

Training Session Plan

Risk Assessment
Two-Day Program

AVERT
FAMILY VIOLENCE



**Collaborative Responses in
the Family Law System**



An Australian Government Initiative

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Training Session Plan – Risk Assessment

Program Title: Family Violence Screening and Risk Assessment

Program Length: Two days

Intended Participants: Professionals working within the Family Court System, or related roles.

Purpose of the Program:

This two-day program draws attention to core issues for risk assessment and safety planning. In applying the knowledge and skills developed during this training, practitioners should also be aware of diversity issues and in particular the need for culturally responsive approaches. The assumed safety of locations, living situations and practices must be negotiated with victims of violence so that cultural issues are taken into account. This will ensure families are not placed at increased risk through a ‘one size fits all’ response.

Program Learning Outcomes:

- Understanding of key risk factors for those experiencing family violence
- Ability to conduct screening and risk assessment
- Ability to conduct safety planning
- Understanding of issues for engaging perpetrators
- Knowledge of referral pathways

Pre-Course Activities:

Ensure participants receive:

- Pre-Course Evaluation* form
- Pre-reading for day one: AVERT Discussion Paper: *Dimensions, Dynamics and Impact of Family Violence*

Room Setting and Equipment: It is recommended that this program be run with a group size no bigger than 25 and the tables should be arranged in “Cabaret” style allowing participants to work in small groups. Equipment necessary for the program includes:

- Video projection
- Whiteboard



Facilitator Preparation:

The AVERT Family Violence Training Package is a multi-disciplinary training package that will be delivered to different professions with different skill sets. Facilitators should tailor the package for their particular audience and context. The package has been constructed with an assumption that an experienced trainer from within relevant professional groups will deliver the training.

Prior to delivering the program, it is essential for the facilitator to view all the video resources and read all the papers that are indicated for use in the session plans. These are listed for quick review at the end of this document and are located on the website under For Trainers/ Resources/ By Type. It is also recommended that facilitators practice any of the activities that are unfamiliar to them. This will assist in having a thorough understanding of the materials and being well prepared to answer any questions that participants may raise. This preparation also provides an opportunity for the facilitator to clarify any hesitations or queries they may have with any aspect of the training. Family violence can be an emotional and controversial topic in many groups. Practicing ways of responding to anticipated reactions will assist in the creation of a quality education experience.

When tailoring a package for a particular audience, facilitators may need to prepare some of their own PowerPoints and Handouts, drawn from the facilitator notes and general materials. A template PowerPoint and Fact Sheet is provided for this purpose on the website under Resources/ By Type/ Learning Materials.

Named fact sheets, discussion papers and resources for training exercises are all provided and can be found on the website under the program title. Points to emphasise are indicated in the session plans as well as in the detailed outline of training exercises.

All exercises, fact sheets, PowerPoints, discussion papers and course evaluation forms can be found on the website under Resources/ By Type.

Program timing in the session plan is a rough estimate and is based on a group of between 20 – 25 participants. However, the level of participation of each group necessarily impacts the amount of time that each activity will take. It is envisaged that each facilitator will know which exercises need to be curtailed if the program is running over time.

In many cases various sections of the Video Resources have been broken up into chapters (e.g. Scenarios; Overview of Family Law system). The appropriate chapters for specific exercises within the training programs are indicated as required. Chapters are listed under Resources/ By Type on the website. Click on the chapter required to start viewing.



Handouts for the Program:

A folder of additional reading can be provided for each participant containing the following AVERT Papers:

- Legal Frameworks*
- Responding to Diversity*
- Screening, Risk Assessment and Safety Planning*
- Prevention Strategies: Involving and Engaging Perpetrators*
- Multidisciplinary Collaboration and Integrated Responses to Family Violence*

The folder should also contain:

- Pre-Course And Post-Course Evaluation forms*



DAY ONE

TIME	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE & FACILITATOR NOTES	RESOURCES REQUIRED
45 min	<p>Introductions and Welcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledgement of Indigenous custodians of the local area. <input type="checkbox"/> Introduction of facilitator and outline of purpose of the training, using the <i>Risk Assessment Learning Outcomes</i> PowerPoint <input type="checkbox"/> ‘Housekeeping’ and timeframe details <input type="checkbox"/> Ask participants to introduce themselves and share what they hope to get from the program <input type="checkbox"/> Show <i>Alice’s Bailey</i> Opinion Piece <p>Emphasise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The dynamics of violence and abuse involve emotional and psychological abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Safety is the key focus for screening and risk assessment 	<p>Opinion Piece: <i>Alice Bailey</i> on DVD 3</p> <p>PowerPoint: <i>Risk Assessment Learning Outcomes</i></p> <p><i>Pre-Course Evaluation</i> forms</p>
45 min	<p>Indicators of Family Violence – Assessing Risk</p> <p>This activity is designed to support participants to look for the combination of factors that present risk and enables the facilitator to point out the use of power and coercive control.</p> <p>Conduct the <i>Risk Assessment</i> Exercise following the detailed facilitator notes.</p>	<p>Exercise: <i>Risk Assessment</i></p> <p>Sets of <i>Risk Factor Cards</i> for each small group (from <i>Risk Assessment</i> Exercise)</p> <p><i>Risk Assessment Scales Handout</i> for each participant (from <i>Risk Assessment</i> Exercise)</p>
30 min	<p>Screening and Risk Assessment Discussion Panel</p> <p>Ask the participants to brainstorm the reasons why the family law system is increasingly expecting workers to conduct screening and risk assessment processes.</p> <p>Watch <i>Screening, Risk Assessment and Safety Planning</i> Expert Discussion</p>	<p>Expert Discussion Panel: <i>Screening, Risk Assessment and Safety Planning</i> on DVD 4</p> <p>Refer to AVERT Papers: <i>Screening, Risk Assessment and Safety Planning and Prevention Strategies</i></p>



TIME	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE & FACILITATOR NOTES	RESOURCES REQUIRED
	<p>Emphasise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Increasing numbers of separating couples use the family law system. A substantial proportion of these separating parents have issues relating to violence, safety concerns, mental health, and alcohol and drugs.<input type="checkbox"/> Relationship separation itself marks an increase in risk and intensification of violence.<input type="checkbox"/> Accessing family dispute resolution, child contact or family court services, may also exacerbate risk for victims due to enforced contact or proximity, or be a flashpoint for a violent episode.<input type="checkbox"/> Family law service providers meet clients at a time of increased risk and therefore family violence is a central concern.	
15 min	Break	
30 min	<p>Risk Factors</p> <p>Present the <i>Risk Factors</i> PowerPoint</p> <p>Emphasise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Risk factors are not the same as causal factors and therefore cannot be seen as direct links. False positives and false negatives are highly likely.<input type="checkbox"/> Nonetheless identification of risk factors needs to be used to draw our attention and prompt us to look closely	<p>PowerPoint: <i>Risk Factors</i></p> <p>Refer to AVERT Paper: <i>Screening, Risk Assessment and Safety Planning</i></p>
60 min	<p>Scenario - Tony and Jessica's Story</p> <p>In <i>Tony and Jessica's Story</i> watch Chapters 1 to 3 stopping at <i>What are the risk factors?</i></p> <p>Ask participants to individually use the risk assessment scales form to assess Tony and Jessica's risk factors.</p> <p>In small groups discuss and compare assessments – what questions do participants have about safety in this scenario?</p>	<p>Scenario: <i>Tony and Jessica's Story</i> on DVD 2</p> <p>A copy of the <i>Risk Assessment Scales</i> form for each participant (from <i>Risk Assessment Exercise</i>)</p>



TIME	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE & FACILITATOR NOTES	RESOURCES REQUIRED
	<p>Share assessments and questions in the large group.</p> <p>Highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> The length of time the dispute has been going on<input type="checkbox"/> Tony's isolation<input type="checkbox"/> How worn down Jessica appears to be<input type="checkbox"/> Tony's focus on Jessica rather than the children<input type="checkbox"/> Tony's capacity to monitor and find out about Jessica's life <p>Watch Chapter 4 and 5 of <i>Tony and Jessica's Story</i> and pause.</p> <p>Ask participants to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> If and how they would safety plan with Jessica?<input type="checkbox"/> What would be the impact on the process of family dispute resolution if they attempt to safety plan with Jessica?<input type="checkbox"/> How would you respond to Tony and what supports would you put in place for him?	
45 min	Lunch	
60 min	<p>Watch Chapter 6 of <i>Tony and Jessica's Scenario</i> – 'Supervision'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> How did the supervision provided by Mergho to Kate align with what you thought should be done? <p>Watch Chapter 7 of <i>Tony and Jessica's Scenario</i> – 'Safety Planning'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> What were the key themes taken up by Kate with Jessica? <p>Watch the Professional Commentary by <i>Dr Peter Furze</i> and <i>Alice Bailey</i></p> <p>Discuss the commentary as a large group and summarise significant themes for good practice in screening, risk assessment and safety planning.</p>	<p>Scenario: <i>Tony and Jessica's Story</i> on DVD 2</p> <p>Professional Commentary: <i>Dr Peter Furze</i> and <i>Alice Bailey</i> on DVD 2</p>



TIME	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE & FACILITATOR NOTES	RESOURCES REQUIRED
45 min	<p>Safety Planning Vanessa’s Testimonial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Divide participants into small groups of 5-7 people. <input type="checkbox"/> Show <i>Vanessa’s Testimonial</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Ask the small groups to consider – what are the key components of a safety plan and list these. Then, devise a safety plan for Vanessa. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask participants to share their safety plan with the large group. <input type="checkbox"/> Key components should include for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Connection to supportive people ■ Sharing information with key professionals such as the school, a counselor, police etc ■ Physical security measures ■ Quick access to emergency telephone and relevant numbers ■ Legal advice 	<p>Testimonial: <i>Vanessa</i> on DVD 5</p>
15 min	<p>Break</p>	
60 min	<p>Indigenous Considerations</p> <p>The purpose of this section is to generate consideration of the need for culturally effective responses to Indigenous families who experience family violence.</p> <p>In identifying and responding to risk and setting up safety plans for Indigenous victims there are multiple factors that intersect with violence that must be considered.</p> <p>Facilitator note: It is essential to read the ‘Indigenous Issues’ section of the <i>Responding to Diversity</i> Paper, before leading this segment and be well informed of the relevant research. Care should be taken to make clear that family violence is part of <i>all</i> cultures and not to generate a stereotypical view of Indigenous communities.</p> <p>Indigenous voices are integral to this part of the program through the use of the Indigenous Expert Discussion and/or Indigenous Opinion Pieces. The facilitator may wish to replace or supplement this with an Indigenous guest speaker.</p>	<p>Refer to AVERT Paper: <i>Responding to Diversity</i></p> <p>Factsheet: <i>Culture and Respect in Indigenous Communities</i></p> <p>Expert Discussion Panel: <i>Responding to Indigenous Community Needs</i> on DVD 4</p> <p>Opinion Pieces: <i>Antoinette Braybrook</i> and <i>Stephen Ralph</i> on DVD 3</p>



TIME	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE & FACILITATOR NOTES	RESOURCES REQUIRED
	<p>Introduce this section by drawing attention to the high risk of family violence and compounded disadvantage faced by Indigenous families in accessing the Family Law System. (Morgan & Chadwick 2009, Bartels 2010, Jennings & Cunningham 2006 – See references at the end of this program).</p> <p>Show one or more of the Expert Discussion: <i>Responding to Indigenous Community Needs</i> and Opinion Pieces by <i>Antoinette Braybrook</i> and <i>Stephen Ralph</i></p> <p>In small groups discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> What issues stand out for you in these presentations?<input type="checkbox"/> What considerations would practitioners need to take into account to respond effectively to Indigenous cultural issues?<input type="checkbox"/> What might be some hazards or dilemmas in responding to Indigenous families? <p>Ask groups to share their thoughts with the whole group. The facilitator can record points on the whiteboard and engage in clarification and exploration of the issues.</p> <p>Emphasise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> The complexity of interconnecting issues such as poverty; poor health; substance use etc...<input type="checkbox"/> The need for an holistic response that addresses these multiple factors, including whole of family issues<input type="checkbox"/> Subsequent to the complexity and co-occurrence of issues, the need for a high priority on collaboration and networked responses<input type="checkbox"/> Consideration of community and broader family engagement in creating responses tailored to individual's needs<input type="checkbox"/> Stolen generations as a significant issue in creating fear and lack of trust in legal systems<input type="checkbox"/> The special needs of the Indigenous workers in the field who are themselves close to the issues. It is particularly important to listen to these workers' recommendations for culturally appropriate ways of responding to family violence in their own communities.	



TIME	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE & FACILITATOR NOTES	RESOURCES REQUIRED
15 min	Closing Activity Invite participants to report to the whole group in a 'round', something from the day that they will share with others.	



Day Two

TIME	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE & FACILITATOR NOTES	RESOURCES REQUIRED
20 min	<p>Welcome and review.</p> <p>Ask participants to each name something they learnt or a question that has arisen for them from yesterday.</p> <p>Use this round to re-iterate the important key messages from the day and respond to any clarifications.</p>	
30 min	<p>Indicators of Family Violence – Power and Control</p> <p>What do we mean when we say family violence is about power?</p> <p>Invite comments and questions from the group.</p> <p>Follow the detailed facilitator notes to conduct the <i>Defining Violence Exercise</i>.</p> <p>Emphasise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Family violence is not relationship conflict<input type="checkbox"/> By far the overwhelming majority of victims of family violence are women. Family violence is situated within a history of gender inequality and male privilege. This context supports male perpetrators to use powerful tactics of control. However, contemporary gender roles are undergoing changes that make the use of violence more available to women<input type="checkbox"/> In order to notice and screen for family violence we must be aware of controlling behaviour and its effects <p>Highlight that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Family Violence only relatively recently became a public issue. For many centuries it has been a private issue. Consequently our legal and social definitions of violence are still emerging and are not yet consolidated<input type="checkbox"/> The individual experience of violence and its particular impact shapes individual definitions.	<p>Exercise: <i>Defining Violence</i></p> <p><i>Defining Violence Cards</i>. One set for each group (from <i>Defining Violence Exercise sheet</i>)</p>



TIME	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE & FACILITATOR NOTES	RESOURCES REQUIRED
60 min	<p>Power and Control Continued</p> <p>Facilitator’s note: It is important to note that people who have experienced Family Violence and whose safety may be at risk are not required to attend Family Dispute Resolution. Legal advice should be encouraged so that people can understand the options available to them. It is possible to apply under section 60i(9) of the Family Law Act for an exception so that participation in Family Dispute Resolution is not required where there has been Family Violence or there is a risk of violence. The other option is to attend an intake and assessment interview at a Family Relationship Centre or other Family Dispute Resolution provider to examine whether or not Family Dispute Resolution is appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Explain that participants are going to view a scenario and they are to assume that it is a case in which they will be involved so they will need to watch and take notes carefully.<input type="checkbox"/> Show <i>Gary and Bronwyn’s Story</i> and conduct the <i>Personal Profile</i> Exercise following the detailed facilitator notes.<input type="checkbox"/> Ask the small groups to consider what questions enabled the family dispute resolution practitioner to investigate Gary’s strategies of power and control. <p>Emphasise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Initial, ‘inaugurating’ physical violence at the beginning of the marriage that controlled Bronwyn for many years<input type="checkbox"/> Signs of escalation<input type="checkbox"/> The effects of long term violence on Bronwyn evident in her presentation.	<p>Scenario: <i>Gary and Bronwyn’s Story</i> on DVD 2</p> <p>Exercise: <i>Personal Profile</i></p>
15 min	<p>Break</p>	
30 min	<p>Engaging Perpetrators</p> <p>After watching the previous story, ask participants to discuss in their small groups the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> How realistic do you believe it is that a professional would “collude with a perpetrator” and what does this mean?<input type="checkbox"/> What would be the focus of your work with a perpetrator in order to undermine the potential for collusion?	



TIME	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE & FACILITATOR NOTES	RESOURCES REQUIRED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> What might you do if you were concerned you had colluded, or might collude with a perpetrator?<input type="checkbox"/> What are the implications if we don't discuss professional capacity/vulnerability to collude with perpetrators? <p>Emphasise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> The importance of sharing our questions and deliberations with appropriate colleagues/supervisors<input type="checkbox"/> The benefits of using screening and risk assessment 'tools'. These support professionals to ask direct questions that relate to the research evidence, regarding indicators of violence<input type="checkbox"/> The priority of bringing individual's back to a focus on the children's interests and safety for <i>all</i> family members (remembering that children are affected by witnessing family violence even after separation)	
45 min	<p>Engaging Men who Use Violence</p> <p>Watch <i>Danny Blay's</i> Opinion Piece and ask small groups to discuss the implications of his comments on their engagement with men who use violence.</p> <p>Ask the participants to share their comments with the large group.</p> <p>Emphasise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Accountability practices prioritise the safety of the victim and children and invite the perpetrator to notice and take responsibility for promoting safety<input type="checkbox"/> Accountability is not the same as exclusion or rejection of perpetrators<input type="checkbox"/> Accountability practices actively seek to avoid colluding with the violence while still engaging supportively with the individual concerned<input type="checkbox"/> Accountability practices also aim to help people who have used violence to change their behaviours through greater appreciation of the impact of their actions	<p>Opinion Piece: <i>Danny Blay</i> on DVD 3</p> <p>Refer to AVERT Paper: <i>Prevention Strategies</i></p>



TIME	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE & FACILITATOR NOTES	RESOURCES REQUIRED
	<input type="checkbox"/> Engaging with people who use violence is an important prevention strategy that is active in sharing the responsibility for social change, rather than simply blaming individuals. At the same time, practitioners must ensure that support and engagement are not confused with excusing perpetrators or holding victims responsible for the violent behaviour. This requires clarity from the practitioner.	
45 min	Lunch	
30 min	Circle of Safety Exercise The purpose of this exercise is to identify what facilitates and interrupts a child's attachment and positive development. Refer to the detailed facilitator notes provided. Complete the exercise drawing from participants' own understandings and experience of working with families, ensuring the key points are elicited. Conclude this section by watching <i>Dr Jennifer McIntosh</i> discuss the importance of <i>Screening, Risk Assessment</i> and <i>Safety Planning</i> and the need to clarify parental capacity. Invite participant questions and answers throughout this section.	Exercise: <i>Circle of Safety</i> Set of Circle of Safety Cards for each small group (from <i>Circle of Safety Exercise</i> sheet) Opinion Piece: <i>Dr Jennifer McIntosh – 'Screening, Risk Assessment and Safety Planning'</i> on DVD 3
60 min	Sam's Story Case Study Exercise Explain that this section will further explore risk and safety from a child focused perspective through an analysis of <i>Sam's Story</i> . Divide participants into four small groups. Hand out the case study of Sam's story and allow participants 30 min to read and discuss the themes in their small groups. Ask them to consider: <input type="checkbox"/> What is going on for Sam? <input type="checkbox"/> Drawing on the previous session, what do you notice are the impacts on Sam, of living with family violence? <input type="checkbox"/> What does Sam need in this circumstance? <input type="checkbox"/> What does Danny need?	Exercise: <i>Sam's Story Case Study</i> Expert Discussion Panel: <i>Impact on Children</i> (Dr. Jennifer McIntosh and Prof. Lawrence Moloney) on DVD 4



TIME	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE & FACILITATOR NOTES	RESOURCES REQUIRED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What does Jodi need? <input type="checkbox"/> What would be a child focused response? <input type="checkbox"/> What referral and collaboration options would you draw on to respond to this situation? <input type="checkbox"/> What are the ethical issues in this case study? <input type="checkbox"/> What Indigenous cultural issues might be present and how would they respond? <p>Invite the groups to share their deliberations and draw out a discussion about the worker “breaching” the Contact Order due to a policy of not forcing children to do something they do not wish to do.</p> <p>Emphasise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> It entirely appropriate not to force children to do something they do not wish to do, even with a contact order in place <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration and specialized input is important <input type="checkbox"/> Consideration of the effects upon a child’s ‘circle of safety’ should shape the worker and system response <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging <i>both</i> parents in order to support their parenting capacity and focus on the child, is critical for safety <p>Show <i>Dr Jennifer McIntosh’s and Professor Lawrie Maloney Expert Discussion Impact on Children</i></p> <p>Conclude by inviting responses and emphasising key points from this commentary.</p>	
15 min	Break	
30 min	<p>Referral Pathways Collaboration and Referral Exercise</p> <p>Refer to the detailed facilitator’s notes in the <i>Collaboration and Referral Exercise</i>.</p> <p>This exercise intends to support participants to share knowledge about local resources and how they may collaborate to assist clients’ safe progress through the family court system.</p>	<p>Exercise: <i>Collaboration and Referral</i></p> <p>Refer to the AVERT Paper: <i>Multi-disciplinary Collaboration and Integrated Responses to Family Violence</i></p>



TIME	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE & FACILITATOR NOTES	RESOURCES REQUIRED
	<p>Begin by highlighting the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Pathways through the system need to be defined and more widely understood<input type="checkbox"/> Unclear pathways or lack of adequate coordination between services, lawyers and courts have adverse implications for the wellbeing of children and other family members<input type="checkbox"/> There is an urgent need for greater sharing of information and facilitation of pathways between the various services, agencies and courts that are involved in family violence matters<input type="checkbox"/> Additional services external to the court are important for supporting the success of parenting arrangements and wellbeing of clients<input type="checkbox"/> This requires knowledge of relevant services and confidence to engage with and refer across systems; disciplines; and jurisdictions	<p>A list of appropriate local services and resources as a handout (created by facilitator)</p>
15 min	<p>Opinion Piece: Sam Page</p> <p>Show the Opinion Piece by <i>Sam Page</i> as a concluding statement about the need for collaboration and skills in responding to family violence, within the Family Law System</p>	<p>Opinion Piece: <i>Sam Page</i> on DVD 3</p>
15 min	<p>Closing round and evaluation</p> <p>Invite participants to report to the whole group in a 'round', something from the program that they will share with others.</p> <p>Handout final evaluation forms for completion and collect these before participants depart.</p>	<p><i>Post-Course Evaluation</i> forms</p>