



# Men's Behaviour Change Programs in NSW

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**Men's Behaviour Change**  
Network NSW

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## What are MBCPs?

Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs) work directly with men who choose to use violence, abuse and coercive control against their partners, former partners, children, and other family members.

MBCPs engage men who use violence to reflect on how their behaviours, driven by their beliefs, attitudes and choices, have caused hurt and harm to their partners and families. MBCPs invite men to take responsibility for their choices and become safe and respectful partners, former partners and parents. They do this by providing a forum for interactive group discussions, reflections and activities using a range of techniques and approaches.

MBCPs aim to promote the dignity and safety of those experiencing harm, including women, children and young people. They do this by assessing, monitoring and responding to the risk and harm caused by the person using violence's choices by using the Risk Safety and Support Framework, an industry developed and statewide recognised common risk assessment framework. MBCPs are also informed by a whole of family approach, achieved through the Women and Children's Advocacy Service, which provides invitational, client-centred, and trauma informed support to affected family members. MBCPs apply an intersectional approach to assessment and interventions in their practice.



## What happens in an MBCP?

MBCPs work with men in a respectful and non-judgmental way to support them to change and make safe choices. This involves working with men to build their understanding of how their worldview, social context, individual life stories and intersecting factors (e.g. culture, language, mental health, ability etc.) may create barriers from them being safe parents, partners or former partners.

The group programs are delivered by two trained facilitators, usually a female and male facilitator. The facilitators role model respectful communication, collaboration, and equality within the group context.

The work with men covers a range of topics:



**exploring the gendered drivers of men's use of domestic and family violence**



**unpacking stereotypical gender roles and norms**



**exploring men's attitudes, values, beliefs and expression of privilege and entitlement in their use of violence**



**expanding men's understanding of types and tactics of violence and abusive behaviours**



**exploring the impact of men's choices to use violent and abusive behaviours towards women, children, young people, other men and themselves**



**supporting men to develop greater insight into safe and respectful behaviours and to develop practical steps to be non-violent and abusive**



**providing a supportive environment that challenges men's attitudes to seek support and engage in a space that supports and challenges growth and change**

There are different roles within MBCPs, including:

- Women and Children's Advocates who provide direct support to affected family members
- Group Facilitators who complete intake, undertake risk and safety assessment and management, and who facilitate the group work with participants
- Team Leaders and Team Managers who oversee the management and coordination of programs and often support the delivery of programs in practice

## Women's and Children's Advocacy Service

At the heart of all MBCPs is the Women and Children's Advocacy service. This service offers current partners, former partners and the children of men who participate in MBCPs support in their own right. Children are supported either directly or through support to their mothers. This service prioritises victim-survivors' safety by providing assertive outreach to family members. For some people experiencing violence, support from Women and Children's Advocates is the first time they have engaged with a domestic, family and sexual violence (DFS) service. Women and Children's Advocates walk alongside those who have experienced harm, being led by victim-survivors as the experts in their own experiences. This may include providing support regardless of a man's engagement in group work.





Women and Children's Advocates provide victim survivors with information about the MBCP group purpose, curriculum and process to prepare them for the man's participation. This is critical to manage the risks that can arise from men's participation in programs, such as men who may seek to weaponise group attendance by covertly intending to use the group for a range of purposes other than change. This service also offers a space for women and children to have a voice into the work with the men to inform the interventions and ongoing responses to risk. Current or former partners' engagement with the Women and Children's Advocacy service is voluntary, confidential and invitational. Information from or about women's and children's engagement and experience is never shared with the men participating in MBCPs.

Women and Children's Advocates offer a warm, non-judgemental, respectful environment to encourage victim-survivors to feel safe to share their lived experiences. This service includes:

- Providing education around the different forms of domestic and family violence, and their impacts on women and children
- Providing ongoing support with safety plans and risk assessments
- Providing information about what happens in a MBCP group
- Advocating on behalf of women and children
- Making appropriate referrals
- Working closely with other services

## What is a registered Men's Behaviour Change Program?

In NSW, registered MBCPs are delivered by service providers who meet the NSW Government's [Practice Standards for Men's Domestic Violence Behaviour Change Programs](#) and the [Compliance Framework for Men's Domestic Violence Behaviour Change Programs](#). Complying with these standards is a robust process that ensures professional practice and safety is upheld. A list of registered providers and their contact details can be found [here](#). Referrals can be made to registered Men's Behaviour Change Programs by contacting them directly or by calling the Men's Referral Service on 1300 766 491.

These standards ensure that practice is safe, evidence informed and aligns with legislative requirements, including relevant information sharing legislation. NSW registered MBCPs centre women and children's safety and address the drivers of domestic, family and sexualised violence and have a strong focus on holding men accountable and inviting them to take responsibility for their choice to use violence.

NSW registered MBCPs share the vision of the whole domestic and family violence sector for communities where everyone can live safely and without fear. Registered MBCPs meet regularly to collaborate, share learning, discuss best practice and support collaborative accountability.

## How MBCPs work with other services

All MBCP staff, including Women and Children's Advocates, work in a collaborative and integrated manner within the broader service system. This includes working with local specialist DFSV services, the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, and other government and non-government organisations. This practice aims to keep the person using violence in view, to promote system-wide accountability, uphold victim-survivor safety and dignity, and respond to risk.

MBCPs also work collaboratively with other services to respond to and meet participants' needs more holistically, including responding to various intersecting risk factors, for example alcohol and other drug concerns and mental health issues.

## Common myths about MBCPs

### MBCPs are not anger management programs

While MBCP practice focusses on the man to manage his own thinking, feeling and behaviour, MBCPs respond to a set of harmful beliefs, attitudes and values which drive men's entitlement and self-justification to use violence and abuse. MBCPs' purpose is to interrupt a pattern of behaviour that creates fear and limits the freedom and agency of the person experiencing violence.

### MBCPs do not provide therapy

MBCPs are trauma and violence informed programs that work with men to understand their lived experiences and provide a space to support them to reflect on where their values and belief systems originate from and how these lived experiences may contribute to their use of violence and abuse. When required, MBCPs will support and encourage men to access additional support (e.g. mental health support, alcohol and other drug support). MBCPs also acknowledge the critical importance and need for healing work for First Nations men, as well as other marginalised communities (including migrant and refugee men, people from the LGBTQIA+ communities, and those impacted by systemic racism and social exclusion) to support their change work journeys.

### MBCPs are not support groups

MBCPs are not support groups but structured group programs run by experienced facilitators who endeavour to hold men accountable for their choices, inviting them to take responsibility for their behaviour and begin a journey of change. MBCPs challenge men to seek support, endeavouring to dismantle beliefs that men may hold of being self-sufficient. Where men require additional support services, MBCPs make referrals to services that can support them with other needs.

## MBCPs choose not to collude with people using violence

MBCP practitioners are trained and supported to identify invitations to collude with men's violence-supporting narratives and beliefs. Practitioners respond in ways that centre victim-survivor dignity and safety and respectfully challenge men, keeping the focus on men taking accountability for their choices.

## MBCPs are not a quick fix

Programs vary in length between 12 and 20 weeks, and outcomes within this timeframe vary. Sustained change is dependent on men's ongoing commitment to embed the learnings from group over the longer-term, so completion of a MBCP is never a guarantee of change.

Although completing a MBCP does not guarantee a man will cease his abusive behaviour, a core component of MBCPs is the support provided to partners, former partners and to children in their own right, to empower, create safety and enable healing. The success of MBCPs might be evaluated through women and children's experiences of increased safety and autonomy and the support they receive from Women and Children's Advocates. The best measure of change may be in hearing the voices of victim-survivors themselves.