



source: Gama

## 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](http://aviva.org.nz) or contact [community@aviva.org.nz](mailto:community@aviva.org.nz) to make a contribution.

### Contact Us

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

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## Thank You

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

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# Me kōrero Let's Talk

November 2022

'It could happen to anyone'  
Jody breaks the silence



How Aviva helps people heal after sexual harm

Support families to have a safe Christmas



“Each young person is unique in their experiences, and in themselves. Before you can help, you need to get to know them.”

## Where You At? The podcast which supports rangatahi to have healthy relationships

**‘Why do I do the work that I do? Because I want to leave the world a better place for our young people.’**  
**These words come from Dylan, Aviva’s dedicated youth worker, a service which is supported by the Launch Foundation.**

Dylan has been working with young people for many years now. At Aviva, his work focuses on rangatahi overcoming their experiences of violence, or who are at risk of using violence.  
‘Each young person is unique in their experiences, and in themselves.

Before you can help, you need to get to know them. I find out what makes them tick. One girl I’m working with wants to be a dog trainer, so we’ve been working towards that goal. For another young person it might be something different. I don’t know how to play basketball, or a guitar, but I can provide practical support so they can do those things. It’s about building a good relationship – that has to come first.’

The work of all our family violence support includes teaching people (of any age) what safe, healthy relationships look and feel like, and helping them to realise that a life without violence is possible, and what they deserve. Giving people that blueprint when they’re young can be life changing, even life-saving. Aotearoa has the highest rates of intimate partner violence in the OECD, and among young people the rates are particularly high. But as far as Dylan’s concerned, there’s reasons to be hopeful.

‘Stats only measure what’s happened,’ he says. ‘They don’t define what happens next. It’s the growth and potential for change in young people that inspires me.’  
The work that all our support workers do is transformational. But everything has its limitations – the

## From court support to care packages – helping people heal after sexual harm

**Aviva is well known for our family violence services. But what many people don’t realise is that for the last decade, we have been supporting ever increasing numbers of people who have experienced sexual harm. Now these people make up around 50% of our overall client numbers. So, what does this work look like?**

Aviva’s Sexual Violence Services (formerly SASSC) typically support people in crisis immediately following a sexual harm incident or report.

‘The counsellors are the ones that take you apart and glue you back together. But we’re industrial strength duct tape,’ says Dana, one of the clinicians.

Over time, the work of the team has expanded, not just in volume, but in scope. A person does not have to report the incident(s) to Police to get support from Aviva. However, should they choose to, their support worker can walk alongside them all the way up to and beyond the court process, should charges be laid. In the last year, our in-court support has increased significantly. This support is vital because the process itself can be extremely retraumatising and people don’t know what to expect.

And in the last year, the team’s work has included support for the Royal Commission’s Inquiry into abuse in state and faith-based care. Members of the team have been providing wellbeing support to people before, during and after they give evidence.

Whatever the situation, Aviva’s Sexual Violence Services support people through an extremely traumatising and difficult time. Recently, with support from the public, we have put together resource and care packages for clients in the immediate aftermath of an assault.

‘When we see clients following an acute sexual assault they are

understandably and normally experiencing trauma responses and often have to go through a forensic medical exam. Under those conditions, it can be very difficult to take on and remember much verbal information,’ says Jo, Client Services Manager.

The care packages include information about trauma, and support options. However, they also contain things like pamper items and new blankets, which people can wrap around them while they are waiting. This is a common form of self-soothing and is a way to regulate. Each package also has a small knitted heart, handmade by one of our clinicians, which gives people something to hold or focus on.

‘One client took the heart into the examination room and she told her support worker she held it the entire time. It sounds like a small thing, but it isn’t, it makes such a difference,’ says Jo.

**In Aotearoa, around 94% percent of sexual assaults are not reported to Police.**  
SOURCE: JUSTICE.GOV.TZ

The Sexual Violence Services Team has grown in the last year, in line with increased demand for support.

‘It’s a sad indictment on our society,’ says Jo. Although she acknowledges that an increase in demand could mean a decrease in people who are afraid to ask for help, which in a country where less than 10% of assaults are reported, is no bad thing.

‘There is more public and government recognition of what is required and that’s heartening. Sexual violence happens in all genders, all classes, all cultures; it’s ruthlessly democratic that way. We need to keep having the conversation; we need to keep talking about it.’



## Courageous Steps goes digital!

For many years, Aviva has been transforming the lives of women and children affected by family violence with our safety and healthy relationships programmes.

*“What I learnt on that course was amazing, absolutely life changing.”*  
– Anna\*

For adults, the course provides safety planning and legal information; helps them understand and recognise types of abuse; and helps them create healthier, violence-free lives.

Thanks to philanthropic funding from the ANZ Staff Foundation and Rata,

Aviva is now able to turn this course into a series of educational videos and an online learning platform.

The digital version of the course will not replace our in-person groups and 1:1 support, but remove barriers that prevent some women from coming to a weekly class – be they work or childcare related, geographical, or health related.

We are very excited to be able to bring our mahi forward into the digital age to continue supporting women to create stronger futures, free from power and control.

\*name changed

## Celebrating 50 Years

**Save the date!**  
**31 MARCH 2023**

Next year is going to be a big year for Aviva, marking 50 years since we opened our doors as New Zealand’s first refuge. This changed the social landscape of New Zealand permanently and, as a result, thousands of tamariki and wahine in Aotearoa have been welcomed, supported and made safe.

Now we work with people of all ages, genders, ethnicities, sexual orientation and experiences of family or sexual violence. Our mahi may have changed, yet our adaptive approach means our work remains as relevant and essential today, as always.

**We will be celebrating 50 years of life saving work and breaking cycles of violence on 31 March 2023, with an evening at Te Pae in Christchurch City. Look out for more information.**

biggest one being, that to get help, first you have to be referred, or pick up the phone. And that’s never easy.

‘I wanted to find a way to help those young people who wouldn’t engage in a service,’ says Dylan. ‘One day, I was chatting to Makenzi [another Family Violence Support Worker] and I said to her, “what would you do?” She said, “well I would start a podcast.” And so, we did.’

*Where You At* is a podcast created by Dylan and Makenzi, in collaboration with Plains FM. Aimed at rangatahi in New Zealand, it offers information to young people on topics such as: boundaries; online safety; sex and consent; power and control, and more. Ultimately, it’s a kōrero about what healthy relationships look like, and what they don’t look like, and it provides tools to help young people create them.

‘A lot of young people can be having really damaging experiences but

not realising that it’s unhealthy,’ says Dylan, ‘they could think what’s happening is normal.’

For some young people, hearing the podcast could be enough to get them thinking more deeply about the relationships in their life, or thinking critically about the things they see in the media or accept as normal. But for others, it might be the catalyst they need to reach out for help; either because they realise they’re experiencing harmful behaviours, or because they are noticing patterns in themselves that they would like to change.

‘What I would say to a young person who’s worried about their relationships is this: if you’re scared, or perhaps you’re noticing that you need to be in control to feel safe – reach out for help. It’s not a sign of weakness, it’s an amazing sign of strength,’ says Dylan.

‘If even one young person hears the



podcast, and it gives them the ability to change something, or ask for some support, then that’s a win.’

**You can stream *Where You At?* on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Podbean and on all major listening platforms.**

## We’re collecting Christmas gifts!



**You can ensure that a family living with violence has presents to open on Christmas morning.**

**Drop-off a gift at The Loft, Level 1, Eastgate Shopping Centre by Friday 9th December.**

- New children’s books, games, and toys
- New clothes
- Sports equipment
- Presents for older teens
- Presents for Mum, Dad, or other parental figures
- Toiletries for adults (including men and teen boys)
- Petrol and grocery vouchers
- Warehouse, Kmart and other vouchers
- Chocolates and other non-alcoholic treats
- Wrapping paper and gift tags

**Gifts must be unwrapped. We cannot accept alcohol, or toy weapons such as nerf guns or water pistols.**

Or make a contribution at [www.aviva.org.nz](http://www.aviva.org.nz) to directly support the people needing Aviva family and sexually violence services.



“The kids learnt their safety was really important and that they had choices.”

## There shouldn't be shame in experiencing violence – it could happen to anyone

**When Jody\* came to Aviva, she and her three kids were going through a really difficult time. A year later, they are feeling safer. Jody tells her story.**

‘At first, the abusive explosions weren't all the time – he'd apologise and I'd think it was going to get better. But something that started out being every six months, became every month, then every week, then every day until it was just our normal way of life.’

Like so many people in abusive situations, Jody wanted to leave, but found it wasn't easy. It took months of planning to be able to leave safely and she had to keep the details secret from her children.

‘The kids would ask, “how much longer do we have to live with Dad?” I'd tell them, “I have a plan, but I can't tell you.”’

‘The day that we left was amazing actually... I just wound down the window of the car, felt the breeze and felt good. I thought, I'm finally free.’

However, leaving was just the first step. Jody and her children still weren't safe.

‘I tried to negotiate with him about the kids. But things went downhill so badly. It was pretty diabolical. I thought he was going to kill me. The kids thought he was going to burn the house down.’

‘In the end I made my own application to the court for a Protection Order and it was granted.’

It was around this time that Jody was put in touch with Aviva.

‘At that point, it was like a weight was lifted off my shoulders. The kids were immediately enrolled in the next Tamariki programme. The facilitators came round here and played with them, chatted with them and learnt about them. And so right from the start they were excited to go along.’

‘It's one thing me telling the kids that abuse is not normal or ok. But it's different coming from outside the family. Aviva does that so well. The kids learnt their safety was really important and that they had choices.’

Jody describes how much her youngest has struggled in the last year.

‘My son loves his dad and wants to be with him... But Aviva has been super good in that – they have never demonised his dad, they've allowed him to love his dad but emphasised the importance of feeling safe.’

‘He was struggling at school. He didn't want to leave my side in case anything happened while he wasn't there... He'd have nightmares.’

‘He is just a different kid now, he's confident, he's got a bunch of friends. Last week he got citizen of the week – out of 500 kids. It was for things like being compassionate, being studious and trying hard. That was better than anything... The transformation in all the kids is next level and I genuinely believe that a lot of that has to do with Aviva and the support that they have had – they are just lovely people.’

Jody also worked with a support worker for adults.

‘She rang me and we talked for over an hour and she just listened. She validated the pain, my experiences, my choices, when for years I had been run down and belittled and told I was being oversensitive, any boundaries I had set were smashed. [In abusive relationships] your confidence gets knocked and you second guess all your decisions. It's nice to hear someone tell you that you are right.’

‘She also had an alarm put in. [Before that] I was not sleeping because I was panicking that he'd get in, I was having panic attacks. It was just awful.’

Jody still has a long road ahead of her, but she has support and things are better at home now.

‘As a family, we are happy and stable. Everything is predictable now. The kids are much calmer.’

‘There should be no shame. A lot of the problem is that nobody talks about it, but it can happen to anyone. What I would say to other

“The transformation in all the kids is next level and I genuinely believe that a lot of that has to do with Aviva.”

people is it doesn't matter how long it has gone on for, or how different you've presented your situation to other people... speak up and reach out. Because what I have had from Aviva is nothing but unjudgmental support.

\*name changed

## Become a Regular Giver this Christmas



**This Christmas, you can start a gift that keeps on giving. Setting up an automatic payment lets you make an ongoing difference to people in your community affected by family and sexual violence.**

You can donate to Aviva on a weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis using our secure donation page [donate.aviva.org.nz](https://donate.aviva.org.nz), or by setting up an automatic payment using the bank details below.

**Account Name:** Aviva

**Account Number:** 38-9017-0823864-00

**Please include your name as reference.**

Contact [community@aviva.org.nz](mailto:community@aviva.org.nz) for more information and to set up receipting.