

SPOTLIGHT ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

It is difficult to accurately ascertain incidence of sexual assault, as victims may be reluctant to report for a variety of reasons. Reporting rates are also affected by the definitions of 'sexual assault' used, and the design and administration of surveys. As a result of these factors, figures that are available for the incidence of sexual assault are likely to underestimate the extent of the problem.

Women are most likely to experience sexual violence from a previous or cohabiting partner, a boyfriend/girlfriend or date (AIHW, 2018). Australian DFV workers believe that 90-100% of their female clients have experienced intimate partner sexual violence (IPSV) (Backhouse & Toivonen, 2018). IPSV puts someone at a much higher risk of being killed, particularly if they are also being physically assaulted (Toivonen & Backhouse, 2018).

Sexual assault is a complex crime with far reaching consequences for individuals, families and the community as a whole. Embodied in sexual assault are dynamics of power and control and deep cultural norms, especially gender norms. Thus it demands significant commitment, not only by the Western Australian Government but by the wider community, to champion change in social attitudes and accountability.

Sexual assault is part of a continuum of violence, ranging from inappropriate sexual behaviour, to sexual harassment to sexual assault. It is important that prevention, early intervention, response and support for victims and survivors is led by government and owned by everyone. This would ensure a coordinated response that involves prevention, early intervention and education, perpetrator accountability and evidence based therapeutic support for victims and survivors.

Given the prevalence of sexual violence, and disturbing community attitudes to sexual violence reported in the latest National Community Attitudes Survey findings, a high level strategic response is essential. Please join us to launch the report: 'A snapshot of sexual violence, prevention and response in Western Australia'.



Professor Donna Chung will present on sexual violence across the spectrum and the life course.

A panel will discuss key issues for sexual violence prevention and response

The report 'A Snapshot of Sexual Violence, Prevention and Response in Western Australia' will be launched and key recommendations to government will be made.

Date: 12 November 2020

Time: 9.15 am (registration) 9.30am to 12.00pm

Location: Room 7, City West Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street, West Perth.

To register to attend please email Alison Evans at: aevans@wchnwa.org.au noting any dietary requirements. Registrations close October 30th, 2020.