



Say No to Abuse and Violence

Recommendation

That the State Government establishes a reference group made up of the relevant government agencies, plus non-government organisations to plan the most effective approaches to addressing the issue of abuse and violence in the community.

Rationale

All forms of abuse and violence have a devastating impact on the victims, their families and communities, and often the perpetrators.

There are various attempts to reduce abuse and violence in the community. However these often operate in isolated 'silos'.

The Department for Child Protection is mandated to address the serious problem of child abuse.

There is a Family and Domestic Violence Unit within the Department for Child Protection. Considerable resources are devoted to providing family and domestic violence services and community education campaigns.

The criminal justice system deals with violence in the community after the incidents have occurred.

The Drug and Alcohol Office of the Department for Health attempts to reduce the harmful effects of abusing these substances. Such abuse often results in various forms of violence in the community.

The Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor administers liquor licences. Licensed premises are the source of considerable violence.

Bullying amongst children and teenagers is a problem that schools are attempting to address, often with the assistance of parents.

Elder abuse is another serious problem that is only beginning to be acknowledged and addressed.

Road rage is a more recent manifestation of abuse and violence that seems to be increasing in prevalence.

There are a few counselling services and courses aimed at addressing the problem of inadequate anger management skills.

There are also a few 'respectful relationship' courses aimed at addressing the problem of inadequate communication and conflict resolution skills.

It is often claimed that women and children are the main victims of violence. However, the ABS Personal Safety Survey (2005) found that a large number of men (10.8%) were the victims of violence in the past 12 months, which is almost double that of women (5.8%).

There are a range of underlying causes of abuse and violence in the community, including:

- Alcohol and drug use and abuse
- Mental health issues
- Psychopathologies
- Emotional distress
- Inadequate coping and problem solving skills
- Inadequate emotional regulation skills, which are often not fully developed in males until their mid-twenties
- Inadequate communication and conflict resolution skills
- Inadequate anger management skills
- Childhood abuse, including the witnessing of parental violence
- Cultural factors
- Gender roles
- Media, film, television, electronic games, websites etc.
- Poor role models
- Peer group behaviour
- Beliefs about violence and non-violent conflict resolution strategies

MAN strongly recommends the establishment of a reference group made up of the relevant government agencies, plus non-government organisations to plan the most effective approach to addressing the issue of abuse and violence in the community.

One facet of the approach could be a broadly based community education campaign titled *Say No to Abuse and Violence*

The Men's Advisory Network (MAN) is the peak body for service providers, organisations and individuals concerned with men's health, wellbeing and other issues affecting men and boys in Western Australia. MAN was established in 1997 and incorporated in 2000. It receives financial support from the WA Department of Health.

The primary role that MAN plays is resourcing the sector through supporting service providers, organisations and professionals from various disciplines, who work with men and boys. In addition, MAN provides information to individuals about appropriate services and professionals, plus provides general community education and raises awareness of the issues affecting men and boys. Further information is available on the website: www.man.org.au

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