

# Men, intersectionality, and preventing violence against women

## Understanding men and boy's relationships to power and privilege

In our work with men, intersectionality helps identify where different men (and communities of men) have different levels of power and privilege in society, with different access to opportunities and resources.

Men and boys can experience different forms of oppression and discrimination such as racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia and classism. And men and boys can experience both privilege and oppression at the same time.

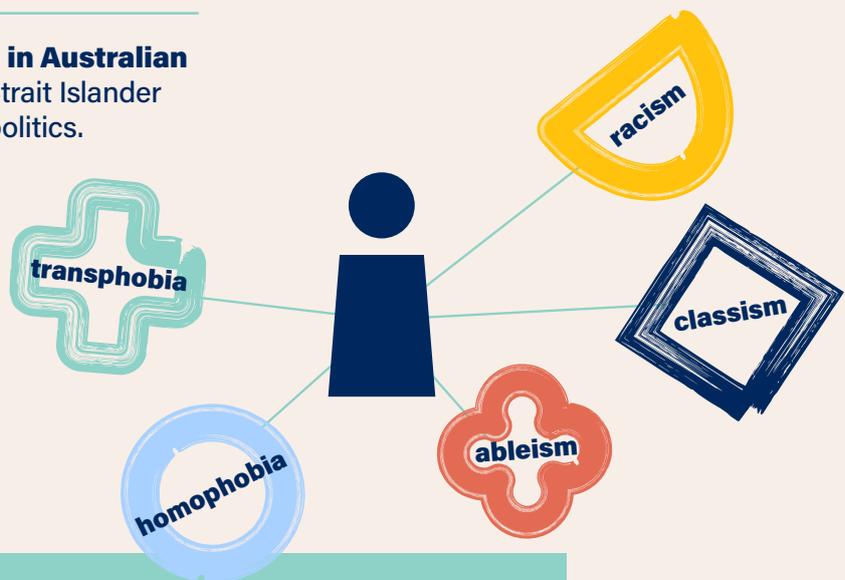
**For example, men as a group are paid more than women**, but many individual men and boys experience homelessness and poverty.

**There are more men than women in Australian politics**, but Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men are not represented equally in politics.



*"Our place in society is very different from what we want it to be, we don't have an equal footing. Now that's very different from acknowledging my male privilege. I absolutely understand my place in society as a male and what safety that allows me and the imbalances and empowerments that come with that. But the minute I put this cultural lens across it of being an Aboriginal man in this country I am very quickly disempowered."*

**Craig Rigney**, Kurna/Ngarrindjeri man and CEO, KKY Aboriginal Corporation



### What is intersectionality?

Intersectionality helps us understand the full range of people's lived experiences in their broader social context and how power operates in society to reinforce privileges for some people and oppression for others because of who they are. Sexism and gender inequality intersect with other forms of discrimination, like, racism, colonialism, classism, and transphobia contributing to individual and collective experiences of violence.

# How to work with men and boys with an intersectional approach



Intersectionality helps us understand the full complexity of men and boys' lives and experiences so that we can tailor our work and engage men and boys in ways that are respectful, effective, culturally relevant, and trauma-informed.



*"We cannot rely on a one-size-fits-all approach if we are to engage and work with a diverse range of men and boys. We must closely consult with, and be led by, those communities."*

**Shane Tas**, Principal Advisor — Masculinities, Our Watch

## Tips for how to work with men and boys

**1. Be targeted and clear** on which men and boys are being engaged, and tailor work in ways that acknowledge all aspects of their identities and experiences.

**2. Advocate for and become allies to community-based organisations**, supporting the visibility of their work and acknowledging the expertise they have in working with their communities.

**3. Explicitly redistribute power and resources** so that people affected by forms of inequality and oppression, and organisations representing them, direct decisions about what and how primary prevention programming occurs.

**4. Practice regular self-reflection** on experiences of power and privilege, assumptions and unconscious biases. Acknowledge, honour and heal one's own experiences of harm that may have been experienced due to gendered violence and inequality.

**5. Build relationships and partnerships and use co-designed and community-led approaches** that respond to the intersections between gender and colonialism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, ageism and classism, to ensure initiatives are culturally relevant and community-building.

**6. Continually grow and develop one's own understanding** of social systems, structures, norms and practices that create intersecting forms of discrimination and privilege, and how these are experienced by men and boys, for example:

- Interrogate masculinities and men's different relations to power and patriarchy.
- Engage with and honour men and boys with diverse lived experiences and work in trauma-informed ways.
- Recognise men's intersectional disadvantage (without using it to justify use of violence) and harness this to build empathy for women's experiences of inequality and generate activism.



**For more information,  
see [ourwatch.org.au](https://ourwatch.org.au)**