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# Preventing violence against women and girls

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## **Abstract**

Men's violence against women and girls is a blunt expression of the pervasive gender inequalities that characterize countries across the globe. Men's violence against women both expresses and maintains men's power over women. Indeed, rape, domestic violence and other forms of violence have been seen as paradigmatic expressions of the operation of male power over women (Miller and Biele 1993, p. 53). Whether in workplaces or elsewhere, efforts to build gender equality must reckon with men's violence against women.

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## Introduction

Men's violence against women and girls is a blunt expression of the pervasive gender inequalities which characterise countries across the globe. Men's violence against women both expresses and maintains men's power over women. Indeed, rape, domestic violence, and other forms of violence have been seen as paradigmatic expressions of the operation of male power over women (Miller and Biele 1993: 53). Whether in workplaces or elsewhere, efforts to build gender equality must reckon with men's violence against women.

The term 'men's violence against women' is used here to refer to the wide variety of forms of violence and abuse perpetrated by men against women, including physical and sexual assaults and other behaviours which result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women. Data from across the globe documents that substantial proportions of women experience violence. In Australia for example,

- The *Personal Safety Survey* finds that nearly one in six women (16%) have experienced violence by a current or previous partner since the age of 15 (ABS 2006);
- The Australian component of the *International Violence Against Women Survey* finds that over a third of women (34%) who have ever had a boyfriend or husband report experiencing at least one form of violence during their lifetime from an intimate male partner (Mouzos and Makkai 2004: 44).

Most women who experience violence in their relationships and families are in paid employment. In turn, it is likely that many if not most of the men who perpetrate violence against women and girls are in paid employment. Thus, there are victims and perpetrators in every workplace. This violence has a direct impact on women's and men's participation at work, workplaces themselves may contribute to or tolerate violence against women, and workplaces can play key roles in preventing and reducing violence. I return to these arguments below. In addition, women are subjected to violence in workplaces themselves. For example;

- 62 percent of women had experienced violence at work within the last five years, according to a representative survey in the state of Victoria, Australia This violence included: being sworn at or shouted at; hostile behaviours; being intimidated or threatened; bullying; victimization; physical attacks; racial harassment, sexual harassment, robbery; wounding or battering; stalking; and rape (URCOT 2005: 7);
- One-quarter of women (25%) and one in six men (16%) aged 15 years and older have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the past five years (Australian Human Rights Commission 2012: 15);
- In a survey completed by over 3,600 union members in Australia, with 81% of respondents female, nearly one-third of respondents (30%) had personally experienced domestic violence (McFerran 2011: 6). Among those individuals who had experienced domestic violence in the last 12 months, nearly one in five (19%) reported that the violence continued at the workplace, for example through abusive phone calls and emails and the partner physically coming to work (McFerran 2011: 10).

Feminist concern with men's violence against women is based on the recognition that this violence both expresses and maintains gendered inequalities of power. Men's violence against women has an impact not just on individual women, but on women *as a group*. Men's violence is a threat to women's mobility, self-esteem and everyday safety. This violence imposes a curfew on women. Sexual violence and other forms of violence act as a form of social control on women, limiting their autonomy, freedom and safety, and their access to paid work and political decision-making. Men's violence thus has the general social consequence of reproducing forms of men's authority over women.

Before exploring the significance of men's violence against women for workplaces, what do we know about the causes of this violence? I outline these below, focusing on the determinants of intimate partner violence in particular – of both domestic violence and sexual violence perpetrated by men against women in the context of relationships and families, although I also draw on scholarship on other forms of men's violence against women.

### **The foundations of men's violence against women**

Three decades of research have identified key determinants of men's violence against women. We can group these into three broad clusters.

#### *Gender roles and relations*

The most well-documented determinants of men's violence against women can be found in gender norms and gender relations. Whether at individual, community, or societal levels, there are relationships between how gender is organised and violence against women.

Individual men's use of violence is enabled by wider gender inequalities. When a man hits an individual woman, or pressures her into sex, or sexually harasses her, his actions are only made possible because of a wider web of collective or structural conditions: the social relations of peer groups, collective ideologies and discourses of gender and sexuality, organisational cultures, institutional conditions, and wider patterns of gender inequality (Flood 2007).

First, men's gender-role attitudes and beliefs are critical. Men's agreement with sexist, patriarchal, and sexually hostile attitudes is an important predictor of their use of violence against women. Putting this another way, some men are less likely to use violence than other men. Men who *do not* hold patriarchal and hostile gender norms are *less* likely than other men to use physical or sexual violence against an intimate partner (Murnen *et al.* 2002; Schumacher *et al.* 2001).

Violence-supportive attitudes are based in wider social norms regarding gender and sexuality. In fact, in many ways, violence is part of 'normal' sexual and intimate relations. For example, for many young people, sexual harassment is pervasive, male aggression is expected and normalised, there is constant pressure among boys to behave in sexually aggressive ways, girls are routinely objectified, there is a sexual double standard, and girls are pressured to accommodate male 'needs' and desires. These social norms means that sexual coercion actually becomes 'normal', working through common heterosexual norms and relations (Flood and Pease 2006: 24).

There are important determinants of intimate partner violence in relationships and families. A key factor here is the power relations between partners – are they fair and just, or dominated by one partner? Men's domestic violence in families and homes is only understandable in the context of power inequalities. In fact, it can be seen as a development of dominant-submissive power relations that exist in 'normal' family life (Hearn 1996: 31). Cross-culturally, male economic and decision-making dominance in the family is one of the strongest predictors of high levels of violence against women (Heise 1998).

Men's use of 'coercive control' against their female partners – of “a range of tactics designed to isolate, intimidate, exploit, degrade and/or control a partner” (Stark 2010: 203) – is enabled by persistent gender inequalities (Stark 2006: 1022). A man is more able to control his wife or partner because he can exploit her roles as a housekeeper, wife, and mother, because she does most of the unpaid work in the house while he is free to advance his career, and because she has been socialised to feel responsible for his emotional wellbeing and his sexual interests.

Another factor at the level of intimate relationships and families is marital conflict. This conflict interacts with the power structure of the family. When conflict occurs in an asymmetrical power structure, there is a much higher risk of violence (Heise 1998; Riggs *et al.* 2000).

Peer and friendship groups and organisational cultures are important influences too. Some men have 'rape-supporting social relationships', whether in sport, on campus, or in the military, and this feeds into their use of violence against women. For example, there are higher rates of sexual violence against young women in contexts characterised by gender segregation, a belief in male sexual conquest, strong male bonding, high alcohol consumption, use of pornography, and sexist social norms (Flood 2007: 5-6).

There is also international evidence that the gender roles and norms of entire cultures have an influence on intimate partner violence. Rates of men's violence against women are higher in cultures emphasising traditional gender codes, male dominance in families, male honour, and female chastity (Heise 1998).

### ***Social norms and practices relating to violence***

The second cluster of causes of men's violence against women relate to other social norms and practices related to violence. Three in particular are worth discussing: domestic violence resources, violence in the community, and childhood exposure to intimate partner violence.

First, there is US evidence that when domestic violence resources – refuges, legal advocacy programs, hotlines, and so on – are available in a community, women are less vulnerable to intimate partner violence (Dugan *et al.* 2003). Second, violence in the community appears to be a risk factor for intimate partner violence. Members of disadvantaged communities may learn a greater tolerance of violence through exposure to violence by their parents, delinquent peers, and others (Vezina and Herbert 2007). Third, childhood exposure to intimate partner violence contributes to the transmission of violence across generations. Children, especially boys, who witness violence or are subjected to violence themselves are more likely to grow up with violence-supportive attitudes and to use violence (Flood 2007: 8-9).

### ***Access to resources and systems of support***

The third cluster of causes concern women's and men's access to resources and systems of support. Again, a range of determinants are significant: low socioeconomic status, poverty, and unemployment; lack of social connections and social capital, social isolation; neighbourhood and community characteristics; personality characteristics (and antisocial behaviour and peers); alcohol and substance abuse; and situational factors such as separation.

Rates of reported domestic violence are higher in areas of economic and social disadvantage, and there are moderate associations between male partners' perpetration of physical aggression and their socioeconomic status (Holtzworth-Munroe *et al.* 1997; Riger and Staggs 2004; Riggs *et al.* 2000; Schumacher *et al.* 2001; Stith *et al.* 2004). Disadvantage may increase the risk of abuse because of the other variables which accompany this, such as crowding, hopelessness, conflict, stress, or a sense of inadequacy in some men. Social isolation is another risk factor for intimate partner violence. Among young women, rates of domestic violence are higher for those who aren't involved in schools or don't experience positive parenting and supervision in their families.

In adult couples, social isolation is both a cause and a consequence of wife abuse. Women with strong family and friendship networks experience lower rates of violence (Flood 2007: 12).

Intimate partner violence is shaped also by neighbourhoods and communities: by levels of poverty and unemployment, and collective efficacy, that is, neighbours' willingness to help other neighbours or to intervene in anti-social or violent behaviour (Flood 2007: 14). In indigenous communities, interpersonal violence is shaped by histories of colonisation and the disintegration of family and community

Another factor is personality characteristics. Spouse abusers on average tend to have more psychological problems than nonviolent men, including borderline, mood disorders, and depression (Abbey and McAuslan 2004; Riggs *et al.* 2000; Schumacher *et al.* 2001; Stith *et al.* 2004; Tolan *et al.* 2006). Adolescent delinquency – antisocial and aggressive behaviour committed during adolescence – is a predictor of men's later perpetration of sexual assault (Abbey and McAuslan 2004).

Men's abuse of alcohol or drugs is a risk factor for intimate partner violence. Men may use being drunk or high to minimise their own responsibility for violent behaviour. Some men may see drunk women as more sexually available, and may use alcohol as a strategy for overcoming women's resistance (Flood 2007: 9-11).

There are also situational factors that increase the risk of intimate partner violence. For example, there is evidence that women are at risk of increasingly severe violence when separating from violent partners (Brownridge 2006).

## **Gender, violence, and the workplace**

Men's violence against women is a workplace issue. First, this violence has a direct impact on women's and men's participation in and productivity at work. Second, workplaces contribute to the cultures and inequalities which allow violence against women to flourish. Third, workplaces can play vital roles in preventing and reducing men's violence against women. There is thus a powerful, threefold business case for workplaces and organisations to address men's violence against women.

### *Impacts on workplaces*

Domestic violence, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and other forms of violence against women have a profound impact on workplaces. Key impacts of this violence include "higher rates of absenteeism, loss of productivity, reduced employee morale and increased need for support in the workplace for victims" (Wells *et al.* 2013: 19). Domestic violence has a direct impact on the economy. In Australia for example, the economic cost of violence against women and their children was estimated to be \$13.6 billion in 2009 (National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2009). There is increasing recognition among employers that there are both ethical and economic reasons to address and prevent violence against women.

Men's violence against women has both direct and indirect impacts on work and employment. Domestic violence has significant negative consequences for women's physical and mental health, both short and long-term, and in turn these diminish their workforce productivity and participation (Murray and Powell 2008: 3-5; Women's Health Victoria 2012: 11-13). Economic costs associated with victimisation include absenteeism, lost productivity related to use of sick leave, distraction and lack of concentration, underperformance, poor workplace relationships, access to employment support services etc., and staff replacement. There are further, second generation costs to do with counselling, changing schools, child protection, increased use of government services, and juvenile and adult crime (Access Economics 2004). Domestic violence

has wider impacts at work. Friends, family and colleagues may also take leave from work for various reasons, and staff may try to protect or support victims (Women's Health Victoria 2012: 13-14). Domestic violence also impedes women's capacity to gain and maintain employment (Murray and Powell 2008: 4). As McFerran (2011: 2) summarises,

The evidence is that women with a history of domestic violence have a more disrupted work history, are consequently on lower personal incomes, have had to change jobs more often and are employed at higher levels in casual and part time work than women with no experience of violence

Domestic violence also may 'come' to work, with the workplace a site of domestic violence and associated behaviours itself. For example, victims may experience physical or verbal harassment by perpetrators during work hours, and they may be stalked at or around their workplaces (Murray and Powell 2008: 4-5; Women's Health Victoria 2012: 14). Men seeking to coerce and control their female partners or ex-partners may target them at work to increase their control and compromise their economic independence (McFerran 2011: 3).

While domestic violence impacts on employment, employment in turn impacts on domestic violence. Participation in paid work allows some women to find assistance and support, to benefit from financial security and independence, and to maintain social networks and support which can be vital in gaining safety (Murray and Powell 2008: 6). Being in employment is a key pathway to women leaving a violent relationship (McFerran 2011: 2). Women may seek assistance in the workplace for experiences of violence, whether these occur inside or outside the workplace setting, through workplace support mechanisms and collegial networks (Powell 2011: 27).

### *Workplaces as contributors to violence against women*

Workplaces themselves may contribute to the problem of men's violence against women. To the extent that workplace norms and relations are marked by gender inequality, they intensify the wider gender inequalities in which violence against women flourishes. Workforces are influential spaces in which gender-inequitable norms and behaviours may be enforced, or challenged. At work, gender inequalities are produced and sustained by a variety of processes, including men's and women's internalisation of privilege and disadvantage; gendered constructions of particular occupations and of management and leadership; men's interactive performances or accomplishment of gender and dominance; men's collective social relations (including segregation, exclusion, and male-focused networking), and men's use of women's presence to construct masculinities and men's privilege (Flood and Pease 2005). To summarise,

Unjust gender relations are maintained by individual men's sexist and gendered practices, masculine workplace cultures, men's monopolies over decision-making and leadership, and powerful constructions of masculinity and male identity. (Flood and Pease 2005: 121)

Workforces also may contribute to violence against women through the ways in which they respond to employees who are victims of violence or its perpetrators.

There is now substantial evidence that violence-supportive attitudes are encouraged and institutionalised in the peer relations and cultures of particular organisations and workplaces. The institutional contexts for which most research has been done include male-dominated and homosocially-focused male university colleges, sporting clubs, workplaces, and military institutions (Flood and Pease 2006: 36-42). For example, in professional sports, there is evidence that risks of sexual violence against women by male athletes are higher in contexts and cultures involving intense male bonding, high male status and strong differentiation of gender roles, high alcohol and drug consumption, ideologies and practices of aggression and toughness, and practices of group sex (Flood and Pease 2006: 37). In military institutions, violence against

women is promoted by norms of gender inequality and other bonds that foster and justify abuse in particular peer cultures (Rosen *et al.* 2003; Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997). Interviews with female victims of violence in the Canadian military find that specific aspects of military culture contribute to and condone this violence (Harrison 2002). A US study provides quantitative support for an association between patriarchal male bonding in peer cultures and violence against women. Using survey data among 713 married male soldiers at an Army post in Alaska, Rosen *et al.* (2003: 1064–1065) found an association between ‘group disrespect’ (the presence of rude and aggressive behaviour, pornography consumption, sexualised discussion, and encouragement of group drinking) and the perpetration of intimate partner violence, at both individual and group levels.

Several mechanisms may produce the increased prevalence of violence-supportive attitudes and violent behaviour among men in such contexts. One is *group socialisation*: in joining particular sporting teams or fraternities, men are actively inducted into the existing norms and values of these contexts. Another is *identification*. Membership of a high-risk group may itself not be sufficient to increase one’s adherence to violence-supportive beliefs or one’s likelihood of assaultive behaviour, and members may also have to identify with the group and see it as a reference group (Humphrey and Kahn 2000: 1320). Another mechanism is *self-selection*: men with pre-existing violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours and an orientation towards other features of these contexts such as heavy drinking may join groups with similar norms.

Studies focused on or comparing particular occupational groups are rare, but they suggest that some workplace and professional cultures involve less violence-supportive norms than others and that occupational cultures and training can encourage positive shifts in violence-supportive attitudes. In a Hong Kong study, police officers and lawyers had narrower definitions of violence against women than psychologists, social workers, and nurses, which may reflect the former groups’ work in settings where legal and more restrictive definitions of criminal behaviour are dominant (Tang and Cheung 1997). White and Kurpius (1999) conducted an American study among people working or studying in mental health and counselling. They found that, alongside a persistent gender gap, undergraduates had more negative attitudes towards rape victims than graduate counselling students, who in turn had more negative attitudes than the mental health professionals. One factor here may be self-selection, where those men who stay in mental health and counselling are more sensitive to issues of gender and violence such that the gap between their and women’s views lessens (White and Kurpius 1999: 993). Another factor may be the cultures of these fields themselves, with counsellor training and occupational norms also encouraging intolerance for violence.

However, occupational cultures and training also can intensify violence-supportive norms. A Queensland study found no gender differences in blaming attributed to victims or assailants by male and female police officers (although both drew on gender stereotypes in their decision-making) (Stewart and Maddren 1997: 930). The authors suggest that this may reflect police training producing uniformity in attitudes. However, a very different interpretation of this uniformity is possible. Referring to the findings in some studies that there are few gender differences in police attitudes and behaviours regarding domestic violence, Stalans and Finn (2000) note that this may reflect the fact that female officers have learned the norms and rules of these male-dominated occupations and thus conform to masculine norms. Their own study found that while female and male police officers did not differ in their arrest rates, *experienced* female officers were more likely to recommend battered shelters, less likely to recommend marriage counselling, and gave greater emphasis to victims’ own decision-making (Stalans and Finn 2000). Male officers and rookie female officers approached domestic violence cases in similar ways, but experienced female officers were more empathetic to battered women and less likely to blame them. This may reflect such women having developed the confidence and security to challenge



men's norms regarding domestic violence, or the result of experiences of discrimination or harassment on the job. Thus, it appears that actual gender differences in attitudes and behaviours in the police force were initially obscured by the male dominance of this profession, but more experienced female officers were able to express them. Further mechanisms producing uniformity in police officers' attitudes include self-selection out of the force by women with contrary attitudes or being weeded out by training and promotion (Stalans and Finn 2000). This study does provide an example of occupational cultures reducing apparent gender differences in attitudes and behaviours regarding violence against women, but one in which such differences in fact were partially stifled or silenced by dominant masculine norms.

Any workplace involves informal social networks and peer relations, and these too can contribute to men's violence against women. A series of studies document that a particular risk factor for men's perpetration of violence against women is their participation and investment in homosocial male peer groups. Beginning in the 1990s, DeKeseredy *et al.* in the USA documented that male peer support for sexual assault, including young men's attachment (close emotional ties) to abusive peers and peers' informational support for sexual assault (peer guidance and advice that influences men to assault their dating partners), were significantly correlated with sexual assault (DeKeseredy and Kelly 1995; Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997). Among men, being more dependent on a male reference group for one's gender role self-concept is associated with attitudes conducive to the sexual harassment of women (Wade and Brittan-Powell 2001), while having a homosocially focused social life can restrict men's acceptance of more progressive views of gender roles (Bryant 2003). To the extent that individuals' peers share negative beliefs about gender and about violence and are involved in physically aggressive or coercive behaviours, those individuals are more likely to perpetrate relationship abuse (Reitzel-Jaffe and Wolfe 2001; Sellers *et al.* 2005: 389).

Among men in groups and contexts characterised by a hypermasculine subculture (whether in a workplace, a gang, or a sports team), higher violence-supportive attitudes and violent behaviours are shaped by several factors. The discussion earlier identified processes such as group socialisation, identification, and self-selection, and this account can be extended by focusing on investment in and conformity to social norms and bonds as key processes. Godenzi *et al.* (2001: 11) argue that in such contexts, 'abuse is a by-product of the men's attempt to maintain a social bond with a conventional or traditional social order marked by gender inequality'. One process is *attachment*, in which having close emotional ties to significant others means that one is more likely to take their concerns, wishes, and expectations into account. Another is *commitment*: men's investments in and loyalties to the dominant (patriarchal) social order and their interest in gaining the rewards of peer acceptance and status associated for example with sexually active and potentially abusive behaviour. Men's attitudes and behaviours also are shaped by *involvement*: their participation in activities associated with that sub-culture, including leisure activities involving time with patriarchal peers such as drinking or consuming and sharing pornography (Godenzi *et al.* 2001: 8). Finally, men's own *belief* in the legitimacy of the dominant system of values plays a role, although this belief of course is influenced by multiple factors including childhood socialisation and popular culture. Therefore, among men whose peer and social relations are characterised by norms and behaviours associated with violence against women, conformity with what is 'normal' in these contexts leads to violent attitudes and behaviours.

### **Workplaces as sites for prevention**

Workplaces have been identified as key settings for the prevention of men's violence against women (VicHealth 2007: 57). Organisations represent excellent sites for the introduction of prevention strategies to end violence against women, for several reasons. First, organizational efforts "scale up" the impact of violence prevention, in that they have the potential to influence

both their internal cultures and the communities which surround them. By changing its policies, practices and culture, an organisation can not only change from within, but also have an impact in surrounding communities, serve as an example for other organisations, influence wider policy, and inform community norms (Davis *et al.* 2006: 12). Organisations have the potential to reach large numbers of people and create conditions in which change can be promoted and sustained. Second, given the impacts of relationship and family violence documented earlier, employers are key stakeholders in prevention: “they are responsible for setting policy, sharing information, promoting skills development, and motivating employees, clients, consumers, and partners to become engaged in efforts to end violence at the individual, family, community and societal levels” (Wells *et al.* 2013: 19). Third, given the violence-supportive cultures of some workplaces or organizations, intensive intervention is needed.

There are a range of benefits for workplaces in preventing and reducing men’s violence against women, including direct and indirect economic and other benefits:

Direct benefits include increased productivity and decreased costs in relation to leave and staff replacement [...] Indirect benefits include supporting staff and being identified as an employer of choice who shows social responsibility and provides community leadership. [...] By being aware of domestic violence issues and having prevention strategies in place, employers can also better ensure that they are meeting equal opportunity and anti-discrimination requirements, as well as their duty of care in ensuring a safe work environment (Murray and Powell 2008: 3)

If workplaces are important sites for the prevention of violence against women, *what kind of* prevention activity is undertaken in workplaces?

### *Primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention*

One common way of classifying activities to prevent and respond to violence is a threefold classification in terms of *when* they occur in relation to violence:

- Before the problem starts: *Primary* prevention
  - Activities which take place *before* violence has occurred to prevent initial perpetration or victimisation.
- Once the problem has begun: *Secondary* prevention
  - Immediate responses *after* violence has occurred to deal with the short-term consequences of violence, to respond to those at risk, and to prevent the problem from occurring or progressing.
- Responding afterwards: *Tertiary* prevention
  - Long-term responses *after* violence has occurred to deal with the lasting consequences of violence, minimise its impact, and prevent further perpetration and victimisation.

Primary prevention strategies are implemented before the problem ever occurs. They are successful when the first instance of violence is prevented (Foshee *et al.* 1998: 45). Secondary prevention focuses on early identification and intervention, targeting those individuals at high risk for either perpetration or victimisation and working to reduce the likelihood of their further or subsequent engagement in or subjection to violence. Secondary prevention is intended to reverse progress towards violence and to reduce its impact. For example, activities may focus on

reducing opportunities for violence by supporting the men who are at risk of perpetrating violence. Secondary prevention efforts are successful “when victims stop being victimized [e.g. by leaving violent relationships] or perpetrators stop being violent” (Foshee *et al.* 1998: 45). Tertiary prevention is centered on responding after violence has occurred. Activities focus on minimising the impact of violence, restoring health and safety, and preventing further victimisation and perpetration (Chamberlain 2008: 3). Mostly, these activities include crisis care, counselling and advocacy, and criminal justice and counselling responses to perpetrators.

These different forms of prevention contribute to each other. For example, rapid and coordinated responses to individuals perpetrating sexual violence can reduce their opportunities for and likelihood of further perpetration, while effective responses to victims and survivors can reduce the impact of victimisation and prevent revictimisation (Chamberlain 2008: 4). In short, the effective and systematic application of tertiary strategies complements and supports primary prevention.

### *Workforce-based prevention*

In workforces, strategies for the *primary* prevention of intimate partner violence are scattered and underdeveloped. On the other hand, organisations and workforces are a common site for the development of improved responses to the occurrence of such violence. Most workplace-based efforts to reduce or prevent men’s violence against women are centered on secondary or tertiary prevention (Wells *et al.* 2013: 48–49). Strategies include training police, legal staff, and other personnel in appropriate responses to and interventions into intimate partner violence; developing coordinated community responses to intimate partner violence; and sensitising health care providers, encouraging routine screening for violence, and developing protocols for the proper management of abuse (World Health Organization 2002). There is evidence that such efforts do improve professional responses to the victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence, increase women’s safety, and assist their processes of recovery.

Workplaces are increasingly prominent sites for domestic violence prevention and intervention. In the USA, UK, and elsewhere, some larger companies now have domestic violence programs in their workplaces, it is mandatory in some jurisdictions for large organisations to have policies providing special leave related to domestic violence, and violence prevention organisations and trade unions have developed training manuals and resources for workplace-based prevention (Murray and Powell 2008: 7). Corporate alliances and public sector networks in the US and elsewhere have developed workplace programs regarding intimate partner violence. While most strategies focus on responses to victimisation (such as security measures, victim resources, and education), many companies also engage in activities designed to raise awareness in general of intimate partner violence (Lindquist *et al.* 2006).

Strategies for workplace prevention vary according to the size, location, and character of the workplace, who is initiating the activities, and whom they target. Typical activities focused on employees include:

- the implementation of policies regarding workplace responses to incidents of domestic violence; statements from management to staff condemning domestic violence and supporting domestic violence prevention in forums such as messages on payslips, workplace newsletters and intranet sites; the training of key personnel who are likely to come into contact with domestic violence issues in the workplace, including managers, employee assistance program staff and human resources personnel; and the display of posters and information sheets that provide information about domestic violence and sources of assistance (Murray and Powell 2008: 8).

Efforts may be employer-led, based on brokerage partnerships, union-based, or organised in

other ways (Murray and Powell 2008: 8). Employer-led efforts involve incorporating prevention strategies – such as flexible leave provisions, increased security, flexible shifts, and the provision of referral information – into existing human resources structures or organisational processes (Murray and Powell 2008: 9). In brokerage models, domestic violence prevention is done as part of philanthropic or corporate social responsibility activities. Businesses may support domestic violence services and promote awareness in their organisation and the wider community, and may receive awareness training and support in return (Murray and Powell 2008: 10). Unfortunately, little data is available, based on robust impact evaluations, with which to assess the effectiveness of these efforts (Murray and Powell 2008: 15).

### **Engaging men in workforce-based violence prevention**

In engaging men in the prevention of men's violence against women, there are important reasons to include strategies focused on workplaces. Workplaces are important gathering points for men, important spaces where men can be found. Paid work historically has been a central source of masculine identity and authority, the primary way in which many men define their value and being (Pease 2002: 97). Research on men, class, and work documents that whether on the factory shopfloor among working-class men or in boardrooms and offices among middle- and ruling-class men, there are powerful interrelationships between work, masculinities, and gender inequalities (Flood and Pease 2005). Workplaces are an important site of male leadership and influence, and they can be influential spaces where masculine norms are formed and enforced (Wells *et al.* 2013: 17-19).

What are some examples of workplace-based efforts to engage men in the prevention of men's violence against women? Given that men's violence against women is the outcome of a complex interplay of individual, relationship, social, and cultural factors, violence prevention too must work at multiple levels. There is a spectrum of primary prevention strategies, addressing determinants of men's violence at different levels of the social order (Flood 2011). I discuss examples of workplace-based efforts to engage men in primary prevention at different levels of the spectrum of prevention, beginning with those at the smallest levels involving individuals or face-to-face education and moving towards the largest levels involving organisations, communities, and policies and legislation.

The most localised form of prevention is transferring information and skills to individuals and increasing their capacity to prevent or avoid violence against women. Individual men (and women) can contribute here in their professional roles. For example, teachers, carers, and physicians may help boys and young men to increase their equitable attitudes, healthcare practitioners may engage patients and parents to promote healthy relationships, and leaders and public figures may speak to boys and men to encourage non-violence (Davis *et al.* 2006). Doctors, teachers, police, child care workers, and other professionals can play an important role in transmitting information, skills, and motivation to clients, community members, and colleagues, and they can be effective advocates for prevention policies (Davis *et al.* 2006). For example, the US Family Violence Prevention Fund encouraged coaches (and other adult men, including fathers, teachers, uncles, older brothers, and mentors) to teach boys that there is no place for violence in a relationship.

The second level of strategy concerns community education. One important stream here is face-to-face educational groups and programs. Education programs which are intensive, lengthy, and use a variety of teaching approaches have been shown to produce positive and lasting change in attitudes and behaviours (Flood 2005-2006). The vast majority of face-to-face education addressing violence against women takes place in schools and universities, and few programs are focused on men in workplaces. In relation to interpersonal violence, the most common primary prevention education that has occurred in workplaces in general concerns sexual harassment.

Various studies have demonstrated that workplace training can improve attitudes towards sexual harassment, among employees in universities and in federal government workplaces (Antecol and Cobb-Clark 2003). In fact, such training has been shown to have an effect on organisational cultures over and above the impact of individual training, in that more widespread training in a workplace is associated with a greater recognition of sexual harassment, regardless of whether or not individual training has been undertaken (Antecol and Cobb-Clark 2003). However, workplace training engaging men faces obvious barriers. There is evidence that men are not as receptive as women to organisational efforts to eliminate gender bias (Prime *et al.* 2009: 2). Men are less supportive of diversity programs for minorities and more likely than women to respond with backlash (Kidder *et al.* 2004: 93).

Another important stream of community education includes communication and social marketing strategies. Again, there is evidence that such campaigns can produce positive change in the attitudes and behaviours associated with men's perpetration of violence against women (Donovan and Vlasis 2005). And again, relatively few social marketing efforts have focused on men in particular workplaces or institutions.

Still at the level of community education, two strategies which are increasingly prominent are 'social norms' and 'bystander intervention' efforts. 'Social norms' campaigns highlight the gap for example between men's perceptions of other men's agreement with violence-supportive and sexist norms and the actual extent of this agreement. By gathering and publicising data on men's attitudes and behaviour, they seek to undermine men's conformity to sexist peer norms and increase their willingness to intervene in violent behaviour (Flood 2005-2006). 'Bystander intervention' approaches seek to place "a sense of responsibility and empowerment for ending sexual violence on the shoulders of all community members". They distinguish between 'passive' bystanders, who do not act or intervene, and 'active' or 'pro-social' bystanders' who take action – whether to stop the perpetration of a specific incident of violence, reduce the risk of violence escalating and prevent the physical, psychological and social harms that may result; or strengthen the conditions that work against violence occurring (Powell 2011: 8-10). Both these strategies are particularly relevant in workplaces.

A third level of prevention strategy involves educating providers and other professionals. There are a small number of initiatives which engage male professionals in workplaces in fostering gender equality or non-violence. For example, in Pakistan, an NGO called Rozan has run gender violence sensitization workshops with police in order to transform the way that the institution thinks about and responds to violence against women (Lang 2003: 11). In south and central America, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has trained soccer coaches to promote adolescent health and introduce gender equity in relationships to boys ages 8 to 12 (Schueller *et al.* 2005: 3).

The three levels of prevention discussed thus far can include strategies which take place in workplaces or which involve particular groups of workers or employees. However, a further level of prevention – changing organisational practices – is *focused* on workplaces and other institutions (Davis *et al.* 2006: 12). As articulated above, this level of prevention embodies the recognition that workplaces and other organisations can play key roles in building non-violent internal cultures and in fostering wider social change.

In focusing on workplaces, one plausibly could stretch the concept of 'bystander' above such that it applied also to these institutional entities. This would have value in highlighting the roles of organisations in allowing and sustaining such behaviours as domestic violence or sexual harassment and their collective (and indeed legal) responsibilities to change. A workplace, through its policies, procedures, and leadership, may be a passive or prosocial bystander to men's violence against women (Powell 2011: 28). This assumes that such entities have agency or the

capacity to act, and this will be truer of specific organisations or workplaces rather than more diffuse or sprawling institutions (McDonald and Flood 2012: 26).

There are very few primary prevention initiatives which engage men in workplaces in organisational change. However, if we count professional sports players as workplace ‘professionals’, then some of the most well-developed workplace initiatives aimed at men have taken place among athletes in sporting workplaces. In Australia, two of Australia’s most popular sporting codes – Australian Rules football and rugby league – have developed violence prevention programs for their athletes and the wider communities associated with the sports. Both are teams-based, contact sports played largely by males. The Australian Football League (AFL) was thrown into crisis in 2004 after a series of allegations of sexual and physical assaults against women by AFL players. In the wake of these alleged incidents, and under considerable public pressure, the AFL announced their intention to address the issue of violence against women within the AFL and beyond. As a result, the organisation announced the adoption of a *Respect and Responsibility* program designed to “create safe and inclusive environments for women at all levels of Australian Football and beyond”. In the wake of similar crises, Rugby League has also taken steps to address violence against women through their player education program *Playing by the Rules*. However, *Respect and Responsibility* represents a more comprehensive and far reaching program to prevent violence against women, in that it addresses an entire organisation, not only some members of that organisation.

The AFL’s *Respect and Responsibility* initiative was formulated and managed in collaboration with violence prevention agencies, and launched in November 2005. It incorporated model anti-sexual harassment and anti-sexual discrimination procedures across the AFL and its member clubs, changes to AFL rules relating to problematic or violent conduct, the education of players and other Club officials, dissemination of model policies and procedures, and a public education program. In 2005, a full-time *Respect and Responsibility* manager was appointed by the AFL, in an ongoing position. In 2008, AFL Victoria extended the initiative with the program “Fair Game – Respect Matters”. This is intended to foster cultural change throughout the sporting code, in encouraging community clubs to assess their own cultures and inviting players, coaches and supporters to improve their attitudes and behaviours towards women. The program is ongoing, and currently undergoing scholarly evaluation.

A recent Australian violence prevention project which at least aspired to generate organisational change is called *Stand Up: Domestic Violence is Everyone’s Business*. Run by the Melbourne-based NGO Women’s Health Victoria, this workplace program aimed to strengthen the organisational capacity of a male-dominated workplace to promote gender equality and non-violent norms (Durey 2011: 6). The program took place over 2007-2011 with the trucking company Linfox. It focused in particular on building the capacity of employees, particularly men, to challenge violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours. The project began with training for employees, focused on bystander intervention, and was extended with engagement with the company at other levels including the development of domestic violence policies. However, the project faced significant institutional barriers and its impact was uneven. The training itself was limited in duration, and there were limits to the whole-of-company engagement in and support for the project. The report on this project illustrates the wider truth that deliberate culture change in workplaces is complex, takes time, requires leadership, and ultimately, can be difficult to achieve (Durey 2011: 74). The project has since been followed by a guide to developing workplace programs for the primary prevention of violence against women (Women’s Health Victoria 2012).

While efforts to engage men in violence prevention in corporate workplaces are relatively rare, there are some significant initiatives engaging corporate men in the promotion of gender

equality. One substantial Australia effort is Male Champions of Change. As Wells (*et al.* 2013: 24) describes,

Male Champions of Change (MCC) is a corporate initiative composed of business and institutional leaders convened by the Australian Human Rights Commission. MCC has a broad mandate of promoting and inspiring women's leadership in the workplace but includes a specific objective to address violence in the workplace. The initiative includes CEOs and board members from corporations who are leading efforts to address women's equality in the workplace. MCC highlights three incremental steps in achieving gender equality in the workplace: promote organizational interest and work to remove barriers and challenges; shift from policy to practice and implementation, ensuring commitment and buy-in across all levels of leadership and front line; and be a driving force for true culture change within an organization where a culture of inclusive leadership is emphasized [...]. This initiative helps to advance the point that men and women can work together to promote greater equality and safety in the workplace and in society.

The largest-scale level of prevention focuses on influencing policies and legislation. Law and policy are valuable tools in fostering primary prevention strategies in the workplace. For example, they may be used to mandate workplace-based prevention efforts, support primary prevention initiatives, and strengthen the legislated obligations of workplaces and other organisations.

## **Conclusion**

In order to build gender-just workplaces, we must address those dimensions of gender inequality which constrain or influence women's and men's workplace participation and experience. Men's violence against women is a critical dimension of gender inequality with a profound impact on the workplace. In turn, workplaces themselves may contribute to the problem of men's violence against women through violence-supportive cultures and institutionalised patterns of male privilege. Efforts to address this violence thus far have focused largely on secondary and tertiary prevention, providing support for victims and survivors and, to a lesser degree, responding to perpetrators. These must be complemented by a systematic engagement in primary prevention. In particular, we must engage men in workplaces in the primary prevention of men's violence against women. There are some promising workplace-based initiatives focused on men, and they are buttressed by a much more well-established body of experience and scholarship on involving men in violence prevention in other settings. However, much more must be done if workplaces are to become both places of and contributors to gender equality and non-violence.

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