

# Applying a gender lens in the workplace

## Learnings from the Generating Equality and Respect program

**This tool provides guidance on applying a gender lens in the workplace. It forms part of a suite of tools developed from the experiences of Monash City Council and Link Health and Community in their journey to create and support gender equity and prevent violence against women as part of the Generating Equality and Respect program.**

Drawing from VicHealth's decade of research and activity in preventing violence against women, Generating Equality and Respect was a world-first three-and-a-half-year program bringing together a range of primary prevention of violence against women programs and activities to a single location in Melbourne. The program had a significant focus on supporting gender equity in the workplace. More information about the program can be found on the VicHealth website.

This tool reflects the learnings gained from Link Health and Community who, as part of Generating Equality and Respect, applied a gender lens within their own organisation. It is not intended as a definitive guide.

This tool may be used by workplaces in everyday practice, as part of planning processes or while conducting a policy review or audit. The tool may be used alone or in addition to existing tools to guide gender audit or self-assessment processes.

### Definitions

**Gender equality** – equal treatment of women and men in laws and policies, and equal access to resources and services within families, communities and society; sometimes referred to as formal equality.

**Gender equity** – involves fairness and justice in the distribution of resources and responsibilities between men and women; sometimes referred to as substantive equality. It often requires women-specific programs and policies to end existing inequalities.<sup>1</sup>

### ONLINE RESOURCES

To view the full suite of tools, visit [vichealth.vic.gov.au/GEAR-tools](http://vichealth.vic.gov.au/GEAR-tools)



<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization 2010, *Violence prevention: The evidence*, WHO, Geneva.



## Why apply a gender lens?

Organisational policies and procedures can impact and affect people of different genders in different ways. Diversity also exists between individual women and men and within groups of women and men. Organisational systems, including policies, plans, programs, services and communication, can cause or lead to discriminatory effects and inequity in access, or may inadvertently reinforce harmful gender stereotypes.

Applying a gender lens in the workplace helps to create gender equity by ensuring that:

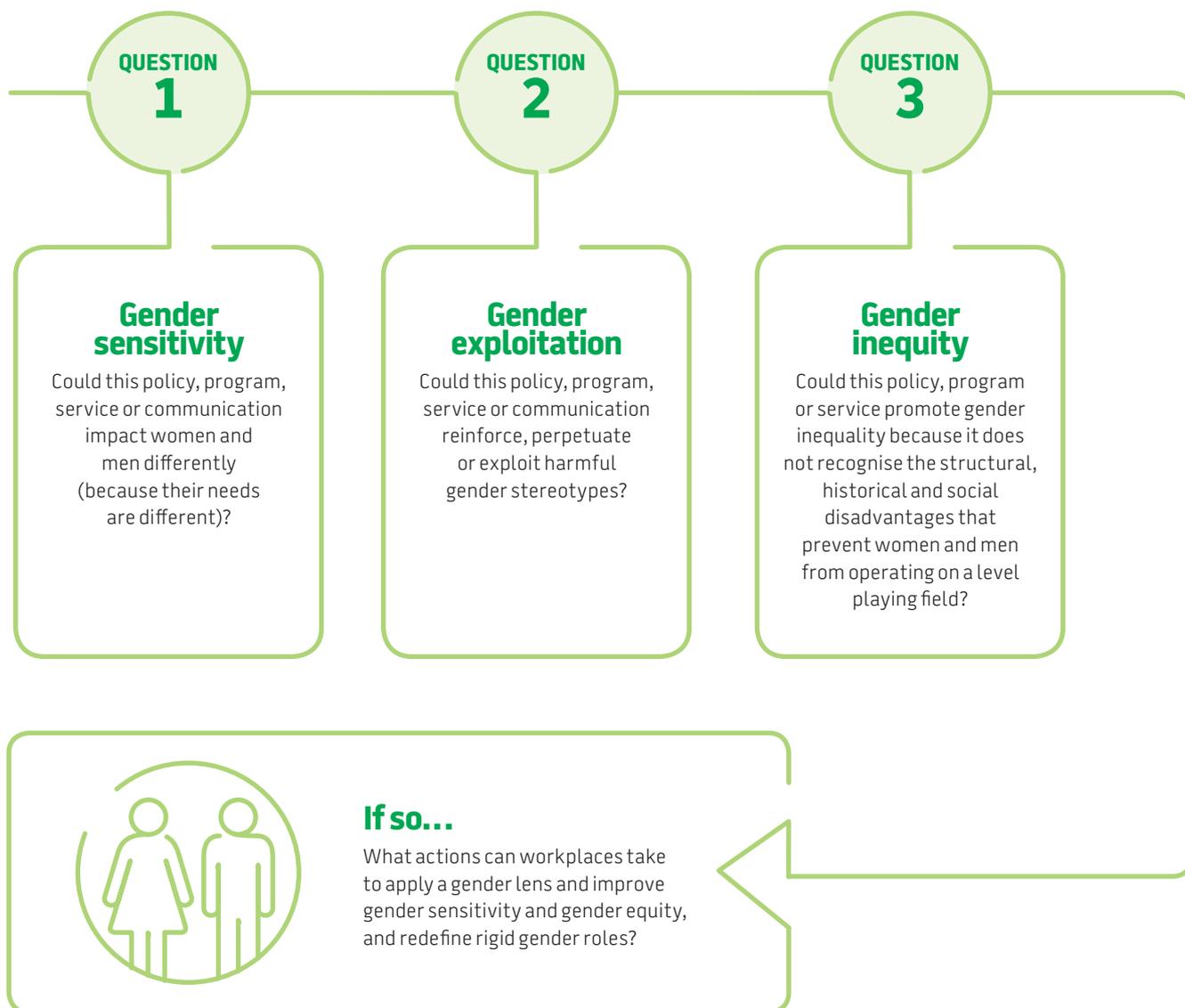
- any differences in the way processes, policies or structures are likely to impact unfairly on women and men are anticipated
- decisions are made that take account of and are responsive to gender.

This tool may be helpful to workplaces in identifying and addressing gender inequity in organisational policies, plans, programs, services or communications. It provides three key questions to guide a review of organisational systems with a gender lens, and examples of measures to ensure gender equity. Some examples of applying a gender lens to policy review are provided in a case study.

## Review organisational systems with a gender lens

To apply a gender lens, reflect on organisational systems and ask the following three questions:

Figure 1: Applying a gender lens



## Take action to support gender equity

Based on your review of organisational systems, take action to improve gender sensitivity, gender equity and to redefine rigid gender roles. The table below gives examples of strategies to help promote gender equity. Consider which of these are already in place in your organisation and identify where further action may be needed.

Improve gender sensitivity	Redefine rigid gender roles	Improve gender equity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender awareness training is available to staff.</li> <li>• Gender awareness statement is in job descriptions and/or in job performance criteria.</li> <li>• Programs, projects and/or service design include objectives with measures for the participation, benefits and impacts according to gender.</li> <li>• The gender impact of projects, programs and services are monitored and evaluated (e.g. choice of access to both male and female clinicians, effectiveness of gender-specific programs).</li> <li>• Mechanisms are in place to routinely assess consumer needs and community consultation feedback by gender.</li> <li>• There is consultation with staff on issues related to gender or concerning gender equality in the workplace (e.g. experiences and perceptions of safety, equal opportunity or sex-based discrimination).</li> <li>• Mechanisms are in place to routinely assess staff consultation results by gender.</li> <li>• Sex-disaggregated data<sup>2</sup> is collected and used for projects, programs and services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health promotion and community engagement activities encourage and enable men and women to participate in non-gender stereotypical ways (e.g. cooking classes for partnered men, health messages for women that focus on body function compared to appearance).</li> <li>• The imagery, tone and language used in communications is inclusive, acknowledges diversity and is checked for gender assumptions.</li> <li>• Gender assumptions about carer roles are challenged in planning service delivery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men and women are remunerated equally.</li> <li>• Affirmative actions are taken towards an equal gender balance on the Board or in Executive Management of the organisation.</li> <li>• There is equal availability and utility of flexible working arrangements between men and women, and across all parts of the organisation.</li> <li>• Gender composition of the workforce is addressed; recruitment strategies provide equal opportunity for men and women.</li> <li>• Gender equity goals or objectives are included in organisational plans, program, project or service design (e.g. a statement of what we will do to increase access or safety for women).</li> <li>• Barriers to access related to gender (e.g. health information provided in different ways, lack of child care) are being investigated.</li> <li>• Mechanisms are in place to ensure both men and women are able to participate in community consultation.</li> <li>• Gender equity training and human resources are available.</li> <li>• Both male and female staff are engaged in gender equity structures within the organisation.</li> <li>• Senior managers are engaged in gender equity structures within the organisation.</li> <li>• Sex-disaggregated data<sup>2</sup> is collected and used for planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects, programs and services.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Sources of sex-disaggregated data: demographic data, service usage, consumer consultation, socioeconomic, labour force and health data, workforce statistics and staff consultation.

## CASE STUDY

### Applying a gender lens to policies in a community health service

Link Health and Community successfully applied a gender lens to a number of policies. The table below provides several examples of how a gender lens can be applied to policy review.

Before: without gender lens	After: with gender lens
<b>Health Promotion policy extract</b>	
The Health Promotion Committee and the Health Promotion Coordinator will oversee the development, implementation and evaluation of the organisation’s Integrated Health Promotion Plan. The Committee will include representation across the organisation and the community according to its Terms of Reference.	The Health Promotion and the Health Promotion Coordinator will oversee the development, implementation and evaluation of the organisation’s Integrated Health Promotion Plan. The Committee will include representation across the organisation and the community according to its Terms of Reference. <b>A gender balance for committee membership will be encouraged.</b>
The Evaluation Plan will include both process and impact measures.	The Evaluation Plan will include both process and impact measures, <b>including relevant equity indicators (based on gender, socioeconomic status, culture, ethnicity or age, for example).</b>
<b>Service Access and Equity policy extract</b>	
Staff shall where necessary receive ongoing diversity training so that they develop knowledge and skills to work effectively from a diversity framework.	Staff will receive ongoing <b>gender equality</b> and diversity training to foster the knowledge and skills to work effectively within these frameworks.
To identify people from diverse backgrounds and assist with access and equity, staff will ensure they collect all relevant data.	To identify people from diverse backgrounds and assist with access and equity, staff will ensure they collect all relevant data. <b>Whenever possible, sex-disaggregated data will be collected to inform planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects, programs and services in order to support the organisation’s gender sensitivity and equity goals.</b>
<b>Research policy extract</b>	
The Research Committee will assess each request on its merits paying regard to how the research fits with the agreed organisational priorities, its impact on organisational resources, and any ethical issues.	The Research Committee will assess each request on its merits paying regard to how the research fits with the agreed organisational priorities, its impact on organisational resources, and any ethical <b>or equity</b> issues.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR APPLYING A GENDER LENS



- Think Out Loud International, *A practical guide to gender mainstreaming in community organisations*  
[www.thinkoutloud.org](http://www.thinkoutloud.org)
- UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001318/131854e.pdf>
- Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services, *Service guideline on gender sensitivity and safety*  
[https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/getfile/?sc\\_itemid=%7B84F93199-D99F-487A-9546-431E5CE42EE5%7D&title=Service%20Guideline%20for%20Gender%20Sensitivity%20and%20Safety](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/getfile/?sc_itemid=%7B84F93199-D99F-487A-9546-431E5CE42EE5%7D&title=Service%20Guideline%20for%20Gender%20Sensitivity%20and%20Safety)
- Women's Health in the North's Gender Analysis Planning Tool  
[www.whin.org.au/resources/gender-equity-and-analysis](http://www.whin.org.au/resources/gender-equity-and-analysis)
- Women's Health Loddon Mallee's Gender Equity Quality Standards  
[http://whlm.org.au/files/5113/7764/6793/Gender\\_Equity\\_Quality\\_Standards.pdf](http://whlm.org.au/files/5113/7764/6793/Gender_Equity_Quality_Standards.pdf)
- Women's Health Victoria's Gender Analysis Framework  
<http://whv.org.au/publications-resources/publications-resources-by-topic/post/gender-analysis-framework>
- Women's Health Victoria, *Gender transformative policy and practice*  
<http://whv.org.au/static/files/assets/e98b657e/Gender-transformative-policy-and-practice.pdf>
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency's reporting resources  
[www.wgea.gov.au/report/reporting-resources](http://www.wgea.gov.au/report/reporting-resources)



Victorian Health Promotion Foundation  
PO Box 154 Carlton South  
Victoria 3053 Australia  
T +61 3 9667 1333 F +61 3 9667 1375

[vichealth@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:vichealth@vichealth.vic.gov.au)  
[vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://vichealth.vic.gov.au)



VicHealth acknowledges the support  
of the Victorian Government.

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May 2016 P-MW-375

