

# **PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Educational work with  
children and young people

  
Edited by Jane Ellis and Ravi K. Thiara

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To Sophie and Matthew [JE]

To Maanuv, Jyoi and Bhavan [RKT]

and for those who work tirelessly to challenge  
violence in all its forms

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and was nominated for several national awards including the Emma Humphreys Memorial Prize and Community Care Award. They won the David Bromham Memorial Award given for work which through inspiration, innovation or energy has furthered the practice of sexual and reproductive health.

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campaigns of battered women who kill which reformed the law on provocation in 1992 and helped introduce the Domestic Violence Immigration Concession (1999) and the Destitution Domestic Violence Concession (2012). She was an original member of the Home Office Working Group on Forced Marriage (1999–2000), and worked with Lord Lester to introduce the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 and to found the End Violence against Women coalition (2005) and Women Against Fundamentalism (1989). She has published widely, including a recent co-edited book entitled *Moving in the Shadows: Violence in the Lives of Minority Women and Children* (2013). Hannana was the supervisor for the SBS Schools' Prevention Project.

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**Leslie Tutty** is a Professor Emerita with the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary, Canada, where she taught courses in both clinical social work methods and research. Over the past 25 years, her research has focused on prevention programmes and services for intimate partner violence and child abuse, including a number of evaluations of shelter and post-shelter programmes for abused women, support groups for abused women, treatment for adult and child victims of sexual abuse and groups for men who abuse their partners. She has authored or co-authored four books, over 45 peer-reviewed journal articles, 90 research reports and 58 book chapters. From 1999 to 2011, Leslie served as the Academic Research Co-ordinator of RESOLVE Alberta, a tri-provincial research institute on family violence.

## Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the commitment of all the contributors and we thank them for embracing this project with great enthusiasm, especially those for whom it was not part of their 'day job' and a new challenge. Many people have been supportive to us in this venture and we want to thank all those who have given us the space to talk about some of our ideas and dilemmas. Finally, we want to thank Policy Press, and Rebecca Tomlinson in particular, for their patience and guidance.

# Foreword

*by Emeritus Professor Audrey Mullender*

This is an important book. It should be read by all teachers, youth workers, social workers and, indeed, anyone who comes into contact with children and young people. All politicians and the general public should read it, too, in order to gain a better understanding of the world in which young people these days are seeking to thrive or at least to survive. Without an appreciation of the pressures upon them and the dangers they face, how can we hope to offer the younger generation our protection, support or help with recovery if the worst does happen to them?

During my academic career, when I was actively researching violence against women and children, I was often asked how I could bear to work in such a painful area. Certainly, there were times when I wept over my computer, so harrowing were the accounts that were shared with our teams in research interviews. Yet two factors outweighed this. First was the privilege of encountering the enormous strength and resilience of survivors. One young man, for example, insisted on carrying on with his interview, through tears, in a fervent wish to enable others to benefit from his experiences. He trusted us to listen, learn and do all we could to bring about change. Consequently, the second factor that motivated us was the crucial challenge of attempting to find out what we could do about violence and abuse: what would help those on the receiving end; what would make the abusers stop; and, the Holy Grail, what would stop abuse from happening in the first place. This book focuses on the last of these goals – primary prevention – and demonstrates that there are indeed many inspiring projects already in place over a wide geographical area, tackling a range of forms of violence and abuse against women and girls. Critically, all the projects outlined in the chapters that follow place gender at the heart of their work and give

us reason to hope that, with our help, both young men and young women may learn a new way of relating in the future.

This is certainly needed. In our research, colleagues and I discovered that one in three secondary-age boys we questioned believed that some women deserve to be hit while, even among girls, one in five agreed with this chilling statement. Boys' attitudes hardened as they got older, peaking at two-fifths of the 15- to 16-year-olds taking this view, whereas the older girls moved away just a little from woman-blaming (Mullender et al, 2002, p 70). We concluded from these findings that preventive work in schools needs to start as early as possible, ideally in junior school or certainly at the beginning of secondary school.

This book's concluding comments show that anyone with the right ideas and a modicum of energy can assist in this endeavour. If you find the right partners and allies, prepare the ground, involve people with the necessary groupwork skills and work to clearly defined principles, then change really is possible. So I urge you to read on, take courage from what others have achieved – often against the odds – and, like them, become part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

### **Reference**

Mullender, A., Hague, G., Imam, U., Kelly, L, Malos, E. And Regan, L. (2002) *Children's Perspectives on Domestic Violence*, London: Sage.

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# Introduction

*Jane Ellis and Ravi K. Thiara*

This collection, the first of its kind to bring together research and practice, addresses the fragmentary knowledge base on prevention work in schools on violence against women and girls (VAWG)<sup>1</sup> at a time when it has received unprecedented attention. It arose out of conversations that took place between the editors about the absence of a wider critical conversation, and the lack of a discursive space, about school-based prevention work with children and young people and indeed about prevention itself – what it is, how and if it can be achieved, why is it desirable, what assumptions it makes about schools, and what view of children and young people it adopts and extends. The editors were very aware of the absence of a body of work that brought together knowledge about the disparate, and often exciting, school-based work taking place in many parts of the country. Such a body of work could also reflect on the many dilemmas and challenges faced by those at the cutting edge of developing this work and how these have been, if at all, addressed. Through drawing together researchers and practitioners in a conversation for the first time, this collection highlights the important work that has been developed thus far in this area and raises, and responds to, some of the questions that might be encountered by those seeking to take this work forward in the future. While the majority of contributors are drawn from the UK, we have included contributions from elsewhere on issues not yet written about in the UK to extend the critical conversation.

VAWG is widely considered a major social problem, the prevalence and universality of which is well documented (Abramsky et al, 2011; Council of Europe, 2011; WHO, 2013). The United Nations defines VAWG as ‘any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or