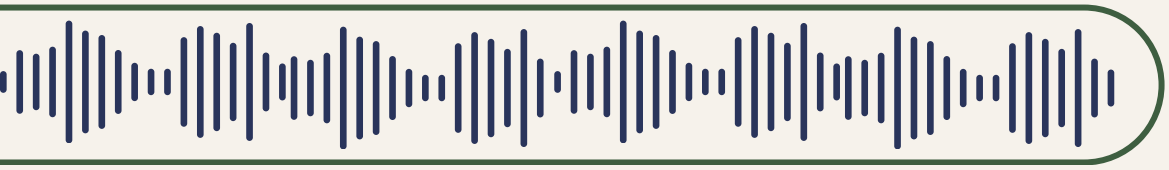
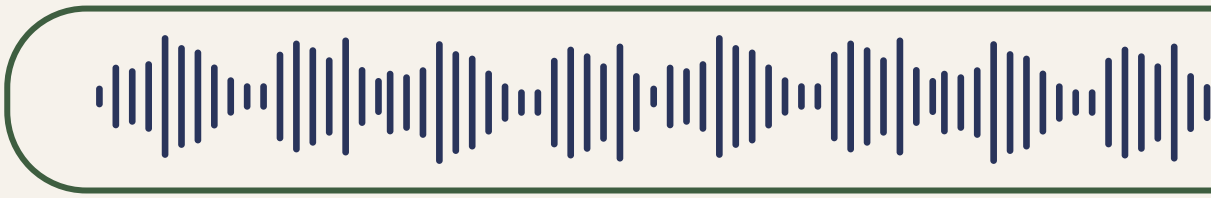
Australian Muslim Women's
Centre for Human Rights
Equality without Exception





Voices for Change: Engaging Muslim Men in the Prevention of Family Violence

RESEARCH REPORT

Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights
Equality without Exception

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About us

This report has been developed by the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights (AMWCHR). AMWCHR is an organisation of Muslim women leading change to advance the rights and status of Muslim women in Australia.

We bring over 30 years of experience in providing one-to-one support to Muslim women, young women and children, developing and delivering community education and capacity-building programs to raise awareness and shift prevailing attitudes. We also work as advocates - researching, publishing, informing policy decisions and reform initiatives as well as offering training and consultation to increase sector capacity to recognise and respond to the needs of Muslim women, young women and children.

As one of the leading voices for Muslim women's rights in Australia, we challenge the most immediate and pertinent issues Muslim women face every day. We promote Muslim women's right to self-determination - recognising the inherent agency that already exists and bringing issues of inequality and disadvantage to light.

AMWCHR works with individuals, the community, partner organisations and government to advocate for equality within the Australian context. This report is designed to highlight learnings and insights from our work in community to contribute to greater awareness and understanding of the unique challenges and barriers facing Muslim men in relation to family violence prevention, and identify opportunities to increase men's engagement in this area.

Acknowledgement of Country

This report recognises that gender, race, and religion intersect to create multiple forms of discrimination and violence against Muslim women, particularly in a context of growing Islamophobia. It also recognises that preventing prejudice in all forms is bound to the struggles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Before we can successfully tackle issues within our communities, we must address the ongoing impacts of colonisation, systemic racism, and discrimination in all its forms in this country.

AMWCHR acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands our organisation is located on and where we conduct our work. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present. AMWCHR is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters, and seas and their rich contribution to society.

Special thanks

AMWCHR acknowledges and expresses sincere gratitude to all AMWCHR staff who contributed to this project. Their guidance and expertise were invaluable throughout the project and report. We would also like to extend our gratitude to Aman Karimi, Yasmin Hammoud, Hala Abdelnour and Dr Asha Bedar, whose advice, expertise, support and guidance was instrumental in the development of this report, along with all research participants whose insights shaped and informed our research findings.

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A note on language: what do we mean when we say ‘prevention’?

When this project began, it was with the intention of focussing solely on primary prevention of family violence (FV) in Muslim communities. Our Voices for Change community program – delivered to boys, girls, and mothers – followed a community-based primary prevention model. That is, it sought to prevent violence occurring in the first place. However, upon beginning the research, it became clear that participants wished to discuss issues that went beyond primary prevention – into secondary prevention (or early intervention) as well as tertiary prevention (or response). Sometimes prevention efforts were seen to be most impactful if the violence was prevented from continuing (tertiary prevention/response), or if a child who had grown up in a home with violence was provided the supports to prevent victimisation or perpetration as adults (secondary prevention/early intervention). Consequently, while the predominant focus of this research is on community-based primary prevention initiatives, there are elements that fall outside of this model.

This work is grounded in the underlying driver of violence against women and children – gender inequality. It also speaks to the intersecting reinforcing factors, especially those which are unique or significantly felt within Muslim communities. While in some cases, work across the spectrum of prevention overlaps and links together, we have endeavoured to be specific throughout to make clear which aspects of prevention work we are speaking to, and at what level of society (individual, community, structural, societal) that work should be targeted.

1. Executive Summary

The Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights (AMWCHR) has been working in the family violence (FV) space for over 30 years. We work across the FV continuum – from primary prevention, to early intervention, response, and recovery. Through our established experience, one issue that is consistently highlighted is the lack of services and initiatives catering to Muslim men and boys, in particular within the primary prevention domain. It has been widely recognised that to achieve effective and sustained prevention of FV, it is critical to engage men and boys – as parents, partners, community/religious leaders, and individuals.

This research project sought to identify and outline some of the barriers inhibiting Muslim men's engagement in FV prevention and identify the ways in which these barriers can be overcome. The study obtained insights from 23 participants representing various community groups. Focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews were undertaken with Muslim men, women, young men, young women, male community leaders, and practitioners working as specialist family violence (SFV) case managers. In the interviews and FGDs, participants were asked about their own and their communities' understanding of FV and healthy relationships, including the key FV drivers and cultural/religious contexts they exist in. They were also asked about what role they believed men in their community – including community/religious leaders – were currently playing in the prevention of FV, and what, if anything, they could be doing better.

The results showed that there are some knowledge gaps related to men's knowledge and understanding of the drivers of FV. Participants spoke of the impacts of patriarchal expectations, masculinities, and gendered family roles, and that like in Australian society broadly, patriarchy and ideas surrounding masculinity were seen to be limiting women's equality and placing rigid expectations upon men too. Yet participants also stated that these issues were not widely recognised as contributing to FV.

Findings also suggested that men are not yet contributing to the prevention of FV to the degree that is required to achieve widespread change. There were several barriers inhibiting involvement in formal and informal prevention initiatives. These barriers were structural, cultural, and individual. The structural barriers included the lack of culturally conscious, safe, and strengths-based educational initiatives for Muslim men, financial pressures and everyday responsibilities which diminish men's capacity to engage, and ongoing impacts of discrimination and stereotyping of Muslim men which prevents engagement or contributes to disengagement. There were also elements of masculinity impacting men's willingness to engage, indicating that, as in Australian society broadly, many men remain resistant to taking accountability for their role and responsibility in the prevention of FV. Programs and initiatives that address these barriers and which draw on community values will galvanise men, including those who are already contributing to FV prevention in individual and unofficial ways.

Participants believed that community and religious leaders have a central role to play in the prevention of FV. While there are some religious leaders who are committed to upholding gender-equal values and messaging, others may be reinforcing attitudes that

contribute to the normalisation of unequal relationships and exacerbate drivers of FV. Areas of concern include mediation and religious and cultural advice, where family unity is sometimes prioritised over safety and equality. More work needs to be done to ensure faith leaders are preserving the shared social and religious values of equality and safety.

Participants also highlighted that upholding the wellbeing of others is of central importance in their various cultures and religion. Appealing to these values of individual, familial, and community wellbeing – and to culture and religion broadly - can be a mobilising and legitimising tool in the prevention of FV. As such, participants believed that cultural and religious values should be incorporated into community-led prevention initiatives.

Participants believed that one of the most impactful ways that FV can be prevented in Muslim communities is if young men and boys are widely engaged and exposed to prevention initiatives. Men and boys must be provided with appropriate information, role models, and social supports to grow their understanding of underlying drivers of FV and become active allies and participants in promoting community values of equality, wellbeing, and women's rights. At the same time, to effect generational shifts, parents must be widely engaged in parenting programs to build capacity around gender-equal parenting and address any biases that may be perpetuating gendered roles which favour boys and young men.

When it came to how programs and initiatives should be delivered to men and boys, participants believed that educational messages would be most effective when delivered by individuals from the same community and cultural/religious/linguistic background as the intended audience. This will ensure the initiatives speak to a place of shared understanding, values, and contexts. Strengths-based frameworks should be adopted to include rather than alienate Muslim men.

In light of these findings, AMWCHR recommends that culturally-appropriate programs be developed to better engage Muslim men, young men, and parents in the prevention of FV. Building on this evidence base, AMWCHR has developed the ***'Framework for Engaging Muslim Men in the Prevention of Family Violence'*** - a tool which provides some guiding principles for use when developing such initiatives.

2. Introduction

In 2021, AMWCHR was funded under Victorian Government FV prevention funding to deliver its Voices for Change (VFC) project. VFC sought to raise awareness and build capacity amongst Muslim communities in Victoria to prevent FV.

To date, the Voices for Change project has incorporated group-based primary prevention programs for Muslim women, young women, young men, girls, and boys. These programs explored FV, healthy relationships, parenting for equality, and the role of culture, religion, and community on understandings of gender equality. The final element of the Voices for Change project is the delivery of a framework for engaging Muslim men in FV prevention. This research project forms the evidence base for the creation of the framework.

Grounded in data from consultations with experts in the field, interviews with community leaders and SFV practitioners, and focus group discussions with Muslim men, women, and young people, this research seeks to contribute to broader understanding of how to engage Muslim men as active participants in FV prevention.

3. Background

3.1. Family violence in Muslim communities

Family violence remains a pervasive issue globally as well as in Australia (WHO, 2021; ABS, 2023). National estimates indicate that 20% of Australian adults have experienced physical and/or sexual FV since the age of 15, while 19% have experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner since the age of 15 (ABS, 2023). FV is well established as a gendered issue, with women experiencing abuse at a significantly higher rate compared to men, and men overwhelmingly being the perpetrators of abuse (Our Watch et al., 2015). It is worth noting that prevalence data for FV is likely to underestimate the true extent of abuse due to gaps in data collection, variations in data collection methods, a lack of understanding of what constitutes FV, as well as stigma, taboo, and barriers that prevent victim-survivors disclosing abuse (Garcia-Moreno, et al., 2005; Barlow & Walklate, 2022; Femi-Ajao et al., 2020).

When it comes to Australian Muslim communities specifically, no empirical research exists that denotes the prevalence of FV in the Muslim community. Research into FV in Australia is primarily based on aggregate data, or at best, is disaggregated into the broad category of 'Culturally and Linguistically Diverse' (CALD). Yet we know that, as in all communities, FV does occur within Muslim families, who may also face greater compounding risk factors. Such factors include those common amongst marginalised populations in Australia, such as poverty (Matjasko et al., 2013; Hassan, 2015), trauma (Voith, 2023; Rees & Moussa, 2023), systemic inequalities (Allard, Slight, Higgs, 2023), along with factors associated with migration and especially insecure migration status (Segrave et al., 2021). Migration in particular has the potential to intersect with experiences of FV, and punitive, inaccessible, and complex migration systems can compound violence against women (Canning 2020).

For Muslim women in non-Muslim majority countries, systemic barriers to support can have a significant impact on help-seeking behaviours. Muslim women in the west may face a 'double vulnerability' to violence, with social exclusion and racism contributing to men's use of violence, and the same issues preventing access to supports and interventions (Afrouz et al., 2020). In this context, Muslim women can experience a 'double bind' which 'makes it difficult for non-white women to speak out about sexism in their communities without feeling complicit in the overall racist discourse about non-white men' (Krayem & Krayem, 2021: 85). Many Muslim women who experience FV do not seek support, in part because of the double bind, but also due to a lack of information, language barriers, and fear of police or justice system interventions (El Matrah, Bedar & Lotia, 2011). The meaning of violence can also vary between and within cultures (Kraus, 2006), which, when moving to a new country, can impact a person's perception of their experiences of violence. This culturally informed understanding of abuse may cause migrant and refugee Muslim women to be unaware that they are experiencing FV.

Additionally, the central importance of marriage, family values, and privacy in many Muslim communities can create feelings of shame and guilt when speaking out (Alhabib et al., 2010; Bucci, 2012). Muslim communities can be highly collectivist (Basurrah et al., 2022), with the welfare of the family and community as a whole considered of central importance to ethical and religious obligations. While in many ways these strong social bonds within Muslim communities are a strength, in the context of FV, they can also present issues for victim-survivors when family and community members believe that above all else, maintaining family unity is the most important thing. This can mean that victim-survivors struggle to seek help and safety and/or leave an abusive situation. There may also be a genuine belief on the part of victim-survivors themselves that it is better to remain in an intact but violent household, rather than separating children from their father (El Matrah, Bedar & Lotia, 2011). The role that experiences of forced displacement and traumatic migration journeys play in these belief systems is significant, often resulting in trauma related to extreme insecurity in citizenship, homelessness, and poverty. To leave the family unit that you have faced – and perhaps overcome – such challenges with, is unthinkable for some victim-survivors.

Due to the combined effects of systemic barriers to support, as well as cultural norms and preferences, many Australian Muslim women experiencing violence often view religious leaders as the first line of support (Elhelw Wright, 2023; Ghafournia, 2017). Yet these experiences are not always positive, and women can face victim-blaming and pressure to remain in the abusive relationship (Ghafournia & Easteal, 2019; Krayem & Funston, 2023). Some research also suggests that Muslim women who experience FV in Australia experience little or no support from Imams for a religious divorce (Afrouz et al., 2020; Ghafournia & Easteal, 2019; Buckley, 2019). Whilst religious leaders are a key intervention point when it comes to FV due to their significant influence and opportunities to disrupt FV, their responses may be compounding rather than addressing issues for Muslim women. They may also be reinforcing ideas which do not support women's safety and agency.

3.2. Family violence prevention: The Australian response

In Australia – and many other parts of the world – violence prevention strategies target violence risk at various stages; primary prevention aims to prevent both the use of violence as well as victimisation, before the violence occurs, through changing structures, norms, and social factors that drive violence; secondary prevention (or early intervention) aims to change the trajectory for individuals who are at a higher than average risk of using or experiencing violence; tertiary prevention (or response) aims to prevent further violence through supporting victim-survivors, holding perpetrators accountable, and facilitating behavioural change to ensure perpetrators are prevented from using violence with the same or other person going forward (Our Watch, 2021). What this means is that prevention activities occur across the spectrum of the FV continuum. However, primary prevention is unique in that it addresses violence before it begins through universal activities targeting the population at large, alongside tailored approaches for specific audiences.

The sociocultural factor most frequently centred in prevention work is gender inequality (Ricardo, Eads, & Barker, 2011), as this is identified as the root of the social condition conducive to violence against women and children (Heise & Kotsadam, 2015; WHO, 2010).

However, there are generally understood to be four common drivers of FV and a further five reinforcing factors. The gendered drivers include: 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 stereotypes constructions of masculinity and femininity; and male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women (Our Watch, 2021). The reinforcing factors, within the context of the gendered drivers, can increase the frequency, type, or severity of violence. These reinforcing factors include: condoning of violence in general; experience of, and exposure to violence; weakening of pro-social behaviour, especially harmful use of alcohol; socio-economic inequality and discrimination; and backlash factors (increases in violence when male dominance, power, or status is challenged) (Our Watch, 2021). Primary prevention initiatives often address the gendered drivers of abuse by taking a gender-transformative approach to practice, seeking to identify individual and societal attitudes and biases that perpetuate men's power over women (and children), and reframe these attitudes towards more egalitarian and gender-equal beliefs.

Various state and federal governments have developed a number of policies and frameworks to collectively address family violence in Australia. Australia's national approach to primary prevention is primarily informed by Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (Our Watch, 2021). The Change the Story Framework also provides the evidence based used for the prevention components of the Commonwealth Government's National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 (the National Plan), as well as a range of state and territory government strategies. The National Plan is an ambitious document that aims to '[end] violence against women and children in Australia in one generation' by, in part, 'reshap[ing] the social, political and economic aspects of our society that allow gender inequality and discrimination to continue' (DSS, 2022: 14). To do this, the National Plan denotes the importance of addressing the intergenerational nature of violence and violence-condoning attitudes through prevention work inside the home. Specifically, it recommends that prevention work focuses on, amongst other things, 'engag[ing] fathers or those in caring roles and support and encourage them to build the skills to be a good father and to develop healthy attitudes about parenting, including shared responsibilities' (DSS, 2022: 108). The government-run Personal Safety Survey (PSS) will be utilised as a key monitoring tool to evaluate the National Plan's effectiveness over time (Diemer, 2023).

Yet when looking at the PSS, we can see that there is still a long way to go to rid Australian society of gender-based violence. While attitudes condoning gender inequality and violent behaviour have been declining over the past decade in Australia (Coumarelos et al., 2023), rates of FV remain high (PSS, 2022). Data on the declining level of acceptance of gender inequality is also nuanced, with Australia's National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) showing that attitudes supporting gender equality in the private sphere, where FV occurs, are more widely held than those supporting gender inequality in the public sphere (Webster et al., 2018). There were also variations in levels of acceptance based on migration status and language spoken at home, with people who had recently arrived to Australia, and those who spoke languages other than English having lower levels of understanding of FV and gender equality (Coumarelos et al., 2023)[1].

These results do not indicate that FV is more prevalent in migrant communities – and there is no evidence to suggest it is. Rather, they are more indicative of the need for prevention work that targets populations that may have specific language or educational needs, as these communities are likely to be alienated from generalist programs.

State and Federal governments are aware of the gaps in service provision to diverse communities. In the past decade, the Commonwealth and Victorian Government have invested unprecedented amounts in the prevention of FV (Safe and Equal, 2023; FVRIM, 2022). Following recommendations from Victoria's Royal Commission into Family Violence (RCFV), the Victorian Government developed the state's 'Free from Violence Strategy'. The Strategy focuses on primary prevention through three 'key phases': building the infrastructure and systems for prevention and expanding what is already working; strengthening whole of community efforts and actions; and maintaining these efforts while simultaneously refining, strengthening, and building on past efforts and initiatives (DPC, 2017). Outlining progress and gaps in FV prevention and response initiatives is the Victorian Government's Strong Foundations document, which identifies government priorities following the implementation of all 227 recommendations made by the RCFV (DFFH, 2023). Both federal and state governments have also identified priority groups that are currently underserved by conventional FV initiatives, and which may have specific prevention and intervention needs (Government of Victoria, 2019). Government policies and frameworks highlight CALD communities, including refugee and migrant communities, as requiring more meaningful and specialised support (DSS, 2022; DPC, 2016). As Muslim communities are often considered a sub-set of CALD due to religious affiliation, language, migration status, and cultural/ethnic ancestry (ABS, 2022), these targeted provisions are intended to fill service gaps for Muslim communities too.

3.3. Prevention needs and initiatives for Australian Muslim communities

Although CALD communities broadly have been identified as a priority group for FV prevention and response initiatives, Muslim communities have very specific FV prevention needs. CALD is a broad category, and Muslim communities are already an incredibly heterogeneous mix of cultures, backgrounds, religious sects, and migration experiences (Hassan & Lester, 2015). Muslim communities are also positioned as a highly politicised group, where decades of surveillance, over-policing, and Islamophobia that have utilised highly gendered narratives (Akbarzadeh, 2020) have further alienated Muslims from the services preventing and responding to FV, including FV organisations, police, and the legal system. This context, diversity, and specialised need are not yet reflected in Australia's prevention initiatives. AMWCHR has attempted to rectify this service gap through engaging in formal and informal prevention work with Muslim men and boys. This has included the Voices for Change project, but also previous programs such as our Family Resilience Project, and our Muslim Boys action-research project. These initiatives have proved successful, though have not yet been implemented on a wider scale due to one-off funding periods. AMWCHR's work with Muslim women and girls has been implemented more intensively, though we recognise that building capacity around FV prevention with girls and women only will not affect long-term change. These challenges are reflected in the wider FV prevention sector, where formal prevention work within Muslim communities is small-scale at best, and prevention work with Muslim men specifically is even more limited. This includes men

[1] The NCAS is based on a total sample of 19,100 people, of which only 116 interviews were conducted in a language other than English. We therefore recommend caution when using the results of the NCAS to definitively characterise migrant and refugee communities' understanding of gender equality and FV, as language barriers, cultural barriers, and other surveying methodologies may impact the results.

in their individual capacities, as well as men in their professional and civic roles as community and religious leaders. Evidently, current prevention work is not speaking to Muslim men.

Community-level FV prevention initiatives in Australia have traditionally and to this day remained relatively generalist. Muslim men – and particularly migrant and refugee Muslim men and boys – are rarely seen or heard in this work. The failure to engage and cater to Muslim men in prevention initiatives means that FV in Muslim communities will persist, with rates becoming stratified compared to the Australian population as a whole. Further, a generalist approach to FV prevention fails to incorporate the many diverse talents, knowledge, and strengths that Muslim men and communities can bring to an area that has not yet achieved its goal of widespread reduction in FV in Australia. Creating more dynamic, inclusive, culturally appropriate, and adaptive prevention initiatives may well be the answer that the sector and society is looking for when it comes to reducing violence in our communities.

4. Research Methods

To create an evidence base for the creation of a framework to engage Muslim men in the prevention of FV, this study focusses on the following research questions:

1. **What are the current knowledge gaps and barriers in Muslim men's understandings of FV and healthy relationships?**

2. **What role, if any, are Muslim men are currently playing in the prevention of FV in their families and communities?**

3. **What role, if any, are Muslim community/religious leaders currently playing in the prevention of FV in their communities?**

4. **How can Muslim men, including community/religious leaders, be encouraged to play a more meaningful role in the prevention of FV in their families and communities?**

To answer these research questions, focus group discussions (FGD) were undertaken with Muslim men, women, young men, and young women. In addition, interviews with male community leaders and practitioners working as SFV case workers were performed. In total, 10 Muslim men and 13 Muslim women were recruited for participation.

In the interviews and FGDs, participants were asked about their own and their communities' understanding of FV and healthy relationships, including the drivers and cultural and religious context. They were also asked about what role they believed men in their community – including community and religious leaders – were currently playing in the prevention of FV, and what, if anything, they could be doing better. The interview and FGD data were manually coded and

thematically analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2022) to identify and draw out common beliefs and experiences across groups.

Participants came from a range of cultural backgrounds. All participants had come to Australia as migrants or refugees, with some having arrived in recent years, and others having been in Australia for several decades. Many participants were living in multi-generational families with parents, grandparents, or in-laws. Others had migrated to Australia with immediate family only. Additional demographics related to participants' cultural backgrounds can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Participants' cultural backgrounds

CULTURAL BACKGROUND	NO. OF PARTICIPANTS
Community leaders	
Afghan	3
Egyptian	1
Practitioners	
Egyptian	1
Afghan	1
Sudanese	1
Women/young women	
Afghan	5
Pakistani	2
Indonesian	3
Men/young men	
Afghan	3

5. Results from interviews and focus group discussions

> *If I position myself as being a woman, I would see the world very differently, very differently. I am being bound by limitation, being bound by expectations that have been put on me – whether from family, whether from the community.*
>
> ***- Male community leader 3***

In entering interviews and focus groups with participants, discussions around FV were intended to focus predominantly on primary prevention. While prevention was a large part of the conversation, participants also shared stories and issues they had observed which related to FV intervention and response. It was decided that some of this content would be included, as many of the issues identified, though discussed in the context of intervention, are also relevant when formulating preventative initiatives for Muslim men.

It is also recognised that preventing FV in future generations relies upon effective interventions in FV cases today, to break the cycle of violence and to support young victim-survivors. Participants' thoughts and experiences can therefore provide insight into the barriers that exist for Muslim men, women, and children within primary prevention, but also aspects of secondary and tertiary prevention too.

It is also important to emphasise that the results below should be read in conjunction with the Discussion section of this report, which provides additional analysis of the research findings and situates the findings within relevant structural, cultural, and material contexts for Muslim communities.

5.1. Muslim men's knowledge surrounding drivers and manifestations of FV

On the whole, participants believed that there was still much that men could learn when it comes to FV, especially in terms of the drivers and manifestations, and the barriers inhibiting safety for women and children. Participants believed that men had good knowledge and recognition of the physical aspects of FV, though the non-physical aspects – coercive control, financial abuse, spiritual abuse – were less understood.

> *Just the overt ones [are recognised]. So when we say overt, we generally refer specifically to physical violence. I think financial violence, I don't think would be recognised. Sexual violence is highly taboo and not spoken about. Spiritual violence or religious violence is definitely not something [that's] clearly understood, and the concept has been developing over the last five years a lot more*
>
> ***- Male community leader 4***

When asked what they believed to be driving issues of FV in their communities, many participants spoke of the impacts of patriarchal expectations and gendered family roles. Like in Australian society broadly, patriarchy and ideas surrounding masculinity were seen to be limiting women's equality and placing rigid expectations upon men too. Yet participants stated that these issues were not widely recognised as contributing to FV. Many participants spoke of the role of gender (in)equality in the home and in society broadly as a normalising factor for FV. Participants believed that these gendered beliefs are learnt early, passed from generation to generation, and can also impact women's perceptions of their own role in the home, family, and society. Consequently, participants believed that individuals may not necessarily recognise or understand what constitutes FV, even if they are experiencing it themselves.

> *The drivers are always gender roles and expectations... men are the decision-makers, the men are the providers, men hold all decisions - they are the kind of the pillar of the household and the family... And this is something that could honestly be ingrained in you as a child - you look around you and your grandmother has grown in this space, and your mother has grown in those spaces... So women genuinely believe that this is their role and this is all their capability and men believe this is their role and this is all their capability.*
>
> ***-SFV case manager 1***

5.2. Community perceptions and family unity in the context of family violence

Participants believed that these gendered beliefs are learnt early, passed from generation to generation, and can also impact women's perceptions of their own role in the home, family, and society.

One of the challenges that participants highlighted when it comes to building on the community's engagement in prevention work and their understanding of FV is the language and way that FV is currently spoken about in mainstream prevention initiatives. Participants shared that there remains a high level of stigma when talking about FV in their communities, which subsequently impacts people's understanding of the issues and access to accurate information about FV. Participants also spoke about the high level of mistrust of the FV sector and services that produce the educational material intended to rectify these knowledge gaps. It was identified that significant fears of child protection, racial bias, and previous negative experiences with government and services was resulting in a mistrust of the FV sector.

Two participants, both of whom are SFV case managers, also attributed some of this mistrust of prevention initiatives to the perception that the FV system and professionals within encourage or support the breakdown of families. This is further reflected in community interviews and focus groups which echoed fears around the breakdown of families . Many, if not all, participants spoke about the importance of family unity and togetherness in their respective communities. While in general, commitment to family wellbeing and solidarity is a positive, in cases of FV, a strong emphasis on family unity can also present as a barrier to help-seeking. Consequently, participants shared that in families where there were risk factors for violence, or even violence itself, several things may happen that relate to the emphasis on family unity. Firstly, women may choose to remain in the abusive situation because they believe it is preferable to stay as a family unit rather than separate the children from their father or other family members; secondly, women may speak up, but face discouragement from family, community members, and community or religious leaders, who may prefer a form of mediation over separation; lastly, if women do leave a violent situation, they may experience ostracisation, judgement, and stigma within their cultural or religious community, as they can be viewed as the instigators of the family breakdown and erosion of cultural identity and continuity.

Consequently, due to the strong emphasis on family unity in their communities, participants spoke of mediation as being a common tool for responding to issues in families, often with the intention of preventing separation or divorce, even in cases of FV.

> *I avoid saying the word 'family violence'... Once we say violence, [they will] get detached from our service. They feel like we are there to ruin the family - the Muslim families. We are there to take their children from them to be raised by non-Muslims.*
>
> ***-SFV case manager 2***

If issues get worse, they [couples] try to discuss with an elder or community leaders and stuff, like how to sort it out.

-Community member 13, young women's FGD

So many [couples] do call their scholar first to get some advice – they tell them what's happening and ask what they think. And they try and talk to them and the wife. And they try to sort it out.

-Community member 7, women's FGD

There is community attitude of stigma and shame around divorce, around family violence terminology, and also family violence itself.

-Male community leader 2

While participants highlighted the emphasis on mediation as a response to many familial issues in their communities, including FV, there were mixed views in the levels of support for this practice. Some participants highlighted that mediation by community elders or leaders could be problematic in cases of FV if the person mediating lacks substantial understanding of FV and cannot work to centre victim survivors' safety and wellbeing. Yet other participants believed that when it came to prevention work specifically, there was a place for mediation and that this was a long-standing practice that drew upon the community trust of elders and leaders. While in its current form, there may be areas for improvement, these participants believed that there were many instances in which mediation could be used as a preventative tool to encourage healthy relationship dynamics and ways of communicating.

5.3. Culture and faith as a preventative as well as weaponised tool in the context of FV

Participants believed that there were many instances in which mediation could be used as a preventative tool to encourage healthy relationship dynamics and ways of communicating.

It was important to understand where participants believed culture and religion sat in discussions of FV – as preventative factors, exacerbating factors, both, or neither. Culture and religion are infinitely complex, diverse, and individually as well as collectively understood concepts. However, there was consensus among participants that Islam was not a contributing factor for FV in their communities. Rather, their faith was a supporter of equality and women's rights. Unfortunately, in practice, religion was sometimes misused to justify gendered drivers of violence and harmful masculinities that favour male power and control.

I think people are starting to understand that people who are perpetuating violence often use the faith as one of the points, because we know that people that are perpetrators of violence will use whatever tool they can to perpetuate that violence. And for so many Muslims, their faith is such an integral part of their life... And what can happen is that... distance starts to build between them and their faith because they see the faith as the problem, not as a tool being used by perpetrators to perpetuate violence.

-Male community leader 4

Islam, like any other religion, can be misinterpreted or misused in an attempt to justify the gendered drivers of abuse or abuse itself. This type of spiritual abuse, participants believed, was driven by cultural factors including patriarchy, which allowed for the misuse of religion to justify power and control. Participants did not believe that patriarchal culture was unique to their communities. However, they believed that when combined with religion, it was difficult to disentangle the two and push back against the mischaracterisation and misuse of their faith as a tool to uphold gender inequality and justify abusive behaviours. Many participants spoke about the tension between their faith, in which FV was not accepted, and aspects of their cultural contexts, which contributed to normalising certain drivers of FV –

There was consensus among participants that Islam was not a contributing factor for family violence in their communities. Rather, their faith was a supporter of equality and women's rights.

There is no doubt that religion, and certainly in Islam, there is no tolerance of DV. There is no point of doing that DV... the culture thing is really really so complex, because there's no rules. Culture does not have any boundaries. Islam has set statements and guidance from Muslims, but the culture is getting impacted from one community to another community.

-Community member 13, young women's FGD

In my community in Indonesia, based on what I've observed, people tend to put culture first and then religion second.... the [religious] mentors here are saying, 'as a woman, you should be doing this, this, this, this. And as a woman, you have to obey your husband, you have to obey men'. This is very closely related to the culture, when in fact, when I learned about religion myself by actually looking at the Qur'an and stuff, it actually says a different thing.

-Community member 14, young women's FGD

Despite participants believing that patriarchal mindsets were creating environments in which unequal relationships were sometimes normalised, there was also a consistent belief that in order to prevent FV in participants' respective communities, culture and religion was a central mobilising and legitimising tool. To effectively utilise culture and religion was not viewed as an easy task. As many participants spoke about how religious practice had been imbued with patriarchal bias, undoing that bias is therefore necessary. For example, several participants spoke emphatically about elements of the faith that demonstrated women's

participants spoke emphatically about elements of the faith that demonstrated women's equality and rights. Yet, these elements were not often referenced in social or religious contexts. So, incorporating these gender-positive elements into FV prevention efforts was viewed as a readily available tool. There were also many aspects of participants' cultures that could likewise be drawn from simultaneously, to strengthen and make meaning in the prevention of FV. Namely, values of community connectedness, collective safety and wellbeing, generosity, respect, and equality. It was these shared values that participants believed were already doing much of the preventative work to build strong communities and families, and which could be further leveraged when continuing this work in an official capacity.

> *It is very obvious that culture and religion plays a crucial role in preventing the FV – especially the culture, which is a combination of values, language, norms, regulations that exist within our relationships and our communities... In our culture it's been prevented not to disrespect each other. In our culture it is recognised that disrespect is very bad – that is something that would impact the children of the family too. And in our religion, Islam is always recognising the prevention of family violence and it's never allowing anyone to disrespect and violate each other's rights.*
>
> ***-Male community Leader 3***

5.4. The role men are currently playing in the prevention of FV

Men's roles and responsibilities with regards to preventing FV are complex and multifaceted. Participants believed they held responsibilities as individuals, as parents, as friends, and as community members to model positive behaviour, be active bystanders, and engage in more official types of prevention efforts. In speaking about men's levels of engagement with FV prevention efforts, participants were careful not to paint all men with the same brush. It is important to emphasise that there are countless men who are positive role models and who encourage change inside and outside of their families. Some participants referenced their own parents, friends, and family members as an example of the strong advocates that men can be in the prevention of FV and achievement of gender equality.

There was a consistent belief that in order to prevent FV in participants' respective communities, culture and religion was a central mobilising and legitimising tool.

In a general sense, however, there was a strong perception that many Muslim men are not yet actively engaging to meaningfully create change, remain accountable for their role in prevention, and decrease rates of FV. Some participants also spoke about the role that men were playing in comparison to women, who they perceived as being more active, participating in more community events and conversations around healthy relationships and women's rights, and actively employing these beliefs within their parenting and relationships.

There were several reasons participants suggested as to why men were not yet engaging fully in the prevention of FV in their families and communities. These included systemic

barriers related to poverty, financial hardship and pressure, and a lack of meaningful initiatives that are culturally safe spaces to engage. Participants also highlighted migrational challenges that shape individual and collective capacity to engage in the work to shift ideas and FV behaviour, as well as the cultural context in which current initiatives are taking place. Lastly, concepts of masculinity were seen as a barrier preventing men from taking accountability and an active role in prevention.

[I feel like with a lot of men, even if they know, or, for instance, if a friend of theirs is engaging in family violence, they won't do anything about it... because a lot of people just don't want to go up against their friends or be controversial about it.

-Community member 11, young men's FGD

[Male community members] protect their female households from any violence from outside their household, but they keep doing violence within their household. They want to protect from others, but not from themselves.

-Community member 13, young women's FGD

5.5. Barriers to engaging: Priorities, responsibilities, and masculinities

A common barrier that was highlighted by participants was that men in community are often so overwhelmed with the real and/or the conceptual responsibility to dedicate themselves to their working life, that their capacity to contribute to, and impact social change, is reduced. Many participants spoke about men who have something positive to contribute, who demonstrate positive masculinity, and who are active and supportive parents and partners, but whose capacity to engage in prevention initiatives is diminished by career and economic pressures. This pressure was believed to come from necessity in some instances – having a real need to work long hours to support families – while in other instances, it was associated with cultural norms and expectations for men to be overly invested in their work.

Participants believed they held responsibilities as individuals, as parents, as friends, and as community members to model positive behaviour, be active bystanders, and engage in more official types of prevention efforts.

There's a high expectation from men to wake up early – 5 in the morning – and then come back at 5pm. So physically they are under pressure.

-Community member 1, men's FGD.

[Men] are out from dawn to dark, to be able to support their family financially... and they have limited opportunities to have a chat or conversation around [family violence].

-Male community leader 3

I know in Sydney, one of my close friends was someone who studied traditional Islam for many, many years with scholars from overseas. For six, eight months after he came back from studies, he was bricklaying during the day, breaking his back to earn a living to feed his family... there are people that have amazing viewpoints... But they're just not given the platform to do that. Or they're so bothered by the little mundane things about life upkeep.

-Male community leader 3

Participants believed that the pressures related to being the primary or sole income source in their home meant that men had limited time to spend with their families. In turn, this causes strained relationships, minimal opportunities for modelling positive behaviours, and on top of the financial difficulties that some families face, could contribute to volatile home environments. In other situations, fathers may be demonstrating positive behaviours at home, but their impact was constrained by these factors, and their skills and knowledge underutilised. In the face of these immediate issues, it may be the case that Muslim men are experiencing a high level of pressure as sole or primary income earners in the family. In turn, this is impacting capacity to engage with FV prevention initiatives – at least in any official or organised capacity.

It must also be emphasised that the issues highlighted above do, in some cases, come down to prioritisation, resignation, and expectations related to masculinity. As mentioned, participants shared that some men in their communities were not just invested in their work, they were overly invested in their work. In these instances, there is prioritisation of work above engagement in official and non-official activities that contribute to breaking down the gendered drivers of abuse. As some participants argued,

There's always this expectation of this gender binary – being a man means that you have to feed the family, you are the breadwinner... power is attached to that relationship.

-Male Community Leader 1

Men in our society try to be the head of the family. They try to take all the responsibility of the family in terms of finances... that's the expectation of men in general...they believe it's a crucial role and they're good at being the breadwinner.

-Male Community Leader 2

There was a strongly felt belief amongst participants that some men accept and respond to these gendered expectations to provide for their families, and in doing so, limit their own capacity to engage in other aspects of family life and parenting that can contribute to the prevention of FV. While participants believed that many men in their communities were driven by very real responsibilities, financial pressures, and economic insecurity, this was a contextual factor and additional barrier to their engagement. It was not, however, one which removed their responsibility or accountability in this space, especially the case where low rates of engagement were attributed to the choice to prioritise their work.

5.6. Barriers to engaging: Intersections with migration and displacement

Migration was consistently raised throughout interviews as an important contextual factor when speaking about men's role in the prevention of FV. There were several ways in which migration intersected with the issue of FV prevention. Firstly, participants believed that the trauma, stress, and pressures that can often come alongside migration and displacement, and the limited supports on offer, can negatively impact protective factors for FV in Muslim communities. These pressures and expectations can be seen above through men being overworked and disengaged from families. Secondly, participants believed that the changed norms and expectations related to family roles and responsibilities were an additional pressure, as men grappled with issues of identity amidst limited outlets for expressing and seeking help around these concerns. Lastly, participants highlighted that social connectedness with one's cultural community is of critical importance, as it was within these contexts that community members feel inclusion and protection from external experiences of discrimination. As a result, when harmful expressions of masculinity do arise, the cost of speaking out may be social ostracisation. Participants believed this left some men reluctant to push back against these norms. These experiences culminated in considerable barriers to men's engagement in the prevention of FV and conversations around gender equality and healthy relationships both inside and outside of their families.

Participants believed that the changed norms and expectations related to family roles and responsibilities were an additional pressure, as men grappled with issues of identity amidst limited outlets for expressing and seeking help around these concerns.

There were a number of issues that participants pointed to which demonstrated how migrational challenges impacted families' wellbeing. Some participants suggested that the changing relationships following migration, and the changing societal norms that women and men were exposed to in Australia was causing men to question their identity and roles within their families and impacting their capacity to display positive partnership and parenting. Some of these changing expectations were external, coming from broader Australian society, while in other cases, participants spoke about women in the community expecting more support from their husbands inside the home following migration.

> *Since we have moved there are lot of expectations. We are exposed to a lot of different cultures. We can see that the Australian girls, the women have freedom… the women [in our community] want more freedom to go out, seek a job, socialise with friends. And so the men think they're losing control.*
>
> ***-Community member 4, women's FGD***

> *I think that when we're living in a country where there's a lot of freedom and choice for the ladies, they want to keep the family together. They just show, 'yes, I have the power'. Even though inside they're against that behaviour, they still have to do it otherwise they think they might lose their wife or children. So they have to show that control.*
>
> ***-Community member 9, women's FGD***

While the above participants spoke about the increased freedom that women experience in Australia, these freedoms may exist primarily at a conceptual level, at least in the initial period of settlement. Numerous participants raised this issue in interviews, highlighting how the stress, pressure, isolation, and reliance on one another following migration can simultaneously bring families closer together, while also exacerbate tensions and issues.

The participants who spoke of migration and displacement changing family dynamics also related this to the vastly different support systems that women had in their country of origins compared to Australia. For example, one participant stated that in Australia, 'the wife expects more from her husband and the husband expects more from the wife' (Community member 4, women's FGD). Other participants also spoke about these changed expectations, stating that life was 'simple' back at home. In Australia, however, due to choice or necessity, women were more frequently working outside the home and were often living in a more nuclear family structure, all while taking on the same amount of domestic responsibilities - 'Everything is the woman's job' (Community member 9, women's FGD). Participants believed that this was causing some women to feel a lot of stress, pressure, and fatigue in their lives. It also caused them, in some instances, to renegotiate roles within their household to encourage their husbands to take on a larger share of domestic duties, which men weren't always open to doing. Consequently, there was sometimes active resistance from men to display more gender-balanced roles inside the home, which are often viewed as integral to the breaking down of gendered drivers of FV.

Some participants believed that due to the difficulty of migration – language barriers, discrimination, having to learn new systems and skills – some community members are reluctant to push back against gendered norms lest they be ostracised from their community and lose that integral support

In other instances, the migration journey was perceived to be a barrier to men's engagement in the prevention of FV due to the reliance on one's cultural community in the face of migrational difficulties. Some participants believed that due to the difficulty of migration – language barriers, discrimination, having to learn new systems and skills – some community members are reluctant to push back against gendered norms lest they be ostracised from their community and lose that integral support -

> *The idea of families staying together no matter what [is] exacerbated by the migration journey… because you feel safer within that kind of community structure… It gives you a sense of connection and identity…. [In my own community] people will not look at me differently because the colour of my skin, or the language I speak, or the food I like, or the clothes I dress [in], or my faith or my religion, or my choices in life. I feel they understand me… But it comes with a price. It comes with a price. I have to do wherever to confine within that cultural norm, otherwise I will be rejected from my community.*
>
> ***-SFV case manager 1***

Participants suggested that the consequence of this aspect of the migration journey with relation to FV is twofold: First, those who are already experiencing violence may view it as

preferable to stay in a violent situation, rather than lose a community that is so integral to their wellbeing and survival. Secondly, this intersection also inhibits prevention efforts, as men who wish to be more vocal in their objection to norms which may drive or reinforce violent behaviours, may likewise choose to accept those norms rather than face ostracisation. Fear of ostracisation may be particularly acute in an environment where new migrants and refugees face considerable structural barriers to settlement and inclusion.

5.7. Barriers to engaging: Social norms and distrust of FV prevention initiatives

When discussing the barriers that are preventing Muslim men's engagement in the prevention of FV, there was a general belief that levels of engagement existed on a spectrum. While some men were able to actively promote and advocate for healthy relationships and gender equality, others were highly resistant. In between these two ends of the spectrum were many men who, though they might have the desire and capacity to increase their participation in FV prevention initiatives, felt they faced social norms and contexts that discouraged such behaviour.

> *We should be playing more of a role in this space… Part of the thing is that it's not normalised – such conversations. It's very difficult to speak about these things. In communities. Like if I'm at a party or something and I go, 'let's talk about FV', that will not be an accepted conversation unfortunately. I think it should be.*
>
> ***-Community member 10, young men's FGD***

For those who did not engage in the first instance, one participant stated that this was sometimes due to 'judgement - Some of them do not want to be judged by the Muslim community' (SFV case manager 2). This judgement, they believed, was driven by the belief that being more outspoken about gender equality, women's rights, and FV prevention in Muslim communities could be associated with becoming 'very western' and 'not Muslim enough' (SFV case manager 2). This perception that engaging in FV prevention is indicative of becoming westernised is likely tied to distrust of systems and services which have often marginalised Muslim communities. FV prevention initiatives, especially if not culturally-informed, may therefore be experienced, at best, as part of the disintegration of community systems, traditions, and values that occurs in migration from Muslim majority countries. At worst, they may be viewed as a deliberate attempt to undermine or threaten these systems, traditions, and values.

Participants did highlight that western models of FV prevention have not yet had a measurable impact on mobilising FV prevention efforts in Muslim communities. These initiatives, participants believed, are not appropriate for preventing FV in Muslim communities, where men require in-language, community-led programs that speak to participants' specific cultural and religious contexts and ideas of masculinity, gendered expectations, and the many pressures and barriers that Muslim, migrant, and refugee communities face. Due to these barriers, participants believed that many men in their community were discouraged from engaging in FV prevention at all, and for those who did attempt to engage, faced considerable hurdles along the way. Nevertheless, there were many men who, despite these barriers, were able to 'show up' in the prevention of FV. It was these men who participants hoped to galvanise more widely to take on a larger role, create wider attitudinal shifts, and set new standards for engagement across communities.

I acknowledge the attempts towards a better conversation in our families, especially in Australia... We have a lot of men who are way better than [most] men – way better at showing up.

-Male community leader 3

5.8. The role of faith/community leaders in the prevention of FV

Central to the conversation about Muslim men's contribution towards the prevention of FV is the role that community and faith leaders are playing in prevention efforts, and what role the community and FV sector believes they ought to be playing. Participants were asked about this, some of whom were community leaders themselves. Overwhelmingly, participants believed two things: That community leaders, and faith leaders in particular, can play a central role in the prevention of FV, and that further efforts should be supported to build capacity and willingness to engage.

Participants were concerned that without the appropriate skills and knowledge to address underlying drivers of FV in their communities, community and religious leaders may be exacerbating rather than mitigating these issues.

Participants shared that in their communities, religious and community leaders are often looked to for mediation and advice around many issues, including relationships and parenting. They are therefore already influencing relationship dynamics in their communities, and consequently, holding responsibility in terms of FV prevention. Some participants believed that seeking the advice of a religious or community leader was a positive thing and could bring solutions to familial issues. However, when not trained adequately in FV prevention, participants also believed that religious and community leaders could reinforce harmful masculinities and gendered drivers of abuse. As one participant said, '[A]s a Sheikh, you just have some Islamic studies and that's it. You don't have a psychology degree, you don't have any social work degree... When it comes to human relationships, you cannot rely on Qur'an only' (SFV case manager 2). In this respect, participants were concerned that without the appropriate skills and knowledge to address underlying drivers and reinforcing factors for FV in their communities, community and religious leaders may be exacerbating rather than mitigating these issues. All three participants who were SFV case managers spoke frequently about how religious leaders and the institutions that they operate within can compound trauma when not adequately trained in FV prevention and response, or where their ideological positions reinforce gendered drivers of abuse.

While participants believed that religious leaders were sometimes neglectful of their role and responsibility in preventing FV in their communities, they also saw opportunities to increase this engagement. Participants primarily believed that religious leaders in their respective communities could do more to foster attitudes that facilitate gender equality, pro-social behaviours, and protective factors for FV. In doing so, religious leaders may positively influence relationships and family dynamics.

I feel like as a religious leader your literal job is to discuss issues of the present. And because this is such a prevalent issue it's not a question of whether you want to talk about it or whether it's comfortable for you as a leader for you to talk about it, or whether you lose friends as a result of talking about it... you need to, because it's an obligation.

-Community member 11, young men's FGD

Yes definitely the family members, especially the community leaders, are the main factors or the main drivers of promoting healthier relationships between men and women.

-Male community leader 3

The reasons why participants believed religious leaders were not living up to their expectations with regards to their involvement in FV prevention were related both to the aforementioned lack of knowledge, as well as community and peer pressure to adhere to and encourage notions of traditional masculinity. What was notable was that participants believed that religious leaders were drivers of community perceptions, but they also believed that the religious leaders themselves were likewise responding to community expectations. Participants suggested this bi-directional relationship means that religious leaders avoid straying too far from these norms, and community members do not receive messages from leaders that challenge any existing beliefs related to FV.

Some will say, 'if I divert from [patriarchal interpretations] I'm not going to be perceived as a true faith leader. I will not be followed or respected or I'm going to be challenged.'... [and] this is exactly what has been happening when you have an Imam or a Sheikh that is perceived as more progressive in terms of their approach or response to family violence - this leader is never acknowledged by [other leaders]... And in the community people will follow that [more traditionalist] leader because he continues holding to the patriarchal norm that would serve the gender roles and the man's role within the family unit.... And this is why it's very hard to find faith leaders that talk openly about family violence.

-SFV case manager 1

There were, of course, some religious leaders who were highlighted as positive examples, though they were considered the exception to the norm. Some participants also said that although their religious leaders did spread positive messaging on healthy relationships, these messages were not consistent or frequent enough. Again, it is also worth remembering that four participants were community leaders themselves (though not religious leaders) and had good knowledge on FV and were involved in formal and informal prevention efforts. Unfortunately, no religious leaders were available for interview or wished to be involved in this research as advisory group members.

I guess being a community leader or community member, we play a significant role as being in the forefront of this conversation. Because we are linked to the first resources on FV in a western society. And we are also aware of the consequences of violence against one person, and what that consequence are. So we can bring all this information back into the community and let the other community members know about it. So we play a significant role – kind of what I say is that we act as a bridge between a community and the mainstream platforms which might help the community to be linked with.

-Male community leader 1

5.9. Supporting Muslim men's engagement in FV prevention initiatives

Virtually all participants believed that addressing the barriers that are inhibiting men's involvement in the prevention of FV requires considerable work on the part of individuals, the community, religious leaders, the FV sector, and governments. As has been detailed, the barriers to engagement, existing community norms, and a lack of real encouragement from community and/or religious leaders meant that participants held various levels of optimism in terms of achieving men's increased participation in formal and informal FV prevention efforts. Yet all participants had suggestions about how men could be better preventors of FV in the home, in their social circles, and in their professional lives in the case of religious leaders. When speaking to participants, it was our intention to give them the scope to discuss how they thought men could best be engaged, and in what capacity.

The most consistent suggestion that appeared across interviews and focus groups was the utilisation of religious spaces to spread more gender-positive and anti-FV messages. Friday (Jumu'ah) prayers, which many Muslims men observe through attending mosque, were posited as an opportunity to share information about FV and healthy relationships with communities. At Jumu'ah prayers, among others, Imams deliver a khutbah (sermon). Participants believed that khutbahs could be a vehicle for FV prevention messaging -

Friday prayer is definitely something I've been talking about for 10 years... most men will still go to Friday prayer.... That message that you give to them is so important because sometimes that's the only connection they have to community, to leaders, to whatever... Why are we trying to do so many other things when you have a captive audience every Friday of thousands and thousands of men across the country? That needs to be coordinated. We did it for [The Voice to Parliament]. Excellent. What about our community? What about the issues that we're facing? Why is that not being spoken about? Why is domestic violence not being spoken about? And it doesn't have to be absent of religious teachings. It can be incorporated with religious teachings.... It's a no-brainer to me.

-Male community leader 4

I don't think community leaders and religious leaders can change this entirely, but Imams play a significant role. The position that they have, people listen to them. Like if it's Friday prayer or whatever – those religious occasions... we live in a very collective lifestyle, and there's this hierarchy which comes from the Elders and then the top down. So obviously, those people need to make those changes.

-Male community leader 1

The utilisation of religious spaces was often pointed to as a way to get men more involved in FV prevention, to speak more openly and frequently about healthy relationships, and legitimise such discussions through the support of respected scholars, leaders, and religious teachings. Several women shared stories of how religious festivals and days of significance could be opportunities to bring the community together to have these conversations. Using the example of Muharram, the first month in the Islamic calendar which contains many days of religious significance, participants spoke about how religious leaders often use this month and the associated events to speak about family relationships and other important topics. The participants believed this to be a positive step in the prevention of FV, though one which had minimal lasting impact as it was not continued throughout the rest of the year. On top of this, the lack of physical spaces for community members to come together meant that communities were fragmented. With a more stable and accessible space for community members and one where they could receive a consistent and cohesive message about FV, participants believed men and boys would be more likely to engage and absorb the messages.

The utilisation of religious spaces was often pointed to as a way to get men more involved in FV prevention, to speak more openly and frequently about healthy relationships, and legitimise such discussions through the support of respected scholars, leaders, and religious teachings.

The participants who were SFV practitioners also stated that they believed the government needs to put more pressure on the religious institutions that receive government funding to better support women and children through FV prevention. This was viewed as a government responsibility as much as a responsibility of the religious leaders and institutions themselves. Again, the involvement of religious leaders and institutions were considered places where education campaigns should be run. The difficulty of involving these individuals and organisations was acknowledged.

> *The issue is, in terms of religion and also in terms of faith leaders, we know that the terminology of FV is very sensitive in our community. So it's not easy to fully involve them. First of all we need to sit with them and talk and train them. They need to be in agreement. When they accept the right response then we can involve them.*
>
> ***-Male community leader 2***

> *So the first step is how to get them engaged. So it could be by Saturday schools, for example, like language teaching schools on Saturday. It could be the topic in their own language, it could be in family relationships.*
>
> ***-SFV case manager 2***

There was also the belief that religious leaders could use their positions to lead by example and demonstrate how they were actively engaged in parenting, domestic work, and treating their partners with respect. This would 'bring changes to the community' through their role modelling (Male community leader 2), and it would also ensure that boys in the community were taught from a young age to uphold gender-equal relationship dynamics.

Men are the cause of FV, then they can be the solution. Because if a man doesn't do violence to their partners or children, then it wouldn't happen. And how we can get men to not do that violence is to educate them, to tell them about the consequences, or even to an extent you have to change their perceptions of these things.

-Male community leader

I believe that individuals and community members would follow the community leaders… they look to the community leaders as role models – especially the young generations.

-Male community leader 3

I think we need to utilise the positive leaders in the community that they actually willing to play that role

-SFV case manager 1

Again, this topic of 'role modelling' came up frequently with respect to community and religious leaders, as well as fathers. Many participants said that fathers could have a strong influence on preventing FV through breaking the cycle of violence and the beliefs that can drive violent behaviour from one generation to the next. To encourage men to display more active and equal parenting, some participants suggested that community members could be trained in an official capacity as peer educators to speak about FV in informal community situations. The idea of an educational campaign came up frequently. This is likely because, as participants shared, stigma and taboos exist as significant barriers to people speaking more openly about FV and spreading FV prevention messages. So, removing that stigma was seen as a priority.

By role modelling – respecting the mother inside the house, talking about women's rights. I think when the child looks at their parents and the way they treat each other with care and respect, they will learn those sorts of things… If the father is not respecting the wife, the children will think, 'women are nothing. I can treat my wife life that'.

-Community member 9, women's FGD

Right now I'm not a parent, but I know that when or if I was to become a parent, I have to take some responsibility in how my son or my daughter, what sort of life they end up living. If my son is going to be abusive, I have to literally go, 'OK, let me go back in time and see where did we go wrong?' And I think it starts in the home.

-SFV case manager 3

But I feel like they could definitely keep their friends or family in-check… And I feel like empowering your children so that they're super independent and if they're ever in that situation, they know that they can reach out for help.

-Community member 11, young men's FGD

It's a very touchy topic, family violence… But to me, for example, clergy or Sheikhs are isolated… if you want to reach to men who can deliver this message, maybe people who work for community. People like us, but male. Maybe they'll be more connected to community and know what's going on.

-SFV case manager 2

While involving religious leaders, institutions, and spaces was important for many participants, there was also a large degree of focus given to formal prevention initiatives in community settings, including parenting programs. In a practical sense, it was suggested that prevention workshops should happen outside of working hours and should be facilitated by someone of the same cultural and linguistic background as the participants.

Lastly, participants highlighted that one of the most important things when it came to prevention work with men was starting early and often, to create generational shifts. Participants' emphasis frequently returned to how young men and boys could be supported to adopt gender-equal beliefs, positive masculinities, and healthy communication skills. Participants believed that beginning early would challenge and prevent the development of harmful notions and behaviours before they begin. Participants believed that such attitudinal and behavioural initiatives need to be tailored to be age and context-appropriate and can be implemented in various ways to reach young men and boys. These could include through increased formal prevention programs in schools, sporting clubs, and community spaces, but also through informal work in the home. In this respect, this work also depends on parents' capacity to do FV prevention work in their home through gender-equal parenting and the creation of safe spaces for boys to express their emotions, develop empathy and communication skills, and resist messages of negative masculinities. Participants believed that working with parents could address gender-biased parenting and build parenting capacity towards prevention. These participants believed that to encourage men's involvement in parenting programs, the programs should emphasise the cultural and religious importance of being a good father and family member. Participants believed that men would respond to this messaging, because it identifies a real desire in them; that is, to be good partners and parents, and to raise their children to be good people.

Participants believed that programs should emphasise the cultural and religious importance of being a good father and family member. Participants believed that men would respond to this messaging, because it identifies a real desire in them; that is, to be good partners and parents, and to raise their children to be good people.

We need to work in the young generation… because you [need to] keep teaching the children from a young age [that] women should be respected.

-SFV case manager 2

I think there should be formal courses at the school level where boy and girls learn together what our Islam says about human rights. Because DV is just about human rights, and nobody has the right to threaten or hurt someone.

-Community member 13, young women's FGD

My father, you know, prays five times a day and he practises the religion. And he uses those teachings to pass on that equality… So I think there are some fathers like my father that probably do play a role in how they try to prevent family violence, because they go 'this is not right', or they talk about giving education to women, they talk about how women have equal rights, and they're always being a great advocate… [fathers] play a role in trying to prevent family violence by first having those teachings in their home

-SFV Case Manager 3

While there was a difference in opinion with regards to how successful recruitment of men in formal programs would be, there was a general consensus that it was important to have these programs delivered by community-based groups or organisations. This was because community-led initiatives were seen as more likely to understand men's/father's cultural contexts, be less prone to judgement and stereotyping, and therefore more effective in shifting attitudes.

In all, participants believed that engaging men in FV prevention requires speaking to the issues that are important to them culturally, religiously and individually. At the same time, such programs need to be practically situated – i.e., at times and in locations that men can reach amidst their other responsibilities. Religious leaders were an important component of encouraging men's engagement in programs, alongside community-led initiatives through organisations with specialist expertise and high cultural capacity.

5.10. Keeping cultural contexts in mind when developing programs for Muslim men

As this research was conducted in response to a lack of culturally-meaningful prevention initiatives for Muslim men, it was important to gain participants' perspectives on what, if any, cultural issues should be kept in mind when designing a program or engaging men in the prevention of FV. Participants raised various issues and suggestions as to how best to engage men, implement more tailored initiatives, and maintain accountability amongst men for their central role and responsibility in the prevention of FV.

The most common issue that arose was, again, the strong taboo that exists in discussions of FV within Muslim communities. The word 'sensitive' arose frequently across interviews and focus groups, and suggested that these topics should be approached with consideration to maintain engagement. As an example, multiple participants suggested that the word 'family violence' should be avoided, and that 'healthy relationships' would be more effective in engaging men and minimising defensiveness from the outset. As one participant said, 'I think if we name it family violence then men will think 'we don't have family violence so why should we go?'' (Community member 4, women's FGD). This comment is reflective of a wider belief expressed by participants; that some men may not see themselves directly impacted by FV, or believe, implicitly or explicitly, that it's an issue impacting women so therefore it is for women to solve. In designing programs for Muslim men, participants believed it was important to be aware of these perceptions and sensitives, while also holding men accountable for their role in prevention.

In a similar vein, it was suggested that programs should begin with speaking to positives first, to

engage men and their capacity, offset defensiveness, and ensure they don't feel as if they are being 'put down' from the outset (Community member 8, women's FGD). What participants are pointing to is the idea of a strengths-based approach; that prevention programs should identify the many things that men can draw from as individuals, partners, parents, and as social contributors, to support growth in these areas. Such practice frameworks should be applied to culturally grounded men's prevention programs to draw on existing strengths, while also reinforcing men's accountability and responsibility in this space.

> *Yeah I think it's good to always start with the positive – how you can make your family live happily with you, what sorts of things to apply at home. Once they know what a healthy relationship looks like, they might think, 'okay I'm not doing this healthy thing in my family'. And then they can know that if you do this thing it might go towards an unhealthy relationship.*
>
> ***-Community member 9, women's FGD***

> *For me, DV is a collective responsibility that requires the involvement of all members of society. Especially the role of faith leaders needs to be more significant. They will educate men to be more equitable partners and provide opportunities to men to learn and practise parenting skills in terms of religion, and our backgrounds.*
>
> ***-Community member 15, young women's FGD***

Another common suggestion was related to how FV prevention programs are delivered to Muslim boys and men. As has already been mentioned but bears reiterating here, many participants made the point that prevention messaging would be most effective coming from male facilitators of a similar cultural and linguistic background to the intended audience/attendees. This would create a more open and judgement-free space where men could ask questions and learn about FV in their own language, and in relation to their own culture and situations. It would also enable shared values to be drawn upon more effectively in the prevention of FV. Some participants spoke about western models not being appropriate for some Muslim men, and that incorporation of religious and cultural elements would be more beneficial and effective in promoting change.

However, participants also suggested that care should be taken when using religion as a prevention tool, so as to ensure that men – including religious leaders – do not disengage if the use of a particular Qur'anic verse, hadith, or tradition challenges established norms on the topic. Again, this came back to being sensitive, careful, and mindful of the many differing religious understandings and cultural contexts. Within these contexts, formal workshops and education campaigns could speak to individual and social issues that may be reinforcing issues of FV. For example, migrational challenges, family breakdown and intergenerational conflict, unemployment, and financial strain.

Some participants spoke about western models not being appropriate for some Muslim men, and that incorporation of religious and cultural elements would be more beneficial and effective in promoting change.

We have to be mindful of the sensitivity of the issue. And sometimes this western approach to FV or to tackling FV might not 100% work within diverse cultures.

-Male community leader 1

If we're running those kinds of sessions with men to give them awareness about FV, I think it would always be good to talk with someone from the same cultural backgrounds. Because our culture and the culture in Australia is quite different from each other….So someone should know the culture very well.

-Community member 9, women's FGD

6. Discussion: Engaging Muslim men in the prevention of family violence

Over AMWCHR's many years of delivering FV prevention programs to Muslim women and young women, we have been consistently asked one thing: can you deliver this program to men? The women attending our programs see the benefit FV prevention initiatives can bring and wish to see the men in the community – their husbands, sons, and fathers – likewise build capacity around gender equality and FV prevention. At the same time, we know that the men's programs that already exist often fail to engage Muslim boys and men, due to programs lacking cultural relevancy and sensitivity. This consistent request from women in the community, and the lack of culturally appropriate programs to fill the service gap, led us to conduct this research project. We aimed to explore how Muslim men can be more widely engaged in the prevention of FV, and what that might look like in practice.

6.1. Barriers impacting men's engagement

The results from this research demonstrate that many barriers are inhibiting Muslim men from contributing and participating to their full potential when it comes to preventing FV in their families and communities. Participants were able to articulate the structural issues contributing to the under engagement of Muslim men in FV prevention and identified several ways that these structural issues could be addressed and overcome.

Firstly, participants believed that more could be done to support Muslim men's understanding of FV in the first instance, and the contributing factor of gender inequality in the home and society at large. Participants shared that FV is a stigmatised issue in communities, which contributes to men's knowledge gaps surrounding these gendered drivers. Participants wished to highlight the sensitivity that exists in the community when it comes to discussing FV. It was identified that significant fears of child protection as well as previous experiences of racial bias and targeting were resulting in a mistrust of services that traditionally deliver prevention programs, including FV services and government. Participants therefore suggested that the framing and use of language should be carefully considered when creating FV prevention initiatives to engage

Muslim men, to prevent the replication of such stereotypes and biases, and to offset issues of distrust.

While not related to prevention programs for men specifically, previous research on Australian Muslim women's engagement with formalised FV services has also highlighted how language can reinforce disconnects between the FV sector and Muslim communities (Elhelw Wright, 2023). This research highlights that while some members of the Muslim community may not describe or speak about FV in the way that the sector speaks about it, there are still high levels of awareness that abusive behaviours are wrong, whether or not terms like 'family violence' are used. Yet current approaches to engagement often focus on acculturation and encouraging Muslim communities to conform with sector language before accessing formal FV supports (Elhelw Wright, 2023). The engagement of Muslim men in this space can be seen in a similar way. Adjusting language to encourage and achieve engagement of men is not necessarily a placated version of prevention. While a shared understanding of FV is important, and language is also important to create that shared understanding, learning cannot begin until men are engaged. To achieve engagement of Muslim men requires a degree of accommodation of language and framing that comes naturally to men's cultural contexts. This finding also highlights the need for a strengths-based approach; prevention programs should identify the many things that men can draw from as individuals, partners, and parents, as well as social contributors that support growth in these areas. Strengths-based approaches are now considered best practice in the field (Pulla, 2006), and such an approach will avoid alienating a community that has frequently been mischaracterised and stigmatised as inherently violent (Bedar, Bottriell, Akbarzadeh, 2020). Further, a consistent finding across interviews and FGDs was that culture and religion was viewed as a mobilising and legitimising tool in the prevention of FV. In utilising a strengths-based approach to appeal to shared cultural and religious values, programs may better engage and support men to learn about the many existing frameworks for violence prevention they already have access to in their own lives.

A further finding from this research was that Muslim men face material barriers to meaningfully engage in prevention efforts. Interestingly, participants highlighted the impact of financial pressures, but also men prioritising their work in lieu of engagement in official or unofficial work that would constitute FV prevention. The surrounding context to this barrier is the high level of social and economic inequality in Australia, particularly when it comes to migrant communities' access to financial security and employment. In Australia, migrant and refugee communities are more likely to be engaged in insecure, casualised, and lower-paid work (Liu et al 2019; Cain et al 2021; Tan & Cebulla 2023). While national data on insecure work is not disaggregated by religion, we do know that Muslim communities are made up of a high proportion of migrants and refugees (Hussein 2015).

We also know that Muslim communities broadly experience barriers to well-paid, secure work commensurate to their skills and experience (Hassan, 2015) due to factors including discrimination, language barriers, and government policies that do not recognise overseas qualifications (Nilan 2011; AFIC 2023). It is likely that these systemic issues are driving Muslim men's prioritisation of their work, especially for families who are experiencing or at very real risk of experiencing poverty, housing insecurity, or homelessness. At the same time, Muslim women experience additional barriers to employment that impact their share in earning capacity in a

household. This includes the gendered barriers to equal employment and earning potential experienced by all women – i.e., the gender pay gap, gendered carer roles, and lower wages within women-dominated sectors (WGEA, 2023) – as well as experiences of interpersonal and systemic inequality specific to being Muslim and (often) women of colour. For example, research also shows that Muslim women who are employed are less likely to be in managerial positions (Khattab et al., 2020), and often experience racial and religious discrimination and marginalisation in the workplace (Syed & Pio, 2010). In the face of these immediate issues, it may be the case that Muslim men are experiencing a high level of pressure as sole or primary income areas in the family. In turn, this is impacting capacity to engage with FV prevention initiatives – at least in any official or organised capacity.

However, there was also a belief among some participants that men's prioritisation of their work was sometimes related to choice rather than necessity. This ties into hegemonic concepts and expectations of masculinity and gender that often influence men's behaviour in the violence prevention space. In this instance, ideas surrounding masculinity – which are not unique to Muslim communities but exist across Australian society broadly – can drive real or conceptual need to be providers, and this need is tied up in men's identities and perceptions of themselves (Gonalons-Pons et al., 2021; Turnbull et al., 2020). This can result in a disproportionate amount of focus being directed towards the delivery of material benefits to families, rather than affecting the social change that might facilitate safety and equality for all

6.2. Delivery of programs for Muslim men

When it came to who should deliver FV prevention programs to Muslim communities, participants believed that FV prevention programs and messages will be most effective when delivered by individuals from the same community and cultural/religious/linguistic background as the intended audience. However, participants also highlighted that men are often held to gendered norms and beliefs by their peers and that resisting these expectations can be difficult. On the whole, program facilitators should reflect the program audience. It may be more suitable for programs targeting Muslim men to be led by Muslim men from the same background as the attendees or audience. Language is a particularly important aspect of this, as in-language programs will allow participants to discuss the content in their own words.

Program attendees may also be more comfortable speaking openly and asking questions with someone who speaks the same language as them, has the same cultural background, and is therefore understanding of additional cultural factors that may be shaping their beliefs and behaviours. At the same time, in recognition of the fact that some men may be more comfortable discussing issues of gender, masculinity, and gender inequality without fear of judgement from peers, there should be options for men to engage in a variety of programs. Facilitators of all genders and backgrounds bring their own strengths to various initiatives. There is no uniform environment that will facilitate comfort and safe expression for all Muslim men. Providing transparent and safe options will enable widespread engagement. The main priority is that cultural and religious sensitivity, inclusivity, and intersectional practices are embedded across all programs.

Participants also shared their beliefs surrounding the roles that religious leadership should be

playing in the prevention of FV in their communities. Participants consistently stated that religious leadership and events should be galvanised to spread violence-prevention messages. Examples included Jumu'ah prayers and religious festivals. Participants also believed that increased community spaces for members to gather in would provide more opportunities for community members to come together for official and unofficial prevention activities. One way that this could be done is for Mosques and ethno-specific/SFV organisations to partner on dedicated and strategic FV prevention initiatives. With faith leaders' religious knowledge and community support, and FV practitioners' expertise in the drivers and manifestations of FV, a strong, religiously appropriate, and effective message can be brought to the community. This initiative should be ongoing, rather than one-off. Religious and community spaces and leaders can show their commitment to fostering healthy and safe families in the community by bringing consistent messaging around FV prevention. However, the involvement of religious spaces and leaders must be contingent on their commitment to spreading the right messages. There is some concern that religious teachings and interpretations, as currently disseminated by some faith leaders, may perpetuate beliefs and attitudes that contribute to violent or violence-condoning behaviours (Vaughan et al., 2020). Consequently, any partnership between religious institutions and FV services should be on a case-by-case basis with religious leaders who have demonstrated a commitment to FV prevention, gender equality, and ongoing education on these issues.

6.3. How to engage: focus points, enablers, and new ideas

One notable theme from this research was the emphasis on the engagement of young men and boys specifically in FV prevention programs. Participants believed that the more impactful way that to prevent FV would be prevented in Muslim communities is if young men and boys are provided with appropriate information, role models, and social supports to grow their understanding of the underlying drivers of FV. Working with boys and young men is paramount in the primary prevention of FV, as it addresses developing gender attitudes, worldviews, and identities (Our Watch, 2021). An investment at this level allows for valuable cognitive work on equality, respect, empathy, and healthy communication, thereby challenging and intervening in the development of harmful notions of gender and masculinity that lie at the centre of FV.

Boys should be given space to talk about their concerns, connect with positive role models, and name and discuss the sociocultural factors which contribute to risk and reinforcing factors for FV (e.g., systemic discrimination, lack of social supports for diverse men, community norms and pressures). To make progress towards FV prevention among young men and boys also requires a commitment to preventative work inside the home. Programs for parents are therefore crucial to support this work. Meaningful prevention initiatives will look to implement parenting programs that support parent's gender-equal parenting capacity and address gender-biased parenting that often underpins narratives of privilege given to boys over girls.

Furthermore, and as participants highlighted, FV prevention requires physical spaces to do work in both official and unofficial capacities. Place matters in FV prevention, and physical environments have the capacity to influence behaviour, beliefs, and learning with relation to FV (Travers, Wilk, Yeakle, 2017). The Victorian Government recently formulated their Framework for

Place-Based Approaches, recognising that individual communities require the physical spaces, resources, and support to address their own needs from within their own communities (DPC, 2020). We encourage the Victorian Government to realise this through supporting Muslim communities to build, adapt, and maintain community spaces that can be utilised for FV prevention initiatives in both a formal and informal capacity. Creating community spaces will encourage more community members to come together in various capacities and will be a safe environment for overt FV prevention discussions, and create more general community support and dialogue around other contextual factors that can act as reinforcing or risk factors for both use of violence as well as violence victimisation (e.g., mental health issues, social disconnectedness).

Participants emphasised that breaking the intergenerational cycle of violence is integral to preventing FV in the future. In cases where there are risk factors for FV today, family tensions, or even existing abuse, participants shared that some community members prefer to reach for community-driven supports to address risk factors and/or prevent escalation. This may include mediation from community or religious leaders. In families where issues have escalated to violence, there are risks of engaging in mediation, as this form of intervention can sometimes place a level of blame on the victim-survivor through the implication that the violence is a mutual problem to be solved (Stitch & McCollum, 2011; Goldner, Penn, Sheinberg, at al., 1990). There is also a risk that without adequate training in FV response, community leaders are vulnerable to collusion and manipulation by the person using violence (Boxall, Meyer, Bartels, et al., 2023; Klein, 2012). While this finding from the research is related to intervention rather than prevention, we know that children in households experiencing FV are at higher risk of both future use of violence as well as future victimisation (AIHW, 2020). As recognised both within primary prevention frameworks as well as across the spectrum of FV response, interventions we are implementing now therefore matter in terms of the intergenerational impacts and long-term reduction in violence. This is why it's important that interventions are effective, and that community and religious leaders who are performing mediation in FV situations are doing so safely, with the adequate knowledge, tools, and oversight.

In recent times new approaches have been trialled that use an 'all of family' model of FV intervention. These programs usually offer concurrent services for women, children, and the person using violence. In some cases, joint work is then offered, if safe to do so. While all of family programs such as the Queensland-based Walking with Dads program, and the Melbourne-based Keeping Safe Together program have shown positive results (Meyer et al., 2019; Diemer et al., 2024), these programs, thus far, have been relatively generalist in their approaches. In recognition of the very specific reasons why Muslim women may wish to or are forced to stay in a FV situation, though would still like support, culturally-specific 'all of family' interventions may prove effective in these cases. For those who would like to seek mediation or support from religious or community leaders, an 'all of family' framework for intervention may provide a safer environment, where community or religious leaders who are providing support or mediation can do so in a collaborative practice setting, alongside and in consultation with SFV workers. This will ensure that for those who desire faith-based supports, community and religious leaders are providing safe, client-centred and trauma-informed care alongside specialist practitioners who can identify and manage FV risk.

Lastly, preventing FV in Muslim communities must go beyond individual- and community-level initiatives to also target the systemic, institutional, and societal factors that drive and reinforce abuse. AMWCHR continues to work across these levels through our programs, casework, research, policy, and advocacy work, to achieve structural as well as individual change. However, as wider scale and intersectional programs at all levels have not yet been tested in Australia (Flood, 2023), increased investment for such programs is crucially needed to affect long-term change. In all, Muslim men must be supported to find meaning (income, safety, and respect) within broader Australian society and address the hierarchy of needs, while also receiving education and support to safely unpack gendered ideas of identity, responsibility, and contribution. A multi-pronged approach that works at the various levels of society will address the many factors which are inhibiting men's capacity and willingness to engage in official prevention efforts, be present as parents and partners modelling positive and equal relationship dynamics, and challenge problematic behaviours of friends and family members.

7. Conclusion

Family violence remains a pervasive issue in Australia and for Muslim communities, barriers to prevention at every point along the continuum of violence compound the impacts for victim-survivors and the wider community. This research project set out to understand how Muslim men, including community and faith leaders, could be supported to engage more widely in the prevention of FV in their families and communities. While the findings revealed that there continues to be knowledge gaps, systemic issues, and barriers which are diminishing Muslim men's capacity to engage with both formal and informal initiatives, it also revealed the present opportunities to overcome these barriers. Muslim men have significant knowledge and strengths to offer when it comes to the prevention of FV in their communities. Alongside support for Muslim women, our findings highlight opportunities to shift the oppressive impacts of FV on the whole communities as well as future generations.

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