

Tip Sheet: Identifying Motivations

Understanding Motivations

Throughout the risk assessment process, professionals may identify a range of motivations that the person using violence holds. Motivation may arise in response to a need or reflect a person's values and beliefs. For example, a person may be in crisis and have short-term, immediate needs to find stable accommodation. This same person may also hold a longer-term motivation related to parenting or caring roles, reflecting their values of family and relationships.

Professionals should seek to identify and understand the person using violence's motivation at various points in time during the engagement in order to:

- Engage with the service and accept support for their presenting needs.
- Address their presenting needs and other circumstances that raise issues or challenges.
- Discuss their use of violence.
- Address their use of violence or working towards safety and change.

Remember: If the person using violence appears to preference short-term motivations and is unable to identify and connect with long-term motivations, their capacity to engage in conversations to address their risk to child and adult victim survivors may be limited.

Practice Tip: Using a strengths-based approach when working with a person using violence can provide opportunities for them to identify and articulate what they can do to address their needs. Steps towards taking responsibility and ownership for their goals, decisions, actions, and behaviours related to presenting needs can form the foundation for addressing their use of family violence.

Using the Intermediate Assessment Conversation Model

The Intermediate Assessment Conversation Model provides prompts to help the professional build rapport with and elicit responses from the person using violence. It is intended to be used alongside the Intermediate Assessment Tool to support engagement and gain a 'person in their context'* view.

Note: The questions in the Conversation Model are posed to support the person using violence to explore what is important to them and how this might look different in the future for themselves and their family.

Leading questions of the Intermediate Assessment Conversation Model include:

- While we are addressing the issue/s that brought you here, are there other areas of your life that you might like to work on?
- We talked about the need to make changes in your life to address the needs you have, so can we talk about how we might put this into action?

See the [Intermediate Assessment Conversation Model](#) for further information and guidance.

*'Person in their context' is an approach which considers the person using violence's presenting needs, history, experiences, risk, strengths, and environmental contexts or circumstances that contribute to their use of violence

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](#).

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (the Centre) would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the past, present, and emerging Traditional Custodians and Elders of this country on which we work.