

# NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022-2027

December 2022

[dcj.nsw.gov.au](https://dcj.nsw.gov.au)



**Warning: This report contains detail related to domestic, family violence and sexual violence, including sexual assault, sexual harassment and issues related to abuse and neglect of children, which some readers may find distressing.**

## Services and support

If you or someone close to you is in distress or immediate danger, please call 000.

Support is always available if you or someone you know has experienced domestic, family and sexual violence. Below is a list of domestic, family and sexual violence support services.

For more information on domestic, family violence and sexual violence support services, visit the [NSW Department of Communities and Justice website](#).

Help and support		
<b>1800RESPECT</b>	National counselling service for sexual assault and domestic and family violence. This service is free and confidential. Available 24/7.	1800 737 732 <a href="http://www.1800respect.org.au">www.1800respect.org.au</a>
<b>Full Stop Australia</b>	Full Stop Australia provides counselling for people whose lives have been impacted by violence and abuse.	1800 385 578 <a href="http://www.fullstop.org.au">www.fullstop.org.au</a>
<b>NSW Sexual Violence Helpline</b>	The NSW Sexual Violence Helpline is for anyone in NSW who has experienced sexual assault, recently or in the past. It is also available for family members or other supporters of anyone who has experienced sexual assault, or others who have been impacted by this violence, including professionals. Available 24/7.	1800 424 017 <a href="http://www.fullstop.org.au">www.fullstop.org.au</a>
<b>NSW Domestic Violence Line</b>	The NSW Domestic Violence Line provides free, 24/7 counselling and referrals to women experiencing domestic and family violence. Interpreters are available.	1800 656 463 <a href="http://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/children-and-families/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/domestic--family-and-sexual-violence-support-contacts/nsw-domestic-violence-line.html">www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/children-and-families/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/domestic--family-and-sexual-violence-support-contacts/nsw-domestic-violence-line.html</a>
<b>Rainbow Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence Helpline</b>	For anyone from the LGBTIQ+ community whose life has been impacted by sexual, domestic and/or family violence. This service is free and confidential. Available 24/7.	1800 497 212 <a href="http://www.fullstop.org.au">www.fullstop.org.au</a>
<b>Well Mob</b>	Social, emotional and cultural wellbeing online resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	<a href="http://www.wellmob.org.au">www.wellmob.org.au</a>
<b>Men's Referral Service</b>	For anyone in Australia whose life has been impacted by men's use of violence or abusive behaviours. Available 7 days.	1300 766 491 <a href="http://www.ntv.org.au">www.ntv.org.au</a>
<b>Say It Out Loud</b>	A national resource for LGBTQ+ communities and service professionals working with people who have experienced sexual, domestic and/or family violence.	<a href="http://www.sayitoutloud.org.au">www.sayitoutloud.org.au</a>

## Help and support

<b>Lifeline</b>	A national charity providing all Australians experiencing emotional distress with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services. Available 24/7.	13 11 14 <a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au">www.lifeline.org.au</a>
<b>National Suicide Call-back Services</b>	A nationwide service providing telephone and online counselling to people affected by suicide. Available 24/7.	1300 659 467 <a href="http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/">www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/</a>
<b>Postvention support services Thirrili</b>	The Indigenous Suicide Postvention Services supports individuals, families and communities affected by suicide or other significant trauma. Available 24/7.	1800 805 801 <a href="http://www.thirrili.com.au/postvention-support">www.thirrili.com.au/postvention-support</a>
<b>Beyond Blue</b>	Provides information and support to help anyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health.	1300 22 4636 <a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a>
<b>Head to Health</b>	Digital mental health services from some of Australia's most trusted mental health organisations.	<a href="http://www.headtohealth.gov.au">www.headtohealth.gov.au</a>
<b>13 YARN</b>	Support line for mob who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping. Available 24/7.	13 92 76 <a href="http://www.13yarn.org.au">www.13yarn.org.au</a>
<b>ReachOut</b>	Online mental health service for young people and their parents in Australia.	<a href="http://www.au.reachout.com">www.au.reachout.com</a>
<b>MensLine Australia</b>	A telephone and online counselling service offering support for Australian men.	1300 78 99 78 <a href="http://www.mensline.org.au">www.mensline.org.au</a>
<b>Kids Helpline</b>	Free, confidential online and phone counselling service for young people aged five to 25. Available 24/7.	1800 551 800 <a href="http://www.kidshelpline.com.au">www.kidshelpline.com.au</a>
<b>Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline</b>	A free, confidential and dedicated service for anyone who needs information, support or would like to report abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people and adults with disability in their family, home and community. It is part of the NSW Ageing and Disability Commission (ADC).	1800 628 221 <a href="http://www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au/">www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au/</a>

## The language used in this plan

We acknowledge that no single set of terms suits all situations and people. No exclusion or harm of people is intended in the terms used in this plan. We use inclusive language while acknowledging that evidence indicates that domestic, family and sexual violence is primarily perpetrated by men against women. We also acknowledge that people of diverse sexualities and gender identities are impacted by gender-based violence, often in complex and intersecting ways. Language used in this document reflects the language of key national frameworks, including the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 and Our Watch: Change the Story.

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# Minister's foreword



**Domestic and family violence is a serious, widespread and preventable problem. It has severe and long-term effects on victim-survivors, their families and the broader community.**

I am privileged to be the Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence. One day, I hope there is no need for a dedicated Minister in this role. Until then, the NSW Government remains committed to addressing domestic and family violence within our communities.

Since June 2021, over \$700 million has been committed by the NSW Government to prevent domestic and family violence, reduce reoffending and support victim safety through the continuation of evidence-based early intervention, victim support and perpetrator interventions.

This includes investment in the \$484.3 million Core and Cluster program, the single biggest investment in addressing domestic and family violence in NSW's history. It will provide access to safe and secure housing and specialist supports for 2,900 women and children escaping domestic and family violence.

In addition to the funding commitment, the NSW Government is delivering significant policy reform to improve women's safety outcomes in NSW.

In November, the NSW Parliament passed legislation to criminalise Coercive Control. Coercive Control, as a course of conduct, is the most prevalent precursor to intimate partner homicide. NSW is the first Australian state or territory to have a dedicated stand-alone offence of coercive control informed by many years of extensive consultation with stakeholders, along with research and analysis.

I am pleased to release the NSW Government's Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027. This plan provides strategic direction and sets out focus areas for action across the continuum of prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and healing from domestic and family violence. It also recognises the need for an accountable, well-coordinated and evidence-based service system. It follows and builds on the NSW Blueprint for Reform, which was the state's first whole-of-government strategy to address domestic and family violence.

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 has been informed by consultation with victim-survivors, frontline workers, non-government service providers, sector peak bodies and government agencies.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the development of this Plan. I look forward to continuing to work with government, the private and non-government sectors and the community as we turn our commitment to ending domestic and family violence into action.



**The Hon. Natalie Ward MLC**

Minister for Metropolitan Roads

Minister for Women's Safety and the  
Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence

# A snapshot: domestic and family violence

## Understanding domestic and family violence

Our understanding of the ways domestic and family violence (DFV) is perpetrated and the impacts it can have has changed over time and continues to evolve. While there is no single, universally agreed definition of DFV, it is important that we work towards definitions that support a shared understanding and consistent response to DFV.

This plan adopts the NSW Government's common definition of DFV.<sup>1</sup> This definition refers to DFV as 'any behaviour in a domestic relationship, which is violent, threatening, coercive or controlling and causing a person to live in fear for their own or someone else's safety. It is usually manifested as part of a pattern of ongoing controlling or coercive behaviour.'

Domestic relationships can include intimate partner relationships and family relationships:

- An intimate relationship refers to people who are (or have been) in an intimate partnership, whether or not the relationship involves or has involved a sexual relationship.
- A family relationship has a broader definition and includes people who are related to one another through blood, marriage or de facto partnerships, adoption and fostering relationships, sibling and extended family relationships. It includes the full range of kinship ties in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, extended family relationships, and constructs of family within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer communities.
- People living in the same house, living in the same residential care facility and reliant on care may also be considered to be in a domestic relationship if their relationship exhibits dynamics which may foster coercive and abusive behaviours.

We acknowledge that the understanding of DFV has evolved since this shared definition was developed and will continue to evolve over the life of the plan.

Domestic and family violence (DFV) can include, but is not limited to, a perpetrator committing:

- acts of, or inflicting fear of, physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, social, cultural, spiritual, identity, and economic/financial violence or abuse
- technology-facilitated abuse
- stalking, intimidation and harassment
- identity-based abuse, such as capitalising on a victim-survivor's fear of exposure or experience of discrimination to control and coerce them by, for example, threatening to expose or "out" someone
- threats and endangerment to children and acts to undermine a person's relationship with their children or their ability to parent
- exposure to DFV, for example, a child witnessing or being forced to participate in violence against another victim-survivor
- threats of or acts to withhold medicine or assistance-of-care needs
- threats of deportation due to migration or residency status
- threats to self-harm or harm others, including children or animals
- systems abuse, for example, by making false reports or using the criminal or family law systems to intimidate and perpetuate control
- other tactics, such as keeping the victim isolated from family, friends and other support networks, including support services and systems.

Gender inequality is the primary driver of domestic and family violence, including coercive control. The evidence suggests men are significantly more likely to be perpetrators of domestic and family violence, whereas women are more likely to be victim-survivors. The NSW Government also acknowledges gender diversity and the experiences of DFV within the LGBTIQ+ community.<sup>2</sup>

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## NSW reforms to address coercive control

The NSW Government has delivered on its commitment in December 2021 to pass legislation outlawing coercive control in current and former intimate partner relationships as part of its response to recommendations from the Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control.<sup>3</sup> The *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Act 2022* (the coercive control Act) was passed by the NSW Parliament on 16 November 2022 and introduces a standalone offence of coercive control into the *Crimes Act 1900*. In doing so, NSW has become the first Australian state or territory to create a standalone offence for coercive control.

The coercive control Act also introduces a statutory definition of domestic abuse into the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal) Violence Act 2007*.

Coercive control is complex, is insidious and, sadly, is a significant ‘red flag’ for intimate partner homicide. It is a form of domestic abuse that involves patterns of behaviour which have the cumulative effect of denying victim-survivors their autonomy and independence. This abuse can include physical, sexual, psychological or financial abuse.

These landmark reforms are crucial to ensuring that a pattern of behaviour which is identified as a precursor to domestic violence deaths is a standalone criminal offence.

The coercive control offence will not be able to commence until 1 February 2024, and no later than 1 July 2024. This is to allow plenty of time for training, resourcing, education and community awareness raising, guided by a multi-disciplinary taskforce led by the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice and supported by reference groups to provide advice and recommendations. The reference groups will include members from the domestic and family violence sector, victim-survivors and their families, the legal profession, Aboriginal organisations and groups, the culturally and linguistically diverse sector, LGBTIQ+ groups, the disability sector, and youth and children’s groups.

The NSW reforms to address coercive control are consistent with the spirit of the draft national principles for coercive control and the matters they outline.

## Developing a Common Understanding of Coercive Control

In recent years, there has been increased community awareness and recognition of coercive control. Many Australian jurisdictions have been considering reforms to strengthen more effective and consistent responses to coercive control, just as NSW has done.

In June 2021, the Australian Government, in partnership with Australian state and territory governments, started work to develop nationally consistent principles to address coercive control. Draft principles were released for consultation in September 2022, and will be finalised in early 2023.

These national principles will outline a common understanding of coercive control by the Australian Government and state and territory governments.

The national principles aim to develop a common understanding of coercive control and to raise awareness of the issue. They also aim to ensure that the community better understands the full range of physical and non-physical tactics used by perpetrators of domestic and family violence and their impacts to help inform more effective and consistent responses to coercive control.

The national principles do not outline model law, and recognise that criminalisation is a decision for state and territory governments, who have constitutional responsibility for criminal law.



# Prevalence and impacts of domestic and family violence

Despite being underreported, domestic and family violence (DFV) continues to be a serious, widespread and preventable issue that impacts many people in NSW and Australia. It has significant and often devastating impacts on the social, emotional, economic and physical wellbeing of both adult and children victim-survivors and families. It also has significant impacts and costs for individuals, communities, workplaces, businesses and governments, particularly in relation to health, justice and welfare.

## In Australia:

On average, approximately

**one**

woman is killed every

**10 days**

by an intimate partner.<sup>4</sup>



More than two million Australian women and

**700,000**

Australian men have experienced violence by an intimate partner since the age of 15 years.<sup>5</sup>

Statistics show that

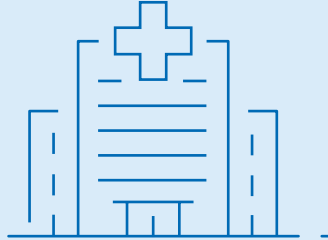
**60.7%**

of LGBTIQ+ people have experienced intimate partner violence, and

**64.9%**

of LGBTIQ+ people have experienced some form of domestic and family violence.<sup>6</sup>

Intimate partner violence contributes an estimated 5.1% to the disease burden in Australian women aged 18 to 44 years (more than any other risk factor) and 2.2% of the burden in women of all ages.<sup>9</sup>



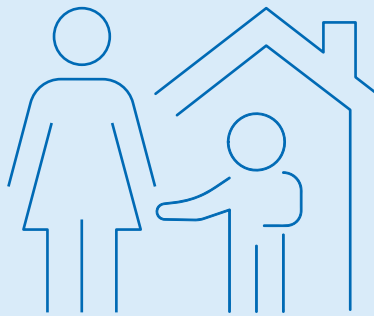
A spouse or domestic partner was the perpetrator in

**45%**

of hospitalisations for female assault victims and

**4.4%**

of hospitalisations for male assault victims.<sup>7</sup>



DFV is the leading reason for seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services (40 per cent of clients, of which 92 per cent were women and children).<sup>8</sup>

DFV is estimated to contribute

**5x**

more to the burden of disease among First Nations women than among non-Aboriginal women and is estimated to make a larger contribution than any other risk factor to the gap in the burden between First Nations women and non-Aboriginal women aged 18 to 44 years.<sup>10</sup>

The estimated cost of violence against women (violence, abuse and stalking) in 2015-16 was \$22 billion.<sup>11</sup>



The estimated cost of financial abuse in 2020 was

**\$10.9**

billion (\$5.7 billion in costs to victim-survivors and \$5.2 billion in costs to the Australian economy).<sup>12</sup>



## In NSW:

There were

# 31,775

recorded incidents of domestic violence-related assault in the 12 months to June 2022.<sup>13</sup>

There were

# 137

domestic violence-related murders in the five years to December 2021.<sup>14</sup>



There were

# 19,304

incidents of domestic violence-related intimidation, stalking and harassment in 2021.<sup>15</sup>

The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Child Protection Helpline received

# 14,795

reports where the primary helpline-assessed issue was classified as domestic violence in the 12 months to March 2022.<sup>16</sup>



DFV was the most commonly reported issue to DCJ for children at risk of significant harm in 2010, with more than 20,000 reports received.<sup>17</sup>



Of the women who experience domestic and family violence, more than 50% have children in their care.

There were 20,063 incidents of breaching an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) in 2021.<sup>18</sup>

It is estimated the annual direct economic cost of DFV during the first year of the pandemic in NSW was \$1.5 billion, with total economic costs of \$5.1 billion. The total direct costs over the period 2020–2025 from the escalation in violence during 2020 are estimated at \$3.3 billion, with total economic costs of \$24.6 billion.<sup>19</sup>

Further information about the prevalence, impacts and costs of domestic violence can be found in the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032.

### The need to recognise children in their own right

Children and young people are victim-survivors of domestic and family violence (DFV) in their own right. This can be as a result of being directly targeted by perpetrators or through exposure to violence directed at other family members, for example, by witnessing or overhearing DFV or experiencing the effects of DFV, including fear and insecurity, economic hardship and homelessness. The statutory definition of domestic abuse contained in the coercive control Act covers abusive behaviour which is directed at children. It also explicitly provides that exposing a child to domestic abuse also constitutes domestic abuse.

DFV has serious, long-term and distinct consequences for children and young people. It can, for example, impact their mental and physical health, social, emotional and neurological development, sense of security and attachment in relationships and ability to cope and adapt to different situations and contexts. The presence of DFV makes the child more likely to experience physical and sexual abuse and all forms of neglect. Often children exposed to DFV have contact with other systems, including but not limited to child protection systems.<sup>20</sup>

Responses to DFV in policy, service design and service delivery must consider the unique needs and experiences of children and young people as victim-survivors.

# Domestic and family violence: a gendered issue

Domestic and family violence (DFV) is experienced by individuals and families across Australian and NSW communities, and anyone can experience DFV regardless of their age, gender, race, culture, socioeconomic status, ability or sexual orientation. However, there is clear evidence to suggest that DFV is gendered in terms of its perpetration, victimisation, frequency and impacts.

International and Australian research consistently identifies gender as the biggest risk factor for DFV, which is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men, predominantly against current or former partners. It is disproportionately experienced by and impacts the health and wellbeing of women and children.<sup>21</sup>

While men can be victim-survivors of DFV and sexual violence, evidence indicates that DFV is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men. 95 per cent of people (women or men) who have experienced violence name a man as the perpetrator for at least one incidence of violence,<sup>22</sup> and around four in five DFV offenders are men.<sup>23</sup>

The 2016 ABS Personal Safety Survey found that in Australia, domestic and family violence is disproportionately experienced by women and children. The survey collected information from men and women aged 18 years and over about the nature and extent of violence experienced since the age of 15.

The survey found that from the age of 15 years:<sup>24</sup>

## Women

were much more likely to experience all forms of violence from a partner or intimate partner than men.



women were nearly

### 3x

more likely to have experienced intimate partner violence than men.

### 1 in 4

women (23 per cent or 2.2 million) and

### 1 in 13

men (7.8 per cent or 703,700) experienced violence by an intimate partner.

women were

### 8x

more likely to experience sexual violence by a partner than men.

### 1 in 4

women (23 per cent or 2.2 million) and

### 1 in 6

men (16 per cent or 1.4 million) reported experiencing emotional abuse by a current and/or previous partner since the age of 15 years.

Of those adults who experienced sexual abuse before the age of 15 years, nearly eight in 10 (79 per cent) were abused by a relative, friend, acquaintance or neighbour.

### 1 in 8

women (1.2 million) and

### 1 in 10

men (896,700) witnessed violence towards their mother by a partner before the age of 15.

## Rates of violence are even higher for certain groups of people, and at life stages.

Women with disability are more likely to experience violence.<sup>25</sup>

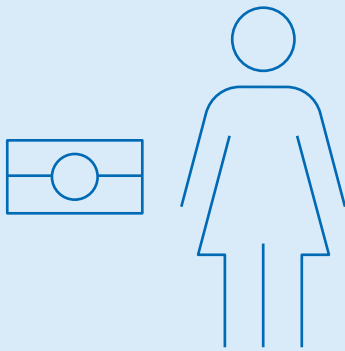
# 36%

of women with disability report experiencing violence by an intimate partner from the age of 15, compared to 21 per cent of women without disability.<sup>26</sup>



In NSW, people with disability were more likely to experience domestic violence re-victimisation within 12 months than those with no identified disability.<sup>27</sup>

Perpetrators of domestic violence in NSW were less likely to be proceeded against when an incident involved a person with disabilities than when the victims had no known disabilities.<sup>28</sup>



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females aged 15 years and over were

# 2x

as likely as males to have experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member.<sup>29</sup>

In 2014-15, Aboriginal women were

# 32x

more likely than non-Aboriginal women to be hospitalised due to family violence injuries.<sup>30</sup>

Lesbian, bisexual and heteroflexible women are at least twice as likely to experience physical violence by a partner as heterosexual, cisgender women.<sup>31</sup>

While there is a lack of comprehensive, population-wide data on the prevalence and impacts of violence against women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, a 2021 study found that one in three migrant and refugee women had experienced some form of domestic and family violence, with temporary visa holders reporting proportionately higher levels of violence.<sup>32</sup>



Women in regional, rural and remote areas were more likely to experience intimate-partner violence than women living in capital cities across the country.<sup>33</sup>

Research suggests that women are at greater risk of experiencing violence from an intimate partner during pregnancy and post-partum, resulting in poor birth outcomes, such as premature birth and post-natal depression.<sup>34</sup>

There is a lack of comprehensive data on children's experiences, prevalence of child abuse and its impact across lifespan. The 2016 Personal Safety Survey estimates that one in six women (1.5 million) and one in nine men (992,000) had experienced physical and/or sexual abuse before the age of 15 years.<sup>35</sup>

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## Multiple and intersecting factors affecting experiences and responses to domestic and family violence

NSW takes an intersectional approach to domestic and family violence (DFV). This approach recognises that all victim-survivors are unique. They all have different personal circumstances, experiences and backgrounds, and many and varied identities. These unique aspects can expose people, or groups of people, to overlapping forms of inequality, marginalisation and discrimination; for example, individual and systemic discrimination on the grounds of race, ability, age, citizenship, residency status, religion, sexual orientation, economic and geographical status, and the ongoing effects of colonisation.

An intersectional approach recognises that DFV and gender inequality intersect and are experienced alongside these structural and systemic forms of inequality, marginalisation and discrimination. It recognises that this can result in some individuals or groups experiencing higher rates and/or more severe forms of violence than others. They may also face additional barriers to support and safety.

Evidence indicates that the following individuals and groups of people experience multiple challenges that increase the likelihood, impact and/or severity of violence, also experiencing additional barriers to seeking support and securing safety:

- women
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

- migrants, refugees, and people who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- people with disability
- LGBTIQ+ people
- women with mental illness
- older women
- women in pregnancy and early motherhood
- women in regional, rural and remote areas
- young women and adolescents
- women who are experiencing or have experienced sexual violence
- people who have experienced child abuse.

Understanding specific individuals' and population groups' experiences of violence and the system response is critical to developing better informed and targeted approaches to more effectively prevent and respond to DFV.

The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 provides further details about the multiple and interacting factors that contribute to the increased prevalence and severity of domestic, family and sexual violence. It also details the different and specific ways certain individuals and groups might experience DFV.

In addition to taking an intersectional approach to domestic and family violence, the NSW Government is committed to ensuring that the responsibility for violence always sits clearly with the perpetrator and not with the victim-survivor. While evidence indicates that groups of people and individuals experience multiple challenges that increase the likelihood, impact or severity of violence, it is important to highlight that this is not because they are inherently more 'vulnerable'. Rather, increased vulnerability often arises because perpetrators of DFV exploit victim-survivors' experiences of inequality, marginalisation and discrimination.

## What causes domestic and family violence, and how can we prevent it?

Research identifies gender inequality as the root cause and the single most common driver of gender-based violence, including domestic and family violence (DFV) and sexual violence. As noted above, intersecting forms of discrimination and inequality, including but not limited to racism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia, also contribute to and impact the dynamics of DFV. DFV experienced by LGBTIQ+ people is also gender-based violence and typically has the same drivers of violence against women.

Further details about the gendered drivers and contributing factors underpinning DFV are set out in *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and children in Australia*, Australia's evidence-based framework for the prevention of violence against women.<sup>36</sup>

The NSW Government recognises that DFV can be prevented and its impacts reduced. Doing so requires a public health approach to addressing DFV. This approach is based on the socio-ecological model (see diagram below). It works to address key underlying risk factors for DFV at all levels of society, respond to this violence and prevent it from occurring in the first place.

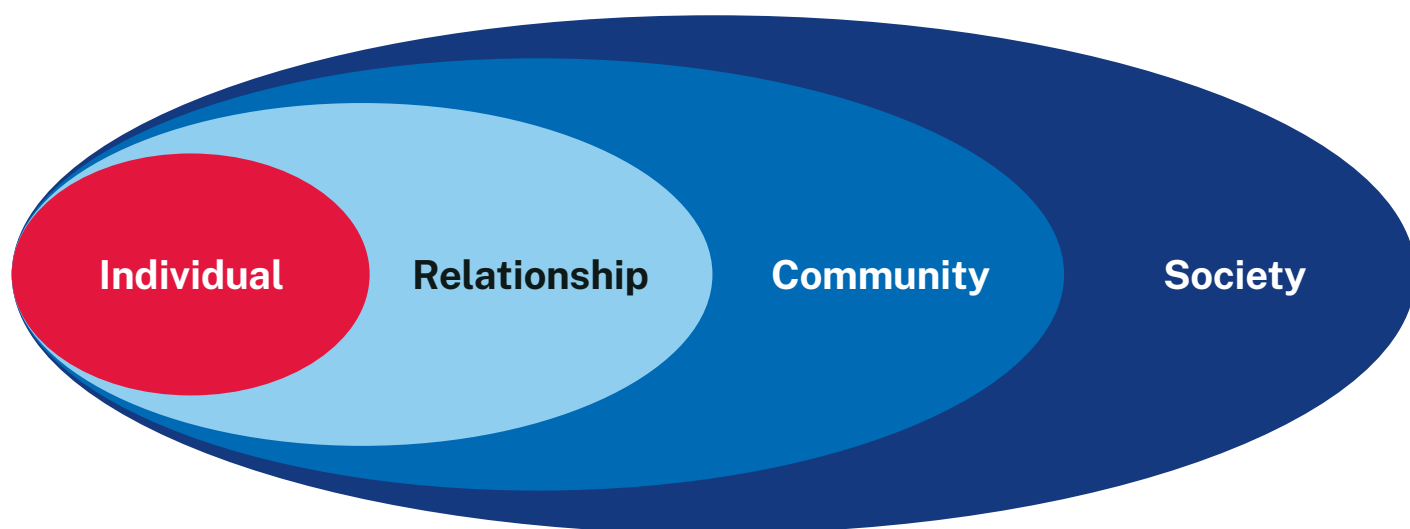
Change the Story is a shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and children in Australia. It sets out that violence against women has distinct gendered drivers. The following four factors associated with gender inequality most consistently predict or drive men's violence against women:

- condoning of violence against women
- men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life
- rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity
- male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control.

Change the Story also details several factors that reinforce violence against women. These include:

- condoning of violence in general
- experience of, and exposure to, violence
- factors that weaken prosocial behaviour
- resistance and backlash to prevention and gender equality efforts.

All these reinforcing factors play a role in influencing the prevalence and dynamics of violence. Addressing these factors, in addition to the distinct gendered drivers described above, is critical to preventing DFV.



**The socio-ecological model**

A public health approach also recognises that victim-survivors and their families often have complex needs and are more likely to experience co-occurring and multiple forms of abuse and violence, rather than a single abusive incident, over a lifetime. It recognises the need for integrated, multi-disciplinary interventions from a range of services and promotes collaborative and integrated service delivery at system, service, and practice levels.

A public health approach includes:

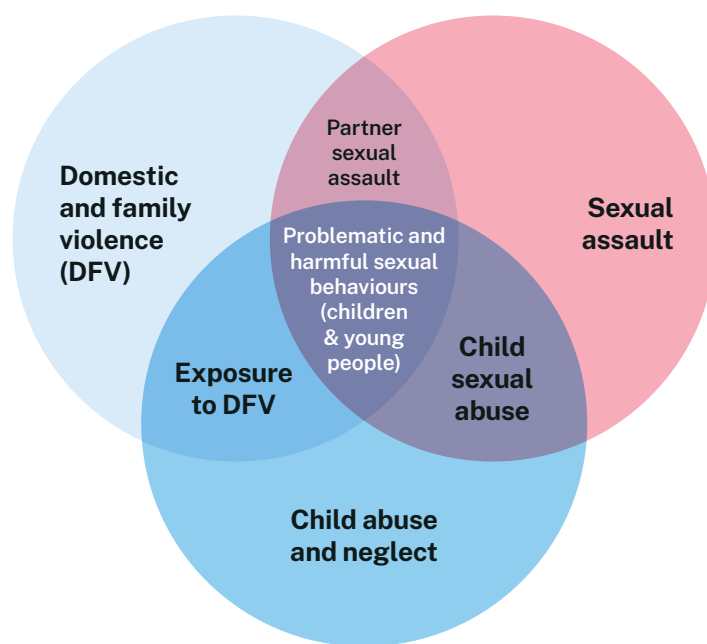
**Primary prevention**, which aims to prevent violence before it occurs. It comprises whole-of-population initiatives that address the underlying causes and drivers of DFV, including norms, attitudes and behaviours surrounding gender roles and relations. It targets structural inequalities and community-level factors.

**Early intervention** (also referred to as secondary prevention), which identifies and aims to address the early signs of violence to stop it from escalating or prevent it from recurring. It includes prevention among high-risk groups and settings, changing the trajectory of violence and preventing the progression of violence.

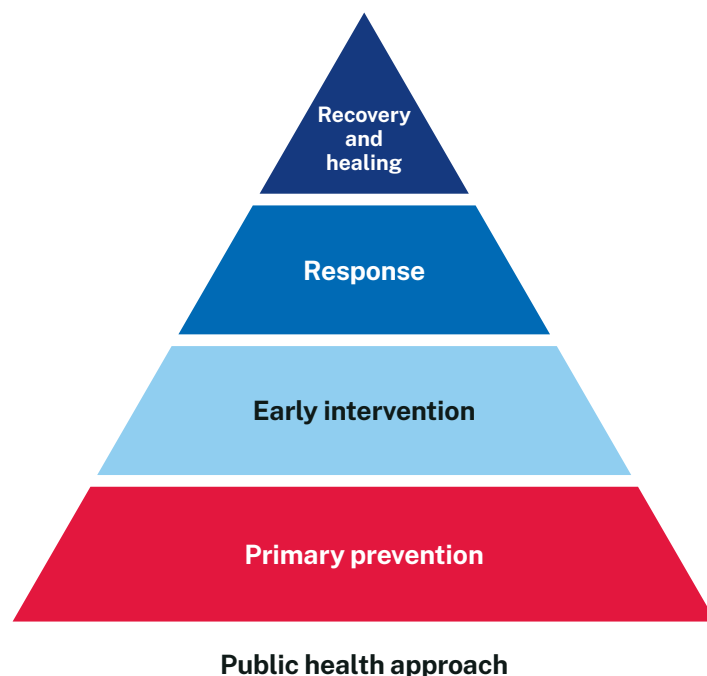
**Response** (also referred to as tertiary prevention), which involves intervening once the violence is already occurring and aims to support victim-survivors and hold perpetrators to account.

**Recovery and healing**, which aims to minimise the impact of trauma, support recovery from trauma and promote long-term health and wellbeing.

Collaboration and integration are integral to the public health approach. The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 adopts a framework consistent with a public health approach, and also includes a specific pillar for system enablers, supporting and reflecting the need for integrated and collaborative efforts to address DFV.



Victim-survivors are likely to experience co-occurring and multiple forms of abuse and violence over a lifetime. [NSW Health Strategy for Preventing and Responding to Domestic and Family Violence 2021-2026.](#)





# NSW Government responses to domestic and family violence

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## Progress in preventing and responding to domestic and family violence in NSW

The NSW Government has worked in partnership with the non-government, community, and private sectors over many decades to address domestic and family violence (DFV). Collectively, we have made significant progress in building a more effective system to prevent and respond to DFV, its re-occurrence and its impacts.

Community awareness of DFV has increased, and our understanding of DFV and its impacts has evolved. Education about respectful relationships and sexual consent is included in the NSW Personal Development, Health and Physical Education curriculum taught to children and young people in all NSW schools.

Prevention and early intervention strategies are being embedded into policy and program development.

Specialist DFV services in both the non-government and government sectors continue to strengthen their practices to support victim-survivors and their families in securing immediate and long-term safety and access to appropriate services and supports.

Significant reforms to relevant laws have supported changes in law enforcement and court processes to improve victim-survivor experiences and outcomes within the justice system.

## Offence of coercive control

On 16 November 2022, the NSW Parliament passed the *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Act 2022* (the coercive control Act). The coercive control Act creates a standalone criminal offence of coercive control in the *Crimes Act 1900*. The offence applies where an adult engages in a course of conduct that is abusive behaviour against a current or former intimate partner, with the intention of coercing or controlling that person. The coercive control offence may not commence before 1 February 2024, and it must commence no later than 1 July 2024.

The coercive control Act delivers on the NSW Government's commitment to develop, publicly consult on and introduce a standalone offence of coercive control in the 2022 spring session of Parliament. This was a key part of the NSW Government's response to the unanimous recommendations by the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control. The coercive control Act is the product of extensive consideration and unprecedented consultation, and is the first standalone offence of coercive control in Australia.

## Definition of domestic abuse

Another reform undertaken in 2022 was the creation of a statutory definition of domestic abuse, inserted into the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007*. This is a separate reform to the offence of coercive control, but was also contained in the coercive control Act passed on 16 November 2022.

In its findings, the Joint Select Committee identified that NSW was an outlier amongst Australian jurisdictions because it did not have a statutory definition of domestic abuse in its civil regime. This creates uncertainty and the risk of confusion as to what constitutes domestic abuse under the law.



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The coercive control Act's definition provides that 'domestic abuse' is "any of the following behaviours directed by one person (the first person) against another person (the second person) with whom the first person has a domestic relationship —

- a) violent or threatening behaviour,
- b) behaviour that coerces or controls the second person,
- c) behaviour that causes the second person to fear for the person's safety or wellbeing or the safety and wellbeing of others."

The introduction of this definition directly addressed the Committee's findings and provides the foundation to the overall legislative framework, to assist in streamlining and reducing complexity which were the core drivers behind the Committee's recommendation. It has been integrated into the existing legislative framework by amending the existing definition of 'domestic violence offence' to include any offence where the behaviour is domestic abuse. This impacts key provisions applying to domestic violence, including the grounds to seek an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO), which rely on the term 'domestic violence offence'.

### **Apprehended domestic violence order reform**

Several key reforms have been made to the ADVO system in NSW. These were made through the *Crimes Legislation Amendment Act 2018* (as amended by the *Justice Legislation Amendment Act (No 2) 2019*) and the *Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Act 2020*. These reforms responded to recommendation 3 of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team (DVDRT) 2015-2017 Report.

These changes include:

- Doubling the default length of ADVOs from 12 months to two years.
- Giving NSW Courts the power to grant indefinite ADVOs in severe cases.
- Giving senior Police the power to immediately vary ADVO conditions to respond to serious and immediate risks to victims, even if a court issued ADVO is in place.
- Ensuring that ADVOs made against adult offenders sentenced to a prison term will extend for two years after the end of their sentence, a period when the risk of reoffending is known to be elevated.

### **Strangulation reforms**

The *Crimes Legislation Amendment Act 2018* also included major reforms to the offence of strangulation in the *Crimes Act 1900*. These reforms responded to recommendation 5 of the DVDRT's 2015-2017 Report.

This reform introduced a new, simpler strangulation offence of intentionally choking, suffocating or strangling another person without the other person's consent under section 37(1A) of the *Crimes Act 1900*. The new offence is a simplified version of the other strangulation offences so it is not necessary for a victim-survivor to be rendered unconscious, insensible or incapable of resistance in order for the offence to be established.

This offence better reflects the harm caused and will facilitate more effective prosecution of choking, suffocation and strangulation, especially when it is made in the context of DFV, which can act as a predictor of further abuse and even fatality. The offence commenced on 1 December 2018.

### **Support for domestic violence complainants**

Unrepresented people accused of domestic violence are now prohibited from directly questioning complainants in many court hearings following changes to the law around cross-examination.

A new section in the *Criminal Procedure Act 1986* (section 289VA) now prevents unrepresented defendants from directly cross-examining complainants in domestic violence criminal proceedings and related apprehended domestic violence order proceedings.

If a self-represented accused seeks to question a complainant, the court will instead appoint a suitable person to ask the questions on the accused's behalf. Court appointed questioners cannot give the accused legal or other advice.

This important protection commenced on 1 September 2021 (when section 289VA of the *Criminal Procedure Act 1986* came into force) and means domestic violence complainants will no longer have to endure the trauma of being directly cross-examined in court by an unrepresented accused person.

Since the protection commenced, the role of Court Appointed Questioner has initially been undertaken by Court staff while the Department of Communities and Justice explored options to expand to a hybrid model.

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Funding was provided in the 2022-23 Budget to support a new hybrid delivery model where the role of Court Appointed Questioner is undertaken by:

- a) a new dedicated Court Appointed Questioner team within the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ);
- b) Justices of the Peace; and
- c) any viable technological options to undertake this role.

Instead, any examination of a complainant must be done by a suitable person appointed by the court, who will ask questions on behalf of the unrepresented accused.

Similar protections already existed for complainants in sexual offence proceedings and for other vulnerable witnesses. Court staff previously performed the role of the court appointed questioner in these matters and were therefore a natural choice for the first stage of implementation of the Court Appointed Questioners scheme in domestic violence matters.

The scheme's operation will be carefully monitored to ensure it best achieves its important purpose. Cross-examination is an important part of the justice process because it safeguards convictions for crimes of domestic violence by ensuring a fair trial.

However, giving evidence can be highly stressful for any witness. Being directly questioned by an alleged perpetrator, sometimes at length, can exacerbate that stress and inflict further trauma on domestic violence victim-survivors.

The changes support complainants by ensuring the complainant is not exposed to an accused's questioning directly, including hearing the tone and tenor of their voice, which may be triggering and can be a version of control.

This change builds on other protections passed by the Parliament in the *Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Act 2020*. Those additional reforms allow complainants in domestic violence criminal proceedings to give evidence in a closed court, and to appear remotely via an audio-visual link for the duration of their evidence.

Together, these important reforms aim to assist complainants to give their best evidence; increase complainant attendance rates at court proceedings; promote fair trials to safeguard convictions for domestic violence; help curb recidivism due to greater legal action rates; and shield complainants from unnecessary trauma that could affect their testimony.

Significant work has been taken to hold perpetrators to account and connect them to specialised counsellors and local behavioural change programs to reduce violence. For example, the NSW Government has increased funding to Men's Behaviour Change Programs and introduced a Men's Telephone Counselling and Referral Service.

Progress has also been made to enhance collaboration, information sharing and service coordination, and we expect responses to DFV to be better integrated and more intersectional in their approach. For example, Safer Pathway now provides system-wide, service system infrastructure for domestic and family violence victim-survivors in NSW. This includes providing victim-survivors of serious threat of further harm with prioritised, inter-agency responses through targeted information sharing under Part 13A of the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007* and Chapter 16A of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*.

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# Achievements under the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform 2016–2021

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform 2016–2021: Safer Lives for Women, Men and Children (the Blueprint) delivered a five-year, whole-of-government approach to domestic and family violence in NSW for the first time.

## Key achievements under the Blueprint include:

- **preventing domestic and family violence (DFV)** through the roll-out of statewide awareness campaigns such as *Speak Out*, the expansion and roll-out of the Tackling Violence program, and the development of the NSW Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy 2017–2021
- **providing early intervention for vulnerable groups** through the establishment of the DFV Innovation Fund and through targeted early interventions for children and young people, such as the Targeted Earlier Intervention program
- **supporting victim-survivors** through the state roll-out of the Safer Pathway program, the extension of Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services, critical housing investments such as Rent Choice Start Safely and the passage of legislation that provides additional support for domestic violence offence complainants giving evidence in court
- **holding perpetrators accountable** through the expansion of community-based Men’s Behaviour Change Programs and the establishment of the Men’s Telephone Counselling and Referral Service, the roll-out of NSW Police Force High-Risk Offender teams, the delivery of innovative projects to reduce domestic violence reoffending, and the introduction of legislation to criminalise coercive control
- **delivering quality services** by embedding evaluation into NSW Government funded DFV programs and considering best practice strategies to engage Aboriginal men and women in behaviour change interventions
- **improving the system** through the establishment of the DFV Reforms Delivery Board and the development of a DFV Outcomes Framework.

Further information on achievements and outcomes can be found in the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform 2016–2021 report cards and evaluation report.<sup>37</sup>

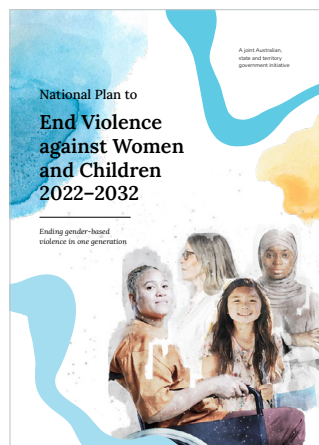
While significant progress has been made, there is still more work to be done. The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 builds on achievements made under the Blueprint, and many of its actions have been informed by recommendations from the Blueprint’s evaluation.<sup>38</sup> The plan has been informed by consultation with non-government service providers, sector peak bodies, government agencies, frontline workers, victim-survivors and the wider community.

Over the five years from 2022–2027, the NSW Government will continue to work alongside the private sector, civil society and communities to continue strengthening whole-of-system responses to prevent and respond to DFV and improve the safety, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities in NSW.

The objectives and focus areas outlined in the plan will build on the solid foundations already in place in NSW. They aim to accelerate action to prevent and respond to DFV in key areas that have been determined through consultation with stakeholders, analysis of research and evidence, and the evaluation of the Blueprint.

## Intersection with other priorities, strategies and plans

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 complements, builds on and strengthens the significant work and reforms that are under way nationally and in NSW to prevent and respond to domestic and family violence (DFV), including:



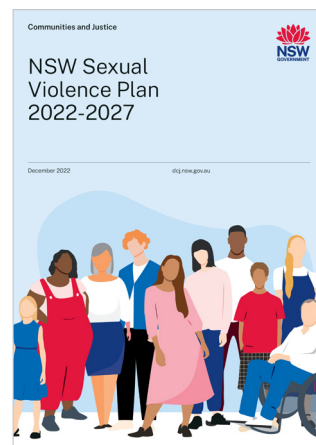
### The National Plan to end Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032

The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 establishes a framework for a shared national commitment to preventing gender-based violence and supporting the women and children who experience it.

The 10-year National Plan will be underpinned by five-year action plans, including a dedicated five-year Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan. These Action Plans will detail priority focus areas for implementation and focus efforts and government investment on those areas.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on domestic, family and sexual violence is leading work on the dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan for family safety, which will lay the foundation for a standalone Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Plan.

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 and the NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022–2027 respond to and align with the National Plan. The NSW plans are crucial to supporting the NSW Government's commitment to and implementation of the National Plans.



### The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 and the NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022–2027

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 is complemented and supported by the NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022–2027. The NSW Government recognises that DFV and sexual violence are interrelated. They are both forms of gendered violence that have common drivers, and victim-survivors often experience multiple forms of violence, either co-occurring or at different stages across life. Often, these forms of violence overlap within families.

The NSW Government has developed separate plans for DFV and sexual violence. Having these separate plans allows for strategic approaches that reflect best practice, evidence and clinical expertise for addressing DFV and sexual violence within the different service delivery landscapes in NSW. At the same time, the common principles, governance, and shared actions of both plans will promote response coordination and integration.

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## The National Partnership Agreement for Closing the Gap and a dedicated Aboriginal Family and Sexual Violence Plan

The NSW Government is a signatory to the National Partnership Agreement for Closing the Gap. At the centre of the Closing the Gap Agreement are priority reforms that focus on changing the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The agreement sets 17 national socio-economic targets across areas that impact life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Of these, Target 13 states that by 2031, 'the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced by at least 50 per cent, as progress towards zero.'

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 and the NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022–2027 are intended to be inclusive of Aboriginal communities in NSW. However, the actions contained within them are not sufficient to achieve Target 13 of the National Partnership Agreement for Closing the Gap. A genuine partnership approach is required to develop and implement a comprehensive and targeted program of work in this area.

The NSW government will also develop a dedicated plan to address family and sexual violence in Aboriginal communities and achieve Target 13. This plan will support the response to family and sexual violence for Aboriginal communities by assisting the broader service sector to:

- recognise the impacts of intergenerational trauma
- promote self-determination and partnership approaches with Aboriginal peoples
- increase cultural safety and capability when responding to the needs of Aboriginal peoples, families, and communities experiencing the impacts of family and sexual violence.

The plan will closely align with and focus on statewide actions and respond to the dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan, which addresses family and sexual violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples nationwide. The dedicated NSW plan to address family and sexual violence in Aboriginal communities will be developed in 2023.

## Other national policies and initiatives

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 also complements and supports the implementation of a number of other key national policies and initiatives. These include:

- **Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021–2031**, which is Australia's framework for reducing child abuse and neglect and their intergenerational impacts.
- **A Roadmap for Respect: Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces**, which provides a clear and comprehensive path forward for Australia to prevent and address sexual harassment and support meaningful change in Australian workplaces. It responds to all 55 of the Australian Human Rights Commission's recommendations in the Respect@Work report.
- **The National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030**, which responds to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) and is the first of its kind in Australia. It is a whole-of-nation policy approach that provides the strategic framework for increasing understanding of, better responding to and preventing child sexual abuse.
- **The National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse**, which aims to increase understanding of the impacts of child sexual abuse by raising awareness, reducing stigma, promoting help-seeking and supporting best practice advocacy, support and therapeutic treatment. Established in response to a Royal Commission recommendation, the National Centre is independent of government and was launched in October 2021 as a joint initiative between the Blue Knot Foundation, the Australian Childhood Foundation and the Healing Foundation.
- **The National Housing and Homelessness Agreement**, which sets out requirements for states and territories to improve Australians' access to secure and affordable housing across the housing spectrum, including for women and children affected by domestic and family violence.
- **The proposed National Principles to Address Coercive Control**, which seek to create a shared national understanding of coercive control, which is important for improving the safety of Australians, particularly women and children, due to be finalised in early 2023.



## Other NSW policies, including the NSW Women’s Strategy 2023–2026

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 complements and supports the implementation of a number of other key NSW policies. Other relevant policies and reforms underway that intersect with and will help achieve the outcomes within the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 include:

<p><b>The NSW Women’s Strategy 2023–2026</b></p>	<p>Efforts to advance gender equality and empower women and girls are key aspects of DFV prevention. Achieving the prevention outcomes set out within the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 will be supported in part through this strategy and the <b>NSW Government’s Women’s Economic Opportunities Review</b>.<sup>39</sup></p>
<p><b>The NSW Housing Strategy 2041</b></p>	<p>This long-term strategy is to promote better housing outcomes across NSW, encompassing housing in the right locations, housing that suits diverse needs and housing that feels like home.</p>
<p><b>The NSW Health Violence, Abuse and Neglect Redesign</b></p>	<p>NSW Health is implementing a redesign program to enhance the public health response to violence, abuse and neglect guided by the Integrated Prevention and Response to Violence, Abuse and Neglect (IPARVAN) Framework and the NSW Health Strategy for Preventing and Responding to Domestic and Family Violence Strategy 2021–2026.</p>
<p><b>The NSW Response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse</b></p>	<p>This response to the Royal Commission’s recommendations includes a broad suite of reforms to prevent, identify and respond appropriately to child sexual abuse. Collaborative actions by government, non-government, and community sector organisations continue to implement reforms to prevent child sexual abuse, improve responses to reports of abuse, and ensure that victim-survivors receive appropriate support, redress and justice.</p>
<p><b>The NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2022–2024</b></p>	<p>This plan focuses on responding to young people’s concerns around consent and respectful relationships and decreasing the number of children and young people experiencing DFV and sexual violence.</p>
<p><b>The NSW Homelessness Strategy 2018–2023 and its successor</b></p>	<p>This strategy sets out the NSW Government’s plan for a comprehensive approach to prevent homelessness and improve the way we respond to it.</p>
<p><b>Future Directions in Social Housing 2016–2025 and its successor</b></p>	<p>This strategy is the NSW Government’s vision for social housing, which aims to drive better outcomes for tenants including helping those who are able to transition out of social housing.</p>
<p><b>Strong Family, Strong Communities</b></p>	<p>This strategy is the Aboriginal Housing Office’s ten-year plan to improve the well-being of NSW Aboriginal families and communities through housing.</p>
<p><b>Ageing Well in NSW: Seniors Strategy 2021–2031</b></p>	<p>This strategy sets out the NSW Government’s 10-year plan to respond to the opportunities and challenges of our ageing population.</p>
<p><b>The NSW Interagency Policy on Preventing and Responding to Abuse of Older People (Elder Abuse) June 2020</b></p>	<p>This policy sets out an approach for preventing and responding to abuse of older people for NSW Government agencies.</p>

<b>The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021–2025</b>	This four-year plan builds on the work the NSW Government has undertaken to create more accessible and inclusive communities and provides a blueprint for increasing the social and economic participation of people with disability across NSW.
<b>The NSW LGBTIQ+ Health Strategy 2022–2027</b>	This five-year strategy aims to help people of diverse sexualities and genders and intersex people achieve health outcomes that matter to them.
<b>Her Sport Her Way 2019–2023</b>	This four-year strategy sets out initiatives to enhance women’s and girls’ participation as players, leaders and coaches in sport.
<b>The Multiculturalism NSW Act 2000</b>	This legislation promotes the equal rights and responsibilities of all the people of NSW within a cohesive and multicultural society, recognising and valuing the different linguistic, religious and ancestral backgrounds of the peoples of NSW.
<b>The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Youth Justice Strategy 2019–2022</b>	This four-year strategy helps children and young people who are victim-survivors of domestic and family violence and/or who use violence in the home receive the specialist support they need.
<b>Brighter Beginnings: the first 2000 days</b>	This is a NSW whole-of-government initiative to give children the best start in life.
<b>The NSW Legal Assistance Strategy and Action Plan 2022–2025</b>	This three-year plan considers efforts to prevent and respond to DFV a strategic priority for the NSW legal assistance sector.
<b>The Premier’s Priority to Reduce Domestic Violence Reoffending</b>	This aims to reduce the number of domestic violence reoffenders by 25 per cent by 2023. The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 aims to support this priority, in particular through the actions for perpetrators listed under the plan’s third pillar: response.



# Framework for action 2022–2027

The framework for action sets out the key elements of the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027. This framework for preventing and responding to domestic and family violence (DFV) in NSW:

- complements ongoing NSW Government investments and services which prevent and respond to domestic, family and sexual violence, including housing, child protection and wellbeing, health, police and justice and other services that support individuals, children, families and communities
- builds on the achievements and progress made under the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform 2016–2021 and other NSW Government investments to prevent and respond to DFV
- reflects the gendered nature and dynamics of DFV and embeds an intersectional approach that addresses the need for tailored responses for victim-survivors with disability and those within specific populations, in particular, Aboriginal communities, multicultural communities, LGBTIQ+ communities
- builds on achievements, gaps and opportunities for strengthening prevention and response to DFV in NSW, emphasising primary prevention and actions addressing drivers and risk factors for DFV at individual, relationship, community and societal levels
- reflects current and emerging issues and community priorities in DFV prevention and response in NSW
- recognises the need for whole-of-society collaboration and action to prevent and respond to DFV, including collaboration between communities, civil society, the private sector and governments at all levels.



## Vision

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 and the NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022–2027 work towards a shared vision:

All people and communities in NSW are free from domestic, family and sexual violence.





## Principles

The following set of guiding principles underpins all aspects of the NSW DFV Framework for Action.

Principle	Description
<b>Gender equality</b>	Gender inequality is recognised as the underlying driver of domestic and family violence and advancing gender equality is therefore key to eradicating it.
<b>Victim-survivor, child and family centred</b>	Victim-survivors, including children and young people, are heard, believed and supported, and their needs and rights prioritised. Services and systems are violence- and trauma-informed, integrated, and support victim-survivors' dignity, agency and self-determination. We value the voices of those with lived experience in the design, delivery and evaluation of responses to DFV.
<b>Aboriginal self-determination</b>	Self-determination ensures Aboriginal peoples can meet their social, cultural and economic needs as the First Peoples of Australia. Self-determination is the reclamation of power that authorises Aboriginal peoples to manage Aboriginal-led responses to their social, cultural and economic needs. Government organisations have a mandate to transform structures to further enable the aspirations of First Nations communities to be integrated in all avenues of services design and response. Aboriginal leadership and self-determination will ensure the integration of Aboriginal wisdom and cultural knowledge, community control and co-design initiatives, contributing to the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms and targets.
<b>Inclusive and intersectional</b>	Responses to DFV seek to address multiple and intersecting forms of racism, discrimination, structural inequality and marginalisation that adversely compound victim-survivors' lived experiences and support seeking. Responses to both victim-survivors, including children and young people, and perpetrators, are accessible, inclusive and culturally safe.
<b>Perpetrator accountability</b>	Responses to perpetrators hold them to account and prioritise victim-survivor safety. Perpetrators must be encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviours and supported to change.
<b>Collective responsibility and collaborative action</b>	There is a collective responsibility and accountability to prevent and respond to domestic and family violence. This must be reflected through collaborative and joint work between communities, civil society, the private sector and governments at all levels.
<b>Tailored to context</b>	Through meaningful engagement, services and systems are designed with and tailored to the individual, place, community, and context for which they are being delivered. Responses are tailored to the needs of local communities and individual victim-survivors and perpetrators. Services must respond to the characteristics and needs of different groups at disproportionate risk of experiencing or perpetrating DFV.
<b>Evidence-informed</b>	Services, systems and programs draw on and build knowledge and evidence.



## Objectives






To support its guiding vision, this plan sets out objectives to achieve over the five years from 2022 to 2027 under the pillars of prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and healing, and system enablers.

To measure success in meeting these objectives, measurable outcomes need to be developed and improvements to outcome data made. Work to address this will progress over the life of both the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 and the NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022–2027. Outcomes measurement and data development will seek to align with the National Outcomes and Evaluation Framework as far as possible. Emphasis will be placed on monitoring and evaluations to ensure transparency, accountability and evidence-based decision-making (see Monitoring and Reporting, under Implementation).

Pillar	Objective
<b>Primary prevention</b>	DFV is prevented through changes to attitudes, social norms, practices and structures that underpin gender-based violence.
<b>Early intervention</b>	People at risk of experiencing or perpetrating DFV are identified early and provided with effective support.
<b>Response</b>	Responses to DFV are integrated, trauma and violence-informed, culturally safe, prioritise victim-survivor's safety and needs, hold perpetrators to account and stop the use of violence.
<b>Recovery and healing</b>	People impacted by DFV receive support to heal and recover.
<b>System enablers</b>	DFV prevention and response is coordinated, evidence-based, informed by people with expertise and lived experience, and delivered by a supported and competent workforce.

# NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 on a page

Vision: all people and communities in NSW are free from domestic, family and sexual violence

 <p><b>Pillar 1: Primary prevention</b></p>	 <p><b>Pillar 2: Early intervention</b></p>	 <p><b>Pillar 3: Response</b></p>	 <p><b>Pillar 4: Recovery and healing</b></p>	 <p><b>Pillar 5: System enablers</b></p>
<p><b>Objective</b></p> <p>DFV is prevented through changes to attitudes, social norms, practices and structures that underpin gender-based violence</p>	<p><b>Objective</b></p> <p>People at risk of experiencing or perpetrating DFV are identified early and provided with effective support</p>	<p><b>Objective</b></p> <p>Responses to DFV are integrated, trauma and violence-informed, culturally safe, prioritise victim-survivor’s safety and needs, hold perpetrators to account and stop the use of violence</p>	<p><b>Objective</b></p> <p>People impacted by DFV receive support to heal and recover</p>	<p><b>Objective</b></p> <p>DFV prevention and response is coordinated, evidence-based, informed by people with expertise and lived experience, and delivered by a supported and competent workforce</p>
<p><b>Focus areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing a comprehensive, coordinated, whole-of-NSW approach to preventing domestic, family and sexual violence</li> <li>• building knowledge and skills of children and young people on gender-equitable, safe, respectful, and healthy relationships</li> <li>• working across settings and communities to advance gender equality, address the gendered drivers of violence and build gender-equitable attitudes, norms, and behaviours</li> <li>• building knowledge and grounding prevention activities in evidence</li> </ul>	<p><b>Focus areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• building the capacity of the DFV-specialist government and non-government service sector to identify and respond to risk</li> <li>• building the capacity of the broader workforce to identify and respond to risk</li> <li>• providing support pathways for those concerned about the potential for or escalation of DFV, including coercive control</li> </ul>	<p><b>Focus areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring victim-survivors and their families have greater referral into and access to coordinated support and DFV case management</li> <li>• improving housing supports for victim-survivors and their families</li> <li>• ensuring the needs of victim-survivors from diverse backgrounds and their children are met</li> <li>• ensuring responses consider children and young people as victims in their own right while also partnering with protective parents and carers where appropriate</li> <li>• ensuring justice, police and legal system responses are more DFV-informed and supported to implement legislative reforms, including the coercive control offence.</li> <li>• ensuring perpetrators are kept in view and perpetrator responses are targeted, prioritise victim-survivor safety, and work to prevent further violence</li> </ul>	<p><b>Focus areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring victim-survivors are well supported by trauma-informed services that enable long-term recovery</li> <li>• empowering communities to support victim-survivors’ healing and long-term recovery</li> </ul>	<p><b>Focus areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strengthening coordination and collaboration</li> <li>• building workforce capacity and capability</li> <li>• enhancing knowledge and evidence-based best practice</li> </ul>

# 1

## Pillar 1: Primary prevention

# Pillar 1: Primary prevention



## What we're already doing

Primary prevention works to stop violence from occurring by identifying the underlying causes of violence — the social norms, structures, systems, policies and practises that influence individual attitudes and behaviours — and addressing these across the entire population.

Key investments to date by the NSW Government in primary prevention include:

- advancing gender equality and the economic, social, health and wellbeing outcomes for all women and girls across NSW through the NSW Women's Strategy 2023–2026
- including education about respectful relationships and sexual consent in the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education curriculum in NSW schools
- building community awareness about domestic and family violence (DFV) through statewide campaigns such as *Speak Out*
- supporting prevention initiatives under the first National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2022-2032, including support for Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and membership of Our Watch.
- delivering prevention projects funded under the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund.

## Focus areas for 2022–2027

Building on the investments made to date, the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 will strengthen primary prevention of DFV by:

- developing a comprehensive, coordinated, whole-of-NSW approach to preventing DFV and sexual violence
- building knowledge and skills in children and young people on gender-equitable, safe, respectful and healthy relationships
- working across settings and communities to advance gender equality and build gender-equitable attitudes, norms, and behaviours to prevent DFV
- building knowledge and grounding prevention activities in evidence.

We recognise the need for a greater, more targeted focus on primary prevention to eradicate all forms of domestic, family and sexual violence in NSW. For that reason, we are developing a standalone NSW Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Strategy (NSW DFSV Prevention Strategy), which will deliver a comprehensive and holistic multi-stakeholder framework to address the drivers of domestic, family and sexual violence across NSW. It is anticipated that this strategy will identify priorities that reflect legislative and policy reforms and changing national trends.

The NSW DFSV Prevention Strategy will seek to align primary prevention efforts in NSW with relevant national and NSW reports and Our Watch frameworks and guidance. It will reflect shared responsibilities across government, non-government, private and community sectors and will be developed in consultation with stakeholders representing these groups, victim-survivors and other diverse groups within the community to address DFV and sexual violence in NSW in line with best practice.



## Objective

**DFV is prevented through changes to attitudes, social norms, practices and structures that underpin gender-based violence**

Focus areas	Actions
<b>Developing a comprehensive, coordinated, whole-of-NSW approach to preventing domestic, family, and sexual violence</b>	Develop and implement a NSW DFSV Primary Prevention Strategy
	Explore evidence-based options for the prevention of DFV, particularly for at-risk population groups
<b>Building knowledge and skills in children and young people on gender-equitable, safe, respectful and healthy relationships</b>	Implement age- and culture-appropriate education in early childhood settings on safe, healthy and respectful relationships, addressing the drivers of gender-based violence
	Review the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education mandatory syllabus to ensure the delivery of consistent, age-appropriate education on safe, healthy, and respectful relationships as part of the NSW Curriculum Reform
	Strengthen the delivery of programs that address respectful relationships and coercive control for children and young people across settings, both within and outside educational environments
	Develop resources to assist parents and caregivers in having conversations with children and young people about in-person and online sexual violence, respectful relationships, coercive control, consent and pornography
<b>Working across settings and communities to advance gender equality and build gender-equitable attitudes, norms and behaviours</b>	Progress gender equality under the NSW Women's Strategy 2023–2026 to address the gendered drivers and impacts of DFV
	Continue to identify opportunities to enhance workplace gender equality and violence prevention programs
	Develop and implement targeted awareness campaigns on coercive control in consultation with stakeholders, including First Nations communities and organisations, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTIQ+ peoples, people with disability and rural and remote communities
	Partner with representative bodies, local communities and faith leaders to identify tailored, culturally appropriate prevention initiatives for multicultural and faith-based communities (including refugees and newly arrived migrants with language barriers), LGBTIQ+ people, older people and people with disability
<b>Building knowledge and grounding prevention activities in evidence</b>	Evaluate funded prevention initiatives to understand impact and effectiveness and improve the evidence base
	Support primary prevention research projects to improve the evidence base
	Build on and take stock of research on the relationship between DFV and alcohol and gambling harm to inform liquor and gaming regulatory approaches and decision-making that would help reduce the impact of these reinforcing factors



# 2

## Pillar 2: Early intervention

# Pillar 2: Early intervention



## What we're already doing

While prevention focuses on approaches to stop violence from occurring in the first instance, early intervention refers to targeted responses that aim to identify risks to safety and ensure that timely responses are delivered before risks escalate to violence or to more severe violence. Continuing investments by the NSW Government in early intervention include:

- supporting, monitoring and promoting high standards of child safeguarding in NSW, including through introducing the NSW Child Safe Scheme to prevent abuse in child-related organisations and create child-safe cultures
- delivering targeted earlier intervention across the state to provide flexible support to children, young people, families and communities experiencing, or at risk of, vulnerability
- delivering early intervention projects funded under the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund
- conducting routine screening of DFV across targeted health settings where it is known to be prevalent
- funding the Men's Telephone Counselling Referral Service to help men at risk of perpetrating violence access specialised counselling and other support services.

## Focus areas for 2022–2027

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 will deliver additional activities to reduce the risk of DFV among high-risk groups and settings by:

- building the capacity of the DFV specialist government and non-government service sector to identify and respond to risk
- building the capacity of the broader workforce to identify and respond to risk
- providing support and referral pathways for those concerned about the potential for or escalation of DFV.



## Objective

**People at risk of experiencing or perpetrating DFV are identified early and provided with effective support**

Focus areas	Actions
<b>Building the capacity of the DFV specialist government and non-government service sector to identify and respond to risk</b>	Explore opportunities to strengthen government and non-government DFV specialist frontline workers' capacity to identify, record and respond to DFV in all its forms, including coercive control
	Develop and implement the NSW Health integrated DFV psychosocial, medical and forensic crisis response model
<b>Building the capacity of the broader workforce to identify and respond to risk</b>	Review the effectiveness and impact of training in the child protection system and identify ongoing training and support needs, including increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency training, to better respond to children, young people, and families affected by DFV
	Continue to deliver resources to support religious and multicultural community leaders who support families at risk of or experiencing DFV
	Continue to strengthen NSW Health's Domestic Violence Routine Screening Program
	Continue to enhance the skills, capabilities, and confidence of the NSW Health workforce through the ongoing implementation of the Integrated Prevention and Response to Violence, Abuse and Neglect Framework
	Progress the implementation of Phase 2 of the NSW Health Violence, Abuse and Neglect (VAN) Redesign Program, which strengthens integration between NSW Health VAN services and the broader health system
	Progress the goals and objectives of identification and screening in line with the NSW Health First 2000 Days Framework and NSW Health First 2000 Days Implementation Strategy 2020-2025
	Work with complementary providers, such as financial counsellors and gambling support services, to improve identification of and responses to DFV, including cross-referrals
<b>Providing support pathways for those concerned about the potential for or escalation of DFV</b>	Work with the Commonwealth and corporate partners to strengthen the capacity of the private sector to identify and respond to DFV
	Build on what we know works in early intervention, such as therapeutic responses for children and families, including those who have experienced sexual and other forms of violence and abuse, as well as holistic family-centred risk assessment and therapies
	Partner with stakeholders to determine effective early intervention initiatives for people displaying coercive behaviour or violence, particularly men and young men
	Deliver the NSW Health Aboriginal Family Wellbeing and Violence Prevention Program, including early intervention activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that incorporate cultural resilience and promote healing
	Provide coordinated and culturally appropriate support for young people interacting with the youth justice system who are using, experiencing, or at risk of using or experiencing DFV

# 3

## Pillar 3: Response

# Pillar 3: Response



## What we're already doing

The harmful, pervasive, and lifelong impacts of domestic and family violence (DFV) require holistic, integrated and trauma-informed service responses. Response often includes, but is not limited to, services such as case management, crisis counselling and housing assistance, as well as child protection, police and justice responses, legal services and perpetrator interventions. These efforts aim to support victim-survivors to secure immediate and long-term safety, hold perpetrators to account, and prevent the reoccurrence of violence.

NSW delivers a range of programs and service responses to DFV for both victim-survivors and perpetrators:

- The Safer Pathway program is the primary multi-agency response system for victim-survivors of DFV across NSW, providing a consistent, coordinated and collaborative cross-agency response.
- The NSW Health system delivers 24-hour crisis support and comprehensive medical and psychosocial response for victim-survivors.
- The NSW Domestic Violence Line is a statewide telephone crisis-counselling and referrals service for women and persons who identify as female.
- Case management for victim-survivors is available across NSW and delivered through programs such as Staying Home Leaving Violence and Specialist Homelessness Services.
- Support is provided to the NSW legal assistance sector to deliver legal and related support services to prevent and respond to DFV, supporting women, children, and families to be safe.
- The Victims Support Scheme, which provides counselling, financial assistance for immediate needs and for economic loss, as well as recognition payments for victims of crime, including victim-survivors of domestic and family violence.

- The NSW Police Force responds to reports of DFV incidents, acting against perpetrators and holding them to account. Men involved in a DFV incident are automatically referred to counselling and referral services.
- Perpetrators can access community-based interventions such as men's behaviour change programs as well as programs in custody.
- Complainants in criminal proceedings involving domestic violence offences and related ADVO proceedings have the benefit of supports and special provisions when giving evidence, including support to prevent them from being directly questioned by the accused.

## Focus areas for 2022–2027

In addition to providing ongoing support for existing measures, the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022-2027 will strengthen responses to DFV by:

- ensuring victim-survivors and their families have greater referral into and access to timely, coordinated support and DFV case management
- improving housing supports for victim-survivors and their families
- ensuring the needs of victim-survivors from diverse backgrounds and their children are met
- ensuring responses consider children and young people as victims in their own right while also partnering with protective parents and carers where appropriate
- ensuring justice, police and legal system responses are more DFV-informed and supported to implement legislative reforms, including the coercive control offence
- ensuring perpetrators are kept in view and perpetrator responses are targeted, prioritise victim-survivor safety and work to prevent further violence.



## Objective

**Responses to DFV are integrated, trauma and violence-informed, culturally safe, prioritise victim-survivor's safety and needs, hold perpetrators to account and stop the use of violence**

Focus areas	Actions
<p><b>Ensuring victim-survivors and their families have greater referral into and access to coordinated support and DFV case management</b></p>	<p>Expand access to specialist DFV case management across the service sector for those who need it most by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reviewing and mapping the availability and accessibility of specialist DFV case management services across NSW</li> <li>• expanding specialist DFV case management provided through refuges as part of the Core &amp; Cluster housing commitment</li> <li>• expanding the Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) program across NSW</li> <li>• expanding the case management capacity of Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services (WDVCASs) and Local Support Services (LSS) as part of the Safer Pathway program</li> </ul>
	<p>Improve the effectiveness of integrated, cross-agency responses by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool (DV-SAT) risk assessment tools used to support safety planning and appropriate service responses, including referral into Safety Action Meetings where serious threat is identified</li> <li>• improving coordination of supports provided to DFV victims by piloting and evaluating the co-location of WDVCAS workers in police stations</li> <li>• providing case management directly through WDVCAS and LSS for victim-survivors of DFV with complex circumstances and higher support needs</li> <li>• improving the IT systems and governance processes to manage coordination between Safer Pathway agencies</li> </ul>
	<p>Expand the reach of Safer Pathway by developing new referral pathways so victims who do not report to police can be triaged for risk and referred to adequate support services</p>
	<p>Develop a common risk assessment framework that can be used by all agencies and providers</p>
	<p>Review Part 13A of the <i>Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007</i>, which enables information to be shared between service providers to ensure victim-survivors receive coordinated supports that meets their specific safety and welfare needs</p>
	<p>Map and understand existing services and gaps for diverse victim-survivors in metropolitan, rural and remote regions across NSW</p>
	<p>Ensure the NSW Police Force refers adult and child victim-survivors of DFV to appropriate community support services</p>

Focus areas	Actions
<b>Improving housing supports for victim-survivors and their families</b>	Deliver and operate new women’s refuges and upgrade eight existing refuges to the core and cluster model, including wrap-around and support services for victim-survivors, including children and young people and Aboriginal people
	Deliver increased social and affordable housing dwellings for women experiencing DFV through the Community Housing Innovation Fund (CHIF) in partnership with the community housing sector
	Develop new strategies for homelessness and social housing that consider the needs of victim-survivors of DFV
	Work with the Australian Government to increase crisis and transitional housing options for women and children escaping DFV and older women at risk of homelessness
<b>Ensuring the needs of victim-survivors from diverse backgrounds and their children are met</b>	Partner with stakeholders to ensure that resources and services for victim-survivors with disability are accessible
	Partner with stakeholders to ensure that resources and services meet the needs of multicultural communities
	Review the SHLV service model delivered to Aboriginal women and children across urban, regional and remote settings to ensure it is tailored to meet their needs and achieve outcomes for Aboriginal victim-survivors of family violence
	Strengthen support for Aboriginal women in custody who have experienced DFV
	Develop and deliver supports to address DFV against LGBTIQ+ people
	Develop and implement initiatives and strategies for the NSW Police Force to engage the community in its response to DFV, including multicultural communities, Aboriginal communities, people with mental illness and people with disability
<b>Ensuring responses consider children and young people as victims in their own right</b>	Improve integration between the DFV, child protection and health systems to ensure victim-survivors and their families are supported, and children and young people can access appropriate responses
	Increase the availability of Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) for young people experiencing or using DFV in police custody or at risk of remand in Western Sydney and regional NSW
	Trial specialist supports for accompanied children and young people in homelessness services, focusing on those who are experiencing or at risk of DFV
<b>Ensuring justice, police, and legal system responses are more DFV-informed</b>	Trial WDVCS hearing support for victim-survivors in DFV-related court hearings in 14 WDVCS locations
	Expand audio-visual link facilities to additional courts and tribunals to enable court participants to appear remotely, including sexual offence and domestic violence complainants and other vulnerable witnesses
	Implement the hybrid model of Court Appointed Questioners to ensure domestic violence complainants are not directly cross-examined by self-represented defendants
	Continue to monitor the operation of ADVOs, including in relation to recent reforms, and identify opportunities for improvement
	Continue to implement the NSW Government’s response to the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control, including implementation of the new standalone offence of coercive control and a definition of domestic abuse
	Co-design and implement a culturally and linguistically diverse DFV framework for the criminal justice system around best practice principles and how to work with communities
	Improve the legal assistance sector’s capacity to provide client-centred and trauma-informed supports to people and families affected by DFV under the NSW Legal Assistance Strategy and Action Plan 2022–2025



Focus areas	Actions
<b>Ensuring perpetrators are kept in view and perpetrator responses are targeted, prioritise victim-survivor safety, and work to prevent further violence</b>	Map and analyse existing services for DFV perpetrators in NSW to identify gaps and opportunities
	Collate and analyse intelligence to identify high-risk and repeat DFV offenders to inform the development and implementation of appropriate strategies to reduce the risk of offending and reoffending
	Develop tools and resources that support the delivery of DFV-related perpetrator programs and services that meet the specific needs of perpetrators from diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal men, multicultural communities, people of diverse sexualities and genders and people with cognitive impairment
	Support the development of men’s behaviour change programs (MBCPs) and other community-based interventions for perpetrators that meet the specific needs of perpetrators from diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal men, multicultural communities, LGBTIQ+ people and people with cognitive impairment
	Explore and implement measures to increase uptake and engagement with perpetrator interventions prior to court finalisation or within the first three months of an offence, particularly for young and first-time offenders
	Explore options for perpetrator interventions that reduce violence while also prioritising victim-survivor safety, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• responses that provide therapeutic and wrap-around supports</li> <li>• whole-of-family responses, particularly for young people and Aboriginal people using DFV</li> </ul>
	Develop, deliver, and evaluate targeted responses to young people who use violence

# 4

## Pillar 4: Recovery and healing

# Pillar 4: Recovery and healing



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## What we're already doing

Victim-survivors of domestic and family violence (DFV) may face a range of issues while they are working towards recovery and healing. It is important to ensure that victim-survivors are supported to access trauma-informed, culturally safe and evidenced-based responses. Recovery recognises that victim-survivors and their children often need to access supports and services to recover from the financial, social, educational, psychological and physical impacts of violence. It also recognises that in some cases, the perpetrator may still be in contact or interacting with the victim-survivor or their family and aims to ensure there is no further violence and to provide an opportunity for whole-of-family healing if appropriate and safe.

Investments by the NSW Government towards long-term recovery and healing for DFV victim-survivors include:

- measures to improve economic, social and health outcomes for women and girls who have experienced domestic and family violence under the NSW Women's Strategy 2023–2026, including the Return to Work program, which provides grant funding to support women as they re-engage in the workforce
- supporting accommodation and safe housing options for families, children and young people experiencing DFV, including private rentals
- case management services for victim-survivors, including the Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) program
- the Multisystemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect (MST-CAN) and Functional Family Therapy through Child Welfare (FFT-CW) services, which focus on treating the underlying causes of trauma, harm and concerning behaviours resulting from DFV with the aim of keeping families together, engaging with the family's broader social environment and developing each family's social and community support networks.

## Focus areas for 2022–2027

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 will contribute to supporting victim-survivors, including children victim-survivors, in their recovery by:

- ensuring victim-survivors are well supported by trauma-informed services that enable long-term recovery
- empowering communities to support healing and long-term recovery.



## Objective

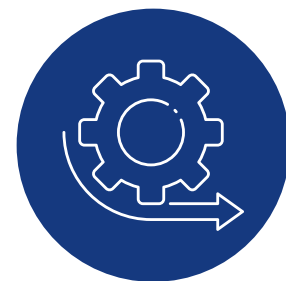
### People impacted by DFV receive support to heal and recover

Focus areas	Actions
<b>Ensuring victim-survivors are well supported by trauma-informed services that enable long-term recovery</b>	Ensure that the case management approach through the Safer Pathway program outlined in pillar 3 of this plan extends beyond the immediate crisis period and considers the needs of families
	Support the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement, with a specific focus on DFV
	Support the implementation of the NSW Health Aboriginal Family Wellbeing and Violence Prevention Strategy
	Support the implementation of the NSW Health Integrated Trauma Informed Care Framework
	Partner with organisations working with children and young people experiencing or who have experienced DFV to strengthen trauma-informed practice and service delivery
	Work with the Australian Government and corporate stakeholders to explore and strengthen the role of the banking and finance sector in supporting recovery
<b>Empowering communities to support healing and long-term recovery</b>	Support and build the capacity of diverse communities to support victim-survivors and their families in recovery
	Explore court support and diversionary options that include a culturally based residential healing program for Aboriginal perpetrators of DFV
	Support the delivery of Strong Aboriginal Women and Strong Aboriginal Men early intervention programs in correctional facilities

# 5

## Pillar 5: System enablers

# Pillar 5: System enablers



## What we're already doing

Preventing and addressing domestic and family violence (DFV) is complex and requires a whole-of-system response, including responses from across a range of service systems, such as specialist DFV services delivered by government and non-government services and other services such as police, courts, health, legal, child protection, housing, out-of-home care services and perpetrator programs. It is critical that we continue to build on previous gains to ensure that the DFV sector is supported by clear leadership, a robust evidence base and a skilled workforce that works with victim-survivors and perpetrators, including children and young people. Work already undertaken or under way to build coordination, capacity and evidence for DFV prevention and response includes:

- having a strong governance mechanism in place through the NSW Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Board, which is comprised of senior executives from NSW human services and central government agencies who provide strategic direction for reforms to the NSW DFV and sexual violence service system
- holding Safety Action Meetings (SAMs) through the Safer Pathway program, which are attended by government agencies and local service providers to coordinate service responses and develop tailored, time-specific Safety Action Plans to reduce the risk of further violence or harm to victim-survivors, including children assessed to be at serious risk

- generating evidence, including supporting the work of Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) to inform action against DFV in NSW, including building knowledge on:
  - the experience of children and young people with disability within and across sectors
  - the legal understanding of intimate-partner violence
  - the mental health impacts of DFV, including constructions of complex trauma and implications for women's wellbeing and safety from violence
  - multicultural and settlement services supporting women experiencing violence
  - young people's conceptualisation of violence and abuse.

## Focus areas for 2022–2027

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 will continue to contribute to building systems that support DFV prevention and response by:

- strengthening coordination and collaboration
- building workforce capacity and capability
- enhancing knowledge and evidence-based best practice.





## Objective

**DFV prevention and response is coordinated, evidence-based, informed by people with expertise and lived experience, and delivered by a supported and competent workforce**

Focus areas	Actions
<b>Strengthening coordination and collaboration</b>	Establish a Women's Safety Commissioner to provide expert advice to government, strengthen cross-government collaboration and advocate for continuing to improve women's safety in NSW
	Support the establishment of an Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network to provide knowledge and guidance around Aboriginal-led and place-based solutions to address domestic, family and sexual violence
	Identify opportunities to expand the reach of consultation on DFV reform, including reform that incorporates lived experience into the development and/or review of policy and programs
	Enhance collaboration to strengthen integrated responses to DFV where these experiences intersect with mental health care needs and/ or alcohol and other drug use
	Continue to strengthen information-sharing arrangements between government agencies, courts and other providers, including between the DFV, child protection, health and family law systems
	Continue to work across government and with peak bodies and other stakeholders to examine opportunities to better integrate and coordinate services that affect common clients
	Work with partner agencies to implement integrated commissioning models across government, including in regional areas, to enable better integration of responses across the child protection, health, police, education, housing and youth justice systems to minimise re-traumatisation of victim-survivors, reduce duplication and realise efficiencies
	Establish an implementation taskforce to oversee the implementation of the offence of coercive control and related recommendations of the Joint Select Committee, including training and education to support frontline services, government agencies and the justice system operationalise the offence
	Implement the recommendations of the NSW Audit Office report on NSW Police responses to DFV
Ensure legislative settings that appropriately support victim-survivors and deter domestic and family violence, including ongoing review of NSW laws	
<b>Building workforce capacity and capability</b>	Work alongside key stakeholders to conduct a workforce census to better understand the capacity of the specialist DFV and broader workforce to identify and respond to DFV
	Develop a 10-year DFV workforce development strategy in consultation with key stakeholders
	Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts to develop culturally specific approaches to attract, retain and support First Nations workers in the DFV service system
	Build the capacity of the community-based sector, particularly Aboriginal service providers and smaller organisations, to deliver victim-survivor support and perpetrator programs

Focus areas	Actions
	<p data-bbox="459 210 1235 241">Develop a men’s behaviour change program workforce strategy</p> <hr/> <p data-bbox="459 259 1382 322">Build the capacity and cultural capability of specialist DFV and the broader workforce to:</p> <ul data-bbox="459 331 1501 584" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="459 331 1078 362">• identify, record and respond to coercive control</li> <li data-bbox="459 371 1501 434">• recognise and address the gendered drivers of violence experienced by people of diverse sexualities and gender identities</li> <li data-bbox="459 443 1445 506">• recognise and address the overrepresentation of LGBTIQ+ people as victim-survivors of DFV</li> <li data-bbox="459 515 1485 577">• respond to and support recovery and healing of priority cohorts, including young people, Aboriginal people and people with a disability</li> </ul> <hr/> <p data-bbox="459 600 1434 663">Prioritise enhancement and capacity building for the following organisations to deliver specialist DFV services:</p> <ul data-bbox="459 672 1158 864" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="459 672 1075 703">• Aboriginal community-controlled organisations</li> <li data-bbox="459 712 1158 743">• Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations</li> <li data-bbox="459 752 1005 784">• Cultural and/or faith-based organisations</li> <li data-bbox="459 792 798 824">• LGBTIQ+ organisations</li> <li data-bbox="459 833 826 864">• Youth-based organisations</li> </ul>
<p data-bbox="86 889 424 952"><b>Strengthening knowledge, evidence, practice</b></p>	<p data-bbox="459 889 1474 952">Develop a 10-year NSW cross-agency DFSV Data Strategy to guide data collection, performance monitoring and reporting</p> <hr/> <p data-bbox="459 969 1449 1032">Support service providers to improve databases, data collection and reporting to support monitoring and evaluation</p> <hr/> <p data-bbox="459 1050 1485 1081">Evaluate new programs and initiatives to understand their impact and effectiveness</p> <hr/> <p data-bbox="459 1099 1501 1198">Develop and implement a NSW research agenda for DFV, taking into account the work of ANROWS in establishing the National Research Agenda, and work underway in other Australian jurisdictions</p> <hr/> <p data-bbox="459 1216 1086 1247">Co-design quality standards for NSW DFV services</p>

# Implementation

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## Governance

The NSW Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Board (the Board) will have overarching responsibility and accountability for the implementation of the NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022-2027 and the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022-2027.

The Board brings together principal decision-makers and leaders from across NSW Government to ensure agencies work collectively to shape, support and implement domestic, family and sexual violence reforms. Whole-of-government strategies to address domestic, family, and sexual violence are a key focus of the Board's operations. The Board includes representatives from the following NSW Government Clusters:

- Premier and Cabinet
- Stronger Communities (including the Department of Communities and Justice and NSW Police Force)
- Treasury
- Education
- Health

The Board will provide updates to the Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence as required.

The NSW Women's Safety Commissioner will attend meetings of the Board and support governance of the plans. Monitoring the implementation of relevant strategies and initiatives is an important part of the Commissioner's role in providing leadership and oversight of whole-of-NSW-Government policy and programs on domestic, family and sexual violence.

## Expert input and guidance

Effective implementation of the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 will require dynamic and meaningful consultation with people who have lived and other expertise. This approach will be underpinned by, but not limited to, ongoing guidance from key advisory bodies, including:

- the NSW Domestic, Family Violence and Sexual Assault Council, comprised of experts in service delivery and academia
- the NSW Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Corporate Leadership Group, comprised of private-sector leaders committed to driving social change in their industries and the community
- the Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network, in conjunction with other key First Nations advisory groups and voices, who will provide community-led knowledge on domestic and sexual violence issues
- the Department of Communities and Justice's Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sector Group comprised of representatives from peak bodies and service providers.

We commit to ongoing meaningful engagement with victim-survivors, young people, Aboriginal peoples, multicultural communities, LGBTIQ+ people and people with disability in the implementation and monitoring of this plan. This engagement will include consulting with existing groups established by the NSW Government, such as the NSW Youth Advisory Council, to provide advice on policy and with other similar advisory groups established by other government stakeholders.

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## Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring and reporting on the impact of the plan will be supported by the development of a NSW Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Outcomes Framework. This framework will identify and define outcomes, indicators, measures, data sources and reporting mechanisms to demonstrate progress against the objectives articulated in the plan. This, in turn, will inform decision-making, planning and accountability for the domestic and family violence and sexual violence service systems in NSW.

A NSW Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Data Strategy will be developed to lay out the government's commitment to improved data collection that will enhance the quality of evidence needed to demonstrate the impact of the plan and relevant service systems.

To the greatest extent possible, monitoring and reporting on the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022-2027 and Sexual Violence Plan 2022-2027 will be aligned with monitoring and reporting processes to support the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, including the National Outcomes Framework.

A report card on the implementation and achievements of the NSW plans will be published annually after the end of each financial year. To ensure accountability and inform decision-making, a robust evaluation of the plans will also be undertaken to demonstrate their impact and inform policy and program improvement in the future.

All monitoring and reporting under the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022-2027 and Sexual Violence Plan 2022-2027 and the National plan will be overseen by the NSW Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Board.



# Glossary

<b>Broader workforce</b>	Broader workforce refers to those who are sometimes in contact with victim-survivors or perpetrators of sexual violence and are required to deal with the impacts of sexual violence, despite it not being a significant focus of their role. Examples are police, nurses, teachers, disability support workers, community services and social workers, youth workers, and corrective services workers.
<b>Brotherboys</b>	A term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to describe gender-diverse people who have a male spirit and take on male roles within the community.
<b>Child sexual abuse</b>	Child sexual abuse is any act that involves or exposes a child to sexual activity of any kind. Child sexual abuse can be perpetrated by an adult, another child or a group.
<b>Consent</b>	Sexual consent is when people freely and voluntarily agree to engage in sexual activity, including kissing, touching and oral sex. In NSW, consent is a fundamental part of sexual offence law. A sexual offence occurs when someone does not consent to a sexual act, including sexual intercourse or sexual touching. Consent must be present every time, including for the duration of any sexual act. Consent to one act does not mean consent is given to any other act. Consent to a sexual act with one person does not mean consent is given to a sexual act with a different person or with the same person on a different occasion. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.
<b>Domestic and family violence</b>	While there is no single, universally agreed definition of domestic and family violence, this plan adopts the NSW Government's common definition of domestic and family violence: any behaviour in a domestic relationship that is violent, threatening, coercive or controlling and causing a person to live in fear for their own or someone else's safety. It usually manifests as part of a pattern of ongoing controlling or coercive behaviour.
<b>First Nations</b>	First Nations people is a collective name for the original people of Australia and their descendants. It is used to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Australia and to emphasise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people lived on this continent prior to European invasion. While this document uses the terms 'First Nations', 'Aboriginal' and 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' peoples interchangeably, in NSW 'Aboriginal' is often used in preference to 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of NSW.
<b>Gender</b>	Gender refers to the economic, social, political, and cultural attributes associated with being women and men. The social definitions of what it means to be a woman or a man vary among cultures and change over time. Gender is a sociocultural expression of particular characteristics and roles that are associated with certain groups of people with reference to their sex and sexuality. Rigid gender roles leave no space for acknowledgement or celebration of gender diversity.
<b>Gender equality</b>	Gender equality refers to the equal distribution of rights, opportunities, resources, responsibilities and outcomes between people of different genders. Gender equality does not mean erasing gender differences, but that people's rights, responsibilities and opportunities are not dependent on their gender.
<b>Gender identity</b>	A person's deeply felt sense of being male, female, both, in between, or something other.
<b>Gender inequality</b>	Gender inequality refers to a social condition characterised by unequal value afforded to men and women and unequal distribution of power, resources and opportunity between them. It is the direct result of patriarchal systems that privilege the needs, interests and behaviours of men over women. Gender inequality permeates many aspects of Australian society and institutions.

<b>Gender norms</b>	Gender norms are the informal rules and expectations that shape attitudes about masculinity and femininity — for example, the idea that men are strong and aggressive and women are polite and nurturing. Rigid gender norms like this impact not only the ways women and men act, but also the ways they relate to each other, both within relationships and in other aspects of their lives. Gender norms are harmful to people of all genders, maintain unequal relations of power, and are a key driver in gender-based violence.
<b>Image-based abuse</b>	Image-based abuse happens when an intimate image or video is shared without the consent of the person pictured. This includes images or videos that have been digitally altered. Image-based abuse also includes the threat of an intimate image being shared.
<b>Intergenerational trauma</b>	Historical trauma passed down from those who directly experience the incident to subsequent generations — for example, the impact of the Stolen Generations continues to be felt by present and future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
<b>Intersectional approach</b>	Intersectionality describes the interactions between multiple systems and structures of oppression (such as sexism, racism, classism, ageism, ableism, heteronormativity and cissexism), as well as policy and legal contexts (such as immigration status). Multiple forms of oppression and inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other, resulting in, for example, some groups of victim-survivors experiencing higher rates of violence, more severe forms of violence and/or facing barriers to support and safety that other victim-survivors do not experience.
<b>Intimate partner violence</b>	Intimate-partner violence, also commonly referred to as ‘domestic violence’, refers to any behaviour within an intimate relationship (including current or past marriages, domestic partnerships, or dates) that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm.
<b>LGBTIQ+</b>	An acronym used to describe members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer and asexual communities. It is sometimes used to include allies or supporters of the LGBTIQ+ community. Other acronyms used to describe this community include LGBTIQ, or LGBTIQ+. At times in this document, certain letters may be intentionally left out if that group is not specifically included in what is being referenced.
<b>National Agreement on Closing the Gap</b>	The National Agreement on Closing the Gap was developed in partnership between Australian governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations. There are four priority areas for reform and 17 targets. The objective of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap is to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
<b>Problematic harmful sexual behaviour</b>	Problematic and harmful sexual behaviour refers to behaviour of a sexual nature outside the range accepted as ‘normal’ for a child’s age and level of development. Such behaviour is detrimental to development and normal functioning and may harm the child as well as other children subjected to this behaviour or place either the child or children at risk of harm.
<b>Perpetrator</b>	Perpetrator refers to a person who commits an illegal, criminal or harmful act, including domestic, family or sexual violence.
<b>Sexual assault</b>	Sexual assault is any non-consensual vaginal, anal or oral penetration of another person with any body part or object. In NSW law, ‘sexual assault’ is used instead of the term ‘rape’ to describe sexual intercourse without consent.
<b>Sexual harassment</b>	Sexual harassment is an unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favours or other conduct of a sexual nature that makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated.



<b>Sexual violence</b>	Sexual violence refers to sexual activity that happens without consent, when consent is withdrawn or when the person is unable to consent due to their age or other factors. It occurs any time a person participates in non-consensual sexual activity, such as sexual touching, a sexual act, sexual assault, sexual harassment and intimidation, or trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual violence can be non-physical and include unwanted sexualised comments, intrusive sexualised questions or harassment of a sexual nature. Forms of modern slavery, such as servitude, may involve sexual violence.
<b>Sistergirls</b>	A term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to describe gender-diverse people that have a female spirit and take on female roles within the community.
<b>Technology-facilitated sexual violence</b>	Technology-facilitated sexual violence (TFSV) involves the use of digital technologies and platforms to perpetrate sexually abusive, aggressive or harassing behaviours. It includes rape threats, online stalking, the use of an app or platform to set up an in-person rape or sexual assault, and image-based sexual abuse. TFSV can be perpetrated by intimate partners, strangers, friends, colleagues or others known to the victim-survivor.
<b>Trauma</b>	Trauma occurs when someone's ability to cope is overwhelmed. Trauma can have a significant effect on someone's physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing. The impacts of trauma, whether resolved or acknowledged, may surface at any time, particularly when victim-survivors tell or repeat their experiences or when they encounter similar experiences shared by others. Trauma looks different for people depending on their experience and other factors, such as exposure to previous traumatic events, access to support and mental health status.
<b>Trauma-informed care, practice and systems</b>	Trauma-informed care recognises the prevalence of trauma and its impacts on the emotional, psychological and social wellbeing of people and communities. Trauma-informed practice integrates an understanding of past and current experiences of violence and trauma in all aspects of service delivery. The goal of trauma-informed systems is to avoid re-traumatising individuals and to support safety, choice and control as critical to healing.
<b>Victim-survivor</b>	A person who has experienced domestic, family or sexual violence. This term is used to acknowledge the strength, resilience, and resistance shown by people who have experienced or are currently living with violence. People who have experienced violence have different preferences about how they would like to be identified and may choose to use victim or survivor separately or use another term altogether.

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