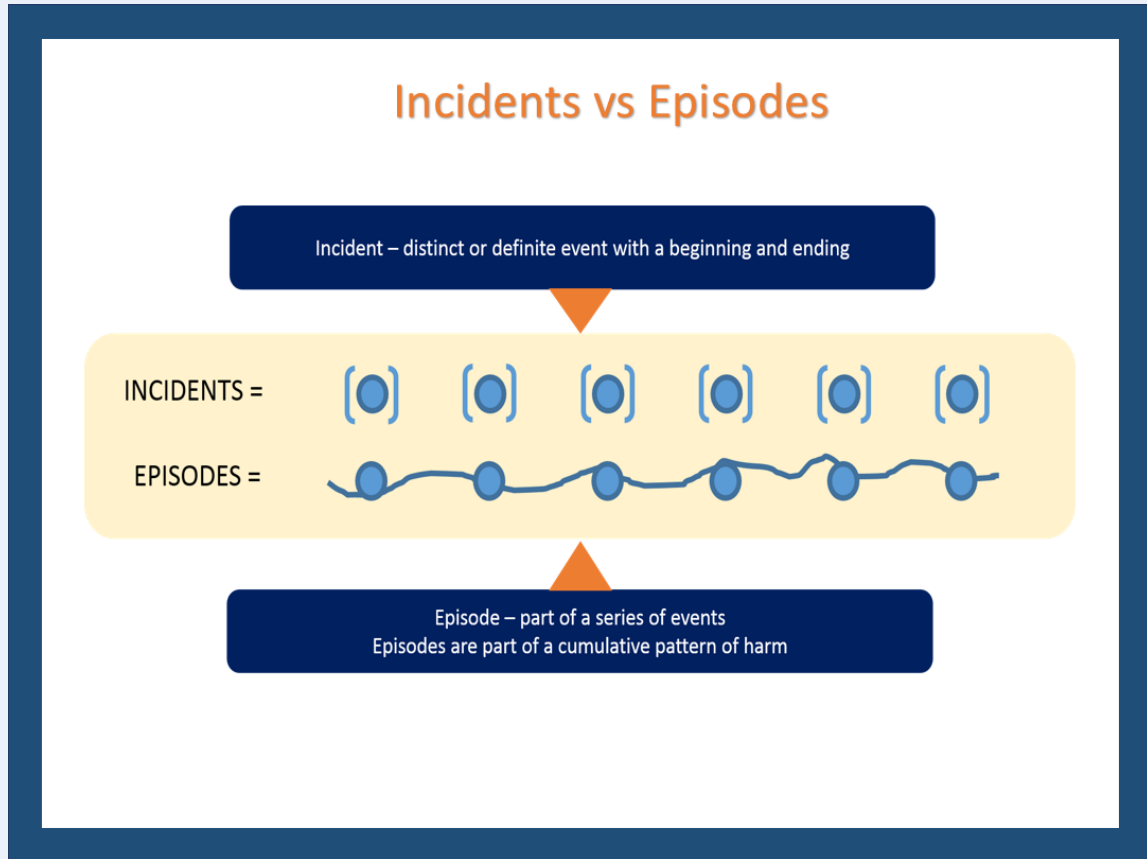




EPISODES NOT INCIDENTS

HANDOUT

INCIDENTS VERSUS EPISODES



NZ Police view Family Harm as episodic in nature. In far too many cases where the justice system (including Police) has viewed family violence on an 'incident' basis, people have been seriously harmed or killed.

To understand the episodic nature of Family Harm, read **episode one to eight** below and on the next page. Imagine if the first episode you respond to is Episode Five. Unless you discover what has occurred previously, you may not be able to contextualise the degree of harm the victim is exposed to. By understanding what has happened in the past, we're able to establish a pattern of coercive and controlling behavior and provide the help required (along with our partners) to prevent further harm from occurring.

Please note:

- **fictitious characters have been used in these episodes.**
- **some of the content described in these episodes while based on reality, are graphic in nature.**

EPISODE ONE:

You are responding to a Family Harm episode. The information you receive is that the neighbours have called 111 as there was a lot of screaming and yelling next door. Upon reaching the address, you see Mere sitting on the step crying. Her partner Joe has gone around to his mother's house to cool off. Mere tells you that it was just a verbal argument. They were arguing because they don't get paid until tomorrow and there is no food in the house for the kids' breakfast or lunch.

EPISODE TWO:

You are responding to a Family Harm episode. The information you receive is that the neighbours have called 111 as there was a lot of screaming and yelling next door. Upon reaching the address, you find Mere and Joe still screaming at each other. Upon questioning them, you establish that Mere was meant to be home at 6pm after work but ended up working late and didn't come home until 8pm. Joe was meant to be meeting friends to go and watch the rugby at 6.30pm.

EPISODE THREE:

You are responding to a Family Harm episode. The information you receive is that one of the occupants of the address you are being sent to called for the Police. Upon reaching the address you find Joe drunk and ranting. Mere, Joe's partner, is also drunk – she is in tears cleaning up a smashed cellphone on the floor. Upon questioning them, you establish that they had both been out clubbing. Mere, had met up with an ex-boyfriend at the club who had texted her to ask whether she'd like to catch up some time – upon seeing this, Joe flew into a rage and threw Mere's cellphone on the floor then stomped on it with his foot.

EPISODE FOUR:

You are responding to a Family Harm episode. The information you receive is that one of the occupants of the address you are being sent to, named Mere, called for the Police. Upon reaching the address you find Mere screaming at you to "f@?k off" and that you're too late – "Joe has taken off now". Upon questioning you find Joe has punched two holes in the wall and taken off. You obtain Joe's address and go around there to question him. Upon finding Joe, he apologises for his behaviour and explains to you that he was upset because Mere isn't letting him see his kids.

EPISODE FIVE:

You have been called to a disturbance across the road from a local service station. Upon arriving at the service station, several witnesses tell you that there was a man and woman arguing across the road. According to the witnesses the man was yelling at the woman and then shoved her. The woman then started screaming right up in his face. The man then moved as if to backhand the woman in the face, but she cowered and he didn't actually hit her. After driving up the road a bit more, you encounter a man walking up the street with a woman slightly behind him – they fit the description witnesses gave you of the couple. Upon questioning them, you find out that they are Mere and Joe and, in fact, were the couple who were arguing, but both deny that any pushing and shoving went on.

EPISODE SIX:

You have been called to a Family Harm episode. The information that you receive is that a child called 111 and said that 'daddy was hurting mummy'. Upon arriving at the address you find Mere, Joe and their son Flynn. Upon questioning Mere and Joe deny anything has occurred and Flynn tells you that it was a prank phone call. You notice red marks around Mere's neck and a red mark on Flynn's cheek.

EPISODE SEVEN:

You have been called to a Family Harm episode. The information that you receive is that a child called 111 to say that 'daddy was hurting mummy'. Upon arriving at the address you find Mere, her clothes are torn, she is unable to walk properly and her right eye looks like it has been punched closed. You cannot find any other adults at the address. You ask where Mere's partner is – she says that he has gone out with some friends and she doesn't know where he is or where to contact him. Mere's 6-year-old son, Flynn, is also present, but refuses to talk to you as Mere keeps on crying and telling him that he's 'ruined everything'.

EPISODE EIGHT:

You have been called to the address of Mere. Upon arrival, Mere's brother Maurice is waiting outside the house with Mere's son, 6-years-old, they are both visibly shaken. Maurice has been taking care of Mere's son for the last couple of days – Mere was meant to pick him up yesterday, but didn't show. After turning up to Mere's address, Maurice did not get a response when knocking on the door, but noticed that a bathroom window was open. To get inside, Maurice asked Mere's son to climb through the window then let him in. Upon climbing in the window, Mere's son found his mother naked in the bath and stabbed multiple times. Mere was dead.