

Applying evidence-based approaches to the policy & practice of family violence prevention

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crime prevention victoria

Aims of this presentation



To describe the lessons learned from implementing two family violence prevention pilot projects within a 'justice' context

To identify the elements which are crucial to successful implementation

Definition & scope



Family violence - violent, threatening, coercive or controlling behaviour in current or past familial, domestic or intimate relationships (VCCAV)

- A.k.a. domestic violence, intimate partner violence, spousal abuse
- Includes child, sibling & elder abuse
- Mainly involves justice & health sectors

Victorian family violence context



- 28,000+ incidents reported to Victoria Police 2002-03
- Reporting rates estimated at 20%-30%
- IPV responsible for 9% of BOD in Victorian women aged 15-44 years (3% of all women) & is the major contributor to death, disability & illness (VicHealth)

Victorian family violence prevention policy context



- Crime & violence prevention strategy, *Safer Streets and Homes*, 2002-05
- Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce FV
- VicPol code of practice for investigating FV
- VLRC review - *Crimes (Family Violence) Act*
- Family Violence court trial – 2 locations
- Mandatory behaviour change program
- Indigenous Family Violence Strategy

Family Violence Prevention Pilot Projects



- Five FV projects being implemented by Victorian Community Council Against Violence within *Safer Streets & Homes*
- Two pilot projects being implemented - one regional, one metropolitan
- Few evaluations available to provide evidence of effective approaches

Project aims & objectives



To determine how a coordinated approach to prevention might work by:

- Improving interagency partnerships
- Identifying effective prevention initiatives
- Improving responses to boys & young men who use violence
- Improving safety for women & children

Principal preventive approaches identified by literature review



- Whole-of-school programs - curriculum components integrated with behaviour modelling, supportive policies, practices and culture, referral mechanisms
- Specific school-based programs, eg relationship violence
- Community education
- Training for professionals

Existing FV activity in project areas



- Regional DHS-funded FV Networker positions
- Networks of FV agencies
- Annual Week Without Violence
- School-based programs
- Group programs for women
- Community information resources
- Crisis support & court services

Proposed project initiatives



- Community education - arts-based, media
- School programs - Protective Behaviours, Tribes
- Professional development & training - police, health professionals, employers
- Resource development - parent info
- Intersectoral linkages with council health & safety planning, workplace programs
- Practice guidelines

Lessons learned



Successful prevention initiatives will be limited or enhanced by

- Availability of 'evidence'
- Funding body's capacity to implement
- Community's capacity to support
- Coordinating agency's capacity to conduct

Availability of evidence



Dependent on

- Published results of well-designed, well-evaluated studies
- Understanding of meaning of 'evidence'

Funding body's capacity to implement prevention initiatives



Dependent on

- Shared understanding of effective family violence prevention strategies & techniques
- Recognition that communities may lack prevention expertise & capacity
- Clear implementation & evaluation plan

Community's capacity to support prevention initiatives



Dependent on

- Enthusiastic, engaged, trusting stakeholders
- Shared commitment to prevention
- Prior experience with collaborative work - BestStart, Neighbourhood Renewal
- Existing community safety infrastructure - Local Safety Committee, Community Safety Officer positions

Agencies' capacity to conduct prevention initiatives



Dependent on

- Availability of secure ongoing funding & resources
- Mandate to conduct prevention activities within funding & service agreements
- Willingness to engage in collaborative interagency work
- Expertise in prevention

Conclusion



Successful program implementation is usually dependent on

- Availability of evidence of effectiveness
- The capacity of all stakeholders
- Understanding of, and commitment to, shared goals
- Adequate time & resources to determine an effect

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