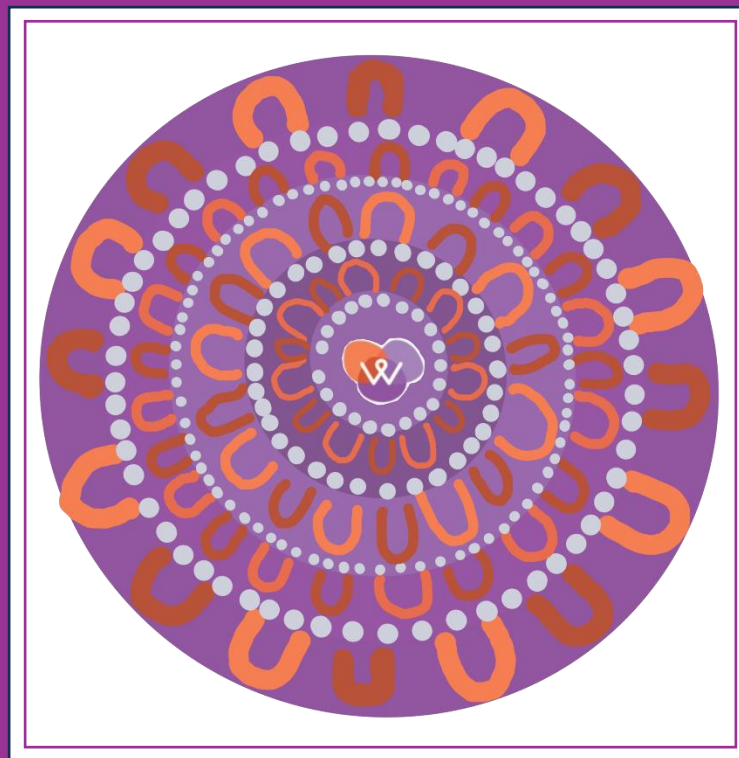




CENTRE FOR
Women's Safety
and Wellbeing

Western Australia Code of Practice



Executive Summary
Key Insights and Development



STOPPING
FAMILY VIOLENCE



ABOUT US

The Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing (CWSW) is the peak body for women's specialist domestic and family violence, community-based women's health and sexual assault services in Western Australia. CWSW works with governments, peak bodies, community, and private organisations to prevent violence against women, promote women's health and advance gender equity to ensure that women's voices are integral to policy, legislation, and services.

Stopping Family Violence (SFV) is the peak body for perpetrator response in family, domestic and sexual violence in Western Australia. SFV works across training, research, policy, and advocacy and drives change by supporting governments and community sectors to build effective service systems and create or enhance safety for all victim-survivors. SFV supports all the sectors and services involved in responding to perpetrators in Western Australia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing and Stopping Family Violence acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians and first peoples of Australia. We recognise the impacts of colonisation and dispossession and the contemporary disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and forever and acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded. We recognise our First Nations peoples' right to self-determination and continuing connections to land, waters, community, and culture.

RECOGNITION OF VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

The Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing recognises the strength and resilience of adults, children, and young people who have experienced domestic, family, and sexual violence and acknowledge that it is essential that responses to domestic, family, and sexual violence are informed by their expert knowledge and advocacy.

We pay respects to those who did not survive and acknowledge friends and family members who have lost loved ones to the preventable and far-reaching issue.

Artist: Rosie Paine

Rosie Paine is a proud Yilka/Wongutha/Noongar/Yamatji woman from the North East Goldfields of Western Australia.



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PROJECT OVERVIEW

In December 2022, the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing (CWSW) and Stopping Family Violence (SFV) successfully advocated for the development and implementation of a Western Australian Code of Practice (the Code) for specialist family and domestic violence services. The project outcomes include the development and implementation of a Code of Practice and Audit Tool for specialist domestic and family violence services with evaluation over a three-year period.

The purpose of the Code is to support consistency in specialist family and domestic violence service provision for victim survivors. The Code will articulate principles and standards to guide consistent quality service provision for victim survivors accessing specialist family and domestic violence services in Western Australia. It will be developed using a range of research processes, including participatory consultations with specialist family and domestic violence service leaders and practitioners, government and sector partners, and victim survivors.

The Code will be founded on a framework that is underpinned by an evidence-based understanding of family and domestic violence, intersectional analysis, and supporting frameworks including human rights, social justice, and a trauma and violence-informed approach.

The objectives of the Code are to:

- describe the evidence base and theoretical frameworks that inform the shared principles and standards of specialist family and domestic violence services;
- support continuous quality improvement to enable consistent, inclusive, safe and accountable service design and delivery;
- clarify the relationship of the Code with other essential systems resources that inform specialist family and domestic violence service responses; and



- provide guidance on the leadership role of specialist family and domestic violence services within the family and domestic violence response system and broader social change advocacy.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CONSULTATION PERIOD:

During the consultation period, stakeholders from various regions across WA shared valuable insights. The key findings from the consultation include:

- Strong consensus on the need for a comprehensive Code of Practice.
- Staff safety, both psychically and psychologically were of the most priority for every consultation across all regions.
- Risk and Safety, Cultural Safety and Violence and Trauma informed were picked 100% of the time for top 10 principles.
- Supervision, professional development, and training opportunities for staff played a large role in all conversations.
- Strong desire to move away from high caseloads and KPI's and a desire to move toward relationship building and meaningful engagement with clients.
- Perpetrator accountability was identified as the *most challenging* to imbed in practice, due to the nature of our current service system.
- A desire for multidisciplinary teams in accommodation services, acknowledging the increase in complexity and intersections.
- A desire for flexibility in implementation to accommodate regional variations.
- Emphasis on accountability for the sector, and inclusivity for people accessing services came through consistently.
- Regional and remote services highly valued face to face consultation.
- Code acknowledges the irreplaceable insight gained by physically immersing oneself in the contexts in which services operate.



PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY EACH REGION:

Different regions have distinct priorities for the Code's development:

- **Wheatbelt:** Isolation, the absence of service infrastructure, and formidable recruitment challenges emerged as pivotal themes in the dialogue during these consultations. Notably, with a special focus on Narrogin, confronted distinctive hurdles, such as the absence of a taxi service and limited public transportation options. The region's priorities centred around collaboration and advocacy, speaking to the extreme difficulty in achieving meaningful cooperation due to the scarcity of services. Simultaneously, the imperatives of inclusion, access, and equity came to the forefront, underlining the pressing housing crisis and the resolute drive to establish equitable support for clients.
- **Pilbara:** Aboriginal self-determination and the prioritisation of cultural safety were pivotal factors in the consultation process throughout the Pilbara region, reflecting a resolute commitment to enhancing the well-being of its Aboriginal communities. Moreover, the spirit of collaboration and advocacy emerged as cornerstone principles in these consultations, as many parts of the Pilbara region rely extensively on synergistic partnerships with various service providers, fostering a holistic and integrated approach to the support they provide.
- **West Kimberley:** In parts of the region, engagement with victim-survivors primarily relies on assertive outreach with limited opportunities to build relationships as the focus is on responding to high levels of high harm. Staff across the region expressed concerns about the lack of incentives for living and working in the region due to high living costs and limited housing opportunities. They also noted a deficiency in available services. One of the most profound quotes from this consultation is “*your postcode shouldn't dictate the response*” (in relation to response from service providers for family and domestic violence).
- **East Kimberley:** Connection and collaboration with local service providers is paramount to specialist family and domestic violence services in the region, as there are limited referral pathways and collaboration is the only way to support people in



a fraught service system. Similarly, to other regions, services in the East Kimberley are stretched and are flexing their contracts to better meet the needs of their communities.

- **Great Southern:** This region is highly integrated with shared trainings across organisations, clients and sometimes office space. The staff across this region are familiar with one another and all of the principles that were prioritised during this consultation reflected a prioritisation for best practice for victim-survivors.
- **Gascoyne:** One of the primary concerns raised in this region is the limited funding available, coupled with recruitment challenges. These challenges have been exacerbated by the housing crisis, leading to understaffing across all services. Additionally, the intersection of crime and alcohol and other drugs has presented unique challenges for the region in responding to family and domestic violence. There are also issues of distrust between the community and service providers, which are primarily attributed to concerns about the confidentiality of information. The prioritisation of principles revolves around Confidentiality and Information Management, as well as Person-Centred approaches. These principles align with the region's commitment to 'sowing seeds' for positive change.
- **South West:** This region placed a significant emphasis on staff safety, wellbeing, and organisational sustainability, as well as the need for consistent policies that promote shared language and advocacy within the sector. The consultation primarily revolved around principles and priorities aimed at bolstering the sector itself rather than focusing solely on service users. Notable discussions included accountability, both at the government and funding levels, and how a lack of accountability in these areas directly affects the services provided to victim-survivors.
- **Goldfields:** The region placed emphasis on intersectionality, particularly delving into the intricate interplay of culture, race, and the issue of family domestic violence. Furthermore, the consultations dedicated substantial attention to exploring the nexus between trauma and family and domestic violence. In Kalgoorlie it is evident that the HUB occupies a pivotal role within the region, serving as the linchpin for



coordinated responses aimed at supporting victim-survivors and facilitating vital connections among service providers.

- **Midwest:** The Midwest have a family violence alliance representing a wide variety of service providers including Governance and Non-Government Agencies. The alliance is committed to creating an integrated and domestic and family violence informed region, creating better outcomes for victim-survivors. This region placed deep priority on principles that reflected positive operational outcomes.
- **Metropolitan:** The metropolitan consultation was varied, with different parts of the metro reflecting and prioritising differing needs. Conversations that centred around organisational accountability, lack of resourcing for children and young people, recovery models, case management frameworks, information sharing challenges, and minimum qualifications for workforce were just some of the themes that came through for these consultations.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the consultation period, the Code of Practice team actively engaged with the challenges that our sector encounters in delivering high-quality family and domestic violence services. We diligently documented your concerns during this period and have leveraged them to shape several key recommendations and inform our strategic advocacy efforts. Below, you will find a selection of these recommendations:

- Specialist high level, family and domestic violence risk assessment training be provided to the sector.
- Investment in purpose-built service design.
- Diversifying perpetrator accountability strategies within the specialist family and domestic violence sector to bolster system responses and promote better understanding among service providers.
- Review of “Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing” to enable information sharing between agencies.



- An uplift in funding for specialist family and domestic violence and flexibility in funding.
- Continued advocacy for housing, for staff in regional services and clients across the state.

ESTABLISHED PRINCIPLES:

The Code of Practice's core principles, informed by consultation feedback, include:

PRINCIPLE

THEMES TO BE COVERED THEREWITHIN

<p>Risk and safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Victim-survivors assessment of risk is prioritised. ○ CRARMF ○ Safety Planning ○ Regional and remote considerations ○ ATSI & CALD considerations ○ Reference to MARAM ○ Intersectionality ○ Acknowledgment that staff have a right to safety refer to organisational capability, sustainable workforce and family and domestic violence informed and trauma informed principles ○ Sexual violence in the context of perpetrator behaviour ○ Information sharing for risk management
<p>Bringing perpetrators into view</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bring perpetrator into view. ○ Learning about victim-survivor strengths ○ Mapping perpetrator patterns ○ Documentation and information sharing ○ Coordinated response and collaboration ○ Advocacy for perpetrator responses to increase safety
<p>Wellbeing, healing, and recovery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prioritising personal wellbeing while in services ○ Prioritising natural supports (outside of service) ○ Healing - essential for regional and remote and how that's done ○ Healing and what it means for Aboriginal people ○ Community education / awareness ○ What does the person need for the long term? ○ Person centred & personal autonomy ○ Economic empowerment ○ Social participation ○ Therapeutic intervention ○ Coordinated response for people using violence



<p>Family and domestic violence trauma informed practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dignity and respect ○ Trauma informed principles ○ FDV informed principles ○ Intersection of FDV and trauma ○ Person centred ○ Sexual violence in the context of perpetrator behaviour ○ Staff wellbeing ○ FDV specialist sector context ○ Reference to staff safety and wellbeing
<p>Inclusive and accessible services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At risk groups ○ regional and remote considerations ○ intersection of mental health and FDV ○ Intersection of AOD and FDV ○ Disability and LGBTIQ+
<p>Leadership and organisational capability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Responsibility of Organisations to develop apt policy and process that supports clients and staff. ○ Responsibility for Organisations to champion best practice in FDV ○ Responsibility for quality leadership at all levels ○ Investment in capacity building of staff ○ Budgets ○ Risk and safety for staff (physical and psychology) ○ Advocacy for staff and clients at a higher level ○ Advocacy at all levels
<p>Skilled and sustainable workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workforce development – foundations; equipped to respond to complexity. ○ Professionalising the sector ○ Empathising with the difficulty of work ○ Burnout & compassion fatigue ○ Supervision ○ Psychological safety
<p>Culturally secure / appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aboriginal and Torres Strait ○ Culturally and Linguistically Diverse ○ Religion and spirituality ○ Cultural security ○ Cultural awareness/ competency (worker response, continuum)) ○ Interpreters (CALD and Aboriginal) ○ Organisational responsibility to prioritise



<p>Safety and wellbeing for children and young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Responsibility to response ○ Child caregiver relationship ○ Age-appropriate responses ○ Collaboration and coordination ○ ATSI ○ CALD ○ Intersectionality ○ Isolation and silence ○ Cumulative harm ○ Multiple harms to children and young people by the perpetrator ○ Harmful sexual behaviours ○ Adolescent violence in the home (AVITH)
<p>Collaboration and advocacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guidelines for information sharing refer to s.28B of the CCA Act ○ Reference to parts of the legislation that enable information sharing and how ○ Information sharing for risk – reference to Risk and Safety ○ Information sharing for needs referral ○ Information sharing to keep perpetrators in view ○ Collaboration and coordination as a sector / resource sharing ○ Coordinated response (engagement with allied services) ○ Alliances within regions (establish working groups) ○ Common language ○ Guidelines for consent – limitations and enablers ○ Advocacy for client needs (multiple types of advocacies) ○ Advocacy for client rights

DRAFTED PRINCIPLES PREVIEW:

A sneak peek at one of the drafted principles:

- **Safety and Wellbeing for Children and Young People:** Service responses prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people impacted by family and domestic violence and ensure they are acknowledged as victim-survivors in their own right. Appendix A
- **Standards and Indicators:** Look and feel for standards and indicators. Appendix B.
- **Meeting Child Safe Standards:** See the synergies created for Child Safe standards and principle for Safety and Wellbeing for Children and Young People. Appendix C.



NEXT STEPS IN CODE'S DEVELOPMENT:

The development of the Code of Practice will proceed as follows:

- **Draft Refinement:** Further refinement of the draft principles based on stakeholder feedback.
- **Audit Tool:** Development of the self-assessment audit tool.
- **Workshops:** Facilitation of workshops with Office for Prevention of Family Domestic Violence, CRARMF Refresh Team and Governance Committee.
- **Working Groups:** Sector representatives to review developed drafts for content expertise.
- **Pilot Programs:** Initiating pilot programs to test and evaluate the practical implementation of the Code.



APPENDIX A: Themes covered

Risk and Safety	Dignity and Respect	Person-Centred Approach	Confidentiality and Information	Perpetrator Accountability
Child Centred Practice	Cultural Safety	Aboriginal Self-Determination	Inclusion, Access, and Equity	Capable and Sustainable Workforce
Quality Governance and Leadership	Family and Domestic Violence and Trauma Informed Practice	Victim-Survivor Centred Practice and Empowerment	Wellbeing, Healing and Recovery	Collaboration and Advocacy

APPENDIX B: Sample Standards and Indicators

Standard	Indicator
<p>1. Children are seen as victim-survivors in their own right and the service adapts for their inclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Where appropriate children and young people are informed about their rights and have an opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them. b. The service provides multiple pathways to accessible and developmentally appropriate ways to engage children and young people in feedback. c. The Organisation reviews child and young person feedback and surveys and uses it to refine and develop service provision. d. The organisation regularly seeks children and young people's views and encourages their participation in decision-making. e. The service works collaboratively with adult-victim survivors in their parenting/caring role to understand and promote their child's voice in decisions that affect their lives. f. The service creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing is the centre of thought, values and actions. g. Age appropriate and accessible information is provided to children and young people about what the service does, how their information is managed, how they will be involved in decisions that impact them, and how to ask for help. h. Organisations and staff have a responsibility to ensure that offices and service design is reflective of children and young people and signals to children and young people that they are safe and welcome in this service.
<p>2. Safety for children and young</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The service works collaboratively with adult victim-survivors in their parenting/caring role to support children's ongoing safety and wellbeing.

<p>people is prioritised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Staff are inducted, trained, and supervised to sensitively discuss the impacts of family violence on infants, children and young people with parents/carers and to determine the supports they require to enable ongoing safety and wellbeing needs. c) Risk assessment and risk planning for children and young people is considered and conducted in line with the Western Australian Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework d) Safety planning for children and young people is completed with either the parent or directly with the child and young person. e) The service considers the experience of the adult-victim survivors child/ren and ensures that they are visible in all planning, risk assessment and safety planning. f) Where a professional is concerned for a child or young person's wellbeing, a safe and supportive conversation with the non-offending parent or caregiver is held to raise identified concerns. Where concerns are not resolved, professionals will follow Child Protection Concern Referral Form process. If you are a mandatory reporter, please refer to Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse in WA
<p>3. The Wellbeing of children and young people is prioritised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Organisation and staff promote autonomy and agency for children and young people and recognise that child comes first in their own life. b) Where appropriate children and young people have a case management plan that reflects their, safety, well-being and goals.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Organisations and staff have a responsibility to connect with local stakeholders and service providers to ensure they are equipped to provide warm and responsive referrals for children and young people where specialist child and youth responses are not held within the service provider. d) The importance of social participation is understood by the service and prioritisation for pathways to social inclusion are prioritised. e) The service work collaboratively with adult-victim survivors in their parenting/caring role to understand and promote their child's voice in decisions that affect their lives. f) Where appropriate children and young people are informed about their rights and have an opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them.
<p>4. Organisations are committed to the prioritisation of increasing safety and decreasing risk for children and young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Organisations have clear and well documented child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures that reflect the Code of Practice and the Child Safe Standards b) The organisation is responsive to the needs of families and communities, including to cultural safety aspects. c) Children and young people from all cultural backgrounds see themselves and their culture reflected in their environment and the Organisation is active in the prioritisation of this. d) Services will respond appropriately and with a trauma informed approach to children and young people who use violence in their home. e) The service works in a collaborative and supportive way with the caregiver of the child/ren and young person where there are concerns for HSB or AVITH

APPENDIX C: Sample Meeting Child Safe Standards

Principle	Key Action Area	Indicator	Connection to our Code
Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people. 2. Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people. 	The organisational leadership models and regularly reinforces attitudes and behaviours that value children and young people and a commitment to child safety, child wellbeing and cultural safety. This commitment is clear in duty statements, performance agreements and staff and volunteer review processes.	2.A-H 5.A-F
Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information, and participation. 2. The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation has programs and resources to educate children and young people on their rights including their right to safety and right to be listened to. 2. The organisation is proactive in providing age-appropriate platforms to regularly seek children and young people's views and encourage participation in decision-making. 3. Children and young people are informed about their roles and responsibilities in helping to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their peer. 	1. A-E 3.A & D

<p>Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.</p>	<p>The organisation engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation is responsive to the needs of families and communities, including to cultural safety aspect. 2. The organisation seeks feedback from families and communities on issues of child safety and wellbeing and incorporates this into their policies and practices. 	<p>2.E & F 3A-D 5.C</p>
<p>Safety for children and young people is prioritised.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable. 2. Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation produces child-friendly material in accessible language and formats that promotes inclusion and informs all children and young people of the support and complaints processes available to them. 2. Staff and volunteers are trained to recognise and respond effectively to children and young people with diverse need 	<p>1B 4A</p>