



# COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

— FOR —

## Preventing Violence Against Women

WEBINAR AND  
SLIDE PACK

MAY 2020



WOMEN'S HEALTH  
IN THE NORTH  
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BUILDING A  
Respectful  
Community



**WOMEN'S HEALTH**  
IN THE **NORTH**

Women's Health In the North  
680 High Street  
Thornbury VIC 3071

Thank you for downloading the Communications Guidelines for Preventing Violence Against Women recorded webinar and slides.

You can access the webinar here:

<https://youtu.be/L3laGJCp89o>

This webinar goes alongside the resource *Communications Guidelines for Preventing Violence Against Women*.

This webinar provides:

- an introduction to violence against women and how it is linked to gender inequality
- a guide to applying a gender analysis
- language considerations
- strategies for incorporating messaging that promotes gender equality and prevents violence against women.

If you require any further information, please email us at [info@whin.org.au](mailto:info@whin.org.au)

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## Communications Guidelines for Preventing Violence against Women

Webinar

May 2020

WOMEN'S HEALTH IN THE NORTH


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Women's Health In the North would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today - the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, and to their elders past, present and emerging. Women's Health In the North acknowledges that Aboriginal sovereignty has not been ceded and expresses hope for justice and reconciliation.


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Women's Health In the North would also like to acknowledge the victim survivors of family violence, sexual assault and all forms of violence against women. We are thankful for all the women who have shared their stories to inform the work of responding to and preventing violence against women.

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## About WHIN

Women's Health In the North (WHIN) is a state government-funded regional women's health service. It aims to strengthen women's health, safety and wellbeing with a strategic focus on:

- Gender equity
- Preventing violence against women
- Coordination and integration of family violence
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Economic equality
- Environmental justice.

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## WHIN's Catchment


Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne:

- Banyule
- Darebin
- Hume
- Moreland
- Nillumbik
- Whittlesea
- Yarra



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## Learning Objectives

To develop an understanding of:

- Violence against women
- The link between gender inequality and violence against women
- Key actions to prevent violence against women and the role of communications
- How to apply a gender lens to your work
- How to include preventing violence against women messaging in your work

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## Sex

'Sex' refers to biological and physiological differences between females, males and intersex people.

## Gender

'Gender' refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men.

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## Sex, gender identity and sexuality

- Sexuality is who we are attracted to or have relationships with
- LGBTQIA - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/ questioning, intersex, asexual



**Sex**  
female, male, intersex

≠

**Gender identity**  
cis-gendered, woman, girl, man, boy, trans, transgender, genderqueer, non-binary, gender diverse, two-spirit, sister-boy, brother-girl, Hijra

≠

**Sexuality**  
lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, straight, queer

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## WHIN's language

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## Violence against Women

'Violence against women is not the result of random, individual acts of misconduct, but rather is deeply rooted in **structural relationships of inequality between women and men**.'

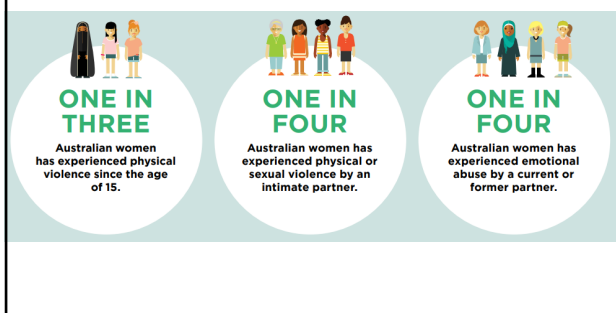
- United Nations, 2006

'Any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, including threats of harm or **coercion**, in **public or in private life**.'

- United Nations; Our Watch; COAG

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## Prevalence



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## Preventing Violence against Women

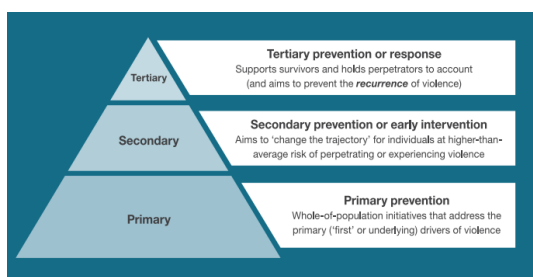
Although there is ***no single cause of violence against women***, current evidence shows that gender inequality is at the core of the issue.

Gender inequality sets the necessary social context in which violence against women occurs.

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## Gender Inequality

Gender inequality is a social condition characterised by the **unequal value** afforded to men and women and the **unequal distribution** of power, resources and opportunities between them.



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## Gender Equity

Gender equity is a term which describes fairness and justice in outcomes for women, men and gender-diverse people.

It is not about the equal delivery of services, or distribution of resources, it is about recognising diversity and disadvantage, and directing resources and services towards those most in need, to ensure **equal outcomes** for all.

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## Rationale for Gender Equity

- Legal obligation
- Organisational performance
- Health and wellbeing
- Social justice and human rights
- Prevention of violence against women

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## A settings-based approach

Effective prevention efforts engage people across the many different environments where people **live, work, learn, socialise and play** – often called ‘settings’.



(Our Watch: Change the Story Framework, 2015)

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## Victorian context

**Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence** (March 2016).

**Safe and Strong** - A Victorian Government Gender Equality Strategy - Preventing violence against women through gender equality.

**Free from Violence** - Victoria's Strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women.

**Our Watch Change the Story Framework** - A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia.



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## Gender Equality Act (2020)

- Enacted on 25 February 2020
- Requires public entities to
  - develop and implement Gender Equality Action Plans every four years
  - report on sexual harassment and equal pay
  - achieve targets on hiring and promoting women
  - undertake gender impact assessments to ensure that policies, programs and services consider the different needs of Victorians of all genders

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Violence against women  
is serious, prevalent and driven by

## GENDER INEQUALITY

### GENDERED DRIVERS of violence against women:

CONDONING of violence against women	MEN'S CONTROL of decision- making and limits to women's independence	STEREOTYPED constructions of masculinity and femininity	DISRESPECT towards women and male peer relations that emphasise aggression
-------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Gender inequality sets the **NECESSARY SOCIAL CONTEXT**

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Reinforcing factors – *within the context of the gendered drivers* – can increase frequency or severity of violence:

- 5 Condoning of violence in general
- 6 Experience of, and exposure to, violence
- 7 Weakening of pro-social behaviour, especially harmful use of alcohol
- 8 Socio-economic inequality and discrimination
- 9 Backlash factors (increases in violence when male dominance, power or status is challenged).

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Violence against women  
**IS PREVENTABLE**  
if we all work together



**ACTIONS**  
that will prevent violence against women:

CHALLENGE  
condoning of  
violence against  
women

PROMOTE  
women's  
independence  
& decision-making

CHALLENGE  
gender  
stereotypes  
and roles

STRENGTHEN  
positive, equal  
and respectful  
relationships

Promote and normalise GENDER EQUALITY in public and private life

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## Applying the essential actions

### Challenge condoning of violence against women

- Frame men's violence against women and children as a community safety and public health issue.
- Address and dispel commonly held myths about violence against women and their children (Table 1). This might be in specific posts during campaigns or in moderating community dialogues.

### Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships

- Apply a gender impact assessment (page 18) to an output e.g. invitation to a town hall or community consultation. Consider if it would attract more men than women and tailor imagery or language for different audiences.
- Promote initiatives that support women's participation and leadership e.g. sports and business programs.
- Engage in days of observance or campaigns e.g. Week Without Violence or 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence

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## Applying the essential actions

### Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles

- Challenge traditional notions of parenthood e.g. gendered roles and identities associated with care for children so as to support equitable parenting roles.
- Don't rely on gender stereotypes to tell a story — show different groups engaging in various activities and roles.
- Communicate your organisation's human resources policies that support gender equality to all of staff in order to normalise equitable access.

### Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relationships between women and men, girls and boys

- Share resources and tips on how to be an active bystander when witnessing sexism and gender discrimination. See [Respect Victoria](#), [OurWatch's The Line](#), Gender Equity Victoria's [Online Bystander Project](#) and VicHealth's [Take Action](#).
- Depict girls, boys, women, men and gender-diverse people participating in various contexts together.
- Promote and support programs that build equal and respectful relationships

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## The Role of Communications

- To support all employees in your organisation to strengthen their understanding of gender equality, why it's important and relevant to them and what they can do to help achieve it.
- To reinforce an understanding in your community of the link between gender equality and preventing violence against women by using multiple communication channels, and tailoring messages

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## Gender analysis

Process of considering gender and gender inequalities. It identifies action to address inequalities, unequal power relationships and the consequences of inequalities on health, safety and wellbeing.

It can be used to:


- ensure that women, men and gender-diverse people are not disadvantaged by a policy, program or project (including communications outputs)
- consider how gender inequalities are reduced, maintained or increased, resulting in negative consequences
- enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of activities
- identify priority areas for action to promote gender equality.

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## Gender-disaggregated data

Gender-disaggregated data refers to data that can be separated by participants' gender, allowing an analysis of how women, men and people of all genders are impacted.



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## Gender Impact Assessment For Communications

Consider some or all of these questions:

- 1 How might this communications strategy or output affect women, men and gender-diverse people differently?
- 2 Are different approaches needed to meet the needs of women, men and gender-diverse people?
- 3 Are different approaches needed to engage and meet the needs of:
  - Aboriginal women and men?
  - Refugee and migrant women and men?
  - People of diverse gender and sexual identities?
  - Women and men with disabilities?
  - Women and men of low socio-economic status?
- 4 Does this communications strategy or output consider and represent the diverse lived experiences and voices of women? Has it been tested or developed with a diverse range of community members?
- 5 What assumptions about women and men is this output making? (For example, an assumption that all mums 'stay at home' and can thus participate in activities during business hours.)
- 6 Does this strategy or output capitalise on or perpetuate gender stereotypes, or does it promote diverse gender roles?
- 7 How might this strategy or output reduce, maintain or increase the gender inequalities between women and men?
- 8 How could the organisation measure whether communication outputs have improved outcomes for women and gender equality?

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## Gender Impact Assessment For Communications

Consider some or all of these questions:

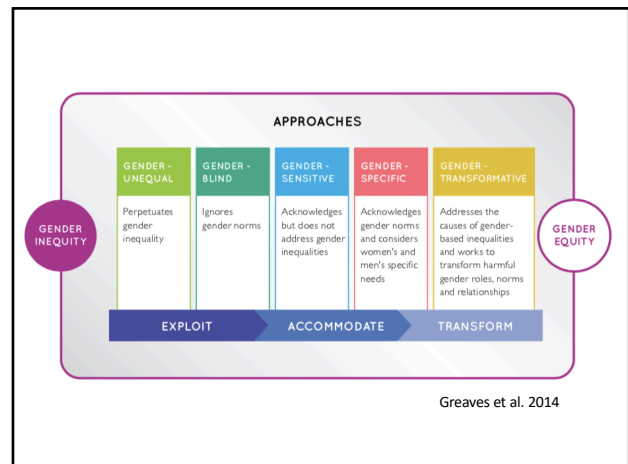
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**Scenario 1:**

You work for a local council and you've been asked to post an invitation on Facebook to a community basketball tournament.

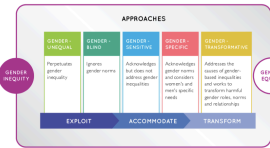
The photos the organiser has have provided were taken at the previous year's event and comprise entirely of people who appear to be white, able-bodied men.

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Let's apply this thinking to the example of addressing violence towards women on an education campus:



**EXPLOIT:**  
Providing messaging to the student body that recommends women protect their own safety by limiting travel after dark. This simultaneously blames the victim, fails to hold the perpetrator accountable and endorses the myths that men's violence against women is inevitable and that men are inherently violent.

**ACCOMMODATE:**  
Publicising that the education institution's response is to improve lighting in public places and increase security on campus to make students feel safer. This approach responds to gender but does not address the underlying issue of men's violence.

**TRANSFORM:**  
Increasing safety measures on campus and promoting a gender equality campaign that addresses the gendered drivers of violence against women, for example, active bystander education. This approach provides an immediate response and addresses the underlying factors.

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Merri Health  
28 August at 16:38

28 August marks #EqualPayDay and is dedicated to closing the gender pay gap. Did you know that women would have to work an extra 55 days to earn the same as men? 🤔  
TheGapMatters Workplace Gender Equality Agency

Equal Pay Day  
28 August 2019



14% matters...  
because it adds up over a lifetime.

#EqualPayDay  
#TheGapMatters

14 1 comment 1 share

Like Comment Share

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## Planning and Strategy

- Align your communications planning with your organisation's gender equality strategy
- Collaborate with your organisation's gender equity officer or working group,
- Design key performance indicators or targets for consistent messaging e.g. three social media posts a month on gender equality/ preventing gender-based violence
- Celebrate your organisation's achievements around gender equity and preventing violence by informing your audience

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## Proactive Communications

- Position statements
  - Pre-prepared or in response
- Communications planning templates
  - Include entries that specifically address the essential actions or assess gender-responsiveness
- Plan for days of observance and campaigns
  - Simple and engaging way to create content

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## Proactive Communications

- Acknowledge the hard work in your team
  - Create a best practice library
  - Recognise met quotas
  - Apply for awards
- Engage victim-survivor advocates
  - Speaking Out' Program through Women's Health East
- Promote support services

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## Professional Development

- Consider training in preventing violence against women in the onboarding of new staff
- Free eLearning module through Action PVAW website
- Face-to-face training with Women's Health In the North, other women's health services or Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria
- Have a member of your team learn about how to respond to disclosures of violence

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## Language – writing about acts of violence

- If working directly with someone who has experienced violence, use the terms that she or they use to describe themselves, or the crime.
- If writing generally, 'victim-survivor' is a strength-based approach that centres women's voices.

✓ **DO**

✗ **DON'T**

✗ **DON'T**

name the violence. It is critical that the type of violence is named. e.g. 'men's violence against women/and their children', 'intimate partner violence' 'family violence', 'assault', 'sexual assault', 'elder abuse', 'child abuse', 'rape' or 'murder' (Our Watch, 2019).

attribute the violence to where the victim-survivor had been, the time of day, what she was wearing or drinking.

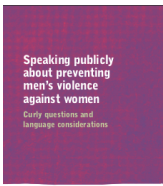
use terms that minimise or trivialise the violence for example, 'domestic dispute', 'violent/volatile relationship' (relationships are not abusive, people are) or terms that minimise the responsibility of the perpetrator for example, 'violence came out of the blue', 'things got out of hand' (Deathe & Rich, 2015).

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## Evidence-based Language

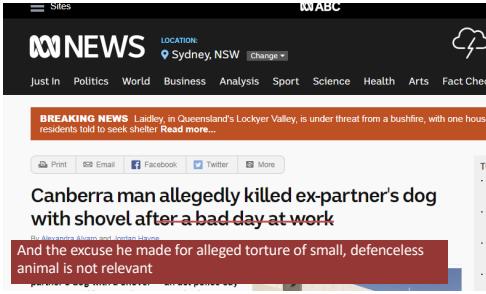
When writing or presenting about violence against women, frame it within the context of gender inequality

- Refer to the gendered drivers
- Avoid connecting violence to mental health, culture, stress, finances, as being 'fuelled' by alcohol and other drugs, as a result of carer-stress or describe a perpetrator as 'just snapping'
- Avoid attributing the violence to what the victim was doing, wearing, consuming etc.
- Avoid any recommendations that women moderate their own safety as a prevention strategy.



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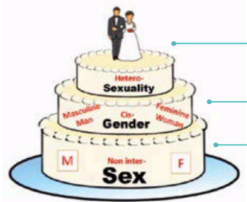
## Evidence-based Language



<https://janegilmore.com/category/fixedit/>

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## Cis-normativity and Hetero-normativity



**HETERONORMATIVITY**    **L.G.B.T.I.Q**

- 10% Same sex attracted, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual
- 2-4% Trans and gender-diverse
- 1.7% Intersex


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## Inclusive or gender-blind?

- DON'T simply replace the term 'women' and use 'people' in an effort to be inclusive, as this obscures the high rates of violence experienced by women, and contributes to perpetuating gender inequality.
- It is unlikely that you can be inclusive of everyone in one social media post, but it is possible to be inclusive across your range of communications.

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## Representation



**Protect what matters most**  
*Sooty heroes and babes in arms*


- DON'T** take shortcuts that rely on gender stereotypes to tell a story. Challenge gender stereotypes when you can.
- DO** build a library of images that represent the community. When building an image library, it is crucial that consent is given by anyone featuring in the images for the image to be reproduced.
- DO** broaden the perceived 'mainstream'. Normalise the participation of different communities across your services, not just in targeted communications e.g. depict same-sex couple families in communications related to all kinds of community activities not just communications about LGBTIQ issues or events.
- DO** audit your stock photos and update them to include positive images of women and men, including non-stereotypical images in community settings and workplaces.
- DO** brief your photographers on applying a gender lens. Explain how it is important to your organisation to use photos that show people of all genders challenging gender stereotypes.

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## Community Engagement

- DON'T** simply avoid all potentially controversial content. Topics that are 'controversial' are often part of important community dialogues. The social change required to prevent violence against women and promote gender equity will inevitably generate some resistance and backlash. Use it as an opportunity for community engagement.
- DO** consider whether content may have the potential to 'trigger' or re-traumatise someone who has experienced violence. For example, images of violence or death, or graphic descriptions of violence. Using this content may not be in the best interests of the community. If there is an important reason for using the content, include a 'trigger warning' or find another way to convey the message.
- DO** consider the timing of content if you predict that moderation might be required. In these instances, ensure that staff can attend to social media channels or questions.
- DO** Prepare staff for responding to disclosures of violence. It is important that communications staff provide appropriate referral information (see page 4) via a safe channel (not public) and do not attempt to 'counsel' or advise the person on their situation.

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## Managing resistance

Resistance and backlash is a sign that change is underway

**DON'T**

- expect to change the hearts and minds of the 'entrenched opposition'. Focus on those who are curious or unconvinced.


**DO**

- prepare for managing community dialogues sensitively by building skills in responding to backlash and creating protocols for moderating and responding to community responses.

**DO**

- consider some standard responses that acknowledge the experience of the commenter and respond. You might respond to say you will take their feedback on board, or respectfully affirm the position of the original communication output and support it with data (see 2.0).

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## Self-care

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## Referral Options


- At risk in immediate danger: 000
- Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre: 1800 015 188
- The Orange Door: 1800 319 355 (north east metro region)
- Berry Street Northern Family & Domestic Violence Service: 9450 4700 (Hume/Moreland)
- CASA House (Centre Against Sexual Assault): 9635 3600
- Women's Information and Referral Exchange: 1300 134 130
- NIFVS Services Directory [www.nifvs.org.au](http://www.nifvs.org.au)

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## Thank-you

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