The **PATRICIA** Project:

PAThways and **R**esearch

In Collaborative

Inter-Agency working

Professor Cathy Humphreys ANROWS conference Melbourne 27th February, 2016





MAEVe

Melbourne Research Alliance to End Violence against women and their children



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An multi-organisational team

- Dr Lucy Healey
- Marie Connolly, Aron Shlonsky, Ilan Katz, Donna Chung, Patrick O'Leary, Sarah Wendt Menka Tsantefeski, Lesley Laing, Susan Heward-Belle, Fiona Buchanan
- Consultant David Mandel
- Researchers in each state
- Advisory group from Govt and NGOS



Over-arching question

 What are the elements that facilitate differential pathways and appropriate service system support for the safety and well-being of women and children living with and separating from family violence in an integrated intervention system?



Focus

 Collaborative practice in interagency working between Child Protection,
 Specialist domestic and family violence services, and Family Law



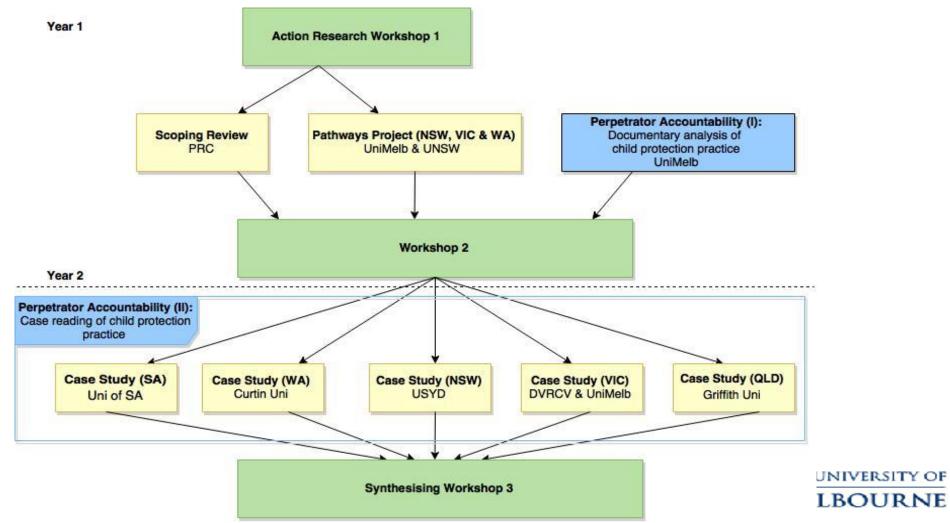
What's the Story??

A history of contentious relations

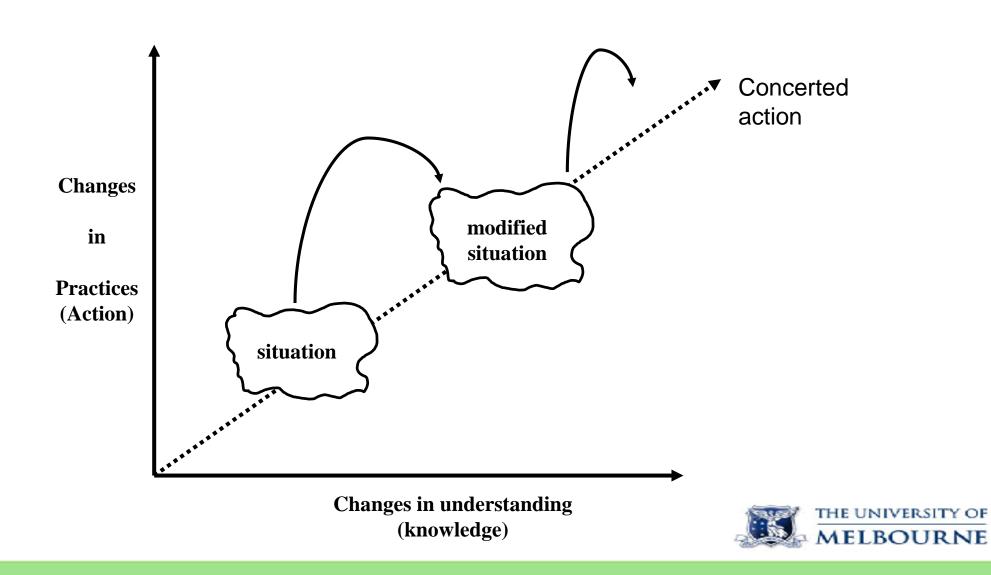
AND opportunities for good practice



Program Structure

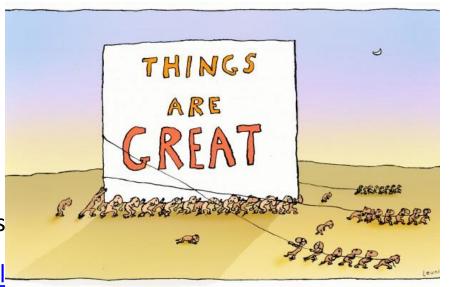


Transformation (Ison, 2009)

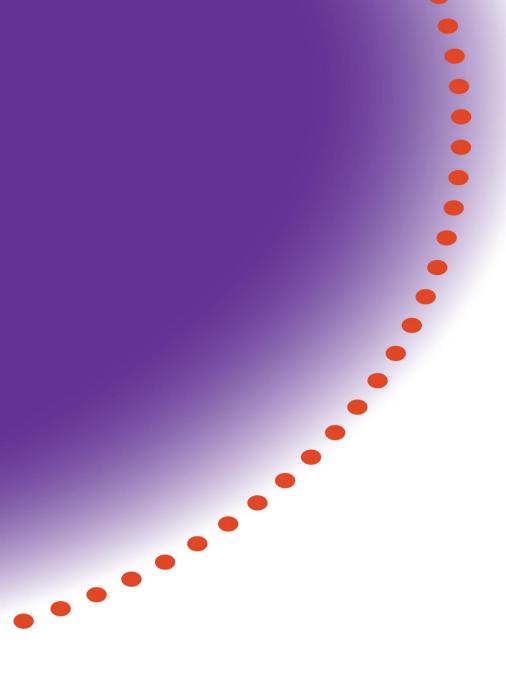


SCOPING REVIEW

- A State of Knowledge paper
- A briefing paper
- Parenting Research Centre and University of Melbourne
- 24 models of interagency work reviewed
- Available on Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) website: http://anrows.org.au/publications/l-ndscapes/the-patricia-project-pathways-in-research-in-collaborative-inter-agency







Authors:

Dr Michelle Macvean¹,
Prof Cathy Humphreys²,
Dr Lucy Healey²,
Ms Bianca Albers¹,
Dr Robyn Mildon^{1,}
Prof Marie Connolly²,
Dr Arno Parolini¹,
Ms Sophia Spada-Rinaldis¹

 Parenting Research Centre
 School of Health Sciences, Department of Social Work, University of Melbourne

Other contributors from the Parenting Research Centre: Mr Ben Devine, Ms Natalie Pill, Dr Gina-Marie Sartore, Ms Anastasia Pourliakas



Purpose

To conduct a *scoping review* using systematic search and selection processes to map out the evaluations of models of interagency working in order to address the following research question...



Research question

What processes or practices do child protection services and specialist domestic violence services or family law engage in so that they can work better together to improve service responses for women and children living with and separating from family violence?



Models identified

Twenty-four models of interagency working with some degree of child protection involvement were identified:

- nine were centred on domestic and family violence services;
- 10 centred on child protection; and
- five were court-based models.

- nine were Australian models; and
- 15 were non-Australian models.



Key finding

There is little definitive data on which *clear* suggestions for interagency working in this area can be made.

Sufficient evidence to suggest what works for the services and systems or for the individuals being served is *not yet available*.

<u>However</u> – directions for recommended policy and practice emerged.



Components of interagency working

Interagency component	Models
Management and operations structures and processes	19
Service provision	19
Service planning	18
Entry into the service system	16
Governance changes	14
Quality monitoring of services	12
Attending to the service array	9



Ways of working with child protection

Development of formal agreements for working together and sharing information

Use of operations manuals

Shared theoretical frameworks, goals and vision

Co-location

Shared data management and security systems

Formation of committees and meetings

Appointment of agency representatives and coordinators or liaisons

Allocation of specific child protection funding

Role clarification

Shared intake and referral procedures

Common risk assessments

Agreements to include child protections in various aspects of services

Training on interagency working

Cross-agency leadership

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Recommendations cont.

- A stronger evidence base is needed
- Interagency working needs to involve more than just training;
- Agencies need to pay attention to how the infrastructure surrounding the interagency collaboration may support this work;
- Particular attention could be paid to the involvement of child protection in domestic and family violence services – child protection involvement was lacking in several of the identified models.



Challenges in the CP work

Developing a differential response

i) not all children show signs of significant harm

ii) Unethical to respond to women seeking help with a

referral to child protection

iii) Inundating the child protection system



The Pathways Team

Professor Aron Shlonsky
Jennifer Ma, PhD Candidate
Christine Eastman, Research Fellow
Colleen Jeffries, Data Architect



PATHWAYS

- Purpose: to understand how the child protection system intervenes with families where D/FV is identified in an initial report
- Data from 2010/2011 & 2013/2014 :
 - NSW Community Services
 - Victoria Department of Health and Human Services
 - WA Department for Child Protection and Family Support





Pathways Methodology

- Analysis 1: Descriptive
 - comparing family demographic & case characteristics with identified D/FV reported to the CP system with families reported without D/FV identified
- Analysis 2: Assessing effects of triage on the system
- Analysis 3: Cross-jurisdictional issues



Background

- Preliminary work has indicated that CP systems face a number of challenges with families where D/FV is an identified issue
- The three jurisdictions differ in terms of where within the system these problems arise, how they manifest and the strengths and challenges to the system in addressing the issue of D/FV



New South Wales

- In 2010, NSW introduced a number of innovations to the system to better triage cases of suspected harm to children
- Divert those which do not meet the statutory threshold of Risk Of Significant Harm (ROSH) out of CP system and towards appropriate service provision
- Two most significant innovations were the Child Wellbeing Units (CWU) and the Mandatory Reporters Guide (MRG)



Western Australia

 In 2013, WA introduced the Family and Domestic Violence Response Team (FDVRT), a process which involves early triage between WA police, non-government Family and Domestic Violence Coordinated Response Services (CRS) and the Department for Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS)



Victoria

- The state of Victoria has not introduced processes similar to NSW and WA to its system
- However, Victoria has developed state-wide family violence specialist services and family support services for early intervention



Parallel processes in research and practice

- The nature of collaboration
- Reflections on the processes required for 5 state child protection departments to engage in case reading training and workshops
- The levers to open the policy window?



Challenge 2: Intervention with perpetrators (mainly men)





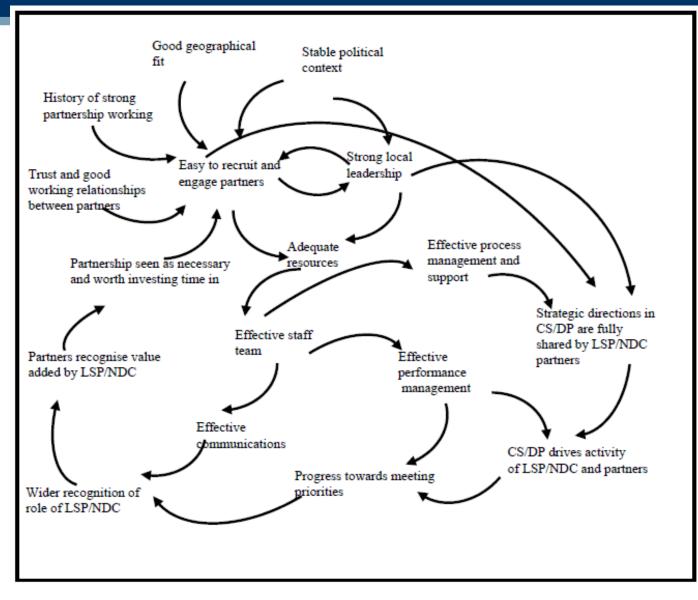
Focus of case reading process

What is the quality of screening for D/FV?

 What is the quality of D/FV practice in cases where it is identified?

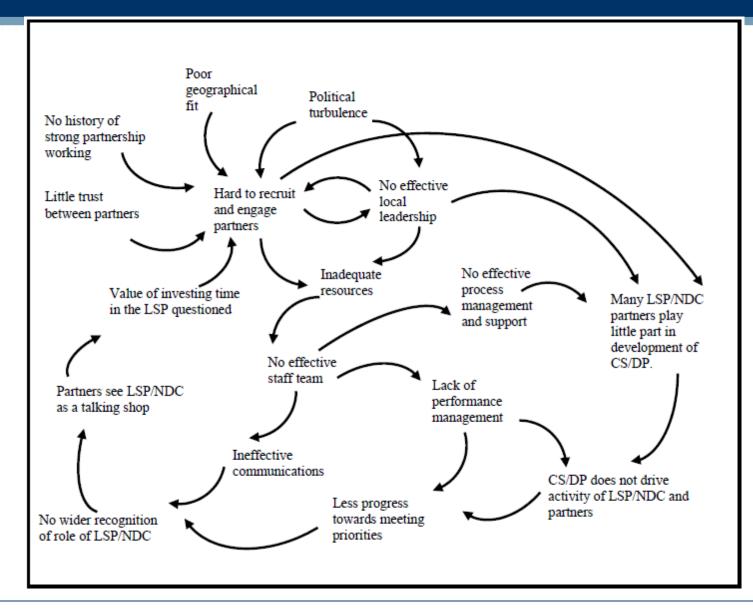
 Results of case reading are presented as themes, trends and practices (not as an audit of individual workers' work)

The Virtuous Circle



Geddes, M. (2006). Evaluating English experience of governments and communities in partnership: the empire strikes back? In *Governments and Communities in Partnership* (p. 17). Melbourne, Australia: Centre for Public Policy, University of Melbourne.

The Vicious Circle



Geddes, M. (2006). Evaluating English experience of governments and communities in partnership: the empire strikes back? In *Governments and Communities in Partnership* (p. 19). Melbourne, Australia: Centre for Public Policy, University of Melbourne.

Collaboration in the research team

- Strong and stable leadership
- Clearly defined roles and research responsibilities
- Enough resource (sort of) to employ an excellent senior research lead
- A history of successfully working together
- Enthusiasm and commitment to the area of work a shared vision



Collaborative Processes

- Senior leadership in each jurisdiction supporting participation in PATRICIA project
- A context supportive of senior leadership champions (COAG agenda; D/FV intervention a current priority for reform; criticism of CP intervention; access to high quality resources David Mandel and Safe and Together resources; engagement in evidence building and research
- Constructive 'competition' between states
- Enthusiastic frontline workers
- Honorariums to recognise the work



Case Study Sites in 5 states

Focusing on innovative and good practice examples of collaboration to address other challenges in the CP / DFV / Family Law



Challenging issues in Child Protection and DFV

- Two victims: Adult and Child
- Dealing with complex, interlocking issues
- mental health, drug and alcohol and DFV
- Enforced 'statutory separation' and issues of post-separation violence what role when there are children in danger or risk of harm but a competent and protective mother?



- Recognition of D/FV as an attack on the mother-child relationship
- No 'actuarial' risk assessment available for children and DFV what risks THE DURNE

Linking service systems

...a maze of differing philosophies, eligibility thresholds, knowledge bases, service types, funding contract arrangements, and ethical and legal considerations (Tilbury, 2013 p. 312).





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Valuing CP intervention

- The ability to investigate
- Documentation of harm to children
- Funded to focus on children (not just through pilot projects)
- A data repository to track repeat offending
- Greater leverage/authority with perpetrators, other organisations and courts



Contentious CP/FV issues

One sharp spear????



Specialist D/FV

No statutory powers

Rarely funded to focus on children – some exceptions

 Women's programs are voluntary and community based – a contrast to the statutory services



Family Law: A contentious relationship

 The Family Law Court and associated services set up to manage no fault divorce and confirm child contact and property arrangements

 Not established to manage violence and abuse – this is 90% of current work

New Family Law Council reference

