

Direct Practice Competencies – for staff working in direct client service delivery roles and programs.

DIRECT PRACTICE COMPETENCIES	Elements	Standards expected
1. Understanding Family Violence and Homelessness	a. Complexity of family violence & gendered nature	i. Has a clear understanding of the definition of family violence from a human rights perspective and the gendered nature of violence against women. ii. Knowledge of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 and Child Safe Standards (2016 Victoria)
	b. Issues of Power & Control	iii. Understands and is able to identify power and control as forces that drive behaviour, their use and abuse, and responses to their abuse such as co-dependency, family violence, homelessness, child abuse and neglect.
	c. Intersections with homelessness, mental health and substance abuse	iv. Understands how the intersections among addiction, mental illness, homelessness, complex needs and family violence affect the ability to provide services in the empowerment/self-help program models.
	d. Legal	v. Understands the difference between a police and self-initiated application for an Intervention Order in Victoria.
	e. Court Support	vi. Understands the process for obtaining an Intervention Order in the Victorian Magistrates Court and the support services available to women.
	f. Family Systems Theory	vii. Understands the impact family violence and trauma can have on children and the family relationship including the role of Child Protection and family service referral.
	g. Feminist Perspective	viii. Recognises the gendered nature of family violence as a reflection of the broader inequality and disempowerment of women within patriarchal social structures.
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2. Family Centred Practice	a. Family Sensitive	i. Assesses client/family to identify needs that are unique to each individual/family. ii. Acknowledges and builds on family strengths while responding to family stressors and risk factors for child abuse and neglect.
	b. Individualised tailored support	iii. Develops plans that are strengths based, achievable, culturally sensitive and specific to each client’s needs.
	c. Strengths Based & Reflective Practice	iv. Assures that family member strengths are identified and ties strengths to actions when developing a plan.

	d. Child Aware & Inclusive	v. Recognises each child's unique experience and includes children as active participants in decisions that affect them. vi. Emphasises physical, psychological, and emotional safety for children and mothers. vii. Promotes child-safe environments.
	e. Attachment Theory	viii. Nurtures the parent/child relationship and communicates to a mother any positive observations of her infant or child. ix. Encourages mother to participate in play or be initiating connection by bringing attention to a child's play. x. Advocates for mother and infant or young child to remain together where appropriate.
	f. Trauma Informed Practice	xi. Has a grounded understanding of, and responsiveness to the impact of trauma on individuals. xii. Creates opportunities for mothers and children to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.
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3. Individualised Case Management	a. Facilitating affordable, safe housing options for women and their children.	i. Clear, non-judgemental communication and engagement skills in phone and face to face interactions with referrer and clients. ii. Facilitates timely access to safe housing and support services to meet identified needs.
	b. Facilitating service referrals, social inclusion and employment opportunities.	iii. Advocates on behalf of women and their children to achieve goals. iv. Works with the client where she is at and is empowering in interactions and support. v. Provides advocacy at appointments as needed.
	c. Following a Case Management Framework including:	
	- Screening, Intake & Assessment	i. Identifies and explores potential risk factors during screening and intake stages. ii. Makes evidence based decisions to accept referral based on initial risk assessment, program capacity and the needs of the other residents. iii. Seeks secondary consultation where necessary.
	- Case Planning	iv. Works from a strengths perspective and assists the client to identify and build on own strengths and abilities to develop tailored case plans. v. Prioritizes competing needs and objectives. vi. Maintains client case files and reporting.
	- Case Reviews	vii. Critically reflects on personal practice and is aware of complex nature of the role, including issues of vicarious trauma, grief and loss, lost opportunities and setbacks and perceived worker error. viii. Identifies standards and procedures for routine and timely reviews.

	– Service Referrals	ix. Works collaboratively with the client and other services to find timely referrals that are suited to the individual and service setting.
	– Exit Planning & Case Closure	x. Applies criteria and procedures for effectively exiting a family from the service or manages the ceasing of services where appropriate. xi. Acknowledges and personally manages the challenges faced in the role, including positive and negative outcomes of cases.
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4. Teamwork	a. Communication & collaboration	i. Communicates and collaborates effectively across the team to encourage a sense of team spirit. ii. Respects clients and colleagues rights to privacy and confidentiality. iii. Listens with understanding and without judgement.
	b. Decision Making & joint problem solving	iv. Develops ideas and solutions jointly with others.
	c. Handovers	v. Regularly participates in handovers to develop a shared understanding of cases.
	d. Team meetings & Supervision	vi. Regularly participates in team meetings and supervision.
	e. Supporting each other	vii. Works with different ages, genders, race, religion, political persuasion and seeks to understand differences in viewpoints. viii. Supports less experienced colleagues. ix. Gives fair and constructive feedback to team members.
	f. Building partnerships/ relationships	x. Develops productive relationships with external providers/referrers.
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5. Program Development	a. Planning, input, development, implementation and evaluation of programs	i. Promotes the self-determination and autonomy of women, actively seeking to enable them to make informed decisions ii. Works collaboratively with team to plan, develop, implement and evaluate program processes and improvements.
	b. Program innovation	iii. Strives to continually improve service delivery through participating in effective program evaluation and identifying potential for innovation.

	c. Program partnerships	iv. Ensures services provided meet clients express needs in collaboration with partners and key stakeholders. v. Builds effective relationships with current and future partners.
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6. Cultural Diversity	a. Working with culturally diverse clients and using interpreters	i. Able to work cross culturally with clients from linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. ii. Knows when to involve an interpreter and is comfortable communicating through an interpreter. iii. Establishes relationships with clients/families from cultural backgrounds different from one's own. iv. Identifies differences in cultural, ethnic, and religious values, perceptions, customs and behaviours among clients, particularly non-Permanent Residents.
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7. Risk Management and Compliance	a. Identifying and assessing risk for self, others and clients	i. Uses the Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF) to respond to risk factors associated with family violence. ii. At first point of contact, able to prioritise safety and action a crisis response if requested/required. iii. At first point of contact includes timely information provision, with a focus on safety. iv. Assessment includes identifying legal, financial and other practical requirements, providing information and connecting women and children to services. v. Considers risk severity and probability to self and team members when assessing client risk and safety planning.
	b. Managing risk	vi. Ensures risk assessments and information given is within the scope of own professional training and role. vii. Seeks a secondary consultation on assessments and referrals regarding the needs of clients. viii. Escalates high risk concerns according to risk management procedures.
	c. Compliance to Program policies & procedures	ix. Adheres to occupational health and safety protocols at all times to minimise risk to self and clients. x. Provides explanations of their rights and safety planning. considerations as clients of the service, appropriate to their age and language.
	d. Record keeping on SHIP	xi. Maintains client notes for each client, including separate notes when working with parents and children. xii. Updates client records on SHIP for reporting requirements in a timely and accurate manner.

	e. Collecting & analysing data	xiii. Able to collect, retrieve and analyse program data as required.
	f. Monitoring and reviewing risk	xiv. Breaches and near misses are communicated to appropriate management according to procedures and logged at the time of the event.
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8. Self-Management	a. Truth seeking	i. Resists jumping to conclusions; checks out hearsay and others' opinions in order to form opinions and conclusions based upon first-hand interaction and assessment.
	b. Limit setting	ii. Acknowledges importance of "taking care of oneself" to maintain mental health and conserve energy and enthusiasm. iii. Manages professional boundaries and does not develop inappropriate relationships with clients.
	c. Maintaining composure	iv. Maintains composure in stressful situations; persists despite turmoil or conflict. v. Identifies when and how to take action to regain self-composure.
	d. Managing stress	vi. Understands and is able to identify the causes and effects of stress and techniques for effective stress management and self-care, particularly in relation to Vicarious Trauma. vii. Communicates appropriately to seek timely support if required.
	e. Self-Awareness	viii. Understands how he/she is perceived by others and modifies style appropriately to situation.
	f. Prioritisation	ix. Prioritises activities with consideration to risk factors to manage workloads.
	g. Participating in regular supervision	x. Participates in regular supervision using reflective practice to develop self-insight and direct practice competency.