

Y Respect Gender: Promoting gender equity

PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN THROUGH AND IN THE
WORKPLACE



Background

VicHealth's research on violence against women

- Burden of disease measures
- Framework to prevent violence against women

Respect, Responsibility and Equality program

- Take A Stand

Y Respect Gender Project

- Formal partnership with the workplace
- Embedded program coordinator
- Strong focus on cultural change to promote gender equality
- Constructivist evaluation
- WHO Healthy Workplaces framework

YMCA Victoria

- Largest of the Australian YMCAs
- Recreation centres, swimming lessons, camping, children's services, disability, stadium sports, pools, youth work
- Dispersed over 150+ sites
- 6000 staff, 1500 volunteers, largely young, female, casual or part time
- 70% female staff but smaller representation at higher levels of management

Planning and oversight

- Three focus areas
 - Building equal and respectful relationships
 - Increasing women's leadership and influence
 - Creating a positive and equitable workplace culture
- Two day planning workshop
- Logic model and action plan
- Launch
- Project Team and Reference Group
- Partnership meetings
- Regular evaluation feedback

What did we do?

Strong communications

- Using existing internal channels
- Thematic content approach

Leadership capacity building

Training – general and specific

Policy and procedure analysis and changes

Other system changes

Focus on gender equality, respectful relationships, gender stereotypes

Interventions to build sustainability

Action learning at 4 specific sites

Evaluation Findings

Evaluation methodology

Constructivist approach

- Worked with the YMCA project management team to develop program logic model
- Surveys conducted at the baseline and after 3 years to understand change over time
- Qualitative data collected over the course of the project and analysed to provide a feedback loop with the YMCA to enable continuous improvement.

Evaluation indicators

Changes in women's representation at all levels of the YMCA

Equal, respectful relationships normalised

All policies and practises reflect gender equity (including in recruitment and promotion)

Gender equity implemented by managers at all levels

The YMCA is an advocate for gender equity internally and in the wider community

Changes after three years

Increased awareness of gender equity and respectful relationships (but still room for improvement)

Increased (and more sophisticated) dialogue at all levels about gender equity, gender stereotypes and violence against women

Increased understanding about the link between gender equity and violence against women

Key Learnings

Effective communication essential

Cultural change requires champions and drivers

Change is a process: an action learning approach facilitated local ownership over time.

Barriers to change:

- Deeply held attitudes about the gendered nature of work and leadership and resistance to change
- Fears that gender equity threatened men's jobs

Impact and challenges

Increased conversations between staff in pilot sites about gender equity and respect resulted in local management changes.

Increases in women's representation in senior management not yet achieved after three years

Staff turnover: importance of policies that support practice and sustainable practices.

The Workplace Perspective

Peter Burns, CEO, YMCA Victoria