# The five guiding principles for working with men and addressing masculinities

## What are the five guiding principles?

Mutually reinforcing, interrelated ways to ensure our work is evidence-based, intersectional, accountable and transformative.

### #1 Intersectional approaches

*"You don't need to be the expert, invite those experts in."*

**Cassie Lindsay**, Co-Founder, Red Consulting and Training

Intersectional approaches help honour and connect with people's different life experiences and varying relationships to power. They help centre the appropriate voices and communities to ensure the work is relevant, effective and trauma-informed.

**Example:** Building partnerships with diverse organisations and individuals with specific community knowledge and lived experience.

### #2 Gender transformative approaches

*"To move beyond gender where freedom, joy, connection, love and respect are the things that define who we are, not these rigid ideas about what makes a man a man or a woman a woman."*

**Jackson Fairchild**, Primary Prevention Leader

A gender transformative approach challenges the rigid ideas and practices our society has about gender and seeks to transform these. This includes strengthening the practices and cultures in our institutions, workplaces and communities that promote more inclusivity, diversity and safety for people of all genders.

**Example:** Challenging and transforming the idea that certain roles and behaviours are more appropriate for boys and men, and others are for girls and women, and that everyone must fit into these gender binaries.

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# #3

## Strengths-based approaches

*"It's about knowing the whole person [or community]...and looking to the positives, looking to the solutions."*

**Shelly Hewson-Munro**, Prevention, Masculinities and Learning, RMIT

Strengths-based approaches are accessible, engaging and draw on men's and boys' experiences and strengths, connecting with their positive values that can support preventing men's violence against women.

**Example**: Working with men to build their empathy for the experiences of women, and use that empathy to reflect on the changes needed to prevent violence against women.

# #4

## Maintaining accountability to women

*"If I don't understand what a lived experience is, I have to listen to people with that lived experience."*

**Hala Abdelnour**, CEO and Founder, Institute of non-violence

Because women experience violence overwhelmingly from men, it's important that men work collaboratively with and centre the voices of a diverse range of women.

**Example:** Inviting and reimbursing women to participate in steering groups for primary prevention projects with men so that the work centres women's knowledge and experiences.
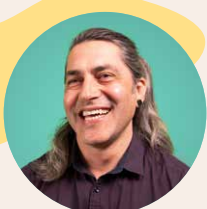
# #5

## Solutions across all levels of society

*"Collectively, we can change the structures and norms of society that hold us back and limit the ways in which people can live their lives and express themselves."*

**Cameron McDonald**, Sector Engagement Lead, Our Watch

While systems of patriarchy are expressed and upheld by individuals, ultimately, our social systems help to reinforce inequality. Prevention solutions need to:

- challenge and transform society's rigid ideas about gender
- create more progressive policies and laws that protect the rights of women
- drive positive change at community and organisational levels.

Involve coordinated and complementary efforts by a diverse range of stakeholders, sustained over a long period of time.

**Example:** While we encourage men to take on childcare responsibilities and challenge the idea that only women should do this, we should also advocate for employers to allow men to access parental leave and challenge career discrimination against women who have children.

## For more information, see ourwatch.org.au

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