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Effective practice in violence prevention education with boys and young men

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Citation:
Flood, M. (2024). *Effective Practice in Violence Prevention Education with Boys and Young Men*. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology.
DOI: http://doi.org/10.5204/rep.eprints.251170

Acknowledgements:
This report was supported by the DART Institute: Domestic Abuse Resource and Training Institute and the Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

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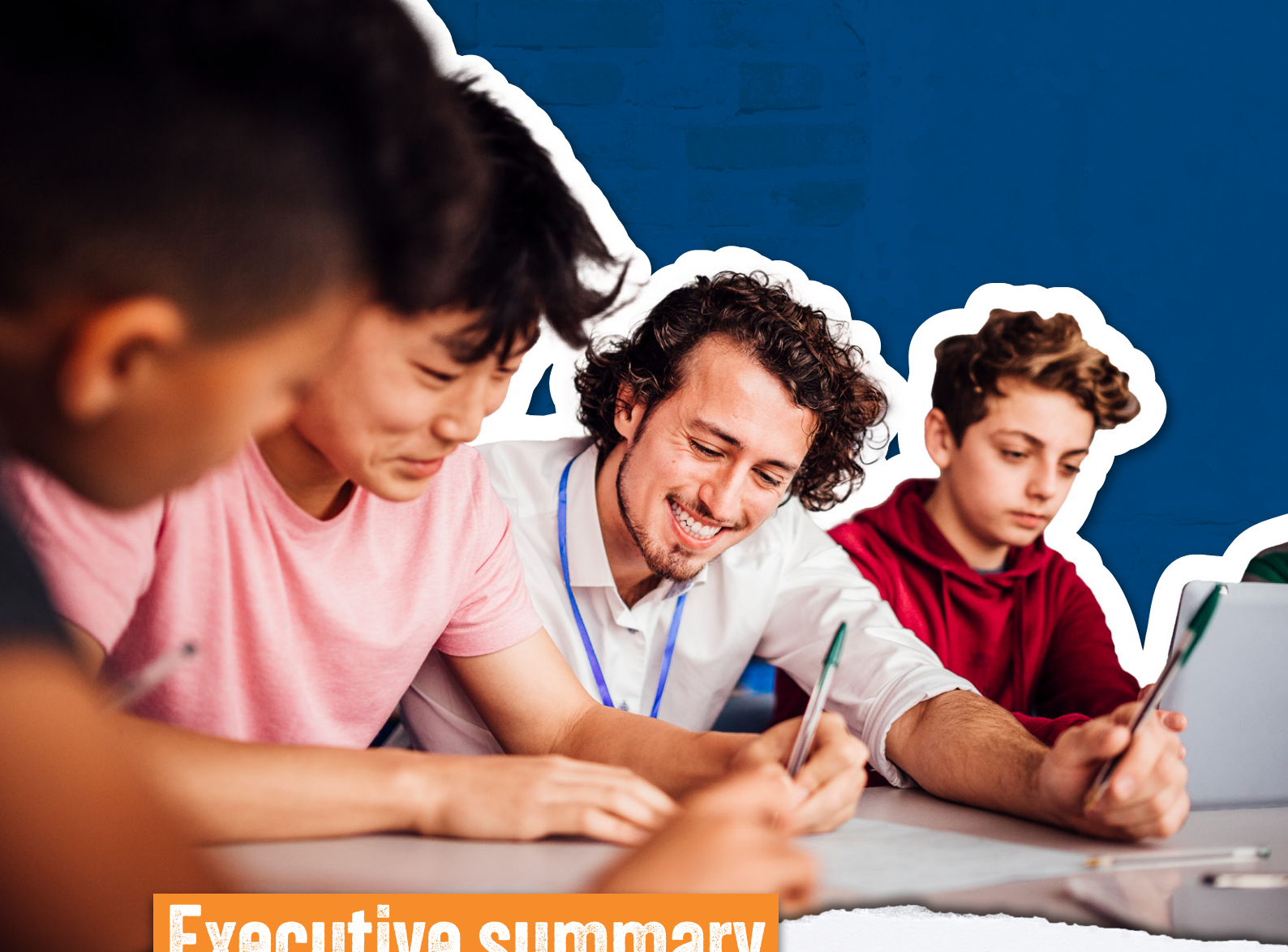


Executive summary

This report examines violence prevention education with boys and young men. Exploring how best to work with boys and young men in classrooms and other face-to-face settings, it identifies six standards for best practice in this work.

The report focuses on educational strategies aimed at the primary prevention of domestic and/or sexual violence, focused on boys and young men, and provided face-to-face in schools and other settings.

Such strategies are part of a field of violence prevention aimed at men and boys. Recent trends in this 'engaging men' or 'healthy masculinities' field include growth, increased policy support, greater sophistication, community support, the identification of standards for effective practice, and a growing evidence base.

Evidence for effectiveness

There is substantial evidence that well-designed education programs among children and young people can contribute to the prevention of sexual violence, dating violence, and other forms of interpersonal violence. They can lead to declines in violence-supportive attitudes and beliefs and in actual perpetration and victimisation. At the same time, the evidence base is limited, both by lack of evaluation and by methodologically weak assessments.

The evidence base for educational efforts among boys and young men is similar to that for violence prevention education more generally: there is evidence that well-designed programs can make change, and the evidence base also is limited by lack of or limited evaluation.

Effective practice in face-to-face violence prevention education with boys and young men

There is an increasing consensus on the approaches and strategies that are most likely to provide positive and substantial change among men and boys.

This scoping review identifies six key elements of best practice in in-person violence prevention education with boys and young men. Interventions should be:

1. Gender-transformative
2. Informed
3. Whole-of-institution
4. Engaging
5. Relevant and tailored
6. Based on evaluation and continuous improvement

The most effective programs are those that compare well against most if not all six criteria.

These six criteria can be understood in more details as follows.

1 Gender-transformative

Programs should:

- Aim to be gender-transformative – to transform gender norms, relations, and inequalities towards gender justice
- Reflect this in their content, processes, and structures

2 Informed

Programs should:

- Incorporate an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding violence, that:
  - Addresses the links between gender, power, and violence, examining violence-supportive constructions of gender and sexuality, and fostering gender-equitable and egalitarian relations
- Address both domestic and sexual violence
- Address established risk factors for or drivers of this violence
- Incorporate a theory of change – an account of the ways that program content and processes will be used to achieve intended outcomes

3 A whole-of-institution approach

Programs should be based on a whole-of-institution approach, that operates in school contexts across:

- Curriculum, teaching and learning
- School policy and practices
- School culture, ethos and environment
- The relationships between school, home and the community

Programs should seek to generate change at multiple levels and using multiple strategies

4 Effective curriculum delivery

A Curriculum content

Program curricula should:

- Be informed by scholarship on domestic and sexual violence
- Address various forms of violence
- Target the risk factors for or drivers of violent behaviour

B Curriculum delivery (teaching and learning methods)

Programs' teaching and learning methods should:

- Be participatory and interactive
- Include activities focused on skills development
- Involve the use of quality teaching materials
- Be respectful
- Address cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains
- Have protocols for disclosure of victimisation and perpetration

C Curriculum structure

Programs should:

- Be of sufficient duration and intensity to produce change
- Be timed and crafted to suit participants' developmental needs, including their developing identities and social and sexual relations

D Staff: teachers and educators

Programs should:

- Be delivered by skilled teachers and/or educators, supported by resources, training, and ongoing support
- Be taught be educators who have content expertise, skills in participatory teaching methods, and experience in critical self-reflection on gender and other issues

5 Relevant and tailored practice

Programs should:

- Be informed by knowledge of their target group or population and their local contexts and tailored to this
- Address local risk and protective factors related to domestic and sexual violence
- Be attentive to a range of forms of social difference and inequality, including class, ethnicity, sexuality, and (dis)ability, addressing both disadvantage and privilege
- Engage with participants' cultural and material conditions and seek to improve them where appropriate

6 Impact evaluation

Programs should involve a comprehensive process of evaluation, which at minimum:

- Reflects the program framework and logic
- Includes evaluation of impact or outcomes, through
  - Pre- and post-intervention assessment
  - An experimental or quasi-experimental design
  - Long-term follow-up
- Is used in a process of continuous improvement

And which ideally includes:

- The use of standard measures or portions of them
- Measures of not only attitudes but also behaviours, particularly violence perpetration
- The collection of both quantitative and qualitative data

Conclusion

As violence prevention programs among boys and young men develop in Australia, it is vital that they come as close as they can to established standards of effective practice. If programs can adopt the approaches and strategies known to produce change, they will make invaluable contributions to the work of ending domestic and sexual violence.

Introduction

This report examines face-to-face violence prevention education with boys and young men, to identify elements of best practice in this work. It explores how best to work with boys and young men in classrooms and other face-to-face settings to change violence-supportive attitudes, behaviours, and social relations and to foster non-violent and gender-equitable attitudes, identities, behaviours and patterns of interaction. In a context where violence prevention work with boys and young men is developing rapidly, it is vital that this is guided by evidence of what works. This review provides a framework for developing, implementing, assessing, and funding violence prevention education with boys and young men.

There are growing efforts to prevent domestic and sexual violence in countries around the world, and violence prevention education has been widely adopted as a key means of prevention. Educational strategies are used particularly among children and young people and often in school settings. With the violence prevention field's shift towards an emphasis on the need to engage men and boys in prevention [1], there has been a proliferation of programs and strategies aimed at boys and young men in particular. This report provides a scoping review of this work and the elements that are most likely to generate positive and substantial impacts.

The term "violence prevention education" is used here for any teaching and learning strategy aimed at the primary prevention of domestic and/or sexual violence. Other terms often used for such efforts include respectful relationships education, healthy relationships education, and consent education. This review focuses on primary prevention efforts, that is, intended to prevent initial perpetration and victimisation. Such efforts overlap with interventions aimed at secondary and tertiary prevention, that is, aimed at those at risk of using or suffering violence or already doing so, but this review excludes interventions and scholarship focused on the latter, for example involving work with male perpetrators of violence. The review focuses on programs particularly with boys and young men in secondary schools, although it also draws on scholarship and experience in programs among boys and young men and mixed-gender groups in universities and community settings. In this report, the terms "men" and "boys" are used to refer to males and individuals who identify as men or boys, and both may include non-binary individuals.

This review focuses on violence prevention education provided in face-to-face settings. Another promising means of prevention education, and one in growing use including among men and boys, is online education [2]. Other valuable means to prevent and reduce domestic and sexual violence include communications and social marketing, organisational development, community development, community mobilisation, and law and policy change [1], but these are outside the scope of this review.

The ‘engaging men’ or ‘healthy masculinities’ field

A field of programming and policy centered on engaging men and boys has emerged across the world in the past five decades. This involves efforts self-consciously aimed at men or boys and addressing their involvements in gender in some way. One significant focus of this ‘engaging men’ field is men’s violence against women or domestic and sexual violence, while other significant areas of focus include men’s health and wellbeing, fathering, boys’ education, sexual and reproductive health, and other areas [3]. In Australia, the stream of this work focused on violence prevention in recent years also has been termed ‘healthy masculinities’ work, reflecting a common emphasis on the goal of fostering non-violent, gender-equitable lives and relations among men and boys.

Primary prevention activities in Australia aimed at men and boys are diverse, from small scale events and strategies organised by local groups and community organisations to larger campaigns by regional and national organisations such as Jesuit Social Services and White Ribbon Australia. Most activities among men and boys involve educational programs in schools, workplaces, and other community settings, one-off annual events, and small-scale social marketing, and few efforts involve community mobilisation aimed at establishing ongoing advocacy networks, large-scale social marketing or norms change campaigns, or efforts to change national law and policy [1]. Primary prevention efforts overlap with other areas such as work with perpetrators of violence. Internationally, the organisations involved in engaging men and boys range from small advocacy and service-focused groups running campaigns in local communities to large-scale national organisations to regional and global networks such as MenEngage.

In Australia, primary prevention efforts among men and boys tend to be separate from other efforts focused on men’s health, fathering, and other areas, reflecting the wider siloing of these areas in service provision, although there are also growing signs of dialogue. The boundaries of the ‘engaging men’ field are fuzzy, in that programming and service provision aimed for example at gay and bisexual men, trans men, and Indigenous men and boys, and with populations that are overwhelming male such as prison inmates, may not count itself or be counted in ‘healthy masculinities’ work.

Six trends are visible in Australian work with men and boys for violence prevention. First, the field is growing. The number of programs and initiatives focused on men and boys now is well above what it was in the early 2000s and even just five years ago. This growth has accelerated in recent years with initiatives including:

- The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation's Masculinities and Health Project [4-7]
- Federal Government funding for "Men as Role Models for Preventing Violence against Women and their Children" (2020)
- A Victorian Government project addressing consent, pornography, and gender that includes a stream of work focused on "Engaging men and boys in conversations about masculinity and gender equality" (2023)
- Federal Government funding for "Healthy Masculinities Trial and Evaluation (Healthy MaTE)" projects (2024)
- Our Watch's Men and Masculinities in Primary Prevention project (2023-2027).

Overlapping with this, there is also growing policy support for engaging men and boys in violence prevention, and this is the second trend in the field. In Australia's national prevention frameworks and policies, we have seen an increased focus on challenging harmful forms of masculinity and engaging men and boys in prevention. This is visible in:

- the second edition of the national violence prevention framework Change The Story, including in its emphasis on male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control [8]
- the Federal Government's second National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032. Under prevention, one of the four pillars in the national plan, a focus on men and boys is one of the eight focus areas for action: "Support men and boys in developing healthy masculinities and positive, supportive relationships with their male peers" [9].

There has been high-profile work into men's or community attitudes towards masculinity, including a series of reports by Jesuit Social Services' Men's Project [10-12] and other work [7]. There has also been an expansion in the fields or domains in which engaging men or healthy masculinities work takes place, to fields such as parenting [13], women's economic empowerment [14], parliamentary politics [15], and violent extremism [16]. Third, the work itself is getting smarter: more sophisticated conceptually, better able to work with men who are at different stages of change, and more experienced at responding to and reducing backlash [17].

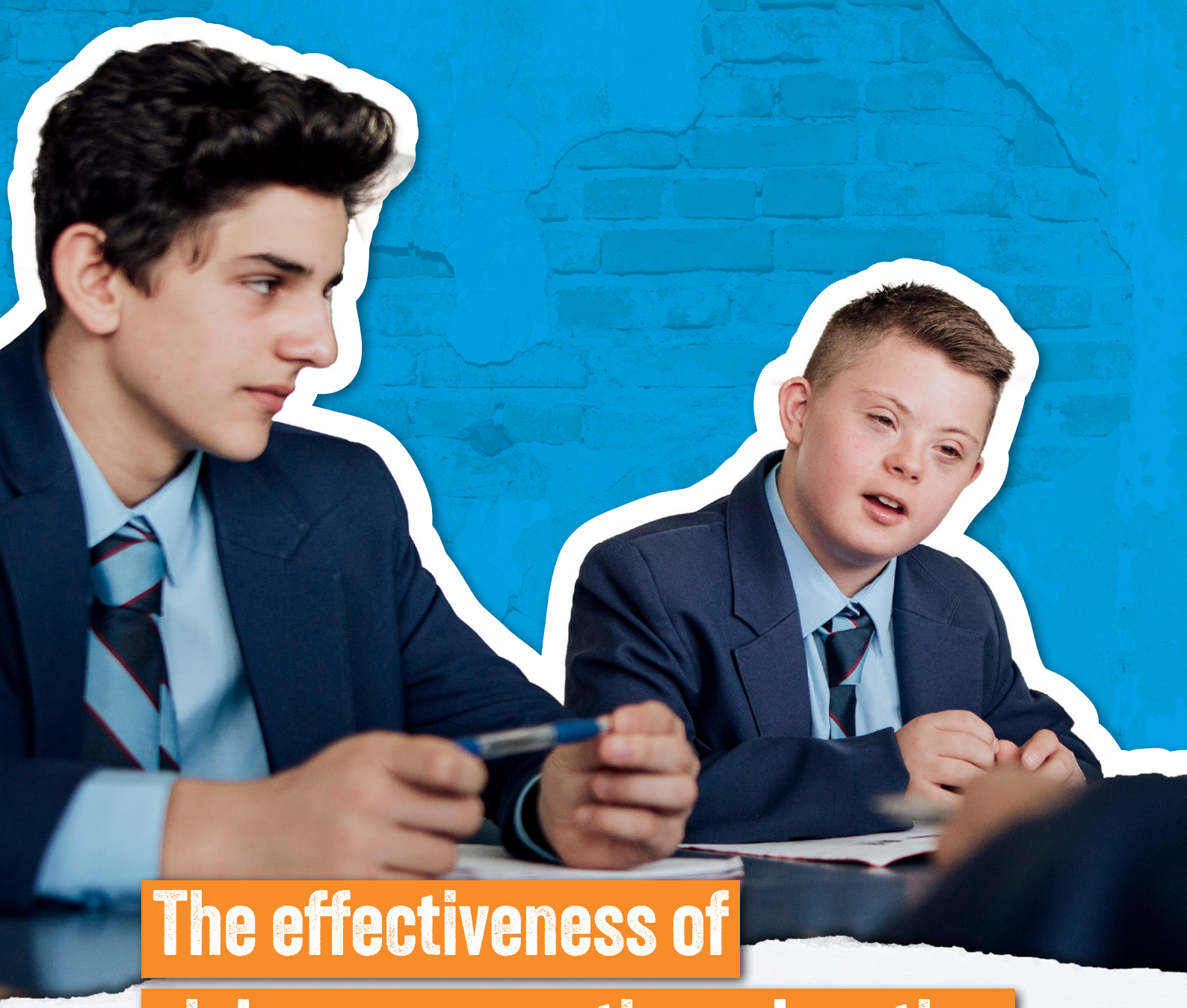
"Although there is both good and bad in community attitudes towards masculinity, there is widespread support for men's positive roles in ending violence against women.

Although there is both good and bad in community attitudes towards masculinity, there is widespread support for men's positive roles in ending violence against women. A 2020 survey in Australia found that just under 80% of people agree that "There are things that all men can do to help prevent violence against women," and only 4% disagreed [7]. Although there is not longitudinal data on community attitudes towards engaging men in violence, it is likely that this has increased, so tentatively, this is the fourth trend in this field. I certainly notice that while I used to spend my time in public forums two decades ago arguing for why we engage men, now I spend more time examining how we should engage men.

There is a growing sense of the standards or principles that should guide this work. Internationally, this includes Canadian "Guidelines For Funding Programs that Engage and Mobilize Men and Boys in Violence Prevention" [18] and The Warwick Principles, developed in Fiji and intended for use across the Pacific [19]. Locally, the Working with Men and Boys for Social Justice Assessment Tool provides a checklist for leaders, designers and facilitators of programs or initiatives to review, reflect on and strengthen their work [20]. I co-authored or contributed to all three pieces of work. Another significant Australian articulation of the principles for work with men and boys is provided by Our Watch [21, 22].

The sixth trend in the engaging men field is a growing evidence base, almost entirely outside Australia. This includes robust examinations of the impact of this work, as expressed in the six systematic reviews or meta-analyses noted below, as well as wider scholarship on the character, dynamics, and challenges of this work.

Returning to the focus of this review, violence prevention education, what is its evidence base?



The effectiveness of violence prevention education

Teaching and learning strategies are one of the most widely used strategies for violence prevention. They are also one of the most frequently evaluated strategies. There is now a very substantial body of scholarship regarding the impact of educational programs among children and young people regarding sexual violence, dating violence, and other forms of interpersonal violence. There are literally 100s of studies of the effectiveness of violence prevention education programs in schools and universities, as well as meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and narrative reviews of this field [23-41]. There are also reviews of prevention efforts focused on men and boys, and I return to this further below.

There is good evidence that education programs among children and young people can contribute to the prevention of sexual violence, dating violence, and other forms of interpersonal violence. If done well (and this is a significant 'if'), such programs can produce declines in factors associated with violence such as attitudes and beliefs, and in some instances can produce declines in actual perpetration and victimisation. The evidence base is strongest particularly for educational programs' impacts on attitudes and beliefs, and weaker for programs' impact on actual perpetration and

victimisation. Few impact evaluations include data on perpetration or victimisation. Only some school-based or university-based group interventions show evidence of reductions in violence perpetration and/or victimisation. Among schools-based efforts example, these include the following:

- A ten-session curriculum called Safe Dates in the USA showed reductions in sexual dating violence perpetration and victimisation, including four years later [42-46]
- A school-wide prevention strategy in the USA called Shifting Boundaries produced reductions in adolescents' perpetration and victimization of dating violence [47-50]
- An 18- to 21-session intervention in Canada titled Fourth R: Strategies for Healthy Youth Relationships showed positive impacts on self-reported perpetration of physical dating violence [51-56].
- An intervention in Mexico delivered over a semester, comprising a classroom-based curriculum delivered over 16 weeks and school-wide activities that promote prevention and awareness of dating violence, involved a significant reduction in male students' perpetration of and victimisation involving psychological dating violence [57].
- A six-week self-defence program among high school girls in Kenya titled No Means No Worldwide led to reductions in girls' levels of sexual assault victimisation [58, 59].
- In a school program in Kenya based on parallel instruction for girls and boys, comprising six two-hour sessions, there was a significant reduction in girls' rates of sexual assault victimisation [60].

Reviews of school-based violence prevention programs consistently find that they have positive impacts on violence-related knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. Reviews also generally conclude that they can reduce both violence perpetration and victimisation. For example;

- A meta-analysis of the effects of teen dating violence prevention programs, based on 38 studies, finds that prevention programs had a significant, positive impact on measures of knowledge, attitudes, and violence perpetration, but not dating violence victimisation [61]. It concludes that, "incidents of dating violence among adolescents can be reduced and prevented with the implementation of dating violence prevention programs" [61].
- A systematic review of studies that evaluated the primary prevention of intimate partner violence or sexual violence among youth aged 12-24 years and that addressed perpetration (that is, that sought to change the behaviour of potential perpetrators) "found sufficient evidence that primary prevention interventions are effective in reducing the perpetration of IPV and SV among youth." (e51) [62]. It also found an overall positive impact of programs on levels of victimisation.

> Reviews of school-based violence prevention programs consistently find that they have positive impacts on violence-related knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs [… and] they can reduce both violence perpetration and victimisation.

- A global systematic review of rigorous (experimental and quasi-experimental) studies of prevention programmes for adolescent dating violence, based on 52 studies with most of these (75%) in schools, notes a variety of programs that have had positive impacts on perpetration or victimisation [63].
- A global review of best practice in work to prevent adolescent intimate partner and sexual violence identifies a series of interventions that have been rigorously evaluated and that show significant reductions in physical, emotional/psychological, or sexual adolescent IP/SV, and/or improve behaviours, attitudes, and knowledge that promote gender equality and healthy power dynamics [31].
- On the other hand, an older meta-analysis of school-based interventions aimed at preventing or reducing violence in teen dating relationships reported that while they have a significant and important impact on dating violence knowledge and attitudes, they had no overall impact on perpetration or victimisation [28].

Programs among young people in contexts other than schools, such as universities, that have shown impacts on violence perpetration and/or victimisation include a multi-session program among men in a university residence [64], a four-by-three-hour sexual assault resistance program among female students [65, 66], a mixed-sex, multi-session program among first-year students [67], and various other interventions [68-70].

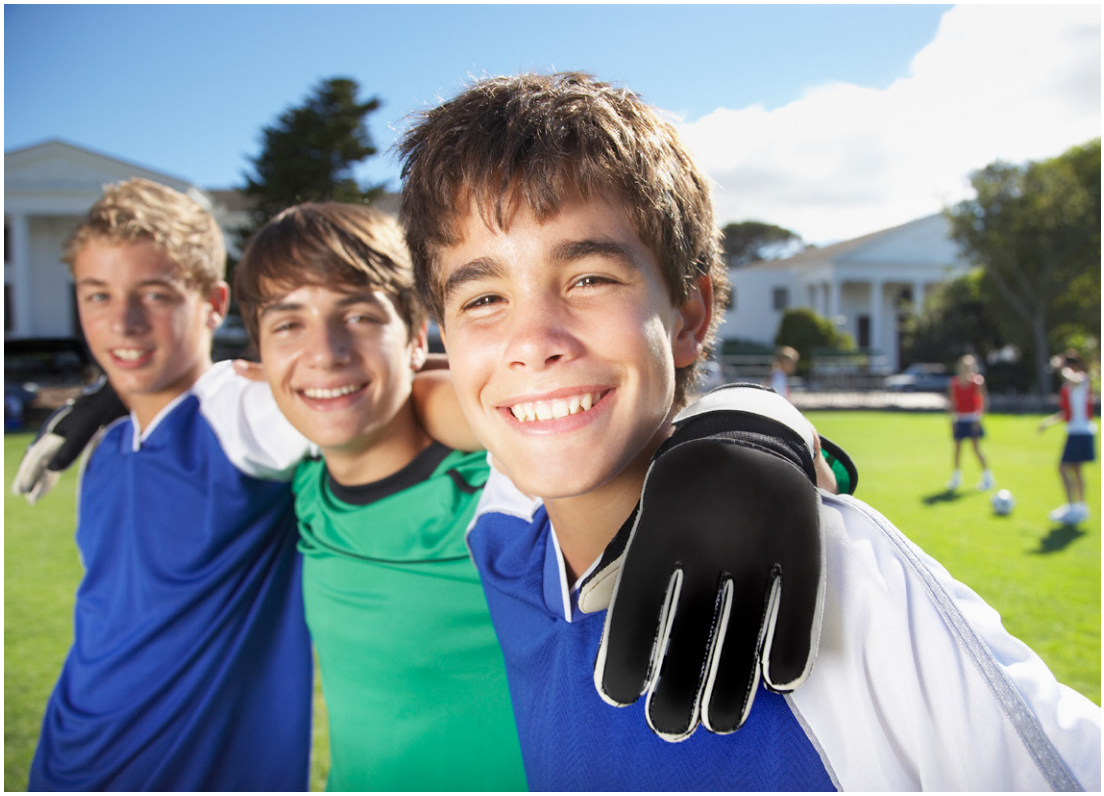
In addition, programs among young people in non-university contexts have also shown positive impacts [68, 71]. For example, in a cluster-randomised trial of the program Stepping Stones among young men and women aged 15-26, two years after the intervention, men's self-reported perpetration of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence was significantly lower than that of men in the areas where the program had not been implemented [71]. Various other group training programs, whether for women or men or both, also have shown positive impacts [68].

While violence prevention education can have positive impacts, our knowledge of what works and does not work is limited by the weaknesses of the existing evidence base. Most violence prevention education programs have not been evaluated. When they are evaluated, evaluations often rely only on risk factors or proxy variables for violence such as attitudes rather than including measures of violent behaviours themselves [67]. Few evaluation studies use control or comparison groups, collect longer-term and follow-up data, assess mediators of change [1], or compare the impact of the intervention among different demographic groups. More widely, there are debates over what counts as evidence, and calls to 'count change' not merely at the level of individuals but also communities, institutions and social systems [3, 72].

Although there are now a very large number of impact evaluations of violence prevention programs in schools, very few have taken place in Australia. There are only a handful of Australian evaluations of violence prevention education programs in schools that rely on pre- and post-intervention data. These include evaluations, in chronological order, of:

- Kinks and Bends, a sexual violence prevention program [73]
- Respect, Connect, Protect in Victoria [74]
- The Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools (SAPPSS) in Victoria [75]
- LoveBites in NSW [76]
- Respectful Relationships Education in Schools (RREiS) pilot [77]
- R4Respect, a peer-led domestic violence prevention program in Queensland [78].

One increasingly important strand of violence prevention work is aimed at men and boys. What is the evidence base for this?



Prevention work among boys and young men

The evidence base for violence prevention education with boys and young men tells a broadly similar story to that for the field more generally: there is evidence that well-designed programs can make change, and the evidence base also is limited by lack of or limited evaluation. There have been six systematic reviews or meta-analyses of violence prevention interventions focused on men and/or boys [69, 70, 79-82], as well as other reviews [1, 3, 83-86], and reviews focused on overlapping areas such as sexual and reproductive health [87].

The first four of the reviews of violence prevention interventions focused on men and/or boys are summarised in a recent UN Women report [3], so I briefly summarise the two more recent reviews.

A 2020 meta-analysis focused on sexual assault prevention interventions intended to reduce negative attitudes, beliefs, and/or behaviors associated with sexual assault and rape, and targeted to male participants with an average age of 18 or older [82]. Programs had to address at least one of seven dependent variables, have adequate quantitative evidence, and include a control group. The meta-analysis located 29 studies, including published articles and theses. In terms of impact, the programs had an overall positive impacts on attitudes towards sexual assault and future inclinations toward engaging in sexually aggressive behavior and engaging in sexual assault prevention behavior, but no significant effects on rape empathy, sexual assault knowledge, gender-related attitudes, and sexual assault perpetration. Only five of the evaluation studies included measures of actual sexual assault perpetration, and there was little evidence that the programs reduced the incidence of sexual assault [82].

A more recent systematic review focused on sexual and dating violence prevention programs for male youth [81]. It examined programs aimed at boys and young men up to the age of 25. The review focused on programs that were in-person, group-focused, multi-session (with at least two sessions), and interaction-based, and on studies of these with a quantitative design. It excluded broad sexuality education and masculinity programs and treatment programs for offenders or perpetrators, programs that had one or more mixed-gender sessions, and programs focused on university students. (Programs for university students have been extensively evaluated elsewhere [69, 82, 88, 89].) The systematic review found 17 papers reporting on 15 effectiveness studies of 13 unique programs from seven countries. About half of the programs were implemented in schools.

In this systematic review, positive effects were documented by almost all of the 12 programs that reported on effect sizes (statistical measures of a relationship between variables or difference between groups, indicating the practical significance of a research outcome). The following summarises the programs' impacts for various types of outcome:

- Attitudes towards sexual and domestic violence: 24 effect sizes were included, and four were significant.
- Gender-equitable attitudes: 18 effect sizes were included, and seven were significant.
- Intentions: Six studies looked at intentions. For intentions to intervene as a bystander, two effects were significant. For intentions to perpetrate sexual and/or domestic violence, no studies showed impact.
- Perpetration of sexual and/or domestic violence: 26 effect sizes were included, and 12 were significant.

In short, programs showed positive impacts on boys' and young men's attitudes towards sexual and domestic violence, gender-equitable attitudes, bystander intervention intentions, and their perpetration of sexual and/or domestic violence.

Focusing on Australia, there is a rapidly emerging field of work with men and boys in Australia, comprising violence prevention initiatives and other 'healthy masculinities' initiatives. However, at this point no primary prevention programs aimed at men and/or boys in Australia have been subject to any kind of quasi-experimental or experimental evaluation. Nevertheless, there are a small number of evaluations based (only) on post-intervention data, including examinations of the social marketing campaign "Violence against women: It's against all the rules" [90], training among elite male players in the AFL [91] and NRL [92], the White Ribbon Campaign [93, 94], the community development program Strong Aboriginal Men [92], the community mobilisation program Working Together With Men [95], and a program aimed at mobilising male allies as part of the Respectful Communities initiative at Monash University [96].

Elements of good practice

What is best practice in face-to-face violence prevention education with boys and young men? There is an increasing consensus in the field on a series of approaches and strategies that are more likely to provide positive and substantial change among men and boys. There are also areas of debate, and other areas where the most effective ways forward are not yet known.

To identify standards for best practice, this review draws on three sources of guidance:

- Scholarship regarding effective practice in violence prevention in general
- Scholarship regarding effective practice in violence prevention among boys and young men and in related fields such as men's health
- Experience in working with boys and young men in violence prevention and related fields.

Although there is diversity in the standards for violence prevention visible in the field, there are also elements that receive consistent emphasis. These elements are visible in both Australian frameworks and guides [97-100] and in international materials [101-105]. This review is guided by a synthesis of these elements. It also draws on and extends earlier work I have done reviewing effective practice in violence prevention with men and boys [1] and in respectful relationships education [97], co-authoring or contributing to recent statements of principles for violence prevention with men and boys [18-20], and listening to practitioners and educators in the field in Australia and elsewhere.

This review therefore identifies six key elements of best practice in in-person violence prevention education with boys and young men. Interventions should be:

1. Gender-transformative
2. Informed
3. Whole-of-institution
4. Engaging
5. Relevant and tailored
6. Based on evaluation and continuous improvement

Programs which live up to only some of the criteria may have significant positive impacts among participants. The most effective programs, however, and thus the most desirable ones, will be those that make strong claims against most if not all six criteria.

1 Gender-transformative

The first element of best practice in violence prevention education with boys and men is that it is based in a sound approach to work with boys and men. This work should be intended to transform gender inequalities and to enhance men's and boys' lives. Our work must be guided by both a concern with patriarchal injustices and a concern for men's and boys' own wellbeing.

A gender-transformative agenda, intended to transform the gender inequalities that limit and harm women and girls and generate more gender-equitable relations, is vital in prevention work with men and boys. The international engaging men field shows a growing emphasis on the need for interventions to be gender-transformative [18, 19, 79, 80, 106-108], as does Australian work [1, 22, 109-111]. In practice, the terms 'gender transformative' and 'feminist' seem synonymous [110]. In any case, violence prevention efforts with men and boys "should be grounded in principles of gender justice, recognise the systemic gender inequalities that structure society, and seek to transform oppressive gender structures, norms, and practices" [111]. This work should recognise the violence and discrimination to which women, girls, and gender-diverse people are subject, locating this within wider systems of gender-based oppression.

If a gender-transformative approach must be foundational to this work's aims and agendas, this also has implications for its content, processes, and structures.

- *Content:* Effective efforts among men and boys will have *content* on the gender-related factors known to drive violence perpetration, as well as on other factors, as noted below.
- *Processes:* Prevention efforts should involve boys and men in critical reflection on masculinities and gender, foster their support for gender equality and non-violence [1], and may seek to mobilise them in collective action as allies and advocates.
- *Structures:* Work with men and boys should be done in partnership with women and women's groups [1]. This includes processes of accountability, and the principle of accountability is widely emphasised in standards for this work [18, 19, 112, 113]. Work with men and boys should include lines of consultation with feminist advocates and groups, partnerships, and attention to gender equity in divisions of labour, interpersonal dynamics, and rewards and recognition [18].

Transforming rigid and oppressive gender structures, norms, and practices is also about improving the lives of men and boys. Violence prevention work with men and boys must be committed to enhancing their lives.

Our work should be informed by the recognition that while many men and boys receive various forms of unearned privilege because of patriarchal norms and relations, their own lives also are constrained. For example, Australian research finds that men and boys who conform more strongly to traditional norms of masculinity show poorer mental health, greater risk-taking, and lower help-seeking [10-12].

> "Programs should start with the working assumption that many men and boys are interested in and willing to learn and grow, and that they want to be good men or people, partners, parents, and members of society.

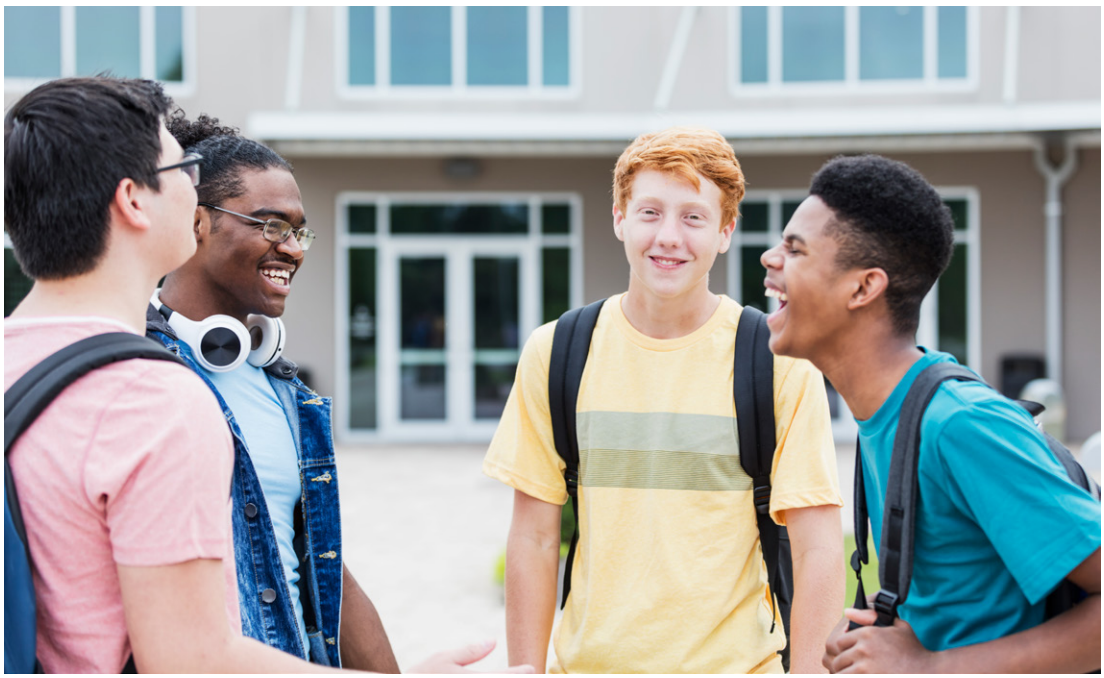
In practice, there are several ways that violence prevention efforts among men and boys should enact this commitment to enhancing men's and boys' lives. Programs should start with the working assumption that many men and boys are interested in and willing to learn and grow, and that they want to be good men or people, partners, parents, and members of society [22, 114]. They should recognise the challenges men and boys may face in accessing and using support services [115]. Programs should recognise men and boys as stakeholders and beneficiaries in progressive change, emphasising that they will benefit from progress towards gender equality and non-violence. The engaging men field shows

> a consensus that men and boy will benefit, in terms of their own lives, their relations with women, children, and other men, and their workplaces and communities (Flood, 2019a). There are also caveats: with progress towards a society free of violence against women, men who can no longer perpetrate such violence lose the perceived benefits associated with this, and men in general will lose unfair privileges [111]

Programs should use strengths-based or positive approaches in engaging men and boys [1, 116]. This is not to endorse naïvely praising all men and boys and avoiding any attention to the harmful behaviours perpetrated by some and the wider inequalities that sustain these. But a strengths-based approach may involve:

- Using positive messages about men's potential roles in personal and social change
- Addressing men as allies and pro-social bystanders and not only as potential perpetrators
- Acknowledging and building on men's and boys' existing commitments to and involvements in non-violence and equality
- Appealing to men's positive and pro-social aspirations, and
- Supporting efforts at positive change [1].

A well-developed approach to men and boys in violence prevention will involve both the two dimensions above – a feminist recognition of patriarchal privileges and injustices and a compassionate recognition of the constraints on men's and boys' own lives – and a third dimension, a recognition of diversities and inequalities among men and boys. This third dimension, intersectionality, is discussed under the fifth principle below.



2 Informed

The second element of best practice in violence prevention education with boys and men is that it is based on a sound understanding of both the problem – the dynamics and drivers of domestic and sexual violence – and how it can be prevented. Without such understanding, there is a risk that prevention efforts will be wasted because they are poorly directed and therefore ineffective at achieving the desired change. In other words, interventions must be theory-driven and evidence-informed [101, 102, 104]. Interventions ideally are both evidence-based and evidence building [19]. Violence prevention programs among men and boys, like those among any population, must be informed by contemporary scholarship.

Programs ideally will address both domestic and sexual violence – including the behaviours and dynamics associated with each [117, 118]. Both forms of violence have profound impacts on victim-survivors' health and wellbeing, in practice they often overlap and co-occur, and there is also overlap in the risk and protective factors for each. The various forms of physical and sexual violence, occurring both within and outside a relationship context, exist on a continuum [117, 119], and only addressing one but not others is both ineffective and dangerous. Programs should include content on new and emerging forms of violence, including technology-facilitated abuse.

Programs seeking to prevent domestic violence and sexual violence must address the established risk factors for, determinants of, or drivers of this violence [81]. These include violence-supportive and sexist attitudes and norms, gendered power relations and inequalities, and a host of other social and cultural factors [98, 120, 121]. For example, there is consistent evidence that men's sexual violence against women is shaped by violence-supportive attitudes and norms of male sexual entitlement [122], and primary prevention programs among males should address these. As a recent review argues,

> given the consistently documented associations between rigid gender role beliefs and aggressive behavior among men, we view infusing culturally situated, intersectional, and critical conversations about masculinity and gender expectations into multilevel programming as one important ongoing component of reducing boys' and men's risk for using violence against women and girls. [86]

Prevention programs, thus, should address those elements of stereotypical and patriarchal constructions of masculinity that feed into some men's use of violence and other men's tolerance of this violence. They should involve boys and men in questioning harmful gender norms and patterns of injustice, rehearsing equitable and non-violent attitudes and behaviours, and internalising these as their own [123].

Prevention programs should have outcomes focused on reductions in the perpetration of violence. That is, as well as intending to build knowledge and skills and improve attitudes, they should aim to change behaviour, and above all, to reduce perpetration [117].

As well as content on perpetration, violence prevention programs aimed at boys and young men should include content on male victimisation. There are several reasons for this. Offenders and victims often overlap, and having been exposed to violence as a child is a well-documented risk factor for later perpetration (although neither a necessary condition for or inevitable determinant of perpetration) [122]. Young men may be victimised by same-sex intimate partners or female partners and others. In addition, when boys and young are men are taught to reflect on and indicate their own sexual wishes and boundaries, they may also be better at respecting those of others [81].

"Programs seeking to prevent domestic violence and sexual violence must address […] violence-supportive and sexist attitudes and norms, gendered power relations and inequalities, and a host of other social and cultural factors.

Programs also must incorporate a logic model or theory of change – an account of the ways in which project content and processes will be used to achieve the project's intended outcomes [97]. These are vital for prevention planning, in that "*Mapping out what will change, by when, and how, is a critical way to know if you are achieving expected results*" [117]. While logic models link program activities or processes to intended outcomes, theories of change tend to do more to show how and why the desired change is expected to come about. A logic model shows program components, but a theory of change also addresses a theory of the problem, why activities will produce outcomes, and necessary preconditions for change [124]. A logic model is useful as an overview of the program elements, but a theory of change is useful in designing an intervention, planning for impact, and evaluation.

3 Whole-of-institution

The third element of best practice in violence prevention education with boys and men is that it is embedded in a whole-of-institution approach. There is a general recommendation in violence prevention that strategies should include multiple components and affect multiple settings to address a wide range of risk and protective factors of the target problem [101]. A comprehensive approach entails utilising multiple strategies designed to initiate change at multiple levels of analysis (i.e., individual, peer and community), and for multiple outcomes (i.e., attitudes and behaviour) [104]. In violence prevention initiatives that take place in institutions such as schools or workplaces, a comprehensive approach can be understood in terms of a 'whole-of-institution' approach.

A whole-of-institution approach requires the adoption in that institution of comprehensive and multipronged intervention strategies to prevent and reduce violence [117, 125]. Evaluations and reviews of violence prevention and sexuality or relationships education in both school and university contexts are unanimous in advocating a whole-of-organisation or institution-wide approach in order to maximise program effectiveness [98, 104, 117, 118, 126-132]. A whole-of-institution approach

is critical to the effectiveness of violence prevention education as it addresses the contexts and culture in which participants study, work, or live; gives multiple exposures to key messages; engages all relevant stakeholders; works across the diverse settings and levels of the institution to effect cultural change; and addresses the practices, policies and processes relevant to building non-violent institutions [75, 126, 133].

Given that this review focuses on efforts in the secondary school context, we can refer here to a 'whole-of-school' approach. This aims to bring about systemic, sustainable change, such that changes in students' attitudes and behaviour are reinforced by supportive response mechanisms, policy frameworks, and the school's formal and informal culture [129]. A whole-of-school approach typically operates across at least several of the following overlapping domains:

- ***Curriculum, teaching and learning:*** curriculum content, pedagogy, resources and outcomes
- School policy and practices: formal policies and practices, including coordination between prevention efforts and support services for students and staff
- ***School culture, ethos and environment:*** the informal school culture and ethos (attitudes, values and practices), extracurricular activities, and the social and physical environment
- ***Partnerships and services:*** the relationships between schools and the community [97].

For schools to adopt whole-of-institution approaches to violence prevention, five further elements should be in place. Although these typically are beyond the scope or control of community-based programs aimed at men and boys, they are worth identifying, as follows:

> "strategies should include multiple components and affect multiple settings to address a wide range of risk and protective factors of the target problem

- ***Response systems:*** Schools must have effective systems of response to both victims and perpetrators of violence, whether they are students or staff [98, 99].
- ***Institutional support:*** Resources should be provided to establish the systems and structures that will enable the sustainability of initiatives [134]. Effective prevention requires a long-term vision, and resourcing for tools, training and infrastructure, and senior level leadership [98].
- ***Integration and stakeholder involvement:*** Relevant stakeholders include school decision-makers, representatives of the students and staff, policy-makers, and community organisations. Community agencies such as domestic violence and sexual assault services may play vital roles in providing specialist resources such as counselling and intervention, and in building schools' capacity to conduct violence prevention, through training, liaison, forums, and information provision [117, 126, 135].
- ***Standards and accountability systems:*** The development of systems related to schools' success or failure in reducing and preventing violence is central to the implementation of a comprehensive prevention strategy [136]. This includes the collection of measures of outcomes among students and staff and of institutional climate.
- ***Assessment and reporting:*** Violence prevention education in schools should include assessments of student achievement, including relevant competencies. Schools should report on these, making themselves accountable to learning and teaching processes, the community, and government.

In practice, this is one element of prevention programming with which many interventions among boys and young men will struggle. Few programs engaging boys and young men in violence prevention have the capacity to implement whole-of-institution approaches, as a recent stocktake of 'healthy masculinities' programs in community contexts in Victoria indicated [137].

Programs aimed at boys and young men, nevertheless, can move closer to a comprehensive standard by seeking to generate change at multiple levels and using multiple strategies to do so. They may collaborate with the school and other partner organisations in supporting elements of a whole-of-school approach. They may engage not only students but also other stakeholders such as teachers and other school staff (e.g. via professional development) and parents (e.g. via community and education sessions) [84]. And they may adopt strategies that give boys and men multiple forms of exposure to prevention messages across their participation in school and other settings.

4 Engaging: Effective teaching and learning

Violence prevention education will only be effective if based in appropriate forms of teaching and learning. Four dimensions of educational practice are relevant: (a) curriculum content, (b) teaching and learning methods, (c) curriculum structure (duration and intensity, and group composition), and (d) educators.

a Curriculum content

Programs' content should directly address the factors known to drive violence, and should address both physical and sexual violence, as noted above in describing the second element of effective practice.

This means that program curricula should address the specific dynamics and determinants of these different but related kinds of violence, through content on sexual consent and coercion, strategies of coercive control associated with 'domestic' or intimate partner violence, and so on. Prevention education thus should include both components common to different forms of violence (such as respect, empathy, and communication skills) and components specific to particular forms [118].

b Teaching and learning methods

Programs among boys and young men should adopt the general characteristics of effective teaching and learning practice: they should be participatory, skill-building, and based in quality materials.

Good practice programs are participatory and interactive. Traditional, lecture-based methods of delivery are ineffective in violence prevention [128]. Face-to-face education should be grounded in interactive and participatory curricula [97, 98, 101]. It should include participatory discussion, group work, cooperative learning, role plays, introspection and critical reflection, and behavioural rehearsal. In short, education must involve active learning [105, 131]. Programs should use multiple modalities to engage participants: lecture, discussion, activities, videos, role plays, and so on [86]. Interaction and participation are related to group size, and evaluations and meta-analyses find that programs using small-group approaches are more effective than those based on large groups [138, 139].

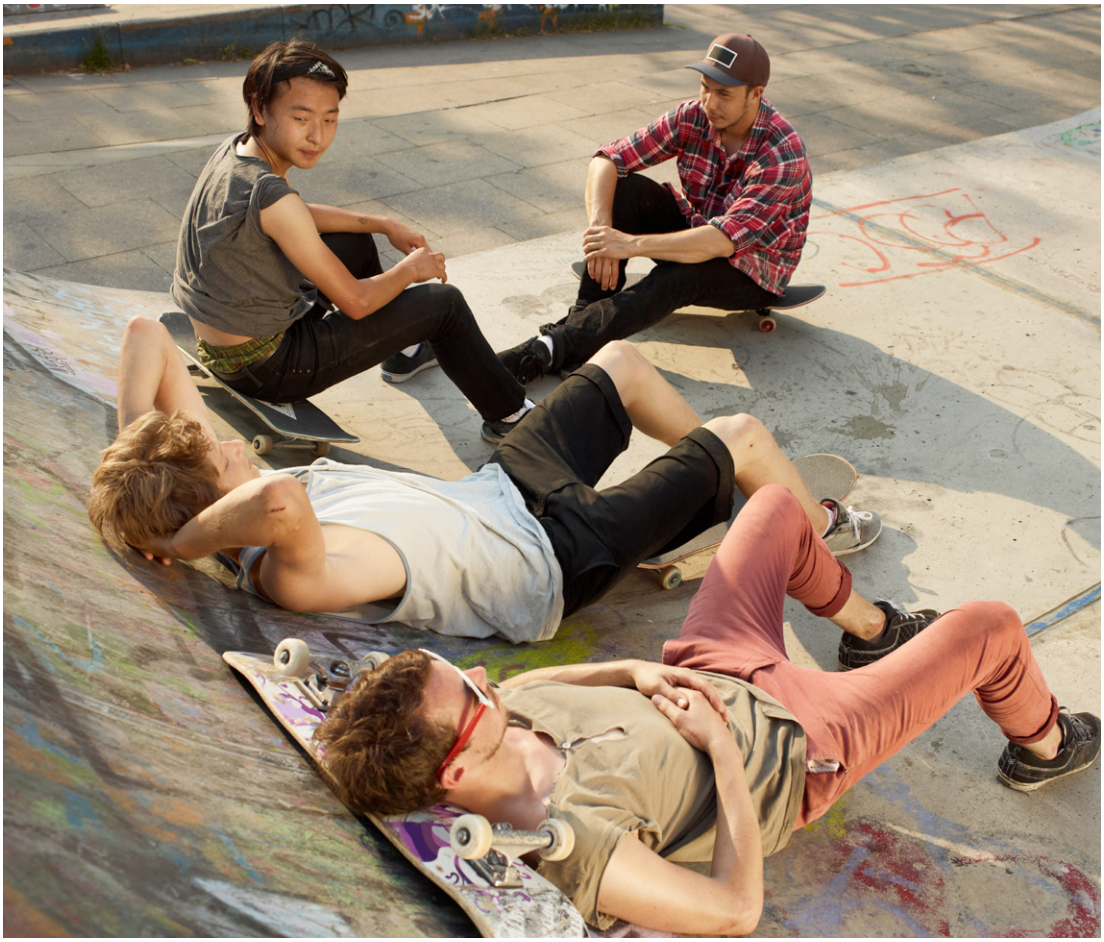
> Face-to-face education should be grounded in interactive and participatory curricula

Group education is valuable in providing space for participants to reflect critically on themselves and their personal experiences, 'denaturalising' gender norms and power relations and making them visible to participants, and providing a supportive and safe environment over an extended period of time [84].

Good-practice programs include activities focused on skills development. Experience in both violence prevention and sexuality education suggests that programs that have had positive impacts on actual behaviours are those in which the focus is on skills development, and there is a clear 'behavioural message' [140]. For example, one of the most well-evaluated efforts is the skills-focused program Safe Dates, which showed positive effects on physical and sexual dating violence perpetration and victimisation four years after the program [45, 46]. A systematic review of school-based interventions aimed at preventing or reducing violence in teen dating relationships recommends that programs incorporate skill building to promote behavioural change [28]. In order to empower students to negotiate sexual and personal relationships and reduce unwanted sexual experiences, skills development should include conflict resolution, interpersonal skills, and the negotiation of consent [141]. Programs should provide opportunities to participants to practise and 'get it wrong' [114].

Good practice programs involve the use of quality teaching materials. There is evidence, particularly from the sexuality education field, that the quality of teaching materials has a significant impact on educators' implementation of curricula [142]. Teaching materials for programs should be well informed, well organised, practical, and well structured.

Well-developed written curricula are valuable for supporting facilitators to deliver the program as intended, including making it more likely that the program will include the elements known to be effective. Written curricula also help to maintain the consistency of program content across diverse facilitators and settings [143].



There are further aspects of teaching and learning that also receive emphasis in scholarship or experience in anti-violence work with men and boys, as follows.

Good practice programs are respectful. Effective programs among boys and young men will strive to create respectful, inclusive spaces in which participants can share views and experiences, reflect critically on issues of gender and power, and articulate and explore problematic views and behaviours. They will discourage hostile and shaming interactions [114], and allow questions and reflection [144]. We may call these 'safe spaces', although this does not necessarily mean spaces free of discomfort, as participants' explorations of issues of masculinity and violence may generate difficult feelings and responses. Indeed, boys' and young men's feelings of discomfort and vulnerability can be used to create connections, solidarity and intimacy among boys and men in challenging gender inequalities [145, 146].

Good practice programs address cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains. Programs that merely convey information, engaging participants only at the cognitive level, are not enough to create the change needed to actually prevent violence [147, 148]. Instead, programs should address what participants know, how they feel, and how they behave [149]. Programs among boys and young men ideally should also engage them at the:

- *Behavioural level*: through clear behavioural messages, as well as strategies such as modelling of the desired behaviours or opportunities to practice them through role plays and interactive drama
- *Affective level*: through emotion-oriented strategies intended to generate empathy such as having participants listen to stories or speakers regarding violence and its impact, reflect on the women and girls in their own lives, 'walk in women's shoes', listen to women and girls e.g. in 'fishbowl' exercises [1].

Good practice programs have protocols for disclosures. Disclosures of violence victimisation are relatively common in and after violence prevention education sessions in schools, and so programs should have protocols in place for responding appropriately to them [128]. Programs also should have protocols for responding to disclosures of perpetration, although these are less common and sometimes inadvertent.

c Curriculum structure

Good practice programs have sufficient duration and intensity to produce change. In the violence prevention field, there is widespread endorsement of an association between program duration or intensity and program impact [25, 86, 88, 100, 101, 126, 150-153]. Greater duration means greater exposure to the prevention messages and materials, it facilitates the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, and it allows educators to use participatory strategies which increase impact.

Programs with greater amounts of contact with students have larger impacts on student outcomes [154, 155]. For example;

- In a review of eleven primary prevention programs among school students, two reported positive effects on behaviour, and these were two of the longest programs, at 7.5 and 36 hours [155].
- In a recent meta-analysis, in all reviews that considered 'dosage' as a variable, increased dosage was associated with larger effect sizes in desired outcomes [37].
- Comparisons of the impact of short and long versions of the one program find that the latter have greater impact [156, 157]. In fact, in one such comparison, a single-event mass training had no positive, lasting impact [156].
- While brief, one-session educational programs among university students are very common, "none have demonstrated lasting effects on risk factors or behavior" [130].

In short, one-off and short-duration education sessions will not achieve lasting change in violent attitudes or behaviours. Although there is no hard-and-fast evidence for the minimum duration required, this review recommends that education programs should be at least five hours in length.

Length alone is no guarantee of program effectiveness, and other features of programs also shape impact. One review of programs in low- and middle-income countries working with adolescent boys and young men to promote more gender-equitable masculinities noted the value of residential experiences (such as multi-day camps) in deepening attitude and behaviour change and of informal contact between facilitators and participants [84].

> "one-off and short-duration education sessions will not achieve lasting change in violent attitudes or behaviours

Another dimension of curriculum structure is group composition, such as the gender makeup of participants. There are important advantages to both single-gender and mixed-gender groups in violence prevention education, for females and for males [1]. The evidence regarding the effectiveness of single-gender versus mixed-gender groups is mixed. Different reviews reach differing conclusions [25, 70, 88, 138, 139, 158, 159], depending in part on effectiveness for whom and the outcomes under consideration. The advantages of single-gender and mixed-gender formats depend on the focus and goals of the teaching sessions, their teaching methods, and the age and other characteristics of participants.

One strong argument in favour of single-gender classes is the need to address issues of consent, gender, and sexuality in differing ways with male and female audiences. There is a consistent gender gap in males' and females' understandings of and attitudes towards domestic and sexual violence [160]. There are advantages for both girls and boys in having single-gender formats, with advantages for boys including greater comfort and honesty, greater likelihood of disclosing and thus reflecting critically on their sexist and violence-supportive views and behaviours, and more potential to encourage their 'ownership' of the issue [1]. At the same time, there are also downsides to male-only formats, including greater risks of collusion and the exclusion of trans and gender non-binary participants.

This review focuses on violence prevention education with boys and young men. Although much of this takes place in single-gender groups or classes, mixed-gender formats also have some benefits. They may allow boys and young men to listen to and learn about girls' and young women's experiences, hear their views, develop greater empathy for them, engage in productive cross-gender dialogues, have sexist and violence-supportive views critiqued, and foster cross-gender alliances [159]. Therefore, optimum teaching strategies for boys and young men may involve either single-gender classes or a sequenced mix of mixed-gender and single-gender classes.

d Educators

The final issue of effective teaching and learning involves the teachers themselves. Violence prevention education must be delivered by skilled and trained teachers and/or educators [117], and this requires support in the form of resources, training, and professional support [97, 98, 100]. Effective educators must have content expertise, but also skills in participatory learning strategies, including facilitating group discussions and interactive activities, managing group dynamics, and dealing with challenging participants [84, 108, 161]. In turn, this requires careful recruitment, training, and ongoing support.

As well as content expertise and teaching skills, there are some personal orientations or characteristics that are useful for educators. Educators

> are more likely to be effective if they also are authentic, credible, empathetic and open-hearted. They should have engaged in their own critical self-reflection, they should not have a punitive orientation towards members of the privileged group, and they should be respectful and compassionate. [162]

Recruitment of facilitators, and particularly male facilitators, should aim to find and support individuals who are strongly supportive of gender equity, who model gender-equitable behaviours, and who will be able effectively to communicate messages about alternative masculinities and gender equity [84, 108]. Facilitators should have the ability to "engage critically with their own understandings, beliefs, and emotional investments in gender, power, and masculinity" [145], in part to manage the emotional and affective dynamics that arise in educational work on gender, power, and violence.

Much violence prevention education programs in schools is delivered by community educators external to the school, and there are advantages to this. Community educators typically have specialist knowledge of and comfort with the topic [126], have links to violence-related services, and may have more access to professional development and support for violence prevention. On the other hand,

> Delivery by external educators is less likely to be integrated comprehensively into the school curriculum, may reach only those classes or schools with teachers or staff sensitised to the issue, may be unsustainable if programs are dependent on short-term funding, and neglects teachers' and schools' direct responsibility for fostering respectful relationships. [1]

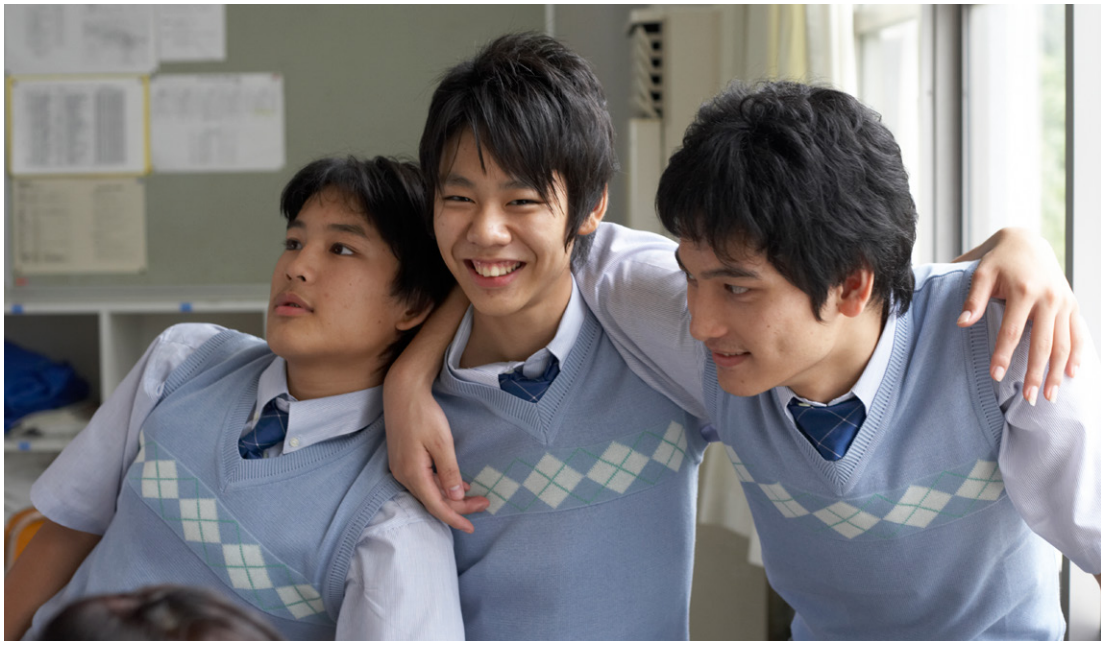
There are advantages in having school staff provide violence prevention education [1]. The use of school-based staff facilitates a whole-of-institution approach, enables more effective integration of program curricula, involves training and capacity-building for staff present in the school and available to students, and is more likely to impact on school culture [128]. School teachers have consistent interactions and established relationships with students, are aware of student wellbeing, and generally have appropriate professional skills [98]. The employment of dedicated prevention staff, in the form of onsite and full-time educators with relevant expertise, is valuable in supporting both prevention and response [98, 117].

> "Both women and men can be effective educators in violence prevention with boys and young men

Some prevention programs use young male facilitators near in age to the participants, as quasi peer educators, while others use professional educators. While some early discussions recommend the use of peer educators (such as other students) [139, 163], more recent and wide-ranging investigations challenge the apparent effectiveness of peer-based delivery. A 2005 meta-analysis of 69 studies of sexual assault education on U.S. college campuses found that professional presenters were more successful than either graduate students or peer presenters [88], while a review of interventions for preventing boys' and men's sexual violence found that whether professionals or others implemented the intervention had little influence on impacts [70].

Both women and men can be effective educators in violence prevention with boys and young men. Both female and male educators have advantages in such work, as I have explored in detail elsewhere [1]. Although there seems to be some level of assumption in the violence prevention field that male educators are more appropriate than female educators in work with boys and men, there is little evidence with which to assess this. In the literature on work with boys and men, many evaluations do not provide information on the sex or gender of their facilitators or educators, although where programs do report on the sex of the facilitators they are more likely to be male than female [81]. In any case, nearly all reviews of the effectiveness of violence prevention work with men and boys do not comment on the issue of the sex of facilitators [69, 70, 82-84, 86, 87].

Effective educators may be men, women, or gender-diverse, or in mixed-gender teams. This review does not recommend that violence prevention education among boys and young men by delivered by male or female educators, but only that educators have content expertise, teaching skills, gender-equitable orientations, and training and support.



5 Relevant and tailored practice

Good practice programs are relevant to the communities and contexts in which they are delivered. They are informed by knowledge of their target group or population and their local contexts [101]. They are intersectional, attentive to intersecting forms of disadvantage and privilege among boys and men [19, 108].

Understanding one's audience and tailoring one's work to them is vital, whether in face-to-face education, communications and social marketing, or other strategies [164, 165]. For example, there is evidence that culturally relevant interventions among racially diverse populations are more effective than 'colourblind' ones [166]. Adapting program curricula to the setting or environment – the formal and informal characteristics of the school, the sporting code, the university, and so on – can enhance its credibility and relevance for participants. Programs also may need to be adapted for particular groups of participants, facilitators, or communities, in response for example to low levels of literacy [167].

Although there is widespread recognition that violence prevention education with boys and young men should be relevant or culturally appropriate, this may be seen as necessary only when working with groups or populations that are positioned culturally as 'other' or 'different' or 'diverse', such as Indigenous or gay, bisexual or trans boys and young men. Instead, such attention is necessary in working with any group or population in any context, including those seen to be 'mainstream' or 'normal'. For example, a group of middle-class, white, heterosexual boys in an inner-city school has 'culture' – distinct forms of talking and behaving, values, and worldviews – just as much as a group of Indigenous boys in a remote community do.

Best practice programs with boys and young men will address not only the risk and protective factors identified as relevant to domestic and sexual violence in general (see above), but also the risk and protective factors specific to the contexts and communities in which they work. Regarding risk factors, for example, these might include a school's norms of male entitlement, local gender norms, patterns of alcohol and drug use, or community characteristics such as poverty, violence, and disadvantage.

Various violence prevention programs among men and boys have been adapted for new settings or participants. For example, Program H, first developed in Brazil, was then adapted for use in India as the program Yaari Dosti [168-170] and in the USA [171, 172]. Program H also was adapted for the US context as Manhood 2.0 [123, 173, 174]. Coaching Boys Into Men, a dating violence prevention program that trains coaches to talk to male high school athletes and was first developed in the USA, was then adapted for India and renamed and redesigned as "Parivartan" ('transformation') for implementation among middle school-aged cricket athletes in schools [175-177]. Coaching Boys Into Men also has been adapted for specific community settings in the USA [178].

To tailor programs and curricula to local contexts and their risk and protective factors, developers may review existing research or conduct or commission formative research; conduct a formal or informal needs assessment among intended participants; host an adaptation workshop [143]; and/or develop the work in collaboration and consultation with communities.

A robustly intersectional approach to work with boys and men goes beyond this attention to cultural relevance, towards attention to intersecting forms of disadvantage and privilege among boys and men. An intersectional approach:

- Seeks to empower or liberate individuals and groups from socially organised inequalities;
- Emphasises that all people are members of multiple social categories (to do with gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and so on), these categories are interconnected, and they are tied to power and inequality;
- Recognises that these categories are both properties of the individual (to do with their identities) and characteristics of the social order (to do with social structures, institutions, and interpersonal interactions);
- Operates at both the individual level and the societal or structural level, examining how systems of power are implicated in the development, organisation, and maintenance of inequalities and injustices;
- Addresses both disadvantage and privilege (systematically conferred advantages individuals receive by virtue of their membership in dominant groups) [179].

Adopting a properly intersectional approach has four implications for violence prevention education among boys and young men. First, programs should be based on knowledge of their target group or population and their local contexts (as noted above). Second, programs should be attentive to a range of forms of social difference and inequality, including class, ethnicity, sexuality, and (dis)ability. Third, they should pay attention to not only disadvantage but privilege. In the 'engaging men' field, many programs fall short of the second and third two requirements. To the extent they address issues of diversity, they focus largely on ethnicity. Moreover, many programs focus only or largely on issues of disadvantage and neglect issues of privilege. They address how some boys or men are disadvantaged as members of ethnic minorities, Indigenous, or gay and bisexual for example, but do not address how other boys or men who are white or heterosexual are correspondingly advantaged [110].

Programs, fourth, should engage with participants' specific cultural and material conditions. For example, in work with boys and young men who are socially and economically disempowered, programs should seek to improve their living conditions or collaborate with other programs and organisations seeking to do so [1]. This may mean working to improve boys' and young men's access to schooling, employment, job conditions, support services, and freedom from discrimination.

> "Good practice programs […] are intersectional, attentive to intersecting forms of disadvantage and privilege among boys and men

Although this review has argued for adapting programs to relevant contexts and their participants, there is a tension between this and program fidelity, that is, ensuring consistent and quality implementation across contexts. Modifying a program may compromise the elements of the program that made it effective. Fidelity of implementation includes elements such as the delivery of program components (content, methods, and activities), exposure (the number, duration and frequency of sessions), and delivery quality [143].

Program adaptation ideally involves "changing a programme's design or implementation to improve its appropriateness for a new setting or group of participants while also striving to maintain programme fidelity by keeping the elements that made the original programme effective" [143]. Prevention advocates and educators can draw on guidance on how effectively to adapt curriculum-based programs [143, 180].

6 Evaluation and continual improvement

Without robust evaluation, there is no way to tell if interventions among boys and men are making a difference. The strongest programs will be those that have an evidence-based theoretical rationale, have been implemented, have been robustly evaluated, and have been shown by this evaluation to have a positive and substantial impact. Such programs can be describe as effective: they have solid evidence that they can make positive change.

We must pay attention to the relative effectiveness of programs and prevention strategies. There are various ways to rank the effectiveness of programs. One simple three-category scheme is as follows:

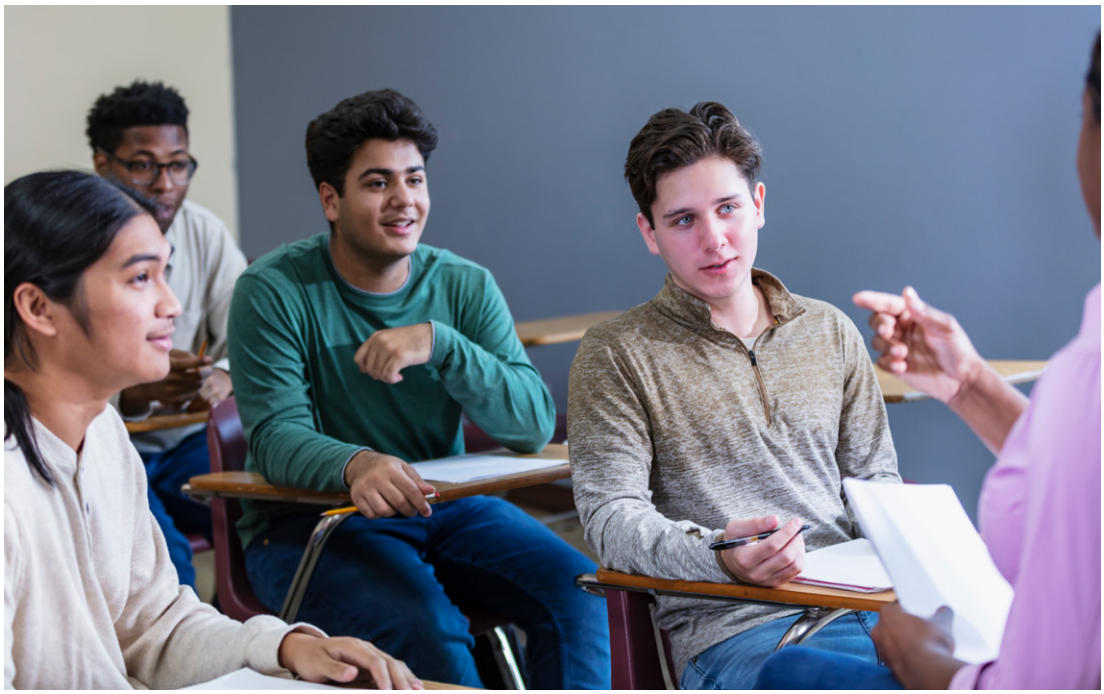
Table 1: Ranking the effectiveness of programs

	Potentially promising	Promising	Effective
Theoretical rationale (There are sound theory-based reasons for its use)	√	√	√
Evidence of implementation (It has been tried)		√	√
Evidence of impact (It has been shown, in a robust evaluation, to have a positive impact)			√

[181]

This review does not take the position that the only programs that should be implemented or funded are those that would be classed here as 'effective'. First, this is impractical given how few programs have been evaluated. Second, this stance would marginalise valuable or innovative strategies and programs that have not yet been implemented, or implemented but not evaluated. Some programs and strategies have compelling rationales, but have been implemented only rarely and evaluated even less often.

Instead, programs that should be implemented and funded are those that can make strong claims against the first five criteria in this review. That is, because of their design, they are more likely than other programs to have a positive and substantial impact. At the same time, programs that have also been robustly evaluated and shown to have positive impacts should be seen as particularly valuable.



Credible evidence that a program has a positive impact can come only from what this review describes as 'robust evaluation'. Robust evaluation involves, at minimum:

1. The collection of pre- and post-intervention data
2. An experimental or quasi-experimental design incorporating control or comparison schools, students, or groups
3. Follow-up assessment, in which domains of impact also are measured after a long period (of at least six months)

The table above refers to 'positive impact'. This refers to statistically significant, positive, and lasting change in the intended outcomes of the program.

While the three elements above represent minimum standards for robust evaluation, impact evaluations of programs ideally will also involve three further elements:

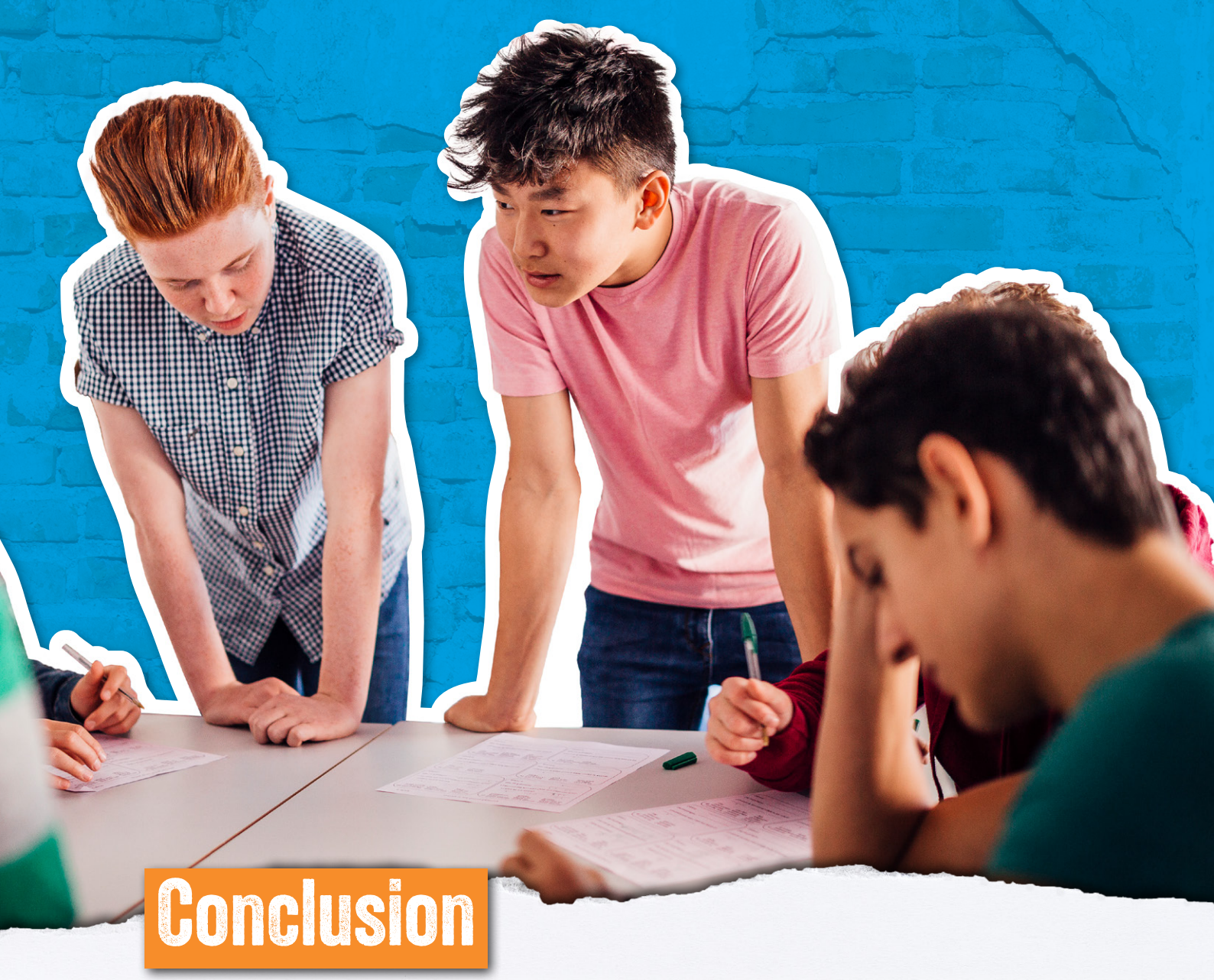
4. The use of standardised and established measures of violence-related outcomes
5. Measures of not only violence-related attitudes but also behaviours – particularly of violence perpetration, but also victimisation
6. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data (where the latter may include interviews and/or focus groups with selected participants in the program and/or with 'key informants' or participant observation).

Even more sophisticated evaluations will involve:

7. Measures of context and setting (such as measures of school culture and context, both to assess organisational readiness and to address contextual influences on violence and its prevention)
8. Measures of attitudes and behaviours not only among participants but also facilitators
9. Measures of program implementation and fidelity.

Other classification schemes set the bar higher than this review for what will be counted as 'effective', whether in terms of the number and design of evaluations or the domains of impact. They may specify that for an intervention to be assessed as effective, it must be supported by an evaluation using a randomised controlled trial (RCTs) and/or quasi-experimental design [105], or at least two such studies, or even only multiple RCTs [36], or must have demonstrated change in actual perpetration or victimisation [36, 89]. Some classification schemes also are blunter, in that they include assessments of programs as having 'unclear' effectiveness, as 'ineffective', or even as 'potentially harmful'.

Programs ideally involve a comprehensive process of evaluation that is integrated into program design and implementation [99]. Programs should be oriented towards continuous improvement, in which evaluation findings are used to inform improvements in program design [117]. Moreover, evaluation provides the opportunity to build evidence about what has been tried and its outcomes and share this with other stakeholders [99].



Conclusion

Violence prevention education with boys and young men ideally is gender-transformative, informed, whole-of-institution, engaging, relevant and tailored, and based on evaluation and continuous improvement. Programs that come closer to these six standards of practice are more likely than other programs to produce substantial and lasting change among boys and young men.

This review provides a benchmark for face-to-face educational programs among boys and young men aimed at primary prevention. Its standards should guide the development and implementation of programs in Australia and the provision of funding and other forms of support for them. The identification of standards of effective practice in respectful relationships education a decade or so ago [97, 98, 100] was one factor that has informed improvements in this field in Australian schools, and it is hoped that this review may prompt a similar improvement in work with men and boys.

There are reasons to be hopeful about violence prevention work with boys and young men. Programming and policy addressing boys, men and masculinities is increasing in both reach and depth in Australia. However, there are also very significant challenges, including the presence of violence-supportive attitudes and norms among young people and particularly young men [182], the growing influence of misogynist online communities, and the fact that substantial minorities of young men have perpetrated domestic and sexual violence [12, 183].

Work with boys and young men in schools and other settings in Australia must strive to reach established standards of effective practice. If programs can adopt the approaches and strategies known to produce change, they will make invaluable contributions to the work of ending domestic and sexual violence.

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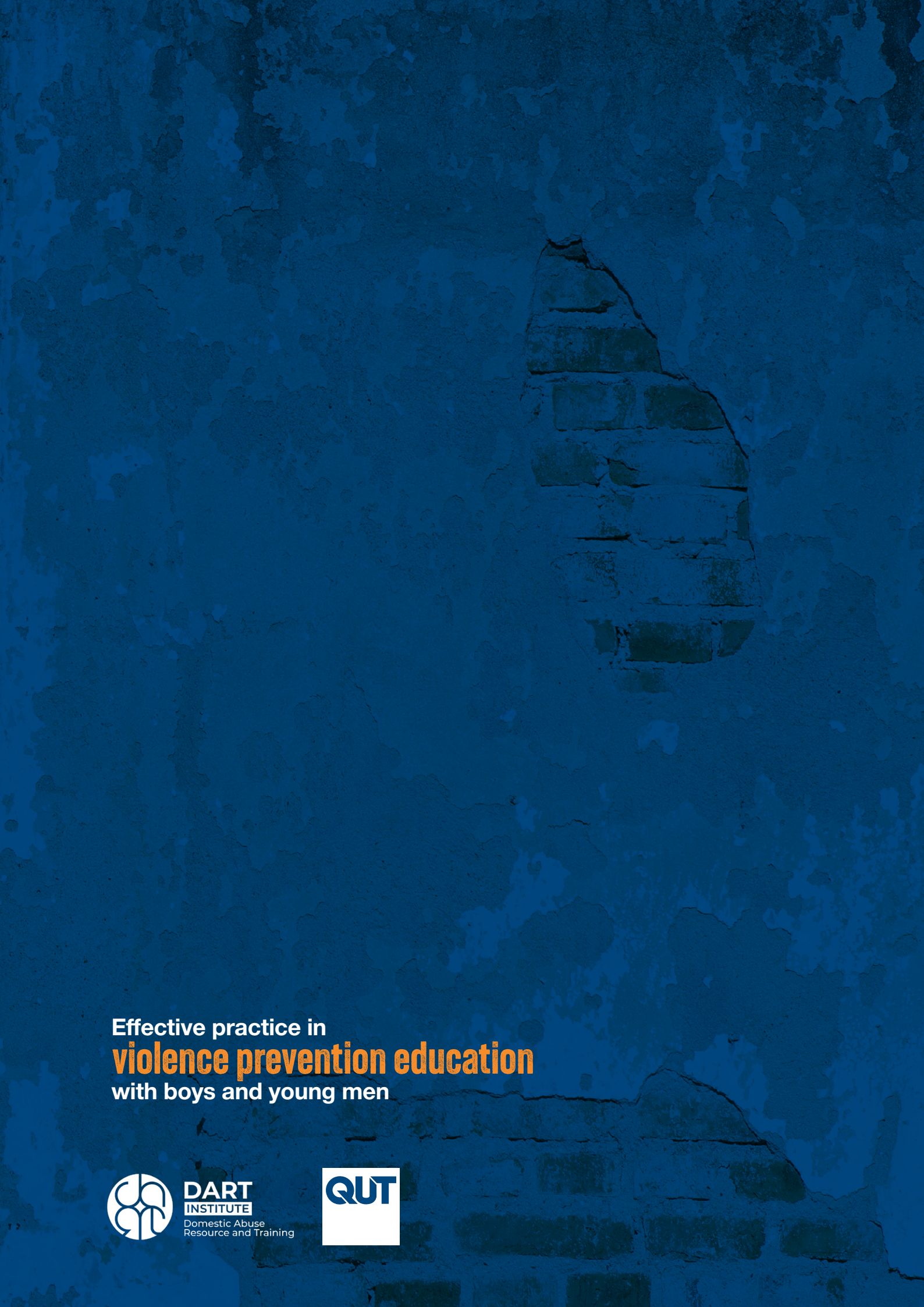

Effective practice in violence prevention education with boys and young men

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