

ReCLAIM Research Project: **An innovative organisational approach to the prevention of violence against women**

Dr Tracy Castelino, PVAW Consultant

Carolyn Poljski, Health Promotion Coordinator, MonashLink

**In collaboration with Fran James, Carmel Fox, Pauline Kelly,
Sheila Eva, Helen Wirtz, Jenny George and Kerry Super
(ReCLAIM Working Group, MonashLink)**



Introduction



- Family violence is not just a private matter
- Approx. two-thirds of Australian women who report violence by their partners are in paid work (ABS, 2005)

'Family violence has no boundaries and doesn't stop at the front door of the workplace.'

(Stanton & Jervis, 2010)

Introduction



- Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick (2011): *What affects the employees, affects the employers*
- FV: loss of paid & unpaid work time; lost work productivity; safety hazards for employees
- Workplaces are sites for change
- Employers: foster environments that demonstrate that FV is not acceptable

Introduction



- MonashLink Community Health Service:
 - Multi-site health service
 - Melbourne's inner eastern metro region
 - Oral Health, Primary Care, Counselling
 - FV: counselling & groups for women & men
 - ML staff survey of attitudes to VAW in 2010
 - CEO is a White Ribbon Ambassador

Aim



- ReCLAIM Research Project
examined MonashLink's internal operations, understanding, policies and practices in relation to gender equality and VAW

Methodology



- Violence Prevention Gender Audit was undertaken using the following methods:
 - Staff survey
 - Staff focus groups
 - Analysis of 5 MonashLink's policies
- Today's presentation will highlight key themes

Themes



- Theme 1: Terms and Understanding
- Theme 2: Profiling the client group – Ways to address equality in generic projects/programs
- Theme 3: Naming MonashLink's position on gender equality and violence against women
- Theme 4: The Business Case
- Theme 5: Collegial support & Capacity Building
- Theme 6: Engaging women & men in the process of change

Findings: Theme 1



TERMS AND UNDERSTANDING

- Staff understanding & response to VAW varied
- Clinicians should be trained to assess & listen for whether women may have been subjected to violence
- Staff members need upskilling in the provision of appropriate support to clients affected by violence

Findings: Theme 2



ADDRESSING EQUALITY IN PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

- Staff members were interested to better understand client groups
 - Targeting the under-represented/excluded
 - Gender-disaggregated data on client access and utilisation of services
 - Integrated service delivery for initiatives aimed at same groups & individuals

Findings: Theme 3



NAMING MONASHLINK'S POSITION ON GENDER EQUALITY AND VAW

- Rhetoric about commitment to PVAW is good but not enough
- Internal actions & external partnerships are critical
- Safe and welcoming spaces at ML for those affected by violence need to be created
- Organisational position on PVAW is required

Findings: Theme 4



THE BUSINESS CASE

- FV can affect employee performance at work
- FV can result in reduced productivity, absenteeism
- Embracing equality in the workplace via fair & inclusive HR policies
- EAP approach to PVAW? More research needed

Findings: Theme 5



COLLEGIAL SUPPORT & CAPACITY BUILDING

- Staff members were committed to supporting women affected by violence and challenging sexist attitudes
- BUT lacking in knowledge and skills

Findings: Theme 6



ENGAGING WOMEN AND MEN IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

- ML needs to engage in a process of change for individuals, the organisation and leaders for their community
- Organisation, especially White Ribbon Ambassadors, needs to participate in 16 Days of Activism and White Ribbon Day

Recommendations



- Develop a Family Violence Policy and Procedure
- **Develop an organisational statement on VAW**
- Provide training for all employees
- **Provide an organisational advocacy response to PVAW**
- Develop a Gender Equality Policy Checklist
- **Improve procedures and guidelines for appropriate responses to staff regarding family violence**
- Establish the issue of VAW as a HP priority

Conclusion



Changing organisational culture needs understanding, valuing & embracing *gender equality principles* to build healthy, respectful and successful workplace

More information



- For more information about the ReCLAIM Research Project, contact Carolyn Poljski on cpoljski@monashlink.org.au or 03 9564 6182
- The ReCLAIM Research Project Report can be downloaded from the MonashLink website: www.monashlink.org.au/index.php/services-menu/health-promotions.html

THANK YOU!