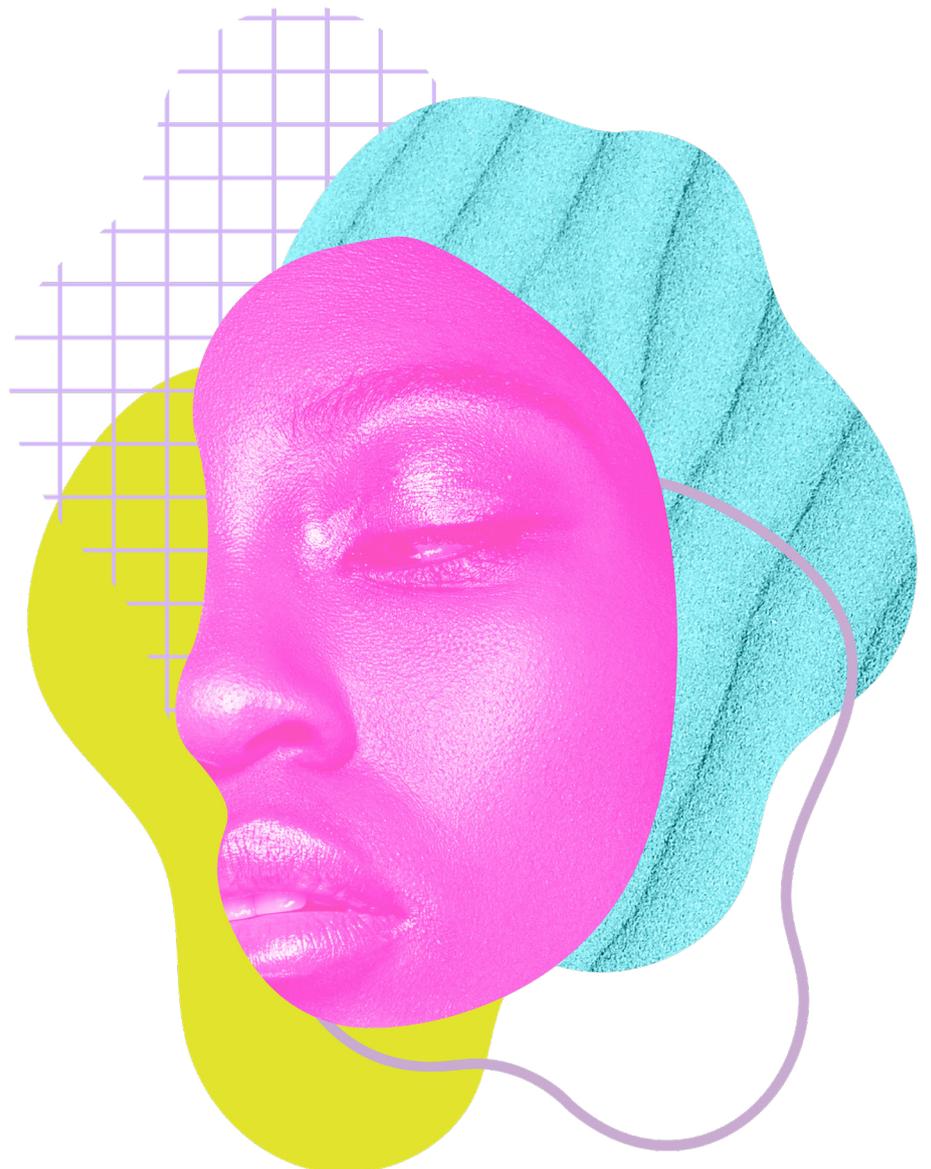
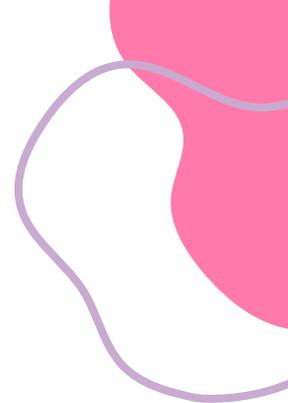


Disrupting Harmful Responses in Family Violence work

Working with the 4 P's - Policy, Procedure, Process and Practice
A Practice Guide for Family Violence Responders





A Practice Guide for Family Violence Responders

Start here: ethical positioning and responsibility

Use the Ethical Anguish Tool to notice discomfort, unease, or dissonance in your work. Ethical anguish often signals a collision between professional obligation and ethical responsibility. This discomfort is not failure - it is a signpost for disruption.

Activism in practice is essential for the safety of people experiencing violence and for your own ethical wellbeing. See yourself as a potential risk within systems, and act with informed, reflective responsibility.

Disruption is not measured by the P's we change, but by the P's we try to change.

1. Disrupting Policy

Risk: Policy is treated as neutral, fixed, or protective, even when it produces harm.

Disruptive practice actions

Ask explicitly:

Is this policy trauma-informed, resistance-aware, and context-sensitive...

Who does this policy protect - and who does it expose to harm?

Where policy conflicts with safety or dignity, name the conflict rather than silently absorbing it.

Use supervision and internal feedback mechanisms to raise specific policy harms.

Documentation prompts

“This policy limits my ability to respond ethically because...”

“Application of policy X reduced safety by...”

“Alternative response required to preserve dignity and context.”

Key reframe

Questioning policy is not insubordination. It is ethical responsibility.

2. Disrupting Procedure

Risk: Procedures are followed automatically, stripping away context.

Disruptive practice actions

Pause before acting and ask:

What assumptions does this procedure make about intent, credibility, or risk?

Where possible, slow the process to allow space for context, resistance, and informed judgement.

Adapt procedural steps to prioritise dignity, safety, and relational understanding, not speed or compliance.

Escalate concerns when procedures silence resistance or punish complexity.

Documentation prompts

“This procedure assumes neutrality where coercive control is present.”

“Following standard steps would have increased risk due to...”

“Procedural deviation was necessary to uphold safety and dignity.”

Key reframe

Procedures are tools, not moral authorities. Ethical discretion is part of professional competence.

3. Disrupting Process

Risk: Decision-making processes invisibilise harm, reward credibility performances, and erase context.

Disruptive practice actions

Map the process:

Who gets heard? Who is believed? Who must prove themselves?

Ask:

Whose interests does this process centre? Who is marginalised or excluded?

Actively challenge claims of “neutrality” where context has been stripped away.

Identify when processes are being used strategically by perpetrators to extend control.

Mapping prompts

“This process amplified the perpetrator’s narrative by...”

“The person experiencing violence was required to...”

“System access was restricted through...”

Key reframe

Processes are not passive. They produce outcomes, power, and harm.

4. Disrupting Practice

Risk: Practice collapses complexity into surface behaviour, emotion, or credibility cues.

Disruptive practice actions

Ask explicitly:

Move beyond descriptions like 'emotional', 'calm', 'uncooperative'.

Analyse behaviour in terms of intent, context, resistance, and pattern.

Centre resistance:

What has this person done to survive, protect, or reduce harm?

Refuse documentation that flattens experience or reproduces stereotypes.

Use your notes as a site of ethical resistance, not administrative compliance.

Documentation essentials

Context of coercive control

Acts of resistance (small, strategic, constrained)

System constraints shaping behaviour

Where ethical anguish emerged and why

Key reframe

Good documentation does not simplify. It holds complexity with care.

Holding yourself ethically

Expect pushback when disrupting the 4 P's - this often confirms you are working against harm, not creating it.

Use supervision to track ethical strain, not just case risk.

Remember: Neutrality is not safety.
 Compliance is not protection.

Disrupting systems abuse is not about heroics. It is about small, consistent acts of collective ethical resistance that interrupt harm pathways and restore dignity.

This guide supports ethical and effective disruption of harmful system responses in family violence work, in that it recognises that policies influence procedures which shape processes, and ultimately practice. To work against harmful responses disruption must often begin by tracking backwards to the conditions that may drive a harmful response.

Use the Ethical Anguish Tool to reflect on discomfort or dissonance in your work – it often signals a collision between professional obligation and ethical responsibility. We must work against institutional norms that uphold harm despite good intentions. Activism in practice is essential – for the safety of those we work with and for our own ethical wellbeing. See yourself as a potential risk within systems, and act with informed, reflective responsibility.

Design Note: Fragments of Hope

The collage imagery throughout my website and handouts carries deliberate meaning and hope. Each artwork, designed by Lucie, represents the “taken parts of the self” those whose lives have been diminished by both perpetrators and systems that perpetuate injustice. The partial faces and layered shapes symbolise how women’s lives are devastated and constrained through systemic coercive control, how a perpetrator tries to dismantle her from her own core, her sense of knowing, and from all the parts of herself.

These images hold hope - as the women are “not broken” - they remain present, visible, and whole within their complexity. The bright colours reflect their true inner vibrance and the possibility of recovery, restoration, and the reclaiming of what has been dismantled and fragmented.

As responders, we hold a profound responsibility - as our actions can either compound harm or contribute to safety and dignity. From a place of safety, space and justice, the fragmented parts of herself may be restored to wholeness as they are still there. This, like the images, is the embodiment of hope.