

Working with family violence: key definitions.

RESOURCE 9

FAMILY VIOLENCE, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

When we talk about family violence in this toolkit, we are also including domestic violence and intimate partner violence. Each of these definitions has a specific meaning.

Family Violence can happen between people who are in some way related. It can include husbands and wives or other partners, parents and children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and other extended family members, including cultural interpretations of extended family. It doesn't have to occur between people living in the same house. We use this terminology throughout this Toolkit because it is the broadest.

Domestic Violence can happen between people who are living together. This usually falls under the category of family violence as well, as most people who live together are families, but it can also occur between people who live together through other circumstances, such as shared accommodation.

Intimate Partner Violence can happen between people who are in an intimate relationship, whether living together or not, or who have previously been in an intimate relationship together. Intimate partner violence can involve some dynamics that other types of family or domestic violence do not, given the nature of sexual and other intimacy involved in an intimate relationship.

What all of these things have in common is that they involve 'actions which are violent, threatening, coercive, controlling or intended to cause the family or household member to be fearful'²⁰.

Family, domestic and intimate partner violence can include physical, verbal, emotional, sexual or psychological abuse, neglect, financial abuse, stalking, harm to an animal or property, restricting the victim's spiritual or cultural participation, or exposing children to the effects of these behaviours. Different perpetrators can use many different means to intimidate and control their victims.

²⁰ This definition is taken from the [DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/subjects/family-and-domestic-violence).
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TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

Trauma-informed practice, or trauma-informed care, is a way of working with people who have experienced or are experiencing trauma. It is about making sure that the services we provide do not cause any more trauma. Trauma-informed practice helps people feel safe when you are working with them, which means you can provide a better service.

Three key things that workers can do to make sure their work is trauma-informed are:

1. Acknowledging the impact that trauma can have on clients and how this might relate to struggles that they may be having in working with the service;
2. Ask about the trauma rather than waiting for a victim to disclose, and;
3. Respond in a way that shows that you believe the client and that you do not judge them.

For more information, see the Federal Government's **MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL ONLINE DEVELOPMENT (MHPOD)** site.

MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL ONLINE DEVELOPMENT
(MHPOD) www.mhpod.gov.au/assets/sample_topics/combined/Trauma_and_Mental_Health/objective2/index.html

STRENGTHS-BASED PRACTICE

Strengths-based practice recognises that all people and communities have inherent skills, capabilities and resources that they can use to make their lives better, according to their own choices and priorities. Strengths-based practice comes from a human rights perspective.

When we use strengths-based practice with a client, we respect and honour their ability to take actions in their own lives – including the strength that they have shown in asking us for support. Rather than telling the client what they need or what is good for them, we work with them as a team. We recognise that they are experts about their own situation, and our role is to help them identify and tap into their own strengths and resources as well as the range of supports and resources that are available from our and other services.

More information about using strengths-based practice in a family violence context can be found in the Victorian Government's **FAMILY VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK**.

FAMILY VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK
<http://www.thelookout.org.au/sites/default/files/Risk-Assessment-for-Specialist-Family-Violence-Workers-Handbook-Practice-Guide-3.pdf>