Revisiting Safe at Home Responses to Domestic and Family Violence – what factors contribute to better safety and housing outcomes for women?

Associate Professor Jan Breckenridge
Associate Professor kylie valentine
Dr Kyllie Cripps, UNSW Sydney
Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to acknowledge that we are meeting and presenting on the traditional lands of the Larrakia people, and pay our respect to elders past, present and emerging.
National Audit of Safe at Home Programs and Operational Framework

- Funded by the Commonwealth Government (DSS & AGD)
- Includes existing Safe at Home responses and Keeping Women Safe in their Home (KWSITH)
- Builds on Meta-evaluation of Safe at Home Responses (Breckenridge et al., 2015)
What do Safe at Home responses aim to do?

- To keep women and children in their home/home of choice
- To reduce the risk of the perpetrator being present and using further violence and abuse
Four Pillars of Safe at Home Responses

Maximising women’s safety
- criminal justice responses
- proactive policing
- safety alarms
- home security upgrades

Enhancing women’s economic security
- supporting employment
- re-training

An integrated or coordinated response
- local partnerships
- vertical or horizontal integration

Homelessness prevention
- information about housing options before crisis and at separation
- support for women to maintain housing afterwards
What is the Audit looking at?

- Do Safe at Home programs increase the safety and housing stability of women and children over time?
- What evidence is there of effectiveness and in particular for women from select population groups and diverse locations?
- Do different technology options reduce risk and enhance safety?

Initial timeframe 2017-2019 – extended to 2020
What are we doing?

1. Three case studies in different jurisdictions focussed on:
   - Technology, housing and homelessness prevention, wrap around support, case management, home safety upgrades, brokerage and referral

2. Two case studies in different jurisdictions
   - Focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

3. Across all case studies
   - Focus on Older women

4. Development of a National Operational Framework
Case Study 1

- **Four sites** chosen from approximately 30 DFV service sites across the state

- **Range of technology** - personal duress alarms (PDAs), CCTV home security cameras, victim-focused smartphone applications, & electronic sweeps/scans/debugging of victims’ homes

- **Property audit &/or cyber audit** - assessing the safety of home/property & examining cyber environments such as computers, smart phones & vehicles (tracking devices) to address identified or perceived security concerns of surveillance &/or stalking
1. **What services are offered?**

### Technology
- Most women (82.3%, n=227)
  - Personal duress alarm (PDA)
- Almost 1/3 women (32%, n=89)
  - Security camera (SC)

### Other support
- DFV counselling
- Home Security Safety
- Upgrades (HSSU)
- Court support
- Referrals to other support services
- Casework support
- Case-management & ‘wrap-around support’
2. What do we know about clients and housing?

- 276 clients from four sites
- 19 -78 years (mean = 37.7yrs)
- 16% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 46% of women, reported feeling very unsafe or unsafe in their current housing

Housing at service entry
- 55.8% in rental accommodation
- 22.5% lived in their own unit/house
- 14.5% living with family or friends
- 1.4% in a women’s refuge
- 78.6% were living in a household with children and/or other family members
3. Increased feelings of safety for clients with Personal Duress Alarms if:

- in rental accommodation at service entry (as opposed to living with friends/family or refuge)
- reported feelings of safety in their current housing situation at service entry

with Security Cameras if:

- issued with IT consultant/cyber security information
- provided with other Home Security Safety Upgrades support
- thought that lighting or changed locks would improve safety
- were of an older age.
4. Needs of different groups

Data limitations, relating to the needs of different groups of women (CALD, Indigenous, women with disability). Preliminary examinations of interviews with providers showed:

Difficult to keep women in smaller towns/rural communities safe in their own homes:

“Not only does he know where she is but so does all his family, or his family might just be up the road.” – Manager

Additional Barriers

• Difficulties putting in SCs in multi tenancy properties
• Internet is needed for SCs – reception and affordability
• Trust in police required
Case Study 2

- Established SAH response

- Specialised DFV program targeting women who choose to remain in the family home or another home of their choice.

- Case-management model-needs based, integrated with key professional partnerships and flexible range of effective services are delivered to clients

- Housing focused but not housing constrained
1. What services are offered?

282 (20.5%) clients were rehoused

Most clients received an individual safety plan 867 (63.1%) or a risk/lethality assessment 835 (60.8%).

623 (45.4%) clients received safety audit in their home

Clients aged 45 years+ received significantly fewer total SAH program services relative to the comparison group

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, & clients with disability received significantly more SAH program services relative to the comparison group

Social disadvantage, followed by Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander status - the most common factors associated with receiving services related to the criminal justice system, safety, housing, and economic security
2. What do we know about clients and housing?

- 1,373 clients
- Mean age 36.8 yrs
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander 14.4%
- Women with disability 13.3%

Housing at service entry
- 19.3% lived in their own unit/house
- 23.0% lived in public housing
- 36.9% lived in a private rental home
- 4.1% were homeless

Living situation at service entry
- 31.5% living in home where DV occurred
- 32.9% living in other long-term accommodation
- 2.9% living in temporary accommodation
3. Increased feelings of overall wellbeing for clients

Most clients had improvement in their overall wellbeing scores over time (except for those living in short term accommodation)

At exit significantly higher overall wellbeing scores for:

- clients who were not homeless at the time of the DFV
- clients who were living in long term accommodation at service entry
4. Needs of different groups

Both Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander clients and non-Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander clients experienced significant improvement over time.

Most clients were significantly likely to experience decreased risk. Exceptions were women who:

- were living with disability
- were homeless
- resided in short term accommodation
Case Study 3:

- Domestic violence services in this state are part of the homelessness sector.
- KWSITH funding is expanding these services to clients living in public housing properties, extending the provisions of security upgrade items & expanding available technology options.
- SAH responses assist women at risk of homelessness due to DFV.
1. What services are offered?

- Home safety audits & tailored home security packages, including the installation of locks, sensor lights and alarms
- Technological supports include personal alarms & disposable/prepaid phones for emergencies
- Safety planning assistance
- Referrals to other support services
2. What do we know about clients and housing?

• 2,540 clients
• Mean age 36.9 yrs
• Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander 15.5%
• Women with disability 2.6%
• Older women 23%

Most clients were renting at the time of intake (66.9%) & exit (64.3%)

A smaller proportion were homeowners at intake (18.1%) & exit (16.6%)
3. Factors influencing goals achieved at exit (no client outcome or wellbeing data available at present)

- Stable housing and home ownership
- Having fewer prior engagements with DV services
- Having higher initial DV risk scores
- Not having mental health issues
- Were aged 46 years+
- Having a higher number of brokerage services
4. Needs of different groups

Clients who were significantly less likely to achieve their goals:

- experienced mental health, drug/alcohol issues
- received sustainable housing or SHP services
- were Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander
Some Preliminary Findings

- Overall positive outcomes for clients
- Most clients experienced increased feelings of safety or wellbeing from entry to exit (exception those living in temporary accommodation)
- Being in long-term accommodation (including home-ownership & rental accommodation) is associated with positive SAH response outcomes
Some Preliminary Findings

- Older women benefited from security cameras
- Older women were more likely to achieve their service goals
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander women were less likely to achieve their goals
- Both Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander clients & non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander clients experienced decreased risk over time
Some Preliminary Findings

Clients were more likely to have improved safety at case closure if they:

- resided in their own home or a rental house at the time of the DFV
- resided in long term accommodation at service entry
- they were not living with disability
For more information, contact:

Mailin Suchting
Manager
Gendered Violence Research Network
E. m.suchting@unsw.edu.au
T. +61 2 93852991

Gendered Violence Research Network
School of Social Sciences
University of New South Wales
E. gvrn@unsw.edu.au

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