

fact sheet #6.

# RAISING AWARENESS AND CHANGING ATTITUDES?

Even though almost all Australians recognise that the physical and sexual assault of women is wrong, some still have attitudes and beliefs that tolerate and promote violence against women. For example, in a 2009 survey on attitudes to violence against women:

- Around 1 in 6 people believed that a woman is partly responsible for being raped if she is drunk or drug affected<sup>1</sup>.
- 34% of people believed that 'rape results from men being unable to control their need for sex'<sup>2</sup>.
- 3% of people said that 'women often say no when they mean yes'<sup>3</sup>.
- More than half of all people believed that a woman could leave a violent relationship if she wanted to<sup>4</sup>.

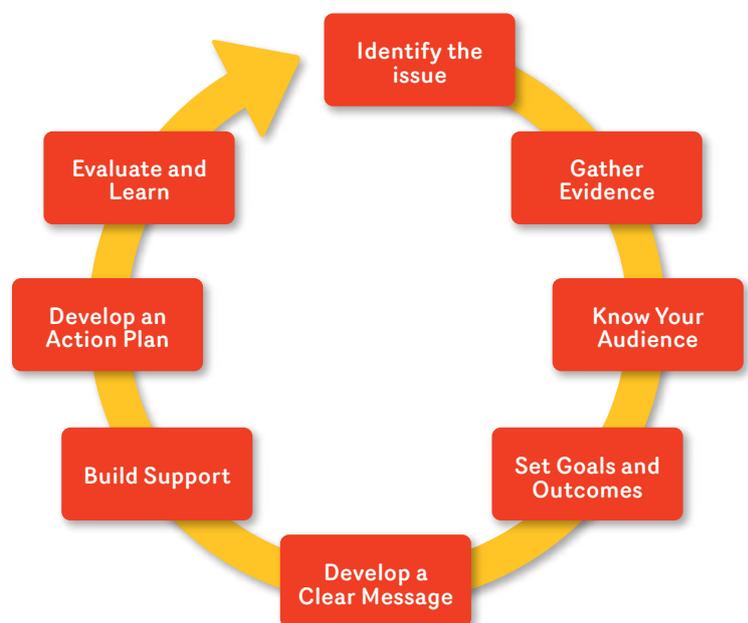
To effectively change attitudes and behaviours like these, primary prevention initiatives need to inform people about the facts of violence against women and give them the skills to change and adopt new attitudes and beliefs.

Evidence has shown that raising awareness about violence against women by itself is not always enough to make people change their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Effective and long-term social change requires engaging communities and fostering local activism and advocacy.

Use a strengths based approach! Focusing on the benefits of non-violence and gender equality can sometimes be more effective than 'scare campaigns' about violence.

You can use this advocacy planning cycle to help raise awareness about violence against women in your community.

## ADVOCACY PLANNING CYCLE



<sup>1</sup><sup>2</sup><sup>3</sup><sup>4</sup> VicHealth: National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey, 2009



**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.

# ADVOCACY:

The act of supporting or arguing in favour of something, such as a cause, idea, or policy.

## CASE STUDY: SUMMER OF RESPECT

In 2011, members of the Women's Services ACT network decided to combine all of their community awareness events and initiatives into a single, summer long campaign to reduce and prevent violence against women. The Summer of Respect campaign started with Reclaim the Night in October 2011 and finished on International Women's Day in March 2012. The aim of the campaign was to create a sustained conversation in the local community about sexual violence and its impact.

Throughout the Summer of Respect campaign there were lots of opportunities for the public to engage in activities, issues, and conversations around sexual violence and respectful relationships. This included a social media campaign targeting young people. By pooling the time and resources of a number of different organisations and creating a strong, consistent and sustained advocacy message, members of the ACT Women's Services Network were able to increase the scope and visibility of their campaign.

## RECOMMENDED READING



**Title** Advocacy Fact Sheets  
**Author** Our Community  
**Link** [www.ourcommunity.com.au/advocacy](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/advocacy)



**Title** SASA! An Activist Kit for Preventing Violence Against Women and HIV  
**Author** Raising Voices (Uganda)  
**Link** [www.raisingvoices.org/sasa/kit\\_download.php](http://www.raisingvoices.org/sasa/kit_download.php)



**Title** INSTIGATE! – An Online Toolkit for Community Mobilisation  
**Author** Transforming Communities (USA)  
**Link** <http://tc.clientrabbit.com/files/resources/instigate/welcome.html>



**Title** Points of Departure: Advocacy Toolkit for Immigrant and Refugee Women  
**Author** The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health  
**Link** [www.mcwh.com.au/leadership/resources.php](http://www.mcwh.com.au/leadership/resources.php)



**Title** National Survey on Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women (2009)  
**Author** Victorian Health Promotion Association (VicHealth)  
**Link** [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/Freedom-from-violence](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/Freedom-from-violence)



This is 6 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](http://www.nrwn.org.au)