



'It's not OK' Campaign Community Evaluation Project

CASE STUDY 5: OHAKUNE

The wider Mt Ruapehu area, including Waimarino, Ohakune, Raetihi and Waiouru, has not had a longstanding presence of family violence intervention. Rather, participants characterised historical non-violence interventions as recent and siloed, drawing attention to the discrete existence of the Work and Income Family Violence Coordinator, individual efforts of the New Zealand Police and Corrections and, more recently in 2011, the first local White Ribbon Campaign.

Prior to 2011 there was no coordinated interagency response... rather there were discrete agency responses. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

Prior to the 'It's not OK' Campaign, participants categorised the area, and in particular Ohakune, as having a high level of community violence. This occurred in schools, workplaces and manifested as family violence.

Ohakune had a very high level of family violence and bullying in the schools, violence in the workforce, in the pulp mill. (Ohakune, Champion)

INTERVENTIONS

Ohakune's 'It's not OK' Campaign interventions developed over a three-year period. Beginning in 2011, the Campaign focused on raising awareness and developing linkages with key community stakeholders. Awareness-related interventions included media Campaigns (local newspaper, radio and newsletters), posters, billboards and community events.

We simultaneously launched billboards and had workshops on how to respond to family violence. We had whānau events which were really special. It wasn't just about getting whānau together it was about being role models for positive parenting and whānau relationships. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

Key to the success of the Campaign was the identification and training of a diverse range of non-violence community champions, 90 per cent of whom were portrayed in a local billboard Campaign. The champions were provided with initial non-violence related training and, for the first year met every two weeks. Thereafter, they met monthly to share experiences and provide peer support. These champions were selected to reflect a range of ethnicities and ages. Specific target sub-communities included:

- schools;
- rugby players;
- local hairdressers; and,
- local business owners.

In addition, linkages with employers and teachers were developed and attempts were made to link existing services to achieve a collaborative and shared approach to family violence.

We tried to pull other services together. We met with teachers and the Principal to make sure they were getting the support that they needed. Until then the agencies and services worked alone, in isolation. By collaborating people stopped falling through the cracks. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

The following specific Campaign related interventions were developed and implemented in the community.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

Awareness raising – awareness raising occurred through the use of ‘It’s not OK’ branding, billboards (portraying local community representatives), media campaigns (Facebook, local newspaper, radio and newsletters), family / *whānau* events / fun days, logos on sporting uniforms and sporting merchandise and resources.

On our billboard were unborn babies, infants, toddlers, youth, parents and grandparents and the reason for that was that violence affects everyone in the mills. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

Sharing stories of change – Vic Tamati presented his story of change at the local high school. These presentations were regarded as transformational and resulted in a number of students identifying with Vic Tamati and taking a non-violence pledge and / or seeking assistance. Further, Vic Tamati’s presentation was reported to have galvanised the school’s commitment to non-violence.

Community champions – a central component of the Ohakune Campaign was the identification, training and promotion of diverse community champions. Champions were identified to reflect the diverse nature of Ohakune’s communities. Initially, champions were promoted through billboards but this extended to having an extensive presence at community events.

We wanted to encourage others in the community to be referrers and counsellors. We identified people who could help. We looked at not just professionals but people in the community who were already doing it... genuine people who were practicing those good behaviours in their homes. (Ohakune, Champion)

Hairdressers as a point of referral – The Campaign funded Kelly Porter, who owns the hairdressing salon in Ohakune, to pilot a project enabling hairdressers and beauticians to identify and know how to respond to family violence. These professionals see the effects of family violence in their clients and are often unsure how to respond. A presentation has been delivered to hairdressers and hairdressing students in Taupō, Palmerston North, Lower Hutt and Hawkes Bay and a set of posters featuring hairdressers has been produced.

DVD – in 2014 interested community members made a DVD about the positive changes that had occurred in the community in regards to family violence.

We wanted to show some awesome stuff that has happened in our community so we made a community short-film. We got some camera equipment and we interviewed people... We decided to look at what positive things had happened in our community that have eliminated negative behaviours. We went to kindies, primary and high schools, into people’s homes and gathered people’s stories of change. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

IDENTIFIED IMPACTS

Participants stressed that impacts arising out of the Campaign have been incremental and generally occurred on a small scale. These changes, however, have been appreciated as they qualitatively demonstrate a major shift in cultural attitudes and behaviours associated with non-violence.

1. Increased awareness and message infiltration

All participants stated that the national 'It's not OK' Campaign has resulted in a high degree of awareness and knowledge of family violence. Further, the local Campaign raised awareness of how support can be accessed.

The Campaign has had a huge impact. The community is now well aware of what is not OK. Our challenge now is to look at what is OK. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

The Campaign has been embraced by the wider community. We are getting involved with families who would normally clam up around the police. Now we are able to work with the family. (Ohakune, Police representative)

Further, key Campaign messages were reported as having become entrenched. This was evidenced by the use of Campaign messages, as common vernacular, across multiple levels of the community. Multiple reports were provided of adults, students and children using Campaign slogans in reference to violent and / or bullying behaviours.

You can see evidence of the Campaign everywhere. If you went into the high school or workplaces, the majority of the people would know what you are talking about is family violence. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

2. Attitude change and increased prosocial behaviours

The Campaign was reported to have led to decreased incidence of antisocial behaviour and contributed to a number of positive changes in communities and workplaces.

Decreased antisocial behaviour

Multiple reports of reduced antisocial behaviour were provided. Decreased incidents of bullying and stand-downs were reported at the local high school as well as a significant reduction in sport related violence. Further, the type of violence was reported to have shifted from physical to verbal. While this shift was regarded as significant, participants were aware that there is a need to conjointly address physical and verbal abuse.

There have been less stand-downs in the high school [Ruapehu College] and there has been less violence reported in schools, workplaces and sports fields. (Ohakune, Police representative)

There have been less stand-downs and bullying in the schools. They haven't had a stand down for bullying for a number of years. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

The level of violence has dropped. It's gone from more physical to more verbal. We realise we have to work on verbal abuse but the decrease in physical violence is significant. (Ohakune, Champion)

When you talk about shifts in attitudes, when you go to the houses you are made to feel more welcome. You are getting called in at a much more milder level, you can get in and talk. (Ohakune, Police representative)

Families, once regarded as intergenerationally dysfunctional, and at-risk of continued family violence, were reported to have an increased awareness of family violence and had taken actions to refrain from family violence and adopt positive family dynamics.

We are getting more traction working with families known to experience intergenerational family violence. (Ohakune, Police representative)

X came from a family where DV was rife in the family, a lot of the family started reaching out for help. A whole lot of factors brought it about. One of the grandmothers saw what they had created and went out and started looking for help. It resulted in less call outs and the severity of the calls out have decreased. (Ohakune, Police representative)

Multiple reports were also provided of people who had a history of assault choosing to engage in non-violence in conflict situations. Further, across the community, groups that had once been perceived as conservative had demonstrated positive attitude shifts and had requested involvement with the Campaign. Participants also linked a rise in self-referrals to the increased awareness arising from the Campaign. This was especially noted in relation to self-referrals to Peter Porter, who then channelled individuals into appropriate programmes and / or support.

Self-referrals are huge. People are always coming in and asking for Pete's number. (Ohakune, Champion)

In 2013 there were significantly more self-referrals than previous years. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

Changes in wider community culture

Changes in wider community culture were discussed in terms of increased family violence discussions and an increase in the number of people intervening in family violence situations.

a) Increased willingness to discuss family violence

The Campaign was reported to have provided a vehicle for wide reaching attitude and behaviour change across multiple levels of the community.

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There's more of a lack of acceptance of family violence. It is still a work in progress but it has been a major step. There are things going on. (Ohakune, Police representative)

Each year there has been more participation in our non-violence events. When we started people would keep away from us. There was a lot of shame and embarrassment. Now people are quite happy to come up to our stalls. They encourage each other. (Ohakune, Champion)

In addition, participants provided multiple references to an increased understanding of family violence and higher incidences of children, families and social service providers engaging in family violence discussions. Importantly, these discussions not only increased knowledge but the perceived freedom to discuss family violence was directly linked to the national Campaign and the various complementary local initiatives.

There are more people in the community talking about family violence. (Ohakune, Champion)

Further, the Campaign was attributed with the erosion of socio-cultural barriers and stereotypes that had precluded previous community-wide responses in the area. Specifically, Campaign related events, where all sectors of the community were brought together for a common purpose, led to the development of friendships and community networks which eroded historical socio-cultural divides.

The biggest thing is the bridges that have been built between the cultures. Between Māori and non-Māori. The events we have held have broken down historical barriers. Rangi and John Smith coming along and sitting down and having a conversation and finding out more about one another and realising they aren't half bad. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

b) Inspired to intervene

The willingness to discuss family violence was directly linked to a small but growing movement of community-based family violence interventions. Specifically, participants discussed situations where they or another party had intervened in family violence situations.

I had a lady the other day who came into the salon and said, "You would be so proud of me, I rang the police on my neighbours". She said that, not so long ago she would have just pulled the curtains. But now she felt confident enough to take action. (Ohakune, Champion)

Notably, the Campaign billboards provided a reference for those in family violence situations. For instance, four champions reported that they had been approached, on numerous occasions about family violence issues, and had referred these cases onto appropriate agencies. In other situations, champions had acted as an information and referral source.

A lot of the people on the billboards... people seek them out and ask them for help. (Ohakune, Champion)

Changes to organisational culture

Behaviour and attitude change was reported to have occurred in a variety of workplaces. Specifically, arising from the local Campaign, a number of social service providers and some employers had implemented non-violence policies.

The mills were real good... if a guy had had a barney with his missus they'd call Pete in to have a chat with the guy. It was real good for the mill, for the business. We had a lot of support from management. It was mainly one of the mills. They are younger and mingle more and they work more closely than the other mill. (Ohakune, Champion)

3. Community responsiveness and ownership

Community responsiveness and a sense of local ownership were identified as an important Campaign outcome, as responsiveness and ownership were regarded as indications of community support of non-violence and prolonged sustainability. The Ohakune Campaign was discussed as quintessentially community owned. This was underscored by the role of champions who represented a diverse cross-section of the community. Other aspects of community ownership included the local high school's involvement with the Campaign, local businesses in-kind support and sports clubs' growing commitment to being violence free.

We have a lot of champions, people who are able to stand up and point people in the right direction. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

The pub in Raetihi closing down was huge. A lot of people have recognised the connection and support for the pub dwindled. Eventually it closed. It's contributed to more people in the community drinking sensibly. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

Suddenly we were talking together. You can't necessarily say it was 'It's not OK' but the Campaign was definitely part of it. It was a catalyst. (Ohakune, Police representative)

Finally, a sense of community ownership was discussed in reference to a greater number of non-government and government agencies that had demonstrated an interest and commitment to the eradication of family violence. These commitments were reported to have resulted in increased interagency family violence collaboration.

Prior to 'It's not OK' there was only the Police, Ministry of Justice, Probation, the Department of Corrections and CYFs referrals. They were working in isolation. Now the responses are coordinated. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

You can't hide behind one agency, we are all talking and we know who they are. We are talking to WINZ and employers are talking to Pete. (Ohakune, Champion)

4. Statutory intervention

Police participants reported increased family violence notifications, lower thresholds for the reporting family violence related behaviours (an increase in minor offences being reported) and an

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increase in those coming forward with a first time notification. Further, an increase in strangers reporting a family violence incident was noted.

Reporting has increased and there is a sense that the severity of calls has decreased. (Ohakune, Police representative)

In 2013, DV incidences dropped 70 per cent in Ohakune and 50 per cent in Raetihi. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

Of note, spikes in family violence statistics over the winter holiday season were attributed to 'out of towners' and not to locals.

When winter comes we get all sorts of people... out of towners. Unfortunately, that does in on our statistics. (Ohakune, Police representative)

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Participants were asked to identify critical success factors integral to the local Campaign's success. Critical success factors included: the importance of having a dedicated coordinator, community champions, historical antecedents, leadership, the national 'It's not OK' Campaign and the national 'It's not OK' team.

1. Dedicated coordinator / leader

Having a dedicated project leader, who had the time and energy to have a single Campaign focus, was resoundingly regarded as a critical success factor. Peter Porter's role as a Community Support Work, and the skills and passion he brought to the role was identified as foundational.

Pete Porter is worth his weight in gold. Some of the families Pete Porter works with are really difficult, with entrenched intergenerational family violence. They have fallen though the cracks for generations. Pete has the ability to sit down and talk. These families trust him and little-by-little he has been able to bring about positive changes. He doesn't bully them like some social workers. He doesn't threaten. He keeps going and pushes. (Ohakune, Police representative)

2. Community champions

Champions, while providing a means to provide local faces to the national Campaign messages, were reported as providing a high degree of community leadership. Much of this success was associated with the careful decision-making that led to the selection of a wide cross-section of champions, people that resonated with others in the various communities they represented. As a consequence, champions were seen as having an extensive reach based on an authenticity of relationships. It was this authenticity, derived from community connections, that was believed to result in early intervention and prevention.

It came down to a number of key people in the community. Peter Porter and the champions have been instrumental. (Ohakune, Police representative)

3. Historical antecedents

Community stakeholders had reported that one of their greatest concerns was violence. This shared concern provided an impetus to the local Campaign as the community wanted Ohakune to be a safe area.

'It's not OK' has been successful here because the people here are passionate about their community and have been aware that people needed help and that a family violence service wasn't always the best option. (Ohakune, Champion)

4. Leadership

The success of the Ohakune Campaign was attributed to two primary levels of leadership. Firstly, the role of Peter Porter was identified as foundational. In 2010, Ngati Rangī Trust employed Peter Porter as a Community Support Worker with an expectation that a component of the Community Support Worker role was to reduce violence and reconnect *whānau* to iwi. Because his role was loosely defined, Peter was given substantial freedom to respond innovatively to family violence.

There was a huge freedom for me to do whatever I needed to do. That was awesome. There was no red tape. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

Through his role as a Community Support Worker, Peter led the development of a number of iwi activities and in 2011, initiated the area's first exposure to the White Ribbon Campaign. Soon after, in the same year, Peter became involved in the 'It's not OK' Campaign.

When I first became involved with social services with Ngati Rangī Trust I needed to meet with stakeholders and identify issues. Ninety-five percent of those things they identified were violence related. Without saying it directly they were looking at a bridge between those families and those services. And that is when I got involved with White Ribbon. We became aware of the 'It's not OK' Campaign a few months later. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

Non-violence champions were identified as a second level of leadership. Champions were identified as key influences representing geographical communities, businesses, sports and schools. In each of these settings, champions provided leadership by making public non-violence statements, in the form of billboards and posters, and by acting as a source of family violence intervention, a referral mechanism and, in many cases, crisis support.

5. The national 'It's not OK' Campaign

The national 'It's not OK' Campaign was described as providing a vital framework to guide the area's family violence prevention and intervention strategies.

I just think the Campaign is great. It's a national Campaign that is saying that we are not wrong. It reinforces what we are doing. (Ohakune, Champion)

The Campaign has been vital. It is the first thing that people see. The billboards are in people's faces everyday. And the constant driving of the message has been really important. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

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The national Campaign was also appreciated as providing an opportunity to build upon consistent national messages at a local level.

Having the 'It's not OK' Campaign makes everyone know that it is OK to actually ask for help. It has given people permission to intervene. Having 'It's not OK' makes it easier to say, "No, this is going to stop". (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

Of equal importance, the national Campaign was described as inspiring local efforts and was attributed to having fostered the successful community ownership of the Campaign messages. In this sense, the Campaign was regarded as hugely successful because it consistently encouraged communities to develop their own non-violence, Campaign related, strategies.

If we didn't have the national Campaign we wouldn't have achieved so much in such a short amount of time. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

6. Support provided by the national 'It's not OK' team

The national Campaign team was lauded for their provision of advice, support and financial assistance. Especially appreciated was the provision of strategic advice and focus the Campaign team brought to local initiatives.

My communication is always with Stephanie. It is really vital. She has been amazing. She keeps me informed about what is happening. She guides me. She gives me her expert opinions. She encourages me to bring other people along. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

The provision of 'It's not OK' Campaign resourcing was highly valued. While the funding was relatively small, it was greatly appreciated given the various agencies' low operational budgets and time it would have taken for resources to be developed locally. Participants stressed that the existence of non-violence resources had greatly enhanced their ability to respond to individual, family and community needs.

If we didn't have the resources, the little bit of financial resources they gave us, we wouldn't have been able to achieve what we have achieved even now. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

Whether it is the T-shirt, the badges or the wristbands, people love those things. Even if it means they pick one of those things up a year later and it triggers them to act on it, then that is awesome. (Ohakune, Champion)

Those resources, the Facebook page, have been really useful in this community. There is always someone in the community that you know... who is building relationship. (Ohakune, Champion)

Without the resources it would have been really hard to get around and meet people. The billboards and all the resources we hand out means that the Campaign message was able to spread really quickly. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)

The awareness related activities would not have been possible without this funding. Participants acknowledged that, without funding, opportunities would have been lost to link local initiatives with the national 'It's not OK' Campaign branding. This would have severely hindered audience resonance and uptake. As such, the complementary national and local branding meant that a non-violence call to action occurred at a local level.

BARRIERS TO ON-GOING SUCCESS

Insufficient funding was raised as a primary barrier to the Campaign's on-going success. This barrier was understood within an environment of intergenerational violence and family dysfunction that will require long-term support to achieve the required changes. As such, funding was identified as requirement to the development and implementation of strategies to achieve significant shifts in culture.

A scarcity of adequate referral, support and intervention services was raised as a primary concern. Importantly, participants acknowledged that the Campaign has resulted in increased awareness and referrals for support and intervention. While the Campaign has resulted in increased awareness and referrals for support and intervention, the community has struggled to meet these increased demands. This was especially frustrating given increased family violence notifications have not coincided with increased service related funding. Specifically, the need for a local safe house and timely access to alcohol and other drug (AOD) related services were raised.

Finally, a dilemma currently facing the community is providing a term of reference of prosocial behaviour. Whilst participants unanimously agreed that awareness of non-violence has been raised across the wider community, there is a need to demonstrate how to intervene in family violence situations and what good parenting and family behaviour entails.

What's important now is that people need to know what they should do... like call the police. Our township is at a stage of knowing what is not OK. We need to focus on the positive. If we stay with the negative you might create more negativity. We need to move to positive behaviour. (Ohakune, Community Support Worker)



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