

Frequently asked questions



Q1: Is violence against women common in modern day Australia?

A: In 2012/13 Victoria Police attended more than 60,000 family violence incidents across Victoriaⁱ. That accounts for 167 homes a day. 1 in 3 women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15, with 1 in 5 having experienced sexual violenceⁱⁱ.

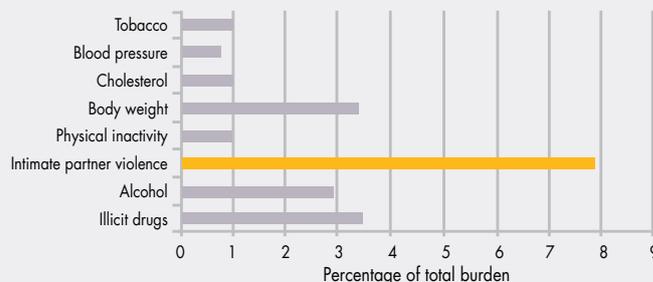
Q2: What about violence against men?

A: The evidence is very clear that most violence against men is perpetrated by another man, unknown to the victim and is more likely to occur in a public place. Conversely, most violence against women is perpetrated by a man that is known to the woman and more likely to occur in the homeⁱⁱⁱ. Another key factor in considering the differences between violence against men and women is that while violence experienced by men is declining, violence against women continues to increase^{iv}.

Q3: What are the impacts and costs of violence against women?

A: The impacts are very serious. For Victorian women aged between 15 and 45, violence from an intimate partner contributes to more ill health than any other preventable risk factor including smoking, alcohol, poor diet and physical inactivity^v. Violence against women results in physical, mental and emotional ill health, disease and sometimes death^{vi}. See Info Sheet 5 for more information.

Top eight risk factors contributing to the disease burden in Victorian Women 15 - 44 years



VicHealth, 2014, The Health Costs of Violence; Measuring the Burden of Disease Caused by Intimate Partner Violence, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne.

Q4: How can you prevent violence against women?

A: The term 'primary prevention' means stopping violence before it occurs. We need to focus on why violence happens in the first place and address those factors. Research conducted by VicHealth identified that one of the most important thing we can do to prevent and reduce violence against women is to promote equal and respectful relationships between men and women^{vii}. When councils get involved in initiatives, planning and policy development that promotes equity and respect between men and women, they are contributing to the prevention of violence against women.

Q5: What has preventing violence against women got to do with councils?

A: Victorian councils have become national leaders in prevention efforts. They engage in activities that have become critical in developing safe, inclusive and respectful workplaces and communities.

Councils are key settings through which individuals, families, organisations and communities are engaged and have an important role in influencing cultural and social structures. Councils are also major employers in the community, putting them in the position to influence the welfare of their own council community.

Q6: Which area of council is responsible for preventing violence against women?

A: Councils have successfully embedded preventing violence against women strategies into the diverse range of services and functions they provide to the community.

In many rural settings where one council staff member is often responsible for a variety of roles, there is a good level of understanding about where to channel efforts in their particular community and council. Councils have added preventing violence against women activities, such as ensuring more women and girls are included in organising and participating in sports clubs, into existing council initiatives while also working in partnership with key community groups. See Info Sheet 6 for examples of how councils have done this.

Q7: How can I get more information and link with others working on preventing violence against women?

A: The MAV hosts a Preventing Violence Against Women Network which meets quarterly. Rural councils are encouraged to attend and can do so via Skype or video conferencing. Visit the MAV website: www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/social-community/gender-equity

Your women's health service will have information about preventing violence against women in your region. See Info Sheet 2 for a listing. Subscribe to the VicHealth E-news: www.vichealth.vic.gov.au

Q8: Who is most vulnerable in my municipality and where can I find out about the levels of violence?

A: Women from all social, economic and cultural backgrounds experience violence. However, women with disabilities, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal women are more vulnerable to violence^{viii}.

You can find out the number of police callouts to family violence incidents in your municipality by visiting: www.socialstatistics.com.au and checking the family violence incidents section. Also contact your regional women's health service for more local information and sex disaggregated data (see Info Sheet 2).

Q9: I understand that councils are best placed to work on preventing violence before it occurs, but where can I get help if violence does occur?

A: It is inevitable that in working on the primary prevention of violence you may get queries or disclosures from women who have experienced violence. Women in rural communities face specific barriers in getting help and support. Lack of crisis accommodation, resources and services, long distances to travel to family, friends and health services and a lack of confidentiality in small close knit communities can make it hard to act when violence occurs. It is important to listen and believe women who disclose experiences of violence and offer to refer them to a local or state-wide service.



In an emergency, call 000. If you need information and/or support contact the national 24/7 service **1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)** or visit www.1800respect.org.au

ⁱ Victoria Police, 2013, *Crime Statistics Official Release 2012/13*, Victoria Police, Melbourne.

ⁱⁱ ABS, 2013, *Personal Safety Survey, Cat. No. 4906.0*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

ⁱⁱⁱ ABS, 2013.

^{iv} Victoria Police, 2013.

^v VicHealth, 2004, *The Health Costs of Violence: Measuring the Burden of Disease Caused by Intimate Partner Violence: A Summary of Findings*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne.

^{vi} The Royal Women's Hospital, 2012, *Family Violence – Information for Women*, The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne.

^{vii} VicHealth, 2007, *Preventing Violence Before it Occurs: A Framework for Action and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women in Victoria*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne.

^{viii} VicHealth, 2013, *Preventing Violence Against Women in Australia Research Summary*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne.



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