**Case Study title:** South CoastViolence Prevention Network, working to shift cultural attitudes to men’s violence against women

**PCP name:** South Coast PCP

**PCP partners involved:**

* Gippsport
* Victoria Police Wonthaggi branch
* SalvoCare Eastern
* YMCA, Bass Coast
* Department of Education and Training
* South Gippsland Shire Council
* Bass Coast Shire Council
* Bass Coast Health
* Gippsland Southern Health Service
* Department of Health and Human Services

**PCP program logic area:** Mental Health Promotion

**Introduction/background/issues**

**Local Context**

The subregion of South Coast comprising of Bass Coast and South Gippsland Shire Councils has moderate to high reports of family violence, incidence of this type of violence is growing at a rapid rate. Rural populations such as Bass Coast and South Gippsland face many barriers to accessing services and therefore this rise is unlikely to slow down. Family Violence was recognised as an area of need by partners of the South Coast PCP and is listed as a priority in Strategic and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans in the catchment. The goal of the network is: *To reduce violence against women and their children within the South Coast sub-region.*

The partnership recognised an important part of preventing violence was to affect cultural attitudes towards violence and worked together to build resources to deliver the `*Mentors in Violence Prevention Training’* in the subregion. Work involved having 6 individuals in the subregion trained to become facilitators and recruiting workplaces and community organisations to undertake training.

*Mentors in Violence Prevention’* is an evidence-based leadership program focused on preventing all forms of violence. It utilises a bystander approach to prevention. The program does not view participants as either perpetrators or victims of violence. It views all participants as empowered bystanders who can confront, interrupt or prevent violence. The program seeks to enlist all people in the fight against violence by equipping them with the skills to be effective bystanders.

**Methods**

South Coast Violence Prevention Networks plan was to implement a multi-pronged intervention approach to shift cultural attitudes to prevent men’s violence against women. This network is underpinned by:

* A governance structure and supported by a Terms of Reference
* Mentors in Violence Prevention (Bystander Facilitation) Training undertaken by 6 South Coast PMVAW sub regional working group members
* MVP – Mentors in Violence Prevention education sessions delivered to community organizations & businesses
* Support to the establishment of a White Ribbon Ambassadors Network in the South Coast
* Development of coordinated White Ribbon Day events in Bass Coast and South Gippsland
* Support to agencies to implement White Ribbon Accreditation
* Collection, analysis and review of sub-regional data relating to PMVAW

**Results/discussions**

While it is too early to establish the effect of the interventions used to affect cultural shifts/changes in attitude in the South Coast sub region, the program has been evaluated over 3 years in the USA with positive results. Evaluation findings suggested that people who received MVP training experienced increased levels of knowledge and awareness, improved attitudes regarding violence against women, and increased confidence in their ability to prevent and/or intervene in abusive or violent situations, exactly the result we believe we will see overtime in the South Coast.

**Conclusions/implications**

By implementing and evaluating interventions, South Coast Violence Prevention Network may be able to add to evidence which supports a systemic approach on preventing violence against women rather than a system which focusses on reacting after violence has a occurred.