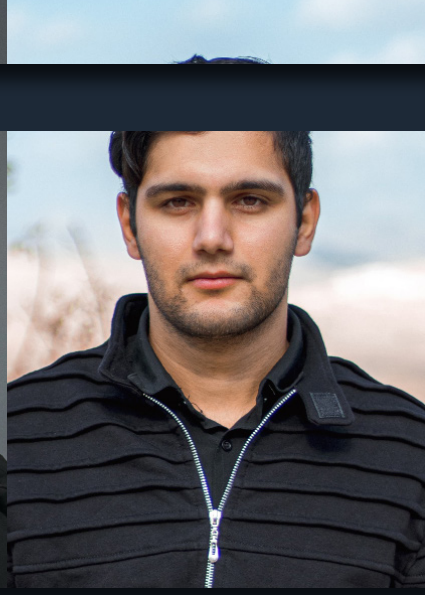


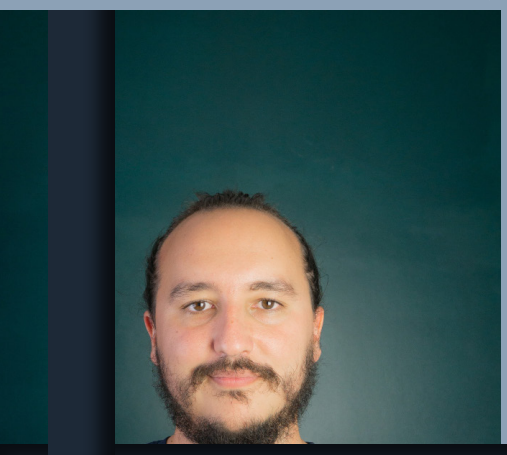
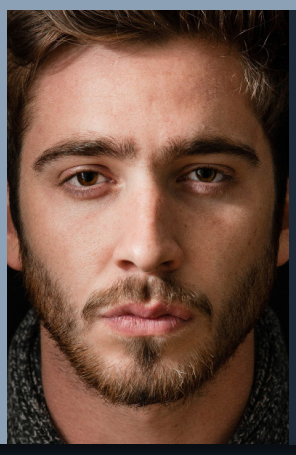
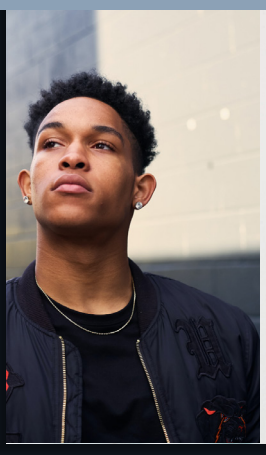



The Multi-Faces of IPV Across the Prairie Provinces: Men as Victims

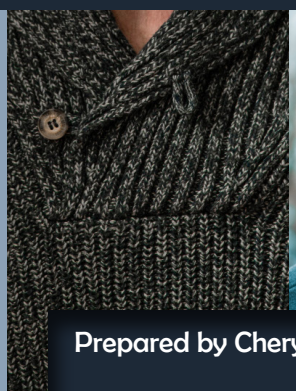
Final Report

RESOLVE — Research and Education for Solutions to Violence and Abuse

THE LAUREL CENTRE





Prepared by Cheryl Fraehlich, PhD | RESOLVE Manitoba | November 2020

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Acknowledgments

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Executive Summary

Purpose

This study was the result of a special call-out by the Prairieaction Foundation for tri-provincial research to examine men as victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) across the prairies. The project was initiated by The Laurel Centre in Winnipeg and involved academics from RESOLVE Centres in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Family Service Regina and Family Service Saskatoon were the community partners in Saskatchewan and Calgary Counselling Centre was the community partner in Alberta.

The purpose of this study was to explore men's experience of IPV across the Prairie provinces and answer the following questions:

1. What are men's experiences as victims of IPV?
    a) What is the nature of the violence/abuse experienced by men in their intimate partner relationships and the context of the violent/abusive episodes?
    b) How do men describe the impact of being a victim of IPV
    c) How do men describe the impact of being a victim of IPV?
2. What are men's experiences of help seeking?
    a) When do men seek help?
    b) Which sources of help do men seek?
    c) What are men's perceptions of the process of help seeking?
3. What are the barriers, challenges and/or gaps that men experience in terms of seeking help?
4. What are recommendations for addressing men's experiences of IPV?
5. What are recommendations for addressing men's experiences of IPV?

In order to answer these questions, interviews were conducted with men from the Prairie provinces who had experienced violence by an intimate partner. A total of 45 men were interviewed, including 18 men from Manitoba, 11 men from Saskatchewan, and 16 men from Alberta. There were 34 in-person interviews with men in urban centres (Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon and Calgary) and 11 telephones interviews with men in rural and northern communities.

Individual and focus group interviews were also conducted with service providers from agencies/organizations that provide service to men who experience IPV. Across the three provinces a total of 41 services providers

participated in interviews. These included in-person interviews with service providers in urban centres and telephone interviews with service providers in rural and northern communities in each province. There was a high level of consistency between what was stated by men and service providers.

Findings

Description of the Participants

Men Who Experienced Violence in Intimate Relationships (Total 45):

- 44 years was the average age of men who participated in interviews
- 91% of the men self-identified as being heterosexual
- 60% of the men reported European/White descent; 27% were Indigenous and 13% were from other visible minorities
- 56% of the men had completed post secondary education and 58% were employed
- 89% of the men were no longer in an abusive relationship with their partner
- 16 (36%) men had a previous relationship in which they experienced IPV
- Men had been in a relationship with their most recent abusive partner from 1 to 40 years with an average of 9.5 years
- 69% of the men had children (average of 3 children)
- 29% of the men had children living with them either full-time or in shared custody arrangements

Service Providers (Total 41):

- 73% of the service providers were female
- 71% of the service providers were from urban areas
- Service providers worked in a variety of sectors that included:
  - Police/RCMP
  - Probation
  - Victim Services/Domestic Violence Case Court Workers
  - Family Centres/Support Programs
  - Shelters
  - LGBTQ2S+ Support Services
  - Counselling Services
  - Sexual Assault Services
  - Municipal Government
  - Housing

Men's Experience as Victims/Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence

Nature of the Abuse

Men were asked about the type of abuse they had experienced in their relationship with their intimate partner:

- 84% of the men experienced physical abuse
- 100% of the men experienced emotional abuse
- 16% of the men experienced sexual abuse
- 22% of the men experienced spiritual abuse
- 67% of the men experienced financial abuse
- 47% of the men experienced "other" types of abuse.

Most men reported more than one type of abuse and most reported that the incidents began early in the relationship.

"Other" types of control/abuse included threats of violence by partners as a means of controlling men's behaviour, threats that partners would take children and/or not allow men to see their children, and actually

denying men access to their children. In addition, men described what service providers called “legal” or “systems” abuse which involved men’s partners manipulating or lying to the police, court personnel, or child welfare agencies. This might involve telling authorities that men were physically violent or partner’s lying in the context of men’s attempts to gain custody or access to their children.

When describing the context of the incidents, 44% of the men indicated that alcohol or drug use were involved; this sometimes involved both the men and their partner, but more often only the partner was using alcohol or drugs. A number of men stated that their partners had previously experienced trauma and/or had mental health issues and attributed the abuse to these factors. The majority of the men (77%) had never used violence in the relationship.

Impact of Abuse

Men and service providers described various aspects of men’s lives that were negatively impacted by the experience of abuse. Examples include:

Impact on Physical and Mental Health:

- Lost/gained weight
- Headaches
- Sleep problems
- Worsening of existing health conditions
- Loss of identity/self-esteem
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Suicide thoughts/attempts
- Post traumatic stress disorder
- Alcohol/drug use

Impact on Employment/School: Men described how injuries or the emotional impact of abuse prevented them from being able to focus or do their jobs or studies. A few men had been fired because of poor performance or missing work.

Impact on Relationships: Men described being afraid to enter new relationship or being hyper vigilante for signs of abuse in a new relationship.

Impact on Parenting: Men’s parenting was impacted in various ways. For example, some men were not allowed to participate in decision making around childrearing while they were still in the relationship with their abusive partner. If the relationship ended, not being able to see kids was devastating for fathers. A few service providers talked about how men's parenting improved once they were out of the abusive relationship.

Men’s Help Seeking Experience

A few of the men who were interviewed had never told anyone about the abuse they had experienced. Those men who had sought help and support would most often initially turn to informal sources of support such as family members and friends. These family and friends often encouraged men to seek help from formal services such as the police or counselling services.

When those men who did reach out were asked about the response they received while seeking help, men’s replies were mixed. While some men reported a very positive response from informal and formal sources of help, others reported a negative response that they did not perceive to be helpful.

Barriers and to Seeking Help

During the interviews, men and service providers were asked about anything that might make it difficult for men

to seek help. Several barriers were identified:

Social Construction of Masculinity: Traditional cultural norms/ideals and stereotypes regarding masculinity were repeatedly discussed as a barrier to seeking help. Some men referred to this as "toxic masculinity" and men and service providers described the expectations for men to be tough, strong, dominant, and self-reliant. This is also a central part of the context of male victimization and contributes to the belief that men cannot be victims of IPV.

Disbelief/Denial of Victimization: Men reported not recognizing their experience as abuse and not seeing themselves as victims. In addition, men felt that seeking help may be construed as a sign of weakness.

Shame/Stigma: A sense of shame about their experience and a fear of being stigmatized prevented men from disclosing the abuse they experienced and seeking help. This was even greater for individuals in the LGBTQ2S+ community who are often also stigmatized because of sexual orientation.

Fear of Not Being Believed/Fear of Being Blamed: Men's fear of not being believed if they disclosed abuse or of being blamed for incidents was often based on their previous experience and their initial contact with systems and agencies.

Financial Barriers: Financial barriers to leaving or seeking help included costs for housing or legal fees.

Men Can't Find Help: Men described either not knowing where to look for help or looking for help and not being able to find services.

Love/Commitment: Men described loving and being committed to their partners and families and wanting the relationship to work.

Fear for Children/Losing Contact with Children: Men reported feeling the need to remain in the relationship in order to protect their children or being afraid that if they disclosed the abuse, they would not be able to see their children.

Gaps and Challenges in Service

Both the men and service providers who participated in interviews were asked if the existing services meet the needs of men who experience IPV. In short, the answer to this question was a resounding "No". A number of gaps/challenges in services for men were identified:

- Lack of services for men and especially shelter and housing services; this is particularly true in rural / remote areas
- Most services for men are offender based
- Men do not see themselves represented in existing services
- Lengthy wait times for service
- Bias within systems and among service providers that involves the belief that men are not victims of IPV
- Lack of training of service providers to assist male victims
- Lack of clear policies and guidelines within systems/agencies in terms of providing service to men
- Gender politics/backlash that involves resistance among service providers to acknowledge male victimization and the need to provide service to men

Recommendations for Improving our Response to Men who Experience IPV

During the interviews and focus groups, men and service providers were asked for suggestions and recommendations for ways to improve the provision of service to men who are victims/survivors of IPV. A number of suggestions were made including:

Increased public education

- Domestic violence education campaigns need to be inclusive to increase awareness that IPV includes both male and female victimization.
- Men need to be represented (other than as being offenders) in educational material such as brochures, posters and social media, and in advertisements about domestic violence services.
- Representation should include diverse cultures
- Representation should include LGBTQ2S+ community
- Education targeting children and youth is essential so that they receive more information about healthy relationships and a stronger message that violence is never acceptable.
- Education also needs to focus on types of masculinity and healthy masculinity.

Believe men

- IPV service organizations need to create an environment that is safe for men and that validates their experience.

Improved training for service providers

- Service providers need more training about male victimization and systems/agencies need clear policies and guidelines.

Expand and develop existing services and resources:

- Provide more services for men who experience IPV
- Holistic models of service are needed with greater collaboration between systems and service providers.
- Services should be culturally safe and appropriate.
- Provide more information/advertising about services for men

Introduction

Purpose

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is behaviour that causes harm to partners in an intimate relationship and includes physical and sexual violence, emotional (psychological) abuse, and controlling behaviour (World Health Organization, 2013) IPV is recognized as a serious social and public health issue with devastating consequences for individuals and families (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2016) The purpose of this study was to explore men's experience of intimate partner violence (IPV) across the Prairie provinces. This study is the result of a special call-out by the Prairieaction Foundation for tri-provincial research to examine men as victims of intimate partner violence in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Most research to date has focused on female victims of IPV and although a growing number of studies indicate that men also experience abuse by their intimate partners, there is a paucity of Canadian research on men's experience (Tutty, Babins-Wagner, & Rothery, 2009) This study addresses this knowledge gap through an examination of men's experiences as victims of IPV, including the nature, severity, context, and consequences of IPV incidents, their experience of help seeking, and gaps and barriers experienced by men who do seek help.

The project was initiated by The Laurel Centre in Winnipeg and involved academics from RESOLVE Centres in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Family Service Regina and Family Service Saskatoon were the community partners in Saskatchewan and Calgary Counselling Centre was the community partner in Alberta.

Background

In 2018, Canada’s rate of police-reported IPV was 322 per 100,000 population with female victims reporting at a rate of 507 per 100,000 and male victims reporting at a rate of 134 per 100,000 (Burczycka, 2019) While rates of reporting were highest in the territories, provincial rates were highest in the Prairie provinces of Saskatchewan (655 per 100,000 population), Manitoba (592 per 100,000 population) and Alberta (400 per 100,000 population) This included 1,156 male victims in Saskatchewan (253 per 100,000 population), 1,145 male victims in Manitoba (2,217 per 100,000 population), and 3,080 male victims in Alberta (176 per 100,000 population) Crime data are known to underestimate the actual rates of IPV as the majority of incidents are never brought to the attention of police; male victims are more likely than female victims (76% versus 64%) to state that the police were not made aware of their experience of victimization (Burczycka, 2016) Additionally, crime data do not include emotional, psychological and some types of financial abuse which are not chargeable offenses (Bressan, 2008)

Since 1999, each cycle of Canada’s General Social Survey on Victimization (GSS) has found almost equal proportions of men and women reporting victimization (Burczycka, 2016; Brennan, 2011) The 2014 GSS found that 4% of Canadian men and 4% of Canadian women reported being victimized by current or former spouses or partners in the preceding five-year period (Burczycka, 2016) Although Indigenous women were more likely to experience such victimization than non-Indigenous women (10% versus 3%) and to experience more severe forms of violence, there was no significant difference in the rates of spousal victimization reported by Indigenous men compared to non-Indigenous men. Rates of reporting were lower for visible minority members (3%) and immigrants (3%) Overall, women were more likely than men (34% versus 16%) to experience severe violence (sexual assault, beaten, choked, threatened with a gun or knife) Men were more likely than women to be kicked, bitten, hit or hit with something than women (35% versus 10%) In the preceding five-year time frame, 35% reported between 2 and 10 incidents of physical violence and 17% reported more than 10 incidents. There was no significant difference between men and women with respect to multiple incidents. Men were slightly more likely than women (15% versus 13%) to report emotional or financial abuse.

The 2014 GSS also found that women were more likely than men to report physical injuries (40% versus 24%) as a result of spousal violence (Burczycka, 2016) For both men and women bruising was the most common form of injury. Male victims were more likely to report cuts, scratches and burns (76% versus 33%) A smaller portion of respondents reported bone fractures and/or internal injuries (9%) and hospitalization was required by 16% of victims. These figures were not, however, disaggregated by gender. Both men and women reported emotional consequences as a result of the abuse, but women were more likely than men to experience long-term symptoms

of Primary Care Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (22% versus 9%) (Burczycka, 2016) An analysis using a subset of the data from the 2014 GSS found that there was no significant difference between male and female victims of IPV in the long-term effects of IPV associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) related symptoms (Lysova, Dim, & Dutton, 2019) Other studies have also found that men experience significant psychological and physical symptoms as a result of IPV including emotional distress, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, social isolation, and PTSD (Hines & Douglas, 2009; Kar & O'Leary, 2010; Lupri & Grandin, 2004)

The issue of male victimization by their intimate partners is the subject of debate and controversy. Over the past few decades, numerous studies in addition to the GSS have reported evidence of gender symmetry in IPV and found that similar proportions of women and men perpetrate violence against their intimate partners (Archer, 2000; Dutton, Nicholls, & Spidel, 2005; Lupris & Grandin, 2004; Straus, 2009) This includes several early Canadian surveys reporting equal rates of male and female victimization (for example, Brinkerhoff & Lupri, 1988; Sommer, Barnes & Murray, 1992; Sommer, 1994; Kwong, Bartholomew & Dutton, 1999)

Studies supporting gender symmetry have been criticized for a number of reasons. For example, many surveys, including the GSS, rely on the use of the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) which does not account for the meaning, motives, and context of violent incidents (Dragiewicz & DeKeserdy, 2012; Tutty 1999) Kimmel (2002) suggests that the CTS measures "expressive" actions in response to arguments and ignores "instrumental" violence which is used to control the victim and which can occur outside of the context of conflict between intimate partners. These distinctions are similar to Johnson's (1995) distinctions between "common couple" violence which refers to less severe forms of violence that occur when conflict escalates to violence and "patriarchal terrorism" which involves systematic control of another person through physical violence and other means. Therefore, studies supporting gender symmetry do not account for differences in men's and women's use of violence such as women's use of violence in self-defence (Dragiewicz & DeKeserdy, 2012) Although the controversy centers on the nature and seriousness of male victimization, the fact that some men are in fact abused within their intimate relationships is not disputed.

Although there is a lack of research and specifically Canadian research on male victimization, existing studies shed some light on men's experiences. Tutty (1999) examined two unpublished qualitative studies in Alberta involving 18 men. While much of the abuse men experienced was psychological, 16 men reported at least one incident of physical violence, which was sometimes chronic and involved serious physical attacks. Nine men admitted using aggressive behaviours towards their partners and could be described as being in mutually violent relationships. Although some of the men sustained injuries as a result of the violence, none of the men sought medical attention. Migliaccio (2001), examined the narratives of 12 American men who experienced abuse from their wives. Eleven of these men had experienced physical abuse and ten of these men sought medical assistance for their injuries.

Tutty, Ogden, Babins-Wagner and Rothery (2008) evaluated a treatment program for male victims of domestic violence in Alberta and conducted interviews with nine married, heterosexual men. All nine men indicated that they had been emotionally/psychologically and verbally abused by their partners with two men reporting only psychological abuse. They reported that their wives belittled and demeaned them, made the majority of household decisions, controlled money, and controlled sex. Three men reported having been physically attacked and two reported having objects thrown at them or having valued objects and keepsakes destroyed by their partners. Men also described concerns about how their children were being parented and about their own and their partner`s substance abuse and/or mental health issues.

Male victims face unique barriers to help-seeking including internalized gender stereotypes, a lack of societal recognition of male victimization, lack of support services, and comparatively harsher perceptions of male-perpetrated violence (Machado, Santos, Graham-Kevan, & Matos, 2017; Migliaccio, 2001; Tutty, 1999) A qualitative study of men in Alberta found that the help-seeking process can be particularly difficult for male victims as there is a continual negotiation of victim status and the maintenance of a masculine identity (Zverina, Stam, & Babins-Wagner, 2011) Using qualitative interviews with men from an urban centre in Saskatchewan who experienced ongoing physical and psychological violence by their female partners, Brooks, Martin, Broda, and Poudrier (2017) examined men’s understanding of their victimization with a focus on men’s perceptions of masculinity. All of the men described difficulty disclosing violence because of the influence of pervasive norms regarding masculinity and fear of being judged. Men also described that when they disclosed the abuse they experienced, they were not believed. This was also reported by Douglas and Hines (2011) who also found that

men report more positive experiences with informal support, such as family and friends, rather than the police and other professionals.

A growing body of evidence indicates that many men are victims of IPV and that the abuse they experience is sometimes severe and causes a variety of negative consequences. There are few Canadian studies on IPV experienced by males and much of the information on this topic has been derived from decontextualized measures that do not provide information on the meaning and motive of women's use of violence or on the nature and consequences of violence for men. Although quantitative research has described important information such as the incidence of police reporting and the prevalence of specific types of violence, statistical data provides a narrow frame of reference that does not represent men's experiences within their particular social contexts.

We are still in the early stages of understanding IPV against males and there is a need for qualitative studies that examine the context in which this occurs (Dragiewicz & DeKeseredy, 2012, Tutty et el., 2008) Examining men's experience as victims of IPV is not intended to undermine women's experience or to detract attention from female victims. No abuse should be tolerated. Across Canada, there are very few social or therapeutic services created for male victims of IPV and those that exist are often based upon female-centered approaches (Tutty et al., 2008; Zverina et al., 2011) Effective intervention programs for both men and women and effective prevention programs targeting all family violence cannot be developed without greater understanding.

Methodology

Research Questions

This was a multi-site exploratory study of men's experience as victims of IPV across the Prairies which addressed the following questions:

1. What are men's experiences as victims of IPV?
    a) What is the nature of the violence/abuse experienced by men in their intimate partner relationships and the context of the violent/abusive episodes?
    b) Are there differences between men who seek services for IPV across the Prairie provinces in terms of demographics and the nature of the reported violence?
    c) How do men describe the impact of being a victim of IPV?

2. What are men's experiences of help seeking?
    a) When do men seek help?
    b) Which sources of help do men seek?
    c) What are men's perceptions of the process of help seeking?

3. What are the barriers, challenges and/or gaps that men experience in terms of seeking help?

4. What intervention services are available to men as victims of IPV?

5. What are recommendations for addressing men's experiences of IPV?

Methods

Four sources of data were utilized in this research:

- Qualitative interviews were conducted with men from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta who had experienced violence by an intimate partner. In-person interviews were conducted with men in urban centers and telephone interviews were conducted with men from rural and northern areas in each province.
- Qualitative focus group and individual interviews were conducted with service providers from agencies/organizations that provide service to men who experience IPV. These included in-person interviews with service providers in urban centres and telephone interviews with service providers in rural and northern communities in each province.

- An environmental scan of existing services for men who experience IPV in each province was carried out to describe existing intervention services. In addition to services identified by community partners and by focus group participants, an online search for services was conducted. Many agencies and organizations identified through these means were telephoned to verify and obtain additional information on the types of services provided. The scope of the scan was limited to the social services (community and social support, shelter, housing) and criminal justice (victim assistance) sectors. The report includes the name, location and contact information of each agency/organization and a brief description of the type of services provided.
- An attempt was made to conduct a provincial comparison of men who access agencies for assistance through anonymized data routinely gathered at intake by community partner agencies. Agencies statistics were compiled and provided by the community partner agencies but the differences in they type of information collected at intake varied greatly and allowed for a limited comparison.

The qualitative interviews were the primary data component of this study. Qualitative methods are particularly useful when exploring topics that address the nature of people's experience with a phenomenon and when little is known about that phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) The interviews with men allowed for a detailed and contextualized understanding of their experience. In addition to allowing service providers to share their perception, the focus groups and individual interviews with service providers served as a form of triangulation – the findings from the interviews with men were compared and contrasted to the findings from the interviews with service providers to enhance the validity of the study.

Participants and Procedures

Applications for ethics approval for this research were submitted to the University of Manitoba Psychology/ Sociology Research Ethics Board, the University of Regina Ethics Board, and the University of Calgary's Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board. Approval was received from each of these universities.

Purposive sampling was used to recruit interview participants. English speaking men who were 18 years of age and older and who had experienced IPV were recruited through notices posted at agencies that provide service to men and on these agency websites. A total of 45 five men from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta were interviewed. This included 34 in-person interviews with men in urban centres (Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, and Calgary) and 11 telephones interviews with men in rural and northern communities. Written consent was obtained from all men who were interviewed in person and verbal consent was obtained from men who were interviewed by telephone. Men were given a $40.00 honorarium for their participation.

A list of appropriate service provider agencies/service providers was generated by community partners in each province. Across the three provinces a total of 41 services providers participated in focus groups and individual interviews. This included six group and seven individual interviews. Written consent was obtained from service providers who participated in in-person individual and focus group interviews. Consent was assumed for participants who called in to a focus group and verbal consent was obtained from service providers who participated in individual telephone interviews.

All interviews were guided by semi-structured questionnaires that provided direction and consistency across interviews and sites. These questionnaires are included as Appendix A and Appendix B at the end of this report. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Quantitative data that consisted of the demographic information provided by men was analyzed using SPSS software. A thematic analysis was performed on the qualitative data from the interviews and focus groups; transcripts were content analyzed and coded to bring together similar ideas, concepts and themes.

Limitations

There are limitations to this research. A self-selected sample of men who experienced abuse by their intimate partner were interviewed and their experience and perception may not be representative of all men who are victimized. The same is true of the self-selected sample of service providers who provide service to these men. Although a number of service sectors were represented among the service providers who participated in focus group and individual interviews, not all perspectives were captured. In addition, the community partner agencies do not each record the same information about men who seek service during the intake process. Therefore, only

a limited comparison of demographic information about men accessing services and the type of violence they experienced across the three community partner agencies was possible.

Findings

As previously mentioned, information collected during the interviews with men was compared and contrasted to the information collected during the interviews with service providers. Men and service providers were asked similar questions and there was a high level of consistency in their responses. The findings from the interviews with men and service providers are presented together.

Description of the Participants

Men Who Experienced IPV

Across the three provinces interviews were conducted with 45 men who had experienced violence in their intimate relationships. These men included 32 who were from urban centres and 13 who were from rural and northern communities. Table 1 provides an overview of the number of men interviewed in each province.

Table 1 : Number of Men Interviewed by Province

	Province	Number of Participants
Manitoba	Winnipeg	10
	Rural/Northern	8
	Total	18
Saskatchewan	Regina/Saskatoon	9
	Rural/Northern	2
	Total	11
Alberta	Calgary/Edmonton	13
	Rural/Northern	3
	Total	16

Total N = 45

At the time of the interviews, men's age ranged from 20 to 71 years, with an average age of 43.6 years. The majority of these men (41, 91%) self-identified as being heterosexual; two men self-identified as being pansexual, one as homosexual, and one as asexual. When asked about their ethno-cultural identity, 27 men (60%) reported European/White descent; 12 men (27%) were Indigenous and six men (13%) were from other visible minorities.

Most of the men who participated in interviews had received post-secondary education. Six men (13%) had not completed high school and the highest level of education completed by four men (9%) was high school. However, 10 men (22%) had completed some college/university education and 25 men (56%) had completed college programs or university degrees. At the time of the interviews, 26 men (58%) were either employed or full-time students, 15 (33%) were unemployed and four (9%) were retired. Although 10 men declined to answer a question regarding annual household income, the average annual household income reported by men who did answer this question was $54,827.00.

Men were asked about their relationship status with their most recent abusive partner. While five men were still in a relationship with this partner, 40 men (89%) were no longer in a relationship with this partner. The average length of the relationship with their most recent abusive partner was 9.5 years, with a range from less than one year to 40 years. Most men reported that that abusive incidents began early in the relationship. In addition, 16

men (36%) had previous relationships in which they experienced intimate partner violence.

Most of the men (31, 69%) had children with an average of three children (range from one to six children) There were 13 men (29%) who had their children living with them either full-time or in shared custody arrangements.

Service Providers

A total of 41 service providers participated in focus group and individual interviews. Eleven of these service providers were from Manitoba, 18 were from Saskatchewan and 12 were from Alberta. Thirty of these service providers (73%) were female and 11 service providers (27%) were male. Most of these service providers (29, 71%) worked in urban areas and 12 (29%) worked in rural/northern areas.

The sample of service providers included representation from a variety of agencies/sectors:

- Police/RCMP
- Probation
- Victim Services/Domestic Violence Case Court Workers
- Family Centres/Support Programs
- Shelters
- LGBTQ2S+ Support Services
- Counselling Services
- Sexual Assault Services
- Municipal Government
- Housing

Men's Experience of Victimization: Nature and Context of Abuse

Nature of Abuse Experienced by Men

Men were initially asked a "yes/no" question about the type of abuse they had experienced in their relationship. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Type of Abuse Experienced by Men

Type of Abuse	Number of Men	Percent
Physical	38	84
Emotional	45	100
Sexual	7	16
Spiritual	10	22
Financial	30	67
Other Types of Control/Abuse	21	47

As shown in Table 2, 100% of the men experienced emotional abuse and 84% of the men who were interviewed experienced physical violence. In terms of frequency, this was followed by financial, "other", spiritual and sexual abuse. Most of the men who were interviewed experienced more than one type of violence/abuse by their intimate partners. When asked about the types of abuse that men experience in their relationships with their intimate partners, services providers also described the types of abuse listed in Table 2.

Following the initial "yes/no" question regarding the type of abuse they had experienced, men were asked to describe the incidents in more detail.

Physical Abuse

Men described a range of physical violence which ranged from single incidents to ongoing and severe violence. Men described being pushed, slapped, punched, kicked, scratched, hit with objects, and stabbed:

She used to be beating me up, she used to be grabbing me with her hands and punching several times to the point where my shirt [was] full of blood. (SK03)

I was choked for an extended period of time. She just kept choking and she choked me so bad that five hours later, I actually had to walk to the hospital, giant marks on my neck because I was not able to swallow. (AB10)

She tried stabbing me in the stomach and I caught the knife with my hand and severed my tendons when she pulled it out. (MB13)

Emotional Abuse

A wide range of emotionally abusive behaviour was described by both men and service providers:

- Name-calling
- Criticism/Put-downs
- Jealousy
- Attacking masculinity
- Public humiliation
- Threats
- Harassing at work
- Isolation

- Mind games
- Threatening suicide
- Berating on social media
- Destroying property
- Undermining men as fathers
    - Belittling men in front of children
    - Trying to turn children against them

Isolating men from their family and friends or activities was frequently described:

I didn't see my family for a long time. Yeah … because he wouldn't let me. I mean I saw my family sometimes, but I lied about where I was going. (MB08)

She slowly isolated me from things by being mad at me about them. I coached [sport] for a high school here in [name of city] for years … and I would come home and she would be accusing me of like, doing things with players and being inappropriate … I kind of made excuses that I couldn't continue coaching even though I loved it … " (SK07)

By the time our marriage had reached the end I had no friends, I had no family, I had no activities, I had no hobbies. … By the time the marriage was ending, she had eroded me to basically this man in a cage. (MB09)

One man described being fearful of not responding to frequent texts which were sent while he was at work:

She was very obsessed with Facebook. … she wanted me to go through all my Facebook friends and tell her how I knew each one of them. … At first, I said yes, but after a while I said, "No, I'm not doing that". So she'd go through my friends list and would text me and say, "How do you know this person?" Over, over, over, and over, all day. And I'd be at work. (MB10)

Men described being verbally abused/belittled in front of their children:

I'd go home and she just continues this constant barrage of belittling in front of my children. Constantly. Constant barrage of being accused of things … She wasn't beating me, but she might as well have been. I didn't have the self-worth to stand up for myself. (SK10)

Sexual Abuse

Seven men described experiencing sexual abuse by their partners. This included forced sexual contact, but men more often described that their partner "used sex" as a form of abuse:

There were a few times where she came in and she wanted to have sex and I was like "No, I don't want to have sex". I was just at the point where it was just easier to give in than it was to argue and fight it. (SK07)

It wasn't that I was forced to have sex, which is the way it's usually thought of. I was criticized for sex and had it used against me, both in when I wanted it and when I didn't want it and sort of was used as a manipulative tool. (AB01)

She got into bed naked and was basically rubbing herself against me by saying, "You know you'll never have any of this". (AB16)

Spiritual Abuse

Ten men indicated that their abuse experience included spiritual abuse. When describing this experience, men explained that their partners would undermine or critisize their beliefs, force them to abandon their beliefs, or not allowed them to attend religious or spiritual activities:

Well it was anytime I tried to heal and I tried to become a better person. … she worked very hard to try to keep me ill. She worked very hard to subvert my efforts to improve myself and to change my mind and my spirit … to

undermine all those. So I would consider that spiritual abuse. Because my spiritual growth was not being a sick man anymore, wanting to grow into something new. (MB09)

My family comes from a religious background, a very strong religious background, but she did not practice any of it. And it seemed as time went by, she started basically telling me that I had to follow her religion … suddenly demanding that I follow this religion. (MB14)

Financial Abuse

Experiences of financial abuse were reported by most of the men (30) who were interviewed. A variety of examples provided by men included taking all money from bank accounts, controlling access to money and how it was spent, and not helping with household payments and expenses. Examples of financial abuse that men reported also included charging maximum amounts to credit cards and not allowing men to have any money even if they were working, which would assist in attempts to isolate men:

She would take all my money from work and instead of spending it on groceries she'd go and have herself a good time. (MB07)

She would take my bank card and she would go help herself for whatever things she wanted. She wanted to go out to the bar. She wanted cigarettes, she wanted ... whatever it is she wanted. She would just take my card, help herself ... she stole money from me that way. (MB11)

And taking all the money to make sure that I couldn't go anywhere or do anything. (SK05)

Other Types of Control/Abuse

Almost half of the men who participated in an interview reported experiencing "other" types of abuse. When asked to explain this, they described threats of violence and injury from their partners as a means of controlling their behaviour and keeping them in the relationship.

I had a heart attack, or angina … it was pretty rough. She took a picture of me in the hospital and then sent it to me and I asked her why she had. She said so I don't ever forget what she can do to me …. (SK05)

One time we're in the parking lot of Walmart and we were arguing, and I got out of the car … and I was walking away, and she drove up behind me and like clipped my legs... And I was like "Why would you do that?" and she said "I'll run you over next time". (SK08)

They also described being threatened through their children; their partners would threaten to leave with the children and/or to not allow men to see their children.

She threatened to move to Ontario so I would never see my child. (SK07)

Using my child as a form of abuse … not letting me see him in a reasonable manner … using access to my son as leverage. (AB10)

She didn't let me see them for a full year … I was terrified that (children's names) would have forgotten me. (MB05)

Service providers described "legal" or "systems abuse" which involved men's partners lying to police, the courts, or child protection agencies. These service providers explained that this occurs in the context of men's partners saying it was the victimized men who were physically violent after an incident of violence had been reported to police or in the context of men's attempts to seek custody of or access to their children. Comments made by men exemplified these experiences:

I'm pretty sure the cops don't want to take me seriously cause I'm white and she's black. And she was even acting like she's ESL. She speaks perfect English. Better than you and I. Not a single human being on this planet that's ever met her, up until the cops, has had a problem understanding her. She just lays the accent on thick to get away with it. (SK05)

My wife made a false allegation that she had been assaulted … And the police believed her even though she had no evidence of injury and I had significant evidence of injury. (AB13)

She was putting all these false claims against me and using these other resources including Child and Family Services. (MB14)

Context of Abusive Incidents

During the interviews, men were asked to describe the context of IPV and the abusive incidents. Men provided a range of responses. Some men described violent incidents as "coming out of nowhere" while others described being verbally and physically attacked during arguments. Men also identified the development of patterns in their relationships; the violence or abuse occurred in a cycle:

During the actual incidents maybe a few days later I would be in Toronto or something like that, she'd call to apologize and say "Things will be better this weekend". We would be good for maybe a couple of weeks and then it would fall back into that same kind of pattern. (MB18)

There was a cycle. Over and over and over again. … That whole cycle destroyed vacations, holidays, all sorts of stuff. Totally ruined plans for things- you couldn't do a long-term plan. (SK01)

I felt like I had to be really careful with what I said or did because I didn't want her to become upset or have another episode. So I guess I was just walking around eggshells. (SK11)

Typically, the abuse increased in frequency and severity over time. While some men described weekly or monthly incidents, a number of men described daily incidents.

Just under half (44%) of the men indicated that alcohol or drug use was involved in the abusive incidents. Sometimes both partners were using alcohol or drugs when the abuse occurred, but more often men reported that only their partner had been using alcohol or drugs. Men would attribute their partner's abusive behaviour to the use of alcohol or drugs.

She drank quite heavily, which at first was when we went out and then it just kind of became more often. And as she drank more, she became more, more violent and argumentative (SK07)

When describing their relationships, 15 men (33%) reported that their partner had previously experienced trauma which included abuse during their childhood or IPV in a previous relationship. Fourteen men stated that their partners had mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and postpartum depression. As with alcohol and drug use, men would attribute their partner's abusive behaviour to these issues.

She would say that she had a rough upbringing, that she experienced some abuse when she was younger. A lot of that would come out when she was intoxicated. (MB12)

… she had gone through some very horrific things in her life too and dealt with them or whatever. (SK02)

And this is another thing I didn't find out until we were deep into the relationship that she was supposed to be taking pills. She's bipolar. (MB06)

She was diagnosed when she was a teenager. Didn't do anything to manage it. Didn't treat it as far as I saw. She didn't see someone for mental health or have meds, nothing like that. So I'd ask her to go get help but it just falls on deaf ears. (MB10)

Men were also asked if they had ever used violence in the relationship. The majority of the men (32, 71%) indicated that they had never used violence in the relationship. Five men (11%) said that mutual violence was involved in some of the violent incidents. In addition, eight men (18%) reported that they had used violence in self-defence. Service providers also stated that in some cases involving their work with men, bilateral violence occurs, but that in many cases the female partner is clearly the primary aggressor.

Provincial Comparison

Community partner agencies were asked to compile agency statistics on the number of men seeking assistance at their agency for the two-year period from 2016 to 2018. They were asked to include basic demographic information (age, racial/ethnic background, income, education, employment status) about these men and the type of violence they had experienced in their intimate partner relationships. Unfortunately, not all of the requested information about men is collected at intake at each agency and could not be provided. For example, Family Service Regina does not collect information on the racial/ethnic background, education level, income, or employment status of men seeking service. Therefore, only a very limited comparison was possible.

The Men's Resource Centre (a program of the Laurel Centre) in Winnipeg collected intake information from 98 men over the two-year period 2016 to 2018. Family Service Regina collected intake information from 127 men over the two-year period and the Calgary Counselling Centre collected intake information from 134 men over the two-year period. The average age of men at intake was 40 years in Winnipeg, 37 years in Regina, and 43 years in Calgary. The information provided by the agencies indicated that some men at each agency had experienced physical abuse, with Family Service Regina having a greater number of men reporting physical abuse. Emotional abuse was also reported by men at each agency.

Demographic information and information on the type of violence experienced by the 45 men who participated in interviews was also compared.

- The average age of men in Manitoba was 43 years and the average age of men in both Saskatchewan and Alberta was 44 years.
- While most of the men who participated in interviews identified as being European/White, more Indigenous men were interviewed in Manitoba (44%) than in Saskatchewan (27%) and Alberta (6%) More men from visible minorities were interviewed in Alberta (25%) than in Manitoba (0) Saskatchewan (18%)
- Overall, the men from Manitoba who participated in interviews had less education, more unemployment and lower annual incomes than men from Saskatchewan and Alberta.
- Relatively equal numbers of men from each province reported experiencing physical abuse. Physical

abuse was experienced by 83% of the interview participants from Manitoba, 82% of the interview participants from Saskatchewan and 88% of the participants from Alberta.
- More of the men from Alberta (25%) reported that their partners had sexually abused them than men from Manitoba (11%) and Saskatchewan (9%).
- More of the men from Alberta (81%) reported that their experience included financial abuse than men from Manitoba (56%) and Saskatchewan (64%).
- More of the men from Manitoba (33%) reported that their experience included spiritual abuse than men from Saskatchewan (9%) and Alberta (19%).

Overall, the interviews with men did not reveal any striking differences in men's experience across the provinces and any differences must be interpreted cautiously.

Impact of Abuse on Men

Men were asked how they had been impacted by their experience of victimization. They described multi-faceted and sometimes severe consequences that were also described by service providers.

Impact on Men's Physical and Mental Health

- In addition to bruising and injuries, men described a number of ways that their physical health was impacted by the abuse they experienced that included losing or gaining weight, headaches, sleep problems, and worsening of existing health conditions. More frequently, they described impacts on their mental health that included:

  - Loss of identity/self-esteem
  - Fear
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Suicide thoughts/attempts
  - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
  - Alcohol/drug use

- During the interviews, men provided numerous examples of these effects.

Physically I was starting to get sick. I was getting migraines. Taking pills. Drinking more. Only thing I didn't do is drugs. Street drugs. Over-the-counter medication I'd take more than usual. (MB07)

I can't sleep and I've lost a lot of weight. I have to see a psychiatrist. I've been tested for PTSD. I'm scared to leave the house because I think someone's going to kill me. (SK05)

I just couldn't focus very well and lost a lot of weight. Couldn't sleep barely at all so that affected every part of my life. (AB16)

I would just lay in the dark and stare at the roof, just depression, a lot of depression. … some days I couldn't even function, couldn't get up. When the kids were there it was great, I was on. I was dad. When the kids weren't there, I was a mess. (MB10)

When somebody you love is trying to hit you, like kill you, its not just the fear of getting away from that, it's just like your heart's broken. You just feel crushed. And then you're numb to it so over time I got more and more numb. (SK01)

Impact on Employment/School

- Men described how their experiences impacted their work or school. Injuries or the emotional impact of abuse prevented men from being able to concentrate or do their jobs.

I wasn't able to like concentrate because I was always distracted thinking about what was happening or what happened the night before … One night we got in a fight and we fought literally all night and I had a final at 9:00 a.m. (SK08)

And the stress. I mean, it's affected my work performance too. (SK05)

Impact on Relationships

- Men who were no longer in a relationship with their most recent abusive partner, described how their experience of abuse made them afraid to begin new intimate relationships. or impacted new relationships that they were in.

I'm scared of relationships I'm terrified even though I'd love to have one I'm scared of having one. I haven't had a relationship in 15 years. … I'm just scared of failure, scared of it not being healthy like I'd like it to be. (MB13)

I was never interested in dating at all. … I still struggle with trusting women … after experiencing this and seeing how fast someone can destroy you? … I just didn't want to get involved with any woman to be very, very honest. (MB14)

- Men also described being hyper vigilante in new relationships.

I'm always on edge … I watch everything very closely. I listen to the words that my current girlfriend says to me, you know, and maybe I read too much into it? But that's just how I have adapted over the years." (SK04)

Impact on Parenting

- Men and service providers described various ways in which men's parenting had been impacted, both while they were still in the abusive relationship or, if the relationship had ended, after the relationship ended. Men described not being able to participate in decision making about childrearing and not being able to participate in activities with their children even while they were still in the relationship with their abusive partner. They also described how the abuse negatively impacted how they interacted with their children.

I wasn't allowed to take [my son] places. Even my daughter. Neither. I just wasn't allowed. I don't know what you'd call that? Emotional abuse, psychological abuse, whatever. I was meant to feel or felt that I wasn't worthy enough or wasn't capable enough. (SK02)

This stress that it causes I find I have less patience with my kids when I am dealing with her or have dealt with her recently. (AB16)

- Fathers who were no longer in a relationship with their abusive partners described not being able to see their kids on a regular basis. Not being able to see their children was devastating for fathers.

It's affected my parenting in that she's taken parenting time away from me … my daughter and I go ten days where we see each other for four hours. That's it. (AB12)

I would say I'm physically drained, this consumes my life. You know every day I'm constantly trying to figure out ways to get to see my kids, or have a relationship with them. (SK04)

- A few service providers talked about how men's parenting improved and they became better parents after leaving the abusive relationship.

Men's Help Seeking Experience

Reaching Out

During the interviews, men were asked if they had ever told anyone about the abuse that they had experienced or sought help from either informal or formal sources. A few men had never told anyone about their victimization and almost of the men who were interviewed did not seek help until the abuse had been occurring for some time.

Most of the men reported disclosing the abuse and seeking help only after a severe incident or crisis situation. For example, men sought help following an escalation of violence or a severe attack or when they were afraid for the safety of their children. In other instances, the police had been called, sometimes by men themselves, by their partners or by a third party. For some men the crisis involved being out of the house and having nowhere to go. Abuse was also disclosed by men as they tried to get help to see their children. Some men reported that the catalyst for taking some sort of action was the realization of how their children were being impacted by the violence occurring in their homes.

My son was at the table and it was a beautiful summer day and she went off and started hitting me and ripped the collar off my shirt in front of my son at the table and he started to cry. That was my last ever time in that house. That was my last day and I moved in with my parents ... That was it. [I left because] it was my son. It was hard to see. I never expected that. (MB18)

What's really affected me a lot was one of the last incidents before March 20th. And they were daily by now. The kids just stayed in their room. They both sat on the bed and they were both on their iPad. Like nothing was going on. Holy crap, did that affect me. (MB02)

One time my son, he was only nine at the time, as I was walking out the door he said "Dad, why do you always have to be the one that leaves? Why can't mom leave?" And that was the last time I ever did that, that I ever walked out the door. Just this de-escalation cause' my kids are seeing this, right?" (MB10)

Informal Sources of Support

When men do reach out for help, most initially turn to informal sources of support – their family members and friends. Men were asked about the response they received when they disclosed the abuse experience and whether or not they found this response helpful. Men had both positive and negative perceptions of this response. Some men indicated that these informal supports were already aware that something was wrong in the relationship and would try to help men understand that they were in fact experiencing abuse.

My sister actually noticed the cycle of abuse more than I did … (SK02)

It like took me some like talking to friends to start to understand … what she was saying wasn't right about a lot of these situations or it wasn't totally my fault or me who was screwing up in all of them. (SK11)

I was turning a blind eye to it and they were telling me to get away from her. And I was under that way of thinking that I could change her, you know? (MB06)

Some men indicated that they initially felt supported by family members and friends but that the support waned over time, particularly when men were not willing to leave the relationship.

I felt they were trying to be supportive but it's like, they're being supportive and then telling me what they thought and what they disagreed with and looking out for me but at the same time they gave me my space to make my own decisions and so they were like, "Hey man, this is what we feel and this isn't right. You got to look out for yourself … ' I think it was kind of like passive. Like they didn't want to get involved and really help me." (SK08)

Other men indicated that they were not believed when they disclosed their abuse to family members and friends, or that they were not provided with support.

They would just ignore me and be on the girlfriend's side. That I was lazy and I was feeling a bit betrayed or what do you call it … I had nobody else to talk to. (MB16)

The first few times [my friend] would be compassionate and understanding and after a while he'd say, "Hey [participant's name], I don't really want to hear about it cause' it's kind of sounding like a broken record". (MB12)

Formal Sources of Support

Service providers reported that often these friends and family members will help men to locate formal services and are often the people who call agencies to inquire about services on behalf of men. The support and efforts of these individuals is what brings men forward.

There are external factors that determine when the men decide to seek help. Let's take, for example, the amount of informal support that these men have. ... informal support plays a big role for you. When we ask men what brought them here … the man saying, "Well, because my mom gave me this number or my mom actually requested me to see a counsellor. My friend actually told me to see a counsellor or my sister told me to see a counsellor". So when men have been asked by somebody who genuinely cares about them, then they might consider calling, right? (AB Service Provider)

Service providers also stated that when men do disclose to formal service providers, IPV is often not the presenting issue. They will talk about, "not feeling well", something being wrong, being unhappy and so on, and service providers described having to "unpack" what is really going on. Sometimes men will disclose in the context of other services such when seeing an employment counsellor and be referred for services for victims of abuse.

Many of the men who were interviewed had sought help from formal service providers including the police/RCMP, lawyers, counsellors/therapists and from shelter organizations. When asked about the response they got when they did seek help from formal service providers and if the if response was helpful, men again perceived both positive and negative responses.

Some men perceived their interactions with law enforcement and justice system personnel and counsellors/therapists to be very positive:

I did the most courageous thing I ever did … I called the police. And oh my god let's just fast forward. CFS, or at first the police, CFS, doctors at the hospital … um … victim services, the crown, judges, lawyers … every service out there … has been more than incredible. And I'm a pessimistic fella. … Every service has been unbelievable. Saved my life. Saved my family's life. (MB02)

I really needed protection. The best people involved through this whole situation would have been the RCMP, they were fully aware, and a lawyer, believe it or not, who was, you know, giving the facts and being very supportive … (MB14)

And I felt like I had someone on my side. That was different. … I felt like he kind of had my back and I never felt like that before with these other therapists … it made me feel like I had an advocate. (MB10)

However, men also reported several negative experiences in their interaction with service providers.

The cops came and said "You're being arrested for assault." … The [town] detachment RCMP sergeant did apologize but its too late now. Its already gone through the courts so … the apology is really nothing. (SK05)

A few of the counsellors, they didn't, don't believe my story. You know I just didn't feel that they were genuinely there for me. … I felt I was pegged as the villain as soon as I walked in [to the counselling office]. (SK04)

Barriers to Seeking Help

Men and service providers were also asked if anything made it difficult for men to seek help and both reported that several barriers for men exist.

Social Construction of Masculinity

- One thing that was repeatedly reported as a barrier to seeking help was the social construction of masculinity or the traditional cultural norms and ideals surrounding masculinity which are part of the context in which men experience IPV. This "toxic masculinity" or “hegemonic masculinity” includes beliefs that men are supposed to be strong, tough, dominant, and self reliant.

Nobody teaches men that you don’t have to put up with this. A lot of the times the conversation is, “be a man”, just put up with it. (MB05)

I think there a cultural sort of narrative out there that men don't talk about this stuff, that you've got to be macho about this stuff that you need to handle this by yourself. … you have to “man up”. Those sorts of narratives in culture (AB06)

Traditionally in North American culture it’s the old “Boy’s don’t cry” . Boys are allowed maybe three feelings … laughter, frustration, anger’ kind of thing … and you kind of suck it up, fight through the pain, don’t admit to pain, don’t share frustrations or fears, that sort of thing.” (MB01)

- Service providers described how men do not have the language or space to talk about their abuse experience.

Think about the traditional peer support that is available for men. Traditionally we don't have a lot of space for them to talk about stuff like that. Now when you're going through an abusive relationship, this is not something that you can volunteer at the bar with your friends on a Friday night right? … you don't talk to your friends about stuff like that … they really don't have that support structure in place. (AB Service Provider)

The social construction of masculinity is tremendously powerful and is related to other barriers to seeking help that were described.

Disbelief/Denial of Victimization

- Another barrier to seeking help described by men was not recognizing their experience as abuse and/or denying that that they were victims.

I should have known what it was but I really didn’t know what it was because I’d never experienced domestic violence before or even knew the term. (SK01)

No, I didn’t tell anyone about the abuse. I didn’t even know I was being abused. (MB09)

I mean they, [my friends] could see what was going on years ago. I guess it wasn't until I stepped out of that circle that I could see what was going on. (SK04)

I couldn't believe. I wouldn't believe it. (SK09)

- Service providers also described men's lack of recognition/acknowledgement of their experience as abuse. Men may know something is wrong in their relationship, but they are reluctant to see themselves as victims. Service providers also indicated that men often do not want to disclose physical violence or will minimize or downplay it. Seeking help can be construed as a sign of weakness, Men want to somehow preserve their masculinity and disclosing their victimization is a threat to the masculine image.

Shame/Stigma

- Almost all of the men and service providers who were interviewed noted that a sense of shame about their experience and a fear of being stigmatized prevented men from disclosing the abuse they experienced and seeking help.

Shame. Shame is awful. Shame is a terrible emotion. If it's an emotion or feeling or whatever it is. It's awful. I was just so ashamed. I mean, my god. Here I am pretending to be the man. (MB02)

Embarrassment was so huge. I work with 50, 60 guys and if any of them found out about what really was going on the level of embarrassment that I would've taken on … inside I was just so scared of that. (MB12)

Having to admit that this was happening. It's very difficult to admit that … you know guys are fixers aren't they? And I couldn't fix. It just got worse. So pride. (AB12)

Well I just think it's a shame base, right, we are socialized to think that men are supposed to be tough and manage and get through things and not ask for help and it's a sign of weakness if they do … What wimpy guy would want to go forward and say my partner is abusing me. Like we don't make it safe for them to do that, generally. (MB Service Provider)

- Service providers suggested that this sense of shame and fear of being stigmatized may be even greater for individuals in the LGBTQ2S+ community who are often stigmatized because of sexual orientation.

Fear of Not Being Believed/Fear of Being Blamed

- Another barrier faced by men is the fear that they will not be believed when they disclose the abuse they have experienced and/or a fear of being blamed for the incident. Men are aware that males are typically viewed as perpetrators of domestic violence.

- In particular, the fear of being blamed and charged for the violence prevents men from reporting incidents to the police/RCMP and other formal services. Both men and service providers indicated that this fear is real and is often based on previous contacts with police when men called for help which resulted in these men being charged.

Another time I tried to leave and he stopped me and then I got my head smashed open on a table. I called the police but I got charged so … I don't have much faith in that type of system. (MB08)

Men won't call the RCMP because they're scared they'll get charged … and it's real. I've worked with men who have been wrongfully charged or dual charged. They've also seen this happen to their friends. ... They have tried getting help and the outcome has not been good. (MB Service Provider)

Financial Barriers

- Men described financial barriers that prevented them from seeking help or leaving the relationship or that resulted from leaving the relationship. These were related to the cost of paying for counselling services or legal fees, or paying their own living costs while continuing to support their children.

So partly I was scared to leave. Where would I go? I had all those questions anyone would have in that situation. Where would I go? How will I take care of myself? How would I protect my children? All those things are going through my head. And we didn't have a lot of money. (MB10)

I went through bankruptcy actually and I had like $12,000.00 in legal fees in six months. Just trying to see my kids. (SK02)

- In some instances, men returned to the abusive relationship to avoid financial difficulties.

I wanted to go back because the comfort … just the safety-net, I guess. Financially, I mean that safety-net was definitely there … (MB08)

Unable to Find Help

- A number of men indicated that a barrier to help seeking was being unable to find services and resources for men who experience abuse.

I had a really hard time trying to find a place for help for men and domestic violence. There doesn't seem to be any resources out there for men. It just seems like their only catered for women. (MB12)

I feel like I've always tried to reach out and find resources, but I think there's not a lot of resources for men. Like, it feels like there's a lot more resources for women and children and men kind of just get left with whatever is left which isn't that much. (SK08)

Through Google and stuff, I couldn't really find a lot of like sources or like reliable sources that had like explicit information on what's emotional abuse or what abusive situations are … (SK11)

I wanted to see if I could find help for us or find help for … you know, how do I deal with this stuff coming at me and all this and I didn't know where to find it. I didn't know where to ask. (MB13)

Love/Commitment to the Relationship

- Men described that another barrier to disclosing the abuse or reaching out for help was loving their partners and families and being committed to making their relationship work and keeping their family together.

Like I guess, you know, you make that commitment, for me old school make a commitment. For me to marry somebody, you make it work, try to make it work. (SK02)

When I was in the middle of it all I figured I could control everything and eventually make things right and I don't need help … things will be ok. (MB12)

I had a lot of old stereotype ideas of family and you know, staying together and being there for the children. (SK01)

- Service providers stated that when men do seek help, they do not want the relationship to end. They want the abuse to stop and are looking for ways to "fix" things.

Fear for Children/Fear of Losing Contact with Children

- As previously described, women would threaten to take children and not allow men to see them. An enormous barrier for men to speak out or leave an abusive relationship is the fear that they will not be able to see their children or that they need to stay in the relationship in order to protect their children. Many service providers commented on this fear as being a barrier to men.

One of the things we hear a lot when men are contemplating what they're going to do is, "What am I going to do with my children? Am I going to be able to take my children? Is she going to prevent me from taking the chil-

dren?" And then there's the systems pieces that say children should be with their moms and that bias is alive and well at the [name of city] court center. (AB Service Provider)

Concern for children is the number one factor that prevents men thinking of leaving an abusive relationship [from actually leaving]. In our experience, the chances of these men trying to maintain contact with the children while they try to leave that abusive relationship or the chances of them getting in touch with the childrenis extremely, extremely slim. Meaning that if they choose to leave that relationship, they are also choosing to leave their children. (AB Service Provider)

They want to access our shelter services, but are terrified that if they do, they will lose contact with their kids, so lots of them don't. … they want to leave with their children, because maybe the home is not safe for their children either. (MB Service Provider)

Gaps and Challenges in Service

Both men and service providers were asked if existing services meet the needs of men who experience IPV. In short, the answer to this question was a resounding "No". A number of gaps in services and challenges for men seeking service were identified.

Lack of IPV Services for Men

- Men and service providers indicated that there is a lack of services for men who experience IPV.

We don't see men talking about their experience of course, because there's really no avenues for them to talk about it because services are not open to them. (Alberta Service Provider)

- This true for counselling, parenting programs, advocacy, and legal services, but in particular, there is a lack of shelter services for men fleeing violence. Across the prairies there are few emergency shelter services for men who experience IPV. Men are often referred to homeless shelters that do not provide IPV specific services and that do not allow men to be accompanied by their children. This poses a huge challenge for men with children. Men may also be provided with short-term hotel accommodation. However, if men are fortunate enough to access any type of emergency shelter services, there is an even more acute shortage of second stage housing for men.

Where you need to take the kids and go … Maybe you could get a hotel for a few nights, but what do you do after that? (MB10)

Housing beyond the shelter is probably one of the most difficult aspects of the of the shelter stay (MB Service Provider)

- There is an even greater lack of services for men in rural and northern communities. Many of these communities have no services for men which necessitates travel to receive services. Travelling to access services may require time off work, locating child care, or leaving children behind.

- Many existing services for men are offender based.

- Wait times for counselling/therapy services can be long.

- Men do not see themselves represented in existing services. Men stated that when looking for service or when accessing service, information that they saw promoting services for family violence and IPV only represent women as victims. They described pictures on websites, posters, and brochures that depicted only women. The language used to provide information or describe services also targeted women/mothers. In most instances, representations were of heterosexual relationships.

Biased Perceptions of "Who" Can be Victimized

- Another challenge described by service providers is the perception that IPV is a women's issue only and

the widely held view that only women are victims of IPV. This bias is present among service providers and within systems.

There's this widespread notion that domestic violence is something exclusively that men do to women, but not on the flip side. This notion is widespread and exists within the justice system, within our legal authorities, within different systems and it's deeply perpetuated. (AB Service Provider)

- This bias is deeply embedded within some organizational cultures and service provision models and it can be a challenge to guide the service providers themselves:

I have to encourage some of our staff that even if its dual charges and … where now he's the victim, that we have to look at it through that lens. … So how do you support your staff to approach that from 'this is the victim, this is the services we provide, this is how we have to approach'? … That's been a struggle for our staff ... Now he's been identified as the victim. Sometimes horrifically beaten up. So you have to offer him services .... who makes that decision on who "deserves" the services? (SK Service Provider)

Having to encourage staff that even if men have previously been charged or have been dual charged - they have to be recognized as victims. They have to be offered service and staff can have a hard time accepting that he is "deserving". (Manitoba Service Provider)

When we screen in counselling, we often ask the question with women, "Is there violence in your relationship?", and we don't necessarily ask that of men. We might say, "Have you been violent to her?", but we might not ask the other way around" (SK Service Provider)

- Men who participated in interviews also described the biased view that only women can be victims of IPV situations.

Well, the main thing is endemic gender bias in the system. All men are bad and all women are innocent. There's such extremist gender bias in the system now. … there's generally a denial of intimate partner violence against men. I guess we're supposed to just kind of tolerate it or something. (AB13)

People are so completely wrong about how much violence occurs in this world and from whom it's directed from and to whom it's directed. That makes me sick to my stomach how men are not allowed to be victims and, in fact, we're victims every bit as much as women. (MB09)

It seems like it's always going to be tough for men to be believed or, "Well you're just a wimp" or … it's going to be difficult for men is the way I look at it. Even with some changes it's still going to be difficult because of the portrayal of the man being bigger and which is usually always true. (MB03)

- Men described experiences during violent incidents in which they were being attacked that validated this assumption.

The neighbour would knock on the door and I answered the door and she says, "Quit hitting your wife. Stop it. I'm going to call the police". (MB02)

I had a next-door neighbour knock on the door and say, "You okay? You okay?", cause she's just screaming. … I open the door and he looks at her and says, "You okay?" I say, "What about me?" He says, "You're crazy." And then he left. (SK01)

As previously described, many men are not believed when they initially disclose their abuse and they explained that as they attempt to break free from the abusive relationship, they continued to encounter biased perceptions.

So over time, you just don't do anything. I tried a few times cause you got to keep trying over the years to see if things have changed and counseling, police, all that kind of stuff is still just … they didn't have a clue what to do or even that I was, or the children were being hurt by her. She was the victim all the time. No matter what. (SK01)

Being a man and a dad really sucks when it comes to kids and the courts. They say it's not biased but it very

much is." (MB18)

Lack of Training and Guidelines for Service Providers

- During the interviews, men described reaching out for help but being faced with service providers who did not seem to know how to respond to them. Service providers may lack adequate training to allow them to assist men who experience IPV.

I phoned the police and they'd come. They don't know what to do. [They said] "What do you want us to do?" … they're like, looking at each other and … [they said] "Well you know mobile crisis is often good in these situations. Do you want us get them?" (SK01)

- One man described his experience meeting with a counsellor:

Yeah, I talked to them, but they just agree and nod and there's hardly any advice at all about it. (MB16)

- Inadequate training was also described by service providers.

Most of that training over the years has been one sided. And so people aren't looking at the fact that males can be victims. Males often are victims and their language is different today. They ask for help differently and professionals just aren't trained whether it's children's services, the police, income support employers … they, they will expect an issue to be with a woman who might be a victim, but nobody seems to pay attention when the male is a victim. (AB Service Provider)

- Some service providers spoke of a lack of clear guidelines for providing service. Although they may be required to provide service to men, guidelines on the actual "how to" are not well thought out or clearly articulated. As one shelter worker stated:

I feel like in some ways we were told we have to do this but there was no prep behind this, just "We're going to do this and see how it goes" … We definitely need something. I feel like it's just, "Follow what you normally do and that's good enough", right? Almost an afterthought. It probably was some, "We're seeing this happening and we're not responding to it and how can we have some sort of response to it". But is it a good response? I don't know. (MB Service Provider)

Gender Politics/Backlash

- During the focus groups and interviews, service providers described their experience working with men who had experienced IPV and the challenges that they encounter. They described resistance among some service providers to acknowledge male victimization and the need to provide services to men. This resistance is, of course, related to the biased view that only women can be victimized. Some of the service providers described the backlash they have encountered in the course of their work.

The politics are so strong that speaking this openly would be, you would get a lot of flack. I work with … some of my greatest allies are women, who truly understand the issues and have really been supportive but they themselves have suffered a lot of political and professional backlash for taking a different stance. That takes a great deal of courage to be able to speak openly- that this isn't as black and white as we once assumed. No, we have to evolve the conversation. (AB Service Provider)

And part of the problem from a traditional women's shelter perspective is that in the circles that I move in as director, I've taken some heat and it's so nice to actually talk with another direct service providing organization where the philosophy is common and it just makes sense. … So we don't have to argue about gender politics and who's a bigger victim. And I'm just tired of those kinds of conversations. (AB Service Provider)

- As one service provider explained, the resistance to acknowledge men's victimization may in part be due to a fear of detracting attention from women's victimization and jeopardizing much needed resources for women.

… so when I go to, say, my board or whoever it might happen to be to change a strategic plan or change the way we word things, there's always that worry that we're going to lose sight of the women because it's always been that women's issue. And I know when I talked to the shelter directors that have been around for a long time, you can tell that there's a lot of hesitation in talking about this as an everybody's issue, right? … the fact that this has been at the forefront for them for so many years it almost seems like they don't want it diluted, know what I mean? So, I think there's reluctance there as well....I guess it's probably fear of losing the resources that are directed towards women, partly. (MB Service Provider)

Improving Our Response to Men

During the interviews and focus groups, men and service providers were asked for recommendations for ways to improve the response to men who are victims/survivors of IPV and for suggestions to improve the provision of service to men.

Increased Public Education

The most frequent suggestion made by men and service providers was to address the biased perception than only women can be victims of IPV through education. The need to shift societal attitudes was described as being a crucial step in addressing male victimization which needs to be openly acknowledged and discussed. Domestic violence education campaigns need to be inclusive to increase awareness that IPV includes both male and female victimization.

I mean, it has to start with public education, right? Cause' then people are informed about issues. Then resources usually come from that … (MB10)

Well, just getting the word out there I think is number one you know. Most men, I feel are ashamed to admit that they have been through the violence or, the well, physical violence for sure (SK04)

Public education regarding domestic violence, just so that we can get rid of some the gender bias (AB Service Provider)

There is not enough conversation in the public forum, I think. The conversation is usually "violence against women and children". (SK Service Provider)

Specific suggestions regarding public education included:

- Men need to be represented (other than as being offenders) in educational material such as brochures, posters and social media, and in advertisements about domestic violence services.
- Representation should include diverse cultures
- Representation should include LGBTQ2S+ community
- Education targeting children and youth is essential so that they receive more information about healthy relationships and a stronger message that violence is never acceptable.
- Education also needs to focus on types of masculinity and healthy masculinity.

Believe Men

As previously mentioned, one of the barriers to seeking help among men is the fear of not being believed when they seek help; this fear has often been validated by men's experience. Service providers and men who participated in interviews indicated that a crucial aspect of improving the response to men who come forward is simply to believe them when they disclose that they have experienced abuse and seek help.

One of the first things [men need] would be to be acknowledged and believed. Men should not afraid of not being believed. (SK Service Provider)

Service providers described the need for organizations and agencies that provide IPV services to create and foster an environment that is safe for men. This includes listening to men, validating their experience, and

responding to them in compassionate, non-judgemental way.

If you want to resolve an issue like violence, domestic violence, family violence, whatever it is, first of all you have to be open to the view that anyone can be a perpetrator of violence and it's not gender specific. (SK02)

Improved Training for Service Providers

As previously discussed, bias regarding who can be victimized exists within organizations and among service providers. Service providers discussed the need to address this bias and related gender politics and backlash through the provision of better training.

If we truly want to improve services to men, we need to provide some core training for all personnel who work in domestic violence around being responsive to men and removing barriers. Even if you're not an organization who's going to provide shelter to men or provide necessarily any kind of counselling to men. I think you have to be at least able to have that initial conversation that is warm, welcoming, removes barriers. (AB Service Provider)

Service provided listed a variety of professionals who should be provided with information and training about the realities of male victimization including law enforcement personnel (many of whom do receive primary aggressor training), judges, prosecutors, counsellors/therapists, and shelter staff. This training should also be accompanied by clear agency guidelines and policies to follow.

The need for service providers to be aware of and check their own biases was described as being very important.

I think the most important thing is to … as the worker, you need to check your own biases, because if we think of all women as victims, then we often think of all men as perpetrators. So it's the ability to give them the safety to tell their story and to not be putting our own biases into it … you just have to listen to them and hear what they have to say in a non-judgemental way. I think sometimes that's difficult because we are all products of being socialized. (MB Service Provider)

We need to believe that men are actually victims of violence within their relationships whether they are hetero-sexual or other. We need to believe that men are victims and challenge the notion that that they are not really victims. (MB Service Provider)

Expand and Develop Existing Services and Resources:

Numerous suggestions to address service gaps and to improve existing services were made by men and service providers. As one service provider described:

We are now in this position now where the pendulum is just kind of starting to swing a little bit more to say okay so now we're seeing absolutely men experience all the same things that women can experience, but now we just have to catch up with the support services. (MB Service Provider)

- Provide more services for men who experience IPV. This includes:
  - Shelters for men and their children
  - Second-stage housing with support programming
  - Counselling services
  - Parenting support
  - Financial support and assistance navigating systems that provide financial support
  - Legal services and assistance navigating the family court system
  - Childcare
  - Information
  - Advocacy for men and advocacy for services for men

Other suggestions for improving existing services included:

- Expand hours of service so they are accessible after regular working hours

- Holistic models of service are needed with greater collaboration between systems and service providers
- Services should be culturally safe and appropriate
  - Elders and traditional healing methods should be utilized
- Provide more information/advertising about services for men

Both men and service providers indicated that asking for services for male survivors of IPV is not intended to minimize women's experience or to detract from much needed resources for women. There is however, a need to acknowledge and provide support to men.

Think the eighties. There was no support for women at all. Domestic violence was always happening behind closed doors. Nobody talked about that. And imagine the incredible resources that are available to woman right now …. So the concerns about men in domestic violence … how do you provide adequate services to this population, but at the same time not to lose sight of the larger woman's issue?... I mean, women still go through a lot of global gender inequalities. That's a fact and a tragic reality, but that should not invalidate or take away the need for services for men. This is not a competition. (AB Service Provider)

I don't want abused women to be hurt or continue to be abused. That's not the point. The point is everybody … who is abused, has got to be treated properly because … it not only hurts that person but it screws up society basically … the children, the community, you name it … that stereotype has got to end. (SK01)

Summary and Conclusion

This study is the first to explore men's experience of IPV across the Prairie provinces. It is also the first tri-provincial study to incorporate the perspectives of both men who are abused by their intimate partners and the professionals who provide service to men. There was considerable overlap between what was described by men during the individual interviews and by service providers during focus groups and individual interviews.

Men's experience of IPV includes physical and emotional abuse that is often ongoing and severe. Men also experience sexual, spiritual, and financial abuse as well as other types of abusive control that include threats of further violence, threats of restricting father's access to children and/or denying access to children, and systems abuse that involves men's partners lying to police, the courts, or child protection agencies. The consequences of these experiences on men are devasting and impact all areas of their lives including their physical and mental health, their employment/school, their relationships, and their parenting.

When men disclose their abuse experience, they most often initially turn to informal sources of support such as family members and friends who then encourage men to seek help from formal services. The response that men receive from both informal and formal sources of support is sometimes perceived to be helpful. However, the response is not always perceived positively and men reported not being believed or blamed for the abuse. Men and service providers identified a number of barriers to seeking help. The social construction of masculinity and the influence of pervasive gender norms regarding masculinity were identified as a huge barrier for men and is consistent with what has been identified in previous research (Brooks et el., 2017; Zveran et al., 2011) Disbelief and denial of victimization, shame, fear of not being believed and of being blamed for the abuse, financial limitations, not being able to find services, commitment to their partners and families, and fear around not being able to protect or have contact with their children were also identified as barriers to seeking help.

Men and service providers identified a number of gaps in service for men who experience IPV and challenges within service provision agencies and organizations. Overall, there are lack of services for men; in particular there is a lack of shelter and longer-term housing for men seeking to escape abusive relationships. Men also do not see themselves represented in existing services. Societal and system bias around "who" can be a victim of IPV is pervasive and contributes to men's experience of not being believed when they seek help. This bias also contributes to the backlash experienced by some service providers who work with men and the resistance they encounter by others to acknowledge male victimization and provide service to men. This bias may also be related to a lack of training for service providers that would allow them to effectively assist men.

Men and service providers made numerous suggestions and recommendations for ways to improve the response to men who are victims/survivors of IPV and to improve the provision of service to men:

- Increased public education to increase awareness that IPV includes both male and female victimization.
- Believe men
- Improved training for service providers
- Development and expansion of existing resources

More specific suggestions were included in each of these categories. Not surprisingly, the suggestions and recommendations addressed specific areas of concern relating to barriers to help seeking experienced by men and the service gaps and challenges that were also identified during interviews and focus groups. The suggestions to improve the response to men who experience IPV are directly related to policy and practice.

Education about family violence is a form of primary prevention with the goal of changing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2016) Public education campaigns that represent both men and women as victims/survivors are essential for addressing the widely held belief that IPV is one-sided. A true picture of the occurrence of IPV in relationships is necessary to achieve changes in behaviour in both men and women. Education directly targeting children and youth so that they learn that violence in relationships is not acceptable for anyone is also important. Improved education and training must also be available for service providers who are called upon to provide service to men who experience IPV. Together, these suggestions for education address the seemingly simplistic but critically important recommendation made by the research participants – to believe men.

Suggestions for developing and expanding existing resources for men who experience IPV included providing more services for men in many areas including shelter/housing, counselling, and parenting support. While this would require considerable financial resources, providing at least some increase in services and resources is essential to address critical gaps in areas such as shelter services for men. Other suggestions within this category such as modifying hours of services and providing more information about men's services may be less resource intensive and more easily implemented.

The results of this study are important in and of themselves in terms of raising awareness, informing existing services, and providing recommendations for the development of services and programs within the Prairie provinces. In addition to providing implications for policy and practice, the results of this study also provide an important contribution to the literature on men's experience of IPV.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide for Interviews with Men

Date: _____ Interview Number _____

Location of participant: _____

Type of interview (telephone or in-person): _____

I. Background/Demographics:

1. Can you tell me how old are you are? _____ (years)

2. What are your current living arrangements? (E.g., in what community, by myself, living with sibling, roommate)

3. Are you currently employed?

4. What is your occupation?

5. What is the highest grade/level of education that you have completed?

6. What is your total annual household income (approximate)?

7. With which ethno-cultural group do you identify?

8. How would you describe your sexual orientation?

9. What is your current relationship status?

a) Married ____ Separated/Divorced ____
b) Common-law ____ Single ____
c) Dating ____ Widowed ____
d) Other (specify) ____

10. Do you have any children? _____ Yes _____ No

11. If yes, how many? Ages?

12. How many of your children live with you?
All_____
Some _____
None _____

13. If some of your children live elsewhere, where do they live?

[Check all that apply]
Father/Mother _____
Grandparents _____
Relative _____
Child welfare – temporary placement _____
Child welfare – permanent placement _____
Children live on their own _____
Other (please explain) _____

II. Men's Experience of IPV

1. People who are in abusive relationships can experience different types of violence/abuse. Have you experienced: (Interviewer in addition to yes/no – other comments are okay)

Physical violence? _____ Yes _____ No
Sexual violence? _____ Yes _____ No
Emotional/Psychological abuse? _____ Yes _____ No
Financial abuse? _____ Yes _____ No
Spiritual abuse? _____ Yes _____ No
Other types of controlling behaviour/behaviour that you consider abusive? ____ Yes _____ No

2. Have you been in more than one relationship where you experienced IPV?

Thinking about the most recent relationship in which you experienced IPV:

3. Are you still in a relationship with this person?

- How long were you/ have you been in this relationship?
- When did the relationship start? When did it end?

4. When did the abuse start in the relationship?

5. In as much detail as you are willing to provide, can you tell me about the incidents/situations in which the abuse occurred (in the most recent relationship in which abuse occurred- can also refer to previous relationships if salient to participant)?

Probes:

- How often did the incidents occur?
- What was going on prior to the incident(s)?
- At the time of the incident(s)?
- After the incident(s)?
- Did you use violent behaviour during the incident(s)?
- At any time in the relationship?

7. How has the experience of IPV affected you?

Probes:

- Physically?
- Emotionally?
- Spiritually?
- Parenting?
- Behaviour?
- Employment/School?

III. Help Seeking Experience

1. Have you ever told someone/sought help about IPV?
   - If no, did you ever think about or consider telling someone?
   - When was this?
   - What made you decide to do this?

2. Did anything make it difficult to seek help?

3. What sources of help did you seek?

   a) Informal (E.g., friends and family)?

For each source:
What was their response?
Did you find them helpful? Why or why not - please explain?

b) Formal (E.g., police/RCMP, shelter, counsellor, crisis line)?
For each source:
What was their response?
Did you find them helpful? Why or why not? Please explain?

4. Do you have any suggestions for ways in which services for men who experience IPV could be improved?

IV. Additional Comments

1. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your experience of IPV?

Thank you for taking the time for this interview and for sharing your thoughts and experiences. This can be a difficult topic to talk about and your responses are very valuable in helping us to understand men's experiences.

Once again, thank you.

Appendix B: Interview Guide for Focus Groups/ Interviews with Service Providers

Location of Participants _____ Focus Group/Interview Number _____
Type of interview (in-person or telephone) _____

I. Background/Demographics (on separate page)

What is your occupation?

How many years have you been in this position?

What is your gender?

How many years have you been working in the area of IPV?

Do you have any specific training/education related to IPV?

Note: For the purpose of this study, intimate partner violence is defined as physical, emotional, financial, and sexual violence/abuse that individuals may have experienced by a current or former intimate partner.

II. Experience Working With Men

1. In your experience of working with men who experience IPV:
    - What is the nature/type of abuse that men report experiencing? (E.g., physical, emotional,
    - financial, sexual)
    - What is the context of these experiences? (E.g., are the incidents involving violence by both
    - partners, is a female partner defending herself, is the partner the primary aggressor)
    - What is the impact of these experiences on men's lives? (E.g., emotional impact, impact on parenting, work)

2. When do men seek help/What prompts them to seek help?

3. Where do men seek help or where/whom do they turn to?

4. What kinds of things prevent men who experience IPV from coming forward for assistance?

5. What are the needs of men who seek help for IPV? (E.g., shelter, housing, counselling, legal assistance)

6. Do the existing services meet men's needs?

7. What are the gaps/barriers in existing services?

8. How can services for men be improved?

9. How can we improve our response to men who experience IPV?

10. Other than those you have already mentioned, what services/resources are available in the province for men who experience IPV?

Thank you for your participation.