



# **WORKING WITH MEN TO END FAMILY VIOLENCE**

## **A COORDINATED APPROACH TO MEN'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE**

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# OVERVIEW

- Embedding Men's Behaviour Change Programs within a Specialist Domestic Violence Court
- Participation and retention rates
- Feedback from clients and partners and key learnings

# THE **PRIMARY PURPOSE** OF DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE MEN'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM'S



*"Hold Perpetrators to Account and build safety around their partner/ex-partners", whilst working with them to "challenge their underlying beliefs, values and behaviours"*

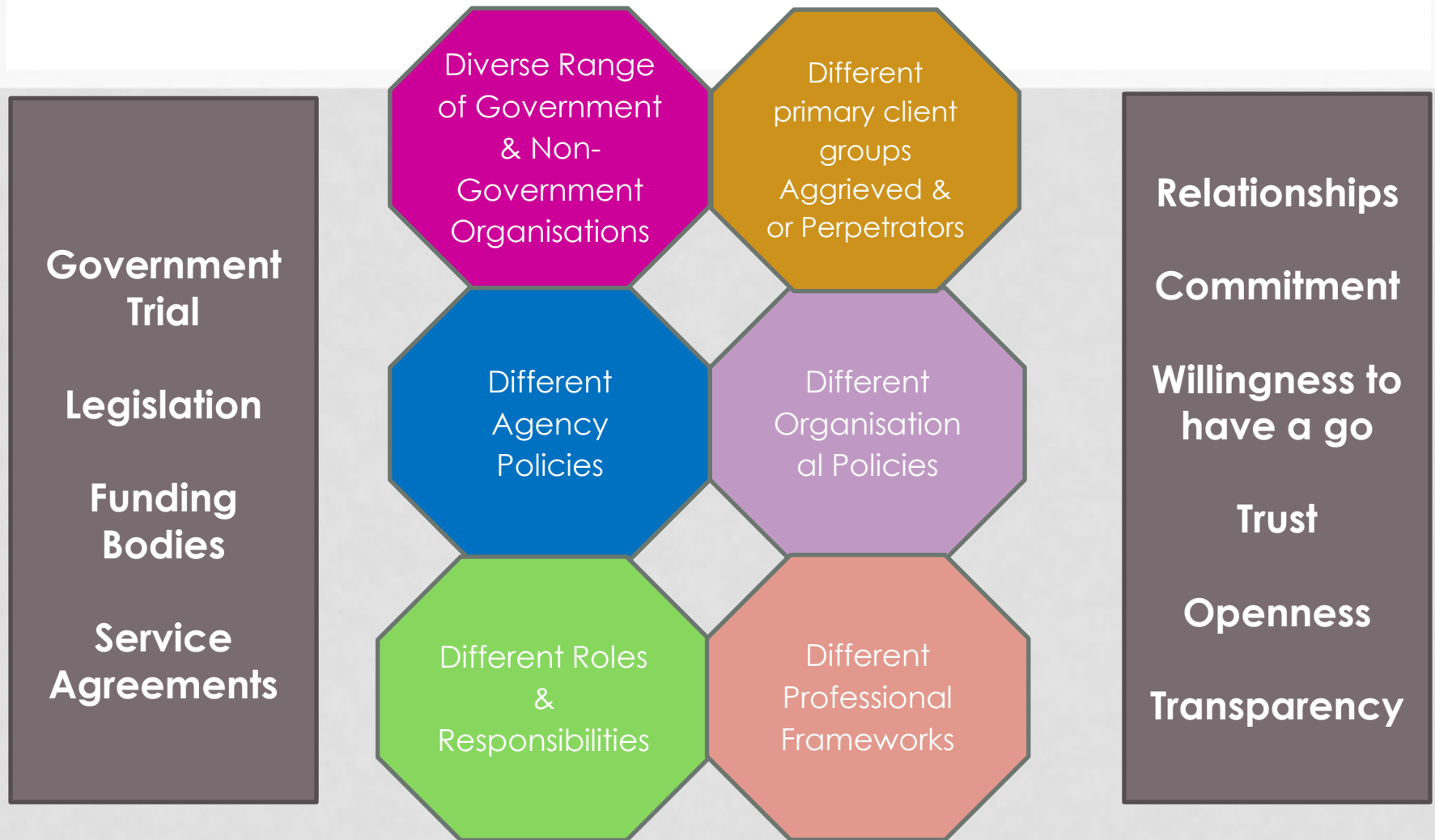
# FOUNDATIONS - COORDINATION, PRACTICE REVIEW & CHANGE POINTS

- **Gold Coast Domestic Violence Integrated Response monthly meeting (led by DVPC Regional DV Service 20+ yrs)**
  - Networking, building rapport for joint work & practice/systems reviews
  - Case unpacks and reviews used to make practice and systems change
- **Specialist DFV Court (Sep 2017) - Operational Working Group**
  - Receipt of DV Applications to inform Risk for MBCP
  - Wording on the DVO to support Intervention Order attendance MBCP and Maintenance Program
  - Wording on DVO to support Mediation where appropriate
- **Bi-weekly attendance at Police High Risk Triage Meeting (June 2017)**
  - Information sharing on joint cases
  - Assessment and action planning for managing risk
  - Increased knowledge of imminent risk
  - Coordinated response i.e. perpetrator visit Probation/MBCP enables time for support to partner/ex-partner
  - Improved Accountability, Monitoring and Safety via Information Sharing

# CONTACT WITHIN THE COURT SETTING

- Men's Information and Referral Officer has been based within the Southport Magistrates Court Setting for approximately 8 years.
- Provides information prior to accused entering the court:
  - What to expect during the court process and the options available
  - Where necessary defuses perpetrators anger and provides them with skills and tools to engage more respectfully with the court processes and acts to modify behaviours towards victims
  - Overview of a Intervention Order (IO) and the benefits of informing the Magistrate of their interest in undertaking a IO
- Direct referral pathway into the **Men's Behaviour Change Program** and other appropriate services

# Barriers & Drivers



Primary Outcome All Clients going through the court system have access to the right supports, at the right time, i.e. safe space, risks managed, appropriate referrals, women's support, men's support, duty lawyers

# Program Exit Reports for Court

- **Facilitators** rate the following on a scale from 1 – 5
- **Engagement in Program** – speaks openly about feelings & thoughts, refers to learnings, openness to referrals
- **Attendance** – legitimate reasons for any absence
- **Taking Personal Responsibility** - not blaming partner or external factors, speaks respectfully about partner, not using manipulation and/or collusion
- **Input from Partner/ex-partner experience throughout the program**
- **Monitoring Breaches and risks via the Court, Police, Child Safety, Probation & Parole, other relevant services**



# REFERRALS OUT

- **Where men are excluded during the program other referrals may include:**
  - Drug & Alcohol
  - Mental Health
  - Housing and emergency accommodation
- **On Program Exit:**
  - Re-referral into the Men's Behavior Change Program
  - 10 Week Maintenance Program
  - Parenting Programs – such as Keeping Kids in Mind
  - One on one Counselling
  - Family Mediation

**Acknowledging the need for further support  
and linking men to services is essential**



# WOMEN'S ADVOCATE & SAFETY

- Prior to engagement in the program all men are required to provide the contact details of their partners/ex-partners
- The partners/ex-partners are engaged and supported by a Women's Advocate throughout the program to monitor the impact and assess the ongoing risk
- Risk is assessed and safety plans are developed where appropriate
- Integrated DV response is initiated when high risk is identified
- Contact with the partner/ex/partner to raise their awareness of the program content and the strategies the men are learning, as part of a strategy to prevent the perpetrators using their new knowledge as further power over the partner/ex-partner

# ENGAGEMENT PARTNER/EX-PARTNER

- Enables us share key issues raised and present these as themes to challenge behaviors within the topics of the group.
- Provides information on emerging or ongoing risks and positive behaviour changes.
- Key information gathered is used within the exit report that goes to the court for men engaged in the program as part of a Intervention Order.

**Duff (2011:73) states that responses to wrongs should be addressed “by tacking, or trying to tackle the person(s) who wronged the victim”.**

- Duff sees this occurring in a series of steps:
  - 1) *‘alleged perpetrators are called to account – when the victim reports the offence to the police or when the police discover offences*
  - 2) *when the police investigates offences and when prosecutors bring charges against suspects*
  - 3) *the alleged perpetrators are then held to account for what he did, which occurs when they are asked and expected to answer questions by authorities’.*

In Duff’s view this the criminal trial *‘constitutes the kind of calling to account that .... Criminal wrongdoing requires’.*

In Queensland we would say that this is where the civil Magistrates Court has the opportunity to hold these perpetrators to account.

## Daily states that:

*“taking accountability requires alleged perpetrators to be ‘called to account’ and ‘held to account’ for their actions and if admitting to or convicted for offences, expecting that they will take active responsibility for their wrongful behaviour, by, sincere apologies or expressions of remorse and completing prescribed justice requirements.*

(Daily K. 2017:119)

*This coordinated approach to Men’s Behaviour Change is taking this to the next level by holding the men accountable and enhancing risk management*

# PARTICIPATION

- Ensuring timely engagement when a referral is made via the Men's Information and Referral Practitioner from the court the importance of initiating an intake session and booking assessment session needs to be very timely given the wait lists.
- Keeping clients active whilst they are waiting to enter the MBCP following the initial assessment, we will do one or more of the following:
  - Referral to another program for Counselling to prepare for the group, parenting program, Drug & Alcohol, Mental Health and or Housing and emergency accommodation
  - Maintain contact on a fortnightly basis at a minimum depending on level of risk
- Engagement and Participation in the session vary depending on the topic and any current issue that the men may be managing.
- Sessions on the Impact of DFV on Children, Family of Origin, Values and Beliefs, Respectful Relationships and Taking Responsibility are great turning points to increase participation levels.

# MBCP Retention Rates

- Tightened the guidelines for absence to a maximum of 2 sessions during the program
- Where sessions are missed a catch up session is compulsory
- Where more than 2 sessions are missed it is automatic exclusion from program
- Clients can request re-start and are required to complete the full program again
- This resulted in an almost immediate reduction in drop outs
- The majority of men reach a more active level of engagement at around week 5 - 6
- The increased retention and the increased referrals over the past 2 years has resulted in high wait lists

# LEARNING'S FROM THE COORDINATED APPROACH TO MBCP

- Improvement in the men's engagement within the court setting
- Increased referrals from the Court from an average of 50- 60 (2015) men per quarter to 120 -140 (2017) men per quarter
- Increased number of DVO's being granted resulting in more men wanting to access the program
- Reduced number of drop outs
- Waiting list with 4 groups running 122 men (4 mths)
- Ongoing engagement of partners/ex-partners continues to be a challenge
  - Receipt of DV Applications to inform Risk for MBCP
  - Wording on the DVO to support Intervention Order attendance MBCP and Maintenance Program
- Wording on DVO to support Mediation where appropriate



# IMPACT ON REFERRAL PATHWAY & POINTS OF ENGAGEMENT

## Increased Referrals:

- Court via an addition of an Intervention Order on the Domestic Violence Order
- Magistrates directly recommending that men consider engaging the MBCP
- Police, Child Protection Services, Probation & Parole, Regional Domestic Violence Service and other generalist Family Support Services
- Lawyers engaged with representing the accused
- Probation & Parole, Child Safety and other generalist agencies
- Previous clients referring mates & Self Referrals
- More men seeking support from the Men's Information and Referral Worker within the Court Setting

# KEY PARTNER AGENCY FEEDBACK

- Magistrate – I am seeking what appears to be a reduction in recidivism, fewer of the men that are attending the program seem to be coming back in front of me
- Lawyer - I am seeing a real difference in the way the clients that have completed the program are engaging in discussions regarding the DVO, they seem more willing to take ownership over what they have done

# PERPETRATOR FEEDBACK

- This stuff was challenging, initially I thought this was just crap, but when I got into the discussions and listened to the facilitators and what some of the other guys said, I could see how wrong I was. I want to make changes, but I know it's going to be hard. Stopping and thinking before I act is what I am aiming for.
- Why didn't I learn about this stuff when I was much younger in school, it could have saved me a lot of issues in relationships
- I have learnt tools that will help me become a better person within a relationship.
- I have time to think about how I am going to react. Still again, application is key but looking back if I allow my old self to come back into the new person that I am creating will send me down the very road I no longer want to travel.
- What happens next, I mean I have learnt so much and now know I need to continue learning if I am to sustain this change I want to keep
- My goal is to maintain this change so that I can be civil with my ex-wife and enjoy my 2 yr old daughter so much more
- I would love to re-unite with her eventually when she is no longer in fear of life with me. I am prepared to wait but I understand otherwise. Life still goes on.
- I am being grateful she allows me to have them in my life. Being a better dad to them also, creating better memories.

# KEY LEARNING'S OPERATIONAL WORKING GROUP

- Open transparent communication built on trust, is essential between the Magistrates and Key Stakeholders regarding; Systems, Processes, Document Templates, Wording for Orders, and the benefits of Men's Behaviour Change Programs.
- Introduction of Magistrates docket System to ensure that they can follow individual cases
- Difference of opinions caused by differing frameworks, professional backgrounds and knowledge is inevitable **“Keep Talking”**
- Experiment with processes, systems and documents, to enable you to work out the faults and endorse what works
- Key stakeholders need to take questions back to their agencies to explore and bring back options and ideas
- Magistrates are aware of the waitlist timeframe and set temporary DVO's to enable attendance in the program.
- **There will be challenges, “Don't expect it to be resolved the first time around”**

# The Balancing Act



Perpetrators are enter court not knowing, feeling unsure and unfamiliar

The Men's Information Worker informs, builds a level of safety and creates s sense of familiarity to encourage engagement with the MBCP

# SO, DOES ONE SIZE FIT ALL WHEN IT COMES TO FAMILY VIOLENCE OFFENDING?

Holtzworth-Munroe and Stewart would suggest no, one size most certainly does not fit all.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10072/3851>

*“Therefore need to be more thoughtful when considering how we work with various men who use violence in the family.”*



# PROGRAM CONTENT

- What is Domestic Violence
- Cycle of Violence
- Dynamics of Power and Control
- What is Anger
- Impact of Domestic Violence on Women and Children
- Influences of Family of Origin
- Respectful Relationships
- Communication, perception, differences and barriers
- Values & Beliefs
- Taking responsibility
- Implementing and Maintaining Change
- Goal Setting
- Time out & It's use

**Dr Bruce Perry would say that:**

***“The experiences during childhood have an impact  
on the brain stem development!”***

***“these experiences support the establishment of our  
Values and Beliefs”***



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