

Family Safety Framework

Family Safety Framework was introduced in Alice Springs in July 2012, and is being introduced in Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek in 2014-17.

The purpose of the Family Safety Framework is to provide an action-based, integrated service response to individuals and families experiencing domestic or family violence who are at high risk of injury or death.

The Family Safety Framework is a coordinated effort between key agencies in the NT. In Alice Springs it is led by NT Police through the Domestic Violence Unit in partnership with the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice and the Department of Children and Families. In all other NT locations it is led by the NT Police through the Domestic Violence Unit in partnership with the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice;

Government Agencies in each FSF region

- Department of Children and Families (Child Protection)
- Department of the Attorney-General and Justice
- Department of Correctional Services
- Department of Education
- Department of Housing
- Department of Health (Emergency Department)
- Commonwealth Department of Human Services – Centrelink.

Non-Government Agencies

Alice Springs

- Alice Springs Women's Shelter
- NPY Women's Council
- Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
- Tangentyere Council

Darwin

- DAWN House Women's Shelter
- Darwin Aboriginal and Islander Women's Shelter (DAIWS)
- Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation
- YWCA DFV Centre

Katherine

- Wurli Wurlinjang Health Services
- Binjari Health Clinic
- Katherine Women's Crisis Centre

Tennant Creek

- Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation
- Barkly Region Alcohol Drug Abuse Advisory Group
- Tennant Creek Women's Refuge

Other agencies also participate in the Family Safety Framework and Family Safety Meetings where this is necessary to enhance the safety of the family.

The Family Safety Framework includes the following essential elements.

1. Risk Assessment Form

The Family Safety Framework relies upon the use of a risk assessment form by all participating agencies. The risk assessment form helps workers assess the risk of further harm for individuals, especially women, children and young people who are most at risk of experiencing family and domestic violence. It uses known risk factors to identify the probability of harm occurring. It is intended as a guide or checklist to prompt workers to consider relevant factors in each case. It does not replace the use of professional judgement which must be exercised by each worker in accordance with their professional responsibilities. Cases assessed as high risk are referred to the Family Safety Meetings.

2. Protocol for Information Sharing

The Family Safety Framework relies on agreement between agencies to share information about high risk cases to prevent further harm to individuals and families involved. All agencies participating in the Family Safety Framework adhere to an information sharing protocol. This includes the signing of a confidentiality declaration at every Family Safety Meeting covering all agencies responsible for safeguarding information in keeping with the *Information Act* (NT) and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

3. The Family Safety Meeting

Agencies participating in the Family Safety Framework will meet fortnightly to discuss high risk family and domestic violence cases and to agree on appropriate actions to increase the safety of the individual/family. This is called a Family Safety Meeting (FSM). The FSM is chaired by the Officer in Charge of the NT Police Domestic Violence Unit. The FSM provides a co-ordinated process for increasing the safety of Individuals and families at high risk of violence by identifying high risk cases, sharing information across agencies, agreeing on actions to increase safety, and monitoring and reviewing the extent to which those actions have improved safety. The FSM will generate a specific action plan to support the reduction of risk for each person/family referred to the FSM.

4. Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation

The Family Safety Framework includes careful monitoring and evaluation of how it is operating and its impact on safety.