

# Strength in the Difference

## A Practice Exchange between Family Services and Family Violence Services NIFVS Forum Summary



On 18 July 2017, 100 workers gained a greater understanding of family services and family violence services responses to violence. Participants heard from Family Safety Victoria about how family violence reforms will enhance responses to women, children and perpetrators. A panel of practitioners highlighted their unique specialisations and frameworks, and participants shared their practice wisdom.

The panel described the unique focus of each sector

Family Services (Children's Protection Society)	Family Violence Services - women (Berry Street)	Men's Behaviour Change Program (Uniting Kildonan)
Best Interests Framework. Safety, stability and development of children.	Family violence lens. Human rights, feminist and trauma informed.	Feminist framework. Gendered nature of family violence and male privilege.
Early intervention and post-crisis. Work with children's recovery post-crisis.	Crisis intervention. Risk assessment and risk management.	Post-crisis intervention. Risk assessment and risk management.
Engage and triage fathers in early stages, and test if they wish to be involved in service delivery.	No contact with fathers/perpetrators, but keep perpetrators 'in view' by placing the responsibility of the violence them.	Engaging perpetrators regarding motivations and goals for family to build on empathy. e.g. 'What sort of father do you want to be?'
Look at and respond to mental health issues of mothers e.g. depression.	View depression, anxiety and isolation as a normal response to family violence.	Engage and be respectful to men, while naming behaviour as abusive.  Maintain rapport that is not collusive. Separate men from their behaviour.
Able to work with family long term to provide a consistent response, while consulting with family violence services.	Able to support family services, if already involved, to respond to situation.	Able to support to women (partners) and perpetrators for the duration of the group.
Able to consult with Community Child Protection workers before/ instead of reporting.	Report to Child Protection – cannot consult.	Report to Child Protection – cannot consult.



**WOMEN'S HEALTH  
IN THE NORTH**  
voice • choice • power

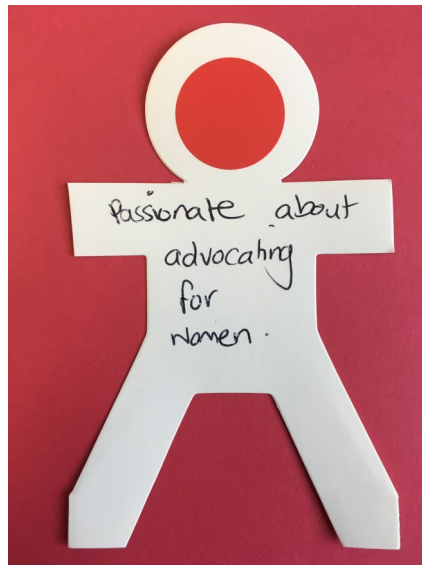


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Participants described what they value about the unique role of:

## Family Services

Attuned to whole family  
Gently engage families before crisis intervention  
Interrupt risk to children  
Coordinated response e.g. Care Teams  
Child centred.



## Family Violence Services

Work with high risk in short time frames  
Hold men accountable for their use of violence  
Specialist knowledge about justice processes  
Passionate about advocating for women.

Family Safety Victoria presented about the progress of family violence reforms



*Katherine Riddell from Family Safety Victoria*

**'The purpose of the Information Sharing legislation is to clearly tilt towards holding perpetrators accountable and in view.'**

The CRAF redevelopment will include a whole-of-system risk management approach, across the full spectrum of risk.

The new Information Sharing legislation will enable information about perpetrators to be shared more easily by 'prescribed' agencies.

The 10-year Industry Plan will help facilitate integration of family violence and family services.

Support and Safety Hubs will enhance response through:

- ◆ Police referrals going to one place, rather than three separate points of entry.
- ◆ Information about perpetrators being made available to support a full risk assessment.
- ◆ Providing people with many ways to access the support they need (not just a physical Hub).