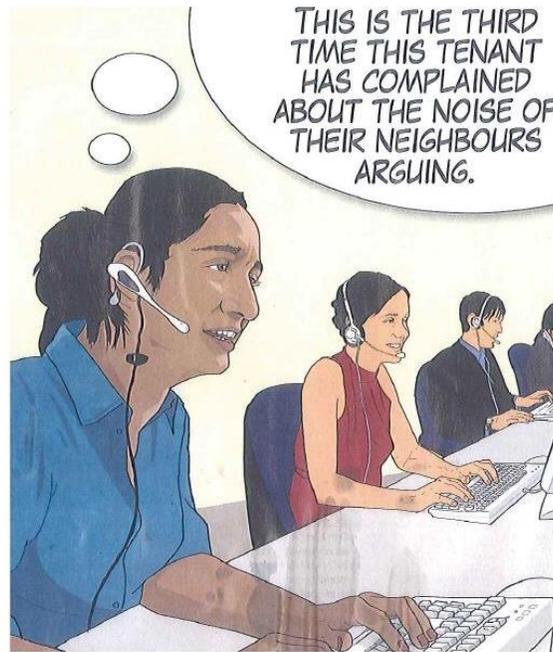
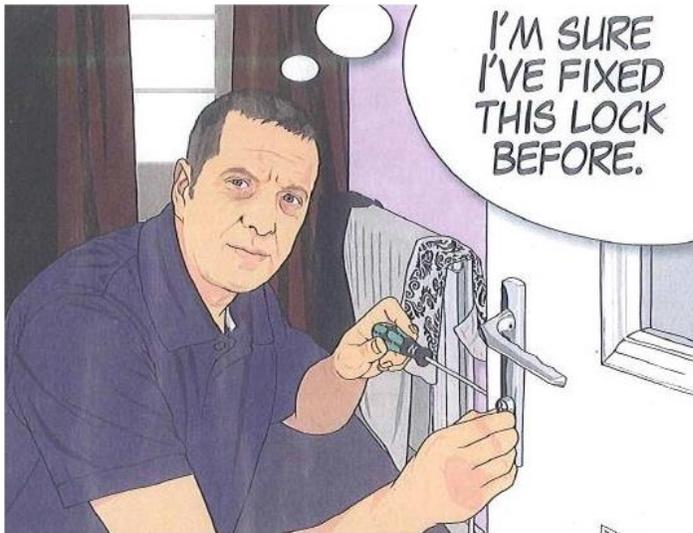


STRENGTHENING PRACTICE IN RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TOOLKIT



BUILDING AWARENESS & CAPACITY TO RESPOND



RATIONALE UNDERPINNING TOOLKIT DEVELOPMENT

- Toolkit was piloted by 6 CHPs who have tested the tools and resources
- Key message - everyone has a role to play across a CHP
- Staff need to be supported to know what to look for and what their responsibility is
- Toolkit designed to assist housing professionals better understand & respond to incidents of DFV
- Components can be customized by CHPs to fit into operating practice

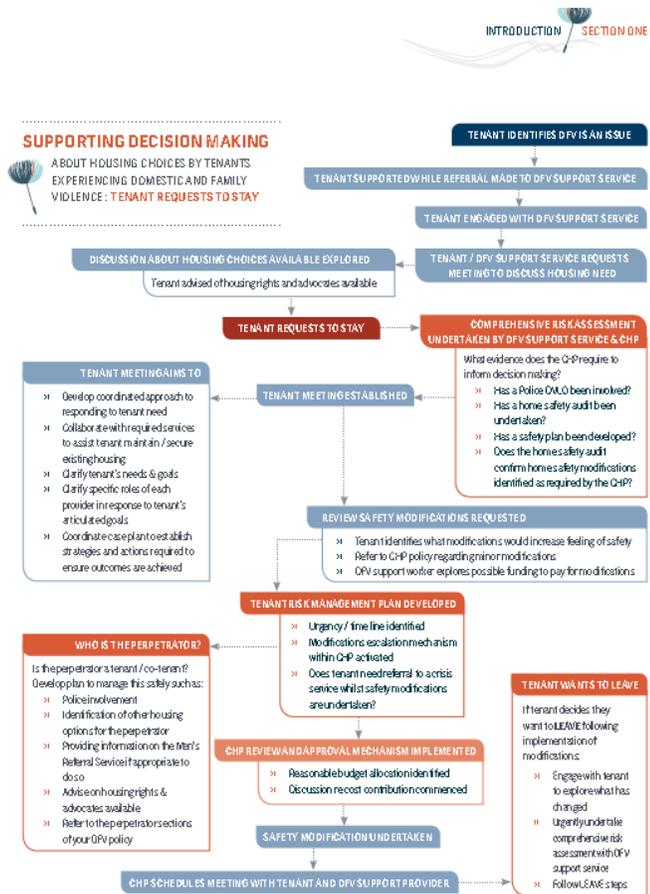
WHAT IS IN THE TOOLKIT?

- Toolkit in 6 sections + a PowerPoint Presentation:
 - ❖ Section 1 - Intro with template policy & 6 pathways procedures
 - ❖ Section 2 – Guidance tools and checklists
 - ❖ Section 3 – Tenant and applicant resources
 - ❖ Section 4 – Case studies
 - ❖ Section 5 – A resource for employers
 - ❖ Section 6 – A resource for housing professionals
 - ❖ PowerPoint presentation that can be used for staff meetings to raise awareness of DFV

SECTION I: POLICY & PATHWAYS PROCEDURES

- Template policy – identifying & responding to DFV to frame an early intervention response that all CHPs should be striving to deliver
 - ❖ Building staff skills and knowledge
 - ❖ Supporting residents to report DFV in a variety of ways
 - ❖ Making a commitment to investigate all DFV complaints received
- Pathways procedures
 - ❖ Step all staff through their role
 - ❖ Guidance if tenant chooses to stay, transfer or leave
 - ❖ Guidance on children & mandatory reporting

A PATHWAY: TENANT REQUESTS TO STAY



- Provides a structure for decision points / people & services to involve if a victim of DFV requests to stay in the property rather than leaving
- Helps to provide direction at a time where there can be high levels of stress and tension for both the tenant & the CHP
- Identifies actions that can be taken to manage the situation with the perpetrator

SECTION 2: GUIDANCE TOOLS & CHECKLISTS

- Guidance tools & checklists include:
 - ❖ Issues of concern that could indicate DFV – prompt sheet that could be used as part of staff training / team meeting discussions
 - ❖ Supporting decision making checklist – tenant requests to stay checklist to guide planning decisions about modifications to increase safety in the property
 - ❖ Home Safety Assessment Checklist – stand alone house
 - ❖ Home Safety Assessment Checklist – apartments / units
 - ❖ Guidance notes – assist CHPs with hints & tips about what to consider when conducting a property safety audit
 - ❖ Managing DFV within a CHP – WHS responsibilities checklist
- A CHP might choose to include the home safety checklists into their procedure that they have established to inform decisions about home safety modifications

A CHECKLIST: HOME SAFETY ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST



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 backyard	YES (please ✓)	NO (please ✓)
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		
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?		



- The Home Safety Assessment Checklist can be undertaken by any community housing employee and be given to the relevant housing / tenancy worker in your organisation
- It provides a standardised structure to guide assessment of home safety to inform decision making on possible safety modifications required
- It builds consistent practice across the CHP & provides evidence of a clear & consistent assessment approach

SECTION 3: TENANT AND APPLICANT RESOURCES

- Two tenant resources have been developed to be included into all tenant lease sign up packs.
- One provides information on DFV. It identifies what a CHP might do if a tenant is experiencing DFV. It also provides advice about the range of services & supports available for victims of DFV.
- The other provides information about the range of men's DFV behaviour change programs provided across NSW.
- Incorporating both these resources into all tenant lease sign up packs enables CHPs to provide information in a safe way to victims and perpetrators. For victims, having this information available might just be the trigger they need to seek assistance. They can also state that they didn't seek the information – it was part of the sign up pack if they are challenged by the perpetrator for having such information.

SECTION 4: CASE STUDIES

- Four case studies are presented:
 - ❖ Paying attention to your observations
 - ❖ Working with someone who has English as a second language
 - ❖ Working with an SHS youth service
 - ❖ Working with an Aboriginal tenant
- Case studies designed to be used as part of in-house staff development activities

SECTION 5:A RESOURCE FOR EMPLOYERS

- Supporting staff working with DFV – resource advising of support strategies you might choose to follow as an organisation
- Guidance on the do's and don'ts for supporting employees impacted by DFV throughout the course of their work

SECTION 6:A RESOURCE FOR HOUSING PROFESSIONALS

- The following resources have been developed to support all staff working across a CHP to increase their understanding about DFV
- The information resources could be used as part of a staff induction kit and would support staff information sessions as part of building a CHP's housing management practice
 - ❖ Information on DFV
 - ❖ The Duluth Model – understanding power and control
 - ❖ NSW Government policy & practice initiatives on DFV

INFORMATION ABOUT DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

- Provides a definition of DFV
 - ❖ Domestic and family violence 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.**
 - ❖ 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.**
- Identifies where CHPs can find out useful information about DFV – www.1800respect.org.au

WHO IS AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE?

- Women & their children
- People in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex & Queer relationships
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities
- Culturally & Linguistically Diverse communities
- Older women
- Women with a disability
- Women in rural and remote communities
- Men though data tells us that in 2012, 87% of domestic & family violence victims were women

INDICATORS OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

The three categories below provide a guide to some of the characteristics to the potential existence of DFV.

- Physical
- Emotional
- Social

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.

CHALLENGING MISINFORMATION ABOUT DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

- One of the challenges in seeking to address DFV is that there is a lot of misunderstanding and myths about the issue
- Such misinformation not only creates further difficulties to prevent DFV but also reinforces stereotypes
- The Myths & Truths resource can be used for quick quizzes in staff meetings for example

MYTHS ABOUT DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

- **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.

MYTHS ABOUT DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE CONT...

- **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.

MYTHS ABOUT DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE CONT...

- **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.

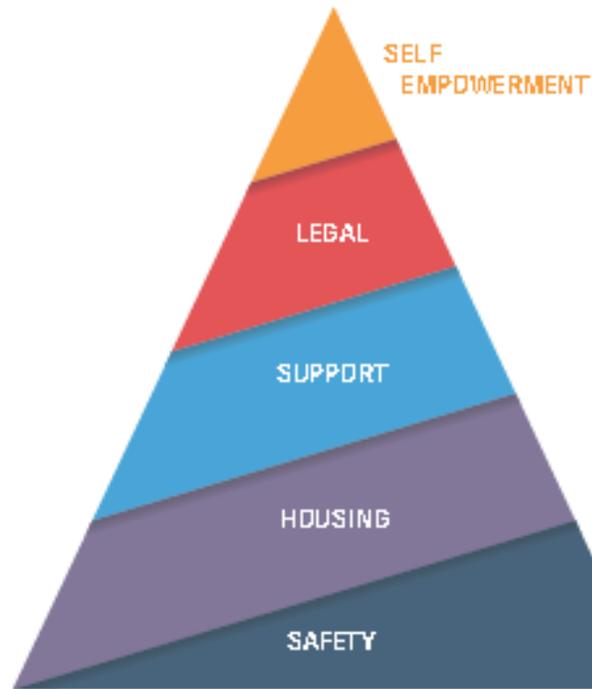
Truth: Domestic and Family Violence is about power and control. Family violence nearly always happens in private, with no witnesses. Perpetrators do not generally abuse their workmates or bosses, regardless of the amount of stress they experience at work. Very often abusers hurt victims in parts of their 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.

THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE



- On average, a victim will leave a DFV relationship seven times before she leaves permanently
- 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 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

UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF A PERSON EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



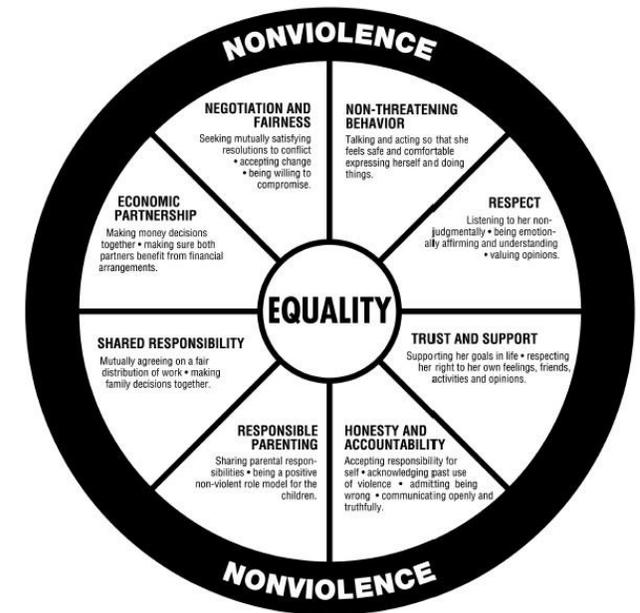
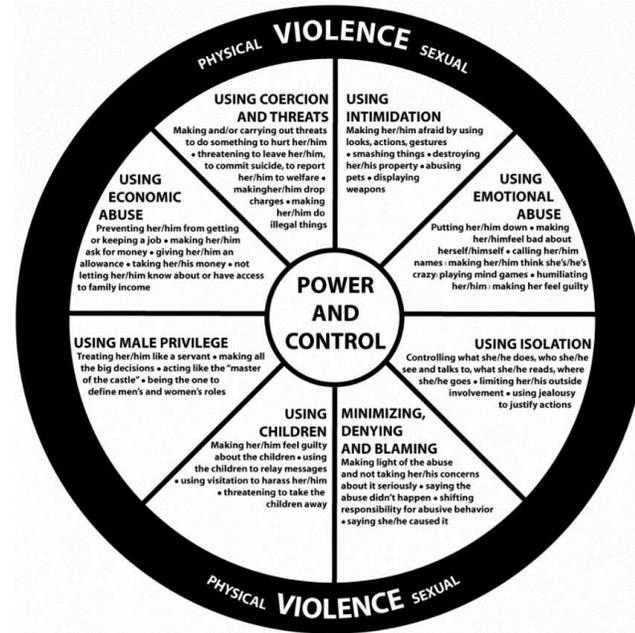
- It is beyond the scope of this Toolkit to articulate and understand the myriad of needs a person may require.
- However, while it is important to be mindful of individual differences and circumstances, it is reasonable to assume there are some common needs a person experiencing DFV requires.
- Understanding the needs of a person experiencing DFV can be viewed as a model similar to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

THE DULUTH MODEL: BUILDING A CONSISTENT APPROACH

- The Duluth Model is a widely supported practice model that is used internationally
- It defines domestic and family violence broadly to include social, emotional and financial abuse
- Three principles of reducing risk, increasing safety and ensuring perpetrator accountability are the foundation of the model
- The feminist theory underlying the Duluth Model is that men use violence within relationships to exercise power and control.
- This is illustrated by the Power and Control Wheel. According to the Duluth Model, "women and children are vulnerable to violence because of their unequal social, economic, and political status in society."

POWER AND CONTROL VERSUS EQUALITY

- Domestic & family violence is characterized by the pattern of actions that an individual uses to intentionally control or dominate his intimate partner.
- That is why the words "power and control" are in the centre of the wheel.
- A perpetrator systematically uses threats, intimidation, and coercion to instil fear in his partner.
- Making the Power and Control Wheel gender neutral would hide the power imbalances in relationships between men and women that reflect power imbalances in society.
- By naming the power differences, we can more clearly provide advocacy and support for victims, accountability and opportunities for change for offenders, and system and societal changes that end violence against women.



STARTING A CONVERSATION: SOME QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT ASK

- ***Are you OK?*** - Sometimes asking a simple question such as 'Are you OK' can provide an opportunity for the person to talk about the situation.
- ***You appear to be stressed. Is there anything happening that is stressing you?*** 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-judgemental environment that promotes self-empowerment.
- ***You seem to be hurt can I ask what happened?*** 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.

STARTING A CONVERSATION CONT...

- ***Would you like some support?*** 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.
- ***Are you safe? You have a right to be safe.*** Regardless of which question 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.

NSW GOVERNMENT POLICY & PRACTICE INITIATIVES

Current NSW Government responses:

- **Start Safely** – Start Safely subsidy has been expanded in 2016.
- **Staying Home Leaving Violence** – has been expanded to 4 new sites in 2015-16 (now in 23 locations).
- **Safer Pathway** – Central Referral Point, Local Coordination Points, automatic referrals from Police to Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service or Victims Services.
- **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.
- The availability of **temporary accommodation** to support DFV victims through FACS Housing offices and Link2Home. The Link2Home telephone service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year on **1800 152 152**. This is a free call from a landline.
- **Domestic Violence Line** is a statewide free call number and is available 24 hours, 7 days a week on **1800 656 463**.
- **Specialist Homeless Services** that places a key importance on accommodation and support in response to DFV.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- 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
- Daisy is an app that connects women around Australia to services. Daisy can link you up with a service phone number, be used to search the internet for more information and let you know what to expect when contacting a service. Family members and friends can use Daisy to gather information and support a loved one's decision making. It is available through both Google Play and the Apple App Store

STRENGTHENING PRACTICE: INTERVENING EARLY

- Housing professionals have a key role to play, alongside their colleagues in social services, health and the police, in keeping people safe.
- Housing professionals are ideally placed to identify victims of domestic and family violence, but only if they know what to look for.
- Signs of domestic and family violence can be difficult to detect. Sometimes people may not even be aware that they are a victim.
- It is vital that housing professionals are able to identify abuse and recognise possible indicators.

HOW CAN SUCH A COMMITMENT BE ACHIEVED IN PRACTICE?

- The **Strengthening practice in responding to domestic and family violence toolkit** provides a suite of tools and resources to help build and strengthen practice across your CHP
- Building your capacity to identify and respond effectively to DFV will be an ongoing & iterative process that will be strengthened as you polish your skills and learning through reflective practice of both your organisation's and each person's practice
- The Centre for Training in Social Housing has a one day training module **CHCDFV001** *Recognise and respond appropriately to domestic and family violence* that has embedded the toolkit into the learning