

PREVENTING DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE. WHY IS IT MEN'S BUSINESS?

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World Health Organisation 2017

- ▶ Domestic violence (DV) is prevalent in most, if not all, countries and cultures in the world.
- ▶ It is very hard to detect, as generally the victims are too powerless, fearful, intimidated or ashamed to disclose the abuse.
- ▶ Global and national data indicates that most men do not use violence against women but when violence against women and men occurs, it is perpetrated overwhelmingly by men
- ▶ DV is frequently invisible - it happens behind closed doors, and often systems and cultural norms do not treat it as a crime, but rather as a 'private' family matter, or a 'normal' part of life

Australian Human Rights Commission (2011)

Freedom from violence (whether sexual, mental, emotional, financial or physical) is a fundamental human right. The right to protection from violence and to security and liberty of a person is recognised in the major human rights agreements including the:

- ▶ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- ▶ **Convention on the Rights of the Child**
- ▶ **Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women**
- ▶ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- ▶ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- ▶ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women

- ▶ *'The term violence against women means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life'.*

Australian Human Rights Commission



In Australia, it is estimated that

- ▶ approximately one woman is killed by her current or former partner every week, often after a history of domestic and family violence.
- ▶ 17% of women have experienced violence from *a current or former partner* since the age of 18 (compared to 5.3% of men).
- ▶ family and domestic violence is present in 55% of physical abuses and 40% of sexual abuses against children
- ▶ 1 in 4 children are exposed to domestic violence.

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

Australian Government's *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children (2010-2022)*



- ▶ Domestic violence refers to acts of violence that occur between people who have, or have had, an intimate relationship.
- ▶ While there is no single definition, the central element of domestic violence is an **ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner through fear**, for example by using behaviour which is violent and threatening.
- ▶ In most cases, the violent behaviour is part of a **range of tactics to exercise power and control over women and their children**, and can be both criminal and non-criminal.
- ▶ Family violence is a broader term that refers to violence between family members, as well as violence between intimate partners. It involves the same sorts of behaviours as described for domestic violence.

Domestic, intimate partner and family violence can occur between people in a range of domestic relationships including:

- ▶ Spousal relationships
- ▶ Intimate personal relationships
- ▶ Family relationships
- ▶ Informal care relationships.

A review of the research

highlights that most violence against women:

- ▶ is perpetrated by 'normal' men, in the context of a gender-unequal society that is, 'normal' men in the sense that they are acting out the gender norms and values with which many men have socialised, in unequal gender relations which themselves have been seen as normal.
- ▶ both maintains, and is the expression of, men's power over women and children.
- ▶ has social causes, including gender inequality in the broader society
- ▶ comprises a diverse range of violent, coercive, or controlling behaviours and strategies which may or may not involve physical violence.
- ▶ often takes place between men and women who know each other.
- ▶ may deliberately be hidden from public view.
- ▶ may or may not be illegal and criminal.
- ▶ may be seen as 'normal' or acceptable by community members.
- ▶ is a fundamental barrier to gender equality and a denial of women's human rights and of women's rights to full citizenship. (Flood 2010).

Research Evidence for Family & Domestic Violence



- ▶ Family violence occurs at all levels of society and gender, religion, race, ethnicity, class, age and sexuality influence the experience and outcomes for victims.
- ▶ In patriarchal cultures, societies, communities and families, men have more power and control than women, however immigrant or refugee men, do not share equally in the benefits of a patriarchal society because power deficits such as unemployment and racism, can modify men's power.
- ▶ Male perpetrators can be credible, respected members of a community and commonly do not accept responsibility for the violence, instead they tend to deny that the violence happened, minimise the violence, blame the victim for causing it or justify the violence.
- ▶ Cultural and religious norms can play a part, some making women responsible for the violence or forcing women to stay in the situation to keep the family together or to remain members of a community.
- ▶ Victims in marginalised groups, such as people with disabilities, those from indigenous or culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (including migrants and refugees) or from rural areas, are doubly disadvantaged.

Types of violence against women

► *Creating fear*

This is the most powerful way a perpetrator controls his victim - it can include giving particular looks or making threatening gestures, possessing or threatening to use weapons, destroying property, cruelty to pets, or any behaviour that intimidates and makes the victim feel powerless.

► *Intimidation*

Includes smashing things, destroying possessions, putting a fist through the wall, handling weapons, using intimidating body language (angry looks, raised voice), hostile questioning, or reckless driving of vehicle with the victim in the car, harassing the victim at her workplace (either by making persistent phone calls, or by sending text messages or emails), following her to and from work or loitering near her workplace.

► *Verbal abuse*

Using words as a weapon to cause significant and long-lasting damage. May include threatening to hit, screaming, shouting, put-downs, name-calling, swearing, using sarcasm, or ridiculing her for her religious beliefs or ethnic background. Verbal abuse may be a precursor to or accompany physical violence.

Types of Violence against Women



► *Physical abuse*

Behaviour such as pushing, shoving, pinching, hitting, slapping, attempted strangulation, hair-pulling, punching etc. and may or may not involve the use of weapons. It could also be threats to destroy or actually destroying prized possessions. It can range from a lack of consideration for the victim's physical comfort to causing permanent injury or death.

► *Emotional abuse*

Behaviour that deliberately undermines her confidence leading her to believe she is stupid or that she is 'a bad mother', or useless in bed or even to believe she is going crazy or is insane. This humiliates, degrades and demeans the victim. The perpetrator may threaten to harm the victim, her friends or family members, or threaten to take her children from her or kill the children, or to commit suicide; may also use silence and withdrawal as a means to abuse.

► *Social abuse*

Involves isolating the victim from her social networks and supports, either by preventing her from having contact with her family or friends or by verbally or physically abusing her in public or in front of others. It may involve continually putting friends and family down so she is slowly disconnected from her support network.

Types of Violence against Women

► *Financial abuse*

The perpetrator takes full control of all the finances, spending and decisions about money so the victim is financially dependent on her partner. It may include denying her access to money, including her own, forcing her and her children to live on inadequate resources and demanding she accounts for every cent spent. This type of abuse makes it hard for the victim to leave the relationship.

► *Sexual abuse*

Any unwanted sexual behaviours or comments. This may include forced sexual contact, rape, forcing her to perform sexual acts that cause pain or humiliation, forcing her to have sex with others, or causing injury to her sexual organs, telling her that she is frigid or sexually incompetent and openly having sex with other women.

► *Controlling behaviours*

Dictating what she does and when she can do it, who she sees and talks to, where she goes, keeping her from making any friends or from talking to her family or having any money of her own. This can include preventing her from going to work, not allowing her to express her own feelings or thoughts or to make decisions for herself, not allowing her any privacy or forcing her to go without food or water.

Types of Violence against Women

▶ *Spiritual abuse*

Ridiculing or putting down her beliefs and culture, preventing her from belonging to or taking part in a group that is important to her spiritual beliefs or from practising her religion.

▶ *Separation violence*

Often after the relationship has ended, the violence continues. This can be a very dangerous time for the victim because the perpetrator may perceive he has a loss of control over the victim and may become more unpredictable. During and after separation is often a time when violence will escalate and may lead to threats of murder or suicide.

▶ *Stalking*

The victim is stalked by the perpetrator before, during or after separation. Stalking includes loitering around places that she frequents, watching her, following her, making persistent telephone calls and sending emails or mail, including unwanted love letters, cards and gifts after the relationship has ended. Stalking is a criminal offence.

▶ *Domestic homicide*

The victim and/or her children are killed by the intimate partner as a result of domestic violence - the risk is highest during or after separation.



What causes men's violence against women?



- ▶ Some people and cultures believe men must be strong and powerful, dominant and in control - characteristics associated with masculinity, or what it means to 'be a man'. These characteristics are called 'gender norms'.
- ▶ Men often have more power and a higher status than women in private and public life: in the home, workplace and community. This imbalance is known as 'gender inequality'.
- ▶ Violence against women is more easily accepted in societies and cultures where men and women are not equal.
- ▶ Men's violence is the result of gender norms and inequality between males and females in a culture or society.

What drives violence against women?

The drivers of men's violence against women include:

- ▶ gender norms
- ▶ accepting and sometimes approving of men's violence against women
- ▶ men controlling decision-making
- ▶ limits to women's independence in public and private life
- ▶ interactions between men that are aggressive and disrespectful towards women.

Only some men use violence against women. Most men think that violence against women is never acceptable.

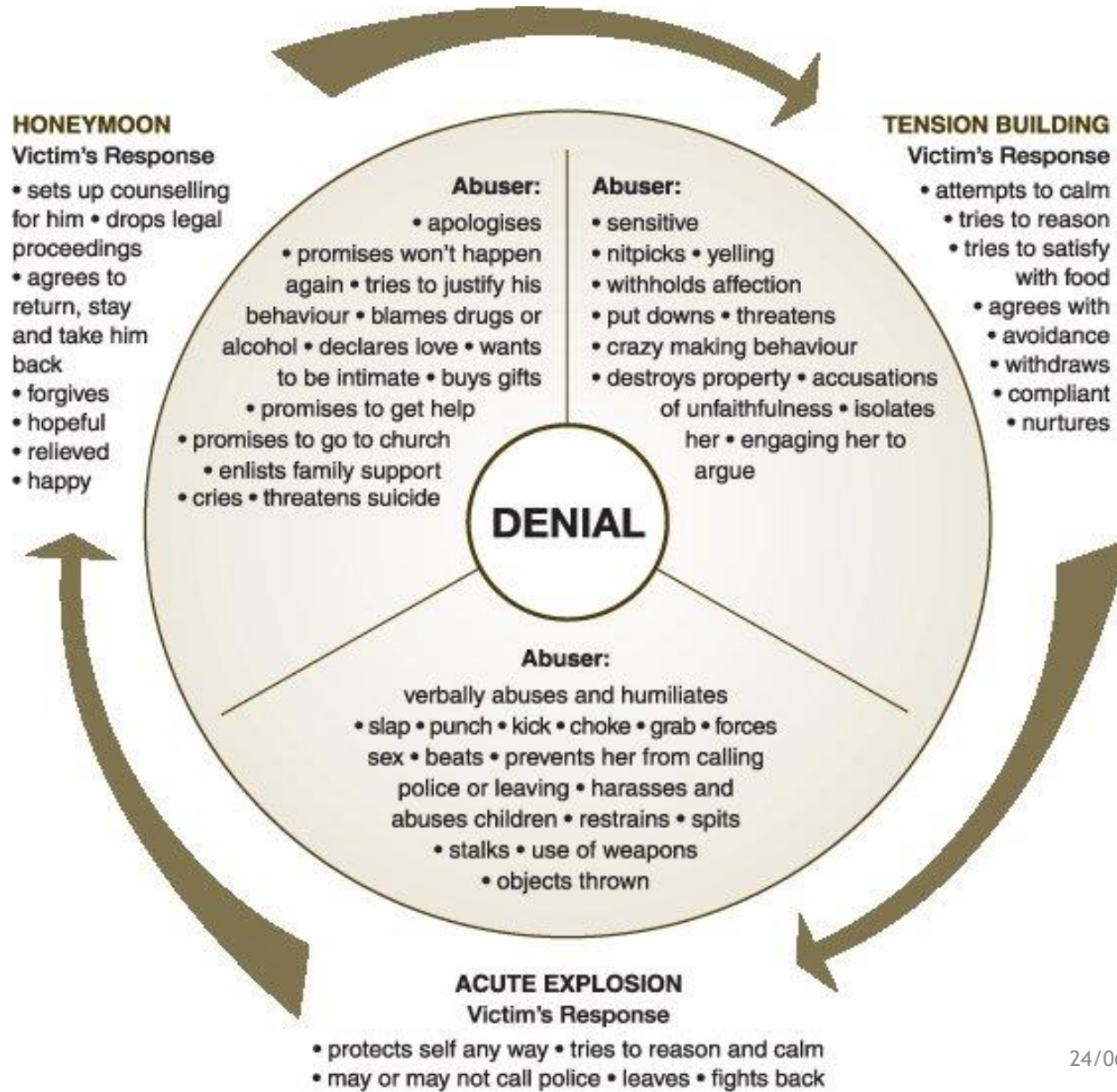
Men are also victims of violence. However, most of the time men and boys are victims of violence by other men.

Other contributors to men's violence against women

There are also a number of reinforcing factors that, while not a direct cause of men's violence against women, increase its likelihood and severity:

- ▶ discrimination
- ▶ experience of and exposure to violence
- ▶ alcohol and substance use
- ▶ some cultural and religious practices
- ▶ lack of knowledge of Australian laws
- ▶ loss of traditional family and community support systems.

The Cycle of Violence



The three stages of the cycle of violence



Phase 1: Tension-building Phase

- ▶ **Build Up:** Tension between the people in the relationship starts to increase and verbal, emotional or financial abuse occurs.
- ▶ **Stand-over:** This phase can be very frightening for people experiencing abuse. They feel as though the situation will explode if they do anything wrong - often described as 'like walking on egg shells'. The behaviour of the abuser intensifies and reaches a point where a release of tension is inevitable.

Phase 2: Acute Explosion

- ▶ The peak of the violence is reached in this phase. The perpetrator experiences a release of tension and becomes extremely angry and abusive. This feeling can become addictive, and the perpetrator may become unable to deal with anger in any other way.

The three stages of the cycle of violence



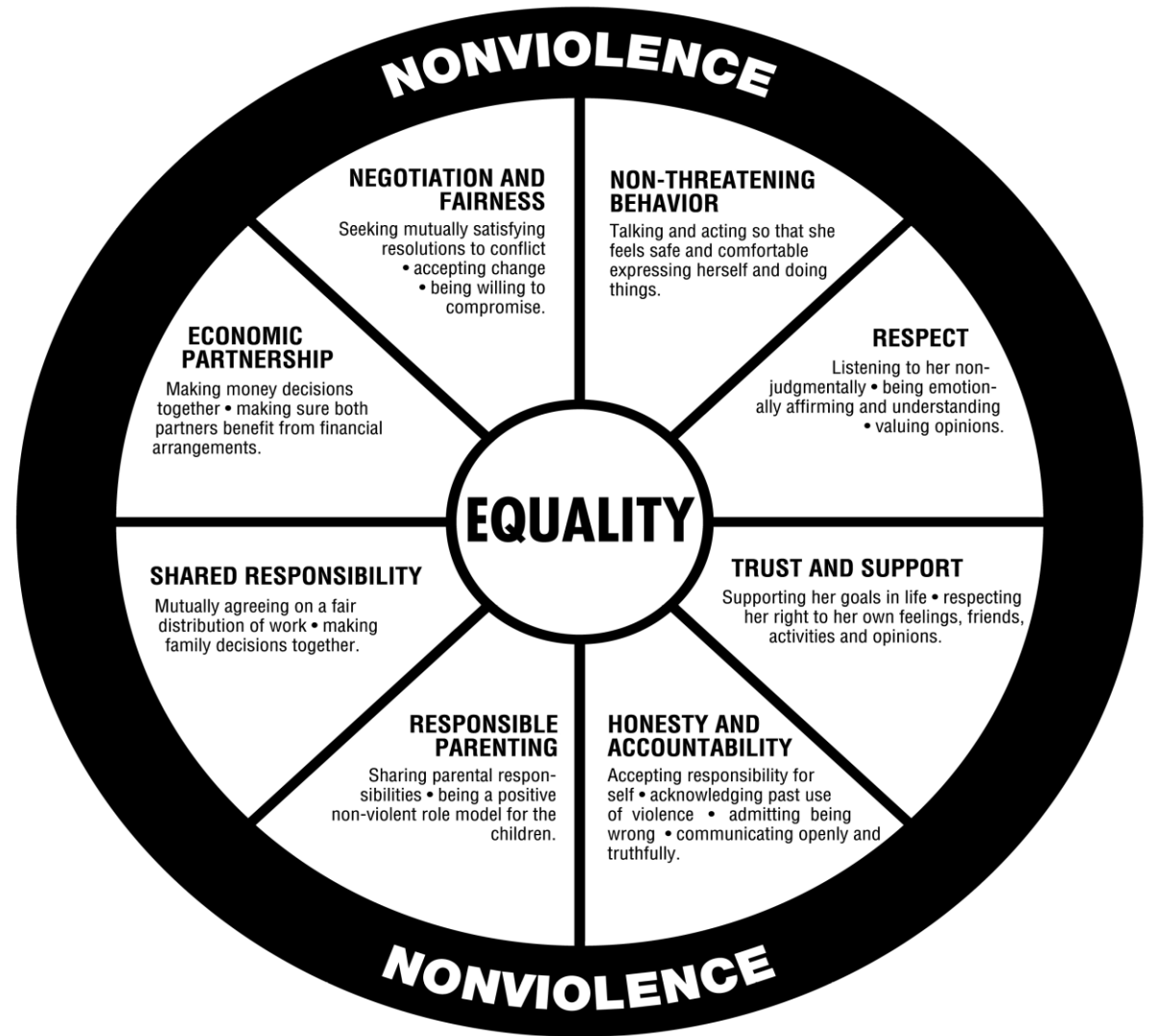
Phase 3: Honeymoon Stage

- ▶ **Remorse:** At this point, the perpetrator starts to feel ashamed. They may become withdrawn and try to justify their actions to themselves and others. For example, they may say: “You know it makes me angry when you say that - its your fault.”
- ▶ **Pursuit:** During the pursuit phase, the perpetrator promises never to be violent again. They may try to explain the violence by blaming other factors such as alcohol or stress at work. The perpetrator may be very attentive to the person experiencing violence, including buying gifts and helping around the house. It could seem as though the perpetrator has changed. At this point, the person experiencing the violence will feel confused and hurt but also relieved that the violence is over.
- ▶ **Denial phase:** Both people in the relationship may be in denial about the severity of the abuse and violence. Intimacy increases and both people feel happy and want the relationship to continue, so they ignore the possibility that the violence could happen again.

Over time, this phase passes and the cycle may begin again, often becoming more frequent over time.

The difference between ‘conflict’ and ‘violence’

- ▶ Disagreements and conflicts are a **normal** part of a **healthy** relationship.
- ▶ **Conflict is necessary for good decisions, learning, change and intimacy.** Both parties should be able to put forward their different points of view or concerns and feel comfortable discussing them together on an equal footing.
- ▶ In a healthy relationship, both parties treat each other with respect, discuss the issues and may compromise, negotiate or problem-solve to seek solutions to overcome their problems that satisfy both of them.
- ▶ They may argue loudly but if they are not frightened of, or intimidated by, the other, and the **balance of power is roughly ‘equal’**, then it can be described as ‘conflict’ NOT ‘domestic violence’.
- ▶ In a relationship where domestic and family violence is occurring, **the balance of power is ‘unequal’**. The victim feels threatened - too frightened to argue back or too scared to disagree or express an opinion. The perpetrator has **power over** the victim and **controls** many aspects of their lives.



The Australian *Family Law Act* 1975, Section 4AB



(1) For the purposes of this Act, *family violence* means violent, threatening or other behaviour by a person that **coerces or controls** a member of the person's family (the *family member*), or causes the family member to be **fearful**.

Australian *Family Law Act* definition (continued)

(2) Examples of behaviour that may constitute family violence include (but are not limited to):

- ▶ an assault; or
- ▶ a sexual assault or other sexually abusive behaviour; or
- ▶ stalking; or
- ▶ repeated derogatory taunts; or
- ▶ intentionally damaging or destroying property; or
- ▶ intentionally causing death or injury to an animal; or
- ▶ unreasonably denying the family member the financial autonomy that he or she would otherwise have had; or
- ▶ unreasonably withholding financial support needed to meet the reasonable living expenses of the family member, or his or her child, at a time when the family member is entirely or predominantly dependent on the person for financial support; or
- ▶ preventing the family member from making or keeping connections with his or her family, friends or culture; or
- ▶ unlawfully depriving the family member, or any member of the family member's family, of his or her liberty.

Australian *Family Law Act* definition (continued)

(3) For the purposes of this Act, a **child is *exposed* to family violence if the child sees or hears family violence or otherwise experiences the effects of family violence.**

(4) Examples of situations that may constitute a child being exposed to family violence include (but are not limited to) the child:

- ▶ overhearing threats of death or personal injury by a member of the child's family towards another member of the child's family; or
- ▶ seeing or hearing an assault of a member of the child's family by another member of the child's family; or
- ▶ comforting or providing assistance to a member of the child's family who has been assaulted by another member of the child's family; or
- ▶ cleaning up a site after a member of the child's family has intentionally damaged property of another member of the child's family; or
- ▶ being present when police or ambulance officers attend an incident involving the assault of a member of the child's family by another member of the child's family.

South Australian legislation: *Intervention Orders (Prevention of Abuse) Regulations 2011*



Defines domestic violence as:

‘the use of violence or intimidation to coerce, dominate, or control a spouse, domestic partner, or family member’.

Acts of abuse include:

- ▶ Causing physical injury
- ▶ Causing emotional or psychological harm (includes the infliction of mental illness, serious emotional distress, shock, and fear)
- ▶ An unreasonable denial of financial, social, or personal autonomy.

South Australian legislation *Intervention Orders (Prevention of Abuse) Regulations 2011*

An intervention order directs the accused not to commit acts of abuse against the person named in the order. It can also impose specific restrictions on the accused, such as ordering the accused to:

- ▶ have no contact with the named person
- ▶ stay away from that person's residence, workplace, or other place frequented by the person
- ▶ not come within a specified distance of that person
- ▶ refrain from harassing or intimidating the person
- ▶ refrain from taunting or stalking the person
- ▶ refrain from leaving messages or comments about the person on social networking sites
- ▶ return the person's property
- ▶ surrender weapons
- ▶ participate in an intervention program.



Criminal Law Consolidation (Rape and Sexual Offences) Amendment Act 2008.



Rape

(1) A person (the *offender*) is guilty of the offence of rape if he or she engages, or continues to engage, in sexual intercourse with another person who —

(a) does not consent to engaging in the sexual intercourse; or

(b) has withdrawn consent to the sexual intercourse,

and the offender knows, or is recklessly indifferent to, the fact that the other person does not so consent or has so withdrawn consent (as the case may be).

Maximum penalty: Imprisonment for life.

A 2016 national community attitudes survey

demonstrated that people from countries in which the main language is not English and who are recently arrived to Australia are

- ▶ more likely than others to have low levels of understanding of violence against women,
- ▶ are least likely to reject attitudes explicitly supportive of violence, and
- ▶ have a low level of support for gender equality, which can compound the problem

(Murdolo et al 2016).

Australian Human Rights Commission (2010) report - *In our own words.*
African Australians: A Review of human rights and social inclusion issues



Consultation with 2500 Africans plus service providers identified deep concern at levels of family violence, a growing problem. Major contributing factors included:

- ▶ the changing roles and dynamics within families after settlement, including the roles of men, women and young people
- ▶ violence or threats of violence by young people against their elders
- ▶ legal approaches and service interventions based on an understanding of 'family' that was not relevant or appropriate, contributing to family breakdown
- ▶ uncertainty about reporting family violence because of fear of police and law enforcement agencies, as well as fear that women and children may be removed from their family home
- ▶ very few options for men who wanted assistance to address violent behaviour and
- ▶ a lack of bilingual counsellors and support persons.

Why don't female victims report DV or leave?

Research studies commonly report that female victims find it extremely difficult to leave abusive situations and find domestic violence hard to disclose and/or report for many reasons.

In particular, migrant and refugee women may:

- ▶ think the behaviour is 'normal' if they have been raised in an abusive home
- ▶ stay because of religious and cultural beliefs, persuasions or norms
- ▶ think that the term 'domestic violence' refers to physical violence only
- ▶ have feelings of powerlessness and fear or lack the confidence to leave because of constant criticism and 'put downs'
- ▶ feel ashamed and/or do not want to shame their family or community by reporting it - want to protect his and the family's image
- ▶ still love their partner when he is not abusing them and hope or believe he will change
- ▶ stay for the children; any father is better than none



Why don't female victims report DV or leave?



They may also:

- ▶ feel responsible for the violence and blame themselves; think if they themselves change the abuse will stop
- ▶ believe that seeking help for domestic violence will hurt their men and/or lead to family breakdown
- ▶ fear losing their children, or the perpetrator harming their children if they report it
- ▶ fear that they will not be believed or taken seriously - he may be an elder or important person in the community or church
- ▶ fear that they may lose contact with their family and/or community
- ▶ be socially isolated and have little or no contact with family and friends - have no place to go and/or fear living alone
- ▶ not know where to go for help or if there is any available
- ▶ be afraid to access the services that are available, e.g. the police, because of prior experiences in their country of origin, and
- ▶ not have enough funds, support or resources to leave the situation or to employ a lawyer or other advisors.

SA Research with Liberian women (Zannettino 2012)

From the Liberian women's perspective, there were four main aspects of culture impacting on domestic violence in their homes and communities. These were:

- ▶ disruption to traditional gender roles (e.g. women receiving the Centrelink payments),
 - ▶ beliefs surrounding rape in marriage (which is against the law in Australia),
 - ▶ the acceptability of using violence within the family for child discipline and chastisement (hitting children is against the law in Australia), and
 - ▶ the belief that parenting is women's responsibility.
- ▶ War and living in camps had led to a breakdown in the usual societal roles and standards for protecting children, and as a result, children had experienced a broken sense of trust that adults would protect rather than harm them.
 - ▶ The men's sense of identity relied heavily upon their capacity to deal with and overcome adversity but their lived experience, including the complexities of resettlement, made this difficult.
 - ▶ Refugee men may use domestic violence as a way of expressing feelings and dealing with the stress associated with settlement in a different country as well as a strategy for gaining control and re-establishing power following the experience of violence and trauma in their homelands.

Why engage individual men as partners and allies in the prevention of domestic violence?



- ▶ Gender norms and roles set by society benefit men. It is therefore up to men to challenge those norms and roles.
- ▶ Studies show that men commit the vast majority of domestic and sexual violence and therefore have a special responsibility to end the violence.
- ▶ When men commit acts of violence, it becomes more difficult for the affected women to trust any man, which in turn makes relationships less enjoyable for men and for women.
- ▶ Most men care deeply about the women and girls in their lives, whether they are their wives, girlfriends, daughters, other family members or colleagues, fellow parishioners or neighbours.
- ▶ Men can play a critical role in setting a positive example for other men, by treating women and girls with respect and by challenging other men's harmful attitudes and behaviours.
- ▶ Traditional ideas of what it means to be 'masculine' or 'feminine', can promote unequal relations between women and men and can be challenged.

What can individual men do to help prevent or reduce men's violence against women?



Flood (2011) highlights that there are three broad forms of action individual men can take to prevent or reduce violence against women:

- (a) behaving non-violently themselves;
- (b) taking action among other men and women; and
- (c) taking wider collective action.

Research evidence (Flood 2011)



- ▶ When a man who has used violence against a woman chooses to cease doing so, this reduces violence against women.
- ▶ When a man supports a woman who is being subjected to violence by a partner or ex-partner, he increases the chance that she will seek help, report the violence, escape the violence, and recover from the abuse.
- ▶ When a man intervenes in a violent incident in progress by offering support or assistance to the woman being attacked, he may lessen the harm she suffers during that incident, and she may hear the message that she is not to blame for and does not deserve the violence inflicted on her.
- ▶ When a man intervenes in a violent incident in progress by challenging the man who is using violence against a woman, he increases the chance that the perpetrator will at least slow down or limit the violence he's inflicting. The perpetrator may be put on notice that he won't get away with violence, and he may be more likely to take responsibility for his actions.

Research evidence (Flood 2011)

- ▶ When a man questions a friend's joke when it is offensive to women, or a colleague's violence-supportive comment, his actions break down peer support for violence against women. He raises awareness of the offensive nature of the comment and increases others' willingness to speak up as well.
- ▶ When a father behaves in non-violent and respectful ways in his family, he increases the likelihood that his children will grow up with non-violent and respectful attitudes and relations.
- ▶ **When men who are senior leaders of organisations use their influence to become advocates for violence prevention, they also make it more likely that other members of the organisation will support these efforts too.**

Video (40 minutes)



▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3qn76O9VRM>

Workshop (30 minutes)

1. Large group to divide into smaller groups of 4 or 5
2. Each of the small groups to appoint a reporter and discuss the following questions for 15 minutes (5 minutes for each question):
 - ▶ *On reflection, how has the learning in this workshop made you think differently about relationships between men and women in your culture? What has changed?*
 - ▶ *How does violence perpetrated by men toward women damage men's lives as well?*
 - ▶ *What do you think you can do as an individual or a group to create a world in which women and children don't live in fear of men's violence?*
3. The reporter from each group to feed back their findings to the larger group (15 minutes)

Commit to taking action to prevent DV in your community

- ▶ Actions that I can take:
- ▶ Actions that we can take as a group of men:
- ▶ Actions that others should take (say who):

(This can be on a large sheet of paper taped to the wall and each person asked to write something under each heading OR each person can be given a sheet of paper with the three headings and invited to write something under each heading).

Violence is always wrong and is always the fault of the perpetrator!

THANK YOU



If you would like copies of this presentation or have further queries please contact me by email dale.bagshaw@unisa.edu.au or mobile phone: 0408 805 641

If you are interested in participating in our Catalyst Foundation Project please contact:

Truphena Mahindu: Truphena@catalystfoundation.com.au

Project officer: “Partnering with Men Toolbox - tools to build men as leaders in the prevention of domestic violence”

Catalyst Foundation

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