

SEEN SAFE SUPPORTED

**A NEW WAY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUNG
VICTIM SURVIVORS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE**

System gaps and recommendations
grounded in young people's lived
experience and practitioner insights



FVREE FREE FROM
FAMILY
VIOLENCE

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About this report

This report identifies key system gaps in current responses for young people experiencing family violence and sets out recommendations for a new approach. It is grounded in extensive consultation with young people with lived experience, specialist family violence practitioners, and service system stakeholders across Victoria's Eastern Metropolitan Region, alongside analysis of national data and desktop research.

Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank the young people with lived experience of family violence whose voices were central to this work and whose experiences shaped how the issues were understood and articulated. Their courage, passion and advocacy have been pivotal to this work.

We equally acknowledge FVREE's specialist family violence practitioners, whose decades of practice wisdom and deep understanding of family violence and the service system were critical to informing our analysis.

We also sincerely thank service system stakeholders who generously contributed their time, knowledge and expertise, and whose insights shaped and strengthened this work.

Together, these lived and professional perspectives made it possible to surface the complex challenges facing young people and those who seek to support them.

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Accessibility

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF 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 women and families continue to be disproportionately affected by family violence due to the ongoing impacts of colonisation.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

When people feel heard, valued, validated and understood, they can safely interact, engage and collaborate. We strive to provide safe, inclusive and accessible services and experiences for all. We recognise we have a leadership role to play in championing diversity, equity and inclusion.

We support all victim survivors of diverse abilities, ages, genders, bodies, sexualities, relationships, faiths, and cultures; committing to our vision of a community free from family violence, where everyone is safe.



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ABOUT FVREE

FVREE is a specialist family violence organisation delivering evidence based prevention, early intervention, crisis response and recovery support. Our vision is for a community free from family violence, where everyone is safe.

Our deep expertise is grounded in intersectional feminist practice, guided by lived experience and informed by human rights frameworks for preventing and responding to family violence. We recognise and uphold the rights of children and young people and acknowledge them as victim survivors in their own right.

We work with all victim survivors and have recognised capability in specialist responses for marginalised communities: LGBTIQ+, First Nations people, those with disability and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This approach ensures our work reflects an understanding of the diverse experiences of violence and systemic exclusion, and aligns with best practice in inclusive, trauma informed responses.

We employ approximately 170 staff, many of whom are specialist family violence practitioners providing direct support to victim survivors on Wurundjeri and Bunurong Country. Our services operate across the diverse local government areas of Boroondara, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse and the Shire of Yarra Ranges in Eastern Metropolitan Naarm/Melbourne. These areas span multicultural inner city communities, established middle suburbs, outer urban areas with pockets of social disadvantage, and semi-rural communities with social isolation and limited local services.

FVREE is the specialist family violence service provider within The Orange Door support and safety hubs in the Eastern Metropolitan Region. The Orange Door is Victoria's statewide integrated service model for people experiencing or using family violence, or who need support with the care and wellbeing of children and young people. This was a landmark reform following recommendations from the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2016. This collaborative multi-agency model brings together specialist family violence services, child and family services, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, services for people using violence, and statutory partners within a shared access, assessment and response framework to enable coordinated approaches that support the safety and wellbeing of victim survivors.

We have established and mature networks across adjacent services that support young people, including youth, child and family, sexual assault, community legal, housing and homelessness, mental health, alcohol and other drug, and disability services, Aboriginal community controlled organisations and specialist services supporting people from migrant and refugee backgrounds and LGBTIQ+ communities, as well as strong working partnerships with Victoria Police and Child Protection.

We deliver prevention and early intervention initiatives to stop violence before it starts and educate the community to recognise and safely respond to disclosures of family violence. We are the national partner for YSL Beauty's global campaign, Abuse is Not Love. The campaign aims to reach 2 million young people worldwide by 2030 to recognise the signs of intimate partner violence.

OUR IMPACT

120,000 HOURS OF SUPPORT TO 13,000 VICTIM SURVIVORS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE DELIVERED BY 80+ SPECIALIST PRACTITIONERS

3,500+ INDIVIDUALS TRAINED TO RECOGNISE AND RESPOND TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

OVER \$3.5M IN MATERIAL AID

TERMS AND ACRONYMS USED IN THIS REPORT

KEY TERMS

Adjacent Services

Refers to voluntary services that operate alongside family violence services, including sexual assault, child and family, youth, community legal, housing and homelessness, mental health, alcohol and other drugs and disability services, Aboriginal community controlled organisations and specialist services supporting people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, and LGBTIQ+ communities.

Child and Family Services

Child and family services support children, young people and families to improve safety and developmental outcomes. This includes family services, parenting support and early intervention programs, care services such as foster care, kinship care and residential care, placement prevention and reunification services.

Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)

Established under Part 6A of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), CISS enables prescribed information sharing entities to share information with each other to promote the wellbeing and safety of children, including in situations where family violence is suspected or established as being present.

Family Violence

Used to collectively refer to domestic, family and sexual violence, and intimate partner violence, consistent with Victorian legislation. It includes behaviour by a person towards someone in a family, family like or intimate relationship that is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically, socially or economically abusive, or that is coercive or controlling, and causes them to fear for their safety or wellbeing. Family violence also includes behaviour that causes a child or young person to hear, witness or otherwise be exposed to the effects of such conduct. Family violence can also occur in kinship, family of choice or carer networks.

Family Violence Response System

Refers to specialist services and responses that play a primary role in addressing family violence. This includes specialist family violence services, specialised services operating at The Orange Door and statutory services including police and child protection.

Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)

Established under Part 5A of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic), FVISS enables relevant information to be shared between prescribed information sharing entities to assess and manage family violence risk.

LGBTIQ+ People

The term used to refer to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender diverse, intersex, queer or questioning, asexual and other identities.

Lived (or Living) Experience Expertise

Direct, personal experience of a social issue, system or disadvantage. Individual identity can also contribute to your lived or living experience. It reflects the insights, understanding and wisdom gained through living that experience, rather than learning about it through observation, study or professional practice.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM)

Legislated under the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic), MARAM is a system-wide shared approach to assessing and managing family violence risk. It is underpinned by 10 practice responsibilities designed to support consistent and collaborative practice. Under MARAM, prescribed services and professionals hold different responsibilities depending on their role in the service system.

Statutory Services and Systems

Refers to services with legislated powers and mandatory functions where engagement is not voluntary. These include Child Protection, police, courts and the justice system. Statutory services are typically involved where legal intervention is required due to concerns about safety or harm.

The Orange Door

Refers to Victoria's statewide support and safety hubs which provide an integrated service model for people experiencing or using family violence, as well as families requiring child and family wellbeing supports. It provides coordinated access, assessment, safety planning, and referral through a collaborative multi agency practice response involving specialist family violence services, child and family services, Aboriginal community controlled organisations, services for people who use violence and statutory services.

Young Person

For the purposes of this work, FVREE uses the term to refer to people aged 12-25 years old.

ACRONYMS

ACCO Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation

AOD Alcohol and other drugs

AVITH Adolescent violence in the home

CALD Culturally and linguistically diverse



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Too many young people are experiencing high levels of immediate risk and long term harm as a result of family violence. Many carry this burden alone, too afraid or distrustful of service systems to disclose what is happening, or unable to find support that feels accessible, safe, and designed with young people in mind.

As a society and as a service system, we must do more to see, hear and respond to young victim survivors, both those who are actively seeking help and those who lack the language, trust or confidence to disclose. How we do this will play a critical role in shaping young people's safety, wellbeing and long term outcomes.

A persistent and unresolved challenge

Despite significant reform following the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2016, and widespread agreement that young people must be recognised and supported as victim survivors in their own right, system wide change has been limited. While policy and practice frameworks increasingly acknowledge young people's distinct experiences, services struggle to provide consistent, accessible, age and developmentally appropriate trauma informed responses that enable young people to be safe and to heal.

This challenge exists within a context of sustained and growing demand on specialist family violence services, alongside increasing complexity in how violence is experienced and perpetrated. As services prioritise immediate risk and crisis response, effort is most often directed toward adult victim survivors, partly due to the limited access for young people. Where young people do receive support, it is most often short term, fragmented and mediated through adults, constraining opportunities for earlier, relational intervention that could disrupt harm trajectories.

Services also face legal, ethical and practice tensions in balancing the rights and recovery of adults with the rights of young people. Upholding an adult victim survivor's autonomy and supporting them to regain control is a foundational principle of family violence practice. At the same time, services must ensure that young people are directly recognised, heard and supported in ways that reflect their distinct experiences and safety needs. These tensions, particularly where perspectives diverge, continue to impede the consistent embedding of youth focused approaches.



Understanding the realities on the ground

As a specialist family violence service with more than 30 years' experience, deep understanding of family violence dynamics, and strong connections across the service system, we wanted to understand what needs to change, and what role we could play in driving it.

We undertook broad consultation to understand young people's experiences of engaging with services, why many do not seek help at all, and how gaps in current responses affect safety, wellbeing and long term outcomes. We invited frank, non-judgemental discussion to surface issues and develop practical, achievable solutions.

We brought together the perspectives of those closest to this issue: young people with lived experience of family violence, specialist family violence practitioners with deep practice wisdom, and practitioners and stakeholders across Melbourne's Eastern Metropolitan Region who work with young people and are often required to respond to family violence, even when it is not their primary role.

Importantly, this work revealed not a lack of commitment, but a strong and shared willingness across the service system to do better for young people. Practitioners and stakeholders spoke openly about the limitations of current models and expressed a clear appetite to work together to find solutions. While operating under significant strain, stakeholders consistently demonstrated readiness to collaborate, learn and develop responses that better support young people experiencing family violence.

The thoughtful contributions and generosity of time and spirit given by so many stakeholders and young people is ultimately what has made this work possible and meaningful. We extend our sincere thanks to all those who responded to the call to engage with us.

What we heard

Young people described the service system as difficult to trust and hard to access. Many feel unheard and excluded from decisions about their safety and lives, and fear negative or unintended consequences if they disclose. The language and models used by services often do not reflect how young people understand or experience family violence, making help seeking harder.

Family violence services described responding to increasing complexity with limited capacity to provide the sustained, relational and developmentally appropriate support young people need when they do present. More broadly, unmet support needs and the impacts of family violence are driving growing demand across mental health, housing and homelessness, youth and education settings, many of which are not equipped or resourced to safely identify or respond to family violence risk, and where pathways to specialised support are limited.

At the same time, young people were clear about what helps: trusted relationships, choice and control over how they engage, flexible and longer term support, and responses that are inclusive, culturally safe and grounded in their realities.

Towards a new way to meet the needs of young victim survivors

Together, these findings point to both a clear need and a genuine opportunity for system reform. Addressing the challenges young people face requires moving beyond crisis driven, adult centric models towards responses that build trust, continuity and capability around young people.

System reform must create the conditions for youth centred, developmentally appropriate practice, with a stronger emphasis on earlier intervention and relational responses. It also requires stronger integration across family violence and adjacent services, statutory responses and education systems, and increased capability and resourcing to safely identify and respond to family violence wherever young people seek help.

Critically, the system is ready for this shift. What is needed now is leadership, investment and structural support to harness existing goodwill and translate shared intent into sustained change.

SEEN SAFE SUPPORTED

From the outset, this project was about more than identifying system gaps or documenting on-the-ground realities. It was intentionally designed to develop practical, achievable solutions and to translate evidence, lived experience and practice wisdom into action.

Seen Safe Supported is a youth informed service blueprint that proposes a new way of working, one that can operate at both service and system levels. It aims to shift the conversation from understanding the problem to implementing responses that meaningfully improve safety, access and long term outcomes for young people experiencing family violence.

The blueprint is built around three core pillars:

- **Raising awareness** among adults and young people of the unique signs and dynamics of family violence experienced by young people
- **Bringing specialist family violence expertise** into the places and spaces where young people already are
- **Providing peer based and therapeutic support** that enables healing, recovery and long term safety

Together, these pillars provide a clear and achievable pathway to shift the system towards responses that are relational, sustained and genuinely youth focused, so that young people experiencing family violence are no longer left to navigate harm alone, but are truly **seen, safe and supported**.

SEEN

BUILD CAPABILITY TO RECOGNISE VIOLENCE TOWARDS YOUNG PEOPLE

Strengthen system-wide capability

- **Recognise** unique red flags and indicators
- **Respond** in a trauma informed, relational way, built on trust
- **Refer** to specialist family violence support services

SAFE

BRING THE SYSTEM TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Hold young people safely in their places and spaces

- Surface and manage family violence risk
- Help to safety plan
- Remove barriers and unblock access

SUPPORTED

HEAL FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE

Therapeutic & Peer support

- Rebuild trust in adults and systems
- Nurture agency, belief and hope
- Support recovery



THE EVIDENCE: WHY WE MUST ACT

Too many young people are experiencing family violence

Violence against children and young people is a significant and ongoing problem in Australia.

National evidence indicates that 62.2% of the Australian population has experienced at least one form of child maltreatment, demonstrating the scale and pervasiveness of harm (Haslam et al., 2023). Exposure to family violence is the most common form of maltreatment, affecting 39.6% of the population, followed by physical abuse (32%), emotional abuse (30.9%), sexual abuse (28.5%), and neglect (8.9%). These experiences are widespread, often cumulative and frequently occur over extended periods rather than as isolated incidents. The prevalence of multi-type maltreatment, particularly among young people, highlights the scale, complexity and enduring nature of violence affecting children and young people (Haslam et al., 2023).

Children and young people experience family violence in diverse ways, including as direct victims, witnesses, or through coercive control, such as being used as tools of abuse. Exposure in childhood significantly increases the risk of adverse outcomes across the life course, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, suicidality, and other mental health challenges (Fitz-Gibbon, 2025). Research demonstrates wide ranging and interrelated impacts on cognitive development, behaviour, emotional regulation, relationships, physical health, education engagement and housing stability (Fitz-Gibbon, 2025; Haslam et al., 2023; Campo, 2015).

Some young people experience disproportionately high rates of family violence and face additional barriers to safety and support, including those who are LGBTIQ+, First Nations, those with disability, from CALD backgrounds, or residing in rural or remote areas. (Corrie & Moore, 2021; Gillfeather-Spetere, & Watson, 2024).

Trauma driven behaviours, including reactive violence, are also common. A consistent finding in the evidence is that many young people who use violence have experiences of abuse, though this pathway is not inevitable (Howard, 2011; Spark & Siegmann, 2022). In an Australian survey of over 5,000 young people, 89% of those who self reported using violence in the home had experienced child abuse themselves (Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2022).

“Child maltreatment is a major problem affecting today’s Australian children and youth. It is not simply something that happened in the past. It is a matter of national urgency that we act collectively to reduce child maltreatment and its devastating consequences.”

Haslam et al. (2023) p. 16

There is a national commitment, but service gaps remain

There is a strong and explicit commitment across Commonwealth, state and territory governments to address family violence, led by the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 and state based plans, including *Until every Victorian is safe: Third rolling action plan to end family and sexual violence 2025–27*. These frameworks increasingly recognise children and young people as victim survivors in their own right.

However, this policy commitment has not yet translated into consistent, accessible or age appropriate service responses. Service models remain largely adult focused and crisis driven, and young people are unlikely to present at family violence services despite significant risk to their safety and wellbeing, often not knowing such services exist or are available to them. (Corrie & Moore, 2021; Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2023).

Further, service and system responses do not consistently address the needs of young people experiencing or using family violence, with gaps particularly evident for those who identify as LGBTIQ+, First Nations, those with disability, from CALD backgrounds, or residing in rural or remote areas (Gillfeather-Spetere, & Watson, 2024).

Young people continue to experience significant barriers to disclosure and support, including fear, shame, threats, distrust of services, police minimisation, unsafe child protection decisions, limited access to mental health care, and housing instability (Fitz-Gibbon 2025; Corrie & Moore, 2021). Young people under 16 are often excluded from services altogether, while those aged 15–19 fall between child and adult systems, leaving them effectively invisible within service frameworks (Corrie & Moore, 2021).

Further, schools often lack the training to identify and respond to young people experiencing family violence, and only a small proportion of young people disclose their experiences to school staff, with inconsistent support when they do (Stewart et al., 2025).

“To our immense cost, children’s safety, security, health and wellbeing have not been taken seriously as a matter of national policy.”

Haslam et al. (2023) p. 15

62.2% of the Australian population has experienced at least one form of child maltreatment



A PERSISTENT AND UNRESOLVED CHALLENGE

Despite growing recognition of the distinct experiences and needs of children and young people, and significant reform following the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2016, system wide change has been limited. While policy and practice frameworks increasingly acknowledge young people as victim survivors in their own right, progress in embedding this recognition into everyday practice has been uneven. In particular, service models have been slow to consistently and proactively respond to young people's needs outside of their role within the family unit.

This challenge sits within a broader context of sustained and increasing demand on specialist family violence services. Services are responding to greater complexity in how violence is experienced and perpetrated, including increased use of technology-facilitated abuse, as well as growing recognition of elder abuse, sibling abuse, and violence within families of origin. As demand and complexity escalate, service effort is necessarily concentrated on immediate risk and crisis response. In practice, this response is most often directed toward adult victim survivors, with young people experiencing violence having more limited and inconsistent access to direct support.

Where young people do engage with the service system, this has most commonly occurred as part of a family unit. Support has predominantly been provided indirectly, through safety planning and case management with the parent, rather than through sustained, developmentally appropriate work with young people themselves. While there has been a gradual increase in direct engagement in recent years, this remains uneven. The result is a gap for young people seeking support independently, alongside an ongoing tension between responding to urgent safety needs and investing in earlier, relational responses that could interrupt harm trajectories over time.

Services must also navigate complex legal, ethical and practice tensions. These include balancing respect for the rights, agency and recovery of the parent experiencing violence with the rights of young people as victim survivors in their own right. These tensions are heightened where perspectives or interests diverge, complicating efforts to embed youth focused approaches within service models that remain largely oriented toward short term crisis stabilisation.

An Inherent Practice Tension

Many adult victim survivors tell services that direct engagement with their children is unnecessary or potentially harmful, often driven by a desire to shield them from further distress: *They weren't in the room, They didn't see it happen, or They don't need this brought up again.* Upholding the adult victim survivor's autonomy and supporting them to regain control is a foundational principle of family violence practice, and one that must be carefully balanced with young people's rights and needs.

At the same time, evidence and practice wisdom consistently show that young people experience significant harm, even when violence is not directly witnessed. Further, the parent identified by the system as the 'protective parent' may not always feel safe to the young person and may at times be a source of harm themselves. Importantly, this harm often occurs within the context of that parent's own experiences of violence and the complex impacts of coercive control and trauma. These realities add further complexity to service responses and underscore the need for approaches that can hold both accountability and compassion, while centring the safety, rights and lived experiences of young people.

UNDERSTANDING THE REALITIES ON THE GROUND

We wanted to understand young people's experiences of engaging with the family violence response system, why many are not engaging at all, and the impacts of gaps in current responses.

To do this, we brought together the perspectives of those closest to the work: young people with lived experience of family violence, specialist family violence practitioners with decades of practice wisdom, and practitioners and stakeholders from across the broader service system.

Recognising that young people's experiences are shaped across multiple systems, consultation extended beyond family violence to community services, statutory services, key institutions young people engage with, particularly secondary schools, and government and policy stakeholders.

Understanding the experiences and perspectives of this broad cohort enabled us to surface a detailed and nuanced picture of what is happening on the ground; the complex challenges facing young people and those who support them, and identify areas where stronger service integration could contribute to improved responses for young victim survivors.

Engagement methods were tailored to each group to ensure participation was safe, meaningful and context appropriate, and were led by senior practitioners, some of whom have lived experience of family violence.

WHO WE TALKED TO



10 young people with lived experience of family violence

of all genders, with neurodiversity and disability, from LGBTIQ+ communities and from CALD backgrounds.

Consultations with young people were conducted using trauma informed, youth friendly approaches, through a combination of one-on-one conversations and facilitated group discussions.



60+ specialist family violence practitioners

over 60% of whom have lived experience of family violence.

These practitioners deliver intake and assessment services through The Orange Door, crisis response, case management and therapeutic services.

Practitioners were engaged through structured forums, providing space for collective discussion and shared reflection.



100+ service system stakeholders across Victoria's Eastern Metropolitan Region from:

ACCOs	LGBTIQA+ services
AOD services	Mental health services
Child and family services	Migrant and refugee services
Child Protection	Multicultural services
Community legal services	No to Violence
Department of Education	Safe and Equal
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	Secondary schools
Department of Justice and Community Safety	Sexual assault services
Disability services	Victoria Police
Housing and homelessness services	Youth Affairs Council of Victoria
	Youth Services

Stakeholder consultations were conducted through individual one-on-one discussions, followed by a regional validation forum to test and refine key findings.

WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT

- How young people talk about and understand their experiences of family violence
- What happens when young people disclose their experiences of violence
- The obstacles and enablers to accessing support from the perspectives of young people and practitioners
- The challenges that impede service integration
- What's needed at system and service level to improve the safety, support and wellbeing of young victim survivors



WHAT WE HEARD

WHAT WE HEARD

What's happening on the ground

- Low levels of trust prevent young people from engaging with services or disclosing harm
- Young people are frequently excluded from decisions affecting their safety, wellbeing and futures
- Concerns about harmful or unintended consequences act as a major barrier to help seeking
- Service language does not align with how young people experience and understand family violence
- Adult centred service models limit young people's access to direct support and do not always meet their needs when accessed as part of a family unit
- Crisis driven, short term and fragmented responses undermine continuity, trust and safety
- The service system struggles to respond to the intersecting identities and contexts shaping young people's experiences of harm
- Young people who both experience and use violence are poorly recognised and there are insufficient services to address their needs
- Family violence is driving significant demand across mental health, housing and homelessness and youth services
- Services working with young people are increasingly expected to be able to identify the nuanced signs of family violence and respond safely without the necessary specialist training to support this
- Schools recognise the prevalence of family violence but lack the capacity and support to respond safely and effectively

What an effective service response for young people looks like

- Support that recognises and addresses their distinct needs as victim survivors in their own right
- Pathways to support through trusted people, relationships and settings
- Flexible, relationship based and developmentally appropriate support over longer timeframes
- Integrated peer based support
- Accessible, inclusive and culturally safe

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE GROUND

LOW LEVELS OF TRUST PREVENT YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ENGAGING WITH SERVICES OR DISCLOSING HARM

Lack of trust is a significant barrier to young people seeking help or disclosing harm. This mistrust is shaped by past experiences of being disbelieved, dismissed or misunderstood by adults and services, leading many young people to question whether it is safe to speak up at all.

Young people speak of 'testing' individuals and services through small or indirect disclosures to assess their response. Where these early disclosures are minimised or normalised, young people are less likely to share more serious or escalating harm.

Trust is further undermined by short term engagement, frequent changes in services staff and limited continuity of support. These disruptions can occur just as relationships are forming, reinforcing perceptions that services are unreliable or unsafe.

“Everyone knew what was going on, but no one reported it. The people, the systems, let me down. Adults around me, let me down. It felt like no one was going to listen anyway, so what’s the point...they had let me down before.”

- Young person

“It can take months to build a relationship with a young person, learning how/where to meet them. And then a team leader taps the worker on the shoulder to close.”

- Practitioner



YOUNG PEOPLE ARE FREQUENTLY EXCLUDED FROM DECISIONS AFFECTING THEIR SAFETY, WELLBEING AND FUTURES

Across service interactions, young people feel unheard and marginalised in decisions about their own safety, wellbeing and future. Opportunities for young people to express their views are limited and their perspectives are often not sought, reflected, or acted on, particularly within statutory systems.

For example, police report that when responding to family violence incidents, officers focus on engaging with the person using violence and the adult victim survivor, with children and young people often not directly engaged at the scene.

Multiple stakeholders cite Family Law Court Orders that contradict and override state based intervention orders, as well as poor experiences with Independent Children's Lawyers, which result in outcomes that leave young people in situations that are unwanted and unsafe.

Where decisions are made without their involvement, young people experience responses as something that happens *to* them rather than *with* them. This contributes to feelings of powerlessness, disengagement and distrust, and can reinforce reluctance to engage with services in the future.

“[The] adult victim survivor didn't have to meet with the perpetrator, we didn't want to either, we said to everyone we didn't want to, but we were forced to.”

- Young person

“I didn't have control over anything, even court. We told our lawyer we didn't want to see our dad, and they still made us go to supervised visitation. We were terrified.”

- Young person

CONCERNS ABOUT HARMFUL OR UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES ACT AS A MAJOR BARRIER TO HELP SEEKING

Fear of unintended consequences is a major barrier to disclosure and engagement. Young people are more concerned about what they might lose than what they might gain from seeking help. We heard that young people are actively weighing the risks of disclosure, given their lack of autonomy and control of the outcomes: *Will mum get in trouble? Will dad get sent back to jail? Will I be believed?*

There are strong fears about breaches of confidentiality and information being shared with parents or unsafe people, potentially escalating violence. Past experiences of confidentiality breaches in family law, medical and statutory systems reinforce these fears.

Young people also express fear of forced interventions that feel worse than their current situation, including being separated from siblings or returned to unsafe environments. For some, delaying help seeking until turning 18 is seen as the safest option.

“I wouldn't want anyone knowing about it. They [the family] will get angry at me for disclosing.”

- Young person

“I didn't have words for what to search, maybe: are we going to be removed from Australia.”

- Young Person

“We lied to everyone. We really needed help, but we didn't want to go back to foster care or to the perpetrator.”

- Young Person



SERVICE LANGUAGE DOES NOT ALIGN WITH HOW YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCE AND UNDERSTAND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Young people commonly describe their experiences in language that is different to that used by the service system. Young victim survivors speak of feeling unsafe, controlled, isolated or unloved, rather than identifying what is happening as family violence. Where harm has been present throughout childhood, young people may have no clear reference point for what safety looks like, making it harder to recognise experiences as abuse or to seek help.

Service and community understandings of family violence do not always align with these lived realities. Forms of harm such as coercive control, intimate partner violence and technology facilitated abuse are often minimised or normalised within peer groups and by adults, contributing to missed opportunities for early recognition and support. As a result, young people's experiences may go unidentified or unaddressed until harm has escalated.

“From my perspective the family violence was unrecognised. I knew it was painful and scary but not something that I knew how to seek help for.”

- Young person

“They aren't thinking it's family violence. They are thinking 'my parent doesn't love me because they get angry'”

- Services system stakeholder

ADULT CENTRED SERVICE MODELS LIMIT YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO DIRECT SUPPORT AND DO NOT ALWAYS MEET THEIR NEEDS WHEN ACCESSED AS PART OF A FAMILY UNIT

Family violence services are perceived as adult focused and difficult for young people to access independently. Most young people encounter services through a parent or caregiver, rather than being recognised and supported as victim survivors in their own right. Models that rely on working 'through the parent' can limit young people's access to information, reduce opportunities for direct engagement, and leave them unclear about their rights and options.

Access is further constrained by inconsistent understanding and application of consent, eligibility and information sharing requirements under FVISS and CISS across services. Where practitioners lack clarity or confidence in these processes, young people seeking support independently may face additional barriers or be turned away unnecessarily.

“No one asked me. I had no help. They accessed me through my mum.”

- Young person

“I don't think my mum would've left the relationship, so support for me wouldn't have been an option.”

- Young person

CRISIS DRIVEN, SHORT TERM AND FRAGMENTED RESPONSES UNDERMINE CONTINUITY, TRUST AND SAFETY

Young people frequently describe service pathways as fragmented, with repeated referrals requiring them to retell their stories without meaningful service continuity or follow through. They feel caught between systems, particularly during transitions from child to adult services, with no single service holding responsibility for understanding or responding to their ongoing risk and coordinating engagements.

Young people talk about practical barriers feeling exclusionary, including transport, access to technology and inflexible service hours. These experiences amplify the perceptions of mistrust in the system and contribute to disengagement and the risk of harm not being disclosed and/or identified.

Practitioners report that short term, linear service models limit their ability to work relationally and provide support over the time young people need.

“We were being dragged around, it’s like we didn’t fit into the system or something.”

- Young person

“Young people don’t fit in the current adult system, we keep trying to make them fit and wonder why it’s not working.”

- Practitioner

“We have a systems maintenance and throughput model, instead of a relationships first model.”

- Service system stakeholder

THE SERVICE SYSTEM STRUGGLES TO RESPOND TO THE INTERSECTING IDENTITIES AND CONTEXTS SHAPING YOUNG PEOPLE’S EXPERIENCES OF HARM

Factors such as First Nations identity, culture, religion, disability, neurodiversity, sexuality, gender identity and socio-economic context influence how violence is experienced and perpetrated, yet are rarely recognised as central to safety, engagement and effective support.

As a result, some young people face compounding barriers to seeking and receiving help. Young people describe fears related to shame or negative community consequences, immigration concerns, parental gatekeeping, and the risk of being ‘outed’ by the system.

These experiences contribute to early disengagement or complete avoidance of services among young people with intersecting identities, driven by concerns that responses will not be culturally safe, identity affirming or trustworthy.

“Families stay in unsafe situations due to community pressure. They tell them that ‘dad will be taken away, and then they might not be able to stay in Australia.’ You can see why they don’t get help.”

- Service system stakeholder

“Schools side with the parents and don’t recognise that the treatment of the LGBTIQ+ student is a form of family violence.”

- Practitioner

“It’s hard when you don’t have any money, even paying for a bus is hard. So there’s no way I could pay to access support and I thought they all cost money.”

- Young person

YOUNG PEOPLE WHO BOTH EXPERIENCE AND USE VIOLENCE ARE POORLY RECOGNISED AND THERE ARE INSUFFICIENT SERVICES TO ADDRESS THEIR NEEDS

Consultations highlight that experiences of harm and the use of violence often occur together and are closely interconnected, with high rates of neurodiversity. However, current service system responses do not consistently recognise or respond to this complexity. Often violent behaviour in young people is a survival response, communication of distress or learned behaviour within unsafe environments and systems.

Young people are commonly identified and treated solely as 'users of violence'. Increasing numbers of young people in the Eastern Metropolitan Region, including children under 10, are named as 'respondents' (the person using violence) on Victoria Police Risk Assessment and Management (L17) reports completed by officers attending family violence related incidents. This can result in intervention orders being taken out against the young person by police based on information provided by the very person who is perpetrating violence against that young person, the parent.

Ambiguity about parental consent obligations often prevents services from directly engaging with the young person, missing critical opportunities to recognise them as victim survivors and provide access to early support focused on safety, wellbeing and healing. For example, they rarely get access to early legal advice to assist in correcting the record when they are listed in service systems solely as a 'user of violence'. When this identification isn't addressed, the label becomes entrenched and young people's ongoing exposure to family violence and its impacts are overlooked.

Identification as a user of violence further impedes young people's access to services such as homelessness, mental health or AOD based on services' concerns that they will cause safety risks to other service users and/or staff. Housing is identified as a particularly acute gap for this cohort. Many young people are excluded from crisis accommodation, emergency motels or independent housing options, especially when they are in the youth justice system. As a result, young people are left to face insecure and unstable living arrangements that often compound risk to their safety.

Some AVITH services are described as effective in supporting young people, however these services are small in number, under resourced and overwhelmed. Stakeholders also observe that relatively few programs consistently apply a victim survivor lens that reflects the developmental, trauma related and neurodiverse drivers of young people's behaviour.

"I can't think of even one [AVITH] case that didn't have family violence, a disability or both."

- Service system stakeholder

"Services refuse to engage with young people who are deemed as violent, even if they are also victims."

- Service system stakeholder





FAMILY VIOLENCE IS DRIVING SIGNIFICANT DEMAND ACROSS MENTAL HEALTH, HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS, AND YOUTH SERVICES

Young people describe making deliberate decisions to reduce harm, including avoiding home or leaving family homes altogether. While these actions reflect strong self-protective instincts, they frequently result in instability, declining mental health, and disengagement from education and community supports. Young people who leave home due to family violence may also enter unsafe or unstable living situations or relationships, increasing their exposure to further harm.

Consultations and service data from the Eastern Metropolitan Region consistently identifies family violence as a major driver of demand across mental health, housing and homelessness, and youth services.

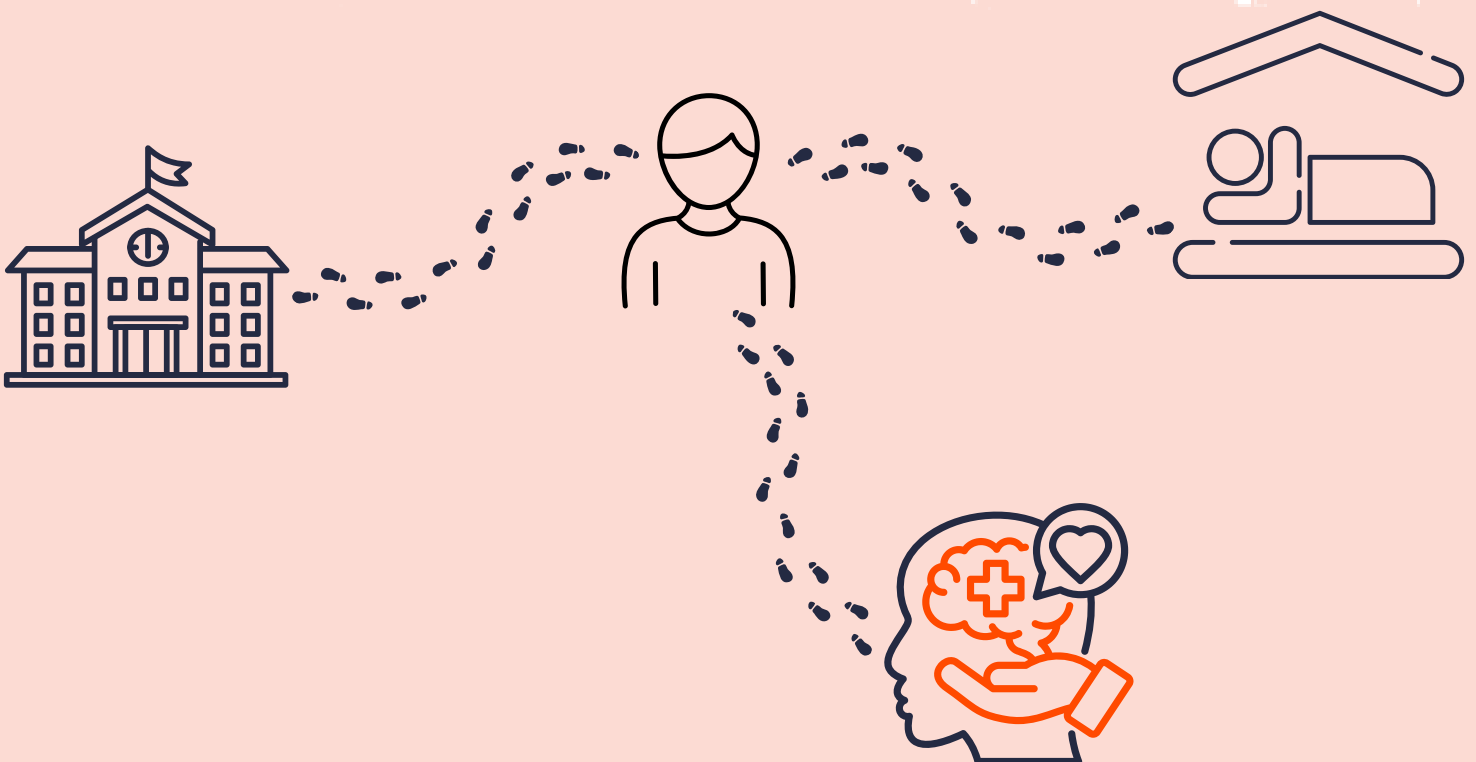
Mental health services report family violence as a frequent and primary presenting issue. A considerable proportion of referrals to local youth mental health and youth outreach programs in the region identify family violence as one of the main reasons for engagement, even where this is not the focus of the service.

Housing and homelessness services similarly identify family violence as a dominant underlying driver of demand. Many young people accessing youth refuges and housing programs have experienced family violence, with unsafe family environments often precipitating entry into these services.

Together, mental health, housing and homelessness, and youth services act as critical and often trusted access points for young people experiencing family violence, with a key role to play in identification and earlier intervention, and the potential to prevent escalation to crisis or statutory responses if appropriately supported.

“Lots of young people are homeless, and in foster care or kinship care due to family violence. Now that they have left the home, they are no longer deemed at immediate risk of family violence, so don’t get a family violence response.”

- Service system stakeholder



SERVICES WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ARE INCREASINGLY EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE NUANCED SIGNS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE AND RESPOND SAFELY WITHOUT THE NECESSARY SPECIALIST TRAINING TO SUPPORT THIS

Mental health, housing and homelessness, and youth services report that they are increasingly working with young people affected by family violence, but that their role is primarily focused on responding to the impacts rather than the violence and risk itself. These services are not designed or resourced to assess or manage the complexity of family violence, particularly where coercive control, ongoing family relationships and developmental factors intersect, as is often the case for young people. Practitioners in these settings cannot reasonably be expected to assess risk or patterns of perpetration in the way specialist family violence services can.

Without access to consistent and timely secondary consultation, shared practice and clear referral pathways, these services are left holding significant risk without the expertise or authority required to respond safely. Services we spoke to consistently identified a gap in access to youth informed specialist family violence expertise, alongside limited referral pathways to support.

Services speak openly about the strain that this places on staff and the critical need for additional support. At the same time, there is a clear willingness to work collaboratively to develop solutions.

“We’re often the ones holding the relationship, but we need family violence services beside us, through secondary consults and co-case management, to manage risk safely.”

- Service system stakeholder

“Workers lack confidence, tools and language to unpack young people’s family violence risk, particularly when disclosures are indirect.”

- Service system stakeholder

SCHOOLS RECOGNISE THE PREVALENCE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE BUT LACK THE CAPACITY AND SUPPORT TO RESPOND SAFELY AND EFFECTIVELY

Consistent with national data, schools we engaged with described family violence as widespread among students. One school we talked to estimated that around one third of students had experienced family violence, with approximately one third of these students not connected with any formal support.

Teachers frequently observe changes in behaviour, engagement and attendance and may attempt to respond. However, these changes are often managed through disciplinary or behavioural frameworks rather than trauma informed supports. As a result, distress driven behaviour is not always recognised as a response to underlying harm or unmet need, and punitive responses further entrench a young person's lack of trust.

While individual teachers are often supportive and motivated to help, schools report limited capacity to respond. Time and workload pressures, inconsistent access to student wellbeing supports, lack of clarity regarding parental consent obligations and varied interpretations of mandatory reporting requirements all constrain schools' ability to meaningfully help the young person.

Like mental health, housing and homelessness, and youth services, schools talked about the need for access to specialist family violence expertise and referral pathways, as well as greater capacity for coordinated practice and responses.

“How did my teachers not notice... were they just too busy?”

- Young person

“Some teachers asked questions, and tried to help but were super busy.”

- Young person





WHAT AN EFFECTIVE SERVICE RESPONSE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LOOKS LIKE

SUPPORT THAT RECOGNISES AND ADDRESSES THEIR DISTINCT NEEDS AS VICTIM SURVIVORS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT

Young people need to be recognised and supported as victim survivors in their own right, rather than being responded to primarily through adult experiences of family violence. While there is widespread recognition of this need at a practice level, achieving it requires more than changes to individual programs or existing service models.

Consultations highlight that how the system understands, prioritises and expects services to work with young people fundamentally shapes practice. System level settings, including expectations, accountability mechanisms, risk frameworks and resourcing, signal who services engage with, what is prioritised in decision making, and what constitutes 'good practice'. Where these settings remain adult centred or crisis driven, young people's experiences and needs continue to be secondary, regardless of practitioner intent.

At a practice level, there is a need for youth centred, developmentally appropriate responses that reflect how family violence affects young people differently. This includes approaches that actively support young people's agency and autonomy, validate their lived experiences, and respond to their distinct relational, emotional and developmental needs.

“Young people are incredibly autonomous and their own individuals – they are often so overlooked by services and supports.”

- Service system stakeholder

PATHWAYS TO SUPPORT THROUGH TRUSTED PEOPLE, RELATIONSHIPS AND SETTINGS

Formal service pathways are rarely the first point of contact for young people experiencing family violence. Instead, initial help seeking and disclosures most often occur through trusted people, relationships and settings already present in young people's lives.

Practitioners and stakeholders highlight that engagement with the service system commonly happens through intermediaries such as school wellbeing staff, youth workers, GPs, coaches, extended family members or a friend's family. Pathways into specialist support are strongest when services recognise and actively work with these trusted access points, rather than expecting young people to navigate complex, adult centred systems on their own.

Young people also emphasised the importance of having choice and flexibility in how they access support. Outreach based engagement, multiple options for contact (online, phone and in person), and calm, welcoming environments make it easier to take a first step and remain engaged. Practitioners reinforced that rigid, clinical or institutional service models can unintentionally deter engagement and limit access.

“I had a really cool chaplain, and I spoke to him about the craziest stuff while playing jenga. It's good to keep them {young people} busy while talking about things.”

- Young person

“The best conversations I have with young people are when we are in the car together.”

- Service system stakeholder

FLEXIBLE, RELATIONSHIP BASED AND DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE SUPPORT OVER LONGER TIMEFRAMES

Young people need support that is age appropriate, transparent and non-clinical. Effective practice prioritises rapport, consistency and trust building over immediate assessment or disclosure, recognising that disclosure will only happen when trust is built.

Informal approaches such as walking sessions, shared activities, games or conversational engagement are described as reducing pressure and enabling relationships to develop over time. Young people value practitioners who feel relatable and approachable, including communication styles that are not overly formal or authoritative.

Flexibility in service hours is also critical. After school, evening and weekend options align better with young people's lives and safety realities, recognising access barriers are particularly pronounced for young people managing schooling, work, caring responsibilities, transport challenges, restricted access to technology or monitoring at home.

Practitioners and service stakeholders reinforce that engagement is more successful when services are able to 'stay with' young people over time, respond to indirect or partial disclosures without escalation (noting this requires a very nuanced and in depth understanding of family violence risk for young people) and pace intervention according to readiness. This requires workforce confidence and service conditions that support continuity and enduring relationship based work.

Practitioners also highlight that adult focused risk assessment tools are not suited to this reality as they are not designed to support gradual or partial disclosure over time, and that young people commonly share experiences incrementally as trust develops. The development of a children and young people's MARAM tool, which is currently underway in Victoria, must allow for this, enabling risk to be identified and understood through ongoing, relationship based engagement.

"Outreach and after school is best."

- Young person

"It's easier to talk to someone closer to my age, not 30-40 years older than me."

- Young person

"6 months is not long enough for case management. We are speed dating with young people and saying 'tell me all your trauma and we will be here to support you, you can heal with us and trust us. But also, now we are finished with our time and have to close' and we wonder why they won't engage."

- Practitioner

INTEGRATED PEER BASED SUPPORT

Young people describe friends as central sources of emotional safety, affirmation and practical support. Peers often help young people make sense of what is happening, manage risk day-to-day, and take steps toward safety, including leaving unsafe environments. Practitioners reinforce this, noting that young people are often more willing to talk openly, 'test' help seeking and explore options through trusted peers before engaging with formal services.

Peer based programs that enable shared experience and connection are especially valuable. These are seen as meaningful supports in their own right, as well as spaces where young people feel understood and believed, and where confidence to engage with more structured responses can develop over time.

“I think it would be mad [good] to have programs of how to help others, you know, programs to help my mates. I will help them and then move forward. Your mates know everything, you rant to them.”

- Young person

“You be there to support us, and we will run the new service, that would work.”

- Young person



ACCESSIBLE, INCLUSIVE AND CULTURALLY SAFE

Cultural safety, identity affirmation and visible inclusion are consistently identified as foundational conditions for young people to engage, disclose harm and remain connected to support, particularly for those with intersecting identities. This is due to many young people from these cohorts having had prior experiences of being marginalised, misunderstood or harmed by service systems, contributing to low trust and fear of further harm. Feeling seen, respected and believed in relation to their identity is therefore central to building trust and creating the conditions where young people feel safe to engage and share their experiences.

Choice is a critical component of cultural safety. Consultations emphasise the importance of young people having agency in who they engage with and how support is provided, including flexibility around practitioner identity. While shared culture or identity can strengthen trust for some young people, others expressed a clear preference to work outside their cultural or community context to protect privacy and avoid judgement or pressure. Where genuine choice is absent, concerns about confidentiality, minimisation of violence, community repercussions or exclusion are heightened.

Visible inclusion is described as an immediate signal of safety and belonging. Features such as First Nations artwork, Pride symbols, pronoun badges, accessible and culturally representative spaces, and diverse staffing help reduce physical barriers to engagement and support earlier connection.

Practitioners and service stakeholders reinforce that these visible cues matter because they shape first impressions and expectations of safety, but must be matched by workforce capability, inclusive practice and safe information sharing.

“I want someone who can resonate with me, in my own language.”

- Young person

“If I was walking into a service, it would be ideal to see that staff are diverse.”

- Young person

“Coming into the space with a big Aboriginal artwork shows respect to Indigenous people and makes me feel safe.”

- Young person





TOWARDS A NEW APPROACH FOR MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUNG VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR A NEW APPROACH

The following principles define the design requirements for a new approach to meet the needs of young people experiencing family violence. Together, they guide how services and systems should be designed and delivered, and provide the foundation for FVREE's service blueprint.

BE CO-DESIGNED WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND GOVERNED BY LIVED EXPERIENCE

Young people must play a leading role in the design, testing and ongoing development of responses. Young people's lived experience must shape priorities, decisions and solutions, not just inform them.

Design implications:

- Co-design is embedded across service model development, implementation, evaluation and continuous improvement, including the development of policies, practice approaches, communications and access points.
- Youth participation is resourced, supported and safe, and inclusive of diverse experiences (culture, identity, ability). Enabling conditions need to support genuine and shared decision making.
- Lived experience and peer roles are clearly defined, well supported and appropriately remunerated.

UPLIFT CAPABILITY ACROSS EDUCATION SETTINGS AND ADJACENT SERVICES

Adults in education settings and adjacent services must be equipped to recognise early indicators of harm and respond safely and confidently.

Design implications:

- Youth specific family violence capability across schools, youth services, mental health, AOD, housing and homelessness, child and family, legal and community settings, to recognise unique risk indicators, and respond safely when risk is disclosed.
- Secondary consultation pathways so non-specialist staff can access timely, expert advice and decision making support when responding to risk involving young people.
- Capability to respond safely to intersecting needs, identities and unique aspects of these such as family of origin violence and culturally specific risks, and refer to appropriate specialised services.
- Risk assessment tools and frameworks that are adapted or developed where existing approaches do not translate well to young people (noting that a Children's MARAM is under development).

CREATE FLEXIBLE, DISCREET AND YOUTH FRIENDLY ENGAGEMENT PATHWAYS

Support must fit young people's lives and safety realities. Young people should be able to access help in ways that feel safe and manageable.

Design implications:

- Outreach delivery models to connect with young people flexibly in the places that work for them, backed up by non-clinical, welcoming environments where engagement at service premises is preferred.
- Multiple ways to engage, including in person, online, phone and text/web-based options where appropriate.
- After hours availability aligned to times when young people can safely connect.
- Clear, youth friendly information about services, confidentiality and what to expect.
- Practical barriers addressed as part of engagement (transport, food, phones/data, identification, income support).
- Strong school interfaces that enable access without forcing school based delivery.

USE RELATIONSHIP BASED PRACTICE

Safety, engagement and disclosure are built over time through consistent, trusting relationships. A new approach must prioritise relational continuity over short-term or transactional support.

Design implications:

- A peer workforce that brings lived expertise to relational engagement.
- Consistent practitioners and longer engagement timeframes that allow young people to 'dip in and out' of service where needed and access support at varying intensity over time.
- Informal and trust building practice approaches (e.g. walk-and-talk, activity-based engagement).
- Workforce conditions that protect relational work, including manageable caseloads, supervision and reflective practice.

PROVIDE INTEGRATED WRAP AROUND SUPPORT

Services should function as a connected system. Young people should not be required to navigate multiple services, repeat their story, or manage referrals on their own.

Design implications:

- Integrated, wrap around responses across education, mental health, housing and homelessness, child and family, specialist family violence, and cohort specific services.
- Responses that work with 'the whole person' including when they are both a victim survivor and user of violence.
- Warm handovers as standard practice, including supported introductions where needed.
- Shared care arrangements, co-case management and embedded specialist family violence roles.
- Flexible service eligibility requirements to avoid disrupted service engagement and ensure sustained relational support through transitions like moving geography or turning 18.

BE TRAUMA INFORMED, INCLUSIVE AND HEALING FOCUSED

Responses must acknowledge the impacts of family violence and hold complexity without judgment or exclusion. Safety and healing should be prioritised over risk adverse or punitive responses.

Design implications:

- Inclusive pathways for First Nations, CALD, LGBTIQ+ and young people with disability or neurodivergence.
- Trauma and healing focused approaches that avoid re-traumatisation.
- Transparency around confidentiality, reporting and information sharing.
- Court and statutory aware practice, including access to plain language legal advice and advocacy.

SEEN SAFE SUPPORTED: A SERVICE BLUEPRINT

Seen, Safe, Supported describes a service blueprint for working with young people experiencing family violence. It translates the design principles into a clear, youth focused model that shapes how services and systems can recognise harm, create safety and support healing over time.

The blueprint is organised around three interconnected pillars. Each pillar sets out both what the system must achieve and how this is delivered in practice, working across services, settings and relationships rather than through a single program or entry point.

SEEN

Building capability to recognise violence towards young people

The *Seen* pillar focuses on strengthening system-wide capability to recognise family violence as it affects young people, including within family contexts, peer relationships and intimate relationships.

This is achieved by:

- Delivering targeted training to professionals working in schools, youth services and other youth facing settings to improve workforce capability to recognise unique red flags and indicators, respond in a trauma informed and relational way, and help young people connect with specialist services.
- Embedding access to specialist family violence expertise within schools and youth settings, enabling timely advice and secondary consultation for professionals, and earlier, safer responses when concerns are identified.
- Supporting young people's own understanding of healthy and unhealthy intimate partner and family relationships, and the dynamics of coercive control so they can better recognise harm to themselves and their peers and seek help.

Through *Seen*, there is increased understanding and recognition of young people's risk across the service system, enabling earlier and more appropriate responses in the places and spaces young people are.

SAFE

Bringing the family violence system to young people

The *Safe* pillar focuses on increasing the accessibility of family violence responses for young people without increasing risk or requiring them to navigate adult centric systems.

This is achieved by:

- Specialist family violence advocate co-locations and outreach, bringing expertise directly into youth accessible and community based settings.
- Collaborative planning and wrap around support, coordinating responses across education, mental health, housing and homelessness, child and family and specialist family violence services, justice and child protection.
- A seamless and connected response, with warm handovers, shared responsibility and reduced reliance on young people to manage referrals or repeat their story.

Through *Safe*, engagement is flexible, discreet and grounded in trusted environments, supporting young people to access help in ways that feel manageable and secure.

SUPPORTED

Healing and recovery for a brighter future

The *Supported* pillar focuses on how young people are held over time through consistent, coordinated and relationship based support that promotes healing and long term wellbeing.

This is achieved by combining:

- Lived experience expertise, including peer and youth led roles that strengthen connection, trust, and relatability.
- Specialist family violence expertise, ensuring responses are grounded in safety, accountability, and best practice.
- Therapeutic expertise, providing developmentally appropriate, trauma informed and healing focused support.

Together, these elements support continuity of relationships, support that adapts as young people's needs change and responses that hold complexity without judgment, exclusion or punitive escalation.

Through *Supported*, young people are given the opportunity to heal, strengthen relationships, and build positive life trajectories beyond violence.

A NEW WAY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

SEEN

BUILD CAPABILITY TO RECOGNISE VIOLENCE TOWARDS YOUNG PEOPLE

Strengthen system-wide capability

- **Recognise** unique red flags and indicators
- **Respond** in a trauma informed, relational way, built on trust
- **Refer** to specialist family violence support services

By delivering training and embedded access to specialist expertise in schools and youth settings for professionals and young people

SAFE

BRING THE SYSTEM TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Hold young people safely in their places and spaces

- Surface and manage family violence risk
- Help to safety plan
- Remove barriers and unblock access

By conducting specialist family violence advocate co-locations and outreach: delivering collaborative planning, wrap around support, and a seamless response

SUPPORTED

HEAL FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE

Therapeutic & Peer support

- Rebuild trust in adults and systems
- Nurture agency, belief and hope
- Support recovery

Using lived experience, specialist family violence, and therapeutic expertise

SPECIALIST FAMILY VIOLENCE IN COLLABORATION WITH INTERSECTING AND UNIVERSAL SERVICES

Youth, Mental Health, AOD, homelessness, legal, youth justice, health, sexual assault, child protection, family services, Victoria Police, ACCOs, Rainbow, CALD, disability, multicultural services and schools





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