



Establishing a local Partners in Prevention network

Learnings from the Generating Equality and Respect program

This tool provides a step-by-step guide to establishing a local ‘Partners in Prevention’ network, a network of professionals who work with young people to build respectful relationships and prevent violence against women. This guide forms part of a suite of tools developed from the experiences of Monash City Council and Link Health and Community in their journey to create and support gender equity and prevent violence against women as part of the Generating Equality and Respect program.

Drawing from VicHealth’s decade of research and activity in preventing violence against women, Generating Equality and Respect was a world-first three-and-a-half-year program bringing together a range of primary prevention activities to a single location in Melbourne. More information about the program can be found on the VicHealth website.

This tool reflects the learnings gained from Monash City Council who, as part of Generating Equality and Respect, set up a local Partners in Prevention network. It is not intended as a definitive guide.

The tool can be used as a checklist when setting up and maintaining a local Partners in Prevention network.

The six key steps are:

1. identifying stakeholders
2. consultation
3. establishing and launching the network
4. promoting and recruiting
5. building workforce capacity
6. evaluating and sustaining.

Definitions

Gender equality – equal treatment of women and men in laws and policies, and equal access to resources and services within families, communities and society; sometimes referred to as formal equality.

Gender equity – involves fairness and justice in the distribution of resources and responsibilities between men and women; sometimes referred to as substantive equality. It often requires women-specific programs and policies to end existing inequalities.¹

ONLINE RESOURCES

To view the full suite of tools, visit vichealth.vic.gov.au/GEAR-tools



¹ World Health Organization 2010, *Violence prevention: The evidence*, WHO, Geneva.



Why establish a local Partners in Prevention network?

In Victoria, a statewide Partners in Prevention network is led by Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria. Local Partners in Prevention networks can be set up by organisations from across the youth, health, community and education sectors, such as a local government, school, community centre or women's health service. A network brings people from different sectors and different organisations together into a community of practice – a group of professionals who have a shared focus on respectful relationships education.

A local Partners in Prevention network supports excellence in the delivery of respectful relationships education and the prevention of violence against women and helps to:

- connect local professionals who work with young people on respectful relationships education
- strengthen local links and partnerships between organisations and across sectors
- provide a forum to share resources, ideas and experiences
- build the capacity of professionals and improve local practice.

Respectful relationships education

Respectful Relationships Education (RRE) is a comprehensive program for schools (primary or secondary), the wider education context and youth settings. It aims to address the key drivers of violence against women: gender inequality and adherence to rigid gender roles. It explores power and control, respect, gender, sex, love, consent and the broader social structures which enforce, legitimise and normalise a whole range of expectations and views around these topics.

The Victorian Government's current focus on this issue makes this a great time to get involved, show leadership and respond to the inevitable demand from school staff and leaders needing extra support.

Step 1: Identify stakeholders

A stakeholder mapping exercise will identify who is working with young people in the local area and what networks and relationships are already in place. The mapping exercise is a critical first step in establishing a Partners in Prevention network.

Task	Tips and considerations
Identify the organisations and professionals who work with young people in the local area	<p>This may include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local government and community health services (youth services, health promotion, project workers, community development workers) • schools (primary and secondary school, including teachers, wellbeing coordinators, psychologists, principals) • Department of Education and Training (student wellbeing, school nurses) • mental health services • sexual health services • multicultural and bilingual workers • police and legal services • family violence and women’s health services.
Identify relevant local networks	<p>Local networks may include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principals’ networks • local government facilitated youth networks • student wellbeing networks • school nurse networks • health and wellbeing committees • diversity and Inclusion working groups.
Consider existing relationships	<p>Consider, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • existing relationships between your organisation and other organisations and professionals who work with young people • checking if there is a member from the statewide Partners in Prevention network in the local area by contacting Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria on prevention@dvrvc.org.au.

Step 2: Consultation

Consult with a number of the organisations, professionals and networks identified in the stakeholder mapping exercise (Step 1) to explore local workforce needs and interest in a local Partners in Prevention network.

The consultation may involve a combination of individual and small-group discussions, face-to-face and virtual meetings, or an online survey. It may occur as part of the agenda of existing networks or as separate discussions.

Consultation can raise awareness and build capacity, confidence and ownership of the workforce to build gender equity and prevent violence against women.

Task	Tips and considerations
Explore local activity and commitment	<p>Identify local activity in education with young people (e.g. education on respectful relationships, gender equality, violence against women).</p> <p>Explore commitment to respectful relationships education and the prevention of violence against women.</p>
Identify needs	<p>Identify existing professional development and training opportunities; identify gaps and local workforce needs.</p> <p>Identify existing sources of information and support; identify gaps and local workforce needs.</p> <p>Explore confidence in delivering respectful relationships education.</p> <p>Identify challenges to delivering respectful relationships education with young people (e.g. time, resources, organisational support).</p>
Gauge interest in network	<p>Identify potential members and local champions for respectful relationships education.</p> <p>Discuss expectations for the network, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roles and responsibilities, including capacity to contribute • expectations on the purpose and role of the network (e.g. access to information and resources, professional development and training, networking) • preferences for how the network may be run (e.g. frequency of meetings, establishing a new network or integrating within the remit of an existing group).

Step 3: Establish and launch network

Step 3 in establishing a Partners in Prevention network involves drawing on the results of the stakeholder mapping exercise (Step 1) and the local consultation (Step 2) in order to establish and launch the network.

Task	Tips and considerations
Develop network guidelines or terms of reference	<p>Draw upon the results of the stakeholder mapping exercise and the local consultation to make decisions about the network and its membership, purpose, priorities and structure. These decisions will set the parameters or 'protocols' of the Partners in Prevention network and should be made in partnership with key partners.</p> <p>A gender balance for network membership is encouraged.</p> <p>Document the network parameters. Creating 'network guidelines' or 'terms of reference' will ensure that everyone has a common understanding. A brief, one-page summary is sufficient.</p> <p>Invite key partners to provide feedback and input on a draft of the network guidelines to help refine them and enhance local ownership and buy-in.</p>
Launch the network	<p>It is a good idea to 'launch' the network as a way of marking the official start. This can be done in a variety of ways and may be as simple as emailing members who expressed interest in joining or announcing the group on social media. Getting people together for a launch event is a good way to promote the network and generate local interest and support. Consider holding a stand-alone session or integrating it with an existing local network meeting.</p> <p>When launching the network consider highlighting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why preventing violence against women is a priority in the local area • why promoting equal and respectful relationships and gender equality with young people is important for preventing violence against women • how the Partners in Prevention network will support professionals who work with young people to deliver excellence in respectful relationships education.

Step 4: Promote and recruit

A broad membership base is critical for the Partners in Prevention network to establish and strengthen existing partnerships for the delivery of good practice respectful relationships education.

Task	Tips and considerations
Promote the network and recruit members	<p>Promote the network widely.</p> <p>Describe the aims of the network and focus on the benefits of membership.</p> <p>Develop and disseminate network resources and collateral (e.g. website, brochure, business card).</p> <p>Circulate information about the network at relevant meetings and events, place in strategic locations and disseminate in local publications.</p> <p>Ask existing network members to identify/recruit new members.</p>

Step 5: Build workforce capacity

The focus now shifts to building the capacity of network members in respectful relationships education.

Task	Tips and considerations
Plan and implement strategies to build local workforce capacity	<p>Planning should be done in partnership with network members.</p> <p>Use the local workforce needs and preferences identified during consultation to inform planning.</p> <p>It may be useful to schedule meetings for the year and plan a calendar of activities. Engage women in the consultation, planning and delivery of events, and invite women as guest speakers.</p>
Minimise barriers to working in respectful relationships education	<p>A common barrier to working in respectful relationships education is lack of funding. Consider the possibility of delivering a small seeding grants scheme and/or free professional development sessions for network members, to minimise financial barriers to undertaking work in respectful relationships education.</p> <p>The benefits of a grants scheme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding to expand, develop and sustain activities for respectful relationships education • building the evidence base, as grant recipients monitor and evaluate their projects • opportunities to develop case studies based on the work of grant recipients which can be promoted locally • building partnerships between network members • increased membership in the network, as eligibility for grant funding should include membership of the network.



Step 6: Evaluate and sustain

A Partners in Prevention network is not static and needs to be reviewed periodically to ensure the network is still relevant, informative and beneficial to its members, and to determine ongoing training and information needs.

Task	Tips and considerations
Evaluate the network	<p>The network evaluation can be done in a number of ways, such as conducting an annual member survey, interviews and focus groups.</p> <p>The evaluation should be linked back to the network aim and purpose as documented in the network guidelines. Changes to members' confidence and knowledge, and change within network member organisations, may be considered as part of the evaluation.</p> <p>When reflecting on the network, consider the outcomes of its collective work, the need for and commitment to continuing the network, and the resources available.</p>
Plan for sustainability	<p>Consider how the local Partners in Prevention network will be sustained, particularly if the leading organisation is unlikely to have ongoing capacity. For example, champions from within the network member base may be able to provide support and leadership.</p> <p>Importantly, the network should focus on integrating and sustaining respectful relationships practice locally. This may include strategies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• engaging local youth services and local government to integrate respectful relationships education in their plans e.g. Youth Plan• ensuring respectful relationships education is a discussion point / on the agenda of other networks e.g. Youth Workers Network• linking local network members with the statewide Partners in Prevention network – http://partnersinprevention.org.au/

A network brings people from different sectors and organisations together into a community of practice – a group of professionals who have a shared focus on respectful relationships education.

MORE INFORMATION



- VicHealth's Generating Equality and Respect program
www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/programs-and-projects/generating-equality-and-respect
- VicHealth's Partnership Analysis Tool
www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/the-partnerships-analysis-tool
- Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria's Partnership in Prevention network
www.partnersinprevention.org.au/
- Victorian Government Department of Education and Training, *Respectful Relationships Education*
www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/respectrel.aspx



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