

BUILDING BRIDGES:

Principles for work with men
and boys to end violence
against women and girls



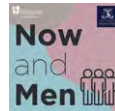
**END
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN**

B **EQUALITY** **YOND**
RETHINK MASCULINITIES

Created by the End Violence Against Women Coalition
and Beyond Equality

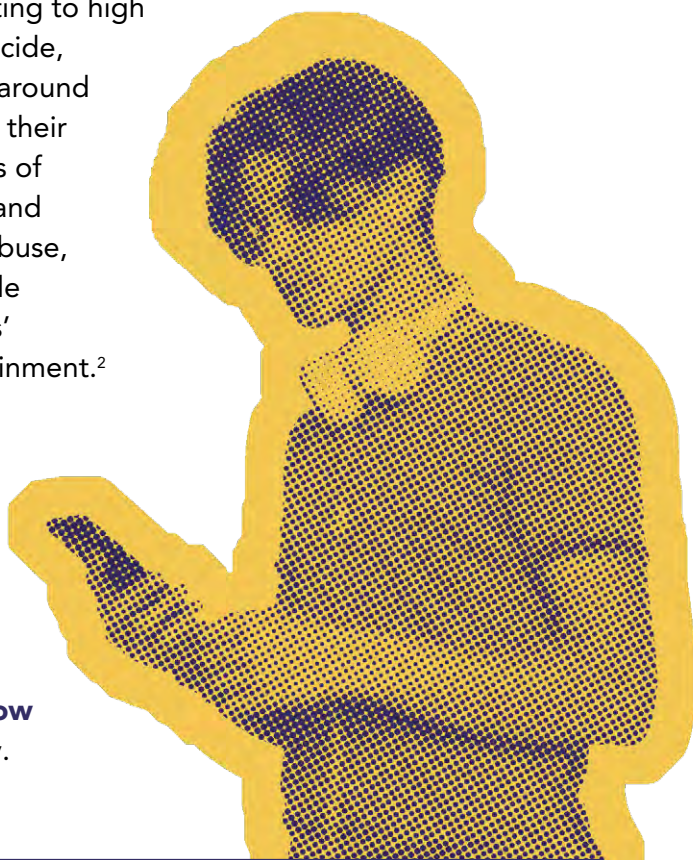


and endorsed by:



Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is endemic across society – causing immeasurable harm to women, girls and society at large.¹ At its root, VAWG is driven by harmful gender norms arising from gender inequality and intersecting structural inequalities such as those based on race, disability, wealth and social class, and sexuality. These same gender norms and systems of power are also harming men and boys in myriad ways, including fueling boys and men’s engagement with harmful misogynistic content online, contributing to high rates of male suicide, creating stigma around help-seeking for their own experiences of sexual violence and other forms of abuse, and playing a role in reducing boys’ educational attainment.²

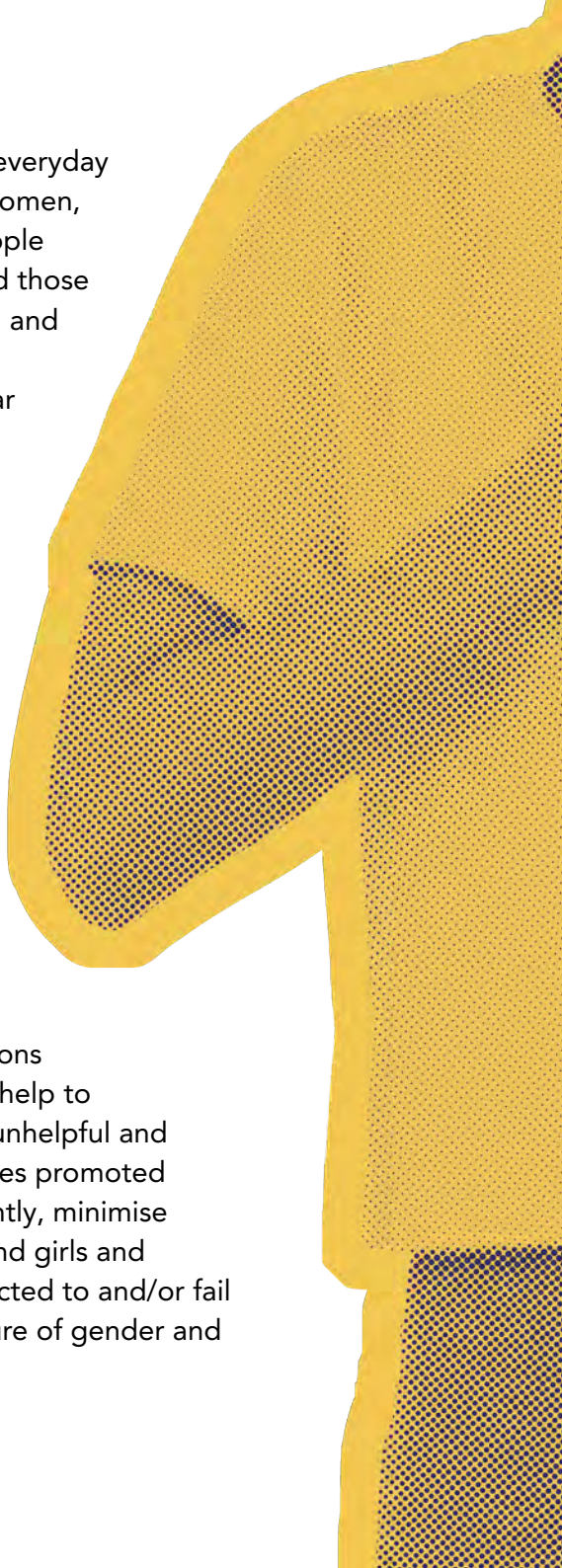
As such, work to bridge efforts to address **both** VAWG and men and boys’ wellbeing is a necessity, but **how** we do this is key.



- 1 EVAW (2026). [Snapshot VAWG-Coded](#) [includes recent data on scale of VAWG experienced by women and girls]
- 2 EVAW (2025). [New Paths to Prevention: Engaging more boys and men in ending violence against women](#)

Incredible work is carried out everyday by organisations supporting women, girls, trans and non-binary people harmed by men's violence, and those engaging and supporting men and boys. This work is intrinsically connected, but can also feel far apart. At its worst, we have seen our work pitted against one another. **We have co-created these principles in order to better bridge the gap as we stand firm in knowing that gender equality is not a zero-sum game.** People of all genders have the right to live their lives not only free from violence, but to thrive.

These principles celebrate the deep and complex work involved in effective interventions with men and boys. They also help to ensure that such work avoids unhelpful and sometimes dangerous narratives promoted by those who, even inadvertently, minimise or sideline the harm women and girls and marginalised groups are subjected to and/or fail to recognise the systemic nature of gender and intersecting inequalities.





OUR PRINCIPLES:

1 Gender transformative and feminist

Freeing us all from social norms that lead to harm is a necessity. We see this in the curtailment of women's freedoms, the endemic levels of domestic abuse and sexual violence, and forms of men's violence against other men and boys. As well as the ways that limiting and harmful notions of what it means to be a man contribute to loneliness and suicide. **Restrictive gender norms harm everybody, while feminism and gender equality benefits us all.** It is therefore essential that our work is driven by the principle and goal of equality, and that we actively work to shift the gender norms and inequities at the root of these issues.

UN definition:

Gender transformative approaches seek to challenge gender inequality by transforming harmful gender norms, roles and relations, while working towards redistributing power, resources, and services more equally.

Gender Transformative Approaches to Achieve Gender Equality and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights – Technical note. United Nations Population Funds

Feminism is 'a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.'

bell hooks (2000)
Feminism is for Everybody Pluto Press

2 Intersectional

Gender inequality is compounded by structural oppression and discrimination experienced on the basis of race, disability, wealth and social class, sexuality, sex, gender identity, trans identity, religion, immigration status and age. **These inequalities have a significant impact on people's lives, and it is essential they are not flattened in work focused on any one gender.**

For example, any meaningful work to tackle VAWG must also recognise that these intersecting inequalities, such as a woman's immigration status or race, can drive victimisation and mean some women are less likely to have access to justice and support. Work to address boys' educational attainment must also look through the lens of race, social-economic status and disability to gain any real understanding of boys' reality. Another example is the need to consider how homophobia may impact someone's experience of abuse, including men of all sexualities. Ensuring we are approaching our work through this lens of intersectionality creates space for greater solidarity, and enables us to push back against narratives which, for example, seek to blame women and feminism for issues faced by men or the weaponisation of VAWG for anti-migrant and racist agendas.³

3 EVAW, Hibiscus, Women for Refugee Women, Southall Black Sisters, Imkaan and the Latin American Women's Rights Service (2026) [Not in Our Name: How to talk about the weaponisation of violence against women and girls – a practical guide](#)

3 Systemic

Harmful gender norms are embedded and reproduced at every level of society and supported by not only individuals, but also by systems and structures which maintain the status quo – from victim-blaming practices embedded in the criminal justice system, to stark health inequalities, the unequal harms of climate crisis, the harms of the hostile immigration environment, and the monetisation of harm in our online world. We will have limited impact if we only address the perspectives and behaviour of individuals or one-off initiatives which do little to tackle institutional cultures and systems which reproduce that behaviour. It is essential that our work **recognises the systemic and structural nature of gender and intersecting inequalities and calls for systems-change.**



4 Relational, connected and accountable

It is essential to create space for difficult conversations and difference, whilst recognising the opportunities for connection that can build solidarity and enable us all to thrive – recognising that our lived realities and the issues we face are intertwined. **These difficult conversations require the need to embrace discomfort, to acknowledge the realities of harm and unequal power, and ensure the voices of those being harmed are heard.** For example, work which seeks to tackle the influence of harmful misogynistic ideas on boys and young men must also hear the voices of the women, girls and LGBTQI+ people who are the ultimate targets of those harmful ideas. In holding these difficult conversations, we must seek to reflect and be open about the dynamics of power at play, including the allocation of resources and how marginalised voices are centered/ decentred. This includes vigilance and reflection on any underlying sense of entitlement, and the importance of accountability,⁴ empathy and care⁵ – for ourselves and for others.

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- 4 Men Engage Alliance (2023) [Accountability Framework of MenEngage Alliance](#)
- 5 Equimondo (2026) [What if we led with compassion, care and accountability? Applying a caring masculinity lens to the prevention of men's violence against women and girls](#)

5

Hopeful

A different world is possible – violence is not inherent in any one group or person, nor does it need to be normalised in society. We are striving to build a positive vision of what the future could look like for us all if we were freed from harmful gender norms and expectations. We are committed to a culture of non-violence, rejecting all forms of physical, emotional, and structural harm. We are all agents of change in the work of creating that future.



6 Inclusive – honouring our universal human right to safety and dignity

People of all genders have the right to live our lives free from abuse.^{6, 7, 8} Although who we work with may differ, the universality of that right is essential to the world we want to build: no one's experiences will be ignored and we will leave no one behind.



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- 6 Home Office (2025) [Freedom from violence and abuse: men and boys explanatory note](#)
 - 7 Galop (2023) [Sexual violence: A snapshot of those harming LGBT+ people](#)
 - 8 EVAW (2026) [Snapshot VAWG-Coded](#) [includes recent data on scale of VAWG experienced by women and girls]; Women's Aid (2020) [Why data matters when talking about domestic abuse](#)

To read our guide to applying these principles to your work and to sign up to implementing them, please [click here](#).



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