

TAKING ACTION TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

A sport-specific guide for members of the Communities of Respect & Equality (CoRE) Alliance



CoRE
COMMUNITIES OF RESPECT & EQUALITY

WIG
women's health
GRAMIANS



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An electronic version of this document can be found at: www.whg.org.au

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Acknowledgements

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Women's Health Grampians also acknowledges the many women and gender diverse people who have lived experience of discrimination and violence, and who, by bravely sharing their stories, have helped inspire cultural change.

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

As a member of the Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) Alliance, your club has demonstrated a meaningful commitment to the prevention of violence against women and children.

This guide offers practical, evidence-based actions that your club can take to foster happy and healthy communities free from violence and inequality. Gender inequality is widely recognised as the main driver of violence against women. In societies where women and gender-diverse people are disrespected and valued less than men, when violence-supportive attitudes and rigid gender stereotypes prevail, and when everyday sexism goes unchecked and unchallenged, violence against women and gender diverse people occurs. We also know that rates of violence are higher for women and gender diverse people who also experience other forms of discrimination- including racism, ageism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia.

Our communities should be safe, inclusive & welcoming places for people to live, work & thrive.

This guide supports sporting clubs who are members of CoRE to take action to challenge these drivers and make an impact on community safety.



NOTE: We use an inclusive definition of 'women' that includes all people who identify as women.

WHY SPORT AS A SETTING

Sport is a large part of Australia's cultural identity. This is reflected in the number of people who play sport, the number of people who attend sporting events, the number of people who watch sports on TV, and our performances at a local, state and international level. Sporting clubs and sport leaders can be as influential as community champions, ambassadors and change agents.

Sporting clubs are in a unique position to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women and gender diverse people. Taking meaningful and proactive steps to enable a safe, welcoming, inclusive respectful environments can make a world of difference to those in the community and can help attract and retain people from all walks of life to your club. Increasing gender equality is an important part of preventing violence against women and gender diverse people and your club is an important piece of that puzzle .

EIGHT ESSENTIAL AREAS FOR ACTION

Using Change the Story¹ as a blueprint, this guide will offer direct examples and practical solutions to promote gender equality, a key driver of violence against women and gender diverse people. By adopting or expanding on these actions we can stop violence before it starts.

There are eight essential action areas outlined in the Change the Story framework where CoRE clubs can focus their attention and efforts. These essential actions are divided into two types. Essential actions 1-4 are designed to target the four specific gendered drivers of violence, understood to be the main risk factors that predict violence at a whole of community level. Essential actions 5-8 address the broader social context that influences the occurrence or dynamics of violence against women.

Essential actions to address the gendered drivers of violence against women:

1. Challenge condoning of violence against women
2. Promote women's independence in decision-making in public life and relationships
3. Build new social norms that foster personal identities not constrained by rigid gender stereotypes
4. Support men and boys to develop healthy masculinities, and positive, supportive male peer relationships.

Essential actions to address social context that gives rise to violence against women:

5. Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life
6. Address the intersections between gender inequality and other forms of systemic and structural oppression and discrimination, and promote broader social justice
7. Build safe, fair & equitable organisations & institutions through policy & systems change
8. Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys, in public and private spheres.

It is up to you as a CoRE member to decide how to implement and build on these ideas, based on the specific purpose, setting and circumstances of your club. As a member of the CoRE Alliance, your club can use these action areas as a guide to devise a game plan specific to your unique context.



DON'T FEEL LIMITED TO THE EXAMPLES SPECIFIED HERE - YOU KNOW YOUR CLUB BEST, SO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX!

Being proactive in one or more of these action areas brings us one step closer to ending violence against women - so don't watch from the sidelines, get involved, play your part, big or small, and together we can make violence against women and gender diverse people an issue of the past. Together, we can create a safe, equal and respectful community.



1-4 TAKING ACTION ACROSS THE GENDERED DRIVERS

Whether you make micro or macro changes, small-scale or wholesale changes, the important step is to simply start – start the conversation, start the work. By navigating through this guide, you will find that you most likely are already promoting gender equality. These ideas will add value to and scale-up that work. Below are suggested activities, actions or initiatives you can select to do which will address the main risk factors of gender-based violence.

*“Every situation is different
& we’re learning how to
approach them...”*

- Minyip Murtoa Football Netball Club player



1

Challenge attitudes that condone violence against women

We must all challenge the attitudes, behaviours, systems and beliefs that perpetuate disrespect and inequality within personal and peer relationships, and in the wider community. It is imperative that we don't downplay, trivialise, justify or normalise violence against women and gender diverse people, or shift blame away from the perpetrator.

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- Develop a leadership statement on preventing violence against women and gender diverse people that is front and center on the club's website and used in induction to set the tone around expected standards of behaviour and the values of the club.
 - Display active bystander posters around different areas of the clubhouse to help people call out any remarks, comments or behaviours that are sexist, disrespectful and derogatory.
 - Show your support for new clubs that become a CoRE Alliance member – a social media post welcoming new CoRE clubs will help spread the word and grow the breadth of clubs contribution to culture change.
 - Make the CoRE logo visible any communications you distribute (i.e. email signatures, website, newsletters) so that other clubs may see it, ask what it represents, then hopefully how they can get involved.



2

Promote women's independence & decision making in public life & relationships

Promote women's independence and decision making in public life and relationships. Limitations on women's independence and decision-making occurs in both the public and private spheres. Within the public sphere, this takes the shape of lower numbers of women (particularly women from diverse backgrounds) in politics, at decision-making levels throughout the community and in leadership roles within organisations. Within the personal sphere, it is evident in stereotypes of the male breadwinner who controls household finances and decision-making. To foster a more equitable society, we must create space for women, girls and gender-diverse people to participate on an equal footing with men and boys, economically, politically and socially.

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- Seek gender balance on the Board/Committee by devising a retention and recruitment plan to support future female leaders to join the Board. This could also include setting targets/quotas for gender balance at the governance level and making this part of the club's constitution.
 - Consult with women and gender diverse people in your club – you don't have to know the answers on how to promote gender equality, those in the club will, so formally ask the question (i.e. survey) or informally (i.e. take 10-15 minutes a week to chat to different women on how the club can strengthen peoples' positive experience).
 - Update the club's Uniform Policy and ensures it caters for people of diverse backgrounds (i.e. allowing female netballers to wear leggings under a dress or pants/shorts if they come from cultures where there is conservative dress).



3. Build new social norms that foster personal identities not constrained by rigid gender stereotypes

Sometimes prescribed roles for men and women appear harmless, however it is these attitudes that ultimately contribute to the perpetuation of gendered violence. Disrupting the gender binary and traditional ideas about masculinity and femininity is vital. Your organisation can reject gendered roles and stereotypes by creating a culture of equality and respect for all staff, regardless of gender.



Provide club-wide bystander training to foster a speak up and speak out culture around sexism and disrespect and prepare people when faced with situations that should be called out.



Language and images matter- undertake an image audit or review of the images you display across any communications platform (website, social media, etc) to understand if you are reinforcing gender stereotypes (i.e. always showing images of men managing the bbq and women in the canteen; registration forms for girls that are coloured pink; not showing the diversity of players from different backgrounds/identities in your club, etc).



4. Support men & boys to develop healthy masculinities & supportive male peer relationships

Forms of masculinity that promote aggression and disrespect don't just hurt women, girls and gender diverse people. Men and boys are also negatively affected by social norms and traditional masculine stereotypes. Encouraging expressions of healthy masculinities is vital to the prevention of violence in our communities.

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- Be conscious of stereotypical language used around the clubhouse (i.e. "I've got granddaughters that play harder than you lot"; "boys will be boys") – this can perpetuate outdated ideas around masculinity and femininity.
 - Nominate key male figures (i.e. life members, president, captain, coaches) to join the CoRE working group to show that equality matters to everyone and benefits everyone.
 - Ensure men play an active role in planning and participating in prevention campaigns such as International Women's Day and/or 16 Days of Action to End Gender-based Violence.
 - Tee up senior male players to attend female training sessions to support skill development and break down barriers or feelings of intimidation.



TAKING ACTION ACROSS THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Below are suggested activities, actions or initiatives you can select to do which will help change the underlying social conditions that produce and drive, excuse, and justify violence. Activity here is equally as important as addressing the gendered drivers.

“Speaking up is better than doing nothing”

- Minyip Murtoa Football Netball Club player



Promote & normalise gender equality in public & private life

Gender inequality can be difficult to identify in everyday life because it can be subtle, impersonal and normalised. Viewing social structures and systems through a gendered lens will allow your organisation to act meaningfully and contribute to a more equitable world.

- Collect sex-specific data – you can't fix a problem if you don't know it exists, collect demographic data across the club's ecosystem to see where issues lie (i.e. gender imbalances at the board level, officiating level, etc).
- Keep up-to-date with new ideas and ways you can better promote gender equality in sport – sign up to CoRE and Sport e-newsletter and/or join up to the CoRE Friends Network.
- Participate in prevention campaigns (i.e. International Women's Day and 16 Days of Activism) every year to raise awareness of gender-equality and gender-based violence so others in your community become informed and motivated to act.



6. Address intersections between gender & other systemic/structural oppression & discrimination, & promote social justice

Intersectionality acknowledges that gender inequality is compounded by the overlapping effects of other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience due to characteristics such as race; Aboriginality; religion; ethnicity; disability; age; sexual orientation; rurality and/or; gender identity. By planning and implementing actions which take an intersectional approach to inequality, we can play a role in promoting social justice for everyone in our communities.

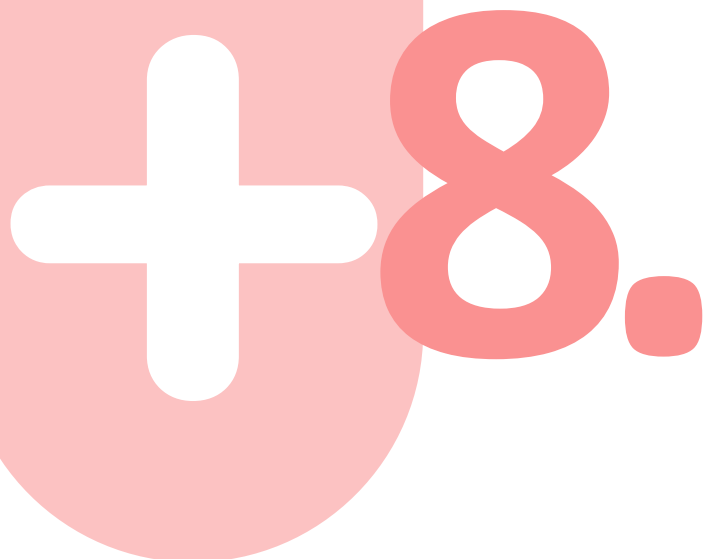
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- Nominate key people in the club to be a welcoming officer (s) – tasked with making new and potential members feel welcome to the club and supporting them to learn the ropes and settle in- this will help grow a positive and welcoming reputation.
 - Celebrate and normalise diversity by hosting a ‘pride round’, ‘indigenous round’, ‘multicultural round’ so everyone feels like they belong and are welcome. Consult with representative/advocacy groups in your community to support these events and ensure you budget for this in the planning (for example, if hosting Pride Round engage Tiny Pride as a partner).
 - Ensure women from diverse groups have a voice in your club. Provide opportunities for participation and leadership.
 - Consider developing inclusion plans for your organisation/club (such as a Reconciliation Action Plan, Accessibility Inclusion Plan or Pride in Sports initiatives).



Build safe, fair & equitable organisations & institutions by focusing on policy & systems change

Preventing violence against women and children needs to be addressed holistically. As individuals, we can all make a commitment to challenging the drivers of gendered violence. However, this effort should also occur structurally and systemically if we are to create meaningful, sustainable change to the prevalence of family and gendered violence.

- Be proactive not reactive around violence against women- ensure standard policies are in place so the club is well positioned to support and empower those experiencing violence including:
 - Family Violence Leave and Dealing with Disclosures policy
 - Responding to public allegations of family violence policy
 - Code of conduct
- Ensure 'gender equality' or 'diversity and inclusion' is a key pillar of your strategic plan, then it becomes an operational priority and holds the club accountable to progress.
- Embed prevention of violence against women messaging into club induction processes (i.e. board, player, coach onboarding protocols) to enable a zero tolerance of sexism, discrimination and gender-based violence within the clubs culture/ethos.



Strengthen positive, equal & respectful relationships between men, women, girls & boys, in public & private spheres

Respect is the foundation of a healthy and equal relationship. Clubs have a role to play in promoting and modelling positive, equal and respectful relationships and demonstrating how sexism and discrimination can be challenged and gender equality normalised. Disrespecting women doesn't always lead to violence, but all violence against women begins with disrespect. Let's stop it at the start, and that begins with respect.

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- Understand what the pressing safety/inclusivity issues may be for those who use your facilities by doing a facilities audit – this can help identify hot spots and areas to improve (i.e. imagery, female-friendly changerooms, lighting issues, etc).
 - Turn up your commitment to preventing violence against women and fast track outcomes around gender equality by participating in Women's Health Grampians' Act@Play Program, a 6-month cultural change program that takes a whole-of-sport approach to gender equality.



WHAT'S YOUR GAME PLAN?

Sporting clubs are often run by volunteers, who may be time poor and under-resourced. Respecting this fact, it is important that actioning any of the suggestions in this guide are realistic and achievable. Start curating your clubs gender equality journey by listing here what the pressing items are for the club to commence.

Changing culture is a marathon, not a sprint, though we do encourage you to commit to and do as much as possible. This Taking Action Guide is a great first step and listing the club's potential priorities here could serve as a great second step. Next, develop a Gender Equality Action Plan with your local WHG Regional Consultant to ensure your game plan is fit-for-purpose and your road map for change considers future endeavours.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- Women’s Health Grampians is your local – knowledge & partnership broker:
<https://whg.org.au/our-work/projects/gender-equality-in-sport-and-recreation/>
- OurWatch, is the national prevention agency:
<https://www.ourwatch.org.au/change-the-story>
- Respect Victoria, are at the forefront of campaigns circulating on tv to promote the idea of respect: <https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/>
- Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) works collaboratively with the not-for-profit, private and government sectors to:
 - Improve the health and wellbeing of Victorians
 - Build stronger and more connected communities
 - Deliver economic growth and jobs
 - Enhance liveability.<https://sport.vic.gov.au/>
- The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) is a pioneer in health promotion – the process of enabling people to increase control over and improve their health. Our primary focus is promoting good health and preventing chronic disease:
<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/>
- For the research inclined, PASI is you’re one stop shop:
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6136cb2287e8604b4c56c29b/t/63c643cdc6545c1db2c90778/1673937878027/MRFF-Combined+participation+and+retention+women+and+girls-formatted-141222.pdf>



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