

RESPONSIBILITY 5: SECONDARY CONSULTATION AND REFERRAL

Responding via Secondary Consultations & Referrals

All professionals that align to Responsibility 5 are required to seek internal supervision and further consultation with specialist family violence practitioners to collaborate on risk assessment and risk management for adult and child victim survivors and adults using family violence, as well as to make active referrals for comprehensive specialist responses, if appropriate.

Secondary consultation and referral involve determining what response is required to respond to an individual's risk or to support their wellbeing or needs, and identifying the services that can assist. For professionals working with children and families, this could look like:

- Seeking internal supervision through their service or organisation.
- Consulting with family violence specialists to collaborate on risk assessment and risk management for adult and child victim survivors and adults who use violence.
- Making active referrals for comprehensive specialist responses, if appropriate.

Practice Requirements

- **Secondary consultation purpose** – Secondary consultation is a key aspect of building a shared understanding of family violence and to develop system-wide consistent and collaborative practice. It can take place for a range of reasons, including using the skills and knowledge of specialist family violence services to help professionals gain a further understanding of family violence risk and possible referral options. Secondary consultation can also occur with other specialist services that have expertise or resources to address the presenting needs and circumstance of the person using family violence.
- **Secondary consultation with specialist family violence services** – Professional should seek secondary consultation with specialist family violence services when it is known that family violence is present. This will assist in gathering advice on practical, timely, and effective engagement strategies and interventions. Secondary consultation may result in a specialist practitioner supporting and working collaboratively with another professional to undertake risk assessment and management at an Intermediate or Comprehensive level.
- **Referral purpose** – Professionals may choose to refer a service user directly as a result of their risk assessment or management planning or as a result from a secondary consultation with another professional. Referrals can connect a person using violence to another service for presenting needs or circumstances that may be related to their use of violence. Referral can support stabilisation and enhance protective factors.
- **Enabling a successful referral** – There are several ways that a professional can support the referral process to ensure that is undertaken in a safe and appropriate manner, as well as having the greatest likelihood of the person using violence accepting and continuing to engage in services.
- **Responding to barriers** – Real or perceived barriers affect the likelihood that the person using violence will engage with the service they have been referred to. These can minimise the ability of the service system to monitor the person's movements and behaviours as well as manage family violence risk.

Professionals should consider seeking secondary consultation with specialist family violence services:

- To establish the presence or analyse the level of family violence risk (e.g., where there is uncertainty based on the available information).
- Where there is uncertainty about the identity of a person using violence
- To develop and/or action risk management and safety plans
- Where expert knowledge on working with people using violence or victim survivors and the responses is required to address unique needs and barriers (e.g., disability services, LGTQIA+ services, etc.).
- To determine whether referral is needed for specialist family violence services.
- Support safe engagement and strategies for working with people using violence.
- For a Comprehensive risk assessment or management response (including consideration for a RAMP response).

Please see [here](#) for the full Practice Guides, including key examples. For more information on putting the Practice Guides into practice, please see the [PUV Training provided by No to Violence](#).

More information: <https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources>