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# Manicures and massages with a message

By Sophie Malcolm

## Offer a manicure and they will come.

That's the philosophy behind a special pampering day, with a very important message.

This week, women from the Robinvale community gathered for the 91st Sisters Day Out.

Antoinette Braybrook is the Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service of Victoria, which organised the event.

She says the "wellbeing workshop" is designed to provide a "safe space" to talk about family violence.

"Pampering is our hook, so there's hairdressing, massage, manicures, reflexology and that's the hook that brings the women in, and then we all gather together in this safe space, to talk about family violence in our communities," she says.

"Nationally, Aboriginal women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised for violent assault, and ten times more likely to die as a result of family violence, so this is a really really big issue.

"I also know a high percentage of Aboriginal children in out of home care are there because of family violence.

"Family violence is tearing our families apart- it means that we are losing our culture, we are losing our identity."

Antoinette says the FVPLS uses the opportunity to educate women about things like intervention and child protection orders, as well as legal rights and services.

Ada Peterson, from Mallee District Aboriginal Services, says the focus of workshops like this is shifting towards younger women and teenagers.

"It's teaching these young women that it's okay to say no, and if you're in a relationship that's not working, it's best to move on and not stay with that person," Ada says.

"It's building their self esteem, also building their morale up with them, but for them, having the right to say no or to move onto an area where they feel much more comfortable.

"For me, it's about generational change...it's about making those generational changes with the young ones, the next lot of kids who are coming through.

"It's one step closer to closing the gap."

Aunty Rose Kirby, from Robinvale, is part of a family violence action group and says attitudes towards the issue have changed.

"It's really changed a lot over the last few years, I think because more people are aware of it and especially the services that are available." she says.

"Before, no one knew where to turn to. But myself, being involved with domestic violence, I'd like to know all about these services so I can guide these young people, or anyone that needs help, to where they can get help.

"I hope the message gets out...don't be frightened to come forward, there's always help available."



Manicures in process at the Sisters Day Out in Robinvale ( Sophie Malcolm - ABC Local )

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