

Taking Action in our Community: a qualitative evaluation

RESEARCH SUMMARY



Background

This research explored the experiences of workers/volunteers who designed/facilitated Taking Action in our Community program activities. Prior research demonstrates the important role that program staff have in supporting communities to promote gender equity and take action against gender-based violence. This study aimed to explore which factors:

- Enabled program workers/volunteers to support community action
- Posed barriers to program workers/volunteers in their role mobilising community action

Participation

Nine workers/volunteers from neighbourhood and community houses across outer eastern metropolitan Melbourne, who had been involved in the Taking Action in our Community program participated in phone interviews.

Findings

Guided by the supervision team, the student researcher developed a thematic map to visually demonstrate the most prominent themes from across the interviews. The thematic map (next page) shows the key enablers and barriers to interviewees feeling supported in their role throughout the program.

- Enablers
 - Leveraging resources
 - Making connections
 - Feeling empowered

- Barriers
 - Perceived agenda
 - One-off nature of the program
 - Identifying impacts

Conclusion

The findings present insights into the enablers and barriers to the supportive capacity of program workers/volunteers who design and facilitate community mobilisation activities. Identification of the challenges experienced in first year implementation will serve as opportunities to strengthen program implementation in years to come.

Recommendations for future practice

1. Advocate for ongoing funding
2. Establish ongoing training and worker peer support
3. Establish stronger evaluation framework for houses to measure impacts
4. Implement recommendations from the 'healthy masculinities' evidence base

Access to full thesis

This study was conducted by student researcher, Olivia Stephenson, as part of her Honours degree.

- The Honours thesis is available to access on Deakin University's CHASE website [here](#).
- The research team's symposium at the 2020 International Conference of Community Psychology is available to view [here](#).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research team sincerely appreciates the assistance of all program workers who participated in the interviews. If you have any queries, please contact Olivia Stephenson at olivia.mj.stephenson@gmail.com or Lisa Hanna at lisa.hanna@deakin.edu.au

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Leveraging resources

- Robust training
- Adequate funding of activities
- Informational resources (reference documents etc)



Making connections

- To other organisations and services
- Between neighbourhood house and community
- Connections between community members



Feeling empowered

- Personal sense of duty
- Engaging tools (multimedia, videos, songs etc)
- Proactive house culture

↑
Enablers

↑
Workers Supporting Community Action

↓
Barriers



A perceived agenda

- Perceived 'man-bashing' agenda
- Perceived disregard for male victim-survivors
- Involving men



One-off nature

- Lack of momentum
- Lack of ongoing support



Identifying impacts

- Unable to communicate aims
- Uncertain what change looks like

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