

Issue Brief:

# Engaging Men and Boys to Reduce and Prevent Gender-Based Violence



The White Ribbon Campaign is the world's largest effort of men and boys working to end violence against women and girls. Originating in Canada in 1991, as a response to the December 6th Montréal Massacre that took the lives of 14 women, the White Ribbon is the symbol of a man's pledge to never commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women. The White Ribbon Campaign now is active in over 60 countries, and works with the United Nations, governments, and civil society around the world. For more information please visit [www.whiteribbon.ca](http://www.whiteribbon.ca)

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The authors would like to gratefully acknowledge the support and confidence of Status of Women Canada in selecting the White Ribbon Campaign to prepare this Issue Brief. It is our sincere hope that this Issue Brief will contribute to our shared vision of ending gender-based violence in Canada. This paper would not have been possible without the passion, dedication, and hard work of our small but extraordinary team here at the White Ribbon Campaign; Humberto Carolo, Tuval Dinner, Clay Jones, and Nick Rodrigue. In all of our efforts we salute the courage and conviction of every woman who has fought for gender equality and struggled to end violence against women and girls; you have been at the fore of this work for decades, we are humbled and inspired by the work you have done. Finally, we must acknowledge that our contributions to this field have been richly informed by many men before us, to name just a few of special relevance to this paper; Michael Kaufman, Michael Flood, Gary Barker, Michael Kimmel, Alan Berkowitz and Rus Funk.

Until the violence stops,

Todd Minerson, Executive Director  
White Ribbon Campaign

The ideas and opinions expressed in this work are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Canada

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Issue Brief has been commissioned by Status of Women Canada (SWC) in collaboration with The Public Health Agency of Canada to provide an overview of efforts to engage men of all ages in efforts to reduce and prevent gender-based violence.

The paper will begin with a look at the historical efforts in Canada and the development of work with men and boys to end gender-based violence around the world. This overview will also chronicle the expression of this effort in various United Nations commitments since the Beijing 4th World Conference on Women in 1995. A brief review of Canadian statistics around violence against women, and a look at what little research exists on men's attitudes towards gender-based violence in Canada and globally will follow.

In order to address the roles men of all ages can play in preventing and reducing gender-based violence, the paper will then examine the root causes; the socialization of men, power and patriarchy, masculinities, gender inequality and the links to all forms of violence against women. Further detail will be provided for the complex issues and multiple dimensions around gender-based violence particularly as they relate to men, and a brief contextualization of the relevance to several communities of interest.

Finally, the paper will illustrate the promising strategies, best practices, and effective frameworks for engaging men and boys in the effort to reduce and prevent gender-based violence. This section will also identify gaps, and note the considerations, limits and risks involved as well.

The White Ribbon Campaign, a Canadian registered non-profit with 20 years experience in this work has been commissioned to write this paper. WRC began in Canada in 1991, as a response to the tragic murder of 14 women on December 6th 1989, at L'École Polytechnique in Montréal. A small group of men determined that men had both a role and responsibility in working to end violence against women. What started as a grassroots effort to raise awareness with men and boys, has now evolved to an internationally recognized movement, with WRC activities supported in over 60 countries around the world.

### Why work with men and boys to reduce and prevent gender-based violence?

Violence against women is one of the world's most egregious forms of discrimination and abuse of human rights. It takes place in every country in the world, across all strata of social and economic classes, and Canada is no exception. Despite decades of effort, particularly from women and women's organizations, women and girls still experience violence at a staggering and traumatic rate. This violence causes harm and misery to women, children, families, communities, and

nations. In fact we would all benefit from the elimination of violence against women.

In 1993, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly defined violence against women as "any act of **gender-based violence** that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women" (United Nations, 1993). In real terms this includes violence in domestic and inter-personal relationships; many forms of sexual violence including rape and sexual assault; systemic, institutional and culture based forms of violence (rape in conflict settings, preventing girls from attending school by threat of violence, honour killings); and new emerging forms of harassment and stalking based in modern technology.

The vast majority of this violence is perpetrated by men, specifically against women and girls. While most men may never use or condone the use of violence, the simple fact is that men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators of gender-based violence. The root causes of gender-based violence can almost exclusively be narrowed down to two things; the fundamental condition of gender inequality for women, and the violent, harmful and controlling aspects of masculinities which are the result of patriarchal power imbalances.

The thesis of this issue brief is threefold.

1. **Work with men and boys is necessary.** As major perpetrators, the target audience for primary prevention, holders of the social norms and influencers on other men, men need to be engaged to reduce and prevent gender-based violence.
2. **Work with men and boys can be effective.** As the evidence base grows, evaluation data appears, lessons are learned, and best practices are shared, we know this may be the missing compliment to past decades of work.
3. **Work with men and boys can have a positive, transformative impact for the lives of women and girls, but also for the lives of men and boys.** There is a much broader spectrum of positive roles for men and boys to play than perpetrator or potential perpetrator of gender-based violence. These roles not only prevent and reduce violence against women, but also improve the lives of men and boys by freeing them from these harmful and limiting aspects of masculinities. As a result, we can eliminate gender inequalities that hold back the development of our communities and nation, and ensure that women and girls men care about do not have to live a life in fear of violence.

## Exclusions and limitations of this paper.

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It is important at the outset to understand the exclusions and limitations of this paper.

While exploring issues around men and masculinities and the links to gender-based violence, inevitably many issues that negatively affect the lives of men and boys appear, and merit further exploration. These include the “costs” of patriarchy to men, men’s violence against other men, economic insecurity, the pressures to provide and protect, the impact of the recession, the negative impacts of crime, war, and the emotional and psychological costs of masculinity. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore and solve these conditions referred to as the “crisis of masculinity”.

The paper will focus specifically on issues related to engaging men and boys in the prevention and reduction of gender-based violence, and not engaging men on the full range of gender equality issues; for example, income equity, political representation, sexual health and reproductive rights, etc.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to conduct a policy analysis of legislation and policy possibilities for engaging men and boys in the reduction and prevention of gender-based violence.

The paper will also include a limited review of the impact of criminal justice responses on prevention and deterrence, and will not evaluate the effectiveness of the police justice response. A brief analysis of batterer intervention programs and options will be provided, recognizing that programs for men who have used violence are an important part in addressing the continuum of men’s attitudes and behaviours towards gender-based violence.

Finally, it is also beyond the scope of this paper to look specifically at interventions in men’s health or health promotion field, although links to those areas are important.

## 2.0 SETTING THE CONTEXT

### Understanding the history of the work globally and in Canada

Prior to the 1990s, the bulk of men's involvement with engaging other men to end violence against women and promote gender equity occurred in small pockets around the globe, focused primarily on local initiatives that lacked any long-term sustainability. Early, grassroots community-based groups in Canada, such as Men's Network for Change and Men for Women's Choice were made up of loose collections of men with shared attitudes towards ending violence against women and gender inequality. Early efforts focused on awareness-raising through newsletters and letter-writing advocacy campaigns (Michael Kaufman, 2011).

The North America National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS) began as a loose-knit spontaneous social movement in the early 1970s and continues today as an organization for "changing men, strongly supporting the continuing struggle of women for full equality" (NOMAS, 2008).

It was not until the early to mid-1990s, that unified, professional organizations of men working to end violence against women began to emerge around the globe and especially in Canada, in no small part due to the tragic events at L'École Polytechnique in Montréal on December 6th 1989. The White Ribbon Campaign, initiated in 1991 and recognized as a registered charitable organization in 1993, has taken a leading role in Canada and around the globe in engaging men to speak out about violence against women.

Through the federal Family Violence Initiative, in 1992 the Government of Canada funded five research centres on family violence and violence against women at universities across Canada. Those centers include RESOLVE, FREDA Center (SFU & UBC), The Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research (MMFC & UNB), CRI-VIFF (Université de Montréal, Université Laval), and the Center for Research & Education (University of Western Ontario). This is one of many investments by the federal government in ending gender-based violence, and one that has stimulated some important work in the field.

From the mid-1990s until the present day the gender equity and violence against women movements have gained strong footholds on university and college campuses across Canada. On a yearly basis, many Campus Health & Resource Centers order educational materials and white ribbons from the White Ribbon Campaign to display and distribute to students. Students' associations organize groups of men to engage their peers on ideas and definitions of masculinity, gender equity and healthy relationships.

Some campuses, such as Ryerson University and the University of Western Ontario, have created sustainable White Ribbon Campaigns that engage with their communities, both

on and off campus, by hosting day-long workshops, producing PSAs, and maintaining interactive websites and a presence in social media through Twitter feeds and Facebook pages.

The movement has spread beyond university and college campuses in Canada. For example, Kizhaay Anishnaabe Niin ("I Am a Kind Man") is an online tool for Aboriginal men in Ontario that embraces the "Seven Grandfather Teachings", a way of living through "wisdom, love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility and truth." Created in partnership with the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centers, White Ribbon Campaign and the Ontario Government, "I Am a Kind Man" has a mandate to engage Aboriginal communities to speak out against all forms of violence against women (Kizhaay Anishnaabe Niin, 2011).

National and local women's organizations, such as the Canadian Women's Foundation (CWF), YWCA Canada (and various local chapters), the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, METRAC and many shelters and transitional housing organizations, have supported and created initiatives aimed at working with men and boys to help end violence against women. In addition, several provincial governments, including Ontario, Newfoundland, and Alberta have conducted different projects and programs to engage men in the prevention of gender-based violence.

Since the early to mid-2000s there has been a marked increase in organizations working with men and women, re-examining gender roles and ideas of masculinity. The Fourth R is an in-depth curriculum-based strategy that works with youth, their peers, teachers, parents and their communities at large (The Fourth R, 2008).

We Can End All Violence Against Women (We Can) is an international campaign with a presence in British Columbia focused on engaging men, women, boys and girls at home and in their communities, using social-media (Facebook, Twitter and Youtube) as broad-reaching, awareness-raising tools. The campaign's ultimate goal to end violence against women is addressed by challenging attitudes and beliefs that support and perpetuate violence (We Can, 2011).

### Engaging men and boys from the United Nations perspective

Equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of international law as established in the UN Charter. Achieving gender equality is a societal responsibility that must fully engage both men and women. The role of men and boys in promoting and realizing gender equality has, however, only been given significant attention during the past 15 years.

The Cairo Programme of Action (1994) and its 1999 review highlighted the need to encourage men to take responsibility with respect to child-rearing and housework, family life as well as parenthood and sexual and reproductive behaviour.

The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) restated the principle of shared power and responsibility; and argued that women's concerns could only be addressed in partnership with men. It also identified priority areas for action: education and socialization of children, sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, and balancing work and family responsibilities. (United Nations Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995)

The outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the UN General Assembly (2000) reaffirmed earlier commitments and noted obstacles to the implementation of critical areas of concern. For example, persistent gender stereotyping, unequal power relationships between women and men which hindered women's ability to insist on safe and responsible sex practices, lack of communication and understanding between women and men on women's health needs, were identified as areas where men needed to be engaged.

At its 48th session in 2009, the UN Commission on the Status of Women adopted agreed conclusions on "(t)he role of men and boys in achieving gender equality" that put forward a series of recommendations to ensure men's involvement in efforts towards gender equality and the advancement of women:

- promote reconciliation of work and family responsibilities;
- encourage the active involvement of men and boys in eliminating gender stereotypes;
- encourage men to participate in programmes designed to prevent and treat all forms of HIV/AIDS transmission and other sexually transmitted diseases;
- design and implement programmes to enable men to adopt safe and responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour;
- **support men and boys to take an active part in the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence;** and
- implement programmes to accelerate socio-cultural change towards gender equality, especially through the upbringing and educational process (United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, 2009).

In 2009, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon launched his UNiTE to End Violence against Women Campaign, a landmark commitment from the highest level of the UN. A key

feature of this campaign was the recognition that men must be partners in prevention and agents of change. The UNiTE Campaign recognized that:

"For many years, women around the world have led efforts to prevent and end violence, and today more and more men are adding their support to the women's movement. Men have a crucial role to play as fathers, friends, decision makers, and community and opinion leaders, in speaking out against violence against women and ensuring that priority attention is given to the issue. Importantly, men can provide positive role models for young men and boys, based on healthy models of masculinity." (United Nations UNiTE Campaign, 2009)



In the effort to include men as part of the solution to ending violence against women, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon launched his Network of Men Leaders as part of the UNiTE Campaign. The Network supports the work of women around the world to defy destructive stereotypes, embrace equality, and inspire men and boys everywhere to speak out against violence.

## A growing global movement

In 2004, a global alliance of NGOs and UN agencies that seeks to engage boys and men in achieving gender equality was formed, called MenEngage. The International Steering Committee Members include Sonke Gender Justice (South Africa), Promundo (Brazil), EngenderHealth (US), Family Violence Prevention Fund (US), International Center for Research on Women (US), International Planned Parenthood Federation (UK), Save the Children-Sweden, Sahoyog (India), and White Ribbon Campaign (Canada). MenEngage partners work collectively and individually toward the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those components that focus on achieving gender equality. Activities of the alliance include information-sharing, joint training activities and national, regional and international advocacy.

In 2009, MenEngage hosted the first Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This Symposium brought together over 400 activists, academics and government leaders from over 80 countries. It culminated in the Rio Declaration, a comprehensive call to action on a range of actions for men and boys as it relates to gender equality; including ending gender-based violence. (MenEngage Alliance, 2009)

## Next steps for Canada

There is a growing acceptance among women's organizations in Canada and around the world, international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Save the Children, Plan International), multi-lateral organizations (the EU, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Pan American Health Organization), and the UN that engaging men and, especially, young men and boys is an essential approach in working towards full gender equality. In addition, there has been a surge of grassroots organizations led by and addressed to men and boys to advance men's role and responsibility in ending gender-based violence and promoting gender equality.

Despite all of these advances and initiatives, the growth of organizations, and institutional and government recognition, challenges remain. In Canada, no organized national network of like-minded organizations examining violence against women and working towards gender equity exists on a strategic national level. Most of the efforts are local, small scale, under-resourced, and unsustainable. Although well intended, these initiatives may not be grounded in evidence-based best practices. In that regard, Canada lags behind many other countries in the world, such as Brazil, India, Sweden, and South Africa, however, there is a great deal of promise, and a great deal of work to do.

In terms of capacity and skills building, there is an opportunity to advance the field rapidly with the advent of social media, e-learning tools and approaches, and the growth of the body of work to draw upon internationally. First however, there is a need to conduct a comprehensive mapping of projects, programmes and interventions currently taking place across the country. Upon completion of a mapping project, a better case could be made for the actual needs in terms of capacity building, skills development, and network building. All of these efforts would serve to ensure that the work is evidence based, reflects the most effective approaches that are known, and "made-in-Canada" successes can be leveraged for greater impact.

The fundamental question has shifted from "why" we should work with men and boys, to "how" we work with men and boys.

In particular, it is known that there are major gaps in Canada around;

- A detailed understanding of Canadian men's beliefs and attitudes around gender-based violence and gender equality – the two key elements in effective programme development
- Consistency and evidence base in programme development, facilitator training, and programme evaluation
- A national network or forum of like minded service providers
- A gendered approach to early childhood education, and character development vis a vis gender equality at a young age

Current advances in technology, communications, social media, and e-learning mean that scaling up this form of capacity building can be done in a matter of a few years, not decades. In the US, an online organization called **PreventConnect.org** ([www.preventconnect.org](http://www.preventconnect.org)) is dedicated to advancing the field of primary prevention around gender-based violence, and uses webinars, teleconferences, a resource clearinghouse, interviews, and other e-learning initiatives to advance its mandate. It would be interesting to see how this could be applied in the Canadian context.

The past five to seven years have witnessed a paradigm shift in the nature of the dialogue around working with men and boys to promote gender equality and prevent and reduce gender-based violence. The fundamental question has shifted from "**why**" we should work with men and boys, to "**how**" we work with men and boys. Subsequently the conversations have looked to the evidence base, the effective strategies, promising practices, the lessons learned from other fields and disciplines, taking programmes to scale, building networks and partnerships.



## A review of the statistical situation in Canada

Violence against women is a serious and prevalent issue in Canada, despite the relative lack of attention it receives as a public policy issue, a justice issue, a gender equality issue and a public health and safety issue outside of government and community groups working to end it.

- Half of Canadian women (51%) have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16 (Statistics Canada, 1993);
- Every minute of every day, a Canadian woman or child is being sexually assaulted (Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 1998);
- In 2009, victims of spousal violence were less likely to report the incident to police than in 2004. Just under one-quarter (22%) of spousal violence victims stated that the incident came to the attention of the police (Statistics Canada 2011); and
- Rates of self-reported family violence have remained relatively stable since 2004, and homicides are seeing a gradual decline in numbers, women still continue to be at three times greater risk of being murdered (Statistics Canada, 2010)

Canadian violence against women statistics confirm that men are the offenders in over 90% of spousal violence cases across a broad spectrum of offences including sexual assault, major assault, uttering threats and criminal harassment (Statistics Canada, 2006).

Recently, many attempts have been made to provide suggestions that the rates of perpetration and prevalence of violence in intimate partner relationships is symmetrical; that is to say equal between men and women. A more in depth analysis of that data concludes that men's perpetration of this violence against women is more frequent, more harmful, more likely to be fatal, less often used in self-defense, and more often used as an ongoing tool of power and control as opposed to episodic type violence (Kimmel, 2002, Dobash, 2004)). While men certainly can and do experience violence, a selective use of these statistics, methodological flaws and conflicting evidence all dispel this myth of gender symmetry (Flood 2007, 1999). When men experience violence in intimate relationships, it is far from equal to women's experiences of gender-based violence, particularly when you expand the understanding beyond violence in intimate partner relationships to sexual violence, harassment, stalking, workplace violence etc.

Research has shown that experiencing and/or witnessing violence early in life can increase the likelihood that both men and women will experience violence from or perpetrate

violence towards spouses. The Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS) found that "women in violent marriages were twice as likely to have witnessed their own fathers assaulting their mothers and were three times as likely as women in non-violent marriages to state that their spouse had witnessed violence as a child" (Statistics Canada, 1994). Furthermore, young women and girls with early exposure to abusive relationships are at an increased risk of victimization by others later in life (Statistics Canada, 2006).

Further research has also found that men who either witnessed their mothers suffering abuse by their fathers, or were abused themselves, were more likely to inflict abuse on their own partners later in life and that "men who were exposed to violence in childhood also tended to inflict more serious and repeated assaults on their wives than men without this early exposure" (Valerie Pottie Bunge and Andrea Levett, 1998).

It is clear that early exposure to violence as a child has a significant effect on the likelihood that one will experience or perpetrate violence against others as an adult.

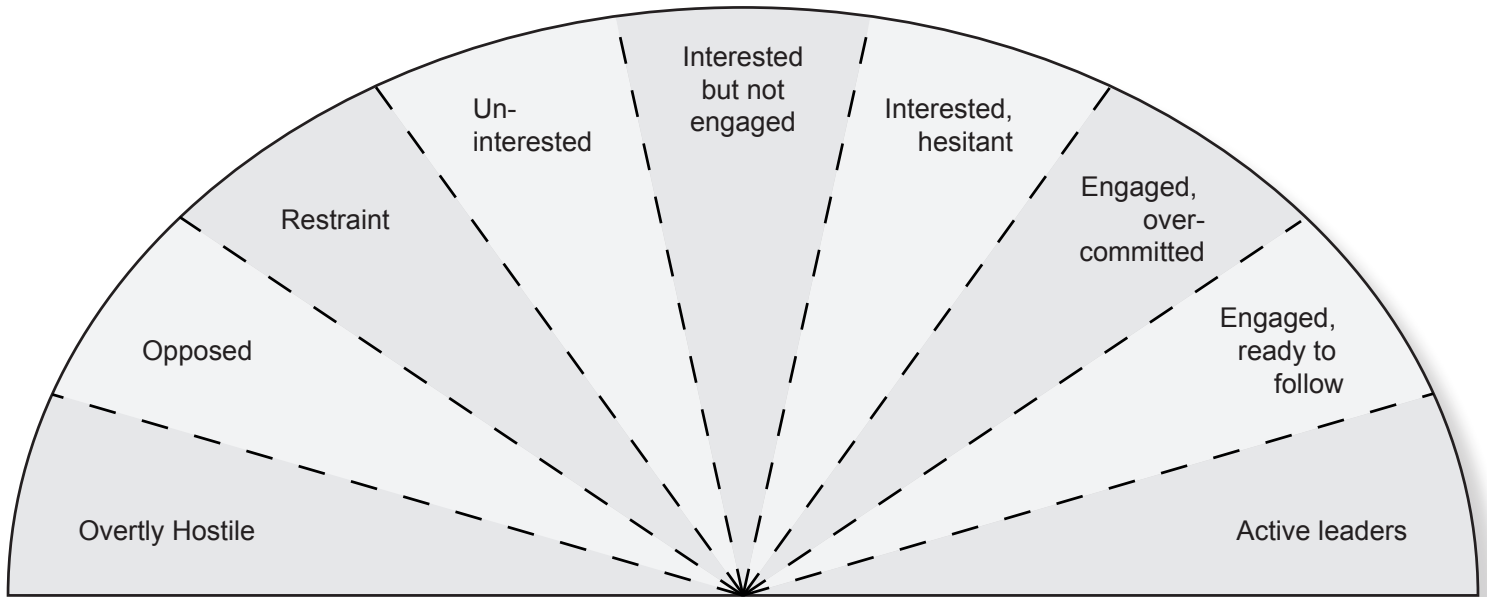
## Men's attitudes and beliefs around gender-based violence

Relatively speaking, very little is known about Canadian men's attitudes and beliefs around gender-based violence. In 2005, the White Ribbon Campaign conducted a survey with men across Canada to better understand perceptions and attitudes towards men's violence against women. The survey found that the majority (75%) of Canadian men feel that it is very important to speak out on issues of violence against women, and two thirds (66%) felt that they could personally be doing more. Of those, less than 50% were willing to intervene when confronted with a peer's sexist language or behaviour while at the same time more than half would intervene when the behaviour turned violent (Pollara, 2005).

Most men appear to be caught between knowing the importance of speaking out about violence against women and the unwillingness or perceived lack of knowledge or skills to intervene should the issue arise. Furthermore, when men do intervene, their responses are more likely than women's to be characterized by anger and revenge-seeking, excessive advice-giving, trivializing and victim-blaming (Michael Flood, 2010).

The involvement of men in ending violence against women and promoting gender equality varies and can best be described as diverse interventions on a continuum. Rus Ervin Funk's "Continuum of Men's Engagement" describes the different stages of men's involvement in ending violence against women (Funk, 2006). Interventions and programs are best informed when they assess where their target

**TABLE 1: The Continuum of Men**



From "Reaching Men: Strategies for Preventing Sexist Attitudes, Behaviours, and Violence" by Rus Ervine Funk, 2006.

audience lies on this spectrum, and what means can be used to advance them towards a more active and supportive position with regards to gender-based violence.

In a study sponsored by the Family Violence Prevention Fund with 1,000 men in the USA, it was found that one in five men did not support efforts to end violence against women because they were not asked to get involved. Furthermore, 13% of men felt that the reason for their lack of involvement was because they were perceived as part of the problem rather than part of the solution (Garin, 2000). This is a strong indication that strength-based messages and campaigns focussing on the positive roles men can play can have a significant impact on encouraging men to increase their ownership of the issue both by getting involved and by seeing themselves as part of the solution.

More recent research by the Family Violence Prevention Fund (Peter D. Hart Research Associates Inc., 2007) provides some very encouraging news. This research not only confirms the positive impact men can have in promoting gender equality, but also indicates a strong willingness among men to do so. This survey found:

- Fifty-seven percent (57%) of men believe that they personally can make at least some difference in preventing domestic violence and sexual assault;

- Seventy-three percent (73%) of men think they can make at least some difference in promoting healthy, respectful, non-violent relationships among young people;
- Seventy percent (70%) are willing to make time to talk to children about healthy, violence-free relationships (up from 55% in 2000);
- More 35- to 49-year-olds (81%) and younger men (78%) are positive than older men about their ability to promote healthy relationships among young people; and
- Men's interest in talking with children about this issue has increased notably since 2000, when 55% of men said that they would be willing to make time to do it. Not only do 82% of fathers of children under 18 say that they would be willing to make time, but also 63% of men who do not have children under 18 say the same.

While there is no current research available, WRC also hypothesizes through our work and experience over the past 20 years, that this kind of engagement by men in promoting gender equality, has a lateral benefit of encouraging, empowering, and enabling them to begin similar efforts within their own peer groups and communities.

## 3.0 MEN & MASCULINITIES

Gender-based violence is a complex, complicated, and wide-ranging issue involving a multitude of factors embedded in culture, economy, law; and most intractably our **cultural constructions of masculinities**. For too long men's roles in this equation have primarily been seen as perpetrators or potential perpetrators of violence against women, but relatively little has been done to understand the root causes, and how that understanding can be leveraged as a primary prevention strategy.

We are just at the leading edge of connecting our understanding of men and masculinities with prevention work, and expanding the positive roles men can play to recruit new allies, new approaches, and new paradigms to the effort to end violence against women.

Contrary to what some evolutionary scholars assert, men are not biologically programmed or "hardwired" to be abusive towards women. If this were true, then all men would be violent toward women, but most are not. Men's violence does not operate in a vacuum. Men learn a substantial number of actions, values and beliefs from growing up in and being part of the cultural context they live in. Their values and beliefs are expressions of broader social forces, which in Canada are too often patriarchal in nature (Walter DeKeseredy, 2011).

In many studies, as well as in our own work, one can see that young men and boys still learn that the ideal man, a real man, is tough, unemotional, powerful, dominant, uncompromising and in control (Cordelia Fine, 2010). This concept of masculinity is not only limiting and dated, it's also dangerous.

The negative messages and problematic cultural norms boys learn also give a reason for hope. In a world that promotes these ideas there are still many men who reject violence and refuse to use it in their relationships. If we are able to tap into the aspects of our culture and men's attitudes that support gender equality and healthy relationships we may start to see significant changes in the lives of women.

### Barriers to men's engagement

Our collective experience at the White Ribbon Campaign has led us to identify several grouping of barriers for men's engagement in working to prevent and reduce violence against women.

#### 1) Accountability Barriers

Perhaps the most common way in which these barriers are articulated is through comments like "I don't beat my wife, go and talk to those guys who do". This statement says several things. First, I am not part of the problem; second, it's not my problem to deal with anyway; and finally, isn't the fact that I don't use violence enough to make me a "good guy"?

The negative messages and problematic cultural norms boys learn also give a reason for hope. In a world that promotes these ideas there are still many men who reject violence and refuse to use it in their relationships.

These kinds of beliefs are indicators that men and boys do not see violence against women as a personal issue to them, that there are challenges for men examining their own roles in a patriarchal system, and that the bar is set quite low for what it means to be a good guy when it comes to violence against women.

Some of these challenges can be solved through raising awareness, but at their heart they necessitate men's own critical examination of their role in an inequitable society, their own actions, language and beliefs, and as such require more sophisticated approaches. They need multi-faceted approaches to raising the bar and changing the social norms for men's attitudes and behaviours around violence against women.

#### 2) Awareness Barriers

Many men actually do not think violence against women is a serious issue in our society. In addition, many men are oblivious to the conditions and experiences around violence that are a daily part of women's lives. One of the most powerful tactics of systems of power and privilege is to render itself invisible, and a key strategy to overcome this barrier is to shine light on the subject matter, draw personal connections to the issue with men, and to advocate for a clear, fair and enhanced representation of the issues of violence against women in the media and cultural landscapes.

#### 3) Privilege Barriers

Even when men are ready to acknowledge they have a role to play in matters around gender-based violence, they often point the finger to "other" men as the real problem. Men with mental health issues, addictions or substance use challenges, men from low income, low education demographics, or men from immigrant or less "progressive" communities.

Once again this is a system of power and privilege immunizing itself from critical analysis, but there are other dimensions at play here. First, it is a perfect example of the multiplicities of masculinity, where some men experience even greater

power and privilege over others, and will utilize that power to protect their own self-interest.

In addition, the reality for many men is that it is a difficult and foreign thing to examine your own role in a patriarchal system, a system where almost everything men learn about masculinity is how to work within it, how to survive it, how to make it work to our advantage – not how to critically examine it and challenge it.

#### 4) Men's silence

Given the barriers above, the default position for too many men is one of silence. A deeper examination reveals many of the reasons even “good guys” remain silent.

- Many men tell us they simply don't know how, don't have the proper tools, or have never had this kind of behaviour modelled to them;
- Pressure to be “perfect”, knowledgeable, or at least well informed;
- May have personal experiences (of action or omission) that are difficult to reconcile with speaking up;
- Have never been asked or challenged to speak up;
- Do not think they can make a difference;
- May want to protect other men in their lives who may use violence;
- Own experience of violence or sexual abuse recalled; and
- Worry about what other men will think of us, seem like “less of a man”.

If we apply a basic social justice understanding to ending gender-based violence, then we can also equate silence to tolerance, and inaction to impunity, that is to say a lack of real consequences for men who commit or condone violence against women and a perpetuation of the conditions which support and tolerate it.

When men do break the silence, the results are often surprising. Instead of fearing what other men think, they may find that more men share those views, but also were afraid to express them. Instead of seeming weak or less manly, they are viewed as principled and courageous for speaking out. We also hear men relate that despite their fears, they do have the tools to do this work, they have been doing it in other ways, and feel even more encouraged once they make those connections.

### Transforming masculinities

Paul Collier, whose work on how we can improve the lives of the “bottom billion” people on the planet, offers an interesting thesis on transformative social change. He contends that transformative social change happens where there is an alliance between compassion and “enlightened self-interest”. (Paul Collier, 2008)

If we apply this concept to working with men and boys to end violence against women, we illuminate one of the critical missing elements in the work. The case for compassion is clear, women and girls have a right to a life free of violence, the levels of violence are pandemic, and it affects us all. However, where is the enlightened self-interest, the fundamental question of “what's in it for men”, as a motivator for change?

Across the globe, the evidence is clear. Where women fare better, have equal access to education and employment, improved health outcomes, and experience less violence; those countries perform better by almost every indicator. There is a “gender equality dividend”, a tide that can raise all of our boats; however, historically that conversation has been more about rights and equality (as it needed to be) for women and girls, and less about the economic, social and political benefits to all of us.

Work with men and boys needs to also demonstrate the more personal costs of patriarchy to men, and subsequently the benefits to working towards gender equality and ending violence against women.



Costs of patriarchy to men:

- **Health Costs:** shorter lives, higher suicide rate, disproportionate representation in stress related illness (heart disease, stroke), addictions, far greater chance of dying in an accident or homicide, more likely to be in jail;
- **Emotional Costs:** alienation from ourselves and others, mental health, depression, disconnection, conformity into traditional masculine stereotypes;
- **Economic Costs:** work longer, lower overall prosperity for society, pressure to provide; and
- **Societal Costs:** war, violence, crime, fear of other men.

## Benefits of gender equality for men:

- Being trusted, better relationships, better health;
- Not being lumped into a stereotypical group of "men", not having to conform to negative aspects of masculinity;
- More freedom to pursue any activities in which they are interested; People men care about (mothers, sisters, girlfriends, aunts, etc) have a lesser chance of being harmed by violence and other gender inequities;
- Not bullied by other men for stepping outside the gender "box";
- Less pressure to be the sole provider and protector, more economic prosperity for all; and
- More opportunities to be close to your children.

Approaches to working with men and boys to prevent and reduce gender-based violence must not only challenge the harmful aspects of masculinities, but also work towards the enlightened self-interest motivations. A combined approach will facilitate truly transformative change, and the creation of a new paradigm around the social norms associated with what it really means to be a man.

Gender-based violence is neither exclusively a women's issue, nor a men's issue, but it is a **society wide issue**.

It is as much about women's empowerment and reclaiming safe space as it is about deconstructing masculinity and dismantling privilege; as much about support and intervention for women, as it is about education, awareness and prevention for men.

Men need to be addressed as part of the solution, not just part of the problem. They need to be invited and challenged to critically reflect on the existence of patriarchy, male power and privilege; to analyze the costs to women and girls, but also the costs to men and boys. Finally, men and boys also need to be shown the benefits of gender equality, to women, girls, and all of humanity.

## 4.0 ISSUES AND DIMENSIONS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

### 4.1 Domestic and inter-personal violence

#### Scope, magnitude and complexities

Spousal violence in Canada has resulted in the largest number of convictions involving violent offenses between 1997 and 2002. Of those offenses, 90% were committed by men (Statistics Canada, 2006). This form of violence has serious costs, measured at \$4 billion annually, when taking into account expenditures related to social services, criminal justice, lost employment and health care (Greaves et al., 1995).

Interpersonal violence, although experienced by both women and men, is highly gendered. Women are three times more likely than men to be physically injured by spousal violence; five times more likely to require medical attention (Statistics Canada, 2005), and five times more likely to fear for their lives. The severity of this violence or the threats experienced by women were so serious that 38% of women feared for their lives compared with 7% of men (Statistics Canada, 2000).

Between 2000 and 2009, there were 738 reported spousal homicides in Canada, and women continued to be three times more likely than men to be victims of spousal homicide. If there is a glimmer of hope, it is that the spousal homicide rate remained stable for the third consecutive year. This follows nearly three decades of gradual decline. (Statistics Canada, 2011)

According to the Canadian Women's Foundation, violence is experienced by women across all ethnic, racial, religious, age, social and economic groups. However, risk and vulnerability increases for young women, women with a disability, women geographically isolated, and Aboriginal women.

Domestic violence can also take on many forms. In addition to physical violence, psychological, faith based, economic, emotional, and the use of violence as an ongoing tool of power control and intimidation often take place in a domestic context.

Violence in the home has a significant impact on children. It is estimated that 360,000 children are exposed to violence at home in Canada (UNICEF et al., 2006). Witnessing or experiencing violence in the home may have long term consequences for children including emotional trauma, depression, and other psychological and behavioural problems extending into adolescence and adulthood (Statistics Canada, 2000). As an example of the scope of this violence and the impact on children, 36,840 children and 58,486 women sought refuge in shelters in Canada in one year alone (April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004) (Statistics Canada, 2005)

According to the UN, violence against women is one of the most serious human rights abuses in the world and includes

According to the UN, violence against women is one of the most serious human rights abuses in the world and includes domestic abuse, rape, child marriages, and female circumcision.

domestic abuse, rape, child marriages, and female circumcision. Other forms of violence against women include gender selection during pregnancy, infanticide, commercialized violence such as trafficking of women and girls, labour exploitation, incest, and rape as an instrument of war. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women identifies and categorizes violence according to where it takes place – in the family, in the general community, and where perpetrated or condoned by the state (United Nations Department of Public Information, 1996).

#### Violence in Same-sex Relationships

Significant advances in the recognition of human rights for gays and lesbians have occurred over the past twenty years in Canada, including the legalization of same-sex marriage at the federal level. Despite these advances and increased visibility of same-sex relationships in mainstream communities, abuse within these relationships is not yet well understood or documented.

Experts believe that rates of violence and abuse in same-sex relationships are similar to those in heterosexual relationships. This is difficult to confirm as there is so little research conducted to investigate this issue. Reporting rates are very low due to lack of culturally appropriate services; poor relations between the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered (LGBT) community and service providers such as shelters, police, child welfare; and reluctance in the community to acknowledge this problem (Pat Durish, 2007).

Frameworks developed to understand violence in heterosexual relationships are inadequate for understanding same-sex partner abuse. In addition, experiences of abuse in relationships vary in gay, lesbian, or transgendered relationships. Several misconceptions exist such as dismissing same-sex violence in gay relationships as “boys will be boys” or denial that women may be capable of abusing another woman within an intimate relationship. Individuals who have experienced violence within same-sex relationships have often

reported having their complaints dismissed by police as “cat fights” or situations of “mutual aggression” (Pat Durish, 2007).

Additional research is needed in order to fully understand the complexities of abuse in same-sex relationships. The needs of the LGBT community need to be taken into consideration by victims services, police services, and service providers. Training, capacity building, community mobilization, and resource development can be effective ways in addressing violence in same-sex relationships at a systemic level. Mainstream organizations, including prevention and education programs, need to take into account the experiences and needs of individuals in same-sex relationships both from a prevention and support point of view. Community awareness campaigns could prove to be effective in de-stigmatizing the issue of violence in same-sex relationships.

### **Gaps in men’s understanding**

Without relevant research it is difficult to say for sure what men in Canada know and understand about domestic violence. What is often heard from men is that, since they are not violent themselves, it is not their responsibility to act on this issue. Men also tell us that when violence against women is discussed they feel that they are being blamed and seen as part of the problem.

There is a much greater willingness from men to engage in dialogue and action around this issue when they are viewed and presented as part of the solution. The Family Violence Prevention Fund in the US, the White Ribbon Campaign in Australia and the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) (The IMAGES Survey) are conducting studies which explore these attitudes in much greater detail. The value and the necessity here is to accurately identify risk areas, entry points, and effective strategies for engaging men, and these results have informed very successful programmes and interventions. WRC has conducted preliminary research, but more detail is needed to effectively inform relevant programmes and interventions that are responsive to the unique aspects of Canadian society.

### **Connections and links to attitudes around gender equality**

Most men believe that violence against women is unacceptable and most men reject common myths about domestic violence. However, a substantial minority, over a third, believe dangerous ideas like rape results from men not being able to control a need for sex. Many men are still too willing to believe that women lie and make up false accusations of violence.

There’s a powerful link between violence against women and sexism. Research shows that men with the worst attitudes,

the most violence-supportive attitudes, are those with the most sexist attitudes towards gender and gender roles (Michael Flood, 2010). Conversely, men who exhibit gender equitable behaviours and attitudes are more likely to be able to identify a positive male role model who influenced them. Globally, countries that rank high on the Global Gender Gap Index have consistently lower rates of violence against women. As will be reported in the Section on Strategies and Frameworks, this is the key consideration for the need for the inclusion of gender equity and gender transformative work with men and boys.

## **4.2 Sexual Violence**

Sexual violence against women is an area in which men are almost exclusively the perpetrators, but relatively little has been done around primary prevention work with men and boys. The Ontario Government has recently released a Sexual Violence Prevention Plan with a strong component around primary prevention with men and boys, which leads us to have some optimism that this approach is beginning to take hold.

Sexual violence is a complicated issue due to the variety and difference in various forms of perpetration, the links to the sexual objectification and commodification of women, the inherent gender inequality and men’s privilege historically in matters of human sexuality.

This section of the issue brief will look at those complexities in greater detail.

### **Rape and Sexual Assault**

Rape and sexual assault remain shockingly common in Canada. The numbers tell a powerful story of young people and children being violated and adult women surviving sexual violence in their homes, on campus, in their dating lives and elsewhere. Statistics Canada has found that one in four girls and one in eight boys (Isely & Hehrenbech-Shim, 1997; Scarce, 1997) have been sexually abused by the time they are eighteen. The majority of perpetrators in these cases are heterosexual men.

When it comes to sexual assault, girls and young women between the ages of 15 and 24 are the most likely victims (Justice Institute of British Columbia).

Despite a persistent myth that women are most often assaulted by a stranger most (69%) of survivors are sexually assaulted by men known to them – dates, boyfriends, marital partners, friends, family members or neighbours (J. Brickman and J. Briere, 1984).

Most efforts to work with men on rape and sexual assault have been based on fear and criminal punishment as a

deterrent, and have not addressed many of the underlying causes of sexual violence, as will be detailed below.

### **Date Rape**

One of the profoundly disturbing realities of sexual violence is its prevalence among young people who are at the beginning of their romantic, intimate and sexual lives. Just looking at the context of Canadian university and college campuses the statistics are staggering. 4 out of five female undergraduates surveyed at Canadian universities said they had been victims of violence in a dating relationship. 29% reported incidents of sexual assault (W. DeKeseredy and K.Kelly 1993.).

The Centre for Prevention Science of the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health surveyed 1819 Grade 9 and 11 students in both rural and city schools between 2004 and 2007 to measure both the victimization and perpetration of harassment and bullying and overall school safety. When surveyed on sexual pressures, 4% of males in grade 11 admitted trying to force someone to have sex with them, while 10% of males and 27% of females admitted being pressured into doing something sexual that they did not want to. Not surprisingly, the data shows that girls are feeling this pressure more than boys, with 15% reporting that they had oral sex just to avoid having intercourse (David Wolf and Debbie Chiod, 2008).

### **Rape in Marriage**

Although some people may still believe that perpetrating rape in a spousal relationship is not possible, it has been illegal in Canada since 1983. Despite the legislating of this crime, studies have found that 29% of women who have ever been married or lived in a common-law relationship have been physically or sexually assaulted by a partner during the relationship; 21% were assaulted during pregnancy (Karen Rodgers, 1994).

### **Drug Facilitated Rape/Sexual Assault**

Since the mid-1990s, there has been a growing number of reports of assailants surreptitiously using prescription and non prescription drugs to induce disinhibition, sedation and amnesia to facilitate rape. This type of victimization is most commonly referred to as drug-facilitated sexual assault. Although Rohypnol, in particular, has been maligned as a "date rape drug," many other easily accessible substances have reportedly been used to facilitate sexual assault, and alcohol is the most common drug in this category (McGregor MJ, Lipowska M, Shah S, 2003).

Historically, most prevention work around drug facilitated sexual assault has focused on educating women about the risks they face and what they can do to protect themselves.

Recently in Ontario and Manitoba (AGCO, 2011), a legislative adjustment to the Liquor Control Act allowed for women to take their drinks into the washroom in bars, to reduce the risk of being compromised. Very little has been done to educate men about this issue and to encourage them to intervene when they are a bystander to this situation. One example of an effort to get men to speak out comes from Carleton University. The Male Ally project is using social media to encourage men to speak out and encourage other men to do the same. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkIp3FS-HaM>)

### **Sexual objectification of women, the commodification and sexualization of women**

Women's sexuality has traditionally been repressed, controlled and used to market consumer goods and services; to feed popular media; and as an "acceptable" form of pleasure for men's sexual gratification. This toxic appropriation of women's sexuality has had a profound impact on men's sexual violence against women. This leads to the belief (for some men) that women's bodies are at men's disposal for admiring and consuming, a belief that is perpetuated almost everywhere men and boys look.

This also manifests a profound inequality in our social norms around men and women's sexuality. For example, some men, especially young men, continue to be praised and encouraged for their sexual prowess, having multiple partners, and other harmful masculine sexual activities. Young women with multiple partners however, are not praised, but in fact they are judged in very derogatory terms. Belief in non-equitable and violent masculinities is linked with acts of sexual violence and exploitation.

### **Dispelling sexual violence myths**

Any effort to engage men and boys in preventing sexual violence against women and girls must address the pervasive myths around sexual violence. These myths give some men excuses, in some way justify or minimize sexual violence, but are also influential in misdirecting well intended prevention strategies.

Some of these myths include;

- Men's violence and sexual desire is misconstrued as impulsive, uncontrollable;
- The myth of "stranger danger"; that the greatest risk to women is the unknown sexual predator hiding in dark corners;
- "Boys will be boys"; the misconception that sexual violence is in some way a "normal" aspect of men's sexual development; and
- Sexual violence is in some way "caused" by women's sexuality – the idea that the way women dress can instigate a sexual assault, or if a woman makes any kind of advance, it is an invitation for sexual intercourse.



**Enthusiastic consent encourages both partners to discuss their desires and to openly communicate with each other before and along the way of sexual experiences.**

Working with men and boys must challenge social norms that view men as dominant and women as subservient, must encourage equitable views of women's sexuality, and must provide education for men and boys on myths and facts related to sexual assault.

**Enthusiastic Consent**

Approaches to sexual violence prevention have varied over time and can be described along a continuum of prevention where, at one end, efforts are focused on educating men and boys to end sexual violence, and at the other end, initiatives aimed at informing potential victims of warning signs of sexual assault. Campaigns such as "NO means NO" are well known throughout Canada and around the world, but a newer approach has emerged that addresses the issue of enthusiastic consent.

This model addresses consent by going beyond a "no" response and suggesting instead that involved partners seek an enthusiastic "yes" before proceeding with intimate relations of any kind. This model focuses on the positive aspects of consent and encourages equitable negotiation among partners of pleasurable experiences ahead of time. It encourages the person who initiates physical contact to take responsibility for seeking and understanding consent, regardless of their gender. Issues such as a partner's intoxicated state, power dynamics, and peer pressure are addressed by encouraging the contact initiator to take these into consideration and to make sure a situation of exploitation does not follow.

Enthusiastic consent encourages both partners to discuss their desires and to openly communicate with each other before and along the way of sexual experiences. As a result, the likelihood of unwanted sexual contact, misunderstandings, or unreasonable expectations, essentially date rape or sexual assault, can be significantly reduced (Jaclyn Friedman and Jessica Valenti, 2008).

This model may prove effective in addressing the issue of consent and sexual violence with men as it de-stigmatizes

a "no" response so that individuals are less likely to feel embarrassed or lose pride when an offer of attention is refused.

**Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is both one of the most prevalent, yet least recognized forms of sexual violence against women. As a measure of its pervasiveness, 87% of Canadian women report experiencing sexual harassment (Statistics Canada: 1993).

Sexual harassment, including sexual jokes, comments, gestures or threats, is pervasive in our schools and workplaces. A survey of 4,200 girls between nine and 19 years of age, revealed that 80% had experienced sexual harassment in some form and half reported encountering it daily (Y. Jiwani, et al. 1999). Because it may not involve a physical or sexual "action" of violence, its harm to women and girls is often minimized. In schools and workplaces, it can cause higher drop-out rates, loss of employment, and prevents women from equal opportunities to experience the full benefits and opportunities of education and employment.

Much of the approach to address sexual harassment has been based in policy and legislation. Part III of the Canada Labour Code confirms a worker's right to work in an environment that is free of sexual harassment and requires employers to take action to prevent it. The Code defines sexual harassment as any conduct, comment, gesture, or contact of a sexual nature that is likely to cause offence or humiliation to any worker or that might, on reasonable grounds, be perceived by that worker as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment or on any opportunity for training or promotion (Ministry of Labour). Similarly, school boards have been mandated to institute policies for zero tolerance around sexual harassment; however both of these approaches often fall short on a complimentary education and awareness component with a strong gender perspective for men and boys.

**4.3 Trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, pornography**

Trafficking for the purpose of the commercial sex trade is one of the most egregious and horrific forms of violence against women. It involves multiple violations to fundamental human rights (coercion, kidnapping, forcible confinement, sexual abuse and exploitation, rape, violation of minors, debt bondage etc.). It is also often perpetrated against minors.

Human trafficking is also an issue for young men and boys. It takes form as commercial sex trade, war and conflict, forced labour; many other forms of labour (sweatshops, agricultural work); and may be perpetrated (and profited from) by both men and women.

There are areas within this discussion that are indisputable, egregious rights violations - child sexual exploitation through prostitution, sexual abuse and exploitation, forced slavery, kidnapping. Those issues require immediate, swift, and unapologetic responses, primarily criminal and justice in nature. However, there are other areas where even the women's movement lacks a definitive consensus (the consumption of pornography, sex work as a viable economic choice for women), which complicates the understanding of men's roles and responsibilities.

The issues are further complicated considering the political, economic and social contexts. Globalization, poverty, organized crime, war and conflict, media, colonialism, and racism all factor significantly to understanding trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. This is an extremely polarized debate around human sexuality, with moral and libertarian perspectives taking up tremendous space on either end of the spectrum. This has left little room for healthy debates around men's sexuality which acknowledge difference and diversity, but also challenge the harmful patriarchal notions connected to gender-based violence. For example, an evolved, healthier expression of men's sexuality may eliminate the harm caused to men by accessing pornography, the harm of pornography to women (objectification, commodification, trafficking, exploitation, etc) and therefore reduce the demand, and lessening the attractiveness of this as an option for women.

In several aspects the future directions are clear. These discussions must be linked to a critical reflection on masculinities, both in transforming the harmful aspects, but also in creating new healthy dimensions of male sexual identities.

The role of men as allies and agents of change on the clear-cut issues like child prostitution, sexual abuse and exploitation has been untapped and has potential for positive change. Men have roles to play in challenging and changing social norms. Supporting existing efforts aimed at engaging men and boys could have great effect in addressing these issues.

Lastly, more work is needed in looking at men's roles in the "demand" side of the equation.

#### **Understanding the "demand" side**

Men have many different roles in the demand side of trafficking, prostitution and the consumption of pornography, as clients, consumers, sex workers, managers (pimps, traffickers). Men also have a diverse spectrum of reasons for purchasing and consuming sex. These include the desire to engage in specific sexual activities, non-emotional sex, companionship, convenience, risky encounters, power/hostility, fill an emotional void, or sexual addiction (Flood, 2011).

There is just now an emerging opportunity to focus on preventing violence and exploitation in commercial sex rather than to deter the buying of sex. As indicated by the complexity of the issue above, there are currently no agreed upon principles to develop this work. There is potential to learn from our experiences in engaging men in other gender-based violence prevention and gender equality work. Much of this work will have to be done in partnership with other human rights and social justice efforts.

Ultimately, we need to improve men's accountability and responsibility as consumers of pornography and commercial sex in reducing the "demand", and therefore the harmful consequences, while working towards a new paradigm of healthy, diverse understandings of men's sexuality.

#### **4.4 Technology Based Violence**

Technological advances have given us many new tools to combat violence against women and engage new allies in promoting healthy, equitable attitudes about relationships. Unfortunately, many of these new advancements have also seen new methods of threatening, attacking and degrading women and girls. In the areas of communication technology and social media entirely new ways of harming others are being discovered and exploited. Because of the high rate of use of these mediums by young people many of the victims are children and adolescents.

Recent research has shown that the prevalence of cyber bullying, online harassment and other forms of technology based violence is extremely high. A 2002 British survey found that one in four youth, aged 11 to 19 has been threatened via their computers or cell phones, including death threats. (NCH -National Children's Home (UK)). In a University of Toronto study involving middle and high school students, 21% reported being bullied and 35% reported bullying others online in the three months preceding the research (Mishna, 2008).

As with many other forms of violence, prevention efforts have largely focused on teaching people how to avoid abuse (e.g. parents supervising and teaching about internet safety). It is necessary to design and implement strategies that aim to prevent cyber violence from happening in the first place. This can include but is not limited to the creation of prevention policies in schools, one-on-one instruction, inclusion in curriculum as a form of harassment, and signing online code of conduct agreements with students and their parents.

The use of new technologies to inflict harm on others is connected to the forms of violence against women that have been documented in this paper. It is necessary for discussions and measures taken to eliminate these modern forms of violence to be seen within the larger context of human

An honour-based crime differs from an incident of violence against women causing death in that it is usually pre-meditated, often planned in advance, and involving multiple family members.

rights and gender equality.

#### 4.5 Harmful traditional practices

Many of our attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and practices are deeply rooted in cultural norms, values and traditions. While the majority of those values and norms encourage positive character building such as compassion, kindness, respect, equality, and sharing of responsibilities, some may be misconstrued and used to negatively impact the safety, health, liberties, and well-being of many in our society. This section explores a small collection of harmful practices rooted in norms, values, and traditions that are well known to put women and girls at higher risk for violence or that have contributed to serious violations of human rights in Canada and around the world.

##### Honour Crimes

Canadian expert on honour-based crimes, Amin A. Muhammad, Professor of Psychiatry at Memorial University of Newfoundland, defines an honour-based crime as the premeditated murder of a spouse or family member, primarily women, who are thought to have brought shame or dishonour to the family by engaging in certain behaviours considered unacceptable such as extra-marital sexual relationships, or relationships with men not approved by the family (Amin Muhammad, 2010). An honour-based crime differs from an incident of violence against women causing death in that it is usually pre-meditated, often planned in advance, and involving multiple family members. In this definition, the perpetrators involved in an honour-based crime may not experience repercussions in their family or community.

Over 5,000 women die every year around the world as a result of honour-based violence (United Nations, 2007). In Canada, approximately twelve honour-based crimes have been committed over the past ten years, women and girls being the victims. Highly publicized cases include the al-

leged drowning of teen sisters Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti Shafia by their parents and 18 year old brother in Kingston, Ontario in 2009; the strangulation of Aqsa Parvez in 2007 in Mississauga, Ontario resulted in her father and brother being charged with first degree murder; the stabbing of Amandeep Atwal by her father in British Columbia in 2003; and the murder of 5-year old Farah Khan in Toronto by her father in 1999 while her stepmother watched (CBC, 2009).

The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, reports that honour-based crimes are common in Pakistan, Turkey, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Iran, Yemen, Morocco and other Mediterranean and Gulf countries. Aside from the dozen cases in Canada in the last decade, honour-based crimes have also been reported in Germany, France and the United Kingdom within immigrant communities. Historically, this form of violence has not been isolated to Islamic countries or communities. Brazil is cited as a case in point, where, in the past, murder was justified to defend the honour of the husband in the case of a wife's adultery (Radhika Coomaraswamy, 2002).

Other examples of historical honour-based crimes in the west include the murder of Henry VIII's fifth wife in Britain based on allegation of adultery; in the early times of Peru, the laws of Incas permitted husbands to starve their wives to death as punishment for committing an adulterous act; Aztec laws resulted in death by stoning or strangulation for female adultery during the early times of Mexico; in ancient Rome, the senior male within the household retained the right to kill a related woman if she was engaged in premarital or extra-marital relations (Amin Muhammad, 2010).

The debate over honour-based violence is not homogeneous as some believe these crimes must be looked at as separate, culturally condoned forms of gender-based violence while others advocate for honour crimes to be treated the same way as other forms of violence against women, separate from cultural influences. From a prevention and education stand-point, it is important to address issues such as family honour and shame and their cultural and social manifestations as it relates to gendered behaviour for both men and women with the aim of creating broader understanding and acceptance of women's rights and liberties and men's ability to reject deeply rooted, harmful aspects of masculinity.

##### Early and Forced Marriage

The practice of early and forced marriage is a form of child exploitation and sexual violence, since girls are forced into marriage and a sexual relationship, putting their health at risk and limiting their ability to obtain an education. In many parts of the world, especially in Africa and South Asia, families choose early marriage of their children because it provides economic stability and safety for themselves and their daughters, especially in situations of crisis or conflict where

young girls may be kidnapped (UNIFEM, 2007). In other parts of the world such as North America, early marriage of girls is associated with polygamy and certain fundamentalist religious practices and beliefs.

In Afghanistan, it is estimated that 57% of girls are married prior to turning 16. The practice of “bride money” combined with a dire economic situation puts girls at higher risk for early marriage. Family poverty and indebtedness are cited as major factors that lead to young girls being considered as assets in exchange for money or goods by their families. Girls as young as six and seven years old are exchanged by their families for high sums of money with the understanding that the actual marriage does not take place until the child goes through puberty. Contrary to this arrangement, reports indicate that young girls exchanged for bride money may be sexually abused not only by the groom but also by older family members, particularly if the groom is also a child (Yakin Ertürk, 2006).

Early marriage in North America has been the subject of ongoing controversy, including incidents related to the fundamentalist Christian groups, where it has been practiced as a form of spiritual marriage within its polygamy (plural marriage) tradition (Eve D’Onofrio, 2005). High profile cases in the USA include church leader Warren Jeffs’ conviction for arranging a marriage between a 14 year old girl and a 19 year old boy in 2007 (Jennifer Dobner, 2007) and the 2008 removal of 468 children from the Yearning For Zion Ranch in Texas resulting from allegations of abuse and children being married to adults. The children were later returned to the sect after the State’s Supreme Court ruled they were improperly removed (Ralph Blumenthal, 2008).

In Canada, allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation were levied in 2007 against the Bountiful Community in British Columbia but charges were never laid because victims were unwilling to testify citing “religious freedom” (Canadian Press, 2007). At the time of writing of this report, the British Columbia Supreme Court is reviewing the legality of Canada’s polygamy laws. Government lawyers in this case argue that polygamy leads to abuse, human trafficking and victimization of women, men and children.

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), also known as “cutting”, is known worldwide as a serious violation of the rights of women and girls. It involves procedures that serve to alter or cause injury to female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is known to have no health benefits for women and girls. In fact, it can lead to severe bleeding, urinary tract problems, and can result in childbirth complications in adult life, including death of the newborn child (World Health Organization, 2010).

Approximately 100-400 million women and girls live presently with the effects of FGM. The practice is most commonly performed on girls above the age of ten (World Health Organization, 2010). In Canada, FGM is prohibited under sections 267 (assault causing bodily harm) and 268 (aggravated assault, including wounding, maiming, disfiguring) of the Criminal Code of Canada and is considered a form of child assault (Federal Interdepartmental Working Group on Female Genital Mutilation, 1999).

Like other harmful traditional practices, FGM is deeply rooted in cultural values, traditions and norms. Worldwide, significant attention has been drawn to the impact of FGM on the lives of women and girls but fewer programs have sought to directly involve men and boys in changing cultural norms and traditions associated with this practice. At a local and global level, men and boys can be effectively engaged by correcting misconceptions about FGM and by providing information about the negative health and legal consequences of FGM. Men and boys can play a role in addressing social pressures to continue FGM prevalent among some communities and can be involved in educating other men and boys about the need to eradicate FGM.

### **Elder Abuse as Gender-based violence**

Attitudes towards older people are complex, multidimensional and include both positive and negative elements. Although in general, our societies are encouraged to respect and revere our senior citizens, a great deal of discrimination and violence is experienced by those most vulnerable in the family and in the community. Age-based prejudice and stereotyping usually involves older people being pitied, marginalized, patronized, and abused.

Violence against vulnerable older people can be motivated by subconscious hostility or fear; or, within families, by impatience and lack of understanding. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines abuse and neglect of older adults as “...single or repeated acts, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person” (World Health Organization, 2002). This may involve causing physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or financial harm or failing to provide adequate basic needs such as food, health care, and shelter. Neglect in the form of isolation and abandonment, violations of legal rights and privacy as well as being deprived of personal choices, decisions, status, and respect are also common forms of elder abuse.

Elder abuse may occur among spouses or within other relationships such as family; between friends; between an older person and someone in a position of trust such as an accountant; or between an elder and a service provider.

The reported rate of family violence in 2007 experienced by

seniors in Canada is much lower than younger individuals (48 versus 104 per 100,000), however, significant gender differences exist. Senior women experience rates of violence eight times higher than male seniors within a family context but, overall, male seniors had a higher rate of violent victimization. Spouses and adult children were more likely to be the aggressors in violence committed against senior women while adult children were accused more often in cases of family violence against senior men.

When homicides were reviewed, senior female victims murdered by a family member were most commonly killed by their spouse (40%) or adult son (36%). In nearly two-thirds of family homicides of senior men, an adult son was the accused perpetrator. This would indicate a gender dimension to the problem. However, most often, frustration, anger or despair seemed to be the motive for family-related homicides against seniors. In contrast, financial gain was the most commonly identified cause of senior homicides committed by unrelated individuals (Statistics Canada, 2009).

In addition to strategies involving the coordination of community support services and training of frontline staff to recognize and address elder abuse, public awareness initiatives must focus on the role and responsibility of men and adult children in speaking out against and ending violence against seniors, in the same way that men and boys need to be engaged in gender-based violence prevention and education initiatives. Cultural norms and traditions need to be assessed both as possible tools for education and awareness-raising in the general population and also for the possibility of the existence of deep-rooted attitudes, practices, and behaviours within those norms and traditions that may lead to increased risk factors for vulnerable seniors.

## 4.6 Homophobia

Homophobia can be defined as a form of prejudice demonstrated by personal attitudes, expressions, and insulting behaviours, avoidance, discrimination, and/or physical violence or threats against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered people and their allies. It is, in essence, a form of gender-based violence in that it targets individuals based on their gender and sexual identity or orientation. The impact of homophobia in Canada is significant and has been documented in various studies.

In Canada, gays and lesbian are three times more likely to be victims of violence than heterosexuals (Statistics Canada, 2005). As the table below shows, results from a national survey of young people's experience with homophobia in Canadian schools revealed that 75% of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students and 95% of transgender students feel unsafe at school, compared to 20% of their heterosexual peers. 90% of transgendered students, 60% of lesbian, gay and

bisexual students, and 30% of heterosexual students experienced verbal abuse because of their gender expression. More than a quarter of student respondents reported physical violence based on sexual orientation and 41% reported experiencing sexual harassment at school, compared to 19% of their heterosexual peers. Finally, half of heterosexual students polled felt their school was not safe for LGBT students (Egale Canada, 2009).

**TABLE 2: Young people's experience with homophobia in Canadian schools.**

Experience	LGBTQ (%)	Straight (%)
Felt unsafe at school	66	20
Skipped school because they felt unsafe	33	12.5
Were sexually harassed	41	19
Do not feel accepted	47.5	19
Feel depressed about school	62	36
Made homophobic remarks	19	40
Feel teachers address homophobia effectively	33	60
Have not been taught about LGBTQ issues at school	61	54
Feel at least one area of school is unsafe for LGBTQ people	70	49

Statistics from Egale Canada First National Survey on Homophobia in Canadian Schools. Phase 1 Results. 2008

There are important links between homophobic harassment of men and boys and violence against women. Because men and young men fear not being a "real man," some will use verbal and even physical violence against girls or boys to prove themselves. Not only does such taunting hurt boys and young men, it also directly feeds into sexism. Much of the problem is based on the belief that anything a male does that is remotely "feminine" is a negative trait.

On many occasions, men who participate in trainings and workshops led by White Ribbon Campaign staff have shared that homophobia is a barrier for their involvement in efforts to promote gender equality and end violence against women.

(W)hen working with men and boys on preventing gender-based violence, one of the most powerful ways to generate empathy and understanding, is to ask men if they had experiences of violence, and how those experiences made them feel.

Essentially, some men don't speak up in favour of women's rights for fear of being perceived as not real men or as gay. Also, homophobia may come into play when promoting alternative, healthier, caring, and compassionate masculinities as these traits have been traditionally associated with women and therefore men who express them may have their sexual orientation questioned. Homophobia is used by many men as a form of gender policing against other men, as a way to pressure men to adhere to strict, hyper masculine traits, some of which involve using strength, control, and even violence as means to resolve conflict or exert control over women and other men.

When developing and promoting programming for men and boys aimed at preventing violence against women, harmful aspects of masculinity, homophobia, sexism, and other forms of gender-based violence must be addressed. Similarly, women and girls need to be encouraged to reject behaviours and actions by men and other girls that promote homophobia and misogynistic expressions of masculinity. Collaboration between violence prevention organizations and LGBT community groups and organizations may be beneficial in order to address homophobia, violence in LGBT communities, and men's violence against women. Men and boys need to be encouraged to also speak up against homophobia and mainstream violence prevention organizations would benefit from becoming allies in the eradication of homophobia.

## 4.7 Men's own experience of violence

This issue brief and the work it recommends has a primary focus on the prevention and reduction of violence against women by engaging men in that effort. In doing so, it is relevant and necessary to explore the experiences that men also have as victims and survivors of violence. This is important both from the standpoint of human rights (everyone, woman, man, or child has the right to a life free of violence)

and because we know that those who experience violence are at a higher risk of perpetrating violence (Valerie Pottie Bunge and Andrea Levett, 1998).

Men do experience a significant amount of violence in their lives. Statistics Canada has told us that consistently since 1979 around 90% of homicide victims in Canada have been male (Statistics Canada, 2009). As a result of being involved in violence and crime 94.5% of incarcerated Canadians are male (Public Safety Canada, 2008). We also know that boys and young men experience sexual abuse at extremely high rates and that this is a severely underreported crime. Sadly, one in six Canadian boys has experienced a sexual assault. (Canadian Badgley Royal Commission, 1984)

When boys experience or witness violence in their families, it becomes the single most potent indicator of whether or not they will use violence against women at a later point in their lives. Other prevalent experiences of violence (bullying, homophobia, criminal violence, violence in sports) for men and boys only normalizes and sustains the stereotypes that violence is part of being a real man, that violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflict .

In addition, when working with men and boys on preventing gender-based violence, one of the most powerful ways to generate empathy and understanding, is to ask men if they had experiences of violence, and how those experiences made them feel. For many men, this may be the only experience of fear and powerlessness they experience in a patriarchal society. For these reasons we must develop a keen understanding of men's own experiences of violence, and be prepared to address the issues that arise from that, **in conjunction with** the primary goal of ending violence against women.

## 5.0 IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST

Although the use of violence against women is common in all age groups, socio-cultural and geographical groups, it is important to consider the different ways in which it impacts communities throughout Canada. By exploring this impact in more detail in specific communities, we may be able to identify opportunities for effective, cultural, age appropriate and regional specific programming and interventions. It should be noted however, that the most comprehensive understanding and effective strategies for the prevention of gender-based violence must be done in close consultation with these communities themselves.

### Aboriginal Communities

In Canada, a history of colonization, institutional violence, personal and systematic racism and ongoing disenfranchisement has left a scar within many Aboriginal communities. This legacy has contributed to a reality in which Aboriginal women between the ages of 25 and 44 are five times more likely than other women of the same age to die as the result of violence (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1996).

At the World Conference on the Prevention of Family Violence, 2005, in Banff, Alberta, Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International Secretariat, London, England, named violence against Aboriginal woman in Canada an extreme violation of human rights. While there are no accurate national statistics, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) has worked with families and communities to compile a list of 582 missing or murdered Aboriginal women over the past three decades (Amnesty International, 2010).

Despite these profound obstacles and real tragedies, there are countless examples of resilient, empowered and impactful efforts being made from within these communities to address violence against women. Many of these take a community approach that involves women, men, youth and children.

One of the best examples is a campaign in Ontario called Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin (I am a Kind Man). Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin is a province-wide initiative that utilizes primary, secondary and tertiary prevention strategies<sup>1</sup>. Their mandate is to:

- Provide an opportunity for communities to help Aboriginal men and youth understand the causes of violence against women and girls and to support them in joining together to end the violence;
- Offer Aboriginal men and youth a safe place to learn their roles and responsibilities when it comes to ending violence against Aboriginal young girls and women;

- Recognize the challenges youth and men face and provides opportunities for them to reconnect to their traditional roles within families and communities; and
- Provide a supportive model for community healing which can be easily adapted to fit within individual communities ([www.iamakindman.ca](http://www.iamakindman.ca)).



Currently there are ten sites in Ontario running a variety of programs as part of this initiative. These include poster and public awareness efforts, youth and adult mentoring programs, youth and adult workshops and an educator toolkit. There are also several sites that deliver interventions (counselling and groups) for men who are at risk of or have used violence (Terry Swan, 2011).

There is still a great call for more work. Communities in Canada's North experience traumatic levels of violence and economic inequity – conditions which only increase the difficulty and need for this work.

1 For more information on these strategies, please see Chapter 6.0

## (T)he factors that lead to the use of violence by men against women and the way in which that violence is expressed may differ from community to community.

### New Canadians

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Men's use of violence against women is prevalent in all social and ethno-cultural groups. However, factors such as residency status may lead to women being at higher risk for violence (METRAC, 2006) and men being at higher risk for committing violence. Women and families who sought refugee status or women and children without status in Canada may be at higher risk of experiencing violence due to the vulnerable position they are in. Refugee or non-status women generally have limited access to information, counselling and community services and may be reluctant to access emergency services such as police services because of fear of deportation. Similarly, women and families without status may not have access to medical services and if one partner is charged with assault, this may have serious consequences for the family.

Work and income are integral to men's identities in most cultures where the male is expected to be the head of the household. Economic disempowerment keeps men from fulfilling the expected role of household lead. This may result in an increase in men's use of violence against women in order to compensate and reconfirm their sense of male identity and masculinity. Under-employment or unemployment can have a devastating effect on the self-esteem of men and has been linked with the use of punitive measures with children, increased alcoholism, and the use of violence in relationships (Demetrios Kyriacou et al, 1999). Experiences of unemployment, lack of language proficiency, lack of knowledge of Canadian laws and customs, challenges in finding work combined with the process of settling into a new country and society may contribute to strained family relationships among newcomers.

While many agencies and community groups have focused on providing support to newcomer women and children who experience violence, and some provide programs for men who have used violence, very few have initiatives aimed at primary prevention and education for men and boys. In addition to continuing and strengthening secondary and tertiary support and intervention programs for victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence, there is an opportunity to

increase and scale up effective programs aimed at educating boys, young men, and adult men who are newcomers to Canada about their role in preventing violence against women and in promoting gender equality. A multi-sectoral approach would work best in this case, with settlement agencies working together with violence prevention organizations and cultural community groups to engage newcomer men and boys in ending violence against women and children. Efforts must be considered to strengthen the capacity of agencies working with newcomer communities in Canada to engage men and boys in gender-based violence prevention. Due to the complexity of these issues, these communities need to be engaged, resourced, and supported in this effort.

### Cultural Communities

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Although gender inequity and the use of violence against women is present in all cultural groups in Canada and societies around the world, the factors that lead to the use of violence by men against women and the way in which that violence is expressed may differ from community to community. Aruna Papp, a social worker and family violence private practitioner in Toronto, advocates for a closer analysis of culturally specific values and traditions that may put women and girls at higher risk for family violence and that lead men and some women to commit gender-based violence against their spouses and family members (Aruna Papp, 2010).

Without this closer analysis, policy-makers and organizations may miss important opportunities to address community-based traditional practices, factors and risks through relevant policy, intervention, education, prevention, and support programs for women and men. However, it's important to note that a gender-based assessment of values, norms, and traditions is a good idea any time a policy or project aimed at ending violence against women is envisioned, regardless of the community, group, or region that project or policy is aimed at. In other words, cultural-specific and meaningful opportunities to address violence against women must be considered for any group.

As is the case with newcomer communities, the majority of organizations and programs addressing violence against women in cultural communities throughout Canada do it primarily from a support point of view by focusing efforts on addressing the needs of women and children who have experienced violence. Some include programs such as the Partner Assault Response (PAR) model delivered in various languages to rehabilitate men who have used violence against their spouses. An additional priority needs to be added by including programming to engage men and boys in education and prevention initiatives aimed at ending violence against women before it takes place.



Partnerships between violence prevention organizations, culture-specific community agencies, cultural groups, faith-based organizations, community leaders, arts and sports organizations, local businesses, community-based newspapers, television and radio may prove successful in engaging men and boys in preventing violence against women on a wider scale within specific cultural communities. Programs, initiatives and public awareness campaigns delivered in various languages may be effective in addressing the information and support needs of individuals whose first language is not English or French. Care must also be taken in order to ensure prevention and education initiatives are culturally relevant and not simple translations of existing campaigns and resources.

be beneficial in exploring and testing models of engagement for men and boys.

## Rural Canadians

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The risk and impact of violence against women in rural communities may be exacerbated due to isolation by geography, family, or self imposed. Larger distances from neighbours, social supports and programs may further isolate women and families who have experienced violence. Access to social networks, health care, and support programs may be more difficult as a result of distances or travel barriers between individuals and service providers. Younger generations may leave the rural community, leaving fewer family members upon whom to rely for support. Equally impactful may be the “everyone knows everyone” perception in small isolated communities, where women may feel uncomfortable discussing experiences of violence, especially in a family context, and men may want to “protect” other men they know from the consequences of perpetrating violence against women.

Women who have experienced abuse in rural communities may have to travel great distances in order to access a shelter. In rural farming communities, it may be even more difficult for women to leave abusive relationships if their employment is tied to the farm. Aboriginal women living in isolated rural settings may be both at higher risk for violence and may find it difficult to access support services as a result of geographical isolation and cultural relevancy.

Building on existing strategies and efforts to reach out to rural Canada, including Aboriginal communities, and looking at strengthening programs and initiatives to include a component to provide primary prevention and education for men and boys may be an effective way to introduce a focus on engaging men and boys to end violence against women in rural and remote aboriginal communities. This could involve strengthening the capacity of organizations and service providers in rural settings to work with men and boys in primary gender-based violence prevention. Partnerships with schools, teachers’ unions, community and friendship centres, rural and farming associations, public health initiatives, cultural festivals and gatherings, and the private sector may

## 6.0 FRAMEWORKS, STRATEGIES, POSITIVE ROLES FOR MEN & BOYS IN THE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

As the conversation has shifted to “how” do we effectively work with men and boys to prevent and reduce gender-based violence, clarity and consensus is beginning to emerge in the research and collective experience around the most successful and impactful frameworks and strategies.

In understanding where this work fits in the prevention of gender-based violence, it is useful to understand the accepted approaches of violence prevention generally.

- **Primary Prevention:** Before the problem starts
- **Secondary Prevention:** Once the problem has begun
- **Tertiary Prevention:** Responding afterwards

Primary Prevention aims to lessen the chances that men and boys will use violence, and/or that women and girls will suffer from violence in the first place (Michael Flood, 2008). This includes education efforts, awareness campaigns, mobilizing communities, and challenging and changing social norms.

Examples of Secondary Prevention approaches are support and transition services for women and families experiencing violence, or opportunities to work with men who are at high risk of perpetrating violence.

Tertiary Prevention could include work with batterers, and the criminal justice response once violence has already taken place. Here the goal is often intervention and prevention of re-occurrence of the violence.

Clearly, if Primary Prevention efforts are successful, the outcome is less need for Secondary and Tertiary efforts, and more importantly the prevention and reduction of gender-based violence in the first place. However, the Primary Prevention approach has traditionally been least likely to be part of most strategies to end gender-based violence around the world. In most cases, this is because the need to support women and families getting out of violent situations is so great and so urgent, and the problem of what to do with men who have used violence is so immediate. On their own, none of these approaches will succeed in realizing the transformative change we hope to realize, only as a holistic and comprehensive response will we see real change.

There are other conditions which should be understood to be “non-negotiable” in approaches to the work with men and boys to prevent and reduce gender-based violence.

1. The work must be framed within human rights and more specifically women’s rights. Gender-based violence is the most harmful expression of the fundamental conditions of gender equality for women and girls around the world. The correlations between levels of gender-based violence and levels of gender inequality are clear. Men’s power and privilege is perpetuated and sustain by violence or the threat of violence.

When working to end gender-based violence, you must also be working to end gender inequality.

2. Gender must be understood in its relational sense. As feminist analysis has taught that women’s gendered identities are socially constructed, so to it must be accepted that men’s gendered identities are socially constructed. If gender inequality is one precept of gender-based violence, harmful, controlling and violent constructions of masculinities are the other. Understanding that gender is both masculine and feminine, that if the condition of women is not predetermined, that the condition of men can change as well is essential. Transforming those harmful aspects of masculinity is another non-negotiable.
3. The work must be evidence-based. There is enough data and research now to make clear, direct, and informed decisions about different approaches and strategies to engage men. The urgency of the issue of violence against women, and the risk of harm from ill-informed efforts is too great to tolerate anything but sound, evidence-based approaches wherever possible.

### Non-Negotiable Conditions When Working With Men and Boys:

**Framed within human rights and women’ rights.**

**Transforming harmful aspects of masculinities.**

**Based on evidence.**

There are at least two other frameworks which are very important to consider in the work with men and boys to prevent and reduce gender-based violence.

### The Lifecycle Approach

Male power and privilege is not something that suddenly appears when boys reach adulthood. From the earliest age, even it can be argued from in the womb of our mothers; boys and men are exposed to the influences, conditions, and privileges of patriarchy. In some parts of the world, generations of missing girls are demographically unaccounted for due to the preference for a boy child and the prevalence of sex selected abortions and female infanticide.

At a very early age, boys learn what it means to be a man, and what is accepted as truly masculine, what makes a real man (i.e.; boys don't cry). Boys also learn at an early age how to make their gender privilege work for them, and how to "police" other boys gender identities, largely through the use of sexist and homophobic language (don't be such a girl, you are a sissy).

### Examples of Lifecycle Interventions with Men and Boys

**Young Boys/Pre-School:** Engaging men as caregivers in the family and child care settings, introducing concepts of emotional health and wellness for boys, character building efforts

**Junior School Age: 6-12:** Training of teachers, after-school programs, educational activities, intro to equality, respect, empathy

**Adolescence:** Promoting critical thinking about gender roles, information, campaigns, group educational activities, promoting healthy relationships, critical reflection on the negative aspects of masculinities

**Early Adulthood:** Promoting critical thinking about gender roles, information, campaigns, group educational activities, promoting healthy relationships, consent education, sexual health education, roles as engaged bystanders, challenging peers

**Adulthood:** Men's roles and fathers, role model and mentors, sexual and reproductive health, engaging men in maternal and child health, violence prevention strategies, modeling equitable relationships, peer educators, engaged bystanders

**Late Adulthood:** Men as grandfathers, elders, story tellers, the preparation of the next generation

Popular media representations of stereotypical and hyper masculine imagery are pervasive. In almost every variety of popular media, for every age group, but particularly boys and young men, popular media is overly influential in creating and sustaining these constructions of masculinity<sup>1</sup>.

Boys also begin gendered interactions with girls and women at an early age, and those continue through the life cycle. At each stage those interactions are different, the risk for those interactions to become violent varies, and the approaches to violence prevention need to reflect those distinct realities.

1 For an excellent resource see Jackson Katz's film, "Tough Guise".

It is also a valid and ongoing question of how many interventions, how often, and for what length of time must they be effective for long term attitude and behaviour change, given the life long exposure to stereotypical constructions of masculinities.

For these reasons, a lifecycle approach to this work is advocated by NGOs in the field. Appropriate and relevant interventions at all ages of the lifecycle are necessary and imperative to realize transformative change.

### Spectrum of Prevention

In addition to requiring appropriate and relevant interventions across the lifecycle of men and boys, a Spectrum of Prevention is a necessary consideration.

While individual behaviour change with men and boys is essential, patriarchal power structures have ensured that men's power and privilege, the lynchpin for gender based violence, exists individually, in our relationships and families; in our political, economic, educational, religious, corporate, military and quasi-military institutions; in our communities; indeed throughout society.

Dr. Michael Flood has adapted the commonly used Spectrum of Prevention for the work to engage men and boys in ending violence against women.

#### Types of Interventions with Men

1. Strengthening Individual Knowledge and Skills. Education, skills building and awareness raising at an individual level.
2. Promoting Community Education. Group efforts, social marketing and communications, media strategies.
3. Educating Professionals and Service Providers. Training teachers, police officers, coaches, or doctors for example to do primary prevention work in their specific target communities.
4. Engaging and Mobilizing Communities. Building coalitions and networks, identifying and building capacity of male leaders, awareness events, White Ribbon Campaigns.
5. Changing Organizational Practices. Challenging and changing entrenched practices that tolerate or provide impunity for gender-based violence.
6. Influencing Policy and Legislation. Legal and policy reform (Flood 2008).

## Strategies:

### Gender Transformative Programming

In 2007, the WHO and Instituto Promundo, a Brazilian NGO, conducted the first comprehensive assessment of programmes engaging men and boys in gender equality work. This study sought to understand evidence around the effectiveness of these programmes, which types of programmes were most effective, and what gender perspective should be applied to those programmes.

The review analyzed evaluation data from 58 programmes and projects around the world, across the spectrum of initiatives working with men and boys on gender equality issues, from gender-based violence prevention, to HIV/AIDS prevention to sexual and reproductive rights.

The study identified three types of programs:

1. **Gender neutral:** No distinction between the needs of men and women, neither reinforcing nor questioning gender roles.
2. **Gender sensitive:** Recognize gender norms but little attempt to transform them.
3. **Gender transformative:** Seeks to promote equitable relationships, change gender norms and social expectations.

There were several key findings of the study.

- Well designed programs with men show compelling evidence of leading to change in behaviour and attitudes;
- Programs understood to be gender transformative had a higher rate of effectiveness;
- Programs that integrated face-to-face or group work with community campaigns and media efforts show even greater effectiveness;
- Relatively few programs with men and boys go beyond the pilot-project stage or into long-term efforts; and
- Evaluation data from 57 programmes engaging men & boys showed 63% were effective or promising (WHO-Promundo, 2008).

Gender transformative programming provides safe, supportive, non-judgemental, (but challenging) and facilitated opportunities for the discussion of gender norms and how these influence behaviour. It includes deliberate public debate and critical personal reflection about these norms, and it also strives to measure the changes in attitudes toward gender norms and relevant behaviours.

## Promoting Gender Equality & Men as Allies

An ally is an individual who speaks out and stands up for a person or group that is targeted and discriminated against. An ally works to end oppression by supporting and advocating for people who are stigmatized, discriminated against or treated unfairly.

Men can play a significant role as allies in helping to end violence against women and in promoting gender equality.

In particular it is very important for men to build meaningful and effective partnerships with women's organizations who have been doing this work for decades, who have an intimate understanding of the issues of violence against women, patriarchal power relations, and gender equality. These partnerships sometimes need to overcome the historical scepticism around men doing this work, and may require considerable effort. Nonetheless, they are essential.

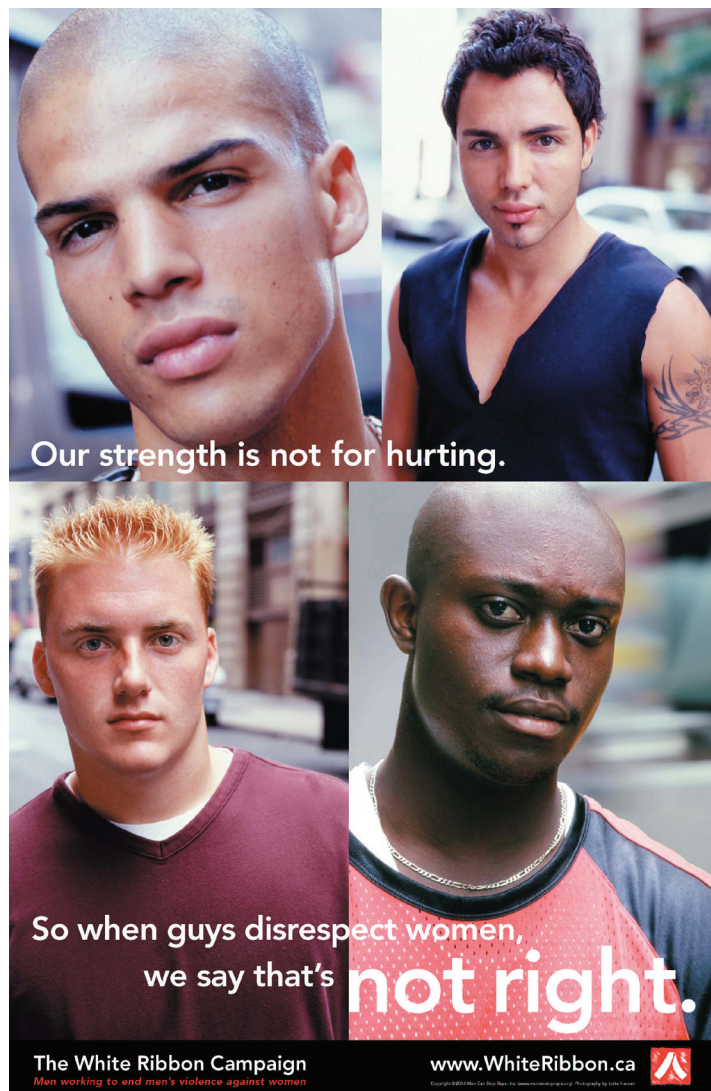
### From The White Ribbon Campaign Fact Sheet What Every Man Can Do

1. Listen and learn from women and their experiences around violence.
2. Challenge sexist language and jokes that degrade women.
3. Get involved with the White Ribbon Campaign's educational efforts.
4. Support local women's programs.
5. Examine how your own behaviour might contribute to the problem.
6. Understand the roles you can play as a father, a mentor, a role model.
7. Be an advocate for change.

## Strength Based Approach

Behaviour and attitude change with men is more likely when our conversations and campaigns focus on preference, hopes, and intentions as opposed to guilt, shame or fear. When we can show positive examples of equitable, non-violent behaviour we do not alienate, or motivate men by fear, shame or guilt, fostering more meaningful and long-term change.

Men respond better to being shown the “right” way to do things than being scolded about the “wrong” ways, and often a starting point is locating and valuing what men are already doing right, and connecting it to positive outcomes that relate to the reduction and prevention of gender-based violence. It is important to note that this is not an excuse or substitute for NOT challenging harmful behaviours, stereotypes and myths, rather an approach that does not blame individual men for those in campaign or awareness raising tools.



In 2004, an expert panel at the National Institute of Health (NIH) in the US determined that “Programs that use ‘scare tactics’ to prevent children and adolescents from engaging in violent behavior are not only ineffective, but may actually make the problem worse” (National Institute of Health Press Release, 2004).

A definitive global example of a strength based approach is the “Strength Campaign” first pioneered by Men Can Stop Rape in the US. The tagline “My Strength is not for hurting” is followed by positive examples of equitable and non-violent

behaviour. This campaign has been adapted in well over 20 countries around the world.

## Address and Inform Men (AIM) Framework

The Address and Inform Men (AIM) Framework was articulated by Dr. Michael Kaufman, co-founder of the White Ribbon Campaign for UNICEF in 2003. It rests on the premise that we must address our cultural construction of masculinities to eliminate violence against women, and masculinities are not homogeneous, there are tremendous ethno-cultural, economic, faith based and historical diversities to consider.

Accordingly men from those communities must both be addressed and involved at the program development level, using relevant, action-oriented messages, using images of men/boys who are like them. Power and patriarchy can be best dismantled and deconstructed from within, self examination is essential to that process, and men need to see their own experiences reflected in that. Engaging men at this stage, in this way also builds a sense of ownership and personal investment in the issue and programme or intervention. Peer motivation is also a powerful force for mens’ programs and campaigns involving men are more likely to resonate (Kaufman, 2003).

If we are asking men to change, whether as perpetrators, potential perpetrators, or in more positive prevention roles, they need to be addressed and involved.

## Social Norms Theory

“Social norms” refer to the acceptability of an action or belief; they are the unspoken rules about what is “normal” for that group or setting. Social norms are especially powerful in perpetuating male power and privilege. One of the key tactics of dominant power structures is rendering their power invisible, inevitable and unchallengeable. Patriarchal cultures are riddled with social norms designed to make men feel their power and privilege is normal.

Perceptions of social norms are good predictors of behaviours and attitudes, what people will say and do. Misperceived norms exert powerful (and unconscious) effects on behaviour, two forms are especially relevant to men’s roles around gender-based violence.

- **Pluralistic Ignorance:** the incorrect belief that one’s private attitudes, judgments or behavior are different from others.
- **False Consensus:** the incorrect belief that one represents the majority when one is actually a minority (Berkowitz, 2003).

Correcting these misperceptions can provide a context for men to:

- Speak out against behavior that makes them uncomfortable;
- Identify allies in other men who share their beliefs, but had not articulated them; and
- Undermine support for beliefs and behaviors that contribute to sexual assault perpetration.

To understand the power social norms exert over men, one study found that men's willingness to intervene to prevent sexual assault is highly correlated with men's perception of other men's willingness to intervene (Fabiano et al, 2003). In another study the likelihood of rape increased when men believe that other men are more likely to endorse rape myths, (such as some women might dress "too" seductively for a man to control himself, or no really means yes). This effect is greatest for men who already hold rape myths to be true (Bohner et al, 2006).

Campaigns, programmes and interventions utilizing social norms theory have shown effectiveness in other kinds of behaviour change (e.g. drinking and driving, seat belt use, smoking cessation) and have potential for preventing and reducing gender-based violence.

## Men's Positive Roles

### Bystander Interventions

One of the more promising and researched areas for men's positive roles in preventing and reducing gender-based violence is in the area of effective bystander intervention. Particularly in the context of preventing sexual assault, there are several objectives:

- to prevent an assault;
- to interrupt sexist/objectifying remarks about women;
- to prevent victim-blaming; and
- to interrupt male enabling behaviors.

Dr. Alan Berkowitz has identified many barriers men state for not being an active bystander:

- Assume that it is not a problem because others don't intervene (social influence);
- Fear of embarrassment (audience inhibition);
- Assume that someone else will do something (diffusion of responsibility);
- Believe that others' aren't bothered by the action (social norms); and
- Fear of retaliation (Berkowitz, 2008).

Effective bystander intervention programs seek to give men and boys the tools, skills, options and confidence to be more effective interveners, and in the process, challenge and change existing social norms around men's roles and responsibilities in a positive way. In doing so many of these programs involve role playing, or other active learning experiences to build skills and eliminate inhibitions.

### Peer and Near Peer Mentoring, Train the Trainers

Many programs and projects around the world work to build capacity of individuals and communities to become peer or "near peer" educators, or to leverage the reach and impact of their work through the training of trainers. Not only can this be an effective means of promoting attitude and behaviour change, but also establishing new social norms (that men care about and are engaged on the issue of gender-based violence prevention), and is a cost-effective method to realize greater impact.

Groups like Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women (MASVAW) in India, the Men as Partners (MAP) Project of Engender Health across eastern and sub-Saharan Africa, have benefited from train the trainer approaches, which bring relevancy, capacity and impact to the community level.

Men Can Stop Rape has worked with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in the US to conduct a comprehensive long-term evaluation of its Men of Strength (MOST) Clubs. The encouraging early signs from this evaluation have led to the CDC designation of a "promising practice" for gender-based violence prevention for the MOST Club project.

MOST Clubs take a gender transformative approach to working with boys and young men in US high schools. Over a year-long period, space is created for participants to understand a healthier model of masculinity, to empower them to find their voices in working to prevent gender-based violence, and promote a more civil, less violent society. In this model, peer education is a focus, and "near peer" education (where slightly older boys and young men teach younger boys and men) has been found to be effective.

The study found that participants had greater awareness of the issue, were more likely to intervene or take public action, had practical ideas on how to prevent violence against women, and healthier understandings of masculinity (Stephanie R. Hawkins, Men Can Stop Rape, 2005).

### Fatherhood, Role Models

A growing body of international research confirms that men's participation as fathers and mentors can be positive for the lives of women, men and children. Conversely, father's absence, or the use of violence by fathers, can have an ongoing, inter-generational impact on children. Research is fairly consistent in confirming that men's use of violence against women is passed from one generation to the next. Various

studies have found that having witnessed or been a victim of violence in the home is associated with using violence against an intimate partner.

Men spend a limited proportion of their time caring for their children. Even when men participate in child care, they typically define this care as “helping”, not a task they chose to participate in, or for which they are responsible. And even when they take on these tasks, men often continue to see themselves as being able to opt out of certain aspects of domestic tasks or chores.

suggests, but has not confirmed, that involved, nurturing fatherhood reduces the likelihood that boys in such households will later use violence against female partners (Gary Barker, 2004).

There is some empirical evidence from North America and Western Europe that positive father involvement increases the chance that sons will be more gender-equitable, and more nurturing as fathers, and that daughters will have more flexible views about gender as well. A qualitative study with low income young men in Brazil found that young men who



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IT STAYS WITH HIM.**

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If men and women are sharing the responsibilities of child-care and breadwinning, women's status (and thus basic rights) within the family and the community will increase. Increasing men's involvement in child development is an important component of promoting gender equality and ending violence against women.

Men's psychological well-being is higher the more time they spend caring for a child. By expanding the role of men to include caring for children, the restrictions of traditional narrow definitions of masculinity are deconstructed, to be replaced with a broader vision of the human capacity of men in family life and society in general. Caring for children and being engaged in the lives of young people leads to an increase in men's capacity to express emotions and experience empathy.

International research also indicates that increased father involvement associated with lower levels of family conflict and violence increases the chance that children grow up in an emotionally and physically safe environment. Other research

were more gender-equitable were generally able to identify a father or other male figure in their lives that modeled or demonstrated more gender-equitable roles (Gary Barker, 2001).

A critical learning from this study is that it is not always possible, nor desirable for the biological father to be the exclusive positive gender equitable role model. As noted, some paternal influences can have quite detrimental effects. Other influential males in the lives of young boys have an equal opportunity to model gender equitable behaviour and affect a positive influence. This is particularly important in reflecting the diversity of family structures that populate contemporary Canadian society, and for reaching out to a broader spectrum of men to engage in this way.

- Community leaders, and gatekeepers;
- Policy makers; and
- Organizational/institutional leaders.

With that sound base, it is also becoming clear that the potential for impact is significant, engaging men not only in their

roles as fathers, but as other family members, role models, and caregivers. This form of positive engagement directly reduces the risk for violence within families, challenges and changes social norms, providing for more caring and nurturing forms of masculinity. Of all the different approaches in Canada, this holds the most promise and should be regarded as a priority.

### **Analysis of Batterers Interventions (Intervention Strategies)**

The validity and efficacy of batterer intervention programs and the range of methodologies employed in their delivery are strongly debated within and outside of the violence against women field. There is a small but growing body of research attempting to ascertain the impact of various models used to prevent people who have used violence from using it again. This research, while providing meaningful criticism of existing programs, does not come to a conclusion as to which methodologies deliver the best results.

Part of the challenge in evaluating batterer intervention programs is the large number of variables at play and methodological problems in the available research. The variables at play include whether participants are mandated, length of programs, qualifications of program facilitators and measured outcomes of the programs. Some of the methodological problems in much of the existing research include small samples, lack of random assignment or control groups, high attrition rates, short or unrepresentative program curriculums, short follow-up periods, or unreliable or inadequate sources of follow-up data (e.g., only arrest data, only self-reported data, or only data from the original victim) (Healey, Smith and O'Sullivan, 1998).

Among evaluations considered methodologically sound, the majority have found modest but statistically significant reductions in recidivism among men participating in batterer interventions. A notable exception is Adele Harrell's 1991 methodologically rigorous quasi-experimental evaluation of batterer interventions in Baltimore, conducted for the Urban Institute. Harrell's study raised particular concern in the field by its unexpected findings that participants in all three batterer interventions recidivated at a higher rate than those in the control group.

Preliminary results from a four-site study sponsored by the CDC are inconclusive: at 12 months, re-offense rates for program graduates are similar to those for batterers who dropped out at intake, and no significant variations exist in outcomes for batterers in programs of varied length and curriculum. A three month, pre-trial, educational program has shown slightly better outcomes when socioeconomic factors are taken into account (Healey, Smith and O'Sullivan, 1998).

**There is evidence to suggest that any meaningful examination needs to also look at the systems that intertwine with these programs, namely criminal justice institutions and community supports.**

In Canada, one of the most widely used intervention programs is called the Partner Assault Response (PAR) Program with approximately 7,000 men attending these programs in Ontario in 2003. According to the Canadian Department of Justice (DOJ) "there is currently little evidence that intervention programs for abusive men lead to reductions in men's assault of their intimate partners. Recent reviews of the literature suggest that, at best, these programs lead to a small reduction in rates of subsequent assault relative to non-intervention." This clearly demonstrates that in order to guide the improvement of such programs, more research is needed, in particular research that is thorough and focused on the factors most likely to promote change in men's violent behaviour (Scott and Stewart, 2007).

Some of the frustration with the lack of empirical evidence supporting one program or treatment method over another has led to calls for an approach that looks at violent men as a diverse group requiring specifically tailored interventions. There is a shift in some researcher's focus that looks at studying which subgroups respond better to which specialized interventions (Healey, Smith and O'Sullivan, 1998).

There is also research that suggests that looking at batterer intervention programs in isolation is problematic and misguided. There is evidence to suggest that any meaningful examination needs to also look at the systems that intertwine with these programs, namely criminal justice institutions and community supports. Policing, sentencing, shelters and supports for abuse survivors, cultural acceptance for violence and other elements all have an impact on how violence users engage in the process of change (Healey, Smith and O'Sullivan, 1998).

Despite the need for more research there have been some clear recommendations for the elements that make a successful intervention program. According to a roundtable of experts in the field a successful intervention program must include:



1. Partnering with other individuals and organizations to enhance accountability and offer a range of services;
2. Working closely with court and probation to monitor court-ordered referrals;
3. Creating a solid program infrastructure, which includes ongoing training and supervision of staff and implementing policies that are consistent with best practices;
4. Moving beyond legal sanctions in coordinated community responses;
5. Shaping interventions and programs based on input from adult survivors and children;
6. Using risk assessment and risk management; and
7. Engaging men early in their roles as parents and partners (Carter, 2009).

There was also a recommendation from this roundtable to develop new ways of reaching violent men because batterer intervention programs reach only a small percentage of those who use violence. Finally, this group of experts acknowledged that there are a variety of legitimate and meaningful critiques of batterer intervention programs. Having recognized these critical voices they ask for the continuation of these programs because they are practically the only site in which violent men are supported and challenged to change. Instead of dismantling the batterer intervention programs in place they call for continued research and increased accountability for the organizations running these programs and the men involved (Carter, 2009).

We cannot ignore the important work that needs to be done with men who have used violence. A criminal justice response on its own is not sufficient. As we learn more about primary prevention work, gender transformative programming, and the need to address complex and multiple masculine identities, the only thing that is not clear is how effective, consistent, relevant and impactful these programs are. There also may be lessons learned from different models of service provision such as the case management model. Much more work is needed in order to ensure these programmes are delivering to their fullest potential.

### Other Considerations for Engaging Men and Boys in the Prevention and Reduction of Gender-based Violence

Practical experiences of almost twenty years of work and support and collaboration with groups around the globe have led us to identify further considerations and challenges in this work.

Perhaps the most prominent is the recognition that men and masculinity cannot be understood as a homogeneous subject matter. Class, race, sexual orientation, religion, culture and ability all play vital roles in creating men's identities and experiences, and significant differences in terms of power and privilege. The intersections of racism and sexual orientation in particular warrant a recognition of the multiple needs and realities of men and boys. One direct result of this challenge is the question of building inclusive structures for all men, or achieving the "big tent". In our experience and in others around the world, joining in the work to prevent and reduce violence against women can be one of those issues which builds bridges between men of different races, sexual orientations, economic classes and education levels, and political differences.

Men's own understanding of gender equality is another barrier which needs special attention. Many men need to understand that this is not a "zero sum game"; equality for women and by extension preventing and reducing gender-based violence benefits everyone. It is not just a matter of "winning" privileges at the expense of men. In addition to articulating the costs of gender inequality to women and girls, especially in the form of violence, effort must be made to articulate the costs of patriarchy for men. Engaging men and boys cannot rely solely on a call to compassion and human rights, but must also appeal to an ideal of "enlightened self-interest"; both in identifying the disadvantages of being a man (health, emotional, psychological, societal) and the advantages for men, families, businesses, communities, and nations of realizing greater gender equality.

Creating safe and comfortable spaces for these efforts, where still sexist and hostile views can be challenged is another consideration. On the one hand, men and boys are generally not accustomed to discussing these issues, critically analyzing their own power and privilege, and need a safe space to do so. On the other hand, many of those spaces where men go are often also responsible for supporting and sustaining those harmful hyper-masculine behaviours and stereotypes. Skilled facilitators, time and trust are required to create the balancing act where men can open up, yet still be challenged on these issues.

**Engaging men and boys cannot rely solely on a call to compassion and human rights, but must also appeal to an ideal of "enlightened self-interest".**

Being creative in identifying entry points for engaging men and boys on the issue of violence against women is another consideration. Men's resistance to these efforts may be exacerbated by an unwillingness to participate in "formal" programming at official institutions. Going to places where one might typically find men and boys (barber shops, sporting events), identifying cultural entry points (music, video games), identifying issues of interest or emotional connection (fatherhood, men's own experiences of violence), are necessary in designing and developing programs and interventions.

In overcoming historical skepticism around men's legitimate desires to work for gender equality and ending violence against women, partnering with women's organizations is required, and demonstrating one's intentions through positive experiences is recommended. In addition, since the numbers of men and organizations is quite small, finding male allies in places where there is an existing resistance to prevalent constructions of masculinity (younger men, social justice movements, educators) is a useful approach.

Finally, we must be realistic about the limits of change. What change is possible? Challenging and changing social norms, and male power and privilege, which has been entrenched for centuries in many societies, will take time. Negative influences and harmful stereotypes exist pervasively in the media, popular culture, and some interpretations of faith. It may not be possible to change some men's views on these matters. Our experience has shown a much greater malleability, acceptance and understanding of this work with younger men and boys, however this by no means suggests that we should give up on older men, or let them off the hook with regards to their own roles and responsibilities in ending violence against women.

### Gaps in the Field

In the course of developing this paper, and in our experience in this work, many prominent gaps have been identified. Most of the efforts working with men and boys are small scale, pilot project, and unsustainable or under resourced. The following are some of the structural gaps which result.

- There is no comprehensive national approach to set goals, measure success, provide consistency, or support sustainability in the work to end gender-based violence;
- There is no national coordination specifically of work with men and boys, resulting in small scale, pilot projects, and isolated efforts;
- There is a serious lack of meaningful, long-term evaluation data on Canadian programmes and interventions working with men and boys;
- Successful results in lasting behaviour change are not being leveraged and scaled up; and
- Best practices and effective strategies are not identified in an accessible way, skills and capacity are not being kept up-to-date.

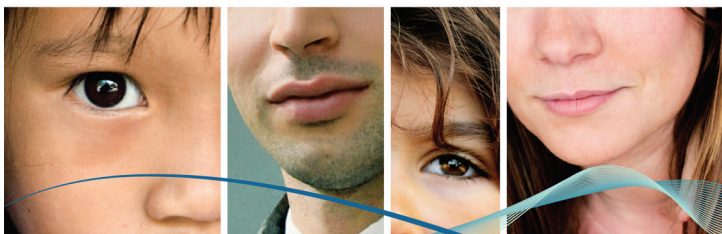
As a result, many well intentioned programmes and interventions may be missing the mark, or even in some cases, causing more harm than good. Innovative and potentially highly effective programmes are not often well evaluated, shared, or resourced to realize maximum impact.

Given the dispersed efforts and responsibilities for ending violence against women in Canada and the skills within civil society at all levels; a comprehensive approach to violence prevention could expect to see demonstrable results. Such an approach could harmonize the disparity of current efforts across the spectrum, from support and transition services for women and families, to violence prevention efforts with men and boys; provide leadership, directions and accountability; foster the scaling up of best practices and effective strategies; eliminate the different silos of the work and promote multi-disciplinary and intersectional approaches, both within and without governments; and finally set measureable targets and meaningful outcomes for positive change.

This direction could also address the specific needs of different communities of interest, ensuring that responses are relevant and effective. It would also ensure that a comprehensive approach to violence prevention, support for survivors, and policy and legislation concerns are synergized.



The National Plan to Reduce  
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In April 2009, the Australian Government released what has become the benchmark for National Strategies in the world.

In addition, there are some serious research gaps in Canada:

- Programs and interventions for young boys under the age of eight are not well understood. There is little research from a gender perspective on “character” programmes for early childhood development, yet the need for such efforts is clear;
- There is a deficit of reliable, current and detailed understanding of Canadian men’s beliefs about and attitudes towards gender equality and gender based violence; and
- Batterer intervention programs require more consistency and research into their delivery and implementation.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

Organizations and funders are well accustomed to conducting risk assessments in the conception stages of policies, programs and projects. The possibility of backlash and the potential impact on policy and programming outcomes must be taken into consideration when envisioning initiatives aimed at engaging men and boys in preventing gender-based violence. The sections below outline several important factors that must be taken into account when assessing risks associated with policies and programs involving men and boys. These factors must be fully discussed and a plan to mitigate associated risks must be included in policy and program planning stages.

### Backlash

Over the years, efforts to engage men and boys have been met with many positive reactions from individuals, communities, organizations, governments, and institutions around the world. On the whole, the movement to engage men and boys in promoting gender equality and ending violence against women has been well received and has led to significant positive change (Fabiano et al, 2004). However, some challenging reactions and a certain degree of backlash have surfaced from various sources. Backlash is an inevitable response to change in social movements. The women’s movement has experienced this over the years. Careful consideration must be given to the possibility of negative reactions at the local level to efforts aimed at working with men and boys.

Efforts to engage men and boys in promoting gender equality continue to draw criticism from the men’s rights movement (Michael Flood, 2009). A certain degree of criticism and scepticism has also emerged from within the women’s movement for various reasons such as:

- The historical lack of support from and lack of involvement of men over the years;
- Scarcity of funding resources; and
- Concerns over a possible imbalance between funds committed to programs supporting women and children versus resources committed to prevention and education of men and boys.

### Men's "Rights" Groups

Men's "rights" groups emerged and have gained strength over the past thirty years. Such groups have organized over the years in order to:

- Resist feminism;
- Discredit the women's movement;
- Oppose changes to definitions of family; and
- To stand against advances in employment equity (Michael Flood, 2009).

In general, resistance against the advancement of women's rights began at the onset of the women's movement but some of it has been taken up by an organized men's rights movement.

These groups usually organize around fatherhood rights and custody issues and argue that men experience violence and discrimination based on their gender as much as women. They also focus on the issue of child custody and access and advance the idea that men experience serious discrimination in the justice system when it comes to family court decisions (Jordan, 1998). Men's rights groups capitalize on general reactions by men against feminism as well as negative sentiments against social justice. Members of these groups will often accuse men working to end violence against women as being anti-men, man-hating, and traitors.

The efforts put forth by the men's "rights" movement can be viewed as being harmful to men as they essentially promote strict definitions of masculinity which are harmful to both women and men themselves. Some issues raised by these groups are legitimate, such as men's experiences of violence; however this is raised in the context of anti-feminism, and used selectively. Further, some groups suggest that programs for women who have experienced abuse such as shelters and counselling services must be stopped as they discriminate against men.

The source of gender-based violence is not women, women's rights, or women's services, but rather the social constructions of masculinity that lead men to use violence against women and girls and other men (Stith et al., 2004). To counter backlash from men's "rights" groups, men and boys need to be encouraged to become allies with women's organizations, to speak out about violence against women and in favour of gender equality, through the media and by

**(F)unders must ensure that efforts to engage men and boys in gender-based violence prevention exist concurrently and side-by side with efforts aimed at education, prevention, and support for women and girls**

participating in community actions, to show that men's rights groups do not speak for all men.

It's important to address ways in which men experience violence (mostly at the hands of other men) and validate the pain felt from those experiences. Experiences of bullying and childhood sexual abuse must also be acknowledged and addressed. Programs and services for men who have experienced violence and sexual abuse must be offered but not by ending programs and services for women and girls as is suggested by men's rights groups.

### Working with Men and the Women's Movement

It is important to acknowledge the historical and heroic efforts of women and women's organizations in advancing rights and setting the stage for successful work with men and boys in ending violence against women. Significant lessons were learned from the early involvement of men and men's organizations in ending violence against women. Many of those efforts did not involve women's organizations in a meaningful way. An unintentional early result was increased attention paid by the media to men's efforts when women's organizations had been conducting violence prevention work for many years with mixed support from media organizations.

Efforts to involve men and boys in primary gender-based violence prevention and education must be conducted from a rights and gender equality perspective. Policies and programs need to be developed and strengthened concurrently with prevention, education and support for women and girls, including those who have experienced or witnessed violence.

Organizations and programs aimed at engaging men and boys need to find synergies with women's organizations and need to work together to support existing programs and initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for women and girls, men and boys. Men need to be engaged as allies, and encouraged to work towards advocating for change at the individual, family, community, institution, and systemic level.

## Resource Scarcity

There is fear and concern that resources may be re-deployed to work with men and boys at the cost of important programs and services for women and girls. Some women's organizations may question funding for programs engaging men and boys in preventing violence against women when funding for women's programs is reduced or eliminated. Depending on the political climate, this may act as a barrier to joint program development and may discourage collaboration or the development of effective partnerships among organizations working to end violence against women.

In order to alleviate these concerns, funders must ensure that efforts to engage men and boys in gender-based violence prevention exist concurrently and side-by-side with efforts aimed at education, prevention, and support for women and girls. At the policy level, funders must look for opportunities to augment existing policies, strategies, and programs focused on prevention and education and add working with men and boys as an additional and complementary strategy. Strategies and resources aimed at secondary and tertiary support programs for women and children must continue and be strengthened.

## Cultural Inoculation: The Socialization of Men and Boys

Over time, the use of violence against women in various spheres in our society has been viewed as a taboo. In certain circumstances such as violence in the home, it is still seen as a private matter by many. Forms of violence such as sexual assault bring serious stigma and shame both to the victims and family members. In many instances, women are discouraged from reporting incidents of sexual harassment, assault, or physical violence for fear of additional retribution, lack of support, or impediment to career advance in the case of workplace violence and harassment. These forms of social control have a serious impact on the ability of women to seek support and on efforts to eradicate violence in our communities.

The impact of gendered behaviour is strongly rooted in social norms and values. Often, a particular behaviour may be perceived or valued differently depending on whether it's expressed by men or women. One general example is sexual activity and the different way in which young men who are sexually active are perceived versus young women. In many instances, certain behaviours may bring a higher degree of shame to individuals and/or families depending on whether those behaviours were expressed by men or women.

When it comes to men and boys' involvement in ending violence against women and promoting gender equality, it is equally important to consider the impact of how our society views gender-based violence, masculinities, and the role of men and boys. Our experience at the White Ribbon Cam-

paign indicates that strong efforts need to be advanced in order to work within particular spheres to engage men and boys in ending violence against women. When we do our work, we still come across many attitudes and beliefs, both individual and institutional, that trap men and boys in strictly controlled and narrowly defined ways of being men.

It is clear that if we are going to put an end to men's use of violence against women and girls and other men, we must first challenge the social creation and normalization of violent masculinities in our society. However, in many cases, this has proven to be particularly challenging given how entrenched those notions are in many cultural contexts. Young men police each other with the use of bullying, taunts, homophobia, threats and violence as a way to pressure them to conform to narrow visions of masculinity. Often we hear from parents and school administrators that this is to be expected and that "boys will be boys." When violent images of masculinity are challenged in the world of sport, many will simply argue that form of masculinity is culturally entrenched in sport and that hockey, football, boxing, and other fight-based sports would simply not be the same without it. The debate in the National Hockey League (NHL) in North America concerning the use of body checks and resulting concussions is a prime example.

Ending violence against women by promoting gender equality requires us to review and challenge traditional and socially constructed gender roles in the home, in the community, and in the workplace. For many, the roles of men and women in family life, in community leadership, and in the workplace, are strongly ingrained in social and cultural values and may be difficult to challenge. However, when developing policies and strategies to address men's violence against women, it's important to consider the impact of these social controls and devise incentives to encourage greater share of responsibilities among men and women in those various spheres.

If we are to create and promote alternative and healthier forms of masculinities where men's violence against women and other men is to be rejected, then we need to address how those notions of masculinity and femininity are created and promoted through various channels such as sport, school environments, workplace, community, family life, and cultural norms and values.

## 8.0 GLOSSARY

**Ally:** An individual or organization that has similar values, who will work collaboratively to promote gender equality.

**Assault/Violence:** The intentional use of force or coercion which may be physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual or economic in nature. It may be committed through actions, threats, or words.

**Domestic Violence:** encompasses all acts of violence within the context of family or intimate relationships.

**Economic Abuse:** when perpetrators control access to the all of the victims' resources, such as time, transportation, food, clothing, shelter, insurance, and money.

**Emotional/Psychological Abuse:** the systemic destruction of a person's self-esteem and/or sense of safety, often occurring in relationships where there are differences in power and control. It includes threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, deprivation of contact, isolation and other psychologically abusive tactics and behaviours. A variety of terms are used interchangeably with psychological abuse, including emotional abuse, verbal abuse, mental cruelty, intimate terrorism and psychological aggression.

**Empathy:** Identification with and understanding of another person's situation, feelings, and motives.

**Gender:** refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.

**Gender-based Violence:** Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life

**Gender Equality:** Gender equality refers to the equal valuing of people regardless of their sex. It works to overcome the barriers of stereotypes and prejudices so that all sexes are able to equally contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political developments within society.

**Healthy and Equal Relationships:** Relationships based on respect, trust, equal decision-making, safety, equal share of responsibilities, consent, open communication, etc.

**Homophobia:** Prejudice demonstrated by personal attitudes, expressions, and behaviours of defamation, avoidance, discrimination, and/or physical violence or threats against lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans people and their allies.

**Objectify:** To promote women in ways that are degrading. When certain sexual or physical characteristics are separated from women as whole individuals.

**Patriarchy:** A social system in which men are the primary authority figure, central to social organization, and where fathers hold authority over women, children, and property.

**Physical Abuse:** Hitting, punching, slapping, biting, kicking, bruising, breaking bones, throwing things and using weapons are obvious examples of physical abuse. The denial of human needs, such as food, water, sleep and even shelter are also forms of physical abuse.

**Rape:** unwanted sexual intercourse, including vaginal, anal, or oral penetration. Intercourse occurs by force, or by threat of force or coercion, such as that caused by fear of violence, duress, detention, psychological oppression or abuse of power, against such person or another person, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment, or committed against a person incapable of giving genuine consent.

**Role Model:** An involved, caring, concerned individual, who demonstrates real commitment for equality between men and women, who others look up to.

**Staying Silent:** Not speaking up, not challenging, or choosing to condone acts of violence against women or sexist and homophobic language

**Sexual Abuse:** also referred to as molestation, is the forcing of undesired sexual behaviour by one person upon another. When that force is immediate, of short duration, or infrequent, it is called sexual assault. The offender is referred to as a sexual abuser or (often pejoratively) molester. The term also covers any behaviour by any adult towards a child to stimulate either the adult or child sexually. When the victim is younger than the age of consent, it is referred to as child sexual abuse.

**Sexual Assault:** type of sexual activity that occurs without consent.

**Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment constitute sexual harassment.

**Sexism/Sexist:** Language, actions, messages, beliefs, and attitudes that promote women as inferiors or less deserving of rights.

**Values:** Beliefs of a person or social group in which they have an emotional investment.

**Verbal Violence:** the use of words (written or spoken) to sexualize or hurt another person.

**Violence Against Women:** Acts of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty.

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