

Emotional Abuse and Domestic Violence Awareness Session

The NSW Police Force & India Club together held a special information session on emotional abuse and domestic violence awareness in the Hills district. The idea emerged in a meeting with Police Superintendent Philip Flogal that India club host this forum, realising a need on the issue. Additionally to raise awareness in the community and be equipped to be able to help friends and neighbours in an appropriate and meaningful manner, if need be.

This vital information session was aimed at welfare of the community & to build confidence that help is at hand and it is OK to talk about it. The idea took off from there.

As India club is open to all multicultural communities, we extended the invitation to all multicultural groups to attend the Information Session. We believe joining hands with diverse groups enriches each other's lives by sharing each other's customs & culture and invited diverse multicultural groups to join Indian community forum and address together, issues of common interest like this one.

India Club welcomed all attendees including the guests - Superintendent Mr. Philip Flogel, the Hon Federal MP Philip Ruddock, State MP David Elliott, The Hills Shire Mayor Greg Burnett, Deputy Mayor Michelle Byrne, The Hon. Alan Cadman, Councillor Tony Hayes, Mrs. Marisa Clarke, St Michael Care Coordinator Carole Harding & Members of NSW Police Force. The IC president also extended warm welcome to members of other Indian organisations and multicultural groups who came to the session.

The Media- Hills Shire Times, Hindi Gaurav, Indian link, Darpan Radio, Monika Geet Maala, Indian Down Under & SBS (Punjabi) Radio all promoted the event. Deputy Mayor Michelle Byrne provided additional support and publicity & Mrs. Marisa Clarke accorded her support and encouragement. IC member Jyoti passionately promoted this seminar and her contribution to the seminar was very substantial.

In the audience, there were Social workers from Migrant Resource Centres and members of various other groups including Bahai Group, from Women & DV Court Advocacy, psychologists, lawyers, people who are quietly doing counselling, members of various multicultural groups and of course India Club members.

Superintendent Flogel officially opened the Forum. Mr. Ruddock, David Elliott, and Greg Burnett all conveyed their thoughtful message encouraging people to speak up and get help.

The Topics covered:

- *DV Awareness - Jyoti*
- *Ensuring the Safety of Victims of Domestic and Family Violence - Senior Constable Nathan Corbett - NSW Police, Domestic and Family Violence Team*
- *Youth Voice - Divya Dhingra, IC member*
- *There's always support - Carol Harding - St Michaels Family Centre*
- *Socio-cultural aspect - Shobha Yadav Counselling Psychologist, IC member*
- *The Legal Process - Senior Constable Melissa Sedger, NSW Police*
- *Questions answered Panel - Senior Constable Nathan Corbett, Senior Constable Janine Elliot, Carol Harding - St Michaels Family Centre, Shobha Yadav*

After the presentation Indian dinner was served. The dinner was sponsored by enthused IC member Jyoti, owner of Castle Tower Subway. Ajay Raj of Maya da Dhaba catered the food. NSW Police force organised the hall tea coffee and biscuits.

The feedback is pouring and very positive; that it is the first seminar where such relevant information was given. The topics and the information given were meaningful. The question answer session further clarified the concerns raised. Presenters and the guests were empowering, the audience attentive and the session was conducted gracefully and in orderly manner. Presence of all the guests, including Parliamentarians, Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Castle Hill Police Superintendent and members of the police force, was appreciated that they care and the issue is important to them. Many complimented that it was good to meet approachable, interactive and happy police officers.

Some of the MRC members have asked to replicate this information seminar in their area. It has also been suggested that there should be a follow up seminar. We are organising a meeting to discuss the next step and may be a support group.

Shubha Kumar
President, India Club