Family Peace Program Brief Intervention - Experiences and Learnings

Paul Monsour and Yolande le Roux
Group Facilitators / Counsellors
Anglicare Southern Queensland

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Where did this come from?

- WSJ Taskforce *Hear Her Voice* Report 1– *Recs 26, 28, 74*
- Rec 26: "…diversity of perpetrator interventions across a continuum of risk and need" → includes Brief Interventions.
- Rec 28: "…intersectional approach to meet needs of people with diverse backgrounds ... and identities" → explicitly diverse cohort
- Rec 74: " … court based DV perpetrator diversion scheme" → DFV Diversion Scheme
- Anglicare Sth Qld successful for Brief Intervention linked to Diversion Scheme in Brisbane
- Court based DFV Diversion scheme commenced 26 May 2025, by amendments to *DFV Act 2012* (Qld)
- FPP Brief Intervention - primary intervention option for the Diversion Scheme – connected but operates independently, other referrals.

Diversion Scheme Eligibility

- Court determines eligibility for a diversion.
- Criteria:
  - Charged with a single offence of contravening a DVO / PPN and granted bail.
  - "Accepted responsibility" (not a formal guilty plea)
  - No previous other DVO or PPN issued against them
  - Not previously been convicted, as an adult, of:
    - Contravening a DVO or PPN; or
    - "Any other offence involving domestic violence"
  - Never previously been referred to DFV diversion scheme
  - Willingness to participate in DFV diversion
- If the defendant is found ineligible, the charge proceeds through the usual process.

DFV Diversion Scheme Process

- If eligible, the court makes *Suitability Assessment Order*, defendant bailed
- Matter adjourned for min 6 weeks for Suitability Assessment & *Report*
- On return, Magistrate decides to make a *Diversion Order* & adjourns again if defendant:
  - Is still eligible
  - Consents to the order
  - Can start the program within a reasonable time
  - Does not pose an unacceptable risk to the safety or wellbeing to the aggrieved or staff of the program
  - Wishes of aggrieved taken into account
- Note “immunity from prosecution” re Assessment disclosures
- The court, defendant and the prosecution may apply to vary or revoke the Diversion Order.
- *Notice of Completion* or *Notice of Contravention*
- Court finalises the matter or proceeds with prosecution

Completion of the Diversion Order

- Anglicare will notify the court on completion of the program
- On the day the court receives the *Notice Of Completion,* the *Diversion Order* ends, the defendant does not have to enter a plea.
- Matter finalised at final adjournment, charges are dismissed.

What if they don't complete the Diversion Order?

- If diversion order is revoked or contravened, defendant must enter a plea to the charge. Partial completion may be taken into account.
- Failure to complete the Diversion Order must be taken into account in determining whether to vary a domestic violence order.

Client Journey

Family Peace Project - Client Key Dates

Client	**Fred NURK**	
Counsellor assessing	Paul	
Suitability Assessment Order Date (advised by Court)	7/07/2025	Monday
Assessment	16/07/2025	Wednesday
Diversion Order Adjourment Date (advised by Court)	22/08/2025	Friday
Orientation	4/09/2025	Thursday
1st Session - Rolling Group or Counselling Start	10/09/2025	Wednesday
2nd Session	17/09/2025	Wednesday
3rd Session	24/09/2025	Wednesday
4th Session	1/10/2025	Wednesday
Mid-way review	3/10/2025	Friday
5th Session	8/10/2025	Wednesday
6th Session	15/10/2025	Wednesday
7th Session	29/10/2025	Wednesday
8th Session	5/11/2025	Wednesday
Exit session	14/11/2025	Friday
Complete By date for SAR	5/12/2025	Friday
Final Adjournment date (advised by Court)	12/12/2025	Friday
Follow up session	13/02/2026	Friday

About FPP BI

- Condensed FPI program – from 40 weeks to 8 weeks (2 sessions in 1)
- Many aspects in common with conventional MBCP programs: differences – trauma responsive and tailored to brief format
- Therapeutic + psycho-educational approach
- Strong emphasis on client-counsellor relationship
- Takes a broader view of 'cruel behaviours' beyond legal framing of DFV and recognises impact of past experiences of abuse
- Takes a deeper dive into emotional responses, 'defence systems', vulnerability, accountability and responsibility for healing
- Accepts all genders, CALD, First Nations, AOD + MH etc,
  - via individual counselling where appropriate/required

Key ideas in FPP

- "River of Cruelty" model
  - Acknowledges childhood experiences including histories of cruel treatment which lead to negative beliefs about self ("shadow messages")
  - Identifies how our shadow messages and our defences against adverse emotions lead to using cruel behaviour towards others
  - Identifies hidden positive messages about self ("golden shadow message") as a resource or inspiration for changed behaviour
- Promotes participants taking responsibility for **both**
  - changing their patterns of abusive/cruel behaviour **and**
  - healing from their experiences of abuse/cruelty
- Emotional literacy (primary emotions) and tolerance for adverse emotions including guilt and shame (the "painful shift")
- Moving from external focus to personal introspection

Diverse background and identities

- **Diverse cohorts** ~ tailored counselling for diverse cohorts (group unsuitable), e.g. needs interpreter, disability / accessibility challenges
- **Female participants** ~ tailored counselling sessions based on the course content, (not group program with male participants).
- **People using resistive violence** ~ individual tailored program.

Group Session Content

- Orientation – Definitions, Emotions, Key concepts
- Session 1 – River Of Cruelty
- Session 2 – Personal Introspection
- Session 3 – Negotiation and Fairness
- Session 4 - Creating Trust in Partnerships
- Session 5 - Sexual Respect
- Session 6 - Parenting with Respect
- Session 7 - Motivations for using Violence
- Session 8 - Shame and Guilt

Victim-survivors Advocate

- Victim-survivor contact details sent from QPS.
- Can hear victim-survivors voice before *Suitability Assessment*
- Comprehensive risk assessment (CRASF Level 2), safety planning and needs assessments, counselling, ongoing support and referrals.
- Counselling offered to children of the family as well.
- Support tailored to meet diverse and unique needs of victim-survivors.
- Counselling can include session coursework such as River of Cruelty etc.

Cohort to date (October 2025)

- **39 referrals**
  - 4 completed, (5 ready for Exit interviews)
  - 31 active,
  - 3 ceased,
  - 1 excluded
- **32 from DFV Court Diversion**
- 2 ceased due to Diversion Order not made / revoked
- 6 women (**4 from DFV Court Diversion** and 2 other referrals)
- 1 LGBTQA+
- 6 CALD (3 require interpreter)
- 3 First Nations

Experiences and Learnings

- Court, Diversion Scheme
  - strict and tight timeframes, not receiving DVO, misidentified clients, use of Live List for assessment scheduling, pressure to increase availability, info exchange processes still being refined
- Brief intervention
  - time is limited, rapport building is crucial from first contact, need to do effective work quickly, some clients have strong need for 1 or 2 additional sessions to complete a piece of work
- Condensed FPI
  - relationship and emotional safety is crucial, use of self-disclosure is integral, close co-facilitator relationship and being present to catch moments to do therapeutic work; moving between psycho-ed and therapeutic work
- Clients
  - facilitator disclosures opens the group to vulnerability, some clients want further support to continue trauma healing, some clients appreciate this is as a second chance; eligibility screening doesn't remove all high risk
- Diverse backgrounds & identities
  - 1:1 work especially with translators time and resource intensive, woman open to looking at cruelty passed on even when using resistive violence,

Questions?

Contact Details

Making a referral (FPP):

- Phone: MHFW intake team on 1300 114 397
- Email: mhfw@anglicaresq.org.au
- Point of entry for all counselling & support needs across ASQ, including DFV services.
- Or via DFV Court Diversion or Intervention Order