

# Sharing information to support patients' health and wellbeing

## What is the issue?

Family violence is a serious health issue. It is a **greater health risk** for women than **smoking, alcohol** or **physical inactivity**.<sup>1</sup>



Leading health risk factor for women aged 25-44<sup>2</sup>

**1 in 10** women attending GPs have experienced combined physical, sexual or emotional abuse by a partner or ex-partner. For full time GPs this is **5** women a **week**<sup>3</sup>

Women are the main victims of patterns of abuse by a partner that causes **fear, injury** and **death**<sup>4</sup>

Increased risk of anxiety, depression, panic disorders, suicidal thoughts, cardiovascular conditions<sup>5</sup>



Young children exposed to **5 or more** significant adverse experiences in the first three years of childhood are likely to experience **delays** in brain, language and/or emotional development<sup>6</sup>



Promoting child wellbeing includes prevention and early intervention to avoid escalation of wellbeing issues into safety concerns.<sup>14</sup>



Children abused before 15 are **3x as likely** to be victims of domestic violence as adults<sup>1</sup>



**65%** of Victorian child protection substantiations were for emotional abuse<sup>7</sup>

## Why GPs?

**“ An empathetic response from a trusted doctor can be LIFESAVING<sup>5</sup> ”**

**80%** of victim survivors seek help from health services, mainly GPs<sup>5</sup>

**#1** point of family violence disclosure (after friends & family)<sup>10</sup>



Holistic, effective early response

Children at risk come into contact with health services and child protection at the same time<sup>9</sup>

**1 in 3** family violence victim survivors disclosed to a GP<sup>5</sup>

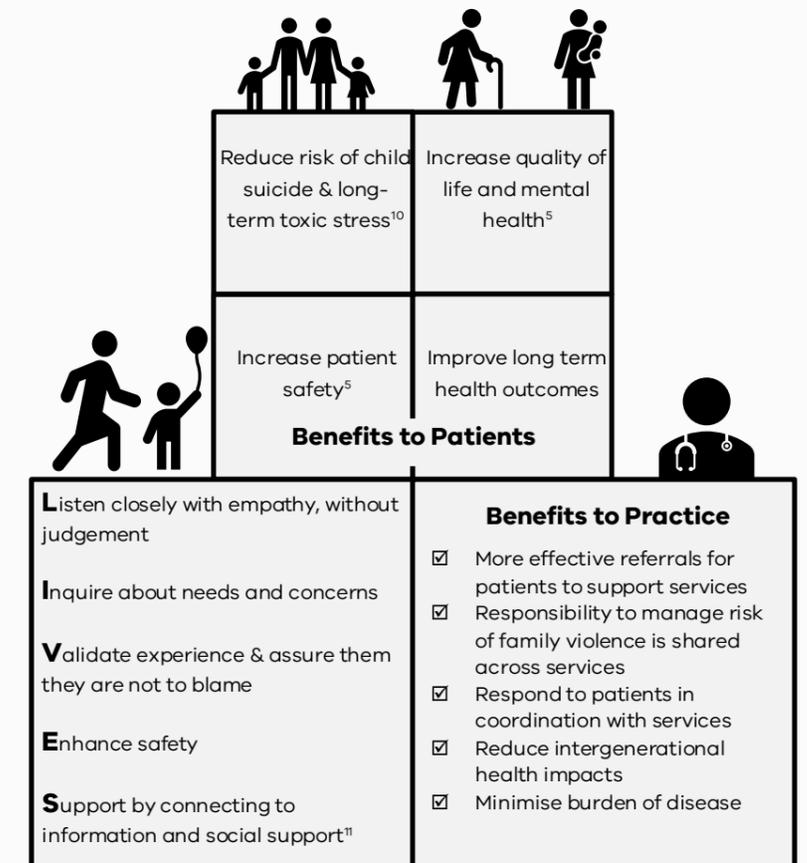
Victim survivors have a **high level of trust** in GPs and their advice<sup>5</sup>

Victims survivors see GPs often due to health effects of violence<sup>5</sup>

## Benefits to Patients and Practice

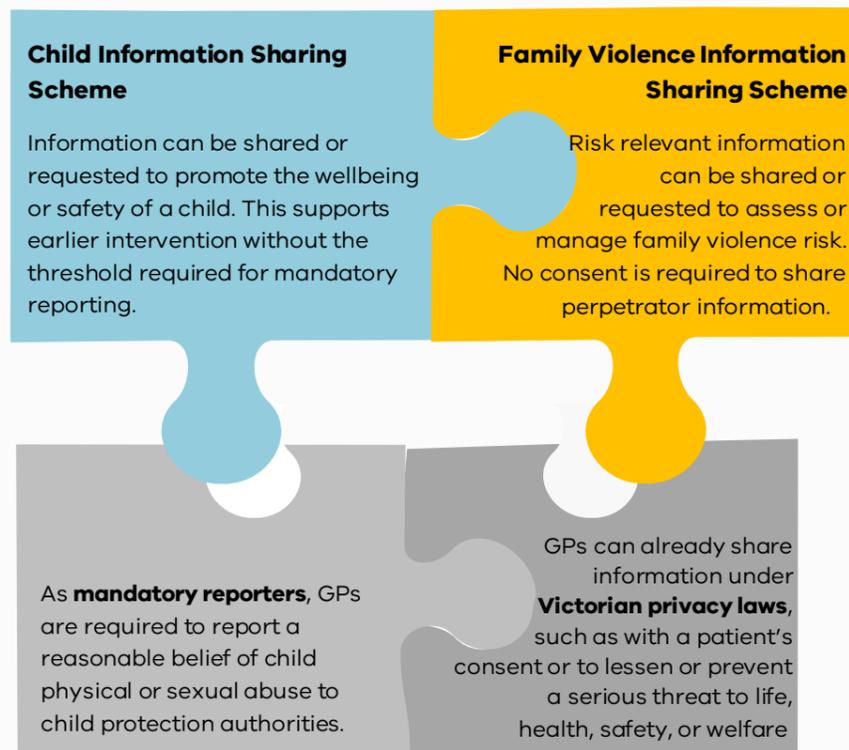
GPs are a vital part of a system working together to keep victim survivors safe and promote child wellbeing & safety.

GPs can provide an effective and early response to people experiencing family violence. GPs can identify and assist children who experience wellbeing issues or safety risks.

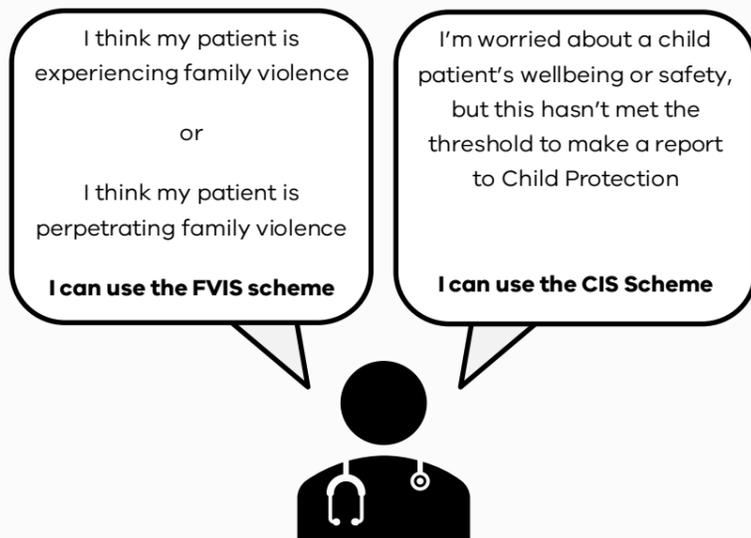


## What is changing?

New information sharing schemes add to ways that GPs can share information to support patients who are experiencing family violence, wellbeing issues or other safety risks.

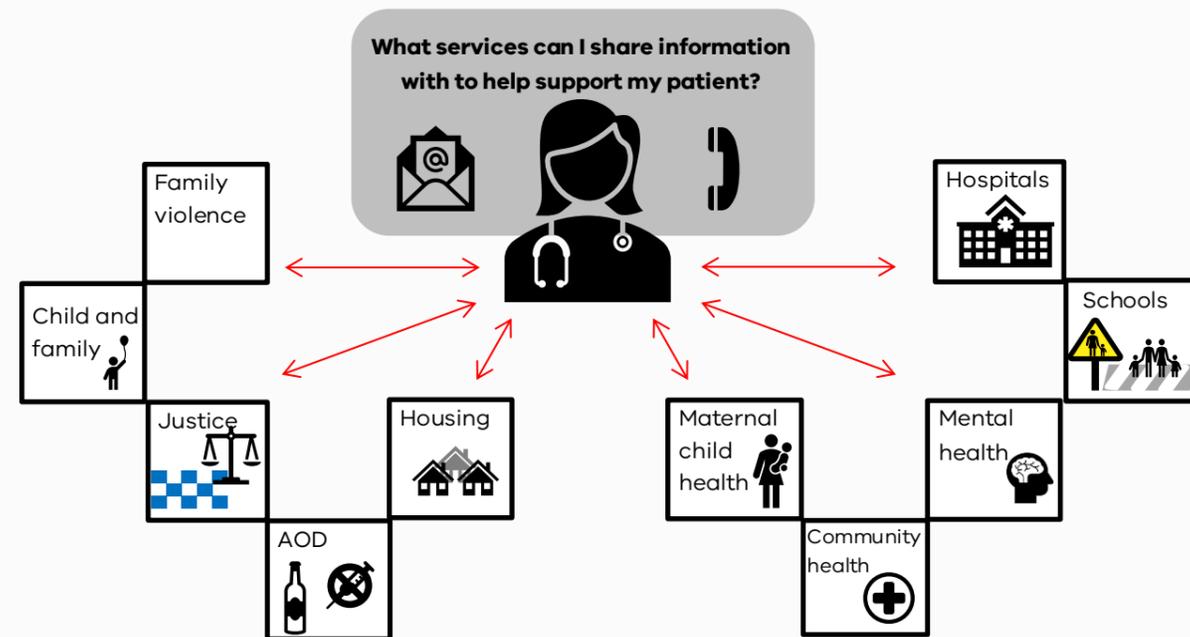


## When would I use these schemes?



## How does this work in practice?

GPs will be able to use these schemes to share information with other services to support their patients.<sup>12</sup>



## Who can I consult with or refer to?

- You can seek secondary consultation or referral to services such as:

  - Specialist family violence services
  - Men's Referral Service
  - Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations
  - Child FIRST
  - Maternal and Child Health Services
  - Services providing support to people from diverse communities
  - 1800RESPECT

Resources to assist

  - MARAM practice guides
  - The Lookout
  - RACGP's resources such as 'The White Book'
  - Children at Risk Learning portal

For immediate help

  - Victoria Police - **000**
  - Safe Steps Crisis Response Service - **1800 015 188**
  - After Hours Child Protection - **13 12 78**

## Definitions

Family violence	Family member	Child Wellbeing	Child Safety
behaviour by a family member that controls you or makes you afraid. It includes if a child hears, sees or is aware of this behaviour. <sup>13</sup>	a partner, ex-partner, parent or child, another relative or anyone else who you think of as part of your family. <sup>13</sup>	supporting good health, positive relationships with adults, children & community, & age-appropriate learning and development. <sup>14</sup>	risk of harm or incidents of harm, such as bullying, self-harm, sexual abuse, family violence. <sup>14</sup>

## More Information

- Short video on the reforms  
Introduction: [www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-multi-agency-risk-assessment-and-management](http://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-multi-agency-risk-assessment-and-management)
- Phone: 1800 549 646
- Information Sharing Schemes GP FAQs: [providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/information-sharing](http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/information-sharing)  
elearn modules: [elearn.childlink.com.au/login/index.php](http://elearn.childlink.com.au/login/index.php)  
Visit [www.infosharing.vic.gov.au](http://www.infosharing.vic.gov.au) for further resources on family violence, child wellbeing and safety.

**Sources:** <sup>1</sup>Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW] (2018) *Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia*. <sup>2</sup>AIHW (2019) *Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019*. <sup>3</sup>DN: Hegarty K. What is intimate partner abuse and how common is it? In: Roberts G, Hegarty K, Feder G, editors. *Intimate partner abuse and health professionals: new approaches to domestic violence*. London: Elsevier, 2006. p. 19–40. <sup>4</sup>DN: Royal College of General Practitioners (RACGP) (2014) *Abuse and violence: Working with our patients in general practice* (4th edition). <sup>5</sup>State of Victoria (2016) *Royal Commission into Family Violence, Vol. IV*. <sup>6</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019) *Preventing child abuse and neglect*. <sup>7</sup>Australian Institute of Family Studies [AIFS] (2017) *Child Family Community Australia Resource Sheet: Child Abuse and Neglect Statistics*. <sup>8</sup>State of Victoria (2019) *Commissioner for Children and Young People, Unpublished*. <sup>9</sup>Australian Bureau of Statistics sourced from AIHW 2018. <sup>10</sup>Adapted from World Health Organisation (2014) *Health care for women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence: A clinical handbook*. <sup>11</sup>For a full list of prescribed entities visit: <https://www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing> <sup>12</sup>Adapted from the definition in the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (Vic). <sup>13</sup>Adapted from the *Ministerial Guidelines for the Child Information Sharing Scheme*.