

## **DOMESTIC and FAMILY VIOLENCE DOES AFFECT CHILDREN**

Children are affected by living with violence in many ways. Every child's experience is unique, however listed below are some of the ways that children may act, feel or be thinking as a result of their experience.

### **HOW CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE MAY FEEL:**

- Scared; Confused; Helpless; Numb; Angry
- Guilty about loving the abusive parent
- Guilty about not protecting the abused parent
- Worried about the future
- Split down the middle

(It's OK and very normal to have these feelings.)

### **HOW CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE MAY ACT:**

- Aggressive to other children, brothers, sisters, pets / fighting at school
- Treat mum like her partner treats her
- Regression (return to behaviours from younger years) e.g. bedwetting, tantrums, specific fears
- Problems concentrating/forgetful
- Easily distracted
- Problems with school work
- Lying, stealing
- Withdrawn, unusual shyness
- Trouble sleeping, nightmares
- Physical illness (stomach aches, headaches)
- Easily startled
- Unable to play

## **WHAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE MAY THINK:**

- Violence is an appropriate way to solve problems
- The violence is my mother's fault
- The violence is my fault
- Domestic violence is a secret
- Men have the right to control women



## **AARDVARC**

### **Children and Young People living without Domestic Violence**

The AARDVARC Program is for children and young people who have experienced domestic or family violence, and their parent/caregiver.

The purpose of AARDVARC is to provide a safe and supportive environment where children can express their thoughts and feelings and begin to heal.

AARDVARC maintains client confidentiality for the safety of participating families and as such does not keep any client records. AARDVARC staff are unable to participate in report writing or legal processes.

AARDVARC offers the child and parent/caregiver:

- Acknowledgment of the experience of violence
- An opportunity to talk and make sense of this experience, within a safe and supportive environment.
- Information and other ideas.

AARDVARC involves a shared commitment between children, their parent/caregiver and AARDVARC workers and offers:

- an individual program
- information sessions
- groups for children.

AARDVARC programs are flexible and utilize a variety of activities to connect with and communicate with children .

Some of the activities children and young people may choose include:

- Writing stories or journaling
- Dress ups and role plays
- Drawing and painting
- Dancing and listening to music
- Meditation / relaxation
- Clay work and sand tray play
- Interests such as sport, TV shows, role models

These activities aim to promote the following:

- Healthy relationships education & development
- Self esteem
- Handling conflict, anger and stress safely
- Communication skills
- Identification & exploration of feelings
- Protective behaviours & safety plans

### Information sessions

Information sessions are held regularly for those involved in supporting children and young people who have experienced domestic violence.

Information sessions -

- Respect the role of the parent/caregiver
- Share information and strategies useful in supporting children and young people.

### Individual program

A Short term individual program provides further opportunity to explore the experience of violence for the child/young person and their parent/caregiver. Individual programs -

- Seek to understand the effects of violence on the child/young person and their parent/caregiver.
- Respect the role of the parent/caregiver
- Seek to strengthen the relationship between child and parent/caregiver
- Provides specific support to the parent/caregiver and children

### Groups

Groups for children will be available throughout the year and focus on protective behaviours, safety, self esteem, feelings and communication.

Groups -

- Provide an opportunity to learn within a safe, creative and fun environment
- Are held after school hours
- Run for 4-6 weeks

## The North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service also offers?

- ☺ Information and Referral
- ☺ Community Education and Training Resources
- ☺ Assistance with Protection Orders
- ☺ Court Support
- ☺ Perpetrator Education Program

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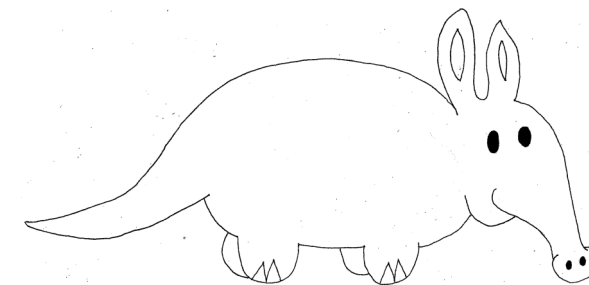
<http://www.nqdvrs.org.au>



## Against Violence # 14

North Queensland  
Domestic Violence  
Resource Service

# AARDVARC



**A**cknowledgement  
**A**nd  
**R**ecognition of  
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**C**hange

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