



Ground-breaking opportunity to improve health, wellbeing and safety in Canberra

The Alcohol and Other Drug Safer Families Program in 2017

The ACT's specialist alcohol and other drug sector is a key partner in reducing the frequency and severity of domestic and family violence

Alcohol and other drug (AOD) use and domestic and family violence (DFV) frequently co-occur. A high proportion of AOD service consumers are likely to have experienced or used DFV, suggesting that AOD workers have an important role in detecting DFV and intervening sensitively and appropriately.

Advice to guide specific practices in responding to DFV in AOD work has been lacking. Within the context of emerging evidence and as one element of the ACT Government's broader Safer Families initiative, ACT Health engaged the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) in 2017 to undertake a rigorous and comprehensive co-design

process with specialist AOD services and DFV stakeholders, clinicians, consumer representatives, researchers and policy workers to design a program of work and companion tools to inform implementation and resourcing from 2018 onwards.

This led to the development of the ACT *AOD Safer Families Program* which aims to prevent and respond to domestic and family violence by establishing new coordinated/integrated AOD and DFV interventions within the specialist AOD service system, while concurrently enhancing the universal capacity of the service system including services, the workforce and service consumers, to respond well to DFV.

Australian-first tools were co-designed in the ACT to inform our responses to domestic and family violence in specialist alcohol and other drug settings

The first year of the *AOD Safer Families Program* resulted in a series of Australian first tools. When used together, they provide sufficient information to guide AOD practice at an organisational, program and individual worker level when working with AOD service consumers who experience or use DFV. These tools are fit-for-purpose for the ACT and can also be utilised across all Australian jurisdictions:

Item	Applicable to	Purpose
Domestic and Family Violence Capability Assessment Tool: for AOD Settings	Program/organisational level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmark and assess capacity to respond to DFV in AOD settings Plan for service enhancement/capacity building (to existing AOD treatment and support) or new coordinated/integrated AOD and DFV responses Assess and report on progress
Scope of Practice: for Working with Service Consumers in AOD Settings who Experience or Use DFV	Both program/organisational level & practice/clinical level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify roles, responsibilities, activities and decision making capacities of the AOD workforce as it relates to responding to DFV Guide services and workers on how to work safely and effectively (based on skills, qualifications and training) Inform workforce planning, training and recruitment
Practice Guide: for Responding to Domestic and Family Violence in Alcohol and Other Drug Settings	Practice/clinical level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guide practice (e.g. screening, assessment and interventions) Optimise responses and outcomes for service consumers Ensure activities funded through the <i>AOD Safer Families Program</i> are evidence based and align with clinical consensus

In addition to the above tools, stakeholders also designed an ACT-specific Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and an implementation model and guidance from 2018.

Alcohol and other drug services can deliver improved outcomes related to both alcohol and other drugs and domestic and family violence

When the *AOD Safer Families Program* model is implemented from 2018 as recommended by the ACT AOD sector with input from DFV stakeholders, the ACT community can have confidence that:

- People who access specialist alcohol and other drug services (service consumers) receive comprehensive services that more effectively respond to alcohol and other drug issues as

well as domestic and family violence and, as a consequence, have enhanced treatment outcomes.

- The ACT has a specialist alcohol and other drug service system that provides alcohol and other drug and domestic and family violence interventions that reflect sound practice and better meets community expectations of safety.
- The frequency and severity of domestic and family violence among people who have used alcohol and other drug services in the ACT is reduced.
- The health, wellbeing and safety of people who have used alcohol and other drug services, their families and friends, are improved.

For more information on the *AOD Safer Families Program* in 2017, and the materials and infrastructure that underpin it visit: www.atoda.org.au