



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

What causes men's violence against women?

Men's violence is the result of dominant gender norms and gender inequality in a patriarchal society. Sometimes men feel pressure to be dominant and in control. In most cultures men and women believe men and boys must be strong, independent and powerful in order to be seen to be 'masculine'.

Men often have more power and a higher status than women in private and public life: in the home, workplace and community. This imbalance of power is known as gender inequality. Violence against women is more easily accepted in cultures and societies where men and women are not equal. However, not all men use violence against women. Most men think that violence against women is never acceptable.

Drivers of violence against women?

The drivers of men's violence against women include:

- dominant gender norms - what it means to be 'masculine' and 'feminine'
- gender inequality
- accepting and sometimes approving of men's violence against women
- men controlling decision-making and other aspects of public and private life
- limits to women's independence and power in public and private life
- interactions between men that are aggressive and disrespectful towards 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 against women
- experience of and exposure to violence
- alcohol and substance use
- some cultural and religious beliefs and practices
- lack of knowledge of Australian laws
- loss of traditional family and community support systems.

What about violence against men?

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

[i]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.