

Mens Behaviour Change - Post-Participation

Service guidelines

**We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay respects to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge that Aboriginal self-determination is a human right and recognise the hard work of many generations of Aboriginal people.**

**We are committed to safe and inclusive workplaces, policies, and services for people from LGBTIQA+ communities and their families.**

To receive this document in another format, email Perpetrator Programs Family and Sexual Violence Programs Branch Family Safety Victoria. pepetrator.accountability@familysafety.vic.gov.au

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In this document, ‘Aboriginal’ refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Available at Service Providers - [Men's behaviour change program resources](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-behaviour-change-program) https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-behaviour-change-program

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# Glossary

| Term | Description |
| --- | --- |
| **Facilitators/Perpetrator Intervention Team** | This general term refers to the practitioner/practitioners involved in working directly with the participant on their use of family violence. In common perpetrator interventions such as Men’s Behaviour Change Programs, these practitioners are often ‘facilitators’.  |
| **Family Safety Advocate**  | This term refers to the role of engaging with impacted family members of participants attending intervention programs. The purpose of contact is to engage around risk assessment and safety, provide support, and establish a counterpoint to the participant’s under-reporting of their use of violence and abuse. These roles are sometimes referred to as ‘family safety contact’ or ‘partner contact’.  |
| **Family Violence and Child Information Sharing Schemes** | Proactive sharing schemes, Responsibility 6 of MARAM.  |
| **MARAM** | Victorian Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework. MARAM is embedded in legislation, which requires prescribed organisations to align their policies, procedures, practices and tools to the state-wide Framework. |
| **Participant**  | The term ‘participant’ refers to the adult using family violence. This has the same meaning as the term ‘perpetrator ‘and ‘person using violence’, which is often used in practice tools.  |
| **Victim Survivor**  | The term ‘victim survivor’ refers to family members who have been impacted by the person using violence. This includes children, partners, other family members and kinship groups. ‘Victim survivor’ has the same meaning as a ‘primary person’ as defined in Section 144E of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008. As per the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines, a person will be a victim survivor if an information sharing entity (ISE) reasonably believes there is a risk the person may be subjected to family violence. |

A note on the use of ‘participant’ and ‘victim survivor’

Family violence is understood as being driven by gender inequality and oppression, with statistics demonstrating that victim survivors are predominantly women and children, and participants are primarily men. However, it is also acknowledged that family violence affects people of all gender identities, and from a diverse range of family-like relationships. For that purpose, the terms ‘victim survivor’ and ‘participant’ are used in this guide to account for the various ways family violence can present.

# Acronyms

| Term | Description |
| --- | --- |
| **CALD** | Culturally and Linguistically Diverse |
| **CISS** | Child Information Sharing Scheme |
| **FSA** | Family Safety Advocate |
| **FSC** | Family Safety Contact |
| **FVISS** | Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme |
| **LGBTIQA+** | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual |
| **MARAM** | Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework |
| **MBCP** | **Men’s Behaviour Change Program** |

# Introduction

Post-participation support for Men’s Behaviour Change Programs (MBCP) was established across Victoria in 2022 on the recommendation of the Expert Advisory Committee on Perpetrator Interventions (See [Resources](#_Resources) to download). MBCP Post-Participation Services (post participation or post participation service) increase the safety of victim survivors by holding people who use violence accountable for their behaviour through continued support for behaviour change via group and one-on-one engagement. The post participation service is offered to men who have commenced an MBCP, including those who do not complete the full program.

# Purpose

The purpose of the Post-Participation Service Guidelines (the Guidelines) is to provide guidance on implementing and delivering the post participation service as part of supporting MBCP. The Guidelines provide agencies with requirements for administering the post participation services (as a program) both for people who have completed MBCP, and people who have engaged but not completed MBCP (as defined in the Program Scope section).

These guidelines are to be read alongside the:

* MBCP Minimum Standards
* Implementation Guide: Men’s Behaviour Change Minimum Standards
* Family Safety Advocate Practice Guidance.

See [Resources](#_Resources) to download the above.

# Program principles

## Increase victim survivor safety

The priority of the post participation service is to increase the safety of victim survivors. This may be achieved with a variety of interventions, including supporting the ongoing work of sustainable behaviour-change with participants, as well as family safety advocacy work.

Agencies providing post participation are aligned to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Risk Management (MARAM) Framework and are required to address all MARAM practice responsibilities under the Victim Survivor and Adult Using Family Violence Practice Guides (comprehensive).

Agencies providing the post participation are Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) and Risk Assessment Entities (RAEs) under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) and Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS).

## Increase accountability and sustain change

The post participation service is intended to build lifelong and ongoing sustainable change for participants and continue to change the narrative for those participants.

Post participation services are designed to support the MBCP journey and continue, reinforce and solidify the change management work of participants by facilitating navigation of the best path for those who have not completed an MBCP.

Ongoing risk assessment, risk management and safety planning must be provided throughout the post participation service intervention.

## Cultural safety and inclusive engagement

Program modification may be required to provide a tailored response to the cultural needs of participants. The program should include considerations and tailored specific support for men from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (GBTQ) men, and men impacted by cognitive impairment who use violence in intimate relationships.

Services for Aboriginal participants are to be aligned with The Nargneit Birrang Framework vision and principles.

## Tailored program response to individuals

Service interventions are intended to be flexible and tailored to participant needs. A focus on additional learning, managing risk, actioning safety plans, case coordination, and sustaining, maintaining and reinforcing change assists to build on the accountability of the participant. It also helps to ensure continued visibility of perpetrator risk across the system.

While this may be best achieved through individual or group work sessions, it is distinct from a case management response.

|  |
| --- |
| * Post-participation support may be structured around revisiting specific family violence topics from the MBCP, including but not limited to:
	+ the impact of their use of family violence on their partner and/or children
	+ parenting/fathering
	+ enhancing strategies to maintain behaviour change
	+ living to values and goals
	+ accountability for their use of violence
	+ safety planning with participants.
* Support should incorporate the individual needs and circumstances of the participant, in line with their comprehensive safety plan.
 |

# Program scope

As the post participation service is an extension of MBCP, all practice standards and frameworks that apply to MBCP (see link to the minimum standards under Resources below), including Family Safety Advocate Guidelines, apply to post-participation service interventions, maintaining consistency across both MBCP and the post-participation service.

A participant’s service journey will differ dependent on whether they have completed or have not completed MBCP. A flowchart representing the potential service pathways for people who have engaged in or completed post-MBCP is provided at [Appendix 1](#_Appendix_1:_Flowchart).

## Who is eligible to engage with the post participation service?

The post participation service is available to:

* Individuals who have completed an MBCP program, and
* Individuals who have engaged in but not completed an MBCP program. This may be people who:
	+ have engaged with but have been unable to complete MBCP, or
	+ for whom MBCP is not an appropriate service, and they require support in accessing another relevant service for people who use violence, or other appropriate services such as alcohol and other drug services or mental health supports.

## What is the post participation service aim for participants?

For people who have completed an MBCP, post-participation services are aimed at supporting sustainable change and providing transitional support from engaging in intensive MBCP to living in the community with limited supports.

To support this, agencies should ensure:

* a comprehensive risk management plan is completed and up to date, and
* appropriate risk management actions are determined e.g. referral to further supports, tailoring behaviour change strategies and collaboration with other parts of the service system.

For people who have not completed an MBCP, in line with the requirements of MARAM and MBCP, post-participation services aim to:

* maintain visibility of perpetrator risk
* identify and coordinate risk management strategies, and
* support participants to re-engage in services or programs, refer to alternative services, and support victim-survivors to increase their safety.

## What approaches are used for the service?

People who have **completed** an MBCP may be able to participate in the post participation service either through individual or group sessions.

For people who have **not completed** an MBCP, the post participation service is expected to be provided as individual sessions. It is recommended that this be provided in a different format to the MBCP.

The post-participation service can be adapted to a specific theme if the agency deems it appropriate. It may be influenced by the group or individual participants, however, the focus should be on the continued journey of behaviour change and increasing safety to victim survivor.

## What determines a participant’s suitability for the post participation service?

Participants are suitable for the post participation service if:

* they want to continue their self-growth regarding changing their behaviour
* they are willing to engage with the program
* they understand their own behaviour and safety planning actions
* MARAM Risk Assessment, Risk Management Plan, and Safety Plan have been completed or are being completed, in line with MARAM practice guidance
* they consent to Family Safety Contact, and
* they have completed/disengaged from the MBCP program within the previous three months (or longer, at the discretion of the service provider’s post-participation program manager).

The post-participation service provides the opportunity for the service provider to pro-actively work with a client who has disengaged to increase their motivation, (for example, by utilising motivational interviewing) and to assist them to prepare for engagement in other interventions or services.

## How and when do you engage MBCP participants for the post participation service?

For people who have completed an MBCP, a seamless referral into the post-participation service is intended. It is recommended that information about post-participation support is shared and socialised with participants throughout the MBCP, including during intake, at the midway point, and at the exit interview.

Service providers may develop an information sheet for MBCP participations about the post-participation support. This can be discussed at intake, midway through the MBCP and at the exit interview.

Service providers are encouraged to tailor promotion of the post-participation service to align with the client’s individual goals and motivation to change. Messaging should aim to find the hook for each person and highlight how post-participation support will help them meet their goals.

## What are the different ways to work with people who have not completed a MBCP?

Where a MBCP participant has not completed the program:

* Investigate the reasons for disengagement and explore options to re-engage and work with the participant.
* Provide individual support to identify and address barriers to MBCP engagement.
* Explore alternative services/referral pathways for participants where MBCP is no longer appropriate or responsive to their needs, for example, current mental health needs or capacity to attend due to cultural needs or employment demands
* If non-engagement continues, share non-engagement and other risk-relevant information with other services, where appropriate, and the victim survivor(s). Use FVISS/CISS to ensure that up-to-date information is available to understand the risk to any adult, child or youth victim survivors. (See next section regarding risk assessment and management).

An Aboriginal healing group may be more appropriate for a person who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

A person unable to attend MBCP may require support in finding an appropriate group that meets at a different time or provides the program online.

Other types of support may be more suitable, e.g., participant might need or benefit from an individual case management response.

Brokerage may be used to provide additional support to participants to stabilise and address needs impacting risk. Please refer to the department’s funding guidelines for Perpetrator brokerage funding.

## What are the requirements for risk assessment, risk management and safety planning within the post-participation service and when do these need to be undertaken?

Agencies providing MBCP and the post-participation service are ‘prescribed organisations’ for MARAM, FVISS and CISS. Under the MARAM Framework, agencies providing post participation are specialist perpetrator intervention services and are expected to align their practice and tools to the comprehensive level responsibilities.

MARAM Risk assessment and management should be a continuous process throughout the engagement, non/dis-engagement, and case closure (see MARAM Responsibilities 7 and 8).

Practitioners are expected to undertake a comprehensive risk assessment and develop a comprehensive risk management plan for all MBCP and post-participation clients. The risk assessment and risk management plan should build on or continue from those completed during previous engagements with the agency and/or service system.

To support risk and safety management for victim survivors, it is imperative for service providers to clarify their information sharing requirements (refer to MARAM Responsibility 6) under the FVISS and/or CISS (refer to relevant Ministerial Guidelines)

Proactive information sharing and seeking should be completed using the FVISs and CISS, where appropriate. Information sharing practices and processes should also be appropriately documented. Refer to the FVISS/CISS Ministerial Guidelines for more information (see [Resources](#_Resources)).

Agencies are expected to share information under FVISS and/or CISS if there is a change and/or escalation of participant risk to victim survivors, or if there is a change to any other risk-relevant information. This may include a decline in program engagement and/or exiting the service.

Throughout a participant’s engagement, MARAM Comprehensive Risk Assessment, Comprehensive Risk Management Plans and Comprehensive Safety Plans must be continually updated and shared when relevant. Where possible, the Risk Management Plan and Safety Plan should reflect the participant and victim survivor’s goals and strategies. Care must be taken in how victim survivors’ needs and wishes inform work undertaken with any adult using family violence. Refer to MARAM Responsibility 8 for detailed guidance.

* If a participant was not engaged with MBCP long enough to have a completed a Comprehensive Risk Assessment, Risk Management Plan or Safety Plan, the Post-Participation Service practitioner may complete or update it.
* A participant may cease engagement and not return phone calls. The facilitator should use FVISS/CISS to contact and notify the victim survivor about the participant’s absence and ensure the safety plan is reviewed. They should also notify the participant’s other services to support accountability.
* The Comprehensive MARAM Practice Guides were released to specialist family violence services in February 2022. Specialist providers should align their policies, practice and tools to the Adult Using Family Violence MARAM Practice Guides.

## What is required for Family Safety Contact?

Family safety contact is a critical component of the post participation service that supports victim survivors to increase their safety.

Family safety contact work by a Family Safety Advocate should support victim survivors with risk management, safety planning, referrals, long-term goals and other relevant supports.

The support provided and intervals of engagement for family safety contact should be flexible to meet the needs of the victim survivor. This may be determined by the service provider.

Support for family safety contact may cease at the end of engagement with the person using violence, however, this is at the discretion of the service provider based on the victim survivor’s needs and their level of risk.

To fast-track rapport and continue support that has already been provided, the Family Safety Advocate can be the same person who supported the victim survivor while the participant was involved with MBCP.

## Key elements of exit planning for post-participation service participants?

The following are key elements of exit planning for post participation service participants:

* The participant should have increased confidence of their ability to address the factors contributing to their use of violence and behaviour in their home and community.
* There should be active and ongoing risk assessment, risk management and safety plans
* The participant and victim survivors should know what their next steps are and where to access support if necessary
* FVISS/CISS should be used to contact and notify relevant agencies of the participant’s service completion to ensure they understand the participant’s situation. These agencies might include Child Protection, Mental Health and Alcohol and other Drug services, police, Corrections Victoria, parenting programs. It may be appropriate to share risk assessments, risk management plans and safety plans with these services.

## How can the post participation service be adapted?

Agencies have flexibility to design the post participation service within the parameters of these guidelines. At a minimum, the post participation service must support the sustainable, positive change for men who use family violence and work towards increasing safety for victim survivors. The funded agency can determine how this is delivered.

Discretion may be used by agencies providing the post participation service to determine the appropriateness of participants and referral into the program. Each service provider is expected to develop documented practice guidance for their staff to inform engagement, selection and suitability.

## What skills do staff require to provide the post participation service?

Post-participation support provided in a group setting is expected to be delivered by staff who are trained to deliver the MBCP, given the like nature of risk and approach. Group support may be facilitated by the same staff who facilitate the service provider’s MBCP.

Post-participation support provided on an individual basis is expected to be delivered by staff with skills and experience as per perpetrator case management. Individualised post-participation support may be provided by either by a MBCP facilitator or a perpetrator case manager

## How will the post participation service be reported on?

Program reporting requires provider agencies to report on cases in IRIS and Service Delivery Tracking. Please see the IRIS Funding Sources Fact Sheet – Reporting required against ‘Provisional 1 Funding Source – Post Participation funding source descriptor’.

When reporting is completed in Service Delivery tracking, please add a breakdown for participants supported in a group setting vs participants who received a group work setting.

## How will the post participation service be evaluated?

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (the department) is committed to exploring opportunities to evaluate the efficacy of services and to build the evidence of what works to reduce harmful behaviour. Further advice will be provided to service providers if a formal program evaluation of the MBCP post-participation service be planned. Outside of a formal/independent evaluation, the department may seek feedback from service providers and use data from IRIS, to articulate the outcomes possible through the delivery of the post-participation service.

Service providers are encouraged to capture data and evidence to assist them to locally measure the impact of their post-participation service for the purposes of quality improvement and to contribute to statewide conversations about the impact of MBCP post-participation supports.

# Resources

The resources listed below inform and provide a foundation to this guidance. They also apply when adapting the post participation service to your agency’s program offerings.

| **Resource** | Link |
| --- | --- |
| **Person who uses family violence**  | * [Perpetrator Case Management Guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/interventions-people-who-use-violence) https://www.vic.gov.au/interventions-people-who-use-violence
* [Implementation Guide: Men’s Behaviour Change Minimum Standards](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-behaviour-change-program)https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-behaviour-change-program
* [Adult perpetrator-focused MARAM practice guides](https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-professionals-working-adults-using-family-violence)https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-professionals-working-adults-using-family-violence
* [Perpetrator Brokerage Guidelines](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-behaviour-change-program)
* [Implementation Guide: Men’s Behaviour Change Minimum Standards](https://ntv.org.au/advocacy-media/resources/#practice) https://ntv.org.au/advocacy-media/resources/#practice
 |
| **Supporting victim survivors** | * [Family Safety Advocate Practice Guidance](https://ntv.org.au/sector-resources/resources/)https://ntv.org.au/sector-resources/resources/
* [MARAM Victim Survivor Practice Guides](https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-victim-survivor-practice-guides)https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-victim-survivor-practice-guides
 |
| **Family Violence and Child Information Sharing Schemes** | * [Family Violence and Child Information Sharing Schemes (FVISS/CISS)](https://www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing) – including the Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelineshttps://www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing
 |
| **MARAM** | * [Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework](https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-multi-agency-risk-assessment-and-management-framework)https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-multi-agency-risk-assessment-and-management-framework
 |
| **Expert Advisory Committee on Perpetrator Interventions** | * [Expert Advisory Committee on Perpetrator Interventions: Final Report](https://apo.org.au/node/268781)https://apo.org.au/node/268781
 |
| **Nargneit Birrang Framework**  | * [Nargneit Birrang Framework](https://www.vic.gov.au/nargneit-birrang-aboriginal-holistic-healing-framework-family-violence/chapter-2)https://www.vic.gov.au/nargneit-birrang-aboriginal-holistic-healing-framework-family-violence/
 |
| **Legislation**  | * [Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/family-violence-protection-act-2008/053)https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/family-violence-protection-act-2008/053https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/family-violence-protection-act-2008/053
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# Further information

For further information about the MBCP Post-Participation Service or other department funded perpetrator programs, please contact the department’s Family Safety Victoria division by emailing perpetrator.accountability@familysafety.vic.gov.au.

# Appendix 1: Flowchart representing the potential journey for a participant after engaging in MBCP

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