

organisation and community wide strategies for prevention
keep the field up to date with policy
Assess possible programs
state wide
wider strategy of prevention
Develop
strengthening
primary prevention
cultural
cost-effective
Leadership
maximise cultural change
training
Recommendations for practice enhancement
Assess possible programs
Prioritise
men and boys
community
change
to maximise effectiveness
commitment on human rights
gender collaboration
electronic network of service providers
primary prevention of violence
Develop
the social determinants of violence
engaging
Actively work in partnership
with the philanthropic and corporate
Assess
collaboration
prevention policies
groups
long term
workforce development
long term
comprehensive training
masculinity
prevention.
recommendations
messages
conferences
Post dialogues
based on community strengthening and development
sexuality
intervening
embedded within a broader sectorial/community response
strategies for prevention.
clear commitment
aim to prevent violence before it occurs
relevant
the social determinants of violence
practice discussions
clearly articulated plan for evaluation
cultural
human rights and social justice
men
primary prevention
role of gender
boys
strategic
close integration
best practice standards
cost-effective
community wide strategies
the social determinants of violence
sexuality
network
with the philanthropic and corporate
close integration with other services
multi-systemic approach
practice enhancement
best practice education
program aims to prevent violence before it occurs
specific recommendations
work in partnership
prevention of gender based violence
whole of government approach
secondary and tertiary areas
Ensure programs comply



Less to lose and more to gain?

**Men and Boys Violence Prevention
Research Project**

Executive Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Violence against women is a costly personal and social issue that has far reaching and long term impacts across the whole Australian community. Primary prevention takes these factors seriously and aims to intervene to prevent intimate partner violence and sexual violence before they occur.

Our research found considerable interest at a state and national level in engaging men and boys in violence against women (VAW) primary prevention. The study findings indicate that VAW primary prevention is still in the early stages of development both in Australia and internationally. Effective intervention is acknowledged as more likely to occur if actions are taken at multiple levels within the community. This requires action at policy levels as well as within communities or organisations and at the local level of service provision.

The survey that was undertaken for this study of prevention agencies and programs found a significant clustering of prevention efforts in Victoria and NSW with work also being undertaken in Queensland. Students at high school and university were the most common targets of primary prevention efforts, with adolescence and early adulthood recognised as key periods for VAW perpetration and victimisation. Other programs identified in our study worked specifically with Indigenous communities, CALD communities and sports organisations. Most stakeholders described their programs as underpinned by a gendered, ecological model of VAW that understands violence as a product of gender inequity and gender norms.

The findings from surveys and interviews indicate that a coherent and identifiable field of prevention practice focused specifically on men and boys has yet to emerge in Australia. Activities in the field are piecemeal, ad hoc and dispersed. There is no peak organisation that provides support to areas of emerging practice except in relation to men's behaviour change programs (i.e. perpetrator programs). Primary prevention activities are scarce as well as programs focused on boys or men specific activities.

Despite these findings, there are areas of prevention activity focusing on men and boys that indicate promising practice. These include programs and activities such as: respectful

relationships education, bystander strategies, community development approaches, whole of organisation approaches, infant and parenting programs and social marketing.

The strongest finding emerging from our research is that best practice in engaging men and boys occurs in two key areas of primary prevention:

- Community strengthening and development; and,
- Organisational and workforce development.

Section 5 of the report provides a detailed evaluation of 2 programs that demonstrate these approaches. They are the Strong Aboriginal Men Program (SAM) and the NRL Respectful Relationship Sex & Ethics Program. These two programs share the primary prevention goal of preventing violence before it occurs as well as other important similarities, in particular:

- They are underpinned by a gendered analysis of violence against women;
- They involve working specifically or mainly with men;
- They emerge from and are supported by organisations with significant experience and expertise in violence against women; and,
- They engage men in multi-systemic change including at the community or organisational level.

While both programs have been developed in response to men and boys in specific settings they are potentially adaptable and replicable in other settings. The knowledge gained from the design and implementation of the SAM program could be applied well to working with CALD communities and emerging refugee settings. The NRL program has many key features that can be used by diverse sporting codes and with other male workforce based programs.

Both programs therefore demonstrate a potential for reach and influence beyond their immediate program base. This is important to enhance further primary prevention activities and in addressing long term cost effectiveness. Primary prevention is both a short and long term investment in challenging deep seated practices. Without a clear commitment and investment in policies and programs focused on intervening before violence occurs, personal and financial costs will continue to grow leading to increased tertiary sector expenditure. Leadership is needed within organisations and across our diverse communities to promote policies and practices that build on existing international evidence to progress primary

prevention of VAW. In particular, attending to the following issues will increase engagement by men and boys in the prevention of VAW:

- Addressing the role of gender in VAW in a manner that is relevant and boys and men can understand
- Utilising educators who men and boys can relate to as role models will increase their willingness to 'hear' violence prevention messages
- Recognising that masculinities are diverse, fluid and sometimes contradictory within individuals, groups and communities
- Experiences of masculinity are effected by class, location, ethnicity, cultural background, sexuality and other factors; there is no 'one size fits all' experience
- This has implications for ensuring educational programs and other prevention activities are tailored to the specific needs of men; for example using methods of education that Indigenous men can relate to
- Engaging men and boys in the contexts and institutions in which they live, work and play may assist in enhancing the relevance of VAW prevention

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are designed to progress violence prevention focused on men and boys. However, while there are specific recommendations particular to men and boys, many have application to the broader field of primary prevention.

1. Recommendations for prevention policy

- 1.1 Develop a whole of government approach to the primary prevention of violence with particular attention to engaging men and boys, operating from an ecological or multi-systemic model to maximise cultural change.
- 1.2 Maximise interagency and intersectoral collaboration and ensure relevant strategic planning around program funding for men and boys' violence prevention.
- 1.3 Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), The National Foundation for the Prevention of Violence against Women and state governments to work in an integrated way to ensure primary prevention is a priority area of activity.
- 1.4 Build a state wide electronic network of service providers, researchers and policy staff to ensure dissemination of the latest research and keep the field up to date with policy developments. This network could serve to generate meetings, forums, practice discussions and conferences.
- 1.5 Prioritise workforce development - including developing comprehensive training for new staff entering the field of primary prevention and the particular issues related to engaging men and boys.
- 1.6 Foster dialogue between primary, secondary and tertiary areas of prevention work to maximise the primary prevention of gender based violence by men and boys.
- 1.7 Actively work in partnership with the philanthropic and corporate sectors to develop organisation and community wide strategies for prevention.

2. Recommendations for practice enhancement

- 2.1 Foster the development of primary prevention activities at the whole of organisation and community based levels.
- 2.2 Ensure programs comply with best practice standards and ensure new programs are developed in consultation with specific subpopulations of men and boys to ensure they are appropriately targeted to maximise effectiveness.
- 2.3 Assess possible programs and activities for funding against the following criteria:

Best practice criteria for effective primary prevention programs with men & boys

1. The program aims to prevent violence before it occurs
2. The program aims to specifically engage men and boys as part of a wider strategy of prevention or as a discrete component
3. The program targets the social determinants of violence such as socio-economic status, cultural background, sexuality and ability
4. The program uses a multi-systemic approach to primary prevention
5. The program clearly demonstrates adherence to recognised best practice education or other prevention activity standards
6. The program is framed by a commitment to human rights and social justice
7. The program is embedded within a broader sectorial/community response demonstrated by close integration with other services
8. The program has clear objectives and strategies to meet those objectives
9. The program has a clearly articulated plan for evaluation

3. Funding of best practice programs

3.1 Investment in primary prevention activities targeting men and boys should consider the Stronger Aboriginal Men (SAM) program as an exemplar program focused on prevention via community strengthening and development.

3.2 Investment in primary prevention activities targeting men and boys should consider the NRL Respectful Relationship Sex & Ethics Program as an exemplar program focused on prevention via organisational and workforce development.