

Intersectionality and Diverse Communities (I&DC)

Terms of Reference

Background

Womens Health in the South East (WHISE) is the lead health promotion agency for women's health in the Southern Metropolitan Region (SMR) of Melbourne. 'Preventing Violence Together (PVT) – A Regional Strategy for the Southern Metropolitan 2016-2021', was developed in collaboration with PVT partners. The role and purpose of the strategy is to explain the causes of violence and to take collective action.

In 2020-2021, we are now in the fourth and final year of this regional strategy. The two Communities of Practices (CoPs) have seen strong partner commitment and focus on:

- Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality (GE)
- Intersectionality and Diverse Communities (I&DC)

The Intersectionality and Diverse Communities CoP has evolved from its first year of implementation in year three, which was heavily driven by WHISE. The intention for the CoPs in year four, is to grow and expand the membership of the COP and realign to the key principles of a communities of practice, which is member-led and centres on collaborative thinking and learning.

Governance

Roles and Responsibilities

Women's Health in the South East (WHISE) provides overall leadership of the PVT Strategy, and as such will continue this role in supporting the two CoPs, in the four-year action plan.

WHISE will provide administrative function of the Intersectionality and Diverse Communities CoPs by:

- organising COP meetings
- facilitating PVT Partner input / opportunity to share work (learnings)
- managing membership
- communicating back the Working Groups and Steering Committee,
- evaluation
- dissemination of key resources

The Intersectionality and Diverse Communities CoP remains PVT owned, but members can welcome key matter experts from outside of the region, to attend and maximise the learnings of this collaborative shared space.

Purpose:

Partner consultation revealed a need and want to continue the focus on intersectional practice and working with diverse communities. The purpose of the Communities of Practice this year is to consolidate understanding of the impact of intersecting forms of discrimination and disadvantage, and move towards sharing best-practise for the advancement of gender equality and prevention of violence against women.

A successful CoP requires members to be participatory and is essentially led by its members. It is the member's responsibility to ensure that the CoP remains relevant, engaging and offers value to the domain of interest.

The Community of Practice (CoP) is a forum where members come together in a process of 'thinking together' to explore understandings of diversity and intersectionality and what a best-practice approach looks like. Members of the CoP actively maximise opportunities for mutually guiding each other through their understanding of successes and challenges. It is a safe and non-judgemental space, noting that primary prevention programming and activity for diverse communities requires further focus and ultimately more investment from government.

The purpose is to build the capability and capacity of the primary and secondary prevention workforce to apply an intersectional lens. It is about tapping into existing action in our region which incorporates an intersectional approach. Together we will work to capture progress, case studies and contribute to the local evidence base.

Guiding Principles

The proposed guiding principles of our Communities of Practice on Intersectionality and Diverse Communities are:

- Our work applies an intersectional feminist lens, with the goal of justice and equity, which goes beyond diversity and inclusion.
- Our gender transformative work builds on Australia's National Framework for prevention, Change The Story, in addressing the ways in which the intersections between gender inequality and other forms of inequality impact on people's lives and experiences of violence.
- Our work does not adhere to a binary understanding of sex and gender, which can have negative implications for those who are gender diverse.
- That the CoP is a consultative and inclusive forum. A safe space where members harness the collective capability of the group, in ways that fully respect the individual and the varying levels of knowledge, awareness and experience.

Objectives

The proposed objectives listed below, centre on building skills for the application of intersectionality through:

- 1) Increasing the understanding in our region that the probability of violence against women is higher when the consequences of gender inequality intersect with the impact of other forms of inequality and discrimination, such as racism, discrimination of people with disabilities, on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.
- 2) Increase knowledge in our region, of the key principles of intersectional practice (see below):
 - *Going beyond explanations that use single categories to describe people or issues, recognising many factors interact together.*
 - *Identifying and transforming systems of power that negatively shape individual outcomes*
 - *Understanding that there is no fixed hierarchy of disadvantage and that we may experience or understand the ways our lives are impacted by power or oppression differently*
 - *Centring marginalised experiences, voices and leadership, wherever possible.*
- 3) Increase the confidence of practitioners to apply an intersectional lens to their practice
- 4) Increase the application of an intersectional approach to practice in our region; share and capture learnings, challenges, case studies

Participating Agencies / Organisations

Members of this CoP to date, are typically those who hold professional roles in primary prevention, who already recognise the importance of intersectionality, equity and social justice. It is hoped this year, that the existing members will initiate bringing allies from the broader workforce onboard, to attend the meetings. Through individual & collective effort, members of this CoP commit to attracting a more diverse membership, from our regional workforce.

The Southern Melbourne Region covers the local governments areas of City of Port Phillip, City of Stonnington, City of Bayside, City of Glen Eira, City of Kingston, City of Frankston, Mornington Peninsula Shire, City of Casey, City of Greater Dandenong and Cardinia Shire.

Below is a list of agencies that engaged in the year three – Intersectionality and Diverse Communities of Practice, note, this may not be exhaustive.

- City of Port Phillip
- City of Stonnington
- Glen Eira Council
- Bayside City Council
- Kingston City Council
- Frankston City Council
- Mornington Peninsula City Council
- City of Greater Dandenong
- Cardinia Shire Council
- City of Casey
- Regional Integration Committee (Principal Strategic Advisor)
- Department of Education and Training (Respectful Relationships representation)
- Southern Melbourne Primary Care Partnership
- Frankston Mornington Peninsula Primary Care Partnership
- enliven
- Peninsula Health
- Monash Health
- Central Bayside Community Health Services
- Caulfield Community Health Service

- Connect Health
- Star Health
- Jewish Care
- WAYSS
- Windermere
- South East Community Links
- Mission Australia
- Family Life
- Uniting
- InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence
- Women with Disabilities Victoria
- South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault
- Wellsprings for Women

We encourage those organisations above, who were engaged in the Intersectionality and Diverse Communities of Practice last year (Year Three), to reflect on who isn't yet engaged with this CoP, and how their involvement might not only serve to build the capability of the broader workforce, but also the capacity and scale.

Guiding Documents

1) [Dhelk Dja – Safe Our Way](#)

State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services, October 2018

2) [Changing The Picture:](#)

Our Watch, 2018

3) [Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement](#)

Family Safety Victoria, 2018

4) [Intersectionality Matters](#)

Multicultural Centre For Womens Health, 2017

5) [Pride in Prevention: A Guide to primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities](#)

Rainbow Health Victoria, 2020