



Creating safe hospitals for women experiencing violence

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Overview of this presentation



1. The Royal Women's Hospital's whole-of-hospital response to violence against women (VAW).
2. Common challenges experienced by metropolitan hospitals in Victoria building capacity to recognise and respond to VAW.
3. Reflections on necessary components for building capacity in hospitals.

About the Women's



- Australia's largest specialist women's hospital;
- 2,300 staff, 28,000 inpatient services, 150,000 outpatient episodes of care and **6,500 babies**;
- A **diverse community**; from 175 countries, 60 languages, 40 faiths;
- **Four service streams**: maternity, neonatal services, gynaecology inc cancers, women's health;
- **Social model of health** includes commitment to gender equity, innovation and advocacy.

Context in Victoria



- 2001 research found **27% pregnant women** at the Women's experiencing violence in current relationship;
- 2004 Burden of Disease study found **intimate partner violence** was major cause of preventable death and disease in women aged 15 to 44;
- State and federal VAW plans have focused on integrating and improving **community, police and justice responses.**

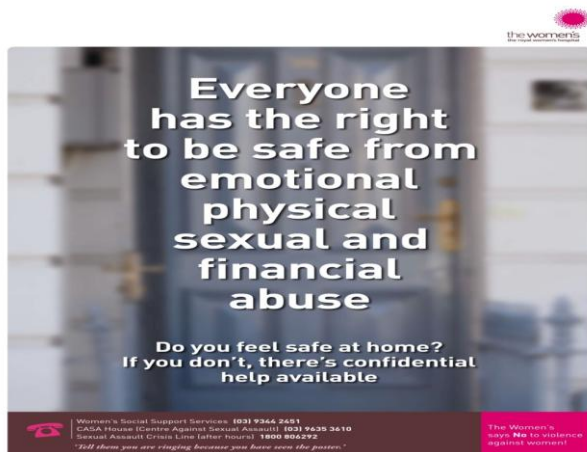
Women's VAW Strategy



- Women's approach **unique** amongst hospitals;
- Multiple interventions for a comprehensive, **whole-of-hospital approach;**
- **Primary Prevention** – Sexual Assault Prevention Program In Secondary Schools;
- **Early Interventions** – Clinical Practice Guideline and training for staff in principles of violence sensitive practice;
- **Recovery and response services** – CASA House and Women's Social Support Service.

Community Education Program





the women's
support services

Everyone has the right to be safe from emotional, physical, sexual and financial abuse

Do you feel safe at home?
If you don't, there's confidential help available

Women's Social Support Services: (03) 9364 2551
CASA House (Centre Against Sexual Assault): (03) 9635 2610
Sexual Assault Crisis Line (after hours): 1800 806292
"Tell them you are ringing because you have your eyes closed."

The Women's Support Services
1800 806292



the women's
support services

We recognise past experiences of violence might affect how you feel about treatment and examinations

If you need to talk,
there's confidential help available

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Early Results at the Women's



- Increased **support** for women;
- Evidence-based **clinical practice guideline** for inquiry, management and referral;
- Improved **skills** and **confidence** in trained staff;
- Award winning violence **prevention program** in 31 schools around Australia, recognised as **leading practice**;
- Piloting a co-located **family violence legal clinic**.

Building Capacity in the Sector



- 2010 workshop with government and hospitals to discuss the need for **consistent, evidence-based approach in hospitals**;
- **Working group building capacity** in five metropolitan hospitals, chaired by the Women's;
- Social work led, identifying **training needs**, reviewing **policies** and **procedures**, arrangements with community services to provide **family violence clinics**.

Challenges in Victoria



- No **policy mandate** from government
- Questions about the **evidence supporting a role for hospitals**;
- Concerns about implications for **demand management**;
- Limited resources for **service development** and **training**;
- Challenges of engage health professionals when **competency** not part of **registration requirements**.

Necessary Components



- **Evidence** local to funding system, workforce and organisation of health care;
- **Champions and leadership** in clinical and executive areas;
- Resources to develop **workforce expertise** beyond risk assessment;
- **Social model of health** in clinical practice, service development and strategy;
- **Feminist understanding** of violence against women.

Reasons for Optimism



1. Social work departments building capacity for hospital-wide responses;
2. Role for health in prevention, early intervention and service responses in State Government's consultation framework for new Action Plan.
3. Learning from the US and international models.

Conclusion



In summary:

- Research shows that violence is a women's health issue;
- Model for whole of hospital strategy;
- Significant challenges for hospitals to build capacity;
- Components for advancing health care in hospitals for women experiencing violence.

References



- VicHealth 2004 *The health costs of violence Measuring the burden of disease caused by intimate partner violence A summary of findings* Victorian Health promotion Foundation Carlton South
- VicHealth 2009 *Respectful Relationships Education Violence Prevention and Respectful Relationships Education in Victorian Secondary Schools*, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Melbourne
- Council of Australian Governments 2010 *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra
- Victorian Government 2012 *Action Plan Consultation Framework - Addressing Violence against Women and their Children*, Department of Human Services, Melbourne

Contact us



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