16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

November 25 - December 10, 2021

A campaign toolkit for the north-east Victorian and Goulburn Valley region

+ WOMEN'S HEALTH GOULBURN NORTH EAST

RESPECT WOMEN | CALL IT OUT

If you or someone you know is experiencing family violence, you can find support via the following phone numbers:

Safe Steps: 1800 015 188
Respect hotline: 1800 737 732
Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800
MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978

We are intersectional in our approach and are proud to stand beside generations of great women whose work has brought us closer to equality for all. We acknowledge the wisdom, living culture and connection of the Traditional Custodians of the unceded lands on which we work, and acknowledge the profound disruption of colonisation and the Stolen Generations on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We believe in shared and just cultural transformation that embraces diversity, and these acknowledgements are part of the ethical principles that guide our work and conduct.

Women's Health Goulburn North East
Last updated October 2021

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About Women's Health Goulburn North East

Women's Health Goulburn North East is a feminist organisation, leading change towards women's empowerment, women's health, the prevention of violence against women and ultimately, gender equality, in rural and regional Victoria.

We apply a gendered lens to the factors and environments that shape women's health and wellbeing in rural and regional Victoria. Our expertise is in women's economic equity, gender and climate justice, the prevention of violence against women and sexual and reproductive health rights.

We believe in the potential of, and support the efforts of, communities and individuals in driving systemic change.

About the 16 Days

A global campaign against violence, with gender equality actions for rural and regional communities

The UN's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence is a global campaign between November 25 and December 10, aimed at eliminating gender-based violence - that is, violence perpetrated against people based on their gender, or violence that affects people of a particular gender disproportionately. It is most frequently used to describe men's violence against women.

> **The 16 Days of Activism campaign is bookended by two international days of significance - the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25, and Human Rights Day on December 10.**

For this year's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, Women's Health Goulburn North East (WHGNE) has designed a social media campaign to build awareness of the diverse, gendered impacts of disasters like bushfire and pandemic, and to support our communities across the Goulburn Valley and north-east Victoria to keep women and children safe before, during and after natural disaster.

For more information on the Victorian 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence campaign, and an excellent toolkit of information, campaign collateral, booklists, activity primers and other resources visit:

16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence 2021 – Domestic Violence Victoria (dvvic.org.au)

How to use these social media resources

First things first!

Download your very own 16 Days of Activism social media tiles from the Women's Health Goulburn North East website at www.whealth.com.au/research/16-days-of-activism-against-gender-based-violence-social-media-toolkit-2021/.

These resources have been designed for use by organisations, groups and workplaces of all types, across north-east Victoria and the Goulburn Valley, to amplify the global call for decisive, collective action against gender inequality.

Each of the social media tiles is based upon the pioneering research of our partnership project, Gender and Disaster Australia (formerly the Gender and Disaster Pod). This Australia-first research demonstrated the links between disasters, such as bushfire, and family violence, and has been the foundation upon which Women's Health Services across the state have called for dedicated state funding for gender and disaster workers to ensure communities are adequately resourced and prepared to address disaster-related violence.

Please use the tiles in the order in which they appear in this toolkit, with each day of the campaign providing an opportunity for organisations to lead discussion among social media followers around the day's key message. You will notice that we have not created tiles for days 2, 6, 9 and 12. This is because we will be lauching a new video resource on day 2 of the campaign, which will then be shared on days 6, 9 and 12 to spark reflection and discussion around the campaign themes highlighted on the previous days. On days 2, 6, 9 and 12, you can either share the video and related post directly from the WHGNE Facebook page, or copy the video link from our YouTube page to post it with the relevant content for that day.

Don't forget to include the campaign hashtags:

#16dayscampaign #16days #genderanddisaster #endgenderbasedviolence #orangetheworld #respectis #callitout #generationequality

Day 1 - Thursday, November 25, 2021

Key message:

The past two years have brought disaster to our very doorsteps. From bushfire to pandemic, our communities have seen firsthand how disaster not only exacerbates existing inequalities, but also heightens the risk of gender-based violence.

As we mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women today, we also kick off our 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, bringing to this year's campaign the lessons we've learnt through our Gender and Disaster Australia project (formerly Gender and Disaster Pod) about how we might better keep women and children safe from gender-based violence during and after disaster.

Disaster does not discriminate. But humans do, and inequality comes from culturally constructed roles, norms, values and stereotypes that we, ourselves, can change.

This 16 Days of Activism, tune in each day as we unpack what contributes to gender-based violence in times of disaster and how we can work together in our communities to put an end to it.

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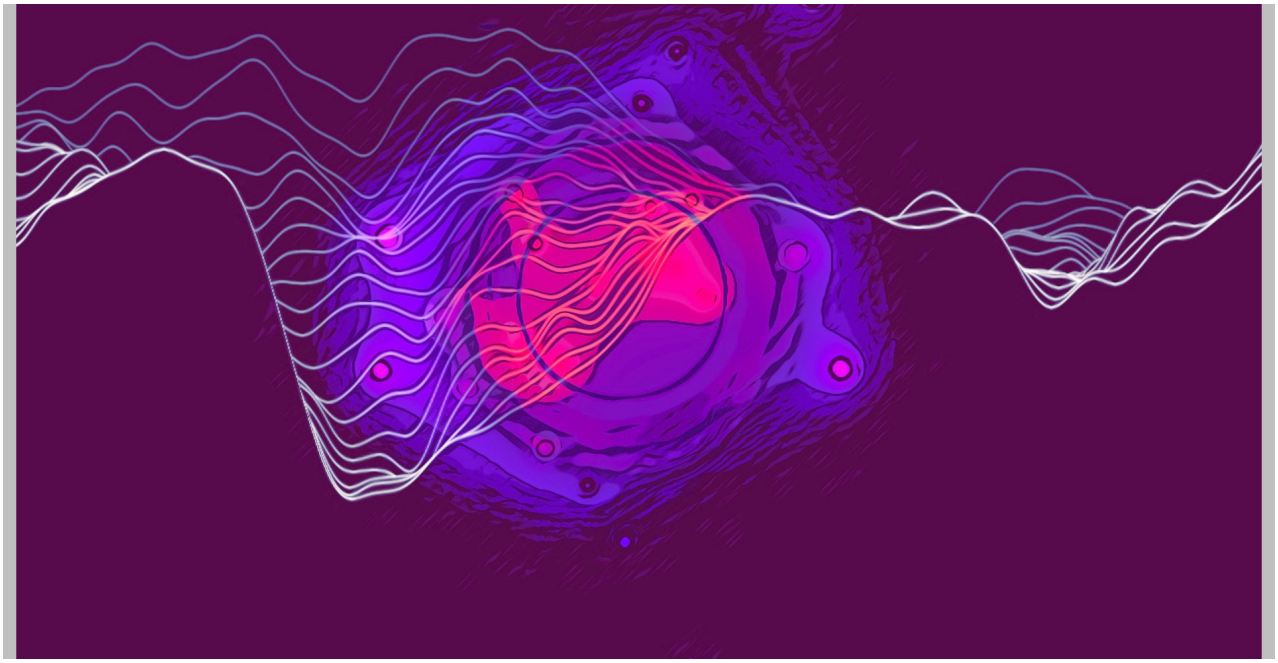
Find and share this post and the video via
WHGNE's Facebook page



Day 2 - Friday, November 26, 2021

Key message:

Stay or leave?

It's a question that reverberates across bushfire-prone communities not just when we prepare and execute our fire plans each summer, but also once the flames are extinguished and some women find themselves coming to grips with a different type of danger - family violence.

On day two of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, we're excited to share with you this magnificent but chilling animation that we've created in collaboration with author Cate Kennedy and animator Annie Murray of @BiggerPictureAnimations.

Take a look and let us know how this makes you feel. We'll look forward to exploring this in more detail with you on Day 6 of the 16 Days of Activism.

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Day 3 - Saturday, November 27, 2021

Key message:

Gender-based violence refers to acts of sexual, physical, mental and/or economic harm inflicted on an individual based on their gender.

It is driven by gender inequality and the abuse of power and can occur in private or in public.

Gender-based violence is not only a violation of human rights, but a life-threatening public health issue, and one that disproportionately impacts women and gender-diverse people. It's estimated that one in three women will experience gender-based violence in their lifetime.

During times of disaster, the threat of gender-based violence significantly increases for women.

This 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, we'll be shining a spotlight on what gender-based violence looks like in times of disaster and how communities can promote safety and equality in disaster planning and recovery.

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Day 4 - Sunday, November 28, 2021

Key message:

Research shows that gender-based violence increases in the aftermath of disasters like bushfire. However, post-disaster family violence is often unrecognised, unrecorded and even excused in situations where stress levels are high, perpetrators have acted as 'heroes' in the face of fire and where men are often suffering the trauma of disaster.

There is never an excuse for gender-based violence. Women's rights to live free from violence must be held, before, during and after disaster.

As communities and services we must plan ahead to prevent gender-based violence from occurring after disaster. Planning for fire should include the development of strategies to prevent and respond to family violence in your community, post-disaster.

Read about Macedon Ranges Shire Council's Australia-first Prevention of Violence Against Women in Emergencies Action Plan, via the link in our bio (Australian Journal of Emergency Management, Volume 31, Number 4, October 2017 (aidr.org.au), p40)

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Day 5 - Monday, November 29, 2021

Key message:

The way men and women act and interact before, during and after natural disaster reflects a social pressure to conform with outdated gender stereotypes, which impose upon men the culturally defined masculine role of 'protector', juxtaposed against the woman as 'the protected'.

Not only do gender stereotypes give men and women different roles with different levels of risk during disaster, but they also result in different responses to disaster, with men often responding to disaster with displays of hyper-masculinity, violence or alcohol abuse.

Gender expectations also colour the way communities regard men and women during disaster, and the story of the male firefighting 'hero' can often lead to social complicity in preventing action to protect or support women who are experiencing family violence.

Cultural change is integral to preventing family violence. Men have an equal right to be flawed, to need help, to express their emotions. And women's experiences, diverse roles and voices must be heard so that communities and services are prepared to support them during disaster.

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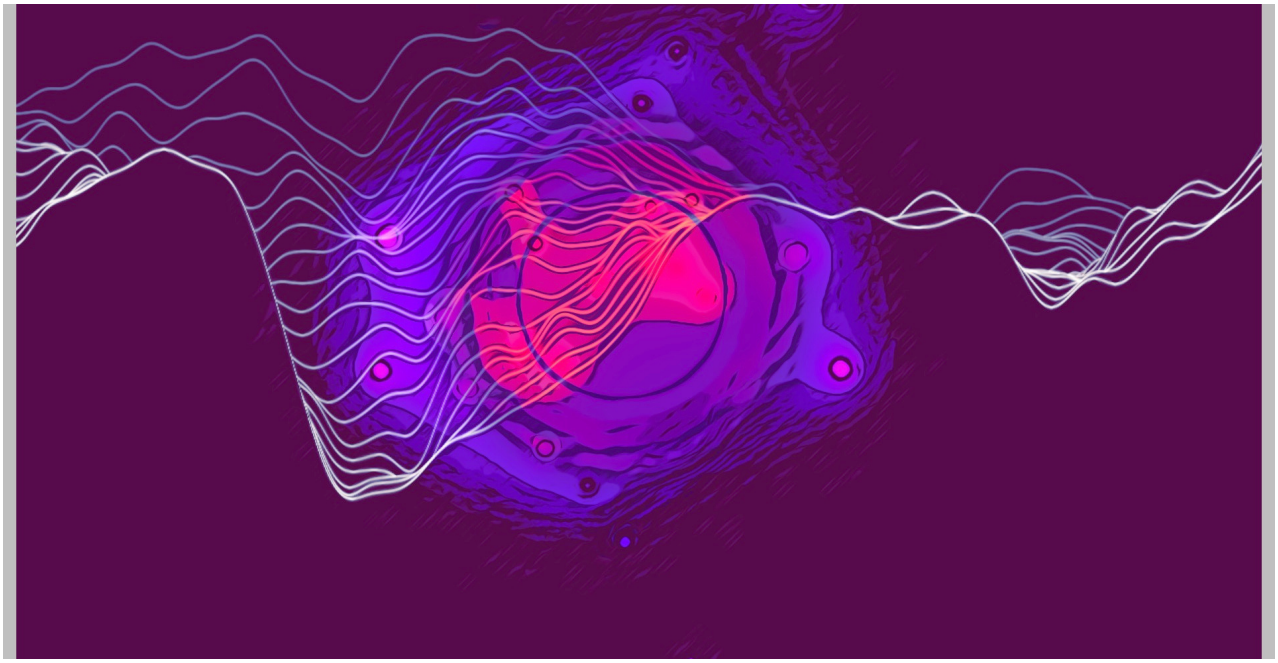

Day 6 - Tuesday, November 30, 2021

Key message:

Have you seen our Stay or Leave animation, about women, gender-based violence and bushfire?

Today, Day 6 of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence we invite you to watch the video and reflect on it with us.

Throughout the video, can you find references to the way gender stereotypes shape the narrator's experience of bushfire and family violence? Tell us your thoughts in the comments.

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Day 7 - Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Key message:

Gender-based violence can be hard for women to report. But the barriers to reporting are exacerbated in the aftermath of disaster for a variety of reasons.

Women may fear repercussions for themselves, their partner or children, experience shame or concern at the thought of reporting their partners to police, particularly when their partners are considered by community to be 'heroes' in the face of fire.

Women may also compare their situation to widespread community loss and suffering, so underplay their experience of family violence – or fear others, including service personnel will do so, particularly where resources are stretched to address primary, fire-related needs.

As communities, we need to encourage safe expression of emotion, provide access to adequate support services for men and women. Ask women if they feel safe. Believe women. And act to protect women from gender-based violence.

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Day 8 - Thursday, December 2, 2021

Key message:

Relationship violence is a taboo subject in our communities. It becomes even harder to talk about gender-based violence in the aftermath of disaster, with all kinds of behaviour being excused as existing social structures are put on hold as communities recover.

In the aftermath of the Black Saturday bushfires of 2009, violence was often attributed to depression, PTSD, financial problems, alcohol abuse. These are forms of excusing or justifying violence, and they neglect the fact that gender-based violence happens because a person chooses to use violence. It is about gaining control, not 'losing control'.

Before, during and after disaster, we need to call out inequality and gender-based violence when we see it. Say the word 'violent' - not 'stressed' or 'angry'. Recognise family violence when you see it and provide women with options for referral and support.

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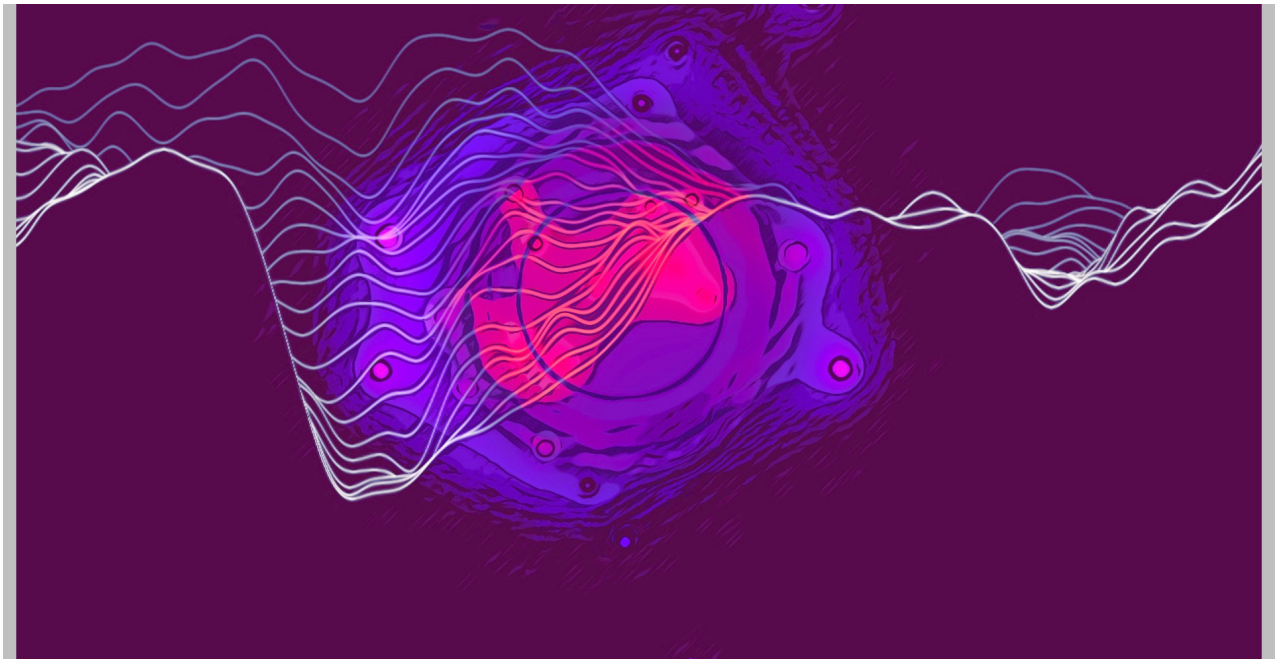

Day 9 - Friday, December 3, 2021

Key message:

It's Day 9 of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence.

We hope you've watched Stay or Leave, the animation we created in collaboration with Cate Kennedy and Bigger Picture Animations.

Throughout the video, the narrator tries to excuse or 'minimise' the violence she is experiencing in a number of different ways. Can you identify any of these?

If you heard someone say to a friend who had just disclosed family violence, "Compared to some others, you're doing okay," what would you say or do?

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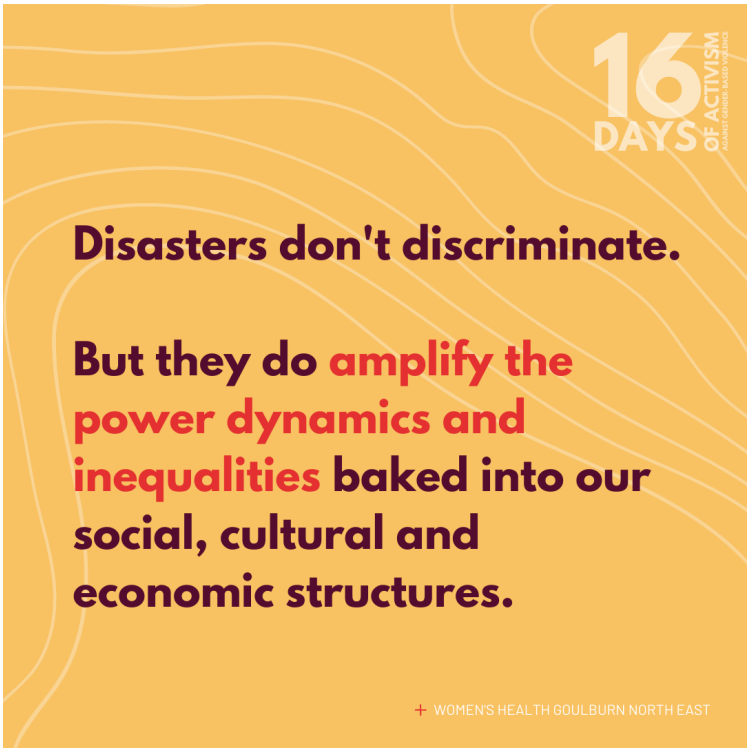

Day 10 - Saturday, December 4, 2021

Key message:

Cultural gender norms, or ideas about what is 'normal' in terms of gender, are deeply engrained in Australian society.

These norms set up power imbalances between men and women. And these power imbalances are reinforced by gender structures that organise an unequal distribution of economic, social and political power, resources and opportunities between men and women.

In times of disaster, like bushfire or pandemic, the existing inequalities in our communities are exacerbated. In the aftermath of disaster, men and women may experience heightened expectations that they live up to stereotypical male or female roles, increasing some people's vulnerabilities, disrupting coping mechanisms, and undervaluing the strength, resilience and innovation of others.

Effective disaster planning and response – and with it, the prevention of gender-based violence – cannot be assured until we acknowledge the social constructed gender roles that play out around disaster and strive to create inclusive, culturally safe and gender equal planning processes.

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Day 11 - Sunday, December 5, 2021

Key message:

Disasters, and the way we plan for and recover from them, can exacerbate the marginalisation and discrimination gender-diverse people experience in our communities.

When bushfires destroy homes, gender-diverse people can find themselves without one of the key safe, judgement-free places in their lives. And with evacuation facilities and models of support organised around the male/female gender binary, response and recovery efforts can be discriminatory, unsafe and inaccessible for gender-diverse people.

As communities, we need to recognise the way different lived experience impacts people's experience of disaster and build models of disaster prevention, response and recovery that are strengthened by this experience.

It's also important that we acknowledge the resilience, relationships of support and capacity that already exist in local gender-diverse communities, and ensure this is honoured in bushfire planning and response.

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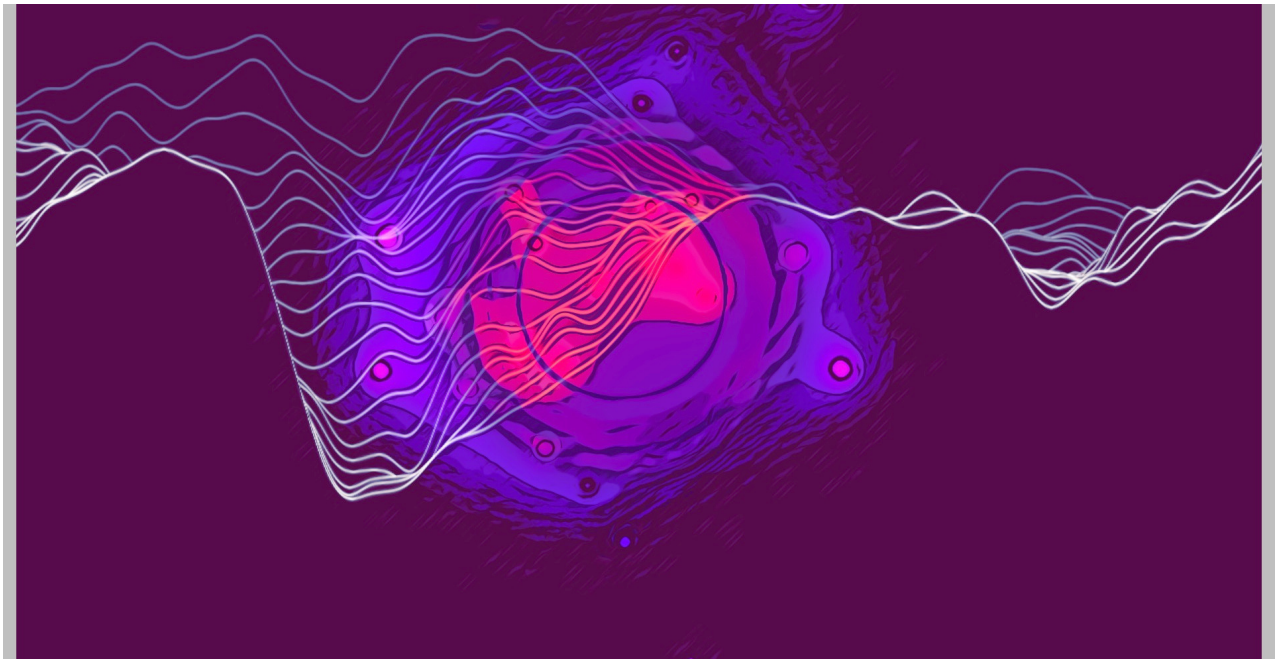

Day 12 - Monday, December 6, 2021

Key message:

Today is Day 12 of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence.

Our new animation, Stay or Leave, shares a testimonial-like narration of a woman's experience of bushfire and family violence.

At the start of the video, the narrator says, "The fire plan on the fridge tells us just what to do in case of emergency, but not in the days beyond."

The past 12 days of this campaign have demonstrated how important it is for communities to have plans in place to support women experiencing violence during and after disaster.

Taking into account what you have learnt about gender, violence and disaster so far, what might your "plan on the fridge" look like?

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Day 13 - Tuesday, December 7, 2021

Key message:

Women experience disasters like bushfire differently from men. Furthermore, bushfire impacts women living with disability, Indigenous women, low-income women and older women in ways that are often overlooked.

While women are considered to mainly fulfil a role as 'carers' during disaster, their roles are diverse and complex – conversations with women in the aftermath of the Black Saturday fires revealed that women were equally as likely to have rescued their children from fire, and protected their properties while their partner was away fighting fire elsewhere.

Women from all walks of life and backgrounds have valuable insights to contribute to communities' disaster preparedness, planning and response. Their lived experience should be valued for its potential to shape systems and services to better meet the needs of communities and ensure no-one is left behind in disaster planning.

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Day 14 - Wednesday, December 8, 2021

Key message:

Disaster planning, recovery and reconstruction is often shaped by patriarchal structures and outdated gender norms that place men in positions of power.

However, women have both the skills and the experience to lead change and support their communities through disaster planning and recovery.

Including women in all levels of disaster planning/recovery ensures plans are more reflective of communities and consider different needs and strengths and challenge harmful and discriminatory norms.

By including a diversity of people in decision-making and reconstruction, communities open up opportunities for growth of confidence and financial recovery in the aftermath of disaster.

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Day 15 - Thursday, December 9, 2021

Key message:

There is an uptick in gender-based violence during and after disaster. Communities, organisations and emergency management services need to be prepared to identify and respond to family violence, to keep women and children safe.

This means an investment of time and funding in training for everyone working with communities during and after disaster. It means communities and services should be prepared to provide appropriate referrals to women and gender-diverse people seeking support.

And it means those working with communities during and after disaster should collect accurate data on the incidence of family violence, to support better funding of disaster recovery workers trained in family violence prevention and response.

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Day 16 - Friday, December 10, 2021

Key message:

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence might end today, but the work of creating a safe, gender equal community continues.

As another year of pandemic-related disruption draws to a close, and as fire season looms, this work is more urgent than ever.

Gender equality and the prevention of violence against women starts with every one of us, our expectations, beliefs, attitudes towards women and our relationships with each other.

We're here to support you with resources and advice as you join us in creating meaningful cultural change towards equality in the community. Visit the link in our bio to continue the journey.

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Looking for more gender equity resources for your organisation, workplace or community?

Check out *www.whealth.com.au* for toolkits, information and research to support you to become a great gender equality activist and prevent violence against women in your community.