Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare

Practice focused guide for MARAM and Information Sharing for Child and Family Services

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Acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (the Centre) would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the past, present, and emerging Traditional Custodians and Elders of this country on which we work.

The Centre also acknowledges the injustices and trauma suffered as a result of European settlement, the Stolen Generations, and other policies such as the forced removal of children from their families, communities, culture and land. We respect the resilience of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the face of this trauma and respect their right to, and aspiration for, self-determination and empowerment.

Sovereignty was never ceded. This always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

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Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to assist the child and family services sector to navigate the information and resources currently available regarding the Family Violence Multi Agency and Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM), Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) and Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS). Collectively these reforms are called MARAMIS.

Child and family services are required to align their practice, policies, procedures and systems with the MARAMIS reforms to improve the collective service response to family violence and to promote the wellbeing and safety of children. MARAMIS also serves to keep people who use violence in view and hold them accountable for their actions. There is a significant amount of information and resources available about MARAMIS to assist organisations in implementing these reforms.

The guide provides an overview of the reforms and supporting resources for organisations. It does not replace the need to consult Family Safety Victoria (FSV), Department of Education and Training (DET) or Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) resources but can be used as a complementary resource.

- Section 1 of the guide provides a high-level overview of MARAMIS and key resources.
- Section 2 of the guide provides a context for organisations that are aligning their policies, procedures, tools and other resources to MARAMIS.

Please note: The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare has released an Organisation Focused Guide for MARAM and Information Sharing. This Organisation Focused Guide provides context for organisations that are aligning their policies, procedures, tools, and other resources to MARAMIS.

Terminology and language

The language and definitions used in this guide are consistent with the MARAM Framework. To access an overview of definitions used, follow the link below:

Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework Definitions

MARAM alignment is defined by FSV as Actions taken by Framework organisations to effectively incorporate the four pillars of the Framework into existing policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools, as appropriate to the roles and functions of the prescribed entity and its place in the service system.

Acronyms

MARAMIS: MARAM (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment & Management Framework) + Information Sharing schemes

CISS: Child Information Sharing Scheme

FVISS: Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme

ISE: Information Sharing Entity

RAE: Risk Assessment Entity

Framework organisations: Organisations required to align with the MARAM Framework.

Prescribed organisations: Organisations and services prescribed to share information under the FVISS and the CISS.

Section 191 agencies: An agency with which a public service body or public entity enters into or renews a State contract or other contract or agreement in accordance with section 191; and which provides services under that contract or agreement relevant to family violence risk assessment or family violence risk management.

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Section 1: Overview of MARAM & Information Sharing Schemes

Background and context for MARAM and the Information Sharing Reforms

MARAMIS reforms

The Victorian Government's reforms commenced in 2018 for Child and Family Services. These are the Family Violence Multi Agency and Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS), which are being rolled out alongside the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS).

MARAM and FVISS provide an integrated legislative framework to improve the state's collective service response to family violence, while the CISS aims to facilitate information sharing promote the wellbeing and safety of children more broadly. FVISS and CISS build on existing information sharing and privacy legislation to expand the capability of prescribed organisations in Victoria to collect and share crucial information to effectively assess and manage family violence, and to promote children's safety and/or wellbeing.

MARAMIS does not replace or override the formal mandated responsibilities of agencies such as Child Protection, family services and Victoria Police in regard to children and young people experiencing varying forms of child abuse and neglect but exists alongside these other obligations. The MARAMIS acknowledges that these agencies work to their own policies and procedures in relation to these matters.

The aim of MARAM and the FVISS is to make sure that people affected by, experiencing, or using family violence are provided with an appropriate, consistent, and capable response no matter where or how they engage with services. It aims to establish a system-wide, shared understanding of what family violence is and outlines each organisations responsibility in responding to this. The reforms provide a consistent framework to assess whether family violence is present, how it can impact people from different backgrounds and at different stages of life. It acknowledges children as victim survivors in their own right and improves professional capacity to respond, ensuring people are more likely to get the help they need when they need it.

Intersectional lens

MARAMIS uses an intersectional lens throughout its tools and practice guidance as a core part of risk assessment. It assists practitioners to recognise how victim survivors uniquely experience family violence and barriers to family violence service responses. It focuses on intersecting factors such as identity, systemic oppression, structural inequality, and discrimination.

Section 144J (2)(e)of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (FVPA) specifically requires Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) to have regard to, and be respectful of, a person's cultural, sexual and gender identity and religious faith, in recognition of the fact that these aspects of identity and experience may affect their response to family violence and the process of sharing information under the FVISS.

Using an intersectional lens assists practitioners to consider how people's unique and individual identities can interact and shape their experiences of and responses to family violence. This understanding is of particular importance when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse or faith communities, people who identify as LGBTQIA+, people from small or interconnected communities such as rural and regional Victorians, people with a disability and both older and younger people.

More information about intersectionality can be found here:

- Intersectionality and Family Violence and importance of data collection
- Understanding Intersectionality

Children and young people as victim survivors in their own right

Historically, the impact of children and young people's experiences of family violence was not fully recognised or well understood. As a result, children's experiences were often viewed within the confined parameters of their parents/carers experiences.

MARAMIS recognises the unique needs and experiences of children and young people who experience family violence and establishes children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right. This recognition allows for the appropriate risk assessment tools, safety plans, practice guides and training to assess and work with children and young people as victim-survivors separately from their family.

Children are victim survivors of family violence whether they are directly targeted by the person using violence or not. They may be subject to direct physical, sexual, psychological or emotional violence, or to threatening, coercive and controlling behaviours by people who use violence. Children and young people also experience family violence as victim survivors if they are exposed to the effects of a person who uses violence towards any family member, even if they do not witness that violence directly.

The impacts of family violence on children and young people may include increased risk of other vulnerabilities and harms, including bullying, mental health issues, abuse in their own intimate relationships, risk taking behaviours, homelessness, and disengagement from education.

Responses to family violence need to consider how family violence impacts on a child or young person's development, health and wellbeing (physical, emotional, and psychological), education, connection to their culture, and what is needed for the child or young person's recovery, including therapeutic responses.

All professionals must complete an individual risk assessment for each child identified in the family where family violence is present. The children's risk assessment includes additional risk factors to the adult assessment and provides guidance on recognising observable signs of trauma at each age and stage of development.

Please note: Guidance on working with adolescents and young people as victim survivors is provided in the victim survivor–focused MARAM Practice Guide. Supplementary guidance for working with adolescents who use family violence will be published in 2021. Young people aged 18 to 25 years should be considered with a developmental lens and to ensure any therapeutic needs relevant to their age and developmental stage are met. The adult person who uses violence focused MARAM Practice Guide (released in July 2021) has relevant information for assessing and managing risk when working with young people aged 18 to 25 years who use violence. Supplementary guidance for working with children and young people to directly and comprehensively assess risk and needs will also be published in 2022.

Resources

- Learn more about working collaboratively with children, young people and families in the context of the reforms here MARAM and Information Sharing Resource Hub
- How MARAMIS meets the needs of Children and Young People (Victorian Government website)
- CFECFW, Safe and Equal & NTV Webinar series: infants experiencing Family Violence, children experiencing Family Violence, adolescents experiencing Family Violence
- Tips for conversations with children and/or parents/carers about the Information Sharing Schemes
- Dr. Wendy Bunston webinar – Children as clients in their own right

MARAM Tools

- Child Assessment Tool (Victim Survivor Responsibility 3, Appendix 7)
- Safety Plan for older children and young people (Victim Survivor Responsibility 4, Appendix 10)

MARAM Framework

The aim of MARAM is to ensure services effectively identify, assess, and manage family violence risk. MARAM updates and replaces the previous framework, the Common Risk Assessment Framework – commonly referred to as the 'CRAF'.

MARAM has been established in law under a new Part 11 of the FVPA.

MARAM offers support for achieving organisational alignment of policies, processes, and procedures to represent a consistent understanding of family violence and child wellbeing and safety best practice. This means organisations which are authorised through these regulations, as well as organisations providing funded services relevant to family violence risk assessment and management, must align their policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools to MARAM.

This video provides a useful explanation of the background of the reforms.

1. Screenshot of video explaining the Information Sharing Schemes and MARAM.

To whom does the Framework apply?

Part 11 of the FVPA establishes the Framework as a legislative instrument.

Organisations required to align with the MARAM are referred to as 'Framework organisations'. The FVPA requires these organisations to align their policies, procedures, and practices with the Framework's Principles and requirements.

Resources

- The MARAM Framework can be found here.
- The Framework is broken down into sections here.
- MARAM Training is available, please see here for an overview of options available.

Information Sharing Schemes

The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) and the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) are being implemented together with the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM). FVISS allows for information sharing to assess and manage family violence risk for both children and adults, while CISS allows for information to be shared to promote the wellbeing and/or safety of children more broadly.

The Schemes supplement existing legislation to expand legal permissions to share information, which supports professionals who work with children, families, victim survivors and perpetrators of family violence and helps to create a more collaborative, integrated system to improve safety and wellbeing outcomes.

Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)

Established under Part 5A of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*, the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) enables prescribed organisations and services to share information to assess and manage family violence risk to children and adults. The FVISS assists the service system to manage victim survivor safety and hold perpetrators in view and accountable for their actions and behaviours. MARAM guides information sharing in a family violence context.

Information sharing requests made under FVISS must relate to one of the following purposes:

- A family violence assessment purpose
- A family violence protection purpose (to manage risk, including ongoing risk assessment).

Consent is not required from anyone to share information when a child is at risk. However, the child and/or any adult victim survivors should be consulted about the sharing of the information where it is appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so. Where no children are at risk, consent from the adult victim survivor is required to share their information, unless it is necessary to share that information to lessen or prevent a serious threat.

Under the FVISS, prescribed organisations/workforces can share perpetrator information without consent. Where your organisation cannot come to a view on the identity of family violence or the presence or risk, then information may still be shared about an alleged perpetrator with RAEs for a family violence risk assessment purpose to determine if they are a perpetrator. This includes information about adolescents who use family violence.

Please click here for a case study exploring the application of both CISS & FVISS

Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)

The Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), established under Part 6A of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, enables prescribed information sharing entities (ISEs) to share information with each other to promote the broader wellbeing and/or safety of a child or a group of children.

Sharing information using the CISS can help provide wrap around support services through integrated service provision to children facing disadvantage, promote early identification of needs and risks, support making prompt and effective interventions, and improve outcomes to children and families.

The CISS gives precedence to the wellbeing and safety of children over the right to privacy. Consent from a child or any other person is not required to share information under CISS, if the sharing of information would promote the wellbeing and/or safety of a child and the scheme's legal requirements for sharing have been met. However, ISEs should seek and take into account the views of children and family members about information sharing where it is safe, appropriate, and reasonable to do so.

For the more limited purpose of managing risk to a child's safety, the CISS permits sharing with a child, an adult with parental/caring responsibility (who is not the perpetrator) or a person with whom the child is living.

Sharing information using the CISS can help provide wrap around support services to children facing disadvantage, promote early identification of their emerging needs, and support making prompt and effective interventions.

Please click here for a case study exploring the application of the CISS.

Do I use the CISS when Family Violence is occurring?

Information sharing entities (ISEs) can share information to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child whether or not family violence is present. Information can be shared:

- under FVISS to assess or manage family violence risk
- under CISS to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child

ISEs should be mindful that sharing information in the context of family violence may pose particular and complex risks for children and other family members, and when considering sharing to promote child wellbeing or safety they should be alert to whether family violence risk may be present.

What should you do if you cannot share information under CISS?

Organisations and services should share information and collaborate as permitted by law. If you do not meet the thresholds for sharing under the CISS, other child safety reporting and information sharing obligations still apply - including mandatory reporting obligations, reporting to Child Protection if there is a significant risk of harm, and information sharing with Child Protection.

What is an ISE?

An Information Sharing Entity (ISE) is a service or organisation that is prescribed under FVISS and/or CISS. Only services and organisations that are prescribed as ISEs can share information under FVISS and CISS.

If you are sharing information with another ISE, you must make sure you verify the person you are sharing with is from that ISE. Under the FVISS, an ISE can also share perpetrator information with a victim survivor to assist them manage their risk.

All organisations and services prescribed as ISEs can access the online ISE list. This online list is a searchable database that can be used to identify other organisations and services prescribed under the Schemes.

What is an RAE?

Risk Assessment Entities (RAEs) are a sub-set of ISEs. RAEs are a group of ISEs, which also have the responsibility to establish and assess the level of risk. As such, information can only be shared (by request or proactively) with RAEs for a family violence assessment purpose. See below for a table outlining the role of RAEs when information sharing under the schemes.

RAEs are generally specialist family violence organisations, services and/or programs are equipped with the specialist knowledge and expertise to conduct thorough risk assessment and management. Child Protection, Child FIRST, The Orange Door and Victoria Police are also RAEs.

What information can you share as an ISE?

Information that is relevant to assessing and/or managing family violence, or promoting the safety and/or wellbeing of a child or group of children can be shared provided that:

- The information will assist another ISE to carry out one or more of the following activities:
  i. making a decision, an assessment or a plan relating to a child or group of children
  ii. initiating or conducting an investigation relating to a child or group of children
  iii. providing a service relating to a child or group of children
  iv. managing any risk to a child or group of children

- The information is not excluded.
    - Excluded information includes information that may endanger a person's life or physical safety, prejudice an investigation or a coronial enquiry, contravene legal professional privilege, contravene a court order or law that prohibits the disclosure of the information, is contrary to public interest or contravenes a court order or law that prohibits the disclosure of the information (See Section 41Q of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act and Section 144C of the Family Violence Protection Act)
- Sharing the information does not contravene another law.
- The applicable consent requirements have been met.

You are still required to share information the way you currently do under your existing permissions and legislative responsibilities. The Schemes do not affect existing reporting obligations to Child Protection or Police (e.g., Mandatory Reporting).

Who can you share information with?

Organisations/workforces who are prescribed under one or more of the Schemes are referred to as Information Sharing Entities (ISEs).

You may only share information using the Schemes with services and organisations that are also ISEs. However, there are circumstances in which information may be shared with individuals concerned to manage risk. To manage risk to a child's safety and/or wellbeing, information may be shared without consent (if necessary) with the child or their parent/guardian. Additionally, information about the person who is using violence may also be shared with the victim survivor to manage risk to their safety and/or that of the children.

You are also able to share information with other organisations/workforces (whether prescribed or not) using your existing permissions to share.

Sharing under FVISS

Prescribed Org/Service	Information Sharing Entity (ISE)	Risk Assessment Entity (RAE)
Sharing/Requesting Purpose	Family Violence **Protection** Purpose only.	Family Violence **Assessment** Purpose and **Protection** Purpose
Risk Information	-Relevant Child & Adult Victim Survivor information - Third Party information -Person who is using violence only	- Relevant Child & Adult Victim Survivor information - Third Party information - **Alleged** person who is using violence, and person who is using violence.

Protections for individual workers

A person who is authorised to share information under the Scheme, who acts in good faith and with reasonable care when sharing information will not be held:

- liable for any criminal, civil or disciplinary action for providing the information
- to have breached any code of professional ethics or to have departed from any accepted standards of professional conduct.

This protection from liability applies only to individuals and does not protect organisations.

Using the ISE list

All organisations and services prescribed as information sharing entities can also access the online ISE List. The online ISE List is a database that can be used to identify other organisations and services prescribed under the Child Information Sharing Scheme and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme.

Please note that the ISE List is updated at regular intervals but is not a live list. Information sharing entities are responsible for verifying whether an individual is from an Information sharing entity before they share any information. The ISE List should not be solely relied on to verify Information sharing entities.

If contact information for an organisation does not appear on the ISE List, please check the organisation's website for public contact details.

Resources to help you implement the Information Sharing Schemes

There are a range of online guides and templates to assist with implementing the information sharing schemes, which can be found here.

- Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines
- Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines
- Information Sharing Guides, Templates and Tools
- A Guide for organisations on how to share information
- Frequently Asked Questions about the Information Sharing Schemes and MARAM

Where there is confusion in your prescription as an ISE, it is recommended that you contact the Information Sharing Inbox for further guidance; infosharing@dffh.vic.gov.au.

ISE Information Sharing Guide

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Who can share?

Information sharing entities (ISEs) are authorised to share information. These ISEs are:

Prescribed by regulations

Why they can share...

Relevant information about a person (adult or child) who is a victim survivor, perpetrator or a third party can be shared for the purpose of:

Establishing and assessing risk

Managing risk

When can they share?

ISEs can share information:

Voluntarily with other ISEs

In response to a request from another ISE

What cannot be shared...

Excluded information*

ISEs cannot share information that would contravene another law that has not been specifically overridden by the scheme.

Adult Victim Survivor

An ISE reasonably believes that there is a risk that the person may be subjected to family violence.

CONSENT REQUIRED
(from the adult victim survivor)
Prior to sharing their information unless there is a serious threat or the information relates to assessing or managing a risk to a child victim survivor (no consent - see below)

Child Victim Survivor

An ISE reasonably believes that there is a risk that the person (under the age of 18 years) may be subjected to family violence.

NO CONSENT REQUIRED
(from any person)
If their information is relevant to assessing or managing risk of family violence to a child victim survivor.

Perpetrator

An ISE reasonably believes that there is a risk that the person may commit family violence.

NO CONSENT REQUIRED
(from the perpetrator)
Prior to sharing their information to assess or manage risk of committing family violence.

Alleged Perpetrator

A person who is alleged to post a risk of family violence.*

NO CONSENT REQUIRED
(from the alleged perpetrator)
Prior to sharing their information to establish or assess risk of committing family violence.

Third Party

A person whose information is relevant to assessing or managing a risk of family violence.

CONSENT REQUIRED
(from the third party)
Prior to sharing their information unless there is a serious threat or the informaiton relates to assessing or managing a risk to a child victim survivor (no consent - see above)

Please note:

- *Excluded information (including but not limited to) if sharing the information might endanger a person's life or a police investigation, contravene a court order, or is subject to legal professional privilege.
- *Information about an alleged perpetrator can only be shared in the risk assessment phase.
- All ISEs must respond to information requests unless an exemption applies.
- A good faith defence protects individuals who share information in good faith and with reasonable care.

FVISS Information Sharing Guide

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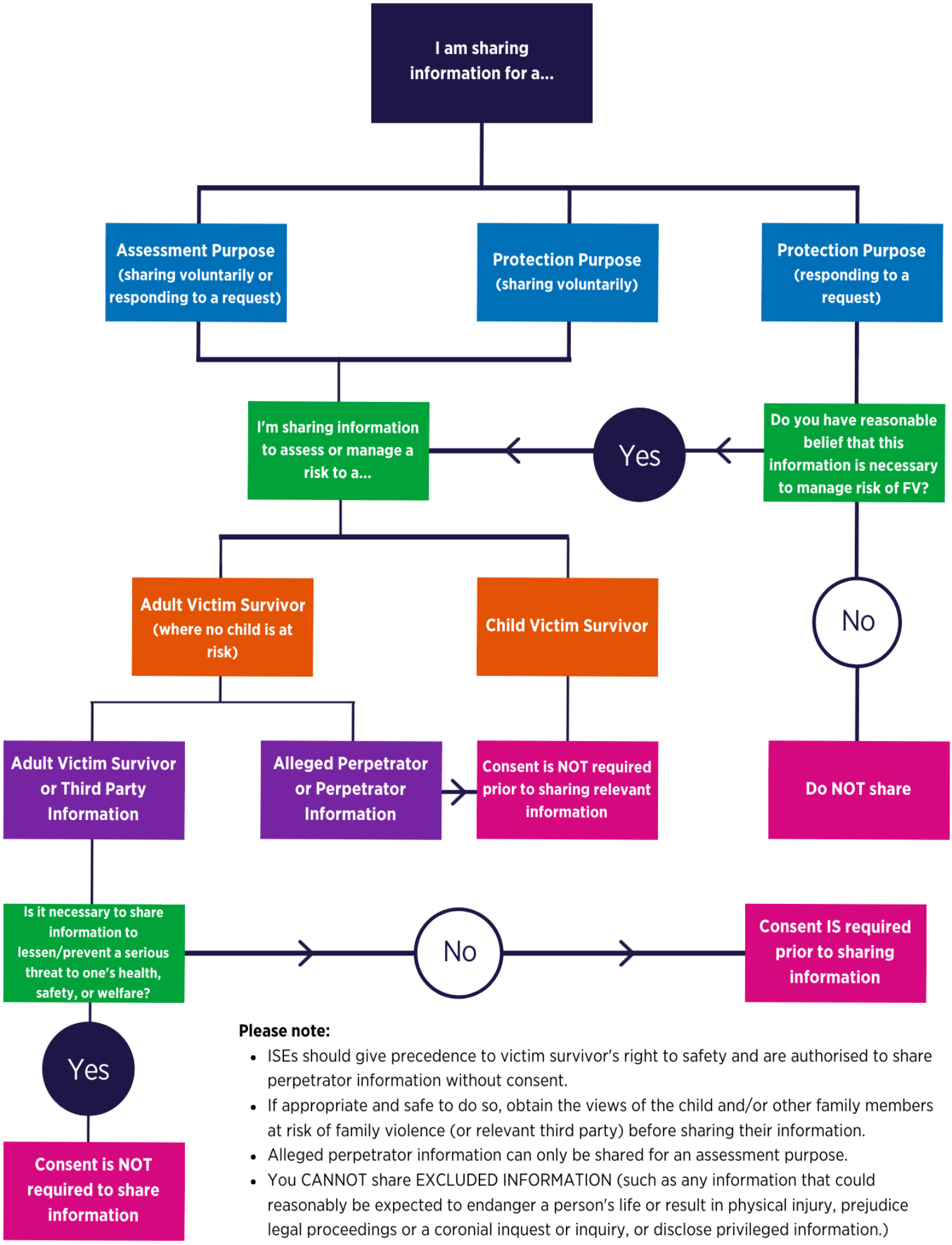
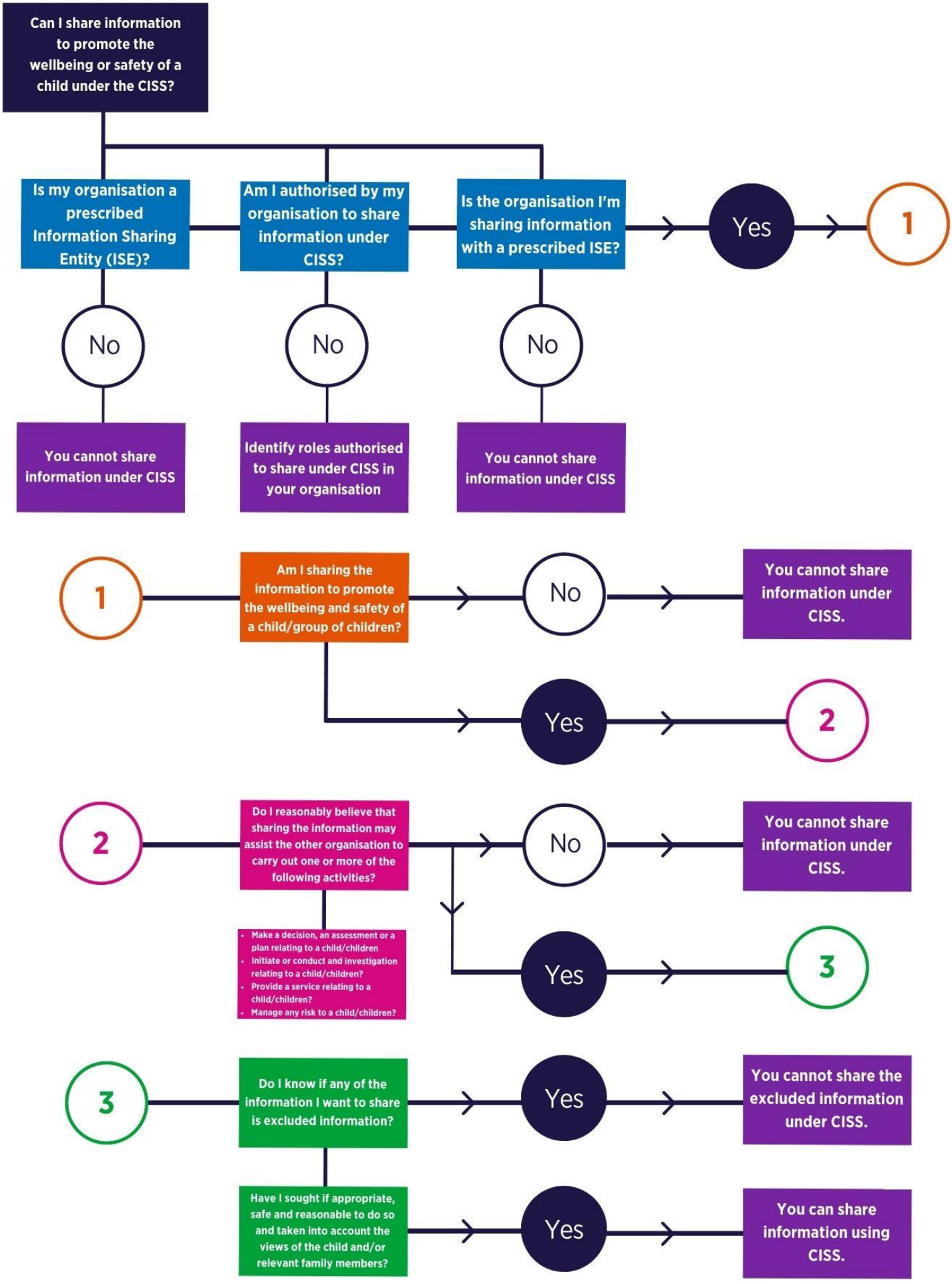


Please note:

- ISEs should give precedence to victim survivor's right to safety and are authorised to share perpetrator information without consent.
- If appropriate and safe to do so, obtain the views of the child and/or other family members at risk of family violence (or relevant third party) before sharing their information.
- Alleged perpetrator information can only be shared for an assessment purpose.
- You CANNOT share EXCLUDED INFORMATION (such as any information that could reasonably be expected to endanger a person's life or result in physical injury, prejudice legal proceedings or a coronial inquest or inquiry, or disclose privileged information.)

CISS Information Sharing Guide

Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare



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Section 2: Practice alignment of the MARAM & Information Sharing Schemes

Practice alignment of the MARAM and Information Sharing Schemes

Supports practitioners to understand their relevant responsibilities under the MARAM framework towards the identification, assessment, and ongoing management of family violence risk as it relates to their specific roles.

MARAM alignment is defined by Family Safety Victoria as: 'Actions taken by Framework organisations to effectively incorporate the four pillars of the Framework into existing policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools, as appropriate to the roles and functions of the prescribed entity and its place in the service system.'

Practice Resources

The MARAM Practice Guides underpin the MARAM Framework. These guides are designed to for use by professionals and have been developed to support professionals in the implementing MARAM. There are three key resources which can be used as part of implementing MARAM:

The Foundation Knowledge Guide

The Foundation Knowledge Guide provides professionals and services with information about the key elements of the MARAM Framework, as well as additional foundational knowledge to guide all professionals before using the Responsibilities for Practice Guide.

Professionals should be familiar with this introductory and supporting information prior to engaging with the MARAM Responsibilities for Practice Guide.

Adult and Child Victim Survivor Practice Guide

This Victim Survivor Practice Guide provides guidance for professionals working with child or adult victim survivors.

The guide reflects each of the ten responsibilities pf practice set out in the MARAM Framework, and support professionals in understanding their responsibilities under MARAM towards the identification, assessment and ongoing management of family violence.

Adult Person Who Is Using Violence Practice Guide

This Person Who Is Using Violence Practice Guide provides guidance for professionals working with adults using family violence.

This guide supports professionals in ensuring that victim survivor safety is the key consideration when working directly with people who use violence to address their risk and needs.

Please Note: The guides are evolving as they continue to be updated and evaluated to reflect the emerging evidence-base relating to experiences of family violence across the community and shifting practice directions that will contribute to this evidence base.

Additionally, Family Safety Victoria has provided the following video explaining how to use the practice guides. The link to the video can be found here.

The Foundation Knowledge Guide

The MARAM practice guides support practitioner to understand their responsibilities under the framework. The Victim Survivor Practice Guides and Person Who Use Violence Practice Guides reflect each of the ten responsibilities of practice set out in the MARAM Framework.

The Foundation Knowledge Guide provides an overview of the MARAM principles, pillars, and responsibilities. Professionals should be familiar with this introductory and supporting information prior to engaging with the MARAM Responsibilities for Practice Guide.

MARAM Principles

The MARAM framework is based on the belief that to provide consistent, effective, and safe responses for people experiencing family violence, services need a shared understanding of family violence and of the responsibilities for the professionals involved to follow. To help achieve a shared understanding, the Framework principles support each Pillar and help guide Victoria's family violence system-wide response.

1. Family violence is unacceptable	Family violence involves a spectrum of seriousness of risk and presentations, and is unacceptable in any form, across any community or culture
2. Collaborative and coordinated responses	Professionals should work collaboratively to provide coordinated and effective risk assessment and management responses, including early intervention when family violence first occurs to avoid escalation into crisis and additional harm
3. Understand the drivers of family violence	Professionals should be aware, in their risk assessment and management practice, of the drivers of family violence, predominantly gender inequality, which also intersect with other forms of structural inequality and discrimination
4. Victim survivors' agency	The agency, dignity and intrinsic empowerment of victim survivors must be respected by partnering with them as active decision-making participants in risk assessment and management, including being supported to access and participate in justice processes that enable fair and just outcomes
5. Children as victim survivors in their own right	Family violence may have serious impacts on the current and future physical, spiritual, psychological, developmental and emotional safety and wellbeing of children, who are directly or indirectly exposed to its effects, and should be recognised as victim survivors in their own right
6. Family violence impacts on children	Services provided to child victim survivors should acknowledge their unique experiences, vulnerabilities and needs, including the effects of trauma and cumulative harm arising from family violence
7. Culturally responsive to Aboriginal communities	Services and responses provided to people from Aboriginal communities should be culturally responsive and safe, recognising Aboriginal understanding of family violence and rights to self-determination and self-management, and take account of their experiences of colonisation, systemic violence and discrimination and recognise the ongoing and present day impacts of historical events, policies and practices

8. Culturally responsive to diverse communities	Services and responses provided to diverse communities and older people should be accessible, culturally responsive and safe, client-centred, inclusive and non-discriminatory
9. People who use violence are in view and accountable for their actions	People who use violence should be encouraged to acknowledge and take responsibility to end their violent, controlling and coercive behaviour, and service responses to people who use violence should be collaborative and coordinated through a system-wide approach that collectively and systematically creates opportunities for people who use violence accountability
10. Adolescent violence in the home requires a different response	Family violence used by adolescents is a distinct form of family violence and requires a different response to family violence used by adults, because of their age and the possibility that they are also victim survivors of family violence.

MARAM Pillars

The MARAM Framework is structured through 'Pillars' that aim to establish a system-wide approach and shared responsibility for family violence risk assessment and management. Each Pillar has its own objective (see figure 2 below). The Pillars are set at the **organisational** level and are designed to build knowledge, skill and support the effectiveness and integration of the system-wide response to family violence in Victoria.

Practitioners working across Child and Family Services need to be aware of all four Pillars and how they inform their practice when working with children, young people and their families. It is the role of the organisation to ensure that policy, procedure and practice approaches are aligned to the MARAM Pillars.

2. Figure 2 on p. 19 of the MARAM Framework document illustrates the four pillars.

MARAM Responsibilities

The MARAM Responsibilities (as outlined by Pillar 3 of the framework), outlines 10 different responsibilities of practice for professionals. This helps professionals to identify which practice guides are relevant for their role.

- Shared responsibilities will assist professionals and services to work together to identify, assess and manage family violence risk through information sharing, secondary consultation and referral.
- Responsibilities 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 10 as outlined below apply to **all** relevant professionals and services within prescribed organisations.
- Some professionals also have a role in risk assessment and management at either the *intermediate* (Responsibilities 3 and 4) or *comprehensive* (Responsibilities 7 and 8) levels.

Please note there are two separate Foundation Knowledge Guides, one focused on working with victim survivors and one focused on working with adults who use violence. Both Foundation Knowledge Guides contain background information on the key elements of MARAM and Information Sharing. It is advised to begin with the Foundation Knowledge Guide before moving on to reading the practice guides for each responsibility.

More information on the practice guides is provided on 26 and 31. There is some overlap in content between the two sets of guides, as many of the same principles and practice concepts apply to working with both victim survivors and people who use violence. Each guide gives detailed advice on how to ensure your practice aligns with your organisation's MARAM framework responsibilities.

MARAM Responsibilities Table

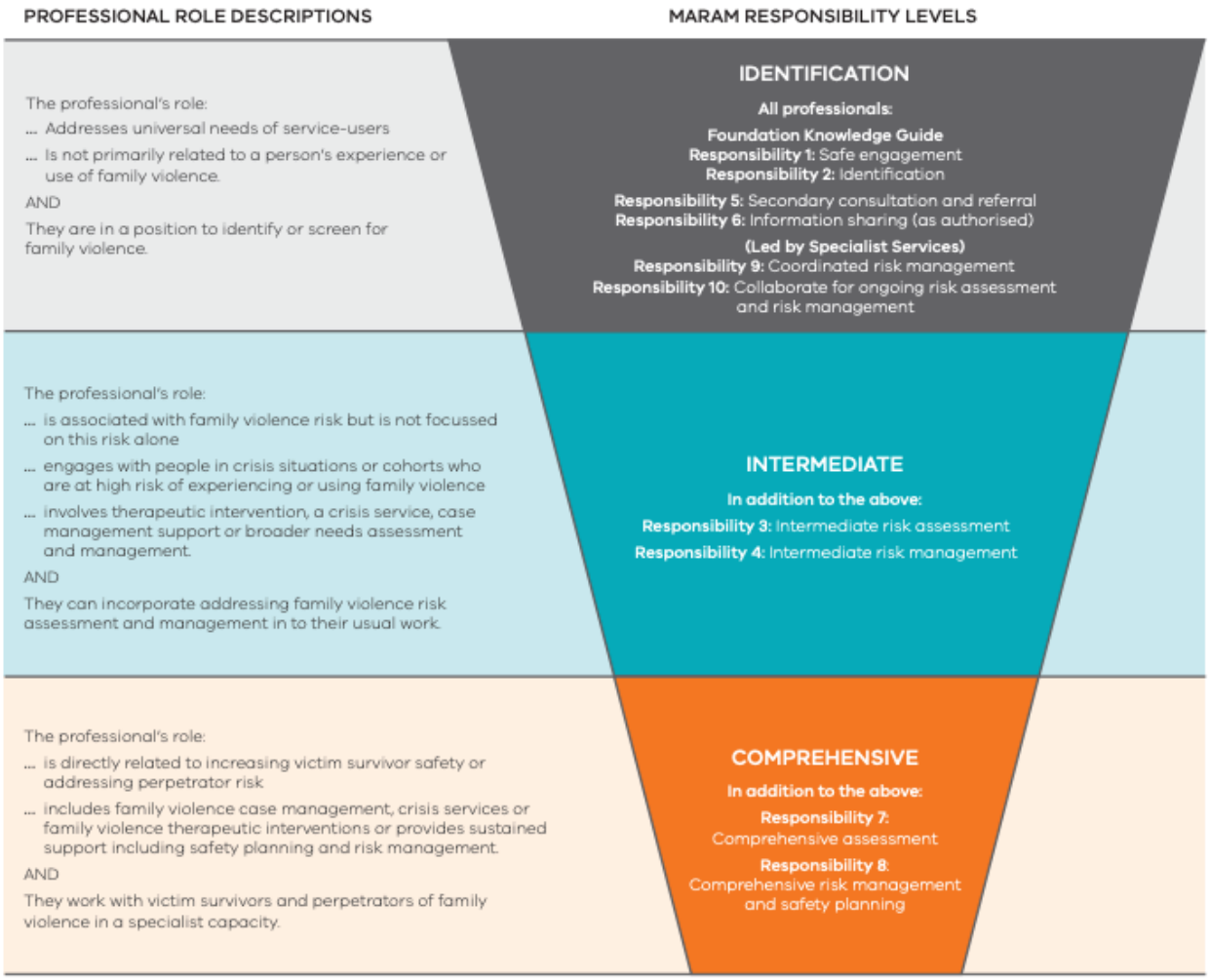
Responsibility 1: **Respectful, sensitive and safe engagement**	Ensure staff understand the nature and dynamics of family violence; facilitate an appropriate, accessible, culturally responsive environment for safe disclosure of information by victim survivor service users; and respond to disclosures sensitively. Ensure staff recognise that any engagement of a service user who might be a person who uses violence must occur safely and not collude or respond to coercive behaviours.
Responsibility 2: **Identification of family violence**	Ensure staff use information gained through engagement with service users and other providers (and in some cases, through use of screening tools to aid identification/or routine screening of all service users) to identify indicators of family violence risk and potentially affected family members. Ensure staff understand when it might be safe to ask questions of service users who may be a person who is using violence, to assist with identification.

Responsibility 3: **Intermediate risk assessment**	Ensure staff can competently and confidently conduct intermediate risk assessment of adult and child victim survivors using Structured Professional Judgement and appropriate tools, including the Brief and Intermediate Assessment tools. Where appropriate to the role and mandate of the organisation or service, and when safe to do so, ensure staff can competently and confidently contribute to risk assessment through engagement with a person who uses violence, including using Structured Professional Judgement and the Intermediate Assessment, and contribute to keeping them in view and accountable for their actions and behaviours.
Responsibility 4: **Intermediate risk management**	Ensure staff actively address immediate risk and safety concerns relating to adult and child victim survivors, and undertake intermediate risk management, including safety planning. Those working directly with people who use violence attempt intermediate risk management when safe to do so, including safety planning.
Responsibility 5: **Seek consultation for comprehensive risk assessment, risk management & referrals**	Ensure staff seek internal supervision and further consult with family violence specialists to collaborate on risk assessment and risk management for adult and child victim survivors and people who use violence, and make active referrals for comprehensive specialist responses, if appropriate.
Responsibility 6: **Contribute to information sharing with other services (as authorised by legislation)**	Ensure staff proactively share information relevant to the assessment and management of family violence risk and respond to requests to share information from other information sharing entities under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, privacy law or other legislative authorisation.
Responsibility 7: **Comprehensive assessment**	Ensure staff in specialist family violence positions are trained to undertake Comprehensive assessment of risks, needs and protective factors for adult and children victim survivors. Ensure staff who specialise in working with people who use violence are trained and equipped to undertake Comprehensive risk and needs assessment to determine seriousness of risk of the person who is using violence, tailored intervention and support options, and contribute to keeping them in view and accountable for their actions and behaviours.
Responsibility 8: **Comprehensive risk management and safety planning**	Ensure staff in specialist family violence positions are trained to undertake comprehensive risk management through development, monitoring and actioning of safety plans (including ongoing risk assessment), in partnership with the adult or child victim survivor and support agencies. Ensure staff who specialise in working with people who use violence are trained to undertake comprehensive risk management through development, monitoring and actioning of risk management plans (including information sharing); monitoring across the service system (including justice systems); and actions to hold people who use violence accountable for their actions. This can be through formal and informal system accountability mechanisms

	that support people who use violence's personal accountability, to accept responsibility for their actions, and work at the behaviour change process.
Responsibility 9: **Contribute to coordinated risk management**	Ensure staff contribute to coordinated risk management, as part of integrated, multidisciplinary and multiagency approaches, including information sharing, referrals, action planning, coordination of responses and collaborative action acquittal.
Responsibility 10: **Collaborate for ongoing risk assessment and risk management**	Ensure staff are equipped to play an ongoing role in collaboratively monitoring, assessing and managing risk over time to identify changes in assessed level of risk and ensure risk management and safety plans are responsive to changed circumstances, including escalation. Ensure safety plans are enacted.

MARAM Responsibility Pyramid

The table below illustrates the relationship between staff roles, MARAM Responsibilities, MARAM resources and Tiers discussed above in the *Capability Framework.* The table presents the information found in FSV's inverted triangle/pyramid infographic, which can be found here.



Tiers of responsibility (Capability Framework)

The *Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework, December 2017* (Capability Framework) describes the four 'Tiers' of workforces that have responsibility for responding to victim survivors and/or people who use violence. This Framework was in circulation prior to the MARAM resources but is still useful or understanding how workforces have historically been categorised and remains valuable for mapping roles and responsibilities using MARAM.

This list provides a broad overview of the Tiers within which different workforces can understand the scope and limits of their role and expertise.

These Tiers were featured in the FSV 'inverted pyramid' until more recently, see: MARAM Responsibilities Decision Guide for Organisational Leaders (old version) which can assist in mapping staff responsibilities and training needs under MARAM.

It should be noted that the Tiers below do not always encapsulate or address the complexity and diversity of individual roles and programs within specific services and sectors under MARAM. For example, a tier 4 organisation might provide education services, but also employ welfare officers who hold capabilities described in Tiers 2 or 3.

Tier 4: Workers in universal services and organisations

Includes workplaces, education services, early childhood services, sport and recreation organisations and faith-based institutions.

Tier 3: Workers in mainstream services and non-family violence specific agencies

Health care services, drug and alcohol services, housing services, mental health services, Centrelink, individuals providing therapeutic services, emergency services, Maternal and Child Health services, youth services, disability services, culturally and linguistically diverse services, Aboriginal services, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse and intersex services, aged care services.

Tier 2: Workers in core support services or intervention agencies

Courts and court services, legal and paralegal agencies and services, corrections police family dispute resolution services, forensic physicians and medical staff providing sexual assault crisis care, child protection, child and family services, family and relationship services, homelessness services.

Tier 1: Specialist family violence and sexual assault practitioners

State-wide family violence crisis and specialist services, Support and Safety Hubs, family violence outreach services, women's refuges, Centres Against Sexual Assault, people who use violence intervention services, men's family violence telephone/online services, crisis family violence and sexual assault telephone/online services, specialist family violence or sexual assault professionals operating in in Tier 2 or 3 services, specialist family violence or sexual assault services for Aboriginal or culturally and linguistically diverse

Key Concepts for Practice

The concepts form the basis on engagement with victim survivors and with people using violence.

Structured Professional Judgement

- Structured Professional Judgement is defined in MARAM as a professional determination of level of risk, considering:
- A victim's self-assessed level of risk, safety and fear
- Assessment against evidence-based risk factors
- Information sharing to inform assessment
- Professional judgement, using an intersectional analysis lens.

More information can be found here (follow link to Structured Professional Judgment model)

Person-Centred Approach

Engaging with victim survivors, of all ages, should be informed by the:

- Person's experience of family violence
- Impact of the violence on their daily functioning
- Presence of any serious threat/risk
- Person's description of their relationship with the person who is using violence
- Person's relationship with other family members (who might also be victim survivors), as well as other significant family relationships.

Part of a person-centred approach is ensuring that adequate, transparent information is provided. For all victim survivors, approaches should be responsive to a person's abilities and capacity to communicate so that they can make informed choices and provide input into the risk assessment and management process.

Intersectionality

MARAMIS uses an intersectional lens throughout its tools and practice guidance as a core part of risk assessment. It assists practitioners to recognise how victim survivors uniquely experience family violence and barriers to family violence service responses. It focuses on intersecting factors such as identity, systemic oppression, structural inequality, and discrimination. This can influence how the victim survivor:

- Talks about and understand their experience of family violence or recognise that what they have experienced is a form of family violence.
- Understands their options or decision on what services to access based on actual or perceived barriers.
- Describes and/or are differently impacted by their experience of family violence, and violence generally.
- More information on intersectionality can be found on page 6 of this guide.

Trauma and Violence-Informed Practice

Having a trauma-informed lens is essential when engaging in family violence risk assessment and management. Key practice considerations include the following:

- Everyone experiences some level of trauma from family violence
- Trauma affects each person differently

Trauma and violence informed practice considers 'the intersecting impacts of systemic and interpersonal violence and structural inequities on a person's life'. This includes taking an intersectional view to highlight current and historical experiences of violence so that problems are not seen as exclusively originating within the person but these aspects of their life experience are viewed as adaptions and predictable consequences of trauma and violence.

Reflective Practice and Unconscious Bias

Bias might cause professionals to make judgements and assumptions about a person's particular experiences of family violence, their level of risk, or create or fail to address existing berries in their engagement with clients.

Practitioners should engage in reflective practice by considering how their own cultural norms and practice might manifest as conscious and unconscious biases affect decisions, engagement with clients and approaches to Structured Professional Judgement.

Evidence-Based Risk Factors

Risk factors reflect the current and emerging evidence-base relating to family violence risk. These risk factors underpin MARAM identification, screening, and assessment. Family violence risk assessment is used to understand the presentation of risk and to determine the level of risk.

Victim Survivor	Risk Factors
Adults, Children & Young People	Controlling behaviours, access to weapons, threat to harm/kill, caused physical harm, strangled or choked the victim, threatened or harmed pets/animals, threatened or attempted self-harm/suicide, stalking, sexual assault, breach of orders, history of violence, obsession, jealousy, AOD abuse, isolation, emotional abuse, property damage, unemployed, mental illness
Adults ONLY	Physical assault while pregnant/following a new birth, self-assessed level of risk, planning to leave or recent separation, escalation (severity/frequency) of violence, financial abuse/difficulties, imminence.
Children & Young People ONLY	Exposure to family violence, sexualized behaviour towards a child by the person who is using violence, child intervention in violence, undermining the child-parent relationship, professional and statutory intervention.

You can access the full table of evidence-based risk factors in the Foundation Knowledge Guide on page 28.

Protective Factors

Protective factors are factors that when strengthened promote safety, stabilisation and recovery from family violence. The table below provides examples of different types of protective factors (systems intervention, practical/environmental, and strengths-based).

Protective Factors for Adults and Children	
Systems Intervention	• Person who is using violence is incarcerated or prevented from contact • Victim survivor is on the Victims Register for notification of pending release of person who is using violence from incarceration • Court dates relating to family law, family violence or other matters involving the person who is using violence or victim survivor • Intervention order is in place and being adhered to • The person who is using violence is actively linked to a support program
Practical / Environmental	• Safe housing • Financial security • Transport • Communication safety • Connection to advocacy/professional/therapeutic service • Ability to access community
Strengths-Based (identity/relationships/community)	• Social networks (family, friends, informal social networks) • Connection/Sense of belonging to community • Culture and identity • Agency of victim survivor • Healthy relationships • An individual's personal skills and emotional resilience

Adult and Child Victim Survivor Practice Guide

MARAM practice guides support professionals to understand their responsibilities under the MARAM Framework towards the identification, assessment and ongoing management of family violence. The MARAM Victim Survivor Practice Guide can be found here.

MARAM Responsibilities

Responsibility 1: Respectful, sensitive and safe engagement

Responsibility 2: Identification of family violence risk

Responsibility 3: Intermediate Risk Assessment

Responsibility 4: Intermediate Risk Management

Responsibility 5: Secondary consultation and referral, including for comprehensive family violence assessment and management response

Responsibility 6: Contribute to information sharing with other services (as authorised by legislation)

Responsibility 7: Comprehensive Risk Assessment (Specialist Family Violence Services only)

Responsibility 8: Comprehensive Risk Management and Safety Planning (Specialist Family Violence Services only)

Responsibility 9: Contribute to coordinated risk management

Responsibility 10: Family Violence: Collaborate for ongoing risk assessment and risk management

Victim Survivor Practice Guidance and Tools for Child and Family Services

[Responsibility 2] – Identification of Family Violence Risk

- Observable Signs of Trauma
- Guidance on Use of Screening Tool
- Screening and Identification Tool
- Response Options and Safety Plan

[Responsibility 3] – Intermediate Risk Assessment

- Adult Brief Assessment Tool
- Adult Intermediate Assessment Tool
- Child Assessment Tool
- Intermediate Tool Guidance

[Responsibility 4] – Intermediate Risk Management

- Adult Safety Plan Template
    - Safety Plan for Older Children and Young People

Screening and Identification Tool

About this tool: This tool supports professionals to form their professional judgement about how to respond to family violence. It is used to identify is family violence is occurring, the victim survivor's level of fear for themselves or another person, and to identify the person using violence.

Who should use the tool? All professionals should use this tool (Tiers 1-4).

When should the tool be used? This tool should either be applied routinely or when indicators of family violence are identified.

- When the professional suspects that someone may be experiencing family violence and have observed signs/indicators of family violence
- To start the conversation is someone discloses they are experiencing family violence
- If the professional's workplace requires screening all individuals that they work with for family violence
  - **Practice Guidance:**
  - All of the questions in the tool should be asked if possible
  - Screening and identification should not be undertaken if the person suspected of using violence is present

Practice Considerations – Communicating with Victim Survivors:

• **Adult Victim Survivors**	• **Child Victim Survivors**
• **Ask open-ended, rapport building questions:** • I'm pleased to see you today – how are things going? • What has brought you here today? • Tell me a bit about your family/home life/ relationship with x?	• **Ask general prompting questions about their home life or family relationships:** • Have things changed at home recently? • Is there someone at home that makes you feel safe? • Are there things at home you wish you could change?
• **Frame questions as part of routine:** • In our organisation it is common that we ask questions about family violence so we can connect people with appropriate support. Is it ok if I ask you a few questions about how things are going at home/in your relationship?	• **Link observable indicators into the conversation:** • You appear to be really tired today. Is there a reason you're maybe not getting enough sleep? •

Practice Tip:

When speaking with children and young people remember to; ask questions in an empathetic, non-judgemental manner, to validate a child who provides you information or expresses their feeling about their family or circumstances, do not ask question in a way that feels like a list, and use language that is age and developmentally appropriate, as well as relevant to the culture and community that the child is part of.

Brief and Intermediate Assessment Tools

The purpose of these tools is to identify the range of family violence behaviours being experienced by asking questions based on risk factors, to consider the information gained through the assessment and apply Structured Professional Judgement to determine the level of risk, and to under the level of risk at a point in time or changes in risk over time.

Adult Brief Assessment Tool

About this tool: The Brief Assessment Tool includes high-risk factors (increased likelihood of the victim survivor being killed or nearly killed) only. It is used for time-critical interventions only. However, it can be used to inform a full intermediate assessment later or when the situation allows.

Who should use the tool? This tool should be used by professionals who role is linked to, but not directly focused on, family violence (Tiers 2 & 3)

When should the tool be used? This tool should be used professionals in time-critical interventions when:

- There is limited time to engage with an individual
- It is not safe to seek further detail about the family violence beyond high-risk factors
- It is during a crisis intervention

Adult Intermediate Assessment Tool

About this tool: The Intermediate Assessment Tool includes questions about a broader range of evidence-based risk factors experienced by adults and questions about risk to children.

Who should use the tool? This tool should be used by professionals who role is linked to, but not directly focused on, family violence.

When should the tool be used? This tool should be used by professionals after disclosure or identification and screening of FV or changes to risk over time. It should be used when there is reasonable time, and it is safe to complete the assessment. If the intervention is time-critical, the Brief Assessment Tool should be used instead.

Brief and Intermediate Assessment Tools Practice Considerations:

Your analysis of the elements of Structured Professional Judgement and application of your professional experience, skills and knowledge are the process by which you determine the level of risk.

Determining Level of Risk:

- Victim survivor's self-assessment of risk, fear, and safety – where self-assessment indicates that the adult victim survivor considers themselves (or any child victim survivor) to be at serious risk, **this is key information about the level of risk**, even if other risk factors have not been identified as present.
- Frequency – Frequency by itself is not **always** the indicator of the level of risk – you should explore further to understand if frequency has changed or escalated.
- Change or escalation in frequency or severity – if the types of behaviour the person using violence have changed in terms of frequency or severity, this would indicate escalation of risk. You should also consider **the scale of escalation and the impact** on the victim survivor.

Risk Levels	
At Risk	• High-risk factors are not present. • Some other recognised family violence risk factors are present. However, protective factors and risk management strategies are in place to lessen or remove/manage the risk from the person who is using violence. • Victim survivor's self-assessed level of fear and risk is low, and safety is high.
Elevated Risk	• A number of risk factors are present, including some high-risk factors. Risk is likely to continue is risk management is not initiated/increased. • The likelihood of a serious outcome is not high. However, the impact of risk from the person who is using violence is affecting the victim survivor's day-to-day functioning. • Victim survivor's self-assessed level of fear and risk is elevated, and safety is medium.
Serious Risk	• A number of high-risk factors are present. • Frequency or severity of risk factors may have changed/escalated. • Serious outcomes may have occurred from current violence, and it is indicated further serious outcomes from the use of violence by the person who is using violence is likely and may be imminent. • Immediate risk management is required to lessen the level of risk or prevent a serious outcome. • Victim survivor's self-assessed level of fear and risk is high to extremely high and safety is low.

Practice Tips:

To assist your decision-making on how to assess risk for a child or young person, consider:

- Creating opportunity for a child's personal agency and voice to be heard
- Individually assess their experience of risk
- Wherever possible, collaborate with a parent/carer who is not a person who is using violence
- Reinforcing responsibility is with the person who is using violence

Child Assessment Tool

About this tool: The tool outlines questions to be asked to child victim survivors in order to assess risk. The questions are divided into two sections; questions appropriate to ask children, and questions appropriate to ask the parent/caregiver.

Who should use the tool? This tool should be used by professionals who role is linked to, but not directly focused on, family violence (Tiers 2 & 3).

When should the tool be used? This tool includes questions about both the child's experience of risk, and the experience of the adult victim survivor. It is recommended that this tool is used for infants and younger children (0-5), and older children (6-14).

Practice Considerations – Directly or Indirectly Assessing Risk for a Child or Young Person:

When using this tool is should be assessed if it is safe, appropriate, and reasonable to do so considering the child's age and development, and their ability to understand the question. It is recommended that professionals use their professional judgement to decide on how to frame the questions and who they should be asked to.

- **Infants and Younger Children (0 -5)** – If infants are suspected at being at risk from FV, a full intermediate assessment of the adult victim survivor and the child must be done. The assessment should be conducted indirectly by asking questions with the parent/caregiver who is not using violence.
- **Older Children and Young People (6 -18)** – An older child may be assessed directly, if appropriate, safe, and reasonable to do so. For young people aged 15-18 years, considering their age and developmental stage and circumstances, it may be appropriate to ask adult-focused questions in the Intermediate Assessment Tool.

Safety Plans

About this tool: The MARAM Comprehensive Safety Plan includes tools to help risk manage individual risk factors, identify interventions, assign actions, and coordinate and/or collaborate with other professionals and services.

Who should use the tool? This tool should be used by professionals who role is linked to, but not directly focused on, family violence (Tiers 2 & 3).

When should the tool be used? Safety planning should be undertaken where any level of risk is present, noting that the safety plan will differ depending on the level of risk identified.

Practice Guidance

- The safety plan should be completed in collaboration with the adult victim survivor, including in the development, implementation and monitoring of the plan. It may be appropriate to work with a young person to develop their own personal safety plan.
- Separate safety plan should me developed for each child or young person.
- If there are any change in circumstances, services should be using these tools to reassess risk. Safety plans require regular review and updates based on ongoing risk assessment.

Practice Considerations – Safety Planning for a Child or Young Person

Safety plans should be tailored to circumstances and needs of all people in the family. Infants, children and young people may have differing safety and wellbeing needs, and where appropriate, may need their own safety plan.

Safety plans involve discussing with each victim survivor (or in the case of an absent child, an infant or a non-verbal child, their safe caregiver) what actions the professional can take or coordinate with other services to manage risk from the person who is using violence and meet their needs. The safety plan should be documented and identify actions, individuals, organization responsible and timelines.

Safety plans for children might include: actions and contact numbers to get help safely and quickly, identifying trusted people in the child's network who can help them (and ensuring they have the phone numbers of those trusted people), technological safety, and identifying service that the child might like to access for ongoing support.

- Infants and Younger Children (0-5) – may have their safety plan contained within the adult victim survivor or caregiver's plan.
- Older Children and Young people (6-18) – the child or young person's age and developmental stage will influence the level of involvement they have. They should be included in the development of their own safety plan wherever possible, including to reflect their views and wishes. If you cannot seek the views or input of the child or young person in the development of their plan, you can develop safety plans on their behalf by talking with their parent or caregiver who is not using violence.

Adult Person Who Uses Violence Practice Guide

This Guide offers guidance for professionals working with adults using family violence. The MARAM Person Who Uses Violence Practice Guide can be found here.

MARAM Responsibilities

Responsibility 1: Respectful, sensitive and safe engagement

Responsibility 2: Identification of family violence risk

Responsibility 3: Intermediate Risk Assessment

Responsibility 4: Intermediate Risk Management

Responsibility 5: Secondary consultation and referral, including for comprehensive family violence assessment and management response

Responsibility 6: Contribute to information sharing with other services (as authorised by legislation)

Responsibility 7: to be released in late 2021

Responsibility 8: to be released in late 2021

Responsibility 9: Contribute to coordinated risk management

Responsibility 10: Family Violence: Collaborate for ongoing risk assessment and risk management

Person Who Uses Violence Practice Guidance & Tools for Child and Family Services

[Responsibility 2] – Identification of Family Violence Risk

- Response Options Following Identification of Indicators of Family Violence Risk
- Identification Tool for People Who Use Violence

[Responsibility 3] – Intermediate Risk Assessment

- Adult Person Using Violence Intermediate Assessment Tool
- Intermediate Assessment Conversation Model
- Screening Questions for Cognitive Disability and Acquired Brain Injury
- Recognising Suicide Risk in the Context of Adult People Using Violence

[Responsibility 4] – Intermediate Risk Management

- Intermediate Risk Management Plan
- Intermediate Safety Plan
- Intermediate Safety Planning Conversation Model

Identification Tool for People Who Use Violence

About this tool: The Identification Tool for people who use violence includes narratives and behaviours that might be observed in the context of family violence. Professionals can use this tool to record observations of narratives and behaviours that may indicate a person is using family violence. Narratives and behaviours identified that indicate family violence risk will inform professional judgment on how to respond.

This tool is split into three sections:

- Identifying narratives or behaviours linked to use of family violence
- Identifying the person's presenting needs and circumstances
- Risk identification at present and/or if immediate intervention is required

Who should use the tool? All professionals who have a role to identify signs of family violence (Tiers 1-4).

When should the tool be used? This tool should be used when a service user's narratives and behaviours indicate they may be using family violence.

Awareness that person is using family violence	Service role in relation to family violence response	Example
Known to the service	Directly related	A professional is aware the person is using violence based on information shared such as; their service engagement is due to court-ordered therapeutic need in relation to their use of violence, and/or direct disclosure of family violence behaviour from the person.
	Indirectly related	Disclosure from a victim survivor or information shared by a profession in another service, but the person using violence does not know the service is aware of this.
Suspected	Indirectly related	A professional suspects a person may be using violence based on indirect disclosure. Narratives about beliefs or attitudes, or behaviours may indicate use of violence. In this situation, the person is not likely to be aware they are suspected of using violence.
Not identified	Either directly or indirectly related	A professional does not suspect a person is using violence, no information has been shared to notify them and no disclosure has been made. The person knows the professional is not aware they are using violence.

Practice Guidance

- Applying a victim-centred lens when listening to a person's narratives or observing their behaviours, will assist the professional to think about the victim survivor's experience of these attitudes and behaviours.
- This tool may not be able to definitively determine the presence of family violence, without direct disclosure of risk behaviours. However, it supports professionals to record information that can be analysed alongside other information.

Identifying narratives or behaviours linked to the use of family violence

- **Narratives that may relate to underlying beliefs or attitudes** – Recognising narratives that may revel underlying beliefs or attitudes that are pro-violence, discriminatory, and/or commonly associated with likely use of family violence.
- **Physical or verbal behaviour that may relate to the use of family violence** – Recognising physical or verbal behaviour that may reveal the use of coercive control and violence, such as aggression, hostility, or malice.
- **Narratives minimising or justifying** – Recognising narratives that minimise or justify beliefs and attitudes or physical and verbal behaviour.
- **Narrative or behaviour practitioner experience (of the service user)** – The person may use the above narratives or behaviours with you during a session or over time. You may experience invitations to collude or feel intimidated, manipulated, or controlled throughout your engagement with them.
- **Immediate risk** – The person using violence may make a direct or targeted threat against an adult or child victim survivor, a third party or any other person. The person using violence may also indicate risk to their own safety.

Adult Person Using Violence Intermediate Risk Assessment Tool

About this tool: This tool helps professionals identify and assess the person's use of violence and its impact on children, their parenting role, and co-parenting relationships. It also considers the person's motivations and capacity for change in relation to their parenting role, prioritising the safety, wellbeing and needs of children and young people.

Who should use the tool? Professionals who interact with service users to assess or manage a presenting need and/or engage with people in crisis situations or cohorts who are at risk of experiencing or using family violence (Tiers 2 & 3).

When should the tool be used? This tool should be used directly after a service user discloses using family violence or when the practitioner becomes aware of information confirming the person is using family violence.

Practice Guidance:

The Intermediate Assessment Tool should be used in conjunction with the Intermediate Assessment Conversation Model (Appendix 4) which provides prompts to help the professional build rapport with and elicit responses from the person using violence.

- Please note: This model is only a guide. Professionals should use engagement skills and experience to determine the best approach to the conversation, and navigate the conversation based on their responses and any immediate needs.

The risk assessment process will be informed by:

- Building trust through safe, non-colluding practices
- Identifying the motivation to engage
- Gathering and analysing risk-relevant information
- Ongoing engagement and keeping the person using violence in view
- Responding to change in risk over time

If the person using violence refuses to participate, record this as a possible risk indicator. It highlights a level of resistance to address issues, including their use of family violence.

Intermediate Risk Management

Risk management and safety planning are separate activities when working with people using family violence.

- The Intermediate Risk Management Plan is for professionals only and is not to be accessed by the person using violence.
- The Intermediate Safety Plan can be developed with and given to the person using violence so they can refer to it.

Intermediate Risk Management Plan

About this tool: Theis tool should be completed by professionals in collaboration with other services to determine and coordinate actions to reduce risk from the person using violence to adult and child victim survivors. It can be used to record strategies already in place and actions required to manage risk. It can also be used to record presenting needs and circumstances that require stabilisation and any protective factors requiring strengthening.

Who should use the tool? Professionals who interact with service users to assess or manage a presenting need and/or engage with people in crisis situations or cohorts who are at risk of experiencing or using family violence (Tiers 2 & 3).

When should the tool be used? This tool should be used where family violence is identified through a self-disclosure or identified through a risk assessment.

Practice Guidance:

- If safe to do so, professionals can work directly with the person using violence to develop a Safety Plan, which can also inform the Intermediate Risk Management Plan.
- It is never safe or appropriate to discuss any aspect of the Risk Management Plan with the person using violence if the victim survivor is present.

Intermediate Safety Plan

About this tool: This tool is designed to outline strategies the person using violence can implement to lessen the risk associated with their behaviours, unaddressed needs and circumstances and enhance emotional and behaviour regulation. This tools also focuses on stabilising the person and strengthening their protective factors, managing events which may increase risk, and safety for self if suicide or mental health responses are needed.

Who should use the tool? Professionals who interact with service users to assess or manage a presenting need and/or engage with people in crisis situations or cohorts who are at risk of experiencing or using family violence (Tiers 2 & 3).

When should the tool be used? This tool should be used where family violence is identified through a self-disclosure or identified through a risk assessment.

Practice Guidance:

- The Safety Plan template should be used in conjunction with the Intermediate Safety Planning Conversation Model.
- Safety Plan actions should be practical, clear, and easy to implement.

Collusion

Collusion occurs when professionals, organisations and the service system act in ways that reinforce, support, excuse or minimise a person's use of family violence and its impacts.

It reduces the professionals and the service system's capacity to keep the person using violence engaged, in view and accountable for their behaviour and to keep victim survivors safe.

Key practices to balance safe and respectful engagement while minimising the risk of collusion:

- Keeping the victim survivor's experience and the effects of violence as the central concern.
- Being alert to the potential of implicitly or explicitly endorsing violence-supporting narrative or behaviours of the person using violence.
- Intentionally listening, taking an invitational but objectively analytical approach.
- Avoiding confrontation with the person using violence. This helps to reinforce help-seeking behaviours and model non-confrontational problem solving.

Ongoing Risk Assessment and Management

Keeping the person using violence in view means that professionals across the service system are maintaining a proactive and active awareness of their family violence risk and behaviour.

This includes any change or escalation of family violence risk, as well as the presence of or need to reinforce protective or stabilising factors related to their presenting needs and other circumstances.

Practice Considerations:

- Reach out through secondary consultation to other professionals how may hold risk-relevant information so you can respond to change or escalation of risk or to access specialist expertise to support understanding and management of risk and safety.
- Proactively share risk-relevant information.
- Understand which interventions, at what time, are the most appropriate for the person using violence, and their affected family members.

Remember:

- The key to determining seriousness of risk is to understand how risk changes or escalates over time.
- No change or nor reported change can also indicate risk.

Training

There are a range of self-paced and virtual training options available depending on the Tier/s level of responsibility you hold in your organisation. For a summary of all of the MARAM training module available, please click here.

Information Sharing Training

All training for the information sharing reforms, including an introduction to MARAM, as online webinars and eLearning courses are accessed through the Information Sharing and MARAM Online Learning system. To enrol in this training, you will need to sign up and log in to the system here.

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Workforces

Information sharing training has been developed for Child and Family Services professionals to understand how to share and request information under the schemes to promote the wellbeing and safety of children and assess and manage family violence risk.

Child and Family Services workers should access the DFFH Information Sharing eLearn modules here.

The three modules each take approximately 20 minutes to complete and cover Essentials for Professionals, Purposes and Requirements, and Consent and Privacy.

All Other Workforces

Training has also been developed for all other workforces, agencies and organisations that do not fall under the previous category. The training can be accessed here.

This module outlines when and how to use the FVISS and CISS and provides an introduction to the MARAM Framework as a key underpinning of the information sharing reforms,

MARAM Training for Child & Family Services Practitioners:

- Screening & Identification level (Tier 4 workforces)

Practitioners who have roles that align to Screening and Identification are required to complete MARAM Screening and Identification training.

A MARAM eLearn package is available to access through https://training.infosharing.vic.gov.au. To access Screening and Identification you will need to go through Families, Fairness and Housing Workforces → eLearn: MARAM Victim Survivor Screen and Identification.

- Brief and Intermediate (Tiers 2 & 3 workforces)

The Centre for Excellence in Child & Family Welfare currently offers MARAM Brief & Intermediate online training for Child FIRST, Family Services, AOD, Homelessness and Mental Health workers.

Child and Family Services workers who have roles that align to Brief and Intermediate level risk assessment and management are required to complete Brief and Intermediate MARAM Training. This training is offered by Safe and Equal and can be found here.

- Comprehensive (Tier 1 workforces)

Family Services workers who have roles that align to Comprehensive level risk assessment and management are required to complete Comprehensive MARAM training. This training is offered by Safe and Equal and can be found here.

- **MARAM Collaborative Practice Training:** The training focuses on collaborative practice and the foundational aspects of MARAM, including risk assessment and collaboration for ongoing risk management through respectful and sensitive engagement with victim survivors, information sharing, referral and secondary consultations. Contact the Principal Strategic Advisor (PSA) in your area for this training here.

Other optional training:

Safe and Equal offer a range of virtual training, including:

- Family Violence Foundations (online, self-paced)
- Introduction to Preventing Violence Against Women (PVAW) – Foundation course
- MARAM Comprehensive Risk Assessment & Management (Specialist)
- MARAM Comprehensive Family Violence (Specialist) – Renewing Practice from CRAF to MARAM

Useful resources

FAQ's

- Frequently Asked Questions – This resource from the Victorian Government provides detailed information and responses to common questions from information sharing entities (ISEs) about CISS, FVISS and MARAM.
- Screening and Identification Practitioner Guide (Role specific FAQs)
- Brief and Intermediate Practitioner Guide

Training

- MARAM and Information Sharing E-Learning Modules (Victorian Government)

Victorian Government

- Family Safety Victoria Updates
- Dhelk Dja – Safe Our Way
- DET Guidance on Information Sharing Schemes

- Information Sharing Enquiry Line
  1800 549 646 infosharing@familysafety.vic.gov.au

Other

- Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare MARAM and Information Sharing Resource Hub – The Centre hosts a hub of resources to support the implementation of the MARAM framework and Information Sharing Schemes. These resources are intended to increase knowledge, confidence and capacity among child and family services, and allied sectors, to work collaboratively and effectively with children and their families.

Case Studies

Information sharing case studies developed by CFECFW are provided below to assist understanding of the practical application of the CISS and FVISS for child and family services. Please find the case studies listed below:

- Integrated Family Services
- Youth and Family Therapy with a Focus
- Youth and Family Support
  Highlighting the application of CISS