

STEPS

TO OTHER PATHWAYS

**An Early Years Family
Violence Resource Kit**

.....
*For professionals working
with young children in
the City of Whittlesea*
.....



In partnership with



■ Acknowledgements

The City of Whittlesea recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Willum Clan as the traditional owners of this place.

Steps to Other Pathways: An Early Years Family Violence Resource Kit has been developed in response to an action in the City of Whittlesea Family Violence Strategy 2014 – 2018 - Safe in our homes, Safe in our communities.

The Resource Kit aims to assist professionals working with young children 0-4 years in the municipality to feel confident in identifying and responding to Family Violence. This Resource Kit also relates to the Commission for Children and Young People's submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence 2015 "early childhood services, such as long day care and preschools or kindergartens, do not appear to have any specific guidelines or resources for staff in relation to family violence."

The development of the Early Years Family Violence Resource Kit was undertaken by Trish Reck as part of her Master of Social Work whilst on placement with the City of Whittlesea in 2015. As part of the project, extensive consultations were undertaken with partner agencies through the Whittlesea Early Years Partnership and the Early Years Family Violence Working Group, with feedback informing the content and format of the Resource Kit.

Training will be provided through Anglicare Victoria to support the implementation of this Resource Kit.

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The City of Whittlesea acknowledges the contribution of Trish Reck, Master of Social Work Student, whose skills and knowledge were instrumental in realising this project.

Council is also grateful to the following groups for their rich contributions and acknowledges their active participation in developing this Resource Kit:

- **The many community agencies and their representatives who participated in the consultations.**
- **City of Whittlesea's Department of Family, Children and Young People.**
- **Whittlesea Early Years Partnership (WEYP), Whittlesea Community Futures.**
- **WEYP Early Years Family Violence Working Group.**

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Why an Early Years Family Violence Resource Kit?

Early Years Practitioners are “...in an ideal position to recognise the signs of vulnerability and could provide an important role in supporting children”¹.

- Attendance at child-care, kindergarten, maternal child health appointments or supported playgroups offer children familiarity, stability and safety they may not have at home if there is the uncertainty of family violence. Early Years practitioners are in a unique position to develop the important, trusting relationships that can allow a woman or her children to disclose what may be happening at home.
- Family violence is the leading contributor to disease, disability and death for women in Victoria².
- Approximately 40% of children recorded by police as ‘present’ at incidents of family violence within the Whittlesea LGA are aged 0-4 yrs³.
- The first three years are vital and formative for a young child’s brain development. It is now recognised as the time where the foundations of the ‘brain architecture’ are laid down⁴.
- Research clearly indicates the damaging effect of early trauma on children’s developing brains, with significant abuse and trauma leading to Insecure Attachment⁵.
- Addressing family violence is a priority advocacy area for the City of Whittlesea, and the development of a Family Violence Resource Kit is one of the key actions within the City of Whittlesea’s Family Violence Strategy 2014-2018 - Safe in our homes, Safe in our Communities.

- The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), also “emphasises the importance of supporting children’s and families’ transitions as they move within and across services throughout the early childhood period”⁶.

Isn't there enough information out there already?

Yes! There is a wealth of useful and rich information available through existing frameworks, resources and specialist family violence services, however the information is often found in different places. Some professionals have commented that they do not always have the time or means to look up and gather the information they require. This Resource Kit has been designed to meet this need.

The Early Years Family Violence Resource Kit aims to:

- Present the most important, immediate, practical and local information to practitioners.
- Present the information in ‘bite-sized’, ‘quick-reference’ and practical fact sheets.
- Ensure that women and children at risk of family violence have access to appropriate resources through clear and direct referral pathways available within the City of Whittlesea.
- Ensure women and children who are at risk of family violence remain/become safe.

¹ The North East Early Childhood Development Project (2012) *Paving the Way: Facilitating a Pathway with Vulnerable Children and Families – Toolkit of Resources*, Melbourne.

² Royal Commission into Family Violence (2015) *Issues Paper* State Government of Victoria.

³ Flory, R (2012) *Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Project: Scoping Exercise Report*, Whittlesea Community Connections, Melbourne.

⁴ Shonkoff, J (2011) Protecting Brains, Not Simply Stimulating Minds – in *Science*, Vol.333 pp982-983.

⁵ Dwyer, J., O’Keefe, J., Scott, P., and Wilson, L (2012) *Trauma and young children – a caring approach project*, Women’s Health Goulburn North East, Melbourne.

⁶ Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/pages/veyladf.aspx?Redirect=1)

■ Introduction

Who is the Resource Kit for?

This Resource Kit is designed to assist professionals working with young children (0-4yrs) in the City of Whittlesea to feel confident in identifying and responding to suspected or disclosed family violence. It therefore is for the benefit of all vulnerable infants and young children who are at risk of the traumatic impact of family violence on their lives, both in the short term and long term.

Why use the term ‘Family Violence’?

The term Family Violence is used rather than Domestic Violence to acknowledge that violence within the home affects the whole family (including extended family). This term also acknowledges the preferred term used by the Aboriginal Community ⁷.

Scope of the Resource Kit

Family violence is a complex social issue and impacts on nearly all aspects of life - including social skills and confidence, overall development, physical and mental health, education and relationships.

It is beyond the scope of this kit to try and address this range of issues, or attempt to outline and engage with some of the unique circumstances and processes that different cultures and community groups may have in relation to the issue of family violence.

Statistics show that in most cases (84%), family violence is perpetrated by men against their intimate female partners and children ⁸.

Given the limited scope of this Resource Kit, and the above statistics, the focus will be on family violence that is perpetrated by men onto their female partners and children. It is important however to acknowledge that family violence occurs in various contexts, each with its own unique set of circumstances and appropriate interventions and support requirements.

Services that can provide information and support regarding different community groups, include: Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Transgender & Intersex Services; Violence towards Elders (Seniors Rights Victoria); Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention & Legal Service; Family Violence in CALD Communities (InTouch); Violence Perpetrated against Men (Men’s Referral Service), are detailed in the Resource Section.

Recommendations for use and implementation of this Resource Kit

- An electronic version of this Resource Kit is available through the City of Whittlesea, phone 9404 8870 for a copy.
- It is highly recommended that this Resource Kit is used in conjunction with tools such as the “*Choosing Positive Paths*” Family Violence Parenting Resource Kit (2015). It is available either through www.berrystreet.org.au or www.whwest.org.au.
- It is also suggested that the enclosed Quick Reference flow-chart “*Responding to Family Violence*” is laminated and put in a prominent place within the working area as an easy access tool.
- This Resource Kit should be made available in conjunction with appropriate training on family violence to ensure staff feel properly resourced and confident in using the information.

⁷ Department of Human Services (2012) *Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides 1-3 (CRAF)*. Edition 2, State Government of Victoria, Victoria.

⁸ City of Whittlesea (2014) *Family Violence Strategy 2014-18 - Safe in our homes, Safe in our communities*.

Self-care

According to the Bureau of Statistics' 2012 Personal Safety Survey:

- 17% of all adult women in Australia (and 5.3 % of all adult men) experienced family violence since they were 15.
- 25% of women and 14% of men had experienced emotional abuse.

Given the above, it is likely that anyone reading this Resource Kit will have been impacted by family violence either directly, or through knowing someone personally, or within their professional work.

It is important to acknowledge the potential impact this will have – and ensure that appropriate support is sought when necessary. Some options for support may include:

- Advice/support from your supervisor.
- Access to specialist and non-specialist support services available listed within the Resource Kit.
- Access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available to staff in some work places.
- In the absence of workplace EAPs, staff can call their Human Resources Department directly to discuss any supports they may require.
- Private counselling and support through psychologists and counsellors. (General Practitioners can make referrals or suggestions for counselling options).

Family Violence definition:

Family Violence is defined in accordance with section five of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008, as:

- a) Behaviour by a person towards a family member of that person if that behaviour is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically or economically abusive; or is threatening, coercive; or in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or another person; or
- 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 paragraph¹.

Family violence includes:

Physical assaults	Hitting, slapping, choking, punching, pulling hair, etc.
Direct or indirect threats	Threats to harm family members/friends/pets or break treasured items, threats to take the children or have women transported back to their country if from overseas, etc.
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	Rape – includes forcing someone to perform unwanted sexual acts or to have sex with others, pressuring someone into agreeing to sex, unwanted/inappropriate touching, and incest.
Emotional and psychological abuse	Put-downs and insults, verbal abuse, threatening to kill themselves or the person, playing psychological 'games' that leave the other person feeling they are 'going crazy'.
Spiritual/religious	Putting down/ridiculing someone's beliefs and culture, not allowing someone to practice their religion or be part of a group that is important to their spiritual beliefs, etc.
Economic/financial control	Controlling all the money, not giving someone access to any money, or giving minimal funds and expecting the household to be run efficiently, making big financial decisions without consultation, selling someone's possessions without their consent.
Property damage	Tearing/burning clothes and toys, smashing treasured objects, breaking household items, punching holes in walls, etc.
Social isolation	Refusing to let someone see their friends and family, disconnecting the phone, moving from place to place into isolated areas, constantly putting the person's friends and family down so they disconnect.
Any behaviour that causes a person to live in fear	Stalking, threats, getting a friend or another family member to stalk/threaten/contact.

Why won't she just leave?

- A woman may attempt to leave an abusive relationship an average of up to seven times before she leaves for good.
- Leaving can be dangerous. According to Ganley (see Reference section), approximately 75% of women who are killed by their abusive partners are murdered when they attempt to leave or after they have left an abusive relationship.

There are many legitimate reasons why women stay in abusive relationships, including:

Reasons women stay:

Fear	Fear of the unknown, her partner's actions/threats if she leaves (<i>which are very real – see above</i>). The violence often continues or even escalates when the woman leaves.
Nowhere to go/homelessness	She is likely to have lost contact with friends/family through isolation and the violence – and have no networks and nowhere to go.
Money	She may not have worked outside the home, and have no independent income – or her income may not be enough.
Children	She may believe it is better for the children to have both parents, and/or may not have the energy or confidence to parent on her own.
Love/promises/hope things will get better	Some parts of the relationship may be working well, her partner may promise to change. Women generally want the abuse to end – not the relationship.
Lack of confidence/self-esteem	She may come to believe she is no good or useless through the abuse she has experienced (and possibly through her own family history).
Guilt	She may believe her partner is unwell and needs her – she cannot abandon him.
Religious beliefs	The commitment of marriage.
Cultural or Ethnic Background	She may remain in the relationship because to reveal she is experiencing family violence may bring her (and her wider family) shame/stigma. Cultural beliefs may also discourage her from revealing her situation.
Stigma of being single or coming from a 'broken home'	Most cultures indicate that a woman's value depends on her being in a relationship. Women without partners tend to be devalued.
Societal beliefs	Some parts of society still believe that some aspects of violence in relationships are acceptable.

Quick facts:

- **Family violence during pregnancy is regarded as a significant indication of future harm to the woman and her children¹.**
- **Separation is a time of extreme danger to women and children...** approximately 75% of women who are killed by their abusive partners are murdered when they attempt to leave or after they have left an abusive relationship².
- **Family violence does not discriminate between classes, cultures or societies.**

A note of caution:

Don't jump to hasty conclusions

Presence of any of the indicators below does not immediately signal family violence or abuse.

Consider cultural aspects

It may be culturally inappropriate for a woman to attend meetings without her husband/partner.

Raise your concerns

Discuss with the appropriate supervisor or manager, and/or a trusted colleague. Ideally, concerns could also be discussed with the parent directly depending on the relationship you have with them, or how safe you feel.

Infants:

What to look for:	Possible additional presentation at child care/ kindergarten/playgroup/MCH, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequent /unexplained injuries (eg: fractures, bruises, burns, bites or dislocations).• Might be fearful of new people (including unknown or loud voices).• Might startle/become distressed specifically by male voices.• 'Fussy' – not settling or feeding.• Easily distressed or startled.• May regress in development/lose some of the things they have learnt (eg: rolling over).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Might be slower developmentally - (eg: rolling over, pulling themselves up, learning to crawl or walk).• Might not be as responsive or alert as other babies.• Might not seek comfort of or help of adults.

¹ Department of Human Services (2012) Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides 1-3 (CRAF). Edition 2, State Government of Victoria, Victoria.

² Ganley, A, L., Why Women Stay, a Project of the Family Violence Prevention Fund (www.domesticabuseshelter.org/infodomesticviolence.htm)

Young Children:

What to look for:	Possible additional presentation at child care/ kindergarten/playgroup/MCH, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressive behaviour and language. • Anxiety – appearing nervous or ‘jumpy’. • Clingy – not wanting to separate from mother/ primary carer. • Withdrawn or unusually quiet, passive and compliant (the excessively ‘good’ child). • Frequent injuries explained as “accidents” either by child or parent (eg: bruising, minor cuts, broken bones). • Baggy or inappropriately heavy clothing (eg: long-sleeved jumpers on a hot day) to hide possible signs of physical abuse. • Unexplained ‘psychosomatic’ symptoms (tummy aches, head-aches - when checked not appearing to have any cause). • Bedwetting and sleeping disorders - including nightmares. • Regression – going backwards developmentally. • ‘Acting out’ - such as cruelty to animals, hitting their mother or others. • Becoming fearful when other children or adults shout, laugh very loudly or cry. • Wary/distrustful of adults (males). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children may trust staff enough to tell them about the violence at home. • Not being able or willing to share toys or activities. • Not able to concentrate or settle down to any tasks or activities. • Easily upset and unable to settle. • May throw toys or break property. • May not seek comfort from adults – or be excessively clingy with adults. • May not want to leave child-care, kindergarten or groups – may show fear of going home or of parent. • May be slower developmentally (trouble with speech, movement, memory). • May find it hard to follow directions. • May be picky or uninterested in food. • May have difficulty adjusting to change in routines. • May always be quiet and good – too eager to please.

Women:

What to look for:	Possible additional presentation at child care/ kindergarten/playgroup/MCH, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woman’s partner may be observed (or have been described) as jealous or possessive and have a ‘bad temper’. • Woman may appear nervous, ashamed or anxious in the presence of her partner or overly eager to please him. • Frequent injuries explained as “accidents” (eg: bruising, minor cuts, broken bones). • Vague excuses for inconsistent attendance at events or appointments. • Excessive clothing or accessories to hide possible signs of physical abuse. • Low self-esteem and self-worth. • Limited access to friends, family, transportation, or money. • Chronic headaches, unexplained aches and pains. • Depression or anxiety or other personality changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She may trust you enough to disclose the violence. • Possibly gets frequent phone calls from partner who wants to know where she is/when she’s coming home, etc. • Does not disclose anything about home-life, remains wary of staff. • May appear highly stressed and ‘impatient’ with the child/children. • May appear pre-occupied/unable to respond and be present with her children. • May not attend parent evenings or meetings – or attends only with partner who may do most of the talking.

See Fact Sheet 3 and Quick Reference Flow-chart - **Responding to Family Violence.**

Remember - if anyone is at immediate risk of harm call 000.

Your role may simply be to inform your manager of your concerns. However, the following information is important to be aware of when considering the best approach to supporting women/children who are at risk of family violence.

To provide effective support to women and children experiencing family violence, it is important to:

- Be aware of **power imbalances** within some relationships (eg: between the woman and an abusive, controlling partner; even between professionals and clients).
- Respect the woman as the '**expert**' on her own situation and ask her what she needs. Usually this is information on her rights and the options/services available to her.
- See the woman and children's **behaviour in context** of their experiences (**trauma**), rather than drawing false conclusions or making hasty judgements.
- Remember – your role may simply be to recognise if something seems wrong and raise your concerns – Manage UP – talk to your supervisor!

Responding to children - things to consider:

- As Early Years Professionals you are usually a highly significant and trusted person (attachment figure) in the lives of the children you work with. You provide them with a consistent and secure base for learning (consistency, routines of child care, kindergarten, playgroup, etc.).
- Young children do not generally have the words to explain their experiences – instead, they may express themselves through play, music, art, and drawing – and through their behaviour! (**See Fact Sheet 4 'Impact and trauma of Family Violence', and 'Practical Tips' at the back of this Kit for ideas on supporting traumatised children**).
- Keep in mind that children's behaviours may be responses to trauma – rather than being a 'naughty' or 'difficult' child.
- Understand that a traumatised child's chronological and developmental age may be different (the child is likely to be behind developmentally).

Responding to Children:

See 'Practical Tips' section of Resource Kit for ideas on supporting traumatised children.

Do:	Don't:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acknowledge their presence - physically get down to their eye-contact level if you can. Try and see things from their perspective.• Listen to them - allow them to talk about their experiences if they want to – but don't force the issue.• Reassure them - be clear with them that the violence/'scary things' happening at home is not their fault. If they have disclosed family violence/abuse, reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling a trusted grown-up.• Use age-appropriate language and activities - provide age-appropriate information to children in a direct and honest way to explain what is happening. Lack of information for very young children usually leads them to imagine the worst – and that everything is their fault.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re-traumatise children by exposing them to adult discussions (eg: full disclosures of violence from mother; threats partner may have made, etc).• Silence children if they raise issues of abuse/violence happening at home. Instead, <i>reassure</i> them (and any other children present) that it is never ok to hurt or scare anyone, and that it is important to let a trusted grown-up know so they can find a way to help.

Responding to Women:

Do:	Don't:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to her – Acknowledge her experience. Being listened to is empowering, and may assist you in getting enough information to provide effective support. • Believe her – It would have taken a lot of courage for her to talk with you. Many women in abusive relationships have little or no confidence left, may feel 'stupid', and ashamed at the situation they are in – and are fearful they won't be believed. • Reassure her – Be clear with her that the violence is not her fault. Many women are told/ believe the violence is their fault, or that somehow they 'deserve it'. • Emphasise that violence is unacceptable – no matter what the circumstances! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions that might suggest she is responsible for the violence - (eg: 'Why don't you leave?'; 'Why did he hit you?'). • Assume you know what she needs and try and tell her what she has to do. • Minimise her experiences or put them down to 'relationship difficulties' – she is likely already doing that herself.

Useful examples of conversation starters/questions¹:

Speaking with women:	Speaking with children:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is everything ok at home? • Are you worried about anyone's safety or wellbeing? • Are you concerned that things at home are affecting the children? • Is there anything I/we can do that would be helpful? • Do you have any supports/trusted friends who can help or who you can talk to? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everybody has some worries - Do you have any worries? • What happens at your house if people have an argument? • Can you tell me the best thing about home and the worst thing about home? • Is there anybody in your family you worry about?

¹ Department of Human Services (2012) Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides 1-3 (CRAF). Edition 2, State Government of Victoria, Victoria.

General considerations:

If you are in a position of supporting a woman/child/children, it is important to consider the following:

Getting support for yourself:

- Always consult with your manager/supervisor if possible. This also provides you with support.
- Consider consulting with a trusted colleague, and/or calling a Specialist Family Violence Service for information and support/consultation (which can be done without breaching any confidentiality).
- Consider the Employee Assistance Program or your Human Resources Department if available and you need additional support.

The type of response you can offer:

This will depend on a number of factors:

- The professional boundaries of your actual role, your level of experience and confidence, as well as the policies and regulations of your work place.
- How safe you feel depending on what information you have received or what you have observed.

If appropriate/possible, offer to help her with a simple emergency plan *(accessed via Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF)² or family violence websites).

Safety & Risk Assessment:

If possible (and if appropriate), you or your manager should try to check the following:

- Does she feel safe to go home?
- Does she think the children are safe?
- Has he made any threats to her/the children?
- Is there a history of violence?
- Does he have access to weapons?
- Is there a family member, friend or worker she could call for support?
- What information or services does she have or need to get the right support? (eg: Family Violence Crisis numbers, appropriate case management services; intervention orders, etc).

Important Note:

Always make sure it is safe for the woman/child/children to take home information about services/family violence.

If an abusive/controlling partner finds this information, a woman's situation may become more dangerous. (Perhaps there is somewhere she can leave it at your centre?).

² Department of Human Services (2012) Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides 1-3 (CRAF). Edition 2, State Government of Victoria, Victoria.

■ Impact and Trauma of Family Violence

FACT SHEET 4

Quick Facts:

- Family violence is the leading contributor to disease, disability and death for women aged 15-45¹.
- The first 3 years are vital formative years for a young child's brain development where the foundations of the 'brain architecture' are laid down. Therefore, this is a highly sensitive time for a child's development ².
- Significant abuse and trauma leads to Insecure Attachment ³.
- Children do not have to be physically present during violence to be traumatised ⁴.
- **Everyone's experience of family violence is unique – therefore generalised assumptions about its impact should never be made ⁵.**

Impact on women can include:

Physical injuries	Cuts, scrapes, bruises, fractures, dislocated bones, loss of hearing/vision, knife/gunshot wounds – homicide.
Ongoing mental health/emotional issues	Anxiety, depression (including suicidal thoughts/suicide), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, low self-esteem, no confidence.
Gynaecological problems	Miscarriage, early delivery, sexually transmitted diseases.
Ongoing physical health problems	Gastrointestinal disorders associated with stress, headaches, back-pain, muscular complaints, fainting/seizures, eating disorders.
Alcohol and substance misuse/addictions	May smoke throughout pregnancy, may use alcohol as a means of coping.
Homelessness/poverty	No stable accommodation due to having to escape family violence. No income – can't hold down a job while having to hide, etc.
Social isolation	Lack of social networks and loss of friendships due to family violence and having to relocate often.

¹ Royal Commission into Family Violence (2015) Issues Paper State Government of Victoria, Victoria.

² Shonkoff, J (2011) Protecting Brains, Not Simply Stimulating Minds – in *Science*, Vol.333 pp982-983 (cited in the North East Early Childhood Development Project (2012) *Paving the Way*).

³ Dwyer, J., O'Keefe, J., Scott, P., and Wilson, L (2012) Trauma and young children – a caring approach project Women's Health Goulburn North East, Melbourne.

⁴ Department of Human Services (2012) *Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides 1-3 (CRAF)*. Edition 2, State Government of Victoria, Victoria p.24

⁵ Domestic Violence Victoria - www.dvvic.org.au/

■ Impact and Trauma of Family Violence

FACT SHEET 4

Impact on children can include:

Impact on infants	Impact on young children
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequent /unexplained injuries (eg: fractures, bruises, burns, bites or dislocations).• Disturbance to sleep and feeding.• Clinginess, indiscriminate attachment.• Fussiness, difficulty in soothing, hyperactivity.• Withdrawal and lack of responsiveness.• Fearful of new people, (including unknown or loud voices).• Might startle/become distressed specifically by male voices.• Easily distressed or startled.• Might be slower developmentally - (eg: rolling over, pulling themselves up, learning to crawl or walk).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overly responsible for their age – always pleasing.• Regression and loss of recently acquired skills.• Sleep disturbances, nightmares.• Difficulty in seeking or accepting comfort.• Split loyalties between parents – confusion.• Feeling the violence is their fault – (still in ‘magical thinking’ age where the world revolves around them).• Loss of self-esteem and confidence.• Aggression – bullying others, aggressive to siblings, pets.• Psychosomatic symptoms (unexplained non-medically-based headaches, tummy aches, ear aches, etc).• Problems with anxiety and fearfulness.• Heightened sensitivity to noise, smells, sights, crowds (may be triggered by these/flashbacks).• Difficulties learning (can’t concentrate, hyperactive, school/kindergarten refusal).• Developmentally inappropriate sexualised play or behaviour ⁶.

Note:

As Dwyer, Scott & Wilson (2012) state - It is important to be aware that the extent to which a child is impacted by the trauma of family violence depends on a complex interaction of many factors – including:

- Developmental age.
- Type of trauma (one-off versus ongoing).
- Whether it involved harm caused by another person or was a natural disaster.
- Genetic makeup - temperament, health issues, disability.
- Protecting factors in child’s life.

⁶ Dwyer, J., O’Keefe, J., Scott, P., and Wilson, L (2012) Trauma and young children – a caring approach project Women’s Health Goulburn North East, Melbourne.

■ Impact and Trauma of Family Violence

FACT SHEET 4

Impact on parenting/women as mothers:

Effects of violence	Impact on woman	Impact on parenting - mother & child relationship ⁷
Physical	Physical assaults may result in hospitalisation, reduced mobility, impact on her overall physical health long-term or even leave her with permanent disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physically – women may be unable to care for their child if in hospital. Depending on physical impact, they may have difficulty carrying out certain tasks (driving, walking), or picking up, carrying or even hugging their child. • Emotionally - pain, distress, anger and irritability may result in women being emotionally distant, unavailable or unable to meet their children’s needs – which can result in an insecure attachment between mother and child. This in turn impacts on the child’s development.
Prioritising partner’s needs over children’s to manage the violence	Women may be constantly fearful and trying to meet their partner’s (usually unreasonable) expectations and demands in order to try and keep themselves and their children safe from his anger/violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotionally (and sometimes physically) unavailable to the children – impacts on mother/child relationship. • Not letting children make noise or mess - can impact on development and learning. • Appearing irritable or impatient with their child/children – not able to enjoy them or provide emotional stability/calm.
Belittling, undermining, insulting and hitting women in front of their children	Women may lose confidence and authority as a parent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of respect by children for their mother’s authority. • Loss of trust in their mother’s capacity to provide for them or protect them. • Decreased opportunities to learn/experience healthy relationships.
Minimising the impact of violence on themselves/the children	Women may be too traumatised, or ‘desensitised’ to violence to really assess the actual risk to themselves and their children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children may lose trust that their mother can protect them. • Children may get angry with their mother for not protecting them (or herself).

⁷ Australian Institute of Family Studies (2010) *Issues for the safety and wellbeing of children in families with multiple and complex problems: The co-occurrence of domestic violence, parental substance misuse and mental health problems*. NCPIC Issues No.33 – Dec.

⁸ Dwyer, J., O’Keefe, J., Scott, P., and Wilson, L (2012) *Trauma and young children – a caring approach project*, Women’s Health Goulburn North East, Melbourne Dwyer.

On an encouraging note

Protective factors, (eg: other supportive and nurturing experiences, effective professional support, supportive friends and networks, temperament/genetic makeup, etc) can have a positive impact despite the presence of the issues outlined above and below.

Results of a US study published in the Australian Institute of Family Studies (2010) suggest the effects of domestic violence on mothering may not be permanent – there was no significant difference (in parenting capacity) between women who had experienced intimate partner violence in the past and women who had never experienced intimate partner violence. **(See 'References' section for full article details).*

Useful websites:

- www.childtrauma.org
- www.kidsmatter.edu.au

Quick facts:

- Majority of men do not use violence with their families.
- Men who use violence with their families do so mostly ‘behind closed doors’ – and generally appear to control their behaviour/anger at work or in public. Their use of violence is not a loss of control, but a means of attempting to maintain or gain control in their relationship.*
- Men can be victims of family violence, however research and practitioner experience show that relatively few men in heterosexual relationships are victims of intimate partner violence.*
- Some men who use violence may present as a victim – however this may be in the context of women retaliating in self-defence. Men may claim injuries (scratches/bite-marks, etc) and try and use this as evidence against the woman.*
- Given the complexities – it is recommended that men always be referred to a men’s family violence service, or be given the Victims of Crime Helpline; while women need to be referred to a women’s family violence service.

*(Department of Human Services (2012) Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides 1-3 (CRAF). Edition 2, State Government of Victoria, Victoria).

Recognising men who use violence:

- Some men may acknowledge the violence and tell you because they are seeking support.
- The woman, or her friends and family may voice their concerns to you directly.
- You may also observe or be aware of the following:
 - Lots of arguments and fights with his partner.
 - High levels of unreasonable jealousy and possessiveness (eg: he may accuse her of having affairs when she is not; he may not like her having her own friends, etc).
 - Controlling behaviour – he may control the finances, where they go, who they socialise with, etc).
 - Following her or monitoring everything she does (she may have to report back to him, or be home at a certain time, etc).
 - Threats to hurt her or the children.
 - Putting her down/being dismissive and rude to her in front of others.

Some reactions men may have if challenged about their behaviour:

- **Minimising** or playing down the violence and its impact on his partner/children (eg: “I only gave her a bit of a push”...).
- **Denying** that what he was doing was abusive.
- **Justifying** his behaviour (eg: claiming she provoked him).
- **Blaming** external circumstances or others for his behaviour (eg: stress at work, stress about finances, etc).

Responding to men - what to consider:

<p>Safety</p>	<p>The safety of everyone (including you) needs to be considered above anything else.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember - violence is a criminal offence. If anyone is at risk, the abuse must be reported to police and/or Child Protection (See Fact Sheet 6 on 'Duty of Care'). If he is on the premises and becomes aggressive or threatening – call the police. You may need to consult with your supervisor to make sure you have proper support, and to work out whether you need to report the abuse, and who to report to (See Fact Sheet 6 on 'Duty of Care'). You may also need to develop an immediate plan for the safety of any children or woman <i>*(See Flowchart 'Responding to Family Violence' at the back of this Kit or Safety Plans can be accessed via CRAF or family violence websites)</i>.
<p>Type of support you can offer</p>	<p>The type of support you can or should consider will depend on an number of factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The professional boundaries of your actual role, your level of experience and confidence, as well as the policies and regulations of your work place. How safe you feel depending on what information you have received or what you have observed. (Do not directly challenge him or tell him you need to make a report if you feel unsafe or he is at your work place. Instead – discuss your concerns with your supervisor or a colleague at a time when he is not there). If he has accepted responsibility for his actions, and actively and genuinely wants to change his behaviour - then provide him with the blue Men's Help Card and the numbers below.
<p>Men who are victims of violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst it is acknowledged that men can be victims of family violence, research and practitioner experience show that relatively few men in heterosexual relationships are victims of intimate partner violence. It is recommended that men always be referred to a men's family violence service, or be given the Victims of Crime Helpline. The effects of family violence on male victims can be just as destructive and devastating as it is on women victims. <i>*(See Facts Sheets 2 & 4 for further information on 'Recognising Family Violence', and 'Impact and Trauma of Family Violence')</i>. A complicating factor for men who are genuinely victims of family violence can be a feeling of failure as a man – and the potential stigma of being a male victim.

Support/resources for men who use violence, or are victims of family violence:

Service	Description
<p>Men's Behaviour Change Program (MBCP) (Plenty Valley Community Health Centre – Epping) 9409 8724 (Intake)</p>	<p>Individual and group-work activities for men who have violence and anger issues (Men's Behaviour Change).</p>
<p>MensLine Australia Ph: 1300 78 99 78</p>	<p>MensLine Australia is a professional telephone and online support and information service for Australian men.</p>
<p>Men's Referral Service Ph: 1300 766 491</p>	<p>The Men's Referral Service provides anonymous and confidential telephone counselling, information and referrals to men to help them take action to stop using violent and controlling behaviour.</p>
<p>Kildonan Uniting Care Family Violence Intervention Program Ph: 8401 0100</p>	<p>Individual and group-work activities for men who have violence and anger issues (Men's Behaviour Change).</p>
<p>General Practitioners</p>	<p>Affordable psychological counselling is available through a Mental Health Care Plan which can be developed by a General Practitioner.</p>
<p>Victims of Crime Ph: 1800 819 817</p>	<p>Helpline regarding rights, advice about reporting of crime, legal process, compensation and connections to other support services.</p>

Quick facts:

- The Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (CYFA) states clearly that the **best interests of the child** must always be considered **above anything else**.
- Children's safety must therefore always be the **first** consideration for **everyone** working with vulnerable children and families.
- **Anyone** can make a report to Child Protection if they are genuinely concerned about a child's safety.
- All reports are strictly confidential to legally protect the reporter.
- Mandatory reporting requirements override professional codes of practice.

About this fact sheet:

- Most Educational Facilities or Community Organisations working with children will have their own policies and procedures regarding the safety of the children in their care.
- Most staff will also be aware of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) website, which provides detailed information on how and when to make a report to their Child Protection Services. (www.dhs.vic.gov.au)
- This Fact Sheet is intended to sit along-side these policies and documents, and provide a brief, simple overview of some of the main points to consider when faced with the possibility of having to make a report.

Why do I need to know about reporting?

Depending on your professional role, you may not be the person responsible for making the decisions about reporting BUT – it is vital that everyone understands what is expected and what to do to make sure all vulnerable children are protected – **the safety of children is everyone's responsibility**.

Who can or should make a report if they are concerned for a child's safety?

Duty of care	Mandatory reporting
<p>Everyone has a moral and social obligation to report any concerns they have about child abuse and neglect (which includes family violence).</p> <p>Any person who has formed a reasonable belief that a child is unsafe can (and should) make a report to Child Protection.</p> <p>Unsure about reporting? - discuss concerns (and observations) with a manager, supervisor or colleague. Manage up rather than do nothing!</p> <p>Remember – you don't have to be the one who makes the report – but you do have a responsibility to raise the alarm if you are concerned for a child's safety.</p>	<p>The Children Youth and Families Act (CYFA) 2005 lists a number of professionals who are legally bound to report any concerns they have for the safety of children that are under their care or come to their attention - namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Principals • Doctors • Nurses (including midwives) • Police <p>NB: As of 2015, a new law has been passed stating that “Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence”.¹</p> <p>There is also an amendment to the Educational Training Reform Act 2006 pending to recognise and register all Early Childhood Educators as qualified teachers - therefore eventually mandating them.²</p>

What about my relationship with the family/child?

The decision to make a report is usually difficult and complex, with many conflicting rights, needs and circumstances to be considered. *Ideally:*

- Someone from the centre/organisation will have discussed their concerns openly with the family (if possible/safe). *This will largely depend on the relationship the centre/professional has with the family – or the nature of the abuse/neglect.
- Concerns can be raised in a positive and strengths-based way (ie: acknowledging the difficulty of parenting, current stressors, etc, as well as the strengths the parents do show).
- A report can be seen as getting extra supports rather than being punitive – and parents reassured that it is unlikely their children will be removed.
- **Ultimately the safety of the child has to be considered above anything else. The question needs to be: "What's in the best interests of this child?"**

¹ <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/betrayal+of+trust+implementation>

² Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare. Facts Sheet: Mandatory Reporting Victoria.

What about my safety/confidentiality?

- All Reports are confidential. The CYFA 2005 legally prevents the disclosure of the name of the reporter or any information that might identify them.
- In extreme cases, if it is the only way to ensure the safety and wellbeing of a child, the court or tribunal may name the source of the report.

How do I make a report?

In case of **emergency** or if a child is in immediate danger **call 000**.

1. Make sure you have as much factual information available as possible before you call 000 – be prepared. *It doesn't matter if there are things you don't know – it is still important to call if you have concerns.
2. Call DHHS Child Protection on **Ph: 1300 664 977** or **Ph: 13 12 78** (A/H or Emergency) with the information below.
*Note: Be prepared to wait a while – the lines are generally very busy.

Information Child Protection needs³:

Details	Child's name, address, age, etc.
Your role	What's your role with the child/family?
Your concerns	What have you observed that has caused concern – clear concrete evidence is very useful (eg: descriptions of injuries, patterns of behavior, incidences or disclosures, dates and times, etc.)
Why are you reporting now	Has something extra happened today to increase concern?
Immediate safety of the child	Where is the child now? Are there immediate concerns for anybody's safety?
Other services involved	Are there other services that could be called in or should be notified?

³ http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Child_abuse_reporting_procedures

■ Supporting Traumatized Children

As Bruce Perry (2003) advises:

- The brain altered in destructive ways by trauma and neglect can also be altered in reparative, healing ways.
- Exposing the child, over and over again, to developmentally appropriate experiences is the key.
- Repetition can influence those parts of the brain altered by developmental trauma.

Young children benefit best from:

- Familiar routines and consistent expectations from carers.
- Imaginative play opportunities.
- Non-verbal opportunities for self-expression and healing.
- Low pressured, informal and creative, activity-based interventions.

Things to consider:

- “The most ‘therapeutic’ interactions often come from people who have no training (or interest) in psychological or psychiatric labels, theories, treatments and the adult expectations of the child that go with these. In interacting with the child, respect, humour and flexibility allow the child to be valued as what they are” (Perry, 2003).¹
- Early Childhood educators are often secondary attachment figures who provide a secure base for learning.²
- Child development is relationship (attachment) dependent. Modelling healthy, respectful relationships and providing appropriate adult support to children assists with repair and healing.³
- Perry stresses the importance of understanding what is causing a child’s behaviour and get to know as much about the child and their world as you can.
- Keep in mind that children’s behaviours may be responses to trauma – rather than being ‘naughty’ or ‘difficult’.⁴

Simple ideas that might help:

- Pay attention to children and their behaviour, words and play. This will provide opportunities to understand their experiences of trauma.
- When a child brings up a traumatic event, take their lead and enter into a discussion. (Children will quickly pick up if someone is uncomfortable or reluctant and will not approach or raise issues again).
- Keep sharing thoughts and feelings, and give children opportunities to ask questions.
- ‘Tune in’ and help children understand their feelings by using reflective statements (eg: “You look sad/angry...need a little help?..”)
- Be as honest and as factual as possible (in an age-appropriate way) about the traumatic event. (Little or no information often leads to scarier, imagined scenarios...).

¹ Perry, B.D (2003) Effects of Trauma on Children The Child Trauma Academy (www.ChildTrauma.org.au) Perry 2004

² Dwyer, J., O’Keefe, J., Scott, P., and Wilson, L (2012) Trauma and young children – a caring approach project, Women’s Health Goulburn North East, Melbourne.

³ Dwyer, J., O’Keefe, J., Scott, P., and Wilson, L (2012) Trauma and young children – a caring approach project, Women’s Health Goulburn North East, Melbourne.

⁴ www.kidsmatter.edu.au

■ Supporting Traumatized Children

- Provide consistent, well-structured and predictable routines. Let children know about changes, and give them plenty of transition time from one activity to another.
- Plan ahead (if possible) for any challenging behaviours or incidences.
- Separate the behaviour from the child. Provide lots of praise for good behaviour or times they have managed to calm themselves down.
- Take time to calm yourself when you have a strong emotional response (walking away for a few minutes, handing over to someone else if possible, etc).
- Create a 'quiet corner' or 'rest space' with familiar and comforting toys where children can go to calm down.
- Have 'Quiet Time' together (either individually or as a group) reading stories that help children explore and express feelings.
- Try different types of play that focus on expressing feelings (eg: drawing, play-doh, dress-ups, physical games/outdoors...).
- Ensure 'angry energy' can be identified and expressed/released appropriately with adult encouragement rather than suppressed or being seen as 'not ok'. Children need to learn that being angry is fine – it's what they do with it that is important (eg: going outside to stamp up and down, running around the playground, drawing the "angries" out and talking with an adult).
- **Seek out appropriate professional supports for the child and their family if you feel out of your depth or have grave concerns for the child's welfare and development.**

Specific activities:

Doll's House – imaginative play

- Adults can enter into child's play (with child leading) and observe any patterns, interactions, etc. that may play out. Possibility for checking in with child and/or talking through what is shared/expressed in a natural, playful way.

'Feelings' stories

- Specific stories available in educational and therapeutic bookstores. Assist children to learn about feelings/experiences and make sense of them. Breaks sense of shame and isolation.
- Can also create own 'diary' or experience story with pictures and words.

Use of symbols (eg: farm animals/finger puppets, etc.)

- Can encourage play and provide opportunities to express experiences and feelings. Can also use:
 - Dress-up corner
 - Sand-tray and figures
 - Doll's house – as above.

■ Crisis/Specialist Family Violence Support Services for the City of Whittlesea

The following provides a brief overview of family violence-specific direct services and supports offered in the Northern Metropolitan Region. It must be noted that while the focus of the information is only narrowly focused on family violence, some agencies listed (eg: Berry Street) provide a much broader range of services. Services have been listed in a 'logical' order rather than alphabetically.

Police

If you are in danger call 000

For other Family Violence enquiries, call police:

Mill Park - 9407 3333 (24/7) | Epping - 9409 8100 (24/7) | Whittlesea Police – 9716 2102

Police code of practice for Family Violence states: - Police must 'take the appropriate course of action' to any Family Violence incident. This can include:

- Criminal Action – can include arrest, interview and charges laid by police on perpetrator where criminal offences are committed.
- Civil Protection – Applications for Intervention Orders including Family Violence Safety Notices where immediate concern exists.
- Referral to Support Services – Formal and informal referrals for all relevant family members including children (eg: Berry Street, Men's Active Referral Service, Child Protection or Child FIRST).

Safe Steps – Family Violence Response Service

Ph: 1800 015 188 (24/7)

Website: www.safesteps.org.au

State-wide service for women and children experiencing family violence.

- Services include:
 - 24/7 family violence response line *(see above)
 - Risk assessment & safety planning
 - Emergency accommodation
 - Support & Information
 - Advocacy & Referral
- Access/eligibility:
 - Statewide - Women can call and speak confidentially to another woman for information on family violence support services, legal rights and accommodation options.

■ Crisis/Specialist Family Violence Support Services for the City of Whittlesea

DHHS - Child Protection

Ph: 1300 664 977 (9am - 5pm) OR Ph: 13 12 78 (after hours)

Website: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children,-youth-and-families/child-protection>

- Services are specifically targeted to support/protect children and young people at risk of harm or where families are unable or unwilling to protect them – this includes family violence.
- Access/eligibility – anyone who is concerned about a child’s safety can (and should) call Child Protection to make a report. *(See Facts Sheet 6 - Duty of Care/Reporting).

Berry Street Northern Family & Domestic Violence Services

Ph: 9450 4700 (9am - 5pm Monday-Friday)

Website: www.berrystreet.org.au

- Services include:
 - An Initial Response Worker available from 9am – 5pm daily to provide information, referral, support, advocacy and secondary consultations
 - Referral to after hours support through Safe Steps on 1800 018 188.
- Access/eligibility:
 - Regional Specialist Family Violence Service
 - Service available to women & their children who reside in the Northern Metropolitan Region
 - Secondary Consultation available to workers
 - Support available to friends, family of women experiencing family & domestic violence.

1800RESPECT

Ph: 1800 737 732 (24/7)

Website: www.1800respect.org.au

National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service.

- Service provides professional telephone and online crisis and trauma counselling, information, referrals and support.
- Access/eligibility:
 - Nationwide
 - Available 24/7
 - For people who have been, or are, affected by sexual assault, domestic or family violence
 - Service is also available for frontline workers, friends and family members seeking information, counselling or support.

InTouch, Multicultural Centre against Family Violence

Ph: 1800 755 988 OR 9413 6500 (9am - 5pm Monday-Friday)

Website: www.intouch.org.au

State-wide services that assist women from CALD backgrounds experiencing or have experienced family violence.

- Culturally sensitive and holistic services to victims of family violence, including:
 - Advise and information
 - Advocacy and assistance with immigration and other legal issues
 - Complex case management (assistance to find housing, financial support, etc)
 - Culturally appropriate family violence support
 - Court Support
 - Safety Planning
 - Referrals to appropriate services
 - Secondary consultation
 - Therapeutic group work.
- Access/eligibility:
 - State-wide service; anyone can call the above numbers – no referral needed.

■ Crisis/Specialist Family Violence Support Services for the City of Whittlesea

Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service (EMH)

Ph: 9482 5744 OR 1800 015 188 (after hours)
Via Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre

Website: www.emhaws.org.au

EMH promotes social justice and equity for Aboriginal women and children experiencing family violence in the community.

- Services include:
 - Women's Refuge
 - Outreach services – crisis and intake, case management, court support
 - After hours crisis service
 - Counselling and support for women and children.
- Access/eligibility:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island women and children who are experiencing family violence can call the above number directly
 - Non-Aboriginal women who are mothers of Aboriginal children and/or who have Aboriginal partners are also eligible for this service.

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention & Legal Service

Ph: 1800 105 303 OR 9244 3333

Website: www.fvpls.org

State-wide service offering assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors of family violence and sexual assault. Will also work with families and communities affected by violence.

- Services include:
 - Free legal advice on Intervention Orders
 - Family Law
 - Child Protection
 - Victim's compensation
 - Other problems arising from family violence
 - Family violence support - referrals, ongoing casework, counselling, court representation.
- Access/eligibility:
 - Telephone or face-to-face support available to Aboriginal women, men and children who are at immediate risk of family violence or sexual assault
 - Non-Aboriginal parents of Aboriginal children are also eligible.

Salvation Army – Crossroads Family Violence Service

Ph: 9353 1011 (during business hours)

Website: www.salvationarmy.org.au

Support for women and women with children escaping family violence.

- Services include:
 - Crisis services, risk assessment and safety planning
 - Case management and support
 - Outreach
 - Groups
 - Integrated Service Provision in the Whittlesea LGA (in collaboration with other agencies).
- Access/eligibility:
 - Women and women and children escaping family violence
 - Anyone can call.

■ Crisis/Specialist Family Violence Support Services for the City of Whittlesea

Men's Referral Service (MRS)

Ph: 1300 766 491

Website: www.mrs.org.au

Confidential telephone counselling, information and referrals to help men stop using violent and controlling behaviour.

- Service includes telephone counselling and information.
- Access/eligibility:
 - Men who are using violent or controlling behaviour towards partners/children/family
 - Women wishing to find information about violence
 - Friends, family, or colleagues of people using or experiencing family violence
 - Professionals wishing to support a male or female client experiencing family violence.

Men's Behaviour Change Program (MBCP)

Ph: 9409 8724 (Intake)

Website: www.pvch.org

Men's Behaviour Change Program:

- Services include:
 - Group program
 - Individual counselling
- Access/eligibility:
 - For men who want to identify, understand and take responsibility for their abusive behaviours towards women and children.

Victims of Crime (that occur in Victoria)

Ph: 1800 819 817 (freecall) – (8am – 11pm)

Website: www.victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au

This Helpline provides:

- Information about your rights and entitlements
- Advice about reporting a crime
- Information about the criminal justice process, including after an offender is in jail
- Help applying for financial assistance
- Referral to support services, such as the Victims Assistance Program.

Other Support Services for the City of Whittlesea

The following provides a brief overview of local agencies and services that provide a broad range of services and programs including family violence support.

Beyondblue

Ph: 1300 22 4636 (24/7)

Website: www.beyondblue.org.au

- Beyondblue aims to reduce the impact of depression and anxiety in the community by raising awareness and understanding, empowering people to seek help, and supporting recovery, management and resilience.
- Telephone counselling, online information and online chats available.

CatholicCare – Greater Melbourne, Geelong & Gippsland

Ph: 9287 5555 (9am - 5pm)

Website: www.ccam.org.au

CatholicCare works with disadvantaged families and individuals experiencing a range of challenges including: poverty, family violence, family break-up and addiction.

We aim to improve the quality of life and reduce social isolation for those who are vulnerable and marginalised.

- Services include:
 - Counselling
 - Family Dispute Resolution
 - Integrated Family Services (Child FIRST)
 - Parenting Order Program (POP)
 - Refugee and Settlement Services
 - Relationship Courses.
- Access/eligibility:
 - Anyone can call to discuss their support needs.
 - Fees apply for some services
 - Offices are located across Greater Melbourne, Geelong and Gippsland, including Epping in the City of Whittlesea.

ChildFIRST - (Child and Family Information, Referral and Support Teams) North East Metropolitan Area

Ph: 9450 0955 (9am - 5pm)

Website: www.cps.org.au

Child First North East Metro (Child and Family Information, Referral and Support Teams) provides a central referral point into Family Service Programs. It supports families who reside in Banyule, Darebin, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra and have children aged between 0-17 years including pre-birth support. Child FIRST can provide information and advice to families or professionals where there are concerns about children's wellbeing. The aim is to ensure that vulnerable children, young people and their families are linked with community services and supports.

Child FIRST North East Metro is a partnership between the nine Family Service agencies in the North East and the Department of Human Services. Child FIRST and the nine participating agencies work together to provide targeted and individualised support to vulnerable families. Referrals can come directly from families or other professionals and may include concerns around parenting, family conflict, physical or mental health issues, substance misuse and social isolation. Child FIRST is managed by Children's Protection Society (CPS).

Other Support Services for the City of Whittlesea

Children's Protection Society (CPS)

Ph: 9450 0900 (business hours)

Website: www.cps.org.au

Independent and voluntary child and family services organisation servicing the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne. They offer a wide range of services.

- Services include:
 - Child FIRST North East (Central Intake located here)
 - Family Services including Mentoring Mums, Mothers in Mind, Playgroups
 - Early Years Services at Korin Korin Kindergarten
 - Counselling – Sexual Abuse Counselling & Prevention Program
 - Parenting advice, information and support
 - Father's Support Services including 'I'm an Aboriginal Dad' program and Caring Dads.
- Access/eligibility:
 - Services available to families with children 0-18 years within the Northern Region
 - Offices across a number of locations including Heidelberg, Thomastown and Wollert
 - Anyone can call to discuss support needs.

Families@Home – Kildonan Uniting Care

Ph: 8401 0100 (9am - 5pm)

Website: www.kildonan.org.au

Families@Home program provides a holistic response to families who are at risk of homelessness due to family violence with a focus on keeping women and children safe and secure in their homes. The program provides a coordinated and early intervention response.

- Services include:
 - Housing support to obtain or maintain suitable and safe housing
 - Family violence support
 - Financial counselling, assistance and support
- Access/eligibility:
 - Families in the City of Whittlesea at risk of homelessness due to family violence. Either self-referral or referral through community service organisations (eg: maternal child health, family services, Child FIRST, family violence services or housing programs).

Gamblers Help

Ph: 1800 858 858

Website: www.gamblershelpnnw.org.au

Gamblers Help North & North Western is the provider of Gambler's Help services in the Northern and Western Metropolitan Region of Melbourne.

- Services include:
 - Professional, confidential counselling for people (and their families) who have an issue with gambling
 - Financial counselling to help people with gambling-related money problems
 - After hours services are available in some locations.
- Access/eligibility:
 - Services offered across Banyule, Brimbank, Darebin, Hume, Melton, Maribyrnong, Nillumbik and Whittlesea
 - Anyone affected by gambling can call
 - Appointments available in over 100 locations – including Epping and Thomastown.

Other Support Services for the City of Whittlesea

Kids Helpline

Ph: 1800 55 1800 (24/7)

Website: www.kidshelpline.com.au

- Free 24-hour counselling service for young people aged 5-25 years.
- Counselling offered by phone, e-mail and over the web by fully qualified and accredited counsellors.

Kildonan Uniting Care – Family Violence Intervention Program

Ph: 8401 0100 (9am - 5pm)

Website: www.kildonan.unitingcare.org.au/program_family_violence.php

Range of services for men, women and children who have experienced family violence - including individual and group responses.

- Services include:
 - Individual support and group-work activities for women
 - Individual and group-work activities for men who have violence and anger issues. Focus on enabling men to accept responsibility and make changes, while ensuring the safety and support of partners and children
 - Individual and group work activities to support/assist children parents and families impacted by family violence.
- Access/eligibility:
 - Anyone can call Kildonan Uniting Care. Many services based at Heidelberg site.

Lifeline

Ph: 13 11 14 (24/7)

Website: www.lifeline.org.au

- 24-hour telephone crisis service available every day of the year to anyone, anytime and from anywhere in Australia.
- Online crisis chat service – Every night at lifeline.org.au/crisischat.
- Lifeline Melbourne is a program of Wesley Mission Victoria.

City of Whittlesea Maternal and Child Health Service

Ph: 9404 8888

Website: www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Maternal and Child Health Service provides free developmental health checks, support and information for children and families from birth to school age.

- Services include:
 - Advice to parents on baby health, feeding and parenting issues
 - Health checks at 10 key stages of child's development
 - Information and referrals to other services as required.
- Access/eligibility:
 - All City of Whittlesea residents are able to access MCH services
 - Contact will be made by MCH when notification of birth is received from the hospital
 - Client moving into the area can contact MCH to enrol 9404 8888.

Other Support Services for the City of Whittlesea

Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault (NCASA)

Ph: 9496 2240 (9am - 5pm) OR Ph: 1800 806 292 (24 hrs)

Website: www.austin.org.au/northerncasa

Regional sexual assault service for the Northern Metropolitan Region. It is located on the Repatriation Campus of Austin Health and also operates a number of outposts in the northern region, including four outposts in the City of Whittlesea - Whittlesea, Lalor, Mill Park and South Morang.

- Services include:
 - Free therapeutic services to women, men and young people over the age of 12 years, who have experienced sexual assault, including counselling and group work
 - 24 hour crisis care for victims of a recent assault (over 18 years). *For crisis care for people under 18, please call the 24-hour line above
 - Advocacy and community education
 - Secondary consultation and training to other professionals.
- Access/eligibility:
 - Persons over the age of 12 years (and their non-offending family members), who live in the northern metropolitan region, and who have experienced sexual assault, can call the service to make an appointment or speak to a counsellor over the phone.

Parentline

Website: www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/parentline.aspx

Ph: 13 22 89 (8am to midnight 7 days a week)

- Statewide telephone counselling service for parents and carers of children from birth to eighteen years of age.
- Professional counsellors able to explore a variety of issues that impact on parenting and relationships, who can also provide contact details for community services.
- Confidentiality and right to privacy of callers respected.

Plenty Valley Community Health

Ph: 9409 8787 (Epping)

Website: www.pvch.org

PVCH is the largest provider of primary healthcare, support services, and social and psychological services to people of all ages, in the City of Whittlesea and neighbouring municipalities.

- Services include:
 - Aboriginal Health - (Ph 8401 1303 or 9409 8724)
 - Child Health Team
 - Counselling - Generalist and Case Work
 - Women's family violence therapeutic individual counseling
 - Women's therapeutic groupwork
 - Disability Services
 - Men's Behavioural Change Program
 - Women's Health Service
 - PVCH GP Super Clinic
 - Refugee Health Service
 - Healthy Mother Health Babies
 - Dental and beside Disability Services
 - NDIS Service provider.
- Access/eligibility:
 - Services located across the Northern Region - Epping, South Morang, Whittlesea and Mill Park
 - Available to residents of the outer northern metropolitan area of Melbourne (includes Whittlesea)
 - Anyone can call
 - Fees may apply.

Other Support Services for the City of Whittlesea

ReGEN – Alcohol & Other Drugs

Ph: 1800 700 514 (Intake 9am - 5pm Monday-Friday)

Website: www.regen.org.au

UnitingCare ReGen - Alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment and education agency of UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania. They deliver a comprehensive range of AOD services to the community.

- Access/eligibility:
 - The Intake service is the first point of contact for clients, families and workers for all enquiries about treatment programs/support.

Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV)

Ph: 1300 368 821

Website: www.seniorsrights.org.au

Seniors Rights Victoria is a free service that provides information, support, advice and education to help prevent elder abuse and safeguard the rights, dignity and independence of older Victorians. Seniors Rights Victoria also provides leadership on policy and law reform and works with other organisations to raise awareness of elder abuse.

- Services include:
 - A Helpline (1300 368 821)
 - Specialist legal services
 - Short-term support and advocacy for individuals
 - Community and professional education
 - Seniors Rights Victoria also provides leadership on policy and law reform and works with other organisations to raise awareness of elder abuse.
- Access/eligibility:
 - Can help any Victorian aged 60 and above or any Indigenous Victorian aged 45 and above, on matters relating to elder abuse and ageing.

Switchboard

Ph: 1800 184 527 (3pm - midnight 7 days)

Website: www.switchboard.org.au

Free, confidential and anonymous telephone counselling, referral and information service for the Victorian and Tasmanian lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) communities and their supporters.

- Services include:
 - Peer-based telephone counselling
 - Online database of community services.
- Access/eligibility:
 - Anyone from the Victorian and Tasmanian lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer communities.
 - Supporters and families of LGBTIQ communities and individuals.

Other Support Services for the City of Whittlesea

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)

Ph: 9287 8800

Website: www.vacca.org

The lead Aboriginal child and family welfare organisation in Victoria. Focus on protecting and promoting the rights of Aboriginal children and young people. Programs and services reinforce Aboriginal culture and encourage best parenting practices, and advise government in relation to child abuse and neglect in the Aboriginal community.

- Services include:
 - Supported playgroups (Koori Kids Playgroup)
 - Indigenous Parenting Support Services
 - Family Violence Program
 - Integrated Family Services & Aboriginal Liaison Worker/Child FIRST
- Access/eligibility:
 - Services available to Aboriginal children, individuals and families.

Whittlesea Community Connections

Ph: 9401 6666

Website: www.whittleseacommunityconnections.org.au

Whittlesea Community Connections is a local not-for-profit community organisation that delivers FREE programs and services to people who live, work or study in the City of Whittlesea.

- Services include:
 - Information and Referral to assist you in local support services, community groups and activities
 - Emergency relief to help basic needs for those who are in financial crisis
 - Family Violence worker outreaches once a week
 - Casework support from social workers
 - Community legal service
 - Settlement services to support newly arrived migrants and refugees in the first five years of settlement
 - Youth services including learning support and L2P driving programs
 - Community transport
 - Whittlesea Volunteer Resource service
 - Tax Help.

Resources and Training

Resources:

Resources	Description
<p>Domestic Violence Resource Centre (DVRC) www.dvrcv.org.au</p>	<p>State-wide resource centre supporting workers and families to help stop family violence.</p> <p>Extensive website with up-to-date information available for workers and families.</p>
<p>Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides (CRAF) www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/718858/1_family_violence_risk-assessment_risk_management_framework_manual_010612.PDF</p>	<p>Department of Health and Human Services tool that provides a shared understanding and approach to assessing levels risk associated with family violence.</p>
<p>Northern Integrated Family Violence Services (NIFVS) www.nifvs.org.au</p>	<p>Leads the integration of family violence and related services in Melbourne's Northern Metropolitan Region (NMR).</p> <p>Extensive website with information for workers and families.</p>
<p>Women's Health in the North (WHIN) www.whin.org.au</p>	<p>Leads the implementation of the Victorian Government's family violence reforms in Melbourne's Northern Metropolitan Region.</p> <p>Extensive website with information for workers and families.</p>
<p>Whittlesea Early Years Partnership Family Violence: <i>A moment in time DVD</i></p>	<p>A DVD to raise the awareness of the impact of family violence on children.</p>
<p>Choosing Positive Paths: Parent Information Kit http://whwest.org.au/resource/choosing-positive-paths/</p>	<p>A Resource Kit for parents concerned about their children who have experienced family violence.</p> <p>Provides a series of tip sheets with strategies and information regarding parenting after family violence.</p>
<p>DAISY www.1800respect.org.au/daisy/</p>	<p>A free app that connects women around Australia to services providing support for the impacts of sexual assault, family violence and domestic violence.</p> <p>Family members and friends can also use Daisy to gather information and support women's decision making.</p>
<p>KidsMatter www.kidsmatter.edu.au/health-and-community/resources</p>	<p>Resources include information on children and trauma, Early Childhood Education and Care, as well as tools that can be downloaded and freely used.</p>

■ Resources and Training

Training

Provided by	Description
City of Whittlesea – Connecting Whittlesea Ph: 9404 8865 (Family Services Education Officer) or e-mail: familytraining@whittlesea.vic.gov.au www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au	Training and education program for parents, carers and professionals supporting families.
Domestic Violence Resource Centre (DVRC) Training Calendar http://www.dvrcv.org.au/training/courses	Training programs are suitable for a range of workers including those in family violence services and those practitioners in services who work with women and their children affected by family violence.
Northern Integrated Family Violence Services Training Calendar www.nifvs.org.au	<p>Free training is offered four times per year for workers who are not directly involved in family violence service provision, but who may work with women and children who are experiencing family violence.</p> <p>Participants increase their understanding of family violence, gain strategies to respond to disclosures and learn about appropriate referrals.</p> <p>Fee-for-service training can also be tailored to your organisation.</p>

Networks:

- **Whittlesea Early Years Partnership, Early Years Family Violence Working Group.** Contact City of Whittlesea’s Family, Children and Young People Department for further details on **Ph: 9404 8870**.
- **Northern Integrated Family Violence Services (NIFVS) - quarterly meetings.** For information **Ph: 9484 1666**.

■ References

Background and Context:

- The North East Early Childhood Development Project (2012) *Paving the Way: Facilitating a Pathway with Vulnerable Children and Families – Toolkit of Resources*, Melbourne.
- Royal Commission into Family Violence (2015) Issues Paper State Government of Victoria.
- Flory, R (2012) *Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Project: Scoping Exercise Report*, Whittlesea Community Connections, Melbourne.
- Shonkoff, J (2011) Protecting Brains, Not Simply Stimulating Minds – *in Science, Vol.333 pp982-983*.
- Dwyer, J., O’Keefe, J., Scott, P., and Wilson, L (2012) *Trauma and young children – a caring approach project* Women’s Health Goulburn North East, Melbourne.
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/pages/veyladf.aspx?Redirect=1).

Fact Sheet 1 – Understanding Family Violence:

- Department of Human Services (2012) *Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides 1-3 (CRAF)*. Edition 2, State Government of Victoria, Victoria.
- Victoria Statewide Children’s Resource Program, *Through A Child’s Eyes: Children’s Experiences of Family Violence & Homelessness*, Melbourne.
- Domestic Violence Resource Centre Website (www.dvrcv.org.au)
- Ganley, A, L., (date unavailable) *Why Women Stay*, a Project of the Family Violence Prevention Fund (www.domesticabuseshelter.org/infodomesticviolence.htm)
- Victorian Community Council Against Violence (2004) *Guide for General Practitioners – based on a kit for general practitioners* by the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (1999). Melbourne

Fact Sheet 2 – Recognising Family Violence:

- Victorian Community Council Against Violence (2004) *Guide for General Practitioners – based on a kit for general practitioners* by the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (1999). Melbourne
- White, D.M (2013) *Recognising the signs of domestic violence* (www.psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2013/09/28/recognizing-the-signs-of-domestic-violence)
- Berry Street & Women’s Health West (2003) *Choosing Positive Paths: A Resource and Information Kit for Parents and Children who have Experienced Family Violence*, Melbourne.
- Department of Human Services (2012) *Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides 1-3 (CRAF)*. Edition 2, State Government of Victoria, Victoria
- Dwyer, J., O’Keefe, J., Scott, P., and Wilson, L (2012) *Trauma and young children – a caring approach project* Women’s Health Goulburn North East, Melbourne.
- Domestic Violence Resource Centre Website (www.dvrcv.org.au)

■ References

Fact Sheet 3 – Responding to Family Violence:

- Victorian Community Council Against Violence (2004) *Guide for General Practitioners – based on a kit for general practitioners* by the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (1999). Melbourne
- Department of Human Services (2012) *Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides 1-3 (CRAF)*. Edition 2, State Government of Victoria, Victoria.
- Dwyer, J., O’Keefe, J., Scott, P., and Wilson, L (2012) *Trauma and young children – a caring approach project*, Women’s Health Goulburn North East, Melbourne.
- Berry Street & Women’s Health West (2003) *Choosing Positive Paths: A Resource and Information Kit for Parents and Children who have Experienced Family Violence*, Melbourne.

Fact Sheet 4 – Impact and Trauma of Family Violence:

- Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria Website (www.dvrcv.org.au)
- Victorian Community Council Against Violence (2004) *Guide for General Practitioners – based on a kit for general practitioners* by the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (1999), Melbourne.
- Department of Human Services (2012) *Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides 1-3 (CRAF)*. Edition 2, State Government of Victoria, Victoria.
- Dwyer, J., O’Keefe, J., Scott, P., and Wilson, L (2012) *Trauma and young children – a caring approach project*, Women’s Health Goulburn North East, Melbourne.
- Victoria Statewide Children’s Resource Program, *Through A Child’s Eyes: Children’s Experiences of Family Violence & Homelessness*, Melbourne.
- Shonkoff, J (2011) Protecting Brains, Not Simply Stimulating Minds – in Science, Vol.333 pp982-983 (cited in the North East Early Childhood Development Project (2012) Paving the Way).
- Perry, B.D (2003) *Effects of Trauma on Children* The Child Trauma Academy (www.ChildTrauma.org.au)
- Australian Institute of Family Studies (2010) *Issues for the safety and wellbeing of children in families with multiple and complex problems: The co-occurrence of domestic violence, parental substance misuse and mental health problems*. NCPC Issues No.33 – Dec.

Fact Sheet 5 – Men and Family Violence:

- Department of Human Services (2012) *Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides 1-3 (CRAF)*. Edition 2, State Government of Victoria, Victoria.
- Mensline (www.mensline.org.au)
- www.dvconnect.org/mensline/other-resources
- www.domesticabuseshelter.org/infodomesticviolence.htm

Fact Sheet 6 – Duty of Care - Reporting Abuse:

- Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare. Facts Sheet: *Mandatory Reporting Victoria*. www.cfecfw.asn.au
- Children Youth and Families Act (CYFA) 2005. Department of Health and Human Services, Government of Victoria.
- Better Health Channel. *Child Abuse – Reporting Procedures*. www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Child_abuse_reporting_procedures

■ References

Supporting Traumatized Children:

- Perry, B (2004) The Child trauma Academy Website - www.ChildTrauma.org
(<http://www.mentalhealthconnection.org/pdfs/perry-handout-effects-of-trauma.pdf>)
- Dwyer, J., O'Keefe, J., Scott, P., and Wilson, L (2012) Trauma and young children – a caring approach project, Women's Health Goulburn North East, Melbourne.
- www.kidsmatter.edu.au