



Intersectionality Matters:

**A guide to engaging immigrant and refugee communities
to prevent violence against women**

Acknowledgement

MCWH acknowledges and pays respect to the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, on whose land this guide was written.

Aboriginal sovereignty was never ceded.

We recognise that as immigrants to this country, we benefit from the colonisation of the land now called Australia and have a shared responsibility to acknowledge the harm done to its first peoples and work towards respect and recognition. We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are leaders in working to prevent the disproportionate levels of violence enacted against them, their children and their families. We also acknowledge and celebrate that intersectional theory has largely emerged from black and indigenous feminist activism and expertise in the United States and around the world, including Australia.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their ancestors and elders, both past and present and acknowledge their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We hope our work contributes to the wider project of respect and recognition between cultures in Australia.

Introduction

Violence against women and girls occurs in all countries and it cuts across all social differences such as race, ethnicity, sexuality, socio-economic class, ability and faith. There may be differences in the types of violence that women and girls experience, but all forms of violence are unacceptable.

Australia's National Framework for Prevention, Change the Story, shows that by working together towards gender equality, we can address the key drivers of violence against women. This guide builds on Change the Story, addressing the ways in which the intersections between gendered inequality and other forms of inequality impact on peoples' lives and experiences. The guide outlines how we can all work effectively together, with and as immigrant and refugee communities, to prevent violence against women.



About this guide

This guide has been developed by the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) for anyone who is working to prevent violence against women.

The guide is informed by Australia's National Framework for Prevention: Change the Story and assumes the reader has an understanding of violence against women and is already familiar with the recommended key actions and approaches for primary prevention. This guide also assumes the following definitions:

- **Primary prevention**

Primary prevention aims to stop violence against women before it starts by addressing the underlying gendered drivers of violence (identified in Change the Story).

- **Violence against women**

Violence against women (VAW) describes any form of violence specifically 'directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately' (UN, 1992).

This guide aims to help people and organisations develop violence prevention approaches, strategies and activities in a way that effectively engages immigrant and refugee communities to prevent violence against women. It has been written to be as practical as possible in indicating what best practice should look like. It is not exhaustive and we welcome feedback and discussion.

If you are reading this guide as someone who has little experience working in the area of violence prevention, this guide will complement other resources that are available and listed in the reference section of this guide.

The guide also complements the work of existing immigrant women's organisations and networks that have been working to prevent violence against immigrant and refugee women across Australia for many years. We encourage you to follow the lead of these organisations and other specialist, representative groups.

Contents

Acknowledgement	1
Introduction	1
About this guide	2

PART 1: 4

How to approach prevention

This section explains why feminism, intersectionality and moving away from a simplistic understanding of culture are essential for effective prevention work

PART 2: 12

Essential ingredients for meaningful violence prevention initiatives

This section summarises some of the key principles for making your violence prevention work meaningful for immigrant and refugee communities

PART 3: 22

Prevention in practice

This section provides tools for thinking through the practical challenges of planning and implementing prevention initiatives to include and engage immigrant and refugee communities

Further reading	33
About us	34

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How to approach prevention

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark blazer over a light-colored patterned blouse, stands in front of a background of tall, thin reeds. She is holding a white sign with handwritten text. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

Equal rights
for immigrant
and refugee women

Taking a feminist approach

Primary prevention aims to stop violence against women before it starts by addressing the underlying gendered drivers of violence. International evidence indicates that violence against women and girls occurs less in countries where women and girls have the same rights and opportunities as men and boys (Change the Story, p. 20). By improving unfair conditions for women and changing community attitudes today, primary prevention aims to stop violence against women in the future.

Violence prevention means working together towards gender equality: essentially, it is feminism in action.

Feminism has a long and diverse history and has been described in many different ways. However, the fight for gender equality is an important part of feminist history and current activism.

If you believe that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities, if you stand for gender equality, then you are taking a feminist approach.

Feminism focuses on the unequal status of women and girls in order to address the inequality that exists across our society. Feminism advocates for women's rights, women's leadership and women's interests in order to promote gender equality.

For that reason, feminists, including trans women and women of colour around the world, have been and are at the forefront of activities to prevent violence against women. Taking a feminist approach that focuses on women's inequality, builds women's leadership, and celebrates women's achievements, is an essential part of primary prevention.

Discussions around gender can sometimes exclude or erase the experiences of genderqueer/non-binary or transgender people. Challenging conventional gender distinctions is an essential part of the movement towards gender equality. It is important for us all to remain open to continually improving our understanding of gender as a social category and respectful in any conversations we have about gender identity.

Taking an intersectional approach

Intersectionality is a way of seeing or analysing the dynamics of power and social inequality in our society. It can be described in different ways: as a theory, an approach, a lens, a framework and so on. What is essential to the idea of intersectionality is the recognition that inequalities are never the result of any single or distinct factor such as race, class or gender. Rather, 'they are the outcome of different social locations, power relations and experiences' (Hankivsky, 2014).

Intersectionality has grown out of an important history of black feminist theory and activism in the United States, beginning in the 1960s and 70s. Recognising that the feminist movement as a whole did not represent the experiences of black women, black feminists 'challenged the idea that "gender" was the primary factor determining a woman's fate' (bell hooks, 1984). Instead, many black feminists argued for a need 'to combat the manifold and simultaneous oppressions that all women of colour face' (Combahee River Collective, 1977), including systems of oppression such as colonialism, class oppression, racism, ableism, homophobia, ageism and patriarchy.

Many of the ways that we are socially located or labelled are connected to aspects of our identity such as race, ethnicity, indigeneity, class, gender, ability, sexuality, geography, age, life stage, migration status or religion. However, as social locations these markers more specifically describe how we are seen and positioned in relation to the many systems of power that structure our society.

Our social locations are not fixed. They depend on the specific situations and settings in which we find ourselves: our political and historical contexts, as well as the forces that govern our behaviour and operate around us such as laws, policies, institutions and media. Our social locations arise from a constellation of many co-operating factors and interactions of power and discrimination.

**There is no such
thing as a single
issue struggle
because we do
not live single
issue lives**

~ Audre Lorde (1984)

Taking an intersectional approach means:

- Going beyond explanations or solutions that use single categories to describe people or issues and acknowledging that we are shaped by many factors interacting together.
- Identifying and transforming systems of power and privilege that negatively shape individual outcomes, building coalitions and working towards social equity.
- Actively reflecting on and addressing our own relationships to power and privilege as bystanders, researchers, workers or advocates.
- Understanding that there is no fixed hierarchy of disadvantage and that we may experience or understand the ways our lives are impacted by power or oppression differently.
- Recognising that people can experience privilege and oppression simultaneously, depending on the specific context or situation.
- Centring marginalised experiences, voices and leadership, wherever possible.

In the context of preventing violence against women, intersectionality reminds us that gender is not experienced in the same way by everyone. For example our age, gender identity, life stage, ability, sexuality, indigeneity, race, ethnicity, class, religious beliefs, family, geographical location and profession can all change our perceptions of gender as well as the way our gender is perceived and treated by law, policy, institutions and others.

An intersectional approach helps us to focus on the intersecting and interlinking forms of discrimination and oppression which contribute to the gendered drivers of violence.

Making feminism intersectional

Because prevention focuses on gender equality it is obvious why gender must be central to our work. By applying a feminist or gendered lens to programs, processes and policies we can see opportunities for effective prevention activities more clearly.

An intersectional approach doesn't ask us to stop using a gendered lens. It asks us to see gender as always interacting and intersecting with other forms of discrimination, institutional policies and political forces in ways that impact on:

- how we experience gender;
- the wider social/political consequences and outcomes of our work; and
- our understanding and perceptions of ourselves and other people, including our perceptions about gender.

An intersectional approach helps us to see that in order to be effective preventing violence against women must challenge racism and other forms of discrimination that also affect women. Equally, work that addresses racism and other forms of discrimination must also challenge sexism and take notice of when and how those issues affect women differently or disproportionately.

When feminism does not explicitly oppose racism, and when antiracism does not incorporate opposition to patriarchy, race and gender politics often end up being antagonistic to each other and both interests lose.

~ Kimberlé Crenshaw (1992)

Moving away from a simplistic understanding of culture

Often when organisations or services think about engaging immigrant and refugee communities, they focus on 'cultural' difference. In some cases, the word 'culture' is used as another way of saying race or ethnicity. This focus relies on a one-dimensional or simplistic understanding of what culture means.

For example, you might have heard yourself say that someone is from a different culture or cultural background, but what do you mean?

For example, are they Italian? Does that mean they only act, speak and think like Italian people do? Like all Italian people? Which Italian people?

Are they African? Africa is a big place – it's a continent of 54 official countries, 9 territories and over 1000 languages. What does describing someone as African mean to you? What does it mean to them?

It's not wrong to describe ourselves or someone else as coming from a particular background. However, it is not always very informative. Problems arise when people decide that someone's cultural background can give them a lot of information about who they are without them knowing more about them. Other problems arise when people think about culture as something that 'other people' have. We are all part of culture and yes, it's complicated.



Asking who are immigrant and refugee communities

This guide uses the term 'immigrant and refugee communities' to describe people living in Australia who were born overseas or whose parent(s) or grandparent(s) were born overseas in a predominantly non-English speaking or non-Western country.

We use the term 'immigrant and refugee' to highlight the impact of the migration and settlement process on communities.

However we recognise that not everyone who fits this description will identify as or consider themselves to be an immigrant or refugee, or will use these words to describe themselves.

We also recognise that categories like 'immigrant' and 'refugee' are loaded with many meanings. These words change and are shaped by political and social forces and cut across a whole range of policy issues and areas such as health, housing, settlement, law, justice, immigration and citizenship.

Other terms used to describe these types of communities include:

- culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)
- ethnic or ethno-specific
- overseas-born
- non-English-speaking background (NESB)

Who do you imagine when you think of immigrants or refugees? Does that image tell the whole story?

People from immigrant and refugee communities are very different across and within groups and regions. For example, immigrants and refugees can be:

- Australian citizens
- International students and their partners
- People with disabilities
- Small business owners
- Young people, children and babies
- People who speak three or four languages
- Permanent residents
- Home owners, renters and property investors
- People with mixed heritage or ethnicities
- Single, married, defacto or living in unconventional or long distance relationships
- People who are seeking asylum in Australia
- Living in rural areas
- Parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts
- From low-income, middle-class or high income backgrounds
- University graduates
- People who have just arrived in Australia
- Second and third generation immigrants
- People who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, intersex or queer
- Full-time, part-time, casual and shift workers
- People experiencing homelessness
- Christians, Muslims, Atheists, Buddhists, Sikhs, Hindus, Jews, Taoists, Agnostics and other religious persuasions
- People who have experienced trauma from conflict, war or asylum seeking
- People without any family in Australia
- Older people
- Single parents and legal guardians
- People who are full time carers for a family member
- Temporary workers and their families
- and many other categories and descriptions

Challenging myths about culture and violence

Often when we talk about culture, either in relation to or as immigrants and refugees, we focus on the differences between the way things were done overseas and the way things are done in Australia. Sometimes we talk about these differences in terms of the 'traditional' practices and beliefs that we, our parents or others were raised with, and the 'new' Australian culture we find ourselves in now.

No matter where we come from most of us have traditions in our lives and families that we cherish and continue from generation to generation. However, when we describe a whole culture as 'traditional' it can stop us from seeing culture as always changing and different for each person. Describing a culture as 'traditional' can suggest that a culture, and people born into that culture, can't or won't change. Sometimes 'traditional' becomes another way of saying 'old-fashioned' or 'less advanced'.

Australian culture is based on traditions and history that is constantly changing. Dominant Australian cultural narratives – the stories and messages that people in Australia often repeat and share – also change over time. Some Australian cultural narratives celebrate multiculturalism and difference. Others focus on our colonial history and connections.

Part of taking an intersectional approach involves seeing people's lives as multi-dimensional. A person or group cannot be explained or defined by a single category: we are more than our labels. Our lives, attitudes and experiences are shaped by many dynamic social forces and relationships across our life spans. For some immigrant and refugee people, connection to their immigrant community may be very important. For others, their immigration experience or immigrant identity may not play as big a role in their life as another factor, such as their age, gender, ability, religion or sexual identity.

Currently, very few dominant Australian narratives acknowledge the theft of Aboriginal people's land or the continuing violence committed against First Nations peoples. Very few acknowledge the historical primacy and continuity of Aboriginal cultures across the continent. Very few acknowledge that violence against women and racism is part of Australian history and present culture.

When talking about immigrant and refugee communities, some people describe a 'clash of cultures'. In fact, clashes occur within cultures. Cultures change, share and borrow from each other across time and place.

Prevention work is about changing the culture of violence – challenging the messages in our everyday lives that support violence against women and sharing messages to promote and support gender equality for everyone.

Questioning racialised representations of violence

Although violence is committed against women in all parts of society, there are differences in the way that violence is represented or talked about, depending on who committed the violence and who experienced it.

For example, when immigrant men commit violence against women or when family violence occurs in immigrant and refugee communities, discussions often focus on culturally specific attitudes as the cause of the violence (Murdolo and Quiazon, 2016).

Some forms of violence like 'honour killing', acid attacks, child brides and sex trafficking are often reported in the media in ways that reinforce the belief that men from immigrant and refugee backgrounds are more patriarchal and that women are in need of 'saving'.

Men from immigrant backgrounds are also often represented as being threatening, dangerous, untrustworthy, extremist, conservative, violent and sometimes illegal or criminal, even when they have not committed a crime. In some cases, immigrant men are described as 'hyper-masculine': more aggressive, authoritarian and domineering than Anglo-Australian men. In other cases, they are described as less masculine: as 'weaker', less independent or less powerful. In both cases, immigrant men's masculinity and potential to commit violence is racialised and contrasted with an idealised 'norm'.

Politics, world events and public debates about immigration, multiculturalism and what it means to be Australian, impact on the ways that immigrant and refugee communities are represented in relation to violence. The clearest example of this is the way that Muslim communities have been vilified as a result of misperceptions about terrorism globally.

All forms of violence against women should be prevented. However, representing immigrant communities as 'more' violent often shifts focus away from the fact that violence against women is not a problem limited to specific 'cultures'.

**...all cultures are patriarchal,
not more or less, but differently.**

~ Leti Volpp (2001)

Essential ingredients for meaningful violence prevention initiatives



I am a community
LEADER.

I am the
SOLUTION.

1. Immigrant and refugee communities have leadership and ownership of violence prevention strategies in their communities

The best way to ensure that prevention is relevant and meaningful for immigrant and refugee communities is to respect the expertise and experience of the community itself in all stages of planning, implementation and evaluation. Giving ownership and leadership to community organisations, members or groups to plan and implement prevention programs is invaluable to effective and meaningful engagement.

While the principle is simple, prioritising community ownership requires clear processes, flexibility and a long-term mindset to build strong and equitable relationships. This is as true for multicultural and ethno-specific organisations as it is for mainstream organisations and prevention programs.

Organisations commonly raise concerns about language barriers, logistical difficulties and time constraints as factors which complicate the success of involving community members. However, frequently the greatest barrier is trust. Organisations need to trust and value the expertise and abilities of community members, even if they do not yet have the specific content knowledge relating to prevention. Providing ongoing training and opportunities to build and share specific content knowledge will be an important part of mutual learning and building relationships.

2. Organisations and individuals role model gender equitable, collaborative and respectful relationships

As individuals and organisations that have made a commitment to preventing violence against women, we know that one of the clearest actions we can take is to strengthen positive, equal and respectful relationships between women and men, girls and boys, of all social backgrounds and in all contexts. This should include our professional contexts, organisational partnerships and community engagement relationships at all levels.

Organisations can start by role modelling gender equality, ensuring that women, including immigrant and refugee women, are equitably represented in decision-making roles. Organisation-wide policies and processes are powerful tools to support equitable representation and organisational change.

Equally, relationships with immigrant and refugee community members, their representative groups and organisations should be equitable, collaborative and meaningful. There are many ways to build successful relationships. The suggestions below might act as a springboard for thinking about how to develop or improve professional relationships with immigrant and refugee community members, groups and organisations.

Equitable relationships

Nurturing an equitable relationship means sharing out resources in a way that creates greater equality between partners, rather than sharing out resources equally regardless of the outcomes. It also means ensuring equitable and transparent processes at all levels of planning and decision-making. Ensuring equitable relationships with immigrant and refugee community members, groups and organisations may mean:

- recognising that each partner brings different skills that they can contribute, rather than requiring each partner to contribute identically.
- finding ways to support immigrant and refugee partners or women's groups with limited resources to participate.

- ensuring that immigrant and refugee community members, groups and organisations you engage for consultation, leadership or other services are properly remunerated for their time and expertise.
- facilitating immigrant and refugee community member participation by providing access supports such as child care, disability access, interpreters and travel reimbursement.

Collaborative relationships

Developing collaborative relationships with immigrant and refugee community members, groups and organisations will mean:

- thinking long term. Trust and understanding can take a long time to develop, so expect to put in time to see results.
- making sure everyone is on the same page.
- providing feedback to the community on the outcomes of focus groups or consultations.
- including immigrant and refugee community members, and women in particular, in decision-making.
- considering the impact on immigrant and refugee community members, groups and organisations, particularly immigrant women's organisations, of competing for funding opportunities.

Respectful relationships

Strengthening respectful relationships is one of the key actions anyone can take to prevent violence against women. In a professional context with immigrant and refugee communities, this includes:

- avoiding tokenism in your relationships, including exploiting immigrant and refugee people by using their pictures without permission on documents; conducting cursory consultations that are not acted on; and not acknowledging the contributions of smaller organisations and community members on documents and in final reports.
- building sustainability and continuity into your engagement with immigrant and refugee community members and/or organisations.

3. Immigrant and refugee women's leadership in violence prevention is centred and supported

In order to address structural gendered inequality and promote women's decision-making, violence prevention programs should prioritise women's and girls' leadership. Violence prevention programs with immigrant and refugee communities should, in particular, support and involve immigrant and refugee women and girls, and should support immigrant and refugee women's and girls' leadership. Otherwise, we risk replicating the gendered inequality that we are trying to address.

We have to be careful that, in involving men [whatever their cultural background] in men's violence prevention, we do not replicate the same structures and processes that reproduce the violence we are challenging.

~ Bob Pease (2008)

Men and boys play an important role in preventing and reducing violence against women. Together with the whole community, immigrant and refugee men and boys can challenge gender stereotypes and attitudes that condone violence against women and support positive personal identities. Men and boys can be strong advocates for identifying and improving unfair conditions that disadvantage or devalue women and women's equal rights.

For effective violence prevention, men and boys should advocate for women's rights, but they should not speak for, or instead of, women. By following and holding themselves accountable to women's leadership on issues relating to gender equality and violence against women, men can play a significant role in preventing violence as women's allies, without being 'saviours' or 'competitors'. Involving and supporting women's leadership in programs and communities is an essential and practical way that men and boys can improve structural gender equality and prevent violence against women (see Pease, 2017).



4. Violence prevention strategies focus on institutions, systems and policies

We can broadly distinguish between two different forms of gendered inequality. The first comes from people's attitudes and everyday behaviour relating to gendered norms or roles. The second comes from the material and structural differences between men's and women's rights, resources and opportunities. These two types of gendered inequality go hand in hand. They reinforce and inform each other.

For example, sexual harassment committed against immigrant and refugee women in the workplace can be driven by stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, behaviours that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women and racist attitudes that devalue immigrant and refugee women. However, it can also be driven by workplace policies that minimise women's decision-making, immigration policies which limit women's opportunities to choose another type of employment and industry regulations which allow employers to exploit immigrant and refugees on particular visas.

When we talk about ways to prevent violence against women we often focus on challenging the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that justify or support violence. In other words, we focus on the gendered norms and behaviours that reinforce gendered inequality.

Challenging stereotypes and attitudes that condone violence are essential actions to address the gendered drivers of violence against women. However, evidence suggests that structural forms of gendered inequality must also be addressed, including the unequal distribution of wealth, power and opportunities that arise from public policy and political or economic processes (Salter et al., 2015). Addressing both forms of gendered inequality together is necessary for consistent and effective prevention.



5. Intersecting forms of social inequality and disadvantage are seen as central and not additional to prevention strategies

Gendered inequality interacts and intersects with other forms of violence and discrimination in society, including, but not limited to racism, ableism, homophobia, ageism, and classism. For example, the difficulties that highly qualified immigrant women experience getting job interviews in their field are the result of simultaneous racism and sexism (Diversity Council of Australia, 2017). These are not 'layers' of discrimination, but the result of interacting and dynamic forms of discrimination that collectively impact on women's lives.

Preventing violence against women must also challenge racism...

Preventing violence against women involves preventing all forms of gender-based violence. Many immigrant and refugee women's experiences of violence and gendered inequality are interlinked with their experiences of racism and discrimination. Some examples of violence and gendered inequality against women that intersect with racism include:

- Public abuse of a woman wearing a hijab;
- Underpaying migrant women domestic helpers;
- Racially derogatory sexual harassment.

Often the relationship between violence against women and racism is not as clear or visible as in these examples. Some forms of detention and deprivation of liberty through state-based mechanisms are connected to or disproportionately experienced on the basis of race or immigration status. Discrimination and fear of racism can impact women's access to prevention programs, information, social networks, services, use of spaces and support. Discrimination also affects women's sense of belonging, feeling safe and respected within the wider community.

Challenging racial stereotypes and harmful assumptions about immigrant and refugee communities is an essential component of preventing violence against immigrant and refugee women.

...because gender is racialised and race is gendered.

The key actions to prevent violence against women focus on challenging rigid gendered stereotypes and roles. Stereotypes and expectations about gender are also framed and influenced by other social labels: gender is never the only way that a person is identified or classed in any society. Gendered expectations and perceptions of Anglo-Australian women and men may not be the same as those for non-Anglo communities living in Australia. Equally, common stereotypes about immigrant and refugee people are different depending on whether they are men or women.

For example, common stereotypes about Arab Australians don't apply equally to Arab men and women. Arab women are often stereotyped as being submissive while Arab men are often stereotyped as being domineering or controlling (Often this stereotype goes hand in hand with the assumption that because someone is Arab they are also Muslim). Similarly, some stereotypical representations of Asian people sexualise Asian women, but do not sexualise Asian men in the same way.

Approach discussions about gender with the understanding that gender is not one thing to all people. Age, life stage, ethnicity, family, religion, sexuality, ability, illness and many other life experiences impact on the ways we see gender. Create opportunities for communities to discuss gender issues specific to them and be open to learning more about their experiences.

6. Prevention programs contribute to new evidence and better outcomes

We still have a lot to learn about preventing violence in Australia and the most effective and meaningful ways to engage people from immigrant and refugee backgrounds. It is important that we document and share widely what works and what doesn't work, conduct ongoing and thoughtful evaluations of our activities and support further research alongside our violence prevention efforts. It is okay to get it wrong along the way: we can and should share our challenges as well as our successes as part of learning and improving.

By staying connected and in conversation with other people working on prevention, as well as listening to new evidence, we can continue to learn and refine the ways we engage with immigrant and refugee communities in the future.

Most of our learning will come from listening to immigrant and refugee women and their communities. Prevention programs that focus on immigrant and refugee communities must acknowledge that immigrant and refugee women are the ones who are most affected by violence, that they have the capacity to bring the benefit of their lived experience to the issues. They are the ones who will be able to determine the success or failure of a prevention strategy in their community. They should have involvement and ownership over prevention activities that are relevant to them.

For recent research relating to violence against immigrant and refugee women in Victoria and Tasmania, read Vaughan, C. et al. (2016) Promoting community-led responses to violence against immigrant and refugee women in metropolitan and regional Australia: The ASPIRE Project: Key findings and future directions.

How to frame prevention in meaningful ways for immigrant and refugee communities

1

Broaden your understanding of feminist histories, movements and advocates

Some people mistakenly assume that immigrants and refugees do not have their own histories of women's rights and gender equality activism. People have taken action to promote gender equality throughout history all over the world. We should celebrate diverse local and international role models and social movements that have fought and continue to fight for women's rights, not only in Australia but in every part of the world. In particular, we should honour Aboriginal women's activism, perspectives and example.

By reading and sharing the work of feminist women of colour and learning more about global feminist movements and histories, we can build a more accurate picture of feminism and gender equality activism.

Prevention should be framed by an understanding that 'culture' is not necessarily pitted against 'feminism' ~ Volpp (2001)

3

Think long-term

Preventing violence against women is a long-term project. Meaningful engagement means building long-term relationships with communities, respecting that change doesn't follow a set schedule, and taking responsibility for your impact on the individuals and communities that you are working with. Prevention initiatives to change attitudes and behaviour may require multiple and repeated approaches, and should be reviewed in the light of new evidence or information about best practice. Many of the issues relating to the gendered inequities experienced by immigrant and refugee communities, such as racism and discrimination, will require ongoing work and advocacy. Remember, attitudinal change and structural change must go hand in hand for effective prevention. If you are working with or are part of a community that has experienced particular disadvantage, managing community expectations and building opportunities to follow up with people in the future will be important for their safety and wellbeing. Think carefully about sustainable action during planning.

2

Frame prevention around global human rights

Framing prevention messages around human rights can help people to contextualise violence and gender inequality as a global issue and a common goal. In particular, using the language of rights and social justice can connect immigrant and refugee communities more strongly with the strategies and conversations about violence prevention and gender equality happening internationally, as well as national conversations in Australia and their countries of birth.

4

Language matters

The language of violence prevention and gender equality can be complex and alienating, particularly for people who speak a language other than English. It is important to avoid jargon and seek the expertise of immigrant and refugee women to make sure that your messages are clear, relevant and meaningful to the audience you want to reach. Focusing on the positive benefits that flow from gender equality can encourage people to take more active roles as agents and leaders of change in their families, social networks and the wider Australian community. Providing concrete examples of ways people can support and promote gender equality can also help to reinforce prevention messages.

5

Make the connections between gendered inequality and other forms of inequality

If you talk about gender inequality and ignore all the other forms of inequality that immigrant and refugee communities may be experiencing, your message will either be lost or worse, be misunderstood or seen as insincere. Equally, discussing other forms of inequality like racism or xenophobia and failing to see the differences in people's gendered experiences of the issues will also miss the mark. Understanding the intersections between and across forms of discrimination, including gendered inequality, is important to meaningful prevention.

A more complex understanding of 'culture' will lead to more effective violence prevention strategies for everyone.

How to foster a more complex understanding of culture in relation to preventing violence

1 Remember there's more to migrants

Immigrant and refugees are professionals, students, neighbours, artists, carers, and athletes. They are business owners, factory workers, engineers, bakers, doctors, teachers, and taxi drivers, as well as parents, partners and siblings. It is important to tailor programs to reach immigrant and refugee women and men as members of particular ethnic communities. But it is not the only frame of reference for meaningful engagement. Mainstream approaches that target men or women across a range of settings should always seek to reach immigrants and refugees as members of Victoria's ethnically diverse population.

3 Think about what it means to 'represent a community'

We often talk about engaging or consulting community members, community leaders or people who represent their community without giving these terms much thought. However, 'representing a community' can be quite complex. Often, immigrants and refugees are perceived to be speaking for, and on behalf of, their community or communities, whether they mean to, and whether the community agrees or not. This is particularly the case when someone is visibly from a non-Anglo or non-white background. Similarly, communities are often held accountable for the opinions and actions of an individual who happens to be from an immigrant or refugee background. Again this is often the case when a community is perceived to be identifiable through their clothes, skin-colour, language or location. No individual speaks for a whole community. Communities should not be stigmatised or stereotyped because of the actions or opinions of individuals. If you are engaging community members, take steps to ensure that your engagement is well-thought out and meaningful, and that you don't expect one person to represent a whole group. Make sure that you engage a range of diverse people within the same community, rather than expect one person to speak for all.

2 Challenge 'cultural' explanations for violence

Violence against women and gender inequality exists across all Australian communities. Some groups of women in Australia are known to be at a higher risk of experiencing gendered violence. However, there is currently no evidence that any one community, immigrant or otherwise, is more or less violent than any other. (Vaughan et al. 2015)

When violence against women occurs in immigrant and refugee communities, the cause of the violence is often connected to simplistic or unfounded assumptions about that community's 'cultural' attitudes to women or violence. Ways that women and girls experience inequality or violence may be different depending on many factors, including but not limited to their race and ethnicity. Although some specific types of gender inequality and violence are less common in Australia than in other countries, all forms of oppression are unacceptable and should be equally shocking to us.

4 Notice how often cultures can change

Talking about 'culture' in a simplistic way can lead us to overlook the structural factors and political contexts in which cultures develop. Reflect on your own relationships to culture: are you solely defined by the values of your workplace, family, suburb or heritage? Cultures are often strongly shaped by time and place and they are always changing. Moreover, although cultures can reflect a set of shared values, they do not determine any one individual's beliefs or behaviour. In order to challenge essentialist attitudes to culture, it can help to notice and discuss the ways cultures change throughout history, are shaped by external and political forces, are experienced differently by different people, and are always characterised by differences and oppositions within them.

5 Practice self-reflection

Even if we never think about it, we are all experts in culture and its complexity. Our families, workplaces, political systems, social networks and forms of expression can all be described as having their own distinct cultures and can also be seen as contributing to a wider Australian cultural identity. We are always participating in the creation of culture, whether we are reinforcing or challenging cultural values, we are never just standing outside looking in. Often a certain way of doing things, or of seeing the world becomes dominant. Being part of a dominant culture often makes that culture difficult to recognise: we tend to explain our actions, values and behaviours as normal or natural and not cultural. We rarely stop to think about why we do many everyday things one way and not another. Self-reflection helps us to remember that we are participants in culture. Self-reflection also helps us to notice when our position in a dominant culture gives us an advantage or a greater degree of privilege or power in relation to other people. Sometimes we may unknowingly take those positions of power when, for example, we assume that other people's difference makes them less capable of decision-making. However, for the most part, privilege is something we hold because of structures. For example, someone who looks and sounds Anglo-Australian will not find it harder to get a job on the basis of their race. Reflecting on the privilege our social positions give us helps us to understand the complexities of culture and cross-cultural exchange.

A complex understanding of culture challenges the idea that we can become 'culturally competent' or make programs 'culturally appropriate'.

Negotiating cultural differences is something we already do in our own lives and something we continue to learn. It's a process.

6 Pay attention to inequalities within communities

An intersectional perspective helps us to think about the ways in which people can experience privilege and oppression simultaneously and differently across different situations and settings. Being part of a community doesn't mean that we will all experience the same types of disadvantage or privilege in the same way. For example, someone who is socio-economically disadvantaged in comparison with other people in their suburb, may also be the head decision-maker in their household. Someone who is socio-economically advantaged may still be subjected to discrimination, inequality or violence on the basis of their gender. Inequality and privilege exist within and across communities in ways which can impact people's connections to communities, experiences and perspectives.

7 Be open to addressing the issues

Some people choose to approach the challenges that can arise from racism by saying that 'they don't see race', meaning that they see and treat everyone as equals. However, 'not seeing race' can mean ignoring or denying that inequalities exist for immigrant and refugee people in their daily lives. As Ghassan Hage has noted,

Racism often works by highlighting a person's difference when it is irrelevant and when they ought to be treated just like any other person. But it also works by treating racialized subjects like just any other person when their difference clearly matters. This is at the heart of the perversity of racism: it makes people visible when they want to be and need to be invisible, and it makes them invisible precisely at the point where they need to be visible and when their experience matters (Hage, 2017).

'Not seeing race' can be similar to claiming that women are already equal to men in our society, which diminishes and erases the gendered inequalities that continue to exist.

To make positive changes we must first hear and acknowledge the existence of both racism and sexism in the lived experiences and realities of immigrant and refugee women and their communities.

Prevention in practice



EQUAL LOVE and
MARRIAGE for 
immigrant and refugee
LGBTIQ people

Many prevention programs and activities aim to be as general or 'universal' as possible so that they reach the largest group of people. Programs are often set in places where most people go, use language that most people understand and include activities that most people can relate to.

However 'a one-size-fits-all' approach is unlikely to reach or include everyone. For example, school-based programs reach the majority of children, but do not reach those immigrants who arrive after school-age. Billboards and media campaigns reach many people, but may not reach some immigrants for a range of reasons: the campaigns may use unfamiliar cultural references, be physically inaccessible or be unreadable to some groups.

A holistic and truly universal approach to prevention involves challenging not only gendered inequality, but other kinds of structural inequalities, negative stereotypes and discrimination, including those based on Aboriginality, disability, class, socio-economic status, ethnicity, religion, sexual identity and refugee status.

~ Change the Story (2016)

Often when organisations have limited resources they will feel that they have to make hard choices about who they should engage. Sometimes conversations will frame marginalised groups as being 'hard to reach.' This is not just the case for immigrant and refugee communities, but also, for example, for people with disabilities and people who live in remote or rural areas.

Limited resources are a reality for many organisations. However, often groups or individuals are only 'hard to reach' because they were not considered in the planning or design of programs or services.

You will not be able to reach everyone immediately and you may feel that as an organisation you need to prioritise. However, taking an intersectional approach, organisations

can start by reviewing their current programs and processes from the perspective of marginalised groups. By bringing marginalised groups to the centre of program planning, you will identify imbalances or oversights in your current strategies, recognise opportunities to make activities accessible to new audiences and gain diverse perspectives to strengthen and guide your decision making.

Creating opportunities to involve women and men in program planning who represent the diverse interests and groups in your region is an important place to start in making sure their needs and views are heard and addressed.

When resources are limited, producing an accurate picture of the people who currently live and work in your catchment area or target group may be critical to decision making. Are you aware of all the communities that live or work in your area? Have you spoken with community leaders and groups about existing prevention initiatives or activities? Answering these questions may involve questioning your own assumptions. The latest ABS Census data is often a good place to start.

An intersectional approach... starts with diversity instead of commonality. Such an understanding may be arrived at by bringing the voices and experiences of marginalised women to the centre of analysis, rather than positioning them at the margins to be defined by their 'difference from' the universalised centre.

~ Adele Murdolo and Regina Quiazon (2016)

Tailoring initiatives to immigrant and refugee communities

Tailoring initiatives to any group requires forward planning, flexibility and consultation. There is no step by step guide. The specific consultation processes, activity plans and group formats will depend on your target group. However, it will help you to think carefully about what tailoring means for your program or activity as early as possible in your planning process. If you are working in partnership with other organisations, talk about what tailoring means to each of you and what it might involve in any given activity. Following are some tips for tailoring to help your discussions.

Always put safety first

Violence prevention work should prioritise women and their children's safety. Available evidence suggests some immigrant and refugee women experience types of violence that are less understood by mainstream services (for example, immigration-related violence and multi-perpetrator violence). A comprehensive safety plan should include consultation with a range of women leaders in the community and family violence services about safety considerations, as well as multilingual resources that have been checked for accessibility.

Partner with the experts

If you are engaging immigrant and refugee communities you are not already part of, you are unlikely to understand the specific local dynamics, histories and social connections between people. Do not assume that because you have worked with one community, you can make assumptions about a similar community in another area. Plan your program in consultation with women and men in the community, as well as immigrant women's specialist services with expertise on violence prevention, to create safe spaces, safe group discussions and meaningful prevention messages for everyone.

Don't muscle in on constructive efforts

Duplication can be good and there is plenty of room for everyone to get involved in violence prevention. Before you start though, it's worth looking around and asking who might already be working hard in this space. As well as regional partnerships led by women's health services, check with the future partners you haven't met yet (immigrant and refugee women's groups and local community members) to make sure you are building on, not bulldozing, existing work and networks.

We're even more diverse than you think

Tailoring does not mean assuming that everyone from any particular immigrant or refugee community likes, thinks and behaves the same. If you are an outsider to the political or social history of an immigrant and refugee community, the diversity within a group may not be as apparent to you as someone from the same community. Immigrant and refugee communities are as diverse as any community –

physically, politically, religiously, geographically, socio-economically, intellectually, socially, generationally, and so on. Tailoring to an immigrant or refugee community will not reach everyone in that community. Good consultation with the community will help you to identify groups within a community that you want to engage and to develop more effective programs and activities.

Have a clear purpose

There is no single 'immigrant and refugee community.' When we talk about working with an immigrant and refugee community, we often mean:

- a particular 'ethno-specific' group (eg. the Vietnamese community),
- a specific language-based group (eg. Karen speakers), or
- a group connected through visa status or immigration pathway (eg. international students).

It sounds obvious, but it's important for the success of your program to be clear about why you want to work with a particular immigrant and refugee group over another. Is it because:

- local community leaders have raised the issue?
- you or your partners have good relationships with that community and you think there will be support for the project?
- you assume this group is more violent or is less supportive of gender equality than other groups?

Make sure that your decisions are evidence-informed and based on consultation with a range of stakeholders, the most important of which are the women and men or girls and boys in the community you plan to work with. Knowing why you want to engage a community will inform how you engage them.

We are not a tick box

So you want to prioritise immigrant and refugee communities. That's great! But we are not a mutually exclusive category. Immigrants and refugees are also people with disabilities, people who identify as LGBTIQ, older people, young people, women, men and so on. Tailoring initiatives to people because they are immigrant and refugee is never your only consideration.

Don't try to be everything for everyone

It's OK to run an activity that has very limited reach or that does not reach some immigrant and refugee groups this time around. What's important is that you acknowledge the gaps, start with the principle of bringing the margins to the centre, and continually review your effectiveness and reach in future planning and evaluation.

Taking an intersectional approach doesn't mean that your activities include absolutely everyone, can overcome every obstacle and accommodate every possible situation. It means you are aware of the gaps, you are ensuring that your own work practices and policies are not creating obstacles and that you are working towards fair and equitable opportunities for everyone.

No single prevention program, campaign, initiative or organisation can reach everyone. Tailoring is about making sure that prevention messages are relevant to the group you are speaking to, creating spaces where people feel comfortable and empowered, and listening and responding to feedback.

You don't need to be expert in every immigrant and refugee community, every person's experience of disability, every experience of sexual identity, every age group, every life stage, every religious persuasion and so on. That's what specialist organisations are for! Consider commissioning specialist organisations to reach specific target groups. Set yourself realistic goals and plan alongside your partners to complement each other's activities, share useful resources and lessons learned.

Tailoring is often about learning from experience, so don't forget to invest the time and resources you need to accurately document and evaluate your processes.

How can I know that my prevention program or activity is inclusive?

The best way to know is to ask:

Have you partnered with immigrant and refugee women's groups or other specialist groups to ensure you have relevant expertise?

Have you budgeted to enable equal opportunities for active participation (eg. by providing child care, organising transport, hiring bilingual facilitators or properly briefed interpreters, choosing an appropriate venue)?

Have you taken the time to foster relationships with the women and men from immigrant and refugee communities living in your region?

Have you consulted with a range of women from the community about the ways they currently discuss gender and address the issue of violence against women in their community?

Have you established a community advisory group and do you value the contribution of its members?

Does your program enable the decision-making and leadership of immigrant and refugee women?

Are you just expecting people to turn up?

Do your evaluations include assessing or acknowledging the gaps in the reach of your program or activity?

Diverse, inclusive, equitable: what's the difference?

Diversity, inclusivity and equity may all sound like the same thing. While they are all important outcomes to strive for, they are different outcomes. An organisation can be diverse and inclusive without being equitable and it can be equitable without being inclusive or diverse.

For example, a diverse organisation might include many different people but it may not have inclusive policies which make those people feel welcome in the workplace. A workplace might actively employ a diverse group of people in service delivery or project roles, but never in leadership roles. That workplace could be described as inclusive and diverse, but not necessarily equitable. In a similar way, an organisation may treat its employees fairly and distribute resources and roles equitably, but may not have inclusive policies or include staff who reflect the diversity of those people the workplace serves.



Ensuring organisations and initiatives are diverse, inclusive and equitable

Achieving diversity, inclusivity and equity will look different in practice depending on your organisation. For example, your service may rarely engage immigrant and refugee communities. On the other hand, immigrant and refugee communities may already represent the core of your work. Regardless of your resources and capacity, building more inclusive and equitable practices into your organisation will better prepare you to engage immigrant and refugee communities in violence prevention.

Services with specialist knowledge are not exempt from ensuring that their organisations are also committed to inclusive and equitable practices and principles. For example, an ethno-specific service that does not equally represent women in leadership roles, and value women's participation will be greatly limited in its capacity to provide expertise on gender equality and prevention strategies. Similarly, a women's organisation that does not have equal representation of diverse women in leadership roles will have limited capacity to work effectively with diverse communities.

Three keys to inclusive and equitable practice are:

- Commitment
- Consultation
- Collaboration

Commitment

Successful and consistent inclusive and equitable practice requires organisation-wide support. Running an inclusive prevention program doesn't make sense and won't work in a non-inclusive and mono-cultural organisation that is not also committed to equitable roles and relationships. Building inclusive and equitable practices into your policies, procedures and workplace culture will take a significant investment of time, energy and resources: but it's easy to make a start.

Consultation

Similar to many other marginalised groups, barriers for immigrant and refugee communities are often obvious to those affected and hard to see for those who are not. Consultation is essential: this includes reviewing available literature and building equitable relationships with immigrant and refugee organisations, groups and communities in your local area. Thorough consultation involves seeking out and listening to a range of community perspectives, prioritising women's voices, and treating the contributions made by individuals and organisations fairly. Formally acknowledge their contribution, role and share in your program or work.

Consultation with the community will be more effective and meaningful if your organisation also has equitable and inclusive policies and practices in place.

Collaboration

Inclusive practice does not mean your organisation or service should have all the answers and be able to cater to every single language, situation and need. Specialist women's services, multicultural and ethno-specific services all play important and needed roles in supporting immigrant and refugee communities. Linking with these organisations to collaborate on prevention initiatives is mutually beneficial and can be essential to building capacity and reach. However, specialist services often have limited funding and organisations should expect to budget for services and formalise roles and expectations.

The focus of this guide is immigrant and refugee communities. However, immigrant and refugee communities include women, people with disabilities, people who identify as LGBT, people who live in remote or rural areas, older people, young people and so on. Inclusivity involves seeing and addressing the bigger picture: the intersecting forms of discrimination that exclude and isolate individuals.

Some signs of inclusive and equitable practices in your organisation:

- ✓ Your workplace culture doesn't support or allow 'casual' racism or sexism such as racist or sexist jokes, off-handed comments, and exclusion of people from social situations on the basis of race or gender.
- ✓ The decision-making roles in your organisation equally represent immigrant and refugee women.
- ✓ Members of your staff at all levels of your organisation reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of your local community.
- ✓ You have relationships with the multicultural, ethno-specific and women's organisations in your area and know the specialist immigrant and refugee women's organisations you can refer to for advice.
- ✓ You use qualified interpreters, rather than using children or other family members to interpret.
- ✓ Your staff have undertaken training in gender equality and cross-cultural awareness.
- ✓ Your staff regularly review practices and policies to make sure they are non-discriminatory.
- ✓ Your workplace culture challenges stereotyped, gendered and racialised representations of immigrant and refugee communities.
- ✓ Key forms, messages and documents are written in plain language and are available in a variety of languages.

Settings for action

Thinking about the way that immigrant and refugee communities relate to settings is important.

Change the Story outlines a number of key settings for primary prevention activities, which relate to the places where people, live, work, learn, meet and play. It describes these settings as 'the places where social and cultural values are produced and reproduced' (p. 38).

It is important to remember that settings are not culturally neutral. That is to say, they often produce and reproduce dominant social and cultural values and systems, which can include racist, sexist and discriminatory attitudes, policies and behaviours towards women from particular communities.

Below is a list of the key settings outlined in Change the Story alongside some issues that may affect the way immigrant and refugee communities connect and relate to them. The considerations provided are not exhaustive. They do not apply to every situation or every immigrant. As a planning activity, use the table as a template to brainstorm issues relating to settings in your region.

Considerations for immigrant and refugee inclusion in key settings

Setting/Sector	Considerations relating to immigrant and refugee communities
Education and care settings for children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigration requirements make it more likely for immigrants to arrive and settle in Australia after school age. Young people in education settings may be negotiating language barriers, family priorities, intergenerational differences and experiences of racism and discrimination.
Universities, TAFEs and other tertiary education institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International students' visa requirements may restrict their access to some services and opportunities.
Workplaces, corporations and employee organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa regulations, available employment opportunities and family responsibilities can lead to immigrants and refugees working unconventional hours, in casual or insecure employment. Immigrant and refugees, and particularly women, may disproportionately occupy positions with little decision-making power or authority. Employment and advancement opportunities in Australia often discriminate on the basis of gender and ethnicity.
Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear processes around obtaining consent to use or reproduce artworks, images or recordings made by or of immigrant communities will ensure participant safety and reduce the risk of exploitative or tokenistic practices.
Sports, recreation, social and leisure spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports in which immigrant and refugees are more actively involved are sometimes less resourced or promoted than mainstream sports and may be less accessible to women and girls. Some social, sporting and leisure spaces are less likely to be relevant or attractive to some immigrant and refugee groups and may be noticeably gendered spaces (for example, venues that serve alcohol, venues that are male dominated).
Health, family and community services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigrant and refugee communities face systemic barriers in accessing mainstream health services including language barriers, difficulty navigating the Australian health system, financial issues and visa restrictions to access. Some visas restrict free access to health, family and community services.
Faith-based contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faith settings are complex and diverse and take different approaches to women's rights even within the same faith community. A good understanding of the complexities and politics of the faith community is needed before embarking on a prevention project. Faith leaders must be led by and accountable to feminist approaches, feminist faith organisations and women's leadership to challenge gender stereotypes and roles within faith-based settings. Very few communities are mono-religious. Not all members of an ethnic community follow religious teachings.
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainstream media rarely caters to non-English speakers or reports international news that may be of significance to immigrant and refugee communities, unless it has direct relevance to Australia. Some media reporting represents immigrants and refugees negatively and is unlikely to be seen as a trustworthy or objective source of information. Ethnic and multilingual media provide important opportunities for engagement with immigrant and refugee communities.
Popular culture, advertising and entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popular Australian media and entertainment has been known to misrepresent and stereotype immigrant and refugee communities. Media representations of immigrant and refugee women and their communities are often based on racist and sexist stereotypes. Violence prevention programs should challenge such stereotypes and create new, more diverse representations.
Public spaces, transport, infrastructure and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some immigrant and refugees, and particularly women, experience faith-based, racially-based and gendered violence in public spaces, including public transport. Some immigrant and refugee communities may not perceive public spaces as safe.
Legal, justice and corrections contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigrant and refugee people in these settings may experience barriers including language barriers, difficulty navigating the legal system, visa restrictions, fears around deportation and lack of social networks or support. Some immigrants and refugees may have experienced corruption or inequality in their countries of origin and do not trust legal or justice systems or processes. Immigrant and refugee people have experienced racism in the justice system and may not trust the system to treat them fairly.

Proven and promising techniques

As Change the Story notes, there is still a lot to learn about precisely what types of prevention are most effective. This is an important reason for building strong evaluation and reporting practices into your work.

Several techniques have been either proven or show promise as effective models for prevention strategies:

- Direct participation programs
- Community mobilisation and strengthening
- Organisational development
- Communications and social marketing
- Community-based advocacy

Change the Story provides an overview of these techniques, including effective or promising practices and less effective or harmful practices. On the following page we have listed some additional considerations for engaging immigrant and refugee communities. Please read them in conjunction with Change the Story. Considerations provided are not exhaustive. They do not apply to every situation or every immigrant community. However, the leadership of immigrant and refugee women should be an integral part of all programs and activities.

As a planning activity, use these suggestions as a start to brainstorm specific issues relating to the implementation of techniques in your region.

Direct participation programs

- Acknowledge, value and financially compensate the work of ethno-specific and multicultural women's organisations who connect you with communities.
- Include quality training, debriefing, professional development opportunities and support for educators and program facilitators.
- Whenever possible, use facilitators who share the group's language and cultural background.
- Allocate additional time and resources for sessions where an interpreter will be used, including time to properly brief and debrief the interpreters. Key messages should be translated in the group's preferred language or written in plain-English to support participants who are less confident speaking English.
- Employ a complex approach to culture and acknowledge immigrant and refugee communities' intersecting experiences of structural disadvantage.
- Allocate planning and resources to address barriers to participation including child care, transport, venue location and access issues.



Communications and social marketing

- If you are promoting services to immigrant and refugee communities, ensure that those services can adequately and appropriately respond to immigrant and refugee needs and be clear about the services they offer. For example, telephone a service to check how they work with non-English speakers, before you recommend it to a non-English speaker.
- Research the appropriate social media platforms to reach diverse immigrant and refugee communities.
- When creating campaigns, consider whether they challenge or reinforce racial stereotypes as well as gender stereotypes and blaming attitudes.

Community mobilisation and strengthening

- Always prioritise immigrant and refugee women's leadership, ownership of and involvement in the project.
- Engage key organisations, recognised community leaders and diverse community members at every stage of planning, implementation and evaluation.
- Employ a complex approach to culture which recognises and addresses the diversity within communities.
- Build and uphold a shared understanding and consistent messages about gender equality and preventing violence against women among community leaders and decision-makers.
- Ensure marginalised community members and organisations are heard and have opportunities for equitable decision-making.
- Engage multicultural and ethno-specific women's health organisations for expert advice.
- Take measures to manage the community's expectations, to monitor and evaluate project implementation and to ensure project outcomes are sustainable and remain accountable to the community, in particular women in the community.

Organisational development

- Promote anti-discrimination of all types in your organisation, including developing and reviewing anti-discriminatory policies and practices.
- Build an intersectional and inclusive approach into organisational prevention plans.

Advocacy and use of champions

- Provide intersectional training and ongoing professional support to champions and advocates to ensure they are well briefed and confident to share appropriate messages.
- Ensure a balanced representation of immigrant and refugee women and men as champions and/or advocates and who are representative of and respected within targeted communities. Try to seek out and nurture champions with different leadership styles including those that exercise quieter and less recognised forms of influence.
- Lead and support advocacy campaigns that seek to influence the structural drivers of violence against immigrant and refugee women and prompt systemic change, such as advocating for improvements to immigration policy and employment discrimination.
- Facilitate opportunities and provide resources for immigrant and refugee women to network and advocate collectively, particularly on issues or in settings where they are underrepresented, such as in male-dominated workplaces and organisations.
- Ensure that champions and their messages are both accountable to and supported by the communities or groups that they speak for or about. Provide opportunities for community feedback and for individual debriefing and support for advocates in their role.

Prevention will require a 'multifaceted and sustained approach involving multiple techniques across settings' (Change the Story, p. 41). One approach will not work for the whole population.

Looking intersectionally at the essential actions to reduce the gendered drivers of violence against immigrant and refugee women

Taking an intersectional approach should shape the way that we undertake the essential actions to reduce the gendered drivers of violence against immigrant and refugee women. Change the Story provides an important national framework for action, including five essential actions. Use the examples below to start your thinking about ways in which prevention strategies and key prevention messages can be developed to include diverse women's experiences and voices and to focus on transforming systems that support violence against women.



Challenge condoning of violence against immigrant and refugee women

Violence against immigrant and refugee women occurs in many contexts. Prevention initiatives often focus on intimate partner violence, because it is known to be the most prevalent form of violence against women. However, other types of violence that immigrant and refugee women experience are not always perceived as 'violence against women.'

Women's experiences of violence in detention or in prison, sexual harassment and other violence against women in the workplace, institutional violence against immigrant and refugee women with disabilities, violence against immigrant and refugee women who identify as LGBT and racially based violence against women are all examples of violence against women that should be challenged as part of prevention.

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

When we look at indicators for gender inequality and racial inequality in Australia, immigrant and refugee women often experience greater levels of inequality in comparison with both non-immigrant women and immigrant men.

For example in 2015, if ASX directors were 100 people, approximately: 64 would be Anglo-Celtic men; 28 would be immigrant or refugee men; six would be Anglo-Celtic women; and two would be immigrant or refugee women

Promoting immigrant and refugee women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships means acknowledging the interconnecting forms of inequality impacting on immigrant and refugee women's lives and opportunities.

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

Stereotypes about immigrant and refugee people are different depending on their gender: they are a combination of both gendered and racialised or 'cultural' stereotypes. For example, some immigrant men are depicted as having qualities that are 'hyper-masculine' compared to Anglo- Australian men while others are

described as less 'masculine' than an idealised and imaginary 'norm'. Immigrant women too are often either portrayed as 'hypersexualised' or in need of 'saving' compared to Anglo-Australian women.

Fostering positive personal identities of people from immigrant and refugee backgrounds means encouraging and supporting children, young people and adults to reject rigid stereotypes about gender and race within their own sphere of influence. Challenging sexist and racist stereotypes about immigrant and refugee women should be central to the task of preventing all forms of gender-based violence.

Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between immigrant and refugee women and men, girls and boys

For many immigrants and refugees, gender relations and norms are significantly impacted by migration and settlement. Changes in financial circumstances and available employment, for example, can lead to shifts in established gender roles in families. Intergenerational conflict in immigrant and refugee communities can also be connected to experiences and expectations around settlement. Actions to promote positive, equal and respectful relationships among people of all ages and life stages should consider the impact of migration and settlement on family, social and professional relationships, including the impacts of racism and discrimination. It is important to challenge 'cultural arguments' or justifications for attitudes that disrespect women and girls or beliefs that men and women are naturally in conflict or opposition to one another.

Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life

Promoting and expecting gender equality for everyone including immigrant and refugee women means supporting both social and structural change. In addition to challenging attitudes in our public and private lives that are disrespectful to immigrant and refugee women, it is important to create and advocate for policies and practices that encourage and actively support immigrant women's social, economic and political participation and leadership.

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Engaging Muslim communities

Contact the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights or see their website for resources: www.ausmuslimwomenscentre.org.au

About us

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) is a national, community-based organisation run by and for women from immigrant and refugee communities. MCWH works together with immigrant and refugee communities, community organisations, health practitioners, employers and governments to build and share knowledge, achieve equity and improve health and wellbeing for immigrant and refugee women and their communities.

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Suite 207, Level 2, Carringbush Building, 134 Cambridge Street, Collingwood VIC 3066

Telephone (03) 9418 0999 or FREE CALL 1800 656 421

ABN 48 188 616 970

www.mcwh.com.au

reception@mcwh.com.au



