family violence after natural disaster

FACILITATOR GUIDE
Acknowledgements

Women’s Health Goulburn North East (WHGNE) was established in July 2000. Previously known as NEWomen, Women’s Health Goulburn North East is the government funded, specialist women's health service for the Goulburn Valley and North-East Victoria.

Our heartfelt thanks to the women who spoke of their experiences of violence after Black Saturday. Their courage in speaking to us has enabled changes to service provision which will ensure better response to family violence in future natural disaster. Sincere appreciation, too, to the workers who gave their time and expertise so generously.

We would like to thank the Victorian Department of Human Services, Emergency Management Unit. We would also like to thank Tricia Hazeleger for her invaluable work in bringing our research on family violence after disaster to the attention of the Emergency Management Unit.

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Introduction

This workshop was designed to respond to a recognised need for emergency workers to have a basic understanding of family violence.

Family violence is an enormous community problem. It is not something that happens out there, to other people. Victims of family violence are among us throughout the community, in workplaces, schools, churches and community groups.

Research conducted after the 2009 Victorian bushfires found that family violence had increased. For some women who had previous experience of family violence, its intensity and frequency escalated – for others it was new and terrifying, coming in the wake of trauma caused by the fires.

In the overwhelming aftermath of this natural disaster, professionals and volunteers often struggled to meet the needs of the many people they worked tirelessly to help. Most had no training in family violence nor did they have the skills to identify it, or the knowledge of how to respond.

This workshop aims to give emergency services workers skills to identify family violence and how to respond and refer victims appropriately. This is not without its challenges … family violence is a hard topic, particularly when participants are from workplaces that don’t appear to have any connection with the issue at all. The belief that this has nothing to do with me is understandable especially when existing work can be overwhelmingly busy and even more so when natural disaster strikes.

When facilitating this workshop is important to reassure participants that this training is not to prepare them to become family violence workers and it is not about adding to their workload. It is about learning to be sensitive to signs of family violence and responding appropriately.

Be prepared to find that the content of this workshop may cause both male and female participants to become uncomfortable or indignant. The contents may seem unfair and one-sided; however, statistics tell us clearly that family violence is a gendered crime. To deny or equalise this is to do a great disservice to the women and children who suffer (and die) at the hands of abusive men each year. Women, of course, can be violent, but the reality is that men do not tend to live in fear, nor are they subjected to the range of abuse suffered by women at the hands of partners and ex-partners. If a man presents or discloses these fears the same care would be afforded to him.

A man’s idea of his entitlement to dominate his partner is supported throughout society. Global wealth and power, as evidenced through disproportionate representation in government and corporations, and media images, portraying aggression as an ideal of manhood, help shape and exacerbate this notion.

Natural disasters are social events that bring great upheaval, tragedy and grief. This training can assist those who have emergency preparedness, response and recovery responsibilities to ensure that family violence does not result in further loss.
About the workshop

The Family violence after natural disasters workshop is designed to increase service organisation staff and volunteers understanding of family violence after natural disaster.

The workshop offers:

- information about family violence after natural disasters based on current research
- practical skills for responding to family violence after natural disaster
- information about safety and referral pathways.

The workshop takes 4–5 hours to complete when presented to 12–15 participants.

Preparing for the workshop

Facilitators should have an understanding of family violence and have read or listened to:


Facilitators should contextualise the workshop by:

• delivering information and coordinating activities to meet with adult learning styles and group preferences
• providing relevant examples for the type of service organisation or background of participants
• compiling and distributing information about safety and referral pathways for the locations where each workshop is delivered.

Guest speakers

It is strongly suggested that a representative of the local family violence service and/or sexual assault service be invited to brief participants about the services and support their organisation offers.

Provide the guest speaker with the following information:

• information required, for example, services offered, contact details
• time allowed for the presentation
• location of the workshop
• number of participants at the workshop
• background of participants, for example, role and organisation
• room set up
• availability of training resources, for example, whiteboard, data projector.
Resources

- laptop and speakers
- power board
- extension cord
- data projector
- PowerPoint presentation
- butchers’ paper and markers
- white board and markers
- copies of local family violence and sexual assault service information, for example, brochures, information cards
- Resource Pack for each participant with a copy of:
  - Participant Handbook
  - evaluation form
  - *Disaster is no excuse for family violence* postcard*
  - *The way he tells it … Relationships after Black Saturday* postcard*
  - *Environmental justice for women* postcard*
  - *Improving women’s health: before, during and after disasters* postcard*

* Postcards can be ordered from Goulburn Valley Printing Services, gvprint@mcmedia.com.au, 58 McLennan Street, Mooroopna, Victoria, 3629. The contact details for family violence service organisations can be customised for the *Disaster is no excuse for family violence* postcard by advising the printer of the required contact details.

Mapping to accredited training

The content of this workshop aligns with some elements and performance criteria in the following units of competency:

**UNIT OF COMPETENCY**

- **CHCDFV505C** Counsel clients affected by domestic and family violence
- **CHCDFV402A** Manage own professional development in responding to domestic and family violence
- **CHCDFV404C** Promote community awareness of domestic and family violence
- **CHCDFV301A** Recognise and respond appropriately to domestic and family violence

Facilitators should advise participants that completion of the workshop and related work or volunteer activity may be accepted as part of a submission for Recognition of Prior Learning by a Registered Training Organisation.
DELIVERY GUIDE
Welcome participants, introduce yourself and give a brief overview of your role as facilitator.

Provide an overview of the way the workshop will be conducted, for example, facilitator presentations, whole group discussions and small group activities to develop the awareness and skills to respond when family violence is observed or suspected.

Provide an overview of the content of the workshop:
- the relationship between natural disaster and family violence
- defining family violence
- examining the causes of family violence
- reviewing the prevalence of family violence in Australia
- identifying the factors influencing family violence after natural disaster
- talking about family violence
- disclosing family violence
- approaching a woman about family violence
- keeping records.

Explain that the aim of the workshop is to assist in ensuring that the safety needs of men, women and children are met after natural disaster.

Ask participants to introduce themselves.

Explain housekeeping, for example, emergency exits, toilets, breaks, use of mobile phones, start and finish times.

Note that many men work with women to eliminate violence against women by men.

Provide additional background information about family violence, for example:
- Most men are not violent; however, the majority of violence involves men – this includes male-to-male violence as well as male-to-female violence.
- Severe female-to-male violence is unusual; when it occurs the same care and attention should be provided to the victim.
- Family violence is an increasing problem worldwide.
- The effects on children are extensive and can cause lifetime harm.
- Family violence is a community issue, not a private issue, or a women's issue.

Advise participants that they may find some information in the workshop confronting or it may raise personal issues. The participants should feel free to leave the room and/or talk to the facilitators during the break.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outline the findings of international research as follows:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 2010 study shows a 53% increase in family violence call outs on the weekend of the Christchurch earthquake.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 2009 study shows four-fold increase in family violence after Hurricane Katrina.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 1989 Increase in family violence after Exxon Valdez oil spill.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explain that The way he tells it … Relationships after Black Saturday research report is the catalyst for the workshop.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outline</strong> the research:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• involved interviews with 29 women and 47 support workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• found that family violence increased for some women who had already experienced it</td>
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<tr>
<td>• found that family violence began for other women</td>
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<tr>
<td>• identified that family violence was another risk factor for support workers to be aware of during natural disaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• recommended that identifying and responding to family violence is one important way to minimise the potential for vulnerable people to be hurt further after natural disaster.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Ask participants to define family violence.

Provide definitions of family violence:

- Family violence includes violent behavior that is repeated, controlling, threatening and manipulative and that occurs between people who have had or are having an intimate relationship or in a family relationship. Family violence can include: physical assaults and a range of tactics including intimidation, direct or indirect threats, sexual assault, emotional and psychological torment, financial control, property damage, social isolation and any other behaviour that causes a person to live in fear.


- Family violence is any behaviour that in any way controls or dominates a family member that causes them to fear for their own, or other family member’s safety or wellbeing. It can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or economic abuse and any behaviour that causes a child to hear, witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of that behaviour.

Outline the types of family violence:
- physical violence
- sexual violence
- emotional/psychological abuse
- social abuse/isolation
- economic/financial abuse
- racial, spiritual or cultural abuse
- threatening to harm another family member or pet
- stalking.

Ask participants to work in small groups to complete the *Types of family violence* activity on pages 13−14 in the Participant Handbook. Groups may be allocated one or two types of violence to discuss.

Debrief the small group activity and provide additional examples of how family violence may present, for example:
- physical violence – punching, kicking, pushing or causing injury with an object or weapon
- sexual violence – rape or unwanted sexualised behaviour
- emotional/psychological abuse – behaviour that undermines a person's self-esteem and sense of self, such as threats, intimidation and constant put-downs
- social abuse – controlling where a person goes and who they see
- economic abuse – withholding money for necessary living expenses such as food, clothing and petrol or preventing a person from having a job
- racial, spiritual or cultural abuse – taunts that inflict emotional harm and/or preventing a person from practising their chosen religious or cultural beliefs
- threatening to harm the person, children or another family member in order to intimidate
- damaging property
- stalking.

Note: If available, provide participants with copies of the family violence risk assessment information for the state or territory in which they are located.

Discuss how family violence:
- is not an act of anger
- is often calculated and unseen by the public
- is based on unequal power that can be maintained economically, physically, emotionally and psychologically and has its basis in fear
- can be ongoing or a one-off action.
**10 minutes  Family Violence Quiz**

**Ask** participants to complete the Family Violence Quiz on page 15 of the Participant Handbook.

**Debrief** the quiz (correct answers in bold):

1. What is the greatest risk factor for experiencing family violence?
   a. Poverty
   b. Race
   c. Religion

2. When is a woman in most danger of being killed?
   a. When the user of violence is drinking
   b. When she fights back
   c. When she attempts to leave *(Source: Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides, edition 2, 2012, p. 28)*
   d. All of the above

3. What was the cost of family violence to the Australian community in 2008−09?
   a. $13.6 million
   b. $1.3 billion
   c. **$13.6 billion** – Victoria has a $3.4 billion annual cost which, if no action is taken, is expected to reach $3.9 billion by 2021−22. *(Source: The cost of violence against women and their children – The National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children, March 2009, p. 4)*
4. How many children in Australia are affected by family violence?
   a. One hundred thousand
   c. Two million
   d. Two hundred thousand

5. Early and repeated exposure of children to family violence may result in:
   a. Chronic emotional and behavioural problems
   b. Familiarity and acceptance of violence
   c. Apparently calm and placid child
   d. Withdrawn and isolated child

6. The number of people who believe that victims would leave the relationship if they really wanted to is:
   a. One in ten
   b. Four in ten
   d. Ten out of ten

- approximately one in three Australian women have experienced physical violence during their lifetime
- nearly one in five women have experienced some form of sexual violence
- nearly one in five have experienced violence by a current or previous partner
- females are more likely than males to experience an act of physical or sexual violence (actual, attempted or threatened) at the hands of a current or former partner.

A study of intimate partner homicides over a 13-year period (1989–2002) finds an average of 77 occur each year in Australia. The majority of these (75 per cent) involves males killing female intimate partners (Mouzos & Rushforth 2003). Recent figures confirm this pattern. For 2007–08, 80 people were killed as a result of intimate partner violence. Of these, the majority (78%) were females (Virueda & Payne 2010).

Intimate partner violence is the leading preventable contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged 15–44, being responsible for more of the disease burden than many well-known risk factors such as high blood pressure, smoking and obesity.

### 10 minutes  Understanding the causes of family violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Explanation</strong></th>
<th><strong>PowerPoint 25-26</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explain</strong> that research has shown that the causes of family violence include deeply held beliefs about masculinity. Men who abuse members of their family also tend to blame other people, alcohol or circumstances for their violent outbursts.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Refer</strong> participants to the VicHealth Framework for Preventing Violence Against Women that states that the key individual and relationship determinants of violence against women are:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| - belief in rigid gender roles  
| - masculine orientation or sense of entitlement  
| - male dominance and control of wealth in relationships. |  
| **Refer** participants to the statistics about women and their place in the world on page 16 in the Participant Handbook. |  
| **Discuss** how the statistics about women’s political and financial positions relate to men’s sense of entitlement. |  
| **Refer** participants to the *Domestic violence – why men abuse women* article in the Resource Pack. |
15 minutes  Identifying the factors affecting family violence after a natural disaster

PowerPoint 27

**Ask** participants to describe the factors during and in the aftermath of natural disaster that may contribute to an environment where family violence could occur.

**Explain** the research after the Black Saturday fires found that the factors that contributed to family violence were:

- a return to traditional stereotypes/roles
- living in close contact
- reduced or no employment
- grief
- frustration with local council and government directives
- confusion over grants entitlements
- hyper-masculinity, for example, risky behaviour including reckless driving or other ways of achieving an adrenalin rush and spending on expensive ‘boys toys’
- media attention
- drugs and alcohol
- rebuilding
- trauma.


**Refer** participants to the *References and resources* list with further information about the Australian experience, for example, the YouTube videos.

**Provide** participants with examples from *The way he tells it … Relationships after Black Saturday* research report, for example:

*Whereas he would hold it back if we were in front of people normally, he really embraced the whole, ‘I can be an absolute prick to everybody and I can get away with it because I can say I‘ve been through the fires and I‘m traumatised.’*

**Emphasise** that trauma, like the other identified factors, is not an excuse for violence, but can be a trigger.

**Note** that family violence often does not manifest until some time after natural disaster, for example, three years after the Black Saturday bushfires some communities began seeing increased private and public violence.
**10 minutes Talking about family violence**

**Explain** that the way family violence is talked about shapes its meaning and value as well as influencing the responses of workers.

**Brainstorm** List words or phrases that may be used instead of saying violence, rape or abuse.

**Refer** to participants’ responses and list the words or phrases that may be used such as bad behaviour, angry, stressed, tense, gets short, wound up, edgy, drinking a bit more, loses it, bad mannered, controlling, demanding, a bit physical, aggressive.

**Explain** that the words used to describe family violence are important and the correct terms should be used at all times.

**Discuss** how understanding the circumstances around violent behaviour or feeling compassion is normal; however, calling it something else, that softens what it is, is not acceptable.

**Provide** participants with examples from *The way he tells it … Relationships after Black Saturday* research report:

*One woman said her husband was more angry than usual. When pressed she told us he had pulled her hair and smashed her hand viciously.*

*Another woman spoke of her husband criticising her for not being proactive. When pressed, she said he punched the wall and both she and the kids were frightened of him. At the end of the interview she said she felt guilty saying these things about him because he was her best friend.*

Emphasise the importance of clarifying words or terms that can have a variety of meanings, for example, *What does your husband do when he is more angry than usual? What do you mean when you say your husband criticised you?*
**20 minutes  Reporting family violence**

**Explain** that many women are reluctant to talk about their experience of family violence.

**Tell** participants there is space on page 17 in the Participant Handbook to write notes.

**Brainstorm** List the reasons that why women might not disclose family violence.

**Discuss** the reasons why women living in rural areas might not disclose family violence, for example, close communities, no assistance available, everyone knows her business, partner could be mates with local service providers.

**Ask** participants why women may not disclose family violence after natural disaster.

**Explain** that the pressures on women not to disclose family violence after natural disaster are huge.

**Outline** some reasons why women did not disclose family violence after the Black Saturday fires:

- *He may have been a hero during the disaster*
- *Her whole world is turned upside down*
- *Excuse by community* (VicHealth report showed that many/most Australians believe family violence is excusable under certain circumstances)
- *Hierarchy of loss – others have suffered more*
- *Fear*
- *Children asking her to stay*
- *Fewer options*
- *No childcare*
- *Schools closed*
- *Full-time care of children*
- *No work or unable to work due to childcare and access issues*
- *Not being supported – family, community, agency*
- *His vulnerability.*

**Reasons women do not disclose family violence**
- He may have been a hero during the disaster
- Her whole world is turned upside down
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- Hierarchy of loss – others have suffered more
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- Full-time care of children
- No work or unable to work due to childcare and access issues
- Not being supported – family, community, agency
- His vulnerability.

Provide case study examples from the Black Saturday research report, for example:

I didn’t want him to break. I didn’t want him to die. He was pretty fragile, he was pretty angry and I didn’t want him to go and smash his car into a tree or something stupid like that.

… when women went to family, they were ignored, accused of over-reacting and blamed for not caring well enough for their men. Friends and work colleagues did not want to get involved and sometimes fearful of violence or confrontation themselves, leaving the woman unsupported and making excuses for the man.

Sometimes, women just kept trying to get help from different people, different services. The women told of health professionals failing to follow up on initial conversations, and willing to drop the issue if the man denied any violence or pass the woman on to some other service. Ultimately, many women gave up. One woman, after finishing our interview, said, ‘I’ll get out of here in a box’, revealing her level of fear and surrender.

I hadn’t said anything, but it was one of those days when I thought I can’t do this anymore that’s it. OK, I’m shooting baskets with [my son] and he says to me, ‘I can understand why you would want to’ and he didn’t finish his sentence, ‘but please don’t leave we’ve been through enough’.

Well, they say, ‘We know that it’s hard for you, we can see that, and we don’t want it to continue but at the moment we’re not set up enough to move out so when we move out you can move out, Mum.’
### 15 minutes Reasons for workers not disclosing family violence

**Ask** participants to comment on why workers might not respond to or report family violence.

**Tell** participants there is space on page 17 in the Participant Handbook to write notes.

**Outline** some of the reasons workers might not respond to or report family violence after natural disaster:

- no reporting mechanism
- sensitivity
- fear of tipping the man over the edge
- not my job
- no real knowledge of family violence
- no idea what to do
- fear of being implicated
- fear of retribution.

**Explain** that unless participants are a family violence or sexual assault worker their role is to acknowledge the occurrence of family violence, refer women to relevant agencies and provide support if appropriate.

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**PowerPoint 30**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for workers not disclosing family violence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- No reporting mechanism</td>
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<td>- Fear of being implicated</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Fear of retribution</td>
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Explain that different settings require different approaches when speaking to a woman about family violence:

- Universal approach – presenting everyone with an information pack that includes family violence information such as the resource cards. The least invasive way of presenting this is to go through the whole pack and point out all the information.
- Direct approach – directly approaching a woman about family violence is not easy. Having a prepared approach can sometimes make this initial approach easier.

Outline the 4-Step process:

1. ASK: Are you safe at home?
2. NAME IT: What you’ve just described to me is violence and it’s a crime.
3. RESPOND: Give contact details of the local family violence service and/or sexual assault and police.
4. FOLLOW UP: Last time you spoke about your safety. I’d like to know how you are now.

Refer participants to the Disaster is no excuse for family violence postcard in the Resource Pack.

Ask participants to describe the opportunities that may present for approaching a woman they suspect is experiencing family violence, for example, during a follow up property check.

Ask participants to work in pairs to complete the Approaching a woman about family violence activity on page 18 in the Participant Handbook.

Ask participants to work in small groups to complete the Scenario activities on pages 19–20 in the Participant Handbook.

- How would you respond?
- How would you broach the subject with the woman?
- When would you broach the subject with the woman?
- What would you say?
- What would you ask?
- What information would you give her?
- What if she says nothing is wrong?

Debrief the small group activity.

Refer participants to the earlier discussion about using euphemisms and emphasise that is important, where possible, to ask for clarification, for example, What happens when he drinks too much? Can you describe ...? What are his bad behaviours?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20 minutes</th>
<th>Guest speaker</th>
<th>PowerPoint</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduce</strong> the guest speaker who will explain the role and function of family violence and sexual assault services.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Provide</strong> copies of information and contact details.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ask</strong> participants to list other services or agencies that may be useful sources of information and advice.</td>
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</table>
Ask participants to outline the responsibilities of their role in relation to keeping records about family violence disclosures or concerns.

Detail the reasons for collecting data:
- historical information for the staff member collecting the information
- the woman may need help at a later time and staff may have changed at the service
- to build on the evidence base that shows the incidence of family violence during and after natural disasters – without this incidents remain anecdotal and cannot be used as proof of the need for resources and support.

Explain that keeping systematic records adds to the evidence base needed for resourcing family violence support for women, men and children.

Outline the data from the 2009 Victorian bushfires:
- Department of Human Services data after the 2009 fires showed only nine cases of family violence in the Hume region. In 2008 this region had some of the highest statistics in Victoria.
- During the 2009 bushfires workers were recorded as saying that they felt sensitive to the men and had deliberately noted down other main issues such as stress instead of family violence out of respect to the man.
- The interviewers for The way he tells it … Relationships after Black Saturday noted that both women and workers often used toned down words and phrases when talking about family violence.

Provide participants with examples from The way he tells it … Relationships after Black Saturday research report, for example:

A lot of people struggled with putting that sort of information down . . . and you know, somebody might have disclosed something to them . . . it's just about how do you define that and how do you report that in your case notes . . . I think the difference is getting through it and knowing what it is but actually respecting the client and recording it in their words.

Outline the data that should be collected:
- date
- your name
- person’s name
- suspected family violence
- your observations
- your actions
- follow up – what needs to be done.

Ask participants to outline the changes that may be required to their workplace systems to incorporate data about family violence disclosures during natural disaster.
### 10 minutes Close and evaluation

**Provide** a summary of the key points from the workshop.

**Remind** participants of the contact details and information available for local family violence and sexual assault services.

**Ask** participants to complete and return the evaluation sheet.

### PowerPoint 37-38

#### Key points
- The relationship between natural disaster and family violence
- Defining family violence
- Examining the causes of family violence
- Reviewing the prevalence of family violence in Australia
- Identifying the factors influencing family violence after natural disasters
- Talking about family violence
- Disclosing family violence
- Approaching a woman about family violence
- Keeping records.