Information Sharing Schemes

at a glance

This is a supplementary high-level resource. For more information:
- **See here for guides, templates and tools**
- **See here for eLearning training**
- **See here for VAADA's flowchart**

Victorian Alcohol & Drug Association

When can information be shared?

Information can be shared with another ISE (Information Sharing Entity) when:
- It's used to assess or manage family violence risk
- Used to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child (or group of children)
- Consent requirements (if any) have been met

These are the thresholds for sharing information

FVIS: Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme

Risk Assessment Entities (RAEs) are the only Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) that can request and receive information for a FV assessment purpose

Information may be shared between ISEs and RAEs for an assessment purpose by:
- An ISE sharing information with a RAE voluntarily
- A RAE making a request for information from an ISE
- An ISE responding to a request for information from a RAE
- Between RAEs themselves - voluntarily or making/responding to a request

Suspicious that your client is experiencing family violence? Contact an RAE (Information can only be shared with them for the purpose of a risk assessment)

Have reasonable belief (i.e. a disclosure) that your client is experiencing FV? You can contact ISE or RAE

Record keeping

- Date of the request
- The information requested
- The ISE making the request
- Did you obtain consent or seek views of the parties (children, victim survivors, third parties), as required? - if not, why?
- Did you notify the parties (children, victim survivors, third parties) that their information would be released or has been released? - if not, why?
- What information was disclosed?

When should information not be shared?

Information cannot be shared, or requests can be denied, when:
- the request doesn't meet the sharing threshold
- Information is "excluded," such as when it will:
  - endanger a person's life or result in physical injury
  - prejudice legal proceedings, a police investigations or coronial inquiry
  - discloses identity of confidential source of information relevant to law enforcement
  - prejudice coronial inquest/inquiry, or a fair trial
  - contravene a court order
  - discloses legally privileged communication

CISS: Child Information Sharing Scheme

Information can be shared by ISE to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child, or group of children.

If request is made about a child's wellbeing/safety, ISEs should indicate how they will use the information for a child or a group of children
- make decision, assessment, or plan related to wellbeing and/or safety
- provide a service related to the wellbeing and/or safety
- manage risk
- initiate or conduct an investigation relating to the wellbeing and/or safety

Who can I ask for help?

- Info Sharing & MARAM Enquiry Line
  - 1800 549 646
- Information Sharing Frequently Asked Questions
- Specialist Family Violence Advisors
  - Check here to find the advisor designated to your area

Obtaining consent

Important to always identify the victim survivor and person using violence (or alleged) - as this will inform whether consent is required to share information.

When is consent needed?

- Consent is required from adult victim survivors or third parties when sharing information to assess or manage family violence - unless it is necessary to lessen/prevent serious threat to a person's life, health, safety, welfare

When is consent not needed?

- Consent not required from any person if information is necessary to assess or manage risk to a child victim survivor - however, should seek views of children, their (protective) parent/guardian or adult victim survivor where it is safe, appropriate and reasonable to do so
- Consent, views or wishes of people using violence is never needed

Reminder: Consent is never perpetual. Regularly seek feedback with clients to determine if consent, and who they are willing to engage with, has changed over time

Making a request

- Can be made in any format - email, phone, in person
- Consider how organisations prefer to receive requests
- Refusal of request must be provided in writing
- You may ask for a request to be provided in writing (email is fine) if you need to verify requestor's identity (as an ISE)
- Must specify one or more purposes for which information will be used as defined by the schemes

Responding to a request

- Ensure requestor is an ISE
- Ensure consent is acquired (where appropriate)
- Decision to share lies with the disclosing ISE and they must be satisfied that the request meets the sharing threshold