The Calling in Men Project

FAQs on the 9 Promising Approaches for Practitioners Engaging Men in Violence Prevention and Gender Equality

powered by Shift

sh!ft

THE PROJECT TO END
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK

Table of Contents

What is the Calling in Men Project?

With the support of Women and Gender Equality Canada, Shift undertook a comprehensive review of the academic and grey literature available on engaging and mobilizing men in gender equality and violence prevention.

Our goal was to shed light on what current research is telling us about the most promising approaches for engaging men and to share those learnings across Canada.

We began by talking to diverse male-identified practitioners and subject matter experts from across the country. Of the many promising approaches that were identified, nine were selected for in-depth research.

They are:

1. Calling in approach

2. Nudge approach

3. Social norms approach

4. Bystander approach

5. Virtual reality approach

6. Gamification approach

7. Data science approach

8. Community justice approach

9. Fatherhood approach

We then conducted 'rapid evidence reviews' on the nine selected approaches. A rapid evidence review is a type of knowledge synthesis that includes identifying specific research questions, reviewing the best available evidence to answer those questions, and identifying the key strengths, challenges, and gaps the evidence is pointing to.

The following publications of our findings are available on our website:

Following the Evidence: 9 Promising Approaches for Practitioners Engaging Men in Violence Prevention and Gender Equality

High-Level Summary of Nine Rapid Evidence Reviews: Innovative Approaches to Mobilize More Men to Prevent Violence and Advance Equity

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

These FAQs were created to make the research more accessible and support practitioners to integrate these approaches into their work. Our hope is that the approaches can be adapted by a wide range of people working with men across social justice movements. Whatever your entry point, we believe there are many valuable insights to draw on as we work to build a more just, violence-free, and equitable future.

Why is engaging men necessary to prevent violence and achieve gender equality?

For more than three decades, governments and the anti-violence sector have recognized that men play a critical role in stopping violence before it starts, yet we've struggled to prioritize this work and understand how to do it effectively.

In Canada, we know that

- 90% of violent crimes are committed by men,[1]

- 98% of sexual assaults are committed by men,[2] and

- 83% of violence against women is committed by men.[3]

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

Research shows that, compared to women, men have

- higher rates of suicide,[4]

- higher rates of injury and early death,[5]

- higher rates of alcohol and substance abuse,[6] and

- higher rates of mortality and morbidity.[7]

And the situation is even worse for racialized and Indigenous men, who are over-represented in many of these categories.

While men are the primary perpetrators of violence against women and girls, men are also the primary perpetrators of violence against men and boys, which makes them frequent victims of violence, abuse, and trauma.

The way that we socialize men not only harms women — it also harms men.

That's why engaging men as co-beneficiaries and agents of change for equality, justice, and inclusion is essential in the prevention of violence.

Our aim is never to make excuses for men or diminish the necessity of holding men accountable. Rather, we are seeking to improve our approach to accountability so that we can mobilize men to ultimately prevent violence from happening in the first place.

By engaging men with strategies that "meet them where they're at" and providing opportunities for transformational learning, healing, accountability, and repair, we can create effective conditions that change hearts, minds, and (most importantly) behaviours. We can build momentum for bigger and more impactful social and gender justice movements.

Who contributed to the research project?

These FAQs are adapted from research that included the following authors and contributors:

Authors:
- Laura Pascoe
- Lana Wells
- Elizabeth Dozois
- Elizabeth (Liz) Baker
- S. Hamid Akbary
- Brian Hansen

Research Assistants & Administrators:
- Elena Esina
- Naomi Phung
- Winta Ghidei
- Winta Abera

Male Practitioners & Experts:
- Jake Stika
- Aslam Bubulia
- Abbas Mancey
- Ayrah Taerb
- Jared Cline
- Todd Minerson
- Jeff St. John

1 Calling in Approach

What is a calling in approach?

Calling in is a term first credited to Ngọc Loan Trần, a Việt/mixed-race disabled queer writer and educator based in the U.S. South. It is a practice of inviting people or organizations who are causing or have caused harm into a conversation in which learning and growth are the goals.

Calling in approaches include clear and appropriate feedback starting from a place of hope that change is possible. Calling in tends to be done in private, emphasizing face-to-face conversation based in mutual dignity and respect, with the goal of healing and repair for everyone involved.

In contrast to calling out (or cancelling) approaches which tend to perpetuate shame, blame, and humiliation (which evidence shows are not effective tools for motivating sustainable behaviour change), calling in approaches can help us create environments where people are more likely to be receptive to learning and making amends.

In particular, Black, racialized, Indigenous, and Queer social justice activists have been at the forefront of calling in approaches. Through their lived experiences, these individuals have seen and spoken about the necessity of compassion and love in the processes of holding people accountable in ways that support healing, recovery, and social change.

Why use a calling in approach to engage men?

Research shows that humans often respond to threats (shame, humiliation, being called out) by shutting down or getting defensive — and that is not a mindset that supports learning, growth, or behaviour change.

By using a calling in approach in our work with men, we can foster an environment of *compassionate accountability* where individuals are more likely to be able to see themselves as part of the movement for promoting gender equality and violence prevention.

When we use a calling in approach with men, they are better equipped to hear challenging or uncomfortable information with an open mind and an open heart — and then have an opportunity to learn, change their behaviour, repair relationships, and make amends.

What are the most promising ways to use a calling in approach?

First, we must recognize that **where men are now is the only place from which they can move forward.** To effectively engage men we have to start from where they are on the change continuum. That's why it's so important to use promising, innovative approaches like nudges, gamification, and virtual reality (you can read more about these strategies throughout our FAQs) because these approaches are built with human instincts in mind.

Engage men with compassion. A person is much more likely to succeed in behavioural change if we approach them from a place of compassion and optimism that change is possible. The way we frame the message can be the difference between being heard or being shut out. This also means we have to do our own internal work and be able to regulate our emotions in the face of difficult conversations.

Recognize that "calling out" practices can replicate cycles of harm. Calling out practices can sometimes dehumanize people, and as Audre Lorde taught us, we can't fight oppression with the same tools that helped create the oppression in the first place. If we want to make behaviour change sustainable, we need to embody compassionate accountability strategies like calling in to help us get there.

What is an example of putting a calling in approach into practice?

Several years ago, the Shift Team facilitated a series of workshops designed to help practitioners engage men in gender equity and violence prevention. We assumed that everyone who signed up for the workshops shared a similar perspective on equity, so we were entirely unprepared when,

at the end of day two, one of the male participants suddenly exclaimed: "I don't think women are ready for gender equality!" There was an audible gasp in the room. We were all shocked, triggered, and enraged by the comment. For the first few minutes, there was a bit of a pile-on, with people letting the man know how offensive and inappropriate the comment was. Then one of the facilitators wisely suggested that we break for the day and come back to the conversation in the morning.

The next day, we put aside the scheduled programming and facilitated a two-hour conversation that was guided by curiosity and compassion. During the discussion, we were able to help the man understand the impact of his words, but in a supportive way that promoted learning and growth. And it wasn't just the man who learned through this discussion. By engaging in a two-way conversation and genuinely seeking to understand the thinking behind his comment, the group was able to learn more about how to engage men with similar attitudes and experiences. The incident also resulted in the development of meaningful group agreements about how we wanted to engage with one another — agreements that went well beyond the "ground rules" we had set out at the beginning of the workshops and helped to generate more productive conversations.

The story illustrates several aspects of calling in:

1. **Time:** These types of conversations cannot happen quickly (in this case, the facilitator put the agenda on hold and did not move on until everyone in the group felt ready);

2. **Timing:** It is difficult to do this work when you are emotionally activated, so you need to choose a time when you feel more regulated;

3. **Two-way conversation:** Calling in is a conversation, not a declaration;

4. **Mutual learning:** Calling in prioritizes learning and development and doesn't assume that the only person who has anything to learn is the one who created harm;

5. **Curiosity and compassion:** Calling in involves checking our assumptions (e.g., the assumption that the person intended to create harm); and interacting in ways that doesn't shut down learning or curiosity.

What else should I know before implementing calling in approaches?

Patriarchy carries its own traumas for men, including the trauma resulting from personal experiences, such as being bullied, experiencing homophobia, and being victims of sexual violence. **Men also need healing and support** to relearn connection and reclaim their humanity as individuals deserving of giving and receiving love.

How you frame the message is critical. Men must be engaged for their own liberation, not just as instruments for promoting women's empowerment. Some men may actually need to begin with understanding how their own humanity has been denied and, from there, find the path towards understanding others.

Read more about calling in approaches:

In addition to the Shift research reports listed earlier, the following resources offer further information on calling in approaches:

- Elizabeth Dozois & Lana Wells — Changing Contexts: A Framework for Engaging Male-Oriented Settings in Gender Equality and Violence Prevention — Practitioners' Guide

- adrienne marie brown — We Will Not Cancel Us and Other Dreams of Transformative Justice.

- Asam Ahmad — When Calling Out Makes Sense

- Mel Mariposa — A Practical Guide to Calling in

- Sian Ferguson — Calling in: A Quick Guide on When and How

- Charlie Glickman — Calling in

- Kim Scott — Radical Candour

- Loretta Ross — Don't Call People Out — Call Them In (TedTalk)

- Sonya Renee Taylor — Let's Replace Cancel Culture With Accountability (TedTalk)

- Ngọc Loan Trần — Calling in: A Less Disposable Way of Holding Each Other Accountable

2 Nudge Approach

What is a nudge approach?

Our decisions are highly influenced by our physical, institutional, and sociocultural contexts, which means that even seemingly unimportant details in our environment can influence us without us consciously noticing. Nudge approaches are designed to influence behaviour by making small, strategic changes to things like processes, social environments, and physical spaces.

Nudges aren't coercive and don't force a particular decision; they just make certain choices easier or more attractive. For example, putting fruit at the check-out counter in the grocery store would be considered a nudge, while banning junk food would not.

Why use a nudge approach to engage men?

We all naturally carry biases. Often, we aren't even aware they exist. Nudges can be a helpful way of shifting conditions in our structures and environments so that it's easier for us to avoid being impacted by our blind spots.

Also, because nudges are subtle and don't mandate behaviour change, they can be particularly effective in our work with men because they naturally minimize defensiveness, helping us avoid that "boomerang" effect we see with other interventions.

What are the most promising ways to use a nudge approach?

The great news is **that nudges are relatively easy to implement.** Nudges are small changes, which usually makes them cost-effective.

When it comes to nudges, **it's all in the design.** For example:

- you can **change processes** to reduce bias in hiring (check out the Bias Interrupters toolkits to learn more).

- you can **frame messages** in ways that engage men as potential allies instead of potential perpetrators (e.g., engaging men as bystanders who are empowered to intervene).

- you can help people **feel the need** to change by using arts, storytelling, and performance to share the personal impacts of violence and harm.

- you can **use language strategically**, such as including feminine coded words in a job posting for a traditionally male job.

What's an example of putting a nudge approach into practice?

One example of a promising nudge intervention was done with a U.K. police force that wanted to improve diversity by increasing the number of applicants who passed an entry exam.

Half of the applicants included in the study got a pre-exam email that was framed positively with the goal of priming them for success (using terms like "Congratulations!" and "Good luck"). The other half received emails that had more unnecessary words and phrases that could increase anxiety (phrases like "Please note there is no appeals process for this stage").

The study found that nudging applicants with a positively framed and supportive email prior to the entry exam had a significant effect; non-white applicants gained 12 percentage points in their percentile ranking while white applicants saw a two-percentage point increase.

These findings show that even an intervention as simple as changing the wording of an email can lead to a significant difference in outcomes.

What else should I know before implementing nudge approaches?

For nudges to be effective, **they need to be based on a clear understanding of what factors are contributing to the current patterns of behaviour and what factors might cue something different.** This makes them highly nuanced and context-specific. If you don't have a good, *specific* understanding of the contextual factors, you could design nudges that don't work or have the opposite effect of what you intended.

That also means **nudges need to be tested and refined.** Nudges work differently in different contexts, so they'll likely involve some trial and error before you get it right.

And while nudges can be incredibly effective, **they aren't a magic bullet.** Social issues are complex, and nudges alone won't solve them.

Read more about nudge approaches:
In addition to the Shift research reports listed earlier, the following resources offer further information on nudge approaches:

· Elizabeth Dozois & Lana Wells — Changing Contexts: A Framework for Engaging Male-Oriented Settings in Gender Equality and Violence Prevention — Practitioners' Guide

· Behavioural Insights Team — EAST Framework: Four Simple Ways to Apply Behavioural Insights

· Behavioural Insights Team — MINDSPACE: Influencing Behaviour Through Public Policy

· Iris Bohnet — What works: Gender Equality by Design

· Dr. Rory Gallagher — Nudging for Change: An Introduction to Behavioural Insights (lecture)

3 Social Norms Approach

What is a social norms approach?
We're all familiar with social norms, even if we don't always stop to consider how they might be impacting our decisions and behaviour.

Social norms are those unspoken or sometimes explicit guidelines we follow when it comes to the behaviour we expect from ourselves and others. Social norms are specific to a community and can vary across groups and cultures. Shaking hands when you meet someone new is an example of a social norm.

Social norms are maintained through social pressure. If you go against a norm, your status within the group could be jeopardized. As social animals, group approval is particularly important to us — so targeting social norms can be a very powerful way to change attitudes and behaviours.

The trouble with social norms is that people sometimes misperceive them. For example, a man might go along with a sexist joke at the bar because he thinks that's what's expected by his peers, when in reality, most of the men are also privately uncomfortable. That means norms can sometimes make us behave in ways that go against our own beliefs.

Social norms approaches work to either target misperceived norms or, in cases where a harmful norm is consistent with most people's beliefs, work with a community or social network to create new norms.

Why use a social norms approach to engage men?
There is strong evidence to support a social norms approach for engaging men. We all look to others for social cues on how to behave. For men in particular, the perceived attitudes of peers can be highly influential.

We all want to belong and fit in; it's only natural. So, if we can change the expectations of the group, we can also change attitudes and behaviours.

What are the most promising ways to use a social norms approach?

To effectively target a gender inequitable or violent social norm, it's really important to **work with a specific community or social network** where people have pre-existing relationships or connections. Our attitudes and actions are far more likely to be influenced by the people we know and respect.

That's why it's also essential to **identify and work with "key influencers"** within that group or network. Those are the people that others naturally look up to and emulate. That could include very different types of influencers, depending on the community and norm you're targeting — from the local sports hero, to the company CEO, to the most social guy in the office.

You'll also need to **get your message out everywhere.** A new norm has to be highly visible and very pervasive in order to take hold.

It's also important to know that **social norms take time to change.** An effective social norms campaign will likely need at least three years to make an impact.

What's an example of putting a social norms approach into practice?

There are many examples of social media and marketing campaigns that aim to target gender inequitable social norms.

#momentsmatter is a new Alberta-based three-year, province-wide campaign targeting norms change by celebrating leaders who are taking a personal role in building positive and respectful workplace cultures that help stop sexual harassment.

The #momentsmatter campaign invites people to submit positive stories of simple actions people have taken to make their workplaces safer, emotionally healthier, and more inclusive.

By sharing good stories (i.e., modelling healthy norms and behaviours), the #momentsmatter campaign can encourage more actions that lead to better workplaces.

What else should I know before implementing social norms approaches?

Challenging a social norm can make people defensive. Norm change is not a linear process; typically, we see a "boomerang effect" before we see lasting change — so it is important to be prepared for that. Strategically framing messages to reduce defensiveness can help to mitigate backlash.

It's also important to keep your focus on the positive norm. Rather than showing what not to do, we need to model the healthy behaviour we want to see. Men need to feel empowered that they are part of a solution, not just part of the problem.

Read more about social norms approaches:

In addition to the Shift research reports listed earlier, the following resources offer further information on social norms approaches:

- Elizabeth Dozois & Lana Wells — Changing Contexts: A Framework for Engaging Male-Oriented Settings in Gender Equality and Violence Prevention — Practitioners' Guide

- Cheyanne Scharbatke-Church & Diana Chigas — Social Norms, Corruption & Fragility

- Alan D. Berkowitz — An Overview of the Social Norms Approach

- Jade Greear (National Social Norms Center) — Social Norms Message Creation Guide.

- UNICEF — Behavioural Drivers Model

4 Bystander Approach

What is a bystander approach?
We've likely all had the experience of witnessing a conversation or a situation that left us uncomfortable or even deeply concerned. We probably wondered to ourselves, should I do something? What CAN I do? Maybe we didn't notice the warning signs.

A bystander approach seeks to leverage the potential power of a witness to notice, respond to, and disrupt harm.

By building community-wide capacity to recognize when someone needs help, the skills to know how to respond, and the commitment to do so, bystander approaches can support people to safely and effectively intervene in harmful situations.

Typically, bystander approaches include training in the form of a workshop or discussion-based capacity-building session.

Why use a bystander approach to engage men?
Witnesses have a lot of power. Our friends, colleagues, and peers have a direct influence on how we behave. When men speak up, it can make a huge difference in the actions and behaviours of other men.

What are the most promising ways to use a bystander approach?
It's really important for **men to hear the message from other men.** That's why we need more men at the table leading, role-modeling, and teaching bystander approaches.

Because cultural norms play a significant role in whether someone takes action as a **bystander, a bystander approach should not be a stand-alone program.** The strategy needs to also **address the broader cultural issues,** like rape myths, attitudes toward women, and the culture around retaliation.

Bystander approaches should also include **interactive teaching techniques** like role-playing. A discussion-based presentation to raise awareness is a good start, but it's not enough; we need to help men build skills to intervene and give them an opportunity to practice.

Finally, practitioners using bystander approaches **need to acknowledge that many men have past experiences of witnessing, perpetrating, or being victims of violence.** We have to take a trauma-informed approach; that is, we need to acknowledge, legitimize, and heal the impact that trauma has on men.

What's an example of putting a bystander approach into practice?
Bringing in the Bystander (BITB) is one of the most well-evidenced violence prevention bystander programs in the world. It's a workshop-based intervention designed for university students that has been implemented on campuses across the U.S., U.K., Canada, Sweden, Australia, and New Zealand.

BITB employs a combination of discussion, lecture, interactive exercises, small group work, opportunities to practice skills, and role play scenarios to increase participant knowledge and competencies.

Research has shown that participation in Bringing in the Bystander resulted in improvements in bystander behaviour, attitudes, efficacy, intent, and willingness to help.

What else should I know before implementing bystander approaches?
First of all, it's really important to know that while the bystander approach is effective, **on its own, it's not enough.**

Bystanders can only be successful if they are supported through **broader organizational accountability,** such as multiple methods for reporting, guaranteed anonymity, and timely responses to complaints.

Also, bystander approaches, on their own, might help prevent a specific incidence of violence, but **they don't address the root causes of why violence is occurring the first place.** For this reason, we recommend bystander approaches be one part of a multi-pronged strategy.

Bystander approaches should **always include strategies for mitigating risk.** There is a very real element of danger when intervening to stop violent or discriminatory behaviour, and bystanders need to be equipped to intervene in safe and appropriate ways.

Finally, we need to **move beyond university campuses** when it comes to bystander approaches. More needs to be done to bring bystander training to other places where men live, work, play, and worship.

Read more about bystander approaches:
In addition to the Shift research reports listed earlier, the following resources offer further information on bystander approaches:

- Elizabeth Dozois & Lana Wells — Changing Contexts: A Framework for Engaging Male-Oriented Settings in Gender Equality and Violence Prevention — Practitioners' Guide

- Paula McDonald, Sara Charlesworth & Tina Graham — Action or inaction: Bystander intervention in workplace sexual harassment

- New York State Rape Crisis and Sexual Violence Prevention — Stop Sexual Violence: A Sexual Violence Bystander Intervention Toolkit

- Michelle Russell — How to React if You See Someone Being Harassed

- Jorge Arteaga & Emily May of *Right To Be* — I've Got Your Back: The Indispensable Guide to Stopping Harassment When You See It

5 Virtual Reality Approach

What is a virtual reality approach?
The virtual reality (VR) approach uses virtual simulations to allow users to gain different "embodied perspectives", explore decision-making, and practice skills in a hyper-real environment. Many of us have had the opportunity to explore a virtual world (through gaming) as they are becoming more commonplace.

Why use a virtual reality approach to engage men?
Because it mimics real world situations in compelling ways that can help us to understand others' points of view. Virtual reality is a powerful way to activate empathy, a key ingredient in behaviour change.

Virtual environments can also help men safely practice behaviours and experience the consequences of their actions.

What are the most promising ways to use a virtual reality approach?
Use the power of perspective. Especially the perspective of victims. The ability to empathize with another's perspective is a skill that is often socialized out of men from an early age.

Show real-life consequences because research demonstrates that understanding future consequences can impact our present decisions. BUT, make sure you also **give men a safe place to make mistakes** as they learn to become allies.

You can also use virtual reality approaches to **augment other efforts,** for example, using virtual reality for bystander training.

What's an example of putting a virtual reality approach into practice?
A study in Spain used virtual reality to understand possible ways to disrupt harmful behaviours in group scenarios.

The study looked at whether an embodied victim perspective (i.e., male participants experiencing sexual harassment from the perspective of a woman being harassed) would break the in-group solidarity with the virtual males.

In the study, a group of all-male participants were placed in an immersive VR experience in one of three conditions:

1. The participant is among a group of males at a bar where a male is sexually harassing a female; the participant is then embodied as the female victim who is being sexually harassed in the bar scenario;

2. The same initial scenario, but the participant is embodied as one of the men who witnesses the female being harassed; or

3. The participant just experiences an empty bar with no sexual harassment.

One week later, participants were placed in another immersive VR experience. This time, participants were encouraged to give shocks to a female student by a group of three virtual males, the same men that engaged in sexual harassment in part one of the study. (This scenario is similar to the one in Milgram's famous obedience study).

The study found that participants who were in the female embodiment condition were more likely to stop administering shocks than those in the male embodiment condition, and they administered half the number of shocks in total.

This evidence strongly suggests that virtual reality approaches could help prevent behaviours like sexual harassment that occur in group settings.

What else should I know before implementing virtual reality approaches?

This research is in its infancy. We have a lot more to learn.

Virtual reality approaches can be expensive to design and implement. They likely won't be feasible in low-resource settings.

Read more about virtual reality approaches:

In addition to the Shift research reports listed earlier, the following resources offer further information on virtual reality approaches:

- Vantage Point — Corporate sexual harassment and bystander intervention virtual reality training

- Shift Bias — Diversity, equity, and inclusion virtual reality training

- Praxis Labs — Workplace equity & inclusion training using immersive learning

- Equal Reality — Workplace diversity & inclusion virtual reality training

- Della's Story — Online escape room allowing players to learn the story of a Sixties Scoop survivor

6 Gamification Approach

What is a gamification approach?

If you've ever found learning was easier when you were having fun, you were likely experiencing some type of gamification.

Gamification approaches use game design techniques to motivate participants towards a specific outcome, such as increased knowledge or behaviour change.

Gamification is all about making learning, reflecting, and changing attitudes and behaviours less threatening and more enjoyable.

Key elements in gamification include things like: story or narrative, immediate feedback, ever-increasing challenges, rewards and progress indicators, social connection (like group play), and player control.

Why use a gamification approach to engage men?

Simply put, learning through play aligns with our instincts as humans.

Gamification approaches can be particularly effective when engaging men because it makes difficult concepts less threatening and more enjoyable.

What are the most promising ways to use a gamification approach?

Games that include collaboration (like a multi-user or chat-based game) can help **bond men around a common cause,** like positive behaviour change. This is most effective when the game is **built around a story or narrative** they can collectively engage with.

Make sure **game-players get immediate feedback.** Instant feedback is satisfying for anyone, but it can also be an important way of encouraging desired behaviours.

Keep your potential users in mind when you design your game. Ideally, you should be collaborating closely with your target audience throughout the process.

Don't forget the fun factor! Games that balance learning with fun create ideal cognitive conditions.

What's an example of putting a gamification approach into practice?

Campus Craft is a simulation video game that was designed for, and piloted among, American university students. Its goal was to prevent sexual assault by engaging players in prevention education around consent negotiation, binge drinking, and stress management. Players were tasked with solving a mystery. In the process, they participated in health-related conversations (like discussions about consensual sex, impact of drinking on sexual behaviour, etc.), which in turn affected the game development.

Researchers studying participants of Campus Craft found that it decreased rape myths while increasing knowledge related to sexual assault prevention.

What else should I know before implementing gamification approaches?

Not surprisingly, gamification has mainly targeted youth populations; however, **making learning fun and engaging is just as effective with adults.** We need to try more gamification approaches for grown-ups, particularly in workplace settings and other places men gather.

Read more about gamification approaches:

In addition to the Shift research reports listed earlier, the following resources offer further information on gamification approaches:

- Interaction Design Foundation — Gamification
- True Education Partnerships — Gamification in Education: What is it and how can you use it?
- Change Conversations — How to Use Gamification for Social Change

7 Data Science Approach

What is a data science approach?

Data science is a multidisciplinary field of study that focuses on creating, collecting, handling, and analyzing large amounts of data to extract actionable insights. Data scientists use scientific methods to develop algorithms that identify patterns in order to help predict future events, reduce risk, and improve outcomes.

Why use a data science approach to engage men?

Data science holds incredible potential to identify patterns and trends that can help us decide which populations of men to target and how to engage and mobilize them most effectively.

What are the most promising ways to use a data science approach?

Data science helps us make evidence-informed decisions. Large amounts of data can be particularly useful in answering complex questions compared to research that focuses on individuals' perspectives alone.

Data science can also be well suited for identifying inequity and promoting social justice. That's because large data sets are often more diverse and thus more closely representative of the true population as compared to research that focuses on smaller, homogenous samples.

As a first step, **we need more quality data.** At present, the data available in the field of engaging and mobilizing men is limited. We need more collection, storage, and usage of data across non-profit organizations trying to advance the field.

What's an example of putting a data science approach into practice?

One study in Brazil utilized data science methods to understand the most important factors to consider when predicting a mother's risk of experiencing physical intimate partner violence (PIPV) during pregnancy and post-partum.

Researchers randomly selected mothers with children under the age of 5 months who were in primary health care waiting rooms. 811 mothers were interviewed about a) their experience of PIPV during pregnancy and/or post-partum, b) characteristics of their children (e.g., child's age, sex, gestational age), c) their own characteristics (e.g., age, education, race), d) their mothers' and partners' lifestyle (e.g., tobacco and alcohol use), and e) socio-economic status (e.g., amount of household goods, occupation of family's main income earner).

Researchers then used this data to calculate which factors significantly predicted PIPV. From there, they could develop a range of characteristics we would expect to see for mothers at various points on the continuum from low risk to high risk, which could help care providers better identify warning signs.

In this way, we can use data science to make evidence-informed decisions about our interventions and our work engaging men in violence prevention.

What else should I know before implementing data science approaches?

Without understanding the limitations of the data sets and the analyses, **data science may be used incorrectly, perpetuate biases, present false information, and cause irreversible harm.**

It's important to know that the algorithms we design are only as good as the people who design them and the data we use. For example, if a data set contains more male than female participants, the data and subsequent analyses could perpetuate bias. That's why **algorithms should be designed using equitable data.** However, this type of data is, unfortunately, non-existent since we live in a world rampant with disparities. Data scientists can instead build "fake" data sets in order to help design algorithms that don't accidentally perpetuate bias.

It is also easy to find results that are statistically significant but not actually meaningful with large data sets. For example, consider a hypothetical scenario in which a large data set contains reports of suspected child abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic. A researcher may find a statistically significant drop in how often referrals to child protective services were made in October 2020 and conclude incidents of child abuse dropped. However, the drop in referrals is actually reflective of the fact that children were not in schools, which is where referrals are commonly made. Without that understanding, the researchers could interpret the data incorrectly.

Finally, privacy concerns present a major challenge when utilizing large data sets. Informed and ongoing consent will need to be considered in developing and implementing any data science approach.

Learn more about the responsible use of data with the Data Equity Framework created by We All Count.

Read more about data science approaches:
In addition to the Shift research reports listed earlier, the following resources offer further information on Data Science approaches:

- We All Count: Project for Equity in Data Science

- Data Science for Social Good

- Helpseeker — Social change through data & analytics

8 Community Justice Approach

What is a community justice approach?
Community justice is an umbrella term for justice approaches that focus on community-level outcomes that support survivors, hold offenders accountable, strengthen positive community norms, and change inequitable structures. Community justice approaches are understood as alternative solutions to our legal system. These practices have long and experienced histories in Indigenous, Black, and racialized communities

Related terms include alternative justice, transformative justice, reparative justice, restorative justice, and mediation — although there are some distinctions between these approaches.

Restorative Justice is founded on the principles of (a) repairing harm, (b) holding offenders accountable, and (c) restoring the community. In practice, restorative justice approaches involve bringing the offender, victim, and community together to discuss the harm committed and the potential resolution strategies.

Transformative Justice goes a step further to proactively stop harm from occurring by addressing root causes of harm and changing harmful and inequitable structures.

Community justice approaches also focus on transforming individuals and communities. This is accomplished through building the community members' knowledge, skills, and capacity to identify and respond to harm appropriately. While also trying to change the community conditions.

We acknowledge that the breadth of alternative justice practices identified in the research are rooted in various Indigenous, Black, and racialized traditions and/or social justice movements. Proper acknowledgement of this history is critical and we recognize that,

as we move forward, we cannot ignore the origins of the concepts or the decolonizing commitments it requires of us to engage in this work.

Why use a community justice approach to engage men?

The criminal legal system has caused tremendous damage to many communities, particularly Indigenous, Black, and racialized communities where men are at higher risk of being incarcerated. Community justice approaches provide a valuable alternative for engaging men and rehabilitating those implicated in violent or problematic behaviour in ways that focus on restoration and repair rather than carceral punishment.

What are the most promising ways to use a community justice approach?

Community justice approaches take a radically different view of accountability **because they engage offenders as active contributors to a solution.** Seeing men as part of the solution instead of only part of the problem is a key strategy for effective engagement.

Community justice approaches also hold considerable potential for helping us move the needle when it comes to rehabilitating offenders and healing victims. That's because **community justice approaches create a sense of shared responsibility for behaviour change.** Offenders are better able to understand the consequences of their actions, victims' needs are listened to, and the community as a whole shares in the responsibility of repairing harm.

Community justice approaches are also important because **they give ownership of justice processes back to communities.** This is particularly important in marginalized communities, including Indigenous communities, where "outside" law enforcement has fomented distrust and fear.

What's an example of putting a community justice approach into practice?

One example of a community justice approach is the Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) Models that have been adapted for post-secondary students found responsible for sexual misconduct.

CoSA programs provide offenders with pro-social support in order to facilitate their re-entry into the campus community. The model uses volunteers who form a "circle" around the ex-offender. Each circle is comprised of one main volunteer who meets with the ex-offender on a daily basis, as well as three to five other volunteers who agree to meet with the ex-offender on a weekly basis. Volunteers not only model pro-social behaviours and relationships, but also help the ex-offender with instrumental needs such as housing and employment. The time for support circles can vary, however, they generally last between 6 –12 months.

Participation in CoSA programs has been shown to reduce the likelihood of reoffending while increasing the successful integration of an offender back into the community.

What else should I know before implementing community justice approaches?

More research and investment are urgently needed on community justice interventions, including those that specifically seek to engage men. Community justice approaches are utilized in more than 80 countries, many of which are in the Global South, as well as in Indigenous communities. We have a great deal to learn from their approach.

It's also important to know that a community justice approach will not always be appropriate. An important challenge to community justice approaches is that they can inadvertently contribute to women's vulnerabilities if they don't "do enough" to hold perpetrators accountable or if they rely on traditional community norms that have subordinated women. Also, some crimes are simply so severe that a community-based response might not be sufficient to address them. More work is needed to understand when and how we can implement a community justice model.
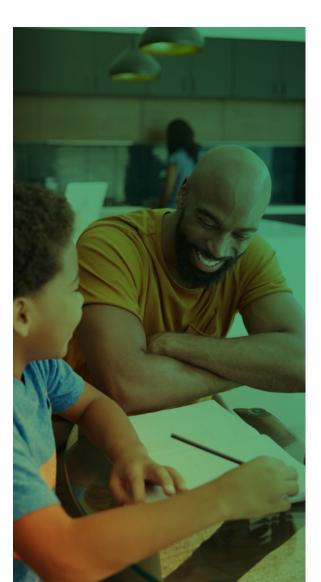
Read more about community justice approaches:

In addition to the Shift research reports listed earlier, the following resources offer further information on community justice approaches:

- David R. Karp & Todd R. Clear — Community Justice: A Conceptual Framework
- Neighbourhood Justice Centre — Community Justice: an introduction
- Barnard Center for Research on Women — Transformative Justice (video series) Video 1, Video 2
- Caroline Claussen, Sharon Goulet & Lana Wells — Opening the Door Beyond the Legal System: Understanding the Use of Alternative Justice Approaches to Sexual Violence Prevention and Healing in Canada

9 Fatherhood Approach

Why use a fatherhood approach?

Simply put, fatherhood is the best time to engage men. An entry point like fatherhood increases the potential for men to be involved in healthy, gender-equitable relationships and increases the likelihood that they will be nonviolent and nurturing.

Some researchers suggest that it is due to the increased awareness that men achieve when reflecting on how inequality will impact their own children. Others suggest that a parent has more contact and opportunities for interventions delivered through public systems, like the health and school sectors.

A fatherhood approach includes a range of different programs and initiatives that aim to increase positive involvement of fathers in their children's lives. This includes things like taking an active role in caring for their child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical health and having a respectful relationship with the child's mother or co-parent.

The fatherhood approach includes all males in caregiving roles — biological and adoptive parents, stepparents, transgender fathers, father figures, and any other males serving a parenting function.

Why is fatherhood key for engaging men?

The evidence is overwhelmingly clear that promoting positive fatherhood involvement can prevent cycles of domestic violence, advance gender equality, and reinforce healthier masculinity norms.

Children with engaged fathers have higher emotional, cognitive, and social well-being, are less likely to use violence against female partners in adulthood, and are more likely to exhibit nurturing, gender-equitable behaviours if/when they themselves become fathers.

Unfortunately, while a fatherhood approach has the potential to be transformative for gender equality and violence prevention, it remains highly underutilized in Canada.

What are the most promising ways to use a fatherhood approach?

First of all, it's important to **start early** because fatherhood involvement that starts earlier in a child's life is more likely to be sustained. We should begin engaging fathers during pregnancy and then continue to leverage places where fathers naturally have the potential to be involved.

We need **more government legislation and policies that support father involvement,** e.g., mandating fully paid, non-transferable paternity leave for at least three months.

We also need to **encourage more men to become involved in care work,** including unpaid domestic work and other caregiving roles like nursing, childcare, and teaching. Research shows that societies where men carry a more equal portion of care work have less violence, better mental health, and greater economic equality through women's increased labour force participation.

It's also really important to **notice the ways our sector might not always be that welcoming to men.** We recommend that service providers looking to engage men conduct father-friendly organizational assessments to ensure readiness to provide services to fathers and father figures.

What's an example of putting a fatherhood approach into practice?

Catholic Family Service of Calgary, Alberta, launched the Fathers Moving Forward program in September 2015. Fathers Moving Forward targets biological fathers-to-be between the ages of 16–26.

The Fathers Moving Forward program utilizes a group format with participants completing 12 sessions on topics that include: support skills, stress management and reduction, de-escalating conflict, problem-solving, acceptance skills, and family planning. Sessions use a combination of individual and group education, coupled with experiential learning and skill-building.

As a result of this work, Catholic Family Service also identified and addressed organizational, structural, and cultural factors that limited father engagement across the organization. This included enhancing the physical environment at their organization by making fathers more apparent in the imagery, décor, and language, working with staff to reflect on potential biases in their practice, developing evaluation strategies specific to fathers, and hiring more male staff.

What else should I know before implementing fatherhood approaches?

There are many barriers that make it challenging for some fathers, particularly those who are disadvantaged, to become more involved with their children. Understanding and seeking to address these structural barriers should go hand in hand with supporting positive father involvement.

Much of the traditional language of parenting (e.g., "mothers" and "fathers") is exclusionary and reinforces a binary. Gender and sexually diverse fathers are largely absent from the research, and gendered discourses on parenting are a challenge to promoting positive fatherhood involvement.

Read more about fatherhood approaches:

In addition to the Shift research reports listed earlier, the following resources offer further information on fatherhood approaches:

- Elizabeth Dozois, Lana Wells, Deinera Exner-Cortens, Elena Esina — No Man Left Behind

- MenCare — A global fatherhood campaign

- State of the World's Fathers — Global report on men's involvement in parenting and care work

- Caring Dads — Group intervention program for men involved in family violence

Sources

[1] *Rotenberg, C., 2017*

[2] *Sinha, M., 2013*

[3] *Vaillancourt, R., 2010*

[4] *Bellette, J.M., & Janz, T., 2015*

[5] *Navaneelan, T., 2017*

[6] *Public Health Canada, 2016*

[7] *Statistics Canada, 2017, 2020*

For more information, please contact:

Lana Wells (she/her/elle)
Associate Professor/
Brenda Strafford Chair in the
Prevention of Domestic Violence
Faculty of Social Work
University of Calgary

lmwells@ucalgary.ca
preventdomesticviolence.ca

powered by Shift

sh!ft
THE PROJECT TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE