



# Turn Input into Action



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## Overview of Project and Findings

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Communications and Project Officer

NIFVS Team (WHIN)

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# Victim Survivor Experience Mapping

## Background

- Ensuring service responses are informed by the experiences of victim survivors is a key family violence reform.
- The Royal Commission emphasised that the voices of victim survivors be heard and used to guide policy development and service delivery.



The Victim Survivor Experience Mapping was a key component of the [NIFVS Regional Integration Committee's strategic plan](#) to:

- Centre the voices of victim survivors
- Enhance the family violence service system by mapping and learning from victim survivor experiences of the service system in the northern metropolitan region.



Through an EOI process an Implementation Group was established in September 2021.

### **Implementation Group members**, led by NIFVS Team:

- Survivor Advocates from inTouch and Safe and Equal.

Managers or Senior Practitioners (System Listeners) from:

- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)
- Berry Street
- Good Samaritan Inn
- Northern CASA
- Northern Community Legal Centre
- Royal Children's Hospital
- Uniting.



# Methodology

**Seven** semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with an emphasis on exploring victim survivors' recent experience of the NMR family violence service system.

The **Eligibility Criteria** was victim survivors who:

- Were over the age of 18
- Lived in the NMR area
- Were with or without children
- Had been in contact with the family violence system within the last two years and
- Were in a safe position to reflect on their experience with low risk of re-traumatisation.



# Demographics

- All identified as women
- Ages - late **20s to 50s**
- **3** were not residents of Australia
- **5** lived in growth corridors, **3** - Hume and **2** - Whittlesea
- **5** had children and the other **2** had either experienced miscarriages or still births
- At the time of the interviews, **2** were employed and **1** ran her own business.



# Development of Recommendations

The following contributed to the development of the recommendations:

- Advice from the interviewees
- Recommendations developed by the Implementation Group
- Discussion with those organisations which interviewees had provided feedback about
- Advice from industry experts (e.g. Safe and Equal)
- Discussion with PSA and FVRIC Chair.





# Key Themes from Mapping

## What is Working

- Practitioners listening to, believing and understanding victim survivors.
- Supporting victim survivors to understand family violence, navigate the service system, and provide referral pathways that best meet their needs.
- Positive difference when a violence and trauma-informed approach is used.
- Holding adults who use violence to account.
- Practical assistance e.g. FVFSPs and housing
- Case management and case work.



# Key Themes

## What is Working:

*Trish said, 'The worker was very respectful, personable, I felt I could trust her, and she gave great practical advice, such as support to navigate the service system and referral pathways that best met my needs.'*



# Key Themes

## Areas for Improvement

### Enhancing Communication Skills and Implementing a Violence And Trauma-informed Approach

*Trish said the worker 'kept asking me the same questions' and the conversation didn't get anywhere. The experience was 'extremely stressful'.*



# Key Themes

**Creating a Culturally Safe Environment, Especially for First Nation Victim Survivors**

*Emily indicated that she didn't want to engage with services due to a fear of Child Protection removing her children.*

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# Key Themes

## Equipping Practitioners to Identify Collusion and Reduce Misidentification

*Natalie said when the workers visited, they seemed impressed by her husband's 'hands on approach' when he proudly showed the workers all the toys he had bought for the child and said he did the grocery shopping; however, they did not know that this was because he did not allow Natalie to access money or go shopping.*



# Key Themes

## Enhancing Responses to Financial Abuse

*Trish experienced significant financial hardship due to financial abuse that was inflicted on her by her husband blocking her from their shared bank account and leaving her with only \$200. Trish was not eligible for Centrelink or other financial assistance, because of her citizenship status.*



# Key Themes

## Ensuring Crisis/Motel Accommodation is Safe

*Brenda and her children stayed in motels initially.  
The doors didn't lock at some of the places.  
Brenda said it was terrifying.*

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# Key Themes

## Mentoring New Graduates

*Rebeca said, 'Because they were so fresh out of uni they didn't have the life experience, they'd learnt everything from a textbook. If I had someone who approached me as not knowing everything and was open and willing to listen, that would be a different story. Establish a relationship with the people you're dealing with'.*





# Turn Input into Action

## Impact of Child Removal on Aboriginal Communities

Ruby Bovill

Team Leader  
Family Violence Therapeutic Program

VACCA

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## **Victoria Police Predominant Aggressor Project**

Dagmar Anderson

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Strategy, Policy and Legislation Unit  
Family Violence Command

Victoria Police

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# Identification of the Predominant Aggressor

SSgt Dagmar Andersen

Family Violence Command



## ND5 Trial – Why?

Since the Royal Commission into Family Violence, the whole of government reform agenda is accountable to the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor (FVRIM).

Victoria Police operates within a wider system, legislated in the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) framework.

# Key Principles

- ***The system is victim-centric*** – the needs, views and safety of victims will be at the centre of the family violence system.
- ***The system is effective*** – intervention is consistent and decisive, and responses support victims to promptly seek help.
- ***The system is efficient*** – stakeholders work collaboratively, and knowledge is transferred to provide a trauma informed response.
- ***The system is dynamic*** – the system remains responsive to changing demands to achieve and maintain long-term harm reduction.

## *Policy around Identification of the Predominant Aggressor*

- ◇ The primary aggressor is the party to the family violence incident who, through **known history and actions within the relationship**, has caused the most physical harm, fear and/or intimidation against the other. Once they have been violent (particularly the use of physical or sexual violence) all of their other actions **imply the threat of violence for the victim**.
- ◇ The **history of family violence is often more important to consider than the single incident when deciding who is the primary aggressor**. The primary aggressor, through their history and pattern of **coercion, power and controlling behaviour**, can be distinguished from a victim who may have utilised self-defence or violent resistance in an incident or series of incidents.

VPM – Family Violence 3.6 ‘Identifying the primary aggressor’

# Key Findings

- ◆ Group A – No offence and female *nominal* PA (features of 3<sup>rd</sup> party caller & female found to be most agitated/yelling/aggressive)
- ◆ Group B – counter claims & unable to determine roles
- ◆ Group C – male initiate report and NOD
- ◆ Group D – female offender and respondent
- ◆ Group E – Family Law and cross apps - low to moderate risk FV and female respondent (drivers relating to her mental health concerns / risk of homelessness / shared children)

# MARAM Practice Guides

## *Working With Adult People Using Violence*

“6.1.1 Interventions with perpetrators may increase risk to adult and child victim survivors. They may also increase a perpetrator’s risk to themselves (from suicide or self-harm) or to professionals/community (such as threats to harm).”

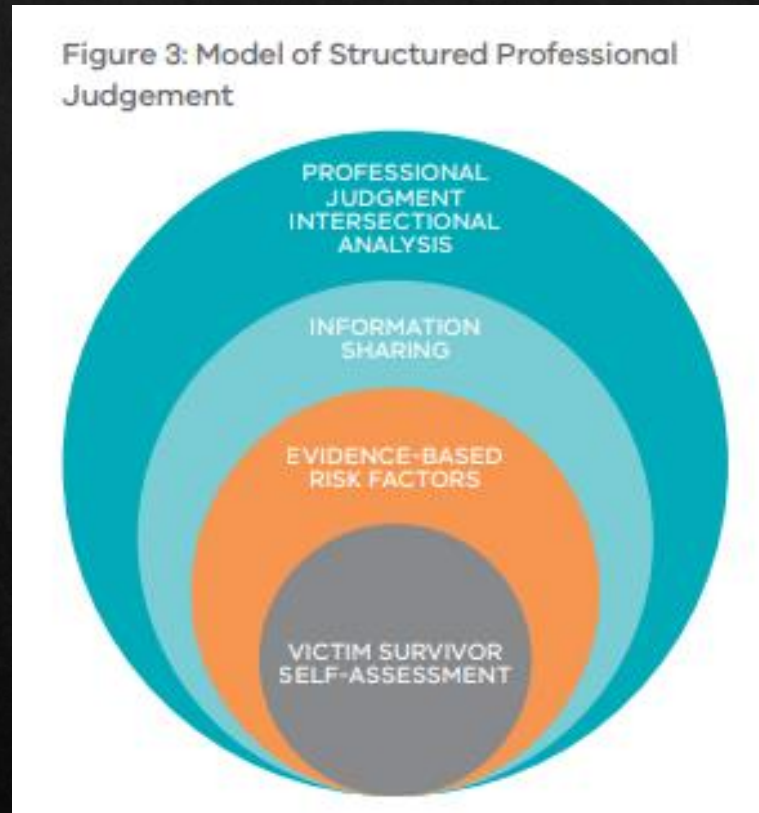
*MARAM Practice Guides – Working With Adult People Using Violence, p.16*



## Next Steps

- ◇ Wider Program of Works includes systems, stakeholder engagement and policy adjustments
- ◇ Informed by ND5 trial and other feedback
- ◇ Embedding structured professional judgement into police practice

*Foundation Knowledge Guide, pp.35-37*



# Northern Integrated Family Violence Services

[www.nifvs.org.au](http://www.nifvs.org.au)

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