

Tip Sheet: Risk Factors Specific to Children

Children and Young People as Victim Survivors in Their Own Right

Children are victim survivors of family violence whether they are directly targeted by the person using violence or not. They may be subject to physical, sexual, psychological or emotional violence, or to threatening, coercive and controlling behaviours. Children also experience family violence as victim survivors even if the effects of a person using violence's behaviour is directed toward another family member, and they do not witness that violence directly.

Moving Toward Child-Centred Narratives

Professionals may engage with parents who use violence – it is important in these circumstances to identify whether there are children in their care, and the nature of the relationship, including contact and parenting arrangement. Parents using violence often take the role of parental expert, pointing out the other caregiver's shortcomings amongst other narratives including:

- Undermining the child and co-caregiver's relationship through dismissal of the caregiver's parenting and ridiculing them in front of children or others.
- Unrealistic expectation and poor understanding of child development

Professionals can work to shift these narratives towards more 'child-centred' narratives to reinforce a focus on the impact and needs of children impacted by family violence, for example:

- Making the link that behaviour and attitude directed at the co-caregiver is a parenting choice which also affects the wellbeing of children.
- Being able to identify the impacts the person's use of violence has on their children's growth and development.

For more information about narratives, please see [Responsibility 2](#) of the MARAM Adults Using Family Violence Practice Guidance.

Keeping Children in View When Conducting Safety or Risk Management Plans

Child victim survivor safety is paramount in the risk management that professionals undertake with people using violence. Professionals must consider how they keep a child's level of risk of family violence central to their risk management planning and decision-making process.

Remember: You must consider how you keep the children's lived experience as a victim survivor of family violence central to your risk management planning and decision-making process. Identifying general circumstances related to children and young people, for example, where they are living and any parenting or contact arrangements, will inform the development of a Safety Plan with the person using violence.

Practice Tips:

- Professionals must not disclose any information that would put a victim survivor at risk (e.g., sharing information received from them, sharing risk assessments, and safety plans, etc.).
- When safe, reasonable, and appropriate, the professional should inform the victim survivor that they are involved with a coordinated collaborative risk assessment and management process, including what services are involved.
- If a victim survivor has made a safety plan, it's important to prioritise this and try to ensure your risk management strategies don't jeopardise any measures in place.

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.