

Developing a gender equity and/or prevention of violence against women organisational policy

A sample policy tool

PREVENTING
VIOLENCE
TOGETHER



UNITED

Working Together to Prevent Violence Against Women in the West



women's health west

Publication and acknowledgements

Women's Health West acknowledges the contributions of the following individuals who supported the content development of this resource:

- * Stephanie Rich, Women's Health West
- * Elly Taylor, Women's Health West

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The resource supports the development of organisational policies and procedures to prevent men's violence against women and promote gender equity, and as such, focuses on the needs and gender-based inequities experienced by women and men. We recognise the inequities, discrimination and violence experienced by transgender and intersex clients and communities, and we strongly encourage organisations to develop organisational policies and procedures that respond to the unique and diverse needs of all their staff.

Women's Health West acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, the people of the Kulin Nation, and we pay our respects to Elders and community members past and present. We express solidarity with the ongoing struggle for land rights, self-determination, sovereignty and the recognition of past injustices. We express our hope for reconciliation and justice.

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About the resource

Preventing Violence Together (PVT) is Melbourne's western region partnership and action plan to prevent men's violence against women. The vision of *Preventing Violence Together: The Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women* is to create communities, cultures and organisations in Melbourne's west that are non-violent, non-discriminatory, gender equitable, and promote respectful relationships.

In October 2012, the PVT partnership was funded by the Department of Justice and Regulation to implement the three-year 'United' project. United is a collaboratively developed project by partner organisations, and seeks to further implement the PVT action plan by building organisational capacity to embed sustainable, evidence-based strategies to prevent men's violence against women before it occurs.

The objectives of the United project are to:

- * Eliminate, decrease, and redress gender inequity
- * Embed and drive cultural change across all partner organisations to redress the causes and determinants of violence against women
- * Increase awareness and capacity building of partner organisations, and the community, to create safe inclusive environments where women and men can participate equally
- * Increase the awareness and understanding of violence against women across workplace settings and the broader community
- * Document and disseminate the lessons and challenges of primary prevention activities including the development of proxy indicators of success.

The United project includes a suite of primary prevention strategies that partner agencies have committed to implement by late 2015. Included among these strategies is the development of tools and resources to support the gender equity and primary prevention work of partners, as guided by the emerging needs of the project and partnership.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

The purpose of this tool is to assist organisations develop an organisational policy to prevent violence against women and promote gender equity. It contains background information regarding gender equity and violence against women and includes sample policy templates that organisations can draw upon in the development of organisational policies and procedures.

The focus of this tool is the primary prevention of violence against women. However, it is important to note that early intervention and response strategies are also included if they support primary prevention outcomes. For example, a family violence clause in the organisation's enterprise bargaining agreement is a response strategy that exists primarily to support staff who experience family violence. However, by including this clause in their enterprise bargaining agreement, the organisation makes a strong statement that violence against women is not acceptable and therefore also contributes to the primary prevention of violence against women.



Why have an organisational policy about gender equity and prevention of violence against women?

Before embarking on the development of an organisational gender equity and prevention of violence against women policy, it is important to consider the rationale and benefits for doing so.

Ultimately, an organisational gender equity and prevention of violence against women policy assists to:

- * Demonstrate a high level of organisational commitment to a workplace in which violence against women is unacceptable and where respectful relationships and gender equity is promoted
- * Provide a clear statement and understanding of an organisation's position regarding violence against women and gender equity to management, staff, clients, partner organisations and the broader community
- * Provide the organisation and its staff with a framework for strategic action around gender equity and the prevention of violence against women
- * Provide middle management and coordinators with a framework that supports the prevention of violence against women and promotes gender equity in their particular spheres of work, responsibility and influence.



Scoping the policy context of your organisation – checklist

This checklist includes a series of prompts to determine where and how a gender equity and prevention of violence against women policy can be integrated in your organisation's policies and procedures. It also highlights some of the key factors that require consideration in order to develop and implement organisational gender equity and prevention of violence against women that is supported, monitored, resourced and sustainable.

To support the development of a comprehensive and effective organisational gender equity and prevention of violence against women policy, it is helpful to consider the following key prompts and questions.

WHERE DOES A GENDER EQUITY AND PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN POLICY SIT WITHIN THE ORGANISATION?

- * Does your organisation have an existing framework for its policy and development?
- * Does each department or work area have a separate vision or goal, or does the organisation have one overall vision or goal?
- * In light of the above, will the gender equity and prevention of violence against women vision statement, objectives, actions and outcomes form:
 - * A stand-alone policy document?
 - * A stand-alone policy document with specific strategies and actions that are embedded within each existing policy area and/or department?
 - * No stand-alone policy document, but gender equity and the prevention of violence against women is to be integrated in all areas of policy and practice across the organisation?
- * Who is responsible for the implementation of each policy and its related actions? How will the organisation ensure they are implemented?
- * Is the policy based within existing Federal and State legislation and policies and, if so, does it refer to them?
- * Does the organisation regularly review its policies in relation to current legislation?



HOW CAN THE ORGANISATION DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A GENDER EQUITY AND PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN POLICY THAT LEADS TO ACTIONS THAT ARE SUSTAINABLE?

- * What are the factors that motivate and influence your organisation to design and implement policies, procedures and practices in relation to gender equity and the prevention of violence against women?
- * What factors exist that can either promote or prevent gender equity within your organisation?
- * What factors exist that can contribute to the sustainability of the policy strategies and actions?
- * What strategies does the organisation need to put in place in order for the gender equity and prevention of violence against women policies to continuously evolve and improve?
- * What factors can support the effective implementation of policies within your organisation?
- * Who needs to be involved in order for the policies to be effective and sustainable?
- * Does the organisation attach clear time lines to each action?
- * Does the policy clearly state who is responsible for each action?
- * Are the policies, objectives and actions reviewed regularly?
- * Is there a clear evaluation process in place for the organisational policies?



Sample organisational policy for gender equity and the prevention of violence against women

GENDER EQUITY AND THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: POLICY OF (INSERT NAME OR ORGANISATION)

The gender equity and prevention of violence against women policy outlines the commitment of (insert name of organisation) to achieve gender equity and therefore prevent violence against women, as a workplace and service provider, and via our external work with our partner organisations and the communities we work with.

Policy development process:

(Insert description of how this policy was developed in your organisation)

Review of policy:

After its initial implementation, the policy will be reviewed regularly, with review dates scheduled to be undertaken (insert every number of years or insert review date).

Our vision:

(Insert name of organisation) is a safe environment for all women and children, where relationships between women and men are equal and respectful.

Why gender equity and the prevention of violence against women is important to (insert name of organisation):

It is the role of (insert name of organisation) to challenge and change attitudes, beliefs and cultures that support violence against women. We believe, in line with current research and best practice, that violence against women is preventable by ensuring that respectful attitudes, behaviours and beliefs are shaped in the places where we live, work and play (VicHealth 2007).

Violence against women refers to 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life' (United Nations 1993). It involves any form of abuse, violence and or coercion that serves to establish and maintain power and control over another person, is enacted in a context of unequal power or privilege, and has the potential to cause harm to the physical and or emotional wellbeing of that person (Dawn House Women's Refuge 2013). We recognise that violence against women can occur in many forms, including physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, financial, and social or spiritual abuse.



(Insert organisation name) recognises that violence against women is a crime, a human rights violation and a public health problem. The health, social, emotional and economic costs of violence against women are profound. Violence against women has severe impacts on women, their children, their families and friends, employers, workplaces, communities and society in general. Violence against women comes in many forms and occurs in all socioeconomic, age and cultural groups and locations in Australia.

Approximately one in three Australian women experience physical violence during their lifetime, and nearly one in five will experience some form of sexual assault (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013). According to Victoria Police reported crime data, women in the Melbourne's western region are particularly at risk of violence from their intimate partners, with a rate of 6.23 reported incidents per 1,000 – higher than the state average (Victoria Police 2014).

In summary:

- * Intimate-partner violence is the leading preventable contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged 15–44 years (VicHealth 2004)
- * Intimate-partner violence is in the vast majority perpetrated by men (80.4 per cent), and where women make up 71.1 per cent of the victim/survivors (VicHealth 2007)
- * Violence has wide-ranging and persistent negative effects on women's health and wellbeing, and increases their risk of mental, physical and sexual and reproductive health problems (VicHealth 2004)
- * While there are a number of settings in which violence against women can occur, reported violence against women is most commonly enacted within the home (74.9 per cent) (VicHealth 2007)
- * In 2009, the economic cost of men's violence against women and their children was estimated to be \$13 billion in Australia (The National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2009).

The board, CEO, managers and staff of (insert name of organisation) are extremely concerned about this data and commit to preventing violence against women before it occurs by promoting gender equity. We recognise that violence against women is never caused, invited or deserved by the victim/survivor, and we believe that everyone has the right to live safe and free from violence, regardless of what they say or do (National Women's Rural Network 2012).

At (insert name of organisation) we will work to redress the known causes and contributors to violence against women, by working to create safe, respectful and equitable workplaces, communities and environments. We commit to promoting gender equity by addressing the social, economic and political power inequalities between women and men within our organisation, as well as among the communities we serve and work with.

(Insert name of organisation) understands that violence against women has a number of key drivers and contributing factors. Most notably, research shows that gender inequality is the key driver of men's violence against women. Particularly, it is the adherence to rigid gender roles and stereotypes, and the unequal distribution of power and resources between women and men, which form the key underlying causes of violence against women (VicHealth 2007). These key drivers occur across all levels of society, including the individual, community, organisational and institutional (VicHealth 2007).



(INSERT NAME OF ORGANISATION)'S ROLE IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUITY AND PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

(Insert name of organisation) is a signatory to the *Preventing Violence Together: Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women* (Preventing Violence Together Partnership 2010). (Insert name of organisation), as an organisation, is in a unique position to work with our employees, partners and the community to promote gender equity and prevent violence against women.

As a workplace, (insert name of organisation) recognises that we are in a position to redress the gender inequities within our organisation and influence the culture within our workplace. By promoting a culture of respectful relationships between women and men within our agency, we can contribute to the prevention of violence against women and promotion of gender equity.

We understand that for many women, employment can be a key pathway to leaving a violent relationship. The financial security that employment affords them may enable them to leave and to maintain, as far as possible, their home and standard of living (Patten 2003).

We also recognise that work is not only about economic independence for women, but that it can be a place where women who experience violence build self-confidence, and where the support from work colleagues can make a difference in their lives (McFerran 2011).

Women are over-represented in non-career-focused part-time jobs and casual employment, which presents significant implications for their financial security, training, development and career progression. Women regularly spend less time in the workforce due to childbearing and caring responsibilities, and as a result have substantially less superannuation. Women comprise 45.9 per cent of all employees in the labour force in Australia, of whom 53.6 per cent work full-time (24.6 per cent of all employees) and 46.4 per cent work part-time (21.3 per cent of all employees) (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2014).¹

(Insert organisation name) also acknowledges that gender pay inequity is a problem across Australia, with Australian women earning 17.8 per cent less than men for the same work. Female graduates earn \$2,000 per annum less than male graduates on entering the workforce (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2013).

We acknowledge that given the prevalence of violence against women in Australia, we will have staff directly affected by domestic and family violence. In a study of 3,600 union members, 30 per cent stated that they had personally experienced domestic violence (McFerran 2011). Nearly half of those (women) who had experienced domestic violence reported that the violence affected their capacity to get to work – the major reason being physical injury or restraint (67 per cent), followed by (the perpetrator of the violence) hiding keys and (the perpetrator's) failure to care for children (McFerran 2011). Notably, nearly one in five women (19 per cent) who experienced domestic violence in the previous 12 months reported that the violence continued in the workplace in the form of abusive phone calls and emails, and the partner physically coming to their work (Patten 2003).

This information highlights the importance of employment and financial independence in the prevention of violence against women. It is also a reminder that some of our female employees will experience violence by their current or former partner. The organisation's enterprise bargaining agreement therefore includes a clause that sets out how we, as an employer, will support our female staff who experience violence by an intimate partner.

¹ Note: Your organisation might also consider including the percentage of women in part-time and full-time positions within your organisation here.



We recognise that gender is a factor in everything we do. It is embedded in the gendered nature of language, the gendered nature of our physical environment, and who is involved in planning and designing our programs and services. We will work towards the use of language that is non-sexist, free of gender stereotyping, and promotes gender equity. We will change our physical environment to one that is safe for all and that is free of harassment, discrimination and gender stereotyping. Our planning and design of services and programs will work to promote gender equity and equal participation of women and men.

(Insert name of organisation) will work towards gender equitable employment across the organisation. We seek to employ equal numbers of women in decision-making and leadership positions, as well as in the more male-dominated work areas. We will also work to encourage (where possible) more men in female-dominated areas, including children's services.

As a service, we aim to consider gender equity and the prevention of violence against women in all our service and program planning and provision.

We will use the evidence available to us by experts in the field to:

- * Promote equal and respectful relationships between women and men by embedding principles of gender equity into all relevant organisational projects, plans, programs, policy, services, work plans, research and partnerships
- * Promote non-violent social norms by ensuring that all internal and external organisational communication is respectful and gender equitable
- * Promote access to resources and systems of support – for example, ensuring that managers and staff have access to gender equity and prevention of violence against women training
- * Ensure that the language we use in communicating with our clients promotes gender equity principles and the prevention of violence against women – for example, by ensuring that pronouns used in publications are gender neutral and that representations of women and men are not based on, or perpetuate, gender stereotypes
- * Ensure that our physical spaces are safe and inclusive for women, and avoid displays of images that stereotype the roles of women and men.

We will work towards embedding gender equity and the prevention of violence against women into our existing policies and plans including:

- * Operational and strategic plans
- * Facilities and infrastructure plans
- * Municipal public health and wellbeing plans
- * Integrated health promotion plans
- * Diversity plans
- * Community engagement plans
- * Organisational training and professional development plans.

At (insert name of organisation), gender equity will be embedded in all our policies and structures. Our overarching message will be that violence against women is never acceptable, and gender equity is something we strive for in our workplace.



Appendix 1: Key definitions

Diversity: This refers to the ways in which individuals and groups differ from each other, including (but not limited to) gender, socioeconomic status, ability, Aboriginality, faith, ethnicity, culture, language, sexual orientation, geography, and age.

Early intervention: Often referred to as 'secondary intervention', early intervention entails working with individuals and groups who are at greater risk of perpetrating violence or being subjected to further violence.

Gender: A broad term used to describe the socially constructed norms, roles, responsibilities and expectations that shape our understanding of what it means to be a woman or a man within a given society. Rigid understandings of gender reinforce power differences between women and men – these undermine women's health, safety, wellbeing, and status in society. Additionally, those who challenge narrow conceptions of sex, gender and sexuality, experience frequent discrimination, harassment and violence (Women's Health West 2014).

Gender equality: The realisation of equal and measurable outcomes for women, men and gender-diverse people. This includes equal representation; status and rights; establishing equal opportunities for all people to contribute to national, political, social and cultural development; and for all to benefit from these results (Women's Health West 2014).

Gender equity: The process of being fair to women, men and gender-diverse people with the aim of achieving equal outcomes for all. To ensure fairness, measures must often be put in place to compensate for historical and social disadvantage that have prevented women and gender-diverse people from operating on a level playing field with men (Women's Health West 2014).

Gender stereotypes: Stereotypes are overly simplified assumptions that people who share a particular status group also share certain traits in common. Therefore, gender stereotypes are overly simplified notions and generalisations of the traits that all women or men are assumed to possess (Women's Health West 2014).

Gender roles: Socially and culturally defined behaviours, actions and attributes that are assigned to women/girls and men/boys (Women's Health West 2014).

Primary prevention: Often referred to as 'preventing violence before it occurs', primary prevention involves strategies that work to redress the causes of violence against women in order to prevent it from happening in the first place. Strategies can be universal (whole population) or selective/targeted (tailored to specific groups that are at higher risk of experiencing or inflicting violence) (VicHealth 2007).

Response: Often referred to as 'crisis response' or 'tertiary intervention', response involves long-term strategies to deal with the impact after violence has occurred. Response can involve the provision of support and treatment to women and their children who are affected by violence, or to men who use violence (Victorian Government 2012).

Sex: Refers to physical characteristics such as hormones, chromosomes and anatomy. People are generally described as male, female or intersex based on these characteristics (Women's Health West 2014).

Sex-disaggregated data: Refers to information that is cross classified by sex – presenting separate information for females and males. This data is then analysed to provide an insight into the different roles, and general conditions of women and men in all areas of society (Women's Health West 2014).



Appendix 2: Drivers of men's violence against women

UNEQUAL ACCESS TO POWER AND RESOURCES

In order to redress violence against women it is essential to understand what causes this gender-based violence to occur in the first place. Institutions such as governments, the media, the judiciary and sports, as well as systems such as our political structures and legal frameworks, determine how power and resources are allocated, distributed and utilised across all levels of society.

In Australia, men predominantly hold positions of power comparative to women across the institutional, community/organisational, and individual/relationship levels. This power affords men greater access to economic and social resources, decision-making and leadership positions, and other opportunities in the public and private domain. Men almost exclusively hold the highest paid and most powerful positions, and therefore their power and privilege are consistently reinforced. This affords men a collective sense of entitlement and upholds their high level of access to resources that maintain these social structures. This also contributes to men's higher visibility and power, while reinforcing women's lower social status in the public sphere.

RIGID GENDER ROLES AND STEREOTYPES

Gender roles are learned through the process of socialisation and cultural expectations. Within rigidly defined gender roles, women and men are expected to play very different roles – these often promote different and unequal access to power and resources between women and men, and promote notions of male dominance. For example, in Australia women undertake the vast majority of domestic labour and unpaid care work for children, people with a disability, the sick and the elderly.

In summary, the unequal distribution of power and resources between women and men, and rigid gender roles and stereotypes, lead to high levels of gender inequality. They create and maintain men's entitlement to exert masculinity, power and control over women, and to create an environment in which women and men are unequal in value. It is within this society that men can make the choice to use violence against women as a means to maintain control over women and as an expression of male power (Women's Health West & VicHealth 2015).



Appendix 3: International, national and Victorian legislation and policy context regarding violence against women and gender equity

INTERNATIONAL

- * United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- * United Nations Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- * United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993)

NATIONAL

- * Time for Action: The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010- 2022
- * Sex Discrimination Act (1984)
- * Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act (1999)

STATE

- * Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006)
- * Living Free from Violence – Upholding the Right: the Victoria Police Strategy to Reduce Violence against Women and Children 2009-2014
- * VicHealth – Preventing violence before it occurs: a framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria (2007)
- * Family Violence Protection Act (2008)
- * Rights. Respect. Trust. – Victorian Government Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy 2009
- * Strong Culture, Strong People, Strong Families: Towards a Safer Future for Indigenous Families and Communities (2008)
- * All of Us: Victoria's Multicultural Policy (2009)
- * Municipal Association of Victoria Preventing Violence Against Women Leadership Statement (2012)
- * Preventing Violence Together: The Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women (2010)



Appendix 4: Policy samples

FAMILY VIOLENCE ENTERPRISE BARGAINING AGREEMENT CLAUSE TEMPLATE (AUSTRALIAN SERVICES UNION 2011)

1 General principle

- (a) (Insert name of organisation) recognises that employees sometimes face situations of violence or abuse in their personal life that may affect their attendance or performance at work. Therefore, (name of the organisation) is committed to providing support to staff who experience family violence.

2 Definition of family violence

- (a) (Insert name of organisation) accepts the definition of family violence as stipulated in the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic). And the definition of family violence includes physical, sexual, financial, verbal or emotional abuse by a family member.

3 General measures

- (a) Proof of family violence may be required and can be in the form an agreed document issued by a police service, court, doctor, district nurse, maternal and child health care nurse, family violence support service, or lawyer.
- (b) All personal information concerning family violence will be kept confidential in line with council/shire policy and relevant legislation. No information will be kept on an employee's personnel file without their express written permission.
- (c) No adverse action will be taken against an employee if their attendance or performance at work suffers as a result of experiencing family violence.
- (d) (Insert name of organisation) will identify a contact in Human Resources (or other appropriate staff member), who will be trained in family violence and privacy issues (for example: training in family violence risk assessment and risk management). (Insert name of organisation) will advertise the name of the contact within the organisation.
- (e) An employee experiencing family violence may raise the issue with their immediate supervisor or the Human Resources contact. The supervisor may seek advice from Human Resources if the employee chooses not to see the Human Resources contact.



FAMILY VIOLENCE ENTERPRISE BARGAINING AGREEMENT CLAUSE EXAMPLE (WOMEN'S HEALTH WEST 2010)

FAMILY VIOLENCE LEAVE

Women's Health West (WHW) recognises that employees sometimes face situations of violence or abuse in their personal life that may affect their attendance or performance at work. WHW is committed to providing support to staff who experience family violence.

Leave

1. An employee experiencing family violence will have access to up to 20 days per year of paid special leave related to her experience of family violence. This leave will be in addition to existing leave entitlements.
2. An employee who supports a family member experiencing family violence may take carer's leave to accompany them to court, to hospital, or to mind children
3. WHW will develop policies and procedures to supplement this clause to detail the appropriate action to be taken in the event that an employee reports family violence
4. No adverse action will be taken against an employee if their attendance or performance at work suffers as a result of experiencing family violence, save that an employee who works in the family violence team and discloses family violence will be supported to access family violence leave (see below), annual leave and unpaid leave for a period not exceeding 12 months.
5. In order to provide support to an employee experiencing family violence and to provide a safe work environment to all employees, WHW will approve any reasonable request from an employee experiencing family violence for:
 - i. changes to her roster or hours worked where possible;
 - ii. job redesign or changes to duties where possible (acknowledging that the family violence service has little capacity to redirect duties away from direct service delivery);
 - iii. a change to her telephone number or email address to avoid harassing contact; and
 - iv. any other appropriate measure including those available under existing provisions for family-friendly and flexible work arrangements, where possible.



STAFF FAMILY VIOLENCE PROCEDURES TEMPLATE (ADAPTED FROM MARIBYRNONG CITY COUNCIL 2011)

We, (Insert name of organisation), take our responsibility to develop a supportive environment to encourage both victim/survivors and perpetrators of family violence to come forward for help and support.

Education and support for employees who are victim/survivors of family violence

1. (Insert name of organisation) will make available a list of resources for victims and perpetrators of family violence. The list will be posted in highly visible locations in the workplace
2. We will arrange for capacity building of appropriate staff regarding family violence and the impact it has on women and our workplace, with managers encouraged to refer victim/survivors of family violence to appropriate family violence support services
3. (Insert name of organisation) will not discriminate against victim/survivors of family violence in hiring, staffing, or other terms, conditions, or privileges of employment
4. We will make reasonable efforts to provide a safe work environment for the staff member who is experiencing family violence.

Leave options for employees who are victim/survivors of family violence

In addition to the provisions in the organisation's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, we will make reasonable efforts to assist victims who need time off beyond their Enterprise Bargaining Agreement entitlements, including time off for medical and legal assistance, court appearances, counselling, relocation, or to make other safety arrangements.

1. Employees, managers and supervisors are encouraged to first explore paid leave options that can be arranged in order to help the employee cope with the situation without having to take a formal unpaid leave of absence. Depending on circumstances, this may include:
 - i. Arranging flexible work hours so the employee can seek protection, go to court, look for new housing, enter counselling, arrange childcare, etc.
 - ii. Considering use of sick time, job sharing, compensatory time, paid leave, informal unpaid leave, etc. particularly if requests are for relatively short periods.

Employee payroll and benefit change request

1. (Insert name of organisation) will make reasonable efforts to transfer company benefits to the victim-employee's own name when the victim-employee leaves a spouse (or domestic partner)
2. We will process the victim/employee's requests for making changes to his/her electronic payroll transfers.



Performance issues related to being a victim of family violence

1. (Insert name of organisation) is aware that victims may have performance problems such as chronic absenteeism or trouble concentrating as a result of family violence
2. We will make reasonable efforts to consider all aspects of the employee's situation and, to the extent possible, utilise all reasonable options to attempt to resolve the performance or conduct problem
3. If reasonable attempts to resolve the performance problems are unsuccessful, within a reasonable amount of time, (Insert name of organisation) will implement performance management options in accordance with Council's policies and procedures.

Employees who commit acts or threats of family violence

1. Any employee who threatens, harasses or abuses a family or household member at, or from, the workplace could be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. This includes employees who use workplace resources such as phones, fax machines, e-mail, mail or other means to threaten, harass or abuse a family or household member.
2. Some job positions may give an employee access to certain types of information or resources. If he or she uses this access to knowingly enable a perpetrator to harm a victim, that employee will be subject to disciplinary action.



DEVELOPING A WORKPLACE SAFETY PLAN FOR VICTIM/SURVIVORS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Role of managers

When assisting an employee to develop a personal safety plan ask what changes, if any, could be made in their workplace to make them safer. Victims of family violence know the perpetrator better than anyone else. When it comes to their own safety, offer to assist them in developing a personal workplace safety plan. However, if it is determined that other employees or clients are at risk of physical harm, it is essential to take reasonable measures to provide protection for them as well.

Role of employees

It is difficult for (insert name of organisation) to assist an employee whose work-life is affected as a result of family violence if the relevant supervisor or manager is unaware of the situation. If an employee is experiencing family violence, and it is affecting their work-life, they are encouraged to discuss the issue with their supervisor or manager and develop a safety plan. The safety plan might contain the following:

1. Consider obtaining a restraining order that includes the workplace, and keep a copy on hand at all times. The employee may consider providing a copy to his/her supervisor, workplace security, or human resources.
2. Where possible, consider requesting a change and/or unpredictable rotations of work schedule, work site, or work assignment if such a change is possible and would enhance safety at work
3. If an absence is deemed appropriate, be clear about the plan to return to work. While absent, the employee should maintain contact with the appropriate human resources personnel.
4. Review the safety of your parking and transport arrangements
5. Consider having your telephone calls screened at work.



Appendix 5: List of tertiary support services for the western region

While this tool focuses on the prevention of violence against women and the promotion of gender equity, we believe that by displaying this list in the offices and public areas of your organisation, the employer communicates clearly that they do not condone violence against women.

Police

Emergency response
P: 000 (24 hours)

Safe Steps: Family Violence Response Centre

Telephone counselling and referral to safe accommodation
P: 03) 9373 0123 or 1800 015 188 (24 hours)

In Touch – Multicultural Centre Against family Violence

Provides culturally-sensitive services to meet the needs of women and children, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, affected by family violence.
P: (03) 8413 6800 or 1800 755 988

Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA)

Provides counselling, legal information and support to victims/survivors of recent and past sexual assault/abuse (including incest). To contact any CASA in Victoria, call the Sexual Assault Crisis and Counselling Line.
P: 1800 806 292 (24 hours)

Women’s Health West

Provides women and children in the western region with a range of family violence services – such as court support, crisis housing and case management, women’s and children’s counselling. Weekdays 9 – 5pm.
P: 03) 9689 9588

Kids Help Line

Provides support and information for children.
P: 1800 551 800 (24 hours)

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria

Provides assistance to victims/survivors of family violence and sexual assault, and works with families and communities affected by violence.
P: 1800 105 303

Elizabeth Hoffman House

Provides services (legal, counselling, information and referral) to Aboriginal women and their children in need of support due to family violence.
P: 1800 796 112 (24hrs, 7 days)

Victim’s Support Agency

Provides a central resource for victims of crime.
P: (03) 8684 6700

Victims of Crime Helpline

Information, advice and referrals to assist victims to manage and recover from the impacts of crime.
P: 1800 819 817

Victims Assistance and Counselling Program

A network of services, operating throughout Victoria, that provide access to support, outreach services, court support, referrals, and support groups.
P: 1800 819 817

Men’s Referral Service

Provides free, anonymous, and confidential telephone counselling, information, and referrals to men to assist them to stop using violent and controlling behaviour. Weekdays 9am – 9pm.
P: 03) 9428 2899 or 1800 065 973

Gay and Lesbian Switchboard (Vic.)

Free, confidential and anonymous telephone counselling, referral and information service for the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) community and its supporters. Mon/Tue/Thurs 6pm-10pm, Wed 2pm-10pm, Fri-Sun and Public Holidays 6pm-9pm
P: 9663 2939

Community Health Centres

Offer counselling as well as support groups for women and their children affected by family violence. To find your nearest centre, go to:
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/pch/commhealth/directory.htm>



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