

Observable signs – identifying adults

using family violence

Resource for case practice support workers, Child Protection

(this resource also contains useful information to support child protection practitioners, Secure Care and Hurstbridge Farm)

This resource is based on the *MARAM adult using family violence (AUFV) identification tool* and can be used by child protection practitioners (practitioners) who have contact with Child Protection client’s parents and carers.

Use this observation sheet to identify narratives or behaviours linked to the use of family violence.

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| Observed narrative: beliefs or attitudes |
| * Makes statements that indicate sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, ableist, ageist or racist beliefs (denigrating person or group based on identity). * Makes statements that indicate gendered entitlement to power, control and decision making. * Makes statements that indicate belief in ownership over victim survivors. * Comments negatively on victim survivor’s decisions and actions. * Pathologises victim survivor (describing their behaviour or presentation as behavioural disorder, mental illness, or addiction). * Displays limited empathy or desire to understand experiences of victim survivor. * Complains that victim survivor does not show them ‘respect’. * Openly dismisses victim survivor’s viewpoints or needs, particularly if it conflicts with their own. * Makes decisions for adult victim survivor. * Displays indictors of ownership and entitlement, in relation to children and rights to contact or custody. * Discloses they have no contact or limited contact with biological children from previous relationship(s). * Threatens to report partner or ex-partner to authorities about their ‘poor parenting’. * Criticises ex-partner or current partner’s parenting (put downs, devaluing worth). |
| Observed behaviours: physical or verbal behaviour |
| * Displays controlling behaviour. * Displays indicators of jealousy and/or possessiveness. * Displays indicators of fixation with victim survivor’s actions and whereabouts (monitoring, rumination, and intent focus). * Controls adult victim survivor’s finances or access to employment. * Demonstrates threatening non-verbal behaviour (physical stand over, intrusion into personal space). * Hostile language and attitudes towards authority figures and systems. * Talks about victim survivor in emotionally abusive or degrading ways. * Interrupts, corrects, or dominates victim survivor in conversation. * Raises voice or yells. * Is violent or controlling towards victim survivor before, during or after the visit. * Insists on sitting in on appointments with victim survivor. * Discloses any harm or threat to harm animals or pets. * Physical signs of violent altercation (on the victim survivor or adult suspected of using violence). * Expresses feelings of excessive anger that is ‘outside their control’. * Discloses they have targeted or damaged victim survivor’s property. |
| Observed narratives: Minimising or justifying |
| * Minimising physical harm or neglectful behaviour. * Direct comments or euphemisms that could indicate use of violence. * Presents or talks about themselves as the real victim (victim stance). * Presents as having difficulty with emotional or behavioural regulation. * Blames other people especially victim survivor for behaviour. * Uses impulsivity as a justification of violent and abusive behaviours (may relate to presenting needs such as mental health, use of alcohol/drugs). |
| Observed narrative or behaviour: Practitioner or staff experience |
| * Tries to get you to agree with their negative views about a partner, child, or family member (invitation to collude) throughout service engagement, over time. * Practitioner or staff observes or feels intimidated, manipulated, or controlled during sessions. |
| Immediate risk |
| * Discloses a targeted threat to kill or harm themselves or others. |
| Other risk-relevant information |
| * Note any other information that will be relevant to share for family violence risk assessment and risk management. This may include information relating to AUFV’s presenting needs and circumstances. * Presenting needs and circumstances you become aware of may include information relating to the AUFV’s:   + personal identity, status of relationships   + social and community connections   + presence of other statutory and legal interventions   + practical or environmental issues. |
| Decisions and actions |
| * If immediate risk is present, contact your manager and the child’s Child Protection case manager, or Child Protection After Hours service. Contact police or security if immediate action is required for the safety of yourself, the child, adult victim survivor or the AUFV (suicide or self-harm). * If the observed narratives or behaviour indicate or disclose the use of family violence, discuss with your manager, and share the information with the child’s Child Protection case manager, and record the information on the Client Relationship Information System (CRIS), or as per your program’s case recording requirements. |