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Experiences of complex trauma and unmet support needs are the primary factors in young people using violence in the home.

Systems which categorise young people as *either perpetrators or victim-survivors* has left services unable to recognise the ongoing impacts of trauma on young people who have experienced adult-perpetrated domestic and family violence or who may have other unmet support needs.

Released today by ANROWS, the *WRAP around families experiencing AVITH: Towards a collaborative service response* report found that difficulty recognising and understanding adolescent violence in the home results in young people and their families falling through service gaps.

A major finding of the research was that the impacts of adult perpetrated harm – both previous and current – were the “single greatest contributing factor” to the complex scenario of young people using violence at home. Importantly, families who had struggled to get support for children’s other needs, including needs related to communication, neurodivergence or wider experiences of victimisation, required coordinated support to address their child’s responses to feelings of distress.

The new report by Elena Campbell, Associate Director, Centre for Innovative Justice RMIT University, follows the findings of the [PIPA project: Positive Interventions for Perpetrators of Adolescent Violence](#), which identified the necessity of wraparound, collaborative responses to address the risk and need across the family.

One of the primary findings found that mothers and children who have experienced adult-perpetrated domestic and family violence and the ongoing impacts of trauma, need “opportunities to build attachment and form their collective identity around positive experiences.”

Padma Raman PSM, CEO of ANROWS, stated that this research shows why children must be recognised as victim-survivors in their own right, which the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* recognises.

“Many young people who are using violence in the home have themselves experienced domestic and family violence. This research highlights the need for greater understanding among services systems about the impacts of DFV, trauma and reasons why young people use violence,” Ms Raman said.

“This research shows the need for additional supports, sufficient resourcing of services, and a suitably skilled workforce to provide trauma-informed care and support, rather than just punitive or accountability measures.”

“Many services and individual practitioners have been working hard for a long time to respond to this complex issue,” said Ms Campbell. “It cannot be the remit, however, of just one sector.”

“With a wide range of needs across a family structure – including those resulting from past or current abuse – we need a clear, coherent and coordinated framework through which policymakers, organisations and practitioners alike can respond. This AVITH Collaborative Practice Framework aims to be the first step on the road to recognition – and to services being resourced to provide the support they know is required”.

Engaging with 75 practitioners across Victoria and working with Drummond Street Services to review 33 case files, this research engaged with first-hand experiences of both the service system and people with lived experience.

In a series of focus groups, multiple practitioners highlighted the need for greater nuance and understanding of adolescents who use violence.

“Violence doesn’t just come out of nowhere for these young people ... these young people are generally survivors of experiences of violence, either past or current,” one practitioner stated.

“Young people are primary victims [and] survivors in their own right, and when they’re using violence, that’s telling us something,” another practitioner said.

The research provides a series of recommendations including an AVITH Collaborative Practice Framework and practice examples and reiterates the need for Federal and State Government to invest in preventing AVITH to address families’ needs before crisis occurs.

To read the full report and to access the framework: [WRAP around families experiencing adolescent violence in the home \(AVIRTH\): Towards a collaborative service response.](#)

MEDIA:

Meagan Prabhakar | ANROWS | 0498 005 642

***Interviews with Elena Campbell can be arranged through ANROWS**

About ANROWS

Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety Limited ([ANROWS](#)) is a not-for-profit independent national research organisation. ANROWS was established as an initiative of Australia’s *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* and is continuing under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*. ANROWS was established by the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments of Australia to produce, disseminate, and assist in applying evidence for policy and practice addressing violence against women and their children. ANROWS is the only such research organisation in Australia.