

Community based
prevention
of **violence** against
women and
their **children**

A toolkit for
practitioners



Our Watch 2016

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Acknowledgement of country: Our Watch acknowledges the traditional owners of the land across Australia on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past and present, and we value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and knowledges.



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This toolkit includes current thinking and lessons about prevention work. Using the tools and processes should ensure the best possible outcome for a program.



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Before starting

What is this toolkit?

This toolkit is a suite of materials for practitioners wishing to work with communities to prevent violence against women. It details a primary prevention approach, that is, one that aims to change attitudes, behaviours and practices to stop violence from occurring in the first place. It describes a process and provides tools for working with the community on prevention of violence against women and their children. This approach can be carried out in a wide range of 'settings' – those various places in which the community lives, works, learns and plays. The toolkit offers a strengths based community development approach, which builds the capacity of the community to plan, implement and evaluate prevention activities under the themes of respectful relationships, gender equality and promotion of non-violent norms. It outlines and explains this approach, provides practical implementation tools, and includes information about how to evaluate prevention programs.

Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit has been designed for practitioners and community organisations who wish to engage the community, in a participatory, partnership approach, to prevent violence against women and their children, and to work with other organisations that are a part of an integrated family violence network. A community could be any group of people living in the same place or who have a particular characteristic in common, such as age, social interest, cultural background or sporting interest.



This toolkit is a suite of materials for practitioners wishing to work with communities to prevent violence against women.



Community member checklist

This toolkit assumes that the development of a program to prevent violence against women will be led by an organisation. However, if an individual community member would like to develop a community program the stages are the same as those outlined in this toolkit, including engaging others at the outset of the program.

Here is a checklist of stages for an individual interested in working in the community.

- Establish links with the local family violence and sexual assault network, or key services.
- Become familiar with the principles and research for preventing violence against women.
- Establish an Advisory Group of key organisations who can provide expertise and support to ensure prevention efforts are based on these principles and research.
- Recruit community members from a cross-section of the community to participate in training to address violence against women in the community.
- Together, with the community, develop community action plans, including implementation strategies and evaluation methods.
- Familiarise the community with local appropriate referral services.

How to use this toolkit

The toolkit is based on the principle that different communities need different approaches and that all community programs need to be co-designed and driven by the community, tailored to particular audiences and contexts, and evaluated in an ongoing way to measure their effectiveness.

The toolkit has eight sections:

1. Before starting
2. Getting started
3. Planning, evaluating, sustaining a program
4. Working in the community
5. Developing communication and media plans
6. Learning and celebrating
7. Appendices
8. Useful websites and endnotes

The toolkit details a way of working with the community to prevent violence against women. It includes steps for doing prevention work in the community, the stages of a program cycle and some important considerations for the community engagement required to create effective long lasting outcomes that empower the community.

It is not intended to be prescriptive, nor restrictive, but to describe an approach, and provide a range of tools that can support the implementation of a community program. It assumes that different groups will have different starting points, depending on what work has been done previously.

The tools, mostly provided as ready-made examples, are designed to suit a range of different situations, and can either be used as they are or adapted as required. For further information or resources, there are web addresses for sites that provide more detail about all aspects of planning, implementation and evaluation.

Before starting, read this toolkit from beginning to end to understand the whole process. Individual sections can then be used as needed. This will help you design, implement and evaluate an effective, sustainable prevention program.

Use the toolkit, but be flexible

This toolkit includes current thinking and lessons about prevention work. Using the tools and processes should ensure the best possible outcome for a program. However, it is important that practitioners do not rely on these processes and tools instead of developing relationships with the community and relevant stakeholders. An overemphasis on formal tools and frameworks can leave practitioners feeling overwhelmed and stifled by a 'system' that they feel they must adhere to. All types of community development work need to be built on relationships of trust and rapport and the process needs to be fluid, collaborative and empowering. This may mean doing things differently. This toolkit is only an example of a process. What is important is engaging the community at the outset and using their expertise to influence what happens.

What is important is using a sound community development process and making sure that activities focus on challenging the drivers of violence against women. They need to respond to the evidence on the drivers of violence against women, i.e., the social norms, practices and structures that create and perpetuate gender inequality.

This toolkit respects the need for a program to be adaptable, and recognises that the steps taken in this type of work are not always straightforward and often need revising, changing and adapting along the way, through careful ongoing reflection and evaluation. Community needs may change and programs must be flexible. The toolkit acknowledges the importance of working in the context of the group and that a range of historical, political, economic and social factors need to be considered when working to prevent violence against women in any given community. This is important as women's and men's identities, social position and experiences are influenced by a range of factors, such as ethnicity, faith and socioeconomic circumstance. These factors combine to shape and create unique contexts and experiences, which in turn inform people's approach to and engagement with a community program.



Community
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Responding to disclosures

At any time during a prevention of violence against women program a participant or Advisory Group member may disclose that they are, or have been, a victim of violence.

They may disclose directly or talk more generally about being afraid in their relationship or feeling trapped. They may recount experiences of being hurt in the past or express current fear and distress for themselves and concern for their children's safety. The person may or may not request assistance as part of their disclosure. While community members and facilitators of sessions are not experts in violence against women, and do not generally have counselling skills, they do have a role to ensure a participant's safety and to refer them to an appropriate service.

Disclosing violence is difficult for many victims, not only because it is potentially dangerous, but also because of the stigma and shame that is often reflected in community and personal responses. Race, ethnicity, and cultural and religious beliefs shape individual attitudes about family and sexual violence and disclosure of personal experiences with a violent partner or other family member.

A person who discloses violence needs to feel believed and be supported compassionately and not judged. It is important to reassure them that their feelings are valid, whatever they are.

Convey these messages:

- They are in no way responsible for the abuse or violence against them.
- They can be supported in any choices they make about what to do and they have strengths they bring to this decision-making process.
- The abuser is responsible for the abusive behaviour.

Provide this information:

"If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit 1800RESPECT.org.au. In an emergency, call 000. For more information about a service in your state or local area download the DAISY App in the App Store or Google Play."

Have this information handy at all times and provide it on all program materials.

It is also important to have readily available a comprehensive list of the violence response services and resources in the local community. Many communities have existing support services resource directories, and it is good to have these available during and after the program. There may be services that have experience in working with the specific community group attending the program, however some women prefer not to be involved with a specialist service, particularly women from very small communities who fear that their information may not be kept confidential. Remember, the safety of women and children is paramount.

Our Watch – an overview

Our Watch has been established to drive nationwide change in the culture, behaviours and attitudes that underpin and create violence against women and their children. It has a vision of an Australia where women and their children live free from all forms of violence. Its mandate is to stop violence before it happens.

Our Watch's role is to provide national leadership to prevent all forms of violence against women and their children and its work is always based on sound research and strong and diverse partnerships. To this end, it has led the development of *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*.¹ It is the first framework of its kind in the world. It outlines a consistent and integrated national approach to preventing violence against women and their children.

Change the story brings together the international research and nationwide experience on what drives violence against women and what works to prevent it. It presents a shared understanding of the evidence and principles of effective prevention, outlines ten broad actions that should be taken, and provides a guide to assist governments and other stakeholders to develop appropriate policies, strategies and programs to prevent violence against women and their children.

This toolkit aligns with the overarching principles of effective practice described in *Change the story*.

Community prevention of violence against women and their children – background

In 2014, using Victorian Government funding, Our Watch contracted two community organisations to work with two local culturally and linguistically diverse communities on prevention of violence against women in their communities: one, a newly arrived/emerging community, the other, an established community. The aim of the program was to develop a transferable resource for those wanting to do prevention work in other communities.

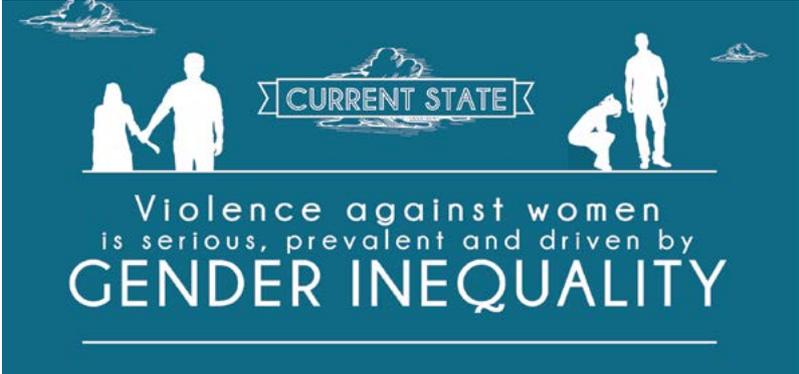
The materials compiled here are informed by the work of those two community organisations, as well as current knowledge about what works in prevention, and best practice principles for working with communities. Additional information has been drawn from existing Our Watch training materials, organisations such as the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health and VicHealth, and other web-based best practice sources.



Its mandate is
to stop violence
before it happens.

What are the drivers of violence against women?

Violence against women and their children is a prevalent, serious and preventable human rights abuse. One woman a week is murdered by a current or former partner and thousands more are injured or made to live in fear. This violence is a problem that crosses social, cultural and geographic boundaries, and its primary driver is gender inequality.



Research has found that factors associated with gender inequality are the most consistent predictors of violence against women and explain its gendered patterns. These are termed the **gendered drivers** of violence against women, and are shown below. They should always be considered together with other forms of social, political and economic discrimination and inequality (such as racism or poverty) as these influence and intersect with gender inequality.



This understanding of what drives violence against women informs the prevention approach outlined in this toolkit.



To understand how these gendered drivers, together with a range of other reinforcing factors, work to perpetuate inequality and violence against women, see *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia* available at: [Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence²](#)

Why tailor to communities?

All prevention activities should be designed to be relevant to their intended audience and the specific context or setting for the activity. For example, this might mean tailoring initiatives to a particular group (such as young people), organisational culture and context (such as a football club) or community (whether geographic or identity based).



Tailoring of prevention initiatives should be based on an understanding that gender expectations, social norms, policies and practices impact on women and men in different ways depending on their identities, background, social and economic position, and roles.

While social norms, structures and practices supporting and driving violence against women exist across Australian society, the way they operate varies between and among different groups in the community. It is important to understand the particular social and cultural values and beliefs of the audience for which the initiative is intended, and to work closely with members of those communities to address the specific kinds of social norms (beliefs, customs and practices), structures and practices that are supportive of violence against women in that community.

While its forms may vary, violence against women occurs around the world, across numerous cultures. In Australia it occurs across all sectors of society. There is no evidence to suggest that any one cultural group or community is inherently 'more violent' than any other. What is known is that multiple forms of inequality, discrimination and disadvantage intersect and interact with sexism and gender inequality to create the underlying conditions and social context in which violence against women is more likely to occur. A range of complex and intersecting factors, including poverty, class, ethnicity and social or geographic isolation, affect women's experiences of both gender inequality and violence.³

It is crucial to understand the particular community or communities within which prevention initiatives will be undertaken, including the way in which relevant intersecting factors operate. Prevention initiatives can then be tailored so they are appropriate for that particular community and context, and take into account the experiences, needs, interests, roles and skills of the audience. If working for example, with a group of people newly arrived in Australia, there is a need to understand their recent history, their religious and cultural beliefs, particularly those relating to gender, men's and women's roles, and masculinity and femininity, and where they are in the settlement process (employed, temporary protection visas, unaccompanied, etc.). There is also a need to be aware of the specific forms of disadvantage and discrimination that the particular group being engaged may be experiencing, e.g., legislative restrictions, community racism or isolation because of limited language skills. There may also be a need to employ bilingual workers, provide childcare or transport, and use visual tools for groups with low levels of English or limited literacy skills.

However, regardless of the social norms of the group, addressing gender equality as the primary driver of violence against women should be central to any prevention program. Initiatives need to build knowledge and skills for equal, respectful and non-violent gender relationships and identities, strengthen non-violent, gender equitable parenting, and empower women. They should be gender transformative, in every culture and context.



There is also a need to be aware of the specific forms of disadvantage and discrimination that the particular group being engaged may be experiencing.



Key terms and definitions

Bystander – someone who sees or hears about an act of sexism, harassment, discrimination or any other form of inappropriate behaviour. People who witness inappropriate behaviour, but are not involved in an incident (either as an instigator or a target), are increasingly recognised as having the potential to be powerful allies in challenging sexist or discriminatory behaviours and attitudes.⁴

Community capacity building – is the process of increasing people’s knowledge and abilities to empower them to be able to achieve the outcomes they want for themselves.

Drivers – the underlying causes that are required to create the necessary conditions in which violence against women occurs. They relate to the particular structures, norms and practices arising from gender inequality in public and private life, but which must always be considered in the context of other forms of social discrimination and disadvantage.⁵

Domestic violence – refers to acts of violence that occur in domestic settings between two people who are, or were, in an intimate relationship. It includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and financial abuse.⁶

Family violence – is a broader term than domestic violence, as it refers not only to violence between intimate partners but also to violence between family members. This includes, for example, elder abuse and adolescent violence against parents. Family violence includes violent or threatening behaviour, or any other form of behaviour that coerces or controls a family member or causes that family member to be fearful. In Indigenous communities, family violence is often the preferred term as it encapsulates the broader issue of violence within extended families, kinship networks and community relationships, as well as intergenerational issues.⁷

Gender – the socially learnt roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women; gender defines masculinity and femininity. Gender expectations vary between cultures and can change over time.⁸

Gender based violence – violence that is specifically directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately.⁹

Gender equality – involves equality of opportunity and equality of results. It includes the redistribution of resources and responsibilities between men and women and the transformation of the underlying causes and structures of gender inequality to achieve substantive equality. It is about recognising diversity and disadvantage to ensure equal outcomes for all, and therefore often requires women-specific programs and policies to end existing inequalities.¹⁰

Gender equity – refers to fairness and justice in the distribution of rights, responsibilities and resources between women and men and gender diverse people according to their respective needs.

Gender identity – a person’s deeply held internal and individual sense of their gender in how they define themselves in relation to masculine and feminine characteristics. ¹¹

Gender inequality – the unequal distribution of power, resources, opportunity and value given to men and women in a society due to prevailing gendered norms and structures. ¹²

Gender roles – the functions and responsibilities expected to be fulfilled by women and men, boys and girls within a given society. ¹³

Gender transformative approaches – encourage critical awareness of gender roles and norms. They include ways to change harmful gender norms to foster more equitable power relationships between men and women and between women and others in the community. ¹⁴

Gendered drivers – the specific elements or expressions of gender inequality that are most strongly linked to violence against women. They relate to the particular structures, norms and practices arising from gender inequality in public and private life. The gendered drivers are the underlying causes required to create the necessary conditions in which violence against women occurs. They must always be considered in the context of other forms of social discrimination and disadvantage. ¹⁵

Gendered norms – consist of a set of dominant beliefs and rules of conduct which are determined by a society or social group in relation to the types of roles, interests, behaviours and contributions expected from boys and girls, men and women. ¹⁶

Human rights based approach – acknowledges that everyone has the right to a life free from violence and free from the fear of violence. It also means that everyone should be fully supported to participate in the development of policy and practices which affect their lives, and to claim rights where necessary. ¹⁷

Intimate partner violence – any behaviour by a man or a woman within an intimate relationship (including current or past marriages, domestic partnerships, familial relations or people who share accommodation) that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm to those in the relationship. This is the most common form of violence against women. ¹⁸

Primary prevention – whole-of-population initiatives that address the primary (first or underlying) drivers of violence. The approach requires changing the social conditions, such as gender inequality, that excuse, justify or even promote violence against women and their children. ¹⁹

Respectful relationships – refers to relationships among intimate, romantic or dating partners, characterised by non-violence, equality, mutual respect and consideration and trust. ²⁰

Settings – environments in which people live, work, learn, socialise and play. ²¹

Sex – the biological and physical characteristics used to define humans as male or female.²²

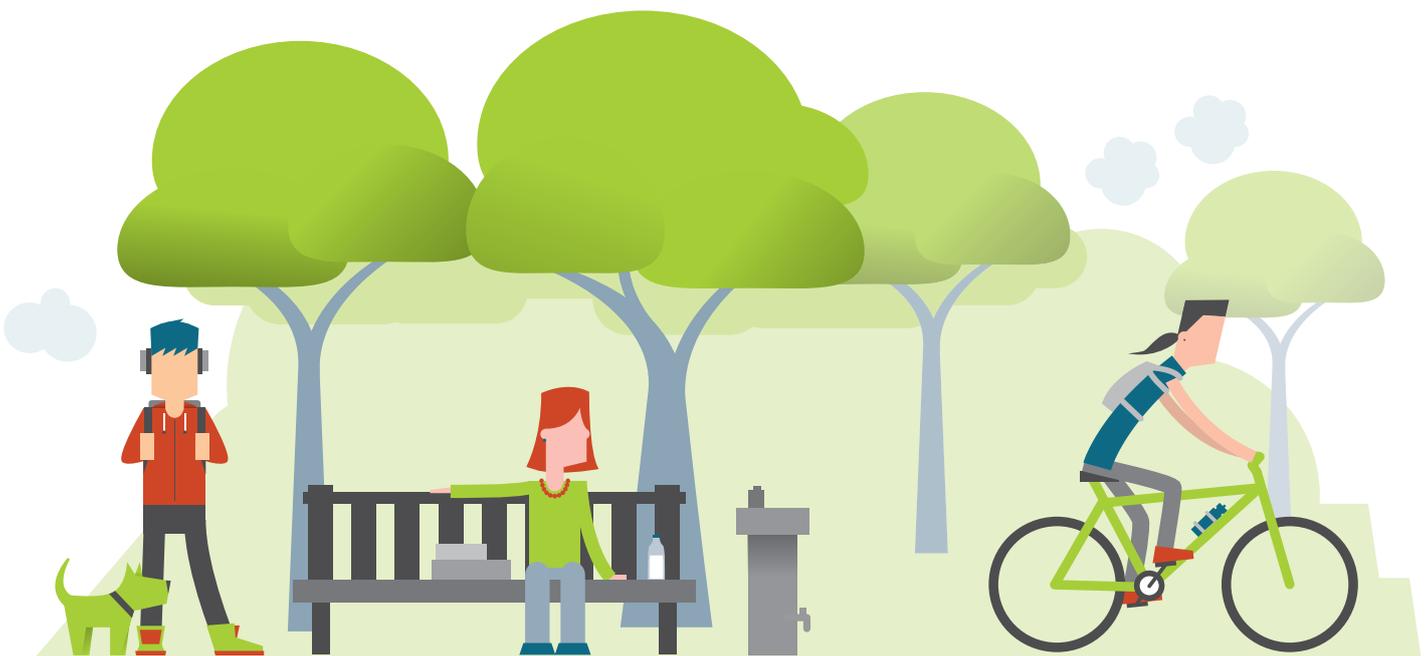
Sexual violence – sexual activity that happens where consent is not obtained or freely given. It occurs any time a person is forced, coerced or manipulated into any unwanted sexual activity, such as touching, sexual harassment and intimidation, forced marriage, trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, sexual assault and rape.²³

Sexism – discrimination based on gender, and the attitudes, stereotypes and the cultural elements that promote this discrimination.²⁴

Social norms – rules of conduct and models of behaviour expected by a society or social group. They are grounded in the customs, traditions and value systems that develop over time in a society or social group.²⁵

Violence against women – any act of gender based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life. This definition encompasses all *forms* of violence that women experience (including physical, sexual, emotional, cultural/spiritual, financial and others) that are gender based. See also **gender based violence**.²⁶

Violence prevention – refers to prevention of violence against women and girls. Prevention programs focus on stopping violence against women before it occurs, rather than intervening once an incident has already happened. Prevention involves working with whole communities to address the attitudes, behaviours, norms and practices that cause violence against women.



Key understandings

Efforts to prevent violence against women and their children in communities are grounded in the following understandings:

- Violence against women and their children is a prevalent and serious human rights violation and can contribute to intergenerational cycles of harm.
- Violence against women and their children occurs across the social spectrum and in all cultures.
- Violence against women and their children is rooted in gender inequality, including discrimination against women, gendered power relations and harmful cultural and social norms.²⁷
- Prevention of violence against women and their children requires a human rights based approach that prioritises the safety, agency and empowerment of women, and the principle that all women and girls have the right to a life free from violence and free from the fear of violence.
- Prevention of violence against women programs must ensure they do no harm. Some strategies may have the potential to increase risks to women and children. Very strong consultation processes with specialist organisations and among community members are required to build rapport and to identify and mitigate any risks.
- There is substantial diversity between and within all communities. When planning, developing, implementing and evaluating strategies to prevent violence against women, the varying cultural, religious, social and economic circumstances of communities need to be considered. Prevention approaches need to be tailored to the specific needs of the community.
- Gender inequality, roles, relationships and identities, and the norms, practices and structures supporting them, are influenced by a range of historical and contemporary social and economic factors, therefore they vary within and between groups. For this reason, assessing the ways in which gender relations are structured in specific groups, and understanding the ways in which they influence violence against women, is crucial.
- Some factors contributing to violence against women and their children involve current or past adversity for perpetrators of violence. These factors can help understand violence and the need to address it. However, they should never be used to excuse violent behaviour.
- Culture is neither fixed nor a natural feature of particular individuals or groups. Rather it is shaped by, and therefore can be changed by, social, political and economic forces.
- Among any group of people involved in prevention activity it is likely that there will be women who have experienced (or are currently experiencing) violence, and men who are perpetrators. It is vital that all prevention activities ensure that accessible and appropriate systems of support are available to respond to women's experiences of violence (at home or within the setting in which a prevention initiative occurs) and provide ongoing support where required.

2

Getting started



All initiatives for prevention of violence against women need a comprehensive and realistic budget.

Getting started includes:

- Make sure the program is resourced.
- Understand the culture and context of the community.
- Gather and consolidate knowledge and evidence on the drivers of violence against women and its prevention.
- Engage the community.
- Assess community readiness.
- Establish an Advisory Group.
- Establish a community working group and build their capacity.

Make sure the program is resourced

All initiatives for prevention of violence against women need a comprehensive and realistic budget. While there may be in-kind support, all programs also need funding. The size of the budget will depend on the size, scope and length of time of the program. The budget needs to consider all planned and possible expenses such as staffing, program costs (catering and travelling, venue hire etc.), communication expenses (printing of flyers, posters etc.), administration, equipment and evaluation. It may also be necessary to consider a budget for childcare and transport, and in the case of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, culturally appropriate staff, interpreters and translators.²⁸



For more on budgeting and for a budgeting template go to Our Community website:

[Our Community](#)



Understand the culture and context of the community

The cornerstone of working with the community is starting 'where the community is at'. The first task is to assess the community's current level of understanding of prevention of violence against women, and gain a sound understanding of the culture and context of the community. Each community is unique and influenced by a range of factors including location, culture, ethnicity, employment, religion, current issues, socioeconomic status, existing relationships with services, and for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, the stage they are at in the settlement process. Before embarking on any work with a community, it is important to understand this context, and particularly the way in which men and women may experience these factors differently. For example, some newly arrived communities may have migrated from countries that perform poorly on measures of women's equality and empowerment, which will influence programs promoting these principles. In addition to understanding the context within the community it is important to understand external factors which the community may be dealing with, e.g., racism, unemployment and poverty.

A thorough understanding of a community can be achieved by spending time with community members, sport and faith leaders, reading about the community and culture, talking with other agencies and attending community events. When engaging with groups from non-English speaking backgrounds, bilingual workers can provide considerable insight and entry into the community and enhance the program.



For more on assessing the community go to
Community Tool Box:
[Community Tool Box website](#)



Practice example
Getting to know the community

Our bicultural worker led development of a comprehensive understanding of the community from the early stages of the program. The worker's existing relationship with women from the community through previous programs meant both an understanding of community context and a level of trust that encouraged community engagement. The worker developed a community profile, detailing key information about the specific community in Victoria and in our local area. This included information about life in the country they had fled from (such as language, religion, education, employment and marriage) and the community in Victoria (such as location, migration and post-migration experience, media and influential people). There was also a section discussing attitudes, beliefs and behaviours around violence against women, gender and relationships. This document was used to educate the Advisory Group about the community, and it underpinned all our engagement with the community.

Gather and consolidate knowledge and evidence on the drivers of violence against women and its prevention



It is important to do as much preparation as possible before starting a program. Start talking to the community. Ask around to learn how others have been successful at this type of work, identify any challenges others have faced and investigate how they were overcome.

Identify which agencies would be best to get in touch with as potential partners. These would usually include the local council, local family violence services, settlement services, women’s health services, community legal centres, local community development agencies and police. There may be others more specific to a particular area, for instance, in a rural area it may be useful to link with the local emergency management organisation. Working together means resources are shared, experience and expertise combined, and workload shared.

Add to this by reading up on best practice and the latest knowledge and evidence on prevention of violence against women. *Change the story*, Australia’s framework for primary prevention of violence against women, explains how gendered drivers, together with a range of reinforcing factors, work to perpetuate inequality and violence against women, and articulates actions, supported by evidence, to reduce these drivers.²⁹



Practice example *Consolidating knowledge*

By their nature, community development prevention projects require various kinds of knowledge and expertise and we recognised it was unrealistic to expect any one agency to possess everything we needed. For this reason, our project Advisory Group consisted of practitioners from many different agencies, combining expertise in community development, prevention of violence against women, settlement issues and the local community more broadly. Rather than expect one agency to be an expert on everything, this partnership approach meant each could contribute their different skills, knowledge and resources to the program.

Engage the community

Efforts to prevent violence against women are most likely to be successful when they are led by communities themselves. Community engagement is a process of involving the community in generating ideas, being a part of decision-making, and sharing the responsibility for a program. This ensures that the community is central to and meaningfully engaged in program governance, planning, implementation and evaluation. By fostering effective participation, ongoing self-determination is encouraged.

At the core of community engagement is the need to build relationships and engagement with a cross-section of the community, a task that requires understanding, skill and sensitivity. The cornerstone of community engagement is identifying people or groups who are (or could be) the voices for change and who will engage others. Active community members will be identified when a community profile is being developed. However take care, because it is often the most empowered members of the community who are initially identified, and they are not always the most representative. It is important to develop a consultation process that is inclusive and representative, and for prevention of violence against women it is essential to hear the voices of women, especially those who are the most disempowered. Thorough consideration must be given as to how best to engage these women, and a process developed to ensure they are included.



Practice example Engaging the community

We developed a community consultation document and a spreadsheet to collect basic participant information. This was a list of 'connected' people and who they might be linked with. These people became a working group of sorts and we worked closely with them and with various agencies to understand how we might connect more broadly in the community.

Our connected people invited individuals to participatory consultations and together we ran a forum, in effect a training session, for interested members from a range of groups in the community. All in all we consulted about 70 community members through these processes. We also consulted an established women's group and around 15 family violence and related services. From this we were able to further develop our community consultation document and this was used to plan the next steps in our consultation, to further 'map' our community and identify community risk and protective factors for violence against women in the community.

This was a great process for engaging the community, to get them thinking about prevention and to motivate them to be part of the planning and implementation of community prevention. They had already started to think about the root causes of violence against women and the deeply engrained attitudes, beliefs and values that give rise to men's violence against women, such as those that support gender inequality and sexism.

Assess community readiness

Understanding the level of readiness in the community to undertake work to prevent violence against women is central to community engagement. It provides an opportunity to establish what the community already knows and what they may get involved with and accept. Every community, regardless of how it defines itself, will have a unique understanding of itself as a group and how it understands and experiences violence against women, and the approach required to address it.

Each community has specific challenges to overcome and strengths it can build on to solve deeply embedded problems and areas of resistance to change. It is important to identify these challenges and strengths, and develop an understanding of how open a community may be to any potential program. A community might be ready to deal with one issue, but not another. For example, a community might be ready for awareness raising and prevention initiatives, but be reluctant to talk about particular cultural traditions or practices. The better the understanding of the community, the more effective efforts to stimulate community change are likely to be. Individuals in the community may also be at different stages of readiness and it is important to be aware of this and to encourage and support those who are most prepared to engage, and to build relationships with others who may be less ready.



A community might be ready to deal with one issue, but not another.



See Appendix 1 for a short list of questions that could be useful to assess the readiness of a group or community.

For a complete analysis, see the Community Readiness Tool. It describes an extensive community readiness process and provides a range of appropriate tools.
Go to: [Community Tool Box](#)



Practice example Assessing community readiness

During our community consultations the working group completed the Community Readiness Tool. They then used it during their conversations with community members as a check list to get a picture of how ready the community was to embrace change. What came through as a real strength for our community was the importance of the family and celebration. The other strong learning was that while there was a keen interest to address violence against women, they didn't know how to go about it. They expressed a need for training to get a real understanding of the issues so they could develop skills to work with the community through families. They had already been involved in response and support and had a clear understanding of the difference between response and prevention. They were now keen to build their ability to work on prevention.

Establish an Advisory Group - partners, stakeholders and community



An Advisory Group is usually formed for the life of a program to provide key information and guidance. The group does not have authority to direct the program, however it is made up of members who hold key knowledge about the prevention of violence against women and others who hold key knowledge about the community.

To help ensure the program addresses the needs of the community and is in line with the principles of prevention work it is best to engage a cross section of the community. This can include, active community members, those with the lived experience of violence against women, and key organisations. All will bring their specific expertise to the program. Key organisations might include a women's health service, local government, a local settlement service and a domestic violence service. It is important to develop a broad approach to who might be considered the best people to be involved. It should not be limited to those who identify themselves as leaders (who, for example, are often prominent men with a high public profile, or leaders of religious and ethnic organisations), but might also include less prominent community members who have knowledge and influence in a specific sphere, such as with a youth group, women's group or a sporting team.

Having a gender balance is important. It's not just about the numbers, but about having a group that doesn't reflect established gender inequalities, and ensures those already empowered don't dominate. Including members from different age groups may also be useful. And including community members who have direct access to others with knowledge and understanding of what might work best in that specific community would be a great advantage.



Having a gender balance is important. It's not just about the numbers...

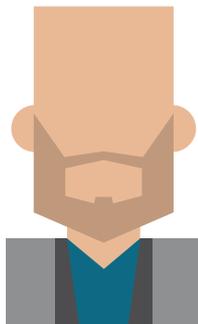
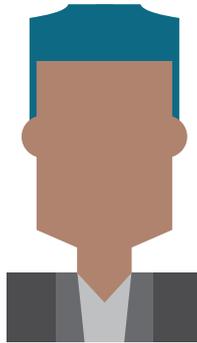
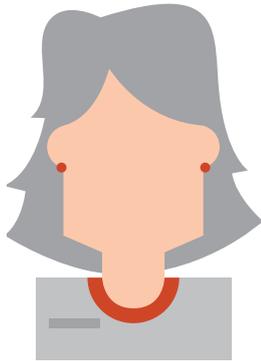


Practice example

Forming an Advisory Group

The membership of our Advisory Group included representation from the local community we were working with, a local settlement service worker, a family law lawyer, a member of the police force who was the family violence liaison officer, a community safety officer from the local council, a senior practitioner from the local family violence service and a senior manager from the local women's health organisation.

This group made up an amazing collective of expertise and community experience. Their interest, knowledge and commitment to the program made any challenges that we were presented with just so much easier to resolve.



Establish a community working group



In addition to an Advisory Group there needs to be a group of people who are prepared to do the work; a working group. It may include some members of the Advisory Group who have the time and capacity to be more involved in implementing potential initiatives, and will involve casting the net more broadly to recruit other community members and ‘champions’ interested in being involved.

Gathering champions requires long-term commitment to building relationships, and often long conversations to gain trust. These champions, or people with influence, may be sports coaches, women who bring the community together, or perhaps a member of a local social club. There may also be members of the community who have the lived experience of violence who are keen to be involved. Working group members should have an understanding of both the issue and the community, and be prepared to undergo further training. Once involved they can advise on how to engage others in the community and can identify activities and strategies that will work with their community. It is important that the working group represents a cross-section of the community, including both men and women, from a range of professional and socioeconomic backgrounds. This could be achieved through personal approaches and calling for nominations, or other processes identified by the Advisory Group.

In some communities, such as newly arrived communities, community members may not be at a point in their settlement process where they feel comfortable in, or capable of, engaging in this way. If the community is not able or prepared to form a ‘formal’ working group, then the onus is on the lead organisation and partners to be flexible, rather than working with a model that does not suit the community.

Community members coming together to form a working group need to be prepared to take part in capacity building to fully understand prevention of violence against women, and be willing to bring others in the community on board. Working group members should have a commitment to the issue of violence against women, a good understanding of their community and a desire to increase their knowledge and understanding.



Practice example

Establishing a working group

The community we worked with was well-established with strong networks and many active associations and people taking leadership across the community. They were from a range of associations, from a good cross-section of the community, and a mixture of men and women. The very first task of the program was to tap into these networks to establish a working group. Our organisation already had well-established partnerships with members of the community, so the task was made easier as some associations had already expressed a passion for the prevention of violence against women.

The working group contributed to every aspect of the program design, including its name and its focus on community empowerment for prevention. They were actively involved in setting the focus, reviewing the content of the training materials for the capacity building workshops and driving the consultation process to inform the program.

As a result, an additional 35 community men and women were consulted to seek advice about the sorts of activities that the community would welcome. This was also informed by consulting 15 family violence specialists in the area.



Roles, responsibilities and relationships

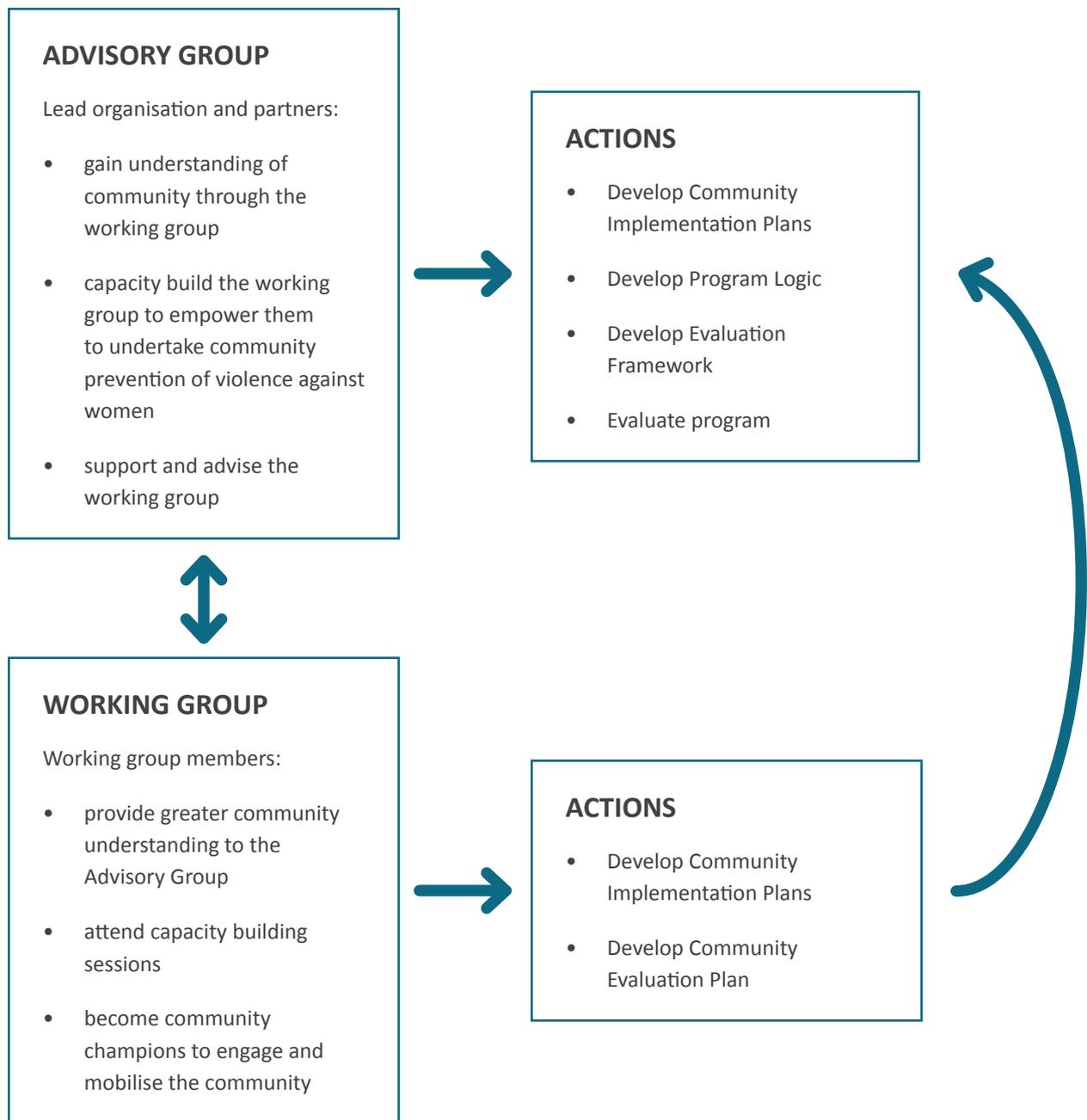


Figure 1 Relationship between the Advisory Group and Working group and their roles

Build the capacity of the working group



Building the capacity of the working group to understand and clearly articulate the drivers of violence against women will empower them to confidently engage with their community. It will support them to provide genuine advocacy for preventing violence against women and assist them in gaining community support. It is important that community knowledge and expertise, and ownership, is at the heart of developing and guiding community initiatives. As well as influencing design and delivery of community initiatives, working group members benefit from sharing their expertise and building the capacity of one another.

Building the skills and knowledge of the working group and empowering them to develop and run their own community initiatives is key to long lasting success of programs. By developing an understanding of the issues, building knowledge of prevention, and by offering the skills to understand the whole planning, implementing and evaluation process, programs are more likely to have long-term benefits.

It is important that all training sessions are underpinned by a clear understanding of the drivers of violence against women and provide links to the integrated family violence system.

Building the capacity of the community to have a depth of knowledge about the gendered nature of violence against women takes time. It requires attention to and an understanding of how adults learn.

While the key messaging about violence and its prevention in training sessions should remain constant, the teaching methods need to vary, to recognise and acknowledge people's different styles of learning. Some people learn by thinking things over, some need to talk and share, while others might be visual, or more verbal. It is important that programs allow for these differing styles of learning. It can be useful to use simple pictures, symbols and diagrams, YouTube clips and other audio-visual materials. While a PowerPoint presentation may be a good starting point, much will be learned through a participatory discussion, one that is respectful and culturally relevant and that allows for ongoing questioning and for members of a community to learn from one another.



Our Watch has developed two training modules and a Facilitators Guide that provide a starting point for building community capacity and empowering communities to take action. These are available from Our Watch.



Practice examples

Building community skills and knowledge

Skills development was crucial in supporting community members to feel confident and knowledgeable enough to engage in prevention conversations. We partnered with a local women's health organisation to work with our bilingual worker, to co-deliver the training. For our group this training started with conversations about what constitutes violence against women in order to clearly define and understand the problem before considering the solution. Without this training they would not have had the understanding of violence against women that was needed to start to consider prevention work.

We staged our training program. Our first step was two skills development sessions for the community members who were members of the working group. These sessions were designed to increase their understanding of violence against women and to build their knowledge of primary prevention and the gendered nature of family violence. This group then became involved in planning community based initiatives for the prevention of violence against women. They helped plan the key capacity building sessions for the next 'layer' of participants. This was a great method as that group then became the champions of the program, helped design community initiatives, and then recruited others to be involved.

We recruited two culturally-appropriate facilitators, a man and a woman, to support the training workshops. We advertised these roles through ethno-specific networks and newspapers, and recruited two people with significant experience in the area of prevention of family violence and with strong networks and connections in the community. The facilitation team adapted the content of the workshop to include videos from a highly respected cultural icon who gave examples that showed that change can and does happen. Because many of the participants were recruited through the facilitators' networks and already known to the facilitators, there was a great deal of respect for their work. Their leadership was trusted, fostering a willingness to address some controversial issues around culture, generational change and gender, with a gentle and open spirit. They were quickly ready to create plans for action in their community.

Working group capacity checklist

On completion of the capacity building phase, before the working group begin to plan their community initiatives, it's important that they feel sufficiently empowered to work confidently in their community. Below is a list of questions that might be useful for the working group to use a checklist to gauge their readiness to undertake the next steps.

Does the working group:

- Understand the key drivers of violence against women?
- Understand the different types of violence against women?
- Understand the impacts of violence against women?
- Demonstrate the application of gender equality?
- Understand the difference between prevention, intervention and response?
- Understand the culture and context of the audience and the particular sensitivities of the group?
- Understand the local experience, beliefs, language and social norms, and the possible constraints and opportunities?
- Understand the need to focus on community strengths, and on the community's beliefs and values that support or encourage equality, respect and human rights?
- Appreciate the need to engage in a participatory process, and to consult and engage a range of groups in the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives?
- Know how to respond to disclosures of violence and make appropriate referrals?

3

Planning, evaluating, sustaining a program

Success of a program requires good planning to clearly articulate how and why a program is being implemented, to identify how its success will be measured and to consider ways of making aspects of the program sustainable.

Planning a program

Although there are a number of ways to plan a program, there are also key elements to working successfully with the community. The community needs to be involved in all stages of the program. Social change is most likely to occur when those who will be affected by it are involved in developing and shaping the program, and instrumental in its implementation and evaluation.

The planning process needs to be strengths based, evidence-informed, participatory and flexible, and open to change and adaptation allowing for the dynamic nature of working with the community. A plan needs to reflect an understanding of the broader research on prevention of violence against women as well as the context and culture of the community, and demonstrate a reflective process of review and change as required.

Good planning is key to achieving successful program outcomes; planning early-on ensures objectives are clear, the process is defined and measures of success are articulated. While it is important to document these processes in a methodical way, they need to remain open to changes and the challenges that will emerge throughout the program.

There are a number of tools to assist in all stages in this process. A **Program Plan** (Appendix 2) outlines the phases of a program, and identifies the essential features of the program, and includes the development of a communication strategy.

While this overarching implementation plan can be developed with an Advisory Group of stakeholders and community members, there needs to be sufficient flexibility to allow the community to develop their own **Community Implementation Plans** (Appendix 7).



Evaluating a program

Evaluation is a core component of any violence against women prevention strategy. It is part of the holistic process of planning, implementing and evaluating.

It is important to evaluate prevention programs to gauge the success of a program for accountability, credibility and transparency, and to develop and strengthen the program.

The first step is to identify who the evaluation is for and what they need to know. Ensure the evaluation has a well-understood purpose and includes, where possible, data for all the different groups, including gender. Like planning, evaluation is not static and will evolve through the course of the program and, like planning, the community needs to be involved in the evaluation process to have a sense of engagement and empowerment in the change process and to better understand what works and what doesn't.

Evaluation can be undertaken by an external consultant or conducted internally with a clear understanding of evaluation principles and the right tools.

The methodology suggested for this work is one that is continuous, iterative and ongoing, and asks many questions.

A helpful evaluation tool is the development of a **Program Logic** (Appendix 3) which is a clear visual representation that describes the sequence of events to bring about change. It details the resources of the program and activities undertaken and what will be produced through those activities. It also describes the short, medium and longer-term outcomes. Developing a good Program Logic makes it easier to complete the other steps in evaluation planning. While it is a great tool for prevention work, a Program Logic should not be rigid, but remain flexible and be a diagram that helps to inform the direction of the program.

The **Evaluation Framework** (Appendix 4) supports the program logic and details process and impact indicators, data collection methods, responsibilities and timelines. This is not a static template to be completed at a particular stage of the program, but a flexible document that evolves with the program.



Evaluation can be undertaken by an external consultant or conducted internally with a clear understanding of evaluation principles and the right tools.



A more comprehensive understanding of evaluating prevention of violence against women initiatives and an additional selection of evaluation tools are available from VicHealth.³⁰

Sustaining a program

Sustaining a program over time is a challenge for all types of programs, particularly those funded for a specific term. Sustainability is best defined as the ability of the program to continue and its benefits to be maintained over time. Think about sustainability in the early stages of a program and agree on what to sustain, such as a particular set of programs, a specific partnership or collaborative process, or the capacity of the community to continue work already begun. The best chance of increasing program sustainability is to connect groups with existing organisations and service systems to build strong supportive partnerships.

The **Program Sustainability Assessment Tool** is a self-assessment that the Advisory Group can use to evaluate the sustainability capacity of a program. It measures core sustainability factors and stimulates thinking about how to sustain the program in its entirety or aspects of it. When the assessment is completed online it generates an automated summary report on overall sustainability. These results can be used to start sustainability planning. Often sustainability is considered when funding is coming to an end or the program is beginning to wind up, however, it is best considered when planning a program and developing the evaluation processes.



For the Sustainability Assessment Tool go to:
[Program Sustainability Assessment Tool](#)



Practice example
Ensuring sustainability

Thinking about sustainability from the outset made us determined to build elements of our program into our wider organisational work and to build prevention of violence against women into our other community work. The community is now linked to community service organisations that are providing ongoing mentorship, resources and support. This is great, as most of the work had short-term funding but with these partnerships in place the program doesn't stop when the funding stops. Because the community was involved in all aspects of planning and evaluation everything was written clearly and simply, in a way that everyone could understand and interpret. This made it easier for them to identify their next steps.

Program checklist

Below is a list of questions that might be useful for the Advisory Group to use a checklist to ensure consideration has been given to all aspects of the planning, evaluation and sustainability phases of the program.

Does the program have the following?

- A Program Plan
- A Program Logic
- An Evaluation Framework
- Sustainability assessment
- Community Implementation Plans
(developed by the community working group)



4

Working in the community

Develop community plans



Once the working group and community champions have had their capacity building training it is time to support them with the development of their plans for working in the community more broadly.

When developing and implementing strategies it is important that the community drives and develops the plans for specific initiatives they intend to implement. This plan includes detail about what, how, when and with whom they will work. The key principles to apply are those of community engagement and participatory processes, to determine an entry point for activities that respond to the needs of the community and the cultural, religious and socioeconomic contexts of their lives. Having effectively engaged the community and supported them to increase their skills, the community working group and champions will be able to identify appropriate prevention initiatives and the most effective course of action to bring about social change in their community.



See Appendix 5 for a list of potential community prevention activities.



Practice examples

Developing community plans

It took a bit of time to skill our group sufficiently to be able to know exactly what a community plan might look like. It was time consuming and sensitivity and care was required to build a group that was representative and was made up of participants who were able to collaborate with one another and who had the knowledge and confidence to know how to proceed on developing prevention initiatives. Once they had that, and had completed their capacity building sessions, they were really engaged and knew exactly what would work for, and in, their communities, and they had ownership of the plans and the process for moving forward.

Our working group wanted to involve the broader community in the development of the plans and to build their skills as well. So they had the idea to recruit champions. This proved to be incredibly easy, as the members of the working group drew on their networks to recommend people to attend the program. They also distributed posters and flyers in key locations where the community members shop and gather. A number of champions registered after seeing the posters but most of the participants were encouraged to attend through their peers. As a result, we had a room full of people with a shared understanding of the causes of family violence and a real commitment and readiness to work towards shifting gender and cultural practices for positive change. They were ready to create plans for action in their community.

Consider the role of mentors

Mentoring is an important part of engaging the community to lead prevention work as there is significant skill involved in designing and then carrying out successful community programs. It is the role of the lead organisation to find suitable mentors for each of the activities that the community wishes to initiate.

A key role for the mentors is to guide and support groups to focus their planning and activities on the main drivers of violence against women. These are the attitudes, beliefs and values that condone such violence, and support gender inequality and sexism. Mentors act as advisers and provide guidance to the groups as they plan and implement activities to prevent violence against women before it starts.

Members of the Advisory Group are often well placed to provide information about the most suitable organisations (potentially including their own) to approach for mentors. Women's health and other community organisations and services often provide a good starting point and in some cases active community members will be able to mentor each other.

Mentors need to understand the concept of mentoring, i.e., guiding and supporting, not doing, and they need to have the capacity to support a community group to develop initiatives for their communities. They also need to be prepared, where necessary, to undergo further training focusing on primary prevention, have the capacity to support the program and make a suitable time commitment for meetings and phone calls for the duration of the initiative. They may decide to meet with other groups and their mentors to learn from, and encourage, each other.



Once groups have developed their plans they will need considerable support to put their ideas into practice. Mentors can provide assistance on both content and practical issues, such as, what other stakeholders they might consider, or if there are legal implications or regulations they need to think about, or potential risks associated with their ideas. The mentors are there to help the community implement their plans for action.



Practice example

Using mentors

We recruited 10 mentors from the local prevention of violence against women network and the Advisory Group. They completed a two hour training workshop with the project champions. This worked really well as everyone was on the same page. In our evaluations one of the champions wrote, 'I was so glad to discuss our ideas with the mentors as we were feeling really overwhelmed and just didn't know where to start. The mentors helped us to narrow our target audience and to begin with young parents rather than all new migrants, so we are now working with a local community centre to establish a playgroup for isolated mothers.'



5

Developing communication and media plans

Communication is the way to spread the word about a program and connect to the community and other stakeholders. Throughout the life of a program the purpose, audience, message and channels of communication may vary so it is important to have a communications plan that is a living document that is revised throughout the life of the program.

The stakeholders in any community are diverse, including individuals, cultural groups, government departments, health and community agencies and services, therefore, the process of sharing ideas and information requires a variety of communication tools (such as media releases, media fact sheets and speeches) and channels (such as local newspapers, ethno-specific papers, community events and social media). To communicate effectively, plan out the objectives or desired effects of the communication, and consider what you need to do to achieve these. A communications plan organises the actions, timelines and key messages of a prevention program, and documents the best channels for messages, and what is to be achieved. Consider using social media, ethno-specific newspapers, posters, brochures, fliers, presentations or special events.



See Appendix 6 for a Communications Plan template and Appendix 8 for a list of Key Messages.



Practice example

Creating a communications and media plan

We began developing our communications plan as part of our community consultation process. Our plan included the methods for initially engaging the community: word of mouth, brochures, flyers and a forum and key messages for getting people involved. Once we had an interested working group, community members, supporting agencies and an Advisory Group, the process was dynamic and participatory. Our document was reflective of and responsive to ongoing input and recommendations. It was a real living document. By making it this way we were able to further identify opportunities throughout the program. As well as communicating externally, we also wanted to be able to share information with and between group members. It was important for group members to maintain contact with one another and to share information on initiatives to prevent violence against women via email or via the newly established Facebook page. We added this into our communications plan as it became clear this was going to be a good way to go.

6

Learning and celebrating

Having collected a range of data, and learnt what worked and what didn't along the way, at the end of the program the evaluation results will need to be collated, interpreted and assessed. It is also important to consider how these learnings will be used, and how and to whom the results will be disseminated.³¹ What's been learnt may be shared with the community, with the funders through a final report and possibly through a paper or conference presentation. For a comprehensive list of ideas for disseminating findings refer to VicHealth's concise evaluation guide.³²



No one would suggest that prevention of violence against women programs are easy work! Therefore it is important to celebrate successes, throughout the program and at what might be the natural end to your program.

Along the way friendships and partnerships will have been developed, skills gained and networks enriched. Many will have gained a real increase in their understanding of violence against women, attitudes will have changed, rigid gender roles will have been challenged, and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity will have been questioned. Many will have learned a whole new way of viewing their world. There will be much to celebrate! There are many ways to do this; have a meal, a party, a fun family day or whatever it is that would be most appropriate with your community. It's important to acknowledge in one way or another that much work has been done and the community have made a real commitment to contributing to the creation of an Australia where women and their children live free from all forms of violence.

7

Appendices

Appendix 1

Community Readiness Tool – prevention of violence against women

Community readiness is the degree to which a community is ready to take action to prevent of violence against women. Readiness can range from having no knowledge of the issue at all to already having successful prevention programs in place. An understanding of the level of readiness of a community makes clearer the types of initiatives a community may be willing to get involved in and accept. Below is a set of questions for stakeholders and active community members to gain further information about where to begin in a community. These questions could be asked in a survey, one-on-one interview, or in a focus group meeting. They can be adapted and added to depending on the audience, to create a clearer picture of community readiness.

List of community readiness questions

1. What do you know about violence against women?
2. Whose involvement would help us reach our goal of prevention of violence against women? Why?
3. Who else needs to be involved?
4. What is currently happening in the community on this issue?
5. What are the existing resources?
6. What are the strengths of the community?
7. What might prevent men and women from participating?
8. Who would benefit from being involved in this program? Why?
9. What might make it difficult to reach our goals? (Safety, negative attitudes) Why?
10. What is going on for the community that may impact on or impede the success of a program? (Racism, legislative requirements, etc.)
11. How likely are community members to give time to build their capacity to work on prevention of violence against women?
12. What cultural barriers and practices exist that could provide challenges to prevention of violence against women initiatives?
13. What programs have been run previously on this issue?



A more comprehensive understanding of community readiness tools and a more complex questionnaire is available at: [Community Tool Box³³](#)

Appendix 2

Program Plan Tool – prevention of violence against women

The Program Plan sets out the objectives of the overall program and the strategies to work with the community to prevent violence against women.

The process begins with developing a sound understanding of the culture and the context of the community and by building a community profile. It involves identifying and engaging those interested in making a difference and potential partners and champions, and establishing an Advisory Group drawn from stakeholder groups such as migrant resource centres and agencies responding to and preventing family violence and sexual assault, such as centres against sexual assault, specialist family violence services and women’s health services.

While making the Program Plan as detailed as possible, the final Program Plan will be informed by the community consultations, subsequent Community Implementation Plans and ongoing reflection.

A sample Program Plan is shown on the following page, with program objectives, program phases, tasks and dates.

Program objective – increase awareness of both the universal and community-specific drivers contributing to violence against women and their children in the community, and implement strategies to support the community in their prevention initiatives.

Program phases	Tasks, strategies and details	Date (start and finish)
<p>Build an awareness and understanding of the culture and context of the community and build a community profile.</p> <p>Build knowledge and understanding of evidence based prevention of violence against women.</p>	<p>e.g. Talk to the community, talk to local members of the service sector, read widely.</p> <p>Read up on the latest knowledge and evidence on prevention of violence against women.</p>	
<p>Develop a range of local community service sector partnerships to support ongoing implementation of primary prevention initiatives.</p>	<p>e.g. Talk with members of the integrated family violence network, women’s health centres, and local ethno-specific centres, establish an Advisory Group, and establish a working group of community members.</p>	
<p>Identify community members as potential champions and partners.</p>	<p>e.g. Contact local ethno-specific women’s networks, associations, clubs, etc.</p>	
<p>Assess the community readiness and potential points of entry.</p>	<p>e.g. Conduct focus groups, use questions from the Community Readiness Tool.</p>	
<p>Build the capacity of the community to undertake and promote primary prevention activities with others.</p>	<p>e.g. Hold forums, conduct Our Watch community prevention of violence against women training Modules 1 and 2.</p>	
<p>Support the community to identify violence prevention strategies for their communities and to develop community plans.</p>	<p>e.g. Facilitate community planning meetings to develop initiatives, engage mentors to assist community members.</p>	
<p>Develop a community consultation and engagement strategy including communication plan.</p>	<p>See Appendices for tool</p>	
<p>Develop a detailed program budget.</p>	<p>Go to: Community Financial Centre³⁴</p>	
<p>Develop evaluation strategy (including program logic, evaluation framework and data collection methods).</p>	<p>See Appendices for tool</p>	
<p>Develop sustainability strategy.</p>	<p>Go to: Program Sustainability Assessment Tool³⁵</p>	
<p>Publish and promote a report and celebrate success with community.</p>	<p>Go to: VicHealth³⁶</p>	

Appendix 3

Program Logic Model Tool – prevention of violence against women

The logic model describes the sequence of events to bring about change and provides the framework for the evaluation. This table shows a sequence of events and the program results achieved by this sequence. For more detailed information about developing a Program Logic refer to VicHealth’s concise guide.³⁷

Inputs	Strategies	Outputs	Short Term Outcomes (12 months)	Medium Term Outcomes (2 to 5 years)	Longer Term Outcomes (5 years +)
What resources go into the program	What activities the program undertakes	What is produced through those activities	The changes or benefits that result from the program		
e.g. Staff, money, community members and equipment, etc.	e.g. Development of activities, materials and training programs, community action, etc.	e.g. Number of people trained, flyers produced, workshops held	e.g. Increased capacity of the community to address prevention of violence against women	e.g. Increase in implementation of prevention of violence against women strategies in the community	e.g. Increased gender equality in the community and reduced violence against women

Appendix 4

Evaluation Framework Template – prevention of violence against women

The Evaluation Framework supports the program logic. It details process and impact indicators, data collection methods, responsibilities and timelines.

Priority area:			
Goal:			
Target population/s:			
Objective 1	Impact indicators	Evaluation methods/tools (provide specific details)	Timelines and responsibilities
Strategies	Process indicators	Evaluation methods/tools (provide specific details)	Timelines and responsibilities
1.1			
1.2			
1.3			
Preparation of evaluation report:			
Dissemination of evaluation:			

Appendix 5

List of potential program ideas for working with communities – prevention of violence against women

Prevention programs aim to stop violence against women before it starts. They challenge and change the attitudes, behaviours and practices that allow violence to occur in the first place. Initiatives to prevent violence against women should be carefully tailored to ensure they are appropriate and meaningful for the group of people they aim to engage. The ultimate aim of all programs should be to achieve gender equality through the empowerment of women and by challenging and changing the attitudes, behaviours and practices that create inequality.

All programs need to be underpinned by the drivers of violence against women and provide links to the integrated family violence system.

List of ideas

1. Hold training sessions with community members that focus on using their expertise to influence others to promote healthy and respectful relationships and increase understanding of family violence and its impact on women and children.
2. Engage and train non-violent men to work as ambassadors in their communities.
3. Work with boys to support development of social and emotional skills required to participate in equal and respectful relationships.
4. Run programs to empower women to participate in civil society and to facilitate change through training in advocacy and human rights.
5. Run programs to reduce women's isolation and increase skills and economic participation.
6. Hold bystander training programs to equip community members to take action to prevent violence against women.
7. Run media campaigns with key messages developed through community consultation that promote a zero tolerance attitude to violence against women and promote gender equality, promoted via a coordinated and sustained campaign through multiple media outlets.
8. Hold training programs that empower young women, promote healthy gender identities of young women and men, and facilitate development of respectful relationships.
9. Work with young women and men to be creative leaders and champions of gender equity and prevention of violence against women through the arts, such as video production, music, theatre and arts events.
10. Work with young women and men to be leaders and champions of gender equity and prevention of violence against women through sport, such as bystander training.
11. Empower women through leadership development and increased participation in decision-making in the home and in the workplace.

Prevention checklist

Use this quick checklist to ensure your program is using a prevention approach to prevent violence against women.

- Does your program aim to challenge and change attitudes, behaviours and practices that allow violence against women to occur?
- Does your program challenge and change the cultural and social conditions that allow violence against women to occur?
- Does your program address the underlying causes of violence against women, such as gender inequality and rigid gender roles?
- Does your program focus on the best of the community and its beliefs, and encourage equality, respect and human rights?
- Does your program consult and engage a range of groups in the design of the program and use a participatory approach?

Appendix 6

Communications Plan – prevention of violence against women

A Communications Plan details how key messages about the program will be delivered. A Communications Plan organises the actions, timelines and key messages of a prevention program and documents the best channels for messages, and what is to be achieved. The Communications Plan is dynamic and participatory. It is reflective and responsive to the ongoing program and to community and Advisory Group input.

Target	Key message	Method	Responsibility	Date
Who do we want to inform?	What do we want to convey?	How are we going to tell them?	Who is going to do it?	When will it happen?
1. e.g. Community members	<p>Violence against women and their children is a complex social problem, but one that can be prevented.</p> <p>Community members interested in preventing violence against women are invited to attend an information session.</p> <p>Our organisation is recruiting community members to work in partnership to prevent violence against women.</p>	<p>Word of mouth through two local interested groups</p> <p>Flyer in local social club</p> <p>Social media Facebook page</p>	<p>Program worker to develop draft key information</p> <p>Advisory Group members</p> <p>Bilingual worker</p>	<p>Key information developed by d/m/y committee meeting</p> <p>Campaign begins d/m/y</p>
Broader community				
Other agencies				
2.				

Appendix 7

Community Implementation Planning Tool – prevention of violence against women

The Community Implementation Plan Tool is a document for use by community champions and mentors to track their planned activities.

This plan is dynamic and continues to be developed and adjusted throughout the life of the program.

1	Your name/s	
2	Phone number and email address	
3	Name of program	
4	Brief description of your program	
5	<p>What is the purpose of this program?</p> <p>Why are you doing this?</p> <p>What is already being done on this topic?</p> <p>Has anything like this been done before?</p> <p>What mistakes or successes can you learn from?</p>	
6	<p>How will your program help prevent violence against women and encourage respectful relationships and gender equality?</p> <p>(Which of the four key drivers will you address?)</p>	
7	The overall vision for your program – OBJECTIVE	
8	What STRATEGIES will you use?	
9	<p>Who will be involved in this program and what will they do?</p> <p>How do you plan to get these people involved?</p>	
10	What support services will you link with when conducting your program?	

11	<p>What are the milestones of your program? What are key achievements or major progress points that must be reached to achieve success of the program? What are different tasks and steps that you will need to do to get to an end result? (E.g. a group formed, a venue found, first activity undertaken).</p>	When will this happen (timeline)	
	Step 1		
	Step 2		
	Step 3		
	<p>Step 4. Please add extra lines where required.</p>		
12	What are the risks/challenges that your program might face?		
13	Program budget	Item	Cost
	What resources do you need? (e.g. venue, computer, catering, equipment, childcare etc.)		
	Do you need to pay for presenters or training?		
	Do you have to raise more money? (e.g. ticket sales, sponsorship)		
			TOTAL:\$
14	How will you know if your program is successful?		
15	How will you report the progress and the outcomes of your program?	What does success look like for each activity?	
16	Is there any training you will need to carry out your program?		
17	What support will you need to carry out the program?		

Appendix 8

Key messaging – prevention of violence against women

Key messaging will depend on what you are trying to communicate, the audience and the medium you are using.

List of useful messages

1. Violence against women and their children is a complex social problem, but one that can be prevented.
2. Primary prevention of violence against women focuses on strategies that seek to change the social conditions, such as gender inequality, that excuse, justify or even promote violence against women and their children. It challenges deeply ingrained attitudes, beliefs and systems that give rise to men's violence against women and their children, such as those that support gender inequality and sexism.
3. Violence against women and their children occurs across Australian society and is not restricted to any one group.
4. Different communities face different challenges, and some communities are affected by multiple factors, not only the gendered drivers, but the many other reinforcing factors that increase the likelihood of violence.
5. Research shows that prevention initiatives must reach the whole Australian population and that communities benefit from initiatives that are tailored to their specific context, circumstances and needs.
6. (Name of organisation) has strong existing relationships with a range of communities and is committed to involving them in the design, implementation and monitoring of initiatives.
7. (Name of organisation) is working with communities to develop primary prevention community plans and activities that will build the capacity of active community members and empower them to be the voices for change to prevent violence against women in their communities.
8. This program provides the opportunity to bring together community members to design and develop their own primary prevention activities and to build skills in the community to prevent violence against women and their children before it starts.

The program will:

- bring together community members to design and develop their own prevention activities – activities that will work for their communities
- build the skills in the community to do effective prevention work
- ensure communities work in partnership with established health, community and women's organisations for the best possible outcomes for women and children

Copy to place at the bottom of all media releases

*If you cover this story, or any story regarding violence against women and children, please include the following tagline:

"If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit 1800RESPECT.org.au. In an emergency, call 000. For more information about a service in your state or local area download the DAISY App in the App Store or Google Play."

Appendix 9

Alternative text for Figure 1

Alternative text for Figure 1: Relationship between the Advisory group and Working group and their roles.

Roles, responsibilities and relationships.

The figure shows an advisory group and a working group in one column with an arrow between them indicating that there is a two-way exchange between them.

The advisory group lead organisation and partners to gain understanding of community through the working group and capacity build the working group to empower them to undertake community prevention of violence against women.

The working group members provide greater community understanding to the advisory group, attend capacity building sessions and become community champions to engage and mobilise the community.

Actions that arise out of the working group include: develop Community Implementation Plans and develop Community Evaluation Plans.

These actions feed into further work done by the advisory group including: develop Community Implementation Plans, develop Program Logic, develop Evaluation Framework and evaluate program.

8

Useful websites and endnotes

Useful websites

Our Watch

www.ourwatch.org.au

Our Watch is a nationwide organisation established to change cultures, behaviours and attitudes that underpin violence against women and their children. In 2015 *Our Watch* led the development of *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*. It outlines a consistent and integrated national approach to preventing violence against women and their children.

The Line

www.theline.org.au

The Line is a website for young people about relationships, gender, sex, bystander action, technology and communication, and how to keep behaviours healthy and respectful.

1800 Respect

www.1800respect.org.au

1800 Respect is the national sexual assault and family violence counselling service. It is a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week service.

VicHealth

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au

VicHealth is the Victorian health promotion foundation. *VicHealth* has contributed significantly to the world body of knowledge and practice on prevention of violence against women.

Endnotes

¹ Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia*, Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia.

² See note 1.

³ See note 1.

⁴ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Bystander approaches to sexual harassment in the workplace, Part 4*, <https://www.humanrights.gov.au>

⁵ See note 1.

⁶ See note 1.

⁷ See note 1.

⁸ See note 1.

⁹ See note 1.

¹⁰ See note 1.

¹¹ See note 1.

¹² See note 1.

¹³ See note 1.

¹⁴ *Galvanizing Equity*, (2014) *Bringing Gender Transformation to Life, Principles in Action* www.galvanizingequity.com, London, UK

¹⁵ See note 1.

¹⁶ See note 1.

¹⁷ Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, (2008) *From Principle to Practice, Implementing the Human rights Based approach in Community Organisations*, Melbourne, Australia.

¹⁸ See note 1.

¹⁹ See note 1.

²⁰ Department of Early Childhood Education and Development, (2009) *Respectful Relationships Education, violence prevention and respectful relationships education in Victoria*, Melbourne, Australia.

²¹ See note 1.

²² See note 1.

²³ See note 1.

²⁴ See note 1.

²⁵ See note 1.

²⁶ See note 1.

²⁷ See note 1.

²⁸ OurCommunity.com.au, *where not-for-profits go for help*, https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/financial/financial_article.jsp?articleId=2204.

²⁹ See note 1.

³⁰ VicHealth, (2015) *Evaluating Victorian projects for the primary prevention of violence against women: A concise guide*, <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/a-concise-guide-to-evaluating-primary-prevention-programs>

³¹ See note 30.

³² See note 30.

³³ Community Tool Box, <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/overview/models-for-community-health-and-development/community-readiness/main>

³⁴ See note 28.

³⁵ Program Sustainability Assessment Tool, <https://sustaintool.org/assess>

³⁶ See note 30.

³⁷ See note 30.

**Our
WATCH**

End violence against
Women And Their Children