



Culturally responsive practice with men who use violence

This resource is designed for family violence practitioners seeking to apply best practice principles when working with men from with migrant and refugee communities who use violence. Working intensively with these men is complex and nuanced, with a number of barriers impacting them and their families, including systematic and community racism.

This tip sheet covers the key principles of our Motivation for Change *inCulture, inLanguage* early intervention program for men who use violence and some tips on culturally responsive and collaborative practice with men. Quotes in tip sheet were provided by experts during a public forum in 2020.

Key Principles

> Culturally responsive practice

There can be significant barriers for clients engaging with mainstream family violence services. Many services are not easily accessible to these men and barriers to their engagement are compounded as their migration and settlement experience, language, culture and faith may not be reflected or well understood.

A culturally responsive program can address issues of social and cultural isolation, and encompass the impacts of the migration journey, while familiarising men with the broader service sector, building their trust in service engagement and empowering them to seek further assistance when necessary.

> Inclusive work with men

When working with men, family and community, the intersectional nature of men's use of violence and their understanding of behaviours and values within their culture, faith and language must be considered. Embedding these unique sensitivities to their refugee and migration experiences actively engages and invites men who otherwise would not access mainstream services.

> Collaborative practice to ensure women and children's safety

The concepts of respect and non-violence are explored and redefined to engage with male clients and increase the safety of women and their children. Working with all of family and focusing on the victim-survivor's experience alongside case managers and separate family safety workers is key.

> Trauma-informed practice

The lived experience of torture, trauma and racism in the migration journey is real, and cannot be overlooked when working with migrant and refugee families. Trauma-informed practice provides opportunities to focus on and emphasise physical, psychological and emotional safety for men and their families.

"Validating trauma is important – it's never an excuse but it needs to be acknowledged". – Farah Faiq, Family Violence Respondent Practitioner, Melbourne Magistrates Court

"The concept of mediation, restorative practice or behaviour change is a western notion – there is a lot of misunderstanding in some communities about what these are. We can encourage understanding as we work with men". – Ali Hussain, Motivation for Change Team Leader

Pro-tip: Culturally responsive practice in the initial stages of assessment

Key practice tips when undertaking an assessment of a client are below.

- ✓ Engage safely, with considered questions about their culture.
- ✓ Reflect on your own biases and assumptions about race, faith and culture, and put these aside.
- ✓ Be curious, create a space for their story and their migration journey.
- ✓ Listen with empathy, build trust and be transparent about your role and objective.
- ✓ An eco-map, tailored genogram or family tree are useful visual aids. They can include all of the family, extended family, community and any possible experiences of trauma or torture.
- ✓ Allow space and time for clinical or legal terms to be simplified or explained, particularly if it is not in the client's preferred language.
- ✓ Interact at the client's pace and consider how difficult it may be to disclose family violence due to stigma or shame and ostracism from the community.
- ✓ Weave in risk assessments and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework with invitational questions about their story.
- ✓ Consider cultural norms and definitions of control, power and family violence that can be explained within this context.

Male clients who are assessed with having significant or unresolved trauma are not considered to be ready for group work and can be referred for specialist support.

Collaborative practice with family safety workers

It is crucial to work with separate family safety contact workers who support the man's affected family members. The experiences of women, children and other family members who have been subject to family violence should always be included and considered.

Collaborative consultation with partner contacts and family safety workers ensures that all experiences are captured, safety is prioritised and risk can be identified and monitored.

- ✓ Use the MARAM Framework and look for patterns of abuse, not isolated incidents.
- ✓ Utilise the information sharing scheme with other relevant agencies.
- ✓ Ascertain visa status of the man and his family.
- ✓ Embed the family connections in a tailored genogram or family tree or eco-map.
- ✓ Invite discussions about the family and community as part of the migration journey.

Sanjay is a permanent resident, and his partner Avani is on a spousal visa. Avani is an inTouch client and disclosed Sanjay's physical and emotional abuse, but believed it was because he is a hard worker and is stressed. Avani remains fearful of her **safety** at home and her stay here in Australia. She would like Sanjay to be better and his behaviour to change. Sanjay reluctantly agrees to meet a MFC case manager for a conversation, where he disclosed that the violence was only a 'one off' thing and that he was a good provider. After two thorough assessments and time with the case manager, Sanjay believes that he could learn something from the program, alongside other men from similar cultures. The MFC program **collaborates** with the client services case manager to check in with his partner Avani, and ascertain her safety and how Sanjay behaves at home.

Sanjay participates in the MFC group, is invited to reflect on his journey as a man of care versus a man of control, and how this is perceived in his **culture and community**. Throughout the group and case management he is challenged around his patterns of behaviour toward Avani and how this **impacts** her. Avani described to her case manager how she no longer receives 'silent punishment' from Sanjay when she tries to talk with him and feels safe.

Pro-tip: Developing culturally responsive practice in a program

- > Cultural issues are not add-ons, they need to be embedded in practice.
- > Involve victim-survivors, migrant and refugee communities and family violence advocates in the creation of knowledge, content, and program curriculum.
- > Make 'whiteness' and privilege visible in the macro and micro elements of the program.
- > Make culture, faith and values visible in your practice.
- > The reference point for understanding family violence is the experience of women who have been subjected to that violence.
- > Localise materials, assessments and content to ensure they are relevant and relatable.
- > Integrate outcomes that address power, privilege and social justice.
- > Design assessments that allow participants to reconnect to communities and leaders.
- > Recognise the impact that systemic and community racism has on migrant and refugee men.

"There are men of honour in every culture, every community". – Dr Tracy Castellino, ShantiWorks

"We need to let men know we are concerned and interested in their experiences. Trauma includes having one's cultural world turned upside down". – Tom Griffiths, Men's Family Violence Consultant