

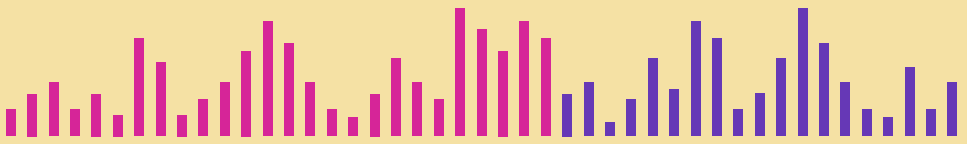
Insights from Lived Experience

Outcomes from consultations with Amplifying Voices Advocates

Improving the Children and Young Persons Program with Lived Experience

Thank you to all of the Amplifying Voices Advocates that participated in the consultations. It was a honour to witness the sharing of your personal knowledge, insights into a complex system, and part of yourselves to benefit others. Your generous and meaningful contributions are greatly appreciated and testament to the difference Lived Experience can achieve within our sector.





About Amplifying Voices

Amplifying Voices is a lived-experience program for women and gender diverse people who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence, and homelessness.

The program provides a unique opportunity for participants to develop expertise for using their lived experiences to advocate for changes in policy, services and community attitudes perpetuating violence and homelessness.

The following acknowledgement of living and lived experience was created by the YWCA Amplifying Voices 2024 Leadership and Advocacy Group to:

- promote the strengths and value of people with living and lived experience of DFSV and homelessness with dignity and respect
- build understanding about the collective expertise of people with lived experience
- challenge the deficit perspective held by others about victim/survivors, which is disempowering and obstructive to their healing journey.

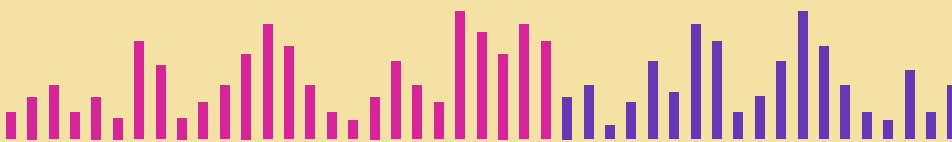
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LIVING AND LIVED EXPERIENCE

We acknowledge the individual and collective expertise of those with a living or lived experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, and homelessness.

We stand together as proud survivors with diverse experiences that reflect the resilience, compassion, creativity and bravery of other women and children who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence and homelessness.

We understand the complexity of each survivor's journey and the value of exchanging the knowledge from our experiences to lead and advocate for meaningful change.

Together we can be the most powerful agents for preventing and responding to family, domestic and sexual violence, and homelessness. Because personal is political and our personal commitment is to end violence, by ending our silence.



YWCA Consultation with Amplifying Voices

Graduates from the Amplifying Voices program were invited to participate in a two-part consultation to inform the development of a new Children and Young Person program for the YWCA Domestic and Family Violence Centre.

The consultations were a way to facilitate safe and meaningful discussions with our Amplifying Voices Advocates about their lived experiences of domestic and family violence (DFV) from the perspective of a parent, or someone who experienced DFV as a child/young person. This knowledge was used by YWCA staff to make informed decisions about specific components in the development of the new Children and Young Person program.

Consultation 1 aimed to learn from lived experience knowledge to understand:

1. what is important to support children and young people;
2. what is missing from existing services;
3. what needs to be improved; and
4. how to give children and young people a voice.

Consultation 2 aimed to collect feedback from people with lived experience about a new tool designed for the Children and young person program to understand:

1. if the tool is useful;
2. what language and images should be used;
3. what types of support are important to include; and
4. how the tool could be improved.

REFLECTIONS FROM YWCA STAFF

“Having the voices of lived experience was incredible and so powerful! I valued their bravery, confidence and strength.

I feel they have made our program and the tool genuine, knowing it’s been created with the authenticity of their lived experiences.

The consults create a space for people to be heard and valued. Their input will create better practices and services for the future.”

~ Children and Young Person Case Manager

Consultation 1

Learning from lived experience knowledge

The aim of consultation one was to learn from the insights of people who have experienced domestic and family violence, as a child or young person, or as an adult with children or young people in their care.

The YWCA Children and Young Person Case Managers were interested in building on their professional knowledge to make sure the design of their new program was reflective of the lived experiences of victim-survivors.

Six Amplifying Voices Advocates participated in this consultation and helped YWCA staff to understand what is important for programs that support children and young people who are experiencing DFV.

Summary of key learnings

- **Schools and community services can play a crucial role in helping children and young people affected by family and domestic violence.**
- **Children and young people experiencing domestic and family violence want to have fun doing family activities/outings like their peers.**
- **Parents want more affordable options for their children to connect and make friends.**
- **Bullying is a significant concern amongst children and young people, and their parents.**
- **Families need more comprehensive and ongoing support throughout their journey.**
- **Families feel let down by the sector and experience significant challenges seeking the support they need to recover from crisis, heal together and build a future that is self-determined and prosperous.**
- **It is crucial to validate everyone's lived experiences and actively listen to children and their parents to better understand how we can support families.**

We asked...

What helped you when you were a child or young person, or what helped your children?



Amplifying Voices told us...

Schools can actively prevent, recognise and intervene to help children and their parents experiencing domestic and family violence.

HOW?

- Schools can do more to educate children and young people about their rights.
- Schools need more education and training to recognise domestic and family violence and how to intervene.
- Schools can do more to help children and young people understand domestic and family violence.

Professionals can help parents to navigate the system.

HOW?

- Helping parents to navigate the system so they have more time and space to connect with their children.
- Supporting parents to feel stable and independent helps their children to feel safe.
- Providing ongoing, trauma-informed support within the legal system.

Services can provide accessible information and support for parents and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

HOW?

- Provide interpreters and translated information.
- Take time to listen and understand the family's situation and needs.
- Awareness raising campaigns about domestic, family and sexual violence in Australia need to be relative to the experiences of migrant and refugee families.

Trusted adults can listen to and believe children.

HOW?

- Help children to understand what is happening so they can communicate their wants and needs.
- Listen to children and advocate for their rights.
- Involve children in decisions that impact them.



What we can do with this knowledge

We can reflect on YWCA's work and continue to improve how we can provide the best support for families we work with.

HOW?

- We will continue to advocate for the needs of children and their parents/families when working with schools.
- We will continue to provide informal education about domestic and family violence to school stakeholders.
- We will continue to strengthen relationships with legal services to help them understand the family's needs.
- We will continue to listen to and believe children/parents to meet their needs and find the right support.
- We will continue to assist parents in navigating services to find the right support.
- YWCA will apply for grant funding to translate forms and information into multiple languages, in both written and audio form, to make our services more accessible for families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



We asked...

Tell us about a time your child, or you as a child/young person, needed support?



Amplifying Voices told us...

Children and young people need ways they can talk and seek help from adults they trust.

HOW?

- Local and free walk-in services or programs that engage children and young people.
- Free phone services or applications suitable for children and young people to reach out if they need to talk to someone.
- Guidance counsellors at school that children and young people can talk to about bullying, relationships or family worries.

Children and young people need better education programs in schools about bullying, respectful relationships and consent.

HOW?

- More education for teachers to identify signs of bullying and how to respond.
- Realistic strategies that children and young people can use to cope with bullying on social media and at school.
- Information and support for families to stay safe online.
- More engaging and relevant programs to educate children and young people about respectful/healthy relationships and consent.

Families need more accessible opportunities to have fun and connect.

HOW?

- Provide free/low-cost family activities.
- Support for children and young people to socialise and make friends.

Court is one of the most painful experiences for families and they need more wrap around supports during and after this time.

HOW?

- Financial support that reduces barriers to legal information and representation.
- Advocacy support for parents to help make-decisions and uphold their parental rights and rights of the child.
- Follow-up support for parents and children.

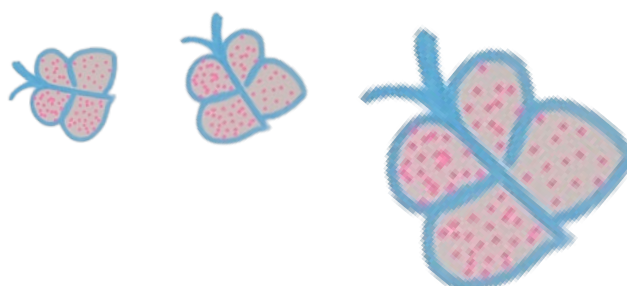


What we can do with this knowledge

We can strengthen pathways for families to access opportunities that build community connection and services that meet their social, cultural, financial, physical and mental health needs.

HOW?

- We will organise and facilitate a variety of regular and one-off activities for children and young people, based on their wants, needs and interests.
- YWCA will allocate funding for family activities each financial year.
- We will prioritise learning about the interests of the children and young people we work with and ask how they want to connect with their peers.
- We will continue to liaise with schools and advocate for our clients based on their needs.
- We will work with families and schools to provide realistic/practical strategies to combat bullying and peer related issues.
- We will continue to work with legal services and advocate for clear referral and support pathways post-legal proceedings.
- We will promote wellbeing with children and young people to better support mental health.



We asked...

Can you tell us about a time your child, or you as a child/ young person, got support that was unhelpful?



Amplifying Voices told us...

Types of support provided to families don't always align with what is needed at the time or the diverse needs of that family.

HOW?

- Services are not listening and families have unmet needs that continue to impact on their health, wellbeing and hope for the future.
- Some supports are decided by the system and service providers without ongoing consultation with families.
- There is limited support after crisis to help with navigating the system and accessing appropriate supports (legal, financial, healthcare, childcare/school etc.).
- The court mandated programs and co-parenting programs need to be improved with understanding of family capacity, wants and needs.



What we can do with this knowledge

We can continue to improve our practice to make sure our program is person centred and meets the diverse needs of the families we work with.

HOW?

- We will ask parents and children what they need at different stages of their journey to work at their pace and let them lead.
- We will advocate for the needs of families we work with to strengthen their access to resources and continuity of care with other services.
- We will assist families with their appointments and referrals.
- We will support families with building more community connections.
- We will share information to families about local services and programs.
- We will listen to the parents and children we work with to learn what is important to them and understand how we can continue to improve how we work together.

We asked...

Can you tell us about a time when your voice/your child's voice was heard?



Amplifying Voices told us...

Children and parents experiencing violence seek help from people they trust.

HOW?

- The school principle noticed the signs and told me there was support here in Australia. They respected my privacy and did not ask questions but wrote support letters to the court for my children.
- My childhood best friend told her mum, who then helped me.
- The school did what I said I needed to keep my children safe.
- Talking to a family friend who took me out for coffee and cake.

People experiencing violence feel heard by YWCA and other specialist DFSV services with experienced workers.

HOW?

- Services and workers are trauma informed.
- Services and workers practice from a feminist framework.
- Services and workers promote recovery by building resilience through self-advocacy and self-determination - The Donkey and The Well metaphor.





What we can do with this knowledge

We can include ways of including the voices of the children and parents we work with into the design of our program.

HOW?

- Build our program with the intention of having children and parents voices heard and included in the client journey.
- Implement a variety of 'check in' style opportunities for clients to tell us how we can better support them with their recovery journey.
- Continue to believe clients and validate their experiences through active listening.

MY VOICE
MY POWER
♥

Consultation 2 **Designing a tool for case management**

The aim of consultation two was to collect feedback from people with lived experience about a new tool designed for YWCA adult and child case managers supporting families at the YWCA Safe Houses. Two Amplifying Voices Advocates participated in this consultation and helped to improve the design and delivery of the tool.

YWCA Case Management Tool

The case management tool aims to help parents, children and young people identify what goals or supports they want included in their plan to make sure case managers are meeting the family's wants, needs and interests.

The tool is a set of cards with a range of services and activities that a family might need when they are experiencing domestic and family violence. The cards have words and images on them to communicate the range of options.

There are two sets of cards:

- 1 x pink set for case managers working with children and young people
- 1 x blue set for case managers working with adults

A copy of the final tool is attached at the end of this document.



Summary of key learnings



- The tool is useful for parents and children to identify their needs and communicate how we can support them.
- The tool can help to relieve stress for clients and make case planning easier.
- The tool helps the parent or child to lead the worker and have choice.
- It is important to use the tool regularly to review the client's needs and prioritise because they change often.
- Clients need to feel prepared and have time to think about what they need.
- Clear explanations about the tool (different colours etc.) in the beginning are important to help the client take the lead.
- The tool needs more detailed information and examples of supports listed on the cards.
- We were missing some types of support. Speaking to people with lived experience highlighted how important it is for clients to lead and tell you what they need.
- Some images need to change so they are positive and engaging.
- There should be a different set of cards for children with basic words.
- Different versions of the cards will be beneficial for different cohorts.
- Feedback from other Amplifying Voices groups could be helpful to gather different perspectives [the Culturally Diverse group and First Nations group].
- The cards can be used individually and together as a family.
- Using the tool to set future goals, when someone is ready, can help promote hope.

We asked...

*Is the tool helpful for understanding the role of case managers?
Is the tool helpful for a family to identify and prioritise their needs?*



Amplifying Voices told us...

The tool is helpful in many ways, for both the worker and family.

HOW?

- People don't always know what they need until they see it.
- "I wish there was this tool for me to help figure out what I needed".
- Great concept and tool for stress relief.
- The different colours help to understand the difference between the child and young person case managers and adult case managers.

How the tool is used will make a big difference to a family's ability to identify and prioritise their needs.

HOW?

- They [the client] should be the one who makes their plan [using the tool].
- It is hard to focus on the future during a crisis. Instead of asking what someone thinks they need later, it is better to review their needs and goals ongoing.
- When they [the client] are ready, you can use the tool to set future goals. This helps to rebuild their hope for the future.
- It [the tool] can be used from the beginning, when you first meet someone, so they can tell you what they need now [immediate needs] and then use it again later [review needs], so they can tell you when their needs change.
- The decision about when to do a review should be made by the client and worker. They [the client] might need space and time to decide when, but the worker can set a review time if they believe it has been too long.
- The tool could be given to the client before they are expected to use them with the worker. This will help them to feel prepared and start thinking about what they need.

- Don't give people a limit of how many cards [needs or goals] they can select. Let them choose freely and then tell you which one's matter the most to them.
- Ask children their interests, likes, wants, dislikes, weekly goals and what is important to them.



What we can do with this knowledge

We can use this knowledge to inform how we will use the tool in our roles as case managers.

HOW?

- We will use the tool for case planning with families.
- We will explain that the pink cards represent support provided by the children and young person case managers and the blue cards represent support provided by the adult case managers.
- We will let the parent and child lead by choosing what they want to include in their plan and tell us what is important to them [set goals and priorities].
- We will keep copies of the tool at the safe houses for clients to access before it is used for the first time and whenever they want to review their needs/goals.
- We will set a review time when clients do not have capacity or awareness to recognise when it is needed.



We asked...

What language and images should be used?

Are there any types of support missing from the tool?



Amplifying Voices told us...

The tool should be visually engaging and informative.

HOW?

- The text should be black.
- The headings for different cards should be 'Adult Case Management' and 'Child and Young Person Case Management'.
- The tool should be named 'Goal Setting Cards'.
- There could be different categories for the cards (legal, housing, money, education etc.).
- Pictures should be simple and positive.
- Detailed feedback was provided to change words, suggest alternative images, add types of support and descriptions or examples.





What we can do with this knowledge

We can make changes to the words, images and types of support on the cards to make sure they are suitable and engaging for our clients and reflect the needs of families experiencing violence.

HOW?

- Change text in black and call the tool 'Goal Setting Cards'.
- Change 'DVO' to 'referral and support to get DVO'
- Change image for 'children's counselling' and list types of therapy (play, art, animal).
- Change image for 'communicating with school'
- Change image for 'children's engagement at school'
- Change image for 'school supplies'
- Use 'swimming' image for 'sports program'
- Use 'ABC blocks' image for 'early learning'
- Use the 'NDIS' image and add 'disability support' for adults
- Add 'physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy' to 'allied health'
- Add 'family and criminal law' to 'legal support'
- Add 'certificates, diplomas etc.' to 'courses'
- Add 'health checks, dental, women's health, mental health and fitness' to 'health'
- Add 'budgeting, paying bills and debts' to 'financial support'
- Add examples for 'youth programs'
- Add examples for 'employment support'
- Add 'assistance applying for Escaping Violence Payment'
- Add 'applying for driver licence, driver test or identification'
- Add 'connect to culture, spirituality, religion'
- Add 'translating and learning language' to communication
- Add 'living skills' and list 'organisation, cooking, house chores'
- Add 'connection to community' and list 'programs, events, groups etc.'
- Add 'home safety' and list 'cameras, locks, fence'
- Add 'pets'
- Add 'mail' and list 'redirection'

We asked...

*How can the tool be improved for children and young people?
How can the tool be improved for families from different cultural and language backgrounds?*



Amplifying Voices told us...

Adapt the tool so it is suitable for each audience.

HOW?

- Create another version of the tool with cards for children and young people using simple words and images.
- Create another version with images suitable for other cultures and translated in other languages.
- The tool could be used to have conversations with the parent and children together depending on the age of the children and whether they want to talk with or without their parent. It should be their choice.
- Some children might try to express how they feel but a parent could 'shut them down'- Case managers could work towards safety for the child and parent to share.



What we can do with this knowledge

We can involve children and young people, and families from different cultural and language backgrounds in future developments of the tool.

HOW?

- We will create other versions of the tool in the future.
- We will enquire about another Amplifying Voices consultation to develop one for culturally and linguistically diverse families.

Case Management Tool **Cards for Children and Young People**

*Child and Young Person
Case Management*

Goal Setting Cards

*Child and Young Person
Case Management*

Goal Setting Cards



*Referral to Allied Health services
(Physio, OT, Speech)*



Referral to NDIS or disability services



Support to enrol your child/children in school



*Support in communicating with your
child/children's school*



Support to safety plan with your child/children



Support in organising school transport



Support to help your child/children engage in and continue to attend school



Support to get school resources (Uniforms, additional stationary etc.)



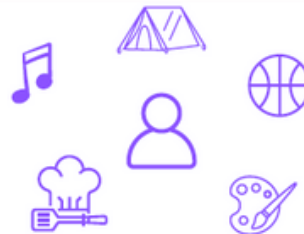
Support in liaising with your child/children's school about behaviour



Linking your child/children to youth programs



Linking your child/children to sports programs, sporting groups or swimming lessons



Linking your child/children to interest or hobby groups



Linking your child/children to alternative education programs (Flexible learning, tutors TAFE etc.)



Linking your child/children to early education (Childcare, playgroups, early learning centres etc.)



Support to develop routines at home
(Getting ready for school, bed time, bath times, meal times
etc.)



Support around sleep for your child/children



Support with healthy eating, family meal planning
and cooking



Support to provide emotional support to your
child/ children



Support with your child/children's behaviour at
home, creating boundaries or having tricky
conversations



Referral to parenting programs, playgroups,
or parent support groups

BLANK CARD

BLANK CARD

Case Management Tool

Cards for Adults

Adult Case Management

Goal Setting Cards

Adult Case Management

Goal Setting Cards



Long term housing



Referral & support to get DVO



*Legal support
(family law, criminal law etc)*



*Support for employment.
(Maintaining, new employment, resume, uniforms,
transport, relevant checks / cards)*



*Courses and Training
(Certificates, diplomas etc)*



*Applying for drivers license, drivers test
or identification*



centrelink

Support with Centrelink payments, child support or crisis payment



Transport



Assistance applying for Escaping Violence Payment



Financial Support
(Budgeting, financial counselling, bills or debt)



Connection to culture, spirituality or religion



Counselling for yourself



Support Network
(connecting to friends, family or community)



Connection to Community
(programs, events or groups)



Living Skills
(Organisation, cooking, household chores etc)



Your Health
(Health checks, dental, women's health, fitness, mental health)



Routine at Home (adult)
(Household tasks, appointments, sleep, meals)



Mail
(Redirection, AUS Post PO box)



Communication
(Translating, learning language or english, communication skills)



Technology safety
(phones, online accounts, cameras, tracking)



Wellbeing and Self Care



Support Alcohol and other drugs



*Disability support
(NDIS, SILS, community access, therapies)*



*Home Safety
(Cameras, locks, fences etc)*



Pets



For more information about Amplifying Voices

Visit, www.ywca.org.au/support/amplifying-voices-program/

To get in touch with Amplifying Voices

Email, AmplifyingVoices@ywca.org.au



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