The Northern Territory's

Domestic, Family & Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018–2028

Safe, respected and free from violence

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

"*Tjulpu Wiltja Tjuta*" (bird's nests) is an installation art work made by Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara artists Iluwanti Ken and Mary Katajuku Pan. The artwork was a finalist in the 2017 Telstra National Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander Art Award.

Tjala Arts.

"This is the story of the Patupiri (swallow) who is clever, knowledgeable and skilful. Patupiri builds a safe, strong nest to protect its family against the rain and predators. It uses sticks and branches to build a strong and secure shelter, finding and gathering grass, feathers and mud to make the nest warm and comfortable so that its babies can grow and develop."

Iluwanti Ken and Mary Katajuku Pan

The swallows' nests, like the artists' work expresses our vision and approach for a future where women and children are safe, and families are supported to thrive. This work, like the basket making art across central Australia and Arnhem Land represents what it takes to make this happen. Innovation, cleverness, local knowledge and relationships, ways of sharing information and skills, helping and working together. These are essential if we are to reduce violence so that our homes, communities, workplaces and schools across the Northern Territory are safe, respected and free from violence.

Aboriginal Acknowledgment

The Northern Territory Government proudly acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country and recognises their continuing connection to their lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders both past and present. We also acknowledge the courage and dignity of women and men who not only stand up and say no to violence but who take action to challenge the violence and hold perpetrators accountable.

Please be aware that this document may contain images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have passed away.

If you, or someone you know is in immediate danger call 000 for emergency assistance.

If you have experienced violence or sexual assault and require immediate or ongoing assistance, contact 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) to talk to a counsellor from the National Sexual Assault and Domestic and Family Violence hotline.

Mandatory Reporting of domestic and family violence applies to all persons over 18 years of age in the Northern Territory.

Contents

	Chief Minister and Minister's Foreword	2
	Executive summary	5
1	Introduction	10
2	Understanding domestic, family and sexual violence	12
3	Domestic, family and sexual violence in the Aboriginal community	18
4	Building on what we've achieved	23
5	Principles	26
6	Implementation and next steps	28
	Appendix A : Glossary	30
	Appendix B : End notes	32

Chief Minister and Minister's Foreword

We are proud to present and share with you the *Safe, Respected and Free from Violence Reduction Framework 2018 – 2028*, the Northern Territory's strategy to reduce all forms of domestic, family and sexual violence. The Framework articulates a shared vision and commitment for a future where women and children are safe and families are supported.

Reducing domestic, family and sexual violence requires united action across all parts of society. This must include governments, Aboriginal and community controlled organisations, non-government organisations, culturally diverse communities, sporting groups, faith communities and individuals.

Achieving long term social and cultural change requires concerted and sustained effort through shared responsibility and partnerships. This is why we have committed to a 10 year plan, and to approaches and actions that are accessible and equitable. These will challenge systemic racism and inequality as well as gender inequalities.

The nature and extent of domestic, family and sexual violence in the Northern Territory is distressing. People of all ages and circumstances across the Northern Territory, whether they live in our cities, regional centres or remote communities are affected. Too many women and children's lives are defined by violence and abuse perpetrated against them by close family and or intimate partners.

The problem is complex and challenging. The impact of the violence causes life-long traumas, affecting parenting and the wellbeing and development of children and young people.

We can and we will do better to prevent the violence so that Territorians can thrive and enjoy healthy and respectful relationships.

A shared awareness and understanding of domestic, family and sexual violence is the first step. Working together with local knowledge and relationships, a willingness to try new approaches, and the sharing of information and skills are all essential to reduce violence.

Domestic violence is preventable. With concerted, collaborative, and long term efforts we can reduce domestic, family and sexual violence and give every Territorian the fundamental right of living a life where they are *safe, respected and free from violence*.

Chief Minister, the Honourable Michael Gunner MLA

Minister for Territory Families, the Honourable Dale Wakefield MLA

Executive Summary

Domestic, family and sexual violence is a serious, prevalent and life-threatening problem that crosses all ages, cultural, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Too many women and children in our families and communities know and feel its devastation.

Domestic, family and sexual violence has profound physical, psychological, social and economic effects on victims. These impacts can include serious injury, disability or death, chronic pain and disease, mental health issues, loss of employment, absenteeism and presenteeism, financial insecurity and isolation, and alienation from family and social support.

Witnessing domestic and family violence causes serious, lasting harm to children. It impacts on attitudes to relationships and violence, as well as behavioural, cognitive and emotional functioning, social development, learning and later job prospects.

Exposure to domestic and family violence also increases the risk of a child or young person experiencing other forms of abuse or neglect. We know that for children, exposure to domestic and family violence is highly correlated with child protection reports and may lead to cycles of youth offending.

The burden of domestic, family and sexual violence is disproportionally carried by Aboriginal women and children as victims and Aboriginal men as perpetrators. The victimisation rates for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory are approximately 18 times higher than for non-Aboriginal people. This is significantly higher than in other states.

Yet domestic, family and sexual violence is preventable. This Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework (the framework) seeks to challenge and change the social and cultural attitudes, values and structures that support violence. It represents a long-term commitment to invest in the continuum of prevention and early interventions to break the cycles of family vulnerability, violence and offending. Our vision is for a future where women and children are safe, respected and free, and where young people can exercise consent and engage in respectful and healthy relationships throughout their lifetimes.

The framework is broad and takes a Territory-wide approach that allows for regional variations, complementary agency effort, building on the strategies and initiatives that have worked, and expanding the scope and reach to individuals and communities in need.

Our work aligns with the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children* and integrates with other Northern Territory policies and reform initiatives, especially those targeting children and youth.

The framework will be implemented over the next ten years through a series of three rolling action plans. This flexible approach will ensure that future action plans are responsive to outcomes achieved, new challenges and priorities, emerging evidence, innovation and opportunities.

The First Action Plan – *Action Plan 1: Changing Attitudes, Intervening Earlier and Responding Better 2018-21* – will be developed by Territory Families in 2018. It will set out the key initiatives and actions that we will take in the first three years on the path towards realising this framework's vision and outcomes, how they will be funded and who will deliver them.

We will retain a focus on measuring outcomes to know what success looks like, to make sure we know what service users value, and to learn what works and what doesn't work.

We commit to not only saying no to violence but to challenge and reject the inequality between women and men, as well as other forms of social inequality that contribute to social and cultural environments where violence occurs.

Our vision

Territorians are safe, respected and free from violence wherever they choose to live, work, learn and play

Principles

Women and children's safety and wellbeing is at the centre

Shared responsibility, partnerships and local responses

Evidence and needs-based and outcomes-focused

Accessibility, equity and responsiveness

Focus on long term social and cultural change

Challenging systemic racism and inequality

Shared awareness and understanding of domestic, family and sexual violence

Delivery

The Framework will be implemented through a series of action plans that will move us towards our ten year vision.

Action Plan 1 2018-21

Changing Attitudes, Intervening Earlier and Responding Better 2018-21

Action Plan 2 2022-25

Taking stock, evaluate and review, building on what works

Action Plan 3 2026-28

Sustaining effort and measuring change and success

The outcomes

Outcome One

Domestic, family and sexual violence is prevented and not tolerated

Violence is prevented before it occurs by addressing the factors that lead to or condone violence. There is a strong focus on children and young people and the specific contexts and places where inequalities and violent behaviours are shaped. Respectful relationships and non-violent behaviours are embedded and normalised in our community, wherever we live, learn, work and play.

- 1.1 Educate the community about DFSV and protective behaviours
- 1.2 Develop and implement policies that challenge rigid gender roles, gender inequality, sexism and discrimination
- 1.3 Partner with community, business, sporting and religious leaders to grow the number of organisations that actively reject DFSV and challenge gender inequality
- 1.4 Ensure government policies which address reinforcing factors such as harmful use of alcohol and other drugs support the reduction of violence

Outcome Two

Territorians at risk of experiencing violence are identified early and provided with effective interventions

Early interventions are focused on keeping people vulnerable to violence safe and changing the behaviours of those at higher than average risk of perpetrating violence. Actions are aimed at challenging the impacts of behaviours or building the skills of individuals or communities at risk or where incidents of violence are identified or disclosed.

- 2.1 Focus prevention programs on protective behaviours and healthy, respectful relationships
- 2.2 Conduct research and collate data regarding vulnerable groups
- 2.3 Develop tailored responses for communities at risk of experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence
- 2.4 Build the capacity of universal services and the community to identify and respond to DFSV

Safe, respected and free from violence

Overview

Outcome Three

People experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence are protected and helped to recover and thrive

Victims of domestic, family and sexual violence receive services that provide timely, accessible, person-centred, flexible and appropriate help to meet their immediate safety and recovery needs. A coordinated and integrated system with skilled workers wraps around the victim wherever they live and at any stage of experiencing violence to help them feel supported, connected and free from violence.

- 3.1 Strengthen the systemic response to high risk DFSV cases including the Family Safety Framework
- 3.2 Enable a connected, coordinated and collaborative response that puts the client at the centre
- 3.3 Improve the criminal justice system so that the safety and wellbeing of victims is the first priority and they are not re-traumatised
- 3.4 Build a capable and responsive system and workforce
- 3.5 Ensure when children are exposed to DFSV the response does not further harm the child

Outcome Four

Perpetrators are held accountable and connected early to responses that change their behaviours and reduce violence

Perpetrator accountability is embedded in system preventions and intervention responses that identify domestic, family and sexual violence as part of a pattern of behaviour. Behaviour change interventions are targeted towards high-risk domestic, family and sexual violence offenders and reflect the distinctive social and cultural contexts and drivers in which violence against women occurs in the Territory.

- 4.1 Connect perpetrators to timely, effective and evidence based behaviour change interventions
- 4.2 Ensure behavioural change interventions are effective and reduce reoffending
- 4.3 Refocus the justice system on the rehabilitation and restoration of perpetrators to violence-free families
- 4.4 Empower the community to support perpetrators to end the use of violence

Outcome Five

Legislation, policy and funding models enable a responsive, high quality and accountable domestic, family and sexual violence service system

The system meets the needs of victims and perpetrators through intelligent and efficient design, robust and sustainable legislation, strong and consistent leadership, strong oversight mechanisms and an adequate and competent workforce.

- 5.1 Ensure policy and legislation works toward reducing DFSV
- 5.2 Ensure legislative and policy changes are embedded in agency and organisational policies and practices
- 5.3 Better integrate DFSV services and child protection
- 5.4 Enhance sharing of data, information and intelligence
- 5.5 Prioritise government and non-government sector investment to the greatest needs and return

Priority Actions

Safe, respected and free from violence

What will we do now?

Our vision is a long-term one and realising it will take many years of sustained focus and effort. The first Action Plan (2018-21) will outline the key initiatives and actions in the first phase of the Framework's implementation.

We have also identified a number of areas for immediate action. They will require working across government and in close partnership with the non-government organisations and communities.

Outcome	Priority Actions
1 Domestic, family and sexual violence is prevented and not tolerated	Provide prevention programs to support children and young people exercise consent and engage in healthy and respectful relationships. Develop and implement a sexual violence prevention and response framework and gender equality strategy. Support localised initiatives to promote respectful relationships.
2 Territorians at risk of experiencing violence are identified early and provided with effective interventions	Target and support individuals and groups at risk through multiple pathways including an expansion of outreach services. Broaden the reach and participation in the Family Safety Framework and improve training in universal service agencies to enable them to identify and act on risk.
3 People experiencing DFSV are protected and helped to recover and thrive	Develop an integrated and specialist domestic, family and sexual violence hub in Tennant Creek which will support women and children of the Barkly region to be safe, recover and thrive. Reform the service model for women experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence in remote communities.
4 Perpetrators are held accountable and connected early to responses that change their behaviours & reduce violence	Trial and evaluate a specialist approach to domestic and family violence in the Alice Springs Local Court to improve the safety, experience and outcomes for people affected by domestic, family and sexual violence. Align perpetrator outcomes with National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions.
5 Legislation, policy and funding models enable a responsive, high quality and accountable DFSV service system	Review and reform the *Domestic and Family Violence Act* so that it provides a sound, responsive and accountable foundation for the service system. Develop a model to inform the investment in domestic, family and sexual violence resources. Ensure the Northern Territory Public Sector leads the way for Territory employers on domestic and family violence leave policy, including paid leave. Invest in the sector to improve practice and innovation through the establishment of the inaugural biennial DFSV conference for front-line workers and practitioners.

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1 Introduction

Purpose of this document

This framework represents our ten year strategy to reduce domestic, family and sexual violence. It builds on the achievements of the Northern Territory Government's previous domestic and family violence strategy –*Safety is Everyone's Right.* This new framework – *Safe, Respected and Free from Violence* – reflects our combined efforts, knowledge and ideas to reduce violence and work together to achieve safer homes, communities, workplaces and schools.

Scope and approach of this strategy

The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework (the framework) sets out the Northern Territory's vision for a future where people are safe, respected and free from violence wherever they choose to live, work, learn and play. Domestic, family and sexual violence is a serious, prevalent and life-threatening problem that crosses all ages, cultural, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Too many women and children in our families and communities know and feel its devastation. Developed in partnership with non-government and community-based experts, the framework supports a long-term commitment and comprehensive approach to the prevention and reduction of domestic, family and sexual violence.

The Framework is broad and takes a Territory-wide approach that allows for regional variations, complementary agency effort, building on the strategies and initiatives that have worked, and expanding the scope and reach to individuals and communities in need. Our work aligns with the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children.*

The Framework also integrates with relevant Northern Territory policies and reform initiatives, especially those targeting children and youth.

Consistent with the World Health Organisation's approach to violence prevention, the Framework recognises that the process of change for a future where people are safe, respected and free from domestic, family and sexual violence will require a strong focus in prevention and early intervention infrastructures and programs, as well as sustained investment and improvements in formal response and recovery services.

Effective and robust prevention and early intervention strategies will counterintuitively increase the need for the presence of integrated and coordinated formal response services in the short (1-5 years) to medium-term (5-10 years).

This framework and associated rolling action plans will focus on measuring outcomes to know what success looks like, to make sure we know what service users value, and to learn what works and what doesn't work.

We commit to not only saying no to violence but to challenge and reject the inequality between women and men, as well as other forms of social inequality that contribute to social and cultural environments where violence occurs.

What do we mean by domestic, family and sexual violence?

Domestic violence (DV) is typically used to refer to acts of violence that occur between people who have or once had an intimate relationship. The term family violence (FV) describes violence targeted at spouses and partners as well as people in a family relationship, including a relative according to Aboriginal tradition or contemporary practice. Family violence is often the preferred term used by Aboriginal people and services.

Consistent with the *Domestic and Family Violence Act,* the Framework prefers the term domestic and family violence (DFV). Domestic and family violence is defined as a pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner or family member through fear, for example by using behaviour which is violent and threatening, and to place at risk their immediate and longer-term safety and wellbeing. A combination of tactics and forms of violence are often used to exercise control over women, children and other family members. The violence can take the form of physical, sexual, stalking, emotional or psychological, technology facilitated and financial abuse and it can include criminal and non-criminal behaviour.

Sexual violence can occur in intimate partner and family contexts, in our communities, workplaces, schools and in other circumstances. Sexual violence includes sexual harassment, sexualised bullying, sexual pressure and coercion and sexual assault including rape.

The specific inclusion of sexual violence within the Framework recognises both the significant co-occurrence of domestic and family violence with sexual assault and sexual violence, and the need to improve how the prevention and intervention systems and services respond. Within intimate partner or domestic relationships sexual violence is considered a tactic of DFV, occurring in the context of other forms of violence and part of a pattern of coercive control. A sexual violence prevention and response framework will form an important part of the strategic actions under the Framework.

2
Understanding domestic, family and sexual violence

Understanding domestic, family and sexual violence is difficult. It takes many forms and no two experiences are the same. It occurs in all parts of society and impacts on all levels of our community. The causes and the contributing factors are complex, stemming from social and cultural attitudes and behaviours such as gender inequality as well as other forms of social discrimination.

Domestic, family and sexual violence is widely prevalent in the Northern Territory

Violence is unacceptable and inexcusable, yet rates of domestic, family and sexual violence are high in the Northern Territory. Aboriginal women and children disproportionately bear the brunt of this violence.

The Northern Territory has the highest rates of domestic, family and sexual violence in Australia. Northern Territory Police Officers and emergency service representatives attend to more than 61 incidents on a typical day.[1] With that, at least one child is subjected to domestic and family violence every day of the year in the Northern Territory.

The number of domestic violence incidents reported to police in the Northern Territory has been steadily climbing every year since 2010; however, confirmed domestic and family violence offences have been decreasing. We understand this to be due to individuals feeling safer to come forward and report an incident before an offence occurs.

We know that, while men can be and are victims, the majority of victims of domestic, family and sexual violence are women and the majority of the perpetrators are men. Aboriginal women are significantly overrepresented as DFSV victims.

Gender inequality is the number one driver of the majority of domestic, family and sexual violence

Extensive international and national research into the drivers of violence against women identifies gender as the number one driver or cause. The expressions of gender inequality most commonly linked with higher levels of violence against women are:

- condoning of violence against women
- men's control of decision-making
- limits on women's independence
- rigid gender roles and identities
- male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women.[2]

These gendered drivers of violence arise from discriminatory institutional, social and economic structures, social and cultural norms and values, and organisational, community, family and relationship practices.

Reinforcing factors

Other forms of inequality and social conditions can intersect with gender inequality to increase the frequency or severity of violence against women. We call these reinforcing factors or intersectional drivers. Reinforcing factors do not, on their own, predict violence, but they do play a role. Alcohol and other drugs, socio-economic inequality and discrimination are significant reinforcing factors.

61
incidents
relating to domestic and family violence on a typical day in the Northern Territory

1,730
victims
of domestic and family violence related offences per 100,000 people in the Northern Territory in 2015. This victimisation rate is about **three times** higher than any other jurisdiction

4
homicides
relating to domestic and family violence per 100,000 people in the Northern Territory in 2015, which is the highest of any jurisdiction

Domestic, family and sexual violence takes on many forms.

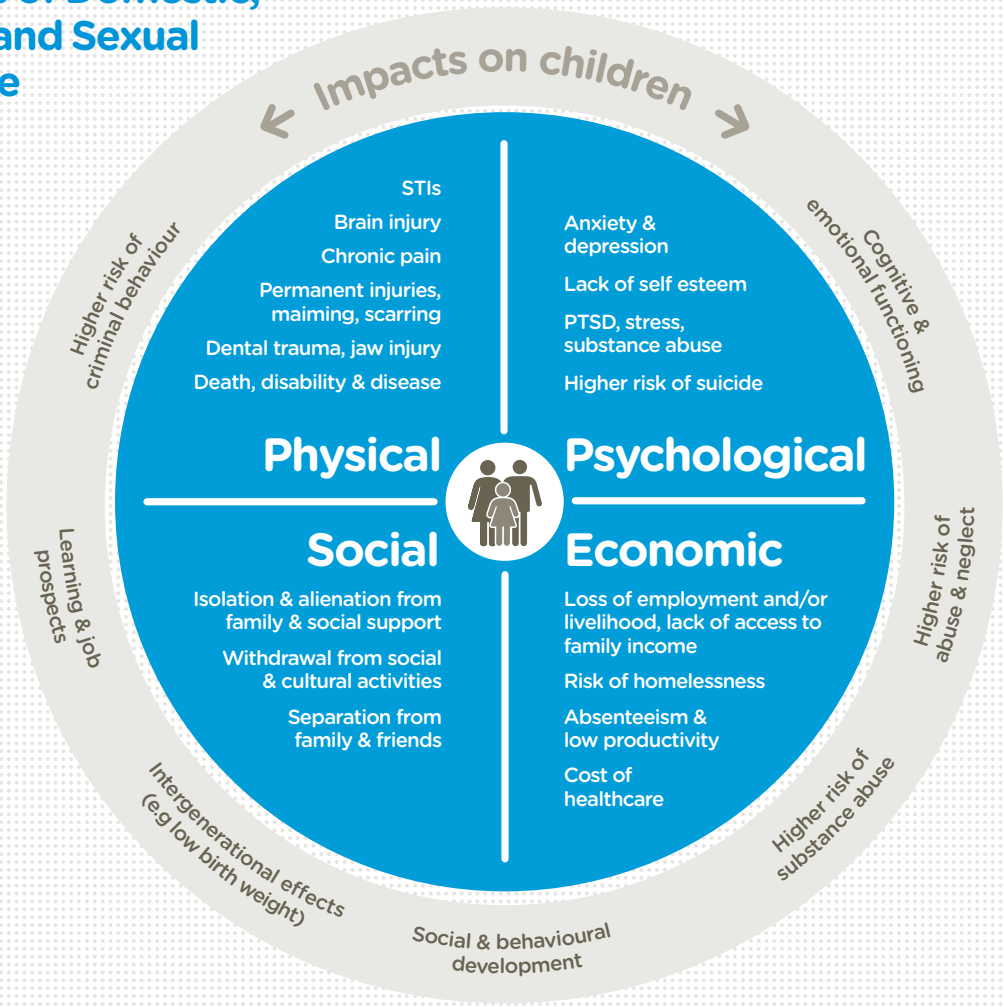
No two experiences are the same.

18x
higher
compared to non-Aboriginal people, the victimisation rate for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory is 18 times higher

164
sexual assaults
per 100,000 people in the Northern Territory in 2015, which is almost 50% higher than the next highest jurisdiction

Source: NT Police (2017); ABS (2017), 4510.0 Recorded Crime – Victims, 2014-16.

Impacts of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence



Alcohol is not sufficient in itself to predict violence, but alcohol abuse increases the probability, frequency and severity of violence

Women consistently report that coercive and controlling violence occurs whether their partners are drunk or sober. However, in the context of power imbalances and attitudes that normalise violence, the harmful use of alcohol and/or drugs increases the risk of DFSV.

Per-capita alcohol consumption in the NT is one and a half times higher than the Australian average, with alcohol consumption rates for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people higher than the national average in every age category.[3]

Alcohol is a feature in a large number of police call-outs to family violence, and is correlated with a higher number of, and more severe, incidents of violence against women.

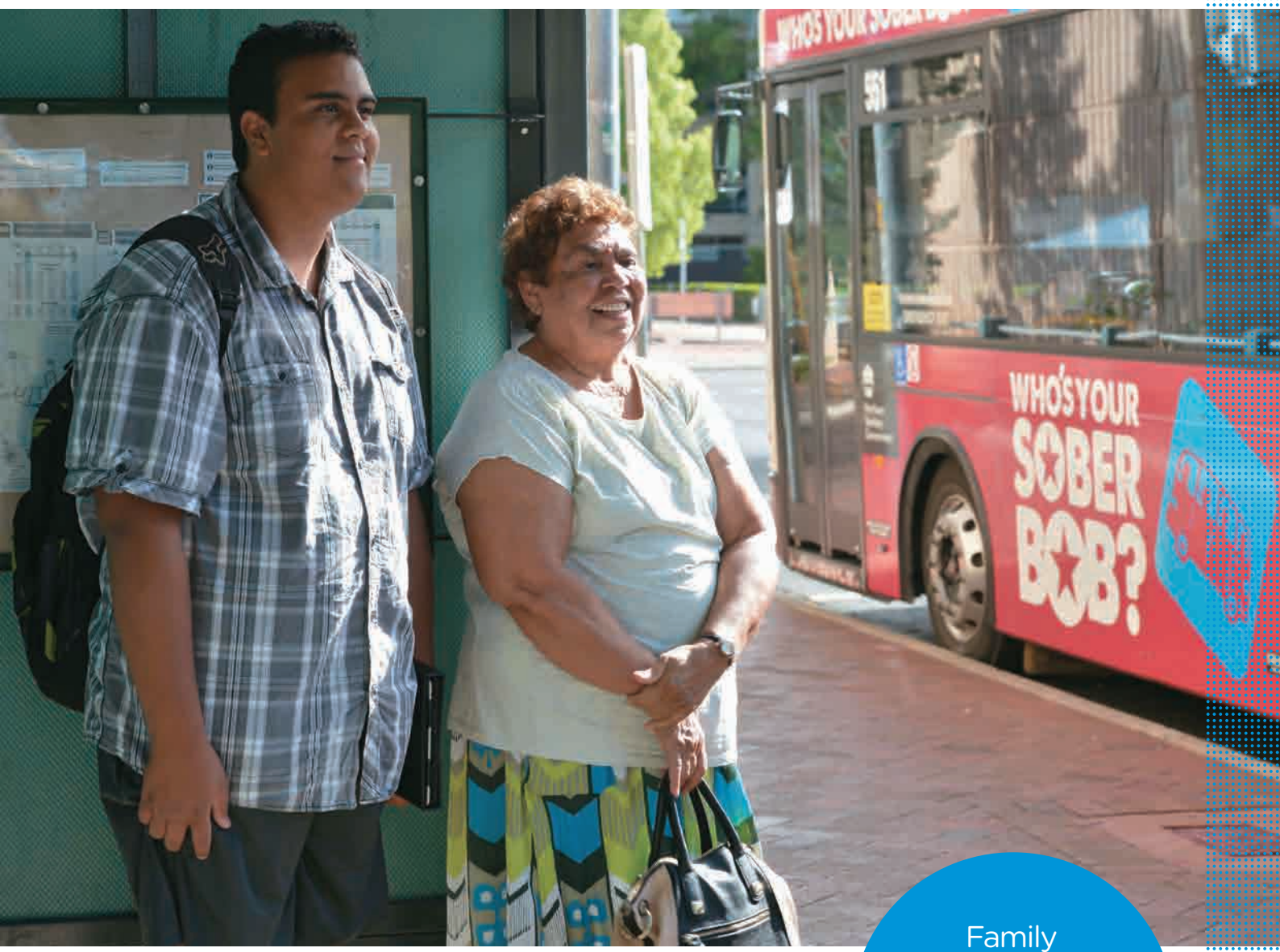
Socio-economic inequality and discrimination

Rates of violence can be high among groups experiencing other forms of discrimination and social inequality, including those based on race and ethnicity, sexuality and gender, age, social class, disability and social and geographical location.

In the Northern Territory those at a higher risk of experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence include:

- Aboriginal women
- women in regional and remote communities
- people with disabilities
- people experiencing mental health problems
- elderly people
- women and children from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Because gender inequality and other forms of inequality and social conditions are interrelated, preventing violence requires mutually reinforcing approaches at the population, community, institutional and individual levels.



Family violence and elder abuse both cause harm to our seniors.

Homelessness and domestic, family and sexual violence

Across all regions of the Northern Territory, domestic and family violence was cited as the main reason for seeking homelessness services in 2015-16.[4] Of those clients accessing Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) who disclosed they were a victim of DFV, 76 per cent were Aboriginal women and girls.[5]

Violence in other familial relationships

The drivers of family violence for those in same-sex relationships and transgender and gender diverse people are less understood than the determinants of 'violence against women'. This framework recognises the need to grow our understanding in this area, as well as other less reported or less common manifestations of family violence such as sibling violence, child-on-parent violence, elder abuse and violence against men.

The devastating effects of domestic, family and sexual violence

Domestic, family and sexual violence has profound physical, psychological, social and economic effects on victims. These impacts can include serious injury, disability or death, chronic pain and disease, mental health issues, loss of employment, absenteeism and presenteeism, financial insecurity and isolation, and alienation from extended family and social support.

The impacts of violence are far reaching, extending to families, friends, co-workers and communities. Violence can have devastating effects on children and young people who witness it or are victims themselves.

Witnessing domestic and family violence causes serious, lasting harm to children. It impacts on attitudes to relationships and violence, as well as behavioural, cognitive and emotional functioning, social development, learning and later job prospects.

Exposure to domestic and family violence also increases the risk of a child or young person experiencing other forms of abuse or neglect.

In the Northern Territory in 2016-17, exposure to domestic and family violence was identified in about half of the substantiated cases of abuse and neglect of children.[6] There is also evidence linking exposure to DFSV to youth offending.

Domestic, family and sexual violence is preventable

Domestic, family and sexual violence is preventable if we work together to address the complex drivers of violence. We can also intervene early to prevent violence from manifesting or escalating by identifying people who are at greater risk of experiencing violence. For those who have already experienced violence, we must hold perpetrators accountable and prevent it from happening again.

Given what we know about the nature and extent of the problem in the Northern Territory, a long-term commitment and clear and consistent messages about respect and equality are required to reduce violence. Through our combined efforts we must bring about broad and specific social and cultural change.

We need to create a society in which domestic, family and sexual violence is no longer normalised, where young people understand and can exercise consent and respect throughout their lifetime of relationships, and our society and communities are safe, respected and free from violence and gender inequalities.

We need to create a society in which...

...domestic, family and sexual violence is no longer normalised...

...young people understand and can exercise consent and respect throughout their lifetime of relationships...

...and our society and communities are safe, respected and free from violence and gender inequalities.

3
Domestic, family and sexual violence in Aboriginal communities

Aboriginal people and communities across the Northern Territory have consistently identified the problem and enormous impact of domestic, family and sexual violence on their lives and wellbeing. Although the burden of domestic, family and sexual violence in Aboriginal communities is disproportionally carried by women and children as victims and men as perpetrators, women also use violence within intimate and other relationships.

Aboriginal women in the Northern Territory are recorded as having the highest rates of victimisation in the world.

Family violence impacts on Aboriginal people at vastly disproportionate rates and has devastating effects on Aboriginal communities in the Territory. Nine out of ten victims of family and domestic violence related assaults in the Northern Territory are Aboriginal.

Aboriginal women in the Northern Territory are among the most victimised by intimate partners in the world.[7] For many young Aboriginal women and girls their early relationship experiences are characterised by coercive and controlling behaviour enforced with violence, non-consensual sex, fear and isolation.[9] Rigid gender identities that drive or contribute to the perpetration of violence are learnt from a young age and overlap with other social, emotional and cultural inequalities.

In remote and very remote areas, Aboriginal men and women are hospitalised for assault at a much greater rate than non-Aboriginal people. The rate of hospitalisation of Aboriginal women for assault is also higher.[10]

Normalisation of violence

Too many women and children's lived experiences within their communities are defined by violence and abuse perpetrated against them by close family and intimate partners. In many communities and families violence has become entrenched and normalised as an everyday part of community and family life. This can also lead to a reluctance to disclose and report violence.

Domestic, family and sexual violence in remote communities

Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council has reported that in their remote cross-border area of operation "there are very few individuals whose lives are not affected by domestic violence, either as direct victims, child witnesses of violence or as family members of victims and users of violence." NPY Women's Council has estimated that Aboriginal women in the region are around 60 times more likely to be victims of domestic homicide than are non-Aboriginal women." [11]

89%

89% of victims of family-and-domestic-violence-related assault in the Northern Territory in 2015 were Aboriginal.

Source: ABS (2017), 4510.0 Recorded Crime – Victims, 2014-16

40x

In the Northern Territory Aboriginal women are 40 times more likely than non-Aboriginal women to be hospitalised for family-violence-related assaults.

Source: Ramamoorthi, R., Jayaraj, R., Notaras, L. and Thomas, M. (2015)[6]

91%

91% percent of sexual assault victims were Aboriginal women and girls. Half (51%) of these victims were under 19 years of age.

Source: ABS (2016), 4510.0 Recorded Crime – Victims, 2013-15

531
women

sought safety at the Alice Springs Women's Shelter from March 2016 to March 2017

438
children

sought safety at the Alice Springs Women's Shelter from March 2016 to March 2017

96%
Aboriginal

of those who sought shelter identified as Aboriginal

Source: AIHW (2016), Statistical Summary for: 78001A Crisis Accommodation 2016-17.

Compounding impacts of domestic and family violence on Aboriginal people

Aboriginal victims can be further disadvantaged by their isolation from accessible and timely specialist support services and justice responses. Repeated violence and victimisation, non-disclosure and under-reporting associated with fear and threats of further violence, and poor information sharing practices increases Aboriginal victims' disadvantage and risk of harm.[12]

Gender inequality and other reinforcing factors

As well as gender inequality, Aboriginal women experience other disadvantages and vulnerabilities linked to a history of injustice and racism that impact on their social, health and economic status. Intergenerational and childhood trauma, community-wide condoning of violence and lateral violence are recognised as contributing factors.

Family, kinship and cultural influences can be protective and supportive, but they can also sanction and normalise the use of violence and enable perpetrators to exploit the unique social and cultural features to avoid being held accountable, and to prevent victims from seeking safety and help to recover.

What Aboriginal women want

Aboriginal women have taken a key role in informing strategic policies and actions to break the cycle of violence and to keep women and children safe.

For many Aboriginal women and girls, their want is for the violence to stop, to live free of all forms of DFSV so that they can learn, work and participate fully in family, community and cultural life. They want prevention efforts directed at those who perpetrate and enable the violence and they want those who have harmed them to be held accountable.

Aboriginal women value help in the form of immediate and practical support and assistance at the time of crisis. This requires skilled and knowledgeable workers who can provide assertive outreach, support with legal and court processes and advocacy with other agencies and people in the community.

An awareness and understanding of the true nature and extent of domestic, family and sexual violence is required so that all parts of the response system are accessible, effective, robust and evidence and needs based.

Aboriginal men have an important role to play in modelling positive and respectful relationships with women, especially with their intimate partners and the mothers of their children. This role is supported by Aboriginal women who value and welcome men's role and contributions to their health and wellbeing and to that of their children, family and community.

STAFF

4
Building on what we've achieved

The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework aims to expand and build on the successes of past policies and the work that the sector is already doing to respond to violence.

NT Government policy: continuity and reform

The Framework retains several key elements of the Northern Territory's previous Domestic and Family Violence Reduction policy – *Safety is Everyone's Right.*

The *Family Safety Framework*, specialist DFV services including women's shelters and safe houses, and perpetrator interventions will continue to be central to the Northern Territory's response to domestic, family and sexual violence.

Recent reviews and consultations for this Framework have identified opportunities to broaden and improve each of these initiatives. The strategies outlined in the Framework incorporate these recommendations.

The specialist DFSV sector: building capacity, improving coordination and strengthening accountability

As frontline services the specialist DFSV sector's core business has been to help women and children impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence. As specialists, the DFSV sector needs to be responsive, flexible and accountable in offering multiple programs including, but not limited to, crisis accommodation and support. An effective specialist DFSV sector requires quality staff and practices embedded in professional standards with knowledge of the local and specific socio-cultural contexts of their clients as well as the networks of families and communities they work with. Collaboration and coordination with other services and agencies is essential for both effective client outcomes and accountabilities.

Outreach service models designed to provide targeted and integrated crisis, advocacy and case management support for domestic, family and sexual violence victims and their children, wherever the victim resides and whether they remain in the relationship or not, are an essential component of an integrated and responsive service system. Specialist outreach services targeting men who use violence are also an essential component to building a coordinated, responsive and accountable sector.

A community of practice that is child and family focused.

A shared practice between child protection and the specialist domestic, family and sexual violence sector

Developing a shared practice that is collaborative, innovative and reflective across the child protection and specialist DFSV sector, inclusive of women's, men's and children's services is essential. The critical domains and elements required to enable collaborative supportive partnerships in this challenging environment are embedded in the Framework. They include, a shared vision and commitment, leadership, information sharing, authorising enviroment, cultural change, perpetrator accountability, resources and sustainability.[14] The strategies outlined in the Framework provide an opportunity and the support to develop a community of practice in the Territory that is child and family focused.

Sustainable and enduring investment in domestic, family and sexual violence prevention and response

Given the prevalence and impact of violence in the Northern Territory we need to both increase and better target our investment in DFSV prevention and response services to improve the social returns for women, children and families. Through this framework, in partnership with the non-government sector, government will introduce an evidence and needs-based investment approach. This will ensure we prioritise what works best to prevent violence and support people experiencing violence to recover and thrive. Improving how we measure and evaluate the services we provide will increase the consistency, transparency and accountability of our investments.

National action on domestic, family and sexual violence

Reducing and stopping domestic, family and sexual violence is a long-term journey of reform at a local, national and international level. All Australian jurisdictions are making significant investments and undertaking wide-ranging reform. Our efforts to prevent and respond to domestic, family and sexual violence must build on this momentum and support and complement these investments and reforms.

Through the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children* 2010-22, all Commonwealth, state and territory governments have committed to working together to reduce violence against women and their children.

In recognition of this commitment, the goals and outcomes of this Framework align closely with the National Plan. In particular the Framework shares the focus of the Third Action Plan 2016-19 on prevention and early intervention, Aboriginal women and their children, sexual violence and perpetrator accountability.

As we implement the Framework, the Northern Territory Government will encourage new and strengthened links between supports and services in the Northern Territory and other jurisdictions, share information and innovation and look to contribute to the national evidence base.

The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children

The National Plan (2010-22) provides a 12-year platform for Commonwealth, state and territory governments, to work together with the non-government sector, business and communities, to achieve a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children. Endorsed by COAG, the National Plan sets out six national outcomes for all governments to deliver over a 12-year period. The national outcomes are:

- Communities are safe and free from violence
- Relationships are respectful
- Indigenous communities are strengthened
- Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence
- Justice responses are effective
- Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account.

In 2016, at the half-way point of the National Plan, the Third Action Plan was developed and endorsed by all jurisdictions. Key areas of focus are prevention and early intervention, Aboriginal women and their children, greater support and choice, sexual violence, responding to children living with violence and keeping perpetrators accountable.

5
Principles

The Framework principles will underpin and guide our approach and response to domestic, family and sexual violence in the Northern Territory.

Women and children's safety and wellbeing is at the centre

The safety and wellbeing of women and children is always the first consideration. Cultures, practices and beliefs that justify the use of domestic, family and sexual violence are not tolerated.

Shared responsibility, partnerships and local responses

Domestic and family violence is everyone's concern, and responsibility for ending it is shared between the government, non-government and community sector. Efforts to prevent and respond to violence emphasise partnerships, local control and decision-making. Community leaders and groups champion and drive change.

Evidence and needs-based and outcomes-focused

All efforts to prevent and respond to violence are based on the evidence of what works. Success and performance measures are used routinely to evaluate the outcomes for program participants and service users. Programs and services are responsive to emerging evidence, changing needs and improving practice.

Accessibility, equity and responsiveness

Services are accessible, equitable and responsive to intersectional need. Government and the non-government sector work together to meet the needs of victims and perpetrators in regional and remote communities, Aboriginal communities, culturally diverse communities, among people in same-sex relationships and people with disabilities.

Focus on long term social and cultural change

Changing attitudes, ending violence and challenging its causes is a long-term endeavour that will require enduring effort. Commitment and accountability to the long-term vision of this strategy will be maintained through sustained leadership at the highest levels of government, non-government, local community and the private sector.

Challenging systemic racism and inequality

Domestic, family and sexual violence reforms acknowledge that the current challenges facing Aboriginal children and families result from a history of injustice and racism that remains embedded within the laws, policies and practices of our society, systems and institutions.

Shared awareness and understanding of domestic, family and sexual violence

There is a shared awareness and understanding of what creates domestic, family and sexual violence while also understanding and paying attention to the effect of other forms of discrimination and inequality.

LAW COURTS
POLICE STATION

6 Implementation and next steps

Implementation

The Framework will be implemented over the next ten years through a series of three rolling action plans:

- *Action Plan 1: Changing Attitudes, Intervening Earlier and Responding Better 2018-21*
- *Action Plan 2: 2022-25*
- *Action Plan 3: 2026-28*

This flexible and phased approach will ensure that future action plans are responsive to outcomes achieved, new challenges and priorities, emerging evidence, innovation and opportunities.

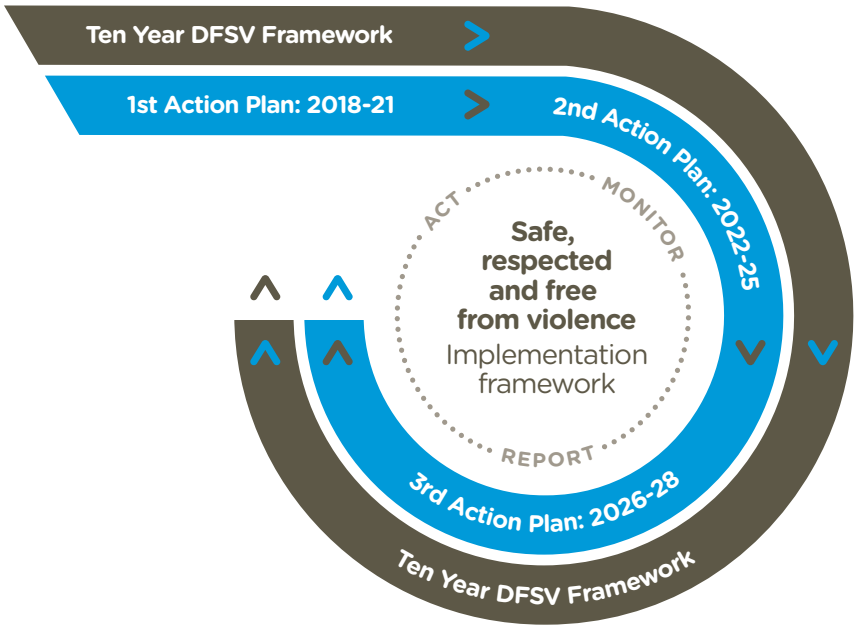
First Action Plan

The First Action Plan – *Action Plan 1: Changing Attitudes, Intervening Earlier and Responding Better 2018-21* – will be developed by Territory Families in 2018. It will focus on the first phase of implementation, explaining how we will implement the strategies outlined in this framework. It will outline the key initiatives and actions that we will take in the first three years on the path towards realising this Framework's vision and outcomes, how they will be funded and who will deliver them.

Under the theme *Changing Attitudes, Intervening Earlier and Responding Better*, key areas of focus will include:

- challenging the values, norms, attitudes and behaviours that drive DFSV
- understanding the role of key early responders and building their capacity
- strengthening the specialist DFSV sector
- building a stronger shared understanding of the needs of victims and perpetrators.

Ten year implementation approach



Action Plan 1

Action Plan 1 will recognise the Government's commitments and build on and complement the range of positive activities that are already underway across the government and non-government sector.

- Expand the integrated response models
- Invest in evidence-based prevention
- Develop a sexual violence prevention and response framework
- Design and establish a DFV homicide review

Measuring our progress

A focus on the outcomes that align with the vision set out in this Framework will drive our actions. The first Action Plan will include indicators aligned to the outcomes in this strategy, along with a baseline assessment and targets. For example, the broad indicators to measure progress may include:

- Territorians do not tolerate domestic, family and sexual violence.
- Vulnerable women, children and families receive early and effective interventions.
- Victims of domestic, family and sexual violence feel safer and supported to recover.
- Evidence-based programs that reduce offending behaviours.
- Legislation, policy and funding models reduce the prevalence of domestic, family and sexual violence.

This set of indicators will be an important accountability tool, so that we focus our efforts on what works.

A key activity under the first Action Plan is to develop an accountable and robust outcomes reporting framework.

Success indicators from the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children*

High level indicators of success

- Reduced prevalence of domestic violence and sexual assault
- Increased proportion of women who feel safe in their communities
- Reduced deaths related to domestic violence and sexual assault
- Reduced proportion of children exposed to their mother's or carer's experience of domestic violence

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Appendix A Glossary

Accountability

Responses to DFSV aim to ensure that people who use violence are 'accountable' for their behaviour. This means that people who use violence:

- Know that DFSV is unacceptable and that physical and sexual violence and some forms of psychological violence are crimes with legal consequences.
- Take responsibility for changing their own behaviour, through attending programs, accepting support and ceasing to blame the victim for the violence.

Coercive control

A range of strategies used to manipulate, dominate and control the actions of another with the aim of achieving and maintaining personal power, particularly over an intimate partner.

Consent

A person's free and voluntary agreement. The NT Criminal Code details the legal requirements regarding consent for sexual activity.

Domestic and family violence

Domestic and family violence is defined as a pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner or family member through fear, for example by using behaviour which is violent and threatening, and to place at risk their immediate and longer-term safety and wellbeing. A combination of tactics and forms of violence are often used to exercise control over women, children and other family members. The violence can take the form of physical, sexual, stalking, emotional or psychological and financial abuse and it can include criminal and non-criminal behaviour.

Domestic Violence Orders

Domestic Violence Orders (or DVOs) are civil law orders issued by courts or police, which place restrictions on the behaviour of the respondent. There are different types of domestic violence orders with different rules that the respondent must follow.

Drivers

The underlying causes that create the necessary conditions in which domestic, family and sexual violence occurs. They relate to the particular structures, norms and practices arising from gender inequality in public and private life, but which must always be considered in the context.

Early Intervention

Approaches aiming to change behaviours or build skills of individuals or groups who are at risk, or exhibiting early signs, of perpetration or experience of violence.

Evidence-based

Evidence-based approaches combine well researched interventions with clinical experience and ethics, and client preferences and culture to guide and inform the delivery of services.

Family & relationship

The terms 'family' and 'intimate relationship' are construed broadly for the purposes of identifying DFSV. DFSV includes:

- Violence between people who are relatives according to Aboriginal tradition or contemporary social practice
- Violence between people who are, or have been, same sex partners
- Violence by a carer towards a person in their care
- Violence against someone that a person lives with
- Violence in which one person has guardianship of another
- Violence between people (including young people) who are dating regardless of whether they have had sex, or if they are in an official relationship.

Gender

The socially learnt roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women. Gender defines masculinity and femininity. Gender expectations vary between cultures and changes over time.

A number of systems and structures can be subject to gendered perspectives. Gendered structures are the laws and systemic mechanisms that organise and reinforce an unequal distribution of economic, political power and resources between men and women. These structures can influence gender norms, which are the dominant beliefs and rules of conduct, which are determined by a society or social group in relation to the type of roles, interests, behaviours and contributions expected from boys, girls, men and women.

These gender structures and norms are reinforced by gendered practices which are the everyday practices, processes and behaviours undertaken at an individual, relationship , organisational, institutional or societal level.

Jealousy or "Jealousing"

Jealousy is linked to aggression and can be seen or perceived as a cause in itself for aggression and domestic and family violence. Often used by Aboriginal people as a verb to describe circumstances where one or both parties seek to make the other feel jealous and express their jealousy (and their valuing of the other person) through violence.

Kinship

The kinship system is a feature of Aboriginal social organisation and family relationships across Australia. It is a complex system that determines how people relate to each other and their roles, responsibilities and obligations in relation to one another, ceremonial business and land. The kinship system determines who marries who, ceremonial relationships, funeral roles and behaviour patterns with other kin.

Lateral Violence

Lateral violence, also known as 'horizontal' or 'sideways' violence or intra-racial conflict, is a product of a complex mix of historical, cultural and social dynamics that results in a spectrum of behaviors that include: gossiping, jealousy, bullying, shaming, social exclusion, family feuding, organisational conflict, and physical violence.

Lateral violence has sometimes been described as stemming from "internalised colonisation" and/or "internalised sexism".

National Plan

In 2011 the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (2010-2022)*. This framework is a way in which the NT Government may progress the actions and strategies outlined in the National Plan and contribute to a sustained reduction in violence against women and children in Australia.

Perpetrator

A perpetrator is the person accused of committing domestic, family or sexual violence regardless of whether they have been convicted for the crime or whether they are male or female.

Perpetrator programs

The overarching name used to describe the range of programs and services that are designed to enable perpetrators to take responsibility for their violence and work towards changing their violent attitudes and behaviours. An example of a type of perpetrator program is a men's behaviour change program that works with perpetrators to enable them to accept responsibility for their violence, make attitudinal changes, and behavioural choices towards non-violence. A key element of men's behaviour change programs is that women and children victims are able to be supported during the process and their safety is monitored.

Practitioner

For the purpose of this Framework, practitioner means anyone working on the prevention of violence against women. A practitioner may be working on the prevention of violence against women as their primary role or as their secondary role such as a nurse or community development worker.

Prevention

May also be referred to as Primary Prevention and means whole of population initiatives aiming to prevent new instances of violence before it occurs by addressing underlying causes.

Recovery

May also be referred to as Tertiary Prevention approaches that focus on longer-term support to lessen trauma and empower victims/survivors, or to reduce longer-term recurrence of violence by changing perpetrator behaviour.

Respectful Relationships Education

Respectful relationships are those in which both partners need to be equal, feel safe, valued and accepted for who they are.

Respectful relationships education is an approach to preventing and ending domestic, family and sexual violence by raising awareness and changing individual and community attitudes about violence.

Social and cultural change

Shifts in culture, behaviour, social institutions, and social structures over time. Social and or cultural change can occur within organisations and/or across communities/society at large.

Technology Facilitated Abuse

Technology facilitated abuse is a form of domestic violence that provides abusers a pervasive way to control, coerce, stalk and harass their victims. It includes a range of behaviours. These include sending abusive text messages or emails, making continuous threatening phone calls, spying on and monitoring victims through the use of tracking systems, abusing victims on social media sites, and sharing intimate photos of the victim without their consent ("Image-based abuse or" "revenge porn").

Trauma

A psychological wound that has occurred due to a person's perception of a stressful event. In relation to DFSV, particular types of trauma that are relevant include intergenerational and childhood trauma.

Intergenerational trauma is a form of historical trauma transmitted across generations. Survivors of the initial experience who have not healed from it may pass on their trauma to further generations. In Australia intergenerational trauma particularly affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially the children, grandchildren and future generations of the Stolen Generations.

Childhood trauma is the result of an event or a series of events which cause a child to feel helpless and pushed beyond their ability to cope. Trauma affects children differently depending on their age, personality and past experiences. When a child is traumatised it affects the whole child: their mind, body, spirit and relationships with others.

Trauma-Informed Practice

A strengths-based framework grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasises physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

Victim/survivor

These terms will be used interchangeably as both terms have different significance. 'Victim' signifies that a crime has taken place against a person and 'survivor' recognises a victim's agency and individual capacity.

Violence against women

An act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of harm or coercion. This encompasses all forms of gender-based violence that women may experience including physical, sexual, emotional, cultural/spiritual, financial, and others.

Appendix B End notes

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Image supplied by Children's Ground