



Family Law and Culture

facilitator's manual



**family
peace**

Learning Law + Language

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dialogue starters

INTRODUCTIONS

- Facilitator shares some of their own cultural and professional background.
- Ask about where participants were born, where they have come from. Acknowledge their experiences and capacities.
- If there is time, icebreakers are useful. There are many on the internet. Be aware of possible cultural sensitivities.
- It is important to acknowledge that great skills and capacities around family building already exist in the group, and that all of us, including the facilitators, learn from each other.

MARRIAGE

- In what ways are marriage ceremonies carried out in different parts of the world?
- Do parents or family have to agree to a marriage?
- Is a dowry required? Who pays it and what is it for?
- What is the 'marriage age' in different countries – the age below which you cannot marry?
- Can relatives marry? Which relatives cannot marry?

FAMILY TYPES

- Do many families you know have lots of children?
- What does 'family' mean to you? In Australia the family usually means the nuclear family (parents and their children).
- How are single mothers (mothers without the father or partner living with them) treated in different countries?

RAISING CHILDREN

- How do parents make sure the children behave?
- Is there anyone apart from parents who can discipline children?
- What are some ways to teach children to behave without hitting?
- What happens if a child keeps doing wrong things even after they're told and shown what is right?
- How do people learn how to be parents?

YOUTH RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- At what stage is a child considered an adult in different countries?
- What role and rights do teachers have in disciplining children?
- Do male and female children have different responsibilities?
- How are teenagers disciplined?
- What was your experience as a child going to adulthood? Was there conflict with family? If so, how was this managed?
- Are children or young adults involved in your family decision-making?
- What are some practical steps your community can do to resolve any conflict between young people and their parents/elders?

PARTNERS' ROLES

- Who is the head of the family?
- What are the traditional roles for male and female in the family?
- Have some of the traditional roles of husband and wife changed over time?
- What roles do elders play in the family?
- Has your role in the family changed over time?

CONFLICT BETWEEN PARTNERS

- What are some of the problems that wives and husbands have to face?
- How are arguments or problems between partners resolved?

RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN

- How does separation or divorce happen in different countries?
- There is a high rate of marriage breakdown in Australia.
Why do you think this is?

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- What are some ways of resolving conflict in a marriage?
- What are some ways you can show your partner or children that you love them?
- What are some useful things to do to help people deal with arguments and anger?
- Where can people go in Australia to get help with problems between partners?

topics

Where the Law Comes From

Traditions

- Australia's first law is that of the Indigenous or Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples.
- In 1788 British rulers began to take over the country from the Indigenous people without their consent, and imposed British law. Colonies were formed.
- Modern law and government in Australia came out of Christian and Western European traditions, and later from international laws and standards. Australian law is not religious although it was shaped by Christianity and some of its values.

Federation

- In 1901 the colonies came together in a federation of States under a federal system of government.
- The Australian Constitution was created. Federal (or Commonwealth) and State Governments were formed. State Constitutions were made.
- Australian Laws are made by State or Federal parliaments and through general legal principles developed by courts over time.

Federal Law

- The Constitutions give power to the Federal and State Governments to make laws in different areas.
- The Federal Government has power under the Constitution to make laws about marriage (and divorce, children and property of the marriage) and areas such as immigration, customs, tax, fisheries, social security etc.
- The laws as to who can marry and how, is set out in the federal Marriage Act.
- Under the federal Family Law Act, marriages can be ended or dissolved (divorce) and if parents separate:
 - Proper arrangements must be made for care of children.
 - Limited or supervised contact of children by one parent can be decided where a parent has been violent.
 - Children can have their own lawyer to assist children to argue their needs.

State Law

- State Governments also have powers to make laws which affect families. For example, State child protection laws aim to protect children from harm. State criminal laws can punish people abusing or neglecting their children. State laws are made to make sure children are treated differently than adults in the criminal justice system.

Right to Culture

- Australian law and culture has changed over time. Many laws are now based on international standards. As long as you don't break Australian Law, everyone has a right to follow their culture and beliefs. They must also respect the right of others to follow their culture.

Marriage

- Family laws are different throughout the world but there is also much in common.
- Marriage in Australia can only be between one male and one female. The law does not recognize a marriage with more than one spouse.

Marriage Age

- In Australia a person must be 18 or over to marry. A court can give consent for a person aged 16-18 to marry someone who is 18 or over in exceptional cases. Parent's consent is needed for the under 18 year old.
- It is unlawful to have sex with a person under the age of 16. In Queensland anal sex with a person under 18 is unlawful.

Consent

- The marriage partners must consent. The consent of parents or elders is not needed but it is wise to include them where possible.

Share Marriage Costs

- There is no law which requires an exchange of gifts or dowry of any type. Often there is an engagement and wedding party where gifts are given to the new couple by family and friends to assist their home building.
- If the families involved in the marriage want to present a dowry, and everyone agrees, then it is fine to do so.

Legal Marriage

- A marriage celebrant must be registered under the law to perform marriages. Marriage can be done by a religious or civil ceremony.
- Generally, a marriage between two people made outside Australia, which is recognized as valid in that other country, is considered valid in Australia.
- You cannot marry your natural or adopted: siblings; half-siblings); parents; grandparents; child or grandchild.

Defacto Relationship

- A relationship which is like a marriage except the couple have not gone through a marriage ceremony, is recognized in Australian law. This is called a 'defacto' marriage (marriage 'in fact') and gives rights and responsibilities to the partners regarding property and children.
- Same-sex (gay and lesbian) couples cannot marry under Australian law. However such relationships are not illegal between consenting adults. In Queensland a same-sex relationship is viewed similar to a defacto relationship and partners have the same rights in respect of property. The law has moved to treat same-sex couples equally in areas such as tax, social security, health, aged-care and employment. It is unlawful to treat people worse because of their sexual preference.
- In Australia within a marriage or defacto relationship, men and women should share in the care and parenting of children and enjoy equal rights to have their own separate interests, friends, work, study etc.

Family Types

Mother, Father, Children

- Different types of family relationships are accepted in Australia.
- The most common type of family in Australia is a mother, father and children, and this is what most Australians aspire to.
- De-facto relationships are accepted in Australia. They sometimes have children and this is accepted as a type of family in Australia.

Single Parent

- Around 20% of families in Australia are single parent. When parents separate or divorce their children sometimes live with one parent, or between both parents.
- Sometimes the father will take no responsibility after the pregnancy and leave the mother to care for the child. Sometimes one parent dies, leaving only one parent and children. Although more rare, sometimes an aunt or grandmother takes care of the children.

Extended Family

- In Australia, most people do not live with their extended family, but many have close ties with them. Many Australians look after their aging parents in their home but many elderly people are placed in aged care facilities when they require assistance with their activities of daily living.
- In many other countries the extended family lives together or very close by. In some places even long term friends living under the same roof are considered family. Neighbours are also very important and can be considered family if there are no blood relations close by.

Same-sex Relationships

- Gay and lesbian relationships are not illegal between consenting adults.
- Gays and lesbians in different communities are often in fear of revealing their sexual identity. Where people have to hide their identities because of fear, this can be damaging. Although gay relationships are less accepted in some cultures and places, it is important for mentors and leaders to be able to reach out to those in their communities who may be isolated. Some communities have considered nominating a support person who the community knows will be willing to listen and give guidance, to deal with these issues. Sometimes getting support from outside services not connected to the community is preferred to ensure impartial and confidential support.

Discrimination is Unlawful

- It is unlawful to treat people badly because of their sex or sexual preference. This may be 'unlawful discrimination' and a complaint may be made to the Australian Human Rights Commission or an Anti-Discrimination Commission (see 'Key Contacts' list).

Raising Children

Parents' Legal Responsibilities

- Parents/guardians are responsible for the upbringing, protection and development of their children. In Australia the law says parents must:
 - Provide the child with necessary things such as food, clothing, medical treatment, housing, and care.
 - Ensure the child goes to school at least until they are 15.
 - Guide and develop their children in a safe and supportive way.
- Parents have rights to guide and discipline their children - within the law.
- All children have the right to live in a safe environment free from physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect.
- Children are treasured and given loving guidance in all cultures. You can raise your children in Australia however you want as long as it doesn't break the law.

What is Discipline?

- In all cultures parents have the main role to discipline children. Discipline is about teaching proper behaviour. It builds responsibility and encourages children to think for themselves.
- In some groups children have to listen to their parents and elders without having any say. In Australia many have moved away from this. Parents are encouraged to listen to children and give them a say, and as they grow, gradually develop their capacity to make wise decisions based on reason, not fear of physical punishment nor unquestioned respect for a person in an authority role. Respect must be earned.

Is Physical Punishment Allowed?

- In many cultures strong physical punishment is standard practice. Many parents worry that if this is not allowed they will lose control of their children.

- Using or threatening physical punishment is control by fear. Hitting teaches children that violence is acceptable.
- Children will best respond to parents who have spent the time building a relationship with the child and have had firm, loving authority. This type of discipline shows a lot of respect to the child.
- In some countries physical punishment of children is now against the law. Australia is moving this way but in most states parents can use reasonable force to discipline their children. Under the criminal law in Queensland for example, parents can only use “reasonable” force. This depends on the circumstances but physical discipline that causes any injury is certainly against the law.
- Some research indicates that harsh physical and verbal discipline of children may be linked to behaviour problems such as increased child aggression. Abused children often have more problems with school, self-control, confidence and making friends. High levels of ‘positive parenting’ (parental warmth, acceptance, consistency, monitoring, reasoning) may moderate this. Research is unclear as to whether this applies across all ethnic groups.

Types of Discipline

- Discipline should be fair and consistent. It can be: ‘time out’; ‘grounding’; withdrawing favourite things; giving praise to encourage your child and build their confidence and good behaviour.
- Discipline changes based on the age of the child. It may include picking up the child in a respectful way and removing them from the scene; removing an object from the child and distracting their attention to something else; if old enough, enforcing a pre-explained consequence with firmness and understanding; giving the child ‘time-out’ to calm down for an appropriate length of time, removal of privileges etc..
- Young people often enjoy taking risks and testing boundaries. They may make unwise decisions and mistakes. Young people will usually learn from these. Parents need to have a balance between using firm discipline and guiding by letting their children face the consequences.
- If children break the law then they can face consequences depending on their age (see ‘Youth Rights and Responsibilities’ section).

Who Does the Discipline?

- In Australia, it is the parents’ role and responsibility to discipline and guide the child. Even close family members such as grandparents, aunts and cousins will usually not discipline the child unless the parents have given them permission to do so. Certainly, no other member of the Australian community will discipline the child, unless it is within the child care or education system.
- This means that people in the family and community will expect you to teach your child how to behave in an acceptable manner. For example, if your child is misbehaving in public, other people will expect you to take responsibility for your child. They will not correct the child. If you don’t take responsibility, the other parents may consider you to be an ineffective parent.
- In some cultures the family’s name and honour is highly important and children can be disciplined by the extended family as a representative

of that family, as their misbehaving reflects badly on the family. Australian law focuses more on individual rather than family rights.

Keeping Self- Control

- Children can often 'push your buttons' and make you feel frustrated and angry.
- One way to keep self control is to listen to what the person is saying first. Try to understand their point of view. Try not to disagree straight away. Young people want to be listened to and understood. If they feel you are trying to control them without giving them a say they will get frustrated.
- Sometimes it is useful to stop and say "because we're both angry right now, we should stop the conversation and take a break". After some time you resume the conversation and try again to communicate calmly.

Child Protection

Child Abuse

- Harm to a child or young person can be caused by:
 - physical abuse: punching, slapping, kicking, shaking, biting, applying physical 'discipline' or 'punishment' causing harm or injury,
 - emotional or psychological abuse: constant criticism, name-calling, belittling, excessive teasing, blaming, ignoring, punishing normal behavior, withholding praise and affection, exposing a child to domestic and family violence,
 - sexual abuse or exploitation: any sexual act or sexual threat imposed upon a child including exposure, indecent phone calls, voyeurism, persistent intrusion of a child's privacy, penetration, rape, incest, involvement with pornography, and child prostitution.
- These types of harm often occur together. The younger a child is, the more vulnerable they are and the more serious the consequences are likely to be.

Neglect:

- Neglect means failing to meet a child's basic needs for adequate supervision, food, clothing, shelter, safety, hygiene, medical care, education, love and affection and failure to use available resources to meet those needs.
- Parents are responsible for the child's safety and supervision. Other people will not see your child as their responsibility, unless in extreme danger.
- Leaving young children alone or allowing them to roam a neighbourhood when unsafe may lead to parents being accused of neglect and investigated by Child Protection authorities.
- It is unwise for young children to leave the protection of parents without being in the company of an older person. Parents must be certain that the person left caring for their child is mature, reliable and responsible. The carer should be able to stay calm, decide who to phone and know how to handle any disagreements and what to do if the other children 'play up', disobey the ground rules, or are ill. If anything happens to the children, the parents may be held responsible.

- The law sets no age limit but as a general rule any child under 12 is most likely too young to be left at home alone.
- In many places, children are cared for by extended family and community, as well as by the parents. In Australia there is less opportunity and trust in informal community child care due to fear of child abuse. However, child care centers are often used by parents as an alternative extended family within the community. Australians generally place trust in these facilities.
- Adults who look after children usually must have a special 'Blue Card' from the Government. This identifies them as suitable people to care for children.
- Community members or carers such as teachers and Doctors may report suspected child abuse to authorities. Some are required by law to do so.

Child Protection Authorities

- Parents who abuse their children physically, emotionally or sexually, or do not protect them from harm, may be investigated by Government Child Protection authorities.
- There are Child Protection authorities in each State who are responsible for protecting the needs of children and can get involved if they have suspicions a child is in need of protection.
- Government involvement in parenting is unknown in some cultures and some see this as interfering with traditional roles in resolving family disputes.
- Key principles Child Protection authorities operate under are:
 - Every child has a right to protection from harm.
 - If the Department is advised of concerns about children, it will assess the level of risk to children before deciding on type of intervention.
 - The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
 - Emphasis always on working towards children being cared for by their families.
 - Any Department decisions about child must respect and maintain ethnic, cultural and religious identity and values.

Parents' Rights

- When Child Protection authorities are told by anyone about suspected child abuse or neglect, they must investigate. Child Protection or the police can speak with the child in private and without the parents consent. They must tell the parents about this and give parents a chance to have a say. Officers must show their identification and say why they are there. The law says the identity of the person notifying must not be revealed, unless a court allows this.
- Parents, as well as their children, should get legal advice when Child Protection becomes involved. Often Child Protection will talk to the family to help improve care of the child at home where abuse has happened. Sometimes the authorities may try to get parents to make a care agreement. If abuse appears serious then Child Protection may want to take the child away – they must get a Court order to allow this. Parents are able to have their say and should get legal advice as soon as the authorities become involved.

- The authorities sometimes make mistakes. If decisions are made there are ways to appeal to a Tribunal or the courts. There are time limits to appeal and you should get legal advice urgently. You can also make complaints to the Department or the Government Minister in charge.

Legal Advice

- Where Child Protection authorities or the Police get involved with your family matters you should urgently see a lawyer. Everything you say and do will be noted by the authorities. You should also keep notes of all contact with authorities (what happened, what was said) and all documents about the case.

Building Relationships with Children

- Children are treasured in all societies. They are loved and raised successfully in all cultures. Some ways of raising children in Australia may be the same and some ways may be different compared to other countries.
- A widely accepted view of good parenting in Australia is to develop good relationships with your children, listen to their opinions/concerns, respect their need for privacy, provide boundaries and gradually negotiate broader freedoms, independence and self-reliance.
- Some ways of raising children in Australia are listed below.

Set Boundaries

- It is a parent's responsibility to set limits. These need to be well communicated and reasonable. Boundaries, or rules, give the child a sense of structure and safety. As the child begins to grow, they will want to make some of their own decisions. This is when the parent needs wisdom in providing guidance and at the same time, allowing the child more freedom. Children learn best when they understand what is acceptable in the family, what isn't, and what consequences will happen if they cross the boundaries.
- Once rules are set it is important to be strong and maintain them – be consistent.

Give Children your Time and Attention

- Developing a good relationship means getting to know your child better. Often this means doing something together and giving the child sufficient attention. This can be talking about what happened at school, playing a game of soccer together, helping them with their homework, listening while they tell you something – as long as the child feels that you are interested in them and enjoy being with them.
- Giving attention in Australia often means looking at the child while talking, listening to what they are saying and making an effort to understand what they are meaning and feeling. They will appreciate your guidance after you have shown them you care about how they feel and will listen to their concerns and opinions.

Encourage your Child

- It is the parent's responsibility to develop the child's sense of self-worth and ability. A child with high self-esteem will approach life with confidence and a positive attitude. This will enable them to be an effective member of society.
- Parents do this through encouragement. For example, if the child enjoys sport the parents may encourage and develop this interest by taking them to sport activities and praising the child's efforts. If the child enjoys learning, the parent may take the child to a library, or sit and read interesting books together. This tells the child that they are valued. The child then has a better chance of developing into a confident and happy person.
- Praise is most useful when it explains why it is being given and gives detail of the positive actions of the child. For example, "Thank you for doing the washing up. This has helped me out and the dishes were done really well".

School

- Parents must make sure their children are at school during term time. Sometimes children spend time away from school, often with friends, without parents knowing. If this happens, it is best if the parents try first to understand the reason for the teenager's missing school, and then decide on the consequences, plus make future plans for ensuring their attendance.
- Parents should keep in contact with the school even if the language may be difficult. Taking a friend along or a school support officer to interpret can be useful. A visit to the school with your child, to discuss things is also important.
- Teenagers may have a large amount of school work to do. Some youth need peace and quiet; others prefer to study with noise around them. It is the parents responsibility to provide a suitable study environment and equip them with pens, paper etc. Some students, especially in high school, may need a computer. Parents can often find computers for use at a local library or community centre if they don't have one at home.

Maintain Strong Male Relationships

- Maintaining a good relationship with a male figure (dad, uncle, grandfather) as well as the mother is very important to young people. The father role in the family is vital. Dad's need to make time to build relationships with their children. This can happen at family meetings, dinner time, watching TV together, playing soccer, going to the movies, fixing or making things, working together. A female teenager will feel special if her dad or other important male in her family increases her self-esteem. This will help her learn to have a respectful relationship with boys rather than seek their inappropriate attention.

AS YOUR CHILDREN GET OLDER.....

Have Family Meetings

- A good way to listen to your children is to have regular family meetings, for example, fortnightly. The family gathers together and each member is given an opportunity to talk about an issue that concerns them, or an idea. Each person is shown respect by all the members of the family listening to what they have to say without interruption. If other family members disagree, they

calmly state their own opinions without criticizing the other person, but only after the person has finished speaking.

- At these meetings, the parents have an opportunity to build a relationship with their children based on respect for them as individuals. After listening, the parents can choose to find a compromise that suits both the child and the parent, or they can use their parental authority to calmly and firmly, with an explanation, refuse permission. This way, each member's place in the family is given value, and each person feels of value.

Develop Child's Independence and Responsibility

- In Australia the child is encouraged to be independent according to their age and maturity. The parent's role is to teach the child how to take responsibility for their own lives.
- In Australia it is considered a sign of maturity if young people are taking some responsibility and learning how to make wise decisions. This will often depend on parents setting clear boundaries so their children can learn these lessons.
- During the teenage years, young people are preparing for adulthood. This can be a time of sharing opinions, interests, ideas, and feelings. It can be a time of parents building a more adult relationship with their child and discussing subjects rather than just telling them the parental point of view.
- Teenagers are forming their opinions, views and values. These may differ to those of the parents. By showing understanding of your teenager's need for more independence, listening to their views and then expressing your own opinions, you are building the relationship while also teaching them how to show respect for your family's views and others.
- Independence and freedom, however, require responsibility.
- As young people become more independent and want more freedom, trust becomes very important. Start by giving teenagers a small amount of responsibility and as they prove they are trustworthy, increase the amount. This includes events such as being home at an agreed time, doing what you've asked them to do, keeping up with their school grades, and respecting the family values while at home. If they show they aren't trustworthy, then privileges, such as watching TV or going out with friends, can be removed for a short time. Opportunities for proving their trustworthiness need to be given again and again until they have grown in maturity and responsibility.
- While independence is highly valued in Australia, dependence is natural, and family members still often rely on each other throughout their lives in varying ways. In a broader sense, we are all dependent on each other in our community, and on the natural environment.

Building Financial Independence

- Teenagers may still depend on parents financially and for the necessities of life such as food and shelter. However, it is during this time of preparing to be an adult that parents can start to expect their teenager to take more responsibility. For example, if the young person wants extra clothes, a mobile phone, or entertainment money, then parents may choose to request some form of 'work' in exchange. Perhaps they may ask the young person to mow the lawn in exchange for money for the movies. Or they may ask for some

money towards petrol if the young person has gained a driver's license and wants to borrow the car. This may mean that the young person has to find some work which teaches them the value of money and how to take responsibility for their finances. This is a form of parental guidance for youth.

Privacy

- People's personal belongings are considered to be private. This means that personal objects such as clothes, books and jewellery are for their use only. It is expected that other people will ask permission if they want to use these personal belongings. Diaries, journals, and mail are considered very private and not for others to look at.
- Privacy is very important to teenage children as they are learning to become independent. In Australia, this is accepted as part of the journey in becoming an adult. Adolescents want to keep some information private which makes them feel more like an adult. Unless the parent is concerned that they are keeping important information secret for the wrong reasons, it is appropriate to respect that they are becoming independent and not to ask them to tell you everything. Young people will talk to parents when they want to, not often when parents want them to!
- Privacy also means allowing the child time alone sometimes. This might be in their bedroom, away from the rest of the busy family life.
- Privacy also means respecting the child's need for privacy in matters such as getting dressed and showering. As the child gets older, they will often want to shield their body from the eyes of other people.

Friends

- During teenage years, friends become even more important and influential. Being included in a group of friends is a key need we all have. Your teenager may want to impress his/her friends more than they want to please you. This might mean wearing different clothes, going different places, even using different words. This can cause arguments between parents and youth. Parents need to calmly talk about their concerns without criticizing the person.
- Your teenager may want to spend more time with their friends than with the family. They may want to go to the shopping centre, movies, play soccer etc. If they have learnt to be responsible and make wise choices, this is an opportunity for them to experience some independence. Some parents encourage their children to invite friends to their house to talk, watch TV etc. This gives parents the opportunity to ensure their children are behaving appropriately.
- In Australia, many teenagers go to parties. As a parent, you need to ensure that these parties are safe and that there are other adults there. It is considered wise to ask your teenager for information about the party, and to gather information from other adults involved such as their friends' parents. Your teenager may not like you 'interfering' but sometimes parties end in fights with police being called, so a wise parent will put firm boundaries around these social events.

- Encouraging your child to participate in positive formal activities can provide valuable social links, a sense of purpose and belonging, and increased self-esteem.

Children often Adapt Quicker to the New Culture

- Children usually learn language and adapt to the new culture more quickly. This can cause problems between parents and children. Often children want their family to live like a mainstream Australian family. They may feel frustrated because they believe they understand more about Australian life than their parents. A parent's authority may be challenged. This can cause conflict. It can make parents feel disrespected and they may try to exert control over their children trying to regain their parental authority. Unfortunately, this can make the situation worse. The children have learnt that they can voice their opinion in Australia and may argue with the parents. If this disagreement is not resolved then many arguments may happen.

Youth Rights and Responsibilities

Age of Legal Responsibility

- Everyone must obey the law. The level of responsibility depends on your age. The law treats young people differently as they are more at risk because of their age and lack of experience.
- In the criminal justice system a child under 10 cannot be criminally responsible. A child 10 to 14 will only be charged by the authorities (usually the police) if they can prove the child understood the act was wrong.
- Criminal offences for children are dealt with in the Children's Court. Children's courts usually give lesser penalties than adult courts because of the age and lack of experience of the young person.
- Children are dealt with in the Children's Court up till 18 and then in adult courts. In Queensland the age is 17 - a person is treated as a child if they commit an offence when under 17 and are found guilty before they turn 18.

Rights require Responsibility

- In Australia you are officially an 'adult' after turning 18 but some freedoms are allowed at earlier times. The law has changed over time to gradually give greater rights and freedom to do things independently as the child gets older.
- Rights require responsibility. For example, you have a right to buy cigarettes at 18, but it may be unhealthy to start smoking. A right to drink alcohol may damage you and others if you drink to excess.
- You also have a responsibility to allow others to exercise their legal rights.

Parent – Child Relationship

- Parents have responsibilities to guide and care for their children, and rights to discipline reasonably, but not to abuse their children.
- Relationships between children and parents are complex, especially where there is conflict. Adolescence (teenage years) is often a time of more conflict, with children challenging parents' authority as they seek more independence. The older the child gets, the more the relationship needs to be negotiated.

Right to Protection from Abuse

- People have the right to live in safety, free from physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect.
- Laws have been made to try to protect children from abuse.
- The State can act to make sure children are protected from harm through Child Protection laws. It makes the welfare and best interests of a child most important.
- Australia has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and should therefore incorporate this international law into its domestic laws.

Leaving Home

- Generally parents are legal guardians until you turn 18. No law says you must stay at home until you are 18.
- Once 16 you will normally not be forced to return home as long as you have a safe place to go and can support yourself financially.
- In deciding whether to act, authorities consider the parents' attitude, the child's maturity, income and whether they are in a safe place.
- Centrelink benefits are usually only available once you turn 16, although in special cases they are available under 16.
- If you are under 16 the police and Child Protection authorities can investigate why you have left. If they think you need protection from harm or abuse they can make an application for a child protection order. This order will say where you should live.

Parents Need Care Also

- Parenting is hard work, and parents need to have care and support. Parents need to feel a sense of control over their lives. Rest is essential. Parents need to be able to cope with stress. Support can come from extended family and community networks. The home needs to be a place of safety and support as much as possible.

Partners' Roles

Family Roles

- In a new country, people may need to adjust to different family roles.
- Families can face many problems when coming to a new country where the rules and ways of doing things may be quite different. These issues can be made more difficult because of lack of employment, low income, or isolation in the new country or trauma from a refugee experience.

Equal

- In some cultures it may not be common that male and female have an equal say.
- In some groups the male/ father figure has the dominant position and is the main authority figure within the household.

- In Australia there is wide acceptance that within marriage or defacto relationships, men and women should be equal and have the same rights.

Different

- Men and women have equal rights to have their own separate hobbies and interests, friends, work and study.

Sharing

- Both partners are expected to share in the care and parenting of children.

Agreed Roles

- A family can agree to whatever roles each family member should have, so long as it does not break any laws.

Respect

- A good relationship will always have agreed rules and standards of behavior based on respect and conflict is solved through negotiation. Even if one person has the final say, there will be discussion beforehand.
- Unhealthy relationships have a significant degree of control by one person over another, to the first person's advantage.
- It is illegal to discriminate against someone because of their gender, sexual orientation, race or religion.

Conflict between Partners

Conflict

- Conflict happens in all relationships; however refugees face many added pressures in a new country.
- Changed family dynamics can create tension in the family. For example a wife may become an income provider. It may not be culturally acceptable for a man to undertake domestic chores, even when the wife is working full time. The wife may also feel stressed that she is not fully taking care of what were her motherly domestic and childcare obligations. The man, who previously was the unquestioned head of the household, begins to feel inferior as the chain of command is broken and respect is lost. Changed roles and activities may make the man think his wife is deserting home by going out and mixing with others. These types of issues can lead to frustration and conflict, and sometimes violence.

Family/Domestic Violence

- Family violence is unacceptable and in Australia the law will act strongly against abuse so as to protect people.
- Family violence occurs to some extent in all countries. In Australia it occurs in all geographic areas and in all socioeconomic and cultural groups.
- Where there is violence it is mainly by men against women.
- In Australia a spouse can leave the relationship where violence happens. If for example, a husband abuses his wife she can get police protection,

a court order stopping the partner going near her and can receive income support and shelter funded by the Government.

Police Business

- In Australia “family violence is police business, not family business”. Police will become involved in cases where there is family violence.
- These laws are made because a person should not have to stay in a dangerous situation where their safety is at risk. In the past the laws did not protect women as much but this has changed.

Types of Abuse

- There are several types of abuse that can occur in the family:
 - Physical abuse – direct body assaults, weapons, dangerous driving, property destruction, assault of children, locking out of the house.
 - Sexual abuse – any form of forced sexual activity or sexual shaming (i.e. sexual activity without consent, causing pain during sex, assaulting genitals, coercive sex without protection, making victim perform sexual acts unwillingly, using sexually degrading insults).
 - Emotional abuse – blaming the victim for all relationship problems, constantly comparing the victim to others to undermine self-esteem and self-worth, using silence and ignoring.
 - Verbal abuse – continual ‘put-downs’ and humiliation (privately or in front of others) about intelligence, body image and capacity as parent or spouse.
 - Social abuse – isolation from family and friends through techniques such as ongoing rudeness to family and friends, moving to locations where the victims knows nobody, and forbidding or physically preventing victim from going out and meeting people.
 - Economic abuse – complete control of all monies, no access to bank accounts, providing only an inadequate ‘allowance’.
 - Spiritual abuse – denying access to ceremonies, land or family, preventing religious observance, forcing to do things against religious beliefs, being rude about religious background.

Services Available

- There are services available to give advice to people who are violent or affected by violence. See ‘Key Contacts’ list.
- As men are more likely to be violent than women there are women’s shelters available for women to escape from violent situations.
- Centrelink can assist with emergency funding when someone has to leave home because of violence.

Court Orders

- Courts can make domestic violence orders to provide protection to the person against further domestic violence.
- For the Court to grant a domestic violence order, a person must fear for their safety and there must be a chance that the violence will happen again.

- Courts can make different orders such as: the family stays together but the abuser must be of good behaviour; that counselling should be tried; or that the abuser must leave the home.
- It is a criminal offence to breach such a Court order.

Consent

- In marriage, your partner cannot force you to have sex. It is against the law to have sex with a person without their consent.

Peace

- Even if relationships break down this can be done peacefully. Disputes can be managed peacefully and in many cases relationships can be rebuilt. See section on 'Building Relationships'.

Relationship Breakdown

- The best way to deal with a marriage or other relationship in crisis is to try and work the problems out and to save the relationship if it is possible and safe.

Divorce

- Australian law and culture allows men and women to freely enter into marriage relationships but also to leave the relationship when it has broken down.
- A marriage remains ongoing unless one party dies or the marriage is ended by a court. A religious or customary divorce is not required nor legally recognized.
- Men and women have equal rights to apply for a divorce.
- Couples can get a divorce even if they weren't married in Australia.
- Divorce can be started if either party is a citizen; or has been resident for the 12 months before the start of the court divorce process.
- Divorce is "no fault" – no one has to prove the other spouse caused the marriage to breakdown. Before 1975 someone's fault had to be shown before a court would grant a divorce.
- The law has only one requirement for divorce: separation for one year. This shows the marriage has broken down "irretrievably".

Why Couples Separate

- There is a high rate of separation and marriage breakdown in Australia.
- Some of the main reasons people divorce or separate in Australia:
 - Violence by one partner against the other.
 - Financial or emotional problems.
 - Poor communication and lack of support.
 - Disagreement about gender roles eg: who looks after the children and discipline, runs the house, goes to work/study, freedom to have own friends, interests.

- Partners may consider it's best for the children and each other to part if parents are unhappy together.
- Greater emphasis on individual needs of husband/wife being satisfied as well as family needs.

Counselling

- Many people want to try to keep their families together and go to counselling for help. Where there is separation, counselling can also help people agree on future plans about the children and property.
- Family counselling helps people with relationship difficulties better manage the personal or interpersonal issues to do with children and family during marriage, separation and divorce. Family counselling may be about hurt feelings, problems between you and your partner or another person in the family, new living arrangements and issues relating to the care of your children and financial adjustments.
- Services are available in Australia to assist couples trying to save their marriage or relationship.
- There are Family Relationship Centres to help people strengthen their relationships, settle disputes and guide them through separation and divorce.
- Family dispute resolution can be provided by Family Relationship Centres, Legal Aid offices, community organisations, and individuals such as lawyers, social workers or psychologists. All family dispute resolution providers must be registered and must meet appropriate standards of training, experience and suitability. If you are in a remote place, family dispute resolution can be accessed via telephone.

Mandatory Counselling

- The law requires couples to go to counselling before divorce proceeds where there are children under 18, unless there are risks of violence or undue pressure at that counselling. This is to try to settle disputes and allocate possessions and arrangements with children without going to court, which can be expensive and time-consuming. Counselling before a couple can divorce is also mandatory for couples married two years or less, unless it is unsafe to have that counselling. Counselling is usually done through Family Relationship Centres.
- You are not required to attend family dispute resolution:
 - where you are applying for consent orders
 - where you are responding to an application
 - where the matter is urgent
 - if the court is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds to believe that:
 - there has been family violence or child abuse by a party
 - there is a risk of violence by a party, or
 - there is a risk of child abuse if there were to be a delay

- where a party is unable to participate effectively (for example, they are too far from a family dispute resolution provider or because of an incapacity of some kind), or
- where a person has contravened and shown a serious disregard for a court order made in the last 12 months.

Separation and Children

- Men and women have equal rights and responsibilities after separation regarding children and decisions should be based on the “best interests of the children”.
- Family laws in Australia have a strong focus on ensuring what is ‘in the best interests’ of individual children. The law puts the rights of the child as the highest priority because they are young and less able to protect themselves. The law does, however, also focus on the rights of parents to be involved with their children and their responsibilities to care for them.
- Under the Family Law Act, if parents separate:
 - Proper arrangements must be made for care of children
 - Limited or supervised contact of children by one parent can be decided where a parent has been violent
 - Lawyer can be appointed to assist children to argue their needs
- The family law system is trying to move away from people going to court and more towards resolving disputes through mediation.

Shared Parenting

- Children have the right to know both parents. The law aims to give both parents equal responsibility and equal roles in decision-making where this is in the child’s best interests. It does not necessarily mean spending equal time with children. This applies only when it is safe to do so - so as to protect against violence or child abuse.

Child Support

- Both parents have legal responsibilities to contribute to the support of their children. If they separate there is a government Child Support Scheme that helps make sure separated parents make payments for the benefit of their children. Parents can sometimes agree the payments themselves without going to the Child Support Agency.

Building Relationships

Agree your Roles

- It is best that partners talk and agree about what their roles are in their relationship and in the family. A good relationship will always have agreed roles based on respect.

Show your Love

- Practice actions that show you care. Show affection and interest.
- Spend time together. Praise achievements. Encourage efforts. Do things you enjoy doing together.

Conflict

- Conflict happens in every relationship.
- Conflict is best solved through patience and negotiation.

Right Time to Talk

- When problems arise, create a calm space and set aside enough time to talk things over.
- Let the person know it's OK to discuss issues with you.
- Explain what your concerns are and why you have them.
- Try to find out what is behind the behaviour – be patient – it may take a long time for feelings to settle before you can really talk and look at the problem together. Many disputes have an underlying problem. Search for the real problem.

Good Communication

- Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slower to become angry.
- Communicate openly – listen and keep checking what you understand is being said to you.
- Remember it isn't always easy to understand or express our feelings well or know what someone else is feeling.
- Be prepared to admit your mistakes and limitations.
- Be willing to compromise.
- Accept the differences between yourselves.
- Be clear and honest about your own fears if you can.
- Apologize when you have to.

Deal with Anger

- Everyone gets angry. Having wisdom means having control over your anger.
- If your anger gets too much, don't be violent – go for a walk, run, or do some other physical exercise. Talk to friends or other helpers. Pray or meditate. Take long, slow, deep breaths or beat up a pillow.
- Practice patience – you can't always get what you want.
- Use anger positively. See it as an opportunity to reflect deeply about why you were angry and how you dealt with it, so you can understand yourself and your situation better and grow from the experience.

Explore Solutions

- Conflict is solved through negotiation.
- Listen to the other person's choices as well as say your own. Talk about what each will mean.
- Try to agree on the choice that's most likely to work and fits with your values.
- Try the choice and check it out after some time.

Seek Help from Others

- Seek help from other trusted family or friends.
- Seek help from elders in the community or other significant people religious or community members, or specific community workers/ organizations.
- Go to counselling services and relationship professionals. In Australia there are mediation services which can help resolve disputes.
- It may be helpful to seek to build up structures and supports through community organizations and groups to try to manage disputes.

Respect Culture and Law

- Where you live now may be a very different place to where you have come from. Laws and customs may be different in Australia.
- Your original culture is a strong part of your identity which can be proudly maintained, as long as it doesn't break Australian law.



frequently asked questions

Marriage

Are marriage practices different in different countries?

The principles about marriage are common among most groups but marriage practices may differ in various places.

Marriage practices in some places differ between urban and country areas. Some practices may be customary - arising from clan or tribal practices. There may be differences about the roles of religious ceremony and the State and where the marriage vows take place.

In Australia marriage ceremonies can take different forms but they must include the core requirements governed by the federal Marriage Act 1961. The marriage celebrant can be a religious or non-religious person but must be registered under law.

Can my family decide who I should marry?

In many places, consent of the family to a marriage is very important. It is the families as much as the individuals that are seen as being joined together. A marriage expands the family. It becomes the social glue which helps keep the family and the community together. Families have strong views on who may be acceptable and negotiations with the other family may be required about who should marry.

In Australia, marriage is the decision of the marriage partners. While family acceptance is desirable and welcomed, it is not required by the law. The 'marriage age' is 18 and the law treats people as adults at that age. In very exceptional cases, a court can allow a person aged 16-18 to marry and the court will normally require the parent's consent.

Are underage overseas marriages legal in Australia?

Overseas marriages are valid in Australia if the marriage was recognised as legal under the law of that overseas country at the time the marriage took place.

Australia will not recognise overseas marriages:

- where one of the parties was already married to someone else;
- where the parties are too closely related under Australian law (including relationships traced through adoption) i.e. either as ancestor and descendant, or as brother and sister (including half-brother and half-sister);

- where parties to the marriage are both of the same sex;
- where the consent of one of the parties was not a real consent due to fraud, mistake, duress or mental incapacity;
- where a person's overseas divorce is not recognised in Australia.

If one or both of the parties lived in Australia at the time of the overseas marriage, both the husband and wife must have been 18 or over. In other cases, under-age marriages will be recognised except if either party is under 16. However if the overseas country allowed an under 16 marriage and the parties are now over 16 the marriage will be recognised (if nothing else above made the marriage invalid, e.g. no consent etc.).

There is no requirement to register in Australia a marriage which takes place overseas.

In our culture the man is head of the family.

Is this different in Australia?

Male and female roles may be very different in a new country. In many cultures, males have had more power and rights than women. The male is often traditionally seen as breadwinner, warrior and protector. Girls are traditionally brought up as house keepers and mothers. In some places the woman becomes a part of the husband's family upon marriage. However women may also have an honoured and vital place in the family, be given respect and be able to have their say.

In Australia the laws and culture previously favoured men much more. Since the mid-20th century there has been an increase in women's independence, economic opportunities and changes in laws have given women more protection and opportunity. It was only in 1969 in Australia that equal pay was accepted in the law for women for equal work. In 1975 the Racial Discrimination Act was passed. In 1975 the Family Law Act allowed 'no-fault' divorce. In 1982 the Sex Discrimination Act made it unlawful to treat people unfairly because of sex/gender.

These legal and cultural changes may not happen in some other more traditional countries.

Children

How can we discipline children under the Australian system if we cannot smack them?

Children are loved and treasured in all cultures. The traditional practice in many places is to strongly emphasize the need for children to listen and pay respect to their parents and elders. Strong physical punishment is often seen as a necessary part of discipline.

In Australia hitting children is considered negatively. Parents have legal responsibilities to guide and care for their children and it is unlawful to abuse them physically or emotionally. The law in most States allows parents to use some 'reasonable force' but any discipline that causes injury is unlawful. Children have rights to be cared for without abuse or neglect.

Discipline is easier when understanding and respect is built with children rather than fear of physical punishment. It is best not to base discipline on hitting, shaking or other force as it can lead to injury. It is safer to use other methods of discipline such as setting consistent, firm and fair guidelines, withdrawing privileges, using 'time out' etc.

Some research indicates that harsh physical and verbal discipline of children may be linked to child behaviour problems. High levels of 'positive parenting' (parental warmth, acceptance, consistency, monitoring, reasoning) may moderate this. The research is unclear as to whether this applies across all ethnic groups.

The main things to know about Australian law and the family are:

1. Parents have responsibilities to care for their children
2. Everyone, including children, has individual rights
3. Violence in the family is not OK.

Why do police get involved when parents discipline their children?

The criminal law across Australia will punish a parent if they use unreasonable force to discipline their children. Any physical discipline which causes injury is against the law and police and child protection authorities will get involved. Some other countries outlaw any sort of physical punishment of children.

Laws have been made to protect children where they may be harmed by parents or others. Most parents love and care for their children as best they can and it is only a small number who abuse their children. However the laws have been made very strong to try to protect children and in Australia the Government may step in if there is just a suspicion that abuse is happening. In some cases this suspicion is wrong, but in some cases it is correct.

The law also gives financial support to children and caregivers where there is abuse to enable the child to live away from home to escape the abuse.

If the Bible says we can discipline our children with force, does this mean we can hit them?

Corporal or physical punishment is recommended in the Old Testament Bible. This is mainly in Proverbs which outlines Solomon's way of parenting. However his son (Rehoboam) turned out to be a cruel and hated ruler after Solomon's death. This could be interpreted as showing that harsh physical punishment has a very negative effect on children. The New Testament talks of discipline of children, but not of physical punishment.

Managing children is a family matter in our culture.

Why does the government here get involved?

Child protection authorities in each State get massive numbers of notifications of suspected child abuse or neglect. The authorities are responsible for protecting children and must get involved if they are told that someone thinks a child is at risk of harm.

Parents who abuse their children physically, emotionally or sexually, or do not protect them from harm, may be investigated by government child protection authorities. In some cases this may also lead to criminal charges.

Can people other than parents discipline children?

Traditionally, children are part of an extended family and community. If they are seen to be misbehaving this reflects badly on the family. In some places the family and even respected community members have rights to discipline the children.

In Australia, it is usually only the parents that discipline their children. Teachers can also give out discipline in school, though not physical punishment.

What control do the police have over the behaviour of children?

If police are contacted about possible crimes they have a duty to investigate. Police can charge children if they break the law but there are age limits as to when a child can be criminally responsible. The police try to work with communities and deal with children's issues sensitively.

Does Australian law allow children 'too much freedom'?

It is often said that parents are losing control of their children:

"Our children say that being "free" means that they can do whatever they like and they don't need to follow rules".

"What children watch on TV /internet and what they wear is corrupting them – parents want to put limits on this. It's hard for parents to enforce our customs."

"The way children dress and behave as a reflection on their parents. If they dress or behave badly this causes embarrassment to the family".

Families can face many problems, especially when coming to a new country where the rules and ways of doing things may be quite different. These issues can be made more difficult because of trauma, lack of employment, low income and isolation in the new country.

Under the law, freedom works both ways. Not only do children have individual legal rights but they also must learn responsibility. Under the law they should obey their parents because parents have the legal right and responsibility to shelter, care for and guide their children. Children have responsibilities to follow the law. If they break a criminal law they can be charged by police once they reach the age of criminal responsibility. Police do not try to get involved with young children unless there is some suspicion of abuse.

In Australia you are officially an 'adult' after turning 18 but there are some rights the law allows at earlier ages. The law has changed over time to gradually give greater rights and freedom as the child gets older.

Relationships between all parents and children are complex. The law is usually not the best way to solve family conflict. This requires a long process of building understanding, trust and respect. Children gain maturity with age and experience and need to be guided and shown boundaries of proper behaviour.

Parents still have responsibility to provide a home for teenage children even when they break family rules. Adolescence in many families is often a time of challenging parents authority and seeking more independence. A widely accepted view of good parenting in Australia is to develop strong relationships with teenage children, respect their need for privacy, allow them a reasonable degree of independence and listen to their opinions and concerns. The aim is to build people who can think and act for themselves in a responsible and caring way as independent individuals.

Spouses / Partners

If our culture allows us to discipline our wives physically, can this continue in Australia?

In all families and groups, conflicts occur. The family is valued and treasured in all societies and when disputes happen there is a great effort to try to restore the relationships.

In some places it may be acceptable for the male to use physical force to correct his wife. Physical violence is unacceptable and in Australia the law will move strongly against abuse so as to protect people. Everyone has a right to safety. People from overseas need to be aware that police will become involved in cases where there is family violence.

There is still significant violence by men against women in Australia. The way Australian law deals with these conflicts is to give power to police, courts and government departments, rather than to families or community members, to try to protect women and children from violence. Community services are available to help support people in times of conflict.

Can you leave your partner if there is violence?

Family violence laws are made because a person should not have to stay in a dangerous situation where their safety is at risk.

In Australia a spouse can leave the relationship where violence happens. If for example, a husband abuses his wife, she can get police protection, a court order stopping the partner going near her and can receive income support and shelter funded by the Government. If a wife abuses her husband, he also can seek a court order.

Are men more violent?

Family violence occurs to some extent in all countries and in the vast majority of cases this is by men against women.

In the past in Australia the laws did not protect women but this has changed. There are now laws against family violence. Government provides for women's shelters where the relationship becomes violent and provides social security to support women economically during these times. This is seen by some men as encouraging family breakdown; however the safety of women and children is the primary issue. The rights of the individual are highly regarded in Australia.

Does the law make it too easy to divorce? Should the law make the family try to stay together even where there are problems?

Australian law and culture allows men and women to freely enter into marriage relationships but also to leave the relationship when it has broken down.

In Australia it used to be that to get a divorce one partner had to prove the other was at fault. Now the law allows 'no fault' divorce. You only have to prove that the marriage has broken down and the parties have been separate and apart for at least 12 months.

There is a high rate of divorce in Australia but the law is not made to deliberately break up families. Australian family law attempts to treat people in a marriage as equals and tries to ensure that everyone's individual rights are respected. The law assumes that adults can make their own decisions and if there is abuse or other problems, the law allows an individual to leave the marriage.

The law requires counselling before breakdown of marriage where there are children under 18, unless it is unsafe to have that counselling. Counselling before a couple can divorce is mandatory for couples married two years or less, unless it is unsafe to have that counselling. Counselling is usually done through Family Relationship Centres.

What if one partner does not want a divorce?

If the marriage breaks down to a point where it cannot continue the partners have equal rights to seek a divorce through the Family Court. The law no longer makes it difficult to divorce by requiring proof that someone was at fault. The court attempts to ensure that the best interests of children are the most important consideration in family breakdowns. The law also considers the rights and responsibilities of mothers and fathers.

There are many services that help women but what about the men?

There are groups and services available to help men with relationship problems. They also deal with how to redirect anger and prevent domestic violence. There are also support groups for men, which aim to help to deal with different roles a man/father/husband/son has in Australia.

Can a person remarry without getting a divorce?

A divorce must take place before a person can remarry. However a husband and wife can separate and live apart without being divorced. They can live in defacto relationships rather than getting married. These are marriage-type relationships which are recognized by the law though there is no formal marriage ceremony.

In our culture, family disputes are resolved within the community. Can this happen in Australia?

In many traditions, disputes are usually seen as matters to be resolved within the family. The family are usually the closest support and know the married

couple and children better than people outside the family. Attempting to resolve issues this way also keeps the problems confidential and the family name is not shamed. Any dispute affects the whole extended family and resolving the dispute will help repair the whole family which then helps restore peace in the community.

In some cultures physical abuse by a married man may lead to the wife going to the husband's relatives to try to resolve the problems. The husband may be counselled or in some cases may even be physically disciplined by his family. Sometimes the matter may not be resolved. In the most serious cases elders or police or other authority structures may become involved or the wife may flee back to her parent's family. Culturally it is acceptable in some places for neighbours to try to diffuse conflict situations.

In all societies, family violence is a major problem. In Australia strong laws have been made to try to limit this. Family violence here is police business. Police have a duty to protect the community and to pressure a person not to take a case to police could be dangerous and unlawful. Services are available in Australia to help manage conflict and seek safety.

The process of adapting to the new culture takes time. Family breakdown is a very difficult time but this does not excuse violence and the need for safety and physical protection. There can be various layers of family and community action and response in conflict situations. It may be an advantage to build stronger local networks to further support families in conflict, however any strategy would need to ensure fairness and safety for all individuals and comply with Australian laws.



role plays

Role Play - Marriage

PORTRAYING AN ENGAGEMENT AND MARRIAGE

Man, Woman, Marriage Celebrant

Man: "Honey, we have been going out together for a long time now and I love you very much"

Woman: "And I love you too, darling"

Man gets down on one knee

Woman gasps and they hold hands

Man: "My love, will you marry me?"

Woman: "Oh darling, of course I will"

Man puts ring on woman's finger. Man and woman hug, very excited.

Marriage celebrant (someone from the audience?) stands at one end of the room. Husband and wife walk down the aisle together. (Hum "da dum da dum etc")

Marriage celebrant: "Welcome everybody; we are here to marry this man and this woman. Do you take this woman to be your wife?"

Man: "I do"

Marriage celebrant: "Do you take this man to be your husband?"

Woman: "I do"

Man puts ring on wife.

Marriage celebrant: "I now pronounce you husband and wife, you may kiss the bride"

Man and woman hug and pretend to kiss.

Role Play - Parent's Rights and Responsibilities

PORTRAYING NEED TO CARE AND PROTECT CHILDREN

Man, Woman, Narrator

Woman is pregnant (rolled-up jumper under shirt).

Narrator: "when a man and woman get married, they often start a family. The woman gets pregnant and they have a baby"

Woman has baby and holds baby/jumper

Woman and man both lean over and pat baby, happy to have baby.

Man holds baby, baby starts crying and man gets frustrated, shaking the baby.

Woman grabs baby back and turns her back on her husband.

Narrator: "Parents must care for their children, they must feed and cloth it, keep it safe and love it. They must not hurt the baby. Shaking a young child can do serious harm to the child."

Role Play - Youth Rights and Responsibilities

PORTRAYING LACK OF DIALOGUE AND CONFLICT BETWEEN PARENT AND TEENAGER

Person, father or mother

Young Person: "Dad/Mum I love you"

Parent: "I love you too honey, what do you want?"

Young Person: "Well . . . there is this party tonight and I really want to go"

Parent: "I am sorry but you are not going to a party, you haven't even cleaned your room"

Young Person: "Awwwwwe Dad/Mum, everyone is going. I'll be soooo uncool if I don't go, please, please, please. I'll clean my room and even do extra chores."

Parent: "I said no! That is it"

Young Person: "Come on Dad/Mum pleeeeeeeeeeeeeeease"

Parent: "I said no – now stop complaining and go do your homework"

Young Person: "I've already done it, but what do you care. You don't love me"

Young Person stomps off to their bedroom. Young Person looks around then mimes sneaking out of the window. Parent comes in to check on them as young person is sneaking back in the window.

Parent: "Where have you been? You've disobeyed me and now you're grounded for 2 weeks."

Young Person: "You don't ever talk to me. You just say 'no' all the time and don't try to see things my way a little bit. Give me a chance and I'll show you can trust me."

Role Play - Partner's Roles

PORTRAYING HOW MALE AND FEMALE ROLES CAN BE FLEXIBLE AND POSITIVE.

Man, Woman

Husband (to audience): "We are married now and I have just finished a long day at work."

Wife (to audience): "And I have also been at work and now I am home cooking the dinner."

Husband comes driving home from work – the car is making unhealthy noises.

Husband comes inside, slams the door closed and huffs into the kitchen.

Wife is stirring a pot in the kitchen and adding ingredients to the pot.

Wife: "Honey is that you? How was your day? The car sounds terrible."

Husband (stressed out): "I have had a long day and the stupid car is a mess again and I am no good at fixing cars, I just don't know what is wrong with it."

Wife: "Now darling . . . you know how good I am at fixing cars, and you are sooo good at cooking. Why don't you stay here and finish off the dinner while I go out and look at the car."

Husband: "Thank you, love, sounds good"

Husband starts fixing the dinner.

Wife goes outside and mimes fixing the car. Turns the engine on and car roars to life

"Vroom vroom"

Wife comes back inside

Wife: "Car is all fixed darling, how is dinner coming along"

Husband: "All finished, taste this" **Husband gives wife a spoonful to taste.**

Wife: "Delicious!"

Role Play - Conflict Between Partners

PORTRAYING STRESS, CONFLICT AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BETWEEN PARTNERS.

Man, Woman

Man watching TV, woman cooking, cleaning, running after the kids.

Woman goes up to husband: "Look here you lazy man, I am cooking, cleaning and running after the kids, I need some help. Get off your lazy bottom and give me a hand"

Man: "I've had a hard day at work. I need to rest. Get out of my way woman, I am watching the game"

Woman (shouting): "That's right, watch TV while I run around doing everything to keep this family together. I've worked hard all day too"

Man (shouting): "Always moaning and nagging, you can't give me a moment's peace; I work hard for this family"

Woman: "You don't work nearly as hard as me"

Man stand up: "What did you say?"

Woman: "I said you are useless"

Man pretend slaps woman and she falls down crying.

Role Play - Building Relationships

PORTRAYING CONSTRUCTIVE WAY TO DEAL WITH STRESS AND CONFLICT

Man, Woman

Man watching TV, woman cooking, cleaning, running after the kids.

Woman goes up to husband: "Honey, I know you are watching the game, but I have to finish the cooking and the cleaning and the kids are getting under my feet. Can you please give me some help here?"

Man: "Oh darling, I am tired and want to watch the TV but we should share the load and help each other out. I'll take the kids outside and we can kick around the football and I'll vacuum the floors later."

Woman: "Oh that would be wonderful"

Man and woman hug and get up to do respective chores.

education workshop **evaluation survey**

Topic:

Location:

Date:

Male **Female** **Under 25** **Over 25**


1. Did you find the information in the workshop useful?

No.	a little	yes	very
			

2. Did the workshop help you to have a better understanding of how law works in Australia?

No.	a little	yes	very
			

3. Was the information presented clear and easy to understand?

No.	a little	yes	very
			

4. Any other comments?

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Thank you.