Raise it!
Conversations about sexual harassment and workplace equality

MAV: Prevention Violence Against Women Network meeting

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Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Australians and recognise their culture, history, diversity and deep connection to the land.

Artwork by Joanne Dwyer and Laura Thompson

This artwork symbolises equal opportunity in a natural form.
Today’s session

• Raise it! pilot: overview and aims

• Using the conversation starter resources

• Key evaluation insights: what worked and what didn’t work so well

• Next Steps

• Q & A
Evidence shows sexist and gendered discrimination are driving factors for sexual harassment.

While workplace policies and systems are important, the biggest gap is actually how to approach the conversation on these themes.

VEOHRC received funding from the Victorian Office For Women to support complementary measures to legislative reform under the Victoria Gender Equality Strategy: Safe and Strong.

Our objective was to develop resources and education to help people ‘start conversations’ at work about:

- Sexual harassment
- Discrimination pertaining to pregnancy and parental leave
- Access to Flexible work requests

= a pilot program to test ‘what works’
Commission implemented a **pilot program** to catalyse **new, healthy, safe conversations** to challenge discrimination and its root causes (gender inequality, social inequality)

The program was not ‘business as usual’ but involved placing new engaging materials in the workplace and setting challenges to talk about the topics

**Pilot period Nov 2018-March 2019:**
- 7 pilot sites;
- Communications plan and kit;
- Pre and post- pilot survey;
- Policy Wellness Check
- Education program: awareness and conversation skills + how to use, access and share the toolkits;
- Access to the toolkits
- External evaluation.
Sexual harassment response tool

- Chatbots accessible on mobile phones
- Clarifies rights and resources
- Users can commence and return later
- Make a plan to start a conversation
- Access further supports
Manager pathway

Flexible work request tool

This toolkit will help you prepare for a chat with your manager about flexible work.

The information being provided is general in nature, that it doesn’t take into account specific personal circumstances and that it should not be considered legal advice, rather information.

- What key points does the manager need to cover?

- How can the manager continue the conversation?
Conversation Starter Kit

Kit resources:
• Planner
• Instruction booklet
• Subscribe to newsletter emails
• Posters
• Challenge Cards

Objectives:
• Get people talking about (e.g.)
• Why it’s hard to make a request for a FWA
• Difficulties in processing a request
• Barriers to raising a concern about sexual harassment
• How to access support (for both managers and staff)
Time to raise the conversation!

Go to:

bit.ly/raiseit_demonstration

• *Talking* about difficult workplace topics can help prevent these types of workplace discrimination

• Traditional training approaches to preventing sexual harassment and workplace discrimination do not focus on the ‘*how to*’
An independent evaluation tells us how we can better:

• build confidence & capacity to have difficult conversations at work
• build an enabling workplace culture
• work towards better, fairer, more equitable outcomes for staff

And asked:

• How did participants apply the knowledge and skills built in the pilot program?
Experiences of pilot sites

• Before sharing the key evaluation insights we’ll take forward

• We invite 2 of our pilot site contacts to talk to us about their experiences of implementing the Raise it! pilot

• We’ve asked them to focus on key impacts and challenges
Key overall insights: what works

- Participants increased their awareness, knowledge and skills related to the Raise it! issues

- Strong indicators of increased confidence to make a complaint about sexual harassment, raise and negotiate a request for parental leave or flexible work

- **Education sessions** helped: particularly interactive activities and hearing different points of view
How did it impact having conversations?

- People found the toolkits an invaluable resource to rely on if/when they needed to:

  ![Feedback on Digital Toolkits](image)

  - Participants reported needing more support with **how to take action**, even after being equipped with all the necessary information.
Evaluation findings: what works

Insight 1:
Encourage pre-planning and enhance the onboarding process

Our response:
• Clarify expectations and resources at the beginning of engagement
• More specifically engage leadership/team leaders
• Provide more time and support to implement Policy Wellness Check actions = safety culture at org level
Insight 2:
Face-to-face education with interactive components

Our response:
• Shorter, more iterative education sessions to engage broader cross-section of workforces
• Enhanced role play to bridge intent and action and increase bystander components
Insight 3:

Provide additional support on how to take action after participants are equipped with all the necessary information.

Our response:

• Further develop a ‘Champions model’ to drive engagement with resources and amplify reach
• Build troubleshooting into the education program for peer-to-peer support = reduced barriers at org level
Insight 4:
Team leaders/managers are a key entry point

Our response:
• More specifically engage leadership & team leaders
• Provide tailored messages and support for managers to use to clarify benefits and role-model a consistent narrative
Following today’s session, is there anything you might do differently in your workplace?

Knowing what services are available for supporting victims

Best ways to respond to disclosures of sexual harassment

Making my team aware of their rights

Being more conscious and supportive of staff going on parental leave.

Look to use the toolkit for flex work requests

Yes I think listening and not trying to problem solve straight away if someone comes to me with an issue

Know what to do as a bystander for sexual harassment
Next Steps: Sexual Harassment Program

VEOHRC will offer a Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Package:

**Policy Wellness, Check & Org Support**
- Engage commitment from leaders
- Allow sufficient time to implement core actions
- Provide additional VEOHRC supports: *How to Develop an EO Guide & Sexual Harassment Complaint Guide*
- Promote policies and systems to prevent sexual harassment to the workforce, and communicate Leader commitment

**Education**
- Focus on middle managers to build capability and increase impact on culture at local level
- Iterative delivery over sustained period (6-12 months)
- Blended components including short F2F sessions, email prompts and peer-support style workshops
- Increased emphasis on practical bystander skills, while maintaining first responder content

**Toolkits**
- Manager Conversation Starter Kit to support conversations in their own time
- Chatbots promoted to all staff as a helpful resource, with an informative ‘cheat sheet’ for use
- Delivered with more supportive instruction to middle managers for use and promotion in their teams

**Evaluation**
- Lean evaluation on chatbot use and attitudinal behaviour change at 6 and 12 months
- Provided to organisations via a concise report
VEOHRC will offer a Gender Equality and Flexible Work Planner package:

**Education**
- Tailored for middle managers to increase impact on culture at local level
- Streamlined delivery via a core F2F session, email prompts and peer-support style workshops
- Increased emphasis on sharing effective models

**Toolkit**
- Promoted to all staff as a helpful resource, with an informative ‘cheat sheet’ for use
- Championed by leadership as a resource for consistent application of FWAs

**Evaluation**
- Lean evaluation on chatbot use and attitudinal behaviour change at 6 and 12 months
- Provided to organisations via a concise report
Q & A
Further resources

More info (FAQs):

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Enquiry line: 1300 292 153