

Exercise

Private or Public

AVERT
FAMILY VIOLENCE



**Collaborative Responses in
the Family Law System**



An Australian Government Initiative

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Contact us

Inquiries regarding the licence and any use of this resource are welcome at:

Assistant Secretary

Family Law Branch

Attorney-General's Department

3-5 National Circuit

Barton ACT 2600

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Private or Public Exercise

Purpose:

- To promote discussion about what is considered private and what is considered public in relation to families
- To promote an awareness of the changing notions of what is public and private, influenced by social norms
- To consider how a public or private approach influences the experience of family violence for those concerned.

Materials required:

- Set of cards for each small group
- A3 sheet for each small group, divided into two columns: Private and Public.

Process:

1. Ask participants to work in small groups of 4 – 7 members. Give each group a set of private or public cards and an A3 sheet. Ask them to debate each card and place it, as agreed, on either the private or public side of the sheet. Give groups about 15 – 20 minutes to do this.
2. When every group has completed this, ask a representative from each group to identify what they think is public and what is private. Ask each group to report back.
3. Notice what cards are placed differently for each group. For instance, some people may say suicide is a public issue, whereas others may say it is private. Ask people to explain their reasons for classifying things as private or public. If by some chance all the groups come up with the same division of public and private, ask them if this division would have been the same 50 years ago, or 100 years ago. What if this exercise was being done with more diverse cultural groups in the room? In what ways would the change in time or culture impact on our distinction between private and public?
4. Ask:
 - What difference does it make if something is considered public or private?
 - How does this influence our response to family violence?
 - How does this influence the experience for the victim, perpetrator and children involved?



Key things to draw out of the discussion:

- Public and private issues are socially constructed/are informed by social norms
- Community values shape what is considered public or private
- Public issues imply public responsibility and public acknowledgement
- Private issues imply individual responsibility and secrecy
- A public gaze and public opinion has an impact on the experience of family violence for those concerned.



Private or Public Cards

Birth

Death

Family success

Divorce

Family debt

Mental health



Illegitimacy

Suicide

Unemployment

Sexual behaviour

Child abuse

Domestic violence



Religious beliefs

Political affiliation

**Conflict between family
members**

Punishment practices

Health status such as HIV

Hygiene



Nudity

Disability

Cultural heritage

Assets and money