The *Nabilan* Prevention Toolkit

FACT SHEET 2. THEORIES OF CHANGE FOR PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women is a complex social issue and there are many factors that contribute to this violence. It is therefore important to take the time to think about how we develop programs, projects and initiatives to prevent violence against women. Existing theories about how people can change a situation or resolve a problem (theories of change) can be very useful tools to help decide the actions required in our projects.

The Australian prevention organisation Our Watch define a theory of change as:

"…a way of stepping through the actions that need to be taken for complex and long-term social transformation, and the principles or assumptions behind such actions." (Our Watch 2014).

The theories of change and principles that are proving to be useful and effective for prevention of violence against women are:

- The Ecological Model
- Proschaka and Velicer's Stages of Change Model
- Social Norms theory

In the violence against women context it is also important to acknowledge that these theories have been influenced by feminist theory, and value feminisms contribution to recognising that violence against women is a global health issue and advocating for justice and prevention responses.

These theories are also influenced by a Human Rights framework as violence against women is considered one of the most widespread violations of human rights that affects women of all ages, race, culture and wealth, but disproportionately affects women from indigenous and marginalised communities.

Using the Ecological Model for understanding violence against women

Lori Heise developed the Ecological Model in 1998 to present a clear context for how violence against women occurs across our societies. This framework recognises that no one factor causes violence against women and that violence is caused by the interplay between individual, interpersonal, community, and socio-cultural factors. These are represented by the different levels on the Ecological Model. In this way, the Ecological Model helps us gain a deeper understanding of the issue of violence against women. For example, by using the Ecological Model, we can see why just telling an individual man not to use violence against women will not put an end to this behaviour if his family and friends continue to support the use of violence, if the social norms that justify men's dominance over women are not changed, and if the laws to punish violence against women are not properly implemented. (See top half of Figure 1).

Using the Ecological Model as a model for change

In addition to helping us understand the problem of violence against women, the Ecological Model can also help us find the most effective violence prevention solutions. Heise (2015) and the Lancet (2014) have used the Ecological Model to illustrate what is required across all levels to drive and enable positive change. The Ecological Model can be used for us to reflect on whether our violence prevention programs are effective, and to maximise their impact. (See bottom half of Figure 1).

INEQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN & MEN

DISCRIMINATORY LAWS & POLICIES

INEQUITABLE NORMS & PRACTICES

STIGMA, SHAME & SILENCE

DOMINANT MASCULINITY
SUBMISSIVE FEMININITY

Men's use of violence against women

Victim bears costs

SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY FOR MEN
EMPOWERMENT & OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN

Consciousness raising

Skill building

Activism

POSITIVE SOCIAL NORMS

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN & MEN

SOCIETAL

COMMUNITY

FAMILY

INDIVIDUAL

Impunity by decision makers

Lack of funding

Health, law, security not responding

Internalised acceptance of male superiority / female inferiority

Small group work

Critical reflection

Collective action

Community outreach

Movement building

Legal and policy reform

Funding

Advocacy

Explicit support of violence against women

Religious and cultural justification

Deprioritising violence against women

Acceptance of men's control

Lack of political will to implement law and policy

Skill building

First responders

Neighbourhood organising

Skill building

Popular education

Edutainment / change in public debate

Social movements for state accountability

Public opinion campaigns

Figure 1: The Ecological Model. Source: Michau et al., 2014.

Using the Ecological Model to identify who to work with

The Ecological Model is also important for programs, projects and initiatives to make sure that they are engaging with the whole community. In the SASA! approach, this is called 'Circles of Influence' (see figure 2), and this recognizes that each of these circles influences a person's experiences and ideas about violence. We must involve people from all circles of influence in violence prevention activities because, if we do not, we will not succeed in changing the community norms that sustain violence against women and children.
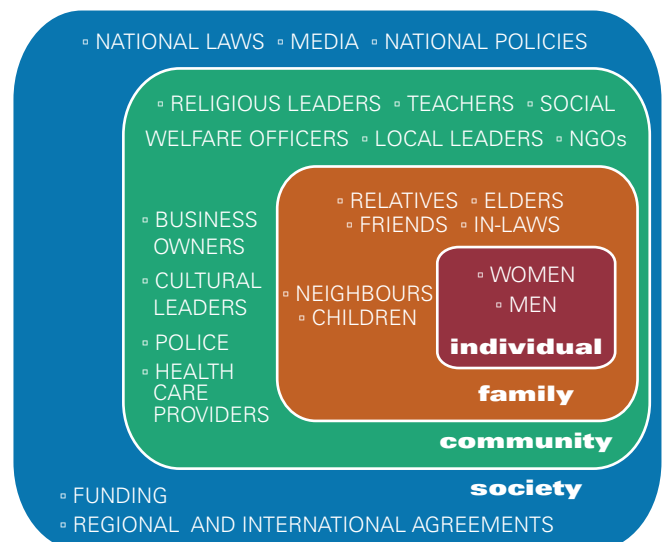

▫ NATIONAL LAWS ▫ MEDIA ▫ NATIONAL POLICIES

▫ RELIGIOUS LEADERS ▫ TEACHERS ▫ SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICERS ▫ LOCAL LEADERS ▫ NGOs

▫ BUSINESS OWNERS
▫ CULTURAL LEADERS
▫ POLICE
▫ HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

▫ RELATIVES ▫ ELDERS
▫ FRIENDS ▫ IN-LAWS

▫ NEIGHBOURS
▫ CHILDREN

▫ WOMEN
▫ MEN

individual

family

community

society

▫ FUNDING
▫ REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

Figure 2: Using the Ecological Model to identify circles of influence. Source: Raising Voices, 2008.

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[1] The SASA! approach was developed by the organisation Raising Voices in Uganda.
To find out more about their excellent violence prevention tools, visit: http://raisingvoices.org/sasa/

Proschaka and Velicer's Public Stages of Change Model

Proschaka and Velicer's Stages of Change Model explains the phases of change people go through as they work towards changing their behaviours and practice. This can be used for individual and collective (whole of school) transformational change (Kyegombe, 2014; Michau 2007).

Stage 1: Pre-contemplation: an individual is unaware of the problems and its consequences in her/his life.

Stage 2: Contemplation: an individual begins to think about whether the problem related to her/his life.

Stage 3: Preparation for action: an individual obtains more information and develops an intention to act.

Stage 4: Action: an individual begins to try new and different ways of thinking and behaving.

Stage 5: Maintenance: an individual recognizes the benefits of the behaviour change and maintains this change.

SASA! (Raising Voices, 2008) is an example of how the Stages of Change Model can be utilised to support effective change in a community. In SASA! the Start phase corresponds to **pre-contemplation**, the Awareness phase corresponds to **contemplation**, the Support phase corresponds to **preparation for action**, and the Action phase corresponds to both **action** and **maintenance**. The SASA! approach also works on a different type of power for each of these stages.

Stages of individual change	SASA! phases	Types of power
Pre-contemplation	**Start:** • Learning about the community's beliefs and attitudes about violence against women. • Selecting community members to be Community Activists. • Reflecting on our own power.	**Fostering power within ourselves.** *Power within* is the strength that arises from within ourselves when we recognize abuses of power and our own power to start a positive process of change.
Contemplation	**Awareness:** • Increasing the community's awareness about violence against women and children, why it happens and what are the consequences. • Encouraging critical thinking.	**Understanding men's use of power over women.** *Power over* is the power that one person or group uses to control another person or group. Using one's power over another is an injustice. Fostering a balance of power between women and men benefits everyone.
Preparation for action	**Support:** • Encouraging different community members to work together and support each other. • Building networks. • Strengthening skills to make change.	**Joining power with others to give support.** *Power with* is the power felt when two or more people join together to do something that they could not have done alone. Power with includes supporting those in need, those trying to change and those speaking out. Power with also includes asking for help and support.
Action & Maintenance	**Action:** • Taking actions to make positive change. • Trying new behaviours. • Celebrating change. • Strengthening actions to ensure sustainability.	**Using our power to create positive change.** *Power to* is the belief, energy and actions that individuals and groups use to create change. Power to is the freedom experienced by women and men when free to achieve their full potential, no longer bound by norms that accept men's power over women.

Social Norms

The Ecological Model shown previously highlights the important role that social norms play across all levels in ending violence against women. There are three important components to understanding social norms (Alexander-Scott et al. 2016):

1   Social norms are shared beliefs about:

- What others in a group ***actually do*** (ie. what is typical behaviour)

- What others in group think that others ***ought to do*** (ie. what is appropriate behaviour)

2   Social norms exist within reference groups: a reference group is the group of people important to an individual when he or she is making a decision (ie. parents, siblings, classmates, work colleagues, football teammates, Facebook friends). The reference group may be living nearby the individual or they may be distant.

3   Social norms are maintained, in part, by approval and disapproval within the reference group: Individuals who violate norms within a reference group may be punished by the group, and those who comply may be rewarded. The desire to conform to the expectations of a reference group means that social norms can be very persuasive and can be stronger than legal prohibitions. For example, many men still use violence against women, even though there are now laws against it. A main reason for this is that these men's friends, family members, or colleagues (their reference groups) condone their violent behaviour as being normal and acceptable, and may even reward these men with the label of 'real men' for being tough and dominant. However, if friends, family members, and colleagues began actively promoting non-violent relationships, and stopped inviting men who use violence to hang out with them, many of these men would likely stop using violence against women so that their reference groups would again accept them.

It is important to note that if a violence prevention initiative only focusses on what people actually do (ie. statistics on violence against women) then this could unintentionally increase violent behaviour because people who did not behave in this way before might begin to use violence so as to align their behaviour with what they think most people do (Neville 2005). It is, therefore, important for violence prevention initiatives to encourage communities to focus on a positive vision for change. Effective violence prevention initiatives can support reference groups to normalise respectful and violence-free relationships.