Updated 10 November 2020

Draft family violence position statement

At this hospital/health service we recognise that family violence across the life span is a complex and serious community issue, most commonly experienced by women and their children. It has both immediate and long-term impacts on the physical, psychological and social health and wellbeing of those affected

As a health service we are in a unique position to identify people at risk, sensitively enquire if we can help, and make referrals to integrated family violence services if required. By respecting the decisions of patients and offering a range of options, health professionals have a vital role in ensuring that health needs are met, inclusive of a patient’s safety. Such interventions have the potential to empower people affected by family violence, contribute to enhanced health outcomes and potentially save lives.

We will continue to prioritise support for our staff both professionally and personally in relation to family violence to ensure their wellbeing and safety through our Workplace Support Program.

In 2018 the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) was introduced in response to recommendation 1 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence (Victoria 2016). MARAM is the best practice framework for family violence risk assessment and management, based on current evidence and research. It aims to establish a system-wide shared understanding of family violence and collective responsibility for risk assessment and management. Hospitals will be in scope for MARAM in 2021.

Under MARAM, family violence is recognised as a misuse of power to achieve control over another person, and can take place in any relationship where a power imbalance exists, and affects all genders, relationships and family types. Our vision is a future where our community is free from family violence and where healthy, respectful relationships between women and men are the norm. As a hospital we can make a significant contribution to achieving this vision and contribute to changing behaviours and community attitudes through system, organisational and clinical practices, as well as education and advocacy programs.