



Case management checklist for working with women on temporary visas staying in refuge

This resource, for refuge practitioners, is part of a series on best practice when working with women from migrant and refugee backgrounds who are victim-survivors of family violence. It has been designed as a checklist of topics to discuss with clients on temporary visas early in the case management process to help determine what support they require. It includes some referral pathway weblinks; however, support options will be locally specific, and refuge staff should research these options within their local area.

□ Visa and immigration status

Urgently refer all clients on temporary visas for professional immigration advice

A Migration Agent or Immigration Lawyer will explain a client's visa options and eligibility for services. Laws around visa status and eligibilities change regularly so expert advice is imperative to ensure current and correct information.

Questions to ask your client

1. What is your immigration status?
2. What type of visa are you on, if any?
3. What is the visa status of any children or other dependents?
4. Do you have access (either physical or electronic) to your documents and those of your children (passport, visa, marriage certificate, birth certificates)?
5. Do you receive correspondence from the Department of Home Affairs about your visa application?
6. If so, have you received any recent correspondence (28 days to respond)?
7. Do you know if the Department of Home Affairs has been informed about your separation with your partner?

Services for immigration advice and assistance

Organisation	Contact details
inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence State-wide service for general immigration advice and referral, and immigration assistance for clients eligible to access the Family Violence Provisions (FVPs) in the Migration Regulations. We also offer secondary consultations on immigration issues. Note that only inTouch clients can access the inTouch Legal Centre.	Phone the intake line: 1800 755 988 Complete a Referral Form: https://intouch.org.au/contact-us/
Northern Community Legal Centre Migration advice, referral and assistance for clients in Hume and Moreland LGAs and Mitchell Shire.	Phone: (03) 9310 4376 Website: https://www.northernclc.org.au/
Women's Legal Service Victoria State-wide service for clients who have both family law and immigration matters.	Phone: (03) 8622 0600 or 1800 133 302 Website: https://www.womenslegal.org.au/
Refugee Legal State-wide service specialising in protection visa claims.	Phone: (03) 9413 0100 Website: https://refugeelg.org.au/
Asylum Seeker Resource Centre State-wide service specializing in protection visa claims.	Phone: (03) 9326 6066 Website: https://asrc.org.au/

Services for immigration advice and assistance

Organisation	Contact details
The Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne) (MIC) MIC has two qualified Migration Agents who can assist newly arrived refugees in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne to sponsor their family members to come to Australia as temporary or permanent migrants.	Phone: (03) 9285 4888 Website: https://miceastmelb.com.au/
Private Migration Agents For accredited Migration Agents, please see Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority.	Website: https://www.mara.gov.au/

Income

Many women on temporary visas will have limited access to income and financial assistance due to visa status.

Options to explore with your clients

Government payments Clients may be eligible for Centrelink payments, Special Benefits/Family Tax Benefits and/or Medicare. Check the Social Security Guide for eligibility.	Centrelink Multilingual Call Centre's phone number: 131 202 Website: https://guides.dss.gov.au/guide-social-security-law/9/2
Family Violence Flexible Support Packages Packages to help victim-survivors of family violence improve their safety, wellbeing and independence, with an average value of \$3,400 per client.	Website: https://www.vic.gov.au/flexible-support-packages
The Australian Red Cross The Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) Financial Assistance Program is available to people on temporary visas, or with uncertain visa status, who are living in Australia and are experiencing or have experienced family violence and financial hardship. This includes payments of up to \$3,000, along with referrals to specialist agencies and casework support for up to three months.	Website: https://www.redcross.org.au/migration/family-and-domestic-violence-financial-assistance-program/

Debt and fines

Clients may have additional financial pressures due to outstanding debts and fines. A perpetrator may have taken out loans in the client's name, or accumulated fines such as traffic infringements using the client's vehicle. The client may have accumulated debts and fines herself due to the family violence she experienced. There are programs available such as Fines Victoria's **Family Violence Scheme** at <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/fvs>, designed to support people affected by family violence within the fines system.

Questions to ask your client

1. Are you aware of any unpaid fines in your name?
2. Do you know if your ex-partner took out any loans in your name?
3. Are you making any regular payments to pay off debts or loans?

Services for financial counselling and assistance in waiving fines and debts

Organisation	Contact details
National Debt Helpline	Phone: 1800 007 007 Website: https://ndh.org.au/
Your local Community Legal Centre	Website: https://www.fclc.org.au/find_a_community_legal_centre

Services for financial counselling and assistance in waiving fines and debts

Organisation	Contact details
South East Community Links Southeastern Melbourne region	Website: https://secl.org.au/
Eastern Financial Counselling Services Eastern Melbourne region	Website: https://www.each.com.au/service/eastern-financial-counselling-services/
Uniting North East Financial Counselling Program Northeastern Melbourne region	Website: https://www.nifvs.org.au/service/uniting-kildonan-north-eastern-financial-counselling-program/
VincentCare Financial counselling	Website: https://vincentcare.org.au/our-services/financial-counselling/
The Salvation Army	Phone: 1800 722 363 Website: https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/financial-assistance/financial-counselling/

□ Legal support

Women on temporary visas may be unaware of their legal rights and entitlements and what assistance can be provided. There are a range of legal issues clients may require support with including:

- > Family Violence Intervention Orders
- > Clients may be eligible to apply for the Victims of Crime Assistance Program (VOCAT) for financial compensation for the violence they experienced. The tribunal can also award financial assistance for counselling, medical, safety-related and funeral expenses and lost earnings. Website: <https://www.vocat.vic.gov.au/assistance-available/urgent-financial-assistance/victims-family-violence>
- > Parenting and/or spousal maintenance payments from the ex-partner
- > Property settlement
- > Divorce
- > Child custody arrangements
- > Airport watch list.

Services for legal advice and assistance

Organisation	Contact details
inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence State-wide service including legal support and legal secondary consultations. Note that only inTouch clients can access the inTouch Legal Centre.	Phone the intake line: 1800 755 988 Complete a Referral Form : https://intouch.org.au/contact-us/
Your local Community Legal Centre	Website: https://www.fclc.org.au/find_a_community_legal_centre
Victoria Legal Aid	Phone: 1300 792 387 Website: https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/ In-language service website: https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/speak-us-your-language
Women's Legal Service Victoria	Website: https://www.womenslegal.org.au/

□ Health

Many clients on temporary visas will not have access to Medicare or the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and may have high medical expenses for themselves and any dependents. There may be health providers in your local area who can facilitate low or no cost services. Clients may also prefer GPs who speak their first language. Compiling a list of bi-lingual GPs in your local area would be a useful resource.

Local Community Health Centres may assist with low cost or free healthcare.

Local services that provide health information and run activities to enhance wellbeing	
Organisation	Contact details
GenWest	Website: https://genwest.org.au/
Women's Health in the North	Website: https://www.whin.org.au/
Multicultural Centre for Women's Health	Website: https://www.mcwh.com.au/

Health services for refugees and asylum seekers	
Organisation	Contact details
Victorian Refugee Health Network	Website: https://refugeehealthnetwork.org.au/refer/asylum-seeker/
Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Has a medical clinic and can provide pharmaceuticals.	Website: https://asrc.org.au/
Cabrini Asylum Seeker and Refugee Health Hub	Website: https://www.cabrinioutreach.com.au/our-work/australian-programs/asylum-seeker-and-refugee-health-hub/
Monash Health Refugee Health and Wellbeing	Website: https://monashhealth.org/services/refugee-health-and-wellbeing/
EACH For refugee health nurses, GPs, pharmacy and allied health.	Website: https://www.each.com.au/
cohealth In Kensington and Footscray, for refugee health nurses, GPs, pharmacy and allied health.	Website: https://www.cohealth.org.au/
IPC Health Refugee Health Program In Sunshine, Hoppers Crossing, Deer Park and Wyndham Vale, for refugee health nurses, community case workers and allied health.	Website: https://www.ipchealth.com.au/
Centre for Holistic Health Provides counselling and healthcare promotion workshops for Mandarin and Cantonese speaking clients.	Website: http://www.chh.org.au/en/

Cultural and religious support

It is likely that clients will move geographical location to stay in the refuge and will feel disconnected and isolated from their communities. The most successful outcomes for women on temporary visas in refuge come when strong community connections are established. This includes connection to local cultural groups, religious institutions, and multicultural organisations. Compiling a list of religious institutions, cultural groups and multicultural organisations in your local area would be a useful resource.

Questions to ask your client

1. Do you require any items for practicing your religion or culture?
2. Are there any times you're unavailable due to religious or cultural practices?
3. Is there anything I need to be aware of or that you require support for in relation to this?
4. Do you usually attend a mosque/temple/church?
5. Would you like to continue this practice in this area?
6. Would you be interested in joining the local cultural/community group?

Faith Communities Council of Victoria contributes to the harmony of the Victorian community by promoting positive relationships between people of different faiths and greater public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teaching, customs and practices of Victoria's diverse faith traditions. Website: <https://www.faithvictoria.org.au/>. Further information and a list of local religious institutions and organisations can be found here: <https://www.faithvictoria.org.au/resources/links>.

Connection to community

Along with religious and culturally affiliated institutions, clients may benefit from other local community organisations and groups. Compiling a list of local community hubs, mother's groups, recovery groups, etc, would be a useful resource.

Services for building clients' community connections

Organisation	Contact details
Shakti Australia Has a helpline (9:00 am to 4:00 pm) that provides specialist cultural support to migrant and refugee women and their children of Asian, African and Middle Eastern origins. Shakti Ethnic Women's Support Group operates in Melbourne.	Phone: 0414 442 584 or 1800 742 584 (1800 SHAKTI) Website: https://www.shakti.org.au/support-group-inc-melbourne/
Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights	Phone: (03) 9481 3000 Website: https://amwchr.org.au/
Chinese Community Social Services Centre Inc.	Phone: 9898 1965 Website: https://www.ccssci.org.au/
Viet Wellbeing	Phone: (03)93961050 or 0432 698 626 Website: https://www.vietwellbeing.com.au/
Australian Vietnamese Women's Association (AVWA)	Website: https://www.avwa.org.au/en/
First Contact/Vietlove INC Vietnamese Community Support Group	Phone: 0498 696 888 Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/160804961901887/?ref=share
Afghan Women's Organisation Victoria INC	Website: https://www.afghanwomensorganisation.org/

□ Connection to other support services and programs

Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) service providers offer clients with settlement-related information, advice, advocacy and assistance to access mainstream and other relevant services. SETS providers can assist with:

- > Education and training
- > Facilitating English acquisition and access to language services
- > Employment
- > Housing
- > Health and wellbeing
- > Family and social support
- > Transport including driving lessons
- > Civic participation
- > Justice.

Further information and a list of service providers can be found here: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settling-in-australia/sets-program/sets-client-services>.

Other support services and programs	
Organisation	Contact details
<p>Vicseg New Futures</p> <p>Works with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants offering childcare and community programs to support people to access education, and work placements and training to support people to enter the workforce.</p>	<p>Website: https://vicsegnewfutures.org.au/</p>
<p>MiCare</p> <p>Aims to improve the health and wellbeing of refugees and migrant families with the provision of several different services.</p>	<p>Website: https://www.micare.com.au/settlement-services/family-services</p>
<p>Life Without Barriers</p> <p>Provides counselling and relationship advice, safety planning, housing, transportation, and financial assistance for women and their children experiencing family violence.</p>	<p>Website: https://www.lwb.org.au/services/child-youth-and-family/domestic-violence/</p>
<p>Access to childcare for temporary visa holders</p> <p>In cases where the adult victim-survivor of family violence is not eligible for the Child Care Subsidy due to their visa status, and the child is at risk of serious neglect or abuse, the client may be eligible for the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) payments on behalf of a child.</p>	<p>Website: https://www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing/provider-eligible-enrolments</p>
<p>Good Samaritan Inn's Women in Work program</p> <p>An employment program focused on finding employment for women who have experienced family violence.</p>	<p>Website: http://www.goodsamaritaninn.org.au/women-in-work/</p>

□ Wellbeing

In addition to discussing cultural and religious needs, connection to community and to other support services, ask your client if they require any other assistance that may foster a healthy sense of wellbeing and help them on their recovery journey. Since clients on temporary visas often stay in refuge for extended periods, this question can be asked at different times as they will be ready for different activities and interactions at different stages of their recovery.

inTouch's **inSpire program** at <https://intouch.org.au/inspire/the-role-of-inspire/> is available for inTouch clients who have exited case management. The program supports migrant and refugee women to build a life they choose and connect with others safely and meaningfully. It focuses on fostering economic independence and building social and community connections. During the co-case management process, refuge staff may discuss this option with the inTouch Case Manager and client.

inTouch delivers **recovery groups** at <https://intouch.org.au/our-work/recovery-from-family-violence/> across the East, North and West regions of metropolitan Melbourne. Most recovery groups are delivered in-Language, in-Culture in partnership with agencies such as **Chinese Community Social Services Centre Inc.**, **Whittlesea Community Connections** and **cohealth** Footscray.

A calendar of recovery groups is advertised each quarter, with referral contact details. The sessions operate face to face, usually from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm for six weeks and focus on:

- > Providing a therapeutic space, connection, healing and empowerment
- > Fostering a positive and safe environment to allow women to build their confidence
- > Enhancing understanding of the impact of family violence on women, children, families and communities
- > Assisting in the recovery process of families by exploring healthy relationships, healthy communication, assertiveness, coping with conflict, developing social networks and life in Australia
- > Raising awareness of support systems and increasing access to support services.

Other resources

- > inTouch Tip Sheets: www.intouch.org.au/resourcesforprofessionals
- > **Safe and Equal** information on supporting people from migrant and refugee communities: <https://safeandequal.org.au/2022/01/26/tailoring-inclusive-support-for-our-communities/>
- > **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)** provides a free immediate phone interpreting service which can be used to call other services if they do not have interpreters. Phone: 131 450 (within Australia, 24 hours, every day of the year).

Refer to inTouch for co-case management

- > Phone our intake team on **1800 755 988** to discuss your client's needs
- > Complete our online **client referral form** at <https://intouch.org.au/client-referral-form/>
- > The relevant MARAM assessment and client consent form must be attached with the referral
- > One of our intake workers will contact you to discuss how we can work together to support the client. After allocation, the case manager will contact you, the referring agency, before contacting the client. The client will then be contacted by phone, using an interpreter if needed.

Request an inTouch secondary consultation

- > Phone our intake team on **1800 755 988**
- > For cultural consultations complete our online **cultural secondary consultation form** at <https://intouch.org.au/secondary-consultation-form/>
- > Our intake team will record your request and a case manager, lawyer or migration agent will contact you within five working days.