



# Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence: Advancing Primary Prevention

Lana Wells, Associate Professor  
Brenda Strafford Chair in the Prevention of Domestic Violence,  
Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary  
[www.preventdomesticviolence.ca](http://www.preventdomesticviolence.ca)  
[lmwells@ucalgary.ca](mailto:lmwells@ucalgary.ca)

2019 Alberta Community Crime Prevention Conference  
May 8, 2019  
Canmore, Alberta





We are what we have  
*learned* to be





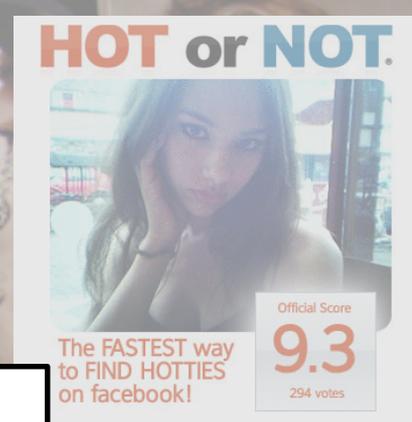
We care about what we have  
*learned* to care about





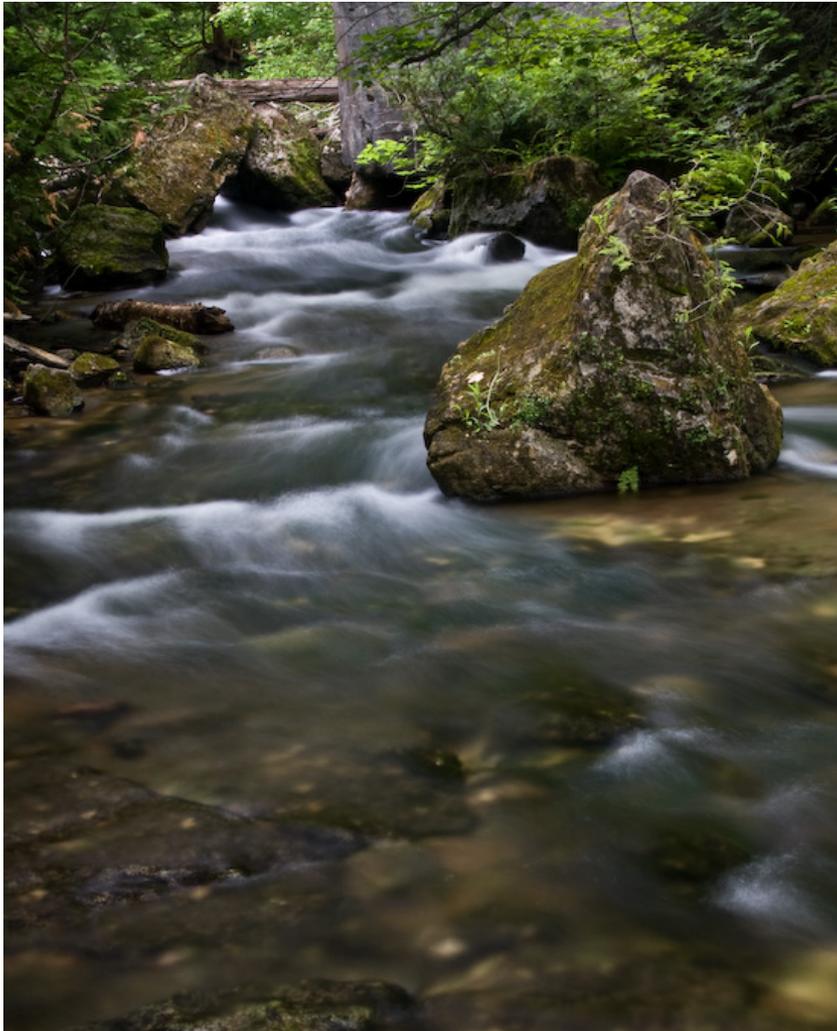
We do what we have *learned* to do





Violence, gender discrimination, and destructive relationships are **learned behaviors**. To understand those behaviors, we can't just look at the individual. We have to look at how our social-cultural environments are producing violence and injustice.





*"We are still standing on the bank of the river, rescuing people who are drowning. We have not gone to the head of the river to keep them from falling in. That is the 21st century task."*

# Where we focus



# Shift: Sweet Spot for Social Change



- We convene, connect and motivate
- We identify strategic relationships and potential synergies between people, policy and research
- We summarize research in accessible ways
- We incubate ideas/innovations
- We are uniquely positioned to bridge research and practice because we are an Action Chair in an academic setting

# Types of abuse



Physical



Cultural/Spiritual



Sexualized



Medical



Emotional/Verbal  
/Psychological



Intimidation, Threats and  
Control (including pets)



Financial



Judicial



Social



Stalking/Harassing



Technology



Domestic Violence is **Pervasive**

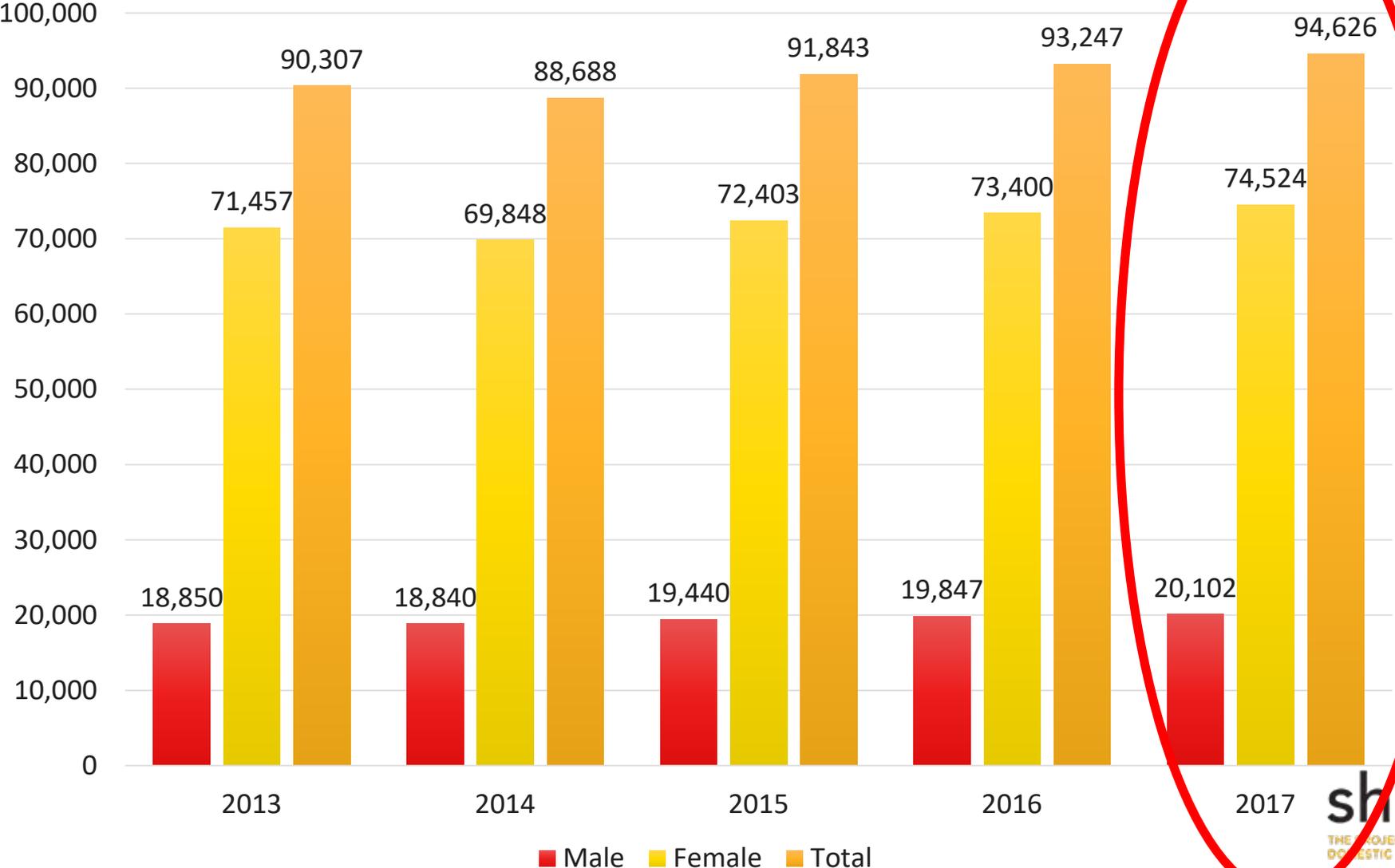
Domestic Violence is **Costly**

Domestic Violence is **Complex**

Domestic Violence is **Preventable**

# Domestic violence is pervasive

## Victims of police-reported intimate partner violence in Canada

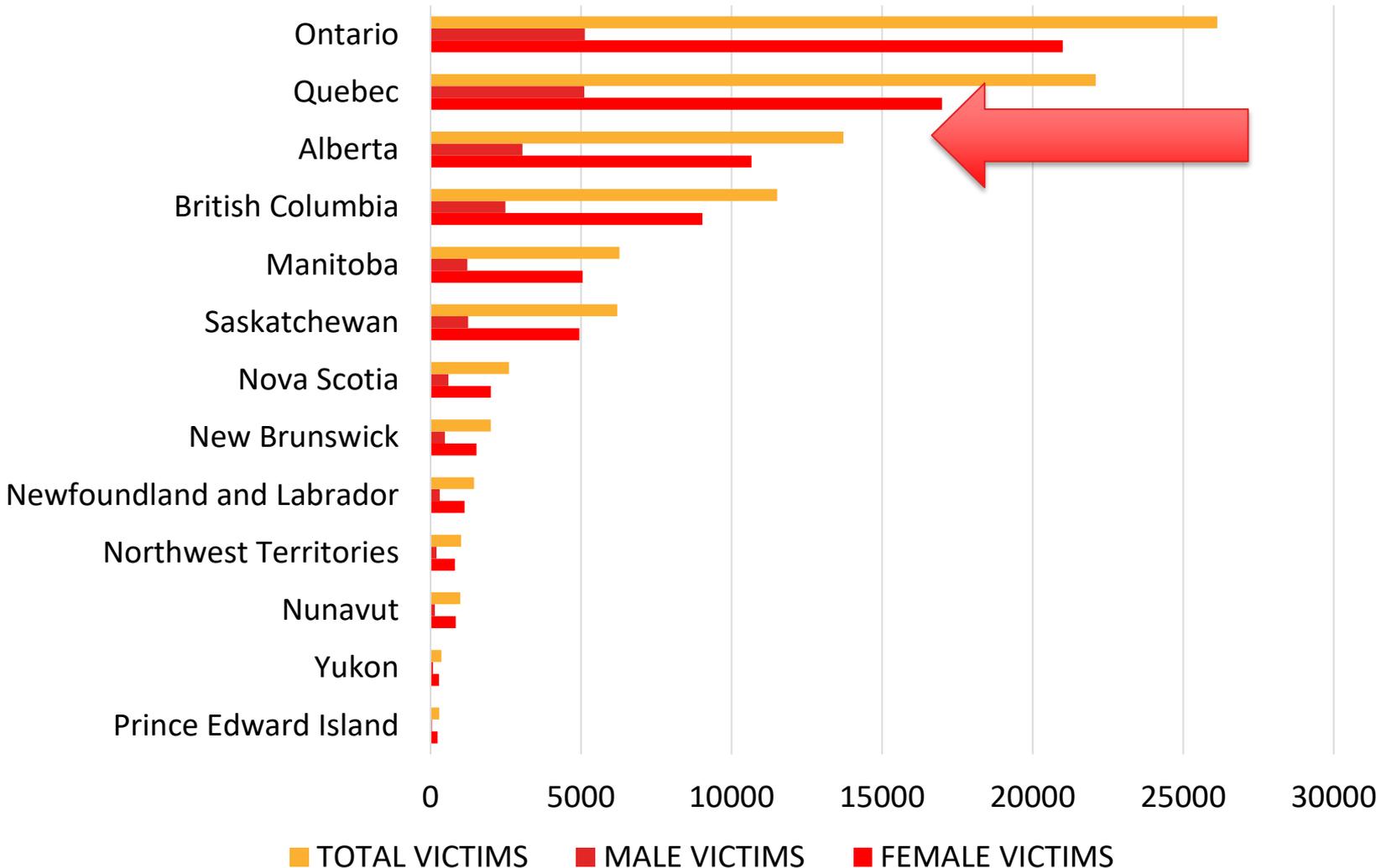


Statistics Canada, 2018



# Domestic violence is pervasive

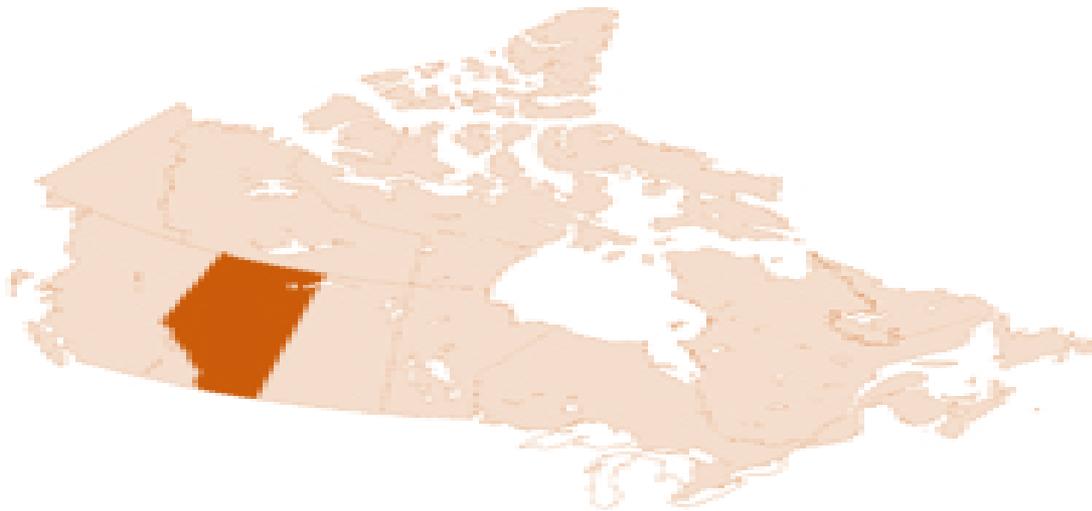
## Victims of police-reported intimate partner violence, 2017





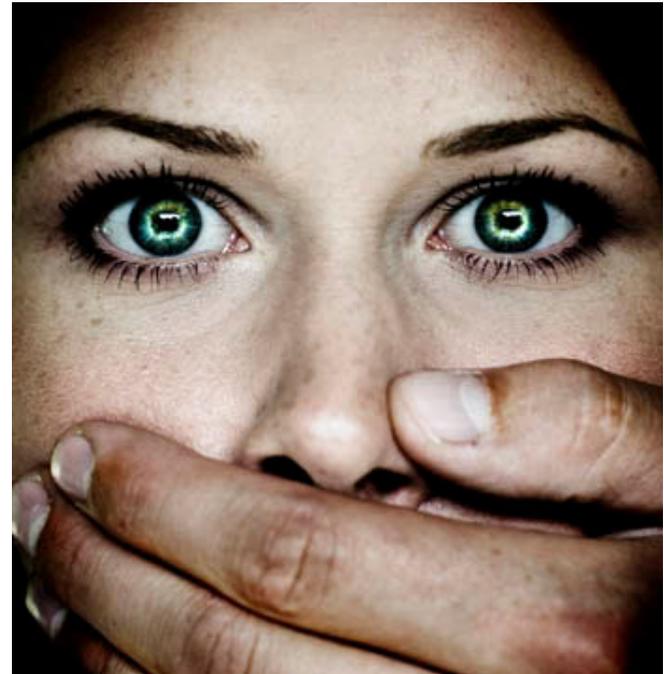
1 in 2 women will experience one  
incident of physical or sexualized  
violence.

Statistics Canada. (2017). By The Numbers: Violence Against Women and Girls in Canada.  
[http://fedec.gc.ca/sites/default/files/upload/documents/publications/wsc\\_by\\_the\\_numbers\\_vaw.pdf](http://fedec.gc.ca/sites/default/files/upload/documents/publications/wsc_by_the_numbers_vaw.pdf)



**74% of Albertans** report that they personally know at least one woman who has been sexually or physically assaulted.

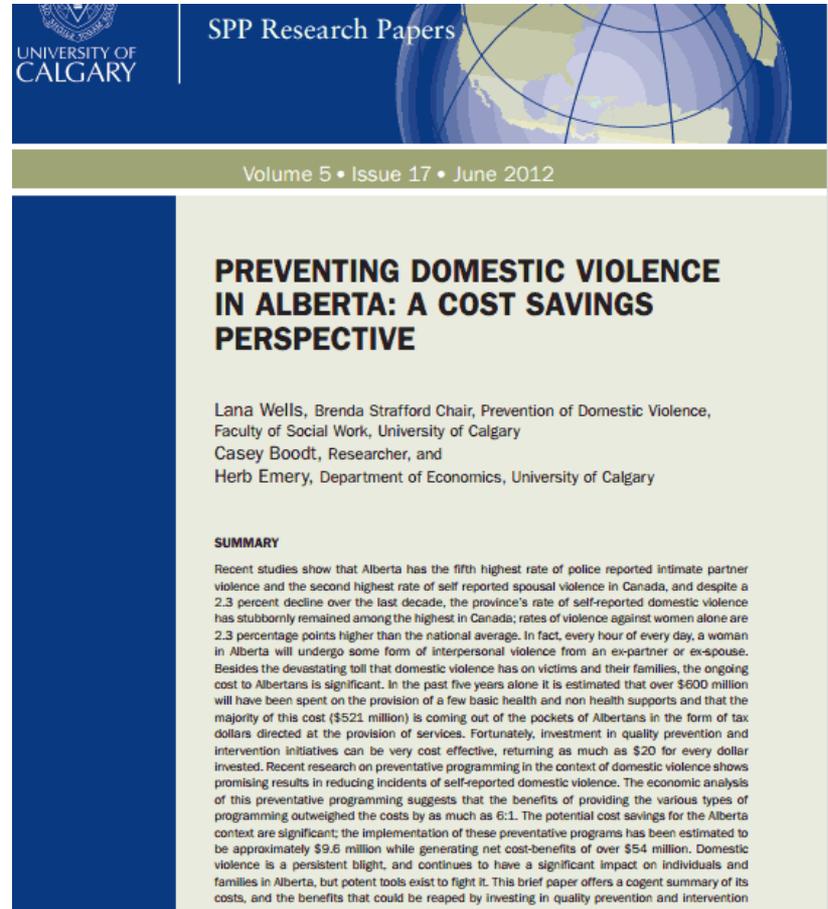
*Every hour of everyday, a woman in Alberta will be the victim of some form of violence by an **ex-spouse** or **ex-partner**.*



# Domestic Violence is Costly

Alberta spent over  
**1 Billion dollars** over  
five years on family  
violence.

Lana M. Wells, Casey Boodt and Herb Emery. (2012). Preventing Domestic Violence in Alberta: A cost savings Perspective, SPP Research Papers, 5 (17).





# Domestic violence is gendered

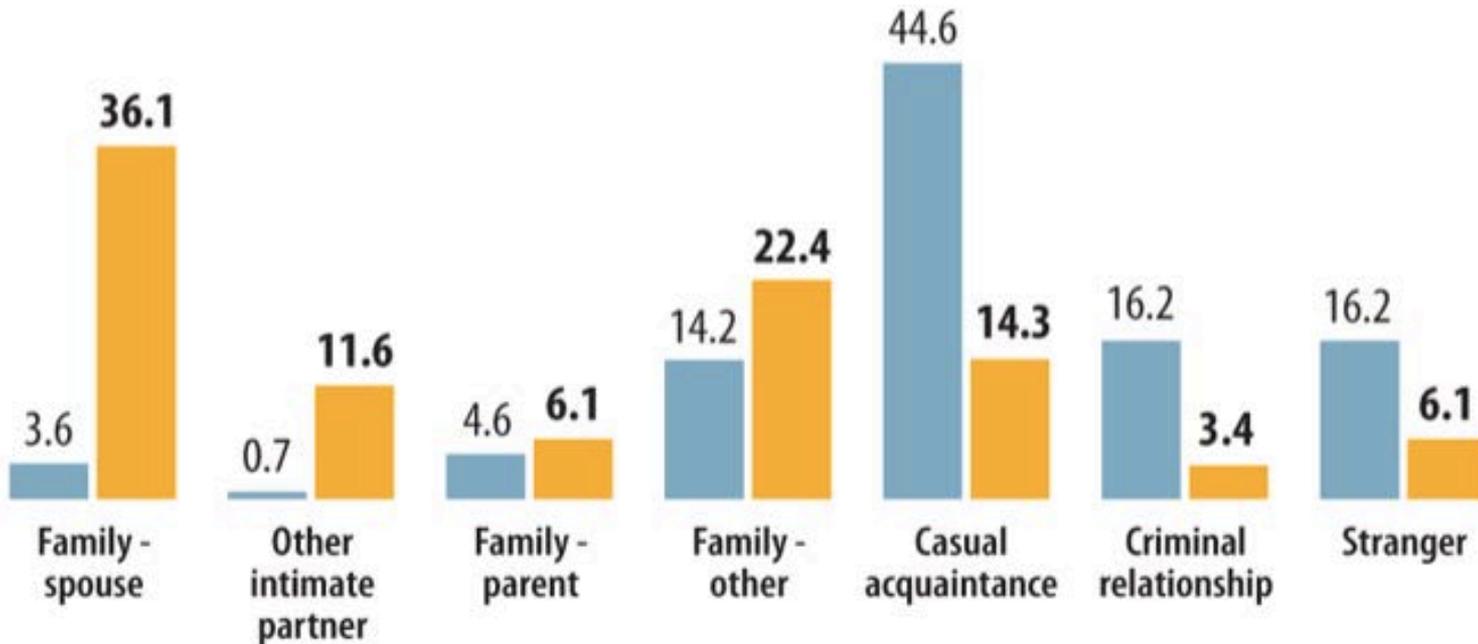
## HOMICIDE RELATIONSHIPS

*A look at the relationship between homicide victims and their accused in 2015:*

PER CENT KILLED BY:

● MALE VICTIMS

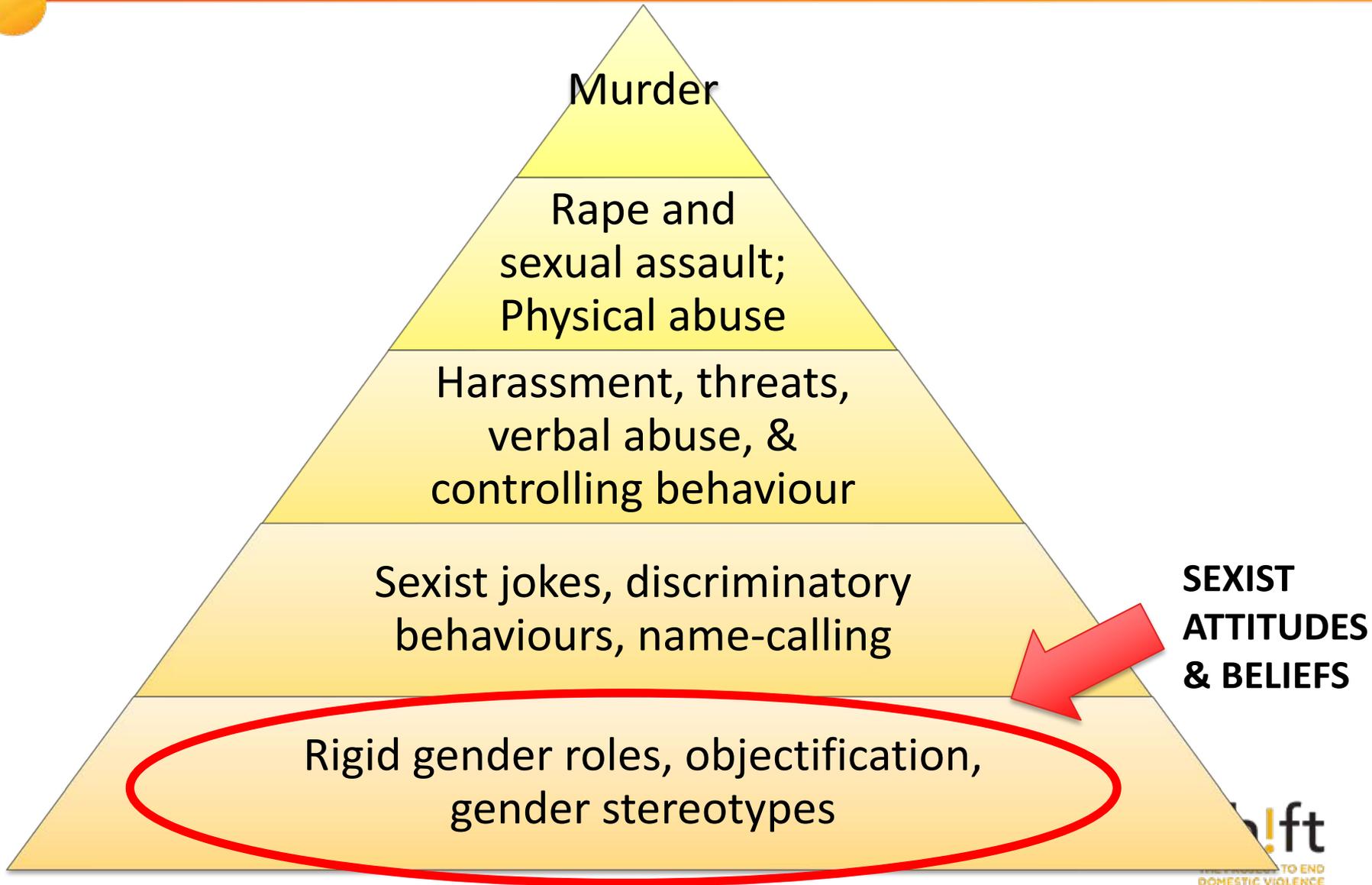
● FEMALE VICTIMS



SOURCE: Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability

THE CANADIAN PRESS

# Pyramid of Violence



**SEXIST  
ATTITUDES  
& BELIEFS**

# Domestic violence is complex

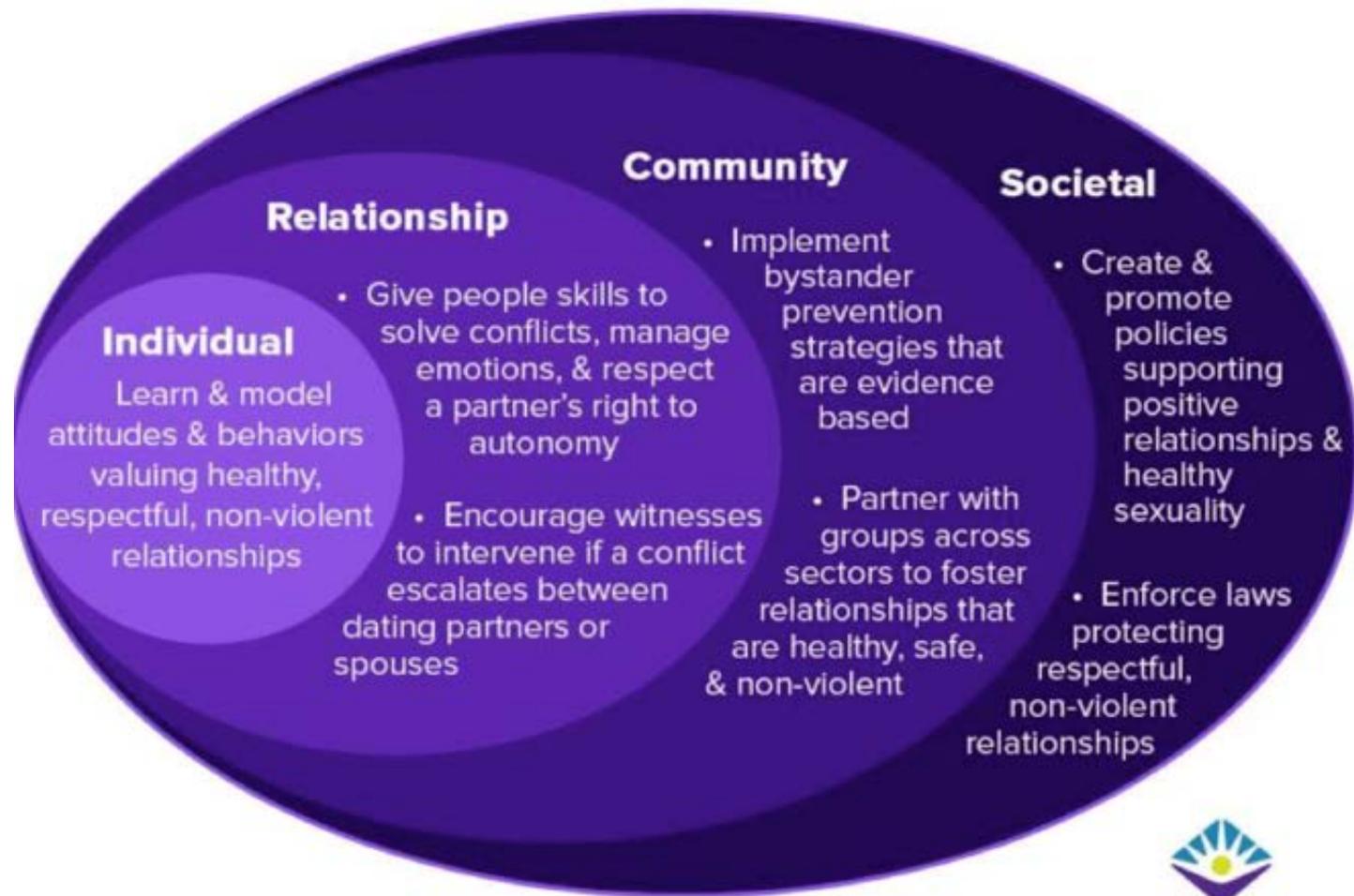
- Gender inequality is linked with domestic violence
- Societies with stronger belief system about male dominance have more domestic violence
- Link between men's adherence to sexist, patriarchal, and sexist hostile attitudes and their use of violence against women
- Witnessing or experiencing violence as a child linked to future perpetration/victimization
- Participating in peer groups and networks that support violence linked to violence
- Viewing media portrayals of violence against women (anti-violence messaging and violent pornography) linked to violence



**We believe** that violence is **learned** and **reinforced** through **institutions** like the family and school, through **interpersonal relationships**, through various forms of **media**, and through **policies** and **legislation** and this belief informs our prevention strategies.

Thus we use an ecological approach to violence prevention.

# Ecological Systems Theory for Violence Prevention



# Ecological Model in Practice



Herbert, R., & Mackenzie, D. (2014). *The way forward: An integrated system for intimate partner violence and child abuse and neglect in New Zealand*. Wellington, NZ: The Impact Collective.

*Requires us to build a comprehensive approach that targets social and cultural norms, structures and institutions, policies and practices while building the will and skills of individuals which means we are trying to create opportunities and environments where people can learn, adapt, and change.*



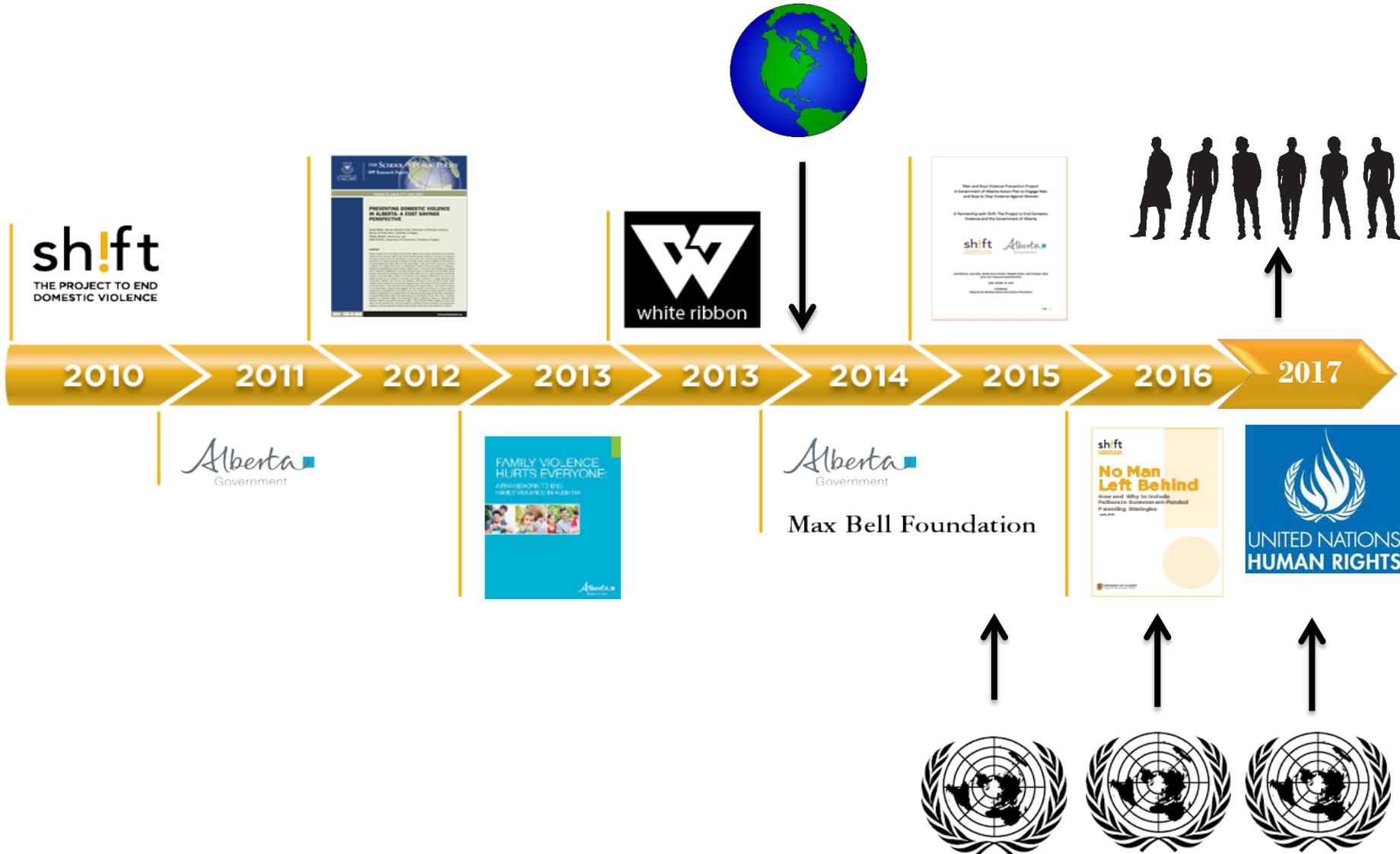
# Domestic Violence is Preventable

- ✓ Every human has a right to be free of violence

# Domestic violence is preventable by...

- Ensuring Albertans have the capacity to build and sustain healthy relationships
- Stopping the transmission of violence to children, youth and young adults
- Engaging and mobilizing non-violent men and boys as allies, leaders, advocates and violence disrupters
- Developing non-violent and healthy socio-cultural norms and environments

# Creating the conditions





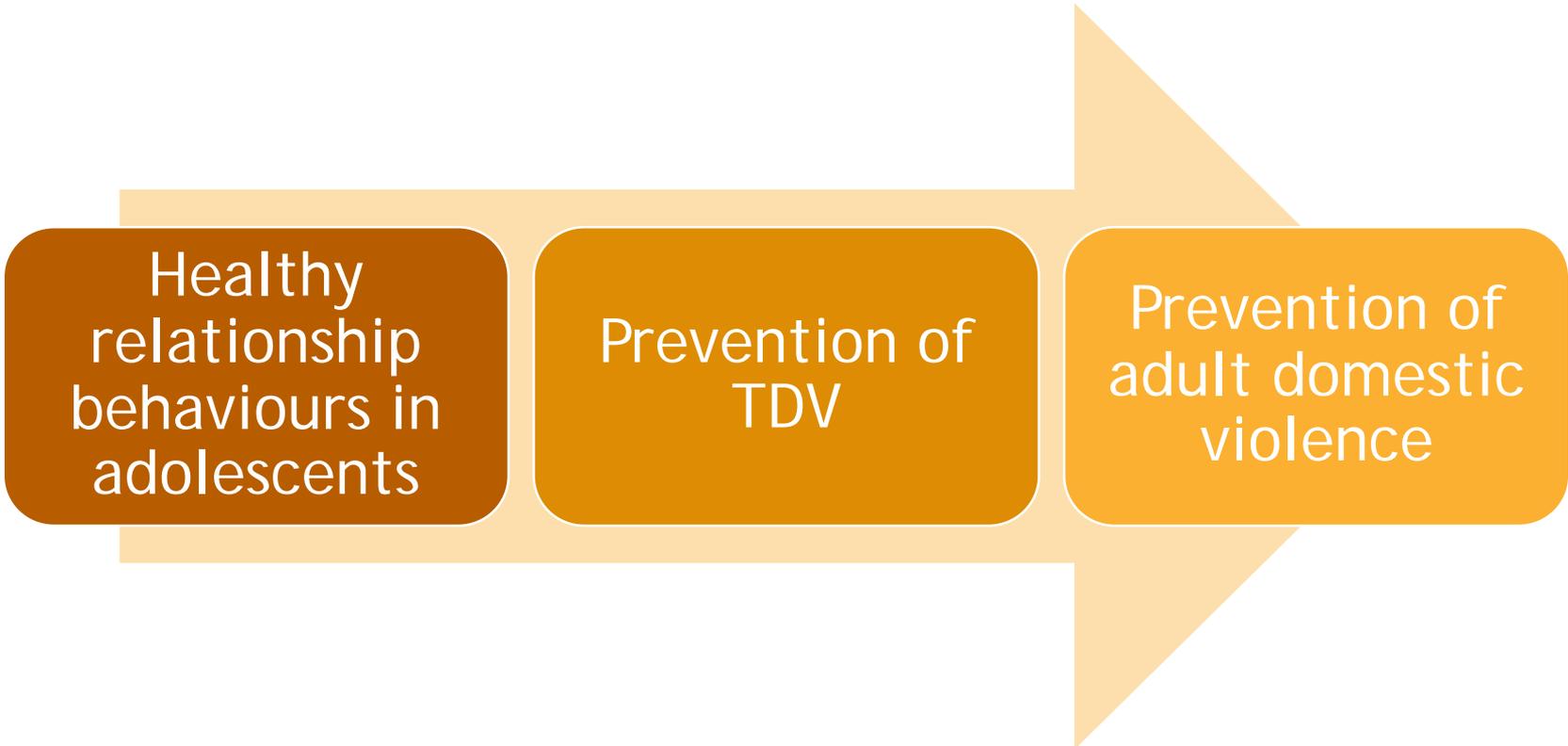
Men and boys **must** be part of the solution to stop violence against women.

But most men do **NOT** go to violence prevention programs

We need to go where men **naturally congregate**  
(work, learn, socialize, worship and recreate)

We need to build creative, comprehensive, multifaceted strategies that take an intersectionality approach that includes support for implementation, evaluation, measurement with government and community.

- To feel a sense of responsibility to intervene
- We want men and boys to learn how to stop the perpetration of a specific incident – this is a skill that needs to be learned through practice
- We want men and boys to be able to respond appropriately to a disclosure of violence – to believe the survivor and not minimize the experience
- We want men and boys to have the skills to challenge someone who makes a sexist remark or joke that normalizes VAW but to do it in a safe and appropriate way
- We want men and boys to positively influence their environments



Healthy  
relationship  
behaviours in  
adolescents

Prevention of  
TDV

Prevention of  
adult domestic  
violence

# Social-ecological model

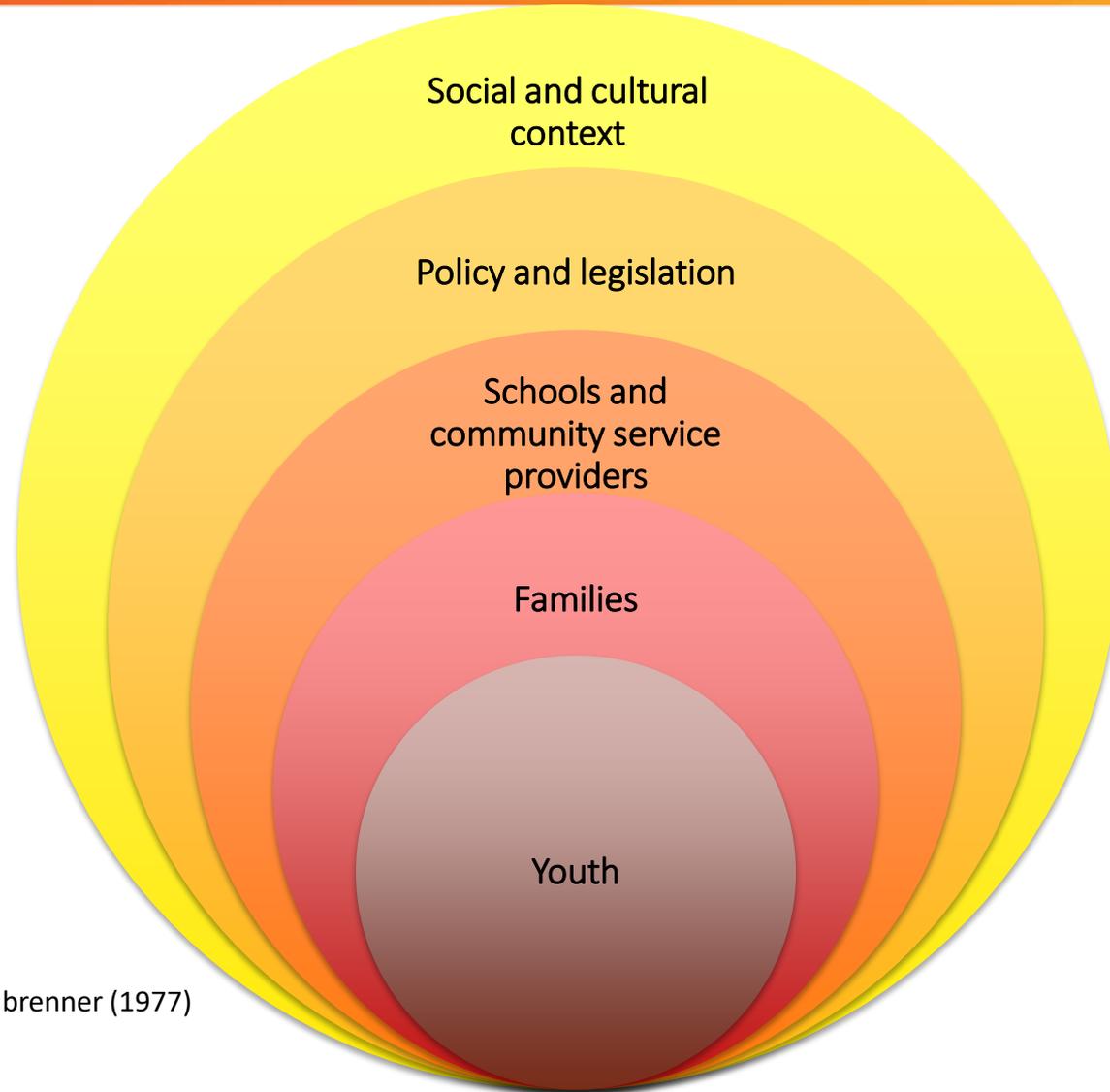


Figure adapted from: Bronfenbrenner (1977)

In partnership with CAMH, Shift is working to increase capacity at multiple levels...

# AB Healthy Youth Relationships Strategy

## SYSTEMS

Provide province-wide support and expertise to schools and communities via Healthy Youth Coordinator

Support post-secondary institutions with course curricula to equip educators to cultivate safe schools

Advocate for an evidence-based approach to healthy relationship programming in school jurisdictions throughout Alberta

## ORGANIZATIONS

Support the development of a strategic, coordinated approach to Healthy Relationship programming among community service providers and school boards

Provide ongoing training to a cohort of key leaders from across Alberta so that they have the knowledge and skills to lead their communities in supporting healthy relationship skills in youth

## FAMILIES

Develop evidence-based healthy relationship resources for parents

## YOUTH

Cultivate healthy relationship skills in youth via evidence-based programming in schools

Teach youth how to coach their peers about healthy relationships via evidence-based community programming

To ensure that young people have the skills to develop and maintain healthy relationships, so that...

The next generation can live a life free from domestic violence

# Supporting communities, schools, and families

Cultivate healthy relationships skills in youth via **evidence-based** programming in **schools** and **community** based programs



**Fourth R – Western University:** A relationship-based approach to prevent adolescent violence and related risk behaviors (grade 7-9) taught by teachers



**Healthy Relationship Plus Program (HRPP) – Western University:** Taught by community professionals in small-group community and/or school setting (ages 14-18)



**Healthy Relationship Training Module (HRTM) - PREVNet:** Provides formal training for adults who work with children and youth

## Fourth R

- **42** schools divisions and **317** schools
- **1600** teachers trained
- Over **83,000** grade 7-9 students reached

## Healthy Relationship Plus Program (HRPP)

- **828** facilitators trained
- Over **18,000** youth participated in the program

## Healthy Relationship Training Model (HRTM)

- **813** adults (who work with youth) trained

What does this mean  
for municipalities?



# The role of local government

- Prioritize the issue
- Leadership and Coordination
- Sustained involvement
- Contact with the community
- Resources
- Ensure ongoing monitoring and evaluation

# Four municipal level policies

## Municipalities (N=25)

#	Province/Territory	#	Municipality
1	Alberta	1	Calgary
		2	Edmonton
2	British Columbia	3	Vancouver
		4	Surrey
		5	Victoria
3	Saskatchewan	6	Saskatoon
		7	Regina
4	Manitoba	8	Winnipeg
		9	Brandon
5	Ontario	10	Ottawa
		11	Toronto
6	Quebec	12	Montreal
		13	Quebec City
7	New Brunswick	14	Fredericton
		15	Moncton
		16	St. John
8	Nova Scotia	17	Halifax
		18	Cape Breton
9	Prince Edward Island	19	Charlottetown
		20	Summerside
10	Newfoundland	21	St. John's
		22	Corner Brook
11	North West Territories	23	Yellowknife
12	Yukon	24	Whitehorse
13	Nunavut	25	Iqaluit

1. City of Edmonton, *Gender-Based Violence Prevention Initiative (2017)*
2. City of Vancouver, *A Gender Equality Strategy (2005)* and *Women's Equity Strategy (2018)*
3. City of Winnipeg, *Winnipeg Safe City: Working for a City Free from Violence Against Women and Girls (2013)*
4. City of Toronto, *Action on Intimate Partner Violence against Women (2015)*

# What can FCSS and Municipalities do to end domestic violence?

- Mayor's and City Council's can be the 'champion' for the crime and violence prevention strategy
- Municipalities can lead, organize, motivate and fund local prevention plans (both external and internal)
- Shift from a relatively narrow focus on crime prevention to the broader issue of community safety and security as a public good (both in the home and in community)
- Prevention is cost effective compared with criminal justice solutions

# Commit to develop and implement a local violence prevention plan

- Workplace initiatives/strategies (internal and contracted)
- Advancing gender equality policies Includes men and boys in the solution that promotes healthy masculinities
- Partners with child welfare and Early Childhood Development, schools and school jurisdictions
- Limiting alcohol outlet density
- Invest in the coordination of domestic violence sector AND other key institutions for collective impact
- Fund primary prevention activities/programs (evidence)



**“If you want to fix something you  
are first obliged to  
understand...the whole system”  
- Lewis Thomas**



Thank you!

[www.preventdomesticviolence.ca](http://www.preventdomesticviolence.ca)

# What do we think needs to be put in place?

- Common definitions, goals and shared understanding
- Ecological approach
- Human rights-based and gender-transformative approach
- Intersectional approach to ensure effective support for diverse populations
- Funding to support the continuum of prevention: primary, secondary, tertiary
- Strong legal framework: criminal, civil, family, restorative justice and legal assistance
- Programs/supports for perpetrators/victims, children and informal networks (friends, families, neighbours, etc.)
- Engage/mobilize of men and boys
- On-going training across sectors/professionals
- Collaboration between systems and institutions including information sharing
- Supportive media-messaging NOT blaming the victim
- Strategies to prevent and reduce alcohol related harm
- Death Review Committee's = systems change
- Accountability systems



Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada



THE CALGARY  
FOUNDATION  
FOR CALGARY FOREVER



[www.accpa.org](http://www.accpa.org)

Alberta

Government

Max Bell Foundation



United Way  
Calgary and Area



*Making a  
difference!*

[www.calgary.ca/fcss](http://www.calgary.ca/fcss)



CANADIAN  
WOMEN'S  
FOUNDATION

camh Centre for Addiction  
and Mental Health

sh!ft  
THE PROJECT TO END  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



**SHIFT TO STOP  
VIOLENCE  
BEFORE IT STARTS**

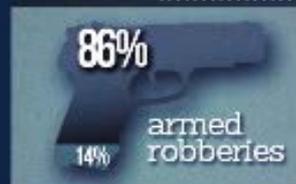
[www.preventdomesticviolence.ca](http://www.preventdomesticviolence.ca)

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

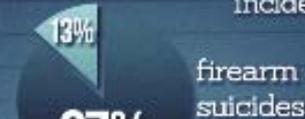


**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK

# GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS OF VIOLENCE



domestic violence incidents



86%

14%

90%

87%

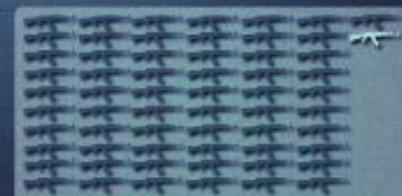
stalkers



Indigenous women are 3 times more likely to be victims of violence than non-Indigenous women (Justice Canada, 2017)

99%  
rape

for more, check out  
**TOUGH GUISE 2**  
toughguise2.com



61 of 62 mass shooters

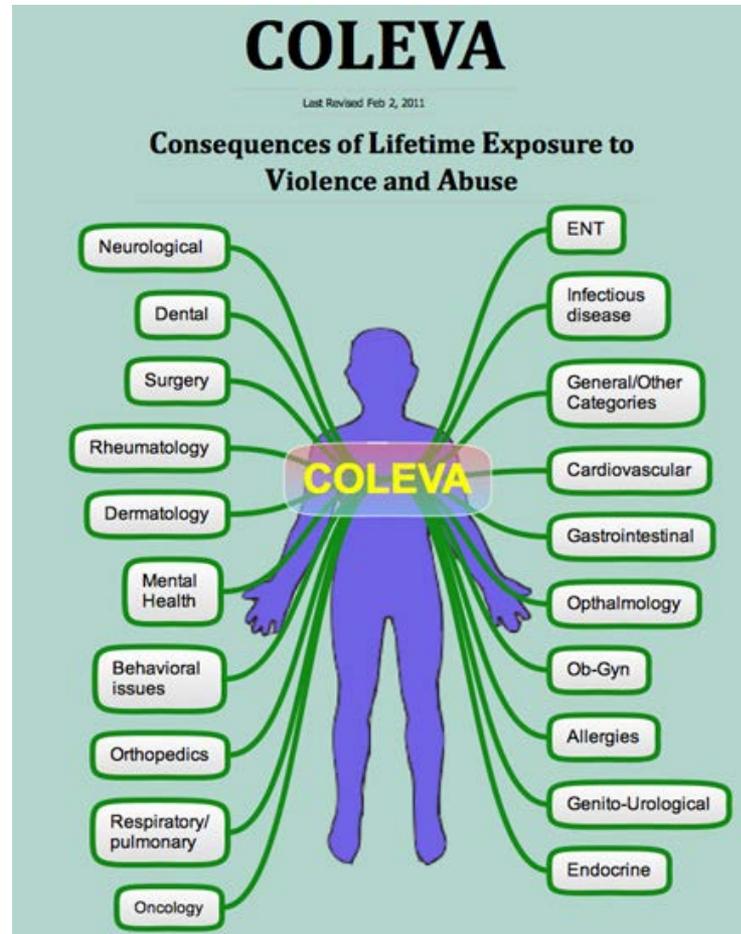
# Municipal governments can.....

- **Analyze** density of alcohol outlets and **strengthen** local zoning regulations (distance between outlets, per capita rate, geographical density)
- **Reduce** or avoid congestion in and around outlets and lower the likelihood of altercations
- **Evaluate** every licence application and contest those that could adversely impact a neighbourhood and **consider** citizens participation in alcohol liquor license application hearings
- **Promote** health by ensuring the community offers alternatives in entertainment, recreation and socializing

# Consequences of violence

- Adverse childhood experiences lead to disrupted neurodevelopment...
- Disruptions lead to social, emotional and cognitive impairment...
- Impairments lead to adoption of health-risk behaviours to help manage emotions; and
- Risk behaviours lead to disease, disability, and social problems, all of which may culminate in early death

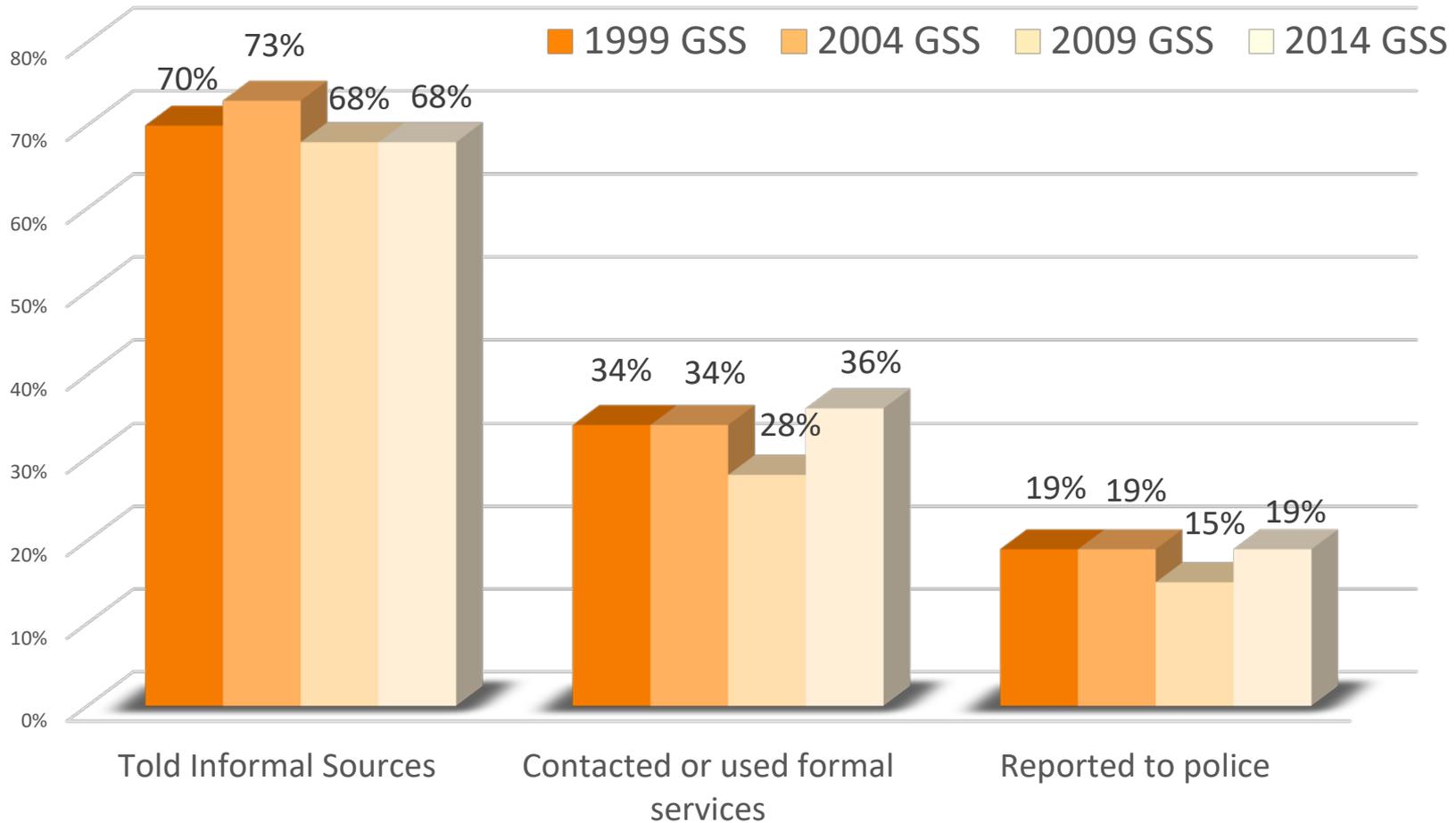
[www.coleva.net](http://www.coleva.net)



- Built the case
- Built capacity through working group/survey
- Calgary Domestic Violence Coalition Prioritizes area
- Comprehensive framework designed
- CWES and Sagesse launch programs



# Trends: Contact informal supporters for help





# A Way Forward...

# Include gender equality strategies in Violence Prevention Plans

- Implement policy to improve gender equality
  - Paternal leave and fatherhood programs
  - Pay equity to fix the gender wage gap (equal pay for equal work)
  - Affordable, quality and accessible child care
  - Invest in women leadership

# Commit to school based prevention activities, especially target adolescence

- Redesign the Education Act and curriculum and teacher training to prioritize
  - gender equality,
  - non-violent communication
  - by-stander skills
  - social & emotional learning
  - media literacy
  - promotion of healthy masculinities/femininity
  - sexual health, consent

# Trojan Horse Approach: Entry-points are places, programs and initiatives where men and boys naturally congregate

- Schools
- Workplaces
- Health Care Settings
- Sports and Recreation
- Places of Worship
- Fatherhood Settings
- Military Settings

*Engaging Men and Boys in Domestic Violence Prevention: Opportunities and Promising Approaches*  
(Wells, Lorenzetti, Carolo, Dinner, Jones, Minerson, & Esina, 2012)

## Other interventions...

- Support a long-term education campaign to promote healthy, non-violent masculinities
- Reduce exposure and access to pornography
- Invest in by-stander programs throughout lifespan

# Prevent incidents of child abuse

- Promote positive discipline in parenting programs
- Invest in positive father involvement
- Invest in parenting after separation programs/supports
- Invest in programs that reduce impact of trauma, mental health and addictions

# Men's violence prevention efforts must:

- Be linked to the promotion of gender equality and be grounded in a feminist analysis;
- Challenge and work to transform traditional and violent masculinities;
- Be carried out in partnership with, and even be accountable to, women and women's groups;
- Acknowledge and address intersections among gender, gender identities, masculine identities, sexuality, racial or ethno-cultural background, class, age, and any other forms of social difference;
- Not divert financial or any other resources from violence against women work led by women; and
- Quantifiably evaluate the impact of men's involvement on reducing violence.

Principles from (Flood & Pease 2009).

# Canadian scan on domestic violence prevention policies at the municipal level

sh!ft

THE PROJECT TO END  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

CANADIAN SCAN ON DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICIES  
AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL

September 2018

 UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK

- National scan of municipal websites
- Search for approved and endorsed *policies* in violence prevention
- 2013-2018
- 10 provinces, 3 territories
- Out of 25 municipalities reviewed, only four had municipal level policies

sh!ft  
THE PROJECT TO END  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE