

## **FAMILY VIOLENCE CODE IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCREDITATION (CIA) WORKING GROUP**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Purpose and Role**

The Code Implementation and Accreditation (CIA) Working Group has been established by domestic/family violence organisations from the southern and eastern metropolitan regions of Melbourne. The organisations are combining to work together to share, develop and disseminate resources and knowledge around policies, procedures and practices relevant to accreditation for family violence and homelessness organisations in Victoria. The *Victorian Homelessness Strategy* (2002) identified the need to develop an accreditation system as a means to define the consistency and quality of services that consumers, funding bodies and the community could expect from community managed homelessness assistance and family violence services (DHS, Housing & Community Building Division, 2007). To this end, organisations will be assessed and accredited against the HASS (Homelessness Assistance Service Standards) Industry Standards and the Organisational Management Standards provided by the accreditation provider.

Whilst family violence organisations are undertaking accreditation work, Domestic Violence Victoria is encouraging them to work within, be guided by, and implement the DV Vic Code of Practice for Specialist Family Violence Services. Consideration and implementation of the Code of Practice will be undertaken within the Group and any policies, procedures and practices developed for use in relation to women and children experiencing family violence will reflect the DV Vic Code of Practice. Deb Western, DV Vic, will review resources that are developed in light of the DV Vic Code of Practice.

Sandy Milne, Project Manager, Sector Engagement, Accreditation Project, Council to Homeless Persons, and Deb Western, Practice Development Manager, DV Vic, will work with the Group to provide facilitation, information and coordination within the Group and between the Group and other organisations in the fields of family violence and homelessness.

#### **Scope**

Work undertaken towards accreditation will focus on the two components of accreditation: Client Service Delivery Standards of HASS, Sections 1-5 revised November 2006, as well as the Organisational Management Standards to be provided by the accreditation providers. The Group will collect and co-ordinate the development of policies, procedures, practices and other relevant resources for the purposes of accreditation. These resources will be shared and distributed to the family violence field.

The CIA Working Group members commit to sharing and disseminating resources that are developed within the Group with the wider family violence field.

The Working Group will hold an overview of HASS/Accreditation issues. This gives an opportunity for Group members to feed directly to DV Vic and to CHP any concerns, questions and recommendations regarding the content and process of accreditation. There will, thus, be a shared voice between family violence services, DV Vic and CHP.

No work will be undertaken in relation to Registration of organisations.

### **Objectives**

1. Develop collegial and supportive working relationships between family violence organisations as they work towards accreditation and implementation of the Code of Practice.
2. Share resources and knowledge that will contribute to the review and development of organisational, practice and service delivery policies, procedures and practices relevant to accreditation and implementation of the Code of Practice.
3. Contribute to the advancement and understanding of practice development, evaluation and continuous quality improvement in the family violence and homelessness fields of practice.
4. Act as a collaborative body to disseminate information and resources regarding accreditation and implementation of the Code of Practice to all other family violence and SAAP funded organisations throughout the state.

### **Membership**

The CIA Working Group began with membership of family violence organisations from the Southern and Eastern metropolitan regions of Melbourne. Membership will be extended to family violence organisations in Northern and Western metropolitan regions in order to achieve broader representation and greater sharing of resources in common work undertaken towards accreditation.

Current member organisations are:

- Valerie House & Mornington Peninsula Domestic Violence Outreach Service
- Caroline Lodge

- DV East:
  - Brenda House
  - Kara House
  - Maroondah Halfway House
  - Women's Liberation Halfway House
- Olive's Place
- Women's Health West
- Georgina Inc:
  - Martina's

Sandy Milne and Deb Western have attended as facilitators and to provide information, resources and practice briefings in relation to accreditation and to implementation of the DV Vic Code of Practice.

The CIA Working Group has not been developed as an exclusive entity. Membership is open to family violence organisations from all regions, metropolitan and rural. However, it is recognised that organisations not currently participating, particularly those based in rural regions, are likely to be restricted from attending due to geographical and time considerations. Other organisations may already belong to their own working groups or networks.

The size of the membership of the Working Group will not be limited. However, in order for Group members to undertake and complete development of resources such as policies and procedures in a timely fashion, Group members will monitor the size of the Group over time. It is important for the Group to be flexibly open so that new or visiting members can attend in order to provide specialist input or because of a specific area of interest.

### **Process**

The CIA Working Group will work as a community of practice (See article by Wenger). Within this practice framework, Group members recognise and respect the diversity of experience and knowledge within the Group. Such diversity and knowledge contributes to peer support, knowledge and practice development, and achievement of the Group objectives.

In line with the Group's development and the communities of practice model, processes within the Group are those of co-operation and involvement where all members participate in decision making and setting directions for the work to be undertaken. The agenda, the work to be undertaken between meetings, and work to be covered in the next meeting, will be decided upon at the end of each meeting. All Group members have input to the agenda and ideas for work to be undertaken.

Minutes and agreed actions will be documented and distributed to all Group members 5 days prior to the next meeting. The role of minute taker will be shared amongst Group members.

Policies, procedures, practice guidelines, practice documentation, evidence and evaluation of practice, and other resources that are developed within the Group will be disseminated and shared within the broader family violence field. This may be achieved via Group members forwarding information through their own networks and by Sandy Milne and Deb Western co-ordinating information and resources and forwarding them to the field via their respective e-mail mailing lists, web sites and Newsletters.

The CIA Working Group will meet monthly throughout 2007 and 2008 and more frequently if needed due to immediacy of work required.

**Date approved:**

**Revised:**