



Glossary for the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions

The National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions (NOSPI) will set standards for the way our governments and community partners respond to and engage with male perpetrators of domestic, family and sexual violence.

Governments acknowledge that both men and women can be perpetrators or victims of domestic, family and sexual violence. However, evidence shows that domestic, family and sexual violence are forms of violence most often committed by men against women and their children.

The glossary below defines the meaning of key terms for the purposes of the NOSPI to help people understand their intended scope and application. The definitions listed in the glossary have been developed through extensive consultation among Australian governments as well as with stakeholders in the domestic, family and sexual violence sectors.

The NOSPI definitions generally follow the definitions used in the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*. Please note the definitions may differ from the technical and legal definitions used for specific purposes, for example in government legislation.

Forms and acts of violence

Domestic, family and sexual violence are forms of violence which consist of both criminal offences and civil offences. In Australia, each state and territory has their own legal definitions of what constitutes domestic and family violence and what constitutes sexual assault. It is important to note that the definitions outlined here for the NOSPI are generally broader than legal definitions of what constitutes an offence.

Violence against women can be described in many different ways. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women observes that the term ‘violence against women’ means:

‘any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.’

Domestic violence is carried out by someone against a person who is currently or formerly their intimate partner. It can include physical, sexual, emotional and psychological and other forms of abuse. Repeating, or threatening to repeat acts of abuse over time, is a defining feature of domestic violence. Domestic violence can happen in any setting but often takes place in the home of one or both of the partners involved.

Family violence refers to violence committed by someone against a family member or members, as well as violence against an intimate partner. It involves the same sorts of behaviours as described for domestic violence.

The term 'family violence' is the most widely used term to identify the experiences of Indigenous people, because it includes the broad range of marital and kinship relationships in which violence may occur.

Sexual violence is behaviour of a sexual nature directed toward a person which makes that person feel uncomfortable, distressed or threatened, and to which that person has not freely given consent, or which involves another person using physical, emotional, psychological or verbal force or coercive behaviour against that person. Sexual violence can take place in the context of family or domestic violence (e.g. an act of sexual violence committed against an intimate partner or a family member) or outside of the family or domestic violence context (e.g. an act of sexual violence committed by a neighbour, work colleague, co-tenant, carer, or stranger).

The term '**sexual assault**' is commonly used to describe a legally-defined criminal offence which involves physical assault of a sexual nature directed towards another person without their consent. This includes a range of behaviours legally defined as sexual crimes such as rape, sexual assault with implements, being forced to watch or engage in pornography, forced prostitution, and being made to have sex with friends of the perpetrator.

For the purposes of the NOSPI, legally-defined sexual assault offences are a sub-set of sexual violence. The NOSPI will use the term 'sexual violence' as a general term that covers both the broad experiences and the legally-defined offences and will specify whenever there is a reference to sexual violence that does not cover both these definitions.

Physical violence includes slaps, shoves, hits, punches, pushes, being thrown down stairs or across the room, kicking, twisting of arms, choking, and being burnt or stabbed. These acts can take place as part of domestic and family violence, as well as sexual violence.

Psychological and emotional abuse can include a range of controlling behaviours such as isolation from family and friends, continual humiliation, threats against children or being threatened with injury or death. These acts can take place as part of domestic and family violence, as well as sexual violence.

Financial abuse can include control of another person's money or other assets. It can involve, for instance, stealing cash, not allowing a victim to take part in any financial decisions or preventing a victim from having a job. These acts can take place as part of domestic and family violence, as well as sexual violence.

People involved in acts of violence

Perpetrator is the term used in the NOSPI to describe males who commit domestic and family violence against women or children, or who commit sexual violence against women. The term 'sexual violence offender' can also be used to describe male perpetrators of sexual violence in the context of clinical services for sex offenders. It is important to note that interventions with perpetrators of child sexual abuse are not covered by the NOSPI due to the highly specialised nature of many interventions with child sex offenders.

The term perpetrator reinforces the serious nature of domestic, family and sexual violence. The term is intended to cover all men who commit one or more identified acts of domestic or family violence against women and their children, or sexual violence against women, whether or not they have ever been arrested, charged with a crime, or had an intervention order issued against them.

Some people prefer to use the phrase 'men who use violence' because they consider it labels the behaviour rather than the person, acknowledging that their perpetration of violence does not define them, and that many of the men who perpetrate violence have experienced their own trauma and difficulties in their lifetimes.

For the purposes of the NOSPI the term 'perpetrator' will be primarily used for consistency with the National Plan, as well as to keep a focus on the serious nature of the behaviour. However, where appropriate the NOSPI may refer to 'men who use violence' with the same meaning as 'perpetrator'.

Victim/survivor is the term used in the NOSPI to describe women and their children who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence by a male perpetrator. Some people prefer to use the phrase 'women who experience violence' because they consider it labels the behaviour perpetrated against the women rather than the woman herself and acknowledges the efforts many victims of violence make to protect themselves and their children from domestic and family violence. To balance these perspectives the term 'victim/survivor' is primarily used in the NOSPI, however, the phrase 'women [and their children] who experience violence' may be used in the NOSPI with the same meaning as 'victim/survivor'.

Women and their children is the final part of the title of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children and the way it applies to the NOSPI aligns with the National Plan. The word 'children' in the phrase refers to any child being cared for by an adult who is a perpetrator or victim/survivor of domestic, family or sexual violence. Any form of domestic and family violence can harm children, whether they are directly or indirectly a target of abuse or whether they witness violence against their parent.

The system that holds perpetrators to account

Perpetrator accountability system – this is the overarching name used in the NOSPI for the range of different interventions that our governments and community partners make in response to identified acts of domestic, family and sexual violence. The primary aims of the perpetrator accountability system are to stop perpetrators' violence, hold perpetrators accountable for their violence and ensure women and children are safe and free from violence.

There are different but connected layers in the perpetrator accountability system. First, there are targeted perpetrator interventions that engage with a perpetrator directly because of their violence, or risk of perpetrating, domestic, family or sexual violence. This includes but is not limited to the structures, agencies and programmes which make decisions or orders that directly relate to perpetrators' interactions with the women and children against whom they have used violence. It also includes programmes and services that work directly with the perpetrator with the purpose of enabling him to change his violent behaviours and attitudes.

These may utilise an individualised case management strategy to plan a treatment pathway; monitor ongoing compliance and risk; and motivate a perpetrator to engage effectively with treatment.

There are also a range of services and programmes that are not directly targeted at addressing the perpetrator's violent acts but instead engage with a perpetrator to address his other associated issues that can amplify the impact of his violence or affect his readiness to change.

In addition, there are mainstream services that play an important role in maintaining women and their children's safety while other services engage directly with the perpetrator. The supporting services include but are not limited to women's support and crisis services.

The NOSPI Scope diagram (in the COAG paper) provides a visual depiction, examples and written description of the broad range of systems, structures, services and programmes that make up the perpetrator accountability system.

Perpetrator programmes – this is the overarching name used to describe the range of programmes and services that are designed to enable perpetrators to take responsibility for their violence and work towards changing their violent attitudes and behaviours. Perpetrator programmes include men's behaviour change programmes and clinical services for perpetrators of sexual violence and sexual assault.

Men's Behaviour Change Programmes – Men's Behaviour Change Programmes are one element of the domestic and family violence service system. They are usually group-based programmes that work with family or domestic violence perpetrators to enable them to accept responsibility for their violence and make attitudinal and behavioural choices towards nonviolence. The programmes can also play a crucial role in contributing to the safety of women and their children who are the victims of the man's violence.

Clinical services for sex offenders – this is one response in the broader justice system that intervenes with perpetrators of sexual assault. In Australia, sex offender programmes are largely prison-based and operate on a voluntary basis. Programmes are often intensive and targeted at moderate to high-risk offenders. They are generally delivered in a group format and generally accommodate offenders of both child and adult victims.

Intervention orders – this is a generic term that describes the range of orders that can be made by various legal and justice authorities across Australian jurisdictions, in the context of domestic and family violence, to prohibit or restrict certain behaviour. These include 'Intervention Orders' (IVOs), 'Domestic Violence Orders' (DVOs), and 'Apprehended Violence Orders' (AVOs).