



intouch

NOOR

**intouch Lived and Living Experience
Framework and Engagement Tool**

Purpose

This Framework and Engagement Tool supports practitioners, service-providers and leaders to centre lived and living experience in family and domestic violence (FDV) prevention, early intervention, service design and systems advocacy. It provides a lived-experience-informed lens to better understand the complexities of FDV subjected to women and children from migrant and refugee backgrounds and supports culturally safe, rights-based and responsive practices.

For migrant and refugee women, experiences of violence are often shaped by intersecting factors including migration pathways, visa insecurity, racism, language barriers, gender norms, social isolation, past trauma and fear or mistrust of authorities. These factors can influence how violence is experienced, recognised, and responded to, and may affect whether women feel safe to access support. Lived and living experience provides critical insight into these realities and helps practitioners understand how violence is experienced in everyday life, how systems may unintentionally create barriers, and what meaningful prevention and support look like within communities.

intouch recognises lived and living experience as expert knowledge that informs prevention, early intervention, service design, and systems change. This commitment is supported by NOOR, intouch's internal victim-survivor advocacy group, which provides both in-house and external consultation through individual and collective engagement.

This Framework is guided by the values and principles outlined in *The Family Violence Experts by Experience Framework: Embedding Lived Experience in the Family Violence Sector* (Safe and Equal, 2023):

- Co-design
- Transparency
- Strengthening lived and living experience

Engagement occurs through a range of platforms including consultations with NOOR members, intouch advisory processes, community dialogue, media engagement and podcast storytelling.

Why Lived and Living Experience Matters

Lived and living experience is essential for effective responses to FDV, and it's particularly imperative for migrant and refugee women who face additional barriers and risks to seeking support.

Lived and living experience provides unique insight into:

- How violence is used by perpetrators and is experienced, hidden, survived and resisted by victim-survivors
- The early warning signs of perpetrator coercion and control
- The barriers perpetrators and systems create or exploit that prevent women from seeking support



- How systems and services may collude with, overlook, or fail to identify perpetrator behaviour, unintentionally causing harm
- What safety, trust, and culturally safe support look like in practice, including holding perpetrators accountable and keeping responsibility with them
- The far reaching and ongoing impact of FDV on women and children

Without lived experience informing responses, prevention and systems, there comes a risk service providers become ineffective, inaccessible or culturally unsafe. intouch recognises NOOR members and other lived experience act as partners in strengthening prevention, early intervention and systems change.

NOOR Overview

Navigating Our Own Resilience (NOOR) is a family violence survivor-advocate group comprising migrant and refugee women with lived experience of family violence. Established in 2018 by intouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence, NOOR is the only group in Australia advocating for culturally and linguistically diverse, and racially marginalised victim-survivors to influence and transform the family violence system.



How NOOR Centres Lived and Living Experience

NOOR embeds lived and living experience across all levels of work through workshops and structured pathways for engagement. Rather than relying on consultation alone, it ensures lived experience informs planning, program design, advocacy and decision-making through shared influence and leadership.



This model sets out what meaningful lived and living experience engagement should look like in practice. It recognises that people with lived and living experience hold critical knowledge about safety, barriers to support and culturally grounded responses to family violence.

The diagram below illustrates how this approach should be applied across different stages of work, outlining the roles of both lived and living experience participants and NOOR leadership in creating safe, culturally responsive and accountable engagement processes.

Sources of Lived and Living Experience

Safe and Equal (2022) identifies three distinct but complementary sources of lived experience within the family violence sector: lived experience in the workforce, lived experience of clients and lived experience of survivor advocates:

1. Clients
2. Advocacy groups
3. Workforce

intouch recognises additional sources of lived and living experience understanding that data collected from these groups will further knowledge and insight, strengthening FDV practice and response. These include:

- Victim survivors
- Men who use violence
- Perpetrators
- Families and social circles

Recognising that meaningful systems change requires action across the family violence continuum, lived and living experience must inform both prevention and early intervention efforts. These focus areas provide critical opportunities to address the underlying drivers of family and domestic violence, strengthen protective factors, and ensure responses are grounded in the realities and expertise of those most impacted. For migrant and refugee communities, this means partnering with women who hold lived and living expertise to design culturally responsive initiatives that build trust, strengthen community capability, challenge harmful norms, and create pathways to support before violence escalates.

Prevention

Prevention refers to actions that stop FDV before it occurs by addressing the underlying drivers of violence and inequality. Prevention is strengthened when it is informed by lived and living experience, ensuring responses are grounded in the realities of those most impacted.



Early intervention builds on this by responding to the early signs and risk factors of FDV. It is informed by an understanding of the primary drivers of violence, alongside the lived and living experiences of migrant and refugee women.

Our Watch identifies four primary drivers of violence against women in Australia through its national framework *Change the Story*. These drivers describe the underlying gendered inequalities that enable family and sexual violence.

The four primary drivers

- 1. Condoning of violence against women**
When attitudes, norms, or systems excuse, justify, or minimise violence, including victim-blaming and a lack of accountability for perpetrators.
- 2. Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence**
When men hold power in relationships, families, communities, and leadership, limiting women's autonomy and choices.
- 3. Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity**
Expectations that men should be dominant and in control, and women should be passive, nurturing, or submissive.
- 4. Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women**
Social norms among men that normalise sexism, disrespect, and violence.

While these drivers are consistent across contexts, lived and living experience shows that migrant and refugee women often experience them in more complex and intersecting ways, shaped by culture, migration, and systemic barriers, which can look like:

- **Condoning of violence against women** may be reinforced through the misuse of culture, religion, or tradition.
- **Men's control of decision-making and limits on women's independence** can include controlling access to documents, services, transport, information, and finances.
- **Rigid gender roles and stereotypes** may be intensified through expectations of women as obedient wives or daughters-in-law, alongside additional cultural and familial pressures.
- **Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect** can be reinforced within tight-knit or diaspora communities, where social pressure to conform is strong.



For migrant and refugee communities, prevention must respond to both gender inequality and broader structural barriers. Strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Challenging gender inequality, racism, and discrimination
- Reducing social isolation and strengthening community connections
- Increasing awareness of rights, safety, and available supports
- Supporting economic independence, decision-making, and access to resources
- Strengthening community leadership and culturally grounded solutions

Lived and living experience is critical to shaping prevention approaches that are culturally safe, relevant and responsive to the diverse realities of communities. It ensures that prevention efforts move beyond one-size-fits-all models and reflect the complexity of people's lives.

Early Intervention

Early intervention refers to timely, culturally responsive action that identifies and responds to risk or early signs of FDV before violence escalates or becomes entrenched.

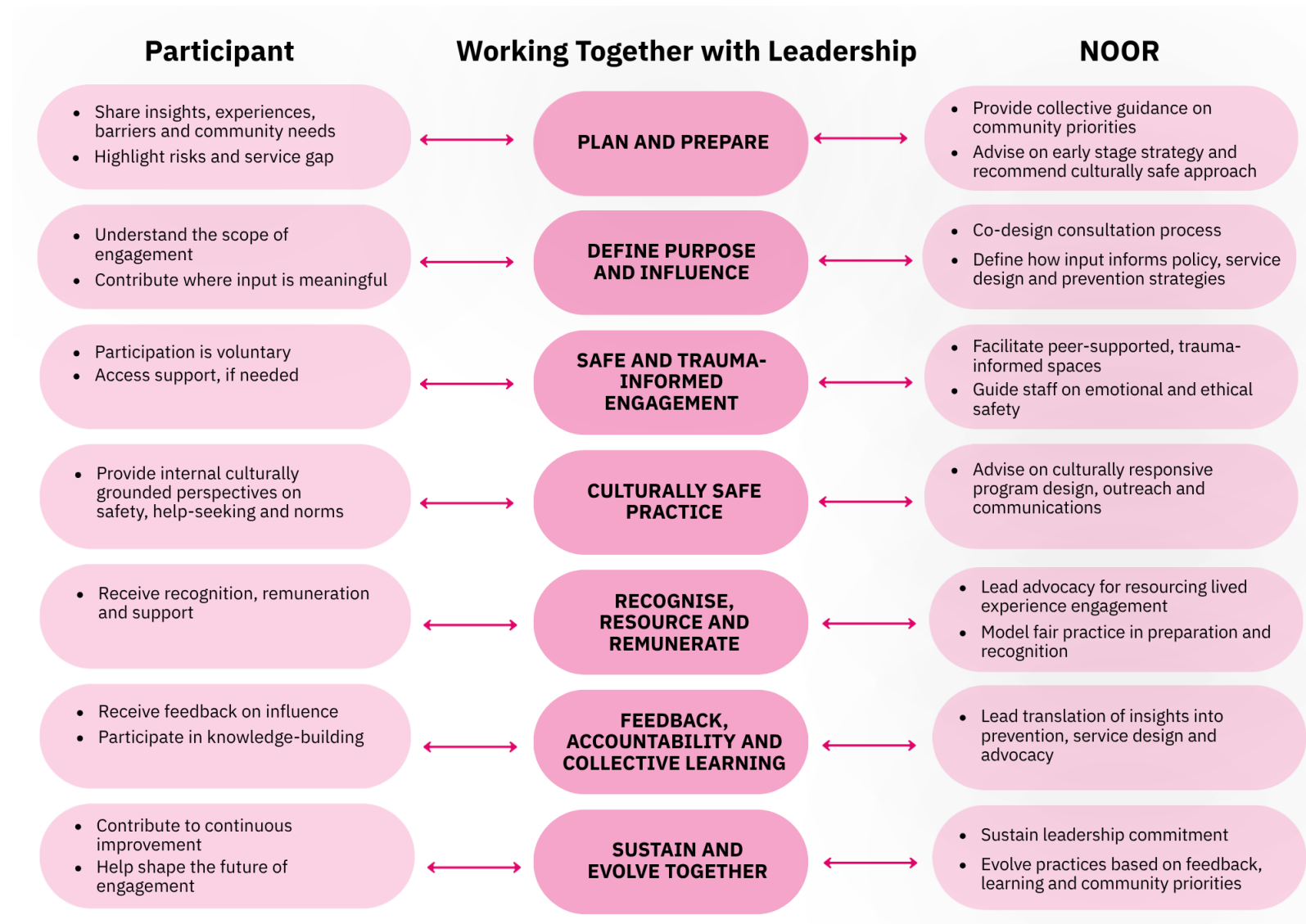
For migrant and refugee women and children, early intervention includes:

- Recognising early warning signs and patterns of coercive control
- Reducing barriers to help-seeking, including stigma, fear and visa insecurity
- Creating trusted and culturally safe pathways to support
- Preventing ongoing harm and inter-generational impacts

Lived and living experience helps practitioners understand how early warning signs appear in everyday life and what forms of support are most trusted and accessible.



Embedding Lived and Living Experience in Practice: From Participation to Leadership (NOOR)



Engaging Lived and Living Experience in Practice

The stages of meaningful engagement with NOOR and lived and living experience are outlined in the diagram above, with detailed guidance below to support consistent, trauma-informed and accountable practice across the organisation. Meaningful engagement ensures lived and living experience can influence prevention, early intervention, service design and advocacy.

The recommended stages of engagement with NOOR and lived and living experience across the organisation:

Planning Engagement

Before engagement begins, the organisation should consider:

- Why lived experience input is being sought
- What decisions or outcomes the engagement may influence
- Whether engagement is occurring early enough to shape the work
- Whose voices may be missing or underrepresented
- What supports may be required, including interpreters, childcare, or accessibility needs
- How participants will be recognised and compensated

Clear communication about the purpose and scope of engagement helps build trust and transparency.

Creating Safe Engagement Spaces

Engagement must prioritise safety, dignity, and choice.

The organisation should ensure that:

- Participation is voluntary and informed
- Participants can choose what they share
- No one is required to disclose personal experiences
- Trauma-informed facilitation is used
- Cultural safety and language access are provided
- Participants can pause or withdraw at any time

Where appropriate, engagement can also support peer connection and collective dialogue.

Listening and Learning

Engagement should focus on listening rather than extracting personal stories.

The organisation should prioritise:



- Respectful and open dialogue
- Strength-based storytelling that recognises survival and resilience
- Reflective listening and validation
- Learning about barriers to support and experiences with systems

These insights can strengthen prevention strategies, improve service accessibility, and inform policy reform.

Accountability and Follow-Up

Meaningful engagement requires transparency about outcomes.

The organisation should ensure that:

- Participants are informed how their input was used
- Outcomes or changes are communicated back to contributors
- Feedback loops are created where possible
- Limitations or constraints are explained honestly

Accountability builds trust and strengthens long-term relationships with communities.

Ongoing Learning and Systems Change

Embedding lived and living experience is an ongoing commitment rather than a one-off consultation.

intouch will continue to work alongside NOOR members and community leaders to strengthen:

- Community-led prevention
- Culturally safe services
- Policy and systems reform
- Collective leadership and knowledge sharing

Conclusion

This Framework establishes a practical approach to embedding knowledge informed by lived and living experience across governance, decision-making, policy development, advocacy and service improvement. Grounded in the survivor-led model of NOOR and the expertise of migrant and refugee women, it demonstrates how this strengthens accountability and contributes to more equitable, culturally safe responses to family and domestic violence.

Meaningful engagement is not defined by consultation alone, but by the extent to which it informs decisions, shapes priorities and influences direction. This requires structures and processes that enable it to be integrated into governance and decision-making at every level.



Through NOOR, the Framework demonstrates that integrating this approach into practice strengthens accountability, improves the quality of decisions and supports lasting systems reform. It provides a practical foundation for embedding it across policy, governance and practice.

Reference List

ANROWS. (n.d.). *Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety*. <https://www.anrows.org.au>

ANROWS 2020, *Mapping tool: Safer pathways to family violence crisis and support services for CALD women*, ANROWS, Sydney.

Intouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence. (n.d.). <https://intouch.org.au>

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence n.d., *NOOR Survivor-Advocates*, viewed 11 June 2026, <https://intouch.org.au/noor-survivor-advocates/>

Koleth, M., Serova, N. & Trojanowska, B.K. 2020, *Prevention of violence against women and safer pathways to services for migrant and refugee communities: Ten research insights from the CALD PAR initiative*, ANROWS Insights 01/2020, ANROWS, Sydney.

Safe and Equal. (n.d.). <https://safeandequal.org.au>

Safe and Equal 2022, *Sources of lived experience in the family violence sector: Issues paper*. Safe and Equal. https://safeandequal.org.au/wp-content/uploads/PAP_Sources-of-Lived-Experience-Issues-Paper_FINAL.pdf

Safe and Equal 2023, *The Family Violence Experts by Experience Framework: Embedding lived experience in the family violence sector*, Safe and Equal, Melbourne.

UN Women. (n.d.). <https://www.unwomen.org>

UN Women 2021, *Intersectionality resource guide and toolkit: An intersectional approach to leave no one behind*, UN Women, New York.

Wheildon, L. & ANROWS 2023, *Towards meaningful engagement: Key findings for survivor co-production of public policy on gender-based violence*, ANROWS Insights 05/2023, ANROWS, Sydney.

World Health Organization. (n.d.). <https://www.who.int>

World Health Organization et al. 2024, *RESPECT women: Preventing violence against women*, 2nd edn, WHO, Geneva.

