

ABOUT FAMILY VIOLENCE NETWORKS IN NEW ZEALAND

Sheryl Hann Campaign for Action on Family Violence Sheryl.Hann005@msd.govt.nz March 2010

- Family violence is a complex social problem that has existed for centuries – but it is preventable
- International good practice shows that interagency partnerships and collaboration are necessary to effectively address domestic violence
- We need effective quality joined up services, but if we want to end family violence we need to do more than help victims and perpetrators
- We need significant social change – a social movement of people working towards violence-free lives
- Change comes from the flax roots – from people getting together – family violence networks are central to working better together.

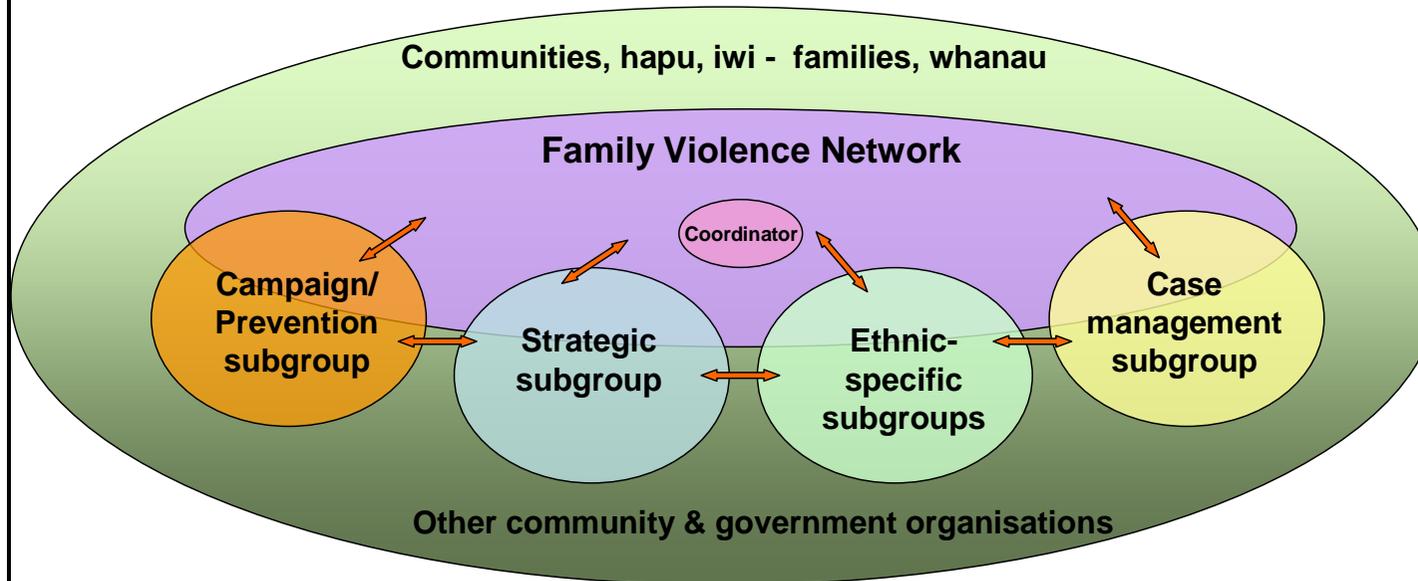
WHAT DO FAMILY VIOLENCE NETWORKS LOOK LIKE?

This is model (below) was developed after talking with many of the family violence networks in NZ. It is not how one particular network looks, but some of the elements that are common to many.

The main points from this model are:

- It's helpful to have a model of the structure of your network, so that people know how it works, what members do and where decisions are made
- The network is responsible to the community – the wider community needs to know what you do and be able to contribute ideas/issues – the network can take local leadership around preventing family violence in YOUR community
- Networks are made up of working parties, project groups or subgroups that do the work (organise training, do media releases, organise campaigns, collate research etc) *between* the monthly meetings. The Coordinator can not do all the work of the network – the members need to be actively involved
- Information needs to be shared between the working groups and across the network so that everyone has the best possible information to help them make decisions about what is needed in their community
- Networks benefit from having a range of people from across the community – many networks now have members that are not from family violence services. These people may be more interested in leading work with the media, promotion of services, changing attitudes and behaviours and community action (i.e. the Campaign/Prevention subgroup)
- Only a few networks currently have ethnic-specific sub-groups but others are considering work streams or groups led by Maori and Pacific peoples.

Elements of community collaboration to prevent family violence



Role of Network - information sharing, professional development, training, relationship building.

Role of the Strategic subgroup - systems monitoring, problem solving, community vision & strategy, strategic advocacy, management of Coordinator.

Role of the Ethnic-specific subgroups -caucuses determined by Maori, Pacifica, Pakeha or Tauivi & other ethnic groups.

Role of the Campaign/ prevention subgroup - campaigns, media, community education, training, making links to wider community.

Role of the Case management subgroup – (FVIARS or similar) sharing information, case planning, referrals & monitoring response to reported violence, systems monitoring.

Model based on family violence networks in NZ- developed by Sheryl Hann

WHAT FAMILY VIOLENCE NETWORKS DO

- **Coordinating local agency responses and services** – e.g. Interagency case management (FVIARS or similar)
- **Improving practice of organisations** – e.g. training; developing good practice; collaborative policies; monitoring & research
- **Supporting projects that help survivors and perpetrators, children, family and whanau** – e.g. identifying service gaps, developing new collaborative services
- **Promotion** – e.g. media; promoting available help and services
- **Work to mobilise communities and prevent family violence (primary prevention)** – e.g. awareness raising among general public; campaigns; community education; community action initiatives such as working with businesses, churches, marae, sports groups, schools, ethnic community groups to prevent family violence
- **Building the network & relationships inside & outside the sector** – working with people who are not family violence service providers to ensure they can provide effective support to people experiencing family violence, and contribute to preventing violence.

Networks work best when they develop an **Action Plan** that sets out what change they are trying to make in their community, and what actions they intend to do over the year that will contribute to that outcome. A good place to start is gathering information – any data from the local area about family violence, and information from the community about what key issues require action.

For more information on the processes within networks, see the last section on good practice in family violence networks.

What's the point of a network meeting?

Network meetings need to be a **means to an end** – people want to know why they are coming together.

To make positive change in your community, the meeting has to be more than a talk-fest and a catch-up.

The network will flourish if people can see that:

- they are making a difference
- something is changing in their community
- being part of the network improves their work
- working together makes them feel inspired and energised.

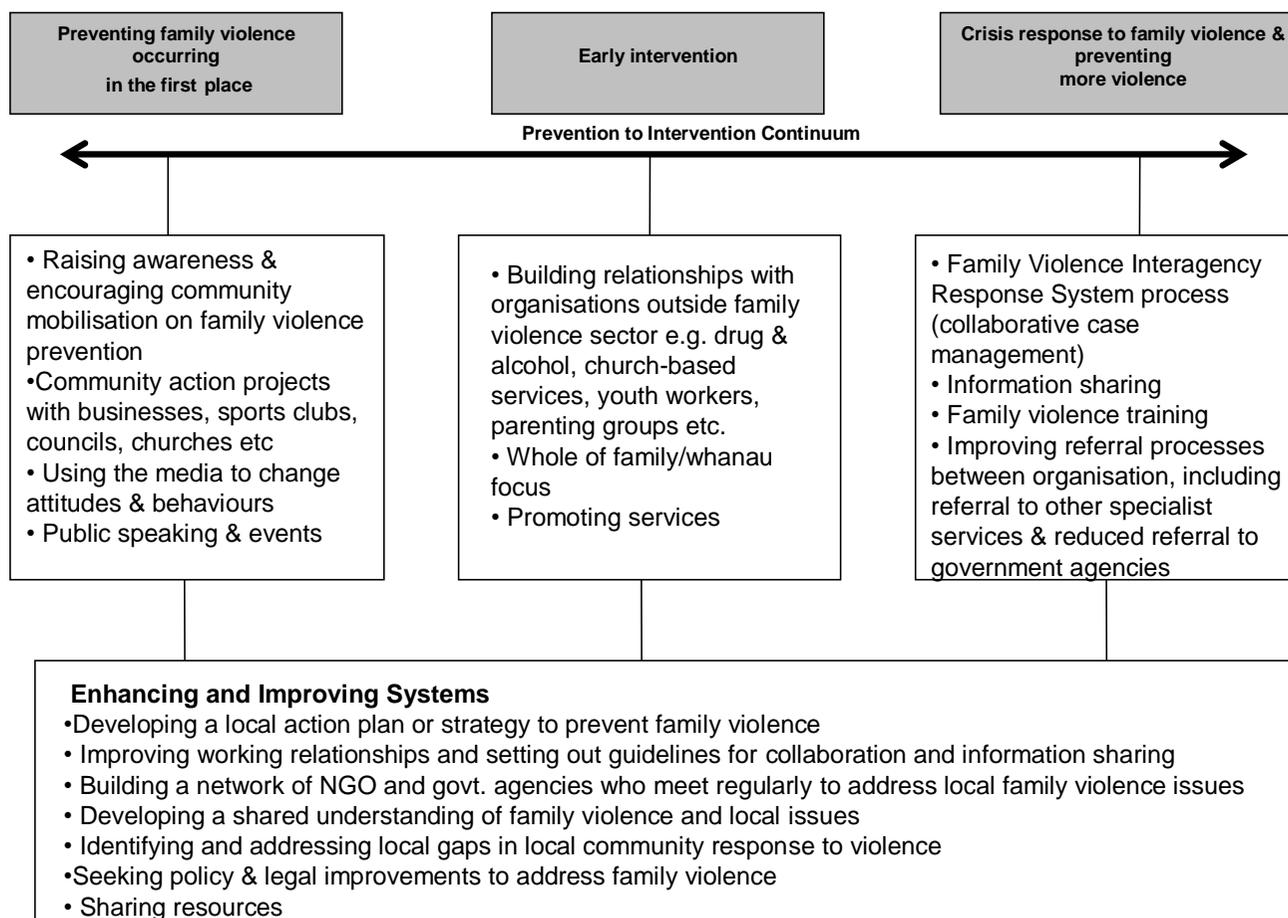
WORKING AT ALL LEVELS TO END FAMILY VIOLENCE

A key role of family violence networks is to improve practice and coordination of services so that individuals, families and whanau get the help they need to end family violence. However, effective services alone will not stop violence. We need to invest in prevention initiatives that aim to stop violence from happening in the first place and changing social norms that perpetuate family violence.

To address family violence and prevent future violence, work must be undertaken at three levels. These three areas need to be developed simultaneously.

Level of Intervention	When	Target group	Example
Primary Prevention	Before violence has occurred	Whole population	Local campaigns to positively change the way people think and act about family violence; promoting safety, wellbeing and peaceful relationships, and building resilience with individuals and communities;
Secondary Prevention/ Early Intervention	When there is increased risk of violence or early signs of violence	Individuals, families/ whanau and groups at increased risk	Support for pregnant women and new mothers at risk; positive parenting such as SKIP and Incredible Years; screening for family violence
Tertiary Prevention/ Service Provision or Crisis intervention	After family violence has occurred	With victims, perpetrators and their families/ whanau	Police and courts response, Refuge safe house and outreach, stopping violence programmes, counselling, relationship counselling, children's services, education programmes for victims and children who witness violence.

Range of activities of family violence networks



This diagram shows the typical activities of family violence networks or collaboratives, demonstrating how they can work at all levels, from primary prevention to crisis intervention.

Networks make a valuable contribution by building the infrastructure required for effective joined up services and well-trained workforce.

Family violence networks are able to take the lead on developing a whole-community strategy for ending family violence and ensuring whanau/families receive quality services that meet their needs.

WHOLE OF COMMUNITY APPROACH TO PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE

The Coordinated Community Action model demonstrates what a whole-of-community response to family violence might look like with different sectors of the community working collaboratively to take actions that promote safety, support those affected by violence, and contribute to stopping violence from happening in the first place.

Not all of us can or should focus on the same thing, as a range of activities are needed to create change. To make the best use of our expertise we need to identify what our role is and how we can best contribute.

The model is a useful tool to workshop with your organisation, project team or family violence network to figure out what is currently happening in your community and what else could be done to engage your whole community in violence prevention.

DESIRE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

COORDINATED COMMUNITY ACTION FOR PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE (NEW ZEALAND VERSION)



IT IS
OK TO ASK
FOR
HELP

0800 456 450
www.areyouok.org.nz

GOOD PRACTICE IN INTERAGENCY WORK TO PREVENT FAMILY VIOLENCE

Summary of Success Factors for Family Violence Networks

- **Safety** – safety, protection & accountability at the centre of all actions
- **Clarity** – about purpose, outcomes, structures & decision making
- **Action** – have an action plan; members get involved to do the work
- **Vision** – focus on the big picture & the steps to get there
- **Community owned** – accountable to, and linked in with wider community including people affected by family violence
- **Diversity** - key NGO & government family violence agencies & beyond
- **Leadership** – buy-in from key leaders, & network takes leadership
- **Strategic** – build on community strengths & passion
- **Flexible** – respond to & make the most of opportunities
- **Always improving** – learning from past activities to do it better
- **Wide-ranging** – working from intervention to primary prevention

What is collaboration?

The term “collaboration” is often used interchangeably with coordination, partnerships, inter-agency, multi-agency, and cooperation.

Collaboration means more than simply working together. It identifies a systemic change.

Collaboration is:

“The practice of combining and leveraging public and community-based organisational resources and power to address difficult problems in the community.”¹

Complex social problems such as family violence require multi-agency working, joined up services, whole-of-community mobilisation, and a holistic approach that links prevention, early intervention and crisis intervention work. Community collaborations or networks are essential both for effective responses to family violence, and for the prevention of violence before it exists.¹

¹ See Michau, L. (2005). *Good Practice in Designing a Community-based Approach to Prevent Domestic Violence*. United Nations; Fanslow, J. (2005). *Beyond Zero Tolerance: Key issues and future directions for family violence work in New Zealand*. Families Commission: Wellington; WHO. (2007). *Preventing Violence: A guide to implementing the recommendations from the World report on violence and health*. Family and Community Services. (2006). *Community Action Toolkit to Prevent Family Violence*. Ministry of Social Development and ACC.

Below are the findings on success factors for collaboratives from three existing collaborative initiatives:

- *Better at Working Together* literature review on interagency collaboration from the High and Complex Needs Unit in the Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand.²
- Coordinated Community Response literature from Duluth, Minnesota, USA
- Guidance on multi-agency working from the Home Office in the UK.

Success factors for collaboratives – NZ literature review

The New Zealand review of collaboration research indicates some common factors for success. To be successful, collaboratives need:

- Common language and vision, and clarity about history of the project, aims, and responsibilities
- Skills to collaborate (such as communication skills, and conflict resolution) and joint training
- Ability to evaluate and monitor the performance of practitioners and organisations involved in the collaborative work (e.g. collaborative activities need to be recognised in staff training, job descriptions and performance agreements)
- Processes for monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the collaborative initiative so that the initiative:
 - Is understood to be a means to an end (not an end in itself)
 - Achieves what it sets out to do
 - Is in line with good practice
 - Is informed by current evidence
- Commitment from individuals and organisations to work collaboratively (support and mandate from management is vital)
- Leaders that have strategic vision, tenacity, organisational skills, and can share power and encourage participation
- Clear membership procedures (including induction) and members who have a mandate to make decisions and consistently participate in meetings
- Time spent on nurturing relationships and building strong personal links between members
- Coordination support (a coordination role that is committed, knowledgeable, and informed but neutral to vested interests is needed to facilitate communication among members, provide administration services, and organise activities)
- Power-sharing and joint accountability – conflict, challenges and power differences need to be dealt with openly and positively

² Atkinson, M. (2007). *Better at Working Together: Interagency Collaboration. Part I: Literature Review.* High and Complex Needs Unit: Wellington

- Adequate funding and resources for the long-term (collaborative processes need a considerable investment of time and resources)
- Patience (allowances need to be made for the time it takes to progress collaborative projects)
- To avoid “collaboration fatigue” by being focussed, and clear about links/overlaps with other local collaborations.

Prior to establishing a collaborative initiative, the role of Maori, and how Maori will be represented needs to be considered. A “Treaty-based” collaboration should aim to achieve a balanced power relationship. The process of developing collaborative initiatives with Maori needs to be led by Maori and guided by tikanga.

Furthermore, government agencies and well-resourced organisations need be aware of not taking over the collaborative agenda, and may need to consider how to support the involvement of organisations that are not funded to collaborate.

Success factors for collaboratives – Coordinated Community Response (Duluth)

The Coordinated Community Response to domestic violence was pioneered in Duluth, Minnesota in the United States. The model developed by the Duluth Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) is the most widely used model in family violence intervention internationally.³

According to the ‘Duluth model’, domestic and family violence can only be addressed and prevented through a collaboration between NGOs and government agencies, which is informed by the needs and experiences of victims and perpetrators. The purpose of all interagency approaches around family violence is to improve safety and autonomy for victims and reduce offender’s opportunity and inclination to harm victims.

In a review of factors enabling the mobilisation of communities to prevent domestic violence, Shepard⁴ argues that the most effective collaborative models:

- Have a social ecological perspective that looks at the prevention of violence at many levels – individual, family, community, social institutions, cultural environment, and public policy
- Engage community members and organisations outside of sector

³ The Duluth model prioritises the coordination of a criminal justice response to partner abuse and children witnessing domestic violence. However, the success factors are relevant and applicable to the ways of working in New Zealand where collaboratives are increasingly prioritising a “whole of family/whanau” approach, and are linking the prevention of partner, child and elder abuse together.

⁴ Shephard, M. (2008). *Mobilizing Communities to Prevent Domestic Violence*. VAWNET.

- Take an approach that strengthens community assets
- Link different forms of violence together making connections between causes and solutions to partner abuse, child abuse, elder abuse and community violence
- Develop evaluation data to understand the impact of initiatives.

The table below is adapted from the success factors for interagency working which were identified by advocates and researchers at DAIP. The first column includes what is regarded as the minimum level capabilities of a network. The third column describes a well-functioning network that can make a significant contribution to the prevention of family violence in that area.

The Duluth model makes it clear that networks should be constantly changing, adapting and improving in ways that are informed by evaluation, monitoring and feedback from those affected by violence.

Levels of Interagency Response to Domestic Violence (adapted from the Duluth Model)		
Minimum Capabilities (Level 1)	Level 2 Capabilities	Level 3 Capabilities
Several key organisations regularly attend interagency meetings and have shared policy/ procedures (although there may be some key organisations that are hostile and/or not participating)	Most key organisations in a community are involved in the network and form small working groups to fix gaps or problems	The network has reinvented itself and developed new solutions as previous system changes have become ineffective
Some practitioners take the role of coordination and leadership on top of their regular jobs	A paid coordinator does tasks set by network and facilitates solution-based working groups	The paid coordinator spends less time coordinating meetings & encouraging attendance, & more time on improving systems
There is a plan for the network	Interagency data collection, monitoring and tracking occurs	Each point of prevention and intervention as been examined to ensure that workers are coordinated within and across agencies
Informal support for collaborative response from some managers	Some managers support the network by freeing up staff to do collaborative problem solving, and seeking funding for the collaboration	Managers support interagency agreements that maximize victim safety and accountability of offenders and system
Shared work happens in interagency group and is based on practitioners' ideas for solutions	The network seeks to address service gaps, particularly marginalized people' access to services	Marginalised community members have their needs addressed and built into the network process
Practitioners are learning more about each others roles (but there may be some ill-feeling when addressing problems with an organisation's performance)	Network members learn the details of each others jobs, and are able to critique others work without it becoming personal or involving public humiliation	Government agencies are trusted by their NGO partners to initiate system changes that improve victims' safety and autonomy, and hold perpetrators and institutions accountable
Relationship building across organisations assists with problem solving around difficult cases/issues	Policy development within individual organisations is informed by critical reflection and promising practices from other communities	Network members share good practice and learnings with other communities
The network has produced some resources and promotes community awareness of family violence	The network continues to grow prevention and awareness raising activities	The network is active in community organising to raise awareness of family violence issues with those that provide other social and health services
Representatives from marginalized communities may be invited to meetings	Victims of violence and marginalised community members are invited to assess the network and provide their ideas	Focus groups of diverse groups of people who have experienced family violence are regularly used to evaluate the collaboration and inform improvements in the system response
All have attended family violence awareness training	Training is built around implementing new procedures and is discipline-specific	Organisation members who have been involved in system changes become co-trainers

Success factors for collaboratives – “Reducing Domestic Violence ...What Works?” (UK)

The UK Home Office developed a guidance on inter-agency working for addressing domestic violence which are called multi-agency forum or fora.⁵ These networks focus mostly on partner abuse, and multi-agency fora for child abuse operate separately but are linked.

Multi-agency fora in the UK are involved in:

- Coordinating local agency responses and services
- Improving practice of organisations (e.g. through training)
- Supporting projects that help survivors and perpetrators
- Awareness raising among general public
- Prevention work (e.g. in schools).

The Home Office Guidance discusses the following as good practice elements for multi-agency fora:

- Clearly stated principles, aims and objectives which can easily be evaluated, to ensure that the collaboratives are seen as a means to an end and not an end in itself
- Agreed definition of domestic violence
- Effective participation and leadership from community organisations, particularly those working with survivors (multi-agency networks should not be dominated by government agencies)
- Developing resources for their area that provide information for those experiencing domestic violence
- Providing training
- Developing good practice guidance
- Monitoring of information sharing protocols for local organisations
- Working closely with child protection committees and other related fora
- Ensuring that senior managers, policy makers and practitioners are engaged in the fora
- Making use of coordinators by directly employing a coordinator or having one of the member agency staff undertake the duties
- Monitoring and evaluating activities to ensure that they are actually improving the safety of survivors of family violence.

⁵ Home Office. (2007). *Domestic Violence: Breaking the Chain: Multi-agency guidance for addressing domestic violence*. United Kingdom. p3.