



# ***Stopping Violence Against Women Before it Happens***

## **A Practical Toolkit for Communities**

**Julie Oberin, Chair of AWAVA**

7<sup>th</sup> Australian Women's Health Network Conference, Sydney,  
10 May 2013:

*Gender Matters: Determining Women's Health*

## Why?

- To assist implementation of Australian Government's *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022*

## What?

- 15 easy to understand factsheets covering key concepts specifically: **primary prevention** of violence against women

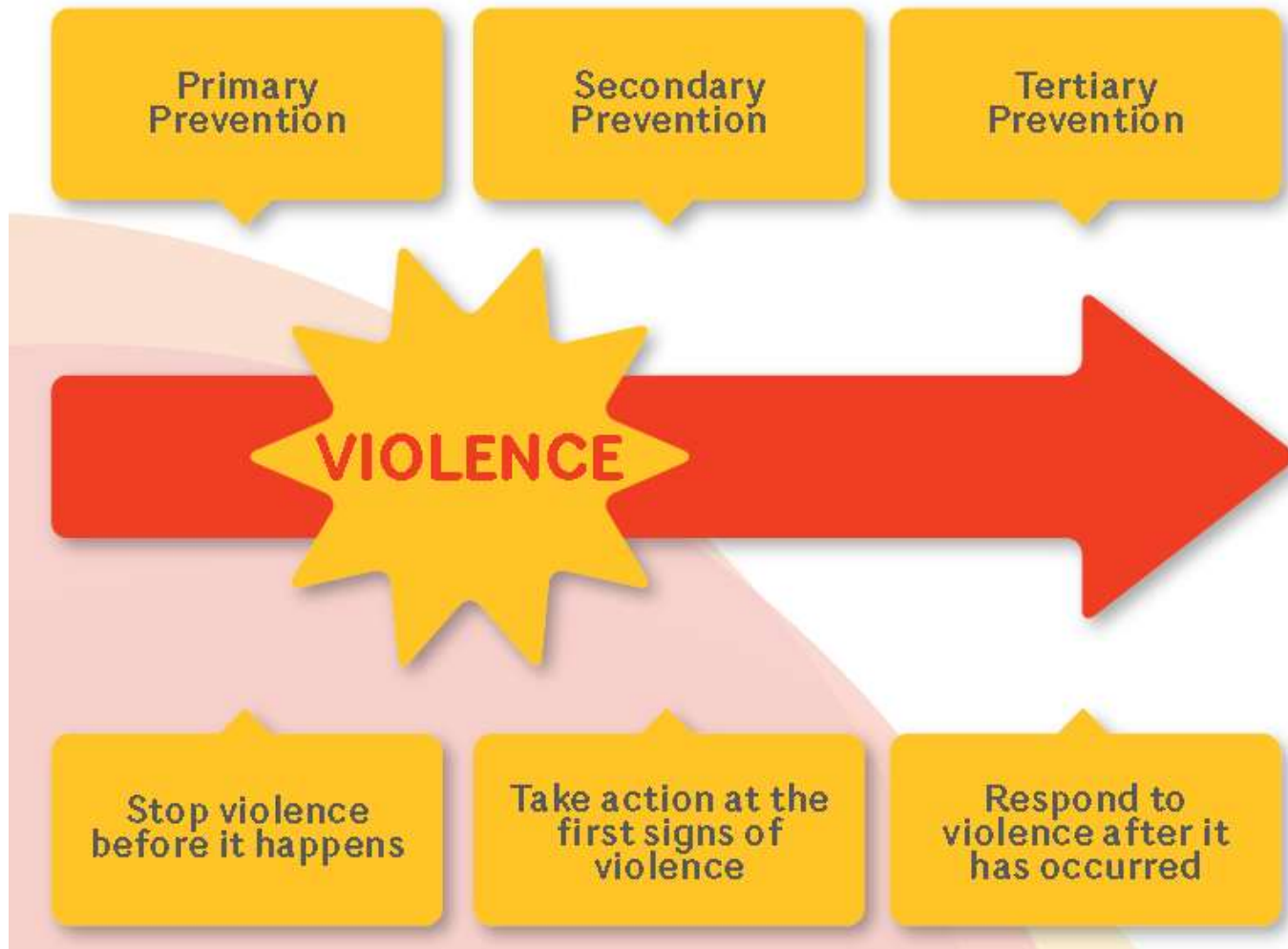
## How?

- Online Survey
- Partnership members provided advice
  - NRWC-led:** Sandra Stoddart and Val Lang
  - AWAVA:** Julie Oberin and Amy Blain
  - QCDFVR:** Heather Nancarrow, Annie Webster and Terese Kingston
- 2 community consultation events in Emerald and Broken Hill

*“If the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children has any hope of achieving its goal, then it is women like this, in communities like Emerald, all over Australia, that we need to be engaging in violence prevention work.”*

*– Kiri Dicker – Project Officer for **Stopping Violence Before it Starts***

# *What is primary prevention?*



## *Project Officer's Impressions:*



### *Emerald*

*They told us about the challenges they faced addressing violence against women in their communities. They said that there was a pervasive attitude that violence against women 'didn't happen' in rural areas...sometimes both men and women were reluctant, or even offended, to discuss the topic. Sadly, we were told that there is sometimes little empathy for women who experience violence, especially in communities where everyone was 'doing it tough'.*

# *Key Findings from Community Consultations:*

## **The positives**

- enthusiastic response from participants
- communities keen to know what to do and how to take action
- valuable input from Emerald and Broken Hill communities

## **The challenges**

- limited knowledge of the National Plan
- lack of knowledge/understanding of primary prevention
- primary prevention, seen as an 'extra'
- men and women often dismissive or ambivalent about gender equality
- attitudes and beliefs that are violence-enabling

## *What communities wanted to see in Toolkit:*

- ways to incorporate primary prevention projects into existing workload
- strong preference for straightforward, practical resource in plain English
- information on *how to speak out* about violence and gender inequality
- how to engage men in discussions about violence and gender equality
- accessible to everyone
- practical advice and ideas
- focus on 'getting started' and taking action

*They wanted information and advice on how to broach the topic of violence against women in ways that engaged, and didn't isolate, rural communities...they wanted to know 'what worked'...and lots of practical ideas and simple steps to getting projects started at a community level.*

# ***Structure of Toolkit:***

## **Part One: Understanding Violence Against Women**

- 1: What is it?
- 2: Why does it happen?
- 3: How can it be prevented?
- 4: What are the issues for rural communities?
- 5: How can I speak out?

## **Part Two: Primary Prevention Methods and Approaches**

- 6: Raising awareness and changing attitudes
- 7: Encouraging respectful relationships
- 8: Improving women's financial independence and leadership
- 9: Engaging men and boys
- 10: Supporting families

## **Part Three: A Step-by-Step Guide to Taking Action**

- 11: Working in partnership
- 12: Community mapping
- 13: Setting goals and objectives
- 14: Program design and delivery
- 15: Monitoring and evaluation





# How to use Toolkit:

Download for **free** at:

<http://www.nrwn.org.au/stopping-violence-against-women-before-it-happens-a-practical-toolkit-for-communities/>

A RECOMMENDED READING LIST ON EACH PAGE PROVIDES FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES ON EACH TOPIC.

WEBSITE    TOOLKIT    REPORT    FACT SHEET    VIDEO CLIP    BOOK

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1 What was your first reaction when you read these facts about violence against women?
- 2 What are some of the attitudes that your community has towards violence against women? Are these different among certain groups?
- 3 Are there any statistics or information on rates of violence against women in your local community? If so, how do they compare with the statistics in this toolkit?
- 4 Why does violence against women require a different approach than other types of violence, such as violence against men?

Stopping Violence Against Women Before It Happens: A Practical Toolkit For Communities

The National Rural Women's Coalition in partnership with AWAVA and CDFWR have produced the Family Violence Toolkit.

National Rural Women's Network    National Rural Women's Coalition    AWAVA    CDFWR

You can order a hard copy of this kit by downloading, printing, filling in and sending us an order form which can be found [here](#). Alternatively download the entire NRWN Family Violence Toolkit or individual Fact Sheets FREE using the links below.

Download entire toolkit    Download fact sheet 1    Download fact sheet 2    Download fact sheet 3    Download fact sheet 4    Download fact sheet 5

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# How to use Toolkit:

**fact sheet #1. WHAT IS IT?**

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REFERS TO:**  
 ...any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women.

The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993)  
 Violence against women does not only include physical and sexual violence, it refers to a range of different violent and abusive behaviours as shown below

**POWER AND CONTROL**

**WHY FOCUS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?**  
 Although both women and men can be perpetrators or victims of domestic and family violence and sexual assault, research shows that the majority of violence is perpetrated against women by men.  
 This toolkit focuses on violence against women because of the scale and complexity of the problem and the unique strategies and approaches required to effectively reduce and prevent it. These strategies must start by acknowledging and addressing the fundamental link between violence against women and gender inequality. This relationship is discussed in more detail throughout the toolkit.

**1800 RESPECT (1800 737 733)**  
 A free, 24 hour advice and support service for people experiencing domestic and family violence.

**HOW COMMON IS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?**  
 About 1 in 2 Australian women experience physical violence and almost 1 in 5 women experience sexual violence in their lifetime.  
 In 2005, over 250,000 women experienced physical violence (about the population of Canberra) and over 125,000 women experienced sexual violence (about the population of Townsville).  
 Violence can happen to anyone, but some groups of women are at higher risk of experiencing violence, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, young women, women with disabilities, and immigrant and refugee women.

**THIS TOOLKIT FOCUSES ON DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT, AS THESE ARE THE MOST COMMON FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN AUSTRALIA.**

## ARTS, SONG AND DRAMA

Arts, song, and drama can be an effective way of speaking out about violence against women. Songs such as Archie Roach's *Walking Into Doors* send a powerful message about ending violence.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How can we start a conversation about violence against women in our community? How can we engage 'hard to reach' groups?
- 2 How can we convince people that reducing violence against women is everyone's responsibility?
- 3 How can we talk about violence against women in a way that empowers people to take action?
- 4 What is the best way to deal with people who become disruptive or aggressive when we talk about violence against women?

### QUICK COMEBACKS

Here are some quick responses to some of the most common questions and comments that people might make about violence against women.

- Q But what about all the women who abuse men?  
 A It is true that sometimes women are violent towards men, however research continually shows that the majority of victims of domestic violence and sexual assault are women. Resources and services need to respond to this research.
- Q Violence is not a big problem in the country...  
 A Actually research has shown that violence against women is a problem all over Australia, including in country areas. Just because you don't see it, doesn't mean it doesn't happen.
- Q Aren't you accusing all men of being violent?  
 A No! The majority of men choose to not abuse women, but unfortunately they often don't speak out about it either. One of the most effective ways of ending violence against women is for men to speak out against it.
- Q What did she expect? Dressing like that!  
 A No one ever deserves violence because of what they are wearing! Men need to take responsibility for their behaviour, not blame women for their choice of outfit.
- Q If it's so bad, why doesn't she just leave?  
 A Sometimes it's hard to understand why women stay in violent relationships. They might be scared, ashamed, or have nowhere else to go. They may think that staying in a violent relationship is what is best for the children, or her partner or other family members might convince her that she should stay. Women may not know what services are available to help. Leaving a violent relationship can be more dangerous than staying if a woman does not have proper support and protection.
- Q Violence is just part of their culture...  
 A Violence against women happens in all cultures - but that doesn't make it okay. All women have the right to live free from violence regardless of their culture.



This is 5 in a series of 15 fact sheets to help rural communities stop violence against women before it happens. Download the full set at [www.nrwv.org.au](http://www.nrwv.org.au)

# Community feedback and what you can do

## What's happened since

- Minister Collins launched Toolkit August 2012
- Nearly 4,500 page views, over 3,600 downloads of toolkit
- Good feedback



## What next?

- Tell your community about the tool
- Get involved
- Start primary prevention activities in your community

*Addresses the challenging topic of gender inequality and violence against women...points the reader to look at challenging attitudes and behaviour*

*Congratulations on a terrific, informative resource*

***Available on:***

**[www.nrwc.com.au](http://www.nrwc.com.au)**

**[www.awava.org.au](http://www.awava.org.au)**

