Putting the prevention of violence against women into practice:

How to Change the story

Acknowledgements

Building on a history of Australian women's leadership in primary prevention

Good prevention strategies already exist across Australia and signs of progress are emerging. This Handbook builds on the valuable work by individuals and organisations in many sectors. Our Watch would like to acknowledge the numerous women and women's organisations across Australia that pioneered the work in the prevention of violence against women, in particular our colleagues in the women's health, gender equality, family violence and sexual assault sectors. We would also like to acknowledge the important leadership and work of women in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse communities in working to end violence against women across Australia. Their collective leadership, commitment, efforts and advocacy – which are underpinned by a feminist, social justice and human rights approach – have put the primary prevention of violence against women at the forefront of the national agenda in ending violence against women. This has provided an important basis upon which this work can continue.

Glossary

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Ableism – the institutional, cultural, and individual set of beliefs, attitudes and practices that perceives and treats people with a disability as being less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and participate, or of less inherent value than able-bodied individuals. Ableism results in the systemic and institutionalised exclusion and marginalisation of people with a disability.

Ageism – the process of systematic stereotyping of, and discrimination against people based on their age. Although ageism is more generally used in relation to the discrimination against older people, ageist attitudes and norms also adversely affect younger people.

Backlash – the resistance, hostility or aggression with which gender equality or violence prevention strategies are met by some groups. Challenges to established gender norms and identities or entrenched ideas about the roles of men and women are often resisted by those who strongly adhere to such norms and see them as traditional or natural. From a feminist perspective, backlash can be understood as an inevitable response to challenges to male dominance, power or status and is often interpreted as a sign that such challenges are proving effective. Backlash can include attempts to discredit arguments about gender inequality or the gendered nature of violence as well as efforts to preserve existing gender norms and hierarchies, with the result that progress towards violence prevention and gender equality can be slowed or even reversed. In some cases backlash can lead to an increase in violence itself.

Classism – the institutional, cultural, and individual set of beliefs, attitudes and practices that assign differential value to people according to their socio-economic status. Classist attitudes and norms may be based on a person's family background, wealth or income, education, and/or occupation.

Colonisation – the action or process of forcibly taking over the land of Indigenous peoples (also known as dispossession), and establishing rule or control over those Indigenous peoples. In the context of Australia, the British colonisation of Australia devastated the Indigenous population and the many pre-existing Indigenous cultures through dispossession, massacres and other forms of violence, forced relocation to reserves and missions, forced labour and the forced removal of children from their families. The impacts of colonisation on Australia's Indigenous peoples are still felt today, and its legacies include widespread and significant intergenerational trauma.

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

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

Emotional/psychological violence – can include a range of controlling behaviours such as control of finances, isolation from family and friends, continual humiliation, threats against children or being threatened with injury or death.

Ethnocentrism – the belief that one's own culture is superior to others, and has the right to impose its norms or tenets onto others. Ethnocentric attitudes and norms often manifest as judgement, prejudice and discrimination against individuals and/or groups, especially with concern to language, behaviour, customs and religion.

Evaluation – is the systematic collection of information about the activities, outputs and impacts of programs to assess their value to the strategy, improve ongoing implementation and use the knowledge gained to inform future prevention work.

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

Framework – the conceptual structure underlying and supporting an approach to a specific objective, in this case, the prevention of violence against women and their children. A framework is typically made up of interrelated component parts or elements, all of which need to be in place to achieve the objective.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gender transformative – gender transformative principles support actions to prevent violence against women and reduce gender inequality at the same time.

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

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

Gendered practices – the everyday practices, processes and behaviours undertaken at an individual or relationship level, organisational or institutional level and societal level that reinforce and perpetuate gendered norms and structures.

Gendered structures – the laws and systemic mechanisms that organise and reinforce an unequal distribution of economic, social and political power and resources between men and women.

Healing – recovery from the psychological and physical impacts of trauma. It is used particularly by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for whom this trauma is predominantly the result of colonisation and past government policies. Healing is not an outcome or a cure but a process that is unique to each individual. It enables individuals, families and communities to gain control over the direction of their lives and reach their full potential. Healing continues throughout a person's lifetime and across generations. It can take many forms and is underpinned by a strong cultural and spiritual base.

Heterosexism – the belief and assumption that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual, and that heterosexual relationships and family forms are 'normal', 'natural' and/or superior to others. Heterosexist attitudes and norms result in both the privileging of heterosexual relationships and the conscious and unconscious exclusion of, and prejudice, discrimination and harassment towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer people, both by individuals, and at an institutional level in society. Because it is based on binary notions of sex and gender, heterosexism also reinforces prejudice and discrimination against transgender and intersex people and others who identify with non-binary notions of sex/gender.

Impacts – refer to changes sought through a project's activities and outputs such as an increase in the skills of training participants to stand up against sexist comments in the workplace (practice change), improvements in workplace leadership for gender equality (structural change) or an increase in public discourse questioning traditional or rigid gender roles (norm change).

Indicators – translate the elements of the logic model into things that can be measured such as things that are seen, read, heard or found out about in some way.

Inputs – a project's resources such as funding, staffing, policies, evidence-based practice, partnerships' readiness and leadership for the work.

Intergenerational trauma – a form of historical trauma transmitted across generations. Survivors of the initial experience who have not healed may pass on their trauma to further generations. In Australia intergenerational trauma particularly affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially the children, grandchildren and future generations of the Stolen Generations.

Intersectionality – a theory and approach which recognises and respects that our identities are made up of multiple interrelated attributes (such as race, gender, ability, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sexual identity, and socio-economic status) and understands the intersections at which women, experience individual, cultural and structural oppression, discrimination, violence and disadvantage.

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

Logic model – describes how a prevention strategy works: what the inputs, activities and outputs will be and how these will help achieve the impacts and outcomes.

Monitoring – refers in this Handbook to population-level tracking of progress, for example through quantitative national indicators.

Non-partner sexual assault – sexual violence perpetrated by people such as strangers, acquaintances, friends, colleagues, peers, teachers, neighbours and family members. See also sexual violence.

Norms – see social norms.

Normalisation of violence – where violence, particularly men's violence, is seen and treated as a normal part of everyday life.

Normative support for violence against women – is expressed through attitudes, behaviours and systems that justify, excuse, downplay or tolerate such violence, or blame or hold women at least partly responsible for violence perpetrated against them.

Outputs – are tangible products arising from prevention activities such as events, training sessions, organisational policies and practices.

Practitioner – is anyone who is working on the prevention of violence against women or has the potential to work on prevention. A practitioner may be working on the prevention of violence against women as their primary role or their work on prevention may be integrated into an existing role, for example as a nurse, educator or community development worker.

Primary prevention – whole-of-population initiatives that address the primary (first or underlying) drivers of violence.

Qualitative research – is primarily exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations. It seeks to understand how the world is understood, interpreted and experienced by individuals, groups and organisations. It helps to explain the 'why' and is often richly descriptive, flexible, relative and subjective.

Quantitative research – is used to quantify a problem by generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviours and other defined variables and to generalise results from a larger sample population. Quantitative research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research.

Racism – the systematic prejudice, discrimination and/or antagonism directed against someone of a different race, ethnicity, culture or religion. Racism can take many forms – attitudinal, institutional and cultural – and is based on the belief that one's own race, ethnicity, culture or religion is superior to another. This may be explicit, but in the contemporary context is more often implicit (and therefore difficult to identify and counter), typically expressed as negative stereotypes and assumptions about particular individuals or groups and discriminatory organisational and institutional practices.

Reflective practice – is a process of consistently being aware of, and reflecting on, your own work as well as your position within your work. This means that any achievements, progress or problems can be identified early.

Reinforcing factors – factors which become significant within the context of the drivers of violence. These factors do not predict or drive violence against women in and of themselves, however when they interact with the drivers they can increase the frequency or severity of violence. See also drivers.

Secondary prevention – also called early intervention, this aims to 'change the trajectory' for individuals at higher-than-average risk of perpetrating or experiencing violence.

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

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

Sexism – discrimination based on sex and/or gender, and the attitudes, stereotypes and cultural elements that promote this discrimination. Sexism relies on rigid, hierarchical binaries of 'male/female' and 'masculine/feminine' that assign a higher value to men and masculinity, and consequently creates societies characterised by structural and normative **gender inequality** that systematically disadvantages women.

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

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

Socio-ecological model – is a feature of public health and is used to demonstrate how violence is a product of multiple, interacting components and social factors. The model conceptualises how the drivers of violence manifest across the personal, community and social level and illustrates the value of implementing multiple mutually reinforcing strategies across these levels.

Strategy – this Handbook uses the word 'strategy' to describe prevention work. The words project, program, policy, intervention, initiative or other similar words all refer to a specific set of activities that are time-bound and planned, implemented and evaluated through a logic model approach.

Structural discrimination and disadvantage – the norms, policies and systems present within politics, the legal system, education, workplaces and healthcare that are intended to be neutral but in effect present obstacles to groups or individuals in achieving the same rights and opportunities available to the majority of the population.

Systemic social inequalities – a pattern of discrimination that is reflected within social norms and reinforced through law, education, the economy, healthcare and politics and results in privileging certain groups and individuals over others.

Systems and structures – are macro-level mechanisms, both formal (reinforced through government, institutions and laws) and informal (social norms), which serve to organise society and create patterns in relation to who has social and political power.

Tertiary prevention – supports survivors and holds perpetrators to account, and aims to prevent the recurrence of violence.

Theory of change – explains how to move through the actions that are necessary for complex and long-term social change, and the principles or assumptions behind those actions. It is a vision or narrative of how change will happen from the problem through to the solution.

Validity – in evaluation is the degree to which any measurement approach or instrument succeeds in describing or quantifying what it is designed to measure. A validated measure has been thoroughly tested to ensure that it is reliable, valid and sensitive to change.

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