

# Position Statement

## Family Violence

Jewish Care has one clear vision: **Together, building and supporting a healthy, resilient, and inclusive Jewish community.** Our values are universal and enduring in nature, but are also particular to the Jewish approach to creating a meaningful life, and a strong, cohesive community.

Our foundational values define who we are and underpin everything we do. The values, **Respect** (*derech eretz*), **Community** (*kehilla*), **Inclusion** (*hachlala*) and **Social Responsibility** (*achrayoot chevratit*), are about people - they provide a moral compass for the way we respond to challenges and the decisions we make.

These values pervade every aspect Jewish Care, informing relationships between colleagues, staff and clients, and our organisation and the wider community.

The Board of Jewish Care seeks to demonstrate our commitment to these values by clearly stating Jewish Care's position on important issues that are contextual to the Jewish community's rich history or because it frames the way we will conduct ourselves and our engagement with members of the community.

## Preface

Family violence is a crime and a violation of human rights. It affects people from all walks of life regardless of age, culture, sexual identity, ability, ethnicity, religion or socioeconomic status. Family violence encompasses other commonly used terms such as domestic violence, intimate partner violence and spousal abuse.

Family violence is a pattern of abusive behaviour used within family or family-like relationships to control and dominate. Family violence includes but is not limited to physical violence. The Victorian Family Violence Protection Act 2008 also recognises emotional, financial, sexual and social abuse as family violence. Family violence can also include behaviours that cause a family member to fear for the safety of their property, another person or a pet.

דרך ארץ  
derech eretz  
respect

קהילה  
kehilla  
community

הכללה  
hachlala  
inclusion

אחריות חברתית  
achrayoot chevratit  
social responsibility

**Jewish Care (Victoria) Inc**  
619 St Kilda Road  
Melbourne Victoria 3004  
PO Box 6156  
Melbourne Victoria 3004

Head Office: (03) 8517 5777  
All Services: (03) 8517 5999  
info@jewishcare.org.au  
www.jewishcare.org.au

ABN 78 345 431 247  
ARN A0040705X

The prevalence of family violence makes it a significant community issue in Australia.

- One in four Australian women<sup>i</sup> (25%) has experienced violence from a male intimate partner<sup>ii</sup>.
- One in ten women (10%) have experienced sexual violence, and over 1.8 million women have experienced physical violence by a male intimate partner<sup>iii</sup>.
- Intimate partner violence contributes to more death, disability and illness in women aged 15 to 44 than any other preventable risk factor<sup>iv</sup>.
- On average, one woman a week is killed by a partner or former partner<sup>v</sup>.

Children are impacted by family violence both as direct victims and/or indirectly as witnesses to family violence. According to Victoria's Family Violence Protection Act 2008, family violence includes behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear, witness or otherwise be exposed to the effects of violence. It is now well understood that children who witness family violence can experience significant emotional and psychological harm. Children as young as infants can show signs of trauma including developmental delay as a result of witnessing family violence.

Children are present in 1 out of every 3 family violence cases reported to police<sup>vi</sup>.

The important role that ethno-specific community organisations have in educating, supporting and responding to the needs of their individual communities has been recognised by the Royal Commission into Family Violence<sup>vii</sup>.

## Position Statement

Jewish Care acknowledges that family violence is one of the most pervasive and damaging issues in our society and is unacceptable in any circumstances. Jewish Care believes that every individual has the right to feel safe and secure within their intimate relationships.

Jewish Care's position is underpinned by principles of human rights and social justice. Jewish Care believes that family violence is a community issue and acknowledges that alongside the community, the organisation has a key role to play in the reduction and eradication of family violence through upholding the safety of women and children, acting in the best interests of the children and holding the perpetrator accountable.

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*respect*

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In this endeavour Jewish Care is committed to taking concrete steps by:

- Playing a key role in awareness raising, early detection, intervention and provision of support to those impacted by family violence;
- Promoting community-wide efforts to advocate and strengthen culturally appropriate and safe resources for victims/survivors and perpetrators, and to encourage primary prevention and community education initiatives;
- Advocating to government for recurrent funding for culturally specific family violence responses and programs;
- Encouraging attitudes and actions necessary to prevent family violence, identify women, men, children and families 'at risk', and promote help-seeking;
- Committing to educating the Jewish Care workforce alongside the Jewish Community about family violence;
- Offering a broad range of services and supports to women and children who have experienced family violence and through our partnerships, supporting active referral for those who perpetuate violence;
- Recognising the organisation's role in the provision of flexibility and support when employees are dealing with family violence including the provision of leave entitlements; and
- Cultivating respectful relationships within the workplace and towards the Community, taking into account cultural requirements.

This Position Statement was reviewed and approved by the CEO in August 2021.

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<sup>i</sup> Since the age of 15 years

<sup>ii</sup> Cox, P 2015, 'Violence against women: Additional analysis of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey 2012', *Horizons Research Report*, Issue 1, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), Sydney.

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iv</sup> Domestic Violence Prevention Centre 2017, Domestic Violence Statistics, Domestic Violence Prevention Centre Gold Coast Inc., Gold Coast, viewed 6 April 2017, <<http://www.domesticviolence.com.au/pages/domestic-violence-statistics.php>>.

<sup>v</sup> Cox, P 2015, 'Violence against women: Additional analysis of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey 2012', *Horizons Research Report*, Issue 1, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), Sydney

<sup>vi</sup> Crime Statistics Agency, 2016, Family incidents, year ending 31 March 2016, State Government of Victoria.

<sup>vii</sup> Refer to Vol. V of the Royal Commission into Family Violence Report

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