How to use the technique of funnelling to bridge towards a conversation with an adult about their use of domestic, family and sexual violence harm

When might we use the technique of funnelling?

- A client or a patient shows some indicators that point to an increased possibility that he's using violence (e.g., he talks about his partner just leaving him, he's depressed).
- You are enacting a routine process to attempt to identify users of violence (not screening… see slides 11 - 16 of the slides set that you can download from the Featured section of my linkedin profile page, on identifying users of DFSV).
- Someone who you know is using violence, but he doesn't know what you know, and it's not safe to be very direct with him about his harmful behaviour → so you try to approach things in a more indirect way.
- A friend or colleague who you have observed some ways in which he treats his current or former partner that seems 'off' or controlling.

Prepare yourself first.

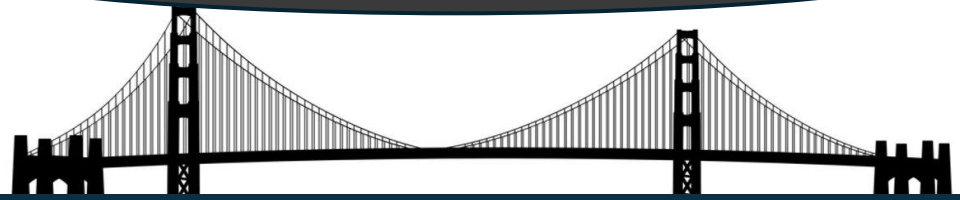
What do I know about his use of violent and controlling behaviour, that he doesn't know that I know, that if he becomes suspicious that I know, might put those who experience his harmful behaviour at further risk?

What are my goals in starting the conversation?

Am I prepared with conversational container and midpoint skills to respond to his likely minimisation, justifications and blaming of the survivor?

Bridge into the conversation in a way that makes sense to him – so that it doesn't come out of the blue and lead him to think "What did she tell you!"

At this point in a first meeting with a client, we usually ask about how relationships at home are going. We do this because… … Is that OK?



I notice you've been feeling really tense of late, and I wonder how things are at home. You know I'm your friend and you can tell me anything…

Can we start with how things are going with your partner Jane – how would you describe the relationship?

It's going OK I guess, we have our ups and downs, like every couple.

Can I ask you about some of the good things in the relationship, that you want to keep hold of?

[Practitioner explores the client's aspirations for his relationship, what a healthy relationship might mean for him, etc., then continues:]

You mentioned that you have some ups and downs, what happens when things aren't going so well?

We have fights over money. She spends it like there's no tomorrow.

I can see that you're feeling financial stress.

Yeah, it's like she's never heard that there's a cost-of-living crisis.

I'd like to ask about these arguments, how things are going at home can really matter for our work together on…

Okay

On a scale of 0 to 10, how bad do some of the worst arguments get?

A seven, I guess

When it gets to a seven, if I was a fly on the wall at the time, what would I see?

Jane just goes off at me when I try to explain why she shouldn't be spending money on shit.

I can see that finances is something that you worry about. When you're feeling really worried about money, and you are starting to argue, what does Jane see you say or do?

She's got such a thin skin, she yells and screams at me and I can't get through to her.

This doesn't sound easy to talk about John, I know you want the best for your family. I'm wondering, when you are feeling this stress, do you ever say or do things you later regret?

Practitioner might now explain that he's asking these questions to see if it's possible that Jane might be feeling unsafe when they 'argue' …