

# Pride in Prevention Messaging Guide

A guide for communications and engagement to support primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities

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A guide for communications and  
engagement to support primary prevention  
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communities

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## Contents

Introduction .....	2
Key concepts and issues .....	4
Designing communications .....	10
Engaging with communities .....	15
Bringing it all together .....	25



# Introduction

This resource has been developed as a companion to **Pride in Prevention: A guide to primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities.**

Pride in Prevention draws together existing research and policy frameworks, and puts forward a new conceptual model for understanding lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ)\* experiences of family violence, along with priority actions for primary prevention.

This guide provides additional support to organisations and practitioners in developing effective and appropriate family violence prevention messaging, and delivering this through public campaigns, social media communications and policy work. It also aims to support community engagement in developing and delivering prevention messaging, and specifically engaging with LGBTIQ communities.

**Just like everyone else, LGBTIQ people deserve to live in a supportive community, and be treated with care and respect. Achieving this will require collaborative and concerted effort to promote choice, bodily autonomy, equality and celebration of diverse human experiences of sex, gender and sexuality.**

The purpose of primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities is to work towards a world where all people can be themselves and enjoy their lives and their relationships. Just like everyone else, LGBTIQ people deserve

to live in a supportive community, and be treated with care and respect. Achieving this will require collaborative and concerted effort to promote choice, bodily autonomy, equality and celebration of diverse human experiences of sex, gender and sexuality.

Unfortunately, experiences of stigma, discrimination, abuse and violence are common for LGBTIQ people. The underlying social drivers of this violence are outlined in **Pride in Prevention**, suggesting the need for whole-of-population approaches and primary prevention interventions to promote social change.

## Who is it for?

This guide aims to build the expertise and capacity of both LGBTIQ practitioners and organisations, and mainstream family violence practitioners and organisations, in the design and delivery of primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities. This includes those experienced in working to advance LGBTIQ rights, health and wellbeing, and those experienced in the primary prevention of violence against women and broader efforts to promote gender equity.

The guide draws on existing expertise in communications and engagement, applying this to LGBTIQ family violence primary prevention. Many of the principles and approaches included in the guide are drawn from frameworks used extensively in message development to promote gender equality or prevent men's violence against women. In particular, it draws on the **Common Cause framework**, an innovative framework for designing messaging to inform social justice conversations and behaviour change.



The guide also draws on established best-practice principles and approaches to LGBTIQ inclusion outlined in the **Rainbow Tick** LGBTIQ-inclusive practice framework.

## What's in the guide?

This guide is divided into four sections.

The first section introduces the key concepts and issues involved in the primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ people.

The second section deals with designing communications, introducing some key principles and suggesting effective approaches for prevention messaging specific to LGBTIQ family violence.

The third section covers community engagement, specifically how to engage

with LGBTIQ communities, bystanders and allies, and respond to backlash and resistance.

The fourth section brings everything together with a list of prompt questions for easy reference.

\* Variations on the acronym LGBTIQ may be used in this guide, depending on which parts of LGBTIQ communities are being referenced or discussed. Different versions of the acronym are also used in particular contexts, e.g. organisations working with young people often use LGBTIQ+ while those working with older people often use LGBTI (because of the historical meaning of the term 'queer').



# Key concepts and issues

Drawing on existing research, policy frameworks and theoretical approaches, **Pride in Prevention** outlines in detail a proposed conceptual model for understanding the drivers of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities. This guide should be read in conjunction with **Pride in Prevention**, as it won't be replicating this work in detail. Instead, this section aims to present key concepts and issues that need to be understood and communicated in primary prevention messaging for LGBTIQ experiences of family violence.

## What are the drivers of violence?

The key argument put forward in **Pride in Prevention** is that the drivers of violence for LGBTIQ people are closely linked and related to the drivers of men's violence against women.

Using a strong base of existing research, the national framework for the primary prevention of violence against women, **Change the Story**, has established that men's violence against women is driven by:

- ▶ condoning of violence against women
- ▶ men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life and relationships
- ▶ rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity
- ▶ male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women

For LGBTIQ people the drivers of family violence are both similar and different, in that they include rigid gender norms, but also cisnormativity and heteronormativity. These will impact in different ways for different parts of LGBTIQ communities, depending on their gender, sexuality and status as a person with an intersex variation. However, collectively, all LGBTIQ people are impacted by these inter-related social norms.

Rigid gender norms are reinforced by the idea that the only 'normal' and 'natural' bodies and gender identities are 'male' and 'female'; this is called *cisnormativity*. Meanwhile, *heteronormativity* is the idea that the only 'normal' and 'natural' relationships are heterosexual relationships between 'men' and 'women'. People with bodies, sexualities and relationships that

## What is primary prevention?

According to **Change the story**, the national framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and children in Australia:

*Primary prevention requires changing the social conditions, such as gender inequality, that excuse, justify or even promote violence against women and their children. Individual behaviour change may be the intended result of prevention activity, but such change cannot be achieved prior to, or in isolation from, a broader change in the underlying drivers of such violence across communities, organisations and society as a whole. A primary prevention approach works across the whole population to address the attitudes, practices and power differentials that drive violence against women and their children.*

Primary prevention is targeted at the deep underlying social drivers of violence through initiatives aimed at stopping violence before it starts.

fall outside of these social norms are made to feel like there is something wrong with them, their feelings and their relationships.

These social drivers of violence lead to inequality, discrimination and devaluing of LGBTIQ people. Homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and intersexphobia further drive family violence experienced by LGBTIQ people, and normalise this violence. This is compounded by community and service-level failures to recognise and respond to family violence experienced by LGBTIQ people. This all makes it harder for LGBTIQ people to recognise family violence or seek help.

The dominance of heteronormative (and cisnormative) models of family violence make it harder for LGBTQ people to recognise and label intimate partner violence as such, creating silence around this violence. This silencing has been found to contribute to LGBTQ people staying in abusive relationships, and also to delay or prevent recognition of violence by victim-survivors, their families and communities.

## Trans and gender diverse

The overarching term *trans and gender diverse* can be defined as referring to people whose gender identity or experience is different from the gender that was presumed and recorded for them at birth. Within this grouping, people use a range of different terms such as trans woman, trans man, non-binary, Brotherboys and Sistergirls.

Meanwhile, the word *cisgender* is used to mean people whose gender identity or experience aligns with the gender that was presumed and recorded for them at birth.



In **Pride in Prevention**, a model is proposed (see below) to explain the drivers of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities. This model provides important guidance in developing prevention messaging that acts against the drivers of violence. This model is preliminary, and larger-scale consultation and reviews of evidence and interventions will be needed in order to develop a shared national primary prevention framework that is inclusive of LGBTIQ experiences of family and intimate partner violence.

However, the model currently provides a vital starting point for designing primary prevention messaging that is either specific to LGBTIQ communities, or that meaningfully includes these communities in broader primary prevention messaging.

### What can be done?

Based on this model, **Pride in Prevention** puts forward a range of suggested actions to address the drivers at each level (see box on page 7).

These suggested actions directly target the drivers experienced by LGBTIQ communities, and are an important starting point in developing primary prevention messaging.

### How do we describe the issue?

**Pride in Prevention** summarises the existing research base on LGBTIQ experiences of family violence, acknowledging that it is limited in a number of ways. Nevertheless, when put together, there is sufficient research around prevalence and dynamics to suggest the need for policy priority and a specific service-based response, as well as a focus on primary prevention.

Key points from **Pride in Prevention** are included in the next section as a high-level summary that can be used in campaign materials, social media and policy statements or submissions (see page 8).

	Societal	System & institutional	Organisational & community	Individual & relationship
Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Rigid gender norms</li><li>▶ Cisnormativity</li><li>▶ Hetero-normativity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Inequality in recognition of bodies, identities and relationships</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Devaluation of bodies, identities and relationships</li><li>▶ Reproduction of norms and stereotypes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and intersexphobic behaviour</li><li>▶ Normalisation of violence and abuse</li></ul>
What do these lead to?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and intersexphobia</li><li>▶ Gendered cultures of violence</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Invalidisation of identities and relationships</li><li>▶ Loss of bodily autonomy</li><li>▶ Discrimination</li><li>▶ Failure of responses to violence</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Stigma and discrimination</li><li>▶ Normalisation of inequality</li><li>▶ Failure to recognise violence</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Negative self-worth</li><li>▶ Perpetration of violence and abuse</li><li>▶ Poorer health outcomes</li></ul>





## Suggested actions

### Societal level

- ▶ Challenging rigid gender norms and heteronormativity
- ▶ Challenging homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and intersexphobia

### System and institutional level

- ▶ Promoting equal recognition and celebration of LGBTIQ bodies, identities and relationships
- ▶ Integration of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities in primary prevention responses

### Organisational & community level

- ▶ Supporting positive, equal and respectful LGBTIQ relationships and communities
- ▶ Promoting pride in LGBTIQ bodies, identities, families and relationships
- ▶ Raising awareness and community capability to respond to violence

### Individual and relationship level

- ▶ Supporting families to fully embrace LGBTIQ children and family members
- ▶ Supporting positive intimate relationships
- ▶ Enabling positive community connections

A 'gender-transformative' approach seeks to positively shift gender norms, as well as cisnormativity and heteronormativity. This approach aims to challenge violence against women and violence against LGBTIQ communities simultaneously – paving the way for choice, acceptance and celebration of a diversity of bodies, genders, sexualities, social roles and relationships.

### Why focus on this issue?

- ▶ LGBTIQ communities experience violence within their intimate relationships at similar (and sometimes higher) rates than cisgender and heterosexual relationships.
- ▶ LGBTIQ people experience violence within their 'family of origin' (biological or adoptive family), related to disclosure of their identities or their experience as a person with an intersex variation.
- ▶ More broadly, LGBTQ people report high levels of verbal and physical abuse, harassment and sexual assault, including within their homes.
- ▶ Experiences of family violence impact on mental health, and LGBTIQ communities already have significantly poorer mental health outcomes than the general population.
- ▶ There is a national shortage of family violence services skilled in working with LGBTIQ communities. Service pathways for trans and gender diverse people and gay, bisexual and queer men across Australia are particularly poor.

- ▶ To date, there has been little focus on, or investment in, primary prevention of LGBTIQ experiences of family violence.

### Why does it happen?

- ▶ There is nothing intrinsically wrong with LGBTIQ people, their bodies, identities and relationships.
- ▶ The key drivers of violence are rigid gender norms, heteronormativity and cisnormativity – that is, social norms that suggest there is something wrong with LGBTIQ bodies, identities and relationships.
- ▶ The resulting inequality and invalidation not only drive violence, but limit recognition and effective responses to this violence.
- ▶ Gendered experiences of inequality and sexist cultures of violence also exert influence on LGBTIQ intimate relationships, though not enough is understood about these dynamics and how they influence perpetration.

### What can be done about it?

- ▶ There is a need for more research, a national policy framework and a specific service response.
- ▶ Primary prevention must include a focus on equality, recognition, respect and celebration of LGBTIQ bodies, identities and relationships.
- ▶ This is likely to involve a mixture of integration of LGBTIQ experiences into mainstream education, community and messaging initiatives, as well as initiatives driven by LGBTIQ-community controlled organisations and LGBTIQ people themselves.

## What about men's violence against women?

The majority of existing research, policy and service responses to family violence has so far been focused on men's violence against women. This is justified by a strong and growing research base that has clearly established the prevalence and dynamics of men's violence against women, as well as key features of effective prevention and service responses.

Continuing to address men's violence against women can be done in ways that simultaneously challenge, rather than reinforce, the silencing and exclusion of LGBTIQ communities and their experiences. This needs to be done carefully as messaging intended to prevent men's violence against women can sometimes inadvertently reinforce binary understandings of gender, and reinforce assumptions that 'women' and 'men' are both cisgender and heterosexual.

Similarly, primary prevention messaging specific to LGBTIQ communities could inadvertently detract from the importance of men's violence against women as a social problem. For instance, well-meaning but simplistic attempts to 'de-gender' discussions of family violence can inadvertently feed denial of the impact of sexism, gender inequality and gender-based violence.

Resolving this unnecessary conflict can be achieved through deliberate acknowledgement of the diversity of experiences of family violence alongside a focus on the shared drivers of violence, and a commitment to work together against these drivers.

Rigid gender norms and gender inequality are founded on the social constitution of stereotypical roles for men and women within heterosexual intimate relationships. Because of this, primary prevention of

LGBTIQ experiences of family violence helps to challenge and break down many of the key ideas that drive violence against women. For instance, LGBTIQ visibility and pride challenge social norms by expanding understanding and validation of the diversity of human experiences and expressions of sex, gender and sexuality.

A 'gender-transformative' approach is highlighted in **Pride in Prevention** as an emerging approach that seeks to positively shift gender norms, as well as cisnormativity and heteronormativity. This approach aims to prevent violence against women and violence against LGBTIQ communities simultaneously – paving the way for choice, acceptance and celebration of a diversity of bodies, genders, sexualities, social roles and relationships.

### Inclusive language

In talking about men's violence against women, it is increasingly **standard practice** to define the term 'woman' in an inclusive way. This should be based on gender identity and expression rather than bodies, i.e. gender is about how someone understands themselves and how they choose to interact with those around them.

The overlap and indistinct boundaries between the categories of 'women' and 'LGBTIQ communities' also needs to be acknowledged. This is particularly important for those who live within the intersection of these experiences of inequality and discrimination. The experiences of women within LGBTIQ communities must be included in discussions about men's violence against women. Similarly, the experiences of women within LGBTIQ communities also require attention. LGBTIQ communities are not immune from sexism, and this can drive experiences of discrimination and violence for women in this context.

# Designing communications

This section deals with designing communications, introducing some key principles and suggesting effective approaches for prevention messaging specific to LGBTIQ family violence.

## Who is the audience?

The target audience for communications will heavily influence the format, content and approach. For instance, messaging could be part of a community-based resource, social media campaign or a policy submission. In line with the drivers and actions outlined in **Pride in Prevention**, some campaigns and messages could be targeted at LGBTIQ communities themselves:

- ▶ to increase individual recognition of violence in LGBTIQ relationships
  - ▶ to reduce use and acceptance of violence by LGBTIQ people
  - ▶ to improve community responsiveness
  - ▶ to promote healthy relationships and families
  - ▶ to build positive self-awareness, pride and community connection
- However, the drivers of violence affecting LGBTIQ communities exist within broader society. This means effective LGBTIQ primary prevention strategies need to engage the whole community and promote action across a range of settings:
- ▶ to challenge rigid gender norms
  - ▶ to reduce cisnormativity and heteronormativity
  - ▶ to promote recognition and celebration of LGBTIQ bodies, identities and relationships
  - ▶ to achieve LGBTIQ equality
  - ▶ to increase allyship and build coalition

## Values and frames

If the aim is to convince those who are persuadable, the Common Cause framework suggests ways to shift, disrupt or get around existing ideas by appealing to particular values that are associated with positive social actions and a sense of shared humanity – like love, health, freedom, care, respect and equality. This is outlined in the **Common Cause handbook** as follows:

*Values, as well as influencing our behaviours and attitudes, are connected to the way we understand the world. One way this connection manifests itself is through frames. Frames are both mental structures that order our ideas; and communicative tools that evoke these structures and shape our perceptions and interpretations over time.*

Frames include a range of techniques to present an issue, such as metaphors, associations, comparisons, etc. The Common Cause framework suggests that messages can inadvertently repeat or reinforce ideas by relying on existing 'frames', rather than shifting ideas in a transformative way. For instance, talking only about LGBTIQ people as targets of violence (to an audience who is still not convinced) can inadvertently reinforce the idea that this is somehow normal, unchanging and even justified.

Instead, appealing to altruistic and open-minded values gives a broad audience something to identify with and inspires them to enact the change that is being asked of them.

An isometric illustration of a community event on a green lawn. A central stall has a sign that reads 'FOOTBALL IS FOR EVERYONE' in pink letters on a dark background. The stall is decorated with rainbow flags, balloons, and has a person behind the counter. To the left of the stall is a clothing rack with various items. Several people are walking around the area, including a woman in a white tank top and dark skirt, a man in a blue shirt and grey trousers, and a woman in a pink shirt and blue pants. A large, curved, light-brown shape on the left side of the illustration partially obscures the text.

While it is useful to specifically target messages to an intended audience, it is highly likely that messages will be seen by other audiences, especially given the proliferation of digital platforms.

A useful way of thinking about this can be drawn from broader resources about designing messages to improve equality. In the model outlined in **Framing equality toolkit, ILGA Europe and Public Interest Research Centre, UK**, audiences consist of:

- ▶ Your base: People who are already (broadly) supportive of the issue.
- ▶ Your moveable middle: People who can be persuaded. Those who are undecided or haven't engaged with the issue.
- ▶ Your target: People (or institutions) whose behaviour you want to shift, usually by leveraging your base or moveable middle.
- ▶ Your opponents: People who are strongly opposed to the issue. They are unlikely to ever be supportive of your message.

Any message should be designed with a target in mind, while rallying the base, and effectively engaging people who have yet to make up their mind. It is sometimes necessary to be mindful of those who may never be convinced; however, trying to appeal to everyone can dilute the message.

## What is the aim?

Clarifying the intended audience for a message helps to clarify which level of the socio-ecological model the message sits within and which driver is being addressed. The next step is to examine the actions and responses that the message seeks to inspire in order to disrupt the driver(s).



Messaging in primary prevention can have a variety of aims. For the purposes of this guide, the most relevant of these might include:

- ▶ informing and educating an audience or prompting them to find out more
- ▶ persuading an audience to think about something differently or question their assumptions
- ▶ encouraging an audience to change their behaviour or take action on an issue
- ▶ demonstrating how to celebrate and reinforce change, in order to encourage positive actions by the audience

Deciding on the aim of a message also includes deciding which parts of LGBTIQ communities are included. While all

**Structuring a message around a shared vision helps to focus on solutions, or the 'action' it seeks to inspire. If the message is only focused on problems or barriers, it can have the opposite effect on an audience to that intended.**

members of LGBTIQ communities may be included within some messages, others may only speak to the experience of some subgroups. It is important to be clear and explicit about this from the outset.

Decisions about this will be informed by the driver being addressed and the expertise and community connections held by the organisation and practitioners designing the message. It may also be useful to examine what other materials are in circulation, to fill gaps and ensure that the diversity of LGBTIQ community needs and experiences are represented.

Deciding which parts of the LGBTIQ community are in scope will help to manage the expectations of the audience,

and to focus the necessary LGBTIQ community engagement (see page 15).

## How do we know what works?

The **Common Cause framework** is based on research conducted, both internationally and in Australia, particularly in the field of social psychology. It has gained currency in Australia in informing message development for gender equality and prevention of violence against women. This approach has been tested and evaluated by **Common Cause Australia**, on behalf of VicHealth and key sector partners, in the following guides:

- ▶ **Framing gender equality: Message guide**
- ▶ **Framing masculinity: Message guide**

There is not yet sufficient established best-practice and expertise, or research and evaluation, to determine specifically what is effective in the context of LGBTIQ family violence primary prevention. So primary prevention messaging campaigns should be both tested and evaluated to help build evidence in this space.

There are a range of methods and techniques that can be used both to test messages prior to release, and to evaluate the impact afterwards. The available budget will determine what is affordable, but both testing and evaluation should be part of any messaging campaign.

More detail and examples can be found here:

- ▶ **Prevention handbook, Our Watch**
- ▶ **Violence against women: a concise guide to evaluating primary prevention projects, VicHealth**
- ▶ **Framing equality toolkit, ILGA Europe, Public Interest Research Centre, UK**

# How do we structure a message?

The **Framing gender equality: Message guide** suggests that persuasive messages should be structured in the following way:

- ▶ Start with a vision of equality, appealing to shared values
- ▶ Identify the barrier that gets in the way of this vision
- ▶ Identify the action that will remove the barrier and achieve the shared vision

This way of structuring a message is based on concepts developed by Common Cause, particularly the importance of understanding and making use of both ‘values’ and ‘frames’ (see box on page 10).

Structuring a message around a shared vision helps to focus on solutions, or the ‘outcome’ it hopes to achieve. If the message is only focused on problems or barriers, it can have the opposite effect on an audience to that intended. Reiterating difficult statistics, poor outcomes, or horrible incidents can reinforce the idea that the situation is inevitable and can’t be changed, instead of galvanising an audience into action.

The following messages are provided as examples that clearly seek to move the audience, in particular the persuadable audience, towards engaging in action for the greater good – in this case acting against the drivers of violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities.

## Message template

Vision	Barrier	Action
State the shared value and describe the ideal situation.	What is getting in the way of our vision? Be specific.	What needs to happen to remove the barrier? Add a specific call to action if appropriate.
Final message		
Put it all together to create a powerful, persuasive message.		

## Sample message: healthy relationships

Vision	Barrier	Action
A world where all relationships are equal, and based on love and respect.	Attitudes and systems that suggest LGBTIQ people are not ‘normal’ or valued.	Celebrate LGBTIQ families and relationships and warmly encourage help-seeking.
Final message		
All of us want relationships and families filled with love and respect — and deserve support when things go wrong. However, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic legislation, systems and attitudes mean it’s less likely that LGBTIQ couples, parents and young people will seek help when someone uses violence against them. We know that recognising and celebrating LGBTIQ people, relationships and families makes a difference. Will you help us create a safer environment for LGBTIQ people to stand up, ask for help and experience the love we all deserve?		



## Sample message: LGBTIQ inclusion in sport

Vision	Barrier	Action
Everyone should be able to play sport and be comfortable being themselves.	Attitudes that suggest LGBTIQ kids aren't welcome, or shouldn't be open about who they are.	Make it clear that all kids, including LGBTIQ kids, are welcome in sport.
<b>Final message</b> <p>Everyone should be able to play a sport, whether it's football, netball, gymnastics or something completely different. But the language we use on the field can make it clear to LGBTIQ kids that they're not welcome. At its worst, this can lead to violence – which doesn't belong in the game, or anywhere else. Together, we can make it clear that sport is for all of us, including LGBTIQ people. Join our campaign to get positive about equality and respect in sport.</p>		

# Engaging with communities

This section covers principles and approaches to community engagement, specifically how to engage with LGBTIQ communities, bystanders and allies, and respond to backlash and resistance.

## How do we engage with LGBTIQ communities?

Primary prevention of violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities is most likely to succeed when it involves messages that resonate with both the broader community and LGBTIQ communities themselves.

Whether the message is put out by an LGBTIQ organisation, or an organisation that isn't based in LGBTIQ communities, community engagement is a vital part of designing and delivering communications.

For LGBTIQ community organisations, community engagement and message testing is also important, depending on the particular focus of the messaging. For instance, organisations working with one part of LGBTIQ communities may need to consult with other groups to ensure their experiences and needs are accurately included in ways that help rather than harm.

When messaging around LGBTIQ family violence is woven into broader family violence primary prevention messaging, engagement with LGBTIQ communities is essential. The principle here is 'nothing about us without us' and this means that the voices and experiences of LGBTIQ people must be centred within the planning, design and implementation of messaging around LGBTIQ family violence.

Involving LGBTIQ individuals as spokespeople can be powerful and persuasive (see section on spokespeople

on page 16). However, it is also important to partner with LGBTIQ organisations and experts in order to ensure the campaign is understandable, up-to-date, appropriate and effective.

### Partnerships

Working in partnership can be a great way for organisations to learn from each other and support ongoing capacity building and collaboration. Existing primary prevention organisations have an established reach, practice base, coordinated leadership and integration with family violence policy frameworks. LGBTIQ community organisations have a wealth of experience and expertise in transforming community attitudes through health promotion, community development, human rights advocacy and targeted campaigns to counter myths and stigma.

This will involve finding out which organisations or experts are appropriate to represent particular communities or advise on particular issues. Organisations that are led by, and deliver services for, specific communities should be consulted wherever possible. This consultation should also include finding out the most appropriate contact points to be listed, e.g. phone counselling, family violence services, websites for more information.

If the work is likely to be ongoing, or take up a lot of time, it may be necessary to form a community advisory group in order to consult with LGBTIQ people from a particular community or area of interest. This can help build connections and relationships, and make it more likely the advice is appropriate and useful.

It is important that this group includes a diverse range of people from LGBTIQ communities, and organisations should pay community advocates for their time.

See Standard Three of the [Rainbow Tick](#) on community participation for more on guiding principles and suggested actions.

## How do we work with spokespeople?

Choosing who will deliver the message can be as important as the content of the message itself. For instance, someone who is not LGBTIQ but respected in a particular community might be well-positioned to shift community attitudes. However, using spokespeople or individuals from organisations that hold, or have not acknowledged their history of, anti-LGBTIQ views will undermine and discredit the message.

**Focusing on values and a shared vision for the future can help to frame the story for the person telling it, as well as helping the campaign specialist or journalist to turn the message into a persuasive piece. By presenting an experience of violence as a barrier to happiness, choice and a fulfilling life, the spokesperson can then present suggested actions and advocacy as the resolution.**

The voices of people with lived experience can be very powerful when included in communications. This can be achieved with varying levels of participation, for example, through inviting people to be media spokespeople, conducting and distributing

video interviews, or simply using photos of people with quotes about their experiences. Lived experience can also be inserted into communications through the use of case studies from research and statistics about people's experiences.

There are a number of critical points to consider when engaging people with lived experience as spokespeople. Sharing a story of family violence can be empowering for individuals and assist in effective advocacy. However, there are also a number of risks and ethical considerations, such as individual harm, privileging certain voices over others, appropriating power, privacy and confidentiality, legal obligations, and risk of defamation.

These considerations are explored in detail in [When I tell my story, I'm in charge: Ethical and effective storytelling in advocacy](#), a resource produced by the Human Rights Law Centre.

Stories should be shared in a way that supports the message. In line with the approach suggested in this guide, over-emphasising trauma can be reinforcing for both speakers and listeners. Organisations can support the person with lived experience to pivot to solutions that the audience can support and act upon. This can be encouraged through prompt questions for spokespeople, assisting them to share their story in a positive way. For example:

- ▶ What supports and connections were key to your recovery?
- ▶ What would help other people with similar experiences?

Focusing on values and a shared vision for the future can help to frame the story for the person telling it, as well as helping the campaign specialist or journalist to turn the message into a persuasive piece. By presenting an experience of violence as a barrier to happiness, choice and a fulfilling





violence. This includes inequality and discrimination based on culture, indigeneity, ethnicity, socio-economic status, ability, geography, age, migration status and religion.

These can all influence individual, family and community understandings of sex, gender and sexuality. Through this, the impact of rigid gender norms, cisnormativity and heteronormativity will be felt differently by LGBTIQ people depending on these

**Including intersectionality in ways that are relevant and that resonate with a range of communities will improve both the quality and impact of the message for a range of audiences.**

intersecting social characteristics, and can be made worse. **Pride in Prevention** includes a discussion of the unfortunately currently limited research base covering these issues.

The diverse experiences of people experiencing family violence are increasingly being recognised in government policy and decision-making, and family violence sector responses.

In Victoria, the **Everybody Matters statement** is an explicit commitment to an intersectional approach to equity and inclusion in the family violence response.

An intersectional approach is important in messaging around primary prevention of violence because both LGBTIQ communities and target audiences experience overlapping experiences of inequality and discrimination. Including intersectionality in ways that are relevant and that resonate with a range of communities, will improve both the quality and impact of the message for a range of audiences.

Representation of diversity is important, for example in case studies and images. However, deeper consideration of appropriate

intersectional approaches should be considered in primary prevention messaging.

Examples of this include:

- ▶ Using spokespeople, where possible, with lived experiences that are represented less often, e.g. particular parts of LGBTIQ communities, people of colour, people of different faiths, people with disabilities, older people, etc.
- ▶ Developing messaging around family violence that includes LGBTIQ experiences where relevant (e.g. LGBTIQ older people's experiences of elder abuse may be different, and messaging that doesn't include them will be ineffective for this group).
- ▶ Implementing messaging around LGBTIQ experiences of family violence that includes the experiences of those who are also Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or from multicultural backgrounds. This will improve the effectiveness of the message to broader audiences. However, this needs to be done in a way that respects different cultural understandings of gender, sexuality and family, and represents individuals in cultural context.

In untangling this, the overall aim of the messaging should guide the inclusion of particular communities and voices, and the specific community consultation required. This might mean consulting with organisations and individuals from multiple and overlapping communities.

## How do we engage bystanders and allies?

**Pride in Prevention** recommended the development of messaging to inform and activate 'bystanders' – people who witness attitudes and behaviours that reinforce the drivers of family violence.

This approach has been a feature of primary prevention interventions and messages targeting men's violence against women. (See, for example, Our Watch's [Bystander research: snapshot report](#).) Bystander messaging and campaigns can help build abilities and skills for people to actively disrupt the drivers of violence when they see them.

There is limited existing practice in applying bystander messaging to LGBTIQ experiences of family violence, but it is an approach worth testing.

In encouraging bystander activation, it is important to consider the safety of the LGBTIQ person and the bystander themselves. The specific contexts and complexities involved in this sort of messaging for LGBTIQ communities require more consideration.

In addition, bystander initiatives targeting men's violence against women should consider how to

simultaneously challenge homophobia, given that this plays an important role in male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control. This would require consultation with LGBTIQ community organisations to ensure the messages are appropriate and promote bystander actions in ways that are safe.

LGBTIQ community organising has also regularly included the concept of 'allies' – those who are not LGBTIQ themselves but take an active role in advocating for and on behalf of LGBTIQ people. However, allies may not (yet) be confident to act as an effective bystander, i.e. to intervene in the moment.



Messaging aimed at bystanders and allies can potentially support primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities – for example, by asking the audience to promote choice and celebration in diversity of bodies, sexualities and relationships or to challenge stereotypes of sexuality and gender.

**Bystander initiatives are just one strategy for primary prevention, and promote change at the individual level. Other more systemic issues may be at play within settings such as educational settings, workplaces and services. In these cases, the focus should not be on activating individual LGBTIQ people, bystanders and allies, but on organisational change towards cultural safety for LGBTIQ people.**

Encouraging either bystanders or allies needs to be done carefully. In designing messaging for these audiences, the following should be kept in mind:

- ▶ Before expressing public support, it is important that bystanders and allies check with the LGBTIQ person that they are comfortable with this, how it should be done and the potential consequences.
- ▶ LGBTIQ people themselves must own and determine their own path in disclosing their sexuality, gender or status as a person with an intersex variation (where, when and how).
- ▶ Expressing public support for LGBTIQ people in ‘coming out’ can be both powerful and important, although for many LGBTIQ people this is not a one-off event, but rather an ongoing process of disclosing to others if and when they feel safe.

- ▶ For others, ‘coming out’ is not the appropriate frame for their experience. People with an intersex variation may or may not choose to describe or disclose themselves as intersex. Some trans and gender diverse people may choose to ‘transition’, though others may not, and again this may be a process rather than a one-off event.
- ▶ Queer, trans and intersex people of colour (QTIPoC) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Brotherboys and Sistergirls belong to communities with their own cultural understandings about sex, gender and sexuality. LGBTIQ people in these contexts may also choose specific and deliberate approaches to disclosing to the important people in their lives.
- ▶ It is important not to encourage ‘calling out’ or shaming of people within families or communities in a way that increases the risk of violence for an LGBTIQ person or that models coercive behaviour.

For examples of bystander campaigns, messaging and toolkits, see:

- ▶ **Prevention handbook: Become an active bystander, Our Watch**
- ▶ **Gender equity and respect: Bystander action toolkit, VicHealth**

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## How do we manage resistance and backlash?

The concepts of resistance and backlash are used regularly by those working to promote gender equality or prevent violence against women. **(En)countering resistance: Strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives**, produced by VicHealth, summarises and explains that backlash is often understood as the more aggressive and extreme end of resistance to social change.

*Resistance can be at its greatest when existing structures are threatened. The idea of equality can provoke strong feelings – these are long-held social norms that are being challenged. You often know you're starting to get results with your gender equality initiatives when you meet resistance.*

Knowing to expect resistance and backlash, and how to deal with it, can help ensure it does not hinder progress or push back change.

Primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ

communities includes advocating for social change towards LGBTIQ equality, and challenging rigid social norms around sexuality and gender. Organised resistance and backlash to this change occurs from within political and legal institutions, political parties, lobby groups and community organisations. However, resistance and backlash can occur in any context – online, in workplaces, schools, and so on.

Resistance and backlash to challenging the drivers of violence for LGBTIQ communities is common, intense, political and socially sanctioned. Some of these responses may be complex, layered, or even come from feminist or LGBTIQ academics and organisations (e.g. resistance or backlash to trans and gender diverse inclusion within feminist spaces, or resistance and backlash to gender equality within LGBTIQ spaces).





# Types of resistance and backlash specific to LGBTIQ equality

Denial	Disavowal	Inaction	Appeasement
Denying the problem or the credibility of the case for change.  Putting the blame back onto LGBTIQ people.	Refusing to recognise the relevance of the problem or take responsibility for change.	Resisting the importance of making change, or refusing to implement a change initiative.	Placating or pacifying those advocating for change, but seeking to limit its impact.
<i>"Homophobia isn't a problem in our community."</i>	<i>"It's not my responsibility to respond to homophobic things my colleagues say."</i>	<i>"It's too difficult and resource-intensive to make our intake forms more inclusive."</i>	<i>"Absolutely, I love the LGBTIQ community! Sadly there's not much we can do."</i>
Appropriation	Co-option	Repression	Backlash
Simulating change while covertly undermining it.	Using the language of progressive frameworks to argue against change.	Reversing or dismantling a change initiative.	Aggressively attacking those seeking change.
<i>"I support marriage equality, but sexuality doesn't belong in schools."</i>	<i>"Women's voices are being silenced in the push for rights for trans and gender diverse people."</i>	<i>"Clients complained about trans people in the space. So we've reverted to the old set-up."</i>	<i>"These people deserve all the abuse they get."</i>

This table has been adapted from [\(En\)countering resistance](#) and is used with permission.

The process for developing prevention messaging should include specific consideration of resistance and backlash. A plan should be developed that includes:

- ▶ Likely resistance and backlash
- ▶ Possible formats or forums (e.g. social media, mainstream media, upcoming public meetings)
- ▶ Messages to respond, and a plan for when to activate these
- ▶ Spokespeople who may be useful in responding
- ▶ Plans to support staff and spokespeople
- ▶ Advice for key stakeholders and partners in how to respond in support of the message

Understanding and identifying possible resistance and backlash should form part of any internal processes involved in designing messages. However, this material should not be shared publicly – e.g. myths vs responses – as this can inadvertently reinforce negative ‘frames’.

## What about resistance and backlash online?

As most prevention messages are now shared online, a specific plan will be required for managing social media.

The following tips may be useful:

- ▶ Develop community guidelines for social media channels and online communities to explicitly name homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and intersexphobia as unacceptable
- ▶ Outline consequences for the behaviour so quick action can be taken, e.g. users will be blocked or banned
- ▶ Develop responses that can be shared quickly by moderators to name inappropriate or abusive

Understanding and identifying possible resistance and backlash should form part of any internal processes involved in designing messages. However, this material should not be shared publicly – e.g. myths vs responses – as this can inadvertently reinforce negative ‘frames’.

messages and explain why the action has been taken

- ▶ Develop messages for community members that encourage them not to engage with ‘trolls’ as this enflames resistance and backlash
- ▶ Investigate options for security and moderation like closing comment threads, removing comments, etc.
- ▶ Distribute the plan to the communications team, but also to front-line or reception staff in case resistance and backlash spills over into phone calls or in-person.

## How do we talk about gender equality and LGBTIQ equality?

One final consideration in minimising resistance and backlash is to limit conflict and competition between causes – specifically relevant in this case are the causes of gender equality and LGBTIQ equality.

Messages aimed at primary prevention of men’s violence against women are often integrated with expressions of broader support for social change towards gender equality, in the same way that messages aimed at primary prevention of LGBTIQ experiences of family violence are linked to support for LGBTIQ equality.

Gender equality is an issue that is important in its own right and requires focus and

attention to achieve the necessary social change. Resistance and backlash to change can include efforts to deny gender inequality and discrimination, and because of this it is counter-productive to argue for a 'de-gendering' of initiatives focused on issues like workplace or pay equality. However, in line with advice provided in this guide, it is important to promote both gender equality and prevention of violence against women in a way that does not reinforce LGBTIQ exclusion and inequality.

**Messages aimed at primary prevention of men's violence against women are often integrated with expressions of broader support for social change towards gender equality, in the same way that messages aimed at primary prevention of LGBTIQ experiences of family violence are linked to support for LGBTIQ equality.**

So, for instance, gender equality messages should be inclusive of all those who are women, as well as acknowledging the inter-linked experiences of exclusion and inequality for all LGBTIQ people. Gender-transformative approaches suggest the need for mutually reinforcing efforts to challenge rigid gender norms, cisnormativity and heteronormativity simultaneously – in order to prevent violence and achieve equality for all.

The following tips may be useful in developing best practice messaging in this space:

- ▶ Be clear about the problem being discussed – e.g. is it intimate partner violence, family violence, sexual violence, workplace discrimination, pay disparities, etc. This helps to define the aim of the message and the intended action or change it seeks to promote.
- ▶ Draw on, and reference, research that demonstrates the prevalence, dynamics and solutions to the problem. These may be different for women and for different subgroups within LGBTIQ communities.
- ▶ Be inclusive in defining who is a 'woman' or a 'man', and include trans and gender diverse people where they are also impacted by the problem. Avoid defining gender based on bodies.
- ▶ Overall though, don't get bogged down in defining binary gender categories (i.e. which LGBTIQ people are 'women'). This serves to reinforce rigid gender norms instead of challenging them.
- ▶ Focus on solutions to the problem, and the social drivers of that problem – which are closely linked for women and LGBTIQ people.
- ▶ Put forward positive visions of choice and freedom that will benefit both women and LGBTIQ people.

# Bringing it all together

## Questions to ask

- ☐ Who is the target audience? Who are the base, moveable middle and opponents?
- ☐ What is the aim? What action are we asking people to take?
- ☐ Does the messaging use the vision-barrier-action structure?
- ☐ What is the plan to test and evaluate the message?
- ☐ Are the values, frames and language in the messaging transformative and persuasive or are they accidentally reinforcing the opponents' argument?
- ☐ Is too much time spent talking about the problem and not enough time talking about the solution?
- ☐ Who is the spokesperson? How are they perceived? Will this add to the credibility of the message for this audience?
- ☐ Has the organisation safely and meaningfully involved people and professionals from the communities we are speaking about?
- ☐ Is there a plan in place in case of resistance or backlash?
- ☐ How will the evaluation and lessons be shared to help others in future?

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