**The Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability**

What is the aim of the Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability?

The Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability (WDV’s Workforce Development Program) is a primary prevention strategy aimed to prevent violence against women with disabilities, improve gender and disability responsive service practice and ultimately improve the status and opportunities of women with disabilities.

This program has been providing the disability sector with training in the following areas:

* Gender and disability intersectionality
* Violence prevention against women with disabilities
* Gender equitable and responsive practice

Fundament to this program is our co-facilitation model. This model has been very successful in bringing together women with disabilities and prevention partners to ensure high quality training design, development, implementation and delivery from both a women with disabilities expert lived experience perspective and a violence prevention perspective.

The program is evidence based aligning with Our Watch’s ‘Change the Story’ explanatory model of violence, and focusing on the fundamental contributor section of the Preventing Family Violence & Violence against Women Capability Framework.

The training package comes in a range of options from half day to a whole of organisational change approach program. Each program will vary in depth and knowledge covered based on what is right for your organisations. Below are some of the content that is covered. **:**

* Introductions, purpose and disclaimer
* Identifying areas of gender and disability inequality and intersectionality
* Considering equity and equality
* Considering the structures, norms and practices (Social model and gender inequality) and addressing unconscious bias, bystander and gender and disability responsive practice
* Defining, identifying and exploring violence against women with disabilities
* Introducing violence prevention – change the story and the drivers of violence
* Exploring the drivers of violence, their intersection with gender and disability and strategies to prevent violence against women with disabilities. For example
	+ Drivers
		- Condoning of violence against women
		- Men’s control of decision-making and limits to women’s independence in public and private life
		- Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity
		- Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women.
	+ Strategies to prevent violence against women with disabilities
		- Challenge condoning of violence against women and women with disabilities
		- Promote women’s independence and decision-making in public life and relationships
		- Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles
		- Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys

Why is this program important?

On all measures of social and economic participation (housing, security, income, employment and education), women with disabilities experience high levels of disadvantage compared to women and men without disabilities.

Women with disabilities are less likely than women without disabilities to receive appropriate health services, particularly breast and cervical cancer screening programs, bone density testing, menopause and incontinence management.

Women with disabilities are more likely to have their human rights abused and experience higher rates of violence than other women and men without disabilities, such as sexual assault, being exposed to practices which qualify as torture, inhumane or degrading treatment such as interventions to control fertility, forced medication, and chemical restraint.

Recent findings from both the Royal Commission on Family Violence and the Parliamentary Inquiry into Abuse in Disability Services highlight the important role that support services, managers, coordinators and community mental health and dual disability practitioners have in addressing gender and disability inequality and preventing violence against women before it occurs.

Which organisations can engage with training from the Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability?

The program works with disability, advocacy and government organisations that work with or have stakeholders that are women with disabilities. Over the last four years, WDV’s Workforce Development Program has delivered gender equity and violence prevention training to ten disability organisations, with staff at all levels of the organisation including executive, senior management, leadership and direct service staff.

Who funded the project?

This program was established in 2014 and has successfully completed three funding stages over the last four years. The Victorian Government funded the project over 2013-14 and 2014-15 as an initiative under the Action Plan to Address Violence against Women and Children 2012-2015. The program was provided extension funding on 2016-2017. Recently the program received a further four years funding commitment under the Family Violence Industry Plan, Office for Prevention and Women’s Equality for the next four years (2017-2021).

Where can I find more information?

If you are interesting the Workforce Program on Gender and Disability and would like to discuss more about training, tailoring and/or a partnership, please contact Women with Disabilities Victoria.

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