



Intersectionality Guide: A tool for CORE members

How your organisation can address gender
inequality and other forms of discrimination

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Acknowledgements

Women's Health Grampians acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional owners of all the land and waters of the Grampians region, their Elders, past and present and in particular the strong Aboriginal women of these lands who are central to family and community. We are proud and honoured to work with them.

Women's Health Grampians would like to acknowledge the many women in Victoria who have experienced family violence, and whose courage and determination should be honoured.

Women's Health Grampians would also like to acknowledge the advice and insight of the 11 Equality Advocates who provided their input into this guide. We share our vision for a safe, equal and respectful society with them, and thank them for sharing their experience with us.

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Introduction

This guide has been developed to support you as a member of the Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) Alliance to address how gender equality and other forms of discrimination intersect. It provides you with practical steps on how to take action in your organisation to address these issues.

This guide was developed as part of Women’s Health Grampians’ Equality for All Project, funded by the Victorian Government. Equality for All seeks to strengthen the CoRE initiative to prevent violence against women and their children, while raising awareness of diversity and empowering local women to champion and lead change within their communities.

Why is this important for CoRE members?

As a CoRE member you have agreed to take action to prevent violence against women and address gender inequality. However, it is important to address the inequalities that exist between different groups of women. Women who experience multiple forms of discrimination experience increased disadvantage and can also experience higher rates of violence. This concept is called intersectionality.

The Equality for All Project has 11 Equality Advocates – 11 women from diverse backgrounds who were trained to present on their lived experiences and

support CoRE members to develop a deeper understanding of and ability to take meaningful action to address all forms of discrimination, whether based on gender, race, religion, age, sexuality or ability. Equality Advocates provided input into this guide and can speak at CoRE organisations, events and workshops. Equality Advocates also meet one-to-one with CoRE members to talk about equality for all, diversity and inclusion for all women.



(Source: Our Watch)

How to use this guide:

This guide should be used by your CoRE Liaison Officer in conjunction with your senior leadership group or management team as they will have the organisational knowledge required to answer the questions. It should also involve any relevant internal working groups (such as the gender equity working group, consultative committee, CoRE group, diversity group or Act@Work Action Groups.)

The outcomes from your use of this guide can be used to enhance your CoRE mapping process or your CoRE Action Plan. Information gained from this guide can also be communicated to staff as an opportunity to demonstrate your leadership and commitment to CoRE and to diversity and inclusion.

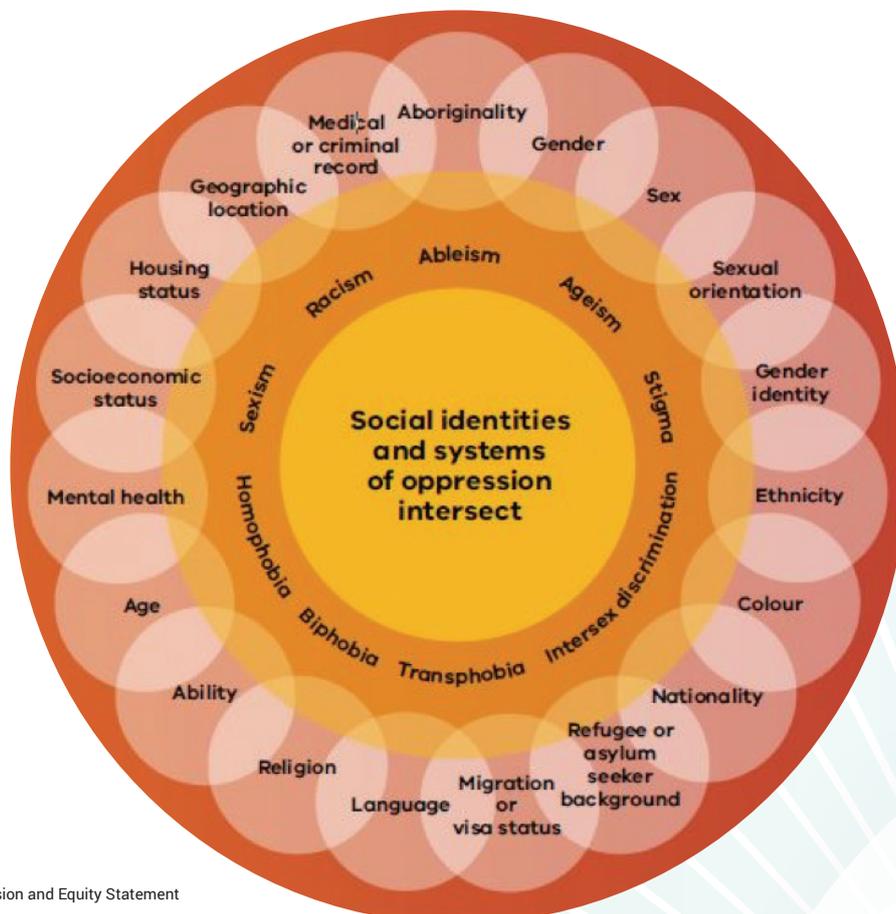
Key features of this Intersectionality Guide:

- Information about intersectionality and how it applies to different groups
- Scenarios and questions to assess how your organisation approaches intersectionality
- Actions to consider in addressing gender inequality and other forms of discrimination
- Advice on integrating this with your CoRE Action Plan and mapping

Gendered Drivers and Intersectionality

How do the gendered drivers intersect with other forms of discrimination?

Intersectionality is defined as the complex, cumulative manner in which the effects of different forms of discrimination combine, overlap, or intersect. To break that down, it essentially means that discrimination doesn't exist in a bubble – different kinds of prejudice can be amplified in different ways when put together, for example gender inequality and racism. The diagram below shows how the different forms of discrimination intersect with each other.



Source: Everybody Matters Inclusion and Equity Statement

<https://www.vic.gov.au/everybody-matters-inclusion-and-equity-statement>

It is important for CoRE members to consider intersectionality when undertaking prevention of violence against women activities as women from diverse backgrounds are more likely to experience violence. Where gender inequality intersects with other forms of discrimination, there are often higher rates of violence against women.

For example² :

- Aboriginal women are 32 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of family violence than other women
- Women and girls with disabilities are at least twice as likely to experience violence as those without disability
- Women from immigrant backgrounds are more likely than others to be murdered as a result of family violence
- Family violence perpetrated against LGBTIQ+ people occurs at similar rates to family violence perpetrated against non-intersex, heterosexual, cis-gendered women

Further information about how the gendered drivers intersect with discrimination experienced by specific groups of women is included in Appendix 1. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women, women living with a disability, older women, LGBTIQ+ and women from multicultural backgrounds.

Intersectionality is about recognising that women and men have complex identities and different groups of women will be affected or disadvantaged by programs, systems and policies differently.

So when we are thinking about taking action on gender inequality, we also need to be consciously considering and addressing these additional barriers. It is also important to be aware of our unconscious bias and about not to make assumptions about people.

Key Principles for applying Intersectionality to your work

LEARN

Intersectionality is everywhere – women are not all the same, there are differences and inequalities between women

LISTEN

Respect individual women's voices and experiences and make space for those voices to be heard

OPEN

Be respectfully curious without assumption or prejudice

REFLECT

Think about your own privilege and intersecting identities and what you bring to the table

APPLY

Have the courage to reimagine the work that you do, and do it

Intersectionality Tool

This tool has been developed to support you to undertake a discussion about intersectionality in your organisation and identify opportunities, actions and areas for improvement. It can be used by CoRE members to assess the attitudes, structures and processes in your organisation that support women from intersectional backgrounds.

How to use this tool

The tool provides a series of scenarios followed by a list of questions that are designed to prompt conversation, provide insight into your organisation and help you apply an intersectional lens to your organisation's policies, systems, processes, infrastructure and culture. The scenarios are designed to activate your thinking about how intersectionality might be experienced in a workplace. Women's Health Grampians Regional Consultants can assist you with undertaking this process or provide further information where required.

The scenarios are broken up into key areas:

- Organisational Culture
- Leadership and Management
- Human Resources
- Community/Client Engagement & Consultation
- Programs and Services
- Policies and Strategies
- Facilities

Actions can be incorporated into your CoRE Mapping or Action Plan or other associated action plans and strategies such as your gender equality strategy or prevention of violence against women plans. Results of this process can also be communicated to staff as an opportunity to demonstrate your leadership and commitment to CoRE.

Organisational Culture

Scenario

Jenny is an older woman who works in a local community organisation. She works in an administration role with all the staff in the organisation and fulfils a range of tasks, including promoting the organisation on social media. Jenny is new to social media and sometimes needs assistance in how to use it and the how to promote the organisation on Facebook or Twitter. The staff in the organisation aren't always supportive and do not take the time to show Jenny how to use social media. As a result Jenny feels unsure and is self-conscious about asking for help.

For further information about intersectionality and older women please see appendix 1.E.

Guided Questions

Think about what the key issues are in this scenario.

Then consider the following questions:

1. Does your staff induction program include specific information about diversity and inclusion and your organisations values around sexism, racism, homophobia, ageism, ableism and other forms of discrimination?
2. Are your staff training programs and professional development opportunities inclusive of intersectional women and do they take into account the barriers for women accessing training and learning?
3. Does your organisational culture support inclusion? How?
4. How do you engage the views of women in the organisation?

Actions:

- Organisation to include training/professional development for all staff in using IT and other key systems and processes in the organisation, regardless of experience and age.
- Be inclusive of everyone in your organisation, particularly older people in your organisation or group and promote accessibility and encourage participation by everyone.
- Ensure training manuals, policies and procures are accessible for all staff, including available in easy English and large print.
- Consider a mentoring program for existing staff to mentor new staff and provide information about the organisation.

Leadership and Management

Scenario

Sajiv is an Indian woman working in early childhood education as a childcare educator. Sajiv speaks two other languages other than English and is qualified in early childhood education. Sajiv found that in her workplace staff with the same qualifications were given different duties to her. She was told that she would struggle with tasks such as taking minutes and instead was given more cleaning duties or designing cultural awareness activities for the children. Sajiv made a complaint to her manager but this was not taken seriously.

For further information about intersectionality and multicultural women please see appendix 1.C.

Guided Questions

Think about what the key issues are in this scenario.

Then consider the following questions:

1. Does your organisation challenge stereotypes or reinforce stereotypes when allocating tasks or developing work plans?
2. Do you have women from diverse backgrounds in your senior management team?
3. Have your managers undertaken cultural awareness training?
4. Does your complaints process take into the account the needs of women?

Actions:

- Consider including other significant cultural days in your organisational calendar and providing staff with the opportunity to choose what is relevant.
- As an organisation celebrate a variety of important events that are relevant to everyone in your organisation.
- Consider cultural awareness training for managers.
- Personal leave to include the ability to use this for cultural or religious leave.
- Task allocation to be undertaken based on qualification and experience rather than ability to speak or write a language.
- Support staff to wear clothes in their culture and promote this within the organisation.
- Provide staff with information in simple English and train staff in the use of professional translators in situations where someone requires additional support with language.

Human Resources

Scenario

Michelle is a lesbian woman who was attending a staff workshop at a local community venue. Michelle was seated with a group of staff she did not know well and in the introductions the conversation became personal talking about marriage and children. Michelle was asked if she was married and she said she was, but it wasn't legal as she had married her partner before the laws had changed. The person sitting next to her became agitated and then abruptly got up from the table and moved to another table. The other people at the table did not acknowledge what had happened.

For further information about intersectionality and the LGBTIQ+ community please see appendix 1.D.

Guided Questions

Think about what the key issues are in this scenario.

Then consider the following questions:

1. Have your staff undertaken unconscious bias training?
2. Are women from diverse backgrounds represented on internal and external groups/committees?
3. Does your organisation have Rainbow Tick accreditation or a LGBTIQ+ acknowledgment or inclusion plan?
4. Do you promote your staff Employee Assistance Program and ensure that it is accessible to all staff?

Actions:

- Consider unconscious bias training for staff
- Apply an intersectional lens to staff training and professional development policies and procedures
- Consider staff training and professional development about diversity and inclusion and organisational values statements
- Ensure staff undertake Active Bystander Training to learn how to challenge discriminatory attitudes and behaviours
- Include considering intersectionality in the design, development and planning of policies, programs and strategies

Community/Client Engagement & Consultation

Scenario

Bernie is a woman living with a disability, who was at a community consultation meeting with a local organisation about disability access. Bernie was explaining the need to provide disability access for a project and a senior manager from the organisation became agitated and said to her “I’m sick of women like you trying to make me feel bad about these issues”.

For further information about intersectionality and women living with a disability please see appendix 1.B.

Guided Questions

Think about what the key issues are in this scenario.

Then consider the following questions:

1. When undertaking consumer/client/community consultation, do you ensure that women from intersectional backgrounds are included and supported to respond?
2. Does your organisation have links with organisations that represent women from intersectional backgrounds? i.e representative from Goolum Goolum, Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative, Ballarat Regional Multi-cultural Council, Grampians Disability Advocacy
3. Do your photographs and images show women from intersectional backgrounds accessing your services or as employees?
4. Are your external messaging and communications accessible and have you considered ensuring communications are available in easy English formats and use pictures to aid comprehension?

Actions:

- Undertake training for staff in indigenous cultural awareness and diversity and inclusion.
- Utilise the expertise of specialist organisations to provide advice, for example disability, multicultural, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or LGBTIQ+ organisations.
- Undertake an image audit of your organisation to ensure that images, messages and actions include positive representations of staff, clients and the community.
- Talk to organisational leadership about the commitment to addressing intersectionality.

Programs and Services

Scenario

Biny is a woman from a multicultural background living in a rural community. Biny went into a local business in her community to enquire about building a new house. The salesperson told her that she could not afford the house she wanted and that she should consider purchasing a cheaper home. The salesperson did not know anything about Biny including her employment status or budget.

For further information about intersectionality and multicultural women please see appendix 1.C.

Guided Questions

Think about what the key issues are in this scenario.

Then consider the following questions:

1. Have you identified and addressed barriers for women from intersectional backgrounds accessing your services?
2. Are your programs accessible for women from intersectional backgrounds? (consider language, accessibility etc)
3. Have your staff undertaken unconscious bias training?

Actions:

- Develop service systems that ensure all women have access to the same level of service no matter their backgrounds/identities or where they turn to for help.
- Train and support staff to embed intersectionality in practice.
- Consider unconscious bias training for staff.
- Consider cultural awareness training for staff.

Policies & Strategies

Scenario

Libby is a woman living with a disability, who wanted to work for her community so applied for a position at a local organisation. After attending an interview Libby was informed she was successful although she would need to attend a medical appointment to ensure her needs were met during her employment. Libby attended the appointment and received no communication from her future employer. Soon Libby was asked to attend another medical appointment and a further physiotherapy session, once again with limited communication. When Libby asked if she could be involved in discussions regarding her disability and employment, she was advised that the organisations recruitment policies and procedure dictated that a full medical work assessment was required before Libby's employment began and that a meeting wasn't required.

For further information about intersectionality and women living with a disability please see appendix 1.B.

Guided Questions

Think about what the key issues are in this scenario.

Then consider the following questions:

1. Do your organisation's policies and procedures consider the needs of all women? If so, how?
2. How does your organisation take into consideration unconscious bias?
3. Does your recruitment process take into consideration the needs of women from intersectional backgrounds?
4. Do your organisation's policies and procedures consider the needs of all women? If so, how?

Actions

- Organisation to allow new staff to be involved in discussion relating to their disability and employment, enabling self-advocacy and empowerment.
- OHS policies to be looked at through an intersectional lens, sometimes these policies may need to be flexible to ensure individual needs are met.
- Promote images in the recruitment process that encourage women from diverse backgrounds to apply.
- Ensure clear communication from employer to employee (key contact) throughout the entire process, so any concerns and questions can be addressed.

Facilities

Scenario

Debra is an Aboriginal lesbian woman. Debra and her partner were looking to hire a local hall for an event. They were both dressed casually in their Koori tops when talking to the hall manager. The hall was for hire for \$500. The hall manager looked them up and down and said you wouldn't be able to afford this facility and the lowest I will go is \$200. Debra was unsure if it was because they were a lesbian couple or because he assumed they were both Aboriginal. Debra and her partner left without hiring the hall due to the man's prejudice.

For further information about intersectionality and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women see appendix 1.A.

Guided Questions

Think about what the key issues are in this scenario.

Then consider the following questions:

1. Do your facility hire procedures take into account the needs of intersectional women?
2. Are your facilities welcoming and accessible to everyone?
3. Do you show images of intersectional women using these facilities in your promotional material?
4. Has your frontline staff undertaken Indigenous Cultural Awareness training?
5. Do you undertake Acknowledgement of Country within your organisation?

Actions

- Consider intersectionality when designing or upgrading new facilities.
- Conduct a gender audit of your facilities, consider the needs of intersectional women and assess if your facilities are accessible for all women.
- Frontline/customer service staff undertake indigenous cultural awareness training.
- Consider developing a Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Include Acknowledgement of Country statements for organisational events, meetings etc and promote the importance of this to staff.
- Consider unconscious bias training for staff.

Next Steps

Now that you have completed the intersectionality tool and examined the possible actions, the next step is to incorporate the actions you have chosen into your CoRE Mapping & CoRE Action Plan. Consider communicating the outcomes of the tool and your chosen actions to the staff in the organisation as a part of your commitment to CoRE. Also consider meeting with a WHG Equality Advocate to discuss lived experience of intersectionality and how this impacts on your organisation. Your Regional Consultant will be able to support this process.

"Taking an intersectional approach doesn't mean that your activities include absolutely everyone, can overcome every obstacle and accommodate every possible situation. It means you are aware of the gaps, you are ensuring that your own work practices and policies are not creating obstacles and that you are working towards fair and equitable opportunities for everyone."

Source: Intersectionality Matters: A guide to engaging immigrant and refugee communities to prevent violence against women: <http://www.mcwh.com.au/downloads/Intersectionality-Matters-Guide-2017.pdf>

APPENDIX 1:

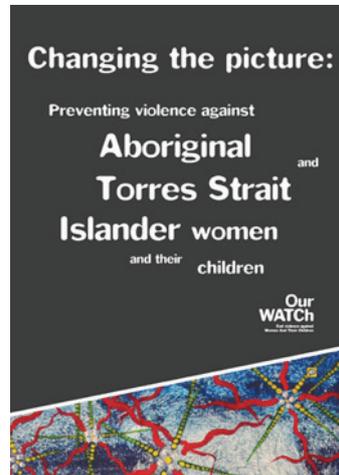
A. Intersectionality and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women

Violence against women is not an 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander problem'. It is an issue in all communities across Australia. At the same time, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience disproportionate rates of violence, and violence that is often more severe.

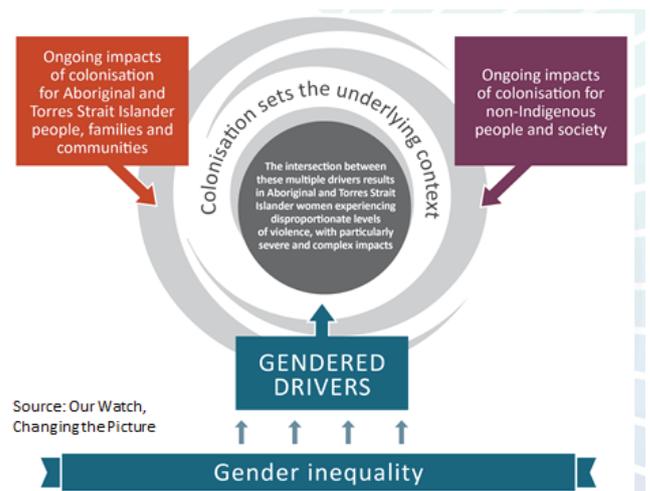
The diagram on the right is a diagram showing how the gendered drivers intersect with racism and other discrimination experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Changing the Picture: preventing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children helps us understand why this is, what is needed to change, and we can all work together to stop this violence from happening in the first place.³ In order to prevent violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and see the higher rates of family violence decrease, organisations need to address gender inequality and the continuing impacts of colonisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the ongoing impact of colonisation for non-indigenous people and society.

3 (Our Watch Trainers Manual 2019)



(Source: Changing the Picture, Our Watch 2018)



Source: Our Watch, Changing the Picture

B. Intersectionality and Women with Disabilities

Women with disabilities experience higher rates of violence and also experience higher rates of gender inequality and discrimination. Women's With Disabilities Victoria have developed resources and information that outline how intersectionality impacts women living with a disability. See below diagrams.

Gender-based and disability-based discrimination intersect and increase the risk of violence for women with disabilities.



Areas to consider for gender and disability discrimination



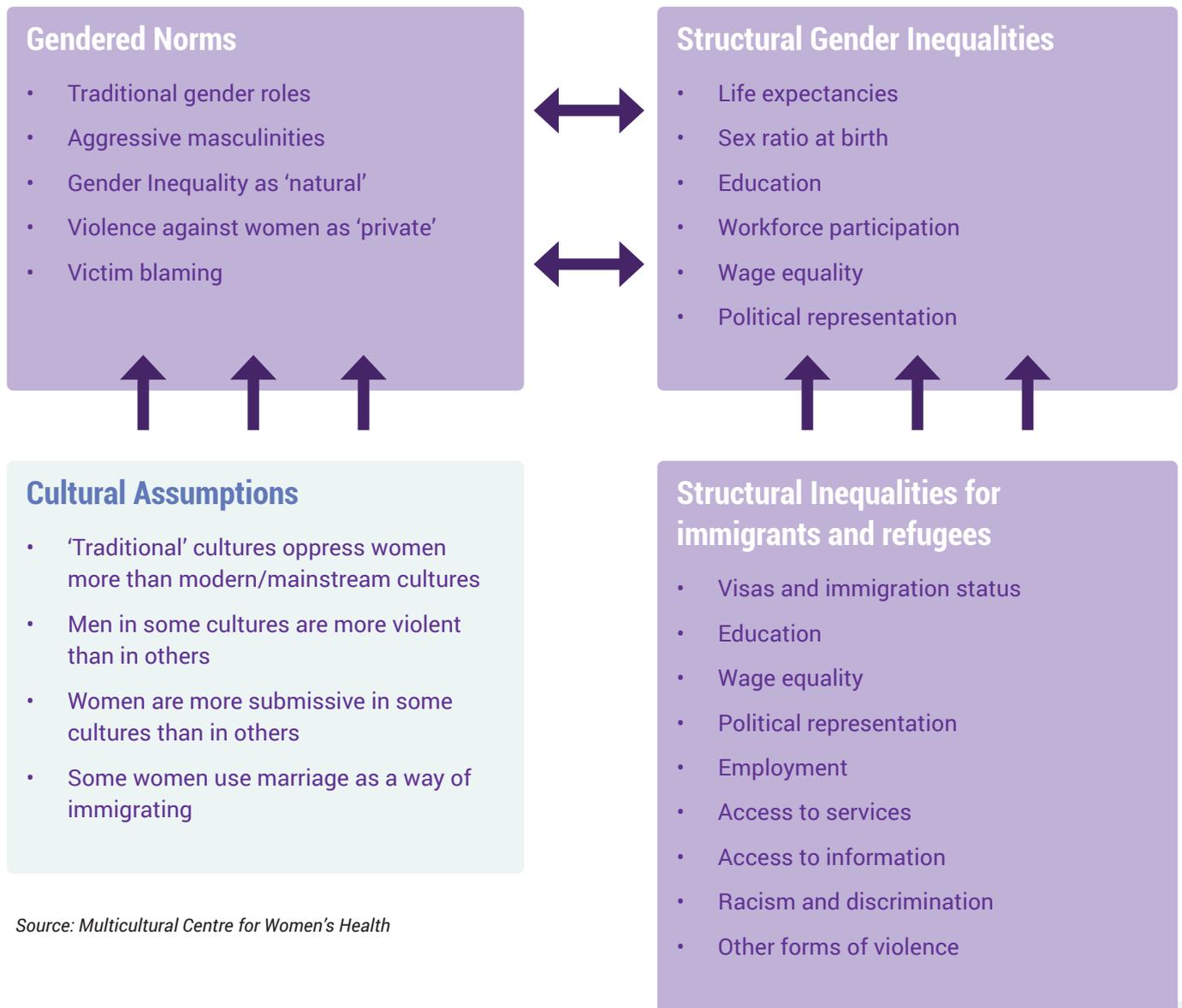
- Dominant social norms
- Supporting rigid gender and disability roles and stereotypes
- Gender and disability inequality
- Institutional violence
- Practices that support unequal opportunities and lack of access.
- Unequal relationships based on gender and disability and infantilisation

(Change the Story framework for primary prevention of violence against women and their children Australia - Our Watch et al 2015)

Women with disabilities			
<p>Over one-third of women with disabilities experience some form of intimate partner violence.</p>	<p>Women and girls with disabilities are 2X more likely to experience violence.</p>	<p>Experience higher rates of violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased severity longer periods of time 	<p>Experience disability based violence and gender based violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> specific to the nature of their disability.
<p>Intimate partner violence is the top risk factor for death, disability & illness in Victorian women aged 15-44.</p>	<p>Are often exposed to other risk factors for violence, such as: experience living in institutions; being dependent on informal or formal care in the home</p>	<p>Are less likely to seek support due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inaccessible information and communication, physical barriers to services etc. 	<p>Fear not being believed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> less likely to report incidence of violence to the police less likely to seek support than women without disabilities.

C. Intersectionality and Multicultural and Refugee Women

Women from multicultural and refugee backgrounds experience varying and intersecting forms of oppression and discrimination, including gender inequality. The following diagram provides a representation of how the gendered drivers and gender inequality intersect with cultural assumptions about women and men from multicultural backgrounds and the impact of other structural inequalities for immigrants and refugees.



Source: Multicultural Centre for Women's Health

Further information can be found in *Intersectionality Matters: A guide to engaging immigrant and refugee communities to prevent violence against women*.

<http://www.mcwh.com.au/downloads/Intersectionality-Matters-Guide-2017.pdf>

D. Intersectionality and LGBTIQ+ people



Our Watch's Primary Prevention of family violence against people from LGBTI communities, analyses the intersectional barriers for people from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning, asexual plus (LGBTIQ+) communities. This research suggests that the gendered drivers of violence against women have synergies with the drivers of violence against people who are LGBTIQ+ . Specifically:

- The link between traditional notions of masculinity and homophobic attitudes; and
- Harmful gender and sexuality stereotypes contribute to inequalities for people who are LGBTIQ+.
- Binary biological sex does not determine a binary gender, which undermines the concept that masculinity and male power are grounded in male biology.

There is a strong correlation between traditional masculine ideals (and associated attitudes and behaviours), violence against women, and violence against LGBTI people.

The report concludes that to address violence against LGBTIQ+ people, organisations must address the heterosexist and gendered systems and processes that perpetrate harmful gender and sexuality stereotypes. Organisations should not focus on the identities of LGBTIQ+ people, but rather on the structures, norms and attitudes that discriminate against people in the LGBTIQ+ community.

Summary Report Primary prevention of family violence against people from LGBTI communities

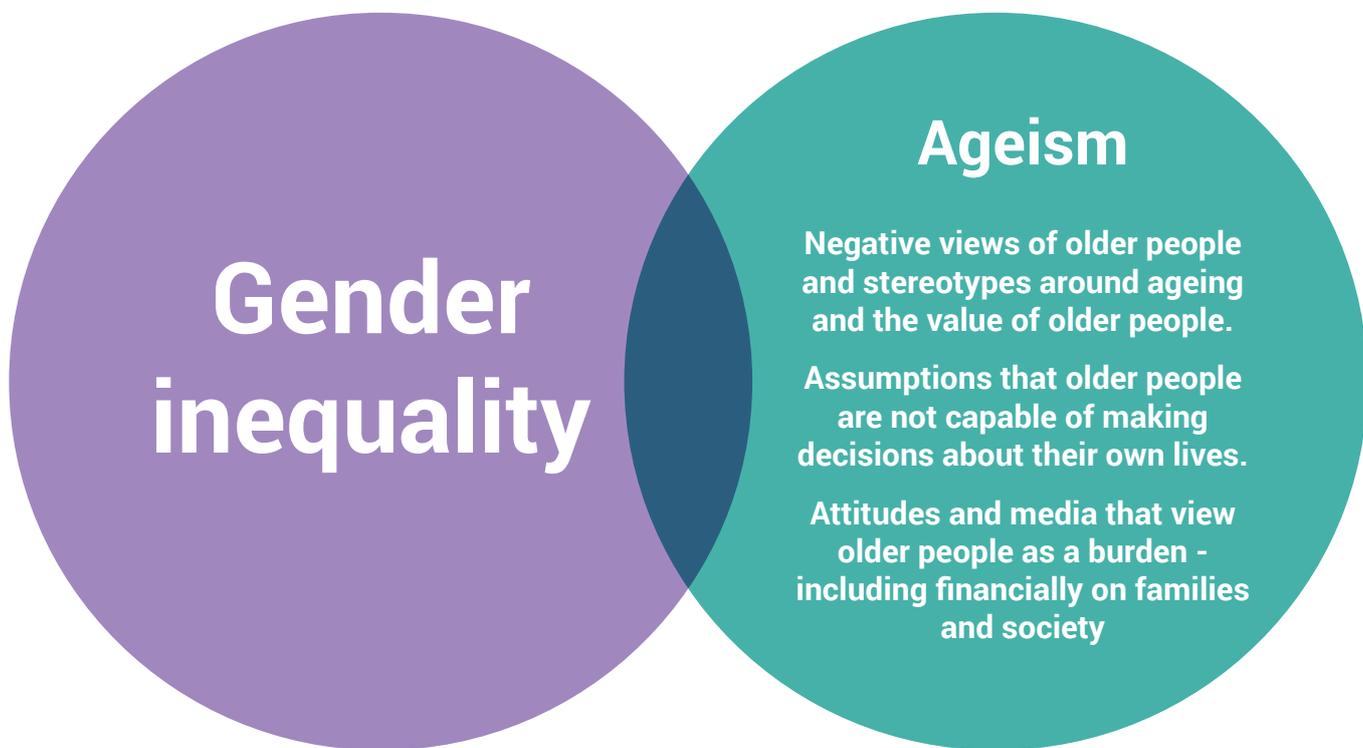
[https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/32e193c0-66f9-4957-81bb-62c2245a9d88/Primary-Prevention-of-FV-against-LGBTI-people-Report-\(Accessible-PDF\).pdf.aspx](https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/32e193c0-66f9-4957-81bb-62c2245a9d88/Primary-Prevention-of-FV-against-LGBTI-people-Report-(Accessible-PDF).pdf.aspx)

E. Intersectionality and Older Women

Discrimination against older women (ageism) is caused by the belief that older women have less value in society. This includes:

- Negative views of older women and stereotypes around ageing and the value of older people.
- Assumptions that older women are not capable of making decisions about their own lives.
- Attitudes and media that view older women as a burden – including financially on families and society.

Older women can often be marginalised, given less power in relationships and society and are afforded less independence as a result. Older women experience discrimination in the community, workplaces and in their homes resulting from both gender inequality and ageism. Seniors Rights Victoria has further information about Elder Abuse <https://seniorsrights.org.au/>



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10. Elder Abuse as Family Violence: <https://seniorsrights.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Elder-Abuse-as-Family-Violence-FINAL.pdf>



Please contact Women's Health Grampians for more information and support on any initiatives you would like to pursue

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