

Practitioner support guide

# Working with men in violence prevention

PRACTITIONER REFLECTIONS VIDEO SERIES - CHAPTER 4

## Purpose of the support guide

This supporting guide provides further support for preparing to work with men and boys and addressing masculinities in the prevention of men's violence against women. This supporting guide includes:

1. Introduction to Chapter 4.
2. Tips for working with men and boys to prevent men's violence against women.
3. Resources and tools.
4. Supports available.



### Men in focus evidence review

[ourwatch.org.au/change-the-story/men-in-focus](https://ourwatch.org.au/change-the-story/men-in-focus)

## About Chapter 4

This video is relevant to anyone working with men and boys and seeking to challenge and transform masculinities in the prevention of men's violence against women. Chapter 4 features practitioners discussing how to prepare for this work.

Chapter 4 has four parts:

1. Collective care, self-care and reflective practice.
2. Important considerations for working with men.
  - a. Work in a trauma-informed way.
  - b. Collusion and collaborative practice.
3. Resources and tools.
4. Be prepared and courageous.

## Important considerations for working with men

### #1 Collective care and self-care

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### #2 Reflective practice

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### #3 Work in a trauma-informed way

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### #4 Collusion and collaborative practice

## CHAPTER 4

# Important considerations for working with men

## #1 Collective care and self-care

- Working for social change is challenging work and can have a personal and collective impact on us.
- Collective care and self-care are crucial for enabling practitioners to deliver safe, sustainable and effective primary prevention work.
- Shelley Hewson-Munro underscores the importance of having strong supports in this work:

“There’s a vulnerability that will always be there in this work. And so, you need to make sure you work with people who you can talk that out with.”

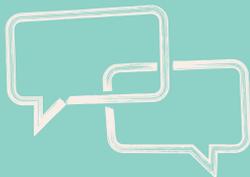
### **Shelley Hewson-Munro (she/her).**

Manager, Prevention, Masculinities and Learning, RMIT.

- See page 105 of the *Men in focus practice guide: Addressing masculinities and working with men in the prevention of men’s violence against women (Men in focus practice guide)* for guidance on debriefing, which can provide a space to celebrate achievements, attend to challenges as early as possible, and to learn from one another.

### **Prompting question**

How can we remember that we are not alone in experiencing the challenges we face in social change work, that we are in this together and collective care is an important part of keeping our work sustainable and joyful?



## #2 Reflective practice

- Alongside collective care, practitioners should undertake regular self-reflection to interrogate the conscious and unconscious biases that may affect their work, as Cameron McDonald says:

“I think a really important thing that men can do is to find ways of making this a regular practice of checking in on our biases.”

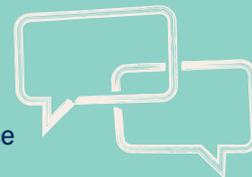
### **Cameron McDonald (he/him),**

Sector Engagement Lead, Our Watch.

- Use the ‘suggested activity 18’ in the *Men in focus practice guide* on page 86, the reflections on pages 35-40, and the ‘Effective practice checklist’ on pages 7-9 to reflect on your conscious and unconscious biases and privileged perspectives to prepare for doing this work.

### **Prompting question**

How can we ensure that mechanisms for reflective practice are incorporated into prevention work to support professional development, maintain accountability and promote sustainability of ourselves in this work?



### #3 Work in a trauma-informed way

- People have their own diverse and unique life histories and experiences that usually are not immediately apparent.
- Trauma-informed approaches work mindfully with individuals' experiences of trauma in conjunction with the social, political, economic, institutional, structural and historical contexts in which trauma is inflicted.
- Mack Kohn describes how trauma can affect participants' responses to prevention content:

"Some people will walk out of the room. Some people will try and distract the rest of the room. And it's understanding that this is not trying to make fun of what we're talking about, this is something that's going on within in this young person's life that they're uncomfortable with."

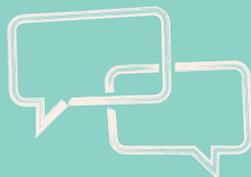
**Mack Kohn (he/they).**

Program Coordinator – R4Respect, YFS.

- Relevant professional development resources include Safe and Equal's [Responding to disclosures](#) page and training from The Blue Knot Foundation, [Using a trauma lens when working with Domestic and Family Violence](#).
- For more information on trauma-informed prevention practice and the connection between trauma and contexts of structural oppression see Viki Reynolds's article [Trauma and resistance: 'Hang time' and other innovative responses to oppression, violence and suffering](#).

**Prompting question**

How can we attend respectfully and ethically to people's life experiences in our work?



### #4 Collusion and collaborative practice

- Collusion occurs when facilitators of men's violence prevention initiatives side with, or ally themselves with, perspectives that minimise, blame, justify or excuse men's use of violence and its associated impacts.
- The risk of collusion is that it perpetuates the status quo, it condones violence, and it doesn't lead to fundamental shifts in attitudes and structures.
- Craig Rigney offers this tip on how body language can be unintentionally collusive:

"One of the biggest areas where people fall down is body language. As a practitioner, listening to a man disclose his use of violence against women, if I'm nodding my head, what message is that telling him? I'm nodding my head to say yes, keep talking. To him, he may be thinking, he agrees with me."

**Craig Rigney. Kurna/Ngarrindjeri man.**

CEO, KKY Aboriginal Corporation.

- See the [Men in focus practice guide](#) pages 116-118 for more guidance on building empathy and rapport and creating spaces for critical reflection on prevention practice.

**Prompting question**

How can we get the balance right between building rapport and maintaining accountability to victim-survivors of men's violence against women?



# Resources and tools

The practitioners in Chapter 4 mention some great resources for informing work with men and boys and addressing masculinities:

1. *Men in focus practice guide: Addressing masculinities and working with men in the prevention of men's violence against women* is designed to support practitioners to address masculinities and work with men in the prevention of men's violence against women. See the effective practice checklist on pages 7-9, and the practitioner vignettes throughout the guide for more insights.
2. VicHealth's *Framing masculinity: Message guide* gives recommendations on effective values-based messaging when engaging people working to challenge outdated masculine stereotypes.
3. *The Man Box 2024: Re-examining what it means to be a man in Australia* by The Men's Project, Jesuit Social Services, is a comprehensive study that focuses on the attitudes to manhood and the behaviours of Australian men.
4. The Zoe Belle Gender Collective's *Transfemme resources* provide support for trans women and men who date trans women, and information about the drivers of violence against trans women.
5. Rainbow Health Australia's *Pride in Prevention: A guide to primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities* unpacks the drivers of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ people.
6. Shelley Hewson-Munro and Dr. Sarah McCook's *Working together with men 2.0* provides tools and templates to ensure that prevention initiatives remain accountable to women.

# Support is available

**Violence against women is widespread across our society and impacts the lives of many people.**

If the content in these resources raises any issues for you, the following supports are available:

## 1800 RESPECT

☎ 1800 737 732 🕒 24-hours 📍 [1800respect.org.au](https://1800respect.org.au)

Free national family and domestic violence telephone, online chat, and online video counselling services.

## Australian Human Rights Commission National Information Service (NIS)

☎ 1300 656 419 or 02 9284 9888  
📍 [humanrights.gov.au/complaints](https://humanrights.gov.au/complaints)

Information and referrals regarding workplace sexual harassment, for individuals and employers.

## Men's Referral Service

☎ 1300 766 491 🕒 24-hours 📍 [ntv.org.au/mrs](https://ntv.org.au/mrs)

Information and referral for men who are concerned about their use of violent or abusive behaviour.

## 13 Yarn

☎ 13 92 76 🕒 24-hours 📍 [13yarn.org.au](https://13yarn.org.au)

Crisis support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## QLife

☎ 1800 184 527  
🕒 3pm-midnight, 7 days a week 📍 [qlife.org.au](https://qlife.org.au)

LGBTIQ+ peer support and referrals for people wanting to talk about a range of issues.

Find out more at [ourwatch.org.au](https://ourwatch.org.au)



OurWatchAus  
[twitter.com/OurWatchAus](https://twitter.com/OurWatchAus)



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**Our Watch**  
Preventing violence against women