

A Roadmap for Lived Experience Engagement

Supporting South Australia's
Specialist Domestic, Family and
Sexual Violence Services Sector

AUGUST 2024

a joint project between

embolden



Domestic and
Family Violence
Safety Alliance

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The Project

In February 2024, Embolden SA¹ and the Domestic and Family Violence Safety Alliance² partnered on a project to understand and develop a pathway to strengthen sector-wide lived experience engagement practices across South Australia. *A Roadmap for Lived Experience Engagement* (the Roadmap) represents a shared vision for the South Australian specialist DFSV services sector towards true engagement with survivor-advocates and accountability to those who have lived experience of DFSV. The Roadmap charts a course for the specialist DFSV services sector to demonstrate leadership in a way that recognises the centrality of lived expertise in ensuring a sector that is responsive, respectful and safe.

Project Team & Contributors

Mary Leaker	Embolden General Manager
Laura Cremen	DFV Safety Alliance Senior Manager
Ruby Hoffman	Bachelor of Social Work Student
Roshni Thattengat	Master of Social Work Student

Acknowledgements

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Sovereignty

We acknowledge the sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples over the lands, skies and waterways of Australia. We pay respect to Elders past and present as the traditional owners and custodians of the lands across Australia and acknowledge their cultural authority on ways of being in relationship with Country. Colonisation brought patriarchal violence that has impacted all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, particularly women and children. We acknowledge the cultural knowledge and wisdom that has sustained and strengthened First Nations peoples in resisting, responding to, and healing from violence on these lands since 1788.

This roadmap was developed with consideration of the community in South Australia including those living on Kurna, Peramangk, Ngarrindjeri, Boandik, Ngadjuri, Nukunu, Barngarla, Nauo, Wirangu, Kokatha, Mirning, Ngalea, Ngargad, Erawirung, Thanggali, Malyangapa, Antakirinja, Yankunytjatjara, Pitjantjatjara, Arabana, Dieri, Dhirari, Wangkangurru, Yarluyandi, Ngamini, Yandruwandha, Yawarrawarrka, Pirlatapa, Adnyamathanha and Kuyani lands.

¹ Embolden is South Australia's member-based peak body for specialist domestic, family and sexual violence services.

² The Domestic and Family Violence Safety Alliance (DFV Safety Alliance) is a statewide specialist domestic and family violence homelessness alliance consisting of 8 service partners (19 services and government partners). All DFV Safety Alliance services are individually members of Embolden.

People with Lived Expertise

We recognise the valuable knowledge, skills and perspectives of people with lived experience of domestic, family and/or sexual violence. The specialist DFSV services sector must be grounded in the perspectives of those with lived expertise. Without the expertise of people with lived experience, this roadmap and other efforts by the DFSV services sector would struggle to truly recognise and effectively respond to the needs of the victim-survivors we work alongside. We hold great respect for this expertise, and we ground this roadmap in a pursuit of justice for victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence, past and present.

We acknowledge the strengths and limitations of our collective voice - recognising that it does not represent the experiences or perspectives of all victim-survivors or professionals across the community. To the best of our abilities, we have aimed to develop the *Roadmap for Lived Experience Engagement* through a highly critical and holistic lens, holding a strong appreciation for diverse, intersectional identities. As lived experience approaches are strengthened across the SA specialist DFSV services sector, there must be an ongoing commitment to amplify the voices of victim-survivors and communities, with particular consideration for marginalised groups.



Terminology

The following definitions are primarily derived from key national policies and lived experience resources. *We acknowledge that these terms do not reflect the identities or experiences of all people who have lived experience of domestic, family and sexual violence.*

Domestic and family violence includes all forms of violence that can occur within relationships. This includes intimate partner violence (commonly referred to as domestic violence), violence perpetrated between family members and in family-like settings (including carer relationships and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship relationships), coercive and controlling behaviour and sexual violence. It encompasses physical, emotional, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural, psychological and economic abuses. This Roadmap acknowledges the gendered nature of domestic and family violence, which is primarily perpetrated by men against women, but acknowledges that it can impact on anyone regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, culture or position in society.

Sexual violence includes any sexual activity that happens where consent is not freely given or obtained, is withdrawn or the person is unable to consent due to their age or other factors. Sexual violence occurs any time a person is forced, coerced or manipulated into any sexual activity. Sexual violence can be non-physical and include unwanted sexualised comments, intrusive sexualised questions or harassment of a sexual nature.³

SV is a shortened form of sexual violence.

DFSV is a shortened form of domestic, family and/or sexual violence. Similarly, **DFV** is a shortened form of domestic and family violence.

The specialist DFSV services sector (the sector) refers to the statewide collective of services directly funded to deliver services to support those who are experiencing or have experienced domestic, family and/or sexual violence or those who are using or have used DFSV. That being said, this Roadmap focuses on engagement with victim-survivors of DFSV.

Lived experience describes the knowledge, insights and expertise that arise from the direct experience of domestic, family and/or sexual violence. Although clients and the DFSV workforce are key sources of lived experience for the specialist DFSV services sector,⁴ this Roadmap will focus on survivor-advocates.

Victim-survivor refers to people who have direct, first-hand experience of domestic, family and/or sexual violence.

Client refers to victim-survivors who have been provided with support by a specialist domestic, family and/or sexual violence service. Clients can become survivor-advocates and are a valuable and integral source of expertise and insight into operational and strategic work in the DFSV specialist sector.

Survivor-advocate refers to a victim-survivor who actively engages in advisory, policy or program work on the issue of domestic, family and/or sexual violence, basing their work on their lived experience of DFSV. In the DFSV sector, a survivor-advocate may be a current or past client of a service.

Gender-based violence refers to violence that is used against someone because of their gender. Gender inequality and other forms of discrimination create the social context in which violence against women and children occurs. Overwhelmingly, men are the perpetrators of violence against women in Australia. By referring to violence as gender-based, it strengthens our understanding that gender-based violence against women is a social problem requiring comprehensive responses that go beyond specific events, individual perpetrators and victim-survivors. Gender inequality, rigid gender norms and stereotypes, and discrimination including racism, are at the heart of the problem.⁵

³ The National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children, 2022-2032, <https://www.dss.gov.au/ending-violence>

⁴ Sources of Lived Experience in the Family Violence Sector, Issues Paper, July 2022, Safe+Equal, <https://safeandequal.org.au/resources/sources-of-lived-experience-in-the-family-violence-sector-issues-paper/>

⁵ Theory of Change for the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, <https://www.dss.gov.au/the-national-plan-to-end-violence-against-women-and-children/theory-of-change-2022-2032>

Introduction

Engagement with lived experience perspectives is critical to the effectiveness of the specialist DFSV services sector and constitutes an important mechanism of accountability to victim-survivors, who are best-placed to identify gaps and opportunities in practice, services and systems.

The Roadmap for Lived Experience Engagement (the Roadmap) emerged from a project between Embolden and the DFV Safety Alliance in 2024 to understand the current practices, strengths and challenges of lived experience engagement across the South Australian specialist DFSV services sector, and to map these to best practice approaches identified in the lived experience literature and implemented within other Australian jurisdictions. The development of a statewide lived experience roadmap is a key deliverable for Embolden and aligns with the DFV Safety Alliance’s strategic commitment⁶ to centre victim-survivors’ perspectives within service design and delivery (including through the DFV Safety Alliance Lived Experience Plan). It also aligns with work being undertaken across other states and territories to embed lived experience perspectives into DFSV service planning, practice and policymaking.

People with lived experience of domestic, family and/or sexual violence (DFSV) have a unique standpoint that is derived from their knowledge, insights and expertise. Ensuring that the diverse lived experiences of victim-survivors are informing policies and solutions is reflected in the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032*⁷ as a cross-cutting principle and underpins the theory of change for addressing DFSV. The National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (NASASV) also encourages engagement with lived experience perspectives in the National Standards Practice Manual for Services Against Sexual Violence;⁸ Standard 2 on valuing client experience states ‘organisations must seek the feedback of clients to improve service delivery and ensure that they are meeting client needs’.

Of the key sources of lived experience for the specialist DFSV services sector (clients, workforce, survivor-advocates), the relationship with survivor-advocates presents a significant opportunity for further engagement regarding policy development, service planning and practice. Thus, the Roadmap will focus on strengthening lived experience engagement by maturing the sector’s relationship with survivor-advocates (some of whom may be current or previous clients) in mutually beneficial ways, with a particular focus on the infrastructure and governance arrangements that can support effective and sustainable long-term engagement. This Roadmap was particularly influenced by the Family Violence Experts by Experience Framework⁹ and practice resources created by Safe+Equal¹⁰ for the Victorian specialist family violence services sector. Exemplifying good practice lived experience engagement, these documents were co-produced by people with lived experience (WEAVERS)¹¹, DFV researchers at University of Melbourne and DFV practitioners. For example, the Experts by Experience Framework highlights that with a similar level of resources, some lived experience engagement activities offer more impact than others (Figure 1).

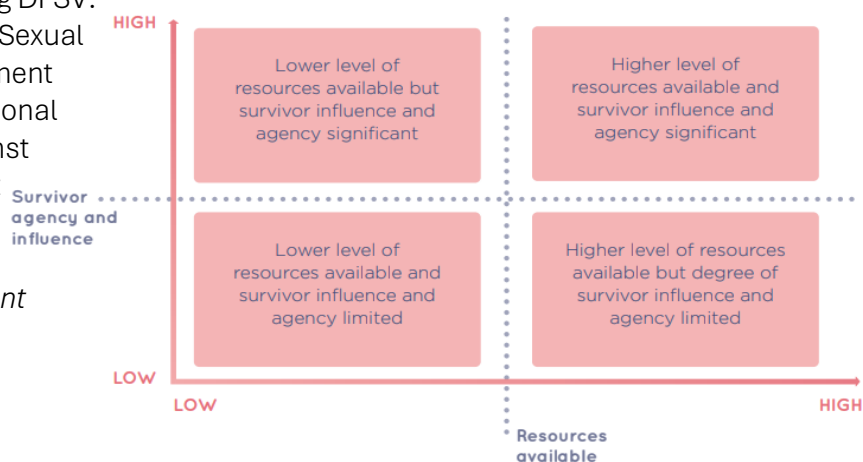


Figure 1. Resources and victim-survivor influence are key factors that can guide a service’s choice of lived experience engagement activity. (Source: Family Violence Experts by Experience Framework)

⁶ Domestic and Family Violence Safety Alliance. (2023). DFVSA Strategic Plan.

⁷ The National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children, 2022-2032 <<https://www.dss.gov.au/ending-violence>>

⁸ National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (2021). Standards of Practice Manual for Services Against Sexual Violence, <https://www.nasasv.org.au/resources>

⁹ Lamb K, Hegarty K, Amanda, Cina, Fiona, and the University of Melbourne WEAVERS lived experience group, Parker R. (2020) *The Family Violence Experts by Experience Framework*: Domestic Violence Victoria. Melbourne, Australia.

¹⁰ Safe+Equal is the peak body for specialist family violence services that provide support to victim survivors in Victoria.

¹¹ A group of survivor-advocates who engage in the co-production of research and training with the University of Melbourne.

Purpose of the Roadmap

The Roadmap for Lived Experience Engagement has been developed to provide South Australia's specialist DFSV services sector with practical actions to more fully engage and embed lived expertise in policy development, service planning and practice.

In South Australia, specialist DFSV services play a leading role in responding to gender-based violence and their quality is derived from the combination of lived expertise, practice expertise and academic expertise (Figure 2). While practice and academic expertise are firmly embedded in SA's specialist DFSV services sector through supervision, training and professional development, approaches to engaging with the lived expertise of survivor-advocates are in the early stages of development and are missing whole-of-sector implementation. The Roadmap will present current practices of lived experience engagement in South Australia, a vision for future lived experience engagement and recommendations to guide the way. It is underpinned by a holistic approach to lived experience engagement that is intended to strengthen practitioner-level, service-level and whole-of-sector engagement with survivor-advocates.

The Roadmap also functions to inform the work of policy makers and governments about pathways forward to improve prevention and response to DFSV. For government bodies and funding partners, the Roadmap can be used to inform strategic policy and funding decisions. For Embolden, the Roadmap can serve as a blueprint for engaging with victim-survivors in the community, including those who do not engage with specialist DFSV services. For the DFV Safety Alliance, it can help inform better practices for embedding lived expertise into service-level engagement, service planning, monitoring and evaluation. It is hoped that this roadmap will build the collective capacity, capability and accountability of the specialist DFSV services sector to engage with lived expertise.

You think you know something and then you ask the lived experience advocates, and you get this wealth of knowledge that you'd never get in any other way. - Sector Professional

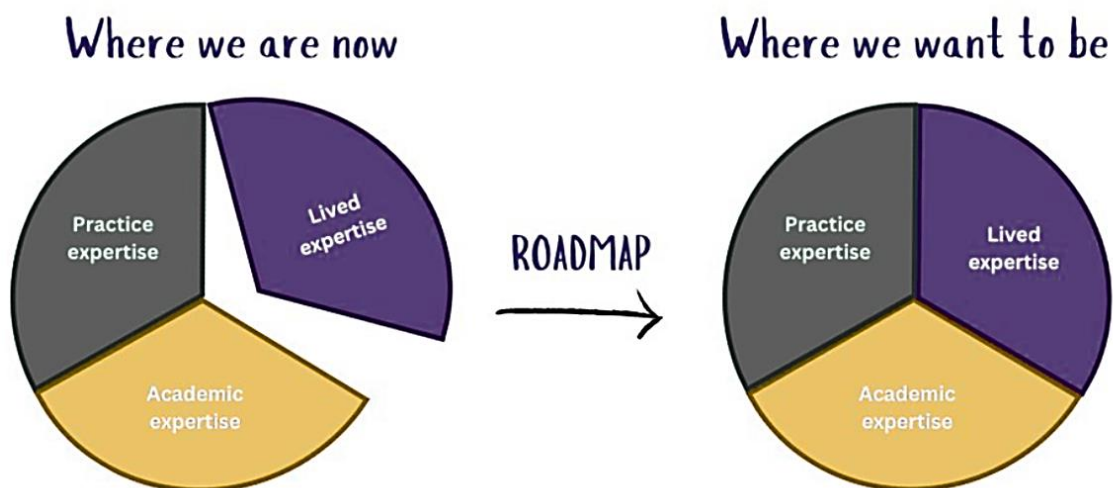


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework for this Roadmap

Audience

- Organisations that provide services to people with experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, including collectives such as Embolden, DFV Safety Alliance, and individual organisations and/or services
- Policymakers
- Government bodies

Other Key Stakeholders

We acknowledge the important role of survivor-advocates in the DFSV services sector. This roadmap is designed to place the responsibility for change with the sector and the bodies that govern it, not with victim-survivors or survivor-advocates. As such, this roadmap focuses on systemic and practice changes that are required to meaningfully centre people with lived experience in decision-making.

Structure

Part 1 provides a snapshot of current practices of lived experience engagement across SA's DFSV services sector.

Part 2 presents a vision for future lived experience engagement.

Part 3 outlines a roadmap toward that vision that builds on current strengths and recommendations for good practice.



PART 1 – Where Are We Now?

A vision for the future practices of lived experience engagement by the SA DFSV specialist services sector needs to be based on a clear understanding of the South Australian context including current practices, strengths, challenges, barriers, gaps and opportunities.

Our Approach to Understanding Current Lived Experience Engagement Practices

To understand the current context of lived experience engagement in SA's DFSV services sector, the project team undertook the following activities:

1. A **desktop review** to identify best practice and useful tools for lived experience engagement across Australia. For a full list of the key documents included in the review and a description of the approach used to undertake the review, please see **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**. Useful resources can be found in **Appendix C**.
2. A **survey** on lived experience engagement practices was circulated to specialist DFSV services to understand the breadth of lived experience engagement activities across the sector, identify areas of good practice, explore challenges and understand gaps. The survey received 27 responses from staff across 14 different organisations/services. Further details including survey questions can be found in **Appendix A**.
3. Key informants for follow-up interviews were identified from the surveys. Extended semi-structured key informant **interviews** were undertaken with seven practitioners comprising diverse roles (frontline staff, team leader, program manager) about the lived experience engagement practices undertaken by the specialist DFSV services sector. A full list can be found in **Appendix A**.
4. The project team met with 18 **survivor-advocates** in individual and group interviews to understand survivors-advocates' experiences of advocacy with the specialist DFSV services sector.

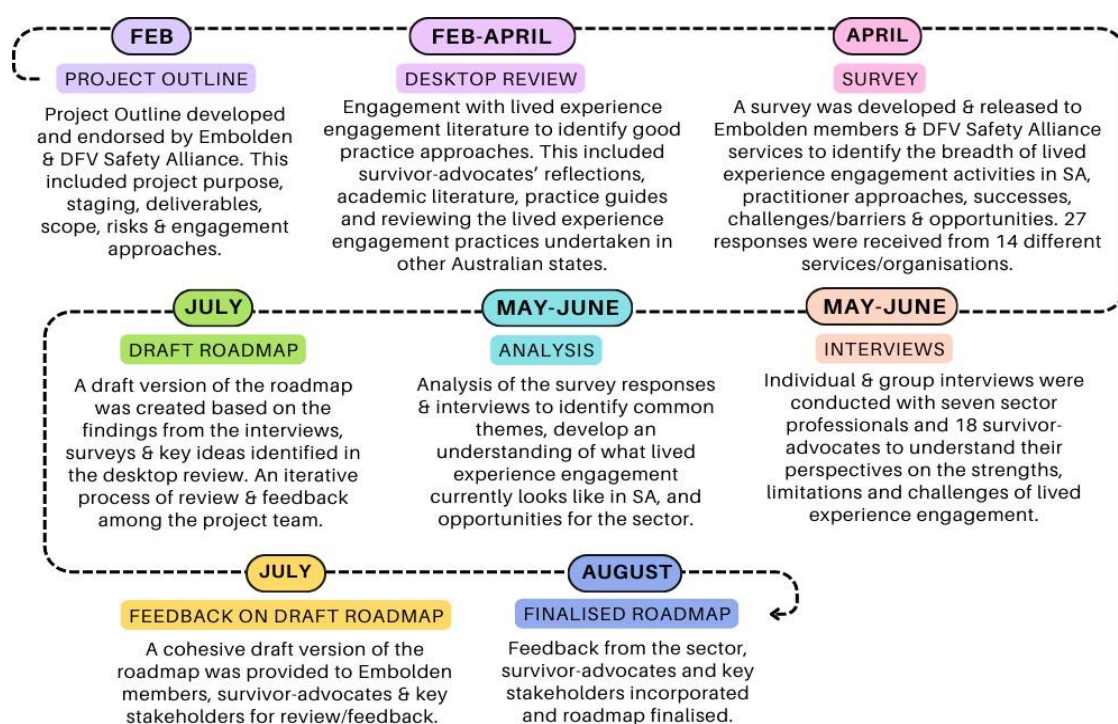


Figure 3. Project Timeline & Methods

A Snapshot of Current Lived Experience Engagement Practices in South Australia

Survey responses from 14 specialist DFSV services, in-depth interviews with seven DFSV professionals, and interviews with 18 survivor-advocates generated insights into the diversity of lived experience engagement practices undertaken by the SA specialist DFSV services sector (Figure 4), as well as valuable perspectives on the strengths, challenges, gaps, barriers and opportunities for lived experience engagement in the South Australian context. The project team focused on eliciting insights which had relevance for the sector, peak body, government and funding bodies. Care has been taken to consider the diversity of insights provided based on the type of service and client group.

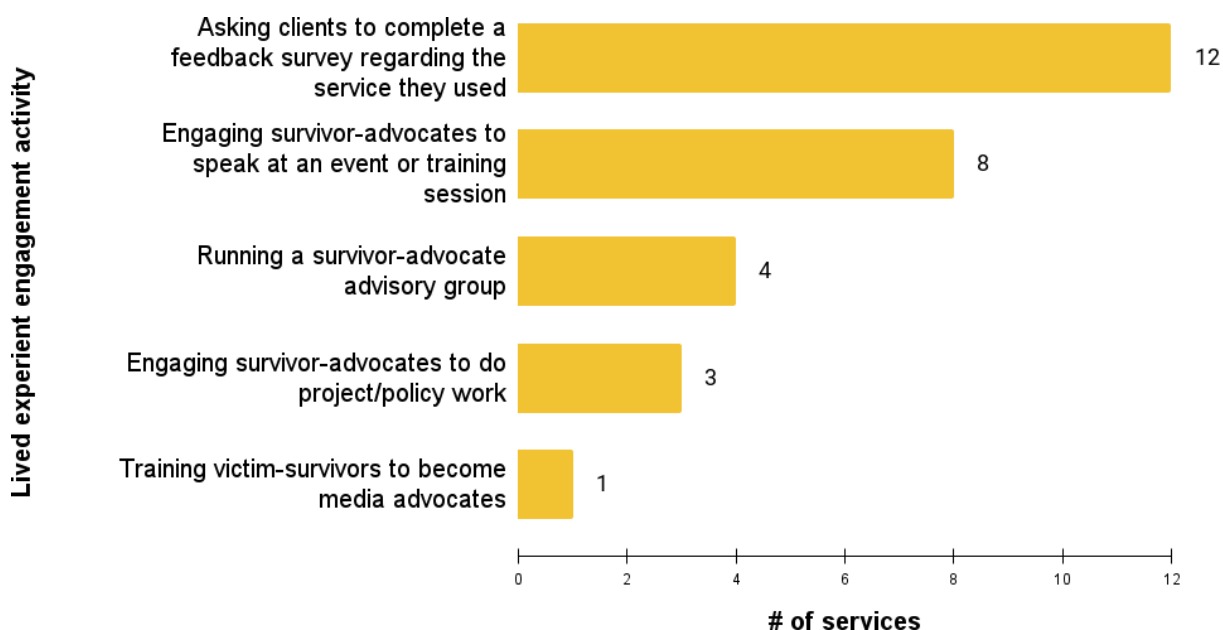


Figure 4. The types of lived experience engagement activities undertaken across the SA specialist DFSV services sector based on survey responses from 14 services.

Key Insights into Current Lived Experience Engagement Practices in South Australia

1. A diverse set of lived experience engagement initiatives exist across the sector, but the most common approaches (informal feedback, feedback surveys) offer limited agency and influence for survivor-advocates.
2. The specialist DFSV services sector has essentially reached its ceiling for lived experience engagement within current resourcing and conditions.
3. Current practices of lived experience engagement have resulted in improvements at the practitioner and service level. However, there is significant scope to strengthen the sector's relationships with survivor-advocates to elevate lived expertise in policy development, service planning and practice.
4. Current lived experience engagement practices have resulted in limited engagement with the survivor-advocates who experience systemic exclusion and marginalisation.

Key Insight 1: A diverse set of lived experience engagement initiatives exist across the sector, but the most common approaches (informal feedback, feedback surveys) offer limited agency and influence for survivor-advocates.

- Informal feedback from clients and feedback surveys are the most common engagement approaches used to gather lived experience perspectives across the sector (Figure 4). 12 out of 14 services reported using informal feedback and feedback surveys to engage with lived experience perspectives. For 50% of these respondents (six in total) informal feedback and feedback surveys were the only form of lived experience engagement undertaken by the service.
- Advisory groups emerged as an effective mechanism for leveraging the perspectives of survivor-advocates into existing governance mechanisms.
 - Four of 14 services reported having an advisory group of survivor-advocates. 50% (two services) had long-term engagement with the advisory group (>four years), while two services were in the early stages of establishing an advisory group.
 - Dedicated staffing was identified as a key factor for successful engagement with the advisory group, and as a barrier for services that did not have an advisory group. 75% of services with an advisory group had dedicated staffing at a minimum of 0.4 FTE.
- Victim-survivors become involved in lived experience engagement opportunities almost exclusively through informal pathways. Frontline staff play a key role in identifying potential survivor-advocates and connecting them with lived experience opportunities, with key factors being the victim-survivor's perceived capacity for using their lived experience safely and suitability for current lived experience engagement initiatives. As a result, there are limited opportunities for victim-survivors to self-identify their interest in using their lived experience to influence policy development, service planning and practice.
- All 14 services demonstrated limited knowledge of the lived experience engagement practices occurring elsewhere in the sector both within and outside of South Australia.
- Services that engaged in the most diverse range of engagement activities described long lead times when setting up a new initiative and a period of latency before lived experience perspectives were reflected in policies and service deliver.

Key Insight 2: The specialist DFSV services sector has essentially reached its ceiling for lived experience engagement within current resourcing and conditions.

- Funding for lived experience engagement (the significant staff time required, reimbursement for survivor-advocates) is not built into funding contracts. As a result, services are self-funding lived experience engagement, or seeking out grants. Services want to engage more fully with lived expertise but are under considerable pressure to meet demand in the community, often in the context of crisis. Without additional funding for lived experience engagement, services are faced with the dilemma of directing existing funds away from frontline and crisis services. Services expressed concerns about the negative impacts of under-resourced lived experience engagement including feelings of abandonment and re-traumatisation for survivor-advocates, and burnout/moral injury for staff. The effect of short-term and pilot funding on relationships with survivor-advocates was also highlighted as a key barrier to long-term and sustainable lived experience engagement.
- Current practices of lived experience engagement are overly dependent on individual staff members, rather than operating at a whole-of-service or whole-of-sector level. Deepening lived experience engagement will require the development of lived experience infrastructure and governance mechanisms across the sector, including lived experience advisory groups, dedicated staffing and embedding identified survivor-advocate roles into existing governance structures.

Key Insight 3: Current practices of lived experience engagement have resulted in improvements at the practitioner and service levels, however there is significant scope to strengthen the sector's relationship with survivor-advocates to elevate lived expertise in policy development, service planning and practice.

- In the survey responses and interviews, services highlighted a range of improvements that arose from engagement with lived experience perspectives. At the service level, improvements included accessibility and inclusiveness of services for people who experience intersectional barriers to support, trauma-responsiveness of services, language used in written materials for clients and updates to practice guides. At the practitioner level, feedback resulted in improvements to staff practice approaches and staff training content/materials.
- Understandings of what lived experience is, why it should be valued and practice approaches to support it varied amongst organisations, services and professionals. This led to differing perceptions of the impacts and support needs of survivor-advocates, and the role of this work in supporting recovery and healing; potentially limiting services' readiness to engage more fulsomely in this space and reducing opportunities for survivor-advocates to engage.
- Staff noted risk of re-traumatisation for victim-survivors as a significant barrier to increased lived experience engagement at their service (30% of respondents; six of 16 responses to a question on challenges). However, survivor-advocates considered their work to be an important element of their recovery and healing, despite the challenges. Lived experience work was described as "meaningful", "powerful" and "educative", and said to have contributed to survivor-advocates' empowerment, positive self-perception, social connection, professional capacity and resilience.
- Survivor-advocates described issues with remuneration that impacted their engagement, trust in and relationship with services. Examples included long delays in receiving remuneration and some instances of never receiving payment. Staff identified that the lack of formal processes and the complexity of financial acquittal processes has meant that the rates, timeliness and right to remuneration for lived experience engagement is not consistent across the sector.

Key Insight 4: Current lived experience engagement practices have resulted in limited engagement with survivor-advocates who experience systemic exclusion and marginalisation.

- Services expressed their awareness of the limited diversity of the lived experience perspectives informing their service. Survivor-advocates also noted that increasing the diversity of their advisory groups was important to them. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women who live with disability, people who identify as LGBTQIA+ and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were identified as important survivor advocates, to prioritise engagement with from the service and survivor-advocate perspective.
- Frontline staff identified that the perspectives of children and young people are missing from the sector. The challenges to future lived experience engagement include the need for age-appropriate engagement tools and addressing concerns regarding safety, parental consent and the capacity of children and young people.
- Stigma is a barrier for survivor-advocacy in some regional areas, due to the small size of communities. It was noted that particular modes of lived experience engagement may be less favourable in regional contexts due to stigma (e.g. public speaking, survivor-advocate groups).

How does South Australia compare with other states and territories?

A review of the approaches to lived experience engagement in other states and territories identified considerable investment and prioritisation of lived experience in line with the National Plan and offered insight into possible statewide mechanisms that could be relevant for South Australia. Several other states and territories have established a standing advisory group to the peak body for specialist DFSV services and an increasing number are establishing a standing advisory group to the government that is specific for DFSV. Victoria is leading the way with a standalone lived experience strategy in addition to well established advisory groups to the peak body and government. At a national level, the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission has also developed a Lived Experience Advisory Council. It is expected that the landscape for statewide lived experience mechanisms will evolve due to the increasing investment in lived experience engagement across Australia.

For South Australia, the combination of a standing lived expertise advisory group to government specific for DFSV, a standing advisory group to the peak body for specialist DFSV services, and a dedicated lived experience strategy to guide statewide efforts offer South Australia an opportunity to create meaningful improvements to lived experience engagement with long-term impact.



PART 2 – Where Do We Want To Go?

A vision for good practice lived experience engagement with survivor-advocates that is tailored for the South Australian context.

The Lived Experience Roadmap stems from the understanding detailed in the *National Plan* that successful lived experience engagement is essential to drive effective, fit-for-purpose responses to DFSV. The vision for lived experience engagement, key elements of the vision and guiding principles are outlined below for SA's specialist DFSV services sector and designed to guide the sector. The vision has been informed by the perspectives of survivor-advocates, sector professionals and existing research¹⁰ to respond to the key needs identified by those involved in the Roadmap's development. All direct quotes have been published with permission by survivor-advocates and sector professionals.

The Vision for SA's Specialist DFSV Services Sector

A whole-of-sector approach where lived experience is proactively and meaningfully embedded in all aspects of SA's specialist DFSV services sector, including individual practice, services and the peak body.

Key Conditions:

- Lived experience engagement is central to the work, not an add-on or obligation.
- A whole-of-sector approach where every level of the sector (practitioners, services, the peak body) is resourced and equipped to engage with lived expertise.
- Infrastructure and governance arrangements enable the conditions for meaningful engagement with lived expertise.
- Place-based and tailored approaches enable services to respond to the context and needs of specific communities and experiences of DFSV.

¹² See Appendix B

Guiding Principles for effective, respectful & sustainable lived experience engagement

Recognition of Expertise

“The foundation of our work is that women have the expertise.” - Sector Professional

Through their experiences of the sector and of DFSV, survivor-advocates’ expert knowledge is essential to inform and strengthen all areas of the sector, from service design to policy development. Advocates are given the appropriate reimbursement for their time and expertise and regarded as experts in their own right.

Flexibility

“The advocates don’t have to stay involved consistently. They choose what they want to share and how and when they are involved” - Sector Professional

Flexible, responsive and tailored ways of undertaking lived experience engagement are prioritised to ‘meet victim-survivors where they are at’ by making adjustments that respect the safety, cultural, spiritual, social, physical and psychological needs of advocates.

Self-determination & Empowerment

“I’ve turned my past into my power.” - Survivor-advocate

Survivor-advocates have influence over how, when and how much they engage. The sector uses its power to elevate, rather than filter, the voices of survivor-advocates. Survivor-advocates’ professional boundaries are respected, and their strengths are recognised and utilised.

Plurality & Diversity

“There’s always something new to consider.” - Sector Professional

Diverse ways of knowing, being and doing are equally valued. An intersectional perspective is used to understand experiences of DFSV, such as those related to race, gender, sexuality, age, ability and economic status, with an understanding of how these interact and impact victim-survivors in unique and complex ways. The sector proactively increases engagement with a plurality of voices, perspectives and experiences, with a particular focus on those who are systemically marginalised. Diverse approaches to engagement are also utilised to improve engagement with survivor-advocate perspectives that are under-represented.

Informed Engagement

“Clarity of expectations sit with workers as well as clients.” - Sector Professional

Survivor-advocates are provided with the information they need to engage in a timely and appropriate way to enable them to meaningfully engage with opportunities. This may include early provision of relevant policies, practices, system information, service guides and scope/purpose of the engagement opportunity, and should be provided in a format that is best suited to the survivor-advocate (e.g. written, verbal, presentation, etc.). This briefing and support is provided prior to any engagement opportunity and incorporated into remuneration. Transparent and clear communication requires sector professionals to adapt to the communication needs or styles of each individual survivor-advocate, such as those with different linguistic backgrounds, learning styles or developmental stages.

Healing & Safety

“Clients don’t need saving...they need someone to walk alongside them.” - Sector Professional

Healing and safety are fundamental to appropriate and safe lived experience work. Survivor-advocates should be provided the opportunity to opt in/out at any stage, to avail of debriefing with an appropriate support person and to change their minds regarding engagement at any time.

Survivor-advocacy should be acknowledged as part of a healing journey, and therefore capacity and readiness to engage should not be assumed. Different topics may be of more/less interest for individual survivor-advocates and their choices should be central to any decision-making.

Appropriate Timeframes & Planning

“We’re a team, we’re a partnership...it’s providing a space to really learn from one another.” - Sector Professional

The pace of lived experience engagement should allow for quality, meaningful work to take place that aligns with the capacity of survivor-advocates and staff. Work should be done gradually, thoroughly and with deep consideration to uphold the sustainability and effectiveness of lived experience engagement within its specific context. Taking time to establish strong foundational processes of lived experience engagement in the initial stages allows for long-term work to be fruitful, effective and stable. In the instance of unavoidable time restraints, all constraints should be clearly communicated with survivor-advocates prior to, and throughout, their engagement. When the lived experience engagement activity is time bound, consideration should be taken to develop timelines that are achievable and respectful of the level of involvement required by victim-survivors.

A whole-of-sector approach to lived experience engagement for the specialist DFSV services sector in South Australia

Survivor-Advocates

Provided with opportunities that:

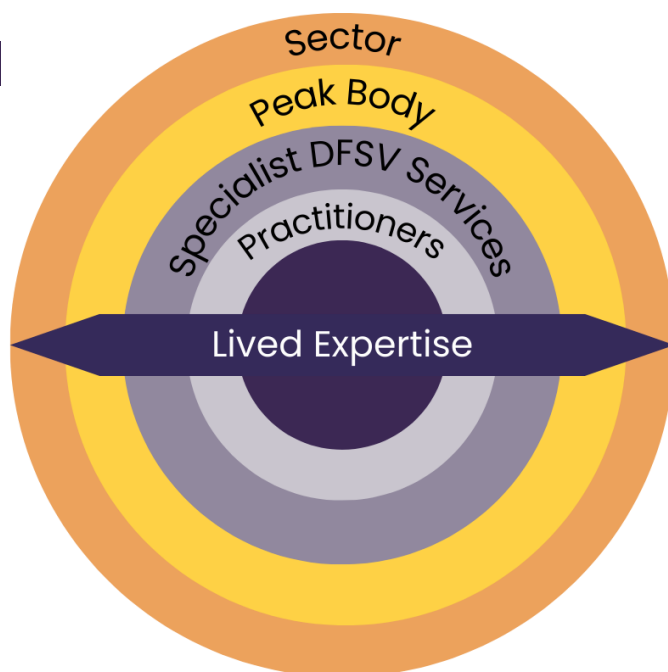
- honour survivor-advocate agency
- are influential
- feel empowering & meaningful for the survivor-advocate

Features of lived experience work

- Clarity on expectations, responsibilities & their role (e.g. reform versus input/advice).
- Feedback on the impact & outcomes of their engagement.
- Streamlined remuneration processes & payment within 1-2 weeks.
- Involvement from the beginning of an initiative.
- Continuous program of training offered to strengthen key survivor-advocacy skill sets (e.g. trauma-informed story sharing)

Provided with support

- By a trusted staff member in a way that feels right for the survivor-advocate.
- Opportunities to regularly connect & collaborate with peer survivor-advocates.
- Availability of experienced ‘mentors’ to guide those who are new or embarking on a new area of advocacy.



Practitioners

Role within the sector: Supporting survivor-advocates to engage directly with services on improvements to policy development, service planning and practice.

Responsibilities to Survivor-Advocates

- Preparing, debriefing & checking-in
- Working alongside & collaborating
- Addressing power imbalances in relationships
- Using the practitioner's knowledge & position in the organisation/sector to elevate survivor-advocate perspectives
- Tailors their approach to the context.

Specialist DFSV Services

Role within the sector: Ensuring that lived expertise is reflected in service governance, planning, program logic & practice.

Responsibilities to Survivor Advocates

- Developing & cultivating relationships
- Creating service-level structures/initiatives for lived experience engagement
- Culture of responsibility & accountability to those with lived experience
- Onboarding, training/professional developing & ongoing support
- Streamlined processes for remuneration
- Embedding lived expertise into service planning & delivery
- Increasing the diversity of lived experience perspectives
- Exploring peer support models
- Elevating and embedding lived experience perspectives across the sector to influence service models as well as individual services

Responsibilities to Staff

- Training on practice approaches for lived experience engagement
- Communicating lived experience perspectives across the service
- Ensuring that lived experience perspectives are available to decision-making groups

Peak Body

Role within the sector: Engaging with lived expertise to inform policy submissions & advocacy efforts.

Responsibilities to Survivor-Advocates

- Direct engagement with survivor-advocates, including those who have not engaged with a specialist DFSV service
- Development of policy submissions that are informed by the combination of lived, practice & academic expertise.

Responsibilities to Specialist DFSV Services

- Providing opportunities for services to share insights, reflections & learnings on lived experience engagement
- Keeping abreast of noteworthy lived experience engagement initiatives nationally

PART 3 – How Do We Get There?

The Roadmap identifies a path to move from current isolated practices to whole-of-sector practices where lived expertise is embedded across the specialist DFSV services sector.

In South Australia, the specialist DFSV services sector express significant commitment and enthusiasm for lived experience engagement. However, the sector lacks formal structures to support sector-wide lived experience engagement that is sustainable, effective, ethical, diverse and inclusive. The infrastructure and governance arrangements that are required to create the conditions to cultivate and leverage lived expertise are not embedded across the sector, resulting in missed opportunities to improve policy development, service planning and practice. As previously outlined, work is being undertaken nationally to develop and strengthen whole-of-sector approaches to lived experience engagement, which provides SA with an opportunity to join these nationwide efforts.

Recommendations to Strengthen Lived Experience Engagement in SA’s DFSV Services Sector

Building on the good practices described in the lived experienced literature, this section outlines specific recommendations for South Australia’s specialist DFSV services sector to strengthen engagement with survivor-advocates at the practitioner, service and peak body level for a whole-of-sector approach. These recommendations are guided by the vision articulated in Part 2: Where Do We Want to Go? and tailored to the South Australian context from the insights into current lived experience engagement practices outlined in Part 1: Where Are We Now?

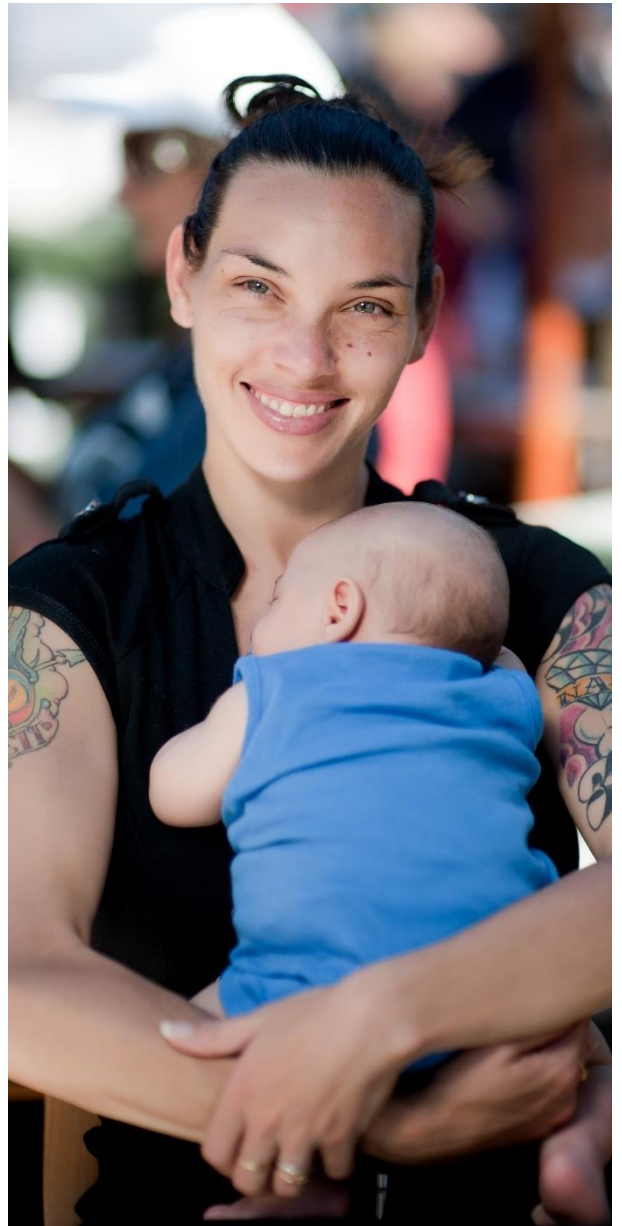
The recommendations are grouped into three key areas to reflect the needs of the South Australian context:

Key Area 1: Invest in the infrastructure to elevate lived expertise (Recommendations 1-5)

Key Area 2: Invest in survivor-advocates (Recommendations 6-7)

Key Area 3: Leverage existing sector strengths and skills (Recommendation 8)

While the Roadmap’s recommendations primarily focus on the specialist DFSV sector, it also encompasses recommendations targeted to the State Government. Additionally, several recommendations are contingent on government funding decisions.



Key Area 1: Invest in the infrastructure to elevate lived expertise

1. That the State Government establish and effectively resource a lived expertise advisory council that directly advises government on DFSV policy.
2. That the DFSV services sector is effectively resourced to support best practice lived experience engagement in policy development, advocacy, and service design, delivery and practice.
3. That lived experience engagement is funded as a line item in service contracts to enable service-level engagement with survivor-advocates, including within a service's governance structure.
4. That the DFSV services sector is resourced to develop and implement an Impact Framework for the Roadmap to be reported on annually, to ensure that all parts of the sector remain accountable to the Roadmap's vision and goals.

Key Area 2: Invest in survivor-advocates

5. That the specialist DFSV services sector is effectively resourced to develop and implement a training and professional development program for survivor-advocates, building on existing resources and expertise nationally.
6. That the specialist DFSV services sector is effectively resourced to develop and implement standardised remuneration scales for survivor-advocates, which are reflected in funding agreements (Rec 3).

Key Area 3: Leverage existing sector strengths and skills

7. That the specialist DFSV services sector is effectively resourced to enable services to consolidate and embed current innovative and diverse lived experience engagement practices and share cross-sector learnings on good practice.

Key Area 1: Invest in infrastructure that elevates lived expertise

Recommendation 1: That the State Government establish and effectively resource a lived expertise advisory council that directly advises government on DFSV policy.

- Establish a statewide DFSV Lived Experience Advisory Council (LEAC) comprising survivor-advocates, to inform State Government strategic decision-making that impacts DFSV policy and funding. The LEAC would be convened by the Minister for Women and Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence, with scope to provide advice across government as required.
- Learn from and engage with other states and territories that have already adopted this model, including the Victim Survivor Advisory Council (VSAC) in Victoria.
- The LEAC should link with lived experience advisory mechanisms nationally, including within the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission.
- The LEAC would reflect diverse perspectives and experiences and be facilitated by staff trained in trauma-informed approaches and best practice lived experience engagement.

Recommendation 2: That the DFSV services sector is effectively resourced to support best practice lived experience engagement in policy development, advocacy, and service design, delivery and practice.

Current lack of funding for lived experience engagement is significantly impacting the sector's ability to engage meaningfully with survivor-advocates. Without discrete funding to drive this, South Australia will continue to lag behind best practice and emerging priorities within the national and state/territory landscape. Dedicated resourcing would enable the development of mechanisms for engaging with lived experience perspectives across all levels of the sector. This includes maintaining and developing inclusive methodologies to ensure voices are diverse, with a particular focus on First Nations women

- Examples of initiatives to resource could include:
 - Establishing a lived experience advisory group/network to inform sector-wide policy and advocacy
 - Developing, supporting and maintaining a confidential, centralised register for survivor-advocates to self-identify their interest in lived experience work and to enable a targeted approach to engagement on key issues (e.g. sexual violence, living in a regional area, technology-facilitated abuse, older women). This could also connect victim-survivors who are interested in influencing policy development, service planning and practice with opportunities across the specialist DFSV services sector, strengthening the capability of smaller services to engage people with lived experience
 - Developing and distributing a regular bulletin for people with lived experience on the activities and opportunities across the SA DFSV services sector (e.g. training opportunities, lived experience initiatives, events, etc.)
 - Dedicated resourcing for services to enable engagement with, and support for, survivor-advocates over the course of their lived experience work as standard practice. For example, pre- and post-briefing for lived experience engagements.
- Support to enable services to undertake targeted engagement with particular cohorts of victim-survivors.
- Promoting and supporting opportunities for survivor-advocates to develop peer networks.
- Practice leadership on lived experience engagement to support frontline specialist DFSV services and practitioners to embed lived experience voices in a range of strategic and operational areas through the development of staff training, practice guidance, practical toolkits for lived experience engagement and communities of practice. There would be a focus on service/organisational capacity building including embedding lived expertise into governance structures, client engagement, service development, practice and continuous improvement. Practice leadership could encompass:
 - Developing practice guidance to embed lived experience across the sector
 - Developing and supporting implementation of standardised tools
 - Maintaining visibility and reporting on lived experience engagement.
 - Understanding sector trends and arising issues and identifying opportunities for collaboration on key issues impacting on multiple services.
 - Identifying and developing inclusive practice for specific groups (e.g. children, marginalised communities etc.) to ensure diverse voices are proactively included.
 - Providing bespoke advice and guidance to individual services as part of their lived experience journey.

Recommendation 3: That lived experience engagement is funded as a line item in service contracts to enable service-level engagement with survivor-advocates, including within a service's governance structure.

- Services require funding to undertake lived experience engagement and provide remuneration to survivor-advocates who are providing their time and expertise to improve systems for people who experience DFSV. Services are not able to adequately fund lived experience engagement within existing contracts, which was a key insight that emerged from the surveys and interviews with services discussed in Part 1. Resourcing must be sufficient to enable services to embed lived experience as part of governance structures and to input into service design, continuous improvement and practice.

Recommendation 4: That the DFSV services sector is resourced to develop and implement an Impact Framework for the Roadmap, to be reported on annually, to ensure that all parts of the sector remain accountable to the Roadmap's vision and goals.

- With appropriate resourcing, a DFSV sector impact framework for lived experience would be developed in collaboration with a diverse group of survivor-advocates. Annual reporting on impact and integration of lived experience across the sector with trends, gaps, issues and recommendations for future areas of focus.

Key Area 2: Invest in survivor-advocates

Recommendation 5: That the specialist DFSV services sector is effectively resourced to develop and implement a training and professional development program for survivor-advocates, building on existing resources and expertise nationally.

- Survivor-advocates should receive induction and training as part of their role. The sector risks losing valuable lived experience insights when the infrastructure for on-boarding and ongoing professional development is missing from organisational processes.
- Survivor-advocates should be provided with opportunities to regularly connect with each other, learn together and engage in knowledge exchange. Peer networks are a key source of support for survivor-advocates and can increase the influence of lived experience engagement initiatives.
- A training and professional development program should be co-produced with a diverse group of survivor-advocates, including those who are experienced in lived experience work. The program should be available to all those engaging in survivor-advocacy, to support the building of capacity, awareness of policy and service changes, a trauma-informed impactful voice and self-care. Training can help survivor-advocates focus on what needs to change rather than the traumatic details of the violence and abuse they've experienced.¹³
- Suggested areas for training/professional development include:
 - understanding the drivers of gender-based violence,
 - the structure of the specialist DFSV services sector at the state and national level,
 - public speaking,
 - trauma-informed approaches to story sharing,
 - sector updates, and
 - strategies to deal with the challenging aspects of lived experience work.This could include external training opportunities, such as LELAN¹⁴ or those by Morgan and Co.¹⁵
- The lived experience training/professional development program would be contingent on adequate resourcing to support coordination and implementation.

¹³ ANROWS webinar, Towards Meaningful Engagement, 2023

¹⁴ LELAN is the SA peak body by, for and with people with lived experience of mental distress, social issues or injustice, <https://www.lelan.org.au>

¹⁵ <https://morganandco.au/>

Recommendation 6: That the specialist DFSV services sector is effectively resourced to develop and implement standardised remuneration scales for survivor-advocates, which are reflected in funding agreements (Rec 3).

- Survivor-advocates must be remunerated for their time and expertise. Remuneration should be transparent, timely, clarified prior to engagement and reflective of the type of activity undertaken. It should be scaled to include preparation, the activity itself, post-engagement and, if relevant, travel, accommodation and childcare. Processes for remuneration must be streamlined to make lived experience opportunities accessible to all survivor-advocates. For example, the requirement of an ABN and invoice may be an unnecessary barrier.
- Standardised remuneration scales for survivor-advocates will need to be co-produced with a diverse group of survivor-advocates, including those who are experienced in lived experience work. This may also include benchmarking against national standards. Benchmarking will require careful consideration of the benefits and limitations of hourly rates versus set lump payments for an activity to ensure that survivor-advocates are fully remunerated for the entirety of their lived experience work, not just partial remuneration. For example, a set rate for speaking at an event may result in a very low hourly rate after factoring in the time spent by the survivor-advocate to develop and prepare their talking points.
- Lived experience remuneration must be clearly reflected in service funding agreements, in line with Recommendation 3.

Key Area 3: Leverage existing sector strengths and skills

Recommendation 7: That the specialist DFSV services sector is effectively resourced to enable services to consolidate and embed current innovative and diverse lived experience engagement practices and share cross-sector learnings on good practice.

- Practice leadership and resources to support services' engagement with survivor-advocates and practitioner development. Services will then identify how these can and should be embedded into individual services to promote consistent lived experience practice, elevate visibility and understanding. Areas of focus may include:
 - practitioner induction and training,
 - pathways for potential survivor-advocates,
 - development of lived experience engagement practice (for example, mentoring and peer support for survivor advocates).

Appendices

Appendix A: Lived Experience Project Methodology

Desktop Review

Key terms: “lived experience”, “domestic violence”, “domestic and family violence” and “domestic, family or sexual violence”.

From February-April of 2024, the project team conducted a desktop review of the existing literature and qualitative research available through the Google search engine that included the key term ‘lived experience’ when paired interchangeably with the other key terms ‘domestic violence’, ‘domestic and family violence’ and ‘domestic, family or sexual violence’. The resulting research was used to identify further relevant and related information through the use of available reference lists.

The documents included in the desktop review were restricted to those within Australia that had been published within the last four years (from 2020 onwards).

To our knowledge, all documents included in the desktop review are reliable, being either reviewed academic articles or being sourced directly from the relevant organisation or government body.

Survey Questions

1. Sector Information
 - a. Organisation
 - b. Service
 - c. Your role
 - d. Your name (optional)

2. What activities does your service/organisation undertake to engage people with lived experience? Choose as many options as relevant.
 - Informal feedback from clients about the service they received
 - Asking clients to complete a feedback survey regarding the service they used
 - Regularly reviewing client feedback
 - Supporting survivor-advocates to prepare a submission to an inquiry
 - Running a one-off advisory group
 - Running a standing group that includes survivor-advocates among its membership
 - Dedicated positions for survivor-advocates in the organisation
 - Dedicated positions for survivor-advocates on a governance group
 - Engaging survivor-advocates to do project/policy work

- Engaging survivor-advocates to speak at an event or training session
- Training victim-survivors to become media advocates
- Training for lived experience advocates (including but not limited to those who have experience DFSV)
- Peer staff
- Other

3. Please provide additional details of the activities selected above.

4. How do victim-survivors become involved in these initiatives? *How were they identified and invited by the organisation?*

5. How are survivor-advocates supported throughout the initiative (before, during, after)? *E.g. debriefing, training, childcare.*

6. Did the organisation make improvements or changes as a result of victim-survivors' input? *E.g. actively engaging in service improvements based on feedback, changes in practice, etc.*

7. Were victim-survivors informed of how their feedback was being used?

8. What challenges have you encountered when developing or implementing lived experience activities?

9. What worked well when developing or implementing lived experience activities?

10. Are there lived experience engagement activities you would like to implement? *If so, what are these and what barriers (if any) exist for implementation?*

Programs & Services that Responded to the Lived Experience Survey (14 Services)

- Centacare CFS -Whyalla, Limestone Coast, Riverland & Murray Mallee-Adelaide Hills
- Connection, Strength & Recovery Program
- Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme Earlier Access to Support & Recovery (EASE)
- Haven, Centacare
- Health & Recovery Trauma Safety Services (HaRTTS), which includes Yarrow Place
- Junction Australia
- No To Violence
- NPY Women's Council
- Relationships Australia
- Salvation Army - Bramwell House
- Uniting Country SA
- Women's Safety Services South Australia
- Yarredi Services

Interviews with DFSV Sector staff (7)

Manager: Integrated Programs¹⁶, Women's Safety Services SA

Community Programs Team Leader, NPY Women's Council

Head of Engagement, No To Violence

Community Voice Project Lead, Junction Australia

Training & Community Engagement Coordinator, Yarrow Place, HaRTTS¹⁷

Program Manager: Connection, Strength & Recovery, Women's Safety Services SA

Coordinator: Safe and Well Kids, Women's Safety Services SA

Interviews with Victim-Survivors & Survivor Advocates (18)

Individuals (1)

HaRTTS Consumer Engagement Committee (10) Voices for Change (7)

¹⁶ Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), Multi-Agency Protection Service (MAPS), Safety, Accountability & Responsibility through Integration (SARTI), Safe & Well Kids (SAWK), Women's Safety Contact Program (WSCP)

¹⁷ Health & Recovery, Trauma Safety Services, Women's & Children's Health Network, SA Health

Appendix B: List of Key Documents Resulting from the Desktop Review

Backhouse, C., Toivonen, C., & Funston, L. (2021). NSW Voices for Change: Preventing domestic, family and sexual violence through survivor-led media advocacy. Sydney: DVNSW

Cataldo, M. & Wark, W. (2024). Cultivating lived wisdom: Translating experience to expertise [Desktop Review]. Eastern Metropolitan Regional Family Violence Partnership. RFVP_Cultivating Lived Wisdom report_final.pdf

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission (2023). *Best Practice Principles: Engaging People With Lived and Living Experience* <https://dfsvc.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-10/Best-practice-principles---Engaging-people-with-lived-and-living-experience.pdf>

Domestic Violence Victoria. (2020). Family Violence Lived Experience Strategy <https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-lived-experience-strategy>

Lamb, K., Hegarty, K., Parker, R., Amanda, Cina, Fiona, & the University of Melbourne WEAVERs lived experience group. (2020). The Family Violence Experts by Experience Framework: Domestic Violence Victoria. <https://safeandequal.org.au/working-in-family-violence/service-responses/experts-by-experience-framework/>

Loughhead, M., Hodges, E., McIntyre, H., Procter, N. G., Barbara, A., Bickley, B., Harris, H., Huber, L. & Martinez, L. (2023). A model of lived experience leadership for transformative systems change: Activating Lived Experience Leadership (ALEL) project. *Leadership in Health Services*, 36(1). <https://www.lelan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Article-LEx-leadership.pdf>

Safe and Equal. (2022). Sources of Lived Experience in the Family Violence Sector Issues Paper <https://safeandequal.org.au/resources/sources-of-lived-experience-in-the-family-violence-sector-issues-paper/>

Wheildon, L. (2023). Towards meaningful engagement: Key findings for survivor co-production of public policy on gender-based violence. <https://anrowsdev.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Wheildon-ANROWS-Towards-meaningful-engagement-Key-findings-for-survivor-co-production-of-public-policy-on-gender-based-violence-2023.pdf>

Appendix C: Useful Resources

Planning Best Practice Engagement with Survivor Advocates – Safe+Equal¹⁸

 Do's Things that contribute to good engagements	 Don'ts Things that contribute to poor engagements
<p><i>"Ensuring we have all the information required to be informed. A checklist of who the audience is and what needs to be talked about."</i></p> <p><i>"Take time to set up a supportive safe space."</i></p> <p><i>"By sharing your pronouns and asking what pronouns they use, you will create safe space for the survivor."</i></p> <p><i>"Providing opportunity for debriefing. Having access to a trauma informed support person from the organisation who knows us well or having the choice of bringing our own support person."</i></p> <p><i>"To be involved in the process from the beginning and of course being adequately remunerated for our time."</i></p>	<p><i>"Don't assume someone's gender by their appearance and use wrong pronouns. If you don't know what pronouns they use, just ask!"</i></p> <p><i>"When organisations take the positive feedback only and not the constructive feedback."</i></p> <p><i>"When there are no considerations in place about triggers or safe space. For example, the impact of walking into a space and being confronted with uniformed Police. That's a big trigger for me."</i></p> <p><i>"Any information can be detrimental and compromise safety. When we say we don't want our location to be disclosed, for some reason it gets disclosed anyway."</i></p>
<p><i>"Good engagements plan for how to manage disclosures. While we often get disclosure, this should not be the responsibility of survivor advocates."</i></p> <p><i>"Asking survivor advocates about triggers and boundaries and respecting those boundaries."</i></p> <p><i>"Allow us to determine what is safe and what is not safe. Ensure you are led by us as to how to support and maintain our safety throughout the engagement."</i></p> <p><i>"Providing flexibility and allowing to be human beings – being survivors it's not just something we are reading from a book, it's something we are living."</i></p> <p><i>"Being clear about how our information and experiences are going to be used and share –having transparency around that."</i></p> <p><i>"Understanding that lived experience is not the past tense but it is continuing – even though we may not be in a violent situation, the risk factors can be high."</i></p> <p><i>"Provide clear parameters or limitations. Articulating what you want and what you don't want is a matter of respect when it comes to engagement. This doesn't mean coming with all the answers, but ensuring there is clarity on the direction, outcomes or where you hope to get to."</i></p>	<p><i>"Having an engagement opportunity is not an invitation into my private life or for professionals to hunt me down on social media."</i></p> <p><i>"Not supporting new advocates. In the beginning I would disclose too many details of my story, there needs to be a level of understanding from the support person in where a survivor advocate is at in their journey."</i></p> <p><i>"Sometimes consulting with us is used like a checklist 'tick- we got their input' and they interpret our words to fit the answers they desire. That can have serious consequences."</i></p> <p><i>"Engagements that see us as only able to offer a story or case study feel tokenistic. We are more than our experiences of violence and abuse."</i></p> <p><i>"We don't like surprises."</i></p> <p><i>"Small things can have big impacts on power imbalances. For example, providing survivor advocates sticker name tags if the other participants are not wearing them."</i></p> <p><i>"When we don't receive feedback or hear about the outcome. Too often, we are forgotten after an engagement."</i></p>

¹⁸ Safe+Equal, Planning Best Practice Engagement with Survivor Advocates, <https://safeandequal.org.au/resources/planning-best-practice-engagements-checklist/>

Before the engagement

Explain the engagement opportunity

- Introduce yourself** – your name, role, pronouns and organisation.
- Role** – Outline the role of the advocate – facilitator, participant, speaker, panel member, consultant.
- Time commitment** – Number of anticipated hours, including preparation.
- Remuneration** – Payment amount and method. Will additional costs such as childcare or travel be covered?
- Privacy and confidentiality** – Share any limitations to privacy and confidentiality up front.
- Audience** – Describe who else will be involved or attending. E.g internal stakeholders, external stakeholders, other survivor advocates. Provide information on their role in family violence work and family violence literacy and awareness.
- Topics and themes** – Explain the topics that will be covered and the input you are seeking.
- Influence and outcomes** – Explain how their input will influence outcomes, the process for providing feedback and approval before outcomes are shared.
- Recording** – Outline if the engagement will be recorded, how it will be shared and who with.
- Feedback** – Outline how the survivor advocate can provide feedback about their engagement experience, and the processes that are in place to support this.
- Questions** – Invite the survivor advocate to ask questions or offer their suggestions.
- Project brief** – Confirm this information in a written project brief provided to the survivor advocate. Refer to the [Project Brief Template](#).

¹⁹Safe+Equal, Survivor-Advocate Engagement Checklist, <https://safeandequal.org.au/resources/planning-best-practice-engagements-checklist/>

Discuss the survivor advocate's engagement needs and expectations.

Use the [My Engagement Needs and Expectations Form](#), developed by the Safe and Equal Expert Advisory Panel, to record this information.

- **Experience** – What kind of advocacy experience and professional development have they had prior to this engagement?
- **Introductions** – How would they like to be introduced (e.g. as a survivor advocate, as a speaker with lived experience of family violence)? Would they like to introduce themselves and their role? Are they acting as an independent advocate, or representing a group or network?
- **Access requirements** – Explore access or support requirements E.g Auslan interpreter, interpreter, accessibility, breaks, how do they prefer to receive information, reminders or prompts, sending slides and questions in advance, technology requirements.
- **Safety** – Are there any legal, physical, emotional or cultural safety considerations? If so, what support or protection can your organisation put in place to support engagement?
- **Privacy and confidentiality** – How would they like their privacy and confidentiality to be maintained (use of first or full name, use of pseudonym, visibility of email address, use of image or recordings)? Develop a privacy and confidentiality agreement, including for what purpose their information will be used and for how long.
- **Environment** – Explore what is needed to create a safe space, whether in person or online. This could include knowing who else will be in and have power in the space, how the space is set up, where the exits are located and having an agreed way to communicate if the person is uncomfortable.
- **Boundaries** – Explore ways to uphold the survivor advocate's personal and professional boundaries and whether there are topics or themes they are not comfortable speaking about.
- **Support** – What type of support would the advocate find useful? Pre-briefing and debriefing, support from your organisation, from other survivor advocates or their own support person.

Pre-briefing

- **Written information** – Confirm the purpose, participants or audience and any agreed actions to support safe engagement and when you will be in touch after the event at least seven days before the engagement. This could include a run sheet, agenda or Terms of Reference.
- **Pre-meeting** – Depending on the nature and scope of the engagement, explore the option of meeting beforehand to collaborate on planning and meet other contributors.



During the engagement

- **Welcome** – Welcome the survivor advocate and introduce them the way you have agreed. Acknowledge them when they first enter the room, whether it is online or in-person.
- **Ways of working** – Whether through a Terms of Reference or group agreement, set agreed ways of working and give permission to take a break or step out of the session if needed. Remain flexible and open. Be mindful that you might need to adapt your timelines or approach to support participation.
- **Language** – Where possible, minimise jargon, acronyms and overt displays of hierarchy.
- **Power dynamics** – Address power and hierarchy, for example the physical set up of the space or use of titles. Check out the Experts by Experience Framework video on addressing power imbalances when working with people with lived experience of family violence.
- **Audience engagement** – Consider how much direct contact other event attendees or meeting participants will have with the advocate during the session, and whether additional supports need to be put in place. For example, if an audience has low level family violence awareness or literacy, it may be useful to have an extra colleague available to ensure the survivor advocate is not left unsupported at any point.
- **Discussions** – In group discussions, be intentional in asking survivor advocates to contribute. Give permission to pass or come back to a question.
- **Disclosures** – Ensure you have a plan to respond to disclosures of family violence and communicate what supports available for all participants. It should never be the responsibility of a survivor advocate to manage disclosures when engaging with a family violence service.
- **Respect** – Respect the survivor advocate's time and start and finish engagements on time.
- **Thank you** – Have a clear process for what the conclusion of the engagement looks like. Thank them for their contributions and the value they brought.



After the engagement

- **Debrief** – Check in with the survivor after the engagement. Did anything occur during the engagement that impacted them? Did anything come up that could affect their legal, physical, emotional, and cultural safety? Ensure they are comfortable with what they shared, for example, was anything disclosed that they would like edited from a recording or submission? Ensure the time for debrief or time to decompress following an engagement is remunerated.
- **Invite Feedback** – check in how they felt it went, ask if they have feedback about the session. Could anything have been done differently or better? You might consider multiple ways to provide feedback, with the option of anonymity.
- **Offer feedback** – share your reflections on how the engagement went, what the survivor advocate did well, the value they contributed and constructive feedback.
- **Next steps** – Confirm next steps, including how any outcomes from the engagement will be collated and shared. Confirm the process for remuneration including when they will receive payment.

Other Useful Resources

[Survivor Advocate Feedback Template My Engagement Needs and Expectations Survivor Advocate Project Brief Template Skills and Capability Self-Reflection Tool](#)