

Code of Practice for Specialist Family Violence Services for Women and Children

Section 6: Key Elements of Practice

- 6.1 Engaging Women in the Support Relationship
 - 6.1.1 Power
 - 6.1.2 Clear Boundaries
 - 6.1.3 Rights Based Approach
 - 6.1.4 Validate and Build Upon Strengths
 - 6.1.5 Respectful, Open and Transparent Interaction
- 6.2 Engaging Children in a Support Relationship
 - 6.2.1 Engaging Child or Young Person's Mother
- 6.3 Responding to the Diversity of Women's Experiences
 - 6.3.1 Women with Mental Health Issues
 - 6.3.2 Women with Disabilities

 - 6.3.3 Women with Substance (Mis)Use Issues
 - 6.3.4 Culturally Informed and Sensitive Practice
- 6.4 Responding to the Diversity of Children's Experiences
- 6.5 Privacy, Confidentiality and Duty of Care
- 6.6 Risk Assessment and Safety Planning
- 6.7 Facilitating Referrals
- 6.8 Collaborative Practice
 - 6.8.1 Collaborative Practice with Victoria Police
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- 6.9 Case Notes, Files and Data Collection
 - 6.9.1 Case Notes & Files
 - 6.9.2 Data Collection
- 6.10 Reflective Practice
- 6.11 Self Care

Section 6: Key Elements of Practice

Section Overview

PD Network section 6 CoP

Section six describes the methodological framework for specialist practice with women, and children who experience family violence.

Key Statements

- Practice is informed by feminist methodologies and human rights and social justice frameworks, and underpinned by the core values outlined in this document: a client centred focus, response to diversity and a non judgmental and non discriminatory approach.
- Practice is undertaken by workers within the context of the organisational framework and must be supported by service policy and procedure that is aligned with stated practice frameworks and core values.
- Workers are the interface between the woman, children and the service. On this basis the support relationship is established not only between the woman/child and the worker but also between the woman/child and the service.

Implications for Policy

See Section Five Overview for Policy Implications of this section.

Implications for Procedure

See Section Five Overview for Procedure Implications of this section.

Practice Implications

- Workers aim to actively engage women and children in positive support relationships;
- Workers provide support/counselling in the context of individual women and children's lives and experiences;
- Workers aim to foster positive support relationships with women and children so that the safety and well being of their children can be discussed in an open and supportive manner;
- Workers seek to reinforce and enhance the sound knowledge and effective strategies employed by women to address the issues they face;

- Workers provide holistic responses to women and children and have the responsibility to support them with a range of issues in addition to the issues that women and children face as a direct result of their experience of family violence;
 - Knowledge regarding family violence and associated issues informs rather than predetermines practice;
 - Workers gain support for their practice through professional development, secondary consultation, co-case management or referral to specialist services when dealing with issues outside the service's role and/or expertise;
- Practice is client driven;
- Workers engage in reflective practice and employ proactive and reactive strategies to ensure positive self care;
 - Workers use appropriate methods to facilitate communication with women and children and have a sound knowledge of the methods available;
 - Risk assessment and safety planning is central to practice;
 - When undertaking referrals an active approach is taken;
 - Workers recognise a collaborative practice approach enhances support and subsequent outcomes for women and children. An integral part of collaborative practice is a mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities and workers take active steps to facilitate such understanding;
 - Worker's practice compliments the relevant documents and initiatives of agencies such as the Victoria Police and Child Protection and workers practice in line with relevant documents and initiatives;
 - Best practice incorporates the completion and maintenance of appropriate case notes, files and data collection;
 - Workers actively participate in individual and group supervision and debriefing;
 - Workers recognise the importance of active participation in the development and review of their professional development plans and training opportunities.

Some prompt reflective questions:

- In what ways do you engage in positive support relationships with women (and their children)?

- What knowledge and strategies do women employ in order to manage the violent situations they experience?
- How do you respond to these efforts by women?
- How does your own knowledge about family violence inform your practice?
- How do you ensure that your knowledge about family violence and associated issues informs rather than predetermines your practice?
- In what ways do you gain support for your practice?
- How do you use supervision to support you and to support your practice?
- What does “practice is client driven” mean to you?
- How do you ensure that you take an active approach when making referrals?
- What processes and procedures do you use to undertake risk assessment and safety planning?
- What are some examples of collaborative practice in which you have been involved?
- How has collaborative practice added to the positive outcomes for women and children?
- What issues are you aware of when you complete file notes and undertake data collection?
- What professional development plans do you have and how do you ensure they are relevant and current for you?
- What documents and initiatives from other agencies guide your practice?