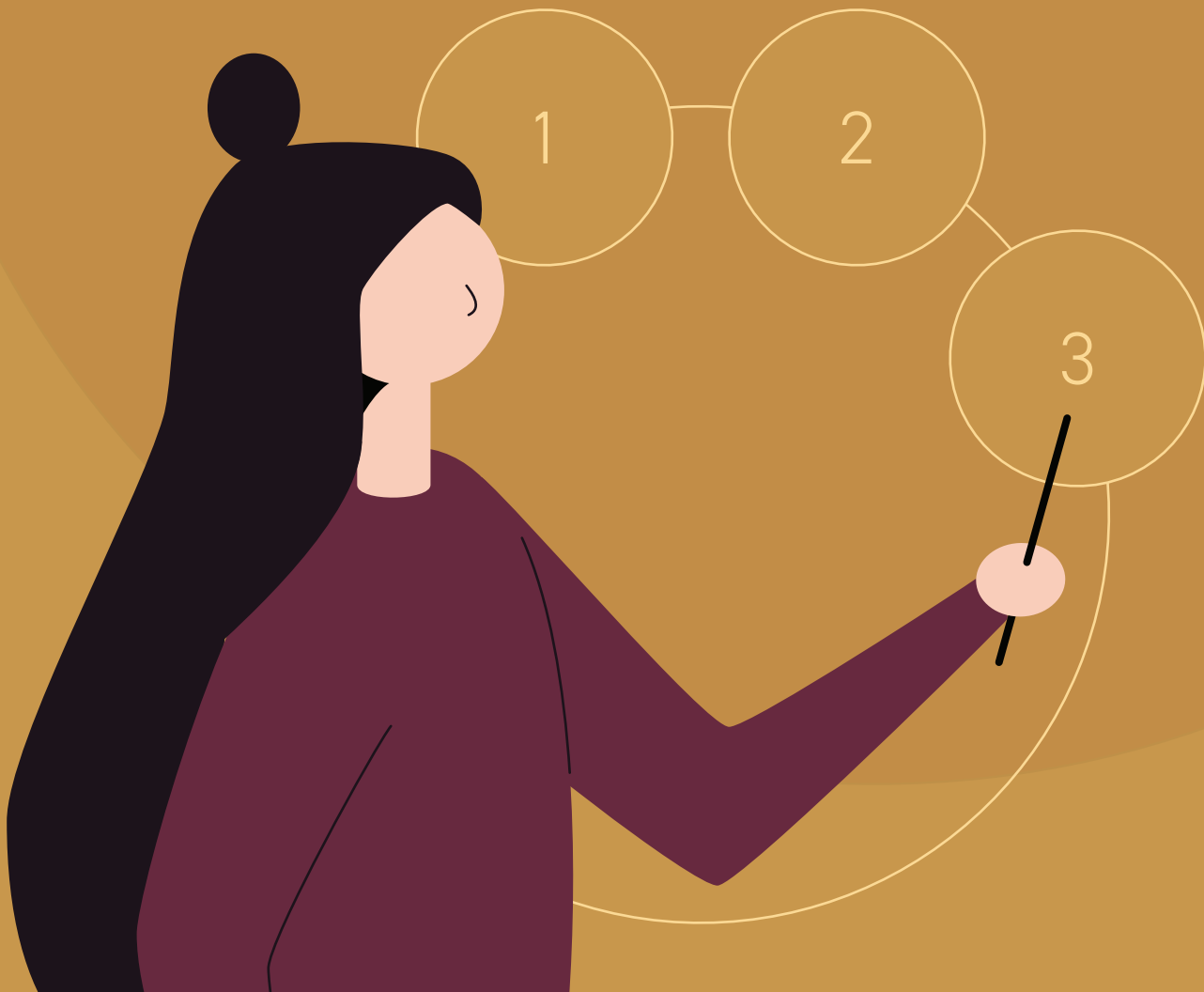


EDUCATING FOR EQUALITY



A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR UNIVERSITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Universities are vibrant and inclusive communities, committed to providing safe and supportive working and learning environments for people of all genders and sexualities. Over the last five years, our universities have undertaken a significant amount of work to address gender-based violence.

Educating for Equality: A How-to Guide for Universities helps universities put into practice a whole-of-university approach to promote gender equality and prevent gender-based violence. This guide should be read in conjunction with Educating for Equality: A Whole-of-University Approach.

This guide is written specifically for those teams within universities responsible for developing a whole-of-university approach to preventing gender-based violence. It offers practical guidance, tools and further reading.

Every university is different, and the size, location, population and structure of your university will influence what your approach looks like.

Your university may already have a strategy to prevent gender-based violence in place, or initiatives to respond to gender-based violence. If so, this guide will assist you to identify any gaps in your approach.

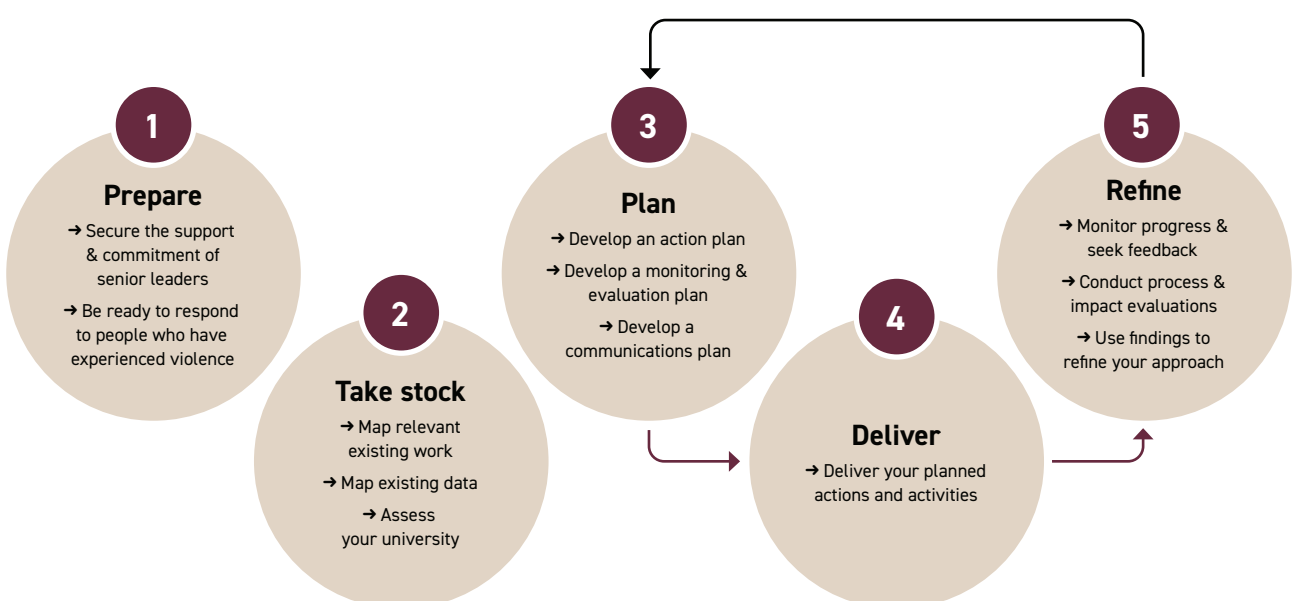
This guide is divided into a five-step continuous improvement cycle (see Figure 1).

Each of these steps is based on evidence and research. You can apply the principles of each step to your university, no matter what stage of the process you are currently at.

Implementing a whole-of-university approach is not a linear process. Some steps may be completed more rapidly than others and all should be tailored to the needs of the university.

At the end of each year, universities should track their progress and reflect on successes and challenges, and take actions to plan, deliver, evaluate and adapt their approach for the following year.

Figure 1: A five-step cycle



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Review the composition of your team

Just as no single university can solve gender-based violence on its own, no one individual can or should be charged with this sole responsibility. Everyone within the university has a role to play in creating a culture where gender stereotypes are challenged, gender-based discrimination is not accepted and gender equality is actively promoted and modelled.

Each university should identify a team with broad representation to guide the development and implementation of the whole-of-university model. This implementation team should establish clear indicators to monitor, implement and measure success. It is essential to have input from all areas of the university.

The implementation team should include staff and students from different cultural backgrounds, religions and genders; those not traditionally engaged in this work; as well as those with violence prevention and response expertise.

Many universities have existing structures and systems they can draw upon to implement this work, such as working groups with responsibility for sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention, diversity and inclusion, Science in Australia Gender Equality, or safety and wellbeing. These groups may be able to integrate the development of a whole-of-university approach to preventing gender-based violence into their work. Consider whether existing operational arrangements need to change or new people included to ensure input from across the university.

If an appropriate governance structure doesn't already exist, it will need to be established. It is important that there is representation from each of the five domains on the implementation team: student life; workplace; teaching and learning; business and operations; and research.

It is suggested the team include:

- workplace staff, such as the Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Human Resources, union representatives, work health and safety staff, and equity and diversity staff
- teaching and learning staff, such as the Deputy/Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic, members of the Academic Board, junior and senior academics, and library staff
- student life staff, such as the Deputy/Pro Vice-Chancellor student experience (or similar), Dean of students, club/society presidents, student leaders, Masters/Deans of residential colleges and halls, and equity and diversity office staff
- research staff, such as the Deputy/Pro Vice-Chancellor Research, and research office and commercialisation office staff
- business and operations staff, such as the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, government and strategic relations staff, IT staff, communications staff, planning/performance unit staff, and general counsel
- a staff member or an external advisor with expertise in primary prevention (such as a seconded Our Watch practice advisor)
- victims/survivors of gender-based violence
- a senior staff member with responsibility for student welfare and support services.

It is likely that some people will have expertise and knowledge across more than one domain; for example, human resources staff may be able to contribute to both the 'workplace' and 'business and operations' domains.

The demands of coordinating a whole-of-university program of work is significant and will require commitments of time and resources from across the university. We recommend that universities resource a project coordinator to oversee the implementation of the action plan, report on progress, build the university's knowledge and practice in this area and act as a point of contact for the overall work program. This coordinator may be in a dedicated position or the responsibilities may be allocated to someone in addition to their main duties.

All members of the team should have dedicated time for meetings and other work relevant to the development and implementation of the whole-of-university model, especially if the people responsible have been given this responsibility in addition to their current role.

Ideally, the team should be led by a university senior executive.

Engage students and other stakeholders

Engaging students as well as staff is essential to driving long-term, sustainable change. Students are key stakeholders in gender equality work across the university and they need to be provided with ongoing opportunities to engage and show leadership in university prevention work.

Universities can consider:

- enabling students to provide input into the design, direction and implementation of primary prevention activities, including co-design models
- providing students with the opportunity to participate in the self-assessment process to ensure their voices are heard
- remunerating students for their input, such as through a paid role or course credit.

It's also important to connect with external organisations to ensure you are gathering information from a range of sources to inform your work. External stakeholders could include organisations with expertise addressing different forms of inequality and discrimination (such as homophobia, racism and disability).



STEP 1 – PREPARE

Secure the support and commitment of senior leaders

The involvement of senior leaders is pivotal to the success of a whole-of-university approach. Leaders create the authorising environment for the work to take place through their public commitment, strategic input, and allocation of resources. Leaders need to be engaged from the start and continue to promote and drive this work as it evolves.

Key leaders and stakeholders include:

- Vice-Chancellors
- Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Pro Vice-Chancellors
- Vice-Presidents, Chief Operating Officers and Executive Directors
- Deans, Heads of School, Heads of Department and discipline leads
- Heads of Campus.

The *Educating for Equality: Key Messages* outlines the key rationale for addressing gender-based violence and may help you consider which are most relevant to your institution. It's important to link your case to your university's priorities, values and mission.

Universities can further support leaders by:

- providing training to improve understanding of gender-based violence, its drivers and the role of the university in prevention
- developing a business case for gender equality and connecting gender equality to the vision and goals of the university
- upskilling people in primary prevention, including as it relates to their specific leadership role
- offering face-to-face training, mentoring or participation in an ongoing community of practice facilitated by experts in the primary prevention of gender-based violence
- providing information and access to support services prior to, during, and following training activities.

SECURE THE SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT OF SENIOR LEADERS

KEY TOOLS

Educating for Equality: Training Packages

- Leaders
- Managers and team leaders
- Implementation team

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

Our Watch [Workplace Equality and Respect Practice Guidance: Engaging Leaders](#)

VicHealth [Equal Footing: A Practical Toolkit for Boosting Gender Equality and Respect in Your Workplace](#)

VicHealth [Supporting Gender Equality in the Workplace](#)

VicHealth [What works? Case studies](#)

Be ready to respond to people who have experienced violence

Delivering primary prevention activities will increase the community's understanding of gender-based violence and demonstrate your university's commitment to prevent it. As people's knowledge increases, they may recognise what they have experienced or witnessed is gender-based violence – and they may feel safer to disclose their experiences to their university.

To deliver prevention activities safely, universities need to have appropriate response systems in place to support staff and students who experience any type of violence, and be ready to deal with increased disclosures, reporting and demand for support services.

A whole-of-university approach considers the needs of both students and staff. While a university may have different policies, procedures and practices for staff and for students, the principles of compassion, support and assistance, confidentiality and privacy, cultural competence and natural justice apply in any situation involving any member of the university community.

Universities are diverse and inclusive communities, and staff working in response services need to have an understanding of the multiple forms of discrimination faced by people who have experienced violence, and the barriers faced by some members of the university community in accessing support and response services. For example, research shows that LGBTIQ+ people who experience family and domestic violence are less likely to identify the abuse, find support and report to police. It is essential that university response systems are inclusive and meet the needs of all members of their diverse community.

Anyone in a university may be a 'first responder' to a disclosure of gender-based violence, and this can be daunting for both the person disclosing and for the person hearing the disclosure. Ideally, all staff should be trained to respond effectively and safely to people sharing their experience of violence. Universities can partner with specialist violence prevention and response organisations to train university staff with these skills.

The safety and support considerations set out in the *Educating for Equality: Self-Assessment Tool* will help you consider the effectiveness of your university's safety and support actions, and where improvements may be needed.

BE READY TO RESPOND TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE

KEY TOOLS

- *Educating for Equality: Self-Assessment Tool*
- *Educating for Equality Practice Guidance: A Victim-Centred Approach to Responding to Violence*

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Universities Australia [Guidelines for university responses to sexual assault and sexual harassment](#)
- Domestic Violence NSW [Good Practice Guidelines for the Domestic and Family Violence Sector](#)
- UN Women [What will it take? Promoting Cultural Change to end Sexual Harassment](#)
- 1800RESPECT [An introduction to responding to violence and abuse](#)
- Safe Steps [Family Violence Response Centre](#)
- Rainbow Network [Providing inclusive services for LGBTIQ+ young people](#)
- Say it Out Loud [How to better understand and support LGBTIQ+ victims of violence](#)
- InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence [Supporting migrant and refugee women victims of violence](#)

STEP 2 – TAKE STOCK

Map relevant existing work

Educating for Equality is not intended to replace or duplicate already existing work. Rather, it aims to bring together the entire university community to develop a holistic approach that is underpinned by a long-term strategy and sector coordination.

As a starting point, it is important to identify the work already happening across the university to build a comprehensive picture of current and past programs, initiatives and activities that promote gender equality, improve safety or prevent violence. This will support you to build on existing momentum and draw together those who are already engaged in violence prevention.

Universities have diverse and inclusive communities, and there will be issues and risk factors specific to particular groups of staff or students. It's important to seek out feedback from a diverse range of groups. Conducting an analysis will help you to understand what policies, programs, supports and practices exist for different groups of people, and who needs to be involved and considered in this process.

Some of the committees or departments that may be useful reaching out to include:

- *Respect. Now. Always.* committees or working groups
- disability services or working groups
- Ally networks
- diversity and inclusion working groups
- Respectful Relationships working groups
- Reconciliation Action Plan working groups
- Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) working groups
- Safer Community units
- gender equity strategy units.

Mapping prevention activity is a key opportunity to assess the effectiveness and impact of the university's current efforts, and this information should be used to inform planning for future work.

MAP RELEVANT EXISTING WORK

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Universities Australia, [*Respect. Now. Always.*](#)

Map existing data

Universities have rich, existing sets of data that can help inform and guide practice, drive change and determine priorities and goals. Starting with what already exists is a useful way to:

- critically reflect on the status of gender equality at your university and opportunities for improvement
- establish a baseline to track progress
- support a business case for change.

Data can be drawn from across the entire university. Examples of data include:

- staff culture surveys
- pay equity and gender composition reports
- use of flexible working arrangements and leave including parental leave and family and domestic violence leave
- bullying, sexual assault and sexual harassment reports
- university counselling service use and trends
- de-identified employee assistance provider reports
- measurements of workplace productivity and employee performance review feedback.

Internal data can be supplemented by relevant external research and reports, such as the Student Experience Survey, International Student Barometer, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Personal Safety Survey.

Disaggregating data, where possible, can help you to better understand your community – for example, differences in experiences or outcomes between people of different genders and sexualities, age groups, modes of study, indigeneity or disability. This will help you to ensure that the actions you take as part of *Educating for Equality* are meaningful, accessible and responsive to the experiences of the entire student and staff community.

MAP EXISTING DATA

RESOURCES

- Workplace Gender Equality Agency [Data](#)
- [Science in Australia Gender Equity](#)



Assess your university across the five domains

Now that you have checked that your university has safe and supportive responses in place, your team can complete a self-assessment of your university.

The self-assessment tool is evidence-based and focuses on areas that are most likely to yield results and make a difference in preventing gender-based violence.

The tool helps universities to:

- identify strengths and areas of good practice that show promise
- consider strategies to make change
- highlight opportunities for improvement.

The tool asks you to assess progress against key objectives in the five domains – student life, research, business and operations, teaching and learning and workplace.

It is worth investing time and energy to identify the right mix of staff and students to complete the self-assessment. More information about conducting the self-assessment can be found in the *Educating for Equality: Self-Assessment Tool*.

ASSESS YOUR UNIVERSITY ACROSS THE FIVE DOMAINS

KEY TOOL

- *Educating for Equality: Self-Assessment Tool*

STEP 3 – PLAN

Develop an action plan

Now that you have identified areas for improvement in your university, it's time to start developing actions and activities to address them. The planning process will look different for each university, but it may help to:

- Focus on high impact areas that you've identified using the self-assessment tool as gaps or as opportunities to build on promising work. This helps ensure that your actions and activities are tailored for your community. As a general rule, gaps in the university's responses to students and staff experiencing violence should be prioritised.
- Narrow down and focus on a realistic and achievable set of actions. Set goal statements for each action using tools like SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely).
- Using the *Educating for Equality: Action Plan Template* can help you check you have the knowledge, resources and support systems to undertake these actions right now.
- It is important to consider your actions across the academic year and beyond – don't commit to everything in the first semester.
- Cross-check your proposed actions and activities against the whole-of-university model. Are the actions aligned with the evidence base and do they address the drivers of gender-based violence? Does your plan address all areas of the university, and is responsibility for delivery shared across the university? Do the actions reinforce and complement each other? Does the plan address the needs of both students and staff? This will help ensure you are covering the five areas key to preventing gender-based violence.
- Consider developing an overarching statement, highlighting the institution's overall goal, the timeframe for the action plan, and the need for multiple strategies operating across different areas of the university.
- Ensure your work reflects other forms of structural inequality and discrimination, such as racism, colonialism, ableism, religious discrimination and class privilege, and how these interact with people's experiences of gender inequality. For example, your proposed actions and activities may include supports for staff who are single parents or the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in leadership roles.
- Include an annual review point or a mechanism for updating the action plan as the work evolves.

DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

KEY TOOL

- *Educating for Equality: Action Plan Template*

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Sexual Violence on Campus: strategies for prevention](#)
- [University of Strathclyde Equally Safe in Higher Education Toolkit](#)

Not all actions can be delivered in one year and some longer-term goals may need to be broken up into smaller activities. Think about what resources you have, and focus on what steps you can take in the next 12 months that will move you closer to achieving your long-term goals. The *Educating for Equality: Action Plan Template* can help you map your immediate actions and activities to your medium and long-term objectives.

You may also consider opportunities to include actions in existing plans or strategies, such as reviews of curriculum by individual schools or departments.

Having the action plan signed off by the leadership team and shared with university staff will help promote a shared sense of ownership and accountability.



Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan

Monitoring and evaluation help to demonstrate the effectiveness of prevention work, ensure accountability and credibility, provide opportunities for improvement, and contribute to the evidence base on what works to prevent gender-based violence. It is essential to plan how you will monitor change and evaluate your actions and activities from the start. This can include working with evaluation, planning or analytics teams and academics within your institution to identify outputs; short, medium and long-term outcomes; indicators and measures; and risks and assumptions that underpin your activities and actions. The *Educating for Equality: Action Plan Template* provides an example of how you can map these to your activities and actions.

It may be useful to consider current reporting mechanisms and tools that can be drawn upon to help develop indicators, such as Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) reporting data, SAGE applications and staff surveys. Victorian universities may also draw upon the Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020 as an additional reporting mechanism.

Prevention of gender-based violence requires multiple actions across all areas of society and it is difficult to attribute outcomes to any one action or activity. For example, staff reviewing curriculum materials for gender bias, a student-led campaign to promote positive male role models, and staff training on unconscious bias can lead to an improvement in individuals' attitudes and behaviours towards gender equality, but it can be difficult to pinpoint this change to any one activity. The change may be a cumulative result of all the above. Considering monitoring and evaluation from the start can help ensure you capture measurable outcomes that can meaningfully track progress and demonstrate impact.

It is also important to consider how you will assess the overarching whole-of-university approach. Universities can use the self-assessment tool to track overall progress. By going through the self-assessment on a regular basis, universities can identify where they've made improvements and progress, and any unintended consequences, ineffective practices or unanticipated barriers.

This can be supplemented by process and impact evaluations:

- A process evaluation looks at the extent to which the whole-of-university model was delivered as expected, including the quality of the implementation, what is working well and areas for improvement.
- An impact evaluation is broader in scope, and assesses the overall effects – intended or unintended – of the whole-of-university model as a whole. In this context, an impact evaluation examines changes to staff and students' attitudes and behaviours, structures and practices that contribute to gender-based violence.

The core elements of a monitoring and evaluation plan should address:

- the goals and what you are trying to achieve
- who is responsible for the evaluation, and what resourcing will be required to complete it
- how changes will be measured, including the tool or instrument that will be used (e.g. interviews, focus groups, surveys), and whether this already exists or needs to be developed
- data sources such as feedback from staff, students and other stakeholders
- the timeframes for evaluation and any future review points. Consider aligning the timing of this process with other institutional processes to make the process easier, and help embed primary prevention as part of business as usual.

DEVELOP A MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

RESOURCES

- Our Watch [Counting on Change: A Guide to Prevention Monitoring](#)
- Our Watch [Prevention Handbook: Measuring and evaluating your work](#)
- VicHealth [A concise guide to evaluating primary prevention projects](#)
- Better evaluation [Improving evaluation practice and theory](#)

Develop a communications plan

Informed people are engaged people. 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.

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 and breaking down barriers for people experiencing – or who are at risk of experiencing – violence to seek help.

An important part of communications is creating a culture where all staff and students feel confident to speak up if they see or hear sexism, harassment, discrimination, or violence. It's vital that everyone in the university community is aware of:

- the university's commitment to preventing gender-based violence
- the supports that are available to people affected by violence
- the role they're expected to play in creating an environment which promotes gender equality and respect for all members of the university community.

Use a range of methods and mediums to reach different areas of the university. Consider using your intranet portal, social media platforms, training sessions, notices, events, or identify champions in each domain of the university to promote your work.

A detailed communications strategy should be developed that outlines when, how and what to communicate to the community to ensure people are informed and engaged.

DEVELOP A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

KEY TOOLS

- *Educating for Equality: Key Messages*
- *Educating for Equality: A Guide to Digital Engagement*
- *How to Talk Openly and Safely about Violence, Abuse and Harassment*

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Our Watch [Workplace Equality and Respect Practice Guidance: Communications guide](#)
- Equally Ours [How to shift public attitudes on equality](#)
- Women's Health in the North [Communications Guidelines for Preventing Violence Against Women H](#)

STEP 4 – DELIVER

Deliver your planned actions and activities

As you begin to implement your plan, continue communicating with students, staff, senior leaders and other stakeholders about why these actions are important, what your goals are, and why this is the best way forward. Refer to your communications plan, developed in Step 3, for more information.

You may need to work with what you have, rather than wait for everything to be in place before you get started. Additional resources and institutional buy-in may come as a result of the actions you start to take.



STEP 5 – REFINE

Monitor progress and seek feedback

Monitoring implementation – which includes having conversations in the community – helps ensure:

- the action plan is being implemented in the right ways, and to the best possible effect
- any implementation issues and unanticipated consequences or barriers are identified and addressed
- new promising ideas are noticed and tested
- everyone in the university community knows about the university's approach to preventing gender-based violence, the actions being taken and why
- people who are affected by violence know how to find information and access support.

Attitudes, structures and norms transform gradually over time, and each person, team and area of the university will go through different stages of change at different rates. Seeking immediate and ongoing feedback from students, staff, senior leaders and other stakeholders will provide vital information about the level of awareness and engagement with the primary prevention actions and activities, and help ensure your actions are appropriate.



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Conduct process and impact evaluations

Take stock and review what you've achieved, what's working and what's not. Evaluation is not a one-off process; it is vital to establishing a cycle of continuous improvement and informing future work.

Use the findings of your evaluation to refine your actions and communicate these with your community. Evaluation is at its best when it's a participatory process, and sharing findings can be a useful tool in engaging the community and ensuring they feel heard and included in the process.

Use evaluation findings to refine your approach

Change in any organisation takes time and you should expect that changes in attitudes, structures and norms within your university will transform gradually. Students and staff will go through different stages of change at different times, so regular and ongoing monitoring and reflecting will help make sure your actions are appropriate for the time.

Your action plan and evaluation framework will outline what you need to check your university's progress to prevent gender-based violence. At a minimum, consider completing the self-assessment tool every year to map your progress against the objectives.

Reflecting on what has worked and what has not will support the formulation of more effective actions and support change in the long term. Sharing your experience with others, within and outside of your university, will help to foster new ideas and solutions to challenges.

Before revising your action plan, it's important to pause and recognise progress. Celebrating and communicating the gains you've made will build support for further work and promote similar action in other sectors and communities.

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