

Me kōrero

Let's Talk



SUMMER 2024-25

Easing the Burden at Christmas

– How your support
makes a difference

Keeping it Real

– Introducing the
Harm Less podcast

Bound by Love, Bound by Healing

– A mother and
son's story





Kaimahi Chelsea

Putting Aroha into Christmas

A kaimahi’s perspective on Christmas for her clients

Kia ora and Meri Kirihimete,

I begin to hear clients stressing about Christmas as soon as October rolls around. For many, it’s their first Christmas after leaving an abusive relationship. The emotional toll is overwhelming, and Christmas expectations can feel insurmountable. There’s a lot of anxiety about how they’ll make it special for their children, and how they’ll make ends meet when they’re already stretched beyond capacity.

When I first offer to arrange a hamper and some gifts, I can visibly see the weight lift from their shoulders. It’s incredible to witness - I hear the sigh of relief. In that moment, it feels like I’m helping to ease a burden they’ve carried for too long.

When I deliver the gifts and food parcels, I’m met with surprise and disbelief at the quality and quantity of what our donors and supporters have given. Many parents cry, they’re overcome by gratitude because they simply couldn’t afford to give their children Christmas presents on their own.

It’s not just about the presents; it’s about the aroha and dignity that comes with it, to rekindle a sense of normalcy for families, and the excitement that every child deserves to wake up to on Christmas Day.

Donations of gifts or contributions to food hampers aren’t just material items; you’re reminding families that they’re not alone, that the community around them cares when they need it most, and that they deserve good things. The kindness and generosity of everyone who gives, so Aviva can get gifts into the hands of those who have endured so much, makes an enormous difference, and I’m just so proud to be part of it.

Aroha nui,
Chelsea

“People get themselves worked up into a panic about Christmas so the fact we can offer this really helps ease the stress.”

LAURA, SEXUAL VIOLENCE KAIMAHI



ABOVE & BELOW
A peek into last year’s Christmas gift room



Police and other agencies report spikes in family violence between Christmas and the start of the school term.

RNZ, JANUARY 2024



Support Families this Christmas

Ensure that a family working to overcome violence has presents to open on Christmas morning.

Drop off your **unwrapped gifts** to the Aviva Gift Room at The Loft, Level 1, Eastgate Shopping Centre **before Friday 13th December.**

Christmas Gift Ideas

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

Please no wrapped gifts, second-hand items, alcohol or toy weapons such as Nerf guns or water pistols.

You can also support our clients at Christmas by donating to Aviva here: aviva.org.nz/donate

Silent Night

by Helen Trainor

In shadows deep where secrets reign,
a mother walks through hidden pain,
two small hands to hers held tight,
a weight she bears with all her might.

His words roll forth —a thunder's roar,
the walls they shake, she shuts the door,
to shield their eyes from worst unseen,
to keep their innocence white and clean.

Still scars run deep through air that's thin,
each shout, each blow, again, again,
for though she tries to silence the night,
it seeps its way into the light.

Attempts to leave, like paper dreams,
folded fear, bursting seams,
with every plan, the grip grows tight,
a dance of dread that steals her fight.

Then, one day, with courage drawn,
she takes their hands across the lawn,
her heart a drum, her spirit fierce,
she breaks away the locks that pierce.

It's Christmas now, in a home that's theirs
no shadows lurk, no whispered fears,
the laughter speckled in squealed delight,
she gathers them up and holds them tight.

Gifts from Aviva, delivered with care,
a reminder of kindness, the love we share,
the joy they bring, each treasure bright,
as twinkling stars fill up the night.

Here's to mothers, warriors brave,
who rise from the ashes, their children save,
with hearts of hope they pave the way,
to brighter tomorrows, and peace for today.



“Aviva’s support has reignited my belief that things can improve and that there are people out there who care.”

CRISTINA

Bound by Love, Bound by Healing

A mother and son’s path to healing

As a survivor of intimate partner violence, Cristina* talks about her journey to a better place for herself and her son. She reflects on how her own childhood trauma and the absence of healthy role models affected her response to her partner as an adult. Cristina explains how she regained control of her life, set boundaries when dealing with her ex, and supported her son through his experiences.

“I was born into a world of struggle, in a country where poverty and corruption were the norm. My mother, young and unmarried to a man who already had children, had few choices. She was uninvolved in my upbringing. I was shuffled between relatives, and raised to cook and clean for my keep; bullied and beaten in the homes

where I stayed, they even called me “Cinderella”.

I dreamed my parents would one day marry and I would get the affection I so craved, but nobody spoke of my mother. It was as if she’d committed a crime, and I was too timid to ask what it was.

Despite my harsh beginnings, I achieved at school and graduated with a qualification in design. I worked hard in the industry and picked up extra work as a translator. When an opportunity to go to New Zealand arose, I took it.

Arriving in New Zealand was both exciting and terrifying. The only people I knew were colleagues, and I was very naive about men. When I met Mark, I thought he was my prince charming. He was very attentive at the beginning, making me feel special, yet he never

introduced me to any of his friends or family. He preferred to keep our relationship secret, dismissing my concerns, and saying I should be grateful he came around at all.

I opened my heart to Mark*, hoping he would reciprocate if I gave him my everything. When nothing changed, I began pulling back. That made him insistent on seeing me, so I let him back in, yearning for the fairy-tale I hoped was possible.

When I became pregnant, Mark was so angry, accusing me of using him and threatening me with what his family would do if they found out. I was so scared. My doctor suggested I speak to the police, but I felt too scared to do that either. On my boss’s advice, I told Mark I was seeing someone else. It wasn’t true, but he stopped contacting me.

My beautiful baby Lucas was born, and for five blissful years, I raised him alone. Then, unexpectedly, Mark sought 50:50 custody. Believing it was important for Lucas to bond with his father, I agreed to weekend visits.

Soon after, however, I noticed alarming changes in Lucas. He was restless, crying often, and acting out aggressively. His school grew concerned and suggested counselling, but Lucas wouldn’t speak to anyone but me. He said he was scared of Mark, who was strict, denying him food and making him sleep on the floor as punishment.

At the school's suggestion, I contacted Aviva, and a compassionate social worker entered our lives. For the first time, I felt safe to express my feelings without any judgment. I shared my disappointment, guilt, and fear.

“As I became more comfortable with my emotions, I was able to help Lucas recognise and express his feelings too. Aviva’s support empowered me as a parent, teaching me positive parenting techniques that I began to implement.”

Through Aviva’s programme, I started to identify red flags in relationships, understanding how my own childhood trauma had made me vulnerable to Mark’s manipulation. I learned to set boundaries and evaluate who really deserved my love. With my support worker’s guidance, I was also able to help Lucas, sharing tools to keep him safe. I’m so proud of how far he’s come.

Aviva’s support has reignited my belief that things can improve and that there are people out there who care. I firmly believe you can learn from life’s hardships and find the good amongst the bad. That’s what I want to instill in Lucas too, as we continue our journey together. I know the road won’t always be easy, but I do know we’re getting stronger as we go.”

Cristina’s journey highlights the complex nature of communicating with an abusive ex-partner in co-parenting situations. If Cristina and Lucas’s story resonates with you or someone you know, support is available. Please reach out to Aviva’s 24-hour Support Line on 0800 28 48 26.

**not their real name*

How to Get Involved

Collect donations

Want to help Aviva in a new way? If you run a local retail or customer-facing business, consider becoming a donation hub.

You could collect cash donations for our Christmas and annual appeals, or even be a drop-off point for Christmas gifts or Easter treats.

We will support you with donation buckets, social media tiles, posters and messaging.

Contact our Fundraising Team: community@aviva.org.nz or phone 0223 157 954



Join our team of volunteers

Right now, we are seeking reliable volunteer drivers to transport up to three primary school-aged children between their schools and Aviva offices. An Aviva vehicle will be provided for use during transportation.

Responsibilities include:

- **Driving with Care:** Transport children safely and reliably, adhering to the NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi road rules and Aviva’s processes.
- **Punctuality:** Be dependable and adhere to set time frames each week.
- **Caring Attitude:** Approach your role with empathy and sensitivity, prioritising the safety and well-being of each child.
- **Confidentiality:** Always maintain confidentiality and respect boundaries.

See our volunteering web page for full details: aviva.org.nz/volunteer

Harm Less

conversations about sexual violence in Aotearoa

Harm Less podcast does not shy away from nuance or complexity but keeps content clear and accessible.

Keeping it Real

Check out the *Harm Less* podcast

Aviva's *Harm Less* podcast is now available on podcast platforms, featuring in-depth conversations with survivors, practitioners and policy makers about sexual violence in Aotearoa.

It's well documented that sexual violence is all too prevalent in our society. The past year has seen a deluge of headlines about sexual violence in this country. This can make it seem like sexual violence is inevitable. That, says Jo Bader, is a mistake. Jo is Aviva's Senior Client Service Manager for Sexual Violence Services. Despite being incredibly familiar with the scale and impact of sexual violence in Aotearoa, she believes there is reason to be hopeful.

While the figures show that sexual violence is not decreasing, what these headlines (and the subsequent public outrage) demonstrate is a decrease in our collective tolerance of it. And, further, a reduction in the expectation that the burden of shame be carried by its victims.

Harm Less makes visible what has been invisible

Handled with warmth and sensitivity, it hosts kōrero with survivors, practitioners, policy makers and family members. Their conversations explore how we got to this point, and how we can change things. They do not shy away from nuance or



complexity but keep content clear and accessible. This is important, because it's a topic about which greater understanding is vital.

Why? Because collective outrage about certain headlines is just a starting point. It might seem like social change happens by osmosis.



Image: Heather Joy Photography

Change will only happen when awareness becomes understanding, and understanding becomes meaningful, sustained action.

LEFT Aviva Sexual Violence Kaimahi

But it happens when people take action to create change. And when it comes to sexual violence, every single one of us can take action.

What can you do?

If that sounds daunting to you, fair enough! We’ve just told you that sexual violence is an enormous problem, that it is complicated, and that successive governments, policymakers, and communities across the country haven’t managed to solve it yet. What can lil’ old you do?

That’s where Harm Less comes in. Give it a listen!

Luckily, you don’t have to do anything – we’re not asking you to donate money or volunteer your time; nobody expects you to patrol your local bus stop, or create a detailed spreadsheet which ranks your peers’ behaviour from most-least problematic.

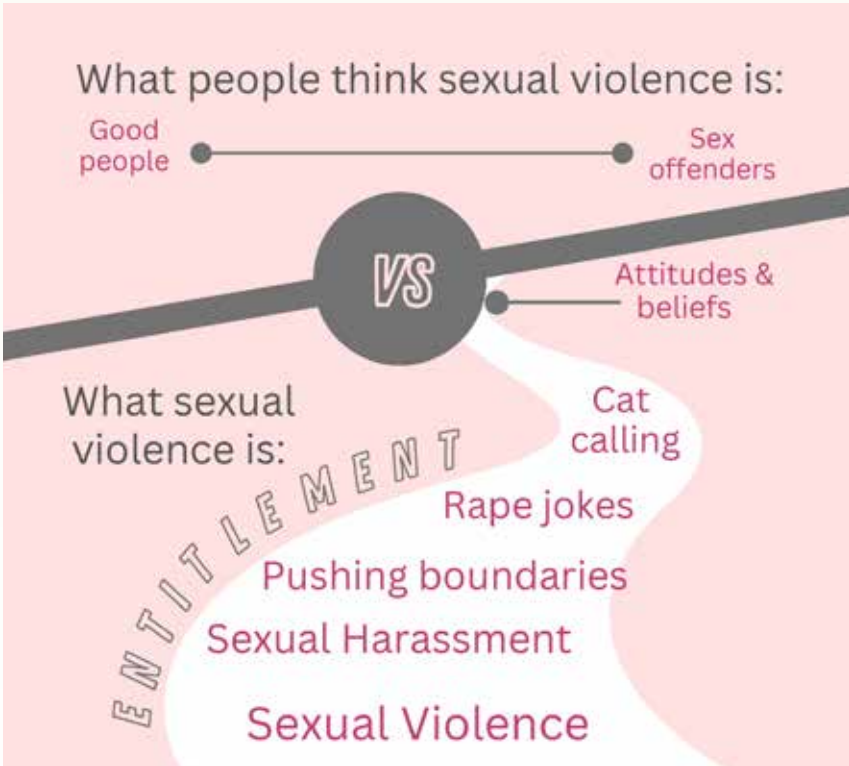
But we are asking everyone to stop tolerating sexual violence and the things that cause it. Sexual violence and its complexity have been hidden, or seen as one dimensional, for

too long. As a result, most people don’t know how to be part of the solution. We are asking people to engage in the kōrero. Change will only happen when awareness becomes understanding, and understanding becomes meaningful, sustained action.

Alongside Harm Less sits Aviva’s Asking for it... to Stop campaign – a

digital guide to being an Upstander (someone who stands up against sexual violence and the attitudes which cause it). This campaign ran in April of 2024 and its resources are available for everyone (including its social media tiles).

Contact community@aviva.org.nz for a tool-kit of Asking for it... to Stop resources.





Thank You

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

- Arise Church
- BNZ – Colombo Street
- Bolt of Cloth Limited
- Canterbury Women's Legal Association
- Catholic Diocese of Christchurch – Hoatu Fund
- Christchurch Aunties
- Christchurch Casino Charitable Trust
- Christchurch City Council – Community Grants
- Clothed Love
- Compass FM
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- Thursdays in Black
- Twigger Women's Refuge Endowment Fund
- Un Cadeau Charitable Trust
- University of Canterbury – Modern Feminist Society
- University of Canterbury – Young Leaders
- Victory Family Centre
- Waiwetu Trust
- Zonta Club

Aviva Exists Because We Care

We are a Canterbury-based family violence and sexual violence agency dedicated to making New Zealand Aotearoa violence-free. Our extensive range of person-centred services includes both one-on-one support and group education programmes, for anyone affected by violence – all ages, genders, sexualities, ethnicities, and experiences of violence.

We uphold the potential of each person to not only become safe but to begin a journey toward a fulfilling, violence-free life. We're here to help every step of the way.

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/donate](https://www.aviva.org.nz/donate) or contact community@aviva.org.nz to make a contribution.

Contact Us

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

ADDRESS

The Loft, Level 1
Eastgate Shopping Centre

PO Box 24 161
Christchurch 8140

FREEPHONE

0800 28 48 26

EMAIL


community@aviva.org.nz

WEB

www.aviva.org.nz

SOCIAL

 @AvivaNZ

 @AvivaNZ

 violence.free.aotearoa