

MARAMIS General Overview Guide

For Child and Family Services

2024

Acknowledgement of Country

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.

The Centre also acknowledges the injustices and trauma suffered as a result of European settlement, the Stolen Generations, and other policies such as the forced removal of children from their families, communities, culture and land. We respect the resilience of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the face of this trauma and respect their right to, and aspiration for, self-determination and empowerment.

Sovereignty was never ceded. This always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.



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Introduction

About this Guide

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Management (MARAM) Framework and the Information Sharing Schemes have been developed, based on current best research, to reduce the risk of family violence and keep people who use family violence in view and accountable.

Child and Family Services are required to align their practice, policies, procedures, and systems with MARAM and the Information Sharing Schemes to improve the collective service response to family violence and to promote the wellbeing and safety of children. MARAM and the Information Sharing Schemes also serve to keep perpetrators in view and hold them accountable for their actions.

This guide outlines important information to support professional to develop a shared understanding of family violence, the MARAM Framework, and the Information Sharing Schemes.

The guide provides an overview of MARAM and the Information Sharing Schemes and supporting resources for organisations. It does not replace the need to consult with Family Safety Victoria (FSV) or the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) resources, however this guide can be used as a complementary resource.

If you have any further questions about CISS, FVISS and MARAM, including support with implementation, contact the Enquiry Line via email at infosharing@dffh.vic.gov.au.

Overview of MARAM & Information Sharing Schemes

About the Family Violence and Information Sharing Reforms

Addressing family violence requires a whole-of-community response and a coordinated system working together to support adult and child victim survivors, address risk and safety needs, and promote perpetrator accountability.

The Family Violence Multi Agency Risk Assessment Management Framework (MARAM) and Information Sharing Reforms were introduced to the Child and Family Services in 2018

MARAM and the Information Sharing Schemes was developed to ensure that people affected by, experiencing, or using family violence are provided with an appropriate, consistent, and capable response no matter where or how they engage with services. The Framework aims to establish a system-wide, shared understanding of what family violence is and the roles that organisations play in responding to this.

MARAM and the Information Sharing Schemes build upon and complement existing child and family wellbeing and safety responsibilities and practices, while aiming to improve the wellbeing and safety of children and reducing the risk of family violence.

MARAM provides a framework that when aligned to ensures all staff of prescribed organisations:

- Understand the nature and dynamics of family violence.
- Are trained to facilitate an appropriate, accessible, culturally responsive environment for safe disclosure of information by victim survivors, and respond to disclosures of family violence sensitively.
- Are able to effectively and safely engage and work with Adults Using Family Violence in order to keep them in view and accountable.
- Know and are trained in their MARAM responsibilities and how to effectively apply the appropriate tools.

MARAM acknowledges children as victim survivors in their own right and improves professional capacity to respond, ensuring people understand, prioritise, and provide the most suitable responses to ensure that their needs are met, and the risk of family violence is managed.

The Information Sharing Schemes, the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) and the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), build on existing information sharing and privacy legislation to expand the capability of prescribed organisations in Victoria to collect and share crucial information. The Schemes broaden the circumstances and ways in which professionals from different services can share information in order to:

- Effectively assess and manage family violence risk (under FVISS).
- Promote children's safety and/or wellbeing (under CISS).

Information sharing and service collaboration are vital in the early identification of risk and in facilitating timely and appropriate support.

MARAM and the Information Sharing Schemes authorise Child and Family Services to:

- Contribute to a consistent, system-wide shared responsibility to identify, screen, assess and manage family violence.
- Respond to requests for information to promote child wellbeing or safety.
- Assess and manage risk of family violence.
- Request information to promote child wellbeing or safety and/or manage risk of family violence.
- Proactively share information to promote child wellbeing or safety and/or manage risk of family violence.

Family Violence

The Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic) defines family violence as behaviour that:

- is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically, or economically abusive
- is threatening or coercive
- is controlling or dominating
- causes fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or another person
- causes a child to hear, witness or otherwise be exposed to the effects of any behaviour referred to above.

MARAM outlines the key understanding of family violence that should underpin the work of all prescribed services. It includes:

- Family violence is a behaviour that controls or dominates a family member and causes them to fear for their own or another person's safety or wellbeing.

Family violence is a choice by an adult perpetrator to use behaviours for the purposes of power and control. Perpetrators use coercive tactics and violent or controlling behaviour to gain power over the victim-survivor/s. Responsibility for the use of violence rests solely with the perpetrator.

- Family violence is deeply gendered and rooted in structural inequalities. While both men and women can be perpetrators or victim-survivors of family violence, perpetrators are overwhelmingly men, who largely perpetrate violence against women (who are their current or former partner) and their children.
- Family violence can occur in a range of ways across different communities and relationship types. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right, with unique experiences, vulnerabilities, and needs.
 - Older peoples' experiences of family violence from intimate partners, adult children or carers, or extended family members, often described as elder abuse.
 - The experiences of family violence may vary across communities, and people from Aboriginal or diverse backgrounds may experience additional structural inequalities.

Using an Intersectional Lens

Intersectionality refers to different aspects of a person's identity which can contribute to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. It is the idea that multiple identities intersect, such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, religion, class, socio-economic stats, gender identity, ability or age, which can create system of disadvantage for individuals and/or groups.

MARAM uses an intersectional lens throughout its tools and practice guidance as a core part of risk assessment. It is important for professionals to understand how to apply an intersectional lens in their practice as it allows them to recognise how victim survivors uniquely experience family violence, the structural barriers they may face to receiving a family violence service responses and how they may be specifically targeted by an adult using violence.

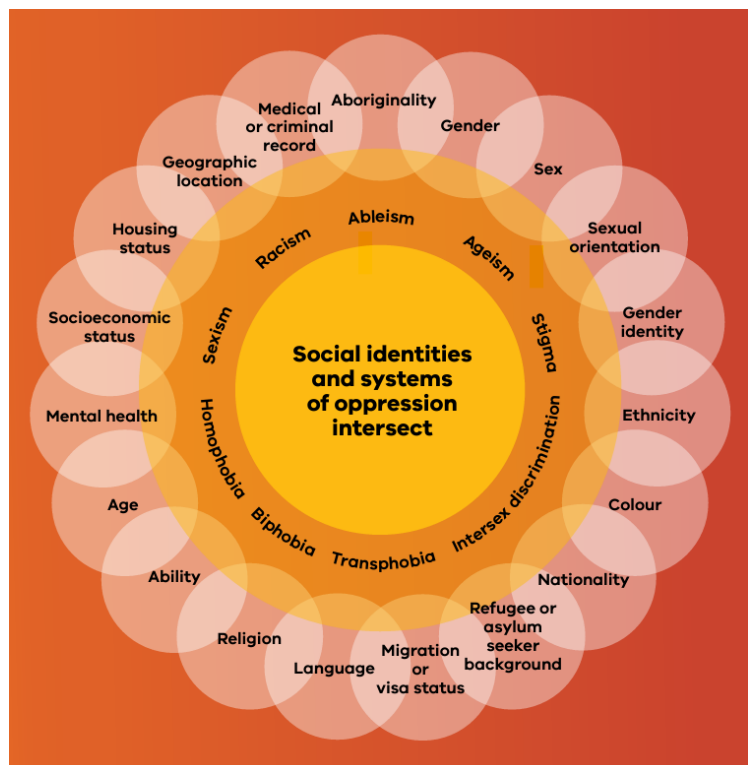
The MARAM Foundation Knowledge Guide highlights the importance of applying an intersectional lens in response to family violence to improve the wellbeing and safety of all clients. *Section 10.3* of the [MARAM Foundation Knowledge Guide](#) outlines intersectional approaches and how to apply an intersectional lens in practice.

The MARAM Foundation Knowledge Guide outlines seven different concepts for practice that professionals can use when working with clients. These concepts include person-centred approaches, intersectional approaches, and reflective practice and unconscious bias as outlined here:

- **Intersectional Approach:** This approach is a way of considering a child or young person's identity and experiences, as well as giving space for the professional to reflect on their own bias in order to best be able to respond to the child or young person safely and appropriately.
- **Person-Centred Approach:** A person-centred approach gives the child or young person space to describe what they have experienced, allowing professionals to sensitively identify trauma and/or child wellbeing issues. This approach can be combined with an intersectional approach to allow professionals to validate a child or young person's experience or violence or wellbeing issues, and their ongoing impacts.
- **Reflective Practice and Unconscious Bias:** Using an intersectional lens means being aware of biases you may hold as a result of ideas, opinions, and/or stereotypes formed throughout your life. It also involves thinking about and reflecting upon your own characteristics and how these have shaped your identity, as well as what power and privilege you may hold.

More information about intersectionality can be found here:

- [Understanding Intersectionality](#)
- [Diversity in Practice: Intersectionality](#)
- Video: [Intersectionality and MARAM in Practice](#)



Cultural Safety

Cultural safety is about creating and maintaining an environment where all people are treated in a culturally safe and respectful service. This can look like showing respect, listening, learning, and carrying out practice in collaboration with regard for another's culture whilst also being mindful of one's own potential biases. Culturally safe responses should assist people to feel safe and where there is no challenge or need for the denial of their identity.

For Aboriginal Communities

To effectively support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, professionals need to understand their culture, history, family, and community.

Historically, Aboriginal communities have experienced systemic oppression, structural inequality, discrimination, and have continued to be denied the right to self-determination. These experiences can influence how Aboriginal children and families access services and support.

Organisations and services should promote cultural safety and recognise the cultural rights, kin and community connections of children from Aboriginal and diverse communities. They should actively value and respect a child's identity as a core aspect of their wellbeing and safety.

Everyone has a responsibility for the cultural safety of Aboriginal people in their organisation. Everyone is responsible for how they work with Aboriginal staff and clients of community services. This includes recognising:

- Knowledge and respect for self: Awareness of how one's own cultural values, knowledge, skills and attitudes are formed and affect others, including a responsibility to address their unconscious bias, racism and discrimination.
- Knowledge and respect for Aboriginal people: Knowledge of the diversity of Aboriginal peoples, communities and cultures, and the skills and attitudes to work effectively with them.
- A commitment to redesigning organisations and systems to reduce racism and discrimination: Strategic and institutional reform to remove barriers to optimal health, wellbeing and safety outcomes for Aboriginal people.
- Cultural safety is an ongoing learning journey: An ongoing and response learning framework that includes the need to unlearn unconscious bias and racism and relearn Aboriginal cultural values.

For Culturally, Linguistically and Faith-Diverse Communities

People from culturally, linguistically and faith-diverse communities may experience systemic barriers when seeking support. These barriers can look like:

- Limited access to information about family violence support services (particularly in different languages).
- Previous negative experiences with services which can lead to reservations about future engagement.
- Lack of cultural awareness and safety from service providers.

In order to address these barriers and effectively support people from culturally, linguistically and faith-diverse communities, it is crucial that practitioners understand a family's own cultural context, practices and beliefs, as well as consider unique barriers, stigma, or discrimination as well as any historical trauma, and how this may affect their experience of family violence.

Practitioners should be aware of the following practice considerations when engaging and working with people from culturally, linguistically and faith-diverse backgrounds:

- Consider the effects of recent experiences of racism and discrimination in Australia.
- Consider experiences of significant trauma prior to migrating to Australia (particularly where they are from refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds).
- Be aware of how visa or immigration status can impact on access to services.

[Dhelk Dja](#) is Victoria's Aboriginal-led agreement for ensuring communities are free from family violence.

It articulates the long-term partnership and directions required at a statewide, regional and local level to ensure that Aboriginal people, families and communities are violence free, and built upon the foundation of Aboriginal self-determination.

Children and Young People as Victim Survivors in Their Own Right

MARAMIS recognises children and young people as victim survivors in their own right, the unique needs and experiences of children and young people who experience family violence and establishes children and young people as victim. This recognition allows for the appropriate risk assessment tools, safety plans, practice guides and training to assess and work with children and young people as victim survivors separately from their family.

Child and Young Person Definition

For the purpose of this guide, the term “child and young person” encompasses age groups 0-18 including newborn, infant, toddler, children, and young people. Newborn refers to time of birth through to 3 months. Infants are typically from 3 months to 18 months, toddlers from 18 months to 3 years of age, child 3 to 11 years, and young people from 12 to 18. The term child may be used to describe all ages and stages.

Children and young people are recognised as victim survivors of family violence in their own right, regardless of if they are directly targeted by the adult using violence or not. This can include physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional violence, or to threatening, coercive and controlling behaviours by a perpetrator. Children and young people also experience family violence as victim survivors if they are exposed to the effects of a perpetrator’s violence towards any family member, even if they do not witness that violence directly.

The [Australian Child Maltreatment Study](#) (2023) highlighted the national prevalence and long-term impacts of child maltreatment in Australia across all types of harm. The study found 40% of Australia’s children have been exposed to family violence, 32% have experienced physical abuse, 31% have experienced emotional abuse, 28% have experienced sexual abuse, and 9% have experienced neglect.

The impacts of family violence on children and young people may include increased risk of other additional forms of harm and vulnerabilities, including bullying, mental health presentations, abuse in their own intimate relationships, risk taking behaviours, homelessness, and disengagement from education.

Responses to family violence need to consider how family violence impacts on a child or young person’s development, health, and wellbeing (physical, emotional, and psychological), education, connection to their culture, and what is needed for the child or young person’s recovery, including therapeutic responses.

All prescribed services and programs must complete an individual risk assessment for each child identified in the family where family violence is present. The children’s risk assessment includes additional risk factors to the adult assessment and provides guidance on recognising observable signs of trauma at each age and stage of development.

MARAM and the Information Sharing Schemes have been designed to promote the wellbeing and safety of children and young people by:

- Improving earlier identification of issues or risks, including family violence risk, and enabling earlier support and participation in services.
- Increasing collaboration and supporting a more coordinated and integrated approach to service delivery across the service system.
- Empowering professionals to make informed decisions.
- Promoting shared responsibility for wellbeing and safety, and defining responsibilities for identifying family violence across the service system, including creating consistent and collaborative practice.
- Identifying wellbeing and safety issues and risks, and obtaining relevant information to share in relation to family violence.

Child Wellbeing

Effective implementation of the Reforms enables prescribed organisations and services to share information to promote the wellbeing and safety of children. The promotion of wellbeing enhances the rights and quality of life of children and young people and supports their safety and development.

Wellbeing differs from person to person and is broad in nature. Socio-economic factors, the age and stage of a child, along with a child's experience can impact on wellbeing and how it is viewed. Additionally, children are not homogenous; all children grow, learn, and develop differently.

As wellbeing is broad, the Reforms allows the sharing of information to support collaborative service provision to children and respond to identified needs and risks, guided by the children's best interests and developmental frameworks.

Many wellbeing frameworks are informed by the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1989\)](#) and use variants of these rights to measure wellbeing. Common factors that can inform wellbeing are:

- Physical, psychological, and emotional health
- Access and engagement with services
- Safe and stable environments
- Accommodation
- Nourishment
- Protection from the elements
- Access to resources to learn and develop
- Engagement in supportive relationships
- Involvement in activities that enable development

While the list above provides guidance on factors that can impact a child's wellbeing, this is not an exhaustive list. Professionals are encouraged to use their professional judgement to determine what factors are impacting on individual child or young peoples' wellbeing.

[This video](#) developed by the Department of Education depicts how sharing for wellbeing under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), can help a child thrive.



Existing Child Wellbeing and Safety Obligations

Existing child wellbeing and safety obligations continue to apply.

The Reforms expand circumstances in which confidential information (including personal, health and sensitive information) can be shared between prescribed professionals. The Reforms complement these obligations and work alongside them to support a more complete system of support for the wellbeing and safety of children.

 <p>Child Safe Standards</p> <p>Requires organisations involving children to have policies, procedures and practices to keep them safe.</p>	 <p>Mandatory Reporting</p> <p>Requires certain professional groups to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to child protection authorities.</p>	 <p>Reportable Conduct</p> <p>Requires organisations involving children to make reports of alleged abuse by workers or volunteers.</p>
 <p>Duty of Care</p> <p>A legal obligation to avoid doing things that could foreseeably cause harm to another person.</p>	 <p>Privacy Laws</p> <p>Regulates the way personal information is collected, stored, accessed, used and disclosed.</p>	 <p>Criminal Laws</p> <p>Regulates conduct in society to protect the community and provides sanctions against those who commit crimes.</p>

Safeguards for the Reforms

A range of safeguards and protections exist under the Reforms to ensure that professionals can safely, confidently, and appropriately share information.

 <p>Only prescribed organisations and services can share.</p>	 <p>Good faith defence provides protection for professionals.</p>	 <p>Organisations are bound by Ministerial Guidelines.</p>
 <p>Complaints can be lodged.</p>	 <p>Professionals are trained to have access to supporting resources.</p>	 <p>Offences and penalties for inappropriate use.</p>

The Good Faith Defence

A person who is authorised to share information under CISS and FVISS, who acts in good faith and with reasonable care when sharing information, will not be held liable for any criminal, civil or disciplinary action for providing information. They are not considered to have breached any code of conduct or professional ethics or to have departed from any accepted standards of professional conduct.

Complaints

If you are concerned that information might have been shared in a way that is not permitted, you have the right to provide feedback and make a complaint. To make a complaint in the first instance, speak to the organisation who shared the information. All organisations should have procedures in place for dealing with complaints.

If you are not satisfied that the matter has been resolved, a complaint may be made to:

- The Office of the Victorian Information Commission (OVIC) if the complaint relates to personal information or the Health Complaints Commissioner (HCC) if the complaint relates to health information under Victorian Law
- The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) under Commonwealth Law.

The Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework

About the MARAM Framework

The Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) aims to build a shared understanding of family violence across Victoria's service system.

MARAM is embedded in law under Part 11 of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (FVPA), and establishes the foundations for a consistent statewide approach and shared responsibility for identifying and responding to family violence. The Framework guides family violence risk identification, assessment, and management.

Child and Family Services organisations required to align with the MARAM are prescribed as **Framework organisations**. The FVPA requires these organisations to align their policies, procedures, and practices with MARAM.

For a list of prescribed MARAM framework workforces, please [click here](#).

MARAM Pillars

The MARAM Framework is structured around four conceptual 'Pillars' against which organisations must align policies, procedures and practice guidelines and tools that will help ensure the establishment of a system-wide approach and shared responsibility for family violence risk assessment and management. Each Pillar has its own objective and requirements for alignment.

The Pillars are set at the organisational level and are designed to build knowledge and skill and support the effectiveness and integration of the system-wide response to family violence in Victoria.

- **Pillar 1:** A shared understanding of what family violence is
- **Pillar 2:** Consistent and collaborative practice to identify and respond to family violence risk
- **Pillar 3:** Responsibilities for identifying and responding to family violence risk
- **Pillar 4:** Systems, outcomes, and continuous improvement

MARAM Principles

The Framework is based on the requirement that to provide consistent, effective, and safe responses for people experiencing family violence, services need a shared understanding of family violence and of the responsibilities of the professionals involved.

To support a shared understanding of family violence, MARAM sets out 10 Principles underpinning four Framework 'Pillars' that help guide Victoria's family violence system-wide response.

The 10 principles are:

- Family violence involves a spectrum of risk and is unacceptable in any form.
- Professionals should work collaboratively to provide coordinated and effective risk assessment and management.
- Professionals should be aware of the drivers of family violence, predominantly gender inequality.
- The agency, dignity, and intrinsic empowerment of victim-survivors must be respected.
- Family violence may have serious impacts on children, who are victim-survivors in their own right.
- Services provided to child victim-survivors should acknowledge their unique experiences.
- Services and responses provided to people from Aboriginal communities should be culturally responsive and safe.
- Services and responses provided to diverse communities and older people should be accessible, culturally responsive, and safe.
- People who use violence should be encouraged to acknowledge and take responsibility to end their violent, controlling, and coercive behaviour.
- Family violence used by adolescents is a distinct form of family violence and requires a different response.

MARAM Responsibilities

There are 10 responsibilities underpinning MARAM. The responsibilities are shared across the service system to support consistent and collaborative practice.

- **Responsibility 1:** Respectful, sensitive, and safe engagement
- **Responsibility 2:** Identification of family violence
- **Responsibility 3:** Intermediate risk assessment
- **Responsibility 4:** Intermediate risk management
- **Responsibility 5:** Seek consultation for comprehensive risk assessment, risk management and referrals
- **Responsibility 6:** Contribute to information sharing with other services (as authorised by legislation)
- **Responsibility 7:** Comprehensive risk assessment
- **Responsibility 8:** Comprehensive risk management and safety planning
- **Responsibility 9:** Contribute to coordinated risk management
- **Responsibility 10:** Collaborate for ongoing risk assessment and risk management

All organisational leaders in Framework organisations are required to understand the roles and responsibilities of professionals and services within their organisation. Identifying and mapping these roles within and across the organisation will support a shared understanding of these.

Shared responsibilities will assist professionals and services to work together to identify, assess and manage family violence risk through information sharing, secondary consultation, and referral.

Responsibilities 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 10 as outlined above apply to **all** relevant professionals and services within prescribed organisations and designated level *Intermediate*.

Some professionals also have a role in risk assessment and management at either the *intermediate* (Responsibilities 3 and 4) or *comprehensive* (Responsibilities 7 and 8) levels.

The Information Sharing Schemes

The Information Sharing Schemes (the Schemes) were introduced in response to Royal Commissions, coronial inquests and independent inquiries over the past decade that identified poor information sharing as a barrier to service collaboration with detrimental outcomes for children and families. The Information Sharing Schemes enable Information Sharing Entities to access and share relevant information to promote the wellbeing or safety of children or to assess or manage family violence risk.

The **Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)** and the **Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)** are the two key Information Sharing Schemes of the Reforms.

- FVISS enables Information Sharing Entities to share relevant information to assess or manage risk of family violence.
- CISS enables Information Sharing Entities to share relevant information about any person to promote the wellbeing or safety of children or a group of children.

The Schemes expand legal permissions to support professionals who work with children, families, victim survivors and people using violence and help to create a more collaborative, integrated system to improve safety and wellbeing outcomes.

What is an Information Sharing Entity?

An Information Sharing Entity (ISE) is an organisation or service that has been prescribed in legislation to request and share information under the Reforms. Only services and organisations that are prescribed as ISEs can share information under the FVISS and/or CISS.

The Prescribing Regulations prescribe different ISEs which have obligations to deliver specific services or functions within the relevant legislation. There are three ways to be prescribed:

- As a MARAM Framework Organisation
- As a FVISS ISE
- As a CISS ISE

Your organisation or service may be prescribed to all three or only be prescribed to one or two (i.e., MARAM and FVISS only or FVISS and CISS only). Based on the number of prescriptions your organisation or service has, there may be a different definition for your service functions under each prescription. For example:

- *Child and Family Services are prescribed as a MARAM Framework Organisation, a FVISS ISE, and a CISS ISE. These prescriptions describe Child and Family Services as 'a community-based child and family service within the meaning of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, to the extent that it performs the functions of a community-based child and family services'.*

- Child and Family Services as a **MARAM Framework Organisation** are prescribed under the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* and [Schedule 3 of the Family Violence Protection \(Information Sharing and Risk Management\) Regulations 2018](#) (p. 28).
- Child and Family Services as a **FVISS ISE** are prescribed under *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* and [Schedule 1 of the Family Violence Protection \(Information Sharing and Risk Management\) Regulations 2018](#) (p. 16).
- Child and Family Services as a **CISS ISE** are prescribed under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* and [Schedule 1 of the Child Wellbeing and Safety \(Information Sharing\) Regulations 2017](#) (p. 11).

What is a Risk Assessment Entity?

Risk Assessment Entities (RAEs) are a subset of specialist ISEs which have the responsibility to establish and assess the level of risk. As such, information can only be shared (by request or proactively) with RAEs for a family violence assessment purpose.

RAEs can request and receive information for a family violence assessment purpose. Only RAEs can request information for a family violence assessment purpose.

RAEs can be specialist family violence organisations, services and/or programs are equipped with the specialist knowledge and expertise to conduct thorough risk assessment and management. and Child Protection, Child FIRST, The Orange Door and Victoria Police are also RAEs.

Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme

The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) enables prescribed organisations and services to share information to assess and manage family violence risk to children and adults. FVISS assists organisations and services to manage victim survivor safety and hold people using violence in view and accountable for their actions and behaviours.

Who can share information?

Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) are authorised to share information with other ISEs. These ISEs are prescribed by regulations.

Who can I share information with?

Information can be shared with any organisation that is a prescribed ISE. For further information, see the [online ISE list](#). Some ISEs are also prescribed as Risk Assessment Entities (RAEs) that can request information for a family violence assessment purpose.

Whose information can be shared?

- Information can be shared about any person, if it is relevant to assessing or managing family violence risk.
- Consent is not required from any person to share information that is relevant to assessing or managing family violence risk to a child, if there is a serious risk to *any* person or if sharing is permitted by another law.
- If none of the above apply, consent is required to share the information of an adult victim survivor, including a student over 18 years of age, or a third party.
- You should seek and take into account the views of the child and/or family member before sharing their information, whenever safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so. Consent is never required to share information about a perpetrator, alleged perpetrator or adolescent using or at risk of using family violence.

Why can I share?

ISEs can share information for two purposes:

- To establish and assess family violence risk (family violence assessment purpose).
- To manage family violence risk, including via ongoing assessment.

All ISEs can share information for a management purpose. Only ISEs that are also prescribed as RAEs can request information for a family violence assessment purpose. All ISEs can share proactively with RAEs for a family violence assessment purpose.

What information can be shared?

ISEs may only share information that is relevant to assessing or managing family violence risk.

What information cannot be shared?

- ISEs must not share [excluded information](#).
- ISEs cannot share information that would contravene another law that has not been specifically overridden by FVISS.
- ISEs cannot share information if the applicable consent requirements have not been met. For example, where consent is refused or withdrawn NO information can be shared unless:
 - The information is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare.
 - Sharing is necessary to assess or manage family violence of a child victim survivor.
 - Sharing the information is required or authorised by another law.

When can information be shared?

- ISEs can **share information** relevant to a family violence **assessment purpose** with RAEs. For example, this occurs when the primary focus is on establishing whether a risk of family violence is present, assessing the level of risk the person suspected of using violence poses to the victim survivor, and correctly identifying the parties as the person using violence or victim survivor.
- ISEs can proactively **share information** for a family violence **management purpose** with other ISEs, including RAEs.
- It is important for professionals to be aware that risk is dynamic and can change over time, information can be shared for the purposes of **ongoing** risk assessment to monitor risk and escalation, as a key component of risk management.
- ISEs can **request information** for a family violence **management purpose** from other ISEs, including RAEs. For example, any ISE can request and share information from other ISEs to inform ongoing risk management and safety plans with the victim survivor.

- ISEs must respond to information requests from other ISEs and RAEs by providing relevant information.

How should information be shared or requested?

- Information can be shared or requested either verbally or in writing, which includes a standard form or report, email or other forms of electronic communication.
- Some services may have data security standards which inform their preferred method of communication.
- You must meet all [record keeping requirements](#).

Child Information Sharing Scheme

The Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) enables prescribed organisations to share information to promote the wellbeing and or safety of a child or a group of children. Sharing information under CISS can contribute to wrap around support services through integrated service provision to children facing disadvantage. CISS can also be used to promote early identification of needs and risks and implementing, support making prompt and effective interventions to improve outcomes for children and families.

Who can share and request information?

Professionals in information sharing roles prescribed under CISS can share information under the Scheme if the requirements of the three-part threshold are met.

ISEs are legally obliged to respond to a request from another ISE.

ISEs may also request information and proactively share information that meets the threshold.

Who can I share information with?

Information can be shared with any organisation that is a prescribed under CISS For further information, see the [online ISE list](#).

You can share information with a child, a person with parental responsibility¹ for the child, or a person with whom the child is living, for the more limited purpose of managing a risk to the child's safety.

Whose information can be shared?

If the three-part threshold is met, you may share information about any person. Information that can be shared is broad and may include:

- Professional judgements
- Plans and assessments
- Information obtained from other sources

- Historical information

The legislation provides strict guidelines for sharing, and protects all information shared.

You should seek and consider the views of the child and/or their family members before sharing their information, whenever safe, reasonable, and appropriate to do so.

However, there may be instances where the sharing of information is urgent, and it is not possible or safe to speak to the child/family first.

Why can I share?

ISEs can share any information for the purpose of promoting the wellbeing and safety of children as long as the requirements for sharing are met. The requirements are set out in the three-part threshold test.

Threshold Part 1: Promoting child wellbeing or safety

- An ISE can request or share information about any person for the purpose of promoting the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children.

Threshold Part 2: Sharing to assist another ISE

- The disclosing ISE must reasonably believe that sharing the information may assist the receiving ISE to carry out one or more of the following activities:

¹ Parental responsibility means all the duties, powers, responsibilities, and authority that parents have, by law, in relation to their children.

- Make a decision, an assessment or a plan relating to a child or group of children.
- Initiate or conduct an investigation relating to a child or group of children.
- Provide a service for a child or group of children.
- Manage any risk to a child or group of children.

Threshold Part 3: No excluded information

- ISEs must not share any information that is [excluded information](#).

What information can I share?

You can share confidential information about any person, including sensitive, personal and health information. For example, this may include case notes, observations, assessments, contact details, service engagement history, and any other information relevant to promoting the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children.

What information cannot be shared?

- You should not share information that does not meet the three-part threshold test. For example, you should not share irrelevant parts of a case file or health record.
- You must not share information that is restricted from sharing by another law.

When can information be shared?

- Information can be shared or requested any time that the threshold is met.
- You can **proactively share** information when, in your professional judgement, the threshold is met.
- You **must share** information in **response to a request** when, in your professional judgement, the threshold is met.
- You should respond to requests for information in a timely manner, including when you are declining the request.

How should information be shared or requested?

- Information can be shared or requested either verbally or in writing, which includes a standard form or report, email or other forms of electronic communication.
- Some services may have data security standards which inform their preferred method of communication.
- You must meet all [record keeping requirements](#).

Helpful Resources for Information Sharing

There are a range of online guides and templates to assist with implementing the information sharing schemes, which can be found [here](#).

Information Sharing Schemes

- Video: [Information Sharing](#)
- Fact Sheet: [Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme](#)
- Fact Sheet: [How to Use the Schemes together](#)
- [Information Sharing Entities \(ISE\) Online List](#)
- [A Guide on How to Share Information](#)
- Information Sheet: [Working collaboratively with other professionals to improve the wellbeing and safety of common clients, especially children, young people and their families](#) (CFECFW)
- [Tips for conversations with children and/or parents/carers about the Information Sharing Schemes](#)
- Case Study: [Coordinated Responses – Using MARAM, FVISS and CISS to Support Collaboration](#)
- Case Study: [Coordination Responses – Continuing to Strengthen Collaborative Practice](#)
- Case Study: [Snapshot of Good Practice – Putting the Information Sharing Schemes into Action](#)

Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)

- [Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines](#)
- [Child Information Sharing Scheme Summary](#)
- [CISS Example Record Keeping Form](#) (direct .docx download)
- Case Study: [Requesting Information Under CISS](#)
- Case Study: [Responding to Requests under CISS](#)
- Case Study: [Highlighting the application of the Child Information Sharing Scheme \(CISS\)](#)
- [Child Information Sharing Tool for ACCOs](#) (VACYPA)

Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes (FVISS)

- [Family Violence Information Sharing Guidelines](#)
- [Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme Overview Diagram](#)
- [FVISS Example Record Keeping Form](#) (direct .docx download)
- Information Sheet: [How to Request Information under FVISS](#)
- Fact Sheet: [The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme \(FVISS\)](#) (AMES Australia, JewishCare, & Whittlesea Community Connections)

Training

There are a range of self-paced, virtual, and face-to-face training options available depending on the level of MARAM responsibility you hold in your organisation.

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) offers a range of learning options on MARAMIS for prescribed Child and Family Services organisations tailored to different roles and workforces.

You can find more information about learning options via the Victorian Government '[Training for the information sharing and MARAM reforms webpage](#)'.

Additionally, the Centre has developed three resources to assist in navigating the current MARAM training options available.

1. [MARAM Training Summary](#) – The training summary outlines accessible training relating to MARAM and the Information Sharing Schemes, as well as providing an overview of the relevant training for all workers prescribed in MARAM framework organisations or within Information Sharing Entities (ISEs).
2. [MARAM Training Map](#) – This map is a high-level summary of the mandatory MARAM training the professionals must complete (as relevant – depending on level of responsibilities and alignment).
3. [MARAM Training Mapping Tool \(Example & Template\)](#) – A supporting document to assist managers responsible for implementing activities to progress their organisations alignment and implementation of MARAMIS to determine which MARAM training is most relevant for specific roles within their organisation. The roles listed serve only as a guide, and it is encouraged that organisations fill in the table themselves to map out roles, responsibilities, training, as well as any other relevant information. A template is provided for organisations to complete based on the example.

Additional Resources

Victorian Government Resources

[Family Violence Reform Homepage](#) – Support service details, resources for the family violence workforce as well as news, plans and progress of the reform.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) – This resource from the Victorian Government provides detailed information and responses to common questions from Information Sharing Entities about CISS, FVISS and MARAM.

[MARAM and Information Sharing Quarterly Newsletters](#) – Family Safety Victoria's MARAMIS quarterly newsletters provide the latest news and information about key projects, resources and training on the MARAM and Information Sharing reforms.

[Family Safety Victoria Updates](#) – Sign up to receive to stay up to date with what's happening across government and the family violence sector, and opportunities to get involved.

Information Sharing Enquiry Line:

Email: infosharing@familysafety.vic.gov.au

Phone: 1800 549 646

Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Resources

[MARAM and Information Sharing Resource Hub](#) – [The Centre](#) has created a collection of resources to support the implementation of the MARAM framework and Information Sharing Schemes. These resources are intended to increase knowledge, confidence and capacity among child and family services, and allied sectors, to work collaboratively and effectively with children and their families.

Glossary – Terms and Abbreviations

The language and definitions used in this guide are consistent with the MARAM Framework. To access an overview of definitions used, follow the link below:

[Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework Definitions](#)

MARAM alignment is defined by FSV as “actions taken by Framework organisations to effectively incorporate the four pillars of the Framework into existing policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools, as appropriate to the roles and functions of the prescribed entity and its place in the service system.”

MARAMIS: MARAM (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment & Management Framework) + Information Sharing Schemes

CISS: Child Information Sharing Scheme

FVISS: Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme

ISE: Information Sharing Entity

RAE: Risk Assessment Entity

Framework organisations: Organisations required to align with the MARAM Framework.

Prescribed organisations: Organisations and services prescribed to share information under the FVISS and the CISS.

Section 191 agencies: An agency with which a public service body or public entity enters into or renews a State contract or other contract or agreement in accordance with section 191; and which provides services under that contract or agreement relevant to family violence risk assessment or family violence risk management.