

# Concepts and definitions

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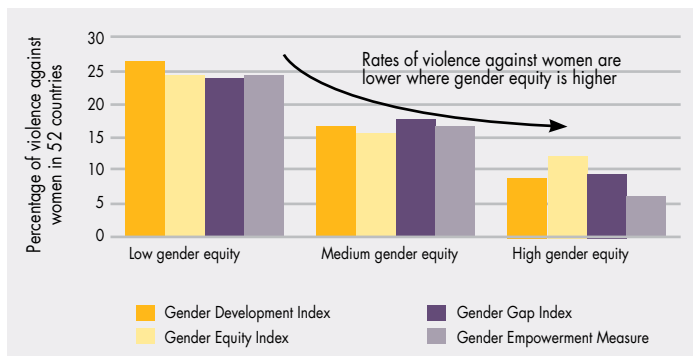


*“Violence against women is deeply rooted in discrimination and inequality between men and women”*

Investing in Gender Equality: Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, UNIFEM, 2010

**Violence against women** is defined as: ‘any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women’<sup>i</sup>. It can also include financial abuse, using intimidation, threats and isolation.

**Primary prevention of violence against women (PVAW)** refers to strategies aimed at preventing violence before it occurs. This includes changing behaviours and attitudes and building the awareness and skills of individuals. The central focus of work in primary prevention is on strategies that address the underlying structural and cultural drivers of violence against women, such as gender inequality and beliefs in rigid gender roles and stereotypes<sup>ii</sup>.



UNIFEM, 2010, Investing in Gender Equality: Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.

**Tertiary services & programs** aim to provide support and redress to victims/survivors of violence and deal with the consequences of violence. Social support services, health care providers, the criminal justice system and crisis accommodation are all examples of settings through which tertiary services and programs are delivered.

**Social determinants of violence against women** are the social and cultural conditions under which violence against women are more likely to occur. VicHealth<sup>iii</sup>, identifies the absence of equal and respectful relationships between men and women at the individual, community and societal levels as the most significant determinants leading to violence against women.

**Gender** refers to female and male identity that goes beyond the biological differences between men and women (known as sex). Gender expectations are shaped by social, political and economic influences and can differ from culture to culture, depending on what is considered socially acceptable behaviour for men and women.

## Connecting preventing violence against women and gender equity

National and international research shows societies, communities and families have lower rates of violence against women when greater equality exists between women and men and girls and boys.

Women still do not enjoy equal opportunity in Australia today. This can be seen in all facets of society from the low numbers of women elected in government and a lack of representation in executive roles. Women continue to earn less than men, and the sexual objectification of women remains evident in aspects of our media and community life.

**Gender equity** takes into consideration the differences in women's and men's lives and recognises that different approaches may be needed to produce outcomes that are fair.

**Gender stereotypes** refer to expectations of how a person should behave or present because of their gender. This can result in women and men being expected to take on certain roles and a lack of tolerance when these stereotypes are challenged. Gender stereotyping can be harmful as it can promote the idea that women are less valuable than men<sup>iv</sup>.

**Sexism** is discrimination against a person on the basis of their gender or sex. Sexist attitudes and beliefs can encourage the idea that women are not equal to men and don't deserve the same rights. Sexism can be in the form of 'jokes' that minimise the impact and seriousness of violence against women, and other attitudes supporting the continuation and acceptance of violence against women.



### Women's health services - for regional information and resources, contact:

**Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West**  
[www.womenshealthbsw.org.au](http://www.womenshealthbsw.org.au)

**Women's Health Goulburn North East**  
[www.whealth.com.au](http://www.whealth.com.au)

**Gippsland Women's Health Service**  
[www.gwhealth.asn.au](http://www.gwhealth.asn.au)

**Women's Health Grampians**  
[www.whg.org.au](http://www.whg.org.au)

**Women's Health Loddon Mallee**  
[www.whlm.org.au](http://www.whlm.org.au)

**Women's Health East**  
[www.whe.org.au](http://www.whe.org.au)

**Women's Health in the North**  
[www.whin.org.au](http://www.whin.org.au)

**Women's Health in the South East**  
[www.whise.org.au](http://www.whise.org.au)

**Women's Health West**  
[www.whwest.org.au](http://www.whwest.org.au)

**Women With Disabilities Victoria**  
[www.wdv.org.au](http://www.wdv.org.au)

**Multicultural Centre for Women's Health**  
[www.mcwh.com.au](http://www.mcwh.com.au)

### Useful links

**1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)** [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)

**Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria (FVPLS Victoria)** [www.fvpls.org](http://www.fvpls.org)

**Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA)** [www.casahouse.com.au](http://www.casahouse.com.au)

**Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (DVRCV)**  
[www.dvrcv.org.au](http://www.dvrcv.org.au)

**Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children**  
[www.preventviolence.org.au](http://www.preventviolence.org.au)

**Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria (GLHV)** [www.glvh.org.au](http://www.glvh.org.au)

**Intouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence**  
[www.intouch.asn.au](http://www.intouch.asn.au)

**Municipal Association of Victoria**

[www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/social-community/gender-equity/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/social-community/gender-equity/Pages/default.aspx)

**National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022**

[www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children-2010-2022](http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children-2010-2022)

**No To Violence, Male Family Violence Prevention Foundation**  
[www.ntv.org.au](http://www.ntv.org.au)

**Partners in Prevention** [www.partnersinprevention.org.au](http://www.partnersinprevention.org.au)

**Safe at Home, Safe at Work: Domestic Violence Workplace Rights and Entitlements Project** [www.dvandwork.unsw.edu.au](http://www.dvandwork.unsw.edu.au)

**The Look Out** [www.thelookout.org.au](http://www.thelookout.org.au)

**UN Women** [www.unwomen.org.au](http://www.unwomen.org.au)

**VicHealth Preventing Violence Against Women Program**

[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Programs-and-Projects/Freedom-from-violence.aspx](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Programs-and-Projects/Freedom-from-violence.aspx)

**Victoria's Action Plan to Address Violence Against Women and their Children 2012- 2015 Everyone Has a Responsibility to Act**

[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/736056/preventing\\_violence\\_against\\_women\\_and\\_children\\_action\\_plan\\_102012.pdf](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/736056/preventing_violence_against_women_and_children_action_plan_102012.pdf)

**White Ribbon Foundation** [www.whiteribbon.org.au](http://www.whiteribbon.org.au)

**World Health Organisation**

[www.who.int/topics/gender\\_based\\_violence/en](http://www.who.int/topics/gender_based_violence/en)

- <sup>i</sup> United Nations General Assembly, 1993, *United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*, UN General Assembly, Geneva.
- <sup>ii</sup> VicHealth, 2007, *Preventing Violence Before it Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women in Victoria*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne.
- <sup>iii</sup> VicHealth, 2007.
- <sup>iv</sup> VicHealth, 2012, *More Than Ready: Bystander Action to Prevent Violence Against Women in the Victorian Community*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne.



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