

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY STUDY ON INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE PUBLIC HEARING

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July 10, 2024

(Adapted from Building a Movement: Mobilizing more men for violence prevention, gender equality, and social justice in Canada, Laura Pascoe & Lana Wells)





Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for inviting me to participate as a witness for your study on preventing intimate partner violence. The evidence is undeniable. Engaging, motivating, and working with men and boys to prevent intimate partner violence must be Ontario's top priority because men are the primary perpetrators of violence against women and girls. They are also the primary perpetrators of violence against men and boys, which also makes them frequent victims of violence and subject to trauma.

Research shows that people who perpetrate intimate partner violence are created, not born. If collectively, we want to stop producing perpetrators of violence, we must focus our attention on disrupting the pathways to perpetration by better supporting individuals while changing the cultural and structural conditions that produce, promote, and condone violence, inequality, exclusion, and discrimination. If we are to end intimate partner violence, it is crucial to better understand who uses violence, how, and why so we can design better policies and practices to prevent it from happening in the first place.

Currently, governments throughout Canada invest very little in engaging, motivating and working alongside men and boys. This must change if we want to prevent the perpetration of male violence. It is time to invest in collecting better data to understand perpetrators trajectories, typologies and patterns and invest in policies and practices that are focused on preventing this form of violence. It is time to reframe the problems of Intimate Partner Violence in Ontario by putting perpetrators in the picture and to focus more on preventing and reducing the perpetration of abusive behaviours.

The time is NOW to create a more cohesive provincial strategy. Ontario is in a prime spot to become a national leader by funding a government-led strategy to engage and mobilize men and boys to prevent violence. The following recommendations outline where more research, funding, policies, capacity, and support are needed to do just that.

We hope you find this report helpful in your important initiative. With kind regards,



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Problem statement: Little is known about violence perpetration in Canada. The absence of robust and consistent information on perpetration limits our ability to effectively prevent and reduce intimate partner violence (IPV). Data collection on IPV should include deliberate attention to perpetration -to the prevalence and character of violence perpetration, including its gendered and intersectional dynamics. We need consistent and regularly captured data on perpetration to effectively prevent and reduce perpetration and to benchmark and measure the efficacy of our prevention efforts.

Recommendations:

- Develop and invest in a sustainable, evidence-informed funding model that powers a
 provincial strategy that disrupts trajectories of male violence and gets more men and boys
 involved in violence prevention efforts.
- 2) Invest in a data collection system that targets the prevention of perpetration of intimate partner violence.

Background: The evidence is clear. Men are responsible for most of the violence perpetuated against all people. In Canada, men:

- commit 99% of sexual assaults against women and 93% of sexual assaults against men;¹
- perpetrate 83% of violence against women;² and
- are three times more likely to criminally offend, including violent crime.³

At the same time, we know:

- men are frequent victims of violence (mostly from other men, namely bullying, physical assault, and homicide);^{4 5 6}
- suicide rates are three times higher among men than women;⁷
- men exhibit more unhealthy and risky behaviors than women, increasing risk of injury,⁸ heart disease,⁹ and other comorbidities;¹⁰
- 1-in-3 men admit to heavy drinking (versus 1-in-5 women);¹¹and
- 19% of men use illegal drugs (versus 15% of women).¹²

Racialized and Indigenous men are over-represented in many of these categories, presenting a starker reality for many Canadians. This is because they are negatively impacted by patriarchy in addition to other systems of oppression and discrimination.

We know from research that preventing male violence and advancing gender equality requires men and boys to be part of the solution. That means when men and boys can:

- emotionally self-regulate
- embody gender equitable norms and behaviours
- have the skills to disrupt sexism and violence within themselves and their peers
- embrace nonviolence
- have the skills to heal, repair and manage conflict
- be accountable, and
- actively inspire their peers, colleagues, and children to do the same



then we can stop violence before it starts. 13

The following report outlines three recommendations and actions that Ontario can do to disrupt trajectories of male violence and get more men and boys involved in violence prevention efforts.

- **1.** Invest in a data collection system that targets the prevention of perpetration of intimate partner violence.
- 2. Invest in leadership and networks of men engaged in violence prevention efforts.
- **3.** Support the integration of evidence into practice to build a prevention workforce.

Recommendation #1: Invest in a data collection system that targets the prevention of perpetration

The following four key areas outline where research and funding are urgently needed in order to collect more data (quality and quantity) on trends, attitudes, behaviors, practices, and public perceptions relating to the perpetration of IPV. To achieve this:

- 1. Invest in both cross-sectional and longitudinal research.
 - Conduct a province-wide perpetration survey that will measure the extent, character and drivers of violence perpetration.
 - Cross-sectional research: Invest in the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), in partnership with Promundo.
 - Longitudinal research: On men's health, such as Australia's <u>Ten to Men</u> study on male health, which would help in understanding how gender and social inequalities also impact men and boys.

Estimated Costs: \$400,000

2. Fund public perception research.

- Invest in research on men and boys who feel disengaged from prosocial movements. We are seeing a troubling global rise in white supremacy, antisemitism, terrorism, and other hate-fueled groups and movements. We need more research that:
 - Targets male populations most likely to join these groups (e.g., rural men, working class men, men in military and paramilitary settings) to understand, from a place of compassion, what the pressing issues are (e.g., employment, mental health) for them and how to better meet them where they're at.
 - Investigates how right-wing and extremist groups frame and message issues
 to better understand how to strategically resist them and reframe prosocial
 efforts to resonate with these populations and cultivate a sense of belonging

¹ Please note these costs are approximate and we encourage you to partner with Ontario researchers to advance these areas.



in promoting peace, healing, and nonviolence. For example, Oxfam's research on masculinity and the far-right offers valuables insights that could be built upon.

Estimated Costs: \$200,000

- **3.** Gather more data on the strengths, needs, and experiences of Indigenous and equity-deserving male populationsⁱⁱ and then test approaches to meet them where they're at. The following populations are currently underrepresented:
 - Men in rural settings, as much of the work to engage men in Canada is in urban settings.
 - Men from racialized communities.
 - Indigenous men.
 - Men in communities of faith.
 - Trans men.
 - Men with non-physical disabilities and men as partners to persons with disabilities.
 - Men who are survivors of domestic and sexual violence.
 - Older men.
 - In fatherhood research: Indigenous, newcomer, and immigrant fathers, single fathers
 - (as a result of choice, divorce, or being widowed), fathers in non-heterosexual relationships, trans fathers, fathers with disabilities, and fathers of children with disabilities.
 - Understanding the intersections of violence prevention, gender equality, and diversity, justice, and inclusion from the perspectives of diverse male populations.

Estimated Costs. \$600,000

4. **Invest in more research on trauma and it's impacts among men and boys.** Men are more likely than women to encounter traumatic events;¹⁴ this is particularly true for Indigenous, Black, and racialized men and boys.¹⁵ Research is needed to understand the impact of trauma on men and boys and how trauma manifests through a gender lens, including how rigid male gender norms may produce their own traumatic consequences.¹⁶ Research is also needed on how to improve men's help-seeking behaviour in response to trauma and set up services so that men will use them.

Estimated Costs. \$300,000

^{II} Equity-deserving groups are groups of people who have historically, persistently, and systematically experienced barriers in participating in society based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation and transgender status, etc. These groups include women, racialized populations, 2SLGBTQIA+ populations, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, seniors/older adults, people living in rural and remote areas, etc.



- 5. Fund research that expands the knowledge base and visibility of men and male-identified allies who already embody the values to role model and build a movement.
 - Research questions needing answers: What are the protective factors that can be
 cultivated to promote prosocial behaviour in men and male-identified people? What
 is already happening in Ontario/Canada that we want to see more of? What are the
 building blocks for cultivating healing, accountability, repair, and resilience skills at
 the individual, family, community, and systems levels?
 - Fund work by men to create and sustain ethical spaces and opportunities for men and boys to envision and play with potential new ways of being, relating to others, and contributing to a just, equal, and safe world, and support them in documenting and sharing their vision and findings with others engaged in this work.
 - Fund research and efforts that use transformative justice and other alternative
 justice approaches in communities, institutions, the criminal legal system, and
 outside the criminal legal system so that men are not only held accountable but
 done so in a way that deepens their connection to and investment in gender and
 social justice. Invest in womenatthecentrE who are already leading this work.

Estimated Costs: \$300,000

Recommendation #2: Invest in leadership and networks of men engaged in violence prevention efforts.

We recommend the following strategies to strengthen partnerships and build the necessary networks to catalyze shared learning and growth in work to mobilize men and boys for gender and social justice:

- 1. Provide sustained investment for communities of practice, a provincial network, and learning exchanges to inspire nonviolent men and boys as leaders and role models.
 - Invest in a provincial network of male-identified leaders alongside feminist leaders.
 - Invest in a variety of community of practices to strengthen evidence-informed practices
 and expand capacity among those working with or interested in working with men and
 boys.
 - Promote and support the creation of more male ally spaces (e.g., events and opportunities that bring men and boys together).
 - Fund learning exchanges with other provinces or countries advancing the field and movement of engaging men, such as Alberta and Australia.

Estimated Costs: \$300,000

2. Fund and support diverse and Indigenous male leadership.

To start, we recommend you:



- Invest in Indigenous community leadership to develop and implement culturally appropriate responses to violence against women, such as initiatives that focus on traditional healing and holistic approaches.¹⁷
- **Invest in equity-deserving leadership** so that equity-deserving populations have inspiring examples of men who are supported be change agents in their own communities and contribute their expertise in the broader movement to mobilize men.

Estimated Costs300,000

3. Develop a repository of research and practical tools on engaging men.

Well-organized and accessible research is key to bridging the research to practice gap and strengthening work in this field. We recommend you create a website that:

- Includes findings from regular internal audits of all research and initiatives targeting men and boys for violence prevention and advancing gender equality.
- Shares key learnings from all the initiatives you fund that include engaging and mobilizing men.
- Showcases accessible resources to inform and support change efforts by leaders by integrating evidence into practice.

Estimated Costs: \$400,000

Recommendation #3: Support the integration of evidence into practice to build a prevention workforce.

Ontario can invest in changing the social conditions to reinforce and support healthy relationships. For example, it will be critical to invest in approaches that change the contexts in which men live, work, learn, play, and worship to enable nonviolence and support gender equality. Investment in male leadership is key. To do this, we recommend you:

- 1. Build the capacity of the public and private sectors to see, frame, and engage men and boys as part of the solution. Specifically, this means:
 - Frame this work for men and boys as their own liberation and humanity and not only for the benefit of women and others. This means changing the messages in our campaigns from diagnostic to hopeful and prosocial.
 - Invest in practitioners learning how to practice restorative and transformative justice approaches where possible. Engaging with men in loving and compassionate ways shows far greater potential to inspire men to change and be invested in gender and social justice work than taking a harsh and blaming approach. Invest in womenatthecentrE who are already doing this important work https://www.womenatthecentre.com
 - Invest in initiatives that focus on changing contexts. We need to increase our focus on contexts and utilize evidence-informed levers that can accelerate change towards our vision of a just and equal world. Shift's Changing Contexts 18 provides useful guidance.



Estimated Costs: \$300,000

2. Invest in and scale up what we already know works to engage and mobilize men and boys:

Our research identified three life transition points that are particularly likely to accelerate progress in mobilizing men and boys as co-beneficiaries, allies, and advocates:

- Fatherhood
- Adolescence
- Experiences of trauma

Fatherhood. In the Canadian context, targeting fatherhood as a violence prevention and gender equality strategy is one of the most effective entry points, yet it is still underfunded and deprioritized.¹⁹ To increase opportunities for positive fatherhood, we recommend you:

- Legislate fully paid, non-transferable paternity leave.
- Invest in and incentivize gender-responsive family-friendly workplace policies that support all parents in caring for their children while providing job protection.
- Collect gender-disaggregated data on unpaid care work to monitor progress.
- Identify and facilitate pathways for men to train and work in paid care work.
- Engage fathers through health systems, schools, and places where fathers already congregate.
- Expand evidence-based father-focused and father-inclusive programs at the community level.
- Create a specific fund for public health and grassroots organizations to access so they can create, support, and sustain peer groups for new dads at the local level.
- Conduct father-friendly organizational assessments of organizations' readiness to provide services to fathers and father figures.
- Reexamine investment in parenting programs and fund positive fatherhood involvement among nonviolent men as a key primary prevention strategy.
- Invest in a public awareness initiative that focuses on fatherhood.

Adolescence. The earlier in life prevention starts, the more effective it is.

We recommend you:

- Invest in more trauma-informed efforts to engage adolescent boys in places they already gather, for example schools, sports, in their family unit. Canada's investment in and scaling up of youth-focused gender transformative programs.
- Target young men in post-secondary environments, for example by supporting the adoption
 of a similar policy to the United States' 2013 Sexual Assault Violence Elimination Act
 (SaVE) which mandates eligible universities to provide students with primary prevention and
 awareness programs.

Experiences of trauma. We live in a society that struggles to see men and boys as victims. This is a



glaring gap in the capacity to reach men and stop cycles of harm.

We recommend you:

- Fund mental health services for men: This includes the development, coordination, and operations of a provincial men's help line, phone app, and virtual interventions to support mental health and well-being. Alberta's Men& initiative and Nova Scotia's 211 are two excellent Canadian efforts to build on.
- Integrate trauma-informed approach to work with men. Invest in building the capacity of those working with and wanting to work with men to utilize a trauma-informed approach.
- Fund initiatives that leverage the power of the messenger. We have learned a lot about the power of the messenger in communicating information, ²⁰ yet this research is still not well taken up in Canada. Invest in efforts that:
 - Leverage peers, near-pears, role models, parent-child relationships, intimate relationships, male leaders, or other formal or informal key influencers in men and boys' lives to communicate information and build positive and supportive connections.
 - Leverage key influencers within diverse networks to prevent violence and support prosocial norms and behaviours.
 - Focus on positive male leaders and champions and support them to influence other men, such as connecting fathers with other fathers.

Prioritize sustained programs and systems-oriented work instead of one-off psychoeducational programming. Increase project cycles to allow sufficient time for upfront investment and iterative learning cycles, orienting to the specific context, and adapting and responding to innovation. Sustained and easily accessible funding for customizable programming for Indigenous and equity-deserving populations. Tailor programming to the specific culture, structure, strengths, priorities, and challenges of each group²¹ and ensure these funds are easy and straightforward to obtain.

Estimated Costs: \$1.5M



3. Increase the gender-based violence sector's capacity for evaluation practices that are oriented towards innovation and measuring change in dynamic social environments.

To do this:

- Invest in evaluation training and capacity-building for those working with men, such as on developmental evaluation and utilization-focused evaluation to better equip those in the field to design, plan for, implement, and capture innovation and prosocial change.
- Fund and support efforts that utilize these innovative evaluation practices, including by lengthening project cycles to at least 3-5 years.

Estimated Costs: \$300,000

4. Invest in knowledge mobilization and translating research into practice:

Strategies to do this include:

- **Community-university-government partnerships**, including participatory action research.
- Easily accessible online repository of best practices and evidence on what works.
- Simple and accessible online materials, infographics, videos, and apps.
- Public-facing engagement opportunities.
- Knowledge sharing opportunities.
- Intentionally cultivate the next generation of men and boys excited and onboard the shared vision by:
 - Invest in community-based and online clubs and groups for men and boys to participate in dialogue with one another about issues relating to gender, relationships, and their emotional lives without fear of judgment or shaming.
 - Invest in social norms media campaigns and other mass media efforts that showcase male role models, male "champions," and floods Canadians with hopeful, positive, and uplifting images and stories of men and boys.
 - Support male gender equality leaders and champions by investing in leadership capacities at the grassroots, community, and institutional level.

Estimated Costs: \$500,000



If interested in advancing additional primary prevention efforts, please see the following reports that can support your initiative.

- Four primary prevention plans that focus on addressing the root causes of violence by advancing gender equality,²² promoting social inclusion within government policy²³ and community-based organizations,²⁴ and supporting Indigenous self-determination.²⁵
- A comprehensive provincial strategy to engage and mobilize more men and boys²⁶ because they are overrepresented among perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence and are key to stopping violence before it starts.
- An action plan explaining how the Government of Alberta and the anti-violence sector can
 contribute to preventing <u>child maltreatment and adverse childhood experiences</u>²⁷ because
 these actions will disrupt the intergenerational transmission of violence while ensuring the
 next generation grows up in safe and empowering environments.
- A case with evidence-based actions that can <u>build the capacity of each Albertan</u>²⁸ to be an active bystander and challenge the normalization of violence and inequality within their spheres of influence. This approach will send a strong message to perpetrators throughout Alberta that domestic and sexual violence are not acceptable.
- A prevention of sexual violence action plan²⁹ with targeted strategies to transform our cultures, institutions, laws, policies, and practices that create or enable sexual violence, as it is the only violent crime in Canada that is not declining.³⁰
- A suite of policy recommendations on <u>financial and economic supports</u>³¹ to build protective factors for women and equity-deserving groups.
- Specific policy recommendations related to health, food, housing, and climate change 32 as they can become either risk or protective factors for domestic and sexual violence.
- New legislation, policy and programs that specifically address <u>technology-facilitated</u> violence.³³
- An <u>accountability framework</u>³⁴ that was designed for the Government of Alberta to help identify outcomes and indicators for monitoring progress on violence prevention and advancing equity and inclusion here in Alberta.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these important resources.

Wishing you success in your important initiative.

With kindness, Lana Wells



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