



The Practice Brief

Grounded in practice. Guided by wellbeing. Driven by change.

Welcome back to the new-look Practice Brief — a short, practical update from Sol Synergy for family violence, family services, Child Protection, drug and alcohol, mental health, and homelessness practitioners, practice leaders, and team leaders across Victoria.

GIPPSLAND FAMILY VIOLENCE SNAPSHOT

9,291

family violence incidents recorded across Gippsland

2,668

breaches of family violence intervention orders

#1

rate of incidents in Victoria — East Gippsland

Gippsland recorded 9,291 family violence incidents and 2,668 breaches of family violence intervention orders between March 2025 and March 2026 (Crime Statistics Agency). A breach is a message about intent, not a technicality to log and move past — when we treat it as paperwork, we lose the signal it's giving us about escalation.

Behind every number is a person seeking safety, a child living with the impacts of violence, and a practitioner navigating increasingly complex circumstances. East Gippsland continues to record the highest rate of family violence incidents in Victoria per head of population — a reminder of the ongoing demand on local services.

Rather than repeat the statistics, this issue asks what they mean for practice: how we assess risk, support victim-survivors, hold people using violence accountable, and keep children visible in our work.

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From breach information to safer practice

PRACTICE CONSIDERATIONS

Family violence is rarely a series of isolated incidents — the data reflects patterns of coercive control that escalate over time and require continual reassessment rather than one-off responses. Every breach is a re-assessment trigger: does it change the risk level, warrant another referral, or mean the safety plan needs updating?

Under MARAM, that reassessment should be documented within 24 hours for high-risk matters, 48 hours for other cases — a defensible standard on paper, but a harder one to hold when a breach lands on a Friday afternoon and caseloads are already significant. If your team is missing those timeframes, that's rarely a skills problem — it's usually a capacity problem dressed up as a training need.

THE IMPACT ON WORKERS

Behind every statistic is a practitioner carrying the emotional weight of this work — as demand rises, so does exposure to trauma, high-risk situations and complex decision-making, and reassessment has become a routine part of practice rather than an occasional task.

Vicarious trauma builds gradually through repeated exposure, competing priorities and less time for the reflective supervision that actually processes it, rather than just case-managing it. This isn't only an individual load to carry: leaders and managers need to ensure risk on repeat-breach cases is shared across the organisation, not carried solely by the practitioner holding the file.

TWO THINGS WORTH CHECKING THIS MONTH

Whether debriefing happens after high-risk disclosures as a matter of course, not just when someone asks for it — and whether “I'm fine” is still an acceptable answer to “how are you going?”

PRACTICE CORNER: A REAL DILEMMA

“A practitioner tells you their client has experienced three breaches in two months but doesn't want this one reported — she's worried about retaliation and doesn't trust that the intervention order will make her safer. What do you do?”

There's no clean answer, but there is a wrong instinct: overriding her judgement because the system needs a report. Client-led practice means her stated wishes carry real weight — she's the expert in her own life.

The practice move is to separate two questions — what does she want to happen, and independently, what do the risk indicators actually show — so neither quietly overrides the other. If risk indicators are escalating, that's a conversation for internal risk review and possible further referrals, not necessarily a police report against her wishes.

Document what she told you, what you assessed, and why you acted as you did — her autonomy and the service's duty of care both need to be visible in the file.



What breaches mean for people and practice

THE IMPACT ON VICTIM-SURVIVORS

Behind every breach is someone who reported unsafe behaviour and then watched the order meant to protect them be broken — repeated breaches reinforce the message that the risk hasn't gone away, keeping fear and hypervigilance active rather than letting any sense of safety settle.

Families notice whether every breach gets a consistent response, not just the ones that escalate into something visible; if we want reporting that reflects real risk rather than exhaustion with the process, responses need to be timely and transparent every time — not necessarily harsher, just visible.

Children are part of these statistics too: even when they're not the direct target, they carry the impact through fear and disrupted safety, which is why keeping them visible in our assessment and planning matters as much as anything else we do.

THE IMPACT ON PEOPLE USING VIOLENCE

Repeated breaches also say something about the effectiveness of our response to people using violence — when lower-intensity interventions aren't holding, that strengthens the case for structured behaviour change work and consistent accountability across services, courts and corrections.

Inconsistent follow-up sends the message that an order carries no real consequence; timely, coordinated responses do the opposite, using each breach as a chance to reassess risk and re-engage someone in the change process rather than just processing the incident.

IN BRIEF

Training: Safe & Together™ CORE and Refresher training is available statewide, tailored to regional and ACCO contexts — get in touch if your team wants to upskill.

Over to you: What's the practice dilemma your team keeps circling back to? Contact and let me know — the most common one shapes next issue's Practice Corner.

Communities of Practice: our next session is confirmed for Friday 31 July 2026, 11:00am–11:30am. Details via LinkedIn and email.

KEEP THE PATTERN VISIBLE

Each breach is an opportunity to reassess risk, respond consistently, share responsibility and keep children visible.



SOL SYNERGY

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Source: Gippsland Family Violence Alliance, Crime Statistics Agency (Mar 2025–Mar 2026).