



## Reaching out to women and children

Emerge is the only high security refuge service in Victoria that offers specialised outreach programs that support women and children who are experiencing or have survived family violence.

The Outreach Program is for women and children who either live in our crisis accommodation, at home or in the community. We also work with children in foster care. Our case workers link women and children into local services within the community.

In any one year, Emerge's case workers provide intensive support to around 100 women and their children. Over 70% of these women are born outside of Australia. We work closely with interpreters and other services to assist these women and children. This includes safety planning, finding housing, providing access to legal services, financial counselling and other essential services, and help in applying for Family Violence Flexible Support packages.

All the women using our outreach services need support and information about living with family violence; around 25% of children require specialist counselling services, and 25% need help with child protection, court and other legal matters.

### Our outreach programs include:

#### **Safety planning**

Some of the women and children involved in our outreach program live with their perpetrator. Emerge works closely with every woman and child to ensure their safety. A crucial aspect of this is establishing a comprehensive safety plan that puts in place steps and procedures to help keep them safe.

Every woman and child receive an individual safety plan.

Our website has a comprehensive safety plan<sup>1</sup> page which can be translated into many different languages, giving women information about where to go and what to do if they feel unsafe.

#### **Working with children**

At Emerge we make sure that the needs of any child using our outreach programs are addressed. Our dedicated child case manager works closely with children who have experienced family violence, and who are living in the community.

Emerge works with local schools, family therapists and other services to ensure every child is safe and has access to the services they need to thrive.

#### **Children in foster care**

A growing trend is the number of children in foster care requiring our outreach services. Our programs enable foster children and their carers to connect with others in a safe and nurturing environment. Our case workers help them to remain in school and participate in local community activities while supporting the new family.

<sup>1</sup><http://emergesupport.org.au/safety-plan/>



## **Housing support**

Escaping family violence is one of the major reasons for women and children becoming homeless or being put at risk of homelessness.

Our outreach program covers a range of housing help from liaising with local real estate agents and housing services to help women and children find housing, access financial support and educate them about their rights as tenants.

## **Financial counselling**

Many women coming to Emerge have been prevented from accessing their own bank accounts, their personal property has been secretly pawned off, and often they have debts/fines or credit cards taken out in their name that they are not aware of. Most women's cases are complex, requiring advocacy and casework.

Through philanthropic funding and the support of Kingston City Council, Emerge employs a financial counsellor who works with women to gain control of their finances, and to eliminate debts that have been incurred because of family violence.

## **Court support**

Emerge works with the Victoria Police and Moorabbin Magistrates' Court to reduce the stress and impact of the court process on children and their mothers. The aim of the program is to reduce the stress and impact of the court process on children and their mothers, and protect them from further traumatising.

## **Family violence education and community awareness**

Community education is vital to the understanding of the causes and prevention of family violence. Emerge staff are available to speak at business functions, local schools, community groups, services or councils, by emailing us on [mail@emergesupport.org.au](mailto:mail@emergesupport.org.au)

## **About Emerge Women and Children's Support Network**

Emerge Women & Children's Support Network is an independent organisation delivering 24/7 housing and support services to women and children at a time of crisis; and provides vital outreach to women and children living in the community, often with perpetrators in their own home.

Founded over 40 years ago, Emerge is the leading family violence and housing service in southern metro Melbourne, supporting women and children from across Victoria.

As part of our refuge and outreach programs, we offer tailored programs aimed at assisting women to rebuild their lives and learn new personal and professional skills as they begin their journey towards independence.

We support the mental wellbeing of children and infants through arts therapy, afterschool and play programs.

Emerge is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission.

We have DGR status and donations over \$2 are fully tax-deductible.