Conversation Guide

Building Healthy Relationships and Happy Families



SSI For equality of life.



About this guide

This guide was created to help our community build healthy relationships. It is part of our work preventing family and domestic violence before it starts.

The guide was developed as part of SSI's Conversations for Prevention project, in partnership with many members of local Myanmar communities in Coffs Harbour. Conversations for Prevention is supported by the Department of Communities and Justice through the NSW Primary Prevention Multi-Year Partnerships (MYP) Grants Program.

This guide is intended to help you to have conversations about building healthy, respectful, valued relationships in your family.

Together, we can prevent violence before it starts and help our families to be happy, healthy and safe.

Getting ready for the conversation

01

You can support your community using this guide.

Sometimes we don’t have conversations about personal topics because of judgement or shame.

This guide will help you to start conversations with your friends and family about healthy relationships.

This is something anyone can do, anywhere, anytime, publicly or privately.

Ask if the person you are talking to is comfortable to have a conversation with you or someone else. Pause and check in with them.

Have this conversation with people you trust and feel safe to talk to about this topic.

If you are uncomfortable you can stop the conversation.

These conversations are confidential and private. Whatever is shared, you can't take outside. You should not share what you hear without permission. If you believe someone is in immediate danger of severe harm you must report it.

If someone tells you they don't feel safe at home, or they are experiencing domestic or family violence: please listen, believe them, and let them know they can get support.

There is a list of services at the end of this guide who can help.



What is primary prevention?

Primary prevention means stopping violence before it starts.
It's just like teaching water safety, to prevent drowning.



Managing change

02

It’s normal to experience challenges on your settlement journey, as we come from a traditional environment to a different way of living.

Sometimes we may experience conflict in our families as we adjust to this change.

Adapting to new roles within the family takes time and patience. We need to support each other.

If someone is finding it difficult to adjust to the change, remind them that the most important thing is working together in a relationship to make sure everyone feels safe and respected.

In Australia, my education and skills are not recognised. It creates a lot of stress in my family. Searching for employment is very hard. I've been applying for a lot of jobs but it's difficult to secure something.

We all face these challenges. We have to go step by step. We have to encourage each other, never give up, and talk to each other. It's a long process and takes time. Encourage each other in your family.



Everything is different here in Australia compared to back home. Sometimes, we have arguments at home because we both feel overburdened and stressed.



My friends were having conflict in their relationship too, after moving here. They decided to communicate and share the responsibilities at home. For example, if she cooked, he would wash the dishes. They became much happier because they were working together for their family.

We can make a change, so our children grow up with a better future, where families are more equal, happy and healthy.

Since moving to Australia we've had to change the way we do things, especially at home. I'm glad we talked about the challenges and made decisions together about how to manage our life in a way that's best for our family.

Yes! It took some time to get used to, but we've become really good at communicating our needs, making decisions together and sharing all the housework across the family so that everyone feels valued and respected.



At first, we worried that the community would judge us for not sticking to traditional roles. We worried they might laugh at a man doing housework and looking after the children while the woman goes to work and earns the money.

Now we don’t worry what the community thinks, so long as our family is happy. When I was growing up, my mother cooked, but my father cooked too. It taught me that husbands and wives can work as a team.



I’m so proud of my parents. Seeing them work together as a team makes me feel safe and happy. They’ve shown me what matters most is what works best for your family.



Oh you are so lucky, I want to tell my parents they can work as a team because I want to feel safe and happy at home too.

Encouraging positive communication

03

It’s difficult to talk about your personal life with other people.

But if we encourage people to talk to someone, then we can help each other.

Don’t worry about what other people in the community think.

As long as you and your family are happy and healthy, do what is important for you.

That is how we start building happy, healthy relationships.

My family and I are finding things difficult, but there's no one for me to talk to about it.

Coming to a new country brings new pressures – financial stress, housing, work, language.

No one is expected to handle all of that alone.

You can talk to me or someone else who you trust.

I will try my best to help.



I don’t want anyone to look down on me in the community.

When we talk, you and me, it’s private and confidential, unless there is something life threatening.



I worry the community will judge me if I stay home to look after the kids and my wife goes to work.



Do not feel worried about other people judging or making you feel ashamed.

What is best for the family is something you and your family decide together.

As long as both of you are happy with the arrangement you agree on, that’s what matters.

It may seem unusual to some people in the community but remember—moving to a new country brings change.

I would like to communicate better but I don’t know how.

We can help each other by sharing our own experience. You can tell me what you are struggling with, and I can introduce you to services that can support you. But you have to be willing to seek help.



Finances

04

Roles in the family around finances might change after moving to Australia.
For some families, women start going to work after moving to Australia.

The economic structure is different here. People may need support from others in the community or professional services to work out how best to manage money.

Many couples and families from different cultures all experience stress about finances.

The important thing is working together as a team towards your shared goals, and showing respect for one another even when things are stressful.

I feel stressed about money. There is no one who can help me. We have arguments about finances.



Lots of couples find money stressful, especially after moving to a new country where finances work differently.
But women having more independence or working doesn't mean you have to feel separated. You and your family can talk about money together and make plans as a family to work towards your goals.

Do you know who can help me with my financial hardship?

Of course there is help available.
For example, a financial counsellor can help you to plan your budget and work towards your financial goals as a family.



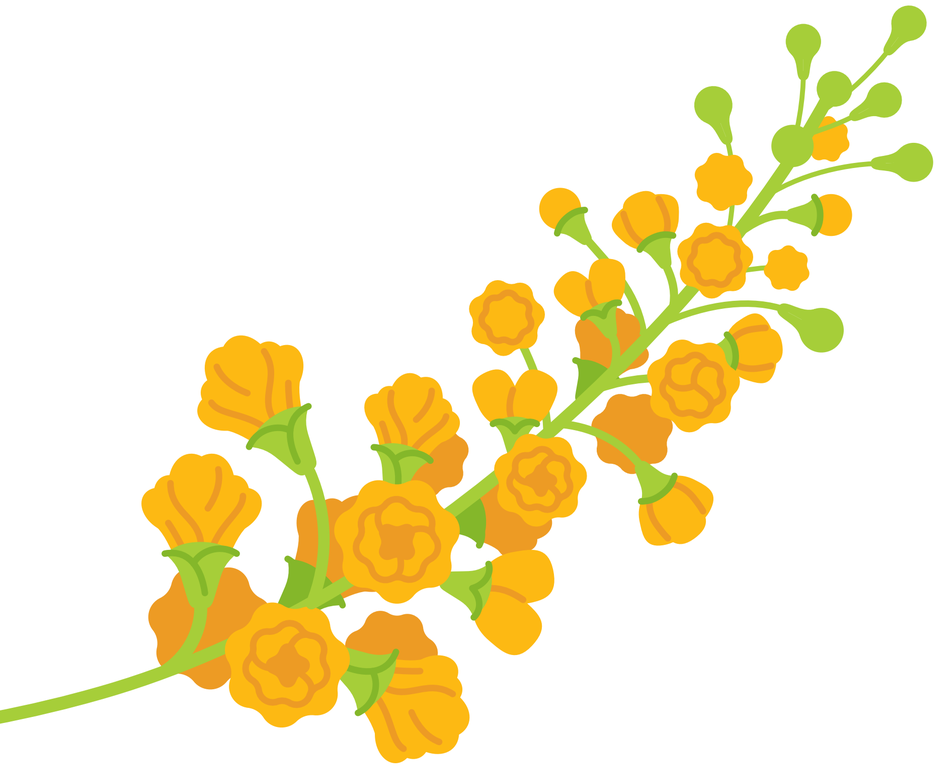
After the conversation

05

Plan to talk to someone afterwards to share how the conversation went. It can be difficult to have these conversations so you might need support too.

Services

Here are some services that can help...



Emergency contacts

If someone's life is in danger or there is an immediate risk of harm, call 000.

000 Police and emergency services.

02 6652 4000 Warrina (available 24/7).

02 8111 7077 Adira: NSW Multicultural Centre for Women's and Family Safety.

1800 RESPECT on 1800 737 732, text 0458 737 732. National domestic, family and sexual violence counselling service, available 24/7.

1800 656 463 NSW Domestic Violence Line. Crisis counselling, available 24/7.

The above services are all free to access and you can ask for an interpreter.

You can also talk to your family GP, caseworker, or a service that supports you.

More resources

Scan QR code or click the link
to see all our resources,
including a short animation.

ssi.org.au/conversations-for-prevention-myanmar

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