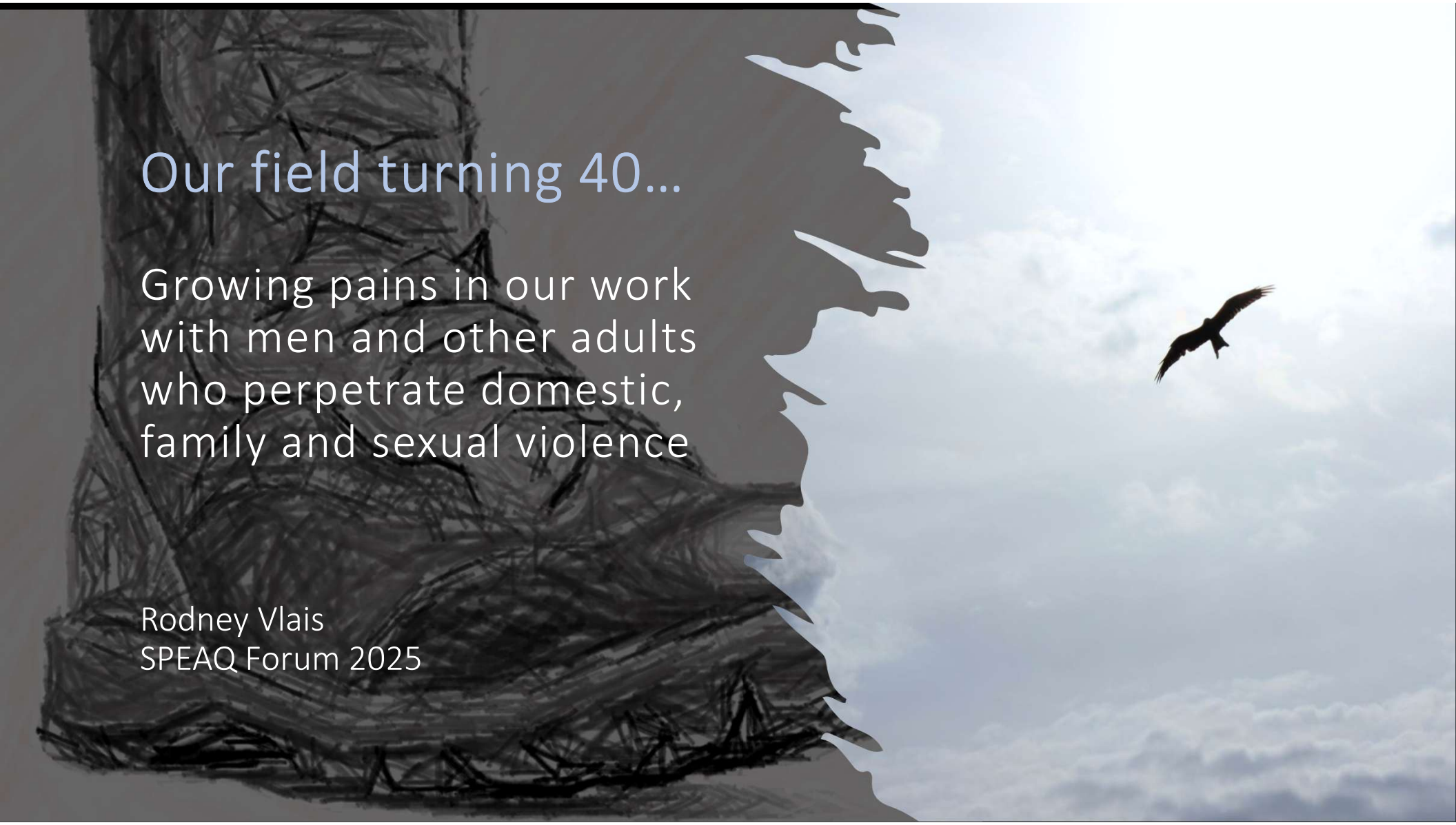
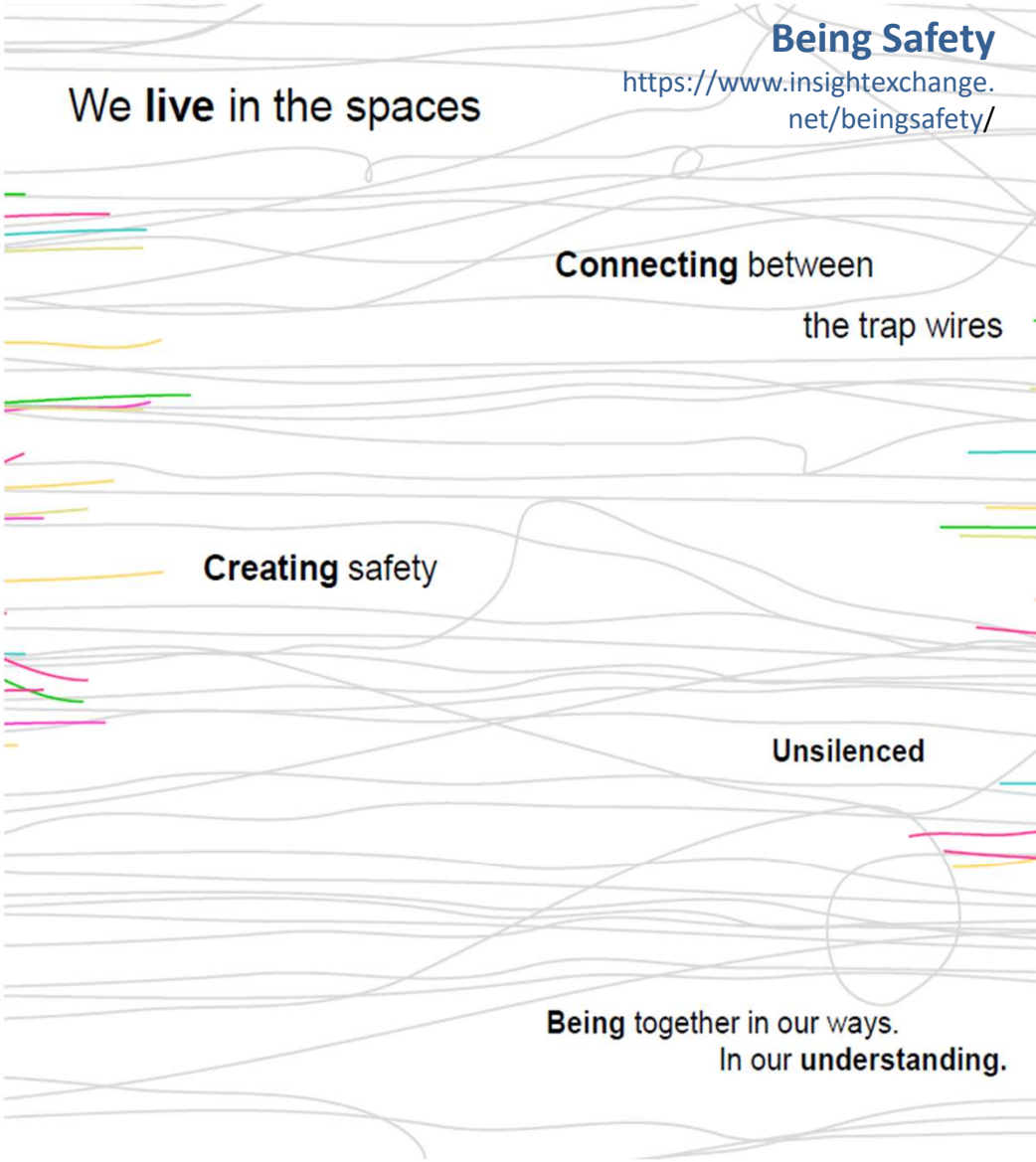


Our field turning 40…

Growing pains in our work with men and other adults who perpetrate domestic, family and sexual violence

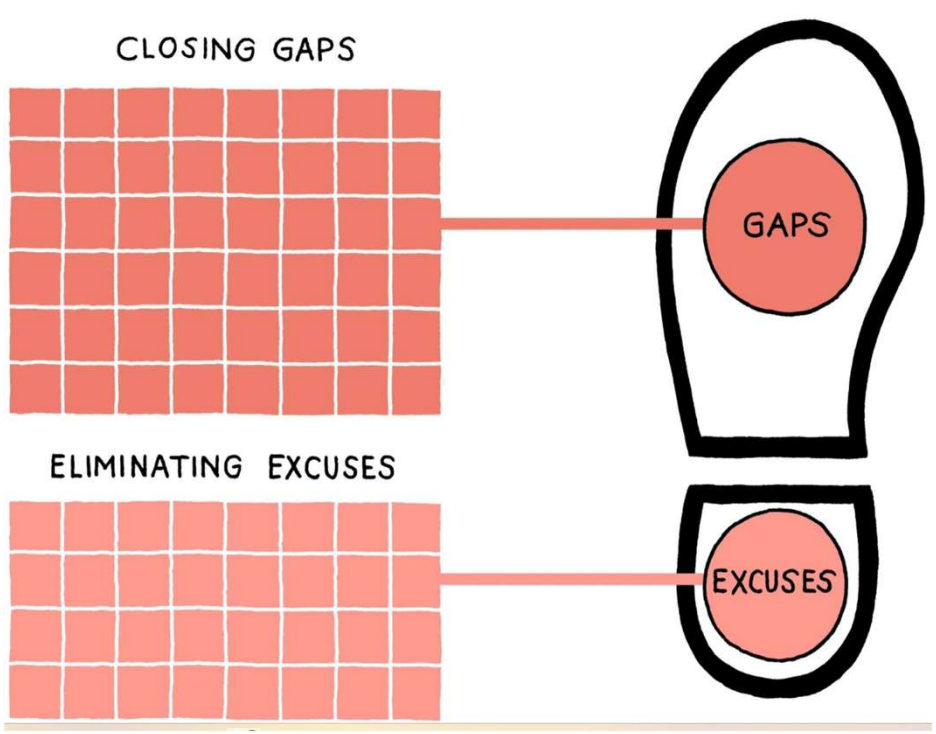
Rodney Vlais
SPEAQ Forum 2025

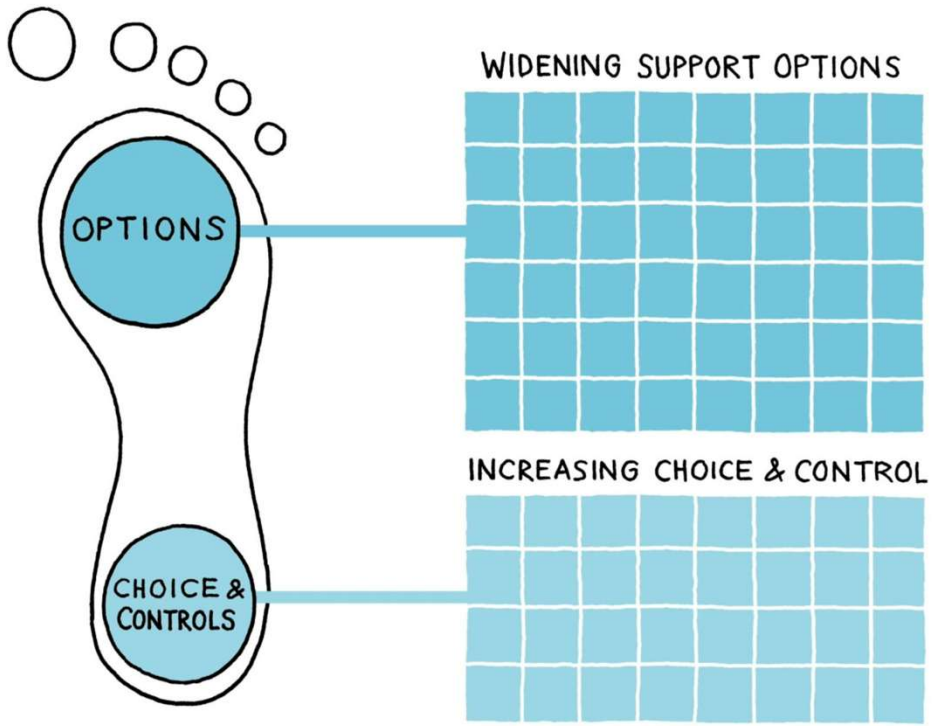

his use of violence
dominating
isolating
intimidating
Shaping our beliefs and
perceptions
of each other
obscured from seeing all his strategies
secrecy
dividing and deceiving us
disconnecting us
keeping us far apart


Being Safety
https://www.insightexchange.net/beingsafety/
We live in the spaces
Connecting between
the trap wires
Creating safety
Unsilenced
Being together in our ways.
In our understanding.

Our actions

https://www.insightexchange.net/our-actions/





Fitzgerald, R., & Douglas, H. (2025). Domestic violence and the role of imprisonment as a response: men's post-conviction talk about strangling women. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 1-21.

Qld incarcerated men who use DFSV talk about their use of non-fatal strangulation



'I didn't want to hit her, so I choked her instead, it's not as bad as hitting her!'

'I had to shut her up, she was just going off, hysterical, I needed to control that woman or she just would have kept going at me'

'This whole non-fatal strangulation charge, it's further proof that women and all those femo-men now rule the world and want to victimise us real men'

'There are so many other men here in prison on domestic charges, the place is full of men like me, treated unfairly. They all agree with me. And I'm learning so many new ideas about how to keep her under check when I get released.'

These are made up quotes that accurately represent what the men were saying in the research. Implications for intervention:

- Educate about the harms caused through NFS
- Assess function of using NFS in each case – some men want to traumatise and terrorise the victim-survivor into silence
- Attempt to counter collusion between DFV offenders in prison, as they confirm and embolden each other's sense of grievance
- Post-release work with DFV offenders is vital, as some will be more dangerous after release

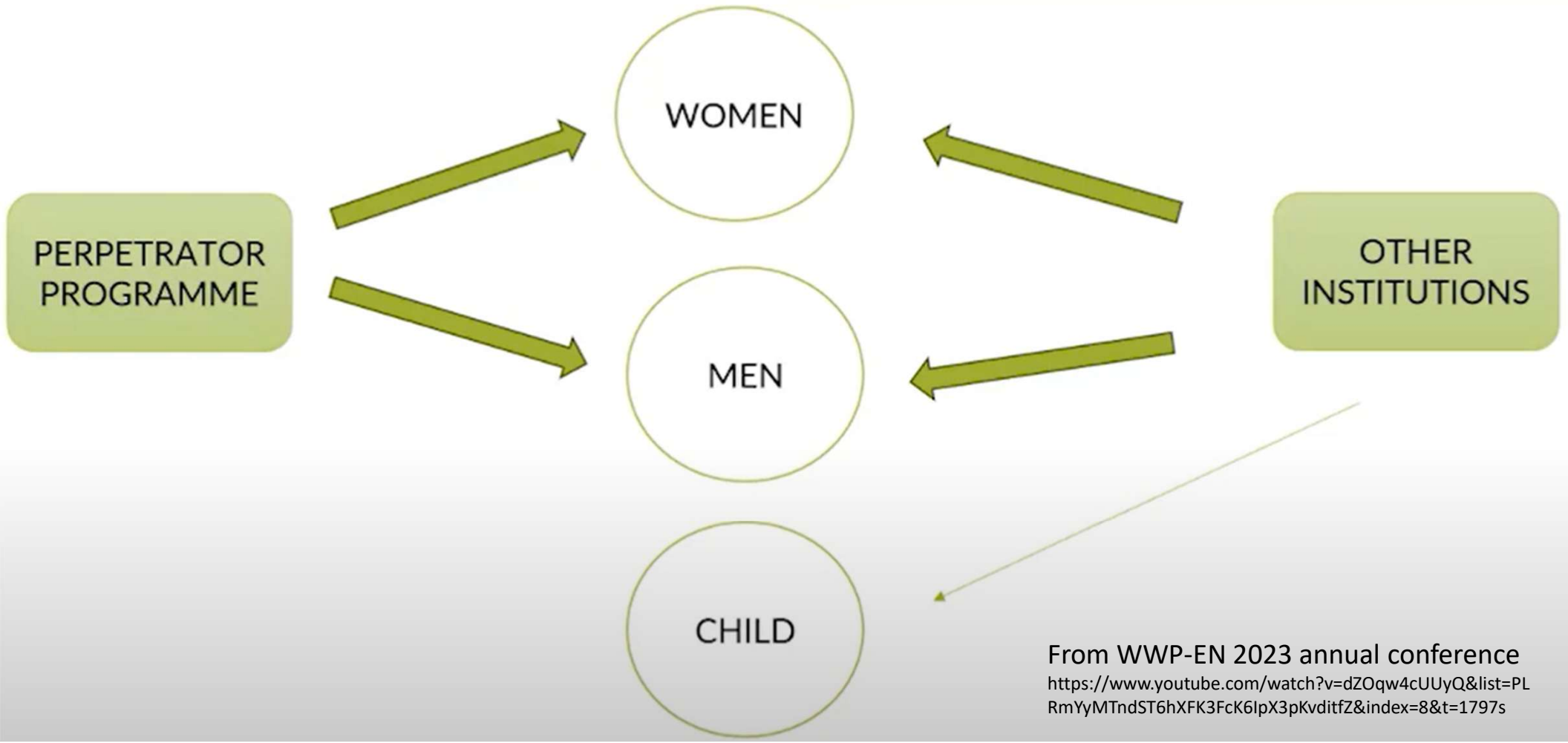
Adult users of DFSV differ in the extent to which they use power and control against their intimate partner to:



Ongoing challenge: Centring child victim-survivor needs and experiences in the context of perpetrator interventions and programs

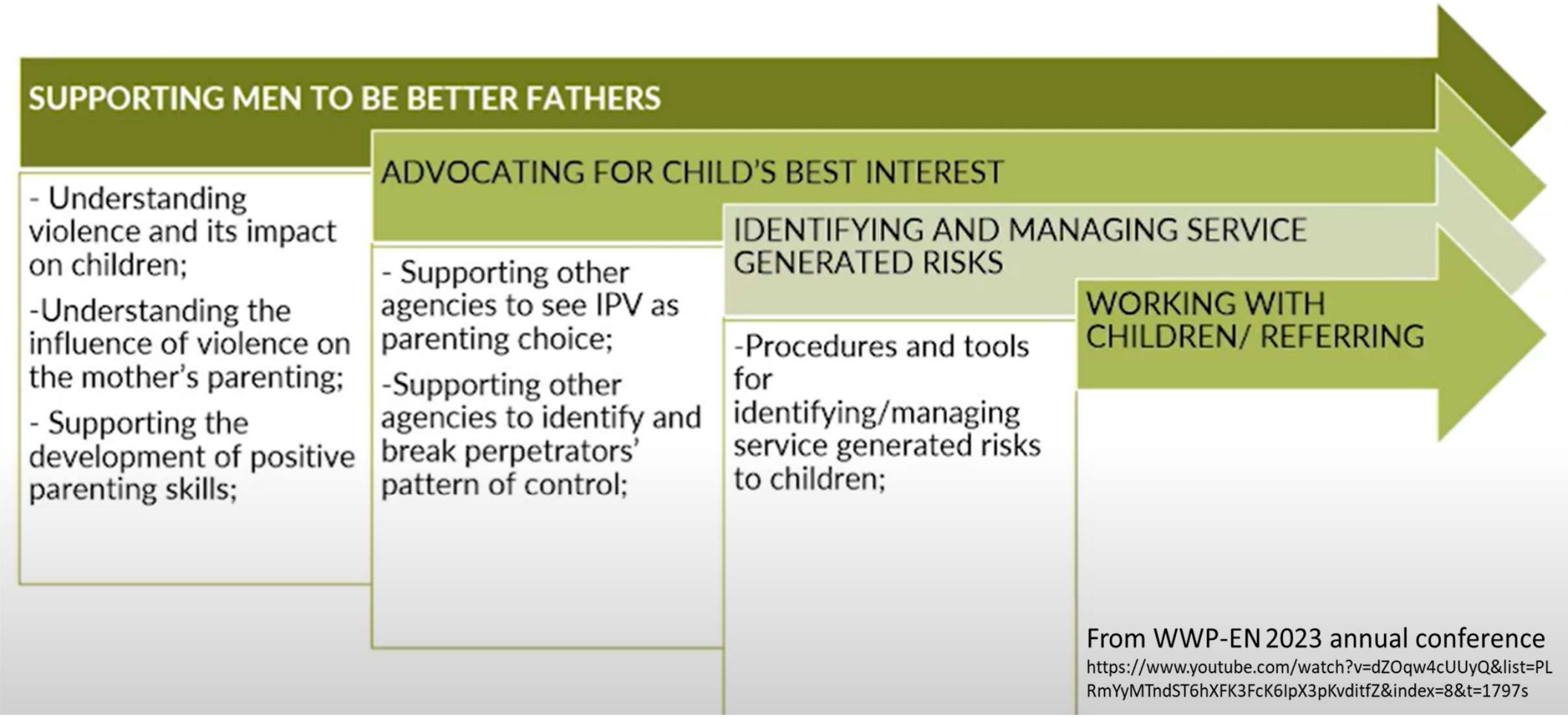


Interventions



From WWP-EN 2023 annual conference
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZOqw4cUUyQ&list=PLRmYyMTndST6hXFK3FcK6IpX3pKvditfZ&index=8&t=1797s

The role of perpetrator programme



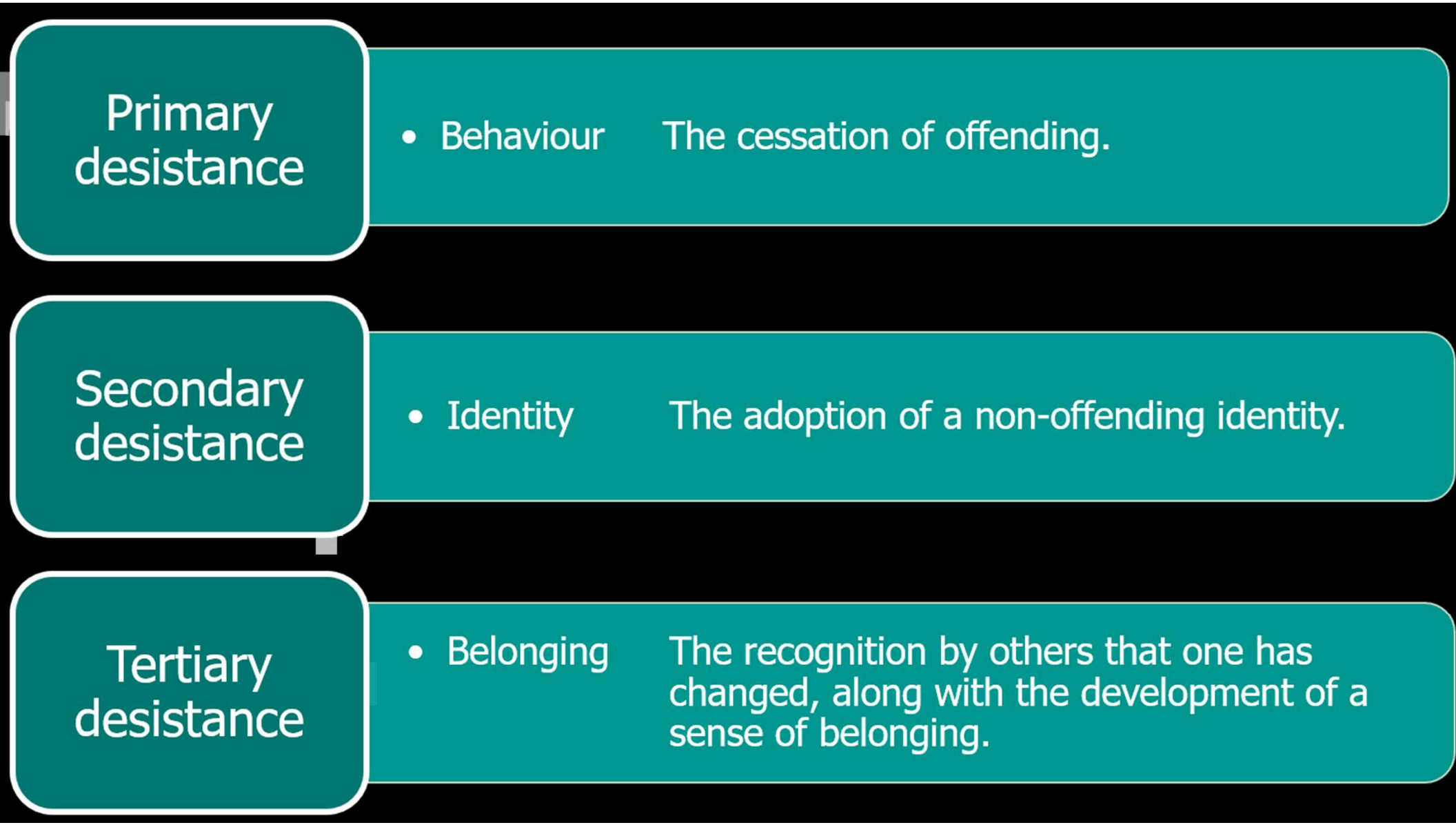
From WWP-EN 2023 annual conference

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZOqw4cUUyQ&list=PLRmYyMTndST6hXFK3FcK6IpX3pKvditfZ&index=8&t=1797s



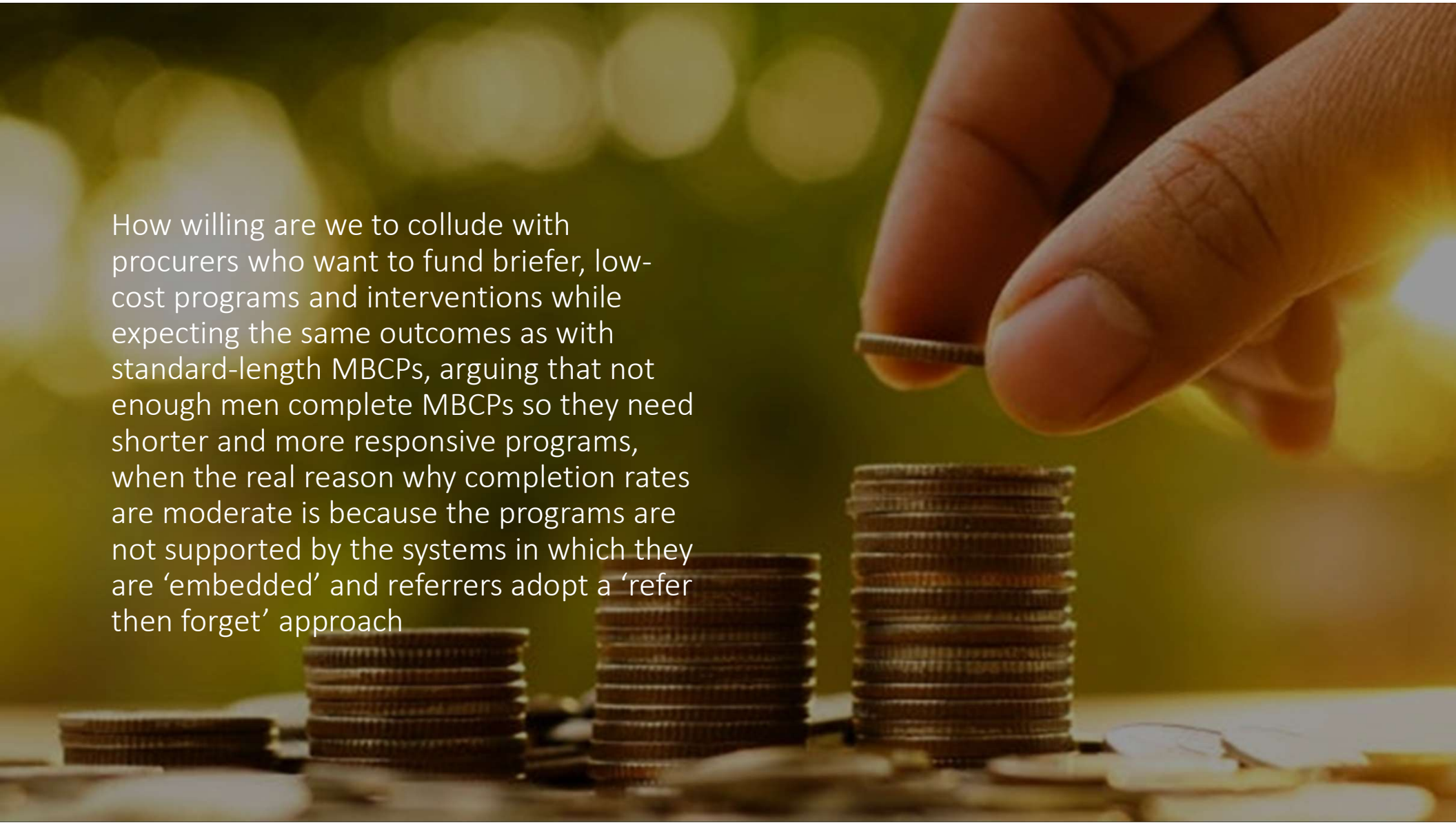
MBCPs and many other perpetrator interventions from the specialist DFSV sector are strong on engaging fathers who use DFSV, but less strong on perpetrator pattern-mapping and on deeply understanding impacts of his behaviour on child and family functioning

Many intensive family support services lack skills in engaging fathers who use DFSV (despite having some opportunities to work with Dads, sometimes for long periods), but are potentially strong on perpetrator pattern-mapping and on deeply understanding impacts on child and family functioning… as they work in family homes, and spend time with the adult survivor and children in-person over many months


Primary desistance
• Behaviour The cessation of offending.
Secondary desistance
• Identity The adoption of a non-offending identity.
Tertiary desistance
• Belonging The recognition by others that one has changed, along with the development of a sense of belonging.


Let’s innovate!

A continuum of perpetrator interventions

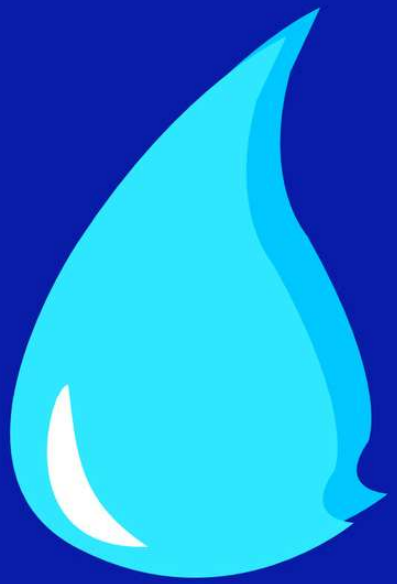

How willing are we to collude with procurers who want to fund briefer, low-cost programs and interventions while expecting the same outcomes as with standard-length MBCPs, arguing that not enough men complete MBCPs so they need shorter and more responsive programs, when the real reason why completion rates are moderate is because the programs are not supported by the systems in which they are ‘embedded’ and referrers adopt a ‘refer then forget’ approach

Three considerations in structuring our programs – do we focus on all three?



Issues that need frequent proactive and reactive seeding and reinforcing:

- intimate partner sexual violence
- social violence
- financial/economic violence
- sexual jealousy
- respectful co-parenting
- etc



Program curriculum… balancing a degree of fidelity to the curriculum, and not being a slave to the manual



The change elements that your program is based on, and that the curriculum serves… the *proximal change processes* that are necessary (but not sufficient) for change



We need to assess:

- Patterns of violent, controlling & entrapping behaviours
- Patterns of harms (past/cumulative & current focus)
- DFSV risk (current to future focus)
- Complex needs

In other words, a risk, harm & needs assessment… not only a risk assessment

Adding some individual sessions that include a focus on Motivational Interviewing principles and practices can improve attendance and participation in men's domestic & family violence behaviour change programs.



https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/15248380221111472
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10926771.2023.2189043#d1e389
https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychiatry/articles/10.3389/fpsyt.2025.1538050/full
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1359178917301635



Purpose of perpetrator-focused risk **analysis**

How likely is the adult causing harm to continue to use DFSV despite the presence of service system responses that attempt to place constraints on their ability, inclination or choices to do so?

In practical terms, this question could mean, for example *How likely will the serious-risk adult abide by DVO / court conditions?*

This purpose is also related to assessing triggers for change or escalation in severity of violence, including a focus on **acute dynamic risk factors**

And it relates to the BIG question – are our service system responses sufficient? Are we doing enough? Are we acting smartly and strategically to reduce and manage risk? Could we be making things worse, inadvertently escalating risk in the short-term or contributing to long-term build-up of risk?

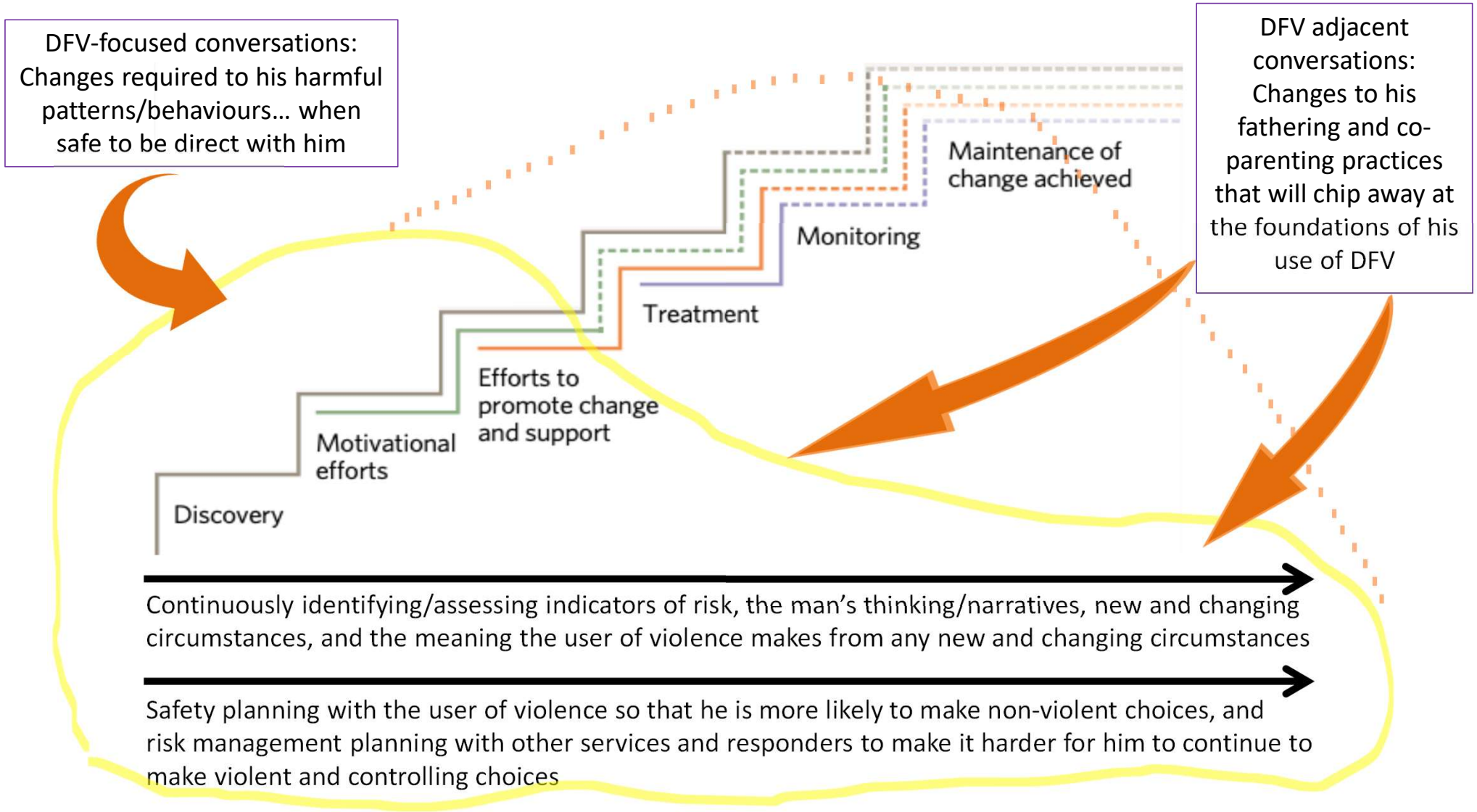


Purpose of perpetrator-focused risk **analysis**… ctd

Under what (new or changed) circumstances or scenarios might the risk posed by the person using violence escalate significantly?

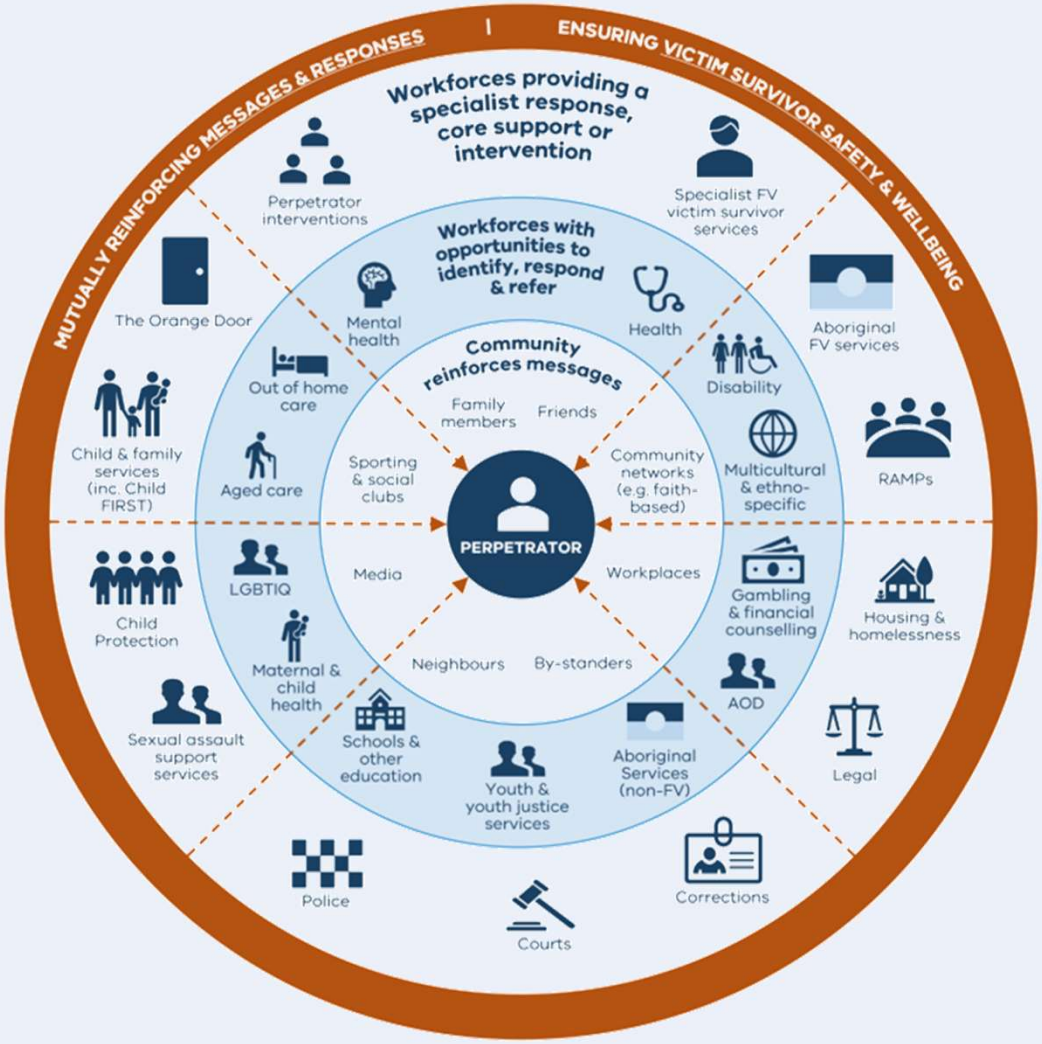
This question relates to the need to **predict** scenarios in which the individual might be at increased risk of using lethal or near-lethal violence, or another form of severe violence such as kidnapping a child from the adult victim survivor. In other words, *What are the pathways from here in which this could end badly?* Predictive analysis allows risk management approaches and actions to be identified that might reduce the chance of such pathways happening.

Significantly adapted Intervention ladder (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2018)




The market
love will tear us apart
again

Web of accountability



Who has the most power in this web?

How might the actions of statutory authorities create barriers for community-level and local accountabilities?

How might structural and systemic violence used by state-based institutions break fledgling webs?

What does this mean for marginalised communities that systems of colonial, cisgender, heteronormative, mononormative, racialized, able-bodies privilege want to keep at the periphery?

How might we work towards *transformative* justice focusing on collective and community-driven processes that address the intersectional causes of harm, not ‘just’ restorative justice focusing on an individual level