

CASE STUDY

99 Steps *Access Community Services*

The '99 Steps' program, run by Access Community Services, provides specialist, culturally appropriate responses to women and children from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV) in order to enhance their safety and wellbeing.

About the program

The experiences and needs of migrant and refugee survivors of DFV are often complex and multi-layered. Women from non-English speaking backgrounds are amongst the most vulnerable groups experiencing violence. Mainstream services may face challenges in understanding and responding to these needs. A comprehensive and holistic case management model is required to support the woman to navigate the complex systems she faces (e.g. Magistrate's Courts, Family Law, Immigration, Department of Child Safety) in a language other than her own.

What Does 99 Steps Do?

- Provides wrap-around case management/care co-ordination, support and counselling for the woman and her children
- Listens to the woman and what she wants, without judgment
- Provides telephone or in-person interpreters or offers the woman a worker who speaks their language
- Provides safety planning, whether leaving or remaining in the relationship
- Ensures that the woman is aware of all the options available to her
- Refers women for legal and immigration advice
- Provides court support
- Provides Family Violence Assessment Reports for the Department of Home Affairs (usually requested by RAILS)
- Works with police, the Courts, lawyers and immigration agents to ensure the best outcomes for women who have experienced violence
- Completes applications and writes supporting documents for women to access Victim Assist Qld financial assistance as a result of their experiences of violence
- Refers to other services

AT A GLANCE



Target Participants

Women from CALD backgrounds who have experienced DFV



Aim

To provide specialist, culturally appropriate responses to women and children from NESB experiencing DFV.



Organisations Involved

Various organisations in the community, as well as the local 'Integrated Service Response Group,' which comprises government and non-government organisations addressing DFV.



Location

Logan and Beenleigh, Queensland.



Funding

Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (Queensland Government).



The 99 Steps program was developed in response to needs in the community and the challenges mainstream services may face in understanding the unique challenges that women from non-English speaking backgrounds experiencing violence may face. The 'Not Now, Not Ever' Report completed by Dame Quentin Bryce also highlighted a need for more specialist CALD DFV services in Queensland. The Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS) used to service the whole of Queensland, but had to draw its boundaries in several years ago, excluding Logan.

Challenges

The main challenge faced during the design and implementation of the 99 Steps program was that the initial funding was very limited, which meant that only a Manager and two other workers could be employed, each at 3 days per week. This has now grown to a team of four – soon to be on full-time hours until March 2021.

Key Learnings

This experience has generated 3 key learnings for Access:

- 1.** CALD survivors of DFV are strong, resilient and resourceful, combatting multiple barriers to protect their children.
- 2.** Although there have been many positive developments in the DFV space, there is still a long way to go to ensure safety, respect and equality for women.
- 3.** Working with women from collectivist cultures (with the strong focus on family and community connections and needs) is very different to working with women from individualistic cultures.

More information

For more information, please *contact Caroline Fitzpatrick, Manager, on 0447528399 or refer to 99Steps@acsl.org.au*

