

# Guide to mapping primary prevention of gender-based violence within public health courses in universities



## **Acknowledgements**

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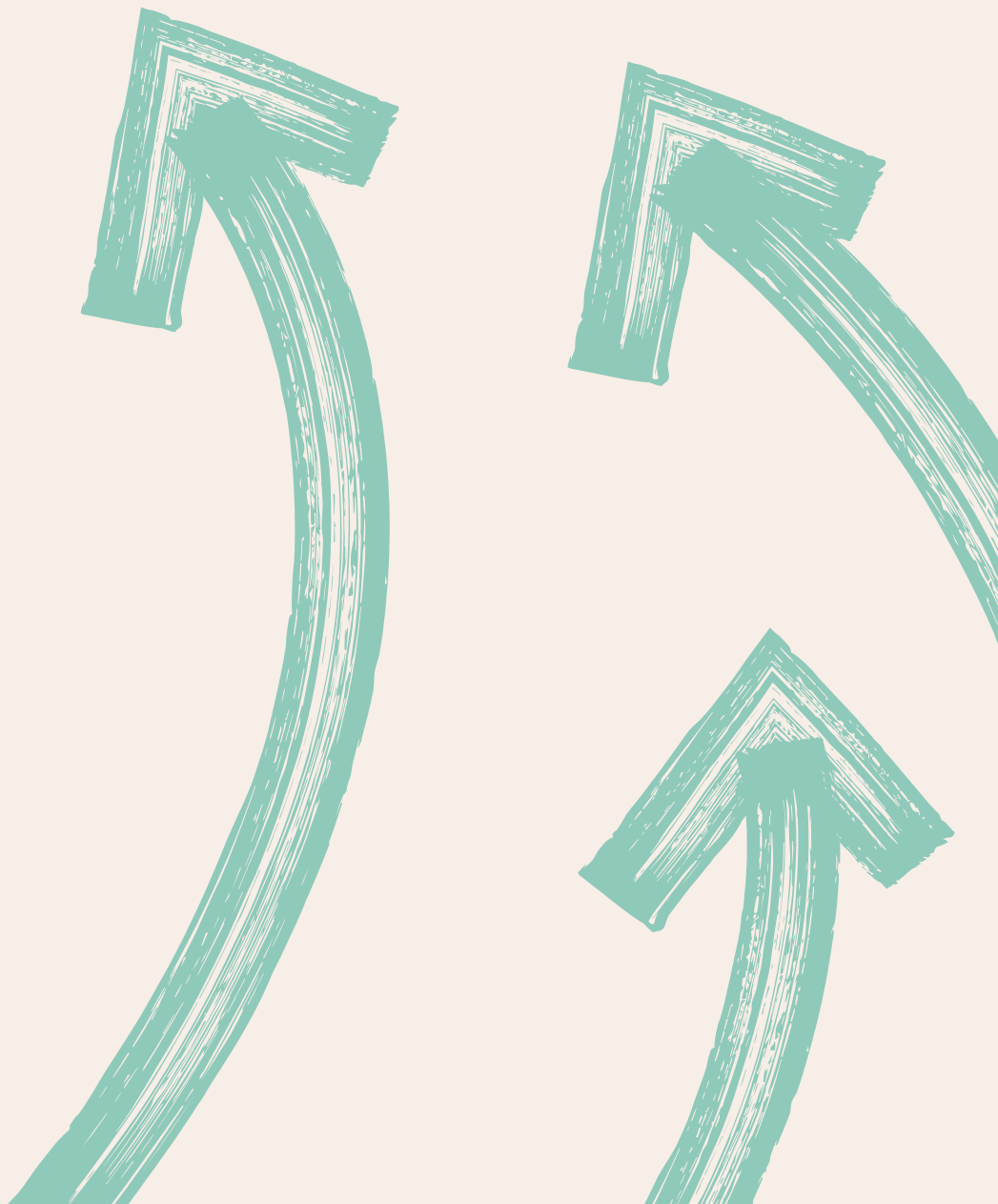
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## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Our Watch acknowledges the traditional owners of the land across Australia on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past and present.

# **Guide to mapping primary prevention of gender-based violence within public health courses in universities**



# How to use this guide

This following is a guide to assist in mapping primary prevention essentials to university course curriculum. This has been designed to accompany the [‘Upskilling pre-service professionals to support the prevention of gender-based violence’](#) and [the ‘Educator’s guide to upskilling pre-service professionals to support the prevention of gender-based violence’](#) a guide which outlines an approach for developing the capability of university students to support the prevention of gender-based violence through their professional roles.

## Obligations for Victorian Universities under the gender equality act

In Victoria, as universities are prescribed entities under the [Gender Equality Act \(2020\)](#), they are required to meet obligations including:

1. Promoting gender equality when developing and delivering policies, programs and services that have an impact on the public (including the student body).
2. Conducting gender impact assessments to assess the gendered impact of their policies, programs, and services.
3. Undertaking a workplace gender audit every four years to measure progress towards gender equality in their workplace.
4. Developing and submitting a Gender Equality Action Plan every four years.
5. Reporting on progress to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner every two years.

Further information is available on the [Commission for Gender Equality in the Public sector website](#), including tailored [advice for universities](#) to ensure they are complying with the Act.

# The mapping process

**The mapping process identifies current practice and gaps, then provides guidance on integrating primary prevention of gender-based violence into your curriculum. We have broken down the key learning material into threshold concepts that are described below. This integration prepares students for their future workplaces and professional environments.**

The work of prevention will require an awareness of gender and intersectionality, that is, how gender theory intersects with other forms of discrimination and oppression such as colonialism, racism, ableism, homophobia, and heteronormativity and ageism. It is likely, within your course/major you are already teaching aspects of gender theory and if not, we are confident there is expertise in both gender theories and intersectionality across your departments.

This guide will assist teaching staff to identify where, and at what level, foundational content on gender and intersectionality appears across subjects. It includes material on the core capabilities to prepare students for prevention work.

The mapping process involves three steps. The approach to complete these steps is not linear and will vary depending on the specific context. It is recommended that course convenors and lecturers progress through the steps in their own timeframe. This resource outlines the steps and then provides information on the core capabilities for public health curriculum on the prevention of gender-based violence.

## Threshold Concepts

The threshold concepts, which are detailed below with prompting questions, are:

- Gender, Sexual Identity and Systems of Power, Privilege and Oppression
- Intersectionality and Gender Equality
- Addressing Gender-Based Violence

## Steps to mapping the curriculum

### Step One:

Where are the threshold concepts for learning already being delivered, or present and active in the curriculum?

This involves identifying the key units/subjects:

- where the threshold concepts on gender and intersectionality are already delivered, and
- where else the threshold concepts on the prevention of gender-based violence would best fit.

For example, as extended content in subjects/units that already address gender theories and intersectionality, or as a case study in a workshop or tutorial.

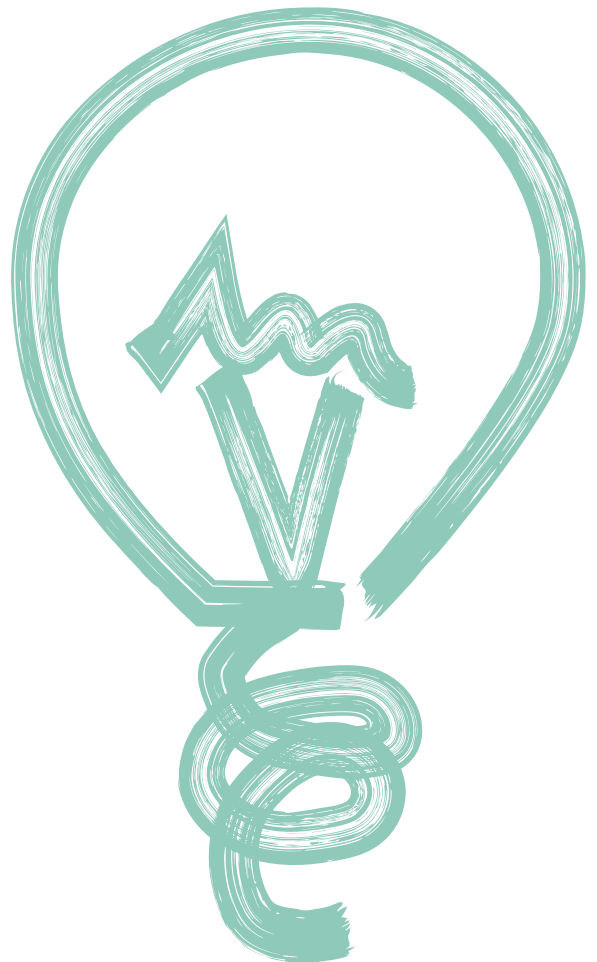
### Step Two:

Where are the gaps and opportunities to embed the specific content on the prevention of gender-based violence? It is recommended that:

- the threshold concepts are included in a range of subjects across the life of the degree.
- the material be delivered in a range of forms, for example, as lecture content, required reading, tutorial exercises, assessments
- the material be embedded in core units, tailored for elective units and fit the specificities of your course of degree.

### Step Three:

**Environmental scan:** This stage prepares the academics who are teaching a unit, for delivery of the content, including self-reflection, establishing a safe environment, and identifying support services. For the purposes of this type of material, academics are “frontline workers” in the sense that they may have students or colleagues who are talking about their lived experience of violence for the first time. It is important for educators to know what specialist supports and services are available in order to refer appropriately.

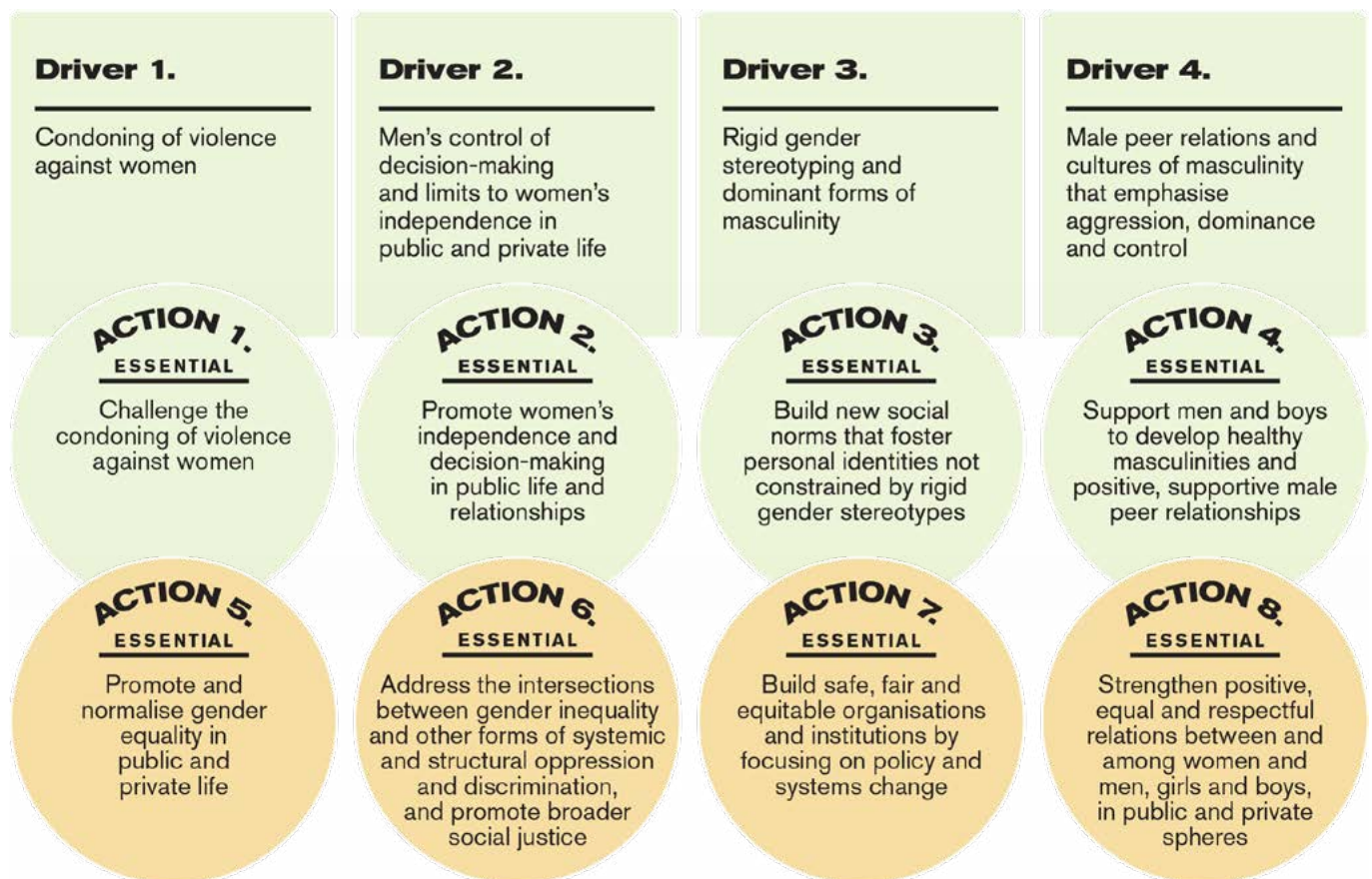


# Primary prevention core capabilities: Actions, skills and threshold concepts

The following section outlines the essential actions, skills and threshold concepts which are the core elements of prevention work.

## Primary prevention core capabilities: actions

Mapping curriculum to achieve primary prevention outcomes is informed by, and should incorporate, the essential actions required to address the drivers of violence against women:



## Primary prevention core capabilities: skills

The mapping process aims to ensure students are equipped with the required skills to implement primary prevention of gender-based violence into their professional roles within their working environments. These skills include the ability to:

- Locate and identify own bias/beliefs/values and assumptions relating to key knowledge areas (threshold concepts)
- Increase capacity to engage in self-reflection relating to key knowledge areas
- Identify the drivers of gender-based violence within the profession
- Identify systemic and structural forms of discrimination and abuse that influence how gender-based violence is experienced differently by different groups of women
- Apply an intersectional lens to work with individuals and communities
- Identify and call out sexism, harmful gender norms/stereotypes/violence-supporting behaviours and gender inequality in their professional role
- Identify opportunities to integrate prevention into their professional role
- Respond to resistance and backlash when attempting social and behavioural change

## Threshold concepts

Threshold concepts describe and inform ways of thinking, seeing, and knowing that characterise a specific discipline. In this case, threshold concepts relate to ways of understanding and thinking about the primary prevention of gender-based violence, that is, the structures, norms, attitudes, practices, and power imbalances that drive this violence, and how to prevent it from happening in the first place.

These Threshold Concepts materials are designed to support the most effective teaching and learning content and are based on longer-form evidence reports produced by Our Watch:

- [Change the Story](#)
- [Changing the Picture](#)
- [Changing the Landscape](#)
- [Men in Focus Evidence Paper](#) and [Practice Guide](#)

The process of embedding the threshold concepts will:

- Occur across the life of the course/degree, that is, it provides a scaffold that supports sequential introduction of concepts across the duration of the degree
- Occur in those subjects deemed to have most relevance. There is no need for the threshold concepts to be in all subjects
- Be about incorporating content into existing subjects – it is not about creating new subjects or completely changing the curriculum
- Promote gender equality and prevention of violence knowledge and skills amongst students, staff, and within the university environment
- Be informed and aligned to the evidence base and essential actions to prevent gender-based violence

Following are summaries of the main threshold concepts and some prompting questions to support mapping these concepts to subjects within the curriculum. The threshold concepts can be considered individually and can overlap. The prompting questions are included to support the embedding of the concepts in the content and teaching materials.

The questions are asked in various ways to support those who are new to this work and in order to address conscious and unconscious gendered bias.



Threshold concept

# Gender, Sexual Identity and Systems of Power, Privilege and Oppression

- Gender is a social and cultural concept, involving sets of roles, activities, attributes, and behaviours that society considers appropriate for women and girls, men and boys and are perpetuated by gender norms, practices, structures, stereotypes, and myths.
- Gender norms are given value and are hierarchical. They affect all of us, men and women and non-binary people, but are particularly harmful to women, because 'feminine' norms are ascribed lower social status than 'masculine' ones which sends the message that women have lower social value, are less worthy of respect and are more often targets of gendered violence.
- Gender norms are usually binary and heteronormative and punish/exclude/discriminate against those who do not fit within the dominant norms and stereotypes
- Gender inequality is present not only in individual experiences and interpersonal relationships, but also at a systemic and structural level. This is broadly defined as 'patriarchy'
- Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and privilege across roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of resources.
- Historically, patriarchy has manifested itself in the social, legal, political, religious, and economic institutions across a range of different cultures, and results in women's experiences of oppression and discrimination at an individual and systemic level

## Prompting questions

- Which theories of gender difference/ gender sexual identity are being utilized in this unit/subject?
- Is the foundational gender content sufficiently developed so that it can now incorporate/support the national prevention principles?
- Is there a gender bias (explicit or implicit) within the course content, texts, teaching practice, assessments?
- Is the course content, teaching or assessments dominated by men, written by men, examples by/ of men?
  - Are there a mix of men/women, straight/gay/ non-binary?
  - Is the language used in the content, lectures, set readings inclusive of all genders?
  - Do any residual gender stereotypes show up in your material?
- Does the content of the unit use intersectional examples or case studies that reflect the experience of women from different communities and groups? E.g., refugee women, first nations women, rural and remote, women with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ women?
- Does the course content reflect a commitment to gender equality and personal identities not constrained by rigid gender stereotypes?
- Does the course content include a reflection of gender inequality at a systemic or structural level?
- How could the course content better promote gender equality for all, including the benefits to men and boys?
- Does the course content promote healthy masculinities and positive supportive relationships between men and women?

Threshold concept

# Intersectionality and Gender Equality

**Gender inequality intersects with other forms of inequality (e.g., racism, colonialism, ableism, heteronormativity, homophobia, ageism etc.) to create additional and compounding disadvantage at individual, community, organisational, system, institutional and societal levels, and results in disproportionate experience and rates of violence for some women and privilege for men.**

- Intersectionality seeks to understand who has the power and who is disempowered and silenced/excluded/made invisible, and to challenge this to promote equality.
- Are the voices/experiences of First Nations' women, women with disabilities, immigrant & refugee women; people from LGBTIQ+ community; older women; younger women; rural & regional women present?
- Intersectionality promotes reflective practice around ideas, unconscious bias, assumptions and experiences of identity, gender, power, discrimination, privilege, and violence against women.

## Prompting questions

- Is the general concept of intersectionality (even if a different term is used) explained in the content of this course?
- Are there readings and other material and, guest speakers with lived experience or expertise to deliver material or content related to their community? E.g., First nations person/author delivering the material on First Nation content? Member of LGBTIQ+ material delivering on issues and violence impacting those in the LGBTIQ+ community?
- Is there a range of representation in this topic/text/ lesson? (e.g., First Nations people, people with a disability, range of ages, racial and social groups, LGBTIQ+?)
- Thinking about the above, whose experience is missing or silenced, invisibilised or excluded?
- Does it support or does it challenge myths and stereotypes about women, men, people from different cultures and communities
- Is there discrimination in the way different groups of women are presented/promoted or privileged?
- Does the content include discussion of other forms of discrimination beyond gender discrimination, either implicitly and/or explicitly (e.g., racism, colonisation, ableism, heterosexism, ageism, classism etc.)
- Have you audited the readings to ensure they are not discriminatory?
- Is the content culturally safe for students from a full range of social, cultural, or religious, domestic/ international backgrounds?
- Does the content of the unit explore what safe, fair and equitable organisations and institutions look like?

Threshold concept

## Addressing Gender-Based Violence

- Gender inequality drives higher levels of men's violence against women. Gender inequality is the social context in which violence against women occurs and is key to understanding what drives this violence.
- Gender inequality is expressed at all levels of the socio ecological model and four gendered drivers below (outlined in Change the Story) are the strongest predictors of violence against women and help to explain its gendered pattern:
  1. Condoning of violence against women (justifying, excusing, trivializing, dismissing, or victim-blaming)
  2. Men's control of decision making and limits to women's independence in public and in private life
  3. Rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity
  4. Male peer relations & cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance, and control
- Resistance and backlash are part and parcel of prevention work
- Resistance and back lash seek to halt change and maintain the status quo of gender relations, re-enforcing male privilege and power
- Resistance and backlash should be anticipated in this teaching
- Resistance and backlash can take various forms and there are recommended strategies to help minimise and manage them

### Prompting questions

- Is gender-based violence, including family violence and sexual harassment, defined and explained?
- Are the statistics, facts, and types of gender-based violence included?
- Do the statistics and facts include violence experienced by members of the LGBTIQ+ community?
- Does the content make clear the link between gender inequality and gender-based violence (i.e. the evidenced-based drivers (causes) of gender-based violence)?
- Does the content explore ways to address the causes of gender-based violence (i.e. the essential actions to address violence against women as defined in Change the Story)?
- Are women presented equally as leaders and/or does it promote women's independence and decision making in public and private life?
- Is gender-based violence or gender inequality explicitly or implicitly condoned or trivialised by colleagues, stakeholders, or others in the profession?
- Are negative gender stereotypes used to describe people's identities/roles/qualities?
- Does it promote healthy masculinities and positive supportive relationships between genders?
- Does it explain why resistance and backlash occur?
- Does it prepare for and provide safe and effective ways for public health professionals to manage resistance and backlash in the workplace?
- Does it reflect on how to create safe working environments?

# Environmental scan for delivery of curriculum

**In order to deliver content on gender based violence there are a few things teaching and learning staff should consider:**

## My own critical reflection

- What is my own position of power, based on my perceived position of authority, and the knowledge and expertise I hold in the subjects I teach?
- What are my own views, assumptions, and prejudices, and how do I avoid bringing them into groups?
- Are there students from particular social, cultural, or religious backgrounds that can trigger certain emotions in me – positive or negative?
- I may not be value-free, but do I use pedagogical techniques to understand how my experiences shape who I am as an academic?
- Are there barriers preventing people from accessing what they need in order to participate fully in this subject/activity and how do we attempt to remove any barriers?

## Creating a 'Safe' space

Is this a 'safe' space for all women, men, and gender diverse people to learn and participate?

Some things which enable the creation of spaces which are conducive to learning and participation about the prevention of gender-based violence, and managing resistance and backlash include:

1. Check that there is a group agreement in place to guide respectful behaviour and communication within the class? – if so, remember to use it; if not, engage students in developing a set of agreements which can be reiterated at the start of each session
2. Encourage the challenging of ideas, rather than challenging people

3. Promote inclusion and 'deep listening', encouraging all students to have the opportunity to speak rather than one or a few persons dominating conversations
4. Address students' concerns by validating and addressing concerns rather than contesting or contradicting, even when you disagree. If safe to do so, respond by repeating their question or statement back to them, to confirm you understand correctly. Encourage them to provide more information – but be mindful of time.
5. Encourage honesty and openness – thank people for their views and sharing.
6. Ask process questions that cause students to reflect, and that can't be answered with 'yes' or 'no'.
7. Consider if some students are quieter because they don't know the subject, or are they scared to speak up?
8. Consider that some people might be triggered by certain content and how this might impact their learning and wellbeing
9. Keep discussion from wondering too far from the key message – utilize a 'bank' or 'parking lot' for ideas.
10. Ask for feedback. Consider backlash and resistance in using the feedback to reflect on our work.

## Delivery - Preparing my audience

Key principles when preparing students for the introduction of gender-based violence content include:

1. Focus on building trust with students - Pay attention to students' comfort level – discussing gender can be personal, complex, and sensitive.
2. Be upfront at the beginning about what students can expect from your course and acknowledge that some students (for example, men) may find the content challenging.

# Not all university staff are expected to become experts at responding to violence — **but everyone has a role to play.**

3. Inform students the session will cover information about gender-based violence and let them know the external and internal support services that are available if they need support during or after the class.
4. Some of your students (and colleagues) may have been impacted by such violence – to lessen the risk of causing distress to them and others, it's important to remind students the classroom is a space for adult learning, not a therapeutic space. Encourage students to wait and disclose any personal experiences to an appropriate person in a safe and confidential space.
5. Frame the discussion in relation to the facts and evidence. Invite students to ask questions to unpack uncertainties – reiterate the relevance of the content back to the students' discipline (eg public health profession) and future professional lives.

## Preparing for Resistance

1. Develop strategies to manage resistance/backlash in the classroom. Ensure you are familiar with your content. Think about possible backlash you might get from students. Think about how you can respond and if there are strategies to minimise it.
2. Monitor classroom dynamics – address any stereotyping and harassment – intervene quickly and explain that terms are derogatory.
3. If a conflict arises in a group – remind students of the group agreement/class rules.
4. Ask the group what they think about the question raised or how would they suggest handling the problem.
5. When necessary, offer responses to questions and clarify misinformation.
6. Who can I debrief with?

A resource which can help with managing resistance is VicHealth's [Encountering Resistance](#) guide

## Responding to Disclosures: My Role

It's important to respond in a supportive, safe, and respectful non-judgmental way.

For primary prevention activities to be delivered safely, appropriate response policies, procedures and services must be in place. Evidence shows that when we openly discuss and show that a university supports the prevention of violence against women, staff and students may feel safe to disclose their own experiences of violence.

Therefore, response systems and referral pathways to family violence and sexual assault services must be established before action to prevent violence is undertaken. Some students will be under 18 years of age and universities are required to comply with relevant child safety standards in their state.

The Victorian Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework ([MARAM](#)) offers best practice guidance on how to assess family violence risk. MARAM recommends that professionals across a broad range of services, organisations, professions, and sectors have a shared responsibility for identifying, assessing, and managing family violence risk, even where it may not be core business. Key staff and educators should be trained in responding to disclosures and be aware of how and where to refer students or colleagues who disclose being a victim or perpetrator of violence.

## Resources

### **Recognise and respond appropriately to domestic and family violence**

(Safe and Equal Victoria) - <https://safeandequal.org.au/training-events/>

### **Course in Identifying and Responding to Family Violence Risk -**

<https://www.yourcareer.gov.au/learn-and-train/courses/22510VIC>

(nationally recognised training course)

### **Effectively preventing and responding to sexual harassment: A Quick Guide**

(Australian Human Rights Commission resource) <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/effectively-preventing-and-responding-sexual-harassment-0>

### **Practice guidance: Responding to disclosures** (Our Watch resource) -

<https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/practice-guidance-responding-to-disclosures/>

**Not all university staff are expected to become experts at responding to violence – *but everyone has a role to play.***

### **My role is to do the following:**

- 1. Recognise** the signs of gender-based violence.
- 2. Respond** with appropriate care. You are not responsible to 'resolve' or 'manage' any disclosure or provide counselling. You can start by saying "I'm sorry that happened to you'.
- 3. Act** in accordance with relevant University response and prevention policies and procedures.
- 4. Refer** to support services – within the university and in the community.

# Support services for those who make disclosures

**If someone is in danger or it's an emergency?**

Ring **000** and act in accordance with your university's procedures and contact relevant university staff

## Internal Support

At my university:

*Insert the services and contacts available at your university*

## External Support

### Non-emergency support

- National Helplines and service directories (national and state-based)
- Free and 24/7

### Victim/Survivors:

**1800RESPECT** National Domestic Family & Sexual Violence Counselling Service (including referral to emergency accommodation)

**PH:** 1800 737 732

**Services:** Phone, Chat, Email, Interpreters available

- Support women/men/all genders who are experiencing or have experienced violence
- Support family members or friends supporting those experiencing violence

### For those who use violence/perpetrators:

**MENSLINE** - Phone and online counselling

**PH:** 1300 78 99 78

**Services:** Phone, Chat. Video chat by appointment

- Support for families and friends of men using or experiencing violence
- Support for men experiencing family violence

**NO TO VIOLENCE - Men's Referral Service** - Advice for men about family violence, including information about men's behaviour change programs and crisis accommodation for men excluded from home due to their violence

**PH:** 1300 766 491

**Services:** Phone, Chat, Interpreters available

- **State Based and Local:** See above for service directories

## My own self-care

- Remember I am not alone in supporting students - seek support from the university
- Call **1800RESPECT** for debriefing, secondary consultation and guidance 1800 737 732
- Practice Self-Care - be aware of my emotions and the impact of this work on me - seek EAP support or external counselling services including **1800RESPECT**

Self-care is the joint responsibility of you and your workplace. Seek support from the department:

- Familiarise yourself with your university's internal policies for support
- Your university's employee assistance program
- Find a 'buddy' amongst your colleagues which you can share your experience with and gain support from.
- Ask your manager for support before you go into class

Ensure you have information about what supports the university can provide for you when you are teaching this content

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