



Poking the Bear: Lessons on Engaging and Mobilizing Men in Violence Prevention

Lana Wells, Keynote for the Canadian Domestic Violence Conference #6
Halifax, Nova Scotia, March 5, 2019

Good morning everyone – I am so pleased to be here today to open up the Canadian Domestic Violence Conference! I want to thank the conference committee for inviting me to be here with you this morning.

I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are on the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaw people.

Today's presentation is going to highlight what I've learned from 10 years of research and advocacy efforts related to engaging and mobilizing men as allies, leaders, partners, stakeholders and co-beneficiaries to achieve gender equality and prevent gender-based violence. Just to give you a bit of background on me - I have had the privilege of working with different orders of governments, hundreds of human service organizations, a range of key experts from around the world, and several male-dominated settings to move this field forward. My work has focused on advancing social change in 4 key ways:

- Changing the policy environment to better support primary prevention efforts.
- Collaborating with community leaders and organizations to include men and boys as part of their violence prevention and gender equality strategies.
- Researching and testing promising practices, and
- Making research findings accessible, understandable and useful to diverse groups.

These are the areas I have focused on in my position at the University of Calgary where I am leading an initiative called Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence. The sole focus of Shift is *primary* prevention. This means moving upstream and taking action to stop violence before it starts, rather than treating or alleviating its consequences. Gloria Steinem articulates it this way: "We are still standing on the bank of the river, rescuing people who are drowning. We have not gone to the head of the river to keep them from falling in. That is the twenty-first century task."

It is this task that drives my work and is the reason I have focused much of my attention on engaging and mobilizing non-violent men and boys as allies and advocates. If we want to advance gender equality or stop gender-based violence before it starts, we **have** to work with men and boys,



because they are the most common perpetrators of violence and often hold the power within our families, communities, systems and institutions.

So today, I am going to focus on what we know – or at least what we think to be true – about engaging men and boys in violence prevention and gender equality. But before we dive in, I'd like to explain the title of my presentation, and why I chose the metaphor 'poking the bear' to describe my talk today.

First, I want to be clear that the 'bear' in this metaphor does not represent a person or any living being – it represents structures of oppression, including patriarchy, colonialism and an exploitative type of capitalism that has created enormous harm both socially and environmentally. These structures must be dismantled – and we all need to work to agitate, poke, disrupt and ultimately transform them.

If we don't poke the bears of injustice and oppression, nothing will change.

I know that everyone in this room has been engaged in poking the bears of violence and injustice – but we still have a long way to go. And we need to support one another in this effort because it's challenging work – the bear is fierce, and working to change the status quo can generate anger, retaliation and backlash. This work takes courage.

And here's where it gets really tricky. Patriarchy, racism, homophobia, white privilege doesn't simply exist in external structures and systems – they also lurk within each one of us. So, the challenge is also an internal one.

We all need to critically poke, interrogate, and reconstruct the bear that lurks inside ourselves, continually examining our own power and privilege and reflecting on ways that we might be unintentionally reinforcing harmful gender norms and violence. That kind of self-reflection is critical to this work and needs to become a daily practice for all of us. So – that's the set up for where we're headed today.

We're going to explore how to engage men in the work of dismantling structures of oppression, violence and injustice.

It has been more than two decades since men's roles, responsibilities and contributions were first recognized as a critical component in the fight to achieve gender equality and stop violence against women and girls. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing World Conference on Women where a global commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action encouraged men to participate fully in the actions necessary to achieve gender equality and stop gender-based violence.



We can probably all agree that there have been significant changes since that time – but we still have a long way to go.

I want to acknowledge the good work that's been done to date while at the same time challenge us to continue to innovate and find ways to close the gap between where we are and where we want to be. I certainly don't have all the answers – but I think that the team at Shift has been asking some interesting questions over the past decade, and we've identified some promising trailheads. I am going to start with some of the fundamentals today – the key theories and approaches that comprise the *foundation* of our work. Many of these will be familiar to you – but in the spirit of poking the internal bear, I would encourage you to adopt a beginners' mindset as you listen and think about what these theories and approaches might mean to you and your practice.

After we explore those ideas, I want to look at some of the problems that currently exist in the very complex field of engaging and mobilizing men and boys and describe some of the things that my team has been exploring to address those problems. My hope is that some of our learnings might help to spark new thinking and prompt you to explore some of the roads less travelled.

So, I'm going to begin by briefly touching on three theories and approaches that help to orient us to this work and provide a solid foundation for our efforts. There is so much that I could have included in this list, but I really tried to think about the minimum specifications – what is absolutely critical. Based on my experience and what the research has revealed to this point, I would say that these three things are foundational:

The first is having a rights-based, feminist orientation, and understanding that gender equality is the cornerstone of the violence prevention movement. Twenty-five years ago, at the Beijing Conference- Hilary Clinton made this statement: "Human rights are women's rights, and women's rights are human rights." Need I say more?

As for the term 'feminism' it can make people uncomfortable or defensive – but a feminist is simply someone who believes in the social, economic and political equality of all genders. So, it's really about social justice. That means that men and non-binary individuals can be feminists just as easily as women can.

Feminist theory argues that patriarchy is a root cause of violence against women because it legitimizes the oppression of women, normalizes gender-based power differentials, and perpetuates sexist norms within families, communities and societies. Well what does that mean? It means that patriarchy makes things like wage disparity, toxic masculinities, and violence against women seem like a normal and natural part of life. *They are not*. They are the products of patriarchal norms and systems.

We created them – which means we can change them.



So feminist theory and achieving gender equality are both critical to successful violence prevention efforts.

However – and this is a very important point - if your feminism is about simply gaining equal power with white men, you will end up oppressing a bunch of other people – and that is why intersectionality is also foundational to this work.

Intersectionality is a concept that was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to highlight the ways that systems of oppression related to race, class, gender, ability, immigrant status interact and are influenced by one another. This is important to understand, because those who are affected by intersectionality face an increased risk of experiencing violence. The third feature that is foundational to this work is applying a gender-transformative approach. A gender transformative approach focuses on transforming rigid gender norms and imbalances of power.

We sometimes think of gender as something fixed, something we're born with. But there is a distinction between sex and gender. Sex refers to biological differences while gender refers to the roles, behaviours, and expectations our culture creates and assigns – how you are “supposed” to feel, and act based on whether your body is seen as female or male. Gender socialization involves learning the social norms around what a society deems to be appropriate for males and females.

A gender transformative approach targets participants' underlying beliefs about gender and explores the inner workings of masculinity and the harm it causes to all genders. It focuses on how boys and men interact with girls and women and how boys and men interact with each other because we know, homophobic teasing is a practice of performing and policing a particular kind of rigid, heteronormative masculinity.

A pivotal study conducted by the World Health Organization in 2007 confirms the importance of using a gender transformative approach when working with men and boys to stop violence and advance gender equality. The study found that programs that used a gender transformative approach with men and boys were effective in influencing men's attitudes and behaviours.

So those are the three theories and approaches that are central to engaging men and boys: feminism, intersectionality and gender transformative approaches.

Now, before we move on to explore some of the tensions and solutions that we've been exploring at Shift, let's ground these theories in reality by considering some sobering Canadian data that demonstrates why feminism, intersectionality and gender transformative approaches are key to this work.

In Canada, we know that



- 90% of violent crimes are committed by men,
- 98% of sexual assaults are committed by men, and
- 83% of violence against women is committed by men.

So, violence is gendered (the majority of perpetrators of all forms of violence are men). This is why it's important to specifically target men and boys in upstream violence prevention.

But it's not just women who experience violence resulting from patriarchal systems, colonialism, toxic masculinities and unhealthy gender norms. Men suffer as well.

Research shows that, compared to women, men have

- higher rates of suicide,
- higher rates of injury and early death,
- higher rates of alcohol and substance abuse, and
- higher rates of mortality and morbidity.

And the situation is even worse for racialized and Indigenous men – they are over-represented in many of these categories. Experiencing racism is a form of trauma and that must be acknowledged in our work.

All of this data tells us a story.

The way that we socialize men not only harms women – it also harms men. That's why feminism, intersectionality and gender transformative approaches are foundational at this stage in the work. Having identified some of the ideas that comprise the backbone of this work, I'd like to spend the remainder of my time with you describing some of the emerging practices - the 'how' - associated with engaging and mobilizing men and boys in violence prevention. And I'm going to frame those practices around key problems or challenges.

You may have seen this quote before: "If I had 20 days to solve a problem, I would take 19 days to define it." This famous quote describes where I think we are at in the movement to engage and mobilize non-violent men and boys in Canada. And I would actually say we are at day 5 (and that is being generous).

I believe that in 2020, everyone in this room understands "why" it is important to engage non-violent men and boys as allies and advocates but we are still breaking ground on the "how" – and we won't understand how to move the needle on this issue unless we have a better appreciation of the problem itself – what's driving it, what sustains it, what keeps us from moving closer to the goal of a just, equitable, violence-free world.



Remember that bear that I referred to at the start of this talk? Well, to quote a cartoon from my childhood, it's "not your average bear." This bear is incredibly complex – and until we understand its nature a little better, we're not going to get very far.

So, I'm going to identify four aspects of the bear – four problems or challenges associated with engaging men in violence prevention and gender equality – and then I'll speak to some of the potential solutions that we have been exploring.

Problem #1: It's difficult to recruit men to violence prevention programs.

Years ago, we conducted interviews with human service providers across Alberta who were providing violence prevention programming for men – and the number one thing we heard from these providers was how difficult it was to recruit men to violence prevention programs.

Remember a moment ago I said that it's worth spending time on problem definition – and this provides a good illustration of why that's so important. If you define the problem as "we need to improve our recruiting mechanisms" that sends you down a particular path – one that keeps you delivering programs.

But there's another way to think about the problem and that is to say maybe programs aren't the answer – or at least, not the *whole* answer. And that leads you to wonder what else might be needed.

We have been working in collaboration with government and community partners to explore this very question. In 2017, we convened a learning collaborative that is focused on developing **non-programmatic approaches** to engaging men in violence prevention. For those interested, we will soon be releasing a practice framework that outlines some of the ideas explored and tested including a set of principles to guide the work.

A key insight related to implementing non-programmatic approaches is that this work needs to be context-specific, which means instead of asking men and boys to come to *us*, we need to go to *them* – to engage them in the places where they naturally congregate like workplaces, recreational facilities, schools and places of worship. And once we manage to engage men and boys in those settings, we need to work with them to customize interventions so that they're tailored to their specific culture and context. This is just good community development work, and it's critical to engaging men and boys.

I'll be offering an example of a non-programmatic, context-specific approach in a moment, but first I need to warn you that implementing this type of approach is *challenging* – primarily because of *us*, the human services sector. We tend to default to what we know – and what we know is how to design and implement short-term programs. We've built most of our infrastructure around



programs, including our training, funding, staffing, evaluation and reporting mechanisms – and trying to fit non-programmatic approaches into those structures can be a bit like trying to fit a round peg in a square hole.

This is a problem that only we can solve, so I want to challenge everyone here today – but particularly funders, policy makers and leaders – to consider ways to grow our infrastructure so that we can extend our behaviour change toolbox beyond the ‘programs for problems’ model. Psychoeducational programs are necessary, but they’re not sufficient to get us where we need to go. We need more than a single tool to engage men and boys.

Problem #2: Human decision-making and behaviour isn’t as rational or straight-forward as we have been led to believe.

The emerging fields of behavioural science and behavioural economics have radically altered our ideas about how humans make decisions and what impacts our behaviour – and we need to be integrating these insights into our social change efforts. Traditionally, our approach in the sector to changing violent and sexist behaviours has looked something like this: we work with men to build their knowledge, shift their attitudes, and cultivate the motivation to change, and then they change.

That linear approach does work in some circumstances – but it does not account for the many ways in which our physical and sociocultural environments influence behaviour. Research shows that contextual factors like social norms, culture, physical and social design in the settings where we play, learn, work and worship can OVERRIDE individual attitudes, intentions or beliefs. It turns out the environment’s effects on behavior are a lot stronger than most people expect. Furthermore, research shows that there is actually a statistically weak correlation between intention to engage in a target behaviour and actually engaging in the target behaviour. Intention translates to behaviour change only 27-39% of the time.

What does all this mean for our work? Well, one of the very important implications is that we need to think differently about how to support behaviour change and complement psychoeducational programming with other types of interventions. So, what are some other approaches that might complement programmatic efforts?

Well a key one is to consider how to leverage sociocultural environments to change behaviour. I’m going to show you a quick video as a way of illustrating the influence that small social cues have on behaviour. This is an excerpt from Candid Camera. (**show video – SLIDE 21**)

Human beings are social animals. On an unconscious level, we are always looking to others for cues about how to behave. We can leverage this in our work with men and boys by supporting them to flood their environments with small signals that cue more pro-social, equitable behaviours.



For example, instead of delivering a two-hour workshop on gender equality, what if we worked with key influencers– so those are people that others look to as a reference for how to behave – in a setting (for example, a workplace) – where we build *their* capacity to *model* gender equitable behaviours and prosocial norms?

Actions speak louder than words – particularly the actions of people we look up to – so we have been working with men in various settings to build their capacity to flood their system with tiny signals that can help to build new norms and gender-equitable behaviours.

Let me give you a few examples of men signaling to other men gender-equitable behaviours in public and observable ways. In the news last week, you may have seen that the US men's soccer team released a public statement in support of the US women's soccer team earning the same pay that players on the men's team were getting.

That's an example of men signaling that gender equality should be the norm. Another great example is men taking paternity leave. Men taking paternity leave normalizes caretaking to other men. Research shows that when there are enough of those signals being sent, social norms and behaviors begin to change.

Another approach we have been testing is called nudge theory. A nudge is a small change in the physical or sociocultural environment that can influence behaviour without restricting choices – so it's suggestive rather than being coercive. One of my favourite nudges is one that helped to address the problem of urine on the floor of men's washrooms. The solution wasn't to post a sign asking men to please aim carefully or to develop a program to teach men how to hit the centre of the urinal more consistently.

The intervention simply involved a nudge that would make guys want to take aim because it gave them a target to hit – **it looked like this. [show picture]**. Most guys choose to aim for the fly, so this nudge has been very effective. In fact, it served to reduce spillage **by 80%**.

Gender equality and violence prevention might not be as simple as getting men to aim better (although let's be honest, this work is about getting men to *aim* better 😊) but there is lots of evidence to suggest that nudge theory applies to our work as well.

This book by Iris Bohnet – Gender Equality by Design offers example after example of ways that small contextual changes and nudges have served to produce more gender equitable behaviours. One example she uses in her book describes how orchestras were able to overcome their biases in hiring.



Historically, women were consistently discriminated against during the hiring process. In fact, in 1970 only 5 per cent of musicians performing in the top five orchestras in the United States were women. To overcome their biases in hiring, orchestras started to use a physical screen to conceal the identity of the candidate from the jury. As more and more orchestras started to use the screen – it substantially increased the likelihood that a female musician would be hired. As a result of this physical change, female musicians in the top five symphony orchestras in the US went from 5% of all players to 25%. Today, women compose more than 35 per cent of the most acclaimed orchestras. By changing the structure and process for hiring, orchestras were able to overcome some of their biases. In other words, a focus on changing the environment as opposed to training the jury to not be biased was effective at changing behaviours.

Problem #3: Culture eats policy for breakfast

Many of you will have heard Peter Drucker's famous quote "Culture eats strategy for breakfast". Well, to describe the third challenge we face, I will paraphrase Drucker and say that culture eats *policy* for breakfast as well. To be clear, I'm not saying that policy is unimportant – I'm just saying that, like programs, policy is not enough. You've probably all had the experience of seeing a policy have limited impact because it runs counter to the dominant culture. For example, lots of hockey leagues in Canada have policies that prohibit hazing – but hazing still happens because it's part of hockey culture.

We have lots of great policies and legislation in this country. For example, we have a Pay Equity Act, national poverty reduction strategy, recent changes to the Canadian Labour Code on sexual misconduct and violence, longer parental leave policies including paternity leave, lots of women empowerment strategies around entrepreneurship and increasing women's involvement in politics and boards. Also, every province and territory in Canada now has a violence prevention policy framework or plan.

Despite all of this, we are still seeing high rates of male violence against women and girls. In Canada, a woman or girl is murdered every two and half days, one in three women have experienced unwanted sexual behaviour in public, and sexual assault continues to plague our country.

We are also still seeing widespread gender inequities. A recent report published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives stated that, if we keep going at the current rate of change, it will take 164 years to close the economic gender gap in Canada – 164 years! The gap is even larger for racialized and Indigenous women.

Policy can only take us so far – we have to focus our efforts on changing culture.



This is something that we've been exploring with our learning collaborative, where we've been looking at how to transform culture within each of the male-dominated settings that we are working in. It's challenging though, because culture is one of those things that is really only visible from the outside.

For example, it's easy to notice culture when you travel to a different country. But identifying the norms or rules for living that comprise our own culture is harder. That's because our own culture simply feels normal or natural to the people on the inside. Two Alberta Community Development professionals, Judie and Michael Bopp, explain it this way:

We dwell within the pool of our shared cultural system, much as fish dwell within water. Most of the time, fish pay no attention at all to the water. They are one with it. They move within it and are moved by its currents. It is their medium. Similarly, human beings' dwell within their meaning-making systems without thinking about the system itself. In this way children grow into a complex web of acquired habits of thought and action without even trying to do so. It just seems to happen. But what is a people to do if the aggregate effect of their collective habits of thought and behaviour is life-threatening to themselves and future generations?

Because we 'dwell in our meaning-making systems' without really noticing them, the first step in changing culture is to render it visible.

To that end, we developed several processes and activities to help men surface aspects of the culture that dominates their settings. We found, that when men are supported to identify harmful aspects of their culture, **then they** are able to be more intentional and effective in changing and redesigning their own culture. For example, we have been working with a group of theatre artists in Calgary who are working to change culture in rehearsal halls so that sexual harassment and assault becomes a thing of the past. These men have been taking the lead on surfacing gender-inequitable and violent norms within their community and changing them.

Problem #4 – Men have historically been excluded from gender equality and gender-based violence prevention efforts (and those that *are* involved aren't very well supported).

This problem is ironic. In her book *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men* Caroline Perez argues that our world is largely built by and for men, with everything from government policy and medical research to urban planning and technology being designed in ways that benefit men more than women.

However, when it comes to gender-based violence or advancing gender equality, men have been left out – *literally*, in fact. Not only are they often excluded from the work, but they're also left out of policy frameworks, programs, measures, and indicators related to gender equality and violence



prevention. As educator and activist Jackson Katz so eloquently put it in his Ted Talk that went viral in 2013, violence against women isn't a women's issue – it's a MEN's Issue. Katz argued that most of our language and measures focus on changing women, not men – and it's time to start focusing our energy on the changes we seek in men, and then build these into our data collection strategies, including our evaluation plans and population surveillance methodologies.

We also need to help men understand that they have a meaningful role to play in gender equality and violence prevention work – and that's challenging for a whole bunch of reasons. One reason is that many men feel like they have something to lose from restructuring current systems of power – so we're seeing more and more cis-gender, white, straight men saying that they feel they're under attack and resenting the loss of the social and economic dominance that they feel rightfully belongs to them.

It's also challenging because this work requires a transformation in how we think about gender, and particularly how we construct our ideas about what it means to be a man. Gender is a significant part of how humans construct identity, so explorations of masculinities and gender performance can be emotionally and psychologically charged.

A third challenge is the rise of cancel culture, where men are increasingly being called out in ways that are very public, shaming and punitive. Let me be clear - this is not to say that the Harvey Weinstein's of the world should not be held accountable –they MUST be held accountable - it's just to say that healthy, responsible men might be afraid to get involved in the women's movement if they haven't lived an entirely blameless existence.

The fourth challenge is that the human services sector is largely staffed by women, so it has sometimes been difficult to ensure that men's perspectives are adequately represented in the design of many gender-based violence prevention programs, policies and initiatives.

And then when we *do* engage men, we sometimes recreate the very inequities we're trying to address. Men who step into this work often receive more praise and higher levels of financial compensation than women who are doing the very same work.

Lastly, some men in this work engage out of a desire to protect women or be the saviour – which is problematic because it creates the same power differential that we're trying to eliminate – so we need to be careful about the way we frame engagement opportunities for men.

A final challenge is that men who ARE interested in this work are often not very well supported. Last year, I had the opportunity to interview 33 male-identified gender equality advocates with my colleague Dr. Sarah Fotheringham. These are men who have spent a lot of time doing their own



personal work and engaging in public advocacy related to gender equality and violence prevention. And guess what they told us? They said they are feeling isolated, under-resourced, and inadequate.

They explained that, if we want more men in the anti-violence movement, we need to change the narrative to be more inspirational versus diagnostic, we need to create more brave spaces where men can learn and make mistakes without judgement, and we need to create more opportunities for men to explore healthy masculinities and gender socialization with other men.

So, what are some of the approaches that might help to make the movement more inclusive of men?

Well first, we need to actually include men in our work – and second, when we do, we need to get specific about the changes in men in our measurement, evaluation and data collection processes.

Second, we need to actively support men to be allies in this work. I am currently working with a male-led, pro-feminist organization called NextGenMen to create a national network of male-identified allies who will work in collaboration with women to advance the field – but we need networks at the provincial and regional levels as well.

Third, we need to build certain capacities in our sector. One is the capacity to help men to cultivate their own ‘compelling why’ or reason for engaging in this work. Research shows that men tend to engage in violence prevention issues when they feel a personal connection to the topic. This may include experiencing violence or oppression themselves, or knowing someone who has experienced violence, or being part of a peer group where there is support for getting involved.

Helping men to understand the impact of toxic masculinities on their own health and wellbeing and providing them with opportunities to connect violence against women to personal experiences of being judged, marginalized or victimized can also help to motivate engagement.

Anyone interested in engaging and mobilizing men also has to be able to understand men’s perspectives (in all of their richness and diversity) and know how to meet them where they are at. This is a complex skillset, one that is not developed quickly. And it can easily go sideways if you have not done your own work around power and privilege, gender socialization, and past traumatic experiences. But it’s a key part of this work.

Another skill set that is important is the capacity to hold men accountable in ways that are compassionate rather than humiliating or shaming. Compassionate forms of accountability like ‘calling in’ focus on healing, repair and reconciliation, and help to create brave learning spaces where men can explore new ideas and grow their capacity to positively shape their environments.



Finally, we need to relinquish some control and create space for men to be the agents of change, meaning that interventions must be co-developed with, and implemented by, them not us – a process we sometimes refer to as “doing with, not for.” The practitioner’s role is really to support men’s efforts, not lead them.

I’d like to conclude this morning’s talk by thinking through the implications of all of this for funders, policymakers and community-based practitioners and organizations. I’ll start with funders and policymakers because funders and policymakers are instrumental in shaping how the sector approaches issues of gender-based violence and discrimination – your leadership is critical.

So, this call to funders – is to help extend our sector’s approach to behaviour change beyond the ‘programs for problems’ model.

I encourage funders and policymakers to:

Invest in non-programmatic approaches. Fund community development approaches, fund culture change and social norms approaches, fund regional and provincial networks – all of these are examples of a non-programmatic approach. These approaches must include advancing gender equality.

Change your funding and reporting mechanisms to better accommodate nonprogrammatic approaches. Programs are pre-structured and time-limited, so they’re much easier to budget for. And developing a logic model and evaluation plan for a program is relatively straight-forward. Not so with a non-programmatic approach. Remember that these approaches are emergent – the ‘how’ is co-developed with stakeholders from the setting – so they don’t fit neatly into a logic model, budget line, or traditional evaluation plan. Creating funds specifically targeting innovation and R&D will help advance this area.

Extend your funding cycles –These types of initiatives require a longer-term commitment. Whereas a program can be delivered in days or weeks, a relationship-based, context-specific approach takes years.

Fund professional development opportunities so that people in the human services sector can expand their behaviour change toolbox. We need to unlearn to learn. We also need support to train practitioners in anti-oppressive work, compassionate accountability, gender transformative approaches and intersectionality if they are going to be working with men to advance gender equality and prevent violence.

Break down the funding silos. We tend to fund gender equality efforts and violence prevention work separately – but they are interdependent, and we need to start taking a more integrative



approach in our policies, plans and initiatives. We also need to be funding more community-university- and government partnerships to move this work forward.

Invest in pro-feminist men's leadership. We need more diverse men leading this work. Just make sure that investments in men are *in addition to* investments in women-led organizations, not instead of.

Invest in gender transformative programs. This one might come as a surprise to you because I've talked a lot about nonprogrammatic approaches today – but don't get me wrong – programs are still necessary – and actually we need more of them – we need more diverse men on the ground doing work within their community transforming gender norms and oppressive systems and structures. Last year, I worked with experts from the United States, Australia along with the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters to develop a set of guidelines for funding gender equality and violence prevention programs. They are posted on the Shift website and I encourage you to take a look.

Measure changes in men, not just women. Make sure that these targets, indicators and measures are also integrated into policy frameworks and plans, programs and initiatives. Funders and policymakers – we need your leadership – these are 8 doable changes that can have significant impact to engaging and mobilizing more men and boys in violence prevention. Okay, let's turn to the implications for community-based organizations, including senior leaders and frontline practitioners now. We need to

Build individual and organizational capacity for non-programmatic approaches. Read the framework when it comes out, workshop it with your colleagues, and consider engaging in training opportunities related to non-programmatic approaches.

Build capacity for engaging men. One of the organizations that participated in our learning collaborative is now committed to going through an organizational development process to become a gender transformative organization. They are working on building their capacity across the whole organization to more effectively engage men and boys in their programs and services. Consider a similar process and think about ways you can enhance the capacity of your organization to engage men and boys in violence prevention and gender equality.

Extend your knowledge base. This recommendation actually applies to everyone, including funders, policymakers, leaders and practitioners. We tend to read books in our own discipline – but to do this work, we need to expand the range of what we're drawing on. Here are some books that go beyond programs and explore strategies to change culture, norms, physical and social environments to influence behaviours [slide 45].

I have two more implications for practitioners...



Do your own work. I mentioned at the beginning of this talk how important it is to examine your own power, privilege and gender socialization. If we don't, we're likely to recreate the same inequities we're trying to address – so it's important to engage in honest, ongoing self-reflection. This is important, not just for men, but for all of us.

Support one another. This work is really hard – particularly when it triggers anger and resentment in men. We need to have each other's backs and encourage one another.

We have covered a lot of ground today. I hope I have inspired some new insights, ideas and practices you want to integrate into your work.

I want to encourage you to go to my website and check out the resources (the Engaging Men Practice Framework will be posted there in April – the accountability guidelines for funders are there as well, along with a number of research reports on engaging men and boys).

I want to thank you so much for inviting me here to share some ideas and lessons learned over the last 10 years. I am around all day and would be pleased to further this conversation with anyone interested.

A big thank you to the organizers of the conference and to you for spending the morning session with me. Have a wonderful conference.



THE PROJECT TO END
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Poking the Bear: Lessons on Engaging and Mobilizing Men in Violence Prevention

Lana Wells, Brenda Strafford Chair in the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Canadian Domestic Violence Conference 6

March 5, 2020



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK



**Engaging and mobilizing men
as allies, leaders, partners,
stakeholders and co-
beneficiaries to achieve
gender equality and prevent
gender-based violence.**



SHIFT TO STOP VIOLENCE

BEFORE IT STARTS



www.preventdomesticviolence.ca

Initiated by the Brenda Stafford Chair in the Prevention of Domestic Violence



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK

Shift's Focus Areas



Changing the **policy environment** to better support primary prevention efforts



Collaborating with **community leaders** and **organizations** to include men and boys as part of their violence prevention and gender equality strategies



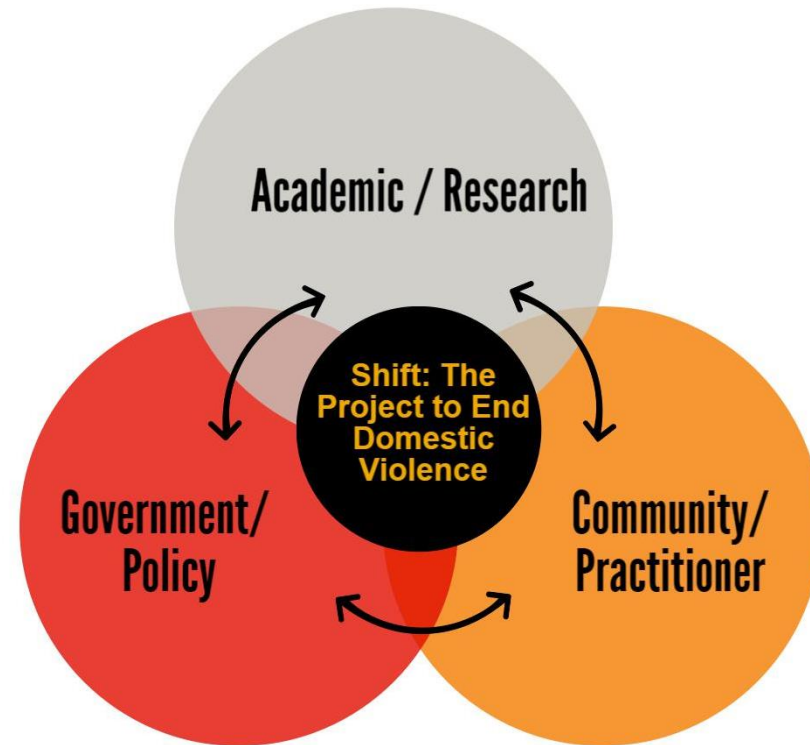
Researching and **testing** promising practices



Making research findings **accessible, understandable** and **useful** to diverse groups

sh!ft

THE PROJECT TO END
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK



“We are still standing on the bank of the river, rescuing people who are drowning. We have not gone to the head of the river to keep them from falling in. That is the twenty-first century task.”

Gloria Steinem

“To passively accept an unjust system is to co-operate with that system and thereby to become a participant in its evil.”

Martin Luther King Jr





**BEIJING+25: REALIZING
GENDER EQUALITY AND
THE EMPOWERMENT
OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS
9-20 March 2020**



Important Theories and Approaches

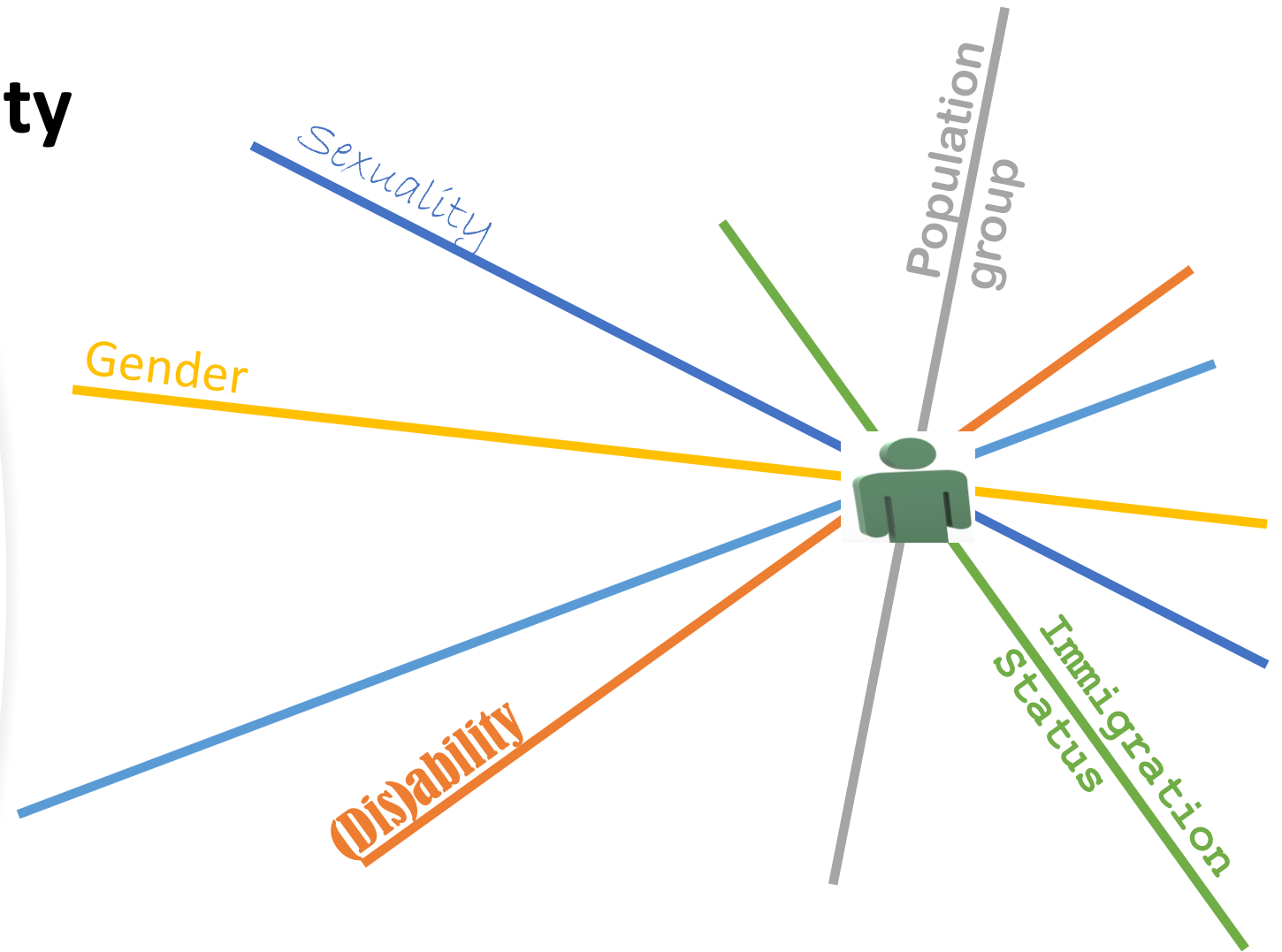
- 1. A rights-based, feminist orientation that is focused on advancing gender equality.**

2. Intersectionality

Photo: Marla Aufmuth / TED Women 2016

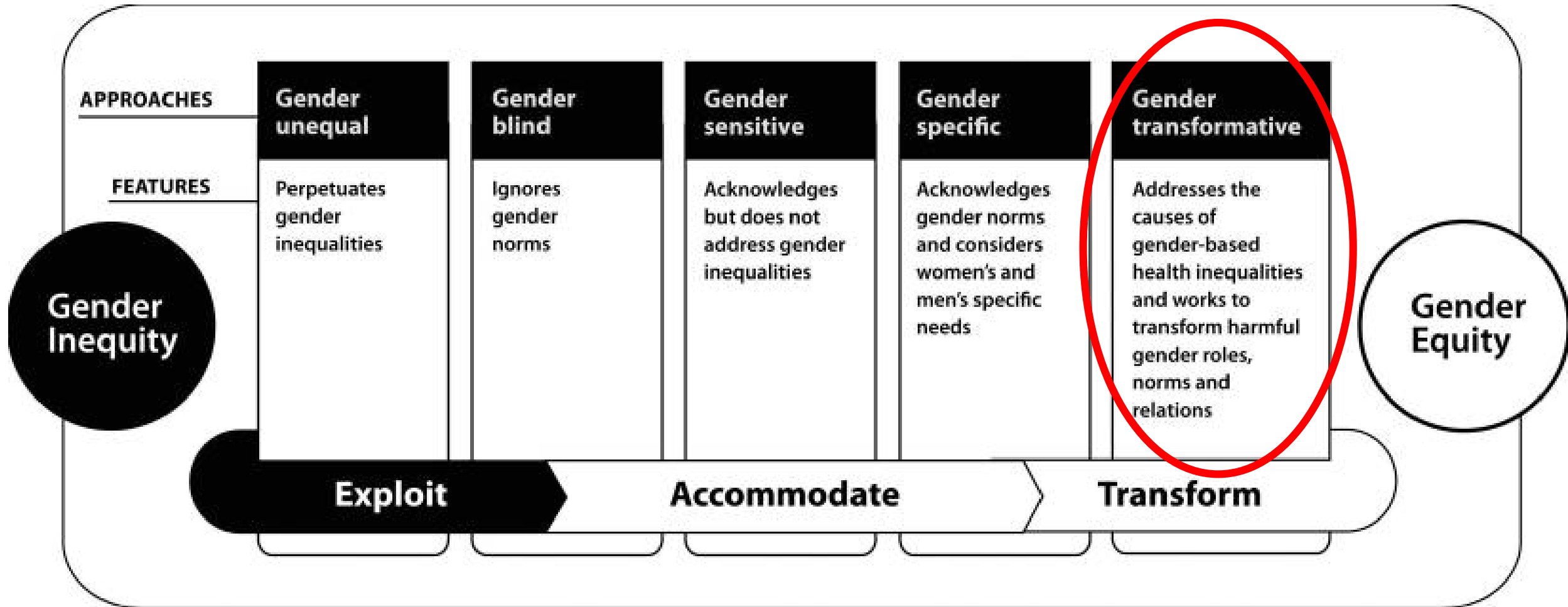


Kimberlé Crenshaw



Source: Exner-Cortens, D., 2019

3. Gender Transformative Approach

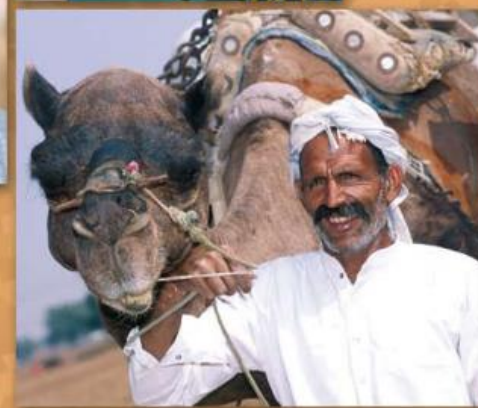





Engaging men and boys in changing gender-based inequity in health:

Evidence from programme interventions

Gary Barker, Christine Ricardo and Marcos Nascimento





In Canada,
we know
that...

- 90% of violent crimes are committed by men
- 98% of sexual assaults are committed by men
- 83% of violence against women is committed by men

- Suicide rates are **3** times higher among men than women
- **30%** of young men are at risk of injury (vs 23% female)
- Men are **79%** more likely to die from heart disease than women
- **1 IN 3** men admit to risky drinking at least once a month (vs 1 in 5 women)
- **19%** of men use illegal drugs (vs 11% female)
- Men live **4 years less** than women

***“If I had 20 days to solve a problem,
I would take 19 days to define it”***

Albert Einstein





PROBLEM #1

**It's difficult to recruit
men to violence
prevention programs**



PROBLEM #1

Potential Opportunities & Approaches:

- Non-Programmatic Approaches
- Context-Specific Approaches



A large, textured orange watercolor splash on the left side of the slide, with the text 'PROBLEM #2' written in white serif font inside it.

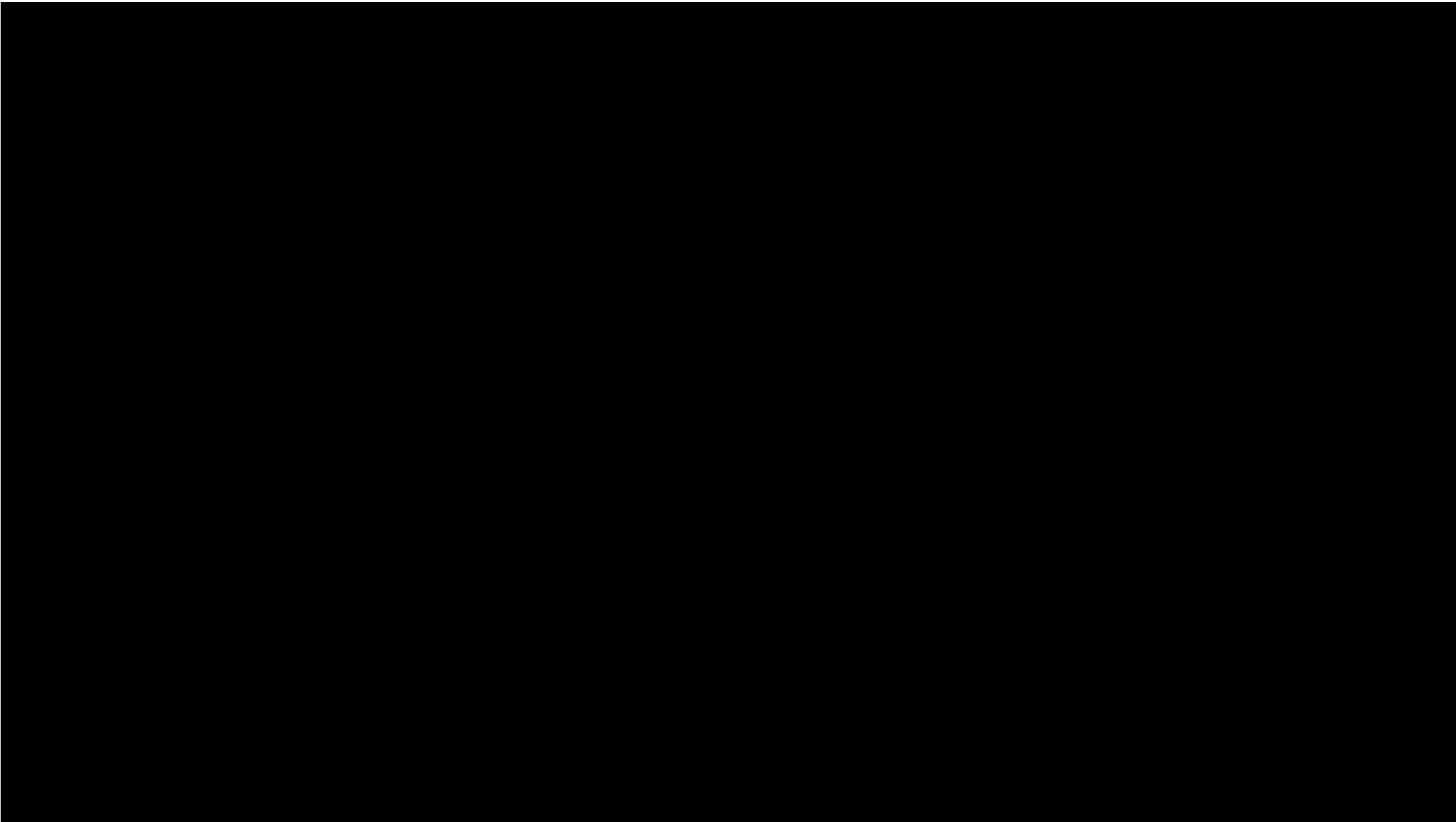
PROBLEM #2

Human decision-making and behaviour isn't as rational or straightforward as we have been led to believe.

Traditional behaviour change approaches work from the (incorrect) assumption that humans are rational decision-makers.



Correlation is statistically weak



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgRoiTWkBHU>

A large, textured orange watercolor splash shape on the left side of the slide, with some smaller orange dots scattered around it.

PROBLEM #2

Potential Opportunities & Approaches:

- Working with key influencers to flood the system with gender-equitable, prosocial signals
- Intentional design of physical and sociocultural environments (Nudge theory)

TIMELY ASSIST

The US men's soccer team steps up as allies in the fight for equal pay

July 31, 2019



By **Sarah Todd**

Senior reporter, Quartz and Quartz at Work



AP PHOTO/SETH WENIG

Everyone's a winner with equal pay.

Creating Behavioural Nudges

A nudge is a small contextual shift that has the potential to change behaviour without changing the choices available.



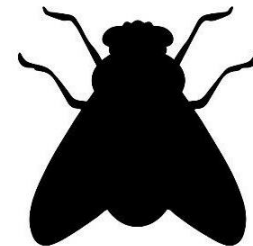
Nudge

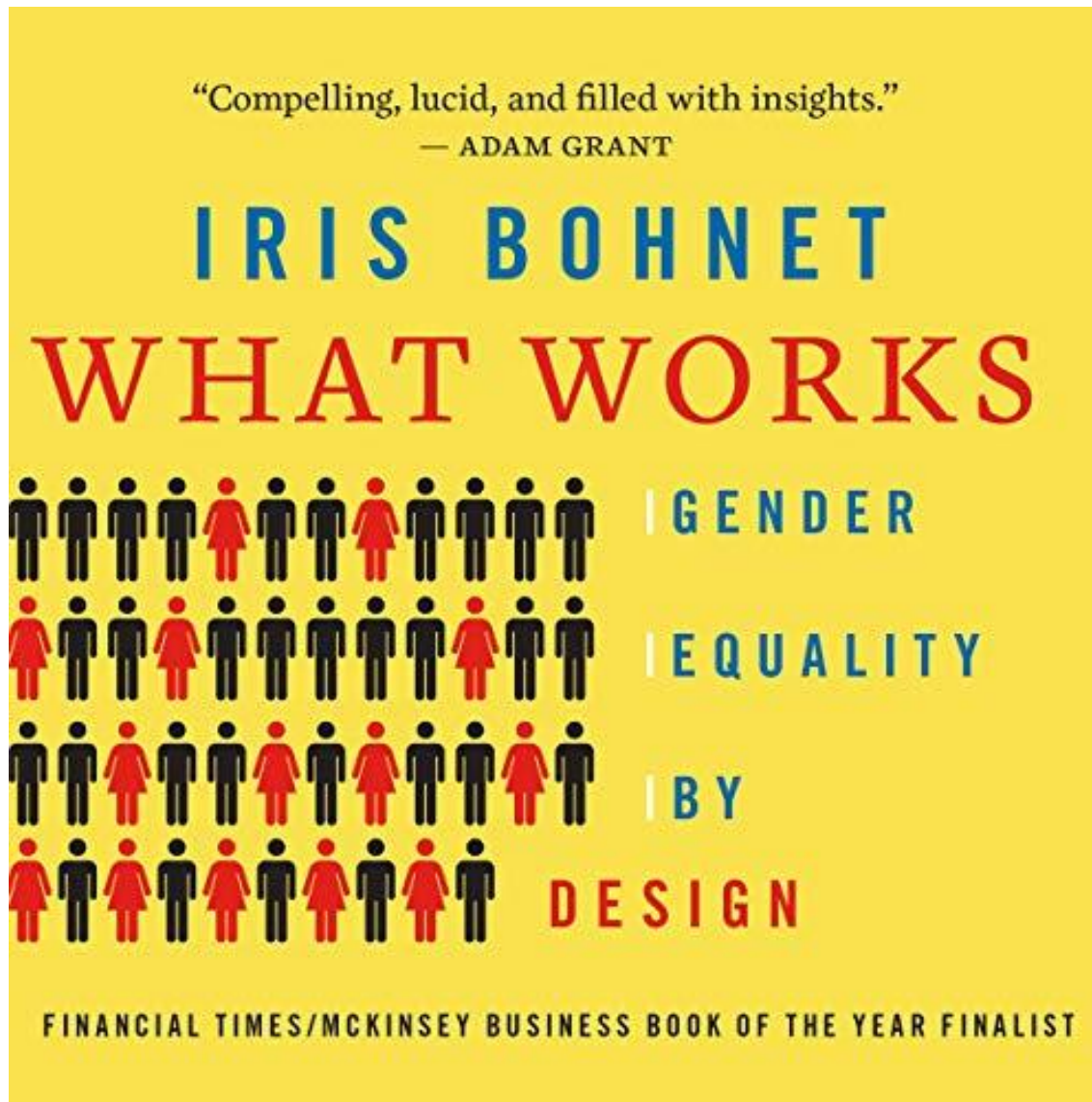
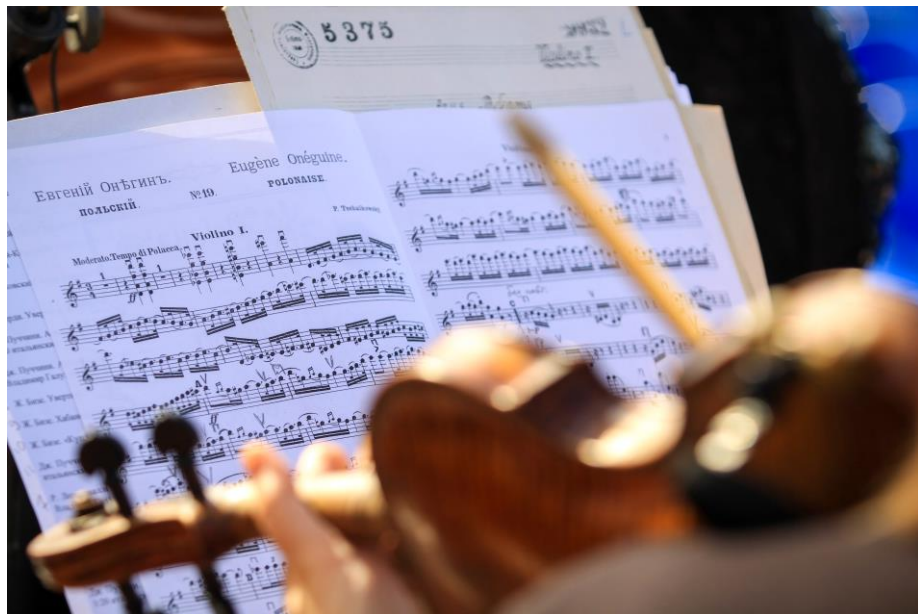
Improving Decisions about
Health, Wealth, and Happiness

Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein
Revised and Expanded Edition

"One of the few books I've read recently that fundamentally changes the way I think about the world." —Steven Levitt, coauthor of *Freakonomics*

NUDGE







PROBLEM #3

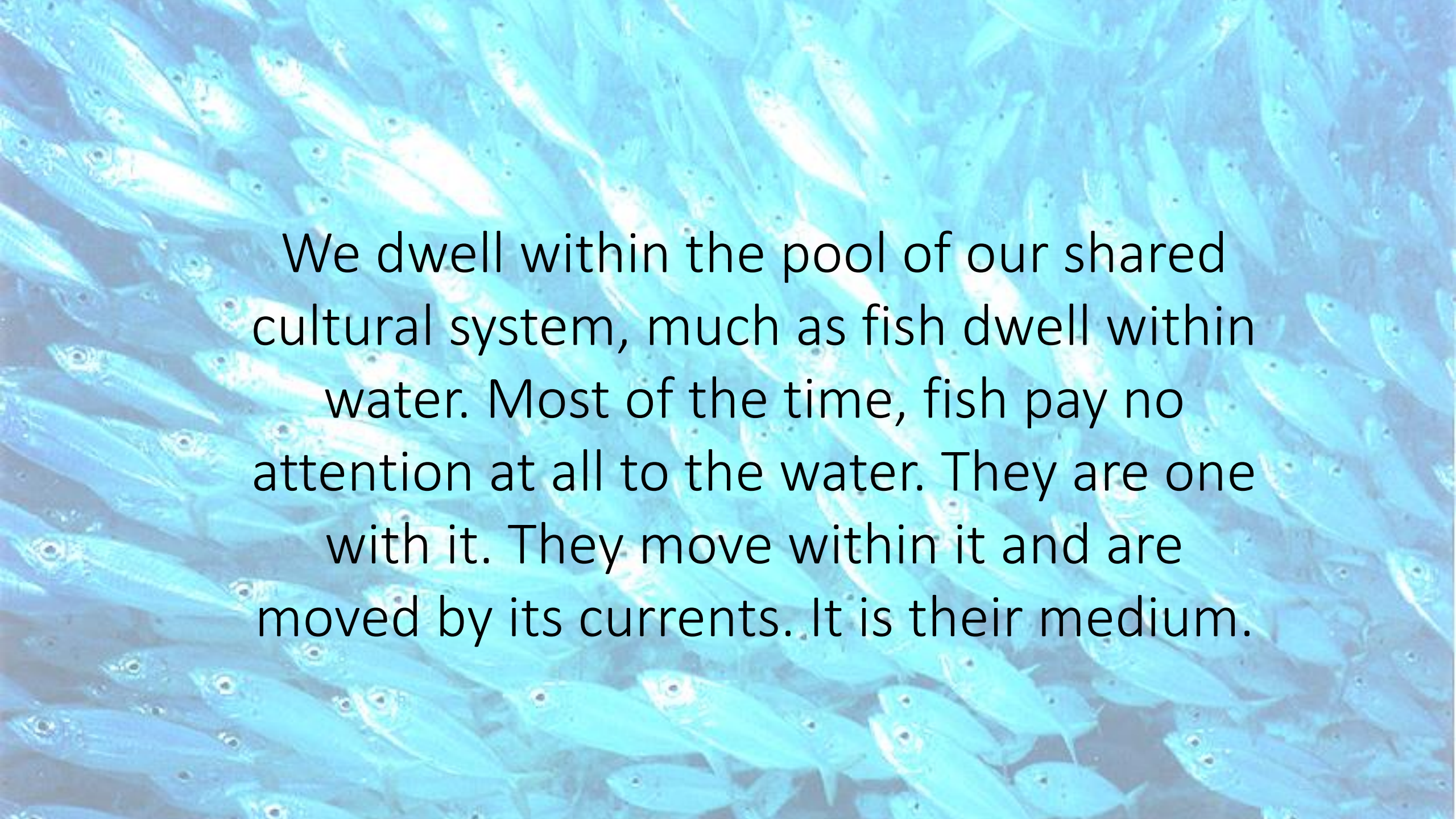
**Culture eats policy
for breakfast**

Unfinished Business

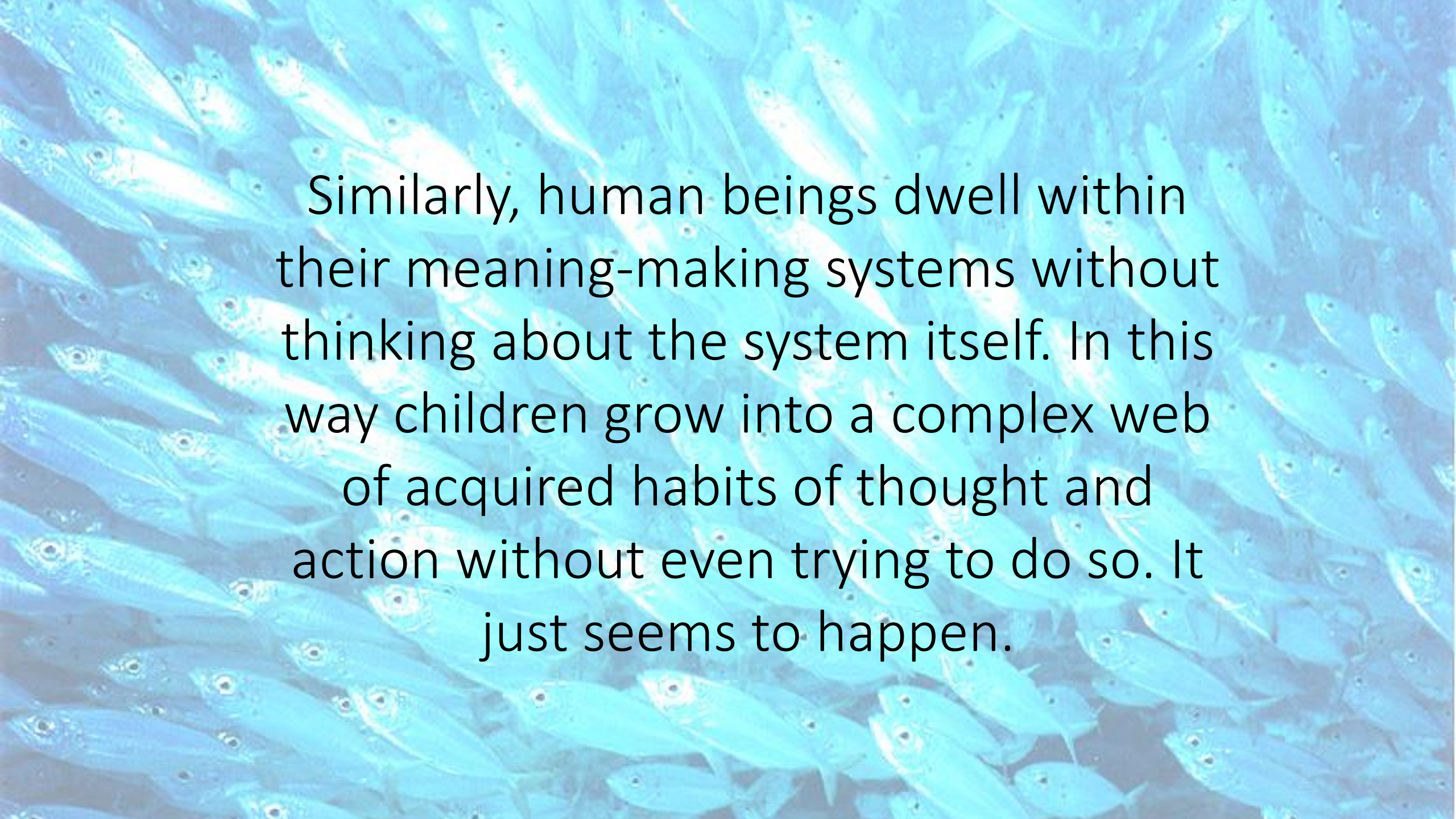
A Parallel Report on Canada's Implementation
of the Beijing Declaration and Platform
for Action

Prepared by a network of women's rights
and equality-seeking organizations, trade unions
and independent experts

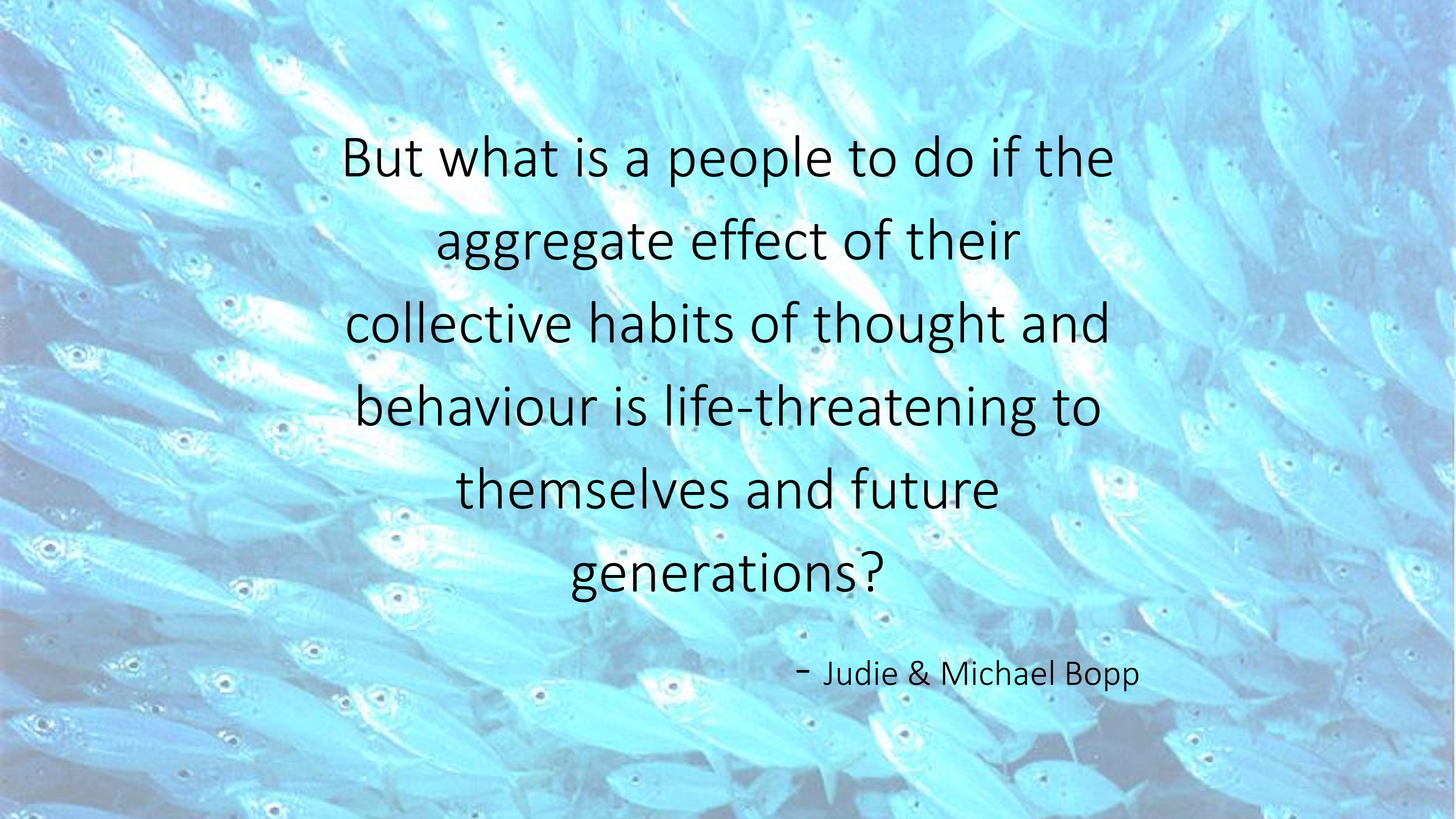
164 years!

A large, dense school of small, silvery fish, possibly sardines or anchovies, swimming in clear blue water. The fish are viewed from above, creating a pattern of many small, elongated shapes. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

We dwell within the pool of our shared cultural system, much as fish dwell within water. Most of the time, fish pay no attention at all to the water. They are one with it. They move within it and are moved by its currents. It is their medium.

A dense school of small, silvery fish swimming in a blue and green aquatic environment. The fish are packed closely together, creating a textured, shimmering effect. The background is a mix of light blue and green, suggesting an underwater scene with sunlight filtering through.

Similarly, human beings dwell within their meaning-making systems without thinking about the system itself. In this way children grow into a complex web of acquired habits of thought and action without even trying to do so. It just seems to happen.



But what is a people to do if the
aggregate effect of their
collective habits of thought and
behaviour is life-threatening to
themselves and future
generations?

– Judie & Michael Bopp



PROBLEM #3

Potential Opportunities & Approaches:

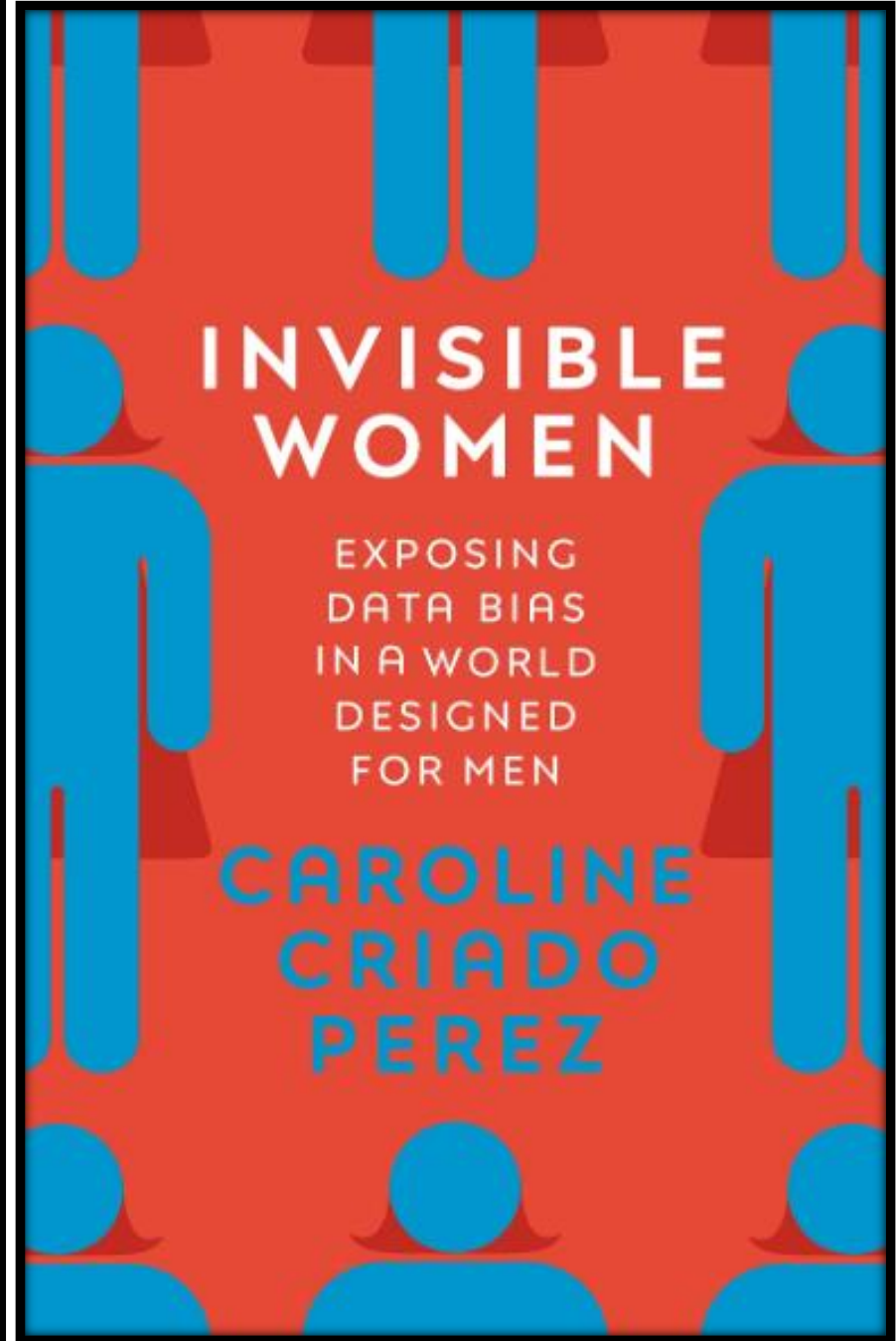
- Tools and processes for making culture visible
- Intentional design of culture




PROBLEM #4

Men have historically been excluded from gender equality work and gender-based violence prevention efforts (and those that *are* involved aren't very well supported).

Photo: Rachel Louise Brown





“Blaming victims and minimizing the harms they have suffered is much easier than holding people accountable — especially the powerful and well-connected.”

Jackson Katz, PhD

Educator

Filmmaker, *Tough Guise*

Author, *The Macho Paradox*

Source: IMDb, *Miss Representation*, 2011



Challenges to engaging men

1. Some feel like it is a zero-sum game
2. Transform gender
3. Cancel culture
4. Human service sector largely staffed by women
5. Over compensated/accolades
6. Savior complex



**Tomorrow's Men Today:
Canadian Men's Insights on
Engaging Men and Boys in
Creating a More Gender Equal
Future**

**Sarah Fotheringham
Lana Wells**

October 2019



If we want
more men in
the anti-
violence
movement,
we need
to...



Change the narrative from
diagnostic to inspirational



Create more brave spaces



Explore healthy masculinities
and gender socialization with
other men

PROBLEM #4

Potential Opportunities & Approaches:

1. Include measures and targets related to changes in men in data collection strategies and evaluation plans
2. Support pro-feminist men's networks, organizations and initiatives
3. Develop sector-wide capacities related to:
 - Helping men to cultivate their own 'compelling why' for this work
 - Meeting men where they're at
 - Compassionate accountability
 - Doing with, not for

An abstract watercolor splash background. The splash is irregular and organic, with a color gradient from bright orange at the top to deep blue at the bottom. The edges are soft and feathered, with some darker, more saturated areas in the center. There are small droplets and splatters around the main splash, particularly on the left and right sides.

Implications for Funders and Policy Makers



Implications for Funders and Policy Makers

1. **Invest in non-programmatic approaches**
2. **Change your funding and reporting mechanisms**
3. **Extend your funding cycles**
4. **Fund professional development opportunities**
5. **Break down the funding silos**
6. **Invest in pro-feminist men's leadership**
7. **Invest in gender transformative programs**
8. **Measure changes in men, not just women**

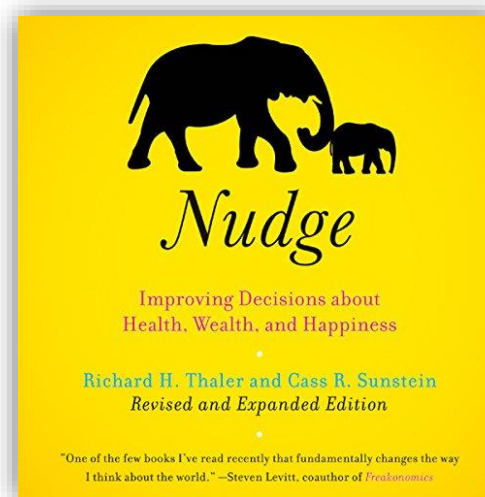
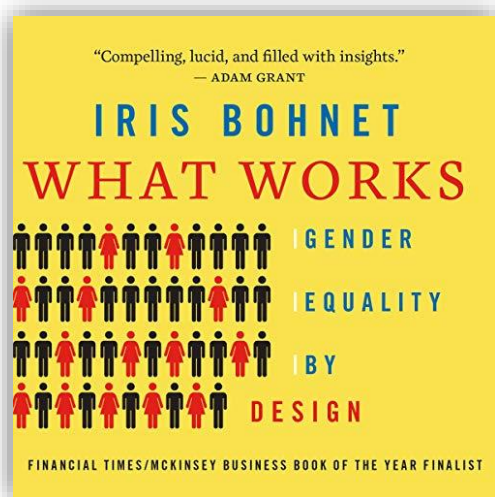
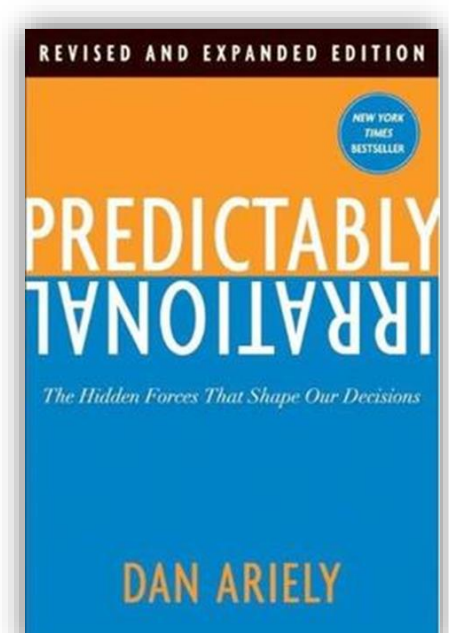
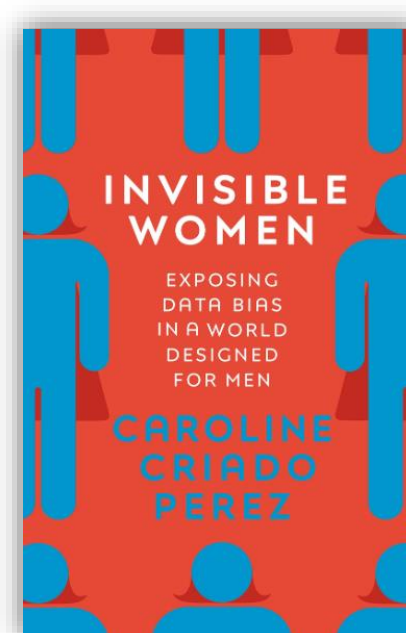
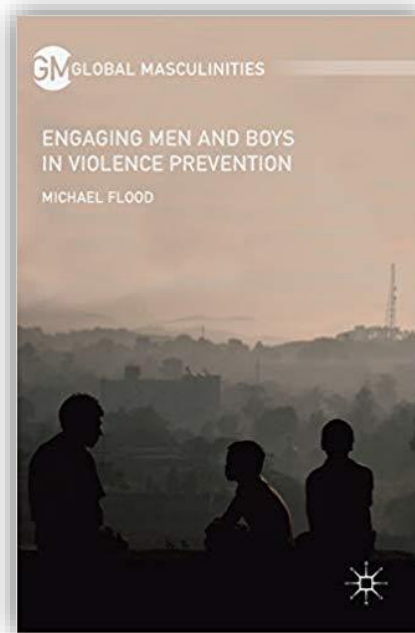
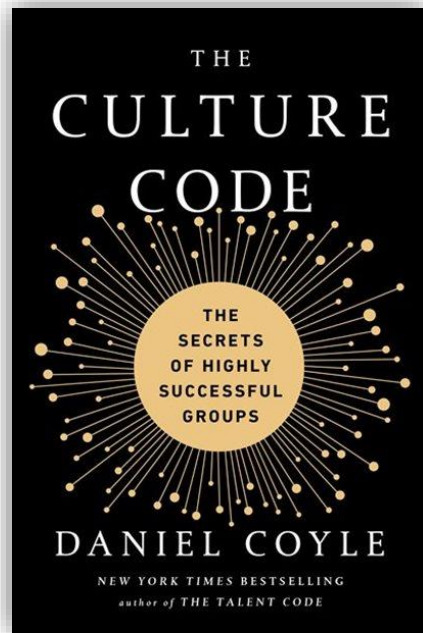
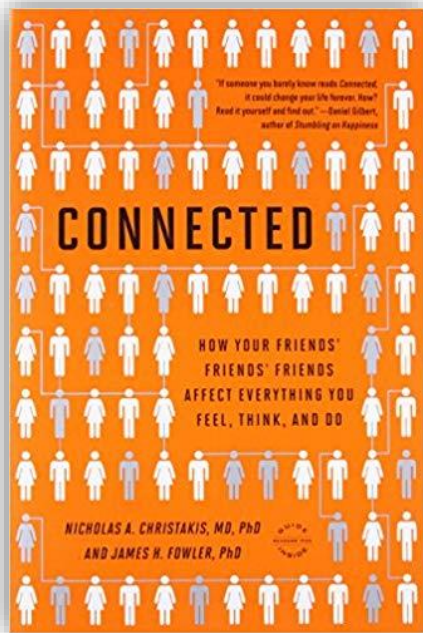


Implications for Organizational Leaders and Practitioners



Implications for Organizational Leaders and Practitioners

- 1) Build individual and organizational capacity for non-programmatic approaches**
- 2) Build capacity for engaging men**
- 3) Extend your knowledge base**





Implications for Organizational Leaders and Practitioners

- 1) **Build individual and organizational capacity for non-programmatic approaches**
- 2) **Build capacity for engaging men**
- 3) **Extend your knowledge base**
- 4) **Do your own work**
- 5) **Support one another**

References

- Armitage, C. J., & Conner, M. (2001). Efficacy of the Theory of Planned Behaviour: A meta-analytic review. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 40(4), 471–499. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466601164939>
- Bopp, M. Bopp, J. (2006). *Recreating the World: A practical guide to building sustainable communities* (2nd Ed.). Calgary, AB: Four Worlds Press.
- Calgary Communities Against Sexual Assault. (2020). *Violence pyramid*. Retrieved from http://ccasayourworld.com/get_the_facts/violence_pyramid/
- Dolan, P., Layard, R., & Metcalfe, R. (2011). *Measuring Subjective Wellbeing for Public Policy: Recommendations on Measures*. Retrieved from <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/special/cepsp23.pdf>
- Exner-Cortens, D. (2019, May). *Safe schools for all youth: Considering identity-based victimization*. Invited keynote conducted at the Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network's (PREVNet) 10th Annual National Conference.
- Navaneelan, T. (2017). *Suicide rates: An Overview*. Statistics Canada Catalogue (no. 82-624-X). Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-624-x/2012001/article/11696-eng.htm>
- Rotenberg, C. (2017). Police-reported sexual assaults in Canada, 2009 to 2014: A statistical profile. Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/54866-eng.htm>
- Sheeran, P., & Webb, T. L. (2016). The Intention-Behavior Gap. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 10(9), 503–518. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12265>
- Sinha, M. (2015). Measuring violence against women: Statistical Trends: Highlights. Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11766/hl-fs-eng.htm>
- Public Health Canada. (2016). *Suicide in Canada: Infographic*. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/suicide-canada-infographic.html>
- Statistics Canada [on behalf of Health Canada]. (2019). Canadian Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey (CTADS) in 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canadian-tobacco-alcohol-drugs-survey/2017-summary.html#n4>
- Statistics Canada. (2020). Deaths and mortality rates, by age group. Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1310071001&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.1&pickMembers%5B1%5D=3.3>
- Bellette, J.M., & Janz, T. (2015). *Injuries in Canada: Insights from the Canadian Community Health Survey*. Statistics Canada no. 82-624-X. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-624-x/2011001/article/11506-eng.htm#a2>
- Pederson, A., Greaves, L., & Poole, N. (2015). Gender-transformative health promotion for women: A framework for action, *Health Promotion International*, 30(1): 140–150, p. 143.
- Thaler, R., & Sunstein, C. (2008). *Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Vaillancourt, R. (2010). *Gender differences in police-reported violent crime in Canada, 2008*. (Catalogue no. 85F0033M, no. 24). Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics: Ottawa.



SHIFT TO STOP VIOLENCE BEFORE IT STARTS



www.preventdomesticviolence.ca

Initiated by the Brenda Stafford Chair in the Prevention of Domestic Violence



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK