

Integrated Responses to Vulnerable Children:

Improving responses to children who have experienced family violence

Presented by:





Overview

Setting the scene

Understanding the integrated system

Prof Cathy Humphreys

Presentation on children and integration

Panel

Responses to case study

[BREAK]

Discussion

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Why are we here?

Children are present at 1 in 3 family violence incidents

NIFVS Regional Plan 2013-17 has identified 'improving integration of appropriate services for vulnerable children and their families' as a priority area.

We want to build on great work that has already occurred:

- Think Child (strategic partnership between family violence, family services, police and child protection)
- L17 Triage Pilot Project (meetings between child protection, police, ChildFirst and Berry Street)
- Family Violence Therapeutic Children's Network (bi-monthly meetings for counselling, case management and group work practitioners across the North and West).



About NIFVS

Northern Integrated Family Violence Services (NIFVS) is the partnership that leads the integration of family violence and related services in Melbourne's northern metropolitan region (NMR).

Our Vision

For women and children to live safe and free from family violence.

Our Mission

To maintain and continually develop the integrated family violence service system in the north, in order to improve the safety of women and children.

The *NIFVS Regional Plan 2013-2017* sets out the priorities and key initiatives of the organisations involved in the partnership.

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What is integration?

Integration brings together disparate parts into a unified whole.

An integrated approach to family violence would see all parts of the family violence service system working together to provide a better service to victims of family violence and reduce the incidence of family violence.

Integration in northern metropolitan Melbourne involves:

- a shared understanding of family violence and a shared vision for change
- all parties understanding and striving to improve the system
- strong structures and relationships across the system
- information-sharing and collaboration across a broad range of organisations
- opportunities to discuss and resolve issues
- ensuring a 'continuum of care' through smooth referral pathways and consistent service responses.





The partnership

The NIFVS partnership formed in July 2006, following the reforms to the family violence service sector introduced by the Victorian Government.

The partnership was led by the Partnership Management Group made up of representatives from funded family violence services.

In March 2015 a new 'Regional Integration Committee' was convened to increasing representation across the entire family violence system.

The new Committee includes representatives from: family violence specialist services, Victoria Police, courts and relevant government agencies, as well as CALD, disability, family services, housing, indigenous, legal, mental health, sexual assault and women's health services.



NIFVS coordination team

The NIFVS coordination team includes the Regional Integration Coordinator (RIC) and two project workers. The team resources, coordinates and supports integration by:

- providing leadership for regional integration
- convening and supporting regional networks and groups
- disseminating key family violence information
- identifying and promoting good practice models
- delivering training and facilitating forums to the sector
- facilitating links between local, regional and statewide family violence structures.

The team is employed by Women's Health In the North and funded by the Department of Health and Human Services.



Networks and groups

There are a number of family violence networks and groups in the NMR. Some are open to new membership or one-off attendance, including:

NIFVS Network Forums

NIFVS Network Forums are open to anyone who works towards women's and children's safety in the northern metropolitan region. Quarterly meetings focus on improving integration in specific areas identified in the regional plan. The next forum will held on 23 June 2015.

Local Family Violence Networks

Local family violence networks have been established for over 20 years. The current networks are based in Banyule/Nillumbik, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Sunbury and Yarra. Details about upcoming meetings can be found at: www.nifvs.org.au





Family Services Structure

The family violence and family service systems sit side by side.

Integrated Family Services

Integrated Family Services are provided by a range of organisations across the region. They deliver a range of family friendly services to support parents-to-be and parents with children aged 0-18 years.

Referrals are managed through Child FIRST.

Child FIRST (Hume Moreland and North East Area)

Child FIRST provides information, referral and advice to families concerned about the development, safety and well being of children.



NMR family violence intake pathway: children (0-18 yo) experiencing family violence

Police attend incident

Police conduct preliminary risk assessment. Police make the appropriate family violence referral (see women's intake pathway).

If a child is present and police:

- have a reasonable belief that a child or young person is in need of protection
 - concerns of sexual or physical abuse or
 - concerns of significant harm or neglect

a referral is made to **Child Protection**

Child Protection "triages" all police family violence referrals with Berry Street Northern Domestic Family Violence Services (NFDVS) and Child FIRST. Child Protection, NFDVS or Child FIRST may work with the family, as follows:

Child Protection open an investigation

Child FIRST work with family

Berry Street NFDVS may consult with or refer to: **a specialist children's casework or therapeutic service, children's group work, CAMHS, Gatehouse or a private mental health practitioner.**

See Service Directory for children's referrals.

Woman with a child attends court to apply for a Family Violence Intervention Order or a variation, or due to civil action taken by police

Support person refers the woman and her child to a **specialist family violence service** as per the women's pathway.

Family violence service may consult with or refer to: **a specialist children's casework therapeutic service, children's group work, CAMHS, Gatehouse or a private mental health practitioner.**

See Service Directory for children's referrals.

Woman with a child discloses family violence to a specialist family violence service

Family violence service conducts a comprehensive risk assessment and safety planning.

Given the presence of a child, service may:

Consult with **Child Protection** (Ph: 1300 664 977)

Child Protection may open an investigation or make the appropriate referral.

Consult with or refer to: **ChildFIRST, a specialist children's casework or therapeutic service, children's group work, CAMHS, Gatehouse or a private mental health practitioner.**

Woman with a child discloses family violence to a generalist service

Service conducts a preliminary risk assessment. If the woman or child are in present danger, service calls the police, with the woman's agreement.

If the police are not called, service may consult with: **Child Protection** (Ph: 1300 664 977) about the child's safety.

Service may also refer woman and her child to: **specialist family violence service** as per women's intake pathway.

Child Protection open an investigation or make the appropriate referral

Family violence service may consult with or refer to: **ChildFIRST, a specialist children's casework therapeutic service, children's group work, CAMHS, Gatehouse or a private mental health practitioner.**

See Service Directory for children's referrals.

Child discloses family violence to a school or health service

Consult with **Child Protection** (Ph: 1300 664 977) about the child's safety.

Child Protection open an investigation or make the appropriate referral



Family Violence Services

There are a limited number of family violence services for children.

Counselling and group work services include:

- Koorie Playgroups (Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency)
- Merri Community Health Services Integrated Family Violence Service
- My Parents 'n' Me Group (Greensborough Family Relationship Centre)
- Sexual Abuse Counselling and Prevention Program (Children's Protection Society)
- The Sanctuary Drop-in Support (Kildonan)

- Bright Futures (Merri Outreach Support Service)
- Dolphin Program (Anglicare Broadmeadows)
- Turtle Program (Berry Street)





Panel Discussion

Emma Toone

Senior Clinician

Berry Street Domestic and Family Violence Service

Allen Jeffress

Team Leader, Bright Futures

Merri Outreach Support Service

Megan Johnson

Team Leader, Child Focused Counselling and Support Team

Anglicare

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Small group activity

Improving responses and integration

- What needs to change in order for the system to become more integrated?
- Given the information you have received today, what could you/ your organisation do differently to ensure it better responds to children?



Next Steps

There are a number of ways to stay connected with the work of integration in the family violence sector.

Visit our new website at www.nifvs.org.au to:

- Access notes and presentations from today's forum
- Find resources on working with children
- Stay in touch via the monthly NIFVS eNews
- Join a regional network or group
- Order Women's and Men's Family Violence Help Cards
- RSVP to Identifying Family Violence Training (22 April 2015)
- RSVP to Regional Family Violence Sector Induction (22 April 2015)
- Host a Week Without Violence event (3rd week of October)

Contact Details

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