CHANGE the STORY

A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia.
Presentation overview

1. Background and context: why prevention?
2. Development of the new national framework
3. Change the Story: overview and explanation
3. Key messages
4. Companion tools and resources
Project partners

Our Watch
- National NGO focusing on prevention of violence against women
- Driving nationwide change in the structures, norms, cultures and attitudes that underpin violence against women
- Policy advocacy and government engagement, media, communications and campaigns, support to practitioners
- ‘Backbone organisation’, providing cross-sector support and coordination

ANROWS
- National research organisation. Builds, translates and leads uptake of evidence

VicHealth
- Health promotion through research, campaigns and advice to government
- Leadership in primary prevention of violence against women for over a decade
- Developed first prevention framework (2007)
Violence against women: prevention is an obligation

• Prevalent but preventable
• Human rights violation – governments have a prevention obligation under international law
• Serious and long-term impacts on women and children’s lives
• Significant social and economic costs
• Barrier to achieving gender equality
Prevention as part of an integrated approach

Response
Supporting victims/survivors and holding perpetrators to account

Early intervention
Initiatives with specific groups identified as at risk to ‘change the trajectory’

Prevention
Whole population initiatives to stop violence from happening in the first place
Need for an increased and dedicated focus on prevention

• Responses to violence against women have improved, increasing reporting to police and services, support for victims and accountability of perpetrators

• But prevalence is not changing – need to ‘turn off the tap’ and prevent future violence before it starts

• To do this, primary prevention strategies are necessary (as a complement rather than a replacement for response and early intervention efforts)
Prevention as a conceptual approach

- Violence against women as a social problem
- Identify the underlying drivers of violence, across the socio-ecological model
- Directly address these drivers, and align efforts with the significance of each
- Aim is social transformation – change the socio-cultural conditions and power structures that create the context for this violence
- Distinct from an individualistic approach
Change the story:

a shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children
Origins and purpose

• Supported by *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*

• A guide or national ‘roadmap’ for prevention policy and practice

• An integrated, evidence-informed approach, for coordinated action across jurisdictions and sectors

• A means of moving beyond isolated small-scale initiatives to a comprehensive whole population approach

• Innovative: no other country has a national prevention framework
Development

• Joint project: Our Watch, ANROWS, VicHealth
• National Technical Advisory Group
• NGO driven and owned, but governments engaged and consulted
• Extensive research (reviews of existing literature and evidence, and new papers commissioned)
• Substantial stakeholder engagement and involvement
  – Consultations in every jurisdiction
  – National forum for peak groups and national orgs
  – Significant stakeholder review and feedback on drafts
• Peer review (research and practitioner)
• Political engagement
• Communications strategy
Structure

• **Element 1**: Explanatory model of violence – identifies drivers and reinforcing factors
• **Element 2**: Ten actions aligned with these
• **Element 3**: Techniques, approaches, strategies
• **Element 4**: Necessary supporting infrastructure
• **Element 5**: Stakeholder roles & responsibilities
• **Element 6**: Stages of action
Element 1: Explanatory model

• Nuanced model – gendered factors are central, but other factors acknowledged and included
  – Gender inequality is the underlying social context, or necessary condition, but this always intersects with other inequalities
  – Key drivers are gendered, but other factors are also relevant – they reinforce the gendered drivers to increase the probability, frequency or severity of violence against women in some circumstances
While no single ‘cause’ of violence against women, current evidence tells us the social context of deeply ingrained gender inequality is significant.

‘Intersectional’ understanding of the relationship between gender inequality and other social inequalities
Gender inequality expressed through structures, norms and practices at different levels of society
Gendered drivers

Particular expressions of gender inequality consistently predict higher rates of violence against women:

1. Condoning of violence against women
2. Men’s control of decision-making and limits to women’s independence in public and private life
3. Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity
4. Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women.

Reinforcing factors

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).

Higher probability of violence against women
Element 2: Essential and supporting actions

**Essential actions to address the gendered drivers of violence against women**

1. Challenge condoning of violence against women
2. Promote women’s independence and decision-making in public life and relationships
3. Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles
4. Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys
5. Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.

**Supporting actions to address the reinforcing factors**

6. Challenge the normalisation of violence as an expression of masculinity or male dominance
7. Prevent exposure to violence and support those affected to reduce its consequences
8. Address the intersections between social norms relating to alcohol and gender
9. Reduce backlash by engaging men and boys in gender equality, building relationship skills and social connections
10. Promote broader social equality and address structural discrimination and disadvantage.

Lower probability of violence against women
Element 3: Approach, settings, techniques

Approach and principles

• Reaching everyone, with mutually reinforcing efforts
• Tailoring to context
• Intensive effort with some groups
• Working across the life course
• ‘Gender transformative’ approach

Multiple settings for action

(incl. schools, early childhood, health and community services, workplaces, organisations, sports, media, popular culture)
What does prevention look like? Example techniques:

- **Policy and institutional change** (to support and resource prevention work but also to embed gender equality more broadly)
- **Participatory programs** to challenge gender stereotypes and discrimination, promote respectful, equal relationships and gender equality (e.g. with young people in schools, or with new parents)
- **Work to change organisational cultures and practices** (e.g. in workplaces, sports clubs)
- **Community-led initiatives** to empower women, or engage men in challenging harmful constructions of masculinity and promoting non-violence and gender equality
- **Public communications/social marketing campaigns.**
- **Engagement of media/journalists** (for better reporting of violence and promotion of gender equitable norms)
- **Civil society advocacy** to build momentum, capacity and leadership
Element 4: A prevention infrastructure

1. Mechanisms for coordination and quality assurance
2. An expert workforce
3. Political, sector and civil society leadership
4. Policy and legislative reform
5. Shared monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks
Element 5: Stakeholder roles

• Primary responsibility is with government, but everyone must play a part
• Need mutually reinforcing strategies at all levels of the social ecology, in multiple settings where people live, work and play
• Partnerships and collaboration essential

- COAG
- Commonwealth, state, territory and local governments
- Those working in key settings and sectors
- Those working on other social issues – partnerships particularly important to address intersections and reinforcing factors
- Our Watch
Element 6: Stages of action

• We don’t have to do it all at once! Generational change
• Short, medium and long-term actions and envisaged outcomes
• First three years: embed good existing strategies and establish infrastructure for ongoing, sustainable action
• The Framework is just a document: endorsement, advocacy and use by multiple stakeholders is what will bring it alive
Existing resources and ongoing work

- The Framework
- Supporting documents:
  - *Foundations 1*: Detailed background research
  - *Foundations 2*: Think pieces, consultation report, issues/implications
- Video
- Infographic poster
- Drivers and actions: four page summary

Being developed in 2016:
- Implementation and evaluation guide (practical ‘how-to’ guide)
- Guide to prevention monitoring
- Nationwide training / capacity building strategy
- Guide to preventing violence against Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women
Key messages

- Violence against women is a complex social problem, but one that can be prevented.
- As we’ve seen with other major social changes (e.g. smoking, seatbelts, marriage equality), we need multi-level leadership and change across legislation, policy, communities and individuals, and changing social norms about these issues is critical.
- *Change the story* is the first of its kind; it’s the first time any country in the world has outlined a consistent and integrated national approach to prevent violence.
- We now know what it will take to end violence against women in Australia; this new shared framework shows us how.
Further information:

Download *Change the Story* and all associated resources:

www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do-(1)/National-Primary-Prevention-Framework

The framework partners encourage the wide distribution of these resources, and the use and reproduction of content, images and diagrams (with source acknowledged)

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