

Unpacking Violence:



A storytelling resource
for understanding non-
physical forms of abuse and
the gendered drivers of
violence against women

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Our
WATCH
End violence against
Women And Their Children

Provide your feedback on this resource via this survey.

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Introduction

The Our Watch Non-physical Forms of Abuse campaign, *No Excuse for Abuse*, aims to raise awareness of non-physical forms of abuse against women and increase understanding that all forms of abuse are serious. The campaign, funded by the Australian Government's Department of Social Services, launched in July 2018 and includes [social marketing content](#)¹ and material. This resource is to support people working to prevent violence against women in Australia. In this document, we refer to these people as practitioners.

The practice component of the campaign aims to provide prevention of violence against women practitioners with resources they can use when undertaking prevention activities e.g., training and presentations to stakeholders, policy planning, organisational development, and advocacy work. These resources will demonstrate the relationship between non-physical forms of abuse and the gendered drivers of violence, as identified by [Change the story](#)².

The resource consists of:

- **seven narrative stories** that can be used to demonstrate and unpack non-physical forms of abuse and their link to the gendered drivers
- **guidance notes** to support practitioners in making use of the stories

This resource also includes information for facilitators and background knowledge.

Acknowledgements

This resource was developed by Claire Varley for Our Watch. To ensure an intersectional lens is across the narratives and guidance notes, consultations were held with expert practitioners for their advice and input — Karla McGrady (Our Watch), Dr Peter Streker (Community Stars), Dr Philomena Horsley (Consultant—LGBTIQ and violence against older people), Bianca Evans (Women with Disabilities Victoria) and Sharmila Falzon (City of Parramatta). Our Watch also thanks the group of practitioners from the women's health, local government, gender equity and domestic violence sectors who provided feedback on the draft resource.

Information for practitioners

Information for practitioners

What is this resource?

This resource aims to support practitioners to use narrative stories as the basis for unpacking and exploring different forms of non-physical abuse, their dynamics and impacts, and how they illustrate the gendered drivers of violence against women. The narratives consider a number of different forms of violence against women, in different settings and with different perpetrators. It is a primary prevention of violence against women tool that can be used by practitioners working in the primary prevention and response fields. It is noted that practitioners are those who “specialise in designing, implementing and monitoring actions to prevent violence against women... Practitioners must understand the drivers of violence against women and are engaged in activity that focuses on actions to prevent violence before it starts” ([Victoria State Government 2017, pg. 14³](#)).

The narrative stories are intended to support practitioners, and those they work with, to:

- build awareness of what non-physical forms of abuse might look like;
- explore the impacts non-physical forms of abuse may have on those who experience it;
- develop an understanding of how these forms of abuse reflect the gendered drivers of violence against women;
- consider how different and intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression can shape how non-physical forms of abuse are experienced by different women;
- unpack possible resistance to the narrative stories.

The narrative stories are not:

- case studies for identifying bystander action or support and referral options;
- an exhaustive list of every form of non-physical abuse.

While the narrative stories cover a range of settings and experiences, they do not take place across every setting and there are many experiences they do not cover. This resource includes information on considerations for if practitioners would like to tailor the narratives or create their own.



The narrative stories and guidance notes were developed with an intersectional lens from the outset. Expert advisors provided input, review and advice across each stage of development. There is information included throughout this resource on how practitioners can bring an intersectional lens to their use of this resource, as well as to any new narrative stories they may develop for themselves (see the key terms in [Change the story](#)⁴-page 13-15; 38-40 & 61-62 and in the [Putting the prevention of violence against women into practice: How to Change the story](#)-page 49-51⁵).

Why narrative stories?

Personal stories are a powerful primary prevention tool. They can bring a human face to public health issues and build empathy, understanding and connection. They can also help link individual experiences to the broader social context, for instance by highlighting the common patterns of power and control that appear across each individual experience of abuse. Stories can also allow us to show the complex interplay of multiple forms of non-physical abuse and the impact this can have for women and children. Stories can also be experiential – they help people to better understand the experiences of others, particularly if they have no similar personal experience.

As primary prevention tools, narrative stories can challenge myths, highlight gendered norms, practices and structures, and engage with the gendered drivers and essential actions. They can also seek to role model and foster intersectional thinking. See page 19 for more information on how this resource has sought to incorporate an intersectional lens across the narrative stories.

Who should use this resource?

This resource is intended to support practitioners across a range of sectors who are working to prevent violence against women. The resource has three levels of prompt questions: **beginner**, **intermediate** and **advanced**. While these levels are designed to help practitioners ensure the content is suitable to their participants' needs, the levels also indicate the minimum knowledge practitioners should hold if they are going to deliver at that level.

- If you are using this resource to develop your own practitioner knowledge, there are links throughout the resource to help you find additional information on each of the topics covered in this resource.
- If you are using this resource as part of your work (for instance, as part of training), it is expected that you will have a good understanding of non-physical forms of abuse and at least an understanding of primary prevention of violence against women and the gendered drivers. See the table on page 10 for more information on the expected knowledge required to facilitate each level of this resource.

It is recommended that if you intend to use this resource for training purposes that your facilitators have expertise in the prevention of violence against women and a clear understanding and commitment to gender equality, and the themes identified in *Change the story*. They should have the skill to explain this theoretical framework in practical ways, articulating in an easy to understand manner the four drivers of violence against women: condoning of violence against women, men's control of decision making and limits to women's independence, stereotyped constructions of

masculinity and femininity, and disrespect towards women and male peer relations that emphasise aggression (see [more information on the capability framework](#)⁶).

When to use the resource

These resources may have a range of uses and audiences including:

- to assist in developing your own practitioner knowledge;
- as the basis for a group activity in face-to-face training with schools, universities, workplaces and other settings;
- as a learning prompt in a community of practice;
- as part of induction activities for new primary prevention practitioners;
- to build the primary prevention knowledge of response workers;
- to assist practitioners in developing their own narrative stories.

How to use the resource

As a facilitator utilising this resource in your work, it is important to ensure that you have undertaken the necessary preparation to do so **respectfully, confidently** and **safely**. This section outlines key considerations to think about as part of your preparation.

Using the resource respectfully: an empowering intersectional approach

Women experience gendered drivers of violence differently based on their many social identities; social statuses and their experiences of power, privilege, discrimination and oppression. These different experiences are shaped and reinforced by social systems and structures – such as health, education, welfare and legal systems.

Prevention work is not about trying to change people’s identities—it is about focusing on addressing the discriminatory norms, structures, practices that are embedded in the social systems and structure.

This raises important considerations about how we view or value different aspects or characteristics of individual identities and the structural barriers or enablers that accompany this. Individuals are not inherently more or less empowered, but have power given or limited to them based on a range of systemic forms of discrimination and disadvantage, such as racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia or classism. This means that it is important that our stories capture the structural barriers and discrimination that shape individuals’ experiences, rather than presenting people as innately vulnerable or disempowered.

While the stories in this resource seek to consider a range of experiences, no story can attempt to represent or speak to the experiences of all women. It is also important to remember that every individual’s identity is complex and multi-faceted, and we all belong to many different identity categories simultaneously. Instead, these stories aim to prompt discussion that teases out some of these issues and that explores how various forms of structural oppression or discrimination can impact on individuals.

As facilitators, it is important to remind our audiences of this, and to challenge any stereotypes or assumptions they hold about different members of our community. This includes exploring our own privilege and assumptions and is a necessary part of the work to achieve real equality. The questions in the guidance notes are designed to help you unpack and explore these stereotypes or assumptions in a way that encourages learning and growth.

For more information, see the information about intersectionality in the background information section of this resource (see further on page 19).

Selecting stories

Take the time to consider which stories you will utilise:

- Have you ensured that the stories you are using represent a range of experiences?
- Does your selection convey how widely violence against women occurs?
- Might your selection of stories inadvertently reinforce the idea that only 'some women' experience violence?
- Do you feel confident talking about these stories in a way that doesn't reinforce stereotypes or create the impression that some people are inherently 'more vulnerable'?
- Is there any additional research you need to do about how violence impacts different women in order use particular stories?
- If you are using only one or two stories, remember to contextualise them and identify why you have selected them. Explain that these are just examples and that there are many different experiences of violence.



Using the resource confidently: step-by-step suggestions

The narrative stories

The narrative stories aim to challenge the tendency to minimise or dismiss the impacts of non-physical forms of abuse, and to situate this violence within a primary prevention approach. They seek to do this through building empathy or connection by recreating the experiences of victim-survivors, and by prompting discussion about what is happening and how this links to the gendered drivers.

The guidance notes

The purpose of the guidance notes is to help practitioners unpack and make use of each story, including:

- identifying the **forms of non-physical abuse**;
- identifying the **gendered drivers** and explaining how they operate across norms, practices and structures to create the conditions in which violence against women is more likely to occur;
- considering which **essential actions** could address the drivers;
- applying an **intersectional lens** to the stories and examining how the gendered drivers intersect with other forms of discrimination and oppression;
- possible **resistance** to the story;
- where to get **additional information**.

The **overarching questions** for each story are:

- Which forms of **non-physical abuse** are present?
- Which of the **gendered drivers** are at play?
- Which **essential actions** could change this story?
- Apart from gender, what **other factors** might influence how the abuse is experienced in this story?
- What resistance might you face by showing this story, and how could you plan to mitigate or respond to it?

Step-by-step suggestions

The following steps can assist you in utilising the resource as part of your work.

Step 1: become familiar with the resource and identify how it might support you in your work and in your professional development.

Step 2: identify who your audience is and what delivery method you will be using.

- We recognise that practitioners across Australia are working at different levels and with a range of diverse target audiences. To support this, the resource employs three levels of prompt questions so that you can tailor your work to both you and your audience's needs.
- Use the table below to help you decide what level of questions are appropriate for your audience. As a facilitator, you should, at a minimum, hold the knowledge of the level you are delivering (or

higher). If you are using the resource for your own professional development, use the table to help you work out where to start.

Level 1: Beginning	Level 2: Intermediate	Level 3: Advanced
<p>You have a good understanding of non-physical forms of abuse.</p> <p>You have an emerging understanding of primary prevention of violence against women and the gendered drivers of violence.</p> <p>These questions will support you to make the link between the gendered drivers and non-physical forms of abuse, and get you thinking about how different forms of discrimination and oppression interact with the gendered drivers.</p>	<p>You have a good understanding of non-physical forms of abuse, primary prevention of violence against women and the gendered drivers.</p> <p>You are familiar with inclusive practice and have an emerging understanding of the different forms of discrimination that can impact individuals' experiences of abuse.</p> <p>These questions will help you unpack how the gendered drivers drive non-physical forms of abuse and build your ability to begin to apply an intersectional lens to this analysis.</p>	<p>You have a comprehensive understanding of non-physical forms of abuse, primary prevention of violence against women, the gendered drivers and intersectional practice.</p> <p>These questions will help you consider an intersectional approach to exploring how the gendered drivers drive non-physical forms of abuse.</p>
<p>Example:</p> <p>Response practitioners seeking to build their primary prevention knowledge.</p> <p>Practitioners starting out in the primary prevention space (see further on page 19).</p> <p>To support delivery of primary prevention activities or training to audiences with limited or no prior primary prevention experience.</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Primary prevention practitioners seeking to build their intersectional practice.</p> <p>To support delivery of primary prevention activities or training to audiences who are familiar with primary prevention and the gendered drivers.</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>As learning prompts for experienced primary prevention practitioners, for instance self-directed or as part of a Community of Practice.</p> <p>To support practitioners to develop their own intersectional primary prevention narratives.</p>

If you are using the resource for your own self-directed professional development, it is suggested that you start by working your way through the stories using the prompt questions as a guide.

If you are using the resource as part of your work, continue to the next step.

Step 3: select your stories

- Ensure you are using a range of stories (see tips on selecting stories on page 9)
- Review each story and decide if it requires any tailoring for your participants
 - Is it an appropriate length for how you plan to use it?
 - Is it in an accessible format for your participants?
 - Is the language suitable for your participants?
 - Do you need to change any jargon?
- You may decide that you would like to write your own narrative story or stories.
- If you are tailoring the existing stories or writing your own, see page 13 for assistance.

Step 4: review the guidance notes

- Work through the guidance notes jotting down any notes and example answers you might need to support you.
- You may identify content areas that you require additional information on, such as statistics or further reading.

Step 5: identify supports

- Reread the section on using the resource safely (see page 14) and ensure you have planned for how you will respond to any potential disclosures.
- Identify what else could support your delivery – do you want to set up debriefing for yourself and other facilitators after the session? Are there key people whose support could encourage greater traction, such as managers or the executive? Are there key people who could assist in co-delivering this with you?

Step 6: plan for resistance or backlash

- Using the guidance notes as a starting point, think about what possible resistance or backlash you might experience from your participants.
- Think about how you might respond to this, and if there are strategies you can employ to minimise this (for instance, addressing possible resistance in your introduction or framing of the stories).

Step 7: plan and finalise your evaluation/feedback process

- Evaluation is an important part of your practice – not only does it help you reflect on how your work is going but it also helps you learn how to improve or make adjustments when planning the work you do in the future. When considering how to use this resource, it is important to consider how you will evaluate your use of the resource and its impact on both you as a practitioner and on the people you work with.
- To help you plan your own evaluative practice, we have provided a feedback form template that you could use to collect feedback and reactions from your participants. The feedback form template is on page 61 of this resource and can be incorporated into any existing evaluation tools you are currently using.

Suggested use of the feedback form:

1. Determine whether the feedback form provided will meet the needs of, and is a good fit for, your audience
2. Create your own modified version of the feedback form if you would like to make any changes
3. Allow time for your participants to complete the feedback form at the end of the session then collect them and use for your own internal evaluation purposes

For more information on the evaluation of the Our Watch non-physical violence practitioner resources, and to provide your own feedback, <https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/4680808/Our-Watch-NPFV-Resource-Contact-Details-Capture>.

Tips for tailoring the stories or writing your own

The narrative stories included in this resource are examples of how you might seek to use storytelling to demonstrate the complex impacts of non-physical forms of violence and their links to the gendered drivers.

The stories you use – and how you tell them – will depend on the purpose and audience they are directed at. This may mean you decide to adjust details of the narrative stories included in this resource or to write some of your own.

Here are some tips for writing intersectional stories about non-physical forms of violence. You should also keep these things in mind if you are making any changes to the narrative stories included in this resource.

Focus on patterns of power and control

- Focus on showing the gendered patterns of power and control rather than individual incidents of violence or abuse, and how these manifest as fear and coercion. This can be helpful for highlighting the difference between healthy conflict and abuse.
- Think about how this array of non-physical acts of violence contributes to creating unsafe environments or cultures – in the home, the workplace and in other settings – and the impact this has on the women and children who occupy these spaces.
- Ensure the story holds the perpetrator to account for the abuse and that there isn't anything that might infer blame or responsibility on the victim-survivor.

Think about norms, practices and structures

- Consider how the reactions of others can reinforce, minimise or excuse non-physical violence, including the reactions of friends, family, colleagues and service providers, as well as policies and laws that reinforce discriminatory or unequal power relationships.
- Make links to the gendered drivers to show how these stories about individual relationships are connected to, reinforce and are reinforced by larger community and societal norms, practices and structures.

Take the time to do your homework and seek input from others

- Do your homework – do the research and make yourself well informed and aware of how different forms of violence are experienced by different groups in the community.

- Always seek input from others with a lived experience of the group you are describing, but don't expect them to do the work for you.
- Ensure a review process to seek feedback on your draft stories from key organisations or individuals and be open and willing to take their feedback on board.

Avoid reinforcing stereotypes, myths or assumptions

- Use your stories to counter or dispel assumptions or stereotypes about particular groups – this involves questioning your own assumptions.
- Be mindful of how you talk about 'communities' – it is easy talk as if any community were a single homogeneous group, but the reality is that all communities are complex and pluralistic and are made up of individuals with varying experiences and stories. Individuals also belong to multiple communities and no one story can ever claim to represent all people.
- Avoid tokenism – intersectionality is not just about ensuring you have 'one of every group' in your stories. Thinking intersectionally requires drawing out and questioning how different people might experience similar events – what might be different? Would they have access to the same services? What norms, practices and structures enable or limit them? What other forms of inequality might impact them?

Question your own assumptions and beliefs

- Reflective practice is important – be open and aware and constantly consider how you can continue to improve your knowledge and practice, including working alongside partners from many different areas.

Utilise a strength-based approach

- Avoid thinking of certain communities are inherently more vulnerable or in need of 'saving'. Being an ally means affording all people with power and resilience, reaffirming their agency and choice, and recognising the structural discrimination and oppression that creates vulnerabilities rather than people themselves.
- Think about both the problem and the solution – the space we're in and where we want to be. This might include asking key questions such as:
 - What would it look like if everything went the way it should?
 - If this was a safe space for all women, what would it include?
 - What do people require in this space to access everything they need?
 - What is prohibiting this, and how do we attempt to fix it?

Using the resource safely: preparing your audience

Family violence and other forms of violence against women is prevalent and occurs across all communities. This means that many people engaging with this resource may have been impacted by violence. It is important to keep this in mind when utilising the stories and to ensure you do so in a way that lessens the risk of causing distress to others. This includes always introducing the narrative stories prior to sharing them, as well as providing support options suitable to the context in which

you are using the stories (for instance, identify a person who can provide de-briefing during face-to-face training or include a link to suitable local support services in written resources).

Here is an example of how you might introduce the stories if you were using them in a training session:

“The stories we are about to use are personal narratives that describe different experiences of non-physical abuse. They are designed to capture the impacts of non-physical forms of abuse on individuals so that we can better understand these forms of abuse and how they connect to the gendered drivers of violence. It can be easier to identify physical abuse, but we know that non-physical forms of abuse can have serious and long-term impacts on those who experience it. While the stories are fictional, they may resonate or connect with peoples’ own experiences. If you find anything in the stories upsetting or distressing, feel free to step out of the room. You can also come and speak to myself, or one of the other facilitators, during the break or after training, or you can contact 1800 RESPECT confidentially on 1800 737 732.”

If you do not feel comfortable providing support or referral it is important you identify what options will be available to anyone who might need support.

For information and support about family violence and other forms of violence against women in Australia, contact 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732 www.1800respect.org.au)

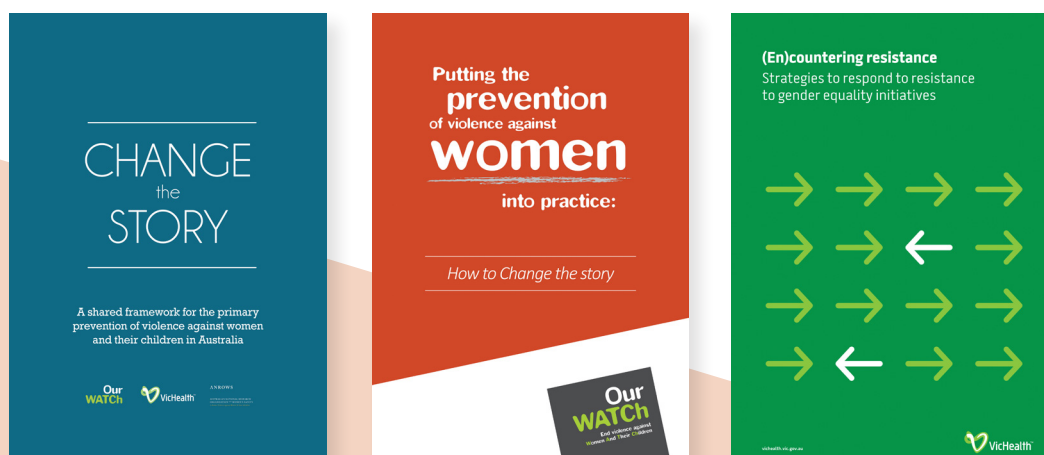


Background knowledge

Background knowledge

To support your ability to work with the narrative stories, it is recommended you have a good understanding of a number of key concepts and frameworks:

- [*Change the story*](#)⁷ sets out the framework for understanding the gendered drivers of violence against women and provides the evidence base for essential actions to address the drivers.
 - Developed by Our Watch, in partnership with VicHealth and ANROWS and released in 2015, *Change the story* brings together the international research and nationwide experience on what drives violence against women and what works to prevent violence against women. Rather than prescribe specific actions, it presents a shared understanding of the evidence and principles of effective prevention and provides a guide to assist governments and other stakeholders to develop their own appropriate policies, strategies and programs to prevent violence against women. It outlines a consistent and integrated national approach to prevent violence against women and their children and is the first national framework of its kind in the world.
- [*Putting the Prevention of Violence Against Women into Practice*](#)⁸ is the accompanying handbook to *Change the story* and sets out what prevention work looks like in action.
 - This handbook was released by Our Watch in June 2017 and is a how-to guide to support the implementation of *Change the story*. The handbook is a practical guide to assist organisations to put theory into practice and translates the ‘big picture’ framework of *Change the story* into on-the-ground action. *Change the story* outlines the ‘what’ and ‘why’; this handbook presents the ‘how’ of primary prevention. It outlines how you can assist in preventing violence against women in your context – whether it is a workplace, school, sports club, local government or NGO – with step-by-step guides and templates.
- [*\(En\)countering resistance: Strategies to respond to resistance to gender initiatives*](#)⁹ outlines the different forms of resistance to gender initiatives and suggestions for how to plan for and respond to these. This resource was developed by VicHealth, 2017.



Non-physical forms of abuse

As their name suggests, **non-physical forms of abuse** refer to a range of abusive actions and behaviours that are not physical in nature. While there is often a tendency to consider or prioritise only physical or sexual acts of violence, perpetrators often use a range of other abusive behaviours to manipulate, coerce, control, threaten and harm women and children. Often, perpetrators use a combination of different forms of abuse, and women and their children report that non-physical forms of abuse can be of equal or greater impact than physical violence. Non-physical forms of abuse can include emotional and psychological abuse, social abuse, financial and economic abuse, technological abuse, spiritual abuse and stalking. It also includes how the stated or implied threat or fear of this abuse can cause women and children to modify their behaviour or limit their choices in an attempt to protect themselves from abuse (referred to as **coercive control**, for instance the idea of 'walking on eggshells'). All forms of abuse can have significant and long-term health and wellbeing, economic and social impacts on women and children, and increasingly, state and territory laws are changing to reflect this more complete definition of violence.

The gendered drivers of violence against women

Change the story outlines the evidence for taking a gendered approach to understanding and addressing violence against women. It includes information about the gendered drivers of violence against women, the essential actions required to prevent violence, and the importance of this effort taking place across social norms, practices and structures.

The **gendered drivers** are the particular expressions of gender inequality that consistently predict higher rates of violence against women:

- 1 Condoning of violence against women;
- 2 Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life;
- 3 Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity;
- 4 Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women.

The **essential actions** to address the gendered drivers of violence against women are:

- 1 Challenge condoning of violence against women;
- 2 Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships;
- 3 Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles;
- 4 Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys;
- 5 Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.

To prevent violence against women, we need to address the **norms, practices and structures** that enable or condone violence against women.

- **Norms** are the things which represent our knowledge about what other people do and we think we should do.
- **Practices** are the ways these norms are usually or habitually performed.
- **Structures** are systems such as organisations or rules that arrange our norms and practices in particular way.

An intersectional approach

An **intersectional** understanding of violence against women acknowledges that:

while gender inequality is a necessary condition for violence against women, it is not the only or necessarily the most prominent factor in every context. An intersectional understanding also acknowledges that violence against women is often experienced in combination with other forms of structural inequality and discrimination. For example, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, racism and the legacy of colonisation intersects with sexist beliefs, behaviours and structures resulting in violence that is different for them in comparison to non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Examining how other forms of structural inequality and discrimination intersect with gender inequalities to exacerbate violence supports practitioners to effectively address the root causes of violence against all women, across the diversity of the Australian population... Thus an intersectional understanding of violence against women should not focus on the characteristics of the group itself, but on social structures and social and cultural norms that discriminate and disadvantage that group. At the same time, it is important to remember that no group is homogeneous or defined by a single identity or characteristic.¹⁰

Australian society is diverse and it is important that the stories we use reflects this diversity. There are many different aspects of identity that shape how individuals experience the world, and the access to resources and opportunities they are afforded. This includes:

- Gender;
- Class;
- Race and ethnicity;
- Age;
- Gender identity and sexuality;
- Disability;
- Visa status;
- Geography;
- Socio-economic status;
- Education level.

These factors also shape how people experience different forms of non-physical abuse, as well as their ability to seek and receive support that is appropriate and responsive to their needs.

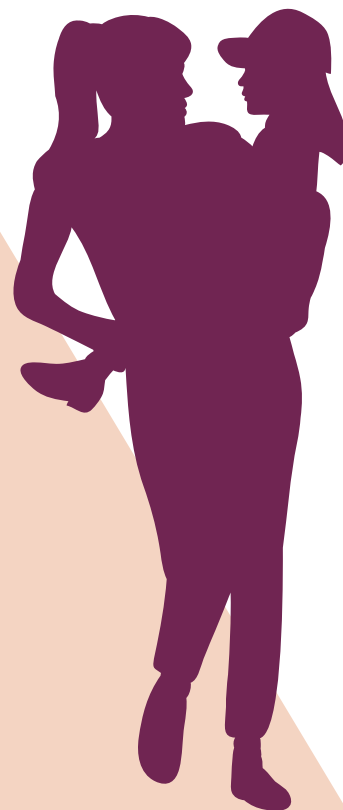
It is important to remember that none of these factors mean people are 'inherently' more or less vulnerable but are granted more or less power by structural or systemic forms of disadvantage or oppression. Our norms, practices and structures shape who is afforded or limited power, privilege and access to opportunities and resources.

While most people are familiar with the terms 'sexism', 'racism' and 'classism', here are some other useful terms to be familiar with:

Ableism is a form of discrimination that favours able-bodied people. This includes practical forms of discrimination such as failing to ensure accessible venues, facilities or resources, as well as holding views that people with disabilities are not equal to or are 'less than' people without disabilities.

Ageism is the 'stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people on the basis of their age.' Ageism is widespread and socially normalised, leading to the marginalisation of older people within our communities. Examples of ageism include being overlooked for employment, restricted from social services and being stereotyped in the media.

Micro aggressions are often subtle yet pervasive acts of hostility, minimisation prejudice or unconscious bias that are experienced by people on the basis of one or more factors of their identity. These might be verbal, behavioural or environmental, and can be intentional or unintentional. For instance, asking someone where they are 'really from' or telling someone with a disability that they are 'inspiring' for no reason other than the fact they have a disability. The cumulative effect of being exposed to daily micro aggressions can impact the health and wellbeing of those experiencing them and can reinforce the message that they are not seen as being equal to or part of the norm.



The Narrative Stories

The Narrative Stories

The following seven stories were developed using an iterative consultative process with a number of expert practitioners.

Each story is designed to be a learning tool to prompt discussion about non-physical forms of abuse and their link to the gendered drivers. They do not seek to represent the experiences of all women, but to demonstrate how experiences of non-physical forms of abuse may be influenced by intersecting forms of oppression and disadvantage.

1. **Protection** (family violence perpetrated by a sibling).
2. **Control** (family violence perpetrated by parents and by a current partner).
3. **Technology** (family violence perpetrated by a former partner).
4. **Micro aggressions** (family violence perpetrated by a current partner and micro aggressions perpetrated by a service).
5. **Safe spaces** (family violence perpetrated by a current partner).
6. **Locker room talk** (workplace sexual harassment).
7. **Selling up** (family violence perpetrated by an adult child/elder abuse).

Protection

She knew her brother wouldn't let her go. Not to a gig in the city and not with her work colleagues who he'd never liked. It had been like this since their father left and her brother took on all the responsibilities. Not that anyone asked him to or needed him to, but he stepped into that role so seamlessly that before she or their mother realised, he was suddenly making all the decisions, just like their father had. She had wanted to move out – she was in her twenties now and it was embarrassing to still be living at home – but he got into their mother's ear and suddenly neither of them thought it was a good idea. What if something happened to her and she needed their help? It was an unsafe world out there for women, especially for women like her. It wasn't that he didn't trust her – it was all the monsters out there he needed to protect her from. He'd been saying that since university when he'd insisted she come home straight after class because he didn't like her going on public transport after dark, and it had gotten worse after she graduated and started earning her own money.

She used to go out anyway, texting him to say she was with friends and would be back by ten, but he would punish her each time: hiding her wallet, removing her public transport pass, taking the battery out of her wheelchair while she slept. She'd missed work a few times because of that, calling in sick when really she was furious. One time he left her in the car, ignoring her phone calls while he wandered around the shops for an hour because she'd stayed in the city for after-work drinks the night before. She had missed a medical appointment and had to wait ages for a new one. She'd mentioned this to the doctor at the rescheduled appointment, but the doctor laughed it off as if it were a joke. It was obvious how much her brother cared for her, the doctor had smiled, and he clearly had her best interests at heart.

Her mother told her she should know better – that this is what her brother was like – and she really needed to stop egging him on. He was under a lot of pressure, with his job and always running her around to medical appointments when she needed it, and he really was doing his best. It annoyed her, the way people were always going on about how great he was and how he did so much for the family. Going on about it in this weird coded way as if she couldn't understand what they were implying – as if she were stupid. 'You're so lucky to have him,' the neighbours would often say when they crossed paths outside the house and her brother would smile modestly as if he didn't love the attention. But when she suggested ways to free her from this dependency on him – getting her license, organising taxis to her appointments – he shrugged them off, so things never changed.

And the problem was, she really wanted to go to this gig. She adored the band, for once it was in an accessible venue, and she'd been invited by a particular colleague who she was pretty convinced had been flirting with her for months now because she had been flirting back pretty hard too. But she knew there'd be repercussions if she went and she just couldn't afford to take any more time off work, let alone risk losing her job because they'd already been so patient with her. And if her brother found out who'd she gone with, well, then there'd be trouble because it was a dangerous world out there for women like her.

Guidance notes: protection

Setting:

- Private sphere;
- Workplaces, corporations and employee organisations;
- Health, family and community services.

What forms of non-physical abuse could be present?

<p>Prompt questions</p> <p>Level 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is the perpetrator in this story?• What impacts has the perpetrator/s behaviour had on the character’s day to day life? <p>Levels 2 & 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What wellbeing, economic and social impacts might this have on the character?	<p>Family violence perpetrated by sibling.</p> <p>Social abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolation and limiting her movement;• Restricting who she can socialise with. <p>Emotional abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using concern/protection as a reason to limit someone’s movements:• Repercussions for breaking his rules (causing her to miss work or medical appointments, restricting her ability to move around).
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What gendered drivers are present and how do they operate across norms, practices and structures to create the conditions in which violence against women is more likely to occur?

Prompt questions

Level 1:

- Which of the gendered drivers are present in this story?

Level 2:

- Which of these examples reflect individual attitudes and behaviour? Which examples are the product of organisational or systemic conditions?

Level 3:

- Which of these are examples of gendered norms, gendered practices, and gendered structures?

1 **Condoning of violence against women:**

- Protectionism and infantilisation of women with a disability (by brother, mother, neighbours and doctors);
- Downplaying or minimizing of abuse (by mother and doctor);
- Victim-blaming – putting blame on disability for creating ‘burden’ and being a stressor for brother. ‘You’re so lucky to have him’.

2 **Men’s control of decision-making and limits to women’s independence in public and private life:**

- Brother taking on father’s role as ‘protector’ and deciding where she should go and with whom (including who she might be romantically involved with);
- Neighbours reinforcing brother’s role as ‘head of the family’;
- Brother limits her independence ie doesn’t allow her to get license.

3 **Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity:**

- Men as either protectors or monsters, and women needing protection by or from them.

What essential actions could address these drivers?

- ① Challenge condoning of violence against women.
- ② Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships.
- ③ Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles.
- ④ Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys.
- ⑤ Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.

Don't forget that essential actions should address one of the gendered drivers.

Level 1: What are the opportunities to change this story?

Level 2: Are these actions addressing norms, practices or structures?

Level 3: What considerations would need to take place to ensure these actions were intersectional and inclusive?

Applying an intersectional lens

Prompts

Level 1:

- Apart from gender, what other forms of discrimination or oppression might influence the character's experience?
- How might these impact on or influence her ability to seek out or access support?

Level 2:

- How might this story change if the woman in it did not identify as having a disability?
- How might this story change if it was about an older woman and her grown up son who lives with her?

Level 3:

- How might this story change if she had an intellectual disability?
- Would this story change if the colleague she had a crush on was male or female?
- How might this story change if it was about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander woman living in a small regional town?

This story touches on:

- the intersections of gender inequality and ableism;
- how 'protection' is often used as an excuse for behaviour that controls or limits the movement of women and people with a disability;
- how women with disabilities experiencing abuse often struggle to be heard or believed, even when they disclose abuse to others;
- the importance of not presenting any individuals as being inherently more 'vulnerable' than others, but recognising that larger systemic and structural forms of oppression and marginalisation make people vulnerable.

Anticipating resistance

Prompts

Level 1:

- What resistance or backlash might people have to this story?

Levels 2 & 3:

- How might you prepare for, mitigate or respond to this backlash?

Possible resistance:

- If she really wants to leave, there's nothing stopping her;
- He's only trying to protect her;
- It doesn't seem to be affecting her that much – she can go out if she wants and just deal with the repercussions.

Useful resources

- Women with Disabilities Victoria, (2017), *Inclusive Planning Guidelines for the Prevention of Violence Against Women with Disabilities*, Melbourne: WDV, http://www.wdv.org.au/documents/Inclusive%20Planning%20Guides_print.pdf.
- Women with Disabilities Victoria (2018), *Our Right to Respect: Guidelines for developing resources with women with disabilities about safety from violence and abuse*, Melbourne: WDV, <http://www.wdv.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/FINAL-Our-Right-to-Safety-and-Respect-Safeguards-Guidelines.pdf>.



Control

Like so many other kids, I spent six long years waiting for high school to end so that I could leave that close-minded, judgemental world behind and finally start my life. It was clear since I was young that my parents would never accept me for who I was because they lived in a world where being a lesbian was a choice – and it was the wrong choice. My mother for the most part just ignored it, as if dropping comments about how attractive the men on *Neighbours* were was enough to change my sexuality. But my father – it disgusted him in a way nothing else seemed to come close to. The first time I got dobbed in by some busybody parent for kissing another girl at a party, he just looked at me with complete revulsion and sent me to my room and I wasn't allowed out until it was time for school the next day. As we sat down to dinner that night, he told me – in front of Mum and all my siblings – that if this was something I chose to continue doing I could find somewhere else to live. I was fourteen.

The next few years were pretty horrible and even though all I wanted to do was run away, there was nowhere for me to go, even after I got into university. At university I discovered this amazing world outside of my lectures, eventually overcoming my shyness to join the queer collective and suddenly meeting all these people who saw the world the same way I did. I even started kind-of-maybe-seeing another girl from one of my classes. We met during a tutorial when some of the male students started giving another student a hard time because she was talking about queer rights. The tutor didn't do anything – that happened a lot – and it was left to us queer kids and feminists to jump in to their defence. Another girl spoke up first and I was so impressed I found myself speaking up too.

That was how it started, and it was pretty wonderful for those first few months. I couldn't tell my parents, obviously, but that didn't seem that big a problem because I hadn't been telling them these things for years. But then something changed. The girl I was seeing started getting really possessive. She didn't want me hanging out with our friends anymore – didn't trust me with them – and she became convinced I was flirting with people when I wasn't. She didn't like me going out without her and when we did, she would put me down in front of everyone, so I stopped going out that much. When I eventually told her I needed some space, she texted me to say that she would tell my parents about relationship if I broke up with her. I had no choice – I had no money and nowhere to go and my parents would kick me out if they found out the truth.

I tried to get help, making an appointment with one of the university student counsellors because you could see them for free. But he just looked at me like I was being dramatic – told me that conflict was normal in relationships and asked if I'd considered how we might both be at fault? And I could tell what he was thinking – you're both women, how bad can it be?

Only it *was* bad, and I didn't know what to do. I felt like I was stuck between a rock and a hard place, and neither option was bearable. I won't lie – I was running out of options and my head was getting pretty dark when I got called in to see one of my lecturers. I had submitted a terrible essay – cringeworthy to think about it now, but I just wasn't in a good place to study – and she wanted to know why my work had suddenly slipped. And I ended up crying – sobbing – as everything tumbled out because I was just so exhausted from holding it all in. She listened to me, and she believed me, and she connected me with a couple of services. She helped me get a job in the university library and eventually I was able to move into a sharehouse. It's pretty shabby and the room is small, but it's my own. And while things still aren't great with my parents, I no longer spend all my time worrying about whether or not I'll have a roof over my head. And it's a small thing I know, but finally it feels like my life is starting and I'm the one in control.

Guidance notes: control

Setting:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities, TAFE and other tertiary education institutions; • Education and care settings for children and young people.

What forms of non-physical abuse could be present?	
<p>Prompt questions</p> <p>Level 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is perpetrating abuse in this story? • What impacts has the perpetrator/s behaviour had on the character’s day to day life? <p>Levels 2 & 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What wellbeing, economic and social impacts might this have on the character? 	<p>Family violence perpetrated by parents.</p> <p>Financial abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatening to stop support/kick young woman out of home. <p>Emotional and psychological abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawing love and affection because of sexuality; • Refusing to accept sexuality; • Degrading or belittling someone because of their sexuality. <p>Family violence perpetrated by a current partner (intimate partner violence).</p> <p>Emotional and psychological abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatening to disclose someone’s sexuality against their will; • Possessiveness and controlling behaviour; • Verbally demeaning or belittling someone in front of others. <p>Social abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricting or controlling who someone can spend time with.

What gendered drivers are present and how do they operate across norms, practices and structures to create the conditions in which violence against women is more likely to occur?

Prompt questions

Level 1:

- Which of the gendered drivers are present in this story?

Level 2:

- Which of these examples reflect individual attitudes and behaviour? Which examples are the product of organisational or systemic conditions?

Level 3:

- Which of these are examples of gendered norms, gendered practices, and gendered structures?

1 Condoning of violence against women:

- Excusing of controlling behaviour and abuse perpetrated by parents;
- Excusing/justification of abuse by parents towards LGBTIQ young people (ie behaviour justified because of their views);
- Minimisation of intimate-partner violence experienced by women in same-sex relationships (by counsellor).

3 Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity:

- Prioritisation and acceptance of heterosexual norms;
- Idea that women 'can't be violent' or that the abuse must be mutual;
- Lack of service provider competency to work with LGTIQ community (counsellor).

What essential actions could address these drivers?

- 1 Challenge condoning of violence against women.
- 2 Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships.
- 3 Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles.
- 4 Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys.
- 5 Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.

Don't forget that essential actions should address one of the gendered drivers.

Level 1: What are the opportunities to change this story?

Level 2: Are these actions addressing norms, practices or structures?

Level 3: What considerations would need to take place to ensure these actions were intersectional and inclusive?

Applying an intersectional lens

Prompts

Level 1:

- What other forms of discrimination and oppression are present in this story?
- How might these impact on or influence her ability to seek out or access support?

Level 2:

- How might this story be different if it took place in a metro, regional or remote part of Australia?
- How might this story be different if the main character was an international student dependent on her parents to pay her university fees and living expenses?

Level 3:

- How might this story be different if the main character had a disability that was not catered for by most standard rental or accommodation options?
- How might this story change if the main character identified as non-binary or gender diverse?

This story touches on:

- the intersection of gender inequality and homophobia;
- the interdependency of sex, gender and sexuality and how dominant norms shape expectations regarding gender and sexuality;
- the young woman's experience of multiple perpetrators;
- how young people experiencing abuse from parents are often dependent on them and unable to leave;
- how threats around sexuality can be used to perpetrate abuse;
- micro aggressions experienced by LGBTIQ people, including from service providers and within university learning environments;
- barriers to LGBTIQ people accessing mainstream services;
- assumptions about abuse in same-sex relationships – that it either does not exist or that it is mutual as women 'can't be that violent' and men 'can fight back' or that there can't be power inequality between two women or two men.

Anticipating resistance

Prompts

Level 1:

- What resistance or backlash might people have to this story?

Levels 2 & 3:

- How might you prepare for, mitigate or respond to this backlash?

Possible resistance:

- Resistance to idea that woman can perpetrate abuse;
- Resistance to gendered drivers of LGBT people's experience abuse;
- Resistance to including abuse; perpetrated by women as scope of work is 'men's violence against women';
- Excusing abuse perpetrated by the parents because they have the right to their own values and belief systems.

Useful resources

- Our Watch, (2018), *Primary prevention of family violence against people from LGBTI communities*, [https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/32e193c0-66f9-4957-81bb-62c2245a9d88/Primary-Prevention-of-FV-against-LGBTI-people-Report-\(Accessible-PDF\).pdf.aspx](https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/32e193c0-66f9-4957-81bb-62c2245a9d88/Primary-Prevention-of-FV-against-LGBTI-people-Report-(Accessible-PDF).pdf.aspx).



Technology

You haven't seen him in three weeks, but it seems like he's always with you. The text messages, the phone calls, the emails, the comments on your Facebook page... You try to block him but he keeps finding ways to get through. Your mobile keeps pinging with messages from unknown numbers that switch between anger and pleading, hurt and defensive. You're a bitch, a slut, the love of his life, the only person he could ever have children with, the only one who has ever understood him. It was the two of you against the world and now you've destroyed him by leaving. *Ping, ping, ping.*

You try changing your number and there are twenty-four peaceful hours before he somehow gets hold of the new one and the avalanche started again, relentless and un-abating. He begs you to come back in the morning, curses you in the afternoon and in the middle of the night tells you he has nothing left to live for now. *Ping, ping, ping.*

He's started involving other people now. Your best friend posts a picture on Facebook of the two of you celebrating her birthday at your favourite restaurant by the river and he leaves a comment right there for everyone to see: *Don't trust this lying whore.* Your best friend removes it as soon as she sees it, but you know that it was there and that others have seen it too. She tells you not to think about it – he's obviously not taking the break up well – but he'll get over it soon enough. You ring the local police station but they tell you their hands are tied and to call back if he turns up at your house and scares you, but you are scared already.

You start scanning your friend's Facebook profile pages, checking every post to see if he's commenting about you. People tell you to ignore him – to put your phone away – but at least this way you know what he's saying, what he's doing, where he is. *Ping ping ping...* If someone tags you in a photo you quickly un-tag yourself because you're worried he'll turn up wherever you are and make a scene. You stop commenting on people's posts because he might see them and reply. Suddenly, it's like you don't exist anymore – all those photos and chains of comments that you are no longer a part of. It lurks inside your head all the time: checking your phone when you should be concentrating at work, lighting up the home screen when you should be trying to sleep, that feeling of anxious dread every time it vibrates on the table nearby.

He has photos, too – he reminds you – naked images that you're ashamed that you let him take. And it eats you up inside knowing that any day now he could share them – with your friends, with your family, with strangers... You want to call the police, but you're too embarrassed. You want to tell your friends but you feel so stupid for letting this happen. If your parents find out, if your work finds out... As you sit there shaking, your phone starts up again... *Ping, ping, ping.*

Guidance notes: technology

Setting:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not specified.

What forms of non-physical abuse could be present?	
<p>Prompt questions</p> <p>Level 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What impacts has the perpetrator’s behaviour had on the character’s day to day life? <p>Levels 2 & 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What wellbeing, economic and social impacts might this have on the character?	<p>Family violence perpetrated by ex-partner (intimate partner violence).</p> <p>Technology-facilitated abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sending abusive texts, emails or messages;• Using social media to harass, monitor or stalk someone;• Making continuous abusive phone calls.• Threats to/sharing of intimate images of someone without their consent. <p>Emotional abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Threatening self-harm and blaming someone for this;• Threatening comments;• Isolation and humiliation.

What gendered drivers are present and how do they operate across norms, practices and structures to create the conditions in which violence against women is more likely to occur?

Prompt questions

Level 1:

- Which of the gendered drivers are present in this story?

Level 2:

- Which of these examples reflect individual attitudes and behaviour? Which examples are the product of organisational or systemic conditions?

Level 3:

- Which of these are examples of gendered norms, gendered practices, and gendered structures?

- 1 **Condoning of violence against women:**
 - Minimisation of behaviour by best friend;
 - Shifting responsibility for change to the person experiencing violence (changing number, ignoring him etc);
 - Police not willing/unable to act.
- 3 **Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity:**
 - Perpetrator's sense of entitlement to control and be in relationship with the person experiencing abuse;
 - Use of gendered language in insults.

What essential actions could address these drivers?

- 1 Challenge condoning of violence against women.
- 2 Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships.
- 3 Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles.
- 4 Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys.
- 5 Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.

Don't forget that essential actions should address one of the gendered drivers.

Level 1: What are the opportunities to change this story?

Level 2: Are these actions addressing norms, practices or structures?

Level 3: What considerations would need to take place to ensure these actions were intersectional and inclusive?

Applying an intersectional lens

Prompts

Level 1:

- Apart from gender, what other forms of discrimination or oppression might influence the character's experience?
- How might these impact on or influence her ability to seek out or access support?

Level 2:

- How might this story change if the character lived in a small town or a capital city?
- How might this story change if the character was sixteen years old?
- How might this story change if the character was an international student with limited knowledge of the legal and support system in Australia?

Level 3:

- How might this story change if the character was non-verbal and relied on technology to communicate with others?
- How might this story change if the character worked in the sex industry?
- How might the story change if the character identified as bisexual but did not feel safe sharing this information with her family or colleagues, and the perpetrator was a woman?

Anticipating resistance

Prompts

Level 1:

- What resistance or backlash might people have to this story?

Levels 2 & 3:

- How might you prepare for, mitigate or respond to this backlash?

Possible resistance:

- If it's really that bad, why doesn't she close her accounts and block him?
- People shouldn't be so dependent on technology – you can just turn social media off;
- It's just online – she isn't in any real physical danger;
- She shouldn't have shared intimate images with the perpetrator in the first place.

Useful resources

- Women's Health East (2018), *Women Online: The intersection of technology, gender and sexism*, Melbourne: WHE, http://whe.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2018/06/WHE_WomenOnline-VR3_20-6-18_WEB.pdf.
- DVRCV, (2018), *Using Technology Safely*, <https://www.dvrcv.org.au/knowledge-centre/technology-safety>.
- DVRCV, (2015), *SmartSafe website*, <http://www.smartsafe.org.au/>.
- eSafety Commissioner (2018), *Report to the eSafety Commissioner*, www.esafety.gov.au/image-based-abuse/action/remove-images-video/report-to-us.
- eSafety Commissioner, *eSafety Women website*, <https://esafety.gov.au/women>
- eSafety Commissioner, *eSafety Women - Online training for front line workers*, <https://frontlineworkers.esafety.gov.au/>



Micro aggressions

[Sound of telephone ringing]

Woman 1 (Phone support worker): Hello, this is United Women & Children's Support, how can I help you today?

Woman 2 (Caller): Hi, umm. I found this number online and I guess I'm just looking for some information?

Phone support worker: Sure. Can you tell me a bit about what's going on for you today?

Caller: It's... well, my husband. He's... I don't know how to describe it. I feel like I'm going crazy...

Phone support worker: I'm here to listen, you can talk about whatever is happening for you.

Caller: So... we fight, right, and he says these horrible things, but then the next day he acts like nothing is wrong. Like, I'm making it all up and then he twists it all around so that it sounds like I'm being irrational and over-reacting and picking fights for nothing.

Phone support worker: I can hear from what you're saying that this must be very difficult having him do this to you.

Caller: It is really difficult. And he always – like, he's just critical of everything I do. I can never do anything right and he just picks and picks and picks away, criticising my cooking and my parenting and how clean the house is. And when I say something about it he gets all defensive and accuses me of being a crazy angry black woman and it's doing my head in.

Phone support worker: Sorry, but can I just confirm, when you say... do you mean you're Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? It's just, I need to know for our data...

Caller: Um, yeah, I'm a Yugambah woman from Queensland originally. So, the more I think about it, the more I've started to realise that it's been like this since we met and I've just been putting up with it and thinking it was ok. But I mean – since we met! Since university! That's a long long time ago.

Phone support worker: You met at university?

Caller: Yeah. We were both studying nursing.

Phone support worker: Oh, wow. Good on you.

Caller: Um, ok. But anyway, I mean, it's even impacting my work because they're long shifts and it's like he needs to know where I am all the time, but I'm obviously at work so I can't answer my phone...

Phone support worker: Does he work?

Caller: Sorry?

Phone support worker: Is he working too?

Caller: Yeah, he's a nurse as well, I told you. We both are. And, I mean, that's the thing, we both work at the same hospital so it's like he can monitor me and no one has any issues telling him where I am because he's my husband, but I just feel like he's... like he needs to know where I am all the time. Like, he can't deal with me spending time with my family for anything because then I'm abandoning him and the kids, but if we're doing some traditional Irish thing that's fine, but the minute I want to –

Phone support worker: Sorry, I'm confused. Traditional Irish thing?

Caller: Yeah, he's Irish. Well, you know Australian, but they're really proud of their Irish heritage so we're constantly doing Irish things. But he acts like it's this big inconvenience when I want to go back home for cultural things.

Phone support worker: Oh, right. So he's not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? I'll just un-tick that box...

Caller: Yeah... Um, so yeah, his family don't say anything. They just watch him speak to me like that and do nothing. Like, he got all embarrassed when a photo appeared in the paper of me and the kids at a Sorry Day rally and wouldn't speak to me for days because his mum had seen it and thought I was breaking the law. But she's never really liked me anyway. They all just act like I'm so lucky to have him. And I just... I feel like I'm going crazy. Am I just imagining all of this? Because there are women who are far worse off than me but I just feel so overwhelmed by everything.

Phone support worker: I can hear that you're very emotional at the moment –

Caller: Of course I'm emotional – I feel like my head is about to explode! I feel like no one is listening to me and no one is actually hearing what I'm saying –

Phone support worker: Now if you just calm down –

Caller: Excuse me?

Phone support worker: There's no need to get so angry with me. I'm just trying to help –

Caller: Are you? Because I'm finding this conversation really disrespectful and unhelpful.

Phone support worker: I didn't mean to come across that way –

Caller: But you did. You are.

Phone support worker: I... I'm sorry. That wasn't my intention. What can I do?

Caller: You can start by asking me what I need. And listen to me. The same way you would anyone else.

Phone support worker: I'm sorry. Can we start this again?

Caller: [long pause] Ok. But only if you promise me you're going to go do your homework after this.

Phone support worker: I promise. So, how can I help you?

Guidance notes: micro aggressions

Setting:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health, family and community services.

What forms of non-physical abuse could be present?	
<p>Prompt questions</p> <p>Level 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is the perpetrator in this story? • What impacts has the perpetrator/s behaviour had on the character’s day to day life? <p>Levels 2 & 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What impact might the micro aggressions have on the character? • What wellbeing, economic and social impacts might this have on the character? 	<p>Family violence perpetrated by partner (intimate partner violence).</p> <p>Emotional and psychological abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaslighting - making her question her own recollections or experiences, and denying things happened when they did. Blaming her for over-reacting, being irrational etc; • Constantly criticising and putting her down; • Possessive and controlling behaviour, including monitoring her whereabouts. <p>Cultural and spiritual abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolating her from family and from participating in cultural practices; • Belittling or minimising her cultural practices. <p>Systemic violence/abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micro aggressions from the phone support worker, including making assumptions based on the caller’s Aboriginality about her education, employment, and her husband’s ethnicity and employment.

What gendered drivers are present and how do they operate across norms, practices and structures to create the conditions in which violence against women is more likely to occur?

Prompt questions

Level 1:

- Which of the gendered drivers are present in this story?

Level 2:

- Which of these examples reflect individual attitudes and behaviour? Which examples are the product of organisational or systemic conditions?

Level 3:

- Which of these are examples of gendered norms, gendered practices, and gendered structures?

1 Condoning of violence against women:

- Minimisation and excusing of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, (including by his family).

2 Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life:

- Husband's sense of entitlement and possession over wife, including needing knowing where she is all the time.

3 Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity:

- Stereotyped assumptions about Aboriginal women (and men), including education and employment status;
- Husband's expectations caller will manage cooking, parenting and household chores.

What essential actions could address these drivers?

- 1 Challenge condoning of violence against women.
- 2 Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships.
- 3 Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles.
- 4 Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys.
- 5 Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.

Don't forget that essential actions should address one of the gendered drivers.

Level 1: What are the opportunities to change this story?

Level 2: Are these actions addressing norms, practices or structures?

Level 3: What considerations would need to take place to ensure these actions were intersectional and inclusive?

Applying an intersectional lens

Prompts

Level 1:

- What other forms of discrimination and oppression are present in this story?
- How might these impact on or influence her ability to seek out or access support?

Level 2:

- How might this story be different if it took place in a metro, regional or remote part of Australia?

Level 3:

- How might this story be different if the caller was a full-time carer?
- How might this story change if the caller also identified as a Muslim?

This story touches on:

- the intersections of gender inequality, racism and the ongoing impacts of colonisation for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia;
- harmful assumptions and stereotypes about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders;
- how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experiencing abuse often struggle to be heard or believed, even when they disclose abuse to others, or have their abuse minimised or excused;
- the importance of not presenting any individuals as being inherently more 'vulnerable' than others, but recognising that larger systemic and structural forms of oppression and marginalisation make people vulnerable;
- how services can perpetuate non-physical abuse through micro aggressions;
- the importance service providers 'doing their homework' in order to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including cultural safety training and awareness.

Anticipating resistance

Prompts

Level 1:

- What resistance or backlash might people have to this story?

Levels 2 & 3:

- How might you prepare for, mitigate or respond to this backlash?

Possible resistance:

- Denial that a service might respond like this (Note that this narrative draws from real world examples);
- 'The worker was only trying to help' (Importance of avoiding the 'saviour narrative' that sees some women as inherently in need of more protection than others);
- Resistance to the story shifting the spotlight between both the perpetrator and systemic/structural violence/abuse.

Useful resources

- Our Watch (2018), *Changing the Picture: preventing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women*, Melbourne: Our Watch, <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do/Prevention-of-violence-against-Aboriginal-and-Torr>.



Safe spaces

To my darling sister,

Sorry it's been so long since I last emailed. Things have been so busy here with the girls starting kinder. You should see the belly on me now – I feel twice as pregnant as I did with the twins and twice as exhausted too! It would be great to have a bit more help around the house but you know what husbands are like. He can stack the dishwasher but anything beyond that seems beneath him!

I've been wanting to call you and Mum, but we've been trying to cut down on our overseas phone calls because he's worried about our spending. There seems to be less and less money coming into our joint account these days, but I never hear the end of it if I ask for more money. Even the girls have started calling me up on it. You should hear them – perfect mimics of him sometimes – 'Mummy, stop whining all the time!' Between you and me, it gets to me sometimes – as if he's the only one who is allowed to complain about things. Work doesn't value him, his boss is out to get him, he's under all this pressure to put food on the table. I offered to find a job once the baby is a few months old but the idea of me not being here for the kids makes him sad, and he thinks I'd struggle to find work because the system is so different to back home. Plus, my wages would barely cover the cost of childcare. I think it embarrasses him sometimes to have a foreign-born wife; they give him a hard time at work joking that my cooking stinks out the lunchroom.

Sometimes it is like a dark cloud descends on the house when he gets home and we all have to be on our best behaviour. He's under pressure, what with the funding cuts and possible redundancies, so we try our best but he's often so hard to read. I know I shouldn't push him but it's embarrassing to have to put off paying bills. I can't win though – he gets upset if I ask him for more money but you should see him if we get overdue notices. Last time he went into this rage about how I couldn't be trusted with his money and how he'd be better off sending me home because I was a liability and I'd never get my permanent visa if I didn't get my act together, then he refused to speak to me for the rest of the evening. We'd promised the girls we'd go to the movies that night because it was cheap ticket night, but he sat on the couch with the volume up loud ignoring us all. I did what you told me to do the next day – told him he shouldn't be speaking to me like that, not with the girls around, and that they'd been so disappointed about the movie. He just looked at me like a bewildered puppy completely shocked that I thought he'd said those things to me. He never would, he insisted, and he was so hurt that I would ever think him possible of that. And he had been ready to go to the cinema, but I was the one who didn't seem to want to go. And he was worried about me because my memory has been all over the place with this pregnancy and the hormones were making me overly sensitive. And maybe he's right, because like I told you before I've just been so exhausted and not sleeping that well right now.

Sometimes I don't know how I'm going to manage when this baby arrives. I asked him about taking some time off work – parental leave, like you suggested – but when he raised this at work they asked him who was really wearing the pants in our relationship. He was so angry when he came home because of the shame I'd caused him, and he wouldn't speak to me all weekend. Had the girls running back and forth to deliver messages to me because he couldn't even look at me. And then they started on about it too, telling me I shouldn't make Daddy sad because you can tell they hate having to run back and forth between us.

Anyway, I better be going. I haven't forgotten about your offer to fly over and help out in these last few months, but I'm just not sure the time is right. You remember how he got when Mum and Dad came to visit – grumpy and mopey and giving me such a hard time about. Maybe after the baby is born and things settle down for him at work a bit more, when things have improved.

Sending my love to everyone.

Your loving sister. Xxx

Guidance notes: safe spaces

Setting:

- Private sphere.

What forms of non-physical abuse could be present?

<p>Prompt questions</p> <p>Level 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What impacts has the perpetrator’s behaviour had on the character’s day to day life, and on that of their children? • Do you think the woman would consider her home to be a ‘safe space’? Why or why not? Would her children? <p>Levels 2 & 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What wellbeing, economic and social impacts might this have on the character and their children? 	<p>Family violence perpetrated by a current partner (intimate partner violence).</p> <p>Financial abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlling access to finances; • Restricting her ability to earn income; • Expecting her to manage household finances with limited money. <p>Emotional and psychological abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using visa status to threaten or control, including the threat of being sent home or separated from children; • Children witnessing or being exposed to abuse; • Using children as proxies for abuse; • Gaslighting – making her question her own recollections or experiences, and denying things happened when they did. Questioning her memory and wellbeing; • Punishing family by ignoring them or blaming them for things; • Threats and intimidation. <p>Social abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolating her from family/support networks and controlling who she can or cannot speak with; • Restricting access to employment and other social connections; • Belittling or limiting her access to culture; • Making house so uncomfortable that people do not want to visit. <p>Note: Pregnancy as risk factor for experiencing family violence.</p>
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What gendered drivers are present and how do they operate across norms, practices and structures to create the conditions in which violence against women is more likely to occur?

Prompt questions

Level 1:

- Which of the gendered drivers are present in this story?

Level 2:

- Which of these examples reflect individual attitudes and behaviour? Which examples are the product of organisational or systemic conditions?

Level 3:

- Which of these are examples of gendered norms, gendered practices, and gendered structures?

1 **Condoning of violence against women:**

- Minimising or excusing his behaviour and blaming it on stress, work, money issues etc.
- Structural barriers (such as her temporary visa) that can make it harder for migrant women to seek support.

2 **Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life:**

- Household income seen as 'his money' rather than shared money;
- Husband's control over her ability to work and her contact with family.

3 **Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity:**

- Men seen as breadwinners and women seen as primary caregivers (reinforced by the belief that her wage is responsible for covering childcare and that this is the only value of her being employed);
- Husband's workplace not supportive of parental leave for men;
- Wife seen as 'whining' if she brings up finances;
- Role modelling unequal and disrespectful relationships to children.

What essential actions could address these drivers?

- ① Challenge condoning of violence against women.
- ② Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships.
- ③ Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles.
- ④ Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys.
- ⑤ Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.

Don't forget that essential actions should address one of the gendered drivers.

Level 1: What are the opportunities to change this story?

Level 2: Are these actions addressing norms, practices or structures?

Level 3: What considerations would need to take place to ensure these actions were intersectional and inclusive?

Applying an intersectional lens

Prompts

Level 1:

- What other forms of discrimination and oppression are present in this story?
- How might these impact on or influence her ability to seek out or access support?

Level 2:

- What might change in this story if it was an Australian-born woman from an Anglo-Saxon background living in Perth while her family were in Tasmania?
- What might change about this story if the family had come to Australia as refugees and had temporary protection visas?

Level 3:

- Would this story change if the woman's home country was Canada or Iraq?
- Would this story change if her husband was a taxi driver or a university lecturer?

This story touches on:

- the intersections of gender inequality and racism;
- how structural inequalities can reinforce inequality in relationships and make it harder for women to seek support, for instance, her dependency on her husband for her visa and future permanent residency;
- how violence against women on temporary visas may be more likely to be excused or minimised (for instance, suggesting she may be making up the violence in order to stay);
- how patterns of power and control can highlight the difference between a healthy relationship and an abusive one (A key point here is looking at whether his behaviour is causing her fear or to change her own behaviour in order to avoid repercussions);
- the importance of questioning internal assumptions or unconscious bias about gender and race, such as blaming 'culture' for abuse. (Note that in this story we do not know the cultural or ethnic background of either the woman or her husband, only that there is a power discrepancy created by their different residency statuses);
- how the core elements of abuse – power, coercion and control – are what defines abuse, and that this occurs across all cultures and communities.

Anticipating resistance

Prompts

Level 1:

- What resistance or backlash might people have to this story?

Levels 2 & 3:

- How might you prepare for, mitigate or respond to this backlash?

Possible resistance:

- Blaming 'culture' for the abuse;
- Justifying the perpetrator's behaviour, for instance seeing each individual act on its own as 'not that bad' or 'part of a normal relationship' (ie, it is normal to fight about money, not everyone gets on with their in-laws etc).

Useful resources

- Our Watch, (2016), *Community based prevention of violence against women and their children: A toolkit for practitioners*, Melbourne: Our Watch, <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/0ae20458-abd0-4df6-81a9-4626c98dee25/OurWatch-Community-Toolkit-2-AA.pdf.aspx>.
- Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, (2017), *Intersectionality Matters: A guide to engaging immigrant and refugee communities to prevention violence against women*, Melbourne: MCWH, <http://mcwh.com.au/downloads/Intersectionality-Matters-Guide-2017.pdf>.



Locker room talk

It was a disaster waiting to happen. Imagine how you'd feel if straight off the back of winning the district grand final for the first time in a quarter of a century, you rock up at the start of the footy season to a lecture about how, because of some local government grant, everyone is expected to sit through these training sessions about how woman are people too, as if we didn't already know that. Don't get me wrong – I know this isn't the most sensitive environment in the world, but that's the nature of the sport. But someone on the Board has gone all PC and now they're putting in ramps and making inclusivity pledges and trying to get more girls on the field. They've certainly rubbed a lot of the blokes up the wrong way by putting all the money towards employing this girl to help make the club culture 'more appealing to ladies'. There are plenty of other things that need fixing around here, like renos for the change rooms or getting rid of all the pot holes in the oval or upgrading the medieval training equipment. To be honest, things have gone a bit too far.

I mean, I get it – I feel bad for her, but what do they expect? They're feeding her to the lions, sending this poor girl into a room full of blokes still high off the fumes of the championship and making her talk about gender equality. Everyone thinks so – the boys, the coach, most of the Board. She could be less full on about it too. Rocks up to the first session and starts talking about consent, like we're all rapists or something. You can imagine how that went down. And I'm not naming names, but I think she got the message when she turned up the next day to find some of the boys had done a Photoshop number on a couple of nudey images with a headshot they found on her LinkedIn profile and then posted it in the team's Facebook group instead. It's become a bit of a running competition now – who can find the best pic. She's been a Kardashian, some Victoria's Secret angels, even a couple of vintage Playboy models. She laughs along with it, but you can tell it's getting to her even though it's a closed group so it's not like everyone can see it.

The problem is they're going about it all the wrong way. Footy is an institution in this town. Everyone's dad or grandad played, and we've even got a couple of Brownlow boys who started out at this club. But it's like none of that history matters anymore. And it's not just us blokes; my Mum agrees too. Suddenly there's all this money to start a girl's team and we're apparently part of the problem. Besides, I've seen some of the girls who are signing up to play. Calf muscles bigger than mine. They'll have no trouble handling themselves amongst the boys and I reckon most of them probably play for the other team, if you get my drift. I mean, I'm not a Neanderthal, it's fine if women want to play too, but the reality is the boys are always going to kick farther and play harder and that's the type of game people want to see. We tried explaining this to the new chick but she went all women's lib on us, which got a rise out of the boys, and then she goes and gets upset when one of the guys asks her if she gets her hair cut at a special discount lesbian hairdressers and then runs to the coach about it because she can't take a joke. And then she goes to the club president when the coach tries to explain that it's all a bit of fun and not to take it seriously 'cos this is how everyone talks to each other in the club room. And it was a complete accident that she happened to walk into the room while some of the guys were talking about whether they thought she was a moaner or screamer but to her credit, she seemed to handle it ok. And yeah, it's not nice seeing her upset and all, but what am I supposed to do? You don't kick the hornet's nest.

Guidance notes: locker room talk

Setting:

- Sports, recreation, social and leisure spaces;
- Workplaces, corporations and employee organisations.

What forms of non-physical abuse could be present?

<p>Prompt questions</p> <p>Level 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What might be some of the wellbeing, economic and social impacts of this behaviour for the worker in the story? <p>Level 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the story, the worker employed by the club laughs along with the banter and jokes. If the behaviour is actually upsetting her, why might she be responding like this?• In Australia, the legal definition of sexual harassment includes a working environment that is ‘sexually permeated or hostile’. How might this workplace reflect this kind of environment? <p>Levels 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are some of the broader impacts of this behaviour for:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ the football club;◦ its players;◦ for players’ partners, friends and family its community?	<p>Sexual harassment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crude or offensive jokes and innuendo;• Intrusive questions about a colleague’s private life;• A working environment that is sexually hostile. <p>Emotional abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Belittling the worker. <p>Image-based abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharing explicit images.
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What gendered drivers are present and how do they operate across norms, practices and structures to create the conditions in which violence against women is more likely to occur?

Prompt questions

Level 1:

- Which of the gendered drivers are present in this story?
- Would it make a difference if the narrator was club captain or a new recruit?

Level 2:

- Which of these examples reflect individual attitudes and behaviour? Which examples are the product of organisational or systemic conditions?

Level 3:

- Which of these are examples of gendered norms, gendered practices, and gendered structures?

1 **Condoning of violence against women:**

- Club coach excusing behaviour as ‘just a joke’;
- Victim-blaming – focussing on the worker’s reaction to inappropriate behaviour rather than the behaviour itself. ‘What do they expect?’

3 **Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity:**

- Football seen as a ‘men’s space’;
- Homophobic comments resulting from women transgressing traditional notions of feminine appearance and behaviour;
- Resistance by men to engaging in discussions around consent and gender equality.

4 **Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women;**

- Sexist and homophobic jokes;
- Tolerance of a sexualised and hostile workplace;
- Sense of male entitlement and culture of male superiority (ie men are naturally better at football, no one wants to see women play, expectations around how money should be prioritised and used in the club);
- An acceptance this is ‘just what it is like’ in a male sporting environment;
- Disempowering language – referring to the worker as a ‘girl’ and a ‘chick’;
- Gender equality seen as a threat to a historically male dominated institution.

What essential actions could address these drivers?

- ① Challenge condoning of violence against women.
- ② Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships.
- ③ Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles.
- ④ Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys.
- ⑤ Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.

Don't forget that essential actions should address one of the gendered drivers.

Level 1: Workplace or organisational cultures can either reinforce or challenge the drivers of violence. What are the opportunities to change this story?

Level 2: Are these actions addressing norms, practices or structures?

Level 3: What considerations would need to take place to ensure these actions were intersectional and inclusive?

Applying an intersectional lens

Prompts

Level 1:

- Apart from gender, what other forms of discrimination or oppression might influence the worker's experience?
- How might these impact on or influence the worker's ability to seek out or access support?

Level 2:

- What difference would it make if this story was set in a regional, remote or metro area?
- How might this story change if the worker was from a non-Caucasian background?

Level 3:

- How might this story change if it was a male worker experiencing this abuse?
- How might this story change if the worker was an older woman from a Muslim background who wore a hijab?
- How might this story change if the worker was a transgender woman?

This story touches on:

- the intersections of gender inequality and homophobia;
- the interconnectedness of exclusionary language and cultures;
- the intersections of sex, gender and sexuality;
- the minimisation and acceptance of this exclusionary language/culture as jokes or humour resistance to efforts to reduce sexism, racism, trans and homophobia, and ableism.

Anticipating resistance

Prompts

Level 1;

- What resistance or backlash might people have to this story?

Levels 2 & 3;

- How might you prepare for, mitigate or respond to this backlash?

Possible resistance:

- Criticising the approach – the Board or the worker haven't gone about implementing this work the right way;
- It is the worker's job to be able to manage this kind of response;
- What do they expect – it's a sporting club;
- She is sending mixed messages by laughing about it – how are they supposed to know she is taking offence?

Useful resources

- Australian Human Rights Commission, (2002), *A Bad Business - Fact sheet: Legal definition of sexual harassment*, Sydney: Australian Human Rights Commission, <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/bad-business-fact-sheet-legal-definition-sexual-harassment>.
- Liston, R., Mortimer, S., Hamilton, G. and Cameron, R. (2017). *A team effort: preventing violence against women through sport*. Evidence Guide prepared for Our Watch. Melbourne: RMIT University, <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/01967038-a7f9-4267-ba3e-912c0fa0398e/A-team-effort-evidence-guide-AA.pdf.aspx>.
- Our Watch (2018), *Workplace Equality and Respect Hub*, <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/Workplace-Equality-and-Respect-Hub/Home>.



Selling up

It was freezing inside but Maureen had said that she didn't like to put the heater on because of the cost. Her hands, when she'd passed the cup and saucer to Tania, were ice cold, and Tania had had to stop herself from leaping from the couch to turn the heater on then and there.

'When did you say you moved in?' Maureen asked, settling herself gently onto the couch beside Tania, her walker left to one side.

'Just this weekend,' Tania replied, admiring the ornate teacup. 'You're the first neighbour I've visited.'

'Royal Doulton,' Maureen informed her. 'Lizzie – my daughter – will get it, though my son's wife has had her eye on it for years.'

Maureen raised a hand towards the frames lining the mantelpiece and Tania followed her gesture. 'That's Lizzie there with her husband and kids. Works for a big name lawyer in the city. Very long hours. She does her best to pop round but it's a bit of burden having to cross the city to get here. Thank god for the ladies from my craft group always dropping by. But she's been very good since the fall, my Lizzie. They both have, she and my son Peter. They've got their own families but they still make the time to take me to my appointments and what have you.'

'You had a fall?' Tania gave her a concerned look.

'It's my own fault really,' Maureen sighed. 'They've been telling me not to get up at night because I get dizzy but I went and did it anyway, didn't I, and look what happened. Peter was very cross with me. They were about to go on a lovely holiday to Bali and I ruined that for him.'

'I'm sure they didn't feel like that,' Tania said, but Maureen's eyes were on her empty teacup.

'I'd offer you another tea but that was the last of the milk,' she apologised. 'Jen – that's Peter's wife – she normally does my weekly shop when she does her own, but that's not until tomorrow or the day after.'

'I can pop down to the shop and get you some more. It's no trouble at all.' Tania went to stand but Maureen waved her offer away.

'No no, don't you worry yourself. Jen prefers to do my shop. Besides, I haven't any money to give you. She holds onto my debit card so it's easier for her to pay. I tell you, I'm glad it's her and not me. The prices alone would give me a heart attack. I found a receipt in the shopping bag last week and look at that – \$300!'

She fished a receipt off the side table and held it out to Tania. Tania scanned it. It seemed like a lot of food for just one person. She realised that this must include Jen's own groceries too.

'Anyway, you'll love this neighbourhood,' Maureen continued. 'It'll be nearly fifty years that I was in this house and I'm sure the new owners will enjoy it just as much as we did.'

Tania was confused. 'New owners?'

Maureen looked at her hands. 'I'm selling up. It was Peter's idea. In case I have another fall. They've got a spare room at their place. It's a bit far for anyone from my craft group to visit but it'll be easier on Peter and Jen. I had always thought I'd stay in my own home but it's the least I can do after all the trouble I've been for everyone. And Peter says my finances just can't support it. I've been lucky to have him to manage my accounts since my husband died.'

'Is that something you want?' Tania asked, but Maureen didn't answer.

As Tania was leaving, a car pulled up outside the house. A woman got out and Tania recognised her from the photo on the mantelpiece.

‘You must be Lizzie. I’m Tania. We’ve just moved in next door. I’ve been visiting your mum.’

‘Did she trap you in there with her stories?’ Lizzie laughed warmly. ‘She does love to chat.’

‘We had a great time,’ Tania smiled back. ‘But I – look it isn’t my place – but it’s very cold in there and she said she couldn’t put the heater on because of the cost...’

Lizzie rolled her eyes. ‘That’ll be my brother getting into her head! She’s got plenty of money put away after Dad died. Peter and his wife are always going on about money because their business isn’t doing well but Mum is fine. I tell her she needs to stand up to them but she doesn’t want to make a scene. She’s her own worst enemy sometimes. Anyway, I better keep going because I haven’t got long before I’ve got to head off again. Lovely to meet you.’

Lizzie let herself into the house, closing the door behind her. Tania stood there a moment, taking in the property, her head full of conflicting thoughts. Soon her hands started to hurt in the cold and she turned back towards her own warm house.

Guidance notes: selling up

Setting:

- Private sphere.

What forms of non-physical abuse could be present?

<p>Prompt questions</p> <p>Level 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is the perpetrator in this story?• What impacts has the perpetrator/s behaviour had on the character’s day to day life? <p>Levels 2 & 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What wellbeing, economic and social impacts might this have on the character?	<p>Family violence perpetrated by an adult relative (family violence experienced by an older person or sometimes called elder abuse).</p> <p>Financial abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using her debit card to pay for their groceries without her consent;• Limiting her spending, including utility bills;• Withholding information about her finances;• Coercing her into selling her home against her wishes. <p>Social abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cutting her off from her networks (craft group). <p>Emotional and psychological abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encouraging her to feel like a burden or that her needs inconvenience others.
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What gendered drivers are present and how do they operate across norms, practices and structures to create the conditions in which violence against women is more likely to occur?

Prompt questions

Level 1:

- Which of the gendered drivers are present in this story?

Level 2:

- Which of these examples reflect individual attitudes and behaviour? Which examples are the product of organisational or systemic conditions?

Level 3:

- Which of these are examples of gendered norms, gendered practices, and gendered structures?

1 Condoning of violence against women:

- Minimising or excusing impacts of violence against older people, and reinforcing the narrative that their needs are a burden on others;
- Victim-blaming by the daughter – ‘she’s her own worst enemy’, ‘she needs to stand up to them’.

2 Men’s control of decision-making and limits to women’s independence in public and private life:

- Son’s control of finances and decision-making (and husband’s control prior to this).

3 Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity:

- Tendency for managing finances to be seen as men’s work and lack of financial literacy education for women.

What essential actions could address these drivers?

- 1 Challenge condoning of violence against women.
- 2 Promote women’s independence and decision-making in public life and relationships.
- 3 Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles.
- 4 Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys.
- 5 Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.

Don’t forget that essential actions should address one of the gendered drivers.

Level 1: What are the opportunities to change this story?

Level 2: Are these actions addressing norms, practices or structures?

Level 3: What considerations would need to take place to ensure these actions were intersectional and inclusive?

Applying an intersectional lens

Prompts

Level 1:

- What other forms of discrimination and oppression are present in this story?
- How might these impact on or influence her ability to seek out or access support?

Level 2:

- Would this story change if Maureen had come to Australia as a migrant from a non-English speaking country and in her later years was only able to communicate in her mother tongue?
- Would this story change if Maureen was financially well off or if she was working class with no financial assets but her house?

Level 3:

- Would this story change if Maureen had a disability that required daily support from a care worker?
- Would this story change if it were about an older gay man and his nephew?

This story touches on:

- the intersections of gender inequality and ageism;
- the invisibility of older people from discussions around family violence and violence against women;
- the tendency to minimise the experiences of older people experiencing forms of abuse and control;
- the tendency to view older people as not being capable of making informed choices about their lives.

Anticipating resistance

Prompts

Level 1:

- What resistance or backlash might people have to this story?

Levels 2 & 3:

- How might you prepare for, mitigate or respond to this backlash?

Possible resistance:

- Excusing abuse because those perpetrating it are well-intending or well-meaning;
- Excusing abuse because of the 'stressful' nature of providing support and care for others.

Note: The decisions and choices made around how families care for their older members can be a very sensitive and emotive topic, particularly when it comes to whether or not people stay in their own homes.

Useful resources

- Seniors Rights Victoria, (2018), *Your Rights – Elder Abuse*, <https://seniorsrights.org.au/your-rights/>.



Feedback form template

Feedback form template

Suggested use: Print and distribute to participants and collate at the end of the session

The survey below will take you less than five minutes to complete. If there is anything this questionnaire does not cover that you would like to share, please do so in the comment box at the end of the questions.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary and anonymous. Your responses will be collated and used to improve our work.

Thank you for your feedback.

Endnotes

- ¹ <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/no-excuse/home>
- ² <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do/National-Primary-Prevention-Framework>
- ³ https://www.vic.gov.au/system/user_files/Documents/fv/Preventing%20Family%20Violence%20%26%20Violence%20Against%20Women%20Capability%20Framwork.pdf
- ⁴ <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/0aa0109b-6b03-43f2-85fe-a9f5ec92ae4e/Change-the-story-framework-prevent-violence-women-children-AA-new.pdf.aspx>
- ⁵ <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/a8d9dc3d-2291-48a6-82f8-68f1a955ce24/Putting-prevention-into-practice-AA-web.pdf.aspx>
- ⁶ https://www.vic.gov.au/system/user_files/Documents/fv/Preventing%20Family%20Violence%20%26%20Violence%20Against%20Women%20Capability%20Framwork.pdf
- ⁷ <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/0aa0109b-6b03-43f2-85fe-a9f5ec92ae4e/Change-the-story-framework-prevent-violence-women-children-AA-new.pdf.aspx>
- ⁸ <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/a8d9dc3d-2291-48a6-82f8-68f1a955ce24/Putting-prevention-into-practice-AA-web.pdf.aspx>
- ⁹ <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/-/media/ResourceCentre/PublicationsandResources/PVAW/Encountering-Resistance-Gender-Equality.pdf?la=en&hash=54D49CAE94D6B162A42C3FE6FC8C79600A194AE4>
- ¹⁰ Our Watch 2017, *Putting the Prevention of Violence Against Women into Practice: How to Change the Story*, Melbourne: Our Watch p.51

Provide your feedback on this resource via this survey.

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End violence against
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