



# ADDRESSING SEXUAL VIOLENCE FOR ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Prevention - General

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Shama Hamilton Ethnic Women's Centre Trust  
info@shama.org.nz

## Introduction

The Connections! Hui brought together just over 100 ethnic community organisers and therapists to talk about sexual violence prevention and responses for ethnic communities. It was hosted by the Hon. Jenny Salesa and Shama Hamilton Ethnic Women's Centre.

Participants who attended represented 31 different ethnicities, 7 different religious backgrounds, 4 genders and were from 13 different regional locations in New Zealand. The hui was organised into two sessions of small group discussion about preventing sexual violence, and two sessions of small group discussion about responding to sexual violence. Each of these topics included a session of 'general' discussion, where participants in the groups represented different ethnic, religious, linguistic and gender perspectives, and a session of 'specific' discussion, where participants self-identified into ethnic, cultural, religious, sexuality or gender groups.

Discussion was facilitated by 'hosts' for each table, who had spent time thinking about and developing the questions in the month prior. Participants were also provided with information about questions prior to the event to allow them to gather wider community input.

This discussion paper reports on the first session: a general discussion about preventing sexual violence for ethnic communities (see Appendix for questions that were used to prompt group discussion). This session includes discussion about prevention in communities, prevention for re-victimisation and prevention of child sexual abuse.

Following papers include one that summarises the prevention discussions for groups that shared a similar aspect of diversity - whether by ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality or migration journey, and two papers that address responses to sexual violence.

Ten different groups of 8-10 people each fed into this discussion paper. These groups were religiously, culturally and linguistically diverse, and members had varied life and professional experiences. For example, one group of 8 people identified 20 different languages spoken by the people around their table. Another group identified that they had professional identities including a psychologist, social worker, manager, support staff and community members. All groups had at least 5 different ethnicities around the table.

This paper includes all notes taken from all groups to describe the main themes of the discussions. It is structured as follows:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Ethnic community values to underpin sexual violence prevention
- 3) What prevention work can be done?
  - a. What's working?
  - b. Addressing racism
  - c. Building cultural competence
  - d. Policy development
  - e. Education for ethnic communities
  - f. Development of a national service
  - g. National conversation
  - h. Community resource
  - i. Acknowledging other issues
- 4) What do we want to see first?

## Ethnic community values to underpin sexual violence prevention

We asked people about the values in their communities that are useful for preventing sexual violence. Ethnic communities hold core values that are effective and useful for prevention work. These values are already present in some aspects of most societies, and positive gains can be made by working to increase these values into areas of sexual behaviour and relationships. It is important that sexual violence prevention inside ethnic communities builds on the values of these communities rather than imposing Western values.

- **Education** – can be used to increase availability of information for all community members. As a key value, ethnic community members seek education and are interested in positive educational outcomes, which are considered to provide the best economic and social outcomes for both children and adults. Promoting understanding consent, language around sex, practices of sex, understanding different genders and gender expectations, understanding different cultural expectations in a new country and learning protective parenting practices as **educational** is a useful strategy. Gaining greater understanding of psychological and physical processes is valued.
- **Respect** – can be used to develop respect for different gender, cultural and religious identities, develop respect in relationships and hold true to the value of respect between older and younger people (traditional hierarchy) while addressing the 'strict respect' between elders and young people that can allow predatory behaviour and creates barriers for help seeking. Discussing this key value in our communities allows for conversations

about what it truly means to respect others as human. Ongoing discussion about respect will allow for more discussion of intergenerational violence that hinges on different sets of values.

- **Openness** – can be used to develop more open communication and attitudes to difference. One group discussed the importance of an openness to adapting to each other’s values and another talked about the importance of adapting to a New Zealand way of life, as being open to change. Many people have already come to New Zealand, open to change. Conversations were had about the issues created by conservative thinking, and that valuing ‘openness’ could promote different ways of addressing this. One group described this as creating a ‘safe family openness’ to have dialogue. Specific issues that would benefit from more open discussion were identified around rainbow communities, sex, mental health issues and disclosing violence. Valuing openness rather than a protective silence is a useful strategy.
- **Trust** – this value can be used to have conversations about what trust means in leadership, or when a person has disclosed. Developing trusted processes for addressing violence or issues within communities is important, and both integrity and trust must inform all work and practices with ethnic communities. There was the sense that this work could not proceed without trust - it was a key value that was highlighted by most groups alongside transparency.
- **Acceptance** – This value is about developing non-judgemental attitudes which are needed to address stigma, in particular stigma for people who have been sexually harmed, or are sexually active. Shame around sex is key, and some participants talked about loss of virginity out of marriage being the end of life. Further, if sexual violence has been involved, shame hinders recovery. Even consensual sex can carry the notion of being defiled/loss of purity for some. The value of acceptance goes hand in hand with growing an understanding that sexual violence is not okay, and that people who have experienced it should not be shamed. Valuing acceptance can be used to have conversations that change these ideas. Participants described the ‘ideal family’ as one of the factors that impacts people staying in harmful relationships, so conversations about acceptance can re-value what is ideal in a family and address the idea there should be no broken homes. Developing acceptance was talked about in many different contexts, including ideas of addressing collective community shame, including shame about disclosing violence and also talking about drugs etc. This value combats the concept of ‘name and shame’ and people feeling judged. Groups also talked about the lack of recognition of various genders and sexualities and the need to grow the value of acceptance for all community members.
- **Justice** – Participants talked about justice in terms of placing shame where it belongs, not on the victim. This value was also talked about in challenging dominance to create more fair community dynamics. Valuing justice should show that sexual violence does not have a ‘degree’ of effect on victims, and justice requires that harm must be addressed regardless of the ‘degree’ of violence from a criminal perspective. ‘Justice’ is a concept that is highly valued as a restorative process for communities.

- **Gender equality** – Many groups raised patriarchy within society and within communities as a problem that prevents good sexual violence prevention and interventions. Recognising that many cultures have aspects of gender equality in their practices or teaching means that strengthening the value of gender equality will strengthen work done in our communities. Gender equality connects with values also described as uplifting women and uplifting children. People talked about the perception of ‘My wife, my property’ being very difficult to deal with and the necessity of changing gender scripts. Combatting this, valuing gender equality allows for conversations that address hierarchy differently, and allow for conversations about power and control. This value challenges the role of females as ‘chattels’ in society. Groups discussed community cultures around gender bias and gendered behaviour, and the way that community responses tend to favour outcomes for males. The value of gender equality can be used to combat patriarchal values such as it being women’s duty to provide sex in the context of relationships/marriage. Participants talked about addressing patriarchal values that sit behind victim-blaming and wife-blaming, family roles that have the ‘Dad’ making all the decisions, as well as patriarchal ideas about roles and practices for girls and boys which position parents and superior and leave children’s voices unheard.
- **Culturally oriented communications / practice** – this value was discussed by several groups as a value that communities hold on to and need to see practiced both within diverse cultural contexts and within a mainstream context. The positive valuing of ‘normal’ cultural values and good values is important. It is important to adapt and retain cultural understandings and values to work towards being free from sexual violence.
- **Healthy physical contact** – many communities value healthy physical contact within families and with extended family as part of strengthening social bonds. Conversations about this value can be used to strengthen understanding of what ‘healthy’ means for different people, and what to do if physical contact doesn’t feel healthy. Groups talked about the usefulness of cultural difference and intercultural dialogue about this, as extending and explaining one’s own cultural ideas means we examine and test these with others who are different. The visibility of difference means that we need to explicitly check rather than make assumptions about behaviour.
- **Communication** – Strengthening and supporting the ways that people are able to communicate about sexual violence and talk about sex generally is important. This includes both how to verbalise these topics and how to listen to them. Participants discussed the difficulty in talking about sex and sexuality, let alone rape. It is harder for ethnic women to speak up and report, and many are silent. Many participants talked about being silenced in their communities and doubly silenced by mainstream communities. Strengthening the value and practice of talking about difficult topics means that conversations can be had about some of the really difficult issues, including misusing religious beliefs for sexual behaviours; underage marriage or big age gaps in marriage, and bringing small girls over to New Zealand who have been ‘lost in translation’. Participants talked about not wanting to report, and the sense that rape is worse than murder. Re-valuing communication can

change the 'politeness' rules in culture and change how assertiveness is viewed, the importance of eye contact during communication and ideas about who is allowed to speak, when. The value of communication can be used to combat/change some of these ideas, and also be used to promote conversations about consent and different types of sex/preferences, young people learning about sex and relationships, as well as building the power to say 'no'. The value of communication should be understood to avoid simplistic answers in favour of holistic ones - for example, reporting violence is not as simple for people in marginalised communities.

- **Human rights** - an important value for many people who have migrated to New Zealand either voluntarily or as refugees. Extending education about awareness of rights, and what rights are in the context of sexual violence is important. Using this value to promote community leaders developing the awareness of rights for women and children in communities could be an effective prevention strategy.

## What prevention work can be done?

This section highlights the actions identified by participants in order to prevent sexual violence from occurring in ethnic communities. Participants were asked to think about issues/actions that could be addressed in mainstream society as well as those that could be taken in ethnic/cultural communities.

### What's working?

A number of aspects of sexual violence prevention were identified as working, or as partially working for ethnic communities. These included the presence of laws to prevent sexual violence (and specific to cultural concerns, such as laws to prevent forced marriage), mainstream society's consciousness of the issues and growing awareness of sexual abuse, the current challenges to social discourses and norms such as the MeToo movement, the growing availability of education around informed consent, the sense that ethnic voices are being understood better by the mainstream, the growing acknowledgement of cultural difference and what those differences mean and the growth of the diversity movement. However, many of these positive moves are only partially affecting ethnic communities, and some not at all. In particular, the lack of statistics relating to ethnic communities and the gaps between ethnic communities and sexual violence responses/prevention and decision making processes were highlighted.

Connections with current mainstream organisations providing sexual violence prevention were not explored by participants in this session with the exceptions of the Women's Self Defence Network providing education in schools, the development of relationships with university and developing a relationship with White Ribbon. It is likely that there are more connections and exploring these should be a future focus of work. It is also possible that participants did not know of connections, and this is a growth area for prevention services. Groups talked about supporting what is already working, but not always having information about what that is and not having information about what is working in ethnic communities. There was the strongly articulated idea that prevention

needed to be shaped and lead from within people's own ethnic communities. Many groups talked about the importance of developing knowledge and practice by the community for their own community. Sexual violence relies on cultural scaffolding to maintain it, and mainstream approaches focus on dismantling mainstream cultural scaffolding in generic ways. All approaches to sexual violence prevention need to account for cultural understandings of consent and power differentials within ethnic communities.

### **Addressing racism**

The impact and correlation of racism with sexual violence was discussed at length in several groups. In particular, groups talked about the ways that racism increased sexual violence towards particular groups of people, the ways that racism stopped people from seeking help, the ways that racism eroded the fabric of cultural communities and the ways that racism supported violence within cultural communities.

In terms of the ways that racism increased sexual violence towards particular groups of people, one group talked about the fetishization of Asian women who are seen as submissive, available, willing to do anything. Another group discussed the sexualisation of Latin American women and a further group reported conversation about the stereotyping of Indian women. In these conversations, groups described a racial layer of objectification adding to sexual violence. Ethnic women get shamed for having values around purity and virginity by a wider community that is more sexually permissive but shamed for losing 'purity' from their own community.

Racism also prevents help seeking and increases silence. Discrimination in the wider community hampers a victim's willingness to report because of a fear of more negativity and violence towards their community. If they do report, ethnic women are not believed and taken seriously about their own experiences in ways that feel similar to when children report violence. "We are seen as unreliable narrators of our own lives – additionally so because of racism". Participants talked about racism from privileged / bureaucratic organisations, institutional racism and the generalisation of races – blanket stereotyping of races – that happens when ethnic people seek help.

Inside cultural communities, racism also has an impact. Males already have power in a patriarchal society, but if the male partner is also white this gives him an additional level of power. People with power who exhibit predatory behaviour understand that women will not want to report outside of their community, and use this. Ethnic language TV also perpetuates the media objectification of women and Bollywood movies dictate what relationships/love should be like for some ethnic and linguistic groups.

Groups talked about combating racism through media and positive advertising, through educative outcomes for mainstream organisations and through addressing institutional racism. Many of these aspects are discussed in further parts of the reporting of this day. In particular, groups talked about the need for community leaders to be shown respect by mainstream organisations.

The impact of racism was correlated with poverty, as these together create situations where sexual predation and victimisation is more prevalent, because of the pressure of poverty.

## **Building cultural competence**

Cultural competence is the ability of organisations and people to work effectively with others. Participants talked about cultural competence not just being the ability to recognise difference, but also having specific knowledge about the ways that culture, ethnicity, gender, age and migration impact on ethnic people in Aotearoa. For example, being greeted in one's own language by a provider was not seen as important as understanding how racism might be specifically impacting that person. Participants wanted a focus on structural aspects of cultural competence rather than window dressing.

Many groups discussed the importance of education for mainstream sexual violence prevention and support organisations. There is a high need for better understanding of cultural sensitivities and mainstream practices lack skills and training to be culturally safe. However, professionals need to be trained and this training should not just be about cultural differences but should include how to initiate conversations in culturally appropriate ways, using values that matter to ethnic people and how to manage disclosures when they happen because this may require different elements than mainstream cultures. Professionals need to be culturally prepared and information needs to be tailored, and provided in different languages - these resources are important. All professionals need to be trained to understand how violence impacts ethnic communities - the idea that the acknowledgement of sexual violence means sometimes breaking cultural beliefs, and that this can lead to heightened cultural shock.

Preventing and intervening in sexual violence needs to include training GPs (both ethnic and Pakeha – some people prefer doctors from within their own communities and others want outside) to open conversations with ethnic clients in ways that are sensitive and culturally appropriate. Groups discussed the ways in which GPs are a major point of contact, and other health professionals such as nurses and midwives are also important. Continuing professional development should also include schools.

At the same time as cultural competence is being built, work needs to be done within ethnic communities to build trust in professionals.

Part of the issue around cultural competence is that the lack of cultural and religious understanding of ethnic communities results in violence being either under or over-estimated, which has a direct impact on resources available to respond and prevent violence inside ethnic communities. More ethnic liaison people in organisations (police etc) may help to change this approach. Utilising ethnic workforces and social workers was seen as particularly important.

## **Policy development**

Four main areas of policy development were discussed in this session. These included policy and practice around visas - including partnership and student visas, the provision of support for people who have experienced sexual violence outside of New Zealand but are now living here; support around understanding New Zealand legislation relating to sexual and domestic violence and the development of research.

Firstly, groups talked about the power of visas impacting women in arranged marriages, and partnership visas not giving access to things people need to integrate into society to minimise isolation. Groups talked about women on partnership visas based on husbands not disclosing



violence as they will be sent back – even if the perpetrator is jailed, the woman will be sent back. Women in this situation have no rights to work even if they can stay here, so they are extremely vulnerable and have less access to support and are often very concerned about finance and money. Also, immigration processes take too long, creating more vulnerability. Perpetrators know this, and use that argument against women to create fear and dependency, disempowerment and vulnerability. Education is needed about legal rights and where to go – with a strong focus on education before it is needed. Groups also talked about the risks for international students on student visas who have limited access to services and limited rights in New Zealand, and a lack of knowledge about what support is available and how to access it. These visas in particular make people more vulnerable to sexual abuse and coercion and thus require more support and information at the point of granting the visa, and specific approaches once they are in the country.

Secondly, groups talked about the provision of support for people who have experienced sexual violence outside of New Zealand. Currently, this is not covered under ACC legislation and people who have experienced sexual violence in childhood struggle to get support, increasing their vulnerability to further sexual harm and also creating risk for children and families. Therapists reported that for people coming from overseas the experiences of incest are common. Further, if they are able to get support there is a lack of cultural safety and cultural understanding if they engage with therapists who do not understand contexts outside of New Zealand.

Groups who discussed this talked about the need for provision of information for migrants and refugees. They talked about misconceptions among ethnic families about legislation in New Zealand and the lack of induction on entry to New Zealand, especially when granted residencies. It was felt that MBIE needs to take action on this and provide information both on legal protections against violence and also on how cultural values link with positive violence prevention values via induction. It was discussed that years of conditioning has solidified some cultural practices for families, and that discussion, education and promoting awareness was very important, and needed to be ongoing.

Lastly, there was a call for policy development around research. There needs to be recognition that sexual violence in ethnic communities is a problem. There has not been enough research specific to ethnic communities – need more people generating the information specific to ethnic communities to provide rationale for appropriate funding and tailor appropriate responses. It was suggested that a research hub be developed to address the gap in research about ethnic communities and violence/sexual violence, and that this hub gather together all available research and promote new research strands for attention.

### **Education for ethnic communities**

Prevention education must happen with an ethnic lens. Groups talked about needing education that is focussed on prevention and intervention, to increase understanding of the differences between sexual, domestic and intimate partner violence, and the ways that these play out for people in ethnic communities. Education also needs to inform people of their rights and give training to community members around managing disclosures when any education is provided. Prevention education should look at the beauty of relationships, and the possibilities for creating this. Accessibility is a key issue for educative initiatives, which must be tailored specifically for different communities. There were many suggestions about how education could happen, detailed below.

**Culturally effective education** must be based on cultural values, and must also address that different cultures (and different families within different cultures) have different ideas and that some of these ideas are not acceptable. This is true of all cultures, including Western ones. For example, communities and families need to be able to discuss ideas that might seem strange from a Western culture without being judged from the outside, but developing self-reflection and judgement from the inside - can a father take a bath with their daughter because they think the daughters body belongs to them? What are different cultural ideas of parenting? What is abusive? Ethnic communities need to be able to discuss in their own context what it means to have children watching videos of sex to learn about sex; or practices of kissing and what is acceptable for different people, and to be able to talk about different ways of seeing it. Teaching and using culturally appropriate positive language for sexual behaviours and the body is useful.

**Awareness campaign:** Several groups discussed developing understandings of sexual violence through media that is linguistically and culturally accessible. For example, Shortland Street has story lines that educate about levels of violence and responses to violence, as well as impacts of child abuse. Education like this can raise awareness and could be engaged with through ethnic language TV. Engaging in social media as an education tool was discussed and groups emphasised that multilingual, multi media strategies are needed when educating people, and when advertising services. There is a need to promote responses to sexual violence in the same way as it is done for drinking and driving. Media representations can combat stereotypes and normalise good responses to sexual violence – this would educate and empower women and support men to behave well.

**Schools and kindergartens:** Many groups talked about providing ongoing workshops in schools, kindergartens and daycares. Schools provide places for early intervention when consent is taught, and this should start at early intermediate and primary schools. Education like this helps in training children with the values needed for tomorrow. However, there need to be tailored sexual education/consent programmes for ethnic minority youth in which majority ethnic minorities classes are able to change content to be more culturally specific. Some things in mainstream education don't apply and content should be focussed on practising good relationship (the social and emotional aspects of learning to be sexual) rather than principles of basic sex (just information about bodies and how they work, particularly in relation to pregnancy and STIs). Alongside this, there must be education for parents – parents may never have experienced sexual education so how do they talk to their kids? Language can become a barrier for migrant/refugee families as parents who struggle with English are less likely to participate in school-parent activities, so this needs to be specifically addressed. This could mean delivery in the languages parents speak, if there is a large population speaking one language at a school and it should mean including the community in school education programmes.

**Adult education:** Adult education is also needed to change current behaviour and this needs to be accessible to all generations. While training could be provided through social institutions, several groups also talked about the difficulty of getting people to engage in workshops run by community groups. More effective prevention education might happen in professional workplaces, where the value of education can be mobilised more effectively. Re-framing workshops as 'personal development' might also be more effective. This education must combat the idea that it will interfere with your cultural values and beliefs by being delivered in ways that match cultural values.

There also needs to be specific tackling of vulnerable populations, including students, backpackers and young people in homestays.

### **Education for women**

Adult education needs to be gender specific. Education for women should support and strengthen women to feel comfortable to change. Part of this work needs to be redefine love language and expectations going into relationships as the view of consent is different in different cultures, especially from patriarchal systems – in some cultures marriage is consent. As well as this, it must talk about rape within marriage. There are different sexual scripts for marriage and incest and women need to have conversations that ask ‘How can I report that? How will my family respond?’ This education also needs to address issues around contraception, as withholding information on contraception is one of the ways that power imbalances play out. It is important to discuss stigma in this context, and the ways that this might play out for ethnic women if they report, and how to build protection for themselves from that.

Two things were highlighted as important in doing this education. The first is that this work needs to sit alongside a support service that is in place to do intervention if necessary, as currently there isn’t an effective place to refer women. This should also educate women to know where to go – a service that will address trauma that is current as well as trauma that has happened back home with a clear and accessible pathway. The second is that it needs to cover women who are both caring for children and often invisible to mainstream organisations; and women who are professional but may never have had access to this information.

### **Education for men**

This needs to be done in culturally appropriate ways that are open to respond to dynamics for men who are currently living in a different culture from the one they grew up in, as the conflict in practices can be confusing. For example, in South America, whistling at women is a practice that is becoming less acceptable back there, giving men there and in Aotearoa a chance to change. However, when the cultural context changes, it is difficult to know how to engage well with people, to know what behaviours will harm another person and to know the polite ways of either letting people know you are interested or saying no. For example, the South American cultural context means men are used to flirting by saying something nice but without intending ‘harm’, but in New Zealand the charm of engaging with others is confusing – it may be considered harmful. In this context, men are acknowledging that some behaviours are not acceptable and education for men needs to be open to discussing and responding to these types of dynamics. Groups discussed men needing to understand and address ‘eve teasing’ as the start of sexual violence, the idea that women can be enticed to do something means women and children become things of enticement – sexual objects. There was discussion about changing ‘Machismo’ behaviours and the acceptance of gender inequality generally. Groups also discussed needing education around text messages, what’s appropriate or inappropriate language for texting, and behaviours such as whistling at women. For predatory men, these behaviours are used to step closer and closer to women, to test them. Education should be around the impacts of this behaviour and also exploring what it means, as some of this has been culturally acceptable for men. This education should also seek to understand the nature of damage for the victims vs. perpetrator. It should address stigma and the ways that this plays out in different cultural contexts and in small communities.

Education for men needs to acknowledge that men are resistant to change as they hold a position of power and that predatory activities can increase as their position of authority decreases, which has impacts on relationships as men try to control more. On the other hand, the issue of thinking children/women are adopting western culture without them is tough for men and they need support and education about rights and values in New Zealand. Ethnic men can be quite disconnected from New Zealand male culture and this has both advantages (ie. disconnected from rugby, beer, meat & potatoes culture) and disadvantages (do not have cultural access to same positive messaging and can be at risk in groups of men). There are different sexual scripts for ethnic men vs. ethnic women, and vs. 'kiwi' men.

It was highlighted that there are men who work tirelessly in this complex area in their respective ethnic communities and are able to be role models and examples to other men. It is important that ethnic men are not seen as inherently predatory – a framing that racism makes likely – and that many are allies in this project. Groups also acknowledged that some men are also victims of sexual violence and will need support services available when this type of prevention education is done.

**Community facilitators:** The importance of developing community facilitators was discussed – people within a community who understand both the topic and the culture, and can provide safe spaces to have discussion. It was considered very important to include religious leaders in the discussions and finding solutions. Groups suggested training religious leaders in the communities in understanding and responding appropriately to disclosures as well as working in preventative ways. It was suggested that religious leaders might nominate someone in their community they can refer to for disclosures; and could undertake some form of sexual violence prevention/response education. Facilitators could engage community with outreach programmes such as an awareness day for cultural groups.

**Other areas of education:** Groups also discussed the need to have culturally appropriate education in anger management, how to parent, relationships, police and justice processes, basic sexual education and awareness of body anatomy. Education must let people know they have a voice and they can speak without fear.

### **Development of a national service**

Several groups talked about developing a national service, indicating that this service should strongly value the response of minority groups to their own people and practices of cultural safety. Participants talked about their struggles to change existing organisations and the desire to create a new space for ethnic leadership. Several groups commented that counsellors/therapists should be from similar cultures to survivors. If cultural/linguistic matching could occur it would improve issues around accessibility, trust and effectiveness of using interpreters. Accessibility was a key idea for this service, with the need for using different languages to promote services and accessing services and the ability to call the service for free. The focus of this service should not just be on responding but also on preventing. It should have a role in developing policy.

Aspects of the national service that were discussed in this session included that the working processes of the service be relevant to culture of the person accessing, and that there should be clear pathways when dealing with sexual violence victims. The services should provide absolute confidentiality, choice with options to talk anonymously, to talk over the phone, to talk to someone in their own language or to talk with someone from another community entirely. If it were possible

to use a telephone interpreting service, that should be an option. Participants also identified the need for peer to peer support. There is a gap in aftercare and first response for ethnic communities, and trust and time is needed to build effective solutions.

Related to conversations about a national service, some groups described the need for a national framework for addressing sexual violence for ethnic communities in New Zealand. It is possible that a framework could be developed and held by a national service, or independently.

### **National conversation**

Ethnic communities need to be able to have national conversations about prevention, such as provided by the Connections! hui. Opportunities to talk about prevention and preventative conversations can be created both nationally and regionally, and religious leaders and clergy must be involved. There need to be open, regular and consistent conversations to break the silences created in some cultural contexts and to practice talking about taboo topics.

The groups identified the following conversation points as being important to facilitate in ethnic/cultural and inter-cultural dialogue:

- What sexual violence is, the definition, and what's culturally and legally inappropriate. This conversation can address the issue that sexual violence is not always recognised as violence within cultural definitions of violence, thinking about when sex is harmful and when it is not
- Consent – what is the basis for consent? Is consent enough? And at what point is consent given? Is consent asking for permission?
- Expectations around what happens after marriage ie. Having children becomes 'everyone's business.
- Young people are navigating 2 cultures. There is a big disconnect between generations about what 'sex' and 'sexuality' is and more conversation is needed to bridge this and address culture shock for the older generation, especially the lack of understanding of younger generations culture of sex. Need to negotiate the cultural clashes between New Zealand culture vs. ethnic values and beliefs and build connection across generations and cultures.
- Vulnerability, confusion and misunderstanding in sexual encounters: Eg Having a friendly nature can mean 'welcoming'. However, a white woman being friendly is ok but an ethnic women being friendly can be seen as an invitation.
- Harmful sexual behaviours such as stealthing
- Stigma, shame and gossip – what the fear and reality of this means for people who have experienced harm
- Cultural vs. religious practices to address misusing religious beliefs for sexual behaviours
- Realities vs. myths around who sexual violence perpetrators are
- Stigma around counselling – counselling is for mad people. Counselling is a foreign concept. Starting to talk about this provides a pathway for professionals.
- Rainbow communities - isolation is compounded for people in these communities when they are also culturally diverse. The way that different cultural communities talk about gender and sexuality is really different.

- How to change some of the gender scripts for men, including how to engage them with taking responsibility for their own actions and how to grow their respect for women and children.

### **Community resource**

Part of what needs to happen to prevent sexual violence is to develop the fabric of community better – more resourcing of cultural groups and activities, with strengthened messages that carry the values described above and prevention activities. Community building through community events and casual settings to improve connections means that people who are experiencing harm know more people to reach out to. This is part of improving visibility and access to information. Local agencies/organisations in councils (ie Multi-cultural and ethnic councils) within various regions need to know what exists to support people experiencing violence. Involving the community and led by the community addresses the different needs and creates accountability.

Improved community resource needs to allow for communities to deal with cultural tensions within communities and to develop intercultural dialogue. Create space to work collaboratively so that we can have some place to talk. There was also a sense that there needs to be better resourcing that comes all the way back to families and support for young people. Asking families what is needed, and building a community response and resource from that to develop community led prevention programmes.

### **Acknowledging other issues**

Within this workshop a strand of conversation was present that acknowledged behaviours and practices within mainstream New Zealand (other than racism) that made it harder for ethnic communities to be free of sexual violence. Discussions commented on alcohol and drug abuse, casual attitudes around sex and alcohol, careless/racist language, financial poverty, cultural appropriation and lack of understanding of legal status of ethnic people - issues that may be intertwined with cultural misunderstanding. A couple of groups discussed New Zealand's culture around homelessness and night shelters and the consumption of alcohol/drugs as being factors that had a cultural impact particularly for households in poverty. Groups discussed inter-ethnic community confrontations and disputes, and a lack of co-ordination across services and projects that are meant to support community.

**Lastly, we asked people what they would like to see happen first. The answers are below, and many refer to points previously discussed in more depth in this paper.**

- Have a voice! There needs to be representation from ethnic people in government on boards and as part of NGOs working in sexual violence prevention and responses.
- Change in legislation around who can access services for support.
- Education for men, women and community facilitators
- National conversation – make it okay to talk about it
- Surveys - can provide anonymity for collecting data about sexual violence perpetration and victimisation.
- Include voices that haven't been in this conversation so far - ethnic sex workers
- Community building – create safety for ethnic people within their communities

- Develop a multi-generational group of ethnic leaders from the communities to lead the initiative (prevention programmes) so that it is community led, community owned and ratified by the community.
- Structured clear pathways for services
- Development of national framework to guide work
- Providing a confidential, multicultural free therapeutic service to ethnic community members dedicated to responding to sexual violence
- Changing cultural values and mindset
- Including prevention education in school curriculum
- Supporting what's already working
- Having long term support for victims – support and education must be before, during and after.
- Helping males about consent
- Encouragement for women's voices
- Education and involvement for community leaders
- Educating all of New Zealand
- More ethnic representation at senior levels of authority to take the right decisions
- Strategic research agendas
- Education within the community
- Acknowledgement of different cultures / cultural diversity and cultural awareness.
- Preserving one's own identity/heritage
- Compassionate understanding of each other
- Advocacy
- Changing mainstream media
- Rainbow community - homophobia in ethnic communities
- Ensure there are legal services available for ethnic communities
- Challenge dehumanising language
- Facebook page of community groups - social media
- Create an awareness campaign promoting people to speak up about violence
- Create safe spaces to demystify/de-shame sexual violence and sex itself - sexual health education
- Audit of what's happening - data of sexual violence, age, gender, which communities, what services are available, abortion rates, adoption etc.
- Support people in services
- Developing support networks

## Final words

This document is a collation of minutes taken in the first 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?