

Minimum Standards Quick Reference



Responsibility for implementing the Minimum Standards

- 1 Responsibility for implementation of NTV's Minimum Standards rests with the governance body of the lead provider.

Group work in relation to other interventions

- 2 Program providers only provide couple therapy or relationship counselling if the woman is willing to participate, does not feel threatened in the counselling situation and feels safe at home. They never provide couple therapy or relationship counselling when the man is still using physical violence or significant levels of controlling behaviour.

Staffing men's behaviour change groups

Note that that the NTV Management Committee may deem a person's experience and qualifications to be equivalent to these criteria.

- 3 For every men's behaviour change group session:
 - At least one facilitator is a Level Three Facilitator.
 - A second facilitator is at least a Level Two Facilitator.
 - Third and subsequent facilitators are at least Level One Facilitators.

Level One Facilitators meet all the following

- Level One criteria:*
- Has a demonstrated understanding of the men's behaviour change process and the gendered nature of male family violence
 - Has observed a minimum of 10 men's behaviour change group sessions.

Level Two Facilitators meet all the following

- Level Two criteria:*
- Has a demonstrated understanding of the men's behaviour change process and the gendered nature of male family violence
 - Has at least 80 hours of experience facilitating relevant group work
 - Has observed a minimum of 10 men's behaviour change group sessions
 - Has at least 2 years experience in direct service provision with women in the context of family violence OR in a program that adheres to NTV Minimum Standards (or an equivalent for men's behaviour change). This includes the MRS.

Level Three Facilitators meet all the following

- Level Three A criteria:*
- Has a demonstrated understanding of the men's behaviour change process and the gendered nature of male family violence
 - Has at least 3 years professional experience in counselling
 - Has at least 2 years experience facilitating relevant group work
 - Has a 4 year degree from a recognised tertiary institution in a relevant discipline (for example, Social Work, Psychology, Psychiatry, Community Welfare, Behavioural Science or Medicine)
 - Has at least 100 hours of experience facilitating men's behaviour change groups
- OR Level Three B criteria:*
- Has a demonstrated understanding of the men's behaviour change process and the gendered nature of male family violence
 - Has a Graduate Certificate of Social Science (Male Family Violence - Group Facilitation)*
 - Has at least 100 hours of experience facilitating men's behaviour change groups.

- 4 Contact workers meet all the following

Contact Worker criteria:

 - Has a demonstrated understanding of the men's behaviour change process and the gendered nature of male family violence
 - Has knowledge of the processes and content of the provider's group sessions
 - Has observed a minimum of 6 men's behaviour change group sessions
 - Has experience in direct service provision with women in the context of family violence OR a Graduate Certificate of Social Science (Male Family Violence - Group Facilitation)*.

* Or an equivalent men's behaviour change group facilitator qualification from a recognised tertiary or training institution

- 5 Staff undertaking assessments of men:
 - Are a Level 3 (A) Facilitator **OR**
 - Have a Graduate Certificate of Social Science (Male Family Violence - Group Facilitation)* AND at least 200 hours of experience facilitating men's behaviour change groups.

* Or an equivalent men's behaviour change group facilitator qualification from a recognised tertiary or training institution.

- 6 Supervisors of men's behaviour change program staff meet all the following

Supervisor Criteria:

 - Has a Graduate Certificate of Social Science (Male Family Violence - Group Facilitation)* OR 4 year degree from a recognised tertiary institution in a relevant discipline (for example, Social Work, Psychology, Psychiatry, Community Welfare, Behavioural Science or Medicine)
 - Has relevant and diverse skills in counselling and group work
 - Has at least 3 years professional experience in the family violence field
 - Has at least 100 hours of experience facilitating men's behaviour change groups
 - Has current knowledge of issues in male family violence and the men's behaviour change field.

* Or an equivalent men's behaviour change group facilitator qualification from a recognised tertiary or training institution

- 7 All group programs are facilitated by at least two co-facilitators, one male and one female co-facilitator, unless there are demonstrably exceptional circumstances, in which case, they are facilitated by two male facilitators, both of whom:
 - Have at least fortnightly contact with at least one experienced woman worker in peer supervision, individual supervision, telephone supervision (in cases of geographical isolation) or the program's Reference Group AND
 - Have their sessions observed (directly or via audio or video tape) by an appropriately experienced female at least monthly.
- 8 Initial contact is made by a female worker and women are able to have contact solely with female staff if they wish.
- 9 Facilitators and contact workers participate in at least four relevant professional development activities each year (of which two are activities conducted by NTV) and keep a log of their professional development activities.

Program planning

- 10 Men's behaviour change program providers have a Reference Group that meets at least quarterly. This group comprises representatives of local women's services and as many other relevant service providers as possible.
- 11 Programs provide men with access to a minimum of 24 contact hours of men's behaviour change group-work, spread over a minimum of 12 sessions and spaced no more than fortnightly. Contact hours do not include time spent on initial assessment or follow-up processes.
- 12 Providers emphasise all of the following core messages in all aspects of program promotion and delivery:
 - The safety of women and children always comes first.
 - There are many different ways that a man can be violent and controlling.
 - Violence and abusive reactions are controlling of others, even though men might feel 'out of control'.
 - Male family violence has wide-ranging, long-lasting negative effects on those who experience it.
 - Male family violence is never acceptable or excusable, and some forms of violence are illegal.
 - Every man has a choice to use or not use violence.
 - It is each man's responsibility to stop his violence and abuse.
 - Being responsible means giving up using force and power to get what you want.
 - Male family violence has a context in patriarchal attitudes and structures, and the association between masculinity and violence is socially constructed.

- There is a difference between a feeling and a behaviour, and men have a choice about how to behave when they are experiencing a certain feeling.
- Responsibility, equality, respect and trust can promote more equal and non-violent relationships.
- Being aware of others' feelings is important in non-violent ways of relating.
- Being aware of one's own feelings is important in non-violent ways of relating.
- Everyone needs to challenge sexism and secrecy about male violence – including within men's behaviour change programs.
- Women and children are in the best position to judge whether men are behaving in less violent and controlling ways.

- 13 Providers help men to develop skills to:
 - Identify and challenge any of their ideas, attitudes, beliefs and myths that stand in the way of them taking responsibility for their behaviour in the past, present and future.
 - Recognise the many ways that they can be violent and/or controlling.
 - Recognise the effects of their violent and controlling behaviour on others.
 - Listen to, accept and integrate feedback about their behaviour from women and children.
 - Place others' needs and emotions on at least an equal footing to their own.
 - Respond to their own and others' strong emotions in non-violent and non-controlling ways.
 - Use appropriate non-violent and non-controlling behaviours and ways of relating.
 - Manage and use appropriately their feelings of guilt and shame about their violent behaviours, in ways that enable them to take responsibility for their behaviour.
 - Prioritise settings and personal relationships (for example, friendships) that support their choice to use non-violent and non-controlling behaviours and ways of relating.
 - Enhance and draw upon positive personal qualities such as persistence and openness.
 - Identify thoughts, feelings, physiological reactions and behaviours that are part of the 'winding up' process; use strategies to interrupt that process; and use 'winding down' thoughts before using non-violent and non-controlling alternatives.
 - Advocate against men's use of violent and controlling behaviours, especially in male-dominated spaces, and challenge the social contexts and conditioning in which these take place.
 - Reshape their own masculine identity and sense of manhood so that they are characterised by non-violence.
 - Identify how non-violent and non-controlling behaviour and ways of relating will help them to strengthen their existing positive attributes and become a better person, partner and parent.

Access and participation

- 14 Groups' eligibility requirements include that men must:
 - Acknowledge that they have a problem, or at least demonstrate a willingness to consider the possibility of acknowledging their violent behaviour.
 - Show a desire, commitment and capacity to attend and participate in the entire program.
 - Show a willingness to keep their partner and children safe (or acknowledge their right to be and feel safe, where men do not have contact).
 - Agree to program staff having regular contact with any women and children who might be affected by their violent and controlling behaviour.
 - Agree to abide by the law, including all the requirements of any legal orders in force.
 - Agree to the provider's policies on limited confidentiality and responding to criminal acts or breaches of court orders.
 - Agree to give up their access to guns or other weapons, unless they require them for their livelihood (in which case staff should discuss this safety risk with their partner and incorporate this factor into safety planning).
 - Agree to an ongoing evaluation and monitoring of their progress in changing their violent behaviour and attitudes.

- 15 All men who enquire about a men's behaviour change program are provided with a Men's Referral Service brochure and encouraged to use the service as a complementary source of support.

- 16 Men or women making an enquiry about a men's behaviour change program are contacted by program staff within one week, but preferably within 48 hours.

- 17 Intake assessment includes at least one face-to-face interview conducted by an appropriately qualified family violence worker.

- 18 At a minimum, assessment covers the man's:
 - Current relationship status and relationship history.
 - Parenting status.
 - History of using all forms of violent and controlling behaviours.
 - Capacity for using all forms of violent and controlling behaviours.
 - Possession of weapons.
 - Legal standing, including current or previous court proceedings or orders, charges or convictions, and any reports required by statutory or other bodies.
 - Understanding of the need for change and willingness to change.
 - Commitment and ability to attend group sessions.
 - Ability to keep women and children safe, particularly in relation to physical violence.
 - Acceptance that, throughout the group program, group facilitators will contact women and children who are affected by his violence.
 - Willingness to accept the provider's policies regarding limited confidentiality and responding to criminal acts and breaches of court orders.
 - Any potential barriers to the man's participation are also assessed and managed appropriately.

If women and children affected by the man's violence agree to contact with the program, they are invited to contribute information to the man's assessment.

- 19 Program providers have a process to continue to engage and support men, women and children, in circumstances when men cannot enter a group immediately.
- 20 Program providers give men, women and children documentation about the rights and responsibilities of all parties.
- 21 Participation in the provider's program is contingent upon men signing a contract agreeing to:
 - Program staff contacting any women and children affected by their use of violence.
 - Limited confidentiality.
 - Staff disclosing information about them to statutory bodies as required by law.
 - Pay fees as set by the provider.
- 22 All groups have an agreement about acceptable conduct and behaviour within the group and about the consequences of breaking the agreement.

Administration

- 23 In all record keeping:
 - File notes discriminate between fact and interpretation.
 - Records never contain speculation about future behaviour.
 - Quotes are written down wherever possible.
 - Disclosures are attributed to the person who makes them (for example, 'Mr N said ...').
- 24 Information that might reasonably be considered to have the potential to jeopardise a person's safety is never recorded.
- 25 Women's and children's files are separate to men's files.
- 26 Files and notes never leave the provider's premises. They are stored in a secure environment, with access limited only to relevant personnel.
- 27 Men are permitted to join a men's behaviour change group only if they have agreed that their personal information will have limited confidentiality.
- 28 All conversations between women and program staff, and all information given to staff by women, are kept confidential unless women wish otherwise or unless the circumstances require mandatory reporting.

- 29 When providing any information to a court or other statutory body, providers include information about the complexities and uncertainties of men's behaviour change work. They do not:
 - Provide any feedback about men that helps them to avoid penalties, or that lessens the strength of a justice or child protection response to their use of violent and controlling behaviour.
 - Provide a court or other statutory body with any comments about men's behaviour outside the group, or with timelines for behaviour change or family reunification.

Accountability to family members

- 30 Contact with and support of women and children is primarily about their safety and wellbeing.
- 31 Men are encouraged to talk about and reflect on the impacts of their violence on women and children. Men are provided with information and evidence about the effects of their violence on women and children, and women's and children's voices have a place in every group session.
- 32 Program staff always ask about and respect the wishes of women when they share information about men's behaviour.
- 33 Information provided by women and children is shared with men or the group only if they have given explicit permission, and the program staff agree that it is safe to do so.
- 34 At minimum, contact workers ask women and children about:
 - Their safety.
 - What information and support they need.
 - Their experiences of the man's behaviour.
- 35 Contact workers tell women about:
 - Any threats, direct or indirect, to their or their children's safety.
 - The man's attendance and participation in the group.
 - What the group has been talking about.
 - The limitations of groups for men and the possibility that the violence and controlling behaviours might not stop.
 - Their rights, including rights to live in safety, legal protection, support and information.
 - What they, as the provider, will do in the event of a man breaching a court order or committing any act of violence against them or their children.
 - Services and resources that might help them to make decisions for themselves and in their and their children's interests.
 - Any concerns that they have about the wellbeing or safety of their children.

- 36 Initial contact with women and children occurs as part of a man's intake assessment, or if this is not possible, before a man attends his first group session. Where women and children express interest in being contacted by program staff, additional contact occurs at least:
 - After the man's second or third session.
 - Every three or four weeks through the program.
 - When the man leaves the program.
 - More or less contact than this is at the discretion of individual women and children.
 - Contact arising from specific safety concerns (for example, to advise a woman that her partner has not attended) is imperative and is counted as extra to the schedule of contact outlined above.

- 37 Providers make all reasonable attempts to contact any woman who has had an intimate relationship (co-habitation, co-parenting of a dependent child or adolescent, or a sexual relationship) in the last two years with a man wishing to participate in a men's behaviour change group:
 - Women who currently live with or have recently separated from a man wishing to participate in a men's behaviour change group are sent an introductory letter, followed up by a telephone call.
 - Women who have been separated from a man wishing to participate in a men's behaviour change group for more than three months are sent a letter inviting them to make contact.

Safety

- 38 Program providers have and implement written procedures for:
 - Documenting all risk assessments.
 - Monitoring threats or risks to safety in an ongoing and systematic way.
 - Responding to perceived threats to safety.
 - Reviewing critical incidents.
 - Responding to criminal acts.
 - Notifying relevant authorities of possible risk to children, consistent with the notification pathways of their relevant authority.
 - Relevant aspects of the procedures are explained to men, women, and children upon entry to the program, and thereafter as needed.

- 39 Program providers assist women and children to make and revise safety plans to cover foreseeable contingencies.

- 40 Providers ensure that women and children who do not want to see the man who has violated them are not on the premises at the same time as him, or that if they are, there is no chance that they will encounter each other.

- 41 At a minimum, when a participant in a men's behaviour change group commits any act of violent and controlling behaviour, whether reported by the man, a family member or a third party, program providers always have contact with the woman to:
 - Revisit her safety plan
 - Offer support, or offer to organise support, for her to pursue legal action or to discuss her legal option
 - Offer support, or offer to organise support, if she wishes to speak with police
 - Discuss whether she wishes to pursue legal action (for example, criminal charges, seeking a court order) against the man
 - Discuss any risks to her safety that she or the provider believe could arise from her taking legal action or speaking with police and make changes – as needed – to her safety plan
 - Discuss any other action she would like the provider to take, including when and how often the provider should contact her again
 - Discuss any risks to children and action that program staff feel they might need to take regarding a child protection notification
 - Report back to her about what has been done in response to the man's act, what further support she can get, and what (if any), further action she needs to take.

Practice and program delivery

- 42 Men's behaviour change groups focus on violence and control as primary themes. Cessation of violent and controlling behaviour is prioritised over other potential outcomes, such as personal development.
- 43 Program providers work with specialist services and draw on information about good practice to maximise their inclusiveness for men who are marginalised because of their indigeneity, ethnicity, sexuality or other factors.
- 44 Group agreements include processes for facilitators and participants to respond to misogyny and collusion with, or minimisation of, violent and controlling behaviours within the group.
- 45 Facilitators debrief for a minimum of twenty minutes at the conclusion of each group session.
- 46 Level Two and Three Facilitators, and Contact Workers, have at least monthly, one-on-one supervision, with a Supervisor who meets NTV's criteria for supervisors. Level One Facilitators have at least fortnightly, one-on-one supervision, with a Supervisor who meets NTV's criteria for supervisors. Staff undertaking assessments of men have at least monthly, one-on-one supervision, with a Supervisor who meets NTV's criteria for supervisors.

Monitoring and evaluation

- 47 Program providers evaluate each program they deliver, drawing on quantitative and qualitative data, including information and feedback collected from participants, women and children, and other stakeholders. The findings of evaluation are reported to all members of the Program Reference Group and are used to inform future program planning and delivery.