

fact sheet #2. WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

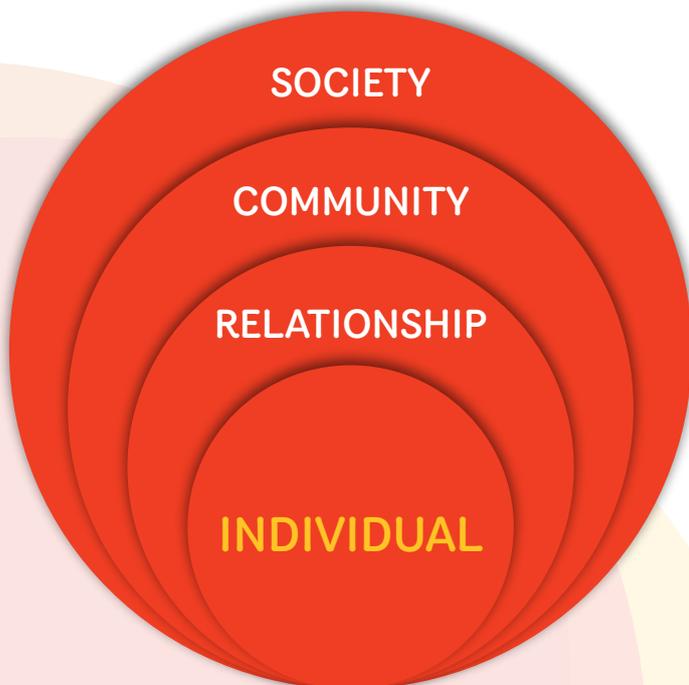


Violence against women is never caused, invited or deserved by the victim. Everyone has the right to live safe and free from violence, regardless of what they say or do.

Research shows that violence against women occurs in all socio-economic, age and cultural groups and locations in Australia.

The diagram shown here explains that there are many complex and interlinked factors that cause and contribute to violence against women. If we want to reduce violence against women we must address the issues at all of these levels.

THE ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF VIOLENCE



This is called the Ecological Model of Violence and was developed by the World Health Organisation. There is more information about this model in your recommended reading list

INDIVIDUAL

Strategies aim to develop and change the skills, attitudes and behaviours of individuals through information, support and training. Factors can, but don't necessarily include exposure to violence as a child, alcohol and drug abuse and poor education.

RELATIONSHIP

Strategies aim to influence close interpersonal relationships with partners, family, and friends. Factors include attitudes and behaviours that tolerate and perpetuate violence against women.

COMMUNITY

Strategies aim to influence environments such as groups, organisations and social settings, through policy, changing attitudes and providing training and skills development. Factors include isolation, unemployment and poverty.

SOCIETAL

Strategies aim to influence and change institutions, systems and social and cultural norms through media, legislation and opportunities. Factors may include narrow gender roles, inequalities and acceptance of violence.

Remember: None of these things alone justifies or causes violence against women. It is caused by a complex interaction of many factors.



1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)

A free 24 hour national domestic and family violence and sexual assault counselling service for people who have experienced violence, and for workers supporting them.

GENDER INEQUALITY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Gender equality is the belief that men and women have equal value in our society and therefore deserve the same rights, choices and opportunities. While Australia is making progress in advancing gender equality, many women still experience fewer opportunities, poorer outcomes and more restricted choices than men.

The relationship between gender inequality and violence against women is complex, as gender inequality is both a cause and result of violence against women. While progressing gender equality will reduce violence against women in the future, violence and abuse also act as a barrier to achieving gender equality as it has serious impacts on women's health and wellbeing.

Even more complex is the fact that some women experience multiple inequalities, such as those based on culture, ethnicity, age, sexuality and disability. For example, immigrant and refugee women may be more likely to experience violence but less likely to report it if they do not have access to relevant information, or fear being deported.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Draw the diagram on the first page onto a whiteboard or butcher's paper.

Make a list of all of the issues that might influence violence against women at the individual, family, community and society levels. On one side list the things that contribute to violence against women and on the other side, list the things that protect against it.

Discuss what can be done at a community level to eliminate the things that cause violence against women and encourage the things that protect against it.

RECOMMENDED READING



Title World Report on Violence and Health (2002)
Author World Health Organisation (WHO)
Link www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report



Title Gender Awareness Toolkit
Author Amnesty International
Link www.amnesty.org/en/womens-rights/activist-toolkit



Title Preventing Violence Against Women in Australia: Research Summary (2011)
Author The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth)
Link www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/Freedom-from-violence/



Title GenderWorks Toolkit: We're Stronger Together
Author Oxfam UK
Link www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/ukpoverty/genderworks



Title We Are Equals
Author Equals USA
Link www.wearequals.org



This is 2 in a series of 15 fact sheets to help communities stop violence against women before it happens. Download the full set at www.nrwn.org.au