

CHIFVC COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

SESSION 1: Working Towards a Coordinated Response to Family Violence

The Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee (CHIFVC) hosted its inaugural Community of Practice forum on 23 November at The Ballarat Mining Exchange. More than 60 attendees from a range of sectors came together to work towards a coordinated response to family violence for the region.

“This is the first of a series of cross-sectoral Community of Practice forums we are planning to enable practitioners and managers to exchange their knowledge and insights, and help shape a better system,” said Libby Jewson, CHIFVC Deputy Chair and Executive Officer of WRISC Family Violence Support Services.



Facilitated by Kristen Sheridan from ShantiWorks, the forum explored key principles for working in partnership, a shared understanding of family violence, better practice models for a coordinated system, and opportunities for systemic change.

Kristen encouraged the group to be brave and have hope for a strong and coordinated future system for the Central Highlands community. “There is a need for strong policies and processes to be in place, a need to ‘own’ your own role in the system, and show leadership at every level.” She asked participants to reflect on what they and their organisation have to offer, and to harness opportunities to share learning and influence practice.



One approach drawn on in discussions was the ‘Duluth Model’ - an ever evolving way of thinking about how a community works together to end domestic violence. This model shifts responsibility for victim safety from the victim, and supports a coordinated community response through building a shared commitment and establishing written policies and agreements.

Discussions throughout the day also highlighted the importance of culture and addressing gender stereotypes and roles through primary prevention activities, the accountability of perpetrators, and empowering the voice of those affected by family violence.

The next Community of Practice will take place in the first half of 2018 and all practitioners, workers and managers from the family violence, health, legal, justice, education and other related sectors involved in addressing family violence are invited to join the group.



“Our approach is founded on a common commitment to support victims of family violence in our communities, to identify gaps and work together for better outcomes” said Libby. “This first Community of Practice provides a strong platform to continue the conversation about the challenges we face and the design of new solutions – as part of state-wide reforms underway in this area.”