



PVT Communities of Practice: Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality - Evaluation

Last year (year three), our Communities of Practice (CoP) focused on inviting key matter experts to hear the emerging evidence-base on engaging men and boys in gender equality. This year, the focus is on hearing from organisations in our region who are currently planning or running programs designed to shape healthier norms and attitudes for Australian men and boys.

On 17 September 2020, representatives from 19 different organisations (86% women and 14% men) across local government, youth development and support, education and community services attended the first Communities of Practice (CoP) for year four of the Preventing Violence Together (PVT) Strategy.

Jewish Care presented the work they are doing to engage men and boys in gender equality in their diverse community and the Department of Education and Training, The Men's Project and Edithvale Primary School presented on the work they are doing in respectful relationship schools, on how to free boys from outdated gendered expectations. Both organisations spoke about the importance of values-based and strength-based messaging and referenced the [Framing Masculinities Message Guide](#).

Members attitudes about traditional masculine stereotypes

Statement: Men freed from traditional masculine stereotypes enjoy better physical and mental wellbeing

Further to the CoP, there was an increase of support for the statement above, with 73% strongly agreeing with the statement, compared to 64% prior to CoP.



Statement: There are things all men can do to end violence against women

The post CoP survey demonstrates a marked increase in support for the statement above.



Confidence in applying effective and persuasive messaging for gender equality initiatives

Increase in CoP member's confidence with 60% of respondents reporting they were confident, compared to 31% prior to CoP.



Key practical challenges of planning and implementing initiatives to engage men and boys in gender equality

Responses were categorised into four categories (1) engagement, (2) challenging stereotypes, (3) Encountering resistance and backlash and (4) practical challenges "the how".

Key Practical Solutions

1. The importance of language, the principles of effective framing and values-based messaging

- "Reframing key messages is really useful - resources from VicHealth"
- "Get the language/messaging right"
- "Avoid crafting messaging upon traditional ideas about masculinity - as for instance, 'Man up' etc."
- "Create strength-based messages, rather than negative ones, i.e. freeing men from stereotypes"
- "I really liked the idea of delving into masculinities as a plural"
- "The Man Box and the need to support men/boys by framing the solution rather than a new or better form of masculinity"
- "Focus on men's wellbeing as a starting point, to increase buy-in from young men"

2. Modelling and how to foster engagement including:

- "Important when working with young men who are disruptive, to consider he may have been exposed to a limited range of gender messages about ideal masculinity"
- "Pornography is another way to start the conversation which would capture people's attention"
- "Just having teachers role modelling is a great option. Always have teachers addressing behaviour and explaining why and following up to let kids know you support them"

Most significant take away

Get the language/messaging right

Importance of language to break stereotype

Gender stereotypes are not good for anyone

- Pleased to see the move away from 'toxic masculinity'

Benefits to men

