



Project report

**Now you have
heard us**

What will you do?

**Insights from young people on
domestic and family violence**



FAMILY SAFETY HUB
AN INITIATIVE OF THE ACT GOVERNMENT



CHILDREN & YOUNG
PEOPLE COMMISSIONER
ACT Human Rights Commission

Acknowledgment of country

The ACT Government acknowledges the traditional custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people.

The ACT Government acknowledges and respects their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

Accessibility

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events accessible to as many people as possible.

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, such as large print or audio, please telephone (02) 6205 2677.

If English is not your first language and you require translating and interpreting services, please telephone 131 450.

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require the National Relay Service please phone 133 677 then ask for 133 427.

Copyright



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

Family violence is hard. It is hard to live with.

It is hard to stop or prevent. And sometimes it is hard to hear and talk about.

Reading this report may also be hard.

Take a break if you need to.

At the back of the report are some ways to find people you can talk to if you need help.



Contents

A note on language	8
Introduction	9
The process	10
Checking what was already known	10
Bringing in the experts	10
Bringing in the real experts	10
Making it safe	10
Listening to services and connecting with young people	11
Listening to young people	11
What we heard	13
The insights	13
Who do young people trust to help?	16
Do young people talk to their friends about family violence?	19
What advice do young people have for other kids?	20
What do young people want to see change?	21
What did young people think about sharing their story?	22
What happens now?	23
Do you want to talk or are you worried about someone you know?	23
Appendix A – high level findings of environmental scan and research sources	25
Appendix B – consent form	27
Appendix C – case studies used as discussion prompts	28
Appendix D – evaluation form and responses	29



Domestic and family violence impacts all children and young people who live with it. Children and young people are victims in their own right, with their own recovery and support needs, separate to the needs of adults. Yet the views of children and young people are missing from the services we provide and the policies we design. In short, adults design policy and system responses that fail to meet children's and young people's needs.

To change this, we must change our approach. As a first step the ACT Children and Young People Commissioner and the Family Safety Hub sought to hear those missing voices and learn from them.

The Family Safety Hub and the Children and Young People Commissioner thank and acknowledge the young people who gave their time and generously shared their experiences and views. It was a privilege to listen, and to now share what you told us.

Please listen to what these young people have said. This is their experience.

You may find some of what you read challenging. Sit with what you feel and listen and learn from the experiences of these young people who live in our city.

What we heard calls for very different systems, supports and approaches to those that are currently offered.

Think about what you can do differently.

Where we have quoted a young person we have not changed their words, including some coarse language, except to remove names or any other identifiable details.

If you are a young person reading this report and your experience is different, or you have a different view, that is okay. Understanding that everyone experiences family violence differently shows how complicated this problem is. We hope some of the things you read here will ring true for you. Because although your story may be different, you are not alone.

A note on language

Domestic and family violence is all the different forms of coercion or violent behaviour a member or members of a family use to control or intimidate other family members. It is not just physical violence. There are lots of ways to frighten and control a person without using physical violence. It can be emotional abuse, verbal abuse, financial control, psychological control or sexual abuse.

Domestic and family violence is not just conflict, which is normal in relationships. Domestic and family violence is about power and control. It is not a one off. It is a pattern of behaviour that controls and dominates other family members and makes them afraid for their own or another person's safety or wellbeing.

Domestic violence is about violence between people who are, or used to be, intimate partners. Family violence is broader and can include violence between intimate partners, as well as violence between extended family members, parents, children, siblings or other family members. They might live in the same household or they might not.

The young people who spoke with us had experienced all these different types of family violence. Some lived in families where there was violence between parents or other adults, some experienced violence from their parents, stepparents, siblings or other family members. Some were violent themselves. Because of the range of violent relationships young people lived with, this report generally uses the term family violence to include both domestic and family violence.

Throughout this report the term young people is used. In some definitions, children are defined as those aged 0 to 12 years and young people (or youth) as people up to 24 years. The young people we talked with were aged 13 to 20 years. They reflected on experiences from when they were very young through to their current lives.

Introduction

In April 2018 the Domestic Violence Prevention Council held an extraordinary meeting focussed on the needs of children and young people affected by domestic and family violence.

The council made recommendations in six priority areas including consulting with children and young people so the ACT Government:

“puts the voices of children and young people at the heart of service design and delivery so that they directly influence the development of child-centred service responses to family and domestic violence.”

In October 2018 the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence committed to implementing this recommendation and funding was made available by the Attorney-General to undertake consultation with young people.

Over six months we listened to 70 young Canberrans, 35 of whom have lived with family violence. They talked about what it is like, what helped and what didn't, and what needs to change.

To share what we have learned we have produced two publications – a book of the insights and this report, which provides more details on the project and further information about what young people shared.

Together these are the start of making sure the voices of young people, missing for too long from conversations about them, are heard by those who can make a difference.

The process

Two core principles underpinned this project: making sure it was as safe as possible for young people who wanted to take part and making sure control remained with young people themselves.

All the young people who were involved in this project were paid, recognising the value of both their time and expertise.

The steps taken to deliver the project are outlined following.

Checking what was already known

Young people's time and willingness to engage in consultations is precious, so any direct consultation about their experiences of family violence needed to add to what was already known and not duplicate existing work.

An environmental scan confirmed previous studies have not sought young people's insights into the services and responses that most successfully support children and young people impacted by family violence. There was limited understanding of what is working in the ACT for children and young people. Furthermore, children and young people have not been involved in setting the research agenda and deciding what is important to focus on.

A summary of the environmental scan is at Appendix A.

Bringing in the experts

An adult expert reference group was established to oversee the project, with a remit to ensure the project was child-safe, child-friendly and ethically sound. The adult reference group included experts in ethical research, domestic and family violence, child protection and young people's participation. The reference group guided the project design and implementation.

- > Professor Morag MacArthur, Emeritus Professor Australian Catholic University
- > Dr Justin Barker, Executive Director, ACT Youth Coalition
- > Marcia Williams, Chief Executive Officer, Women's Centre for Health Matters
- > Jodie Griffiths-Cook, ACT Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner

Bringing in the real experts

22 young people, including members of the Ministerial Youth Advisory Council and Headspace Youth Reference Group, were consulted as 'sounding boards' to set the priorities for the project. They advised on the design of the methodology to help ensure it was safe and relevant for young people.

The sounding boards were clear the consultation needed to lead to real change and should focus on:

- > enhancing safety
- > improving services
- > understanding and validating experiences

The sounding boards said the consultations would need plenty of time, there must be a range of ways for young people to engage and young people must have the ability to opt out at any time. The space itself, as well as the process, must be safe. Young people's stories and information must be respected and safeguarded. Young people themselves must be respected and not judged or blamed at any time for the things they may say.

The advice of the sounding boards had direct impact on the project. This included practical considerations like getting a designated mobile phone so young people could message to get in touch. It also meant ensuring the consultations allowed for both talking about change and what needs to happen, as well as sharing personal experiences if young people wanted to talk about what they had been through.

Making it safe

A statement of ethical practice was developed as the foundation for the project methodology. The project methodology was guided by relevant sections of the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, the Institute of Child Protection Studies' Kids Central Principles and the Ethical Research Involving Children Charter.

As there was no intent for the project's methods or products to constitute academic research, the guidance of the expert reference group was sought regarding ethical practice, rather than formal ethical clearance by a research institute.

Resources around participant rights, informed and ongoing consent, and facilitator responsibilities were developed and adhered to. Consent was based on the principle of young people having agency and control. Active, informed and ongoing consent was achieved through a specifically designed consent process including a consent form (see Appendix B). Opting out was always a realistic option with alternative activities, spaces and workers made available in each consultation. Trusted support people were welcome in the sessions.

The project was designed to, as far as possible, prevent distress to any participants. The project information brochure, consent process, consultation session materials and activities were all designed to give participants choice and control, to validate their experience and to promote their self-esteem. They were also designed to normalise talking about domestic and family violence. The consent forms, information brochures and consultation activities were piloted with young people.

A distress protocol was developed. All staff involved in the project were briefed on possible participant distress and equipped to minimise or alleviate its effects. The facilitators of the consultation sessions had relevant qualifications, experience and commitment to child and young people-centred practice. Supports were made available to all participants, including an external counselling service with expertise in family violence participants could access anonymously and free-of-charge.

In-depth consideration was given to the possibility that mandatory child-concern reports may need to be made as a result of consultation sessions, and how to provide a safe space for young people wanting anonymity. A designated contact person was assigned within the ACT Government's Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS), who was briefed on the purposes and intentions of the project, and had particular skills in working with young people.

CYPS staff committed to have young people involved in any process or decisions if mandatory concern reports were made as a result of the consultations. Facilitators committed to work with and alongside young people in making any care concern reports. Facilitators were open about their responsibilities as mandatory reporters, so participants understood the potential consequences of any disclosures of current abuse. Facilitators also talked with young people about how they could participate and have a say without talking about their own lives if they wanted to. This allowed young people to participate on their own terms and no child concern reports were made.

Listening to services and connecting with young people

In-depth conversations were had with staff at 13 organisations to gain their insights into the experience of young clients, and what is and isn't working in meeting the needs of children and young people who experience family violence.

A number of these services asked their young clients if they were interested in having a say and provided a brochure about the project. Some of the organisations co-hosted sessions with small groups of young people. Sessions were co-hosted with:

- > CREATE Foundation
- > Lake Ginninderra College
- > Dickson College
- > Canberra PCYC
- > Communities at Work – Galilee School
- > A Gender Agenda

Thank you to the staff at all the organisations who took time to share their knowledge and views, passed on project information to clients and networks, or host group sessions.

Listening to young people

A suite of consultation activities was developed, including an in-depth interview schedule, focus group session plans, case study prompts, tactile activities for people who prefer non-verbal communication, and a box for anonymous contributions. The case studies resonated strongly with young people and showed it was okay to talk about family violence for what it is, and as it happened. The case studies are in Appendix C. Fun ice-breaker activities were included in each session and food was provided. Attention was given to creating a safe space, including room layout, providing cushions and blankets and sensory calming devices such as fidget toys. All conversations ended with informal wellbeing check-ins, social chat and the opportunity for debrief if required.

In total 70 young people had a say about family violence in nine sessions: 35 of these young people had lived with family violence themselves. 35 had not lived with family violence, or did not disclose whether they had.

Eight sessions were with small groups or individual interviews in which nearly all participants had experienced family violence. One large session was

held in a mainstream college environment, where most participants had not (or did not disclose) experiencing family violence.

The young people who had experienced family violence included young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, religious backgrounds, young people with disability, males, females and gender-diverse young people. The youngest was 13, the oldest was 20 and the average age was 16.

Young people had a lot to say. The sessions went for 1.5 to 2 hours and could have gone longer. There were plenty of wise cracks, cross-talk and keeping each other grounded. There were jokers, quiet observers, thinkers, challengers. Across all sessions there was a striking similarity in the respectful quiet that descended when any participant spoke about their experiences with family violence, and in the words of acknowledgement young people gave to each other. Everyone had complete respect for one another's sharing, and for what each person had gone through.

Several young people said they had not heard other young people talk about these kinds of experiences before. They had felt they were on their own. Some young people shared their story for the first time.

Our experience of listening showed young people can and do want to talk about family violence when the conversation is safe, authentic and non-judgemental.

Future consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island young people is planned so this project can reflect their experiences and advocate for their needs. The Family Safety Hub and Children and Young People Commissioner are seeking the advice of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body about the best approach to hear their voices.

The *We don't shoot our wounded and Change our future - share what you know* reports highlighted the significance and complexity of domestic and family violence for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The *Our Booris, Our Way* review of child protection systems, policies and practices that impact young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders has provided important insights into what system reforms may be required to better meet their needs.

The Family Safety Hub and Children and Young People Commissioner recognise the expertise that has already been shared through these reports and any future consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will build on these existing insights.

The ACT Government is committed to working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to develop a collaborative approach to data collection. Collection of data for this project will consider the sensitivities of collecting data from young people and the cultural implications of how that data is used.

What we heard

Comparing what young people who lived with family violence had to say with the views of those who had not showed experiencing family violence firsthand changes how you think about it and what you consider helpful. If we want to make a difference for children and young people who live with family violence, we need to listen to the children and young people who have been through it themselves.

The insights below are drawn from the experiences of the young people who had lived with family violence.

The insights

We took in everything young people said, wrote and told us through their stories, opinions, attitudes and body language. There were common themes, experiences and language. These were refined into statements that represented the experience of young people and were tested to make sure the language had integrity and impact.

Through this process we distilled what we heard from young people into 13 powerful insights that speak directly to the experience young people have when they are affected by family violence. An insight is not a direct quote from a consultation session and is not the specific story of one young person. Rather, these are the key messages that came from everything that was said.

I can't tell anyone, because it will break up my family or make things worse.

Young people do whatever it takes to keep family violence a secret. They know most people won't understand and mandatory reporting can do more harm. There is no pathway when young people seek help for themselves.

"I know care and protection tries to do their job, and they were really supportive. But I think the long-lasting effects that they have on families need to, one, be vocalised, and two, addressed. Because my mum is so afraid to a point where we can't tell anyone anything ever."

"I don't trust the police, I wouldn't trust the police to help me. My Dad got taken away 14 times and all I saw was the police storming the house and taking him away. I still get anxiety when I walk past someone in uniform."

"People say it's confidential, can't say nothing to nobody, then you go home and your parents get mad at you because of it. Because they've called home and said something to my parents. So it's like what's the point of even telling you if you can't keep it a secret or keep it confidential?"

You have no idea how hard this is and what it takes.

Young people are working hard all the time to keep themselves and their siblings safe. Deciding who to trust, who not to trust, what to say, what not to say, where to be, where to hide, when to intervene. It takes a lot of time, energy and skill.

"I'd bring my iPad or my phone or something and I'd play music and sometimes, I actually had a little go bag which had UNO and stuff that we could just sit in the backseat and play together because we couldn't really go anywhere else."

"My Mum was always scared. I don't know, even though I'm there pretty much every night now she's still scared and that. I look after Mum, I feel like I have to, and I want to."

"Because that was like this really big thing, I decided to make everything else in my life perfect. I didn't have control over that, so I focussed on everything else."

If you want to help me, you need to start with the people I trust.

Young people are wise and incredibly astute in choosing who they will talk with about what's happening at home. Supports need to build from the people they trust, or they may never reach out again. Being bounced around the system and having to tell their story over and over again is a form of abuse.

“I think it’s just some are more understanding and actually listen and other ones it’s just like, you know? It’s just. . . it doesn’t feel like they listen or they don’t believe you or something. It’s like, I don’t know how to put it.”

“Every time I got sent somewhere else, or someone left, I had to tell my story again, like I had to do that six times.”

“I would be worried about putting the teacher in a difficult situation where they may not know what to do.”

Adults control my world and their assumptions aren’t right.

Adults make decisions without listening to, informing and involving young people. Young people’s rights are routinely disregarded. Services are designed by and for adults. Young people are not looking for help in the places that adults think they are.

“I think more questions need to be asked too. A lot of caseworkers will assume things. There’s a lack of communication to get better understanding of a situation and therefore could be able to help more appropriately. When there’s assumption being made, sure they may be able to present you with services but they may not be the most relevant.”

“Adults stick together, they wouldn’t believe me.”

“Depending on the Family Court if there’s a situation where the child is clear about authorities talking to their parents, then they should listen to the child because the child actually knows what’s going on and the child knows when the parents are going to say, “Oh yes, we’re so sorry, we’re gonna do so much better” to the authorities. Then they turn around and beat the kid.”

I feel what I feel. This matters. It’s okay if I still love the person despite what they do.

Young people are grappling with complex thoughts, feelings and emotions and need support, not judgement. Young people carry guilt, shame, defensiveness, anger, despair, love and hate, often all together. They need help with much more than the physical aspects of safety.

“...there was a distinct level of not wanting him to have the option, not letting him have a voice. I also think too a lot of it is just, they just assumed he wouldn’t want to be around. He would come crying to me about how he misses him but he knows he’s a bad guy, and he was confused on that, ‘am I still allowed to love him?’”

“I feel that pain a lot because my dad fucked off. We have a toddler roaming around. He always looks at me because I’m the reliable one. He always asks, “Where’s dada? Where’s dada? I don’t have the heart to tell him ‘dad’s a bad person, you don’t want to be anything like him’. It’s hard, especially when your parents are bad.”

“...it’s not like he was bad all the time. And he did things to help my family out and he is my dad.”

I just need to go to the park for a few hours while things cool off. Or I might need to leave home altogether.

Violent homes are not the same every day, so flexible responses are needed. Young people may need help to be safer within their family. Or they may need help to leave safely.

“Never been to a refuge, moved out a couple times. Just gone to my Nan’s.”

“We need a safe place for young people to go. Safe houses you can go to at any time of night to stay for a short period until things cool down at home, that are safe, warm, non-judgemental. You should be able to rock up at any time, or maybe ring and they can pick you up and take you there. The safe house needs to not make reports to CYPS or police.”

“I used to get picked up by the police and taken back home. That happened heaps of times, they took me home... So they were taking me home, the exact place that was not safe.”

My siblings matter more than anything else.

Siblings are critical protectors, supporters and confidantes to young people experiencing family violence. Splitting them up may take away the only meaningful relationship they have and an essential part of their identity.

“Back then when we were kids, going through what we went through, I was the shield, copping it. The only way we really could deal with it is me taking most of the abuse pretty much.”

“Back then when we were kids, going through what we went through, I was the shield, copping it. The only way we really could deal with it is me taking most of the abuse pretty much.”

“[Other people] don’t understand that pain. Not properly. Whereas we’ve got the same story, we know what’s going on. Other people don’t know.”

I came out as transgender and that’s when the violence started.

We are only just beginning to understand family violence for some groups of young people. Many trans young people are vilified in their own families. The existing gendered system does not meet their needs and perpetuates abuse.

“...it’s so horrifying to know as an LGBT person, if I come out, my loving parents, who I know are loving, who I know are good people - aren’t going to be the same anymore. And if I don’t come out, if I was different, and if I was better, then my parents would love me.”

“There’s a lot of stuff that might not be thought of as abuse to people who have never been vulnerable to that. Misgendering, purposeful misgendering, and deadnaming [referring to a trans person by their birth name]. It’s 100% abuse but it’s not seen that way by cis people.”

“Realising your gender in a cis-normative world is a terrifying, really hard experience. It’s something that people go through years of repression. People pretend and ignore away and do everything they can to make pretend that they’re not that. With all of those factors, of course someone wouldn’t be able to admit to themselves, let alone admit to other people that they’re trans in an environment where they don’t feel safe.”

It doesn’t end just because my parents split up.

Family violence does not end with separation, prison or court orders and young people need support to manage the ongoing impact. Some young people are forced to have contact with people who are not safe. Others are not supported to maintain relationships they need.

“They’re not together anymore but my little sister goes back and forth and she’s been through it already, but I don’t want her to just have an outburst and go out on her because Mum’s not around. You know what I mean?”

“Where their mum and dad aren’t together anymore, they should be fully aware that they can stop seeing him whenever but also they have a right to see him. No matter what anyone says, at the end it’s up to them... because they have a right to see him.”

“People being nice to you and you can’t cope with people that actually love you because you’re like, ‘No this is wrong. This is not what I deserve. This is not what happens to me’.”

Adults need to step up.

Young people recognise that violence is the issue. Young people are not asking ‘why didn’t she just leave?’ They are looking for complex behaviour change, accountability, and increased knowledge and action across the whole community. Adults need to work harder to stop family violence from happening.

“People are too scared to talk about it and it could be the difference between someone living... you could be saving a life.”

“Just in general, more parents or the schools, stuff like that should be aware too, so they can help support that one lone kid that doesn’t know where to go to get some information.”

“Yeah there’s a lot of people who live with long term abuse, who don’t know, they’re never taught how to function in a normal relationship.”

I had no other option, I had to hang on until I could fight back.

Young people don't want to be like their parents but using physical violence may be the only thing that makes a difference.

"The amount of times that I sat there and just took punch after punch after punch and I grew to the point that I had to ... prove to him that I'm not afraid. Just stand up for yourself."

"I feel I'd go around to my stepdad's house and just fucking smack him in the face. You get what you give. You've given it so fucking take it. 'Don't be a bitch', as you said to my Mum when you hit her. 'Don't be a fucking maggot.' See how he feels."

"I didn't used to be angry, but now I'm really aggressive. It just comes out."

It's my brother or my sister that is abusing me.

Different kinds of violence need different responses. So much needs to be done to understand and respond to adolescent violence, towards parents, siblings or in their own intimate partner relationships. Sibling violence is a little understood or talked about form of family violence.

"I suffered domestic abuse and felt like I couldn't tell anyone because it was my brother hurting me."

"Even when people talk about domestic violence, they think about between grown-ups, the Mum and the Dad. I don't think people talk about family violence at all. I felt really alone. No one knew about this stuff."

"I'm glad I didn't tell anyone because he got to stay in a safe place."

I just want one worker with a warm heart.

Young people are looking for workers who genuinely understand, who care about them and will stick with them.

"You have to be passionate and committed and show that you really care and really want to do something, share about yourself and be genuine."

"Recently I tried to come to deal with it, but my counsellor disappeared. Retired. Once he left, then there was no one there anymore, just gone."

"I think the counsellor just didn't know what to do. She'd say 'Oh that's hard' and then talk about something else. I reckon they thought I was exaggerating because I was a young person. I think they didn't know anything about family violence."

Who do young people trust to help?

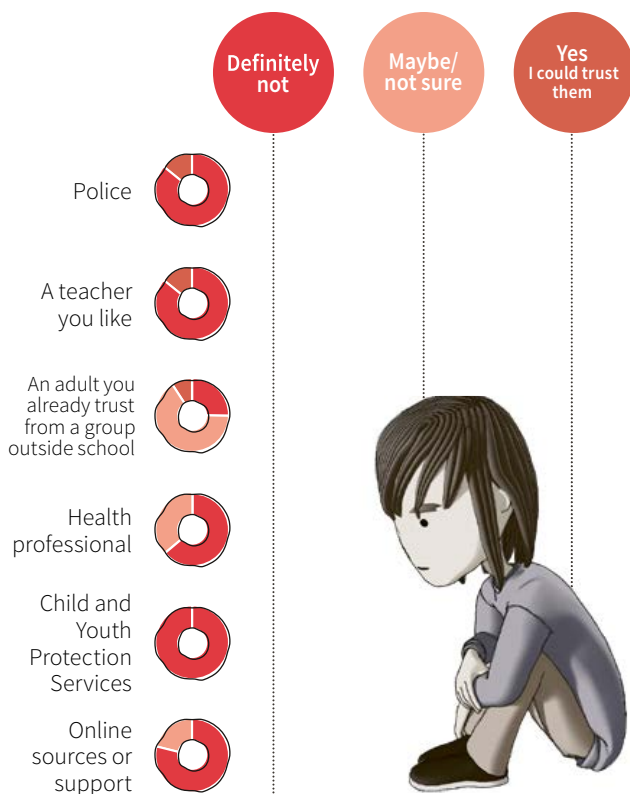
We asked many of the young people who spoke to us if there was anyone they would trust to help if things were rough at home. In some groups this was a general conversation, with prompts about particular types of people and whether they could or couldn't be trusted to help.

In other groups we suggested types of people, designated one side of the room 'I would definitely trust them', the other side 'I would definitely not trust them' and asked people to stand anywhere on the spectrum in between.

Young people who had lived with family violence clearly felt differently to those who had not. They were much less likely to trust that police, teachers, health professionals or Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) workers could help them.

Young people who had not lived with family violence had a different outlook. They were more likely to be unsure about who could help but assumed that there was someone. For these young people, teachers were generally regarded as people who could help, followed by police.

Young people who had lived with family violence



Among young people who had lived with family violence, the views were clear. Their experiences were of services or organisations that were meant to help but didn't. In most sessions young people talked about their experiences with CYPS being negative. In one session where every participant had had police involvement in their family due to family violence, not a single participant had found it made any difference.

Individual stories showed the gaping holes in the system: young people who had sought help from health professionals only to be told because they were underage they should 'come back with a parent' (who was the source of violence and abuse). Young people who had sought help in mental health settings and been told they were being melodramatic or a 'typical teenager' or that

other people 'deal with worse'. Young people who had sought help through teachers or counsellors who were clearly out of their depth and did not understand family violence.

Several of these young people had vowed never to seek help again. It took such courage to seek help the first time, only to have the door slammed in their face.

In discussions young people had nuanced reasons for why various professionals could not be relied upon to help. Young people consciously consider whether workers can actually make a difference to their situation, the structures and systems such as mandatory reporting workers are embedded in, and what kind of existing relationship they have with the worker.

"People say it's confidential, can't say nothing to nobody, then you go home and your parents get mad at you because of it. Because they've called home and said something to my parents. So it's like what's the point of even telling you if you can't keep it a secret or keep it confidential."

"I would be worried about putting the teacher in a difficult situation where they may not know what to do. Because they might not be trained and they're like, 'I want to help you and I will do everything I can but I don't know exactly what to do'."

"In the end, nothing actually happened. He was allowed back in the house, and it didn't actually change until it was a critical situation where mum nearly passed away."

"[CYPS] probably don't have enough funding for any of the stuff that they would like to do and how they would like to help. So they're like, 'We just need to get them out.' But then there is no thought of what happens next. So they don't have the support to properly benefit every child that goes through it."

"You've got to actually know them."

For young people living with family violence, the only people they might consistently turn to for help are adults they already trust from groups outside school. Examples were non-government support programs, behaviour change programs and alternative education programs, where young people had a relationship with staff over an extended period of time, and those staff were active about being in touch and staying engaged.

Even then young people were clear it depended on the specific worker, who they were and what they were like, and they would have to already trust the worker before talking with them about family violence.

All the young people who had lived with family violence talked about being able to tell quickly who they could trust and who they couldn't. It was clear they trusted their own judgement above any designated role or responsibility a worker may be defined to have. They were looking for people who had been through family violence themselves, who could really understand what it's like, who wouldn't judge, blame or stereotype them, who would get to know them and be authentic about themselves.

Some young people said the internet was a good way to get general information. It has the advantage of being anonymous, but they found you need to be able to sort through information to find the accurate and helpful things and piece it together yourself.

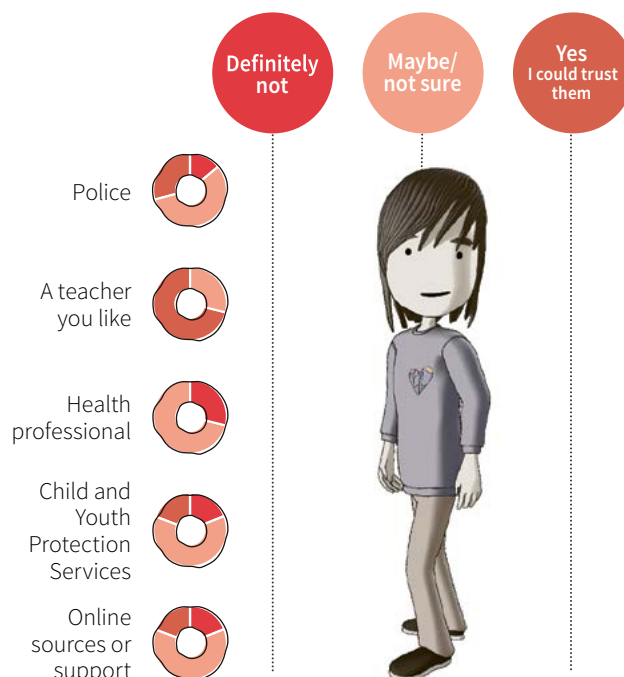
Many who had lived with family violence had a range of reasons for not going online for help:

“Online they don't know you. You can get information but they can't help you.”

“The online forum wasn't helpful, it took over a day for them to get back to me.”

“When you're a kid and you're on the computer, a kid doesn't know how to delete their tabs and a parent is going to be looking. If it's about control then they'll be looking or they'll have some monitoring service.”

Young people who had not lived with family violence



Young people who had not lived with family violence were more inclined to trust that emergency services and other professionals would be able to help change a young person's circumstances, and there would be support available to children and young people living with violence.

“She should tell someone! Because they might help her feel safer (in complete confidentiality).”

“She should tell the police. Why? To stop the violence, get help for Mum, keep herself safe and rehabilitate Dad. Why not? She might not be able to keep seeing her Dad.”

“It will only get worse the longer it goes on. Call the police.”

“Get legal aid.”

“A mediator could help work on the family issues, work together.”

“Go to a safe house, stay with extended family.”

“Talk to the police, helplines, a trusted teacher, trusted family friends.”

“Having a close friend to talk to.”

These young people were still conscious of the need for connection with the person they would turn to:

“The police can be helpful, but you need an individualised approach and they might not be able to do that.”

“The difficulty with health professionals is that there isn’t an established relationship, it’s just who you see on the day.”

“A school counsellor/social worker would be a safer more understanding environment [than the police].”

And they talked about some of the potential problems in telling anyone:

“Maybe don’t tell anyone in case Dad finds out. Could result in further abuse.”

“A way to address the situation without getting the Dad into trouble and or breaking up the family.”

“Thank her for disclosing (if she does) and don’t make her feel guilty (it’s not her fault).”

Whether or not they had experienced family violence themselves, young people had a pretty good appreciation of the impact it could have on someone:

“She’s gonna get fucked up.”

“Substance abuse, psychological issues (PTSD, depression, anxiety), abusive behaviours, abusive relationships, self-harm, passive traits, leave home?”

“She’ll be tolerant of the injustice and will be insecure in what is right to do.”

Do young people talk to their friends about family violence?

In several of the sessions young people talked about other possible sources of support, and whether they had found them helpful. We were keen to understand the role of peers and friends.

Young people who had lived with violence shared how isolating family violence is. They often have no friends to talk with. For those who had friends, many didn’t want to bring their troubles at home into their friendships. Others would not tell their friends for fear their friends would naively tell someone about it, thinking it would help.

“That’s when I lost a lot of connections because I’m a bit in and out of school. I was in a big group of friends when it started and ... now I’m literally by myself.”

“You don’t bring your own problems into your mate’s shit, I guess.”

“Your friends are good for support but in terms of trying to tell on the person, you need someone with a bit more authority.”

“You don’t tell anyone. Because your friends want to help you so then they might tell a teacher or something thinking that it’s going to help.”

“Because my friend had the same thing with her Mum and had to move out she understood. She’s the only friend I’ve told everything to about all this.”

“I also really don’t have many friends, but I feel like kind of minor things I would be able to talk to people about, but there are some big things I would probably never tell anyone unless they were there when it happened and they already knew.”

In contrast, the transgender and non-binary young people talked about friends as a key support. These were friends in the gender-diverse community who had experiences in common. For these young people they themselves were the target of abuse, violence or vilification, an experience their friends shared and understood.

“Yeah I know a lot of people who if they want to rant about stuff they go to their friends and they’re saying all this stuff. But sometimes you can get advice for your friends. What should I do? Who should I reach out to? What stuff should I do to help to stop this? And friends can give some good personalised stuff for you.”

“Especially in the trans community there’re a lot of people who struggle with abusive families. And trans people are often friends with other trans people so you’re very likely to be friends with someone who has gone through a similar situation to you and would be able to help you and give you advice.”

What advice do young people have for other kids?

Towards the end of every session young people were asked what advice they had for other children or young people in Canberra who are living with family violence.

What they said reflects their individual experiences – of using drugs to cope with trauma, of trying services that didn’t help, learning the system, learning their rights, making it through to a safer space, or feeling like things would never get better.

This is what they said:

“There is good and bad in everything. Yin and Yang.”

“Speak up.”

“Just stand up for yourself. You don’t need to take that much abuse.”

“Invoke your rights, you’re allowed to do that.”

“Depends on what age they are. It does depend on the situation. I’d say if you’re from 14 to 18, your parents are abusing you, tell them to shut the fuck up. Speaking about their rights by law, and just see how they react. If they do something, go straight to the cop shop. Don’t listen to anyone else. If they’re younger than 14, speak up to an advice counsellor, someone, aunt, uncle, anyone that’s a circle that they can trust intuitively. There’s always that one person I’ve noticed that’s warm hearted, that you’ll know, you’ll pick up on immediately. Talk to them.”

“I reckon the fact that you can see your parents after you go to foster care. Sitting there telling you you can’t is a lie. You have the right to see them.”

“It actually does get better. A lot of kids think shit’s not going to get better but it actually does.”

“That’s really hard. I’m not sure. I wish I could say “It’ll get better” but I can’t. I wish there was some easy nice thing to say like “there are people to help you” but there aren’t. I think maybe you just have to focus on what you can do for yourself and do that.”

“I think another big thing is also reminding kids that forgiveness isn’t always about them getting away with it because ...I’ve forgiven my parents but I still don’t talk to them. But it’s a let go for me, not for them. They don’t even know I’ve forgiven them but in my heart, it’s not my pain to bear anymore.”

“That it doesn’t last forever. It may seem like in the moment it lasts a long time. But people are looking out for you. And even strangers on the street will make a report to try and help you out.”

“I don’t know, just finding someone that actually knows how you feel. So you can talk to them.”

“I haven’t really got any advice, just really feel for what they’re in. I just feel bad for them.”

“You have a choice in how you take things. You can’t change what happens, but you can choose to stay positive.”

“Just hang in there. Try to at least, because hopefully one day it will be better.”

“You can change the next generation.”

“Speak up more. Tell your parents you don’t like it.”

“If you’re gonna do drugs, do safe drugs.”

“Try to avoid it, try to avoid the conflict, stay out of the way.”

“If it’s abusive, try to call someone to help.”

“Don’t give up, and don’t give a fuck.”

“Do what you’ve got to do.”

“Hold on until it stops happening.”

“Don’t go to CAMHS.”

“Stay strong.”

What do young people want to see change?

Young people had lots of ideas about what needs to happen to better meet the needs of children and young people in Canberra who live with family violence. Sometimes they spoke about the things that were missing, that could have helped in their own life. Sometimes they spoke about the future, about what could help other children and young people who are living with violence. Their ideas and suggestions are grouped below.

Crisis responses

- > social workers or youth workers who accompany police responding to domestic and family violence incidents when children or young people are present
- > a hotline that children can ring in domestic and family violence crisis situations, that will default to child/youth trained police
- > a 24/7 phone line for children and young people to get domestic and family violence help and advice that isn’t the police
- > all emergency services and domestic violence services to have better training in what family violence looks like for transgender and gender-diverse young people
- > trusted support people for children and young people when they get interviewed by the police

Meeting basic needs

- > crisis accommodation, including temporary safe houses, for young people
- > accommodation in Canberra for under 16s
- > more safe places to go and things to do
- > respite care and services for children and young people who live with family violence
- > information to help children and young people feel less alone, to know that it happens to other children and young people too
- > practical help with what to say, whether to talk about it or not, how to function in the household

Skilling the workforce, and changing the mix

- > more youth-engagement police in the community, day and night
- > training for teachers to understand family violence and how to support students
- > youth workers in schools, and more youth workers generally
- > training in working with young people for senior staff in services and government departments, in order to change culture
- > better access to mental health support in general and more specialists in Canberra
- > smaller case-loads for case workers
- > workers who are honest about what they can and can’t do
- > upskilling workers to empathise with young people, and to have both family violence and child/youth-work skills

Understanding and listening to young people

- > case workers who involve young people more, and ask more questions to get a better understanding of the specific young person and their situation
- > workers knowing and upholding children and young people’s rights
- > child-centred practices and services, that listen to and involve children and young people
- > confidential, direct communication between young people and decision makers

Addressing ongoing impacts

- > more people who can help address underlying trauma

- > better responses to complex behaviour in schools, that address underlying causes and trauma
- > more say over ongoing relationships, such as easier access to see a parent if you want to, and not being forced to see a parent
- > self-help tools and strategies to accept experiences and move on
- > free counselling
- > Empowering children and young people
- > more information for children about domestic and family violence
- > better information for children at the point of need, recognising they won't take it in unless they are experiencing family violence
- > more information for children and young people about who to go to for help
- > start education about family violence early, in year 3-4 of primary school
- > empower children and young people to be able to speak up, including within systems

Helping parents

- > support for mothers so that they can leave and not have to go back
- > behaviour change support for fathers
- > teaching people the right way to treat one another
- > better support for parents generally

Raising community awareness

- > more information for parents and teachers, through schools, about domestic and family violence
- > better information and awareness in the community generally about domestic and family violence
- > more explicit education about what behaviours are okay in a family, and the difference between discipline, punishment and abuse

Changing systems

- > legislative change so that the perpetrator has to be removed from the house, rather than the children taken away
- > legislative change so that workers can take out Family Violence Orders, rather than the mother
- > more alternative education pathways
- > intensive support services that get involved with children over a long period of time
- > creating systems that are about caring

What did young people think about sharing their story?

All of the young people who participated in group sessions were encouraged to evaluate the session. Evaluations were anonymous. Participants were asked to choose an emoji sticker that represented how they felt about the session overall. They were also asked a small number of questions:

- > What did you like MOST about the session or thought worked well?
- > What did you like LEAST about the session or thought could be done better?
- > Did you have a chance to express your views?
- > Did [the facilitators] listen to your views?
- > Any other comments?

The evaluations confirmed young people can and do want to talk about their experiences of family violence when the conversation is safe, authentic and non-judgemental. Thirty of the young people with lived experiences of family violence filled in an evaluation form. Being able to share, and the way the sessions allowed everyone to have a say, were common themes from the evaluation.

All of the feedback received through the evaluation is at Appendix D. Those young people who gave in-depth individual interviews were not given evaluation forms due to the difficulty of anonymity, but were given contact details for the Family Safety Hub manager and Human Rights Commission, should they wish to raise any concerns or give feedback.

What happens now?

Listening to young people and sharing what they told us is just the start of bringing about change. What young people had experienced and had to say should challenge services and systems across both government and the community to make changes to what they do and how they do it.

The Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner will advocate for improvements that respond to what young people said is needed.

The Family Safety Hub will lead a co-design process to find ways to provide the supports and services that young people need, not what adults think they need.

The result of co-design could be a new service, a change to an existing system, updated legislation or a completely new idea. The ideas young people shared with us will be where we start.

The Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner will monitor whether changes are being made and if organisations are being made safer for children and young people.

All adults need to step up and consider how they can make things better for the young people they know.

Do you want to talk or are you worried about someone you know?

These are some of the places you can try if you want to talk about your experiences, get help with a situation you are currently in, or find help for a friend:

For young people:

It can be hard to find the right person to talk to and many young people have not been able to get the support they need and deserve.

We understand that things in your family may not change, or that it might take a long time until things are different.

We also know there are good people out there who are kind and get what you're going through. If you want to try talking to someone, or get some advice, these organisations may be able to help:

Organisations that may be able to help:

ACT Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner	02 6205 2222 ACTkids@act.gov.au	If you are a child or a young person living in Canberra, and you have something you want to say or something you want to ask, or if you need help to get the support you need, you can call or send an email to Jodie Griffiths-Cook, the ACT Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner. She and her team are there to listen to and help children and young people in Canberra.
CREATE Foundation	6232 2409	CREATE represents the voices of children and young people who are in or who have lived in out-of-home care. They also organise great ways for children and young people in care to have fun with each other and stay connected to their siblings.
Headspace	1800 650 890 headspace.org.au	Headspace provides free and confidential telephone and online service for young people aged 12 to 25.
Junction Youth Health Service	02 6232 2423	Junction Youth Health Service provides free healthcare and support services to young people aged 12 to 25.
Kids Helpline	1800 55 1800 kidshelpline.com.au	Kids Helpline is Australia's only free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.
Youth Beyond Blue	1300 224 636 youthbeyondblue.com	Beyond Blue provides information and confidential telephone and online counselling for young people aged 12 to 25 who may be experiencing anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts.

For everybody:

Domestic Violence Crisis Service	02 6280 0900 dvcs.org.au	DVCS can provide support 24/7 to people impacted by domestic and family violence, including those who are at risk of using violence.
1800RESPECT	1800 737 732 1800respect.org.au	1800RESPECT provides support through phone or web chat for those experiencing sexual, domestic and family violence.
Mensline Australia	1300 78 99 78 mensline.org.au	Mensline can provide online or video counselling for men affected by or considering using violence.
Men's Referral Service	ntv.org.au	The Men's Referral Service is a men's family violence telephone counselling, information and referral service operating around the country and is the central point of contact for men taking responsibility for their violent behaviour.
Parentline ACT	02 6287 3833	Parentline provides confidential counselling service for parents and carers as well as parenting courses and support.
Family Drug Support Australia	1300 368 186	Family Drug Support helps families affected by alcohol and other drugs with telephone support services for users, families and carers.
Family Relationship Advice Line	1800 050 321	The Family Relationship Advice Line is a national telephone service that helps families affected by relationship or separation issues, including information on parenting arrangements after separation.
A Gender Agenda	02 6162 1924	A Gender Agenda supports the goals and needs of intersex, transgender and gender diverse adults and young people in Canberra and the surrounding region.

It can be hard to know how to help, and to know whether you are going to make things better not worse. If you are concerned about the safety of a child or young person, the ACT Government's *Keeping Children and Young People Safe* guide is a good place to start.

Appendix A – high level findings of environmental scan and research sources

What we already know about children and young people's experience of violence

Complex trauma is experienced because of domestic and family violence. Trauma has lasting impacts.

Children and young people are individuals with diverse perspectives and experiences.

Children and young people who live with domestic and family violence are victims, whether they are directly assaulted or not.

Children and young people are service users in their own right.

Relationships are an integral part of feeling safe and secure.

Children and young people need someone to talk to and share their thoughts and feelings with, as well as people to help them become safe, and deal with ongoing family relationships.

Parents might need support to reach decisions and take actions that are in children's best interests.

Knowing how best to support children to negotiate their safety in relationships requires insight into key factors that can facilitate children's agency.

What we already know about listening to children and young people talk about sensitive topics

There is a power imbalance between children and adults that must be considered when undertaking sensitive research.

Consent is an important part of any conversation with children and young people; it needs to be both informed and ongoing.

Listening to children and young people includes providing the support they need to have their voices heard.

Research with children and young people should aim to involve them as active participants in the entire process.

Methodology must use child friendly approaches to engage with children.

The research must be safe. Support must be available for children involved in research by way of a qualified counsellor or psychologist.

What we don't understand yet

What aspects of their experience children think are most important.

What works, where, how, why and for whom in the ACT service system.

The perspectives of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and rural and remote areas.

What we know is missing in our service system

Service providers who work with people who have experienced domestic and family violence may need to adapt their service to tailor the needs of children and young people.

Services need better integration across systems to be able to effectively support children and young people.

Sources

2012/13	ACT Government/Thinkplace	Listening to families
2019	ACT Government	<i>A picture of children and young people 2018</i>
2015	Anne Graham, Mary Ann Powell and Nicola Taylor	<i>Ethical research involving children: Putting the evidence into practice</i>
2013	Asa Carter & Carolina Overlien	<i>Children exposed to domestic violence: a discussion about research ethics and researchers' responsibilities</i>
2018	Australian Child & Adolescent Trauma, Loss and Grief Network	<i>Prevalence - Children's exposure to domestic violence and outcomes</i>
2018	Rachel Carson, Edward Dunstan, Jessie Dunstan and Dinika Roopani	<i>Children and young people in separated families: Family law system experiences and needs</i>
2014	Australian Institute of Family Studies	<i>Children affected by domestic and family violence, A review of domestic and family violence prevention, early intervention and response services</i>
2011	Kelly Richards	<i>Children's exposure to domestic violence in Australia</i>
2016	Commissioner for Children and Young People	<i>Children and young people's unique experiences of family violence - Family violence and children and young people in Tasmania</i>
2017	Debbie Noble-Carr, Morag McArthur & Tim Moore	<i>Children's experiences of domestic and family violence: Findings from a meta-synthesis</i>
online	Ethical Research Involving Children	International Charter for Ethical Research Involving Children
2016	Karin Pernebo & Kjerstin Almqvist	<i>Young Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence Describe their Abused Parent: A Qualitative Study</i>
2015	Morris, A., Humphreys, C. and Hegarty, K.	<i>Children's views of safety and adversity when living with domestic violence</i>
2012	Morris, A., Humphreys, C. and Hegarty, K.	<i>Ethical and safe: Research with children about domestic violence</i>
2014	Mudaly, Graham, Lewis	<i>"It takes me a little longer to get angry now": Homeless children traumatised by family violence reflect on an animal therapy group</i>
2017	Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People	<i>Consultations with children and young people about violence - what children had to say</i>
2012	Powell, M.A., Fitzgerald, R., Taylor, N.J., & Graham, A.	<i>Ethical Issues in Undertaking Research with Children and Young People (Literature review for the Childwatch International Research Network)</i>
2014	Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) at the University of NSW.	<i>Keep Them Safe Outcomes Evaluation</i>
2017	United Nations Children's Fund	<i>A familiar face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents</i>
2013	Victorian Government Department of Human Services (Red Tree Consulting)	<i>Assessing children and young people experiencing family violence</i>

Appendix B – consent form

Helping kids in the ACT who live with domestic and family violence What do we need to do?

Hi! So glad that you could join us for this session today. We want to check that you **feel okay** about participating, **understand** what's involved, and get to ask any **questions** you want before we start.

So first, a bit about the session. We know that domestic and family violence happens in the ACT. We also know that children and young people don't get to talk about it much. Today's session is for us to listen to your story and **what you think** needs to happen to help kids in the ACT that live with domestic and family violence. You don't need to tell us anything about your own life if you don't want to. We are interested in your experiences and your thoughts so we can **help kids** in Canberra.

Below is some detailed info about the session and what we will do with what you tell us. We will read through each statement together. Circle the thumbs up emoji in the box if you are **okay** with it and circle the thumbs down if you are **not okay** with it. You can circle the thinking face emoji if you don't know or want to ask questions about it

Circle one

I understand that today's session is about children and young people's experiences of domestic and family violence, and what needs to happen to help kids in the ACT that live with violence or have experienced it in the past.	  
I don't need to share anything about my own life, unless I want to.	  
I can answer some questions and skip others if I want to, and I can stop at any time.	  
Anything I say will be kept anonymous. Lisa and Simone will write down things I say, but they won't tell people that it was me who said it, and they won't include anything specific that might identify me.	  
If I agree, the session will be digitally recorded. I can ask Lisa or Simone to turn the recorder off at any time. Only the people working on this project will listen to the recording.	  
Lisa and Simone will put my ideas together with ideas from everyone else, to tell people who make decisions what we think needs to happen.	  
Lisa will send me some info with everyone else ideas if I tell her I want that.	  
I will get a \$50 voucher for being part of today. I will get the voucher even if I skip some activities or decide to leave.	  
If I feel worried or upset about anything in the session I can call or msg a counsellor who is available for people participating in these sessions. It won't cost me anything. Lisa has the contact details.	  
If I want to complain about this session or about Lisa or Simone I can. I can ring or email their boss, and I can make a complaint to the Human Rights Commission. The contact info is on the information sheet she gave me.	  
If Lisa or Simone are worried about my safety, or the safety of someone else I mention, they might need to tell someone about it. If that happens, they will talk with me first.	  
I don't have to participate unless I want to.	  
Lisa and Simone will listen to and respect my views.	  
I have some questions I want to ask ...	  

Is there anything else you want to know?

..... Yep, I'm ready to get started now.

Name Age

Signed Date / /

Appendix C – case studies used as discussion prompts

Sally lives with her little sister Amy and her Mum and Dad. She loves Amy and her Mum and her Dad, but sometimes it's hard. Sally's Dad gets really angry, he yells a lot and when he's been drinking he hits her Mum. A few times it's been so bad that the police have come. Sally's Dad won't open the door for the police, so they force their way in.

One time it was so bad Sally's Mum had to go to hospital in an ambulance. Her Dad got taken down to the police station. Sally and Amy had to go to the police station too and got asked a lot of questions. Sally and Amy tried not to say much. Their Dad never hits them and they didn't want to talk about what he does to Mum. Dad has told them lots of times that if they say anything the police will take them away and they'll never see Mum again.

When he's sober, Sally's Dad says sorry to Mum. Sally thinks he really is sorry. He buys things for Mum and treats her really nice.

Sally takes care of her Mum. She helps get the icepack and fix her up when Dad's been agro. She comes straight home from school to keep an eye on Mum. She looks after Amy too. When it's bad they go to their room and play Fortnite. Sally and Amy love Fortnite and it helps block out the noise.

Sometimes Sally can't think at school. She tries but she just can't concentrate on what the teacher says. She plays with her friends at lunch but she never invites them over to her place. She doesn't want anyone to know what happens at home. She's scared that people will find out. It's a big secret that only she and Amy know.

When the shit hits the fan in my house it goes dead quiet. Dad gets that cold look in his eyes and you don't move. Like the time Mum burned the sausages. Well, not burnt really. Not black bits like they do at the school fundraiser, just really dark brown and kind of hard. When Mum put Dad's plate on the table he got the look. It went quiet. Dad stood up, walked to the bin and tipped his dinner in. "Kids" he said, holding the bin open. We followed and scraped our dinner into the bin, even though my sausages weren't burned and the veggies sure were fine. Dad took another packet of sausages out of the freezer and slammed it on the bench. "Do it properly this time" he said and stormed out to the weights room.

My Mum's not like the other Mums at school. They wait up near the school gate and chat. Mum stays in the car. Kim, Dee and I get down there as quick as we can when the bell rings or she gets mega stressed. Dad knows where she is all the time and he'll blast her if we don't go straight home after school.

Some of the other Mums go down to the café after footy training, my friends have fish n chips and their mums have coffees. I always used to ask Mum if we could go too, but we never did. And I know why, Mum doesn't have any money. Not for fish n chips, not for coffee. Then one time, I don't know how, she got five bucks. She said I could have fish n chips. But it wasn't much fun. Mum sat in the corner and kept looking at her watch and looking around in case anyone saw her. Some of the other Mums smiled and said 'hi' but Mum just looked at her shoes. I never asked again after that.

Dad's great when it's just him and me at the footy. He drinks some beers and gets me fish n chips and a pie too and we sit with all his work mates. They yell at the ref, and I do too. "You've got a good one there" says his mate. "Sure do" says Dad ruffling my hair.

I just wish Mum was better at keeping under his radar, like I do. Keeping him happy. Just do what he wants and stay out of his way. That's the only way.

Appendix D – evaluation form and responses

Helping kids in the ACT who live with domestic and family violence

Thank you for talking with us today. We want to make these sessions better for other young people. You can help by telling us how it went.

Choose an emoji sticker that represents how you felt about the session
(place your sticker in the box below)

What did you like MOST about the session, or thought worked well?

.....
.....

What did you like LEAST about the session, or thought could be better?

.....
.....

Did you have a chance to express your views?

no not sure yes

Did you feel that [facilitators] listened to your views?









no not sure yes

Any other comments?

.....
.....
.....

Thanks!

Results

Emoji chosen	No. of responses	Emoji chosen	No. of responses
	16		1
	6		1
	2		1
	2		1
		TOTAL	30

Did you have a chance to express your views?

100% of the young people that filled out an evaluation said 'yes' they had a chance to express their views.

Did [the facilitators] listen to your views?

100% of the young people that filled out an evaluation said 'yes', the facilitators had listened to their views.

What did you like MOST about the session or thought worked well?

Expressive

The questions to keep structure

Sharing things

It went good

Getting to share my story

All of it

Talking

I liked the relaxed chat set up, it's easier to talk openly in a casual setting

We all got to have an opinion

I liked how everyone got a chance to talk, amazing

That they listen and talk

It was carefree

Everyone had a go which was good

The anonymous box

I'm not sure

What we talked about and about everything that helped

It was easy to talk and get involved

The questions

The casual conversation setting, the relaxing introduction and re-assurance throughout such as anonymity etc



I thought the way everyone could be open was nice

Having structure and questions but also allowing us to digress or go into detail on another topic

There was equal dialogue

I like how there were many views

I think asking why we made the choices on who to trust was good

Explaining why you chose your answer

Sharing ideas, nothing is right or wrong

The activities

The moving game thing

I liked the questions relating to the case study

The story

What did you like LEAST about the session or thought could be done better?

Nothing everything was good

Nothing

nothing

I think if it was set up more clearly (let us know the plan before starting)

Deep memories

Lots of people make things get away from topic

A bit triggering

Don't know

Nothing, I liked everything

Nothing it was great

Nothing

Maybe offer to have an individual chat

Jenga. Loud sounds trigger breakdowns

I'm not sure

I'm not sure, nothing

How [facilitator] said she was cis was kind of weird



Nothing

More activities

We didn't really talk about many solutions

Maybe more activities on how to deal with these sorts of things

Keep in time, to not rush

I don't know

Too rushed

Any other comments?

smaller groups

n/a


in my prayers

nah





thanks for coming in and listening

the best

thank you, 

it was great

no, 

no, thank you, 

no



Really appreciate the voucher

It was good to talk about these things

thank you!

I didn't speak, but that was me, not the session



ACT Children and Young People Commissioner

The independent position of Children and Young People Commissioner sits within the ACT Human Rights Commission. The Commissioner promotes the rights of children and young people. She talks with children and young people and listens to what they have to say, and provides advice to government and community agencies about how to improve services for children and young people.

ACTkids@act.gov.au

hrc.act.gov.au/childrenyoungpeople

Lisa Fenn and Simone Payne were the staff members facilitating this project.

Family Safety Hub

The Family Safety Hub is part of the ACT Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety. The hub is a new approach to tackling the critical issue of domestic and family violence. The Hub designs and tests tangible solutions, services and supports that can be introduced into the system to help those affected by violence.

saferfamilies@act.gov.au

communityservices.act.gov.au/saferfamilies

