

Mettle Women

Mettle Together



Mettle Together and FDV Survivors Story

Imagine losing everything, your home, your income and your sense of safety.

You are disconnected from your community, away from family, navigating trauma and mental health challenges, while also caring for a young child.

There is no stable support system, and no clear pathway forward.

Suzzy's story reflects the reality of many women experiencing family & domestic violence. A journey of survival, but also strength and resilience.

Mettle Together was created in response to this need made possible through the generosity and support of Volunteering WA.

Mettle Gifts & Mettle Together

What we do

- Mettle Gifts supports women into employment, stability, and independence
- Mettle Together builds on this journey
- Peer-mentorship volunteer program led by women with lived experience
- Graduates return as mentors to support women earlier in their journey
- Creates a sisterhood of connection, trust, and shared understanding. Reduces isolation and reconnects women to community.



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Breaking Barriers for Volunteering

- Group-based mentoring model grounded in safety and trust
- Train 5 mentors in trauma-informed mentorship
- Use lived experience as a tool for connection, hope and support
- Embed co-design (mentors & mentees shaping the program)
- Introduce volunteering as a pathway to confidence and community
- Build readiness, belonging, and future opportunities



Volunteer Activities

Peer Mentoring and Group Volunteering

- Gradual, supported introduction to volunteering as way of Breaking Barriers for Volunteering, meeting people where they are.
- **Preparation, Safety, and Readiness**
- Group-based volunteer days with community organisations: **experience volunteering in a supported environment.**
- (Little Things for Tiny Tots, Orana House, Clontarf Hill)
- Micro-volunteering
- Partnerships with trauma-informed organizations



Workshops & Preparation

Workshops & Preparation

- Co-designed sessions shaped by participants
- Trauma-informed mentorship training for mentors
- Closed group environment for emotional safety
- Wellbeing workshops, including arts and craft sessions, which supported grounding, connection, and self-expression.



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Learnings

What worked well

- Peer group model reduced pressure and increased engagement
- Safe introduction encouraged participation
- Built confidence and active citizenship
- Mentors developed new skills in facilitation and peer support work

Our challenges

- Mental health impacted readiness and consistency of engagement, and caring responsibilities affected attendance.
- External volunteer structures limited mentoring opportunities
- Delays due to limited organizational response

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Outcomes

- 7 trained mentors (trauma-informed)
- Development of: **Leadership & facilitation skills, Employability skills, Interest in Peer Support (work and volunteer).**
- Increased confidence, self-worth, sense of belonging and connection for mentors and mentees
- First-time volunteering led to ongoing engagement pathways
- Reduced stigma around volunteering with lived experience. Shift in perception: **a clearer understanding that these women are not only participants, but contributors.**

Mettle Together Voice of Impact

“I feel part of something bigger. I can finally give back” (Mentor)

- Mentee progressed into mentorship training and now supports others
- Mentor gained more confidence and now doing one-on-one peer support
- Participant started weekly bread donation initiative for women in refuges
- Lived experience became a source of strength and leadership



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Key Takeaways

- Volunteering is powerful, but readiness and safety come first for this group
- Peer support creates trust, connection, and sustained engagement
- Lived experience is a strength, not a barrier
- Supported first volunteering experiences can lead to long-term pathways
- Flexible, trauma-informed approaches are essential
- At its heart: a cycle of giving, healing, and empowerment



Mettle Gifts

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Volunteering WA

Empowering people and communities to enrich Western Australia

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