

EVIDENCE, LEARNING AND EVALUATION SUMMARY

MARCH 2022

Pilot Project Evaluation



The aim of the Side by Side program is to reduce violence by adolescents towards mothers and enhance the safety and wellbeing of participants. The program works with mothers and their sons to address violent and controlling behaviour and promote positive mother-son relationships through co-facilitated group therapy, together with individual support between sessions.

Side by Side was developed and implemented by YFS with the support of Queensland Government Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs.

Implementation

Side by Side was initially implemented as a pilot program over a twelve-month period from October 2020 to September 2021. In total, 12 families participated, and 40 group sessions were conducted.

Evaluation

The evaluation adopted an action learning approach, with iterative learning cycles to:

- identify changes resulting from the program
- explore program strengths and opportunities
- inform further program design.

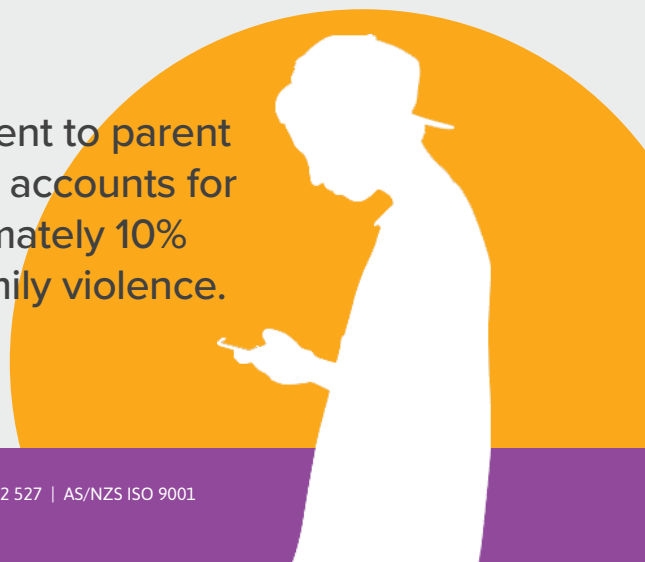
Both quantitative and qualitative data were used in the evaluation.

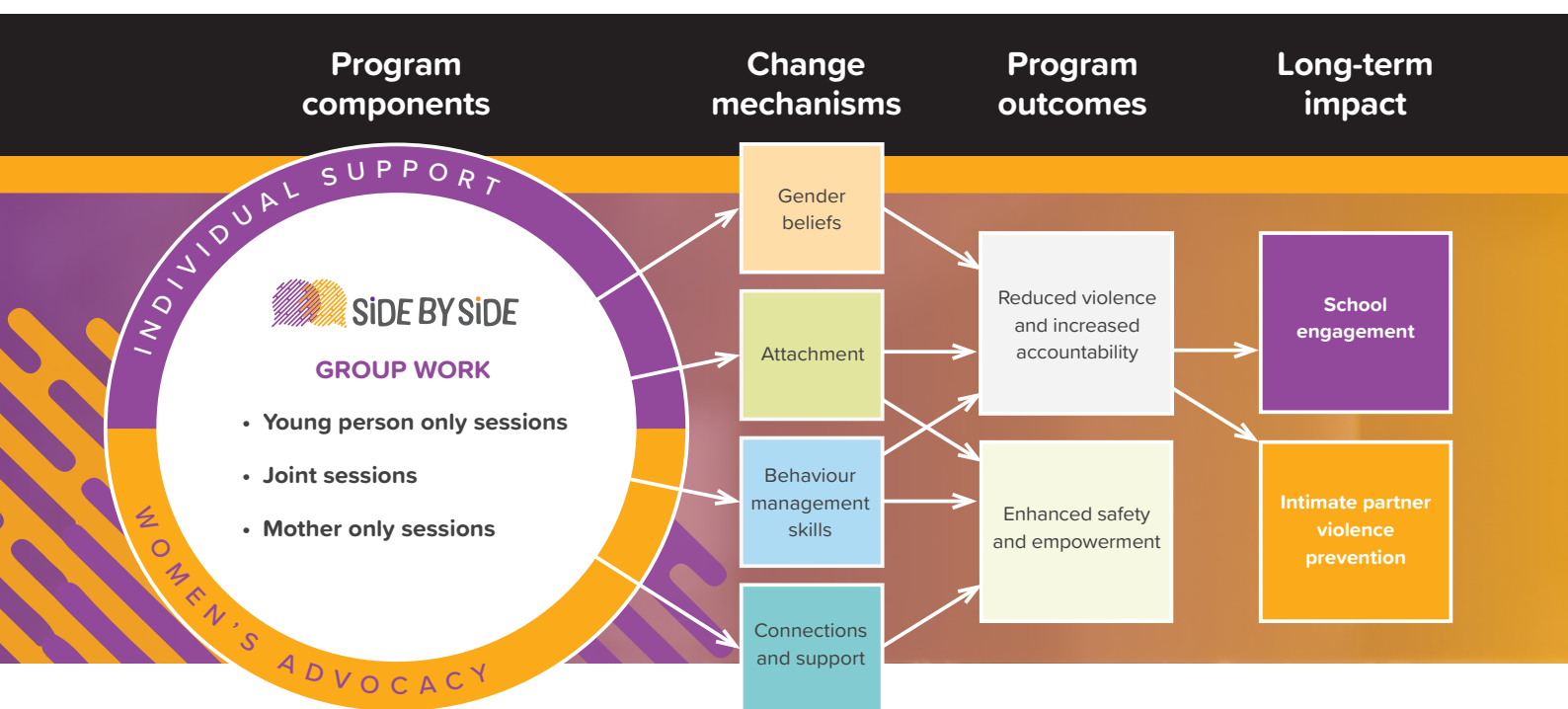
Background

Adolescent to parent violence is a significant and complex form of domestic and family violence. It can considerably impact on families and may lead to adolescents using violence in intimate partner relationships as adults.

Adolescent violence towards parents is typically committed by young men and boys towards their mothers and commonly occurs in the context of intergenerational violence.

Adolescent to parent violence accounts for approximately 10% of all family violence.





Program outcomes

Positive changes resulting from the program included:

- a reduction in young people's use of violent and controlling behaviour
- enhanced safety of mothers
- increased skills and strategies for managing adolescent behaviour
- improved mother-son relationships
- increased connections and support.

These changes appear to be sustained over time, based on follow up interviews with participants.

Participant voices

"He has stopped using violence – he now stops and thinks before he acts."
(Parent)

"I learnt the cues and strategies to manage those cues – to not engage in a battle."
(Parent)

"It is better with Mum than it used to be and hopefully that will continue."
(Young person)

Strengths

Key strengths found to contribute to the program's success included:

- the group structure (mother only, youth only and joint sessions)
- the combination of therapeutic and practical support
- co-facilitation by a male and female facilitator
- a multi-level approach to accountability (at group, peer and individual levels).

Opportunities

Areas of interest identified for further consideration included:

- young people's attitudes towards women
- prevention of future intimate partner violence
- impact on behaviour in contexts outside the home, such as school.

Next steps

Going forward, Side by Side will continue to review and refine the program model and further develop facilitator resources for quality, consistency and transferability.