

Western Australia

Perpetrator Response

Framework

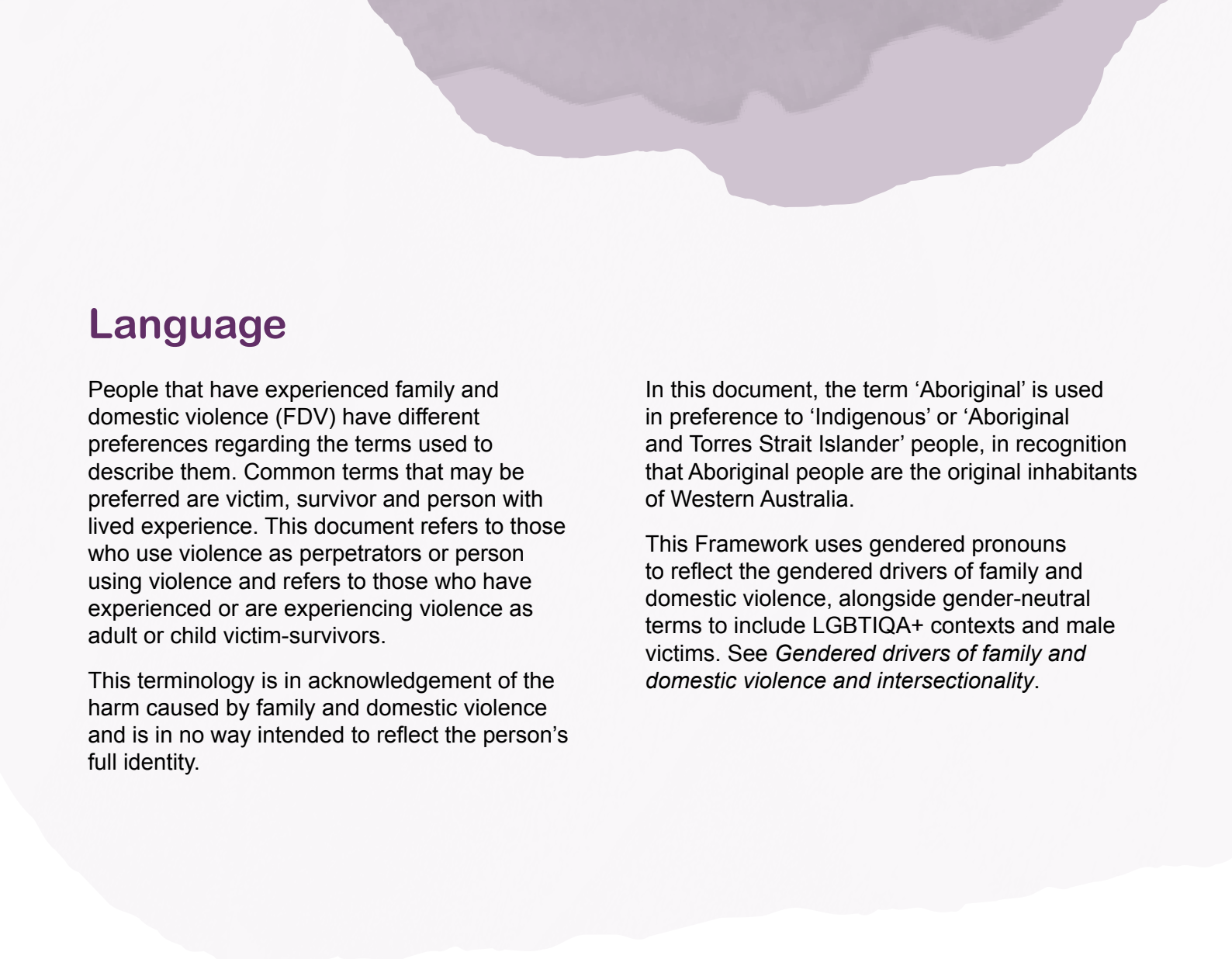
Improving responses to people who use family
and domestic violence in Western Australia

The Perpetrator Response Framework (the Framework) has been developed in partnership with family and domestic violence government and non-government sector stakeholders and is intended to provide a shared framework for use across the service system to improve responses to people who use family and domestic violence.

The Department of Communities warmly acknowledges Stopping Family Violence, the peak body in Western Australia representing perpetrator intervention sectors and services, for their significant contribution in the development of this framework.

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country and People	5
Recognition of victim-survivors	5
Introduction	6
Purpose	7
Critical foundations of perpetrator responses	7
A continuum of specialist perpetrator interventions	7
Integrated, whole-of-systems approach	8
A lifespan approach	8
Place-based approaches	9
Gendered drivers of family and domestic violence and intersectionality	9
FDV-informed and integrated holistic approaches	10
Defining interventions	11
Key principles	13
Focus areas	16
Shared language and terminology	17
Using the Framework to guide change	17
Theory of change	18
Implementation	19



Language

People that have experienced family and domestic violence (FDV) have different preferences regarding the terms used to describe them. Common terms that may be preferred are victim, survivor and person with lived experience. This document refers to those who use violence as perpetrators or person using violence and refers to those who have experienced or are experiencing violence as adult or child victim-survivors.

This terminology is in acknowledgement of the harm caused by family and domestic violence and is in no way intended to reflect the person's full identity.

In this document, the term 'Aboriginal' is used in preference to 'Indigenous' or 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' people, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Western Australia.

This Framework uses gendered pronouns to reflect the gendered drivers of family and domestic violence, alongside gender-neutral terms to include LGBTIQ+ contexts and male victims. See *Gendered drivers of family and domestic violence and intersectionality*.

Acknowledgement of Country and People

The Department of Communities proudly acknowledges Traditional Custodians throughout Western Australia and recognises their continuing connection to their lands, families and communities. We pay our respects to Aboriginal people and cultures, and to Elders past and present.

First Nations women and children are disproportionately impacted by family and domestic violence due to ongoing impacts of colonisation in addition to gender drivers. We recognise and commit to listening to the voices of Aboriginal victim-survivors of family and domestic violence to ensure family and domestic violence responses are culturally safe, Aboriginal-led and community controlled.

Recognition of victim-survivors

The Western Australian Government acknowledges the devastating impact of family and domestic violence on individuals, families, and communities.

No one should be killed, abused or live in fear of being harmed. We acknowledge the strength, courage and resilience of victim-survivors.

We pay our respects and condolences to each individual whose life has been taken and stolen by an abusive perpetrator and, to their loved ones, we commit to contributing to improved systems to increase safety and the wellbeing of victim-survivors and increase opportunities for perpetrator accountability, interventions and minimising the risk of future harm.

Introduction

Family and domestic violence is a significant and prevalent social issue that impacts the health, safety and wellbeing of Western Australian children, women, families, and communities.

The State Government in partnership with community service organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations delivers a range of services that respond to perpetrators of family and domestic violence. This includes police, legal, justice, therapeutic and child protection responses, multi-agency responses, and intervention programs that focus on Aboriginal healing and behaviour change. Perpetrator interventions include targeted responses that directly engage with the perpetrator, as well as the actions taken by agencies, systems, structures, and services that relate to a perpetrator's interactions with victims-survivors.

Between September 2023 and March 2024, the State Government convened the Family and Domestic Violence Taskforce (the Taskforce) to help guide the State's efforts to address family and domestic violence. An outcome of the Taskforce was the [Strengthening Responses to Family and Domestic Violence - System Reform Plan 2024 - 2029](#) (System Reform Plan) comprising 17 interrelated actions across four key pillars: risk assessment, risk management, information sharing and workforce development

The System Reform Plan envisages a service system response that is collaborative, connected and organised around victim-survivor safety, recovery, and re-establishment. It builds on the strengths and resources of existing services and responses to respond to family and domestic violence more effectively in Western Australian communities.

A priority reform action under the Risk management pillar is 'more investment in perpetrator responses,' which includes a strategic and planned approach to strengthening perpetrator intervention through a perpetrator response framework, clear practice standards and regular review of existing interventions.

The Practice Standards for Perpetrator Intervention: Engaging and Responding to Men who are Perpetrators of Family and Domestic Violence (Practice Standards) were released in 2015 and updated in 2025. The Practice Standards reflect the minimum practice standards for Men's Behaviour Change Programs and outcome standards for perpetrator interventions in Western Australia.

The Practice Standards establish the overarching standards of best practice necessary for leading effective work towards the safety of women and children. These standards apply to all aspects of the service system, including legislation, strategic and operational policy, procurement processes and service provision.

This Framework aims to improve responses to individuals who use family and domestic violence. Developed in partnership with the sector and informed by the Practice Standards, it provides a shared framework for use across the service system.

The Framework aims to enhance safety for victim-survivors and promote positive behaviour change in perpetrators through a comprehensive, integrated, and culturally informed approach, considering perpetrator visibility as a key component of managing risk and increasing safety.

A **companion resource** has been developed by Stopping Family Violence, Western Australia's peak body for perpetrator interventions, to sit alongside the Framework. Its purpose is to support practitioners, government agencies and sector partners in understanding and applying the Framework in practice. By presenting detailed guidance, explanations, the evidence base and implementation considerations in a separate resource, the companion resource ensures that the Framework remains concise, accessible, and easy to navigate. This approach ensures that the Framework can be understood by a broad audience, not only specialist practitioners, while still providing the depth of information required to support consistent, high-quality implementation across the system.

Purpose

The Framework provides a blueprint for government and community service organisations, including mainstream, specialist and allied sectors towards improving the consistency, quality and capability of responses to perpetrators in Western Australia.

The objective of the Framework is to enhance safety for victim-survivors through integrated interventions that reduce, manage or contain risks posed by the person using violence, and to promote positive behaviour change of the person using violence in intimate partner and family relationships. This objective sits within a long-term vision for a Western Australia where all people live free from family and domestic violence, as set out in Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020 - 2030.ⁱ

The Framework has been designed as a high-level resource, developed through consultation with stakeholders and informed by evidence and research. It articulates a theory of change, bringing together various elements to achieve the objectives and vision. These elements are:

- eight key principles, critical to designing and delivering a perpetrator response system that works
- five critical foundations that reflect the essential approaches underpinning a strong perpetrator response system
- six focus areas to guide and scaffold improved responses to perpetrators in Western Australia.

The Framework is accompanied by a companion resource that articulates the evidence underpinning the Framework and presents opportunities for the Framework's application by a range of stakeholders.

Critical foundations of perpetrator responses

Guided by the key principles, the perpetrator response system must also be built on strong foundations. Five critical foundations represent the essential approaches that underpin an effective perpetrator response system in Western Australia. While some foundations mirror the principles, they are complementary, demonstrating the system approaches and enablers that must be in place for the key principles to be implemented.

A continuum of specialist perpetrator interventions

- Interventions need to be available across a flexible continuum to ensure the right responses are available to perpetrators at the right time.
- Participation in multiple interventions over time provides a scaffolded approach to accountability and behaviour change.

Specialist perpetrator interventions and programs vary significantly in their scope, intensity and purpose, enabling a continuum of responses that reflect the diversity of perpetrators' readiness to change, risk profiles and individual needs and circumstances. Evidence shows that Perpetrators are more likely to change behaviour and demonstrate accountability when the service system provides scaffolded opportunities for participation in multiple interventions over time.ⁱⁱ

The continuum ranges from single-engagement support and brief interventions, through to men's behaviour change programs, Aboriginal healing programs, clinical case management, migrant men's and culturally tailored fathering programs, integrated individual responses for high-risk high-harm perpetrators, and post-program maintenance and peer support initiatives.

Interventions have distinct but overlapping goals and can be used flexibly across the continuum. For example, brief interventions primarily build motivation and support safety planning as steps toward men's behaviour change programs, but can also serve as post-program reinforcement to consolidate gains. This flexibility, combined with embedded cultural safety and accessibility considerations, ensures the system can respond effectively to diverse perpetrator populations and changing circumstances across an individual's journey of accountability.

Integrated, whole-of-systems approach

- System-wide perpetrator responses need to build opportunities for accountability across all touchpoints.
- Success depends on coordinated, integrated responses that layer strategically over time and across agencies.

A whole-of-systems approach builds perpetrator accountability across all system touchpoints that perpetrators interact with by creating a clear understanding of the perpetrator's pattern of behaviour. These touchpoints include but are not limited to child protection services, family support services, health services, housing, law enforcement, immigration, legal and justice system services (including courts and corrections), youth services and community organisations. Increased perpetrator visibility relies on coordination and information sharing between services that have varying degrees of engagement with the perpetrator or with adults and children harmed by the perpetrator's behaviour.

Workforces and services differ in their roles and responsibilities for engaging perpetrators of family and domestic violence. When multiple services enact clear roles and responsibilities appropriate to their context and degree of specialisation by understanding the perpetrator's pattern of behaviour, they create a web of accountability

for perpetrators.ⁱⁱⁱ This web acknowledges the responses of many actors over time and works to keep the perpetrator in view and build opportunities for accountability and a change in behaviours, beliefs and attitudes. Effective webs of accountability are created when formal and 'informal' community-driven supports, such as Elders and kin and community safety groups, collaborate and share information to centralise adult and child victim-survivor safety and agency.

Coordinated, cross-agency responses to perpetrators should build progressively over the course of a 'chain' of interventions. They require both horizontal integration, where agencies that are simultaneously providing services to the perpetrator collaborate via information sharing and working toward shared goals, and vertical integration, where interventions build strategically upon previous engagements and lay the foundations for other interventions. This works to build change momentum over time while also strengthening across-system understanding about the perpetrator's behavioural patterns and risk.

A lifespan approach

- A lifespan approach works to interrupt perpetration pathways by providing interventions that span across the life stages.
- Beyond individual programs, social environments that normalise violence among boys and young men need to be challenged.

Much remains unknown about why some people enter into pathways to use family and domestic violence and others do not. While traumatic backgrounds and adverse childhood experiences are not in themselves causal factors in this pathway, childhood exposure to family and domestic violence, and to other traumatic or marginalising circumstances, significantly increases the risk of later family and domestic violence perpetration among boys.^{iv}

A lifespan approach interrupts pathways to perpetration by engaging people at different life stages, spanning early intervention to specialist responses. This can include:

- timely, appropriate services for children victim-survivors, including responses to strengthen relationships with non-violent parents
- capability building among a range of services to better identify and respond to adolescents and young people using violence against parents, siblings, or in early intimate relationships^v
- strengthening integrated, multi-agency responses to adolescent and young people's use of violence
- specialist programs for adolescents and young people at risk of using, or currently using violence and their families.

A lifespan approach means working with young people who might be at risk of using violence or who may be exhibiting violent behaviours. It also involves interventions that aim to disrupt the broader social environment that enables the use of violence among boys and young men. This includes community engagements and primary prevention initiatives supporting boys and young men to navigate masculinity in healthy ways.

Place-based approaches

- Interventions are relevant to local communities to address systemic barriers and create whole-of-community webs of accountability.
- Place-based responses can facilitate collaboration across services, community networks and groups.

Place-based approaches combine multiple, mutually-reinforcing interventions within a geographical or locally defined community. They address structural barriers to service access and social environmental factors contributing to a perpetrator's choices to use violence, support community-led responses including those addressing intergenerational trauma, provide early holistic support, progress service system integration, build workforce capacity and identify natural networks outside formal services.

These approaches are particularly relevant in Western Australia, given the geographically dispersed and highly diverse nature of the state. Consistent with Western Australia's Family and Domestic Violence Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework (CRARMF), effective perpetrator responses require whole-of-community approaches that establish webs of accountability beyond specialist programs or justice system responses alone. All services engaging with perpetrators can influence perpetrator behaviour, while supporting victim-survivors to manage risk and build safety.

Siloed approaches allow patterns of coercive control and violent behaviour to remain invisible. Therefore, building a path to safety requires all systems, workforces and organisations to collaborate to keep perpetrators' patterns of behaviour visible and accountable. Supporting place-based approaches can reduce siloing and strengthen collaboration between service sectors and community networks, making whole-of-community approaches practical and grounded in local context.

Gendered drivers of family and domestic violence and intersectionality

- Understand the gendered pattern of family and domestic violence.
- Understand that Aboriginal people have additional drivers due to colonisation and structural forms of oppression.
- Employ an intersectional approach to address multiple forms of oppression.

Family and domestic violence primarily results from gendered drivers such as male entitlement and is an expression of power and control. The current evidence demonstrates that the substantial majority of users of family and domestic violence are cisgender heterosexual men, and that most adult victim-survivors are cisgender heterosexual women.

This gendered lens aligns with Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020 - 2030 and the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children, where the link between gender role socialisation and violence against women is acknowledged.

The language used in the Framework employs gendered pronouns to reflect this. However, gender-neutral expressions are also used to enable inclusiveness of LGBTIQ+ contexts and of male victims (who often experience family and domestic violence from another man).

An intersectional approach is critical in recognising that family and domestic violence exists in the context of multiple and intersecting forms of oppression, discrimination, and inequalities. These include but are not limited to racism, ableism, ageism, heteronormativity, and class discrimination. For Aboriginal families and communities, the ongoing impacts of colonisation further influence the prevalence and experience of family violence.^{vi} Cultural norms, migration status and linguistic exclusion are also intersecting factors that must be considered.

Accordingly, perpetrator intervention systems must deliver flexible and inclusive responses through building partnerships, identifying capability building needs, co-design and determining community-led measures of success.

Using an FDV-informed approach in perpetrator response systems is essential in not only enhancing engagement and behaviour change in perpetrators, but more importantly in harnessing opportunities to enhance victim safety.

Adopting a trauma-informed lens in perpetrator interventions requires care, as it must enhance rather than dilute accountability and recognise trauma as a context for understanding behaviour without excusing it.^{vii}

Further, integrated holistic approaches that address co-occurring issues, such as mental health concerns, alcohol and other drug use and social isolation, are equally critical. These factors can intersect with violence perpetration and can create acute periods of elevated risk, act as barriers to program engagement and undermine behaviour change efforts. Effective perpetrator response systems require coordinated pathways between perpetrator services and other wrap-around supports. Interventions must be adapted for diverse groups including individuals who are Aboriginal people, culturally and linguistically diverse, neurodiverse people, individuals of diverse gender and sexuality, people with disabilities, adolescents and older people. The goal is to remove barriers to behaviour change and reduce risk factors to keep victim-survivor safety central.

FDV-informed and integrated holistic approaches

- Address the complex interconnections between trauma, behaviour and social context with a safety-first approach for victim-survivors.
- Provide wrap-around supports for social, emotional, mental and physical support services when engaging in perpetrator interventions.

Defining Interventions

Brief interventions	Short-term, multi-session support (e.g. telephone or counselling sessions) for individuals who have used or are at risk of using violence but are not yet ready or eligible for full behaviour change programs. These are often early interventions to engage individuals and provide counselling, referral, or motivation to change.
Clinical case management	An individually tailored, wrap-around intervention for perpetrators — often used for those not suitable for group programs (due to complex needs, mental health issues, alcohol and drugs use, homelessness, cognitive impairment, language barriers, etc.). Case management involves assessment, coordination of supports (mental health, alcohol and other drugs, housing, etc.), engagement, risk monitoring, safety planning, and linkage to other interventions (including Men's Behaviour Change Programs or support services).
Culturally tailored fathering program	Parenting/fathering-focused interventions specifically designed for perpetrators who are fathers, where content addresses the impact of family violence on children and aims to build safe, responsible, non-violent parenting skills. These programs recognise fathering as central to men's identity and motivation for change, and are adapted for cultural context.
Fathering program	A program for perpetrators who are fathers (or have parenting responsibilities) focused on parenting, understanding the impact of violence on children, and promoting safe, positive parenting. Unlike general Men's Behaviour Change Programs, the content specifically addresses father-child relationships and aims to support men to be non-violent, responsible, and nurturing parents.
Healing and behaviour change program	Typically refers to interventions aimed at perpetrators (often from Aboriginal or other marginalised or traumatised communities) that combine behaviour change with broader healing — addressing intergenerational trauma, mental health, alcohol and drug use, disconnection, and cultural identity. These programs recognise that family violence may be rooted in broader systemic disadvantage and trauma and support a holistic pathway to behaviour change and wellbeing.
Integrated individual response	A tailored intervention for an individual perpetrator that combines multiple types of support (for example, case management, counselling, mental health, housing, alcohol and drug use support, risk monitoring, and possibly a plan for wrap-around services) rather than a one-size-fits-all group program. This approach recognises diverse needs and aims for a holistic response rather than simple group-based interventions.

Men's Behaviour Change Program (MBCP)	A structured, often group-based program for men who have used violent or abusive behaviour. MBCPs aim to hold perpetrators accountable, challenge and change attitudes and beliefs that underpin violence, develop non-violent behaviour and healthy relationships, and increase safety for victim-survivors. Program length, content and intensity vary. MBCPs are among the most common specialist perpetrator interventions in Australia.
Migrant men's program	Perpetrator intervention programs specifically designed for men from migrant, culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds — recognising that cultural, language, legal, social, and migration-related factors may affect both the experience and use of violence, access to services, and appropriate support. Such programs adapt content to be culturally relevant, may include translation or bilingual support, and account for unique risks and needs (e.g. social isolation, cultural norms and immigration stress).
Modified Men's Behaviour Change Programs for specific cohorts	An MBCP that adapts standard men's behaviour change program content and delivery to meet the distinct needs, risks, and circumstances of particular groups (such as Aboriginal men, culturally and linguistically diverse men, young men, men with cognitive impairment or men in custodial settings) while maintaining a focus on accountability and victim-survivor safety. Interventions should be culturally safe and secure and address factors such as language barriers by using interpreters and multilingual resources.
Post-program maintenance	After completing a primary intervention (e.g. MBCP, fathering program, healing program), maintenance interventions provide ongoing support to sustain behaviour change. This might include telephone counselling, mentoring, peer support, check-ins, or follow-up sessions to reinforce learning, prevent relapse and support long-term safety.
Single-engagement support	A one-off or very limited-contact intervention, often involving brief counselling, safety planning or referral, designed for people who may not enter a full program, but need urgent support or an entry point into the service system (e.g. risk assessment or referral to longer-term supports). While not always formally defined in literature, this type would align with early intervention or engagement-focused services that reach people before or instead of longer-term programs.

Key principles

The Framework is structured around eight key principles to build a strong, effective perpetrator response system. These are informed by the foundational principles of strong intervention systems developed by the RMIT Centre for Innovative Justice (CIJ) and Stopping Family Violence in 2019.^{viii} Further consultation with key government and sector stakeholders has also shaped the key principles.



Principle 1: Centre and support adult victim-survivors

- All interventions with perpetrators are underpinned by a central focus on adult victim-survivor safety, wellbeing and space for action, including access to appropriate support services for the duration of a perpetrator intervention.¹
- The voices, needs and experiences of adult victim-survivors are central in designing and implementing interventions and responses to perpetrators.
- Adult victim-survivors are supported with responses that maintain a focus on the perpetrator and the harm they cause.
- Adult victim-survivor contact is prioritised in every perpetrator intervention.



Principle 2: Centre and support children victim-survivors

- All interventions with perpetrators are underpinned by a central focus on child victim-survivor safety, wellbeing and space for action, including access to appropriate support services for the duration of a perpetrator intervention.

- The voices, needs and experiences of child victim-survivors, are central in designing and implementing interventions and responses to perpetrators.
- Child victim-survivors are supported with responses that maintain a focus on the perpetrator and the harm they cause.
- Child victim-survivor contact is prioritised in every perpetrator intervention.



Principle 3: Build perpetrator accountability

- Clear processes are established to enable perpetrator accountability for harmful behaviour and impacts.
- Accountability processes and actions are meaningful for victim-survivors and for perpetrators.
- The skillsets involved in the specialist work of perpetrator intervention are developed through dedicated pathways, training, supervision and communities of practice.
- Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood for all stakeholders throughout the wider systems who interact with perpetrators.

¹ 'Space for action' refers to moving beyond creating safety to also creating space and opportunity for victim-survivors to restore their freedom, their voice and their ability to make choices, while also improving their wellbeing. A victim-survivor's space for action is restricted and constrained by the abuse they endure.

4

Principle 4: Share responsibility for addressing perpetrator behaviour and risk

- All stakeholders and responders involved in direct and indirect perpetrator engagement understand their responsibility in addressing a perpetrator's pattern of behaviour and risk, ensuring victim-survivors are never blamed or held responsible for the perpetrator's actions.
- Perpetrators experience timely, specific and appropriate system responses that attempt to reduce their motivations and opportunities to continue to use violent and controlling behaviours.
- Perpetrators are kept in view through information sharing to strengthen integrated interventions that identify and respond to risk.
- Agencies across systems evaluate service delivery outcomes and enact continuous improvement strategies to become more informed about family and domestic violence in their practice.
- Agencies across systems work together and share information about risk and perpetrator patterns of behaviour.
- Referring agencies and other stakeholders that respond to perpetrator-driven risk collaborate with, and hold realistic expectations of, behaviour change programs and other specialist interventions.

5

Principle 5: Dynamic risk assessment and management

- Perpetrator use of violent and controlling behaviours is understood as intentional, dangerous and patterned.
- Specialist FDV services and agencies across service systems build capability to identify, assess, respond to and share information effective to dynamic risk.
- Specialist FDV services and agencies across service systems build understanding about what can be learnt about risk and harm through direct engagement of the perpetrator.
- Perpetrator behaviour patterns and impacts on children and families are mapped to avoid victim-blaming, misidentification of victim-survivors and to ensure that documentation and service system actions place responsibility on to the person causing harm.
- Perpetrator use of violent and controlling behaviours towards victim-survivors needs to be shared at the point of referral as an input to understanding perpetrator behaviour patterns.
- Specialist FDV services and agencies across service systems collaborate to develop and enact family and domestic violence risk management strategies, plans and procedures.
- Multi-agency collaborations identify and respond to emergent, escalating and serious risk posed by perpetrators and keep them in view over an agreed period of time.

6

Principle 6: Flexible and responsive interventions

- A wider range of evidence-based interventions are accessible and available for different cohorts including but not limited to young people and fathers, Aboriginal men, migrant men, people of diverse gender and sexuality, neurodiverse people, people with disabilities, older people, and individuals residing or working in a remote location (e.g. fly in fly out).
- Interventions engaging perpetrators from marginalised communities (i.e. Aboriginal, CaLD, LGBTIQ+, disability) are co-designed with networks and representatives from those communities, including when delivered by mainstream services. Interventions are co-designed with adolescents, young people, and their families to ensure services are culturally grounded, responsive and effective.
- Perpetration of family violence by Aboriginal adults is understood as resulting from both gendered drivers and historical and ongoing colonisation, dispossession and trauma.
- Ensure partner contact, support and referral pathways for adult and child victim-survivors is built in by design to all perpetrator interventions.
- Early intervention and prevention opportunities are created to disrupt developmental pathways towards family and domestic violence perpetration.

7

Principle 7: Support societal and structural change

- Community networks, first responders and leaders are supported to strengthen their understanding of family and domestic violence.
- A wide variety of organisations and groups can be actively involved with primary prevention efforts, and to assist communities to increase awareness and address the drivers of family and domestic violence.
- Systemic and structural reinforcers of the underlying drivers of family and domestic violence are identified and addressed.
- Workers within perpetrator intervention systems are aware of how their work supports and influences societal and structural changes to address the drivers of family and domestic violence.

8

Principle 8: Strengthen the continuum of interventions and integration of responses

- A continuum of accessible, culturally-safe, evidence-informed and effective interventions is employed.
- All services have roles to perform along many points of the spectrum of interventions to promote accountability and behaviour change.
- Funders, referrers, intervention providers and other stakeholders understand the realistic goals and limitations of each type of intervention along this continuum.
- Funders, referrers, intervention providers and other stakeholders work closely with services to ensure interventions remain effective and responses are integrated across the continuum of interventions.

Focus areas

The following interconnected focus areas highlight challenges and opportunities for strengthening responses to perpetrators. Design, implementation and integration of interventions relating to the focus areas should be considered within the context of the key principles and the critical foundations, including recognition of the diversity of Western Australian communities.

1

Focus area 1: Victim-survivor safety

- All perpetrator interventions have capacity and capability to result in improved safety and wellbeing for adult and child victim-survivors.

4

Focus area 4: Evidence-based interventions

- The design and delivery of interventions is informed by evidence, including research, practitioner-based evidence and lived and living experience insights, and is routinely reviewed and continually improved.

2

Focus area 2: Promoting visibility and accountability

- All parts of the system work together to keep perpetrators in view and to build opportunities for accountability and behaviour change.

5

Focus area 5: Accessible and diverse interventions

- Interventions respond to different stages of change and levels of risk and are inclusive of various needs, backgrounds and local contexts and systems.

3

Focus area 3: Earlier intervention

- Opportunities for early engagement and intervention are encouraged.

6

Focus area 6: Aboriginal-led and culturally secure

- Ensure cultural safety, collaboration and community control through the design and delivery of interventions for Aboriginal people.^{ix}

Shared language and terminology

Shared language and terminology ensures clarity, consistency and a common understanding across professionals, organisations and agencies involved in addressing and preventing perpetration of harm. Unified language is required to effectively assess, intervene and manage risks related to perpetrators of family violence or other forms of harm.

When all stakeholders use the same terminology with the same understanding, it minimises confusion, enhances communication and promotes a more coordinated approach to safety planning and risk management. Shared language helps define roles and responsibilities, allowing professionals to respond in ways that are evidence-informed, respectful and aligned with best practices.

Shared language improves data collection and analysis, providing a consistent basis for evaluating patterns of behaviour and ensuring that interventions are appropriate and effective. Shared language supports a more integrated and holistic response, making it possible to address the complexities of perpetrator behaviour and the safety of victim-survivors in a more strategic way.

See the companion resource for more information on language and terminology.

Using the Framework to guide change

This Framework brings together key principles, critical foundations and focus areas to achieve the objective of enhancing safety for victim-survivors through integrated interventions that reduce, manage or contain risks posed by the person using coercive control and violence, and to promote positive behaviour change in intimate partner and family relationships.

The eight key principles provide the foundation for all stakeholder decision-making, centring victim-survivor safety while building perpetrator accountability through shared responsibility. The five critical foundations operationalise these principles by establishing the required approaches to maintain perpetrator visibility and accountability across multiple service touchpoints over time. When these foundations are established and principles consistently applied, the six focus areas provide strategic direction for action, addressing identified system gaps and opportunities.

This multi-level approach reflects the reality that no single service or sector can address family and domestic violence perpetration in isolation. Accountability develops through coordinated activity across government services, specialist providers and community supports. This creates system-wide responses that make continued violence more difficult to conceal while strengthening safety and support for victim-survivors, regardless of whether perpetrators achieve behaviour change.

When implemented as designed, this Framework enables perpetrators to receive consistent and appropriate responses; victim-survivors to access enhanced safety, agency, and support; and communities to address the structural drivers and social norms that contribute to violence. The key principles, critical foundations and focus areas are embedded in the Framework's theory of change, provided on the next page.

Theory of Change

Because...

Perpetrator visibility, accountability and behaviour change is essential to improving victim-survivor safety and wellbeing.

- The consistency, quality and capability of responses to perpetrators need to improve.
- Whole-of-system responses face challenges including workforce development and capability, cross sector collaboration, system connectivity and policy gaps.
- Careful, sustainable growth in a continuum of perpetrator interventions is required.
- There are missed early intervention opportunities to interrupt pathways towards FDV perpetration.
- There are systemic and structural drivers of FDV that need to be addressed.

It is understood that...

Strengthening the perpetrator response system will improve victim-survivor safety and increase perpetrator accountability and behaviour change.

- Perpetrator use of violent and controlling behaviours is intentional and patterned.
- Perpetrator interventions enhance victim-survivor safety within integrated systems that manage perpetrator-driven risk.
- Accountability processes and actions must be meaningful for both victim-survivors and perpetrators.
- All sectors, workforces and professionals have roles and opportunities in responding to perpetrators.
- Multi-agency information sharing, perpetrator pattern mapping and perpetrator-focused risk management is critical.

So, this Framework provides...

A set of principles, foundations and focus areas to guide understanding and efforts to improve the perpetrator response system.

- A policy environment that drives timely, specific and appropriate system responses.
- Referrers and other stakeholders adopting realistic expectations of various specialist interventions.
- Clarity and momentum towards dedicated pathways and capability uplift for all workforces.
- A joint understanding of the evidence, approaches and directions to build a safe and strong response system.
- Clear reinforcement that cross-system collaborations are needed to keep perpetrators in view and to identify and manage FDV risk.

That will lead to...

Consistent, evidence-informed approaches to the design and delivery of perpetrator interventions across Western Australia.

- A more strategic system of joined-up interventions that scaffold accountability.
- Less victim-blaming and more FDV-informed support and advocacy for victim-survivors.
- Reduced system gaps that perpetrators can fall between and exploit.
- Accessible, evidence-based interventions responsive to diverse cohorts, needs and local contexts.
- Increased early intervention to interrupt pathways towards perpetration, including with children and young people.
- Referrers and other systems agents working more collaboratively with a range of specialist interventions.
- Workforces and services with knowledge, confidence and skill to enact their roles and engage directly and indirectly with perpetrators.

And result in...

A reduction in the prevalence and impact of family and domestic violence in Western Australia.

- Reduced incidence and prevalence of FDV in Western Australia.
- Fewer domestic homicides by FDV perpetrators.
- High-risk, high-harm perpetrators have reduced opportunities to exercise coercive control.
- Women, children and other victim-survivors feeling safer in their relationships and families.
- Reductions in the proportion of children and young people experiencing FDV who perpetrate FDV as adults.
- Western Australian men responding appropriately towards FDV in their communities.

Implementation

- **Build a common understanding**

- Make the Perpetrator Response Framework a guiding document to inform service planning, design and delivery in Western Australia.
- Development of a supporting resource to provide the evidence base for the Framework and highlight learnings and opportunities for its application.

- **Collaborative approach**

- Involve agencies, community organisations, academics and, where appropriate, people with lived experience in system design.
- Emphasise integrated responses and continuous improvement.

- **Regular reviews and updates**

- Ensure the Framework remains relevant and effective.

ⁱ Government of Western Australia. (2020). *Path to Safety: Western Australia's strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020-2030*. Perth, Western Australia, <https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2021-04/fdv-strategy-2020-2030.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Helps, N., Bell, C., Schulze, C., Vlasis, R., Clark, O., Seamer, J., & Buys, R. (2025). *The role of men's behaviour change programs in addressing men's use of domestic, family and sexual violence: An evidence brief* (ANROWS Insights, 01/2025). ANROWS. <https://doi.org/10.71940/snn3-m344>

ⁱⁱⁱ Victorian Government. (2020). *Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020-2023*. Melbourne, Victoria, <https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-reform-rolling-action-plan-2020-2023>

^{iv} Ogilvie, J., Thomsen, L., Barton, J., Harris, D.A., Rynne, J., & O'Leary, P. (2022). *Adverse childhood experiences among youth who offend: Examining exposure to domestic and family violence for male youth who perpetrate sexual harm and violence* (Research report, 13/2022). ANROWS.

^v Nicholas, L., Hanckel, B., Burgin, R., Kilvington-Dowd, L., Johnston, B., Mills, X., & McGregor, J. (2025). *Improving Responses to Young Men's Use of Intimate Partner Violence: Towards a Best Practice Approach*. Sydney, New South Wales, <https://doi.org/10.26183/0rct-m487>

^{vi} Government of Western Australia. (2022). *Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy 2022-2032*. Perth, Western Australia, <https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2022-12/Aboriginal-Family-Safety-Strategy.pdf>

^{vii} Scott, K., & Jenny, A. (2022). Safe not soft: Trauma- and violence-informed practice with perpetrators as a means of increasing safety. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 32(7-8), 1088-1107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2022.2052389>

^{viii} Vlasis, R., Campbell, E., & Green, D. (2019). *Foundations for Family and Domestic Violence Perpetrator Intervention Systems*. Melbourne, Victoria, <https://cij.org.au/cms/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/foundations-for-family-and-domestic-violence-perpetrator-intervention-systems-dec-2019.pdf>

^{ix} Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Social Services) (2026) *Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence* https://www.dss.gov.au/system/files/documents/2026-03/260219-our-ways-report-v7-web_0.pdf



Department of Communities

5 Newman Court, Fremantle WA 6160

Postal address: Locked Bag 5000, Fremantle WA 6959

T: 1800 176 888 | E: enquiries@communities.wa.gov.au

www.communities.wa.gov.au

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)

T: 13 14 50

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service. For more information visit:

www.communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs