

Literature highlights

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The following are a selection of resources addressing current issues in the sexual violence field. In this edition of *Aware*, we focus on responding to sexual violence in culturally and linguistically diverse communities. ACSSA receives many of these resources. Print resources are available via the interlibrary loan system. Contact your local library for details. Electronic resources are available directly via the web address. The inclusion of a publication in this list does not necessarily mean that it is endorsed by ACSSA.

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities and sexual assault

Identifying the woman, the client and the victim. (2006). Lay, Y. *ACSSA Aware*, 12, 15–20. Available at: <<http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/newsletter/n12.html#identifying>>

Data from a study of 11 Victorian women from Chinese, East Timorese and Vietnamese backgrounds is used to examine the adequacy of sexual and domestic violence service providers in meeting the specific needs of victims from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. In recognising the totality of the intersection of gender and racial oppression that CALD women experience, the article highlights the specific needs of CALD victims and the barriers they face in accessing services. The article explains how such needs and barriers are addressed, if at all, by existing service providers, as well as government policies that establish and inform service delivery provision.

Improving responses to allegations involving sexual assault. (2006). Victoria Ombudsman (Parliamentary Paper No.118). Melbourne, Vic: Ombudsman Victoria. Available online: <http://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/resources/documents/Improving_responses_to_allegations_involving_sexual_assault_report.pdf>

The conclusions of an enquiry into the response of government agencies in Victoria to allegations of sexual assault are presented in this publication. The report discusses the reporting of incidents of sexual assault, terminology, information sharing and privacy, systemic issues for people from culturally and linguistically diverse groups, protection against sexual assault, providing a safe environment, female only residential options, relocation of persons following a sexual assault, child protection, inter agency liaison, Indigenous people, workforce issues, agency employees accused of sexual assault, vetting of employees working with people vulnerable to sexual assault, specialist workers and multi disciplinary teams, police investigation processes, police communication, evidence gathering, Independent Third Persons, withdrawn complaints, non authorisation of briefs, community education about sexual assault, and the role of the media. The report makes recommendations in response to these findings.

Evaluation report. Polish Domestic Violence Support Group "Before it's too late". (2005). Szczepanska, E. Melbourne: Australian-Polish Community Services Inc. Available at: <http://www.apcs.org.au/attachments/publications/DV_Support_Group_Evaluation_Report.pdf>

This report evaluates the Polish Domestic Violence Support Group project conducted between June and December 2004 called "Before it's too late", from the perspective of participants and the

program facilitator. It was found that the program and the implemented therapeutic interventions made a significant and positive impact and improved the emotional wellbeing, sense of safety and belonging for all participants. It also reduced the fear of social rejection and stigma attached to victims of domestic violence.

Service profile: Immigrant women's support service (Queensland). (2005). Allimant, A. *ACSSA Aware*, 5, 20–24. Available at: <<http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/newsletter/n5.html#spro>>

In this interview, the Coordinator of the Immigrant Women's Support Service in Queensland talks about the following: the service's philosophy and organisation; the importance of having a separate service for women from non English speaking backgrounds; issues that are specific to this group of women; what the service offers to female survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault; how the service addresses the issue of male partner rape; issues that the service is working on; and lessons learned.

Intersections of oppression in women's experiences of intimate violence. (2005). Gray, K., & Bradford, M. *CDFVReader*, 3(3), 5–8. Available at: <<http://www.noviolence.com.au/public/newsletters/news11.pdf>>

The author uses the concept of intersectionality proposed by Crenshaw (1991)

to analyse the intersection of gender, race and class in domestic and family violence settings. An intersectional approach encourages practitioners to work with women's own angles of vision. The intersectional perspective provides insight into the way social, economic, cultural, political and legal forces oppress and marginalise women and compound women's experiences of intimate violence. The article focuses on gender race intersections in Australia specifically regarding Indigenous women and migrant women and discusses class and status.

Non-reporting and hidden recording of sexual assault: an international literature review. (2003). Lievore, D. Canberra: Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women. Available at: <<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/reports/2003-06-review.html>>

This report is an international literature review on the issues of non-reporting of sexual assault, and hidden recording (that is, the degree to which sexual assault is recorded as a secondary charge versus primary charge). The focus is on females aged 16 years and older, of diverse backgrounds and situations. The review focuses on research conducted in Australia, England and Wales, Canada, New Zealand and the United States since 1992, and includes the 2000 sweep of the International Crime Victims Survey. Data sources and their limitations are discussed. Risk of sexual assault is found to correlate with gender, age, victim-offender relationship and partner status. Factors effecting decisions to report sexual assault are explored, with personal barriers and perceptions of the criminal justice system having an important role. Attrition and hidden recording of sexual assault is considered. Sexual assault is discussed in relation to indigenous women, women from non-English-speaking backgrounds, rural Australia and women prisoners. The report also looks at recording of sexual assault in

other systems, and finds that marginalisation is both a risk factor and a barrier to reporting.

Deconstructing the culture of sexual assault. (2003). Flood, M. Paper presented at Practice and Prevention: Contemporary Issues in Adult Sexual Assault Conference, Sydney. Online only: <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.arc-39933>>

Cultural and collective supports for sexual assault found among many men must be undermined in order for sexual assault prevention efforts to work, the author argues. Men's perpetration of sexual assault is heavily influenced by contemporary constructions of masculinity and heterosexuality. The author identifies important examples of violence prevention strategies among boys and men, including in schools, through community and mass education, and in collaborative activism, and also shows important dilemmas associated with each. He points out that prevention strategies must also address the complex intersections of gender, class, age, race and ethnicity which shape women's and men's experiences of sexual assault. He argues that multiple forms of social differentiation and oppression structure men's practice of violence against women, its effects, and the responses of communities and media.

Finding the spaces between "us" and "them": The pursuit of equity in sexual assault service provision. (2003, February). Stewart, S. Paper presented at Practice and Prevention: Contemporary Issues in Adult Sexual Assault Conference, Sydney. Online only: <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.arc-39933>>

The author presents results of some exploratory investigations with women from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds who are potential sexual

assault service users. She discusses the participants' responses to the following: responses to the information; awareness of sexual assault services; access, equity and confidentiality; awareness raising strategies; and perceptions of sexual assault. Consultations with two other groups are discussed: NSW health service providers attached to hospitals or community health centres that provide counselling, medical care and examinations, court preparation practical support to people who have been sexually assaulted; and generalist bilingual counsellors and bilingual mental health workers working within the mainstream health system. The author then discusses service provision strategies and prevention and awareness raising activities.

What lies behind the hidden figure of sexual assault? Issues of prevalence and disclosure. (2003). Neame, A., & Heenan, M. (ACSSA Briefing No.1). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies. Available at: <<http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/briefing/b1.html>>

This paper considers several groups of victim/ survivors of sexual assault which are less likely to appear within the estimates of large-scale victimisation studies. The authors draw on research that uses targeted approaches to identify the "hidden" prevalence of sexual assault among adults who were sexually assaulted as children, women from non-English-speaking backgrounds, sex industry workers and young homeless people. As well as being less visible in victimisation surveys, these groups of victim/ survivors are less likely to disclose their experiences or report the sexual assault to the police, and often feel unable to access support.