



## Young Women & Family Violence Community of Practice Session Summaries

The Young Women and Family Violence Community of Practice (CoP) provided an opportunity for workers who are supporting young women who have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) to meet, share, learn and reflect on their practice.

The Northern Integrated Family Violence Services (NIFVS) team and Youth Support Advocacy Service (YSAS) partnered to facilitate five sessions from October 2018 to November 2019. The CoP drew on regional organisations to partner as guest speakers and panel members on a range of topics.

The objectives of the CoP were to:

- Reflect on current practice and frameworks
- Consult with other workers
- Share successes and challenges
- Share insights and practice wisdom
- Talk about how the work affects us.

Below is a summary of the sessions and further resources for workers to enhance their response to young women experiencing intimate partner violence.

### Technology and Intimate Partner Violence: Tactics, Risks and Rights – October 2018

Guest presenters from Darebin Community Legal Service, West Heidelberg Community Legal Service and Northern Community Legal Centre focused on how young women experience 'moral policing' in relation to their technology use. They explored how this creates barriers to disclosure or help seeking in regards to their experience of tech-facilitated intimate partner violence.

An [Australian study](#) of more than 4,200 people aged 16 to 49 revealed the gendered nature of image-based abuse. The study found that young women experienced some of the highest rates of image-based abuse.

Participants heard that the perception that physical attractiveness is linked to self-worth, and that young men labelling sexually explicit images of their female peers as 'trophies' or 'achievements' reflects the wider culture of male entitlement, and the objectification of women in current attitudes and behaviours.

Participants discussed young women's legal rights and the increased emphasis on social/intimate relationships in a patriarchal context where technology provides a platform of social interaction and connection without adult supervision.

Resources: [Duluth Tech Power and Control Wheel](#). [Women Online: The intersection of technology, gender and sexism](#). [Women's Technology Safety & Privacy Toolkit](#)



## Feminist Creative Therapies – February 2019

This session was creative, focussing on fibre art, which is often devalued as ‘women’s work’ and therefore is invisible and relegated to the domestic sphere, created by ‘anonymous’ women.

Fibre art, one of the oldest forms of art, is an unassuming but powerful medium, which can contribute to political change by laying down platforms for discussion whilst bringing important issues to the public eye.

*‘Use the slow, stitch-by-stitch, nature of craft to help you consider the complexities of injustice. It will lead to a deeper understanding of them and their solutions.’ [Craftivist Collective](#)*

Creative therapy, including music, drama, journaling and tactile art can used in both individual and group work.

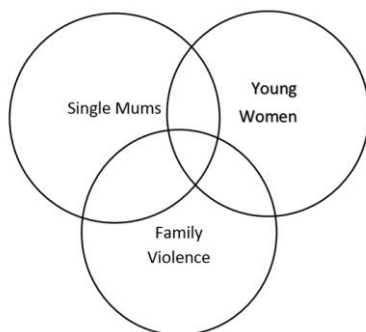
Participants were provided with balls of yarn and taught how to make pom-poms using their hands or a fork. They were encourage to continue making pom-poms throughout the CoP.

Participants then worked through a case study, and used a coat of arms to creatively represent the victim survivor’s values, protective factors, resilience and resistance.

Further Information: [Benefits of Creative Therapy Powerpoint](#)

## Young Mum’s – April 2019

This session focussed on how young mums who experience intimate partner violence might be also experience intersecting discriminations.



Panel members from Berry Street, VACCA, YSAS Wilum and Women’s Health In the North discussed working in culturally appropriate ways with young mums and building engagement and trust whilst managing risk and enhancing safety.

Participants considered how discrimination may impact young women’s access to safety, justice and recovery and what workers could do in their roles to support young mothers who experience intimate partner violence.



## Criminalisation – July 2019

This session explored the ways in which young women's behaviour may be criminalised, and how the gender, class and racial discrimination of criminalisation impacts on their safety, recovery and access to justice in the context of intimate partner violence.

Panel members from Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service, Darebin Community Legal Centre (Women Transforming Justice) and Flemington & Kensington Legal Centre (Police Accountability Project) discussed criminalisation as disproportionately affecting communities that experience systemic racism. They note that, with the majority of people in prison from structurally disadvantaged communities, prisons can worsen the conditions of poor mental and physical health, drug and alcohol addiction, homelessness, violence, and poverty that then lead to further criminalisation.

Panel members and participants discussed how workers could advocate for young women who have experienced intimate partner violence and are involved in the criminal legal system.

More information: [Flat Out re Prison Abolition](#); [Police Accountability Project](#).

## Body, Self and Intimate Partner Violence – November 2019

In this session, participants explored the issues of body and self that young women navigate, the risks they experience, and discussed practice that supports young women's confidence, strength, resilience and resistance.

There are many pressures that young women navigate that can impact on how they view their bodies and form their sense of self. Social media, popular culture and peer relationships hold the potential to both positively and negatively impact these processes.

In situations of intimate partner violence, the pressures young women experience about their bodies can be leveraged by perpetrators of intimate partner violence as a way of obtaining and maintaining power and control. This session used the theories of objectification as a grounding framework and Hip Hop as a platform for exploring resistance.

Supported by workers from YSAS, Arabic Welfare, Banyule City Council, Darebin Youth Services, Melbourne City Mission and several young people, participants spent time writing lyrics about Body, Self and Intimate Partner Violence which were then compiled and performed by Candice Butler, YSAS worker and hip hop artist to music made by [Rezonate Youth Music Crew](#). Click [here](#) to watch the performance.

## Further Resources

Although the Young Women's CoP is no longer being run, workers can access the following resources:

- WHIN: Love Control [Film](#) and [Resource Notes](#)
- DVRCV website: [Love, the good, the bad and the ugly](#).
- NIFVS/YSAS Forum Summary: [Young Women and Family Violence](#)
- Northern CASA booklet: [A Guide for Young Women](#) who have been sexually assaulted.