



## SCENARIO

- Ahmed and Fatima are Syrian parents who came to NZ as refugees two years ago with their teenage daughter Layla.
- Layla started attending high school in their local area in Auckland and integrated very well with the NZ culture.
- However, the parents are still very traditional and are practising their religion strictly. They will not allow their daughter to have a boyfriend without a marriage being arranged or negotiated.
- Layla tried to keep her relationship a secret from her parents.
- When Layla's mother was cleaning her room, she found a photo of her daughter with her boyfriend under her pillow.
- Her parents were incredibly angry and upset.
- When Layla came back home, her father slapped her on the face and asked her to pack her things and leave the house within a week.
- Layla and her parents have been arguing about this for a couple of days now.
- Finally, her father agreed to have a mediation with Layla at the local Community Mediation Centre, to try and sort out the situation and bring peace to the family household.

# AHMED'S (FATHER) INFORMATION



## WHAT HAPPENED?

- I cannot understand Layla's way of thinking and acting because I am from a different cultural background with a hugely different set of values and norms.
- Layla is terribly upset that I, her father, slapped her face but she doesn't understand that I did it out of love for her.
- Had we still been living in our home country what I would have been required to do would have been much, much more severe.
- Layla made matters worse by acting in a way that her mother never would have.
- This act is beyond my understanding. I have never heard of such a silly thing. If a man is not the head of his own house, he is nothing at all.
- Her mother is torn between great sadness and love for both Layla and I. She is in complete confusion. Such a thing would never have happened in my youth.
- I know Layla wants to be like any other girl in NZ, living her life as she wants and having her own privacy. However, her family, culture, traditions, and religion should be important parts of her life.
- Above all, I need to resolve my relationship with Layla because she is my daughter and I love her.



# LAYLA'S (DAUGHTER) INFORMATION



## WHAT HAPPENED?

- I have been disrespectful to my parents. I love them both dearly and never meant for this to happen.
- It is easy to talk with my mother but with my father, it is not easy. We both get angry quickly. I get angry because my father never listens to how life is for me in New Zealand. He always says, “Back in the old country..... Back in the old country.....Back in the old country.....”
- I understand that family, culture, traditions and religion are a big part of mine and my parents’ life. I agree with much of what my father has been saying.
- Many girls in New Zealand are too loose in their behaviour with boys, some of them even sleeping with one or more partners. I would never do such a thing.
- My boyfriend and I have only held hands and spent time talking together. Only once did we have a photo taken. I wish that I hadn’t now, but my girl classmates kept teasing me about not having a boyfriend. I thought that by showing them the photo they would not be unkind to me.
- My parents don’t realise how different life is in New Zealand. Both of them almost never go outside the Muslim community except to work in their shop. I have to go out of the community every day. At school, there is a lot of pressure for me to change and be more ‘Kiwilike’.

I want to do the right thing, but I am only 17 and that is too young to get married in New Zealand, especially without a good education.

- I want to keep my faith but if my father throws me out of the house I will not be able to go to a Mosque either. It will be a great shame for me.
- My boyfriend is not Muslim, but he said he is happy to become one. He is Samoan and his family has many different customs to mine.