



## **Tools to Build African Australian & CaLD Men as Leaders in the Prevention of Domestic Violence Project**

### **WORKSHOP: GENDER VALUES CLARIFICATION**

60+ minutes

Prepare these five large signs:

**STRONGLY AGREE      STRONGLY DISAGREE      DON'T KNOW**

**AGREE    DISAGREE**

#### **Step 1.**

Put up the five signs around the room. Leave enough space between each sign to allow a group of participants to stand near each one. Explain that this activity will help participants explore their different gender values and attitudes.

#### **Step 2.**

Ask participants to stand in the centre of the room/space. Explain that you want them to think about whether they strongly agree, strongly disagree, agree or disagree with each statement you will read out to them.

Read Statement A (only) below out loud. Ask participants to go and stand next to the sign that shows what they think about this statement.

#### **Step 3.**

Once everyone is at a sign, ask one or two participants standing next to each sign to briefly explain why they feel this way about the statement.

When a number of participants have finished explaining their reasoning, ask if anyone wants to change their mind and move to another sign. Let them do this. They can explain why they changed their mind if they want to.

Bring everyone back into the centre of the room/space and read Statement B. Continue in this way for the other statements.

**Possible statements - select those that are relevant to the group and the focus of the workshop.** Feel free to add statements that may be relevant to the group you are working with, or modify any of the statements to make them more relevant.

**Statements relevant to attitudes to parenting, household tasks and decision-making:**

- Women make better parents than men and therefore should be responsible for most of the parenting and child-care responsibilities.
- Men who go out to work and earn money should not have to cook or do any housework when they get home after work.
- In a marriage, men have a right to control all of the important family decisions and the family finances, including any money his wife earns.
- Domestic violence is a private matter between couples. Women can choose to leave an abusive relationship if they don't like it.

**Statements relevant to attitudes to sexual relationships:**

- A man is entitled to have sex when he likes with his partner if they are in a long-term relationship, even if she is not in the mood.
- Women who wear short skirts or low tops are to blame if men sexually harass them.
- It is okay for a man to pressure his partner when she says 'no' or in other ways indicates that she doesn't want to have sex.
- It is okay when a woman I am in a relationship with does not want to have sex.
- Sex is more enjoyable when my partner also wants to have sex with me.
- If I see a friend pressuring a woman to have sex, I should tell him to stop.
- A married man cannot be accused of raping his wife.

For the sake of discussion, if all the participants agree about any of the statements, play the role of 'devil's advocate' by expressing an opinion that is different from theirs (for example, in South Australian law a man can be accused of raping his wife).

If some participants really do not want to answer, let these participants stand in the middle of the room and make up a 'don't know' group.

**Step 4.**

After covering at least four of the statements, lead a discussion. You can ask these questions:

- Which statements, if any, did you feel most strongly about? Why?
- How did it feel to express an opinion that was different from that of some of the other participants?
- How might people's answers affect how they treat women?
- How might culture or religion influence their views?
- Which cultural or religious attitudes and/or practices can be challenged or improved in order to prevent violence against women?

Explain to the participants that rape in marriage is against the law in Australia and a violation of an individual's human rights.

People often unfairly blame female survivors for rape and excuse the male perpetrators' behaviour. Often, people blame the survivor because of something she did, said or wore. Remind the group of the key message of this workshop:

**Violence is always wrong, and always the fault of the perpetrator**

### **Facilitators notes**

Domestic abuse and the threat of violence is an everyday fact for some women. Because men do not live with the daily threat of violence, they often do not realise the extent of the problem that women face. Men usually do not understand how actual and threatened domestic violence is such a regular feature of some women's daily lives.

Men's lives are damaged too by violence against women – e.g. their relationships and sex lives can suffer, they can lose the love and respect of their partner or she can leave, they can be judged by their community and isolated. It is men's sisters, mothers, daughters, cousins and colleagues who are affected by this violence – women that men care about are being harmed by domestic violence every day. Accepting this behaviour gives men permission to carry on.