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THE PROJECT TO END
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Calling in All Men: 26
Recommendations for
Engaging and Mobilizing
Men to Prevent Violence
and Advance Equity**

2022



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Authors Note

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

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

In the process of developing the recommendations included in this report, we worked diligently to map the ways in which intersectionality could be better incorporated within these fields and more alignment and collaboration could be fostered across disciplines. Still, we recognize that our analysis may have shortcomings as we continue the process of learning and unlearning in relation to our own positionality and context in this work. We welcome those who want to call us *in* so that we may continue to make our work stronger, more relevant, and more impactful across a wider audience.

In solidarity,
Laura, Lana, and Elizabeth

1.0 Project Overview

The purpose of this research project is to synthesize evidence-informed *primary prevention* approachesⁱ that engage and mobilize men to prevent and disrupt violence and inequalities, and to share these findings with those funding and working with men and male-identified people in Canada. As part of this project, nine rapid evidence reviewsⁱⁱ were conducted on promising approaches to motivating and engaging men in violence prevention and gender equality efforts. Table 1 below briefly outlines the nine approaches and indicates the level of evidence for each.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF NINE RAPID REVIEWS ON APPROACHES TO MOTIVATING AND MOBILIZING MEN

Approaches	Definition	Summary of evidence
1. Bystander approach ¹	Bystander-based initiatives build bystanders' self-efficacy to take action when they see a potentially harmful interaction in order to mitigate or prevent language and/or behaviour that is inappropriate, hurtful, abusive, or dangerous.	An evidence-based approach with limitations. Research shows that although the bystander approach can have positive impacts on attitudes, intentions, and behaviours, it has not been found to be effective at preventing sexual assault or violence and, as a stand-alone strategy, is an ineffective approach for primary prevention. As such, bystander interventions should always be implemented within a comprehensive multi-level primary prevention strategy.
2. Social norms approach ²	Social norms are rules or expectations for how to behave that are shared by a particular group of people and are maintained by social pressure (i.e.,	While more research is needed, there is strong evidence to support a social norms approach for violence prevention and the approach shows

ⁱ Primary Prevention approaches means focusing on preventing initial perpetration and victimization of domestic, family, and sexual violence by scaling up interventions that target the structural and cultural conditions that produce and reinforce discrimination, inequities, and violence. For this report, primary prevention is defined as strategies that address root causes driving violence, discrimination, and gender inequality (Lee, L., Wells, L., & Ghidei, W. (2021). *Discussion paper to support the design of Alberta's primary prevention framework to prevent family and sexual violence*. [Submitted to Government of Alberta]. Calgary, AB. The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence)

ⁱⁱ Rapid evidence reviews are way of synthesizing knowledge that follows a systematic review process, but components of the process are simplified or excluded in order to shorten the length of time required to complete the review. The process includes identifying specific research questions, searching for, accessing the most applicable and relevant sources of evidence, and synthesizing the evidence.

	<p>social punishment or rewards). There are two types of norms: descriptive (what we think other people do) and injunctive (what we think other people would approve or disapprove of). The two main types of social norms interventions are those that aim to correct misperceptions about norms, and those that work with key influencers to disrupt harmful norms and promote more adaptive ones.³</p>	<p>promise for advancing equity. Findings show that social norms-focused interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decrease negative gender inequitable attitudes. ▪ Improve men’s perceptions of their peers’ attitudes and beliefs. ▪ Increases the likelihood that men will intervene to challenge problematic language and behaviors. ▪ In some cases, the approach has been shown to reduce and prevent violence.
<p>3. Nudge approach⁴</p>	<p>A nudge is a small contextual shift that has the potential to change behaviour without changing the choices available (i.e., it is suggestive, not coercive). Nudges point to a particular choice by changing the way environment is structured or by framing the choice such that the desired behavior is easier and/or more attractive to adopt. Nudges can be applied to language, visuals, organizational processes, policies, physical environments, and social norms.</p>	<p>Nudge interventions show promise for positively changing beliefs and behaviours and show potential for positively changing systems and social norms. Our review found evidence to support the testing of nudge interventions to advance gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion among populations that include men, and specifically to engage and mobilize men. Encouragingly, nudges appear to be less likely to trigger backlash or resistance than more direct and explicit approaches to addressing inequality, discrimination, and exclusion.</p>
<p>4. Virtual reality⁵</p>	<p>Virtual reality can be understood as immersive, virtual, and simulated environments that provide sensory information for users to see, hear, and feel as if they are in a physical world, thus creating a sense of “being there” in the virtual environment. <i>Immersive storytelling</i> is a technique that uses technology to create a compelling sense of presence in order to impact behaviour.</p>	<p>Virtual reality interventions show promise, but the research in this field is still in its infancy and there is much to learn, particularly as it relates to engaging and mobilizing men. Findings suggest that virtual reality can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase empathy (e.g., towards racial minorities, victims of sexual harassment). ▪ Decrease violent attitudes. ▪ Positively influence beliefs.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raise awareness (e.g., about gender inequality). ▪ Improve communication and prevent male-identified anti-social behaviours that occur due to group pressure. <p>None of the studies reviewed measured or provided evidence of impact on social norms and/or culture and/or systems change.</p>
5. Gamification ⁶	<p>Gamification is the application of game design methodologies and techniques to non-game environments (processes, services) to produce a specific outcome (i.e., change in knowledge, behaviour and/or attitude). Key to gamification is to achieve the goal of making the process of learning, reflecting, and changing attitudes and behaviours less threatening, and more enjoyable such that players' intrinsic motivation is cultivated through the right balance of extrinsic and intrinsic motivational appeal.</p>	<p>Gamification shows great promise in creating environments that cultivate motivation, foster learning, and positively change attitudes and behaviours. This approach would be particularly strong if integrated into violence prevention or equity interventions alongside other approaches, such as nudges, social norms, and bystander approaches. While gamification designed to achieve social ends are still in early stages, it has huge potential that has yet to be tapped, including potential for targeting adults (much of the available research focuses on youth).</p>
6. Data science ⁷	<p>Data science is a multidisciplinary field of study that focuses on creating, collecting, handling, and analysing data in order to extract actionable insights from the large and ever-increasing volume of data that are available across a wide range of platforms and sources. Data scientists use scientific processes, algorithms, and systems to identify patterns and trends surface issues, predict future events, reduce risk, and improve programming and outcomes.</p> <p><i>*We purposefully created a broad definition to be inclusive of multiple</i></p>	<p>Data science holds incredible potential to identify patterns and trends in large pools of data ("Big Data") to inform the design of interventions related to engaging and mobilizing men. Realizing the potential of data science to engage and mobilize men will require:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing and improving data collection specific to the agenda of engaging and mobilizing men (i.e., better understanding their help-seeking behaviours) 2. Partnering with those who already have in-depth knowledge and experience in using data science methods, and work to build

	<p><i>types and forms of data science. A broader definition also allows for more flexibility, which is important in a field where the research is emergent (especially as it applies to promoting social change).</i></p>	<p>capacity in the field of engaging men.</p> <p>While data science has enormous potential for this field, it comes with cautions and limitations as it can perpetuate bias and inequities when used incorrectly. The <i>Data Equity Framework</i> created by <i>We All Count</i>⁸ is a useful tool to help people understand how data science can enhance every decision and increase the impact of equity and social justice interventions.</p>
7. Community justice ⁹	<p>Community justice is an umbrella term that embraces a range of crime prevention and justice activities designed to produce community-level outcomes. These activities include short- and long-term problem solving, restorative justice, strengthening normative standards, and effectively reintegrating offenders into the community. Community justice includes restorative/transformational/alternative principles and practices as well as conflict resolution but focuses on these forms of justice at the community, not individual, level.</p> <p><i>*These practices have long and significant histories in Indigenous and Black and Brown communities.</i></p>	<p>While the evidence gathered for this review had limitations, community justice approaches are largely positively received by the communities in which they are implemented, and many show promise in their ability to achieve justice-related outcomes and produce long-term healing and behaviour change. Importantly, community justice approaches provide a pathway for community members to regain ownership of their own community, which is particularly important in marginalized communities, including Indigenous communities, where “outside” law enforcement has fomented distrust and fear. While this approach shows significant promise, none of the research explicitly noted the importance of engaging men (some did indirectly).</p>
8. Fatherhood ¹⁰	<p>Programs and initiatives that promote “positive fatherhood involvement” can be defined as those which encourage fathers to cultivate their child’s well-being and security by taking an active role in caring for their social, emotional, cognitive, and</p>	<p>Fatherhood is one of the most promising entry points for engaging men in violence prevention and gender equality. It is a transformative life stage that evidence shows can translate to positive shifts among men if appropriately leveraged. The</p>

	<p>physical health, and by having a respectful, equitable relationship with the child’s mother or co-parent.¹¹</p> <p><i>* Father/dad: Includes all male-identified people in caregiving roles—biological and adoptive parents, stepparents, transgender fathers, father figures, and any other males serving a parenting function.¹²</i></p>	<p>evidence is overwhelmingly clear that fathers play a distinct and unique role in their children’s lives, and promoting positive fatherhood is a key strategy for primary prevention of child maltreatment, domestic violence, and gender inequality. Children with engaged fathers have higher emotional, cognitive, and social well-being, as well as reduced behavioural problems. Positive father involvement is also good for the broader family unit in that it contributes to positive parenting, home and family maintenance, and greater maternal satisfaction.</p>
<p>9. Calling in¹³</p>	<p>Calling in, a term credited to Ngọc Loan Trần who is a Việt/mixed-race disabled queer writer and educator based in the U.S. South,¹⁴ is the practice of inviting people/organizations who are causing/have caused harm into a conversation in which learning and growth are the goals. Calling in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fosters an environment in which people are more likely to be receptive and have an opportunity to grow. • Provides clear and appropriate feedback in the form of a two-way conversation. • Starts from a place of hope that change is possible. <p>Calling in can be contrasted with “calling out,” which tends to be a one-way declaration focused on punitive efforts that push people out/away, or “cancels” them, usually through shaming and blaming, and often publicly.</p>	<p>Based primarily on the knowledge and lived experiences of equity-seeking populations (in particular Black, Brown, Indigenous, and LGBTQ+ social justice activists), emergent evidence supports the adoption of calling in practices, and they show strong potential for engaging men and holding them accountable. Calling in advocates highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to stop cycles of harm. • The ineffectiveness of a politics of shame and culture of fear. • The need to choose love over hate and focus on systemic inequalities rather than attempting to dismiss or “cancel” individuals. <p>Calling in is a concrete strategy that can help shift the conversation from men as an inevitable part of the problem, to an essential component of the solution. The research strongly suggests that it is time to think radically and creatively about how to meet men where they are, including scaling up efforts to apply innovative</p>

		<p>approaches to help men recognize their vested interest in violence prevention and achieving equity for all.</p>
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This report draws on findings from each of the rapid reviews to provide a high-level synthesis of emergent evidence for what works to engage and mobilize men to prevent violence and promote gender justice, equality, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI).ⁱⁱⁱ It includes a series of recommendations that were developed for a range of stakeholders, including governments, funders, researchers/evaluators, and practitioners. The findings also provide the foundation for identifying gaps in the field and formulating recommendations for the type and level of research, funding, learning, and action needed to make further progress in these areas.

2.0 Methods

The findings and recommendations outlined in this report are based on research and analysis that included nine rapid evidence reviews, consultations with key experts in the field, and a targeted document review. Each of these methods is briefly outlined below. (For further details, please see the corresponding rapid review reports^{15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23}).

2.1 Rapid evidence reviews (n=9)

Throughout the research and analysis, researchers kept an ongoing list of cross-review findings, including key trends, gaps, and evidence. Once all the reviews were completed, the preliminary list was analyzed, and any cross-review themes that did not have clear evidence from at least two reviews were removed. The findings were then synthesized into relevant categories, such as settings, populations, and focus areas, and recommendations were developed. Finally, the findings and recommendations were checked against consultations with subject matter experts to ensure that their input was integrated into the recommendations, as appropriate.

2.2 Consultations with experts in the field

To inform our research and ensure it was relevant to, and resonated with, practitioners working with men in Canada to prevent violence and advance equity, male-identified subject matter experts identified through Shift’s feminist and pro-feminist networks were invited to provide input via online surveys, group meetings, and written feedback on key documents. We intentionally sought male-identified practitioners who worked with and represented a diverse range of Canadian experiences, including varying ages, geographic locations within Canada, racial and ethnic

ⁱⁱⁱ Note: This report is based on a high-level summary of the nine reviews that was completed in early 2022. See: Pascoe, L., Wells, L., Baker, E., Akbary, H. S., Hansen, B., & Esina, E. (2022). *High-level summary of nine rapid evidence reviews: Innovative approaches to mobilize more men to prevent violence and advance equity*. Calgary, AB. The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence.

backgrounds, and scope of work within the field of engaging men. All research was approved by the University of Calgary institutional ethics board.

2.3 Targeted document review

Some of the approaches that were examined in the rapid reviews were first developed to address other social issues and therefore do not speak directly to how and why men should be engaged (e.g., nudges, community justice). This means that some of the questions around how the work of engaging men should be framed and situated are challenging to address based only on the synthesis of evidence from the rapid evidence reviews. For this reason, findings from the reviews and consultations were complemented with insights from two documents that were recently published by UN Women: the first is a full discussion paper on working with men and boys,²⁴ and the other is a policy brief based on findings from the discussion paper.²⁵ Written by two key experts in this field, Michael Flood and Alan Greig, these reports offer global evidence as well as a bird's eye view of research and practice in the engaging men field. The use of these documents in this comprehensive synthesis of evidence ensures a more well-rounded and contextualized analysis of what works to engage men for violence prevention, gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion.

2.4 Limitations

This comprehensive synthesis provides cutting edge evidence and insights around how, why, and where to engage and mobilize men to prevent violence and advance gender and social equality. The research is, however, limited in two ways. First, most of the approaches reviewed focus on evidence relating to programmatic work, rather than efforts to build a social change movement with men. Some of the approaches reviewed certainly show promise in contributing to systems-level change, but there is still little research related to building a movement among men to address the structural gender and social inequalities embedded within the white-capitalist-colonial-heterosexual-patriarchal society in which we live.

Second, the majority of approaches reviewed frame engagement efforts as a way of improving the lives of women and girls, rather than framing the work in ways that include men as *co-beneficiaries* of violence prevention and gender equality. The inclusion of the UN Women reports is intended to try to address this limitation.

3.0 Synthesizing the Evidence: Findings and Recommendations

This section outlines 26 recommendations for motivating and mobilizing more men to prevent violence and advance equity. The recommendations are grouped thematically, as follows:

1. Challenging assumptions about what works to engage men
2. Taking an intersectional approach
3. Leveraging key entry points
4. Strategic ingredients for engaging men
5. Rethinking evaluation in the context of social change

6. Building a movement: Making the personal political...and structural

3.1 Challenging assumptions about what works to engage men

Recommendation #1: Men must be engaged for their own liberation, not just as instruments for promoting women’s empowerment

Rationale: A recent study by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) involving researchers, practitioners, and funders in the field of engaging men^{iv} concluded that efforts to engage men and advance gender equality are limited in their efficacy when men are engaged solely as an instrument of women’s empowerment. Quoting the ICRW report, Greig and Flood write that “[p]rogress on gender equity will be hampered if men see women’s empowerment primarily as a zero-sum game in which men are giving something up in order for women to advance.”²⁶

This study, and others like it, show that in this context, “gender equality” is often focused on the needs of only one gender: women. This does not capture the real stake men have in gender equality and limits the possibilities for large scale transformative change. Instead, experts in this field are increasingly calling for “an alternative framing with a larger and more inclusive goal,”²⁷ one that positions men as co-beneficiaries, stakeholders, agents of change, supportive partners, and clients with their own health needs. Many men need help seeing the compelling reasons to engage in this work, and their “why” starts with understanding the personal stake and impact this work has in relation to their own needs, lives, and experiences—before, and at times in tandem with, focusing on the needs and experiences of others.

Recommendation #2: A gender transformative approach is critical, but it does not always need to be at the *forefront* of this work.

Rationale: Challenging and transforming gender-inequitable norms is a core part of changing sociocultural norms. However, while a gender transformative approach is essential to this work, consideration should be given to when and how it is introduced. For example, focusing on harmful male gender norms in the early stages of engagement with men and male-identified people may perpetuate defensiveness and hostility and limit their receptivity to learning, while there are numerous skills that benefit men and advance the cause without explicitly addressing gender attitudes (e.g., empathy and communication). The nudge approach also shows the power of taking a “side door” approach to addressing issues relating to inequality as it doesn’t penalize or reward particular choices; instead, it makes it easier for people to opt for a particular choice by changing the way the choices are framed.

^{iv} The study by ICRW did not include North America, but covered Latin America, Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

There are also some limitations associated with a gender transformative approach.²⁸ First, the approach often misses addressing men’s violence against other men, including homophobic bullying.²⁹ Second, it can inadvertently assume heteronormativity through its focus on gender relations between men and women (thereby reinforcing a binary perspective of gender). Third, it may inadequately address power relations and other forms of oppression through an overemphasis on gender-focused power dynamics at the expense of power dynamics related to racism, ableism, classism, and the interconnection with other social inequalities. (This is not always the case. SASA! is a great example of an evidence-based violence prevention and HIV reduction initiative that focused on a critical analysis and discussion of power and power inequalities, rather than placing gender at the forefront^{30 31}).

Finally, by placing an emphasis on gender norms at the individual level, the gender transformative framework may inadvertently shift the focus away from the structures and systems that drive systemic discrimination and violence. Flood and Greig caution that “the field’s emphasis on changing gender norms has directed its attention more to men’s shared beliefs and interpersonal relationships and less to patriarchal hierarchies of power, and the embedding of gender norms within them.”³²

Recommendation #3: More creative methods are needed to motivate men and “keep them at the table.”

Rationale: Evidence suggests that helping men understand their personal stake in this work can be most effective when done in ways that disarm their defensiveness and cultivate an openness to learning. This came through strongly in the research on calling *in* rather than out, which highlights the importance of thinking about *how* we bring men to the table (and keep them there). For example, calling in research highlights that calling out practices create a culture of shame, blame, and fear; perpetuate cycles of harm; ignite defensiveness; and shut down people’s capacity for learning. Calling in practices, on the other hand, hold much more potential for engagement, responsiveness, learning, and transformation. The research on calling in also emphasizes the importance of starting where people are at rather than where you wish them to be. This is a particularly valuable insight in terms of thinking about how to keep men at the table—thinking about where efforts can connect men to *their own* vested interests and the liberation that they can experience through increasing gender and social equality and ending violence.

Additionally, some of the approaches reviewed offer ways to engage men that may help to reduce defensiveness, motivate learning, and facilitate skill-building. Gamification and virtual reality, for example, offer creative avenues of engagement, while the nudge approach offers a less direct way to engage men, one that shows promise in achieving substantive prosocial change. Data science methods could also be used to surface relevant patterns and help identify barriers to mobilizing men to advance violence prevention, gender equality, and inclusion, justice, and diversity.

Recommendation #4: Funders need to invest in programs that go beyond changing individual attitudes and beliefs.

Rationale: Traditional approaches to behaviour change (i.e., psychoeducational programs) are based on the assumption that awareness + attitude change = behaviour change. However, behaviour science research shows that awareness and attitudes are often *not* the primary drivers of behaviour change; instead, behaviors are often influenced by contextual cues (e.g., social norms, organizational culture, institutional signals, etc.). Programming that focuses solely on attitudes and awareness, therefore, will likely limit the reach and effectiveness of initiatives aimed at engaging men.

This does not mean that programs are not necessary. However, they should move beyond attitudes and awareness to focus on building the skills and confidence to engage in bystander interventions, hold other men accountable, understand another’s perspective, etc.,^v and should be offered in networks and settings where men congregate (where men work, play, worship, etc.). Furthermore, funders need to invest in initiatives that go beyond programmatic efforts to engage men—ones that focus on shifting the environments that shape men’s behaviours. Nudge and social norms approaches are both promising in this regard, as they can contribute to a movement of men committed to ending patriarchy at a more structural level.

3.2 An intersectional approach to building a movement of gender equitable men

Recommendation #5: Violence prevention and gender equality work needs to be better integrated with and informed by justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) principles and practices.

Rationale: Violence prevention and gender equality are integrally linked; however, in practice (i.e., funding, government violence prevention plans, policies, and programs), they are often problematically siloed. Furthermore, they are rarely connected to JEDI-related efforts. For example, none of the studies in any of the reviews targeted violence prevention alongside gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion. There were also no interventions that combined violence prevention efforts with anti-racism efforts, which is surprising given the attitudinal and behavioural commonalities that contribute to both. For example, fatherhood is recognized as a key entry point for promoting gender equity and violence prevention. However, none of the literature we reviewed discussed leveraging this entry point to advance racial equality. This could be a meaningful and powerful way to build parent-child connection and practice key communication skills, while cultivating the next generation’s commitment to advancing racial equality.

^v Data science methods could be used in conjunction with skill-building efforts to better understand why men behave in certain ways and how to positively influence their behaviour and the environments in which they live.

Recommendation #6: Men need to be explicitly targeted in interventions aimed at violence prevention, gender equality, diversity, equality, and inclusion.

Rationale: Apart from social norms, bystander, and fatherhood approaches, men are not explicitly targeted as key stakeholders in JEDI and violence prevention efforts. For example, the reviews identified numerous evidence-based interventions for addressing equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion, but none of these explicitly targeted men as a key population. It is time to leverage innovations from other fields and movements to catalyze and mobilize men not only for their own liberation, but so that they can be called in to share in advancing gender and social equality. Men need to be made visible through evaluation indicators, measures, and benchmarks—not just as a part of the problem, but as a necessary part of the solution. For example, research on community justice approaches found that men tended to be targeted as perpetrators of violence and inequality, but not as co-beneficiaries and/or change agents. Research on calling in approaches also did not explicitly mention the role men play in both calling in and calling out practices, or how calling in practices may contribute to more men becoming invested in social change movements.

Recommendation #7: Practitioners, researchers, and evaluators should include more diverse male-identified populations in their interventions.

Rationale: All the reviews identified the need to increase diverse male-identified target populations and utilize a more intersectional approach to work with men, particularly for violence prevention and gender equality work. This applies to researchers as well as practitioners and includes diversifying research samples from both a demographic perspective (e.g., race, class, age) and a settings perspective (i.e., a majority of studies are conducted on college campuses; very few are conducted in workplaces, faith-based settings, recreational settings, etc. where access to diverse populations is more likely).

3.3 Key entry points for engaging and mobilizing men

Recommendation #8: Go to places where men already congregate—specifically places where they live, work, socialize, play, and worship.

Rationale: Engagement efforts often require men to come to us (e.g., to programs and services at non-profit organizations). However, research shows the importance of place-based engagement or engaging men in environments where they are already congregating (e.g., workplaces, educational institutions, faith-based institutions, recreational facilities, health care settings, sporting associations, etc.). For example, the need to address men’s low uptake of HIV testing and screening has been recognized and efforts to make these services more accessible (e.g., strategically placing mobile clinics and testing sites in workplaces and schools) have shown success.³³ In addition to increasing engagement, place-based strategies help to shift individuals and impact the social networks in which those individuals are embedded.

The importance of place-based strategies is further reinforced in the community justice literature, which highlights the value of leveraging neighborhood communities to take collective action. This has become even more salient in the context of COVID-19 as people have increasingly recognized the importance of local community and the potential power in leveraging community participation and engagement to develop collective responses.^{34 35} Engaging men and young boys in community justice crime prevention activities, for example, offers an opportunity for them to serve as role models for other men and boys in their community and share the burden of non-punitive crime prevention work that women-led grassroots movements so often bear.

Recommendation #9: Canada urgently needs to invest in more research on engaging and mobilizing men.

Rationale: Canada is minimally represented in the research that was reviewed for this report. The vast majority of studies took place in the U.S., Europe, and Australia, and there is a dire need for Canadians to invest in and implement evidence-informed interventions, including social norms, bystander, nudges, calling in, fatherhood, gamification, and virtual reality interventions designed to engage and mobilize men. This includes investing in university and community partnerships, which are a way to pool resources and expertise and often lead to valuable advances in the field. There is also urgent need to ensure that efforts that receive funding operate “in solidarity with and accountability to intersectional feminist and LGBTIQ+ movements.”³⁶

Recommendation #10: Settings that are female-dominated and/or female-focused should aim to become more male-friendly (where appropriate).

Rationale: Many domestic violence organizations are female-focused, with good reason. However, there are some female-dominated spaces (e.g., parenting/childcare environments, schools, prenatal health), where a female-centric approach may be based on mistaken, biased, or outdated assumptions (e.g., the assumption that men are uninterested in caretaking opportunities). Given this, it is important to consider the ways in which the environment or profession (e.g., social work, education, nursing) may in fact be perpetuating the lack of male involvement because it is unwelcoming to men. For example, in our research on fatherhood, we found that most parenting programs and settings that claim to be for “parents” are in fact centered on mothers and provide little sense of belonging for fathers.

As such, and where appropriate, female-focused settings/programs should consider whether they are actively or inadvertently excluding men, and for what purpose (e.g., is the exclusion of men necessary for achieving gender equality? If not, what could be done differently to reorient towards that goal?). They could consider undertaking an assessment that provides information on the extent to which men can and should be better engaged as co-

beneficiaries and agents of change. The father-friendly organizational assessment is one such tool.³⁷

Recommendation #11: Leverage fatherhood as a key entry point for engaging men and improving outcomes for all.^{vi}

Rationale: Despite a wealth of research highlighting the wide-ranging positive impacts of engaging men through fatherhood, government buy-in is limited and the strategy continues to be underutilized. There is an urgent need to reorient gender norms so that our conceptions of healthy masculinity specifically include an acceptance of care work, which will also help to support the many men who are already embracing this. We must use nudge, social norms, role-modeling, and other strategies to shift the role so often attributed to fathers so that fatherhood is explicitly inclusive of care and domestic work and is less focused on economic contributions. Our high-level summary outlines the following seven steps to achieve this³⁸:

1. Legislate fully paid, non-transferable paternity leave.
2. Collect gender-disaggregated data on unpaid care work to monitor progress.
3. Identify and facilitate pathways for men to train and work in paid care work.
4. Expand evidence-based father-focused and father-inclusive programs at the community level.
5. Engage fathers through health systems, schools, and places where fathers already congregate.
6. Conduct father-friendly organizational assessments of organizations' readiness to provide services to fathers and father figures.³⁹
7. Reexamine investment in parenting programs and fund positive fatherhood involvement among nonviolent men as a key primary prevention strategy.

Recommendation #12: Leverage the power of men's relationships with other men.

Rationale: Men are highly influenced by other men, and more could be done to leverage the power of these relationships to build positive, supportive relationships and change harmful male norms. Leveraging key influencers within diverse networks has been proven to prevent violence and support prosocial norms and behaviours. Focusing on positive male leaders and champions and supporting them to influence their relationships with other men—including connecting fathers with other fathers—may also be a more productive starting point for many than addressing men's relationships with women/people of other genders in the initial stages of an intervention.

^{vi} Terms like “father” and “mother” can reinforce gender binaries and be exclusionary to some parents and family structures, and our goal is to challenge these restrictive assumptions, not fortify them. As such in our work we define “father” broadly to include male-identified caregivers of children. However, much of the existing research and interventions focused on parenting continues to adhere to gendered language and traditional concepts of motherhood and fatherhood. We strongly advocate for more gender and identity-inclusive research into parenting.

Our findings show untapped potential in leveraging the power of male relationships to change harmful gender norms (such as how they manifest in bullying, homophobia, and racism). Research on social network analysis, key influencers, and informal support networks also confirms the importance of leveraging men’s social networks to change behaviours and norms. Gamification shows promise in cultivating healthy male peer group relationships as well.

3.4 Key ingredients for engaging men

Recommendation #13: Always take into consideration the power of the messenger—key influencers matter.

Rationale: Whether it’s a social media campaign, a facilitated or peer-led workshop, or the person who serves as the leader or face of an initiative—the “who” matters. Research shows that the “messenger” can be a deciding factor in determining the receptivity of those the message targets. In short, we are more likely to internalize information from people we like and respect.⁴⁰ For example, research shows that people with perceived authority^{vii} have a high capacity to influence others; people are also more likely to “act on information when the messenger has similar characteristics themselves.”⁴¹ For this reason, it is important to make use of peers, near-peers, and key influencers within men’s social networks. This was noted in nearly all the reviews, including the nudge, bystander, social norms, fatherhood, and calling in reviews.

Recommendation #14: Use storytelling/narrative where possible to engage and connect with men.

Rationale: Many of the approaches we reviewed used storytelling/narrative as a powerful way to engage and connect with men. For example, *feel the need* nudges are nudges that create change through helping people “*see and feel* the need for change (in the unconscious mind)” rather than through rational arguments outlining the need for change.⁴² As such, *feel the need* nudges are primarily about sharing stories to help people feel the need for change at an unconscious level, and storytelling was a core part of many of the virtual reality and gamification interventions reviewed. Research on fatherhood also speaks to the power of developing a compelling “why” story. With regard to leveraging the power of narrative to engage men, research shows that

men are more motivated to engage in prevention work when they can make a personal or intimate connection to the problem of violence against women. [...] This suggests that prevention efforts could be more effective if they can engage men’s emotions, which can help build greater empathy and increase men’s willingness to address violence against women. Importantly, this should be done in ways that do

^{vii} It is important to note that this is context-specific and does not always involve people with formal authority (e.g., depending on the situation, the person with authority could simply be the most well-liked person in the office).

not inadvertently devalue women or reinforce the idea that men need to protect women.⁴³

Recommendation #15: Cultivating the capacity for empathy is important, but more research is needed to understand the interaction between empathy and prosocial behaviour among male-identified populations.

Rationale: Empathy was repeatedly identified in the rapid reviews as a key strategy for increasing prosocial behaviours and changing inequitable social norms. Evidence from the fields of psychology and neuroscience show a positive relationship between empathy and prosocial behaviour, and one study found that empathy and emotion (particularly sadness) played a key role as “vital motivators” in the decision to help others.^{44 45 46} Feminist activist, American novelist, and woman of colour Aya de Leon argues that changing men’s abusive and violent behaviours requires men to “grow their capacity for empathy and bravery by addressing their [own] trauma.”⁴⁷ Research on fatherhood also shows that interventions to build empathy can enhance prosocial behaviours and help to prevent and disrupt violence.

Some research, however, has questioned the association between empathy and prosocial behaviour, and more research is needed to understand the influence of emotion and empathy on motivating particular behaviours among men in violence prevention and gender equity. Assuming evidence does support empathy as a motivator for prosocial behaviour, interventions should be designed to more effectively enhance empathy in men. This is particularly important given the ways in which boys are discouraged from a young age in building empathic skills as a result of harmful male gender norms.

Recommendation #16: Integrate nonviolent communication and conflict resolution capacities into efforts to engage men.

Rationale: The need to develop the knowledge and skills required to communicate effectively and move through conflict in positive, nonviolent ways emerged as an important element in equipping men to engage in violence prevention and the promotion of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. This is also a way to facilitate men’s unlearning of harmful gender norms and improve their relationship with themselves and others. This was echoed in the research on calling in practices, which emphasizes the importance of curiosity-centered, two-way conversations based on dignity and respect for all parties, as opposed to one-way, accusation-centered declarations that treat harm-doers as disposable.

Recommendation #17: Integrate a trauma-informed approach into efforts to engage men.

Rationale: Efforts to engage men more broadly often overlook men’s own experiences of trauma. This includes men’s individualized trauma as a result of adverse childhood events such as experiencing and witnessing violence and experiencing bullying; trauma among men also stems from the socialization and pressure to conform to harmful male gender norms which valorize violence and promote poor health-seeking behaviours and excessive risk-

seeking behaviours. This puts men at increased risk for poor mental and physical health, including increased risk for depression, suicide, and shorter lifespans than their female counterparts.⁴⁸ Integrated a trauma-informed approach to all work with men may be a potentially transformative but largely underutilized tool in engaging and mobilizing men.

Recommendation #18: Anticipate negative reactions to change and develop strategies to mitigate or address them.

Rationale: The process of changing attitudes, behaviours, norms, and beliefs is complex, uncomfortable, and sometimes painful. Resistance and resentment are common. For this reason, social change efforts can often backfire, resulting in a “boomerang effect” and other unintended consequences. How we frame messages and learning matters, and while discomfort and conflict may well arise as part of transformational learning, it is often possible—and much more effective—to reframe messages so that they are first grounded in relationship-building and connection to one’s target audience, rather than focusing on what is “right.” That said, it is important to understand that resistance is not necessarily an indication that the intervention is ineffective. Rather, the boomerang effect may help to flag the need for more skills in positively managing the conflict and discomfort that often comes with transformational learning. It may also signal the need to reflect on how messages are being framed and whether there are ways to communicate and structure the learning that are less likely to fan tensions.

Recommendation #19: Don’t underestimate the power of small actions to catalyze change.

Rationale: Very small interventions (nudges or micro interventions) can have an outsized impact on behaviours. For example, placing a picture of a fly in urinals resulted in an 80% reduction in spillage (i.e., urine on the floor or outer edges of the urinal).⁴⁹ *Don’t Mess with Texas* is another example of a successful nudge,⁵⁰ focused on reducing littering on highways in Texas, the primary target for the initiative was men aged 18-24. The initiative involved an advertising campaign called “Don’t Mess with Texas,” which evoked state pride and reinforced their collective identity as a “tough” group. This campaign was massively successful both in popularity and outcome: 95% of Texans recognized (in fact, in 2006, it was voted the favourite slogan in US) and littering was reduced by 29% in the first year and 72% in the next six years.

It is important to note that small actions still require nuanced and careful design in order to be effective, and these small actions are most effective when integrated into a larger, more comprehensive set of complementary interventions at various levels of change.

Recommendation #20: Use multi-pronged approaches to increase effectiveness.

Rationale: The approaches we reviewed are either already being implemented together (e.g., bystander and social norms approaches) or show promise in complementing one another (e.g., the nudge, social norms, and gamification approaches). Given the need for

multi-pronged approaches that catalyze individual, social, and systems-level change, an intervention that integrates some or all of the approaches reviewed—for example, an intervention that integrates bystander, social norms, nudge, virtual reality, gamification, data science, and calling in practices—should be designed and piloted in order to expand the possibilities for understanding and enhancing prosocial behaviours and positive social and systems-level change.

3.5 Rethinking evaluation in the context of social change

Recommendation #21: Invest in longer-term evaluation.

Rationale: The majority of interventions across all the approaches reviewed only measured attitudinal, behavioural, and/or norms change in the short term (usually immediately post-intervention, though a few measured changes up to 12 months post-intervention). Only a few interventions—including a nudge intervention and a 5-year social norms marketing campaign—measured longer term outcomes. In order to understand more about what approaches catalyze sustained prosocial change at the individual, social, cultural, and institutional levels, evaluations should measure change over time (e.g., at least six months to a year, but preferably 3-5 years). This can also help with identifying when refresher trainings/interventions are required to ensure that the changes are sustained.

Recommendation #22: Project cycles should be extended to account for the gradual and complex reality of social change.

Rationale: The longest-running intervention included in the reviews was a 5-year social norms marketing campaign targeting sexual violence.⁵¹ Interestingly, the evaluation findings showed no significant changes until year three, after which positive changes to targeted norms were found. This helps to highlight the reality that change is often time-delayed. As such, there is a need for longer project cycles that allow the time required to create sustained change, as well as longer-term evaluations to track change over time.

As Flood and Greig note in their UN Women Policy Brief, “social action requires that evidence building and evidence-based practice be re-oriented toward the extended timelines and complex processes of social change. It is important to measure not only short-term change in small-scale programs or settings but also long-term change in large-scale populations and settings and call on donors to support such evidence building.”⁵²

Recommendation #23: Invest in training to increase the capacity of practitioners in evaluation methods and practices, including ones that are better suited to dynamic contexts and settings (e.g., developmental evaluation and utilization-focused evaluation).

Rationale: Many traditional evaluation approaches are designed to evaluate programs. While important, these approaches do not measure systems-level change, nor do they do

much to achieve change at this level. Increased capacity in evaluation methods that are suited for dynamic and emergent social change efforts is urgently needed to further build the field and increase the effectiveness of non-programmatic approaches. This includes developing capacity around data science methods. Finally, a key part of good evaluation is knowing what you want to measure and how to go about it. For example, none of the most frequently used measurement tools for violence prevention bystander interventions measure gender equitable attitudes, making it incredibly challenging to understand how bystander interventions focused on violence prevention impact men's attitudes around gender.

Recommendation #24: More funding and training is needed in knowledge translation and mobilization efforts so that relevant, usable evidence is put into the hands of those who will use it.

Rationale: As in many fields, the gap between research and practice is wide, and relevant research (including research from other fields, e.g., neuroscience, behavioural insights) is often not presented in a way that makes it useful, relevant, and accessible to those working to engage men. This research-to-practice gap is underscored by the number of approaches included in this review that show promise but are not being used within the field of engaging men, including nudges, virtual reality, gamification, and data science.

3.6 Building a movement: Making the personal political and structural

Recommendation #25: Build more of a “movement” and less of a “field.”

Rationale: In their recent report, Flood and Greig flag the ways in which the field of engaging men has increasingly depoliticized its work, focusing on small-scale programs and awareness-raising initiatives that overemphasize the need to change individual male behaviours, as opposed to focusing on social and structural change.⁵³ Flood and Greig acknowledge that this is consistent with the trend towards professionalization of many movements and the shift to a piecemeal, nonprofit-led “programs for problems” approach. It is further exacerbated by a well-intentioned focus within the engaging men field on changing behaviour within the home (responding to the “personal is political” call). Movement-building efforts in this area might also be constrained by male organizers' concerns about not encroaching on the work of feminist-led movements and organizations. This has diluted the political and policy change-making potential of the engaging men field. It has also resulted in significant tensions and a lack of coordination or collaboration with men who are working in their own siloed field, rather than contributing to a more inclusive gender justice movement.

Flood and Greig write:

There is a need for a greater orientation towards anti-patriarchal social action in solidarity with and accountability to intersectional feminist and LGBTIQ+ movements. Work with men and boys should involve greater efforts to build movements for social change, strengthen civil society organizations and coalitions and contribute as one

stream of activity to broader social justice struggles. It must also broaden its approaches to the issues and domains it addresses, such as paying greater attention to the political economy of care work and to institutionalized forms of patriarchal violence.⁵⁴

Recommendation #26: Provide funding for coalitions, learning exchanges, and shareable data sets to advance the field.

Rationale: Competition between social change agents and nonprofit organizations often fragments the field, diminishes learning opportunities, increases costs, and dilutes the potential for transformative movement-building. Priority funding should be given to:

1. Groups working to build a pan-Canadian network or coalition of those working to engage men (this would include funding to establish shared principles and standards).
2. Communities of practice or other strategies to share research and build the skills and capacities of people working in this field.
3. Efforts to build collaborative data platforms (e.g., shared data collection standards, shared repositories, shared principles, and community networks, etc.). Those in the movement to engage men should also partner with data science experts to build the capacity of the sector to use technology to advance social justice.

4.0 Conclusion

The 26 recommendations identified in this report are based on nine rapid evidence reviews Shift conducted on promising and emergent approaches for engaging men, several consultations with seven key experts in Canada, as well as on work by male engagement experts Dr. Michael Flood and Dr. Alan Greig. The analysis provided here advances the state of knowledge in the field of engaging and mobilizing men in Canada by increasing our understanding of promising yet underutilized approaches that should be further integrated into the mobilizing men field. These approaches include bystander interventions, social norms interventions, nudges, virtual reality, gamification, data science, fatherhood, community justice, and calling in. The cross-review findings identified themes among the reviews, along with the strengths and gaps in the field. The recommendations that emerged offer actionable suggestions that deepen the understanding of how to change practices, policies, and programs to create meaningful change. We hope this work serves to advance the field of engaging men and helps to support a broader movement of men to prevent violence and advance equity.

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