

RESPONSIBILITY 10

Family Violence: Collaborate for ongoing risk assessment and risk management

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NOTE:

Guidance and learning objectives for working with perpetrators is in development and will be available late 2020. Finalised guidance will make clear that only key/selected professionals and services will be trained/required to provide a service response to perpetrators related to their use of violence.

The learning objective for this **Responsibility 10** will include:

Ensure staff who specialise in working with perpetrators are trained to undertake comprehensive risk management through development, monitoring and actioning of risk management plans (including information sharing); monitoring across the service system (including justice systems); and actions to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. This can be through formal and informal system accountability mechanisms that support perpetrators' personal accountability to accept responsibility for their actions, and work at the behaviour change process.





10 FAMILY VIOLENCE: COLLABORATE FOR ONGOING RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

10.1 OVERVIEW

Due to the dynamic nature of family violence, family violence risk assessment and management is a continuous process. The aim of professionals, services and organisations working together is to understand family violence risk and undertake joint risk management strategies.

The safety of victim survivors (adults, children and young people) and visibility and accountability of perpetrators is the primary aim of family violence multi-agency collaborative practices.

Good practice in multi-agency responses involves:¹

- ... A focus on victim survivor safety and perpetrator accountability.
- ... Inclusion of all family violence related services at all levels (service delivery, policy, problem solving)
- ... Shared missions, aims, values, and approaches to family violence and protocols
- ... A collaborative approach to policy development and memoranda of understanding

¹ Adapted from Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2008, Multi-Agency Responses to Domestic Violence — From Good Ideas to Good Practice, Newsletter No 33, page 4.

- ... Willingness to change organisational practice to meet the aims of the response and develop operating procedures to achieve this
- ... Practices and protocols which ensure cultural safety, inclusivity and access and equity issues
- ... Information sharing
- ... Adequately trained and professional staff
- ... Senior level commitment and coordination
- ... Workable governance structure, with coordination, steering, troubleshooting and monitoring functions
- ... Transparency, particularly in regard to outcomes, including criminal justice system outcomes, and evaluation processes
- ... Commitment to continual self-auditing, enabled through data collection and monitoring processes
- ... Regular and frequent coordinated case management meetings
- ... Identification of service gaps (e.g. children's counselling) and development of new services to address them.

10.2 SYSTEM-LEVEL COLLABORATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Collaboration at an individual professional level must be supported by organisations' policies and procedures, including agreements for working in collaborative, multi-agency processes.

Professionals and services should understand their role in responding to family violence and how their service/organisation participates in and contributes to a broader network of services responding to family violence.

Services and organisations have a responsibility to work jointly to address family violence risk and undertake family violence risk assessment, risk management, planning and review.

Services should have the following²:

- ... Established strategies for working collaboratively with key partners within their local area to improve outcomes for victim survivors
- ... Strong links with local youth services, multicultural services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, services that specialise in working with people with disability, as well as LGBTIQ specialist services
- ... Formal partnerships built on a mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities and the shared goal of increased safety of victim survivors and families
- ... Established mechanisms that delineate referral processes and pathways
- ... Services regularly meet to discuss how to best support victim survivors and appropriately share information to enable comprehensive risk assessment and consideration of matters relating to the safety and wellbeing of victim survivors
- ... Regular participation in inter-agency and network meetings and are part of community networks and partnerships.

² Adapted from Government of New South Wales, Good Practice Guidelines for the Domestic and Family Violence Sector in NSW.

Further information on organisational responsibilities can be found in the *Organisational Embedding Guide*.

Having a range of professionals working collaboratively allows for interpretation and discussion. More informed decisions can then be made on appropriate family violence risk assessment and management responses.

Multi-agency collaboration is the key to building an integrated community response to family violence.

The functions of multi-agency collaboration include:³

- ... Improving communication between individuals and organisations
- ... Improving each participant's understanding of 'the problem' by exposing them to a variety of perspectives
- ... Improving decision making on collective strategies and individual cases based on more complete information
- ... Facilitating consistent and philosophically coherent policy development across services
- ... Improving the accountability of each network participant to victim survivors
- ... Facilitating evaluation of the collective response
- ... Facilitating broader cultural change.

³ Domestic Violence & Incest Resource Centre Victoria, 2004, Developing Integrated Responses to Family Violence in Victoria — Issues and Directions. Page 24.



10.3 THE ROLE OF SPECIALIST FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES

Specialist family violence services lead family violence system development. Their role includes strengthening the identification of family violence, referral pathways from multiple organisations and workforces, bringing professionals and services together, and promoting a shared understanding and commitment to family violence risk assessment and management.

Specialist family violence services may also:

- ... Identify gaps and barriers in the family violence service system
- ... Support professionals and services to analyse their response to family violence from the perspective of ensuring victim survivor safety
- ... Support services and organisations to make changes to practice or policy to align with the MARAM Framework.

