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Strangulation arrests shows need for violence prevention push

More than four people a day were charged under a new strangulation law in its first year of operation.

By December last year, 1,615 people had been charged with strangulation or suffocation under the Family Violence (Amendments) Act 2018, which came into effect in December 2018. Ninety seven percent of perpetrators are men, and around two thirds of victims are family members of the perpetrator.

Tauranga Women's Refuge estimates around 90 per cent of the women seeking refuge have been strangled.

Family violence charity Shine notes that abusive partners often minimise strangulation ("it's not like I hit you"), but strangulation is often more scary and dangerous than hitting, punching or kicking, leading to a loss of consciousness within 10 to 20 seconds, and frequently leading to long-term fear, confusion and energy loss.

The Law Commission stated that women who have been strangled by their abusive partners are seven times more likely to be killed by them than those who have not. The Commission noted that the act of strangulation signals to the woman that her partner can kill her.

Leonie Morris, Auckland Women's Centre manager and a spokesperson for the Coalition for Safety of Women and Children, says the higher-than-expected numbers show just how entrenched serious forms of family violence are in New Zealand.

"Domestic violence is so prevalent in Aotearoa New Zealand that reducing it requires a multi-pronged approach and sustained engagement with multiple stakeholders."

"Prevention needs to be at all levels, from identifying and intervening with those at the bottom of the cliff, as the strangulation law does, to preventing families falling off the cliff in the first place. The most effective prevention strategies are to prioritise gender equality; address the impact of colonisation; promote social norms that value women and children; and support positive parenting." ■



Jan Logie, Under-Secretary of Justice led the improvements to the Family Violence Act

Radical honesty and joyous activism: Tracey McIntosh's remedies for our unequal society

Matching hope and humour with clear-eyed analysis of Aotearoa New Zealand, Tracey McIntosh (*Tūhoe*) was a warm inspiration at AWC's last event for 2019.

Talking with journalist Paula Penfold in front of a sold-out crowd, the Professor of Indigenous Studies outlined what's needed to eliminate state and personal violence: radical honesty about our society; the ceding of power from state to hapū; and truly honouring all our children and tamariki as valuable rather than vulnerable.

A researcher of Māori incarceration, Tracey honoured the prisoners she sees weekly at the women's prison in Wiri for their "astonishing insight and wisdom": "I have certainly learned far more than I have given – there's no humbleness there, it's just fact." Prisoners describe everyday humiliations imposed on them as children in state care, such as being placed in homes where kai cupboards were kept locked. Being subjected to structural harm means the prisoners are experts on our shared collective condition, says Tracey, and should be valued as such.

Tracey also believes we need to exercise our imaginations to dream up a better world. "If I say to a class of students: 'imagine we close the prisons tomorrow', people on the whole find it impossible to do. The prisons are so monolithic in our imaginaries that we can't see around, or under them."

As influences in her own life, Tracey paid tribute to wāhine Māori scholars such as Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, Margaret Mutu and Leonie Pihama as well as her parents, Lorna and Eric McIntosh.

Tracey on our current mess, and reasons for hope

- "Those that carry the harshest burden in our society are Māori women and Māori children... That's not to diminish the burden others are carrying but to look at the gross disproportionality."
- "The intergenerational reach of the harm is so long – we need a full system overhaul."
- "[As advocates and activists], we have to have emotional states of hope, we have to have joy, we have to work in our collectives and be well. ... The imagination can be a powerful space to create the possibility of joy. Sometimes that is hard to process and it feels inappropriate but it must be there."
- "Every positive social change in the history of humanity – whether it be the abolition of slavery, dismantling of apartheid, gay liberation, marriage equality – right up to the moment of change, people believed it couldn't happen. Our work can create transformative change."
- "I see incredible success; I am absolutely astonished by the intellectual courage of the young Māori scholars that I see. This gives me great, great heart." ■



Auckland Women's Centre chair Mira Taitz, Prof Tracey McIntosh and Paula Penfold

Coming up: A kōrero with Dr Hinemoa Elder

Auckland Women's Centre events is kicking off the new decade in fine style, with a timely and inspiring conversation on life, psychiatry, mātauranga Māori and climate change with the incredible Hinemoa Elder.

Of Te Aupōuri, Ngāti Kuri, Te Rarawa and Ngāpuhi descent, Hinemoa is a leading child-and-adolescent psychiatrist, a pioneering expert in indigenous approaches to traumatic brain injury, and the Māori strategic leader at Brain Research NZ. She is a strong advocate for te reo Māori, in part for its positive effects on wairua and health.

Hinemoa encourages holistic treatment approaches, once saying: *"There's a woman in front of you and she's had a history of violence, we'll be talking about her psychological trauma – that's absolutely critical – but let's not forget the physical trauma that's also happened to various parts of her body."* She was made a Member of the Order of New Zealand last year for her services to Māori and psychiatry.



Recently, Hinemoa has been collaborating to combat methamphetamine addiction in the Far North; and she serves on the Prime Minister's Science Advisor's Cannabis Panel for the upcoming referendum.

Inspired by a voyage to Antarctica she undertook this summer with other women in science, Hinemoa will discuss bringing indigenous knowledge forward in the climate emergency with links to solutions for our well-being.

Stacey Morrison (Ngāi Tahu, Te Arawa) – herself an award-winning media host, author, and te reo advocate – will talk with Hinemoa.

When: Tuesday 10 March 2020
5.30pm: refreshments, 6pm-7:30pm: kōrero

Where: Dalmatian Cultural Society,
10 New North Road, Eden Terrace.

Donation between zero and \$25 (includes platter food); drinks available to purchase.

Please book and prepay at: info@womens.org.nz
All genders welcome. NZSL interpreters provided. ■

Keeping summer festivals safe

Our youth coordinator Gabriella Brayne reports on her Consent Club leadership work.

The Consent Club is a restorative-oriented, peer support system that works at festivals to promote a culture of consent. Our mahi has three focuses: education through kōrero and wānanga for festival goers; training volunteers to practice survivor-focussed, non-confrontational bystander intervention; and dealing with disclosures at festivals.



Gabi (bottom row, centre) and the Guardian team at Kiwiburn.

This year, we went to Soundsplash in Raglan, and Kiwiburn, a six-day participatory art festival, in Hunterville - two very different yet rewarding environments. At Soundsplash music festival, our team of fifteen awesome Consent Guardian volunteers each brought loads of positivity, compassion and personal insight to our kaupapa.

It was awesome engaging with a relatively young crowd about the importance of practicing consent, not only in a festival environment but in all aspects of daily life. Festival-goers reported feeling safer by simply knowing we were available to help.

Our experience at Kiwiburn was equally positive because of the energy of our Guardian team, whom I was honoured to lead. One of our volunteers ran a workshop on practicing consent through theatre art - encouraging attendees to emotionally embrace the kaupapa of consent culture.

This year, we are looking to expand our work even further and encourage more volunteers to join our whānau. If you're interested in joining or are keen to learn more, please reach out to us on our Facebook page 'Consent Club' or Instagram @consentclubnz ■

Save the date! February 18 for Abortion Law Reform Action



Events in support of abortion law reform are planned for Tuesday 18 February ahead of the upcoming parliamentary conscience votes on the matter; there'll be an early evening rally in Auckland.

See "Our Bodies Our Choice! National Day of Action" on social media for details. Events are youth-led and family friendly; we will have fun together while demanding law reform, bodily autonomy and reproductive healthcare for everyone! ■

A year after Christchurch: Let's Deal With It

Conversation with a cuppa: to launch their exciting new digital campaign "Let's Deal With It" aimed at eliminating discrimination, Shakti Community Council is inviting everybody to a "café" in Aotea Square, 5pm-7pm on Friday March 13.

"It's conversation around the table over tea and cookies," explains campaign manager Tayyaba Khan. Discussions will be helped along by question cards developed by campaign partner and youth development organisation Ara Taiohi.

Responding to a call to action from the Trans-Tasman Conference on Racial Equity in the wake of the Christchurch terror attack, the Let's Deal With It campaign will target all forms of discrimination, from workplace sexual harassment to Māori incarceration to the institutional barriers women of colour face in politics and more.

We hope to see you at this worthwhile activi-tea! ■



Tayyaba Khan

Contact

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Centre Hours

Monday to Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Library Hours

Monday to Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Services

- Women's Support: free support, info, advice and referral
- Community Education
- Community Events
- Counselling
- LGBTQ support
- Low Cost Massage
- Self Defence Classes
- Opportunities to talk and support feminism
- Diversity Forums
- Support Groups
- Support for High School Feminism

Designed by Toni Chase