

EDUCATING FOR EQUALITY

A GUIDE TO DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

This guide is part of *Educating for Equality*. It should be read together with the whole-of-university approach, the how-to guide for universities, the key messages, and other *Educating for Equality* tools.

Clear and consistent communications and messaging work alongside policies and programs to effect positive change in people's expectations, behaviours and norms towards violence and gender equality.

Using digital methods and mediums can help you reach and equip as many people as possible with the information and skills they need to promote gender equality and support *Educating for Equality*.

It supports universities to broaden their reach across the entire university community – including students, staff, residences and colleges, business partners and suppliers, sporting organisations and community partners.

The tips provided in this resource are to help you get started, and give you ideas on what to include if you want to develop your own digital engagement approach.



Tips for designing digital content

USE SHORT, CONTAINED MESSAGING

Educating for Equality: Key Messages can help you craft messages you want your audience to hear, connect with and remember. Don't crowd your message by trying to achieve too much with one campaign.

You can use your digital communications to:

- promote the university's commitment to prevent gender-based violence
- raise awareness of the supports available to people affected by violence
- encourage and empower all members of the university community to model gender equality and respect.

Attitudes, structures and norms transform gradually over time, and each person, team and area of the university will go through different stages of changes at different rates. As you implement your plan, seek feedback from stakeholders about their level of awareness and engagement with your university's primary prevention activities, and adjust your messaging as required.

USE MULTIPLE PLATFORMS AND TECHNOLOGIES TO REINFORCE YOUR MESSAGE

The key to any effective primary prevention campaign is to reinforce your message across a range of platforms in all areas of university life. This means reinforcing key messages across:

- the university website
- university social media channels
- learning management systems and eLearning modules
- virtual classrooms, digital teaching and learning materials
- Zoom backgrounds
- emails and email signature blocks
- all staff and all student emails
- messaging on screens across campus.

Consider building prevention materials into existing online education or required courses for students and staff. Where possible, use the university's existing channels to communicate.

Having clear and consistent communications and messaging across all levels of the university contributes to changing social expectations of behaviours and norms across the university. It can also encourage people experiencing violence to access support services.

PLAN FOR REGULAR AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT ACROSS THE YEAR

Regular and ongoing communication about what's happening at the university will help students, staff and other stakeholders understand why primary prevention is important, and how it links to the university's mission. Regular communication will also help build and maintain momentum, and broader institutional buy-in.

It is important that your messages are communicated throughout the year, not just at one specific event or time (for example, O-week). Communications can be timed to coincide with other key points in the university calendar or with other local, national or international events and anniversaries, and drive ongoing conversations throughout the year. Key events and opportunities include:

- International Women's Day on 8 March
- National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day on the first Wednesday of May
- 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to 10 December (Human Rights Day)
- launch of your university's gender equality strategy
- university open days
- O-week and new student induction sessions
- induction and training of student leaders
- staff induction sessions.

Don't limit your communications and engagement to these events – build them into your university's overarching communications strategy.

Rates of gender-based violence, or demand for support services, can increase during or following a major local or national event (such as a national disaster, high-profile media case, grand final weekend and other sporting events), and it can be useful to have a plan for how you will respond ahead of time.

KEEP SUPPORT SERVICES INFORMED OF YOUR PLANS

Primary prevention activities can increase disclosures and demand for support services as people feel more confident to share their experience with their university. Keeping student services and your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider informed of your plans for engagement will ensure they are ready to respond.

LINK DIGITAL INTERVENTIONS TO FACE-TO-FACE OPPORTUNITIES

Capitalise on the benefits of digital mediums (scale and reach), and avoid trying to replicate the intensity or length of face-to-face activities in digital formats. Digital and face-to-face opportunities should complement – not replicate – each other. Use your digital communications to connect people to other face-to-face opportunities for learning and action.

BE ACTIVE AND PRESENT WHERE YOUR USERS ARE

Rather than develop specific applications, websites or modules, find where your users already are and be present and accessible in those spaces. These days, the ability to access information on a mobile device is non-negotiable. Use existing social media accounts through which you already have an established relationship with your audience.

ENGAGE IN CO-DESIGN ACTIVITIES WITH THE INTENDED AUDIENCE

Working in partnership with members of the university community is essential to driving long-term, sustainable change. As key stakeholders in gender equality work, students and staff should be provided with ongoing opportunities to engage, provide input and show leadership. Connecting with a range of people with diverse experiences – including LGBTIQ+ people, international students, people with disability, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – will help ensure your communications are culturally safe, accessible and inclusive. It's vital that your approach to engagement and co-design is genuine and built into the process from the outset, rather than adapting content retrospectively.

DRAW ON PROMISING ONLINE INITIATIVES AND RESOURCES

The following resources may help you develop your digital engagement strategy:

- [Educating for Equality: Change the Story video](#)
- [Guide to implementing a university-wide bystander email campaign](#)
- [Evaluation of a Social Norms Sexual Violence Prevention Marketing Campaign Targeted Toward College Men: Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviours Over 5 Years](#)
- [Doing nothing does harm](#)
- [No excuse for abuse](#)
- [Because why](#)

MONITOR AND EVALUATE

Regularly evaluating your engagement activities can help improve future activities.

TAILOR THE CONTENT FOR YOUR USERS

Create digital content that is personally relevant to the user or targeted towards specific groups, such as those who are more likely to experience or use violence. Many students are in groups that experience forms of inequality or discrimination in the wider Australian community that may affect their experience of violence – including young women, LGBTIQ+ people, people with disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Working in partnership with members of these groups and the broader university community ensures content is culturally appropriate, accessible and inclusive. It's important to do this at the outset, rather than adapt resources or approaches for particular groups retrospectively.



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