

**Let's Stop Violence Before It Starts:  
Using primary prevention strategies to  
engage men, mobilise communities, and  
change the world**

Workshop, Mt Gambier, July 15 2011

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**What we'll cover today**

- The roots of men's violence against women: an ecological model
- Stopping violence before it happens: primary prevention
- Engaging men in prevention
- Changing norms, mobilising communities, and building gender equality

**Who is this guy?**

- Early profeminist activism
  - Men Against Sexual Assault
  - XY (once a magazine, now a website)
- Community education and advocacy
- Academic research & teaching

**Housekeeping**

- Schedule: 9.00am – 4.00pm
  - Break: 10.30 – 10.50 (20 min)
  - Lunch: 12.15 – 1.15 (1 hour)
  - Break: 2.30 – 2.50 (20 min)
  - Finish: 4.00pm
- Food
- Toilets

**How we'll proceed**

- A mix of presentation and participation
  - Including interactive work here and in small groups
- The full text of everything I say will be available.
- There will be time for questions & discussion.

**Online resources: on violence  
prevention, engaging men, etc.**

- [www.xyonline.net](http://www.xyonline.net)
- Articles, manuals, & other resources: <http://www.xyonline.net/category/article-content/violence>
- Web links to organisations, projects, and campaigns: <http://www.xyonline.net/links#a2>
- References on men's anti-violence work: <http://mensbiblio.xyonline.net/violence2.html#Antiviolenceactivism>
- References on violence prevention: <http://mensbiblio.xyonline.net/violence3.html#Violenceprevention>

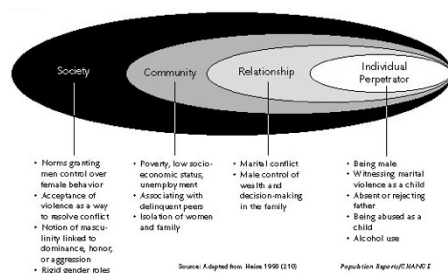
## Good news?

- Rates of violence against women have declined, at least in Australia.
  - Reflecting positive social trends in
    - Community attitudes
    - Gender relations (increased gender equality)
    - Service provision
- But there are negative trends too...

## Causes and context

- Three broad clusters of factors shape men's violence against women:
  1. Gender roles and relations
  2. Social norms and practices related to violence
  3. Access to resources and systems of support

## An ecological model of the causes of violence against women



## (1) Gender roles and relations

- Men's gendered attitudes and beliefs
  - Men's agreement with sexist, patriarchal, and sexually hostile attitudes.
- These are grounded in wider social norms regarding gender and sexuality.
  - Violence is part of 'normal' sexual, intimate, and family relations
- The power relations of relationships and families
  - These interact with conflict between partners.

## (1) Gender roles and relations *cont'd*

- Peer and organisational cultures
  - Some men have rape-supporting social relationships, e.g. in sport, gangs and peer groups, male residential colleges on campuses, and the military.
  - Some contexts involve gender segregation, strong male bonding, high alcohol consumption, sexist social norms, etc.
- The gender roles and norms of communities and cultures.
  - E.g., there are higher rates of VAW in cultures which emphasise male dominance in families, male honour, etc.

## (2) Social norms and practices related to violence

- Domestic violence resources
- Violence in the community
- Childhood exposure to intimate partner violence
  - Children, especially boys, who either witness violence or are subjected to violence themselves are more likely to adhere to violence-supportive attitudes.

### (3) Access to resources and systems of support

- Low socioeconomic status, poverty, and unemployment
  - The factors which accompany disadvantage, e.g. crowding, hopelessness, conflict, stress, or a sense of inadequacy in some men.
- Lack of social connections and social capital
  - Social isolation is both a cause and a consequence of wife abuse.

### (3) Access to resources *cont'd*

- Neighbourhood and community characteristics
  - Such as poverty, unemployment, lack of collective efficacy, disintegration of family and community, etc.
- Personality characteristics (and antisocial behaviour and peers)
- Alcohol and substance abuse
  - Men may use intoxication to minimise responsibility, or as a way to overcome women's resistance.
- Situational factors: separation

### Risk and Protective Factors...

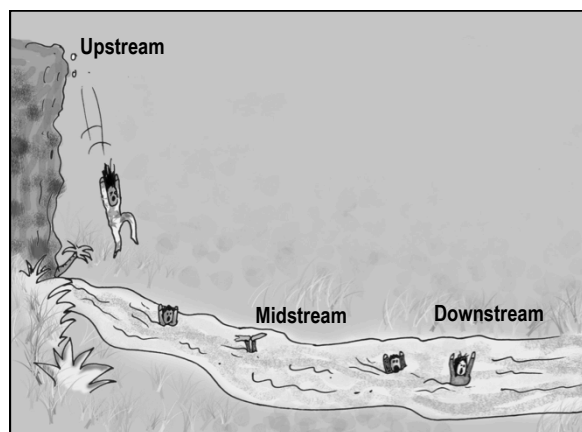
- So, are all men at *equal* risk of perpetrating violence against women?

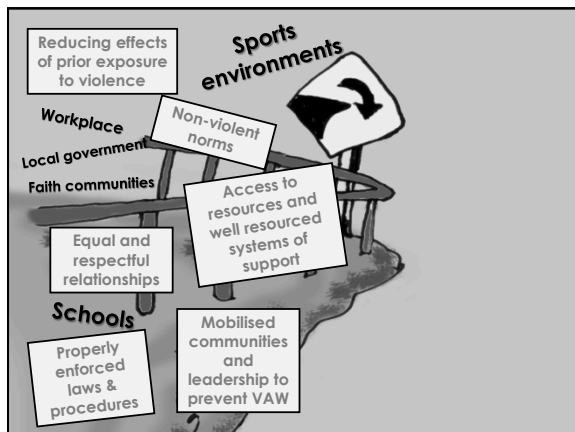
### An introduction to primary prevention

- Prevention has become a focus.
- Working 'downstream' and 'upstream'

### Upstream – Downstream

There I am standing by the shore of a swiftly flowing river and I hear the cry of a drowning man. So I jump into the river, put my arms around him, pull him to shore and apply artificial respiration. Just when he begins to breathe, there is another cry for help. So I jump into the river, reach him, pull him to shore, apply artificial respiration, and then just as he begins to breathe, another cry for help. So back in the river again, without end, goes the sequence. You know I am so busy jumping in, pulling them to shore, applying artificial respiration, that I have no time to see who the hell is upstream pushing them all in. (McKinlay 1974)





## Forms of prevention

- Three forms of prevention:
  - Before the problem starts: *Primary* prevention
  - Once the problem has begun: *Secondary* prevention
  - Responding afterwards: *Tertiary* prevention
- *Primary* prevention: Aims to lessen the likelihood that men and boys will use violence and/or that women and girls will suffer violence.
- All contribute to each other.

## Tertiary and Secondary Prevention

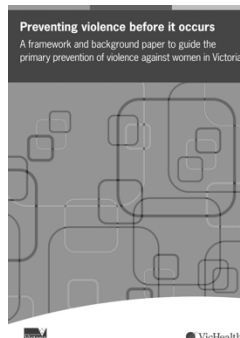
- **Tertiary prevention:** Long term responses after violence has occurred to deal with the lasting consequences of violence, minimise its impact, and prevent further perpetration and victimisation.
- **Secondary prevention:** Immediate responses after violence has occurred to deal with the short term consequences of violence and to prevent the problem from reoccurring or progressing.

(Adapted from CDC 2004)

## Primary Prevention of Violence

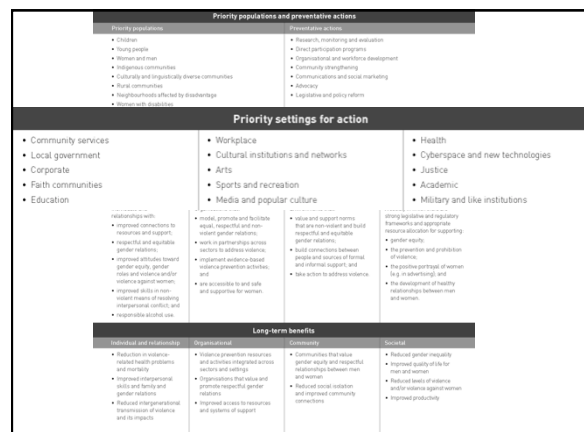
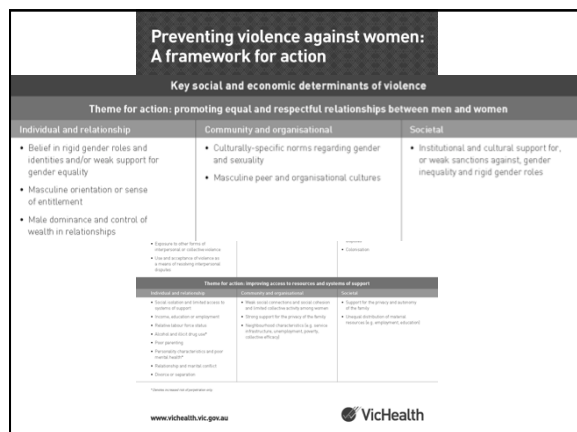
- **Primary prevention:** Activities which take place before violence has occurred to prevent initial perpetration and victimisation.
  - They can be delivered to the whole population (universal), or to groups at a higher risk of engaging in behaviours that harm others, or at higher risk of being harmed (targeted).

- Exercise:
- You have a budget of \$5 million to spend on the primary prevention of VAW. You can spend it on anything you want. It won't buy everything, but will buy a lot. What will you spend it on?
- Spend 2 minutes on your own writing your plan. Identify priorities.
- Then share with those around you. Then collectively identify key priorities.
- (Oh. Then get the government to commit funding and political will.)




## In Australia...

- *Preventing Violence Before it Occurs* (2007): VicHealth develops an evidence-based framework to inform government planning to prevent VAW
- National Council releases *Time for Action*
- Victorian state government developing a state plan
- Federal commitment...



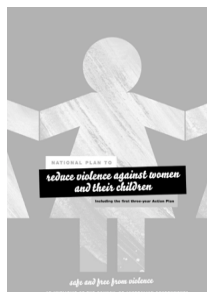
## State and national plans

- Time for Action (2009)** – a national plan to prevent and respond to violence against women (2009 – 2021), by the National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.



## State and national plans

- National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (2011)**



## Prevention: Evaluations

- Evaluations of primary prevention strategies are rare.
- Existing evidence is limited.
- But, some strategies and interventions do have:
  - A *theoretical rationale* (There are good reasons for using it);
  - Evidence of *implementation* (It has been tried);
  - Evidence of *effectiveness* (It has been shown to work).

## Multiple levels of intervention

- Violence against women is the outcome of a complex interplay of individual, relationship, community, institutional, and societal factors.




Figure 1 - Ecological model proposed by the World Health Organization

- There is a spectrum of primary prevention strategies...

## A spectrum of prevention

Level of Spectrum	Definition
Strengthening Individual Knowledge and Skills	Enhancing an individual's capability of preventing violence and promoting safety
Promoting Community Education	Reaching groups of people with information and resources to prevent violence and promote safety
Educating Providers	Informing providers who will transmit skills and knowledge to others and model positive norms
Fostering Coalitions and Networks	Bringing together groups and individuals for broader goals and greater impact
Changing Organizational Practices	Adopting regulations and shaping norms to prevent violence and improve safety
Influencing Policies and Legislation	Enacting laws and policies that support healthy community norms and a violence-free society

## Level 1: Strengthening Individual Knowledge and Skills

- To increase individuals' capacity to prevent or avoid violence.
- Including;
  - Programs for boys who have witnessed or experienced violence in families.
  - Strategies addressing associations between VAW and other social factors (poverty, etc.)



## Level 2: Promoting Community Education

- Face-to-face educational groups and programs:
  - Strong evidence of positive impact on attitudes and behaviours.
    - Although not all programs are effective.
  - Other promising strategies take place outside school and university settings.
  - Including peer education and mentoring.

### Discussion groups fostering gender equality: On US college campuses, 2009



### Discussion groups fostering gender equality: Men's Resources International training, Liberia, 2007



## Community Education *continued*

- Communication and social marketing
  - Well-developed campaigns have produced positive change in men's attitudes and behaviours.
  - Other creative strategies: film, street theatre, comics, radio and TV, song, etc.

## Violence Against Women — It's Against All the Rules (NSW, 2000 – 2003)



## Promoting gender-equitable norms to improve males' health: Program H, Brazil



## Building men's support for non-violence: Men Can Stop Rape campaign (USA)



## Building men's support for non-violence: Men Can Stop Rape campaign (USA)



## My Strength is Not for Hurting campaign (South Africa, 2007)



## Encouraging norms of sexual consent UK Home Office, 2006



### Encouraging norms of respect and equality in dating relationships Choose Respect, USA



### Campus anti-violence campaigns



### Mobilising particular groups of men: fathers



### Community Education *continued*

- Local educational strategies:
  - 'Social norms' campaigns: work to close the gap between actual and perceived agreement with violence-supportive norms
  - 'Bystander intervention' campaigns
- Other media strategies
  - Better news reporting
  - Media literacy
  - Media regulation



### Level 3: Educating Providers (and other professionals)

- Organisational and workplace strategies:
  - Often involve working with men in male-dominated institutions.
  - Examples: with coaches, police, military forces.
- Also need to increase workforce and organisational capacity.



### Level 4: Engaging, Strengthening, and Mobilising Communities

- We must change the social norms, gender roles, and power relations which feed into violence against women.
- Promising strategies of community engagement and strengthening...
  - Involve male community leaders.
- Foster coalitions and networks.



## Level 4 *continued*: Mobilising Communities

- Mobilise communities through events, networks, and campaigns.
- Build grassroots men's groups and networks.
  - White Ribbon Campaign
  - Men As Partners program
  - Many other groups...

## More on mobilising: What men can do

1. Put our own houses in order.
  - Build non-violent, respectful and equitable relations with the women in our lives.
- Challenge violence and violence-supportive behaviour around us.
  - Become positive bystanders.
- Work for wider social and cultural change
  - Shift the attitudes, behaviours, and gender inequalities which feed into men's violence against women.

### Building men's support for non-violence: White Ribbon Campaign (over 60 countries)



Newspaper advertisement, USA



Poster campaign, China (2005)

## White Ribbon Campaign in Australia



## White Ribbon Campaign in Australia



## White Ribbon Campaign march, Syracuse New York (USA), 2007



**Mobilizing men for gender justice:  
South African Men as Partners Network**



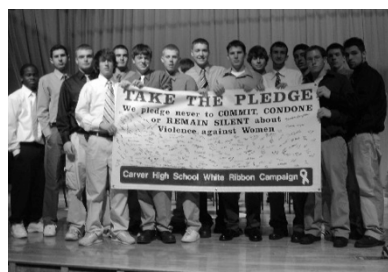
**'Walk a Mile in Her Shoes' campaign**



**'Walk a Mile in Her Shoes' campaign (Los Angeles, 2007)**



**Pledge never to commit, condone, or  
remain silent about ...**



"Coaching Boys into Men" conference, Plymouth County White Ribbon Campaign, Brockton USA, March 6, 2008

**Level 4 *continued*: Mobilising  
Communities**

- Mobilise communities through events, networks, and campaigns.
- Build grassroots men's groups and networks.
  - White Ribbon Campaign
  - Men As Partners program
  - Many other groups...
- Foster alternative, non-violent norms and practices.

## Level 5: Changing Organizational Practices

- And organisational or institutional cultures.
- Especially male-dominated and homosocial contexts.
  - Example of a sporting institution taking systematic action to address sexual assault: the Australian Football League.

## Level 6: Influencing Policies and Legislation

- We need national plans and funding for violence prevention.
- The criminal justice system has an important symbolic (and practical) role.
- Research monitoring and evaluation.



## Engaging men in prevention

- Exercise:
- Debate: We should engage men in the primary prevention of violence against women.
- *For*: Left-hand side of the room (as you face the front).
- *Against*: Right-hand side of the room
- 15 min.

## Engaging men in prevention

- We must address men in preventing violence against women because:
  1. It is largely men who perpetrate this violence.
  2. Constructions of masculinity play a crucial role in shaping violence against women.
  3. Men have a positive role to play in helping to stop violence against women.

## Engaging men - However...

- This does not mean that everything must involve men. Women-only efforts remain vital.
- Dangers in involving men:
  - Threatening funding and resources for programs and services directed at women
  - Dilution of feminist content and orientation of services
  - Men taking over.



## Key principles for male involvement

1. Pro-feminist / gender-just
  - Feminist content and frameworks
  - Partnerships with women and women's groups
  - Protection of 'women's space', women-only, and women-focused programs.
2. Male-positive – committed to enhancing boys' and men's lives
3. Acknowledge diversities and inequalities

## Challenges in working with men

## Challenge: Providing for men

- Whether to address men at all
- Three key principles for male involvement:
  1. Pro-feminist
    - Feminist content and frameworks
    - Partnerships with women and women's groups
    - Protection of 'women's space', women-only, and women-focused programs.
  2. Committed to enhancing boys' and men's lives
  3. Acknowledge diversities

## Challenges: Reaching and engaging men

- Reach men
  - Go to them, or bring them to you.
- Appeal to and engage men
  - Exercise: How can we appeal to men? How can we make the case that violence against women is something that men should be concerned about?
  - Each person to write down key appeals to men. And discuss if you wish.
  - 5 minutes

## Challenges: Reaching and engaging men

- Reach men
  - Go to them, or bring them to you.
- Appeal to and engage men
  - Begin with the positive.
  - Speak to men's own experience and concerns.
    - E.g., 'Violence against women is a men's issue.'
  - Emphasise the shared benefits to women and men.

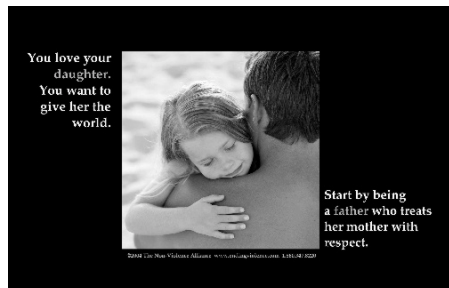
## Example: Framing VAW as a 'men's issue'

- Most men do not assault women. But physical and sexual violence is perpetrated overwhelmingly by men.
- Violence against women is men's problem;
  - VAW makes all men seem a potential threat
  - Men have to deal with the impact of other men's violence on the women and children that they love
  - As bystanders
  - As perpetrators

## More on making the case to men

- Violence hurts the women and girls we love.
- Violence hurts men too. Ending violence against women is part of the struggle to ensure safety and justice for all.
- Violence hurts our communities.
- Violence is the product of narrow, dangerous norms about being a man. They've robbed men of real relationships, health, etc.
- Silence = complicity.
- Challenging violence is part of challenging inequalities of power and oppression.

### Appealing to men's love for their children



### Appealing to men's love for their children



### Appealing to men's (and women's) concerns about the impact of their violence on their children



### Or men's roles in their children's lives



### Challenges: Engaging men *continued*

- Highlight the shared benefits to women and men.
  - How men will benefit from progress towards gender equality (and why men support it):
    - Personal well-being
    - Relational interests
    - Collective and community interests
    - Principle

### Challenges: Engaging men *continued*

- Minimise hostile and defensive reactions:
  - Approach males as partners in solving the problem
  - Address men as bystanders to other men's sexism or violence
  - Create safe and non-judgmental environments for open discussion and dialogue
  - Use male facilitators
  - Acknowledge men's own victimisation

## Challenge: Educating and changing men

- Use men to engage men: male facilitators and educators, and women and men working together.
- Use all-male groups and workshops.
- Create safe spaces for men to talk and learn.
- Offer programs which are comprehensive, intensive, relevant to the audience, and based on positive messages.
- Use interventions with sufficient intensity, in terms of both length and depth.
- Address cognitive, affective or emotional, and behavioural domains: what they *think*, how they *feel*, and what they *do*.

## Educating men *continued*

- Make your interventions culturally appropriate
- Exercise:
  - What would someone doing violence prevention in *this context* need to know and do?
  - Identify and write up five key elements to a culturally appropriate approach.

## Educating men *continued*

- Make your interventions culturally appropriate. Efforts must:
  - Examine how women's and men's involvements in gender relations are organised by class, race and ethnicity, age, and other social divisions and relations.
  - Acknowledge the social, cultural and historical contexts of communities;
  - Be based on community ownership and partnership;
  - Be based in holistic approaches to family and community violence (without losing sight of the highly gendered character for example of intimate partner violence);
  - Reflect this in program characteristics and practices.

## Alice Spring march, September 2010



## Alice Spring march, September 2010



## Educating men *continued*

- Be sensitive to local *gender* cultures.
- Address culturally specific supports for gender inequality. And draw on local resources and texts in promoting gender equality.
  - E.g., responding to defences of violence or sexism in terms of theology, 'tradition', or 'culture'.
- Match your intervention to men's stage of change.
  - From 'average Joe' to 'activist Joe'

	Aware Joe	Internalised Joe	Activist Joe
Aspiring Ally Joe:	Self-Interest	Altruism	Social Justice
Motivation	Selfish – for people I know and love	Other – I do this for them	Combined – Selfishness and Altruism – we do this for us
Ally to . . .	A Person	Target Group	An Issue
Relationship to system	Not interested in systems – just stopping the bad people	An exception from the system, yet ultimately perpetuates it	Seeks to escape, amend, and/or redefine the system
Privilege	Doesn't see privilege – but wants to maintain status quo	Feels guilty about privilege and tries to distance self from privilege	Sees illumination of privilege as liberating
Power	I'm powerful – protective	Empower them – they need our help	Empower us all
Admitting Mistakes	I don't make mistakes – I'm good, and perpetrators are just bad people	Difficult – struggles with critique or own issues – highly defensive about behavior	Seeks critique and admits mistakes – has accepted own sins and seeks help
Focus of the work	Perpetrators	Other members of the dominant group	My people – doesn't separate self from other agents

## Educating men *continued*

- Match your intervention to men's stage of change.
  - Men are at different places along the continuum from passive indifference to active intervention. So...
  - Take men through different developmental stages over the course of your work.
  - Use different educational approaches with men at different stages of awareness and commitment.

## Educating men *continued*

- Use innovative and engaging techniques to foster men's commitment to gender equality.
- Exercise:
  - How can we foster men's personal support for and commitment to gender equality?
- Be prepared for, and respond to, resistance.
- Focus on the practical action men can take.
- Assess the impact of your work.

**LUNCH: 12.15 – 1.15**

## Changing Norms, Mobilising Communities, and Building Gender Equality

- Mobilise men and communities
  - Work towards broader forms of social and political change
- For example:
  - Use community workshops and events.
  - Work with influential groups. And 'gatekeepers'.
  - Use cultural work: art and drama

## Mobilising men *continued*

- Support men in getting organised
- Work collaboratively
  - Build the network
  - Strengthen civil society coalitions: A 'big tent' approach
  - Collaborate with government
  - Develop innovative civil society-government partnerships
- Build capacity
  - Through training and competencies, programme planning, organisational development, and management support

### **Tales of Success and Failure**

- How is men's violence prevention *limited*?
- What's *wrong* with current efforts engaging men in violence prevention?

### **Tales of Success and Failure**

- Have the dangers been realised? Evaluating men's violence prevention
  - Reducing funding for women's programs and services? No, not here.
  - Weakening the feminist orientation? Or exemplifying it?
  - Silencing women – Yes, sometimes
  - Taking over the campaign? I wish.
  - Colluding with violent men
  - Rhetorical rather than real support from men
  - Failing to earn women's trust? Or receiving it too easily?

### **The real achievements of men's violence prevention thus far**

- Raising public and political awareness of the role of men and boys in ending violence against women.
- Mobilising men in groups, networks, and campaigns
- Shifting the attitudes and behaviours which lead to or constitute violence against women (through education and social marketing)

### **Real achievements *cont'd***

- Involving, and shifting, powerful masculine organisations and workplaces
- Forging partnerships between women's and men's networks and organisations
- Putting male involvement in violence prevention on national policy agendas

### **The limits (and failures) of contemporary men's violence prevention**

- Few men are involved.
- Efforts are small, scattered, and under-developed.
- Some campaigns are ineffective and inappropriate.
- A focus on men sometimes has been diluted.
- There is a substantial and organised backlash, particularly by anti-feminist men's groups.

### **Some case studies**

- In a sporting code / culture: AFL Respect and Responsibility strategy



## Respect & Responsibility creating safe supportive environments for women & girls



## Respect & Responsibility Policy

- Launched by the CEO in November 2005
- Represents the AFL's mission statement on addressing violence against women.
- Emphasises the unique role that the AFL and Clubs can play in promoting equal and respectful relationships with women.
- Offers a key site for targeting effective prevention effort – top down and bottom up approach.



## Key components of R & R:

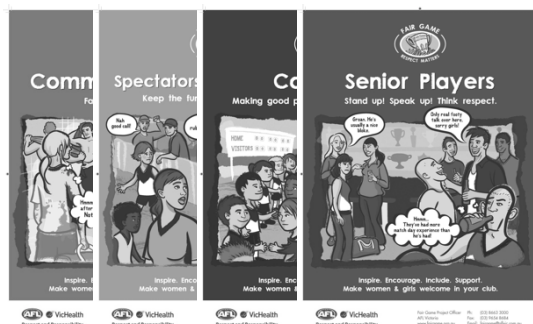
- Policies and procedures
- Conduct rules (including sanctions) for players charged or convicted of physical or sexual assaults and related behaviours
- An ongoing cycle of education for players and others
- The dissemination of these strategies throughout community clubs
- Including resources aimed at coaches, club committees of management, senior players, spectators and supporters



## The "Fair Game" Kit

- An audit and planning tool that helps you establish what is working well in your Club, and what changes could be made to help bring a Respect and Responsibility Program to your members.
- Information brochures for coaches, senior players, parents and spectators.
- Posters that promote the club's commitment to the values of Respect and Responsibility.
- A compact disk with pre-recorded ground announcements spoken by well-known AFL personalities for game days, to inform spectators and members about Respect and Responsibility.

## Fair Game: Respect Matters



## In a male-dominated workplace

- *Project:* Women's Health Victoria – Working Together Against Violence
- *Setting:* Linfox trucking company (48 worksites across the state of Victoria)
- *Aims:* To strengthen the organisational capacity of male-dominated workplaces to develop and implement policies and programs aimed at promoting respectful and responsible relationships between men and women.

- *Measures:*

- Training: 'Harm in the Home', with bystander approach (mainly for workers, but some for senior managers).
- Workplace policy: currently being drafted.
- Development and promotion of a Workplace Resource Kit, including transferable tools and systems (including training package with 'train the trainer' module).
- Forum, to launch and promote training package

## 'Harm in the Home' training

**TOOL 1:  
MAKE IT CLEAR**

### TOOLBOX OF IDEAS



**TOOL 3:  
I RECKON...**

**TOOL 2:  
BRING IT HOME**

**TOOL 4:  
WE RECKON...**

**TOOL 5:  
CHAT**

## What's in a name?

- Exercise: What does each of the following terms *name*, and what does it *omit* or *exclude* or *hide*?
  - a) Family violence
  - b) Domestic violence
  - c) Intimate partner violence
  - d) Violence against women
  - e) Interpersonal violence

## What's in a name?

- *Family violence and domestic violence:*
  - Name various forms of violence in families.
  - Name violence against children.
  - Name violence by men or women.
  - Hide that most violence is perpetrated by men.
  - Hide that most violence in relationships is experienced by women.
  - Omit violence which does not occur in families and/or in domestic spaces and/or among partners who have neither married nor cohabited
    - E.g., in young people's dating relationships, in non-domestic settings, etc.
  - Typically neglects sexual violence.
  - May neglect parent/child, sibling/sibling and adolescent/parent violence.

## What's in a name?

- *Intimate partner violence:*
  - Names violence by men or women in intimate relationships.
  - Includes violence outside familial and domestic settings, including in young people's relationships and by ex-partners.
  - May involve greater recognition of sexual violence.
  - Hides that most violence is perpetrated by men.
  - Hides that most violence in relationships is experienced by women.
  - Omits various forms of violence in families, including violence against and by children.

## What's in a name?

- *Violence against women:*
  - Names all forms of violence against women: in intimate relationships, in other relationships, in domestic and non-domestic settings, etc.
  - Names that violence e.g. in relationships is experienced by women.
  - Names the gendered character of the violence.
  - Typically recognises sexual violence.
  - Does not necessarily name the fact that most violence against women is perpetrated by men ('men's violence against women')
  - Omits violence against children.
  - Omits violence against men.

## Dealing with Resistance and Backlash

- Organised backlash: anti-feminist 'men's rights' and 'fathers' rights groups

## The defensiveness of some men...



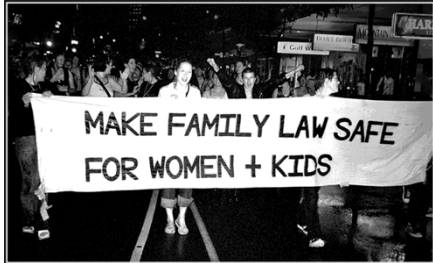
## The fathers' rights movement

- (Separated) Fathers as deprived of their 'rights'...
- FR groups overlap with 'men's rights' groups. And have links to conservative Christian groups.
- An organised backlash to feminism
- Comprised of angry and hurting men (and women), who've come through;
  - Separation and divorce
  - Loss of contact with children

## Agendas of the FR movement

- Re-establish authority and control over ex-partners and children;
- Win an 'equality' concerned with legal 'rights' and status rather than the actual care of children.
- Wind back the legal and cultural changes which have lessened gender inequalities.





## Impact of the FR movement

### (1) Privileging contact over safety

- Family Court practices are prioritising fathers' contact with children, over children's safety.
- A violent father is better than no father at all...
- Family Court practices are exposing women and children to greater levels of violence, abuse, and harassment.

## Impact of the FR movement

### (2) Discrediting victims

- The lie that women make false allegations of child abuse.
- The lie that women make false allegations of DV and misuse protection orders
- Other lies...

## Impact of the FR movement

### (3) On perceptions of intimate partner violence

- The lie that domestic violence is gender-equal – that men and women assault each other at equal rates and with equal effects.

## Men's versus women's violence

- Men's rights and fathers' rights advocates draw (only) on studies based on the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS).
  - "Have you or your spouse, in the last year, ever committed... [a range of acts]."

## Three problems with the claim of gender symmetry in DV

- CTS authors themselves reject this claim, emphasising e.g. that women experience greater fear and injury and more severe violence.
- Methodological problems with the CTS:
  - It asks only about acts, and ignores their impact, meaning, and history.
  - It leaves out...
  - It relies only on one partner's reports
- Other data finds strong gender asymmetries.

- Useful to distinguish between different kinds of violence;
  - *Situational / Common couple violence*:
    - Minor violence, by both partners, which is expressive (emotional) rather than instrumental. Does not escalate over time, and injuries are rare.
  - *Intimate terrorism*:
    - More severe violence, used by one partner (i.e., asymmetrical), plus other controlling tactics, to assert or restore power and authority (i.e., instrumental). Tends to escalate, and injuries are more likely

- Men are the victims of DV...
- There are important contrasts in women's and men's experiences of intimate partner violence.
- Women are far more likely than men to
  - Be subjected to frequent, prolonged, and extreme violence
  - Experience a range of controlling tactics
  - Be sexually assaulted
  - Experience violence after separation.
  - Sustain injuries
  - Fear for their lives
- Women's perpetration of violence...
  - Is more likely to be reactive and/or defensive.

- Men do underreport their violence... But so do women, at a greater rate.
- ... So, how can you tell that men's rights and fathers' rights groups do not have a genuine concern for male victims of violence?

- The fathers' rights movement's attention to DV is not motivated by a genuine concern for male victims of violence;
  - They focus on violence to men *by women*, while men are most at risk from other men.
  - They undermine the protections available to female and male victims alike.
  - They weaken the sanctions placed on perpetrators.

## Impact of the FR movement

- (4) Protecting perpetrators and undermining supports for victims
- FR groups try to;
- Wind back the protections available to victims
  - Undermine the treatment of DV as criminal behaviour
  - Such changes would harm female and male victims of DV alike.

- (4) Protecting perpetrators and undermining supports for victims (*cont'd*)
- FR groups;
- Respond from the point of view of the perpetrators. And act like perpetrators too.
  - Condone and excuse men's violence, and use it as evidence of men's victimhood.
  - Act as advocates for male perpetrators
  - Attack community and media efforts to respond to and prevent violence against women.

### Strategies for beating the backlash

- Discredit fathers' rights groups. Emphasise that they;
  - Are interested only in reducing their financial obligations to their children;
  - Are interested only in extending or regaining power and authority over ex-partners and children;
  - Do nothing to increase men's actual share of childcare / parenting or men's positive involvement in parenting both before and after separation;
  - Collude with perpetrators, protect and advocate for perpetrators, or are perpetrators.
- Produce critiques of their lies and their strategies.

### Strategies *cont'd*

- Co-opt the new politics of fatherhood;
  - Support positive efforts to respond to separated fathers.
  - Emphasise that FR groups fix men in anger and blame, rather than helping them to heal.
  - Build on men's desires to be involved (and nonviolent) parents.
- Find alternative male voices: supportive men and men's / fathers' networks and groups.
  - 'Speaking as a father...'

### Strategies *cont'd*

- Tell women's stories
  - Atrocity tales: Stories of abuse and inequality.
  - In letters, submissions, on talkback, etc.
  - But beware of the ways in which these can
    - Portray women only as victims
    - Homogenise and essentialise women's (diverse) experiences of violence, and
    - Undermine credibility and support.
- Find and nurture male allies: in government, the community sector, academic, etc.

### More on countering objections

1. "But what about women's violence?" "But women are just as violent as men."
2. "That's man-hating." "That's male-bashing."
3. "But working with men will take away from the work we need to do with women."
4. "How do we know which men are allies? How do we know which men need our work the most?"
5. "Where's the proof that this will even work?"

### Complicating what we know about work with men

1. Will men benefit from progress towards non-violence and gender equality?
2. Is our goal to construct alternative masculinities?
3. What about changing men by changing women?

### Complicating what we know about work with men

- That it is in men's interests to support progress towards gender equality.
  - Men must also lose or give up privileges and unjust advantages. Sometimes it is 'win / lose'.
  - Reconstructing men's interests...
  - We must change the structural and institutional conditions within which men make choices about how to live.

- That our goal is to encourage new, positive masculinities among men.



- Appeals to 'real men' are complicit in dominant masculinity.
- There are times when we should be encouraging men to disinvest in masculinity. And to be 'sissies' and 'mama's boys'.

- That engaging directly with men is the best way to change men.
  - It may be more effective to empower women in order to change men.
  - Emphases on 'partnership' between women and men may produce an imperative to male inclusion;
    - Closing off women-only and women-focused work;
    - Leaving women dependent on men;
    - Adopting narrow approaches to kinship, family, and intimacy.

## Conclusion

- Men have a vital role to play in helping to end violence against women.
- While some men are part of the problem, all men are part of the solution.

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Online resources on men's roles in ending violence against women: <http://www.xyonline.net>