

Me kōrero

Let's Talk



April 2022

**April is Sexual
Assault
Awareness
Month**

**Molly tells us
why it's not
as easy as
'just leaving'**

Support
the Aviva
Annual Street
Appeal





source: pixabay

“Having options gave me courage and allowed me to take the first step into leaving the relationship and keeping my children and myself safe.”

“Why didn’t you just leave?”

“I remember the incident that woke me up. He attacked me at my sister’s wedding in front of my family. I wasn’t aware of the mental and emotional abuse he put me through, but it was a wakeup call when he physically hurt me.”

For so long, Molly* had been scared to reach out for help.

“I was terrified! I felt stuck and that there was no way out. At that time, my visa was joint with my ex and thinking about what would happen if I left the relationship kept me in there.”

She had heard about Aviva three months prior from a counsellor at work, but it wasn’t until this

incident that she decided to reach out for support.

“I felt guilty about what I had put my children through by not having the courage to leave. The embarrassment of putting up with what I did.”

Even after reaching out to Aviva, Molly had trouble being completely open with her support worker because of this guilt. But her support worker reassured her that what she was experiencing was violence and she deserved to feel safe.

“She helped me realise that not only my children are affected by the impact of what had happened,

but I was also a victim in this. That realisation was an important part of my journey.”

Aviva supported Molly and her children to move in with her family and eventually to get a bond for new accommodation. But the violence didn’t stop.

“Even after I left, I was still terrified. I remember wanting to open my own bank account seven months later and I was shaking when I went to the bank. That night, he broke into my home. I was scared to take that step to separate our finances as I knew what the repercussions would be.”

A big step for Molly was when she finally started to feel comfortable reporting to the police.

“I had always been fearful of going to the police,” she says. This is common for people experiencing violence, who worry that it could further escalate the situation.

“Now I am able to report everything. Having the bravery to report and knowing how this could help me with my safety was huge.”

Aviva also supported Molly to get a Protection Order.

“Even after the PO was served, he was still intimidating me and breaking into my home. But with him knowing that I was ready to ring the police and that they can arrest him based on the Protection

Order stopped him from actively harassing me.”

People in violent relationships are often asked, “Why didn’t you just leave?” Molly’s story of continued harassment and violence paints a picture as to why that can be difficult. Even having separated, moved into a new home, and having a Protection Order, Molly was still scared and in danger. Her ex even began sending others to harass her.

Through Aviva’s safe@home programme, Molly received home security upgrades, including an alarm to make it easier to call the police and security cameras to collect evidence of any further incidents. Since the security cameras were installed, there have been no further incidents at Molly’s home.


“If this service was not available, I don’t think I would have had the courage to leave him,” Molly admits.

“Because [even after leaving], if I can’t sleep at night and am scared even in my own home, I would have felt like I should have just stayed in the relationship. Having these options, gave me courage and allowed me to take the first step into leaving the relationship and keeping my children and myself safe.”

Molly’s journey is an ongoing one. “Now nearly four years on, I am still suffering the consequences of leaving my ex. I have high blood pressure and anxiety. I am hypervigilant even when I’m at home. I remember having to tell my children about what was happening, and I see the impact it had on them and the struggles they went through to understand it.”

But Molly would not go back for anything.

“I feel safer now and I know that support is available through every



Last year, Aviva made 42 homes safer with safe@home security upgrades

42 homes safer

obstacle I face. Even though there is still anxiety and uncertainty, knowing that someone is on the other end of a phone is good enough for me. There is a way out and you don’t have to do this on your own.”

Support the Aviva Annual Appeal

Aviva Annual Street Appeal
Friday 20th and Saturday 21st May



Aviva has seen a 41% increase in calls for support since 2019. And those reaching out to Aviva are at higher risk and facing more interrelated issues than ever before.

We need your help!

You can help keep your community safe this May by:

- Making donation directly to Aviva at www.aviva.org.nz;
- Organising a fundraiser among your friends, colleagues, or community group; or
- Gifting a few hours of your time to collect for our Street Appeal on Friday 20th or Saturday 21st May. Register your interest at www.aviva.org.nz or contact community@aviva.org.nz for more information.*

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

* We are closely monitoring updates to government restrictions and how they may affect the Appeal going forward. There is a possibility we will decide not to go ahead due to restrictions. We hope to make a final decision by the end of April. If we decide to go ahead, we will contact volunteer applicants around that time.



“Our story isn’t about violence, but violence prevention and how to deal with racial displacement.”

Change starts with us: creating a safe space for our children

Last month, Aviva celebrated the one-year anniversary of SEUGA: a programme aimed at restoring the wellbeing of Pasifika men in our community by addressing issues of violence, addiction and anger.

Lee came to SEUGA following a racial confrontation at work. His wife Naoia tells us about the difference it’s made to their aiga (family). These are her words.

I was born and raised in Christchurch. My father is from Satuiatua in Savaii Samoa and my mother was born in Wellington after her mother migrated here from Tanugamanono in Apia Samoa. I was raised in a loving, busy family, with two brothers and three sisters. I married the sweetest guy and we’ve been married fourteen years. Two

and a half years ago we adopted our first baby, a girl called Havilah-Harper from Samoa. Six months later we fell pregnant with our miracle son Jireh-Lee, who is now one.

[Prior to SEUGA], I think the biggest challenge for us was making sure that we were ok for our kids. We had been taking shifts at the hospital with our son, who has chronic bronchiolitis, and Lee was the only one working. Financially he felt a lot of pressure being the sole provider whilst he had other stuff at work going on and lots of sleepless nights.

Lee has always been a quiet person, so when the situation happened at work, I felt like it was even harder for him to talk about his feelings. As hard as it was for me to not get angry and upset at him, I knew that wasn’t

going to help the situation. Our story isn’t about violence, but violence prevention and how to deal with racial displacement.

I heard about SEUGA from a friend. I thought it would be good for Lee as it involved speaking in Samoan, which he’s often more comfortable with. I knew he would be able to talk freely without any condemnation or judgement and be able to learn from others going through the same thing.

Week by week, Lee started to open up about how he was feeling and remind me that in order for him to speak up, I needed to listen without interrupting. I used to think that I knew a solution to everything when it came to dealing with feelings. I soon found out that what works for others doesn’t work for all.

Things are better now because instead of getting upset at the small things, or frustrated over who did what, we can try to look at the positive of things, acknowledge that yes, there's a problem and figure it out together.

I think the biggest impact has been teaching our children how to better manage their emotions. Right now, our two-year-old is going through a lot of emotions and rather than get upset and angry at her when she has her "moments", we are parenting together in a safe space for her so she knows it's okay to feel frustrated and upset, and that she can have all these feelings around Mum and Dad.

I didn't want our kids to grow up thinking that when you get angry or frustrated, the way to deal with it is through hitting or threatening someone. I've seen a lot within families where children were being physically, mentally and verbally abused. It frustrates me when I hear

people yell at children and say words like, "E ke valea? E ke maga'o e fasi oe?" ("Are you stupid? Do you want a hiding?") How is that showing love? How is this creating a safe space for our kids if they are being shouted at for making a mistake?

This is where change needs to happen. If we don't learn and understand the consequences of our actions, it can lead to all sorts of places like mental health, suicide, courts and even prison. Sometimes people think there's no way out, but there's always hope. It just takes small changes. I wanted Lee to be that great role model for our children and realise it only takes one moment. Had he acted differently [at work] the situation could have been much worse. If we prevent getting to a point of destruction, it's better than trying to pick up the pieces afterwards.

Never be afraid to break free from what was the normal way of doing

"Sometimes people think there's no way out, but there's always hope. It just takes small changes."

things out of respect for elders or culture. It's hard to change learned behaviour, but if we want to see change in the next generation, change starts with us.



"I believe that the assistance provided by Aviva will continue to be required for many years to come, and as such, Aviva is a worthy recipient of a bequest."

FRAN*, AVIVA BEQUESTER

Leave a Bequest

Once your loved ones have been provided for, leaving a bequest in your will is one of the most generous gifts you can make.

A recent bequest is allowing Aviva to develop an early intervention and online education programme.

Work in prevention and education is often unfunded, but is essential to truly break the intergenerational cycle of violence.

By choosing to leave a bequest to Aviva, you are choosing to leave a legacy of support for a violence-free Aotearoa.

Contact community@aviva.org.nz for more information.



source: pixabay



23% of adults experienced sexual assault in their lifetime.
- NZ CRIME AND VICTIMS SURVEY

How do we prevent sexual harm before it occurs?

You can be the difference!

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, around the world. And if you're out around Christchurch this month, you might spot one of the posters for our new campaign, "You Can Be the Difference!"

The black and white posters, like the one opposite, have messages such as:

"I could tell she was asking for it... to stop, so I stepped in and told my friend to back off."

The messages apply to people of all ages, not just younger generations. But they are especially relevant for young people, who are some of the most at risk of sexual assault. The most recent NZ Crime and Victims Survey indicated that 1 in 11 girls aged 15-19 have been sexually assaulted in the past

12 months, which is 4 times the national average!

What's more, research conducted by Aviva in 2021 on sexual harm support available for youth, indicated that more needs to be done around education. We need to do better by our youth, and prevention starts with changing perceptions of young people.

The campaign challenges people to be active bystanders and intervene, to take care of one-another, and stop sexual assault before it happens. Or, to put it bluntly, "see it, stop it."

Jo, Client Service Manager for Aviva's Sexual Assault Support Service Canterbury (SASSC), explains, "For sexual assault awareness month, it's not enough to just trot out the statistics - many people will be

aware that 35% women and 12% of men experience sexual assault in their lifetime (although research tells us that assaults are under-reported, particularly for men). They may well know that the conviction rates for rape in this country sit at around 10%.

"Information like that is only useful if people know that they can do something about it. Awareness without action can lead to feelings of hopelessness and a lack of faith in change. That's why this campaign is about action."

The campaign also challenges pre-conceived notions of what is "acceptable" behaviour. Some of the other slogans include:

Our friend was all over some stranger, so we left... but we made sure our mate came with us; they were too wasted to be left alone.

They were acting all sweet, offering them a ride... but it didn't feel right, so we stepped in and got them out of there.

"There's a strong tendency in society to feel like you should *mind your own business*, or that something is *not our problem*. Even with the best intentions, we might be guilty of it - and that's not anyone's fault, it's often how we were raised and how we're conditioned. This campaign gives people permission to go with their gut if something doesn't look, or feel, right. Sometimes people just need that reminder that they can be the difference," says Jo.

Look out for our campaign in venues across Christchurch and on social media this month. And if you would like more information, or copies of the posters to display, please contact us at community@aviva.org.nz. We'd love you to help us get the word out there.

You can be the difference.

I could **TELL**
THEY WERE
- asking -
FOR IT

TO STOP ...
SO I STEPPED IN AND TOLD
MY FRIEND TO BACK OFF.

You can be the difference!



Your decision to act on something out of line
can be a lifesaver for someone else.

www.aviva.org.nz | 0800 AVIVA NOW (0800 28482 669)



Thank You

We are so grateful to all the supporters below who make Aviva's work possible.

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Aviva exists because we care

Aviva is a Canterbury-based, specialist family and sexual violence agency dedicated to making New Zealand Aotearoa violence-free. We offer an extensive range of integrated, specialist services to support individuals and whānau to not only become safe, but begin a journey toward a fulfilling, violence-free life.

Help Us
Break the
Cycle

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

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

Contact Us

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

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