

COMMUNITY
RESPECT
EQUALITY &

#RespectRules #ViolenceIsNEVEROk



2017 STRATEGIC
ACTION PLAN

for Family Violence
Prevention in Geraldton

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Introduction

As a provider of family violence and sexual assault victim support services, Desert Blue Connect have identified that Geraldton needs to start working towards prevention of family violence, rather than solely providing services to victims after family violence occurs.

The release of the National Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022 put an unprecedented emphasis on prevention, as well as intervention and service response.

Funded under the National Plan, the Community, Respect and Equality Strategic Action Plan for Family Violence Prevention in Geraldton is a project which aims to inspire, innovate and connect community leaders, organisations and government to work together on creative and sustainable strategies for the prevention of violence in our local community.

The first of its kind in the Western Australia, this Plan provides a sound evidence based foundation from which the community can start a unified journey to challenging and saying no to family violence.

Executive summary

Funded by the Department of Social Services, the Community, Respect and Equality Strategic Action Plan for Family Violence Prevention in Geraldton (the Plan) is the first step in the long journey of social change required to reduce the rate of family violence experienced in our community.

The Plan follows the framework set out in Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia (Our WATCH, ANROWS & Vic Health, 2015). This key document, produced by Our WATCH, VicHealth and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) provides an understanding of the drivers of violence against women and how these can be challenged to work towards changing accepted social norms to prevent violence from occurring.

The gendered drivers identified in Change the Story are:

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

In developing the Plan, the project team has generated engagement through a lengthy stakeholder consultation process that ensured the framework was applied in a way that takes into account the unique context of Geraldton as a community. A Reference Group was set up to provide leadership for the project with representation from across community sectors.

The Plan is made up of three phases that build up to the consistent whole of community approach required to affect lasting change to the accepted social norms that enable the prevalence of family violence:

Phase 1: 2017 – 2018 – Developing Knowledge and Awareness

Phase 1 of the plan has a focus on strengthening engagement across community sectors to develop knowledge and awareness of what family violence is and how it can be prevented.



Phase 2: 2019 – 2020 – Building on the Foundations

Phase 2 focuses on implementation of direct participation programs that deepen the knowledge and capacity of community members and organisations including:

- Bystander programs
- Healthy and respectful relationships programs delivered across community sectors
- Emotional wellbeing programs
- Shared parenting programs
- Anti-bullying programs
- Workplace programs
- Women's empowerment initiatives

Phase 3: 2021 onwards – Consistent Whole of Community / Whole of Organisation Engagement

Phase 3 sees the roll out of whole of organisation initiatives across community sectors. It is this whole of community engagement and acceptance that everyone has a responsibility to act against family violence that will have the biggest impact in reducing the level of family violence in our community.

The project

The Community, Respect and Equality: Strategic Action Plan for Family Violence Prevention in Geraldton is the first community based plan developed in Western Australia using the Change the Story shared framework. It is the very first step in the long term journey to challenging and changing the entrenched attitudes and social norms that exist across all socio-ecological levels (see Figure 2 on page 10) driving the alarmingly high level of family violence experienced in our community.

Family violence affects the whole community and requires a whole of community response that involves individuals and organisations across all sectors of the community, not just action by service providers. It is preventable, but there is no quick fix. Prevention of family violence requires change to intergenerational beliefs and social behaviours that are entrenched in our culture, communities and daily lives. It is a long term undertaking that requires sustained, unified effort by the whole community into the future.

Funding was received from the Department of Social Services to develop the Plan. Supporting networks, including a Reference Group, were established as part of the project to enable the implementation and continuation as a community driven initiative beyond the initial funding period.

Outcome

The Community, Respect and Equality Project seeks to make Geraldton a cohesive community where:

- Violence in all forms is unacceptable
- Organisations are non-discriminatory and gender equitable
- Where relationships are equal, healthy and respectful
- The prevalence of family violence is reduced



This will be achieved through:

- Promotion of non-violent and non-discriminatory attitudes and social norms
- Education of what constitutes family violence
- Development of safe, inclusive and gender-equitable workplaces, community and sporting organisations
- Promotion of healthy and respectful relationships by facilitating learning and awareness opportunities

Our approach to prevention of family violence and violence against women

Western Australia's Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022 defines family and domestic violence to be behaviour which results in physical, sexual and/or psychological damage, forced social isolation, economic deprivation, or behaviour which causes the victim to live in fear (Department for Child Protection & Family Support [DCPFS], 2013).

Family violence is a broader term than domestic violence (or relationship violence), as it refers not only to violence experienced in an intimate relationship, but also within the broader context of family, including extended family, kinship and community networks. It includes elder abuse, child abuse and adolescent abuse of parents as well as intimate partner violence (Our WATCH et al., 2015).

Change the Story: a shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia provides the framework and approach on which this plan is based.

Violence against women refers to any act of gender based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public and private life (Our WATCH et al., 2015).

The Community, Respect and Equality Reference Group has chosen to use the term family violence, as a broader term, whilst acknowledging that it is women who overwhelmingly experience violence in domestic and family situations more frequently than men. As such, for the purposes of this document, the term family violence includes violence against women.

It is acknowledged that there are non-gendered aspects of family violence that are not addressed in this Plan. There are also aspects of violence against women (such as sexual harassment in the workplace or in public) that are not included in the definition of family violence but are seen as part of the social context of inequality that drives family violence and are therefore included in the scope of this Plan.

The term family violence will be used throughout the document. The terms violence against women and gender based violence will be used in specific reference to the Change the Story Framework.

Community context

Geraldton is the major regional centre of the Midwest of Western Australia. It has a diversified economy and is well serviced. Geraldton is within easy driving distance to Perth, being just over 400km north of the State capital. Geraldton has a diverse population of just under 40,000 people with 9.7 percent identifying as Aboriginal and 23.5 percent born overseas (City of Greater Geraldton, 2017).



Family violence in Geraldton and surrounding communities is a significant problem. Each month, the Midwest - Gascoyne Police Family and Domestic Violence Response Team attend an average of 234 Family Violence incidents a month for a total of 2819 incidents for the 2016/17 financial year (Department of Communities, 2017). These figures are amongst the highest in the state, with the Kimberley the only region in the state with a significantly higher per capita reporting of family violence (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). According to the ABS Personal Safety Survey 2012 (2013), 80% of women who experience violence from a current partner do not contact Police. When this low level of reporting is taken into account, the estimated number of family violence incidents in the region is closer to 14,000 per year. As the reporting level is known to be so low, one of the initial priorities of this Plan is to undertake detailed surveys to provide a clearer understanding of the level of family violence experienced and reported on a local level. However, even without this detailed, local level picture, the need to start working towards the prevention of family violence, rather than continuing to focus solely on service responses, is clear.

Alignment with National and State plans

The National Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and Their Children 2010-2022 sets out a unified national approach which aims to see a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children (Council of Australian Governments [COAG], 2010).

The six outcomes of the plan are:

1. Communities are safe and free from violence
2. Relationships are respectful
3. Indigenous communities are strengthened
4. Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence
5. Justice responses are effective
6. Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account

The National Plan is delivered through four, three year actions plans, all of which address the six outcomes above whilst focusing as follows:

- First Action Plan: 2010-2013 Building a Strong Foundation
- Second Action Plan: 2013 – 2016 Moving Ahead
- Third Action Plan: 2016-2019 Promising Results
- Fourth Action Plan: 2019-2022 Turning the Corner

The First Action Plan: Building a Strong Foundation saw the establishment of Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), Our WATCH and 1800RESPECT to develop a solid knowledge base and support and lead the establishment of prevention activities and programs across the country.

The Second Action Plan: Moving Ahead, had five priority areas including 'Driving whole of community action to prevent violence' under which this project was funded.



The Third Action Plan: Promising Results continues to focus on prevention and early intervention and includes the following actions that are directly aligned with this project:

- 1.1 Drive nationwide change in the culture behaviours and attitudes that lead to violence against women and their children
- 1.2 Support local communities to take effective action to reduce violence against women and their children
- 1.3 Support schools and teachers to deliver age-appropriate and evidence-based respectful relationships education to all school children covering sexual violence, gender equality issues and a range of other relationship issues and tailored to vulnerable cohorts
- 1.4 Increase men's involvement in gender equality and reducing violence, including through the use of influencers and role models
- 1.5 Embed gender equality in workplace culture and increase women's workforce participation and economic security

The Fourth Action Plan: Turning the Corner is due to be released in 2019.

Western Australia's Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022 (DCPFS, 2013) is aligned with the National plan as follows:

National Plan Outcomes	State Plan Outcomes
Communities are safe and free from violence	Primary Prevention and Early Intervention Individual attitudes and behaviours within the community reflect that family and domestic violence in any form is not acceptable
Relationships are respectful	
Indigenous communities are strengthened	Safety for Victims Adult and child victims are safe and kept free from harm through timely and accessible services
Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence	
Justice responses are effective	Accountability for perpetrators Perpetrators are held accountable for their actions and are actively supported to cease their violent behaviour
Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account	



The outcome of the Plan aligns with the following outcomes of the National and State Plans as shown below:

National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children 2010 -2022	Western Australia's Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022	Strategic Action Plan for Family Violence Prevention in Geraldton 2017-2021
Outcomes	Outcomes	Outcome
1 – Communities are safe and free from violence	1: Prevention & Early Intervention Individual Attitudes and behaviours within the community reflect that family violence in any form is not acceptable	Geraldton is a cohesive community in which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence in all forms is unacceptable • Organisations are non-discriminatory and gender equitable • Relationships are equal, healthy and respectful • The prevalence of family violence is reduced
2 – Relationships are respectful		

Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia.

Our WATCH, in conjunction with ANROWS and VicHealth, has developed *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia* to address the alarming rates of violence against women in Australia (2013). It notes that violence against women and their children is not inevitable but rather is the product of complex and interrelated social and environmental factors that can be challenged and modified. Violence against women is preventable.

Change the Story presents the evidence and a conceptual approach for preventing violence against women and their children in Australia. It is a framework for a shared understanding and collaborative action, with six interrelated elements, all of which need to be in place to achieve this objective:

1. Explanatory model
2. Essential and supporting actions
3. Approach, settings and techniques
4. Supporting infrastructure for a holistic approach
5. Stakeholder roles and responsibilities
6. Stages of action



The Plan follows this approach as wholly as practicable given the community level focus, rather than the national context of Change the Story. As mentioned previously, this document uses the term family violence whilst acknowledging that it is overwhelmingly women who experience violence more frequently than men. The Community, Respect and Equality Reference Group strongly supports the view that a consistent approach is essential to changing cultural attitudes and accepted social norms that drive and perpetuate family violence, violence against women and their children and gender based violence.

Explanatory model

Primary prevention

The prevention spectrum (figure 1 below) outlines the differences between primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.

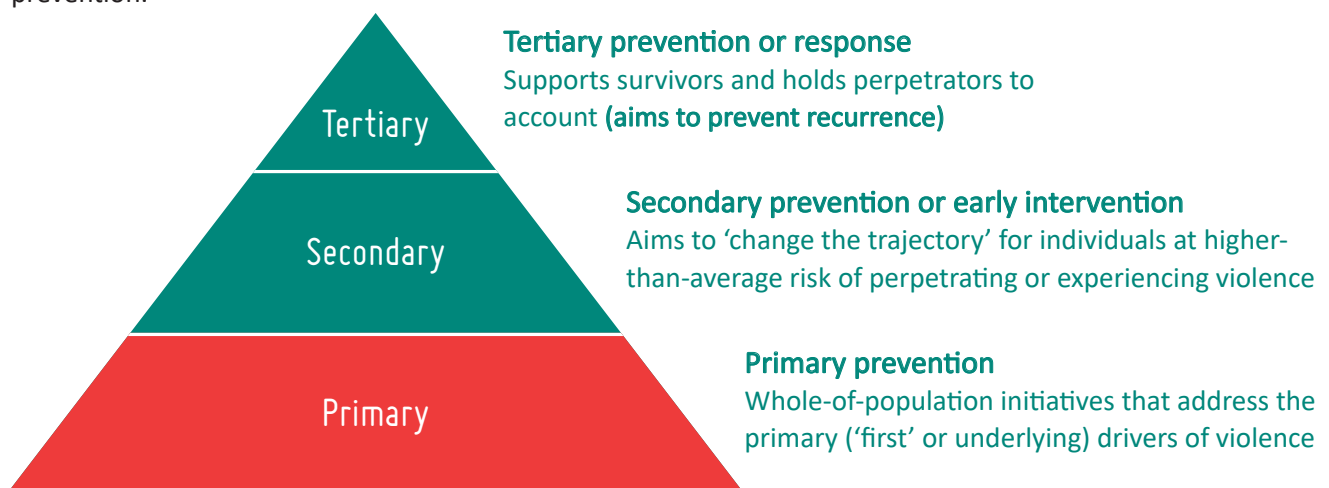


Figure 1: Prevention Spectrum (Our WATCH et al. (2015))

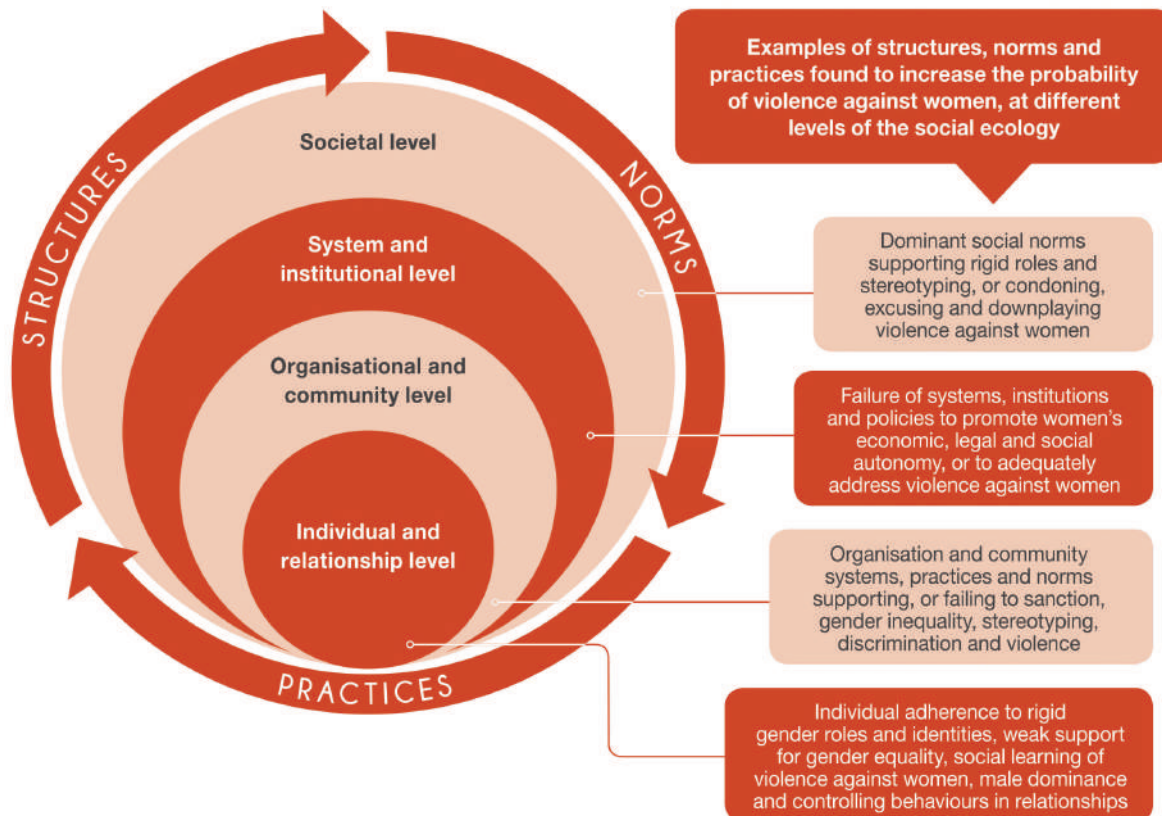
The Plan is focused on primary prevention, working to prevent family violence from occurring rather than solely focusing on providing service responses after violence has occurred (secondary and tertiary prevention). Similar to anti-smoking and drink driving campaigns, primary prevention works by challenging accepted behaviours, social norms, practices and structures that enable family violence to become so prevalent in our community. In the long term, a shift in attitudes and accepted behaviours in the community will prevent family violence before it starts. This is primary prevention (Our WATCH et al., 2015).

Understanding the Social Context of Family Violence

Family violence is a complex social problem with serious and far reaching consequences. It affects the whole community in some way either directly or indirectly. Understanding the social nature of family violence and violence against women is essential to effective prevention efforts. Change the Story uses a socio-ecological model that suggests rather than being a simple phenomenon, violence against women is the result of the complex interplay of individual, relationship, social, cultural and environmental factors (Our WATCH et al., 2015).



Figure 2: Socio-ecological model (Our WATCH et al. (2015))



Change the Story explains how to better understand these complex social factors through a set of gendered drivers and reinforcing factors set out below.

Gendered drivers of violence against women

Research has found that factors associated with gender inequality are the most consistent predictors of violence against women, and explain its gendered patterns (Our WATCH et al., 2015).

These factors are termed gendered drivers of violence against women. They should always be considered together with other forms of social discrimination and disadvantage.

Condoning of violence against women

Condoning of violence against women refers to social norms and structures that:

- **Justify** men's use of violence i.e. 'she was asking for it'; 'she was unfaithful'; 'you know what he has to put up with'
- **Excuse** men's use of violence i.e. men's inability to control their anger, sexual urges, mental health status, use of alcohol and drugs, stress and financial burdens



- **Trivialise** the impact of violence i.e. ‘it’s a private matter’; ‘victims should just leave’; ‘sexual assault victims should sort themselves out rather than report it’;
- **Downplay** the seriousness of violence i.e. ‘she’s just saying that so she can get the kids’; ‘It’s part of their religion/culture’; ‘It’s only rape if she physically resisted’
- **Shift blame** for violence from the perpetrator to the victim i.e. ‘She was unfaithful’; ‘She was asking for it’; ‘She shouldn’t have been wearing that’; ‘She knows what he’s like’ etc.)

Men’s control of decision making and limits to women’s independence in public and private life

Violence is more common in families and relationships in which men control decision-making and less so in relationships in which women have a greater level of independence. This is because it reinforces the message to both men and women that women:

- Have a lower social value
- Have less capacity for functional independence (women are ‘not smart enough’ or ‘not tough enough’ therefore they need the oversight/approval of a man)
- Women are more ‘legitimate’ targets of violence

The effect of this is compounded for women who face other forms of disadvantage and discrimination.

Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity

Levels of violence are significantly and consistently higher in societies, communities and relationships where there are more rigid distinctions between the roles of men and women. This is because:

- The sense of entitlement associated with ‘traditional’ masculine gender roles may result in the use of force (including forced sex) in an intimate relationship. (‘All she needs is a firm hand’ ‘She should know her place’)
- Violence, including emotional violence may be used to reinforce gender roles or punish those who step outside them (including pressure from family and friends in ‘policing’ gender roles in relationships)
- The gendered division between the public world (work, footy club, pub, etc) and the private world (at home looking after the kids) can isolate women and make them more dependent on their partner.

Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women

The following types of negative male peer and organisational cultures are associated with increased rates of violence against women:

- An emphasis on aggression, objectification of women and sexual conquest
- Mates are encouraged to prioritise their relationships with men over women (‘Bros before Hoes’ mentality)
- Reluctance to challenge mates on inappropriate behaviour (‘what happens on tour stays on tour’)

Reinforcing factors

Within the context of the gendered drivers, reinforcing factors can increase the frequency or severity of violence but are not causal factors in violence against women (Our WATCH et al., 2015).



Condoning of violence in general

Violence can be condoned either formally or informally through peer networks (as above), families, communities and organisations. It becomes normalised through jokes and other interactions that downplay, trivialise and excuse in a similar way to the condoning of violence against women.

Experience of, and exposure to, violence

Exposure to family violence as a child (including child physical or sexual abuse) as well as long term exposure to other forms of violence whether as a child or adult (such as racist violence, lateral or community violence, or situations of armed conflict or war) can normalise the use of violence. This is how the acceptance of violence is reinforced from generation to generation, particularly in the absence of role modelled healthy and respectful behaviours, social supports and programs that assist with healing and recovery from the impacts of exposure to violence.

Weakening of pro-social behaviour, especially harmful use of alcohol (and other drugs)

The use of alcohol and other drugs is a feature in a disproportionate number of police call outs to family violence and more severe incidents of family violence. However it is not the use of alcohol and drugs that drive violence (ie. not all people that use drugs are violent and not all people that are violent use alcohol and other drugs) therefore the use of drugs and alcohol are seen as a reinforcing factor not a driving factor.

Socio –economic inequality and discrimination

All forms of inequality and discrimination increase the likelihood of the occurrence of violence against women including:

- Socio-economic disparity
- Racial and cultural discrimination
- Discrimination against people with differing abilities
- Discrimination against people with differing sexual orientation or gender identity

Backlash factors (increase in violence when male dominance, power and status is challenged)

It is well documented that violence against women increases when male dominance and power status is challenged. Men who hold stereotypical beliefs about their roles as providers (or who are part of families, or communities that strongly 'police' these beliefs) are more likely to use violence when that position is challenged (i.e. if their partner earns a higher income or has a higher social standing).

Ten essential and supporting actions that need to be taken to address these drivers and reinforcing factors

Change the Story identifies the following five essential actions and five supporting actions that address the drivers and reinforcing factors. It notes that no one organisation can undertake all these actions. A shared approach is required with actions being delivered in partnership as well as separately in appropriate, context-specific ways (Our WATCH et al., 2015).



Essential Actions

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

Supporting Actions

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

The Community, Respect and Equality Plan, sets out to strategically facilitate delivery of initiatives that address these essential actions in a mutually reinforcing way across different community sectors and settings.

Approach, settings and techniques

A whole of community approach to primary prevention of family violence aims to reach as many community members as possible to have the greatest impact. This means that an inclusive and collaborative approach needs to be used to engage people in all community sectors, sub-communities and demographics.

This does not mean however, that a 'one-size-fits-all' delivery model will be used for the actions. It is essential that the focus, content and delivery of any action should be tailored to the setting, technique, and context of the audience in a way that is appropriate, relevant and engaging (Our WATCH et al., 2015).

Settings

The Plan takes a whole of community approach with focus groups to define actions within the following settings:

- Community
- Education and youth
- Sport and recreation
- Service provision (Including health, mental health, family violence specific and other community services)
- Workplaces
- Cultural



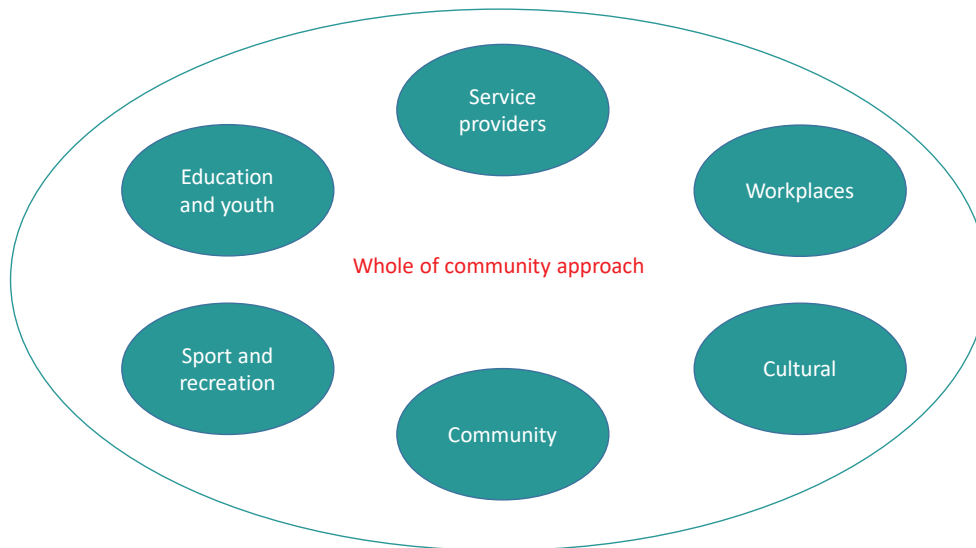


Figure 3: Focus group settings used in the Plan

Techniques

Techniques that have demonstrated effectiveness or promise across other areas of social policy or public health include:

Direct participation programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging people directly at individual, relationship or group level
Community action and empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the community to challenge attitudes and social norms Empowerment projects that increase self-determination and address structural inequalities such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social enterprise programs that encourage economic independence Programs that encourage collaborative community led action
Organisational development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole of organisation approach (i.e. local government, schools, clubs, workplaces etc.)
Communications and social marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising through a variety of media, social media and social marketing techniques



Community Leadership

- Advocacy by key organisations within the community to:
- Raise awareness of the issue of family violence
- Encourage prevention activities
- Lobby for change to policy where relevant
- Capacity Building for key organisations
- Leadership programs to identify and support influential, non-violent individuals to promote gender equality and non-violence.

(Our WATCH et al., 2015).

The supporting infrastructure needed for a holistic approach

It has been recognised internationally that discrete projects and programs are not enough to affect lasting and meaningful change to the level of family violence within a community (Our WATCH et al, 2015). Coordinated and collaborative actions across settings and levels of the social ecology are required to achieve the broad, deep and sustainable change needed to prevent family violence in the long term.

Change the Story sets out the infrastructure supports required to sustain the ongoing multi-setting and multi-level actions required to drive lasting change.

- Mechanisms for coordination and quality assurance
- An expert workforce
- Political, sector-specific and civil society leadership
- Policy and legislative reform
- Shared monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks

The Community, Respect and Equality Reference Group is working towards establishing these supports to facilitate the implementation of the Plan and ongoing action as a community owned and driven initiative.

Stakeholder roles and responsibilities

The Community, Respect and Equality Reference Group was set up with key agencies and representative bodies to provide high level community leadership for the Plan. Members were educated about the Change the Story framework and have been pro-active in directing how the consultations were conducted and how the Plan was developed. The Community, Respect and Equality Reference Group Members are currently:

- City of Greater Geraldton
- Department of Communities
- Department of Education
- Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
- Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Department of Social Services
- Aboriginal Family Law Service
- MEEDAC Inc. (Midwest Employment and Economic Development Aboriginal Corporation)
- Headspace Geraldton



- 360 Health and Community
- WA Country Health
- Women Inspiring Better Business
- Ngala Mid West – Gascoyne
- WA Police
- Our WATCH
- Desert Blue Connect Inc.

The Community, Respect and Equality Reference Group has provided leadership to drive engagement in their corresponding sectors, with input provided back to the project team for inclusion in the Plan. It will continue to meet to drive implementation of initiatives under the Plan.

There is an important role for all community members and organisations to play in the prevention of family violence. Opportunities for community members to engage with the planning process were provided. The Plan identifies a number of initiatives that will articulate roles and responsibilities and provide opportunities for engagement for organisations and individual community members.

Stages of actions

Mapping – June 2016

The initial phase of the project involved mapping of the current family violence primary prevention activities delivered by service providers and agencies in Geraldton. A survey was sent to members of the Midwest Family Violence Alliance. The response to the survey showed the following:

- The concept of primary prevention in the context of family violence was not well understood.
- There is very little primary prevention activity happening in Geraldton other than respectful relationships and protective behaviour programs delivered by Desert Blue Connect Inc. to a number of schools and youth programs.

Stakeholder consultations – September 2016 – July 2017

Following the mapping, a significant number of stakeholder consultations took place, including one on one meetings, presentations and workshops with service providers and community members.

This consultation process validated the findings of the mapping survey and identified the following:

- A number of organisations are challenging the normalisation of gender stereotypes through the way they use language in their services, particularly around parenting roles.
- A number of organisations in Geraldton have staff trained to deliver Red Dust Healing.
- A number of organisations have staff trained in LoveBites and LoveBites Junior, a respectful relationships program for delivery to school age children.
- There are organisations that are mandated to deliver family violence prevention programs, but capacity constraints on a local level had been affecting the consistency of delivery. These capacity issues have since been rectified and steps are being taken to work towards more consistent primary prevention activities.
- There are a number of organisations that hold awareness raising events, however, these are generally 'one-offs' and not part of a consistent, ongoing coordinated approach.



The conclusion of this extensive consultation process is that there are no specific family violence prevention programs active in Geraldton, other than those delivered by Desert Blue Connect. However, there are a few organisations actively working towards delivery of family violence prevention, some organisations with staff trained to deliver programs, and a number of other organisations that are taking the first steps on the journey of challenging gender entrenched stereotypes and other drivers of family violence.

This demonstrates that there is an understanding and readiness for change in some organisations including some service providers, non-health agencies such as the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and other community organisations. There is also a clearly articulated desire within the community to start working towards the prevention of family violence in Geraldton.

Planning Session

A planning session held on 18th July 2017 was the culmination of the consultation process for the project. The planning session provided an overview of the Change the Story framework and included activities that assisted the attendees to understand how the components of the framework fit together. Participants were asked to identify projects they would like to see in Geraldton; which organisations should drive the projects; and what role they see their organisation playing in the ongoing development and delivery of projects under the Plan.

The responses indicated a desire to see the Plan driven as a collaborative, whole of community initiative including representation from across sectors (Government, NGOs, Business, Education, Community and Sporting organisations) with leadership provided by the City of Greater Geraldton. a unified approach reinforced by consistent messaging was identified as an important factor by attendees and most organisations indicated a willingness to participate in focus groups to develop the projects.

The key areas of focus identified for inclusion in the plan were:

- A Community Accord
- Public awareness campaigns and events
- Informal facilitated conversations program delivered across all community settings
- Services and programs for men and boys including mentoring and empowerment programs
- Women's empowerment programs
- Broadening of respectful relationships education across all community settings and not just in schools
- Emotional wellbeing and healing programs
- Governance tool kit for family friendly clubs

Stakeholder engagement following the planning session identified that organisations were at different levels of readiness to accept the whole of community approach to family violence prevention. More work is required to develop a community level understanding that family violence effects the whole community and requires a whole of community response. Relying solely on the actions of service providers will not see a reduction in family violence.



Understanding Community Readiness

Primary prevention of family violence is a relative new area of practice, with the National Plan released in 2012 and Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children released in 2015. As this framework requires the challenging of beliefs and social norms that have been held for generations, it is important to understand the process via which communities adopt or reject change.

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003) is a well-accepted explanatory model of how communities adapt to change (innovation). The theory identifies 5 key stages of the innovation decision process as set out below:

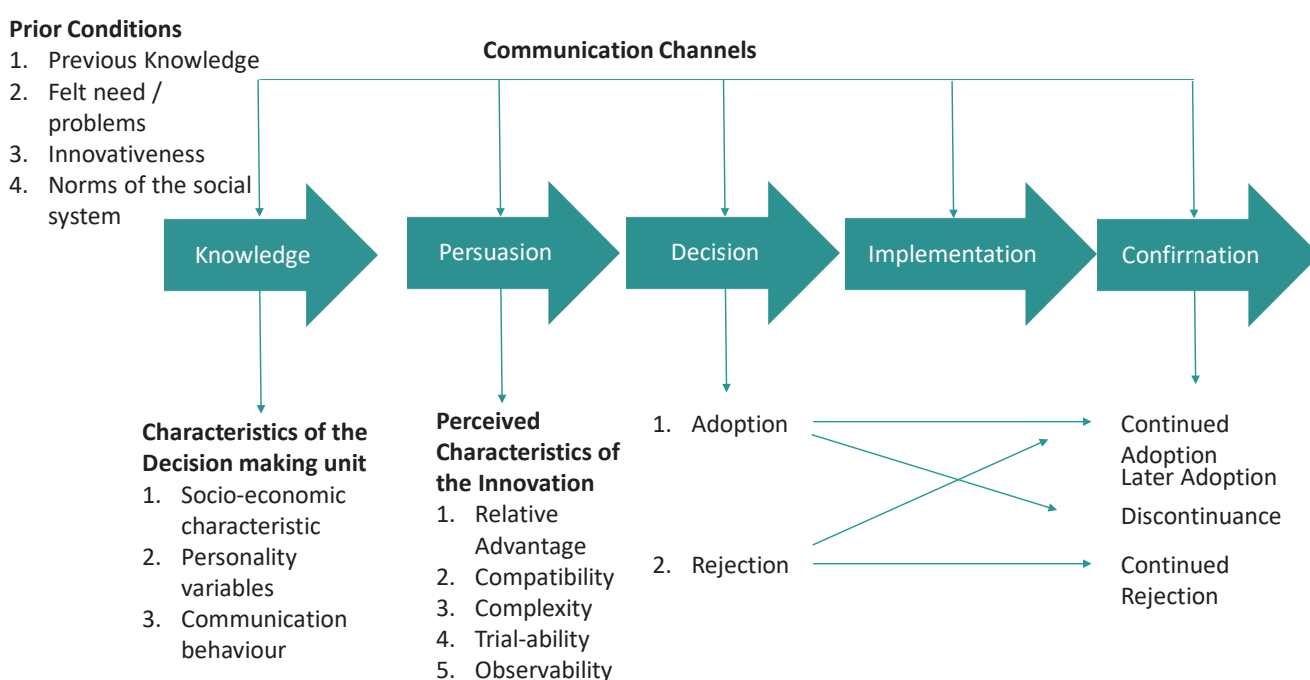


Figure 4: Diffusion of Innovations (Rogers, 2003)

The stages of action in the plan align with the first 4 stages of the Diffusion of innovation model that bring a community to the point of adoption of an innovation (change in attitudes and social norms) (Rogers, 2003):

Plan Phases	Diffusion of Innovations Stages
Phase 1: 2017 – 2018 – Developing Knowledge and Awareness	Knowledge
Phase 2: 2019 – 2020 – Building on the Foundations	Persuasion
Phase 3: 2021 onwards – Consistent Whole of Community / Whole of Organisation Engagement	Decision (Adoption)



A whole of community approach is needed to effect attitudinal change of the magnitude required to see a reduction in family violence and appropriate time must be given to allow the community to take this journey together in a united way. Pushing early delivery of more involved programs before the community understands the drivers of family violence may be counterproductive to the long term goal of changing attitudes and social norms. As such it is important to initially put efforts into community readiness by increasing knowledge and awareness of family violence as a whole of community gendered issue prior to rolling out significant programs to address this at a more detailed level.

The Plan

The Community, Respect and Equality Strategic Action Plan for Family Violence Prevention in Geraldton has three phases:

Phase 1: 2017 – 2018 - Developing Knowledge and Awareness

Phase 1 of the Plan has a focus on strengthening engagement across community sectors to develop knowledge and awareness of what family violence is and how it can be prevented. The components of Phase 1 are:

- Continuation of the Community, Respect and Equality Reference Group
- Roll out of Community Champions
- Community Respect and Equality Summit
- Community Accord
- Public awareness campaigns and events
- Community, Respect and Equality Starting the conversation:
Informal facilitated conversations program delivered across all community settings
- Develop a comprehensive evaluation framework
- Governance for respect and equality in sport program
- Identified focus areas for project development:
 - o Supports and programs for men and boys
 - o Aboriginal women's social support and empowerment
 - o Expansion of healthy relationships, anti-bullying and emotional wellbeing programs to the broader community.
- Ongoing engagement and project development via focus groups and the Community, Respect and Equality Reference Group.
- Ongoing project officer position to drive and coordinate the project going forward.

Further detail on the components of Phase One is available in the table following.



Phase 2: 2019 – 2020 - Building on the Foundations

Phase 2 focuses on implementation of direct participation programs identified in the initial phase that deepen the knowledge and capacity of the community members and organisations. The components of Phase 2 are:

- Delivery of direct participation of programs identified and/or developed in Phase One such as:
 - o Bystander programs
 - o Ongoing support programs for men and boys
 - o Community based delivery of respectful relationships programs
 - o Ongoing and supported wellbeing programs
 - o Shared parenting programs
 - o Workplace programs
 - o Women's empowerment initiatives
- Review of progress against evaluation framework to achievement of outcomes and continuous improvement.
- Ongoing community engagement and project development via Accord member organisations and Community, Respect and Equality Reference Group.
- Ongoing project officer position to drive the continuation of the project going forward.

Phase 3: 2021 on - Consistent Whole of Community, Whole of Organisation Level Engagement

Phase 3 sees the roll out of whole of organisation initiatives across community sectors. It is this whole of community engagement and acceptance that everyone has a responsibility to act against family violence that will have the biggest impact in reducing the level of family violence in our community.

The Components of Phase 3 are:

- Whole of organisation approach adopted that includes:
 - o Organisational level policies and codes of conducts
 - o Organisational level gender equity audits
 - o Whole of organisation training
 - o Adopted by a broad range of organisations across sectors including:
 - City of Greater Geraldton
 - Government agencies with a local presence
 - Service providers and Not-for-profits
 - Workplaces
 - Community organisations and clubs
 - Cultural and religious organisations
- Review of progress against evaluation framework to achievement of outcomes and continuous improvement.
- Ongoing community engagement and project development via Accord member organisations, working groups and Community, Respect and Equality Reference Group.
- Ongoing project officer position to drive the continuation of the project going forward.



Phase 1: 2017 – 2018 – Developing Knowledge and Awareness

Community Respect and Equality Reference Group		Status: Underway
<p>Settings: All</p> <p>Techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Leadership <p>Lead Organisation: Desert Blue Connect</p>	<p>The Community Respect and Equality Reference Group has been set up to provide collaborative leadership for the development of the Plan with representatives from key organisations across community sectors. The Community Respect and Equality Reference Group will continue to provide direction for implementation of the three phases of the plan.</p>	
Community Champions		Status: Underway
<p>Settings: All</p> <p>Techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Action and Empowerment Communications and Social Marketing Community Leadership <p>Lead Organisation: Desert Blue Connect</p>	<p>Western Australian Police Community Crime Prevention funding has been received for the Community Champions Pilot Project.</p> <p>The Community Champions Pilot seeks to recruit community members who will be supported to create their own media messaging, and participate in community awareness events, encouraging the community stand up against family violence in a united, safe and positive way.</p>	
Community Respect and Equality Summit		Status: Complete
<p>Settings: All</p> <p>Techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Action and Empowerment Communications and Social Marketing Community Leadership <p>Lead Organisation: Desert Blue Connect</p>	<p>The Community Respect and Equality Summit and associated events will be held in Geraldton from Wednesday 27th to Friday 29th of September 2017.</p> <p>The Summit will showcase experts in the field of primary prevention of family violence. It will educate and inform delegates on the drivers of family violence and prevention activities that can be undertaken in the community.</p>	



Develop a comprehensive evaluation framework		Status: Articulated Concept
<p>Settings: All</p> <p>Techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Leadership • Community Action and Empowerment • Communications and Social Marketing <p>Lead Organisation: Community Respect and Equality Reference Group</p>	<p>It has been identified through the development of the Plan that there is a need for further investigation into the prevalence of family violence in Geraldton (including reporting rates). Additionally a measure of change around supportive attitudes towards violence and accepted social norms within the community needs to be established. An evaluation framework will be developed by the Community, Respect and Equality Reference Group to monitor progress against the outcomes of the Plan and ensure continuous improvement.</p>	
Community Accord		Status: Articulated Concept
<p>Settings: All</p> <p>Techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Leadership • Community Action and Empowerment • Communications and Social Marketing <p>Lead Organisation: Community Respect and Equality Reference Group</p>	<p>The concept of a Community Accord was raised in both in the preliminary consultation round and also in the planning session.</p> <p>It is anticipated that a Community Accord will be collaboratively developed. All organisations and businesses in Geraldton will be encouraged to participate in the development of the Community Accord and its adoption.</p> <p>It is proposed that the Community Accord will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The promotion of positive cultural values based around the Community Respect and Equality key messages of #RespectRules and #ViolenceisNEVERok • Development and adoption of codes of behaviour • Organisational participation in awareness events and activities including the Community wide Respect and Equality Week. • Organisational participation in the Start The Conversation Program • Engagement with sector specific primary prevention activities and programs • Engagement with the development of future phases of the Plan 	



Community Awareness Activities		Status: Ongoing / Articulated Concept	
Lead Organisation: Community Respect and Equality Reference Group / All Organisations		A coordinated approach to Community Awareness Activities that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible presence at relevant community events • A social media and online presence 	
Start the Conversation Program		Status: Articulated Concept	
Settings: All Techniques: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Participation Program • Community Action and Empowerment • Communications and Social Marketing Lead Organisation: Desert Blue Connect		The aim of the Start the Conversation Program is to engage with a broad range of people in different settings across community sectors through informal but facilitated conversation sessions. The conversations will be facilitated in a way that assists participants to discuss and reflect on their own attitudes towards gender, relationships and violence in a safe and non-confrontational way. The program will also facilitate access to information about family violence and encourage help seeking and appropriate supportive behaviours.	
Governance for Developing a Culture of Respect and Equality in Sport		Status: Articulated Concept	
Settings: Sport and Recreation Techniques: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational development • Community Leadership; • Community Action and Empowerment Lead Organisation: Mid West Sports Federation / Sport and Recreation (DLGSCI)		There is a direct relationship between the strength of a club's governance and their ability to develop a culture of respect and equality. Respect and equality needs to be displayed and driven at Board level. This will role model and establish a culture that is displayed on the field, in the change room, in the club house and by spectators. <p>The elements of Governance for Developing a Culture of Respect and Equality in Sport are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidents breakfasts to discuss, promote and inform of the importance of building a culture of respect and equality and how it can be achieved 	



<p>Governance for Developing a Culture of Respect and Equality in Sport, Cont'd</p>	<p>Status: Articulated Concept</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a 'Family Friendly Club Toolkit' using templates and examples of policies, procedures and codes of conducts including management of sanctions. • Promotion of the Top Club, an existing program to assist clubs plan and implement best practise procedures to develop and manage appropriate club culture. • Promotion of the Community Respect and Equality Community Accord
<p>Priority Focus Area: Services and Programs for Men and Boys</p>	<p>Status: Identified focus areas for project development</p>
<p>Settings: All Techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Participation Program • Community Action and Empowerment • Communications and Social Marketing • Community Leadership <p>Lead Organisation: Community Respect and Equality Reference Group / AFLS/ Headspace / WACHS</p>	<p>It was indicated in the planning session that there is an identified need to provide more primary prevention programs that involve boys and young men as well as a clear lack of support services specifically for men.</p> <p>A focused working group will be set up to identify and articulate specific projects for development in this space including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas where capacity building may be required, for example male to male delivery of primary prevention content • Support and empowerment groups for boys and or young men • Integrated approach to providing access to services for men and identifying servicing needs • Identifying specific programs for development and implementation



Priority Focus Area: Community delivery of broader programs		Status: Identified focus areas for project development	
<p>Settings: All Techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Participation Programs • Community Action and Empowerment • Community Leadership <p>Lead Organisation: Community Respect and Equality Reference Group / Aboriginal Family Law Services / Helping Minds / Hope Community Services / Desert Blue Connect</p>		<p>The feedback from the planning session clearly articulated a desire to extend the delivery of healthy relationships programs beyond schools and into the broader community. There was also an interest in delivery of more comprehensive subject matter such as bullying and emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>A focused working group will be formed to identify and work up business cases for the delivery of direct participation programs to the broader community that cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bystander programs • Healthy and respectful relationships, including community delivery and not just in schools • Anti-bullying; • Emotional wellbeing; • Shared parenting 	
Priority Focus Area: Women’s Support and Social Enterprise		Status: Identified focus areas for project development	
<p>Settings: All Techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Action and Empowerment • Community Leadership <p>Lead Organisation: Community Respect and Equality Reference Group / Community Representatives</p>		<p>There is an identified need to provide social support and empowerment to disengaged Aboriginal women. There has previously been an intergenerational Aboriginal women’s group in Geraldton, however this is not currently functioning.</p> <p>A community working group will be established to work towards the establishment of an intergenerational social support group for Aboriginal women, with a view to growing it into a social enterprise involving art and crafts.</p>	
Continuation of the Project Officer Role		Status: Required to support implementation	
<p>Settings: Service Provision Techniques: All Lead Organisation: Desert Blue Connect</p>		<p>The Community, Respect and Equality Project Officer role will need to continue throughout the three phases of the project to coordinate and facilitate the collaborative approach required for the success of this plan and report back to the Community Respect and Equality Reference Group in regards to progress of the Plan.</p>	



Figure 5 below shows how the components from Phase 1 address the essential actions across community settings.



Figure 5: Essential actions and settings addressed in Phase 1 of the Plan



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