



Preventing and Responding to Family Violence: Addressing Invisibility of Violence Among Diverse Populations



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CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

The aim of the research was to establish the state of knowledge on the drivers and reinforcing factors of other forms of family violence among diverse populations, and on proven and promising practices for the primary prevention of such violence. The literature review contributed to the development of the Victorian State Government's *Family Violence Primary Prevention Strategy*.

METHODS

We conducted a comprehensive literature review and analysis of current global evidence on different forms of family violence and on effective primary prevention practices. The final report and policy recommendations were developed through consultation with policy makers and interest groups.

Our analysis combines a socio-ecological model of family violence with an intersectional analysis to map the interaction of social norms, structures and practices that are relevant for understanding differences in experiences of family violence across diverse populations.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Across all communities, societal-level discrimination and inequality sets the underlying social context in which family violence occurs. These factors marginalise, disadvantage and exclude experiences of violence that don't fit the 'norm'.

Societal-level drivers contribute to, and are reinforced by, the invisibility of family violence at the community level, condemning those at risk of violence to stigma, silence and social isolation. Stigmatisation perpetuates myths that people in some communities do not or cannot experience violence in intimate relationships. In other cases, community attitudes that excuse or justify family violence may shift responsibility away from the perpetrator.

These in turn intersect with individual level factors such as previous experiences of trauma, leading to a pervasive normalisation of family violence among diverse populations. Importantly, these factors intersect in different ways to produce distinct risks for diverse populations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Research

- Establish reliable prevalence and perpetration data, and move beyond prevalence to focus on the drivers of such violence;
- Examine the interaction between these communities and 'mainstream' society and how those unequal power dynamics can drive family violence; and
- Investment needs to be made in learning through creating a culture of rigorous monitoring and evaluation within primary prevention.

Primary prevention

- Address structural factors through holistic and multi-sectoral prevention approaches;
- Invest in innovation and the evaluation of primary prevention programmes, and in consistent population-level monitoring of prevalence across all manifestations of family violence; and
- Promote community leadership and participation, men and boys' engagement in prevention, and strengthen societal-level commitments to prevention across diverse populations.

Community	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Older people	Culturally and linguistically diverse communities	LGBTI communities	People with disabilities	Women in the sex industry
Societal level	History of colonisation Racial discrimination	Ageism	Racial discrimination Anti-immigration attitudes	Rigid gender norms and stereotypes Heterosexism, homophobia and transphobia	Ableism and discrimination against people with disabilities	Rigid gender norms and stereotypes Social stigmatisation and invisibility of sex workers
Community / Organisational level	Lateral violence Intergenerational trauma	Invisibility of family violence against older people Social isolation	Sociocultural factors Social isolation	Invisibility of violence in LGBTI communities Social isolation	Invisibility of family violence experienced by people with disabilities Social isolation Institutional conditions	Under-reporting and discrimination in services
Individual / Relationship level	Alcohol and substance abuse Socio-economic factors	Family relationships Previous experiences of violence and trauma	Insecurity Previous experiences of violence and trauma	Internalised homophobia Family relationships Previous experiences of violence and trauma	Family relationships Previous experiences of violence and trauma	Gate keepers and power in relationships Previous experiences of violence and trauma Substance abuse

For a complete list of references refer to the original report:

The Equality Institute and the Department of Premier and Cabinet, State Government of Victoria (2017). *Family violence primary prevention: Building a knowledge base and identifying gaps for all manifestations of family violence*. Melbourne: Victorian State Government.

The report is available online at www.equalityinstitute.org/family-violence-primary-prevention/

