

DVassist: SPECIALIST FDV SUPPORT ACROSS REGIONAL WA



SUPPORTING SAFETY, RECOVERY AND HEALING
FOR VICTIM-SURVIVORS ACROSS REGIONAL, RURAL
AND REMOTE WESTERN AUSTRALIA



CENTRE
for SOCIAL
IMPACT



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN
AUSTRALIA

EVALUATION FINDINGS JULY 2024 – JUNE 2026



DVassist provides free, specialist family and domestic violence counselling and support to people living across 65 regional, rural and remote shires in Western Australia. Its flexible, trauma-informed model combines counselling, case management, safety planning, psychoeducation and connections to other services.

510
clients
supported

1,795
counselling,
intake and case
management
sessions

1,295
multi-
session
counselling
sessions

180
clients
accessed
support via
webchat

234
clients received
case
management

Clients were reached across all major WA regions outside Perth, with the greatest proportions from the Great Southern (38%), South West (22%) and Wheatbelt (17%).

MIXED-METHODS EVALUATION



- Evaluation drawing on administrative and client outcome data, website analytics
- 23 client case studies
- 9 client interviews
- 2 counsellor and
- 3 stakeholder interviews/focus groups
- 2 podcast episodes.

WHO DID DVASSIST REACH?



97% women



56% aged 26-45



26% reported
disability



11% Aboriginal and/or
Torres Strait Islander



10% culturally and
linguistically diverse

DVassist fills a critical
gap in regional WA by
providing timely,
specialist and trauma-
informed FDV support.

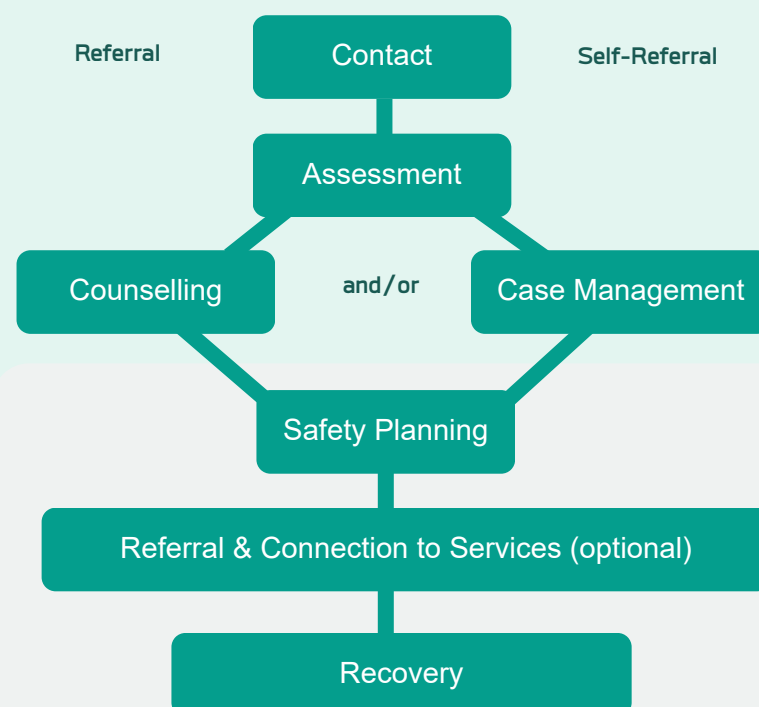
MAKING SPECIALIST SUPPORT ACCESSIBLE

A FLEXIBLE, LOW BARRIER MODEL OF CARE

DVassist's "no wrong door" approach enables victim-survivors to move between counselling, case management and referral pathways as their circumstances and needs change. Support is client-centred, trauma-informed and responsive to both immediate safety needs and longer-term healing and recovery.

95%
of referred clients were accepted by DVassist

ENGAGEMENT PATHWAY



TIMELY ACCESS

55%
received counselling support on the same day

20%
received support the following day

1.8 days
average wait to counselling among the 274 clients with available data

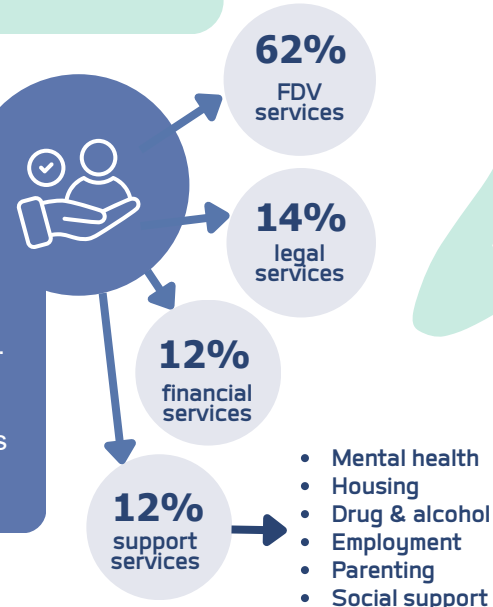
REMOVING BARRIERS THROUGH TELEPHONE AND ONLINE SUPPORT

Telephone and webchat delivery enabled clients to access specialist FDV support regardless of distance, while reducing barriers associated with travel, cost, childcare, health, safety and privacy. Clients also described telephone counselling as providing greater anonymity and emotional safety when discussing traumatic experiences.

"I loved it over the phone because I could... just let it all out."
-Client

CONNECTING CLIENTS WITH THE RIGHT SUPPORT

523 referrals were made to external services over the two-year period. DVassist provided more than a referral. Counsellors helped clients identify appropriate services, navigate applications, prepare for appointments and engage with other providers, while advocating for clients when needed.



SUPPORTING SAFETY, KNOWLEDGE AND RECOVERY

DELIVERING PSYCHOEDUCATION

95% of applicable clients reported an increase in their knowledge of where and how to access other appropriate services when they exited DVassist.

Clients described building a "toolbox" of knowledge, coping strategies and resources that increased their confidence, self-awareness and ability to continue their recovery beyond counselling.

Through tailored psychoeducation, clients learned more about:

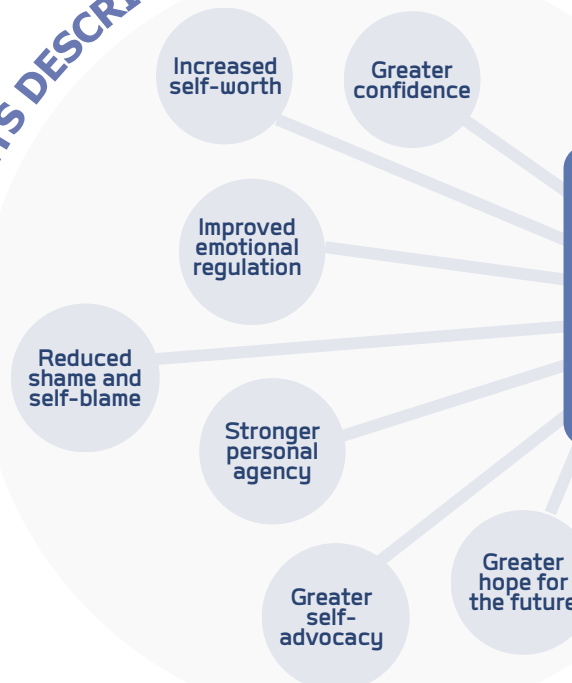
- Recognising different forms of FDV
- Coercive control
- Patterns of abuse
- Trauma responses
- Self-care
- Safety strategies
- Available supports

CLIENTS FELT SAFER AND SUPPORTED

Ongoing risk assessment, safety planning and tailored counselling helped clients develop practical strategies to increase their safety. Just as importantly, trusting therapeutic relationships created a space where clients felt heard, respected, believed and supported.

"The counselling has helped me understand [...] what I can do to make myself safe and keep myself safe in situations."
- Client

CLIENTS DESCRIBE:



IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

92% of applicable clients reported improvements in their mental health and wellbeing following counselling. Importantly, clients described benefits that continued beyond the counselling period.

"I actually couldn't imagine the last two years without DVassist. I think it's changed my life, my overall mental health, my wellbeing."
- Client

WHAT MAKES DVASSIST WORK — AND WHERE TO NEXT?



Whole-person support

Counselling and case management consider safety, mental and physical health, parenting, relationships, finances, legal issues and social connection.

Specialist FDV expertise

Counselling is informed by an understanding of the dynamics, impacts and complexity of family and domestic violence.

What makes the model effective?

Client agency and self-determination

Support builds clients' knowledge, confidence and capacity to make informed decisions and navigate services independently.

Trauma-informed and person-centred care

Support is tailored to each client's circumstances, goals, readiness and changing needs.

Continuity of care

Working with the same counsellor over time builds trust and reduces the need for victim-survivors to repeatedly recount traumatic experiences.

EXTENDING IMPACT BEYOND INDIVIDUAL CLIENTS



102,543
website users

175,736
website views

3,432
printed resources
requested for
distribution

The most viewed
resource "Am I
experiencing Domestic
Violence" received
49,716
views

GROWING DEMAND IS THE KEY CHALLENGE

Demand for specialist FDV support now exceeds DVassist's funded capacity, resulting in the introduction of a waitlist. While this protects the quality and continuity of care for existing clients, it can delay access for new clients seeking support.

WHERE TO NEXT?

- Sustained and increased investment to meet growing demand
- Greater service visibility across regional WA
- Stronger integration with referral pathways to connect victim-survivors with specialist support earlier
- Expanded integrated supports, including complementary financial, legal and practical assistance
- Continued expansion of specialist FDV support across regional, rural and remote WA



DVassist provides a timely, accessible and specialist response to a critical gap in regional WA's FDV service system. Its trauma-informed, flexible and person-centred model supports victim-survivors not only to be safer, but to build the knowledge, confidence, wellbeing and agency needed for longer-term healing and recovery.

