



Harmful traditional practices in the workplace - New Zealand context

Guidance for best practice

2022

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Background

Organisations have become increasingly aware that their staff, and the people who use their services, are multidimensional. Employees and service-users bring to an organisation their skills and abilities as well as their personal relationships and problems.

For employers to address harmful traditional practices (HTPs), an important first step is to understand what these are, why they take place, and who is affected. For instance, it is important to know that worldwide, every social grouping has specific traditional practices, often spanning generations, that reflect the values and beliefs held by members of a community. While some are beneficial, others are harmful. The term HTPs is used to describe specific forms of abuse committed primarily against girls and women. However, HTPs occur across all sexes, sexual identities, and genders, and are not unique to any one culture, country, or religion.

Honour Abuse Research Matrix (HARM) is an international consortium of researchers, practitioners, policy makers and support agencies, working to research and pioneer strategies to eliminate harmful practices, including 'honour' abuse, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation (FGM). HARM, UK version was funded by Research England to produce this jargon-free, evidence-based, workplace guidance for best practice so organisations and their employees feel motivated, confident, and empowered to respond appropriately when they suspect or encounter HTPs.

Navigate this guidance

This guidance raises awareness of harmful traditional practices (HTPs) to help organisations address this often-hidden form of abuse. This guidance is divided into three main sections, each with an introduction followed by five recommendations that detail measures to protect people working both on-site and remotely.

- **Section I. Environment:** Explores cultural competency, diversity and inclusion, and other initiatives to help organisations support people affected by HTPs.
- **Section II. Education:** Suggests specific training and other ways to raise organisational awareness to improve understanding and address the stigma surrounding HTPs.
- **Section III. Empowerment:** Identifies ways to empower people working in, or associated with, an organisation to talk more openly about issues that affect them, including workplace champions and innovative methods to improve communication.

This is followed by a list of 10 practical steps for organisations to take if someone in the workplace discloses that they are a victim or survivor of HTPs.

About this guidance²

Our recommendations are based on a Rapid Evidence Review of the most up-to-date research. With manaakitanga, the authors acknowledge the Treaty of Waitangi and the tangata whenua. This report is designed to inform all public, private, and third sector organisations, of any size. This report is also useful for professionals and families, in understanding and facilitating hidden and visible harms pertaining to domestic/intimate partner/spouse abuse, forced marriage and genital mutilation.

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Introduction

Sherine would not tell her husband where she went to after work. He attacked her violently, grabbing her by the roots of her hair and kicking her upper back. Sherine told her family about the attack a month later, at which point the matter was reported to the police and she was given a protection order to keep her violent husband away from her and her child. Over time, her husband manipulated her into changing the protection order and moving back with him. A few weeks later, Sherine was killed by her husband and her child critically injured.³

The story of Sherine highlights the issue of domestic violence (DV) experienced by women from their intimate partners, and the lack of support that these women can access to avoid getting re-entangled in or walking away from the violent relationship. Apart from family support, often women experiencing DV may get help from their workplaces,⁴ and several organisations are part of The Shielded Project⁵. This project makes asking for help safer than ever through the creation of a tool for victims of abuse to ask for help, without fear of it showing up in their browser's history or an abusive partner ever seeing it. In this report, we suggest guidelines for best practice in the workplace for dealing with DV for women and LGBTI, female gender mutilation (FGM), and forced marriage practices in New Zealand. Collectively, DV or partner abuse, FGM and forced marriages make up the term Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) as used in this report. It is important to note that DV is more in the public and organizational consciousness, while FGM and forced marriages continue to remain primarily as private matters and there is less information about these aspects of HTPs. In the next paragraphs, we introduce each component of HTPs and explore its prevalence in the New Zealand context.

In the OECD, New Zealand has the highest reported rate of DV.⁶ Interestingly, it is also estimated that in New Zealand 76 percent of DV incidents go unreported to the police.⁷ 1 in 3 women experience physical and/or sexual abuse from their intimate partners in their lifetimes and 76 percent of partner homicides in New Zealand comprise of male partners killing their current or ex partners.⁸ According to the Ministry of Justice (2016) applicants of the Protection Order under the Domestic Violence Act are 90 percent women.⁹ Rates of disclosure among women who experienced domestic violence were 77 percent in 2003 and 70 percent in 2019, and disclosure was to friends and family, while help from 'formal' sources ranged between 19.4 percent to 21.1 percent.¹⁰ In New Zealand, women experiencing DV only disclosed their situation when their co-workers or managers noticed low productivity at work, tardiness, bruising, and crying.¹¹ Covid-19 related lockdowns led to an increase in violence at home incidents, ranging from 345 to 645 a day.¹²

Maori, Pasifika, and Asian communities in New Zealand are more susceptible to incidents of DV, and cultural acceptance of women being victims of DV from their male intimate partners.¹³ 80 percent of Maori women experience violence in their lifetimes.¹⁴ Some of the cultural norms in these communities pertain to women agreeing to the male partner being the head of the family and a good wife being obedient to her husband, even if she disagreed.¹⁵ Migrants, particularly Asians, lack understanding of their rights in New Zealand as victims of DV.¹⁶ South Asian women victims do not report DV because they believe it is a private affair, they tend to feel a strong sense of shame towards DV, and report that their communities are unresponsive to DV incidents.¹⁷ These are some of the cultural barriers that women victims face when it comes to disclosing incidences of DV.

While cultural barriers restrict women from disclosing their experiences of DV, societal taboos prevent lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) couples from admitting the prevalence in their relationships, because people in these relationships already expend a lot of time and emotions in proving the validity and authenticity of their relationships.¹⁸ According to the Ministry of Justice¹⁹, the likelihood of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) adults experiencing partner violence is twice as much than the New Zealand average of 29%. Moreover, bisexual, and lesbian women were found to have experienced highest rates of DV, and members of the LGBTI community do not seek support from the police or community members.²⁰

Another type of HTPs – female gender mutilation (FGM), involves the partial or full removal of or injury to female genital organs for non-medical but rather traditional reasons.²¹ In New Zealand, FGM became a national issue that needed contending with due to the influx of Somali refugees in the 1990s. This eventually led to a FGM Education programme,²² and a change in law pertaining to FGM, which was declared to be an illegal practice in 1996 and a 2000 Crimes Act Amendment became a landmark in criminalizing and putting an end to such practices. Consequently, there is currently no evidence of FGM being a practice in New Zealand²³. This is not to say that this practice may well be alive, but rather, as is evident from victims of DV, it may be a matter of the practice not being reported to the authorities.

With regard to forced marriages are a marital union where one of the spouses is forced to marry and may also include underage marriage.²⁴ Research in Australia and New Zealand on forced marriages suggests that these practices are prevalent in communities where a commitment to tradition and social conservatism are highly valued. Victims of such marriages reported a range of violent, exploitative, and abusive experiences from their spouse and the spousal family.²⁵



The Muslim community of Aotearoa New Zealand constitutes a rich and varied tapestry, encompassing people from over 62 different ethnic backgrounds and a myriad of lived experiences. As our community continues to grow and evolve, we have come to realise that although the teachings of Islam clearly forbid practices such as genital mutilation, forced marriage and domestic violence, often cultural practices provide a contrary narrative. Part of our role as a community organisation is to emphasise the correct, mainstream Islamic teachings in these areas. To do so we work closely with established Mosques, Islamic Centres, Associations, Muslim women's organisations, youth groups and others. These are often very sensitive matters and an approach that incorporates understanding, knowledge and compassion is essential.

Abdur Razzaq

Chairperson RCOI, FIANZ

(FIANZ - Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand is the national Muslim umbrella organisation)



In NZ, forced marriages take place due to gender inequality and parental perceptions of children being their property, social norms which are common in Asian, African and Middle Eastern communities living in NZ, and most forced marriages occur without being reported.²⁶

The²⁷ compelling research and statistics in New Zealand summarised here highlights the important role of New Zealand workplaces in supporting women and LGBTI adults who experience DV, victims of FGM, and forced marriages - HTPs. In this report we discuss three recommendations that workplaces can implement to create an environment where women victims of HTPs can not only disclose their experiences but also find pathways out of the violent relationship. These recommendations focus on three key areas: **Environment**, **Education**, and **Empowerment**. Workplaces have a moral, ethical, and legal case for implementing the strategies recommended, in addition to the financial impacts of women employees affected by HTPs manifested through absenteeism, lost or low productivity, reduced morale, sick pay, lost wages. Workplaces cannot afford to treat HTPs as a private matter to be handled behind closed doors. HTPs does not need to occur on workplace premises, and the increased rate of remote working post Covid-19 pandemic highlights the need to protect employees who work from home.

Employers should recognise that many people are affected by HTPs, and that survivors, victims, or perpetrators can be colleagues, employees, or managers. They may also be the people the organisation serves, such as students, clients, patients, service-users, customers. They can be of any age or socioeconomic background, single or in a relationship, and while a person's gender and cultural background are factors that influence who experience HTPs, the reality is that anyone can be a victim or a perpetrator. Ultimately, HTPs affects people working in, or associated with, all types of businesses - from small companies to large corporations.

1. Considerations



The rise in domestic and partner violence that seemed to be sparked by extended lock downs, financial pressures and idle time with readily available porn has been alarming. While research may take some time to find how linked and lasting these situations may be, employers must, more than ever, be ready to provide support to those most vulnerable in these difficult time - women and children, minority communities and those socially disadvantaged. Providing empathy and support helps encourage resilience. Acknowledging fears and faith builds confidence. Every employer has a part to play.

Dr Robert Kilpatrick

Managing Director Arkcon, New Zealand

Former co-chair Joint Learning Initiative

To develop policies and procedures to safeguard employees and service-users affected by HTPs, begin by answering the following questions:

- Is safeguarding a priority at Board-level?
- Do existing safeguarding policy and procedures need updating to include HTPs?
- Do employees receive culturally competent safeguarding training that covers HTPs?
- Do employees know how to respond to 'red flags' and know the 'one chance' rule?
- Can employees and service-users affected by HTPs safely access advice and support (on-site and digitally) from the workplace?

2. Recommendations

Based on a two-stage process, academic researchers conducted a Rapid Evidence Review of existing HTPs literature. A panel of eleven experts, with extensive knowledge of HTPs, then made recommendations based on critical analysis of the research evidence, combined with their professional expertise and experience. By adopting these recommendations, organisations can develop bespoke and inclusive strategies (both for policy and practice), to create a workforce that is willing - and a workplace that is able to respond thoughtfully, pragmatically, and effectively to HTPs.



Management strongly supports any staff member whether male or female, who are experiencing any form of Family Violence, utilising the support that is outlined in the Collective agreement Clause made with the Union and the organization Trust Board.

Village Management are also aware that with more staff in the community either working from home or having lost their jobs, the negative side effect of this, which the media have anecdotally reported, is an increased number of Family Violence incidents.

Gary Williams

General Manager

Dutch Village “Ons Dorp” Retirement and Lifestyle Village, Auckland, New Zealand

Our recommendations focus on three key areas: ***Environment***, ***Education*** and ***Empowerment***.

I. Environment

- Cultural competency training
- Embrace diversity and inclusivity
- Board level buy-in
- HTPs as mainstream safeguarding policy
- Responding to 'red flags'

II. Education

- Awareness training
- Poster campaigns
- Safeguarding training
- Manuals and contracts
- Data management training

III. Empowerment

- Proactive measures and wellbeing initiatives
- Anonymous ways of communicating concerns
- Identify and train workplace champions
- Kōrero (dialogic conversation) sessions
- Lunch and learn

I. Environment

Introduction

A workplace should be culturally diverse and inclusive, to reflect the community it serves. Employees spend more waking hours at work, on average, than anywhere else, so it is important that organisations empower staff and service-users from all cultural backgrounds to talk about issues affecting them, so they feel confident, competent, safe, and productive.

CREATE A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

For organisations to better respond to HTPs, strategies must be adopted across the board to improve awareness of the barriers that victims face in reporting their experiences. Studies show that the stigma associated with HTPs increases victims' suffering. For example, in addition to the harm caused by an abuser and self-blame, they might endure ignorance or bias at work stemming from naivety or prejudice, and reluctance from general support services for fear of being regarded as racist.

We recommend that organisations strive for a workplace environment that is equipped to safeguard employees and service-users affected by HTPs. To be effective, our recommendations must be embedded in organisational policy, and initiatives to drive policy forward must be management-led and adapt organically in response to feedback from staff and service-users. These recommendations, which must have Board level buy-in, highlight the importance of cultural competency training and the need to embrace diversity and inclusivity. They will guide organisations to respond positively and efficiently by adjusting mainstream safeguarding policy.

Recommendations

- **Cultural competency training**

Organisations benefit from nurturing a culturally harmonious workplace. Studies show that cultural competency training encourages staff to recognise and respect similarities as well as differences, thereby overcoming fears and negative stereotypes about people from different cultures.

Cultural competency training is the lynchpin of successful workplace strategies to address HTPs. People of all backgrounds can be at risk of harm from others, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, class, sexual and gender identity, age, and immigration status. How each person responds to the abuse, however, is influenced by the values and norms of their own culture and community, so it is important to understand that experiences of HTPs may differ when compared to more common forms of abuse.

Cultural competency training can enhance employee knowledge and skills to deal effectively with cultural differences in general, so the workforce can flourish in a multicultural environment. Understanding the dynamic nature of culture will enable organisations to better respond to the unique circumstances and needs associated with HTPs.

- **Embrace diversity & inclusion**

For an organisation to support employees and service-users affected by HTPs, they must embrace diversity and inclusion. Diversity captures a range of human differences, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and religious values. Inclusion is involvement and empowerment, where the inherent worth and dignity of all people is recognised. A diverse and inclusive workplace bridges cross-cultural barriers, empowering everyone to discuss concerns they may have. Importantly, studies show that help-seeking by victims differs by ethnicity, with ethnic minority women most often affected by HTPs least likely to disclose their abuse to a 'formal' source.⁷



Churches serve as entry points into communities and as such must play a pivotal role in addressing domestic violence and protecting the most vulnerable from all forms of abuse. We have a particular duty to honour and uphold our belief that humans are created in the divine image to live in loving, respectful and mutually self-giving relationships. As such, abuse of any kind is contrary to the will of God and a shameful affront to human dignity. As an organisation, we (The Anglican Church) are committed to raising awareness about domestic abuse/intimate partner violence and its impact on children, individuals, whānau and the wider community, and providing support for victims and survivors of abuse. More needs to be done to address our appalling record of Intimate Partner Abuse and family violence in Aotearoa. I believe the church is uniquely placed to support the work of other organisations and agencies to partner in combating the broader issues that feed into IPV, forced marriage, FGM and domestic abuse. We begin by working with our employees and volunteers and provide training in conjunction with activities to raise awareness about domestic abuse in all its forms.

The Reverend Canon Katie Lawrence
Acting Dean and Canon Precentor
Wellington Cathedral of St Paul, New Zealand



They may face additional barriers such as racial, cultural, and religious prejudice, due to negative stereotypes that label them and their problems as different from another culture. Therefore, their issues may be sidestepped for being too culturally sensitive.²⁵

Organisations should adopt an inclusive approach that guards against making HTPs an issue that happens to 'them' or 'others'. Support strategies cannot be based on token gestures, such as tick-box 'diversity and inclusion' exercises. These, at best, alienate employees and service-users affected by HTPs. Instead, a diverse and inclusive workplace should promote and sustain a sense of belonging by respecting employees' and service-users' talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and lifestyles.

- **Board level buy-in**

Organisations benefit from welfare initiatives led by executive teams, especially when they recognise personal issues, like HTPs, impact on employees and service-users.²⁶ There are many culturally competent ways to demonstrate Board level buy-in. For example, senior management could use the intranet to recognise dates to raise awareness of HTPs, such as the International Day for Zero Tolerance of Female Genital Mutilation - an annual awareness day on 6 February sponsored by the United Nations, and the National Day of Memory for Victims of Honour Killings, on 4 July. Senior staff should also improve their knowledge by attending HTPs conferences, seminars, and training. Sponsoring a local charity that supports HTPs survivors or hosting a fundraising event are just two more examples that help to promote trust among employees, service-users, and the wider community, as well as raising the organisation's profile.



Domestic violence continues to be a growing concern for New Zealand especially with its growing multicultural society. Traditionally, a lot of emphasis has been given to victims of domestic abuse. I think it is about time that we also focus our efforts on understanding, supporting, and rehabilitating the perpetrators as well. Only in this way are we able to stop the culture of domestic violence in our communities.

Dr John Evangelista
Dean, Catholic Theological College,
New Zealand

- **HTPs as mainstream safeguarding policy**

Workplace strategies to address HTPs should be an integral part of safeguarding policies and procedures, and not a cursory add-on. This need not be difficult and can involve amending existing safeguarding mechanisms—an approach successfully used to address gender equality and LGBTQ issues in the workplace. Initiatives to achieve this should be culturally competent to remove the negative perception that HTPs only happens to minority groups or ‘others’, instead of a significant problem that affects the workplace and wider community. A system of audit should be adopted, with an assurance framework that ensures independent examination of an organisation’s approach to HTPs at least two-yearly.

There is also a need to consider perpetrators, as well as victims - a zero tolerance policy works best, with every effort made to refer them to treatment programmes.

- **Responding to ‘red flags’**

If someone in the workplace discloses that they have been a victim, or are currently at risk of HTPs, this must be taken extremely seriously.²⁷ We recommend that organisations train their staff to recognise and respond to the ‘one chance rule’, which is widely recognised by governmental agencies and welfare organisations as a potential lifejacket for HTPs victims.²⁸ Employers should have measures in place to respond swiftly and effectively. We recommend that all employees be made aware of their responsibilities and obligations when they encounter ‘red flag’ cases, and that “If the victim is allowed to walk out of the door without support being offered, that one chance might be wasted”.²⁸



It is important for any organisation to take partner violence / domestic violence, even if suspected, seriously. You may very well be able to protect a colleague, friend, or family member from serious physical or emotional harm, perhaps even worse. Any organisation that recognises the importance of its people and asks its people to treat each other with respect and dignity, is one that rejects patterns of violence and supports its people who have been abused.

Reverend Katene Eruera

Principal, St John’s Theological College

Auckland, New Zealand

II. Education

Introduction

HTPs are a complex issue. Terms such as ‘honour abuse’, ‘forced marriage’ or ‘FGM’ may seem outlandish to people in New Zealand who are unfamiliar with the beliefs that underpin these practices. It may seem odd, for example, to describe harmful acts against girls and women as ‘honour’ violence or to know that ‘cutting’ young girls is commonly practiced by close family members.

Education is key to understanding why HTPs occurs. Not long ago, it was common for people to think similarly about child sexual abuse, which was considered taboo and seldom addressed in the workplace.

EVIDENCE-BASED TRAINING INCREASES MOTIVATION & REDUCES RISK

Improved education on child abuse has led to increased awareness and acceptance that, despite being difficult and uncomfortable to discuss, it should no longer be ignored as something that happens to ‘other’ people. This more pragmatic approach is also more realistic.

We recommend that organisations train their employees, so they have a better understanding of why HTPs occur, as this will improve their ability to safeguard those affected. We recommend that staff and service- users, at all levels, complete compulsory, culturally competent awareness training that covers HTPs safeguarding specifically. Educational strategies must also feed into employee and service-user manuals and contracts, as well as data management training.



The most effective leaders foster workplace environments where individuals are able to transcend differences of mindset and find the points of consensus in even the most perplexing and challenging situations. Building more gender-equitable patterns in a workplace provides opportunities for women to develop leadership abilities and experience, and to take a far more active and visible role, without fear of paternalism or harassment. However, fundamental to creating this environment is reconceptualising underlying assumptions about the status of women. Intimidation in majority male spaces or cultural norms that frame women's contributions in a limited way, impact the way men perceive women, and their most egregious outcomes result in women being forced into situations which breach their human rights. If from even the earliest years, boys see girls as equals, a culture of collaboration is fostered that is later carried through to the workplace.

Suzanne Mahon

Chief Executive Officer

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of New Zealand



Recommendations

- **Awareness training**

As the types of abuse that people experience varies across different cultures, organisations may not be prepared for the unique needs and experiences of staff and service-users affected by HTPs. Therefore, HTPs awareness training should be compulsory. Classroom and/or eLearning sessions will better equip employees to respect that, while any person of any background can be victim of abuse, their cultural background influences their experience of that abuse. More specifically, people affected by HTPs, especially from minority groups, might experience abuse and its impact very differently to people raised in Western cultures, and so their special needs and circumstance should be recognised and addressed.

- **Poster campaigns**

Well-designed poster campaigns can have a significant and positive impact on observers.²⁹ Printed, or digital posters can be used for information sharing or intervention. For example, they can be used to provide details of refuge shelters, helplines, or information services. This is important as studies show that people affected by HTPs may not be fully aware of, or may be intentionally misinformed about, their legal rights, and campaigns like these help them access support from external agencies. It is important that poster content and delivery are culturally competent - they must be sensitively designed to respect and appeal to the target audience to avoid backlash effects, such as isolating those at risk by using stereotypical images of cultures, victims or perpetrators that might add to the stigma.



Having a ‘Workplace guidance on intimate partner violence/domestic violence’ is a good start. What we need to do, is help de-stigmatise the concept of victim mentality and look at it from a strength base, that we have to courage people to ask for help. We know in New Zealand, we have about 20% of women, ask for help, so we must make it safe. Our patriotic society sometimes makes it hard to ask, as it is seen as a weakness. It would be good to see some data on the utilisation of the law put in place in the workspace, to see how we can improve.

Ranjna Patel. ONZM, QSM, JP

Founder of Tāmaki Health & Gandhi Nivas.

Gandhi Nivas is an organisation helping to prevent family harm in New Zealand. The words Gandhi Nivas symbolise a ‘home of peace’, and this is what the organisation offers to men who have been involved in family violence and need a safe place to stay.

- **Safeguarding training**

In the *Environment* section, we recommended that HTPs be embedded in mainstream safeguarding policies and procedures. We also recommend safeguarding training to improve knowledge on HTPs specifically.

Since 2016, health professionals have had a mandatory duty of care to report any verified or suspected partner abuse cases to the police.³⁰ It is unclear whether other relevant organisations know about this expectation, and how to respond to it. Therefore, specific HTPs safeguarding training should be compulsory for all employees. This should expand on awareness training to include the use of appropriate language, current legislation, and warning signs. This will help organisations to achieve ethical and legal compliance, and to also mitigate risk.

- **Manuals and contracts**

Organisations must send a clear message that they do not take a "not my problem" stance on HTPs.³¹ It must be made clear from the outset that HTPs are recognised as an issue that affects the workplace. This can be achieved by referencing a zero-tolerance approach to HTPs in employee manuals and a statement of expectation in contract terms. Employees should be aware that misconduct inside and outside of work is viewed seriously and may lead to disciplinary action. Organisations should commit to supporting survivors and challenging perpetrators, by recognising that HTPs are a perpetrator's responsibility. However, it may also be appropriate to support an employee or service-user seeking help to address their behaviour.³²

- **Data management training**

Managers, HR teams, and dedicated HTPs support champions will need to make decisions about sharing information with external agencies, including the police and local authority. People affected by HTPs may not give their consent to the sharing of safeguarding information for several reasons. For example, they may be frightened of reprisals, they may fear losing control, they may not trust social services or other partners, or they may fear that their relationship with the person who harmed them will be damaged.

Organisations must respect the wishes of employees and service-users who request that information about them is not shared with external agencies. There are, however, circumstances where organisations can override such wishes. Data management training that covers safeguarding, confidentiality, recording and reporting in cases of HTPs is essential for all senior and HR staff, and dedicated points of contact.

III. Empowerment

Introduction

Organisations need to ensure that their employees and service-users feel empowered in the workplace. People's home and work time overlap, so when someone is affected by HTPs, this impacts on both their personal and professional lives. Organisations can develop empowerment strategies to better support and safeguard staff and service-users affected by HTPs.

EMBRACE EMPOWERMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

We recommend that organisations devise and implement tailored proactive measures and wellbeing initiatives to empower employees affected by HTPs, in addition to effective ways of communicating their experiences to safely seek support. This includes training workplace champions, who can lead on safe-guarding initiatives, to act as a dedicated point of contact within an organisation.

Effective empowerment strategies, such as hosting in-house korero and lunch and learn activities, also help organisations to form productive, meaningful partnerships with support services and local authority departments in the community.



The [NZ Crime and Victimization Survey](#) showed that disabled adults were more than three times as likely as other adults to experience offences by family members in a 12-month period. As a society, we need to take steps to ensure that disabled people can be safe in their homes, and it is my belief employers should be partnering with disabled people to explore what role they can play in this.

Phil Turner

Managing Director

Accessibility Tick / New Zealand Disability Employers' Network



Recommendations

- **Proactive measures and wellbeing initiatives**

Studies show that some ethnic minority people affected by HTPs may not be fully aware of their legal and economic rights, yet given a safe forum to engage, they are eager to participate in activities that support their long-term empowerment.¹⁸ Proactive measures and well-being initiatives to empower those affected by HTPs should focus on improving access to, and control over, resources via external advocacy, basic employee toolkits, and strong referral pathways with local and national support organisations who provide economic assistance, shelter and counselling specifically for HTPs.

- **Anonymous ways to communicate concerns**

Fear of speaking out or reprisal is often cited as a barrier to reporting issues. To empower people to share their concerns, organisations could use anonymous online surveys. Likewise, confidential 'talking-boxes' would enable people to write down their problems or questions on pieces of paper and post them through a slot in the talking-box, which should be placed outside bathrooms or other discreet locations for privacy.

- **Identify and train workplace champions**

One resourceful way of supporting people affected by HTPs in the workplace is to train allies or dedicated 'champions' to act as a main point of contact within an organisation. To be effective, these champions must be allocated time, resources, and private space where people affected by HTPs can speak openly, make phone calls, or research online without fear of being overlooked or overheard. Champions should be empowered to offer confidential advice, and to respond in accordance with standardised guidelines. This can be achieved through training, community outreach and engagement initiatives to equip them with in-depth understanding of HTPs, culturally competent support skills and effective escalation procedures.

They could also provide information on paid (or ‘special’) leave and flexi time – this is particularly important in ‘red flag’ situations, as it can provide the economic security and breathing space necessary to seek health care, legal advice, and changes in living arrangements.²⁶

- **Kōrero sessions**

Hosting regular kōrero (dialogic conversations) sessions will enable staff and service-users to access advice safely from multiple community agencies and in-house services, including housing, police, social services, education, legal, charities and support groups, in one location. Engaging with professionals and the local community in this way will help people at risk of HTPs and raise an organisation’s profile.

- **Lunch and learn**

Relaxed, open, and collaborative, ‘lunch and learn’ is an informal way for employees to engage in skills and awareness training and encourage working relationships across departments. They are a novel and effective way of bringing remote workers together with their team members. This is important as remote working is on the increase and, given the response to Coronavirus in 2020, this upward trend looks set to continue.

These forums are an excellent opportunity to empower employees by raising awareness on a range of topics, for example, by inviting speakers to celebrate positive cultural events such as International Women's Day, LGBT Pride, etc. Studies show that employees feel empowered with increased confidence and self-worth by listening to talks and motivational speeches and participating in discussion groups.³³

Workplace champions should prepare a diversity calendar and organise the events on a regular basis. Costs, in terms of both financial and time, are minimal, but the benefits are numerous. Lunch and learn events boost employee morale, create critical awareness of issues at hand, build teamwork skills and allow expertise to be shared.

3. Practical steps

Organisations of any size can take practical steps to support people affected by HTPs. In this section, we outline ten key steps to prepare organisations, and to guide employees, for when someone at work discloses that they are a victim or survivor of HTPs.

Recognising there is a problem

1. Ensure your working (on-site and digital) environment promotes HTPs awareness strategies using, for example, culturally competent poster campaigns.
2. Request that senior executives take lead on promoting HTP awareness sensitively, using the intranet, for example, to post messages to show support and recognise that HTPs are a problem.
3. If staff do not know how to respond to the 'one chance rule', request that staff are given training.

Responding appropriately

4. When an employee, colleague, or service-user discloses that they are a survivor or victim of HTPs, believe them – do not ask them for evidence.
5. Reassure them that what they tell you is in confidence and that you will not share information with anyone else if they ask you not to, including their family, friends, and/or the community.
6. You may have only one chance to speak to a potential victim and, therefore, only one chance to intervene.

Providing support

7. Suggest that you go to a secure and private space, where you will not be overheard.
8. Alert the dedicated workplace champion—they should be trained and confident to help.

Refer to the appropriate help

9. Provide contact details of easily accessible and reputable support services who have dedicated staff trained to support victims and survivors of HTPs.
10. If necessary, consider the need for immediate police involvement. Get advice if you are not sure what to do. Refer to page 18 for a list of support services.

4. Resources

Honour Abuse Research Matrix

School of Psychology University of Central Lancashire PR1 2HE

Web: www.uclan.ac.uk/harm

Email: HARMnetwork@uclan.ac.uk

Twitter: @HARMnetwork

Support for victims in New Zealand

Are you OK Phone: [0800 456 450](tel:0800456450)

Family Court Phone: [0800 224 733](tel:0800224733)

Police Phone: [111](tel:111) in emergency or [105](tel:105) for a non- emergency

Roopa Aur Aap Charitable Trust Phone: [021665609/ 09 6204606](tel:021665609)

Safe to Talk Phone: [0800 044 334](tel:0800044334)

Shakti Phone: [0800 742 584](tel:0800742584)

Shielded <https://www.shielded.co.nz/>

Shine Phone: [09 815 4601](tel:098154601)

Victims Information Phone: [0800 650 654](tel:0800650654)

Women's Refuge Phone: [0800 733 843](tel:0800733843)



Every employee deserves to work in an environment where they feel safe, respected, and able to fulfill their potential. We must strive for workplaces in which everyone feels so safe that they can reach out for help and support particularly in situations where they are living in unsafe situations at home due to domestic violence or abuse. Everyone can be trained to look for the tell-tale signs that someone is experiencing abuse and to be a safe haven and a true colleague. Let us all strive create atmospheres of trust and safety to unlock the full potential of our people.

Marc Rivers

Chief Financial Officer

Fonterra, Auckland



5. Notes and references

1. Authors

Edwina Pio:

Recipient of a Royal Society medal, and Duke of Edinburgh Fellowship, Fulbright alumna, Edwina Pio is New Zealand's first Professor of Diversity, University Director of Diversity, and elected Councillor on the governing body of the Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. Her research and doctoral supervisions encompass the intersections of work, ethnicity, indigenous studies, religion - spirituality, and pedagogy. A prolific writer, her research is published in leading international journals and media outlets, and she has written over half a dozen books. Edwina has been appointed to the Ministerial Advisory Group pertaining to the Royal society recommendations on the Christchurch Mosque shootings. A woman of peace and prayer, a scholar of color, and a passionately engaged educator, Edwina brings grace, gratitude, courage and thoughtfulness to governance, teaching, research, doctoral supervisions, and stakeholder engagement.

Dr Roxanne Khan:

Dr Khan is an award-winning author who, for over two decades, has researched and published extensively on the issue of domestic abuse victimisation and perpetration. She is founder and director of Honour Abuse Research Matrix (HARM), who published the UK version of Harmful Traditional Practices in the Workplace: Guidance for Best Practice. She also authored Domestic Abuse Policy Guidance for UK Universities, which is shortlisted by the Times Higher Education Awards for 'Research Project of the Year' 2022.

Vikashni Moore:

A Human Resources (HR) practitioner for over 19 years in Fiji and New Zealand, Vikashni has held head of HR roles at some of the largest organisations in Fiji, including Fiji's international airline. Recently she has been a HR consultant for organisations in Auckland, New Zealand. A Master of Business graduate with First Class Honours at Auckland University of Technology (AUT), Vikashni is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree at AUT, supervised by Professor Edwina Pio and Dr Roy Smollan.

2. The first author was invited by Dr Roxanne Khan to write this report. Pertaining to New Zealand, this report is based on the original UK report which has been used as a template and modified for the New Zealand context. The first author brought on board her doctoral student as the third author.

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A note on design

Throughout this publication we have used three key images; the Kōwhai-turanga ora, the Ponga tree, and the Tūī.

The Kōwhai-turanga ora (Tree of Life) refers to authority and powers held by people to whom we look to for help and life. It is prized as a healing tree; whose bright yellow blossoms herald the beginning of spring.

The Ponga tree (Silver Fern) stands for strength, resistance, and enduring power. According to legend the silver underside of the Ponga's leaves would catch the moonlight, illuminating a path through the forest so that Māori hunters could find their way home.

Tūī is symbolic of guardianship, forewarning, grief and awareness for Māori. It is the national heritage bird, and is associated with spiritual harmony, confidence and life fulfillment.

We use these three images to symbolise the vital support services who work tirelessly to heal survivors and to keep them safe from further harm, the enduring strength of those survivors, and their hope for a better future.

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