

Information Sharing Schemes and the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM)

Factsheet for Mental Health Services

Contents

Required training.....	1
What are the Information Sharing Schemes?	2
Who can you share information with?.....	2
What information can you share?	3
What is MARAM?.....	3
MARAM Responsibilities.....	4
Working with perpetrators	4
How do perpetrators use family violence?	4
As outlined in the MARAM guidance, perpetrators use family violence:.....	4
MARAM alignment.....	5
Training and resources for health workforces	5

Required training

Information Sharing Scheme training - the required online training for all mental health service staff is:

- **Information Sharing Scheme eLearn course:** This course is available for health workforces to assist their understanding of the Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes and how they relate to their everyday work. The three modules cover the topics of Essentials for health professionals, Purposes and requirements, and Consent and privacy and take approximately 20 minutes each to complete. To register, go to: <https://elearn.childlink.com.au>

MARAM training for mental health service staff based in hospitals - the required online training is:

- **SHRFV Victim Survivor Intermediate:** This course is suitable for professionals within hospitals with Intermediate responsibilities under MARAM. This training supports practitioners to understand their responsibilities, and to develop the skills and knowledge required in their role. This includes: an applied understanding of the MARAM Framework, practice guidance and tools; foundational knowledge and practice skills to support effective engagement, risk identification, assessment and management at an Intermediate level. This training focuses on working with both adult and child

victim survivors of family violence. It does not address working with perpetrators of family violence. It consists of 4 modules and runs for 2.5 hours in total. To access this course, go to <https://elearn.childlink.com.au/>, sign up for an account (unless you have one), select 'Health Workforces', select 'eLearn: SHRFV MARAM victim survivor Intermediate course', then select 'Enrol me'.

MARAM training for mental health service staff based in other services (outside the hospital system) - the required online training is:

- **MARAM eLearn training for Victim Survivor Brief and Intermediate:** This course is designed to support practitioners with Brief and Intermediate MARAM practice responsibilities. It has been tailored to Department of Health workforces including mental health services, Alcohol and Other Drugs services, Early Parenting Centres and other practitioners at the Brief and Intermediate level in other health services including Community Health services. It is designed for professionals whose purpose of intervention is linked to family violence and engaging with people in crisis situations, or those at high risk of experiencing or using family violence. To register, go to: <https://elearn.childlink.com.au>

What are the Information Sharing Schemes?

The Victorian Government has introduced laws to make it easier for professionals to collaborate with each other, and better support the children and families they are working with:

- **The Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)** forms Part 6a of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* and enables the sharing of information to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or a group of children. The CISS prioritises wellbeing and safety over privacy. This allows professionals to collaborate and share information, without consent, where they can prevent potential future harm or help a child thrive.
- **The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)** forms Part 5a of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* allows the sharing of information to assess or manage family violence risk in relation to both children and adults. The FVISS enables the service system to manage victim survivor safety and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions and behaviours. Where no children are involved, consent from the adult victim survivor is required, only when it is appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so. Information sharing requests made under FVISS must relate to one of the following purposes:
 - for a family violence assessment purpose
 - for a family violence protection purpose (to manage risk, including ongoing risk assessment and management)

Who can you share information with?

Organisations who are prescribed under one or more of the Schemes are referred to as Information Sharing Entities (ISEs). You may only share information using the Schemes with organisations/workforces that are also ISEs. In addition, you can share perpetrator information with the victim survivor to manage a risk to safety and information under CISS to manage risk to a child's safety. You can continue to share information with other organisations/workforces using your existing permissions to share.

Health services that are prescribed under the information sharing schemes include:

- Bush Nursing Centres
- General practitioners and general practice nurses
- Health services (hospitals)
- Ambulance Victoria

- Community health services
- Alcohol and Other Drugs services
- State-funded Aged Care services
- **Mental health services (community-managed and designated services)**
- Early Parenting Centres
- Maternal and Child Health services

Victoria Police, courts, Child Protection, state-funded family violence specialist services, schools and early childhood education and care services are also ISEs.

All organisations and services prescribed as ISEs can access the online ISE list. This online list is a searchable database that can be used to identify other organisations and services prescribed under the Schemes. Access the list via the [VicGov website](https://iselist.www.vic.gov.au/ise/list) <https://iselist.www.vic.gov.au/ise/list>.

What information can you share?

Information that is relevant to assessing and/or managing family violence, or promoting the safety or wellbeing of children can be shared provided that:

- the information is not excluded
 - excluded information includes information that may endanger a person's life or physical safety, prejudice an investigation or a coronial enquiry, contravene legal professional privilege, contravene a court order or law that prohibits the disclosure of the information, is contrary to public interest or contravenes a court order or law that prohibits the disclosure of the information (See Section 41Q of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act and Section 144C of the Family Violence Protection Act)
- sharing the information does not contravene another law
- the applicable consent requirements have been met.

You are still required to share information the way you currently do under your existing permissions and legislative responsibilities. The Schemes do not affect reporting obligations to Child Protection or Police.

What is MARAM?

The Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes are being implemented with the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM). MARAM has been designed to increase the safety and wellbeing of Victorians by supporting prescribed services to identify, assess and manage family violence risk effectively.

MARAM sets out key principles and pillars that should be embedded into an organisation's policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools, and identifies the responsibilities of various organisations and staff across the system. MARAM has been established in law under a new Part 11 of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*.

Your role in assessing and managing family violence risk will be dependent on the nature of your work and contact with those experiencing family violence. Identification, assessment and management of family violence risk is a shared responsibility across a broad range of services, organisations and sectors.

MARAM Responsibilities

There are three levels of MARAM responsibilities: Screening and Identification, Brief and Intermediate and Comprehensive. MARAM responsibilities underpin each of these levels.

Most workers in mental health services align to the Brief and Intermediate level of MARAM.

1. Screening and Identification	2. Brief and Intermediate	3. Comprehensive
<p>A practitioner who may come in contact with family violence victim survivors whilst providing universal services.</p>	<p>A practitioner who in the line of their work has some contact with people experiencing or using family violence but where responding to family violence is not their core role or function.</p>	<p>A practitioner whose role is to respond to people experiencing or using family violence.</p>
<p>MARAM Responsibilities: 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 10 1: Respectful, sensitive and safe engagement 2. Identification of family violence 5. Seek consultation for comprehensive risk assessment, risk management and referrals 6. Contribute to information sharing with other services (as authorised by legislation) 9. Contribute to coordinated risk management 10. Collaborate for ongoing risk assessment and risk management</p>	<p>MARAM Responsibilities: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10 3. Intermediate risk assessment 4. Intermediate risk management</p>	<p>MARAM Responsibilities: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 7. Comprehensive assessment 8. Comprehensive risk management and safety planning.</p>

Working with perpetrators

As described throughout the Foundation Knowledge Guide family violence is deeply gendered. While both men and women can be perpetrators or victim survivors of family violence, overwhelmingly, perpetrators are men, who largely perpetrate violence against women (who are their current or former partner) and children. Family violence is a choice by a perpetrator to use behaviours for the purposes of power and control. Perpetrators use coercive tactics and violent controlling behaviour to gain power over one or more victim survivors. Responsibility for the use of violence rests solely with the perpetrator.

How do perpetrators use family violence?

As outlined in the MARAM guidance, perpetrators use family violence:

- To control or dominate a family member and cause them to fear for their or another’s safety or wellbeing
- As a chosen behaviour to overpower and control someone close. They may use coercive control, from one incident or cumulative behaviour, to gain power. Only the perpetrator is responsible this abuse.
- In gendered ways, based on inequalities. Most perpetrators are male-gendered, and/or the dominant partner, who use violence against past or present female partners, and their children.

For more on coordinated risk management see [Practice Guide Responsibility 9:](#)

< <https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-professionals-working-adults-using-family-violence/responsibility-9>>

Please note that the training for working with perpetrators is not yet available.

MARAM alignment

Prescribed organisations are required to effectively incorporate the four pillars of the Framework into existing policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools. MARAM alignment requires that embedding activities are guided by the 10 MARAM principles, incorporate the contents of the four pillars (and in particular the evidence-based risk factors and MARAM aligned tools) and assign MARAM responsibilities. The following steps have been recommended for organisation leaders to support MARAM alignment:

1. Read MARAM policy and practice documents.
2. Identify or establish governance to oversee the change process.
3. Read, understand and determine MARAM responsibilities for roles within their organisation.
4. Assess organisational landscape for interactions with family violence and existing tools used.
5. Identify and review organisational policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools that will require updating to reflect MARAM. Also identify the need for any new materials as appropriate.
6. Assess training needs and implement a training strategy.

Training and resources for health workforces

Information sharing training for practitioners:

Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes eLearn modules are available for funded organisations. The modules have been developed to assist practitioners understand and use the Schemes in their everyday work. Each module takes approximately 20 minutes to complete and covers Essentials for Health service professionals, Purposes and Requirements, and Consent and Privacy. To access these eLearn modules go to: <https://elearn.childlink.com.au/> and click on the Department of Health.

Further information, training options and resources are available on the [Victorian Government's information sharing website](https://www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-schemes-and-the-maram-framework) < <https://www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-schemes-and-the-maram-framework>>.

Information sharing resources for organisations:

Organisational readiness checklist is for organisational leaders to determine the responsibilities under both information sharing schemes and to identify policies and procedures that require updating to reflect obligations under both schemes. The checklist is available at: <https://www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing>

Ministerial Guidelines have been developed on both information sharing schemes to provide direction to ISEs on how to apply Part 5A in sharing information with other ISEs in relation to assessing or managing risk of family violence and includes guidance and resources to ensure that information is shared appropriately and responsibly < <https://www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing>>.

All services prescribed as ISEs can access the online **ISE list**. Access the list via the [VicGov website](https://www.vic.gov.au/ise/list) <<https://www.vic.gov.au/ise/list>>.

MARAM Leading Alignment training for organisational leaders:

MARAM Leading Alignment training is available for organisational leaders who have decision making responsibilities to embed MARAM within the organisation's context. The training promotes an understanding of the MARAM framework, including key strategies and requirements such as practice, policies and procedures necessary to align with MARAM.

Further information and course enrolment are available on the [DVRCV website](https://training.dvrcv.org.au/course-details/?course_id=78680&course_type=w) <
https://training.dvrcv.org.au/course-details/?course_id=78680&course_type=w>.

MARAM training for practitioners:

SHRFV Victim Survivor Intermediate: This course is suitable for professionals within hospitals with Intermediate responsibilities under MARAM. This training supports practitioners to understand their responsibilities, and to develop the skills and knowledge required in their role. This includes: an applied understanding of the MARAM Framework, practice guidance and tools; foundational knowledge and practice skills to support effective engagement, risk identification, assessment and management at an Intermediate level. This training focuses on working with both adult and child victim survivors of family violence. It does not address working with perpetrators of family violence. It consists of 4 modules and runs for 2.5 hours in total.

To access this course, go to <https://elearn.childlink.com.au/>, sign up for an account (unless you have one), select 'Health Workforces', select 'eLearn: SHRFV MARAM victim survivor Intermediate course', then select 'Enrol me'.

MARAM Screening and Identification eLearn course for practitioners working with victim survivors:

This training is suitable for practitioners who work in health services (outside the hospital system) who may encounter family violence victim survivors in a one-off situation or in a series of events, as part of their normal work. The course is designed to provide practitioners with a shared understanding of family violence and help practitioners confidently identify and respond to family violence risks and collaborate with specialist services. The course has three modules. Each module runs for approximately 30 minutes.

To access this course, go to <https://elearn.childlink.com.au/>, sign up for an account (unless you have one), select 'Health Workforces', select 'eLearn: MARAM victim survivor Screening and Identification course', then select 'Enrol me'.

MARAM Brief and Intermediate eLearn course for practitioners working with victim survivors:

This course is tailored for Department of Health workforces based in services outside the hospital system including mental health services, Alcohol and Other Drugs services, and other practitioners at the Brief and Intermediate level in other health services including Community Health services. The package consists of three modules. Each module runs for approximately 30 minutes. They cover: a shared understanding of family violence, an introduction to MARAM and the assessment tools, the Structured Professional Judgement model, risk assessment, risk management including working with specialist family violence services and safety planning.

To access this course, go to <https://elearn.childlink.com.au/>, sign up for an account (unless you have one), select 'Health Workforces', select 'eLearn: MARAM victim survivor Brief and Intermediate course', then select 'Enrol me'.

Family Violence Foundation eLearn module

A stand-alone Family Violence Foundation eLearn module has been developed for practitioners who may have limited family violence knowledge, or they might be new to working with people who have experienced family violence. This module covers understanding and recognising family violence, using an intersectional lens and your role in responding to family violence. The module is 30 minutes.

To access this course, go to <https://elearn.childlink.com.au/>, sign up for an account (unless you have one), select 'Health Workforces', select 'eLearn: Family Violence Foundation', then select 'Enrol me'.

MARAM resources:

MARAM Organisational Embedding guide and supporting resources are available on the [VicGov website](https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources) <<https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources>> under Organisational focussed resources.

Resources to assist organisations and workers implement MARAM and upskill in family violence knowledge and practice are available on the [Vic Gov MARAM website](https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources) <<https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources>>.

Further information:

For further information about training and resources available to support health workforces implement these reforms, please email: infosharing@health.vic.gov.au