



CADA

Centre Against Domestic Abuse
(CADA)
Moreton Bay region



Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today, the Turrbul and Jagera people. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present. We acknowledge the resilience, strength and capacity of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Artwork: Lyndon Davis | The Lore of the Land (detail) | 2018

**“Another baby on the way
made it even harder to leave”**

Recognising and responding to reproductive coercion and
abuse within a specialist domestic and
family violence setting

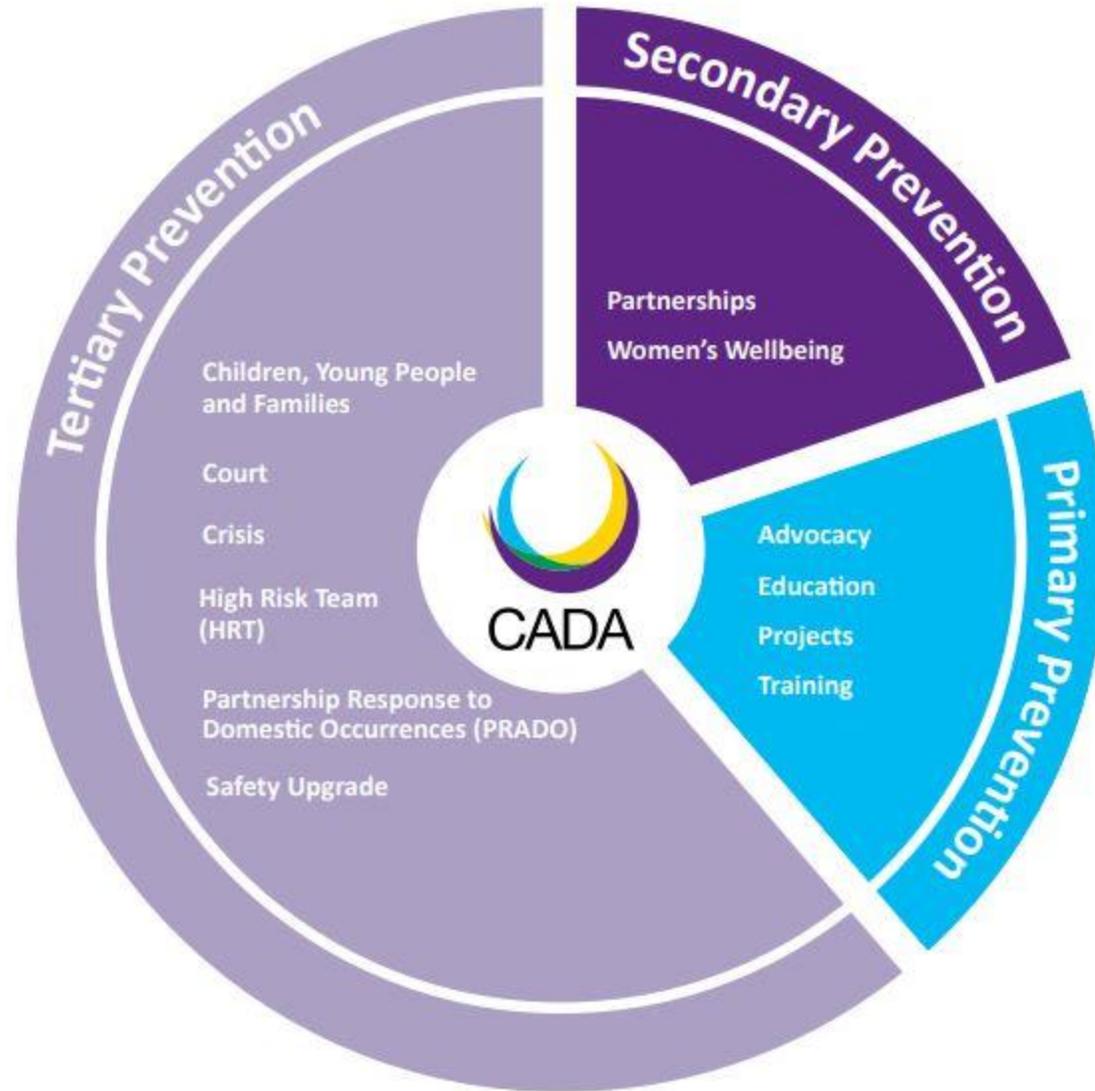
The service setting

CADA is the third largest domestic and family violence (DFV) service in Queensland with offices in Caboolture, Strathpine, Redcliffe and Morayfield.

We have been supporting people experiencing domestic and family violence in the Moreton Bay region since 1992.



CADA Circle of Support



DFV in Moreton Bay

According to Queensland Courts' data, Moreton Bay has one of the highest rates of domestic and family violence of all Local Government Areas.

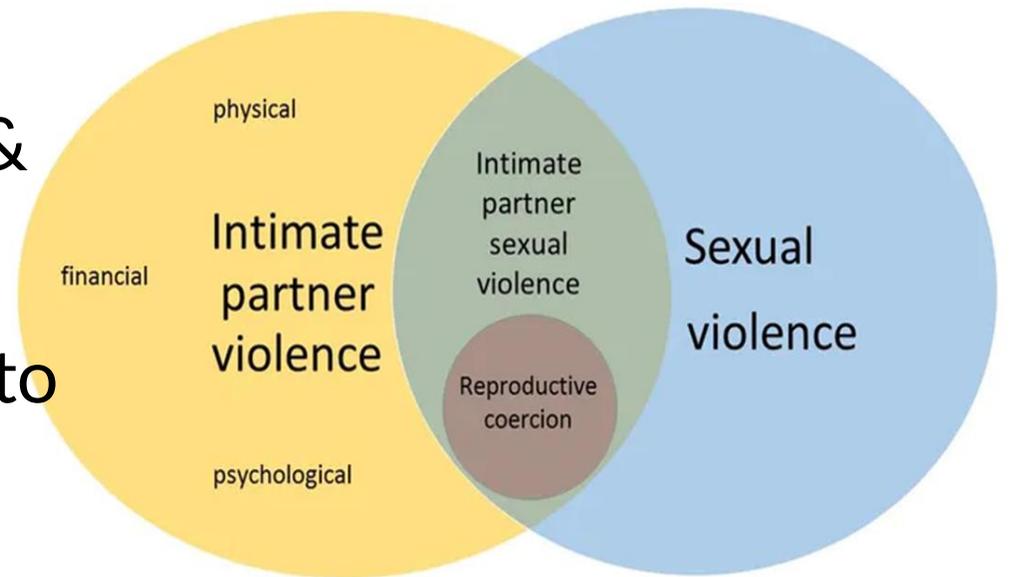
CADA supports approximately 3.7 % of the Moreton Bay population. In the past financial year we supported approximately 20,000 people in Moreton Bay.

1 in 5 families in Moreton Bay is affected by domestic and family violence.



Why focus on Reproductive coercion & abuse?

- DFV services are not routinely screening for reproductive coercion & abuse (RCA)
- This may result in additional barriers to accessing timely abortion
- DFV practitioners are uniquely placed to Facilitate access to contraception, abortion, sexual assault counselling



CADA's Reproductive Coercion & Abuse project

January 2021 to June 2022 (18 months)

Funded by CADA to build capacity of our practitioners and to support young women in the region

Two Project Workers: Luka Janes-Doherty and Ashleigh Basson, both experienced DFV Prevention Practitioners

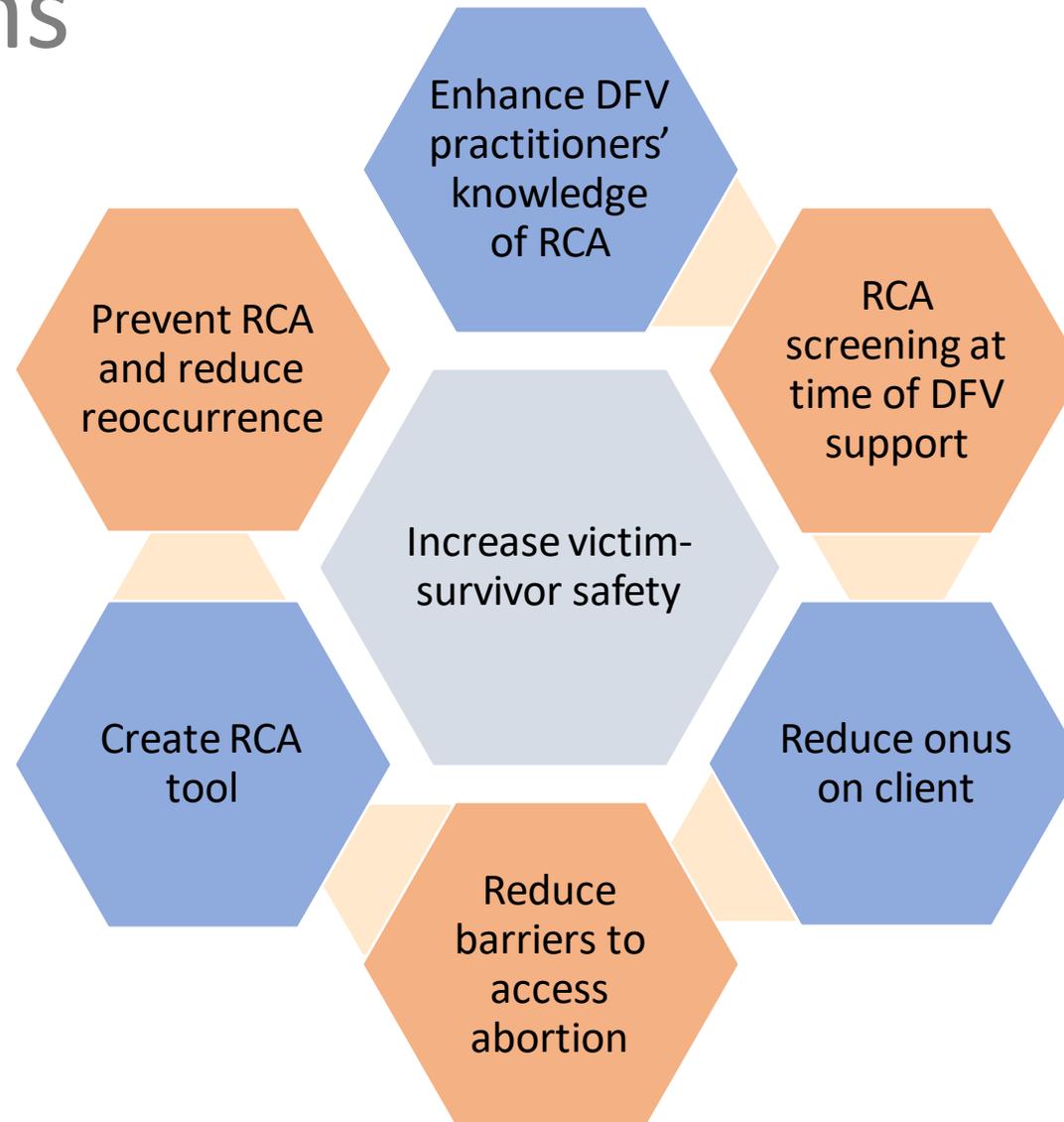
Reference group included QLD Health, Marie Stopes Australia, Children by Choice and the Moreton Bay Regional Council



Identifying the gaps

- CADA DFV prevention practitioners identified key areas for capacity building to build confidence and expertise
- The project team found limited specialist women's and sexual and reproductive health services in the Moreton region
- Support services including youth, young mothers, schools, sexual assault, and sexual and reproductive health services advised DFV and RCA areas of concern for young people they support

Project Aims



Staff focus groups and survey findings

- RCA identified as an issue of concern
- Pre training: gaps in knowledge of referral pathways & abortion provision as well as limited confidence to discuss RCA
- Post training: increased knowledge of contraception options, referral pathways & abortion provision as well as increased confidence to discuss RCA, contraception & pregnancy options
- CADA practitioners requested RCA resource to support their practice

CADA practitioners RCA survey results

MEASURE	POST TRAINING
Increased knowledge of RCA	83 %
Increased confidence to screen for and respond to RCA	83 %
Increased knowledge around pregnancy options, including abortion access	83 %
Increased knowledge of referral pathways	66 %

Embedding RCA within our framework

- Practical interventions: condoms, ovulation kits, pregnancy tests & contraception guide in client bathrooms
- Resource development to support practitioners' work with clients
- Encouraging screening for RCA during client support sessions
- Training sessions enhanced practitioners' knowledge of:
 - reproductive coercion
 - abortion access
 - contraception options
 - referral pathways

Client case study

Mary's husband harassed her to become pregnant as soon as they married. Mary wanted to wait, but her husband believed having a baby would support his Visa application.

Mary had 2 pregnancies less than 12 months apart. When her husband learned she was having another girl, he pressured her to have an abortion and "try again for a son". Mary refused and the physical abuse became more frequent after that. Mary's husband and his mother made threats to stop Mary from seeing her daughter.

Mary was raped multiple times over the course of the marriage. After one incident, Mary was admitted to hospital with abdominal pain. Mary felt ashamed and afraid and did not disclose the abuse. She was not seen by a doctor or nurse in private, a further barrier to disclosing the abuse.

Mary told us she was not aware of the term "reproductive coercion and abuse" until she spoke with a CADA practitioner. She was aware she was experiencing physical abuse and knew being forced into pregnancy felt wrong, but she did not know that it had a name.

RCA project developed resources

Information on
consent

Screening for sexual
abuse and safety
planning

Screening for RCA
and safety planning

Information on
pregnancy options
and contraception

Flow chart on surgical
and medication
abortion via public
healthy system

Services directory to
assist practitioners
with referral
pathways

Reproductive Coercion & Abuse Factsheet

- Produced by RCA project team with input from CADA management & Reference Group
- Design and printing via Gambling Community Benefit Fund grant
- For use by specialist DFV practitioners & other relevant professionals including health
- Focus on safety planning, examples of abuse, support services, contraception
- Easily modified for use in other parts of QLD

Outcomes of RCA project

- RCA project workers facilitate annual training sessions for staff
- Practical interventions (condoms, pregnancy tests) maintained
- RCA specific resources to support clients & optimise safety
- Project enhanced community awareness of RCA & specialist DFV support available
- DFV practitioners have enhanced knowledge of RCA & pathways for support

Recommendations

This short-term project indicated that DFV practitioners are willing to support victim-survivors' needs around RCA, but often do not feel well equipped to do so.

Our recommendations include:

- Expansion of existing sexual and reproductive health services in the Moreton region
- Addition of a Women's Health service
- Funding to further enhance the expertise of the DFV workforce
- Further collaboration between DFV & health services to support victim-survivors of RCA and DFV

Discussion and questions



www.cada.org.au