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AGM MINUTES

28th October 2008

Present;

T C	MC	Judge R R	Returning Officer
J H	MC	D W	Staff Representative
B L	MC	D S	Manager
HY	Public Officer	C H	Staff Representative
J C	Chairperson	T McI	Staff
JW	Staff	MW	Staff
K T	Staff		

1 Meeting opened at 5.05pm

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from: Women's Centre for Health Matters, HH, SB and SM

3 2007 AGM Minutes

The minutes from previous years Annual General Meeting were presented.

Acceptance Moved: John **Seconded:** Dearne **Carried**

4 Matters arising from 2007 AGM Minutes

There were no matters arising.

5 Chairperson's Report

Jane's report was presented.

Acceptance Moved: Toni **Seconded:** Mirjana **Carried**

6 Manager's Report

Dennise presented her report and thanked the Management Committee for their time and support and the staff at DVCS for their hard work.

Acceptance Moved: Jo **Seconded:** Dearne **Carried**

7 Children & Young People Report

Kylie's report was presented.

Acceptance Moved: Jane **Seconded:** Bronwyn **Carried**

8 Young People Outreach Worker (YPOW) Report

Dennise presented Steve's report and the YPOW evaluation. She asked that the Management Committee please take the time to read the evaluation as it provides very valuable feedback about the YPOW program. Dennise also explained that the evaluation was conducted in-house, as DVCS has limited funds for such things, but none the less DVCS was very pleased with the integrity of the process and the results.

Acceptance Moved: Jo **Seconded:** Toni **Carried**

9 Education Officers Report

Acceptance Moved: Jo **Seconded:** Heidi **Carried**

10 Auditor's Report and Appointment of Auditor

The end of year financial reports and audit were presented.

Acceptance Moved: Jo **Seconded:** Jane **Carried**

Kim Hanna was reappointed as Auditor

Acceptance Moved: Jane **Seconded:** Dennise **Carried**

11 Appointment of Returning Officer

Judge Refshauge happily accepted reappointment as Returning Officer

Acceptance Moved: Jane **Seconded:** Dennise **Carried**

12 Appointment of Honorary Solicitor

Bill Redpath was reappointed as solicitor

Acceptance Moved: Jane **Seconded:** Dennise **Carried**

13 Election of MC members

Judge Refshauge accepted the following nominations; JC (Chairperson), H Y (Public Officer), TC, JH, JH, BL

14 Amendment to Constitution

A notion to amend Clause 37(1)(a) of the Constitution of the Domestic Violence Crisis Service Inc was put forward by HY and BL.

Clause 37 (page 12) currently requires the Management Committee meet at least 10 times each year:

Meetings – calling and frequency

37(1) The Management Committee must meet—

(a) at least 10 times during each year; and

(b) at least once in any 2 month period.

It is proposed to amend this to read:

37(1) The Management Committee must meet—

(a) at least 6 times during each year; and

This is consistent with the requirement in clause 37(1)(b) that the Management Committee meet at least once in any 2 month period.

Acceptance moved: Tony **Seconded:** Dearne **Carried**

15 Other business

Dennise was given a round of applause and congratulated on being one of the four finalists in the Australian of the Year Award

Jane declared the meeting closed at 5.15pm

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Each year seems to get busier for DVCS and this year has been no different. Despite this, Dennise and her team have continued to provide an excellent service to those affected by domestic violence. This is supported by this year's client evaluation report that shows that 92% of clients said they would be prepared to contact DVCS again if they were hurt or assaulted in the future.

The increase in workload has led to DVCS significantly reducing the court support they provide to clients in protection order matters. Urgent matters and crisis calls take priority and as a result, there are not the staffing resources to provide court support.

It is regrettable that such a valuable service has been impacted upon, but without additional resources DVCS is unable to provide court support as a standard service. Hopefully, the future will see DVCS return to a position where it will again be part of the standard service provided to clients.

It seems that a year does not pass that we do not see some turnover in staff. This year saw the departure of a number of staff including Toni McInnes who leaves after 19 years with the service. Toni has worked as a crisis worker, team leader and for the last 4 years as the Client Services Coordinator. On behalf of the Management Committee, I would like to thank Toni for her dedication and commitment in her time with DVCS and wish her well for the future.

Congratulations to Dennise for being a recipient of a Medal for the Order of Australia for her services to the protection of women and children living with abuse and violence. Well done Dennise!

This will be my last report as my term as chairperson comes to an end. I would like to thank Dennise and her team for their support and commitment to the service. I also thank the other committee members for their support in my time in this role.

I commend this year's report to you and look forward to working with DVCS in the year ahead.

Jane Caruana
Chairperson

Manager's Report

When you have been writing a Manager's Report for close to 20 years, (not 21 as I was a Crisis Worker for the first 2 ½ years of DVCS) the most difficult thing becomes how to actually begin the report. I usually say something around the challenges that we encountered over the year, yet what year does not present challenges? So here we have it, a new beginning for my report.

New Data-base

DAISY (Data and Information System) is our current data-base and she has been with us since April 2003. Prior to DAISY we had no data-base; everything was recorded and collated manually. I recall how excited we were about DAISY; we considered her top of the line, even 'cutting edge'. DAISY has worked hard for us over the past years but is now close to total melt-down. There continues to be a soft spot among staff for DAISY. Given the speed with which technology progresses, DAISY is now far from cutting edge. It is well and truly time for DVCS to move forward into this era of Information Technology.

This year we received a one off funding grant of \$60,000 from Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, for the development of a new data-base (DAISY II?). For those readers who know about such things, you will be well aware that \$60,000 does not come close to the cost of developing a purpose built data-base. DAISY was developed for us by a woman who wanted to contribute to the community, we have once again been fortunate. Our new data-base is being developed by two IT specialists who agreed to the payment on offer, knowing full well that this was way, way below market price.

Our new data -base is expected to be in operation by the end of this year, she will be amazing, and will ensure we are once again, top of the line, 'cutting edge'. Thank you guys; you are fantastic and many thanks to DHCS for making this possible.

OAM and ACT Australian of the Year finalist

This year I was twice honoured, which also means DVCS was twice honoured. I was named as a finalist for the ACT Australian of the Year Awards 2009 along with the eminent and inspiring Professor Michael Dodson AM, Professor Ross Garnaut AO and Liz O'Brien, fine company indeed. As you would be aware, Professor Michael Dodson was named as the ACT candidate and went on to be named Australian of the Year 2009, an excellent choice.

In the Australia Day Honours 2009 list it was announced that I was the recipient of a Medal (OAM) in the Order of Australia General Division. I was presented with the OAM by our first female Governor General Ms Quentin Bryce along with other recipients at a ceremony at Government House. I found that having the OAM presented by Ms Bryce added to the honour, I found her to be even more inspiring and charismatic in person.

I found it hard to see myself as a worthy recipient of these honours. How I view it is that rather than honouring just me as an individual, the awards honoured DVCS and the many, many wonderful women and men who have worked here over the past 21 years. No one works alone, it takes dedicated teams to make a service what it is, I happen to be the leader, a position that I remain proud and privileged to hold and do not take lightly. When a leader is honoured, it also honours those that supported them and their service along the way. I hope current and past staff and Management Committee members of DVCS view these honours in a similar way, because they deserve to share this recognition.



Staffing Matters

Resignation of Client Service Coordinator Toni McInnes

Certainly the most significant staff change that we have experienced for a number of years is the resignation of our Client Service Coordinator (CSC) Toni McInnes. Toni is now managing Inanna Inc in place of Winsome Willow who is currently in the position of Senior Manager, Homeless Services – DDHCS. Toni was one of the last of the really long-term stayers; she had worked at DVCS for 19 years, firstly as a relief Crisis Worker, later as a permanent Crisis Worker and for the last 4 years plus as our CSC.

Because of the staff turnovers that we have experienced over the past years, Toni was the only CSC that most of our current staff had worked under so her leaving has indeed been felt; the huge fear that comes from the unknown, who will guide us, mentor us, support us, and advise us wisely came to the fore. Toni brought with her the experience of many, many years of crisis work, something not easy to come by. She was also highly valued for her ability to stay calm in a work area that can be far from calm, her ability to stay calm had the effect of being infectious.

Toni is well known and respected within the community sector and Government, she has been part of many committees both representing DVCS and outside of that as a personal choice. Toni was one of the early staff at Inanna Inc (then called Medea) and has been on their Management Committee and held the position of Chairperson for a significant number of years. I know I am speaking on behalf of the DVCS team when I end by saying we wish Toni absolutely the best in her future, both professionally and personally.

Appointment of new CSC Mirjana Wilson

Mirjana Wilson has been employed at DVCS for 6 years as a Crisis Worker, a Crisis Work Team Leader and now as our brand new CSC, though she has certainly acted in this role. While 6 years is not 19 years, it is a significant amount time to work in this area and to gain a depth of understanding about domestic violence and its impact on the lives of women and children in particular but also men. Mirjana was a school teacher prior to coming to DVCS and the skills she gained in that role enhanced her skills as a Team Leader and now I am sure, as our CSC. I am particularly referring here to the skills she brings as a trainer/educator. Mirjana has been one of our main trainers for external agencies and organisations for a number of years. She is also an internal trainer of new staff in their induction training.

So Mirjana is the one who will now guide, mentor, support and advise staff wisely during their day to day crisis work. Welcome Mirjana, I am very much looking forward to working with you in your new role. Many thanks also to Dearne and Courtney who acted in the CSC role following Toni's departure and prior to Mirjana returning from her leave.

Resignation of Winsome Willow

It is fitting that I also acknowledge and pay tribute to Winsome Willow. Winsome was a founding member of both Medea and then Inanna Inc. She was also the Manager of Inanna since its metamorphosis from Medea to Inanna. Some people may not be aware that Winsome was also one of the last of the long term stayers of DVCS. Winsome, in all that spare time she had, also worked at DVCS for 19 years, over that time she has held the position of relief, and in the early years, permanent Crisis Worker. We also employed Winsome over many years to run training for our staff, particularly relating to working within a Narrative Therapy ideas framework.

Following her appointment to DHCS earlier this year, Winsome resigned from DVCS. Again, a great loss of knowledge and experience for DVCS, our less experienced staff really appreciated working alongside her as it was generally felt that they learned so much from that experience. I think the extensive experience particularly relating to women and children's issues, mental health, homelessness and domestic violence that she brings to her new position is an absolute coup and invaluable asset for her new role in Government.

DVCS Team

Despite the significant changes referred to above, DVCS currently has more of a sense of a 'core-team' than we have experienced for quite a number of years. During the past year some re-organisation was undertaken which resulted in our Team Leaders having more of an inter-active role in relation to the day to day support and supervision of Crisis Workers. My thoughts behind this were that if we continued to have such a large turnover of staff, and therefore many staff with not much experience, we needed to provide them with as much support as possible from our more experienced staff. This appears to be successful and I think contributes to the sense that despite many changes we still have a committed, skilled and experienced core team.

Without going back over past reports, I suspect that I have stated the following, a number of times, but feel it more than appropriate that I say it again. A considerable strength of DVCS is the high calibre of staff that we attract; certainly they are not here for the pay. Most of them could be working in much higher paid positions with more opportunity for advancement and recognition. Our staff overwhelmingly join us because they want to work at DVCS, they are passionate about working in this area, they are aware of the devastating impact on women and children who have been affected by domestic violence, they want to make a difference, and they do. This also includes our Administrative & Finances Officer Jo who ensures the smooth running of DVCS. Every good organisation needs a 'Jo'. Jo is one of those women who are always on top of things; it would be a rare day that I ask about something that requires doing and find she has not already done it.

YPOW Program

It was disappointing that we did not receive funding to continue YPOW through the Community ACT Budget submission process. YPOW was originally funded by the Chief Minister's Community Inclusion Funding and had proved it-self an excellent program. I think service providers are all too well aware of the need for such a service in the ACT. Included in this Annual Report is the final YPOW Report from our YPOW Project staff member, Steve. Steve made YPOW the success that it was. His commitment, dynamic energy, skill and ability to engage with diverse group of young people and their families was demonstrated consistently. When Steve drafted the final YPOW Report, it was not yet known if we had been successful for ongoing funding, this becomes clearer as you read his Report. Also included in this Report is the final YPOW Evaluation Report, which highlights the achievements of the program and the difference it made to the lives of young people who were using violence and abuse in their families, and the families of those young people.

Court Support

In reading this year's statistics, you will note that court support for Protection Orders is significantly down on past years. A major reason for this is that the significant yearly increase to calls on the crisis phone lines has impacted on other service delivery, particularly court support (*see Table 1. below*). Court support is now only provided in particular circumstances, for example where there are high risk factors or more complex cases, it is no longer offered to clients as a matter of course.

Further, the decision to provide support in particular cases is made in consultation at the office. Other possible sources of court support are explored with the client, generally family or friends. The client is provided with information by our Crisis Workers in regard to the court processes and issues they may want to make their support person aware of, including the client's 'bottom line' during the proceedings.

Table 1. Total calls to the Crisis Line

Year	No. of calls received
2001-2002	6295
2002-2003	7382
2003-2004	7614
2004-2005	7714
2005-2006	7979
2006-2007	8972
2007-2008	8708
2008-2009	9481

Another reason is that while crisis call-outs remain reasonably steady, what has changed over the years is how often we now attend crisis calls during the day. Previously, crisis call-outs were almost exclusively in the evening or night. This change over time has also contributed to the amount of court support we can provide. Because our crisis call-outs are prioritised above other duties, it became quite common for our Crisis Workers being required to leave a client that they were supporting at court in order to attend a crisis call-out. This situation is far from acceptable or in the best interests of our clients who because they were expecting DVCS court support, had not pursued any other possible avenues of support.

Historically DVCS decisions to provide Court support have been based on the following considerations:

Protection Orders:

Orders are most often applied for as soon as possible following an incident of violence. As such the crisis is not over. The applicant is often experiencing a huge range of feelings and emotions including fear, guilt, shame, anger etc. The applicant will often want to talk about the history of their relationship as well as the most recent incident, including how this has impacted on all family members. The applicant will also be attempting to work out what will be ‘best’ for the future. In general, people in crisis require a person who can provide both practical and emotional support whilst also having a good knowledge of court procedures and relevant legislation.

The Crisis Worker supporting the applicant is involved in the following:

- a. assisting in the practical task of explaining the process of applying for an Order and the legal obligations that apply to the applicant and the respondent to the Order
- b. ensuring the applicant understands 'court jargon' by translating
- c. having further conversations about their decision to apply for an Order (many people want to re-clarify why they are doing what they are doing)
- d. assisting the person to tease out what it is they need included on the Order for their protection and the implications this will have for themselves and their children
- e. often assisting the person to deal with the emotions they may be feeling at this time in order to be able to clearly think about the practical measures that need to be taken
- f. having conversations about other practicalities that may arise as a result of having an Order granted
- g. working out safety strategies with the recognition that this can be a particularly high- risk time for women and their children
- h. making referrals to appropriate agencies
- i. having conversations with our clients about their hopes and intentions for their families future
- j. providing advocacy throughout the legal processes

On reading the list above, surely it becomes apparent that this should be specialised work; it is far from the 'hand-holding' role which is how court support has sometimes been described in the past. The complexity of the duties speak for the need of committed, highly skilled, assertive, experienced staff preferably with legal knowledge.

Points a, b and c would appear to be the solicitor's role however the solicitors are invariably pressured for time and therefore discussion/clarification opportunities can be limited. Indeed, DVCS have found that the Legal Aid duty solicitors often rely on our workers to undertake this role or some of these roles. The message from the Legal Aid office over the years has consistently been that DVCS is an important adjunct to their role in the application of orders. DVCS re-explains the process before, during and after Court according to what the applicant has comprehended.

Court Advocacy Service:

The above explanations are a preamble to the thoughts DVCS has about providing a separate court advocacy service. This is a time when women should be provided with strong advocacy, it is a considerable flaw in access to justice that this service gap exists in the ACT. It would be interesting to have statistics on how many DVCS clients and non-clients of DVCS apply for protection orders and do not have support and would actually have wanted that support. More interesting, and alarming, would be how many of them might have obtained more appropriate Orders with strong representation from dedicated domestic violence court advocates.

Too many applicants of Protection Orders are encouraged to accept undertakings in order that the matter settles quickly. Undertakings offer no form of protection; they are legally unenforceable if breached. More concerning is the encouragement for an applicant to accept mutual Orders during the conferencing process, again so the matter is settled and does not enter the court system. This is a travesty of justice, that an applicant attends court to obtain a DVO and leaves with an Order in place **against** them. This is not about situations where there may have been mutual violence; it is about those times when the applicant is encouraged to accept mutual Orders as a strategy to settle the matter from the respondent's side.

DVCS hopes that in the future with appropriate resourcing, court advocacy, as opposed to court support, will again be offered to our clients as a matter of course, as we strongly believe it should be. Court advocacy for family violence matters is considered an essential part of a 'good practice' system, without it we are letting women and children escaping domestic violence down at a critical time.

Management Committee

I will finish with a big thank you to our Management Committee, what an excellent group they are. Special thanks to Jane for her ongoing support of DVCS and to me personally in my role as manager. Jane has been our Chairperson for the past three years.

Dennise Simpson
Manager

C&YP Report

The last year has seen a number of changes occur within our work with children and young people. The YPOW programme, which continues to receive acclaim (and referrals) from within the sector, has come to an end. And our original CYP focus worker has also left us.

The tireless commitment of our YPOW worker and the success of the YPOW programme is spoken to in other reports within this document, so I will not expand on this here.

I did feel it appropriate to begin this report with a brief tribute to the work of Kylie, who has been the Child and Young People Worker from its inauguration in November 2005 until February 2009. In her time in this role Kylie made a significant contribution to the promotion of children and young people's safety. The most significant of her achievements include:

- ❖ Her work within the organisation – building a culture within the organisation which prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, and strengthening the skills and understanding of crisis workers around the complex impacts of DV on children and young people and how to work with families and individuals around this.
- ❖ Her work with Care and Protection Services, building a collaborative relationship between DVCS and CPS workers for dialogue around risks, supports and collaboration where DVCS holds strong concerns in relation to children and young people's safety and/or emotional wellbeing.
- ❖ Her support for the YPOW programme

It was very sad to see Kylie leave us, though I am very excited by the opportunity it has given me personally in taking up the role.

The last five months have provided me with the opportunity to develop and consolidate my thoughts about the issues that impact on children and young people's safety within a family violence context, how DVCS and the broader ACT community are responding to this, the challenges we face, and how we can continue to improve outcomes for children and young people. Previous to taking up the role of Children and Young Person Focus Worker, I was a crisis worker within our organisation. This has informed my thoughts, as has my ongoing research and professional development around children and young people, and my contact with other organisations and individuals who work with children and young people in various capacities in the ACT, and more broadly.

Crisis workers are the primary point of contact for the organisation with families experiencing violence. A principal focus for CYP is therefore to continue to find ways to support and build the considerable skill and commitment our crisis workers have in their dealings with children and young people and to do so in ways they find useful and relevant. In order to best achieve this it was decided to give me team leader responsibilities, to physically move the CYP into the main room, and to ensure that I also continue to undertake crisis work. I am complementing this day-to-day contact, conversation and reflection with crisis workers with in-house training, the development of a resource folder and appropriate resources, making readings on relevant issues accessible, and ongoing review and development of appropriate DVCS policies and procedures. CYP also continues to review, oversight and resource Crisis Workers around specific complex and high risk cases that feature children and young people.

DVCS management and CYP have been interested to maintain and continue to progress the relationship between DVCS and CPS. In line with this, Case Review meetings continue to occur regularly. As well as providing a direct forum for dialogue around risks, supports and collaboration where DVCS or CPS hold strong concerns in relation to children and young people's safety and/or emotional wellbeing, the personal relationships being developed are leading to regular and ongoing contact between CPS workers and CYP/crisis workers regarding complex cases. It was also the intention of such meetings that they could become a vehicle to drive common understandings around the complex and often unique experiences of children and young people experiencing domestic violence. DVCS management has suggested that the key liaison positions for DVCS within CPS rotate to broaden the base of knowledge and give more management personnel exposure to the complexities of DV issues.

In order to further strengthen the relationship between DVCS and CPS, CYP also spent a day at CPS meeting case workers and talking with managers, and continues to have regular contact with case workers and managers on an as-needs basis. CYP and DVCS Team Leader - Mirjana Wilson will also continue to deliver a series of training workshops for CPS staff on the issue of domestic violence and its possible impacts on children and young people.

I am very fortunate to be in a position that requires active research concerned with evidence based best practices connected with the nature of the support work and advocacy DVCS provides. Being new to this position, I have actively sought out research and literature to keep abreast of emerging best practices in our work with children and young people, and will continue to do this. While much of this research is funnelled back to our Crisis Work Team, research is also generated more broadly to the community and government sectors.

For example, I am currently preparing a submission for the draft ACT young people's plan, and have been involved in various workshops regarding the children's plan and collaborative practice in the sector. I am also continuing to provide professional development training/workshops for external agencies working with children and young people.

CYP continues to have an active involvement with the DVCS Education Officer. This is a very supportive relationship, sharing information and resources as well as personal reflections and ideas. CYP has been involved in discussing the early intervention focus of the Education Officer, and will be involved in two of the programs run jointly by our Education Officer and the Child and Family Centres in Gungahlin and Tuggeranong. We are also investigating how to broaden the impact of DVCS education work in schools, and are currently developing professional development training for ACT teachers.

I am very excited to be able to focus the attention of my work with DVCS on children and young people, and building the capacity of DVCS and the sector to understand and support children and young people who are experiencing domestic violence. I am looking forward to seeing change and consolidation of the ideas and practices we are all working so hard to deliver.

AI
C&YP Focus Worker



YPOW Project- Final Report

Overview of Project

YPOW is an early intervention project targeting children and young people (aged 5-18 years) who use violence in the family home. YPOW centres on the child/young person using violence, and also engages the family in the change process. Interaction with young people is facilitated through outreach, activity-based sessions. YPOW is designed to be flexible to each individual family's needs, and some of the main tasks of the program include the promotion of safety, case management, advocacy, counselling, information and referrals.

YPOW seeks to engage the child/young person's broader social network, including the school, interests/activities and other formal and informal supports, and wrap these supports around the child/young person and their family. YPOW recognises that the most significant change in children/young people and their families is achieved through the development of relationships, and thus prioritises the working relationships with families and the relationship of the family to its wider support network. YPOW is the only program of its kind in the ACT to directly address the issue of children and young people's use of domestic violence from an early intervention and outreach perspective.

YPOW was developed in partnership with the Domestic Violence Crisis Service ACT (DVCS) and the Office of Children, Youth and Family Support (OCYFS). The YPOW project received three year funding in March 2006 under the Chief Minister's *Community Inclusion Funding Program*. The Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS) also provided additional funding for the project to continue until the end of the 2009 financial year. YPOW's pilot period has now come to an end, and the outcome of the project's renewed funding submission is still unclear.

Additionally, the sole YPOW worker had planned to leave DVCS May 2009, and with no opportunity to replace the position, the program moved into a period of finalisation between late 2008 and May 2009. No further referrals were taken during this period, and evaluations were conducted with clients still involved in the program. The details of the latest YPOW evaluations are included in the Annual Report.

Intended Future Directions of YPOW

The program's key objectives have been reached, and YPOW is now well positioned to continue to deliver support and therapeutic services to children and young people who use violence in their family relationships. The recent community budget submission sought recurrent funding to build on the momentum and success of the initial pilot period (under CIF funding). Continued funding will not only ensure the continuation of this unique and distinctive program, it will ensure the program can expand beyond its present capacity to meet the growing issue of children's use of violence, exposure to violence and attitudes toward the acceptability of violence.

Given the apparent increasing need for a service such as YPOW¹, the recent community budget proposal outlined key expansionary objectives for the service. These included:

- Doubling client capacity and output;
- Targeted program expansion e.g. group work, research, collaborative partnering etc.;
- Centralised management, supervision and oversighting;
- Recruitment of a second outreach worker;
- Expanded cross sector training and professional development;
- Development of inter-agency protocols with identified key sector services, e.g., housing, education and health; and
- Expanding/further developing client and program evaluations.

Further to these expansionary aims is the progression of the program into a discrete, evaluated service situated within and managed by DVCS. With direct management, support and supervision provided by DVCS – a community service with expertise in domestic violence², safety *and* outreach – YPOW is well positioned to continue to provide high quality, professional support to children, young people and their families across the ACT.

SM

Psychologist, Grad Dip Psych

Young People Outreach Worker



¹ An unprecedented survey conducted by the White Ribbon Foundation (2008) supports disturbing trends in children and young people's use of violence and attitudes toward the acceptability of interpersonal violence. The report found that a third of boys reported it was acceptable to hit girls, one in every four adolescents live with domestic violence and a third of year 10 girls had unwanted sex. The study reviewed data from the past seven years, including a survey of 5000 12 to 20-year-olds. Please see: Flood, M and Fergus, L. (2008) *An assault on our future: The impact of violence on young people and their relationships*. A White Ribbon Foundation Report. A copy of the report is available electronically at:

<http://www.whiteribbonday.org.au/media/documents/AssaultonourFutureFinal.pdf>

² DVCS have organisational and service policies that recognise the impact of domestic violence on children and young people and their particular vulnerabilities in such circumstances. DVCS policies give priority to the safety and best interests of children and young people across all aspects of DVCS service delivery – including YPOW.

YPOW Project Evaluations

Evaluation sample

Participants in the present evaluation were mainly continuing and active clients of the YPOW program during the period of February 1st 2009 and May 15th 2009. Two clients were evaluated in December 2008 after being exited from YPOW. These young people resided in the same foster care placement, and their carer completed a parent questionnaire for both of them. All of the children are male (a summary of the participants' characteristics are at Table A). One child's questionnaire was excluded from the evaluation. While he agreed to complete the evaluation, the young person demonstrated great discomfort with the process of YPOW exiting, and subsequently gave largely non-sensical answers. Another child, whose parent participated in the questionnaire, was unavailable to take part in the evaluation due to the instability of his situation. Evaluations were carried out as part of the closure of the YPOW program (with the exception of the clients evaluated in 2008). This differs from the previous evaluation, in that clients were not necessarily evaluated after having reached their goals in the program.

Table A. Demographics of the Participants involved in the YPOW Program from 01/02/2009 to 15/05/2009

Cases Closed		Cultural Origin	
Males	10	ATSI	1
Females	0	Italian- Fijian/ Indian	1
Ages	7-14 years	Maori- Bangladeshi	1
Mean age	9.1 years	Anglo-Saxon	7

(n=10)

Materials

The program exit questionnaires developed by the DVCS Children and Young People Focus Worker (CYP) were administered to participants. The questionnaires incorporate a combination of qualitative responses, and Likert-type scales for which participant's rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with a given statement. The questionnaires cover a

range of areas that map on to YPOW's aims with the children, young people and families who are involved in the program. These areas are as follows, and a further description and corresponding results from the questionnaires are under '*Breakdown of questionnaires*':

- Change in behaviour and wellbeing of child/young person
- Family connectedness and relationships
- Connectedness to social networks
- School connectedness
- Child/young person's self-awareness/insight
- Flexibility of program
- Participants' feelings and suggestions about program
- Participants' experience with YPOW workers
- Reaching and setting goals
- Child/young person's self-esteem
- Practical value of program for parents

Procedure

The clients evaluated in December 2008 completed the questionnaire approximately three months after being exited from the program. The remaining five families were administered the questionnaire as part of a closing/follow up visit before case closure. As with the first evaluation, the questionnaires were administered by the YPOW worker. While DVCS recognises the limitations of an evaluation that is conducted in this way, this was the only mechanism available as there was again no funding for external evaluation. A major limitation of an internally-conducted evaluation is the potential for response bias from the children/young people and parents; the participants may have felt an obligation to convey only the more positive aspects of the program, due to the established relationship with the YPOW worker. At the same time, the working relationship with the YPOW worker may have helped facilitate more honest and detailed questionnaire responses from participants.

The YPOW worker met the families at their home to administer the questionnaires at pre-arranged meeting times. Parents and children were informed that their questionnaire data would be held confidentially and securely at DVCS, and used only for the purpose of evaluating the program. The parents were given the parent exit questionnaire and asked complete it (the YPOW worker followed up with parents to ensure that there were no barriers of literacy to completing the questionnaire). Parents were encouraged to fill out the form honestly. It was conveyed that their answers are important to enhancing the YPOW program, and if funding cannot be obtained at this time, there will be data to assist with a re-submission.

While the parent/s completed their form, the YPOW worker took aside one-on-one the child/ren who had participated in the program, and conducted an interview using the questions on the child questionnaire. The child was told that the purpose of the evaluation was to find out what they thought of the program, and to help make YPOW better if it keeps going. The child was encouraged to be as honest as possible, and was told that the YPOW

worker would also like to hear about parts of the program that might not have worked so well.

Children were not prompted on their answers, and if a child appeared to have difficulty answering or completing a question, they were not pushed to do so. Limited examples were only given if a child indicated that he/she didn't understand a question. There were occasions where children were asked to elaborate on some answers. This was done with the use of open-ended statements, e.g., "can you tell me more about that?", or "you've said you've noticed a big change with your behaviour. What sort of things have you noticed?"

Breakdown of questionnaires

Change in behaviour and wellbeing of child/young person

A reduction or elimination of the child/young person's use of violence is considered to be one of the most important indicators of YPOW's effectiveness. Additionally, it is considered vital that there be an improvement in the emotional and psychological wellbeing of the child/young person, given that this goes hand-in-hand with the behaviours of concern.

Overall, the parent questionnaires revealed that there was significant change in children across varied behavioural indicators. For example, parents reported changes in their children such as showing greater respect, less use of violence, less aggression, calming down faster when agitated/more self control, less willing to physically run away from situations and greater participation in chores at home.

The young people's surveys reflected a range of responses around perceived changes in their behaviour and wellbeing. While all of the young people expressed that YPOW had helped them, most had difficulty identifying specific behavioural shifts. Those who did give more details listed changes such as using less violence, not being as aggressive toward siblings, better self-control, communicating better with others and having less anger. A number of the young people's questionnaires included more general statements that YPOW has helped them or that their behaviour is better/has changed since beginning the program.

Family connectedness and relationships

This domain looks at an improvement in the quality and nature of the relationships among family members, exemplified by features such as more positive and open communication, increased family stability and diminished use of violence.

The parents' questionnaires reflected that generally, the relationships within families who participated in YPOW improved significantly. Most parents 'strongly agreed' that their family relationships had improved since YPOW commenced, as well as the relationship with their child, except for two parents rated that they 'agreed' with these statements. More detailed responses from parents expressed that there is less fighting among siblings, the child

is happier to discuss problems/issues in the family, there is less abuse in the parent-child relationship, more respect and improved communication within the family.

One parent added that YPOW allowed her daughter and herself to spend one-on-one while her son was out on visits with the worker. The parents of a 13-year-old male commented, “[There is now] a better relationship between child and family and different ways to change the situation, because of the worker”.

One of the young people in the foster care placement answered the questionnaire in relation to both his biological and foster family. This yielded some different responses. The young person rated his relationship with his foster family as ‘very challenging’, and the relationship with his biological family as ‘strong’. As well, he perceived that while the YPOW worker’s relationship with his foster carer was slightly negative (noting that the carer rated the relationship with the worker as very strong), the worker’s relationship with his natural family was ‘strong’.

The other young people gave varied responses in this area. Two rated their family relationship as ‘good’, one rated about a 4.5 (‘strong-good’), and one rated the relationship as ‘strong’. Qualitative answers reflected the young people’s perception that they are nicer to family members, and their family helps them with problematic behaviour. All of the young people included family as the most important people in their life, and three said they are happiest when with family.

Connectedness to social networks

This area is measured by the family’s sense that they are now more connected into social networks such as family and community services. Also gauged is participation in social activities like camp programs and after school activities, along with changes in the child’s friendships, since YPOW commenced. Generally, responses to this domain were somewhat mixed.

Parents gave a range of responses to the statement that they feel more connected with family and community supports since YPOW began. One parent rated that she was ‘not sure’. Two parents rated that they ‘agreed’ with the statement, and three rated that they ‘strongly agreed’. In response to the question on whether parents have noticed any changes in their child’s friendships since commencing YPOW, the foster carer stated that the children in her care now have more friends. Another parent commented that her son has been less judgemental, and is beginning to choose “better friends that he won’t get into trouble with”.

Referrals to other support services/programs, as well as sporting activities, were made or encouraged for the majority of families. Parents did not tend to specify which services they were referred to. One parent commented that although the YPOW worker is attempting to locate alternative support for her son (given the program is closing), she is concerned that her son will not engage with other workers because he is angry and hurt about losing the YPOW worker.

Young people gave similarly different responses. One participant stated that he is both happiest and feels strongest when with friends (and family). Another young person said that he is happiest when hanging out with his friends. The other three participants, however, did not clearly indicate a sense of social connectedness in the questionnaire. This highlights a need for a more specific question to draw out this information. Many young people did comment that the activity-based aspect of YPOW and ‘getting to go places’ during visits was one of the best things about the program. This was a very social aspect of YPOW, and suggests that the young people felt socially included/connected during their involvement.

School connectedness

A global measure was taken of the degree to which parents believed that their child’s feelings towards school improved since YPOW began. The parents of one child missed answering the statement that since YPOW began, their child’s feelings toward school have improved. However, they identified two key improvements in their child as being his behaviour and attendance at school. The other quantitative responses were mixed. One parent ‘disagreed’ that her child’s feelings toward school have improved since beginning YPOW, though there was no elaboration on this. Another parent replied that she is ‘not sure’, and the other three parents rated that they ‘strongly agree’ with the statement. These parents offered comments including their child is in less trouble at school/is better behaved, and it is easier to get their child to school.

The child questionnaire did not contain a direct measure of school connectedness, meaning that participants were not asked about school in particular. There were a number of qualitative questions, however, that could have prompted responses around feelings towards school. Two of the young people indicated changes at school. One stated that a key thing YPOW has helped with is his school work performance, and another young person said “school”, though the specifics were not elaborated upon. The other questionnaires made no reference to school at all, and again, there needed to be a more targeted survey item exploring this area for young people.

Child/young person’s self-awareness/insight

It was thought that the child/young person’s ability to reflect on themselves and their behaviour was another crucial aim of the YPOW program. This was measured by asking the children/young people a number of questions about what they’ve learned about themselves and life since commencing with YPOW, what animal they’d choose to describe themselves, and when they feel happiest and strongest.

The young people gave some very encouraging responses when asked about new things they’ve learned about themselves since starting YPOW. Comments included “I can have fun”, “I’m not as violent”, “different people act differently to your behaviour”, “I can be

good”, “I’m not the only one who’s been through shit”, “I’ve lost half my anger”, “I can control myself better”, and “ever since I’ve been good, I get more things in my life”.

When asked about other new things they’ve learned since beginning YPOW, answers included “I can drive a go-kart”, “I like skate parks”, “I can write a song”, “girls are not worth worrying about at my age”, and “some people don’t function properly because of their past”.

When asked what animal describes them and why, two young people listed animals (a rhino and a monkey respectively), though weren’t sure why they made this choice. The other three young people chose a “big dog – because they’re cool”, a “possum – because they’re quick and they climb well”, and a “tiger, because they’re vicious”. The young people largely listed being with family and friends as when they feel strongest and happiest. Other responses included “I now feel strongest when I learn to do a jump on a bike”, “I’m happiest when I’m with [YPOW worker]”, and “I feel strongest when I get angry”.

Flexibility of program

An intended central feature of YPOW is that the program is able to flexibly meet the needs of children and their families. This means that the service is delivered without adhering stolidly to a defined service role, a set of service delivery criteria or specific therapeutic modality. Parents were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement that the YPOW program was flexible around their family’s needs. All parents rated a 5 (‘strongly agree’), indicating that they believed the program was flexible to their situation. The child/young person questionnaire did not contain a measure of the child’s perception of YPOW’s flexibility.



Participants’ feelings and suggestions about program

This area canvasses the children and families’ global feelings about YPOW, with respect to whether the participants would recommend the program to other families, how they would rate their overall experience with the program and any suggestions for improving YPOW. Two of the parents rated a 4 (‘agree’) when asked if they would recommend YPOW to other parents, children and young people. The remaining parents ‘strongly agreed’ that they would recommend the program to others. All parents also rated their family’s overall experience with YPOW as a 5 (very positive). One parent replied “more time would have been great” when asked what were the least useful aspects of YPOW. Another parent stated “none

really”, three parents listed “N/A” or drew lines through the question, and one parent left the question blank.

Parents were asked for suggestions to help strengthen the YPOW program. The parents of one child appeared to miss the page of the questionnaire with this question on it. Four parents replied that the program should receive more funding, with one of the comments including:

“Continue providing services to families!!!! The outdoor contact was just what my son needed to be able to ‘trust’ someone. Get more workers as this has been the first ‘service’ that has actually helped my son. With standard counselling he just was telling people what he thought would get him out of there”

Mother of 12-year-old male

One parent suggested that the program be allowed to run for a longer period of time. Another parent said that there should be more workers and the program should have more money to continue, and another commented that there should be “more workers to assist more children, including female workers to work with girls”.

Other comments regarding parents’ feelings about YPOW included:

“I wonder where this family would be without this intervention. As I wonder also, even with the worker’s efforts to get my son other forms of counselling, what reaction he will have to losing his ‘friend’ now that the program is no longer running”

Mother of 12-year-old male

“[YPOW has been a positive support to the family by] being able to respect us as an outsider looking in; not being judgemental, having an open mind and tell it as it is”

Parents of 13-year-old male

“As I am a single mum of 2 children it has been good for my son to spend time with a responsible male, also allowing my daughter and myself some one on one time”

Mother of 12-year-old male

The first question in the children’s questionnaires asked children to come up with three key words to describe their time with YPOW. As with the first evaluation, “fun” came through as a strong theme. Other responses included “funny”, “awesome”, “cool”, “happy”, “enjoy”, “exciting” “privilege”, and “good”.

Another question asked children/young people what they thought were the best thing(s) about YPOW. The activity-based interaction was a predominant answer. Some of the responses were “go-karting”, “the whole thing, everything”, “hanging out with [YPOW worker] and having fun”, and “getting to go places I haven’t been in ages”. One young person stated that the best thing about YPOW is that “it helped me”. When asked what they think would have made YPOW better, one of the young people said “I don’t know”. Two participants stated

“nothing”, with one adding “more fun activities”. One young person said that there should be “more money to do more activities”, and another said that there should have been “longer involvement; doesn’t finish so early”.

Participants’ experience with YPOW workers

This refers to the strength of the relationship between the YPOW worker/s, and the child and family. It also looks at aspects of professionalism from the worker/s such as punctuality and communication.

All parents rated a 5 (strongly agree) for the statement that they felt able to talk and communicate with their YPOW worker/s, and that their YPOW worker/s listened to and understood their needs. Additionally, all parents responded that they “strongly agreed” that the YPOW worker/s were punctual, rang when they said they would and so on. There were some additional comments from parents that spoke to their experience of the YPOW worker:

“[YPOW gave me] someone to talk to if we needed help because [my child] was angry; [the worker helped] me get through it”

Mother of 10-year-old male

“Our worker acted as an advocate for the protection and safety of my son, he went above and beyond what his role was”

Mother of 12-year-old boy

Perhaps most encouraging was the comment from a family with extremely complex needs. This family had historically received multiple service involvement with little change, and had eventually been labelled within the community and government sectors as resistant to progress:

“The worker has been an incredible support for both the family and children, not only for the YPOW child but all of our children... It has been good to have a worker committed to both our children and family and to tell us how it is and not giving up on us and leaving”

Parents of 13-year-old male

All of the children responded that they ‘strongly agree’ (5) that they got along well with their YPOW worker. Three of the young people ‘strongly agreed’ that their family got along well with the YPOW worker, and another ‘agreed’. As described earlier, one of the young people in foster care had divided his responses to this question. He perceived that the worker’s relationship with his carer was slightly negative (rated between a 2.5-4.5 on the question’s scale). The young person had once overheard a professional disagreement between the carer and YPOW worker during a telephone conversation, and had interpreted this as a fight (the nature of the conversation was later clarified to him). The young person, however, ‘strongly agreed’ that his natural family got along well with the YPOW worker.

Reaching and setting goals

Personal goals are set wherever possible with participants, and this area measures the degree to which children/young people believed that YPOW helped them to reach these goals. Two of the young people 'agreed' with the statement that YPOW helped them to reach their goals, and the other three participants rated that they 'strongly agreed' with the statement.

The young people were also asked what key messages they would pass on to themselves if they could go forward five years in time. This question initially appeared to 'stump' the participants, as they found it difficult to project five years into the future. Prompts were given such as "What sort of person do you want to be when you're older?" or "What sort of things *don't* you want to be doing?". The young people gave answers such as "be a respectful person", "be a fun person", "be a motocross rider", "be at TAFE", "have respect, and start pilot training" and "still become an architect". These responses reflect some very positive goals and sense for the future in the YPOW participants.

Child/young person's self-esteem

Another critical aim of YPOW is that the self-esteem of the child/young person increases following involvement in the program. From the parents' perspective, this is indicated by their rating of their child's self-view, and outlook on life and other people.

Parental responses to this area were somewhat mixed. Three parents rated that they 'strongly agreed' with the statements that since YPOW commenced, their child has a more positive self view, and a more positive outlook on life and other people. Another parent rated that they 'agreed' with both these statements. The other two parents rated that they 'agreed' their child has a more positive self view, and they were 'not sure' if their child has a more positive outlook on life and other people.

There was no strong direct measure of self-esteem in the child/young person questionnaire. However, there is a strong sense for the young people's pride in their answers on the changes they have made since beginning YPOW.

Practical value of program for parents

This encompasses the YPOW program providing tangible techniques and strategies that the parents could use to promote positive change in their child's behaviour, as well as relevant and useful referrals made by the YPOW worker/s. The qualitative responses from parents were examined to assess this area. Parents were asked a number of questions that gauged what they believed to have been the most useful aspects of the program for their child and the

family, as well as whether the program has increased their capacity to manage their child's behaviour. Overall, parents' responses reflected that the program was of strong practical value to them.

Where asked if YPOW has increased capacity to manage the child's behaviour, one of the parents left the question blank. Other comments included:

"The YPOW worker has been very helpful in ideas of managing certain behaviours"
Mother of 12-year-old boy

"Yes, I now have an insight into how he thinks and what's going on with him to a point"
Mother of 12-year-old boy

"Yes - having a different approach to the way that we approach the behaviour and not letting the situation bug us as much"
Parents of 13-year-old male

"[YPOW has increased my capacity to manage my child's behaviour by] reinforcing that I am doing the right thing. Taught me to 'choose' the battles to win the wars. My son is showing more respect and sometimes actually doing what he's asked"
Mother of 12-year-old boy

When asked to identify what the most useful aspects of YPOW were, parents made comments such as:

"Having someone having different ideas; having someone to contact and talk about issues; having someone that is able to contact different organisations and services"
Parents of 13-year-old male

"[One of the most useful aspects of YPOW for my family has been] the almost 'on call' ability to get my son help when he's being violent or non compliant; positive reinforcement of boundaries by someone 'closer' to [my son's] age"
Mother of 12-year-old boy

Summary and suggestions

The present evaluation builds upon the first, and provides further evidence on the overall success of the YPOW program. This means that the program is providing effective support and intervention to children and young people who use violence in their families, as well as support to the wider family unit. Given that the majority of participants were still actively participating in the program, families' longer-term progress following exit from the program was unable to be measured.

Education Officer's Report

This year has seen a growing involvement in early intervention programs involving families who have been identified as at risk and who live in difficult and challenging circumstances.

Early Intervention

Learn, Giggle and Grow

I have been co-facilitating the supported play group Learn, Giggle and Grow based at the Tuggeranong and Gungahlin Child and Family Centres. This has been particularly intensive as it involves working directly with families that have significant issues. Learn, Giggle and Grow encourages parents to reflect on their parenting skills, improve their relationship with their children and learn how to rejoice in their children. In addition, working with the mothers and children has allowed me to access other siblings and partners and offer assistance and significant referrals to improve the outcomes for the family in a more holistic manner. The playgroup setting allows isolated parents to come together and learn from each other, receive valuable information about community supports, and improve relationships and quality of life within the family setting. The program also allows a space in lives that may be both hectic and chaotic to spend quality time with children and improves the reflective capacity of parents thereby encouraging a more protective environment for the children and helping to stop the cycle of violence and perhaps the involvement of the child protection agency.

Parent and Infant Relationships

I have also been involved with the Parent and Infant Relationship playgroup at the Tuggeranong Child and Family centre. The Parent and Infant Relationship group is an evidence based program which improves the attachment between parent and infant, thereby promoting a positive template for future relationships. This has proven to be a rewarding but demanding program which requires an ongoing learning curve in the area of infant mental health. The program reaches out to parents who may be having difficulties, either due to current or past circumstances or trauma, establishing a relationship with their child. This is the second time the program has been run and although it is more straightforward it still requires intensive resources to be able to implement the therapeutic concepts of infant attachment. It is exciting to be able to work with other agencies in a program which has such a positive outcome for the women and children attending. The program also invites partners to be a part of the process and invites fathers to attend a session specifically designed to address their concerns and widen their outlook on what it is to be a father. This session also allows fathers to meet other fathers and be part of a process that they may find challenging. In addition, fathers are encouraged to become aware of services available and encouraged to

access these services. I continue to enjoy being part of this program as it allows me to promote DVCS services and be a part of a program which is truly ground-breaking in the area of early intervention in the A.C.T.

Southern Cross Early Intervention Program

I have also formed a partnership with the Southern Cross Early Intervention Program. This early intervention program introduced by the ACT government as part as their Toward 2020 education model aims to address inequalities by identifying the specific needs of young students, including potentially vulnerable children by incorporating services to improve the life chances of children potentially at risk. The Southern Cross program services the Belconnen area. I am hoping to co-facilitate a program with the co-ordinator of the Southern Cross program called 'food for thought'. This program is another avenue to promote their services to parents and the community.



School Programs

Primary Schools

I have also continued my successful relationship with Marymead in the Kid's Business Everyone's Business program. This program is evidence based program developed by Centacare in Queensland and specifically addresses behaviours of anger and aggression displayed in children aged nine to eleven. The children identified for this program are often at risk of being suspended from primary school. The Kids' Business Everyone's Business is

the only evidence based program that addresses this particular age group and it involves the teachers and the parents as well as the children. The program also allows parent to access other services to improve the outcomes for the children.

The program is based on art and music as well as group therapy and employs the process of child whispering which is a variation of the ongoing based framing commentary where the focus is on containing the child who is becoming aggressive or has become disengaged from the group. The technique aims to calm, re-focus and intensely coach a child to take charge of their actions and instil belief in their ability to do so. The group is promoted as a leadership group and the children are told that they have been chosen for the group as they have qualities which have been identified as leadership qualities. The group also allows otherwise isolated children to form friendships. The group allows DVCS to form a close partnership and promote its services within primary schools, to parents and teachers.

Secondary School Programs

I have been continuing to promote our services within the secondary school system by running information sessions and groups for identified students. I have had a varying degree of success with these programs as I have found that some students are identified for the group but are not interested in participating in any activities and my role has become one of a babysitter rather than assisting these students to establish respectful relationships. However, some students are very willing to participate and have reached out for further information in regard to respectful relationships and a greater knowledge about domestic violence. I have veered away from formal presentations to students and have used you-tube clips, songs, art and craft to explore issues such as stereotypes, respectful relationships, and strategies to keep safe. I also had the opportunity at one high school to run a program called Rock and Water. This program is based on martial arts and allows students to learn how to remain calm in stressful situations. It also allows students to discuss relationship issues in secure environment.

Conclusion

I have become increasingly involved in my work with early intervention and I find that this work reaches potentially vulnerable families within the broader community whilst continuing to promote the services of DVCS. It also allows me access to young men using violence and offering them alternative programs that may be able to help them develop strategies to manage their behaviour and break the circle of violence in their family. I am hoping to prepare professional development modules for teachers within primary and secondary schools to deliver information about the affects of domestic violence on young people. This may allow teachers to understand the behaviours displayed by these young people and better equip them to provide support to these young people at risk. Teachers have these young people in their care for considerable periods of time and if DVCS can promote a better understanding in regard to the behaviours displayed by these children it may have a more sustaining impact.

SB
Education Officer

COMMUNITY EDUCATION & TRAINING ACTIVITY REPORT

Community Education & Support

Organisation	People Involved	Activity	No. of Sessions
Gungahlin Child and Family Centre	Parents and children 0-5 years	<u>Learn Giggle and Grow</u> -Supported playgroup for parents known to DVCS who are finding it difficult to cope. Activities are focused on building esteem, promoting respectful behaviours and strengthening the parent/ child relationships.	15
Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre	Parents and children 0-5 years	<u>Learn Giggle and Grow</u>	33
Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre	Parents and infants 0-18 months	<u>Parent & Infant Relationship Support (PAIRS)</u> - Promoting positive interactions between mother and child. For those who have, have had or at risk of having Post natal depression	22
Gungahlin Community Funday	All members of the Gungahlin community.	<u>Health Expo</u> -Provide information and resources to the public	1

Community Agencies

Organisation	People Involved	Activity	No. of Sessions
Centacare	Counselling staff	DV issues, effects on young people/ children and role of DVCS	1
Lifeline Canberra	Counselling staff	DVCS and DV	2
Conflict Resolution Centre	All staff	DVCS and DV	1
Parentline	All Staff	DV issues, effects on young people/ children and role of service	1
Women's Centre for Health Matters	All staff	DVCS and DV	1
Toora Women Inc	New staff	DVCS and DV	1

Government Agencies

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>People Involved</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>No. of Sessions</i>
Australian Federal Police	New recruits	DVCS and FVIP role	3
Care and Protection Service	New recruits	DVCS, DV and the effects on children	4
Family Relationship Centre	All staff	DV, Family Law and DVCS	1
Various Government departments	Annual Practice Talking Conference	Presentation of a discussion paper 'YPOW project'	1
Victims Support A.C.T.	All staff	DVCS and DV	1
Sentencing Administration Board	All staff	DV	1
Commonwealth Attorney General's Department	Lawyers/Solicitors working in Indigenous Communities	DV and DVCS	1

Youth Outreach

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>People Involved</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>No. of Sessions</i>
Multicultural Youth Service	Staff	DV and young people	1
DVCS YPOW Program	Young people	Group cooking. Teach young people basic living skills and strategies for working in groups.	3
Bimberi Youth Detention Centre	Young people	Providing information and discussion.	1

Primary Schools

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>People Involved</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>No. of Sessions</i>
Charles Conder Primary School	Students from year 3-6	<u>Dealing with strong emotions</u> - helping children to discover the physical signs of strong emotions and giving them strategies to deal with those emotions.	7
Sacred Heart Primary School	Students years 3-5	<u>Connecting Kids</u> - group program for students who are struggling emotionally and socially. Activities designed to build on the existing strengths and capacities of the child, reconnect them back into the school environment with positive outcomes.	6
Theodore Primary School	Students years 3-5	<u>Connecting Kids</u>	6
Holy Trinity Primary school	Students years 3-5	<u>Connecting Kids</u>	6

Taylor Primary school	Students years 3-5	<u>Connecting Kids</u>	6
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Secondary Schools

Campbell High School	Male students	<u>Rock & Water program</u> - Using a framework of exercises it aims to make the male students more aware of the physical, mental and emotional changes experienced during adolescence and explores their ideas about boys and manhood, power, strength, desires and boundaries.	15
Canberra High School	Male students	<u>VTec</u> - Discussions & activities that address relationship issues, male roles in society and general life skills	4
Karabar High School	Female students	<u>Rock & Water</u>	5
Melba Copland Secondary School	Female students	Discuss what is a respectful relationship? Explore issues such as stereotypes, self esteem and strategies for keeping safe	8
Telopea Park High School	All students	<u>Health expo</u>	1
Wanniassa High school	Female students	Discuss what is a respectful relationship? Explore issues such as stereotypes, self esteem and strategies for keeping safe	8
Tuggeranong College	All students	<u>Phunktional workshop</u> - uses a broad cross-section of artistic forms that provide a forum for exploring issues such as sexual assault, body image, drugs & mental health	1
Tuggeranong College	All students	<u>Health Expo</u>	1

Tertiary Institutions

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>People Involved</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>No. of sessions</i>
Australian National University	Law students	Effects of DV and Family Law	1
University of Canberra	Law students	DVCS and DV	1



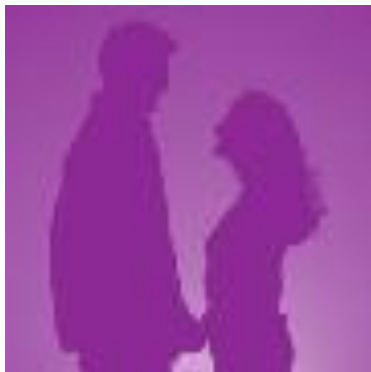
Client Evaluation Report

New DVCS client evaluation process

In November 2008 a new, ongoing DVCS Client Evaluation process commenced for that financial year 2008/09. The new process has proved successful and replaces the past practice of identifying a period of time each year (usually 6 to 8 weeks in the later part of the year) when all client evaluations were completed.

As the new process commenced late last year we have not achieved as many completed evaluations as we normally would expect. We anticipate that our evaluations will again number between 80/90 for the coming financial year.

Previously, client evaluations have targeted new clients to DVCS during the previous year; our new process now targets clients from new to long term. This enables us to gain a longer term view of client's experiences of DVCS.



We have also experienced a significantly higher number of clients responding to the evaluation who have had matters within the criminal justice system (CJS). This is a major point of identifying clients who meet the criteria below (when their matter is completed in the courts – possibly end of support period). Evaluation responses relating to our client's experience of the CJS are not included in this report but are distributed to the relevant CJS agencies:

Criteria for possible participation:

- Existing clients of DVCS who were determined by DVCS workers as possibly ending their support period
- Agreeable to participate
- Identified to the service

Q 1. Are you:

Female	57
Male	5
Total	62

Q 2. What is your age range?

13-18yrs	2%	35-44yrs	30%
19-24yrs	5%	45-54yrs	13%
25-34yrs	41%	55yrs+	5%
		Not stated	3%

Q 3. What area do you live in?

North Canberra	16%	Tuggeranong	29%
South Canberra	8%	Belconnen	16%
Woden/Weston	9%	Gungahlin	15%
Other	7% = Interstate or not answered		

Q 4. What cultural group do you identify with?

Anglo/Australian	39	Italian	2
Indigenous	3	Vietnamese	1
Catholic	1	German	1
Chinese	1	Sudanese	1
Iraqi	1	Indian Sheik	1
Filipino	1	Not stated	7
Indian Muslim	1		
Afghani	2		

Q 5 How long have you been in contact with DVCS?

3 mths or less	3 to 6 mths	6 mths to 1 yr	2 yrs +	Not answered
34%	13%	13%	24%	3%

Q 6. If you have become a client in the previous 12 months, how did you first hear about DVCS?

Police	32	Solicitor	1
Doctor	1	Social worker	1
White pages	1	Friend	1
Nurse	1		

In the past 12 months, what type of contact did you first have with DVCS?

Telephone	50%
A Worker came to Court with me	6%

Workers visited me with the Police	33%
Workers visited me without the Police	7%
Not stated	4%

Q 7 Following your contact with DVCS workers in the past 12 months, were you able to:

	Yes	Partially	No	Not stated
Be physically safer in relation to your immediate situation	71%	11%	11%	7%
Feel that Workers listened to you and understood your situation	93%	7%	0%	0%
Have more information about options and support that are available to you	88%	2%	8%	2%
Feel more able to make decisions about your situation	81%	13%	3%	3%
Have a better understanding of the impact of domestic violence on your children	68%	13%	13%	4%

Comments:

- Fantastic service for women stuck in these situations and don't think there is help
- Being listened to has been very helpful, I appreciated the support.
- The government should fund DVCS to do more and more refuges
- I was already aware of the impact of DV on my children (x7)
- You guys made things a whole lot easier, having a representative at Court and with case tracking was really helpful
- All your advice was the most accurate, more than Legal Aid.
- If it came to a time when I needed more support I know you are there. I hope I don't have to talk to you again.
- The workers at DVCS made me feel strong as I was very weak when I first made contact. Since then I have been assisted with accommodation, DVO and other supports
- Referrals to the excellent WIRC course and VSACT.
- When I first left home DVCS found us a place
- I called DVCS after things had settled down regarding DV, but it would have been useful to talk to DVCS earlier but I didn't because I was hoping that he would come to his senses
- I just love DVCS, because I lived so far out of town you were my lifeline
- DVCS helped me to do things I couldn't do myself
- Really helpful
- I got to the point where I needed 1 on 1 support, talking to different people was hard for me
- I wish I had more physical support, DVCS made lots of suggestions about what I could do but no one was there to help me do things
- Good conversations which were helpful, I am still following up a few referrals
- The support and backup given to me made a tremendous difference to my life, helped me not be so stressed
- Invaluable service
- Listening on the night, gave options not opinions
- DVCS didn't judge, contacted me every few days to see how I was going
- I needed someone logical, not a shoulder to cry on and DVCS was fantastic at this
- Court support was fantastic
- I didn't know anything before DVCS, like what I could do, I really needed help. I was so happy I smiled for the first time in 18 months

- I always carry a DVCS card in my wallet
- Appreciated being able to talk it out and have suggestions to try
- I felt I was alone without family support and now I have help
- DVCS workers were looking for something that wasn't there
- I have been really impressed with staff, time given and empathy
- Nice to have the release on the phone, I don't always feel I can talk to friends
- The law needs to be changed, I have suffered for 8 years since separating
- Felt like I wasn't offered services because I had been offered them a long time ago
- DVCS were not pushy but if I needed to talk to someone they were always there. It was great to have someone check in every now and then and also good to get an impartial view on things
- I felt able to do it myself
- I have a long road ahead of me and there is a lot that is not clear, I have experienced a lot of violence in my life so I have an understanding of this
- I found it good to talk to a 3rd party, workers were nice and easy to talk to
- My partner was taken away and the DVCS workers came in and understood the situation
- I made contact with a group regarding the children
- I felt very supported
- You are all beautiful, kind and caring people, you introduced me to supports
- YPOW absolutely supported our son and we can't thank you enough
- Very happy with all the support that was offered to me – it made a difficult and daunting situation much easier
- Everyone was great
- I had good help
- Great to know I had someone to talk to and have people to check up on me. It was such a shock and I didn't know where to go so DVCS was good to talk to.

Q 8 *What changes (if any) in the past 12 months, have you made to your relationship or intend to make as a result of having contact with DVCS?*

- I want counselling to continue for him and me
- I know I can call DVCS
- Separated (x10)
- I moved out
- He no longer lives with me
- I used all the information that was passed on to me by DVCS. I had no family in ACT at the time of the incident so I appreciated the support you gave me, I have educated my partner with the information provided
- I ended the relationship (x 2)
- I turned a corner, my son is not aggressive any longer
- My partner has only just moved back in and things have been alright
- We are divorcing (x3)
- I learnt that I don't have to put up with the crap of other people and there are ways out and other ways of doing things
- We no longer have contact (x3)
- Nothing (x4)
- DVCS gave me the confidence to talk with my partner who knows that he did the wrong thing
- I minimise the contact we have
- I have cut them off from my life
- Some Workers were good at making me realise that his actions were his responsibility, I found the contact useful while I was not able to speak to him

- I now know that his mental abuse was not just in my head, I had a safety net and know my rights
- I am more in control of our interactions
- I am trying hard to seek help for my problem, I don't raise my voice anymore
- I left and went to a refuge where I feel supported
- Got rid of my boyfriend, I learned to keep distance and that it is OK to say no and even have an opinion!
- Realised that I don't have to live with the abuse or be part of his shocking lifestyle
- Took out a DVO which put a final end to the relationship
- We try and discuss things more often and understand each other better
- I made the decision to end the relationship, I am more able to make decisions for myself and my children
- He's in jail at the moment, I feel stronger and will never go back, I have had a 'light bulb' moment
- To be more assertive and diplomatic
- DVO (x4)
- I have totally broken my relationship and I am learning to be independent
- I have put my foot down about people who have been drinking not being in my house
- I can't see myself going back despite the hardship I am going through right now, I am pretty happy to be out of the situation
- I now have my own home and we are a lot safer, he does come around to see the kids
- I feel more confident about dealing with disputes
- Well um, I am hoping it's over!
- I enjoy my freedom and I have a car of my own, I feel so different than I did 12 months ago, I am not so isolated
- I have been able to set boundaries, get a DVO and stick to it this time
- He does not live here but comes around which is a good outcome
- The changes I made were to get counselling support, make sure he takes his medication regularly and sees his doctor to make sure he is going OK
- I talk to my partner about safety and have accessed my friends for support
- We are attending relationship counselling and he is taking anger management classes
- I see a counsellor and am more active in seeking support
- I stopped the cycle of DV, not putting up with it and my kids know who to call for help
- I am now firmer with my ex and also with my children

Q 9 *In the past 12 months, was there something said to you by a worker that you found particularly helpful?*

- That the children will make up their own minds (client was concerned about influence of their father who was using violence)
- Offered support
- No, I just decided enough was enough, I don't want this happening to my kids
- Helpful that someone called and cared about my situation
- Their ideas hit home with me
- The first person I spoke to said that the kids can't stay in an environment like this and that DV is a cycle and kids must be protected
- Talked me through the DVO court process (x3)
- All the workers were very open and helpful (x3)
- I know that I am not alone and I could contact someone at any time if I needed to (x7)
- Referred to Raja, a hidden jewel

- The legal side of things, helped me to see a solicitor otherwise I may have not gone
- Told me to be strong and they made me feel strong
- I was impressed by the frequent contact I received re the court proceedings (criminal) I don't think I would have been privy to that unless DVCS kept me informed
- Counselling ideas
- Getting the phone numbers for the refuge so I could get out, WIRC referral because I went to the group
- Just the support to do things
- Explaining to me what abuse is helped me to see that me and my children were being abused and we didn't deserve that (x2)
- Gave me different ideas about how to go about doing things
- You gave me security and that is really important
- All of it (x8)
- Reiterating that I was not alone
- Ringing me to see how I was going gave me strength and dealing with my kids
- Going through the emotional side of it, loss, grief and change
- Helped me understand that my husband was responsible for his behaviour
- It's ok to feel
- Knowing that I wasn't going to be homeless, there was help and accommodation there if I needed it
- Helped me get perspective
- Knowing that I didn't have to go to court and press charges by myself made a huge difference
- Listened to me
- Even though I was worried about him, it was helpful to have someone remind me he needed to take some responsibility
- Conversation with a worker that made me feel more normal, that left an impression on me
- Take time out and take little steps
- Things will improve and get better
- Referred me to a psychologist
- Created a plan for situations beyond control, a 5 step plan
- Talking about what I could expect in relation to the criminal process, this prepared me emotionally for my situation
- Kept me up to date on the criminal process
- That DVCS were concerned about me and called each week as no one else knew what had happened
- DVCS didn't judge me because I wanted to stay with my partner

Q 10 ***In the past 12 months, was there something said to you by a worker that you did not find helpful?***

- No (x 56)
- General misunderstanding that this had been an ongoing thing and that I was denying that this had been happening. The assumption that he was on drugs and abusive as we lived in government flats, I found this across a number of services
- Giving me the bad news about his court matter, workers were good but I hated all the bad news
- The attitude of the visiting crisis workers, I felt like the bad guy but it was much better after some ongoing contact
- I had a misunderstanding with a worker, I said I was really drunk and they thought I was going to commit suicide and called the Police. That really upset me and I had just wanted someone to listen to me as I was depressed

- I did make one phone call where I felt that the workers didn't really answer my question
- Most people judge me because of my age, it was a barrier initially when workers spoke to me but I was able to convince them that I was OK. The workers were double checking seemingly thinking that I did not understand what they were saying, it is important for workers to have the right attitude

Q 11 *Looking back over your contact with DVCS in the past 12 months, does any one thing stand out as having been particularly helpful, for example, court support, advocacy, crisis visit?*

- All (x4)
- Court updates (x10)
- Court support (x16)
- Telephone support (x19)
- 24 hour availability (x3)
- Asking me how it was all going (x2)
- Having the Police and DVCS involved has helped keep my husband in line
- Supporting me to get housing (x4)
- It was good to have a young worker as they related well to my son
- The documentation of my situation and the options I could take up
- Being able to get things off my chest by talking to you, not bottling it up
- The crisis visit (x6)
- Assistance to obtain legal advice very quickly
- Feeling of being very carefully looked after by DVCS
- Calling me after hours as I work during the day
- Linking me in with other agencies
- At the crisis visit even though the Police were there, DVCS were there too and they are different, hard to explain
- Giving me a different perspective
- You followed up on things

Q 12 *Do you have any suggestions as to how any of the services provided by DVCS could be improved?*

- Someone to talk to the person using violence, make it clearer to them
- No (x29)
- As a CALD woman it would have been easier face to face
- More face to face (x2)
- Not really, DVCS is out there and there are a lot of agencies telling people to call DVCS, I just didn't call you when I should have
- It would be good to deal with only 1 worker, not so many as sometimes they don't know the story(i.e. a new crisis worker), I would have better rapport with 1 or 2 but not more
- An observation was that I always had different workers, maybe there is not enough staff, I spoke to 4 or 5 people, they were all fantastic but it would make it easier if the same person was dealing with you
- More advertising (x2)
- Blokes, DVCS favours women, do more for men
- More accommodation
- Policy should be made that any information given to DVCS prior to charges being laid be put before the Court, i.e. DVCS records, what I say and DPP, make it legal
- Some people might want more contact
- You need more staff
- Increase funding to YPOW, a great shame that funding was cut to such a great program with positive outcomes

- There needs to be more people like you
- Answer the phone quicker

Q 13 ***In the past 12 months, did you think the workers were aware and respectful of any special needs you may have?***
(Such as needs relating to ethnicity, culture, disability, gender, sexual preference)

- New workers perhaps lack empathy and once I felt that the worker was not old enough to understand
- Initial contact with men could be reviewed, some agencies listen and listen but don't question behaviour, but make criticisms
- More education particularly in schools

Yes	No	Not sure	Not Applicable
70%	0%	4%	26%

Is there anything you can tell us about your experience relating to this?

- I have dyslexia and workers helped me
- Workers always got an interpreter if I needed one
- Workers were very helpful in everything so I would think that they would be like this for everyone
- Were understanding when I was upset
- I have a back and neck injury, workers aware and respectful but not very responsive
- Yes, although I felt that there was an assumption made about my partner
- You were very aware of the needs of my children and this was great
- Always told me what I could do, who to contact and where to get help
- My English wasn't so good and workers encouraged me and supported me
- You had genuine concern for our son
- I received all the help I needed
- Helped me access suitable disability house
- The Police didn't treat me so well, but DVCS did
- Understood the issues I had
- Were patient with my language skills
- Very aware of my age and my adult son
- If workers were aware that it was a touchy subject they didn't push it and were supportive when I was upset on the phone
- Being pregnant and having a young child, I felt supported
- Workers always listened well and respectfully
- They were angels
- You were so kind I tell others
- Never felt any judgment of anything by DVCS, you judge yourself enough at these times

Q14 ***Would you have any hesitation in recommending DVCS to others***

Yes	No	Not sure
0%	97%	3%

Comments:

- Definitely would let them know (x3)

- Very woman focused agency, feel that you believe the best thing for a child is to be with their mother
- Going through everything was a whirlwind – life going so fast and the phone would ring and it would be DVCS. I couldn't cope , just calling and checking, knowing I hadn't been forgotten felt you cared – it made a difference
- It would be good if your workers were more experienced around sexual assault

- Not at all! (x2)
- I have already recommended you to friends (x4)
- Yes but I don't get involved in others situations
- Do it all the time
- I have helped 2 friends to escape DV and contact DVCS
- DVCS was very quick to get to my house and were very caring and understanding
- I would recommend someone right away
- Service is wonderful, all info "on the spot" and great. The enormity hits you , next call picks you up
- I would like to compliment all staff that were working with me, all easy to speak to and caring

Q 15 We would appreciate your comments about how you think that DVCS has or hasn't changed over time in relation to the way we deliver our support.

(NOTE: this question is only for clients who have been in contact with DVCS for 2 years +)

Do you think our services are currently delivered in a way that is;

More effective	Same	Less effective	No response
53%	46%	0%	2%

(n=15)

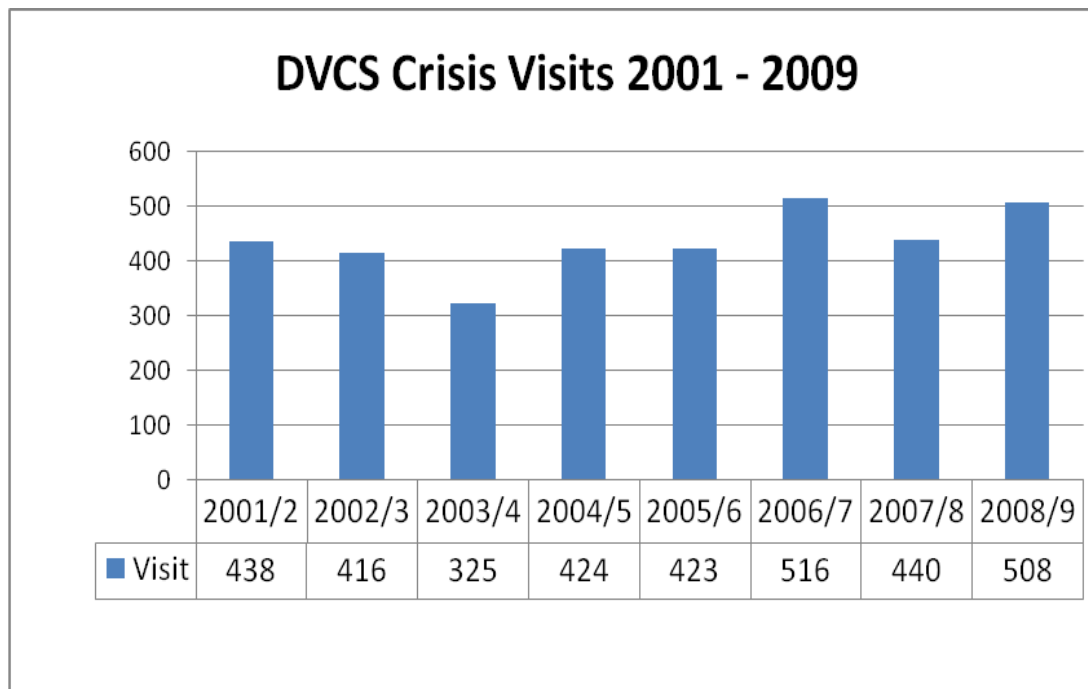
.....than previously?

- More follow up phone calls than previously which was really good
- Hasn't really changed – but I didn't receive ongoing support. I feel that I can pick up where I left off with DVCS after breaks in contact – very consistent
- A lot more follow up
- Helpful and supportive both times
- Always been good
- A little more effective – like to talk and actually listen - previously short conversations , now longer and more understanding which was useful
- All the contact I have had over the past 10 years has been helpful. You are always there and supporting me
- Service is continuing to grow and develop. DVCS has better contact with police and other services
- Easier to talk to – previously was angry about DVCS having called Family Services
- Consistent – towards the end though didn't ring so much
- I'm not sure how but it feels more comfortable with you
- Still consistent and a good support, changed with my needs
- 8 years ago you weren't very good, so I feel you are much better now

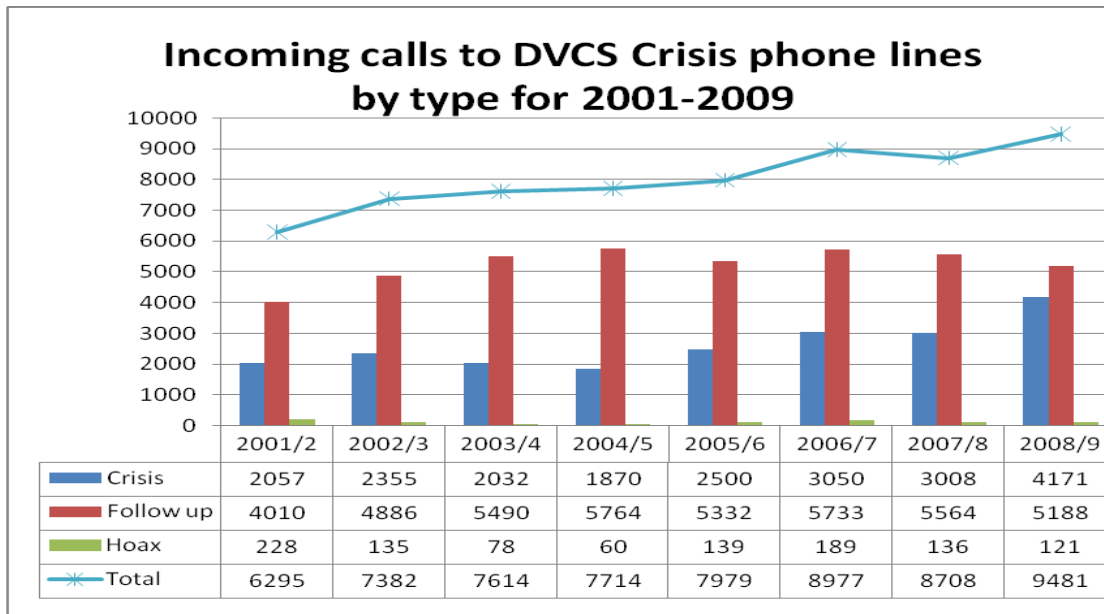
STATISTICS

2008-2009

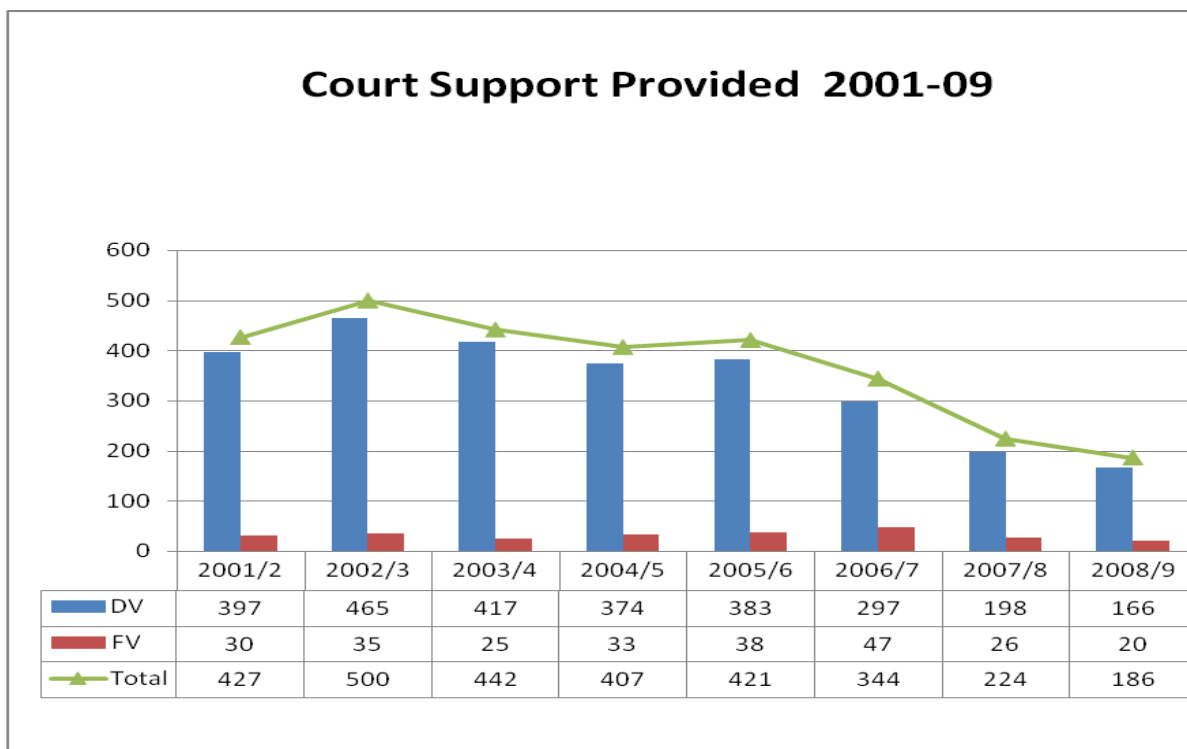
Graph 1. Comparison of the Number of Crisis visits per year over the past eight years



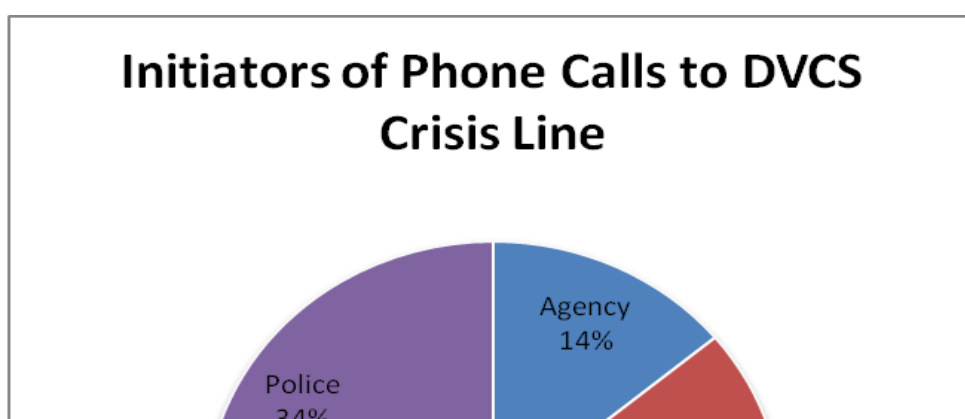
Graph 2. Comparison of the type and number of incoming calls to the Crisis line each year over the past eight years



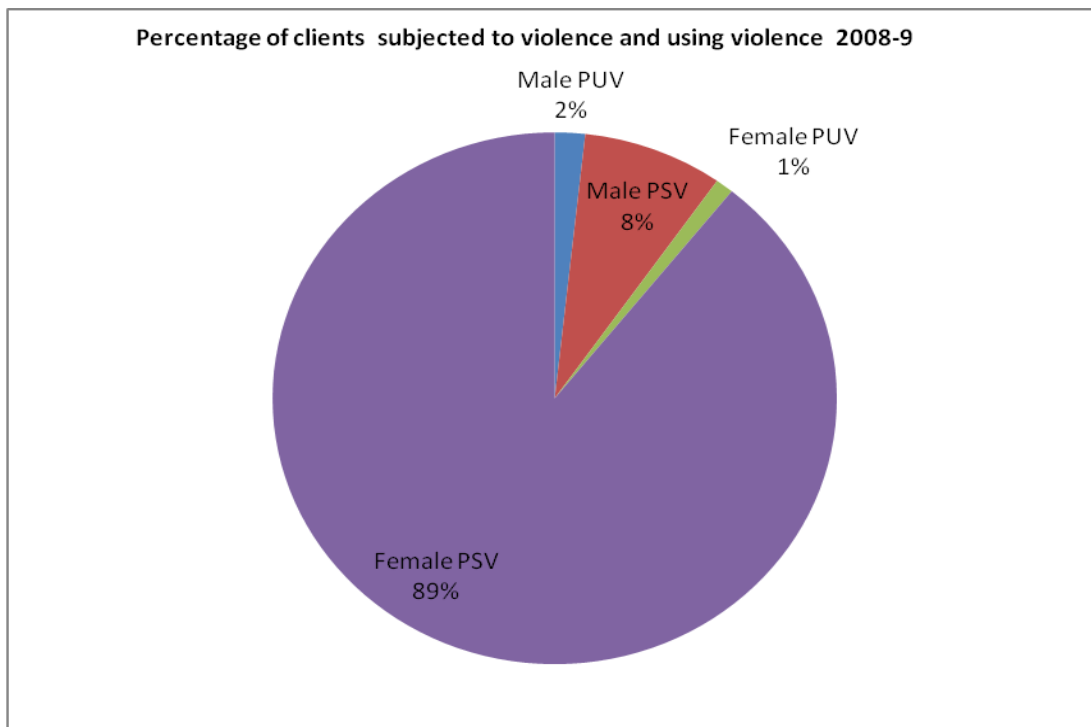
Graph 3. Comparison of the number of times DVCS provided court support to Clients each year (includes Domestic Violence Orders and Family Violence Matters) over the past eight years.



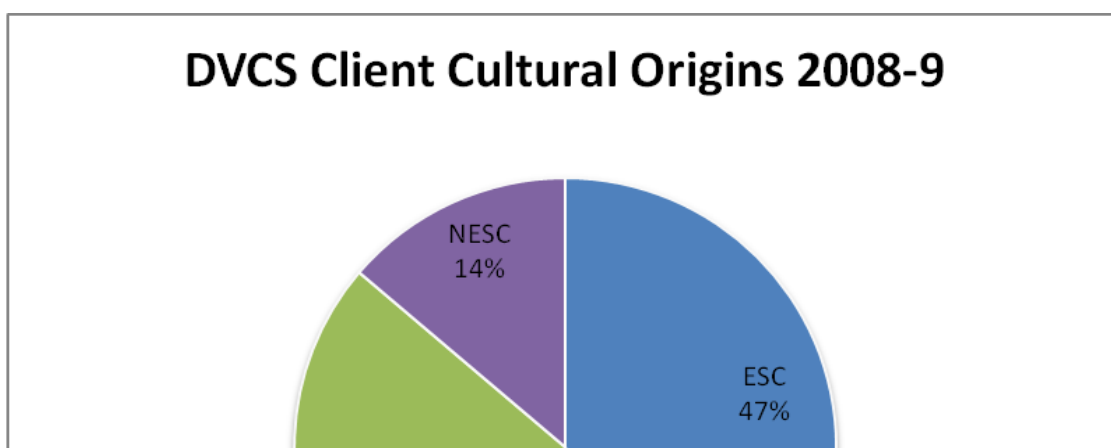
Graph 4 .Shows the percentage of phone calls made to the crisis line by different Initiators.



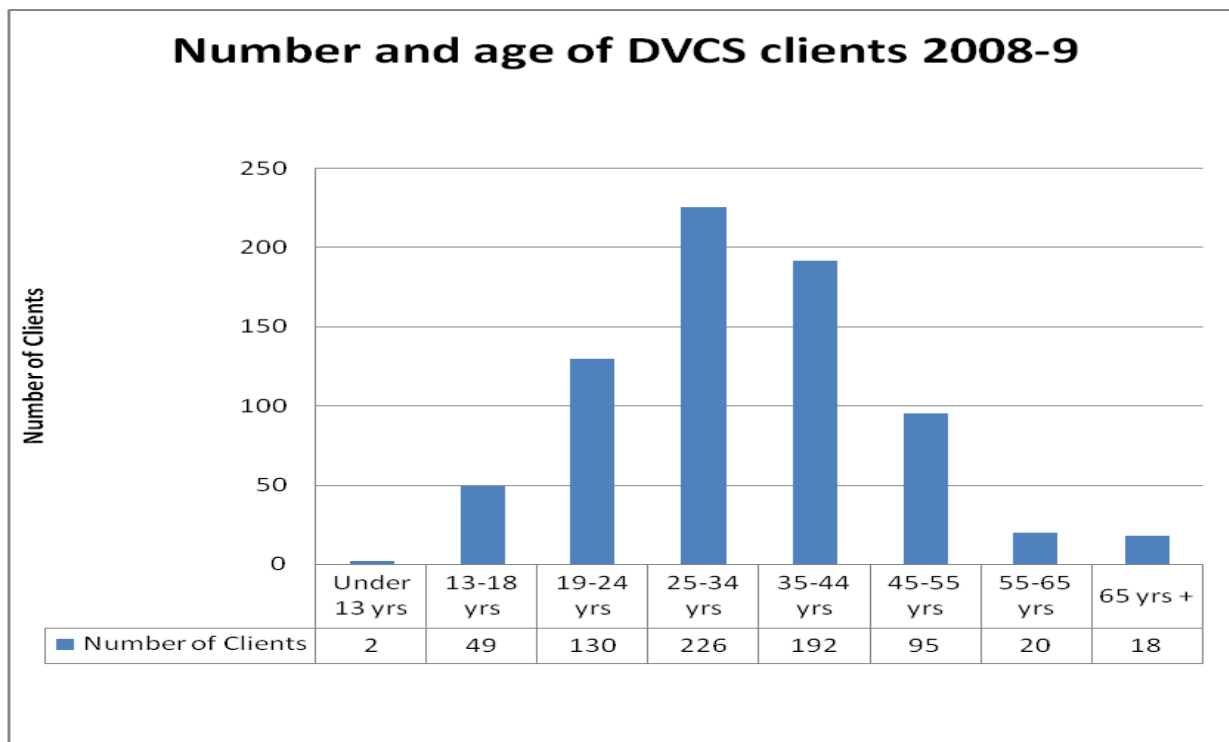
Graph 5. Percentage of current clients (including anonymous clients) who are People Subjected to Violence (PSV) or People Using Violence (PUV) defined by Gender.



Graph 6. Percentage of current clients from various Cultural Origins.

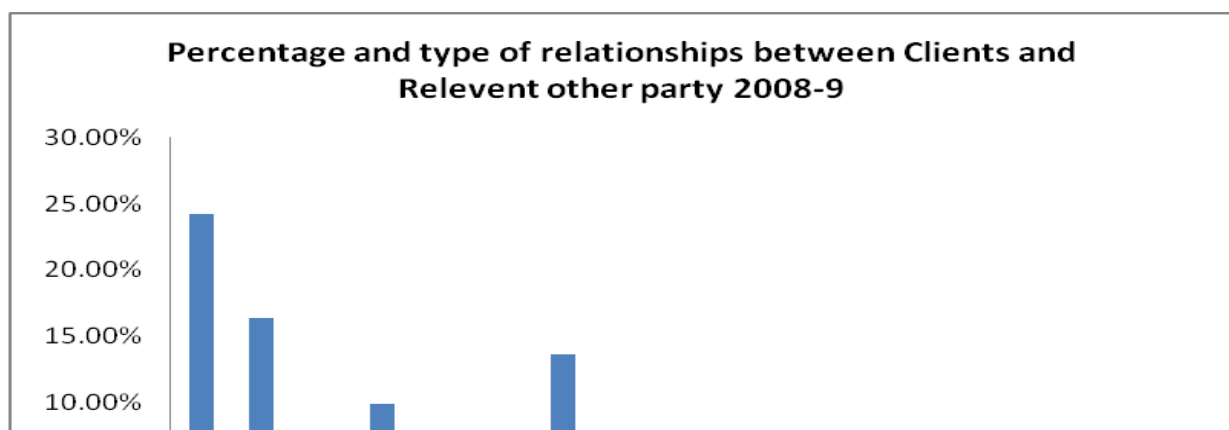


Graph 7. Number and age of current DVCS clients.

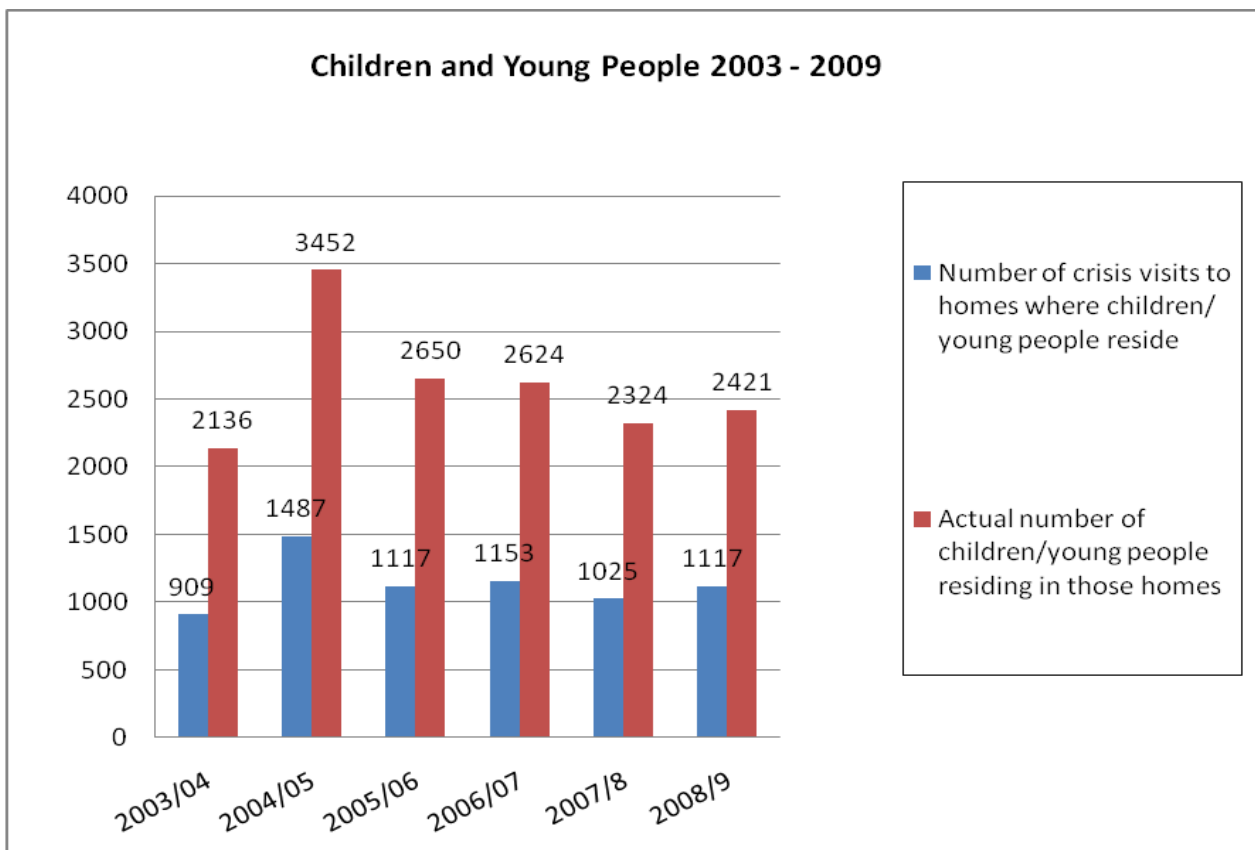


Note: 1241 (62%) of clients that DVCS received contact from or about via the crisis line, between 2008- 2009, have no age stated/ recorded.

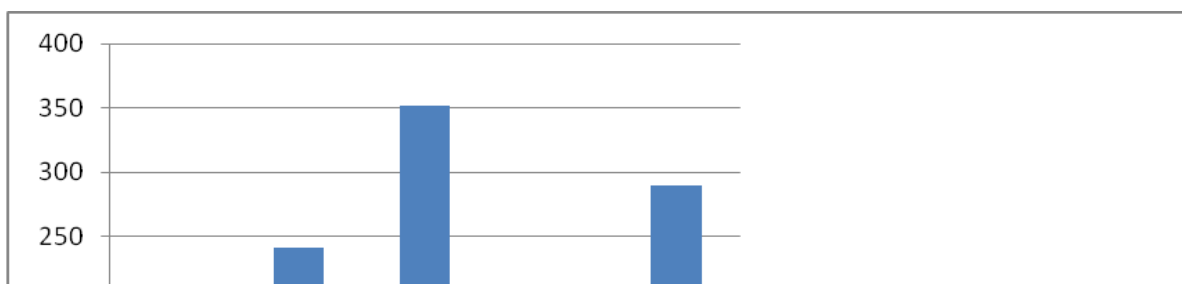
Graph 8. Percentages and type of relationships of current Clients and the relevant other party (predominantly the person using violence).



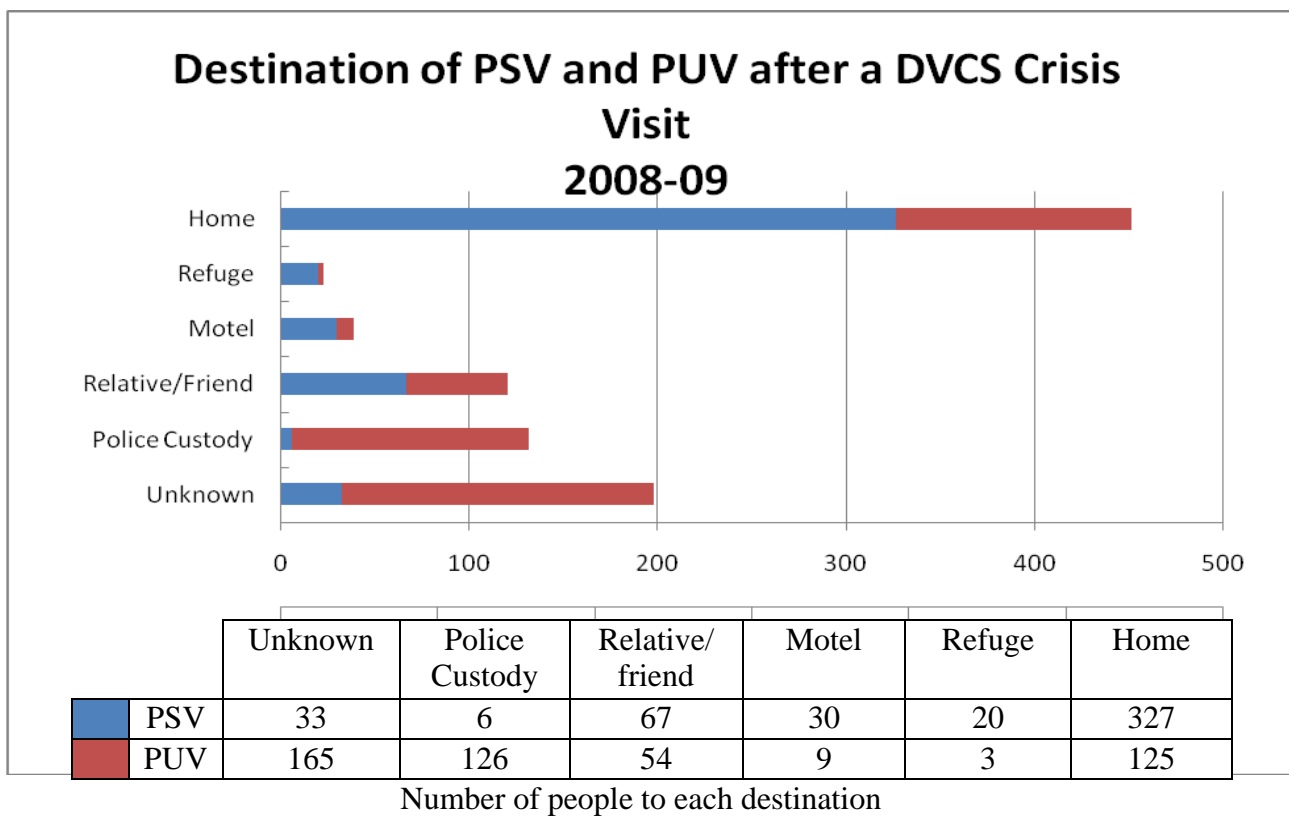
Graph 9. The number of Crisis visits to homes where children/young people have resided and the total number of children who resided with DVCS clients each year compared over the last six years.



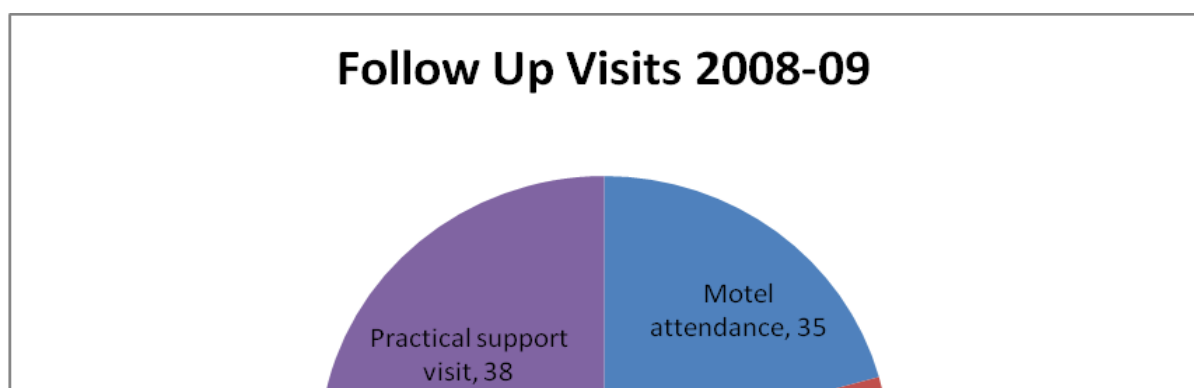
Graph 10. Comparison of the number of FVIP case tracking matters initialised each year over the last five years.



Graph 11. The Destination of Persons Subjected to Violence (PSV) and Persons Using violence (PUV) after a crisis visit over the past year.



Graph 12. Number and type of follow-up support visits given to clients over the past year.



Graph 13. Comparison of the number and types of follow-up support visits to clients each year over the last five years.

