

Reform Implementation Community of Practice



TOPIC: Intersectionality

On Wednesday 25 November the Regional Family Violence Partnership held the third Reform Implementation Community of Practice facilitated by Nina Levin from VACCA on the topic of Intersectionality. There was a wide representation from practitioners, team leaders and peak bodies working in the Specialist Family Violence, Sexual Assault, AOD, Mental Health, Maternal and Child Health, Integrated Family Services, Justice, Housing/Homelessness and Community Health sectors.

Group updates on how organisations are progressing with MARAM alignment included:

- Some organisations have completed family violence policy and procedure manuals/guidelines including updating intake documents
- Many organisations are still waiting for MARAM training for staff to be available
- MARAM tools and MARAM training is not fitting into Mental Health service, some guidelines are being updated but still using CRAF
- One organisation is holding monthly 'embedding MARAM' meeting
- Intermediate and Comprehensive MARAM have similar Risk Assessments, the only difference is intersectionality component, query about why intersectionality is not across all Risk Assessments
- One organisation is looking at what responsibilities each position in the organisation have
- Organisations that are partially state/federally funded are having difficulty with alignment

Panel

Morgan Hunter (Family Violence Team Leader, Anglicare), Sophia Tipping (Disability Inclusion Advisor, DV Vic) and Rachel Foster (Manager of Practice & Development, BWAHS) shared how they see the dynamics of power and social inequality operating with the people they work with (or their member services work with) and how they use an intersectional approach in practice.

Intersectionality

- DV Vic uses an Intersectional feminist lens and social model of disability, advocating that disability occurs within the social environment rather than being inherent in a person. For example the inability to access a building is because of the presence of stairs or absence of a ramp, not because of a person's inability to walk.
- Understanding how power and privilege operate to reward certain dominant groups of people (in this example - able bodied people) and exclude other marginalised groups (e.g. people with a disability) is key in an intersectional approach.

Responsive and culturally appropriate practice

- Morgan Hunter spoke about the limitations of western concepts of family violence in the context of the Mandarin speaking Men's Behaviour Change Program.

- As well as adapting the MBCP language, cultural considerations are also important when explaining concepts around gender or family violence. For example, family violence legislation in China is very different to Australia, so discussing family violence in a Human Rights context alongside Australian legislation is helpful.



Understanding that there is a range of reasons why people can't access safety

- Historical and current experiences Aboriginal people have with the police may mean that calling 000 is not part of a client's safety plan.
- Clients with a disability may fear their children will be removed because of how their disability is perceived.

MARAM and ISS considerations

- Adapt policies, procedures and tools including MARAM to suit the needs of your clients
- Taking time to have conversation about sharing information – how and why we share information, not just signing a consent form at start of engagement – is important.

Educating yourself

- Understanding relevant legislation: Legislative recognition of family-like relationships included as family violence is very important because it includes carers and kinship structures.
- Training is needed for staff around asking questions about disability including asking questions if a client has suffered a head injury or concussion to ascertain if they may have an acquired brain injury.

Examining our own power and privilege

- Rachel highlighted the importance of being conscious of invisible privilege and power dynamics. Knowing what privilege you have in the spaces you are in and the impact that you have, watch for sense of entitlement.

MARAM Collaborative Practice training presented by EDVOS education and training team

EDVOS is offering free MARAM Collaborative Practice training sessions to Tier 2, 3 & 4 professionals who respond to family violence in the Eastern Metropolitan Region. At the Community of Practice, EDVOS trainer Ellen presented the section of the training focusing on Intersectionality. This included:

- What is intersectionality? Examining the theory including the origins of the term coined by Kimberly Crenshaw.
- Centring about amplifying marginalised voices.
- The importance of educating ourselves and understanding power and privilege.
- Viewing a privilege walk; a group activity that is designed to visually represent privilege and create awareness and understanding among participants.

For more information on the MARAM Collaborative Practice training click [here](#).