

A photograph showing two women sitting at a white table, engaged in a conversation. The woman on the left is wearing a blue and red patterned top and is gesturing with her hands. The woman on the right is wearing a grey turtleneck sweater and glasses, with her hands clasped. In the background, a large banner for inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence is visible. The banner features the organization's logo, name, website (intouch.org.au), and a graphic of a hand holding a face.

inTouch

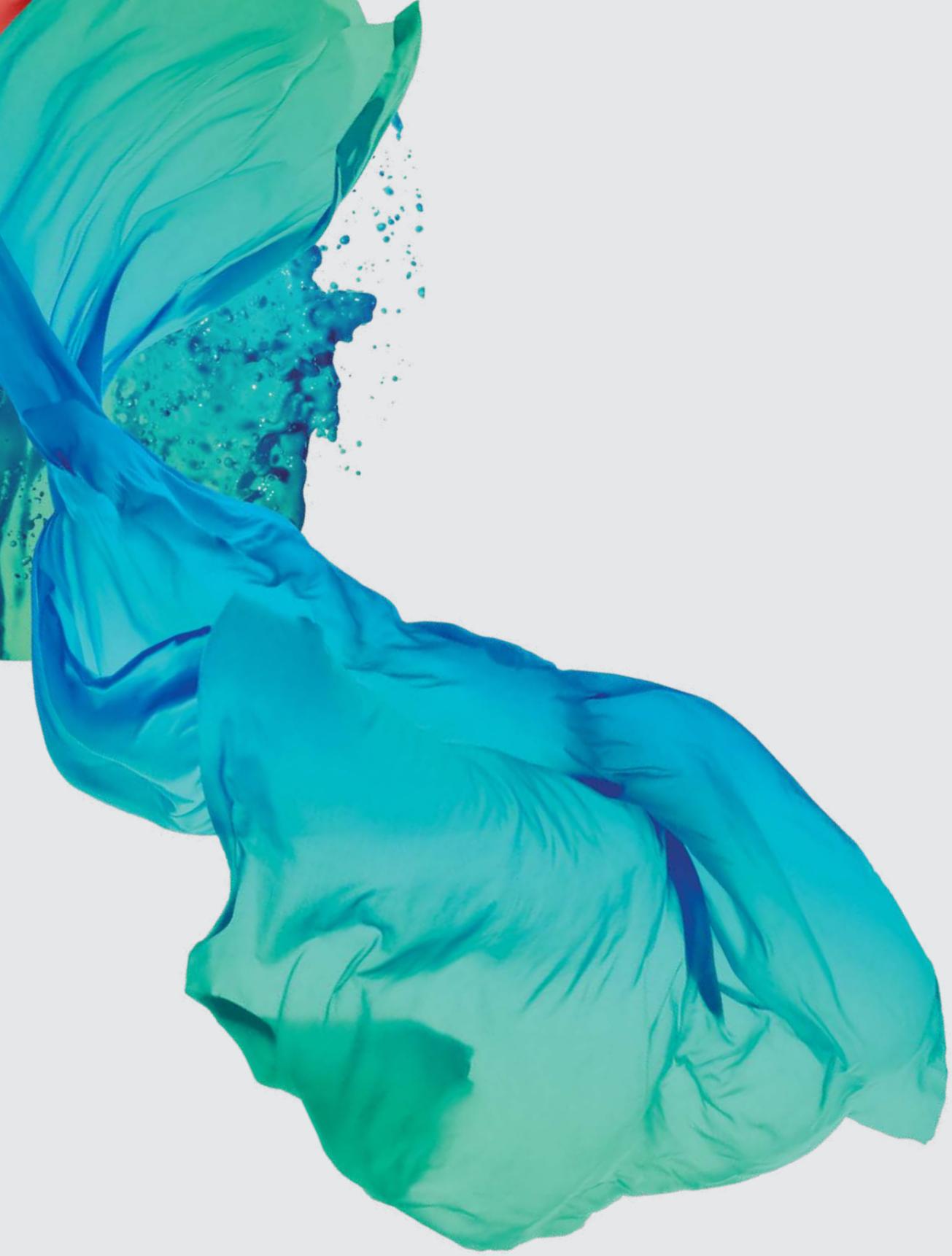
Multicultural Centre
Against Family Violence

intouch.org.au

Direct client services delivery model

inTouch

Multicultural Centre
Against Family Violence



About us

Multiculturalism is a reality, with almost 30% of Australians born overseas, and almost half of the Victorian population having at least one parent born overseas.

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence (inTouch) is a statewide organisation that provides integrated, culturally tailored services to migrant and refugee communities experiencing family violence across Victoria.

Over the past 35 years, we have addressed the specific needs of these communities and have helped over 18,000 women experiencing family violence.

inTouch is a unique and critical piece in Victoria's family violence response system. We work across the family violence continuum including early intervention, crisis support and recovery, building capacity in the sector and providing leadership nationally through our research and evidence-based advocacy work. In addition to our direct work with clients that is provided by our highly diverse case managers who speak more than 20 languages, our services and programs include:

- an in-house accredited community legal centre, the only one of its kind in a specialist family violence service, which provides legal advice, court advocacy and immigration support. Due to limited capacity, legal casework is only provided to inTouch clients following a referral from one of our case managers.

- outreach support to clients across courts in Dandenong, Sunshine, Heidelberg and Moorabbin, as well as various hub locations across Melbourne.
- capacity building of specialist and non-specialist family violence providers, and community organisations to better deliver support to refugee and migrant women experiencing family violence. This includes a free public training calendar.
- an early intervention program, Motivation for Change, working directly with men from culturally and linguistically diverse communities who use violence towards their families. The program comprises of one-on-one case management and group sessions for men.
- inSpire, a newly created fund to support Victorian refugee and migrant women moving beyond family violence, helping them establish their economic independence and emotional wellbeing.

Mapping our delivery model for direct client services

In 2016 the Royal Commission into Family Violence (Victoria) recommended that the government fund inTouch to better support the specific needs of refugee and migrant victim-survivors. As a leading expert, the reach and impact of inTouch's work has grown significantly since then, offering client services for both victim-survivors and perpetrators of family violence.

This growth highlighted the need to clearly document aspects of the inTouch model (the Model), particularly for our client services work which focuses on family violence case management support for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

As a result, in 2018 we commissioned Yvonne Lay and Nicole Bluett Boyd to deliver a report mapping the Model against what is known about best practice in the sector and to

highlight practice considerations into the future. This required an understanding of current practices from all relevant stakeholders, while placing client experience at the centre of all considerations and recommendations.

Family violence is complex and widespread. Whilst there are variances in what constitutes family violence, from conceptual, cultural and even legislative definitions, it is fundamentally based on an unequal distribution of power and resources. This inequality is then used to control, dominate or create fear in another person. Structural discrimination and inequality play a fundamental role in the various ways in which women experience violence; women simultaneously experience bias, oppression, discrimination and disadvantage along multiple dimensions.



The impacts of family violence experienced by women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, including recent arrivals, are compounded by a range of factors associated with the experience of migration and resettlement, as well as systemic barriers to seeking and obtaining help. As such, it is critical to ensure that systems and processes are robust to be able to identify and respond to the often-multifaceted presentations of family violence.

It is in this context that inTouch delivers a unique and tailored service. The Model is built on fundamental principles which are outlined in this document, while remaining client focussed and providing a service response tailored to the client's goals.

The report identified key aspects of our unique Model and expertise, and the need to effectively communicate this to all our stakeholders.

Our specialist expertise

inTouch specialises in working with individuals and families who require a culturally specific and tailored family violence service response. Our *inLanguage, inCulture* case management is at the core of our Model:

- Our case managers have specialised understanding of the issues related to the intersection of family violence, culture, temporary migration, family law and the legal system.
- Our programs are guided and informed by the Inspire for Change advisory group – women that inTouch has assisted in the past, from different cultural backgrounds and with lived experiences of family violence.
- Our case managers speak more than 20 languages and understand potential cultural impacts on women experiencing family violence and the barriers women face when trying to seek help.
- Most of our case managers are migrants or refugees themselves and have a first-hand understanding of the migration journey.
- Case managers provide a bridge between countries and cultures as they are able to assist clients build their understanding and help them navigate Australian systems and laws compared to the systems from their own country.

In 2018–19:



We supported
1430 women



40% of the women arrived
in Australia in the
last five years



82% of the women were
**unemployed or
not working**



These women were
accompanied by
1350+ children



47% of the women were
aged 26–35 years



39% of the women
**did not have any
source of income**



The women were from
**101 countries,
speaking 90
languages**



42% of the women
**required an
interpreter at intake**



21% of women
**were in short-term
or emergency
accommodation**

Direct client services offering

Direct client services offered to refugee and migrant women experiencing family violence include:

- an integrated, culturally responsive model based on *inLanguage, inCulture* case management.
- co-case management where we collaborate and engage with other service providers to successfully deliver a comprehensive range of supports required by clients. Co-case management requires a shared understanding between service providers of the needs of the client and their family, and agreement on the role of each worker. There is a common focus and effective ongoing communication throughout the process from assessment, case planning and care coordination.
- secondary consultations for other agencies or practitioners working with clients from migrant and refugee backgrounds who are or have experienced family violence, or who are perpetrators of family violence. Information that can be provided include how to understand and navigate the barriers these women and her community can face accessing mainstream services, referrals to culturally specific support agencies, information on forced marriage, temporary migration visas and eligibility for services.
- culturally specific, therapeutic recovery groups run across the Melbourne metropolitan area to support women in their recovery through education, self-care activities and cultural/recreational outings.

A teacher from a TAFE called inTouch for a secondary consultation on how to best support one of her students. The student migrated from Sudan with her family four years ago. She told the teacher that she is finding it difficult to concentrate on her studies and feels fearful for her mother's wellbeing at home as her father was being physically and verbally abusive.

The teacher told inTouch that she didn't feel confident having a conversation about family violence with the student in case she asks or says the wrong thing and makes the student 'shut down', or accidentally offends her culture or tells her something inappropriate. The inTouch case manager spoke to the teacher about culturally responsive practice. That is, understanding and recognising the barriers victim-survivors from migrant and refugee communities face and that underpin their access and level of engagement with support services. The case manager also sent the teacher some useful questions to ask so she can assess the level of risk the student is facing.

The teacher called inTouch again a few weeks later to say that the student told her that she feels supported and understood, and knows that what is happening at home is family violence. The student told her teacher that she will call 000 if she is feeling unsafe.

Ayaan's story



Ayaan* is a Malawi citizen and a holder of a New Zealand partner visa. Her husband Cawil* was emotionally, verbally, financially and physically abusive towards her, and their children had witnessed this. One day, the physical violence escalated and Ayaan called the police. An interim intervention order was put in place, excluding him from the property but allowing him to see the children by prior arrangement with Ayaan.

Communication between Ayaan and Cawil regarding arrangements for the children continued until another episode of severe physical violence occurred. Police were involved and a final full intervention order was issued naming Ayaan and the children as protected persons.

Ayaan became traumatised and quite vulnerable following the latest incident, and Child Protection and other support agencies became involved in providing support to her and the children.

Ayaan and her children were removed from the property, with assistance from the local family violence service and crisis response service. They were placed in a motel for four weeks, until a women's refuge became available for short-term accommodation.

The housing crisis agency referred Ayaan to inTouch for cultural support and ongoing safety planning. inTouch also helped to provide immigration and legal advice, followed by a referral, and assistance with a government housing priority access application.

As a result of successful collaboration amongst the agencies involved, Ayaan and her children now have long-term housing and the children are enrolled in school. She was granted a protection visa through another agency, which allows her to receive parenting and family tax benefit from Centrelink.

Ayaan and her children are also receiving ongoing counselling and support from local agencies and inTouch, to assist them in rebuilding their lives. But they are happy to now be living free from violence.

*name changed

Best practice principles

With a vision for culturally diverse families to live free from violence, inTouch's work is underpinned by the key pillars of leadership, influence, innovation and impact. Our pioneering inLanguage, inCulture culturally responsive model is built on specialist and nuanced knowledge of migrant and refugee women's experiences and needs, as well as the specific barriers that this cohort of women face which often exacerbates and compounds their experience of violence. With an extensive history in working with and for Victoria's migrant and refugee communities, our work is guided by the following core principles:

Intersectional approach – inTouch recognises that identity attributes and types of oppression such as racism and sexism, as well as systemic barriers, intersect and compound the disadvantage and inequality experienced by clients and the type of services they receive.

Person-centred practice – inTouch acknowledges the agency of the client and their ability to understand and identify their own needs. inTouch is respectful of decisions made and supports the client to achieve their desired outcomes.

Strengths-based approach – inTouch believes in the clients' capabilities and works through a collaborative process based on mutual respect. Each client's strengths are acknowledged to craft supports and services that will allow them to establish their safety and security.

Outcome focused – inTouch's focus is on the best possible outcome for each client. inTouch monitors and evaluates their services by the outcomes achieved for their clients.

Accountability – inTouch is responsible for delivering services by following these principles and is accountable to their clients and funders.

Culturally competent with a culturally tailored practice – inTouch ensures that each person's cultural and linguistic identity is acknowledged, respected and incorporated into effective service delivery.

Trauma-informed practice – inTouch understands and is responsive to the life-long impact of trauma from war, migration, re-settlement, family violence (including forced marriage and dowry abuse) and many other stressors on the lives of clients. inTouch acknowledges the impact it has and provides a response that creates opportunities for clients to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

In addition, and in line with current best practice principles, inTouch's Model creates a culture that actively values and respects the diversity of women who are survivors of family violence. By ensuring that it delivers culturally sensitive, safe and specific services, inTouch:

- promotes the safety of women and their children
- understands trauma and its impacts on migrant and refugee women and families
- provides integrated care
- enables recovery
- supports and facilitates women's agency.

inTouch's extensive experience in supporting this specific cohort of women, places it in a niche position within general multicultural service sectors such as settlement services, ethno-specific community organisations, as well as within the specialist and broader family violence sectors.

More information

This document should be read in conjunction with the referral pathways to inTouch direct client services document and the inTouch brochure.

More information about inTouch can also be found on our website intouch.org.au.



Connect with us

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Free toll call to 1800 755 988 if you are
experiencing family violence

Find out more at intouch.org.au



inTouch acknowledges the support
of the Victorian Government.

