

Respectful relationships

Promoting gender equality & preventing gender-based violence



Gender inequality and gender-based violence in Australia

- Intimate partner violence (IPV) is the leading contributor to preventable death and illness for women aged between 18 to 44 in Australia (AIHW, 2018).
- One woman is killed by intimate partner every nine days while one man is killed every 29 days by an intimate partner (AIHW, 2019).
- Domestic and family violence (DFV) is the leading cause of homelessness for women and children in Australia (Equity Economics, 2021). 9,120 women become homeless annually after leaving due to DFV.
- In 2021, over a quarter of homicides were related to DFV (ABS, 2022).
- The gender pay gap in Australia is currently 14.1% (WGEA, 2022).
 - In the health care and social assistance industry the gender pay gap is 22.2% (WGEA, 2022).
- The World Economic Forum predicts it will take 135.6 years to close the global gender gap.

Key drivers of gender inequality and gender-based violence: What does the evidence say?

- Gender inequality is *the* key driver of gender-based violence.
- Australia's national prevention framework, *Change the Story*, identifies four drivers of gender-based violence including:
 - Condoning of violence against women.
 - Men's control of decision making and limits to women's independence in public and private life.
 - Rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity
 - Male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control (Our Watch, 2021).
- Initiatives to promote gender equality and prevent gender-based violence need to target settings where people live, work, learn and play.
- Violence supportive attitudes have been linked to traditional attitudes towards gender roles and low support for gender equality (Australian Institute of Criminology [AIC], The Social Research Centre, & VicHealth, 2010; Uthman et al., 2009; VicHealth, 2014; Webster et al., 2018).
- To achieve gender equality we need to address rigid gender stereotypes and norms.

What's problematic about gender norms and stereotypes?

- Gendered norms are gender-based assumptions around capability and weaknesses.
 - For example, men are better breadwinners and women are better homemakers.
- Gender stereotypes are generalisations about the attributes, characteristics and roles that men and women possess or perform.
 - For example, men are confident and competitive and therefore better suited to positions of power and leadership. Women are emotional and therefore are not suited to positions of power and leadership.
- Gender stereotypes intersect with other stereotypes to have a compounding negative impact of certain groups of women. e.g. women with disability, First Nations women, migrant women and more.
- Rigid gender stereotypes affect everyone – they restrict people's choices, opportunities and capacity to develop their personal abilities.
- Gender stereotypes can lead to prejudice and discrimination based on a perceived incongruency between gender stereotypes and role requirements.

Masculine norms, sexism and violence

- Some masculine norms are connected to sexism and violence
- While note all men (nor all women) agree with the dominant cultural masculine norms, many men feel pressure from society to conform to them.

Promundo identified five social processes where masculine norms shape the likelihood of men and boys experiencing or perpetrating violence:

1. Achieving socially recognised manhood
2. Policing masculine performance
3. “Gendering” the heart
4. Dividing spaces and cultures by gender
5. Reinforcing patriarchal power

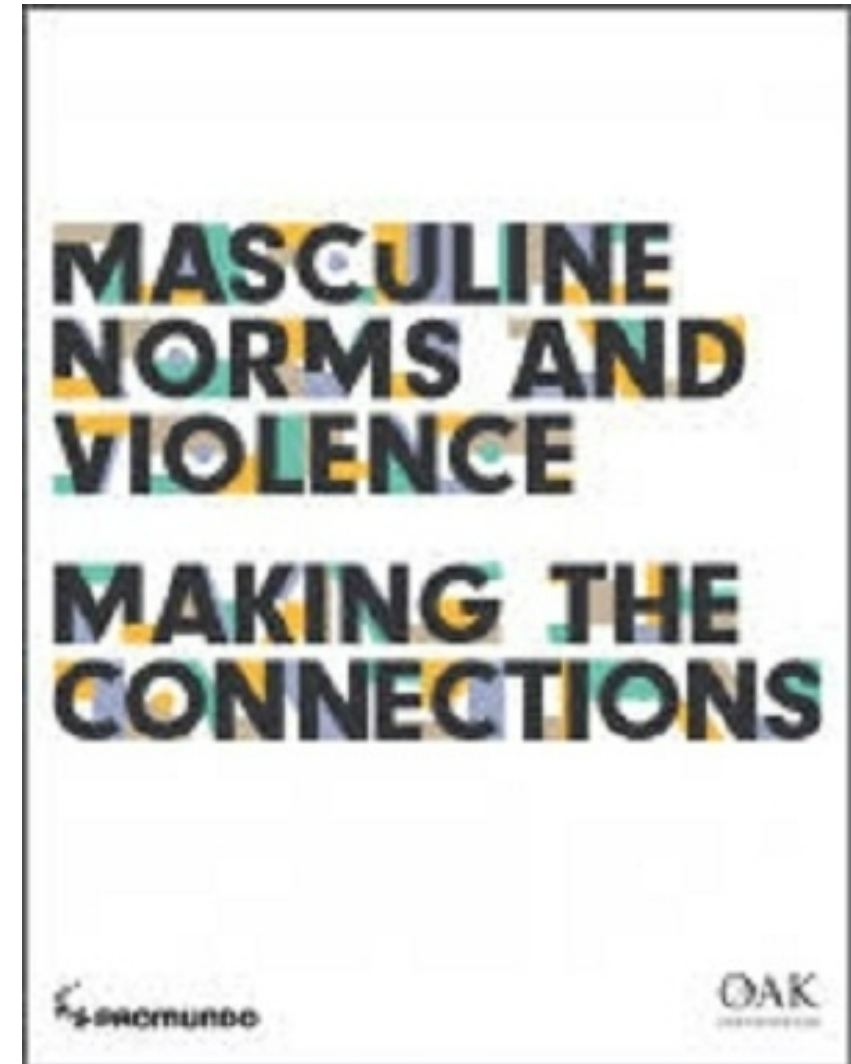
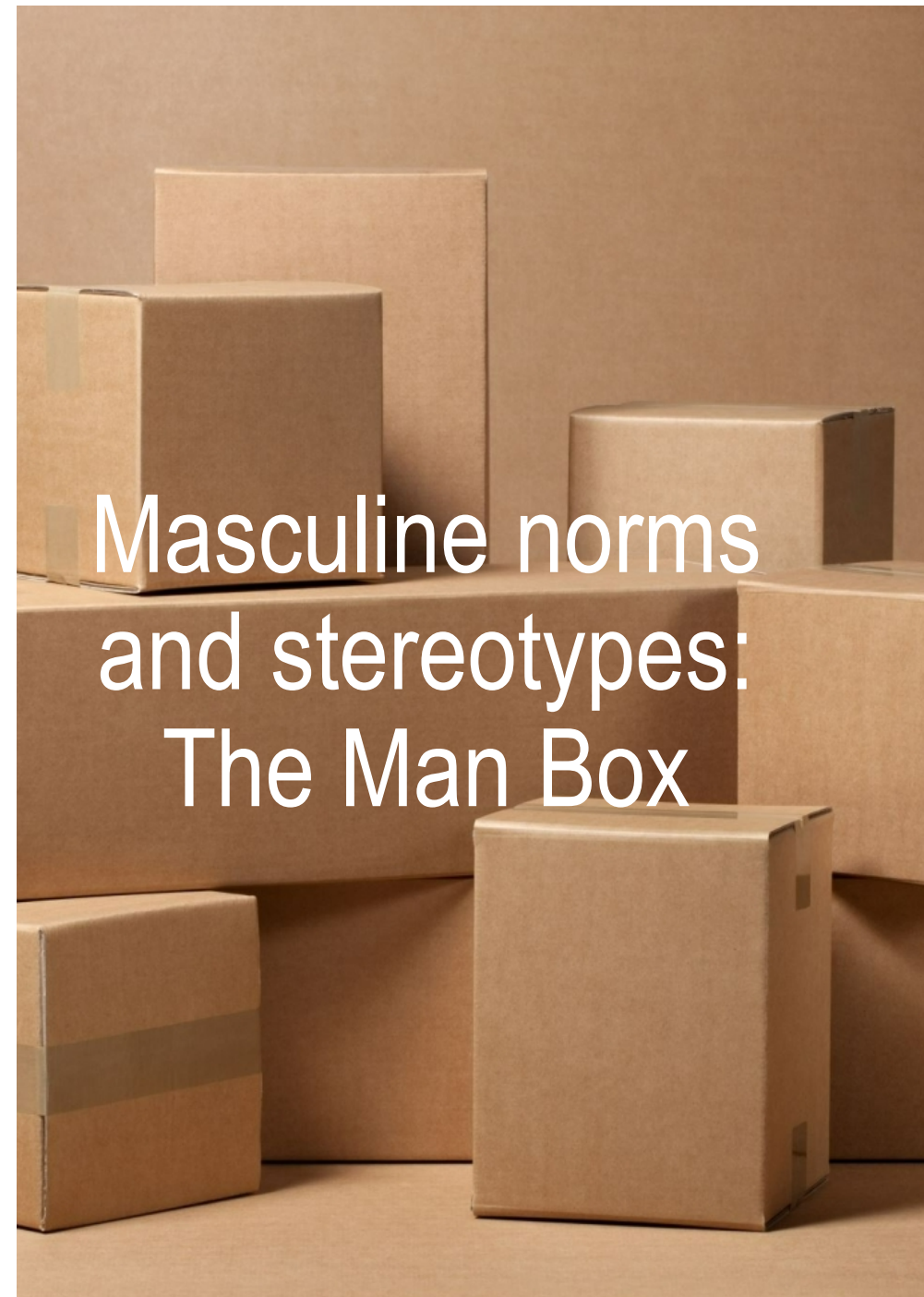


Table 1: Overview of the Man Box

Pillar	Man Box Messages
Self-Sufficiency	A man who talks a lot about his worries, fears, and problems shouldn't really get respect.
	Men should figure out their personal problems on their own without asking others for help.
Acting Tough	A guy who doesn't fight back when others push him around is weak.
	Guys should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous inside.
Physical Attractiveness	It is very hard for a man to be successful if he doesn't look good.
	Women don't go for guys who fuss too much about their clothes, hair, and skin.
	A guy who spends a lot of time on his looks isn't very manly.
Rigid Gender Roles	It is not good for a boy to be taught how to cook, sew, clean the house or take care of younger children.
	A man shouldn't have to do household chores.
	Men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women.
Heterosexuality and Homophobia	A gay guy is not a 'real man'.
	Straight guys being friends with gay guys is totally fine and normal. (reverse scored)
Hypersexuality	A 'real man' should have as many sexual partners as he can.
	A 'real man' would never say no to sex.
Aggression and Control	Men should use violence to get respect if necessary.
	A man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationship or marriage.
	If a guy has a girlfriend or wife, he deserves to know where she is all the time.



Masculine norms and stereotypes: The Man Box

How can you drive change to build respectful relationship in our community?

- Respectful relationships education is a key part of our national approach to preventing gender-based violence.
- Respectful relationships promote respect, inclusion and gender equality.
- The global evidence base highlights the importance of addressing the gender-based inequities that underly gender-based violence including critical discussions of gender roles, norms and relations in primary prevention interventions (Barker, Ricardo and Nascimento, 2007; Casey et al., 2018; Glinski, Schwenke, O'Brien-Milne & Farley, 2018; Our Watch, 2017).
- This requires a *gender-transformative approach* that critically examines gender related norms and expectations and transforms people's understandings of gender roles and promotes gender equitable relationships (Gupta, 2000; ICRW, 2018; Our Watch, 2017).
- Workplaces play can key role in promoting respectful relationships and creating a society where everyone is equal, safe and valued.



**Learn more about the Monash Gender & Family Violence
Prevention Centre**

Website: <https://arts.monash.edu/gender-and-family-violence/>

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