



Episode 19: Joe Ball

Transcript

00:00:00,100 --> 00:00:09,620 [Joe Ball]

[gentle music] One of the most inspiring things I ever hear men say is, "I'm stopping the violence in my time. It stops in my generation, and I'm not passing it on."

00:00:09,620 --> 00:00:42,059 [Female Voiceover]

[gentle music] Welcome to Voices Towards 2050, the official podcast series of the Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence Commission. Please be aware that this podcast discusses topics related to domestic, family, and sexual violence, which may be distressing for some listeners. Support is available. If you need assistance, please contact 1-800-RESPECT or reach out to your local support services. Thank you for joining us.

00:00:46,480 --> 00:01:17,820 [Micaela Cronin]

I want to start today as I always do, by acknowledging the land, lands that I'm on. And today, I'm on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, and I pay my deepest respects to the elders past and present for their care for these lands and for their incredible ongoing generosity and wisdom. My commitment is to always work and live as an ally in this role and always. Today's guest is someone I admire deeply, and who I've wanted to speak to on the podcast for quite a while. Joe, welcome to the podcast.

00:01:17,820 --> 00:01:21,740 [Joe Ball]

It's so lovely to be here, and what a nice thing for you to say.

00:01:21,740 --> 00:01:26,520 [Micaela Cronin]

Hmm. Thank you. So Joe, I'm gonna embarrass you a bit and do a little, just, just, just a brief bio-

00:01:26,520 --> 00:01:26,640 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:01:26,640 --> 00:01:26,640 [Micaela Cronin]

...

00:01:27,700 --> 00:01:55,300 [Micaela Cronin]

um, and then we'll get started. So Joe Bull was appointed as Victoria's commissioner for LGBTIQ+ communities in 2024 and has more than 25 years of experience across disability, housing, homelessness, community advocacy, and social services. He has led landmark initiatives like the creation of the Rainbow Door, a service that provides mental health, family violence, and other specialist services to the LGBTIQ+ communities.

00:01:56,380 --> 00:02:20,620 [Micaela Cronin]

Joe, your leadership was recognised nationally in 2020 when you were named one of Australia's 50 outstanding LGBTI+ leaders. I'd like to get started, Joe, by, by getting you to talk to us a bit about what motivates you to do this work. We've talked about this work, both how rewarding but how challenging it is. So what is it that motivates you to do the work?

00:02:20,620 --> 00:02:38,540 [Joe Ball]

It is people. I mean, that sounds really straightforward, but it's like actually, I have real clear visions of certain people, you know, that pop up in my mind around certain pieces of work, and I don't know, I just like really do it in their name. Like, I have some people that have shared their story with me, like in this context, around family violence.



00:02:38,540 --> 00:02:39,180 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:02:39,180 --> 00:02:45,260 [Joe Ball]

And I'll be up giving a speech or, you know, sitting on a round table, and I can see them in my mind's eye.

00:02:45,260 --> 00:02:45,760 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:02:45,760 --> 00:03:07,740 [Joe Ball]

And I feel like I carry those people around with me, and they pop up at just the right moment, and they're the people that I do it for. I do it for them because they, 'cause they are not in the room, but I take them with me. And I really believe that when we make things better for people who are having the worst time or are the most marginalised, we make it better for everyone.

00:03:07,740 --> 00:03:08,260 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm-hmm.

00:03:08,260 --> 00:03:18,280 [Joe Ball]

But sometimes I think, uh, what helps me focus is to think about a particular person and, and think about how I can make it better for them or could have made it better for them.

00:03:18,280 --> 00:03:21,560 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah, and it is often that could have made it better, isn't it? There are-

00:03:21,560 --> 00:03:21,580 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:03:21,580 --> 00:03:27,750 [Micaela Cronin]

... you know, that's, that's really poignant, Joe. There are people that I know that I carry with me too. Um-

00:03:27,750 --> 00:03:28,160 [Joe Ball]

Mm.

00:03:28,160 --> 00:03:37,240 [Micaela Cronin]

I don't think I'm quite as focused about how I do that, so that bringing people into mind like that is a very, very special way to be motivated to do the work.

00:03:37,240 --> 00:03:45,680 [Joe Ball]

I, I find it, I find it energizing. Like, uh, I know the way I'm saying it might sound like heavy, and of course there's a heaviness when some of those people are not around anymore.

00:03:45,680 --> 00:03:45,769 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:03:45,769 --> 00:03:46,620 [Joe Ball]

There is a heaviness.

00:03:46,620 --> 00:03:46,980 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:03:46,980 --> 00:04:02,500 [Joe Ball]



But I think there's also, like, sometimes I actually just find it really m- me- like it's sort of, uh, propelling, and it doesn't always feel he- heavy, and sometimes I think about the people in a way that has, has a lightness. Like, I think about them, if I knew them personally, maybe f- funny, quirky things about them.

00:04:02,500 --> 00:04:02,700 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:04:02,700 --> 00:04:06,200 [Joe Ball]

You know? Like the, the... So it's, it's, it's not necessarily as heavy as it sounds.

00:04:06,200 --> 00:04:06,350 [Micaela Cronin]

No.

00:04:06,350 --> 00:04:06,800 [Joe Ball]

Mm.

00:04:06,800 --> 00:04:16,719 [Micaela Cronin]

No, no, I understand that. I do. And I think that it's one of the things, I was having a conversation with someone the other day about the balancing light and shade. So yes-

00:04:16,720 --> 00:04:16,730 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:04:16,730 --> 00:04:24,450 [Micaela Cronin]

... yes, there's a heaviness to it, but there's a lightness that we need to bring, and you gotta, you gotta get the balance of those things right. That-

00:04:24,450 --> 00:04:24,550 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:04:24,550 --> 00:04:41,960 [Micaela Cronin]

... I, I wanna talk about when you started in this role and what, what, one of the things that you brought to when you started. So on your first day in office as commissioner, one of the things you spoke about was the importance of exactly what you're talking about, turning a 10-year Pride in Our Future strategy from pages into real action.

00:04:41,960 --> 00:04:42,160 [Joe Ball]

Mm.

00:04:42,160 --> 00:04:55,020 [Micaela Cronin]

So you're, you're coming up to two years in the role now. Talk to us about, t- talk to us about the role and what your approach is and, and what the work of the Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities, what is it you do, Joe?

00:04:55,020 --> 00:05:00,080 [Joe Ball]

Yeah. I think what's interesting about my role is it's not statutory, and so I'm not a complaints commissioner-

00:05:00,080 --> 00:05:00,360 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm

00:05:00,360 --> 00:05:08,660 [Joe Ball]

... like, say, other commissioners like disability, um, other human rights commissioners sort of are driven by commi- or have a function that has community complaints within it.

00:05:08,660 --> 00:05:09,000 [Micaela Cronin]



Mm.

00:05:09,000 --> 00:05:37,020 [Joe Ball]

My role is very much about advocacy and being a conduit between the community and government, and it's advocacy. You know, my role is to be an advocate, and I need to be informed by what is... I need to be informed by the community in order to do that advocacy. And in, in, and I take that, like, sometimes that's hearing people, like being in a consultation with organizations, sometimes it's meeting with like victim survivor advocates, and other times it's actually just reading evidence. You know, like reading research papers, reading reports.

00:05:37,020 --> 00:05:37,039 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:05:37,040 --> 00:05:55,510 [Joe Ball]

And I think you need to bring all those things together and, and, and that's what I bring to bear on, like, how I decode and make real what the strategy is trying to get at. I think also what's difficult, like the strategy is always there in the background, and I'm, I'm a champion of the 10-year strategy. It is, it is also, it also belongs to the whole of government.

00:05:55,510 --> 00:05:55,940 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:05:55,940 --> 00:06:03,469 [Joe Ball]

So it is not only for me to do, but, like, I, I sort of think about it as that I, that I champion it and push it back on track at different, [laughs] different moments-

00:06:03,469 --> 00:06:03,479 [Micaela Cronin]

Yes

00:06:03,479 --> 00:06:13,380 [Joe Ball]

... and with different people. But, but when you're thinking about whole of government, it's everyone from like the suburban rail link, like think about all of government to health-To funding child protection. Um-

00:06:13,380 --> 00:06:13,560 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:06:13,560 --> 00:06:27,840 [Joe Ball]

... you know, it is really, it's every part of government. So, so that's really hard. So, so I'm a champion of it, but it's not my sole responsibility. And I sort of have these metrics where I think about, you know, 40% of my job is planned and 60% of it is responsive. And-

00:06:27,840 --> 00:06:28,060 [Micaela Cronin]

Oh, okay

00:06:28,060 --> 00:06:31,820 [Joe Ball]

... that's be- yeah, like, it's, I mean, it's not as mathematical as that.

00:06:31,820 --> 00:06:31,850 [Micaela Cronin]

Yep.

00:06:31,850 --> 00:06:37,480 [Joe Ball]

That's more something. [laughs] But, but it's something I, like, th- so there's things that just come at you, right? Like, that you don't necessarily-

00:06:37,480 --> 00:06:37,490 [Micaela Cronin]



Yes

00:06:37,490 --> 00:06:40,320 [Joe Ball]

... that fall into the big brackets of the plan.

00:06:40,320 --> 00:06:40,760 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:06:40,760 --> 00:06:44,220 [Joe Ball]

But they're not something that people knew about when it was happening.

00:06:44,220 --> 00:06:44,519 [Micaela Cronin]

No.

00:06:44,520 --> 00:06:54,480 [Joe Ball]

Or, you know, f- like, for example, like, knowing that as soon as I came into the role, I'd actually be responding to a really big spike in gay and bisexual men being bashed.

00:06:54,480 --> 00:06:54,800 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:06:54,800 --> 00:07:16,760 [Joe Ball]

You know, that wasn't written into the plan a fe- you know, when it was written a few years ago, because that hadn't happened yet. But absolutely, that falls within the bracket of safe- you know, we want safe lives, we want police to, uh, you know, I'm, I'm there to work with the Victorian police to, uh, for victim survivors, and it's all in there. But that's that, that's the responsive element, is that the world around me has to be responded to as well.

00:07:16,760 --> 00:07:16,920 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:07:16,920 --> 00:07:27,360 [Joe Ball]

Uh, it can't be as rigid as this is the plan, and I, I sort of systematically roll it out, you know? And I, and I think most CEOs and most people who run organizations can relate to that.

00:07:27,360 --> 00:07:27,679 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:07:27,680 --> 00:07:28,100 [Joe Ball]

That's the-

00:07:28,100 --> 00:07:46,700 [Micaela Cronin]

Absolutely. That, that need to be... A- and I think what you've talked about, about really deeply listening to what's happening in communities, um, and how do you synthesise then what you're knowing and learning, but, but having a radar for where there are emerging issues and where things are shifting is really, is, that's something-

00:07:46,700 --> 00:07:46,710 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:07:46,710 --> 00:07:58,560 [Micaela Cronin]

... that takes a lot of my energy too, is really listening for those. Particularly, I think, listening for what are the early warning, how are we gonna get ahead of when things are harming the people that we, we are here to serve. Can you-



00:07:58,560 --> 00:07:58,800 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:07:58,800 --> 00:08:02,560 [Micaela Cronin]

... that issue that you've raised about the, that emergence of the issue at-

00:08:02,560 --> 00:08:02,620 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:08:02,620 --> 00:08:19,190 [Micaela Cronin]

... and, and one of the aspects of that was the use of on- a- and again, this is something that has been an emerging issue for all of us about the online world and how that's impacting. And, and this one, what there was, there was a real issue around the, around dating apps, and the way-

00:08:19,190 --> 00:08:19,240 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:08:19,240 --> 00:08:25,930 [Micaela Cronin]

... they were being weaponised and the, um, to facilitate hate crimes against LGBTIQ+ people.

00:08:25,930 --> 00:08:26,000 [Joe Ball]

Mm. Is it-

00:08:26,000 --> 00:08:34,859 [Micaela Cronin]

And I know the Victorian police did arrest some people over time. You have played a really key voice in that. Can you tell us a bit more about that?

00:08:34,860 --> 00:08:41,500 [Joe Ball]

Yeah, sure. People have been arrested in Victoria for tech-facilitated abuse. That's a really sizable number-

00:08:41,500 --> 00:08:41,510 [Micaela Cronin]

It is

00:08:41,510 --> 00:08:43,680 [Joe Ball]

... but we know the actual occurrences-

00:08:43,680 --> 00:08:43,940 [Micaela Cronin]

Probably much greater

00:08:43,940 --> 00:08:45,360 [Joe Ball]

... of this abuse will be far hi-

00:08:45,360 --> 00:08:45,370 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:08:45,370 --> 00:08:56,680 [Joe Ball]

... far, far higher. And I, I talk about it as being tech-facilitated abuse, but to be really specific about what it is, it's about gay and bisexual men being hunted through dating apps.

00:08:56,680 --> 00:08:57,240 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:08:57,240 --> 00:09:06,040 [Joe Ball]

Now, w- we know that this is something that's happened in the family violence space, in the, um, sexual assault space for women and girls for a long time.



00:09:06,040 --> 00:09:06,600 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:09:06,600 --> 00:09:17,860 [Joe Ball]

And we've also seen signs of this happening in, in gay and bisexual men as well, and other demographics. However, th- there was something that really changed in 2024. There was an organised component to it-

00:09:17,860 --> 00:09:18,140 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm

00:09:18,140 --> 00:09:44,220 [Joe Ball]

... where it went from something that was happening more sporadically to something that was, that was like an organised process that included, like, filming people, and sha- you know, uh, uh, an element of extortion, and there was a rhythm to it of, of, of how people were doing the crime. And that was picked up by the priority populations police, uh, pri- populations role in the Victoria police. They started seeing this kind of rhythm.

00:09:44,220 --> 00:09:44,740 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:09:44,740 --> 00:10:06,280 [Joe Ball]

And they started seeing how it was happening, the kind of locations it was happening, what was being said to the victims, and how they were being tracked. Uh, so they were originally being largely found on, on the Grindr app, and then being, uh, lured into public places to, to have sex. And then when they went there, um, and sometimes in their, I should say, not just public places, sometimes in their own home.

00:10:06,280 --> 00:10:06,580 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:10:06,580 --> 00:10:14,520 [Joe Ball]

And then, uh, when the meetup happened, there would be a group of young men who would bash them. So they're pretty horrible, pretty horrible crimes.

00:10:14,520 --> 00:10:14,930 [Micaela Cronin]

It's horrific. Yeah.

00:10:14,930 --> 00:10:15,370 [Joe Ball]

Yeah.

00:10:15,370 --> 00:10:15,920 [Micaela Cronin]

It's a joke.

00:10:15,920 --> 00:11:00,710 [Joe Ball]

Now, in Victoria, look, they've happened in every state and territory, they've also happened overseas. In Victoria, we've had a higher arrest rate, and I think that's not because I think it's happening more here. I think it, I have to attribute that to the close work that my office, uh, Thorne Harbour Health, and the priority populations part of Victoria Police have done to work to really target and focus this issue. And we're starting to see the same thing happen in New South Wales, where they're starting to, to target and focus this issue, and the arrests are starting to, to roll in. And I think where governments, uh, put energy into, uh, finding these cases, they are, they are popping up, and people are, arrests are happening, and also victim survivors are starting to come forward. So it's not a Victoria issue, I want to be really clear about, it's a national issue.

00:11:00,710 --> 00:11:00,710 [Micaela Cronin]



Yeah.

00:11:00,710 --> 00:11:10,500 [Joe Ball]

And, uh, we do need every state and territory to be focusing on this. And I think in time, some kind of a national round table would be excellent as well.

00:11:10,500 --> 00:11:29,220 [Micaela Cronin]

Let's talk about that, Joe. I think what you're describing too, 'cause I, I would fully support from, from what I know that this is not something that is about Victoria in particular, but where people are seeing and paying attention and responding appropriately with care, and paying-

00:11:29,220 --> 00:11:29,230 [Joe Ball]

Yeah

00:11:29,230 --> 00:11:48,960 [Micaela Cronin]

... you know, and taking things seriously, it makes a big difference. So tell me a bit about what your experience 'cause I, what, what you've described in terms of the relationship, and it's not always been a good relationship with police, right? So the policing relationship, their, their response to this level of harm that's occurring towards the LGBTQI+ community-

00:11:48,960 --> 00:11:49,010 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:11:49,010 --> 00:11:55,480 [Micaela Cronin]

... is, is important the way they responded to that. And that there was a, I understand there was a particular police officer involved in that as well.

00:11:55,480 --> 00:12:08,600 [Joe Ball]

I'm just trying to think ab- I, I mean, I wanna give his name because he's amazing. Um, Jeremy Oliver, and, um, he has done incredible work as the manager of priority populations. I think the fact that there's a, there's actually something in Victoria Police called priority populations-

00:12:08,600 --> 00:12:08,610 [Micaela Cronin]

Yes

00:12:08,610 --> 00:13:03,764 [Joe Ball]

... like, there's, there's a role there. And that, well, so he works in priority populations, but he's specifically, the priority population he represents is ours, the LGBTIQ+. And he's been working in this for quite some time. And-Yeah, they've built those relationships. They, they've built them, um, with the community, and, and, and I think a big turning point for us in Victoria is we had a community forum, and I contacted the then CEO of Thorne Harbour Health, and I said, "I think we've gotta have a community forum where we just actually have a conversation with the community." We, we say to people, "We're g- come and meet us here, and we're gonna talk about these, this tech-facilitated abuse." And we held it at The Laird, which is a gay men's bar in Collingwood, and we had this meeting, and we d- we didn't really know what this was gonna be like. But the community showed up, and there was numerous people in the room. We, you know, had a panel. Jer- it was me and Jeremy and someone from Thorne Harbour, and a number of, uh, Victorian politicians came as... MPs came-

00:13:03,764 --> 00:13:03,773 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm

00:13:03,773 --> 00:13:15,264 [Joe Ball]

... as well, um, to hear what people had to say. The place was packed out, and numerous people in the room came forward and said, "Look, this has happened to me, and, but I didn't go to police." And, you know-



00:13:15,264 --> 00:13:15,364 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:13:15,364 --> 00:13:19,444 [Joe Ball]

... they, they, they just, and they've, and why they weren't going to the police is they felt deeply ashamed.

00:13:19,444 --> 00:13:20,184 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:13:20,184 --> 00:13:26,384 [Joe Ball]

They felt like they had done something, like they'd done something wrong. You know, they, they, they'd wanted to have sex with a stranger, you know? [laughs]

00:13:26,384 --> 00:13:26,394 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm-hmm.

00:13:26,394 --> 00:13:50,854 [Joe Ball]

Um, and then, and they, and they'd taken on this shame, and they thought, oh, what, or... You know, some people had come forward, but these people in the room were people, and they were, they were people of all different ages. They, so, like, I can't typecast the, the person. There, there was multiple, y- different ages, uh, different backgrounds, different ethnicities, of people that were telling us, like, "I haven't come forward." And, and they, they were happening in the inner city, places that we would consider to be, like, safe spaces-

00:13:50,854 --> 00:13:50,854 [Micaela Cronin]

Safe

00:13:50,854 --> 00:13:52,324 [Joe Ball]

... for our community.

00:13:52,324 --> 00:13:52,414 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:13:52,414 --> 00:14:07,224 [Joe Ball]

And, and, you know, one of the things that I'd learnt from my work of working in family violence is I just really immediately identified this as something that women and girls have had to really work and overcome, the shame and stigma of when violence is perpetrated against you.

00:14:07,224 --> 00:14:07,384 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:14:07,384 --> 00:14:23,854 [Joe Ball]

Of, like, that you were wearing the wrong thing. You were, you were, um, in the wrong place, and I thought, "Wow, we've really gotta bring this to the LGBTI, particularly the, the men's space," the gay and bisexual men's space, of, like, I remember saying in this room to people, I was like, "You have nothing to be ashamed of."

00:14:23,854 --> 00:14:24,004 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:14:24,004 --> 00:14:31,764 [Joe Ball]

"I, I understand that you feel ashamed, but this is a stigma." A- and seeing the tears in people's eyes, like, people needed to hear that, you know? And I think-

00:14:31,764 --> 00:14:32,324 [Micaela Cronin]



Yeah

00:14:32,324 --> 00:14:44,744 [Joe Ball]

... that's when you get, when you get a joined-up approach, you bring that feminist lens to, uh, you know, it has, it has an application beyond just women and girls, and that's, it was certainly happened, it was certainly useful that day.

00:14:44,744 --> 00:14:57,864 [Micaela Cronin]

What an incredibly powerful thing to have created a safe space for your community in that way, and those people. I j- real- it's, it's quite moving, Jo, to hear you talk about what that m- must've been like for those people-

00:14:57,864 --> 00:14:58,104 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:14:58,104 --> 00:15:17,164 [Micaela Cronin]

... to feel safe enough to turn up, and then I'm sure lots of them thought, "I'm gonna go, but I'm not necessarily gonna say anything," because there is, uh, you're right, shame is such, it's such a under... We don't understand enough about how much it drives, drives both behavior but also stops people being able to reach out to get s-

00:15:17,164 --> 00:15:17,384 [Joe Ball]

Yeah

00:15:17,384 --> 00:15:30,504 [Micaela Cronin]

... support. We need to be able to talk more about shame. Helping people to move past that shame is, is really powerful, and it's a gift that I've, I've seen the way you can, you can create that, that safety in a space, so-

00:15:30,504 --> 00:15:30,574 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:15:30,574 --> 00:15:35,474 [Micaela Cronin]

... it's really moving to hear you talk about it, and absolutely we need to talk about how... I, I think-

00:15:35,474 --> 00:15:35,474 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:15:35,474 --> 00:15:50,784 [Micaela Cronin]

... the other point that you've just made about learning from how the power of bringing people together and naming an issue to, like, w- where you started this was talking about how that's what drove the change, right? That was, that's what your-

00:15:50,784 --> 00:15:50,794 [Joe Ball]

100%

00:15:50,794 --> 00:15:53,144 [Micaela Cronin]

... that's what you said was the beginning. Yeah.

00:15:53,144 --> 00:16:07,104 [Joe Ball]

100%, because we just started to see, one, that there was these people that were prepared to talk to their peers about it, right? But they weren't yet ready to go to the police. But a couple of those people did go to the police afterwards because we had Jeremy in the room-

00:16:07,104 --> 00:16:07,384 [Micaela Cronin]



Mm

00:16:07,384 --> 00:16:18,064 [Joe Ball]

... and they had that interconnection. You know, and, like, there is this incredible history in the queer men's space about speaking out against silence.

00:16:18,064 --> 00:16:18,494 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:16:18,494 --> 00:16:21,424 [Joe Ball]

'Cause that's what they had to do with AIDS.

00:16:21,424 --> 00:16:21,644 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:16:21,644 --> 00:16:52,984 [Joe Ball]

You know, and again, it was a stigma. And I, I remember, like, so we did an, a second community forum, um, again to, as a follow-up later on to tell people about the parliamentary inquiry, and I remember sitting in the room, and I w- I was again talking about the parliamentary inquiry, talking about shame and stigma, and had right in front of me these two, um, people who were long-term, like, one of them was, um, Jamie Gardner, who has played this incredible role. He was there to support others. Um, he hadn't been a victim of, of a hate crime, but he was, he was there to support others. I was looking, this, I was like, "This, this man right here, you know-

00:16:52,984 --> 00:16:52,994 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm

00:16:52,994 --> 00:17:14,344 [Joe Ball]

... he's the reason why, like, we have decriminalization in Victoria, like, and we have the state apology." And I was, like, looking at him and looking at the man that was sitting next to him, which was a board member of Thorne Harbour, and I looked at these two men, and I just thought, "Wow." And I, and I remember just saying it out loud from my heart, I was like, "I don't even know what it must feel like for you two to see this happening all over again."

00:17:14,344 --> 00:17:14,484 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:17:14,484 --> 00:17:33,354 [Joe Ball]

You know? And, and afterwards they said, like, "Thank you so much for saying that." Like, 'cause I think there's a real pain for that older generation who it may not be happening to them, but they were like, "Wow, we thought we'd buried, you know, we'd buried that issue, and here we are." So, you know, I, I think that's something we've gotta acknowledge about-

00:17:33,354 --> 00:17:33,354 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:17:33,354 --> 00:17:39,544 [Joe Ball]

... what's happening here, is that there's also, like, like, we thought we had gotten through this, but here it is again.

00:17:39,544 --> 00:17:48,904 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah. Absolutely. And I, I, I think there's a lot of, a lot of us thinking about that too in terms of hard, hard-fought-for gains, that-

00:17:48,904 --> 00:17:48,914 [Joe Ball]



Mm

00:17:48,914 --> 00:18:15,474 [Micaela Cronin]

... battles that we thought we'd been part of, you know, wins that we'd made, that, that we're seeing now backlash against and, and some really, I mean, in, in some ways some things even worse than, you know. Some of the, some of the stuff in terms of what's happening around attitudes and the harm that's being caused in some ways is, is feeling very hard to watch. So I agree, we need to, we, we need to acknowledge the wins and the gains-

00:18:15,474 --> 00:18:15,974 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:18:15,974 --> 00:18:34,293 [Micaela Cronin]

... but we need to, and, and what we can learn from, because I think, I think also what you're talking about, there's a great deal to learn from those campaigns and those, you know, I mean, what's, what's happened. I think there's a great deal to learn from a lot of the work, the advocacy and campaigning work that the LGBTIQA+ community-

00:18:34,293 --> 00:18:34,293 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:18:34,293 --> 00:18:56,568 [Micaela Cronin]

... has done, you know, with AIDS and other things that you've talked about more broadly. And it's one of the things that, you know, you and I have talked about recently, about the conversation that's happening now about-How do we engage men and boys in this work? I have to acknowledge it's not new. This has happened over, again, for many years, but it's happening now. There is some momentum around engaging men and boys-

00:18:56,568 --> 00:18:56,588 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:18:56,588 --> 00:19:05,488 [Micaela Cronin]

... involving them in solutions to end violence, and from, from my particular perspective, to end domestic, family, and sexual violence, those, that kind of-

00:19:05,488 --> 00:19:05,498 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:19:05,498 --> 00:19:10,208 [Micaela Cronin]

... but more broadly, if you're gonna, if, to do that, you need to end violence in our communities, in all-

00:19:10,208 --> 00:19:10,218 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:19:10,218 --> 00:19:11,798 [Micaela Cronin]

... in all of its forms.

00:19:11,798 --> 00:19:11,848 [Joe Ball]

Mm.

00:19:11,848 --> 00:19:18,128 [Micaela Cronin]

So you've talked a lot lately about alternative positive versions of masculinity-

00:19:18,128 --> 00:19:18,488 [Joe Ball]

Mm



00:19:18,488 --> 00:19:26,828 [Micaela Cronin]

... that society needs to, must shift much more actively towards. Can you talk about your work and what you're thinking, what you think needs to be done in that space?

00:19:26,828 --> 00:19:29,148 [Joe Ball]

I'm, I'm, I'm still working it out as everyone else is-

00:19:29,148 --> 00:19:29,158 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm

00:19:29,158 --> 00:19:37,468 [Joe Ball]

... and it's a lifelong project, and I think some of, some of that is actually the work, right, is that, is encouraging men and boys to do self-exploration. [laughs]

00:19:37,468 --> 00:19:37,828 [Micaela Cronin]

Yes.

00:19:37,828 --> 00:19:38,248 [Joe Ball]

Um, I think that's really key.

00:19:38,248 --> 00:19:40,548 [Micaela Cronin]

None of us have, none of us... That's right. [laughs] None of us have-

00:19:40,548 --> 00:19:40,948 [Joe Ball]

Yeah, I think-

00:19:40,948 --> 00:19:42,228 [Micaela Cronin]

... it all worked out, yet.

00:19:42,228 --> 00:19:47,717 [Joe Ball]

Yeah, and I think some of the attitudes around being a man is that you're supposed to have had it all worked out.

00:19:47,717 --> 00:19:47,828 [Micaela Cronin]

Yes. Yes.

00:19:47,828 --> 00:20:22,838 [Joe Ball]

Um, that that sort of becomes intrin- uh, like, um, it's hard to decouple that from masculinity, and that sort of, you know, help-seeking is, is in itself a, an emasculating thing. And so I think we have to turn those things on their head, and for me, like, talking about masculinity, like, I'm somebody who chose to be a man. You know, I wasn't born a man. I'm a trans man. I, I, and, um, I've paid a lot of attention to men, and you know, I made an active choice as someone who grew up facing some s- you know, the neg- the negativity that a lot of women and girls face. You know, I, I was a young girl that carried their keys between their knuckles, um-

00:20:22,838 --> 00:20:22,888 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm

00:20:22,888 --> 00:20:27,438 [Joe Ball]

... and had deodorant in their bag that they could spray, impulse deodorant to spray in someone's face-

00:20:27,438 --> 00:20:27,448 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm



00:20:27,448 --> 00:20:49,478 [Joe Ball]

... and these are, if they attacked you. And these were things that we shared from girl to girl about, like, how you protect yourself, and I certainly had friends who, who had been raped and had, um, had been sexually assaulted, and like, it, it was, it was something close. It was, and it felt really fear. So you know, like, for me to have lived a life of feeling in my own body afraid of boys-

00:20:49,478 --> 00:20:49,478 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm

00:20:49,478 --> 00:21:18,088 [Joe Ball]

... afri- afraid of men's violence, and then to make a choice to become a man, you know, it takes a bit of like, uh, thinking through w- what all that is and understanding that, like, actually, the conclusion I came to is that, you know, I am, I'm, I'm a masculine man, and that's, that masculinity, it is not inherently something that has to be oppressive, and actually, it's not a binary, [laughs] um, of like, well, a non-oppressive man is, he's an effeminate man.

00:21:18,088 --> 00:21:18,248 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:21:18,248 --> 00:21:27,168 [Joe Ball]

No, actually a very, a ve- a ma- it c- it can be both ways. An effeminate man can be oppressive, [laughs] um, and he can also not be, you know, and, and vice versa about masculinity.

00:21:27,168 --> 00:21:27,508 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:21:27,508 --> 00:21:37,468 [Joe Ball]

And the way that I really learnt that, about how masculinity can be many different things, is I learnt it from butch lesbians. [laughs]

00:21:37,468 --> 00:21:37,628 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:21:37,628 --> 00:21:41,548 [Joe Ball]

You know? Like, I learnt it from them, of pe- of women who took on masculinity.

00:21:41,548 --> 00:21:42,108 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm. Yeah.

00:21:42,108 --> 00:22:08,978 [Joe Ball]

You know, and they embodied masculinity, and I saw that how different bodies could interpret masculine masculineness. And so that was a pathway for me of seeing those women who, who paved a way of, o- o- of masculinity on a body that was not born male. For me, I didn't wanna stop there. I, I, for me, I wanted to become a trans man, and I wanted to, you know, have the binary experience e- of, of being the way I am now.

00:22:08,978 --> 00:22:09,028 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:22:09,028 --> 00:22:15,298 [Joe Ball]

And what I bring forward to this, or what I want h- people to hear, is that I really like masculinity. [laughs]

00:22:15,298 --> 00:22:15,748 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.



00:22:15,748 --> 00:22:24,888 [Joe Ball]

So I'm someone who comes at this, not somebody who wants to get rid of it or somebody that doesn't like it, because I've s- worked so hard to become it.

00:22:24,888 --> 00:22:25,128 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm. Mm.

00:22:25,128 --> 00:22:28,648 [Joe Ball]

Um, so I'm really invested in this, this project, you know?

00:22:28,648 --> 00:22:28,668 [Micaela Cronin]

Yes.

00:22:28,668 --> 00:22:58,668 [Joe Ball]

I'm really invested in this project of, like, how you can be a different type of man, and, and I've had to find my own way through that. And so I think these are some of the conversations, and like, you know, I've gone looking for male role models in deliberate ways and sometimes, um, unconscious ways, and uh, I, I think that I've got some, you know, offered some reflections about this, and I, I think I've got some, some things to say about it, but one of the things I think doesn't help is to say that like, uh, masculinity is not the problem, you know.

00:22:58,668 --> 00:22:59,048 [Micaela Cronin]

Yep.

00:22:59,048 --> 00:23:04,467 [Joe Ball]

Power over people, oppression, control, coercion, these are a problem.

00:23:04,468 --> 00:23:04,707 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:23:04,707 --> 00:23:06,748 [Joe Ball]

They can be decoupled from masculinity.

00:23:06,748 --> 00:23:07,068 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:23:07,068 --> 00:23:09,588 [Joe Ball]

And it, and, like, that's the project.

00:23:09,588 --> 00:23:24,568 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah. That is the project, and it's a big, hard project that's re- going to require lots of us. I was in my early 20s when I had my first child, and it was a boy, and I was a pretty strident young feminist at the time, and it was pretty confronting, I have to say-

00:23:24,568 --> 00:23:24,648 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:23:24,648 --> 00:23:50,748 [Micaela Cronin]

... to have a boy, because I was kinda pretty, uh, pretty straightforward about what my views, I think, were about most, most, most of the patriarchy and men, and it was very confronted. And so I think that thing about, you know, having to think about masculinity, I haven't gone the same... Ob- obviously we... I suppose one of my reflections listening to you is that we have very individual and specific pathways, um-

00:23:50,748 --> 00:23:50,928 [Joe Ball]

Mm



00:23:50,928 --> 00:24:05,918 [Micaela Cronin]

... and trying to paint everybody with the, the same brush about what masculinity is or isn't or what your pathway is, it's really important to share the diversity of ex- experiences like you have had.

00:24:05,918 --> 00:24:05,948 [Joe Ball]

Mm.

00:24:05,948 --> 00:24:11,798 [Micaela Cronin]

And I've previously heard you share a powerful moment ab- around the birth of your daughter. You happy to share a bit about that?

00:24:11,798 --> 00:24:31,308 [Joe Ball]

Oh, yeah, sure. Sure. I mean, um, my partner gave birth to our, our daughter, and in the Royal Women's Hospital in Melbourne, which was a fantastic experience, actually. I mean, uh, I'll get more into that in a moment. But, [laughs] but the, um, it w- I mean, my partner had a traumatic birth, and so people who've given birth, they know what I mean when-

00:24:31,308 --> 00:24:31,448 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm-hmm

00:24:31,448 --> 00:24:47,348 [Joe Ball]

... I say that, I say that. So but, but what, what I think was a tremendous experience for me, actually, was a lot of work has happened at the Royal Women's Hospital to make it an accepting place. My, my partner was in labor for, like, 16 hours. It was, like, in te- ter- terribly long labor.

00:24:47,348 --> 00:24:47,428 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:24:47,428 --> 00:24:47,667 [Joe Ball]

Um-

00:24:47,668 --> 00:24:48,328 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm

00:24:48,328 --> 00:24:59,016 [Joe Ball]

... and, and during that time, we saw so many peopleUm, [laughs] like, you know, shifts changed, anesthetists came in, different doctors came in, a lot of different things happened-

00:24:59,016 --> 00:24:59,026 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:24:59,026 --> 00:25:20,416 [Joe Ball]

... and, you know, including eventually in, in NICU and, um, et cetera. And but, but like one thing that happened for me was, um, that I remember that I kept seeing on everyone's... I sort of clocked it, everyone sort of had like a little rainbow sticker or some kind of, a lot of them had a lot of rainbow somewhere on their uniform.

00:25:20,416 --> 00:25:20,715 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:25:20,716 --> 00:25:22,056 [Joe Ball]

Just something really small.

00:25:22,056 --> 00:25:22,195 [Micaela Cronin]



Yeah.

00:25:22,196 --> 00:25:23,836 [Joe Ball]

And you sort of clock it and-

00:25:23,836 --> 00:25:24,156 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:25:24,156 --> 00:25:32,056 [Joe Ball]

... you know, and, and, and to all intents and purposes, how my partner and I present in the world, people would just think we're a pretty ordinary heterosexual couple.

00:25:32,056 --> 00:25:32,396 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:25:32,396 --> 00:25:49,156 [Joe Ball]

Um, and they wouldn't really think of us as a, a, a rainbow family, um, uh, uh, by appearance, and there's noth- nothing... We don't, it doesn't need to be documented anywhere. But, um, what I noted is that they were doing this regardless of who they were seeing, right? They would have these little stickers on-

00:25:49,156 --> 00:25:49,296 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:25:49,296 --> 00:26:03,276 [Joe Ball]

... and their lan- rainbow lanyards. And over this long period of time, I realised that this is gonna be a safe place to be who I am, and there was this moment where after my daughter was born, and you want to do the skin-to-skin contact.

00:26:03,276 --> 00:26:03,466 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:26:03,466 --> 00:26:15,556 [Joe Ball]

And because I knew that people to some level had had some training in LGBTQIA+, it was gonna be okay for me to unbutton shirt and show my very visible top surgery scars-

00:26:15,556 --> 00:26:15,896 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm

00:26:15,896 --> 00:26:17,916 [Joe Ball]

... on my chest and hold my baby-

00:26:17,916 --> 00:26:18,056 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm

00:26:18,056 --> 00:26:18,956 [Joe Ball]

... to my chest.

00:26:18,956 --> 00:26:20,196 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:26:20,196 --> 00:26:35,916 [Joe Ball]

And, like that was an incredible moment in my life, and I, I, I don't know if I hadn't seen all those stickers over that period of time, whether I would've felt as comfortable or maybe whether I would've actually done that thing, which was actually just so incredible, you know, for me. Like, so important for me-



00:26:35,916 --> 00:26:36,046 [Micaela Cronin]

Oh

00:26:36,046 --> 00:26:42,386 [Joe Ball]

... to be able to hold, do skin-to-skin contact. And so like I, but that, that, that's an example why inclusion matters, right? Like that's-

00:26:42,386 --> 00:26:42,496 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah, yeah

00:26:42,496 --> 00:26:46,776 [Joe Ball]

... like, and that you can't always see the person in the room who needs you to do the, do the thing.

00:26:46,776 --> 00:26:47,316 [Micaela Cronin]

No.

00:26:47,316 --> 00:26:52,736 [Joe Ball]

Which is like have a little tiny... I mean, these stickers were really little, but for me they just shone out from their badges.

00:26:52,736 --> 00:27:10,736 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah. It does, 'cause those moments mean so much, Jo. I'm so glad you were able to have that 'cause you can, and you can never take that away. But it, being able to, again, that's a bit of a theme, right? About the capacity to create safe spaces and for people to be seen.

00:27:10,736 --> 00:27:22,716 [Joe Ball]

So then my baby, you know, shortly after she was born, Rosa, she, uh, was rushed off to NICU and, um, I went with her, which is, you know, if anyone's had the experience, they know that the parents get divided.

00:27:22,716 --> 00:27:22,896 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:27:22,896 --> 00:27:52,176 [Joe Ball]

Um, and my partner, um, needed to have a range of things happen that because of her traumatic birth, and I went with my child, Rosa, and went up to NICU and spent the, uh, like the hours and hours, like holding her hand. But, but one of the things that happened to me during this time before my partner came up is I went to this room that was like the breakout, uh, break room for parents. And I went into this room, and there was lots of books in there, and it's just a place you can chill out, and I just like broke down and hysterically cried.

00:27:52,176 --> 00:27:52,256 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:27:52,256 --> 00:27:56,556 [Joe Ball]

'Cause I, I mean, I, to be clear, I thought that my partner and my baby were gonna die-

00:27:56,556 --> 00:27:57,016 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm

00:27:57,016 --> 00:28:16,846 [Joe Ball]

... at a certain point. And so, and I'd held it all together, and when I realised that they weren't gonna die, I went into this room and really sobbed my heart out. But then this man came forward, and he just said, "Oh, you're having a really hard time, aren't you?" And I said, "Yeah, I am. I am." And I was just like crying, crying. And he was just like, that crying that you just can't help, you know?



00:28:16,846 --> 00:28:16,906 [Micaela Cronin]

Oh, yeah.

00:28:16,906 --> 00:28:18,286 [Joe Ball]

It's just so guttural.

00:28:18,286 --> 00:28:18,316 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:28:18,316 --> 00:28:45,076 [Joe Ball]

And he just sat with me, and he talked to me. And he just said like, "Tell me what happened." And we had this most amazing conversation, and it's, it is... He just sat with me while I cried and went through it with, like went through it with me, and showed up with me, this absolute stranger. He was not a worker at the hospital. He was another dad who had a child in NICU, but he just was so present with me, and it is the most incredible experience I've had with another man in my whole entire life-

00:28:45,076 --> 00:28:45,276 [Micaela Cronin]

Wow

00:28:45,276 --> 00:29:00,816 [Joe Ball]

... about how he could sit with me in a moment of grief and hold me, and just in such uncomfortability. And I, what I want to say is I think he was, that was, that was not a, that was not weakness. That was extreme strength.

00:29:00,816 --> 00:29:01,156 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:29:01,156 --> 00:29:06,476 [Joe Ball]

And that was a beautiful, strong, courageous masculinity.

00:29:06,476 --> 00:29:07,556 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:29:07,556 --> 00:29:09,235 [Joe Ball]

To sit with someone like that-

00:29:09,235 --> 00:29:09,436 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:29:09,436 --> 00:29:18,266 [Joe Ball]

... that is, that is the kind of brave, positive masculinity that, that, that is not easy. It is hard masculinity.

00:29:18,266 --> 00:29:18,276 [Micaela Cronin]

No.

00:29:18,276 --> 00:29:23,276 [Joe Ball]

And he did it, and, and I want more men to be like... I, I wanna be more like him, [laughs] you know? And I-

00:29:23,276 --> 00:29:23,296 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:29:23,296 --> 00:29:24,776 [Joe Ball]

He's a ro- he's a role model.

00:29:24,776 --> 00:29:25,416 [Micaela Cronin]



Yeah.

00:29:25,416 --> 00:29:25,626 [Joe Ball]

Yeah.

00:29:25,626 --> 00:29:44,176 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah. That's such a powerful story and experience, Jo, and I think that that description of strength and grace, I mean, most of us have had some exper- I- experience, nothing quite like that about needing to sit with, to be able to sit alongside someone is, takes enormous courage.

00:29:44,176 --> 00:29:48,476 [Joe Ball]

Totally, and he was not trying to... He wasn't trying to say like, "You should do this, bro."

00:29:48,476 --> 00:29:48,486 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:29:48,486 --> 00:29:49,356 [Joe Ball]

"You should do that, bro."

00:29:49,356 --> 00:29:49,776 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah, yeah.

00:29:49,776 --> 00:29:52,146 [Joe Ball]

He was literally just like, "Tell me more about that."

00:29:52,146 --> 00:29:52,176 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:29:52,176 --> 00:30:03,916 [Joe Ball]

And he just said, and I remember him just saying things like, "That sounds really hard." And, and at some point I turned the conversation back [laughs] and I said like, "Tell me about your experience." And lo and behold, he's a social worker.

00:30:03,916 --> 00:30:04,316 [Micaela Cronin]

[laughs]

00:30:04,316 --> 00:30:05,946 [Joe Ball]

Um, but he wasn't on shift.

00:30:05,946 --> 00:30:05,956 [Micaela Cronin]

No, no.

00:30:05,956 --> 00:30:07,086 [Joe Ball]

He was absolutely not on shift.

00:30:07,086 --> 00:30:07,096 [Micaela Cronin]

No.

00:30:07,096 --> 00:30:08,676 [Joe Ball]

You know, he was there with this child-

00:30:08,676 --> 00:30:09,376 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:30:09,376 --> 00:30:20,556 [Joe Ball]



... who had Down syndrome and, um, was from Tasmania. I, I found out that I didn't really know that a lot of Down syndrome kids from Tasmania, um, end up getting supported through the Royal Women's Hospital in Melbourne.

00:30:20,556 --> 00:30:20,616 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:30:20,616 --> 00:30:25,176 [Joe Ball]

And so he was there, and he was on a really long journey. Like, his child was having heart surgery.

00:30:25,176 --> 00:30:26,256 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:30:26,256 --> 00:30:33,136 [Joe Ball]

You know, and he, and he was not in a easy place. So this is what I mean about the courage of his masculinity.

00:30:33,136 --> 00:30:33,576 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah, yeah.

00:30:33,576 --> 00:30:36,316 [Joe Ball]

He was not in an easy place himself.

00:30:36,316 --> 00:30:36,406 [Micaela Cronin]

No.

00:30:36,406 --> 00:30:46,016 [Joe Ball]

And he put himself there with me and, and asked really nothing of me, and I, and I just thought, "Wow, how do we teach men and boys to do this?" You know? Like, and-

00:30:46,016 --> 00:30:46,596 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:30:46,596 --> 00:30:52,906 [Joe Ball]

... and, and, and, and that's what I, I, I think about him, which is when I, when I started talking about bringing people into the room, I'd bring, bring him with me.

00:30:52,906 --> 00:30:52,976 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:30:52,976 --> 00:30:53,546 [Joe Ball]

Like, you know?

00:30:53,546 --> 00:30:53,576 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:30:53,576 --> 00:31:14,132 [Joe Ball]

And how do we teach men and boys to feel like-That's a heroic moment. A heroic moment is when you- isn't when you hold all your feelings in and go and punch a wall, right? That's not, that, that, that might be a response that you have that you feel is uncontrollable, but, you know, the hero's journey, like, is a man who can do what that man did or something similar.

00:31:14,132 --> 00:31:14,192 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.



00:31:14,192 --> 00:31:17,982 [Joe Ball]

You know? And I wanna make that, I wanna make that normal [laughs] you know?

00:31:17,982 --> 00:31:17,992 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:31:17,992 --> 00:31:22,372 [Joe Ball]

Like, I, I want my daughter to have men like him around, you know?

00:31:22,372 --> 00:31:22,632 [Micaela Cronin]

Yes.

00:31:22,632 --> 00:31:30,952 [Joe Ball]

Like, that's ... I want, uh, I want men like that around. I think other men want other men like that around. Like, I, I think this is something-

00:31:30,952 --> 00:31:30,962 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:31:30,962 --> 00:31:34,432 [Joe Ball]

... that if we could make more normal, it would be great for all of us.

00:31:34,432 --> 00:31:38,882 [Micaela Cronin]

It certainly would. It would s- it certainly would make a huge difference, wouldn't it? I mean, in, in all-

00:31:38,882 --> 00:31:38,882 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:31:38,882 --> 00:31:58,522 [Micaela Cronin]

... in all of those moments. And, and look, I think that's where, if I can, if I can draw this back then to, in May, we've had both International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Sexual Discrimination and Transphobia, or, or IDAHOBIT Day, as well as LGBTQ DV, Domestic Violence-

00:31:58,522 --> 00:31:58,552 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:31:58,552 --> 00:31:59,972 [Micaela Cronin]

... Awareness Day. So we've-

00:31:59,972 --> 00:31:59,982 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:31:59,982 --> 00:32:02,852 [Micaela Cronin]

... a- and those are moments to do exactly that, right? To-

00:32:02,852 --> 00:32:02,912 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:32:02,912 --> 00:32:53,292 [Micaela Cronin]

... to show up and pay attention, and learning what it is that you might need to do to create the safety like you have created this safety. That's what these awareness days are about, about thinking about that. And we know, so La Trobe University's National Private Lives 3 survey was run in 2019, and that focused on health and wellbeing, um, of LGBTIQ+ people. And we know that from those surveys and, and other surveys that there's very high proportion of respondents, so fif- 49% in that survey said that they had experienced sexual assault. 60% had ever had any experiences of violence, had had experiences of



violence from an intimate partner, which is well above the population average. So we know that this is a community in which violence does occur, and we need to, to be-

00:32:53,292 --> 00:32:53,302 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:32:53,302 --> 00:33:06,571 [Micaela Cronin]

... more aware of and create spaces to talk about that. Can you talk a bit about what's unique about domestic, family, and sexual violence issues? What are the unique issues emerging in the community that you think are the most important to be highlighting?

00:33:06,652 --> 00:33:16,392 [Joe Ball]

Yeah, I mean, I, I think that, you know, in the case of, I mean, predominantly, I think it still is when it's, uh, physical violence, it's men's violence against m- it's still men's violence.

00:33:16,392 --> 00:33:16,402 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:33:16,402 --> 00:33:17,832 [Joe Ball]

So it's men's violence against men.

00:33:17,832 --> 00:33:18,332 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:33:18,332 --> 00:33:28,652 [Joe Ball]

Uh, men's violence against their bisexual female partner, um, or is it a, maybe a bisexual man into female partner. There's still a lot of men's violence, and I think that's worth saying as well.

00:33:28,652 --> 00:33:28,701 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:33:28,701 --> 00:33:56,692 [Joe Ball]

Um, and s- sometimes in, uh, who's the perpetrator in the family violence can often be, you know, the father as well against their, uh, LGBTIQ+ young person. So I think there's still a lot of men's violence, and that's worth saying. And I, and, but I, but I also think that there is recognizing that there's also intimate partner violence that comes from other genders and from woman to woman and o- other non-binary and, you know, it's, it's not just men's violence.

00:33:56,692 --> 00:33:57,152 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:33:57,152 --> 00:34:13,362 [Joe Ball]

So I think people need to understand, like, the complexity of it and, and often that I think people understand that, like, when the police come to the house, sometimes the blunt instrument of the training in the family violence sector doesn't help the police understand, or the first responders understand, what they need to do.

00:34:13,362 --> 00:34:13,912 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm-hmm.

00:34:13,912 --> 00:34:27,772 [Joe Ball]

For example, you know, like, if you think you're attending a domestic violence situation and you turn up and it's two men, that doesn't make it any less safe. It like, it does, you know, and sometimes it can be like, oh, well, it's two men. They, they, they can sort of fend for themselves-



00:34:27,772 --> 00:34:27,782 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm

00:34:27,782 --> 00:34:28,302 [Joe Ball]

... if you like.

00:34:28,302 --> 00:34:28,572 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:34:28,572 --> 00:34:32,752 [Joe Ball]

But also, like, you gotta remember there's two men, don't forget to ask if there's children.

00:34:32,752 --> 00:34:32,822 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:34:32,822 --> 00:34:37,752 [Joe Ball]

You know? Don't assume there isn't children. Don't assume that the two women you're turning up to are flatmates-

00:34:37,752 --> 00:34:37,832 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:34:37,832 --> 00:34:57,952 [Joe Ball]

... or friends, you know? [laughs] Like, I think that there's challenges with the first responders that, um, and so that people don't necessarily get seen, victim survivors don't get seen, and they can often be seen as that it's, there can be biases that they're, a bias that go, that comes ahead of the risk assessment. You know, I think everyone deserves to have a risk as- you know, a thorough risk assessment done-

00:34:57,952 --> 00:34:57,962 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:34:57,962 --> 00:35:21,492 [Joe Ball]

... about whether their life is at risk and, um, whether they need refuge and whether they, what kind of support services they need and referrals they need. Sometimes a bias can come that the LGBTI people are less at risk, and that can be the bias in someone's mind when they show up. Oh, two women, oh, they're, you know, it's probably not gonna be life-threatening. Men's violence against men, it's probably not gonna be life-threatening. And, and, and I do hear services say-

00:35:21,492 --> 00:35:21,502 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:35:21,502 --> 00:35:29,012 [Joe Ball]

... for example, that they think, they've just outright said to me that they think they have got to prioritise women and girls.

00:35:29,012 --> 00:35:30,212 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:35:30,212 --> 00:35:34,582 [Joe Ball]

And, um, I mean, when I say a lot of the time kids aren't even in the frame, right? Like, sometimes it's just like-

00:35:34,582 --> 00:35:34,582 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah



00:35:34,582 --> 00:35:59,632 [Joe Ball]

... they need to prioritise women. And I understand that except for that we should come at this work with, like, an open mind to risk. Otherwise, a- and, and, and sometimes it might be, like, uh... and then overwhelmingly still the cases are just numerically going to be, uh, you know, a heterosexual cisgender couple, male violence against women. They're going to be because numerically what's out there in the world.

00:35:59,632 --> 00:36:00,452 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:36:00,452 --> 00:36:20,672 [Joe Ball]

Um, but we've gotta try and see the victim survivor, whoever they are, whether they're LGBTIQA+, whether they're Aboriginal, whether migrant background, we've gotta see them as the person that they are and try and park those assumptions, because otherwise, if we don't see people in those situations and we rely on assumptions, those assumptions can be life-threatening.

00:36:20,732 --> 00:36:23,631 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm. Absolutely. Absolutely they are.

00:36:23,632 --> 00:36:23,652 [Joe Ball]

So that-

00:36:23,652 --> 00:36:36,512 [Micaela Cronin]

And that, I, I think that's a really key point, Joe. Those, the, the, th- the impact of biases so that when people don't see the, the risk that's really there, um, and what we need to do about that.

00:36:36,512 --> 00:36:36,652 [Joe Ball]

Mm.

00:36:36,652 --> 00:36:59,191 [Micaela Cronin]

Joe, one of the reasons I started doing this podcast was really about getting pointy about being hopeful that we can achieve this, right? That we can, that we have seen as, as we- you've already kind of alluded to other campaigns where, you know, we have turned things around in a way that community didn't believe was gonna be possible. So-

00:36:59,192 --> 00:36:59,652 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:36:59,652 --> 00:37:06,123 [Micaela Cronin]

... and I, and I worry a bit that we don't-believe that we can end domestic, family, and sexual violence.

00:37:06,124 --> 00:37:06,354 [Joe Ball]

Mm.

00:37:06,354 --> 00:37:32,363 [Micaela Cronin]

And, and when I say end, one of the things that I've been borrowing from the homelessness sector is to describe ending domestic, family, and sexual violence is for us to get to the point where it is rare, brief, and non-recurrent. Those things are measurable, and we can ach- they're achievable, and we need to believe that that's possible to get there. So what is it, what is it that gives you hope? Where, where are you seeing things that give you hope that we can end violence?

00:37:32,364 --> 00:37:41,324 [Joe Ball]

I think where there are instances, you know, I believe that, you know, there's no crystal balls. We can't see the future, but we, but we can look to history, and it's the best predictor of the future.



00:37:41,324 --> 00:37:41,984 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:37:41,984 --> 00:37:56,214 [Joe Ball]

And it tells us that things can change and that things can be cyclic as well. [laughs] I mean, recently, you know, I was actually visiting, I was reminded of how things can be changed when we change the social conditions around people. You know, like, like infanticide used to be a lot higher, right?

00:37:56,214 --> 00:37:56,244 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:37:56,244 --> 00:37:59,384 [Joe Ball]

Li- um, and women would go to prison for infanticide.

00:37:59,384 --> 00:37:59,644 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm.

00:37:59,644 --> 00:38:06,774 [Joe Ball]

Because they would kill their child, uh, out of wedlock, um, because they knew the child would be removed, or they wouldn't be able to look after the child.

00:38:06,774 --> 00:38:06,824 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:38:06,824 --> 00:38:10,344 [Joe Ball]

I was reminded of this 'cause I went to Old Dubbo Gaol in New South Wales.

00:38:10,344 --> 00:38:10,474 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:38:10,474 --> 00:38:15,924 [Joe Ball]

And looking at the female prisoners who were held in that jail, a lot of them were there for infanticide.

00:38:15,924 --> 00:38:16,643 [Micaela Cronin]

Oh, wow.

00:38:16,644 --> 00:38:20,644 [Joe Ball]

And I, and I, and I f- and I was, like, looking at this, and I was thinking, "We have changed that."

00:38:20,644 --> 00:38:20,944 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:38:20,944 --> 00:38:33,944 [Joe Ball]

Like, where w- the way we treat single mothers, um, the supports we give them with the welfare, the welfare, the, the fact there's been these whole advocacy groups of- for single mothers. You know, we don't send people off to [laughs] convents.

00:38:33,944 --> 00:38:34,324 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:38:34,324 --> 00:38:41,984 [Joe Ball]

Um, we don't remove their children. Not in all instances. I mean, I know that's a complicated thing to say in a certain space 'cause there are, there is still child removal. Um-

00:38:41,984 --> 00:38:42,504 [Micaela Cronin]



Yeah, yeah. That is-

00:38:42,504 --> 00:38:44,744 [Joe Ball]

But I think it's not what it was.

00:38:44,744 --> 00:38:44,944 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah, yeah.

00:38:44,944 --> 00:38:53,284 [Joe Ball]

And so that's a really grim story I've told, but what it tells you is that something very grim, something that seemed just, like, part of the fabric of society-

00:38:53,284 --> 00:38:53,294 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm

00:38:53,294 --> 00:39:07,854 [Joe Ball]

... that, um, unwed mothers, you know, it was a, uh, if you became pregnant out of wedlock, it was pretty dark. You know, you would think there was no future, that y- you had to, you are going to be, uh, sort of persecuted yourself or, you know, you're gonna have to do-

00:39:07,854 --> 00:39:07,854 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:39:07,854 --> 00:39:12,984 [Joe Ball]

... terrible things to get by. And we've turned that around by changing the social conditions around people.

00:39:12,984 --> 00:39:13,064 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:39:13,064 --> 00:39:29,964 [Joe Ball]

And so I think if we can do something like that that seemed impossible or, or just part of the fabric of society, we can do it again around this. We can, we can create a world where we change the social fabric, change the relationships between people, and see it as an absolute anomaly that is, that is not

00:39:31,024 --> 00:39:50,724 [Joe Ball]

the sheer numbers that we see, that women are being killed and, and every week in Australia. Like, I, I do believe it, and so that's the history. History always points to me. I always go there and, and look f- and look for that change. I also think that the, that I, all the time, one of the most inspiring things I ever hear men say is, "I'm stopping the violence in my time."

00:39:50,724 --> 00:39:51,204 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:39:51,204 --> 00:39:54,844 [Joe Ball]

I love to hear that. Like, when I, you know, Connor Powell's a good champion for this.

00:39:54,844 --> 00:39:54,964 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:39:54,964 --> 00:40:05,754 [Joe Ball]

And, you know, he gets up and he says, "I'm sto-" You know, as a survivor himself, uh, he gets up and saying, "Violence stops with me." And I mean, talking about male heroes, like, what a heroic thing to do.

00:40:05,754 --> 00:40:05,754 [Micaela Cronin]

Oh, yes.



00:40:05,754 --> 00:40:18,204 [Joe Ball]

"I'm making the violence stop with me, even though I have every reason to, you know, be" ... These people have every reason to be, to have unresolved issues that can play out. The bravery and their courage is to say, "No, it stops here."

00:40:18,204 --> 00:40:18,304 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:40:18,304 --> 00:40:27,104 [Joe Ball]

"It stops at my generation, and I'm not passing it on." And so I, I, they're the two things in this space that I think really get me through.

00:40:27,104 --> 00:40:28,104 [Micaela Cronin]

That's incredibly-

00:40:28,104 --> 00:40:28,294 [Joe Ball]

That's-

00:40:28,294 --> 00:40:33,584 [Micaela Cronin]

That's incredibly powerful, and what a lovely note to finish on, Joe. I think the,

00:40:34,784 --> 00:40:41,754 [Micaela Cronin]

the hope is in the hi- in the history of what we ha- where we have made really dramatic transformations through things-

00:40:41,754 --> 00:40:41,754 [Joe Ball]

Mm

00:40:41,754 --> 00:41:12,804 [Micaela Cronin]

... that were, that were absolutely achievable and that there are things that we could make choices today that would change, the things that we now completely take for granted, is a really good reminder and, and the heroes that, that are around us right now who are already stepping up and doing this work. And, and Joe, I think you're one of those. I've seen you step into rooms and speak like that, and, um, we are very lucky to have you in this role, and I really look forward to more conversations.

00:41:12,804 --> 00:41:19,304 [Joe Ball]

Yeah, well, thank you for having me, and of course, we do this together. I just see that you, me, Michela, we're, we're in this together.

00:41:19,304 --> 00:41:19,313 [Micaela Cronin]

Yes.

00:41:19,313 --> 00:41:24,644 [Joe Ball]

We really are, and, like, thank you for all you're doing. We, we can't do it without each other.

00:41:24,644 --> 00:41:29,044 [Micaela Cronin]

No, completely agree. We're all, it's a, it's a joint, it's a, it's a joint project.

00:41:29,044 --> 00:41:29,064 [Joe Ball]

Mm.

00:41:29,064 --> 00:41:33,784 [Micaela Cronin]

None of us do this alone. Thank you so much for joining me today on the podcast, Joe.



00:41:33,784 --> 00:41:35,104 [Joe Ball]

Absolute pleasure. Thank you.

00:41:39,024 --> 00:41:40,984 [Joe Ball]

[outro music]

00:41:40,984 --> 00:42:39,544 [Female Voiceover]

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[End transcript]