

Sexual Violence Survey

Discussion paper questions

This survey was conducted with the objective of providing opportunity for Indigenous males to share their opinions in regards to the sexual violence framework for the NT. The survey questions were emailed throughout the men's network in Darwin and was presented to individuals for discussion and feedback.

The following is feedback in point form, from Indigenous men in the Darwin Region.

Problems in your community

1. What are the problems related to sexual violence in your community and in the NT that the Framework should consider?
 - The sexual violence framework should be unbiased and cover sexual abuse against both males and females, not just females.
 - There are many safe houses for women, where they can get support and statistics are recorded for crimes against females. There are no safe houses for men and no statistics are being recorded for crimes against males or male victims of sexual abuse.
 - The majority of males don't report sexual abuse, because they feel shame and there is no support services or safe places (shelters) for males to get support and healing.
 - The majority of gay men and sister-girls don't report sexual abuse, because they feel shame and discriminated against for their sexuality. There are no gay friendly support services or safe places (shelters) for gay men and sister-girls to get support and healing.
 - The language and definition must be clear. The dictionary definition of Violence is "behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill." The dictionary definition of Abuse is "Physical, sexual, or emotional maltreatment of another person." Abuse covers physical, verbal, emotional, adult sexual and child sexual abuse. Abuse may also be non-violent, whereas violence refers to a violent act. Therefore, we feel that the term "Abuse" covers more areas than Violence. Therefore, the framework should be named the Sexual Abuse Framework.
 - The term 'safe sex program' is user friendly then 'sexual violence program'. A safe sex program can discuss both safe sex and sexual abuse.
 - People need to know the law regarding sexual offences; what is the age of consent? What is rape? What is sexual abuse? What is sexual assault etc.? And what penalties apply etc.
 - Safe sex education in schools for students.
 - Safe sex education for adults.
 - Safe sex education for LGBTQ people.
 - Some people don't know what is safe sex or respectful sex. A safe sex program can educate people on both safe sex and sexual abuse.

Action area 1: Preventing sexual violence

2. What can be done to prevent sexual violence in your community and across the NT?

- Overcrowding is a serious issue for Indigenous people living in remote, regional and urban areas. There is not enough housing for Indigenous families and often there can be 10-15 people living in a three bedroom house. Children and adults are vulnerable to sexual abuse in these situations. More public housing / accommodation is need for families and young single people.
- Provide safe houses for males to escape sexual abuse and get help.
- Provide safe houses for sister-girls and gay men to escape sexual abuse and get help.
- Education programs and workshops regarding safe sex, healthy sexual relationships, and sexual abuse education for adults. Fund Indigenous organisations to design and deliver programs and workshops for Indigenous people.
- Education programs regarding safe sex, healthy sexual relationships, and sexual abuse education for youth 14-17.
- Education programs regarding protective behaviours for primary age children. Such as; The Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Council was given permission by the Western Australian Protective Behaviours Organisation to adapt the PB Program to be used with young people and families in the Kimberley Region in 2005.

3. What are the key elements of a successful sexual violence prevention program?

A sex education program should include the following themes.

- What is safe sex?
- What is healthy sexual relationships?
- What is abusive sexual relationships?
- What is the law regarding sex, age of consent, rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, pornography, age ratings, offences and penalties etc.
- What are your rights?
- Where to go to get help?
- Programs designed for people with low literacy levels adults and children.
- Programs designed by Indigenous people for Indigenous people, by Indigenous NGO's and Medical services.

4. Where should sexual violence prevention program be delivered e.g. youth detention centres, schools,

- Sex education programs should be taught in high schools and youth detention centres, adult prisons, people on parole and community organisations. Protective behaviours program should be taught in primary schools and community organisations.

- Sex education programs should be taught in towns and urban / remote communities with men's groups, women's groups and sister-girl groups, by Indigenous people and Indigenous organisations.

5. Who should deliver sexual violence prevention program?

- Government and key Indigenous organisations should form a reference group with male and female participants to meet regularly to discuss policies, strategies and programs.
- Develop an Indigenous specific sex education program that is user friendly for Indigenous workers, educators and trainers.
- Indigenous people must be involved in the development, design and delivery of programs to Indigenous people and communities. Establish an Indigenous working group consisting of Indigenous males and females to co-design the program. The program can be used in Indigenous communities and organisations, men's groups, women's groups and youth groups.
- The Government should fund Indigenous organisations to deliver programs and workshops to Indigenous people and communities.
- Organisations / faith organisations with a history of sexual abuse / child sexual abuse should not be given taxpayers funds to run programs for abusers or victims of sexual abuse.
- The majority of Indigenous people and victims do not want to use faith organisations who have a history of child sexual abuse.

6. What words should be used when we talk about people who have experienced sexual violence and people who commit sexual violence?

- Indigenous people prefer to use the word "abuser" rather than perpetrator. And many use the term victim of abuse. Some people feel shame and don't want to be called victim of sexual abuse.

Action area 2: Responding to children and young people who have experienced sexual violence

7. What can be done to support and respond to children who have experienced sexual violence in your community and across the NT?
8. What can be done to support and respond to young people who have experienced sexual violence in your community and across the NT?
9. What can be done to support and respond to children with problem and harmful sexual behaviours in your community and across the NT?
10. What can be done to support and respond to young people with problem and harmful sexual behaviours in your community and across the NT?

There needs to be Indigenous culturally appropriate services established where families, individuals and young people feel comfortable to access and discuss their issues and get support and healing.

An Indigenous Healing Centre (such as DIMS) can provide support, case-management, counselling, mentoring, education and cultural healing activities for Indigenous males to improve their social and emotional wellbeing.

The Indigenous Healing Centres as outlined in the Healing Foundation's, Healing Centre Paper should be adopted. The Healing Foundation has researched what Indigenous people want over the years and has developed evidenced based research regarding Indigenous people and healing.

The Healing Centres would have staff with qualifications in social work / counselling, cultural and Community knowledge, Administration and Community work to best service its people. The Healing Centres can receive referrals and make referrals to other services providers as required.

The NT Government needs to commit long term funding to establish and maintain Indigenous Healing Centres across the N.T.

- Indigenous Healing Centres should be owned and controlled by Indigenous people.
- The Government should fund existing Indigenous organisations to expand their operations to employ counsellors, youth workers and community service workers to provide support, case management, counselling, programs and healing activities for vulnerable people.

ACTION AREA 3: Responding to adults who have experienced sexual violence

11. What can be done to support and respond to adults who have experienced sexual violence in your community and across the NT?

- Provide a safe place which is culturally appropriate and culturally safe for males, gay men and sister-girls to get support and undertake healing activities to maintain their social and emotional wellbeing.
- Establish Indigenous Healing Centres, owned and controlled by Indigenous people (Indigenous Corporations).
- Ex-government houses should be given to Indigenous corporations in communities and towns to operate safe places, healing centres and support services for Indigenous people.
- Provide funding for healing retreats for vulnerable people, gay men and sister-girls.

ACTION AREA 4: Responding to adults who commit sexual violence

12. What can be done to respond to adults who commit sexual violence in your community and across the NT?

- Indigenous male and female leaders from Indigenous communities must be involved in the decision making processes for their community. They can assist the police, courts and government agency staff with their enquires, community courts, sentencing and programs etc.

- Mobile counselling services should be established and funded to visit remote communities when court is being held. When a person is sentenced to undertake programs/counselling, the counsellors are on the spot to provide that service. The counsellor can visit the communities regularly to see clients.
- There should be a men's centre on each community to provide programs and services for males. Visiting counsellors, educators and trainers etc, can provide programs at the centre for clients and education / healing programs for males in general.
- Establish Indigenous Healing Centres to provide support, counselling, programs and cultural healing activities for Indigenous people to improve their social and emotional wellbeing.

ACTION AREA 5: Strengthening the systems that respond to sexual violence

13. How can we strengthen the systems that respond to sexual violence in your community and across the NT?
14. What kind of changes does the justice system need to make to respond better to sexual violence?
 - Empower and employ Indigenous men and women to take lead roles in their community to engage with service providers in the design and delivery of services and programs for their people.
 - Provide funding for fulltime jobs for Indigenous men and women to work with abusers, victims, families and various government agencies to maintain community safety and healing.
 - Provide regular support, training and mentoring to frontline workers.
 - The Justice system needs to fund Indigenous organisations to provide programs and service for men. There is a lack of culturally appropriate support services and programs for men on parole to access after leaving prison.
 - 90-100 percent of the male youth in incarceration in the Northern Territory are Indigenous and over 80% of men incarcerated in the male adult prison are Indigenous men.
 - Almost 60% of the Indigenous adult men incarcerated are imprisoned for domestic violence related offences. Many are affected by intergenerational trauma or being a victim of childhood abuse, which may lead to later alcohol and other drug abuse, poor mental health and social emotional wellbeing, poor parenting, and become at a higher risk of using violence as a way to resolve conflict.
 - Young males exposed to violence and sexual abuse are at higher risk of developing poor mental health and SEWB issues, and suicide/self-harm, incarceration, homeless, using AOD and violence.
 - Indigenous men and young males engage and respond better or positively transform when they are engaged with Indigenous owned or led 'male friendly' and or specific services and programs, that are culturally appropriate, and use Aboriginal cultural healing, western therapeutic and some eastern mindfulness method to assist their recovery. There is not enough or 'inequality' of faith or investment being shown by NTG or Commonwealth Govt of resources in these types of 'male friendly' or culturally safe 'healing' and wellbeing programs

and services for men and boys. Much of the funding resources for FDV and related services and programs are taken up or dominated by larger non Indigenous organisations who receive high levels of funding yet are having limited and or disproportionately lower outcomes, and are overall failing to reduce the levels of FDV or violence in general, child abuse, offending and incarceration among Indigenous men and boys.

- Locations where men can get support and attend weekly men's groups and programs, have proven to have positive effects in regards to PTSD, alcohol and other drugs abuse and male suicide rates as well as other positive outcomes.

- There is a mix of complex existing policies, strategies and frameworks. In particular gender, there's focus on women and girls but not men and boys. The gender equity Strategy fails to deal with the question of how gender shapes men's health.

- NT has the highest Male suicide rate in Australia 25.9 per 100,000 population.

- NT ranks 8th (state/territory) for cancer prevention in Australia. 58.4% of cancer deaths are male.

- NT ranks 8th (state/territory) in Australia for life expectancy @63.2 %

- NT ranks 8th (state/territory) in Australia for Males with Heart disease 102.3% per 100,000 population.

- There is a great need for appropriate funding in the areas of Men's health, wellbeing, family and relationships and sex education programs.

- Northern Territory Government inequality between policy and funding for men's and women's services and programs. Majority go towards women's and children's programs.

- Indigenous males make up the majority of incarcerated adults in prison and youth in detention centres. There is no funding for Indigenous male specific services in the Northern Territory. Males need a safe and supportive place to go to get support, counselling and programs to heal and change behaviour. The Government needs to invest in male specific services.

- The estimated rate of imprisonment of adults in the Northern Territory is significantly higher than the national rate, with an estimated 882 adults per 100,000 in the Territory compared to the national rate of 191 adults per 100,000. On a daily average there were 1,361 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in custody that year, which means Indigenous prisoners represented 85% of the total prison population in the NT that year (Northern Territory Department of Correctional Services 2016). With research 2010 research indicating a cost of \$75,468 spent for every prisoner in Australia in 2008-09, the costs of incarcerating 1,361 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men in prison could exceed \$100 million.

The cost of funding a men's service in Darwin to provide prevention and healing programs is \$500,000 p.a; or twenty men's services throughout the Northern Territory would cost \$10,000,000 p.a. Providing prevention and healing programs for men is far cheaper, and would save the Government millions of dollars in the future.