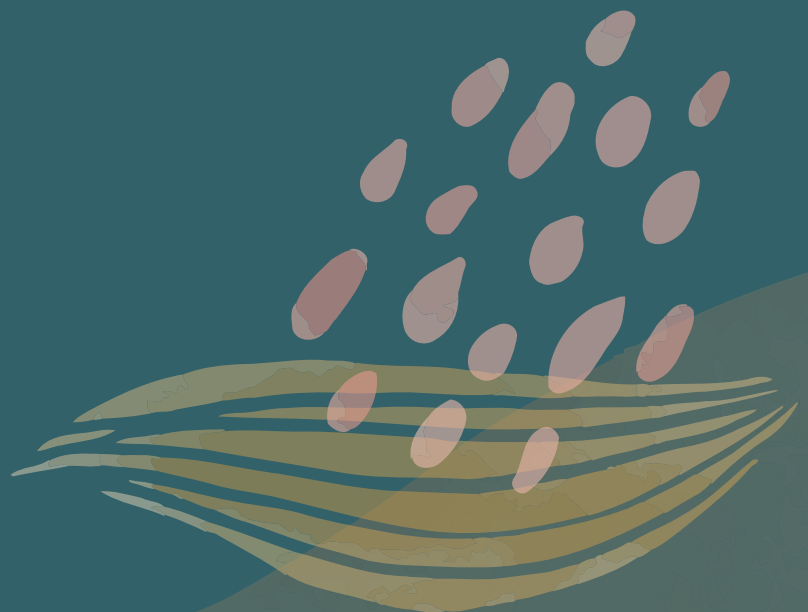


CHO RESPONSE TO DFV – TOOLKIT

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY HOUSING ORGANISATIONS TO IDENTIFY AND RESPOND TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

INTRODUCTION



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INTRODUCTION

Community housing organisations are committed to ensuring that they deliver an effective and sensitive response to any tenants and their dependents who experience domestic and family violence. Community housing organisations are also skilled and experienced in working collaboratively with specialist services and government agencies to deliver the best possible service response for those impacted. Deepening knowledge and understanding of domestic and family violence will support community housing organisations to respond effectively as they continue to deliver quality housing services.

Community housing organisations are committed to ensuring that they deliver an effective and sensitive response to any tenants and their dependants who experience domestic and family violence. CHOs are often on the front line dealing with the fallout of domestic and family violence and have an opportunity to make a significant difference through the implementation of well designed domestic and family violence policies and procedures.

CHOs need to implement approaches to identifying and responding to domestic and family violence that assist a victim-survivor to either remain safely in their own home or relocate to a safe environment. CHOs also need to engage with perpetrators of domestic and family violence in a safe and responsible way.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit has been designed to assist community housing organisations better understand and respond to incidents of domestic and family violence. It has a number of resources that have been designed for community housing organisations to customise and fit within their organisation's practice.

TOOL KIT RESOURCES

- **A policy template** that frames the domestic and family violence response embedded through this toolkit to guide practice across community housing organisations.
- **A number of guidance tools and checklists** to support housing professionals develop consistent service delivery practice across community housing organisations.
- **A tenant resource on domestic and family violence** available as part of the lease sign up. This resource describes the response that can be expected from community housing organisations and provides a range of useful resources for the tenant. By including this resource in a lease sign up kit, it minimises the risk to victim-survivors having such information as all tenants will have it. It also provides an opportunity for early intervention by housing professionals.
- **Guidelines to support safety** when checking in with tenants that community housing organisations are concerned about or suspect are living with domestic and family violence during COVID-19 lockdowns (as we anticipate these will be part of Australian life moving forward)
- **A factsheet on residential tenancy legislation** domestic and family violence provisions by State and Territory
- **A template safety plan** to be utilised for staff victim-survivors.

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This toolkit has been developed for all staff working in community housing organisations, including tenancy management, asset management, corporate services and administration.

KEY TERMS

Aboriginal definition of domestic and family violence	First Nations peoples have advocated for the term ‘family violence’ to be used in conjunction with ‘domestic violence’ in recognition of the violence and abuse that can be used within partnerships, families, extended families, Kinship networks and communities. The term ‘family violence’ describes physical, emotional, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural, psychological and economic abuses that may be perpetrated within a family and community. The term also recognises the broader impacts of colonial violence and racism on First Nations families, intergenerationally, through extended families and Kinship connections and community relationships. ¹
Domestic and Family Violence (domestic and family violence)	Domestic and family violence is inclusive of any behaviour, in an intimate or family relationship, which is violent, threatening, coercive or controlling, causing a person to live in fear. It is usually manifested as part of a pattern of controlling or coercive behaviour. An intimate relationship refers to people who are (or have been) in an intimate partnership whether or not the relationship involves or has involved a sexual relationship, i.e. married or engaged to be married, separated, divorced, de facto partners (whether of the same or different sex), couples promised to each other under cultural or religious tradition, or who are dating. A family relationship has a broader definition and includes people who are related to one another through blood, marriage or de facto partnerships, adoption and fostering relationships, sibling and extended family relationships. It includes the full range of kinship ties in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, extended family relationships, and constructs of family within lesbian, gay, LGBTIQ communities.²

1 The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Task Force on Violence Report, Queensland, 1999, p 114
2 Good Practice Guidelines for the Domestic and Family Violence Sector in NSW, DV NSW

KEY TERMS

Elder abuse	A single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person. Elder abuse can take various forms such as physical, psychological or emotional, sexual and financial abuse. It can also be the result of intentional or unintentional neglect. ³
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer
Perpetrator	The person who commits domestic and family violence. The term perpetrator reinforces the serious nature of domestic, family and sexual violence. The term covers all who commit one or more identified acts of domestic or family violence against a person. ⁴
Perpetrator accountability	The process by which the perpetrator acknowledges and takes responsibility for their choice to use domestic and family violence and works to change their behaviour.
Victim-survivor	The person who has experienced domestic and family violence. This term acknowledges that the person subjected to domestic and family violence is both a victim of a crime as well as a survivor with respect to their autonomy, strength and resilience.
Intersectionality	A theory developed to examine how multiple forms of power, privilege and oppression overlap, or intersect, in people’s lives in mutually reinforcing ways to produce power hierarchies, structural inequalities and systemic marginalisation.

3 World Health Organisation, Toronto Declaration on the Global Prevention of Elder Abuse, 2002
4 National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children 2010 – 2022, Glossary for the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions, p 3