

My Safety Kit – Prototype 1.0

Feedback Report August 2019

When DVSM developed [Follow My Lead](#) for social responders, we had every intention of also developing the complimentary/cousin resource '*My Safety Kit*' for people experiencing domestic and family violence.

We strategically prioritised the development of *Follow My Lead* first because the responses of others are so significant for victims of violence, yet easily de-prioritised and underestimated in their value. Now that *Follow My Lead* has been live for 12 months and has strong and growing engagement, we have proceeded with the development of *My Safety Kit* in prototype format.



What has informed My Safety Kit?

Drawing from the insights learned through our *Concepts of Safety Project*, the learning since the inception of [Insight Exchange](#), and listening to communities we support, we developed *My Safety Kit Prototype 1.0* and sought online anonymous feedback from people with lived experience of violence and people in formal and informal responding roles.

My Safety Kit is designed to:

- Speak and feel like the property of the person – it is in the first person
- Promote and value self-reflection about what is going on which may include uneasiness in some areas and not others
- Support reflection that doesn't make the definition of DFV the determinant of meaning or support
- Widen the contemplation out from crisis focus and crisis decisions only
- Widen the reflection to travel through the wellbeing domains which may not have seemed relevant or connected or validated by services/society
- Reveal that violence is deliberate
- Address common myths that person being abusive is of 'out of control'
- Acknowledge that victim blaming is prevalent and unjust
- Acknowledge that choosing who to talk to and how is careful work
- Acknowledge that people experiencing abuse are doing all they can – they don't 'let it happen'
- Brings in resistance and responses by exploring what lengths people are going to already to uphold their dignity, stay safe and well (including their children and people they care for)
- Inform people that services may ask questions from risk and safety assessment tools for example in NSW the Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool (DVSAT) (which we include a link to with introduction – not as endorsement but as real world likelihood they will be asked these questions at some point when seeking support from services and so more informed and less surprised by these questions, or at least know the purpose they are used for)

The underlying intention of *My Safety Kit* (as described above) was not shared within the feedback process so as not to influence the individual experience, views and responses.

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Who gave feedback?

Group	Participants	Who
01	10	Individuals reached through networks – public and professionals
02	4	Participants in Practice Exchange 2019
03	8	Employees working in DVSM Services
All	22	1 of the 22 individuals (from Group 3) did not give consent to share their feedback therefore the report represents the feedback of 21 individuals.

21 of the 22 participants giving feedback gave consent for DVSM to use their comments (in part or in full) to improve future versions of **My Safety Kit** and to support related Insight Exchange initiatives.

About the people providing feedback

100% of respondents are anonymous

23% identified as being a child survivor of domestic and family violence

57% identified as experiencing (or have lived experience) of domestic and family violence.

42% identified as formally responding (directly or indirectly) to domestic and family violence in their workplace

9% identified as informally responding (directly or indirectly) to domestic and family violence in their workplace

86% identified they have already read *Follow My Lead* before responding to feedback on *My Safety Kit*.

Feedback about My Safety Kit

20/21 said they think *My Safety Kit* is offering something new that is needed

1/21 said it offers something different however it won't be used or useful

“This is **what I like** about *My Safety Kit*:”

- Accessible language Person-centered. Practical tools within the kit. Thought-provoking prompts which make me reflect on my experience. Pages 23,24,27 super useful for intake & assessment and client-led safety planning
- Acknowledging victims' behaviours are due to the trauma/violence experienced.
- Clear, concise information and descriptions about family and domestic violence. Highlights situations someone might find themselves in, that they may have not realised is domestic violence. Asking questions to help someone identify ways their own sense of safety is being compromised - useful as violence can span over many different areas of life. DVSA link - providing victims with information, allowing them to take part in assessing their own risk. Have not seen this in other resources
- Everything is clearly presented for someone to read with ease.
- I believe the information, language and questions are very respectful, pertinent, practical and empowering for victims of DFV.
- I like that it "walks" the reader through the different aspects in a very measured way - encouraging reflection and deeper thinking. The text speaks directly to the woman reading it. It feels very personal. A very different perspective than the usual material. It really brings the wellbeing wheel to life.
- I value the information because it gives me a sense of comfort and that there are many ways to be supported
- It covers all the different aspects of wellbeing. It supports the notion that the survivor is the expert of their own experience and understands their own safety more than others can.
- It is easy to read and understand yet comprehensive in the information provided.
- It is encouraging for someone who has experienced domestic violence on how they can start taking back control in their lives.
- It is thorough and reflects on an individual's personal safety as well as the people that they care for. I also like that it addresses the question '*Why is this happening to me?*'
- Resource is written in the 1st person- information is derived from lived experiences.
- Safety. Not my fault. Not alone
- Summary pages, spaces for comment
- That you are not alone and it's not your fault
- The layout is clear. The information isn't overwhelming, and I believe it leaves space for the reader to reflect.
- The way unspoken questions are answered
- This is a very comprehensive guide to help someone identify the comprising position they might be in and once you identify that your safety is compromised within your home by your partner, you can then start to think about how to build your safety back up and change your situation. In summary, it is the education and empowerment piece that I value most about this document.
- Validates peoples lived experience. Provides good examples and thoughts someone may be having in a DV relationship. Extremely practical. Everything that is needed for safety planning is in one place. Perfect resources for professional or someone in a DV relationship and needs some support. Nothing I can see that would need to be added or changed.
- Very easy to follow

“This is **something I noticed** within *My Safety Kit* that I didn't know or hadn't thought much about before:”

- A resource that explains to victims how their behaviours might be perceived by others while coping with domestic violence. Explanation that these are responses to the violence, not necessarily a mental illness or default of their own. This is a new way of empowering a victim, as most resources focus on telling the person what violence is, compared to giving them space to identify what constricts their sense of safety. Using individuals' sense of safety as a key element to describe and define domestic violence. The decision-making tool - excellent addition
- Giving confidence to victims of how to get out of the violence/family abuse on starting a new journey.
- Having a document that puts language to common feelings brings to the light the guilt or self-blame felt by many (pg 24). Feels more transparent and inclusive e.g. sharing the link to DVSA.
- *My Safety Kit* is very helpful and a much-needed resource. Please add the 1800RESPECT phone number as a positive support for lived experience of DV, it has been a positive counselling support for a family member in my own personal life.
- Not alone. Awareness
- Not that I didn't know but I feel like it reflects on real questions individual ask of themselves which I haven't seen done before
- That some people really struggle with knowing what is wrong and right in a real and this provides them with the ability to see what they are entitled to
- That the written information can come from within the person (1st person expression) not from persons outside of the experience and written as a professional resource.
- The statement below has given me a new perspective on control. “The person abusing me tries to suppress my resistance by limiting my access to material and economic basics, such as food, housing, clothing, money and my financial assets. If they can undermine my material and economic wellbeing, they will be more able to use violence.”
- The variety of rights we have to reach out and seek the advice and support we really need
- The what is available and who can support me section of the kit. I have gone around in circles trying to find this information and when I thought I found it, I still wasn't sure if it was the right resource to help me.
- There is so much support through systems out there and to never be afraid to speak up

Is there anything harmful within *My Safety Kit*?

17/21 said *My Safety Kit* is not harmful

1/21 said they are not sure

3/21 no comment

Zooming In:

Responses from participants who are experiencing or had experienced Domestic and Family Violence
11/11 said they don't think there is anything harmful.
<p>There were three related comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the whole I don't see anything harmful. Being written from the woman's perspective is great but there were times when I felt the text to be a little too emphatic and negative. eg p 31 the first paragraph. I think it is often the case that resistance achieves small victories which may not make much difference overall but are meaningful to the woman and thus helps avoid falling into hopelessness. No, everything from my perspective is positive ways to understand what specific issues are and the specific support. e.g. helplines It feels considered and cautious in language used.
Responses from other participants
<p>4 /10 participants said they don't think there is anything harmful</p> <p>1/10 participant made no comment</p> <p>1/10 participant said they were not sure</p>
<p>There was one related comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do not think there is anything harmful however I am not sure how it can be reduced but there is a lot of content and I think that as a resource something of that size can lose its impact on the person reading it. It is very informative so taking out any content is difficult as it is all useful.

Is there anything **unhelpful** within *My Safety Kit*?

18/21 My Safety Kit is not unhelpful

3/21 no comment

Zooming In:

Responses from participants who are experiencing or had experienced Domestic and Family Violence
<p>9/11 said they don't think there is anything unhelpful.</p> <p>1/11 commented on the length (see last bullet in the related comments below)</p> <p>1/11 no comment</p>
<p>There were three related comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm sure you are well aware that this document is going to speak more readily to educated perhaps middle-class women but may be less accessible to less literate women. This is not a criticism of this kit but just a recognition of the fact that it will speak to a particular audience. • I do believe it's helpful to someone needing assistance • It gives me knowledge of what my new path is and how I'm provided with support • It's very helpful • All the information is really insightful • This is actually a brilliant kit if given to the intended audience at the right time. • It's a large document and there's some great tools further in. My question is whether women would get all the way through, especially in times of crisis. We would probably look to pull some of the pages/prompts out and weave them into current intake and assessment or first client meeting with support worker
Responses from other participants
<p>6/10 participants said they don't think there is anything harmful</p> <p>4 /10 participants made no comment</p>
<p>There were three related comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are times when it is more difficult to understand. I am not clear on the benefit of why it is written in the first person, when it seems that it is trying to guide survivors through a safety planning process. Some of the wording is too complex, for instance: "What kinds of things am I having to do about my learning and growth to stay safe and well?" This question is not clear, and I would imagine is quite difficult to answer (at least without an explanation or discussion to clarify). Perhaps an example could be given.

- I think this is a very helpful tool however from a cultural perspective I don't think any or very few of my Aboriginal clients will have the capacity to get through it all.
- I thought the information on page 2 should start with MY SAFETY KIT statements at the top as the material just starts in the middle of nowhere as it is now. The info needs context before it goes into the 1st 3 paragraphs in the draft

Is there something significant missing within *My Safety Kit*?

Responses from participants who are experiencing or had experienced Domestic and Family Violence

1. From my experience going from one refuge to another being Lebanese Muslim background I found it humiliating and embarrassing for me to ask for financial help, and to even discuss my situation as I felt it was only going through it. Till I got one of the staff from Catholic Care telling me about this website that it is incredible helpful to any age and race. <https://askizzy.org.au/>

Response:

- Ask Izzy has been included in the services listed (The services list was scheduled to be populated post prototype feedback)

2. Maybe touching on religious/cultural abuse for victims who may find it confusing to determine if they are experiencing violence or cultural differences. Perhaps a link, or statement explaining no matter what religion or cultural background you are from human rights are universal, no person should have these limited or have cultural and religious beliefs used as an excuse to restrict or deny information/choices/equal decision making

Response:

- This feedback was provided early by the first participant and was applied into the prototype version. This was not raised as a gap by the other 20 participants.

3. No I found very helpful for when you are anxious scared and worried
4. The timing of when the intended audience is given this kit or has access to this kit is crucial but not mentioned anywhere on the kit. Domestic violence happens in phases as you don't just wake up and all of a sudden, you're not safe and need a safety kit. This kit would need to be given to someone at the very first signs they are starting to feel unsafe, the first doubt, the first gut feeling. then they can seek support before more damage is caused to themselves or their children. If someone experiencing domestic violence knows that if they don't do anything about it in phase 1 then the violence will go to phase two causing more damage and so on.

Response:

- *My Safety Kit* is designed to be self-service resource i.e. a person can read and re-read it on their own terms and timing.
- Because we may never know when a person is first asking questions the challenge will be to make *My Safety Kit* a resource that is made available broadly to support early and repeat access.
- Access to *My Safety Kit* is not designed to be determined by a responder or professional – the person can read it as/when they choose to with our without asking for a copy or without anyone knowing.

Responses from other participants

5. I believe the following should be added:

- a) Although electronic communications & Social Media are mentioned, I think the term 'Technology Facilitated Abuse' (TFA) is a huge area that effects 90% of victims should be used.

Response:

- Technology Facilitated abuse is now inserted into the DFV definition as explicit and standalone. The stalking description remains in the definition, however trimmed to avoid duplication.
 - Stalking; for example harassment, intimidation or coercion of the other person's family in order to cause fear or ongoing harassment.
 - Technology facilitated abuse; for example harassment, impersonation, monitoring/stalking, threats and punishment through mobile phones and other devices, social media and online accounts (like email and banking)
- Resources from the eSafety Commission are in the links for further depth

- b) 1800respect is phone support service (info, counselling & referrals) for women as well as men

Response:

- 1800 has been included in the services listed (The services list was scheduled to be populated post prototype feedback)

6. I think a specific Safety plan-example/ template with more details & prompts should be added.

Response:

Excerpt from the context set at the front of this prototype feedback:

My Safety Kit is designed to:

- Speak and feel like the property of the person – it is in the first person and they are not getting talked to or at.
- Promote and value self-reflection about what is going on which may be uneasiness in some areas and not others
- Support reflection that doesn't make the definition of DFV the determinant of meaning or support
- Widen the contemplation out from crisis focus and crisis decisions only
- Widen the reflection to travel through the wellbeing domains which may not have seemed relevant or connected or validated by services/society
- Reveal that violence is deliberate
- Address common myths that person being abusive is of 'out of control'
- Acknowledge that victim blaming is prevalent and unjust
- Acknowledge that choosing who to talk to and how is careful work
- Brings in resistance and responses by exploring what lengths people are going to already – effort and or loss to stay safe & well (or their children)

- Acknowledge that people experiencing abuse are doing all they can – they don't 'let it happen'
- Inform people that they may be asked questions from the DVSA (which we include a link to with introduction – not as endorsement but as real world likelihood they will be asked these questions at some point when seeking support from services and so more informed and less surprised by these questions, or at least know the purpose they are used for)
- Where reflections lead to contemplation or clarity about decisions the decision-making tool has been included.
- Links under each of the domains enable the reader to know there are many websites/places to explore further. Some of these will hold safety planning ideas for/when leaving.

7. I think it should have something that alerts victims of DFV to the fact that many professionals (Psychologists, Social workers, Doctors, Lawyers etc) don't have specific training or experience in recognizing & responding to DFV (& the potential emotional harm this can cause). Therefore, the tool kit should provide a set of questions they could ask potential service providers/professionals first to maximize their chances of finding appropriately qualified counsellors, case workers, lawyers etc in DFV. Ultimately, I think we need a separate resource that lists suitably qualified professionals trained in DFV so it reduces the risk of victims of DFV being re-traumatized (as they often are).

Response:

The suggestion of appropriately qualified professionals is out of scope for this initiative/resource.

To make small steps on this point:

- A statement has been added around how every discipline/professional has not being trained and ready is included on a new slide that acknowledges this and signposts the reader to:
 - Follow My Lead
 - 'Guide to Selecting a Counsellor' as one example
 - Insight Component – lived experience insights of others
 - Videos on Insight Exchange

8. I don't think that there is anything missing however I do believe it is very long and may lose its impact on the audience it is intended for.

Response:

- Content on each page of *My Safety Kit* has been designed to sit in chunks that fit safely together even if the reader doesn't read further or in order.
- The final design brief includes the need to ease the feel of length and make it more user friendly to dip in and out of

9. I like the idea of placing some information into the kit about what a healthy relationship is. Lots of people do not have any idea what values a healthy relationship hold. They just go along with what they have or what they see around them. Indicating what a good/healthy relationship looks like gives persons another possibility or allows them to see that maybe what they have is not positive or healthy.

Response:

- Relationships are unique, dynamic and contextual, *My Safety Kit* centres on the importance of equality, as a lens to travel through the wellbeing domains.
- *My Safety Kit* is not defined by or limited to intimate partner violence and can include a range of relationships

10. Maybe add Link2Home number (I may have missed it)

Response:

- Linked2Home has been included in the services listed (The services list was scheduled to be populated post prototype feedback)

11. Add a crisis section like 'what to do if I need to leave now'

- *add things like who would I call (police, trusted people),
- *what I need to take (id, birth certificates, important documents)
- *where I can go (family or friends, housing TA etc)'
- *how to increase my safety (location services, not disclosing locations etc)

In my experience these things are crucial in the moment to have a super explicit list that people can follow

Response:

- See response to Question 6

12. My only negative comment is that it appears too busy with too many words for those who have English as a 2nd language

Response:

- This is an ongoing challenge and we will rely on feedback loops about what has/hasn't been useful to improve iterations and to discern whether translated versions would be valuable
- See earlier comments in question 8 re content chunking and design benefits

Would you share *My Safety Kit*?

10/21 I will be using My Safety Kit in my world or work

15/21 I will be passing copies of My Safety Kit to people with lived experience of domestic and family violence

14/21 I will be using My Safety Kit within conversations I have with people with lived experience of domestic and family violence

Who would you share *My Safety Kit* with?

14/21 I will be supplying copies of (or links to) *My Safety Kit* to stakeholders, partners, collaborations they work with or people they influence and named the following sectors:

- Community
- Domestic violence services
- Homelessness services
- Counselling services
- Families of identified DV/FV as abuse is often inter-generational
- GPs
- School
- Local businesses around the North Ryde area to raise awareness
- Mental health professionals in hospital & community settings, private practice & universities
- NGO's
- Domestic Violence Shelters
- Counsellors
- Lawyers
- Schools and day-cares - to offer to families at their discretion, or to keep in a handouts area free for anyone to pick up
- This is a tool I could take to community education session
- I feel this is more for people who are thinking of leaving or have left recently
- It will fill a gap where there is currently nothing like it.

Who else do you wish had access to *My Safety Kit*?

Participants who are experiencing or had experienced Domestic and Family Violence	Other Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Departments • First responders in all areas of the community services industry. I think it would be also beneficial for the police to have as a tool for when they respond to people. • FACS • Correctives Service • Hospitals • Anyone and everyone • GPs and doctors' surgeries • Refuges • Centrelink • Housing • First line responders (e.g. DV line) • Child protection/docs • Community health centres • Women's health centres • Coles and Woolworths - places that are easily accessible, easy to be picked up anonymously • Caseworkers • Most women in my life • legal aid • Law firms • Ambulances • Police and Police stations • Courthouses • Newsagencies • Service stations • Libraries • Schools • Teachers • Counsellors • All workplace HR Managers • Domestic Violence Legal Service • First Responders to DV - Ambulance/Hospitals • WDVCAS • FACS • Schools specifically counsellors • Management in businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allied health • GP's • Emergency Rooms • Emergency Services • Schools for distribution • Psychologists - especially those in private practice & working in university & TAFE settings • All mental health professionals as so often victims of violence are pathologized with MH labels/diagnoses versus getting recognition for their resistance to perpetrators, that has had negative effects on their health. • High school students as they very often don't understand all the forms of DFV • Everyone, domestic violence charities • Refugee services and migrants • Other organisations • Churches/religious places of worship • Community centres • Hospitals