



**From the voices
of CALD women:
towards
achieving
family safety
and freedom**



By

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) is a significant global issue impacting members of all communities, regardless of socioeconomic and geographic position. However, the experience of DFV can differ greatly depending on access to appropriate support. This report aimed to identify DFV issues in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities in northern NSW and consider prevention strategies, especially those involving men, to best support these communities. The report sought to discover women's views about these issues and draw on their expertise on how best to engage men in these discussions. Research methods included a literature review, qualitative research, and identification of CALD men's programs and resources to inform possible future programs. Themes identified in the literature included the relationship of trauma, acculturation, immigration status and regionality to DFV experiences. An intersectional approach was identified in the literature as essential to acknowledge these complex and interwoven issues. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with five CALD women and five key informants from services working with CALD communities in health, refugee settlement, migrant support, and domestic and family support services. Key findings included identification of stressors when settling in a new country, the importance of trust, acting on violence, the role of community leaders, engaging with men around DFV, and the possibility of creating a CALD men's program to prevent DFV. The literature, findings and men's program resources combine to inform the following recommendations: draw on the expertise and experience of women from migrant and refugee backgrounds to consider effective ways to work with men to address negative behaviours around domestic and family violence (DFV); establish a steering committee, including women and men from CALD backgrounds and relevant agencies and services, to work collaboratively to develop an appropriate men's program; work with 'referrers' and 'first responders' (friends, family, community leaders and interpreters) to better equip them to support CALD families experiencing DFV; embed DFV prevention in existing settlement and support services; establish a group program in Coffs Harbour for men from refugee and migrant backgrounds; and implement the proposed CALD men's program in a culturally safe and accessible space.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Section 1: Introduction	4
Background to research	4
CALD communities in Coffs Harbour	5
Supporting CALD communities	5
Purpose and aims of the research	6
Section 2: Methodology	8
Methods	8
Recruitment	9
Analysis	10
Limitations	10
Section 3: Domestic and Family Violence in CALD communities	11
Context	11
DFV issues in CALD communities	12
Trauma	13
Acculturation	13
Immigration status	15
Regionality	15
Seeking support	16
Summary	17
Section 4: Findings	18
Stressors: life in a new country	18
Employment	19
Gambling/alcohol abuse	20
Changing gender roles	22
Importance of trust	25
Friends/family	25
Others trusted contacts	27

Referrals	29
Acting on violence	30
Shame and ostracism	31
Legal fears	32
Women asserting their rights	33
Visas	35
Community leaders	35
Changes to the role of community leaders	36
The importance of education and training	37
Conversations with men around violence	39
Creating a men's group	42
Attendance and group make up	44
Facilitators	45
3Es to Freedom for men	45
Summary	47
Section 5: Working with Men	49
Men's behaviour change programs	49
Context	49
Key issues	50
Men's Behaviour Change Programs resources	51
Conclusion	57
Recommendations	58
References	59
Resource Links	65

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH

This report was produced in the most recent phase of a four-year research partnership between Anglicare North Coast and Southern Cross University. Anglicare's 3Es to Freedom program, that supported women from refugee and migrant backgrounds to pursue education, employment and empowerment, was documented and analysed in previous research (Hughes, Whitaker & Rugendyke 2020; Whitaker, Hughes & Rugendyke 2020; Whitaker, Hughes & Rugendyke 2018). Anglicare North Coast sought to extend these findings by commissioning an additional component of the research that would inform potential future programs. The current study involved talking to women from the 3Es to Freedom program about their observations about Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) issues in their communities. Discussions included key informants from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community service providers and other relevant services. These observations will be utilised by Anglicare North Coast, in collaboration with their partner Warrina Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services, to inform the development of possible programs seeking to enhance family safety in CALD communities in Coffs Harbour, in northern NSW, Australia.

CALD COMMUNITIES IN COFFS HARBOUR

Coffs Harbour's population at the 2016 census was approximately 73,000 (ABS 2020). The population make-up, although mostly from Anglo-Celtic ancestry, includes Indigenous Australians, as well as residents from diverse countries of birth, including the Philippines, South Africa, Germany, Netherlands, Ireland, Papua New Guinea and Fiji, among others. Early waves of migration to the area included Punjabi Sikhs from India who arrived in the 1940s to farm bananas and who now represent the largest Sikh population in regional Australia (Milner & Hughes 2012). More recently, the region has been home to more than 2000 people from refugee backgrounds through the federal government's Humanitarian Regional Settlement Program (Department of Home Affairs 2020). Countries of birth for these emerging communities include Myanmar, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Congo, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia and South Sudan, to name a few (Department of Home Affairs 2020). These communities have been embraced and valued for enhancing the diversity of the local area. None the less, there are challenges associated with settling in a new country which can compound other issues experienced cross-culturally, such as DFV.

SUPPORTING CALD COMMUNITIES

Implementing specific DFV services for CALD women has been recognised as a priority by the Commonwealth Government through the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children 2010–2022* (Department of Social Services [DSS] 2010). However, research is sparse on multicultural services responses to DFV (Vaughan et al. 2019) and 'there is limited evidence about contexts, nature and dynamics of violence against immigrant and refugee women that can

inform the development of responsive and accessible community-based interventions' (ANROWS 2016). Low rates of service engagement make it difficult to share knowledge about effective interventions to address DFV in these communities (El-Murr 2018). This study sought to address this gap in understanding and inform important work in the field of DFV prevention in CALD communities, at local level.

PURPOSE AND AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The overarching research questions were:

- What are the key issues relating to family and domestic violence in CALD communities in regional northern NSW?
- How can we work with women and men in culturally diverse communities to promote safety?
- What existing programs can be drawn on to identify effectiveness in working with communities to change men's behaviour?

The study aimed to:

- contribute to bridging the cultural gap in the Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) sector;
- recognise the voices of CALD women to inform working safely and effectively with men;
- learn about existing DFV programs targeted at men in Australia;
- check assumptions about what we have learnt about the experiences of CALD women;

- consider if different approaches are feasible;
- provide a blueprint for future practice;
- create a meaningful feedback process for participants; and
- acknowledge CALD women as experts on their journeys.

These outcomes could contribute to the development of a program that would:

- develop future partnerships;
- engage with diverse communities and work with them to enhance community safety; and
- be acknowledged by diverse communities as providing a safe space for reflections on DFV.

This research will contribute to guiding service development and potentially build the foundations for effective men's groups and/or Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCP) for CALD communities in regional Australia.

SECTION 2: METHODOLOGY

The study was informed by an intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1991) that considers the convergence of multiple social categories including: gender, ethnicity, class, language, age, and ability/disability, to name a few, in creating social identities. Applying an intersectional approach is essential when seeking to understand complex family and domestic violence experiences in CALD communities (Vaughan et al. 2019). A 'reciprocal research' strategy was applied to 'move beyond harm minimization as a standard for ethical research and ... conduct research projects that aim to bring about reciprocal benefits for refugee participants and/or communities' (Mackenzie, McDowell & Pittaway 2007, p. 299). Such an approach seeks to serve community needs whilst addressing power imbalances in research, especially with people from refugee backgrounds (Doná 2007).

The research was deemed by the Southern Cross University Human Research Ethics Committee to have merit, to be of low risk and meet the principles of the National Statement of Ethical Conduct in Human Research (approval number 2020/132). Informed consent formed the basis of the research. The study proceeded with embedded cultural safety principles to maintain respect for clients whilst also prioritising their physical and mental safety and wellbeing.

METHODS

The following research methods were used:

- a literature review of DFV issues in CALD communities in Australia;

- qualitative research including in-depth, semi-structured interviews with five women from multicultural backgrounds and five interviews with key informants from multicultural and other support services; and
- identification and review of men’s behaviour change programs and CALD men’s groups and other relevant resources.

RECRUITMENT

Staff from Anglicare North Coast and Warrina Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services worked with the researcher to identify appropriate study participants, including five 3Es to Freedom clients (referred to in the report as ‘participants’), and five key informants from relevant multicultural and other support services (referred to in the report as ‘key informants’). The five participants came from Myanmar, Syria and Ghana and have resided in Australia for less than ten years. The researcher did not include women currently being supported for DFV to avoid worsening any recent experiences of trauma. Participants came from a range of countries of origin and were over the age of 18.

During the study design phase of the research there were discussions around whether or not to interview CALD men. However, for the purpose of this study, it was decided to prioritise the women’s voices to acknowledge them as experts on their own lives and communities, and to include them in a meaningful way in any future plans to work on violence prevention. It is recommended that CALD men should be included in any subsequent studies to co-develop a men’s program.

The researcher provided participants with a plain English information sheet about the proposed study. 3Es program staff assisted the researcher to organise interviews with participants. As this research occurred during the COVID-19 epidemic, face to face interviews could not take place. Instead, participants engaged with the researcher via zoom or phone, depending on their preference. Interpreters were not needed, as all participants were confident English speakers. A research safety plan was in place to ensure anyone who experienced feelings of discomfort could be referred to an appropriate counselling service if required. The researcher had also undertaken Accidental Counsellor and Working with People from Refugee Backgrounds training with a dedicated trauma counselling service.

ANALYSIS

All interviews were transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were colour coded manually to enhance the researcher's understanding of the issues and observations discussed. The researcher identified clear themes and grouped these core ideas to represent the findings.

LIMITATIONS

A limitation of this research was that the 3Es to Freedom program was due to cease operation. Therefore, there was a short lead-in time to recruit and interview participants. A longer timeline may have resulted in an increased sample size. None the less, the data reflected valuable observations, drawing on a range of informants and participants from diverse backgrounds and organisations working with CALD communities in the region.

SECTION 3: DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IN CALD COMMUNITIES

This section draws on reports, evaluations, and academic literature to provide contextual information about Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) in CALD communities. Specific issues identified include the necessity to adopt an intersectional approach that recognises the interplay between different social categories such as gender, ethnicity, age and language; in addition to the role of trauma, acculturation, visa status and regionality in DFV experiences.

CONTEXT

Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) is a significant health and welfare concern in Australia (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW] 2020) and internationally (UN Women 2019). DFV can be defined as:

[A]ny behaviour, in an intimate or family relationship, which is violent, threatening, coercive or controlling, causing a person to live in fear and to be made to do things against their will. DFV can happen to anyone and can take many forms. It is often part of a pattern of controlling or coercive behaviour. (Domestic Violence NSW Service Management 2019)

Despite efforts to prevent DFV, some data suggest that this type of violence is on the increase internationally (UN Women 2019). DFV has long-lasting consequences (Timshel, Montgomery & Dalgaard 2017) and impacts all communities, regardless of age, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Women and children are invariably more likely to be subjected to family violence (AIHW 2020).

Evidence suggests that rates of DFV in migrant and refugee background communities, although speculative, are at least equivalent to the broader population (Vaughan et al. 2019). Some international estimates suggest DFV could occur in up to 30-50% of refugee families (Timsehl, Montgomery & Dalgaard 2017). Refugee women and children have been and continue to be at high risk of experiencing family violence (Pittaway 1991; WHO 2020).

DFV ISSUES IN CALD COMMUNITIES

There are specific issues faced by women from migrant and refugee backgrounds that need to be recognised and reflected in policy and programs to address DFV concerns. These intersecting issues include isolation, language difficulties, lack of access to information and knowledge about rights, socioeconomic disadvantage, social norms that legitimise male authority, and visa restrictions that force dependency (El-Murr 2018; Murray et al. 2019; Vaughan et al. 2016). Understanding these intersections can assist in understanding how power and oppression can operate (Nasser-Eddin 2016) and how violence can be perpetrated and experienced.

Research has found that DFV interventions with CALD communities in Australia are limited and need a more thorough evaluation to assess success (Vaughan et al. 2016). Service models are often designed from Anglo-Australian perspectives, ignoring CALD women's specific experiences of family violence (Murray et al. 2019). CALD women's voices are essential when designing programs specific to their needs. They should also inform programs which seek to engage men in diverse communities to prevent violence. There are many gaps in the research about family violence in refugee families, but understanding risk and protection factors are crucial to designing appropriate interventions (Timsehl, Montgomery & Dalgaard 2017).

TRAUMA

Understanding the impact of pre-migration experiences of trauma on women, men and children from refugee backgrounds is necessary when designing DFV prevention programs and interventions. Most people from refugee backgrounds have been exposed to some form of trauma, with up to 80 per cent of refugee background women being victims of torture or sexual assault (Kaplan 2018). Studies have recognised a link between individual family members experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and an increased incidence of family violence (Timsehl, Montgomery & Dalgaard 2017). This is particularly problematic when appropriate strategies for dealing with heightened emotions are not available (Brotherhood of St Lawrence 2015). Hence, it is imperative to adopt a whole of family perspective when examining experiences of trauma and violence, as opposed to focusing on individuals. Although family members' experiences of trauma can increase the chances of exposure to violence, the family unit must also be recognised as an important protective factor in keeping its members safe (Timsehl, Montgomery & Dalgaard 2017).

Trauma-informed practice is essential in working with communities from refugee backgrounds to address issues of DFV (El-Murr 2018). Trauma-informed care should: establish emotional safety, restore choice and control, facilitate connections, support coping, respond to identity and context, and build strength (Wilson et al. 2015) to respond to the complex needs of people from refugee backgrounds.

ACCULTURATION

Acculturation is a significant factor during settlement for anyone from a migrant or refugee background. Acculturation can be defined as: 'the process and resulting changes that occur when two or more cultures come into contact' (Sociology

Dictionary n.d.). Learning the ways of a new culture can be stressful and can heighten incidences of DFV. Timsehl, Montgomery and Dalgaard (2017) in their systematic review of risk and protective factors for DFV in refugee families, found that many studies have documented how the breakdown of traditional values and practices, including gender role changes, has exacerbated the DFV.

It is important to note that DFV is present in all cultures and culture in itself does not cause violence; instead, it is entrenched beliefs about gendered power relations that can be problematic (Brotherhood of St Lawrence 2015; Vaughan et al. 2016). And these beliefs are not necessarily tied to specific cultures and can be interpreted differently on an individual level (El-Murr 2018). However, a facilitator from a South Asian-Men's behaviour change program observed '[These men] will often have very strong ideas about women's roles and what men's roles are. In those societies where gender equality is less supported, the chances of family violence occurring are higher' (Brotherhood of St Lawrence 2015, p. 12).

Women may challenge patriarchal beliefs as they become more empowered by opportunities and access to support (including financial aid), whilst men may feel disempowered through struggles with employment and other challenges in their new life. The length of time in a settlement country is also a factor in the incidence of DFV, with those who have had longer to acculturate are less likely to perpetrate DFV (Timsehl, Montgomery & Dalgaard 2017). Whilst transitioning between cultures can induce stress and conflict, holding on to some traditional beliefs can also be recognised as protective factors. These include valuing the family unit, as well as specific cultural beliefs like Buddhist practices of meditation and not doing any harm (Timsehl, Montgomery & Dalgaard 2017).

IMMIGRATION STATUS

Consideration of the migration context is essential when seeking to understand the specific challenges faced by different groups of CALD women. Links between visa class and incidence of remaining in DFV situations have been demonstrated (El-Murr 2018). Those who have arrived on partner visas may face increased financial and social dependency making it challenging to leave a violent relationship (Vaughan et al. 2016). Many migrant women also experience isolation and do not have the necessary support to flee a violent partner. These women can be threatened with deportation and also pressured by overseas family members to remain in the family (Vaughan et al. 2016). Australian partners sometimes prevent women from connecting to the broader community, and access to information and support services can be withheld (El-Murr 2018).

REGIONALITY

Regional specific DFV issues include lack of culturally appropriate services (Vaughan et al. 2016), lack of access to transport, and the visible nature of living in small communities (Murray et al. 2019). Some minority members of regional and rural communities also report experiencing racism and discrimination (Vaughan et al. 2016), which compounds their experience of violence and might impact on levels of trust and feelings of isolation. El-Murr (2018) suggests this is an important field of research needing further exploration to better service CALD communities in remote and regional Australia.

SEEKING SUPPORT

It is vital to understand the barriers that might prevent women from CALD communities from seeking support for DFV. Many of the women experiencing violence may feel unable to reach out to formal support services and may prefer to seek help from family and friends (UN Women 2019). Women can be ostracised in their communities when they seek support, and community members can blame women for men's violence (Vaughan et al. 2016). There might be fears around losing custody of children, as well as a lack of knowledge of the legal system and the implications of seeking legal intervention (Brotherhood of St Lawrence 2015). Violence within the family might also be normalised and tolerated (Vaughan et al. 2016). Women from refugee backgrounds, in particular, may have been exposed to DFV in their home countries and transition countries but may not have felt they could trust authorities to provide support (Nasser-Eddin 2016). DFV services, because they are not part of communities, might be treated with suspicion. Trust, or the lack of, is, therefore, a significant barrier to seeking support (EI-Murr 2018).

Once settled in the host country, migrant and refugee women may disclose to settlement or migrant services because they may feel more comfortable with established networks rather than seeking specialised DFV services that they may not be familiar with (Vaughan et al. 2019). Women from CALD backgrounds may also prefer to disclose their experiences of violence to known health professionals, rather than seeking out family violence services with which they do not have an existing relationship with (EI-Murr 2018).

Lack of confidence in speaking English can also discourage CALD women from seeking assistance for DFV. Services are encouraged to employ bicultural, bilingual

workers (Vaughan et al. 2016), and use trustworthy interpreters (El-Murr 2018) to bridge this gap.

SUMMARY

Overall, research highlights the necessity to create culturally safe environments that encourage CALD women to seek support. Services need to work collaboratively to support women and communities from migrant and refugee backgrounds (Vaughan et al. 2016) and not impose an internal service agenda (El-Murr 2018). 'Promoting community involvement and leadership has been shown to be important in developing culturally competent programming and should underpin violence prevention strategies' (El-Murr 2018, p. 1), and is required to develop and maintain culturally safe programs that address DFV. Integrating trauma-informed care should provide the foundation for working with populations who have experienced and continue to experience trauma. The challenges of acculturation and living in regional communities must also be understood. Organisations that draw on the principles outlined above engage with communities to co-design appropriate responses to DFV and to share cultural knowledge. Prioritising community-led responses is key to creating successful prevention programs and inspiring behaviour change.

SECTION 4: FINDINGS

To explore the context of Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) in CALD communities in northern NSW, Australia, in-depth interviews were conducted with five women participants from the 3Es to Freedom program, and five key informants working in health, refugee and migrant support, and domestic and family violence services. Key themes emerging from the interviews reflected and extended findings in the literature. These themes included: stressors associated with adapting to life in Australia such as employment/unemployment, alcohol abuse and gambling, and changes to gender roles; the importance of trust when seeking support; acting on violence; the role of community leaders; engaging men in discussions around violence; and the conceptualisation of a men's group to enable violence prevention. Each theme will be discussed below, drawing on observations shared to illustrate participant and key informants' concerns and experiences. Although the incidence of DFV in migrant communities is uncertain due to underreporting, participants in this study acknowledged its common occurrence:

Yes, I have many friends, most of my friends are not very happy families. Most of the time they have some problems, they are arguing ... there are many, many families ... who have some problems with violence. Domestic violence.

STRESSORS: LIFE IN A NEW COUNTRY

There is a multitude of intersecting stressors that can heighten DFV situations. These stressors become more complicated for people from migrant backgrounds, especially when they have experienced trauma, as is the case for the majority of refugees. Grappling with life in a new country creates additional challenges when addressing DFV, as noted by a key informant:

If you come from a migrant background ... you don't have the same values or understanding of what supports are there, it makes it much more difficult for them to even understand what's happening to them.

Even the language used to talk about violence can be perceived as threatening:

If we talk about domestic violence straight up, it's terrifying for [CALD] women ... it's a new conversation, the language of domestic violence, it takes women to such a space of shock, horror and high distress.

Young families are often disconnected from intergenerational guidance during the migration process, and being separated from extended family presents another challenge. A key informant commented that this is often the case for young refugee background families who may have had little opportunity to learn positive parenting skills.

Organisations working with CALD communities need to consider a wide range of intersecting factors as outlined below, to plan effective and sensitive responses to DFV.

EMPLOYMENT

All research participants recognised the role of employment and its links to DFV, including the impact of unemployment or underemployment, as well as the gendered division of labour within the household when one partner or both was employed.

The struggle to obtain employment, especially for men, was linked to the incidence of DFV. Participants stated: 'some are between work and in family lots of stressing' and 'they all struggle to get jobs ... and their English isn't that great. Sometimes the wife's better than they are at learning English'. Another participant said:

His English is not good. He can't improve his English ... So, he lose his job. He just starts sitting at home, nothing he can do, just sitting home. That is something not happen in my community, and never ever the men can sit at home. So, he start to get angry.

The experience of being unemployed is disempowering for men in particular and has a flow-on effect: 'when only one of them is working, the problem starts from there. When men don't have an income there's violence'. For men from emerging communities, being unemployed or having insecure work, as is the case for many, negatively impacts their sense of self-worth and this in turn heightens household tensions.

GAMBLING/ALCOHOL ABUSE

Participants and key informants mentioned that alcohol abuse was considered a significant issue, especially for the men from one specific cultural group¹. The selection of statements below from different research participants illustrates the incidence of alcohol abuse and its perceived association with DFV:

¹ Country of origin has been de-identified to avoid singling out a specific community and to protect participants. This information will be provided privately to inform potential future programs.

In XXX, lots of men are alcoholic, they come into Australia, but they still drink and cause problems around the house.

I think most violence happens because of alcohol, most XXX men drink alcohol, some are very abusive when they get drunk.

Yes, it's a problem; whenever her husband drinks alcohol, they always have arguments.

A key informant acknowledged this concern:

The one issue that we have been worried about lately is actually the drinking, the alcoholism that's become an issue, particularly with the XXX we've noticed, not so much with the other cultures or ethnicities, but definitely the XXX, it's been a big issue ... we've had a couple of deaths as well.

This informant recommended further investigation to learn why the men are drinking so much to consider what can be done to support them.

Compounding the impact of alcohol abuse is its dual presentation in the same community with gambling. A participant stated: 'the biggest issue is that men are drinking alcohol and gambling. Sometimes women are saving money for the children and the men lose it all on a game'. Another participant observed: 'especially the men, they're gambling or they're drunk, that's the biggest problem'.

Observing the interweaving threads of unemployment, alcohol abuse and problem gambling demonstrates the complexities for men in emerging communities, as they navigate life during settlement. A participant stated: 'if the men are working they earn

money but if they drink lots of alcohol there's not enough money for the bills and renting. Very big problem for the families'.

CHANGING GENDER ROLES

For people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, a significant cause of tension is adapting to different gender roles in a new country. Navigating new gender roles was recognised by participants and key informants as being linked to the experience DFV. A key informant observed how many of her clients come from countries where 'more traditional gender roles are assumed'.

The following selection of comments, each from a different participant, describes the traditional gender roles for several countries of origin, as well as the women's awareness of, and desire to, have more equitable gender roles in Australia.

Not fair, not give women rights to make decision. The man is the head of the family, so the women has to follow the man's decision. Sometimes women have no right to express their right. If the man is not helping the wife – for example, the men think looking after kids and house is only woman's duty – so man is not listening when we are sharing some ideas.

Back home, they say woman's role is in the kitchen. For me, I don't think that's a nice thing to say. But now women can earn their own money some men get intimidated by that. They say oh she's making more money than me or she thinks she's the boss of the house, so he might argue with his wife. In some cases that happens because as soon as a woman starts working, she starts to act different and men like to be in charge regardless, so if a woman thinks she's in charge now he's going to retaliate,

that's how it goes.

When we arrive in Australia, they said when husband goes to work during the day time he has to help with the housework and look after the children when he gets home. Sometimes my husband said I am too tired I don't want to do this and I said if you want a family you need to do this, if you don't want to then leave the house.

A key informant commented on the tensions associated with navigating changes to gender norms, especially in relation to household responsibilities, including managing finances.

I feel that there is lots of financial abuse where the man feels that the woman cannot take care of their finances, so they hold onto all the finances. Then the other thing is that the woman gets paid the family tax benefit so in the man's head it is like why are the women getting paid more money than we are?

Another key informant confirmed this:

Because the women get Centrelink money [men] don't have that control anymore.

The achievements of the 3Es to Freedom program have demonstrated many positive changes to gender roles, however, perceived threats to gender norms can worsen conflict and violence. Multiple key informants described the kind of disempowerment they observed in some CALD men as they negotiated changes to gender expectations:

Look, I would sum it up and say mostly it just feels that sometimes the men think that the women are more powerful in Australia because back in their country they are not able to do all these things. I guess it all comes down to the equality that they need to be understanding that these are the rules in Australia, and whatever you were doing back home is not appropriate.

Another stated:

There's a lot of reasons why I think things turn ugly ... I think it is about disempowerment. They might not have been a violent or even controlling kind of person, but here they lose all - they probably feel even worse here, that they lose all control.

Participants and key informants all shared comments about how men from CALD communities with patriarchal gender norms found it challenging to adapt to life in Australia.

I've had two men say this now. They said it to the [male] mental health nurse practitioner, not to me. They don't know how to be a man in Australia. They don't know the rules. They don't know, because ... they've come from very patriarchal society. They've only watched their dads and their uncles and their grandfathers treat their wives whatever, this way and that's the norm for them. So that's what they both said, they don't know how to be a man in Australia.

For men from refugee backgrounds in particular, this feeling of disempowerment, alongside a lived experience of torture and trauma, intersects with and manifests in

behaviours that may increase the likelihood of violence.

So that's been pretty sad, and I don't know, again, are they drinking heavily because of this idea that they don't know how to be a man in Australia?

Despite the significant impacts of changing gender roles, participants remained hopeful of positive outcomes in the future.

I would like women from Myanmar and other communities to have confidence and not just be stuck in the culture and not depend on the man. It would be good if the man is fair and understanding. Every relationship has problems but if the man listens to reasoning, to make relationship better that is good but if the man does not open his mind to learn, and just want to control, and women are not equal then that's not the right thing.

IMPORTANCE OF TRUST

Interviewees acknowledged trust as a significant factor in disclosing violence and seeking support, without which conversations around violence did not occur. Participants identified close friends, family, support workers, community leaders and some interpreters as being trusted individuals in this context.

FRIENDS/FAMILY

The women participants discussed their observations about who a woman would speak to if she was experiencing violence in her family. In most cases they suggested that women would mainly talk to close friends or family members about

their unhappy relationships. Each statement below is attributed to a different participant but all suggest that women will usually only reveal their experiences of violence to those close to them:

If they're prepared to talk [it would be to] someone known to them, such as a relative, mum and dad, that is be okay but not someone else.

They will talk to maybe with their mothers, maybe their siblings but mostly adults like their mother. If they are close to their dad, they might talk to him, and he'll have a talk to the husband.

Most of the women talk about unhappy relationships; a lot of my friends talk to me about their relationships.

The women check on themselves and talk to their close friends

If the women have a violent situation, they just talk to close friends, sometimes they expose.

I have a close friend, and she will talk to me about her relationship between her and her husband. Her husband will drink alcohol, and physically abuse her, sometimes yelling and yelling at the children and her, so she is very, very unhappy.

Well-intentioned friends and family offer support but in some cases, they counsel the women to remain in their situation and hope for change. A participant stated: 'yes, that is very bad, but think about your children, your husband might change one day, no more alcohol and no more abuse, that's all we can advise them'.

OTHERS TRUSTED CONTACTS

In some cases, women may prefer to discuss their experiences of violence with service providers they have existing relationships with, especially those with shared cultural understandings. For example, a key informant reported:

For that particular client it was breaking the barrier because one of my staff members is like a motherly figure and she speaks her language ... So this particular worker built a very trusting relationship with that client, and she started to share some of her stories, what she had gone through when she was newly arrived. Because she was a migrant herself and that way the women open up to her and then it was a very long session.

Key informants also mentioned trust as fundamental to their work with CALD communities:

We have to work hard to be trusted by the women.

Usually, clients and service providers built trust over an extended time and in the context of providing very specialised programs. A key informant noted there was a 'lack of trust of mainstream generalist services'. Further, they said:

The best way into talking to these communities is to build trust and to have relationships because ... that's when things have been uncovered. It's because I've gotten to know people through delivering the program that we have and that they will

disclose something to you.

Another example confirms the positive impact of trust built over time:

The wife was reluctant to report ... but because that particular case manager had taken her for a walk in the park ... she opened up a bit of her story and then that's when we found out, okay, there has been things going on in this family. Then from that day onwards we invited the client to come one-to-one with the case manager and slowly, slowly, we started to get all the information from that client. Then we also guided her to go and report to the police, to make an anonymous complaint to the police because she was not wanting to do that either. Also, she didn't want to go the police station because she was afraid to go to the station ... So, what we did we worked with the local police officers, they're very great, and we had a one-to-one session for the woman in the office and then we also invited the man into the office ... I think that's where we saw a lot of changes both in the man and the woman from that one-on-one session with the police officer. Because they gave a holistic scenario of how it is in Australia and they said to them, look, in your country things might have happened that way but you are now living in Australia and this is the way it happens. So, yeah, that we thought was a good approach to open to the client.

Clients, in some cases, were open to trusting support workers because they had an 'official' capacity: 'as soon as the woman got in the room with her alone, she told her. [They] had literally got off the plane and she was scared of him and didn't want anything to do with the relationship'.

REFERRALS

Interviewees discussed trust in relation to referrals from friends, as well as referrals from services. A key informant commented on the importance of 'knowing where to go and having a response that is warm and inviting and encouraging, and being prepared to go at a slow pace with the woman'. Two different participants mentioned that they would advise friends to seek professional support, but their friends would only act on a recommendation made by someone they trusted.

I think if they trust me, they go there and if it works for them and they talk about it in the community, from word of mouth, they can go there.

They want to know who the person that will talk to them. They want to know. They not trust to anyone to talk. They ask me ... but who's the person? They ask many, many question before they say, okay, we are agree or happy to go.

Trusted relationships with other services and individuals to make successful referrals was deemed essential in working with CALD communities, as reported by two key informants from different services:

So often it comes through a friend of a friend, or an agency has made this warm referral. There's lots of fear - if I start talking, what are you going to do with my information now?

Giving CALD women numbers - give these people a call – that doesn't cut it, because they've got no idea what the service is ... where's the respect of walking alongside her, saying these people are good people.

Interpreters are often considered to be trusted members of local communities, especially in regional areas, and can be privy to disclosures of violence. A key informant explained: 'our interpreter ... the women are calling her like 24/7 when they have problems'. With advanced language skills, interpreters can provide a bridge to the broader community, including access to services. However, the role of interpreters in regional areas can also present some challenges, especially when a woman fears that someone might share her private business with others in the community. Maintaining professional boundaries should reduce these risks, nonetheless, in some cases, key informants noted that women have asked to use phone interpreters instead of local community members. Conversely, some services have asked interpreters if they are comfortable working in certain situations with known members of their community and some say 'I don't want to deal with this one'.

ACTING ON VIOLENCE

There are many reasons why CALD women choose not to act on DFV, including shame and ostracism, as well as fears around losing residency status in Australia for those on partner or other temporary visas. DFV is often hidden and considered to be a private matter. A participant observed: 'not everyone who seems happy is happy'. A key informant stated:

Often times people are sceptical and scared, even though they are going through a lot they don't want their family to look bad, so sometimes they do these things silently.

Another key informant confirmed this observation:

There's just been so much fear associated with stepping outside of the community, even though women have not had lots of support in the community, because they've been silenced and they just feel fear.

SHAME AND OSTRACISM

Speaking about DFV is often taboo in CALD communities and speaking out is considered shameful, as indicated in comments from different study participants:

There's just a high level of shame and when you're talking about any person, CALD or not, when you have the realisation that you are in a DV relationship, a lot of people don't realise that you are. So, once they're classified ... that can be really shocking for people to understand that they're living in a DV relationship.

The majority of my friends in my community, because of our culture, when they have problems in the family they are ashamed to talk to others, they're shy ... Some of our friends they don't want to share. In our culture if we talk about our family's problems that means we don't respect our husbands.

Participants and key informants reported women's fears that they will be ostracised in their communities if they speak out about violence. A participant stated: 'like feeling that the community is going to be against them and also the reputation of their culture'. Furthermore, other participants said 'they feel pressure by the community, to hide the incident and to be resolved within the family or their closer network' and 'if they complain then the elders might not think highly of that particular woman' ... 'there's the fear of being alone and isolated due to lack of family and community support'.

LEGAL FEARS

Misunderstanding and unfamiliarity around Australian law mean that some CALD community members are reluctant to report violence. Others know of families who have had unwanted legal intervention: 'somebody saw me and my husband fighting and now I have an AVO against him'. A participant said:

When she called the police, they came and arrested her husband and said you can't go back to your wife and to your children for one year. So based on that situation, my friend didn't want to call the police because she doesn't want to separate from her husband because she thinks it will be very bad if she doesn't live with her husband, especially for the children. They will feel unhappy without a father, so she never called the police.

Fears of legal intervention extended beyond the CALD community: 'if they talk to their Aussie friend they call the police. So, their husband would be taken away from the family, from them, they don't want that to happen'.

Key informants also reported adverse community reactions around legal interventions:

When she got home the police car had actually arrived at the house to take the husband away ... a community member lived in the same complex. So as soon the husband was taken away in the police car the community member walked up to the lady and said, what have you done, why have you reported to the police about this matter? That is not acceptable. You know you have brought shame to the community.

Concerns were shared around losing custody of children, as well as the impact of fathers being absent in the household:

Some women are very brave to change their relationship. Most of them are very worried about their kids, their children, they don't want children to lose the father. They just want to stay together with their children, so some of the women are very patient and hold the stress and the problem. Because they care about their children. That is not good for the long term I think. We think it is good but it might affect children in the future. Women need to be confident and have to express their rights.

Another participant commented:

Once you're married and you have things going on, maybe your husband is abusive, you feel like if I tell this person about it my husband someone might hear about it and I'm going to lose my marriage and my kids and so on.

WOMEN ASSERTING THEIR RIGHTS

There were, however, many instances of women being aware of their rights, acknowledging their experience of violence and choosing to act, as outlined below by three different participants:

I think they now starting to get that step. They start to go to someone to ask for help and like, especially the women, they try to say, okay, I have a problem ... do you know someone can help me, please?

I told her, I have information, I can give it to you. So, she feels she doesn't have any way except she tell me true, you know. So she said, yes, that is fine. We have - I have

a violence, he hits me.

Often times people like to justify it [staying in a situation] by saying they're my family and I don't want to lose them. But in some cases some people are smarter than that and they say these are my family and I love them, but I don't deserve that so they take themselves out of that situation for their own well being.

With support, some women: 'try to get their own place, maybe go to the police station, file a report, get a restraining order, take an actual action'. One woman said:

People might say I've endured this for so long, I've got to take action, and they don't care and have to do what's best for them and so they reach out to the police or any organisation that might help them out.

Some participants reported how women within communities are encouraging others to act to protect each other:

I said, no, if I hear something like that, I will call you police. I encourage you if you hear my husband hit me, please call the police.

Study participants identified differences in those most likely to act on escaping violence, depending on how long the family has been settled in Australia. The longer the settlement period, the more likely a woman was to leave a violent situation.

VISAS

For some women the concern around losing residency overshadows their need to report violence. Different key informants shared this concern:

I know a lot of people can be reluctant to seek support because of the visa that they may be on and also that they might not be citizens, they might just be permanent residents and what does that mean? So, visas is definitely something that could hinder someone from seeking additional support.

Some women would think that they could be removed from Australia and/or their children may be removed. So, there's a lot of fear around the police and about the legal system from what I've observed.

If I do complain to the police then maybe my husband's visa will be cancelled. We both might be turned back to go back home, and we don't want to go back home. It will affect our citizenship.

The real or imagined threat of being excluded from Australia is often considered more worrisome than ongoing violence.

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Opinions on the importance and role of community leaders varied between participants and key informants. Length of settlement in Australia, cultural differences and community size determined these differences. Some believed that community leaders

were significant influencers and needed to be engaged in discussions about addressing violence, as well as counselling those affected. A key informant noted how working with community leaders can be very successful in 'getting people in the door'.

Some participants were clear about who constitutes a community leader and their role in offering guidance for unhappy relationships, as demonstrated in the following comments from different women from different cultural backgrounds:

I think community leaders definitely play a key role in getting participation happening and education happening around this space ... Some church ministers and people that work in those spaces that are quite influential.

In our community and in our culture people we respect, like pastors, our leaders help if they think we have a problem. They will talk to both men and women and just consult and give some advice, encourage the married life, we have something like that.

Community leaders do play a vital role in some of these DV situations. Because the man and the woman leaders, especially because back in their country, if they have been listening to their elders that might alleviate some of the issues the young ones are going through.

CHANGES TO THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY LEADERS

Identifying community leaders is not so clear in emerging communities:

Here in Coffs Harbour ... we can't say community leader because each family came from different places. We still not have a community leader here in Coffs

Harbour. But if we back to the Iraq or Syrian, we still have community leader.

Some participants reported that everyone in their community is busy in their new life in Australia and some people do not have time to fulfill the role of community leader. In some cases, an unofficial community leader role has emerged, and these are people who are considered by community members to be trustworthy.

Others reported that interpreters could be relied upon in similar ways to community leaders 'because they've got both languages and they've got the contact with the community plus with us'. A key informant shared an insightful example of the changing perception of community leaders in Australia:

I always remember that one of our interpreters said they were trying to get him to be a leader because he had good English. He turned around and said to them, well you know what? You're in Australia now. We're an egalitarian society. You all are equal. You can all speak for yourself. You don't need a community leader.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Concerns were raised about the potential negative influence of community leaders if they did not consider DFV to be a serious issue or if the community leader was a perpetrator of violence. In some cases, the community leaders needed further education around DFV issues and responses to 'understand the Australian way and the legal things that are done here'.

The importance of training extends to bicultural workers, who, although they may not be recognised as leaders, are highly influential in their work with communities. A key informant shared the following observations:

These community leaders in those positions as community workers are not necessarily trained and skilled to provide the support that these people need to improve their lives or what they're going through. In fact, in one instance, we had a gender worker that was working with women who are subjected - who were subjected to DFV. On one occasion, she told me how one of the community workers had sent a client to her and while she was assessing the situation and asking the person, found out that this community worker had asked her if it was the first time that her husband had hit her. She said yes and she said, well then don't worry about it.

Furthermore:

How important it is to involve community leaders in education because at the end, I think it is important to respect traditional cultures and cultures of origin but not blindly. Those traditional cultures as much as our western modernised culture, has negative aspects and we have to be active about changing that. So, I see that community leaders doesn't necessarily mean that they have the wisdom and the care to improve the lives of their members and I think they do play an amazing, important role, and I think they need to be involved within services and equipped and empowered with knowledge, skills and resources to establish good values and practices aligned with human rights, equality, end of violence et cetera and make a positive and effective impact within their community.

Key informants and participants indicated that there was a perception that community leaders can worsen the experience of DFV:

Because what if the community leader was a perpetrator of violence and abuse?

How is it seen or how is it presented, in keeping the secret, and then he's sitting with other men, perhaps in a different position in their little community, how does that fit?

Because they will go to the community leaders or the community members but things might just get solved the old ways.

When including community leaders, power relations within communities must be considered, especially as, in many cases, these leaders are 'old men'.

Regardless of who is and who is not considered a community leader, their influence can be far-reaching and, as stated by a key informant, because their role is 'a link between those communities and the wider society and human rights, it's fundamental, and I think it has to be'.

CONVERSATIONS WITH MEN AROUND VIOLENCE

Many of the women participants in the study stated that men usually did not discuss unhappy relationships: 'the men not talking too much about that. I have my friends from my community they talk to me. I don't know about the men' and 'they keep it to themselves'.

Exceptions were, however, noted by study participants and differences appeared along cultural lines. One woman suggested: 'they prepared to talking to other men.'

They respect to talking to men more than women' and 'usually the men trust men, they talk to the men'. Another participant observed:

So, usually the men will start talking about that, not the women. Yes, in some circumstances, yes, the men will. Maybe married men hanging together as a group having a nice time, maybe drinking, they might express their feelings. He might be showing signs that they're not okay and a friend might ask are you okay brother and they might say no things are not good in my marriage. In other circumstances their friend might advise that they should marry someone else and say you don't have to deal this and you put her in your place. Putting her in her place means beating her up or abusing her.

Men might also disclose their experiences with trusted health or other support services. A key informant noted: 'having a younger male doctor there and if there's anything that comes up like that, we can say well you can just have your "pow-wow" [talk] together'. Another key informant discussed how they used an existing relationship with a male client to build trust with police which ultimately led to a shift in thinking about DFV.

But there were concerns about CALD men not being adequately included in prevention and conversations around violence, especially in regional areas, as noted by different key informants:

Honestly, within the Men's Behaviour Change Network in New South Wales, there's been ongoing conversations about how do you work with a CALD man in say, smaller communities, when you need interpreters because English is a second language?

No, we have not attended to the CALD men and for all those reasons, maybe travel,

distance, referrals?

A key informant recalled that during her long time working in the violence prevention sector there had been very few CALD men participating in Men's Behaviour Change Programs. She mentioned one man's involvement but said he did not complete the program. Another key informant ran small group discussions for men about relationships, but only four out of six men invited attended. Others noted that lack of CALD men's specific services in the region.

Working with CALD men, like CALD women, requires the development of careful, considerate and trusting relationships. The men need to feel safe and supported to talk openly about their experiences.

The reason why men do not share their feelings is because we expect them to be strong at all times, they shouldn't express their feelings. Men think if they express their feelings they're weak. But I think that if we can get men to get the motivation and encourage them to express their feelings then we can sort this out. If they can get together and get to express their feelings, as a group of men, they might see things in common and feel like they are not alone. It's okay for me to express my feelings. I believe that will really help.

The role of women in encouraging men's conversations and action is pivotal, as is the way these conversations are framed:

I think the women are really a place to start. The women that we already are connected with, to encourage men in their community to participate but again, I wouldn't overtly make it about DV. I think there has to be something else that brings people together.

Another key informant commented:

I believe that we would have true advocates through the women to encourage their men to be together and I would see that that then could lead to learning about being in Australia and learning to be that man in Australia, which might be very different to the man that they got taught to be as young children or even the context in which they were young men themselves. Yeah, I think though, that those community connections will be pivotal when it comes to implementing any men's behaviour for change program.

CREATING A MEN'S GROUP

There was a positive response from participants and key informants to create a men's group to address domestic and family violence. A participant said a CALD men's group 'sounds like a really good thing. We can do something and it's going to be good for everybody, everyone in general' and it was required to 'educate them about Australian law'. Key informants and participants shared their support for a CALD men's group in the following statements from a range of contributors:

I think that is a very good idea because a lot of men still think that they just need to make money and the wife looks after the kids and do the housework. Lots of women who have their husband physically abuse eventually call the police but they don't want them to take their husbands away, they just want them to tell them not to bully, not to hit your wife, it's against Australian law, something like that, educate their husbands rather than taking away from them.

I think having education with men in a community around the use of violence and abuse, but once again, it's naming it, that they see their behaviour as abusive or violent.

Many men are shocked when they get issued (AVO) by police. It would be good to have some classes or something for the men to understand the law and family law, something like that, there should be better. They know nothing.

I think more has changed for the men. I mean men and women have changed relationships. They don't know about Australian law. In our culture we listen to the men, the man is the boss of the house. They don't know their rights, they need more education.

Obviously we need to address violence against women and children but at the same time, we need to work on providing men with the resources and the knowledge and the skills to stop perpetrating violence.

Study participants suggested that such a group would assist men in navigating the challenges associated with cultural change after settling in Australia: 'maybe that is something that the men do need is how to be a man in Australia' and 'as a man in Australia, how do I be a man? What's the right thing to do? What's appropriate, what's not?'

However, a key informant stated that there are many considerations when devising an appropriate program for CALD men, saying there is:

an ongoing conversation of how do you get to be able to work these men ... what does that then look like, for example, as a group program? There's always the benefits of group work as opposed to one-to-one ... the difference of doing a CALD group for men in the city, like Sydney, as opposed to Coffs Harbour where it's such a small community and you're known, and those kind of factors.

There were varying ideas around the form of the group, who should facilitate it, who should attend and how men could be encouraged to participate. These are discussed below.

ATTENDANCE AND GROUP MAKE UP

An initial concern was about how to get men to attend a group. A participant suggested:

Maybe start by going to each community, Congolese, Sudanese, get their leaders to spread their word, let them know it's confidential. Some men are open to express their feelings, they just don't know how to go about it.

There was agreement that the group should be for men only and not mixed genders. Some participants suggested that the group would work best if based around cultural lines and specific cohorts to utilise interpreters effectively. However, it was recommended that these cultural groups could be broad and include different ethnicities, for example a Myanmar men's group including different ethnicities (for example Chin, Burmese, Karen etc.) or an African Men's group with men from various nations so that participants could draw on shared experiences. A key informant said 'if there was a group, it would have to almost be like one particular culture so that you could have one or two interpreters to work with it'. Other suggested that mixing cultural groups would be a good idea so that the men can learn about different cultural ideas around positive relationships.

Some suggested that a men's group should be compulsory whilst others maintained 'they would still go if they were interested in the program and what they were going to

talk about'. A settlement service provider acknowledged the importance of running such groups/information sessions upon arrival, as well as doing refresher courses after participants have lived in Australia for some time, as newcomers can forget so much information. All suggestions emphasised the need to offer any kind of men's group meeting in conjunction with a social activity, so the men can feel safe and engage openly.

FACILITATORS

Some participants suggested that men should facilitate the group because 'they respect what the man has said more than women, unfortunately'. The need for a men's group run by men was supported by another who said:

There's a space for men to be together to be men and learn from other Australian men ... It doesn't even need to be Australian men ... just to be with other men that can be in relationships safely.

However, others suggested, as long as they trust the facilitators, they did not necessarily have to be the same gender. Some participants recommended that police run some sessions, and gender was not considered to be an issue as long as 'they know the law about violence'. Benefits of having women facilitators include providing opportunities to see women in leadership roles and as experts on a range of issues.

3ES TO FREEDOM FOR MEN

A commonly heard suggestion from a number of participants and key informants, as outlined below, was that a men's group should take the form of 3Es to Freedom for

men or draw on successes from Red Cross' multicultural playgroup based in Coffs Harbour:

Yes, my husband and I always talking about that. Like 3Es or Red Cross, really helpful for women. If that organisation had something for men, it would really support them.

If there is a group like 3Es for men that would be very nice.

Yeah, I always thought something like that would be great for them, because I think they do feel disempowered when they come here.

I would probably look to the learnings of our program of 3Es. What's worked, what hasn't? Again, it's about building a program and having those undertones of prevention of family and domestic violence, not overtly being about how to change yourself. I would say that programs that are bringing people together where you can get to know service providers and build those relationships are really important.

Again, that just comes from these people having had these lives. Some of them have trauma and torture and they're not going to disclose things. They're not going to sit in a space and unravel or unpack their own relationship. I think it's about ... that building of a space and allowing people to make decisions about what's best for them.

These recommendations extend on the success of 3Es to Freedom for women where participants felt empowered to build skills to enhance their lives in Australia.

The consensus amongst participants and key informants was that any men's group should not be labelled as a domestic and family violence prevention program. However, behaviour change should be the foundation and aim of the program. A key informant recalled:

There was a program in Victoria that had men's gatherings as such, and there was an opportunity to sit and talk about, what's going on in the home? What's going on for you, but what's going on in your home with your wife and your kids? ... It was like a gardening group or there was some other aspect to bring him in.

Another key informant stated:

We also acknowledge that the men in these relationships also need support and to feel safe and they won't disclose and they won't reach out and they won't get help and they won't start talking about that until they do feel safe and have those trusting relationships in place.

SUMMARY

Conversations with 3Es program participants and key informants canvassed a range of issues relating to experiences of domestic and family violence in CALD communities. Findings suggest that DFV is a significant issue in CALD communities and that there is a lack of specific resources to address this issue. Talking to CALD women provided valuable insights into their communities, including the complexity of seeking support for DFV. Study participants reported how CALD men had not been successfully engaged in addressing issues around violence prevention. This lack of support compounds previous trauma and impacts on wellbeing and the ability to live safely. Creating a specific CALD men's program would provide better support for both men and women. Listening to women's voices and observations is key to developing and implementing a men's group in this space, as summed up by a key informant working in DFV:

In Men's Behaviour Change Programs we're working with men, [but] the women's voices are the most powerful in that work because they know him and they know, I think, what gets in the way of the partner not taking responsibility.

Working with well-informed community leaders and bicultural workers who champion violence prevention and acknowledge that violence is not acceptable in any cultural context will also provide a way forward to creating safer communities. Better equipping these key contacts and other 'first responders' to support families is essential to reducing the risk of DFV in CALD communities.

SECTION 5: WORKING WITH MEN

MEN'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAMS

Family violence interventions, in most instances, take place once violence has already occurred (Brotherhood of St Lawrence 2015). However, the potential for DFV prevention cannot be underestimated, especially for CALD communities that are at risk of a very high incidence of family violence (Brotherhood of St Lawrence 2015; McIvor & Markwick n.d.; Vaughan et al. 2019). Research suggests that male children who witness their father acting violently towards family members are more likely to perpetrate violence in adulthood (UN Women 2019). Supporting positive role models must be prioritised and promoted through Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCP) and other groups that empower men to address negative behaviours. This section provides contextual information, as well as an overview of key issues relating to CALD MBCPs and other groups. Programs and other valuable resources are identified to inform the development of future CALD men's programs.

CONTEXT

MBCPs have existed in many countries for some time; however, programs aimed at specific ethnocultural groups have been a more recent addition (Vlais, Ridley, Green & Chung 2017). CALD men's groups were developed in the United Kingdom in the 1970s but programs were not introduced in Australia until several decades later. MBCPs, in many cases, have been offered in English only, excluding CALD men who might be more confident discussing these issues in their first language (Brotherhood of St Lawrence 2015). A Vietnamese-speaking MBCP (see resources section) developed

collaboratively in Melbourne has emerged as a successful model for developing DFV perpetrator interventions in diverse Australian communities.

Various Australian states have formed MBCP networks to promote best practice in this sector. Organisations operating MBCPs in NSW must adhere to the NSW Men's Behaviour Change Network's overarching principles to achieve best practice standards. The principles are as follows:

1. The safety of victims, including children, must be given the highest priority
2. Victim safety and perpetrator accountability are best achieved through an integrated service response
3. Effective programs must be informed by a sound evidence base and subject to ongoing evaluation
4. Challenging domestic and family violence requires a sustained commitment to professional practice
5. Men responsible for domestic and family violence must be held accountable for their behaviour
6. Programs should respond to the diverse needs of participants

(NSW Government 2017)

Registered MBCPs in NSW are required to comply with these guidelines to receive funding and referrals. Observing the standards ensures programs are well informed, facilitated by suitably trained workers and are beneficial for participants and communities.

KEY ISSUES

Diverse community input is essential in devising and managing successful empowerment-based violence prevention strategies (Rees & Pease 2007). Involving

community and religious leaders to encourage men and women to seek support is beneficial in the context of DFV. However, some organisations have reported negative consequences when religious leaders have 'favoured preservation of marriage above concerns for family safety' (Brotherhood of St Lawrence 2015, p. 14). Respecting cultural diversity and traditions is essential when working with CALD men (ANROWS 2015), as it is with CALD women. However, culture is only one factor in gendered identities and behaviours (Debbonaire 2015), and an intersectional approach recognising the interplay between gender, culture, age and language, as well as other social categories, is necessary to understand the different challenges faced by CALD communities. Recruitment of bi-cultural/bi-lingual workers can be linked to program success (Vlais, Ridley, Green & Chung 2017). Additionally, services running successful programs for CALD communities emphasise the need to ensure programs are 'place-based', that is they acknowledge, address and include local community issues, priorities and populations. A 'one size fits all' approach of is little value when working with CALD participants.

MEN'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAMS RESOURCES

The following section includes examples of MBCPs, as well as additional resources to provide relevant insights that could support the development of an CALD Men's group in northern regional NSW. This compilation includes information about currently registered MBCPs, as well as other CALD men's groups that seek to empower participants and promote positive behaviour. Links to these resources are provided at the end of the report.

Brotherhood of St Lawrence Submission to the Royal Commission on Family Violence

The Brotherhood of St Lawrence has considerable experience working with CALD families in many programs in Victoria. This work includes delivery of settlement services, parenting support and other capacity-building programs. Successful strategies to address family violence include embedding DFV prevention programs within existing settlement and support services. The submission emphasises the need to strengthen standards in current MBCPs, as well as engage meaningfully with leaders in both community and religious contexts. Recognising the link between disadvantage, employment status and DFV is considered essential when designing appropriate responses. The submission recommends ensuring that participants trust program facilitators and that culturally sensitive approaches form the basis of any intervention. Programs are more likely to be successful if embedded in discussions about broad issues/challenges, as opposed to being labelled ‘family violence’. An overarching theme of the submission recommends that ‘embedding preventative approaches in universal services, in a non-stigmatising way, would increase the likelihood of reaching both perpetrators and victims. This would require investment to strengthen the capacity of universal services to address family violence’ (Brotherhood of St Lawrence 2015, p. 8).

Building Stronger Families

Building Stronger Families is a 16-week program run by Settlement Services International (SSI) for Arabic and Tamil speaking men from refugee backgrounds who are new to Australia. The program aims to provide a safe environment for CALD men to explore their feelings and actions to change negative behaviours and promote respectful family interactions. Information about domestic and family violence is shared

within the group to build positive relationships in Australia. The program provides practical strategies to support the men to address settlement challenges.

Engage 2 Change

This mainstream MBCP commences with individual counselling sessions to assess men's goals, as well as their readiness to join the group program. The 12-week program focuses on considering the impact of violent behaviour, as well as how to deal with strong emotions. Group participants are encouraged to self-reflect and consider their role in the world as men. The program is run by Kempsey Families Inc, in conjunction with Liberty Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Service in Port Macquarie and Warrina Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services in Coffs Harbour.

No to Violence Men's Behaviour Change Network NSW

This resource provides valuable information for formulating and running Men's Behaviour Change Programs, including an outline of the NSW Minimum Standards introduced in 2012. The Network offers the opportunity to share lessons learned and reflect on best practice. The website includes links to currently registered MBCPs in NSW, as well as registration information. Resources include guides, frameworks and compliance documents.

Settled and Safe

Legal Aid Victoria runs a program specifically targeting families from refugee backgrounds, as well as support workers. The program aims to prevent family violence by empowering communities with knowledge about legal rights and responsibilities.

There is no equivalent program in NSW, although NSW Legal AID provides a refugee legal service.

South Asian Men's Behaviour Change Program

This program, run by Uniting social services, was established in response to the high number of CALD men attending their mainstream MBCP. The program runs for 22 weeks and includes content on challenges associated with settling into a new culture, such as: Australian law and relationships, gender equality, patriarchal societies and their impact on women and children, and managing experiences of trauma.

STOP Men's Behaviour Change Program

STOP (Skills, Techniques, Options and Plans) is an MBCP run by Anglicare in Paramatta, Ulladulla and Nowra. The program works with men seeking to change negative behaviours and move towards healthy family relationships. Content includes exploring ideas around male identity, respectful relationships, family safety concerns and accountability.

Vietnamese Speaking Men's Behaviour Change group

The Vietnamese Men's Behaviour Change Program was established in Melbourne in 2010, following a successful pilot program. A reference group that included family violence support services, multicultural services, health services and, notably, the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association, developed the program collaboratively. Police and Justice Department representatives later joined the group. The program

started 'with an initial focus on torture, trauma and cultural issues, with further content including themes covered in mainstream groups regarding responsibility of the men and safety of the women and children' (McIvor & Markwick n.d.). Male and female Vietnamese speaking facilitators ran the group. The program aimed to reduce the incidence of family violence, improve access to services for CALD men and improve understanding of DFV issues in CALD communities to inform program delivery. Evaluations of the program were positive and indicated a strong desire from the group members to participate in future programs, as well as differences in behaviour as noted by women partners.

Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Project

Based on findings from a scoping study that sought to understand issues around DFV in CALD communities, this project was established to enhance access to CALD specific services. More than 40 agencies working in City of Whittlesea in Melbourne, Victoria, have collaborated in designing and delivering the project. A steering group made up of family violence services, community health, multicultural services and the police oversee the project, working closely with a CALD women's advisory group that is integral to program delivery. The project provides 'place-based', culturally specific services across prevention, early intervention and responses to DFV. An Arabic-speaking Men's group was developed as part of the project in an effort to increase access to language and culturally specific Men's Behaviour Programs. A grant program was developed to empower CALD women. Other programs targeted young people to promote respectful relationships. Training was provided to community and religious leaders to build capacity.

The model summary and implementation document shares lessons learned with organisations seeking to set up similar CALD community informed projects. Key

findings from evaluations emphasise: the need to be flexible and responsive when developing CALD specific services; the success of implementing an integrated, multi-program/multi-partner model; the importance of initiating meaningful community involvement in design, implementation and review phases of all programs to promote a sense of investment; and the vital role of CALD women in bringing men into the conversation around DFV. An important point worth noting is the recommendation to include male and female MBCP facilitators from the same cultural background. Doing so promotes positive role models of both genders and ensures women's perspectives are included in program delivery.

The project website includes an extensive list of CALD community resources, such as a family safety pack, a cultural competence guide, information about women on temporary visas, and many other culturally specific support resources. These resources could provide a potential way forward for co-producing DFV responses with CALD communities in northern NSW.

CONCLUSION

This report sought to identify some of the multidimensional aspects of CALD women's and men's lives that impact their safety in the context of Domestic and Family Violence. The report focused on experiences of CALD communities in northern NSW. The researcher collaborated with CALD women and key informants to identify issues within communities that help or hinder strategies to promote DFV prevention. Study participants spoke about trusted collaborators who could support community members when faced with experiences of DFV. The women's voices were prioritised to share knowledge about how best to work with men. Gaps in services for CALD men were identified and ideas were shared as to how best to bring men into the conversation around violence to address negative behaviours. Whilst culturally specific programs are needed to address family safety, a key informant reminds us that: 'domestic violence is not related to any culture in particular, it happens in all the cultures and every culture has amazing things'. Co-designing a group for CALD men in the region to foster positive relationships will have many benefits for enhancing family safety for members of diverse communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The report findings inform the following recommendations:

- Draw on the expertise and experience of women from migrant and refugee backgrounds to consider effective ways to work with men to address and prevent Domestic and Family Violence (DFV).
- Establish a steering committee, including women and men from CALD backgrounds and relevant agencies and services, to work collaboratively to develop appropriate responses to DFV.
- Work with ‘referrers’ and ‘first responders’ (friends, family, interpreters and community leaders) to better equip them to support CALD families experiencing DFV.
- Embed DFV prevention in existing settlement and support services.
- Establish a program in Coffs Harbour for men from refugee and migrant backgrounds, that embeds behaviour change through providing empowering opportunities to strengthen networks, learn about positive behaviour towards women and develop a sense of understanding and belonging to the broader community.
- Make the proposed men’s group available in a culturally safe and welcoming space, such as a potential future multicultural hub at Anglicare North Coast.

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RESOURCE LINKS

Brotherhood of St Lawrence Submission to the Royal Commission on Family Violence

<http://rcfv.archive.royalcommission.vic.gov.au/getattachment/5B1369DB-2C1E-42FE-9091-2AD31E92B9CA/Brotherhood-of-St-Laurence.pdf>

Building Stronger Families

<https://www.ssi.org.au/services/building-stronger-families>

Engage 2 Change

<https://kempseyfamilies.org.au/mens-behaviour-change>

No to Violence Men's Behaviour Change Network NSW

<https://ntv.org.au/sector-resources/nsw-mens-behaviour-change-network/>

NSW Legal AID Refugee Legal Service

<https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/civil-law/refugee-service>

Settled and Safe

<https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/about-us/community-education-and-projects/settled-and-safe>

South Asian Men's Behaviour Change Program

<https://www.unitingkildonan.org.au/programs-and-services/child-youth-and-family-support/family-violence/south-asian-mens-behaviour-change-program/>

STOP Men's Behaviour Change Program

https://wayout.website/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/STOPGroup_A5Flyer_Parramatta-Mar-20-1.pdf

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Vietnamese Speaking Men's Behaviour Change group

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Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Project

<https://www.nifvs.org.au/resources/culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-cald-communities/whittlesea-cald-communities-family-violence-project/>

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