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DVRCV relaunches website to support young people living with family violence

Every day, children and young people across Victoria are exposed to physical violence, emotional abuse and controlling behaviours in their home. They have very few places they can go to help them understand what's happening and where they can get support.

Today, Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (DVRCV) relaunched their youth-focused website *What's Ok at Home*, designed for these children and young people aged 10-17, as well as the professionals, teachers and parents who see the impact of this violence first-hand. This site was redeveloped from DVRCV's award-winning *Bursting the Bubble* website and brings to life the diverse stories of children and young people living with family violence in a way that protects their privacy and showcases the creative skills and resilience of young people.

"We're delighted to launch *What's Ok at Home* today because we know there are too many Victorian children and young people who are impacted by family violence at home. Children and young people often have nowhere to go for information or support if there is family violence in their home, and this site will provide kids with access to specialist information, support and advice," said Emily Maguire, CEO of DVRCV.

In Victoria, children were present in over 25,000 family violence incidents reported to Victoria Police in 2015/16 – one-third of all cases. The actual incidence is likely to be much higher. This exposure to family violence can have a traumatic impact on children and young people. In developing *What's Ok at Home*, DVRCV drew on the real-life stories and experiences of people who grew up with violence in their family. They described the fear, anxiety, anger, guilt and shame that they carried with them throughout childhood and adolescence – and often into adulthood.

"Given that family violence includes more than just physical assault, it's not always easy to identify. We want children and young people to be able to recognise the patterns of coercion, threats, intimidation or understand that family violence includes social isolation, economic abuse or spiritual abuse. They already know these things are occurring in their families and they're causing them distress and harm, but they might not yet have words for what these behaviours are," said Ms Maguire.

"Our hope is that one day children and young people will never be impacted by family violence. But until that time, it's vital that we provide them with the tools they need to recognise what's happening and get the support they need," said Ms Maguire.

View *What's Ok at Home* at woah.org.au

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