

First to Know First to Act

Assisting universal community service providers to identify and respond appropriately to family violence

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Outline

- Context
- Methodology
- Findings
- Recommendations & Outcomes

Context – Why do this research?

Observation

- Homelessness services are working with vast numbers of women and children who have experienced family violence
- Data did not reflect this, why?
- Risk assessments were not being done, why?
- Women were not getting a specialised response – why?

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Methodology

- Literature Review
- 18 interviews with management and staff of 3 homelessness services
- 12 interviews with management and staff from 3 health providers
- 8 In-depth interviews with former female clients who had experienced family violence

Findings

- Recognising Family Violence
- Confidence in Identifying Family Violence

“I don’t have any screening tool in front of me when I interview a client, I use a laid back narrative assessment and then calculate quickly in my head about the situation and what the needs of the client are...”

Homelessness worker 7 months experience

- Screening constraints

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Findings

“when you have a laid back conversation, so much can get lost of missed... When you have the questions on a paper and they are clearly spelled out...(as a list of behaviours) It’s very much on the page, to me that was a real eye opener,.. My ears were full of peoples opinions and my husbands comments about me... but to see that on a page it kind of solidified everything to me and I finally made my decision”

Female client



Findings

- Creating opportunities for clients to be heard

“It took me a long time to trust somebody, As a client we do a mental assessment in our head like the worker that does the same thing about the client. I ask in my head, Is this agency able to help me? And if the answer is clearly ‘no’ then I leave”

Female client

Recommendations and outcomes

- All homelessness staff have attended family violence training to identify and respond to family violence.
- Uniting Wesley is developing a practice framework to be shared with other homelessness providers
- All staff are trained in the Crisis Risk Assessment Framework
- Uniting Wesley in partnership with Safe Futures Foundation has philanthropically funded a specialist family violence worker to work between the homelessness and family violence service to help build staff capability
- All staff are to be trained to undertake routine screening
- Posters displayed in waiting room to assist clients to self identify



Questions?

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