



DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

ORGANISATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION AND ALIGNMENT GUIDE

Introduction

This guide supports government agencies and non-government organisations in implementing the Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Risk Assessment and Management Framework (RAMF) within their own organisations. The guide provides tips and checklists for activities to be undertaken as part of implementation, including aligning current policies, practices and tools with the RAMF. This guide should be read in conjunction with the RAMF itself, and in particular Part A of the RAMF.

What are the RAMF and CRAT?

The RAMF comprises evidence based information and resources to support services and workers to **identify** DFV, **assess** DFV risk and **respond** to DFV risk.

The RAMF includes the Common Risk Assessment Tool (CRAT), used to assess the risk of harm for a DFV victim survivor. The fundamental purpose of the

RAMF is to increase the safety of DFV victim survivors, and to increase the accountability of people committing DFV.

The RAMF enables all services to share a consistent understanding, language and approach. Having one shared risk assessment tool (the CRAT) enables streamlined communication between the services involved in supporting a victim survivor. Consistency will help earlier identification of DFV, and support services to work together effectively so people get the help they need.

Who are the RAMF and CRAT for?

Victim survivors of DFV may enter the service system at a number of different points. This is why the RAMF and CRAT are for use by all services responding to DFV whether they are universal, statutory or specialist services.

Every worker across the service system has a shared responsibility to respond to DFV, even if DFV is

not their core business. Different services do however have different roles and responsibilities under the RAMF, in relation to screening for, assessing, and responding to DFV risk. More information about the definitions of universal, specialist and statutory services, and of the roles and responsibilities for services under the RAMF, can be found in Part A of the RAMF.

The RAMF and CRAT support the Family Safety Framework (FSF) and other multi agency risk management bodies.

Alignment for Information Sharing Entities

Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) under the DFV information sharing scheme are legally required to align all relevant policies, tools, procedures, and practice guidance with the RAMF. This is mandated under section 124R of the *Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007*.

ISEs may choose to adopt RAMF tools as a whole or to adapt their current tools, provided they are consistent with the evidence-

base, principles and approach in the RAMF.

Organisations that provide a DFV service can apply to become an ISE. The simple application process is available on the [Territory Families, Housing and Communities website](#).

Alignment for non-Information Sharing Entities

The RAMF is intended to guide and support **all** services, whether or not they are ISEs, to better identify, assess and respond to DFV risk. While non ISEs are not legally obliged to align with the RAMF, they are encouraged to due to the benefits for both workers and clients.

What are the benefits of aligning with the RAMF?

- For ISEs, aligning with the RAMF means complying with legislative obligations.
- Victim survivors accessing services are supported to keep safe and to recover and thrive.

- Early identification of DFV can prevent the escalation of violence.
- Provide workers with increased capability and confidence to identify, assess and respond to DFV.
- Consistent and collaborative practice in the workforce will help provide a more coordinated response, benefiting workers and clients.
- Workers will be supported for their own safety and wellbeing as DFV affects employees too.

Is there a timeframe for alignment?

There is no deadline for alignment for ISEs and non ISEs. The process of aligning to the RAMF will be different for each service. Services will be at different starting points in terms of DFV understanding and practice. Services can begin the alignment process in a way that is most appropriate for them.

The RAMF will be reviewed so that it reflects the developing evidence base in DFV risk and good practice. Similarly, alignment with the RAMF should be seen as an ongoing improvement process for all organisations.

More information

Resources and training are being developed to support workers learn about and use the RAMF, and assist services to align with the RAMF. More information is available on the [Territory Families, Housing and Communities website](#) and further resources will be made available over time. <https://territoryfamilies.nt.gov.au/dfv/ramf>

You can also contact the Office of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Policy in Territory Families, Housing and Communities on (08) 89357803 or email: dfv@nt.gov.au.

RAMF Alignment Checklist – starting off

- ❑ Identify who in your organisation will lead implementation activity and commence the process of developing an implementation plan.
- ❑ Identify whether you are an Information Sharing Entity (ISE) under the [DFV Information Sharing Scheme](#).

ISEs are legally required to align policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools to the RAMF under section 124R of the *Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007*.
- ❑ Identify whether you are a specialist, universal or statutory service, and whether your staff include universal, specialist and/or statutory workers. (See the [RAMF](#) pages 9-10 for full descriptions of universal, specialist and statutory services and their roles and responsibilities).

The [RAMF](#) proposes a staged screening and assessment process, appropriate to the roles and responsibilities of the different service types and workers that make up the service system.

Workers in universal, specialist and statutory services have responsibilities to undertake DFV screening.

Workers in universal and statutory services should be able to provide an initial response, including making referrals for a risk assessment and comprehensive risk management response, making mandatory reports and sharing information if required.

Specialist workers and services, and statutory workers with the appropriate skills and training, should be able to undertake risk assessment and comprehensive risk management, with specialist services leading ongoing risk and case management.
- ❑ Develop a communications plan for how staff will be made aware of the [RAMF](#), and what their roles and responsibilities are under the [RAMF](#).
- ❑ Provide access to the [RAMF](#) to all leaders and managers in your organisation, and to all relevant staff.
- ❑ Brief leaders, governance bodies, managers and executives on the [RAMF](#) and the organisation's obligations and responsibilities under the [RAMF](#) (and, if an ISE, under the *Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007*).
- ❑ Provide opportunities for organisational leaders and staff to undertake [RAMF](#) orientation.
- ❑ Provide the [RAMF Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQs) fact sheet to staff.
- ❑ Identify existing policies, procedures, practice guidance, forms, manuals, training and tools that will need to be reviewed, updated or replaced to achieve alignment with the [RAMF](#). Examples of types of policies to review are provided under the five [RAMF](#) component checklists below.
- ❑ Identify processes for reviewing implementation activity and monitoring compliance with policies, guidelines and procedures.
- ❑ If your organisation receives funding from the Northern Territory Government, discuss with contract managers whether there are any alignment expectations.
- ❑ Become familiar with [RAMF](#) training opportunities and identify appropriate staff to undertake training in line with their roles and responsibilities.
- ❑ Become familiar with the [RAMF](#) principles and consider whether the organisation's approach aligns with and is informed by the [RAMF](#) principles.

Alignment under the five key RAMF components

The RAMF comprises five key components. Checklists of alignment activities have been grouped under each of these key components.

Checklist for Component 1: A common understanding of DFV (Including principles for DFV risk management and a Common Risk Assessment Tool)

A common understanding contributes to the goal of consistency in risk assessment and management practice. If we speak the same language, use the same tools, have the same understanding, and work in a way that is informed by the latest evidence, we will provide more effective support for victim survivors.

- Become familiar with the [Northern Territory's Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018-2028, Safe, respected and free from violence.](#)
- Identify all existing policies, procedures, practice guidance, forms and tools that will need to be reviewed, updated or replaced to achieve alignment with Component 1 of the RAMF. This may include identifying gaps where no policies or procedures currently exist and require development. Use Part B of the [RAMF](#) (A common understanding of DFV) and the RAMF Practice Tool 1 - Principles for DFV Risk Assessment and Management as a guide. Policies and procedures may include:
 - policies on how your organisation defines DFV
 - policies on the forms of DFV (see RAMF Practice Tool 2)
 - policies on underlying DFV drivers and the impact of DFV
 - policies on the complexities of DFV experiences across Northern Territory communities.
- Make sure that staff have access to training on foundational understandings of DFV.
- If you have a compulsory training matrix for staff, consider including foundational understandings of DFV training.
- Assess whether the organisation's approach aligns with the RAMF principles.

Checklist for Component 2: A consistent and evidence based approach to DFV screening, DFV risk assessment and DFV risk management

If we work in a way that is informed by the evidence, we will provide more effective support for victim survivors.

- Become familiar with the seven [RAMF](#) practice guides and eight RAMF practice tools for use in the screening, assessment and management of DFV.
- Consider whether there is a need to adopt the RAMF principles, practice guides and tools in full, or whether the [RAMF](#) tools can be adapted and used to develop and update existing organisational policies, principles, practice guides and tools (providing that these are consistent with the [RAMF](#) principles, evidence base and approach).

- Identify all existing policies, procedures, practice guidance, forms and tools that will need to be reviewed, updated or replaced to achieve alignment with Component 2 of the RAMF. This may include identifying gaps where no policies or procedures currently exist and require development. These may include:
 - privacy and confidentiality policies and procedures
 - consent and release of information forms and policies
 - client intake forms
 - client feedback forms
 - DFV screening policies, procedures and tools (see [RAMF Practice Guide 1](#)) including procedures on routine screening (where DFV screening questions are asked of every service user regardless of whether DFV indicators are present) and/or indicative screening (where screening takes place only when indicators of DFV are identified)
 - procedures for staff members on how to identify DFV using DFV indicators, and how to undertake screening, or how to refer to an identified staff member for screening (see [RAMF Practice Tool 5 – DFV Indicators](#))
 - DFV risk assessment policies, procedures and tools (see [RAMF Practice Guide 2](#)) including use of the Common Risk Assessment Tool ([RAMF Practice Tool 7](#))
 - (For universal services): procedures for staff to refer to specialist or statutory services for comprehensive risk assessment and management, where DFV has been identified
 - (For specialist and statutory services): procedures to accept referrals from universal services for comprehensive risk assessment and management, including a prioritisation system
 - DFV risk management policies, procedures and tools (see [RAMF Practice Guide 3](#)) including emergency risk management responses, referrals to the Family Safety Framework, and immediate and ongoing safety planning (see [RAMF Practice Tool 8](#))
 - reviewing and updating existing referral pathways or procedures, including memorandums of understanding with other organisations (see [RAMF Practice Guide 5](#))
 - policies on collaborative practice, referrals and secondary consultations
 - reviewing and updating record keeping systems, including IT systems, Client Relationships Management (CRM) systems, reporting systems ([RAMF Practice Guide 6](#))
 - policies on compulsory training
 - staff induction and training modules
 - operational manuals– e.g. induction manuals, service information, practice manuals
 - information provided to clients
 - joint case management processes with other services
 - procedures on what to do when a service user is suspected of being a person who has committed or is committing DFV
 - procedures on what to do where it is suspected there is a misidentification of the person most in need of protection (the victim survivor).
- Identify which staff will require training and arrange for all staff with [RAMF](#) responsibilities to receive the relevant training.

- ❑ Be aware that DFV risk changes over time. Screening, assessment and risk management are not activities that occur only once. Procedures should be in place to ensure screening, assessment and management can take place at whatever point DFV indicators become identified.
- ❑ Assess whether the organisation's approach aligns with the [RAMF](#) principles.

Checklist for Component 3: A coordinated, collaborative and integrated service system

When all services work in a coordinated and collaborative manner, using consistent risk assessment and management processes and language, it leads to increased safety and accountability, reduced secondary (systems created) trauma, increased accountability of people who commit DFV, and more cohesive responses to DFV.

- ❑ Identify all existing policies, procedures, practice guidance, forms and tools that will need to be reviewed, updated or replaced to achieve alignment with Component 3 of the [RAMF](#). This may include identifying gaps where no policies or procedures currently exist and require development. These may include:
 - policies and procedures that support staff including managers to actively participate where relevant in collaborative governance and case coordination mechanisms such as the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Cross Agency Working Group, the Family Safety Framework and the Multi-Agency Child and Community Safety Teams
 - policies and procedures that support staff including managers to actively participate where relevant in Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) inter-agency and network meetings, and communities of practice
 - policies and procedures that support staff including managers to actively participate where relevant in informal or case by case collaborative case coordination
 - appropriate training and support for staff who sit on the Family Safety Framework as a member so that they are aware of their role and responsibilities.
- ❑ Be familiar with shared strategic policies such as the DFSV Framework, the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework, the DFV Information Sharing Scheme, the [RAMF](#), the DFSV Workforce and Sector Development Plan, and the Gender Equality Statement of Commitment.
- ❑ Develop or strengthen relationships and collaborations with relevant local services.
- ❑ Establish or strengthen multi-agency formal and informal partnerships for the purposes of risk assessment and management, information sharing, secondary consultations and referrals, and collaborative practice (including memorandums of understanding where appropriate).
- ❑ Co-design agreed forms for ease of use between services where frequent information sharing, referrals and secondary consultations take place.
- ❑ Create or update accessible resource lists that detail local and national partners relevant for information sharing, secondary consultations and referrals.
- ❑ Assess whether the organisation's approach aligns with the [RAMF](#) principles.

Checklist for Component 4: Legislation that supports shared responsibility for risk identification, assessment and management

Sharing information and sharing the responsibility to report serious DFV harm or risk increases the safety of victim survivors and the accountability of people who commit DFV.

- ❑ Identify all existing policies, procedures, practice guidance, forms and tools that will need to be reviewed, updated or replaced to achieve alignment with Component 4 of the [RAMF](#). This may involve identifying gaps where no policies or procedures currently exist and require development. These may include:
 - mandatory reporting policies, procedures and training to support all staff in understanding and undertaking their responsibilities (see [RAMF](#) Practice Guide 4)
 - information sharing policies, procedures and training to support all staff in understanding and undertaking their responsibilities
 - (for ISEs under the DFV Information Sharing Scheme) policies, procedures and tools that reflect an understanding of the organisation's obligations under the Domestic and Family Violence Act and the DFV Information Sharing Guidelines (see [RAMF](#) Practice Guide 4)
 - (for Information Sharing Authorities under the *Care and Protection of Children Act*) policies, procedures and tools that reflect an understanding of the organisation's obligations (see [RAMF](#) Practice Guide 4)
 - policies and procedures to inform clients of the mandatory reporting and information sharing responsibilities of staff and the organisation
 - consent forms in place and signed (where required) before sharing information.
- ❑ Ensure that all staff have undergone relevant training to be aware of their obligations under mandatory reporting and information sharing laws.
- ❑ Assess whether the organisation's approach aligns with the [RAMF](#) principles.

Checklist for Component 5: A supported, safe and capable workforce

An effective DFV response needs a workforce with the necessary knowledge, skills and support. The RAMF provides a foundation and tools to guide effective practice by workers and services in the specific area of screening, assessing and managing DFV risk.

- ❑ Assess whether your organisation currently provides a supportive and psychologically safe environment for staff who are responding to DFV.
- ❑ Identify all existing policies, procedures, practice guidance, forms and tools that will need to be reviewed, updated or replaced to achieve alignment with Component 5 of the [RAMF](#), in relation to supporting staff who are responding to DFV as part of their work. This may include identifying gaps where no policies or procedures currently exist and require development. Policies and procedures may include:
 - organisational chart showing where staff can seek supervision and secondary consultations internally in respect of DFV matters
 - access to professional development and mentoring for staff
 - cultural security policies for staff and clients

- providing frontline staff with opportunities to participate in non-frontline work to reduce the trauma content to which they are exposed
 - access to clinical supervision for relevant staff
 - policies and procedures that support a culture of regular debriefing, reflective practice, appreciative enquiry and strengths-based supervision
 - organisational vicarious trauma identification and management procedures, policies and responses, including an acknowledgment of the known risk of vicarious trauma, an understanding of the responsibilities of the organisation in responding, and support for staff in mitigation strategies (such as effectively leaving work at work). This should include education for governance bodies, workers and managers about vicarious trauma and evidence-based responses and access to employee assistance programs
 - providing all workers with information about and access to 1800 RESPECT (freecall 1800 737 732) for information, telephone and online counselling for workers experiencing work related stress and trauma as a result of their work in the DFV area.
- Identify all existing policies, procedures, practice guidance, forms and tools that will need to be reviewed, updated or replaced to achieve alignment with Component 5 of the RAMF, in relation to supporting staff who are victim survivors of DFV. This may include identifying gaps where no policies or procedures currently exist and require development. Policies and procedures may include:
- a strong DFV staff policy that promotes an organisational culture that does not accept DFV in any community or culture
 - training and accessible information for all staff on DFV awareness and support available in the organisation
 - leave and other entitlements under the *Fair Work Act*, antidiscrimination law, awards, enterprise agreements or other industrial instruments including those for the NT Public Service.
 - changes in working conditions for safety
 - workplace safety planning
 - evidence requirements (i.e. court orders, medical notes, statutory declarations – note evidence requirements should be kept to a minimum, given the trauma and stress already likely experienced by the victim survivor)
 - staff privacy and confidentiality – how the organisation will ensure the employee’s disclosures will remain confidential, when confidentiality may be overridden
 - impact of DFV on performance and/or attendance – reaffirming that no adverse action will be taken against an employee where performance and/or attendance is affected
 - impact on the safety, wellbeing and workloads of other staff members (particularly in cases where the person who has committed DFV has turned up at the workplace in person or disrupts the workplace through phone calls, emails, or social media)
 - how and where staff can safely disclose (including alternatives to a direct manager if required, and acknowledging that workers experiencing DFV may not feel safe to speak up at work)
 - referrals to specialist DFV services (which may include interstate or intra-state for safety and privacy reasons)

- referrals to employee assistance programs (provided they have DFV expertise)
- tools, training and support for managers and HR in how to respond appropriately.
- Be aware that increased awareness, training and promotion of DFV response within your organisation is likely to trigger staff disclosures of DFV and be prepared to respond to disclosures when training and communications on DFV are delivered.
- Identify all existing policies, procedures, practice guidance, forms and tools that will need to be reviewed, updated or replaced to achieve alignment with Component 5 of the [RAMF](#), in relation to responding to staff who have committed DFV. This may include identifying gaps where no policies or procedures currently exist and require development. Policies and procedures may include:
 - training
 - employment screening
 - leave and other entitlements under the Fair Work Act, antidiscrimination law, awards, enterprise agreements or other industrial instruments - leave entitlements may be available for specific purposes such as attending behavioural change activities or court)
 - misusing work equipment or time to commit DFV
 - confidentiality – how the organisation will ensure the employee’s disclosures will remain confidential, when confidentiality may be overridden
 - referrals to men’s behaviour change and perpetrator intervention services
 - referrals to employee assistance programs (provided they have DFV expertise)
 - tools and support for managers and HR.
- Be aware that disclosures of committing DFV may lead to serious ramifications, such as criminal charges, the loss of employment, and hostility from colleagues. These impacts may in turn increase the risk to the victim survivor. It is important that disclosures are handled in a skilled and appropriate way.
- Be aware of the Northern Territory Government’s Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Workforce and Sector Development Plan and how initiatives under the Plan may be relevant to your staff and service.
- Assess whether the organisation’s approach aligns with the [RAMF](#) Principles.

Get more information

Resources and training are being developed to support workers in learning about and using the [RAMF](#) and CRAT, and to help services align with the [RAMF](#) and CRAT. Resources are available on the Territory Families, Housing and Communities website and further resources will be made available over time. <https://territoryfamilies.nt.gov.au/dfv/ramf>

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