

## Factors affecting risk - Other Resources

- > **ANROWS, *Personal Safety Survey 2016 Fact Sheet* (2017).**
- > **Judicial Council of California's Domestic Violence Practice and Procedure Task Force, *Bench guide for recognizing dangerousness in domestic violence cases*.**

### **National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative [website](#).**

This aim of this US based organisation is 'to provide technical assistance for the reviewing of domestic violence related deaths with the underlying objectives of preventing them in the future, preserving the safety of battered women, and holding accountable both the perpetrators of domestic violence and the multiple agencies and organizations that come into contact with the parties.' The website provides access to a range of helpful resources including video lectures from some America's most well-known experts on domestic and family violence. The focus of many of these lectures is on understanding risk.

### **Training Institute of Strangulation Prevention [website](#) (United States).**

Includes information on signs and symptoms and impact of strangulation, and online training resources. A single-page downloadable fact sheet emphasises:

- > 10% of women who experience intimate partner violence experience strangulation
- > Strangulation is the obstruction of blood vessels and/or airflow in the neck resulting in asphyxia – loss of consciousness can occur with 5-10 seconds, death within 4-5 minutes
- > 79% of women are strangled manually (with hands); 38% report losing consciousness; 13% are strangled along with sexual assault/abuse, 9% are also pregnant; 97% involve blunt force trauma
- > There is a 7-fold increase in risk of homicide for victims who been previously strangled compared to those never strangled
- > Often there is no external evidence of injury – only half of victims have visible injuries, and of these, only 15% could be photographed
- > Strangulation can cause: physical, neurological and psychological injuries and delayed fatality

## National

**Toivonen, C., & Backhouse, C. [National risk assessment principles for family and domestic violence \(ANROWS, 2018\)](#)**

The National Risk Assessment Principles provide an overarching national understanding of risk and managing risk in the area of domestic and family violence . The principles do not replace existing state and territory frameworks or tools that are currently being used in practice. Instead, they provide a guide for jurisdictions in developing, revising or evaluating risk assessment frameworks, tools and resources for various cohorts (adult survivors, perpetrators, children, other family members).

**Family Court of Australia, [Family Violence Best Practice Principles, 4th edition \(2016\)](#)**

The Best Practice Principles are applicable in all cases involving family violence or child abuse (or the risk of either) in proceedings before courts exercising jurisdiction under the *Family Law Act 1975 (Cmth)*, and provide useful background information for decision makers, legal practitioners and individuals involved in these cases including an explanation of the definition of ‘family violence’ and ‘abuse’ under the Family Law Act and the different types of violence and abuse.

The Best Practice Principles recognise:

- > the harmful effects of family violence and abuse on victims
- > the prominence given to the issue of family violence in the Family Law Act, and
- > the principles guiding the case management system for the disposition of cases involving allegations of abuse of children.

Section C deals with the interim hearing stage and introduces the 'PPP' screening tool as a useful mechanism in the assessment of risk. This screening tool analyses risk by reference to three factors: the potency (of violence), pattern (of violence and coercive control) and primary perpetrator indicators (PPP). The screening tool is not a predictive device but does give a useful framework of factors to look for when considering the risk of family violence.

## State and Territory Police Risk Assessment Tools

### ACT

Australian Capital Territory does not have a formal risk screening tool.

### NSW

**NSW Police Force, 'NSWPF Statewide Implementation of the Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool (DVSAT)' (Summary Paper, 2015).**

The complete Police version of tool is not accessible, but see the non-Police version which is based on the same model: NSW Government, [Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool](#) (June 2015).

**Department of Justice (NSW), [Safer Pathways: Domestic Violence and Child Protection Guidelines](#) (2014).**

This deals specifically with risk factors affecting young people and children. These include (p9): “current or past ADVO or family law contact orders due to violence; the adult victim is pregnant; conflict over visitation/custody issues; a child/young person in the home is not a biological child of the perpetrator; recent or imminent divorce or separation; stalking, sexual assault of a parent/carer, or extremely controlling behaviour by the perpetrator; perpetrator has mental health issues that have resulted in violent or aggressive behaviour in the past; perpetrator frequently uses alcohol or drugs; perpetrator or victim has a history of exposure to domestic violence; victim has been in prior relationships where domestic violence occurred; recent or prolonged unemployment or financial issues causing stress or family friction; weapons in the home; cruel treatment of animals/family pets by the perpetrator.”

## NT

Northern Territory Police, [Family Safety Framework](#). See the 'Form' and 'Practice Manual'.

## QLD

Queensland Police, '[Chapter 9: Domestic Violence](#)' in *Operational Procedures Manual* (Issue 48, August 2015), Appendix 9.1 'Domestic Violence Protective Assessment Framework'.

## SA

The 'SAPOL Domestic Violence Risk Assessment Form' appears to be an internal working document. However, other agencies use a form based off the SA Police. An overview and copy of the assessment is available at:

- Office for Women (SA), [Family Safety Framework: Practice Manual](#) (Version 5, October 2014) 18; Appendix 1.

Tas

**Ron Mason and Roberta Julian, 'Analysis of the Tasmania Police Risk Assessment Screening Tool (RAST)' (Final Report, Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies, 2009) 38.**

Explains the risk assessment tool used in Tasmania to understand risk in domestic violence cases.

Evaluates the success of this system. Importantly, notes risk factors in a number of categories. Looks at the issue from a law enforcement perspective. Makes a distinction between high risk factors generally and high risk factors for re-offending (p 4).

Identifies consensus in literature that, 'important risk factors include: a history of violent behaviour; a history of physical, sexual or emotional abuse toward the partner; access to lethal weapons; antisocial behaviour and attitudes; relationship instability (recent divorce or separation); lifestyle stressors (employment, finances); history of family violence from family of orientation; mental health issues or personality disorder; resistance to change; and, attitudes that support violence toward women' (p25). RAST data also indicates some correlation between firearms and increased risk assessment scores (p21).

Vic

**Department of Human Services (Vic), *Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and Practice Guides 1-3* (updated 9/2017).**

This document has been produced in a human services context. Therefore, when approaches to risk assessment are addressed (p 19), it is not from a judicial perspective. Of particular importance are the conclusions drawn on page 20. The authors note, "In the context of family violence, it is critical that the work of professionals recognises and respects that women and children already have their own knowledge and methods to identify, analyse and evaluate risk. Research has found that victims are often good predictors of their own level of risk so their perspectives must be included in the process of assessing risk."

Figure 5 (pp27-9) includes risk factors that affect the likelihood and severity of family violence, including suicide. Importantly, the authors make a distinction between these factors, and factors affecting risk of ongoing and continued violence (p 30). This distinction is lacking in much of the other literature. The authors favour a standardised approach to risk assessment. They note the elements of such an approach as "victim's assessment of risk, evidence-based risk factors, and professional judgement" (Figure 6, p 44).

See also: Victoria Police, *Code of Practice For the Investigation of Family Violence* (3rd ed, 2017), 27.

WA

Department for Child Protection (WA), *The Western Australian Family and Domestic Violence Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework* (2011) 9; Appendices.

## International

**Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH), *Risk Identification, Assessment and Management Model* (2009).**

This checklist was implemented across all police services in the UK from March 2009. It aims to turn a reactive response to domestic violence, 'it's just a domestic,' into a proactive 'you must ask' questions approach. It provides police services and other partner agencies with a common checklist for identifying, assessing and managing risk.

Who is the DASH for ?

'The DASH is for all professionals working with victims of domestic abuse, stalking and harassment and honour based violence'.

- > There is also a risk checklist for victims of domestic abuse, stalking and honour based violence. This is called the 'Victim-DASH' (V-DASH 2010).
- > There are also further screening questions on stalking. This again has been adapted for victims to use.