

# Partners in Prevention Network Meeting

Tuesday 1 September 2009, 1.00-4.00pm, Ross House

## Information sharing

- SAPPSS program will be run through WestCASA and NorthernCASA as well as CASA House over the next 6 months. New workers at West and North CASA have been contracted to run the program.
- The Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence have been running an advertising campaign on toilet doors within several schools in the Jewish community. Originally the ads were based around a conversation on facebook but a couple of schools did not want to support facebook so the ads were withdrawn and redeveloped accordingly.
- Still waiting for news of the DEECD/VicHealth report on best practice respectful relationships programs
- Michael's forum presentation now available to download in mp3 format from [partnersinprevention.wordpress.com](http://partnersinprevention.wordpress.com) (can go to the PiP website and click through to the blog)
- State plan – update recently sent to PiP list, fact sheets available from the Office of Women's Policy website. We decided to focus the next PiP meeting in December on discussion of the State Plan after its release on White Ribbon Day (25 November).
- Federal plan – the 6 pilot projects have been announced, these are being viewed as pilots that will be thoroughly evaluated, all show promise in some way, not considered the be all and end all.
  - Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society – project covering Victoria and Tasmania looking at primary prevention for young adults (up to age 30) with an intellectual disability
  - Canberra Rape Crisis Centre in partnership with CASA House (Melbourne) will pilot the Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools in three local high schools
  - South Australia's 'Keeping Safe' protective behaviours program, currently delivered in all primary schools across the state, will be evaluated
  - The 'Keeping Safe' program will also be adapted for delivery in Northern Territory schools
  - In Western Australia's Kimberley region a project will be run with 3 remote communities starting with a needs assessment for each and then the development of purpose built programs.
  - In NSW the University of Western Sydney will deliver the 'Sex and Ethics' program in four youth settings and the program will also be trialed in Queensland with 2 rugby league teams
- Working groups
  - Modern Media Messages – film 'Love Control' launched, will be published to youtube in late Sept/early Oct this year
  - Reality and Risk project
- Evaluation Mentor Scheme (take a copy of the handout)
- Topics for future meetings – state plan (see above), cultural diversity or diversity in general, a discussion of best practice guidelines eg. SAPE framework.

- Report back on evaluation workshop

## **VAW prevention and the media**

### **Jane Ashton, Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Victim/Survivor Advocates Program**

Project based on information and learning from "Family violence in the news" toolkit developed by Grampians media project – available at <http://www.cafs.org.au/?id=familyviolencepreven>

- Toolkit was a little too big and bulky and journalists are very pressed for time, few engaged with toolkit

WDVCS program developed due to

- Awareness of need for more survivor stories, to get emotional response from the public
- Needed to refute 'victimology' many survivors are interviewed so soon after the events they are too traumatised to speak coherently
- Wanted survivor/advocates who were strong, clear and not encouraging voyeurism, giving the message that survivors can go on and achieve things

Survivors involved in the program have developed confidence through their involvement. An example of their work was seen in the 'Enough' campaign where the stories of survivors added pathos to the coverage.

Media codes of practice mean that any report of suicide must include a help line number, need to advocate to have the same for DV and SA.

**Recruitment:** Women currently receiving support from community health/DV services are still quite raw, needed women who had 'healed' enough to be able to talk about their experiences – training formed part of screening process, 10 out of 14 women trained are still involved in the project.

Phase I focused on recruiting women in the northern suburbs, didn't ask for much information in recruitment process, only that they were survivors of violence. For training purposes it would have been useful to know more about where the women were coming from, what services they had engaged with. Now have a very detailed questionnaire that helps Jane put together a paragraph on each advocate for journalists. It also helps Jane protect the advocates and match them more precisely with requests coming in.

The Ballarat group had more specific guidelines eg. 5 years out of violence, not currently in court.

Need to be clear about getting permission from advocates for publicising name/photo/video AND make sure that there are a variety of ways for people to be involved so that they don't miss out by saying 'no.'

The advocates don't represent an organisation or the sector, they are just speaking as individuals, can comment on happenings.

Currently the project is looking into work with marginalised groups eg. Rural women, CALD women, women with disabilities.

They can get a bit frustrated, finish the training and want to get right out there on TV but it takes time. Need to have events that link to media coverage eg public speaking engagements.

Look at what's happening in the news and in the sector, think about angles, things you can comment on, it's not all about speaking directly to the media.

**Barriers:**

- No media monitoring, can't keep track of all mentions of DV or related events
- Need a dedicated FV media unit
- Making connections is crucial, getting to know editors and journalists, being available for comment at short notice, getting back to them with statistics, be aware that journalists always have tight timelines
- Police media unit is not trained in DV, often play into negative stereotypes without realising

**Positives:**

- Advocates have gone from strength to strength, increasing confidence over time
- Now more willing/able to talk about broader range of issues including some that are quite sensitive because they have the skills to protect themselves or speak about their experiences in general terms.

Jane would like to see the EVA awards reinstated, to reward good coverage of DV. She would also like to see a central registry or contact point for survivors so they can receive information relating to DV after they have left the service system.

We need to give feedback to the media, write letters to the editor both positive and negative, find the name of the journalist and thank them when they've done a good job. Could send letters to the executive producer at ABC TV. Ultimately need to tap into education/ethics subjects for journalism students.

**Antony Balmain, VicHealth**

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Antony began by running an activity with the group about developing key messages in response to the imminent release of the Department of Education and VicHealth's stock take of respectful relationships education in secondary schools. Some of the messages developed included:

- Schools are an excellent setting for prevention
- Violence against women is serious and preventable; it is the leading contributor to ill health in women between the ages of 15 and 44.
- Current research tells us that interventions need to be wholistic and sustained in order to be effective.
- Violence against women is a huge issue across the community, a key health issue
- It is not ok and never the victim's fault
- Responding to violence against women is a community responsibility and there is a new initiative to educate children through a school-based program.
- Emphasise the importance of changing young people's attitudes
- Prevention is more cost effective than crisis response
- Wholistic approaches are preferable to band aid solutions

In developing key messages, need to think about WHAT? WHY? And WHO?

It's good to use language that is easy to understand – use short sentences, minimise jargon, think about speaking to a 12 y.o. boy when developing messages. 'Primary prevention' becomes 'Stopping violence before it starts/occurs'

## Media releases

Get attention, build an argument and wrap it up. Keep the release under a page.

When talking to the local media there needs to be a local angle – include comment from a teacher or principal of the local school or another person in the community. It's sometimes better to write the article for them or have a look at it before it goes to print.

The lead par (paragraph) is key to catching the attention of journalists. The following were developed by the group in response to the state whole of government plan to prevent violence against women:

“Victoria is on its way to ending violence against women. A state plan for the prevention of violence against women will spread from St Kilda primary school to the bowls club and our service feels that it is key to community safety.”

“Sporting clubs, churches and your favorite TV show unite to make violence against women a thing of the past, under a world-leading state government initiative.” (it is better to avoid lists in the first sentence)

It is worthwhile having a look at the article before it goes to print, particularly if a survivor's story is being published.

Develop relationships with particular journalists, email, then call and then contact again. When calling a newsroom ask their name and speak to them again.

**The gendered newsroom** is a book by Louise North about women's experiences of journalism in Australia.

Antony is happy to be contacted by projects looking for media advice (details above).