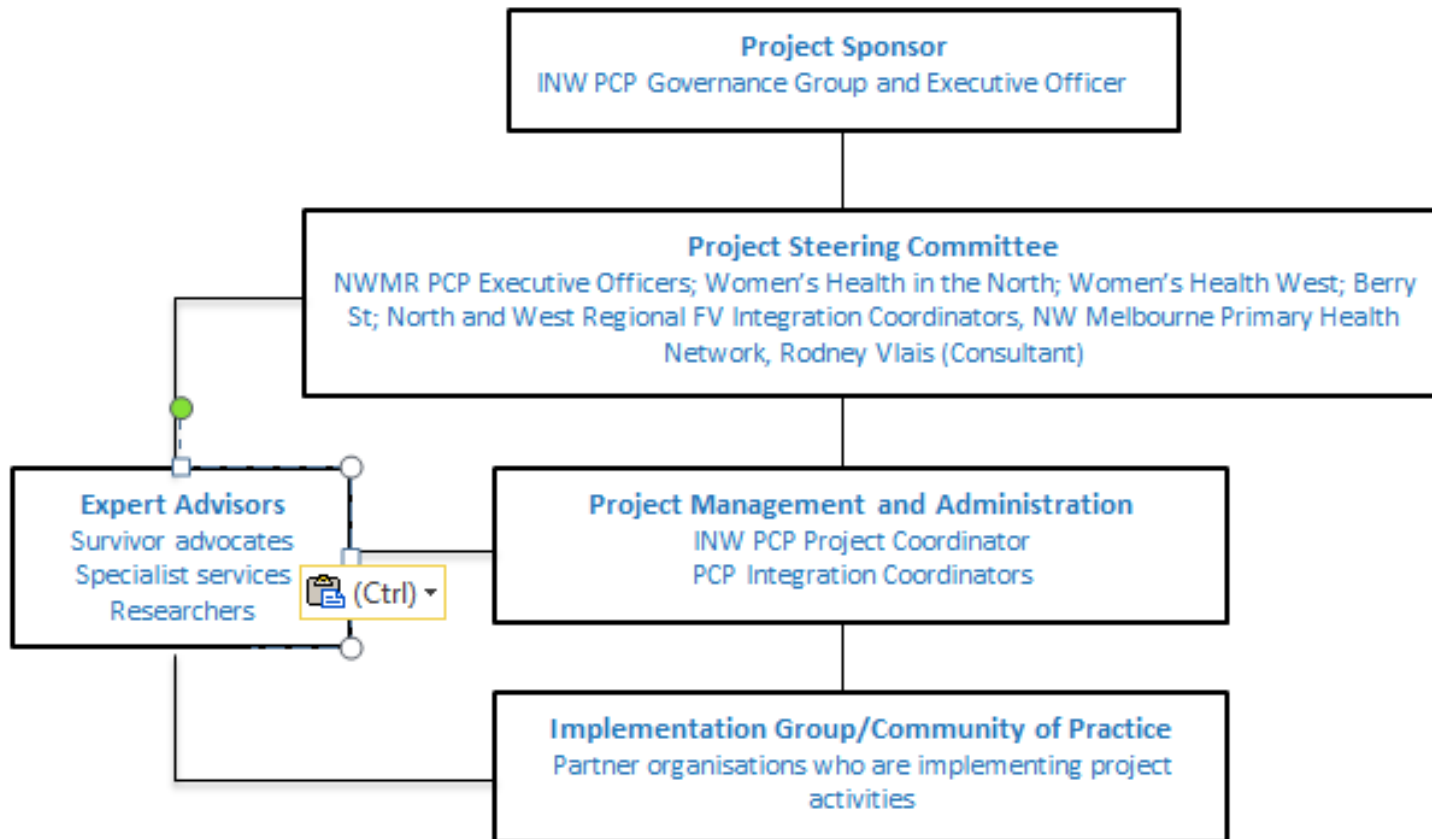


Identifying and Responding to Family Violence Project

Western Region
Management Training



NWMR PCP Identifying and Responding to Family Violence



Training outline

- ❖ Setting the scene
- ❖ Defining and understanding family violence
- ❖ Identifying clients experiencing family violence
- ❖ Responding to clients experiencing family violence
- ❖ Supporting staff experiencing family violence
- ❖ Service coordination and change management
- ❖ Making it work!

Group agreements

- ❖ Safety in the training room for you
- ❖ Confidentiality in the training room for your clients and staff
- ❖ No-one knows everything – together we know a lot!
- ❖ Be aware of time
- ❖ Explore the learning space

Setting the scene

- ❖ Family Violence Quiz (Handout A)
- ❖ Stories from women who have experienced family violence <http://www.tafe.swinburne.edu.au/CRAF/dvd.htm?7>
 - a) What was common about their experiences?
 - b) What stood out in their stories?

Power and Control Wheel



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9dZOgr78eE>

Defining family violence



The Family Violence Protection Act 2008 defines family violence as:

- a) Behaviour by a person towards a family member of that person if that behaviour is
 - i. physically or sexually abusive
 - ii. emotionally or psychologically abusive
 - iii. is economically abusive
 - iv. is threatening;
 - v. is coercive; or
 - vi. in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or well-being of that family member or another person, or...

Defining family violence

- b) Behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness or otherwise be exposed to the effects of behaviour referred to in paragraph a.



Impacts on children

More than half of the women who experienced violence had children in their care when the violence occurred

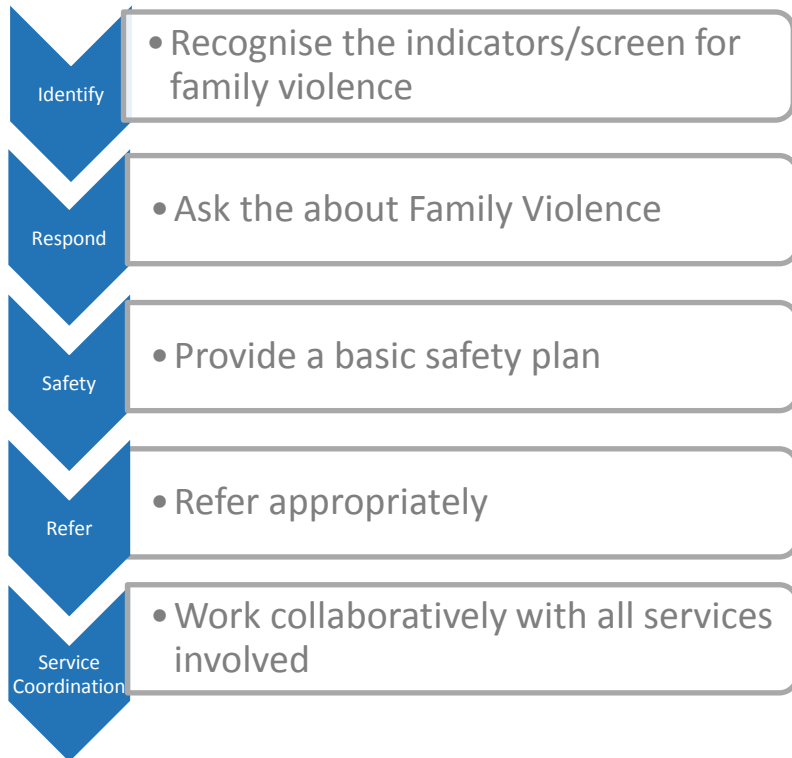
Exposure to family violence includes:

- ❖ Overhearing threats of physical abuse
- ❖ Seeing or hearing an assault or emotional abuse
- ❖ Comforting a parent who has been abused
- ❖ Cleaning up or observing property damage
- ❖ Being present when police attend a FV incident
- ❖ Experiencing the impacts of family violence including homelessness, poverty, death of a companion pet, and impact on schooling and social activities.

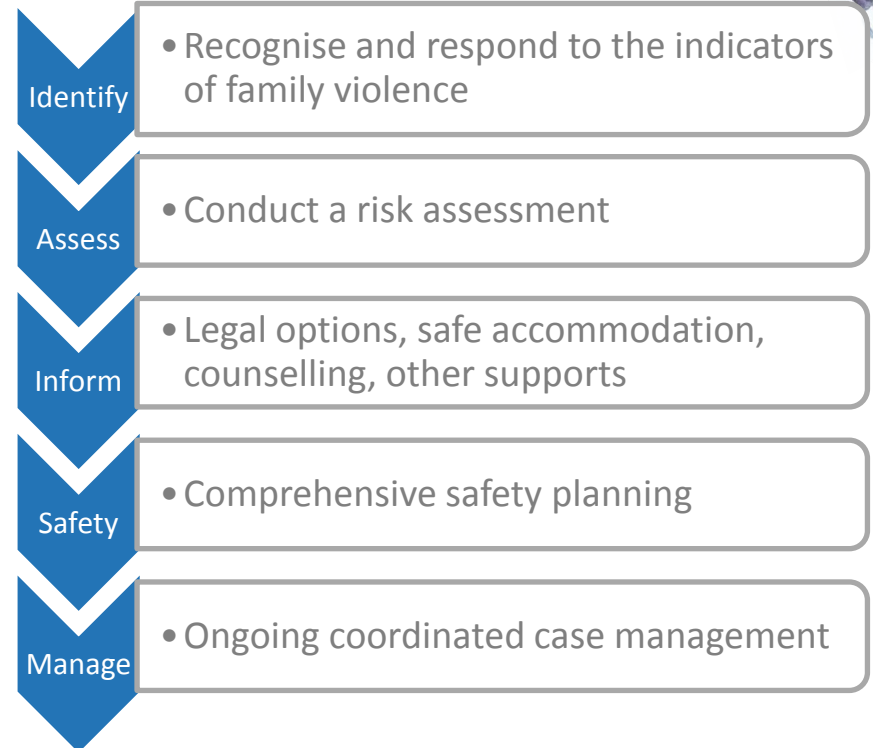


Great expectations

Health Care Professionals



Family Violence Specialists Services



Client Policy Template

Provides guidance to staff regarding:

- ❖ Identifying family violence
- ❖ Responding to family violence
- ❖ Safety Planning
- ❖ Referrals
- ❖ Secondary consultation
- ❖ Documentation
- ❖ Self Care

Family violence indicators

At risk groups:

- ❖ Pregnancy and new birth
- ❖ Aboriginal women
- ❖ Women with disabilities

Physical/Psychological:

- ❖ Injuries, pain
- ❖ Anxiety/depression
- ❖ Recently separated
- ❖ Cancellations
- ❖ Difficulty making decisions
- ❖ Guarded
- ❖ Fearful
- ❖ Partner checking up/always present

Family violence indicators in children



Physical:

- ❖ Difficulty eating/sleeping
- ❖ Slow weight gain (infants)
- ❖ Chronic physical complaints
- ❖ Eating Disorders

Psychological/behavioural:

- ❖ Aggressive behaviour/language
- ❖ Depression/anxiety/suicide attempts
- ❖ Regressive behaviour in toddlers
- ❖ Delayed language development
- ❖ Psychosomatic illnesses
- ❖ Bedwetting
- ❖ Acting out i.e. cruelty to animals
- ❖ Exhibiting sexually abusive behaviour

Identifying family violence Screening VS Responding to indicators



High Risk Populations:

- Pregnant/post natal Women
- Women presenting with Mental Health Issues
- Women presenting with Drug and Alcohol issues



Screen for Family Violence on intake
if safe to do so

Client accesses mainstream
services



Staff members
observes Family
Violence Indicators



Staff member asks the
client about family violence
when it is safe to do so

Fear Factor!

Imagine yourself in the role of a staff member – what concerns or fears might you have about asking a client whether they are experiencing family violence?

How can we support our staff to ask **direct questions** about family violence?



Addressing staff fears by implementing policies and procedures:

- ❖ A quiet private space is available for client interviews
- ❖ Opportunities to speak to the client without the partner/family member present
- ❖ Not using a family member as an interpreter
- ❖ Up to date resources and information readily available
- ❖ Flexibility regarding the length of time allowed for client appointments
- ❖ Processes and procedures in place to ensure staff safety during home visits and outreach support
- ❖ Clear procedures regarding reporting to Child Protection
- ❖ Debriefing and support to staff following a client FV disclosure
- ❖ Staff appropriately trained to respond to disclosures
- ❖ Referral pathways promoted to staff

Practice makes perfect

Are you fearful about the safety of yourself or your kids?

Has your partner ever hit you or hurt you?

Are you feeling safe at home?

Violence is very common in the home. I ask a lot of my clients about abuse because no one should have to live in fear

Do you think the kids might be scared of their father?

Family violence is an issue for a lot of people, and part of our role is to check in with women to see if this is an issue for them, so if they want support we can assist them. Is it ok if I ask you some questions?

It's quite common that women who are pregnant experience violence from their partners – has this been happening to you?

I notice you're looking quite anxious today – is anyone in your home or family causing you to feel stressed and fearful?

Responding to disclosures

Helpful

I know this must be difficult for you to talk about but I'm worried about your safety and want to support you any way I can

You and your kids deserve to be safe

Yes perhaps he is stressed, but it is still his choice to use violence

My role is to give you information and support that will help you to keep safe. Would you like to talk about next steps?

Whatever you choose to do, we are here to support you

Unhelpful

What made him hit you?

If you really care about your children then you'll leave him

So he just snapped? It sounds like he has some anger management issues

He really needs to address his drinking/drug taking behaviour

It seems like he loves you a lot and is experiencing some jealousy

There's not much we can do to help while you stay in this relationship



Safety Planning

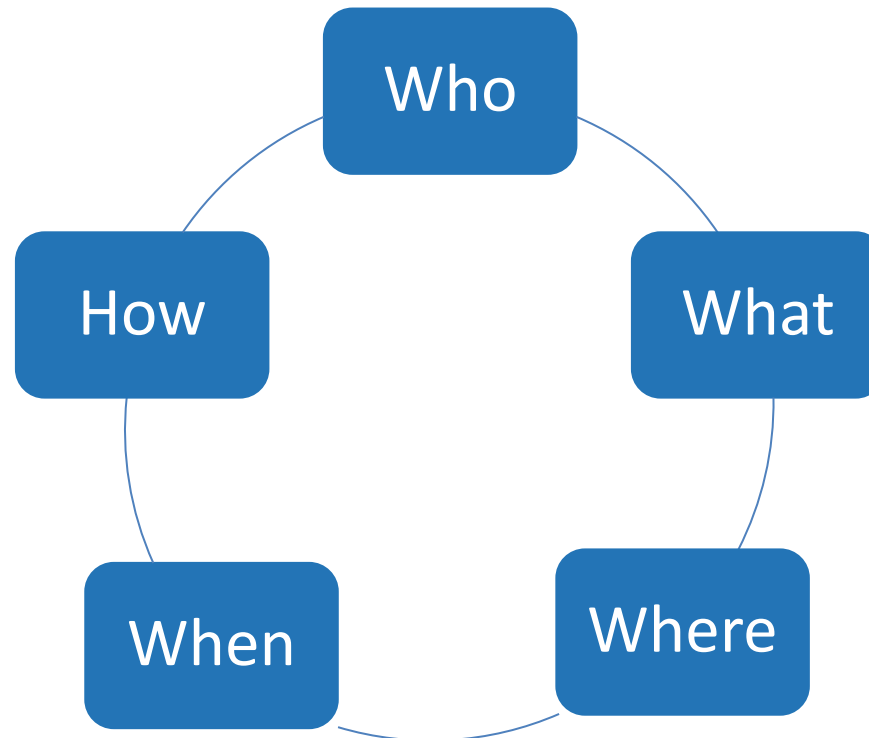
Key Principles:

- ❖ Ask about what strategies have been used to keep herself and her children safe in the past
- ❖ Always incorporate children into Mum's safety plan
- ❖ If you have training to engage with children - support the child to identify their own safety plan as appropriate or refer to a specialist children's support worker
- ❖ Refer to a FV specialist or a children's support worker for comprehensive safety planning

Safety planning - tips

- ❖ Identify a safe room in the house
- ❖ Keep your mobile phone on at all times – switch off GPS
- ❖ Take photos and certify important documents and give to worker/support person
- ❖ Keep spare keys/case in a secret spot
- ❖ Reverse your car into the driveway so that it is easy to leave
- ❖ Choose a code word you can use with a friend to signal that help is needed
- ❖ Keep trusted friends informed about what is going on

Safety planning- Violence escalation



Referrals



Police



1800 Respect



Safe Steps



Family Violence Outreach Services (WHW)



Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service



Intouch Multicultural Centre against Family Violence



Seniors Rights Victoria



Legal Services – CLC's, Women's Legal Service



Child First/Child Protection

Secondary consultations



Internal Consultations - Which programs/staff have the skills to support staff responding to a family violence disclosure

External Consultations - External consultations recognise the limitations of the health worker role and the expertise of specialists family violence services in risk assessment

- ❖ Women's Health West
- ❖ Berry Street Safe Steps
- ❖ 1800 RESPECT (National)

Documentation

A Coroner's Court inquest into a family violence homicide will investigate which professionals were involved with the deceased person and what preventative actions were taken

Documentation should include:

- ❖ Date , details of worker, details of the client
- ❖ Indicators and details of the family violence disclosure
- ❖ Observations
- ❖ Actions (inc. safety strategies, referral and secondary consultations)
- ❖ Follow up

Care for Self

- ❖ Responding to family violence can be stressful and overwhelming
- ❖ It is important that staff involved in responding to family violence disclosures are offered debriefing, support, further training, access to EAP and external supervision (when required)

Morning tea break





Workplace Policy Template.



The purpose of the Workplace Policy Template is to:

- ❖ Create a supportive environment that will encourage staff experiencing family violence to seek help and support
- ❖ Ensure all disclosures are treated confidentially and seriously
- ❖ Provide appropriate support and assistance to employees who are experiencing family violence



Components of a Workplace FV Policy



- ❖ Delegation of responsibility for staff disclosures
- ❖ Provisions for family violence leave
- ❖ Processes for protecting employees confidentiality
- ❖ Supporting work performance
- ❖ Implementation of a Workplace Safety Plan

Policy development considerations:

Who will be the designated person for staff to raise family violence issues?

- ❖ HR
- ❖ Senior Management
- ❖ Team Leader
- ❖ CEO
- ❖ Trained family violence support/contact officer

Policy development considerations!



What will your family violence leave provisions look like?

- ❖ Who can apply for family violence leave?
- ❖ How much leave will be provided?
- ❖ For what purpose will leave be allowed?
- ❖ What will be the application and approval process?

Policy development considerations:

How will confidentiality be maintained for staff experiencing family violence?

- ❖ Family violence issues should always be discussed in a safe and confidential place
- ❖ No information about family violence incidents should be kept on an employee's personal file without their express permission
- ❖ Family violence leave can be recorded as 'personal leave/special leave'

Supporting work performance



Staff experiencing family violence may exhibit performance issues directly related to the family violence such as:

- ❖ Absenteeism
- ❖ Work interruptions
- ❖ Trouble concentrating
- ❖ Physical or mental health issues

No employee should be penalised or disciplined for being a victim of family violence.

Workplace Safety Plan

- ❖ Changes to work schedule, including space, pattern of hours or work location
- ❖ Changes to electronic payroll transfers or benefits
- ❖ Possible changes to job duties
- ❖ Changes to telephone responses or email to avoid harassing contact
- ❖ Review of parking/transport arrangements
- ❖ Permission to carry a mobile phone
- ❖ Intervention order on file with the employees permission
- ❖ Flexible work arrangements

Making it work...

Choose one of the following:

1. Identifying and responding to women and children experiencing family violence
2. Responding to staff disclosures of family violence
 - a) What are the challenges in developing and implementing this policy in relation to either 1 or 2
 - b) What strategies can address these challenges

Further sources of information

www.dvrcv.org.au



www.thelookout.org.au



www.safesteps.org.au



Further sources of information

<http://ntv.org.au/>



<https://www.1800respect.org.au>



<http://www.berrystreet.org.au>



Reflections

- ❖ What changes will you recommend to your workplace following today's training?

