



“EMPOWERING COURAGEOUS PEOPLE”

- ARA is committed to preventing domestic and family violence.
- ARA offers intensive case management and family counselling for individuals from a refugee background experiencing domestic violence.
- ARA also offers community education initiatives aimed at primary prevention, such as the Communities for Change program.

Communities for Change Program

- A peer-led awareness and education project working with refugee communities to prevent domestic and family violence.
- 1 year funding (2019-2020) from DHS (SA Govt).
- Coordinated by ARA in collaboration 28 Community Educators from refugee communities in South Australia.

Community Educators

- **Are well-respected members of CALD communities** (connected to community members from a **refugee background**) with cultural understanding and community connections.
- Have a genuine commitment to **address gender equality** and **service the community** around issues related to domestic and family violence awareness.
- Will provide accurate information related to family and domestic violence and lead discussions to encourage their community's **understanding, uptake and support for values of gender equality and respectful relationships**.

Communities represented

- 13 men, 15 women
- Sierra Leonean, Liberian, Afghan (Pashtun, Hazara), Burundian, Burmese (Chin), Iraqi, Congolese, Latin American (Colombian, Peruvian), Syrian, Vietnamese, Bhutanese, Pakistani, Egyptian, Zimbabwean, Kenyan, Iranian, Eritrean, South Sudanese.

Communities for Change Program

Phase 1: Training: AMES Australia (based on their PVAW program), ARA and DV-Alert (recognise, refer, respond)

Phase 2: Community Educators are supported by ARA to develop a plan for delivering information back into their communities → 18 different initiatives.



Engaging Men in DV Prevention

- Primary prevention = to prevent violence from occurring in the first place by *addressing underlying causes, behaviours and attitudes* that lead to violence occurring (education & awareness-raising)
- We need both committed male and female peer leaders; need to hear each other's perspectives in a safe space without blame.
- Male role models for young men > respectful relationships
- Program co-facilitated with a men's counsellor from Uniting Communities.

Engaging Men in DV Prevention

- In our training sessions we:
 - Unpack gendered drivers of DV in line with national prevention framework: eg. rigid gender stereotypes; control of decision-making; justifying/excusing violence; disrespect
 - Highlight the evidence and statistics
 - Explore women's and men's different experiences of violence
 - Understand most DV cases are perpetrated by men
 - Discuss challenges of migration/resettlement experience for men, women & children that can contribute to DV occurring
 - Explore support services for men (& barriers to engaging with services)

Engaging Men in DV Prevention

- Feedback/discussion from the group:
 - “Men experience a loss of identity and don’t feel like they belong in Australia. They feel like services don’t care about the men”(employment challenges; social isolation; new rights and freedoms for women/children)
 - *How can we better support men and families upon arrival in Australia to adapt to these changes without using violence?*
 - “Men need to hear from men” > “the challenge is to create an environment where men come to the table”
 - We need more men’s programs about gender equality

Future steps

- Work with Community Educators to respond to Covid-19 pressures
- Work to address challenges such as resistance to the topic within the community
- ARA's next SAN meeting – focus is on engaging men in DV prevention.
- Future goal to recruit Community Educators from other communities when more funding becomes available – have received feedback from many CALD communities that this is a program they are interested in.
- If you are interested in becoming involved in the future, please email Imogen imogen.moseley@ausref.net

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