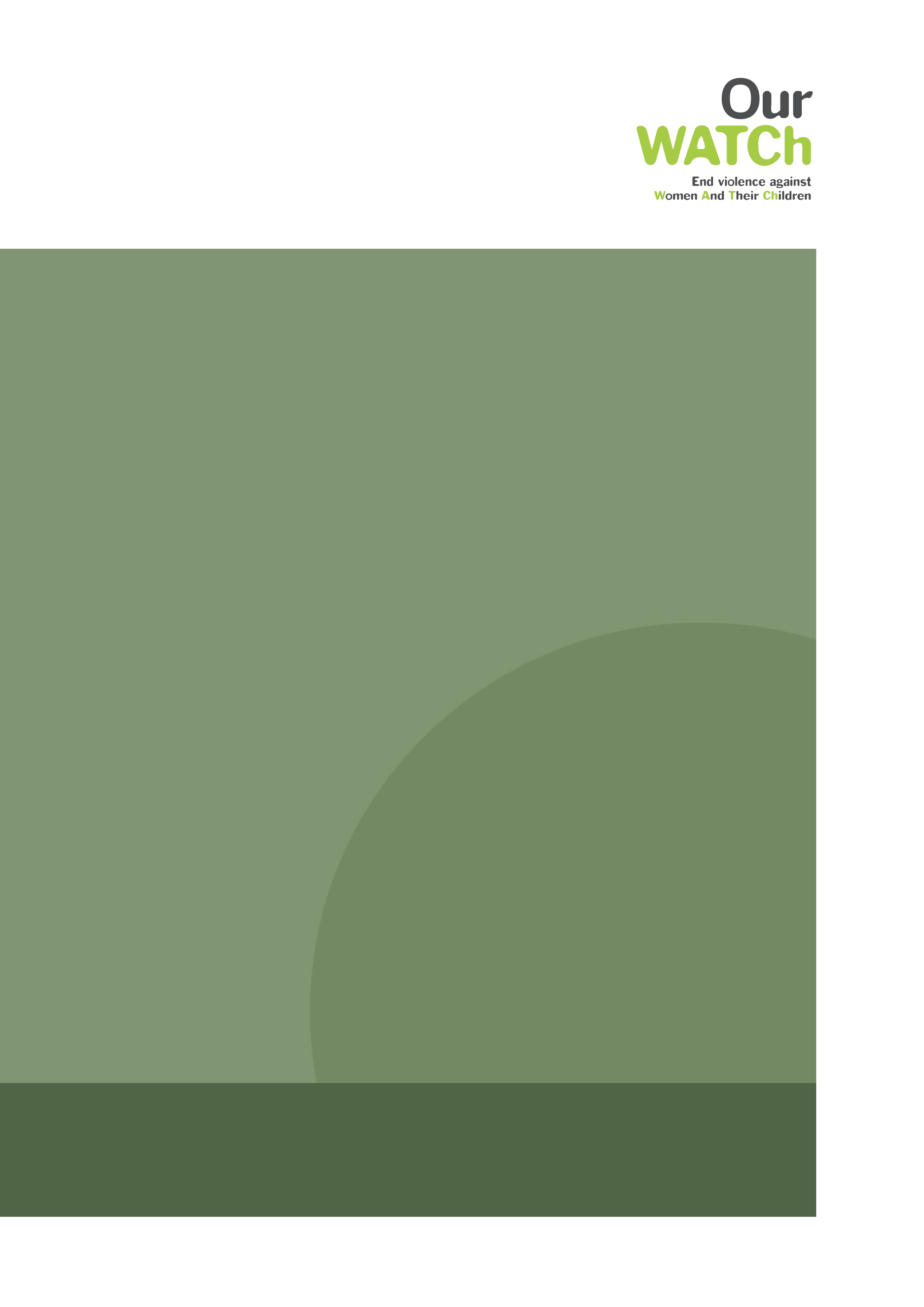
**PREVENTION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN AND THROUGH CRIMINOLOGY**

Teaching resources

# Acknowledgements

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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.

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# Introduction

These materials have been prepared to assist academic teaching of primary prevention of gender-based violence content in undergraduate programs in the discipline of criminology.

While criminology professionals are often involved after an incident of violence has occurred, they also have a key opportunity to contribute to the primary prevention of violence – that is, stopping it before it begins. Evidence tells us that to prevent violence against women we need action across Australia to:

1. Challenge the condoning of violence against women.
2. Promote women’s independence and decision-making in public life and relationships.
3. Build new social norms that foster personal identities not constrained by rigid gender stereotypes.
4. Support men and boys in developing healthy masculinities and positive, supportive male peer relationships.
5. Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.
6. Address the intersections between gender inequality and other forms of systemic and structural oppression and discrimination, and promote broader social justice.
7. Build safe, fair and equitable organisations and institutions by focusing on policy and systems change.
8. Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys, in public and private spheres.

## How to use this resource

This resource includes discipline-specific teaching resources, including hypothetical scenarios and video interviews that have been developed by Our Watch in collaboration with teaching academics.

The teaching resources can be used in tutorials as group exercises or modified to form assessments. While they are designed with specific student groups in mind, they can also be tailored to meet the requirements of your teaching and learning needs. Further advice on using and tailoring the resources can be found in the [*Educators’ guide to upskilling preservice professionals to support the prevention of gender-based violence*](https://handbook.ourwatch.org.au/leadership-resource/educators-guide-to-upskilling-pre-service-professionals-to-support-the-prevention-of-gender-based-violence/?utm_source=PDF3&utm_medium=+PDF+3%3A+Teaching+resources+prevention+of+gender+based+violence+in+and+through+criminology), which provides general advice to teaching academics about integrating prevention of gender-based violence concepts into teaching content and practice.

It is necessary to spend some time developing understanding around the threshold concepts that students need in order to approach material related to gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence, so that it informs their way of thinking and knowing. These threshold concepts include:

* the social construction of gender
* privilege, oppression and intersectionality
* the socio-ecology of gender norms, practices and structures
* the gendered drivers of violence against women.

For additional information about teaching the threshold concepts that underpin these materials, please refer to [*Facilitation guidance – Prevention of gender-based violence in and through*](https://handbook.ourwatch.org.au/leadership-resource/facilitation-guidance-prevention-of-gender-based-violence-in-and-through-criminology/?utm_source=PDF3&utm_medium=+PDF+3%3A+Teaching+resources+prevention+of+gender+based+violence+in+and+through+criminology) *criminology*.

## Safety and support for students

Many of the stories and experiences represented in this resource explore different types of violence and non-physical forms of abuse, which raises the question of how to appropriately respond if someone discloses that they’ve experienced or perpetrated violence themselves. It is important for students to know their professional or personal role, and not attempt to provide specialist care or counselling unless they are qualified to do so.

The key steps to safely and effectively responding to disclosures include:

1. **Recognise** the signs of gender-based violence.
2. **Respond** with appropriate care.
3. **Act** in accordance with relevant university family violence response and prevention policies and procedures.
4. **Refer** to support services.

1800RESPECT provides information and resources for professionals supporting people impacted by sexual assault and domestic and family violence, including online or telephone secondary consultation and support for work-related stress and trauma. Call 1800 737 732, or use their online resources for professionals.

For further information refer to Our Watch’s [*A victim/survivor-centred approach to responding to violence*](https://media-cdn.ourwatch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/19124201/1.4-Victim-centred-approach-1.pdf).

# Scenarios

These scenarios aim to represent a diversity of situations that demonstrate the intersections of the drivers of gender-based violence and others forms of inequality and oppression. They can be tailored to meet the learning objectives of your unit or used as they are. If you plan to adjust any details of the scenarios, refer to the guidance in the [*Educators’ guide to upskilling preservice professionals to support the prevention of gender-based violence*](https://handbook.ourwatch.org.au/leadership-resource/educators-guide-to-upskilling-pre-service-professionals-to-support-the-prevention-of-gender-based-violence/?utm_source=PDF3&utm_medium=+PDF+3%3A+Teaching+resources+prevention+of+gender+based+violence+in+and+through+criminology).

## Scenario 1 – Youth justice

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Audience** | **Purpose** | **Key concepts** |
| Criminology students | To explore the social construction of gender and its relationship to crime and offending. | Gender, gender construction, drivers of gender-based violence, family violence, Aboriginal experiences of gender and discrimination, intersectionality, urban setting, school setting. |

When her dad’s mum died, Kirra had moved from Alice to Sydney to live with her mum, Rose, and her Irish-Australian partner Jeff and their three-year-old twins. Kirra’s dad had said she should come back any time if it didn’t work, but he thought it would be good for Kirra to spend time with her mum and have all the opportunities offered by a big city, even if she was starting at a new school part way through the year. Kirra had never felt that close to her parents; it was her nan she really loved. So in Sydney she cried for her nan, felt crap about school and sad that her mum was with a creep like Jeff.

When Kirra had arrived, Jeff had looked Kirra up and down like he was evaluating her body and said, ‘Geez, you’re dark!’ then ‘Nice legs, though.’ Jeff worked in banking and was a musician on the side. He expected his dinner on the table when he got home. ‘Gotta earn your keep,’ he’d say to Kirra. ‘Your mother and I didn’t get you over here to be a lady of leisure, you know?’ Dinner was never quite right for Jeff. He always criticised it, but never cooked anything himself. He said, ‘I’m old school’, like he was proud of it.

On the weekends Jeff jammed with his band, so he never spent time with Rose or his kids. And then there was the stuff with money. Jeff earnt a lot, but only ever gave Rose a small allowance. Sometimes when Kirra and her mum went to the supermarket there wasn’t enough on the card and Rose would have to call Jeff and beg for more. Sometimes he didn’t answer and didn’t come home for the weekend either. Then there’d be nothing except toast or cornflakes to eat.

Kirra’s mum Rose suffered from headaches that often turned into migraines. This all meant that Kirra ended up taking time off school to look after the twins and clean the house, because Jeff would get angry, shout and swear if the floor was even a little bit dirty or there was a smudge on the bathroom mirror.

Kirra started skipping school because it didn’t feel like anyone understood her, and because of all the stuff she had to do at home. No one seemed to notice anyway.

When Kirra had started at her new school, they’d told her about all the sports she could get involved in, but she hated sport.

The white P.E. teacher was excited about the possibility of her joining the athletics team, saying ‘I thought your mob was pretty deadly at sport. You could be the next Cathy Freeman!’ Kirra had guessed he was trying to be welcoming, but it was so awkward she just wanted to disappear.

A boy said, ‘You’d look hot in shorts.’

The teacher said, ‘Alright, settle down!’ He smiled at Kirra. ‘Don’t worry about them! Boys always get a bit overexcited about attractive young ladies.’

Kirra replied, ‘I’m a bit slow, running-wise, and just not that interested’.

Somehow that last line spread around the school. There always seemed to be a couple of boys, nudging each other and doing stupid imitations of her voice: ‘Oh, I’m just not that interested!’ Then the other one would pipe up, ‘Yeah, and you’re not that hot either, dumb slut.’

During a careers workshop, Ms Green told Kirra there was always work to be had in early childhood education. She’d said, ‘Girls who come from traditional backgrounds with big families are naturally good at childcare.’ Kirra had explained that she loved writing, and wanted to be a journalist.

The teacher said, ‘Oh, but you need really *strong* writing skills for that. That’s aiming pretty high, love.’

Kirra felt her blood boiling and said that she’d won a writing competition and had poems published. Ms Green raised an eyebrow, but the other teacher, Mr Camilleri, said, ‘You could get involved in the school magazine, Kirra. We need another editor.’ Kirra was pretty happy about that, but then she missed out because she had to skip a whole lot of school. Looking after her siblings and worrying about her mum took up all her time.

The stealing started with small stuff: some energy bars, toothpaste, a block of cheese, paracetamol for her mum’s headaches. Kirra would go to the supermarket where they didn’t check bags and they’d never caught her. It was how she met Evie and Damo. They followed her out one day and said they needed someone like her. They’d seen her ‘work’ in the supermarket. She could join them and they’d all help each other. They were smart and funny and more like family than her mum and Jeff. So that was how she wound up getting into a stolen car one day and getting really wasted on some cheap wine.

Kirra just needed to get away and forget about everything. Evie and Damo helped her with that. They were fun and once Kirra had a few drinks, she didn’t feel bad anymore. Things didn’t matter in the same way. Kirra knew it was risky but she was fed up always being the responsible one. Getting into the stolen car made her feel free.

### Additional resources

* Our Watch, [*Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*](https://www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/changing-the-picture/)
* Australian Human Rights Commission, [Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) Report](https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/publications/wiyi-yani-u-thangani)

### Sample discussion questions and answers

1. **Identify the types of abuse that are present in the story.**

Sexual harassment/inappropriate sexual attention:

* The boys at Kirra’s school comment on her legs in shorts and then sexually harass and bully her.
* Jeff looks Kirra up and down and makes sexual comments her.

Jeff is perpetrating family violence. Rose and all her children (including Kirra) are victim-survivors of this. This includes:

* Emotional abuse: Jeff complains about all the meals and the state of the household.
* Verbal abuse: Jeff shouts and swears if he doesn’t feel the house is tidy enough.
* Financial abuse: Jeff gives Rose a household allowance and sometimes Rose has to beg him for money. Money is used as a tool of power and control. Although Rose is doing all the labour of raising a family (and is missing out on a salary and superannuation), the couple do not share money. There is no equity in the financial arrangements.

1. **What are some of the ways in which gender stereotypes are reinforced by the people in Kirra’s story? In what parts of her life is this happening?**

At school:

* When Kirra is on the receiving end of a comment on her physical appearance from one of the boys at school, the PE teacher’s only comment to the boy is to ‘settle down’. He minimises and excuses his behaviour, saying ‘Boys always get a bit overexcited about attractive young ladies’, which is based on the stereotype that men are biologically inclined to be more sexual than women, and that these urges are therefore difficult to control (if they can be controlled at all).
* Ms Green told Kirra there was always work to be had in early childhood education. She said, ‘Girls who come from traditional backgrounds with big families are naturally good at childcare.’ This comment combines sexism and racism under the guise of being helpful.

At home:

* Jeff expects Rose and Kirra to do all the cooking and the housework and does not help, saying he is ‘old school’ – that is, he ascribes to traditional gender roles that say women should do the housework.
* Jeff doesn’t spend time with his children, so doesn’t contribute to either their direct care or to recreational/fun activities. (NB: If he played with his children but did nothing else, this would still be conforming to traditional gender expectations where the woman is the caregiver and the male partner takes children to sport, etc.)
* Jeff objectifies and sexualises Kirra, commenting on her legs and ‘evaluating’ her body as if she’s an object. This is something that routinely happens to girls and young women in society, rather than to men.

1. **What other drivers of violence against women are present in the story?**

Condoning of violence against women:

* The teacher excusing the boys’ sexual harassment with ‘Boys always get a bit overexcited about attractive young ladies’ implies that the boys are not responsible for their own behaviour.

Limits on women’s decision-making and independence:

* Kirra’s mum is financially dependent on Jeff, which limits her independence and her ability to fully care for her children and herself. When she becomes ill, this responsibility falls to Kirra, which subsequently limits her independence and ability to engage fully at school, or even have a part-time job to pursue her own economic independence. This perceived and real lack of freedom on Kirra’s part leads her into antisocial behaviours such as stealing and drinking.

Cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression:

* The boys switch from sexually doting over Kirra to abusing her: she can only be the object of their attention as a sex object or as a person not worthy of their respect. At no point does one of the boys interject to call out or take a stand against this disrespectful behaviour.

1. **Apart from gender, what other forms of discrimination or oppression might influence Kirra’s experience? How might these impact on or influence her ability to seek out or access support?**

Marginalisation can result from moving from a smaller city to a bigger city for the perceived benefit of more opportunities.

A variety of racism is evident throughout the story, usually in the form of microaggressions:

* The PE teacher’s appropriation of Aboriginal English (‘deadly’) and his assumption that Kirra will be athletically talented. These comments are all ways of othering Kirra and reinforce an ‘us and them’ binary.
* The inference from Ms Green is that Kirra does not have the ability to be a journalist and the raised eyebrow signals surprise/scepticism about the truth of what Kirra is saying. The assumption seems to be that because Kirra is from a ‘traditional’ background her talents don’t lie in academic areas like writing and journalism.
* Jeff’s comments on the colour of Kirra’s skin is a form of fetishising people of colour.

1. **What wellbeing, economic and social impacts might these forms of discrimination (gender and otherwise) have on Kirra?**

* These microaggressions can work to marginalise Kirra, making her feel excluded from mainstream systems and making her question how understanding or supportive social supports would be if she needed to ask for specific help, such as financial aid or counselling.
* Instead, she turns to antisocial behaviours such as stealing and drinking as a result of the connections she’s able to make with other people her age who might be experiencing similar feelings of marginalisation and exclusion.
* Long-term, Kirra may become further disconnected from her education and drop out of school, or be forced to drop out because she feels obliged to work to support her family. This will have ongoing economic and wellbeing effects that may lead to poverty and/or a cycle of offending.

1. **Where are there missed opportunities to address some of the discrimination or inequity present in the story? Who could take action, and what could they do/say?**

* There is an opportunity for the PE teacher to address the inappropriate sexual attention one of the boys pays to Kirra, commenting on her legs in shorts. ‘Settle down’ is an inadequate response and the PE teacher then condones the behaviour and participates in the same behaviour, saying to Kirra, ‘Boys always get a bit overexcited about attractive young ladies.’ A whole-of-school approach is needed, where teachers, staff and students understand and promote respectful relationships and gender equity.
* Given Kirra has moved interstate and has started school part way through the year, there is an opportunity for the wellbeing coordinator/school social worker to find out a bit more about Kirra’s situation, her interests and potential needs, and how best she can be supported in her transition. For example, she may need further support in dealing with the death of her grandmother. She may also benefit from being linked in with an Aboriginal community organisation, or some extracurricular writing groups/activities for people her age in Sydney.
* As a bystander to Ms Green’s discriminatory comments, Mr Camilleri could say something like, ‘People from traditional backgrounds do a huge variety of jobs and have a wide variety of interests. It’s important that our students work out what their interests are and choose study and career paths that mirror that.’
* Mr Camilleri could follow up regarding the school magazine idea, particularly given the discriminatory comments of his colleague, and ensure Kirra’s talents and interests are really nurtured.
* Kirra’s irregular attendance at school should be a red flag for her teachers that something’s not right – that she may be suffering from bullying at school or issues at home.

## Scenario 2 – Isolation and assault

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| **Audience** | **Purpose** | **Key concepts** |
| Criminology and policing students | * To understand how gender and other factors of identity shape a person’s experience of society and justice, and influence help-seeking behaviours. * To explore the role of the police in addressing the drivers of violence against women. | Gender-based violence, sexual assault, intersectionality, migrant status, drivers of gender-based violence, social isolation and exclusion, policing practice, regional setting. |

Amirah, a university lecturer in political science, immigrated to Sydney to be with her Australian-born partner Zara. It wasn’t easy for Amirah to get work in her field. She’d have liked to retrain but was not sure what area to focus on. When Zara accepted a job as an engineer in local government in a regional town in New South Wales, everything got a bit harder. The house they’d rented seemed huge and empty and Amirah spent hours talking to friends overseas. Zara worked long hours and was always exhausted when she came home and just wanted to watch Netflix rather than talk. Amirah went to the community centre to try to make connections with locals, but found most of the events were geared towards parents and senior citizens.

One day, when Zara was away on the other side of the state for work, Amirah took an early evening walk. There was a crowd of young men sitting around outside the pub when Amirah walked past with headphones on. Suddenly one of the men lunged and tried to grab her from behind.

‘Nice arse, babe,’ he said. There were whistles and catcalls from the others.

Amirah turned and shouted, ‘How dare you! Don’t touch me!’ The men started up a tirade of abuse, shouting that she was ugly; that no man would want her anyway.

One of them spat on the ground and said, ‘She’s that lesbian chick. I’ve seen her round with her girlfriend.’

Another chimed in, ‘I’d be happy to take you back and show you what you’re missing – or maybe I’ll just take you by surprise later, hey? You’d like that, wouldn’t you?’

Amirah glared at them. The tallest of the group said, ‘Calm down, love, and don’t be trying to give us any shit. Who the hell do you think you are?’

Another said, ‘Fuck me! An Arab *and* a leso!’

Amirah turned back and walked through their midst, saying, ‘You’re all a bunch of pigs!’

One told her to calm down. ‘Just a bit of a joke. You’re not from around here, are you?’

Another said under their breath, ‘Dirty bitch. Watch I don’t bash your ugly face in.’

Amirah stormed into the pub and the female publican eyed her coldly. ‘Yes?’

Amirah blurted out the story of what had just happened. The publican said apathetically, ‘Oh, really?’ She went outside and said to the group of men, ‘Now, apologise to the lady and come in and drink inside.’ She said to Amirah, ‘It’s a buck’s night. These boys were just having a good time. Best to have a sense of humour about it.’

The men were quiet. They followed the publican into the pub, not making eye contact with Amirah. Furious, she said, ‘I’ll be taking this further.’

At the police station, Amirah waited for what seemed like an age before a male constable said that he’d take some details. Amirah found herself shaking as she spoke to him. His manner was very brusque. He took down her details and said a couple of times, ‘Okay, so they didn’t actually touch you?’ Amirah confirmed that this was correct, they hadn’t touched her, but had verbally abused her and threatened her. The constable said, ‘Yeah, it sounds pretty ordinary, but they probably just had a bit too much to drink. It’s a busy night for us. I’ll try and send a car out to the pub later to check.’ He sounded bored. Amirah left the station feeling confused and as if she’d made an unnecessary fuss. She realised she had no idea what the follow-up would be.

When Amirah got home, she couldn’t get hold of Zara so she called a friend in Sydney instead. She felt disappointed when her friend asked why Amirah had been walking alone at night, especially with her headphones on. Amirah hung up feeling frustrated, but also alone and isolated. She started to wonder how many women like her had been made to feel like this.

The following Monday Amirah received a call from a senior sergeant. He explained to her that he’d been going through some documentation after a venue had been ‘trashed’ on Friday night. He said that property was damaged, and it seemed that ‘a group of men ran a bit amok’. He said that it seemed Amirah might have been ‘on the receiving end of some really unpleasant behaviour from the same group of men’, but there wasn’t much information and he’d like some more details. The sergeant sounded genuine.

Amirah told him what had happened, and he responded that it sounded ‘really appalling’. He added, ‘No one should have to put up with that type of behaviour.’ He asked Amirah if she’d mind coming into the station again, as he wanted to do a comprehensive follow-up and get a far more detailed statement. He apologised that this hadn’t been done when she came in after the incident. Amirah asked him what giving more details would result in as she felt that no one was taking it very seriously. The sergeant said, ‘That’s very disappointing, as this is a very concerning incident.’ He said it was important to interview any witnesses from the pub and that Amirah could be the key witness. He explained that it was essential to identify exactly which man had threatened to rape Amirah, and which one had threatened to physically harm her, and whether either of these men was the one who had tried to grab Amirah initially. He said that it was difficult without enough evidence, but that he was determined to try to press charges.

Amirah thanked the Sergeant for taking the time to explain the process. He said, ‘It’s really the least I can do. Every woman should feel safe walking home in this town. That’s the bare minimum, really’.

### Additional resources

* Our Watch, [Preventing violence against LGBTIQ people](https://handbook.ourwatch.org.au/resource-topic/tailor-primary-prevention-to-groups-and-settings/preventing-violence-against-lgbtiq-people/)
* Our Watch, [Preventing violence against migrant and refugee women](https://handbook.ourwatch.org.au/resource-topic/tailor-primary-prevention-to-groups-and-settings/preventing-violence-against-migrant-and-refugee-women/)

### Sample discussion questions and answers

1. **What forms of abuse are present in Amirah’s story and who are the perpetrators?**

Verbal assault and sexual violence perpetrated by the men drinking outside the pub. One man attempts to grab Amirah, while others threaten to rape and physically harm her.

1. **Which of the gendered drivers are present in this story? How do these serve to reinforce gender inequity and exclude Amirah?**

Rigid gender roles and stereotyping:

* The assumption that only parents or elderly people might be seeking community-based activities or support.
* Amirah is expected to just accept the sexual advances of the men at the pub and say nothing. Instead, she lets them know that their behaviour is unacceptable. The inference is that she has not been appropriately passive (traditionally feminine) and has therefore encouraged their further abuse.

Condoning of violence against women:

* Expectations around how women should respond to men’s behaviour, and framing it as the responsibility of women (dependent on how they look and behave).
* One of the men minimises the abuse by telling Amirah ‘It’s just a joke.’
* The publican excuses the men’s behaviour by saying ‘It’s a buck’s night. These boys were just having a good time. Best to have a sense of humour about it.’
* Amirah’s friend asks her why she was walking alone with her headphones on. It is implied that Amirah is somewhat to blame for the abuse.
* The constable also downplays what has occurred by saying, ‘Okay, so they didn’t actually touch you?’ The constable blames the men’s behaviour on alcohol consumption.

Cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control:

* The behaviour of the men outside the pub and the acceptance of this behaviour by the other men present.
* Backlash from the men when Amirah asserts herself rather than accepting or ignoring their behaviour.

1. **Besides gender inequality, how else does power and oppression shape Amirah’s experience? (i.e. do racism, homophobia, ableism or ageism impact her experience too?)**

* Heteronormativity and homophobia – oppression of LGBTIQ+ people.
* Racism and possible Islamophobia – assumptions about Arab-looking people.
* Local people versus outsiders (migrants, people from cities, etc.).
* Overseas qualifications and profession – these aren’t recognised by the workforce, and Amirah therefore has a lack of access to professional and potential social networks and opportunities.
* Education – Amirah’s education has probably given her status in previous contexts, as well as knowledge and confidence about her rights which would inform her own sense of agency. As a result she feels confident to complain to the publican and report the incident to the police, having a strong sense that her rights had been violated, even though she doesn’t feel like she’s taken seriously in the first instance.

1. **What is significant about the responses from the different characters in the story – the publican, the friend and the police officers – and what impact might their behaviour have on Amirah’s wellbeing?**

Both women (the friend and the publican) have also been brought up in a patriarchal society with gender inequity and particular expectations of men’s and women’s behaviour, and seem not to have critically reflected on this. They are contributing to oppression through a lack of awareness. In the case of Amirah’s friend, this is combined with a concern for Amirah’s safety, which is well meaning, but does not address the root of the issue – gender inequality and men’s violence against women. In the case of the publican, there may be an economic concern. The men may be regular customers that the business depends on. These women’s attitudes are additional barriers to Amirah, who is left feeling frustrated and isolated by the lack of real support the women offer.

The constable is dismissive, downplaying the significance of the abuse and any trauma that Amirah may have experienced. This may lead to her feeling unsafe in the community and could result in her moderating her behaviour in ways that are limiting or unhealthy, such as only ever driving rather than walking, or staying home instead of going out to work or to socialise.

The sergeant listens to Amirah’s experience and names the behaviour as abusive. He takes the situation very seriously and explains the process to Amirah, along with the action he intends to take. His manner is not dismissive, bored or cold like the constable’s. He also apologises for the constable’s response to Amirah. It is reasonable to assume that the sergeant’s respectful, proactive response would encourage Amirah to feel that she had finally had a positive experience with the police and that she might cooperate or engage with them in the future.

1. **What could they have done differently to contribute to the prevention of violence?**

Amirah’s friend could have listened, validated Amirah’s feelings and explored what she wanted to do next, reassuring her that the event was not her fault.

The publican could have expressed concern for Amirah (rather than telling her she should have a sense of humour) and asked her if she wished to call the police. If she’d heard the abuse, she could also have called the police herself.

The constable could have taken the incident seriously in the first instance, and listened to and believed Amirah. He could have acted quickly to locate the perpetrators, which would have sent a strong message of intolerance of this kind of behaviour to anyone present.

1. **Thinking about the actions to address the drivers of gender-based violence, how can whole communities work together to prevent this kind of thing happening in the future?**

A whole-of-community response relies on every organisation, institution and person playing a role to address the drivers of gender-based violence and promote gender equality. Police can engage with local, state and national frameworks and resources that recommend best practice approaches for whole-of-community approaches.

In the context outlined in the scenario, police could collaborate with businesses, community groups and non-government organisations to better understand the nature of the problem and work together to solve it. Collectively, they could conduct community forums to get a better understanding of how different members of the community perceive their safety, and what actions would help to build safer communities. People like Amirah could be given leadership roles to ensure that any strategies centred the lived experience of those affected by violence.

Training could be provided to police staff and businesses in understanding the gendered nature of violence and how they can address it in their professional roles.

## Scenario 3 – Grooming

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| **Audience** | **Purpose** | **Key concepts** |
| Criminology and policing students | * To explore the construction of gender in the context of youth, justice and offending. * To identify individual and systemic barriers to justice for women and girls who are at risk of experiencing violence. | Gender, construction of gender, youth, gender diversity, sexuality, sexual assault, sentencing. |

***Content warning. This scenario describes sexual assault. If you're currently in distress, please head to 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732) for support.***

#### Part 1

Lynda was 15 and had lost her dad to cancer a year earlier. He’d been a mechanic and did up old cars. Lynda had spent all her weekends with him, doing up cars. And then he was gone, only two months after the diagnosis. Pretty soon after, Lynda started getting into trouble with the police. She took the family car for a joy ride with a couple of friends from school late one night and was pulled over by the police. Luckily there was no accident, but there could have been. Lynda’s mum had to pay a big fine, which she was really furious about.

Her mum got her Uncle Matt to come over and give Lynda a ‘pep talk’. It was no ‘pep talk’. He said that she was an absolute disgrace and was insulting her father’s memory. ‘What’s wrong with you?’ he asked accusingly. He asked her about her friends, the two boys in the car. Was Lynda ‘a dirty little slut’ on top of everything else she was putting her family through? Uncle Matt didn’t believe her when she said they were just good friends. ‘A load of BS,’ he said, ‘and don’t expect your mother to support you if you get pregnant.’

Lynda lost her temper then and yelled, ‘Of course, *you* couldn’t be expected to understand. You’re such an arsehole! You don’t have any friends, especially not women, because you’re an ugly sexist pig.’ Uncle Matt laughed nastily and Lynda could see he was enjoying himself; it was like a sport to him, winding her up.

He gave Lynda an assessing look, like she was just a collection of body parts, and said, ‘So you’re a leso then, are you? I’ve always wondered about those sloppy jeans and that ugly hair. You could be quite pretty with a bit of effort. It’s a shame.’ Lynda couldn’t be bothered explaining to him that she liked *people* because of who they were, not because of a body part they did or didn’t have.

There had also been that really f\*\*\*ed-up thing at school where she and a couple of girls got told off for wearing tank tops and shorts in the middle of summer. The principal had said it might be distracting for the boys and the male teachers. Weird, when no one had a problem with the boys wearing shorts and singlets.

Lynda had been in a café not long after the tank top debacle, talking to a couple of friends – a guy and a girl – about periods, her period. She didn’t think they were that loud, but a middle-aged guy told them they were putting him and other people off their lunch. ‘Excuse me!!!’ she thought. It seemed like girls’ bodies were a real big deal for everyone, either a source of fascination or revulsion.

Lynda thought, ‘Stuff them all, I’m going to wear heaps of clothes then, just to annoy them.’ Lynda wore jeans and baggy trackies under skirts and a flannel shirt, but also lots of make-up and jewellery. She had fun with it. But then the school principal, Mr Flagstaff, kept dishing out detentions and telling her she was being ‘inappropriate’ and looked ‘messy’, and that her clothes and her style were ‘too much’. Lynda complained about it to her friend Luka, who also liked to experiment with clothes and hair dye and often looked like he’d stepped out of a music video. Luka said that though some of the teachers had raised their eyebrows, he’d never been called ‘inappropriate’ or given a detention based on his appearance.

#### Part 2

Lynda was caught smoking marijuana with a friend at school. Marijuana made her feel good. It took all the hard, sharp edges off things. She was suspended from school and cautioned by police. Lynda was linked in with a not-for-profit that worked with young people who were at risk of dropping out of school and/or entering the justice system. She had connected quite quickly with a worker called Jess and confided in her about feeling like she was gender non-binary. But then Jess moved interstate and Lynda hadn’t really wanted to connect with anyone else.

When she met Jarrod at Central Station, Lynda was feeling particularly isolated. He asked her for a light and admired the hoodie she was wearing that had a print of a car on the front. So they got talking about cars and Jarrod showed her one that he’d been working on. Turned out he was a bit of a rev-head. He mentioned to her that he’d just lost his brother. It had been really sudden; he’d drowned while out surfing. Lynda said she knew how he felt, ’cause her father had just died, and it had also been sudden. Lynda assumed Jarrod was only a couple of years older than her, so when he sent her a friend request on Instagram, she was okay with it. They exchanged a whole lot of messages about Lynda’s dad and then Jarrod told Lynda he was a feminist, because he thought sexism and male violence was the worst. Lynda thought he was pretty cool.

Jarrod sent Lynda a message asking if she wanted to hang out with him in a car he’d just done up, and test it out. Lynda was like, yeah, cool, that would be awesome. She asked if she could bring her friend Luka, but then Jarrod didn’t answer her messages for a bit. Finally, he got back to her and said, ‘Nah, there isn’t really space. I’m feeling really down about my brother but am cool to hang with you coz you understand’. Plus, he said, he had some really good weed and thought they could do a bit of a road trip to Kiama or somewhere and smoke a joint at the beach and get something to eat. He told her not to worry about money – he had some. Lynda liked the sound of all of it. She met Jarrod and the car, a Holden. It was truly awesome; all the detailing and the wheels were better than she’d imagined.

They ended up driving to Wollongong and got stoned and drunk at the beach. Jarrod said there was no way they could drive home, and they’d have to stay the night and go back in the morning. They went to a motel that Jarrod paid for and watched Netflix and drank some more. Lynda didn’t feel worried that they were sharing a bed because Jarrod seemed like a good mate and Lynda often slept over at Luka’s house. But she must have been really smashed and ended up passing out. She woke up half naked with Jarrod on top of her. It was painful and frightening, worse than anything she’d ever experienced. She had never had sex with anyone, and Jarrod, who she’d trusted, was raping her. She tried to yell out and fight him off and he slapped her hard in the face and put his hands around her throat. Lynda was coughing and choking, and Jarrod threatened to kill her if she struggled.

Lynda doesn’t remember anything else except the pain and not being able to breathe. She passed out again and when she woke up Jarrod had gone.

Jarrod had been a youth worker for a not-for-profit, and had access to a Department of Family & Community Services database which holds personal and sensitive information about thousands of children in the child protection system. It includes things like a child’s name and date of birth, address, ethnicity, relationships, case management notes and any history of sexual abuse. Lynda was on this database. Jarrod had left the job at the not-for-profit six months before he met Lynda at Central Station. His access to the database should have been cancelled on his last day of work, but hadn’t been. Jarrod didn’t have a brother who’d died suddenly. He also wasn’t a car nut – he’d borrowed the Holden from a friend. He obviously wasn’t a feminist either. He’d simply used details from Lynda’s case management notes to manipulate her.

### Additional resources

* Rainbow Health Victoria, [Pride in Prevention evidence guide](https://www.rainbowhealthvic.org.au/news/launch-pride-in-prevention-evidence-guide)

### Sample discussion questions and answers

1. **Which of the drivers of gender-based violence are present in this story?**

Rigid roles and stereotyping about gender and sexuality:

* As a young woman, Lynda is expected to behave and look in a certain way and her possible sexual orientation is questioned and negatively judged.
* There is also an assumption (made by Uncle Matt) that women and men can’t have platonic relationships and Lynda must be sexually involved with her male friends. Shaming her in relation to unwanted pregnancy is also based on a stereotype of all female sexual activity being associated with promiscuity and high-risk behaviour.
* Girls aren’t supposed to talk about periods or their bodies in public. These things are taboo and serve to invisibilise women-centred experiences in society.

Men’s control of decision-making:

* In the absence of her father, Uncle Matt serves the role of a belligerent father figure, attempting to control Lynda’s behaviour through threats and aggressive commentary. He has automatically been granted a position of authority, based on his status as an older male relative.
* The male principal is in a position of leadership and has the power to choose his approach to Lynda’s behaviour. His biases regarding what is appropriate female behaviour influence his treatment of her and result in her being punished for experimenting with her gender expression.

1. **Where in the socio-ecology of gender inequality are these drivers occurring?**

* Uncle Matt’s comments to Lynda about her behaviour, appearance and relationships are an example of individual attitudes, as is the comment of the man in the café when Lynda and her friends are discussing menstruation.
* Although the principal at Lynda’s school is partially acting out of individual attitudes and bias about gender, he has significant influence over school policies and practices at the organisational level. Schools often have highly gendered and inequitable dress codes. Female students are often policed about the length and style of their skirts and how much skin they reveal, whereas male students are allowed to wear shorts.

1. **What wellbeing, economic and social impacts might the gendered drivers have on Lynda?**

* Lynda feels isolated at the time she meets Jarrod. It’s clear she feels a sense of alienation at school because there is no opportunity to explore her identity safely and her experience of school and being a young woman is a very inequitable one. She uses marijuana to ‘take all the hard edges off things’.
* All of these factors may have long-term cumulative mental health impacts on Lynda. Also her disengagement from school will have a roll-on effect of locking her out of education and employment pathways. This in turn may equate to significant social isolation and disadvantage.
* The experience of the sexual assault through systemic failure is likely to have a significant effect on Lynda’s emotional and psychological wellbeing, which may complicate her experiences of education, employment and relationships from this point on.

1. **Identify some key points throughout the story (from Uncle Matt’s ‘pep talk’ on) where Lynda could have been supported. Briefly discuss what type of support would have been useful and how this might have altered the course of events.**

* Rather than telling Lynda off, shaming and judging her, Uncle Matt could have offered some empathy about the death of her father, and her response to it. He could have explored what support Lynda would have liked.
* Lynda could have benefitted from some intensive grief counselling, and she and her mother could have attended some family counselling/support groups. Also, Lynda was beginning to question her gender and sexual identity and could also have benefitted from more support around this from a counsellor/teacher/youth worker, as well as connection to peers experiencing the same. A specialist LGBTIQ+ organisation could have been helpful in providing details of how Lynda could be more involved in/supported by the LGBTIQ+ community and peers. Some support was initiated by the worker named Jess, but this seemed minimal, from the details provided in the story. Early intervention into Lynda’s marijuana usage would also have been useful.
* Early intervention may have enabled Lynda to engage more with school, feel more connected to her mother and other support networks and less likely to take risks, use drugs and seek validation/attention from a stranger.

1. **Discuss the various ways that Lynda was let down by the system. How did systemic inadequacies and gaps, combined with her family and school situation, make Lynda more vulnerable to Jarrod?**

* Jess, the worker that Lynda connected with, left her job to move interstate. It seems there was no proper handover of Lynda’s case to another appropriate worker and this contributed to Lynda’s feelings of isolation.
* Jarrod had access to a Department of Family & Community Services database and was able to use confidential information from this database to manipulate Lynda. This was a clear systemic failure, as his access should have ceased when his job finished.

1. **What would be your response if Jarrod was found guilty of the single charge of ‘aggravated sexual assault’ as per the NSW Crimes Act, and sentenced to six years? Would this be fair? How do you think this verdict might have impacted Lynda and her family?**

* Given that Lynda experienced a range of abuse and violence from Jarrod, who also may have accessed and abused other young people through the system, Lynda and her family may have felt very let down and hopeless following this outcome. They may have felt that the system was unjust and benefitted the perpetrator rather than victim-survivors. They may have felt a complete lack of trust in systems and processes and as a result feel anger and resentment.

# Interviews with criminology and policing practitioners

These videos have been produced to support teaching about the ways in which professionals working in justice settings understand and aim to address the issue of gender-based violence in their work.

These are examples of some workers and their views and do not represent the wide variety of workplace experiences in this field.

The individuals and cohorts represented here might spend a lot of their time either dealing directly with victims and perpetrators of violence or supporting those who do. In this regard, the scope of their work might primarily be categorised as tertiary prevention (response). However, they are all able to describe some of the ways in which their day-to-day work can address the drivers of gender-based violence and contribute to a primary prevention approach.

Each of the interviewees is representing an institution, organisation or sector as well as themselves as individuals. Their views do not necessarily represent the views of Our Watch and the evidence base that guides Our Watch’s primary prevention work.

A critical lens is essential to viewing these videos and students should be encouraged to discuss and analyse the content to identify key themes and practices that relate to the primary prevention of gender-based violence. To support an intersectional analysis, encourage them to consider the subtext of power and privilege in each video.

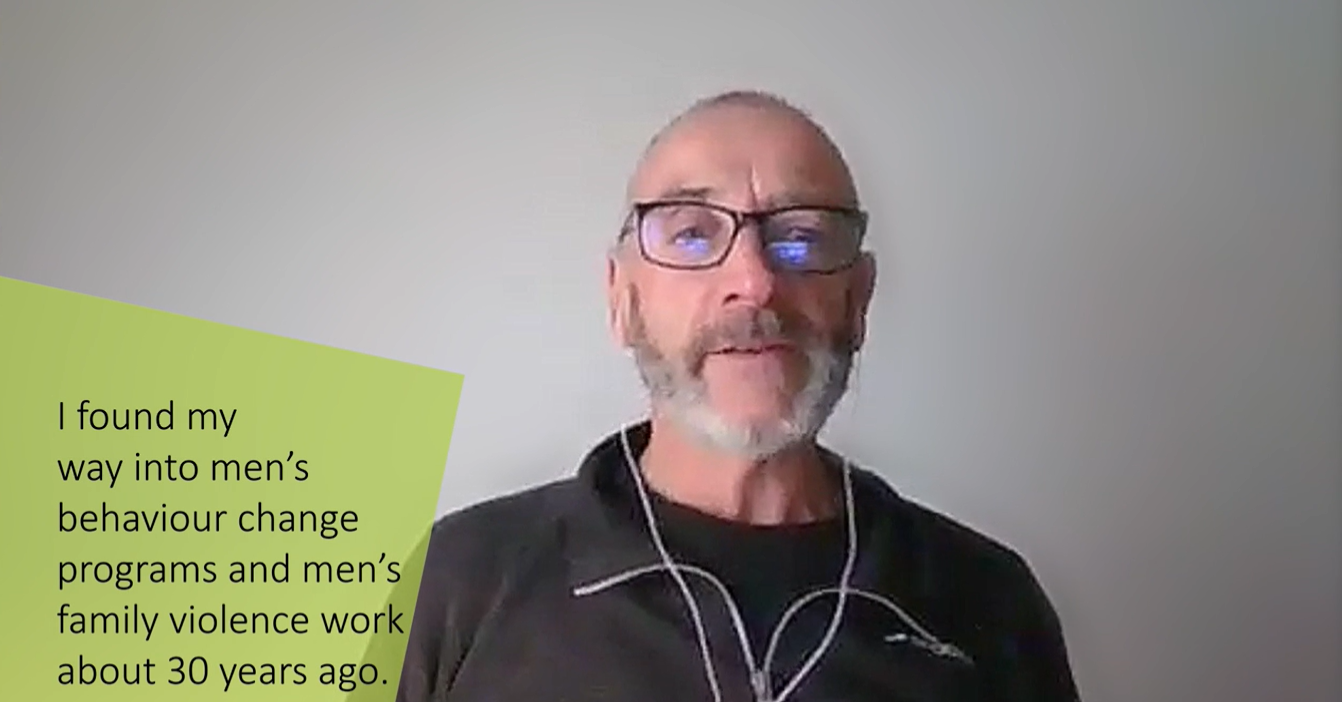
## How to use these resources

These videos can be shown to students in class or as part of tutorial previewing. They should be contextualised with background material about primary prevention work, the drivers of gender-based violence and an intersectional approach. They should also be followed up with a facilitated discussion to unpack and analyse their content. You may choose to use them in conjunction with one of more of the scenarios included in this resource.

The videos do not represent an exhaustive list of practitioner experiences, or of roles in which people have the opportunity to support the prevention of gender-based violence. Refer to the [*Educators’ guide to upskilling preservice professionals to support the prevention of gender-based violence*](https://handbook.ourwatch.org.au/leadership-resource/educators-guide-to-upskilling-pre-service-professionals-to-support-the-prevention-of-gender-based-violence/?utm_source=PDF3&utm_medium=+PDF+3%3A+Teaching+resources+prevention+of+gender+based+violence+in+and+through+criminology) for guidance on developing your own teaching resources.

## Michael Brandenburg – Men’s behaviour change specialist

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Audience** | **Purpose** | **Key concepts/themes** | **Duration** |
| Criminology or policing students | To understand men’s behaviour change roles and how these roles can help to prevent gender-based violence. | Drivers of gender-based violence, men’s behaviour change, perpetrator intervention, gender norms, masculinities. | 8′21″ |



### Watch video

* Original version – YouTube, [*Prevention of gender-based violence and men’s behaviour change, Michael Brandenburg*](https://youtu.be/YfLMOWA6KYs)
* Audio described version – YouTube, [*Prevention of gender-based violence and men’s behaviour change, Michael Brandenburg, audio description*](https://youtu.be/tPy3wsUxEuk)

### Summary

Michael Brandenburg is a men’s behaviour change specialist. In this Q&A he describes his work in delivering crisis response services to perpetrators of gender-based violence, and how he incorporates a primary prevention approach in this work to address some of the drivers of gender-based violence.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Topic** |
| 0′31″ | Introduction |
| 1′30″ | What is men’s behaviour change? |
| 3′12″ | How does men’s behaviour change work contribute to the prevention of violence against women? |
| 4′43″ | What are the key challenges in supporting men to change their behaviour? |
| 6′16″ | What helps make your work more effective? |
| 7′10″ | What advice do you have for people interested in working in men’s behaviour change? |

### Discussion

1. What is your reaction to the interview? What surprised you about the interviewee’s responses?
2. Michael describes working with perpetrators of violence to help them change their behaviours. What relationship does this work have to other efforts that aim to stop violence before it starts?
3. What parts of Michael’s work cross over with primary prevention?
4. How does the issue of men not seeking help relate to the drivers of gender-based violence? What can be done to address this from a prevention perspective?
5. What relationship do the ‘other things going on’ in the lives of perpetrators – housing, drug and alcohol issues, depression and trauma – have to the drivers of gender-based violence? How can these be addressed holistically to support men’s behaviour change as well as prevent gender-based violence?

### Discussion points

* Men’s behaviour change is an intervention that occurs after violence has occurred. This means it is a ‘response’ activity – from a public health perspective, response actions are about supporting survivors and holding perpetrators to account. Primary prevention activities, on the other hand, are about stopping violence before it starts, taking a whole-of-population approach to understanding the underlying drivers of violence and aiming to intervene when these drivers manifest. It draws on evidence that identifies four key drivers that exist in the context of gender inequality.
* Primary prevention aims to address the drivers of gender-based violence. Inviting men in the community to reflect on their current relationships, and talking to children and adults about the bigger picture of violence and what a healthy relationship looks like can help people understand the indicators and risks of unhealthy relationships. It also works to unpack and challenge rigid gender stereotypes that both condone men’s violence against women and normalise women’s subordination to men in decision making, leadership and power-holding roles, in both public and private spaces.
* Men not seeking help is born out of the gender stereotype that men are self-sufficient, don’t need help and can overcome adversity on their own. Men are human and, like all humans, do not have all the internal resources to cure, heal or manage their health, wellbeing, and economic or social difficulties. They therefore benefit from the same help-seeking behaviours as others. The idea that being a ‘real man’ is dependent on being in control of self and others, toughness and stoicism is proven to be directly linked to harmful behaviours related to gender-based violence and men’s health. Encouraging boys and men to feel and express the full spectrum of their emotions and ask for help when they need it challenges the rigid concepts of masculinity that help to drive gender-based violence.
* Conditions such as homelessness, drug and alcohol issues, depression and trauma are known as reinforcing factors. They do not drive violence on their own, but their existence in conjunction with the drivers of gender-based violence increases the likelihood of violence occurring. If these factors were removed from a context, it is still possible that the conditions of gender inequality and patriarchy will be present and enable violence to happen. Challenging rigid and dominant forms of masculinity that promote qualities such as aggression, being in control, stoicism, risk-taking and toughness will not only help to prevent gender-based violence but reduce harmful outcomes for men’s health also.

### Additional resources

* Our Watch, [*Men in focus: unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women*](https://www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/men-in-focus-unpacking-masculinities-and-engaging-men-in-the-prevention-of-violence-against-women)
* Michael Flood and Lula Dembele, [Putting perpetrators in the picture: Mapping the extent and character of violence perpetration in Australia](https://research.qut.edu.au/centre-for-justice/wp-content/uploads/sites/304/2021/06/Michael-Flood-briefing-paper-issue-13.pdf)

## Hong Ong – Multicultural Liaison Officer, NSW Police

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Audience** | **Purpose** | **Key concepts/themes** | **Duration** |
| Criminology or policing students | To explore civilian roles within the police force and the role they play in helping to prevent gender-based violence in the community, drawing on prevention frameworks and best practice. | Drivers of gender-based violence, policing, multicultural liaison, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, gender norms, practices and structures. | 9′11″ |

### Watch video

* Original version – YouTube, [*Prevention of gender-based violence and policing, Hong Ong*](https://youtu.be/yyyqnLVJlKk)
* Audio described version – YouTube, [*Prevention of gender-based violence and policing, Hong Ong, audio desc*](https://youtu.be/s37g8HUNtYk)*ription*

### Summary

Hong Ong is a Multicultural Police Officer at NSW Police. In this Q&A she talks about some of the ways she works within the community and with police officers to help them understand how they can help to address some of the drivers of gender-based violence.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Topic** |
| 0′17″ | Introduction |
| 1′02″ | What drives gender-based violence in the communities where you work? |
| 3′24″ | What does primary prevention of violence look like in your role? |
| 5′22″ | What are the challenges of violence prevention work in your role? |
| 7′21″ | How do you successfully work with the police? |
| 8′16″ | What advice do you have for people interested in police work to prevent gender-based violence? |

### Discussion

1. What is your reaction to the interview? What surprised you about the interviewee’s responses?
2. What are the social, cultural and family norms about gender that link to the drivers of gender-based violence?
3. What does Hong mean when she says that gender norms and stereotypes play a part in ‘tipping the balance of power’? What kind of power is she talking about? What other power dynamics exist in a context of police responding to calls about family violence in migrant and refugee communities?
4. What role can you see police playing in the primary prevention of gender-based violence? What strategies does Hong refer to in how they implement this approach?
5. Why do you think Hong wants to convey an understanding of gender-based violence to community members and police officers where they ‘think, believe it is wrong’ rather than just knowing that gender-based violence is against the law? Is this enough to prevent violence from occurring in the first place? How else can we address the drivers of gender-based violence?

### Discussion points

* The family norms around gender and gender stereotypes do not come from the family alone, but society more broadly. The rigidity of these stereotypes about boys/girls might manifest differently in different cultural groups, but they are pervasive across many parts of society, including schools, media, sports, religious organisations, workplaces, etc.
* Framing violence against migrant and refugee women as a cultural issue can be harmful. Using ‘culture’ as an explanation of violence usually leads to either unfairly blaming and shaming a community or excusing perpetrators for their actions or attitudes, both of which help to drive violence. Unpacking stereotypes related to refugee and migrant people as well as those related to gender are required to support the prevention of gender-based violence.
* Power is relational and exists at multiple levels (that is, of the socio-ecological model). It exists between individuals, between communities and organisations, and between people of different backgrounds, based on gender, socioeconomic status, race, language ability, nationality, sexuality, disability, and more. Police are also a powerful institution and wield certain power among society and in communities. There is a duty for police to recognise and be responsible in the face of power imbalances, especially when dealing with parts of the community who represent minority or marginalised groups.
* Hong makes reference to primary prevention in policing including an educational aspect, such as providing training with community-based organisations, or running information campaigns that target specific parts of the community to support their awareness of their rights and responsibilities in relation to preventing gender-based violence. This work also involves translating information and concepts to migrant communities therefore a nuanced understanding of the harmful aspects of gender across cultures and how to deconstruct them are required.
* A primary prevention approach requires an understanding that gender is socially constructed, not biological, and that our attitudes and behaviours in relation to gender need to change in order to reduce the amount of gender-based violence in our communities.
* A purely legal response to perpetrators of gender-based violence will be limited in how much it can impact the norms, practices and structures that underpin violence. Hong’s work aims to address individual and community norms as one strategy, but no single strategy is enough on its own. Gender norms, practices and structures need to be challenged at all levels of society.
* Structural change is also required to address some of the gendered drivers of violence against migrant and refugee women, such as making improvements to immigration policy and tackling employment discrimination.

### Additional resources

* Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health, [Challenging myths about culture and violence in migrant and refugee communities](https://www.mcwh.com.au/challenging-myths-about-culture-and-violence-in-migrant-and-refugee-communities/)

## Cassandra Forbes – Senior Sergeant and Family Violence Training Officer, Victoria Police

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Audience** | **Purpose** | **Key concepts/themes** | **Duration** |
| Criminology or policing students | To explore the role police officers can play in the prevention of gender-based violence, drawing on prevention frameworks and best practice. | Drivers of gender-based violence, policing, challenging the condoning of violence, victim blaming, family violence training for police. | 11′34″ |

### Watch video

* Original version – YouTube, [*Prevention of gender-based violence and policing, Cassandra Forbes*](https://youtu.be/1kBy5e80qcY)
* Audio described version – YouTube, [*Prevention of gender-based violence and policing, Cassandra Forbes, audio desc*](https://youtu.be/jyxR02KCbCA)*ription*

### Summary

Senior Sergeant Cassandra Forbes is Family Violence Training Officer at Victoria Police. In this Q&A she talks about some of the ways she conveys to police officers how they can help to address some of the drivers of gender-based violence in their frontline police work.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Topic** |
| 0′17″ | Introduction |
| 0′43″ | Why does gender inequality matter to the police? |
| 1′18″ | What attracted you to work in the area of family violence as a police officer? |
| 2′15″ | How can police address some of the causes of violence? |
| 5′23″ | What do you mean by victim blaming? |
| 6′40″ | What strategies help to address family violence in different population groups? |
| 7′44″ | How do you best support frontline police officers to take a consistent approach? |
| 9′14″ | What are some challenges you face in your work? |
| 10′20″ | What’s the best part of your job? |
| 10′54″ | What advice do you give anyone who’s interested in getting into this sector? |

### Discussion

1. What is your reaction to the interview? What surprised you about the interviewee’s responses?
2. What do you understand about the difference between police work in tertiary response and primary prevention?
3. Where can you hear the drivers of violence being mentioned? What do these look like in police work?
4. Reflecting on intersectionality, what structural or systemic factors help to explain the barriers different groups of women might face when reporting gender-based violence to the police?
5. Why does Cassandra use the term victim-survivor? Discuss what a victim-survivor–centred approach could look like in a policing context.

### Discussion points

* Responding to instances of family violence makes up a significant part of frontline police officers’ work. While anyone can experience family violence, statistics show that in the majority of cases the perpetrator is male and the victim is female. First responders to incidents of gender-based violence such as family violence need to treat victim-survivors with sensitivity and respect, and be attuned to the subtle indicators of family violence. Drivers of violence against women – for example, the condoning of this violence, and limits on women’s independence – show up in many contexts, including in the criminal justice system and policing.
* A whole-of-community approach to primary prevention means every organisation, institution and person plays a role in addressing the drivers of violence against women and promoting gender equality. Police can engage with local, state and national frameworks and resources that recommend best practice whole-of-community approaches. This includes linking in with community-based organisations and support services that are expert in the needs of specific cohorts of victim-survivors, so as to understand the context in which the violence is perpetrated. This can help prevent gender-based violence from happening again.
* Condoning of gender-based violence includes actions that excuse, trivialise or justify men’s violence against women, or that blame women for the violence they have experienced. There can be a pattern of using victim-blaming language in the police force which indirectly excuses the perpetrator’s behaviour. This is also a way in which gender-based violence is often condoned by others.
* Opportunities to address the drivers of gender-based violence include:
  + challenging the condoning of violence by avoiding victim-blaming or colluding with perpetrators;
  + challenging gender and other stereotypes about how people who experience gender-based violence should behave, respond or report;
  + promoting respectful and equal relationships among women and men as colleagues and community members; and
  + supporting men and boys to develop healthy masculinities and positive, supportive male peer relationships.
* Some barriers that different groups of women might face – including cultural beliefs, drug and alcohol addiction, financial dependence on the perpetrator, the presence of children in the relationship, etc. – are based on individual attitudes and behaviours. In addition, there are structural and systemic factors that have shaped some women’s experiences with policing and justice institutions. For example, evidence shows that the ongoing impacts of colonisation – which includes negative experiences of, and lack of trust in, government agencies – contribute to high rates of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children.
* The term victim-survivor acknowledges the strength and resilience shown by people who have experienced violence or are currently living with violence, in that they are active survivors rather than passive victims. It is acknowledged that individuals may use other terms to identify themselves, including solely ‘victim’ or ‘survivor’.
* A victim-survivor–centred approach involves victims feeling safe, believed and respected. This includes victim-survivors being supported to feel in control and make decisions about how to deal with the violence, including whether and when to report, and whom to report to, because they are the experts regarding their own experience and their own safety.

### Additional resources

* Our Watch, [A victim/survivor-centred approach to responding to violence](https://ourwatch.sharepoint.com/ctp/Crossteamprojects/13.%20Universities/2.%20Upskillling%20pre-service%20professionals/Practice%20guidance/1.4-Victim-centred-approach-1.pdf%20(ourwatch.org.au))
* Our Watch, [*Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*](https://www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/changing-the-picture/)