



**STRENGTHENING PRACTICE
IN RESPONDING TO
DOMESTIC & FAMILY
VIOLENCE**

**A TOOLKIT FOR
COMMUNITY HOUSING
PROVIDERS**

November 2016



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1 Introduction

Community housing providers are committed to ensuring that they deliver an effective and sensitive response to any tenants and their dependents who experience domestic and family violence. The sector works collaboratively with other specialist services and government agencies to achieve the best outcomes for those affected.

As landlords in the social housing system, community housing providers have responsibilities to support their tenants to sustain their tenancies and prevent homelessness. Tenants or household members that experience domestic and family violence (DFV) have a right to expect that the sector will respond to help them.

Community housing providers have an opportunity to make a significant difference through the implementation of well-designed and evidenced DFV policies and procedures and by ensuring that approaches to identifying and responding to DFV assist victims to either remain safely in their own home or relocate to a safe environment. Critical to this is the need to ensure that the response is tailored to the individual or household.

The aim of the *Strengthening Practice in Responding to Domestic and Family Violence within Community Housing Providers: A Toolkit* is to build on the existing positive practice in both community housing and specialist homelessness services and complement; support and enhance current best practice approaches so they are adopted throughout the sector. The Toolkit includes a wide range of resources to assist providers to effectively identify and respond to DFV.

The Toolkit will increase community housing provider's understanding and capacity to respond effectively to applicants, tenants and household members who experience DFV.

This Toolkit is complementary to other action community housing providers may take to ensure their response to DFV is effective. It does not replace the need for staff to participate in appropriate DFV training in order use the Toolkit effectively and with confidence. The NSW Federation of Housing Associations currently delivers the CHCDFV001 Recognise and Respond Appropriately to Domestic and Family Violence unit as part of the Certificate IV in Social Housing and it is anticipated that such training will be modified to incorporate the Toolkit.

The development of this Toolkit has been done in partnership with:

- NSW Federation of Housing Associations
- Domestic Violence NSW
- Homelessness NSW and
- NSW Family and Community Services.

This Toolkit will support community housing providers to strengthen and develop their practice as part of a coordinated multi-agency and integrated response to domestic and family violence. Its use will be reviewed and periodically updated by the Federation in liaison with our members and the partners in its development.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work done by Peabody (Gudrun Burnet) and Gentoo (Kelly Henderson) and the wider national work of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) that has significantly informed this toolkit development.

Wendy Hayhurst CEO
NSW Federation of Housing Association

2 How to use this toolkit

This toolkit has been developed to assist housing professionals better understand and respond to incidents of domestic and family violence (DFV). It has a number of components that have been designed for community housing providers to customise and fit within their organisation's practice.

They include:

1. A **policy – Identifying & responding to domestic & family violence** to frame the early intervention response embedded through this toolkit and to guide practice across community housing organisations.
2. A **series of pathways** that provide direction to housing professionals in regard to possible responses to domestic and family violence for tenants and applicants with suggestions about possible issues of concern and actions that housing professionals might choose to take. The pathways focus on building collaborative practice with domestic and family violence support services.
3. A number of **guidance tools and checklists** to support housing professionals develop consistent service delivery practice across community housing providers.
4. A **tenant & applicant resource** on domestic and family violence available for all tenants as part of the lease sign up. This resource describes the response that can be expected from community housing providers and provides a range of useful resources. By including this resource in a lease sign up kit, it minimises the risk to victims having such information as all tenants will have it. It also provides an opportunity for early intervention by housing professionals.
5. A **tenant & applicant resource on men's behaviour change services** available for all tenants as part of the lease sign up. It provides information on men's behaviour change programs available to assist them should they be seeking support to address issues that they have around their behaviour and attitudes.
6. Four **case studies** to provide examples of how housing professionals might work with different tenant groups.
7. A **resource for employers** to guide their support of staff working with DFV.
8. An **information resource** that provides an overview of domestic and family violence, how it might manifest, some myth busting and a precis of the current laws that govern domestic and family violence both federally and in NSW.
9. A copy of the **Duluth Model** Power and Control and Equality Wheels that provide a framework to understand relationship dynamics that underpin domestic and family violence.
10. A **summary of current domestic and family violence policy initiatives** to provide a snapshot of all the development work currently being undertaken in this space across NSW.
11. A **toolbox talk** that can be used as part of staff induction and staff development sessions (separate power point presentation).

3 Policy Template

Policy No:	Policy Name: Identifying & responding to domestic & family violence
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Applies to:	Version:
Specific responsibility:	Date Approved:
	Review Date:

Policy statement

The NSW Government has worked together with Government Agencies and community organisations to develop the Domestic and Family Violence Framework for Reform, *It Stops Here: Standing together to end domestic and family violence*.

Community Housing Providers are a key component of the integrated response to improve policy and service delivery to victims of domestic and family violence.

(Name of Provider) recognises that domestic and family violence can happen to anyone, regardless of social background, disability, age, gender, religion, sexuality or ethnicity. We also recognise that domestic and family violence affects both male and female victims, including those in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer relationships. We are committed to supporting victims of domestic and family violence regardless of gender or sexuality.

(Name of Provider) takes domestic and family violence seriously and is committed to providing a sensitive and confidential response to anyone approaching us for assistance in cases of domestic and family violence.

(Name of Provider) is committed to building our skills, capacity and practice to identify indicators of domestic and family violence and to work with victims to assist them to manage their housing and support situation.

(Name of Provider) will take appropriate action that balances the rights and wishes of the victim with the rights of the landlord to protect the property and the safety and wellbeing of other household members and neighbours.

(Name of Provider) will also work with support services and other partners to assist victims and deal with perpetrators as domestic and family violence cases require a multi-agency approach.

This policy covers all tenants and applicants of **(Name of Provider)**.

References

It Stops Here: Standing together to end domestic and family violence

Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (NSW)

Definitions

Domestic and family violence is any behaviour that causes physical, sexual or emotional harm, or causes someone in the relationship to live in fear.

Procedure

(Name of Provider) will support and resource our staff across all aspects of community housing provision to have an understanding of domestic and family violence. Staff will utilise the Domestic and Family Violence Pathways tools to understand their internal reporting and support structures. Through understanding our role in identifying indicators of domestic and family violence and referring to tenancy management staff for further investigation, **(Name of Provider)** will develop and enhance their early intervention approach to vulnerable tenancies and victims.

In order for **(Name of Provider)** to effectively identify and respond to domestic and family violence we will:

- Ensure all staff across all divisions receive training on identifying and responding appropriately to domestic and family violence.
- Enable residents to report domestic and family violence to us in different ways, including in person, in writing, over the phone and online.
- Investigate all reports of domestic and family violence that we receive. Reports of antisocial behaviour might also be related to incidents of domestic and family violence and will also be investigated.
- Give victims the opportunity to opt for a staff member of the same gender to deal with their case wherever practicable.
- Ensure that victims know that they can meet staff in confidence at **(name of provider)** offices or at an agreed safe venue. We will also agree to the method of contact that the victim wishes us to use to stay in contact with them.
- Work with partner agencies to ensure co-ordinated services to prioritise the victim's (including children's) safety.
- Advise victims of external agencies who can offer further advice and support (for advice on tenancy issues, legal advice for example) and make referrals on their behalf and with their consent if required.
- Encourage victims to engage with domestic and family violence support and advocacy services and make referrals on their behalf and with their consent if required.

Provisions within the Residential Tenancy Act (2010) to respond to domestic and family violence

The Residential Tenancy Act 2010 has provisions aimed at giving some protection to tenants who have been victims of domestic and family violence. (It must be noted that a review of this act has reported back to the NSW Parliament (June 2016) and it is predicted that amendments will be made to the legislation).

A victim of domestic and family violence might want to end their tenancy agreement with the perpetrator of that violence. They might want to:

- Stay at the rented premises and have the perpetrator leave, or
- Leave and end their legal liability.

Staying will mean taking action to end the tenancy of the perpetrator by getting a final apprehended violence order (AVO) against them that includes an exclusion order or taking other action under tenancy law which may involve taking action in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Section 79 of the Residential Tenancy Act 2010 allows for the termination of a co-tenant's tenancy where that person has been prohibited by a final AVO from accessing the property.

As a tenant, a victim can change the locks, without the landlord's consent, if any occupant has an AVO with an exclusion order (interim, provisional or final) against the perpetrator. They can withhold copies of the new keys or opening devices from the excluded occupant. The cost for this is paid for by the tenant. The tenant also needs to provide a copy of the keys to the landlord where required.

Leaving means ending a victim's tenancy with or without ending a perpetrator's tenancy.

A victim's tenancy status affects their options:

Co-tenant: the victim's name and the name of other tenants are on the residential tenancy agreement for the premises. They share rights and obligations with the other co-tenant.

Head-tenant: the victim is the tenant identified in the residential tenancy agreement for the premises.

Section 100(1)(d) of the Residential Tenancies Act (2010) provides an option for a tenant to terminate an agreement with two weeks' notice and without further compensation to the landlord, if a co-tenant or co-occupant is prohibited by a final AVO from having access to the residential premises.

Working with perpetrators

(Name of Provider) will take appropriate action (where evidence is available) against anyone responsible for domestic and family violence.

The appropriate response to the perpetrator will depend on the situation. This may include:

- Contacting the Police and other emergency services if the situation requires an immediate response due to safety.
- Refer to support workers who provide services to men (or women where relevant) to assist perpetrators to gain support in addressing their issues.
- If the perpetrator is the head tenant or co-tenant, negotiate with the perpetrator to relocate them to another property if this is the desire of the victim and if it is safe to do so (such as with the Staying Home Leaving Violence program), which will require the perpetrator to agree to being relocated.
- If it is not considered appropriate/safe to relocate the perpetrator and if the RTA 2010 supports the situation, terminate the tenancy for the perpetrator allowing the victim to become the head tenant.

If it is not considered appropriate/safe to relocate the perpetrator or terminate the perpetrator's tenancy, relocate the victim(s) to a safe property. Due to the circumstances, this may be to crisis or transitional accommodation with a plan in place with support worker(s) to obtain long term, stable and affordable accommodation. Assess for suitability of housing assistance, particularly the Start Safely program (which is a rental subsidy that helps people escape domestic and family violence) or the Rentstart Bond loan products to assist victims to be re-housed in private rental.

(Name of Provider) will monitor domestic and family violence incidences across our housing portfolios to support identification of perpetrators and monitor the success of our actions in supporting victims. This will assist **(Name of Provider)** by prioritising areas or individuals affected by repeated domestic and family violence and other antisocial behaviour.

For information relating to men’s behaviour change programs, refer to the following website which includes the Men’s Behaviour Change Program providers in NSW: <http://www.mbcn-nsw.net/>

Work Health and Safety

(Name of Provider) utilise a robust risk assessment process to maintain safety for all staff and contractors. We ensure that all workers and contractors check tenant alert registers before conducting any home visits to manage tenants or their visitors who may pose a risk to staff and contractors.

Partnering with other domestic and family violence responses

(Name of Provider) collaborates with a range of partners across our communities in a variety of ways to support and better manage domestic and family violence. Through *It Stops Here: Standing together to end domestic and family violence*, we are key players in assisting to meet the housing need of victims of domestic and family violence.

We also collaborate with services delivering the Staying Home Leaving Violence program that is operating in Bega, Blacktown, Broken Hill, Campbelltown, Dubbo, Eastern Sydney, Fairfield/Liverpool, Gosford, Kempsey, Lake Macquarie, Maitland/Cessnock, Moree, Newcastle, Nowra, Parramatta/Holroyd, Penrith, Redfern, Tamworth, Wollongong, and Wyong/Gosford to assist victims of domestic and family violence remain in their home with the perpetrator excluded from the property.

Housing Pathways products

There are a variety of Housing Pathways products available to assist people affected by domestic and family violence. These resources can be found at <http://www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au/ways-we-can-help/domestic-and-family-violence>

Related documents

- Privacy and confidentiality policy
- Work Health and Safety policy
- Application and allocation policies
- Tenancy management policies

Review

Reviewing and approving this policy		
Frequency	Person responsible	Approval
[How often will this policy be reviewed]	[Position of person responsible for reviewing policy]	[Position of person/group who approves this policy]

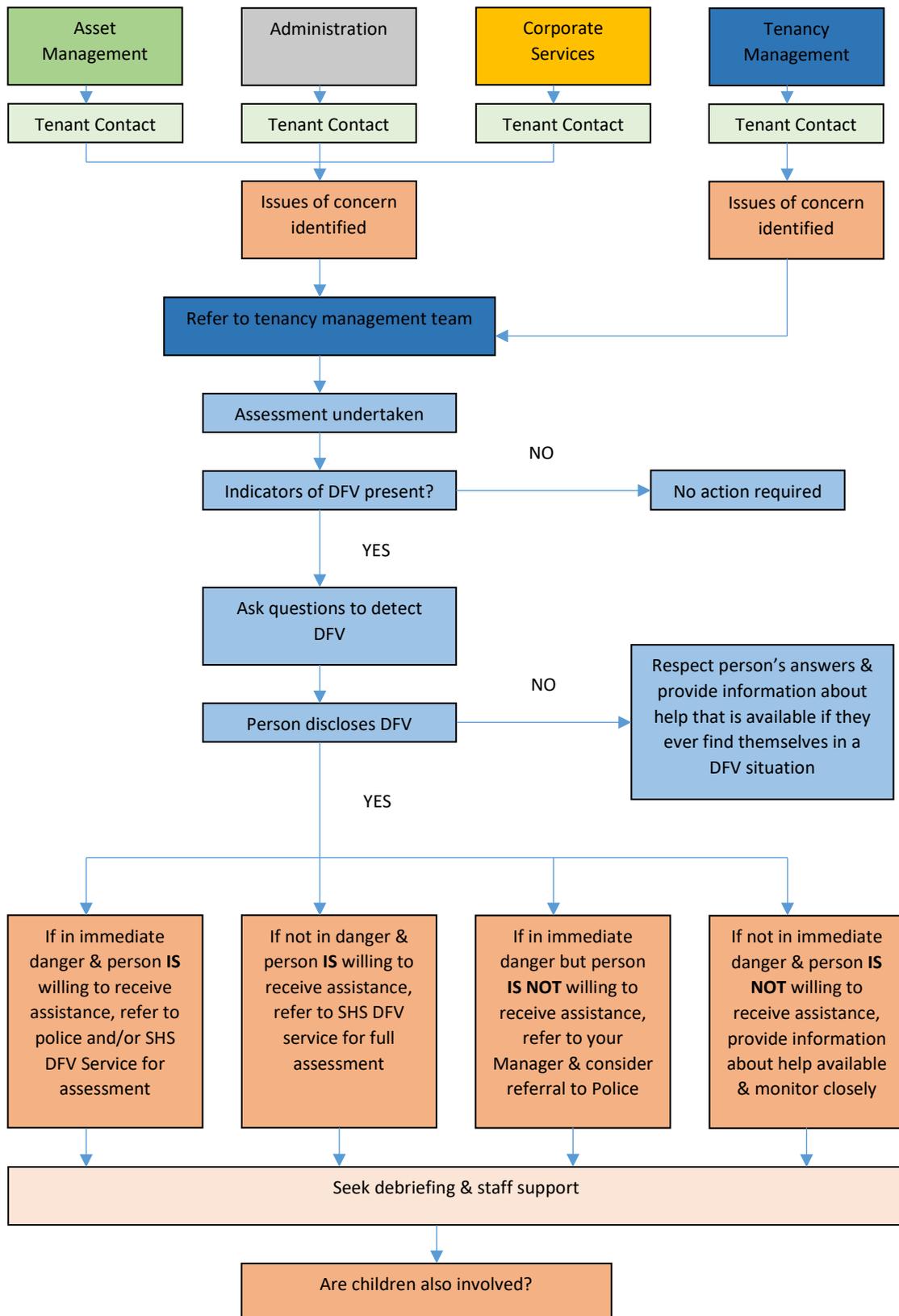
Policy review and version tracking			
Review	Date approved	Approved by	Next review date
1			
2			
3			

4 Pathways Procedures

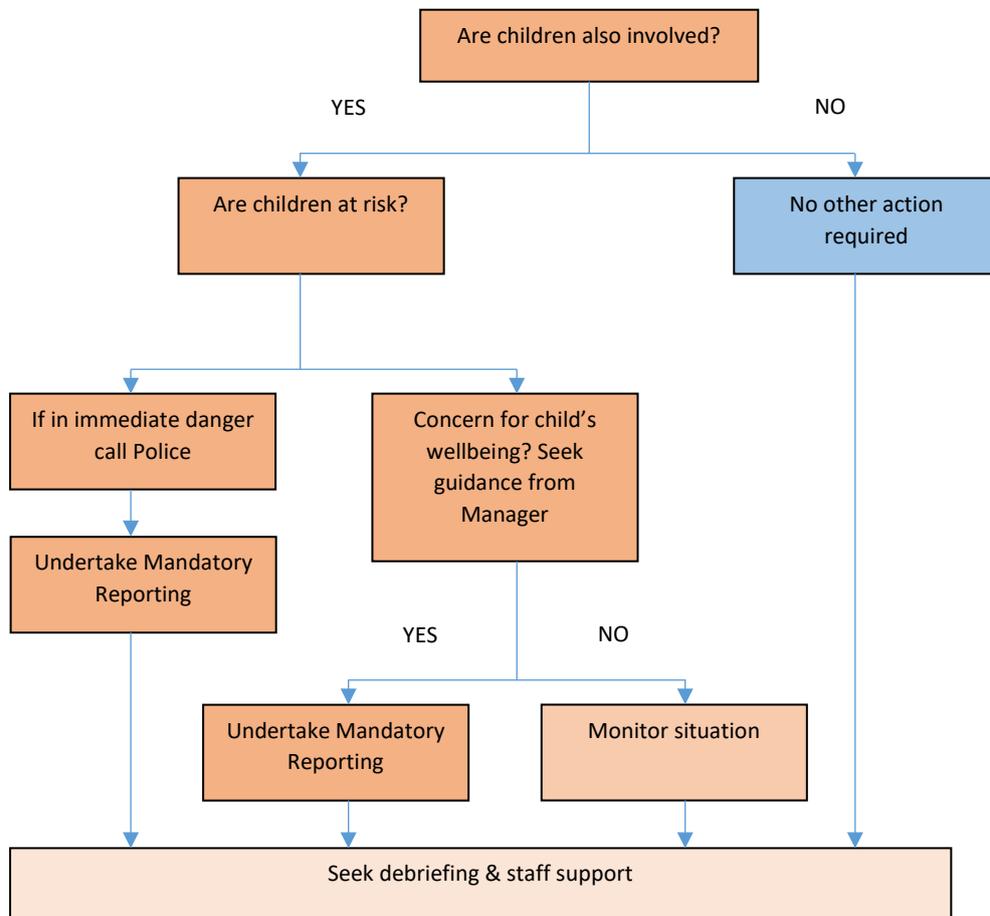
These procedures have been developed to guide and strengthen practice and support staff as they identify concerns about domestic and family violence.

A key component of this practice is the enabling of all staff employed across a community housing provider to better clarify their role in identifying and responding to domestic and family violence.

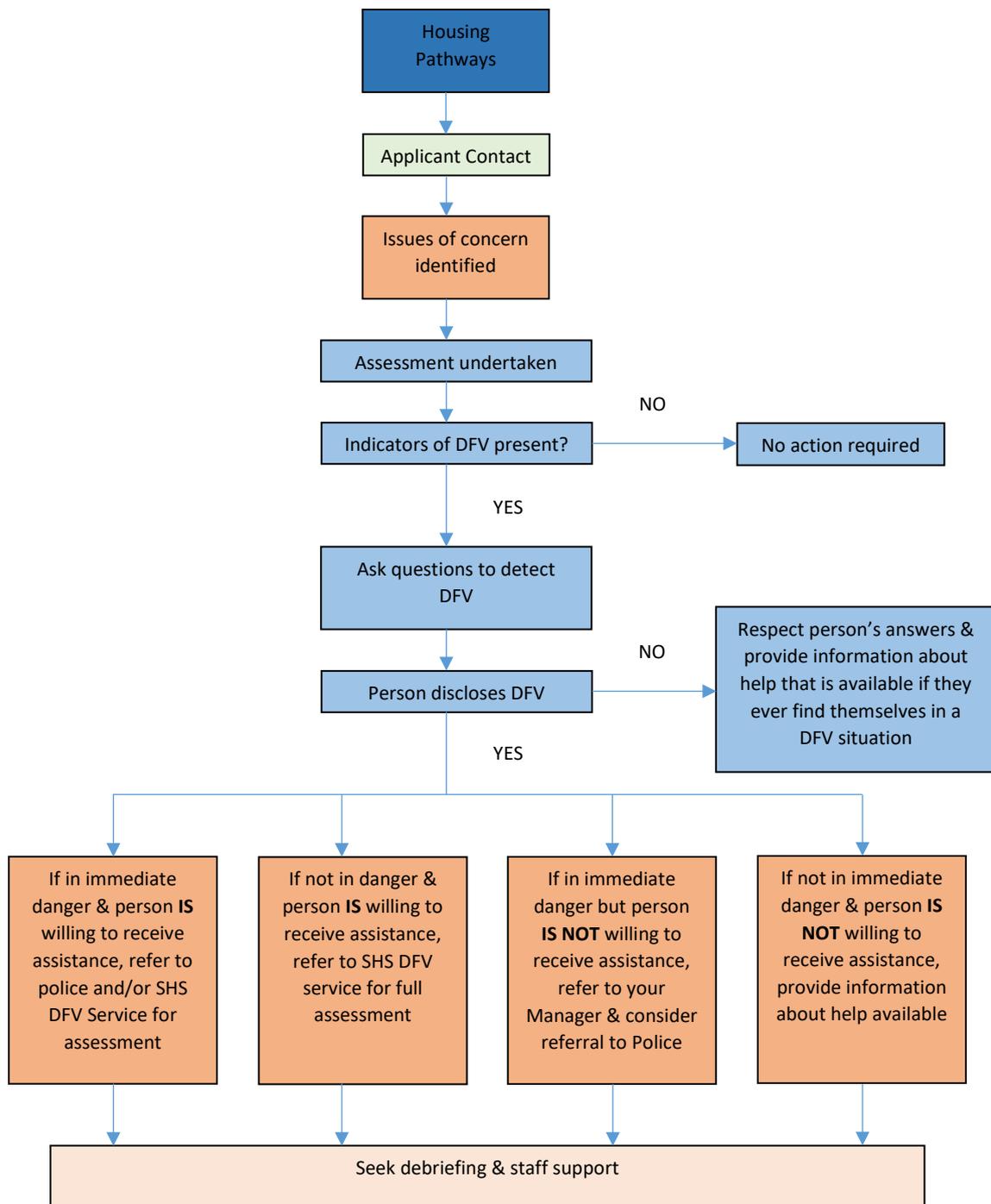
Responding to tenants identified at risk of experiencing domestic and family violence within community housing



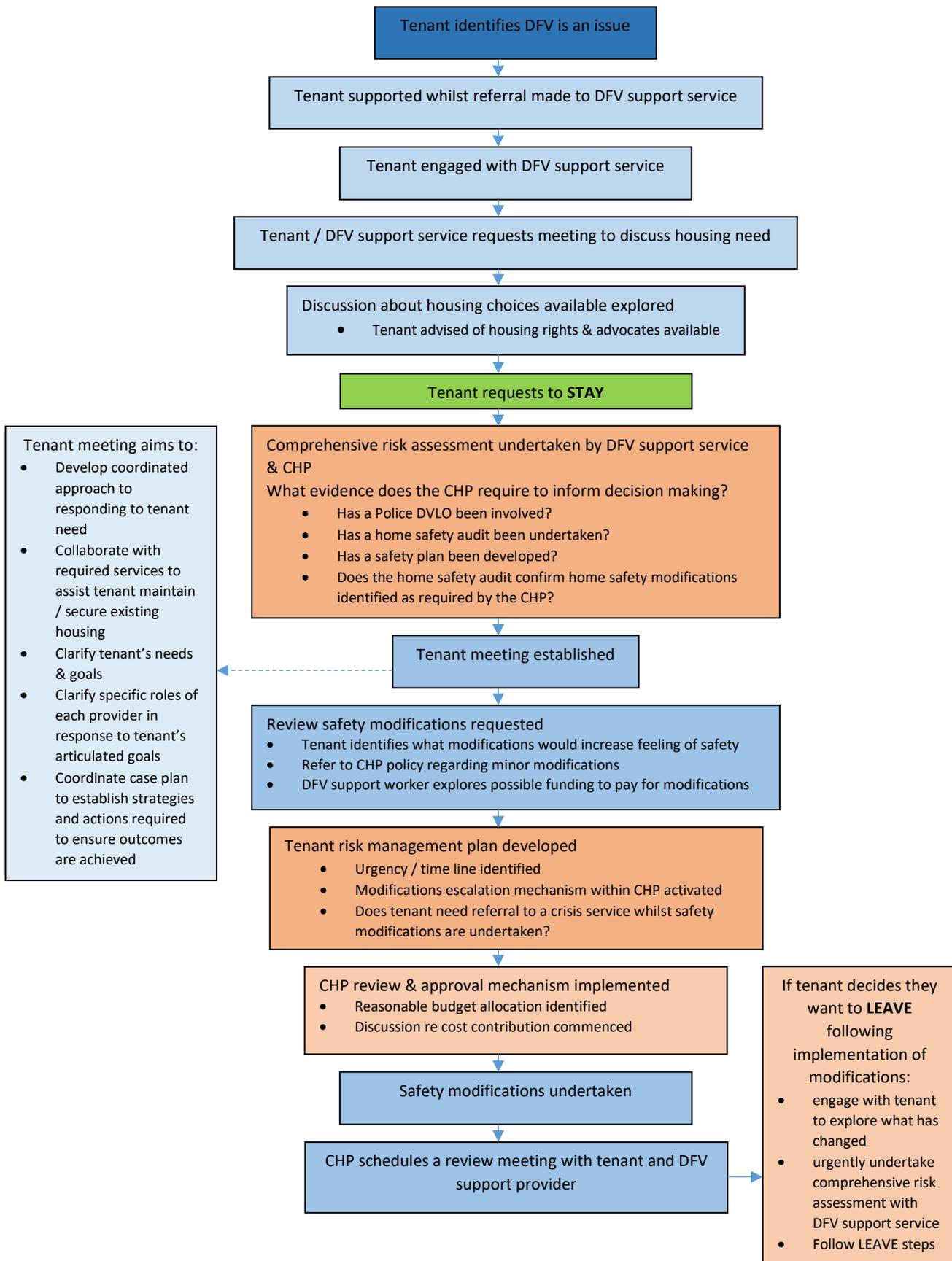
Responding to domestic and family violence when children are identified as living with a tenant



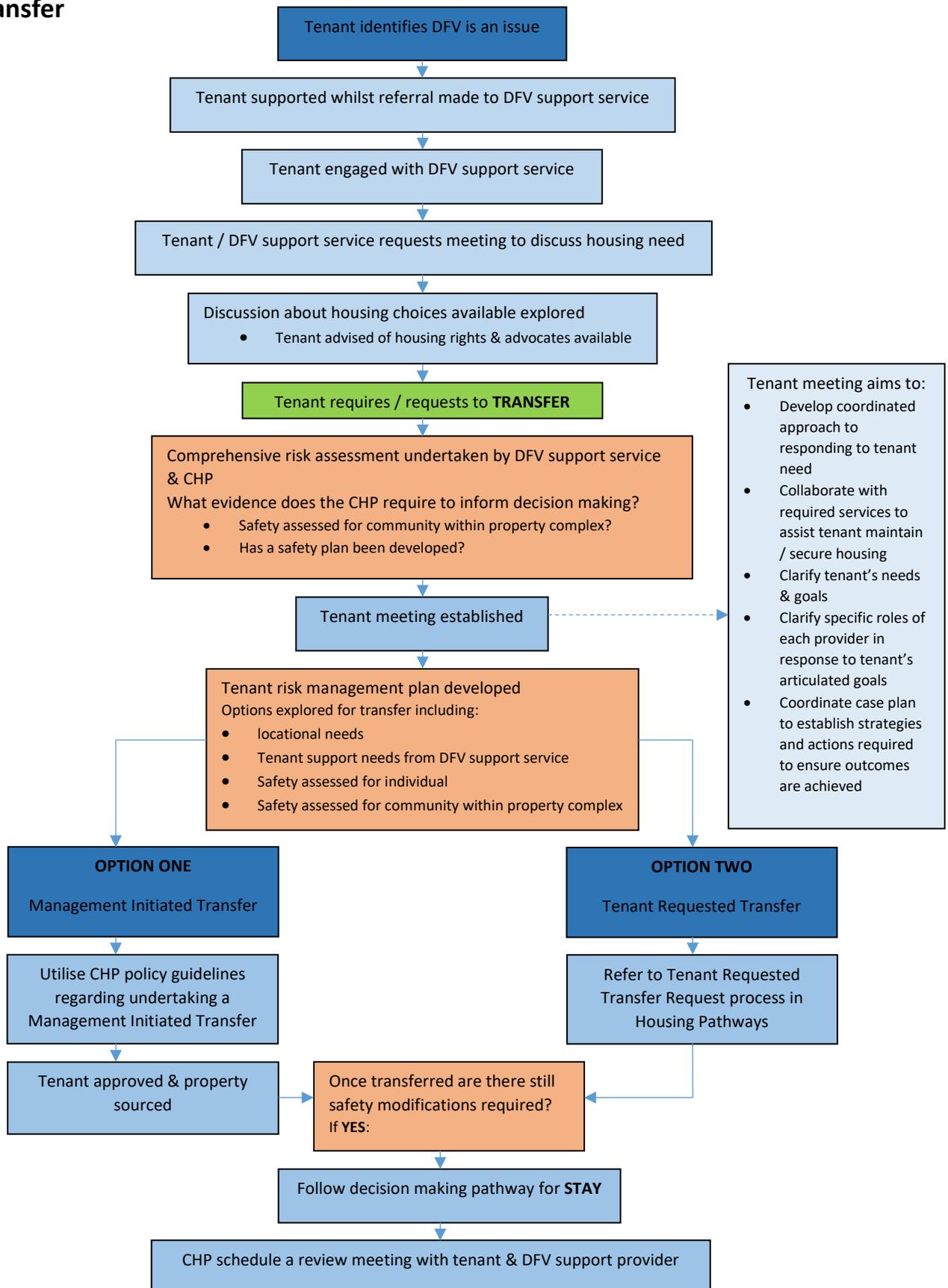
Responding to applicants identified as experiencing or at risk of domestic and family violence as part of the Housing Pathways assessment



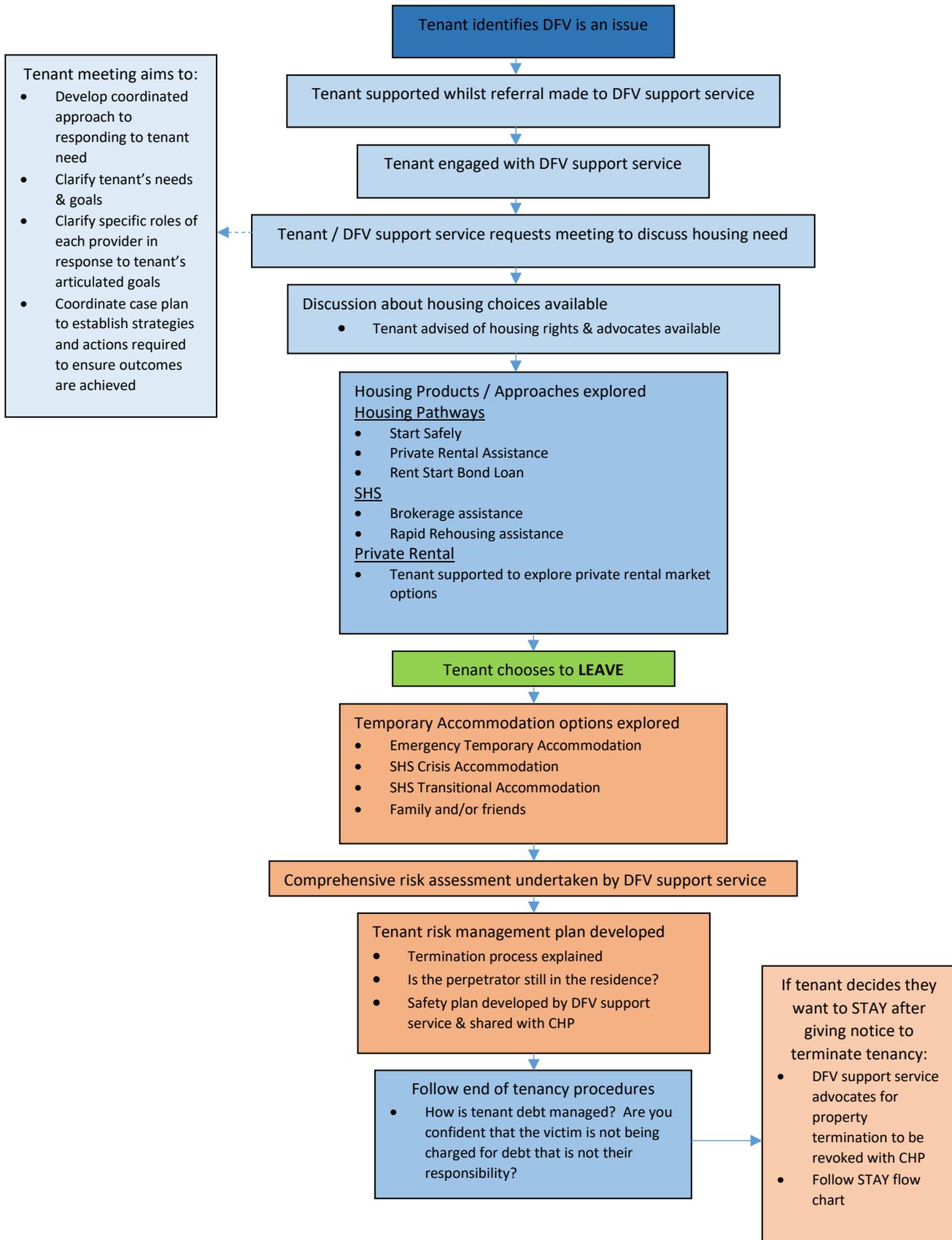
Supporting decision making about housing choices by tenants experiencing domestic and family violence: tenant requests to stay



Supporting decision making about housing choices made by tenants experiencing domestic and family violence: tenant requires / requests to transfer



Supporting decision making about housing choices made by tenants experiencing domestic and family violence: tenant chooses to leave



5 Guidance Tools & Checklists

Guidance tools and checklists have been developed to support good practice approaches. This includes the development of standardised processes for consistent practice within the community housing provider.

For example, a community housing provider might choose to incorporate the ***Supporting Decision Making Checklist if a Tenant Requests to Stay*** and the ***Home Safety Assessment Checklist*** into a procedure that supports decision making regarding home safety modifications. The checklists could provide evidence of a review process undertaken to inform requests for modifications as part of the approval process.

5.1 Issues of concern that could indicate domestic and family violence

Tenant repairs that might indicate domestic and family violence

The following list of repairs might indicate domestic and family violence is occurring within the tenancy:

- ◆ Broken door
- ◆ Broken lock
- ◆ Smashed lights
- ◆ Hole punched in the wall
- ◆ Lost keys
- ◆ Damage to bathroom door / lock
- ◆ Broken windows
- ◆ Any other damage that appears to have been caused by violence

Action

If one of these repairs is notified, make a referral to the Tenancy Manager for investigation with the tenant and further planning.

Tenant complaints or concerns that might indicate domestic and family violence

The following tenant complaints or concerns might indicate domestic and family violence is occurring within a tenancy:

- ◆ Nuisance and annoyance complaints
- ◆ General phone calls received expressing concern about tenant safety or some other issue indicating a potential domestic and family violence issue

Action

If one of these complaints or concerns is notified, make a referral to the Tenancy Manager for investigation with the tenant and further planning.

Housing professional observation

The following observations might indicate domestic and family violence is occurring within the tenancy:

- ◆ Obvious bruising such as on the face or arms
- ◆ Rent arrears
- ◆ Other recurring tenancy issues

Action

If one of these issues is identified, make a referral to the Tenancy Manager for investigation with the tenant and further planning.

5.2 Supporting Decision Making Checklist: Tenant Requests to Stay

When a request has been made to the CHP to undertake modifications to increase safety in the property, the following questions should be explored with the DFV support service and tenant:

1. Has the Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool been utilised to assess areas of risk?	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>
2. What process has been used to guide the decision making about the safety modifications that are required to enable the tenant to remain as safely as possible within their home? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was a structured assessment tool used to guide home safety planning? 	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>
3. What evidence does your organisation require to support your decision making about home safety modifications? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A copy of a home safety assessment tool used by the DFV support service Is an ADVO in place? Is a safety plan in place? Has an application been made for victim support funds? 	Y <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is a SOS Alarm being considered by the DFV support service in addition to the home safety modifications to assist a victim to maintain their safety?	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>
5. What is the timeline required for undertaking home safety modifications? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Day 2 Day 1 Week Other 	Y <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Are you confident that you have received enough information to guide CHP decision making and planning about home safety modifications required?	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>
7. What further information do you require to assist your decision making and tenancy planning?		
8. Who do you need to contact to get that information?		

5.3 Home Safety Assessment Checklist

Crucial to assessing a tenant's safety needs is reviewing their home – its layout, accessibility and security features. The following two audit tools have been developed to support assessment of both a stand-alone house and an apartment/unit (as the safety issues are different for each property type).

These audit tools can be used by Community Housing Providers to assess and determine what aspects of a property may need to be modified to increase a tenant's safety.

The tools are separated into two sections:

- A home safety audit checklist – which primarily consists of walking around all areas of the home, outside and inside, to examine potential entry points and risk areas.
- Guidance notes – this section provides some practical hints and tips on how to increase property safety features.

Home Safety Assessment Checklist: STAND ALONE HOUSES

The home safety assessment can be undertaken by any community housing employee and given to the relevant housing/tenancy worker in your organisation.

OUTSIDE – Front and Back Yard	YES	NO
Is the street number clearly visible from the street?		
Is the street number visible at night?		
Can people see the home clearly from the street?		
Could a person be seen hiding in the yard?		
Can you stop people from getting under the home?		
Is there sensor lighting installed?		
Does the sensor lighting work?		
Are entry and exit points adequately lit?		
Are there light timers?		
Does the letterbox have a lock?		
Is the electricity meter enclosed in a box?		
Is there an approved lock on the meter box?		
Can the garage be locked?		
Are bins, ladders etc. away from windows and gates?		
Is there a fence or lockable gate stopping easy access to the rear yard?		
DOORS	YES	NO
Are external doors solid?		
Are the door frames solid and in good condition?		
Do all doors have good quality locks?		
Do door locks have a single bolt system?		
Do door locks have a double bolt system?		
Are the locks in good working order?		
Does the front door have a peephole?		
Is a security screen door installed?		
Are sliding doors fitted with key locks?		

WINDOWS (and other common area access points)	YES	NO
Are windows of solid construction?		
Are window locks fitted?		
Are unused windows permanently closed and secured?		
Are windows able to be locked in a partially open position?		
Can windows be opened for ventilation if needed?		
Are manhole covers locked?		
Are there louver windows?		
Are skylights secured?		
TELEPHONE	YES	NO
Can telephone lines be tampered with?		
Are telephones pre-programmed with emergency contact numbers?		
Has the phone number been changed?		
Is the new phone number a silent number?		
KEYS	YES	NO
Is the location of all keys (windows and doors) known?		
Are keys out of view when the home is not occupied?		
Are security/screen door keys removed from the lock?		
MONITORING SYSTEMS	YES	NO
Is there a security camera installed?		
Is the security camera in working condition?		
Is the security camera tested regularly?		
ANY ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS	YES	NO

Home Safety Assessment Checklist: APARTMENTS/UNITS

OUTSIDE – Complex/Apartment Block	YES	NO
Does the complex/block of units have a secure gate?		
Is there a security door at all entry/exits?		
Is there a pin coded entry? (much harder for an intruder to enter)		
Is the street number for the building clearly visible from the street?		
Is the street number for the building visible at night?		
Can people see the block clearly from the street?		
Could a person be seen hiding outside of the block?		
Are the trees/shrubs around the complex trimmed?		
Can you stop people from getting inside the complex?		
Is there security lighting installed?		
Does the security lighting work?		
Are entry and exit points adequately lit?		
Are there light timers?		
Does the complex letterbox have a lock? (individual locks on each one)		
If there is a carpark/garage - can this be locked?		
Are bins, ladders etc. away from windows and balconies in complex?		
DOORS	YES	NO
Are external doors solid?		
Are the door frames solid and in good condition?		
Do all doors have good quality locks?		
Are the locks in good working order?		
Does the front door have a peephole?		
Is a security screen door installed? (check balcony/patio too)		
Are sliding doors fitted with locks? (check balcony/patio too)		

WINDOWS/BALCONY	YES	NO
Are windows of solid construction in apartment?		
Are window locks fitted?		
Are unused windows permanently closed and secured?		
Are windows able to be locked in a partially open position?		
Can windows be opened for ventilation if needed?		
Are skylights secured?		
Is it possible to access unit/apartment from the balcony or fire escape?		
Are the sliding doors on patio/balcony secured with locks		
Is there a security screen on the patio/balcony door?		
Are there timed/sensor lights on patio/balcony?		
TELEPHONE	YES	NO
Can telephone lines be tampered with?		
Are telephones pre-programmed with emergency contact numbers?		
Has the phone number been changed?		
Is the new phone number a silent number?		
KEYS	YES	NO
Is the location of all keys (windows, doors & balcony doors) known?		
Are keys out of view when the home is not occupied?		
Are security/screen door keys removed from the lock?		
MONITORING SYSTEMS	YES	NO
Is there a security camera installed?		
Is the security camera in working condition?		
Is the security camera tested regularly?		
ANY ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS	YES	NO

GUIDANCE NOTES

The intention of these guidance notes is to assist Community Housing Providers with some practical hints and tips on what to consider when conducting a property safety audit and practical guidance on how to improve safety features.

Street Number

- The property number should be easily visible day and night.

Landscaping

- Trees and shrubs should be trimmed to reduce hiding places and increase visibility to and from the street.
- Overhanging branches should be trimmed to prevent people using them to access other parts of the property, e.g. using a tree to get to an upper level of the property.
- All objects such as trestles, birdbaths, heavy pots and bins should be secured so as not to be used to break into windows.

Sensor Lighting

- Sensor lighting should be installed around the perimeter of the property to provide more effective illumination during the hours of darkness.
- Sensor lighting should be checked and maintained in good working order.
- Additional sensor lighting should be installed, particularly over entry/exit points.
- Consider using light timers to turn lights on/off when not at home.
- Timer globes are also available.

Letterbox & Power Board

- The letterbox should be fitted with a suitable lock set to restrict access to mail.
- The power board should be housed within a box to restrict tampering with the power supply.
- The box should be secured with a lock set approved by your electricity authority.

Garage & Garden Shed

- The garage should be locked to restrict access and theft.
- Roller, tilt and panel-lift doors can be secured with additional lock sets in the form of hasp and staple or padlocks.
- The garden shed should also be fitted with a suitable lock set, to restrict access.
- Windows within garages and garden sheds should also be fitted with locks or practical dowel to restrict access.
- Garden tools, equipment and ladders should be locked away when not in use to prevent them being used to gain access to the home.

Doors

- External doors and frames should be of solid construction.
- These doors should be fitted with quality deadlocks, which comply with the Australia/New Zealand Standards and Fire Regulations (Australian Building Code) to enable occupants to escape in emergency situations such as fires.
- Chain/bolt locks are preferred.
- Consider having a peephole installed in the door to monitor people at the door.
- Locks should be checked and maintained on a regular basis to ensure they are in good working order.
- Keys should be removed from locks while the tenant is absent to prevent intruders entering or leaving the home.
- Security/screen doors can be used to provide additional protection.
- Security/screen doors should be designed and installed to the Australian Standards.
- Where there is a screen door, install some Perspex around the main door handle so if anyone cuts the screen it's much harder to access the main door lock.
- Consider installing patio bolts on sliding doors.
- Under-house access points should be secured.
- Manholes should be locked.

Windows

- External windows and frames should be of solid construction.
- Window frames should be anchored to the building to prevent easy removal.
- It is recommended that all windows should be fitted with quality key-operated lock sets and kept locked when not in use.
- An intruder may break glass to unlock windows. Don't leave keys in the locks.
- Some styles of windows can be locked in a partially open position. A practical application of a piece of dowel or timber can prevent opening windows.
- If there is a skylight in the property then this should be kept suitably secured.
- Glass within doors and windows may also be reinforced to restrict unauthorized access via these areas.
- The existing glass can be reinforced internally with a shatter-resistant adhesive film to reduce attacks and restrict access.
- The existing glass may be replaced with laminated glass, again to reduce attacks & restrict access.
- Metal security grilles or shutters may be installed to restrict access & reduce attacks. (Note: caution should be exercised if you decide to install metal security grilles or screens. If they are not properly installed, they can trap occupants in an emergency such as a fire.)
- If there are louver windows, get them fixed in position if possible (because they are easy to break and see through).

Telephones

- Pre-program the speed dial function on the phone with the emergency number 000.
- Place a sticker on the telephone with the emergency number and local police number.
- Change the phone number to silent.

Keys

- Spare keys should not be hidden outside the home but left with trusted friends or neighbours.
- Keys should not be left in locks or in view but should be kept in a safe location, as intruders may use them to gain entry to the property.
- In situations of DFV, locks should be replaced when a perpetrator has moved from the property. This is to ensure no further access.

Monitoring Systems

- A camera system can be used to enhance the physical security of a property.
- The system should be designed to provide maximum coverage of the home and garage.
- Remember to regularly check the battery and test the system.
- Window alarms.

NOTE: When determining what modifications may be required at the property, avoid the 'fortress mentality'. It is important to try and get the balance right to encourage vigilance without encouraging anxiety.

5.4 Managing Domestic & Family Violence within a Community Housing Provider: Work, Health & Safety responsibilities checklist

Management Responsibilities

- Clearly defined roles & responsibilities for all employees
- Clearly documented safe work policies & procedures that are communicated to all staff
- WHS orientation for all new staff
- Ongoing training in safe work practices for management & staff
- Continuous identification of hazards, risk assessment & elimination or control of hazards
- Consultative mechanisms & follow-up procedures
- Incident reporting procedures
- Management of violence & aggression in work environments
- Support for injured staff & return to work strategies
- Information & instructions for contractors & visitors
- System established to monitor staff movements when they undertake home visits

Guidelines & policies for safe home visiting including:

- Tenant & environmental risk assessments
- Briefing for staff prior to visits
- Monitoring of staff movements
- Prevention & management of critical incidents
- Communication with staff & stakeholders
- Adequate supports for staff

Staff Responsibilities

- Understand management & staff responsibilities including WHS officers or WHS consultation processes
- Read, understand & comply with policies & procedures relating to workplace safety & risk management
- Attend training as required
- Understand professional boundaries
- Report all incidents & hazards immediately
- Complete office log / attendance board when leaving & returning to the office
- Raise any issues or concerns & seek support when required

Before leaving work premises to conduct a home visit:

- Test phone / other security monitoring equipment to ensure they work
- Review the tenant management system to see if there are any alerts you need to be aware of
- Depending on advice on the tenant management system, consider taking a staff member with you on the home visit
- Ensure the office knows your exact movements & return time
- Understand that CHP staff have a key role to play, alongside their colleagues in social services, health and the police, in keeping people safe.
- Understand that CHP staff are well placed to identify people with care and support needs, share information and work in partnership to coordinate responses

Note: All material presented here is for guidance purposes only. See your organisation's policies & procedures on these issues.

6 Tenant and Applicant Resources

Two tenant resources have been developed to be incorporated into all tenant lease sign up packs.

One provides information and advice on domestic and family violence. It identifies what a community housing provider might do if a tenant is experiencing domestic and family violence. It also provides advice about the range of services and supports available for victims of domestic and family violence.

The other provides information about the range of men's domestic violence behaviour change programs, provided by Government and non-government services, available across NSW. These programs are available for men whose behaviour has brought them into contact with the police or courts as a result of domestic and family violence.

Incorporating these resources into all tenant lease sign up packs enables community housing providers to more effectively contribute to the community in responding to domestic and family violence.

6.1 Domestic & Family Violence: Information & advice for tenants & applicants

INFORMATION & ADVICE FOR TENANTS & APPLICANTS

This leaflet explains what we can do if you are experiencing domestic & family violence.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Domestic & family violence is a crime in Australia.

Domestic & family violence is any form of **physical**, **psychological** and/or **financial abuse** or **control** a person experiences from a partner, ex-partner, family member, someone close to you or in a family-like arrangement such as carers or flatmates.

Domestic & family violence is against the law.

IT'S NOT JUST PHYSICAL

You do not have to be physically hit or hurt to have experienced domestic & family violence.

Domestic & family violence is more than physical abuse. It includes behaviour that is threatening & controlling that can cause you to fear for your own safety or another person's safety.

Other types of domestic & family violence include:

- **Emotional abuse** e.g. manipulation, isolation, put-downs, mind games
- **Financial abuse** e.g. forcing you to hand over control of income or assets, coercing you to take on debt or sign a contract, not allowing you to earn an income
- **Sexual abuse** e.g. any unwanted sexual activity.
- **Social abuse** e.g. insulting you in public
- **Threats** of physical violence & revenge
- **Property damage** e.g. smashing your belongings
- **Harming or threatening** to harm your pets

Domestic & family violence can leave you feeling stressed, anxious and/or depressed and impact on your health & wellbeing.

WHAT WILL WE DO TO HELP YOU?

One working day response

You can contact us and report domestic & family violence to us via phone, email or our website. We will respond within one working day (Monday – Friday).

You can also contact the Domestic Violence Line 24 hours per day on **1800 65 64 63**. If you are in immediate danger, call the Police on **000**.

ADVICE & INFORMATION

We know that every case is different so we will advise you of what options you have.

We will give you information about other agencies that offer further advice and support on such matters as tenancy advice and legal issues. With your permission, we will refer you for help.

SAFE PLACE TO MEET AND SAFE COMMUNICATION

Your safety is very important to us. We want to help you secure your ongoing safety from domestic and family violence. You can meet staff in private at our offices or at an agreed safe place. We will also agree how we can stay in contact with you in a safe way.

KEEPING YOUR INFORMATION SECURE

Your information is strictly confidential & will only be shared with a support service that is bound by law to keep it secure.

We will not give your details, or the information you provide, to anyone without your permission unless there are serious concerns for your or your children's safety. In

such cases, we have a legal responsibility to share information.

Your information will never be shared with the person who hurt you.

SENSITIVITY

We understand if you are more comfortable talking about your situation to someone who is the same sex as you. You should let us know if you want to speak to someone of the same sex and if we can, we will arrange that for you.

CHECK THE RISK TO SAFETY & THE SAFETY OF YOUR HOME

We will facilitate a risk assessment for all domestic & family violence cases. We will go through your options with you which may include increasing the security in your home.

If it isn't safe for you to stay in your home, we will give you advice, information & support to help you get alternative accommodation (such as emergency accommodation).

SUPPORT

One way for us to help you is to make a referral to a support service.

A referral includes information about you, for example: your name, phone number, what has happened and information about any court notices or protection orders. The referral includes any information about the person who hurt you, so that the service understands your situation & needs.

A referral is automatic when police officers attend a domestic & family violence incident or where there are domestic violence proceedings in court.

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR YOU & YOUR FAMILY

After the referral is made, a support service will contact you & offer you help with different issues you may face.

Support may include:

- Safety planning
- Emergency accommodation
- Counselling
- Access to financial assistance
- Court support, or
- Other services you may need to increase your safety.

WORKING WITH YOU

Important decisions about your safety should be made by you, and in most cases we will seek your consent before making a referral to a support service.

WORKING TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

We will work with our partners to support you and to deal with anyone causing domestic & family violence. We know that domestic violence cases involve many organisations & we will work closely with them to ensure you & your family are safe.

TRANSLATION & INTERPRETATION SERVICES

If you need this, we will provide you with translation & interpretation services.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT

We recognise that sometimes it is in the best interest of a victim (and their children) to be provided with support so that they can remain safely in the family home. In other cases, the best action is to assist the victim move to new accommodation. We will work with you to assist you maintain or secure safe and affordable housing.

For *eligible* tenants & applicants, we have access to **Start Safely**, a subsidy which provides short to medium term financial help to eligible clients leaving domestic and family violence so that they can secure private rental accommodation and do not have to return to their homes.

MORE HELP & ADVICE

Emergency accommodation

If you need emergency accommodation in NSW because of domestic & family violence, call the 24hr Domestic Violence Line on **1800 65 64 63**. They can refer you to services in your area. You can also call **Link2Home** on **1800 152 152**. Link2Home is a state-wide information & referral service & they can refer you to Specialist Homelessness Services that support women & children who are escaping domestic & family violence.

Support for male victims

Men who are victims of domestic & family violence can speak to **Victims Services** on **1800 633 063** or visit www.victimservices.justice.nsw.gov.au for confidential support & information.

National counselling helpline, information & support

1800 RESPECT is a national telephone & online counselling service for people who have been affected by sexual assault, domestic & family violence. Counsellors are qualified, professional & specialist trained and can be contacted on **1800 737 732** or www.1800respect.org.au/get-help/

Support for LGBTIQ communities

ACON is available to assist LGBTIQ people who have experienced or are experiencing domestic & family violence. www.acon.org.au/lgbti-health/domestic-and-family-violence/#DFV-Services

Legal Services

Women's Domestic Violence Advocacy Services provides court support. www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/domestic-violence

Women's Legal Service is a specialist legal service for women experiencing domestic & family violence. It can be contacted on **1800 810 784** or www.wlsnsw.org.au

Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre can be contacted on **1800 686 587**

Other services

Immigrant Women's Speakout can be contacted on **(02) 9635 8022**

Your nearest police station or local court can be found in the front of the White Pages phonebook.

Tenancy Advice

The **Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Services** provide advice & advocacy & assist tenants of private rental housing & social housing, boarders & lodgers & residential park residents. The Tenants Union can be contacted on 8117 3700 or search www.tenants.org.au for local services.

Technology & safety

Internet, email & location features on your computer & mobile devices help connect you to support services. However, this technology can also be used by your partner or ex-partner to monitor you & threaten your safety. If you do not feel safe on your personal phone and computer, you can:

- Use computers available for public access which can be found at libraries, community centres & internet cafes
- Create new email, Facebook & messaging accounts using an anonymous user name & new passwords
- Turn off the location feature on your mobile phone & your Facebook page

More information can be found at <http://www.dvrcv.org.au/knowledge-centre/technology-safety>

www.facebook.com/safety/tools

GETTING HELP WITH MONEY

If you are planning to leave a violent or abusive relationship or the perpetrator of the abuse leaves, you may be eligible for a crisis payment from Centrelink – ***you must contact the department within seven days of separation.***

6.2 Behaviour Change Programs: Information & advice for tenants & applicants

INFORMATION & ADVICE FOR TENANTS & APPLICANTS ON SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR MEN WHO WISH TO RECEIVE SUPPORT TO MANAGE THEIR BEHAVIOURS

In NSW, there are a range of men's domestic violence behaviour change programs, provided by Government and non-government services. These are provided in custodial and non-custodial settings, by welfare groups and by counselling services, and are a valuable service to men seeking to change their abusive behaviour.

As a Community Housing Provider, we are committed to supporting tenants and applicants to receive information on the range of services and supports available to them should they be seeking support and guidance on addressing issues that they have around their behaviour and attitudes. This is part of our commitment to addressing domestic and family violence across NSW.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS AVAILABLE

Men's Referral Service

The Men's Referral Service takes calls from men dealing with family and domestic violence matters. If your behaviour has brought you into contact with the police or courts and you're facing issues such as an intervention order, behaviour change, anger management, access or custody, the Men's Referral Service offers anonymous and confidential telephone counselling, information and referrals to help men stop using violent and controlling behaviour.

The Men's Referral Service will treat men with respect and do its best to help ensure men are provided with support. They will provide men with referrals to local services to help them take the next steps to stop using violent and controlling behaviour.

They can be contacted on **1300 766 491**. More information can be found at <http://mrs.org.au>

Men's behaviour change program

Men's Behaviour Change Programs work with men who use violence and abuse with (ex)partners and their children.

These programs typically involve assessment, including risk assessment, and then:

- Group work, individual counselling and case management for men.
- Support, information, referral, safety planning and (in some cases) counselling and case management for women and children.

Information on programs currently available can be found through contacting the Men's Referral Service.

Tenancy Advice

The **Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Services** provide advice & advocacy & assist tenants of private rental housing & social housing, boarders & lodgers & residential park residents. The Tenants Union can be contacted on 8117 3700 or search www.tenants.org.au for local services.

7 Case studies

A number of case studies have been developed to facilitate practice discussions between staff and build opportunities to explore how CHP staff might operate in different situations.

7.1 Scenario 1: Paying attention to your observations

Jess

Jess is a tenancy manager of a CHP. She notices that one of her tenants, Lily, frequently has neighbours making noise complaints about her whenever her boyfriend David stays over. They have arguments fairly regularly, but there is never any property damage. She also notices that Lily seems to have become more and more of a recluse. She used to be quite chatty and bubbly, often seen outside her property smoking with the neighbours. She doesn't go out as much and when she does it's usually only when her boyfriend is with her.

Jess organises for a home visit to discuss noise complaints with Lily, purposefully making it at a time when she knows Lily's boyfriend is at work. She informs Lily about the noise complaints and asks her if everything is ok – Lily says it's fine and makes it clear that she doesn't want Jess asking any personal questions. Jess explains that everything Lily says to her will be in confidence but puts no pressure on her to talk. She tells her about the local women's group run out of the neighbourhood centre – she explains that lots of women go there when they just need a safe place to chat and to learn new skills or have fun. Jess knows they are running a cooking class in a couple of weeks and suggests Lily go to check it out. She gives Lily a flyer with the information on it and the types of thing the service offers – including support for victims of domestic violence. It also has some information on what domestic violence looks like, including social isolation, emotional and psychological abuse and coercion.

Lily

Lily starts to think about the flyer Jess gave her and the information Jess shared with her. She initially thought Jess was overstepping her mark, but she appreciated that Jess didn't push her to tell her anything personal. She kept the brochure for a few weeks and read about the service. She knows that David won't care if she's going to a cooking class with all women but she asks his permission anyway – being careful not to tell him it's a support service but just that it's a cooking class where she gets to bring home a free meal each week. Thankfully he agrees so she decides to head along. She attends the first cooking class, and finds that even though they do learn about cooking – they mainly talk about what's going on in their lives. One of the support workers starts talking about domestic violence and Lily immediately tunes out – she isn't a victim of domestic violence as David never puts a hand to her. Then the support worker asks her what her relationship with David is like, if she feels happy when he comes home from work and what they mainly argue about. She explains that David usually gets angry at her when she doesn't tell him what she's doing or where she is, and that he hates her wearing certain clothes out so she finds it easier to just not go out much anymore. She explains that she doesn't see many of her friends or family anymore as David doesn't like them and always puts them down - so that she doesn't feel like she should be spending time with them. She says that David does yell quite a bit – and she always feels a bit worried when he gets home from work or comes over, but he never physically hurts her and surely he just wants to know where she is all the time because he loves her so much. The support worker explains to Lily that not all domestic violence is physical – that David's behaviours actually don't sound healthy and respectful. She suggests that if Lily wants, she can pretend to be going to the cooking class but in actual fact they could sit together and work through how Lily feels about her relationship. She explains to Lily that this kind of violence is just as bad as being hurt physically, and explains that David is behaving in a dangerous way. After a few weeks, Lily decides that this is a good idea. She realises her relationship is unsafe and unhealthy. She needs help and support to leave the relationship.

Jess

Jess has been keeping a subtle eye on Lily. She knows she's been visiting the support service regularly but also knows that David and her relationship has become increasingly more aggressive. David is nearly always with Lily and their arguments seem to be becoming more frequent and regular. Jess calls Lily in for a meeting with her. She explains that she is on Lily's side and that she would do anything she can to keep her safe. She explains that they can do some minor things to her property to help keep her safe if she chooses to end her relationship with David. She explains that by putting locks on the windows and sensor lights on the windows and doors she might feel more secure. She explains that Lily's safety is the most important thing and if she feels like she needs to go away for a while to be safe, that it's ok and that she won't lose her property. Jess knows that many women fear leaving their property in case they are forced to move out. The fear of being homeless often overshadows the fear of being in the violent relationship. Lily didn't know any of this information – and accepts Jess's help to make her property safer. Jess explains that she has ended the relationship and that she is scared for her safety. With Lily's permission, Jess calls her support worker who talks to Jess around what safety measures are in place for Lily and what to do when David arrives. Talking to the support worker, Jess feels more skilled and confident in being able to assist Lily. Lily feels safe knowing that she has both Jess and her support worker looking out for her.

7.2 Scenario 2: Working with someone who has English as a second language

Tony

Tony has just started working as a tenancy manager for a CHP in a regional area. He is getting to know each of the tenants in the properties in his area and meets a young family - Joseph, Zahra and their son Tommy. He knows that English is not their first language, and notices that Zahra is very quiet and doesn't speak much. He assumes that she doesn't understand very much English as Joseph will frequently speak on her behalf when Tony asks their family any questions.

After a few months, Tony conducts a property inspection on Zahra and Joseph's unit. Zahra doesn't say anything throughout the entire inspection, while Joseph shows Tony inside. Tommy, who is 2, clings to his mother's side the entire time.

Tony notices some minor damage to the bathroom door – it looks as though it's been kicked. He thinks possibly the bathroom door gets jammed and asks Zahra about this. She doesn't say anything and Joseph steps in and explains that he had to kick it open one time but he's fixed the latch since then. Tony has a quick look at the latch and notices that it doesn't appear to be new or replaced.

Later on, Tony is doing an inspection on the unit next to Zahra and Josephs. As he's about to leave he notices Zahra coming back from doing the shopping. She is visibly pregnant. Tony goes to congratulate her, but upon seeing Tony, Zahra looks terrified and quickly darts into the Unit. Tony casually asks Zahra's neighbour if they have much to do with them. The neighbour raises her eyebrows and says "they keep to themselves, but Zahra doesn't seem to be having a good time at the moment". She doesn't elaborate.

Kate

Tony knocks on Zahra's door but she doesn't answer. He heads back to the office and decides to speak to his colleague Kate about the situation, as something didn't quite seem right. Kate used to manage these Units and she said she also noticed frequent minor property damage to the Unit – nothing ever bad enough to stand out, but now Tony mentioned what he saw, she realised there may be a pattern. They decide to unpack and discuss the behaviours they have noticed and use the CHP Toolkit to do this. Tony realises that as a male tenancy manager, Zahra might be uncomfortable to talk to him if anything was wrong. Tony also knows, through his training in domestic and family violence, that domestic violence often starts or gets worse during pregnancy.

Zahra

Tony and Kate decide to ask Zahra to come in to the office – just to finalise some paperwork and give them some information about when the baby is due to arrive. Tony asks Kate to call the household in the hope of getting Zahra alone. Joseph picks up the phone and insists on coming with Zahra. Tony and Kate struggle to find a reason to get Zahra alone. Tony then realises they have the kids play area in one of the office rooms – so when the family arrive, Kate leads Zahra and Tommy into the play room. Tony stays with Joseph in the office and asks the routine questions. Kate asks Zahra if everything is ok. Zahra is clearly upset and has some light bruising around her neck but as her level of English isn't great, Kate isn't able to understand what's going on. As Zahra's first language is Indonesian, Kate gets the interpreting service on the line and they are able to get onto an interpreter. Kate wants to know if Zahra would like some support and help. Zahra answers yes.

Tony then rings the local domestic violence service that works with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse women. He explains the situation and has Zahra's permission to pass on her details. An

Indonesian woman from the service contacts Zahra and makes an appointment for Zahra to come in to see her.

Later that week Tony is notified by the service that the police would be coming later that day to apprehend Joseph. The notes Tony took relating to the property damage and his reasons for contacting the domestic violence service are all filed and able to be used in Court if required. Tony learns that Zahra has been experiencing domestic violence for all of their relationship. Joseph is charged and Zahra moves into the local refuge until Joseph's court date – where he is sentenced.

7.3 Scenario 3: Working with an SHS youth service

Katie

Katie is an 18 year old living in a transitional property that is supported by a youth service. Katie has never had a great relationship with her parents and ran away from home when she was 16. She found herself in a youth refuge, who then helped her find her feet, get a job and move into this property on her own for the next year.

She's going pretty well, and has started to date an older man, Max, at her work. He is lovely, he buys her lots of gifts and takes her out to nice dinners. He spoils her with new clothes and treats her like a princess. She is starting to really fall for him. Max tells her that he is going to look after her, and she doesn't need to worry about money anymore as he will always look after her. He gives her money to go out with her friends –but always wants photos of what they are doing and where they go. He even wants photos of the outfits she wears out – she sends him a selfie every time she leaves the house.

Jodie

Jodie is Katie's support worker at the transitional property. Katie has been going really well, and has been much happier lately than ever before. She's started dating someone new – and Jodie sees how happy it's making Katie. Katie meets with Jodie every month. After a while Jodie notices that Katie has started postponing their meetings. She seems to be coming more and more disengaged and doesn't want to chat to Jodie. When Jodie finally gets hold of Katie she tells Jodie that she doesn't need her anymore because she has Max and he is looking out for her now. Jodie is a bit concerned about this, as she knows she's only been dating Max for a couple of months and that he's a fair bit older than her. She tells Katie that as part of her being able to stay in transitional housing she has to check in with Jodie. Katie is really angry and says that soon she will move in with Max anyway so she won't need her and the property.

Katie

Katie really wants to move in with Max. For some reason, he keeps saying that it's too soon – but they spend every night together anyway. Katie is sick of having to talk to Jodie about what she's doing. She is annoyed that Max doesn't want to live with her – he seems obsessed with her in every other way. He constantly wants to see photos of her and asks her what she's been doing whenever they are apart. He even wants to know where and what she ate for breakfast. Lately he's been commenting that the skirt she bought is a bit tight – she knows she's been putting on a bit of weight but she thought she looked good. Max doesn't seem to like it and she thinks maybe that's why he doesn't want to move in with her. Katie puts herself on a diet and Max seems really happy about it.

Max also has started going through Katie's phone. He looks through all her text messages every time he sees her and she thinks that he's been logging into her Facebook and reading what is happening on there. She doesn't mind though because she's got nothing to hide. The other day she picked up his phone and thought she may as well do the same. He was so angry – he slammed it out of her hand and gave her a fright. She's a bit confused why he can do it, but she can't.

Whenever Katie and Max argue he gets so angry at her, and tells her he can't believe she is arguing with him after he has given her so much. After all – he's paid for her dress, her watch, her earrings and helps pay her rent. Katie knows Max is right so she shuts up and doesn't say anything.

Jodie

Jodie is becoming increasingly worried about Katie. She notices that she's lost a heap of weight, and is starting to dress very differently from before. Jodie learns that Max is buying all of Katie's clothes now. Jodie asks Katie if she's been going well and if she's been exercising (as she notices her weight loss). Katie tells Jodie that Max likes her trim so she's been trying to go to the gym twice a day.

Jodie is concerned. She asks Katie to tell her a bit more about Max and their plans. Katie explains to Jodie that she doesn't have time because Max will be waiting and he gets really angry whenever she's late and he'll be wondering what she's doing for so long. Jodie insists that Katie book in another appointment with her in two weeks' time, since they've missed the last few. Katie reluctantly agrees.

In the meantime, Jodie calls 1800RESPECT and talks to the counsellors around her concerns with Katie and her relationship with Max. Jodie thinks that maybe she's overthinking it, and that Katie is in a happy and healthy relationship for an 18 year old. The counsellors explain to Jodie that Max's behaviour does sound troubling. The counsellor helps Jodie feel confident in raising her concerns with Katie at their next meeting. Jodie knows that Katie trusts her, and she doesn't want to jeopardise that. She knows that this trust is important and that if Max's controlling behaviour becomes worse, Jodie might be the only safe person Katie has.

Katie

Max has become a bit of a jerk. She still loves him, but is getting sick of him constantly asking questions around who she has been with and why. He even made her put this application on her phone that tracks where she is. He says it's to keep her safe but she thinks he's becoming a bit paranoid. Every time she brings it up he loses it – he even slapped her once. It wasn't that bad, but it left a big red mark and she was shocked. He apologised and said he'd never do it again.

She goes to see her support worker Jodie. Jodie is nice and Katie trusts her, so when Jodie starts asking her a few questions about Max and if she's happy – Katie breaks down. She realises that she's not happy, even though she loves Max so much. She relies on him for everything and she couldn't live without him – but she hates how he makes her feel sometimes and that she doesn't have any privacy anymore.

Jodie explains that there is a great hotline called 1800RESPECT that she can call who give over the phone professional counselling. Katie doesn't want to go and see another service as she's been to so many over the years, but ringing someone could be ok. Katie rings them and finds someone who completely understand what Katie is going through. She doesn't push her to leave Max or to break up with him – she just listens. Katie starts to realise how much she's missed being listened to. She starts to resent Max, and knows deep down that he's not the one for her.

Eventually, with the help of Jodie and 1800 RESPECT – Katie ends her relationship with Max.

7.4 Scenario 4: Working with an Aboriginal tenant

Casey

Casey is an Aboriginal woman living in a CHP in regional New South Wales. She has been in an on again / off again relationship with Darren, the father of her three children, for the past 10 years. Darren is a violent man, particularly when he drinks. Casey has previously taken an AVO out against Darren, but had a very bad experience with the police when doing so. When she was younger, she had her children temporarily removed because of Darren's ongoing violence and is terrified of losing them again. She worked very hard to regain care of her children. She does not trust social workers and child protection workers as she believes they don't understand what she has been through, nor how hard she has had to work to be where she is today.

Casey loves Darren and strongly believes he is a good father to their children when he is not on the grog. She wants their relationship to continue, but doesn't want the grog or violence to be part of their relationship.

Fiona

Fiona is the community liaison worker at the CHP where Casey lives with her children. Fiona knows of Casey's and Darren's tumultuous relationship and knows that Darren has been violent towards Casey in the past. Casey keeps to herself and when Fiona tries to engage with her, Casey is wary and does not share much. She seems very reluctant to talk to Fiona about what is going on or how her children are.

One day, Fiona is alerted by another tenant that Casey and Darren have been arguing and that there has been some significant damage to the property. She needs to talk to Casey to see if she is ok and try to get her some help. Fiona is worried that Casey may end up losing her property as there has been damage to the property a few times now.

Fiona makes an appointment with Casey, who clearly doesn't want to engage with her. Fiona recognises that as a non-Aboriginal woman, Casey may distrust her. Fiona asks Casey whether she would prefer to work with an Aboriginal worker, saying that she can arrange that if Casey would like. Casey asks where the Aboriginal worker is from, and when Fiona tells her, she says no. Casey explains to Fiona that the Aboriginal worker is her cousin's partner and she doesn't want her to know any of her family business.

Casey

Casey is very unsure of Fiona at first, but likes that she offered to get an Aboriginal worker, even though she said no to the offer. Casey likes that Fiona seems to understand why she might distrust her as a non-Aboriginal woman. This made Casey feel more at ease, almost as though Fiona understood some of what she had been through.

Casey attends the meeting with Fiona, who greets her with a big smile. The office is bright and welcoming and she feels safe there. Fiona explains that she only wants what is best for Casey and her children, saying that she is there to support Casey and advocate for her needs. Fiona says that she is also not there to judge Casey or tell her what to do. Casey feels more relaxed and starts to open up to Fiona about what has been happening. Fiona says she thinks that Casey should talk to the police, but Casey definitely does not want to do this. Casey is worried that she will lose the property if she does not call the police. Fiona doesn't force her to do anything, she listens and understands why Casey might not want to talk to the police. Fiona gives her a few options around what she could do to help herself and her children feel safer.

Fiona

Casey comes to meet with Fiona and she is clearly terrified. Fiona tries to make her feel as relaxed as possible. She explains that she understands if Casey doesn't want to share anything with her, but tells her that she is worried about her and wants her to be happy and feel safe.

After Casey tells Fiona some of what Darren has been doing, Fiona recommends that Casey contact the police. Fiona sees Casey immediately shut down. Casey clearly does not want the police to be involved. Fiona understands that Casey has had terrible experiences with the police before. She explains that there are now police officers called Domestic Violence Liaison Officers (DVLO) who are trained specifically in domestic and family violence. Fiona gives Casey the card for one of the police officers, just in case Casey wants to call them one day.

Fiona also explains to Casey that there are a number of wonderful services in her area that can help her. She tells her about the local Men's Shed that Darren might like to go to, where they talk about addressing violence and alcohol abuse. She tells her about the local Aboriginal support service for women only where Casey can get support and where the kids can go to playgroup. She also tells her about the local refuge and gives her the number for the DV Line. She explains that if Casey ever feels unsafe and needs to leave her house, that she can call the DV Line and they can help her find a local refuge to sleep in. Fiona also explains that the CHP can help to make her property a bit safer and change the locks or put locks on the windows if she chooses to end her relationship with Darren. Casey says she doesn't want to end the relationship – and Fiona makes no judgement regarding that decision.

Casey

Casey feels like she has a lot of options going forward. She talks to Darren about his behaviour again and he says he is sorry. She tells him about the local Men's Shed and says that she thinks he should go. Darren agrees. He doesn't want to be abusive and lose Casey and their children again. Darren also starts going to the Men's Behaviour Change program run out of the Men's Shed.

Casey visits the local Aboriginal women's service where the kids can go to playgroup and she can enjoy some time having a yarn and a cup of tea with the women there. She doesn't have to share anything with them, but she eventually starts seeing one of the counsellors there regularly. She never calls the DVLO but she hears good things about them from some of the other women so she keeps her card just in case Darren is violent again. She feels supported in these decisions. She doesn't feel judged like she has in the past.

8 A resource for employers: supporting staff working with domestic and family violence

As we grow our understanding of the widespread social prevalence of domestic and family violence (DFV), it is important for employers to consider how they might respond if an employee is affected in some way by domestic and family violence.

Support strategies

Given the prevalence of domestic and family violence - employees may be affected through personal or vicarious exposure. It is important to remember that disclosure of DFV needs to be managed sensitively and confidentially with a range of support options. It is imperative that employees are supported respectfully and within the organisations human resource scope.

While the following support strategies may be appropriate for some individuals, it is important to recognise the need to respect individual differences. Managers and employees should discuss the most suitable arrangements for each individual as required.

1. **Debriefing** – wherever possible, in the first instance, it is helpful to discuss support strategies with the appropriate line manager and develop a support plan. The support plan may include debriefing through supervision or accessing external support.
2. **Employee Assistance Program** - An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a work-based intervention program designed to enhance the emotional, mental and general psychological wellbeing of all employees. The aim is to provide preventive and proactive interventions for the early detection, identification and/or resolution of both work and personal problems that may adversely affect performance and wellbeing.
3. **1800RESPECT** - is a national, professional telephone and online counselling service established by the Commonwealth Government.

1800RESPECT provides a confidential and professional counselling, information and referral service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service is available to individuals who have experienced or are at risk of domestic and family violence and/or sexual assault, their family and friends, as well as frontline and isolated workers.

1800Respect also has information available for employers to guide their response in how they can support employees <https://www.1800respect.org.au/workers/>

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of Managers

- Employees should be informed that their employer understands that domestic violence can affect the workplace and that support will be confidentially provided¹.
- To support Work Health & Safety, follow up with effected employees to ensure they have undertaken the agreed support strategy.

¹ <https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/research/gendered-violence-research-network/gendered-violence-work/>

- The Domestic Violence Workplace Policy website provides useful information for supporting employees affected by domestic and family violence
[https://www.officeforwomen.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/16363/DCSI_Domestic_ViolenceWorkplacePolicy_Staff- Guidelines.pdf](https://www.officeforwomen.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/16363/DCSI_Domestic_ViolenceWorkplacePolicy_Staff-Guidelines.pdf)

Responsibilities of Employees

- Wherever possible, as part of good work health & safety; it is good practice to regularly check-in with line management.
- Disclosures of domestic and family violence can have a personal and professional impact - if employees feel negatively impacted it is important to bring this to the attention of line management as soon as practicable.
- It is important to understand that any requests for support will be managed respectfully and confidentially.
- It is the responsibility of employees to follow up their preferred support strategy and to advise their manager of their attendance.

Do's and don'ts for supporting employees impacted by domestic and family violence throughout the course of their work

- **Do inform staff:** that their workplace understands how domestic violence can impact work and **they can feel safe enough to disclose** if they need support from their workplace
- **Do be sensitive:** approach your discussion with the same sensitivity and confidentiality you would use with any sensitive workplace issue.
- **Do assure the member that you will respect their privacy and keep the matter confidential:** discuss the matter only with those who need to know.
- **Do validate the disclosure:** Be aware that some victims may feel embarrassed that their relationship has become violent – validate their experience and reinforce their courage.
- **Do ask what they would like you to do:** Do they want you to advocate on their behalf - offer the range of options, Individual support, EAP or 1800RESPECT. Ensure that the person has control over next steps.
- **Do discuss a support strategy:** Ask them what they need to ensure that they feel safe and supported at work. Go through the possible actions listed in the support strategies.
- **Don't become personally involved:** your role is not to fix the domestic violence but to assist your employee in the first instance at work. Under no circumstances should you visit the employees' home or place yourself at risk.
- **Don't make this a conversation topic around the water cooler**
- **Don't be judgmental or ask questions about why the violence is occurring:** Your responsibilities are to ensure staff can get to work and do their job safely. Asking questions like 'why don't you leave' are inappropriate. It is the worker's decision to stay or go. These situations are often complicated and difficult. Do not judge their decision.
- **Don't ask for details about what is happening in the home or in the employees' private life:** This is a workplace issue and what is happening at home is not your concern. You are not a domestic violence counsellor, so refer your employee to appropriate supports that can assist.
- **Don't tell the person what to do:** You are not a domestic violence expert. After you have informed them of your role and what you can do to assist, let them make the decisions about matters which affect them.
- **Don't think you know best:** One size does not fit all. Provide options for support; further information such as the legal process can be provided through 1800RESPECT or Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Reference: Material adapted from the Do's and Don'ts to supporting employees impacted by Domestic and Family Violence; Safe at Home Safe at Work project: Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearing House. SDA Union ACT/ NSW & University of NSW

9 Information about domestic and family violence

The following resources have been developed to support all staff working across a community housing provider to increase their understanding about domestic and family violence.

The Duluth Model Power and Control Wheel provides a simplified understanding of various forms of domestic and family violence from the perspective of the victim being subjected to the violence. It is included in this toolkit to support community housing providers to understand the dynamics underpinning domestic and family violence.

The information resources could be used as part of a staff induction kit and would support staff information sessions as part of building a community housing provider's housing management practice.

9.1 Domestic and Family Violence: an information resource for housing professionals

DEFINITIONS AND FORMS OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Definition

This toolkit distinguishes tenants and / or applicants currently experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV) and those with a history of DFV. The following language is used to provide clarity on a persons' circumstances:

- *Victim/s* is used as a reference to a person currently experiencing DFV.
- *Survivor/s* is used as a reference to a person that is no longer living in a DFV relationship.

Domestic violence or abuse refers to a situation where one partner in a relationship, or a family member, is using violent and/or abusive behaviours in order to control and dominate another.²

Abuse happens when one person tries to control or hurt another. Abuse may be physical, such as hitting, pushing or choking. Abuse can also be other things such as putting a victim down, making a victim feel worthless, or being possessive and jealous to prevent the person from speaking to friends or family.³

Domestic violence is any behaviour that causes physical, sexual or emotional damage, or causes someone in the relationship to live in fear. Non-physical forms of abuse can be just as damaging as physical violence.

Domestic violence is also commonly known as:

- Family violence
- Relationship violence
- Intimate partner violence
- Child abuse

Domestic violence does not usually take the form of a single incident. It is ongoing behaviour that gradually undermines the victim's confidence and ability to leave the violent person. The severity and frequency of violence can escalate over time.

Useful information about domestic and family violence can be found on the 1800 RESPECT National Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence Counselling Service www.1800respect.org.au

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

One of the challenges in seeking to address and prevent domestic and family violence is that there is a lot of misunderstanding and myths about the issue. Such misinformation not only creates further

² Queensland Domestic Violence Prevention Centre. Understanding domestic and family violence. <http://www.domesticviolence.com.au/>

³ <http://www.dvrcv.org.au/about-us/relationship-violence>

difficulties to prevent DFV but also reinforces stereotypes. The following are some of the myths and facts about DFV.⁴

Myth: Domestic and family violence happens only to poor, uneducated women and women from certain cultures.

Truth: People of any class, culture, religion, sexual orientation, marital status and age can be victims or perpetrators of domestic violence.

Myth: Most people who commit violence are under the effects of alcohol or drugs.

Truth: Although many abusive partners also abuse alcohol and/or drugs, and some are more likely to be physically violent or use more extreme violence when their judgement is impaired, this is not the underlying cause of the abuse. Many people who abuse alcohol or drugs are not violent and abusive. Alcohol and/or drugs do not cause domestic violence.

Myth: Some people deserve to be abused; they are responsible for the violence or they provoke it.

Truth: No one deserves to be abused. The only person responsible for the abuse is the abuser. Abusers tend to blame the victim for their behaviour.

Myth: If the victim didn't like it, she would leave.

Truth: There are many reasons why a woman may not leave, including fear for herself, her children and even pets. Often women face significant practical barriers to separating from their partners, including a lack of money and housing options. Due to the effects of the abuse, many women lack confidence in their own abilities and accurate information about their options. Not leaving does not mean that the situation is okay or that the victim wants to be abused. The most dangerous time for a woman who is being abused is when she tries to leave. Often a victim does not necessarily want to leave the relationship but wants the violence to stop. Providing non-judgmental support is vital.

Myth: Abusers are mentally ill, psychopathic or have a personality disorder.

Truth: Research does not support this view. Most men who use violence against family members demonstrate acceptable behaviour in other settings. Many are considered respectable members of the community, and other people are often reluctant to believe they could be abusive.

Myth: Domestic and family violence is a personal problem between a husband and wife.

Truth: Domestic and family violence affects everyone and is everyone's business.

⁴ <http://www.thelookout.org.au/fact-sheet-5-family-violence-myths-and-facts>

Myth: Stress and anger lead to violence.

Truth: Violent behaviour is a choice. Perpetrators use it to control and dominate their victims, and their actions are very deliberate. Usually perpetrators of domestic and family violence are never violent outside the home or in public, even when under stress.

Myth: Violence is about anger and rage. The perpetrator just snapped because they were angry.

Truth: Domestic and Family Violence is about power and control. Family violence nearly always happens in private, with no witnesses. Perpetrators do not generally abuse their workmates or bosses, regardless of the amount of stress they experience at work. Very often abusers hurt victims in parts of their bodies where the injuries won't show. Perpetrators are often highly manipulative and blame the victim when they are physically violent for making them angry. This is not acceptable.

WHO IS AT RISK?

Domestic violence and abuse is not limited to one particular group – it is not limited to gender, age, or particular social groups, it occurs among married and de facto couples, couples who are dating, homosexual and heterosexual relationships, and people from all racial, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds.⁵ However, statistics show that women and children are more vulnerable to domestic violence. In 2005 the Australian Bureau of Statistics conducted a survey on men and women's personal safety and exposure to violence since the age of fifteen. The survey highlighted the prevalence of domestic and family violence effecting women:

- 1 in 5 women have experienced sexual violence
- 1 in 6 women have experienced physical and sexual violence from a current or former partner
- 1 in 4 women had experienced emotional abuse by a former or current partner
- 1 in 3 women had experienced physical violence by a former or current partner
- 1 in 5 women have been stalked

The vast majority of dangerous, abusive and violent behaviour that occurs in the privacy of people's homes is committed by men against women. Research shows that men are more likely to be the perpetrators and women the victims⁶.

Impacts of domestic and family violence on children

It is important to acknowledge the long term effects of children's exposure to domestic violence. Children who live in homes where there is domestic violence grow up in an environment that is unpredictable, filled with tension and anxiety and dominated by fear. This can lead to significant emotional and psychological trauma.

⁵ Phillips, J., & Park, M. (2006, December 12). Measuring domestic violence and sexual assault against women: A review of the literature and statistics.

⁶ <http://www.domesticviolence.com.au/pages/domestic-violence-statistics.php>

Evidence suggests that children exposed to domestic violence can severely impact a child's ability to form healthy relationships, increases the likelihood of the development of mental health disorders and behavioural disorders, and increases the risk of future inter-generational violence.

Mandatory Reporting

In NSW all community service organisations are legally mandated to respond to children and / or young people (up to age 16) at risk of harm.

By law, all social housing staff are mandatory reporters. If an employee has a reasonable suspicion or concern that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm, a report must be made to NSW Family & Community Services. As such, it is imperative that all housing professionals are aware of the process of notifying a child at risk.

To make a mandatory report:

- Phone **000** immediately if there is a life-threatening situation
- Non - government organisations can phone the Keep Them Safe support line **1800 772479** for assistance. To guide decision making to severity of risk, a decision report will be generated from the Mandatory Reporting Guide based on the information supplied.
- The Mandatory Reporting Guide is also available online at http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au/reporting_concerns/mandatory_reporter_guide
- A Risk of Significant Harm fax form can be completed and faxed to the Child Protection Helpline **9633 7666**
- If the decision report does not indicate significant harm and you are still concerned, consult with the Child Protection Helpline on **13 36 27**

TYPES OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Domestic and family violence is not limited to physical violence and can often be enacted in a combination of ways. The following describes the various types of abuse:

1. **Physical assault** – physical force with the intent to injure, control or intimidate. Some forms of physical violence are: pushing, shaking, slapping, forced sexual activity against a person's will, throwing things, damaging property, hurting or killing pets.
2. **Sexual** – coercive or unwanted sexual activity, such as rape or undesired and humiliating sexual acts.
3. **Financial** – controlling a victim's access to money reinforces a position of power and can create barriers to accessing required support. Forcing a victim to work or limiting their access to any income is common.
4. **Emotional, cultural and psychological** – this form of violence is often unrecognised and can be very damaging. Some forms of emotional violence are verbal abuse, threatening behaviours, humiliation, blackmail and emotional manipulation. Perpetrators can also not allow a victim to participate in the religion, cultural practices or language of preference.
5. **Social** – this form of DFV isolates a victim from their family, friends and support networks. When a victim becomes socially isolated it is more difficult to access support.
6. **Stalking** – this behaviour has become more prevalent due to increased access through technology such as social media and smart phone apps which can track a persons' location.⁷

⁷ <http://www.smartsafe.org.au/abuse-technology-domestic-violence-and-stalking>

7. **Online** harassment, sending unwanted explicit messages or photos or sharing private photos or messages via **social media** is also a form of abuse.

Which groups are affected by domestic and family violence?

As previously stated, domestic and family violence occurs in all cultures, races and religions. It is found in all communities and across all demographics including age, gender and socio-economic status. Domestic and family violence is made up of many controlling and intimidating behaviours, often much wider than physical violence alone. While there are many similar factors across many groups it is important to highlight particular vulnerabilities in specific groups.

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer relationships

Incidents of domestic violence in same-sex or gender alternative relationships share many of the characteristics of domestic violence as heterosexual relationships. However, there are a number of unique factors such as the following:

- *‘Outing’* – threatening someone who has not disclosed their sexuality to family, friends or work place can be used as a form of control and manipulation.
- *Abuse becomes associated with sexuality*: one of the impacts of homophobia can be internalised homophobia. This can manifest by a person believing they are experiencing domestic violence due to their sexual orientation.
- *Lack of information in the community about same-sex violence*: there is limited information available in the community about domestic violence in same sex relationships. This can increase the likelihood of isolation and limits the opportunity to access support and information.
- *Abuse can be seen as mutual*: In a same-sex relationship there is more frequently no clearly identifiable abuser or victim and the abuser can discount the victim’s accusations by claiming that they were both violent⁸.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Family violence and child abuse occur in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities at a rate that is much higher than that of non-Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women account for 3 percent of the population but 50 percent of domestic violence incidents reported to police. This means that an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman is 45 times more likely to experience DFV compared to other populations⁹.

Causes of domestic violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, like elsewhere, are complex, and a history of violence (such as forcible removal of Aboriginal children and their subsequent treatment) has been identified as one of the key factors in the over-representation of Aboriginal Australians involved in domestic violence incidents. Other factors include:

- poverty, unemployment
- physical illness
- lack of education

⁸ Another Closet. Unique aspects of same sex domestic violence. <http://www.anothercloset.com.au/unique-aspects-of-same-sex-dom/>

⁹ http://www.childprotectioninquiry.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/49815/Appendix_4.1_Summary_of_recent_inquiry_reports_relevant_to_Aboriginal_childrens_safety_and_wellbeing.pdf

- parenting at an early age
- substance misuse
- poor or inadequate housing
- social isolation
- loss of identity
- history of oppression
- inequality between male and female roles
- loss of land and traditional culture
- breakdown of community kinship systems and Aboriginal law¹⁰
- fear of not being believed or taken seriously leading to distrust in reporting to police

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities

The research on the prevalence of DFV against women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds is unclear, so drawing conclusions on the nature and extent of DFV in such communities is difficult¹¹.

Research indicates, that cultural values and immigration status enhance the complexities normally involved in DFV cases and women from CALD backgrounds are generally less likely than other groups of women to report cases of DFV.¹² The factors which may influence this include:

- the limited availability of appropriate translator/interpreter services and access to support services
- limited support networks and reluctance to confide in others
- community isolation
- lack of awareness about the law
- continued abuse from the immediate family
- cultural and/or religious shame; and religious beliefs about this

Elder Abuse

There are a range of factors which contribute to increased susceptibility to DFV for women over the age of 55. It is important to consider the following factors which can contribute to DFV against older women:

- a history of long-term DFV
- increased susceptibility to abuse due to the vulnerability of age
- vulnerability to abuse from children, extended family, friends and neighbours
- at greater risk of emotional and economic abuse
- diminished cognitive and physical functioning
- lack of awareness of what constitutes abuse
- social isolation

Information on elder abuse support services can be found at www.elderabusehelpline.com.au

¹⁰ https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0012/300621/PDF_4_Full_Report_At_risk_groups.pdf

¹¹ http://www.aic.gov.au/media_library/publications/rip/rip07/rip07.pdf

¹² https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0012/300621/PDF_4_Full_Report_At_risk_groups.pdf

Women with a Disability

Women who have a disability also experience domestic and family violence at very high rates.¹³ Women living with a disability also experience greater susceptibility to DFV due to the following contributing factors:

- social isolation
- limited access to services
- reduced cognitive and physical functioning
- lack of information on DFV
- vulnerability of abuse and exploitation from family members and social networks

Rural, Regional, and Remote Communities

While there are many commonalities between women experiencing DFV in non-urban communities and women from other geographic locations, it is important to consider the compounding issue of isolation due to remote location:

- limited means to leave; and societal and/or familial pressure to stay in the relationship
- heightened concerns relating to privacy and confidentiality due to living in a small community with a limited number of service providers
- lack of services, or a lack of appropriate services
- delayed response times (e.g. by police) due to a lack of services and distance
- distance to services and transport access issues
- easy access to guns
- rural community norms/conservative or traditional norms, especially relating to family and gender roles
- lack of financial support or means to gain employment resulting in lack of income

Men

While it is acknowledged that men also experience domestic and family violence the likelihood of men being a victim of DFV is significantly less compared to women. In 2012, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported 87% of domestic violence victims were women. Where women *are* the perpetrators, the violence is different: studies have repeatedly shown that it's not as prolonged, and that men are far less likely to be living in fear.¹⁴

WHAT ARE THE INDICATORS OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Indicators of DFV can be quite broad and some are less obvious than others. The three categories below provide a guide to some of the characteristics to the potential existence of DFV. It is important to note that these characteristics may not be evident in all DFV relationships and may be the result of an unrelated issue. Some characteristics may not be initially evident and may present over time. If an individual's emotional, social or psychological presentation becomes uncharacteristic to their usual / previous presentation it may be an indicator of DFV.

¹³ Suellen Murray & Anastasia Powell. (2008). *Sexual assaults and adults with a disability: Enabling recognition, disclosure and a just response*. ACSSA Issues No. 9, Australian Institute of Family Studies

¹⁴ <http://www.domesticviolence.com.au/pages/domestic-violence-statistics.php>

Physical

- direct assault on the body such as scratching, bruising, biting, slapping, punching, kicking, cigarette burns
- withholding medical care and food
- use of weapons
- sexual abuse
- threats to physical safety
- sleep deprivation
- control over personal autonomy and choice

Emotional / psychological / cultural / religious

- a lack of self-esteem resulting from negative comments
- a lack of confidence in the ability to improve their relationship
- extreme dependence on their partner
- emotionally withdrawn (inconsistent with usual presentation)
- belief that their partner can be changed and they will have an ideal relationship
- poor communication skills in asserting their rights and feelings
- excessive anxiety
- threats to safety
- manipulation and guilt
- blaming
- verbal abuse

Social

- a lack of personal or financial resources
- social isolation
- isolation from broader family network
- poor communication skills in asserting their rights and feelings
- belief in stereotyped sex roles and experiences of guilt when deviating from these
- controlling tactics such as monitoring where an individual is going or checking car mileage
- deliberate social ridicule

IMPACTS OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Individual and community

Domestic and family violence has a devastating impact on an individuals' emotional, psychological, physical and mental well-being. The information below provides a snapshot of the social and economic burdens impacting individual victims of DFV and the broader community.

Economic

The economic effects of DFV can contribute to enormous psychological and emotional difficulties to a person during and after leaving DFV. These impacts include the following:

- difficulty accessing support services due to economic isolation

- reduced capacity to leave the abusive relationship due to limited financial access
- long-term effect on self-confidence and ability to manage finances
- controlled access to psychosocial well-being
- social disadvantage of financial isolation
- the psychological effect of enforced financial poverty
- financial dependence on the perpetrator reinforces the power dynamic

Housing and homelessness

A key issue women and children experience in domestic and family violence is an increased risk of homelessness. Traditionally women and children experiencing DFV were forced to flee their housing due to the limited availability of effective models to increase the safety of victims. A common concern experienced by women considering leaving an abusive relationship is uncertainty about their future housing and the possibility of future homelessness. Current programs, such as Staying Home Leaving Violence¹⁵, places greater emphasis on homelessness prevention by supporting victims to stay in their housing through improving security systems and removing the perpetrator from the family home.

Health

Domestic violence has severe and persistent effects on physical and mental health. Physical injury is common as a result of domestic violence.

The health consequences of domestic violence can endure long after the violence ceases. The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health found that women who have experienced domestic violence rate their health as poorer and use health services more frequently than other women, even after they are no longer exposed to the violence. The effects of domestic violence also has a cumulative impact on a person's mental health. Women who experienced gender based violence reported a higher level of severity and co-morbidity of mental disorders, increased rates of physical disorders, greater mental-health related dysfunction, general disability and impaired quality of life. Women who had experienced DFV also reported higher rates of past suicide attempts.¹⁶

Homicide

The most comprehensive data collection on homicide in Australia which provides details of victims, offenders and the circumstances of incidents, comes through the National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP) at the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC). Of the 185 domestic homicides

¹⁵ <http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents,-carers-and-families/domestic-and-family-violence/staying-home-leaving-violence>

¹⁶

http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/ViolenceAust#_Toc401045314

recorded between July 2008 and July 2010, 66 per cent were classified as intimate partner homicides.¹⁷

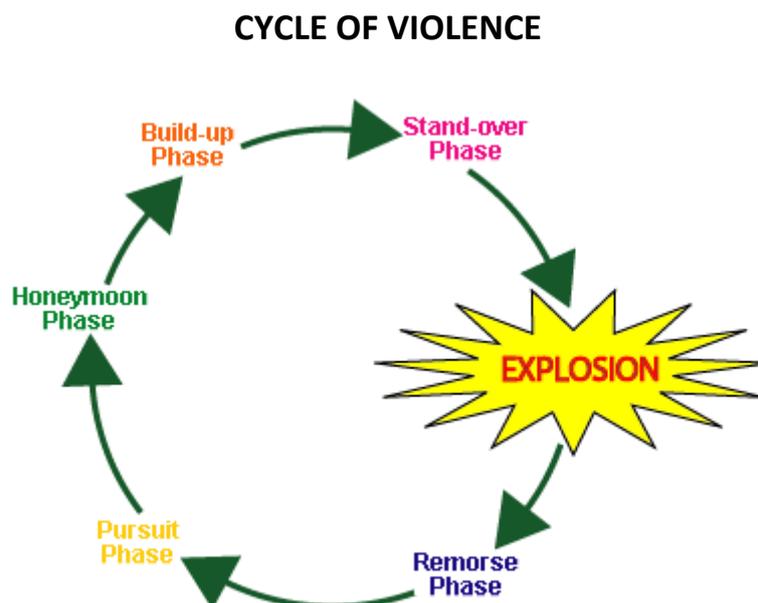
Three in every five Australian homicides during this period occurred in a residential location (61 per cent)—the majority in the victim’s home. Domestic homicides accounted for just over half (53 per cent) of these incidents. This suggests the most likely scenario for the homicide of an Australian woman is at home at the hands of an intimate partner.¹⁸

RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Cycle of Violence Theory

On average, a victim will leave a DFV relationship seven times before she leaves permanently.¹⁹ It is important to understand the psychological reasons for this decision. The cycle of violence offers an understanding around the recidivist dynamic between perpetrators and victims.

The behaviour of the person who commits domestic and family violence is likely to change significantly over time, and to change in a cyclical pattern. The cycle of violence theory explains how and why the behaviour of a person who commits domestic violence may change so dramatically over time, and why victims of domestic violence often remain in the abusive relationship for so long.



<http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/childsafety/practice-manual/prac-paper-domestic-violence.pdf>

¹⁷

http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/ViolenceAust#_Toc401045314

¹⁸

http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/ViolenceAust#_Toc401045314

¹⁹ <http://www.domesticabusehelpline.org/infodomesticviolence.htm>

As illustrated in the diagram, the behaviour of those who commit domestic violence is likely to move through a number of stages. It is acknowledged that not everyone in domestic violence situations experiences the same stages and some may not relate to these at all, but many do. The phases of the cycle are understood as follows:

The build-up phase: This phase may begin with normal relations between the people in the relationship, but involves escalating tension marked by increased verbal, emotional or financial abuse. In non-violent relationships these issues can normally be resolved between the people in the relationship.

The stand over phase: This phase can be extremely frightening for people affected by domestic and family violence. The behaviour of the person who uses violence in relationships escalates to the point that a release of tension is inevitable. The person affected may feel that they are 'walking on egg shells' and fear that anything they do will exacerbate the situation.

Explosion: The explosion stage marks the peak of violence in the relationship and can involve criminal assault, terrorising, serious threats and property damage. The person who commits domestic and family violence experiences a release of tension during an explosion phase, which may become an entrenched behaviour.

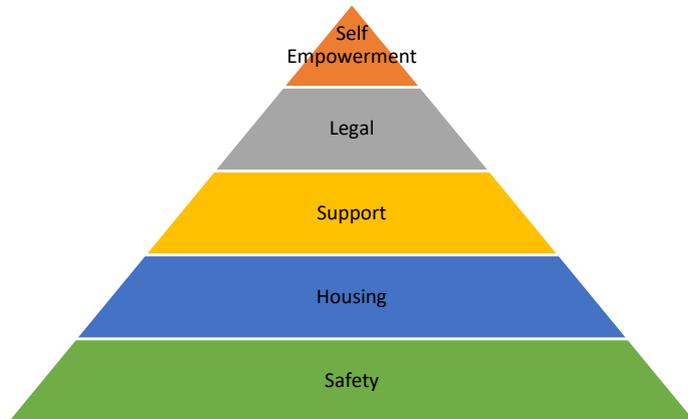
The remorse phase: At the remorse stage, the person who uses domestic and family violence in their relationship feels ashamed of their behaviour or they may be afraid of the consequences. They may retreat and become withdrawn from the relationship. They may also try to justify or minimise their actions to themselves and to others by blaming the victim.

The pursuit phase: At this stage, the person who uses domestic and family violence in relationships promises to the other person never to be violent again and the violent offender may go through a dramatic personality change. The person who uses domestic violence may try to make up for their past behaviour during this period and say that other factors have caused them to be violent, for example, work stress, drugs, or alcohol. They may try to win back their partner with gifts and promises and attention, or they may act helpless, saying such things as "I can't live without you" or "I'll kill myself".

The honeymoon phase: During the honeymoon phase of the cycle of violence, both people in the relationship may be in denial as to how bad the abuse and violence was. Both people do not want the relationship to end, so ignore the possibility that the violence could occur again. After a period of time the violence reoccurs.

Understanding the needs of a person experiencing Domestic and Family Violence.

It is beyond the scope of this toolkit to articulate and understand the myriad of needs a person may require. However, while it is important to be mindful of individual differences and circumstances, it is reasonable to assume there are some common needs a person experiencing DFV requires.



(There are similarities between Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the needs of victims and survivors of DFV)

Safety – the primary need a person experiencing DFV will require is the need to feel safe from harm (including children). Feeling safe from harm includes emotional, physical, mental and psychological safety.

Housing – the need for feeling safe includes housing. Uncertainty and fear about future housing is a common concern shared by people contemplating leaving a DFV relationship.

Support – people leaving violent relationship are often emotionally and socially isolated. It is imperative the person feels they (and their children) will be provided with appropriate support and they understand the support is not dependent on whether they return to the abusive relationship. Support includes emotional, counselling, relocation, child care and financial.

Legal – it is essential that a person experiencing DFV be provided with the correct legal information about the legal process and what support and protection is available. Often victims are not only concerned about their own safety, but are also preoccupied with concern about what will happen to the perpetrator. Referring the person to the appropriate legal advisors can potentially reduce recidivism.

Self-empowerment – given the abusive dynamic of DFV it is important that a person not feel pressured to leave an abusive relationship but rather be provided with the correct information and supported to make their own decision.

How might you start a conversation with a person experiencing domestic and family violence?

It is important to understand the intensely emotional nature of DFV and that a victim may feel a sense of shame, guilt and fear about the situation. Such feelings can create communication barriers and it is helpful wherever possible to build a sense of rapport with the person. While this may be difficult to achieve due to limited opportunity, the following questions can assist to create a space for dialogue:

<p><i>Are you ok?</i></p>	<p>Sometimes asking a simple question such as 'Are you OK' can provide an opportunity for the person to talk about the situation.</p>
<p><i>You appear to be stressed. Is there anything happening that is stressing you?</i></p>	<p>Sometimes asking an open question by using descriptive words such as 'stressed' instead of asking directly about DFV can assist the person to disclose. It also provides a supportive non-judgmental environment that promotes self – empowerment.</p>
<p><i>You seem to be hurt. Can I ask what happened?</i></p>	<p>Such a question is more often used if a person displays physical signs of being harmed. Wherever possible it is important to let the person know you have noticed they are hurt as often victims of DFV feel isolated and silenced.</p>
<p><i>Would you like some support?</i></p>	<p>Due to the psychological effects of DFV a victim may not know how or where to ask for support. At this stage it is important that the person be reassured that support is available and that they do not need to organise this alone.</p>
<p><i>Are you safe? You have a right to be safe.</i></p>	<p>Regardless of which of the above questions is used it is crucial that the message of 'a right to safety' is reinforced. In doing so, the language of abuse is challenged by introducing a sense of hope and empowerment.</p>

PARTNERSHIPS

It is acknowledged the core business of community housing providers (CHP's) is to provide safe affordable social housing by successfully sustaining and managing tenancies. While community housing providers are committed to preventing and responding to DFV it is important that the separation between tenancy management and support is maintained.

In developing this toolkit, it is hoped the tools will enhance the capabilities of CHP's to recognise and respond to DFV. However, effective responses will require efficient collaborative arrangements and partnerships between CHP's and DFV support providers.

While there are existing partnership arrangements; it is critical for CHP's to continue to forge new relationships in order to refer tenants / applicants when DFV is recognised. An appropriate response may require a range of partnerships, such as:

- referral to outreach services
- specialist homelessness services
- pathways between transitional housing and CHP's
- facilitating priority transfers when DFV is identified
- referral pathways to government mainstream organisations
- Staying Home Leaving Violence
- access to Women's Health Centres

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE: THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND OBLIGATIONS

Information for this section has been sourced from Women's Legal Services NSW.

The law

The ***Family Law Act 1975*** is a federal law that covers:

- Divorce
- Financial matters (property and maintenance) of separated couples. The *Family Law Act* covers de facto couples (including same sex de facto relationships) and married couples; and
- Issues about children after separation of their parents (except child welfare issues which are dealt with by the Children's Court). The *Family Law Act* covers children whose parents were married or in a de facto relationship (including a same sex de facto relationship) and children whose parents have never lived together.

The ***Child Support (Registration and Collection) Act 1988*** and ***Child Support Assessment Act 1989*** are federal laws that set up Child Support. These laws cover child support in most circumstances.

The NSW ***Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007*** is a state law. It enables local courts to make Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs) to prevent violence, abuse and harassment in domestic relationships.

The NSW ***Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment Act 2013*** amended the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007. The amendments enable senior police officers to issue provisional ADVOs, expand police powers to give directions or detain a person for the purpose of serving a provisional apprehended domestic violence order on them.

The NSW ***Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Information Sharing) Act 2013*** amended the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 to provide for information sharing between certain public sector agencies and non-government organisations for the purposes of facilitating access by alleged victims of domestic violence to support services appropriate to their needs.

The ***NSW Crimes Amendment (Provocation) Act 2014*** amends the ***NSW Crimes Act 1900***. Provocation can be used as a partial defense to murder. If it is accepted it means a conviction of manslaughter instead of murder. This section was repealed and replaced by the ***Crimes Amendment***

(Provocation) Act 2014 Act following the matter of *Singh v R* [2012] NSWSC 637 (7 June 2012). The offender, Chamanjot Singh, was charged with the murder of his wife, Manpreet Kaur, on 29 December 2009. He pleaded not guilty to murder but guilty to manslaughter, on the grounds of provocation. The Crown did not accept that plea and the matter proceeded to a trial with a jury. The jury acquitted the offender of murder but convicted him of manslaughter.

The NSW **Crimes Amendment (Strangulation) Act 2014** aims to simplify and modernise the existing offence of strangulation in the Crimes Act 1900 (NSW). This Act intends to help victims of domestic violence.

The terms **domestic violence** and **family violence** are often interchanged. They both generally refer to violence between two or more people who are connected by a domestic relationship.

In NSW, the terms **domestic violence** and **violence in a domestic relationship** are used in the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007*. However, the federal *Family Law Act 1975* refers to **family violence**. This definition of family violence changed in 2012 and acknowledges more types of abuse.

A domestic relationship as defined in the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007

You have a domestic relationship with another person if you:

- Are/were married
- Are/were in a de facto relationship
- Have/have had an intimate personal relationship e.g. Boyfriend/girlfriend – doesn't need to include sexual relationship
- Live/lived with each other
- Live/lived in same residential facility at the same time
- Are/were cared for by the other person (paid or unpaid carers included)
- Are/were a relative of the other person
- Are part of the same extended family or kinship group (Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander person)

Family violence as defined in the Family Law Act

Family Violence means violent, threatening or other behaviour by a person that coerces or controls a member of the person's family, or causes the family member to be fearful.

Examples of behaviour that may constitute family violence include (but are not limited to):

- a) an assault; or
- b) a sexual assault or other sexually abusive behaviour; or
- c) stalking; or
- d) repeated name-calling; or
- e) intentionally damaging or destroying property; or
- f) intentionally causing death or injury to an animal; or
- g) unreasonably stopping a family member from having access to and control of money; or
- h) unreasonably withholding financial support needed to meet the reasonable living expenses of the family member, or his or her child, at a time when the family member is entirely or predominantly dependent on the person for financial support; or
- i) preventing the family member from making or keeping connections with his or her family, friends or culture; or

- j) unlawfully depriving the family member, or any member of the family member's family, of his or her liberty.

What is an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order?

Domestic violence is a crime and should be reported to the police. The police may charge the violent person with assault and/or apply for an ADVO for protection of the victim. If the victim would like to remain in their house, police have the power to exclude the violent person from the house.

An ADVO is a court order that places restrictions on the person who is violent or abusive towards the victim. In ADVO matters this person is referred to as the defendant. An ADVO can be tailored to meet the circumstances of each victim so that it provides the best possible protection. An ADVO cannot order a person to do something such as attend counselling or an anger management course.

Police have the power to issue on the spot ADVOS and make film recordings that can be used in evidence.

Is it a criminal offence for a person to have an ADVO against them?

The purpose of an ADVO is to protect the victim from the future behaviour of the violent person. Having an ADVO against a person is not a criminal offence and is not listed on the defendant's criminal record.

If the defendant breaches the ADVO issued against them it can lead to a criminal offence, because it is a breach of a court order. If a breach occurs, the police will investigate the incident and where there is sufficient evidence, charge the violent person. If that person is found guilty of the charge, a criminal conviction can be recorded.

Which courts deal with family law matters?

There are three courts that deal with family law matters:

- the Family Court
- the Federal Circuit Court
- the Local Court

The Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court are often referred to as the Family Law Courts.

Protecting children

In NSW the ***Children and Young Person's (Care and Protection) Act 1998*** provides the statutory and administrative framework to protect children from harm. In NSW many professionals in contact with children are required by law to report child abuse. This is known as **mandatory reporting**.

All social housing staff are mandatory reporters by law and if, during the course of their work, staff have a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm, a report must be made as soon as practicable to Community Services.

Children who live in homes where there is domestic violence grow up in an environment that is unpredictable, filled with tension and anxiety and dominated by fear. This can lead to significant emotional and psychological trauma, similar to that experienced by children who are victims of child abuse.

9.2 The Duluth Model: Understanding Power and Control

The central element of domestic and family violence is an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner through fear. The power and control wheel was developed in Duluth, Minnesota, following interviews with women who had experienced domestic and family violence, who were asked to identify ways in which they felt they were controlled.

The power and control wheel provides a simplified understanding of various forms of domestic and family violence from the perspective of the victim being subjected to the violence.

THE POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

At the centre of the wheel is the purpose of all violent tactics in the relationship, which is the intention of one party to exercise and establish power and control over another.

A person who uses violence believes he or she has a right to control their partner and may use some or more of the tactics found in the power and control wheel by:

- Telling them what to do and expecting obedience
- Using force to maintain power and control over partners
- Feeling their partners have no right to challenge their desire for power and control
- Feeling justified in making the person subjected to domestic and family violence comply
- Blaming the abuse on the partner and not accepting responsibility for wrongful acts.

The tactics shown in the wheel are examples of how power and control are exercised against the person subjected to violence:

Isolation

- Limiting outside involvement
- Making a partner avoid people / friends / family by embarrassing them or humiliating them in front of others
- Expecting a partner to report every move and activity
- Restricting use of the car
- Moving residences

Emotional and mental abuse

- Putting the partner down or name calling
- Ignoring or discounting their activities and accomplishments
- Withholding approval or affection
- Unreasonable jealousy or suspicion
- Playing mind games

Economic and financial abuse

- Preventing the partner from getting or keeping a job
- Withholding funds
- Spending family income without mutual consent and / or making the partner struggle to pay bills
- Not letting the partner know of or have access to family / personal income
- Forcing the partner to ask for basic necessities

Sexual abuse

- Sex on demand or sexual withholding
- Physical assaults during sexual intercourse
- Spousal rapes or non-consensual sex
- Sexually degrading language
- Denying reproductive freedom

Using privileges (perceived or cultured)

- Treating another like a servant
- Making all the big decisions
- Being the one to define male and female roles
- Acting like the master or queen of the castle

Intimidation

- Driving recklessly to make the partner feel threatened or endangered
- Destroying property or cherished possessions
- Making the partner feel afraid by using looks / actions / gestures
- Displaying weapons

Using pets or children

- Threatening to take the children away
- Making the partner feel guilty about the children
- Abusing children or pets to punish the partner

Physical abuse

- Biting / scratching
- Slapping / punching
- Kicking / stomping
- Throwing objects
- Locking another in a closet or utilising other confinement
- Deprivation of heat or food
- Assaults with weapons such as knives / guns / other objects

Threats

- Threats of violence against significant third parties
- Threats to commit physical or sexual harm
- Threats to commit property destruction
- Threats to commit suicide or murder

THE EQUALITY WHEEL

The Equality Wheel was developed in consultation with women who have experienced domestic and family violence and is designed to be used with the power and control wheel. It aims to describe the changes needed to move from a violent relationship to a respectful relationship.²⁰

In a respectful relationship, power is shared between both parties; neither party has power or control over the other. Respect is the foundation of the relationship, and trust and love stem from this mutual respect. Arguments and disagreements are possible and likely, even in a respectful relationship, but it is possible to acknowledge and resolve differing understandings and perspectives in a considerate, non-threatening and non-violent manner. It is possible for a violent relationship to become a respectful relationship.

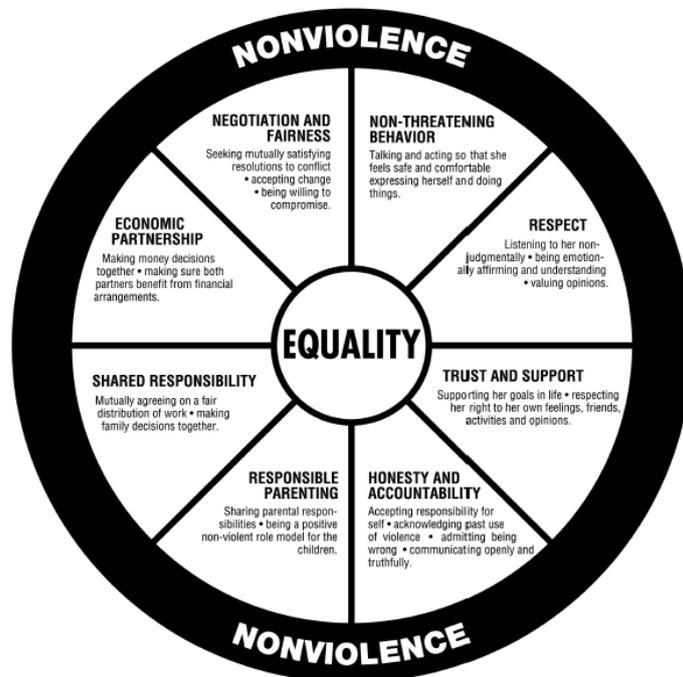
²⁰ www.theduluthmodel.org/training/wheels.html

DULUTH MODEL: POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL



Resource: Power and Control Wheel <http://www.theduluthmodel.org/pdf/PowerandControl.pdf>

DULUTH MODEL: EQUALITY WHEEL



Resource: Equality Wheel <http://www.theduluthmodel.org/pdf/Equality.pdf>

10 NSW Government Policy and Practice Initiatives: Domestic and Family Violence July 2016

NSW DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE BLUEPRINT

This resource provides a snapshot of the policy development currently occurring across NSW as at July 2016. The NSW Government is currently undertaking a scoping of the domestic and family violence (DFV) service system.

Prevention

NSW doesn't yet have a coordinated prevention plan or dedicated funding stream for prevention but we do have Our Watch and Change the Story – a framework for organisations and communities to work on prevention. Videos, resources and models to begin having conversations about prevention in different contexts can be found here.

<http://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/0aa0109b-6b03-43f2-85fe-a9f5ec92ae4e/Change-the-story-framework-prevent-violence-women-children-AA-new.pdf.aspx>

Specialist and mainstream service responses

DVNSW is the state-wide representative body for a diverse range of specialist domestic and family violence services in NSW.

DVNSW is working through the Industry Partnership and with other key stakeholders and peaks including Women's Health NSW and Homelessness NSW to scope practice standards for services working with women, families and communities impacted by DFV. With multiple initiatives being funded by state and federal government, they are working with members and others from the specialist sector to demonstrate the value and complexity of the work that is required when working with survivors of violence. DVNSW are scoping draft standards and are keen to include any CHPs that have interest/expertise in this area.

Current NSW Government responses include:

- **Start Safely** – Start Safely subsidy has been expanded in 2016. <http://www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au/additional-information/policies/start-safely-private-rental-subsidy-policy>
- **Staying Home Leaving Violence** – has been expanded to 4 new sites in 2015-16 (now in 23 locations) <http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents,-carers-and-families/domestic-and-family-violence/staying-home-leaving-violence>
- **Safer Pathway** – Central Referral Point, Local Coordination Points, automatic referrals from Police to Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service or Victims Services. https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/violence_prevention/It_Stops_Here_Safer_Pathway
- **NSWPF DV Evidence in Chief** (means victims are now interviewed when Police are at the scene)
- **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme – Police/NGO partnerships for DVDS** being trailed in 4 sites. https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/violence_prevention/domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme

Stage 1 Domestic and Family Violence Package



The NSW Government has committed a **\$60 million** package to domestic and family violence (DFV). This is in addition to the **\$148.5 million** over four years the Government committed for specialist domestic and family violence services in the 2015-16 Budget. The package augments the Government's existing *It Stops Here* DFV reforms. It responds to the Premier's priority to reduce reoffending by 2019, and supports victims to escape and survive domestic and family violence.

Targeting perpetrators



\$15 million

to introduce Domestic Violence High Risk Offender Teams in all six Police regions. These teams will target serious recidivist offenders and investigate serious DFV matters, as the Police do for other major crimes like gang crimes. The teams will be rolled out over the next three years.



The NSW Police Force will apply Suspect Targeting Management Plans for recidivist domestic violence offenders. This will be in line with approaches to crime management of other serious crimes. The Central Metropolitan Region has kicked off using the plans in October with a view to rolling it out across the state in 2016.



\$4.1 million

to advance the roll out of all 24 Domestic Violence Liaison Officers (DVLOs) positions. These positions play a critical role for police in investigating and supporting victims of domestic and family violence.



\$19.5 million

will be invested in mandated perpetrator behaviour change programs to provide treatment to perpetrators, just like those for drug and alcohol offenders, to make perpetrators face up to their actions, attitudes and behaviours.



Supporting victims



\$20 million

to increase the Specialist Homelessness Services' capacity through additional emergency accommodation and supports for women and children affected by domestic violence, and enable services to respond more quickly.

Australia's first Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme will commence in four Police Local Area Commands from early 2016 including Oxley, Shoalhaven, St George and Sutherland.



\$2.3 million

over two years for Police-NGO Partnerships to provide NGO-led early intervention support and crisis responses to applicants of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme.



\$1.3 million

over four years to increase Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) in high-risk communities in rural and regional NSW.

The *Staying Home Leaving Violence* program will expand to four new sites including Coffs Harbour, Inverell, Orange and Clarence Valley.



The DFV Blueprint is an analysis of the service gaps in the DFV system. This is currently underway with experts across the non-government and government sectors. Work will be completed in 2016 as part of the *It Stops Here* reforms.



GETTING HELP

Anyone in immediate danger should call 000.

For information and support call the NSW Domestic Violence Line on 1800 656 463 or 1800 RESPECT on 1800 737 732.

For information and referral to crisis accommodation and support call Link2home on 1800 152 152.

Men having problems with violent behaviour can call the Men's Referral Service on 1300 766 491.