

Effectively involving men in preventing violence against women

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Key Messages

- Engaging boys and men to prevent violence against women can make a difference
- The main reasons for involving men in violence prevention are:
 - While most men do not use violence against women, when violence does occur it is largely perpetrated by men
 - Constructions of masculinity play a crucial role in shaping men's violence against women
 - Men have a positive role to play in helping stop violence against women
- A 'gender transformative' approach involves challenging rigid gender roles and critically questioning what influences these. Programmes involving a 'gender transformative' approach are effective in changing men's attitudes and behaviours related to violence against women.
- Other principles for engaging men include:
 - Positive messages 'inviting' rather than 'indicting' men can be more effective
 - There is diversity in how masculinities are constructed and expressed in different cultural contexts and social settings. Culturally-relevant material that acknowledges men's social contexts and draws on their personal experiences is required
- Men can prevent violence to women by not personally engaging in violence, by challenging the violence of other men, and by addressing the root causes of violence
- There are local and international examples that can be built on to increase the involvement of men in this work

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Table of Contents

Terminology	4
1. Introduction	5
2. Reasons for involving men in preventing violence to women	6
2.1 Men as perpetrators	6
2.2 Gender roles, masculinity and violence	8
2.3 Men as prevention partners	10
3. Men’s access to power	11
4. Theories and approaches for involving men	12
4.1 Supporting gender equality	12
4.2 Gender transformation	12
4.3 Focusing on social norms	14
5. Strategies for working effectively with men	15
5.1 Principles for working with men	15
5.2 Addressing barriers to men becoming involved	17
6. Engaging men	18
6.1 Building men’s motivation	18
6.2 Connecting with men	20
7. What men can do to prevent violence	22
8. Challenges and risks	25
9. Violence prevention work with men in New Zealand	26
9.1 White Ribbon Campaign	26
9.2 It’s not OK Campaign	27
9.3 Primary prevention programmes for young people	28
9.4 Particular settings	29
9.5 Culturally-specific approaches	31
9.6 Policy initiatives	31
9.7 Backlash	32
10. Conclusion	32
References	34



Terminology

Term	Definition
Bystander intervention	Action taken by someone who is not the perpetrator or victim, such as speaking out against social norms that support violence, interrupting situations that could lead to violence before it happens or during an incident. It involves having skills to be an effective and supportive ally to survivors. ¹
Family violence	Violence and abuse against any person with whom the perpetrator is, or has been, in a domestic relationship. This can include sibling against sibling, child against adult, adult against child and violence by an intimate partner against the other partner.
Gender	The roles, behaviours and expectations that society and cultures expect from males and females. This is different from sex, which is biologically determined.
Gender-based violence (GBV)	Gender based violence is an umbrella term for physical, psychological, sexual or emotional abuse or harassment that is the result of gendered power inequities.
Intimate partner violence (IPV)	Includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological/emotional abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, harassment, damage to property and threats of physical or sexual abuse towards an intimate partner (includes spouses, cohabiting partners, dating partners, boyfriends/girlfriends and separated or divorced partners).
Masculinity	The meanings any particular society gives to being a 'man'.
Primary prevention	Prevention that focuses on stopping violence occurring. This usually involves working with groups, addressing the risk factors of violence and promoting alternative healthy behaviour.
Social norms	The social acceptability of an action or belief; the unspoken rules about what is 'normal' for that group or setting.
Violence against women (VAW)	Any public or private act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty.



1. Introduction

Engaging men and boys in violence prevention is in the interest of women and girls, but ending gender-based violence is also in the interest of the men and boys.

(Carlson et al, in press)² (pp.5-6)

Engaging boys and men to prevent violence against women has been identified internationally as one of the top 20 ‘practice innovations’^a in violence and injury prevention during the last 20 years.³ Violence prevention efforts among men and boys can make a difference. Done well, they can shift the attitudes that lead to physical and sexual violence, and change behaviours, reducing male’s actual perpetration of violence.³ This paper builds on this development.

The increasing involvement of men and boys has occurred alongside a shift toward primary prevention: the move upstream to stop the perpetration of violence before it starts.^{3,4} The involvement of men and primary prevention share a comprehensive approach across multiple levels of the social order, including targeting the causes of violence against women associated with particular settings, communities, and social dynamics.⁴

Men already involved in violence prevention report being nurtured by tangible opportunities to participate, and

sustained by a sense of a mandate for action, a deeper understanding of the issues, and the support of peers and a community.⁵ This paper explores these conditions, including how they can be used to widen men’s involvement in primary prevention activities.

Language

Concise positive verbs are needed to effectively promote new behaviour. The outcome for violence prevention is often described as ‘non-violence’. This is convenient but weak – it simply says what is absent, and unintentionally focuses the mind back onto violence. It doesn’t identify the action we want people to take.

True prevention moves beyond simply stopping violence into promoting alternative healthy behaviour. This requires positive and specific words to describe what we want people to do.

‘Respect’ is the word most frequently used. It needs to be framed as something you earn by the way you treat others (i.e. give it to get it) rather than an entitlement.

Some people use ‘mana’; some use ‘peace’, ‘love’ and ‘aroha’. The word ‘healthy’ can also be helpful.

This paper occasionally uses the words ‘non-violence’ and ‘non-violent’ as shorthand and acknowledges their limitations. Readers are asked to replace these with the word they, or the men in their community, think best describes what they want instead of violence.

^a The top 20 practice innovations were identified by the US National Center for Injury Prevention and Control and were from the 20 years since the centre began operating within the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



2. Reasons for involving men in preventing violence to women

Flood⁴ identifies three reasons for involving men in violence prevention:

1. While most men do not use violence against women, when violence does occur it is largely perpetrated by men.
2. Constructions of masculinity play a crucial role in shaping men's perpetration of violence against women.
3. Men have a positive role to play in helping stop violence against women.

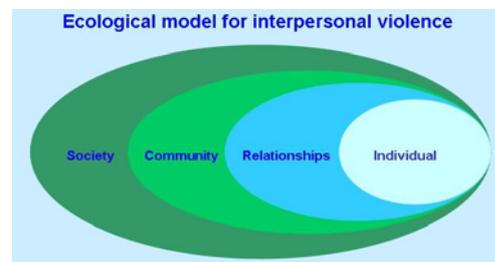
Kaufman argues that having men involved in violence prevention provides unexpected insights and builds a broader consensus that mobilises more resources and partners. *Not* involving men can be a recipe for failure for violence prevention efforts, with some men thwarting or ignoring developments, or inadequately addressing underlying gender systems.⁶

2.1 Men as perpetrators

International population-based surveys show that men's rates of general violence perpetration consistently exceed those of women. This holds true across countries and in relation to different forms of violence.⁷ The 2011 National Intimate

Key violence prevention models

This paper refers to models used in violence prevention. The first is the **ecological model**, which is usually shown as a diagram:



There are **risk** (increase the possibility) and **protective** (reduce the likelihood) factors for violence at all levels of the ecological model, which interact together. (See www.who.int for more information)

The second is the **spectrum of prevention** which identifies the types of activities that a prevention strategy needs to incorporate:

Spectrum of prevention
Influencing policy and legislation - changing laws and policies to influence outcomes
Changing organisational practises - adopting regulations and shaping norms to improve health and safety
Fostering coalitions and networks - bringing together groups and individuals for broader goals and greater impact
Educating providers - informing providers who will transmit skills and knowledge to others
Promoting community education - reaching groups of people with information and resources to promote health and safety
Strengthening individual knowledge and skills - enhancing an individual's ability to prevent injury and promote safety

(See www.preventioninstitute.org for more information)

Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (USA) found that in 2010, 28% of heterosexual US women, compared with 10% of heterosexual US men, had experienced intimate partner violence which resulted in them being fearful, concerned for their safety, suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, being injured or needing health, social or legal services.⁸ The Irish National Crime Council survey of intimate partner violence in men and women identified that one in seven Irish women, compared with one in 16 Irish men experienced severe physical, sexual or emotional abuse from a partner at some time.⁹

A survey of a representative sample of New Zealand women found that the lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual IPV was 1 in 3 (35.4%). When psychological/emotional abuse was included, 55% of New Zealand women ever partnered with men had experienced IPV in their lifetime. In the 12 months prior to the survey, 18.2% of women had experienced one or more forms of IPV.¹⁰

Population-based surveys of violence perpetration (as well as victimisation) are also possible. For example, the 1995 New Zealand 'Hitting Home' survey found that 21% of men in the survey had used physical abuse against their partners in the last year.¹¹ While this figure is unacceptably high, it also shows that four out of five men had not used physical violence.

In 2013, findings from one of the first large studies to focus on male perpetrators (rather than female victims) of intimate partner violence and non-partner rape were published.^{12,13} The UN multi-country study on men and violence interviewed more than 10,000 men in six countries in Asia and the Pacific (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea). The study's findings included:

- Nearly half of men reported using physical and/or sexual violence against a female partner, ranging from 26% to 80% across the sites studied
- Nearly a quarter of men reported perpetrating rape against a woman or girl, ranging from 10% to 62% across the sites.

In New Zealand (and elsewhere), data from Police and court files is not necessarily representative of the level of violence in the community.¹⁴ However it indicates that male perpetration of violence accounts for the majority of family and sexual violence responses by these agencies. For example, the Ministry of Women Affairs conducted a review of



police files coded as 'sexual violation of an adult' for a 2 ½ year period up to December 2007.¹⁵ In these files 99% of the perpetrators were identified as male. Between 2009 and 2012 males made up 72% of the offenders linked to a Police family violence investigation.¹⁶ Data derived from the New Zealand Family Court shows that, in the seven years up to and including 2011, 88% of the individuals who had a protection order taken against them (respondents) were male.¹⁷

Men's violence against women also results in more severe outcomes. From the 1999 Canadian General Social Survey, Canadian women were three times more likely than men to be injured as a result of intimate partner violence; more likely than men to report more severe forms of violence; and twice as likely to report being victimised on more than 10 occasions.¹⁸ In addition, women were five times more likely than men to require medical attention, and women were more likely to report being fearful for themselves and their children, to have depression or anxiety attacks or to report sleeping problems or lowered self-esteem. From the Christchurch Health and Development Study, a longitudinal investigation of a cohort of Christchurch children, women who experienced three or more types of psychological or physical violence were more likely to experience major depression or an anxiety disorder than men who experience the same level of violence.¹⁹

As men's violence is the both prevalent and damaging, it is an appropriate target for prevention strategies. Changing men's attitudes, behaviours, identities, and relations are critical parts of eliminating violence.⁴ In later sections this paper discusses some of the rationale and strategies for undertaking this work.

2.2 Gender roles, masculinity and violence

There is a clearly established link between how gender roles and masculinity are constructed and displayed at all levels of the ecological model and the level of violence against women.^{20,21} Where a culture expects masculinity to involve dominance, toughness and male honour there is persistent support for violence.²⁰ The UN multi-country study on men and violence^{12,13} illustrates the link between men's violence against women, gender inequitable attitudes and some types of masculinity. Men who reported using violence were significantly more likely to:

- have gender-inequitable attitudes and try to control their partners



- have practices that reflect idealised notions of male sexual performance, such as having multiple sexual partners and engaging in transactional sex
- have experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse as a child, or witnessed the abuse of their mother.

The UN report on men's perpetration of violence found that gender inequitable attitudes contributed to rape, with males citing a common belief that men have a right to sex with women regardless of consent, for example men reported that they raped 'because they wanted to and felt entitled to, felt it was entertaining or saw it as deserved punishment for women'. Previous studies have also found a link between the amount of violence in any given society and the degree to which that society supports flexible gender roles.^{20,22}

The World Health Organization notes that 'while they are located at the societal level, these gender norms play out at the level of community, relationship and individual behaviours'.²⁰ To a large extent, men's sexual violence is rooted in ideologies that value male sexual entitlement over women's choice, reflecting the prevailing male privilege in that social environment.²⁰ Peers and organisational cultures are also known to influence the likelihood of men's perpetration of violence, with 'higher rates of sexual violence against young women in contexts characterised by gender segregation, a belief in male sexual conquest, strong male bonding, high alcohol consumption, use of pornography, and sexist social norms'.²¹

Data also shows how the male gender role is enacted within families is also important: if a boy grows up in a family with traditional gender roles he is more likely to physically and sexually abuse women.²² This is reinforced if he also witnesses men being violent to women in the family.²² Male economic and decision-making dominance within the family is another strong predictor of violence against women.^{20,22,23}

An individual man's proclivity for rape is strongly associated with 'hypermasculinity': his tendency to overconform to perceived male gender expectations.²⁴ These expectations of strength, power and domination can be acted out as risk taking, a lack of empathy and coercive behaviour. Sexual aggression can be seen as validating a socially-sanctioned masculinity.²² Even if a man is not violent, their attitudes tend to support violence more than women's do. International studies consistently identify that, overall, men are more likely to: agree with myths and beliefs supportive of violence against women; perceive a



narrower range of behaviours as violent; blame and show less empathy for the victim; minimise the harms associated with physical and sexual assault; and see behaviours constituting violence against women as less serious, less inappropriate, or less damaging than women do.²⁵

If not challenged, these beliefs reinforce the overall societal views that masculinity involves exercising power over women. This is the scaffold for violence against women, and is reinforced by all levels of the ecological system.²⁶ Developing alternative systems and social structures that support nonviolent masculine identities and healthy and equitable gender relationships will only be achieved with the involvement of men.

2.3 Men as prevention partners

Men have a crucial role to play as fathers, friends, decision makers, and community and opinion leaders, in speaking out against violence against women and ensuring that priority attention is given to the issue. Importantly, men can provide positive role models for young men and boys, based on healthy models of masculinity. (United Nations Secretary-General's Network of Men Leaders)²⁷

Tāne Māori are necessary participants on our journey of liberation from all forms of violence and oppression. (Executive Director, Amokura)²⁸ (p.3)

There is a growing consensus among those working in violence prevention that to end violence men must be involved. While efforts have been made to work with men in secondary- and tertiary-based interventions (such as 'stopping violence' programmes for perpetrators) since the 1980s, now men are also being included as 'partners', taking a positive and active role in primary prevention.⁴

All men can have an influence on the culture and environment that allows other men to be perpetrators.²⁹ Some men already live in 'gender-just' ways: respecting and caring for the women and girls in their lives, and rejecting sexist and harmful norms of manhood.³⁰

These men are being mobilised by prevention initiatives. Men who are perhaps currently unaware of the issues, or who have not engaged in critical reflection or don't see it as relevant to them, also need to be actively engaged. How men can become effectively involved as *prevention partners* is discussed in more detail below.



3. Men's access to power

Not all men have equal power, resources or status. The dominant image of masculinity presented in Western countries is of a white masculinity, with other masculinities subordinated, marginalised or made invisible.³¹ Men from different backgrounds have very different access to social resources and social status, and the intersection of gender with other axes of social difference such as race, ethnicity, colonisation, class, literacy, migration, sexuality and age must be considered.

Colonisation has had a 'profound impact on the organisation of masculinities'³¹ (p.3) and contemporary racism continue to involve particular constructions of masculinity, based on associations between crime, violence, and race and ethnicity. The 2010 *Rangahau Tūkinu Whānau: Māori Research Agenda on Family Violence* states, '... colonisation has undermined whānau structures and relationships within whānau including gender relationships, and that the violence evident in Māori communities is the contemporary legacy of colonisation.'³² (p.3) Prevention work with men needs to include opportunities to make sense of experiences of marginalisation and working through the ongoing impacts of impacts of colonisation and institutional racism.³³

These contradictory experiences of power can drive some men's use of violence (men in New Zealand have talked about feelings powerless and reasserting their authority through violence).³⁴ However, gender transformative approaches can also draw on individual men's experiences of exclusion and powerlessness^{6,30,31} to assist them in analysing gender-based power and violence. This can help men develop an understanding of and empathy with the experiences of women and children.

Casey et al (2013) have noted,

experiences of marginalisation and violence can directly undermine and counteract efforts to support men in critically evaluating their own misuse of power. First, the backdrop of the multiple ways in which men, themselves, experience violent marginalization (often in state-sanctioned ways), calls into question the legitimacy of prioritizing and focusing on men's violence against women. Here, 'short-term' gender-focused prevention activities at the individual level can seem misplaced or inadequate in the face of broad-based political violence and/or violence experienced on the bases of other markers of identity. Second ... violence modeled,



*sanctioned, or even promoted on a broad scale can directly undermine and counteract efforts to support men in critically evaluating their own misuse of power.*³⁵ (p.239)

These issues need to be taken into account. However they are not an excuse for men to avoid preventing violence.

4. Theories and approaches for involving men

While an overarching and guiding theoretical framework for engaging men and boys' in violence prevention is still evolving,² some approaches and some general principles are emerging. Two theoretical approaches are discussed here.

4.1 Supporting gender equality

The World Health Organization lists 'promoting gender equality' as one of the seven essential strategies for preventing violence, especially violence towards women.³⁶ This approach places gender-based violence in a context that recognised female social, economic, and political inequality relative to men, as well as acknowledging cultural expectations that men are entitled to dominate and control others. From this theoretical perspective, as men's violence both contributes to, and is supported by gender inequality, the promotion of gender equality is considered a crucial principle for men preventing violence.^{6,31,37,38} Locally, the *A Mana Tane Echo of Hope* report concluded that the transformation of previously violent Māori men is only effective if it includes challenging gender power inequalities.²⁸ Pro-feminism is a key theoretical framework underpinning international projects involving men in violence prevention² and informs this paper.

4.2 Gender transformation

If gender inequality is one precept of gender-based violence, [then] harmful, controlling and violent constructions of masculinities are the other.... Transforming those harmful aspects of masculinity is another non-negotiable [principle for involving men].

(Minerson et al, 2011) (p.4)

Gender transformation involves challenging rigid gender roles and critically questioning the influence of socio-cultural, community, and institutional factors as well as individual beliefs and attitudes.² While described in various ways, including 'resocialisation of men',²⁴ 'an



interrogation of masculinity³⁷ and ‘breaking out of the man box’,³⁹ having men transform their gender notions is seen as crucial to stopping men’s violence to women.^{38,40,41}

South Africa’s Brothers for Life campaign transforms gender for a range of healthier behaviour. See www.brothersforlife.org

Gender transformation focuses on men developing respectful, trusting and egalitarian relations with women and with other men, and promoting positive constructions of masculinity.³⁰ The aim is to replace the socialised links between masculinity, power and violence towards women with more flexible and equitable identities and behaviours. This is achieved by supporting men to make positive changes and by affirming positive and health-promoting formations of manhood.³⁰

The World Health Organization 2007 review, *Engaging Men and Boys in Changing Gender-Based Inequity in Health*,⁴² assessed the effectiveness of interventions seeking to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality and equity in health. They reported that well designed programmes with men and boys can and do result in changes in men’s attitudes and behaviours related to their use of violence against women and questioning violence with other men. The programmes rated as being ‘gender-transformative’ (rather than just ‘gender-sensitive’ or ‘gender-neutral’) had a higher rate of effectiveness.

Gender approaches of programmes:

Gender neutral	Programmes that distinguish little between the needs of men and women, neither reinforcing nor questioning gender roles
Gender sensitive	Programmes that recognise the specific needs and realities of men based on the social construction of gender roles
Gender transformative	Approaches that seek to transform gender roles and promote more gender-equitable relationships between men and women



The WHO review also emphasised that integrated programmes and programmes which involve community outreach, mobilisation and mass-media campaigns show more effectiveness in producing behaviour change than isolated initiatives. Discussion groups for men are one strategy commonly used in gender transformative approach. Having men share their personal experiences with one another can subvert the stereotype of the stoically independent male and hearing from other men can correct the misconception that there is widespread peer endorsement of gender stereotypes.²⁹ Gender-equality discussions can also reduce the pressure on men to act in ways that lead to violence, while publically-expressed discomfort with men's coercive behaviour can inhibit such behaviour.²⁹

Promundo uses a gender transformative approach to promote caring, non-violent and equitable masculinities and gender relations. See www.promundo.org.br/en

Men's adoption of flexible roles and equitable behaviour can sustain a new, non-violent norm that can carry on into future generations. Gender transformation is also likely to ameliorate destructive male behaviours such as high alcohol and drug use, and practising unsafe sex, as well as reducing other forms of violence, such as homophobic attacks and man-to-man aggression, which in turn, contributes to an environment that supports violence against women. In addition to reducing men's violence against women, gender transformative programmes that reduce individual's adherence to rigid codes of masculinity can improve outcomes in a range of other important areas, including: sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention, treatment, care and support; fatherhood; maternal, newborn and child health; and gender socialisation.⁴²

4.3 Focusing on social norms

'Dispelling the illusion that ... whānau violence is normal' is fundamental⁴³

(An updated version of the report from the former Second Māori Taskforce on Whānau Violence) (p.5)

Social norms are how boys' and men's attitudes and behaviour are shaped in powerful ways by their male peers.^{44,45} They have a significant influence in determining behaviour^{46,47} and particularly in perpetuating male power and privilege.³⁸ International



and New Zealand violence prevention projects refer to changing social norms when discussing how they are addressing men's violence against women.²

Two aspects of social norms are particularly relevant to violence prevention. The first is that men routinely overestimate other men's comfort with sexist, coercive and derogatory comments about, and behaviour towards, women.⁴⁸ Men may incorrectly assume that the majority of men use violence when they don't.²⁴ The flip side of this dynamic is that men who oppose violence may mistakenly believe they are in a minority, and as a result keep quiet, which in turn, can be incorrectly interpreted as approval for violence by other men.⁵ A social norms approach is essentially a communication strategy to correct these distortions with information that the majority of men are nonviolent. If effective, individual men then shift their behaviour and attitudes to reflect the nonviolent norm, wanting to conform to their peers.

The second relevant aspect is that men underestimate other men's willingness to intervene in violence against women. A US study identified that the only significant predictor of men's willingness to intervene in behaviours that could lead to sexual assault was their perception of *other* men's willingness to intervene. The less men believed that other men would intervene, the less likely they were to be willing to intervene themselves.⁴⁸ Letting men know that their peers also oppose violence can be a crucial first step in engaging men, but it needs to be done in ways which allay men's fears of being attacked by other men (e.g. by having their masculinity questioned or through homophobic derision.)^{5,48} This requires identifying suitable peer supports and role models, and building men's skills to make effective bystander interventions. In New Zealand, local practitioners report that strengthening Māori men's links with their iwi's non-violent tikanga, through whakapapa and whānaungatanga, offers benefits similar to the social norms approach.⁴⁹

5. Strategies for working effectively with men

Some key principles for working with men are generally agreed upon, along with some strategies to manage the barriers to men's involvement.

5.1 Principles for working with men

Several other key principles for working effective with men have emerged from the literature:



- Approaches to men are more effective if they are positive as opposed to focusing on guilt, shame or fear. This involves: showing positive examples of equitable, nonviolent behaviour; strengthening current nonviolent actions, attitudes and values; and framing discussion in terms of men's responsibility.^{6,24,38} A humane, empathetic and positive approach can foster more meaningful and long-term change than invoking fear, shame or guilt, which can also alienate some men.^{24,40}
- Men can't be stereotyped: there is a wide diversity in how masculinity and sexuality are constructed and expressed in different social settings. This includes men who never use violence, and men who use violence only in some contexts. An effective approach is to work with particular groups to identify what aspects of their culture contribute to violence and what aspects can be mobilised to prevent it.^{31,40}
- Men will be more effectively engaged by culturally relevant material that acknowledges their social context and draws on their personal experience (for example, drawing on their culture's stories, or shared experiences) to provide understanding and support for non-violence and equality.^{31,37} This allows culturally-specific supports for violence to be targeted and addressed.³¹



5.2 Addressing barriers to men becoming involved

Some suggestions for addressing barriers to men taking action are provided below:

Barrier	Possible approaches
Some men holds sexist and violence-supportive attitudes and norms: the same attitudes that shape men's use and tolerance for violence against women.	A gender transformative approach could be relevant as it demonstrates that gender assumptions can be questioned and changed. Men could become engaged by considering how their behaviour affects others, drawing on their experience of being powerless, and promoting the benefits they may obtain from more flexible views. This could be assisted by a social norms approach that points out that most men do not hold such rigid attitudes, or at least are questioning them.
Men overestimate other men's support for violence and their unwillingness to intervene.	This can be corrected by a social norms campaign to identify the low support for violence and the willingness of most men to stop violence.
Fear of how other men will react to the man becoming involved in violence prevention, including the use of violence, stigma, homophobic ridicule, and social discomfort.	This can be alleviated by building skills in making effective bystander interventions, which include responding to the reaction of others.
A negative perception that violence prevention is 'anti-male', possibly reflecting a perception that feminism is hostile to men.	This can be countered by highlighting that most men are not violent, presenting violence prevention as offering hope for men and women, acknowledging that men are also victims of violence and emphasising that the goal is the elimination of all violence for the betterment of all. Promoting the benefits of nonviolent masculine identities could help, as well as approaching more sympathetic men to establish a new norm.
Men may lack the knowledge or skills to intervene.	It may assist to provide men with small steps and specific actions that build their awareness of violence and gender issues, along with their perceived efficacy to take effective action. This includes offering men a language to articulate their involvement and respond assertively to homophobia and anti-feminist stereotyping.
A lack of opportunity or invitation to become involved. ⁴⁸	Create tangible opportunities and provide specific invitations, especially by people men know and in contexts that are familiar to them.

6. Engaging men

There are multiple ways men can be involved in violence prevention work. Building men's motivation and offering specific invitations can increase engagement.

6.1 Building men's motivation

Personal experience

Exposure to or personal experience of sexual or domestic violence can be an influential factor in men becoming involved in prevention.⁴¹ This can occur when men are emotionally moved by hearing women's disclosures of violence.^{4,5} Māori men have talked about seeing others' pain and wanting a better life for their children as two catalysts to change, as well as the healing power of serving others.²⁸ Pacific men have reported that becoming a good role model for their children was the most effective motivator for them to change their behaviour.⁵⁰ Effectively invoking a man's relational interests (with the women and girls he cares for) requires the man to be empathetic and able to link other's experiences with actions that he can take.

Any experiences that men have had as victims of abuse, or of witnessing violence between parents as a child, can also be used as motivation. Men who have experienced abuse can require support and intervention. While most children and young people who experience violence do not go on to abuse others, there are significant risk factors for becoming a perpetrator.²² Men who have previously used violence can draw on their experience of change to become powerful prevention advocates.

Motivated by values

Holding a pre-existing social justice consciousness or egalitarian value system can also be a significant factor in encouraging men to address issues of violence. This awareness may have stemmed from men's own experiences of marginalisation or exposure to racism, classism, and sexism issues.⁴¹ Personal ethical, political or spiritual commitments can also motivate some men to become involved.^{4,5} This may come about from a specific learning opportunity, such as a prevention presentation that generates new understanding.⁴¹



The Healthy Masculinity Action Project prevents violence. See www.getinvolved.mencanstoprape.org/page.aspx?pid=368

Men in New Zealand have talked of ‘fairness and justice for all, regardless of gender and age’, ‘taking a moral stand’ and ‘taking responsibility’ as motivations for involvement in the prevention of men’s domestic violence against women.³⁴

Aligning non-violence with their tikanga is an established approach to motivating Māori men.⁵¹ This suggests that aligning violence prevention with the true values of a culture can draw in men identifying with that culture. The strong respect in the brother-sister relationships within many Pacific cultures can be extended to include respect for all women, motivating men to not use violence.⁵⁰

While interpretations of religious ideology have at times been used to justify violence, ‘the spiritual and theological understandings of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and other world religions each contain values which undermine tolerance for violence against women’.⁵² Drawing on these positive values and aligning them with violence prevention action can motivate members of these faiths.⁵²

Benefits men gain from gender transformation

Highlighting the benefits of gender transformation can also draw in more men. For example, the knowledge that men who support gender equity are more satisfied with life and have happier relationships⁵³ is an attractive selling point. Traditional Western masculinity involves suppressing (so called feminine) feelings including nurturing, receptivity, empathy and compassion.

More than just being protective factors against violence, these emotional competencies enable loving, healthy relationships with family, whānau and friends which are often the most genuine, sustaining and powerful experiences in men’s lives. Being able to genuinely share these experiences, typically hidden in male conversations, can attract men and strengthen their commitment to the safety of their partner and family.

Family Planning’s It’s about Mana programme targets young men with positive messages. See www.familyplanning.org.nz/news/promotions/its_about_mana

All men have to manage their male socialisation. While some accept it as the natural order, many feel uncomfortable with the socialised values and the pressure to live up to an ideal. Some experience these contradictions as a real stress.²⁹ Being able to share their personal experiences of male socialisation, along with naming and managing contradictions to strengthen personal wellbeing, can motivate men. Challenging men to be responsible for their gendered behaviour and to adopt broader gender behaviours is another way to involve men in these discussions.⁶ This can be a critical component of violence prevention programmes for men⁴⁵ and can offer opportunities for men to 'do masculinity differently'.⁴¹ While the benefits to men can draw them in, to effectively prevent violence the focus of gender transformation needs to be on building men's ethical responsibility to support gender equity and justice.³⁷

6.2 Connecting with men

Along with motivation, men's involvement can be encouraged by timely and tangible opportunities to become involved, as well as specific invitations to participate.⁴⁸

Futures Without Violence uses sports coaches to develop non-violent masculine behaviour among boys and young men. See www.coachescorner.org

After extensive research with US men, *Futures Without Violence* developed their 'Invite, not indict' approach that now drives all their men's work. This research highlighted that men's positive intentions that can be harnessed: 73% of the men they surveyed said they believed they could personally make a difference in ending violence, and most fathers said they were already talking to their sons about the importance of violence-free relationships.⁵⁴

Internationally, the use of positive and affirmative messages has been identified as a key feature of successful interventions with men.^{24,30} An effective invitation to men to be involved in violence prevention can build on their values and predisposition to act in a positive manner, while a safe, non-judgmental environment would enable these strengths to surface.^{24,30}

An invitation to take particular action will assist men who do not know how to help,³⁰ while providing small specific steps can turn good intentions into a more substantial involvement.⁵ Graduated involvement can also build men's understanding of the issues.



Experience shows that men are most responsive when they are invited by people they know and in contexts that are familiar to them.² For example, US men became involved after being formally invited by an associate, being encouraged by a friend who was already involved, or having opportunities through their job or a voluntary position.⁴¹ This suggests that recruitment tactics need to be grounded in the local context and culture so each man sees an opportunity for involvement as relevant to him, his culture, class and peers. This requires networks and coalitions with diverse organisations, a key focus of the spectrum of prevention.

Involving boys and young men, especially those with a heightened risk of using violence, can be particularly effective, as adolescence is a crucial time for forming healthy, non-violent adult relationships. Evidence shows that intensive, long-term education interventions with children and teenagers can produce lasting change in attitudes and behaviours.⁵² Again, positive messages are more engaging.⁴⁵

Approaching groups of men, in workplace or education groups and sports clubs, can provide a real opportunity to counter their propensity to support violence and establish a nonviolent norm in these settings. Linking gender equality and non-violent masculine behaviours to the group's goals, and identifying the benefits to their community and the women in the lives of members, can draw men in.

Tauawhi Men's Centre provides a range of services that support and connect with men, when and wherever they can. They also celebrate local men with Men of the Year awards, hold men's health week events and other activities supporting positive whānau connections. See www.tauawhi.org.nz



7. What men can do to prevent violence

This section presents some ideas about what men can do to prevent violence. This involves action that can take place across ecological levels and the 'spectrum of prevention'.^{2,38,48} Flood³⁸ has adapted this model to engaging men in preventing violence:

Spectrum of Prevention	Types of interventions with men
Strengthening individual knowledge and skills	Education, skills building and awareness raising at an individual level.
Promoting community education	Group efforts, social marketing and communications, media strategies.
Educating professionals and service providers	Training teachers, police officers, coaches, or doctors for example to do primary prevention work in their specific target communities
Engaging and mobilising communities	Building coalitions and networks, identifying and building capacity of male leaders, awareness events, White Ribbon Campaigns
Changing organisational practices	Challenging and changing entrenched practices that tolerate or provide impunity for gender-based violence
Influencing policy and legislation	Legal and policy reform

Actions that individual men can take include:

- taking responsibility for their actions
- developing and sustaining healthy, equitable, respectful relationships
- harnessing love, empathy and compassion, or personal values, to behave safely in public and private
- applying self-awareness and strategies to manage moods and ensure emotions are expressed appropriately, especially when feeling angry, fearful or shamed
- employing effective communication, problem-solving and parenting skills, especially in high risk situations, such as during interpersonal conflict and when stressed
- consciously managing personal risk factors, such as childhood experience as a victim, or alcohol and drug use



- building on personal resilience and protective factors, such as social connections, having goals and maintaining hope
- drawing on the many personal strengths that are used in non-violent interactions
- taking cues from non-violent social norms and peers
- moving away from socialised gender roles that are based on dominance to develop a personal self identity aligned with equitable values and behaviours.

Men who have perpetrated violence against women also need to commit to a behaviour-change process that focuses on: safety management; being accountable for their behaviour and its consequences; building and applying self-awareness; learning and embedding the use of new self-management and relationship skills; and reframing beliefs, relationships and self-identity.

Founding Fathers supports US dads to raise non-violent kids and asks them to sign a declaration of intent. See www.founding-fathers.org

Within relationships, men can:

- treat women respectfully in public and in private, nurture children, and develop positive and genuine relationships with other men
- build relationships that partners and children find safe and healthy, be sustained by them and incorporate these relationships into their self-identity
- participate in groups where all genders mix equitably and where caring and flexible behaviour is the norm; seek to understand everyone's views
- publically stand against attitudes that support violence and strengthen non-violent norms by: offering a countering voice when peers support violence; assuming most other men are also against violence; reinforcing non-violent behaviour
- intervene in situations where there is a risk of violence occurring
- offer personal invitations to other men to prevent violence by suggesting tangible actions they can take and appealing to their strengths, their compassion for the women and children they love and their desire to be with peers.²

Young men can be allies and intervene effectively with peers. See www.mystrength.org

At the community level, men can:

- work to undermine the social and cultural supports for violence against women, such as sexist and violence-supportive norms
- establish or join grassroots groups working to end violence, and bring together groups and individuals for broader goals and greater impact
- publically stand against all forms of violence and support community violence prevention or safety initiatives
- develop and support initiatives seeking to reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors for violence – these could focus directly on preventing violence, but also include initiatives such as parenting skills training, advocating responsible alcohol use or promoting positive spectator behaviour at sports events
- participate in groups that encourage a diversity of members and have social norms of equity, flexible behaviour and connectedness between members; use these relationships to understand other’s views, especially those with a different perspective
- support the public demonstration of more flexible gender norms, and equal opportunity for and participation by everyone in the community, especially marginalised groups; publically emphasise that the prevalent community norm is nonviolence
- invite groups of men to be involved by identifying specific contributions they can make and building their sense of responsibility by linking the collective benefits of violence prevention with their goals.^{2,4,6}

Men are prominent in a Hauraki campaign preventing sexual abuse. See www.capshauraki.co.nz/get-info/right2bsafe-child-sexual-abuse-prevention-campaign

Within society men can:

- publically stand against all violence and influence, implement and support national and international violence prevention or safety initiatives
- lobby for, and use positions of institutional power to influence, implement and support legislative and policy initiatives seeking to reduce risk factors and enhance

protective factors for violence – this could include the provision of services for victims and perpetrators, along with actions such as limiting the provision of alcohol, restricting pornography and reducing poverty

- participate in groups that demonstrate or promote inclusion and diversity, fair allocation of resources and harmonious relationships between groups; seek to understand diverse perspectives, especially those not usually heard
- support any systemic initiative that promotes more flexible gender norms and all forms of equality; affirm that the prevalent societal norm is nonviolence for everyone
- show leadership in professional, sports and community organisations, for example by adopting policies and initiating violence prevention activities
- provide tangible opportunities for other men to participate, pointing out the economic and social costs of violence and aligning prevention with their political and ethical commitments.^{2,5}

8. Challenges and risks

Tensions can arise when involving men in preventing violence against women. These need to be acknowledged and specifically addressed. For example, men involved in violence prevention are likely to be given more credit for their efforts than women doing similar work.⁴⁴ This reflects a marginalising of women's voices, which needs to be actively countered as it is women who have worked tirelessly to get domestic and sexual violence onto the agenda and are leading prevention activities. Men need to be responsible for acknowledging this, forming equitable and accountable partnerships with women's violence prevention activities, and not taking resources away from women and children's services.²⁴

Other tensions include: how to mobilise a socially privileged group to dismantle a problem largely perpetuated from within its own ranks; finding ways to engage men that do not reinforce or recreate gendered power inequities; keeping men participating in the challenging process of reconsidering beliefs and working to shed privileges; avoiding collusion with male privilege or violence-supporting attitudes; and reaching out to increasingly larger circles of men while maintaining ideological integrity.³⁷ It is also necessary to address what this work requires men to give up: the benefits men receive



from gendered inequality, such as material benefits, social and sexual services and support, decision-making control, and reinforcement of a powerful sense of self.^{48,55} These dilemmas are shared by projects all around the world.³⁵ One strategy is to ensure the involvement of a core group of men who support gender equity, have the support of committed male leaders and have an alliance with feminist women.³⁷ The World Health Organization suggests involving women in project design and evaluation.⁴²

To appeal directly to men some projects have aligned their preventative messages with (albeit redefined) masculinity or traditional male qualities. For example New Zealand's White Ribbon campaign uses the slogan 'Are you man enough to stop violence towards women?'⁵⁶ while the US Healthy Masculinity Action Project promotes 'strength without violence'.⁵⁷ However some argue that we should not constantly appeal to men's sense of manhood or masculinity and should also encourage men to disinvest in notions of gender *per se*.²¹

There can also be tensions between taking a positive, strengths-based approach to engaging men, and confronting their gender power attitudes and holding them accountable for their behaviour.³⁷

It is essential to strike a balance between discomfort and empathetic support, while maintaining a focus on moving towards the goal of preventing gender violence. A conceptual framework that adequately explains the links between masculinity, patriarchal culture and gendered violence can help build men's understanding.³⁷

9. Violence prevention work with men in New Zealand

New Zealand violence prevention initiatives share some of the features of international work with men. Some key programmes and initiatives, and ways this work could be strengthened, are discussed below.

9.1 White Ribbon Campaign

White Ribbon, an international campaign organised by men, encourages men to wear a white ribbon showing their opposition to violence against women. In New Zealand the campaign specifically promotes: men talking to other men; men as part of the solution; a



new narrative of 'men without violence'; and the best aspects of masculinity.⁵⁶ These last two strategies could fit within a gender transformative approach.

Using social marketing and community mobilisation, the New Zealand White Ribbon Campaign seeks to establish a norm that family violence is unacceptable. It has achieved widespread recognition, media coverage and community uptake. During the lead up to White Ribbon Day in 2012, there were 237 events around the country, including breakfasts, barbeques, marches, prison visits, schools and marae-based events, each incorporating local elements. More than 510,000 White Ribbons were distributed, along with nearly 100,000 posters, balloons and tattoos. Large posters/billboards were prominent at train stations and bus shelters.⁵⁶

White Ribbon has engaged with Māori communities through Te Puni Kōkiri, Te Ahi Kikoha (a Māori health professional group) and the Māori Wardens. It also has established an ethnic outreach group, with its own plan of action that is tailored for ethnic communities.⁵⁶

Internationally, there is little or no evaluation data on the actual impact of the campaign on the norms and relations of gender.⁴ However the 2007 WHO review⁴² found that programmes involving community outreach, mobilisation and mass media campaigns seem to be more effective approaches to changing behaviour among men and boys than single-focus interventions.

Locally⁵⁸ and internationally,⁵⁹ there is also a danger of White Ribbon losing its focus being led by and targeting men, becoming instead a day highlighting 'family violence' with anyone wearing a White Ribbon. The campaign has had institutional support and public funding, however the future of this is equivocal.

9.2 It's not OK Campaign

The Campaign for Action on Family Violence ('It's not OK') uses social marketing, mass media, community outreach and community mobilisation, to establish a norm that family violence is unacceptable. Its activities include TV advertisements, an information line, toolkits and resources for community action, community action projects, businesses, local governments and other players and a research and evaluation programme.



The It's not OK Campaign works at the relationship and community levels of the ecological model, and its many projects operate across the spectrum of prevention. While the language used is gender-neutral men feature prominently in the campaign as champions and messengers.

A 2011 review of 16 campaigns targeting IPV perpetrators (at least as one aspect of the campaign) in five English-speaking countries reported that the It's not OK Campaign was one of the few initiatives addressing most of the stages and influencers of behavioural change it considered necessary for effecting change.⁶⁰ Despite this, funding for It's not OK has consistently decreased since its inception in 2007.

9.3 Primary prevention programmes for young people

Men and boys are involved as participants, and occasionally as male educators, in primary prevention programmes for young people. Schools are a key site for prevention of violence against women; internationally, the largest body of evidence on primary prevention relates to programmes in educational settings.⁴ In New Zealand there are some programmes that focus on sexual violence, including dating violence and developing respectful relationships. Examples of these include Rape Prevention Education's BodySafe and Sex 'n' Respect programmes,⁶¹ and Family Planning's programmes for all aged school pupils. Family Planning incorporates their 'It's about mana' messages into their programmes, specifically to encourage young men to be 'strong, caring, and respectful'.⁶² The 'Sex and Ethics' programme, delivered by Wellington's Sexual Abuse Prevention Network, uses values or ethics to bring about nonviolent sexual behaviour.⁶³

A 2012 stocktake⁶⁴ found that the specialist sexual violence sector has developed a range of primary prevention activities and programmes despite limited capacity, capability, resources and infrastructure. As a result, there are pockets of local good practice but no national consistency.⁶⁴ Most programmes are also not delivered at the optimal length to effectively promote behavioural change: internationally, education programmes that have been shown to produce positive and lasting change in attitudes and behaviours have had greater intensity and length, and used a variety of pedagogical approaches.⁴ For example, the US 'Safe Dates' programme includes a ten-session school curriculum, a theatre production performed by peers and a poster contest. Evaluation has found that



participants continued to report less physical and sexual dating violence perpetration (and victimisation) than those who had not four years afterwards.⁶⁵

To realise the potential gains of primary prevention programmes, these need to be adequately resourced, further developed and supported and coordinated through a national infrastructure. The 2012-13 Programme for Action of the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families⁶⁶ included developing guidance for schools on quality programmes for students addressing relationship violence and promoting respectful gender relations, a project led by the Ministry of Education. At the time of writing, this has not been released.

Parliament's Social Services Committee is currently considering the funding of specialist sexual violence services.⁶⁷ This is an opportunity to advocate for much-needed increased resources and a comprehensive primary prevention plan, including the targeting of young men.

9.4 Particular settings

Men in sports

Men in some sporting groups have made a positive contribution. Professional sportspeople/men have used their public profile to promote violence prevention messages. This approach has been used by the It's Not OK Campaign, which has featured rugby and basketball players as champions of non-violence on billboards and posters.⁶⁸ Working with schools and sports clubs, the campaign has produced branded team shirts and other promotional material, along with establishing the 'It's Not OK fair play awards'.⁶⁸ The 2011 Blow the Whistle campaign used a range of high-profile sports stars and sports clichés to promote violence prevention messages.⁶⁹

However men involved in professional sports can also be negative role models. The New Zealand Herald has reported that 11 professional rugby players have been charged with assault in the past seven years.⁷⁰ On these occasions, professional associations and teammates have been criticised for minimising, deflecting from the violence by focusing, for example, on the pressure players are under, and missing opportunities to make statements on the unacceptability of violence and the need to build cultures of respect.⁷¹⁻⁷³



Positive strategies linking professional sports with non-violence need to be actively developed, such as has begun in Australia, where following similar allegations both Rugby League⁷⁴ and Australian Rules Football⁷⁵ have introduced policies on violence against women, including education programmes and resources. The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) programme⁷⁶ and Coaching Boys into Men⁷⁷ are US programmes using sports settings to prevent violence.

Faith communities

Faith leaders can have a key role in preventing violence in their communities by: taking a public stand against violence; opposing the use of religious justifications for violence; screening for violence in premarital and pastoral counselling; providing assistance and referrals to specialist services; and rejecting patriarchal dominance as a preferred social pattern.⁷⁸ In 2012, 40 New Zealand faith leaders (largely men) released a statement opposing family violence and committing their communities to take action.⁷⁹

Media

Audits of the ways New Zealand media reports family and sexual violence have been carried out. They found significant issues in the ways family and sexual violence were presented and therefore understood by the public, which has implications for the ways these forms of violence are addressed.

The audit of reporting on sexual violence found that news stories reflected commonly held but untrue beliefs, included that false reporting of sexual violence is common, that rape is usually perpetrated by strangers and that victim/survivors are responsible for rape. This reinforces these beliefs which are held more strongly by men.²⁵ The audit also found that 28% of the articles paid significantly more attention to the impacts of being accused of rape on the accused (typically a man), than to the impacts of being raped on the victim/survivor. The media focus on the behaviour of victim/survivors also moved the focus away from men's responsibility for perpetrating sexual violence.

Findings from the audit of media reporting on family violence included: there were few messages about the unacceptability of family violence; 40% contained a myth; family violence was not named; and euphemisms were common. Follow-up analyses two and



three years later found that this had begun to change over the time of the It's not OK media advocacy project.⁸⁰

Reporting family and sexual violence in these ways runs counter to prevention work. Recommendations for reporting sexual violence and family violence have been published by TOAH-NNEST⁸¹ and the It's Not OK Campaign⁸² respectively; if fully implemented, these have the potential to shift media coverage and public narratives in ways that support violence prevention.

9.5 Culturally-specific approaches

The E Tu Whānau Programme of Action for Addressing Family Violence, a framework for Te Ao Māori and government to work together, is 'founded on fundamental Māori aspirations based on the concepts of whānaungatanga, whakapapa, tinana, wairua, mana and mauri'.⁸³ (p.7) The 'Programme of Action for Pacific Peoples 2008 and Beyond'⁸⁴ also has 'cultural alignment' as a guiding principle. Linking violence prevention with cultural values can motivate the men of these cultures.

Shakti Community Council is developing a resource for men in migrant and refugee communities, as part of the 'It's not OK' campaign. Using Hindi, Mandarin and Farsi languages, it aims to increase awareness of domestic violence and includes issues for these men such as dowry abuse. Shakti also works with young men, drawing on their experience of cultural bullying to build their understanding of domestic violence.⁸⁵

9.6 Policy initiatives

The involvement of men in violence prevention is an effective strategy and needs to be suitably supported by government leadership, policy, action and funding. This would be supported by a comprehensive strategy for the primary prevention of men's violence against women, incorporating the range of roles men can play as outlined in this paper. Commitment and political will will be required to make this a reality. A primary prevention plan for violence against women has been developed in, for example, Victoria, Australia,⁸⁶ based on a framework developed by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation.

Taking a gender approach, such as incorporating a critical questioning of masculinity, will help the effective targeting of limited resources for the best outcome. However despite



calls to articulate the importance of a gendered perspective,⁸⁷⁻⁹² with the exception of a few key agencies, a gendered analysis has been notably absent from New Zealand policy and practice.

9.7 Backlash

There has been a backlash by anti-feminist ‘men’s rights’ and ‘fathers’ rights’ groups to projects preventing violence against women. For example, in 2013 in New Zealand, a ‘Ministry of Menz Affairs’ handed out leaflets listing their grievances, and in response to White Ribbon Day, promoted a ‘Black Ribbon Day’ with the slogan ‘Are you woman enough to stop violence against men?’ Flood states that the efforts of men’s and fathers’ rights groups are likely to have had some effect on community perceptions, policy frameworks and institutions.⁴⁸ The influence of ‘fathers’ rights’ groups on the Family Court has also been discussed in the media.⁹³ Men genuinely interested in ending violence need to publically offer countering views.

10. Conclusion

While a relatively new development, there is a strong rationale for involving men in the prevention of violence against women. The evidence for how to best do this is still emerging. There is evidence that gender transformative approaches can be effective, along with programmes incorporating multiple strategies such as community outreach, community mobilisation and mass-media campaigns. Well-designed programmes with men and boys show compelling evidence of leading to changes in men’s attitudes and behaviours related to violence against women. Importantly, gender transformative approaches also lead to improved outcomes in other key social policy areas.⁴²

A significant challenge is expanding programmes from a focus on the individual to a comprehensive approach across the ecological model and prevention spectrum. Violence prevention projects also experience difficulties associated with short-term time frames, lack of sustainable funding, little evaluation and the struggle to develop a comprehensive approach across organisations.

In addition, simply addressing gender roles and masculinity will not stop violence against women,³⁷ as men’s greater economic and political power reinforces male privilege to such



an extent that simply asking individual men to change (while important), will not be enough. More broadly, factors which increase the risk of individual men using violence need to be addressed such as men's experiences of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or exposure to the abuse of their mothers as children, problematic alcohol and drug use and structural level factors such as poverty, colonisation, racism and other forms of marginalisation.

The challenge is to move men's violence prevention along the continuum from 'changing men' to 'men changing'.⁴ If men are serious about contributing to a world where women are safe, they must challenge the violence of other men, and work to undermine the social and cultural supports for violence against women in their communities.⁴⁸



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