

Moving Towards Greater Collaboration

NIFVS Forum Summary

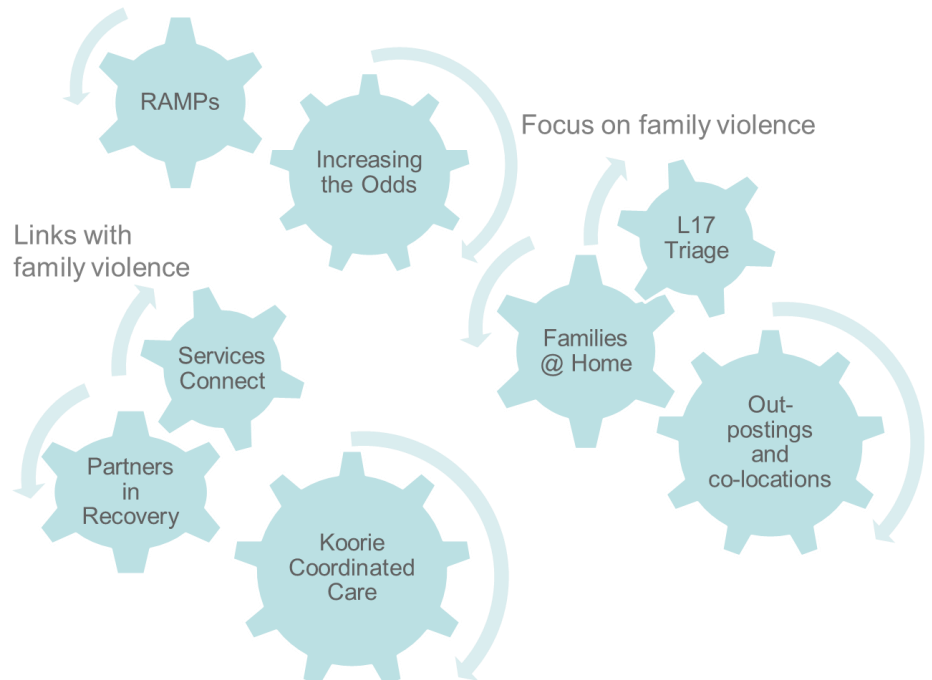
On Tuesday 23 March 2016, nearly 90 workers from a range of sectors came together for a forum considering how cross sector work can improve the safety of women and children who have experienced family violence.

A history of collaboration

Family violence services in the northern metropolitan region (NMR) have a proud history of innovative cross sector and interagency work.

Co-location is becoming a favoured mechanism for collaboration—there are currently 25 instances of family violence services co-locating with other services.

Some current programs and projects that promote collaboration are shown at right.



Some principles supporting collaboration

These principles, or ‘ways of working’, were drawn from regional partnerships, forum participant feedback and findings from the PATRICIA research project, being led by the University of Melbourne.

Practice approaches

- Shared goals and vision
- Understanding and awareness of others’ theoretical frameworks
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Accessing and offering secondary consultation
- Accessing opportunities for joint training/forums
- Understanding intake and referral pathways into other sectors
- Good will

Formal mechanisms

- Information sharing agreements
- Other formal agreements (including MOUs)
- Shared data management systems
- Standard assessment of risk, i.e. through the Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF)
- Governance structures supporting collaboration
- Coordinator responsible for liaison
- Co-location and joint casework/care teams



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Attendees heard a presentation from Catherine Plunkett, from Domestic Violence Victoria, about the core principles for collaboration and other learnings from the Risk Assessment Management Panels (RAMPs). A panel of specialists from innovative cross sector projects (Families@Home, L17 Triage Pilot, Partners In Recovery, Koori Coordinated Care and Increasing the Odds for Safety and Respect) then discussed barriers and enablers to working collaboratively.

Collaboration in the context of family violence: lessons from the RAMPs

- It is important to have **shared goals** that can be revisited when there is disagreement. RAMP members work to promote the safety of women and children and to hold perpetrators to account.
- The RAMP pilots were found to be effective in **reducing risk** to the majority of women and children, ensuring relevant agencies get **access to key information**.
- **Sharing information** relating to risk is crucial, however, it is important to ensure the dignity of survivors.
- The RAMPs aim to **close system gaps that can be exploited by perpetrators**. Getting all of the relevant services in one room enables a systemic response.



For more information about the RAMPS, visit the [NIFVS website](#).

Barriers and enablers: lessons from cross sector work in the NMR

Barriers to collaboration

Demand is immense, with a 259% rise in police reports of family violence in the NMR over the last five years.

Professional blindness can mean that people only “treat” or “look for” things they know how to deal with.

Lack of a shared understanding about what family violence is can reduce effectiveness of interventions.

Taking a relationships approach, rather than a systems approach, can mean collaboration falls over when staff leave.

Enablers to collaboration

Having an “authorising environment” with organisational buy-in and decision makers present.

Clear policy, process and dedicated coordinators to underpin the work.

Valuing each partners’ unique contribution, e.g. the powers statutory organisations might have or the knowledge brought by different sector representatives.

Building on kinship connections across Aboriginal organisations.

Resources to support collaboration

- [Department of Planning and Community Development \(2009\) “Information sharing in the context of family violence.” Victoria.](#)
- [Healey, L. and C. Humphreys \(2013\) “Governance and interagency responses: Improving practice for regional governance – a Continuum Matrix.” Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse: Sydney.](#)