

Forced Marriage Educational Resource for Young People



The Honour My Choice program aims to help stop the crime of forced marriage

Taldumande Youth Services is a well-established service that supports vulnerable and homeless children and young people aged 12-24 years, and their families, across Sydney. On any night, Taldumande has over 70 children and young people staying in their accommodation. Taldumande offers a variety of programs to support children and young people who are facing challenges.

What is Honour My Choice?

If you or someone you know is in a forced marriage situation, Honour My Choice can help.

Taldumande's Honour My Choice program is a leader in prevention and care of children and young people who are victims/survivors of forced marriage. Honour My Choice is a free program designed to help prevent forced marriage and it provides education to children and young people about this crime, as well as to schools and community services. It also provides support to children and young people at risk of or experiencing forced marriage.

The program can connect you with a variety of supports such as accommodation, legal assistance, education, employment, health and mental health services.

The program also works closely with your school and other services to prevent a forced marriage situation from happening, or from getting worse. The educational resources provided to you will give you more information about forced marriage and about the Honour My Choice program, so that you can make your own choices and connect with services that might assist.

Disclaimer: Please note that the Honour My Choice Educational Resource, and all included content and documentation, convey basic information about forced marriage, aiming to provide education and awareness about forced marriage affecting children and young people in Australia. This information is not a substitute for professional legal advice and does not wholly cover all legal aspects of forced marriage but is intended as a first step in understanding forced marriage in an Australian context and its implications.

What you need to know about forced marriage

Some children and young people are forced into marriage by their families or communities. You need to know what your rights are under the law, so it is truly your choice if, when and with whom you marry. You need to access the best supports if your rights are taken away from you.

What is forced marriage?

A person is in a forced marriage if they did not freely and fully consent to being married.

Forced marriage is a violation of your human rights and is illegal in Australia.

Forced marriage is not limited to any specific cultural group, religion, ethnicity, or gender.

It is your legal right to choose who you will marry and when to get married and your rights are protected by Australian law.

What is the difference between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage?

Your parents or family members might wish to introduce you to a potential spouse that they believe is a good match for you. If you meet this person and both of you agree to get married at a legal age of marriage in Australia, this is considered an "arranged marriage." Arranged marriage involves the consent of both people and is practiced across a variety of cultural groups where parents may choose a partner for their son or daughter. Arranged marriages are not illegal in Australia if both parties agree to be married.

Honour My Choice can help if you:

- 1 were previously, or are currently being threatened, coerced, pressured, or deceived into getting married
- 2 have not freely and fully consented to being married
- 3 were under 16 years old at the time you were married
- 4 did not have the mental capacity to consent to your marriage

You are not alone and you can get support

What can you expect at Honour My Choice?

A friendly and experienced caseworker from Honour My Choice will work closely with you and your school to help you at any time that you need support. You can meet with your caseworker in a confidential place at your school, or in another safe place where you feel most comfortable.

Honour My Choice can assist you early, so that your situation does not get worse. You will be provided with information about all the options that are available to help you, so that you can decide what is the best for you and your future.



Honour My Choice can help you to access:

Confidential Guidance:

The first step is speaking to your School Counsellor, Principal, Teacher or another trusted adult who can help you to contact an Honour My Choice staff member safely and securely to get more information, or to report your situation and get assistance.

Case Management:

Your Honour My Choice caseworker will support you with everything you need, so that you can make informed decisions about your own life. Your caseworker is knowledgeable about your situation and your information is kept confidential. Your caseworker will help connect you to all the services you need, assist you to finish your education or to find work, and if you wish, will also help you to find a counsellor who understands what you have been through.

Case Management & Wrap Around Services



Types of Taldumande youth accommodation:

Crisis
Refuge

Semi
Independent
Accommodation

Independent
Accommodation

Aftercare/
Independence

Legal Issues:

The police and legal systems are there to protect your right to live in your home safely without the threat of harm or intimidation. We recognise that it can certainly be difficult and sometimes scary for you to contact the police about your situation. The Australian Federal Police are friendly and handle matters related to forced marriage. Protecting your privacy and safety are of the utmost importance to them. Your Honour My Choice caseworker can assist you in making a call to police, if you choose to do so, and can come with you as your support person for any meetings. The police will investigate what occurred by speaking with you to get more information and they will explain your legal rights to you.

Your Honour My Choice caseworker can also help you contact other appropriate legal services to get specific legal advice, and to provide you with all the information you need to make the choices that you feel are best for you.

Interpreting Services:

If English is not your first language and you need an interpreter, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450, and tell them the language you speak. The service operates 24/7, every day of the year. If you want to speak to a particular organisation through an interpreter, remember that the organisation may only be available during their regular business hours. Your caseworker can help you to make this call if you need support.

Emergency Help:

If your situation is an emergency, your school staff or an Honour My Choice caseworker can help you make a direct call to Triple Zero 000 immediately. You can also call the Australian Federal Police directly on 131 237 to make a report.

A New Pathway

A New Pathway is an accommodation program that has been offered through Taldumande Youth Services since 2015 providing safe and secure housing to young girls aged 16–21 who are escaping forced marriage. Our houses are spacious and furnished, with your own bedroom, and they have everything you need. A New Pathway offers daily support from friendly staff so you can work on your living skills and set personal goals. These houses are in safe neighbourhoods with access to public transport so that you can get to your school, work, shopping centres or other appointments. Our caseworkers and youthworkers provide supervision at the properties, and can help you with your laundry, shopping, budgeting, homework and making meals. Specialist case management and accommodation is also provided to young males escaping forced marriage either through one of our other Taldumande properties or in collaboration with external accommodation services.

When you are ready to move to more independent accommodation, we can assist you to transition to other Taldumande properties or we can connect you to a variety of suitable accommodation services in the community.

If you or someone you know requires support, please contact one of our friendly caseworkers at Honour My Choice for further information and guidance:



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