Engaging Men and Boys in Violence Prevention

Literature Review Summary

Preventing Violence Together (PVT) conducted a review 27 of peer-reviewed journal articles that pertained to the engagement of men and boys in the prevention of men's violence against women. These articles used a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods, with semi-structured interviews or focus groups with participants being the most consistently used. Research participants were often men who worked in violence prevention in some capacity, who reflected on how they entered violence prevention work, or what they had observed in the course of that work. Some participant groups were perpetrators of violence who reflected on what would have helped them avoid violence. Data was sourced from across the world, with some studies focused on certain jurisdictions, including Australia. Several authors were consistently referenced in this review including Erin Casey and Michael Flood, and many of the articles reference each other which indicates a degree of consistency across the research. Articles were identified using Google Scholar and other academic databases. Key terms for searches included "engaging men and boys", "violence prevention", "primary prevention", "masculinity", and "masculinities".

Research reveals some important considerations for this work. Firstly, that engaging men and boys is difficult and complicated work for a variety of reasons. This is stated explicitly in Casey et al. (2013) where they identify 5 tensions in this work: (1) negotiating issues of gender, (2) intersectionality, (3) sustainability, (4) legitimacy, and (5) ideological inclusivity. Much of the other research also includes discussions of difficulties, such as men exhibiting defensiveness in response to gender equality work. Waling et al. (2022) quote a participant in their study:

> "I have found in the past the challenge is when we go into a school that the young men would be Iike – 'why am I doing this, I'm not going to be violent,' and you're almost up against it straight away a little bit, their backs up against the wall." (p.247)

The immediate resistance or defensiveness around the idea of gender inequality or men's violence may highlight a broader lack of understanding and discomfort engaging in conversations about this issue. That would suggest that when developing programs to engage men and boys, practitioners should be cognisant of tailoring their efforts to the level of understanding of the group they intend to work with and manage their expectations regarding progress.

Secondly, that there is little conclusive evidence about effective engagement with men and boys over the long term. Much of the research focuses on the initial engagement of men in the prevention of violence against women, and very focuses on how that engagement is sustained in the long term. This is acknowledged in some of the research, which calls for

more robust evaluation tools that themselves need to be embedded in the long term to adequately measure the effectiveness of these programs. For instance:

> "… The outcome of this review, including the lack of follow up data collection reported, are supportive of the need for increased investment in longitudinal follow-up, particularly in relation to measuring behaviour change and ensuring maintenance of observed changes to attitudes and behaviour over time" (Stewart et al., 2021, p.11).

This highlights the need for robust and embedded program evaluation. It enables the gathering of data that can be used to fill this gap in the research.

Thirdly, that core elements of primary prevention are intrinsically tied to engaging men and boys. For example, Steward et al. (2021) identify that addressing more than one level of the ecological framework is a strategy for improving programming with men and boys. Wells et al., (2023)discuss the importance of strengths-based practice, which appears in other articles, as does trauma-informed practice, culturally secure practice, and more. This demonstrates that the Foundations for Change framework, which includes the above elements as key components of primary prevention, is applicable to work to engage men and boys.

Finally, that there is no one size fits all approach to engaging men and boys. Almost every article reviewed indicated that programs need to be tailored to the context in which they are being delivered. Casey et al. (2016) effectively summarise this idea in their second domain of initial outreach:

> "Dovetailing with the notion of engagement through existing social connections is the clear mandate to situate outreach and prevention efforts within the norms, culture, and structures of men's communities. Across the literature, this has been operationalized as supporting community mobilizations from within natural community leadership structures and as formative qualitative work with men who are members of "target" communities prior to initiation of outreach." (p.235)

Principles for engaging men and boys in the primary prevention of men's violence against women

Based on this review, PVT identified the following 6 principles for engaging men and boys in the primary prevention of men's violence against women. Through the literature review process and discussions with stakeholders it was identified that some of this foundational knowledge is important for practitioners to know and embed in their practice but is not necessarily accessible for wider audiences. Therefore, we have categorised the actions under each principle as 'Embedded', to be implicitly incorporated into practice or 'Direct Messaging', to be explicitly communicated to audiences.

Principles:

1. Work in the local context
   a. Embedded:
      i. Meet men where they are at both in their level of understanding of the issue of violence AND where they are physically meeting and interacting
      ii. Identify local needs and capacities, and leverage local resources and social infrastructure
      iii. Identify target audiences
   b. Direct Messaging:
      i. Co-design with target audiences

2. Use a strengths-based approach
   a. Embedded:
      i. Approach work with men using empathy and compassion
   b. Direct Messaging:
      i. Invite men to use their skills and power
      ii. Build skills and knowledge to further empower men to take action

3. Respond effectively to resistance and backlash
   a. Embedded:
      i. Prioritise safety and seek support
      ii. Understand your context and prepare in advance
      iii. Find and build relationships with allies
   b. Direct Messaging:
      i. Be reflective rather than reactive
      ii. Practice!

4. Work through male peer relations
   a. Embedded:
      i. When exploring violence prevention create safe spaces where men can be open and honest
   b. Direct Messaging:
      i. Leverage topics of concern to men that overlap with primary prevention/gender equality
      ii. Help men come to their own conclusions about prevention and what their role can be

5. Maintain intersectional and feminist lenses
    a. Embedded:
        i. Ensure culturally secure practice
        ii. Include the concepts of violence prevention scholarship (intersectionality, feminism, gender transformative) in design and practice
    b. Direct Messaging:
        i. Upskill critical reflection

6. Aim for sustainable practice
    a. Embedded:
        i. Focus on the target audience
        ii. Make this part of everyday practice
    b. Direct Messaging:
        i. Offer multiple opportunities consistently

References

Abebe, K. Z., Jones, K. A., Culyba, A. J., Feliz, N. B., Anderson, H., Torres, I., Zelazny, S., Bamwine, P., Boateng, A., Cirba, B., Detchon, A., Devine, D., Feinstein, Z., Macak, J., Massof, M., Miller-Walfish, S., Morrow, S. E., Mulbah, P., Mulwa, Z., … Miller, E. (2018). Engendering healthy masculinities to prevent sexual violence: Rationale for and design of the Manhood 2.0 trial. *Contemporary Clinical Trials*, *71*, 18–32. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cct.2018.05.017

Allen, C. T., Carlson, J., Casey, E. A., Tolman, R. M., & Leek, C. (2019). Examining Men's Perceptions of GBV Prevention Programming Content. *Violence against Women*, *25*(5), 614–632. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801218796324

Burrell, S. R. (2018). The contradictory possibilities of engaging men and boys in the prevention of men's violence against women in the UK. *Journal of Gender-Based Violence*, *2*(3), 447–464. https://doi.org/10.1332/239868018X15375304850617

Burrell, S. R. (2023). 'Cause We're All Just Part of the System Really': Complicity and Resistance in Young Sportsmen's Responses to Violence Against Women Prevention Campaigns in England. *Sociological Research Online*, *28*(2), 336–354. https://doi.org/10.1177/13607804211049463

Carlson, J., Allen, C. T., Leek, C., Storer, H., Casey, E., & Tolman, R. M. (2017). Participants' Perceptions of the Nature of Events Aimed at Engaging Men to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence. *Global Social Welfare : Research, Policy & Practice*, *4*(2), 91–103. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40609-017-0083-7

Carlson, J., Casey, E., Edleson, J. L., Tolman, R. M., Walsh, T. B., & Kimball, E. (2015). Strategies to Engage Men and Boys in Violence Prevention: A Global Organizational Perspective. *Violence against Women*, *21*(11), 1406–1425. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801215594888

Casey, E. A., Allen, C. T., Tolman, R. M., Carlson, J. M., & Leek, C. (2019). Walking the Walk or Just Talk?: A Global Examination of Men's Intentions to Take Violence Preventative Action. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, *28*(9), 1038–1056. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2018.1446480

Casey, E., Carlson, J., Bulls, S. T., & Yager, A. (2018). Gender Transformative Approaches to Engaging Men in Gender-Based Violence Prevention: A Review and Conceptual Model. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, *19*(2), 231–246. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838016650191

Casey, E. A., Carlson, J., Fraguela-Rios, C., Kimball, E., Neugut, T. B., Tolman, R. M., & Edleson, J. L. (2013). Context, Challenges, and Tensions in Global Efforts to Engage Men in the Prevention of Violence against Women: An Ecological Analysis. *Men and Masculinities*, *16*(2), 228–251. https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X12472336

Casey, E. A., Ihrig, A., Roman, M., Hoxmeier, J. C., Carlson, J., & Greer, K. (2022). Life Course and Socioecological Influences on Gender-Equitable Attitudes Among Men: A Scoping Review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *23*(3), 764–777. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838020977140

Casey, E. A., Leek, C., Tolman, R. M., Allen, C. T., & Carlson, J. M. (2017). Getting men in the room: perceptions of effective strategies to initiate men's involvement in gender-based violence prevention in a global sample. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, *19*(9), 979–995. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2017.1281438

Casey, E. A., Tolman, R. M., Carlson, J., Allen, C. T., & Storer, H. L. (2017). What Motivates Men's Involvement in Gender-based Violence Prevention? Latent Class Profiles and Correlates in an International Sample of Men. *Men and Masculinities*, *20*(3), 294–316. https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X16634801

Crooks, C. V., Goodall, G. R., Hughes, R., Jaffe, P. G., & Baker, L. L. (2007). Engaging Men and Boys in Preventing Violence Against Women: Applying a Cognitive–Behavioral Model. *Violence against Women*, *13*(3), 217–239. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801206297336

Duley, P., Botfield, J. R., Ritter, T., Wicks, J., & Brassil, A. (2017). The strong family program: An innovative model to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and elders with reproductive and sexual health community education. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, *28*(2), 132–138. https://doi.org/10.1071/HE16015

George, J., Morton Ninomiya, M., Graham, K., Bernards, S., & Wells, S. (2019). The rationale for developing a programme of services by and for indigenous men in a first nations community. *AlterNative : An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, *15*(2), 158–167. https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180119841620

Keddie, A. (2020). Engaging boys and young men in gender transformation: the possibilities and limits of a pedagogy of empathy. *Norma : International Journal for Masculinity Studies*, *15*(2), 97–110. https://doi.org/10.1080/18902138.2019.1706883

Keddie, A., Hewson-Munro, S., Halafoff, A., Delaney, M., & Flood, M. (2023). Programmes for boys and men: possibilities for gender transformation. *Gender and Education*, *35*(3), 250–266. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2022.2147670

Laws, T. A., & Bradley, H. (2003). Transmission of health knowledge and health practices from men to boys among Aboriginal communities and non-Indigenous Australians: Searching for evidence. *Contemporary Nurse : A Journal for the Australian Nursing Profession*, *15*(3), 249–261. https://doi.org/10.5172/conu.15.3.249

McCook, S. (2022). "So, What is a Good Masculinity?": Navigating Normativity in Violence Prevention with Men and Boys. *Australian Feminist Studies*, *37*(111), 37–53. https://doi.org/10.1080/08164649.2022.2095612

Miller, E., Culyba, A. J., Paglisotti, T., Massof, M., Gao, Q., Ports, K. A., Kato-Wallace, J., Pulerwitz, J., Espelage, D. L., Abebe, K. Z., & Jones, K. A. (2020). Male Adolescents' Gender Attitudes and Violence: Implications for Youth Violence Prevention. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, *58*(3), 396–406. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2019.10.009

Morrison, P. K., Miller, E. P., Burke, J., Cluss, P., Fleming, R., Hawker, L., George, D., Bicehouse, T., Wright, K., & Chang, J. C. (2018). Adult Male Perpetrators' Perspectives on What Prevention Approaches Work Best for Young Boys at Risk of Future Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, *27*(2), 179–198. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2017.1320346

Opsal, T., Aguilar, J., & Briggs, S. (2019). The Promises and Pitfalls of Engaging Male Juvenile Offenders in Gender Violence Prevention and Bystander Education. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *34*(21–22), 4384–4403. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260516675466

Ringin, L., Robinson, M., Greville, H., Papertalk, L., & Thompson, S. (2021). Men against violence: Engaging men and boys in prevention of family violence. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, *32*(2), 322–325. https://doi.org/10.1002/hpja.343

Stewart, R., Wright, B., Smith, L., Roberts, S., & Russell, N. (2021). Gendered stereotypes and norms: A systematic review of interventions designed to shift attitudes and behaviour. *Heliyon*, *7*(4), e06660–e06660. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e06660

Waling, A., James, A., & FAIRCHILD, J. (2023). 'I'm not going anywhere near that': Expert stakeholder challenges in working with boys and young men regarding sex and sexual consent. *Critical Social Policy*, *43*(2), 234–256. https://doi.org/10.1177/02610183221103817

Wells, L., Fotheringham, S., & Pascoe, L. (2024). Insights on Engaging Men and Boys in Creating a More Gender Equal Future in Canada. *Violence against Women*, *30*(1), 297–322. https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012231203621

Whiteside, M., Klieve, H., Millgate, N., Webb, B., Gabriel, Z., McPherson, L., & Tsey, K. (2016). Connecting and Strengthening Young Aboriginal Men: A Family Wellbeing Pilot Study. *Australian Social Work*, *69*(2), 241–252. https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2015.1137101