

HIGH RISK INDICATORS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE



MARAM-Aligned Evidence Based High Risk Indicators

If clients that have been identified as victim survivors are experiencing any of the following high-risk factors, they are at increased risk of being killed or almost killed. These high-risk factors are aligned to MARAM and are situated within an AOD context.



Drug or alcohol misuse

Escalation in severity if the adult person using violence (PUV) is also experiencing issues with alcohol and/or drugs (particularly alcohol).



Controlling behaviours

PUV may control victim survivor's (VS) access to substances, dosage, or treatment. May coerce VS to use substances and control how they use.



Jealous, obsessive behaviours

PUV may weaponise their jealousy to sabotage VS's treatment: "you will meet someone in detox and forget about me".

Sexual assault

PUV may coerce VS into using substances as a tactic to initiate unwanted sex. Any sexual act that occurred while the VS was intoxicated should be assessed to identify if sexual assault has occurred.



Escalation of violence

Any increased support from community and time away from the home presents in a similar way to the VS leaving. PUV may escalate behaviour to maintain control over the VS.



Stalking

PUV may turn up unannounced to the VS's appointments, workplace or treatment, or may hack into their social media accounts and portray them as "crazy" or "angry" in their posts, or "out" them as a drug user.



Unemployed, disengaged from education

Risk to the VS escalates as the PUV spends more time in the home.

Physical assault while pregnant / following new birth

Escalation is related to the increased time the VS is spending outside of home and connecting with community support systems eg. Maternal and Child Health Services etc.



Planning to leave or recent separation

PUV experiences VS going into treatment as them leaving, and therefore escalates tactics/violence to maintain control.



Threatens to kill victim

PUV may indicate or threaten to give the VS an intentional overdose.



Strangulation or attempts to strangle

PUV placing their hands on or around the VS's neck is also considered a high risk indicator under this category.



Threats to harm or kill pets

Any threats to harm pets, especially if the pet belongs to the VS or the children, should be taken very seriously.



Threatens or attempts suicide

When a PUV is threatening suicide, there is an increased risk of murder-suicide for the VS and children.



Access to, or use of, weapons

PUV may threaten the VS with a "hot shot." (intentional overdose)

PUV: Adult Person Using Family Violence

VS: Victim Survivor

This resource was created by VAADA to support AOD workers identify high risk indicators in scenarios where their clients are experiencing family violence. The high risk indicators are part of the MARAM Practice Guides for working with victim survivors. For a full list of the MARAM Evidence Based Risk Factors, relating to both adult victim survivors and children, please visit: vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-foundation-knowledge-guide/evidence-based-risk-factors-and-maram-risk

Secondary consultations

Do you need support in assessing and managing your client's risk?

The following organisations may be able to offer secondary consultations:

Organisation	Type	Contact
Men's Referral Service (operated by No To Violence)	People using violence	1300 766 491
SafeSteps	Victim survivors	1800 015 188
1800 RESPECT	Victim survivors	1800 737 732
Rainbow Door	LGBTIQA+	1800 729 367
Queerspace	LGBTIQA+	03 9663 6733
With Respect	LGBTIQA+	1800 542 847
MensLine Australia	Men as victim survivors	1300 78 99 78
Djirra	First Nations	1800 105 303
Elizabeth Morgan House	First Nations	03 9482 5744
VACCA	First Nations	03 8727 0200
Sexual Assault Crisis Line Victoria (SACL)	Victim survivors of sexual assault	1800 806 292
InTouch	Culturally and linguistically diverse communities	1800 755 988
Seniors Rights Victoria	Elder abuse	1300 368 821

Please contact your local Specialist Family Violence Advisor (SFVA) for secondary consults, advice and support. You can find their contact details on VAADA's Family Violence page vaada.org.au/family-violence/

Safety planning for victim survivors

This is a guide to safety planning. It should be led by VS as evidence shows they are best placed to predict their own risk. Safety planning is not a static process and all plans need to be reviewed as the elements of risk and circumstance change.

Here are some areas to discuss with your client when making a plan for safety with them:

Protective Factors - What is currently working to keep you / you and your children safe?

What resources do you currently have? Eg. Cash, phone with safe sim, car, Myki card, and what important documents/ scripts will you need to keep hidden away in safe place?

Who are the safe people in your life who could support you at this point in time? Eg. Neighbours, family members, friends

Who else do you need to consider on your safety plan Eg. Children, pets, caring responsibilities for older relatives?

How would you get to safety if you needed to leave your home quickly?

Where If you needed to leave, where could you go to be safe?

When If you needed to leave, when would be a good time or opportunity?

Is Tech safety required Turn off Find my Phone, change social media settings, new sim, access to safe Internet?

Note: there are different safety plans for adult and child victim survivors. For more guidance on safety planning, see Responsibility 4 in the MARAM foundation and practice guides: vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources/responsibility-4

Options for crisis intervention/in immediate danger

- Safesteps (24/7) 1800 105 188 the statewide crisis service for family violence/referral to refuge
- Sexual Assault crisis line (24/7) 1800 806 292 immediate crisis response for sexual assault
- 000 (24/7) to utilise police to come to the home *victim/survivors, especially rural clients, may not choose this option.

Referral Needs to Consider when Safety Planning With VS

- Specialist Family Violence Service in your area
- 1800Respect (1800 737 732), 24/7 Counselling service, information & referrals (non-crisis)
- The Orange Door (orangedoor.vic.gov.au)
- Culturally-specific services to include on plan (e.g. Aboriginal, LGBTIQA+, disability)
- Male Victims: Men's Referral Service (MRS) 1300 766 491

PUV: Adult Person Using Family Violence

VS: Victim Survivor

This resource was created by VAADA to support AOD workers manage their client's risk where family violence has been identified. For additional guidance, see Responsibility 4 in the MARAM foundation and practice guides: vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources/responsibility-4



Victorian Alcohol & Drug Association