

# MARAM PRACTICE GUIDES

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

Working with adult people  
using family violence

# RESPONSIBILITY 10

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

10.1 Overview	359
10.2 System-level collaboration and development	360
10.3 The role of specialist family violence services	362

### NOTE:

This chapter is for all professionals who have received training to provide a service response to a person they may suspect or know is using family violence.

The learning objective for **Responsibility 10** builds on the material in the *Foundation Knowledge Guide* and in preceding **Responsibilities 1 to 9**.

The guidance in this chapter replicates some general information from the equivalent victim survivor-focused MARAM Practice Guide for **Responsibility 10** – but includes additional, specific information relevant to working with people using violence when collaborating for ongoing risk assessment and management.

# 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), safety of the person using violence (risk to themselves) and monitoring (keeping in view) and accountability of people using violence is the primary aim of family violence multi-agency collaborative practices.

### Key capabilities

All professionals should have knowledge of **Responsibility 10**, and should be able to:

- ... work collaboratively with other professionals and services to ongoing monitoring, assessment and management of risk over time to identify changes in patterns of coercive controlling behaviour and assessed level of risk and ensure risk management and safety plans are responsive to changed circumstances, including escalation.

Good practice in multi-agency responses involves:<sup>1</sup>

- ... 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 memorandums of understanding
- ... willingness to change organisational practice to meet the aims of the response and develop operating procedures to achieve this
- ... practices and protocols that ensure cultural safety and inclusivity to address access and equity issues
- ... information sharing (proactive and in response to requests)
- ... 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

1 Adapted from Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse 2008, 'Multi-agency responses to domestic violence — from good ideas to good practice', *Newsletter*, no. 33, p. 4.

- ... commitment to continual self-auditing, enabled through data collection and monitoring processes
- ... regular and frequent coordinated case management meetings
- ... identification of service gaps (such as children’s counselling) and development of new services and other strategies to address them.

Responsibility for monitoring, assessing and managing risk, and tailoring intervention responses to directly target and address the assessed level of risk of the person using violence, must be held across the service system.

This shared responsibility allows for all services and professionals to have a consistent understanding of family violence. It ensures the person using violence receives consistent and reinforcing messaging about responsibility and accountability.<sup>2</sup>

Ongoing risk assessment and management includes collaborating to develop, monitor and action safety plans and risk management plans to ensure consistency between responses for victim survivors and people using violence.

Ongoing collaborative practice can include formal (such as justice and statutory responses) and informal (such as health and social services engaging with the perpetrator) system accountability mechanisms that work together to support people who use violence to take personal responsibility for their actions, and work at the behaviour change process.

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Innovative Justice 2018, *Bringing pathways towards accountability together: perpetrator experiences and system roles and responsibilities*, p. 55.

## 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 following:<sup>3</sup>

- ... established strategies for working collaboratively with key partners within their local area to increase opportunities for engagement of perpetrators and 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 through working directly with perpetrators
- ... established mechanisms that delineate referral processes and pathways

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Government of New South Wales, *Good Practice Guidelines for the Domestic and Family Violence Sector in NSW*.

- ... services regularly meet to discuss how to best engage and support people using violence and appropriately share information, including with services supporting victim survivors, to enable comprehensive risk assessment and consideration of matters relating to changing narratives, patterns of behaviour, and any needs or circumstances that contribute to the risk of the person using violence to victim survivors and/or themselves
- ... regular participation in interagency and network meetings and are part of community networks and partnerships.

Further information on organisational responsibilities can be found in the *Organisational Embedding Guidance and Resources*.

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 a collaborative and coordinated community response to family violence.

The functions of multi-agency collaboration include:<sup>4</sup>

- ... improving communication between individuals and organisations
- ... improving each participant's understanding of family violence by exposing them to a variety of perspectives
- ... improving joint decision making on risk management strategies and individual cases based on more complete information

4 Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre Victoria 2004, *Developing Integrated Responses to Family Violence in Victoria — Issues and Directions*, p. 24.

- ... facilitating consistent and philosophically coherent policy development across services
- ... improving the accountability of each network participant to victim survivors, including where the organisation or professional is working directly with the person using violence
- ... facilitating evaluation of the collective response
- ... facilitating broader cultural change, as well as targeted culture change for services or systems new to their role in responding to family violence risk.<sup>5</sup>

Multi-agency collaboration supports all points of the service system (across services and sectors) to take responsibility for addressing family violence.

Each agency's actions and responses should be accountable to the lived experiences of victim survivors and reinforce consistent messaging that family violence is not tolerated or accepted in any way.

This includes through direct engagement and intervention with the person using violence, using formal accountability mechanisms (including policing, justice responses and statutory interventions), as well as social and health supports and interventions.

Although non-justice and statutory systems have no authority to impose consequences for the behaviour of the person using violence, they can provide informal sources of accountability, serving to reinforce the expectation that the person will take personal responsibility for their actions.

5 This supports consistent and collaborative practice in multi-agency environments, and is in line with the MARAM Framework, Pillar 2.

### 10.3 THE ROLE OF SPECIALIST FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES

Specialist victim survivor 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 victim survivor 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.

Specialist perpetrator intervention services play a key role in family violence system development and work alongside victim survivor services to:

- ... identify and address family violence risk
- ... establish referral pathways and networks
- ... promote a shared understanding of perpetrator patterns of behavior, beliefs and attitudes (narratives), and compounding needs and circumstances that contribute to dynamic risk.

Specialist perpetrator intervention services may also:

- ... support professionals and services to analyse their practice and response to people using violence through the lens of victim survivor safety and freedom
- ... support services and organisations to make changes to practice or policy to align with safe risk assessment practice responses to people using violence
- ... identify opportunities to strengthen accountability through naming system gaps and barriers and building coordinated networks
- ... identify change or escalation of family violence risk, monitor and lead coordination on risk management interventions with specialist victim survivor services.