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THE PROJECT TO END
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Using Nudges to Engage and
Mobilize Men for Violence
Prevention and the Advancement
of Gender Equality, Diversity,
Justice, and Inclusion:
Rapid Evidence Review**

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Author's Note

We, the authors, would like to take this opportunity to situate ourselves in relation to this research and flag some of the tensions that we continue to navigate as feminists working to advance gender and social justice. First, we are white settlers, trained in the Western scientific tradition, with extensive experience working with feminist issues from an intersectional perspective. Each of us has over a decade of experience working directly with men in the areas of violence prevention and gender equality. Based on our experience, we firmly believe that gender and social inequality is inextricably linked with rates of male violence against all genders and our interventions must focus on all forms of violence to stop violence before it starts.

We are also white feminists committed to advancing racial justice and are on an ongoing journey to understand and learn more about where and how we can be most useful in this work. At Shift, we have been integrating approaches that aim to call *in* rather than *out*, while also reflecting on our own practices and building creative and innovative skills, so that we can maximize our capacity to hold people accountable in ways that generate healing, recovery, repair, and prosocial change. We believe it is imperative to ask hard questions and think strategically about what is and is not working in efforts to achieve social change across anti-violence, gender equality, and justice, diversity, and inclusion fields so that we can build momentum for bigger and more impactful movements.

In completing this review, our methods and analysis used an intersectional approach which allowed us to clearly see the dearth of research on strategies to engage and mobilize men at the intersections of gender equality, violence prevention, and advancing equity, diversity, justice, and inclusion. We worked diligently to name and map the ways in which these gaps need to be addressed, but we recognize that our analysis may have shortcomings as we continue the process of learning and unlearning in relation to our own positionality and context in this work. We welcome those who want to call us *in* so that we may continue to make our work stronger, more relevant, and more impactful across a wider audience.

In solidarity,
Laura, Lana, and Elena

Executive Summary

CallinMen: Mobilizing More Men for Violence Prevention and Gender Equality in Canada is a knowledge synthesis research project led by Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence, a primary research hub with the goal to stop violence before it starts. Shift is based out of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary (Shift/UCalgary). As part of the *CallinMen* project, nine rapid evidence reviews were conducted on evidence-informed *primary prevention* approaches to engage and mobilize men to prevent and disrupt violence and inequalities, with the goal to share these findings with those funding and working with men and male-identified people to prevent violence and advance equity. To support and advance work to engage and mobilize men, both well-known and emergent approaches that show promise in engaging and mobilizing men were identified for review. This review synthesizes available evidence on using nudges to prevent violence and advance equity.

Definition of a nudge approach: Nudge theory starts from the recognition that no design is “neutral” in the contexts in which people work, live, play, and socialize, and that small and seemingly unimportant details within our environment can heavily influence human behaviour. A nudge can be defined as a means of encouraging or guiding behaviour in a predictable way without mandating or forbidding any options—for example, putting fruit at eye level in the grocery store would be considered a nudge, while banning junk food would not.¹ This is also called “choice architecture.”

Equity and inclusive nudges seek to provide positive reinforcement and indirect suggestions which stop the less-than-helpful (or downright harmful) biases present in our minds from driving our behaviour and help us develop more inclusive mental shortcuts to rely on.

There are four main types of nudges:

1. Physical environment nudges: Nudges that change design features in a physical environment.
 - a. Example: Lighting at bus stops to deter violence.
2. Organizational environment nudges: Nudges that target organizational processes, structures, policies, procedures, and guidelines.
 - a. Example: Blinding recruitment procedures so that an individual’s race, gender, or other attributes do not trigger unconscious bias in the hiring process.
3. Symbolic environment nudges: Nudges that focus on any visual or audio marker that is associated with something else (an abstract idea, a process, an object, etc.), such as uniforms, graphics, logos, or a fire alarm. Text and language are also symbolic, and so framing nudges are included in this category, with the focus on changing the words used and the way communication is framed.
 - a. Example: Assess the framing, language, and images on a police service recruiting website from an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens for gender-coded language (<http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/>), hypermasculine images and text, and diversity.²

4. Sociocultural environment nudges, or social nudges: Focus on targeting and influencing social norms and group dynamics and subtle cues that come from the way people interact and behave. Social norms (including bias) are often the core target of nudge interventions.
 - a. Example: Like a social norms approach, obtaining real data from men in a particular community/social network about their attitudes about violence against women (e.g., most do not condone violence against women), and then sharing these actual attitudes in a public way (marketing campaign) in order to nudge men to shift towards a more non-violent, gender equitable norm. In cases where people’s beliefs and the social norms *are* aligned, a social norms approach would focus on disrupting harmful norms and leveraging key influencers to promote adoption of more prosocial norms.

What does the evidence say?

Nudge interventions show promise for positively changing beliefs, behaviours, and shows potential for positively changing systems and social norms. Our review found evidence to support the testing of nudge interventions to advance gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion among populations that include men, and specifically as a way to engage and mobilize men.

Five studies were included in this review, with two of those studies taking place in Canada^{3 4} (both at University of Toronto, focused on student retention and success). There was *no evidence available* on the impact of nudge interventions on violence prevention, or on the impact of implementing a nudge intervention specifically to engage and mobilize men for violence prevention and/or advancing gender equality, justice, diversity, and/or inclusion. Overall, nudges are a low-cost, often “low hanging fruit” option that lead to positive and substantive changes in beliefs and behaviours, and show potential for changing social and cultural norms.

Insights from research on nudges

The nudge approach minimizes defensiveness by working in a subtle way to shift beliefs and behaviours versus head-on awareness- or education-focused interventions that often create a boomerang effect. Examples of promising nudges include:

1. Organizational environmental nudges:
 - Information-sharing policy nudges—e.g., publish percentage of women in leadership positions in organization, or parental leave policies can inform consumers and prompt individuals and organizations to take action.
 - Process nudges—e.g., pre-commitment strategies that encourage people to commit in advance rather than focus on naming and shaming after the fact.
2. Symbolic and sociocultural nudges:
 - Framing nudges—changing/simplifying wording can significantly impact behaviour.
 - Nudges that target social norms—changing norms is central to VP/GE/JEDI efforts.
 - *Feel the need*/motivational nudges—helps people “*see and feel* the need for change (in the unconscious mind) and not when we rationally understand the need for change.”⁵ Storytelling is a powerful example.
 - Nudges via peer networks—we are heavily influenced by *who* communicates information.

1.0 Introduction

In 2020, Shift/UCalgary was awarded a research grant from Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) for a knowledge synthesis research project entitled *CallinMen: Mobilizing More Men for Violence Prevention and Gender Equality in Canada*. Little knowledge synthesis work has been done to date to increase understanding of what strategies and approaches meaningfully engage and mobilize men to prevent violence and advance gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion in Canada; this research fills that gap. Specifically, CallinMen advances the state of knowledge by identifying and reviewing the evidence base for key strategies and approaches that show promise in engaging and mobilizing men to prevent violence and advance gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion in Canada, and develops an evidence-informed “behaviour change toolbox” that consolidates these strategies and approaches.

Therefore, to identify and review promising approaches to engaging and mobilizing men to prevent violence and advance gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion, nine rapid evidence reviewsⁱ of the academic and grey literature were conductedⁱⁱ in 2021 with the goal to share these findings with those funding and working with men and male-identified people to prevent violence and advance equity. This document reports on the findings for how nudge approaches have been used with men to prevent violence and advance gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion.

It is important to note that this research project is focused on advancing *primary prevention* approaches, meaning that we are focused on identifying strategies that change the root causes which drive violence, discrimination, and gender inequality in order to prevent initial perpetration and victimization of violence, harassment, discrimination, and inequities⁶ In line with this focus, our research seeks to understand strategies and approaches that incubate and catalyze male-identified prosocial behaviours and systems that prevent violence, harassment, discrimination, and inequality before they begin.

The specific research questions that guided the current rapid evidence review were:

1. How has a nudge approach been applied to engage and mobilize men for violence prevention and/or to advance gender equality, justice, diversity, and/or inclusion?
2. Based on Question 1, what impact does a nudge approach have on behaviours and/or social norms and/or culture and/or systems?
3. What are the key strengths, challenges, gaps, and lessons learned from applying a nudge approach based on Questions 1 and 2, and how can this inform the application of nudge

ⁱ A rapid evidence reviews is a process that synthesizes knowledge through the steps of a systematic review, but components of the process are simplified or excluded in order to shorten the length of time required to complete the review. The process includes identifying specific research questions, searching for, accessing the most applicable and relevant sources of evidence, and synthesizing the evidence.

ⁱⁱ Rapid evidence reviews were conducted on: bystander approach, social norms approach, nudge approach, virtual reality, gamification, data science, fatherhood, calling in, and community justice.

approaches to engage and mobilize men in male-oriented settingsⁱⁱⁱ for the purposes of violence prevention and to advance gender equality, justice, diversity, and inclusion?

2.0 Methods

A rapid evidence synthesis/review (RES) was conducted in May 2021. RES is “a form of knowledge synthesis that follows the systematic review process, but components of the process are simplified or omitted to produce information in a timely manner.”⁷ The process includes identifying specific research questions, searching for and accessing most applicable and relevant sources of evidence, and synthesizing the evidence.

A systematic search strategy was performed using a combination of keywords. The first set was (“nudg*” or “choice architecture”) AND (“men or male or masculin* or dad or father) NOT (food or eating or diet or meals); the second set was (“nudg*” or “choice architecture”) AND (“gender-based violence” or “gender based violence” or GBV or “family violence” or “domestic violence” or “domestic abuse” or “intimate partner violence” or IPV or “violence against women” or VAW or rape or “sexual assault” or “sexual violence” or “sexual abuse” or “sexual harassment” or “sexual misconduct” or “gender equality” or “gender equity” or “gender justice” or “gender parity” or “gender transformative” or “bullying” or “alcohol” or “empathy” or “belonging” or “addiction” or “harm reduction” or justice or diversity or equity or inclusion or discrimination or “racism” or “anti-racis*” or antiracis* or Indigenous or “First Nations” or Inuit or Metis). Searches were conducted in the following academic databases: EBSCO (All databases, including Academic Search Complete, Academic Search Elite, and CINAHL Plus with Full Text), SCOPUS, ProQuest, and PubMed.

The following grey literature sources were also searched using the keyword “nudg*”: The Behavioural Insights Team website, BVA Nudge Unit’s website, DAWN Canada, The Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women and Children, RESOLVE: Research and Education for Solutions to Violence and Abuse, XY Online, Our Watch, Promundo, The Violence Research Centre Cambridge, Centre for Gender and Violence Research, Prevention Institute, National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children, METRAC (Metro Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children), Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW), CDC, UN Women, UNFPA, and CHANGE: Sexual and Reproductive health and rights for all.

Inclusion criteria:

Time frame: 2010-2021

Publication language: English.

Availability: Full text option only.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Settings** are environments (e.g., a sports setting like a hockey rink) and/or sociocultural environments (e.g., a peer network, a workplace), basically where people naturally congregate. We use the term “male-oriented” to specify the settings in which men often congregate, with or without folks of other genders (e.g., workplace, bars, sports venues, etc). Male-oriented means settings that are biased towards, dominated by, and/or designed for men (Male-oriented. *In Lexico powered by Oxford*. Retrieved from <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/male-oriented>).

Literature had to meet the following criteria:

- *Intervention type and target population:* Describe a nudge approach that has been implemented to prevent violence and/or advance gender equality, justice, diversity, and/or inclusion with a population that includes at least 30% men, aged 18 and over.
- *Evidence of impact:* Provide evidence on impact of nudge approach on behavioural and/or social norms and/or cultural and/or organizational and/or systems change.
- *Relevant literature:* Literature that provides any level of evidence around how nudge approach(es) are relevant/can be used but do not meet the above criteria (e.g., do not include men in target population, or do not describe details of the nudge approach) will be reviewed, separately, to inform the analysis and recommendations of the rapid review.

Literature that did not describe a nudge intervention, focused on areas outside of violence prevention and/or advancing gender equality, justice, diversity, and/or inclusion, and/or did not include at least 30% men in their target population were excluded. Additionally, due to the substantive literature in the following areas that was not relevant to the focus of this rapid review, literature focused on food, eating, or diet or focused on clinical settings (e.g., informed consent as it relates to medical law) *and* did not gender disaggregate their target population were excluded from this review.

Information was extracted in a standardized form, including the following: author, publication year, discipline (if available), type of resource/research, setting, region/country, definition and type of nudge(s) used, purpose of intervention, participant profile including gender disaggregation, length/duration of intervention, evidence of impact (including gender disaggregated, if available), evaluation measures, unexpected findings, and limitations.

3.0 Nudges: A brief overview

Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein first popularized the theory and concept of nudge in their 2009 book, *Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness*.⁸ Taking as their point of departure that there is no such thing as “neutral” design, and that many decisions, together, create the contexts in which people work, live, play, and socialize, Thaler and Sunstein use the term “choice architect” to describe “the responsibility for organizing the context in which people make decisions.”⁹ Thaler and Sunstein situate the concept of a “nudge” within this understanding of choice architecture, stating that “small and apparently insignificant details can have major impacts on people’s behaviour.”¹⁰ They define a nudge as “any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people’s behavior in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives,” noting that nudges must be “easy and cheap to avoid” and that they are not “mandates”—for example, putting fruit at eye level would be considered a nudge, while banning junk food would not.¹¹ David Halpern, author of *Inside the Nudge Unit*¹² and Chief Executive for the U.K. government’s Behavioural Insights Team, or “Nudge Unit,” defines a nudge as “essentially a means of encouraging or guiding behaviour, but without mandating or instructing, and ideally without the need for heavy financial incentives or sanctions” and that a nudge “stands in marked

contrast to an obligation; a strict requirement; or the use of force.”¹³

In making the case for the value and use of nudges, Thaler and Sunstein¹⁴ and Halpern¹⁵ argue that there is a false assumption that people always choose in their own best interests and make decisions logically and rationally. Thaler and Sunstein explain human fallibilities in decision making by describing the two systems of thinking the human brain is organized around: the Automatic System, and the Reflective System. The Automatic System is rapid, instinctive, uncontrolled, and powerful; it is the “autopilot” our brain is on when we drive home from the grocery store without having to think about. The Reflective System, in contrast, is much more deliberative, conscious, slow, and concentrated. It is the part of our brain that is utilized when we are making big life decisions (e.g., where should we live? What school should I go to?) or when asked a complicated math problem. The human brain uses the Automatic System to take mental shortcuts grounded in predictable patterns, such as anchoring, associations, comparisons, status quo bias, and being loss averse, in order to make easier and more efficient the thousands of decisions we each make daily. Nudge intervention seek to undermine and overcome the less-than-helpful (or downright harmful) biases embedded in the Automatic System, as well as often activating the Reflective System to assist in making more deliberative and thoughtful decisions.

The U.K. Behavioural Insight Team (BIT) produced two grey literature documents, the first in 2009 and the second in 2012, that provide additional guidance on elements of context that can be mobilized to influence human behaviour, or to “work with” human behaviour, rather than against it. They state that “approaches based on ‘changing contexts’—the environment within which we make decisions and respond to cues—have the potential to bring about significant changes in behaviour at relatively low cost.”¹⁶ They use the acronym “MINDSPACE” to describe “nine of the most robust (non-coercive) influences on our behaviour,” and further explain that some elements draw primarily on automatic effects on behaviour (e.g. N, D, S, P, A) while other elements activate reflective processing (e.g. M, I, C, E). Note that they describe these in relation to policy, but these are relevant and applicable to nudge interventions beyond policy.

- M= Messenger. (We are heavily influenced by who communicates information)
- I= Incentives. (Our responses to incentives are shaped by predictable mental shortcuts such as strongly avoiding losses)
- N= Norms. (We are strongly influenced by what others do)
- D= Defaults. (We “go with the flow” of pre-set options)
- S= Saliency. (Our attention is drawn to what is novel and seems relevant to us)
- P= Priming. (Our acts are often influenced by sub-conscious cues)
- A= Affect. (Our emotional associations can powerfully shape our actions)
- C= Commitments. (We seek to be consistent with our public promises, and reciprocate acts)
- E= Ego. (We act in ways that make us feel better about ourselves)¹⁷

In their follow up grey literature publication on nudges, the BIT team provide four evidence-informed principles for applying behavioural insights: EAST, or:

- E= Easy (e.g., make it easy for people to make the desired option, harnessing defaults, simplifying messages)
- A= Attractive (e.g., make it attractive by drawing attention, designing rewards)
- S= Social (e.g., make it social by showing that most people perform the desired behaviour; use the power of networks, and encouraging people to make commitments to others)
- T= Timely (e.g., make it timely by prompting people when they're most likely to be receptive).¹⁸

Tinna Nielsen and Lisa Kepinski, in their three-book series *Inclusive Nudges (For leaders, For motivating allies, and For talent selection in all organizations and communities)*,¹⁹ build on this previous work and their own extensive experience working to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion in organizations and communities to focus specifically on applying nudges to undermine unconscious bias and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. They argue that one of the biggest mistakes in attempting to make more inclusive organizations, communities, and systems is trying to “convince” people to change or join a movement. They state that “a body of research shows that the sequence of change is See-Feel-Change, not by knowing and rationally understanding the need for change.”²⁰ Nielsen and Kepinski explain that both nudging and inclusion nudges have the following commonalities:

- “Minimising the negative impact of the shortcuts
- Not relying on the conscious mind to drive change
- Not using rational arguments to convince people to change
- Making the desired behaviour automatic
- Align behaviour with self-interest and intent
- Not using threats or punishment
- Respecting freedom of choice
- Mostly low cost or no cost
- Nudging for the greater good”²¹

In their work, Nielsen and Kepinski describe three types of nudges that are included in their “Inclusion Nudge change approach,” which are used both separately and together:

1. **Motivational nudges** or *Feel the Need* nudges, are nudges that create change through helping people “*see and feel* the need for change (in the unconscious mind) and not when we rationally understand the need for change.”²²
2. **Framing nudges**, meaning changing the words used and the way communication is framed in order to change people’s perceptions or split-second judgements. “A body of research shows how our perceptions are influenced by hidden cues that trigger associations in our unconscious mind. When you change the cues, you can prime action and change perceptions of diversity as a ‘burden’ to be a ‘resource.’”²³
3. **Process nudges**, referring to designing processes “to ensure the ability in yourself and in others to do inclusion automatically in daily actions. Research has identified that behavioural and cultural change comes from making it effortless to do the new behaviour.”²⁴

In understanding where and how nudges can be applied, it is helpful to categorize nudges based on the environment the nudge is targeting. There is not one agreed upon way to categorize nudges in the literature; however, based on Shift’s previous work on nudge interventions, including Shift’s *Changing contexts: A framework for engaging male-oriented settings in gender equality and violence prevention*²⁵ as well as revisions based on Shift’s experience since that publication, nudges can be categorized in four ways:

1. **Physical environment nudges:** Nudges that change design features in a physical environment.
 - a. Example: Lighting at bus stops to deter violence.
2. **Organizational environment nudges:** Nudges that target organizational processes, structures, policies, procedures, and guidelines.
 - a. Example: Blinding recruitment procedures so that an individual’s race, gender, or other attributes do not trigger unconscious bias in the hiring process.
3. **Symbolic environment nudges:** Nudges that focus on any visual or audio marker that is associated with something else (an abstract idea, a process, an object, etc.), such as uniforms, graphics, logos, or a fire alarm. Text and language are also symbolic, and so framing nudges are included in this category, with the focus on changing the words used and the way communication is framed.
 - a. Example: Assess the framing, language, and images on a police service recruiting website from an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens for gender-coded language (<http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/>), hypermasculine images and text, and diversity.²⁶
4. **Sociocultural environment nudges, or social nudges:** Focus on targeting and influencing social norms and group dynamics and subtle cues that come from the way people interact and behave. Social norms (including bias) are often the core target of nudge interventions.
 - a. Example: Like a social norms approach, obtaining real data from men in a particular community/social network about their attitudes about violence against women (e.g., most do not condone violence against women), and then sharing these actual attitudes in a public way (marketing campaign) in order to nudge men to shift towards a more non-violent, gender equitable norm. In cases where people’s beliefs and the social norms *are* aligned, a social norms approach would focus on disrupting harmful norms and leveraging key influencers to promote adoption of more prosocial norms.

As will be seen in the review of the literature below, many nudges target more than one environment at the same time.

4.0 Results

4.1 Source characteristics

A total of 258 search results were initially identified in the academic literature. Following screening and full text analysis, five publications were included in the final assessment, while an additional

five publications relevant to the research questions were retained and used in analysis and recommendations. Grey literature sources were additionally searched; three relevant publications from the U.K.'s Behavioural Insight Team's website were identified through this process and are included in introduction and analysis and recommendation sections. Finally, one publication covering a nudge intervention is part of a larger nudge intervention project; the implementation report from the overall project was identified and is included as additional information for that study.

The five studies from academic literature that comprise the main findings of this review come from the following disciplines: Economics and economic behaviour²⁷; Public Policy and Behavioural Insights²⁸; Finance and Business Economics²⁹; Psychology³⁰; and Law.³¹ Studies were conducted in Canada³²; United States^{33 34}; the United Kingdom³⁵; and one study was a multi-country study, including the United States, Singapore, and China.³⁶ Although eligibility for inclusion in this review was open to any level of evidence and therefore research design, all five studies included employed randomized controlled trial (RCT) research designs.

Of critical note for this rapid evidence review, there were *no available studies* focusing on using a nudge approach for the purposes of specifically engaging and mobilize men for violence prevention and/or advancing gender equality, diversity, justice, and/or inclusion. Importantly, this means that no studies *specifically* targeted men for the purposes of mobilizing men as allies in violence prevention, gender equality, and/or justice, inclusion, and/or diversity, even though men were at least 30% of the target population of all studies, per inclusion criteria. The five studies that met the inclusion criteria focused on utilizing nudge approaches to address equity and/or diversity and/or inclusion, with one such study including gender (e.g., women) as an aspect of the diversity the study sought to increase.³⁷

4.2 Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram of studies included



4.3 Findings: How has a nudge approach been applied?

1. *How has a nudge approach been applied to engage and mobilize men for violence prevention and/or to advance gender equality, justice, diversity, and/or inclusion?*

4.3.1 How are nudges defined?

Only one of the five studies explicitly included a definition of nudges.³⁸ Williams describes nudging theory as exploring “strategies to yield desired behavior without explicitly telling a person what decision to make or what action to carry out”³⁹ and borrows Thaler and Sunstein’s definition for a nudge as “any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people’s behavior in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives.”⁴⁰ Two studies⁴¹⁴² only use the term “nudge” in the keywords, but not in the text of their articles, instead describing interventions as a “light touch behavioral intervention”⁴³ or as “interactive messages rooted in behavioral science principles.”⁴⁴ One study⁴⁵ also only uses the term “nudge” in the keywords, instead focusing on describing the strategy of their nudge approach (partitioning candidates), while the study on police recruitment⁴⁶ describe the study as testing the impact of a “low-cost nudge in police recruitment” and provide some detail on “priming”, the strategy of nudge they are

implementing, without explicitly describing priming as a strategy for nudges.

4.3.2 Settings

Two studies occurred in post-secondary educational settings focused on students; one study⁴⁷ was focused on increasing student reenrollment after the first year of college, particularly underrepresented populations, in STEM pathways via the use of personalized text messages; the other study⁴⁸ focused on increasing feelings of belonging and to help students feel more engaged and supported through a combination of personalized online and text-message coaching nudges.

The remaining three studies focused on increasing diversity and equity in recruitment, hiring, and promotion processes in public and private sector workplaces, although only one study took place in an actual workplace (U.K. police force); the other two were experimental designs that included hypothetical situations only. The U.K. police force study sought to increase success of racial minorities in the recruitment process of a U.K. police force⁴⁹; another study⁵⁰ sought to increase diversity by partitioning candidates based on different diversity attributes in hypothetical hiring processes; the final study⁵¹ sought to explore the possibility of increasing diversity and equity in the promotion process at a hypothetical law firm.

4.3.3 Participant profiles

Of the two studies targeting post-secondary students, one study⁵² included 3,395 first year economics university students at University of Toronto, 45% of whom were male. Forty-eight percent of total target population were international students, and 29% were first generation university students. The second study⁵³ targeted 2,759 first-year students, specifically STEM students, at three U.S. community colleges. 38% of students in the study identified as male, the majority of overall population was white (72%), and 17% were African American.

For the study focused on retention of applicants into a U.K. police force,⁵⁴ between 1500-1700 (exact number not provided in article) applicants were targeted, approximately 65% of whom were male, randomized at the individual level and stratified by racial category (white/non-white), as the goal of this nudge intervention was to increase the number of minority applicants who passed a test in the recruitment process that historically has led to a disproportionate drop in minority applicants. For the study testing partitioning candidates in hypothetical hiring processes,⁵⁵ the study consisted of a total eight studies across the U.S., Singapore, and China. U.S. participants included any adult U.S. resident, recruited through an online survey (studies ranged from 200-580 participants); in Singapore the target population was undergraduates, recruited through a paid student subject pool at a major university in Singapore (80-150 participants); and in China full-time HR professionals at a large state-owned petroleum and chemicals enterprise located in Beijing were recruited via an invitation letter (121 total participants). Each of the studies included at least 30% men (between 36%-49% male).

For the study testing a nudge to increase diversity and equity in the promotion process at a hypothetical law firm,⁵⁶ the study consisted of 182 white participants, as the goal was to increase the likelihood that white individuals would have positive views of diversity and promote a minority

candidate. Participants in this study ranged from 18 to 86 years, with an average age of 51, and 32% of all participants were male. Specifically, the participants were Stanford University alumni and parents of students as well as community college students from 33 U.S. states recruited via an online survey.

4.3.4 Details of nudge interventions

For the study focusing on testing the impact of partitioning candidates in order to nudge people to select more diverse candidates,⁵⁷ a total of eight studies were conducted across targeted groups in the U.S., Singapore, and China. Termed a “choice-architecture intervention” in the article, job candidates were partitioned by gender (Study 1), nationality (Study 2), or university (Study 3), and the subsequent studies tested the effect of partitioning through variations of these studies, such as testing the effect in different populations (e.g., HR professionals at a large state-owned petroleum and chemicals enterprise in China vs. university students in Singapore) or with additional variables, such as lowering the average competence of selected candidates, and only informing people that candidates belonged to different categories without partitioning.

For the study on two nudge interventions among students at the University of Toronto,⁵⁸ the goal was to test two “light-touch behavioral interventions” designed to help college students improve both academic and non-academic outcomes, including overall satisfaction, a sense of belonging, confidence, and reduce depression. The study included two treatment arms and a control group. For the first treatment group, these students completed a psychologically informed online module, called “Choose Your Own Challenge (CYOC),” which took 60 minutes to complete and allowed students to personalize what they got from the intervention based on their own academic and social needs. Specifically, the module “teaches students helpful academic behaviors while guiding them to reflect on, and then overcome, behavioral and psychological barriers to implementing those behaviors.”⁵⁹ For the second treatment group, student completed both the CYOC online module followed by a Follow-Up Text Message Coaching intervention, through which students in this group are “mentored by an upper-year undergraduate student coach who offers advice and consultation about students’ specific challenges via text message throughout the academic year.”⁶⁰ The nudges in this study can be categorized as both organizational, and specifically process nudges (e.g., changing/adding interactions with the organization, or school, they are attending) as well as sociocultural nudges, as nudges are designed to facilitate a sense of

In the study at community colleges in the U.S., the goal was to increase student reenrollment after the first year of college.⁶¹ First-year students over the summer were either nudged to reenroll in the next school term through text messages (twice per week) or did not receive any kind of intervention. Those who received the nudges (text messages) could respond and talk to the text messaging software (which was an actual person responding) which could offer them additional advice and support.

The nudge intervention with a U.K. police force sought to increase the number of minority applicants who passed a test (the Situational Judgement Test, or SJT) in the recruitment process that historically has led to a disproportionate drop in minority applicants.⁶² The SJT is a scenario-

based assessment test taken online that is meant to “capture how potential recruits would react to different realistic situations in which they may find themselves as a police officer.”⁶³ The nudge intervention specifically sought to improve performance among minority groups on the SJT by reducing anxiety. Half of the applicants included in this study got an email that was structured to reduce anxiety, framed positively with the aim to prime success, and had a question to make participants think about their presence/belonging in the police force. The other half of participants received emails that had more unnecessary words and phrases that could increase anxiety. Examples of changes in the intervention email: "Please note there is no appeals process for this stage" was removed to limit stress; "Congratulations!" and "Good luck" were added to make the email more positive; and, to get participants to think of their presence in the police force, they added, "Before you start the test, I'd like you to take some time to think about why you want to be a police constable."

The study testing a nudge intervention at a hypothetical law firm in the U.S. sought to increase diversity and equity in the promotion process, and specifically sought to test “whether the information processing, beliefs, and judgments of the participants were influenced by the racial composition of the committee to which they were accountable in the decision-making process.”⁶⁴ To test this, participants (who were all white) were randomly assigned to either the all-white committee or the diverse committee (consisted of one white, one Asian, and one African-American member). All participants were given a scenario about a promotion opportunity at a law firm with two candidates (one white, one African-American) to choose from. Both candidates were relatively equal in performance but the white candidate was favoured by one of the senior partners.

4.3.5 What types of nudges have been used?

Based on the categories of nudge interventions defined in the nudges overview section above, the studies included in this review employed the following nudges:

Organizational environment nudge: The study on partitioning candidates⁶⁵ is an organizational environment nudge, as it utilizes a process nudge (i.e., partitioning candidates) to reduce people’s unconscious biases during the hiring process.

Sociocultural environment nudge: The study⁶⁶ testing the impact of all-white vs. racially diverse committees on likelihood of promoting a minority candidate in a hypothetical law firm is primarily a sociocultural nudge, although it was the potential to also be an organizational environment nudge if it was implemented as an organizational change in a real law firm. For this intervention, the only nudge is changing the composition of who a participant (e.g., a white person on the promotion committee) believes themselves to be accountable to, thereby triggering participants’ desire to adhere to presumed social norms and group dynamics.

Sociocultural, symbolic, and organizational environment nudges: The remaining three studies nudge through a combination of the sociocultural environment, symbolic environment, and organizational environment. The study⁶⁷ testing the impact of a nudge intervention during the hiring

process in a U.K. police force, for example, primarily utilizes a symbolic environment nudge, adjusting the language (and framing) of emails, while also testing an organizational environment nudge (e.g., changing something in the process of recruitment and hiring). It also nudges the sociocultural environment by sending signals of belonging in order to cue minority applicants to feel a greater sense of group belonging, thereby allowing them to perform better on the SJT. The two studies^{68 69} targeting post-secondary students both nudge through the sociocultural environment, invoking a sense of peer connection (particularly the study⁷⁰ linking students to an older peer via the Follow-up Text Message Coaching) and connection to the overall “group” (i.e., college/university community), thereby changing the perception around whose responsibility it is to succeed from only an individual’s responsibility to responsibility that also includes the university providing support. These studies also utilize the symbolic environment to nudge (e.g., using supportive and positive written language to facilitate a sense of belonging and being supported). Both of these studies are also testing interventions that could become organizational practice; if implemented they could also be considered organizational environment nudges.

4.4 Findings: What impact does a nudge approach have?

2. *What impact does a nudge approach have on behaviours and/or social norms and/or culture and/or systems?*

Overall, the study⁷¹ on candidate partitioning found that the nudge of partitioning candidates can increase diversity in hiring without sacrificing quality of the recruitment process. For example, in Study 1 among U.S. residents, participants were asked to choose three out of eight candidates to hire in a hypothetical scenario. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: “In the gender partition condition, the eight candidates were sorted by their first names alphabetically (i.e., Daniel, Edwards, Frank, George, Karen, Linda, Michelle, and Nancy) such that the first four were men and the last four were women; in the no partition condition, all the eight candidates were listed in a random order.”⁷² This study found that participants in the gender partition condition scored significantly higher on the gender diversity index than those participants in the no partition condition. Based on their findings, the authors note that “partitioning candidates into different categories activates the diversification heuristic, the idea ‘let’s choose some of each,’ which mediates the effect of partitioning candidates on increased diversity of the selected candidates.”⁷³

The U.K. police force study⁷⁴ found that nudging applicants through a positively-framed and supportive email prior to the SJT had a positive and significant effect on minority applicants, with non-white applicants gaining 12 percentage points in their percentile ranking, and white applicants a two percentage point increase. As noted by the authors, “This simple intervention, imposing neither selection risks nor significant costs, managed to increase the probability that a non-white applicant passed the SJT by 50 per cent, closing the gap in pass rates between non-white and white applicants who reached this stage in the process. The results suggest that reduced anxiety and feeling more comfortable with one’s role in the community may be driving the results.”⁷⁵

In the study testing the effect of all-white vs racially diverse committees on white participants’ likelihood of having positive views of diversity and promoting a minority candidate, findings showed

that those who were assigned to the diverse committee "exhibited more positive beliefs toward diversity, were more likely to acknowledge subtle forms of bias, and were more likely to promote a minority candidate than participants assigned to an all-white committee" even though they were just merely anticipating to present their decision to a racially diverse committee" As the author notes, "*mere anticipation* of reporting to racially diverse peers yielded less biased beliefs and behaviors, without actual contact, meaningful interaction, or exposure to minority perspectives."⁷⁶

The study⁷⁷ at community colleges in the U.S. that sought to increase student reenrollment after the first year of college through a text-message nudge intervention found that receiving nudges improved reenrollment by seven percentage points compared with the control group rate of 62%, and those who received nudges reenrolling at a rate 10 percentage points higher than the control group rate of 58%. The implementation report⁷⁸ provided additional details relating to the impact of this intervention on students of colour, noting that 62% of students of color receiving the nudges persisted after their first semester, compared to 46% of those who opted out. The study also found that students who passively received the nudges without responding to the text messages reenrolled at nearly the same rate as the overall treatment effect, providing evidence that the nudge works in irrespective of recipient interaction with the nudge. It is important to note that this intervention included cultivating a sense of social belonging by combatting norms that "attached to that perceived social identity,"⁷⁹ for example by helping people normalize the adversity of college years as real but short-lived. This appeared to contribute to the intervention's effectiveness, but as they did not explicitly measure social norms, it is hard to gauge the impact of this intervention on social norms related to belonging. Still this intervention, as well as both the U.K. police force and the University of Toronto nudge interventions, use nudges to increase a sense of belonging among participants, suggesting that there is potential for social norms change through the use of nudges. Additionally, the implementation report provides this quote from a community college staff person: "Efforts like this remove the onus on students to take care of themselves, putting more on the institution...Nudging streamlines the opportunity to seek help. This is about a fundamental shift in higher education thinking that 'they'll just figure it out.'"⁸⁰

Interesting, the study on two nudge interventions among students at the University of Toronto⁸¹ aiming to improve both academic and non-academic outcomes found the least significant results, despite this intervention being arguably one of the most involved nudge interventions analyzed as part of this evidence review. Findings showed that neither intervention improved student's academic outcomes (specifically, grades or credit accumulation) but that the treatment including both the online module (CYOC) and the Follow-Up Text Message Coaching intervention increased students' sense of belonging and support at the university. The authors note that, "although the treatment effects we estimate are modest, we note that most students in the text-message coaching intervention report feeling supported by their coaches, appreciating their coach's messages, and feeling like they are doing better in university partly because of their coaches."⁸² Study findings also suggest that the Follow-Up Text Message Coaching nudge intervention was particularly helpful in positively affecting non-grade outcomes, noting that "descriptive evidence from the follow-up survey also demonstrates that nearly all students felt supported by their coaches and appreciated receiving text messages from them."⁸³

Examined together, this review found evidence to support the use of nudge interventions to advance gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion among populations that include men. There was no evidence available on the impact of nudge interventions on violence prevention, or on the impact of implementing a nudge intervention specifically to engage and mobilize men for violence prevention and/or advancing gender equality, justice, diversity, and/or inclusion.

4.5 Findings: What are the key strengths, challenges, gaps, and lessons learned from applying a nudge approach?

3. *What are the key strengths, challenges, gaps, and lessons learned from applying a nudge approach based on Questions 1 and 2, and how can this inform the application of nudge approaches to engage and mobilize men in male-oriented settings^{iv} for the purposes of violence prevention and to advance gender equality, justice, diversity, and inclusion?*

4.5.1 Key strengths and lessons learned

The studies reviewed reveal that nudges are being used to promote equity, diversity, justice, and inclusion, and that the evidence demonstrates positive impact on behaviours and potentially social norms. All five of the studies reviewed were well-designed randomized controlled trials, which provided clear explanation of what type of nudges were being tested, how they were implemented, how the impact of the nudges were being evaluated, and provided evidence that supports the use of nudge interventions to promote equity, diversity, justice, and inclusion.

For example, in the study on candidate partitioning, the authors note that they are the first to document “that partition dependence can be strategically used to help people make more unbiased choices when their baseline choices might be biased because of other reasons.”⁸⁴ The study among students at the University of Toronto⁸⁵ concluded that “light-touch behavioural interventions” should be used to increase student's sense of belonging and combat mental health issues even though there was no significant effect on grades, because there was value in improving students’ experiences in college beyond academic outcomes and considering treatment effects on non-academic outcomes such as belonging, satisfaction, confidence, and depression. These strengths not only suggest the power of nudges to create prosocial behavioural and social norm change, but speak to the possibilities of utilizing nudges to facilitate and cultivate less obvious but no less important social norms and group dynamics such as a sense of belonging and of community.

The studies reviewed also highlight the benefits of using a nudge intervention as a low-cost, often “low hanging fruit” option that can nevertheless produce positive and substantive behaviour and potentially social norm change as well. Furthermore, many of the nudge interventions reviewed

^{iv} **Settings** are physical environments (e.g., an office, a hockey rink) and/or sociocultural environments (e.g., a peer network, your team at work); we use the term “male-oriented” to specify the settings in which men often congregate, with or without folks of other genders (e.g., workplace, bars, sports venues, etc). Male-oriented means settings that are biased towards, dominated by, and/or designed for men (Male-oriented. *In Lexico powered by Oxford*. Retrieved from <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/male-oriented>).

have strong potential for being replicated in a number of different settings and contexts, such as the U.K. police force nudge study,⁸⁶ the partitioning candidate study,⁸⁷ and the racially diverse promotion committee study.⁸⁸

4.5.2 Challenges and gaps

No research could be found through this review that specifically sought to engage and mobilize men to prevent violence and/or advance gender equality, diversity, justice and/or inclusion. This is a key gap and speaks to the urgent need for funding towards and research in applying nudge interventions towards these aims.

While there are many strengths to a randomized controlled study, a potential drawback is that the intervention may only be tested, and either not fully implemented into the setting it was tested, or not translated from a hypothetical situation to a real world setting. Two of the studies, the one on partitioning candidates⁸⁹ and the one comparing all-white versus racially diverse promotion committees,⁹⁰ were experimental designs that included hypothetical situations only, so the study would need to be replicated in real world settings to build a stronger evidence base. The other three studies^{91 92 93} appear to be testing interventions only, and do not indicate whether the nudge was adopted and implemented in their respective settings after the study was completed. This makes it particularly challenging to track longer term impact of these nudge interventions, and to understand the full extent of change possible when a nudge intervention is institutionalized.

It is very useful to understand the mechanisms through which nudge interventions are successful, particularly when considering in what contexts and with what populations an intervention could be replicated. The study on candidate partitioning,⁹⁴ for example, did not look at salience of categories of the partitioning dependence as a mechanism for why their gender partitioning worked; they only looked at the diversification heuristic as a mechanism. Future research should look at other individual/situational factors that could limit the partition dependence besides gender stereotypes. Cognitive dissonance, or the “tendency to rationalize or modify evidence that does not support our choices”⁹⁵ is also a potential mechanism that could hinder or facilitate the effectiveness of nudge approaches, and may be an important point that research on nudging approaches to engaging men should closely examine. Additionally, this study only measures the impact of the nudge on the hiring process, and more research should look at the effect of the partition dependence in the later stages of the hiring process or in real world settings, where the hiring process is more extensive. Similarly, the U.K. police force study⁹⁶ only tested the impact of their nudge intervention within one police force and within one aspect of the hiring process; follow-up studies using bigger police force samples, including police force with greater racial tensions, as well as tracking the long-term impact of such a nudge intervention on overall recruitment, retention, and promotion with respect to increase equity, diversity, and inclusion within the police force would highly valuable.

For the study among students at the University of Toronto,⁹⁷ during that same year the researchers also partnered with the University of Toronto's St. George campus in Mississauga and an external for-profit company to send one-way text messages to students to see if student academic achievement and persistence would increase. The researchers were somewhat surprised that these

text-messages had a negative effect on student's success strategies. More research is needed to understand whether simply having *the option* to interact/respond to text messages leads to a positive impact, even if a student chooses not to do so.

Finally, at least a few of these interventions showed potential in changing or modifying social norms, particularly norms related to a sense of social belonging, but social norm change was not explicitly measured in any of these interventions. This is not uncommon, with those in the social norms research field noting the lag of social norms' measurement and the often vague explanations of what constitutes a norm, what type of norm is being targeted, as well as the challenges of how to efficiently measure social norms.^{98 99} Encouragingly, there is a growing body of resources that help to provide guidance on measuring social norms, which should be used for nudge interventions that seek to change social norms.^{100 101}

5.0 Recommendations

3.a How can the findings from this review inform the application of nudge approaches to engage and mobilize men in male-oriented settings?

Although the main findings of this review did not find any nudge interventions that specifically sought to engage and mobilize men for violence prevention and/or the advancement of gender equality, diversity, justice and/or inclusion, there was one example found in the grey literature that targeted men to advance gender equality, although not enough descriptive information on the nudges themselves were provided to be included in the main findings of this review. The BVA Nudge Unit, a global consultancy company,¹⁰² worked with the UN's HeforShe campaign on a nudge intervention with the goal to encourage 1 billion men globally to practice allyship in supporting gender equality. According to the BVA nudge website, more than 60 nudges were co-created with the HeForShe team, including “leveraging emotion via photography of members; increasing salience with locally relevant activities; providing easiness with showcasing the lack of financial or time commitment to register; and engaging social norms with the number of commitments and activities.”¹⁰³ BVA reported that, as a result of these nudge interventions, visitor registration rates for HeforShe improved from 2% to 22.5%. It is important to note, however, that committing to become an active ally in supporting gender equality significantly differs from *doing* allyship,¹⁰⁴ and so while the visibility of so many men being supportive of advancing gender equality may act as a positive nudge for other men to support gender equality—a value in and of itself, but not measured here—further research on the impact of the nudge intervention on concrete behaviours and actions taken by men who signed up as active allies is needed.

There is also much to learn in the available literature for possibilities for applying nudges to engage and mobilize men, and future directions for research. The following section presents additional relevant literature that was identified during the search and screening process of this review, specifically literature that explores the use of nudge interventions to advance gender equality, as well as literature that examines the impact of gender norms on the effectiveness of certain nudge interventions. This review then concludes by summarizing key types of nudges that emerged from the literature that show promise for engaging and mobilizing men and should be considered for

future research.

5.1 Nudges to advance gender equality in the legal profession

For example, one article¹⁰⁵ made the case for the use of a nudging approach in the legal profession to more systematically managing gender balance issues, including providing examples of three types of nudges being used at law firms during the hiring process to reduce gender gaps. The first example is the “encouragement nudge,” which is an email sent to those involved in the hiring process, primarily partners and associates, in advance of meeting a candidate. The email requests “their targeted feedback on specific skills the practice group seeks from the potential hire,” provides a reminder of the goal to recruit more women and how much the firm values women as employees, as well as requests the recipient to state how many women they have been working with over the last week and within the last month, and then to rank those women among the employees within their practice groups. As the author, Cecchi-Dimeglio, explains, “The idea behind targeted information-giving as a nudge is not to induce in-depth thinking, but for the message to act as a heuristic, a “rule of thumb.””¹⁰⁶

The second nudge Cecchi-Dimeglio¹⁰⁷ describes is a “structural nudge,” which is the process of law firms taking into account the “core competencies that the firm is seeking in employees and strives to close gender gaps in top ranks based on those core competencies.”¹⁰⁸ This is done through the process the law firm developing a clear list of criteria in advance, and then shaping interview questions around these core competencies, with a particular focus on evaluating core competencies through situational questions which, Cecchi-Dimeglio contends, “yields a high degree of job-relevant information about the applicant, eliminating guessing and the reliance on differences in gender stereotyping for both male and female applicants.”¹⁰⁹

The third and final nudge Cecchi-Dimeglio describes is the “altering-conditions nudge.” Here, interviewers assign independent ratings for each applicant, and rate specific applicants against set criteria before making their own judgments about whether or not to hire an applicant; they then are asked to decide whom to include, rather than exclude. This nudge however does not take into account the potential value in utilizing social norms, or candidate partitioning, and it could be interesting to compare uses of different nudges to see which proved most effective at reducing the gender imbalance in settings such as law firms.

5.2 Nudges for gender equality in policymaking

Another article,¹¹⁰ enticingly titled “Nudges for gender equality? What can behaviour change offer gender and politics?” analyses how behaviour change strategies, and particularly nudge approaches and their impact on social norms, can inform gender equality policymaking. The author, Waylen, notes that behaviour change strategies have “rarely promoted gender equality nudges or asked whether women and men might be affected differently by nudges.”¹¹¹ Waylen cites the example of the gender quota studies in India (which used the natural experiment of reserved seats for women in certain districts in India (a third of seats were randomly reserved for women from the mid-1990s) that found that this strategy had a significant impact on both women’s descriptive and substantive representation. Waylen also references an experimental study that used

a nudge to increase the number of women candidates for office in the U.S., specifically using a symbolic environment nudge (namely, a framing nudge) to word an email in a specific way that was found to increase the supply of and demand for women delegates to a state nominating convention in a Republican state. Importantly, the author argues that “most gender equality policies have relied not on nudges, but on formal rule changes forbidding certain actions, such as discrimination or unequal pay, implicitly assuming that adoption will be relatively straightforward” and that, because many of these have not been successful, “it is important to determine whether nudges can supplement formal rules and laws around gender equality when they fail to produce the desired changes, for example, by simplifying procedures to make it easier to report incidences of harassment and discrimination.”¹¹²

Waylen references Thaler and Sunstein as well as other evidence to make the following four key suggestions for nudges to advance gender equality through public and private policies: 1) disclosure, or information-sharing policy nudges (e.g., publish number of women in leadership positions in political parties), which can both inform the action of consumers as well as prompt organizations/companies/politicians to take action to avoid bad publicity; 2) pre-commitment strategies (particularly, the author notes, in place of naming and shaming strategies) that encourage people and organization to commit in advance to specific actions and timelines; 3) framing nudges, or “simplifying or altering the wording of communications” that can “impact significantly on behaviour”¹¹³; and 4) nudges that target social norms, as “utilising or changing norms is central to gender equality efforts,”¹¹⁴ although the author notes that descriptive norms (perception of what others do) are less challenging to change than injunctive norms (perception of what others think one should do). There appears to be strong crossover between sociocultural environment nudges, which seek to cue social norm, and social norms approaches, which will be reviewed in another rapid evidence review.

5.3 Nudges to promote gender diversity in the IT sector

An article focused in the information technology (IT) sector lays out a case for and an example of a nudging approach during the strategic sourcing of IT services in order to increase gender diversity (or reduce the gender gap) among IT suppliers sourced by U.S. corporations, noting that IT is a male-dominated field and it can be challenging for women and minorities to gain entry into the sourcing process.¹¹⁵ To improve gender diversity in the sourcing process, Atal et al. recommend the nudge of including having the IT sourcing teams ask questions directly or indirectly about gender diversity during the sourcing process (they provide examples for these questions, such as “What is the percentage of women in your organization?”; and “What is the percentage of women in your organization’s leadership?”).¹¹⁶ The authors break down the strategic sourcing process into seven steps, and provide recommendations for when to ask these questions. Unfortunately, although the authors make clear that the IT sector is male-dominated and provide examples of some of the causes of gender diversity issues in the IT sector, from the low number of female STEM graduates through issues with recruitment, development, and promotions, they do not specifically mention the need to engage men in IT (or the buyers of IT service providers) to address these issues. This blindness around acknowledging men as a key population to engage with and mobilize, particularly when seeking to advance gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion in male-dominated

sectors, seems to be consistent across the nudge literature, and future research on advancing gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion must move beyond this blindness to explicitly and intentionally design nudge interventions to engage and mobilize men.

5.4 Influence of gender norms in adopting pro-environmental behaviours

Finally, another study sheds some light on the impact of gender norms on individuals' receptivity and adoption of particular behaviours. A study in France,¹¹⁷ for example, focused on pro-environmental behaviours encouraged through nudges and the potential impact of gender on adoption of such behaviours. Findings showed that women engage in more pro-environmental behaviours due to being reminded (nudged) by the injunctive social norm (social expectation)—which led to feelings of guilt for women; the authors attributed this to women's "socialization model of care, cooperation, and empathy." Unfortunately, the authors do not provide recommendations for ways to adapt pro-environmental behavioural nudges to appeal more to men, or postulate on what nudge interventions might cultivate more empathy and cooperation among men, instead only suggesting that "socialization models for boys based more on empathy, cooperation, and care could be a way to engage even more individuals in environmental protection."¹¹⁸

5.5 Don't Mess with Texas

The above examples seek to advance gender equality, but do not explicitly mention the need to, or strategies for, engaging and mobilizing men specifically to this goal. There is an example in Thaler and Sunstein's book¹¹⁹ that more specifically targets men to achieve a prosocial behaviour, although in this case the outcome was reducing littering on highways in Texas. The designers of the intervention had tried other campaigns to reduce littering on the highways that hadn't worked, and so recognizing the key population they wanted to reach (primarily men aged 18-24) they implemented an advertising campaign called "Don't Mess with Texas," along with strategies to make it "cool"—by producing decals, t-shirts, bumper sticks, and so on. This campaign was massively successful both in popularity and outcome, with 95% of Texans knowing the slogan; in 2006 it was voted the favourite slogan in US, and littering reduced by 29% reduction in littering in first year and 72% in next six years.

5.6 Recommended nudges for work engaging and mobilizing men

This review identified and reviewed evidence for the use of a nudge approach to engage and mobilize men for violence prevention and/or to advance gender equality, justice, diversity, and/or inclusion. This final section provides a summary of the key types of nudges that emerged from the literature that show promise for engaging and mobilizing men and should be considered for future research:

5.6.1 Physical environment nudges

Unfortunately, no evidence was identified that examined the impact of physical environmental nudges in this review. More research is required in this area, particularly as it relates to engaging

and mobilizing men for violence prevention, gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion.

5.6.2 Organizational environment nudges

Processes nudges: These are included as one of the three types of nudges in the Inclusion Nudges change approach,¹²⁰ and refer to designing processes “to ensure the ability in yourself and in others to do inclusion automatically in daily actions.”¹²¹ Nudges along hiring and promotion processes in particular show promise for being relatively straightforward and low cost to implement in order to overcome biases and judgements that hinder the hiring and advancement of women and minorities/underrepresented populations. The National Football League (“NFL”) adopted the Rooney Rule in 2002, for example, which promotes diversity in hiring committees.¹²² The Rooney Rule came about after a report found that “African-American coaches had statistically performed better than their white counterparts but were more likely to be the last hired and first fired” and requires that “each committee making high stakes employment decisions will include at least one racial minority” or face a fine.¹²³ While there is debate around the effectiveness of the Rooney Rule, African-American head coaches increased in number from two to seven in just four years.¹²⁴ Other process nudge examples include changing the composition of hiring and promotion committees, partitioning candidates, and building inclusion and a sense of belonging into engagement with staff/students via symbolic environment nudges.

Disclosure of information-sharing policy nudges: As noted by Waylen,¹²⁵ disclosure or information-sharing policy nudges (e.g., publish number of women in leadership positions in political parties) can both inform the action of consumers as well as prompt organizations/companies/politicians to take action to avoid bad publicity. This nudge may also serve to catalyse organizations and companies to start collecting data they didn’t previously, which on its own could produce valuable insights.

Pre-commitment strategies (particularly, the author notes, in place of naming and shaming strategies): Particularly if the goal is the call men *in* (rather than call men out), building strategies to encourage people/organization/companies/governments to commit in advance to specific actions and timelines may be a promising approach; however more research needs to be done to understand the contexts and issues that pre-commitment strategies would be most effective. Additionally, research should include clear strategies to support the achievement of commitments, as some research has noted the effectiveness of building capacity and empowerment along the process rather than focusing on outcomes alone.¹²⁶

5.6.3 Symbolic environment nudges

Framing nudges: Described as “powerful nudges,” a little goes a long way and, as Thaler and Sunstein explain, “framing matters in many domains” (but, they also warn, framing nudges should be selected with caution).¹²⁷ Nielsen and Kepinski also highlight framing nudges as one of the three types of nudges in their inclusion nudge change approach noting evidence that “our perceptions are influenced by hidden cues that trigger associations in our unconscious mind.”¹²⁸ Three of the five studies reviewed use symbolic environment nudges, including framing nudges such as the study in a U.K. police force framing the email to applicants, and Waylen also includes framing nudges as one of their four recommended nudges to advance gender equality in policy making, noting that

“simplifying or altering the wording of communications” that can “impact significantly on behaviour.”¹²⁹

Motivational or *Feel the Need* nudges: These are nudges that create change through helping people “*see and feel* the need for change (in the unconscious mind) and not when we rationally understand the need for change.”¹³⁰ Storytelling is a powerful example of a motivational nudge, and, as the *Inclusion Nudges* authors note, “Empathy can increase by hearing the stories of others...Storytelling that increases perspective taking of others’ experiences, triggers emotions, and increases a sense of connection to others can have a lasting impact on support commitment to changing attitudes and behaviours.”¹³¹

5.6.4 Social nudges

Social norm nudges: Changing social norms is a key way to change behaviour at scale. Numerous studies in this review tapped into social norms as a means to nudge people toward different behaviour, such as changing the composition of promotion committees and using text messages to create a social norm around belonging and feeling supported. As Waylen notes in her article, nudges that target social norms are critical as “utilising or changing norms is central to gender equality efforts.”¹³² Shift’s work on *Changing Contexts*¹³³ has also included discussion and examples of the power of social norm nudges, and an upcoming rapid evidence review on social norms approach will also help to build the evidence base around how and where to target social norms to facilitate prosocial behaviour.

Nudges via peer networks: As the U.K. Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) notes, “we are heavily influenced by who communicates information,”¹³⁴ including how we feel about this person/group. Nudge interventions in both studies among post-secondary education students demonstrate the possibilities of small nudges via peer networks. In a report¹³⁵ by BIT identifying the cognitive biases and barriers relevant to accessing services for military service personnel and their families, they emphasize the power of “network nudges” or a peer-based “buddy” programme to help with such transitions. Research should explore the role of key influencers in nudge approaches, as well how to use peer and near-peer relationships through nudge interventions to engage and mobilize men to prevent violence and promote gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion.

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