

Me kōrero



Let's Talk

April 2024

**Aviva named
finalist for
Community
of the Year**

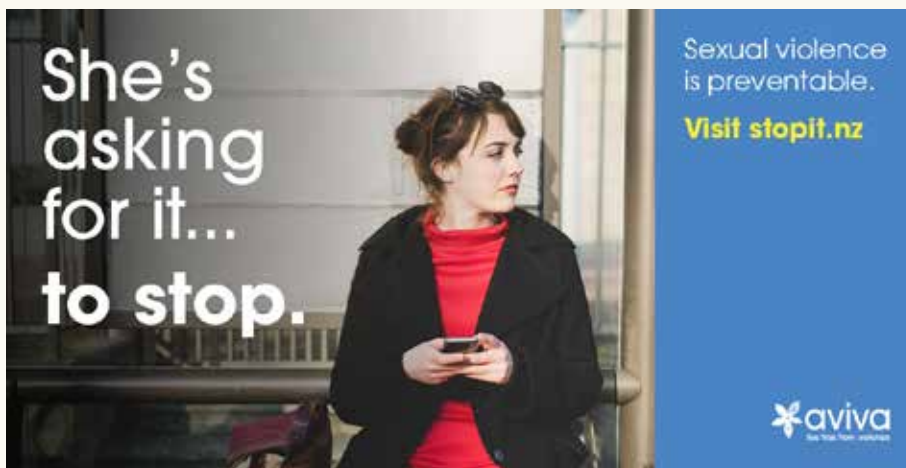
**New groups,
trainings and
workshops
on offer**

**'Everything
felt like chaos,
but it felt like
someone was
finally there.'**

- BENNETT'S STORY

AVIVA LAUNCHES

“Asking For It... To Stop” campaign for Sexual Assault Awareness Month



Kiwis are being asked to speak up when it comes to sexual violence.

“Asking For It... To Stop” is a campaign calling the community to action – to prevent sexual violence.

With practical tools, including language people can use to call out inappropriate behaviours, the campaign encourages Kiwis to stand up against sexual violence in their communities. Businesses can also sign up for free workplace workshops.

Aviva General Manager – Operations Gwenda Kendrew says, “It’s a truth that many of us find uncomfortable, but the reality is that we receive referrals every single day related to sexual violence across Canterbury – as a community, we cannot afford to look the other way.

“That’s why we are doing this

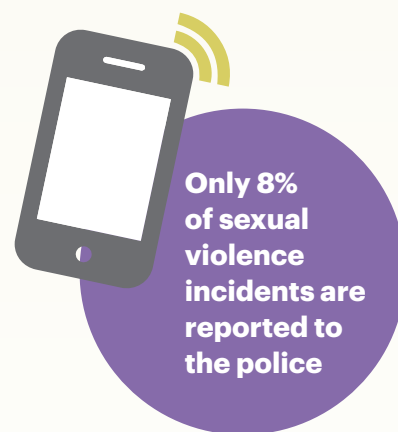
campaign – to help people understand that sexual violence is all too common and is fueled by a society in which unhealthy attitudes and behaviours are allowed to continue.

“If you see or hear behaviours that allude to unhealthy sexual attitudes, caring enough to speak up makes a huge difference.”

The campaign aligns with the globally recognised Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

According to the 2023 New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey, 1.1 million adults or 27% of the adult population, report being the victim of at least one act of sexual assault in their lifetime.

“Sexual violence is a spectrum which starts with attitudes and ends with sexual assaults.



“It’s not enough to think someone else will say, or do something to make it stop,” says Kendrew.

Keep an eye and an ear out for the campaign across Canterbury. For more information or to register your workplace for a workshop, visit **stopit.nz**.



Nationwide Nga Rourou training facilitators, including Jo, Laura and Bex from Aviva.

Wrap-around support at Court

For most people, court is a foreign landscape. Its formal power structure can evoke feelings of intimidation and fear, particularly for those who have experienced family violence or sexual violence. The prospect of recounting deeply personal experiences in front of strangers, often with the user of violence also present, is not just daunting - it's profoundly challenging.

At Aviva, providing unwavering support to our clients throughout this journey is something we do every day. So, when specialist family violence organisation, Shine, approached us to assist them in delivering aspects of their national training package, called 'Na Taku Rourou', to the Ministry of Justice court staff, it felt like a natural extension of our commitment.

Three members of our Aviva Sexual Violence Team are now trained to deliver the sexual violence modules of the training to our region, which includes courts in the majority of the South Island. Shine delivers the family violence components.

Na Taku Rourou is a two day in-person training programme specifically designed for Ministry of Justice court staff, empowering them to better understand and support the people they encounter daily, who have experienced family violence or sexual violence.

Court staff – including registrars, security guards, victim advisors and other court personnel will participate in foundational and advanced training, including the latest theory and research, challenging myths in society, and how to respond across different roles within the courts.

Concepts such as the Sexual Violence Pyramid and the Entrapment Model are used to illuminate the environments in which violence can thrive and to foster a deeper understanding of the post-traumatic responses people may display in court. Responses like – short-term memory loss, difficulty concentrating, being easily confused, irritability or aggression, feeling drowsy or sleepy, slurred speech or difficulty with balance, hypervigilance, or sensitivity to noise and light – amongst others.

“By sharing knowledge we can cultivate a society that upholds the wellbeing and mana of those who have experienced violence.”

**GWENDA KENDREW,
GENERAL MANAGER, OPERATIONS**

Using a holistic approach to wellbeing and incorporating Kaupapa Maori perspectives, Na Taku Rourou training empowers court staff to “recognize, respond, and refer” with empathy, compassion, and respect, whilst being non-judgmental and acknowledging the bravery and courage it takes to engage the court process. In this way, court staff can contribute to more wrap-around support of individuals who have experienced violence.

Together we aim to create a sense of safety and reassurance for people as they navigate court – so their experience will be less daunting and more supportive.



“No matter how isolated and helpless everything may seem, there is someone who will stand beside you.”

There was finally someone who would stand beside me

Bennett* is one of those Kiwi blokes who loves outdoor adventures and challenging himself. It turns out that the biggest challenge of his life was not to be found in the wilderness, but within himself.

“I felt that my entire universe was imploding and that everything I’d committed to seemed to be slipping out of my fingers. I knew I needed help and I tried to find it. It felt like I’d tried everywhere and everywhere I turned was a dead end. I was at the point of thinking there was no one who could help.”

It wasn’t until he got in touch with Aviva that Bennett got the help he needed. He was connected with Aviva’s ReachOut Service which supports people who have used or are at risk of using violence.

“My first experience was a phone call. Out of everywhere I contacted, Aviva was the only one that responded genuinely, with respect and honesty. I felt like someone

was really there. Everything felt like chaos but it felt like someone was finally there.”

Bennett says Aviva has helped him immensely and enabled him to reestablish his foundations.

“The very foundations of who I was felt obliterated. I had become almost completely disconnected with myself, which was scary because staying connected with myself had been my way of dealing with all the challenges in my life.”

Bennett says it’s hard to put into words his connection with Nicky his Aviva kaimahi or support worker.

“When Nicky called me back he was honest and respectful and gave me an assurance that he would find a way to be there and connect with me. He helped me to realise that I wasn’t broken but I did have some cracks that needed to be accepted and addressed.”

“I’ll always have a deep sense of gratitude and respect for Nicky’s

time and everything about him, his aura and mana, it’s all been such a blessing.”

Bennett says his journey has not been an easy one but is unquestionably worthwhile.

“I can be at peace with the things I’ve been through. I better understand healthy and unhealthy boundaries. I’m back. My children have me back. It sounds simple but it wasn’t.”

Although Bennett didn’t know of Aviva before working with them, he is now a huge advocate of their services and approach.

“Aviva have people with the skills, knowledge and most importantly the commitment to be there with you and to work through anything you need to work through.”

He’s adamant that people can always achieve more than they think they can and says that even the blockiest of blokes may need to reach out at some point and get help.

“Just reach out. No matter how isolated and helpless everything may seem, there is someone who will stand beside you. To me that’s what Aviva represents.”

While Bennett acknowledges there will always be new challenges, he credits Aviva with helping him reclaim the strength and confidence to deal with whatever the future brings.

“I have my physical and mental health back. I am enjoying spending time with my kids, I’m back into triathlons and I’m excited about two big events this year. Things are more manageable. I can apply myself to things with focus. The future is bright.”

INTRODUCING A new Men's Education Group

"I wish ReachOut was around when my parents were going through their divorce years ago. I feel as if my brothers and I wouldn't have had to experience what we did if they understood the impacts that violence, and what that does to a child. I had to learn the hard way, but I see it now!"

- REACHOUT CLIENT

Everyone deserves a life free from family violence regardless of gender. Aviva have offered ReachOut as an individual program for over a decade now. After listening to our clients, we are pleased to be able to offer this group service to our communities.

We plan each group quite carefully, aiming to match clients and their needs with like-minded people. Term 3 group this year is for men who want support to move away from a life of relationship conflict, anger and/or violence. It provides a space for men to connect, support one another and navigate the complexities of masculinity in a rapidly changing world. Most importantly it is a space for men to be heard, feel safe and be seen.

The 10-week programme will be held once a week in Christchurch starting Term 3 in July.

For expressions of interest, please contact enquiries@aviva.org.nz or **0800 AVIVA NOW** (0800 28482 669).

"Thank you, just thank you. Tonight I experienced life, hurt, vulnerability, pain and how anger has ruined my heart, soul and destroyed my being. This is our journey of discover in terms of healing my demons. An understanding of healing in the true sense of the form. A form that is needed in order for my own sanity, a true inner sense in order to find happiness."

- MY FATHER'S BARBER CO-FACILLITATED MEN'S SESSION ATTENDEE



Support the Aviva Street Appeal

Friday 17th and Saturday 18th May

Last year, Aviva saw a 58% increase in calls for support. The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact our communities.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

Help keep your community safe this May by:

- 1 Donating to our Street Appeal collectors on 17th and 18th May;
- 2 Signing up to volunteer yourself;
- 3 Organising a fundraiser among your friends, colleagues, or community group; or
- 4 Making a donation.

Go to www.aviva.org.nz for more information.

You can support tamariki and whānau across Canterbury to have 24/7 access to the advice, advocacy, and support they so desperately need.



“Stats can measure what happened, but they don’t define what happens next. The potential for growth and change in young people – that’s inspiring!”

Awakening potential in youth

If you’ve raised teenagers, or have memories of being one yourself, you understand the challenges 13-to-16-year-olds can face. Put family violence into that mix and young people can be left struggling to make sense of their world.

Our ten-week youth programme, He Pito Mata, is doing some great work with rangatahi who have experienced family violence or may be at risk of using harm themselves. It’s all about positive change and awakening potential.

Working in the youth space takes special skills – not least of all is the ability to have fun. It may sound counterintuitive when such big topics are on the table, but He Pito Mata group facilitator, Dylan explains,

“You can’t sit young people down and talk ‘at’ them for two hours. It’s got to be enjoyable, or young people simply won’t engage, and they certainly won’t come back!”

The programme uses games, art, relationship building, and team building to create a relaxed, interactive learning environment where young people can be themselves. Facilitators support the group to set boundaries for non-violent communication within the group. For some, this is their first experience of boundary setting.

Conversations around safety planning and self-care create space for young people to share stories and experiences, “Hearing stories from your peers who have gone through similar things gives context

to a young person’s own experience. They realise they’re not alone. That’s a big shift for a lot of people,” says co-facilitator Cynthia.

Relationships are important to young people; there’s lots of discussion about what makes one good or not – what defines harmful behaviours, physically and emotionally, and what it feels like to be hurt or to hurt someone.

“If violence has been normalised as an acceptable way for a family member to get what they want, then just realising it’s not ok can really challenge a person’s world,” says Dylan.

“Teens often arrive with complex needs stemming from generational family violence. We work with them, slowly building a relationship at a pace that’s led by them. The highlights are when they get excited and proud to share their stories of how they’ve managed to communicate boundaries successfully.

“It’s exciting to see changes begin. There are still good and bad days of course, but on the bad days they’ve got more tools for self-care; they can either redirect themselves into a different activity or space or seek connection with friends and peers with whom they feel safe.

“When young people leave the programme feeling more capable, with more tools and skills to navigate their world than when they arrived – that’s a big win. It’s all building blocks. We can’t change everything overnight, but we can make a difference, and that’s what He Pito Mata is doing with youth – awakening potential.”

Safer futures for Pasifika families



“The body is sacred – the talanoa about the violence is not.”

ALO FĀ

Everything begins with talanoa (a conversation) and that’s exactly what Nicky Sofai, our Seuga Development Manager, is having with Pasifika Church Leaders and community members, in over forty workshops throughout Canterbury. Designed to raise awareness of the effects of sexualised behaviour towards children, and to develop culturally safe and easily relatable language to normalise these conversations within the Pasifika community, the workshops are being delivered in

Samoan, Fijian, Tongan and English.

Nicky explains, “Sexual harm, especially where children are involved, is a very sensitive topic, but as a community, we need to talk more openly about ways to keep our children safe, to prevent harm, and to recognise the signs of abuse. Talanoa in a workshop environment allow us to recognise how our own discomfort around some conversations can create barriers to support. Together, we aim

to develop appropriate language that feels safe, supportive, and acceptable to Pasifika people.”

Workshops also include topics about disclosure, what supports exist through social agencies, and importantly, how faith, culture and values are infused into our response.

We look forward to bringing you more on these amazing workshops and wish Nicky and the Seuga Team good luck and blessings with their delivery. La manuia o outou faiva.

Aviva is a finalist for New Zealand Community of the Year 2024!

We are so thrilled to have our mahi acknowledged and celebrated as one of three finalists for the Mitre 10 Community of the Year category of the 2024 Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards.

The category recognises groups that show the best community spirit and come together to make an outstanding impact on communities they serve.

“We see this as acknowledgement of not just the current team at Aviva, but those who have paved the way for us, those who have supported us, and even more importantly, those we have worked with to overcome the violence they have experienced. It’s truly about being a community!” – Gwenda Kendrew, General Manager – Operations

On 27 March, a group of Aviva team members travelled to Auckland for the awards ceremony.

Although Aviva was not named the winner, it was truly an honor to stand alongside the winners – the Cyclone Gabrielle Volunteers – and all the other nominees striving to make Aotearoa a safe, caring place to live.

We are proud to have been nominated by our community. Arohanui and thank you.



LEFT Aviva team members at Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards



Aviva exists because we care

We are a Canterbury-based family violence and sexual violence agency dedicated to making New Zealand Aotearoa violence-free. Our extensive range of person-centred services includes both one-on-one support and group education programmes, for anyone affected by violence – all ages, genders, sexualities, ethnicities, and experiences of violence.

We uphold the potential of each person to not only become safe but to begin a journey toward a fulfilling, violence-free life. We're here to help every step of the way.

Help Us
Break the
Cycle

By donating to Aviva, you are helping pave the way to a violence-free future for thousands of tamariki and whānau across Canterbury.

Go to aviva.org.nz or contact community@aviva.org.nz to make a contribution.

Contact Us

Keep up to date on our services, campaigns, and opportunities.

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