



# Practitioner Orientation Pack

Updated 2025

## Acknowledgement of Country

Gippsland Family Violence Alliance acknowledges the Gunai/Kurnai, Bunurong, Bidjilal & Ngarigo/Monero people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands now also known as Gippsland.

We pay our respects to elders past, present and visiting and acknowledge they hold the stories, traditions, spiritual connection and living cultures of this Country.

We recognise the Gunai/Kurnai, Bunurong, Bidjilal & Ngarigo/Monero people's long and continued connection and protection of the beautiful coastline from the oceans through inland areas and to the rugged southern slopes of the mountain ranges.

We recognise their continued connection to these lands and waters and acknowledge that they have never ceded sovereignty.

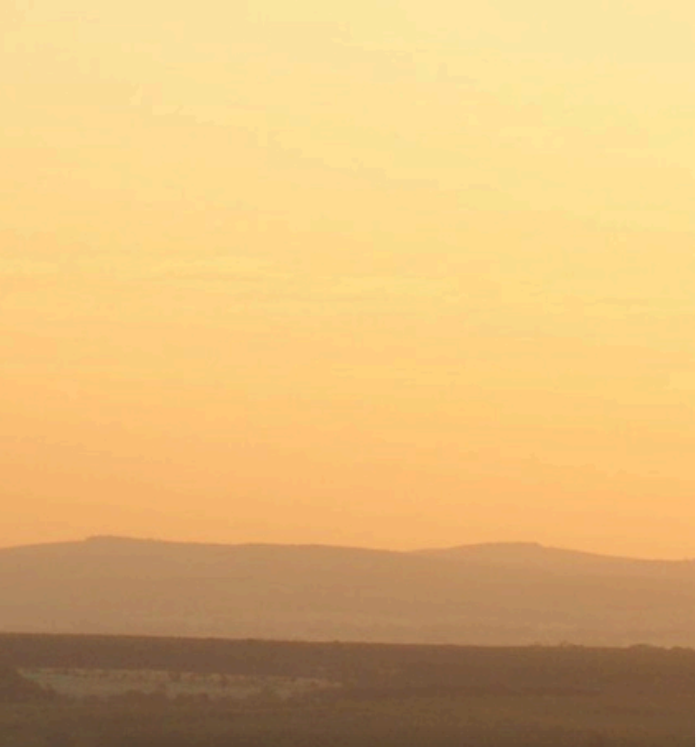
Always Was Always Will Be, Aboriginal Land.



## Recognition of Victim Survivors

The Gippsland Family Violence Alliance would like to acknowledge the victims and survivors of family violence, whose tenacity, advocacy and courage have shaped the family violence service sector and provided us with the evidence base for our work.

We would also like to acknowledge those who have lost their lives due to family violence and the families, friends and communities who have been impacted by these devastating crimes.



## Contents.

<b>How to use this orientation pack</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>History of the service system</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Orientation checklist</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Peak bodies</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The family violence service map</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The Gippsland family violence service map</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Family Violence Statistics</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The Gippsland Referral Pathway</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Service which make up the family violence system</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Framework which supports practice</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Resources which support clients</b>	<b>20</b>



# How to use this orientation pack

This orientation pack has been developed by the Gippsland Family Violence Alliance (GFVA) to support your understanding of the family violence service system in our region.

It is not intended to replace the information or induction materials provided by your employing agency or service. Instead, it offers broader sector knowledge to help you understand how your role connects to the wider family violence system.

This pack provides information about:

- The peak bodies that support and guide your work.
- How the sector is funded and structured.
- The geographic areas and program boundaries within Gippsland.
- The specific programs and services that make up the family violence sector.
- The role and purpose of the Gippsland Family Violence Alliance, our local Family Violence Regional Integration Committee.
- Regional resources and supports specific to the Gippsland service sector.

This resource is designed for use by both specialist family violence services and non-specialist services who play an important role in identifying, responding to, and preventing family violence.

Ultimately, the aim of this orientation pack is to connect you to ongoing communication pathways—such as our newsletter and website—and to support your continuous learning and practice development.

After all, preventing and responding to family violence is a shared responsibility across our entire service system.



**Learn more about the GFVA here:**



**Access it here**



# History of the service system

Family violence was not formally recognised as a crime in Australia until 1975. Before then, there were no dedicated services or supports for victim-survivors. Many women and children experiencing violence sought help through homelessness services or Department of Housing intake points, which were among the few avenues of support available.

During the 1960s and 1970s, alongside the women's liberation movement, grassroots feminist activists began organising refuges to provide safety and support for women escaping violence. Victoria's first women's refuge was established in 1974, and by 1979, there were 16 refuges across the state – including the first dedicated services for Aboriginal women and Italian women. By the late 1980s, more than 30 refuges were in operation.

In 1976, a group of leaders from this movement came together to form the Victorian Women's Refuge Group (VWRG), later known as Victorian Women's Refuges & Associated Domestic Violence Services (VWRADVS) – a key coordinating body advocating for systemic change and service improvement. In 2006, Victoria took a national lead with a Parliamentary Inquiry into Family Violence, marking a growing recognition of family violence as a public policy and criminal justice issue.

Following a number of tragic deaths between 2010 and 2015, the 2016 Royal Commission into Family Violence became a watershed moment. The Royal Commission made 227 recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Victorian Government. By 2023, all recommendations had been implemented, leading to significant investment, system reform, and the creation of a more integrated family violence system.

At the national level, the Federal Government's Standing Committee Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (2020) made 88 recommendations. Of these, the government supported 34, supported in principle 37, partially supported 1, noted 14, and did not support 2. These recommendations continue to inform the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children.

Throughout this history, coordination and collaboration have been recognised as essential to an effective service system – ensuring women's safety, improving responses, and identifying barriers to change.

In Gippsland, this commitment to collaboration has a strong local legacy, reflected in the region's history of community partnerships, including:

- Moe Emergency Relief Advisory Council
- Self-Help Ending Domesticity (SHED) Project
- Latrobe Valley Family Violence Forum
- Moe Family Violence Intervention Project
- Gippsland Family Violence Steering Committee
- Gippsland Family Violence Service Reform Steering Committee
- Gippsland Family Violence Alliance (Current).



**Learn more about the GFVA here:**

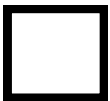


**Access it here**

# Orientation Checklist



Sign up to the GFVA Updates Newsletter, to stay up to date on updates from Gippsland Agencies, Statewide and Federal updates: <https://gippslandfamilyviolencealliance.com.au/practitioner-newsletter/>

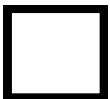


Follow us on Humanitix, to learn about training sessions, forums and communities of practice and other collaborative opportunities  
<https://events.humanitix.com/host/gippsland-family-violence-alliance>



Add the Gippsland Family Violence Alliance to your Google Shortcuts, so you can always utilise the tools, such as the service directory and information sharing tool.  
<https://gippslandfamilyviolencealliance.com.au/>

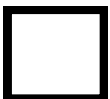
## Optional:



Follow us on Instagram:  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/DPcp7tqDzII/>



Follow us on LinkedIn:  
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/gippsland-family-violence-alliance/?viewAsMember=true>



If you work in the Men's Sector, including case management, group facilitation or family contact work, email [fvsupport@gfva.com.au](mailto:fvsupport@gfva.com.au) to register for the community of practice.

# Peak Bodies

A peak organisation (or peak body) is an Australian term used to describe an advocacy group that represents a collective of organisations, industries, or professionals with shared interests.

Peak bodies are typically established to develop sector-wide standards and best practices, provide guidance to their members, and advocate on their behalf to government and other decision-makers. They play a key role in shaping policy, promoting collaboration, and supporting consistency across the sector.

Unlike unions, which represent individual workers, peak bodies represent organisations or professional groups. You can often join your relevant peak body or access its resources and services to stay informed and connected within your field.

## Safe and Equal

Safe and Equal is the peak body for specialist family violence services that provide support to victim survivors in Victoria.

**Learn more about Safe and Equal here:**



**[Access here](#)**

## No To Violence

Not To Violence is the largest peak body in Australia for organisations and individuals who work with men to end family violence.

**Learn more about No to Violence here:**



**[Access here](#)**

## Sexual Assault Services Victoria

The CFECFW represent over 100 Victorian organisations working across the continuum of child and family services, from prevention and early intervention to the provision of out of home care. Our members are at the forefront of supporting children, young people and families.

**Learn more about SAS Vic here:**



**[Access here](#)**

## Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare

Sexual Assault Services Victoria (SASVic) is the peak body for specialist sexual assault and harmful sexual behaviour services in Victoria.

**Learn more about CFECFW here:**



**[Access here](#)**



# The family violence service map

The Family Violence Service System in Victoria is primarily funded by the Victorian Government. Agencies within the system receive funding that may be:

- Ongoing: continuing across budget cycles, or
- Fixed-term: provided for a specific period, typically between 18 months and 3 years.

Each funded program operates under program guidelines, which outline key expectations and requirements. However, as these are guidelines rather than prescriptive rules, there is some variation in how programs are delivered across different regions.

The state of Victoria is divided into 17 distinct service system areas, each with its own local governance and coordination structures. These areas are illustrated in the map below:

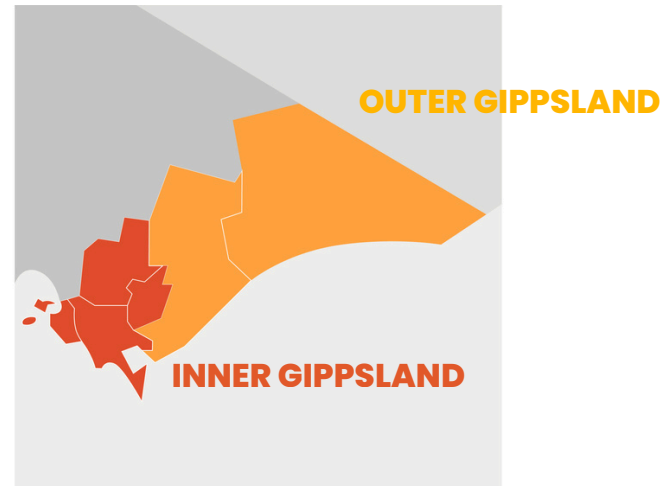


There are a few programs which are funded by the Federal Government. However, these will typically be for a fixed term period and do not typically follow the 17 DFFH service system area's.

# The Gippsland family violence service map

Gippsland has two service systems:

- **Inner Gippsland** which includes Baw Baw, Bass Coast, South Gippsland and Latrobe
- **Outer Gippsland** which includes Wellington and East Gippsland



## Family violence statistics in Gippsland

Gippsland LGA's have high rates of family violence due to gender inequality, which has resulted in unequal outcomes for men and women in economic, education and health opportunities within our Gippsland communities.

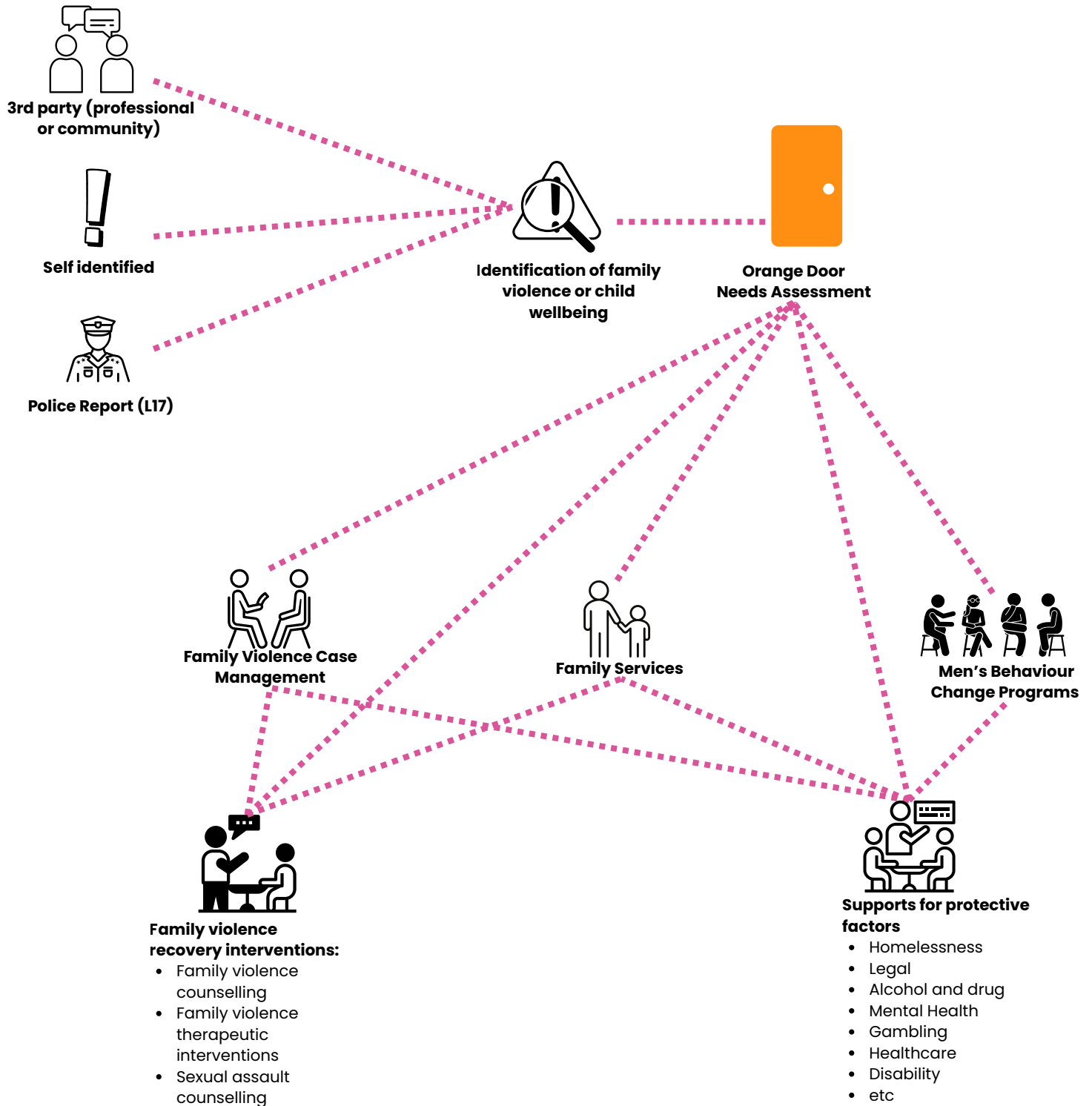
Family Violence exists in all our communities, regardless of race, gender, religion or economic status, with much of it going unreported and unseen.

**The GFVA has a downloadable resource with the statistics.**



[Access it here](#)

# Referral pathway in Gippsland





# Services which make up the Family Violence System

The Gippsland Family Violence Alliance has a comprehensive service directory. This includes specialist family violence agencies but also services which can support the protective factors of those using or experiencing violence.

**Access the Service Directory here:**



**[Access it here](#)**

# Services which make up the Family Violence System

## Intake

Following the Royal Commission into Family Violence, the Victorian Government established The Orange Door (TOD) – a central intake point for family violence and child wellbeing services. There are 17 TODs across the state.

Each TOD is a partnership of local agencies, which may vary by region but always include:

- Services supporting victim-survivors
- Services supporting people who use violence
- Family Services (formerly ChildFIRST)
- Child Protection
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)

TOD teams are supported by Family Safety Victoria staff, including Client Support Officers, a Hub Manager, and a Service System Navigator.

The Orange Door provides initial intake and assessment, including:

- Risk assessment and safety planning
- Identifying goals and referring to appropriate services

Clients typically engage with TOD for around two weeks, not including any waiting periods for services.

Referrals can be made through:

- Self-referral
- Police reports (L17) following a family violence incident
- Third-party referrals, such as from teachers, GPs, or other professionals

Please note: The family violence service system operates with a 'No Wrong Door' approach which allows clients to present directly to family violence specialist services. This operates differently in each area.



The Victorian Government has created a range of resources to support practitioners work with the TODs

To find the contact information for Gippsland's intake's, scan the QR Code



# Services which make up the Family Violence System

## Case Management, Victim-Survivors

Specialist family violence service case management is for those who need additional support to manage their risk due to family violence or recover from family violence. This could be because of the risk level of the situation or the intersectional needs of the client/family. Children and young people are included as individual clients for case management.

### Case management can include:

- Risk assessment
- Risk management
- Assessing the need for brokerage/personal safety initiatives
- Safety planning
- Advocacy
- Psycho-social needs assessment
- Case planning
- Coordination of services
- Referrals

Length of engagement with case management will vary on the needs and risk level of the client/family.

People present to case management via:

- Self referral - to the agency (it's not guaranteed they will meet criteria)
- A referral from the TOD





# Services which make up the Family Violence System

## Family Violence Counselling, Victim-Survivors

Family Violence Counselling is used to support the recovery of people who have experienced family violence. This includes children, however each service has it's own age range that they will support.

The purpose of family violence counselling is:

- to support the person to understand and process their experience
- rebuild the relationship between the children and the non-offending parent
- to empower the person in their life

Referrals to family violence counselling should be made when the client is in a stable living situation and the family violence risk has been managed. Family Violence Counsellors are Family Violence Specialists, so they will check in to assess if risk changes throughout their engagement and refer back to intake or case management as necessary.

Engagement is typically 13 weeks.

People present to counselling via:

- Self referral - to the agency
- A referral from the TOD
- A referral from other services



# Services which make up the Family Violence System

## Family Violence Therapeutic Interventions

Family Violence Therapeutic Interventions support the recovery of people who have experienced family violence. This includes children, however each service has its own age range that they will support.

Therapeutic Interventions can include:

- Group work
- One on one therapies

The program will do a needs assessment with the family.

The purpose of Family Violence Therapeutic Interventions is to:

- support the person to understand and process their experience
- rebuild the relationship between the children and the non-offending parent
- to empower the person in their life

Referrals to Family Violence Therapeutic Interventions should be made when the client is in a stable living situation and the family violence risk has been managed. Family Violence Therapeutic Practitioners are Family Violence Specialists, so they will check in to assess if risk changes throughout their engagement and refer back to intake or case management as necessary.

People present to counselling via:

- Self referral - to the agency
- A referral from the TOD
- A referral from other services



Please Note: this page will go to the Service Directory under: Children Experiencing Family Violence. Therapeutic Interventions is the Government Funding name

# Services which make up the Family Violence System

## Sexual Assault Counselling

Sexual assault counselling is used to support the recovery of people who have experienced sexual violence. This includes children, however each service has it's own age range that they will support.

The purpose of sexual assault counselling is:

- to support the person to understand and process their experience
- rebuild the relationship between the children and the non-offending parent
- to empower the person in their life

Referrals to sexual assault counselling should be made when the client is in a stable living situation and the family violence risk has been managed. Sexual Assault Counsellors are Specialists, so they will check in to assess if risk levels change during their engagement.

People present to counselling via:

- Self referral – to the agency
- A referral from the TOD
- A referral from other services





# Services which make up the Family Violence System

## Men's Behaviour Programs

Men's Behaviour Change Programs are for men who have chosen to use violence in their relationships who are over the age of 18. These are voluntary programs. Men will be assessed by the agency on their suitability for the program, which is based on their insights into their behaviour, readiness to change and whether they are in a stable living environment.

The Men's Program can consist of:

- Assessment
- Case management
- Group Program

Some men will engage in all aspects of the program, some may only qualify for parts. Engagement is typically 12-25 weeks.

The program is supported by a Family Contact Worker who supports the victim-survivor. Their role is to monitor safety and risk.

People present to Men's Behaviour Programs via:

- Self referral - to the agency
- A referral from the TOD
- A referral from other services



The Victorian Government has created resources for the Men's Behaviour Change Programs - scan the QR Code



To find contact information for Gippsland's Men's Behaviour change agencies - scan the QR Code



# Services which make up the Family Violence System

## Child Wellbeing and Family Services

The TOD's are also the central intake for Child Wellbeing concerns. Factors that may affect a child's safety, stability or development are:

- significant parenting problems
- serious family conflict, including family breakdown
- a family member's physical or mental illness, substance abuse, disability or bereavement
- families that are isolated, unsupported or young
- significant social or economic disadvantage

TOD's will do the initial intake with a person/family, this will typically include:

- Risk Assessment
- Safety Plan
- Identification of goals
- Referral to relevant service

Referral into Family Services: Family Services Interventions are determined by both an assessment of need, and the development of a child and family action plan. This plan determines the goals of intervention for the child and family, and details the interventions to be undertaken.

Intervention approaches may include:

- outreach
- in home support
- family decision making/family group conferencing
- group work
- counselling
- brokerage
- accessing universal services
- secondary consultations.

The aim being to enhance parenting capacity and skills, parent-child relationships, child development, and social connectedness.

Referrals for Family Services are through the TOD.



The Victorian Government has created guidelines and resources for family services - Scan the QR Code

To find contact information for Gippsland's family services agencies - scan the QR Code



# Services which make up the Family Violence System

## Community Legal Centres

Community Legal Centres (CLCs) are independent community organisations that provide free advice, casework and legal education to their communities. These centres are an integral part of the justice sector.

Community legal centres (CLCs) are independent community organisations that provide free advice, casework and legal education to their communities. These centres are an integral part of the justice sector.

Some are generalist centres that assist people with issues such as credit and debt, family law, family violence, victims of crime compensation and neighbourhood disputes, while others specialise in particular areas of law, such as tenancy, consumer, employment, human rights, elder abuse, environmental and immigration law.

Community Legal Centres can assist our clients with family violence matters which overlap with the law, such as:

- Intervention Orders
- Child Protection Cases
- Tenancy issues
- Fines accumulated as a result of family violence and more...

Young people can also seek their own legal advice independently of any parent or guardian.



Scan the QR Code to access Peninsula Community Legal Centre's FREE E-Learn Modules on Family Violence and the Law



To find contact information for CLC's - scan the QR Code



# Services which make up the Family Violence System

## Aboriginal-led family violence services within Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO's)

Family violence services for Aboriginal people are being delivered under Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way, the key Aboriginal-led Victorian Agreement that commits community, services and government to strengthening the lives of Aboriginal people, families and communities and to enable people to live free from family violence.

Services are community-driven, Aboriginal-designed and led. They help people to navigate the family violence service system and walk alongside them until they are safely connected with specialist services that meet their needs.

ACCO's are within the Intake teams in TOD.

ACCO's also have:

- Case management
- Men's Behaviour Change
- Family Violence Counselling
- Family Violence Therapeutic Interventions
- Sexual Assault Counselling
- Legal and more...

ACCO's undertake the same work, but in a culturally specific manner. All services are different and adapt to the needs of their community.

Not all members of the Aboriginal community will choose to access ACCO's when seeking assistance, but it is important for practitioners to seek secondary consultations to ensure they are providing a culturally safe service.



# Framework which supports practice

The Victorian Government has developed the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework which supports working with those who use and experience family violence. This framework includes how to assess for risk and how to undertake risk mitigation. It is required that you work collaboratively for this framework to protect families.

**Access the MARAM Portal here:**

**[Access it here](#)**



# Framework that supports practice

## What is Family Violence?

It is important that everyone – practitioners, community members, and partner organisations – develops a consistent and shared understanding of family violence. A common language and understanding helps ensure that people receive the right support, risk is recognised early, and responses are safe and appropriate.

To support this, we have created a dedicated page designed for both community members and practitioners. It provides clear information about what family violence is, how it can present, and the ways we can all contribute to safety and accountability.

**Access the Family Violence Information page here:**



[Access it here](#)

## Information Sharing

To support effective information sharing, under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) or Children Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) we have established an Information Sharing Hub. The Hub helps practitioners understand what information is held by which services, how to make a request, and provides guidance on safe and appropriate sharing practices.

**Access the Information Sharing Hub here:**



[Access it here](#)

## Practitioner Portal

We have developed a Practitioner Portal to support you in navigating the MARAM Framework and applying it in your everyday work. The portal provides practical tools, guidance, and resources to help you assess and manage risk, strengthen collaboration across services, and build confidence in working with both victim survivors and people using violence.

Within the portal, you'll find access to up-to-date practice guides, templates, training opportunities, and examples of collaborative approaches in action. It's designed to be a central place where practitioners can learn, connect, and contribute to consistent and effective family violence practice across Gippsland.

**Access the Practitioner Portal here:**



[Access it here](#)





# **Resources which support clients**

We have resources that can be used with community, to help direct them to safety. We have range of posters and wallet sized cards, community presentations and social media posts which can be used when working in a community setting.

# Resources which support clients

## STOP Family Violence Resources

The STOP Family Violence resources include a range of posters and information cards designed to raise awareness and connect people with support. These resources can be displayed within your organisation or distributed throughout the community to help individuals understand where and how to access assistance.

**Access the STOP Family Violence Resources here:**



**[Access it here](#)**

## Advocating for client rights

To help clients understand their rights and feel confident in raising concerns, we have developed a dedicated webpage that guides them through the complaints process. This resource provides clear information about what they can expect from services, how to provide feedback, and the steps to take if they wish to make a formal complaint. Our goal is to ensure that every person accessing support feels heard, respected, and empowered to speak up when something doesn't feel right.

**Access the understand my rights here:**



**[Access it here](#)**

## Community Presentations

From time to time community groups will request presentations or information sessions about family violence. In an effort to provide a consistent level of information, we developed a 30min and 1 hour community presentation that is available for any agency who needs it.

**Access the community presentations here:**



**[Access it here](#)**



© 2025 This publication is subject to  
copyright

[www.gippslandfamilyviolencealliance.com.au](http://www.gippslandfamilyviolencealliance.com.au)