

Follow My Lead

An awareness raising resource for social and service responders.

Watch the Follow My Lead animation and read Follow My Lead

[Follow My Lead](#) speaks from the voices of people with lived experience of Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) who need the professionals and their social networks to be more prepared to respond effectively. More prepared to respond in ways that uphold dignity and build on safety.



[View the Follow My Lead Animation \(4min\)](#)



[Read Follow My Lead](#)

Who is this resource for?

Any person who may at some point be listening to and responding to their friends, family members, colleagues, peers or to the people who use their service, who are experiencing DFV.

The resource may also have benefits for people who are:

- thinking about their own relationships, safety and their experience of DFV
- seeking support about their own lived (or live) experience of DFV
- working as a service responder to people experiencing DFV.

YOUR RESPONSE CAN BE OF IMMENSE HELP.

**How you respond to me
when I share with you,
and in the time that follows,
matters significantly to me.**

**I might tell you parts of
my experience to test out
how safe I am with you
and to explore how you
react or retreat.**

I'll be looking to see;

what you think of what I have shared

that you believe me

what you think of me and if/how that changes
now that you know more about me

whether you give more weight to what the person
abusing me says than what I say

whether the person abusing me will be able to
influence your thinking and make you think
differently about me

and what this means next.

Violence is most accurately understood when it is examined in context.

Context Life-World / Social Material Conditions

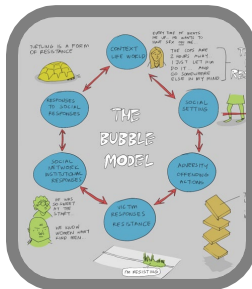
"I am a unique person with unique experiences. I have my own sense of what is important right now and in the long term. I identify with and belong to many communities and networks. These are the contexts in which I understand and respond to Domestic and Family Violence. My race, gender, sexuality, class, immigration status, ability, age etc. influences the circumstances of my life and the discrimination and oppression I may experience. When I face multiple forms of discrimination, the person abusing me is empowered to use greater levels of violence and I am isolated from formal and informal support systems."

Responses to Social Responses

"The quality of the social responses I have received influences 'if' and 'how' I engage with social networks and services. If you try to make decisions for me and tell me what to do, I might feel more unsafe than before I shared with you. I am always aware of the actual and possible responses of others, from professionals to my friends and family members. These responses inform how, or if, I reach out to others."

Social Responses / Social Network Institutional Responses

"I may receive both positive and negative social responses from others. I am always aware of the actual and possible responses of others, from professionals to my friends and family members. How you respond to me when I share with you, and in the time that follows, matters significantly to me. I might tell you parts of my experience to test out how safe I am with you and to explore how you react or retreat."



Contextual Analysis

12 min Video available on www.insightexchange.net

Victim Responses Resistance

"I resist and respond to the violence, discrimination and oppression I experience. I do this in visible and invisible ways that might not seem obvious or directly related to what is going on, but this resistance and response to violence is important to me, and is part of upholding my dignity. The person abusing me knows that I do not like the violence and anticipates that I will resist. Consequently, I must hide my resistance, sometimes completely, and find a safe place in the privacy of my mind. I am experienced in anticipating the patterns and tactics that the person abusing me uses against me and the people I care about. I can see how they adjust their tactics to suppress my resistance and responses to their abuse."

Social Setting / Situation Interaction

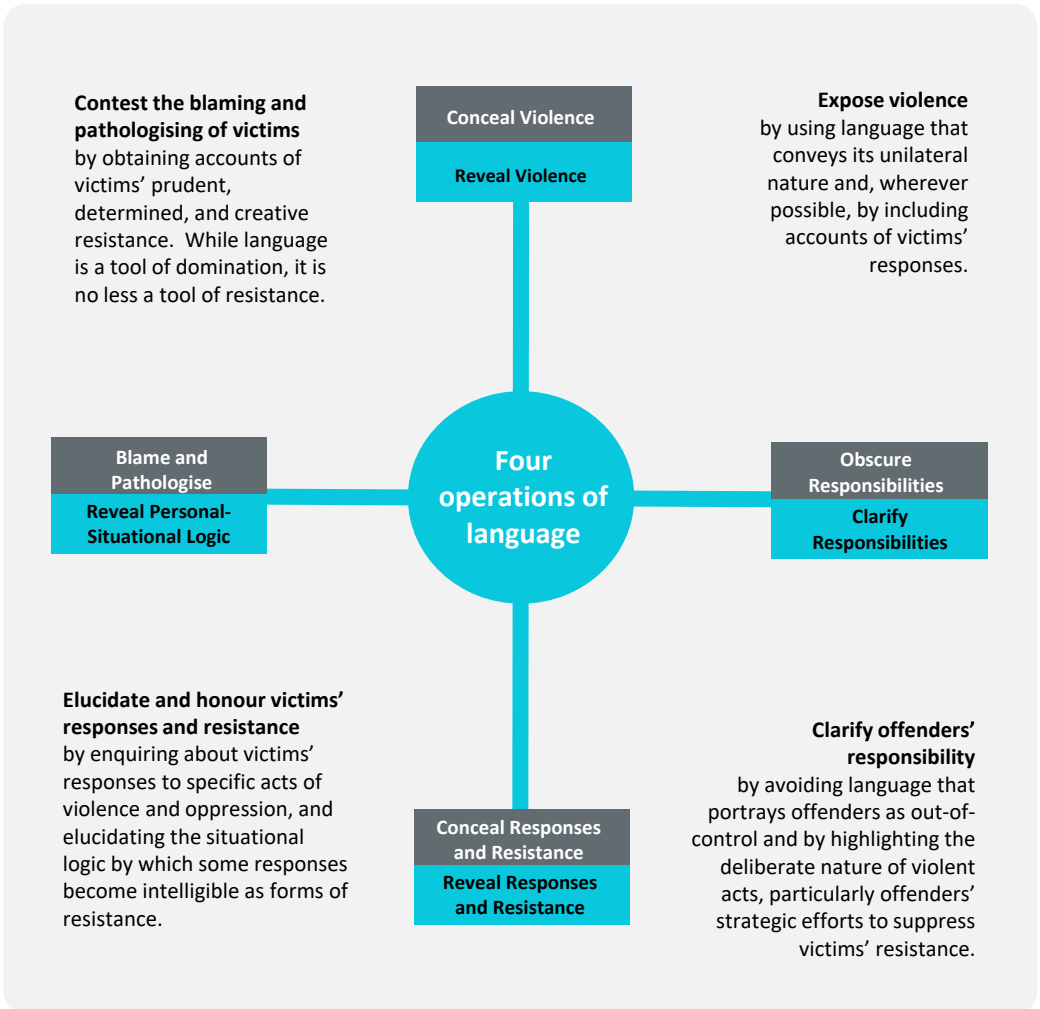
"Where I am (at home, in school, online, on my mobile, at work, in the community) changes the risks I face and the responses I can expect to receive. I anticipate and respond to threats and risks wherever I go, with whoever I meet and whatever I do. The importance I place on the past, the present, the future, and possibly the afterlife, can influence how I see things and make decisions."

Adversity Offending Actions

"The violence I experience is unique. I may be threatened, intimidated or coerced into doing things against my will. The person committing the abuse may isolate me from those I love and manipulate others against me, and undermine my relationships including my parenting. They may commit physical, verbal, emotional or sexualised abuse, and they may threaten or abuse my children, friends or family, pets, property, and things that are important to me as a means to control me. They may steal, control or undermine my finances, or my ability to work or be financially independent. They may try to use my beliefs and spirituality to control and isolate me. The person abusing me may change the nature of their behaviour rapidly, without warning, significantly changing the realities I face."

Every social and service responder is an active social agent in representing violence.

How has my lived experience of violence and abuse been understood, described and written about?



Learn more through the Masterclass on Language and Violence video and Resource Kit via the [Language Lab](http://www.insightexchange.net) on www.insightexchange.net