

Family Violence Practitioner interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for Family Violence Practitioner roles focus on your ability to assess risk, apply state based frameworks and stay client centred under pressure. You will need to show both technical knowledge and the personal resilience this work demands.

- **Process:** Questions that ask you to walk through a procedure, such as completing a risk assessment or making a mandatory report.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask for a real example from your past work, often about advocacy, multi agency coordination or managing a difficult disclosure.
- **Scenario:** Hypothetical situations that test your judgement, usually involving immediate safety, escalation or a breach of an intervention order.
- **Technical:** Questions about specific frameworks, tools and legislation, such as MARAM, information sharing schemes or safety planning models.
- **Safety and wellbeing:** Questions about how you manage vicarious trauma, maintain boundaries and sustain yourself in a high demand role.

The process is often two stages. First a phone screen with a recruiter or team leader covering your qualifications, availability and understanding of family violence frameworks. Then a panel interview with a practice lead and a senior practitioner. The panel usually includes a written or scenario based exercise, such as a risk assessment case study or a safety planning scenario, followed by behavioural questions and time for your own questions.

1. Walk me through how you complete a family violence risk assessment using the MARAM framework.

Why they ask

This tests your technical knowledge and whether you can apply a structured framework in practice, not just describe it.

How to structure your answer

Use a step by step walk through. Start with information gathering, then the assessment tools, then risk levels, then safety planning and referrals, and finish with review.

Example answer

"First, I gather information from the client and any relevant services, using the MARAM assessment tools to identify risk factors, current safety and the client's priorities. I check for immediate danger, such as threats to kill, access to weapons or recent separation. Then I apply the MARAM risk levels, structured professional judgement, and document the assessment in the client record. I discuss the findings with the client, develop a safety plan together, and make referrals to police, housing or child protection as needed. Finally I set a review date and update the plan if circumstances change."

2. Tell me about a time you had to advocate for a client with police or child protection.

Why they ask

This tests your ability to advocate assertively while maintaining a collaborative approach with other services.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: situation, task, action, result. Keep the focus on what you did and the outcome for the client.

Example answer

"A client had an intervention order that did not include her workplace, and her ex partner had attended her work twice. I called the police family violence unit, provided the risk assessment and a timeline of incidents, and asked them to support an application to vary the order. I also contacted the employer's HR to arrange a safety plan. The variation was granted within a week, covering her workplace, and the employer installed additional security. The client told me she felt safe enough to keep her job."

3. A client discloses that her partner has breached an intervention order and she is afraid to go home. What do you do?

Why they ask

This is a judgement under pressure question. The panel wants to see that you prioritise immediate safety before anything else.

How to structure your answer

Use a safety first structure: immediate safety, then risk assessment, then coordination and follow up.

Example answer

"My first priority is the client's immediate safety. I would check whether she is in a safe place right now, whether the partner knows where she is, and whether she needs emergency accommodation or police attendance. I would call 000 if there is an immediate threat. Then I would complete a risk assessment using MARAM, focusing on escalation, threats to kill, and access to weapons. I would develop a safety plan with her, including a code word, emergency contacts, and a plan for her children. I would refer to a family violence refuge or crisis accommodation, and follow up with police to report the breach. I would document everything and arrange a review within 24 to 48 hours."

4. How do you apply the MARAM framework to safety planning?

Why they ask

This tests whether you can move from assessment to practical, client centred safety actions.

How to structure your answer

Explain the framework briefly, then the elements of a safety plan, then how you tailor it to the client.

Example answer

"MARAM gives a structured way to identify risk and needs, then match them to safety actions. I start with the assessment to understand the risk level and the client's own goals. Then I build a safety plan that addresses each identified risk, for example, changing locks, planning a safe route to school, or storing documents with a trusted person. I use the MARAM responsibility levels to decide when to share information with other services, always with the client's consent unless there is a duty to disclose. I review the plan with the client regularly, and update it if the risk level changes. The plan is always client centred, so it reflects what the client is able and willing to do."

5. How do you manage vicarious trauma and maintain your own wellbeing in this work?

Why they ask

This tests self awareness and sustainability. Employers want to know you will stay well and stay in the role.

How to structure your answer

Use an awareness, strategies, supports structure. Be honest about the impact and specific about what you do.

Example answer

"I recognise that hearing about trauma every day has a cumulative effect. I use regular supervision to debrief and reflect on cases, and I keep clear boundaries around my hours and after hours contact. I practise grounding techniques between clients, and I make sure I take annual leave and use the

employee assistance program when needed. I also check in with peers informally, because this work can feel isolating. In my last role I started a monthly peer reflection group, which helped the team feel more supported and reduced sick days noticeably."

6. How do you maintain trauma informed practice when a client is reluctant to engage or keeps missing appointments?

Why they ask

This tests your empathy, persistence and non judgemental approach, which are central to family violence work.

How to structure your answer

Start with principles, then give a practical example of your approach, and finish with how you manage risk.

Example answer

"I start by acknowledging that the client's reluctance is often a survival strategy, not a personal failing. I would reach out in a way that gives them control, for example a text message offering a choice of times or a phone call instead of a face to face appointment. I would avoid pressure and focus on building trust, maybe by helping with one practical thing first, like a referral to a lawyer or housing. If they miss appointments, I follow up with a gentle check in and keep the door open. I document the attempts and any safety concerns, and I consult my supervisor if I am worried about risk. Over time, many clients re engage when they feel safe and not judged."