



the women's
the royal women's hospital
victoria australia

The Women's Says No to Violence Against Women

The Royal Women's Hospital Violence Prevention Strategy

Presenter: Elizabeth McLindon

Authors: Elizabeth McLindon & Helen Makregiorgos

Women's Social Support Services (Social Work)



About us

- We are Australia's largest tertiary hospital specialising in the health of women & babies
- We practice using a social model of health recognising the social & cultural determinants of women's lives
- We provide about 200,000 episodes of care each year
- Our community of women speak 60 different languages & follow 42 separate faiths



Overview of the strategy

The Women's No to Violence Strategy:

- Primary prevention: preventing violence before it has occurred
- Secondary prevention: growing the capacity of health professionals to respond to the issue
- Tertiary prevention: improving women's access to specialist services

Our Strategy is consistent with the *National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2009-2021* (Commonwealth of Australia 2009)



Definition of VAW

Broad definition of violence against women (VAW) as diverse & complex:

An act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

(WHO 2005)



Nature of VAW

Including:

- Childhood abuse
- Witnessing of family violence
- Sexual harassment in the workplace
- Intimate partner, family & domestic violence
- Elder abuse
- Female cutting / female genital mutilation
- Trafficking and forced prostitution
- Sexual assault
- Drug & alcohol facilitated sexual assault
- Pornography
- Discrimination



Prevalence of VAW

- 1 in 3 Australian women experience physical violence in their lifetime (ABS 2005)
- 1 in 5 experience sexual violence (ABS 2005)
- Higher prevalence for Indigenous women, women with disabilities, culturally & linguistically diverse women & sex workers (ABS 2005)



Impacts of VAW

- Physical, emotional and psychological
- Reproductive and sexual health
- Intimate relationships
- Family and friends – infants, children & young people
- Housing and safety
- Education, finance, employment
- Spiritual and world view
- Intergenerational
- Health care access and treatment

WHO 2005 & VicHealth 2004

The role of health services



the women's
the royal women's hospital
victoria australia

- Women who experience violence are more likely to present to health services due to immediate, short and long term consequences (Warshaw & Alpert 1999)
- During pregnancy & in the post natal period women are at increased risk of violence (WHO 2005)
- Health services can have a positive impact for women when their responses are informed by evidence, i.e. advocacy based interventions, information and referral to specialist services (Wathen & MacMillan 2003)
- Health services can play a critical role in leading primary prevention activities in the community (WHO 2002)



Current health sector gaps

Gaps in primary, secondary & tertiary prevention interventions, for example:

- Policies and procedures (ie. Clinical Practice Guideline)
- Training and education
- Community education
- Direct services

VAW strategy: Primary prevention



the women's
the royal women's hospital
victoria australia

CASA HOUSE *Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools (SAPPSS)*:

- Changing the attitudes and behaviours of young men & women through a whole-of-school, principal lead commitment to violence prevention
- Professional development for teachers and school staff, policy & procedures to support the program, Year 9/10 student curriculum, partnerships with local sexual assault & domestic violence services
- Focus on long-term sustainable cultural change meets standards for best practice & has produced encouraging results (VicHealth 2009)



VAW strategy: Secondary prevention

- The Women's *Clinical Practice Guideline (CPG) for the management of violence against women*
- Health professionals training
- Leadership Program
- Community education program - Information, posters & staff badges directed at consumers



Community Education Program

The
Women's
says
NO
to violence
against
women

TALK TO ME

Do you
feel safe
at home?

TALK TO ME



We recognise past experiences of violence might affect how you feel about treatment and examinations

If you need to talk,
there's confidential
help available



Women's Social Support Services (03) 9344 2451
CASA House (Centre Against Sexual Assault) (03) 9635 3610
Sexual Assault Crisis Line (after hours) 1800 806292

'Tell them you are ringing because you have seen the poster.'

The Women's
says **No** to violence
against women!



Everyone has the right to be safe from emotional physical sexual and financial abuse

**Do you feel safe at home?
If you don't, there's confidential
help available**



Women's Social Support Services (03) 9344 2451
CASA House (Centre Against Sexual Assault) (03) 9635 3610
Sexual Assault Crisis Line (after hours) 1800 806292

'Tell them you are ringing because you have seen the poster.'

The Women's
says **No** to violence
against women!

VAW strategy: Tertiary prevention



the women's
the royal women's hospital
victoria australia

- **Women's Social Support Service**
- **CASA House (Centre Against Sexual Assault)**
- **Sexual Assault Crisis Line**
- **Aboriginal Women Health Business Unit**
- **Family and Reproductive Rights Education Program**



How we developed the

Strategy

Developed using evidence of best practice:

- Literature review
- Current practice, e.g. auditing, focus groups
- Practice-based evidence from consultation with staff & external agencies

Organisational support:

- Leadership
- Expertise
- Resources

Recommendations



the women's
the royal women's hospital
victoria australia

Acute health services should develop a whole-of organisation response to the issue of violence against women. Including:

- An organisational mandate to address violence against women, with engagement by senior staff & reflection in strategic planning
- The development of a clinical practice guideline & training for staff
- The advancement of a multi-intervention strategy aimed at the prevention of violence against women, the improvement of early intervention efforts & the extension of actions taken once violence has occurred



Recommendations (cont.)

The Women's supports improvement to the current fragmented system of policy & service delivery for women who have experienced violence. Specifically recommending:

- A mandated role for hospitals & primary health care services in addressing violence against women
- Government supported training & support services for health professionals
- A planning framework for greater consistency, communication & collaboration within the health care sector as well as integration with the sexual assault & family violence, judicial, housing & mental health services.



the women's
the royal women's hospital
victoria australia

Contact us

Women's Social Support Services

E: social.support@thewomens.org.au

W: www.thewomens.org.au

T: [\(03\) 8345 3050](tel:(03)83453050)