



# ADDRESSING SEXUAL VIOLENCE FOR ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Prevention – Responses from specific communities

Discussion document 2 of 4: October 2019



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## Introduction

This discussion paper reports on the second session of the Connections! Hui: a discussion about preventing sexual violence for specific groupings of people within ethnic communities (see Appendix for questions that were used to prompt group discussion). This session includes discussion about values necessary for prevention work, prevention in communities, prevention for re-victimisation and prevention of child sexual abuse.

A previous paper summarised the general sexual violence prevention discussions, and following papers address responses to sexual violence. This paper should not be read alone and is not designed to replace the information from the first paper, but to enhance it for particular groups who were willing for the information to be shared.

This paper includes summarised discussions from 11 tables, including from groups identifying as refugee, migrant, rainbow, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Indian, Filipino, Latin American, Asian and African. Each of these discussions occurred in contexts where the participants shared an aspect of difference and had some common values, language and understandings. They include the 'cultural shorthand' that people sometimes use when discussing issues with other people who understand the same cultural context. Care should be taken in interpreting these discussions from a different cultural or religious background. These notes should in no way be misrepresented to describe the full understanding or expression of a cultural or religious group about preventing sexual violence, or responding to sexual violence within a community. They are guideposts only.

This paper includes all notes taken from these groups to describe the main themes of the discussions. Each section addresses a different group.

These notes were distributed to each group and have been discussed and commented on within the group. They represent a taonga of words, time and effort from participants so that change can be effective.

## How to use this document

This discussion paper must be read alongside the general sexual violence prevention discussions, which outlined values for prevention work in ethnic communities, significant issues across these communities and recommended prevention approaches. This paper highlights some of the diversity between ethnic community groups – one size does not fit all, and this paper starts to describe some of the differences in values, gaps and approaches.

One of the major implications of all discussions from the Connections! Hui was the community imperative 'Nothing about us without us'. This document should stand as a starting place from which to have further discussion with a community.

## PREVENTION FOR PEOPLE WITH A REFUGEE BACKGROUND

**Note:** We do not have statistics about how many people are currently living in New Zealand with a refugee background. New Zealand recently increased the intake of refugee people to 1000 a year, and has been regularly accepting refugees from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Colombia, Iraq, Myanmar, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Syria. There are refugees of many other nationalities also in New Zealand<sup>1</sup>.

The refugee community is diverse. This table represented people from Eastern Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. It had people from different cultures, different religions and languages.

### **Key values and practices that underpin former refugee communities being free of sexual violence**

**Family centred:** There is a sense that every decision impacts family here, family back home and also the children's future. This makes all decision-making very family centred. This value can be used to strengthen protective parenting practices for children.

**Collective values:** Refugee communities often value collectivism rather than individualism. This value can be used to strengthen community practice around understanding and responding well as a community when harm has been perpetrated.

**Religious beliefs:** Refugee communities often have religious beliefs that are different from the mainstream beliefs of the community they settle into. These beliefs have values that should always be used to support prevention work.

**Leadership:** Valuing and strengthening refugee community leadership is important. This can be mobilised to strengthen understandings amongst refugee community leaders about what to do when sexual violence occurs, and how to hold conversations about this well.

**Respect for older members:** Respect for elders is a value that can be mobilised to support community change, if elders understand and value the reason for change.

It is important to recognise that these strongly held values can have both a positive and negative impact for people. Many parts of the different refugee communities are patriarchal or male dominated, which means that values around family, leadership and collectivism can favour men. Religious beliefs also can have a negative impact, even if it isn't directly – one person described this as having the idea that “We will not punish you, but God will punish you”.

### **Behaviours and practices of mainstream New Zealand that make preventing sexual violence in our communities difficult**

**Racism** impacts former refugee communities in a number of ways which stops our communities from being free of sexual violence. For example, lack of cultural understanding and ideas about freedom of expression can be used against people in former refugee communities.

**Lack of cultural understanding** can inhibit reporting and help seeking for fear of being further stigmatised or misunderstood, or having your culture denigrated.

New Zealand considers itself to be a place where there is freedom of expression but this often backfires for refugee communities, when people are condemning the use of burka or using ‘free speech’ to be anti-refugee. There is a sense that **certain cultures are punished for being different**,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/statistics/statistics-refugee-and-protection.pdf>

with people wanting you to be 'more kiwi'. There are often cultural misunderstandings eg. Police who recommend divorce without understanding the meaning or impact of this culturally.

In addition to this, negative stereotypes in the media about certain cultures create a false image of the culture. New Zealanders often have the idea that New Zealand is a paradise in comparison but refugees can get re-traumatised here.

The difference in cultures can also cause issues such as with Internet access to uncensored material and inappropriate content.

### **Behaviours and practices within your community that contribute to sexual violence happening**

Three main issues were discussed. The first was **victim blaming** – that someone who experienced sexual harm would be portrayed in the community as a bad person. The second was the amount of discrimination on the basis of **gender** that many people in our communities experience, and the third was the practice of **keeping silent** about harm that might have happened, because of ideas of bringing shame and dishonour to family and community, feelings of stigma, the idea that no-one will believe you, and guilt.

### **Key issues to address and first steps to take**

**Immigration:** Skilled refugees are being cherry-picked by countries before they get to New Zealand, but New Zealand takes humanitarian refugees. Once they get here, refugees are resettled into certain locations – for example there are Syrians located into Dunedin and Bhutanese into Palmerston North. The settlement locations are already chosen for them. If they relocate they lose their settlement package. This is very disempowering as they have no choice in where they go. This issue impacts overall wellbeing and increases vulnerability to sexual and other forms of violence in the early stages of resettlement.

**Empowerment:** Developing a space and spaces where people are empowered is important. Empowerment needs to happen for a whole community, not just parts of the community – ie. Can't empower children without empowering other parts of the community. Education and employment are important aspects of empowerment. The aim should be to upskill, educate, empower – developing programmes with 'Someone who speaks my language, culture and religion'

**Continued support:** There must be continued support for individuals, families and communities, including psychosocial groups – soccer groups, sewing groups, arts and crafts groups run by a professional. Once group is well established, this can be a space to invite guest speakers and have conversations about difficult topics such as sexual violence. Once people are established with a sense of safety and security, this is possible.

**It is always better to prevent than to respond**

## **PREVENTION FOR PEOPLE WITH A MIGRANT BACKGROUND**

**27.4%** of people living in New Zealand were born outside of the country. Of these, 14.36% are from non-traditional source countries, and not Pacific<sup>2</sup>.

The two groups that discussed this had representatives from Israel, Iran, Germany, South America, Chile and Italy.

Discussion was had around migration and the diversity of experiences that underpin this life event which is different for children than adults. When does migration start? This question is important to consider in terms of vulnerabilities and resilience, and whether people had power in the process or were powerless. We must acknowledge that sexual violence does cross all cultural, ethnic and religious boundaries.

### **What are the key values and practices for your community to be free from sexual violence?**

**Returning back to community:** A key value was the idea of developing community around the migrant person, as a point of resilience and a place to start with prevention work.

**Resilience:** People who have migrated have considerable resilience rooted in the migration journey and choice to move country and start somewhere new.

**Taking prevention as strategy rather than only healing:** this group talked about the practice of prevention as being a key value to work with.

**Nostalgia** is part of the identity of being a migrant and should be addressed in any work that addresses migrants.

### **What are the behaviours and practices of mainstream NZ that contribute to sexual violence happening to people from your community?**

The key point that came up in this discussion across both groups was that ACC doesn't cover matters related to back home and there is a lack of support for sexual violence that happened overseas, which is not funded.

### **What are the behaviours and practices within your community that contribute to sexual violence happening?**

**Lack of knowledge:** There was concern that migrants without permanent residence did not disclose issues because of visa status and were unable to get support because of this. This raises issues both with the vulnerability of the migrant and also with revictimization.

**Different structures of migrant families:** One of the issues that mainstream organisations need to be aware of is the co-dependence of migrant women in families, and the life costs that they face. Parenting dynamics need to be addressed with prevention work as these might be different to mainstream parenting dynamics.

### **What are the key issues to address, and what are the first steps to take with your community?**

**Education:** One of the key issues to address is to ensure that migrants know what supports they are able to access in relation to the legal stages of migration. It is important to inform the migrant but

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/2018-census-totals-by-topic-national-highlights>

also to ensure that organisations are informed about the **legal rights of different groups of migrants**.

For migrants, education should include what happens with disclosures in New Zealand, **and laws and cultural norms** around sexual practice and sexual behaviour right from the beginning. As migrants come from different countries and different cultures, they carry their own traditions and customs which include how to respond to certain situations, or the status and rights of children or women in their community. When these traditions or customs conflict with the law in New Zealand (such as being able to smack children) they must be explicitly told about the law. However, in order for this change to be embedded in community, people also need to understand why it is the law, and to have alternative ways of behaving.

It would be useful for all migrants to receive a **Health and Wellbeing pack** with phone numbers to contact, and workshops about what support is available and how to access it. The same written information should be sent to employers.

Schools are good places for young people to learn about sexual violence and about **consent**, but there is a gap between what children are learning and what parents understand, so it is important for schools to communicate with parents.

Youth prevention programmes can create barriers or different understandings within families – Mates and Dates facilitators need to **acknowledge cultural differences** and develop workshops for parents.

Parenting programmes are important to develop understandings between mainstream practices and those held by people of different cultural backgrounds, and many mainstream programmes do not include this level of cultural analysis.

**Professional body:** A professional body to address sexual violence should be established. While it would not be possible to have a culturally specific professional body (because of all the different cultures), cross cultural practice should be strong. The body should address questions of what are good cross-cultural practices? There was concern that education about 'cross cultural practice' was often not effective. What is the culture of origin and what level of cultural conflict does the migrant face? This professional body should be part of a centralised leadership framework – central body. This professional body could move to a cultural analysis in therapy and prevention.

**Funding for professional prevention** and intervention to work with migrant communities. It is really important to do prevention work **with** communities. We need to acknowledge that there are many ways of doing prevention and be clear about legal boundaries – when prevention turns into early intervention and what needs to happen if people disclose violence or abuse. It is important to talk to community leaders and to go with the community not against it.

**Attitudinal change:** It is important to promote acceptance of difference with mainstream communities and having lots of 'human to human' connection. Meeting different cultures helps get out of the binary of us/them. It would be useful to come out with a thing that allows us to connect and be safe cross-culturally 'eg toolkit'. For migrant communities, it would be useful for migrant people to be able to work on self awareness and confidence.

**Opening up ACC funding to migrants:** This is clearly a big gap that needs to be addressed, as no matter where the trauma has happened, the effects of it are in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## PREVENTION FOR ETHNIC PEOPLE WITH CHRISTIAN FAITH

This table had a diversity of people identifying as Christian, who had beliefs or spirituality related to Christianity. They were from seven different countries/cultural contexts. The group talked about perspectives from each of their own cultural contexts, which were very different. However, what has been recorded here are the aspects of the conversation that related to Christianity.

It is firstly important to acknowledge that Christianity operates differently in different cultural contexts and that any work in preventing sexual violence needs to work specifically with both the religious and cultural aspect present.

### Values for preventing sexual violence

**Womanhood:** It is important to address this value. For some (eg Latin Americans) their faith in Mary/Maria models strong femininity. It can be used to show that single mothers are strong, and this faith values being caring. Within a Zambian context, there are a lot of women pastors and most times if a husband is a pastor, his wife takes on that role as well. If he dies, the wife may take on the responsibility of running the church. Valuing 'womanhood' was a strong protective value.

**Family unity:** This is another strong value throughout Christian faiths. The value could be mobilised to ensure that unity within the family is real when it comes to addressing different generational understandings. For example, focussing on unity (a shared sense of belonging together) when discussing youth sexual violence prevention programmes, for example, can lead to conversations that explain different generational perspectives while holding the family unit in good relationship with each other.

**Sense of life, water, resurrection:** It was felt that the values around resurrection and new life could be mobilised to address the shame and stigma around sexual violence.

### Issues faced by people in culturally diverse Christian communities

The values above also have aspects that are not useful for preventing sexual violence. Womanhood can be linked with the idea of self-sacrifice and the importance of keeping your relationship even if it is 'broken'. It is seen as important to keep your relationship for the sake of your children. Divorce is not acceptable in many cultural/Christian communities, with the only grounds for it being infidelity. This makes marital rape something that is hidden and violence is not an acceptable reason to leave a marriage.

Religious leaders, whether they are priests or preachers, play an important role in keeping women in marriages and can be barriers to reporting violence. This is particularly the case because of patriarchal practices and the dominance of men in these roles.

When something goes wrong for a Christian person, there is a sense that the religion questions the person, not Christianity. This perpetuates a silence from people who have experienced sexual or other forms of violence.

Across the different cultural backgrounds of people in this group, the issue of patriarchy was raised. This is seen in preferences for sons, power given to men to be religious leaders, the ways that religious leaders abuse their roles, the position of women and the enforcing of marriage. Because the concerns that women have are always attended to by women, there is a sense that men are not interested or impacted by these issues. There is also hierarchy reinforced in every strata of communities.

Participants talked about Christian practices happening outside of New Zealand impacting on the cultural practices here in New Zealand, sometimes those things are actually happening here and sometimes they are remembered from countries of origin – for example, priests fathering children and this being accepted by the community, priests abusing their roles, priests abusing maids, Matai leaders maintaining hierarchy, cultural practices of relationships between brothers and sisters-in-law which can create a tolerance of sexual abuse, the treatment of women caught in the act of adultery, incest and an inability to talk about inappropriate behaviours within a family. While priests can be arrested if they ‘cross the line’, providing some protection in law, the things they can be prosecuted for include polygamy, rape and unacceptable religious practices – which still leaves significant gaps.

As well as this, participants talked about New Zealand laws being derived from Christian values – the sense that these two are ‘married’. They described reinforcing one’s own cultural values if people stick with their own/same culture. This can reinforce the worst aspects of culture, and points to the importance of inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue.

### **Actions that can be taken**

**Conversation within cultural/Christian contexts:** This connects to actions suggested in the first document around having safe spaces to talk about different issues. Specifically, this group identified these conversational points, and the importance of addressing religious leaders as part of these conversations.

- **Addressing victim-blaming and stigma:** This is important so that people know they can talk safely about sexual and other forms of violence.
- **Understanding sexual violence:** It is important to consider what sexual violence is, especially in terms of relationships.
- **Addressing what it means to be a woman** – being able to talk about the emphasis on women looking attractive, and the guilt and shame that women are left with if sexual violence occurs
- **Equality for sexes**
- **Freedom of speech**

**Inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue:** It was also seen as very important to be able to discuss cultural and spiritual matters in a safe space with people from other faiths and cultural backgrounds, to understand and to reinforce healthy cultural practices.

**The development of an ethnic sexual violence response service** that is culturally and spiritually sensitive and embraces both aspects of being. This service can provide a space outside of the Christian faith where people can go and get support – it helps to see someone outside, but also understand what it is like inside the faith.

## PREVENTION FOR ETHNIC PEOPLE WITH MUSLIM FAITH

### 1.18% of the population in New Zealand identifies as Muslim.

This table acknowledged a wide diversity of people identifying as Muslim, including differences in cultural background, differences in how faith is practiced and differences in understanding what it means to be Muslim. There are many cultural layers that impact religious practice, which means religion gets interpreted differently for different people. These interpretations of faith are often community based and tied in with food, culture and language. The group also pointed to differences in experience, perspectives of individualism, ethnicity, language, social and economic status and practices around food. The context of how a person has been educated as a child and whether the influences on them have been moderate or extreme also make a difference.

These differences impact Muslim communities considerably, and the group talked about a hierarchy of differences where religiousness can be considered as a scale – seen from both outside the community and inside. Those who are considered more ‘religious’ face different types of prejudice from external sources, and may need different types of interventions from those considered less religious. While religiosity can be related to choice of clothing, education, connection with mainstream society and duration of time in New Zealand, there should not be assumptions made about this as culture also has an impact.

#### Values for preventing sexual violence

**Consent:** Consent is a basic part of Islam – as a religion it is against sexual violence and accords women the rights and power to agree to sex or say no if they don’t want it. Sometimes cultural practices are counter to what religion suggests, and cultures are impacted differently by patriarchy.

Consent is an important value to understand and mobilise through education and education of community leaders. Understanding the consent based values of the Holy Qu’ran is an important part of this, and unpacking this and learning more about it is work should be done with and by community leaders.

**Gatherings:** Coming together as a group is an important value for Muslim peoples and community. Gatherings are places for networking and sharing ideas, as well as understanding, developing and testing values. Gathering people together provides a chance for education and understanding to be passed on, and provides the opportunity to socialise ideas and develop acceptance to change. It is important to ensure that community has access to venues that are appropriate for meeting.

**Responsibility:** This value refers to the responsibility to nurture and care for others that is strongly present in Islam. It can be mobilised to work against practices of shaming and also to encourage the responsible development of practice around disclosures of sexual violence, and support for victims.

#### Actions that can be taken

**Education of religious leaders:** Religious leaders must be given the opportunity to develop skills around leading conversations about responses to sexual violence, and how to do this safely and well. It is important that religious leaders are involved in all aspects of developing work that is to prevent sexual violence and developing responses to sexual violence.

**Addressing the dehumanised Muslim:** The impacts of racism, fear and judgement of Muslims mean that appropriate responses for sexual violence aren’t available, and good prevention work is not currently practiced. The dehumanising of Muslims happens on many levels – through media, TV and

other exposure where Muslims are seen as 'other' to mainstream and mainstream perspectives think that women are 'second-class' in Islam – this means that from the outside, Muslim women face judgement about their 'choice' to practice their religion which dehumanises them even further.

**Addressing shame:** Shame is a very common reaction to sexual violence, and this is also true for Muslim survivors. It is important that Muslim communities are able to have conversations that address shame and stigma, and understand within their own community the impacts of this. Talking openly within families is important and communities can be empowered to do this more effectively by developing our own information.

**Programmes for men:** Harmful behaviour from men is often informed by patriarchal attitudes or understandings of ideology that aren't useful. These are understandings that men must address in their own spaces. It would be beneficial to develop programmes for men which require them to think about and develop different ways of behaving. This should be religiously specific so that it can address cherry-picking – using of Qu'ranic readings to uphold harmful practices

## PREVENTION FOR PEOPLE WITH HINDU FAITH

### 2.11% of the population in New Zealand identifies as Hindu

This was a very diverse group because there is no one definition of Hindu – it encompasses spirituality and religion and is multi-layered. It is a place of family traditions and language.

The first part of the discussion focussed on behaviours, values and practices within the community that impact sexual violence.

The traditionally **patriarchal structure** of Hindu community means that men and men's needs are held as most important.

- The male head of household has both power and status
- The female has a role of service, giving and caring for a family
- Women are taught that their role is to serve
- Women ask permission to do things – they are 'less than'.
- Consent is not considered an issue – sex is about men's and women's duty within marriage, and men need sex. This means that marital rape is not seen as rape. In Indian law, for example, there is no mention of marital rape because it is believed that a woman can not be raped by her husband.
- Men do most of the ceremony in marriage – the woman is only in attendance
- Pre-marital sex is sinful
- Women who leave a marriage are outcasts

Some of this is changing with integration into New Zealand (and other) societies. Gender roles are more fluid. The mother might go out to work and the father might spend more time doing childcare - responsibilities can be more shared by necessity.

There is a difference between Hindu beliefs and practices. For example, Hindu goddesses are worshipped so in the religion women are valued. Language such as 'Namaste' means 'The God in me greets the god in you'. This acknowledges equality between humans.

Hinduism roots never advocate for violence - it is about kindness, compassion and love. However, how scriptures are interpreted is up to individuals and is influenced by the caste system. This can mean that power is entrenched through history and through particular groups of people.

Some of the stories and representations of Gods and relationships between male and female gods can be interpreted in ways that aren't supportive for women being able to make their choices. There needs to be understanding of these stories and how they affect individual people and families of Hindu faith.

However, one of the main gods within Hinduism is Shiva/Shakti which represents both male and female aspects of the divine in equality. Symbols of this equality are woven through Hindu art and temples. This value can be used to strengthen situations where women aren't treated equally.

The concept of the divine can be used to redevelop strength and power for people who have experienced sexual harm.

## Key issues to address for preventing sexual violence

- **Teaching and education** is very important. This should include:
  - Changing how we bring up children – gender equality
  - Developing stories that include gender equality would work well for our community
  - Gender beliefs stem from learnt behaviour – parents need to change how they are behaving so that role modelling at home is different
  - Developing the understanding that the divine is within us all and perpetrators hurt the divine within themselves when they cause violence, and for the victims as well - they are not less because they are also divine.
- Understanding that many members of the community have a very busy lifestyle and face **economic issues**. This increases the influence of the media for young people – need positive media representations and stories that are about empowerment.
- **Growing empowerment and self worth for women**, building on Goddess Strengths such as demonstrated by Shakti - courage, soul. Lakshmi can demonstrate prosperity and wealth. Vani can demonstrate wisdom and knowledge. The angry Indian Goddess Maia can destroy the darkness, and Shakti would not tolerate any darkness or bad behaviour. There is a diversity of opinion about how these stories are understood and used and this might be different across cultural context as well.
- Developing the **values of acceptance and inclusivity** so that people can talk about family issues and family violence without shame about sharing ‘my family secrets’.
- Developing **confidential, safe spaces** to have these conversations.
- **Addressing social hierarchies**. Treating people with respect, irrespective of their role – seeing God in all people. The idea of ‘Soul to Soul’ is the Hindu way of looking at others. The caste system doesn’t have as much impact in New Zealand day to day life but it still has significant impact when it comes to marriage - the mother in law has a lot of power in this relationship. This social hierarchy says that the mother is more important than the wife in relationships which creates risk for wives. Honour based violence can happen when there are inter-caste marriages.
- **Addressing verbal abuse**. Sexual violence does not occur in isolation. It is important to understand that verbal and psychological violence often precede physical and sexual violence and all forms of relationship violence must be understood and identified.

## **PREVENTION FOR PEOPLE OF INDIAN ETHNICITY**

This was a large and diverse group, including people identifying as South American Indian, Fijian Indian and New Zealand Indian, and including people from South India, North India, East India and faiths of Sikh, Muslim and Hindu as well as people without a religious faith.

### **What are the key values and practices that underpin your community being free of sexual violence?**

- Acknowledge colonised patriarchal society. Many Indian cultured countries have a violent history of war which has strengthened the idea that men must be 'protectors' of the family/village.
- Leadership from and within Indian communities in New Zealand
- Open mindset
- Visibility
- Confidentiality – stopping the conversation or spread of gossip
- Inclusion of ethnic minorities in government reports/actions
- Positive mentorship
- Older generation supporting the newer migrants
- Education about rights
- Traditional values – when to challenge them and when not to. Learning how to navigate conflict and resolution.
- Respect
- Open communication

### **What are the behaviours and practices of mainstream New Zealand that contribute to sexual violence happening to people from your community?**

- Stigma, secrecy, shame, guilt. The stigma of trauma or violence suffered means ethnic people are censored from speaking out
- New Zealand normalises sexual violence
- No acknowledgement that sexual violence has happened both in mainstream society and within our community
- Normalising privileged practices
- Objectifying, victim blaming culture
- Objectifying women and certain gender groups
- Isolating certain vulnerable groups
- Trust issues with police and government/legal agencies (barriers)

### **What are the behaviours and practices within your community that contribute to sexual violence happening?**

- Years of cultural conditioning which include matriarchal and patriarchal power and roles - these already interacted to contribute to sexual violence, and when they are enacted within a new cultural context it also creates intergenerational conflict.
- Discourses of virginity/purity

- Patriarchal mindsets - in Indian law there is no mention of marital rape because it is believed that a woman cannot be raped by her husband.
- Family centred/values – off balance vs. individual. Often mothers will favor ‘sons’ because at the end of the day, it is the son who will be looking after her.
- Understanding generational differences - jealousy can be created between generations when mothers don’t have/haven’t had the same opportunities of freedom as daughters/daughters in law.
- Religious values and norms that may create a false sense of respect. Sometimes religious leaders are idealistically put forward. This creates a false sense of security with them because they are perceived as being perfect, which allows predators among them to commit sexual harm which no one acknowledges.
- Cross cultural understanding and adjustment - lack of communication and discussion around values, cultural differences and how to interpret the obvious differences. Generational differences mean that the matriarchal power that women previously held is eroded, creating conflict.

#### **What are the key issues to address and what are the first steps to take with your community?**

- **Address structural racism.**
  - The lack of ethnic representation in mainstream NZ affects actions and compliance with police.
  - Changing media representation of ethnic communities and including ethnic faces in media campaigns. Campaigns such as It’s Not Okay using Indian role models.
  - Supporting marginalised communities
- **Education:**
  - Early intervention and prevention programmes
  - Normalising emotional regulation for boys at school and an early age
  - Increase the awareness of services available
  - Re-defining love languages
  - Consent based and including information about anatomy and contraception.
  - Shift what is taught to women and what is taught to men. Teaching around the core values and roles for genders should be more realistic, rather than the idea that men work 9-5 for paid income. In the current era, women also work full time jobs but because the core values and roles haven’t shifted, she often also has to do all the chores and look after the kids.
  - Deconstructing discourses around virginity, purity, gender roles, male vulnerability, emotionality, patriarchy, male entitlement.
  - Defining/separating culture vs. law – holding that in balance
  - Make information available in Immigration NZ information pack about how to access support services and what support is available, as well as legal information about rights
- **The development of better service**, including having an ethnic survivor-centred approach – there is a concern that untrained first responders can lack empathy and not respond appropriately for survivors. In this case, victim blaming is a hindrance. A survivor-centred approach must include pastoral care, must address language barriers, must include skills of active listening, confidentiality, respect and must have an understanding of the vulnerability

of both sides. Better service should address the barriers to help seeking, which include a lack of financial independence for women; language; visa categories and status (including migrants with visa restrictions and transgender communities) and lack of understanding of New Zealand systems. There should be specific funding allocation for responding to and supporting ethnic people who have experienced sexual violence. Improved service should support professionals better.

- **The development of community response co-ordinators** to create a bridge between police/officials and community. This work links with having local advocates within the community and building allies within other community groups.
- **Collecting data/research** for ethnic communities in New Zealand
- **Domestic violence definition** – this should be fully defined to include many other forms of abuse. It needs to acknowledge that women can be perpetrators too and that men can be victims and face stigma about this.
- **Address issues facing international exchange students** and ethnic students. International students are new to the country and not aware of their rights or the cultural context they are put into.
  - Vulnerabilities - need to be better understood
  - Rights - need to be better explained
- **A safe house** for ethnic people, especially in isolated communities
  - Having a common agency with support structures in place
  - Cultural awareness
  - Respect to elders

## PREVENTION FOR PEOPLE OF FILIPINO ETHNICITY

This group represented a broad diversity of the Filipino population in New Zealand – there were participants who were ‘half’ Filipino, participants who had been living in New Zealand for 3 generations and others who were more recent migrants.

### **What are the key practices and values that underpin your community being free of sexual and related forms of violence?**

**Integration:** It was felt that Filipino communities generally integrate into New Zealand comfortably and have a good adaptability to a New Zealand way of life. This value of being flexible and integrating is a useful one to mobilise for preventing sexual violence, if prevention work is positioned as part of integrating well. Filipino communities see themselves as open-minded about difference.

**Work ethic:** The value of working hard is held by Filipino communities. This value can be mobilised in sexual violence prevention to determine practices that work hard to keep the community free of sexual violence. Filipino communities see themselves as productive, willing to work and travel to make a better life.

**Protective parents:** The value of family and having strongly protective parenting practices can be utilised to enhance parenting that is protective against sexual violence.

**Respect of elders:** This is a strongly held value and can be used in sexual violence prevention to mobilise elders to provide protective practices and messaging. Elders are there to mentor, support, listen and advocate for the right changes.

**Cultural preservation:** Filipino communities have a value around preserving the culture, and this can be mobilised to preserve our good values, including our cultural identity, heritage, customs and traditions. Being free of violence is a good part of who we are and should be preserved.

### **What are the behaviours and practices in mainstream New Zealand that contribute to sexual violence happening to people in your community?**

**Alcohol:** Accessibility to alcohol is a big part and the influence of alcohol has an impact on sexual violence.

**Cultural assumptions:** Assumptions about what Filipino culture and practices are like make it harder for Filipino people to report or address sexual violence.

**Gossip:** The fear of gossip is more enhanced by being a smaller community within a mainstream New Zealand context – gossip might be spread by people both inside and outside the community.

**Mail-order brides:** This practice has an impact on communities in terms of how women in the community are perceived to be sexually available.

**Immigration:** People who do not have permanent residence or are on work visas will find it hard to make a complaint or seek support as they think it might affect their visa possibilities. This places them at risk from employers and people who are supporting their residence.

**Historical experiences:** Other people’s experiences of lack of resolution through the justice system or with police becomes an example to anyone in the community and contributes to silencing and not addressing violence.

### **What are the behaviours and practices in your community that contribute to sexual violence occurring?**

**Gossip and stigma create secrecy and shame:** Fear of these behaviours stop people from talking about sexual violence that has occurred and prevent people from talking about ways to prevent sexual violence from occurring. Cultural rules around speaking up to people in power prevents addressing sexual violence and become a shameful barrier. This practice makes it particularly hard for children to speak up.

**Cultural change:** What's permissible in the Philippines is not necessarily allowed here and there is not enough knowledge about what is different, and why.

**Prestige practices:** Although respect for elders is a value that is really positive, there is also a negative aspect. The giving of prestige to leaders can make it difficult to address behaviour from those leaders. Cultural rules around speaking to people in power, who are held in high regard, become a barrier to questioning authority.

### **What are the key issues to address and what are the first steps to take with your community?**

**Information:** It is important to give information about sexual violence, laws and support services through the New Zealand Immigration information pack. This should include information about healthy relationships. Information can also be provided through newsletters to the community, and through Filipino associations. In order to address the assumed knowledge from other community members having bad experiences with justice etc. people should be assured that they can seek help, and services must be oriented to support them better.

**Education:** This is particularly important for young people, and people who are on work permits. Young people are getting sexual education mainly from their phones and are missing out on information about respectful relationships and respectful language. Because cultural rules around respecting elders are so strong, having education in schools makes it easier for children to disclose – ie. Programmes for preventing sexual violence.

**Strengthening pastoral care:** The more community networks and community support is available, the easier it will be to have conversations necessary for preventing sexual violence. It is important to recognise community leaders and to ensure these people have the skills to provide support. There needs to be a recognition of relationships between people and power.

**Youth programmes/networking:** The Filipino community has a large population of young people, and youth programmes targeted to them can include information and develop protective practices to prevent sexual violence. Some schools have high populations of Filipino children, and classes can be targeted to them in schools.

**Appropriate support services:** When sexual violence has occurred, there need to be appropriate support services available. These need to be transparent about giving people the opportunity to work with someone of the same culture, they need to adhere to a code of ethics and conduct and they need to be able to assure the survivor of confidentiality. Support services also need to be able to help with the basic steps and needs that a survivor might have, including immediate needs of food and transport. People should be able to access this support through phone, social media as well as face to face. There are barriers around language for some parts of the community, so appropriate support services need to be able to address that as well. Support services need to address historical community knowledge of help-seeking not working.

**Different approaches for different parts of the community:** There are different needs in responding to people from older generations or people who are new migrants vs. people who have been here for multiple generations. Approaches are going to need to be sensitive to the differences in Filipino communities. For example, many younger people are not afraid to speak up, but older people might still be impacted by cultural rules around this.

## PREVENTION FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN ETHNICITY

### Diversity

The African group was diverse in terms of where they had come from and ethnicity. Within the group there were similarities of experience. Members talked about experiencing cultural violence in Aotearoa New Zealand after finding a home here but having shared experiences of being underestimated, experiencing workplace bullying and stereotyping.

### Key values for preventing sexual violence

**Collective voice:** The ability to define a collective voice and message, and to speak with this collective voice was described as a strong value. Doing this addresses accountability from the community to the community. It also speaks to the empowerment of our people and the empowerment of our voices rather than repressing them. If African people are empowered to speak with a collective voice, this allows for the group to develop prevention messages and understandings and hold the collective accountable.

**Dignity:** Dignity is about being respected and having pride in yourself. This key value can be used to strengthen the core factors that create personal dignity, and to address any behaviours that minimise dignity within the collective. It is also about giving communities a chance to develop our own processes, work and to have pride in ourselves.

### Behaviours from mainstream that impact our community:

**Racism:** Our communities face false cultural and racist assumptions which combine with misogyny to reinforce the impact of racism for women, especially. The racism we face portrays us as crazy, unstable or unbalanced and media reinforces this. When organisations work with us, it is often reactive rather than proactive - a difference that is highlighted by who is employed to work with us. Racism is pervasive in who is employed to work with our communities - it is unacceptable to have white people employed to work with African communities, this increases the amount of work our communities have to do to educate people, and it limits employing our own people into these roles.

Racism in Aotearoa New Zealand means greater value is placed on white bodies over black. White women are held to different standards of behaviour than African women, even African New Zealand born women (ie. the racism is about colour more than it is about culture).

Racism also informs the way that government and community organisations learn about our communities. It is unacceptable for government or mainstream organisations to gain their knowledge of African communities from conversations with any 'one' African person. This approach privileges African people with 'white' connections, people who have an audience and men.

### Behaviours in our own community:

**Voicing the issue:** It is difficult to have community or family conversations about preventing sexual violence, or issues related to this. There is accepted misogyny in our communities which prevents women from speaking out, because it is just an accepted part of how we operate.

**Respecting elders:** Because this is important to us, even if the elder is perpetrating abuse it is difficult to address. For many of us, it is culturally inappropriate to speak with young children about sexual violence.

**Access to services:** There is no direct access to trusted services – current services do not operate in our comfort zone and so often aren't used or aren't recommended when community members talk with each other.

**What can be done to address these issues?**

**Action plan:** There needs to be an action plan in place for how to address both prevention and responses for sexual violence nationally that empowers our community.

**Greater knowledge of diversity:** One of the key factors for immediate change is improving the knowledge of mainstream organisations both within this work and generally, of cultural diversity. African cultures are not all the same, and understanding the diversities of experience is an important start. In addition, there needs to be more service providers proactively engaging with Africans without assumptions. There should be mandatory cultural training for all stakeholders.

**Resourcing:** Resources should be given to African women who are trained and experienced in addressing sexual violence, domestic abuse and child welfare to address the needs of African / African NZ women and children here.

**Community conversations:** In order to develop a collective voice there needs to be resourcing and support for community conversations about sexual violence prevention and responses across the country from the grassroots to leaders.

**Mens role:** Men need to take a role in speaking out about sexual violence and letting other men know that it isn't acceptable in New Zealand.

**Infrastructure:** There needs to be research about sexual violence prevention and responses for African communities, education for our communities, and support structures in place that are culturally appropriate

## **PREVENTION FOR ETHNIC PEOPLE WHO ARE PART OF RAINBOW COMMUNITIES**

This group was multicultural, age diverse, had representation from both regional and urban settings, was gender diverse, had participants with varying degrees of outness, and varying ability – neurodiversity.

### **Behaviours and practices of mainstream NZ that contribute to sexual violence in your community**

The below factors impact rainbow ethnic people along at least two axes of marginality - not just racism but racism that is also informed by transphobia, homophobia and biphobia.

- Not belonging: Ethnic rainbow people can feel as if we don't belong in mainstream communities, culturally specific communities or even belong fully in rainbow communities.
- Gender stereotypes: These are firmly held within mainstream communities, but they have different overtones for ethnic people which means that gender stereotypes doubly impact rainbow ethnic people
- Harmful cultural/religious practices: Such as conversion therapy
- Hatred of trans people: As seen in the media or comments sections of news reports
- Toxic masculinity: This strongly impacts rainbow ethnic people as it is informed by both racism, cissexism and misogyny
- Lack of comprehensive culturally appropriate sexuality education/consent and unrelatable messaging around relationships. For people who have experienced sexuality education at school, the feeling was that even if the education addressed sexual or gender diversity, it failed to support cultural understandings, or vice versa.
- Justice system failing victims
- Gendered notions around sexual violence

### **Behaviours and practices within the rainbow community that contribute to sexual violence for our community**

- Gendered notions around sexual violence: The idea that men are perpetrators and women are victims mean that people struggle to identify sexual violence where there are different combinations of gender.
- Unrelatable messaging around relationships – not many relationship role models
- Transphobic/homophobic/biphobic practices within our own community that make it unsafe to address sexual violence.
- Even less sexuality/consent education – not fitting in / belonging in either community
- Degrees of outness: This makes perpetration of sexual harm easier when a person can't report it without outing themselves. Outness is different for everyone and for people from ethnic communities there might be a lot of silence or lack of understanding around western concepts of different sexualities or genders, so this defines what coming out means. Coming out is not a 'one hit' thing, and this is even more true for people in ethnic communities.
- Policing of identities: Making it harder to build safe networks
- Trauma around relationships affects our relationships / ability to address harm and conflict
- Normalising of violence against women/trans people – harmful cultural attitudes passed on from our own home countries
- Isolation, lack of self expression, not much sense of community
- Racism
- Isolation – fear of isolation
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### Key issues to address

- Isolation
- Trauma (Intergenerational/interpersonal)
- Fear
- Silence
- Lack of education / awareness – having no visibility, role models
- Proper understanding of gender / sexuality: the difference between it, stereotypes

### Steps needed to address these issues

**Compulsory training / education for everybody:** This education needs to be for us by us. It is important that rainbow organisations make sure their work is responsive to ethnic rainbow communities. Training and education should include trauma informed work specifically addressing ethnic rainbow communities.

**Culturally competent organisations also need to create spaces to help combat the isolation.** Ethnic / culturally competent mainstream organisations can take steps to address phobias within ethnic communities, and make these spaces more nurturing and safer.

**Proper access to mental health support:** A more fully comprehensive package is needed for rainbow communities, and responsive to ethnic people within rainbow communities.

**Anti-racism work within the rainbow community:** This strand of work would make these spaces safer for our community.

## PREVENTION FOR LATIN AMERICAN PEOPLE

This group agreed that it was important to have an **open conversation** within the community and to build agreement around what is understood by 'sexual violence'. This conversation becomes very important when the discussion is between couples, and important to understand what consent means for each other and within the relationship. It is also important to set boundaries and build healthy relationships.

The group identified that **education and information** play a key role to help people to initiate those conversations and build agreements in the intimacy. Otherwise, female and male stereotypes and cultural beliefs can underpin violent behaviours within the community.

The participants of the table expressed their concern regarding the **cultural shock** that the new Latin American generation faces. For our culture, physical contact is very important. We attribute a positive meaning to touch and being touched. It can be confusing for children who are being raised in New Zealand because what it is allowed and validated at home might be punished at school. It would be good if parents, children and the whole community could have support to manage this conflict to prevent major issues in the future.

## PREVENTION FOR PEOPLE OF ASIAN ETHNICITY

This table was diverse in terms of ethnicity – participants were from China, Japan, Malaysia and Korea, and also diverse in terms of religious and migration backgrounds. These are groups that have significant populations in Aotearoa New Zealand and much more discussion is needed with each of them. Feedback was that any culturally specific conversations about prevention and response need to be had with culturally and nationally specific groups, as the differences between them are considerable. The table highlighted issues around racism, stereotyping of people of Asian ethnicity, lack of culturally appropriate services, stigma and the lack of opportunity to come together with groups to talk about these issues.

## Final words

This document is a collation of minutes taken in the second session of the Connections! Hui. For any questions or comments, please contact Bex Fraser on 021 084 20952 or [rmfraser.rf@gmail.com](mailto:rmfraser.rf@gmail.com)

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The Shama staff, Board and Advisory group members worked incredibly hard to create a space that was safe, respectful and nurturing for this discussion. We look forward to seeing the seeds of it grow.

### Appendix 1: Questions to guide this discussion

- What do our communities need to be free from sexual (and related) forms of violence? Think about values, practices and resources.
- What are the behaviours and practices in mainstream NZ that make it harder for our communities to be free of sexual violence? What actions could be taken to change these?
- What are the behaviours and practices in our own communities that make it harder for our communities to be free of sexual violence? What actions could be taken to change these?
- What would you like to see happen first?