

**ATTACHMENT MF2**

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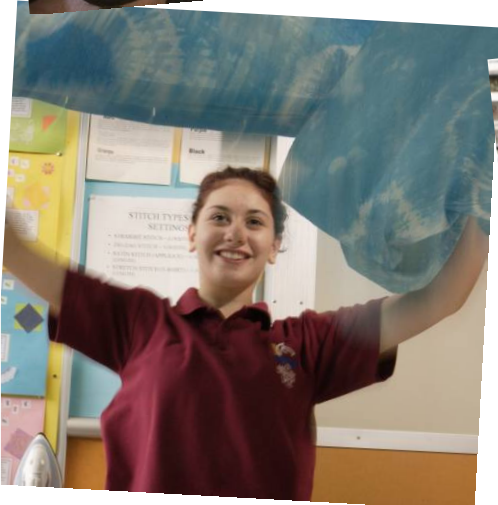


Department of Education and  
Early Childhood Development

# Respectful Relationships Education

Violence prevention and  
respectful relationships  
education in Victorian  
secondary schools

November 2009



**Published by the  
Communications Division  
for the Student Wellbeing Division  
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development**  
Melbourne  
November 2009

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Authorised by the Department of Education  
and Early Childhood Development,  
2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne, Victoria, 3002.  
ISBN 978-0-7594-0567-7  
This document is also available on the internet at  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/)

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## Executive Summary

This report is intended to advance violence prevention efforts in schools in Victoria and around Australia. It is the outcome of the Violence Prevention, Intervention and Respectful Relationships Education in Victorian Secondary Schools Project, undertaken by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) on behalf of the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD).

The report is designed to achieve the following goals:

- to map the violence prevention, intervention and respectful relationships programs that are currently running in Victorian government secondary schools
- to identify and explore best practice in violence prevention, intervention and respectful relationships education in schools in Victoria and elsewhere
- to inform the development and implementation of violence prevention and respectful relationships policy and programming in Victoria
- to increase DEECD's ability to respond more effectively to queries from other government departments, the media and the general public regarding the role of schools in violence prevention and the promotion of respectful relationships.

The report focuses on the prevention of forms of violence that occur in intimate and family relationships, including physical or sexual violence by boyfriends and girlfriends, intimate partners or ex-partners, family members and others. Such forms of violence may overlap, or have similarities, with other forms of violence such as bullying, homophobic violence and racist violence. However, these other forms of violence are not the focus of this report. The report does not seek to make recommendations for policies, programs or processes, but rather enhances the evidence base for respectful relationship education in schools.

The report is based on a review of violence prevention programs in Victoria that occurred in two stages. Stage One (May to August 2008) aimed to identify violence prevention and respectful relationships programs currently operating in, or being delivered to, Victorian government secondary schools, as well as to distil principles of good practice in schools-based programs from the national and international literature.<sup>1</sup> Stage Two (September 2008 to May 2009) involved a more detailed analysis of programs identified as good practice or 'promising practice' models, interviews with key informants and further analysis of existing research on violence prevention. Comments by key informants have been integrated into the text, but in order to protect confidentiality have not been attributed to individuals.

This report, *Respectful Relationships Education: Violence prevention and respectful relationships education in Victorian secondary schools*, is in five parts. **Part 1** provides an overview of violence prevention in schools, the rationale for working among children and young people

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<sup>1</sup> The focus of the Project Brief was on programs that are designed to promote respectful gender relations and to address attitudes and behaviours that might be harassing, abusive or violent towards women and girls. Schools were advised that relevant programs were likely to include terminology such as anti-violence, violence/sexual assault prevention, healthy/respectful relationships, relationships education, anti-discrimination, gender awareness, early intervention or safe dating.



and locating our efforts in schools, and the policy context in Victoria and at a national level. **Part 2** reviews the literature on the effectiveness of schools-based violence prevention and respectful relationships education. This evidence is distilled in **Part 3** into five elements of good practice in violence prevention education in schools, **Part 4** maps the state of the field in Victoria and elsewhere, assessing contemporary efforts in light of criteria for good practice and highlighting good or promising Victorian, interstate, and international violence prevention or healthy relationships programs.

**Part 5** offers proposals for the programming and policies which will most generate most progress in violence prevention and respectful relationships education in Victoria's schools. On the basis of national and international research on and experience in schools-based violence prevention, the report provides signposts for an implementation approach which is most likely to be both effective and sustainable. A sound approach is integrated into school teaching and learning, coordinated, oriented to capacity-building, guided by a range of stakeholders, and involves ongoing evaluation.

To enact this approach in the short term, in **Part 5** the report proposes that steps be taken to establish the role of the Victorian Government in both supporting and building capacity for schools-based violence prevention and in implementing a demonstration project in violence prevention in Victorian schools. The latter would represent a focused effort to implement a comprehensive learning and teaching program. It would begin with the minimum standards identified in **Parts 2 and 3** and aim to reach standards of 'ideal' practice as capacity increases. In the long-term, and building on these efforts, violence prevention and respectful relationships curricula can be comprehensively integrated into learning and teaching in Victorian schools.

## **Part 1: Violence prevention in schools**

Primary prevention has become a central focus of community and government efforts to address violence in relationships and families. One of the most important populations among whom violence prevention efforts have been implemented is children and young people. These efforts often take place in schools.

There is a powerful rationale for focusing efforts on fostering respectful relationships among children and young people. Early interventions with children and young people can have a lasting effect on their relationships in the future. Many children and young people are exposed to and influenced by violence in relationships and families, including in their own dating relationships, and violence-supportive attitudes, norms, and relations are already visible among young people.

Equally, there is a powerful rationale for locating respectful relationships and violence prevention education in schools. On the positive side, schools have distinct advantages as sites of violence prevention education, and schools-based prevention education has been shown to work. On the negative side, school climates and cultures themselves can sometimes be conducive to violence by and among children and young people, and schools may be sites of violence perpetration and victimisation.

Schools-based violence prevention operates in the context of state and national policies and curriculum's in education. In Victoria, the Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development (2008) outlines a new vision for education and early childhood development.

The Blueprint focuses on supporting children and young people to develop the knowledge and skills they need for modern life. Also of particular relevance in the Victorian context is Preventing Violence Before It Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women in Australia (VicHealth), the State Plan to Prevent Violence against Women (currently under development) and state education policies and curriculums. At a national level, the most significant policy development is Time for Action: The National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children, 2009–2021.

## **Part 2: The elements of good practice**

On the basis of current evidence, violence prevention and respectful relationships initiatives among young people can make a real difference, producing lasting change in attitudes and behaviours. Although few Australian programs have been evaluated, and existing evaluations often are limited in conceptual or methodological terms, existing evaluations do show positive results.

National and international research and experience have generated an increasing consensus on the elements of good practice in violence prevention and respectful relationships education in schools.

## **Part 3: Five good practice criteria**

This report identifies five criteria for good practice:

- 1 a whole-school approach
- 2 a program framework and logic
- 3 effective curriculum delivery
- 4 relevant, inclusive and culturally sensitive practice
- 5 impact evaluation.

Together, these criteria represent the minimum standard for effective violence prevention and respectful relationships education in schools. A checklist of the components of the five criteria can be found in appendix one.

## **Part 4: The state of violence prevention**

There are some very good violence prevention and health relationships programs operating in Victorian secondary schools, however most do not involve a whole-of-school engagement, have short durations, and lack substantive evaluation. This is true too of initiatives around the country.

This report identifies three programs in Victoria that come closest to meeting standards of good practice created by VicHealth, and each has distinct strengths and limitations. Others are promising in that they contain important elements of good practice. Some interstate programs also show real strengths, as do well-developed international initiatives.

**Part 5: Advancing violence prevention**

There is at present a significant opportunity to promote respectful relationships among young people. There is also growing momentum, expertise and evidence in schools-based violence prevention within a National and State context from which to draw expertise and embed the growing evidence base.

Respectful relationships and violence prevention education in Victorian schools will best be advanced by an approach that is integrated into school teaching and learning, coordinated, oriented to capacity-building, guided by a range of stakeholders, and which involves monitoring and evaluation. In the short term, most progress will be generated by supporting and building capacity for schools-based violence prevention and in implementing a demonstration project in violence prevention in Victorian schools.



# 1. Violence prevention in schools

One of the most important populations among whom violence prevention efforts have been implemented is children and young people. Schools are now significant sites of violence prevention and respectful relationships education, both in Australia and internationally. The growth of schools-based prevention work is one reflection of the widespread emphasis now being given to the primary prevention of violence.

## Prevention in schools

There is growing momentum in schools-based violence prevention in Australia. Violence prevention and respectful relationships education is an important focus of the Victorian Government's 10-year State Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and the Federal Government's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (discussed in more detail below). The Violence Prevention, Intervention and Respectful Relationships Education in Victorian Secondary Schools Project has coincided with and complements the construction of a national framework for sexual violence prevention through education.<sup>2</sup> In addition, as noted in more detail below, particular violence prevention programs in Victoria and elsewhere in Australia show increased sophistication and comprehensiveness in their engagement with schools, teaching methods, research basis and evaluation.

There are powerful rationales for addressing prevention efforts to children and young people, and locating them in schools. Influential frameworks for primary prevention such as VicHealth's publication *Preventing Violence Before It Occurs* identify education as a key setting for action.<sup>3</sup> As it notes, education programs among young people in secondary schools represent a priority for violence prevention, requiring immediate development.<sup>4</sup>

## Primary prevention

Over the last two decades, primary prevention has become a central focus of community and government efforts to address violence in relationships and families. Primary prevention refers to efforts to prevent violence from occurring in the first place. Primary prevention strategies are implemented before the problem ever occurs, to prevent initial perpetration or victimisation. They are successful when the first instance of violence is prevented.<sup>5</sup> The growing emphasis on prevention reflects the recognition that the community must not only

<sup>2</sup> Carmody, M., S. Evans, C. Krogh, M. Flood, M. Heenan and G. Ovenden. (2009). *Framing Best Practice: National Standards for the Primary Prevention of Sexual Assault through Education*. Sydney: National Sexual Assault Prevention Education Project for NASASV, University of Western Sydney.

<sup>3</sup> VicHealth. (2007). *Preventing Violence Before It Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Victoria*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth).

<sup>4</sup> VicHealth 2007, pp. 18–19.

<sup>5</sup> Foshee, V., K.E. Bauman, X.B. Arriaga, R.W. Helms, G.G. Koch and G.F. Linder (1998). An Evaluation of Safe Dates, an Adolescent Dating Violence Prevention Program. *American Journal of Public Health*, 88, pp. 45–50, p. 45.

respond to the victims and perpetrators of violence, but also work to prevent violence from occurring at all. The underlying causes of violence must be addressed in order to reduce rates of violence and ultimately to eliminate it altogether. Primary prevention efforts complement work with victims and survivors, but do not replace or take priority over interventions within this work.

Primary prevention includes a wide range of strategies, from face-to-face education sessions and social marketing campaigns to community development, organisational change, and policy and legal reform.<sup>6</sup> These are intended to shift the attitudes and social norms that support violence, to challenge the unjust power relations that sustain and are sustained by violence, to address the social conditions associated with violence, and to promote non-violent norms, intimate and family relations, and communities. Primary prevention activities are complemented by two further forms of prevention. Secondary prevention focuses on early identification and intervention, targeting those individuals at high risk of 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.<sup>7</sup> Tertiary prevention is centred on longer-term responses after violence has occurred. Activities focus on minimising the impact of violence, restoring health and safety, and preventing further victimisation and perpetration.<sup>8</sup>

Among children and young people in schools, primary prevention efforts often centre on the promotion respectful relationships. These are seen as relationships – among peers, dating partners and others – characterised by non-violence, equality, mutual consideration, trust and a host of other positive qualities. Respectful relationships are the desirable alternative to the unequal and disrespectful relationships that are often the context for violence and abuse.

## The rationale for violence prevention among children and young people, and in schools

### Among children and young people<sup>9</sup>

In order to prevent violence in relationships and families, there are five powerful reasons to focus efforts on children and young people. Perhaps the most obvious rationale for ‘starting young’ is that it can have a lasting effect on children’s and young people’s later relationships. Adolescence is a crucial period in terms of women’s and men’s formation of respectful, non-violent relationships later in life.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See the following for an overview of the ‘spectrum of prevention’: Flood, M. (2007). Background document for *Preventing Violence Before It Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Victoria*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation.

<sup>7</sup> Foshee *et al.* (1998). p. 45.

<sup>8</sup> Chamberlain, L. (2008). *A Prevention Primer for Domestic Violence: Terminology, Tools, and the Public Health Approach*. VAWnet: The National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women (March), p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> This discussion is based in part on the following: Flood, M. (2007). Background document for *Preventing Violence Before It Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Victoria*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation.

<sup>10</sup> National Campaign Against Violence and Crime. (1998). *Working With Adolescents to Prevent Domestic Violence*. Canberra: NCAVAC Unit, Attorney-General’s Department.

Males' and females' adult relationships are shaped in important ways by the norms and practices they take on in adolescence. Interventions at this stage can change young people's personal and relationship trajectories, preventing problems in adulthood. Thus, early policy investment generates long-term benefits.

Many children and young people experience violence in their homes; one in four young people report having witnessed an act of physical violence against their mother or stepmother.<sup>11</sup> UNICEF estimates that between 75,000 and 640,000 Australian children and young people live with domestic violence.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the impact on families and communities, such violence also has significant social, health and economic costs, and can have an impact on later relationships.

Young people are already being subjected to, and perpetrating, violence themselves. As well as experiencing violence by their parents and other family members, young people – especially girls and young women – can suffer violence in their own dating relationships. Young women face high risks of violence, particularly sexual violence.<sup>13</sup> One in seven girls and young women aged 12 to 20 (14 per cent) have experienced rape or sexual assault.<sup>14</sup> Large numbers of girls and young women are forced, coerced, or pressured into unwanted sexual activity: 30.2 per cent of sexually active Year 10 girls and 26.6 per cent of sexually active Year 12 girls have experienced unwanted sex.<sup>15</sup> Like violence against adult women, dating and relationship violence has a profound impact on girls' and young women's health and well-being. Substantial numbers of boys and young men use physical violence or sexual violence, or report a willingness to do so.

Another reason for 'starting young' is that, among children and young people, there is already some degree of tolerance for violence against girls and women.<sup>16</sup> Younger males are particularly likely to endorse violence against women, some gender norms among teenagers 'normalise' sexual coercion, and substantial proportions of young men continue to be tolerant of intimate partner violence.<sup>17</sup> Children and young people are exposed to high levels of violence-supportive messages in the media and wider community, in a context of tolerance of violence against women by a large number of Australians.<sup>18</sup> This

<sup>11</sup> National Crime Prevention. (2001). *Young People & Domestic Violence: National Research on Young People's Attitudes and Experiences of Domestic Violence*. Canberra: Crime Prevention Branch, Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department.

<sup>12</sup> UNICEF. (2006). *Behind Closed Doors: The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children*. Geneva: United Nations Children's Fund.

<sup>13</sup> Keel, M. (2005) Prevention of Sexual Assault: Working with Adolescents within the Education System. *ACSSA Aware*, No. 8: 16–25.

<sup>14</sup> National Crime Prevention 2001, p. 115.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, A.M.A., P. Agius, S. Dyson, A. Mitchell and P. Pitts (2003) *Secondary Students and Sexual Health: Results of the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Survey of Australian Secondary Students, HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health*. Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University.

<sup>16</sup> See for example Urbis Keys Young. (2004). *National Framework for Sexual Assault Prevention*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra; National Crime Prevention. (1999). *Pathways to Prevention: Developmental and Early Intervention Approaches to Crime in Australia*. Canberra: National Crime Prevention, Attorney General's Department; Anderson, V. N., D. Simpson-Taylor and D. J. Hermann. (2004). Gender, Age, and Rape-Supportive Rules. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 50(1–2): 77–90; National Youth Affairs Research Scheme. (1995). *Young People's Perceptions of and Attitudes to Sexual Violence*. Hobart: National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.

<sup>17</sup> Flood, M. and B. Pease. (2006). *The Factors Influencing Community Attitudes in Relation to Violence Against Women: A Critical Review of the Literature*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth).

does not mean that violence prevention strategies among young people are 'too late', but it does mean that violence prevention strategies must address already existing patterns of dating violence and normative supports.

Finally, violence prevention education among children and youth has been shown to work. After three decades of violence prevention work and research among children and young people, a considerable amount is known about both the bases or causes of interpersonal violence and the strategies that can make a positive difference. In particular, there is evidence that schools-based strategies can lessen perpetration and victimisation. The report returns to this below.

### **In schools<sup>19</sup>**

There is a strong rationale for locating violence prevention efforts in schools. Perhaps the most obvious rationale is a practical or pragmatic one. Schools have distinct advantages as sites of violence prevention and respectful relationships education. Schools are the sites at which children and young people spend much of their time. Children and young people in schools are 'a mass and captive audience',<sup>20</sup> in the charge of teachers and professionals capable of managing and (to varying degrees) delivering programs. Schools have scheduled sessions and ready-made groups and, in relation to evaluation, they allow the repeated collection of data over event-bounded timeframes.<sup>21</sup> In delivering violence prevention curriculums through an existing universal infrastructure, prevention programs have the capacity to reach a wide audience relatively efficiently and cost-effectively (although additional investment is required to embed and support a sustained program of school-based violence prevention).<sup>22</sup> There is potential for synergy between violence prevention and respectful relationships curriculum as well as other school curriculum.<sup>23</sup> More widely, schools are institutions focused on the education of children and young people.<sup>24</sup> In schools, therefore, violence prevention can reach young populations relatively easily, and can be added to existing curriculums, processes and pedagogy.

Another pragmatic rationale for locating violence prevention efforts in schools is that it has been done before. Knowledge and practice resources required for the delivery of schools-based prevention programs are well developed in Victoria, nationally and internationally.

In addition, children and young people themselves want violence prevention activity in schools. Citing a variety of studies, Ellis (2008)

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<sup>18</sup> VicHealth (2006) *Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth).

<sup>19</sup> This section first was written by Michael Flood for the NASASV framework for sexual violence prevention authored by Carmody *et al.* (2009), and appears in modified form in the framework.

<sup>20</sup> Ellis, J. (2008). Primary Prevention of Domestic Abuse Through Education. In C. Humphreys, C. Houghton, and J. Ellis (eds). *Literature Review: Better Outcomes for Children and Young People affected by Domestic Abuse – Directions for Good Practice*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government, p. 125.

<sup>21</sup> Hilton, N.Z., G.T. Harris, M.E. Rice, T.S. Krans and S.E. Lavigne. (1998). Antiviolence Education in High Schools: Implementation and Evaluation. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 13(6): 726–742, p. 737.

<sup>22</sup> VicHealth 2007, p. 19.

<sup>23</sup> VicHealth 2007, p. 19.

<sup>24</sup> Hassell, I. and K. Hanna. (2007) *School-Based Violence Prevention Programmes: A Literature Review*, prepared for the Accident Compensation Corporation by the Institute of Public Policy, New Zealand, p. 59.

notes that ‘children themselves have stated that they want lessons in school on domestic abuse ... Where they have had this opportunity, an overwhelming majority report the lessons were positive and worthwhile’.<sup>25</sup>

Schools have further advantages for violence prevention and respectful relationships education. Experience in prevention programs addressing violence, substance abuse and delinquency among young children suggests that schools are particularly well placed to facilitate, or be the site for, partnerships between young people, parents, teachers and others such as social workers and counsellors.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, to the extent that parent–teacher collaborations are a part of school-based violence prevention, they increase investment in, and thus the effectiveness of, the program<sup>27</sup> and they engage and strengthen ‘natural’ communities.<sup>28</sup> For both primary and secondary prevention efforts, locating programs in schools increases their accessibility and is less stigmatising than services provided in other settings, such as mental health settings.<sup>29</sup> Schools also provide pastoral care and welfare services, allowing them to combine primary, secondary and tertiary prevention activities.

Perhaps the most compelling rationale for locating violence prevention efforts in schools is that it is there that the most substantial body of evidence of effectiveness can be found. In other words, schools-based prevention works – particularly if done well. Of the wide range of primary prevention strategies identified in VicHealth’s review, schools-based programs provide the strongest evidence of effectiveness.<sup>30</sup> A series of evaluations have documented that intensive and long-term education programs in schools produce lasting change in attitudes and behaviours.<sup>31</sup> The evaluation of schools-based prevention efforts is discussed in Part 2 below.

Violence prevention also generates benefits for schools, and therefore for children’s overall education and development. Violence prevention helps to make schools safe and supportive environments, to improve children’s social, behavioural and academic successes, and to lessen the amount of time and energy spent on resolving conflicts and managing violent and disruptive behaviour in and outside classrooms.<sup>32</sup>

However, there are three further reasons for locating violence prevention and respectful relationships education in schools:

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<sup>25</sup> Ellis, p. 125.

<sup>26</sup> Hassell and Hannah 2007, pp. 42–43.

<sup>27</sup> Wolfe, D. A., P. G. Jaffe and C. V. Crooks. (2006). *Adolescent Risk Behaviors: Why Teens Experiment and Strategies to Keep Them Safe*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 131.

<sup>28</sup> Webster-Stratton, C. and T. Taylor. (2001). Nipping Early Risk Factors in the Bud: Preventing Substance Abuse, Delinquency, and Violence in Adolescence Through Interventions Targeted at Young Children (0–8 Years). *Prevention Science*, 2(3), 165–192, pp. 183–4.

<sup>29</sup> Hassell and Hannah 2007, p. 43.

<sup>30</sup> VicHealth 2007.

<sup>31</sup> Flood, M. (2005–06) Changing Men: Best Practice in Sexual Violence Education. *Women Against Violence*, 18: 26–36.

<sup>32</sup> Tutty, L., C. Bradshaw, W.E. Thurston, L. Tunstall, M.E. Dewar, D. Toy-Pries, D. Thomlinson, D. Este, L. Meadows, W. Josephson, S. Dobko, J. Proulx, S. Perrault, M. McDonald and K. Nixon. (2002). *School-based Violence Prevention Programs: A Resource Manual to Prevent Violence Against Girls and Young Women*. Calgary, AB: RESOLVE Alberta, p. 12.

- 1 school climates and cultures can sometimes be conducive to violence by and among children and young people
- 2 school peers play critical roles in young people's involvements in violence
- 3 schools may be sites of violence perpetration and victimisation.

Schools are one of the main environments in which children and young people learn, negotiate and potentially contest the norms and attitudes that encourage and maintain interpersonal violence. In other words, violence-supportive cultures are evident (to varying degrees) in schools, particularly in young people's peer cultures. Schools themselves are key institutions in the production of the normative gender identities that can shape violence.<sup>33</sup> Thus, situating programs in schools is desirable, as programs can target those aspects of the school climate that are conducive to violence.<sup>34</sup>

Peers have a powerful influence on the involvement of young people in violence, whether as perpetrators, victims, or bystanders. For example, among males, there is consistent evidence that peer support for intimate partner violence is an important predictor of men's perpetration of sexual and physical abuse. Young men with 'rape-supporting social relationships' – that is, male friends who give advice, for example that girls owe them sex, and who approve of or use violence against girls and women – are more likely to use sexual and physical abuse themselves.<sup>35</sup> Having friends or knowing other young people who are experiencing violence in their romantic relationships is a significant risk factor for violence. This may normalise violence, or may represent contact with delinquent peers.<sup>36</sup> However, peer influence may also be positive: there is evidence that peers are an important source of support for children living with domestic violence.<sup>37</sup>

The school should not be the only setting for violence prevention among children and young people. Schools-focused strategies miss those children and young people who are not engaged in schooling and who may be most at risk of violence, and it does not directly target specific at-risk populations and environments. Prevention programs should also address those young people who do not attend school, and should address young people through other means and contexts associated with increased risks of victimisation.<sup>38</sup> These include homeless young people, children living in poverty, or in families receiving welfare or whose parents are incarcerated, children leaving juvenile detention or foster care, young parents, and girls and young women under protective services care.<sup>39</sup> Schools-based efforts should be complemented by strategies of community engagement and community mobilisation.<sup>40</sup> Community and societal strategies have

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<sup>33</sup> Ellis, p. 125.

<sup>34</sup> Hassell and Hannah 2007, p. 45.

<sup>35</sup> Flood 2007.

<sup>36</sup> Vezina, J. and M. Herbert (2007) Risk Factors for Victimization in Romantic Relationships of Young Women: A Review of Empirical Studies and Implications for Prevention. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 8(1): 33–66.

<sup>37</sup> Ellis, p. 125.

<sup>38</sup> Rosewater, A. (2003) *Promoting Prevention, Targeting Teens: An Emerging Agenda to Reduce Domestic Violence*. San Francisco, CA: Family Violence Prevention Fund; Vezina and Herbert.

<sup>39</sup> Rosewater 2003.

<sup>40</sup> Family Violence Prevention Fund (2004) *Preventing Family Violence: Lessons from the Community Engagement Initiative*. San Francisco, CA: FVPF.



been under-utilised in violence prevention thus far, and without them, prevention efforts will be less able to address the various social contexts in which violence occurs and the social norms, gender roles and power relations that underpin them.<sup>41</sup> While violence prevention programs that take place outside school settings and have been evaluated are rare, there are sound reasons for complementing universal, school-based efforts with others focused on at-risk populations and environments and using non-school settings such as families, community and faith-based organisations, and media.<sup>42</sup>

## The policy context in the state and the nation

Schools-based violence prevention and respectful relationships education operates in the context of state and national policies and curriculums in education. This section identifies relevant policies and curriculums. Part 5, returns to issues of policy and curriculums when examining how best to advance violence prevention and respectful relationships education in Victorian schools.

### Prevention policy in Victoria

The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) has committed to the current project as part of a whole-of-government plan for the primary prevention of violence against women. The project has the support of Ministers overseeing family violence reform, and is monitored by an interdepartmental committee. This is an important 'first step' in the development of a 10-year State Plan to Prevent Violence against Women, which has education as one of its key settings.

The primary prevention of violence against women is the next step in the Government's family violence reform agenda. This agenda has previously concentrated on 'response end' initiatives, such as legislative reform, the strengthening and integration of the family violence service systems (police, courts, specialist and mainstream services), criminal justice reforms in the area of sexual assault, and the development of an Indigenous Family Violence Ten-Year Plan - Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families - towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities. However, it was recognised that, despite the necessary and ongoing nature of these responses, violence against women would not be reduced without an effort to 'stop it before it starts'.

In 2006, VicHealth was commissioned to review existing research and expert evidence and develop a conceptual framework: Preventing Violence Before It Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women in Australia. The Victorian Government endorsed the framework in 2007.

The research informing the framework suggests that multi-level, integrated and reinforcing strategies should be implemented across a range of settings to prevent violence. However, the research does suggest that there is an immediate need for education programs targeted at young people in secondary school settings.

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<sup>41</sup> Flood 2007.

<sup>42</sup> Vezina and Herbert, p. 60; Whitaker, D., S. Morrison, C. Lindquist, S. R. Hawkins, J.A. O'Neil, A. M. Nesius, A. Mathew and L. Reese. (2006.) A Critical Review of Interventions for the Primary Prevention of Perpetration of Partner Violence. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 11(2): 151–166, pp. 162–163.

On the basis of these findings, \$0.5 million was committed to prevention in the 2008–09 State Budget. In the first instance, funds were allocated to the present project and for violence prevention initiatives in secondary schools based on the project’s research. In the second instance, funds were committed to develop a State Plan to Prevent Violence against Women, based on the VicHealth framework, and the present project. Like the VicHealth framework, the Victorian Government’s State Plan to Prevent Violence against Women is particularly significant in identifying education as one of a number of key settings where prevention strategies can be targeted and have been shown to succeed.

### **Relevant education policies and curriculums in Victoria**

The overarching education policy context for violence prevention in Victorian schools is the DEECD Corporate Plan and its Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development. In relation to schools-based violence prevention and respectful relationships education programs in particular, a current Victorian Government educational initiative of relevance is DEECD’s model for Whole-school Learning in Sexuality Education. This model is supported by *Catching On Everywhere*, a resource for sexuality education program development in Victorian schools. Developed by DEECD and the Department of Human Services, it includes a planning resource (which outlines key concepts and the sexuality education policy environment), along with a three-year program development plan and audit tool. The case studies outlined in *Catching On Everywhere* also provide useful guidance for the development of policy and programs for a whole-school learning approach to sexuality education that could in many respects be applied to violence prevention. However, the curriculum resource does not include substantial content on violence in relationships and families, so it is relevant more as a model of curriculum integration than for its content on violence prevention.

Under the banner ‘catching on’, DEECD assists schools in sexuality education through the following resources:

- *Catching On Everywhere* – a program development resource that supports the Model for Whole-school Learning in Sexuality Education and provides a literature review, a curriculum audit tool, program guidelines and school case examples
- *Catching On-line* – an extensive website for principals, teachers, parents and others
- *Catching On Everywhere* forums – statewide professional learning to support the program development resource and the website
- *Catching On for Years 9 & 10* – a secondary school curriculum resource.

Further resources, including a primary school curriculum resource, are under development.

Various Victorian Government educational strategies are relevant to the current project, including:

- the *Gender Education Strategy for Victorian Schools*
- the *Framework for Student Support Services*
- Social Competencies: An integrated approach to linking student learning and wellbeing

- the *Safe Schools are Effective Schools* policy addressing bullying including cyberbullying.

Curriculum and assessment in Victorian schools were revised in 2005, resulting in the new Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), which were implemented in 2006. The Physical, Personal and Social Learning Strand is one of three interrelated strands for the Prep (kindergarten) to Year 10 curriculum. Within the strand are the domains of Health and Physical Education, Personal Learning, and Interpersonal Development. Many violence prevention or healthy/respectful relationships programs in Victorian secondary schools are either run in the time allocated to these teaching domains or integrated into the curriculum in these areas.

### **National policy context**

Several projects and policies involving or informing schools-based violence prevention have been implemented over the last decade with support from the national level. Under the Partnerships against Domestic Violence (PADV) initiative, the *No Violence in Schools* project (1999–2000) included an evaluation (examined in the following section) and associated school lesson plans. PADV also supported a community education campaign for young people in the Northern Territory called *Be Cool, Not Cruel*, which had a schools-based component; and the *Relationship Violence – No Way!* project, an Adelaide-based early intervention project for young men aged 13–26 who were at risk of perpetrating relationship violence, implemented in a collaboration between secondary schools and youth, health and community workers. The National Campaign against Violence and Crime (NCAVAC) and the National Anti-Crime Strategy also worked together in 1997 on the Working with Adolescents to Prevent Domestic Violence project, involving a literature review and audit of Australian violence prevention programs. The outcomes of the project include a Rural Town Model for violence prevention, an Indigenous Rural Model and a pilot program in a secondary school in Northam, Western Australia (in 1999).

In 2004, the Office for the Status of Women commissioned the National Framework for Sexual Assault Prevention (the National Framework) to provide a way forward for the prevention of sexual assault in the national policy context. The National framework noted the lack of a systematic approach to schools-based prevention work, and the fact that there was no efficient method of using the existing evidence on sexual assault prevention.<sup>43</sup> There was considered to be a need to 'address the level of discretion at individual school sites, which appears to be the key determinant of the nature and extent of the program provided'.<sup>44</sup> The National Framework suggests that all schools throughout the country should be required to provide sexual assault prevention programs. To do this, the National Framework recommended that the creation of national standards or guidelines to ensure that schools-based programs reflect good-practice standards. The National Framework also suggested this should be carried out in partnership with state and territory departments of education and specialist agencies, coordinating with statewide violence strategies, the

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<sup>43</sup> Urbis Keys Young 2004.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

National Safe Schools Framework (see below) and gender equity frameworks.<sup>45</sup>

In 2008, the Commonwealth Government provided the National Association of Services against Sexual Violence (NASASV) with resources to oversee a project on the development and trial of a national sexual assault prevention education framework. Its objectives include the assessment of best practice models of sexual assault prevention education in Australia and overseas; consultation with key stakeholders on a draft prevention education framework via a national roundtable; the development of a national network of education mentors; and the development of the final framework. The framework, *Framing Best Practice: National Standards for the Primary Prevention of Sexual Assault through Education*, was launched by the Federal Government on 20 May 2009.<sup>46</sup>

In May 2008, the Federal Government appointed a National Council to draft a National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Their Children. One of the National Council's priorities has been to examine education programs that seek to positively influence the attitudes and behaviours of young people, especially boys, as a mechanism for preventing violence against women before it occurs. The National Plan was accepted and launched by the Prime Minister in April 2009. The Government simultaneously announced a first wave of investment to support urgent action for a number of the priority areas identified by the National Council. This included the immediate implementation of respectful relationships programs for school-aged young people through the roll-out of a national pilot program. The National Council's Plan recommends among other steps the following approach be taken;

- Ensure all children participate in respectful relationships education:
  - develop, trial, implement and evaluate educational programs in a range of settings, based on best practice principles, for pre-schoolers, children, adolescents and adults that encourage respectful relationships and protective behaviours
  - incorporate respectful relationship education into the national curriculum so that all children have access to, and participate in, a comprehensive respectful relationship education program before leaving school
  - develop and implement an accreditation and evaluation system for respectful relationships programs to ensure that program development and delivery meets best practice.<sup>47</sup>

Prior to these recent developments, relevant national resources included an education resource pack, *Identifying and Avoiding Abusive and Violent Relationships*, for Years 11–12, which accompanied the previous federal government's *Violence against Women: Australia Says No* campaign. In addition to this, the National Safe Schools Framework provides guiding principles for promoting safe school environments and suggests strategies for schools that complement related school policies and procedures, such as behaviour management. The framework aims to provide a nationally consistent

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Carmody *et al.* 2009. Also see [http://www.tanyaplibersek.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/tanyaplibersek.nsf/content/sexual\\_assault\\_prevention\\_20may09.htm](http://www.tanyaplibersek.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/tanyaplibersek.nsf/content/sexual_assault_prevention_20may09.htm).

<sup>47</sup> National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children. (2009). *Time for Action: The National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children, 2009–2021*. Canberra: Commonwealth Government, p. 67.

approach to countering all forms of bullying, harassment, violence, abuse and neglect. It is accompanied by an implementation manual to assist schools in auditing current activity and determining what refinements to current practices may need to be made. A resource pack is also available to schools to assist in the conducting of such audits, as well as to aid planning, implementation and monitoring of the framework.

Another national-level framework of relevance to respectful relationships education is Talking Sexual Health: A National Framework for Education about STIs, HIV/AIDS and Blood-Borne Viruses in Secondary Schools. This was developed by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society on behalf of the Australian National Council on AIDS, Hepatitis C and Related Diseases. The framework is accompanied by a professional development resource, a teaching and learning resource for secondary students and a parents' guide.

Other federal education strategies of relevance to schools-based violence prevention or respectful relationships education programs are the National School Drug Education Strategy; the Mind/Matters program promoting mental health in schools and the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools.

A national curriculum from Prep (kindergarten) to Year 12 will be in development from January 2009 and is due to take effect in 2011. It will cover English, mathematics, science and history. It is uncertain to what extent this will affect the VELS implemented in 2006. However, given the current restriction of the national curriculum to discipline-based learning subjects, the impact on the Physical, Personal and Social Learning strand of VELS, (and therefore violence prevention and respectful relationships education) should be minimal.

## 2. The elements of good practice

Part 2 begins by summarising the state of knowledge regarding the evaluation of violence prevention, focusing on primary prevention efforts. Three points are central here. First, there has been little evaluation of primary prevention strategies and information about effectiveness is sparse. Second, on a more encouraging note, the greatest body of information about effectiveness can be found in relation to schools-based prevention programs. Third, and even more encouragingly, evaluations of such programs show that, if done well, initiatives targeted at young people can produce lasting change in attitudes and behaviours. This section turns then to a detailed outline of the elements of good practice in violence prevention and respectful relationships education. A summary checklist of these elements can be found at the end of the report.

### Evaluation of primary prevention efforts

There has been very little evaluation of primary prevention strategies. Most evaluations of efforts with regard to intimate partner violence, for example, are focused on tertiary strategies, which address such violence after it has already occurred.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, existing evidence regarding the effectiveness of *any* kind of intervention is sparse:

Few efforts have been adequately evaluated. Most have not had any evaluation, and of those that have been evaluated, many did not have an adequate design to permit valid determination of efficacy. When adequate outcome designs were applied, methodological issues such as failure to achieve randomization, inadequate power, inappropriate statistical models, and serious attrition rates often occurred. When these challenges were managed, the evaluation often limited the assessment of effects to variables associated with family violence, but did not actually test effect on family violence. Thus, despite extensive intervention efforts at multiple levels, representing many perspectives, there is scarce literature with adequate empirical qualities available to guide intervention efforts.<sup>49</sup>

The largest body of methodologically rigorous research on the effectiveness of primary prevention strategies concerns efforts in schools and/or among young people. For example, in a recent review of interventions for the primary prevention of partner violence, the authors could find only 11 programs that had been rigorously evaluated (with a pre- and post-test design or a comparison group), and *all* of these addressed adolescent dating violence.<sup>50</sup>

Schools-based strategies have a large body of evaluation evidence, in part because they are one of the most common forms of violence prevention, and in part because they are genuinely effective. However, this does not necessarily mean that schools-based strategies represent the most important or most effective means of primary

<sup>48</sup> World Health Organization. (2002). *World Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

<sup>49</sup> Tolan, P., D. Gorman-Smith and D. Henry. (2006). Family Violence. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 57: 557–583.

<sup>50</sup> Whitaker *et al.*



prevention. There is evidence of a wide range of other effective or at least promising strategies.<sup>51</sup> Some prevention strategies with strong theoretical rationales, such as community development and community mobilisation, have been implemented only rarely and evaluated even less often. As VicHealth's primary prevention framework attests, a range of strategies is desirable to address the determinants of violence at individual, family, community and societal levels.<sup>52</sup>

## The effectiveness of prevention education among young people

It is encouraging to report that violence prevention initiatives among young people can produce lasting change in attitudes and behaviours. Many of the most rigorous evaluations stem from North America. From a series of US evaluations of violence prevention education, delivered in schools and universities in particular, it is clear such interventions can have positive effects on participants' attitudes towards and participation in intimate partner violence.<sup>53</sup> For example, male and female secondary school and university students who have attended rape education sessions show less adherence to rape myths, express less rape-supportive attitudes and/or report greater victim empathy than those in control groups.

Education programs that are intensive and lengthy, and use a variety of pedagogical approaches have been shown to produce positive and lasting change in attitudes and behaviours.<sup>54</sup> For example, the *Safe Dates* program in the United States (a 10-session student curriculum for Years 8 and 9, a play and a follow-up poster competition) is one of the few violence prevention programs targeted at young people to have been longitudinally evaluated. Evaluations of the *Safe Dates* program among American adolescents found that four years after the program, adolescents who had received the program continued to report less physical and sexual dating violence perpetration (and victimisation) than those who had not.<sup>55</sup>

There is some evidence too that education programs focused on primary prevention among college women can reduce women's risk of victimisation.<sup>56</sup> Such programs typically address the behaviours in which women can engage, which will either decrease their risk of being sexually assaulted or increase their chances of escaping from a sexual assault. Recent narrative reviews of psycho-educational programs for young women aimed at identifying and avoiding high-risk situations have described their results as 'mixed', but a cumulative meta-analysis finds instead that such programs have a small beneficial effect. For example, some US education programs aimed at primary prevention have been demonstrated to reduce college women's risks of

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<sup>51</sup> Flood 2007.

<sup>52</sup> VicHealth 2007.

<sup>53</sup> Flood 2005–2006.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Foshee *et al.* 1998; Foshee, V., K.E. Bauman, S.T. Ennett, G.F. Linder, T. Benefield and C. Suchindran. (2004). Assessing the Long-Term Effects of the Safe Dates Program and a Booster in Preventing and Reducing Adolescent Dating Violence Victimization and Perpetration. *American Journal of Public Health*, 94(4), pp. 619–624.

<sup>56</sup> Yeater, E. A. and W. O'Donohue. (1999). Sexual Assault Prevention Programs: Current Issues, Future Directions, and the Potential Efficacy of Interventions With Women. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 19(7): 739–771.

subsequent victimisation.<sup>57</sup> Less evidence is available concerning the effectiveness of violence prevention education among other young adult populations such as professional athletes.

However, far too few interventions have been evaluated, and existing evaluations are often limited in methodological and conceptual terms. Typical weaknesses include the following:<sup>58</sup>

- There is no evaluation.
- The evaluation consists only of post-intervention assessment of participants' satisfaction with, or perceptions of, the education session or retrospective reports of program impact.
- Post-intervention assessments often are made only immediately after the program or only weeks later and there is no longer-term follow-up.
- The evaluation assesses only attitudes, not behaviours or social and sexual relations.
- The evaluation does not rely on standardised and validated measures.
- The evaluation offers limited information on the factors associated with perpetration of, or subjection to, violence, such as the potential to engage in physically or sexually abusive behaviour, and on the program's actual impact on rates of violence.
- The evaluation does not examine the mediators of changes in attitudes, behaviours or other factors, that is, of the causal processes through which the program achieves change.

Few evaluations of prevention programs have actually documented behavioural change in terms of actual reductions in violence.<sup>59</sup> Most evaluations of violence prevention programs use standardised measures of participants' attitudes (such as adherence to rape myths, adversarial sexual beliefs, and acceptance of interpersonal violence and rape empathy) but even statistically significant attitudinal change on these measures does not guarantee significant behaviour change.<sup>60</sup> Where evaluations have been carried out, they show that not all educational interventions are effective. Changes in attitudes often 'rebound' to pre-intervention levels one or two months after the intervention, and some even become worse.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Hanson, R.K. and I. Broom. (2005). The Utility of Cumulative Meta-Analysis: Application to Programs for Reducing Sexual Violence. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 17(4): 357–373.

<sup>58</sup> Whitaker *et al.*, Yeater and O'Donohue; Cornelius, T. L. and N. Resseguie (2006) Primary and secondary prevention programs for dating violence: A review of the literature. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 12: 364–375.

<sup>59</sup> Flood 2005–06.

<sup>60</sup> Dyson, S. and C. Fox. (2006). *An Evaluation of the Sexual Health and Relationships Education (Share) Project 2003–2005*. Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University (commissioned by Shine SA).

<sup>61</sup> Anderson, L., M.P. Stoelb, P. Duggan, B. Hieger, K.H. Kling and J.P. Payne. (1998). The Effectiveness of Two Types of Rape Prevention Programs in Changing the Rape-Supportive Attitudes of College Students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 39, pp. 131–142; Davis, T.D. and D.L. Liddell. (2002). Getting Inside the House: the Effectiveness of a Rape Prevention Program for College Fraternity Men. *Journal of College Student Development*, 43(1): 35–50; Flores, S. A. and M. G. Hartlaub. (1998). Reducing Rape-myth Acceptance in Male College Students: A Meta-analysis of Intervention Studies. *Journal of College Student Development*, 39(5); Frazier, P., G. Valtinson and S. Candell. (1994). Evaluation of a Coeducational Interactive Rape Prevention Program. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 73: 153–158.

In evaluation terms, Australian violence prevention programs in schools suffer from the same if not more severe limitations than their North American equivalents. Few Australian programs have been evaluated in any substantial or systematic way, and this is the case even with regard to many of the most widely used and well-known programs under way in Australia. This is true for example of *Solving the Jigsaw* (Victoria), *Keeping Safe* (South Australia) and *Love Bites* (NSW). Only two of Australia's various violence prevention and healthy relationships programs have been subjected to substantial evaluation: the CASA House *Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools* (SAPPSS), and the *Respect, Protect, Connect* healthy relationships program. Neither meets the standards for rigorous scientific evaluation of effectiveness, including a design using a control or comparison group (for example through randomisation to intervention versus control or randomisation between two or more interventions).<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, they stand out because they have involved substantial evaluation of impact.

Despite these problems, there is still cause for cautious optimism regarding the potential for efforts among children and young people to contribute to primary prevention.<sup>63</sup> Existing evaluations in Australia and elsewhere have provided strong indications of the potential of respectful relationships education to have a positive impact on young people in the Victorian secondary school context. Certainly, more information is needed about the effectiveness of various aspects of the delivery of violence prevention programs in schools. But indications of good practice can be drawn from the common factors of interventions that *are* shown to be effective. These are examined in the following section.

## Good practice in programs

A broad consensus on the elements of good practice in violence prevention in schools is beginning to emerge. This consensus is apparent in recent reviews of violence prevention and respectful relationships education, in evaluations of particular programs or strategies, and in program materials themselves. While much existing research is small in scale and focused on specific projects, there have been some attempts over recent years to collate and review the information generated. A recent New Zealand review of good practice in schools-based violence prevention<sup>64</sup> noted that although evaluations show that certain programs are successful in reducing violence or its precursors, the point at which blueprints for success can be produced has not yet been reached. Rather, the literature has begun to identify a number of broad-level ingredients and approaches that are common to successful interventions.

Drawing on the research and experience to date, this report distils five criteria for good practice in schools-based violence prevention. Together, these criteria represent the minimum standard for effective violence prevention in schools. Programs that meet only *some* of the criteria may be able to, or may already, have significant positive impacts on young people. But the most effective programs, and thus

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<sup>62</sup> Whitaker *et al.*, p. 153.

<sup>63</sup> See for example Whitaker *et al.*

<sup>64</sup> Hassell and Hannah 2007.

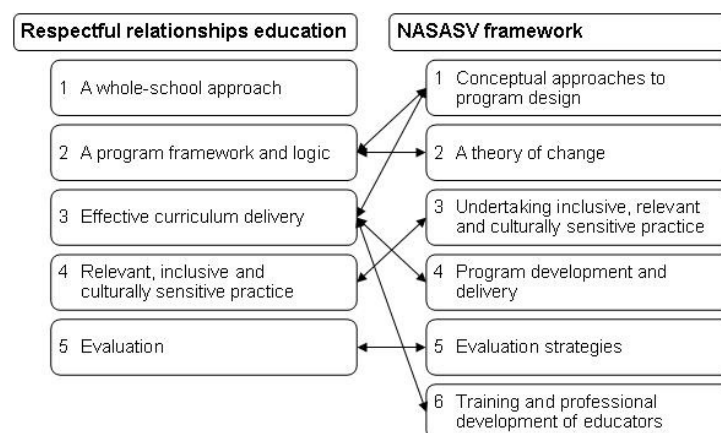
the most desirable, are those that meet all five criteria. These criteria are as follows:

- 1 a whole-school approach
- 2 a program framework and logic
- 3 effective curriculum delivery
- 4 relevant, inclusive and culturally sensitive practice
- 5 impact evaluation.

This report's identification of standards for good practice in schools-based violence prevention education has been complemented and assisted by the recent construction of a national framework for sexual violence prevention through education. The work undertaken for this purpose was funded by the Commonwealth Government through NASASV, and resulted in the framework, *Framing Best Practice: National Standards for the Primary Prevention of Sexual Assault through Education*, launched in May 2009.<sup>65</sup>

These two Australian-based frameworks are complementary and highly compatible. The current report has drawn on the NASASV framework in crafting standards for good practice, and the project team includes members who contributed to the NASASV framework. While the approaches advocated in each framework are very similar, there are some differences. Perhaps the most obvious one is this report's opening and overarching emphasis on a whole-school approach involving curriculum integration, although this is endorsed in the NASASV framework.<sup>66</sup> Other differences are structural rather than substantive. The second standard, a program framework and logic, incorporates the first and second standards in the NASASV framework. The third standard, effective curriculum delivery incorporates the NASASV framework's sixth standard, training and professional development of educators. Both frameworks identify two further, identical standards, inclusive practice and evaluation. Figure 1 shows the two sets of standards.

**Figure 1: Comparison of respectful relationships education and the NASASV National Standards for the Primary Prevention of Sexual Assault through Education**



<sup>65</sup> Carmody *et al.* 2009. This research was led by Associate Professor Moira Carmody from the University of Western Sydney in a collaborative partnership with VicHealth. Associate Professor Carmody is also the principal founder of the *Sex and Ethics* Program discussed in Part 4 of this report.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48–49.

Returning to the framework in this report, the five criteria represent standards to which all violence prevention and respectful relationships efforts in schools should aspire. However, they are not intended to be absolute or final. Good practice is a 'work in progress', and its achievement is dependent on a range of factors, from the local context to the quality of the tools used in evaluation. What constitutes good practice will change over time, as knowledge of effective strategies improves and as schools, education systems and violent behaviours change. It should be noted too that the following discussion is intended to offer a framework with which to design, fund and evaluate violence prevention programming in schools, rather than a detailed 'how to' guide on delivering violence prevention education.

It must be emphasised that the five criteria overlap. For example, the requirement that violence prevention be inclusive (Criterion 4) has implications for an understanding of violence (Criterion 2), given the ways in which violence is shaped not just by gender but by ethnicity, sexuality, disability and other forms of social difference; for the effective delivery of education sessions (Criterion 3); and for their evaluation (Criterion 5).

While a broad consensus on what constitutes good practice is apparent, there is also much more to be established about what works or does not work. In other words, more information is needed regarding the effectiveness of various aspects of the delivery of violence prevention programs in schools.<sup>67</sup> In addition, there are some areas of disagreement over particular dimensions of practice. In the discussion of each of the criteria below, the text notes where more information is needed or where there is disagreement. Where the evidence is equivocal regarding dimensions of violence prevention practice, this report simply urges that programs give attention to the decisions they are making and the rationales for them. Where the evidence is clear, this dimension is identified as an element of good practice.

Part 4 of the report assesses contemporary violence prevention and respectful relationships programs in Victoria and elsewhere in light of the five criteria for good practice, highlighting particularly high-quality and promising programs and approaches.

### **What not to do**

Just as experience and research in schools-based violence identify what works best, they also identify elements of ineffective practice – in other words, 'what not to do'. Of course, the report could identify every possible aspect of ineffective practice simply by noting the inverse of the elements identified in the standards of good practice. Rather than doing this, however, the report simply highlights some common and yet ineffective approaches and strategies in schools-based violence prevention.<sup>68</sup> One of the most pervasive is an exclusive focus on tertiary and secondary prevention strategies, in which efforts are concentrated only on those children and young people who are already living with or perpetrating violence, or 'at risk' of doing so. Another ineffective strategy is to focus only on the production of resources – a manual, a DVD, a poster – without also considering their use and

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<sup>67</sup> Wolfe and Jaffe 2003.

<sup>68</sup> Also see pp. 188–189 of Mattaini, M.A. and M.S. McGuire. (2006). Behavioral Strategies for Constructing Nonviolent Cultures with Youth: A Review. *Behavior Modification*, 30(2): 184–224.

integration into curriculum. Another is to organise violence prevention education in such a way that it is likely to be unsustainable.

**What not to do**

- Take action only after violence has occurred.
- Focus only on strategies of support and welfare.
- Ignore the wider contexts in which violence occurs and is sustained, including formal and informal school cultures, policies and processes.
- Focus only on the production and dissemination of a resource.
- Make programs unsustainable: neglect policy and institutional support, ignore teacher capacity, and do not establish partnerships with stakeholders.
- Use one-off sessions, isolated from other curriculums.
- Lecture students without interaction or participation.
- Evaluate only students' satisfaction with the program and not its impact.

While the adoption of such strategies is understandable, it is not effective.



### 3. Five criteria for good practice in respectful relationships and violence prevention education in schools

The following explains and examines the five criteria of good practice in respectful relationships and violence prevention education in schools in detail. Please see appendix one for a summary checklist of the standards.

#### A whole-school approach

Programs should:

- be based on a whole-school approach, operating across:
  - curriculum, teaching and learning
  - school policy and practices
  - school culture, ethos and environment
  - the relationships between school, home and the community.
- involve:
  - comprehensive curriculum integration
  - assessment and reporting
  - specialised training and resources for teaching and support staff
  - reinforcement of violence prevention programming through school policies, structures and processes.

The single most important criterion for effective violence prevention and respectful relationships education in schools is the adoption of a whole-school approach. It may be tempting for educators and others to focus on issues of program content and delivery, and these are undoubtedly important, but more important are the comprehensive involvement of schools in violence prevention. A whole-school approach is a necessary element in any substantive violence prevention effort among schools. A whole-school approach is critical to the effectiveness of such efforts, as it:

- addresses the context and culture in which children and young people learn and interact in order to foster safe and supportive school environments<sup>69</sup>
- fosters sustainable and comprehensive efforts among teachers, other staff and schools, and builds capacity to initiate and sustain program efforts and innovations
- engages all relevant stakeholders
- involves a concerted approach across entire schools, which is necessary to effect cultural change

<sup>69</sup> Tutty *et al.*, p.18.

- addresses the practices, policies and processes in classrooms, schools and departments relevant to building health-promoting and non-violent schools.<sup>70</sup>

Evaluations and reviews of violence-prevention and sexuality/relationships education are unanimous in advocating a 'whole-school approach' in order to maximise program effectiveness.<sup>71</sup> Such an approach includes (but is not limited to) the following program characteristics: it involves teachers, parents and student welfare coordinators;<sup>72</sup> it has clearly-articulated educational principles;<sup>73</sup> it is integrated into a comprehensive curriculum context;<sup>74</sup> it is reinforced in extracurricular activities through partnerships with organisations and clubs;<sup>75</sup> and it is strategically planned to take into account local needs and issues.<sup>76</sup>

Whole-school approaches address and change the larger context within which children and young people's experiences of, and responses to, interpersonal violence are shaped. Given that 'youth violence and conduct problems are socially embedded phenomena',<sup>77</sup> programs should attempt to change the whole culture in which children learn, targeting aspects of the school climate that are conducive to violence. Comprehensive, multiple intervention programs are needed in terms of targeting a range of behaviours and recognising the multiple contexts in which adolescents live. These should involve the different critical domains of influence (peers, teachers, parents, community, media) in program design and implementation, and focus on the importance of relationships and the types of skills needed for different types of relationships.<sup>78</sup>

Whole-school approaches, such as the *Health Promoting Schools Framework*, have a greater impact on domestic and family violence than uncoordinated single initiatives. For example, they enhance the effectiveness of teaching by giving students multiple exposures to key messages across the curriculum and in different schooling domains. It is important for students to experience the issues in different contexts and to associate the importance of non-violent behaviour with a wide range of teachers. (For example, Drama is an obvious subject for exploring the issues and developing skills in this domain, but other

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<sup>70</sup> Dyson, S., A. Mitchell, D. Dalton and L. Hillier. (2003). *Factors for Success in Conducting Effective Sexual Health and Relationships Education with Young People in Schools: A Literature Review*. Melbourne, La Trobe University.

<sup>71</sup> Ellis, p. 132; Tutty *et al.*, p. 18.

<sup>72</sup> Dyson and Fox; Mulroney, J. (2003). Prevention Programs for Young People that Promote Healthy Relationships. Paper presented at the *Practice and Prevention: Contemporary Issues in Adult Sexual Assault in NSW Conference*, Sydney, 12–14 February 2003.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Smith, P. and S. Welchans. (2000). Peer Education: Does Focusing on Male Responsibility Change Sexual Assault Attitudes? *Violence Against Women*, 6(11): 1255–1268.

<sup>76</sup> Mulroney.

<sup>77</sup> Prinz, R. (2000). Research-based Prevention of School Violence and Youth Anti-Social Behaviour: A Developmental and Educational Perspective. In S. Kellam, R. Prinz and J. Sheley, (eds) *Preventing School Violence: Plenary Papers of the 1999 Conference on Criminal Justice Research and Evaluation – Enhancing Policy and Practice through Research*. Washington DC: Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, p. 9.

<sup>78</sup> Hassell and Hannah 2007.

areas such as English, Sport and Science also offer opportunities to engage with the issues.<sup>79</sup>)

A whole-school approach operates across four overlapping domains:

- *Curriculum, teaching and learning*: curriculum content, pedagogy, resources and outcomes
- *School policy and practices*: formal school policies and practices
- *School culture, ethos and environment*: informal school culture and ethos (attitudes, values and practices), extracurricular activities, and the social and physical environment
- *Partnerships and services*: the relationships between school, home and the community.<sup>80</sup>

Whole-school approaches have been introduced in various states and in other countries for other educational initiatives aimed at addressing social issues, including bullying, discrimination, harassment, teenage pregnancy and mental health.<sup>81</sup> They have a compelling rationale, they have been seen as vital in addressing issues that overlap with violence prevention such as sexuality and drug education, and their use in violence prevention work is increasingly visible. A whole-school approach has been advocated in violence prevention at least since the early 1990s. For example, a position paper published by the then Department of Employment, Education and Training in 1993 argued that adopting this approach is imperative to interrupt and diminish a culture of violence, and the *No Fear* kit developed in 1995 echoed this in advocating the whole-school-based creation of non-violent school communities.<sup>82</sup> More recently, an evaluation of SAPPSS concluded that program was most effective when:

- all teaching and support staff receive specialised training and resources
- school structures support reinforcement of student program learnings and encourage peer-based learning
- respectful relationships and open communication are visibly modelled and rewarded throughout the school community.<sup>83</sup>

As a British review concluded, the long-term impact of programs on violence prevention 'is likely to depend on the extent to which the issues are embedded within the curriculum and wider school activities'.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Partnerships against Domestic Violence. (2001). *No Violence in Schools: Building Healthy Relationships for Young People Project*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

<sup>80</sup> Dyson *et al.* 2003.

<sup>81</sup> See for example Rigby, K. (1996). *Bullying in Schools and What to Do about It*, Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne; Sullivan, K. (2000). *The Anti-Bullying Handbook*. Auckland: Oxford University Press; Driscoll, S. and C. Jenkins. (1998). Development and Implementation of an Anti-harassment and Bullying Program for Students with Mild and Moderate Intellectual Disabilities. *International Journal of Protective Behaviours* 1(1): 7–10. Also see Dyson *et al.*'s (2003) overview, pp. 16–26.

<sup>82</sup> Ollis, D. and I. Tomaszewski. (1993). *Gender and Violence Project: Position paper*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, Department of Employment, Education and Training; Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training. (1995). *No Fear: A Whole School Approach – A Kit Addressing Gender Based Violence*. Canberra: Curriculum and Gender Equity Policy Unit, Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training.

<sup>83</sup> CASA House. (2008). *Evaluation of the CASA House Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools*. Melbourne: Centre Against Sexual Assault, p. 2.

<sup>84</sup> Hester, M. and N. Westmarland. (2005). *Tackling Domestic Violence: Effective Interventions and Approaches*. London: Home Office Research Study 290, p. 17.

Although a whole-school approach has been applied to a wide variety of education programs addressing a wide variety of issues, and there is a consensus regarding its value, actual empirical evaluation of its effectiveness relative to other approaches is not well developed. At the same time, 'it is clear from anecdotal information and the limited evaluation data that such an approach has a great deal to offer'.<sup>85</sup>

### Program and school support

It is clear from the evidence that a commitment to good-practice violence prevention and respectful relationships education is substantial, not just in resource terms but in the time required to set up the systems and structures that will enable the sustainability of initiatives and their adoption across the whole school culture.

European research notes that schools cannot be expected to take on this extra 'effort that educational innovation always entails'<sup>86</sup> without some incentive being offered, and that the effective running of programs can not be reliant on the goodwill and energy of certain committed teachers and student welfare coordinators, who may well 'burn out' without wider support. To this end, the research further recommends:

encouraging the inclusion of these programs in schools' educational projects so they are assumed on the grounds of consensus, providing the space and time to set them up and evaluate them systematically, to monitor the progress made and identify any adjustments required, [as well as] furnishing the various facilities that make all this feasible (funding, materials, scheduling adjustments, human resources, experts to whom enquiries can be addressed, etc).<sup>87</sup>

Systems and structures are therefore required to support schools to implement violence prevention and respectful relationships programs effectively. At a policy level, then, a sound education strategy is one that:

- is incorporated into the curriculum at all levels so that violence prevention education is compulsory and available in every school across the state
- is implemented in line with school protocols to deal with violence, harassment and bullying<sup>88</sup>
- makes resource provisions to set up and evaluate programs systematically, to monitor the progress made and continuously improve<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Dyson *et al.* 2003, p. 26.

<sup>86</sup> Institute of Women, Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, with M.J.D. Aguado and R.M. Arias. (2002). *Good Practice Guide to Mitigate the Effects of and Eradicate Violence against Women*. Madrid, p. 49.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> This is drawn from Urbis Keys Young 2004; Institute of Women, Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, with M.J.D. Aguado and R.M. Arias. (2002). *Good Practice Guide to Mitigate the Effects of and Eradicate Violence against Women*. Madrid; Council of Europe, Group of Specialists for Combating Violence against Women (1997) *Final Report of Activities of the EG-S-VL including a Plan of Action for Combating Violence against Women* EG-S-VL (97) 1.

<sup>89</sup> Mulroney. See also Gourlay, P. (1996). Sexuality Education: Fact, Fiction and Fallopian Tubes. In L. Laskey and C. Beavis (eds.), *Schooling and Sexualities: Teaching for a Positive Sexuality*. Melbourne: Deakin Centre for Education and Change, Deakin University.

- involves partnerships between Departments of Education and specialist agencies, and coordinates with state-based anti-violence strategies, the national Safe Schools Strategy and gender equity frameworks
- is supported by statewide standards, guidelines and performance indicators against which schools are required to report
- systematises and develops existing schools-based prevention programs that have been positively evaluated
- develops educational procedures that make widespread implementation and expansion possible, which includes 'providing the space and time to set [programs] up and evaluate them systematically, to monitor the progress made and identify any adjustments required'<sup>90</sup>
- includes comprehensive training for all teachers (both in tertiary education courses and through professional development) on issues such as:
  - links between sexism/gender role constructions and violence,
  - develop students' skills in this complex behavioural domain, and
  - develop capacity to respond to potential disclosures of abuse;
  - is supported by the provision of necessary resources and facilities, such as materials, human resources and expert advice.

Part 4 discusses the steps which may be taken in the short and long terms to put in place such systems and structures.

### **Standards and accountability systems**

One of the key challenges of contemporary prevention in schools is the development of standards and accountability systems related to school success.<sup>91</sup> Given the rule that 'what gets inspected gets expected', the collection of measures of students' social, emotional and health outcomes is a desirable component of violence prevention and respectful relationships curriculums. These should be complemented by school-wide assessments of the social and emotional competencies of students and of school climate.<sup>92</sup>

### **Integration and stakeholder involvement**

In order to operate successfully, a whole-school approach requires the involvement of a variety of stakeholders operating at different levels. This includes, for instance, those in the policy domain, those working on curriculum development and decision-makers at the school level. It also involves a variety of relationships, such as those between staff and students, parents and students, parents and staff, the school and the community, and of course between students.<sup>93</sup> Connections and partnerships between schools and community agencies and settings are valuable extensions of the impact of school-based prevention work. Community agencies such as domestic violence and sexual assault services may play particularly vital roles in providing specialist

<sup>90</sup> Institute of Women, Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, p. 49.

<sup>91</sup> Greenberg, M.T. (2004). Current and Future Challenges in School-Based Prevention: The Researcher Perspective. *Prevention Science*, 5(1), March: 5–13, p. 7.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8.

<sup>93</sup> Magill, R. (2000) Good Practice in Schools. Paper presented at *The Way Forward: Children, Young People and Domestic Violence National Forum*, Melbourne, 26–17 April.

resources such as counselling and intervention for students experiencing or using violence. They can also be vital in building schools' capacity to conduct violence prevention, through teacher training, liaison, forums and the provision of information about community resources.<sup>94</sup>

Such relationships involve a significant level of commitment, as Dyson *et al.* make clear: '[A whole-school approach] calls for policy and guidelines to be developed, implemented and reviewed; consultation and working in partnership with parents, [indigenous] elders and the school community; accessing community resources and involving students.'<sup>95</sup> They stress the importance of policy and guidelines being reflected in practice, meaning, for example, that programs must not only be run, but 'integrated within a formal student welfare support structure so that linking students to community agencies complements education programs'.<sup>96</sup> Dyson *et al.* cite the Health Promoting Schools Framework developed by the World Health Organization and widely adopted at the policy level among governments in Australia, as an example of a well-developed whole-school approach.<sup>97</sup>

### **Assessment and reporting**

The requirement that materials on violence prevention and respectful relationships should be integrated comprehensively into curriculums also requires assessment and reporting processes. Formative and summative assessments of student achievement should be performed, identifying whether students have achieved to expectation in this component of their Health and Physical Education, Personal Learning, or Interpersonal Development education. This will require the development of assessment tools for students' use, such as homework sheets, and the identification of competencies for teachers' and schools' use. Given that, as the report argues later, a sophisticated evaluation of violence prevention interventions also is necessary, school-based initiatives will be subject to two kinds of evaluation: one driven by school assessment and accountable to learning and teaching processes, parents and government departments; and the other driven by research and policy questions regarding effectiveness.

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<sup>94</sup> Tutty *et al.*, p. 19.

<sup>95</sup> Dyson and Fox, pp. 16–17.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>97</sup> Further strategies for creating and maintaining 'buy-in' from stakeholders, including parents and communities, can be found in Tutty *et al.*, pp. 20–21.



## A program framework and logic

Programs should:

- incorporate an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding violence that draws on relevant feminist research, in particular in addressing the links between gender, power and violence, examining violence-supportive constructions of gender and sexuality, and fostering gender-equitable and egalitarian relations
- incorporate a theory of change, that is, an account of the ways in which project content and processes will be used to achieve the project's intended outcomes.

This report has argued so far that schools-based violence prevention and respectful relationships education must give as much emphasis to the structural and institutional supports for prevention – the ‘scaffolding’ of violence prevention programs – as to the form and content of program delivery. A whole-school approach must provide the overarching framework within which education sessions in classrooms occur.

Violence prevention programs in schools must be based on a sound understanding of both the problem – the workings and causes of violence – and of how it can be changed. In other words, violence prevention and respectful relationships education must incorporate both an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding violence and a theory of change.

There is a growing awareness in the violence prevention field that the articulation of these two overlapping elements is necessary to good practice. Without them, there is little sense of what change is being attempted or how these efforts will lead to the desired change. A detailed expression of the need for both elements is given in a very recent report on national standards for sexual assault prevention. Carmody et al.'s report, produced for NASASV, identifies six standards for sexual assault prevention through education.<sup>98</sup> The first and second standards relate to program conceptual framework and theory of change.

However, both elements identified in this second criterion of good practice often have been absent or underdeveloped in existing programs. As a 2003 review of Australian prevention programs for young people noted, ‘Despite the fact that a clear articulation of the rationale and concepts sustaining the development of initiatives is critical to success, prevention programs rarely make explicit the theory base underpinning their approach’.<sup>99</sup> The same is true outside Australia. A systematic, evidence-based review of sexual assault prevention programs, based on evaluation publications of 59 studies over 1990–2003, found that most programs do not have strong or well-developed theoretical frameworks.<sup>100</sup>

Feminist and feminist-informed approaches provide the most common theories and concepts among violence prevention programs in Australia, although most uses are relatively simple and

<sup>98</sup> Carmody *et al.* 2009.

<sup>99</sup> Mulroney.

<sup>100</sup> Morrison, S., J. Hardison, A. Mathew, and J. O’Neil. (2004). *An Evidence-based Review of Sexual Assault Preventive Intervention Programs*. Washington D.C: National Institute Justice. US Department of Justice.

underdeveloped.<sup>101</sup> A reliance on feminist approaches is both understandable and appropriate, given that it is feminist activism that placed violence against women on community and policy agendas and feminist research that provides the most comprehensive and credible account of the causes and consequences of relationship and family violence.

Programs in schools aimed at preventing violence in intimate and family relationships must be based on an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding this violence. Expanding on this, programs must draw on feminist theoretical understandings. They must address the fundamental links between gendered power relations or inequalities and violence against women. The majority of evaluations and reviews of sexuality education and violence-prevention programs stress the continued need to teach students about the relationship between gender and power. For example, an Australian review of 60 projects emphasised that the inclusion of materials on gender equality and gender roles was necessary for programs to be successful.<sup>102</sup> Programs must address constructions of gender and sexuality that sustain violence in relationships and families, and they must seek to foster gender-equitable and egalitarian relations between and among males and females. Obviously, this has implications for the content or curriculums of violence prevention and respectful relationships programs, as noted below.

A feminist approach to violence prevention does not require a single-minded or exclusive focus on gender. Contemporary feminist research on physical and sexual violence in families and relationships recognises a wide variety of other factors that also shape violence, taking as given that violence is 'a multifaceted phenomenon grounded in interplay among personal, situational, and socio-cultural factors'.<sup>103</sup> VicHealth's recent violence prevention framework models this approach. It offers an integrated ecological framework in which key determinants of violence against women are grouped into three broad clusters: gender roles and relations, social norms supporting violence, and access to resources and systems of support.<sup>104</sup> Thus, a feminist approach to violence prevention can address determinants of family and relationship violence at multiple levels of the social order, while taking as given that gender and gender inequalities are central across these.

Articulating an explicitly feminist understanding may be problematic among some audiences and stakeholders, as there is considerable ignorance of, and sometimes hostility to, feminism in the community.<sup>105</sup> While the inclusion of feminist content on gender inequality and sexism is widely seen as necessary for effective programs, there is evidence of resistance among teachers and schools (and students themselves) to feminist approaches.<sup>106</sup> As a result, some programs adopt gender-neutral content and offer individualistic frameworks that neglect social

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<sup>101</sup> Carmody *et al.* 2009, p. 75.

<sup>102</sup> Strategic Partners Pty Ltd. (2000). *Domestic Violence Prevention: Strategies and Resources for Working with Young People*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

<sup>103</sup> Heise, L. L. (1998). Violence Against Women: An Integrated, Ecological Framework. *Violence Against Women*, 4(3), June: 262–283.

<sup>104</sup> VicHealth. (2007) *Preventing Violence Before It Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women in Victoria*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth).

<sup>105</sup> Carmody *et al.* 2009, p. 32.

<sup>106</sup> Ellis, p. 129.

and structural factors sanctioning boys' and men's violence. However, a feminist conceptual framework is essential both to reflect research on violence in relationships and families and to anchor the political commitments of the program.

Most violence prevention programs in schools do not articulate a theory of change. Many simply assume that their efforts to provide information or improve attitudes (for example) will lessen young people's involvements in violence perpetration or victimisation, without identifying how such processes will occur. There is disagreement in health promotion fields about which theories of change are most appropriate.<sup>107</sup> At the same time, in general there is a consensus that a theory of change is a necessary component of prevention efforts. For example, a systematic review of sexuality education programs found that effective programs (that is, programs that reduce young people's involvements in premature, risky, or unwanted sexual activity) are based on theoretical approaches that have been demonstrated to influence other health-related behaviour and identify specific important sexual antecedents to be targeted.<sup>108</sup> Whether or not violence prevention programs use a logic model – a representation of the ways in which project resources, activities and processes will be used to achieve the intended outcomes<sup>109</sup> – they must be able to specify precisely what impact the program is intended to have, how the program's activities will generate this, and how this impact will be evaluated.

## Effective curriculum delivery

To maximise the effectiveness of violence prevention and respectful relationships education in schools, the effectiveness of its pedagogy must also be maximised. It is this aspect of schools-based violence prevention that have received most attention in the literature. To make sense of these issues, the report identifies the following dimensions of program delivery. They are not in any particular order, as there is insufficient evidence to determine whether some dimensions have a greater influence on program effectiveness than others.

- Curriculum content
- Pedagogy (teaching methods)
- Curriculum structure
  - Duration and intensity
  - Timing
  - Group composition
- Curriculum teachers and educators

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<sup>107</sup> Dyson, S. and M. Flood. (2008). *Building Cultures of Respect and Non-violence: A Review of Literature Concerning Adult Learning and Violence Prevention Programs with Men*. Melbourne: AFL Respect & Responsibility Program & VicHealth.

<sup>108</sup> Kirby, D. (2001). *Emerging Answers: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teenage Pregnancy*. Washington DC, National Campaign to Reduce Teenage Pregnancy.

<sup>109</sup> W. K. Kellogg Foundation. (2001). *Logic Model Development Guide*. Battle Creek, MI.

## Curriculum content

Programs should:

- be informed by feminist research on violence against girls and women
- address various forms of violence, including domestic and sexual violence
- target the antecedents to or determinants of violent behaviour
- address not only attitudes but also behaviours, interpersonal relations and collective and institutional contexts
- avoid focusing only on strategies for minimising personal risks of victimisation, instead addressing systemic constraints on safety and teaching commitments to, and skills in, non-violence.

Given the need for efforts to prevent violence in relationships and families to be based on a sound feminist theoretical understanding of violence, this should be reflected in program content. Above all, program content should be informed by contemporary research on violence against girls and women. There are three overlapping implications of this imperative.

First, good-practice programs ideally address both physical and sexual violence, including the behaviours and dynamics associated with each, rather than one or the other. In other words, they address domestic violence or family violence *and* sexual violence, sexual assault and/or rape. They also recognise and address overlaps between these and other forms of violence and abuse, including sexual harassment, homophobic violence and bullying.

The focus on either domestic violence or sexual violence in many violence prevention and respectful relationships programs perhaps is a legacy of their delivery, in that many are developed and delivered by community agencies that themselves focus on either domestic violence or sexual violence. There is a clear rationale for violence prevention to be inclusive in the kinds of violent behaviours and interactions it addresses. Briefly, domestic violence and sexual violence tend to co-occur. Explanations for these form of violence, and therefore the risk and protective factors associated with them, overlap (although they are not identical). And relevant prevention strategies for each also overlap. For example, strategies to encourage respectful intimate relationships should have impacts on both physical and sexual violence.

Critics of this inclusive approach may contend that the dynamics and causes of domestic violence and sexual violence are so distinct that addressing them in the same program is inappropriate. However, there is also significant diversity *within* the areas of both domestic violence and sexual violence. In relation to domestic violence, for example, there is growing recognition of distinct typologies of perpetration and victimisation and of perpetrators themselves.<sup>110</sup>

Violence prevention education therefore should address a variety of forms of violence occurring in intimate, dating and familial relationships. However, this report does not make suggestions about *how* curriculums should do so, and they may do so consecutively or by

<sup>110</sup> Cavanaugh, M.M. and R.J. Gelles. (2005). The Utility of Male Domestic Violence Offender Typologies: New Directions for Research, Policy, and Practice. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20(2): 155–166; Johnson, M. P. and K. J. Ferraro. (2000). Research on Domestic Violence in the 1990s: Making Distinctions. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62: 948–963.

examining them using a more general language of violence and abuse. At the same time, particularly among secondary school students, curricula should not be so general in their approach to violence that they fail to examine the specific dynamics and determinants of sexual violence and domestic violence. This means, for example, that violence prevention curriculums should include materials on sexual consent and coercion, on strategies of coercive control associated with domestic violence, and on alternatives to both.

Second, program curriculums should directly address the factors known to be antecedents to violent behaviour. As VicHealth's primary prevention framework and the longer background document that informed it attest, these factors include violence-supportive and sexist attitudes and norms, gendered power relations and inequalities, and a host of other social and cultural factors.<sup>111</sup> Specifically, the curriculums of violence prevention and respectful relationships programs should:

- address the intersections of gender and power and their relationships to intimate and family violence
- undermine constructions of gender and sexuality that sustain violence in relationships and families
- encourage, teach skills in, and provide practice at egalitarian relations between and among males and females
- work to construct an alternative, a set of norms, behaviours and interpersonal relations centred on non-violence, gender equality and social justice.

While the third implication is implicit already in this report's mentions of power relations, behaviour and skills, it deserves emphasis given the overwhelming focus on attitudes in existing violence prevention efforts. Violence prevention work must go beyond attitudes. Program content should address not only attitudes, but behaviours, interpersonal relations and collective and institutional contexts.

There are good reasons for violence prevention and respectful relationships programs to address attitudes. Men's adherence to sexist attitudes is one of the strongest predictors of their use of violence against women,<sup>112</sup> and there are clear links between violence perpetration and traditional attitudes about women's gender roles.<sup>113</sup> More widely, constructions of gender and sexuality that sustain violence against women include notions of masculinity as essentially aggressive, dominating and sexually coercive, and norms of gender and sexuality involving male entitlement or privilege, sexual double standards and homophobia.<sup>114</sup> Surveys of young people's attitudes have shown that negative social constructions of masculinity and femininity, as well as stereotypical attitudes towards sexuality, remain common among young people. Such attitudes include those that cast young women as either 'good girls' or 'bad girls' ('sluts'), or those that

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<sup>111</sup> VicHealth 2007; Flood 2007.

<sup>112</sup> Murnen, S.K., C. Wright, and G. Kaluzny. (2002). If 'Boys Will Be Boys,' Then Girls Will Be Victims? A Meta-Analytic Review of the Research That Relates Masculine Ideology to Sexual Aggression. *Sex Roles*, 46(11–12): 359–375.

<sup>113</sup> Flood and Pease 2006.

<sup>114</sup> 'Constructions' are broader than 'attitudes', in that they may include values, social norms, media and other representations, and in some uses, behaviours and collective relations.

encourage young men to act in a sexually predatory way towards young women in order to avoid being labelled homosexual or weak.<sup>115</sup>

Prevention programs must also go beyond attitudes and norms. They must address the cultural, collective and institutional underpinnings of relationship and family violence. They must change not only individual attitudes and community norms, but also behaviours, social and sexual relations, and the structural conditions that perpetuate violence.<sup>116</sup> In short, interventions aimed at attitudinal and cultural change must be accompanied by changes in social practices and structural relations if violence in relationships and families is to be undermined and prevented.

Ideally, violence prevention programs should include curriculums focused on skills development. This report addresses skills development under 'Curriculum delivery' below.

There is a developing consensus in the violence prevention field that educational efforts among young people must go beyond, or indeed abandon, a focus on teaching potential victims how to 'avoid rape' or 'keep safe'.<sup>117</sup> This focus has been criticised for placing the responsibility for violence prevention upon individual women (or children), and for potentially exacerbating victim blame when some women inevitably are unsuccessful at applying the skills and lessons learnt.<sup>118</sup> There are two complementary alternatives. First, program curriculums should include work at a 'systems level', addressing systemic constraints to young women's personal and sexual safety, such as sexist social norms and inequitable power relations. For example, programs may examine the sexist construction of the 'good girl' – 'slut' dichotomy and encourage young women to feel positive about their sexuality, as well as to make decisions regarding what they do and do not want from sexual and personal relationships.<sup>119</sup>

Second, rather than teaching young women how to 'avoid rape', programs can teach young men why and how to avoid perpetrating it. This focus on men's behaviour may take the form of examining the links between the social construction of masculinity and the use of violence, challenging men's conformity to such constructions, encouraging victim empathy, and teaching skills in consensual sex and non-violent conflict resolution.<sup>120</sup> This approach is considered to generate better outcomes for both young men and young women.<sup>121</sup> Challenging social constructions of masculinity gives young men alternatives to the limited range of behaviours and attitudes which traditionally define a 'real man'. For example, it can enable young men

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<sup>115</sup> Hird, M.J. and S. Jackson. (2001). Where 'Angels' and 'wusses' Fear to Tread: Sexual Coercion in Adolescent Dating Relationships. *Journal of Sociology*, 37(1): 27–43.

<sup>116</sup> Flood and Pease 2006, pp. 53–55.

<sup>117</sup> Gourlay 1996; Smith, P. and S. Welchans. (2000). Peer Education: Does Focusing on Male Responsibility Change Sexual Assault Attitudes? *Violence Against Women*, 6(11): 1255–1268; Mulroney.

<sup>118</sup> See for example Yeater and O'Donohue; Carmody, M. (2006). Preventing Adult Sexual Violence through Education? *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 9; Keel.

<sup>119</sup> Hillier, L., D. Dempsey and L. Harrison. (1999). 'I'd Never Share a Needle [But I Often Have Unsafe Sex]': Considering the Paradox of Young People's Sex and Drugs Talk. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 1(4): 347–361.

<sup>120</sup> Flood 2005–06.

<sup>121</sup> Flood, M. (2002–03). Engaging Men: Strategies and Dilemmas in Violence Prevention Education among Men. *Women Against Violence: An Australian Feminist Journal*, 13: 25–32.

to express themselves emotionally and improve their capacity to establish respectful equitable intimate relationships.<sup>122</sup>

It would be problematic to focus education efforts exclusively on boys and men. At least when it comes to voluntary education programs, not all males will participate in programs, those who do are likely to have a lower potential of perpetrating intimate partner violence, and even if all men participated, no intervention is one hundred per cent effective.<sup>123</sup> Failing to direct violence prevention and respectful relationships education efforts to girls and women would be to miss the opportunity to increase women's critical understandings of intimate partner violence and to build on women's existing skills in recognising, resisting and rejecting violence. There is merit in working with young women given the evidence that education programs focused on primary prevention among college women can reduce women's risk of victimisation.<sup>124</sup> In addition, educating women can change men: by shifting women's expectations of partners and intimate relations, interventions may increase the pressures on and incentives for heterosexual men to adopt non-violent practices and identities. Interventions can harness men's motivations to be accepted and liked by women, by encouraging women's unwillingness to associate with sexist and aggressive men.<sup>125</sup>

### Pedagogy (teaching methods)

Programs should:

- adopt the general characteristics of effective teaching and learning practice
- involve the use of quality teaching materials
- be interactive and participatory
- address cognitive, affective and behavioural domains
- be matched to stages of change
- give specific attention to skills development
- respond appropriately to participants' disclosures of victimisation and perpetration.

There are some general characteristics of effective teaching and learning practice, as a recent review documents:<sup>126</sup>

- *Respectful*: The program uses a positive, assets-based approach. For example, participants should be treated as bystanders to violence as opposed to potential perpetrators. By maintaining a focus on cultural norms, skill-building and respect for self, others and the group or community, participants should leave with the message that they can do something.

<sup>122</sup> McGrane, T. (1993). *The Social Construction of Adolescent Sexuality. Change in a Volatile Environment* (Conference proceedings). Melbourne: Children's Welfare Association of Victoria.

<sup>123</sup> Yeater and O'Donohue.

<sup>124</sup> Yeater and O'Donohue.

<sup>125</sup> Adams-Curtis, L.E. and G.B. Forbes. (2004). College Women's Experience of Sexual Coercion: A Review of Cultural, Perpetrator, Victim and Situational Variables. *Trauma, Violence, Abuse*, 5(2): 91–122.

<sup>126</sup> Dyson and Flood, pp. 8–9.



- *Goal-oriented*: Participants should have a clear understanding about why they are participating in the program and what it aims to achieve.
- *Relevant to them*: This is related to the program goal, but if participants have clearly identified expectations for the program, rather than feeling that they are expected to attend, they are more likely to actively participate.
- *Practical*: This is related to relevance. What will they get out of the program that is useful to them now or in the future?
- *Autonomous and self-directed*: This is achieved through the process, not the content. The program should be interactive and participants should have some input to the shape of the program.
- *Focused on the environment and changing social norms*: Assumptions about peer group norms being an asset, and care of the self and others being a norm can help to establish a climate of trust and acceptance. Participants need to feel that they each have a role to play, whether it is personal, or in support of others, or the girls and women they know.
- *Capacity-building*: Dominant positive norms to reframe assumed (negative) norms should be identified. Capacity should be enhanced and skills built to help participants feel like they can be effective bystanders (that is, the creation of a culture of responsibility and respect).
- *Engagement*: Increase receptiveness to prevention messages and decrease defensiveness.
- *Teach and practise skills*: The program teaches bystander skills for effective intervention in social situations, and for practising mutual consent.

Good-practice education programs are characterised by six further features. First, they involve the use of quality teaching materials. Second, they are interactive and participatory. Third, they address cognitive, affective and behavioural domains: what people know, how they feel and how they behave.<sup>127</sup> Fourth, and as part of this, they give specific attention to skills development. Fifth, they are matched to stages of change. Sixth, they respond supportively and appropriately to participants' disclosures of victimisation and perpetration.<sup>128</sup>

There is evidence, particularly from the sexuality education field, that the quality of teaching materials has a significant impact on teachers' implementation of curriculums. An evaluation of the *SHARE* program, a particularly well-developed sexuality education program in South Australia, cited the quality of the teaching materials as one of the program's great strengths. It noted that 'past research suggests the quality and usability of curriculum guides and related teaching and learning resources affect teachers' actual implementation of curricula in classrooms' and that 'quality curriculum materials are a necessary but not sufficient condition for successful curriculum implementation'.<sup>129</sup> Several features of *SHARE*'s main resource, titled

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<sup>127</sup> Berkowitz, A. D. (2004) Working With Men to Prevent Violence Against Women: An Overview. (Part One) National Resource Centre on Domestic Violence: VAWnet Applied Research Forum, October.

<sup>128</sup> Ellis, p. 131.

<sup>129</sup> Johnson, B. (1989) Final year student teachers' views on the characteristics of 'good quality' curriculum materials, unpublished paper used in the BEd (Inservice) course 'Curriculum Theory and Development' Salisbury, SA: South Australian College of Advanced

*Teach It Like It Is*, were considered from a curriculum design and teaching and learning perspective to demonstrate its quality. *Teach It Like It Is*:

- has a research base
- is conceptually well organised and integrated within the overall school curriculum
- acknowledges diversity
- relies on teachers' professional judgement: teachers are positioned as learning facilitators who are best placed to make decisions about the appropriateness of particular activities and resources, rather than 'technicians' who simply follow a syllabus set down by others
- uses a variety of learning activities (with an emphasis on engaging students in interactive and sociable learning tasks)
- is practical, containing concrete teaching suggestions and practical step-by-step procedures to apply them
- is well structured: each lesson has a familiar structure with the same elements
- includes some essential teaching resources (rather than requiring teachers to prepare time-consuming charts and information sheets – these are included in the body of the lesson plans or as appendices, if they are large).<sup>130</sup>

Given that teachers are time-poor, it is particularly important to provide materials that are useable and practical, and minimise additional preparation time.

Education in violence prevention and respectful relationships is more effective if it involves interactive and participatory group processes. Delivery should include greater flexibility and variation in instruction; use modelling as an influence; group participants into smaller 'schools within schools'; and include more supportive interactions, such as group work, cooperative learning, discussions, role-plays and behavioural rehearsal. Participatory and active teaching approaches are seen as good practice in sexuality and relationship education and personal, social and health education, and various studies find them to be more effective than didactic methods.<sup>131</sup>

Interaction and participation are related to group size, and group size has also been found to contribute to educational effectiveness. Brecklin and Forde's (2001) meta-analysis of university-based programs found that larger groups were related to weaker effects, and they suggested that programs may be more effective if small-group approaches were used.<sup>132</sup> Similarly, an earlier evaluation of rape prevention programs concluded that the most effective format involved small groups that used interactive discussion formats, maximised opportunities for self-examination and encouraged introspection.<sup>133</sup> Another evaluation across four school interventions found that, for

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Education; Fullan, M. with S. Stiegelbauer. (1991). *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. New York: Teachers College Press.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>131</sup> Ellis, p. 132.

<sup>132</sup> Brecklin, L. and D. Forde. (2001). A meta-analysis of rape education programs. *Violence and Victims*, 16: 303–321.

<sup>133</sup> Earle, J. P. (1996). Acquaintance Rape Workshops: Their effectiveness in Changing the Attitudes of First Year College Men. *National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Journal*, 34(1): 2–18.

single-sex groups, students showed greater change over time in dating and relationship norms in small-group settings than in a classroom setting. However, for mixed-sex groups, students showed greater improvement when in classroom settings. It may be that, particularly for mixed-sex groups of adolescents, classroom settings allow for greater control by the educator and greater focus than in less structured formats.<sup>134</sup>

Educational programs are more effective if they address three domains: cognition, affective or emotional responses and behaviour.<sup>135</sup> Some programs engage participants only at the cognitive level, by offering information in lecture format or by interactive exercises on 'myths' and 'facts'. But programs that explore only what participants know are less effective than programs that also address how they feel and what they do. Over the past decade, it has been recognised that merely conveying information to students in order to raise awareness of violence and sexual assault is not enough to create the change needed to actually prevent violence.<sup>136</sup> In this, recent violence prevention and 'healthy relationship' programs (like sexual health programs) are distinct from the rest of the school curriculum in their aim to influence behaviours as well as increase knowledge.<sup>137</sup>

Affective or emotion-oriented strategies include having students listen to stories or speakers regarding violence and its impact, in order to elicit empathy. Behavioural strategies include interactive role-plays and drama. For example, in a US program, student actors portray a scene of sexual coercion, and the audience is then invited to rewrite the scene by making suggestions about how the actors could have interacted differently so that sexual coercion did not occur. The actors then recreate the scene, incorporating these suggestions. Such an exercise facilitates behavioural change by modelling the specific behaviours men can adopt to minimise their likelihood of coercing a partner into sex.<sup>138</sup>

Good-practice programs include activities focused on skills development. Experience in both violence prevention and sexuality education suggests that programs that have been evaluated positively on behavioural measures are those in which the focus is on skills development, and there is a clear 'behavioural message'.<sup>139</sup> For example, students who participated in the skills-focused *Safe Dates* program in the United States reported fewer perpetrations of psychological abuse, physical violence and sexual violence against a current dating partner than did students in the control group. They also were more critical of norms supporting dating violence and used more constructive communication skills.<sup>140</sup> Importantly, the longitudinal evaluation of the *Safe Dates* program has shown that behavioural

<sup>134</sup> Clinton-Sherrod, A.M., A.A. Morgan-Lopez, D. Gibbs, S.R. Hawkins, L. Hart, B. Ball, N. Irwin and N. Littler. (2009). Factors Contributing to the Effectiveness of Four School-based Sexual Violence Interventions. *Health Promotion Practice*, 10(1): 19s–28s, p. 26s.

<sup>135</sup> Heppner, M.J., C.F. Humphrey, T.L. Hillenbrand-Gunn, and K.A. DeBord. (1995). The Differential Effects of Rape Prevention Programming on Attitudes, Behavior, and Knowledge. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 42: 508–518.

<sup>136</sup> See for example Gourlay; Hillier *et al.* 1999.

<sup>137</sup> Kirby, D. and J. Alter. (1980). The Experts Rate Important Features and Outcomes of Sex Education Programmes. *Journal of School Health*, 50: 497–502.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> Wight, D., G. Raab, M. Henderson, C. Abraham, K. Buston, G. Hart and S. Scott. (2002). Limits of Teacher-Delivered Sex Education: Interim Behavioral Outcomes from a Randomised Trial. *British Medical Journal*, 324(7351): 1430–1435.

<sup>140</sup> Foshee *et al.* 1998.

change can persist over long periods, with participants continuing to report less physical and sexual dating violence perpetration and victimisation four years following the program.<sup>141</sup>

Skills development should include conflict resolution, negotiation and interpersonal skills in order to empower students to negotiate sexual and personal relationships and reduce 'unwanted sexual experiences'.<sup>142</sup> Imparting assertiveness as well as support-seeking skills to young women is seen as particularly valuable, and again demands specific skills-based training as opposed to information-based sessions.<sup>143</sup>

Experience in sexuality education suggests that programs should provide students with the tools to think critically about real-life situations, and assess and adapt their own values and behaviours. Dyson *et al.* note that this approach demands a high level of aptitude from educators, who need to be able to clarify their own values if they are to help young people clarify theirs.<sup>144</sup> What educators say, as well as their silences, body language and role-modelling, will invariably impart their values to students, meaning that 'attempts by teachers to adopt a value-neutral stance are doomed to failure'.<sup>145</sup>

Ideal programs are matched to participants' stage of change. In relation to relationship and family violence, individuals and groups are at different places along the continuum from passive indifference to active intervention, and different educational approaches should be adopted for males and females at earlier and later stages of change.<sup>146</sup>

Good-practice education programs involve appropriate responses to participants' disclosures of victimisation and perpetration. There is a need for the educational setting to respond to students who may have been abused, or witnessed violence in their homes or in public spaces. It is recommended that educational programs create a high enough level of trust that children can disclose exposure to domestic violence and teachers can make appropriate referrals.<sup>147</sup> However, while there has been less attention to this in violence prevention education, schools-based efforts must also respond to disclosures of *perpetration* or potential perpetration, and have protocols in place for responding to students who disclose having perpetrated or intending to perpetrate behaviour that meets criteria for physical or sexual assault.

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<sup>141</sup> Foshee *et al.* 2004.

<sup>142</sup> Wight, D. (1993). A Re-assessment of Health Education on HIV/AIDS for Young Heterosexuals. *Health Education Research: Theory and Practice*, 8(4): 473–483.

<sup>143</sup> Sikkema, K.J., R.A. Winett, and D.N. Lombard. (1995). Development and Evaluation of an HIV-risk Reduction Program for Young Female College Students. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 7: 145–159.

<sup>144</sup> Dyson and Fox.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13, citing Harrison, L., L. Hillier and J. Walsh. (1996). Teaching for a Positive Sexuality: Sounds Good, but What About Fear, Embarrassment, Risk and the 'Forbidden' Discourse of Desire? In L. Laskey and C. Beavis (eds.), *Schooling and Sexualities: Teaching for a Positive Sexuality*. Melbourne: Deakin Centre for Education and Change, Deakin University.

<sup>146</sup> Berkowitz 2002.

<sup>147</sup> Council of Europe Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men.

## Curriculum structure

Programs should:

- be of sufficient duration and intensity to produce change
- be timed and crafted to suit children's and young people's developmental needs, including their developing identities and social and sexual relations
- have clear rationales for their use of single-sex and/or mixed-sex groups, including the merits and drawbacks of each.

Three aspects of curriculum structure are addressed here: duration and intensity, timing and developmental appropriateness, and group composition.

### ***Duration and intensity***

Good-practice programs have sufficient duration and intensity to produce change. In the violence prevention field, there is widespread endorsement of an association between program duration or intensity and program impact.<sup>148</sup> Although there is debate over this, this report recommends that good practice programs using classroom-length or similar sessions comprise at least five sessions. To achieve behavioural and attitudinal change, programs ideally run over a lengthy period of time, with multiple sessions over successive years.<sup>149</sup>

In violence prevention parlance, the quantity and quality of program contact is referred to as program 'dosage'. Aspects of dosage include 'the session length, number of sessions, spacing of sessions, and the duration of the total program',<sup>150</sup> while further dimensions of dosage include the use of follow-up and 'booster' sessions. Education programs for children and young people vary in their duration, although there is no clear rationale for such variation, and most are relatively short. For example, a US review of eleven primary prevention programs among school-aged young people found that only five were five hours or greater in duration.<sup>151</sup>

There is a general consensus that multiple sessions are required if education programs are to generate behavioural and attitudinal change. As Flood summarises:

To generate sufficient 'intensity' to produce change, effective educational programs require both length and depth. Interventions need to be short enough to be practical, but long and intensive enough to be effective. One-off and one-hour workshops may be attractive to over-burdened schools or organisations, but they are unlikely to produce substantial and persistent change ... On the other hand, while there are practical and financial constraints on lengthy and intensive educational programs, they are more likely to produce lasting change ...<sup>152</sup>

The rationale for greater dosage is obvious. Greater duration means greater exposure to the prevention messages and materials. It

<sup>148</sup> Hassell and Hannah, p. 41; Nation *et al.*, p. 452; Tutty *et al.*, p. 16.

<sup>149</sup> Tutty *et al.*, p. 16.

<sup>150</sup> Nation *et al.*, p. 452.

<sup>151</sup> Whitaker *et al.*, p. 159.

<sup>152</sup> Flood 2005–06.

facilitates the acquisition of new skills and knowledge through both ‘exercise’ – meaningful repetition and application of information – and ‘intensity’ – lucid, exciting learning experiences and opportunities to practise putting new knowledge and skills into action.<sup>153</sup> Greater duration allows educators to move beyond lecture-style instruction to the use of various teaching that which have been shown to increase impact, such as role-plays, skills training and so on.

There is some evidence that programs with greater amounts of contact with students have larger impacts on student outcomes, from two US-based reviews. Among five school-based interventions focused on dating violence prevention in the United States, programs with greater amounts of contact with students (and greater embedment in the classroom curriculum over time) reported greater impacts on students’ attitudes and norms.<sup>154</sup> Safe Dates, a program comprising ten sessions (amounting to 7.5 hours in total) integrated into the school curriculum, had a more substantial and consistent impact than five-session programs of shorter total duration. In another review of eleven primary prevention programs among school students, among the four studies that assessed changes in behaviour, two reported a positive intervention effect, and these – the Safe Dates project and the Youth Relationships project – were two of the longest programs, at 7.5 and 36 hours respectively.<sup>155</sup>

A better idea of the impact of dosage could be generated by comparisons of the impact of short and long versions of a single program. While few such comparisons exist, Hilton *et al.* (1998) report that there was greater change in attitudes and knowledge among students who attended a half-day intervention (a one-hour general assembly and two one-hour workshops) than among students who attended only a one-hour assembly. As they summarise, ‘The value of schoolwide, single-event mass training is questioned by our finding that only classroom workshops imparted information’.<sup>156</sup>

There are important caveats to the general principle of greater dosage. First, length alone is no guarantee of program effectiveness. Various other factors interact with program duration to influence impact. Second, at this stage there are few means to judge exactly what level of dosage is sufficient to ensure a significant positive impact. Is five hours enough? Is ten hours twice as effective as five hours? Third, the relationship between dosage and response may be complex, with J-shaped, plateau, or other patterns possible.

The importance of sufficient dosage seemingly is undermined by the fact that relatively short programs can generate positive impacts, at least in attitudes in the short term. For example, nine of eleven primary prevention programs among school-aged young people in the United States reported at least one positive effect (in knowledge, attitudes, or behaviour), with five of the nine programs measuring attitudes reporting positive changes.<sup>157</sup> To focus on some Australian examples, positive impacts were reported in evaluations of the

<sup>153</sup> Perry, B. (2008a) Making an Impression: Sufficient dosage & SV/IPV prevention. *Moving Upstream: Virginia's Newsletter for the Primary Prevention of Sexual & Intimate Partner Violence*, 4(2), Summer, p. 3.

<sup>154</sup> Meyer, H. and N. Stein. (2004). Relationship Violence Prevention Education in Schools: What's Working, What's Getting in the Way, and What are Some Future Directions. *American Journal of Health Education*, 35(4): 198–205, p. 202.

<sup>155</sup> Whitaker *et al.*, p. 160.

<sup>156</sup> Hilton *et al.*, p. 737.

<sup>157</sup> Whitaker *et al.*, p. 160.

*Respectful Behaviours in Sport* training delivered to AFL players and the youth-focused prevention program *Kinks and Bends*, with both programs involving only a single two-hour session.<sup>158</sup> However, both evaluations were limited in important ways: assessment took place immediately after the intervention, there was no long-term follow-up and responses were likely to be shaped by social desirability.

Furthermore, how much positive change is enough? For example, if after an education program the proportion of young men who see sexual coercion as legitimate in certain circumstances has fallen from 20 per cent to 15 per cent, can the program adequately be described as having had a 'positive impact'?

There is little reason to think that one-off, short-duration education sessions, by themselves, can achieve lasting change in violent attitudes or behaviours. They may have more impact when they are accompanied by substantial wider changes. For example, the impact of single-session interventions among NRL players may have been intensified by the dramatically changed organisational structures within which they were delivered. Similarly with the AFL's *Respect and Responsibility program*, while AFL players are only exposed to single interactive training sessions each year, their clubs have each endorsed a wider program of activity that seeks to promote a workplace culture that is safe, supportive and inclusive for women. The Respect and Responsibility policy also states its intention to provide an industry-wide response to addressing the issue of violence against women through introducing workshops and materials to players in state leagues and community clubs about how to build, value and maintain equal and respectful relationships with women, developing policies and procedures that provide for respectful workplace behaviour, and through making a commitment to participate in the White Ribbon Day campaign each year.

### **Timing and developmental appropriateness**

Violence prevention and respectful relationships education among children and young people is most effective if it is timed and crafted to suit their developmental needs, including the character of their developing identities and social and sexual relations. There is a general principle in public health that prevention initiatives will be more effective if they are appropriately timed: directed towards people within a certain developmental range and with content and format tailored to this range.<sup>159</sup>

The most effective timing of program delivery among children and young people is unknown.<sup>160</sup> For example, the risk of violent behaviours, and opportunities for change, may vary from early to mid to late adolescence. However, there is a strong rationale for 'starting young', as was outlined in Part 1 of this report. Children should be exposed to violence prevention education early enough to have an impact on the potential development of problem behaviours, ideally

<sup>158</sup> Dyson, S., A. Mitchell and C. Fox (2007). *Review of Adult Education & Behaviour Change Literature And Evaluation of 2005 Training – Part Two: Evaluation of Module One Training*. Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University; T Issues Consultancy (2004) *Report on the Evaluation of the Kinks and Bends Program*. Balgowlah, NSW, March.

<sup>159</sup> Perry, B. (2008b). Starting Young & Sustaining: Developmentally Appropriate Primary SV/IPV Prevention. *Moving Upstream: Virginia's Newsletter for the Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence*, 4(3), Winter, p. 3.

<sup>160</sup> Wolfe and Jaffe 2003, p. 5.



beginning in primary school, with this then built and reinforced progressively across year levels.

Part of designing an effective education curriculum for children and young people is tailoring it to their intellectual, cognitive and social development in general, and to their emerging social and sexual identities and relations in particular. There is evidence in studies of adolescent sexual behaviour, for example, that changing the message of the intervention according to the developmental stage of the participants was associated with positive outcomes.<sup>161</sup> Among older, adolescent populations, the curriculum should give greater and more explicit attention to sexual behaviours and sexual relationships. It should work to identify and undermine dynamics of power, control and coercion in young people's intimate and sexual relations, or their 'dating relationships', to use the North American term.<sup>162</sup> Such a curriculum ideally builds on a curriculum for younger age groups that has addressed issues of power, justice and respect in more general terms.

Multi-year violence prevention is ideal. It means that prevention efforts are sustained over time and that students have multiple points of contact with reinforcing messages, both of which are desirable features of violence prevention.<sup>163</sup> However, multi-year delivery is not a necessary component of effective violence prevention and respectful relationships education in schools. Effective programs may be delivered to only a single year level or across year levels, although in both cases, ideally they are complemented by related curriculums at earlier year levels.

### ***Mixed-sex or single-sex classes?***

To meet the standards of good practice, violence prevention and respectful relationships programs in schools should have clear rationales for their use of single-sex and/or mixed-sex groups. As there is debate regarding the merits and effectiveness of these alternatives, a critical attention to group composition rather than a particular option is suggested. Other aspects of group composition are discussed after this. A related issue is the sex of educators, and this is addressed under 'Curriculum teachers and educators' below.

The evidence regarding the significance of sex composition comes largely from sexual violence prevention programs among university students in the United States. It suggests that there are obvious advantages to single-sex groups in schools-based violence prevention, for females and males alike and for men in particular. Arguments for single-sex groups for females and males alike include differently gendered involvements in violence, comfort and safety, and participant preference.

- Males and females are in different places in relation to violence, and violence prevention therefore should engage them in different ways.
  - Males and females differ systematically in their attitudes towards and involvements in violence, for example with males showing higher agreement with violence-supportive attitudes and far higher involvements in perpetration. Goals and strategies in working with

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<sup>161</sup> Nation *et al.*, p. 453.

<sup>162</sup> See Perry (2008b) for some examples of developmentally appropriate prevention initiatives.

<sup>163</sup> Berkowitz 2004.

males and females may therefore be different, and there will be difficulties in combining them.

- Both males and females may be more comfortable and expressive in single-sex groups. In sexuality education, for example, there is evidence that young people can be uncomfortable when asked to discuss sexual matters in front of members of the other sex and reluctant to fully participate in sessions held in a mixed-sex environment.<sup>164</sup>
  - Mixed-sex discussions can become polarised.<sup>165</sup>
  - Working in single-sex groups can minimise the harmful, gendered forms of interaction that are common in mixed-sex groups.<sup>166</sup>
- Girls and women with prior histories of sexual assault may experience mixed-gender workshops as revictimisation, while potential male perpetrators may misuse information on how girls and women can reduce their risk of assault.<sup>167</sup>
- There is some evidence that female and male participants prefer single-sex workshops.<sup>168</sup>

Research on violence prevention education among men in particular tends to emphasise the need for male-only groups, for example because:

- men are more comfortable, less defensive and more honest in all male groups
- men are less likely to talk openly in the presence of women
  - single-sex groups reveal a diversity of opinions among men that may not be expressed when women are present
- men may be more prepared to reveal, and thus reflect critically, on sexist and abusive histories in all-male settings
- men's attitudes and behaviour are shaped in powerful ways by their male peers, and male–male influence can be harnessed for positive ends in all-male groups
- there may be greater opportunity to discuss and craft roles for males in ending sexism and violence.<sup>169</sup>

At the same time, there are clear benefits for mixed-sex groups. In particular, they:

- create opportunities for dialogue between females and males regarding gender, sexuality, violence and relationships, fostering cross-gender understanding and alliance
- create opportunities for males to listen to females regarding these issues

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<sup>164</sup> Wight 1993.

<sup>165</sup> Berkowitz, A. D. (2002). Fostering Men's Responsibility for Preventing Sexual Assault. In *Preventing Violence in Relationships*. Ed. P. Schewe. Washington, DC, American Psychological Association.

<sup>166</sup> Flood 2005–06.

<sup>167</sup> Yeater and O'Donohue.

<sup>168</sup> Tutty *et al.*, p. 15; Berkowitz, A. D. (2001). Critical Elements of Sexual Assault Prevention and Risk Reduction Programs for Men and Women. In: C. Kilmartin, *Sexual Assault in Context: Teaching College Men About Gender*. Holmes Beach: Learning Publications; Berkowitz 2002.

<sup>169</sup> Berkowitz 2002; Funk, R. E. (2006). *Reaching Men: Strategies for Preventing Sexist Attitudes, Behaviors and Violence*. Indianapolis, IN: Jist Publishing, pp. 64–66.

- can lessen the potential for male–male collusion regarding sexism and violence
- can give girls and young women useful exposure to problematic male understandings and behaviours and valuable experience in challenging these or seeing them challenged.

The most significant question in relation to group composition is 'What is most effective?'. There has been some consensus that violence prevention education is most effective when conducted in sex-specific groups. This reflects the fact that various evaluations of US university-based programs find that separate-sex programs are more effective than mixed-sex programs.<sup>170</sup> A 2001 meta-analysis supported the argument for single-sex sessions for male participants, and showed that interventions had more impact on male participants in single-sex than mixed-sex programs.<sup>171</sup> Conversely, a more recent meta-analysis reported that there was no evidence that men were more likely to benefit from single-sex group interventions than mixed-group interventions.<sup>172</sup> One possible explanation for the contradiction is that while the 2001 meta-analysis did not include behavioural intentions, the 2005 one did.

Thus, there is less consensus on the greater effectiveness of single-sex groups than first appeared. A key question here is 'Effective for whom?'. A recent manual on educating men suggests that 'men benefit more than women from mixed-gender programs, and ... mixed-gender programs are less effective for women than single-sex presentations'.<sup>173</sup> Support for this comes from a study of over 1180 participants in four schools-based sexual violence preventions. It found that boys, but not girls, had steeper rates of improvement in attitudes towards sexual coercion in mixed-sex than single-sex groups. In other words, for boys in particular, participation in mixed-sex groups was influential in improving their knowledge and attitudes.<sup>174</sup>

The most effective sex composition of groups may depend on such factors as the age of the group, the focus and goals of the teaching sessions, and the nature of the teaching methods used. In relation to age, for example, there seems to be significant debate (at least in Canada) regarding the sex composition of groups of children,<sup>175</sup> while agreement that single-sex groups should be at least a component of programming is more common for programs for young adults. In relation to the goals of the session, mixed-sex groups may be more effective if the program or session is intended to encourage male empathy for females or victims of violence, to create gender dialogue, or to create opportunities for males to listen to females. However, if the program or session is intended, for example, to encourage males' 'ownership' of the issue or to facilitate their move from bystander to ally, then single-sex groups may be more effective.<sup>176</sup> Finally, particularly in working with adolescents, there is some argument for using different sex compositions at different points in an education

<sup>170</sup> Berkowitz 2002, pp. 166–177; Earle.

<sup>171</sup> Brecklin, L. and D. Forde. (2001). A meta-analysis of rape education programs. *Violence and Victims*, 16: 303–321.

<sup>172</sup> Anderson, L. A. and S. C. Whiston. (2005). Sexual Assault Education Programs: A Meta-Analytic Examination Of Their Effectiveness. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 29(4).

<sup>173</sup> Funk 2006, p. 63.

<sup>174</sup> Clinton-Sherrod *et al.*, p. 26s.s

<sup>175</sup> Ellis.

<sup>176</sup> Funk 2006, p. 64.

program, such as working with males and females separately, and then bringing them together.<sup>177</sup>

Studies of sex education have also suggested that students' discomfort is reduced if they are in familiar class groupings, and if disruptions are minimised.<sup>178</sup> Indigenous, immigrant, refugee and disadvantaged young people may have more complex and/or culturally specific needs from this type of education, and would therefore benefit from specifically developed material or strategies.<sup>179</sup>

### Curriculum teachers and educators

Programs should:

- be delivered by skilled teachers and/or educators, supported by resources, training and ongoing support
- have clear rationales for their use of teachers, community educators, and/or peer educators
- have clear rationales for, or a critical understanding of, their use of female and/or male staff.

The final issue of effective curriculum delivery considered in this report is *who* should deliver it. There is a strong consensus that violence prevention programs should be delivered by skilled and trained staff, as is discussed below. However, beyond this, there is little consensus on whether programs should be delivered by teachers, community educators, or peer educators, and on whether they should be of the same sex as the students, and there is wide variety in actual prevention practice. On these last two issues therefore, again this report urges that education programs have a clear rationale for their practice, or where there is less choice about who delivers the program, at least a critical understanding of its potential implications.

### **Skilled and trained teachers and/or educators**

The competence of those who deliver violence prevention and respectful relationships curriculums may well be one of the most important influences on program effectiveness. Literature on sexuality and relationship-oriented programs suggests that the competency of educators is a critical factor.<sup>180</sup> In order to achieve good practice both in content and in skills-building pedagogies, there is an obvious need to ensure that educators have the knowledge and skills to effectively conduct such programs. It is suggested in the literature on sexuality and sexual health education that, first of all, educators should be well trained in gender, violence and sexual health issues.<sup>181</sup> Further positive qualities are an approachable manner; being comfortable talking about 'taboo' issues such as the physical aspects of sex;<sup>182</sup> being able to create a climate of trust and being seen by students as

<sup>177</sup> Tutty *et al.*, p. 15.

<sup>178</sup> Wight 1993.

<sup>179</sup> Mulroney. See also Gourlay.

<sup>180</sup> Bowden, R.G., B.A. Lanning, G. Pippin, and J. Tanner. (2003). Teachers' Attitudes towards Abstinence-only Sex Education Curricula. *Education*, 123.

<sup>181</sup> Dyson and Fox.

<sup>182</sup> Buston, K., D. Wight, and G. Hart. (2002). Inside the Sex Education Classroom: The Importance of Context in Engaging

Pupils. *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 4(3): 317–335.

'protector and friend';<sup>183</sup> being assertive enough to eliminate hurtful humour while not being dismissive or judgemental;<sup>184</sup> and being able to make the program fun.<sup>185</sup>

Educators in violence prevention and respectful relationships curriculums may require qualities additional to those required of sexuality educators, particularly with regard to the ability to model appropriate non-violent, non-discriminatory behaviours and to provide strong ethical leadership. In the *Respect, Protect, Connect* evaluation, for instance, some school staff observed that, given the seriousness of issues surrounding violence, establishing a 'non-judgemental' rapport with students was not enough. Instead, in encouraging respectful relationships, at times it is desirable for educators to influence or lead students.<sup>186</sup>

Requiring skilled staff to deliver violence prevention necessitates training. US research finds that many violence prevention educators lack a grounding in primary prevention,<sup>187</sup> and the same is likely to be true in Australia. Workers who deliver violence prevention education in schools often come from agencies focused on work with victims and survivors (and indeed perpetrators), and it should not be assumed that they have adequate training and skills to deliver prevention education.<sup>188</sup> There is no substantial Australian training program that builds the capacity of educators to deliver primary prevention education programs. While VicHealth is currently developing a short course that aims to build leadership and increase skills within organisations and communities so that they can undertake activity in the primary prevention of violence against women, it is not intended to provide the more intensive and specialist training required for educators to deliver in education settings.

Overseas research suggests that training of educators is often limited, and, ironically, does not meet standards of good educational practice.<sup>189</sup> On the other hand, Australian evaluations of a successful sexuality education program in South Australia found that external support for teachers – in the form of comprehensive teacher training, regional coordination, and support from experienced and successful community educators – was one of the key factors that promoted schools' use of the program.<sup>190</sup> The same approach has been used in Victoria in relation to such areas as language support and drug education.

Good practice violence prevention and respectful relationships curriculums must be supported by resources, training and ongoing support. This report echoes the standards developed by Carmody et al. for NASASV.<sup>191</sup> In particular, programs must identify how they will

<sup>183</sup> Wight 1993.

<sup>184</sup> Dyson and Fox.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> Fergus, L. (2006) *An Evaluation of the Respect, Protect, Connect Program*. Melbourne: South Eastern Centre against Sexual Assault.

<sup>187</sup> Martin, S. L., Coyne-Beasley, T., Hoehn, M., Mathew, M., Runyan, C. W., Orton, S., et al. (2008). Primary Prevention of Violence against Women: Training Needs of Violence Practitioners. *Violence Against Women*, 15(1), 44–56.

<sup>188</sup> Carmody et al. 2009, p. 59.

<sup>189</sup> *ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>190</sup> Johnson, B. (2006) *An Evaluation of the Trial Implementation of the Sexual Health and Relationships Education (SHARE) Program 2003–2005*. Adelaide: Sexual Health Information, Networking and Education (SHineSA), pp. 13–15.

<sup>191</sup> Carmody et al. 2009, p. 29.

develop the knowledge and skills of those delivering the program, whether they are teachers or community-based workers.

### ***Teachers, community educators and/or peer educators?***

In schools, should curriculums on violence prevention and respectful relationships be delivered by teachers, community educators, or peer educators, or some combination or sequence of these? There are clear advantages to using existing school staff to deliver programs. This facilitates a whole-school approach, enables more effective integration of program messages into other areas of the curriculum, and teaching staff are a permanent presence in the school and therefore a more 'available' resource for students. However, training is a key issue. Recent European research notes that where existing school staff deliver violence prevention education programs, the lack of comprehensive training is the most common impediment to success.<sup>192</sup> Thus, in order to deliver such programs effectively, there is a need to ensure all teachers receive training (both in Diploma of Education courses and through professional development) on issues such as the links between sexism, gender and violence, as well as how to develop students' skills in this complex behavioural domain.

There are also disadvantages to having teaching staff deliver violence prevention and respectful relationship programs, including teachers' lack of knowledge or skills, discomfort with the issues, competing demands, and a perception that the topic area is beyond what they should be expected to teach. Given their ongoing position in the school and professional relationship with students and other staff, teachers may, for example, be unwilling to offer the more personal reflections that can sometimes enrich the delivery of violence prevention education, or be uncomfortable addressing issues of gender and sexuality with students whom they also see in other contexts. Teachers may feel ill-equipped, particularly in dealing with disclosures of victimisation (which do occur).<sup>193</sup> Time for ongoing professional development is required in order to acquire and maintain sufficient knowledge and skills to be effective educators in the field of interpersonal violence. This may be difficult for staff and schools, with their already intensive curriculums and the heavy teaching loads of secondary school staff.

Much of the violence prevention education in Australian schools is delivered by external educators, and there are advantages to this. Community educators typically have specialist knowledge of, and comfort with, the topic.<sup>194</sup> They can relieve pressure on teachers to handle disclosures and potentially embarrassing material. They provide links to agencies and services for children and families living with violence. However, there are also disadvantages. Delivery by external educators is less likely to be integrated comprehensively into the school curriculum, may reach only those classes or schools with teachers or staff sensitised to the issue, may be unsustainable if programs are dependent on short-term funding, and neglects teachers' and schools' direct responsibility for fostering respectful relationships. In addition, as a British report notes, 'external staff are less likely to

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<sup>192</sup> Institute of Women, Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, p. 51.

<sup>193</sup> Ellis, p. 131.

<sup>194</sup> Tutty *et al.*, p. 12.

impact on school culture, or provide continuity and progression to learners, making long-term change more difficult'.<sup>195</sup>

The use of peer educators and/or the incorporation of peer support is identified as an element of good practice in several reports or evaluations. In their meta-analysis of interventions designed to reduce rape-supportive beliefs among college men, Flores and Hartlaub found that one of the most effective programs utilised peer educators.<sup>196</sup> They theorised that the peer leaders were able to speak to participants from a familiar perspective, which enabled participants to relate more easily to the information presented. Some authors have asserted that young men are more likely to learn from their peers, and trained peer educators have had the most effective outcomes in rape prevention programs.<sup>197</sup> Another study, on approaches to teaching a broader health-related program, suggested that peer educators should be other students chosen for their ability to provide leadership and influence the behaviour of others.<sup>198</sup> It was found that the use of such peer educators had a significant effect on how other students responded to the program.

However, more recent investigations are more equivocal about the effectiveness of peer-based delivery of violence prevention curriculums. A 2005 meta-analysis of 69 studies of sexual assault education on US college campuses did not support an emphasis on peer education.<sup>199</sup> It found that the status of the facilitator appeared to influence attitude change and behavioural intentions, but not in a direction supporting peer delivery. Across the 102 interventions in the study, professional presenters were more successful than either graduate students or peer presenters in promoting positive change. Peer-led delivery may fail because of under-investment in peer education as 'cheap labour', or for the same reasons that teacher-led delivery may fail: inadequate training, support and supervision.

The immediate impacts of delivery by teachers, community educators, or peer educators seem to depend above all on their skills, training and support. This report returns therefore to its earlier point, that whoever delivers the curriculum in schools on violence prevention and respectful relationships, they must be supported by resources, training and ongoing support, and programs must articulate rationales for their use. However, given that the first and perhaps most significant standard for good practice identified in this report is a whole-school approach, there is a strong argument for delivery by teachers, whether side by side with community and/or peer educators or not. Teacher-based delivery seems essential to the integration and sustainability of violence prevention curriculums in schools.

### **Gender of teaching staff?**

Most violence prevention educators in Australia are female, reflecting women's much higher levels of participation and employment in services, agencies and community efforts addressing men's violence against women. However, as engaging boys in violence prevention has

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<sup>195</sup> Ellis, p. 131.

<sup>196</sup> Flores and Hartlaub.

<sup>197</sup> Earle.

<sup>198</sup> Carter, D.S. (1999). A Whole of School Approach to Adolescent Peer-Leader Development for Affective Learning in Health-Related Curricula. *Research Papers in Education*, 14(3): 295–319.

<sup>199</sup> Anderson and Whiston 2005, p. 383.



become more prominent and as men's roles have received increasing emphasis, there has also been some emphasis on the need for work with boys and young men to be conducted by male facilitators in particular. Arguments for using male facilitators and peer educators when working with all-male audiences include the following:

- Given the benefits of all-male groups or classes (see the discussion under 'Curriculum structure' above); male educators or facilitators are a necessary complement to this.
- Male educators and participants can act as role-models for other men.
- Male educators possess an insider's knowledge of the workings of masculinity and can use this to critical advantage with male audiences.
- Male educators tend to be perceived as more credible and more persuasive by male participants.
- The use of male educators embodies the recognition that men must take responsibility for helping to end men's violence against women.<sup>200</sup>

However, female facilitators can work very effectively with boys and men, and there are benefits to women and men working together. Such partnerships demonstrate to participants a model of egalitarian working relationships across gender; they model women's and men's shared interest in non-violence and gender justice; they give men opportunities to hear of women's experiences and concerns and to further mobilise their care for the women and girls in their own lives; and they enhance accountability to women and women's services.<sup>201</sup>

The argument that work with girls and young women should be conducted by female facilitators in particular has been made less often, perhaps as this is the norm anyway, given women's over-representation in the violence prevention field. Nevertheless, it is supported by similar arguments to those above and by earlier arguments for single-sex groups *per se*.

Simplistic assumptions about 'matching' educators and participants, for example by sex, may not address the complex interactions and negotiations that take place regarding a range of forms of social difference, from age and ethnicity to class and sexuality. Indeed, sharing a biological sex is no guarantee of individuals' compatibility, given males' and females' diverse gender identities and relations. In any case, there may be practical constraints on 'matching' educators, particularly when it comes to working with boys and young men. Therefore, while there are valuable arguments for matching the sex of the educator(s) and their students in violence prevention and respectful relationships classes, this report suggests that programs have clear rationales for, or at least a critical understanding of, their use of female or male staff.

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<sup>200</sup> Flood 2005–06.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

## Relevant, inclusive and culturally sensitive practice

Programs should:

- be relevant, that is, informed in all cases by knowledge of their target group or population and their local contexts
- be inclusive and culturally sensitive, embodying these principles in all stages of program design, implementation and evaluation
- involve consultation with representatives or leaders from the population group(s) participating in the program, where appropriate.

Good-practice programs are informed in all cases by knowledge of their target group or population and their local contexts. This report emphasises ‘in all cases’ to steer program providers away from the assumption that attention to ‘relevance’ and ‘cultural appropriateness’ is necessary only when working with groups or populations who are marked culturally as ‘other’ or ‘different’ or ‘diverse’. Instead, such attention is necessary in working with *any* group or population in *any* context, including those seen to be ‘mainstream’ or ‘normal’. For example, a group of white, middle-class, heterosexual boys from inner-city Melbourne have ‘culture’ – specific formations of identity, norms, and interaction – just as much as boys who are older, indigenous, poor, or gay. Programming with such boys therefore should be attentive to these, just as they should with any group or population.

Beyond this general principle of relevance, however, there is a powerful rationale for violence prevention and respectful relationships curriculum to pay attention in particular to forms of difference or diversity associated with gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality and disability. There are several components to this:<sup>202</sup>

- Violence – its practice, meanings, causes and impacts – is tied to various forms of difference or diversity:
  - Some population groups experience higher levels of physical and sexual violence than other groups. Women’s and men’s experiences of, and involvements in, sexual violence are shaped in important ways by class, race and ethnicity, age, disability and other forms of social division.
  - Understandings of, and attitudes towards, sexual assault are culturally located, and vary across particular populations, communities and contexts.<sup>203</sup>
- Given this, violence prevention education is more effective if culturally relevant.
- As some forms of difference or diversity are tied to inequalities of power and patterns of disadvantage, an ethical practice in violence prevention requires an inclusive approach.

Carmody *et al.* offer a useful summary of the problems associated with ‘non-inclusive’ or ‘culturally insensitive’ prevention education:<sup>204</sup>

The failure to recognise and respond to diversity in sexual assault prevention education has the potential to make

<sup>202</sup> This is summarised from Carmody *et al.*, pp. 38–.

<sup>203</sup> Flood and Pease 2006.

<sup>204</sup> Carmody *et al.*, p. 40.

programs *irrelevant* (for example, discussing complex relationship interactions with a younger age group), *unacceptable* (promoting casual sex as a norm is not appropriate when working with Muslim young people ...), *discriminatory* (if a program is not adaptive to the needs of participants with an intellectual or physical disability), or *dangerous* (if assumptions are made that ... all participants are heterosexual or that this is the only 'acceptable' sexuality within the community and therefore render the experience of same sex sexual violence as less significant).

Attention to inclusiveness should be ensured regardless of the apparent composition of any one group, primarily in the interests of promoting equality and understanding, but also because 'some groups may be invisible, or prefer not to disclose their presence because of fear of prejudice or discrimination'.<sup>205</sup> The value of showing attention to the needs and experiences of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds has also been emphasised by research<sup>206</sup> that shows such students often feel that program messages are not relevant to them and are therefore more likely to 'tune out.'

There is very little empirical evidence of what constitutes most effective practice in violence prevention education with particular populations. However, there certainly is evidence that culturally relevant interventions among racially diverse populations are more effective than general interventions<sup>207</sup>.

'Cultural appropriateness' should refer also to a sensitivity to *gender* cultures.<sup>208</sup> Among males, for example, there is significant diversity in the constructions of masculinity that are dominant in particular social contexts and communities. This diversity certainly is shaped by ethnic differences, but also by many other forms of social differentiation. There are social groups, workplaces and social networks of boys and men in which violence against women is frequent and viewed as legitimate, and other contexts in which this violence is rare and seen as unacceptable. One of the first steps in working with a particular group or community should be to map their gendered and sexual culture, in order to see which aspects of this culture contribute to relationship and family violence and which aspects can be mobilised in support of non-violence.

Making interventions relevant and inclusive raises the question of tensions between program fidelity and local adaptation. There is debate about whether strict fidelity is the optimal strategy for program effectiveness. On the one hand, there is evidence of greater effectiveness and more positive outcomes with higher fidelity.<sup>209</sup> On the other, there is some evidence that adaptation to local needs can enhance effectiveness.

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<sup>205</sup> Dyson and Fox.

<sup>206</sup> Rosenthal, D.A., S.M. Moore and J. Brumen. (1990). Ethnic Group Differences in Adolescents' Responses to AIDS. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 25(3): 220–239.

<sup>207</sup> Heppner, M.J., H.A. Neville, K. Smith, D.M. Kivlighan and B.S. Gershuny. (1999). Examining Immediate and Long-term Efficacy of Rape Prevention Programming with Racially Diverse College Men. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 46(1): 16–26.

<sup>208</sup> This material is summarised from Flood 2005–06.

<sup>209</sup> Greene, M.B. (2005). Reducing violence and aggression in schools. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 6(3): 236–53, p. 248.

## Impact evaluation

Programs should:

- involve a comprehensive process of evaluation that, at a minimum:
  - reflects the program framework and logic
  - includes evaluation of impact or outcomes, through:
    - pre- and post-intervention assessment
    - long-term follow-up
    - use of standard measures or portions of them
    - measures of both attitudes and behaviours.
  - includes a process for dissemination of program findings in the violence prevention field.
- ideally include:
  - longitudinal evaluation, including lengthy follow-up at six months or longer
  - examination of processes of change and their mediators
  - process evaluation of program implementation and fidelity
  - measures of school culture and context
  - experimental or quasi-experimental design incorporating control or comparison schools, students or groups.

Good-practice programs involve a comprehensive process of evaluation that is integrated into program design and implementation. This fifth criterion could have been incorporated as one component of the third criterion for good practice, effective program delivery. However, as substantive or rigorous evaluations of violence prevention are rare in the field, it seems important to emphasise the need for evaluation as a criterion in its own right.

For the purposes of this report, evaluation refers to the systematic review and assessment of the features of an initiative and its effects, in order to produce information that can be used to test and improve the project's workings and effectiveness. Evaluation is a process that can take place before, during and after a project. It has three broad roles. 'Formative' evaluation (including needs assessment) supports the development of the project, 'process' evaluations examine program delivery and uptake, and 'impact', 'outcome' or 'summative' evaluation assesses the project's impact.

All three evaluation roles are desirable elements in good practice in violence prevention education. Unfortunately, however, very few violence prevention and respectful relationships programs in Australia include a comprehensive process of evaluation. Many efforts have not been evaluated at all, and existing evaluations often are methodologically and conceptually limited.<sup>210</sup>

Without substantive evaluation, we can do little more than 'deliver and hope'.<sup>211</sup> In violence prevention and respectful relationships education, as in any area of teaching and learning or health promotion, it is not good enough to measure 'customer satisfaction' with the session. Nor

<sup>210</sup> Whitaker *et al.*; Yeater and O'Donohue.

<sup>211</sup> Yeater and O'Donohue, p. 750.

is it good enough to simply ask participants after the program what impact they think it had.

In order to assess and improve its effectiveness, violence prevention curriculums must use pre- and post-intervention evaluations, based on standardised measures of both attitudes and behaviour. There is now a wide range of well-tested measures of attitudes and beliefs regarding domestic and sexual violence, perpetration and victimisation, and other relevant measures such as bystander intervention.<sup>212</sup> However, few measures have been designed specifically for, or tested among, adolescent and child populations, meaning that evaluators may be forced to use relatively untested measures, write new ones, or modify measures developed for adult populations.

Respectful relationships education must be subjected to both short- and long-term assessments, with the latter at least six months after intervention. These should be built into program design and reflect the program framework and logic. Furthermore, evaluation should include a process for dissemination of program findings.

There are further aspects of evaluation that are desirable, but not mandatory, in violence prevention and respectful relationships programs: lengthy follow-up, examination of processes and mediators of change, process evaluation of program implementation and fidelity, measures of school context, and experimental or quasi-experimental design. Ideally, impact evaluations incorporate lengthy and longitudinal assessments. There is an argument too for education programs to use more sophisticated understandings of the intended and actual processes of change among participants. Rather than assuming that there will be one common pattern of change among participants or that individuals will vary quantitatively in terms of a common growth pattern,<sup>213</sup> evaluators should look for diversity and contradiction. They should investigate why some individuals 'rebound' to pre-intervention attitudes or behaviours and others do not, and the extent to which different strategies are required for low-risk and high-risk males. They should also explore the mediators of change, those factors that influence whether and how change occurs. Ideally, evaluations will document program implementation and fidelity, as part of determining which factors influence outcomes. They will include measures of school culture and context, both to assess organisational readiness and to address contextual influences on violence and its prevention.<sup>214</sup> Evaluations should take advantage of an experimental or quasi-experimental project design incorporating control or comparison schools, students, or groups.

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<sup>212</sup> See the following two compendiums: Flood, M. (2009). Measures for the assessment of dimensions of violence against women. A compendium. Unpublished. Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University; Dahlberg, L.L., S.B. Toal, M.H. Swahn and C.B. Behrens. (2005). *Measuring Violence-Related Attitudes, Behaviors, and Influences Among Youths: A Compendium of Assessment Tools*. 2nd ed., Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

<sup>213</sup> Heppner *et al.* 1999.

<sup>214</sup> Ellis, p. 133.

## 4. The state of violence prevention

Part 4 maps the state of the field in Victoria and elsewhere, highlighting Victorian, interstate and international violence prevention and respectful relationships programs that meet or come close to meeting standards of good practice.

Data in this section are based on information collected in May to August 2008, involving a quantitative survey, a broad-based literature search and brief follow-up interviews with key informants. Further interviews with selected informants were conducted in January and February 2009.

A great deal of detailed information on violence prevention and respectful relationships programs, in Victoria as well as nationally and internationally, was obtained in the course of this research. It demonstrates the wealth of knowledge, experience and material in the field of schools-based violence prevention, and will be an invaluable resource for Government in future implementation of such work. Data from the quantitative survey were incorporated in a confidential report on Stage 1 of the project.

The focus of this final report is those programs and curriculums seen to model good or promising practice in violence prevention and respectful relationships education. This is not intended to diminish or marginalise other programs that show real promise in terms of working towards best practice standards. As noted below, there are real barriers to the achievement of high standards in violence prevention. However, given that this report was commissioned to generate proposals regarding the programs, curriculums and strategies that will most generate most progress in violence prevention and respectful relationships education in Victoria's schools, it is appropriate to focus on the strongest and most promising efforts.

### Violence prevention in Victorian government secondary schools: An overview

Several characteristics of the delivery of violence prevention and respectful relationships education in Victoria are evident.

First, there are sixteen programs that include content on violence prevention and/or respectful relationships currently running in Victorian secondary schools. There are a further ten programs that can be described as 'complementary'. Either they deal with broader content or peripheral issues but include specific violence prevention content, or they are distinct violence prevention programs but are run outside the classroom context (such as theatrical productions).

Several schools in Victoria identified their general health education programs or sexual health education programs as including content on violence and relationships, but upon interview it became clear that such content usually focused on violence in the context of bullying. Violence in the context of romantic and/or sexual relationships was sometimes discussed in such programs, but the inclusion of such content was highly dependent on the commitment of individual school nurses or other staff to the material.

Second, schools that offer violence prevention programs also tend to run programs on related issues. Many of the Victorian schools that offered violence prevention and/or respectful relationships programs also noted that they were running programs on related issues such as bullying, gender constructions or self-esteem. This pattern indicates a high degree of commitment from these schools to students' social and personal development and wellbeing. Such an approach is supported by a good-practice evidence base that violence prevention programs are most effective in a wider school culture of non-violence, respect and equality. There is currently no single resource or model that schools can use in the development of such a culture, and the effort such schools have made to secure the curriculum time and agency involvement to run such a variety of separately developed programs is substantial. Among such schools, this pattern may reflect institutional and policy commitment, a greater capacity to implement such curriculums, the work of dedicated individuals, or other factors.

Third, nearly all violence prevention and respectful relationships curriculums in state secondary schools in Victoria are delivered in whole or in part by external agencies. Most violence prevention or respectful relationships programs identified are facilitated by external community organisations (usually experienced in the area of violence against women), who have developed their own materials and resources on limited funding. These programs often are offered to schools at subsidised rates or free of charge. Of the 16 programs identified, only one was developed and/or facilitated by school staff without the cooperation of an external agency.<sup>215</sup>

Finally, there is an opportunity for programs being delivered in Victorian schools to evolve to meet the standards for good practice. Only a handful of programs meet most good-practice criteria; that is, they aim for a whole-school approach, are sustained, are focused on skills-building and developing student self-awareness, include a structural examination of gender and power, and undertake formal evaluation. Other programs showed promise of meeting these criteria, but are in the early stages of development and because of this lack of sustained intervention or evaluation of the program's effects, cannot yet be deemed good practice.

Few, if any, existing programs cover the range of content and use the range of teaching and learning methods that this report has identified as constituting good practice in education aimed at preventing relationship and family violence. Few address both domestic violence and sexual violence, or do so with insufficient detail. Many focus on attitudes but neglect behaviours, and some use time-pressured or overly didactic teaching methods that allow insufficient room for interaction and discussion. Few explicitly develop young people's skills in respectful and non-violent sex, relationships and intimacy. At the same time, there are strong examples of good practice both in Victoria and elsewhere.

Most, if not all, violence prevention educators are well aware when their efforts do not meet emerging standards of best practice. They are aware of, and indeed aspire to, these standards but they face serious

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<sup>215</sup> This was a two-workshop program for Year 10 entitled *Sexual Ethics*, run for both young women and men in single-sex groupings, and based on the materials provided by the previous federal government's Violence against Women: Australia Says No campaign, and from the Centre against Sexual Assault (CASA House) program (discussed below). In addition, one other school identified using the Violence against Women: Australia Says No DVD in a mixed-sex, one-off workshop for Year 11 students.



institutional and structural barriers to the realisation of those ambitions. The same is often true of school staff involved in violence prevention and respectful relationships curriculums.

Furthermore, many violence prevention educators make sustained efforts to achieve standards of good practice using resources they have available. As interviews with educators in selected programs have found, some programs have been responsive to the publication of standards for good practice in violence prevention education, for example by NASASV,<sup>216</sup> and have already shifted their practice in response.

It is important to be realistic about what constitutes effective prevention practice, and determine to reach it. There must be a preparedness to apply emerging standards of good practice to existing efforts in order to assess, compare and improve them. And of course, there must also be a readiness to be open to debate about and revision of the standards themselves.

## Good and promising practice in existing violence prevention

Only a handful of violence prevention or respectful relationships programs in Victoria meet most good-practice criteria in their emphasis on a whole-school approach, sustained nature, comprehensive and well-conceived content, focus on skills-building and incorporation of evaluation.

To remind the reader, the standards of good practice identified in *Respectful Relationships Education* are as follows:

- 1 a whole-school approach
- 2 a program framework and logic
- 3 effective curriculum delivery
- 4 relevant, inclusive and culturally sensitive practice
- 5 impact evaluation.

Using these criteria, violence prevention and respectful relationships programs in Victoria can be classified into three broad categories:

- *Good-practice programs* – programs that meet all or most good-practice criteria identified on page 25.
- *Promising-practice programs* – programs that incorporate elements of good practice but are not yet at the stage of development where they would meet most good-practice criteria
- *Other programs* – interventions that may meet only some of the standards of good practice, typically because they involve one or two sessions on violence prevention and/or healthy relationships, either by themselves or as part of longer interventions on related subjects, although there may be promising aspects to their practice.

In the following discussion, examples and aspects of good practice among existing violence prevention and respectful relationships programs and curriculums in Victoria, elsewhere in Australia, and internationally are highlighted. The discussion begins with general comments, before offering program-focused commentary organised

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<sup>216</sup> Carmody *et al.* 2009.

into the following categories and describing the following programs or curriculums:

- Good-practice programs:
  - in Victoria
  - elsewhere in Australia
  - internationally
- Promising practice programs:
  - in Victoria
  - elsewhere in Australia.

There are three programs currently running in Victoria that meet most good-practice criteria, particularly in their sustained nature and focus on skills-building, behavioural change and student self-development. These are the *Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools* (SAPPSS); *Respect, Protect, Connect*; and *Solving the Jigsaw*. All three programs are intended to involve intensive and lengthy interventions and are informed by a broad socio-structural analysis of gender and power, and two have been formally evaluated. Further information about these programs can be found below, in the focused discussion of good-practice programs in Victoria.

Certain elements of other Victorian programs also deserve noting. For example, various programs have elements that may be useful in constructing curriculums that address culturally and linguistically or religiously diverse populations, such as the *Western English Language Human Relation* program, *Berry St Healthy Relationships Program*, and *Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence* program. The innovative designs of the Gippsland *Family Violence and Schools Project* and the Mildura-based *Positive Relationships, Successful Lives* program also are noteworthy.

Interstate models of good practice may translate well in a Victorian context, offering models and methods that could inform the development of Victorian-based programs. The *Sexual Health and Relationships Education* (SHARE) program run in South Australia by ShineSA, has been comprehensively and positively evaluated in recent years and is an obvious example. Its whole-school approach and integrated curriculum-based content, piloted with the support of the South Australian Government, make it one of the most extensively developed programs in the country. Though SHARE's focus is on sexual health rather than violence prevention, there is a great deal to learn from the reported strengths and weaknesses of the model and its implementation.

Another interstate model, the *Sex and Ethics* education program, stands out as a model with important strengths, although it is not a schools-centred approach. The program is based on a partnership between the University of Western Sydney and the NSW Rape Crisis Centre. *Sex and Ethics* is of interest because of its 'train the trainer' model, its innovative theoretical approach and emphasis on young people's sexual and social agency, its grounding in empirical research among young people, its well-developed program manual and support, and its positive and long-term evaluations.

Other interstate programs also are of interest. The Love Bites program in northern NSW is interesting for the way in which it engages young people in the creation of art, music and other media and its ongoing community and media links following the completion of the one-day program. *Positive Relationships, Successful Lives* (Mildura) engages

students in a similar process, including work among indigenous students and students with an intellectual disability. Another NSW program, *Y-ise Up about Relationships*, builds content over four year groups, while most programs deliver to only one year group without repeated interventions in the following years. (However, each intervention of *Y-ise Up* is limited to a two-hour workshop, so the model is not ideal.) Two programs make significant use of peer educators: the *Women Educating Each Other, Women In Safe and Equal Relationships (WEEO WISER)* program developed by the Liverpool Women's Health Centre, and the Domestic and Dating Violence Peer Education program in Western Australia. Finally, the material-based program *Boys Talk* (South Australia) shows strengths in working with young men and delivering content on positive masculinities.

### **Good-practice programs in Victoria**

#### ***Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools***

The *Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools* (SAPPSS), developed by CASA House, is the only violence prevention and/or respectful relationships program identified in the mapping exercise that takes a truly whole-school based approach. The SAPPSS model has the overall objective of reducing the incidence of sexual assault in school communities and building the capacity of schools to respond to sexual assault. It aims to achieve long-term cultural shifts across the school community, with an explicit focus on the development and maintenance of partnerships and evaluation. CASA House can also assist schools in the development or redevelopment of school policy and procedures.

CASA House requires a 'principal-driven commitment to sustaining the program and to engaging a cross-section of the school community'. It works with the school to build the program into the curriculum on a permanent basis, using a phased process over two to four years. This moves from professional development for teachers and a student program, to training of school staff, to incorporation of the student program in the curriculum. The student program runs over six weeks and is delivered to all students in the year group (Year 9 or 10). A Peer Educator program for senior students has been piloted in two schools that are in Phase 3 or 4 of the SAPPSS process, the aim of which is to build capacity for student leadership in violence prevention.

The great strengths of SAPPSS are its whole-school approach, staff training and peer educator programs; the fact that it is offered to whole year levels rather than selected groups; and its aim of creating sustainable, school-'owned' change. The SAPPSS program also has shown a distinctive commitment to evaluation, being subject to substantive evaluation that addresses impacts and examines changes over time. Its results are encouraging. One limitation of the program is that, like many violence prevention programs, its student curriculum does not address both sexual violence and domestic violence. The content of the student program is specifically focused on sexual assault prevention, rather than relationship and family violence more broadly conceived. Nevertheless, the program shows a consistent focus on building knowledge and skills for respectful relationships, communication and behaviour. With greater resources and with school commitment, a longer program with a more holistic scope could be envisaged, without losing the comprehensive sexual assault-based content.

### ***Respect, Protect, Connect***

The *Respect, Protect, Connect* program has been running in the Southern Metropolitan region for over 10 years. It was developed by the South Eastern Centre against Sexual Assault (SECASA) and Women's Health in the South East (WHISE). The focus from its inception has been on working with young men to promote non-violent and respectful ways of relating to themselves and others, while encouraging broader, alternative understandings of masculinity. The program for young women takes a rights-based approach, providing a framework for identifying violence, and encouraging young women to be pro-active in gaining support for themselves or others if faced with a situation involving violence. *Respect, Protect, Connect* is run for Years 7–10 (and sometimes up to Year 12) with single-sex groups, using a near-peer education model, in which facilitators are 18–25-year-old social workers, youth workers or students who have received special training.

*Respect, Protect, Connect's* strengths lie in its longevity and continued support by schools; its holistic, skill-building approach; and its particular focus on working with young men on constructions of masculinity. The program meets most good-practice criteria when the full 12-week program is accepted by schools. However, *Respect, Protect, Connect* shows two significant limitations, concerning its curriculum delivery and its lack of school engagement.

First, in the vast majority of schools in which the program is delivered at present, the program is run only as a one-off session. This is likely to impose significant limits on the program's effectiveness. The program is delivered to multiple years, meaning that students do participate in these sessions year after year as they move through school.

Second, a substantial formal evaluation in 2006 identified the lack of a whole-school approach. The program is not part of the school curriculum and school staff are largely uninvolved in the program, which limits the possibility of creating sustainable change. SECASA and WHISE staff have identified the difficulties of further engaging schools because of school time pressures and lack of agency resources.

### ***Solving the Jigsaw***

*Solving the Jigsaw* has been running for over ten years in the Loddon Mallee region. It was developed by the Emergency Accommodation and Support Enterprise (EASE), a Bendigo-based domestic violence service. The program has two parts: a classroom program and professional development for those who work with children. While targeted at upper-primary to lower-secondary students and presenting as a broadly envisaged anti-bullying program, the student program has also been run for older students in secondary schools, with content adapted to include healthy romantic and sexual relationships. *Solving the Jigsaw* is a holistic violence-prevention program, informed by an understanding of the links between bullying, the experiencing and/or witnessing of family violence, and the risks of later perpetration and victimisation. Particularly at the secondary level, the program is distinctive in bridging the gap between 'protective behaviours' education and relationship violence prevention.

*Solving the Jigsaw* has a number of strengths. It offers a whole-school approach, with a very significant emphasis on 'changing the culture of

violence and building a culture of wellbeing'. The program aims to create sustainable change in the school culture through teacher training. The professional development training for teachers and other school staff goes beyond simple information provision, or even skill-set development for the facilitation of Jigsaw classroom programs, and aims to provide trainees with a model for interacting with students and creating a non-violent school culture. The student program has significant duration: it is 20 to 40 weeks long, with a minimum of one semester, for one hour each week. Importantly, the program offers a model for working with students in an atmosphere of trust and respect, encouraging students' social and/or personal development and wellbeing, and this within a school culture that reinforces non-violence messages. *Solving the Jigsaw* shows an emphasis on respectful classroom processes that is better developed than in most other programs. The *Solving the Jigsaw* model has received further elaboration in a recent program document.<sup>217</sup>

However, *Solving the Jigsaw* has some important limitations as a project relevant to this report. In particular, the program focuses largely on younger students, that is, in the years prior to secondary school. Perhaps reflecting this, the program emphasises protective behaviours, and its content of domestic and family violence is more focused on the potential impacts of domestic violence on children than on teaching them respectful relationships skills. In this sense, *Solving the Jigsaw* does not have an overriding focus on the primary prevention of violence. While it emphasises 'building a culture of wellbeing', much of the program focuses on responding to violence and bullying rather than preventing them. *Solving the Jigsaw* has been subject to some evaluations, with promising findings for professional development for example. But these evaluations were limited in scope and method and there is no substantial impact evaluation of the program.<sup>218</sup>

*Solving the Jigsaw* addresses a range of forms of violence, including bullying, and locates this and other forms of violence as expressions of power and as understandable only in a wider social context. This is a valuable approach to bullying and a powerful way of providing an integrated and consistent approach to various forms of violence and abuse.

Nevertheless, *Solving the Jigsaw* has four significant limitations in relation to this report. First, while this report focuses on prevention efforts among secondary school students, *Solving the Jigsaw* has far less focus than other programs on these older age groups. Second, the program has less content on violence in young people's own sexual and intimate relations than other violence prevention curriculums, including sexual violence and coercion in particular. Third, the program is less preventive in focus. Fourth, impact or outcome evaluation of the program is thin.

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<sup>217</sup> *Solving the Jigsaw* (2008). *Solving the Jigsaw: Changing the culture of violence, building a culture of well-being* (Program document 1997-2008). Bendigo, VIC: EASE. Also see EASE's 2007–2008 Annual Report.

<sup>218</sup> Evaluations of the professional development training were conducted by social work students in 2006, 2007 and 2008. An evaluation of the student program, based on retrospective reports of program significance and impact, was conducted by a social work student in 2002. Finally, a review of written materials and videotaped sessions affirmed that the classroom processes are clinically appropriate.

## A note on evaluation

The three Victorian programs identified above as good practice have all been formally evaluated or reviewed, unlike most of the violence prevention programs taking place in Australian schools. Having evaluation built into program design is one of this report's standards of good practice, and is an indication of a program's level of development and commitment to good practice. Two of the programs, the *Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools* and *Respect, Protect, Connect*, have been subjected to substantial evaluation of program outcomes or impacts. In that sense, both qualify as 'evidence-based programs': they have 'been shown to have a positive impact on targeted outcomes in an empirical study (one based on observation or experiment)'.<sup>219</sup>

The two impact evaluations of Victorian programs included quantitative measures of attitudes towards violence. However, both also adopted in-depth, close-focus measures, attempting to capture young people's perceptions of a program through interviews and/or focus groups, and to assess changes in areas such as communication skills, or participants' ability to articulate what they want or don't want from relationships and/or sex. The extent to which the attainment of such skills will translate into decreased risk of perpetration or victimisation is unclear, but could be seen as an end in itself as a 'respectful relationship' program objective.

The first, a 2006 evaluation of the *Respect, Protect, Connect* healthy relationships program, used both quantitative attitudinal measures obtained through surveys and qualitative data obtained through student interviews.<sup>220</sup> The surveys indicated an immediate decrease in beliefs supporting the use of violence and in gender stereotyping among young men who had participated in the program. Young women who participated in the program showed an immediate increase in awareness about different types of violence, were more readily able to identify violence in their own or their friends' relationships, and were more willing to seek support (though results on other behavioural and attitudinal survey measures were mixed).

In the interviews, all young male and female participants felt that the program had been beneficial for their knowledge and skills. Several young men talked about how the program had increased their understanding of issues of sexuality and consent, or developed their understanding of, and empathy towards, others. When asked if there was anything that they thought they would now do differently because of the programs most talked about how they would manage their anger and solve conflict without violence. The young women were similarly positive, with several indicating increased confidence in their ability to negotiate relationships or deal with life transitions and decisions. Some said that they felt more assertive and better able to respond proactively to bullying, violence, peer pressure or sexual harassment. Nearly all spoke of a greater understanding of their rights, including those involving sexual consent, and an increased awareness of the reality of violence and the different ways in which it could occur.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Jaycox, L. H., D. McCaffrey, B.W. Ocampo, G.A. Shelley, S.M. Blake, D.J. Peterson, L.S. Richmond and J.E. Kub. (2006). Challenges in the evaluation and implementation of school-based prevention and intervention programs on sensitive topics. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27(3): 320–336, p. 321.

<sup>220</sup> Fergus.

<sup>221</sup> Fergus.

The second Victorian violence prevention and/or respectful relationships program to be comprehensively evaluated was the CASA House *Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools*. This was a three-stage longitudinal evaluation, published in late 2008.<sup>222</sup> It found that, immediately after the program, participants demonstrated strong positive shifts in knowledge of consent and free agreement, victims' or survivors' rights in reporting to police, the use of force or pressure to have sex in relationships, and the legitimacy of non-verbal ways of saying 'no' to unwanted sexual behaviour. There was also some positive shift in participants' comfort with asking a partner for consent and an increased willingness to seek support.

Six months later, post-program knowledge levels and attitudes were generally maintained, as was comfort with communicative behaviours, although there was a noticeable decrease in young men's comfort with talking about sexual assault with someone they trust since post-program stage (and even since pre-program). There were, however, exceptions in certain areas, along with different results on some measures between males and females, and differences depending on whether the program had been delivered to the whole year level or only half.

One to two years after the delivery of the program, '[survey] responses suggested that knowledge of concrete information relating to sexual assault (such as the law and prevalence statistics) was largely consistent within the group; however, there was a lot of variation in attitudes, beliefs and comfort with communicative behaviours and this needed to be investigated in focus groups'.<sup>223</sup> The results from the consequent focus groups deliver a great deal of nuanced data on the effect of the program, particularly showing participants' heightened ability to communicate openly, confidently and appropriately on issues of sexual assault compared with the control group. Participants notably articulated that 'the main barriers to engaging in open, respectful sexual communication and behaviour are the fears and confusion arising from social and gender-based pressures and stereotypes'.<sup>224</sup>

## **Good-practice programs elsewhere in Australia**

### ***The SHARE program***

The *Sexual Health and Relationships Education* (SHARE) program in South Australia is a sexuality education program, but highly relevant to this discussion, as the content includes violence and respectful relationships and it represents one of the most comprehensive, integrated and extensively evaluated programs in these areas.

The SHARE program was developed by Sexual Health Information, Networking and Education (SHineSA) in South Australia. It represented one of the first attempts to integrate 'relationships education' (with sexual health, respectful relationships, sexuality and violence prevention content) into a secondary school curriculum in Australia.<sup>225</sup> After obtaining funding from the South Australian Department of Health to develop and implement a comprehensive sexual health and relationships program for students in Years 8, 9 and 10, ShineSA undertook extensive community consultations and

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<sup>222</sup> CASA House.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>225</sup> Johnson 2006.



commissioned a comprehensive literature review on the factors for success in conducting such programs (Dyson, *et al.* 2003, the results of which are discussed above). The SHARE program was subsequently developed, informed by the consultations and research, and trialled in fifteen secondary schools in South Australia during 2003–5.<sup>226</sup>

The SHARE project consists of four linked components:

- a curriculum framework (consistent with the South Australian *Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework*), providing the scope and sequence of 15 lessons on sexual health per year for Years 8, 9, and 10
- a curriculum resource document for teachers, entitled *Teach It Like It Is*, intended to be used in conjunction with other sexual health education resources, such as the *Talking Sexual Health* program developed by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society
- a structural requirement for schools to establish a Student Health and Wellbeing team to plan and manage the implementation of the program on a school-wide basis
- a linkage or pathway to local sexual health information and service providers who can support students in areas beyond the responsibility and expertise of school-based staff.

SHARE therefore clearly adopts a 'whole-school' approach, involving students, parents and families, teachers and school staff and the whole-school environment. The Student Health and Wellbeing Team are responsible 'for coordinating teacher professional development, curriculum planning, resources management, and communicating with and educating parents and the wider community about the project. The team is made up of school staff, students, parents and community health specialists'.<sup>227</sup> One of the further strengths of the SHARE program is the quality of its teaching materials. (See the discussion above for more detail.)

The program has undergone two evaluations. The first was undertaken during the trial, aiming to 'to develop a deeper understanding about the relevance and impact of the SHARE Program, and to identify the extent to which the Program achieved its stated objectives in the four domains identified in the project plans'.<sup>228</sup> The second evaluation was a retrospective qualitative study commissioned at the end of the trial period in late 2005, aiming to 'capture key participants' insights into their experiences developing, supporting and trialing [this] significant, but controversial, sexual health and relationships program'.<sup>229</sup> In the former, the evaluators found small increases in knowledge and understanding about sex and sexual health following the SHARE intervention, and students expressed slightly more confidence that they could say no to unwanted sex.<sup>230</sup> There was, however, 'no change in the small number of students who were 'risk-takers', having casual sex, often under the influence of drugs and alcohol'.<sup>231</sup> Another key

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<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>228</sup> Dyson and Fox, p. 11.

<sup>229</sup> Johnson 2006, p. 6.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

finding was that many of the responses to such questions as ‘what does sex mean to you?’ were strongly gendered ‘and this improved only marginally after the program’.<sup>232</sup> The researchers concluded that there remains ongoing evidence of the need to teach about ‘gender and power, constructions of masculinity and femininity and [...] gender-biased myths’<sup>233</sup> in the areas of sexual health and sexuality.

Hence, the SHARE program is not only one of the most extensive, well-resourced and well-supported (at a state government level) schools-based programs in this area, it is also one of the best documented and analysed.

### **Sex and Ethics education program**

The *Sex and Ethics education program* is of interest because of its ‘Train the Trainer’ model, its innovative theoretical approach and positive focus, its research-based foundations, its well-developed pedagogy and its substantive evaluation. *Sex and Ethics* is not a schools-based program but rather works with groups from different sites, including TAFE, community organisations and universities. However, the program would be easily adaptable to the schools context. The program is supported by both a manual and research on which the program is based.<sup>234</sup>

Developed by Associate Professor Moira Carmody at the University of Western Sydney with the support and assistance of NSW Rape Crisis Service Co-ordinator Karen Willis, the Sex and Ethics education program is the result of a three-year project. This started with listening to young people aged 16–25 years talking about the ways in which they negotiate sexual intimacy, and the associated discovery of a near absence of formal and informal opportunities for young people to access facilitated discussions about relationships. Interviews were conducted in 2006 with 56 young men and women across metropolitan and regional New South Wales about their experiences of negotiating sexual intimacy. Many talked about how ill-equipped they felt in being able to ensure their relationships were safe, non-violent and above all respectful, and very few could recount opportunities they had had in the past to talk about these issues with their peers.

The *Sex and Ethics education program* draws on international research in relation to primary prevention education initiatives in the area of sexual violence and what has been identified as best practice approaches to program design, content and delivery. In brief, the program comprises six sessions of two to three hours duration and is designed for community educators to deliver to young people across a range of education settings.<sup>235</sup>

A real strength of the program is its focus on building the skills of young people as ‘active agents in their own lives’.<sup>236</sup> The Sex and Ethics education program emphasises young people’s engagement with exercises, role-plays and discussions through which they can practise new ways of relating through an ethical framework. This

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<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>234</sup> Carmody, M. (2008a). *Sex & Ethics: The Sexual Ethics Education Program for Young People*. Melbourne: Palgrave Macmillan; Carmody, M. (2008b). *Sex & Ethics: Young People and Ethical Sex*. Melbourne: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>235</sup> Carmody 2008a, p. 14.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

extends from assessing their own needs and safety, encouraging sensitivity and understanding of others' needs and desires, to developing negotiation and communication skills and, importantly, recognising the significance of reflecting on their sexual experiences, and on their responsibilities to themselves and to others.

*Sex and Ethics* trainers attend a 'train the trainer' program for five days, over the course of which they experience all six sessions of the program. In addition, the program emphasises a 'whole-of-setting' approach, in promoting strategies focused on young people's groups and contexts.

The program can be delivered in single-sex and mixed-sex settings depending on the context, and encourages the tailoring of the program and the exercises where the diversity of the group requires attention to be given to particular cultural issues, or to socioeconomic background, disability, or religion and faith.

The program has been positively evaluated, drawing on surveys and interviews with participants and educators, both before and after delivery, with follow-up participant interviews at three weeks and six weeks, and then five to six months after program completion. The evaluation found that young people made significant improvements in their abilities to negotiate ethical sexual practices, increased their awareness in relation to sexual assault and consent and indicated their willingness to engage in active 'bystander' behaviour to minimize harm to others in situations that may result in sexual assault, coercion or that is simply unethical insofar as relationship behaviour is concerned. These results continued to hold six months after participants had been through the program. Moreover, there was strong evidence that the program had impacted on both attitudes and behaviour change.<sup>237</sup>

The founder, Moira Carmody, has been approached to work with policy and program developers in New Zealand as part of a pilot program of sexual violence prevention initiatives. The *Sex and Ethics education program* also is of interest to the Commonwealth Government insofar as implementing their pilot 'respectful relationships' program during 2009 and 2010.

### ***Kids Relate***

*Kids Relate* was developed as a whole-term, curriculum-integrated violence prevention program designed for delivery to Grade 7 students in the Clarence Valley, NSW. It was developed in response to research that identified particular areas of concern in the Clarence Valley and its schools. The research indicated a need to promote healthy relationships in early adolescence in the region, and suggested key people in the community who could offer expert input into a violence prevention program. The project was funded under the Federal Government's Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (PADV) and project-managed by a partnership between the NSW Department for Women and Community Programs Inc.

The resulting *Kids Relate* program aimed to 'challenge the normalisation of violence in personal and social relationships and to assist young people in developing relationships built on equality and the valuing of difference'. Program content emphasises the prevention of 'gender based and racially based violence, family violence, and violence in schools' (from Department for Women Projects fact sheet).

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<sup>237</sup> Carmody 2008b, pp. 112–131.

It was developed through the cooperation of various agencies, 'considered an important way to develop partnerships between local schools and the broader communities of the Clarence Valley, and to facilitate dialogue on the values and norms which underpin violence' (from a Department for Women Projects fact sheet).

The program is of interest for three main reasons. The first is its locally driven, whole-of-community approach, which is evident both in the way it was developed (through an interagency, consultative process) and through its ongoing delivery. This includes co-facilitation by community members and Indigenous elders, as well as ongoing student-led research into the attitudes and policies in the school community.

The second reason is the sustained, curriculum-integrated nature of its interventions. The modules are designed to be run in the Year 7 Personal Development, Health and Physical Education stream. The program materials include a 250-page kit, with each topic having a school lesson plan. The syllabus that was developed is called 'Changing Relations of Power'.

The third aspect of the *Kids Relate* program, which appears to be unique and of interest to the current project, is the intersecting content on race and gender-based violence. In addition to modules on sexual harassment, family violence, homophobia and the social construction of gender, there are also modules on racial bullying of indigenous people/students and explorations of 'terra nullius,' the Mabo challenge and Treaty concepts.

The NSW Department for Women reports that, while teaching staff have been very supportive in the development of the program, there were difficulties in getting a commitment from schools to pilot the modules. DEECD did, however, aim to pilot the program in a number of other locations as one of a number of initiatives to strengthen communities.

*Kids Relate* could be adapted for older age groups and different communities through a similar consultative process, although it is noted that some of the activities from the original modules (for example, scripted role-plays) use colloquialisms from Clarence Valley Indigenous communities, and would need to be adapted for groups in different areas or groups that do not include large numbers of indigenous students.

### **Good-practice programs internationally**

The following is a presentation of some of the best-known violence prevention and/or respectful relationships programs in North America and the United Kingdom. It is by no means a comprehensive analysis, with most information taken from large-scale literature reviews conducted in the countries in question, augmented and updated by internet searches. Information on the North American programs is largely from a 2005 Canadian report that reviews a large number of programs in Canada and the United States covering a spectrum of issues from child sexual abuse to bullying and harassment (and reports in detail on their evaluations).<sup>238</sup> Information on the UK programs is from evaluations of the programs, and the agency and/or program websites.

The programs were selected for their focus on relationship violence, and evidence of good practice in the length of their interventions and

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<sup>238</sup> Tutty *et al.*

the existence of (positive) evaluation. Two of the North American programs specifically engage young people with disabilities, and, though not comprehensively evaluated, are included here, as such programs have not come up in the Australian mapping.

### ***Safe Dates***

*Safe Dates* is one of the longest running and best evaluated programs in North America. Its longitudinal evaluation, which evidences positive outcomes for program participants not only immediately after the program, but also at one year, three years and even six years on, is one of the best examples available of the effectiveness of good-practice schools-based programs.

*Safe Dates* is delivered to grade 8 and 9 students through a 10-session curriculum, along with a student theatre production and a poster contest. The focus is on changing norms of relationship violence and gender stereotyping, along with skills-building in the areas of conflict management and help-seeking. There are also linked community activities in which services for adolescents in abusive relationships are identified, or students can be trained to work on a crisis line or in a community agency.

### ***Zero Tolerance 'Respect' program***

The Zero Tolerance Charitable trust began in Scotland in 1992 as a collection of agencies and organisations aiming to promote 'innovative policy and practice that tackle the root causes of male violence against women and children' (from website). The Trust seems to have significant state support, as well as community ownership, as it was generated from existing organisations. It has run a number of public-awareness-raising campaigns, which have been positively evaluated, and is explicitly committed to a primary prevention approach to male violence against women.

In 1998, the Trust commissioned research into the attitudes of young people towards gender-based abuse, and on the basis of the research findings, developed materials for use in schools and informal youth settings. These materials form the basis of the *Respect* schools-based violence prevention curriculum, designed to be implemented over eight sessions. A one-day training course is offered to teachers and other professionals who want to deliver the *Respect program* materials. Another two-day 'train the trainer' course is offered to professionals wanting to roll out the *Respect program* to schools or youth projects in their local authority or area.

The program was piloted separately in schools in Scotland and England. The Scottish Executive and the UK Home Office had the pilot independently evaluated, with positive results. The program meets good-practice requirements in the length of its interventions and positive evaluation, and particularly because it takes place in the context of wider community campaigns promoting the same message (also initiated by the Zero Tolerance Trust).

### ***Healthy Relationships: A Violence-Prevention Curriculum***

This program began in 1989 in Nova Scotia, Canada, and is integrated into the curriculum for Grades 7 to 9, as a complement to existing health, 'family life,' 'sexual safety' and English curriculums. It aims to examine 'the psychosocial dynamics of male violence and present...

cultural values that impact violent behaviour'.<sup>239</sup> It is one of the more extensive programs available, with 53 activities, each of which is designed to cover a class period of 45 minutes to one hour, presented in a three-volume teacher resource book including activities, handouts, and print/video resource lists. It includes an annotated film bibliography with tips for classroom use, news stories about violence, media advertisements for gender analysis and some suggestions for role-plays. Program content and focus shift for each grade level, and the program concludes with a student-conducted audit of their own school.<sup>240</sup>

#### ***Women and Violence: Education is Prevention***

This program is of interest not only because it is lengthy and has been positively evaluated, but also because it represents a successful school–community partnership in a rural community. The program is located in British Columbia, Canada. It begins with an Education Day for students, school staff, parents and the community, then workshops are run for students (initially from kindergarten to grade 12, although now only the secondary school program is running, and this usually for grades 7 to 8). There is also a 'Freedom from Fear' day, held at schools, in which all grades participate. This includes a theatre production about violence and harassment, a follow-up discussion, and then two-hour workshops in each class on types of harassment.<sup>241</sup>

#### ***The Fourth 'R'***

The *Fourth 'R'*, located in Ontario Canada, is an 18-session program for grades 9 to 12, delivered as part of the health education curriculum. The program is lengthy, and this, along with its incorporation into the curriculum and positive evaluation (of the early intervention program upon which the primary prevention program is based), is evidence of good practice.<sup>242</sup>

#### ***Westminster Domestic Violence Forum Schools Domestic Violence Prevention Project***

The *Westminster Domestic Violence Forum* (WDVF) had been working in London schools for five years when, in 2002, it developed and launched a schools pack based on this work for wider distribution, accompanied by a whole-school training program. The program is of interest for this whole-school approach to training, and pre-program 'audit' of schools' needs (with a program then tailored to suit them).

The program materials were recommended in the UK National Union of Teachers domestic violence guidelines and the Home Office publication, *Developing Domestic Violence Strategies - A Guide for Partnerships*. The resource pack includes a manual, reference materials, links to curriculum requirements and a DVD/video. It is offered in conjunction with a training program for school staff and lead teachers (who then deliver the program), as part of a three-stage process: (1) domestic violence awareness training for the whole school staff team; (2) planning with lead teachers and the WDVF Schools

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<sup>239</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid*, p. 39.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*, p. 39.

Development officer to prepare a scheme of work; and (3) ongoing support and evaluation.

### ***Young Deaf Women and Violence Leadership Development and Training Project***

The *Young Deaf Women and Violence Leadership Development and Training Project*, located in Canada, is innovative in that it addresses the specific needs and expands the skills of young women who are deaf or hard of hearing and it employs a peer-educator model to do so. Young female would-be peer educators participate in a three-day retreat where they learn about different forms of violence and oppression and strategies for helping peers in an American Sign Language friendly environment.<sup>243</sup> These peer educators then provide workshops on violence against deaf women and children for students in both mainstream and specialised schools for the deaf, as well as for their parents, teachers and counselling staff.

### **Promising practice programs in Victoria**

Two programs in Victoria, *Real Life and Xpect Respect*, contain important elements of good practice, specifically in running for a substantial number of sessions and in their comprehensive and well-conceived content. Neither incorporates a whole-school approach, has been formally evaluated, or has been running as long as *Respect, Protect, Connect* or *Solving the Jigsaw*. A further three Victorian programs—*Positive Relationships, Successful Lives*; the Gippsland *Family Violence and Schools Project*; and the South Grampians and Glenelg Primary Care *Healthy Relationships Program*—are in development but show innovation in their approaches or contain other elements indicating promising practice. The Gippsland-based project is distinctive among these in its focus on addressing the school environment in a whole-school approach.

Though in the early stages of development, the strength of the three programs *Positive Relationships, Successful Lives; Real Life; and Xpect Respect* is evident in:

- the community and student ownership (arising from initial consultations)
- (guided) student-driven content, particularly in regard to the form of delivery or workshop outcomes (for example DVDs, songs, art work)
- the Indigenous cultural specificity and student ownership of the Koorie Open Door Education (KODE) program (*Positive Relationships, Successful Lives*)
- the development of original materials and targeted delivery forms for the specialist school
- the fact that all three programs will produce resources which can be used in other violence prevention programs throughout the state.

*Real Life* is a four-week program (one double period per week) developed by Women's Health Goulburn and the North East (WHGNE). The program is run for Years 8, 9 and 10 in mixed classes and co-facilitated by teachers, domestic violence and CASA workers, and school nurses. All facilitators have received a three-hour training session and use a manual. The four sessions are in the form of interactive workshops, focused largely around class discussion and

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<sup>243</sup> *Ibid*, p. 55.



information provision (for example types of violence, support options, etc.), with some time for skills-building activities.

*Xpect Respect* is a nine-week program for young women and men developed by Anglicare Victoria. It functions as a mixed-sex program for all Year 9 students, with certain sessions run in single-sex groups. The program has a dual focus on primary prevention and building capacity to respond to existing issues of bullying and violence within the school environment. At the time of this review's survey, the program was at a relatively early stage of development, and had only been run at one school over a two-year period. However, its content appears comprehensive and broadly conceived, material was tested and in some respects driven by student input, and the intervention runs over a substantial number of sessions. Anglicare hopes to develop the program to build content and skills over Years 8 to 10.

*Positive Relationships, Successful Lives* is currently in development, supported by Victoria Police and the Mallee Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Unit. It was the result of consultations conducted by the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Coordination Office (SOCACO) with the Mildura adolescent community, the latter identifying that they wanted to learn more about how to have healthy relationships and successful lives. The resulting program aims to be community-driven, sustainable and youth-centric.

At the time that information on *Positive Relationships, Successful Lives* was gathered, the plan was to conduct the program within three local schools: a mainstream secondary college, a specialist school for students who have an intellectual disability, and a local Indigenous KODE school. The content has been largely determined by students in consultation with an education expert. The programs were to run for one double period a week over four to six weeks. In all three schools, students will produce various forms of media – a DVD, a 'photo voice' exhibition, a rap song, and so on – and participate in a community forum to present their work.

The *Family Violence and Schools Project* (Gippsland) has been developed by Gippsland Women's Health Service (GWHS), and its primary aim is to change the school environment to enable the ongoing delivery of healthy relationship sessions. While the program delivers healthy relationships sessions to students as a tool for showcasing available curriculum resources, the target audience of the project is school leadership, welfare and teaching staff. GWHS prepares individual school plans, outlining goals and priorities. Schools can then adjust these plans on the basis of their own perceived requirements. GWHS will then provide student programs, staff development programs, resources, materials and policy and/or procedures advice, with the aim of creating a self-sustaining school culture of respect, non-discrimination and non-violence. The innovation of the project lies in its wider policy and capacity-building function for schools. In this, it works on an early intervention or response level as well as primary prevention (through the student programs). It has worked particularly closely with one school to develop a sustainable, whole-school model.

GWHS developed and delivered a pilot program in Latrobe Valley during 2006 to four schools, including a whole-school staff information session, welfare and health staff curriculum training, and resources to develop school policy and procedures. A whole-school package is currently being implemented across one school in Wellington and two schools in east Gippsland. Programs for students are run in both single- and mixed-sex groupings, and educators are trained GWHS

staff, teaching staff, student welfare team staff, other community agency staff and specialist services staff. Student programs for young women are linked to existing curriculum based-programs on social connectedness, while programs for young men are run separately.

The Southern Grampians and Glenelg Primary Care *Healthy Relationships program* is in development. The pilot five-week program is being undertaken as part of the weekly Year 9 Health Education program and may be adopted as the ongoing material for the subject for all Year 9 classes at both participating schools. Content draws on materials from the ShineSA *SHARE* program (South Australia) and *Real Life*. Facilitators will attend a general staff meeting to raise awareness of the program and issues, and encourage staff to respond appropriately or make a referral if a student talks to them about an issue. As part of the evaluation of the pilot, opportunities will be explored for expanding the program to other curriculum areas or year levels and a whole-school approach. The strength of the program is that it aims to engage staff and be ongoing as part of the curriculum. The content is well conceived and, at five weeks, the program is relatively substantial.

Finally, two Victorian organisations run programs that are relevant to violence prevention education in schools. Family Planning Victoria (FPV) runs school programs on sexual and reproductive health, available statewide. These programs target the whole year level. They can be provided to students from Years 7 to 12, although most commonly they are delivered to Years 9 to 11. They are usually run in one-hour or one-and-a-half-hour sessions, complementing the school's own curriculum. In some secondary schools FPV also runs one-off sessions, or half- or whole-day workshops on school health days.

While not explicitly dealing with violence prevention, the FPV secondary school program is relevant because of its similar awareness-raising and behaviour-change goals, and the skills-based delivery method employed. The FPV program also deals with content on relationships and sexual health that overlaps with content in some respectful relationship programs considered for the present project. Workshops can cover sexual decision-making, consent, coercion and aspects of healthy and unhealthy relationships. FPV is in the process of developing packages on the material they are most often asked to deliver. At the request of schools, FPV will train teachers to deliver relevant and accurate sexuality education sustainably and feed in to a whole-school approach. The organisation also runs professional development courses for teachers (as well as youth workers and other health professionals).

The Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence (JTAFV) organises and facilitates community and schools-based education programs. While they are not extensive, they do represent an example of culturally and religiously sensitive violence prevention education, and also exhibit good practice in their strong links with broader community initiatives facilitated by the same organisation. In 2005, an international expert was invited to present a series of forums aiming to promote healthy relationships in the Jewish community, held both in the community and with staff from Jewish Day Schools. These were followed by one-off workshops run in seven schools for students in years 10, 11 and 12, in single-sex groupings. In 2006, the taskforce facilitated a series of professional workshops exploring approaches to family violence, sexual abuse and relationships, with participants including school principals and counsellors. The taskforce has also facilitated the implementation of a pilot program in one Jewish Day School, based on

a program developed by Jewish Women International titled '*When Push Comes to Shove, It's No Longer Love*'. The taskforce runs the Jewish Taskforce Support Line, and is developing a school- and community-based outreach project to support this.

### **Promising practice programs elsewhere in Australia**

The *Love Bites* program on sexual assault and family violence has been running in northern NSW since 2003. It was developed by the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) in partnership with community organisations and teaching staff in the Kempsey area, and is now run by local services throughout the mid-north coast of NSW as a result of their train-the-trainer program. The program is interesting because of its student-driven component (particularly in the afternoon workshops, where 'students are actively involved in creating their own learning experiences'), and for its ongoing community and media campaign following the completion of the one-day program. The program's implementation in the remote outback indigenous community of Walgett, as well as in the disadvantaged, inner-city, multicultural community of Lakemba, is evidence of considerable adaptability and transferability. Over 10,000 students have participated since its inception. The student program covers a whole day, after which students continue to be involved in an ongoing community campaign.

There is also a train-the-trainer component, with over 300 service providers and teachers having been trained to facilitate the program on the mid-north coast, and over 150 workers in other areas of NSW. A trial of the train-the-trainer program in an indigenous community (Walgett) and a CALD community (Lakemba) was successful, with teachers and students reporting positive outcomes. The program is now in its fourth year in Walgett. A retrospective assessment of students' and stakeholders' experiences and views of the program has been conducted.

Another NSW program, *Y-ise Up about Relationships*, builds content over four years, Years 7, 9, 10 and 11 (most programs deliver to only one year group without repeated interventions in the following years). However, each intervention of Y-ise Up is limited to a double-period workshop, so the model is not ideal.

The program was adapted from the Queensland *Preventing Abuse In Relationships* (PAIR) program, and was first established in 1996. Nearly 40,000 young people have participated in the program since its inception. It is now conducted in 12 secondary schools in the Wingecarribee and Shoalhaven regions, with a Youth Support Worker (under the Commonwealth Chaplaincy program) supporting the program in three schools.

*WEEO WISER* was developed by the Liverpool Women's Health Centre in partnership with many other local services that work with young women. The program is of interest for its focus on working with young women in a rights-based prevention context. The program's strengths are the near-peer education model (especially given the relatively substantial training of these educators), the reasonably lengthy in-school interventions (at five double-period sessions) and the fact that it complements (and could be integrated into) the Year 9 curriculum. Other strengths include the establishment of partnerships with young women, schools, DEECD and local services, and the program's potential transferability.

*Kinks and Bends: What's the go with relationships?* is a schools-based program focusing on sexual violence in young people's social lives. It is targeted at a combination of single-sex and mixed groups for the Year 10 cohort, and fits into the NSW stage 5 Personal Development, Health and Physical education syllabus. The core program is only two hours long, but it can be run for up to nine hours. The program has been running since 1999. It began in the form of community art workshops for young women and later developed into a schools-based program for both sexes.

The program includes a comprehensive package (120 pages and nine hours of lesson plans) to support facilitators in leading discussions and raising awareness on sexual assault, including fact sheets on legal definitions. There is a video/DVD depicting a backyard party, a beach scene, a small social group and a nightclub scene, as well as artwork and songs, with follow-up questions and exercises. Teachers are present during workshops and it is recommended that a counsellor be available onsite. A play, 'The Party', was developed for the program, designed to be performed by drama classes in Years 10 and 11, to their peers, with a discussion following the performance. An external evaluation was carried out in 2003, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data from students and facilitators.

The *Domestic and Dating Violence Peer Education Program* (Western Australia) was developed by the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA), the Family and Domestic Violence Unit and Department of Education and Training. It is a pilot schools-based program that seeks to raise awareness about family and domestic violence, teen dating violence and support services that are available for people who have witnessed or experienced abuse. It was run in two secondary schools in metro and regional Western Australia during 2007. The schools-based program is a series of four, 50-minute awareness-raising presentations run in mixed-sex class groupings for Years 8, 9, 10 and 11. Students and their teachers participate. Two experienced facilitators are present: one to deliver and one to counsel.

The program has so far been run in two high schools and a small group of students from each school were trained as peer educators (recruited by expressions of interest forms following student program and interview). These peer educators plan and implement activities and presentations to build on the initial program and continue to educate the student body about family and domestic violence, and dating violence, through activities such as speaking at school assemblies and writing for the school newsletter. The peer educators were trained at a three-day camp.

The program also established links between schools and local services and agencies, and a guide to available services, with contact details, was developed by Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA) and issued to each school. The strengths of the program are its use of peer educators, and also some elements of a whole-school approach, in that a presentation is given to all teaching staff about the project, and domestic and dating violence, and all teachers are provided with a handout about the project.

*Boys Talk* (South Australia) was developed under the auspices of Men Against Sexual Assault (MASA) with the support of Child and Youth Health in South Australia. *Boys Talk's* strengths include its focus on working with young men and its content on positive masculinities. It is a material-based program (that is, a manual), which can be used anywhere. The manual provides for a 10-session program (50–90

minutes each session) in a single or double lesson per week, and is designed for young men aged 13 to 16, in single-sex groupings. It is recommended that two facilitators deliver the program, one male teacher, and one youth worker or community member. Associated professional development and peer education consultancies are available through MASA.

## 5. Advancing violence prevention

There is at present a very significant opportunity to promote safe, non-violent relationships among young people and to foster health-promoting schools. There is growing momentum for the implementation and integration of violence prevention and respectful relationships curriculums in Victoria's schools, propelled by both state and national developments. In addition, as this report has documented, there are already very good violence prevention programs being delivered in state secondary schools in Victoria. Several Victoria-based programs meet or come close to meeting standards of good practice in violence prevention education, while a range of other programs both in Victoria and around the country are promising.

In this final section, this report offers proposals for progressing violence prevention and respectful relationships education programs in Victoria's schools. The report does not seek to make recommendations for the policies, programs and processes that will serve this end. Nor should it be seen to pre-empt the policy approach that may be taken to the adoption and implementation of violence prevention curriculums. However, the extensive research and evidence-base drawn on, and further developed, throughout this report provide clear signposts to establishing an implementation approach that is likely to be both effective and sustainable.

It is valuable to envisage efforts at violence prevention implementation in Victorian schools in both the short term – over the next one to two years, in 2009 and 2010 – and the long term – over the life of the Victorian State Plan for the Prevention of Violence Against Women, from 2010 to 2020. The State Plan is a key reference point and platform for the promotion of violence prevention and respectful relationships education, as it has identified education as one of five key settings where prevention strategies can be targeted. In the short term, two strategies are important and mutually dependent: taking steps to support and build capacity for schools-based violence prevention, and implementing demonstration projects or initiatives in violence prevention in a number of Victorian schools.

In the long term, these interlocking strategies require further exploration. Local and international experience suggest that, in the long term, the effective promotion of healthy and respectful relationships among children and young people will require the integration of violence prevention and respectful relationships curriculums into Victorian schools. This position was recently endorsed by the National Council's Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, in that respectful relationships education was recommended for incorporation into the national curriculum 'so that all children have access to, and participate in, a comprehensive respectful relationship education program before leaving school'.<sup>244</sup> Apart from providing immediate investment in a pilot program, the Commonwealth Government has pledged to work with the States and Territories through COAG to increase the take-up of respectful relationships programs as the evidence for the impact and effectiveness of these programs develops. In Victoria, this might mean that curriculum materials on violence prevention and respectful relationships would be delivered by teachers as a regular and routine component of school

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<sup>244</sup> National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children, p. 67.

learning and teaching, with support from, and in partnership with, community agencies. Ideally, such materials would be integrated into a comprehensive and multi-year relationships and sexual health curriculum.<sup>245</sup> This would represent the achievement of a key next step in prevention, the integration of prevention programming across systems and developmental stages.<sup>246</sup>

Effective respectful relationships programs have the potential to positively impact on school cultures, student wellbeing and educational outcomes and there is significant opportunity to improve guidance and support in this area.

It is encouraging to note that there are already models of curriculum integration in Victoria on which policy-makers, educators and others can draw. The document *Catching On Everywhere: Sexuality Education Program Development for Victorian Schools* provides a well-designed and accessible framework, including a model for whole-school learning and teaching. Sexuality education is an essential curriculum component of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. Teachers assess student achievement against the learning standards within the Health and Physical Education domain. Sexuality education is compulsory in government schools from Prep to Year 10 and the model for Whole-school Learning in Sexuality Education assists schools in providing a comprehensive approach that is integrated with wellbeing programs and community partnerships. Content in violence prevention and respectful relationships could be developed within the framework of this model, building on the excellent materials used by programs identified as good or promising practice in this report.

There are also potential links with other priority policy areas, such as the Premier's Plan to Promote Respect campaign, anti-bullying and mental health initiatives.<sup>247</sup> While varying somewhat in content from violence prevention and with far less focus on relationship and family violence, these areas share many of the same elements of good practice (and curriculum domain), and a synergistic, cooperative approach to their implementation could relieve pressure on schools.

## Alignment of policy with good practice

Effective violence prevention and respectful relationships education in schools requires policy and institutional support and, as was argued in discussing the first standard of good practice, a whole-school approach. This will allow the comprehensive integration of violence prevention into schools' learning and teaching and will build teachers' and schools' capacity to sustain and deliver such curriculums. Without support for and commitment to schools-based violence prevention, efforts will be piecemeal, insubstantial, vulnerable and ultimately ineffective.

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<sup>245</sup> See the following for relevant discussion of curriculum integration: Office for Women and Education Queensland. (2004). *Promoting Positive Gender Relationships* [electronic resource]: A Report of a Study into the Feasibility of Developing and Delivering Curriculum through Queensland State Schools to Promote Positive Gender Relationships. Office for Women and Curriculum Strategy Branch, Education Queensland.

<sup>246</sup> Greenberg, p. 6.

<sup>247</sup> See for example <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/state-of-government-intentions/victorias-plan-to-promote-respect.html>.



As noted in Part 2, systems and structures are necessary to support schools to implement violence prevention and healthy relationships programs effectively. At a policy level, a sound education strategy:

- is incorporated into the curriculum at all levels so that violence prevention education is compulsory and available in every school across the state
- is implemented in line with school protocols to deal with violence, harassment and bullying
- makes resource provisions for monitoring, evaluating, and improvement
- involves partnerships between Departments of Education and Early Childhood Development and specialist agencies, and coordinates with state-based anti-violence strategies, the national Safe Schools Framework and gender equity frameworks
- is supported by statewide standards and guidelines
- systematises and develops existing schools-based prevention programs that have been positively evaluated
- includes comprehensive professional learning opportunities for teachers involved in delivering respectful relationships education
- is supported by the provision of necessary resources and facilities.

In considering how to progress to the next stage, the following three steps are important for implementation in the short term: capacity-building, cross-government coordination and actual delivery and evaluation of violence prevention education.

Capacity-building would include:

- promoting the need for violence prevention and respectful relationships education
- to this end, engaging in partnerships with specialist agencies proficient in program design and delivery of primary prevention of relationships and family violence to provide resources, training and other forms of support to schools as required
- developing or commissioning resources, including models of whole-school learning and teaching in relation to respectful relationships and violence prevention, as well as other materials such as lesson plans
- crafting or framing violence prevention and respectful relationships content to fit with appropriate areas of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards as well as the e5 instructional model of teachers' engagement with students,<sup>248</sup> using a whole-school model such as that promoted by *Catching On Everywhere*, and drawing on existing 'good practice' materials
- conducting or overseeing evaluation.

Secondly, whole-school approaches to violence prevention also require that various domains of educational policy and practice be engaged, including student learning, curriculum development, early childhood development, community partnerships and student wellbeing.

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<sup>248</sup> The e<sup>5</sup> instructional model was released in April 2008, and identifies appropriate ways in which teachers can engage, explore, explain, elaborate, and evaluate.

The third step is centred on implementation, involving both capacity-building among schools and the delivery and evaluation of violence prevention education in schools, as discussed below.

## A demonstration project

A demonstration project in relationships and family violence prevention in Victorian schools is a desirable complement to the steps in policy support and capacity-building already outlined. This would embody standards of good practice, as a demonstration project in curriculum integration.<sup>249</sup>

The general rationale for such an effort is that any violence prevention program should begin with the minimum standards articulated in Parts 2 and 3 (above), and aim to reach standards of 'ideal' practice as capacity increases. The demonstration project would be 'as ideal a project as possible' in the present context and with current resources. Above all, it would be intended as a pilot for the wider goal of the systematic integration into school learning and teaching of violence prevention and respectful relationships curriculums. Its implementation therefore would involve attention not only to the project's impact among students, but to issues of implementation process, sustainability and capacity, and transferability.

The demonstration project would be required to embody the standards of good practice identified in this report. These standards would need to be considered a 'non-negotiable minimum' if the project is to add value to current efforts. In order for best existing practice in schools-based violence prevention to reach the higher standard now proposed, it will be necessary to consider the following additional activity:

- *Capacity-building among schools:* As a whole-school approach requires addressing formal school policies and practices, informal school cultures and activities, and the social and physical environment, participating schools will require support and capacity-building. This may include:
  - supporting schools to develop or consolidate strategies for supporting students to address and respond to violence and related issues, whether individual or group-based
  - giving schools the models and support required to work with parents and the wider community, as well as train peer educators as a contact and support point for fellow students.
- *Capacity-building among teachers:* As good practice requires delivery by skilled and trained teachers (and community-based educators), teachers will require training or professional development in the dedicated delivery of violence prevention curriculums. Not only should the appropriate teachers be trained to deliver specific violence prevention curriculum, but attention should be given, perhaps through a phased approach, to the training of teachers in other disciplines to respond to violence and harassment and the promotion of gender equity and non-violence in their own classes.

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<sup>249</sup> While this report uses the term 'demonstration project', another term is 'blueprint'. This is used for example in a US project focused on establishing the effectiveness of violence prevention efforts <<http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/>>. However, this report avoids the term 'blueprint' to avoid confusion with the Victorian Government's 'Blueprint for Government Schools' and 'Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development' <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/blueprint1/>>.

- *External academic involvement in evaluation:* As few violence prevention educators based in community agencies have the capacity or resources to undertake substantial and academically rigorous evaluations, it may be necessary to engage the participation of researchers in evaluation.
- *Curriculum development:* As many existing violence prevention programs will need to evolve to reflect the standards of curriculum content and delivery identified here, the program or programs used in the demonstration project will also require development.

There is clearly much work to be done in developing violence prevention and respectful relationships learning and teaching in Victoria's schools. A comprehensive prevention strategy, embodying a whole-school approach, is essential for maximising positive outcomes for children and young people. It must be recognised that there is no quick fix for entrenched problems of violence and abuse. However, as the World Health Organization states unequivocally, violence:

can be prevented and its impact reduced [...] The factors that contribute to violent responses – whether they are factors of attitude and behaviour or related to larger social, economic, political and cultural conditions – can be changed.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> World Health Organization, p. 3.

## Conclusion

The evidence shows that violence can be prevented through respectful relationships education, and its harm reduced. What is more, there is a growing body of experience and expertise to guide violence prevention efforts in schools. If efforts include thought, dedicated time and resources, and fostering of skills and capacity, then it is possible to make real progress towards a world in which children and young people live free of violence and enjoy the benefits of engaging in relationships based on equality and mutual respect.

# Appendix 1: Good practice in respectful relationships and violence prevention education in schools: A checklist

## 1 Whole-school approach

Programs should:

- Be based on a whole-school approach, operating across:
  - Curriculum, teaching and learning
  - School policy and practices
  - School culture, ethos and environment
  - The relationships between school, home and the community.
- And involve:
  - Comprehensive curriculum integration
  - Assessment and reporting
  - Specialised training and resources for teaching and support staff
  - Reinforcement of violence prevention programming through school policies, structures and processes.

## 2 Program framework and logic

Programs should:

- Incorporate an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding violence that draws on relevant feminist research, in particular in addressing the links between gender, power and violence, examining violence-supportive constructions of gender and sexuality, and fostering gender-equitable and egalitarian relations
- Incorporate a theory of change, that is, an account of the ways in which project content and processes will be used to achieve the project's intended outcomes.

## 3 Effective curriculum delivery

### **Content**

Programs should:

- Be informed by feminist research on violence against girls and women
- Address various forms of violence, including domestic and sexual violence
- Target the antecedents to or determinants of violent behaviour
- Address not only attitudes but also behaviours, interpersonal relations and collective and institutional contexts

- Avoid focusing only on strategies for minimising personal risks of victimisation, instead addressing systemic constraints on safety and teaching commitments to, and skills in, non-violence.

### ***Pedagogy (teaching methods)***

Programs should:

- Adopt the general characteristics of effective teaching and learning practice
- Involve the use of quality teaching materials
- Be interactive and participatory
- Address cognitive, affective and behavioural domains
- Be matched to stages of change
- Give specific attention to skills development
- Respond appropriately to participants' disclosures of victimisation and perpetration.

### ***Structure***

Programs should:

- Be of sufficient duration and intensity to produce change
- Be timed and crafted to suit children's and young people's developmental needs, including their developing identities and social and sexual relations
- Have clear rationales for their use of single-sex and/or mixed-sex groups, including the merits and drawbacks of each.

### ***Teachers and educators***

Programs should:

- Be delivered by skilled teachers and/or educators, supported by resources, training and ongoing support
- Have clear rationales for their use of teachers, community educators, and/or peer educators
- Have clear rationales for, or a critical understanding of, their use of female and/or male staff.

## **4 Relevant, inclusive and culturally sensitive practice**

Programs should:

- Be relevant, that is, informed in all cases by knowledge of their target group or population and their local contexts
- Be inclusive and culturally sensitive, embodying these principles in all stages of program design, implementation and evaluation
- Involve consultation with representatives or leaders from the population group(s) participating in the program, where appropriate.

## 5 Impact evaluation

Programs should:

- Involve a comprehensive process of evaluation that, at a minimum:
  - Reflects the program framework and logic
  - Includes evaluation of impact or outcomes, through:
    - Pre- and post-intervention assessment
    - Long-term follow-up
    - Use of standard measures or portions of them
    - Measures of both attitudes and behaviours
  - Includes a process for dissemination of program findings in the violence prevention field.
- And which ideally includes:
  - Longitudinal evaluation, including lengthy follow-up at six months or longer
  - Examination of processes of change and their mediators
  - Process evaluation of program implementation and fidelity
  - Measures of school culture and context
  - Experimental or quasi-experimental design incorporating control or comparison schools, students or groups.