



NORTH WEST METROPOLITAN REGION PRIMARY CARE PARTNERSHIPS

# Workplace Family Violence

ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT



## Acknowledgements

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North East Healthy Communities led the development of this document.

North East Healthy Communities acknowledges 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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## Workplace Family Violence: Organisational Assessment

### Background

Family violence can affect the wellbeing, productivity and performance of people in the workplace, and can result in higher levels of workplace stress, the use of personal/sick leave and staff turnover. In some cases, employees experience the direct impact of family violence in their workplace in the form of threatening phone calls, emails and confrontation by the perpetrator at a workplace address (McFerran, 2011).

Workplaces therefore have an important role to play in raising awareness about family violence, and creating a workplace culture and environment that promotes non-violent, equitable and respectful gender relations (Our Watch, 2015). They also have a role to play in responding to employee disclosures of family violence, and ensuring that employees experiencing violence are provided with workplace support.

A Workplace Family Violence policy is an important component of an overall workplace strategy for responding to family violence and ensuring a safe environment and respectful workplace culture (McFerran, L. Cortis, N. & Trijbetz, T, 2013; Charles Sturt University, 2011). By creating a safe, respectful and equitable workplace, organisations also play an important role in promoting positive cultural norms and attitudes in the broader community.

### Purpose

The *Workplace Family Violence: Organisational Assessment Tool* has been designed to be used in conjunction with the *Workplace Family Violence: Policy Template* developed by North West Metropolitan Region Primary Care Partnerships, *Understanding Family Violence as a Workplace Issue: Your Guide* developed by the Women's Team at Trades Hall and the *Workplace Family Violence Example Policy*. These documents outline best-practice principles to guide staff in identifying and responding to women in the workplace experiencing family violence.

The purpose of this organisational assessment is to assist organisations to review existing or newly developed organisational workplace family violence policies. This tool aims to generate discussion and identify existing strengths and areas for change and improvement by



highlighting best practice principles. The results from this tool can then be used to make changes to workplace family violence procedures and policies and build staff capacity in this area.

## **Completion of the organisational assessment**

### **Completion with a group**

When completing this assessment as a group, it is recommended that someone facilitate the discussion. The facilitator might be someone within your organisation or you might engage a professional with expertise in workplace family violence. The facilitator's role is to help your group adhere to time, provide additional information and navigate through difficult discussions. Due to the size of the organisational assessment, it is probable that a few meetings will be required to complete it.

The organisational assessment should be completed by a cross-organisational team which offers a wide representation of skills, knowledge and expertise. Engaging staff from different levels of the organisation will help capture a range of experiences to better understand what is currently happening in your organisation and to understand factors that may enable or impede change in your workplace. To gain organisational influence, it is important that senior management are also included in this team.

### **Before you start you will need:**

- approximately three hours dedicated to completing the organisational assessment (this can be spread over a few meetings)
- a small group that includes staff from different levels and departments within your workplace
- someone to facilitate the sessions
- someone to take notes
- copies of the organisational assessment tool
- copies of your workplace policy and procedures document

### **How to complete the organisational assessment:**

1. Complete and action 'Creating an authorising environment for an organisational response to family violence (page 4).

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2. Each team member is provided with a copy of the organisational assessment.
  3. As a group - with or without facilitation - read and discuss each statement.
  4. Use the columns alongside each statement to write down key conversational points regarding what has or is currently being done and answer what your organisation is currently doing, as well as ideas for what could be changed or improved. Your workplace policy and procedure should provide support in completing this assessment.

### Completion as an individual

If you are completing this organisational assessment as an individual staff member, follow 'how to complete the organisational assessment above. Once the assessment is completed it is recommended that you discuss your answers with other staff so that those with a wide representation of skills, knowledge and expertise are involved in this process.

### After completion of organisational assessment

1. Use the *Workplace Family Violence: Organisational Assessment Guide* to develop an implementation plan for changes to your newly developed or existing workplace policy and procedures.
2. Action relevant implementation points.



## Creating an Authorising Environment for Change

Creating an authorising environment for change is imperative to successfully respond to and identify Family Violence in the workplace. The following statements identify conditions that are necessary to create such an environment. Completing this section, and undertaking improvements where required, is desirable prior to completing the bulk of the organisational assessment.

	What have we done?	How can we improve?
1. Our organisations senior management team has undertaken <u>'Identifying and responding to clients and staff experience family violence: training for managers'</u> .		
2. Our organisations management team have a commitment to strengthen our organisational capacity to identify and respond to family violence in the workplace. This commitment is an organisational priority.		
3. Our executive management team has provided authorisation and support to undertake the workplace family violence organisational-assessment.		
4. Our organisation has the capacity and willingness to resource a small cross-organisational improvement team to conduct the workplace family violence organisational-assessment and implement identified actions.		
5. Our organisation is willing to allocate a budget to enable an implementation of a workplace family violence action plan.		



## 1. Workplace Family Violence Policy

	What have we done?	What/how can we change/improve?
1.1 Our organisation has a Workplace Family Violence policy and procedure <sup>1</sup> . At a minimum it includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifying and responding to family violence</li><li>- Family violence leave</li><li>- Training for staff</li><li>- Confidentiality</li><li>- Support services</li><li>- Safety planning</li><li>- Modified work plans</li></ul>		
1.2 Our orientation requires new employees to familiarise themselves with our Workplace Family Violence Policy/Procedures.		
1.3 Our Workplace Family Violence policy is included in the organisational policy review cycle. (Reviews include the practical implementation of procedures).		
1.4 Where relevant, our Workplace Family Violence policy is detailed in other organisational policies. (E.g. Induction, OHS, Privacy/confidentiality).		

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Implementing all items in this checklist will align your policy with best practice principles. After completing this checklist, your organisations Workplace Family Violence policy may need to be reviewed and updated to reflect required changes.

## 2. Family Violence training and education

	What have we done?	What/how can we change/improve?
<p>2.1 As part of our orientation program, our organisation makes available training to <u>all</u> employees (including senior management) which covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The causes, impacts and indicators of family violence.</li> <li>- Understanding how to appropriately identify indicators of family violence and respond to a disclosure of family violence from a fellow employee.</li> <li>- Supports for employees experiencing family violence (EAP, Leave, modified work plans)</li> <li>- Self-care and debriefing</li> </ul>		
<p>2.2 Our organisation provides training and supervision to managers, HR staff and family violence contact officers<sup>2</sup> on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family violence and industrial entitlements</li> <li>- Referral Pathways</li> <li>- Workplace Safety Plans</li> <li>- Family Violence Leave</li> <li>- Modified work plans</li> <li>- Documentation (leave, conversations and other records)</li> <li>- Confidentiality</li> </ul>		
<p><i>Training is mandatory and is delivered by a family violence specialist.</i></p>		



2.3 Our organisation's annual training calendar contains the above training and refresher courses.		
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### 3. Responding to disclosures of family violence

	What have we done?	What/how can we change/improve?
3.1 Our organisation has clearly documented and promoted roles and responsibilities for staff to follow when responding to a disclosure of family violence from colleagues or when indicators of family violence are present.		
3.2 Our organisation has clearly documented and promoted procedures for staff to follow when responding to a disclosure of family violence from colleagues or when indicators of family violence are present.  Procedures provide guidance to staff on identifying family violence, risk factors and responding to family violence.		
3.3 Our organisation promotes resources that have been developed to support employees to respond to disclosures of family violence. <sup>3</sup>		
3.4 Our organisation encourages staff to access secondary consultations with specialist family violence services when supporting employees with family violence disclosures.		

<sup>3</sup> This might involve development of a staff portal or intranet page containing such things as: how to ask about family violence, a flowchart guiding how to respond to a disclosure of family violence, family violence leave, information regarding family violence and auxiliary services, staff role and responsibilities chart, information regarding family violence officer and safety plan templates.



<p>3.5 Our organisation provides support to staff who receive disclosures. <i>(E.g. Access to EAP sessions, debrief sessions/s with experienced and skilled staff).</i></p>		
<p>3.6 Our organisation prioritises employee confidentiality when responding to disclosures of family violence.</p> <p>Times when that confidentiality may have to be breached would typically occur if there was direct knowledge (and a specific risk, not general) that someone's health and safety was in danger (including children and other parties).</p>		

#### 4. Providing support to employees experiencing family violence

	What have we done?	What/how can we change/improve?
<p>4.1 Our organisation has undertaken all reasonable efforts to create a safe and supportive workplace for employees experiencing family violence.</p>		
<p>4.2 Our organisation's EAP provider has the skills and experience to respond to family violence disclosures. We know this because our service agreement with them includes a clause regarding such experience and/or our EAP acknowledges the importance of referring to specialist family violence services.</p>		



<p>4.3 Employees who are experiencing family violence are provided with information about our EAP. This information is promoted throughout our organisation.</p>		
<p>4.4 Our organisation promotes readily available, and regularly updated family violence resources and support services for employees experiencing family violence.</p>		

## 5. Family Violence Leave

	What have we done?	What/how can we change/improve?
5.1 Our Enterprise Agreement(s) (EA) has a 'family violence clause', which includes a provision for 20 days of paid family violence leave per year.		
<p>5.2 Our organisation has clear and promoted procedures for access to family violence leave. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Where an employee does not want their direct manager to be aware of their experience of family violence, leave can be approved by another manager or HR officer.</li> <li>- Leave can be taken with or without approval or prior notice.</li> <li>- Proof of family violence may be required. However, preference is that no proof is required as requesting this can impede someone disclosing and seeking support.</li> <li>- An employee who is providing support to someone experiencing family violence may also be supported to take family violence leave or other relevant leave, such as carers leave.</li> </ul>		
5.3 Our organisation has a process to ensure that employees with authority to approve family violence leave are appropriately supporting access.		





5.4 Our organisations HR and payroll system code and record family violence leave securely and confidentially in a way that does not identify it as family violence leave on pay slips or other documentation.		
5.5 Our organisations HR and payroll system allows accurate monitoring of the use of family violence leave.		

## 6. Work Performance and modified work plans

	What have we done?	What/how can we change/improve?
6.1 Our organisation has active systems to ensure that employees experiencing family violence are not subject to adverse or disciplinary action if their attendance or performance suffers as a result of experiencing family violence.  Systems include ensuring that there is no further disciplinary action or performance management once a disclosure of family violence has been made.		
6.2 Our organisation has active and promoted procedures to support employees experiencing family violence to support work performance and develop and implement a modified work plan (MWP).		



6.3 Where an employee does not want their direct manager/supervisor to be aware of their experience of family violence, employees are able to access an alternative manager or HR officer to assist the development of a MWP and support work performance.		
6.4 Our organisation has systems to ensure that employees with authority to approve MWP and support the work performance of an employee experiencing family violence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Have the skills and confidence to do so.</li><li>- Appropriately support access to MWP.</li><li>- Receive support to undertake this role as required.</li></ul>		

## 7. Family Violence Contact Officer Roles

	What have we done?	What/how can we change/improve?
7.1 Our organisation has established family violence contact officers/or equivalent. Our organisation has a role description that employees are required to respond to when applying for this role.		
7.2 Family violence contact officers are appropriately skilled and trained to support employees experiencing family violence.		
7.3 Our organisation actively promotes the name/s of family violence contact officers throughout the organisation.		



## 8. Workplace Safety Plans

	What have we done?	What/how can we change/improve?
8.1 Our organisation has a workplace safety plan template available for completion with employees experiencing family violence.		
8.2 Trained staff in our organisation ask employees experiencing family violence if they would like to complete a workplace safety plan and support them to complete one.		
8.3 Our organisation has systems in place to store workplace safety plans confidentially and securely.		

## 9. Employees who commit acts or threats of family violence

	What have we done?	What/how can we change/improve?
9.1 Our organisation has clearly outlined disciplinary procedures to manage employees who commit acts or threats of family violence from or at our workplace. <sup>4</sup>		

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<sup>4</sup>Engaging with a perpetrator on his use of violence can be complex and fraught with risks if not approached in a skilled and appropriate way. For this reason, organisations are encouraged to contact the Men's Referral Service (T: 1300 766 491) for advice and support.



## 10. Documentation and Administration

	What have we done?	What/how can we change/improve?
10.1 Our organisation has clearly documented HR/Payroll protocols to guide the consistent and appropriate documentation of employees' experiences of family violence (e.g. disclosures, conversations and other documents).		
10.2 Our organisation's information management systems and protocols <u>prioritise</u> employee confidentiality when recording information regarding family violence (within the limits of relevant legislation and taking risk to the employee, other staff, children and others into account).		
10.3 Our organisation monitors, evaluates and reports on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Incidents of family violence disclosures</li><li>- Use of family violence leave</li><li>- Effectiveness of implemented workplace safety plans</li><li>- Retention of staff who have disclosed family violence</li></ul>		



## References

Charles Sturt University 2011, [Workplace Guide: Domestic Violence policy and Procedures](#), Sydney, accessed 17 July 2018

McFerren, L. 2011. Key findings – [Safe at Home, Safe at Work? National Domestic Violence and the Workplace Survey 2011](#), Gendered Violence Research Network, Sydney, accessed 20 September 2016, accessed 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018

McFerren, L. Cortis, N. & Trijbetz. T, 2013. [Domestic and Family Violence Clauses in your Workplace: Implementation and Good Practice](#), Gendered Violence Research Network, Sydney. Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018

Our Watch, Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth, 2015, [Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia](#), Our Watch, Melbourne. Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

## Useful Resources

Resource	Description
<b><u><a href="#">Family violence Contact Officer: Role Description</a></u></b>	An example family violence contact officer position description (page 56).
<b><u><a href="#">Model Family Violence Leave Policy</a></u></b>	A model family violence leave policy to be used in conjunction with a family violence leave clause in an Enterprise Agreement (page 50-55)
<b><u><a href="#">Safety Plan: Family Violence in the Workplace</a></u></b>	A template to assist the development of a workplace safety plan (page 57).



<b><u>Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence</u></b>	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"><li>- Family Violence Workplace Policy and Procedure</li><li>- Project Management Tools</li><li>- Training Materials</li><li>- Training Handouts</li><li>- Communication Materials</li></ul>
<b><u>Understanding Family Violence as a Workplace Issue: Your Guide.</u></b>	A guide designed to support the development of a workplace family violence policy and to navigate issues arising in this field.
<b><u>Workplace Family Violence: Policy template</u></b>	Policy template designed to be used to support the development of a workplace family violence policy.
<b><u>Workplace Safety Plan</u></b>	A guide and template to assist the development of a workplace safety plan (page 20).
<b><u>Workplace Support</u></b>	<b>Resources</b> and education activities to support employers to promote a workplace culture that raises awareness and ensures appropriate support is available for any employee experiencing family violence.