TECHNICAL PAPER

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Faith communities supporting healthy family relationships: a Participatory Action Research project with the Multifaith Advisory Group

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This technical paper summarises the current state of knowledge about how faith communities, and in particular how faith leaders, can best respond to and prevent family violence and violence against women. It has been developed as part of the first phase of the Faith Communities Supporting Health Family Relationships Participatory Action Research Project with the Multifaith Advisory Group.

1. Introduction

As in other settings, violence is prevalent in Australia – two in five Australian adults have experienced physical and/ or sexual violence since the age of 15 years (ABS, 2017a). More Australian men report having experienced an incident of violence in their lifetime, and in the last 12 months, compared with Australian women. Men are more likely than women to report physical violence; violence at a place of entertainment or recreation, or on the street; and violence perpetrated by a stranger. However, women are more likely than men to report experiencing sexual violence and/ or emotional abuse; violence by an intimate partner or someone they know; violence in their home; experiencing violence before the age of 15 years; witnessing violence before the age of 15; sexual harassment and stalking (ABS, 2017a). Violence that is experienced in the home and perpetrated by a partner, is more likely to be experienced repeatedly and over a protracted period of time, than violence perpetrated by a stranger in a public place.

Women are almost four times more likely than men to be hospitalised after being assaulted by their current or former partner (AIHW, 2018). On average, in Australia, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner (AIC, 2017). Intimate partner violence is the greatest risk to the health of women aged 25-44 years (AIFW, 2018), and the largest single driver of homelessness (AIFW, 2017). The vast majority of perpetrators of violence in Australia, whether against men or women, are men (ABS, 2017a).

At all levels of government, the impacts of violence on Australians' human rights, health, social and economic wellbeing are increasingly recognised, with greater investment in response and prevention. The very clear evidence that violence is a highly gendered phenomenon means that this investment has largely focused on preventing, and responding to, **violence against women** and **family violence**.

Textbox 1. Definition of terms in relation to violence

Violence against women	Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or the arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1993).
Gender-based violence	Violence that is specifically directed at a person because of their gender, and derived from unequal power relationships, such as violence that is perpetrated against a woman because she is a woman or violence that affects women disproportionately.
Intimate partner violence	Behaviour within the context of an intimate relationship (such as a marriage, domestic partnership, romantic and/or sexual relationship), current or past, that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm to those in the relationship. It includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, financial and spiritual forms of abuse. It is often referred to as 'domestic violence'. This is the most common form of violence against women and the most common form of gender-based violence.
Family violence	Violence perpetrated by one (or more) member(s) of a family against another. Family violence includes intimate partner or domestic violence, as well as elder abuse, violence perpetrated by in-laws, violence perpetrated by adolescents against siblings or parents.

National policy responses to violence against women and family violence include The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (Council of Australian Governments, 2011), the Third Action Plan 2016-2019 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016) and Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children (Our Watch, ANROWS & VicHealth 2015). These documents all recognise the gendered drivers of violence; that violence against women and family violence occur in, and should be priorities for, all Australian communities; and the important role of prevention and response efforts in diverse settings, including faith communities.

Faith communities and faith settings are an important environment where social beliefs and norms are shaped (Durkheim, 2008). Such beliefs and norms have the potential to promote violence against women and family violence or conversely to protect against violence (Flood & Pease, 2006; VicHealth, 2007). Faith can be a "means of transformation and meaning-making" or "it can enable and perpetuate the cycle of abuse" (Horne & Levitt, 2004, p. 84). Indeed, the potential for faith settings and their leadership to both cause and prevent violence is well established in the literature (Ghafournia, 2017; Horne & Levitt, 2004; Magner et al. 2015; Ringel & Bina, 2007; Ting & Panchanadeswaran, 2016).

In order to contribute to efforts in Victoria to build the capacity of faith leaders to prevent and respond to violence against women and family violence, in this technical paper we synthesise the current and emerging evidence about:
- Causes, and contributing factors, of violence against women and family violence in faith settings
- Responses to violence against women and family violence in faith settings
- Primary prevention of violence against women and family violence in faith settings
- Models for building capacity for, and sustainability of, change in relation to violence against women and family violence in faith settings.

Based on this synthesis of the evidence, we also make recommendations about key elements (or principles) of effective approaches for response to, and primary prevention of, violence against women and family violence in faith settings; of effective approaches to fostering sustained capacity to address violence against women and family violence in faith settings; and provide a list of resources and references relevant to the field.

1.1 The Victorian Context

Victoria is not immune to the impact of family violence and violence against women. In the last national prevalence study (the Personal Safety Survey), the proportion of Victorian women reporting that they had experienced violence in the last 12 months (4.6%), was very similar to the proportion of women nationally (4.7%). Victorian women were more likely to report emotional abuse in the last 12 months (5.3%) than were women nationally (4.8%), and Victorian women were also more likely to report sexual harassment in the last 12 months (20% compared with 17%), than women nationally. Victorian women report experiencing partner violence in the previous 12 months at very similar levels to women across the country (ABS, 2017a).

The Victorian Government established a Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2015, with the Premier recognising the severity of the family violence 'law and order emergency'. The wide-ranging Commission made 227 recommendations to the Victorian Government, who committed to implementing them all. In addition to making an unprecedented investment of funding into the prevention of and response to family violence, and violence against women more broadly, the government has supported development of a range of relevant plans and policies, including the 10-year plan to end family violence, Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change; the whole of government framework for prevention, *Free from Violence: Victoria's Strategy to Prevent Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women; and Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy.*

In this paper we recognise all the behavioural acts included in the (Victorian) Family Violence Protection Act (2008) as family violence (see below). We recognise 'family member' to include those persons included in the Act, but also include the 'family-like or carer relationships' included in *Safe and Strong*. We note that, in describing violence against women, Safe and Strong includes "all forms of violence that women experience (including physical, sexual, emotional, cultural/spiritual, financial and others) that are gender-based" (p.2).

Textbox 2: Legal definition of family violence in Victoria

Family Violence Protection Act (2008)	What is meant by family?
The Victorian **Family Violence Protection Act 2008** defines family violence as: a) Behaviour by a person towards a family member of that person if that behaviour • is physically or sexually abusive; or • is emotionally or psychologically abusive; or • is economically abusive; or • is threatening; or • is coercive; or • in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or well-being of that family member or another person; or b) Behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness or otherwise be exposed to the effects of behaviour referred to in paragraph a).	For the purposes of this Act, a family member, in relation to a person (a relevant person), means a. person who is, or has been, the relevant person's spouse or domestic partner; or b. a person who has, or has had, an intimate personal relationship with the relevant person; or c. a person who is, or has been, a relative of the relevant person; or d. a child who normally or regularly resides with the relevant person or has previously resided with the relevant person on a normal or regular basis; or e. a child of a person who has, or has had, an intimate personal relationship with the relevant person.

1.2 Background to the PAR Project

Faith communities play an important role in many Victorians' lives, with residents in the state adhering to a wide range of religions and having affiliation with diverse faith communities and religious organisations. The majority of Victorians (58.5%) indicated a religious affiliation at the last census, with 47.9% of Victorians reporting affiliation with Christianity and 10.6% of Victorians reporting affiliation with a religion other than Christianity. This is the highest proportion of adherents to a religion other than Christianity in the country, and includes members of the Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, Baha'i and other faith communities (ABS, 2017b, see table below for the 20 religions most commonly reported by Victorians at the last census). Victoria also has a highest proportion of residents born overseas of any Australian state, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics notes that people born overseas are more likely to report adhering to a religion than the Australian-born population (ABS, 2017b).

Faith leaders provide guidance and support to members of their communities about a range of moral, social, ethical and personal issues. Faith leaders may provide members of their communities with advice about the role and position of women and men in families and communities; about desirable attributes and behaviours for women and men;

and about interpersonal relationships, problem solving, decision making and discipline. Faith leaders and faith communities may provide invaluable support to women experiencing violence (Allen & Wozniak 2010), with research noting that religious leaders are one of the most common sources of support sought by women who have experienced intimate partner violence (Cox, 2015). However, research has also demonstrated that faith communities may present barriers to women seeking help and condone the use of violence against women (Ghafournia, 2017; Westenberg, 2017), and that women's faith-based beliefs may lead them to endure violence for extended periods and to prioritise preserving their marriage (particularly), or other family relationships, above their own safety (Fowler et al. 2011; Ghafournia, 2017; Wendt 2008). It should be noted that evidence about women's help seeking and help receiving does not necessarily apply equally across different faith traditions.

Data are not available to assess whether the prevalence of violence against women is different in faith communities than in the general population (Popescu et al. 2009), though both internationally and in Australia, there is evidence to suggest that under-reporting may be particularly high in faith communities because of a culture of silence around conflict within families (Cares & Cusick, 2012; Ringel & Bina, 2007). While the methodology used cannot establish

Table 1: Religion in Victoria

Rank	Religion	% of Victorian population
1	(Western/Roman) Catholic	23.0
2	Anglican	9.0
3	Uniting Church	3.4
4	Islam	3.3
5	Buddhism	3.1
6	Greek Orthodox	2.7
7	Christian, nfd	2.5
8	Hinduism	2.3
9	Presbyterian	1.9
10	Baptist	1.3
11	Sikhism	0.9
12	Pentecostal, nfd	0.8
13	Judaism	0.7
14	Lutheran	0.5
15	Macedonian Orthodox	0.3
16	Jehovah's Witnesses	0.2
17	Serbian Orthodox	0.2
18	Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints	0.2
19	Seventh Day Adventist	0.2
20	Salvation Army	0.2

Source: ABS, 2017b. *Note that the majority of Christian religions have declined in size as a proportion of the population between 2011-2016, with the religions where there has been the fastest rate of growth being Sikhism (79.2%) and Hinduism (62.3%).*

generalisable prevalence, in one of the few survey studies of members of faith communities, Aune and Barnes (2018) found in their work with Christian churches in Cumbria, UK, that 57% of women and 17% of men who responded to their survey had ever experienced domestic abuse. Despite this, research in a number of contexts has demonstrated that faith leaders significantly underestimate the level of family violence and violence against women in their congregations (Sojourners & IMA World Health, 2014).

The Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence noted that faith communities represented an important setting through which to reach and engage people with education about family violence and prevention messages, and to connect women experiencing violence with appropriate supports. Faith leaders were noted to be highly influential and authoritative figures, who could potentially make a

major positive contribution to the prevention of violence against women, but that the "training for faith leaders in recognising and responding to family violence is inadequate" (State of Victoria, 2016, p. 137). In response, the Royal Commission made two recommendations specifically relevant to faith leaders:

- **Recommendation 163:** The Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Multifaith Advisory Group and the Victorian Multicultural Commission, in partnership with expert family violence practitioners, develop training packages on family violence and sexual assault for faith leaders and communities. These packages should build on existing work, reflect leading practice in responding to family violence, and include information about referral pathways for victims and perpetrators. The training should be suitable for inclusion as part of the pre-service learning in various faith training institutes, as well as the ongoing professional development of faith leaders.

- **Recommendation 165:** Faith leaders and communities establish processes for examining the ways in which they currently respond to family violence in their communities and whether any of their practices operate as deterrents to the prevention or reporting of, or recovery from, family violence or are used by perpetrators to excuse or condone abusive behaviour.

The Multifaith Advisory Group, in partnership with the Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion (MASC) Division within the Victorian Government's Department of Premier and Cabinet, subsequently established *Faith Communities supporting healthy family relationships: a Participatory Action Research project.* The first phase of this project has involved a scoping review of the (peer-reviewed and grey) literature, and consultations with a range of stakeholders and leaders from different religious communities, to identify evidence about best, promising and emerging practices related to building the capacity of faith-based organisations, faith communities and, especially, faith leaders to effectively prevent and respond to family violence and violence against women. This Technical Paper presents an overview of findings from this process, and is intended to provide a synthesis of the current state of knowledge in this field. This phase of the project will also lead to production of an Evidence Guide – a plain language document intended for a wide audience, which will draw on the Technical Paper to distil key principles for effective work to prevent and respond to violence against women and family violence in faith settings. The second phase of the Participatory Action Research Project will see five pilot projects with different faith communities supported to use the Evidence Guide to create leadership capacity building initiatives.

Faith leader	Few sources specifically define 'faith leader', with the meaning of the term often being assumed. Across the literature there is consensus that faith leaders play an influential role in faith communities, and are recognised by community members as a source of authority, guidance, inspiration and leadership of faith institutions. In this paper, we understand faith leaders to include those in formally recognised roles of religious leadership who provide an authoritative perspective on religious texts, law and organisation, and lead community worship. We also understand faith leaders to include lay people of faith recognised as playing a leadership role by their faith communities.
Faith community	In this paper, we understand faith communities to be a "a single group of regular congregants focused around a meeting place, a religious denomination, or a collective term for people who profess widely varying beliefs and practices but are linked by a common identification as believers" (Karam et al, 2015, p.1).
Faith-based organisation	In this paper, we associate a faith-based organisation with one or more of the following: "affiliation with a religious body; a mission statement with explicit reference to religious values; financial support from religious sources; and/or a governance structure where selection of board members or staff is based on religious beliefs or affiliation and/or decision-making processes based on religious values" (Ferris 2005, p. 312).
Faith setting	When we refer to faith settings, this is inclusive of places of worship, faith communities and faith-based organisations (including, but not limited to facilities owned and operated by religious communities such as schools).

1.2.1 The continuum of prevention of violence against women and family violence

The two Royal Commission recommendations specifically relevant to faith leaders address both the primary prevention of family violence, and response to family violence and sexual assault. The specifications of the Participatory Action Research project, as developed by the Multifaith Advisory Group and the MASC Division, emphasise the need to synthesise the evidence relevant to prevention of and response to violence against women and family violence. The way the terms 'prevention' and 'response' are used and understood in this paper is based on the Continuum of Prevention approach outlined in *Free from Violence*, and as illustrated in the table on the following page.

In this paper we also draw on Victoria's 10 year plan Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change in recognising that a comprehensive secondary and tertiary response to violence includes provision of support for women and their children at all stages including early intervention, crisis support and through to recovery.

The continuum of prevention	Primary prevention	Secondary prevention (early intervention)	Tertiary prevention (response)
What it is	Preventing violence before it occurs	Intervening early to prevent recurring violence	Preventing long-term harm from violence
What we need to focus on	The population as a whole, and the range of settings in which inequalities and violent behaviour are shaped, to address factors that lead to or condone violence	Individuals and groups with a high risk of perpetrating or being a victim of violence, and the factors contributing to that risk	Those affected by violence, and on building systemic, organisational and community capacity to respond to them and hold perpetrators to account
What we need to do	Build social structures, norms and practices that prevent violence from happening or reduce the risk of it occurring	Challenge the impact that exposure to the drivers and reinforcing factors of violence has had on individuals	Contribute to social norms against violence by demonstrating accountability for violence and women's right to support and recovery.

Source: *Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women, p. 3*

1.3 Methodology for collating evidence

In order to identify best, promising and emerging practices for building faith leaders' and faith communities' capacity to prevent and respond to family violence and violence against women we:

a. Conducted an exhaustive search of the peer-reviewed literature published between 2000-2018
b. Collated relevant state-based, national and international grey literature
c. Consulted with key Victorian stakeholders with current or recent experience working with faith leaders and faith communities in relation to family violence and violence against women.

Peer-reviewed literature

Relevant peer-reviewed literature (Jan 2000 – Dec 2018) was identified through a search of a number of academic databases including:
• Medline (Ovid)
• Academic Search Complete
• CINAHL Complete
• Family & Society Studies Worldwide
• Index to Jewish Periodicals
• Regional Business News
• SocINDEX with Full Text.

Key words that were used in the search, using Boolean search methods, included faith, religion, faith-based leader (church leader, priest, pastor, clergy, imam, rabbi, pandit, guru), place of worship (church, mosque, synagogue, temple, congregation), AND violence against women (domestic violence, DV, intimate partner violence, family violence, spouse battering), AND one of prevention (health promotion, training, effective counselling) or response (women's group, shelter, referral, battering group, batterer intervention). The search resulted in 2150 articles. After removing duplicates and title screening, we included 218 studies for abstract review. Abstract screening identified 103 articles eligible for full text review. The articles reviewed included papers from a broad range of disciplines and perspectives, including social work, women's studies, psychology, theology and the development sector.

Grey literature

A number of strategies were used to identify grey literature appropriate for inclusion in this paper. The reference lists of the peer-reviewed literature identified were examined for relevant documents in the grey literature (such as project reports, project evaluations, policy documents, public statements, media sources and websites). Other documents were identified through a search of the websites of faith-based organisations known to be engaged in response to and prevention of violence against women and family violence, and of the websites of organisations that have funded interventions aiming to build the capacity of faith leaders to respond to and prevent family violence and/or violence against women. Some of these websites and organisations were suggested by stakeholders during consultations (see below), and others were known to the research team because of work they have conducted in recent years particularly in Victoria. Documents that provided evidence about the effectiveness of interventions (such as project evaluation reports) were prioritised for inclusion in this paper.

Consultations with stakeholders

Given the known limitations of the published literature relevant to the Participatory Action Research project, we also undertook consultations with members of the Multifaith Advisory Group Working Group on Family Violence and other key stakeholders, to identify examples of 'promising practice' based on their experiential knowledge of efforts to engage faith leaders in preventing and responding to family violence and violence against women. The practice based wisdom elicited during these consultations has been used by the research team to conduct a 'reality check' on claims or assumptions made in the literature. It is anticipated that such consultations will be ongoing throughout the second phase of the Participatory Action Research project, including through ongoing meetings of the Working Group, as a way of continuing to build knowledge in the sector, to test assumptions underpinning design of the pilot initiatives, and to ensure ongoing feedback about developments in the sector that may affect implementation of the pilot projects.

Assessing quality of evidence

The bulk of the peer-reviewed literature identified is from the United States of America, and is primarily based on work with Christian communities, along with smaller bodies of work with Muslim and Jewish communities. There is limited peer-reviewed literature available based on the Australian context. The grey literature is more diverse, includes work with a broader range of faith communities and, in addition to work in the USA and UK, includes initiatives with faith leaders in Australia and in low- and middle-income countries (including source countries for migrant and refugee communities now living in Australia). However, even in the grey literature, there is very little published work focusing on the Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Orthodox Christian communities or other smaller faith communities relevant to Victoria.

The published evidence available is almost entirely qualitative and is of variable quality. High quality qualitative research provides the reader with sufficient information about the context in which the study was conducted, the approach taken to recruitment of participants, and the processes used in the collection and analysis of data, for the reader to be able to assess the credibility and transferability of claims made. Many of the identified studies did not provide this information, or were based on data collected with a very small number of people, limiting our ability to assess whether initiatives could be described as 'good practice'. While our review did find a considerable number of resources that have been developed specifically for use with faith leaders, it was striking how few of these have been evaluated and in how few instances the organisations who developed them have documented how they are being used and with whom. The design of some of these unevaluated resources was based on research, and others were based on the expertise of a range of stakeholders (particularly services working in response to domestic violence) and then adapted to the faith setting.

Given limitations in the literature it was difficult at times to definitively state that a practice was 'best' or 'good' practice, and therefore we have also considered examples of 'promising practice' when making recommendations. Many of these were identified in the grey literature or during stakeholder consultations, where key information about how a practice worked in a particular place, what made it work, and some form of evidence linking the practice to outcomes was available (Compassion Capital Fund, nd). In some instances even this information was not available (for example, with resources and materials on the websites of some of the most well-known organisations working in this field). The MAG Working Group provided useful guidance about additional criteria for 'promising practice' (see Textbox 5), which captured some the characteristics of these well known, widely used and long-lived materials.

What constitutes a 'promising' practice?

Promising practices include strategies, activities or approaches where there is some research, evaluation or other data to suggest effectiveness, but where there is not enough evidence to form strong conclusions. As assessing an activity or approach as promising can be contested, the MAG Working Group identified factors that they thought could be used in assessing evidence of effectiveness. These included:

- Availability of any form of evaluation data
- Quality of design and implementation, including whether intervention/activity was based on a formal needs assessment
- Communication with the target audience
- Supports and resources available
- Longevity of the intervention/activity and growth
- Skills of the practitioners involved
- Clear documentation of where and with whom the initiative has taken place, so assessments can be made about transferable lessons
- Reach within the faith community
- Evidence of adaptation or replication of the intervention/activity by others.

2. Synthesis of current evidence

This section of the technical paper summarises the peer-reviewed and grey literature about causes, and contributing factors, of violence against women and family violence in faith settings; the current state of evidence about primary prevention of violence against women and family violence in faith settings; and what is known about responses to violence against women and family violence in faith settings. Literature that examines efforts to build capacity for, and sustain, change in relation to violence against women and family violence is summarised in the final part of this section.

2.1. Evidence about causes (drivers) and contributing (reinforcing) factors of violence against women and family violence in faith settings

There are a range of contextual and structural determinants that underpin violence against women. Given that faith is an integral and integrated part of many women's lives (Ghafournia, 2017; Wendt, 2008), it is clear that faith and faith settings can have an major influence on women's experiences of violence, of help seeking and receiving, and of healing. Understanding many women's lived experiences of violence requires recognition of the "specific religious contours both to the abuse that is suffered by people of

deep faith and to the healing journey" (Nason-Clark, 2009, p. 389). Such contours vary between faiths, and between faith-based communities and their leadership. Drawing on an intersectional feminist perspective, in this paper we consider violence against women and family violence through a gendered lens.

However, an intersectional approach acknowledges that in addition to gender, women's experiences of violence are mediated by their experiences of race, disability, sexuality and class, as well as interlocking economic, social, political and environmental factors (Crenshaw, 1989; Sokoloff, 2008). The various faith communities in Victoria are positioned differently within specific social, economic, political, historical and cultural contexts, affecting the specific religious contours of abuse and healing referred to by Nason-Clark (2009) above. Of particular relevance here is reflection on the complex historical and current relationship between various faith traditions and institutions, and Indigenous communities in Victoria and more widely across Australia.

Literature on causes, and contributing factors, of violence against women and family violence in faith settings can generally be divided into two main bodies of work. The first focuses on the perspectives of women – exploring women's attitudes to family violence and violence against women in faith settings and women's perceptions of faith-leaders' and communities' responses to violence (Butler, 2001; Ghafournia, 2017; Hassouneh-Phillips, 2003; Ringel

& Bina, 2007; Ting & Panchanadeswaran, 2016). Many of these studies also explore the positive role of spirituality in women's lives. The second group of studies focuses on faith leaders' and faith-based organisations' perceptions of violence and their responses to violence (Brade & Bent-Goodley, 2009; Choi & Cramer, 2016; Dyer, 2010; Levitt & Ware, 2006a; 2006b; Nason-Clark, 2000; Tedder & Smith, 2009). Some studies we identified considered service providers' perspectives on violence within faith settings (Band-Winterstein & Freund, 2018). Men's perspectives on violence within faith settings were rarely sought (Bettman, 2009; Wendt, 2008), and evidence regarding men's attitudes toward violence in faith settings was generally mediated by the testimony of women and faith leaders.

2.1.1 A historic failure to engage with faith leaders and communities

Secular strategies and policies which seek to address violence against women and family violence have often framed the faith sector as a cause of violence, rather than acknowledging the role that faith leaders and faith settings can and do play in responding to and preventing violence (le Roux, 2015; Nason-Clark, 2009). The failure to recognise and engage with faith communities may perpetuate an unhelpful cycle whereby faith leaders and communities are not supported to address violence against women and family violence, are therefore less likely to have the capacity to adopt contemporary actions on violence, and as a result are more likely to remain 'part of the problem'. The distrust between secular and faith-based institutions exists in both directions, as many faith leaders are wary of the state's involvement in their affairs (King, 2009; le Roux, 2015; Ringel & Bina, 2007). The relationship between secular and faith-based institutions is complex and requires acknowledgment that faith-based organisations and faith communities have their own objectives and that these may differ from secular institutions (James, 2011). Such tension demands careful consideration, and effective collaboration between faith and secular sector organisations must be based on ongoing dialogue (James, 2011; le Roux et al., 2016; Magner et al., 2015).

The failure to meaningfully engage faith leaders and communities can be considered as a contributing factor for violence against women and family violence in faith settings. In a scoping exercise conducted for the UK Department for International Development (DFID), le Roux (2015) consulted high-level staff from faith-based organisations and gender-based violence experts concerning the faith sector's role in prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. Participants reported that the faith sector's potential to have a positive impact upon gender-based violence policies

and interventions had not been realised. Those consulted considered that where policy-makers had engaged with the faith sector, they tended to 'use' faith leaders and faith-based organisations as a channel to access communities rather than engaging with communities collaboratively. Participants warned that such engagement was often tokenistic or a form of policy rubberstamping. A failure to meaningfully engage with faith, faith leaders and faith communities suggests that policy makers and the secular sector lack understanding of the role that faith and faith communities play in peoples' lives, which le Roux (2015, p.58) describes as being based on "religious illiteracy".

Policy makers' lack of understanding of the importance of faith in many women's lives also means that legal and secular definitions of family violence and violence against women often overlook spiritual abuse. Spiritual abuse can be defined as harm caused to a woman's spiritual life, "diminishing her worth, limiting her or forcing her to go against her spiritual conscience, leading to a decrease in her spiritual self-image, guilt feelings or disruption of the transcendental relation" (Dehan & Levi, 2009, p. 1303). Women from diverse faith communities, in a range of countries including Australia, have reported spiritual abuse (AMWCHR, 2015; Band-Winterstein & Freund, 2018; Bent-Goodley & Fowler, 2006; Dehan & Levi, 2009; Hassouneh-Phillips, 2003; Knickmeyer et al. 2003; Vaughan et al. 2016) and that secular services often struggle to understand this dimension of violence. Service providers' limited knowledge about the place and role of faith in many women's lives may therefore inadvertently reinforce experiences of violence in faith settings.

Conversely, in some instances failure to engage with faith leaders and faith communities means that leaders may have limited knowledge (be 'illiterate') in relation to legal or other accepted definitions of family violence and violence against women (Gengler & Lee, 2001; King, 2009). While this can lead to faith leaders condoning or justifying practices that would be considered family violence and violence against women, this can also result in faith leaders being unable to describe positive work they are doing in terminology that will be recognised by the secular sector (le Roux, 2015), meaning such work is unrecognised and unevaluated.

2.1.2 Interpretation of faith teachings, scripture and language

Sacred texts and teachings are important in almost all faith communities. There is a sizeable literature exploring the connection between religious texts, stories and scripture, and violence against women, with such work often undertaken by researcher theologians (King, 2009;

Westenberg, 2017; Winkelmann, 2004). Particular readings of sacred texts may be used by community members to justify violence against women (Band-Winterstein & Freund, 2018; Levitt & Ware, 2006b); are used by religious men who use violence against women to defend their behaviour (Douki et al. 2003; El Matrah et al. 2011; Islam et al. 2018; le Roux, 2016; Wendt, 2008; Winkelmann, 2004); inform faith leaders' and communities' responses to violence (Dyer, 2010; le Roux, 2016); and are drawn on by religious women to shape their own understandings of their experiences of violence (Knickmeyer et al. 2016; Winkelmann, 2004).

In work based on the Australian context, Leonie Westenberg (2017) examined several Christian churches' efforts to address violence against women in Victoria, including the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne's *Preventing Violence Against Women* document (prepared with VicHealth), the Catholic Bishops' Council in Victoria parish resource kits and pastoral statement on violence against women, and the Hillsong Church's domestic violence programs and resources. Although she commends the motivations behind these programs that seek to respond to violence, Westenberg raises concerns that the programs tend to focus on secondary and tertiary prevention of violence (such as outlining practical measures that church community members can take to identify and respond to abuse). Westenberg suggests that these resources "fail to address possible causal issues that relate to theological language concerning marriage … [and lack] analysis of possible causal factors in church structure, language and practice" (2017, p.3). This includes a lack of analysis of the impact of the language of submission and male headship (Westenberg, 2017).

Researchers in a range of other settings have highlighted the relationship between religious language and texts, and violent practices. Le Roux et al. (2016) cite research conducted by Scott and Batchelor for Tearfund in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which found where men believed that sacred texts command a man discipline his wife, instances of sexual violence increased. It is important to note that in this study, while many men in participating communities felt their sacred texts state punishment of a wife was acceptable and that a married woman has no control over her own body, faith leaders were even more likely to hold these views, almost universally doing so (le Roux et al. 2016, p.28). In North American contexts researchers have found that, in many instances, when women experiencing partner violence seek help from faith leaders, their leaders draw on sacred texts to counsel them to uphold the covenant of marriage rather than address the woman's safety (Levitt & Ware, 2006a; Manetta et al. 2003). In a study with Jewish, Christian and Islamic leaders in Memphis, Levitt and Ware found some faith

leaders believing that equality in relationships should be taught, and that the "prescription of submission was based on a misinterpretation of scripture" (2006b, p.1175); however, others cited scripture underpinning their belief in the doctrine of wifely submission. This second group of leaders recognised that men could misuse the power allotted to them as heads of the family, but felt that this risk could be managed through compassionate leadership and adherence to distinct gender roles. While this group of leaders suggested any inequalities arising from rigid gender roles would not be abused if men practiced righteous leadership, several did report their concern that members of their community could misinterpret scripture or manipulate sacred text to defend the use of violence (Levitt & Ware, 2006b). Other authors note that men may use their knowledge of sacred texts against women (Band-Winterstein & Freund, 2018; Fowler et al. 2016).

Particular constructions of texts may be internalised by women as well as men, which can have an impact upon women's risk of harm. Religious women who have experienced violence often evoke faith teachings, such as the primacy of forgiveness, to explain their experiences and their decision to remain in or return to an unsafe relationship with a violent partner (McMullin et al. 2012; Nason-Clark, 2009; Popescu et al., 2009; Winkelmann, 2004). Researchers working in the North American context have found that Christian and Jewish women describe their experiences in the language of religion (Winkelmann, 2004), as have researchers working with Muslim women (Hassouneh-Phillips 2001).

Notwithstanding this, the literature confirmed that the relationship between scripture and violence can be protective. Texts can be challenged and re-interpreted to re-frame violence and assist healing (Parsitau, 2011; Rogers, 2003). Many faith leaders and community members invoke scripture to condemn practices of violence against women and family violence. Levitt and Ware (2006b) emphasise the important role that interpretation plays, noting that "it was striking that faith leaders on both sides of the [wifely] submission argument cited scripture as the foundation for their exegesis, often referring to the same text, pointing to the centrality of the interpretive process" (p.1180). Other studies reported that women and faith leaders experience confusion and dissonance when they identify tensions or ambivalence within scriptures and faith teachings (Band-Winterstein & Freund, 2018).

Studies also documented examples of faith leaders actively promoting the principle of egalitarianism and contextualising their readings of scripture by historicising patriarchal elements (Levitt & Ware, 2006b). For example, many Islamic feminists believe that patriarchal cultural

practices distort the proper interpretation of the Qur'an. From this perspective, the original sources of Islam are not inherently patriarchal, rather patriarchal precepts stem from historical social norms of the time (Ayyub, 2000; Chaudhry & Ahmed, 2016; King, 2009). Viewed contextually, the beliefs and norms which facilitate gender oppression may be rejected as misrepresentations, while religious teachings are preserved. Ghafournia's (2017) research in Australia found that some Muslim women mobilise principles of Islamic feminism, and reject the assertion that Islam is inherently patriarchal. The "male monopoly" (Ghafournia, 2017, p. 149) on the interpretation of a range of faith-based texts has been identified as playing a role in their patriarchal construction (Band-Winterstein & Freund, 2018; le Roux, 2015).

Many authors found that both faith leaders and women sought to disassociate men's violent behaviour from religious scripture (Choi & Cramer, 2016; Ghafournia, 2017; Levitt & Ware, 2000a). Ting and Panchanadeswaran's (2016) research explored the interface between faith and violence in the lives of migrant African women in the United States through a small qualitative study with Christian and Muslim women. They found that although women felt unsupported by their faith leaders and faith communities, many were reticent to attribute blame for violence to their faith or sacred texts. They instead found strength in religious teachings and viewed approval of violence in scripture to be a misinterpretation. These women preferred to place the responsibility for violence on men as individuals or on patriarchal values, as distinct from their faith or particular faith teachings. In the words of one participant, "God did not put me in this situation. My husband, he puts me in the situation. Other men, they put women in this situation. God, God is fair. Men are the ones who want power" (Ting & Panchanadeswaran, 2016, p. 43).

While particular interpretations of elements of sacred texts can be a contributor to violence, it is important to recognise that there are many other elements of sacred texts that women draw on as a source of solace and strength during and after experiences of violence. Researchers have documented the ways that religious women experiencing violence draw resilience, and a sense of self, from their faith and faith teachings in a range of settings, and across diverse faith communities (Bradley, 2010; El-Khoury et al., 2004; Ghafournia, 2017; Horne & Levitt, 2003; Vaughan et al. 2016; Wendt, 2008). McMullin (2018) notes that in some instances violence response service providers may have "an ideological bias against working with religious congregations and their leaders", with staff unaware that faith and faith communities are essential resources for religious women – "some community responders who expressed an openness to 'spirituality' do not understand

that for women who are part of a local faith community, spirituality is much more than an abstract concept. For devoutly religious women, spirituality relates directly to their local congregations and to their religious leaders" (p.23).

2.1.3 Structured gender inequality

Patriarchal constructs which run through social, economic and cultural structures, are key to understanding violence against women (Bettman, 2009; Hage, 2000). *Change the Story* (Our Watch, ANROWS &VicHealth, 2015) highlights four gendered drivers of violence: belief systems that condone violence against women; men's control over decision making; rigid gender roles; and an acceptance of aggression and disrespect towards women in male peer groups. Religious institutions have played a role constructing and upholding gender norms that contribute to these gendered drivers of violence (Hage, 2000), in part based on patriarchal interpretations of sacred texts as discussed above. Strict gender roles based on male authority and female submission are often prescribed by faith-based belief systems, texts and teachings (le Roux et al., 2016). As well as potentially facilitating violence, adherence to strict gender roles can also result in women remaining in violent relationships for long periods of time. Levitt and Ware's (2006b) research found that by "structuring differences in power as a religious duty, women may be left vulnerable to abuse as they believe they are unable to end their marriage if they wish to maintain their faith" (p.1186).

Institutionalised gendered hierarchy within faith-based institutions may also reinforce gendered drivers of violence (le Roux, 2015; Levitt & Ware, 2006b). In her consideration of Christian churches' response to family violence in Victoria, Westenberg (2017) suggests that "the tendency [for men to control decision making] exhibited in church structures can reflect and perpetuate an imbalance of power" within relationships (p.3). As Murdolo and Quiazon (2016) observe "valid questions have been asked about the extent to which religions institutions, which have historically excluded women from leadership positions and roles, and which concern themselves via forceful and public mechanisms with the regulation of women's sexuality, reproduction and conjugal roles and the reinforcement of traditional family relationships, might become effective conduits for change in gender relations" (p.25). This resonates with findings from the evaluation of the Melbourne-based Northern Interfaith Respectful Relationships project, which found the patriarchal paradigms of many faith traditions, and the complexity of addressing gender issues in an interfaith context, to be two major challenges to building capacity for primary prevention in the faith setting (Holmes, 2012a).

Patriarchal norms run through many different faith-based and cultural structures across different settings and intersect with other forms of oppression (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). Kaybryn and Nidadavolu (2012) conducted a mapping exercise to explore faith-based responses to violence against women and girls in Asia and the Pacific for UNFPA, collecting data from 26 countries in the region. They also found that a significant challenge for faith-based organisations in responding to violence was gender inequality and patriarchal structures: "Cultural and gender-related challenges were cited [as a barrier to violence prevention in faith settings] across all three sub-regions including patriarchy, the lower social status of women, and expectations of women's dependence on men, all of which overlap both societal and religious contexts" (p. 63). Other international studies have suggested that some faith-based communities continue to view violence against women and family violence as a "women's issue" (Kaybryn & Nidadavolu, 2012, p.63; le Roux et al., 2016; Levitt & Ware 2006a, p.217).

It should be noted that the literature also confirms that many faith-based communities actively challenge gender inequality. For example, guidance provided by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States on developing distinctive Baha'i communities focuses on the relationship between gender inequality and domestic violence. Faith leaders in other communities have actively promoted the leadership of women, and faith-based organisations have developed a range of resources actively promoting gender equality in their communities. This includes through the development of interfaith movements (such as *Side by Side*, http://sidebysidegender.org a global faith movement for gender justice with over 40 member organisations), and development of a range of violence prevention resources focused on gender inequality (see section 2.3). However, it should also be noted that in many instances these resources target gender inequality in *communities of faith*, rather than among their *leadership*, and in others focus on faith-based organisations' work in the context of aid and development, rather than addressing gender inequality in faith communities in high income settings such as Australia (see, for example, Berghm & Uggla, 2017; Christian Aid, 2017; Haque, 2018; Tearfund, 2017).

2.1.4 Barriers to divorce in faith settings

In most but not all major religions, marriage is a sacred institution, with the life-long commitments spouses make to each other also being seen as commitments made to God. The development, and preservation, of healthy and happy marriages is a priority for faith leaders in most communities, however there is considerable variation across faith communities as to their perspectives on divorce. In some faiths, such as the Roman/Western Catholicism, divorce is not allowed. In others, divorce is strongly discouraged (or not allowed) except in instances of adultery. In some faith communities, divorce can be initiated either partner while in others, such as Orthodox Jewish communities, divorce must be granted by the husband.

The end of a marriage is a highly stressful time for most people. For religious women, feelings of guilt and shame that their marriage has 'failed' can be deeply distressing, with women feeling that they have not met their commitments to God (Beaulaurier et al. 2007; Wendt, 2008). Shame associated with divorce was a consistent finding in the literature, present across different faiths and settings, even in instances when violence was so extreme as to endanger a woman's life. When marriage is framed as an inviolable duty, women may feel that they cannot maintain their faith as well as seek safety (Levitt & Ware 2006b). For deeply religious women, this is a tortuous bind (Knickmeyer et al., 2003). Findings underscore the importance of interpretation of religious texts and teachings, as discussed earlier, with many authors finding that women and faith leaders did not see abuse as sufficient grounds for divorce and instead focused on the importance of women's forgiveness, forbearance and duty (Knickmeyer et al. 2010; Popescu et al. 2009; Ringer & Belcher, 2007; Ting & Panchanadeswaran, 2016). Other faith leaders did see that abuse could be grounds for divorce, but often only after multiple instances of violence, noting that their sacred texts stated "God hates divorce" (Horne & Levitt, 2004; Levitt & Ware, 2006a).

Many authors noted that the intersection of cultural and faith-based beliefs often positioned the maintenance of marriage, or 'keeping the family together', as a woman's responsibility (Abu-Ras, 2007; Ogunsiji et al. 2012). The avoidance of shame, or conversely, the preservation of honour, was also a responsibility ascribed to women (King, 2009; Ringel & Bina, 2007; Ting & Panchanadeswaran, 2016). Even without wishing to pursue a divorce, women's desire to avoid family shame was a barrier to seeking help for the violence that they were experiencing, and prevented them (and their husbands) from seeking help for stigmatised contributing factors such as substance abuse, financial insecurity and mental illness (Ting & Panchanadeswaran, 2016). There are very many barriers to help for violence (from faith leaders and more broadly), for a deeply a religious woman not wanting to break her commitment to God, feeling responsible for the maintenance of her marriage, and wanting to avoid bringing shame to her family and community. These can prolong exposure to violence for women (and their children), greatly jeopardising their safety. Levitt and Ware (2006a) found that where faith leaders adhered to strict readings of texts

that did not allow divorce on the grounds of violence, some leaders found creative solutions to facilitate divorce or separation on another basis which adhered to scripture. It should also be noted that whether or not faith leaders prioritised safety, women's *perception* that leaders' prioritised marriage at all costs could prevent them from seeking their help (Knickmeyer et al., 2003).

Literature derived from work in particular faith communities demonstrates how refusing an abused woman a divorce can be a mechanism of further abuse. In Orthodox Jewish communities religious divorces are arranged by a rabbinical court and entail the husband willingly giving the divorce document, called a *gett*, to the wife. Without this document, a divorce granted to an Orthodox Jewish woman through a civil court would not be recognised under Jewish law, the woman cannot remarry in the eyes of the community and any subsequent children would not be able to be part of the community. A woman who has been refused a *gett* is referred to as an *agunah* (a chained woman). Orthodox Jewish men have used their power to provide a *gett* to manipulate the divorce process, in relation to financial settlements and parenting arrangements, but also as method to control, torment and harass their wives. Starr (2018) recommends that *gett* refusal be recognised as spiritual abuse and a form of family violence. *Gett* refusal was in fact recognised as a form of family violence by a Melbourne magistrate in a ground-breaking case in March, 2015 (see https://www.jewishnews.net.au/court-ruling-eases-jewish-divorce/40897).

While both men and women can initiate a religious divorce under Islamic law, submissions to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence (AMWCHR, 2015) and several media reports (see, for example, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-04-18/abused-muslim-women-denied-right-to-divorce/9632772), highlight examples of Muslim women being unable to secure a religious divorce from imams in Victoria. This has also been found in other settings (Douki et al. 2003; Hassouneh-Phillips, 2001). Even if she were to obtain a civil divorce, a Muslim woman who does not have a religious divorce may still be viewed as married by her community and be unable to move on with her life.

2.1.5 A culture of denial, silence and silencing

While many faith leaders are active within anti-violence movements, studies indicate that some faith leaders deny that family violence and violence against women are a problem within their communities (Brade & Bent-Goodley, 2009; le Roux, 2015). Nason-Clark et al. (2017) found that Christian leaders consistently failed to appreciate both the prevalence and severity of family violence within their

communities, as has been found by others (Horne & Levitt, 2014; le Roux, 2015; Sojourners & IMA World Health, 2014). Nason-Clark describes Christian faith leaders' failure to acknowledge violence against women and family violence as the "holy hush" with four dimensions: "resistance to the phrase wife abuse; refusal to see church families as equally violent; reluctance to preach against violence in the family; and interpreting reconciliation as recovery" (Nason-Clark, 2000, p. 361).

Literature derived from other faith communities has demonstrated that violence within marriage is often viewed as a private or domestic matter, which should not be discussed in public (Band-Winterstein & Freund, 2018; Ringel & Bina, 2007). In her scoping review, Le Roux (2015, p.48) noted that, in some instances "addressing SGBV [sexual and gender-based violence] within and through faith communities is thus challenging, for one first has to deal with the refusal to even mention the topic. This refusal to mention or discuss SGBV often extends to the underlying causes of SGBV as well, such as patriarchy, power and gender inequality".

A desire to avoid public discussions of violence may also be connected to fears of community stigmatization, as many faith-based communities are subject to discrimination and racism from the broader community. This is a particularly important consideration in an Australian setting. Connections drawn between violence against women and Islam are highly politicized and divisive (King, 2009). Indeed, research suggests that anti-Islamic sentiment in Australia has meant that some women may avoid help seeking for fear of further stigmatisation from secular services and the wider community (Aly & Gaba, 2007; AMWCHR, 2015; Vaughan et al., 2016). However, in any faith community, a culture of denial, silence and silencing can act to reinforce false perceptions that violence against women and family violence "doesn't happen in our [faith] community", increasing the difficulty for women experiencing violence to talk about what is happening to them.

2.1.6 Intersection of religion, culture and the experience of migration

With Victoria having the highest proportion of residents born overseas of any Australian state, and with people born overseas being more likely to report adhering to a religion than the Australian-born population (ABS, 2017b), it is critical to consider the intersection of religion, culture and the experience of migration when analysing causes and contributors to violence against women in faith settings.

Researchers working in diverse settings have noted that the teachings of faith leaders often intertwine words from sacred texts with those from cultural scripts, folk stories and sayings. For example, in the context of Cambodia it is difficult to separate how Cambodian Buddhist doctrine is communicated and understood from how Khmer sayings and traditional stories are used to explain (and in some instances, justify) violence against women (Eisenbruch 2018). In other settings, cultural concepts and practices shape how specific faith teachings are understood and adopted, with examples including how notions of forgiveness and suffering within Christianity are embodied (Westenberg, 2017; Winkelmann, 2004); the concepts of *lashon hara* (evil tongue) and *shalom bayit* (domestic harmony) within Orthodox Judaism (Ringel & Bina, 2007); and the intersection of cultural and religious conceptions of *izzat* or honour for Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs from South Asia (King, 2009). In addition, some faith-based and cultural belief systems value collectivism and familism over individualism, which may prevent women from prioritising their safety or seeking help (Ahmad, Riaz, Barata, & Stewart, 2004; Eisenbruch, 2018; Ghafournia, 2017).

Participants in le Roux's (2015) international scoping study highlighted how faith leaders read, interpret and teach sacred texts through the lens of the patriarchal cultures of their various ethnic backgrounds, noting the difficulty of separating cultural and religious perspectives. This has also been emphasised in scholarly debate around Chapter IV, Verse 34 of the Qur'an, with Islamic scholars noting that interpretation of the word 'beat' as metaphoric or literal may be shaped by cultural and patriarchal interpretations (Barlas 2002; Douki et al. 2003; Islam et al. 2018; Wadud, 2001).

Researchers working with migrant and refugee religious communities in a range of settings have noted that faith leaders are also often leaders of particular cultural communities, with their responses to issues such as violence also shaped by their experiences of migration and resettlement (and those of their communities). Researchers have noted that when a white man perpetrates violence, this is considered an act of individual deviance. In contrast, "when violence occurs in immigrant communities, the violence is attributed to that community" (Thandi 2011, p. 186; Jiwani 2006; Volpp 2005). This can contribute to faith leaders' desire to handle instances of family violence and violence against women within the community. In their research with African migrants to the United States, Ting and Panchanadeswaran (2016) found that some faith leaders put the needs of the cultural or ethnic community (for example, to not attract the attention of police) ahead of women's need for safety, illustrating the impact of migration, resettlement and factors such as the experience

of racism, on faith leaders' responses to violence. In her work with Korean American faith leaders, Choi (2015a, 2015b) found that some leaders were reluctant to refer women experiencing violence to services outside the faith community, worrying that this would bring shame on the whole Korean American community. Choi also found that Korean cultural values were the strongest predictor for clergy's response, and more influential than "religious fundamentalist beliefs and gender role attitudes" (Choi, 2015a, p.409). Korean American women experiencing violence were equally reluctant to seek help outside the community, perceiving a cultural expectation that women endure hardship to preserve the family (Choi et al. 2017). In Australia, researchers have found that fears related to engaging with external agencies and services, particularly in the law and justice sector, can be exacerbated for religious and cultural communities who have come from settings of systemic discrimination, persecution or violence at the hands of authorities (Vaughan et al. 2016), and for Indigenous Australian communities (Blagg et al. 2018). This poses an additional barrier to women seeking help for violence they may be experiencing, and reduces the likelihood that faith leaders or other members of the community will actively refer women to violence-related services.

In their submission to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, Jewish Care Victoria noted that one of the barriers to services experienced by Jewish women is the strong desire of faith and community leaders, and women themselves, to keep "individual problems within the community itself so as not to be seen to bring shame onto the community for exposing these problems to the non-Jewish community" (Jewish Care Victoria, 2015, p.2). Community members' experiences of anti-Semitism both reinforce a desire to portray the community in a positive light and keep problems internal to the community, and increase anxiety about engaging with non-Jewish services. Aly and Gaba (2007) found that an anti-Muslim environment in Australia had increased the social isolation of many Muslim women, reducing their ability to seek help. It is clear from the literature that policy makers, service providers and academics concerned about family violence and violence against women in faith settings must attend to the specificity of different women's experiences, as well as broader faith-based concepts. The literature suggests that services' and policy makers' failure to do so may inhibit help-seeking and preventative strategies, and reinforce women's experiences of violence.

Whilst not specific to any faith community, the intersection of experiences of migration and violence against women and family violence is particularly pertinent for women in some faith communities. For example, the very large

number of migrants recently arrived in Australia from India means that many Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim women arriving in Australia do so on temporary visas; women arriving from New Zealand after 2001 (largely Christian, and including many women from the Pacific Islands), do so on a Special Category Visa with restricted entitlements; the over 200,000 international students in Victoria, who often form social networks based on their faith, are all living here on student visas. Temporary residency rights have repeatedly been found to increase the risk of family violence, create barriers to services, and make it extremely difficult for women to leave a relationship with a violent partner (Ghafournia, 2011; Seagrave, 2017; Vaughan et al. 2016). When women are not able to access survival services such as Centrelink and Medicare, they may particularly depend on a supportive response from their faith community.

In calling for consideration of the intersection of religion and culture in responses to family violence and violence against women, this is not to suggest that 'culture' is a consideration only for Victorians born overseas. As is emphasised in the whole of Victoria government framework for prevention, *Free from Violence: Victoria's Strategy to Prevent Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women*; and in *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*, stopping violence against women and family violence requires widespread cultural change across Victorian society.

2.2 Evidence about prevention of violence against women and family violence in faith settings

As outlined in section 1.2.1, *Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women* outlines a continuum of prevention – primary prevention (preventing violence from ever happening in the first place); secondary prevention (intervening early to prevent recurring violence); and tertiary prevention (responding to keep women and children who have experienced, or are experiencing, violence safe and preventing long-term harm).

In this section we focus specifically on primary prevention, and specifically on what is known about faith leaders' contributions to preventing violence from occurring.

2.2.1 Addressing causes and contributing factors

Stopping violence against women and family violence from occurring involves identifying the causes of violence, and

factors that can contribute to the severity and frequency of violence, and acting on them. As is documented in *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia* (Our Watch, ANROWS & VicHealth, 2015), the evidence is clear that violence is underpinned by inequalities in social or economic power between different groups of people. The inequality in power underpinning violence against women, and most often underpinning family violence, is primarily based on gender.

Synthesis of international research has shown gender inequality expressed as condoning of violence against women; men's control of decision making and limits to women's independence; rigid gender roles and identities; and/or male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women, is most consistently associated with higher levels of violence against women (Our Watch, ANROWS & VicHealth, 2015, p.8). Therefore, faith communities' and faith leaders' efforts to prevent violence against women and family violence must address these particular aspects of gender inequality.

In addition to these causes of violence against women (referred to as drivers in Change the Story), a number of others factors have been identified in the international evidence as contributing to the severity and frequency of violence, including condoning of violence in general; experience of or exposure to violence; weakening of pro-social behaviour, including harmful alcohol and drug use; socio-economic inequality and discrimination; and backlash when men's power is challenged (Our Watch, ANROWS & VicHealth 2015, p.8). Research and lived experience highlight that gender inequality is not a form of power imbalance and discrimination experienced in isolation, with many Victorians subject to other, and sometimes multiple, forms of discrimination (such as racism, ageism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia, and persecution based on religion eg. Islamophobia, antisemitism), in ways that intersect with gender inequality to shape violence against women in different contexts (Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, nd; Our Watch, ANROWS & VicHealth, 2015).

As outlined in detail in section 2.1, there is considerable evidence about factors that cause and contribute to violence against women in faith settings. Particular faith teachings and passages of sacred texts can be interpreted as condoning violence against women, sanctioning men's control over women in the household, and reinforcing rigid gender roles and identities. Gender inequality is reinforced by the patriarchal norms of many faith traditions and the barriers to divorce experienced by women in some faiths. Members of faith communities and faith leaders themselves

may be subject to religious persecution, racism and other forms of discrimination, which are experiences that intersect with the drivers of violence against women.

There is less evidence about how faith leaders can best be supported to take action to challenge these causes and contributors. Some publications provide suggestions to guide faith leaders' prevention efforts, including suggestion of strategies for promoting women's leadership within faith communities; conducting awareness raising and advocacy in the congregation and wider community; and contributing to local and national policy (Bent-Goodley, St. Vil & Hubbert, 2012). However there is little research evidence about the effectiveness of current efforts to put these suggestions into practice, and how these efforts might be changing some of the attitudes and behaviours that drive violence against women.

Review of the evidence in relation to interventions and programs focused on building faith leaders' capacity to respond to violence against women and family violence found that program participants (faith leaders) often expressed frustration that there was not more focus on actions in relation to prevention (Choi et al. 2017; Jones & Fowler, 2009). The literature suggests that faith leaders are very interested in stopping violence, but it is less clear whether this commitment is grounded in an evidence-based understanding of the drivers of violence against women and family violence.

2.2.2 Building faith leaders' capacity for prevention

It is notable that we found considerably fewer interventions and resources for faith leaders that were primarily focused on prevention of violence against women and family violence than there were primarily focused on response (the latter described in the following section). For the majority of the resources that we did find, their effectiveness had not been evaluated and how materials were being used was unclear. Many of these prevention-focused resources had been developed by faith-based international development organisations, primarily for use with faith leaders and faith communities in low- and middle-income countries (see Appendix 3). It should be noted that some of these resources – in particular *SASA! Faith: A guide for faith communities to prevent violence against women and HIV* (Raising Voices, 2016) and *Transforming masculinities: A training manual for gender champions* (Tearfund, 2017) – have been developed in conjunction with large, evidence-based, international interventions to prevent violence against women, and high quality evaluation data is likely to become available in relation to their effectiveness in the near future.

There have been two well-known prevention interventions conducted in Victoria, where program materials and evaluation reports are available. These are presented as case studies below.

Prevention Case Study 1: The Northern Interfaith Respectful Relationships Project

The Northern Interfaith Respectful Relationships Project (2008 – 2012) was designed to increase the evidence base for primary prevention of violence against women in the faith sector. The project was funded and supported by VicHealth, implemented in partnership with the Darebin City Council, and operated across Melbourne's northern region.

The second phase of the project (the focus of this case study) aimed to:
- Increase the capacity of faith leaders, organisations and communities to undertake primary prevention work
- Promote non-violent and respectful ways for women and men to relate to each other within communities
- Contribute to building the evidence for the primary prevention of violence against women
- Increase the capacity of Darebin City Council and neighbouring councils to undertake primary prevention work. (Holmes, 2012a, p.15)

In order to meet these aims the project developed a peer mentoring program (see also Holmes, 2011); produced a manual and toolkit (Holmes, 2012b); engaged with the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne to develop a primary prevention strategy; and disseminated a monthly newsletter to faith communities and leaders.

Challenges identified through evaluation of the program included that:
- It is difficult engaging male faith leaders in capacity building for primary prevention.
- Peer mentoring and dialogical approaches are highly valued by faith leaders.
- Faith leaders are time poor, reducing availability to participate in capacity building and networking initiatives.
- Clear decision making structures (and/or hierarchy) within faith communities facilitates adoption of community wide policies and strategies.
- There is a tension between developing faith leaders' capacity to undertake primary prevention work, and ensuring they are able to adequately respond to family violence. This suggests that effective primary prevention programs will also need to address appropriate and safe response.
- There are also tensions between promoting male faith leaders as agents of change, and challenging male domination of leadership roles.
- Effectively discussing gender and developing strategies to challenge gender inequality is particularly difficult in an interfaith context.

Interfaith networks are found across Victoria, and have long provided a mechanism for members of different communities to learn about each other's beliefs, and for action on shared social justice issues of concern (such as climate change, refugees and asylum seekers, poverty and food insecurity). However, the Northern Interfaith Respectful Relationships evaluation highlighted the significant difficulties arising when addressing gender issues in an interfaith context (noting that different faith traditions have engaged with mechanisms to promote the role, status and leadership of women in their communities to different degrees). The evaluation also highlighted the difficulties presented for interfaith work when different faith communities have different organisational and leadership structures, and different mechanisms to affect change.

The evaluation highlighted opportunities and key strengths of their approach, that could be incorporated by others. These included finding that:

- Peer mentoring and dialogical approaches are highly valued by faith leaders, and can increase awareness of the prevalence and seriousness of violence against women; increase understanding of primary prevention; increase understanding of the causes of and contributors to violence against women; increase awareness of gendered language in worship; and build confidence in challenging violence supportive attitudes and putting primary prevention activities in place.
- Clear decision-making structures (and/or hierarchy) within faith communities facilitate adoption of community wide policies and strategies.
- Religious institutions have enormous potential to be a positive catalyst for change, with interfaith mechanisms having the potential to generate momentum and commitment to preventing violence against women.

Prevention Case Study 2: CHALLENGE Family violence – preventing violence against women at the local level

The **CHALLENGE Family violence – preventing violence against women at the local level** project was undertaken in the City of Casey, the City of Greater Dandenong and Cardinia Shire Council between 2013 and 2015. The project consisted of two parts:

1. The **Male Leadership model** which involved engaging male community members in training, education and peer conversations regarding equality, gender roles, masculinity and men's roles in preventing violence (funded for three years); and
2. The **Faith Resources model** which involved 12 male and female faith leaders from different faiths who worked together to collaboratively develop a resource aimed at primary prevention of men's violence against women (funded for two years).

This case study will focus on the Faith Resources model and its evaluated impact, though the evaluation report produced for the project often merged findings from the evaluation of both models.

As part of the Faith Resources model an Interfaith Working Group was established which involved representatives from the: Sai community; St Paul's – Antiochian Orthodox Church; Dandenong Interfaith Network; Church of Christ; Casey Multifaith Network; Emir Sultan Mosque; Brahma Kumaris community; Hindu community; Sikh Interfaith Council of Victoria; Buddhist community; United Oromo Christian Church of Australia; Doveton Baptist Church; and the Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence.

A community development model was employed which consisted of the following key elements:
- The faith leaders were offered training regarding gender equity and violence against women. A community development officer with expertise in violence prevention facilitated the model. The project took a participatory approach that focussed on exchanges of expertise between faith leaders (about their faiths and communities) and the officer's expertise (regarding violence prevention).
- The process was reflexive in design and created space for faith leaders to critique and feedback comments about the resource and the development process.
- There was an opportunity for male faith leaders to hear from female faith leaders.
- Interfaith linkages were developed to build support networks.
- A Women's Advisory Group was established to embed women's expertise in both models in the project as well as to create a mechanism for accountability to women.

The resource development process facilitated the re-interpretation of scripture and faith-based teachings regarding gender roles and expectations. The resource itself includes a section regarding the different faiths' perspectives on the importance of gender equity and challenging sexist teachings; 'fact sheets' debunking common myths about violence against women that may be relevant for faith-based communities; and guidance on promoting gender equality in faith-based communities through creating awareness, having discussions, engaging in local initiatives, taking action, building partnerships, and advocating for change (CHALLENGE Family Violence project, 2015).

Evaluation of the model

The evaluation of the Faith Resources model focussed on the impact of the process of developing the resource, rather than evaluating the use and impact of the resource itself. The evaluation found that most participants increased their understanding of the drivers of violence against women, including gender inequity; most participants expressed a continued commitment to violence prevention efforts in the future, both within their communities and through new networks developed through the project; that the Interfaith Working Group made plans to continue work together on violence prevention initiatives, and that an important relationship established in the Project was that between faith-based communities and the Dandenong Interfaith Network; and that the interfaith resource was successfully developed and disseminated through participants' networks and events.

Prevention Case Study 2: CHALLENGE Family violence – preventing violence against women at the local level

Sheridan, Castelino and Boulet (n.d.) made the following recommendations for future prevention work with faith-based communities, based on key learnings which arose throughout the evaluation:

- Prevention resources should be developed collaboratively through consultation with the communities for whom the resource is intended.
- Prevention resources should take an approach that is mindful of domains of privilege and oppression such as gender, race, sexuality, disability, religion and class, "in the hope of ensuring the resource does not further marginalise community groups" (p.41).
- Prevention resources should be translated into relevant languages and use relevant imagery/content.
- Projects working in an interfaith framework should be mindful not to privilege Christian communities.
- Mechanisms which facilitate accountability to women should be embedded in projects (e.g., women's advisory groups with clear roles and terms of reference, as in this project).
- Projects should be based on partnerships which involve collaboration with women as experts.
- People engaging in primary prevention initiatives should be equipped with adequate training and protocols to respond appropriately and safely to disclosures of violence and develop partnerships with the family violence sector to make referrals.

2.3 Evidence about responses to violence against women and family violence in faith settings

The literature confirms that for many women, in some but not all faith communities, faith leaders are often among the first individuals to whom they are likely to disclose violence and look to for help (Beaulaurier et al. 2007; Cox, 2015; Horne & Levitt, 2004; Westenberg, 2017). In some communities, women experiencing violence may only ever seek help from within their faith community (Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence submission, 2015), and therefore ensuring faith leaders and faith-based organisations are able to provide appropriate support is vital for a state-wide response to violence that is able to reach everyone.

Faith leaders hold an important role which is built upon trust and shared community (Knickmeyer et al., 2003) as well as institutional hierarchy (Westenberg, 2017). As a consequence, faith leaders can have a considerable impact upon women's experiences of violence and their decision-making (Nason-Clark et al. 2017). However, review of the literature suggests the support that women receive from their faith leaders after disclosure of violence varies greatly. Many factors underpin this variability, with some (though not all) researchers finding that the breadth of faith leaders' definitions of family violence, and their response to the various experiences women disclosed, were influenced by both the gender of the faith leader and whether they held

liberal or conservative religious beliefs (Choi & Cramer, 2016; Gengler & Lee, 2001; Strickland, Welshimer & Sarvela, 2008; Ware, Levitt & Bayer, 2003).

2.3.1 Provision of support to women experiencing violence

There is a long history of faith communities providing much needed material assistance to women experiencing violence who are in crisis or who have left a violent partner. Such assistance includes temporary housing, social and spiritual support, health services, economic and material assistance (including provision of food, clothing, medicine and goods for children), counselling and case management. In Victoria, faith-based organisations providing crisis and case management services include the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights, Good Samaritan Inn, Good Shepherd, Jewish Care Victoria, McAuley Community Services, Salvation Army, Uniting Vic.Tas, and Vincent Care, amongst others. The origin of these organisations' involvement in family violence and violence against women can often be traced to a committed individual faith leader or group (most often groups of women), who saw the urgent need for a response as a social justice issue and a religious duty. While some of these faith-based organisations retain strong links with the leadership of their respective faith communities, in other instances their contemporary outlook is quite secular. The material support provided by these (variably) faith-based organisations is generally highly appreciated by women who need to use their services,

however the faith-based origins of many crisis services in Victoria can be a barrier for some women, including Indigenous women, non-Christian women, migrant and refugee women, and lesbian and transgender women (Horsley, 2015; Jewish Care Victoria 2015; Neave et al. 2016; Vaughan et al. 2016; Victorian Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby 2015).

Across settings and across faiths, women who have disclosed experiences of violence to faith leaders report a range of responses. Some women report feeling listened to, believed, and that their faith leader was able to provide both appropriate spiritual support and practical referral to specialist services. In contrast, many of the studies described inappropriate responses.

In many instances, survivors reporting being blamed or ostracised by both their communities and faith leaders following help-seeking or disclosure (Band-Winderstein & Freund, 2018; Horsburgh, 2005; Knickmeyer et al., 2003; McMullin, 2018; Miles, 2002; Nason-Clark, 2009; Ringel & Bina, 2007; Ting & Panchanadeswaran, 2016; Wendt, 2008). Blame was often accompanied by faith leaders recommending that women change their behaviour to avoid making their partner angry, suggesting that it was the woman's words or actions that were the cause of the violence (Choi, 2015a; Drumm et al. 2018; Levitt & Ware, 2006; Ringel & Bina, 2007). Sometimes blame was framed in relation to women's gender roles (for example, violence being attributed to women's perceived failure to adequately perform domestic duties) and in other instances it was framed in relation to faith teachings (for example, violence being a result of women's failure to submit to their husband's authority) (Miles, 2002). Levitt and Ware (2006a) found that although faith leaders generally considered that male perpetrators were responsible for violence committed, they also considered that women held some responsibility for the violence, either for provoking violence or for failing to prioritise their own safety. Furthermore, the faith leaders who took part in the study failed to identify the practical reasons why women might endure violent relationships (such as economic or social reasons), preferring to view the woman as deficient in personality or willpower. In none of the studies reviewed, did researchers report that faith leaders recognised that the most dangerous time for a woman is when she leaves or has recently left a violent partner, unless the leader had just received specific training.

Researchers have found that some faith leaders tended to avoid active intervention following disclosures of violence (Dyer 2010; Horne & Levitt, 2004), preferring to see the conflict as a spiritual problem that can be resolved through religious practice (Ames et al. 2011; Choi & Cramer, 2016; Nason-Clark, 2004). In others, faith leaders did intervene,

particularly providing pastoral counselling, but described themselves as uninformed responders (Tedder & Smith, 2018). In a qualitative study exploring violence experienced by older women in Florida, Beaulaurier et al. (2007) found that poor responses from clergy acted as an important barrier to successful help-seeking. Many women in the study reported that their faith leaders encouraged them to maintain the status quo. Not one of the 134 participants in the study reported that they had been referred to services, police or other external resources by their faith leaders. In diverse settings, researchers have found that faith leaders' failure to respond adequately to disclosures of violence can encourage women to remain with violent partners despite significant risks to their safety (Ghafournia, 2017; Hosburgh, 2005; Knickmeyer et al., 2003; Kulwicki et al. 2010).

Some faith leaders attempt to conduct counselling with couples experiencing conflict, rather than making external referrals (Choi, 2015; Horne & Levitt, 2004; Jones & Fowler, 2009). While the faith leader may be a trusted advisor for both parties, there are ongoing concerns that couple counselling in the context of family violence is extremely dangerous for the victim and can be manipulated by the perpetrator (Gondolf, 2012). In many jurisdictions, including Victoria, standards strongly discourage couple counselling as a primary intervention for family violence (Grealy et al., 2008; Mackay et al, 2015).

Research across settings, with leaders from diverse communities, highlights a range of barriers to faith leaders effectively providing support to women experiencing violence. Some of these have been discussed in the preceding section in relation to drivers and contributors within faith settings, and the major barrier of capacity will be discussed in depth in section 2.3.3. Other barriers identified in the literature included fear of the perpetrator (Ringel & Bina, 2007); negative attitudes towards agencies external to the faith community including courts, police and counselling services (Ames et al. 2011; Choi, 2015; Nason-Clark, 2004; Ringel & Bina, 2007; Rotunda et al. 2004); and the fact that very often both the perpetrator and victim are members of the same faith community. This results in a challenging dynamic for the leader of that community (Horne & Levitt, 2004; Nason-Clark, 2009), and may also prevent leaders and communities from supporting community members who experience violence out of loyalty to the perpetrator, which presents a further barrier for women seeking and receiving help (Miles, 2002; Westenberg, 2017).

2.3.2 Holding men who use violence to account and supporting behaviour change

As noted above, some faith leaders recognise that men are responsible for their use of violence but also believe that women hold partial responsibility (Levitt & Ware, 2006a; Miles, 2002). Several authors note the failure of faith leaders to hold male congregants who use violence to account for their actions (Ames, Hancock & Behnke, 2011; Miles, 2002), with women who have experienced violence noting that while they may be subject to gossip and blame, there were few consequences for perpetrators (Ames, Hancock & Behnke, 2011; Knickmeyer et al. 2010; Miles, 2002; Wang et al. 2009).

Evidence as to best practice interventions and responses to perpetrators of family violence and violence against women continues to evolve. The 'pivot to the perpetrator' (Mandel, 2014) is relatively recent in the history of responses to family violence in particular, but was a major focus of recommendations from the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence and is a key priority in *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change*, the State's 10-year plan. In recent years, faith-based organisations have developed, implemented and/or supported programs aiming to stop men's use of violence against women, including in Victoria where Anglicare, SalvoCare Eastern and Uniting Kildonan run Men's Behaviour Change Programs. While Kildonan UnitingCare run a South Asian Men's Behaviour Change Program that addresses cultural issues specific to South Asian families and issues associated with migration, and an Arabic Speaking Men's Family Violence Group, none of the current Men's Behaviour Change Programs currently running in Victoria specifically focuses on holding religious men who use violence to account.

In the case of intimate partner violence, Nason-Clark and colleagues (2003) note that many abused religious women want the violence to stop, but may not want their marriage to end. This is consistent with findings from research with migrant and refugee communities, including many religious women, in Victoria (Vaughan et al. 2016). Abused religious women may therefore place a great deal of trust in programs aiming to change men's behaviour (Nason-Clark et al. 2003). Research has shown that religious men who use violence against women can misuse religious texts and teaching to justify their violence (Douki et al. 2003; El Matrah et al. 2011; Islam et al. 2018; le Roux, 2016; Wendt, 2008; Winkelmann, 2004), and that the perspective of secular workers may have no credibility with highly religious perpetrators (Nason-Clark et al. 2017). While researchers (Horne & Levitt, 2003; Miles, 2002) have identified responses to perpetrators from faith leaders that have been ineffective (including reprimanding the

perpetrator, threatening excommunication, and urging repentance), there is a significant gap in knowledge about how best to intervene to change the behaviour of religious men who use violence and hold them to account. This is particularly the case when the perpetrator of violence is also a faith leader, holding significant and additional power in his intimate and community relationships (Miles, 2002). In summary, there is little evidence available, from Australia or internationally, about how faith leaders specifically can best support perpetrators of violence against women and children to stop their use of violence, take responsibility for their behaviour, and develop and maintain respectful and caring relationships.

2.3.3 Building faith leaders' capacity to effectively respond

Many studies found that faith leaders were simply not equipped to respond effectively and safely to family violence and violence against women due to a lack of education, training and resources (Barnett, 2001; Brade & Bent-Goodley, 2009; Jones et al. 2005; le Roux, 2015; Levitt & Ware, 2006a; Tedder & Smith, 2018). While it should be noted that there were some studies in which faith leaders considered that they were adequately equipped to address violence through their theological training (Choi & Cramer, 2016; Ringel & Bina, 2007), in the majority of studies that explored faith leaders' perspectives on family violence and violence against women, faith leaders expressed that they needed additional support and wanted training to know how best to take action (Brade & Bent-Goodley, 2009; Levitt & Ware, 2006b; Nason-Clark et al., 2017; Tedder & Smith, 2018).

In Australia and internationally, efforts to strengthen faith leaders' response to family violence and violence against women have focused on building faith leaders' understanding of the breadth of forms of violence; training faith leaders to respond to disclosures of violence with a focus on women's safety and that of their children; increasing leaders' knowledge of locally available family violence and violence against women services, and how to make 'warm' referrals to these services; providing spiritual support to women, without pressure to maintain a marriage or preserve the family unit; and holding perpetrators to account for their behaviour (Bent-Goodley et al. 2012; Choi et al. 2017; Fowler et al. 2006; Horne and Levitt, 2003; Jones et al. 2005; McMullin et al. 2015). Based on over 20 years' work on increasing knowledge about the challenges faith leaders face in responding to violence against women, Nason-Clark and colleagues (2010) "have become convinced that building bridges between sacred and secular communities holds the most promise for reducing violence"

(McMullin et al. 2015, p.116), and that both religiously-informed and community-based workers are required for an effective response to violence in families of faith (Nason-Clark & Holtmann, 2013). They note that bridge building requires asking whether the congregation or faith leader's office is a safe place for a victim to disclose violence or a perpetrator to seek help, as well as asking whether the domestic violence service is a safe place for victims or perpetrators to disclose that they are religious (McMullin et al. 2015).

Consistent with the clear finding that many faith leaders feel ill-equipped to respond appropriately to family violence and violence against women, it is unsurprising that there are many interventions and resources that have been developed, in Australia and internationally, aimed at building faith leaders' knowledge and their capacity to respond. In this instance, 'interventions and resources' include training programs and curricula, awareness raising workshops, manuals, policies, guidelines, and 'toolkits' for faith communities. The many interventions and resources we identified have sometimes been developed by local services for faith leaders; sometimes by faith-based organisations or interfaith networks focused on violence against women; and sometimes they have been developed in partnership between faith leaders and local services addressing violence against women and family violence. They range from very short documents of one to two pages, through to in-depth training programs with curricula designed to run over a period of months. The evidence underpinning the various interventions and resources is highly varied. While they are highly varied, what the vast majority of interventions and resources have in common is that their use has never been evaluated or their effectiveness examined. The evidence base as to what works in building faith leaders' capacity to respond effectively to family violence and violence against women is extremely thin. We were only able to identify a limited number of interventions that were primarily focused on faith leaders' response to family violence and violence against women that had been rigorously evaluated (Choi et al. 2017; Drumm et al. 2018; Jones & Fowler, 2009). All such evaluated interventions were based in the United States and were (largely) with Christian faith leaders. Two of these programs are profiled as case examples below.

Response Case Study 1: Forsyth Faith Leader Training Program

The **Forsyth Faith Leader Training Program** was a pilot capacity building initiative, conducted in partnership by faith leaders, a local university, divinity school, women's health, and family violence services in Forsyth County, North Carolina (Jones & Fowler, 2009; Fowler et al. 2006; Jones et al. 2005). The impetus for the program came from the observation that of seven women murdered by their partners in the county (of 300,000 people) in 2001, only one had had contact with local law enforcement agencies but it was believed "that at least five of these women had been in church during the month preceding her death" (Jones et al. 2005, p.56). Residents in Forsyth County are considerably more likely to belong to a church, mosque or synagogue, and attend religious services at least one a month, than is average in the US, but less likely to socialise outside their faith-based social circles – suggesting faith leaders and faith communities may be especially important pathways to support for women experiencing violence.

The program involved initially sending five Christian clergy for training at the Faith Trust Institute in Seattle (a long standing multi-faith initiative, see Appendix 1), who then worked with the program team to design the curricula and format for local training that aimed to a) help faith leaders respond to family violence in ways that focused on women's safety and holding perpetrators to account, while respecting the beliefs of victims and faith communities; and b) build strong links and trust between secular services, advocates and faith leaders.

The resulting program for faith leaders involved a 6 hour training, delivered over two evenings, which consisted of presentations, screening of the Faith Trust Institute's video Broken Vows, guided discussions, and provision of a resource pack for faith leaders (more detail on content is outlined in Jones & Fowler, 2009). Trainings were co-facilitated by a family violence worker and two faith leaders. All participants were required to agree to a 'Covenant of Performance', committing them to prioritising victim safety and always working with family violence services in developing any new initiatives in their communities. A follow up 'booster' session was held some months after the original training, and participants were connected in an ongoing manner through a newsletter, website and annual meeting.

Evaluation of this program found that the training resulted in substantial improvements in faith leaders' knowledge about and attitudes toward family violence, and changes in leaders' behaviours in relation to referral to services.

Response Case Study 1: Forsyth Faith Leader Training Program

The authors note that participants were self-selected and a mix of lay leaders and clergy, but that even among self-selected (ie. supportive) participants, baseline "knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours are uninformed and potentially dangerous to the victim" (Jones et al. 2005, p.79). They therefore felt that training could be expected to benefit even self-selected participants.

Key lessons documented from evaluation of this program included:
*   Recruitment of participants is challenging. Faith leaders are busy, often over committed, and may not recognise family violence as a priority.
*   Engaging with leaders at higher levels of hierarchical faith organisations, who could then promote the program to other clergy, increases participation. Even using this strategy, trust building took longer than expected.
*   An organising group or committee made up of highly committed individuals, and crossing religious/secular boundaries, builds bridges between sectors and ensures curricula is sensitive to faith communities' beliefs and based on the expertise of the family violence and violence against women sectors.
*   Language such as 'domestic violence' and 'training' was off putting to potential participants, and it was more successful to frame the intervention around 'family strengthening'.
*   Hearing survivor testimony is highly impactful, increasing faith leaders' willingness to become more informed about family violence.
*   Faith leaders value forums for discussion of issues around faith and family violence, before moving on to the difficulties involved in communicating with victims and perpetrators.
*   Faith leaders require additional support and reinforcement as they try to put into practice what they have learned, and highly valued the 'booster' sessions. Ongoing supportive discussion groups would be a valuable addition to the original design.
*   Having a faith leader and lay leader from each congregation trained together ensures they can support each other following the training.
*   A Covenant of Performance is an important mechanism for ensuring that any future activities are evidence-based and prioritise victim safety.
*   Partnering with a local university enabled an evaluation of sufficient depth to allow the program to improve and grow.

The program's evaluation yielded a number of additional insights. While the county-wide committee that instigated the project was a multifaith one, participants in the pilot was primarily from evangelical Christian communities. This is partly reflective of the demographic makeup of the county and the research team, but also the constraints on the availability of the over-stretched leaders of smaller faith communities. The researchers described difficulties reaching faith communities without denominational affiliation or hierarchical organisation, including those with predominantly non-white congregations (Jones & Fowler 2009; Fowler et al. 2006), a challenge that has also been identified in relation to multifaith work in Australia (Holmes, 2012a).

The authors highlight the importance of ongoing communication with participants, networking and relationship building, and building on inter-congregation mechanisms for recruitment (in this instance the existing 'competition' between evangelical faith communities was helpful in encouraging different congregations to become engaged with the project). While findings from the evaluation of this pilot were very promising, the researchers noted both challenges (in some instances, institutional resistance and denial of the problem; the need to build trust in the secular sector when past responses have been disappointing; financial sustainability) and limitations (work in the pilot project focused more on supporting victims than holding perpetrators to account or changing their behaviour; limited time period of follow up; and that the majority of participants in the pilot were Christian).

Response Case Study 2: Korean Clergy for Healthy Families

Research conducted with Korean-American migrant communities, by Korean-American researcher Y. Joon Choi (2015a, 2015b, 2016, 2018a) and others (Moon, 2005) has highlighted the importance of Korean-American churches (particularly Protestant churches) as a spiritual, cultural and social resource for Koreans who have migrated to the US. Research demonstrated that Korean-American women experiencing violence turned to their faith leaders for assistance (Moon, 2005), but that often the response they received was inappropriate and ineffective (Choi, 2015a, 2015b). In response Choi and colleagues developed and evaluated an online intervention to support Korean-American clergy address family violence in their communities. While the knowledge-attitude-behaviour theoretical basis of the program has been shown to have limitations when translated to real world contexts of complexity (Campbell 2003, 2014), this represents one of the few examples of an intervention evaluated to a sufficient level to be published in the peer reviewed literature. It is also one of the few evaluated examples of an online training for faith leaders. The online approach was chosen because of convenience, reach, cost effectiveness and anonymity (Choi et al. 2017).

The curriculum built on existing materials for faith leaders, with discussion of the influence of Korean cultural values also incorporated. The aim was to increase the capacity of clergy to appropriately and effectively "prevent and intervene in intimate partner violence in their congregations" (Choi et al. 2017), though the outline of the three modules developed suggests a primary focus on response. In addition to the three online training modules, the program website included a newsfeed and links to news and information on intimate partner violence; a discussion board where participants could share information and support; and links to resources such as safety plans, fact sheets etc.

The program was evaluated by randomizing participants to an intervention group or control group, and found that the intervention group had significantly improved knowledge of family violence resources and improved attitudes in relation to family violence. While this is positive, and suggests that the use of an online approach can be helpful for provision of information and increasing awareness of local resources, there was no difference between the two groups in relation to participants' confidence in supporting someone who has disclosed violence or actual self-reported prevention and intervention behaviours. While online interventions can provide anonymity unavailable in face to face approaches, they are less effective in building skills or in supporting the dialogical interaction found to be so valuable in other evaluations of interventions to build faith leader capacity in relation to family violence (Holmes, 2012a; Jones & Fowler, 2009).

Participant recommendations for future iterations of the program, based on the initial pilot, included:
* providing case examples of appropriate clergy responses to disclosure of family violence and of providing ongoing support to victims.
* addressing the impact of migration on family relations, and particularly the impact of changing gender roles on men, noting that men may use the 'traditional patriarchal' values within the Korean-American church to reassert themselves in the family in unhelpful ways.
* ensuring that the website contained a comprehensive and up-to-date list of local services, including services available for victims whose residency status is uncertain.
* allowing participants to determine the timing of when they access the three modules, so that this can be scheduled around busy workloads.
* not all faith leaders will be comfortable interacting in an online environment or using social media, therefore careful consultation with the intended audience about how they engage with online material prior to design of any intervention is vital.

While results of this program are promising in relation to awareness raising and improving knowledge and attitudes, findings highlight the challenges of building practical skills through an online intervention (Choi et al. 2018b). Nason-Clark et al. (2017) noted that web-based resources and training might better be seen as an approach that can augment in-person training, finding that most faith leaders are unable to take the time away from their faith community "that would be required to fully equip them for pastoral ministry in this area" (Nason-Clark et al. 2017, p.12 of ebook chapter 5).

2.3.4 Other response-focused interventions and resources

A large number of other interventions and resources aiming to build faith leader capacity to respond to intimate partner violence are available, with some also covering responses to other forms of violence against women and family violence. Links to organisational websites, as well as some of the many specific resources we identified are included in appendices 1 and 2. While the effectiveness of these interventions and resources has not been evaluated, many of them have been developed based on the extensive experience of violence response practitioners, and input from faith leaders with deep commitment to appropriately supporting women who have experienced violence.

A major limitation of this collection of materials is that, with the exception of a few interfaith resources, they are all designed for use with Christian, Muslim or Jewish leaders. We were unable to identify any materials from interventions or other resources publicly available online that have been developed specifically to build the capacity of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Baha'i or other faith leaders to respond to family violence or violence against women. This may reflect differences in methods used to disseminate materials or our difficulties in accessing materials published in languages other than English. Resources developed for use with Christian faith leaders tended to be aimed at Catholic or (some) Protestant leaders, with none specifically developed for leaders of Orthodox or Restorationist communities.

Another major limitation of identified interventions and resources is that they overwhelmingly focus on response to intimate partner violence, with less attention paid to (or support for faith leaders to respond to) other forms of family violence or other forms of violence against women, such as non-partner sexual violence. This suggests the urgent need to evaluate the few resources that were identified that did not focus on intimate partner violence only, and for further research in this area.

2.4 Promising approaches to building capacity for change

During review of the literature for the development of this paper, we scoped what could be learned from efforts to build faith leader capacity in relation to other issues (for example, HIV prevention or prevention of child abuse). When synthesising this with what could be learned from the unevaluated interventions and resources identified in relation to family violence and violence against women, key elements that could be described as 'promising' include:

- Collaborative co-design based on partnership between experts (in this case, in family violence and violence against women) and faith leaders, including official or ordained leaders and lay faith leaders.
- Co-facilitation by violence response experts and faith leaders, and male and female facilitators.
- Devotion of significant time and resources to early and sustained engagement with the high level leadership of faith communities where there is a hierarchical structure to the community (less is known about the most effective approaches to engagement in faith communities with different forms of governance).
- Incorporation of respectful listening to survivor testimony.
- Direction to web-based materials, resources and trainings as an adjunct to face-to-face approaches.
- Incorporation of dialogical, discussion-based approaches (which could include participatory workshops, learning circles, peer mentoring, discussion groups, and other formats).
- Ensuring training or other capacity building initiatives provide an opportunity for faith leaders to meet in person with local services providers.
- Ensuring training or other capacity building initiatives clearly articulate the specialist nature of response work, emphasise the importance of faith leaders referring to appropriate services, and practically contribute to referral pathways.
- Supporting the participation of formal and informal (lay) faith leaders, and of male and female faith leaders.
- Provision of follow up, refresher or 'booster' activities of an extended period of time, in recognition that faith leaders need support to reflect on their practice and learn from instances when they actually begin to put what they have learned about response to violence against women and family violence in practice.
- Use of pledges, commitments, or (as in the Forsyth Country project) a Covenant of Performance to ensure responses prioritise women and children's safety at all times, and there are quality assurance mechanisms for new initiatives.
- Devotion of significant time and resources to the workshopping and piloting of curricula and materials, in particular in relation to finding appropriate language that is clear and evidence-based and that will also not engender resistance.

2.5 Summary of current evidence gaps

The current evidence-base regarding effective approaches to the prevention of and response to family violence and violence against women in faith settings is limited, as is evidence about the most effective strategies for building

faith leader capacity in this sensitive and challenging area. The lack of clear evidence is in part due to faith leaders and faith communities, and those researchers working with them, lacking funding for long-term evaluation and reporting on outcomes. In some instances, initiatives have been undertaken to address violence within faith-based communities but these have gone unpublished or unevaluated, or have not been disseminated due to lack of funding and resources (le Roux, 2015).

Major current evidence gaps include:

- The current research regarding causes of and contributors to violence in faith settings has largely focussed on Abrahamic faith communities. Further research regarding causes and contributing factors in non-Abrahamic, and in Orthodox and Restorationist Christian, communities is necessary. This is particularly relevant in Victoria, where there is very little evidence relevant to three of the ten largest faith communities (the Buddhist, Greek Orthodox and Hindu communities) and one of the fastest growing groups (the Sikh community).
- There is a lack of research regarding how to best support men from faith communities who use violence to change their behaviour. It is unclear whether, and to what degree, existing men's behavior change programs in Victoria are accessed by religious men, and whether faith influences the efficacy of existing approaches. There is no robust evidence available that could specifically inform efforts to change the behavior of faith leaders who themselves use violence. The prevalence and impact of family violence perpetrated by faith leaders are unknown.
- More evidence is needed to determine how faith leaders and faith communities can best act to prevent and respond to violence against women that is perpetrated by people other than intimate partners (such as non-partner sexual violence, or violence that might be enacted by a parent, sibling or other family member). As outlined in section 2.1.2, some sacred texts and teachings can be interpreted in ways that justify or condone husbands' use of violence against their wives. It may be that these same teachings are interpreted in ways that justify or condone violence against children (including the use of physical violence to discipline or enforce control over children, or female siblings, and specific forms of violence against women such as forced marriage).
- Robust evidence about effective approaches to training and capacity building regarding violence prevention in faith communities is limited, for all faith communities. This evidence gap is even more pronounced as to what might be effective approaches to capacity building in non-Christian faiths.
- The is very little evidence about what might influence

sustained change. We found no long-term evaluations of primary, secondary or tertiary prevention programs in faith settings, and no evaluations of the impact of prevention resources. In addition, there is a lack of effective tools for measuring short-term and, in particular, long-term change in faith settings.
- Given inconsistent findings about whether or not interfaith approaches can be an effective model for initiatives aiming to prevention violence against women, more evidence is needed about the efficacy of interfaith projects with greater analysis of the circumstances in which they may be effective (Holmes, 2012a; Sheridan et al., n.d.).
- We know very little about what types of prevention and response initiatives are appropriate where a faith-based community rejects the notion of gender equality. We also know very little about what types of violence prevention and response initiatives are appropriate in faith-based communities where separation or divorce is not an option.
- More evidence is needed regarding whether (and if so how) gendered hierarchies within faith leadership structures can be reconciled with the promotion of gender equality which underpins violence prevention initiatives.
- Although there is evidence which suggests that hierarchal organisation within faith-based organisations can facilitate organised and coordinated initiatives to prevent violence (Holmes, 2012a), we do not know how to best effect change within heterogeneous, decentralised faith-based communities.
- More evidence is needed regarding spiritual abuse and how faith leaders and their communities can best prevent and respond to it. In light of the evidence that faith-based community members' experiences of violence and recovery are interwoven with their faith (Nason-Clark, 2009), we need to collect more evidence regarding how secular service providers can best address faith-based community members' diverse needs, including how secular services can best respond to or prevent spiritual abuse.

3. Principles and recommendations

The principles and recommendations outlined below are intended to inform the second phase of the current Participatory Action Project, but also to guide future activity undertaken and funded by others interested in supporting faith communities and faith leaders to effectively prevent and respond to family violence and violence against women.

Principle 1. Safety should be prioritised at all times

Research evidence suggests that at times faith leaders and faith communities may prioritise a range of factors – such as the covenant of marriage, the reputation of the family or community, or particular interpretations of sacred texts – ahead of the safety of those experiencing family violence or violence against women. Efforts to prevent or respond to family violence and/or violence against women will be ineffective, and potentially harmful, if the safety of women and children is not the first priority at all times. Different interventions have developed strategies to communicate, and ensure, this priority. These include strategies to ensure the ongoing quality of activities, and to enshrine a public commitment to safety, such as Pledges or Covenants of Performance.

Recommendation 1: Interventions to address violence support faith leaders to make a public commitment to prioritising women's and children's safety.

Principle 2. Strengthen the interpersonal relationships and institutional networking between secular organisations expert in preventing and responding to violence against women and family violence and faith leaders

Research evidence generated over many years has led international experts in violence against women and family violence in faith communities to conclude that building bridges between secular experts in violence specialist services and faith leaders is the most important plank of any prevention and/or response effort in faith communities. 'Building bridges' involves establishing personal relationships, trust and bi-directional safety for women experiencing violence. Given the turnover of staff in many specialist violence services, and the periodic relocation of faith leaders, efforts to build bridges must be sustained and repeated over time. Bridge building strategies could include regular in person meetings, and faith leaders presenting to professional development forums for violence specialists and vice versa. It may also involve building on existing personal and institutional relationships between faith

leaders and faith-based organisations who deliver family violence and violence against women response services.

Recommendation 2: Establish mechanisms for regular contact and relationship building between faith leaders and experts from local specialist violence services.

Faith leaders can provide specific support to women experiencing violence, in particular prayer and spiritual support. However they cannot, and should not be expected to, meet the complex needs of victims of family violence and violence against women. It is imperative that faith leaders are aware of local specialist services where they can refer women experiencing violence, and have the confidence and capacity to make 'warm' referrals to such services. 'Bridge building' efforts need to incorporate the development of referral pathways that faith leaders can use to refer women who have or are experiencing violence to specialist services. This would include ensuring faith leaders have written materials that contain accurate and current information about local services, in different languages as appropriate, and know how to provide this information to women safely and discreetly.

Recommendation 3: Establish referral pathways that faith leaders can use to refer women to specialist services, and ensure faith leaders have access to current information materials about local services.

A holistic approach to violence against women and family violence needs to consider primary prevention (stopping violence before it begins), secondary prevention (recognising warning signs and intervening early) and tertiary prevention (preventing further harms by through a comprehensive response to the needs of victims of violence). When violence-orientated programs and interventions are conducted with faith leaders, the increased discussion and awareness of family violence and violence against women that ensues can increase the likelihood that faith leaders receive disclosures of family violence and/or recognise signs of family violence among congregants. Therefore, even in interventions that aim primarily to build faith leaders' capacity for primary prevention, there is a need to concurrently ensure their capacity to safely and appropriately respond to disclosures.

Recommendation 4: Ensure all programs and interventions aiming to build faith leaders' capacity for prevention of violence against women and family violence also build capacity to safely and appropriately respond to women experiencing violence.

Principle 3. Interventions and responses should be co-designed and co-delivered

All evidence, from evaluated efforts to build faith leader capacity to prevent and respond to violence against women, or to build faith leader capacity to respond to other difficult social issues, suggests that interventions and programs should be jointly designed by faith leaders and sectoral experts. Promising practice emphasises the importance of ensuring that women of faith also have the opportunity to contribute to the design and delivery of programs, though it is recognised that the inherent power imbalance between women of faith and their faith leaders may make this difficult to create a space where women from the community can challenge and contest the ideas of leaders. Working towards collaborative co-design and delivery processes will take capacity building in itself (the development of negotiation skills, listening skills, trust building, respect etc).

Recommendation 5: Ensure programs to build faith leader capacity in relation to violence against women also include strategies to build the of skills of both faith leaders and sectoral experts in co-design and co-delivery

In many faith communities leadership roles have been dominated by men. This can reinforce notions of rigid gender roles and gender inequality. In the design and delivery of interventions and responses to violence against women and family violence, there is an opportunity to model men and women working respectfully and as equals in delivery of content.

Recommendation 6: Interventions – such as trainings, public statements and sermons – to address violence against women and family violence in faith communities should be jointly delivered by men and women, modelling respectful collaboration and equal contribution.

Principle 4. Ground prevention and response efforts in an understanding of the central role of gender inequality

International evidence confirms the central role of gender inequality in driving violence against women and family violence. There is considerable evidence that some faith leaders and communities may reinforce expressions of gender inequality such as men's control of decision-making or rigid gender roles and identities. Therefore, it is particularly important that prevention and response efforts in faith communities centre on the perspectives of women from the community, and recognise and build on women's leadership. This may involve establishing women's groups,

creating opportunities for women to hold formal leadership roles, ensuring the opportunity for women to contribute to the design and delivery of interventions, and proactively seeking women's feedback on proposals and programs.

Recommendation 7: Build on women's existing leadership in faith communities and foster new opportunities for women to play a leadership role in their community's response to violence against women.

With progressive change, comes a risk of resistance or even backlash. We know that resistance can intensify when social structures or deeply held values are challenged. Efforts towards gender equality and changes in gender norms can invoke strong responses in both men and women, regardless of their membership of a faith group. However, negative feelings about gender equality initiatives may be increased in faith communities where unequal gender roles are justified by convictions about scripture. Resistance is, therefore, to be expected and can be countered by planning and developing strategies concerning, for example, framing or participation (VicHealth, 2018, p.5).

Recommendation 8: Support women and faith communities to plan for and produce strategies that mitigate resistance and backlash which arises in response to gender equality initiatives and women's leadership.

Principle 5. Ground prevention and response efforts in an understanding of intersecting impact of other forms of inequality, diverse cultural perspectives, and the impact of immigration

Many faith communities in Victoria are highly diverse, with congregants from a range of ethnicities, language groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and migration pathways. Members of faith communities bring different experiences, knowledge and attitudes related to gender equality and violence to the community. Efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women and family violence in any faith community must recognise how gender inequality intersects with other inequalities – such as those that may arise because of racism, poverty, past exposure to trauma, precarious immigration status, and discrimination based on religion – to shape congregants knowledge, attitudes and experiences. Faith leaders needs skills for working cross-culturally and in a trauma-informed way with diverse congregants.

Recommendation 9: Capacity building efforts take an intersectional approach, and aim to build skills for cross-cultural and trauma-informed communication.

In some faith communities, there are insufficient faith leaders in Victoria to provide for the communities' needs. This is particularly the case in communities with rapidly growing populations, or with declining representatives pursuing a religious vocation or being ordained. Many communities support faith leaders to migrate to Australia, often for temporary periods, on a Religious Worker Visa. Some newly arrived faith leaders pursue the opportunity to permanently resettle in Australia, but in other communities there is frequent rotation of ordained leaders between congregations in Victoria and in other countries. Newly arrived faith leaders may have limited understanding of Australian law in relation to family violence and violence against women, or of local expectations in relation to gender equality and the position of women.

Recommendation 10: Provide training, resources and ongoing support to newly arrived faith leaders to increase their understanding of Australian law and local expectations

Principle 6. Build on evidence suggesting different delivery mechanisms may be appropriate for different aspects of effective prevention and response interventions

There is mixed evidence as to whether inter- or intra-faith approaches are more effective for building faith leaders' capacity to prevent and respond to family violence and violence against women. The current state of knowledge suggests that interfaith approaches may be effective for building momentum, commitment, and potentially capacity for response. They may also be a valuable mechanism for connecting with smaller faith communities and with those without denominational affiliation and hierarchical organisation. However evidence also suggests that there are very concrete challenges to an interfaith approach to primary prevention efforts, including diverse organisational and hierarchical structures and, in particular, quite different starting points in relation to attitudes and beliefs about gender and gender inequality.

Recommendation 11: Decisions about taking an intra- or inter-faith approach to efforts to prevent and/or respond to violence against women should be made with careful consideration of the similarities and differences between different faith communities, particularly in relation to views about gender and gender inequality.

Evaluated interventions to build faith leader capacity in prevention and response to violence against women highlight benefits and limitations associated with different modalities for delivering programs. The current state of knowledge would suggest that curricula based on peer mentoring and or dialogical approaches (with sustained 'refresher' activities) is most effective for supporting sustained change in attitudes and practices/behaviours in relation to prevention of and response to violence against women and family violence. Online approaches would appear to be a valuable adjunct, particularly for disseminating information and increasing knowledge. Online approaches may engage busy faith leaders, who would be unavailable to attend face to face training or workshops, but at this stage there is insufficient evidence that they can change behaviours (on their own).

Recommendation 12: Face to face peer mentoring and dialogical approaches are used in interventions aiming to change attitudes and behaviours.

Effective and promising interventions have commonly devoted significant time and resources to workshopping and piloting training materials, particularly in relation to language (including translation into different languages, but more particularly identifying what words will resonate with faith leaders in relation to sacred teachings and texts and identifying what choice of words may engender resistance).

Recommendation 13: Ensure sufficient time (and budget) is allocated to the drafting, piloting and workshopping of training materials and resources with representatives of intended audiences.

Principle 7. Engage senior leadership early and sustain engagement over time

In faith communities where there are clear governance structures, and hierarchical organisation, all evidence suggests that engaging senior leadership early in the planning of an intervention to address violence against women and family violence will enhance recruitment of participants, investment of organisational resources, community wide awareness of the intervention, and reduce potential resistance.

Recommendation 14: Allocate sufficient time and resources to solicit support from senior leadership early in the planning of any intervention, and sustain engagement with them through the life of the program.

While recommendation 12 is feasible for faith communities where there are clear decision making channels, there is little evidence about effective approaches to engaging faith leaders and engendering change in faith communities that

do not have clear governance structures or hierarchical organisation, or are completely decentralised. Further research is needed as to the most effective approaches to leadership engagement in faith communities with diverse organisation structures.

Recommendation 15: Liaise with umbrella groups or representative bodies from non-hierarchical faith communities as to the most appropriate and sustainable approach to engaging their leadership.

Principle 8. Strengthen the evidence based by ensuring robust evaluation of interventions and supporting targeted research

Review of the current state of knowledge about causes of and contributing factors to violence against women and family violence in faith settings, and about building the capacity of faith leaders to appropriately and effectively act to prevent and respond, suggests a number of substantial evidence gaps.

As highlighted in section 2.1, there is considerable evidence about the causes of and contributing factors to violence against women and family violence in particular faith settings. Given what is already known, further research on causes and contributing factors in (the majority of) Christian, Muslim and Jewish faith communities is less a priority than increasing understanding of causes and contributing factors in other faith communities relevant to the Victorian (and international) context. This research should include a particular focus on increasing understanding of how these contributing factors intersect with diverse cultures and experiences of migration.

Recommendation 16: Support research that can build understanding of causes and contributing factors to violence against women and family violence in Buddhist, Sikh, Hindu and other non-Abrahamic faith communities, as well as in Orthodox and Restorationist Christian communities.

There are major evidence gaps as to 'what works' in building the capacity of faith leaders to respond safely, effectively and appropriately to violence against women and family violence, and in how the capacity of faith leaders to contribute to primary prevention can best be strengthened. In part, this reflects the limited resources that have been made available to the faith sector for engaging in the prevention of and response to violence against women and family violence, meaning that there has been insufficient funding, time and skills to undertake robust evaluation

of interventions. There is urgent need to generate data based on the evaluation of short, medium and longer-term impacts of capacity building efforts. In particular, there is a need to develop strategies for collecting data about change in individual behaviours, community practices and institutional structures, rather than focusing only on short term change in knowledge, attitudes and intentions. Where possible tools should align with *Counting on Change: A guide to prevention monitoring* (Our Watch, 2017), to measure contribution towards prevention, as well as including measures of contribution towards response (such as referrals to specialist services).

Recommendation 17: Support faith communities to develop tools and frameworks for measuring short, medium and long-term impacts of efforts to build faith leader and faith community capacity, including measuring changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, community practices and institutional structures.

At present there is little to no evidence about effective approaches to engaging men of faith who use violence. There are substantial efforts underway in Victoria to strengthen the evidence underpinning perpetrator programs, including for programs working with perpetrators from specific cultural or linguistic backgrounds. However, to date there has been limited engagement with how faith (for example, the particular interpretations of sacred texts or teachings) may contribute to the perpetration of violence against women and family violence. While some of the key organisations working with men who use violence are faith-based organisations (e.g. UnitingCare Kildonan), it is unclear if 'mainstream' men's behaviour change programs or holistic perpetrator programs, as currently delivered in Victoria, are effective for religious men.

Recommendation 18: Support organisations leading perpetrator programs to work in partnership with faith communities and faith leaders to conduct targeted research to identify the most appropriate strategies for engaging, and changing the behaviour of, religious men who use violence.

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Appendix 1: Key organisations focusing on the role of faith leaders in the prevention of and response to violence against women and family violence

Faith Trust Institute: www.faithtrustinstitute.org

The Faith Trust Institute was founded in 1977 and is a US-based, multifaith initiative working to end sexual and domestic violence. Many other US-based initiatives are based on training organisations and individuals have received through the Faith Trust Institute. The website houses a large collection of resources and materials that could be used in training, including resources specifically developed for working with Christian, Jewish and Muslim women experiencing violence. It also contains resources relevant to clergy sexual abuse, though there is less consideration of responses to clergy as perpetrators of family violence. Links to webinars and some training materials. No information about how materials are used, or evaluation of their impact.

HEART Women and Girls: www.heartwomenandgirls.org

A US-based organisation aiming to promote sexual health education and prevent sexual violence in Muslim communities. Their website contains resources specific to sexual violence, including fact sheets, videos, tools for communities, and training materials service providers in effectively working with Muslim women who have experienced sexual violence (including addressing gendered Islamophobia). One of the few organisations to have a number of resources focused on non-partner sexual violence. No information about how materials are used, or evaluation of their impact.

Peaceful Families Project: www.peacefulfamilies.org

A US based national organisation that focuses on prevention of and response to domestic violence in Muslim families of diverse backgrounds. The Peaceful Families Project was founded in 2000 as the Muslim program of the Faith Trust Institute, but is now an independent organisation conducting advocacy and running trainings, with some training materials available on their website. They run national Imam training, based on the training package Garments for One Another: Ending domestic violence in Muslim families which is available for purchase on their website. No information about how materials are used, or evaluation of their impact.

The RAVE (Religion and Violence E-learning) project: www.theraveproject.org

Focused on Christian faith communities, and based on the long-standing research program of Canadian academic Nancy Nason-Clark, Baptist pastor and researcher Stephen McMullin and colleagues, this website is an e-learning resource for faith leaders and congregations, focused on dissemination of materials and resources. These resources include downloadable examples of sermons on family violence, selected scripture verses, fact sheets, and modules designed to raise clergy awareness. While the website's materials are based on research, no evidence is presented for they are used and the impact of their dissemination has not been evaluated.

Restored: www.restoredrelationships.org

An international Christian alliance specifically working to end violence against women through churches and faith settings. The website provides links to a range of resources, such as 'church packs' (including fact sheets, posters, awareness raising material), resources for men's groups, tools for church self-assessment, and example declarations by leaders. Materials are available from a range of settings around the world, and in different languages, however there is no information about how materials have been used or on the impact of their dissemination.

Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership: www.interfaithpartners.org

A US-based, interfaith partnership against domestic violence. The partnership's website has links to printed resources, webinars, and fact sheets. The materials focus on the Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities, and include example sermons and statements. No information about how materials are used, or evaluation of their impact.

SAFER: www.saferresource.org.au

SAFER is an Australian online tool designed by Common Grace as a resource for Christian leaders and communities to better respond to victims of family violence. It includes pages outlining why domestic violence is a faith issue; on gender inequality and the Church; on recognising violence and responding appropriately; on holding perpetrators to account; and links to a range of Bible studies, liturgical resources, sermon outlines. As a wholly online resource, it is difficult to know how materials are used and there has been no evaluation of their impact.

Note that many other faith-based organisations address violence against women as a major part of their work (including, for example, Jewish Women International) and many other organisations working to address violence against women and family violence include engagement with faith communities as part of their work (including, for example, White Ribbon).

Appendix 2: Links to prevention-focused manuals, practice guidelines and training resources for faith leaders

Indicates materials developed in the Australian context

* Anglican Diocese of Melbourne (nd). *Anglicans helping to prevent violence against women*. This website, has links to a number of prevention focused materials. Available at

Berghm J. and Uggla, F. (2017). *Church and Gender Equality: Resource and tool box*. PMU (Swedish Pentecostal movement). Available at http://sidebysidegender.org/church-gender-equality-new-resource-and-tool-box-from-pmu/

* CHALLENGE Family Violence Project. (2015). *Promoting Equality and Respect: An interfaith collaboration on preventing family violence*. Cities of Casey, Cardinia and Greater Dandenong. Available at

Christian Aid. (2017). *Improving the choices and opportunities for adolescent girls: A toolkit for faith leaders*. Abuja, Christian Aid. Available at https://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/about-us/improving-choices-and-opportunities-adolescent-girls-toolkit-faith-leaders

* Darebin City Council. (2016). *Respect: A guide for Muslim leaders to promote equal and respectful relationships*. Women's Health in the North. Available at www.darebin.vic.gov.au

Haque, T. (2018). *Believe in Change: A toolkit for the Catholic community to promote gender equality*. London, CAFOD. Available at https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/More-issues/Gender

* Holmes, S. (2012). Promoting Equal and Respectful Relationships in Faith Communities: A Manual and Tool Kit. City of Darebin and VicHealth. Available at http://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/ServingCommunity/src/Prevention%20of%20Violence%20Against%20Women/Promoting-equal-and-respectful-relationships-manual-and-tool-kit-Feb-2012.pdf

* Holmes, S. (2011). *Anglican Peer Mentor Program: Equipping Anglican Leaders in Violence Prevention*. Anglican Diocese of Melbourne. Available at http://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/ServingCommunity/src/Prevention%20of%20Violence%20Against%20Women/Anglican-peer-mentor-program-print-copy-2013-(1).pdf

North Carolina Coalition against Domestic Violence. (2011). *Eve's Peace Toolkit: Ending violence by establishing policies to enhance and create equity*. Durham, NCCADV. Available at https://nccadv.org/images/pdfs/NCCADVEVEsPEACEToolkit2011b.pdf

Raising Voices (2016). *SASA! Faith: A guide for faith communities to prevent violence against women and HIV*. Raising Voices and Trocaire. Available at https://www.trocaire.org/resources/policyandadvocacy/sasa-faith-guide-faith-communities-prevent-violence-against-women-and-hiv
(This resource is designed to be used with Christian and Muslim faith leaders)

Tearfund. (2017). *Transforming masculinities: A training manual for gender champions*. Tearfund
https://learn.tearfund.org/~/media/files/tilz/sgbv/2017-tearfund-transforming-masculinities-en.pdf?la=en
(This resource is designed to be used with Christian and Muslim faith leaders)

Appendix 3: Links to response-focused manuals, practice guidelines and training resources for faith leaders

* Indicates materials developed in the Australian context

Alper, E., Miles, A., and Coffey, V. (2005). *Responding to Domestic Violence: An interfaith guide to prevention and intervention*. Chicago, Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network Interfaith Committee Against Domestic Violence. Available at https://www.familyministries.org/files/1.1.1.%20Responding%20to%20Domestic%20Violence%20An%20Interfaith%20Guide.pdf#page=26

* Anglican Diocese of Sydney. (2018). *Responding to domestic abuse: Policy and good practice guidelines*. Available at https://safeministry.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Responding-to-Domestic-Abuse-Policy-Guidelines-and-Resources.pdf

* Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights. (2011). *Muslim Women, Islam and Family Violence: A guide for changing the way we work with Muslim women experiencing family violence*. North Fitzroy, AMWCHR. Available at http://ausmuslimwomenscentre.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/women-oppose-violence-workers-guide.pdf
(While not focused specifically on faith leaders, this is one of the few Australian examples of a resource aiming to build capacity in relation to family violence in the Muslim community).

Canadian Council of Muslim Women (2016). *Engaging men and boys to end violence in the family toolkit*. Gananoque, Canadian Council of Muslim Women. Available at http://ccmw.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ga-ccmw-white-ribbon-toolkit.pdf
(This resource aims to build the capacity of male leaders, including faith leaders)

* Catholic Social Services Victoria. (2017). *Responding to Domestic Violence: A parish resource kit*. Available at http://www.css.org.au/Domestic-Violence/Article/21343/Parish-Resource-Kit-to-support-our-response-to-domestic-violence#.XD1lkK30jMV

Christian Aid. (2016). *Loving one another: A biblical discussion toolkit on gender-based violence*. Christian Aid. Available at https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-08/loving-one-another-biblical-discussion-toolkit-2016.pdf

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FaithAction. (Nd). *Faith and Domestic Abuse: Recommendations for faith leaders*. Dagenham, FaithAction. Available at http://www.faithaction.net/portal/wp-content/uploads/FaithAction_Faith_and_Domestic_Abuse.pdf

Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Faith Trust Institute. (Nd). *Faith and Intimate Partner Violence: Handbook for Advocates*. State of Florida Department of Children and Families. Available at http://fcadv.org/sites/default/files/FaithDVWebVersion.pdf

* Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence Inc. (2011). *Will my Rabbi believe me? Will he understand? Responding to discloses of family violence in a rabbinic context*. Caulfield, The Rabbinical Council of Victoria and JTAFV
(Only available online as an attachment to the JTAFV submission to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence: http://www.rcfv.com.au/getattachment/0BE1B867-BA54-4C21-A193-55385C093CAD/Jewish-Taskforce-Against-Family-Violence)

Jewish Women International. (2011). *Embracing Justice: A Guide for Jewish Clergy on Domestic Abuse (updated edition)*. Jewish Women International. Available at https://static1.squarespace.com/static/568aa781a976af7af9b0e2d3/t/56fc24a001dbaec598922069/1459365025013/JWI+Clergy+Guide+2011.pdf

National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States. (2002). *Guidelines for spiritual assemblies on domestic violence: A supplement to developing distinctive Baha'i communities*. Available at http://bahai-library.com/nsa_guidelines_domestic_violence

New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Governor's Office of Faith Based Community Development Services. (Nd). *Domestic Violence and Faith Communities: Guidelines for Leaders*. New York State. Available at http://opdv.ny.gov/professionals/faith/guidelines.pdf

Restored (Nd). *Ending domestic abuse: A pack for churches*. Available at https://restored.contentfiles.net/media/resources/files/Pack_for_Churches_2016_CwlOjRQ.pdf

* Uniting Care Wesley. (2010). *Domestic Violence Handbook: For clergy and pastoral workers (2nd revision)*. Adelaide, UnitingCare Wesley. Available at http://www.sacc.asn.au/_data/DV_Handbook.pdf

We Will Speak Out.US. (Nd). *Sacred Spaces: A resource for faith communities to prevent and respond to sexual and gender based violence*. Will We Speak Out.US. Available at https://wewillspeakout.us/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Sacred-Spaces-.pdf