



Workplace Equality and Respect

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Working in regional, rural and remote workplaces to prevent violence against women

**Our
WATCH**
End violence against
Women And Their Children



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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 people.

Workplace Equality and Respect documents available on the website

Workplace Equality and Respect Standards

Workplace Equality and Respect Implementation Guide

Workplace Equality and Respect Self-Assessment Tool

Workplace Equality and Respect Key Progress Indicators

Workplace Equality and Respect Staff Survey

Practice guidance: Engaging leaders

Practice guidance: Communications guide

Practice guidance: Dealing with backlash

Practice guidance: Equality and respect for all women - an intersectional approach

Practice guidance: Reducing risk in workplace initiatives to prevent violence against women

Practice guidance: Responding to disclosures

Practice guidance: Understanding your rights in the workplace and Victorian anti-discrimination law

Practice guidance: Workplace responses to staff who perpetrate violence

Practice guidance: Workplace gender equality and the law

Practice guidance: Workplace policies to support equality and respect

Practice guidance: Working in rural, regional and remote workplaces to prevent violence against women

Practice guidance: Workplace support for staff who experience family violence

This guide offers:

- practical advice for undertaking prevention of violence against women initiatives in regional, rural and remote workplaces.

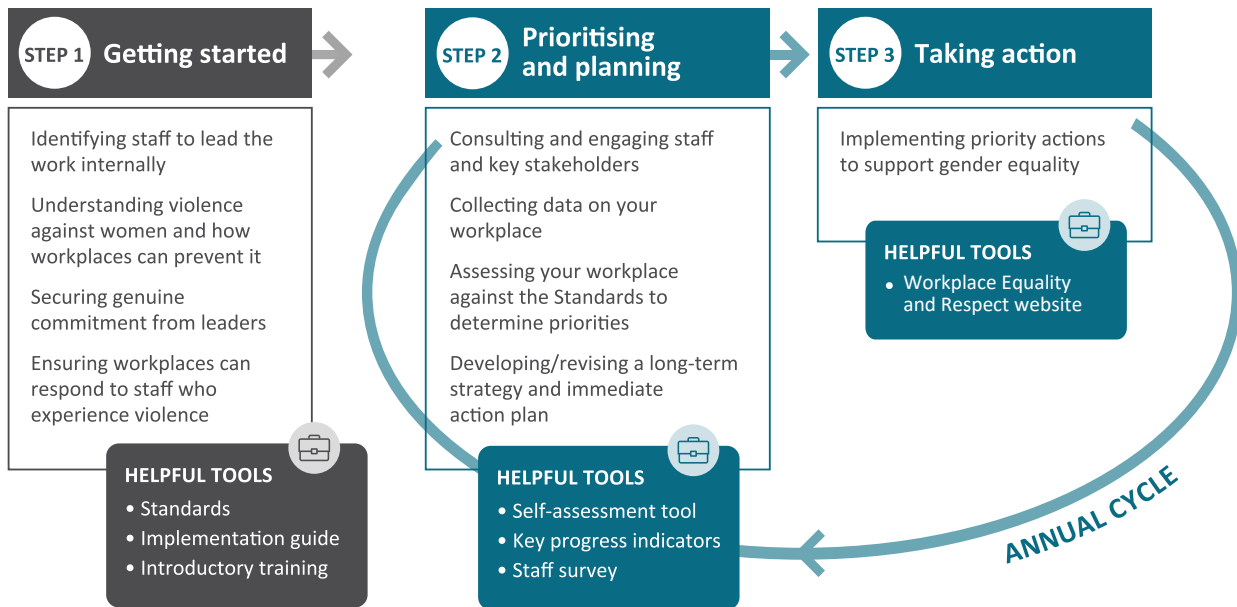
Regional, rural and remote communities and workplaces have unique characteristics including geographic isolation, limited local employment options and inadequate support services and infrastructure. The way in which gender roles and identities are experienced can also be different. These characteristics are further explored in the *Supporting workplace prevention of violence against women in regional, rural and remote communities: Summary paper*.

This guidance is designed as a prompt for people leading prevention initiatives within regional, rural and remote workplaces or others who are partnering with workplaces to support their efforts. It provides practical advice on the actions you may need to take to successfully engage leaders, tailor resources and develop effective strategies to address the drivers of violence against women.

Workplace Equality and Respect | Key steps

The Basics

The next steps



Step 1 | Getting started

Secure leadership commitment

- Use local data and regional, rural and remote-specific images and examples:
 - Collect and collate local data on violence against women and gender inequality so you can provide evidence of the need to do this work in your area and the potential benefits to the community and workplaces.
 - Look for local stories to help give meaning to the drivers and impacts of violence. This will support you to motivate workplace leaders and partners into action.
 - Provide opportunities for workplace leaders to come together to hear about gender equality and violence against women. This can help to galvanise their support and secure their leadership. One idea is to organise a community forum, possibly run by or in partnership with a local business association. This approach can help support the link

between workplace health and safety for women, the business cost of gender inequality and workplace-based family violence initiatives. These themes can be addressed in a general, non-threatening way in the community while providing a foundation for more targeted sessions in workplaces. These sessions could also enable employers (who are likely to also be community leaders in small/rural communities) to self-select as champions to lead workplace-based prevention of violence against women initiatives.

Ensure the workplace can respond to staff who experience violence

- Plan and prepare for disclosures of violence:
 - Response services are sometimes more difficult to access in regional, rural and remote areas. When planning for prevention work, make sure you understand local service systems and develop links with your local support services (family violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault support services). Where access to these services is limited due to geography or inadequate resources, consider this in the design of the program and plan contingencies. For example, where family violence services are only available on certain days, this information should be made available to program staff and external trainers so that they can plan around this. Practical guidelines for planning for disclosures and safety can be found here:
 - *Practice guidance: Responding to disclosures*
 - *Practice guidance: Reducing risk in workplace initiatives to prevent violence against women*
 - If your workplace has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) include the EAP in prevention activities and check to see that they are skilled and trained in supporting victim/survivors of violence.
- Consider people's confidentiality and anonymity:
 - When designing initiatives in regional, rural and remote workplaces – where there is strong interconnectedness and little anonymity – it is important that the confidentiality and safety of employees, their families and members of the community are prioritised. Maintain the confidentiality of people who disclose violence, as well as employees who raise concerns around gender inequitable practices.

- Design your activities in a manner that does not identify one workplace, team or site. Take care not to identify a specific problem around violence or gender equality so that you don't inadvertently identify a particular workplace or individuals. This is particularly important in smaller or more isolated areas. If you are limiting your activities to one team or place, make sure that they are involved in the decision and support that decision.

Step 2 | Prioritising and planning

Consult and engage staff and key stakeholders

- Be collaborative, and use existing networks and leaders:
 - Partner with key local organisations experienced in prevention work, such as the regional women's health service.
 - Partner with local community organisations or invite them to participate in prevention activities. This allows you to draw on existing community leadership outside of the workplace as well as provide greater reach to people in isolated workplaces, such as farmers, bus/truck drivers or people who are self-employed. These community members are likely to mix with others in service clubs, sport and recreation activities or special interest groups; e.g. environmental groups.

Develop a long-term strategy and immediate action plan

- Do your work 'where people are at':
 - Design your prevention of violence against women and gender equality programs to meet staff and community members 'where they are at'. Use stories about violence against women and gender equality that are already being discussed within your local community and workplace as a 'way in' to discussing these topics more broadly. However if using a specific local example, it is important that consent is sought from the people involved and confidentiality maintained where necessary.
 - There might be other issues that are being discussed in your community or workplace, such as the arrival of a new immigrant community or discussion around sexual and gender diversity. These discussions can be a way to open the door for broader conversations around gender equality.
- Budget for training, resource development and workforce capacity building:

- Budget and plan for the design and production of prevention resources that are specific to your community and workplace and/or the types of workplaces that are found in your community. For example, you might include data, images and messaging about agriculture or healthcare and include data separately for women and men. These tailored resources can be used in conjunction with state or national prevention resources that might not be specific to your community but have clear prevention messaging and tools for you to use.
- When tailoring your resources, select imagery and graphics that represent diversity in age, ability, culture, ethnicity, gender and sexuality.
- Plan to support staff working on your project:
 - Establish a local or regional ‘community of practice’ to support your work. This is a forum that supports people to come together and discuss the challenges and successes of their work (in this case, prevention of violence against women) with others doing similar work. Communities of practice are useful in regional, rural and remote areas where there is not a large prevention workforce and often there is only one person doing similar work in that workplace. Communities of practice can meet on the phone, online, using online meeting software, face to face or a combination of these.
 - Human resources personnel are key in prevention work. Because of isolation, it is important to enhance their capacity to do this work through networks, industry organisation membership, and engagement with the prevention of violence against women specialists.
- Plan for evaluation:
 - At the planning stage it is important to budget and plan for an evaluation of your project. This will include collecting and analysing data specific to your workplace and context. If your workplace doesn’t have evaluation expertise, you might partner with an organisation that does, such as your local women’s health services, universities, Primary Care Partnerships or community health services.

Step 3 | Taking action

Implement priority action to support gender equality

- Ensure training delivery and context is relevant to the local context and resources:
 - Ensure external prevention and gender equality experts understand the local context when working in regional, rural and remote communities. This includes making sure they understand where there may be distinct or particularly common gender stereotypes and the types of male- or female-dominated workplaces in your community.
 - Recognise the challenges posed by geographic isolation, lack of reliable internet access and the impact on staff members' ability to attend trainings, meetings and events. Tailor and support initiatives to meet the needs of workplaces and their staff. For example:
 - Consider partnering with workplaces doing similar work or who might be allies in this work. This allows you to share costs and provide more flexible training delivery models, such as offering training on different days or in different locations.
 - Consider developing online training modules to allow staff in remote or distant locations to participate, but be sure those who don't have internet access can access paper copies of training materials.
- Talk to other organisations doing similar work in your area to ensure consistent messaging between and within workplaces.
- Work with local media to bring attention to your work and help promote activities. Provide them with local and workplace-specific examples of prevention work to include in their media.
- Support media in your local area to become more fully informed about violence against women and gender equality issues to enhance their reporting.

Further information	
Evidence-based Standards and tools to support workplace prevention of violence against women	Workplace Equality and Respect Standards: Implementation Guide, Practice guidance documents and resources on the website.
Report outlining key issues for workplace prevention of violence against women in regional, rural and remote communities	Supporting workplace prevention of violence against women in regional, rural and remote communities: Summary paper
Evidence about what drives violence against women	Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia Available at: https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/c81eceab-c8a0-4f3a-a6fb-2202334b398b/Change-the-story-framework-prevent-violence-women-children-AA-new.pdf.aspx
Practical guidance on how to address the drivers of violence against women	Putting the prevention of violence against women into practice: How to change the story Available at: https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/a8d9dc3d-2291-48a6-82f8-68f1a955ce24/Putting-prevention-into-practice-AA-web.pdf.aspx