



Early Years Specialist Family Violence Advisor

Position Description
Family Violence

Stage: Issued
Version: 1.005042
Issued: 20/06/2019
Next Review: 19/06/2022

Position Title:	Early Years Specialist Family Violence Advisor
Location:	Quantum Morwell Office and other Quantum sites as required
Hours of Duty:	As per Employment Agreement.
Duration:	This position is dependent upon future funding.
Position Funding:	Funding is provided through the State and/or Commonwealth Government.
Salary:	Salary and conditions are as per the Quantum Enterprise Agreement 2015 and the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Award (SCHADS). Salary packaging is available.
Classification:	Social and Community Services Award Level 6
Reports to:	Manager Family Violence Quantum Support Services

Our Vision, Mission & Values:

Quantum is committed to providing accessible high quality, advocacy and support services that meet the needs of our community.

Our Vision

Quantum serves to enrich the wellbeing of Gippslanders.

Our Mission

To improve lives by empowering people, particularly the vulnerable to reach their full potential.

Our Values

Quantum recognises that values driven activities and relationships are essential to the successful achievement of our Vision and Mission and a vibrant organisation. These values guide our behaviours, planning, service delivery and relationships.

Respect:

Quantum values the worth and contribution of others and embraces treating people fairly and without discrimination

Integrity:

Quantum values being ethical and professional in our conduct

Empowerment:

Quantum values sharing our knowledge to promote the choices and decision-making capacity of others

Primary Job Purpose:

This Early Years Specialist Family Violence Advisor Capacity Building Pilot has been developed to contribute towards The Royal Commission to Family Violence^[i] (2016) which identified that Family Violence can have profound short and long-term effects on children and young people that may or may not be immediately apparent:

- *impacts on children who live with family violence may be acute and chronic, immediate and accumulative, direct and indirect, seen and unseen*.

The Commission was told that pregnancy is a time of increased risk of family violence, and there is evidence that *such violence can have an impact on the foetus*.

- *A pregnant woman experiencing elevated levels of stress and fear as a result of family violence can transmit stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline to the foetus.*^[ii]

High exposure to cortisol has been linked to low birthweight, significantly smaller head size and reduced ability to fight infection. There is a recognised link between intimate partner violence and miscarriage.

- *A foetus can be injured as a result of physical trauma, which can cause miscarriage or pre-term labour*^[iii]

There is strong evidence to show that early life stress, family violence and trauma have a profound impact on the developing architecture of children's brain and immune systems. Research^[iv] has shown that;

- More than one in four mothers experience family violence in the first four years after having their first child.
- Almost 40% of women who experienced abuse by an immediate partner in the first 12 months after child birth reported depressive symptoms
- Women experiencing family violence are **twice** as likely to give birth to a baby with low birth weight

- Children whose mothers experienced family violence in first 12month were **more likely** to have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties at age four

Research also found that routine screening rates remain low among MCH Nurses due to heavy workloads, lack of knowledge of referral pathways and belief that support services don't have capacity to respond to referrals.

Research also identified that early year's providers are currently not well equipped to engage identifying and supporting families experiencing family violence.

Furthermore women who have been subjected to violence will often seek health care, including for their injuries, even if they do not disclose the associated abuse or violence. It is further recognised that the first response, of every service, is pivotal to women's safety and support. As an early contact point for many people experiencing family violence, the Victorian public hospital system presents an opportunity for earlier identification, and improved responses and referral of victims.

Violence against women and children is a significant problem with serious social, economic and health consequences for women, children, their families and communities. There is a growing momentum across all levels of government to identify opportunities to intervene where family violence is occurring to prevent serious harm and death from family violence. As trusted health professionals, clinicians or early year's practitioner are uniquely placed to identify family violence and provide information and access to support.

The Royal Commission of Family Violence also reported that *universal services have the potential to play an important identification and early intervention role in relation to children and young people at risk of, or experiencing family violence, specifically early childhood services and schools'* **[v]**

Inner Gippsland Children and Youth Area Partnerships, held a workshop early 2019 to understand how might we improve early identification and support of children at risk of family violence and support the areas implementation of the Early Years Compact.

The workshop brought local data, insights, and research to identify gaps and develop localised priorities. One priority was to design and implement an Early Years Family Advisor project based in early year's services to improve the knowledge and confidence of the early years' workforce.

These recommendations require the establishment of specialist family violence advisors to provide expertise to early years services inclusive of antenatal and early childhood services and to ultimately encourage all three sectors to collaborate through the promotion of shared casework models.

This program will provide expertise and support for workers in the antenatal and early year's sectors to identify and respond to family violence with their clients, whether they are experiencing family violence or perpetrating family violence. The Advisor role is part of a one-year Capacity Building Pilot for the Latrobe and Baw Baw catchment area. The Advisors will encourage joint practice and collaboration across the three sectors to help provide an enhanced response to family violence. In doing so, Advisors will promote the benefits of a catchment-wide understanding and collaborative response to family violence.

The Advisor will be supported by a locally based steering committee with senior representatives from Latrobe City Council, West Gippsland Health Care Group, Quantum Support Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education and Training and Family Safety Victoria Inner Gippsland Orange Door.

[i] State of Victoria, Royal Commission into Family Violence, 2014-16

[ii] ibid

[iii] ibid

[iv] Brown SJ, Gartland D, Woolhouse H, Giallo R, Maternal health Study policy Brief No 2: Health consequences of family violence. Murdoch Children's Research institute, Melbourne 2015

Campo M, Domestic and family violence in pregnancy and early parenthood, Australian Institute of Family Studies
Hooker, L, Taft, A, Nicholson, J, Westrupp, Examination of children affected by family and domestic violence, Submission to Human Rights Commission, LaTrobe University, 2015

Cameron, P, Expanding early interventions in family violence in Victoria, Domestic Violence Victoria, 2016
Hooker, L, Ward, B, Verrinder, G, Domestic violence screening in maternal and child health nursing practice: a scoping review, LaTrobe University

[v] State of Victoria, Royal Commission into Family Violence, 2014-16

Duties and Responsibilities:

Pilot outcomes

The Advisor will work toward the following outcomes:

- Support capacity building within the antenatal and early childhood sectors through access to specialist family violence expertise and advice in identifying, recognising and responding to family violence
- Strengthening networks and collaborations between agencies and across the three sectors
- Enhanced referral pathways to provide a more integrated and collaborative health and human service system response to family violence
- Earlier recognition of and intervention into family violence situations for clients of antenatal and early childhood services in the Latrobe and Baw Baw catchment area.
- Enhanced quality and consistency of the service response to victim survivors and perpetrators of family violence at whatever point they access the health and human services systems.

It is expected that through exposure to the antenatal and early childhood sectors the Advisor will be able to increase their understanding of health and early childhood issues and service responses in the specialist family violence workforce.

Key duties

The Advisor will work to a well-developed and informed Partnership Work Plan and will be expected to undertake the following duties within the catchment:

- Work within the structure provided by the Partnership Work Plan including ability to adapt and apply the plan to local needs
- Attendance and engagement in the pilot induction and ongoing training (including in-depth orientation to antenatal and early childhood service delivery)
- Participation, engagement and reporting in to the Steering Committee
- Identification of current antenatal and early childhood agency policies, processes and practices including in response to family violence to understand the landscape and identify opportunities for change, contributing to updates where possible
- Exploring opportunities for practice enhancement to include a more fulsome response to family violence for workers in antenatal and early childhood positions employed by Latrobe City Council and West Gippsland Health Care Group
- Identification of existing networks, collaborations examples of shared casework and identification of gaps, issues and systemic barriers
- Clarification of existing referral pathways and other connections across the three sectors
- Contribution to maintenance of existing networks and establishment of new networks across the three sectors
- Provision of FV expertise to antenatal and early childhood staff including creation of opportunities to share FV expertise with workers in these sectors and establishment of pathways between agencies
- Work with Latrobe City Council and West Gippsland Health Care Group to understand awareness levels around FV identification and responses in their clients, including increasing understanding of and confidence to provide safety planning for clients
- Maintain awareness of reforms in the family violence sector that impact on the three sectors, including the Support and Safety Hubs, the Central Information Point, the redevelopment of the CRAF and legislative reform
- Fulfilment of auspice agency (Quantum Support Services) requirements as an employee including understanding agency strategic direction and duties including record keeping, occupational health and safety and clinical supervision
- Fulfilment of other Program requirements in accordance with the Partnership Work Plan such as record keeping, reporting and evaluation as required

Key Selection Criteria:**Core capabilities**

- Interest in working within a health-based context to build the capacity of the antenatal and early childhood sectors to recognise and respond to family violence
- Understanding of the evidence on the gendered nature of FV, and the nature, dynamics and impact of FV
- Understanding of the complexities and occurrence of FV across a broad range of familial relationships including for children, same-sex relationships, grandparents and carers
- Ability to operate at an agency, inter-agency and cross-agency level
- Ability to recognise and respond to FV in both perpetrators and victim survivor cohorts
- Resilience as a senior worker, including ability to manage stressful situations and work within a new pilot program in the context of significant sector reform
- Work with colleagues across health sectors whose background, expertise, training and approach to practice may be distinct from family violence approaches
- Other capabilities as identified in the Partnership Work Plan

Other relevant skills, knowledge and experience :

- A degree in social work or a related community services discipline
- At least two years' experience in the specialist family violence sector including working knowledge of the CRAF
- In-depth knowledge of the landscape of family violence and other health and human services in the catchment
- Understanding of historical and contemporary issues that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australian society around health and family violence, and capacity to work in a culturally informed and respectful manner
- Working understanding of relevant legislation and how it impacts on family violence and , including but not limited to the Family Violence Protection Act 2008; Children, Youth and Families Act 2005; Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014; Health Records Act 2001, the CRAF and Victoria Police Code of Practice.
- Valid Victorian Driver's licence and Working with Child Check
- Provision of a clear National and International Criminal History Check
- Desirable: demonstrated knowledge of driving organisational change, service development and/or working across sector boundaries (or similar)

Conditions of Employment:

The successful applicant must confirm in writing their acceptance of the Offer of Employment from Quantum, complete a successful Police Check and Referee Check and provide confirmation of a Working with Children Check prior to commencing employment.

- The successful applicant is required to comply with the policies and procedures of Quantum
- A current Victorian driver's license is required at all times
- This position description is subject to an annual review.

Accountability:

Manager Family Violence – Quantum Support Services

Revision History:

Position created 20th June 2019

Acknowledgement:

Please sign and date to acknowledge you have read and understood this position description.

Employee:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Manager

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____