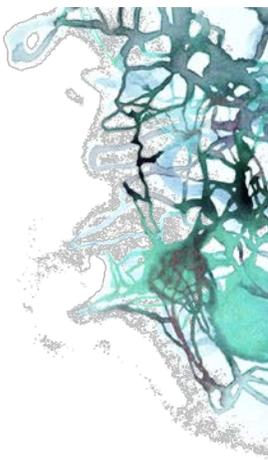




NORTH WEST METROPOLITAN REGION PRIMARY CARE PARTNERSHIPS

Identifying Family Violence and Responding to Women and Children

ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT GUIDE



Acknowledgements



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The development of this example policy was led by Alice Henderson, Project Officer at North East Healthy Communities.

North East Healthy Communities acknowledge the peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our work in the community takes place. We pay our respects to their culture and their Elders past, present and emerging.

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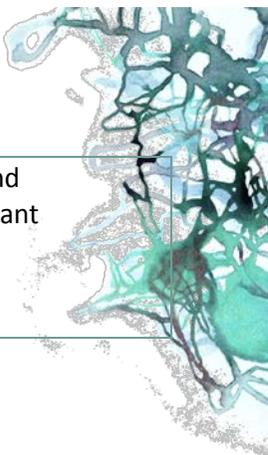


Identifying Family Violence and Responding to Women and Children: Organisational Assessment Guide

This guide aims to support organisations to develop an implementation plan for changes identified through assessing policies with the Identifying Family Violence and Responding to Women and Children: Organisational Assessment. It outlines considerations for change for each best-practice statement when identifying family violence and responding to women and children.

1. Identifying Family Violence and Responding to Women and Children (IFVRC): Policy

	Considerations for Change
1 Our organisation has an Identifying Family Violence and Responding to Women and Children (IFVRC) policy. At a minimum it includes: - Training and education - Responding to family violence - Safety of children and young people - Safety planning - Staff and client safety - Referral and consultation - Support for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop an IFVRC policy (including procedures). Align your policy with statements in the IFVRC: organisational assessment.• If your organisation already has an IFVRC policy and procedures developed, assess it using the IFVRC: Organisational-Assessment and make best practice changes according to this document.
1.2 Our orientation requires new employees to familiarise themselves with the Identifying Family Violence and Responding to Women and Children policy and Procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include IFVRC policy and procedures in organisational orientation/induction.• Promote IFVRC policy and procedures effectively in your organisation so that all staff are aware of it. This could be achieved by developing an IFVRC 'page' on your intranet/website and/or posters outlining the key clauses (e.g. indicators of family violence; asking about family violence; family violence support services) in this policy/procedure.
1.3 Our Identifying Family Violence and Responding to Women and Children policy is included in our organisational policy review cycle. (The review includes practical implementation of procedures).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that the IFVRC policy has a review date and that this is included in your organisational policy review cycle.



1.4 Where relevant, our Identifying Family Violence and Responding to Women and Children policy is detailed in other organisational policies (e.g. client file, client confidentiality).

- Review other organisational policies to ascertain if and where the IFVRC policy and procedure should be referenced in these. Consider making reference to other relevant policies in your IFVRC policy and procedure.

2. Training and Education

	Considerations for Change
<p>2.1 As part of our orientation/induction program, <u>all</u> staff at our organisation attend training which covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition, causes, impacts and indicators of family violence - Asking about and responding to family violence - Barriers to disclosure - Children and family violence - Risk assessment and safety planning - Consultation and referrals - Support for staff - Administration and documentation <p><i>Training is mandatory for all staff. Training may be tailored depending on staff role.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review your organisational orientation training program, ascertain whether it contains the points in 2.1. If not, contact a training provider (e.g. WHIN - Women's Health In the North) to discuss including family violence training in your orientation program. You could consider using an internal trainer should you have the expertise in your organisation to do so. • Review, or develop, a tool to indicate which staff have attended training containing points outlined in 2.1. Ensure all staff attend IFVRC training and record this information.
<p>2.2 Our organisation's annual training calendar contains relevant IFVRC training and regular refresher courses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop or access an IFVRC training program and add this in your annual organisational training calendar. Ensure training is promoted. • Promote IFVRC training and skill development offered externally. • Consider other ways you can support the professional development needs of your employees.



3. Responding to Family Violence

	Considerations for Change
<p>3.1 Our organisation has documented and promoted procedures for staff to follow when asking women and children about, and responding to, family violence. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speaking directly with women about family violence if indicators of family violence are observed.• Assessing and taking action around the immediate safety the client as well as other family members, including children and pets.• Using a professional interpreting agency as required (be mindful when using a local interpreter and ask the client about gender preference of interpreter).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure staff are aware that experiences of family violence may be identified through; family violence screening, disclosure from a woman/child; or if the staff member directly asks the woman/child if they are experiencing family violence based on observed indicators.• The following key principles should be included in a procedural response to family violence:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The discussion occurs in a safe and private place;<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The women’s/child’s story is believed and validated;○ The immediate safety of the client as well as any other family members; including children and pets, is assessed and actioned;○ The safety of children is assessed as a priority; and○ Consultation with appropriate staff occurs in a timely fashion.• Develop an IFVRWC response flowchart (and checklist if appropriate) for staff to follow in asking about and responding to family violence, particularly in regard to immediate safety and risk.• Develop a ‘Possible indicators of family violence’ guide and ‘Prompting questions to ask adults about violence they might be experiencing’. (See page 58 of Family Violence Risk Assessment Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides 1-3, CRAF Manual ed.2.)• Develop a Family Violence Services resource for staff to refer to if appropriate and provide links to these on an easily accessible computer based platform.• Promote the IFVRWC flowchart and guides outlined above in relevant staff training and on an easily accessible computer based platform.• Train all staff in asking about and responding to family violence, particularly in regard to assessing and taking action around the immediate safety of women and children• Train staff in the appropriate use of interpreters.
<p>3.2 Our organisation has a clear privacy and confidentiality policy. This is shared with all clients so that they are aware of the limits to confidentiality as per privacy legislation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review your organisations’ privacy and confidentiality policy, ensure it includes a procedure regarding informing clients (upon entry) that what is discussed with the service is private and confidential, within the limits specified by privacy legislation.



<p>3.3 Our organisation is inclusive in our practice. We actively engage in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culturally sensitive practice that includes indigenous and CALD women and their families; and - Family-sensitive practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train staff in CALD sensitive and family-sensitive practice. • Ensure your organisation is inclusive of people who identify as LGBTI, people of various faith or religions and people with disabilities. • Consult with specialist organisations when working with Aboriginal women, or with women from refugee and immigrant backgrounds.
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4. Supporting Children

	Considerations for Change
<p>4.1 If family violence is present or strongly suspected, our staff enquire whether any children or young people reside with the woman, or have contact with the perpetrator.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an IFVRC response flowchart (and checklist if appropriate) for staff to follow in asking about and responding to family violence, ensure responses regarding children and risk is included.
<p>4.2 Our organisation has documented and promoted procedures for assessing the risk to a child exposed, or suspected to be exposed to, family violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote (in relevant training) documented procedures for assessing the risk to a child suspected to be exposed to family violence. (See page 58 of Family Violence Risk Assessment Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides 1-3, CRAF Manual ed.2). Note: If there are concerns for children, questioning the child should be appropriate to the child’s developmental stage, the staff member should be adequately trained and the protective parent should be actively involved.
<p>4.3 Our organisation has documented and promoted procedures for staff to follow regarding consultation with, or Child First or Child Protection if children are suspected to be exposed to family violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document and promote guidelines and procedures for staff to follow regarding consultation with, or reporting to Child First or Child Protection if children are suspected to be exposed to family violence. This procedure could be documented in the IFVRC policy or in another policy such as ‘Child Safety Policy.’



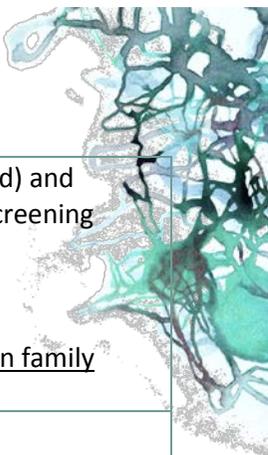
<p>4.4 Our organisation engages and complies with the Victorian Governments Child Information Sharing Scheme.¹</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Child Information Sharing (CIS) Scheme allows authorised organisations and professionals who work with children, young people and their families to share information with each other to promote children’s wellbeing and safety. • Review the Victorian Governments Child Information Sharing Scheme. Ensure that your organisation is aligned with the current iteration of organisations/services prescribed as information sharing entities. • If your organisation (or part of it) is an information sharing entity, consider making changes to relevant organisational policies and practices regarding confidentiality and information sharing. • Include information and procedures regarding this scheme in the IRFVWC staff training.
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5. Screening for Family Violence

(Note: Some organisations may decide not to screen for family violence – if this is the case, there is no need to go through section 5).

	<p style="text-align: center;">Considerations for Change</p>
<p>5.1 Our organisation has considered (and made decisions about) screening women about family violence. These options have been considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening women who are considered to be at a higher risk of experiencing family violence • Routinely asking/screening all women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have not done, consider screening for family violence within your organisation. • The WHO recommends screening for high risk populations, such as women with mental health disorders and antenatal care. However, “universal screening” or “routine enquiries” (i.e. asking women in all health-care encounters) should not be implemented. • Health-care providers should ask about exposure to family violence when assessing conditions that may be caused or complicated by family violence in order to improve diagnosis/identification. • Screening programs need to provide post-screening family violence support to lead to improved outcomes for women.
<p>5.2 (Where relevant) our organisation has documented and promoted procedures for screening women about family violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your organisation has decided to screen women who are considered to be at a higher risk of experiencing family violence, assess and choose an appropriate formal screening tool (e.g. SCTT 2012 Single Page Screener). Alternatively, consider asking some informal screening questions.

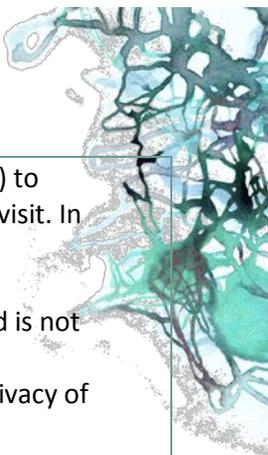
¹ Victorian Government, [Child Information Sharing Scheme](#).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess and decide upon how to administrate (e.g. face to face or client administered) and who will administer the tool. Provide appropriate training to staff responsible for screening clients. <p>Note: For further information regarding screening for family violence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1800Respect Risk Assessment And Screening. Family violence: Towards a holistic approach to screening and risk assessment in family support services.
<p>5.3 Our organisation provides family violence screening training for staff (if and where relevant).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a training module on family violence screening. Train relevant staff.

6. Staff and Client Safety

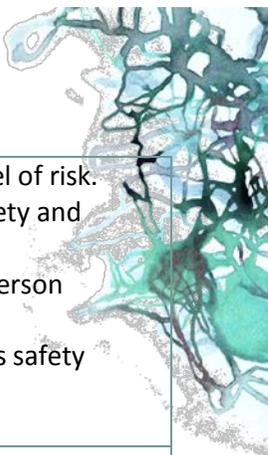
	<p style="color: #008080; margin: 0;">Considerations for Change</p>
<p>6.1 Our organisation has documented and promoted procedures for staff to assess their own safety while working off-site (including an assessment of all occupants/bystanders).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and promote the use of a ‘Working off site/home visits procedures’, which includes an assessment of occupants/bystanders, an assessment of the physical environment. Ensure staff are familiar with these procedures and adhere to them. If your organisation already has a procedure of this nature developed, make a clear reference to/note of it in your IFVRWC policy.
<p>6.2 Our organisation has documented and promoted procedures for staff to assess their own safety while working on-site (including an assessment of other staff, clients and visitors).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and promote the use of procedures to encourage to assess their own and others’ safety in an ongoing way. If your organisation already has a procedure of this nature developed, make a clear reference to/note of it in your IFVRWC policy.
<p>6.3 Our organisation has documented and promoted procedures for staff to contact police if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is an immediate threat to staff, clients, family members or other visitors; and - When a crime has been or is likely to be committed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and promote procedures such as ‘managing threat/aggressive/challenging behaviours procedures’ and/or emergency response procedures which include actions to follow around immediate threat.



<p>6.4 Our organisation has documented and promoted procedures for staff to follow if managing both the woman and a perpetrator on site or during a home visit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and promote procedures (it is likely these will sit within the IFVRC policy) to follow if supporting both the woman and the perpetrator on site or during a home visit. In these procedures the following is recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The perpetrator and the woman are not seen by the same staff member; ○ Relationship counselling for couples/families where violence has been disclosed is not appropriate; and ○ Consider referring one client to another organisation, if this does not breach privacy of either client or put anyone in danger.
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7. Safety Plans

	<p style="text-align: center;">Considerations for Change</p>
<p>7.1 Our organisation encourages referrals to specialist family violence services so that they can undertake comprehensive safety planning and risk assessment with the woman/child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include our organisation ‘actively encouraging referrals to specialist family violence services so that they can undertake comprehensive safety planning and risk assessment with the woman/child’ in the section on Safety Planning in your policy. Note: Specialist family violence services are best placed to develop a tailored safety plan and this is the preference.
<p>7.2 Our organisation supports women to develop a safety plan in instances when a client prefers not to seek specialist support, is not eligible to receive support from a specialist service, or is waiting to gain access to a specialist service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once a disclosure of family violence occurs, the worker should support the woman/child to begin thinking about their safety. • Develop an IFVRC response flowchart (and checklist if appropriate) for staff to follow when responding to family violence, ensure actions regarding developing safety plans are included. • Develop a procedure for the development of a safety plan with clients who have experienced family violence and ensure relevant staff are familiar with it. • Provide training to relevant staff so that they have the skills to develop a safety plan with clients if required. When developing safety plans with women, staff need to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Even if some women are not comfortable/ready to complete a safety plan, informing them that this is an option is important. ○ Developing a safety plan can increase the risk to the woman/child.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Generally, a woman experiencing family violence is best placed to assess her level of risk.○ It is important to ask the woman what they are already doing to ensure their safety and the safety of their children and that this is included in the safety plan.○ Safety plans need to be available in a preferred format that is accessible to the person they are being developed for.○ Being mindful of providing written information to make sure the woman's/child's safety is not compromised.○ Safety plans are living documents and require regular review.
<p>7.3 Our organisation has developed an easily accessible safety plan for staff to use with women experiencing family violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Develop an IFVRC safety plan template. There are a number of checklists and guides available to support the development, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 1800Respect: Safety Planning Checklist○ Women's Health West: My Safety Plan○ Relationships Australia: Safe from Violence – A guide for women leaving or separating○ The Lookout - Factsheet 3: Planning for Safety○ NWMRPCP Identifying Family violence and responding to women and children: Appendix 2● Place the IFVRC safety plan/checklist template on an easily accessible computer based platform for staff.
<p>7.4 Our organisation works with the woman to include the safety of children and young people in the safety plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Include the safety of children and young people in safety planning procedures. Consider including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Depending on the developmental capacity of the child, it may be more appropriate for the woman/parent/caregiver to incorporate the child/children in their own safety plan.○ Dependent upon the child's age, they may require their own safety plan.○ The preference is that the woman is involved in and aware of the child's safety plan.○ The preference is for children to be referred to a specialist children's support worker as they can develop a tailored plan for the individual child's needs. However, if this is not possible or timely it is important to begin a meaningful discussion with the child about their safety.



8. Referral and Consultation

	Considerations for Change
8.1 Our staff consult with senior staff if they require further direction or advice when supporting a woman/child experiencing family violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase staff knowledge of who to access internally for secondary consultation/further information.
8.2 Our organisation encourages staff to access secondary consultations with specialist family violence services in response to women/children experiencing family violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an IFVRC response flowchart (and checklist if appropriate) for staff to follow when responding to family violence, add 'access secondary consultation' in the flowchart. • Increase staff knowledge of who to access for secondary consultation through IFVRC staff training and relevant information in an easily accessible computer based platform for staff.
8.3 Our organisation makes referrals to specialist family violence services, justice services and auxiliary mainstream services for women and children experiencing family violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an IFVRC response flowchart (and checklist if appropriate) for staff to follow when responding to family violence, ensure actions regarding referral and consultation are included. • Develop or make available a list of resources and support services for women and children experiencing family violence and promote it on an easily accessible computer based platform for staff to utilise. • Assign responsibility for regularly updating the list of resources and support services to an employee. • Include information regarding family violence specialist and other auxiliary supports available in IFVRC training for staff.
8.4 Our organisation engages and complies with the Victorian Governments Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme for risk assessment and risk management. ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the family violence information sharing scheme for risk assessment and risk management that has been created by the new Part 5A of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008. Ensure your organisation is aligned with the current iteration of organisations/services prescribed as information sharing entities to share information between themselves for family violence risk assessment and risk management. • If your organisation (or part of it) is an information sharing entity, relevant staff need to consider attending relevant information sessions/training.

² Victorian Government, Family Violence Reform: Information Sharing and Risk Management.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If your organisation (or part of it) is an information sharing entity, consider making changes to relevant organisational policies and practices regarding confidentiality and information sharing.• Include information and procedures regarding this scheme in the IRFVWC staff training.
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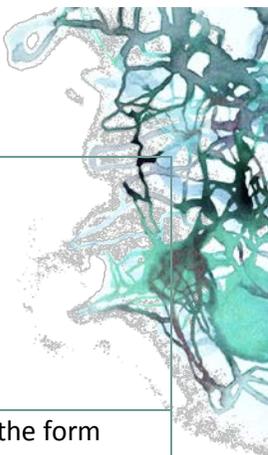
9. Support for Staff

	Considerations for Change
<p>9.1 Our organisation's EAP provider has the skills and experience to support staff who work with clients experiencing family violence. (Our service agreement with our EAP includes such a clause). EAP information is readily available to staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review your organisations' service agreement with your EAP provider and check that it has a clause similar to that outlined in 9.1. If it does not, contact your EAP provider and discuss this. Make changes/additions to your EAP service agreement (or EAP provider) to ensure they have these skills and experience.• If necessary, request that your EAP provider changes/updates their promotional material so that it reflects their ability to support staff working with clients experiencing family violence.• Review the promotion of your EAP throughout your organisation, ensuring it is widely promoted. Promote more widely if required. E.g. on notice boards, toilet doors, in orientation packs, business cards, easily accessibly on the Intranet etc.
<p>9.2 Our organisation has documented and promoted procedures for supporting and debriefing staff who work with client/s who have experienced family violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide training to managers/senior staff so that they are able to provide appropriate debriefing and direction to further support to staff as required (including reminders regarding access to EAP).• Promote supports available to staff who are working with clients who experience family violence in IRFVWC training and in an easily accessible computer based platform for staff to utilise.• Document procedures for supporting and debriefing staff in your organisational IRFVWC policy or reference the policy/ies it is found in.



10. Documentation and Administration

	Considerations for Change
<p>10.1 Our organisation has clearly defined procedures for the documentation in client records of client disclosures and/or when staff ask clients about the occurrence of family violence but there is no disclosure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Document and promote (in IRFVWC training or client record training) procedures for documentation in a relevant organisational policy and make reference to these in your IRFVWC policy.• Staff must document:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Observations and processes engaged in if staff suspect family violence but there is no disclosure.○ Client disclosures of family violence. Including, indicators of family violence, outcome of discussion/s, referral options and information provided○ The history provided by the woman/child.○ Details of other family members, adults and children in the home.○ Consent from the client in order to pass on information to another service such as specialist family violence agency.○ Referrals made to justice services, police, child protection or Child First.○ The outcome of consultation with staff members, managers and external agencies.○ Any relevant information provided directly by the client which can be quoted.• Keep in mind that information documented could later be significant for legal proceedings related to family violence.
<p>10.2 Our organisation has mechanisms for staff to book longer appointment times for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Family violence enquiry and identification- Action planning and steps toward safety- Responding to family violence disclosures- Supporting women and children with referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop systems to enable staff members to book longer appointment times for clients requiring additional support around family violence. Consider client confidentiality when developing systems of this nature.



<p>10.3 Our organisation has review systems in place to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Check usability and adherence to procedures outlined in our organisations identifying family violence and responding to women and children: Client policy. <p>Data is used to improve service delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop relevant review systems.
<p>10.4 Our organisation has developed and promoted resource material on family violence (posters, pocket cards and/or leaflets).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written information on family violence should be available in health-care settings in the form of posters, and pamphlets or leaflets (with appropriate warnings about taking them home).• Written material could focus on awareness raising of family violence, promoting services and/or respectful relationships.• Make resources available in private areas such as women’s toilets.• Utilise already developed resources or alter those already developed, such as those found in the resource list below.



Useful Resources ³

Resource	Description
<u>1800RESPECT</u>	1800RESPECT Frontline Workers Toolkit contains resources for workers who come into contact with people affected by sexual assault, domestic and family violence in the course of their day-to-day work. Good practice resources include apps, videos and digital content for organisations and workers in a variety of sectors.
<u>Family Violence Risk Assessment Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides 1-3, CRAF Manual ed.2</u>	The Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework, also known as the Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF), helps practitioners from a wide range of fields understand and identify risk factors associated with family violence and respond consistently.
<u>Identifying Family Violence and Responding to Women and Children: Client Policy template</u>	Policy template designed to be used to support the development of an Identifying Family Violence and Responding to Women and Children: Client policy template.
<u>Information Sharing and Risk Management</u>	In response to the Commission's findings, a family violence information sharing scheme has been created by the new Part 5A of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 . It authorises a select group of prescribed information sharing entities to share information between themselves for family violence risk assessment and risk management.
<u>Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria:</u> - <u>Referral Options Booklet</u> - Promotional material	A Referral Options booklet developed as a resource for workers in the domestic and family violence sector. It includes contact details and further information on services in the family violence and related sectors around Victoria. DRVCV also have a range of promotional materials regarding family violence, respectful relationships and facts on family violence.
<u>The Lookout</u>	A webpage For workers supporting women's safety in Victoria. Resources for family violence workers, other professionals, survivors/family/friends including family violence resources,

³ Note: this list is not exhaustive.



	training and events, family violence services directory.
<u>Northern Integrated Family Violence Services</u>	Multi-language Posters to inform community members, victims and perpetrators about support services that are available in the northern metropolitan region. A poster is available for men and women contain information in English, Arabic, Farsi, Mandarin, Punjabi, Turkish and Vietnamese. They can be displayed in waiting rooms, on the back of toilet doors, or anywhere it might benefit clients.
<u>Orange Door – Family violence reform</u>	The Orange Door is a new way for women, children and young people who are experiencing family violence or families who need assistance with the care and wellbeing of children to access the services they need to be safe and supported.
<u>Relationships Australia</u>	Safe from Violence: Guide for women leaving or separating. A guide outlining what family violence is and supports to access during different stages of leaving or separating from a violent relationship.
<u>Safe Steps</u>	Safe steps have a range of publications available – both brochures and print resources. Some of these contain general information, however many are primarily safe steps related.
<u>Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence</u>	A tool kit of resources designed to support the implementation of procedures outlined in an organisations workplace family violence policy. This tool kit includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family Violence Workplace Policy and Procedure• Project Management Tools• Training Materials• Training Handouts• Communication Materials (for promotion of family violence support services and issues)
<u>Women’s Health West</u>	My Safety Plan: The booklet contains information that others have found useful when they have left a violent relationship. This booklet contains suggestions that may be adapted to suit individual circumstances; only the person experiencing violence can decide on the best options for them and their family and what is realistic and affordable.