

FAMILY VIOLENCE SURVIVOR  
**PARTNERSHIP  
FRAMEWORK**



**FVREE** FREE FROM  
FAMILY  
VIOLENCE





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY

**We acknowledge that we live, work and deliver services, primarily on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin nation.**

We honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples and acknowledge their ongoing connection to country, land, language, Lore, stories, sea, sky and waterways. We pay our respects to all First Nations Peoples, Ancestors as well as Elders past and present. We acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities continue to be disproportionately affected by family violence, particularly women and children. We also understand that we must view First Nations Peoples' experience of family violence in the context of the continuing impacts of colonisation.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## ADULT AND CHILD FAMILY VIOLENCE SURVIVORS AND ADVOCATES

**We welcome and affirm the diversity of all sexual orientations, gender identity and expressions, sex characteristics, and relationship status'.**

We recognise that the impacts of family violence extend to families, pets and animals.

We respect the lived experiences and Lived Experience Expertise of Family Violence Survivors and Advocates, including children and young people, and value the unique insights, knowledge and perspectives they bring to our work. We look forward to listening to the lived experiences of Family Violence Survivors and partnering in authentic ways as we work together toward a community free from family violence, where everyone is safe.

## SECTOR PEAKS, PARTNERS AND PRACTICE LEADS

**We are grateful for the legacy and significant contributions of Victim Survivor Advocates and people with lived experience working through advocacy peaks and partner organisations who paved the way for empowerment, as well as social, legal, systems and practice change.**

Our work has been informed by the Victim Survivor Advisory Committee (VSAC), Melbourne University Family Violence Experts by Experience Framework, Safe + Equal Code of Practice, Eastern Regional Family Violence Partnership and the high calibre client partnership Frameworks and strategies of sector leaders like Mind, YSAS, Berry Street and Uniting Vic.Tas.

Together with Family Violence Survivors we are learning to embrace and integrate the wisdom of lived experience in all we do. Our work has been inspired by trailblazers like Morgan Cataldo, Rosie Batty, and Christine Robinson. We extend our deep gratitude for the generous contributions of co-collaborators, including Anna Wark, Rebecca Carro, consulting Victim Survivor Advocates, as well as our employees who helped shape our purpose and principles.

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# OUR WHY

**Our organisation has its roots firmly in the early activism and efforts of women who worked collectively to provide refuge and support to women, children and their pets escaping family and domestic violence. From inception, the organisation was shaped by the voices and actions of the people it provided support to.**

The value of lived experience voices in creating safer families was highlighted by recommendation 201 of the 2015 Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence.

Our Family Violence Survivor Partnership Framework builds on our legacy by providing a pathway for intentional partnering with people, including children and young adults, with lived experience of family violence.

## **WE BELIEVE:**

- It is a person's human right to participate in decisions that will affect them.
- Family Violence Survivors are experts in their own lives and context.
- Family Violence Survivors' lived experiences have value and bring fresh perspectives to the decisions we make and the problems we want to solve.
- We will get better outcomes and create change faster if we involve people with lived experience of family violence in our decision making.



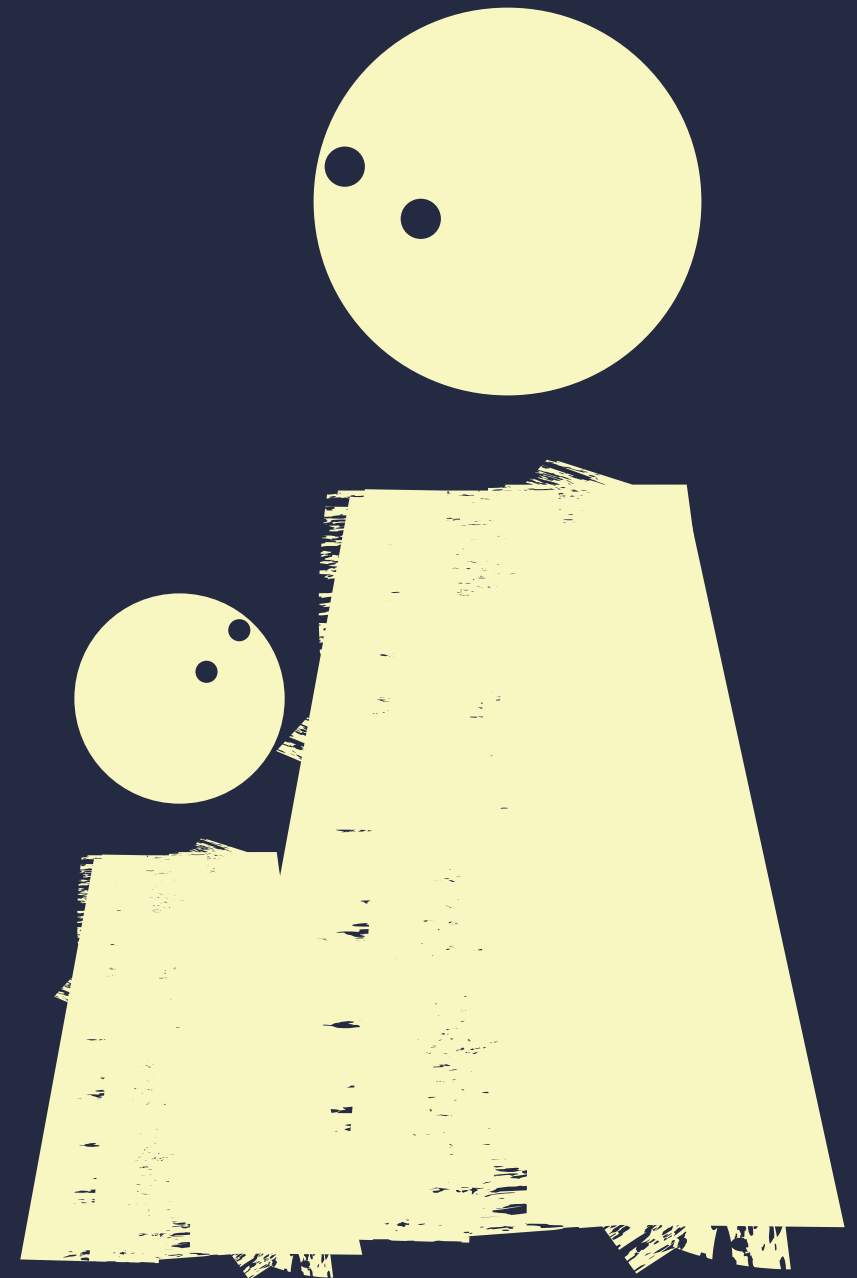
# OUR WHY

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I've experienced first-hand the pervasive impact of family violence. The services which are designed to keep you safe, aren't always accessible or trauma-informed.

At FVREE, we aim to elevate family violence survivors and advocates as equal partners in our workforce. FVREE's framework and accompanying practice guide provide a way of partnering to embed family violence survivor expertise in our culture, services, programs, people development, and operations. From risk assessments, safety planning, recovery, and advocacy, we are striving to make family violence survivor partnership the norm.

— Chloe Symes, Board Director





# OUR INTENT

**Our Family Violence Survivor Partnership Framework (Partnership Framework) will create ethical and safe partnerships with people who have lived experience of family violence. It describes our approach to partnering and what we hope to achieve by listening to lived experience perspectives.**

This Framework re-envisioning our relationship with Family Violence Survivors and program participants from 'service-giver to service-receiver', to one of equal partner, creating a means for them to play an active role in breaking the cycle of violence. This re-envisioning asks us as an organisation to undergo a shift in thinking and ways of working.

**We will:**

**VALUE** lived experience knowledge and expertise equally with professional qualifications and experience.

**RESPECT** each Family Violence Survivor's story, identity and agency.

**BUILD TRUST** and genuine relationships with the people who access our services.

**LISTEN** with curiosity to understand Family Violence Survivor's insights and include their views in our decision-making processes.

**SHARE POWER** by creating safe opportunities for Family Violence Survivors to understand and utilise their Lived Experience Expertise.

**ACT** on the advice and views of Family Violence Survivors in decisions that affect them, including our practice, service design, advocacy for change, and how we work with other organisations to ensure safety.



# PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our Partnership Framework provides a structure for purposeful and intentional partnerships. It draws Lived Experience Expertise into FVREE through reciprocal relationships with Family Violence Survivor clients, including children and young people, impacted by family violence, and external Victim Survivor Advocates.

## PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK THEORY OF CHANGE

Ineffective systems and services accessed by family violence survivors is addressed through partnering across the spectrum of power sharing and participation, at the individual, service, community and system level, where lived experience plays an integral role in affecting meaningful change.

## PURPOSE

Family Violence Survivors are an integral part of the design, continual improvement and delivery of safer, more effective and impactful services and systems, and play an active role in breaking the cycle of violence.

## PRINCIPLES

- Safety
- Power sharing
- Trust
- Transparency
- Courage

## OBJECTIVES

- Safe, ethical, empowering environment
- Partnering practice is evidence based, trauma informed, & promotes recovery
- People feel supported, informed and safe
- Learning through pilot projects & collaboration with other organisations
- Continuous improvement through feedback and measurement

## ORGANISATIONAL ENABLERS

- It will take time to build trust and learn to work together in new ways.
- **Governance** structures and mechanisms that involve Family Violence Survivors
  - Deeper understanding and validation of **Lived Experience Expertise** in our clients and workforce.
  - **Practice guides**, tools and training.
  - A **strong culture** of inclusion and cultural safety.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM

We will apply the International Association for Public Participation Engagement Spectrum to facilitate transparent conversations about sharing power in partnerships.

We will adopt a continuous improvement approach, where we test and learn best practice alongside Family Violence Survivor partners, which will ensure our practice remains relevant and dynamic.

Our practice will be supported by an evidence-based practice guide and employees and Family Violence Survivor partners.



# DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Making lived experience wisdom part of our organisational DNA is foundational to our organisational Theory of Change, Values and Guiding Principles, and aligns with the wider changes driven by Victim Survivor Advocates within our sector.

## SECTOR CONTEXT

**Victorian Family Violence Royal Commission**

**Victorian Family Violence Outcomes Framework**

**Safe + Equal Experts by Experience Framework**

**Safe + Equal Code of Practice**

*Emphasises the inclusion of lived experience as an essential element in the provision of services and the work of the family violence sector more broadly*

**Consumer participation frameworks and best practice models**

## OUR CONTEXT

**Theory of Change**

*The long term impact we are striving to achieve, at individual, community and system level.*

**Values and Guiding Principles**

*Safety, Equity and Courage.  
Intersectional Feminism.  
Person Driven.*

*Evidence informed and Continuous Learning.  
Respect and Collaboration.*

**Strategic Plan**

*Priority 1 - Enhanced and expanded outcomes for victim survivors and the community.  
Priority 3 - An inclusive organisation that applies an intersectional framework.*

# INFLUENCE AND EVIDENCE

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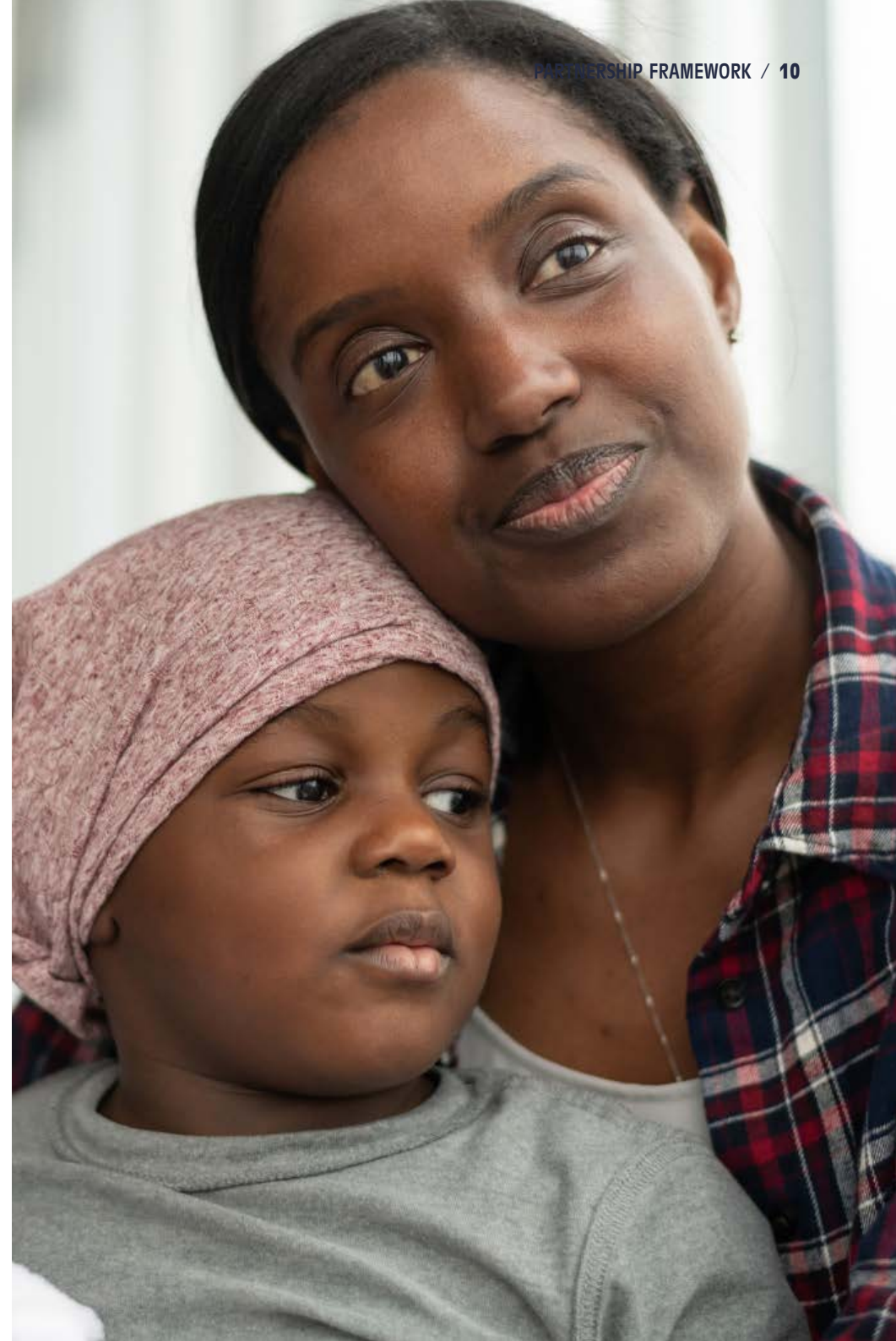
**“It takes both experts and survivors to make choices. I think that every involvement that victim survivors have is important. You can't make decisions based on what you think is going on. Lived experience is invaluable to inform and help make decisions around planning how to respond to family violence. Survivors' voices are powerful and need to be heard.”**

— Victim Survivor Advocate, Eastern RFVP Believed and Respected report.

**Various Human rights charters recognise that justice is founded on the recognition that we all share unequivocal rights to dignity and equal participation in civic life.**

The past ten years has seen a groundswell of interest and policy making around Client Voice and Participation. As a result there is now a rich repository of academic research and thought leadership that is driving best practice models of client and consumer engagement across different community services sectors in Australia.

Immersion in an extensive evidence base, along with multidisciplinary collaboration, learning and resource sharing between Lived Experience practitioners across sectors, form the foundation of our Framework. In implementation we will continue to build and contribute our understanding of ethical, meaningful and effective partnering practices with people who engage with family violence services and systems.

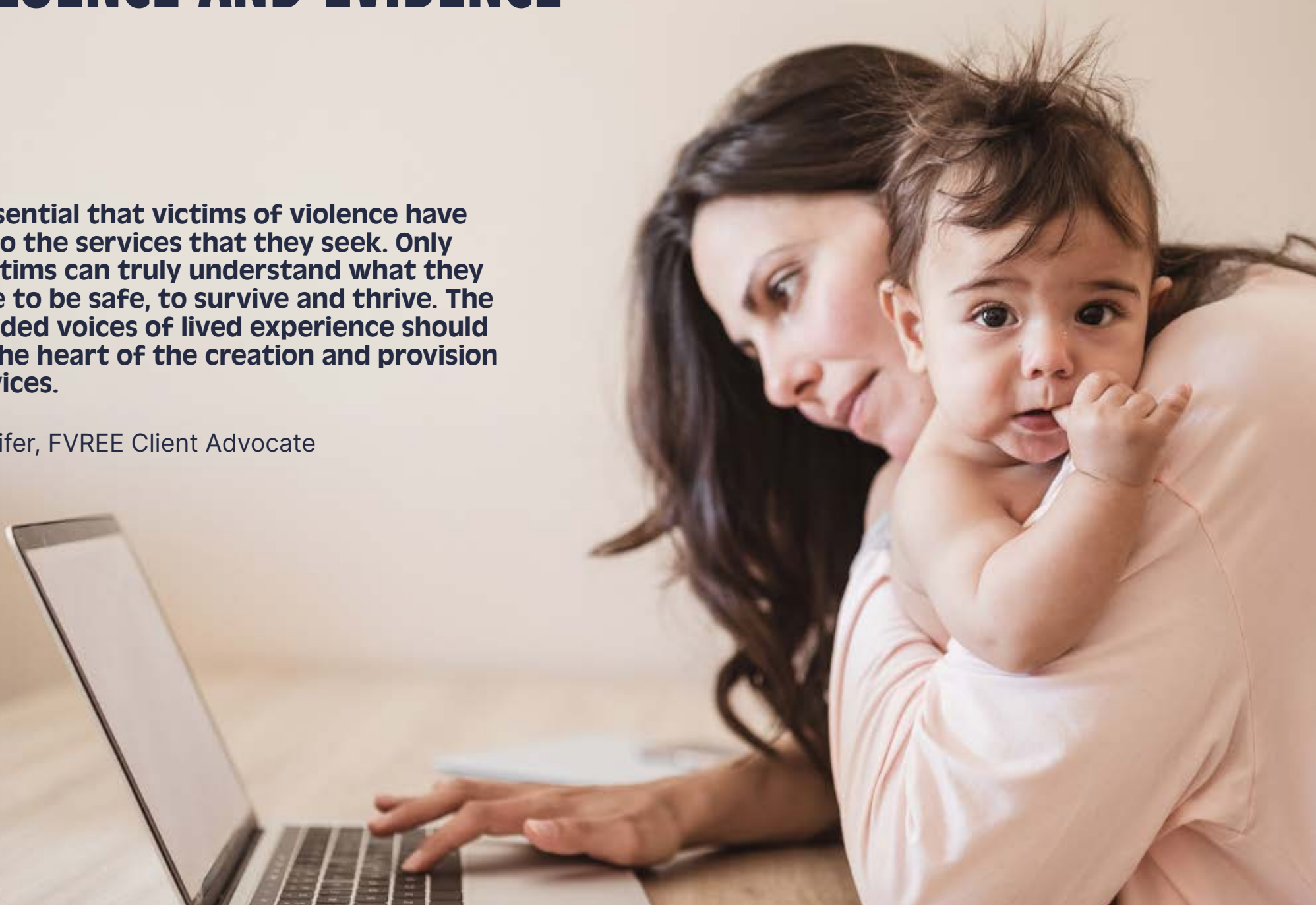


# INFLUENCE AND EVIDENCE

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**It is essential that victims of violence have input to the services that they seek. Only the victims can truly understand what they require to be safe, to survive and thrive. The embedded voices of lived experience should be at the heart of the creation and provision of services.**

— Jennifer, FVREE Client Advocate





## FAMILY VIOLENCE SURVIVOR

# PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO FAMILY VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

We are committed to ensuring Family Violence Survivors' views, perspectives and ideas are elevated, heard and central to the decisions that directly impact them. We commit to purposeful partnering, intentional power sharing and curious, open listening as the cornerstone of authentic engagement and ethical partnerships founded on universal human rights.

We recognise that every Family Violence Survivor's lived experience of violence is unique and can be complicated by intersecting, multiple forms of inequalities or discrimination. We respect each Family Violence Survivor's identity, agency and choice, and commit to working alongside them to listen, understand and respond to their views, insights and knowledge.

We commit to understanding and valuing lived experience knowledge equally alongside professional qualifications and expertise, and to challenging our assumptions about Family Violence Survivors needs, wants and priorities.

Our partnership practice will be inclusive, trauma-informed and evidence based, and we prioritise psychological and cultural safety.

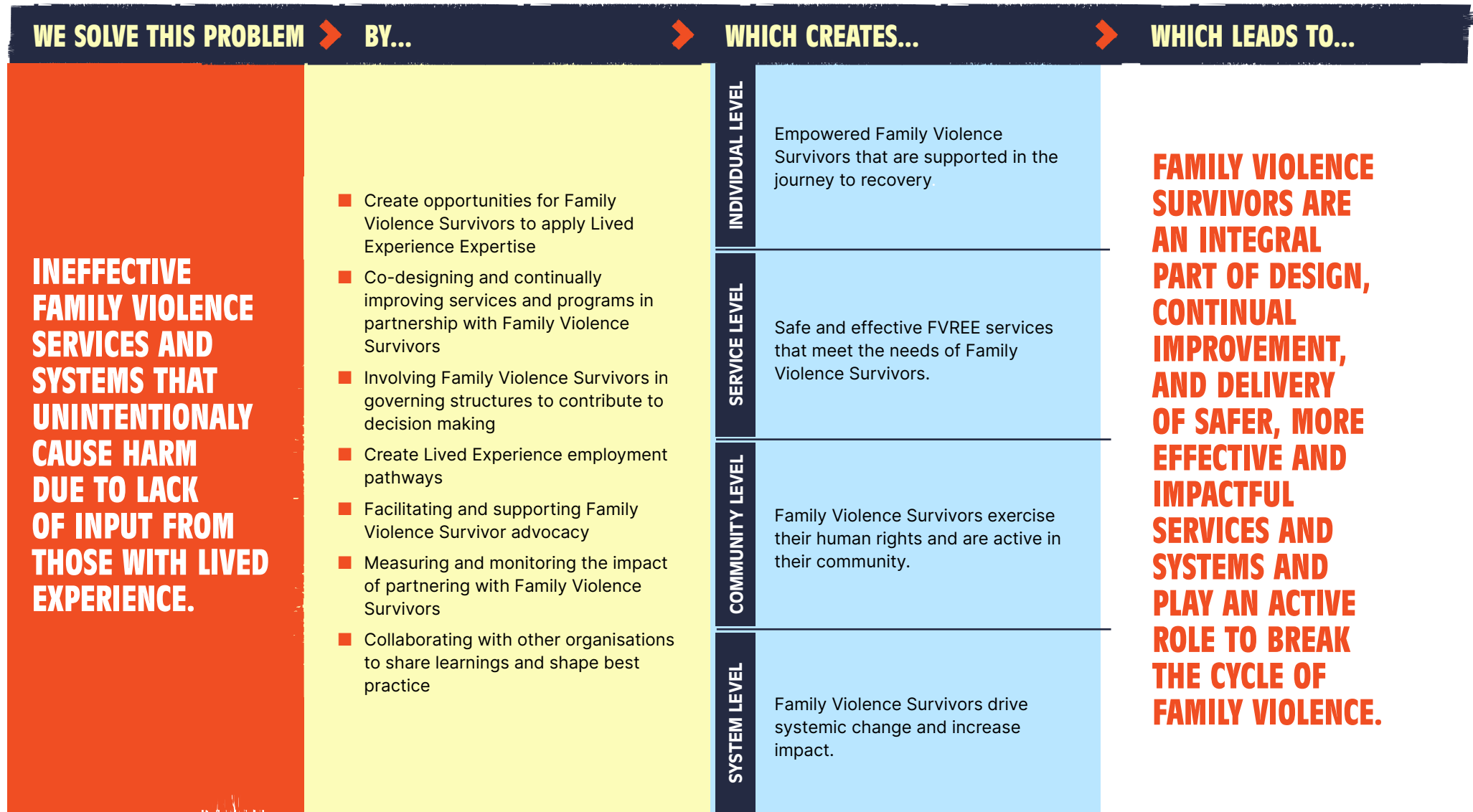
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**We commit to holding ourselves accountable, to Family Violence Survivors, to ourselves and to this Partnership Framework.”**

— Chris Mathieson,  
Chief Executive Officer, FVREE

# PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK THEORY OF CHANGE

In order to make meaningful change across all levels of services and systems, our Partnership Framework was informed by the creation of this Theory of Change.



## FAMILY VIOLENCE SURVIVOR

## PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

**PURPOSE**

Family Violence Survivors are an integral part of the design, continual improvement and delivery of safer, more effective and impactful services and systems, and play an active role in breaking the cycle of violence.

**PRINCIPLES****Safety and Inclusion**

We aim to ensure cultural, psychological and physical safety, be trauma informed and actively work to remove or reduce barriers to inclusion, recognising the dignity of all people.

**Power sharing**

We understand that the foundation of partnership practice is the need to share power, knowledge and resources, including adequately recognising and remunerating people with lived experience.

**Collaboration and Trust**

We recognise, respect and value Lived Experience Expertise and different points of view and take the time needed to build authentic and equal partnerships.

**Transparency and Accountability**

We are clear about the objectives, approach and mutually beneficial outcomes we are seeking through partnering and hold ourselves accountable against our commitments and objectives.

**Courage**

We are curious, reflective, and open to different ways of working.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Create an ethical, safe and empowering environment for Family Violence Survivors to participate and partner with us
- Ensure our partnership practice is evidence based, trauma-informed and recovery oriented
- Support effective, purposeful partnering including by providing tailored training and learning opportunities for our staff to partner effectively and Family Violence Survivors to develop Lived Experience Expertise
- Undertake partnership projects with Family Violence Survivors to establish and continuously improve partnership practice in the organisation
- Collaborate with other community organisations and networks to learn and shape best partnership practice
- Monitor and measure the influence and impact of our work against meaningful partnership indicators.



## FAMILY VIOLENCE SURVIVOR

## PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

CORE  
ENABLERS**Governance****Board**

There are Family Violence Survivor designated roles on our Board ensuring Family Violence Survivors are part of the key decision-making body at FVREE.

**Lived Experience Expertise****Workforce**

- Mechanisms to collect data to better understand lived experience in our workforce
- Defining Lived Experience Expertise as a capability in our Capability Framework and/or recognising lived experience and Lived Experience Expertise in Position Descriptions
- Providing opportunities for existing staff with lived experience to develop Lived Experience Expertise
- Implementing additional measures to ensure management and staff are adequately resourced, trained and supported to successfully incorporate and support Lived Experience Expertise in the workforce
- Designated Lived Experience roles in different parts of the organisation including practice, operations and leadership.

**Clients and Lived Experience Advocates**

We will create appropriate training and other supports so people with lived experience are able to translate that experience into Lived Experience Expertise and apply it in

partnership with FVREE as Lived Experience Partners. These will be recovery oriented, evidence based and trauma-informed and in keeping with emerging good practice across the sector.

**Recognition**

We value lived experience perspectives and Lived Experience Expertise and recognise it through fair and reasonable means of remuneration and reimbursement. This ensures people with lived experience are adequately compensated for their knowledge, expertise, time and contribution.

**Partnering Practice****Practice guide and tools**

- Reflect on power dynamics and address power imbalances
- Prepare staff and Family Violence Survivors for effective partnering
- Planning for partnering activities
- Safety, well-being and risk assessment.

**Services and program feedback**

Feedback is key to building trusting partnerships with Family Violence Survivors and the foundation of good partnership practice

**Co-design and Operations**

Opportunities will be created for Lived Experience Advocates to inform, guide and participate.

## FAMILY VIOLENCE SURVIVOR

## PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

**Culture**

- Conscious reflection on power, its dynamics and how it can be shared so people have agency and self-determination
- Continuous improvement and learning mind set, fostering curiosity and shared responsibility for always doing better
- Embracing difference and collaboration, challenging the status quo and working together so that people can be their best
- Deep listening, empathy and belief in good intent as a means to build trust

**Accountability and reporting****Power sharing practice**

The recognition and sharing of power is the cornerstone to effective partnership practice and a principle underpinning this Framework. We commit to listening to and learning from Family Violence Survivors as we put in place mechanisms, training and tools that facilitate reflection, recognition, risk assessment and effective balance of power in partnerships.

We will explore this practice together with Family Violence Survivors by adopting a continuous improvement mind set and willingly challenging our own assumptions, systems and structures that reinforce institutional and organisational power.

**Continuous improvement**

We have consulted with Family Violence Survivors, partnership experts and sector leaders in the development

**OUTCOMES**

of this Framework and will continue to do so through implementation to inform and enhance our approach.

We participate in relevant professional networks including the Consumer Participation Practice Network and keep up to date with developments and learnings in partnership practice.

- Family Violence Survivors feel empowered, supported and impactful in partnering with us.
- Lived experience expertise is a recognized and valued capability within our workforce.
- Our services and programs are informed by and improved through Lived Experience Expertise.
- Our partnership activities are recovery based and support the recovery process for participating Family Violence Survivors.
- Our culture has changed so that power sharing with Family Violence Survivors in decision making is commonplace.
- FVREE's advocacy is informed by Family Violence Survivors' experiences.

A photograph of a man with curly hair, wearing a red t-shirt and dark overalls, carrying a young child with blonde hair on his shoulders. They are walking on a paved path outdoors. In the background, there are trees, a grassy area, and a body of water. The scene is bright and sunny.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

Partnering with Family Violence Survivors requires us to create an environment where power sharing, deep listening and constructive debate are inherent in our culture.



# MAKING IT HAPPEN

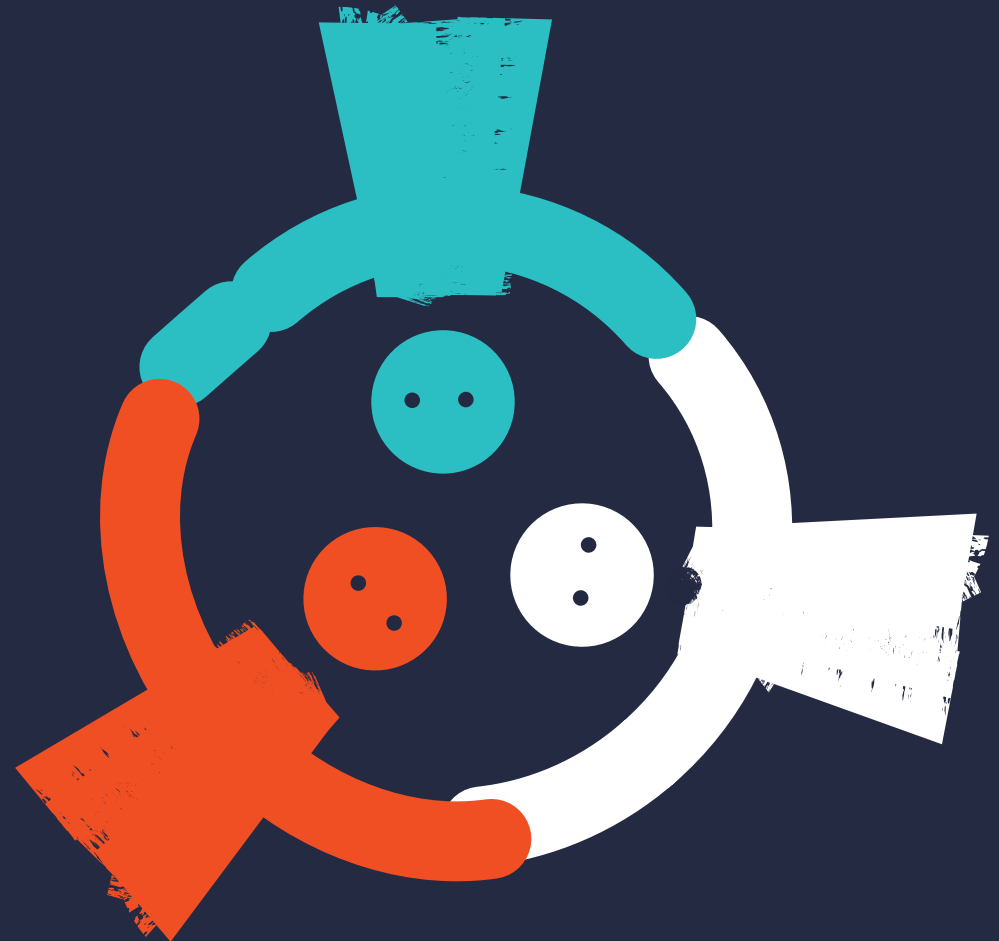
**We will adopt an agile, continuous improvement mindset as we ethically partner alongside Family Violence Survivors, growing strong relationships by learning together in the spirit of kindness and curiosity.**

## Phase One

- Foundation building, preparation, design and planning:
  - Develop training for Family Violence Survivors and our employees
  - Invest in cultural reorientation and foster practice champions
  - Develop policy, procedures, guides and tools to support good practice
  - Design internal systems, impact measures and governance.

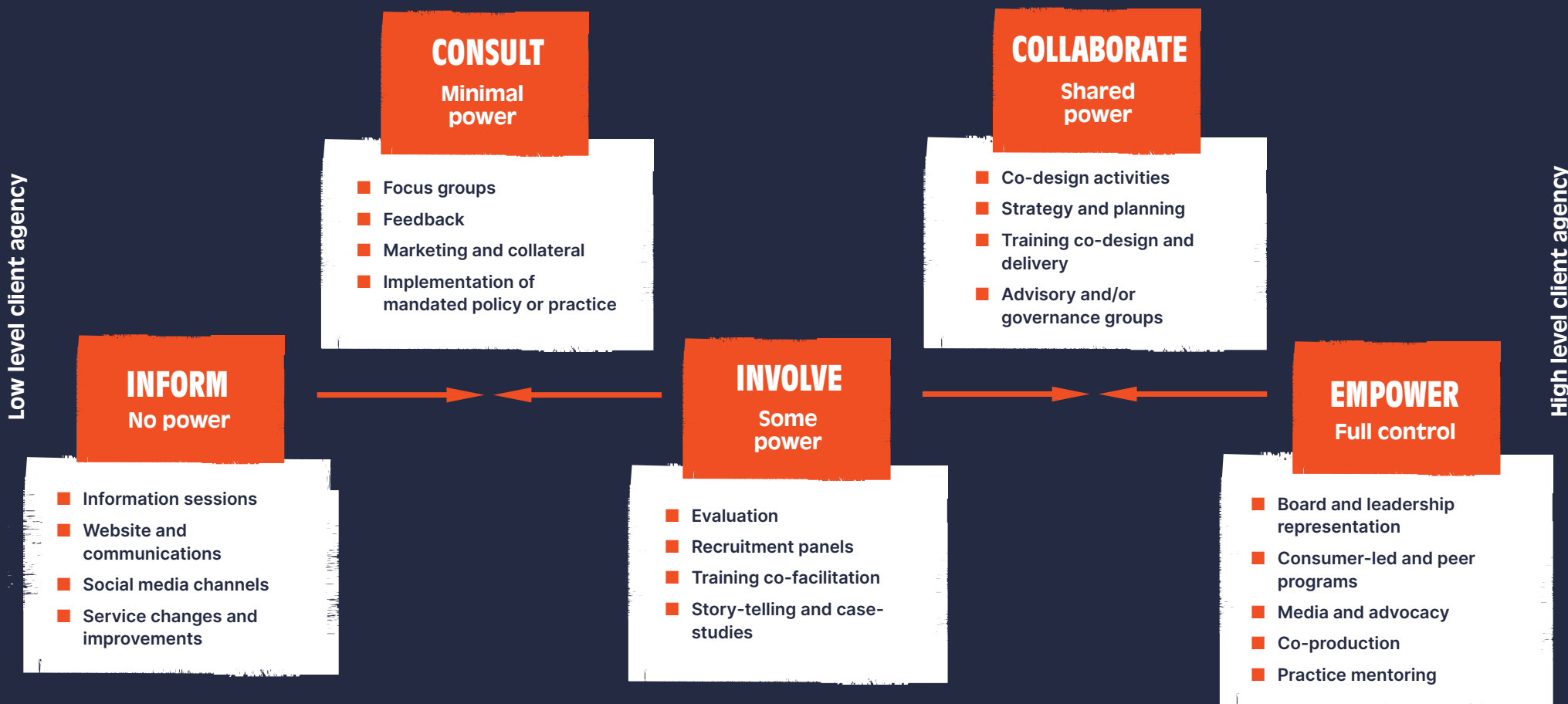
## Phase Two

- Plan and implement pilot projects building in complexity over time:
  - Eastern Metropolitan Region RFVP Victim Survivor Partner leadership training pilot;
  - Focus groups and working Groups
  - Recruitment panels; training co-delivery
  - Victim Survivor Advisory Group



# MAKING IT HAPPEN

The International Association for Public Participation Engagement Spectrum\* provides us with a useful tool to consider the level of engagement and power sharing we are seeking when partnering with Family Violence Survivors. Our intention is to be transparent about the purpose, scope and power shared with each activity.

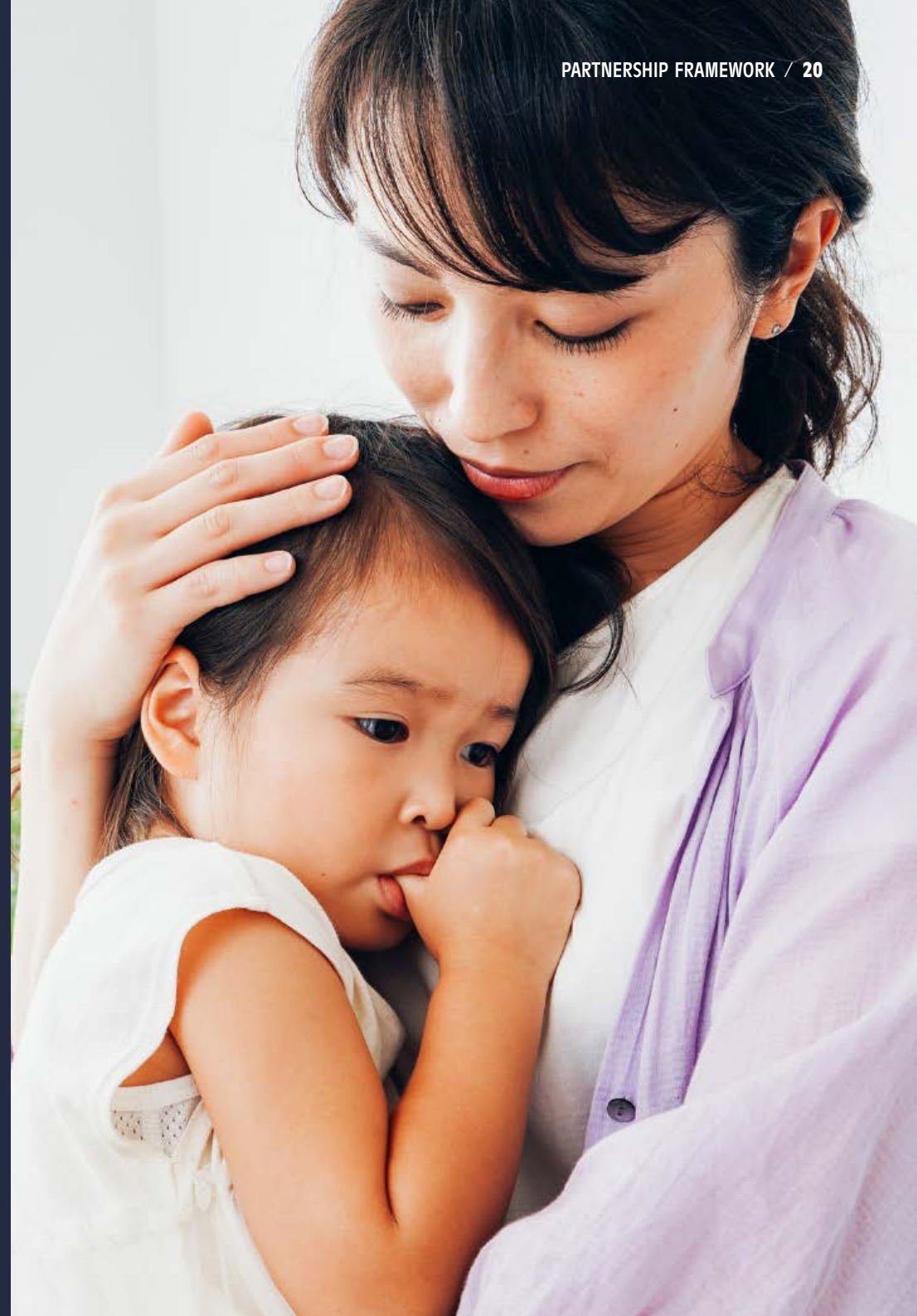


# MAKING IT HAPPEN

## What does it mean for Family Violence Survivors, our leadership and workforce?

As we build our capability guided by our Family Violence Survivor Partnership Framework we expect to:

- Deepen our understanding and validate the value of Lived Experience Expertise of our clients and workforce
- Empower and inform Family Violence Survivors to understand the role they can play at FVREE and how to apply their lived experience effectively in different contexts
- Support our workforce to adapt to new ways of relating to Family Violence Survivors, to change the way we understand Lived Experience, to share power, and to listen differently.
- Launch pilot projects where we test our knowledge and learn together with Family Violence Survivors
- Develop a culture where Family Violence Survivors are able to contribute and challenge us with robust conversations and power is openly discussed and shared in Family Violence Survivor partnerships
- Trust, listen, learn and grow together in our understanding of respectful partnering
- Measure our partnership projects and report our impact
- Be accountable to Family Violence Survivors.





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# THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS & PARTNERS

Our thanks to the wide range of partners we work with to deliver response services, educate the community and advance gender equality. Together, we amplify our impact and improve outcomes for family violence survivors.

In particular, FVREE acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.



**FVREE** FREE FROM  
FAMILY  
VIOLENCE

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