

The PIPA Project

Positive Interventions for Perpetrators of Adolescent violence in the home

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PIPA Origins: 2014 – 2015

CIJ's 2015 report –

Opportunities for early intervention: bringing perpetrators of family violence into view.

Consistent messages throughout the research that:

- (a) Adolescent family violence was a real concern
- (b) There was no consistent response
- (c) There was no opportunity to develop a consistent response.

Conclusion: That opportunity should be created!

PIPA Broader context: 2016

- **Royal Commission into Family Violence** – standalone chapter on Adolescent family violence – Recs 123 – 128.
- **ANROWS Perpetrator Intervention funding stream announced**, with adolescent family violence a priority research area.
- In partnership with Kildonan UnitingCare, Victoria Legal Aid, Legal Aid Western Australia, & Peel Youth Services, the championship of the Children’s Court and the generous support of ANROWS - **the PIPA Project was born!**

PIPA Objectives: 2017 - 2018

- Highlighting the issue where it has not been discussed. Creating an opportunity for practitioners to come together and discuss what they see in practice but which might not be recognised in policy.
- Multi-jurisdictional – understanding the challenge across different contexts – Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania.
- Focusing not just on the problem, but on the response it receives from the service and justice system.
- Articulating what a considered response should look like.

PIPA Methodology

- Practitioner focus groups across all three jurisdictions – a total of 132 individual participants from a wide range of service types, with Tasmania still to be completed.
- Analysis of 4965 client service records from VLA representing all legal services provided to a group of 905 clients aged 10 – 17 during the period March 2015 – September 2017.
- Quantitative and qualitative case file reviews of 325 case files from Victoria Legal Aid, Youthlaw, the Children’s Court of Victoria and Western Australia Legal Aid.
- Further practitioner consultations across all states to test the findings
- Public forums to raise awareness.

PIPA Emerging data and themes from Victoria

- Gender ratio of perpetrators is largely 60/40 (large VLA data set = 38/62, 60/40 when 'marginal' cases excluded);
- Data confirms significant proportion of cases involve a child sibling as victim or witness (54% of Children's court sample);
- In a significant number of cases, the young person usually resided at a single-parented household (43% of Children's court sample);
- Victims are overwhelmingly female (80-93% across samples);
- There may be greater socio-economic diversity in FV respondents than children appearing in other Children's Court matters. (VLA comparison sample: 10% private school among AFV clients: 2% among youth crime clients);
- High levels of CP involvement (about one third) with slightly higher rate of CP involvement among girls (34% of female VLA AFV clients) than boys (28% of male VLA AFV clients).

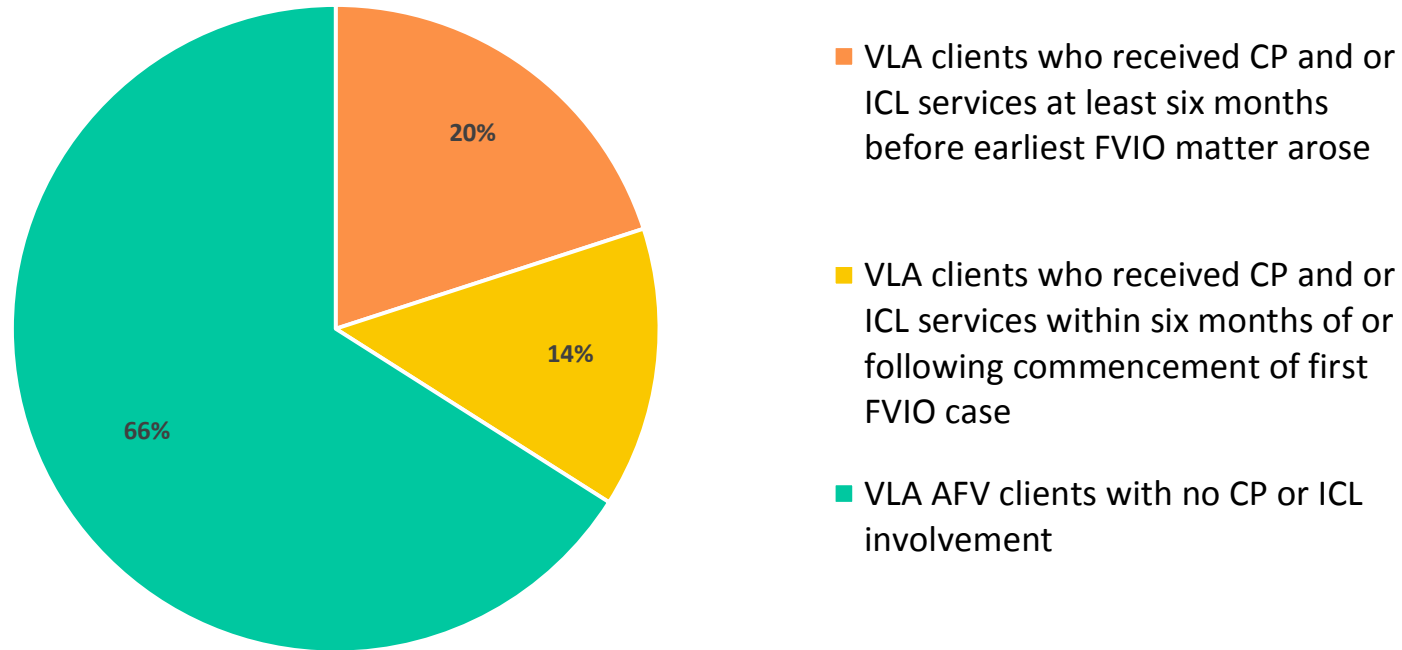
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Emerging data from Western Australia

- 100 randomly selected youth crime files from our partners, WA Legal Aid revealed:
 - Of those 100 files, 11 involved charges specifically related to AVITH – property damage and assaults in the home on caregivers, siblings etc
 - 12 further files involved charges unrelated to AVITH but revealed it as a feature of the young person’s life
 - Of those children with AVITH cases, there was evidence of exposure to family violence in 82%; for secondary or ‘background’ AVITH it was 75%; for general youth crime it was 31%

Figure 1: Adolescents who also received child protection (CP) or independent children's lawyer (ICL) services as a proportion of VLA adolescent family violence (AFV) clients September 2015-March 2017



PIPA Emerging Themes – Diversity of the problem

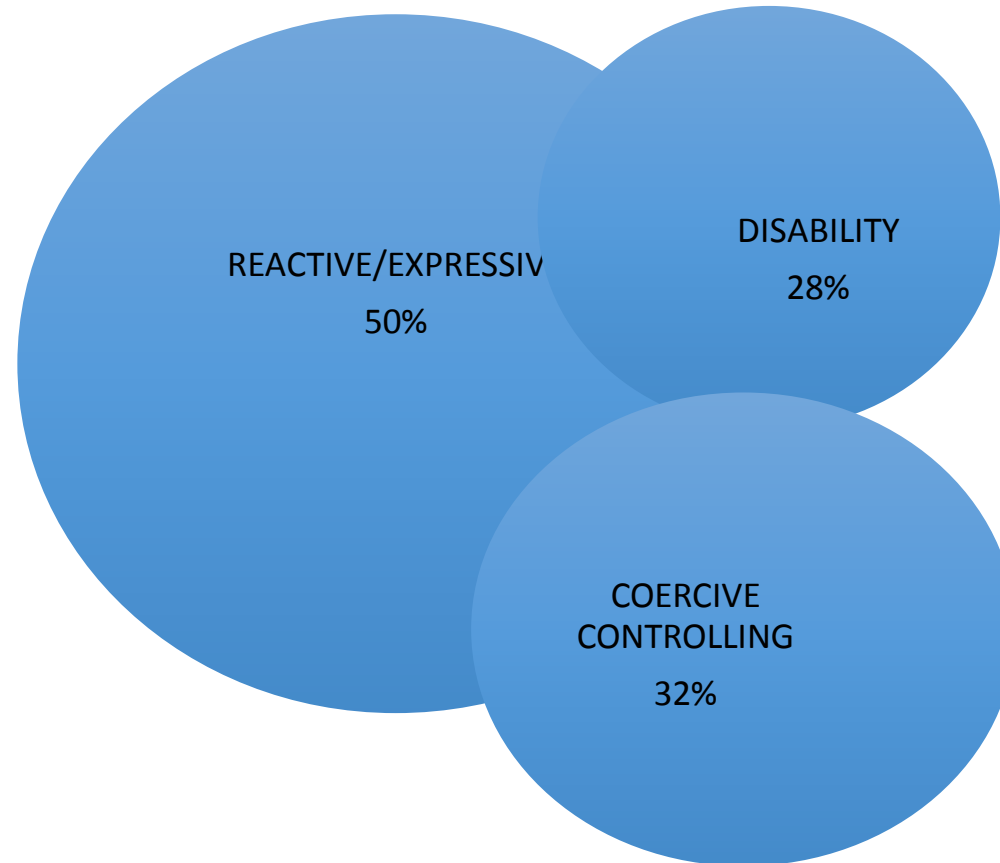
- Practitioners overall felt that a significant majority of cases involve one or a combination of disability; chaotic and multi-directional violence; or violence as learned behaviour from an adult perpetrator
- Our analysis of case narratives identifies three significant features of the violence:
 1. cognitive and/or psychosocial disability as significant factor
 2. expressive or reactive behaviour
 3. coercive violence - involving goal oriented, controlling behaviour

Many cases involve a combination of features, while in some cases one feature is predominant. In a few cases there was insufficient detail available. The overlap makes this difficult to quantify, but our *early* analysis suggests that *coercive violence* is a feature in the *minority* of cases (e.g. 32% of cases in the Youthlaw sample). Analysis of the violence is continuing.

- Levels of disability across case file samples were 45-55%, with Asperger's and ASD at 15-22%
- In 10% of cases, police callout resulted in the young person being transported to hospital due to mental health concerns
- Presence of an adult perpetrator in the family or evidence of exposure to FV was at 20-26% across Victorian samples. *
- Between 16 and 18 % are what we term 'marginal' cases and are being analysed separately (includes sexual assault outside a familial context and intimate partner violence between adolescents).

* This rate is much lower than estimates given by practitioners in focus groups, which reflects the fact that exposure to FV is not routinely asked about by police, lawyers or courts when dealing with these matters, and cases where evidence of this is recorded are only those where it has been narrated by police as part of the event narrative, or are reported in medical or psychological reports, or documented by a legal representative for a specific purpose.

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PIPA Emerging Themes – Limited options for responding

— Children’s Court outcomes for civil Family Violence Intervention Order (FVIO) applications;

- **45%** of cases resulted in a final FVIO being made by the Court
- **53%** of cases resulted in the application being withdrawn and/or struck out – generally after an adjournment period during which an interim FVIO was in place.
- In **33%** of cases an FVIO included conditions excluding the young person from the home of the Affected Family Member (AFM) – this was the young person’s usual or family home in most cases.
- In almost all exclusion cases, the order imposed was an *interim* FVIO. In about half of these cases, the young person resided in the home of an identified relative while excluded from the AFM’s home – in 24% of cases this was with the young person’s grandmother, in 12% of cases the father, in 8% with the young person’s girlfriend.

PIPA Emerging Themes – overall implications

- In many cases, there is an original perpetrator that the system has missed.
- We are imposing an adult intimate partner response on vulnerable children who are unable to comply and who may also be victims as well.
- Blunt justice system responses are inadequate.
- Huge gaps in the service system leave families vulnerable.
- One size definitely does not fit all!

PIPA Plans – where to from here?

- Reports which include the analysis from a case study/pathways approach to reflect this diversity.
- Development and testing of a framework for a considered response.
- Reporting to ANROWS later this year, publication early next year.
- Continued advocacy once the project is complete.

With thanks to Jessica Richter, Project Co-ordinator, for preparation of these slides and ongoing data analysis.

ACTING ON EVIDENCE

Knowledge. Response. Prevention.

15–17 May 2018 · Sofitel Sydney Wentworth

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