



Training options for community services and private practitioners on engaging with men who use domestic and family violence

Background

Community services workers and private practitioners play a role in responding to domestic and family violence (DFV), as they may work with clients who disclose using DFV in their intimate partner and family relationships.

In 2018, Queensland's Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board highlighted the need for community services workers and private practitioners to be able to recognise and respond to clients who may be perpetrating DFV, and maintain the safety of victims and their children.

In consultation with the community services sector and private practitioner peak bodies, the Queensland Government has explored a number of training options available to support practitioners to work productively with clients who may be using DFV in their relationships, while also taking a holistic approach that emphasises perpetrator accountability and victim safety.

This factsheet details a number of training and professional development options available in Queensland and Australia.

All options are delivered by accredited organisations or government funded providers, and are relevant for:

- workers in the **community services sector** (e.g. community and mental health, family support, homelessness, drug and alcohol, and community legal services)
- **private practitioners offering therapeutic services** (e.g. counsellors, psychologists, social workers and mediators).

The options outlined below have been identified based on a needs analysis and consultation undertaken in early 2020, but are not an exhaustive list. Other training options, including university-level courses and units, may also be available.

Note: *These training options are not considered appropriate for specialist domestic and family violence workers and facilitators of men's behaviour change programs or intervention and other specialist perpetrator intervention workers. Information on training and professional development for specialist DFV workers can be found on WorkUP Queensland's website: <https://workupqld.org.au>*

Relevant training options

Queensland Centre for Domestic & Family Violence Research

Interrupting violence: an introduction to safety, accountability and responsibility is a new course developed by the Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research (QCDFVR). Topics covered include:

- recognising and challenging myths that support violence against women
- identifying factors that inform high risk
- implementing a questioning style that is safe, fosters engagement and reduces likelihood of collusion

- utilising a practical accountability model.

Delivery and suitability

- Market testing was undertaken in May 2020, with the aim of broader offerings being available from the second half of 2020 as either in-person workshops or as online training.
- The course has been designed specifically for community services and private practitioners in Queensland and is delivered by recognised practice experts.
- The course takes a holistic approach to addressing violence by focusing on victim safety, avoiding collusion, and strategies to keep perpetrators engaged and accountable.



More information can be found by contacting QCDVFR: <https://noviolence.org.au>

No To Violence

No To Violence is the lead Australian organisation for working with perpetrators of DFV, and offers two relevant courses:

- *Introduction to working with men who use family violence* focuses on practical engagement with clients who are using DFV in their relationships. Topics covered include understanding the gendered drivers of violence, avoiding collusion, inviting accountability and change, ensuring victim safety, and collaborative dialogue skills.
- *Introduction to working with fathers who use family violence* builds on the previous course, focusing on fathers who use DFV. Topics covered include collaborative dialogue skills, working with men to become more nurturing fathers, and supporting men to become supportive and respectful parenting partners.

Delivery and suitability

- *Introduction to working with men who use family violence* is delivered as a one or two day face-to-face workshop.
- *Introduction to working with fathers who use family violence* is delivered as a half-day face-to-face workshop. Completion of the previous course is a pre-requisite for enrolment.
- Online delivery is in development in 2020 and will be available in the future.
- No To Violence are able to deliver customised training around Australia on request.
- Both courses are specifically targeted towards workers in community sector roles who engage with clients who may be using DFV as part of their everyday work.
- Both courses take a holistic approach to addressing violence by focusing on victim safety, avoiding collusion, and strategies to keep perpetrators engaged and accountable.

More information can be found at <https://www.ntv.org.au/training>

Avert Family Violence

Avert Family Violence offers three relevant courses:

- *Basics* is an introduction to DFV, covering definitions, legal frameworks, myths and dynamics, prevalence, integrated service responses and the impacts on children.
- *Screening & Safety Planning* builds on *Basics* and covers universal screening practices, risk thresholds, and safety planning for victims of DFV and their families.

- *Responding to Perpetrators* focuses specifically on working with perpetrators of DFV, covering principles for responses to perpetration, screening for perpetration, evidence/data, and multi-agency/cross-discipline collaboration. The *Basics* and *Screening and Safety Planning* courses are pre-requisites for this course.

Delivery and suitability

- Available as face-to-face (1 and 2 day workshops) and via online delivery.
- Online delivery is self-paced and available on-demand. Each module takes approximately 3 hours to complete.
- Content is designed specifically for those working within the community services, health, family law and human services sectors.
- Completion of the pre-requisite modules ensures that all practitioners have a grounding in DFV dynamics and risk assessment. The training emphasises the need to ensure victim safety and work holistically while working with perpetrators.

More information can be found at <https://www.avertfamilyviolence.com.au>

Safe and Together Institute

Working with Men as Parents: Fathers' Parenting Choices Matter is an e-learning course delivered by the internationally recognised Safe and Together Institute (USA). Topics covered include:

- working with men as fathers to prevent violence
- understanding male parental development and how men's choices and behaviours impact child and family functioning
- specific approaches to engaging men as parents in DFV-informed practice.

Delivery and suitability

- The course is available online as a 2 hour e-learning course. There are no prerequisites to the course.
- The course uses a DFV-informed framework and has a strong focus on victim and family safety.
- A range of other supporting modules are available to facilitate development of a deeper understanding of DFV.
- The Safe and Together Model and training courses are targeted specifically at community sector workers, in particular those who work in the child and family support sector.

More information can be found at <https://safeandtogetherinstitute.com/what-we-offer/e-courses/>

Additional resources and considerations

It is critical that all workers engaging with perpetrators using DFV in their relationships have a strong understanding of DFV and are able to respond holistically. This includes knowledge of risk assessment processes, strategies to ensure the safety of victims and their children, and appropriate referral or reporting options. Workers should avoid responding to perpetrators in isolation and without keeping the victim's safety in mind.

The following general DFV awareness and practice resources may be helpful to build knowledge:

- DV Alert – Recognise, Respond Refer online training <https://www.dvalert.org.au/>
- Safer Families Toolkit <https://www.saferfamilies.org.au/toolkit>
- 1800 RESPECT Frontline workers toolkit <https://goshare.realtimehealth.com/1800respect/home>

Any organisation wishing to arrange training in this area should thoroughly identify their training needs and capacity before making a decision that best suits their needs and resources.

Organisations should also consider ongoing support, supervision and professional development for workers engaging with perpetrators in order to ensure safety for victims, children and staff.