



FAMILY VIOLENCE AND MARAM

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What does a holistic approach mean when working with adults who use family violence?

Stephen Herd, Turning Point

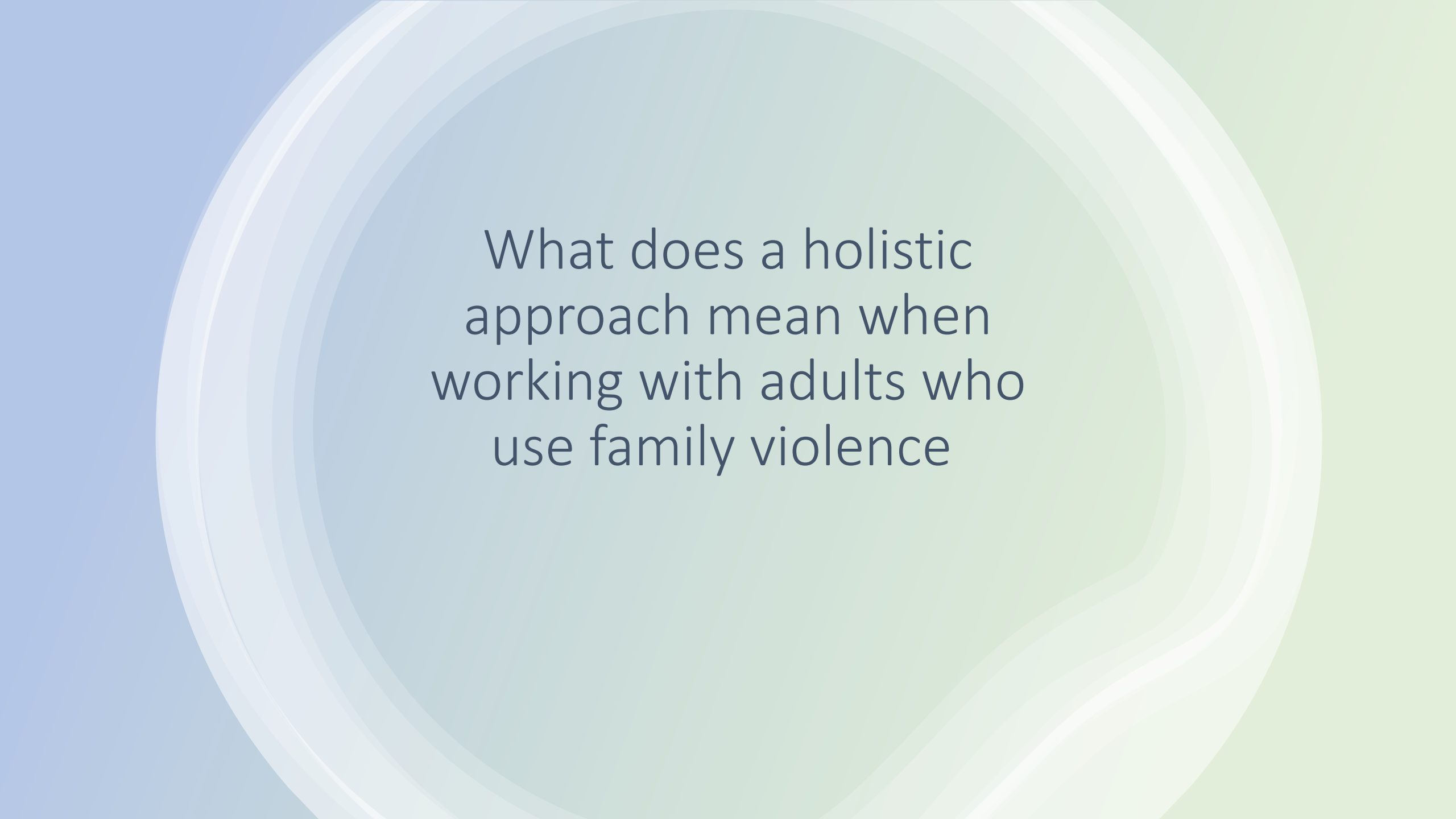
Megan Bagnall, BCCHS

Cindy McKelvie, Salvation Army

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What does a holistic
approach mean when
working with adults who
use family violence

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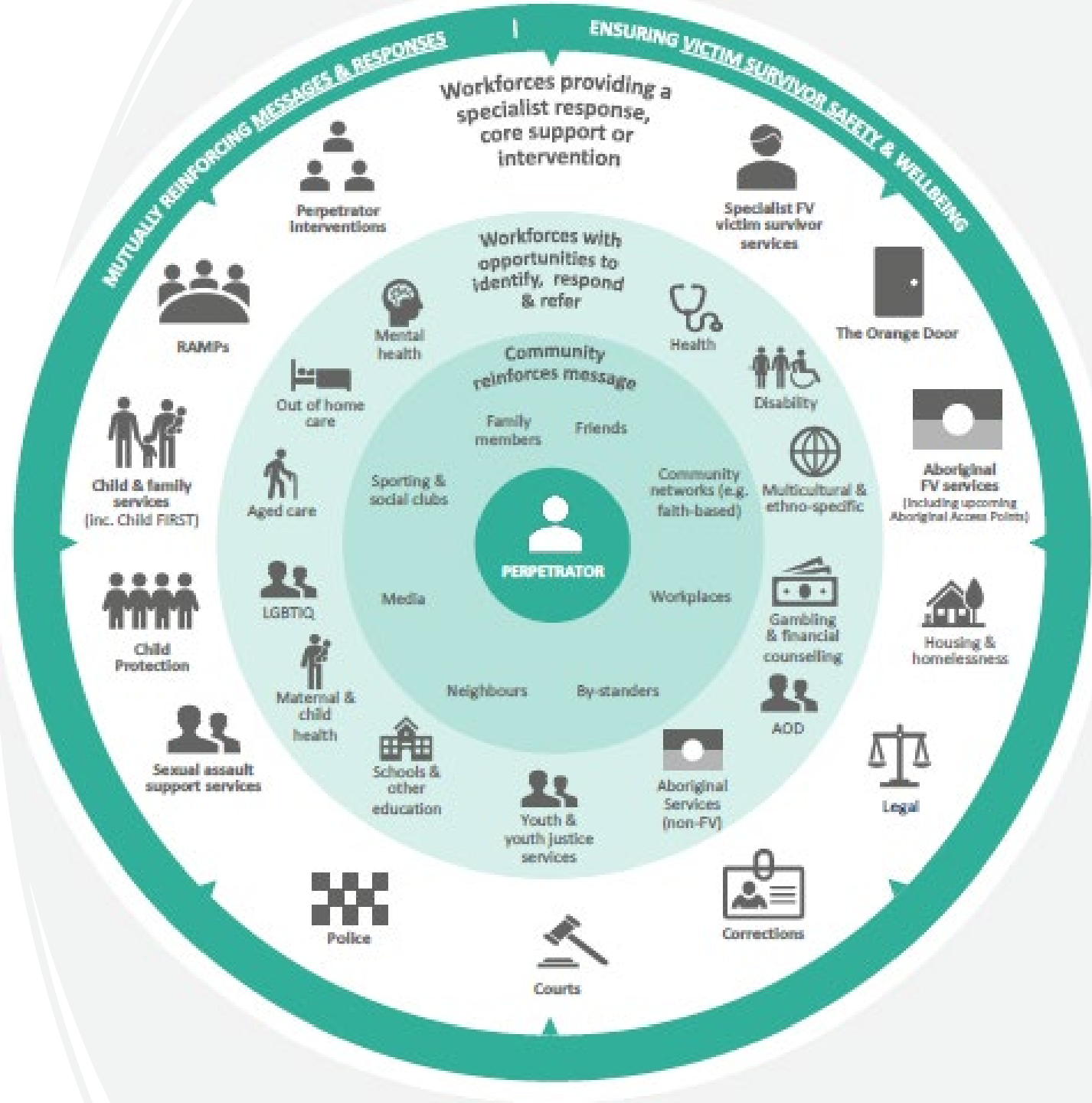


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Wheel of Accountability



Healthy Relationships as a Focus

- The use of Family Violence severely harms the potential for healthy relationships
- Not addressing a clients use of family violence can significantly interfere with the effectiveness of AOD intervention.
- Considering a client's use of family violence is an important part of case planning
- We are part of a broader community responsibility not to tolerate the use of family violence
- AOD practitioners also have a duty of care to those who are not in the counselling room – including any adults and/or children affected by a client's use of violence. Keeping in mind their safety can be just as important – if not more so – than the actual work done with the client on his AOD issues.

Healthy Relationships as a Focus

The health of clients' current and future relationships is an important consideration in AOD work.

To encourage this, an AOD practitioner can:

- use their existing motivational interviewing skills to focus on the client's aspirations and hopes for his life and relationships
- work on AOD use reduction goals
- Look for invitations by the client to engage in conversation about their use of violence

How may a client who uses family violence present at treatment?

- Can present as victims themselves
 - Identify with their childhood experience of FV, not what is happening now.
- May take little/no personal responsibility
 - Blame her/others
 - Minimise what might be disclosed
 - Justify behaviour
 - Even deny
- Focus on the other (her)
 - her mental ill-health, her poor parenting, her inability to manage finances, her cheating on him, her use of violence.
- Use of charm – leading us to think they are a ‘nice guy’

How may a client who uses family violence present at treatment? (cont.)

- May show signs of remorse – tearful, apologetic
- What might you hear?
 - “Relationship has broken down”
 - “We’ve got relationship problems”
 - “She threw me out of my own home”
 - “I want to save my marriage”
 - “I can’t even see the kids – and I’m their father”
 - “She threatened me with calling the cops”
 - “It was a toxic relationship – I’m glad I’m rid of her – my current partner is fine”
 - “She didn’t want the FVIO, the cops put it on me”
 - May describe relationship with mother as “strained”
 - “She [mother] controls my money”



Reflections

- Identify clients behaviour
- Identifying clients role in the episode
- Maintaining focus on clients role not other peoples behaviour
- Centring the victim survivor through use of name
- Exploring the incident
- Stages of Change



Reflections

What are his belief systems?

His needs are more important

He is more valuable to society

As a clinician how do we do this?

Curiosity

Listen for the language

Reflect the language back (when appropriate)

Look for out for invitations to collude



Reflections

- Healthy relationships – what do they look like?
- How is the relationship working? what can it look like in the future
- Accountability – beginning to take some responsibility in his role in the relationship
- Openness to exploring in future conversations

Next steps:

Who would we share this with?

Ongoing conversations

Benefits of exploring

What are the outcomes by exploring or not exploring his narrative?

FV	Don't Explore	Explore
Not present	No change	No change
Present	Decrease safety / missed opportunity	Increase safety / promote change

What may stop me from exploring?

Not discussing violent behaviours

There might be times when a practitioner decides not to raise the issue at a particular time.

- there is significant risk of the client assuming that the issue is being raised because his partner has 'dobbed him in',
- the client appears agitated or distressed
- there is risk to the practitioner's safety, given the client's level of agitation
- it is more appropriate to indirectly obtain a sense of the risk to his partner, in order to determine what actions should be take to support his partner.

References and further learning

- Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA) (2021). NADA Practice Resource: Engaging men who perpetrate domestic and family violence in the alcohol and other drugs treatment context. Sydney: NADA. <https://nada.org.au/resources/engaging-men-who-perpetrate-domestic-and-family-violence-in-the-alcohol-and-other-drugs-treatment-context/>
- MARAM Practice Guides (2021). Foundation Knowledge Guide, State of Victoria <https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources>
- MARAM Practice Guides (2021). Guidance for professionals working with child or adult victim survivors, and adults using family violence, State of Victoria <https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources>
- Bagnall, M., Daniel, R., Herd, S., McKelvie, C. (2022, 23rd November) “As an AOD clinician, what do I need to consider about working with clients who may be using family violence?”, Turning Point, <https://www.turningpoint.org.au/education/webinars/connect-learn-As-an-AOD-clinician-what-do-i-need-to-consider-about-working-with-clients>