

4 November 2009

## **Spiritus Kinnections encouraging abused women to work on life again**

**Karen** a counsellor with Spiritus Kinnections looks at the links between those at risk of suicide and domestic violence.

Karen works extensively with women who have experienced domestic violence, sometimes over a whole lifetime. Their lives can become isolated with controlling partners, they may suffer physical and emotional abuse and constant undermining criticism so that they lose their sense of self worth. This is often exacerbated by the ability of their partners to be charming when in the company of friends and relatives who sometimes find it difficult to believe that this man could be so abusive behind closed doors.

*“Some abused women start to think they are going crazy. If they attempt to leave they are met with threats such as ‘I’ll get you’ or ‘I’ll take the kids away’. It can be quite overwhelming and thoughts of suicide may occur when they feel they can’t go on, that there’s no alternative. This usually passes and in counselling it’s important to create a ‘space’ so you can get to a point – a space where you can work on ‘life’ again.”*

Thinking about suicide can be a complex and overwhelming time, particularly if there are a variety of issues contributing to a person’s depressed state – things such as financial stress, unemployment, mental trauma or illness.

*“Talking about it can be scary. It’s a difficult topic. However, that encouragement and support you can give really matters as you search for what gives them hope and for something to hold on to. It’s a huge privilege to work with people who trust you with their story, their journey.”*

Helping put practical things in place as people begin to turn their lives around is essential.

*“Having access to a trusted friend as well as having appropriate phone numbers handy for around the clock support is part of that and working on such good habits as having sufficient sleep and exercise and eating regular nutritious meals. This can be quite tough as you are often working with people for whom getting out of bed is a challenge. However, those who have come for counselling at Kinnections have achieved that – and that’s a good starting point.”*

**For further information about Spiritus Kinnections, please phone 07 34212826 or email [info@spiritus.org.au](mailto:info@spiritus.org.au)**

**End.../v2 ag**