

TOGETHER *we* CAN

Act now to end Family Violence in Cardinia Shire

Prevention of Family Violence First Aid - Aligned Leisure

Evaluation Report



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Evaluation of Preventing Family Violence First Aid Training - Aligned Leisure Centres Cardinia

Background

Family violence and gender-based violence are pervasive and increasing in our communities. Yet, this serious and life-threatening issue is preventable. Our Watch states that violence is preventable but for us to stop it before it starts, we need to understand the drivers of gendered violence and what we can do together to prevent it.

This is where the idea of first aid comes in. "First Aid" is a frame of reference that seeks to empower non-clinical and/or specialist skill personnel on how to intervene to support the health and wellbeing of a person so it does not escalate to put the person's life at undue risk. The concept has been typically used to enable the broadening of people in our community who can skilfully intervene to preserve life, prevent a condition from getting worse, and promoting recovery.

The concept of a first aider is also based on the idea that an individual can take action, make a difference and do this in many settings. Importantly, first aiders are members of the public who, because of their actions, commitment and skills, have an informed framework of how to address issues in our community and reduce stigma and discrimination. It is this concept of the first aider that was used to develop a non-formal learning program for members of the community and public called Preventing Family Violence First Aid.

Preventing Family Violence First Aid is the first of its kind. The pilot program was run throughout March to May 2023 and demonstrated increased understanding of key concepts and increased confidence.

During August to November 2023, Preventing Family Violence First Aid was delivered to people who worked in Cardinia Shire. Participants were asked to complete two surveys; one at the beginning of the program and one at the end to measure the effectiveness of the program.

About Preventing Family Violence First Aid Training

The training program consisted of seven sessions which were delivered by one WHISE staff and one Cardinia Shire staff. The first session was designed to be a briefing/introductory session. The following six sessions delivered training content on the following topics:

- Module 1 - Family violence: What is it and why does it happen
- Module 2 - Fundamentals of gender equality
- Module 3 - Bystander action in community and workplaces

- Module 4 - Managing resistance and backlash
- Module 5 - Managing and referring disclosures respectfully and safely
- Module 6 - Practicing self-care

Program aims

Preventing Family Violence First Aid has three aims:

1. Program participants will be able to act appropriately to prevent family violence and gender-based violence.
2. Program participants will be able to respond appropriately to family violence and gender-based violence.
3. There will be uptake of the course delivery across partners.

Program objectives

The objectives of this program were to:

1. Increase understanding of the prevalence and drivers of family violence and gender-based violence.
2. Increase understanding of how to be an active bystander in different settings.
3. Increase confidence to stop the poor behaviours that lead to family violence and gender-based violence.
4. Increase confidence to implement safe and respectful ways to manage and refer disclosures.
5. Increase confidence to appropriately respond to resistance and backlash.
6. Increase capacity to notice when to practice self-care.
7. Generate interest to complete train the trainer.

Who attended the training?

Twelve people (58% women, 42% men) attended Preventing Family Violence First Aid. The majority of participants worked for Aligned Leisure with a small number from Community First Responders Australia, Pakenham Secondary College, and the Education Department. All participants were attending the training for work.

Findings and discussion

Objective 1: Increase understanding of the prevalence and drivers of family violence and gender-based violence

Participants rated their understanding of:

- How family violence is defined.
- The different forms of family violence.
- The prevalence of family violence in their local community and Australia.
- The drivers of family violence.

As can be seen in Figures 1 to 4, there were overall increases for all measures. While some participants rated their understanding as *very low*, *low*, or *neutral* (meaning, neither low nor high) before the training program, almost everyone felt that they had a *high* or *very high* level of understanding once they had attended the six training sessions. Only two people felt that they had a *neutral* level of understanding of the prevalence of family violence following the training (see Figure 3).

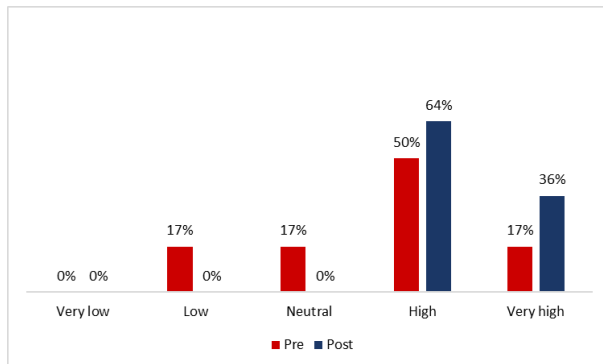


Figure 1. Pre- and post-program ratings of understanding how family violence is defined.

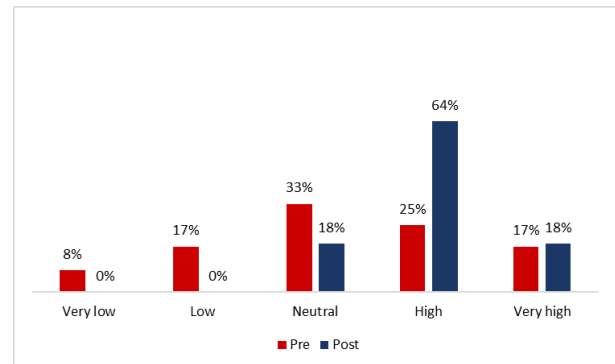


Figure 3. Pre- and post-program ratings of understanding how much family violence is happening.

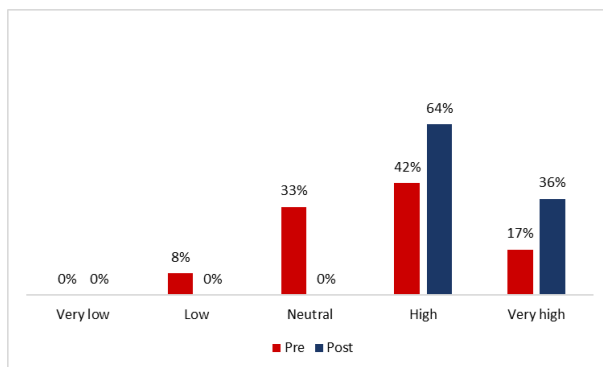


Figure 2. Pre- and post-program ratings of understanding the different forms of family violence.

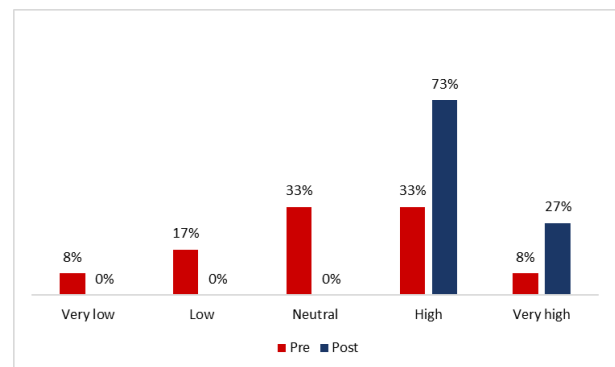


Figure 4. Pre- and post-program ratings of understanding why family violence happens.

These ratings of understanding can be recoded so that they become a scale whereby very low = 1, low = 2, neither low nor high = 3, high = 4, and very high = 5. In doing this, it is possible to analyse whether the difference in mean ratings before and after the training program were statistically significant. The analyses found that the difference in mean ratings for understanding the different forms of family violence ($p = .044$, $r = -.46$) and understanding why family violence happens ($p = .008$, $r = -.61$) were statistically significant. The mean increase in understanding were statistically low to moderate¹ as indicated by the Rank Biserial Correlation (r).

¹ Cohen, J. W., 1998. *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. 2nd ed. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associated.

While there were increases in understanding for the other two measures, the differences from pre to post were not statistically significant. This is perhaps because levels of understanding were already relatively high, as can be seen in Figures 1 and 3.

It can therefore be concluded that the first objective was achieved as program participants demonstrated increased understanding of family violence and its prevalence, and why family violence happens (i.e., the drivers of family violence).

Objective 2: Increase understanding of how to be an active bystander in different settings

Participants were asked to rate their understanding of how to be an active bystander in different settings. As can be seen in Figure 5, levels of understanding ranged from *very low* to *high* before attending the training. Following the training, all participants rated their understanding as *high* or *very high*.

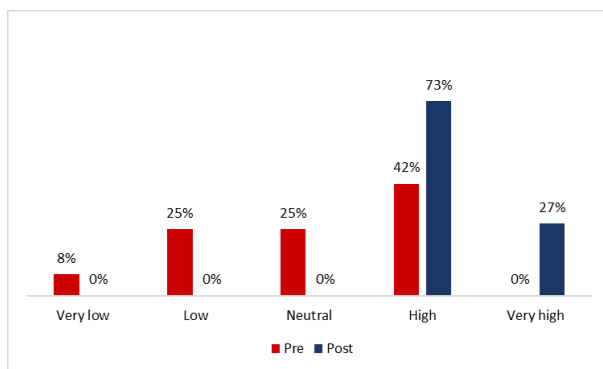


Figure 5. Pre- and post-program ratings of understanding how to be an active bystander in different contexts.

The mean ratings of understanding before and after the training program were found to be statistically significantly different ($p = .002$, $r = -.70$). The increased understanding was statistically large which shows that the second objective of Preventing Family Violence First Aid was achieved. Participants successfully increased their understanding of how to be an active bystander in different settings.

Objective 3: Increase confidence to stop the poor behaviours that lead to family violence and gender-based violence

In addition to understanding how to be an active bystander, the program aimed to increase the confidence of participants to take bystander action and challenging sexism, sexual harassment, gender inequality and other forms of discrimination. Figures 6 and 7 show that confidence increased on both measures following the training.

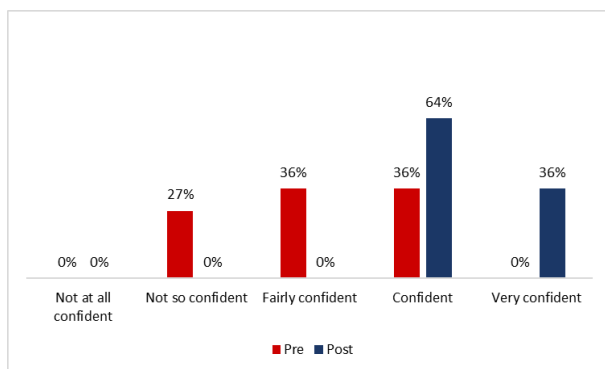


Figure 6. Pre- and post-program ratings of confidence to safely challenge sexism, sexual harassment, gender inequality and other forms of discrimination in the workplace.

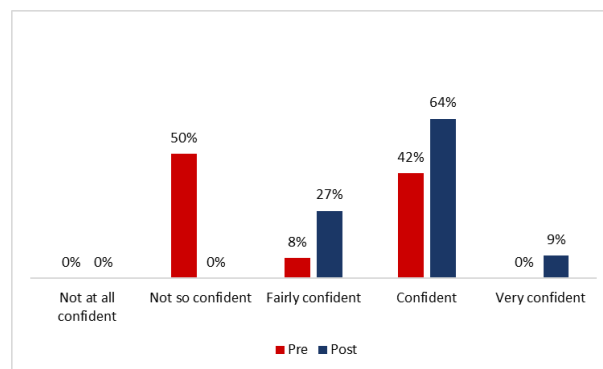


Figure 7. Pre- and post-program ratings of confidence to take bystander action in different contexts.

The mean difference in ratings of confidence from before and after the training were statistically significant for both measures. That is, participants were statistically significantly more confident to safely challenge poor behaviours that lead to family violence ($p = .001$, $r = -.77$) and take bystander action ($p = .034$, $r = -.49$) following the training program. The increases in confidence were statistically large and moderate, respectively. This is noteworthy as it can be harder to increase confidence as we are asking people to put their learning into action which requires a deeper understanding and application of knowledge. In this case, it can be more challenging to increase confidence because we are asking people to confront others and their poor behaviours. It is therefore worth highlighting that this objective was achieved.

Objective 4: Increase confidence to implement safe and respectful ways to manage and refer disclosures

To measure this objective, participants were first asked to rate their understanding of how to receive and refer disclosures of family violence from either a victim or a perpetrator. As can be seen in Figure 8, the majority of participants rated their understanding as *low* or *neutral* before the training. This increased following the training with almost all participants having *high* or *very high* understanding. In fact, the mean ratings of understanding before and after the training were found to be statistically significantly different ($p < .001$, $r = -.84$) with a statistically large increase.

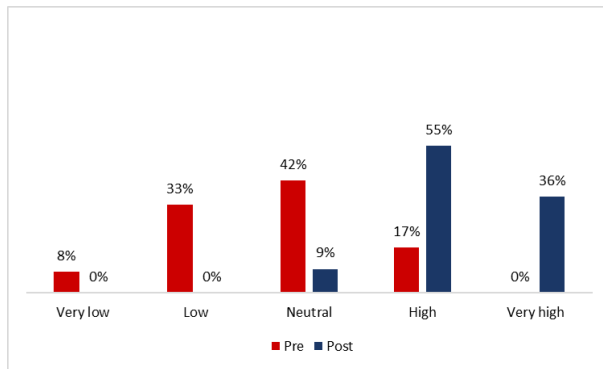


Figure 8. Pre- and post-program ratings of understanding how to receive and refer disclosures of family violence from a victim/perpetrator.

Confidence to effectively receive, manage and refer disclosures from a victim were low to moderate before the training (see Figure 9). Following the training, most people felt *confident* and *very confident*.

Before the training, confidence to receive, manage and refer disclosures from a perpetrator were low with most people feeling *not so confident* (see Figure 10). After the training program, participants had a moderate to high level of confidence but perhaps require follow-up resources or support to increase their confidence.

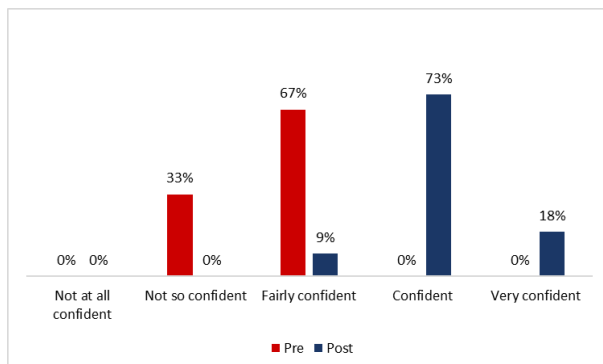


Figure 9. Pre- and post-program ratings of confidence to effectively receive, manage and refer disclosures from a victim.

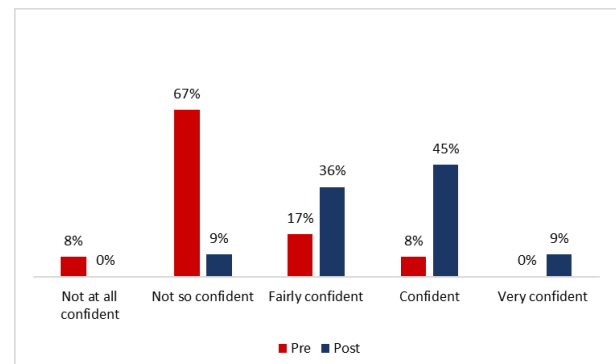


Figure 10. Pre- and post-program ratings of confidence to effectively receive, manage and refer disclosures from a perpetrator.

The mean ratings of confidence before and after the training were found to be statistically significantly different. Participants were therefore more confident to receive, manage and refer disclosures from a victim ($p < .001$, $r = -.94$) and a perpetrator ($p = .002$, $r = -.74$). It should be noted that these increases in confidence were statistically large which is a big achievement given that most participants had low confidence before attending Preventing Family Violence First Aid.

Objective 5: Increase confidence to appropriately respond to resistance and backlash

Participants rated their understanding of how to manage resistance and backlash. Figure 11 shows that understanding was typically *low* to *neutral* before the training program and increased to *high* and *very high*. This increase in understanding was statistically significant and large ($p < .001$, $r = -.83$).

As can be seen in Figure 12, most participants had a low to moderate level of confidence to appropriately manage resistance and backlash. Following the training program, the majority of participants felt *confident* and *very confident*, however, a small proportion still had low confidence. The change in confidence was statistically significant ($p = .007$, $r = -.64$) and the increase was statistically moderate which is a great outcome given that responding to resistance and backlash can be confronting and difficult.

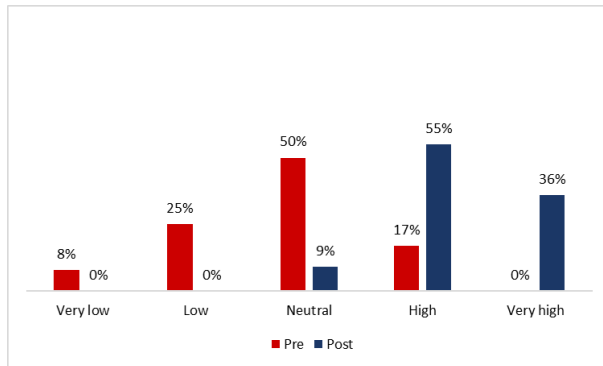


Figure 11. Pre- and post-program ratings of understanding how to manage resistance and backlash.

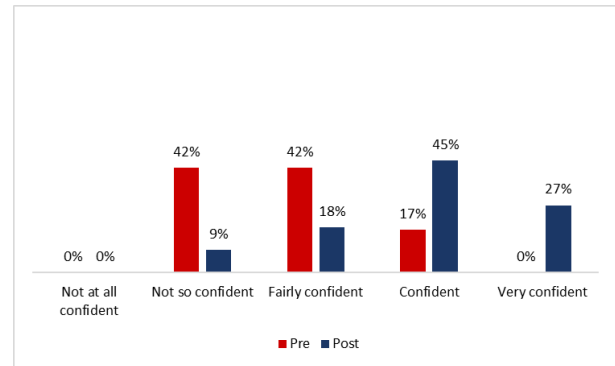


Figure 12. Pre- and post-program ratings of confidence to appropriately manage resistance and backlash.

Given these findings, it is clear that this objective was achieved as participants not only increased their understanding of how to manage resistance and backlash, but they also demonstrated increased confidence to appropriately respond to it.

Objective 6: Increase capacity to notice when to practice self-care

To measure this objective, participants were asked to rate their confidence to:

- Make a plan for their own self-care.
- Notice when they are feeling stressed and respond by practicing self-care.

Figure 13 shows that confidence was varied before the training program but afterwards, the majority of participants felt a level of *confident* to make a plan for their own self-care. Following the training, however, almost all participants felt *confident*.

As can be seen in Figure 14, participants were predominantly *fairly confident* or *confident* to notice when they are feeling stressed and to respond by practicing self-care. Nonetheless, following the training, there was an increase in confidence with a noteworthy increased proportion of people who felt *very confident*.

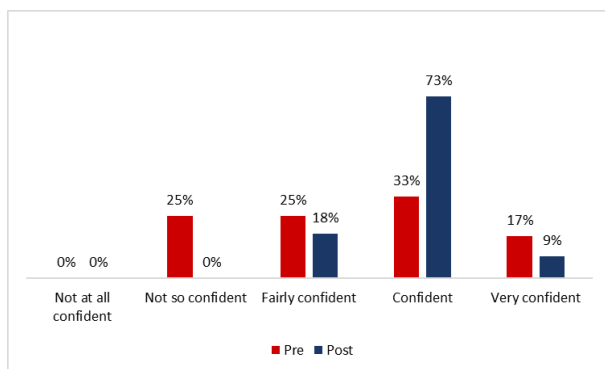


Figure 13. Pre- and post-program ratings of confidence to make a plan for your own self-care.

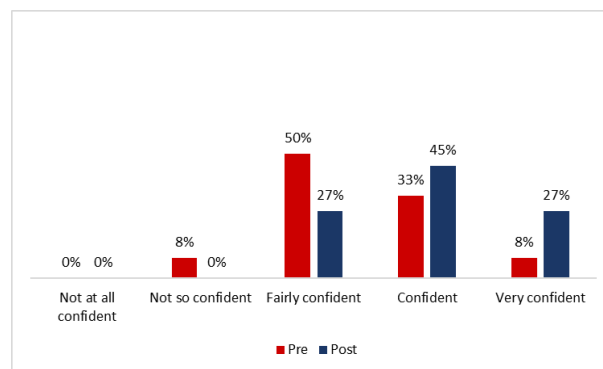


Figure 14. Pre- and post-program ratings of confidence to notice when you are feeling stressed and respond by practicing self-care.

Although the mean increases in confidence were not statistically significant for either measure, this objective was still achieved as participants demonstrated an increased confidence and capacity to notice when to practice self-care.

Objective 7: Generate interest to complete train the trainer

It was hoped that following the training program, there would be interest in completing train the trainer so that more people can run Preventing Family Violence First Aid with other participants in different settings. Of the 12 people who attended the training program, five people were interested in learning how to deliver this program to others. Three responded *maybe* with an interest to find out more.

Confidence to apply learnings

All participants said that they felt confident to apply their learnings from Preventing Family Violence First Aid. A few people felt more confident to be able to “recognise, respond and refer.” Being able to “speak up” and feeling “empowered further to speak up” were also discussed by some participants.

The training also increased confidence for some participants as they learned about the “appropriate methods for certain situations” and “knowing what steps to take to help someone.”

Learning about the “facts and statistics” enabled some participants to feel confident to “speak up on issues of gender discrimination” and raise awareness amongst others.

Key learnings

The majority of participants commented that a key learning was understanding the different forms of family violence and being able to identify them. For instance, one person remarked on “The depth and variety of family violence that exists.”

Being able to appropriately respond to disclosures of violence was also frequently included as a key learning. Comments included, “How to respond & refer appropriately” and “How to manage disclosures.”

A few people spoke about knowing how to take bystander action as being a key learning. For example, one person said, "The right procedure of being an active bystander." Another commented that it was significant learn about "active bystander mentality."

Other key learnings included understanding the "drivers of FV" and the importance of this training program. That is, one person stated,

We should encourage as many people as possible to participate in this training. Everyone can play a part and let's prevent women from dying from domestic violence.

Further support

Several participants requested catchups and an online space for "the group to reach out for questions, support etc." Similarly, someone commented that they "would love to stay in contact with the group! It would be lovely to meet every now and then and share how we have used and applied our learnings."

Some people felt it would be useful to attend an "annual refresher." Also to receive ongoing support, for instance, "continued and updated resources on the impacts and real world examples of family violence."

The ability to participate in role plays was also requested by one person who said, "Method acting out scenarios of how to handle disclosures."