



Victorian Equal Opportunity
& Human Rights Commission

Raise it!

Conversations about sexual harassment and workplace equality

MAV: Prevention Violence Against Women Network meeting

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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

Outline of Raise It! - design

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'

Raise it: how it 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.

**WHAT SHOULD I
DO IF I SEE SEXUAL
HARASSMENT?**



Evidence shows you should support the target of the harassment. You should also find a way to show that the behaviour is not on. What can you do that won't make the situation worse? Talk to a colleague and think of 3 ideas.

Sexual harassment response tool

The screenshot shows a chatbot interface for 'RAISE it!'. It starts with a welcome message: 'Welcome to the Raise It! sexual harassment support and response toolkit. Find safe, anonymous answers to questions about harassment at work.' A blue button labeled 'Let's get started' is visible. The chatbot then provides reassurance: 'Let's help you find the support you need. Your data will not be shared with your workplace or anyone else.' It explains: 'Your answers will help generate the best support options for you, and will help you put some plain English words around what happened. I will also give you prompts to talk about tricky topics if you choose to.' The chatbot asks: 'What would you like information about?' Below this, three blue buttons offer options: 'Something awkward (of a sexual nature) happened to me at work and it made me feel uncomfortable, humiliated or intimidated', 'I saw/overheard inappropriate behaviour of a sexual nature at work', and 'How do I support someone who tells me they are experiencing sexual harassment at work?'.

- 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

RAISE
it!

Hello

Hi!

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.

RAISE
it!

Let's start

I am a manager I am
a manager and I'd
like to support my
staff

Start using [Landbot.io](https://landbot.io) for your business

- 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)



I'VE NEVER ASKED ABOUT FLEXIBLE WORK BECAUSE I THINK THAT I WILL BE JUDGED HARSHLY.

? Do you agree with this statement? Discuss some reasons for your answer with your colleagues.

EVERYONE NEEDS FLEXIBILITY AT SOME POINT IN THEIR CAREERS.



In Australia everyone can request flexible work options. Some people's requests for flexible work are protected by Victoria's Equal Opportunity Act 2010, such as requests from a parent or carer. The Fair Work Act 2009 also protects workers who request flexible work, such as those with a disability or who are more than 55 years old.



Research also shows that flexibility is one of the top five employment drivers for men, and there are proven business benefits for having part-time workers as part of the workforce.



If you're interested in part-time work, what's holding you back?



The Raise it! project is funded by the Victorian Office for Women and implemented by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. The project equips Victorian workers with knowledge and tools to ensure healthy, confident and safe conversations at work about preventing and responding to sexual harassment, and about pregnancy, parental leave and access to flexible work.

Got a complaint? If you believe you have experienced sexual harassment or faced discrimination at work because of your pregnancy or parental status, or if you have general queries related to discrimination, call the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission on 1300 292 153, email equal@vimeo.vic.gov.au or visit humanrightcommission.vic.gov.au/complaints.

For more information see the FAQs on humanrightcommission.vic.gov.au/raiseit/ or email ed@vimeo.vic.gov.au



WHAT'S THE CONNECTION BETWEEN GENDER EQUALITY AND WORKING FLEXIBLY?

* In organisations where flexible work is seen as 'normal' and taken up by both men and women, there are equal opportunities for success for both men and women at work.

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'**

Testing: conversations at work

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

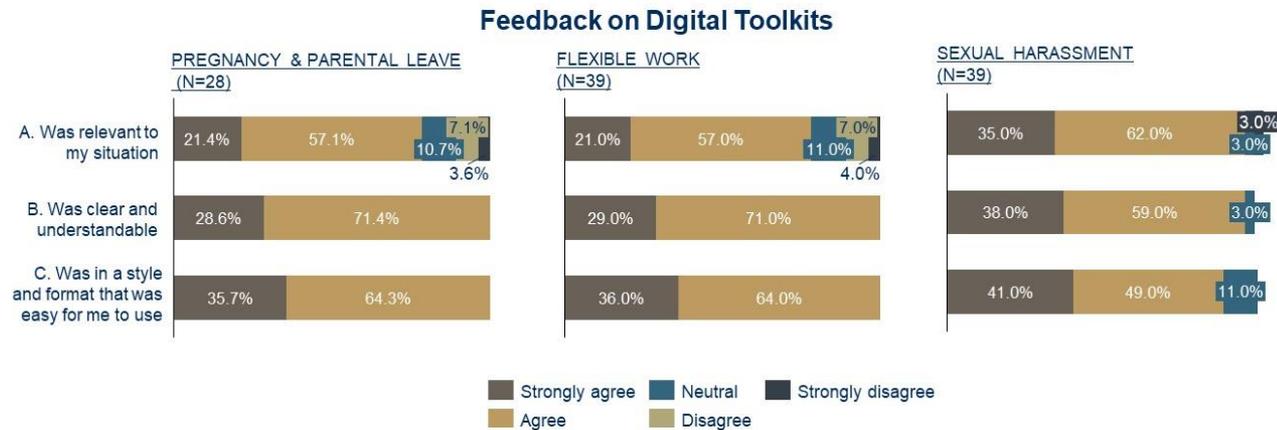
- Before sharing the key evaluation insights we'll take forward
- We invite 2 of our pilot site contacts to talk to us about their experiences of implementing the Raise it! pilot
- We've asked them to focus on key **impacts** and **challenges**

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:



- 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

Evaluation: what works

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

Evaluation: what works?

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

Evaluation: what works?

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

Feedback from education sessions

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.

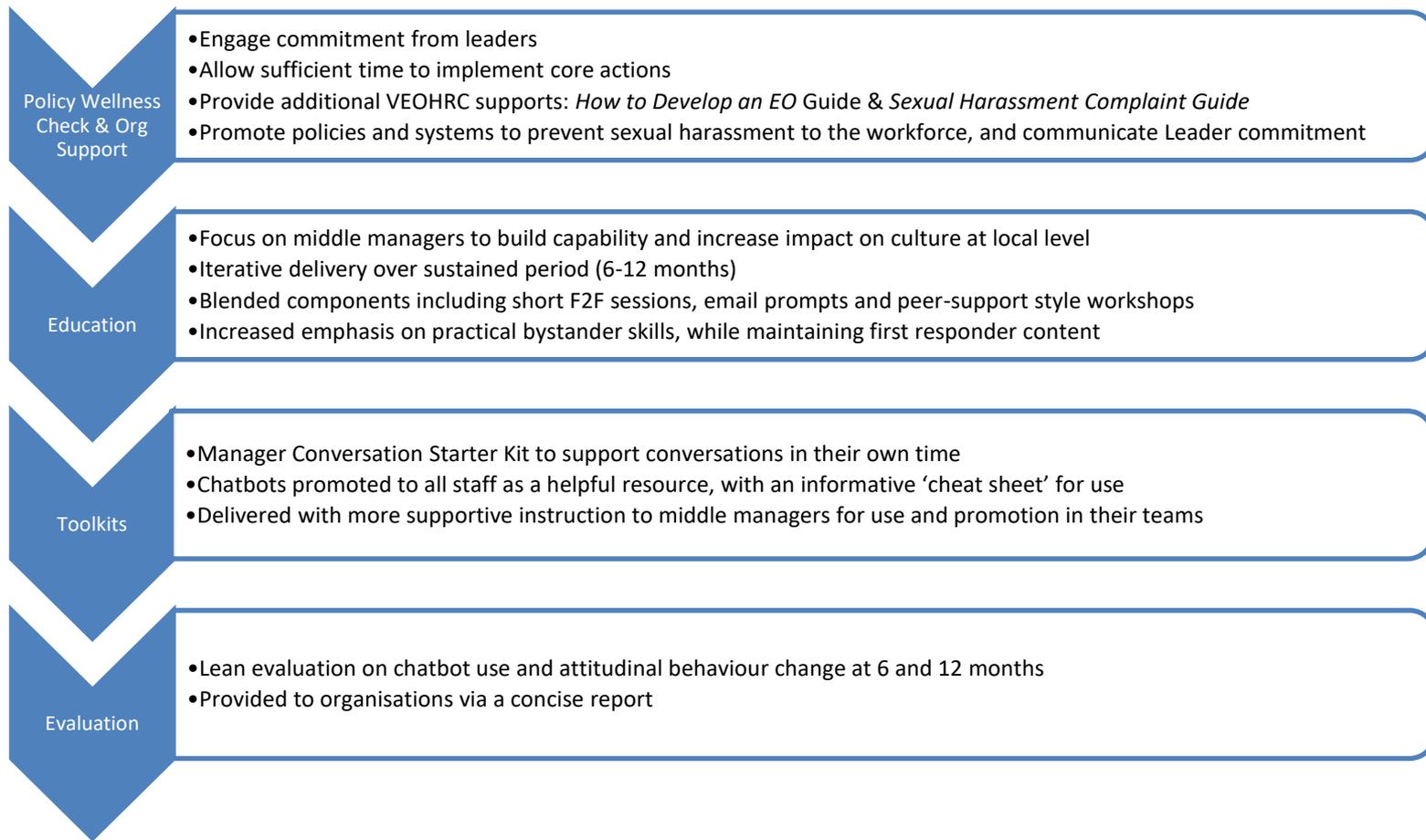
Look to use the toolkit for flex work requests

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

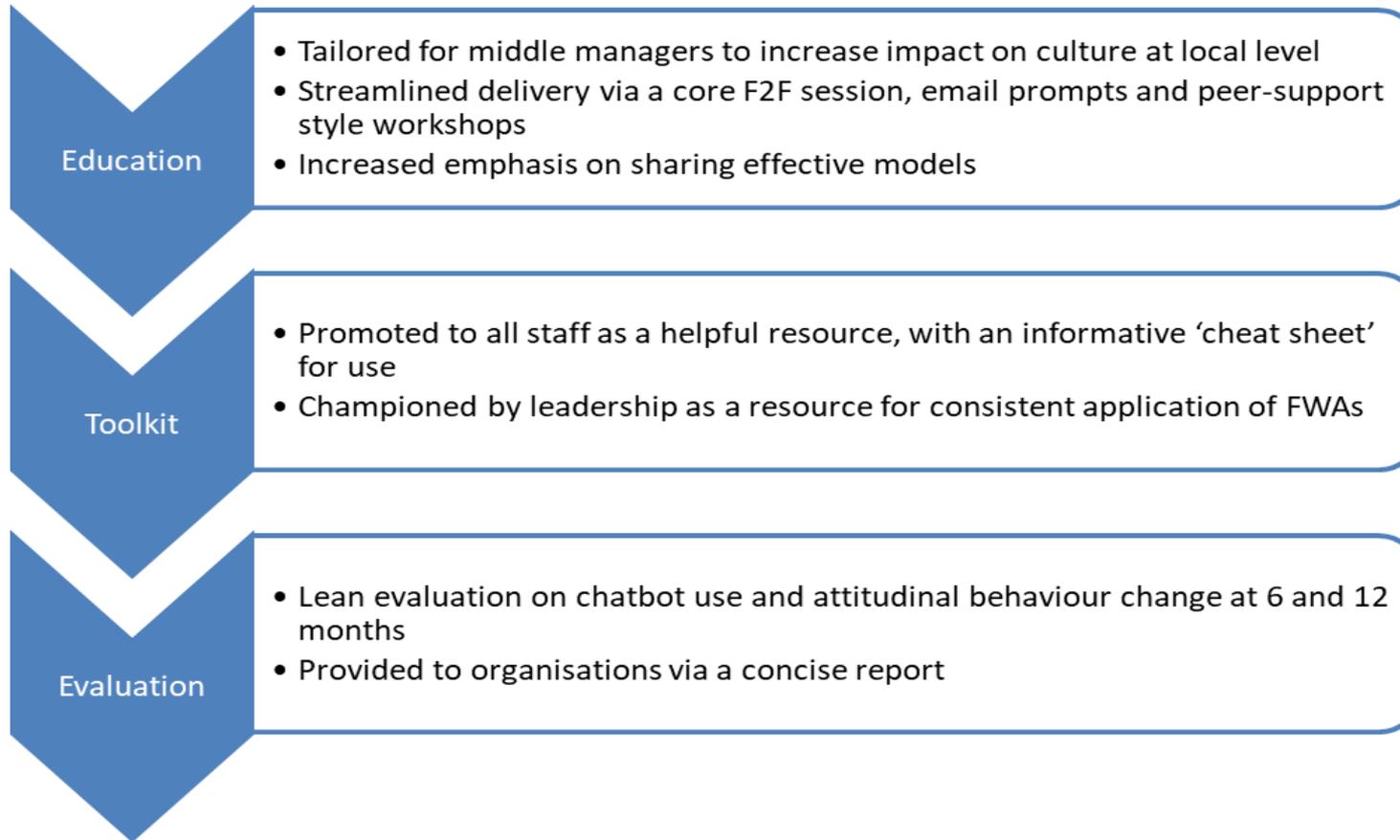
Next Steps: Sexual Harassment Program

VEOHRC will offer a Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Package:



Next Steps: Gender Equality & FWA Program

VEOHRC will offer a Gender Equality and Flexible Work Planner package:



Q & A



Further resources

More info (FAQs):

www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/raiseit

education@veohrc.vic.gov.au

Enquiry line: 1300 292 153