

The Australian National Research Agenda to End Violence against Women and Children 2023–2028

The Australian National Research Agenda to End Violence against Women and Children 2023–2028 (the agenda) is a national research framework relevant for anyone working to support the safety of women, children and LGBTQI+ communities from domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV).

The agenda works as a guide, setting out research priorities and ways of working to steer investment in new knowledge development where it is most needed to inform policies and programs. It was shaped by a rigorous review of the existing research and a co-design process including partnership and consultation with victim-survivors, practitioners, policymakers and leading researchers.

Through working together and focusing on what's needed, the agenda aims to help prevent and respond to violence against women and children by addressing gaps in evidence.



How is it relevant to practitioners?

The agenda recognises that practitioners and those leading practice advocacy are at the forefront of developing innovative models and programs. When research is missing, practitioners are often left to tend to the gaps despite limited time and resources. The agenda aims to support practice and can be a powerful tool for practice leaders, including peak bodies, when advocating for investments in novel approaches, evaluations and the necessary time to foster relationships between services, communities and researchers. The agenda also recognises the need to draw on practitioner expertise in the design, development and undertaking of research, noting opportunities such as participation, supporting safe and relevant data gathering and practitioner-led research.

Using the national research agenda in your work

Practitioners and practice leaders working across DFSV and intersecting sectors, like health, housing, justice and education, can use the agenda to advocate for greater investment in practice-based research. Informed by an evidence review and a comprehensive consultation process, the agenda sets the national standard for what research needs to be done and how. The agenda can inform research at a national, state and territory and community level.

Advocate for funding, resources and evidence-informed approaches

The national research agenda calls for the prioritisation of community-led service development and evaluations so we can better understand what works, for whom and when. It can serve as a key advocacy tool which you can refer to in grant proposals, submissions and lobbying.

Tips

- Advocate for adequate resourcing of research and evaluations in service funding agreements using the agenda.
- Seek funding and resources to implement innovative processes and practices that aim to address current gaps which could then be evaluated by researchers. Refer to the ways of working and the critical components needed to ensure an effective standard of research and evaluation in funding submissions. For example, reference the importance of data for the effective evaluation of programs as part of advocating for enough resources to collect data comprehensively and consistently in order for it to be analysed.
- Reference the agenda in submissions to inquiries, hearings and consultations. For example, by referring to known evidence gaps and advocating for funder investment.
- Refer to the **ANROWS website**, **ANROWS Evidence Portal** and **ANROWS Register of Active Research** to review the existing evidence base and further identify knowledge gaps specific to your service or practice.

Facilitating research and fostering collaboration

Practitioners are vital knowledge holders and should be partners in research development. This can take different forms from participating in research to co-designing research questions and being trained as a co-researcher.

Tips

- Partner with researchers in your field for new research opportunities. Use the **ANROWS Register of Active Research** to see which researchers are working in your region and field.
- When researchers approach you for participants, be open and curious. Take time to reflect on the potential positive impacts for staff and service users. Facilitate group discussions to gauge the level of interest and relevancy of the research for your team and the community they work for.
- When partnering or participating in research, ensure that planning adequately accounts for staff time (for example, to support training in a particular research tool or method or to participate in focus groups, reflective sessions or interviews). If working with a research team on a grant proposal, ensure that service and/or staff time is budgeted for.
- Follow **ANROWS grants announcements** and use the agenda to identify topics to apply for funding alongside a research partner.
- Identify and improve data accessibility for researchers to gain insights into DFSV and explore potential solutions.

Integrate emerging research into practice

The national research agenda can support you to be a more effective user of research and evidence.

Tips

- Use the **Register of Active Research** to see what research is happening across key themes and jurisdictions.
- Sign up to receive the **ANROWS monthly newsletter** to see updates in ANROWS-led and commissioned research and summaries of new and emerging research across the agenda's priorities.
- Follow ANROWS's social media channels for regular research summaries, new research-informed resources and tools and information about upcoming events where active or newly published research will be discussed.
- Let ANROWS know what themes and topics you want more research-based information on. We can work on developing these resources with you.

A closer look at the agenda

Take a closer look at the national research agenda. The agenda is divided up into nine research priorities. These priorities are grouped by theme: systems and society, populations in focus, and types and patterns of violence. This is the third national research agenda developed by ANROWS. Each new agenda identifies priorities through an extensive review of the existing evidence to identify areas of significant research investment.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

EVIDENCE GAPS

Systems and society

Structural inequities

- Address structural inequities within mainstream services.
 - Identify specific government policies that can prevent people at risk of marginalisation from experiencing DFSV, by delivering improved health, social and economic benefits.
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Gender relations, gender norms and attitudes

- Evaluate existing prevention programs.
 - Establish new methods of engagement.
 - Increase understanding about healthy and respectful relationships.
 - Identify local factors driving and sustaining backlash to gender equality in Australia and how to counteract it.
 - Address and counteract the needs of boys and men from a variety of demographic and socio-economic backgrounds to use controlling behaviours.
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Trauma- and DFSV-informed, victim-centred systems

- Identify the specific changes to policies, processes and competencies required to reform DFSV service (police, courts, child protection, housing, as well as frontline DFSV agencies).
 - Understand the extent of misidentification, including the characteristics of those most affected; the data will help to identify potential biases and other factors that are influencing this practice.
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A closer look at the agenda

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

EVIDENCE GAPS

Populations in focus

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

- Explore what effective, respectful and culturally sensitive policing of DFSV could look like and the problem of victim-survivors being misidentified as predominant aggressors.
 - Develop more robust data and research on domestic and family violence (DFV) as a key driver of child removal and people who use DFSV, while including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men as partners in the conversation.
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Children and young people

- Trial and evaluate therapeutic and psychosocial interventions for children who have experienced DFV to help them recover and heal from violence and prevent future cycles of victimisation and perpetration.
 - Invest in longitudinal studies to provide the evidence base to determine how effective recovery interventions are in preventing further DFSV across the life course.
 - Identify effective ways to encourage young people towards non-violent behaviour, respectful attitudes and to appropriately negotiate consent.
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People who use DFSV

- Analyse the role of systems, institutions and norms in enabling DFSV, as well as the influence of factors such as mental illness, childhood trauma, pornography, substance abuse and problem gambling.
 - Identify critical intervention points when the opportunity for prevention and behaviour change is greatest.
 - Identify pathways out of perpetration; specifically, there is a need to develop and evaluate behaviour change programs that have a dual focus on accountability and healing.
 - Update and better use data about the extent of perpetration against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children and the characteristics of people who use DFSV.
 - Update and better use data about the extent of perpetration against LGBTQI+ people.
 - Investigate how and why DFSV is used against migrant and refugee women (including forced marriage and dowry abuse), women with disability and older women, to better identify methods for screening and opportunities for early intervention.
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A closer look at the agenda

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

EVIDENCE GAPS

Types and patterns of violence

Sexual violence

- Explore the deterrent effects of sentencing outcomes.
 - Identify and analyse the factors and systems that enable people to sexually harass others.
 - Investigate the motives for sexual harassment, as they are still not well understood.
 - Explore police competency on sexual violence and the reasons why rates of charging and conviction are so low, as well as why sentences – even for serial and serious offending – are often not custodial.
 - Understand the influence of community attitudes on jury trials, as well as what education might be required for juries and the judiciary in sexual violence matters.
 - Trial and evaluate alternative justice mechanisms co-designed with victim-survivors, to better support victim-survivor safety, recovery and sense of justice.
 - Evaluate practical education programs and resources that help people of all ages to negotiate sexual consent and power in their intimate encounters and relationships.
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Coercive control

- Evaluate the impacts of the coercive control criminalisation on victim misidentification, prevalence of DFV, and victim-survivor safety and recovery.
 - Identify and test effective models for responding to people who use coercive controlling behaviours, including whether this behaviour is adequately dealt with in men's behaviour change programs.
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Economic abuse

- Explore how public and private systems can better identify and respond to economic abuse, how to support victim-survivors and develop safeguards to prevent economic abuse.
 - Assess government and the private sector partnerships to build evidence for how to effectively prevent economic abuse.
 - Explore older women's experiences of economic abuse perpetrated by children and how this overlaps with other forms of abuse, as well as the influence traditional gender roles have on risk of victimisation and the effects that this abuse can have on an older person's economic security.
 - Explore the prevalence, characteristics and motivations for dowry abuse in Australia; it is important to first consult with migrant and refugee communities on how to collect data safely and appropriately.
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Ways of working and ways of knowing

It is not just the research that we do, but how we do it, that matters. The following ways of working and ways of knowing are principles for a new standard of research in DFSV. Upholding these principles requires a collaborative effort between researchers, knowledge holders, funders and data custodians.



Centre connection and address power imbalances through Indigenous research methodologies

Indigenous research methodologies are sets of principles and values developed by Indigenous peoples in response to their own ways of being, thinking and doing. These methods can be used by Indigenous or non-Indigenous researchers working with Indigenous knowledge.



Create space for pilots and evaluations of community-led interventions

Community members can participate in and lead research in their own communities, for their own communities.



Make better use of existing data

Many services, agencies and departments collect vast amounts of data. By improving what data is collected, connecting data across existing datasets and investing in better data analysis, we can learn more and design more effective responses.



Work with the knowledge of experts by experience

Ensure the voices of experts by experience are featured in your work. Aim for co-design wherever feasible. This collaboration between traditional researchers and those with lived experience of DFSV can begin at the development of research questions and continue to the dissemination of findings.



Listen to children when they are children

Listening to children and young people as part of research design, development and analysis shows respect and helps better design system responses and services to accommodate and appropriately respond to their needs.



Value practitioners' expertise

As research participants, practitioners bring a critical lens to how services operate and the opportunities for improvement. As research partners, practitioners build enough safety to support victim-survivor participants and ethically and effectively work with people who use violence.

Key resources



Explore **the agenda** in full



Speak to us about how we could support your work aligning to the agenda



Explore existing **ANROWS research** through our syntheses



Use the **ANROWS Register of Active Research** to find live local research projects



Use the **ANROWS Evidence Portal** to see the results of intervention evaluations – just go to “Intervention Finder” and search by type



Use the **ANROWS Evidence and Gap Maps** to see where there are gaps in interventions across prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and healing



Learn more about best practice in evaluations through the following resources:

[What is evaluation?](#)

[Indigenous Evaluation Strategy](#)

[BetterEvaluation.org](#)