

MARAMIS Practice 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 will provide you with important information about regarding the resources available to you in order to effectively embed the MARAM Framework into your practice. The guide outlines relevant information from the practice guides, training, and tools.

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.

Putting MARAM and the Information Sharing Schemes into Practice

Practice Resources

The MARAM Practice Guides support professionals to understand their relevant responsibilities under the MARAM Framework relating to the identification, assessment and ongoing management of family violence risk as it relates to their specific roles.



The Foundation Knowledge Guide

The Foundation Knowledge Guide provides professionals and services with information about the key elements of the MARAM Framework, as well as additional foundational knowledge to guide all professionals.

Professionals should be familiar with this introductory and supporting information prior to engaging with the subsequent Practice Guides.



Victim Survivor Practice Guides

This Victim Survivor Practice Guides provides guidance for professionals working with child or adult victim survivors.

The guides reflect each of the ten responsibilities of practice set out in the MARAM Framework, and supports professionals in understanding their responsibilities under MARAM towards the identification, assessment and ongoing management of family violence.



Adult Using Family Violence Practice Guides

This Adult Using Family Violence Practice Guides provides guidance for professionals working with adults using family violence.

The guides supports professionals in ensuring that victim survivor safety is the key consideration when working directly with people who use violence to address their risk and needs.

Please Note: The MARAM Framework and Practice Guides will be evaluated and updated as the evidence base evolves.

There is some overlap in content between the victim survivor and adults using family violence guides as many of the same principles and practice concepts apply to working with both victim survivors and people who use violence. Each guide gives detailed advice on how to ensure your practice aligns with your organisation's MARAM framework responsibilities.



The Foundation Knowledge Guide

The Foundation Knowledge Guide is for all practitioners who use the MARAM Framework. It focusses on the legislative context, roles and interactions within the service system, risk factors, key concepts for practice, and an overview of the gendered lens and drivers of family violence and presentations of risk across different age groups and Aboriginal and diverse communities.

MARAM Principles

The MARAM framework is based on the belief 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 for the professionals involved to follow. To help achieve a shared understanding, there are [10 Framework Principles](#) to support each Pillar and help guide Victoria’s family violence system-wide response.

MARAM Pillars

The MARAM Framework is structured through [4 Pillars](#) that aim to establish a system-wide approach and shared responsibility for family violence risk assessment and management. Each Pillar has its own objective. The Pillars are set at the **organisational** level and are designed to build knowledge, skill and support the effectiveness and integration of the system-wide response to family violence in Victoria.

Practitioners working across Child and Family Services need to be aware of all Pillars and how they inform their practice when working with children, young people and their families.

MARAM Responsibilities

The MARAM Framework (as outlined by Pillar 3 of the framework) contains 10 Responsibilities of practice for professionals. The MARAM Practice Guides detail how professionals implement the Responsibilities in their role.

- Responsibilities 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 10 as outlined below apply to **all** relevant professionals and services within prescribed organisations.
- 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.
- Most Child and Family Services organisations must align with Responsibilities 1-6 and 9-10. Additionally, some, but not all, services or roles will also need to align with Responsibilities 7-8 (specialist family violence focused services/programs with comprehensive risk assessment and management responsibilities).

Responsibility		Working with Victim Survivors	Working with Adults Using Family Violence
1	Respectful, sensitive, and safe engagement	Understand the nature and dynamics of family violence, facilitate an appropriate, accessible, culturally responsive environment for safe disclosure of information by victim survivor service users, and respond to disclosures sensitively.	Recognise that any engagement of service users who may be a perpetrator must occur safely and not collude or respond to coercive behaviours.
2	Identification of family violence	Use information gained through engagement with service users and other providers to identify indicators of family violence risk and potentially affected family members.	Understand when it might be safe to ask questions of service users who may be a perpetrator, to assist with identification.
3	Intermediate risk assessment	Competently and confidently conduct intermediate risk assessment of adult and child victim survivors using	Competently and confidently contribute to risk assessment with a perpetrator, including using

		Structured Professional Judgement and appropriate tools, including the Brief and Intermediate Assessment tools.	Structured Professional Judgement and the Intermediate Assessment, and contribute to keeping them in view and accountable for their actions and behaviours.
4	Intermediate risk management	Actively address immediate risk and safety concerns relating to adult and child victim survivors, and undertake intermediate risk management, including safety planning.	If/when working directly with perpetrators attempt intermediate risk management when safe to do so, including safety planning.
5	Seek consultation for comprehensive risk assessment, risk management and referrals	Seek internal supervision and further consult with family violence specialists to collaborate on risk assessment and risk management for adult and child victim survivors and perpetrators, and make active referrals for comprehensive specialist responses, if appropriate.	
6	Contribute to information sharing with other services	Proactively share information relevant to the assessment and management of family violence risk and respond to requests to share information from other information sharing entities under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, privacy law or other legislative authorisation.	
7	Comprehensive assessment	Staff in specialist family violence positions are trained to undertake Comprehensive assessment of risks, needs and protective factors for adult and children victim survivors.	Staff who specialise in working with perpetrators are trained and equipped to undertake Comprehensive risk and needs assessment to determine seriousness of risk of the perpetrator, tailored intervention and support options, and contribute to keeping them in view and accountable for their actions and behaviours.
8	Comprehensive risk management and safety planning	Staff in specialist family violence positions are trained to undertake comprehensive risk management through development, monitoring and actioning of safety plans (including ongoing risk assessment), in partnership with the adult or child victim survivor and support agencies.	Staff who specialise in working with perpetrators are trained to undertake comprehensive risk management through development, monitoring and actioning of risk management plans; monitoring across the service system; and actions to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.
9	Contribute to coordinate risk management	Contribute to coordinated risk management, as part of integrated, multidisciplinary and multiagency approaches, including information sharing, referrals, action planning, coordination of responses and collaborative action acquittal.	
10	Collaborate for ongoing risk assessment and risk management	Staff are equipped to play an ongoing role in collaboratively monitoring, assessing and managing risk over time to identify changes in assessed level of risk and ensure risk management and safety plans are responsive to changed circumstances, including escalation. Ensure safety plans are enacted.	

Key Concepts for Practice

Structured Professional Judgement

Structured Professional Judgement is defined in MARAM as a professional determination of level of risk, considering:

- A victim's self-assessed level of risk, safety and fear.
- Assessment against evidence-based risk factors.
- Information sharing to inform assessment.
- Professional judgement, using an intersectional analysis lens.

To learn more please see [Section 10.1 of the MARAM Foundation Knowledge Guide \(p. 35\)](#).



Person-Centred Approaches

Engaging with Victim Survivors Through a 'Person-Centred' Approach

Using a person-centred approach can help professionals understand the profound impact violence has on adult and child victim survivors. This approach gives the person space to describe the violence they have experienced, allowing the professional to sensitively identify presenting and cumulative risk and trauma.

Part of a person-centred approach is ensuring that adequate, transparent information is provided. For all victim survivors, approaches should be responsive to a person's abilities and capacity to communicate so that they can make informed choices and provide input into the risk assessment and management process.

Engaging with Perpetrators Through a 'Person in Their Context' Approach

A 'person in their context' approach uses aspects of person-centred practice with perpetrators. This approach considers the person using violence's presenting needs, history and experiences, risk, strengths and environmental contexts or circumstances that contribute to their use of violence.

Situating the 'person in their context' is an important starting point for professional's engagement with people they know, or suspect are using family violence. This contextual information informs professional judgement, assists professionals to identify the person's needs, as well as those of adult and child victim survivors, and contributes to risk management activities.

To learn more please see [Section 10.2 of the MARAM Foundation Knowledge Guide \(p. 37\)](#).

Intersectionality

MARAMIS uses an intersectional lens throughout its tools and practice guidance as a core part of risk assessment. It assists practitioners to recognise how victim survivors uniquely experience family violence and barriers to family violence service responses. It focuses on intersecting factors such as identity, systemic oppression, structural inequality, and discrimination. This can influence how the victim survivor:

- Talks about and understand their experience of family violence or recognise that what they have experienced is a form of family violence.
- Understands their options or decisions relating to what the 10 responsibilities for prescribed services to access based on actual or perceived barriers.
- Describes and/or, there are differently impacted by their experience of family violence, and violence generally.

To learn more please see [Section 10.3 of the MARAM Foundation Knowledge Guide \(p. 40\)](#).

Trauma and Violence-Informed Practice

Having a trauma-informed lens is essential when engaging in family violence risk assessment and management. Key practice considerations include the following:

- Everyone experiences some level of trauma from family violence
- Trauma affects each person differently

Trauma and violence informed practice considers 'the intersecting impacts of systemic and interpersonal violence and structural inequities on a person's life'. This includes taking an intersectional view to highlight current and historical experiences of violence so that problems are not seen as exclusively originating within the person, but these aspects of their life experience are viewed as adaptations and predictable consequences of trauma and violence.

To learn more please see [Section 10.4 of the MARAM Foundation Knowledge Guide \(p. 43\)](#).

Safe, Non-Collusive Practice

Invitations to collude occur when the adult using family violence seeks out the professional to agree with, reinforce or affirm their narrative about their use of violence, the victim survivors or their situation. When taken up by professionals, this practice colludes with the adult using family violence's attempts to avoid responsibility for their use of violence.

Collusion takes many forms. Professionals collude by demonstrating compliant collusion (agreement) or through oppositional confrontation (reprimand or arguing with them). If a professional believes a person may be using violence and/or seeking your collusion with their use of violence, apply the principles of reflective practice and consult with your colleagues or consult with a specialist family violence service.

To learn more please see [Section 10.5 of the MARAM Foundation Knowledge Guide \(p. 47\)](#).

Reflective Practice and Unconscious Bias

Bias might cause professionals to make judgements and assumptions about a person's particular experiences of family violence, their level of risk, or create or fail to address existing barriers in their engagement with clients.

Practitioners should engage in reflective practice by considering how their own cultural norms and practice might manifest as conscious and unconscious biases affect decisions, engagement with clients and approaches to Structured Professional Judgement.

To learn more please see [Section 10.6 of the MARAM Foundation Knowledge Guide \(p. 48\)](#).

Risk Management

Risk management should focus on the safety of victim survivors and actions that keep perpetrators in view and hold them accountable for their behaviours. All risk management is based on risk assessment. It responds to the level of risk caused by the perpetrator's use of violence and coercive control, including patterns and forms of violence that may target a victim survivor's identity or experience of structural inequality, barriers or discrimination. Risk management strategies may include:

- Safety planning
- Information sharing as risk management

All prescribed organisations have some role in risk management matched to their responsibilities under the MARAM Framework. The risk management actions that a professional or service should take to reduce or prevent the family violence risk behaviours of a perpetrator will vary according to roles and responsibilities.

To learn more please see [Section 10.7 of the MARAM Foundation Knowledge Guide \(p. 51\)](#).



Adult and Child Victim Survivor Practice Guide

The MARAM Victim Survivor Practice Guide can be found [here](#).

Introduction to the MARAM Victim Survivor Practice Guides and Tools

Risk assessment and management of children is an essential component of case management and forms a key component of MARAM. MARAM provides the 'how to' for professionals to identify, assess and manage family violence risk. The Information Sharing Schemes are key enablers to the MARAM Framework – this means that relevant information can now be shared using FVISS or CISS to support the identification, assessment, or management of family violence risk (or in the case of CISS to promote the wellbeing and safety of children).

There are several MARAM tools available that directly support the assessment and management of risk for infants, children, and young people. Intermediate level professionals may use the Intermediate risk assessment and management tools, while Comprehensive level professionals may use the Comprehensive assessment and comprehensive risk management and safety planning tool.

For the purpose of this Practice Overview Guide, this resource will highlight the practice guidance and tools that apply to all Child and Family Services roles. Responsibilities 3, 4, 7 and 8 may apply to some roles in Child and Family Services.

MARAM Victim Survivor Responsibilities

[Responsibility 1](#): Respectful, sensitive and safe engagement

[Responsibility 2](#): Identification of family violence risk

[Responsibility 3](#): Intermediate Risk Assessment

[Responsibility 4](#): Intermediate Risk Management

[Responsibility 5](#): Secondary consultation and referral, including for comprehensive family violence assessment and management response

[Responsibility 6](#): Contribute to information sharing with other services (as authorised by legislation)

[Responsibility 7](#): Comprehensive Risk Assessment (Specialist Family Violence Services only)

[Responsibility 8](#): Comprehensive Risk Management and Safety Planning (Specialist Family Violence Services only)

[Responsibility 9](#): Contribute to coordinated risk management

[Responsibility 10](#): Family Violence: Collaborate for ongoing risk assessment and risk management

MARAM Victim Survivor Tools and Template

Please note: MARAM tools and templates should only be used after reading the relevant practice guidance developed by Family Safety Victoria (FSV).

Screening and Identification Tool

About this tool: This tool supports professionals to form their professional judgement about how to respond to family violence. It is used to identify if family violence is occurring, the victim survivor's level of fear for themselves or another person, and to identify the adult using violence.

The questions contained within the MARAM Screening and Identification tool can assist you to undertake this role. The outcome of the tool will guide you as to what to do next, including whether immediate action, further assessment and/or risk management are required.

Child Victim Survivor Assessment Tool¹

About this tool: The tool outlines questions to be asked to child victim survivors in order to assess risk. The questions are divided into two sections; questions appropriate to ask children, and questions appropriate to ask the parent/caregiver.

Safety Plans

About this template: The MARAM Victim Survivor Safety Plan includes a template to help risk manage individual risk factors, identify interventions, assign actions, and coordinate and/or collaborate with other professionals and services.

Brief and Intermediate Assessment Tool

The purpose of these tools is to identify the range of family violence behaviours being experienced by asking questions based on risk factors, to consider the information gained through the assessment and apply Structured Professional Judgement to determine the level of risk, and to under the level of risk at a point in time or changes in risk over time.

Brief Assessment Tool

About this tool: The Brief Assessment Tool includes high-risk factors (increased likelihood of the victim survivor being killed or nearly killed) only. It is used for time-critical interventions only. However, it can be used to inform a full intermediate assessment later or when the situation allows.

Intermediate Assessment Tool

About this tool: The Intermediate Assessment Tool includes questions about a broader range of evidence-based risk factors experienced by adults and questions about risk to children.

Practice Considerations When Working With Children and Young People

Directly or Indirectly Assessing Risk for a Child or Young Person

When using this tool it should be assessed if it is safe, appropriate, and reasonable to do so considering the child's age and development, and their ability to understand the question. It is recommended that professionals use their professional judgement to decide and people who use violence. Each guide gives detailed advice on how to frame the questions in an age-appropriate manner.

- **Infants and Younger Children (0 -5)** – If infants are suspected at being at risk from family violence, a full intermediate assessment of the adult victim survivor and the child must be done. The assessment should be conducted indirectly by asking questions with the parent/caregiver who is not using violence.
- **Older Children and Young People (6 -18)** – An older child may be assessed directly, if appropriate, safe, and reasonable to do so. For young people aged 15-18 years, considering their age and developmental stage and circumstances, it may be appropriate to ask adult-focused questions in the Intermediate Assessment Tool.

To assist your decision-making on how to assess risk for a child or young person, consider:

- Creating opportunity for a child's personal agency and voice to be heard.
- Individually assess their experience of risk.
- Wherever possible, collaborate with a parent/carer who is not a person who is using violence.
- Reinforcing that responsibility is with the person who is using violence.

Approaches to Assessing Risk Directly with Children or Young People

When assessing children, it is important to remember that they will have their own unique experiences of family violence and its impacts. Your assessment must focus on the risk and needs of the children or young people, above all else. Considerations for children must be appropriate to their developmental stage and circumstances and should include:

- Obtaining and listening to their own views of their needs, safety, and wellbeing.
- Observing and understanding their current functioning at home, school and in other relevant environments.
- Obtaining and listening to their views on their relationships with family members and peers.
- Obtaining and listening to their views on their relationship with the perpetrator.
- Understanding their relationship with other people experiencing family violence in the family or household, particularly if it is their mother.
- Learning of their sense of cultural safety, where relevant.
- Understanding their level of support available to them if they are a child with a disability.
- Understanding their developmental history, including experiences of family violence or other types of abuse or neglect.

Safety Planning for a Child or Young Person

Safety plans should be tailored to circumstances and needs of all people in the family. Infants, children, and young people may have differing safety and wellbeing needs and need their own individual safety plan.

Safety plans for children might include providing them with instructions and contact numbers to get help safely and quickly, identifying trusted people in the child's network who can help them (and ensuring they have the phone numbers of those trusted people), technological safety¹, and identifying services that the child might like to access for ongoing support.

¹ Technological safety might include changing passwords and usernames, checking smartphone settings, and using a safer computer or device. For more information around technological safety and safety planning for victim survivors, please visit the [Safety Net Project](#).

- **Infants and Younger Children (0-5)** – Every child required an individualised safety plan, however, it can be linked to or contained within the adult victim survivor or caregiver’s plan, as infants or young children are reliant on the adult to enact the safety plan.
- **Older Children and Young people (6-18)** – The child or young person’s age and developmental stage will influence the level of involvement they have. They should be included in the development of their own safety plan wherever possible, including to reflect their views and wishes.

The working with adult people using family violence MARAM Practice Guide can be found [here](#).

Introduction to the MARAM Adults Who Use Violence Tools

Professionals across the service may come into contact with people such as a parent or carer who they suspect or know may be using family violence. As such, they have a role in keeping adults who use violence engaged, in view of services, contributing to accountability for their use of family violence and supporting them to change their behaviour – whether directly or indirectly.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence identified opportunities for a broader range of professionals and sectors to play a role in the integrated family violence system and support identification, risk assessment and management of people who use violence. Working with people using violence can support professionals and the service system to keep victim survivors safe from violence. Identifying, assessing, and managing family violence risk are crucial elements of a broad robust approach to perpetrator accountability.

There are several MARAM tools available that directly support keeping people who use violence in view and accountable for their behaviour. Intermediate level professionals may use the Intermediate risk assessment and management tools, while Comprehensive level professionals may use the Comprehensive assessment and comprehensive risk management and safety planning tool.

Your professional and sector role will determine your level of responsibility in relation to perpetrators, and guidance and tools are provided in the adults who use violence-focused MARAM Practice Guide.

For the purpose of this Practice Overview Guide, this resource will highlight the tools relevant to most Child and Family Services roles and responsibilities (Responsibilities 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 10 as below apply to **all** relevant professionals and services within prescribed organisations, while some roles will also align to Responsibilities 3 and 4).

MARAM Adults Who Use Violence Responsibilities

[Responsibility 1](#): Respectful, sensitive, and safe engagement

[Responsibility 2](#): Identification of family violence risk

[Responsibility 3](#): Intermediate Risk Assessment

[Responsibility 4](#): Intermediate Risk Management

[Responsibility 5](#): Secondary consultation and referral, including for comprehensive family violence assessment and management response

[Responsibility 6](#): Contribute to information sharing with other services (as authorised by legislation)

Responsibility 7: Direct distribution to specialist workforces. Not to be released online.

Responsibility 8: Direct distribution to specialist workforces. Not to be released online.

[Responsibility 9](#): Contribute to coordinated risk management

[Responsibility 10](#): Family Violence: Collaborate for ongoing risk assessment and risk management

MARAM Adult Persons Using Family Violence Tools and Templates

Please note: MARAM tools and templates should only be used after reading the relevant practice guidance developed by Family Safety Victoria (FSV).

Identification Tool for Adults Who Use Violence

About this tool: The Identification Tool for people who use violence includes narratives and behaviours that might be observed in the context of family violence. This tool is split into three sections:

- **Section 1:** Identifying narratives or behaviours linked to use of family violence. Observations may also be from a direct disclosure of using family violence behaviours.
- **Section 2:** Identifying the person's presenting needs and circumstances that may contribute to risk behaviours or act as protective factors. Please note that protective factors alone do not reduce risk, however, if present can help to promote stabilisation and mitigate change or escalation of risk behaviours.
- **Section 3:** This sections allows professionals to record whether risk is indicated at present and/or if immediate intervention is required (for adult or child victim survivors, the adult using violence themselves, or their community).

Intermediate Risk Assessment Tool for Adults Who Use Violence

About this tool: This tool helps professionals identify and assess the person's use of violence and its impact on children, their parenting role, and co-parenting relationships. It also considers the person's motivations and capacity for change in relation to their parenting role, prioritising the safety, wellbeing and needs of children and young people.

Intermediate Risk Management

Risk management and safety planning are separate activities when working with people using family violence.

- The Intermediate Risk Management Plan is for professionals only and is not to be accessed by the adult using violence.
- The Intermediate Safety Plan can be developed with and given to the adult using violence so they can refer to it.

Intermediate Risk Management Plan

About this template: This template should be completed by professionals in collaboration with other services to determine and coordinate actions to reduce risk from the adult using violence to adult and child victim survivors. It can be used to record strategies already in place and actions required to manage risk. It can also be used to record presenting needs and circumstances that require stabilisation and any protective factors requiring strengthening.

Intermediate Safety Plan

About this template: This template is designed to outline strategies the adult using violence can implement to reduce the risk associated with their behaviours, unaddressed needs and circumstances and enhance emotional and behaviour regulation. This template also focuses on stabilising the person and strengthening their protective factors, managing events which may increase risk, and safety for self if suicide or mental health responses are needed.

Practice Considerations when Engaging with Adults Who Use Violence

Prioritising the Safety of Victim Survivors

Victim survivor safety must be the core focus when engaging with a person using family violence. Adult victim survivors are the best judges of the risks they face, and it's likely they will have already taken steps to manage the risk both to them and their children. Professionals must also consider how they keep the children's lived experience as a victim survivor of family violence central to their risk management planning and decision-making process. Prioritising victim survivor safety can look like undertaking the following actions:

- Where possible, appropriate and safe to do so, professionals can engage directly with the adult victim survivor, or else other professionals or services, or the specialist family violence services working with them (if known), to identify and understand existing risk management plans and strategies.
- 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.

Keeping Children in View when Conducting Safety and/or Risk Management Plans

- When children are 'not in the room', maintain their safety as the priority. Keep the focus on use of violence as a parenting choice to promote behavioural change.
- Through any person's narrative about their use of violence, ensure you are considering those who are affected and impacted by the violence.
- Assessment and planning processes should include questions about individual children and parenting.
- Be specific in language, such as speaking about 'fathers who use violence' (rather than 'people' or 'men' who use violence) for those with children.
- Challenge responses around children 'not seeing or hearing anything' as to how children can still be exposed to the impacts of family violence.

Collusion

Collusion occurs when professionals, organisations and the service system act in ways that reinforce, support, excuse or minimise a person's use of family violence and its impacts.

It reduces the professionals and the service system's capacity to keep the adult using violence engaged, in view and accountable for their behaviour and to keep victim survivors safe.

Key practices to balance safe and respectful engagement while minimising the risk of collusion:

- Keeping the victim survivor's experience and the effects of violence as the central concern.
- Being alert to the potential of implicitly or explicitly endorsing violence-supporting narrative or behaviours of the adult using violence.
- Intentionally listening, taking an invitational but objectively analytical approach.
- Avoiding confrontation with the adult using violence. This helps to reinforce help-seeking behaviours and model non-confrontational problem solving.

Ongoing Risk Assessment and Management

Keeping the adult using violence in view means that professionals across the service system are maintaining a proactive and active awareness of their family violence risk and behaviour.

This includes any change or escalation of family violence risk, as well as the presence of or need to reinforce protective or stabilising factors related to their presenting needs and other circumstances.

Practice Considerations:

- Reach out through secondary consultation to other professionals who may hold risk-relevant information so you can respond to change or escalation of risk or to access specialist expertise to support understanding and management of risk and safety.
- Proactively share risk-relevant information.
- Understand which interventions, at what time, are the most appropriate for the adult using violence, and their affected family members.
- The key to determining seriousness of risk is to understand how risk changes or escalates over time.
- No change or no reported change can also indicate risk.

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.

Networks

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.