

CHRISTIE

Collaboration to Harness Research
Involving Safe & Together: Inquiry and
Evidence

Be part of an exciting new project in the
domestic and family violence space

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The CHRISTIE Project team thank the traditional owners and original custodians of lands throughout Australia for their wisdom, guidance, and support to work on land that was never ceded. We acknowledge the disproportionately high rates of violence impacting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women, families and communities.

We acknowledge the ongoing impacts of colonisation and systemic racism that are still present within institutions and the broader community. We acknowledge that we work in the context of generations of resilient, strengths-based, holistic resistance to violence in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities.

We strive to position ourselves as allies, to walk alongside, to listen, to give our voice and strength, to respect, to never forget and to learn from past mistakes so that we can actively support and promote the voices of Aboriginal people and organisations in all our work.



ABOUT CHRISTIE

THE PROJECT

Building on previous projects within NSW Health utilising the Safe & Together™ Model, the CHRISTIE project focuses on children in the context of their relationships by enhancing local collaboration between key intersecting sectors: domestic and family violence (DFV) organisations and non-government child protection organisations (early intervention, targeted intervention and/or family preservation), Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) as well as facilitating broader local collaboration with NSW Health - Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD), Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) and Violence, Abuse and Neglect (VAN), DCJ - child protection, Corrective Services, Men's behaviour change program providers and other services working with men who have used violence, and NSW Police Force.

Funded through NSW Health under the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence National Partnership Agreement, NSW Health have engaged Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW) to lead the project in partnership with the University of Melbourne and the Safe & Together Institute.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

With a focus on children in the context of their relationships, CHRISTIE aims to:

- Build practitioner and organisational capacity to work collaboratively across services for women, children, young people and families living with domestic and family violence where the parental issues of mental health and alcohol and other drug use co-occur with DFV and child protection and wellbeing concerns.
- Embed skills and capacity to enable services to better partner with adult victim-survivors and their children and intervene more effectively with perpetrators of DFV.
- Build sustainable local collaboration between domestic and family violence and non-government child protection organisations, and ACCOs, NSW Health - Mental Health, AOD, ACCHOs and VAN, DCJ - child protection, Corrective Services, Men's behaviour change program providers and other services working with men who have used violence and NSW Police Force to improve outcomes for women and their children.
- Build organisational and practitioner capacity around five key areas:
 - Focusing on children and young people;
 - Keeping the perpetrator visible;
 - Partnering with the protective parent;
 - Worker safety; and
 - Collaboration.

WHY PARTICIPATE?

CAPACITY BUILDING AND SHARED LANGUAGE

CHRISTIE offers organisations a framework to support practice and shared language for cross-organisational collaboration. Being part of the CHRISTIE project will support:

- Development of effective practice with women, children and young people at the intersections of DFV, child protection, mental health and alcohol and other drug issues.
- Capacity-building for practitioners, management and organisations through:
 - High-quality, internationally recognised training from the Safe & Together Institute
 - Access to evidence-based tools and resources
 - Regular Communities of Practice meetings (5 in total) with secondary consultation and mentoring.
- Development and strengthening of collaborative interagency relationships.
- Opportunities to contribute to evidence-based practice guidance and evaluation through a participatory action research process.
- Permanent access to web-based perpetrator mapping tool.

BENEFITS OF DRAWING FROM THE SAFE & TOGETHER™ APPROACH

The framework can be applied when working with families where there are complex, intersecting issues. Benefits of the framework include:

- It centres an 'all of family' response which stresses the importance of addressing the needs, support and/or accountability of each family member.
- It promotes the visibility of men as fathers.
- It focuses attention on supporting children and partnering with the non-offending parent (usually mothers) to highlight their strengths and the protective factors that may surround them.
- It provides a helpful language, vision and a suite of practice tools to support collaborative working across diverse statutory and non-statutory organisations.
- The framework focuses strongly on behaviours, actions and their impacts going beyond 'incidents of violence' towards a behavioural, pattern based approach to domestic and family violence.
- The Safe & Together resources highlight the importance of documentation to ensure that the stories of resilience are 'evidenced' and identified.

KEY ACTIONS AND TIMINGS

EOI applications will be submitted to Domestic Violence NSW by local domestic and family violence organisations

TIMELINE

These are the key timelines for organisations participating in CHRISTIE

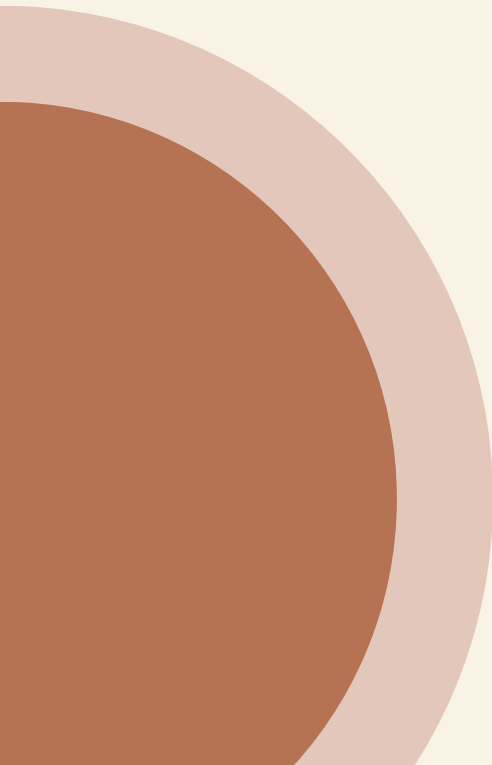
7 May 2024
EOI due date

10 May 2024
4 EOI's selected to cover 4 Local Government Areas (LGAs)

From 13 May 2024
Selected LGA organisations regular leadership engagement sessions

June - October 2024
Phase 1:
2x LGAs training and Communities of Practice

October 2024 - March 2025
Phase 2:
2x LGAs training and Communities of Practice



HOW TO BE INVOLVED

1

Engage your manager to gain commitment to have at least two practitioners be part of the project.

2

Connect with a local domestic and family violence (DFV) organisation so they can submit an EOI. For EOI details please refer the DFV organisation to contact sarahj@dvnsw.org.au

3

Support the EOI process by helping the DFV organisation to engage other collaborating local interagencies that intersect with domestic and family violence to be part of the CHRISTIE project.

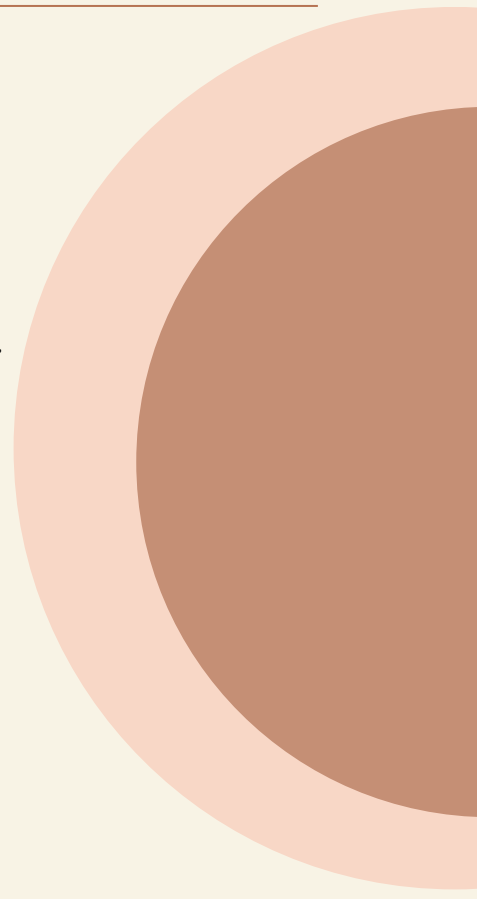
Practitioners participating in the project need to have their manager approval to be involved in the training, Communities of Practice and research component. Managers will also need to be involved in two Project Advisory Group meetings over the 5 months.

Training will be held over 4 half days.

Communities of Practice will be held monthly for 2 hours over 5 months.

“Safe & Together as a Model is something that if everyone's using it, it reduces the amount of work time so to speak, but also reduces the pressure on families to repeatedly answer those questions and go over them again and again. If we're on the same page, it makes things a lot easier.”

Aboriginal Practitioner working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in NSW.



PROJECT CONTEXT

THE PROJECT TEAM

DVNSW

The project is coordinated by DVNSW with a project manager supported by Raylene Hassall, Senior Aboriginal Policy Officer, Bridget Mottram, Senior Policy Officer, and Sarah Judd, Sector Development Manager.

University of Melbourne

The research team includes Dr Margaret Kertesz, Cherie Toivonen and Professor Cathy Humphreys, with guidance and supported by Aboriginal Consultant Marlene Lauw.

Safe & Together™ Institute

David Mandel, CEO, and Jackie Wruck, Asia Pacific Regional Manager

ACWA

Carolyn Thompson, Director - Family Safety and Preservation.


The project team is committed to embedding cultural safety throughout the project, taking a trauma-informed and strengths-based approach to our work. The project team is guided by and includes the CHRISTIE Aboriginal Advisory Group, an Aboriginal facilitator to co-deliver the training and communities of practice, an Aboriginal research consultant and DVNSW's Aboriginal Senior Policy Officer, as well as seeking AH&MRC ethics approval and developing local cultural safety protocols and agreements at each site

BACKGROUND

CHRISTIE builds on previous projects conducted by the University of Melbourne in collaboration with the Safe & Together™ Institute, including PATRICIA, Invisible Practices, STACY, STACY for Children and ESTIE. Funded by NSW Ministry of Health, ESTIE explored the issues practitioners face when working with families who live with alcohol and other drug use and mental health challenges in the context of domestic and family violence. (For more details, see <https://violenceagainstwomenandchildren.com/>)

The project aims to extend this research into the wider domestic and family violence sector with a focus on children in the context of their relationships - aiming to increase local interagency collaboration.

CHRISTIE will also draw on learnings from a current NSW Health funded project which aims to align the Safe & Together Model with Aboriginal whole-of-family practice approaches that centre cultural safety and embed an Aboriginal world view whilst at the same time acknowledging and recognising the impacts of systemic abuse and colonial and systemic abuse.



THE SAFE & TOGETHER™ MODEL

OVERVIEW

The Safe & Together Model was developed by David Mandel, who has over 30 years of experience in the domestic and family violence and child protection fields. The three key principles of Safe & Together are:

- Keeping children Safe & Together with their non-offending parent.
- Partnering with the non-offending parent as the foundation from which children are protected.
- Keeping the perpetrator/person using violence visible as the source of risk and harm to children as well as holding them accountable as a parent for their use of violence and coercive control (<https://safeandtogetherinstitute.com/>).

The Safe & Together Framework has the potential to support safety in families and help prevent the removal of children through the following elements:

- Designed to counter problematic responses that have developed particularly where there is domestic and family violence and children are involved.
- Emphasises the centrality of partnering with the child's mother (or the DFV survivor) to ensure that every support is provided to keep the non-offending parent and child Safe & Together,
- Emphasises the engagement with fathers.
- Addresses co-occurrence and intersection of DFV with other issues of mental health and substance use.

“the Safe & Together model for us achieves better outcomes being a strengths-based approach working with all parties and child focussed. This model is definitely more effective in culturally diverse communities as it also better accommodates those who are separation averse.”

Migrant and Refugee service - practitioner trained in Safe & Together Model