Masculinity and violence against women

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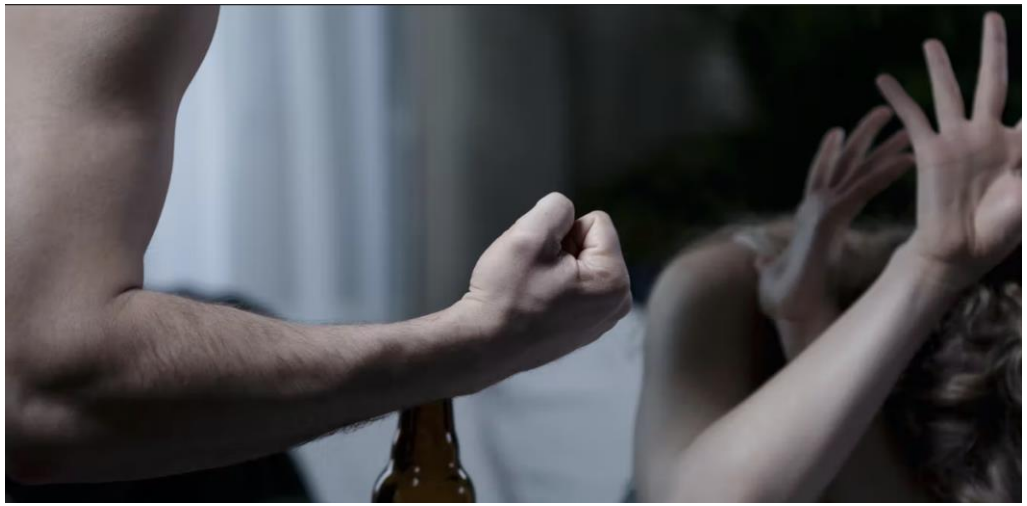
Violence against women

- Includes a wide range of behaviours
  - Naming of the range of male behaviours which women perceive as threatening, violent or harassing
  - New terms for forms of violence and abuse which had been invisible or normalised



Domestic violence

- Domestic violence: a pattern of controlling and coercive behaviours
  - “domestic violence is physical, sexual, psychological or financial violence that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship and that forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour.” (Women’s Aid 2005, cited in Harne & Radford 2008, p. 4)
- Domestic violence as *coercive control,* “the patterned subjugation of one partner by the other”
  - Physical violence typically is accompanied by other forms of abusive and oppressive behaviour. Such as;
  - Threats of violence, intimidation, sexual assault, coercion, emotional abuse, financial control, insults and mind-games, control and isolation.
- Sexual violence: any sexual act without consent
  - Includes rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment

Violence against women

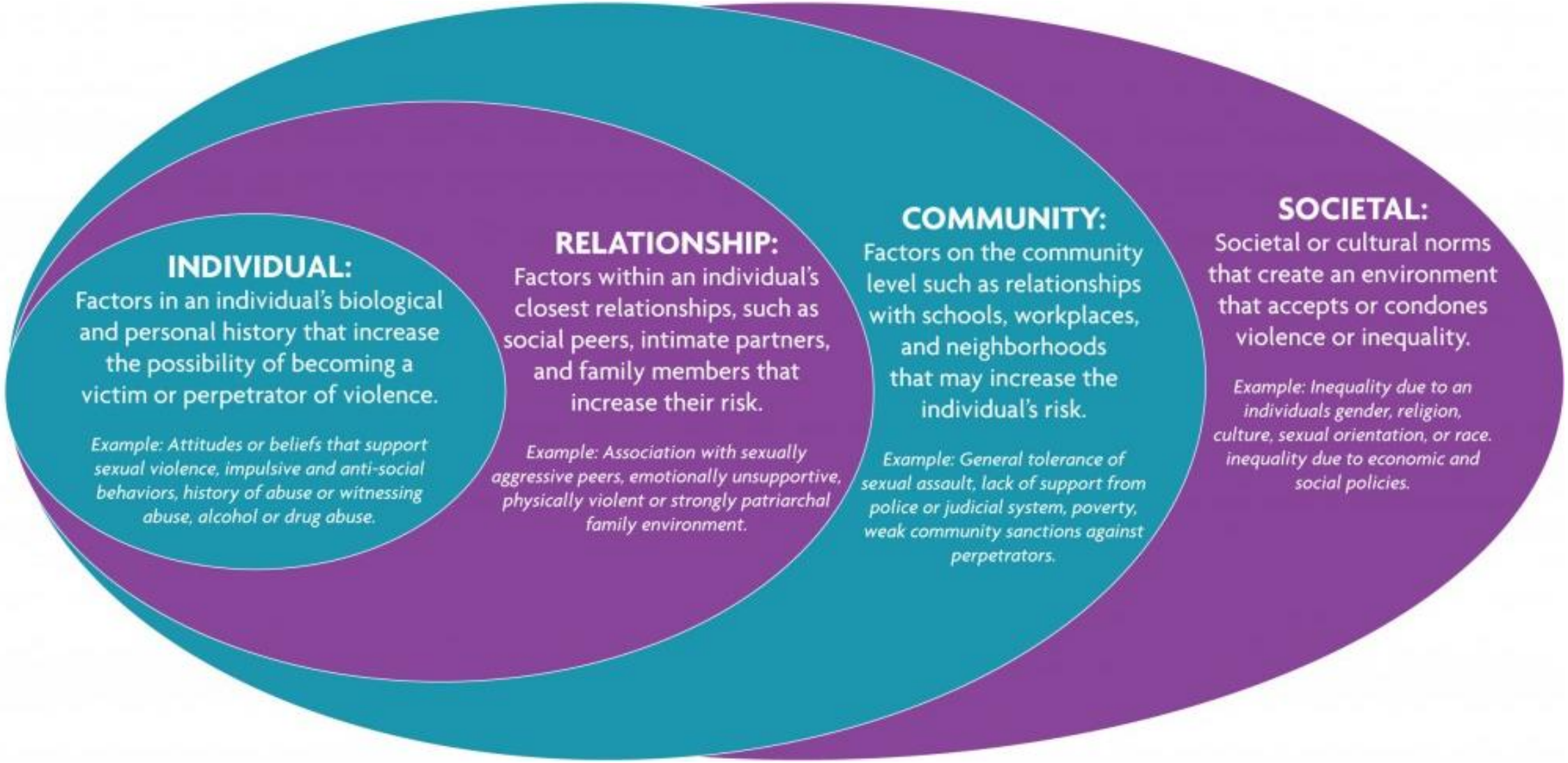
- Includes a wide range of behaviours
- Can be physical or non-physical
- Is linked to power and control

- Domestic and sexual violence are largely (but not entirely) problems of violence by men, against women and children

Exercise: Which men do and which men don’t?

- Your daughter / niece / young female friend wants a boyfriend.
- There are 100 young men in the building next door.
- Which one should she date?
  - Which of these men is more likely to perpetrate violence against her?
  - Which men are less likely? Which men are most likely to treat her with respect and care?
  - Why?
- What would it be useful to know about these guys?

The ecological model



The ecological model

- Risk factors for violence (for perpetration and/or victimisation) can be found at individual, family and relationship, community, and societal levels.
  - I.e., violence has multiple causes.
  - Causes are probabilistic rather than deterministic.
  - Risk factor: a characteristic that increases the likelihood of a person becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence.
- Protective factors too can be found at multiple levels.
- These levels are interconnected.
  - Changes at one level can produce changes at other levels.

The ecological model in *Change The Story*

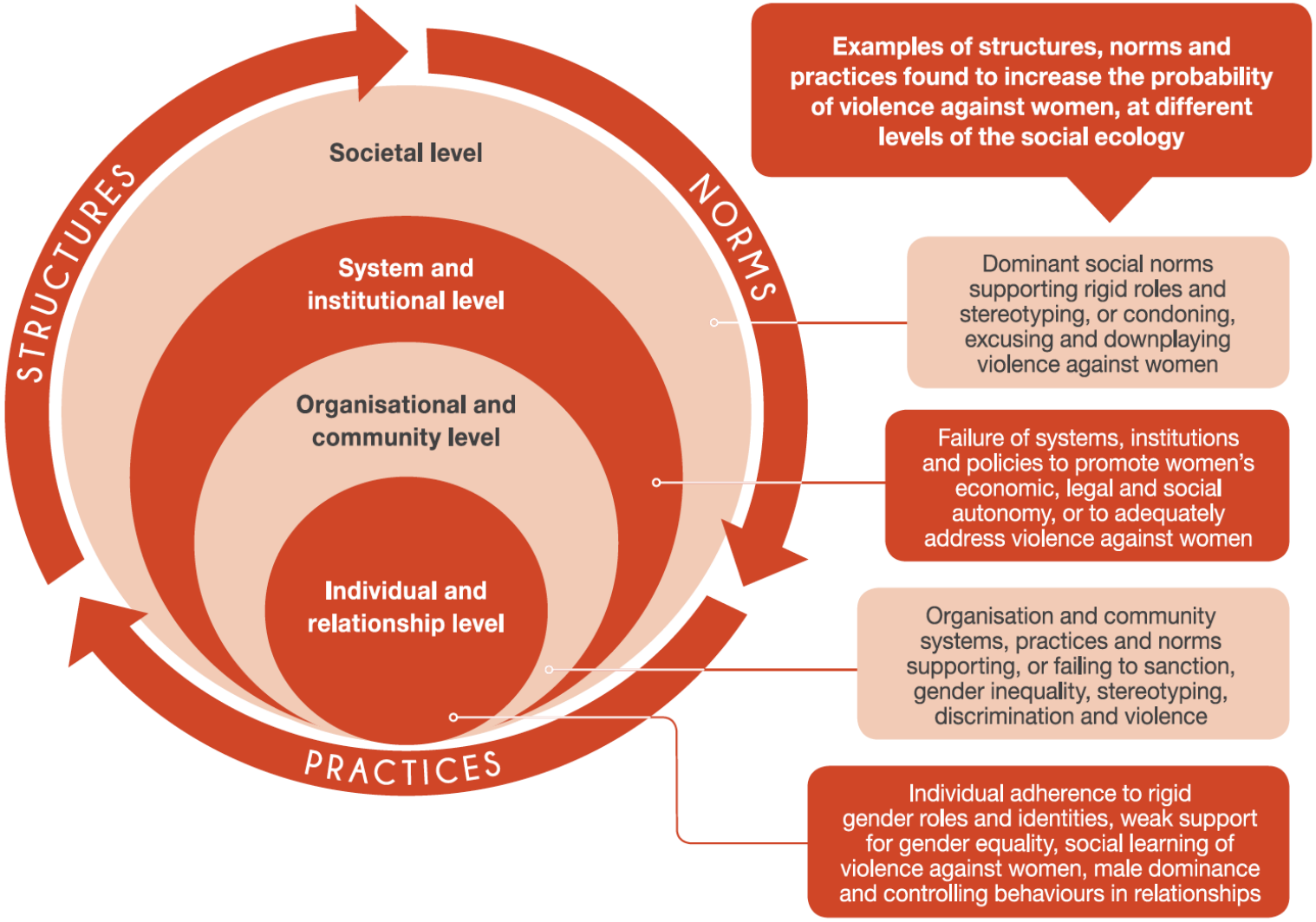


Figure 3: A social ecological model of violence against women.

Causes and context

- Three broad clusters of factors shape men's violence against women:
  1. Gender roles and relations
  2. Social norms and practices related to violence
  3. Access to resources and systems of support

(1) Gender roles and relations

- Men’s gendered attitudes and beliefs
  - Men’s agreement with sexist and sexually hostile attitudes
- Example: Men’s sexual violence against women is shaped in particular by ‘hostile masculinity’.
  - Sexual dominance: sexual motives and feelings of gratification linked to having power over one’s sexual partner
  - Hostility toward women: antagonistic or distrustful attitudes toward women
  - Adversarial sexual beliefs: beliefs that male-female relationships are inherently exploitative and manipulative
  - Rape myths
  - Acceptance of interpersonal violence

(1) Gender roles and relations *cont'd*

- Social norms regarding gender and sexuality
  - Violence in some ways is part of 'normal' sexual, intimate, and family relations
  - Sexual coercion becomes 'normal', working through common heterosexual norms and relations
- Pornography
- Violence as a resource for affirming masculine identities
- The power relations of relationships and families
  - These interact with conflict between partners

(1) Gender roles and relations *cont'd*

- Peer and organisational cultures
  - Some men have rape-supporting social relationships, e.g. in sport, gangs and peer groups, male residential colleges on campuses, and the military.
  - Some contexts involve gender segregation, strong male bonding, high alcohol consumption, sexist social norms, etc.
- The gender relations and norms of communities and cultures.
  - E.g., there are higher rates of domestic and family violence in cultures which emphasise male dominance in families, male honour, etc.
  - Structural gender inequalities

The gendered drivers of domestic and sexual violence

- Gender inequality is the key context for violence against women
- Gender inequality is reinforced and maintained through social norms, practices, and structures.
- Other factors influence and intersect with gender inequality.

Source: Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, & Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. (2015). *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*. Melbourne: Our Watch

(2) Social norms and practices related to violence

- Domestic violence resources
  - Fewer DV services = higher rates of DV
- Violence in the community
- Childhood exposure to intimate partner violence
  - Children, especially boys, who either witness violence or are subjected to violence themselves are more likely to take on violence-supportive attitudes.
  - Pathways: social learning, trauma

(3) Access to resources and systems of support

- Low socioeconomic status, poverty, and unemployment
  - The factors which accompany disadvantage, e.g. crowding, hopelessness, conflict, stress, or a sense of inadequacy in some men
- Lack of social connections and social capital
  - Social isolation is both a cause and a consequence of domestic violence

(3) Access to resources *cont'd*

- Neighbourhood and community characteristics
  - Such as poverty, unemployment, lack of collective efficacy, disintegration of family and community, etc.
  - The impacts of colonisation and dispossession
- Personality characteristics (and antisocial behaviour and peers)
- Alcohol and substance abuse
  - Men may use intoxication to minimise their responsibility, increase women's vulnerability, or overcome women's resistance.
- Situational factors: separation, firearm availability

Masculinity and violence

- Masculinity shapes men’s perpetration of violence against women at every level of the social ecology
  - Individual
  - Relationship and family
  - Community
  - Society
- There is diversity among men
  - Ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, region, etc
  - Distinct cultures (peer, occupational, sport, etc.)
- Men are changing
  - There are shifts over time, both positive and negative
- When a man hits, hurts, coerces, or abuses a woman, his actions are enabled and shaped by a wider web of collective and structural conditions

So…

- We must transform gender:
  - We must transform the norms, practices, and structures of gender
  - We must challenge common, patriarchal norms of masculinity
  - We must shift the gendered power relations of relationships, families, and communities
- And, above all, we must engage men and boys in positive change.

Resources on engaging men

- Free book, *Engaging Men and Boys in Violence Prevention* (Flood, 2019): https://xyonline.net/content/new-book-engaging-men-and-boys-violence-prevention
- Engaging men in violence prevention: A massive collection of resources: https://xyonline.net/content/engaging-men-violence-prevention-walking-tour-some-xys-content
- Men building gender equality: https://xyonline.net/content/men-building-gender-equality-guide-xys-content
- Dr Michael Flood's publications: http://www.xyonline.net/category/authors/michael-flood

- Contact: m.flood@qut.edu.au

Violence prevention: General resources

- Violence prevention: short, key introductions (in full text) http://xyonline.net/content/preventing-violence-against-women-xy-collection-short-key-introductions
- Violence prevention: key international reports and reviews (in full text) http://www.xyonline.net/content/preventing-violence-against-women-xy-collection
- Men's violence against women: Key readings (in full text): http://xyonline.net/content/mens-violence-against-women-some-key-readings-and-reports
- Bibliographies on key strategies and settings for prevention: http://xyonline.net/books/bibliography/27-violence-and-responses-violence/bibliography-16
- Other resources, guides, etc. on violence and violence prevention: https://xyonline.net/category/article-content/violence