

Spotting the signs

DONCARE wants young women willing to participate in focus groups for a new domestic violence prevention program.

Clinical services director Carmel O'Brien said Doncare was developing a leadership program to help women aged 16-25 identify the early signs of a controlling and abusive partner and empower them to act before violence occurs.

Ms O'Brien said the program would plug a gap in domestic violence services.

"So many women we see in our

support programs look back on the beginnings of their own relationships and say 'I wish I'd known'," she said.

Ms O'Brien said a focus group of 10 women last week discussed the pressure on young women to look good and have sex, the difficulties of balancing boyfriends and friends and the impact of social media on relationships.

Program participant Kimberly Batsas-Hill, 21, said the program was an excellent idea.

"Family violence often goes

under the radar because it's behind closed doors," she said.

"Girls have to be aware of the signs and this program will help create a general consensus about what some of those characteristics might be."

The program is being funded with a \$40,000 State Government grant. Details: 9841 4215.

Chloe Godau, Kimberly Batsas-Hill and Shereen Amin participated in a domestic violence focus group.

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