

Margins to the Mainstream

Preventing violence
against women with
disabilities project

2020–2022

Evaluation Report
Executive Summary

Acknowledgments

Acknowledgement of Country

Women's Health East acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people, the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We affirm that sovereignty was never ceded, and that colonialism and racism continue to impact on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and contribute to the high rates of violence they may experience. We recognise the strength, resilience and leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and express our hope for and commitment to reconciliation.

Acknowledgement of lived experience

Women's Health East acknowledges the lived experience of women with disabilities, including neurodiversity, mental health and chronic health conditions, and their strength, knowledge, expertise and resilience. Women's Health East also acknowledges the important advocacy work undertaken by women with disabilities and their organisations – including Women with Disabilities Victoria – to secure the human rights of all women with disabilities.

Women's Health East honours the women whose voices we cannot hear as their lives have been taken by violence. We acknowledge the lasting impacts of violence on women with disabilities, their children and communities, and express our commitment to prevent violence against all women.

Suggested citation

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Foreword

Women's Health East is proud of the Margins to the Mainstream project and the positive impact it has had to prevent gender and disability inequality.

At the heart of the Margins to the Mainstream Project are the women with lived experience of disability who are members of the Project Experts Group. Their expertise and experiences have provided the foundation for all project activities. Our sincere appreciation to Andrea, Jody, Julie-Ann, Sandra, Sam, Tamlyn and Vivienne who are active members of the group. I also thank Eleanor, Hayley and Sue for their contribution to the group and project activities between 2020 and 2021. Thank you to the Project Experts for their individual and collective expertise and insights, creativity, courage and commitment to the project and for your leadership to bring about gender and disability equality.

The success of the project has been made possible by the Together For Equality and Respect partnership and their commitment to advance intersectional primary prevention practice and prioritise the work of preventing violence against women with disabilities across Melbourne's east.

I would like to sincerely thank our partners who made a commitment to the project consortium – Yarra Ranges Council, Boroondara City Council, EDVOS, Access Health and Community, EACH and Inspiro Health. The dedication and practical support provided by staff from these organisations on the Project Advisory Group has contributed to the success of the project.

Women with Disabilities Victoria, as a specialist gender and disability state-wide women's health service, is a critical project partner. I want to thank Women with Disabilities Victoria and their staff for contributing their specialist expertise in key project activities and on the Project Advisory Group.

Thank you to the author of the evaluation report, Dr Wei Leng Kwok of WLK Consulting. Wei Leng's work demonstrates the importance of ethical and fit-for-purpose evaluative practice undertaken in parallel with project implementation. Thank you, Wei Leng, for your expertise in demonstrating and measuring both process and outcomes in this community-led primary prevention initiative.

Further details about the evaluation and the project outcomes are available in the 'Margins to the Mainstream: Preventing violence against women with disabilities project 2020–2022 Evaluation Report.'

I want to sincerely thank all of Women's Health East's staff who have made this project possible. In particular, Avega Bishop, the Project Coordinator of Margins to the Mainstream, who has led this project with a genuine dedication to co-design, collaboration and centring the lived experiences of women with disabilities as leaders and activists of social change.

Finally, I would like to thank the Australian Department of Social Services for funding this project. Without this funding support, projects of this scale and impact would not be possible.

Elly Taylor

Chief Executive Officer
Women's Health East

Executive summary

A primary prevention initiative in Melbourne's east

Margins to the Mainstream: Preventing violence against women with disabilities 2020–2022 (M2M, the project) is led by Women's Health East and is an initiative of Together For Equality and Respect (TFER), the regional primary prevention infrastructure and cross-sector partnership of over 30 organisations working to prevent violence against women in Melbourne's east.

The project commenced in March 2020 following a successful submission by Women's Health East to the Australian Government Department of Social Services' *Community-led Projects to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children Grant Opportunity*. This evaluation report focuses on the project's initial period of March 2020 to June 2022.

M2M focuses on violence experienced by women with disabilities and how to prevent this violence. It operates from a 'drivers and actions' framing that prioritised targeting and transforming the deep underlying causes of violence, to stop violence before it starts. M2M is directed at the necessary social conditions (as first or primary cause) that permit and drive violence against women with disabilities, and the action needed to transform these conditions.

The project fits within prevention's current wave of intersectional practice as promoted by *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia* (Our Watch, 2021) and *Changing the Landscape: A national resource to prevent violence against women and girls with disabilities* (Our Watch and Women with Disabilities Victoria, 2022b).

According to these frameworks, gender inequality operates with other systems of inequality in society to establish and maintain hierarchical relations among people; generate the unequal distribution of power, resources, opportunity

and value between groups; and influence the dynamics, forms, prevalence and severity of violence against women. Prevention must act on these intersecting systems if it is to truly transform the drivers of violence, otherwise its efforts will benefit only some, leaving many others behind.

The expectation is not that any single person, organisation, community or institution can take action on all the drivers of violence at once; rather, that many stakeholders must contribute to transforming the underlying structural and societal conditions that allow for violence, especially by working collaboratively and coordinating their efforts over time.

Within this framing, the prevention of violence against women with disabilities requires resolute attention to gender inequality and disability inequality, or sexism and ableism, as specific intersectional systems that concurrently permit violence against women with disabilities to exist and persist. Unless the drivers are interrupted and disrupted at their intersecting origin, such violence is unlikely to end. This is how the consortium of TFER partners, led by Women's Health East, understood and undertook the work of M2M.

Project objectives and main activities

M2M has five high-level objectives.

Three objectives are aligned with actions in *Change the Story* to address the intersections of gender inequality and other forms of systemic, structural oppression by promoting broader social justice. They are also aligned with actions in *Changing the Landscape* to address the specific context of sexism and ableism that gives rise to violence against women with disabilities by promoting gender and disability equality.

The remaining objectives integrated sustainability action planning and project-level evaluation into M2M.



Figure 1. M2M’s mutually reinforcing activities and their participants and beneficiaries

The objectives are:

1. Strengthen partnerships for sustained work in the prevention of violence against women with disabilities
2. Elevate the voices of women with disabilities and promote their leadership and status in society
3. Build the capacity of partners to embed a focus on sexism and ableism into their prevention work, as intersecting structural drivers of violence against women with disabilities
4. Challenge intersecting sexist and ableist stereotypes across the community and other settings such as organisations
5. Contribute to the evidence base of what works in community-led efforts to prevent violence against women with disabilities.

Six mutually reinforcing activities were contained within these high-level objectives.

Activity 1: Project Advisory Group that offered guidance to M2M

The Project Advisory Group was convened at the start of the project from a consortium of TFER partners, with representation from Women’s Health East as lead partner, Eastern Domestic Violence Service (EDVOS)¹, Yarra Ranges Council, Boroondara City Council, Eastern Access Community Health (EACH), Inspiro Community Health Service and Access Health & Community (AccessHC). The Project Advisory Group included three non-TFER partners: Women with Disabilities Victoria, as a specialist and implementing partner alongside Women’s Health East; a community member and woman with lived experience of disability; and WLK Consulting as project evaluator.

1 EDVOS was rebranded FVREE in December 2022.

The Project Advisory Group's purpose is to inform and support M2M's development and delivery. The Project Advisory Group undertook sustainability action planning as a major piece of collaborative work, and contributed significantly to the evaluation process, such as its design.

Activity 2: **Experts Group (Project Experts) as the project's centrepiece**

The Experts Group is a group of women, the Project Experts, from diverse backgrounds who have lived experience of a range of disabilities. The group's co-facilitation was (for the most part) shared between the Project Coordinator and workers who identified as having lived experience. Project Experts completed skills development and as the project's centrepiece participated in Activity 3 to Activity 6.

Activity 3: **Workforce capacity building via training and other learning opportunities**

M2M delivered training to the Project Advisory Group and TFER in 2020 and 2021, to strengthen understandings of and support for the prevention of violence against women with disabilities. M2M made use of TFER's existing Community of Practice for themed sessions on preventing violence against women with disabilities, with Project Experts considerably involved in two of these, including as their own chaired panel.

Activity 4: **Organisational capacity building and meaningful consultations**

TFER partners were offered a small amount of funding to 'seed' initiatives that disrupted sexism and ableism as drivers of violence. Through this opportunity, two partners undertook meaningful consultations with the Project Experts to support work on improving organisational training packages to be less marginalising and discriminatory from the vantage point of women with lived experience.

Activity 5: **Resources co-design and social marketing strategy**

Project Experts co-designed social media tiles (messages and illustrations) for the region's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence Campaign in 2021, one tile for each day. The tiles were used for the social marketing strategy that year to raise awareness of violence against women with disabilities and communicate calls to action on the drivers of violence. The Experts Group subsequently utilised the tiles as a launching pad to explore themes for a suite of co-designed videos.

Activity 6: **Regional events and other presentations**

Project Experts were guest speakers at two high-profile regional events in November 2021. These were Women's Health East's Annual General Meeting (AGM) and 30-year anniversary celebration (an opportunity to launch the co-designed social media tiles for the 16 Days campaign) and the launch of Together For Equality and Respect Strategy: Preventing Violence Against Women in Melbourne's East (TFER Strategy 2021–2025) (Women's Health East, 2021). These events were noteworthy for the calibre of other speakers who presented alongside the Project Experts. Project Experts also presented to several individual partner organisations.

The evaluation

The evaluation consultant worked with a subgroup of the Project Advisory Group to develop the Evaluation Plan. This was based on the project logic model developed as part of the grant application (available at Appendix 1). The Evaluation Plan included indicators of quality processes and measurable changes (impacts) against which data would be collected from key participants.

The intended users of the evaluation are the Together For Equality and Respect partners and the funders of primary prevention initiatives.

Prevention principles to stop violence against women and girls with disabilities

- ✓ Centre the input of women and girls with disabilities.
- ✓ Ensure autonomy, community ownership and control.
- ✓ Co-design.
- ✓ Use a strengths-based approach.
- ✓ Build partnerships and opportunities for collaboration.
- ✓ Be respectful and authentic.
- ✓ Ensure the physical, emotional and cultural safety of women and girls with disabilities.
- ✓ Ensure accessibility and inclusion.
- ✓ Ensure prevention work is informed by critical frameworks.
- ✓ Contribute to the evidence base.

Figure 2. Core principles for the work of preventing violence against women with disabilities (Our Watch and Women with Disabilities Victoria, 2022b)

The evaluation aimed to:

- Capture the achievements of and lessons learned from M2M and its implementation
- Support those delivering project activities to make informed real-time implementation decisions via continuous data collection and sense-making
- Determine the value of the project from the perspectives of those involved: women with disabilities, partners and the Project Advisory Group
- Draw conclusions about the project so partners can make informed decisions about next steps for preventing violence against women in the region
- Support Together For Equality and Respect partners to communicate and share the results of the project.

The evaluation utilised a variety of data collection methods. These included in-depth interviews with staff involved in various project activities and the Project Experts, a focus group with the Project Advisory Group and participant observations of the meetings; on-line participant feedback forms following the Expert Groups skills development

sessions and the training and Community of Practice sessions; and case studies of the small grant initiatives. In addition, the evaluator reviewed multiple project documents, reports and resources produced throughout the project. The evaluator also undertook a comprehensive review of primary prevention frameworks, programs and strategies to place M2M within the wider primary prevention policy and practice context.

Main findings of the evaluation

Women with disabilities encounter sexism and ableism daily. The last thing they need are prevention initiatives that replicate the marginalisation and discrimination they experience. That's why *Changing the Landscape* offers a set of core principles to guide prevention practice.

One main finding arising from the evaluation is that **M2M upheld every principle contained in *Changing the Landscape***. The project could be said to have anticipated these principles, as it was well into implementation in February 2022, when the *Changing the Landscape* framework was released.

M2M upheld the framework's principles as follows.

- M2M paid meticulous attention to **access, inclusion and safety** throughout, from the moment the Project Team engaged with and recruited eligible women to the Experts Group, to the formation of the group, to the upskilling of the women as Project Experts, to co-design work and partner consultations with the Project Experts.
- The Project Team worked from **strengths-based** and **trauma-informed** positions in their engagements with the Experts Group, putting practices and processes in place so the group could be experienced as a **safe and non-judgemental space** for sharing, learning, reflection and connection.
- M2M **gave the Project Experts time**: to immerse themselves in the group and its activities; to place their lived experience within a wider structural view of discriminatory and oppressive systems; to unpack how deep structural forces have shaped their lives in similar, but not identical, ways; to share lived experience when it felt right; to properly co-design; to be consulted and to contribute expertise in meaningful ways; to forge enduring bonds and build solidarity; and to find safe and sustainable ways to be Experts. When it comes to preventing violence against women with disabilities, time is perhaps the most critical principle.
- M2M **centred lived experience** and **ensured community ownership**. These principles came to the fore during Activity 4 and Activity 5 (i.e. consultation and co-design), which saw **authentic partnerships** and **power sharing** that placed women's knowledge and abilities at the heart of the endeavour. The co-facilitators drew on women's strengths by **being mindful of power imbalances**; by **stepping back so women can lead**; by **placing decision making in women's hands**; by being **respectful in engagements**; and by giving Project Experts time – for co-design, for consultation, for closing the loop by bringing back the results of the advice and feedback given.
- M2M **elevated the voices of women with lived experience** and **amplified their voices** as part of centring lived experience. The project did this through regional events, themed Community of

Practice sessions and other ways of showcasing the Experts and their co-designed resources. Having these sub-principles in place helped consolidate the value of the women, and of the group, to the region's prevention work. It helped to grow women's professional identities too.

- The Project Advisory Group 'walked the talk' by embedding the principles of **access, inclusion and safety** into its terms of reference and by placing **respect** and **authenticity** at the forefront of its work.

A second main finding arising from the evaluation is that **M2M had the expertise and leadership in place to keep the focus where it needed to be**. Prevention practice must adopt an approach to collaboration that is broad enough to cover coalition building and allyship as part of a wider social justice platform, that is, one not wholly or exclusively focused on gender equality. Without such an approach, the capacity to address intersecting systems of oppression and discrimination and transform drivers of violence over time is diminished. Change the Story names strong partnerships between women's health services (like Women's Health East) and specialist services supporting specific communities (like Women with Disabilities Victoria) as central to keeping the work firmly focused on dismantling intersecting systems and maintaining it as primary prevention.

The positive relationship between **Women's Health East and Women with Disabilities Victoria as regional and state-wide feminist organisations**, with mutual gender and disability expertise, ensured the **high quality of M2M's design features and implementation success**. The ongoing relationship between Women's Health East and Women with Disabilities Victoria was critical to the project's set up, with the partnership keeping M2M focused on primary prevention. Further, as a piece of **infrastructure for prevention** in Melbourne's east, there are strong indications that this relationship will continue to grow beyond the project, which bodes well for intersectional practice in the region going forward.

A third main finding from the evaluation is that **M2M's outputs were numerous and impressive**, especially considered against the backdrop of the COVID-19 global pandemic and Victoria's public health responses to waves and clusters of infections for most of 2020 and 2021. Besides

filming for the video in March 2022, all project activities occurred in online environments, in ways that could not have been anticipated by anyone in pre-pandemic life. The outputs were as follows.

- **An expression of interest and recruitment phase** from September to October 2020 to attract women with lived experience to the Experts Group. This phase included expression of interest materials in accessible formats and promotion through Project Advisory Group and TFER networks. It resulted in 18 enquiries from eligible women.
- **An Experts Group** of ten women recruited through the expression of interest process, from November 2020.
- **A skills development program** for the Experts from late 2020 to early 2021 that covered the foundations of violence against women with disabilities and its prevention, the services and supports available to women experiencing violence, and advocacy.
- **A co-design and consultation phase** from mid-April 2021 to June 2022. A core group of six to seven women continued into this phase, which incorporated ongoing upskilling through additional training or 'learn by doing' in communications, public speaking and consultations.
- **More than 55 sessions** for the Experts from November 2020 to June 2022, inclusive of times when the women were together for regional events, Community of Practice sessions, filming and consultations.
- **A process for co-designing 16 social media tiles** (messages and illustrations) for the region's 16 Days campaign in November 2021. **A process for co-designing six videos** with five Experts speaking to the tiles and unpacking their messages or illustrations.
- **Participation in the region's social marketing initiative** for the 16 Days campaign held in November and December 2021, on the theme 'Equality is'. M2M contributed the co-designed tiles² while Women's Health East developed an accompanying toolkit. TFER partners used the tiles in different ways across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. The tiles were taken up beyond the region too, by Women with Disabilities Victoria, Our Watch and Plan International's Gender Network.
- **Participation in two high-profile regional events** in November 2021 that showcased M2M, with Experts presenting the co-designed tiles alongside notable prevention leaders and decision makers from Victoria and nationally as keynotes or panellists.
- **Three training sessions** delivered by Women with Disabilities Victoria for the Project Advisory Group and TFER in June 2020, and again for TFER in June 2021. A total of 44 people participated, with good representation from TFER partners. Those attending reported finding the training worthwhile and improved their understanding of foundational concepts for preventing violence against women with disabilities.
- **Three themed Community of Practice sessions** in October 2021, April 2022 and May 2022 that further upskilled TFER's workforce to prevent violence against women with disabilities. The sessions involved the Experts in different ways, including their **own chaired panel** for the third session.
- **A small-grants initiative** that gave two TFER partners an opportunity to address the drivers of violence against women with disabilities by doing deeper work with the Experts.
- **A process for respectfully and authentically consulting with the Experts** to improve training programs at EDVOS and AccessHC by making them less marginalising and discriminatory. The process included closing the loop by bringing back the changes made to three training programs based on the advice of the Experts.
- **A Project Advisory Group that met 15 times.** The Project Advisory Group led from the front in building prevention principles into its terms of reference and meeting practices. It contributed to the project's evaluation design and sustainability planning, resulting in an **Evaluation Plan** and **Sustainability Action Plan**.

2 The illustrations were designed by a socially inclusive graphic design studio, Blend Creative. A team of graphic designers with seven women with disabilities developed the set of 16 illustrations to match the messages through several rounds of feedback from the Experts Group.

Conclusions drawn from the findings

M2M exemplified what leading-edge prevention looks like in a real-world context of practice in Victoria; it shows how such work can and ought to be delivered now and into the future. M2M's intersectional focus on gender and disability inequalities as the social context of violence against women with disabilities aligned with the latest frameworks for primary prevention. The project aligned with these frameworks in several other ways. For example: by combining mutually reinforcing techniques to take action; by bringing in the expertise and leadership of feminist organisations to maintain the project's primary prevention focus; by adhering to the principles set out in *Changing the Landscape*; and by resourcing fit-for-purpose evaluation as integral to the project.

M2M was of enormous value to the Project Experts in multiple ways. The Experts Group and the activities it supported were unlike anything else in the women's lives. The Experts noted the attention to safety, accessibility and inclusion throughout: from the expression of interest and recruitment phase, to the formation of the Experts Group and early skills development phase, to the regional events and Community of Practice, to the co-design phase, and through to the very last of the consultations. To echo the words of one Expert, the one thing the group and the project didn't have was ableism.

M2M gave Experts the space to be themselves and to be accepted as women with lived experience without judgement. The project gave them time to reflect, connect, share and learn; to place lived experience in a wider structural frame of discriminatory and oppressive systems; to deepen insights and shape collective wisdom; and to step into their identities as agents of social change. M2M supported the Experts to draw on their strengths; to do true co-design and consultation; to lead and own their work; to amplify their voices and be heard; and to do things they had never done.

The acceptance, belonging and support, along with the transformations that occurred for individuals and for the group, were again unlike anything else in the women's lives. M2M's value to the Experts rested in the singularity and uniqueness of the group as experientially different to everything and everywhere else in their world, and the life-changing moments this afforded.

M2M gave Experts opportunities to contribute to TFER's work in tangible and meaningful ways, and to experience first-hand the impact of their contributions as acknowledged by the partners themselves. M2M brought women out of the margins and into TFER's mainstream. It filled them with an enormous sense of achievement and pride. It drove them to take the work further and to look forward to continuing the journey beyond M2M. It fostered a sense of self-worth. In the words of one Expert, 'For the first time ever, I feel like a contributing human being.'

The project gave women the self-assurance to apply for professional positions or take up roles that they otherwise might not have done. It has held value to the Experts on a personal level too, with some becoming stronger self-advocates through being part of the group, others observing improvements to their mental health, and all forming enduring bonds and friendships.

M2M has benefited TFER's intersectional work in tangible ways. The project was designed so that outputs such as the 16 Days campaign social media tiles and video series could be gifted to TFER as resources for the partnership's ongoing use. Partners now have high-quality and evidence-based resources formed through the lived experience of women with disabilities who live in the region, to use in their work.

The social media tiles are particularly noteworthy for their point of difference from other campaign materials available to partners from year to year, in terms of their authenticity, emotional impact and freshness. As one Project Expert put it, 'When I look at them now, the messages and images are timeless. Without knowing it, we made them so they would have longevity'.

The project has strengthened TFER's workforce for preventing violence against women with disabilities, through training and other learning opportunities. The last 18 months detailed in this evaluation saw improved understandings of foundational concepts for the work, such as gender inequality and disability inequality as the intersecting drivers of violence against women with disabilities. The project supported two partners (EDVOS and AccessHC) to work closely with Experts. These partners reviewed their respective training programs and rectified aspects that were marginalising or discriminatory from the point of view of women with lived experience, as practical steps towards transforming the drivers of violence.

M2M is a flagship collaboration of TFER, a demonstration of the partnership's intent around leadership and change on the intersecting drivers of violence as expressed in TFER Strategy 2021–2025.

The project has given TFER an example of what can be accomplished when the partnership brings together a consortium that designs well, operates well, collaborates well, leads from the front and is open to learning along the way. It can achieve high-quality, highly principled work with tangible outputs such as co-designed prevention resources that resonate and meaningful consultation processes.



Figure 3. Examples of social media tiles co-designed for the regional 16 Days campaign in 2021

Next steps for the TFER partnership and the Project Advisory Group

TFER's workforce has gained much through M2M's training and learning opportunities. It is important to continue this learning so the region's infrastructure for preventing violence against women with disabilities, including a workforce with capacity for intersectional prevention practice, keeps strengthening.

Two specific TFER partners have benefited enormously from the opportunity to work with M2M's Experts. However, as TFER is made up of more than 30 partners, it is important for the rest of TFER to engage in this sort of deeper work if the partnership is to see substantial, enduring change on the drivers of violence against women with disabilities. Partners need to do more work on their own organisations as settings for action on gender inequality and disability inequality. Put simply, TFER partners must be the change they want to see.

M2M exemplified leading-edge prevention and intersectional practice in Victoria. In addition, M2M exemplified what a regional partnership approach to leading-edge prevention looks like, led by a women's health service and its strong relationship with another feminist organisation with disability-specific expertise. M2M demonstrates how intersectional prevention practice, regional collaborations and collective action could and should be done now and to the future. This has implications for TFER's standing beyond the region.

The Victorian Government's plan for prevention, *Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women* is in the second cycle of its three-yearly action planning cycles.

The Second Action Plan 2022–2025 has a focus on ensuring prevention in Victoria operates as a coherent, coordinated system. 'Governance, coordination and system development' is one of ten high-level priorities; and this priority names a specific action to 'strengthen collaboration with local and regional partnerships, including women's health services, to inform state-wide policy and programming in Victoria, in recognition of the critical role they play in driving collective action across local communities.'

Herein lies a strategic opportunity for Women's Health East and TFER to widely promote M2M as a regional partnership approach for contemporary intersectional prevention practice, perfect for progressing the 'Governance, coordination and system development' priority of Second Action Plan 2022–2025. M2M could inform state-wide policy and programming going forward, as an exemplar of evidence-based, collaborative regional action on the intersecting drivers of violence.

It is suggested (rather than recommended) that Women's Health East and TFER monitor developments related to the state-wide system infrastructure priority of Free from Violence; and that Women's Health East and TFER prepare to present evidence to state-wide stakeholders of M2M's high-quality design, highly-principled work, and regional partnership approach to intersectional practice, along with the other successes documented in this evaluation report.

Recommendations for TFER

Recommendation 1.

Maintain momentum for the work

TFER must maintain momentum for intersectional prevention practice and the prevention of violence against women with disabilities as TFER Strategy 2021–2025 is operationalised. TFER should do this through a dual approach that continues to strengthen the infrastructure for intersectional prevention work, focusing on breadth as well as depth.

- Breadth should be achieved by continuing to build the capacity of TFER’s workforce through learning opportunities such as an annual (or more frequent) themed Community of Practice session on the prevention of violence against women with disabilities.
- Depth should be achieved through ongoing learning for TFER partners with the region’s Experts to take action on the intersection of sexism and ableism. This can occur by promoting gender and disability equality in their own organisational settings by improving policies, processes, programs and services so they are less discriminatory and marginalising for women with lived experience.

The partnership should prioritise depth as it works on implementing TFER Strategy 2021–2025; and TFER partners engaged in this must include those who are more advanced in ‘putting intersectionality into practice’ and those newer to doing this. TFER must create opportunities for sharing insights and lessons learned.

Recommendation 2.

Keep intersectionality front and centre

Women’s Health East, as lead partner, must ensure that TFER takes steps to consider the prevention of violence against women with disabilities in its processes, structures and relevant conversations. This step will ensure opportunities for regional collaborations on tackling the intersecting drivers of sexism and ableism are explored and discussed up front. Reasonable steps include showcasing M2M at action planning or other decision-making forums, so partners gain an understanding of what can be accomplished when they design and collaborate well, lead from the front, and are open to learning along the way. Therefore, partners can be inspired to continue the work of preventing violence against women with disabilities as part of realising TFER Strategy 2021–2025.

Recommendation 3.

Champion the work

To help facilitate Recommendation 1 and Recommendation 2, members of M2M's Project Advisory Group must commit to delivering their Sustainability Action Plan to champion M2M and the prevention of violence against women with disabilities throughout TFER, as appropriate to their individual organisational roles and spheres of influence. This action is especially important during M2M's extension and will also be critical once Department of Social Services funding comes to an end.

Recommendation 4.

Share the evidence

TFER should explore opportunities to showcase M2M beyond the region, as a demonstration of leading-edge intersectional prevention practice. For example, at relevant state-wide or national forums, or at conferences or events on prevention practice, policy or programming. Outputs of M2M in its extended project period should include a practical 'how to' guide for the prevention field. The guide should be based on the insights gained and lessons learned from project implementation and co-designed with the Experts as appropriate. TFER should develop an actionable dissemination strategy for this evaluation report, including preparing its contents (in full or in part) for distribution to a range of audiences, and in formats to facilitate accessibility.

Recommendations for funders

Recommendation 5.

Program and fund intersectional prevention initiatives differently

Program decision makers and funders must move away from short-term models for community-owned intersectional prevention initiatives towards models that properly recognise the time required for highly-principled and high-quality intersectional prevention practice, and that producing deep transformative change on the intersecting drivers of violence across all levels of the social ecology – societally, institutionally, organisationally, in community life and interpersonally – takes even more time.

Recommendation 6.

Properly acknowledge and resource fit-for-purpose evaluation

Program decision makers and funders must move towards models that properly acknowledge and resource fit-for-purpose evaluation as integral to intersectional prevention practice. Such evaluation is especially important for demonstrating that intersectional prevention practice has not inadvertently reproduced the systems of discrimination, oppression and inequality that it is trying to dismantle. It is also essential for continual learning and improvement, and critical for building evidence on how to do the work and why.

Margins to the Mainstream

Preventing violence against women with disabilities

Project Logic Model

Objective 1

Strengthen partnerships for sustained work in the prevention of violence against women with disabilities (PVAWD)

Objective 2

Elevate the voices of women with disabilities (WWD) and promote their leadership and status in society

Objective 3

Build the capacity of partners to embed into their prevention work a focus on sexism and ableism as intersecting structural drivers of violence against WWD

Objective 4

Challenge intersecting sexist and ableist stereotypes across the community and other settings (e.g. organisations)

Objective 5

Contribute to the evidence base of 'what works' in community-led PVAWD



