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THE PROJECT TO END
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

# CHANGING CONTEXTS:
## A FRAMEWORK FOR ENGAGING MALE-ORIENTED SETTINGS IN GENDER EQUALITY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

## PRACTITIONERS' GUIDE

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## Acknowledgements

## About Shift

Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence is situated in the Faculty of Social Work, at the University of Calgary. The purpose of Shift is to empower others to create the social conditions that will stop violence before it starts. We are working to advance gender equality and equity, promote healthy masculinities, address the intersections of racism, heterosexism, and oppression, and build healthy relationship competencies to stop the perpetration of multiple forms of violence. We conduct research that will inform primary prevention practices, programs, policies, and legislation; and we partner with other researchers and academics, policymakers, community leaders, NGOs, community-based organizations and collectives to implement and evaluate effective primary prevention solutions.

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# Authors' Note

This framework was specifically developed with male-oriented settings in mind (i.e., networks and spaces that are biased towards, dominated by, and/or designed for men). The approach involves changing physical and sociocultural contexts in order to shift behaviour. It is designed to complement traditional 'changing minds' approaches to behaviour change (e.g., psychoeducational programming) by using environmental cues to increase prosocial, equitable behaviours in specific male-oriented settings.

Men are critical to shifting environmental cues (e.g., social norms, cultural dynamics, organizational structures, etc.) within these settings. For that reason, this guide specifically focuses on engaging men in the Changing Contexts process. However, *all* genders have a role to play in ending gender-based violence and inequality – and this guide can be used with mixed groups and/or other genders as well.

We focus on men in this guide because we feel that the gender justice movement cannot be achieved by women or gender-diverse persons alone – and, generally, men have not played a strong role in this work to this point. We want to invite men into the movement in ways that are inspiring, effective, and mutually beneficial. Once men are more fully engaged in the gender justice movement, they can be included in a more general strategy to engage all genders in violence prevention and equality.

# Contents

# SNEAK-A-PEAK:
# A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE CHANGING CONTEXTS FRAMEWORK

You may be looking at this framework and wondering whether it's worth the effort to read it all. We get it – everyone's busy. That's why we developed this high-level overview of *Changing Contexts: A Framework for Engaging Male-Oriented Settings in Gender Equality and Violence Prevention.* The summary below provides a brief sketch of the framework so that you're able to get an idea of the approach first before you dive into all the detail associated with effective implementation. We hope you'll be intrigued enough by some of the ideas outlined here to invest the time to explore the Changing Contexts approach in more detail.

## Project Background, Purpose & Rationale

In 2017, *Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence* (www.preventdomesticviolence.ca) brought together representatives from community-based organizations, government, and academia to develop non-programmatic approaches to engage men in violence prevention and gender equality in settings where they work, play, learn, and worship.

The *Engaging Men Collaborative* (EMC)[*] learning collaborative focused on non-programmatic approaches for a couple of reasons:

**helpful tip**

Words that appear bolded in orange can be found in the glossary

- First, recruiting men to violence prevention/gender equality programs can be a challenge; many men are uninterested in engaging in these types of activities on a voluntary basis.[1] Given this, we need to consider other, complementary approaches and ask ourselves what *else* might be needed to more effectively engage and mobilize men.

- Second, insights from Behavioural Economics and other related disciplines have radically altered our ideas about human decision-making and highlighted the extent to which behaviour is influenced by physical and sociocultural environments. We need to be integrating these insights into our efforts to engage and mobilize men in gender equality and violence prevention.

## Key Elements of the Approach

At its core, the *Changing Contexts* framework distinguishes between two complementary approaches: changing minds and changing contexts.[2] While we still have a long way to go to understand the 'changing minds' side of the behaviour change toolbox (i.e., changing individual knowledge, attitudes, and intentions), we understand even *less* about changing physical and sociocultural contexts. For that reason, EMC focused on developing processes, tools, and activities associated with a *Changing Contexts* approach.

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[*] This a truncated version of the initiative's name. The full name is the *Engaging Men in Gender Equality and Violence Prevention Learning Collaborative.*

The *Changing Contexts* practice framework adds to our behavioural change toolbox by outlining ways to surface and shift contextual influences that shape men's behaviours related to gender-based violence and inequality. Some of the key features of this approach include the following:[*]

1. **Working with *pre-existing* networks or settings**
   Rather than pulling a group of strangers together for a program, practitioners work with pre-existing groups of men in settings where they naturally congregate (e.g., where they work, play, learn, and worship). This means that the *Changing Contexts* approach is more of an *embedded*, consultative approach rather than a traditional service delivery approach.

   *Rationale*

   - Our behaviour is highly influenced by the actions and expectations of people within our own networks.[3] By taking an embedded approach, practitioners can leverage the power of those networks to create change.

   - If we change the minds of individuals without changing the sociocultural systems in which they're embedded, new attitudes and behaviours are unlikely to be sustained.[4]

   - Research suggests that approaches that "build on existing platforms"[5] where men already gather generally achieve and maintain higher rates of engagement.

2. **Customizing & co-creating with key stakeholders in each setting**
   Practitioners work with key influencers in male-oriented settings to co-develop a change agenda that is customized to the specific culture, structure, strengths, priorities, and challenges of that particular group/setting. Drawing on community development principles, they then support the group to develop interventions that are customized to that unique setting.

   *Rationale*

   - You can't take a one-size-fits all approach to engaging men in gender equality and violence prevention because what works in one context may fail in another (e.g., something that works with software engineers might not work with police).

   - Research emphasizes the importance of developing a context-specific understanding of the dynamics that perpetuate gender-based violence and discrimination in order to develop more effective interventions.[6]

   - The co-creation process combines the practitioner's 'outsider' perspective with 'insider' insights from stakeholders who are intimately familiar with the setting.

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[*] Note: This short summary highlights only some of the elements of the practice framework. For a two-page overview of the foundational theories and constructs, principles, and practices that guide this approach please see The *Changing Contexts Framework-at-a-Glance* on p. 19).

3. **Changing culture to change behaviour**

Culture is a key starting point for this work because culture provides the values, belief systems, and rules that govern so much of our behaviour. Changing culture is challenging, though, because our own belief systems usually feel natural or inevitable to us, which means that we don't see or think about them very much. You can't change something that you don't see or understand – which is why the *Changing Contexts* framework includes tools and activities for surfacing culture and making it visible. This phase of work provides a strong foundation for identifying potentially powerful change points in each specific setting.

*Rationale*

- Culture exercises "a form of mind control over us,"[7] subtly telling us what to think, how to behave, and what to care about. By actively working to surface culture, stakeholders are better able to critically examine and reconstruct the dynamics that are contributing to harmful behaviours within their setting.

- The process of surfacing culture not only offers stakeholders a more sophisticated understanding of their context; it also helps to build their capacity for structural analyses as they begin to identify the subtle forces that drive behaviours in their setting.

- Many settings have progressive policies that support gender equality and violence prevention. However, if those policies conflict with the prevailing culture of the setting, they are likely to be rendered ineffectual. (For example, hockey clubs have hazing policies but hazing still happens because it's a part of hockey culture). To paraphrase Peter Drucker, culture eats policy for breakfast – so policy interventions need to work hand-in-hand with *cultural* interventions.

4. **Flooding the system with signals**

Research shows that there is a connection between very small signals like sexist language or rape jokes and physical, sexual, and structural violence.[8] The opposite is also true: prosocial, gender-equitable signals can disrupt toxic cultures and contribute to new social norms.[9] But there's a catch: for this to work, stakeholders need to *flood* their setting with signals; a trickle won't do.

*Rationale*

- Some things (like germs or gossip) can be transmitted through a network with only brief exposure. However, for social norms to change, people within a network need to be exposed to *multiple* signals.[10] So, less is not more with a signaling approach; an "unbroken array of consistent little signals"[11] is needed.

- Numerous studies have shown that we are influenced by people we don't even know because norms travel through networks like a social contagion, with people unconsciously picking up

on tiny signals that are communicated via the reactions and behaviours of others. Researchers Christakis and Fowler (2007) refer to this phenomenon as "three degrees of influence"[12] because that's how far the effect goes: we are influenced by our friends' friends' friends – people we don't even know![13] Studies suggest that violent and discriminatory behaviours are socially contagious up to three degrees of influence, as are prosocial, equitable ones.[14] This creates enormous potential for creating change at scale.

5. **Leveraging the power of environmental nudges to change behaviour**

Behaviour is not only influenced by how individuals within a setting react and behave; it's also shaped by other aspects of our environment, including physical and social design. The *Changing Contexts* approach draws insights from the fields of Behavioural Economics, Behavioural Insights, and Behavioural Psychology to identify small interventions that can nudge behaviour in the direction of gender justice.

*Rationale*

- Traditional ideas about the mechanics of human decision-making assume that our behaviours are based on individual factors like values, preferences, and needs, and that these remain relatively stable from moment to moment. However, research shows that our decisions and behaviours are highly influenced by environmental cues. By creating small changes in the physical and social environment, we can have an outsized effect on how people in that setting behave.[15]

- Educational efforts are important, but they take a lot of time. In contrast, environmental nudges can sometimes help to change the behaviour in the near term (even while we continue to work on changing minds over the longer term). This is an important consideration in the context of behaviours that are causing harm.

6. **Addressing misperceptions about what is normative**

Our ideas about what other people approve of, expect, or do are not always accurate. Research shows that we can often change behaviour by correcting these misperceptions. For example, a man who privately supports sexual diversity might make a homophobic remark in front of his friends because he feels that kind of behaviour is expected of him. But if that behaviour is *not* actually normative – that is, if most of his friends actually feel uncomfortable with those types of jokes – then highlighting the actual norm ('homophobic jokes are not okay in this group') can help to shift the man's future behaviour in that group.

*Rationale*

- Often, we behave in ways that are consistent with what we think is expected of us, *even when the behaviour goes against our own attitudes or beliefs*.[16] (In fact, the correlation between personal attitudes and behaviour is relatively weak.[17]) In those cases where prosocial norms are in fact shared by a silent majority, correcting the misperception and highlighting the actual norm can create immediate changes in behaviour.[18]

- This approach was first used on college campuses to address alcohol misuse. Studies show that when misperceptions of university drinking norms were corrected through messages that reflected the true norms, rates of heavy drinking among students declined.[19] The approach is now being used to reduce behaviours related to sexual assault.[20]

## 7. Working with Key Influencers

Shifting the dynamics that shape behaviours within a setting requires collaborating with stakeholders who have influence within that setting. Key influencers can be people in a formal leadership position, or they can simply be the most social guy in the office – the *type* of influencer needed will depend on the change points identified by the group  (e.g., if you want to change an organizational policy, you'll need a champion from senior management. But if you're trying to reduce sexist jokes in the lunchroom, your most influential people might simply be the comedians in the group or the guys who others like and admire).

### Rationale

- The *Changing Contexts* approach is about flooding the system with signals – but not all signals are equal. For example, normative signals transmitted by people we don't like or respect are unlikely to impact our behaviours, whereas those sent by people we identify with or admire are much more likely to influence us.[21]

- Key influencers are critical to the change process because they can serve to legitimize the change, model the behaviour for others, reduce barriers, and create momentum. Conversely, when influencers are *not* on board, they can serve to block change.[22]

## 8. Developing compassionate approaches to accountability

Holding men accountable for harmful behaviour is important, but it needs to be done in a way that doesn't cause them to disengage or shut down. The framework offers suggestions for how to develop compassionate learning spaces where men can explore new ideas and grow their capacity to positively shape their environments, while at the same time coming to terms with any harm they may have perpetrated.

### Rationale

- Calling out has become a common way of holding men accountable; however, that approach often triggers shame, defensiveness, and social isolation – none of which is conducive to engaging men and building relationships.

- Accountability to higher standards of justice, equality, and non-violence is critical in the context of this approach. (After all, we can't expect men to challenge sexist remarks or violent behaviours if we're not willing to do so ourselves). But we need to ensure that our approach doesn't shut down learning or inhibit opportunities for change. Calling in – an approach that strengthens relationships and promotes learning – offers a helpful alternative to calling out. When we call people to higher standards in a compassionate way – one that promotes ongoing learning and growth – we model the behaviours that we're hoping to see in the men we work with.

## Ready?

Do these ideas pique your interest? Are you ready to add some complementary tools to your social change toolbox? If so, we hope you'll dive into the *Practitioners' Guide* and begin exploring the *Changing Contexts* approach to engaging male-oriented settings in gender equality and violence prevention.

Still not sure? Here are a couple of options for increasing your sense of the overall approach before diving into the details necessary for full implementation.

1. Check out the *Framework-at-a-Glance* visual on p. 19 for a two-page overview of the elements that comprise the approach.

2. Jump to one of the more applied sections (e.g., *Practices* on p. 79) so that you can see what this looks like in action. (Just make sure you go back and review the earlier sections; the practices won't get you very far without a deeper understanding of the ideas and principles that guide implementation).[*]

Despite significant policy and legislative advances in Canada, we continue to struggle with gender-based violence and inequality. Programs and policies are not enough: we need to cultivate a more comprehensive set of tools if we hope to really move the needle on this issue. This guide represents our early efforts to expand the behaviour change toolbox by helping Human Services professionals to support men (and others) to:

- Disrupt, mitigate, and/or address gender-discriminatory and/or violence-supportive dynamics in their networks and settings, and

- Flood those settings with signals that cue more prosocial, gender-equitable behaviours.

We hope the ideas in this guide help to enhance current efforts and ultimately move us all closer to a gender-equitable, violence-free future.

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[*] These options can also be used at any time in your reading of this document – so if you find yourself getting bogged down in the detail at some point, jump to the high level overview and/or *Practices* section for a while and then move back to the other sections as you're able.

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION & PROJECT OVERVIEW

## 1.1 Introduction

In 2004, when Portugal hosted the UEFA European Football Championship, organizers implemented what seemed like a very unlikely approach to curbing fan violence. Hooligan behaviour during international football competitions had been escalating over the years, culminating in over 1000 arrests four years earlier when fans had smashed windows, beaten up bystanders, and fought with police.[23] Portuguese authorities were desperate to find ways to prevent the same level of violence and destruction from happening when they hosted the games.

They found the solution in a radical new approach that had been developed by a social psychologist named Clifford Stott. Stott had studied mob violence for years, and he believed that visual cues such as riot gear, water cannons, police dogs, and armoured cars constituted signals that effectively activated violent behaviour in fans. Stott believed it was possible to reduce crowd violence "by changing the signals the police were transmitting."[24] The idea was mocked in the press, and many thought it was crazy. But Stott had done some early trials and the outcomes were compelling – so the Portuguese authorities decided to try it.

Stott helped the UEFA organizers create physical and sociocultural environments that would curb violence and produce more prosocial behaviours. He did this by implementing a series of visual, verbal, and behavioural signals that consistently communicated one central idea: *We're here to get along*. These included:

- **Visual signals:** There was no riot gear in sight, and officers wore light blue vests.

- **Verbal signals:** Stott selected officers based on their friendliness and social skills because he wanted them to be able to make small talk with fans.

- **Behavioural signals:** The officers were taught a series of small actions that signaled conciliation. (For example, fans often kicked soccer balls around, and the balls sometimes landed on or near people who were sitting in cafés or walking in the streets. Historically, police would confiscate the soccer ball when this happened, but now they were only allowed to take the ball away if it landed on them.)

That was the extent of the intervention. Doesn't seem like much, does it? Just a series of very small changes to how officers looked, sounded, and behaved. But it worked: "More than one million fans visited the country over the three-week-long tournament, and in areas that used Stott's approach, only one English fan was arrested. Observers recorded two thousand crowd-police interactions, of which only 0.4 percent qualified as disorderly. The only incidents of violence occurred in an area that was policed according to the old-fashioned helmet-and-shield system."[25] Eventually, the approach would become "the model for controlling sport-related violence in Europe and around the world."[26]

Those of us who are engaged in violence prevention often emphasize psychoeducational approaches to behaviour change. But the fans at the 2004 Championship were not exposed to an awareness campaign or a violence prevention program, and no one worked to change their understanding, attitudes, and/or

intentions. Their behaviours were changed through a series of subtle cues in their physical and sociocultural context.

The *Engaging Men Collaborative* (EMC) was initiated to explore how this type of approach could be used to increase gender equality and decrease violence in male-oriented settings in Alberta. Comprised of practitioners and researchers, and led by *Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence,* the collaborative met for two and a half years (Oct 2017-March 2020) to develop non-programmatic approaches for engaging men in violence prevention and gender equality. Some of the questions that we hoped to answer through this project included the following:

- What would non-programmatic approaches to enhancing gender equality and preventing violence against women look like?

- How can we complement 'changing minds' approaches with interventions designed to change the contexts in which gender-based violence and discrimination occur?

- How can we work more effectively in the middle space between program-based interventions and policy-based approaches?

- How might we work in settings[*] where men already congregate (i.e., where they work, play, learn, worship, etc.) rather than asking them to come to *us*?

- How could we work with key influencers in those settings to shift social norms and create the conditions for healthy, equitable interactions?

- How can we develop the Human Services sector's capacity to engage in this work?

*Changing Contexts: A Framework for Engaging Male-Oriented Settings in Gender Equality and Violence Prevention* is the culmination of our collective exploration. It was developed to help Human Services professionals engage men to:

- Disrupt, mitigate, and/or address gender-discriminatory and/or violence-supportive dynamics in their networks and settings (e.g., the workplaces, peer groups, sports teams, faith communities, etc. in which men are embedded), and

- Flood those settings with signals that cue more prosocial, gender-equitable behaviours.

The framework outlines:

- **Evidence-based ideas** that underlie this approach;

- **Key principles** to guide Human Services professionals in this work;

- **Practices** associated with a *Changing Contexts* approach to engaging men in gender equality and violence prevention; and

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[*] Throughout this document, the terms 'context', 'setting', and 'environment' are used interchangeably to indicate physical environments (e.g., an office, a hockey rink) as well as sociocultural environments (e.g., a peer network, your team at work) and situations (e.g., becoming a father).

- The **capacities and conditions** required for this type of work.

*Changing Contexts* is a work in progress. It represents our learning to this point – but we're not done! We hope to further test and refine the approach in the coming years, and we invite you to do the same, so that we can draw on a broader base of implementation and evaluation to further solidify the approach.

> "The usual route to behaviour change […] has been to attempt to 'change minds' by influencing the way people think through information and incentives. There is, however, increasing evidence to suggest that 'changing contexts' by influencing the environments within which people act (in largely automatic ways) can have important effects on behaviour."[27]

## 1.2 Project Background

Before we dive into the theories, principles, and practices that comprise the *Changing Contexts* approach, it might be helpful for you to understand something about the collaborative process that resulted in this framework. In this section, we offer a brief overview of the EMC initiative, including our theory of change and some of the key challenges we experienced over the course of the project.

### 1.2.1 EMC History and Project Overview

Increasingly, researchers and practitioners in the domestic violence field understand the need to engage men and boys in violence prevention. Gender-based violence is tied to harmful forms of power, privilege, and gender construction[28] – and changing these entrenched social dynamics requires the efforts of *all* genders. But while the 'why' of engaging men in this work is relatively clear, the 'how' is not: little is known about how to do this work in ways that are meaningful and effective.[29]

Recognizing the need to develop more robust practices for engaging men in gender equality and violence prevention,[*] *Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence* conducted extensive consultations with Human Services organizations and government branches in Alberta to design a way of developing the 'how' of engaging men in violence prevention and gender equality.

We also met with *White Ribbon Canada* to gather their insights on designing a learning collaborative. A key insight during this process was that no sector could do this work in isolation; we needed the

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[*] In 2015, Shift submitted an action plan to the Government of Alberta (*The Men and Boys Violence Prevention Project: Informing a Government of Alberta Action Plan to Engage Men and Boys to Stop Violence Against Women*) identifying the need for further investments in this field. Based on this recommendation, the Government of Alberta allocated multi-year funding to Shift to develop and implement an approach to furthering practice in this field.

combination of academia (research), community agencies (practice), and government (policy) to develop the 'how.'

That's when the idea of a learning collaborative was born: after an extensive design and recruiting phase, Shift convened a group of about 30 practitioners from 14 Human Service and government organizations as well as a team of research and evaluation consultants, to co-develop non-programmatic approaches to engaging men in violence prevention and gender equality.* (Please see Appendix 1 for a listing of EMC member organizations.)

The collaborative comprised two different levels of engagement:

- *Tier One Organizations* agreed to work in at least one male-oriented setting to actively develop and test potential strategies for engaging men in violence prevention and gender equality. In return, Shift provided these agencies with a full range of resources, including developmental evaluation, change management support, research, and strategic support.

- *Tier Two Organizations* agreed to attend the EMC learning sessions and contribute in whatever ways they could. While most were not specifically working in a male-oriented setting, they worked to apply the learnings in their day-to-day work.

We also hosted several meetings with the Executive Directors of both tiers to keep them informed of the work and share our learnings as the initiative progressed.

The EMC Learning Collaborative came together for the first time in October 2017. At that point, we had more questions than answers. We knew that the 'programs for problems' approach was limited, and that we needed to explore non-programmatic interventions. Based on some of Shift's earlier research, we also knew that we wanted to work in settings where men naturally congregate (i.e., where they work, learn, play and worship).[30] We suspected that men in those settings would have far more influence on their peers' and colleagues' behaviours than a Human Services agency could ever hope to have. So we wondered how we might engage male influencers to be agents of change within their own settings. But we didn't know how to approach the work yet.

The group continued to meet for learning sessions every six weeks for the next two and a half years. At these sessions, we:

- Explored some of the 'Engaging Men' research as well as research from other fields (e.g., Behavioural Economics, Positive Deviance, Social Norms Theory, Change Management);

- Worked through case studies, tools and activities;

- Debriefed the experiences and learnings that surfaced as EMC members engaged in the work.

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* The Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB), University of Calgary reviewed and approved this research project (Ethics ID: REB17-0605).

As our ideas emerged, the EMC *Facilitator* worked with the project's developmental evaluators to document key learnings and bring them back to the group, so that pieces of the framework were developed along the way.

Finally, in November 2019, a preliminary draft of the framework was sent to EMC members for their review. The current 'final for now' version was then released in April 2020.  (Note: We refer to this as the 'final for now' version of the Framework in acknowledgement of the fact that we are still learning. We hope to further test the approach over the next few years and integrate those learnings into 'Version 2.0').

## 1.2.2 EMC Theory of Change

Our initial theory of change for the project centred on working with men to cultivate capacities in three key areas:

- Gender equality
- Healthy masculinities
- Healthy relationships

We felt that strengthening this combination of capacities in male-oriented settings would lead to reduced rates of interpersonal and structural violence in all its many forms. While our initial theory of change included an emphasis on social norms and networks, our strong focus on developing capacities related to gender equality, healthy masculinities, and healthy relationships pulled the initiative more towards the 'changing minds' end of the spectrum. As we evolved our approach, we began to shift the emphasis to include a greater focus on 'changing contexts' through social and environmental nudges. Our theory of change now reads as follows:

> Human behaviour is governed by a subtle but pervasive set of cues (i.e., social norms and other environmental signals) that are transmitted through networks.
>
> If we build the Human Services sector's capacity to help male-oriented settings *amplify* signals associated with gender equality and healthy relationships, and *disrupt* signals related to inequality, discrimination and violence,
>
> Then people in those settings are likely to engage in increasingly more healthy and equitable relationships.
>
> (Note: You can find further details on our theory of change in Appendix 2.)

As the diagram below shows, the approach focuses on the relatively unexplored set of interventions that potentially exist between public policy at one of end of the continuum, and programmatic, individual-level interventions at the other.

**EXPLORING THE RANGE OF INTERVENTIONS THAT EXIST BETWEEN PROGRAMS AND POLICY-BASED APPROACHES**

THE HUMAN SERVICES SECTOR HAS INVESTED MORE RESOURCES IN DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL INTERVENTIONS AND PUBLIC POLICY APPROACHES TO STOP GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY. WE HAVE NOT INVESTED AS MUCH IN INTERVENTIONS THAT EXPLORE THE MIDDLE SPACE OF SOCIAL NORMS, NETWORKS, ORGANIZATIONAL, SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN TO CHANGE BEHAVIOUR.

**PUBLIC POLICY**

**SOCIAL NORMS & NETWORKS, ORGANIZATIONAL, SOCIOCULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN**

**INTERVENTIONS FOCUSED ON INDIVIDUAL ATTITUDES, KNOWLEDGE & BEHAVIOURS**

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### 1.2.3 Challenges and Tensions in this Work

This work is incredibly complex, so it's not surprising that we encountered a number of challenges, including the following:

- **Challenges associated with engaging men in gender equality and violence prevention:** We focused on engaging men because they have traditionally remained on the fringes of the movement to end violence against women, and we know how crucial their involvement is in this effort. However, this focus creates a number of challenges and tensions, including the following:

    o  While men can benefit from a more gender-equal society, they also have something to lose from restructuring current systems of power. Engaging a socially privileged group in dismantling structures that benefit them can be challenging.

- o  Many men feel relatively powerless and do not relate to the idea of benefiting from patriarchy (particularly those who are subjected to other forms of structural oppression or disadvantage).

- o  The focus on men reinforces a binary approach to gender and does not account for ways in which women are complicit in upholding patriarchal norms and structures and/or ways in which women and other genders contribute to violence.

- o  Engaging male-identified influencers as leaders in social change efforts can reinforce or recreate gendered power inequities.

- o  Gender is a significant part of how humans construct identity, so explorations of masculinities and gender performance can be emotionally and psychologically charged.

- o  The literature clearly associates toxic masculinities with gender inequality and violence against women. However, that framing 1) reinforces an overly simplistic gender binary (i.e., male/female), and 2) is based on a deficit model (i.e., tells men what they *shouldn't* do, rather than focusing on alternative attitudes and behaviours).[31]

- o  We all have intersecting identities (based on gender, race, socio-economic status, etc.) and are all impacted by intersecting systems of power (e.g., a male might have greater economic power than his female co-workers, but may experience workplace discrimination because of his sexual identity). In the research literature, the term given to this confluence of variables is 'intersectionality'.[32]  Intersectionality "emphasizes the need to consider complex interactions between structures of power and oppression and interconnected aspects of group identity and social location."[33] Integrating an intersectional approach adds a layer of complexity to this work.

- o  The Human Services sector is largely staffed by women (as is the Shift Team at this point) – so it has sometimes been challenging to ensure that men's perspectives are adequately represented in the design of the initiative.

- **Challenges related to engaging in a paradigm shift:** The Human Services sector has developed a relatively strong focus on programmatic interventions. (e.g., most of our funding, reporting mechanisms, organizational structures, hiring, training, and evaluation practices are designed to support the development and implementation of programs.) Collectively, we found ourselves having to work hard to 1) avoid defaulting to a programmatic response, and 2) understand the implications for designing, resourcing, and reporting on non-programmatic interventions. This will continue to be a challenge going forward as there is relatively little infrastructure to support non-programmatic interventions in the Human Services sector.

- **Challenges that limited our ability to engage in action research:** The project was initially conceived as an action research project where Tier One organizations would try various approaches within male-oriented settings and bring back their learnings (with the support of a developmental evaluator). While this did happen to some extent, the process was challenging for a number of reasons, including the following:

- o   High turnover of Tier One organizations (a number of Tier One organizations moved to Tier Two over the course of the project);

- o   High turnover among participants (while the organizations involved remained consistent, their representatives often changed);

- o   Lack of time (Most EMC members were doing this work off the side of their desk);

- o   Limited capacity for a systems approach (Most of the EMC members are clinicians, practitioners, and/or program managers who work directly with men and/or are largely focused on programs – which means that they have not had a lot of experience with systems-level approaches).

These challenges meant that we did not get as far as we'd hoped in testing the various elements of the framework. It also helps to explain why we are unable to provide rich case examples in this version of the framework. However, we do hope to continue testing the model in the coming years and will add examples from our work in subsequent versions of the framework.

## 1.3 About This Framework

This practice framework was specifically developed for Human Services professionals who are interested in engaging men to prevent violence and promote gender equality. (Note: This doesn't mean that Human Services professionals are the only ones who could or should do this work. However, that is the model we tested through the EMC Learning Collaborative, so that is the audience that we had in mind for this document.)

As the *Changing Contexts Framework-at-a-Glance* visual below shows, the framework is divided into four key, interrelated sections:

- **Foundational Theories and Constructs:** You may be tempted to skip the theory and move straight to practices, but this section will help to orient you to the approach in ways that will make the practices come alive. And it provides a critical foundation for this work.

- **Principles:** The principles outlined in this framework represent high-level values, commitments, and guideposts. They serve as key coordinates in helping us navigate the complexity of this work. We outline what each principle looks like in practice to give you a sense of how the principles should be applied.

- **Practices:** We outline seven key practices associated with this work. While there is a sequential logic to the order of these practices, they are iterative and overlapping – so it's not like you move from one practice to the next like a series of steps. Each of the practices will be at play in multiple ways at different times as you work with men to change their settings.

- **Capacities and Conditions Required to Do this Work:** We end by discussing the individual and organizational capacities required to implement this approach. We also discuss what we've learned to this point about assessing the readiness of men/settings to engage in this work.

# CHANGING CONTEXTS FRAMEWORK-AT-A-GLANCE

**HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IS INFLUENCED BY A SUBTLE BUT PERVASIVE SET OF SIGNALS (i.e., SOCIAL NORMS AND ENVIRONMENTAL CUES) THAT ARE TRANSMITTED THROUGH NETWORKS.**
If we help male-oriented settings amplify signals associated with gender equality and healthy relationships, and disrupt signals related to discrimination and violence, then people in those settings are likely to engage in more equitable, prosocial behaviours.

# FOUNDATIONAL
## THEORIES AND APPROACHES

**CHANGING MINDS/CHANGING CONTEXTS:**
If we really want to support long-term behaviour change, we need to do more than change individual minds; we need to also change the environments that shape and influence those minds.

**FEMINIST THEORY/GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES:**
Society is structured in ways that systematically disadvantage women. To reduce violence and achieve gender equality, we have to dismantle patriarchal systems and promote ways of 'doing gender' that are less likely to create harm.

**NON-PROGRAMMATIC:**
The 'programs for problems' model can only take us so far. We need to consider non-programmatic, context-specific approaches to behaviour change.

**SOCIAL NORMS THEORY:**
Change the norms, change the behaviour. By working with key influencers in male-dominated settings to change social norms, we help to shift behaviours.

**MICRO-INTERVENTIONS:**
Very small interventions can have an outsized impact. This includes comments and actions that are reactive (arising in response to a problem) and proactive (happening before a problem occurs).

**BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS:**
Other environmental factors also influence behaviour. Small tweaks to elements within these environments can nudge us towards more prosocial, equitable behaviours.

**FLOODING THE SYSTEM WITH SIGNALS:**
Consistent and multiple transmission of prosocial, gender equitable signals within a network can change behaviour – but we need to flood the system; a trickle won't do.

## PRINCIPLES TO
## GUIDE THIS WORK

**01.** **CONTEXT SPECIFIC:** Work in pre-existing networks to create interventions that are tailored to the specific context.

**02.** **RELATIONSHIP-BASED:** Build a foundation of mutual trust and respect, effective communication, and collaborative meaning-making.

**03.** **DOING WITH, NOT FOR:** Collaboratively develop interventions with men and support them to be agents of change in their settings.

**04.** **MEETING MEN WHERE THEY'RE AT:** Work from an informed understanding of the perspectives, fears, hopes, and concerns of the men we engage.

**05.** **COMPASSIONATE ACCOUNTABILITY:** Develop compassionate learning spaces where men can explore new ideas and grow their capacity to positively shape their environments.

**06.** **MANAGING RISK:** Help men to anticipate and prepare for potential risks associated with challenging the status quo.

## PRACTICES TO
## SUPPORT THIS WORK

**01.** **BUILDING A COMPELLING WHY:** Support stakeholders to develop their own powerful reasons for engaging in this work.

**02.** **SURFACING CULTURE:** Help to surface and reconstruct harmful sociocultural dynamics and influences within each setting.

**03.** **IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE:** Help stakeholders identify key leverage points for creating prosocial, equitable behaviours.

**04.** **LEVERAGING THE POWER OF ENVIRONMENTAL NUDGES:** Change behaviours through small changes to the context.

**05.** **LEVERAGING THE POWER OF SOCIAL NUDGES:** Use social signals to weaken harmful norms and cue a different set of behaviours.

**06.** **LEVERAGING THE POWER OF REALITY CHECKS:** Correct misperceptions about what is normative so that prosocial norms become more salient.

**07.** **WORKING WITH KEY INFLUENCERS:** Work with those who have the power to influence norms and/or enact organizational/system-wide changes.

### 1.3.1 Cautions & Considerations

As you're reading through the Framework, please keep the following in mind:

- The framework represents our best thinking to this point – but it is a work in progress. Please think of it as a starting point, not an end point.

- While the framework focuses on engaging men, it can also be used with other constituents of male-oriented settings. (Please see the *Authors' Note* at the beginning of this document).

- This approach requires a significant investment of time and effort (see Tip) because it involves capacity development. It would be great if we could offer a toolkit that could be implemented immediately – but context-specific approaches can't be implemented with standardized approaches. Furthermore, even the *best* of tools can be ineffective if we don't develop the capacity to use them effectively. We need to be prepared to engage in ways that extend our capacities for this work – and that takes time.

- This framework focuses on the 'changing contexts' side of the continuum of interventions (discussed further in *Changing Minds/Changing Contexts* on p. 55). However, practitioners need a solid foundation in the content and processes associated with the 'changing minds' end of the continuum. In fact, engaging in this work without 1) having explored your own power, privilege, and biases, and 2) knowing how to support others to do the same can be disastrous. For this reason, *Changing Contexts* is intended to be used in conjunction with 'changing minds' resources and approaches. To support this, Shift is developing a *Changing Minds* educational series (slated for release in late 2020). We also suggest that you check out resources like Michael Flood's *Engaging Men and Boys in Violence Prevention*[34] and Promundo's *Manhood 2.0.*[35] These and other changing minds resources can help to build a solid foundation for a *Changing Contexts* approach.

> ### helpful tip
>
> If you're looking for something that can be immediately applied with no work on your part and/or no broader capacity-building efforts within our sector, you'll be disappointed. While we do offer tools for implementing this approach, the power is not in the tool alone but in the capacity of the person using it. You can be given the highest quality chisel, but unless you have the skills of a Michelangelo, you're not going to be producing a *David* any time soon. We would all love to have a set of tools that we can just pick up and use without any capacity development on our part, but that's not how things work. We need to be prepared to engage in ways that extend our capacities for this work – and that takes time.

- In the same way that reading a book about flying airplanes won't make you a pilot, reading this framework is only the first step in developing the capacities required for this approach. As a sector, we need to invest in ongoing learning and capacity development opportunities to support this approach.

- The framework is packed with information, and will probably require several read-throughs to digest. We know it's difficult to find time to read and reflect, but we can't implement new approaches without taking the time to really unpack them.

- We did not have the opportunity to adequately test all of the elements of the framework before the funding period for our Learning Collaborative ended. We will seek opportunities to continue to test this approach, and invite you to help with this in whatever way you can.

> "To design something really well, you have to get it. […] It takes a passionate commitment to really thoroughly understand something, chew it up, not just quickly swallow it.  Most people don't take the time to do that. […] A lot of people […] don't have enough dots to connect, and they end up with linear solutions without a broad perspective on the problem.  The broader one's understanding of the human experience, the better design we will have."[36]

# 2.0 FOUNDATIONAL THEORIES, APPROACHES & CONSTRUCTS

In this section, you'll find an overview of the ideas that serve as a foundation for this work, including theories/approaches from the academic literature and constructs that were developed by the EMC Learning Collaborative.

## 2.1 Foundational Theories and Approaches

While the EMC Learning Collaborative drew on a wide range of academic theories and approaches to develop the framework, three are foundational to this work:

- Feminist Theory/Gender Transformative Approaches*

- Social Norms Theory

- Behavioural Economics

Each of these is briefly explored below.

### 2.1.1 Feminist Theory/Gender Transformative Approaches

**helpful tip**

You may be tempted to skip or skim the theoretical section of this framework, but the information in this section is critical to understanding the overall approach – so even if you don't read the this guide in sequential order, please make sure you come back to the *Foundational Theories, Approaches & Constructs* section and review it thoroughly at some point!

The *Changing Contexts* approach has been significantly shaped by feminist ideas, values, and approaches as well as by complementary theories and approaches associated with gender and oppression.[37] These theories/approaches offer a structural analysis of the three P's (power, privilege, and patriarchy) critical to efforts to prevent violence and promote gender equality. Below, we offer a brief overview of these key concepts. (For a more in-depth exploration of power, privilege, and patriarchy, please see Shift's upcoming *Changing Minds* educational series.)

## ⟳ *What is Feminism?*

At its heart, feminism is about ending sexism, sexual exploitation, and gender-based oppression.[38] While there are many different types of feminist theory and practice,[39] they are all connected by a few key ideas:

- Most societies have been structured in a way that tends to privilege men and systemically disadvantage women.[40] For example, in most countries, women:

    o Are paid less than men (13.3% less in Canada[41]);

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* Community Development is another key approach that informed this framework; however, the essence of the approach is captured in the *Principles* section of this document – particularly in *Context Specific* (p.57) and *Doing With, Not For* (p.65) – so we have not outlined it here.

- Hold fewer leadership positions ("Just 8.5% of the highest-paid positions in Canada's top 100 listed companies are held by women"[42]);

- Have their bodies more highly regulated than men (e.g., legislation that criminalizes abortion); [43] and

- Continue to take on a majority of household and childcare duties even when working full-time jobs.[44]

- This systemic form of gender inequality is referred to as patriarchy. Feminist theory suggests that patriarchy is a *root cause* of violence against women because it legitimizes the oppression of women, normalizes gender-based power differentials, and perpetuates sexist norms.[45]

- It's not just men who are sexist. All of us have been socialized from birth to accept sexist thinking and behaviours. This means that women can be just as sexist as men.[46]

- Similarly, it's not just women who experience the negative impacts of patriarchy. Men are also impacted by a social system that perpetuates problematic beliefs about what it means to be a man and legitimizes violence as a form of social control. Patriarchal norms and toxic masculinities:

- Negatively impact men's physical and emotional health;

- Are associated with higher rates of suicide and depression among men;

- Can limit some of their professional options (e.g., caregiving jobs are usually seen as 'feminine');

- Negatively impact men's help-seeking behaviours; and

- Lead to increased violence among and between men. [47]

"Masculinity is a set of expectations for how men should act and behave, but which many men are unable to meet most of the time."[48]

- The feminist movement seeks to dismantle this system of gender-related oppression and replace it with increasingly more just and equitable social, political, and economic systems.

- While feminism is primarily focused on sexism, it is informed by an understanding of the ways in which other systems of domination (i.e., capitalism, colonialism, white supremacy, etc.) are connected.[49] (For more on this, please refer to the definition of intersectionality in the glossary.)

- The feminist movement is not about being anti-male. It's about ending sexism and striving for a world where power and privilege are not determined by the sex you were assigned at birth.[50] At its heart, feminism is all about social justice.

## ➲ *What is a Gender Transformative Approach?*

By focusing on the way that gender is constructed, performed, and policed, the feminist movement has provided a strong foundation for the development and implementation of Gender Transformative Approaches.

Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs) are based on the following ideas:

- Gender is socially constructed.[51] This means that our beliefs about gender-related roles, traits, behaviours, norms, strengths, and limitations can and do shift over time. They are not fixed or inevitable; they *can* be changed.

- The way that we have constructed our ideas of gender to this point has led to enormous harm for women, non-binary persons, and anyone (including men) who does not conform to dominant gender norms. Current normative constructions of gender tend to:
  - Reinforce the idea that there are right and wrong ways of being a man or women;[52]
  - Perpetuate a heteronormative, binary approach to understanding gender (one that doesn't fit with many people's lived experience);[53] and
  - Reinforce the dynamics of dominance and subordination associated with violence.[54]

- A key focus of GTAs is to dismantle and reconstruct hegemonic masculinities. This term is used to refer to the dominant form of masculinity to which men are expected to conform. Hegemonic masculinities "intersect with gender inequality and other structural inequalities and social disadvantages, and also with men's power and privilege, to help shape men's violence against women."[55]

- Dominant forms of masculinity intersect with gender inequality and other structural inequalities and social

### helpful tip

It's important to understand that dominant forms of masculinity can differ between cultures and across time – so it's not a static thing. What makes a particular form of masculinity 'hegemonic' is that it is the type of 'manhood' that is given the most power, status, social prominence, and institutional support within a particular level of social organization.

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disadvantages, and also with men's power and privilege, to help shape men's violence against women."[56]

Gender Transformative Approaches help to:

- Support people of all genders to reflect critically on the ways that gender is constructed, performed, and policed;

- "Address dominant gender norms, structures and practices that maintain gender inequality and help drive violence against women in order to actively challenge and transform this system and lessen its impacts on women";[57]

- Promote approaches to "doing gender" that are less likely to create harm;

- Facilitate opportunities to examine one's own power and privilege;

- Seek to "actively challenge dominant forms and patterns of masculinity that operate at and across structural, systemic, organisational, community, interpersonal, and individual levels of society."[58] This includes challenging "normative language, culture, and systems."[59]

## ⮑ *Why should practitioners care about Feminist and Gender Transformative Approaches?*

- **Addressing root causes:** Researchers have identified gender inequality as one of the root causes of gender-based violence – so if we actually want to get at the *drivers* of violence, we have to draw on gender transformative approaches: "Scholars suggest that the gendered patterns of violence are a reflection and symptom of the unequal power relations between men (specifically heterosexual and cis-gendered men) and women. Thus, researchers have isolated gender inequality as an overarching driver of violence against women."[60]

- **Structural lens:** Gender inequalities and injustices are embedded in the systems that shape us, including our families, schools, religious institutions, workplaces, legal and political systems, and economic systems. To address gender inequality, then, we have to change the systems that shape our attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviours.[61] In other words, we need a *structural* approach, where we consider all the ways that these broader systems perpetuate and reinforce harmful and inequitable behaviours. This is one of the most important ideas to emerge from feminism – one that helps us to understand the limitations of trying to address sexism at the individual level only. If we change the minds of individuals without changing the sociocultural systems in which they're embedded, new attitudes and behaviours are unlikely to be sustained.[62] (This is discussed further in *Changing Minds/Changing Contexts* below.)

- **The need for social restructuring:** Patriarchal culture is damaging to everyone, including men. [63] This means that we can and should consider more adaptive ways of shaping the norms, institutions, and systems that shape us.

➲ *Cautions & Considerations*

- While patriarchy is damaging for men as well as women, many men benefit enormously from the ways in which gender inequality has been built into our systems and structures – so the motivation to dismantle these structures can be low and opposition can be high. A related issue is that GTAs involve the very difficult work of wrestling with one's own complicity in a system that negatively impacts women and diverse genders. No one likes to feel that they have created harm, and most of us try to avoid those uncomfortable feelings any way we can. This means that you are likely to encounter denial, anger, resistance, and potential backlash from the people you work with. It's really important that you don't take this personally or let it impact your enthusiasm for the work. Anticipating and normalizing resistance can help you to stay calm and manage your own emotional reactions in those situations. For other ways to anticipate, mitigate, and deal with resistance, please see *Meeting Men Where They're At* (p. 68).

> **helpful tip** ⬤
>
> One way of managing your own anxiety about the resistance you might face from the men you work with is to understand that resistance is actually a positive indicator of *de-stabilization* – meaning that the monolith of hegemonic masculinity could actually topple at any moment and is far more fragile than we sometimes think. So resistance might actually be a very positive sign of imminent change.

- While GTAs are critical to this work, they are not usually an effective *starting point* for engaging men in violence prevention. You generally need to build trust, interest, and rapport before you can begin introducing ideas about gender construction, power, privilege, and patriarchy: "[W]e may need to take smaller steps with men in our efforts to transform the current gender system. As Flood explains, the process of reaching and engaging men and boys to be a part of this transformation and change is complicated. It requires many different strategies that take into account the key barriers to men's engagement while also working to transform gendered systems and structures. Employing a gender transformative model that is too rigid may not always result in best practice, and this needs to be acknowledged."[64] This dynamic is explored further in *Meeting Men Where They're At* (p. 68).

- Patriarchal systems and hegemonic masculinities are not easy to change. They take enormous effort on multiple levels across generations. And often we don't see the results of those kinds of efforts for many years – which can be discouraging. But that is how social change works. Think about any major advancement in human rights and you'll see that this is the case. For example, think about the fight for civil rights for African Americans in the US. The simplistic story we sometimes tell ourselves is that everything shifted when Rosa Parks refused to go to the back of the bus. However, others before her had done the same thing *with no apparent result*. So why did things suddenly shift when Parks refused to go to the back of the bus?  Because the US had reached a tipping point. And what created that tipping point? *Thousands of activists fighting for decades on multiple fronts.* (Even Parks herself trained as an activist for 12 years prior to her now-famous act of resistance.) Some of those activists struggled for their entire lifetime without seeing progress. To paraphrase the hip-hop musical *Hamilton*, they were planting seeds in a garden that

they would never see blossom.[65] But their efforts were critical to building that tipping point. This work is slow and effortful and there are very few quick wins. Despite the difficulties, however, we have to build our motivation and capacity to engage in this kind of work because gender-based violence will continue to escalate unless the gender-biased systems that excuse, support, and endorse it are reconstructed.[66]

- Each of us has been shaped by patriarchal systems, so gender-inequitable comments, relationships, and approaches can feel just as 'natural' to us as they do to the people we're working with. This is why doing our own personal work around power, privilege, and patriarchy is so critical to the effectiveness of this approach. (This is explored further in *Capacities and Conditions Required for this Work* on p. 112.) It's also why we need to be vigilant about our approach, so that we ensure that we are not recreating the very dynamics we're trying to challenge. (For example, many social marketing efforts have leveraged stereotypical ideas about masculinity and/or highlighted the need for men to protect women – but both of these approaches end up reinforcing the very dynamics that we're trying to challenge.)

- Using terms like toxic and healthy masculinities is problematic because they reinforce an overly simplistic gender binary (i.e., male/female). Ultimately, we need to move beyond binary approaches to gender and promote other ways for people to be that "aren't tied up in categories of masculinity [and femininity]." [67] At this point, however, gender remains a powerful conceptual category and a significant part of how we construct our sense of identity. Given this, we need to find ways to address harmful constructions of masculinity while also acknowledging the need to move beyond the gender binary to focus on healthy *human* identity. This paradoxical approach was something that EMC members wrestled with. Unfortunately, there are no easy answers for this challenge. Practitioners need to remain mindful of the tension and do the best they can to unpack toxic masculinities while encouraging people to construct identities based on being a good human (versus being a good man or woman).

"In relation to men and masculinity, prevention efforts that rely on a 'real man' discourse can inadvertently reinforce and valorise particular masculine behaviours, and posit these as 'natural' behaviour for men. This can be counterproductive. Strategies that emphasise the need to 'man up', be 'real men' and stand up to violence against women evoke and appeal to a particular notion of masculinity that is often tough, even aggressive, and these qualities are attributed to men as being male qualities. Yet it is just such ideas of masculinity — and the automatic links that are made between these behaviours and what men are 'supposed' to be — that need to be challenged in efforts to prevent violence against women. Similarly, prevention efforts often rely on 'good men' and 'good models of masculinity', in other words, men who perform masculinity well and in a way we easily recognise, such as sports stars. However, these models too subscribe to narrow ideas of manhood, and rely on a binary between masculinity and femininity. Flood suggests that we should also affirm those men who 'don't fit dominant codes of masculinity', since 'part of our work should be to break down narrow constructions of manhood and powerful gender binaries."[68]

## Further Reading

There is so much to read and understand in this area – and we're only scratching the surface here – so we encourage you to explore feminist and Gender Transformative Approaches further. The following books and documents are a great starting point:

hooks, b. (2004). *The will to change: Men, masculinity, and love.* New York, NY: Routledge

Flood, M. (2019). *Engaging men and boys in violence prevention*. Brisbane, Australia: Palgrave Macmillan.

Our Watch. (2019). *Men in focus: Unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women.* Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch.

## 2.1.2 Social Norms Theory

Humans have evolved to pay careful attention to social cues, and there's enormous potential in this for shifting behaviours related to violence and inequality. While social norms are not the *only* factor influencing behaviour, they are a big one for reasons we'll explore in this framework. And social norms theory can add some very important tools to our efforts to promote gender equality and non-violent relationships.

## ⮕ What are Social Norms?

Social norms are rules or expectations for how to behave that are shared by a particular group of people and are maintained by social pressure (i.e., social punishment or rewards).[69] There is a lot packed into that definition, so it's helpful to break it down to consider its component parts.

Social norms are:

- **Rules or expectations for how to behave:** Norms are essentially social expectations – and these expectations can be explicit (e.g., a sign in the bathroom of a restaurant telling staff that they must wash their hands) or implicit (e.g., the sense you get, without ever being told, that it is rude to rummage through your neighbour's fridge if you don't know them very well). While some social expectations are acquired through direct instruction, most are acquired by watching how others in our group react and behave.[70]

- **Shared:** The *collective* nature of social norms is a distinguishing feature. Norms are shared beliefs about what is typical or appropriate behaviour within a given group. In this way, they are different from individual attitudes or beliefs.

- **Cultivated and transmitted by a particular group of people\*:** Norms are cultivated and transmitted within social networks – and they are specific to the social context that has created them (e.g., what is considered 'normal' in one group can be considered highly unusual, rude or immoral by another). Therefore, social norms approaches require understanding something about the context

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\* In Social Norms Theory, these groups are often referred to as "reference groups" – because they are the people we reference when we're trying to figure out how we should behave.

in which a particular norm is developed and maintained. (This is discussed in more depth in *Principles* on p. 57) It's also important to keep in mind that people usually belong to multiple groups with different (and sometimes competing) norms – so they may be guided by one set of norms in one situation and a different set in another.

- **Maintained by social pressure:** Social pressure is the mechanism by which norms are maintained and reinforced. Social pressure can take the form of:

  o Rewards: Approval, encouragement, incentives, inclusion, opportunities, etc.

  o Punishment: Disapproval, contempt, penalties, social backlash, ostracism, sanctions, gossip, etc.

This is the dynamic that makes social norms so powerful: receiving approval by the people who matter to us feels good; being rejected by those people can provoke feelings like embarrassment, shame, loneliness, and loss – feelings we usually try to avoid.[71]

> "Social norms are not the only determinant of people's behavior […], but they are especially powerful because they are grounded in people's desire to belong, and they are backed up by social pressure or punishment from people whose approval or disapproval matter to the individual making the choice of how to act. This is why social norms can be more influential than personal attitudes, knowledge, or morals in behavioral choices. These social expectations and the prospect of social reward or punishment often lead people to engage in practices they personally do not agree with."[72]

## ⮌ Gender Norms

One particular type of social norm requires special attention given the focus of our work: gender norms. Gender norms are social expectations about how women and men should behave.[*][73] Some people think of gender-based attributes as immutable characteristics, something that simply comes with the genitalia that is assigned at birth. However, our ideas about gender are socially-constructed and enforced – and they change over time.[74]

When people violate dominant gender expectations, they often pay a heavy price. For example, men who exhibit qualities or behaviours that are commonly associated with females are more likely to experience violence at the hands of other men.[75] (Violence is often used to regulate social norms and relationships.[76]) Similarly, women are often punished for straying outside the boundaries of what is considered socially

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[*] We are limiting our discussion of gender norms to expectations about women and men because, as a society, we haven't gone very far in developing normative expectations for gender diversity yet – at least in Western culture. (There are norms for nonbinary gender identities in some non-Western cultures).

acceptable for women. For example, "a wealth of research now shows that…people around the world responsible for personnel decisions feel women who ask for better compensation violate gender norms. It isn't just that we are biased to expect women to be collaborative, agreeable, and communal. It is that when we find certain women do not abide by these norms, we too often conclude we do not want to work with them."[77]

Gender norms often result in a double standard that punishes women for the very same attributes that are rewarded in men. This tendency is borne out in the famous Heidi/Howard case study that is often presented in business schools to demonstrate the constraining power of gender norms. The case represents the story of real-life venture capitalist Heidi Roizen. Students are divided into two groups and given the case study to read. For one of the groups, however, the name of the central character in the case study has been changed to Howard. Other than gender, all of the details of the case are identical. Despite this, students rate Heidi's and Howard's performances very differently. Both are deemed competent, but compared to Howard, Heidi is considered more selfish, less likeable, and less worthy of being hired.[78] (This might explain why there are relatively few female heads of state or women in senior C-suite positions of major companies.[79])

What's going on here? Author Iris Bohnet explains that "if women like Heidi demonstrate that they can do a 'man's job,' they no longer fit our mental model of the 'ideal woman.' They violate norms, and people do not find norm violators appealing. Put differently, women who violate social norms pay a social price."[80]

Rigidly held and enforced expectations of what it means to be a particular gender are at the heart of gender-based violence and discrimination. If we want to reconstruct limiting gender norms, we have to understand how they're developed, perpetuated, and enforced – and how they can be *changed*.

## ⮑ *Why should practitioners care about social norms?*

Social norms represent a powerful leverage point for changing behaviour. Here's why they are worth paying attention to:

- **Norms guide behaviour**: The link between social norms and behaviour is incredibly strong. While norms aren't the only thing that affect our behaviour, they are a powerful influence. This makes norms a robust leverage point for social interventions: "What an individual believes others expect of him or her (and the sanctions and rewards that may follow) can be a more powerful driver, or constraint, than individual attitudes, or the law. As a result, a social norms intervention can be a catalytic addition to an existing programme focused on individual, structural and/or material factors."[81]

- **Norms trump attitudes:** When a strong social norm exists, people will often comply with the norm *even when it contradicts their own attitudes and beliefs.* So a man might support gender equality privately, but still make sexist remarks at hockey practice if there is strong social pressure to comply with that norm. This means that we can work to change minds, but if the *sociocultural context* doesn't change, then this is unlikely to result in different behaviours.[82]

- **Three degrees of influence**: Numerous studies have shown that we are influenced by people we don't even know because norms travel through networks like a social contagion, with people picking up on others' behaviours, attitudes, and expectations. Researchers Christakis and Fowler refer to this phenomenon as "three degrees of influence" because that's how far the effect goes: we are influenced by our friends' friends' friends. Obesity, for example, is socially 'contagious' up to three degrees of influence[83] – and some of this effect is causal.[84] The same is true for violence and sexual behaviours.[85] This creates enormous potential for scaling positive behaviours through networks.

## ⮌ *Two types of norms*

While we don't need to understand all aspects of Social Norms Theory to implement this approach, there are some pieces that are critical to efforts to prevent violence and promote gender equality. One of these is the distinction between two types of norms: descriptive norms and injunctive norms.

- **Descriptive norms are based on what we think other people *do*.** These are picked up by observation (e.g., bringing a bottle of wine to your host when they've invited you for dinner becomes normative because that's what you see others in your group doing), and they are subject to the same types of mistakes and biases that accompany all human observation. (More on this in a moment.)

- **Injunctive norms are based on what we think other people would *approve* or *disapprove* of** (e.g., most of us have a sense that we shouldn't pee in the swimming pool – and this is based on our sense that if others found out that we'd peed in the water they're sharing with us, they would *definitely* not approve).

You'll see that in both definitions the phrase "what we *think*" is used. This is key because our ideas about what other people do or expect of us are not always accurate. Why does this matter? Because there is huge potential to leverage this to change behaviour. Here are two examples of how this works:

1. **Leveraging misperceptions about descriptive norms** (What we think other people in our group actually *do*)
   o It's widely accepted that everyone on campus regularly consumes alcohol and binge drinks at parties. (This is a descriptive norm – what young people think other students on their campus do.)
   o You conduct a survey to find out how much students *actually* drink – and you find that heavy drinking isn't the norm at all.
   o You plaster the campus with posters that tell students that 72% of freshmen had less than four drinks last time they partied and most (68%) use alcohol less than six times a month.
   o You are effectively helping to correct misperceptions about what people actually *do*. This approach has proven effective in reducing alcohol misuse on college campuses in the US.[86]

2. **Leveraging misperceptions about injunctive norms** (What we think others in our group approve/disapprove of)

o   Members of a soccer team you're working with seem to make homophobic remarks on a regular basis.

o   Suspecting that they may be underestimating the discomfort that creates for others on the team, you conduct an anonymous survey to find out how many people actually approve of these types of remarks. Your survey shows that the majority do not approve of homophobic remarks.

o   You reveal the results and process them with the team. Team members that disapprove of homophobic remarks come to understand that they are part of a large but silent majority. This gives them the courage to say something the next time a homophobic remark is made, thus helping to create a new norm. [87]

o   With this intervention, you help to correct misperceptions about what others actually expect or approve of. This approach has proven remarkably effective in a range of circumstances, including efforts to reduce violence against women.[88]

We'll explore how to leverage misperceptions of descriptive and injunctive norms further when we begin looking at *Practices* (p. 79).

## ➲ Changing Social Norms

The interventions described above work when the descriptive or injunctive norm differs from people's perceptions of what is normative. But what about when that is not the case? For example, what about when you work in an office where sexism is pervasive and the behaviours and social expectations actually align with that norm (i.e., when you can't leverage the strategies listed above). In those cases, you have to go about changing the norm itself.

So how do norms shift? By creating tipping points: social norms change "when enough people in a reference group believe that enough people are changing."[89] So in our hypothetical office, as people begin to see new behaviours and reactions, they will begin to sense that the norms are changing – and this will create a virtuous cycle (i.e., the more people believe this is the new norm, the more they'll modify their behaviour to comply with it – whether they personally approve of the new norm or not).

> "What is key for modelling the likelihood of social norms impacting on behaviour is that social norms induce a positive feedback loop in behaviours, where the more widely that a norm is followed by members of a social group, the more everyone wants to adhere to it."[90]

So how do you create that kind of tipping point? This is something we'll explore more in the *Principles* and *Practices* sections of the framework, but here's a quick overview of the process:

- Create a core group that is interested in potentially challenging existing norms and/or creating new ones. Ideally, the core group is comprised of men with pre-existing relationships (versus men who don't know each other).

- Help them to cultivate the motivation and skills to flood the system with signals that reinforce the new norms and weaken the old ones.

- Help them to motivate and recruit others, so that there are more and more people sending these kinds of signals and you have a kind of "organized diffusion"[91] where the new signals are being sent by more people in more circumstances. Finding those people who are particularly influential (i.e., those whom others consider a social referent) will be particularly important.

When you've created new shared beliefs within a particular reference group, expectations about behaviour will begin to change.

## ➲ Cautions & Considerations

Here are some things that practitioners need to be aware of when they are implementing a social norms approach:

- Social norms are a key driver of behaviour – but they're not the *only* driver, and practitioners need to understand norms within the context of other drivers and enablers, including political dynamics, power structures, economic forces, incentives, constraints, opportunities, and individual attitudes, motivations, and skills.[92]

- Implementing this approach requires assessing the extent to which the behaviour is guided by a social norm. (Because not all behaviours are the result of a social norm – and not all norms are equal in terms of their power to influence behaviour.*) Another consideration is how 'culturally tight or loose' the group is. Some groups tolerate a lot of diversity, whereas others allow for little divergence from the norms. Norms approaches will be more effective in groups where there is stronger pressure to comply. (We'll explore this further in the *Practices* section.)

- Just because something is normative does not mean it will influence behaviour – particularly in private situations where public scrutiny is not an issue. (Remember: social pressure is what maintains social norms – but if the behaviour is not seen, then it can't be publicly scrutinized.) For example, washing your hands after you use the toilet is normative in Canada – but some people only do it when they are using a public bathroom (and even then, only when others are present).[93] This is one of the issues with domestic violence. Most people in Canada disapprove of

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* Appendix 3 outlines a process for determining whether a social norm is at play, and Appendix 4 can help you to determine how strong the norm is.

this kind of violence, but because it happens behind closed doors, it's easier to avoid pressure to conform to norms around non-violence. So for a social norm to have a strong influence, the behaviour needs to be public and observable.

- Social norms theory suggests that a practice that uses statistics to show how common a negative behaviour like violence against women is can have a harmful boomerang effect. We often publicize these kinds of statistics to make the case for violence prevention. However, in doing so, we can actually leave people with the impression that violence against women is normal – e.g., *'lots of other people do this, so why shouldn't I?'[94]* (We'll discuss alternative messaging in the *Practices* section on p. 79.)

- It's really important to engage community members to lead the change process – *they* are the change agent, not you. This makes sense when you think about how norms change: People within a group see social referents *within their group* reacting and behaving differently, and therefore begin to get a sense that the norm is shifting. Unless you are part of that group (and are considered a social referent), you don't really have the power to shift norms in that setting. [95] (This is discussed further in the *Principles* section on p. 57.)

- Social norms take a long time to change – especially at scale. So while a norms shift may happen relatively quickly among a sports team or some other smaller group, change at a broader societal level can take decades. This doesn't make the approach any less valuable; it just means that we need to be realistic about timelines and objectives.[96]

## ➲ Further Reading

There is so much more to explore in this area – so we'd encourage you to check out the following practice-focused guides to social norms change. While these guides primarily focus on interventions in the Global South, they provide helpful information that has implications for engaging men in violence prevention and gender equality in the Global North.

Alexander-Scott, M., Bell, E., & Holden, J. (2016). *DFID guidance note: Shifting social norms to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)*. London: VAWG Helpdesk.

Scharbatke-Church, C., & Chigas, D. (2019). *Understanding social norms: A reference guide for policy and practice.* Medford, MA: Henry J. Leir Institute, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University.

Cislaghi, B., Manji, K., & Heise, L. (2018). *Social norms and gender-related harmful practices: theory in support of better practice.* (Learning Report No. 2). London: Learning Group on Social Norms and Gender-related Harmful Practices, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, STRIVE.

Berkowitz, A.D. (2012) *A grassroots' guide to fostering healthy norms to reduce violence in our communities: Social norms toolkit.* Mount Shasta, California.

## 2.1.3 Behavioural Economics

Increasingly, social change agents are drawing on the relatively new field of Behavioural Economics to shape their approaches to shifting harmful behaviours. Behavioural Economics integrates insights from psychology and neuroscience to develop more accurate and nuanced models of human decision-making, and highlights the many ways that *context* influences behaviour. This theory (and its close relatives, Behavioural Insights, Behavioural Psychology, and Behavioural Design) was instrumental in shaping our approach and expanding the range of interventions available for engaging men in gender equality and violence prevention.

## ⮮ *What is Behavioural Economics?*

Traditional approaches to human behaviour centre on the idea that our decisions are based on rational calculations: we weigh the pros and cons objectively and then determine the choice that reflects our preferences and/or best interests.[97] Behavioural Economics challenges this model and suggests that conscious deliberation or rational choice rarely determine behaviour.

The underlying logic of Behavioural Economics goes something like this:[*]

1. **Decision-making is largely based on quick, automatic processes:** Researchers estimate that we average about 35,000 decisions a day.[98] If we had to consciously calculate the pros and cons of every decision, we'd never get anything done! Automatic processes allow us to navigate the daily tsunami of information and make split-second choices in ways that aren't as cognitively burdensome as conscious deliberation.

2. **These automatic processes are based on heuristics or mental short cuts:** The rules or mental short cuts that help us to navigate life are shaped by three main factors:

   - *Biosocial drivers:* Biosocial drivers are the instincts that have evolved over the course of human history and are passed on genetically. They include instincts such as sexual drive, the need to belong, the desire to be treated fairly, status drive, ingroup/outgroup distinctions, etc.

   - *Personal experience:* Mental short cuts are also based on the lessons we've drawn from our engagement with the world (e.g., touching a hot stove hurts!). This type of learning is tricky because it's dependent on the quality of our meaning-making. When our interpretation of a situation is hampered by biases and/or biosocial needs and/or inaccurate mental models, we can end up drawing the wrong lessons.

   - *Socialization*: The mental models that shape our thinking and behaviour are also determined by our social environments (e.g., family, friends, workplaces, institutions, and

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[*] Because it's a relatively new field, there is not a lot of cohesion in Behavioural Economics (i.e., no single unifying theory), and the overviews of this discipline vary somewhat in terms of what they emphasize. In this document, we have emphasized those aspects of Behavioural Economics that are most applicable to the *Changing Contexts* approach.

cultures). We tend to "internalize aspects of society, taking them for granted as inevitable 'social facts;'" these 'facts' shape our understanding of "what is right, what is natural, and what is possible in life."[99]

Each of these factors shape the frameworks that we use to interpret life.

3. **Our automatic processes are biased – but in fairly predictable ways.** In his book *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces that Shape our Decisions,* Dan Ariely points out that human meaning-making represents a sort of good news/bad news scenario. The bad news is that we consistently distort reality; the good news is that we do it in predictable ways. (This is good news because when errors and distortions are predictable, we have the potential to anticipate them and build in mechanisms to mitigate their impact.)[100] Eliminating all bias is simply not possible – we will continue to make decisions on the basis of prejudices, stereotypes, allegiances, unfounded beliefs, misguided instincts, impulse, and imperfect knowledge. However, by understanding the nature of these biases and how they impact decision-making, we can begin to develop mechanisms to more effectively manage them.[101]

4. **Context matters.** Traditional conceptions of human decision-making tend to place more emphasis on internal factors (e.g., values, preferences, needs, etc.) and assume that these factors remain relatively stable from moment to moment. In contrast, behavioural economics acknowledges that our preferences and behaviours in any given moment are highly influenced by environmental cues – including visual, olfactory, and aural cues. So, for example, we may place our litter in the garbage in one context and throw it on the ground in another, depending on the cues we're exposed to in each particular environment.* We think of ourselves as consistent, but our decisions and behaviours are actually highly influenced by these types of environmental signals.

5. **This approach to understanding decision-making has significant implications for shaping behaviour.** Traditional approaches to behaviour change typically draw on the "rational choice paradigm,"[102] meaning that we seek to change minds in order to change behaviour. For example, we use things like persuasion, education, and information campaigns to shift attitudes, beliefs, and intentions, believing that these shifts will lead to changes in behaviour. However, as we'll discuss further in *Changing Minds/Changing Contexts* section below (p. 55), the correlation between attitudes or intentions and behaviour is relatively weak. Behavioural Economics draws on insights from psychology and neuroscience to create interventions that work *with,* rather than against, our reliance on automatic processing. (We'll dig into the 'how' of this practice in just a moment, and will explore the implications for engaging men in gender equality and violence prevention further in *Leveraging the Power of Environmental Nudges.*)

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* In one study, researchers placed flyers on car windshields in a parking lot. In one condition they also scattered a bunch of flyers on the ground. People were far less likely to throw the flyer on the ground when the parking lot was litter-free and far more likely to litter when the parking lot was already full of flyers. (Bohnet, I. [2016]. *What works: Gender equality by design.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press).

## ➲ Why should practitioners care about Behavioural Economics?

- **Small changes can produce outsized effects:** Human decision-making is "powerfully shaped" by contextual cues,[103] and a growing body of research suggests that we can achieve outsized impacts on behaviour though small changes to the context in which decisions are made.[104]

- **Opportunity to reduce harm:** Eliminating gender bias (changing minds) is very difficult.[105] However, we can design processes and structures (changing context) that help to reduce the negative impact of bias on decisions and behaviours. Blind hiring practices, for example, can reduce the likelihood that decisions will be affected by gender bias. By supplementing our current methods with approaches that focus on contextual processes, cues, and structures, we can potentially reduce harm related to violence and gender inequality.

- **More to work with:** This approach adds to our toolbox of social change interventions.[106] These tools don't displace existing approaches to social change; they "complement and enhance" them.[107]

> "Applying a Behavioural Insights [or Behavioural Economics] lens to the work of community change gives us a different perspective and set of possibilities for effecting change. While many change efforts often focus on building awareness and desire for change (e.g. 'educating' people about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables), applying a Behavioural Insights lens helps us consider alternate possibilities like making fruits and vegetables easier to access (e.g. at the checkout counter in grocery stores) or in making it harder to get alternatives (e.g. moving unhealthy snacks to the back of the store)."[108]

## ➲ Tools and Approaches

The tools used in Behavioural Economics are often referred to as "nudges." A **nudge** is a small contextual shift that has the potential to change behaviour without changing the choices available (i.e., it is suggestive, not coercive*). The term comes from the idea that "When individuals are thinking automatically, a mere 'nudge' may change their behavior."[109]

Below, we outline the nudges that are most relevant to our work. These include nudges related to:

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* This is an important distinction. Nudge Theory doesn't penalize or reward particular choices; instead it "points people toward a particular choice" by changing the way the choices are framed. For example, if you want to promote healthy eating, "Putting the fruit at eye level counts as a nudge. Banning junk food does not." (Thaler and Sunskind [2008], p.6).

1. Framing

2. Affect (or emotion)

3. Priming

4. Defaults

5. Salience

6. Ego[*]

## 1. Framing: "The way that the message is conveyed can influence its perception and its effects"[110]

What would you be more likely to buy: A container of yoghurt that says "contains 20% fat" or one that is labelled "80% fat-free"? The fat content in both is the same, but the framing makes the second offering more appealing to most people.[111] When you change the frame or way the message is conveyed, you potentially change the behaviour. For example, in the UK, when policymakers changed the term "Unemployment Insurance" to "Job Seekers' Benefit," it changed the behaviour of many recipients, increasing the rate at which they actively searched for work.[112]

*Examples Related to Gender Equality and/or Violence Prevention*[†]

- Research shows that recruiting ads can elicit gendered behaviours when the message contains adjectives that are associated with one gender or another. For example, an ad for elementary school teachers that includes words like "warm," "caring," "supportive," and "collaborative" is far less likely to attract male candidates because, in our current sociocultural environment, these qualities are typically associated with women.[113] Similarly, ads that highlight words that trigger associations with male stereotypes (e.g., competitive, leader, dominant) tend to discourage women from applying.[114] How is the setting you're working in framing new positions?

- Gender equality is often framed in terms of benefits for women. What would happen if we began highlighting the benefits for men? An article from the *Economist* entitled "The Weaker Sex" calls for a shift in cultural attitudes, and points out that men potentially stand to gain from gender equality: "Women have learned that they can be surgeons and physicists without losing their femininity. Men need to understand that traditional manual jobs are not coming back, and that they can be nurses or hairdressers without losing their masculinity."[115] What other ways can the benefits of gender equality be framed for men?

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[*] Note: Social norms approaches are also a key element of Behavioural Economics because they help to shape our social context (and because herding instinct or the tendency for people to do what they see other people doing is another key bias that affects automatic processing). However, as we explored social norms theory in the previous section, we have not included it here.

[†] Because this approach is relatively new, it has not been used extensively in the field of gender equality and violence prevention (particularly primary prevention). For this reason, we do not yet have extensive examples to draw on.

## 2. Affect: "Our emotional associations can powerfully shape our actions"[116]

Remember what happened when a photo of a drowned three-year-old Syrian refugee started hitting our news feeds in 2015? Within 24 hours of the photo's release, donations started pouring in and the refugee crisis suddenly became a key issue in the federal election.[117] The photo changed the behaviour of many Canadians because it activated our emotions in a way that statistics about refugees never could. In the Behavioural Insights literature, this phenomenon is called the "Identifiable Victim Effect" ("One identifiable individual who is described in great detail, evokes deeper emotions and sympathy than does a large group of anonymous individuals"[118]). This is one example of how affect or emotion can nudge people towards a different set of behaviours.

*Examples Related to Gender Equality and/or Violence Prevention*

- Research shows that men who become active in supporting gender equality and violence prevention have often had some kind of "sensitizing experience"[119] – in other words, they have an emotional connection that makes this work a priority. While 'affect' nudges should be used with caution, it might be worth exploring how personal stories of violence and gender discrimination can be used to activate men and engage them in this work.

- When men are supported to make an emotional connection to gender equality and violence prevention, their level of commitment to this work increases.[120] When we get to the practices associated with the *Changing Contexts* approach, we will explore ways to support men to connect to these issues in ways that can serve to increase motivation and commitment (See: *Building a Compelling Why*, p. 80).

## 3. Priming: "Our acts are often influenced by sub-conscious cues"[121]

Small contextual cues (including visual, olfactory, and auditory cues) can work on us at a sub-conscious level to activate a different set of behaviours. For example, in offices where the coffee fund is based on an honour system, placing a poster of eyes above the coin box can result in a threefold increase in the amount that people pay. (Subconsciously, the eyes evoke the feeling of being watched, thereby prompting more ethical behaviour.[122]) Similarly, having students recall the Ten Commandments before taking a test results in less cheating.[123] Neither the office workers nor the students are aware of the way these cues are impacting their behaviour; all of this happens at a subconscious level.

One of the most amazing examples of the impact of priming is a study conducted in the 1980s. The researchers created the illusion of a time warp, placing eight elderly men in an environment that looked and felt like something they would have experienced a couple of decades earlier: the furnishings were from 1959, Perry Como was singing on the radio, Ed Sullivan was playing on a black-and-white TV, and all of the magazines and books were from that era. The men lived in the retro environment for five days – and in that short amount of time, the 1959 priming not only changed their behaviours, it enhanced their physical and cognitive performance, creating improvements in dexterity, flexibility, hearing, vision, memory and cognition![124]

*Examples Related to Gender Equality and/or Violence Prevention*

- Small, subliminal cues that evoke gender stereotypes can impact women's performance. For example, in one study, girls who were asked to indicate their gender on a math exam performed worse than girls who were not.[125] The simple act of ticking a gender box evoked gender stereotypes (i.e., "girls are bad at math") that became self-fulfilling prophecies. How might the settings we work in be evoking gender stereotypes through subtle cues like gender tick-boxes?

- Visual cues like photos or décor can also impact women's performance. For example, one study asked a group of women to give a public speech. The subjects were assigned to one of three conditions: 1) they were subtly exposed to photos of strong female leaders, 2) they were exposed to photos of male leaders, or 3) they were not shown any photos at all. The researchers found significant differences in performance based on how each group had been primed: "Women who had seen a picture of a female leader gave longer speeches that were rated higher both by external observers as well as by the women themselves than those who had seen a picture of [a male leader] or no picture" at all.[126] (The photos had no impact on men's speeches.) This suggests that organizations can subtly impact gender expectations and performance by the photos they choose to display on walls or in documents. According to one study, even the photos on a screensaver can impact us![127]

- Visual cues can also prime or mitigate violent behaviours, including assaults. For example, installing windows and doors on abandoned buildings resulted in a 19% reduction in physical assaults and a 39% reduction in gun assaults around remediated buildings in one US city.[128] How might physical environments prime violence-supportive behaviours in the settings you're working in?

## 4. Defaults: We tend to "'go with the flow' of pre-set options"[129]

A default is a pre-set option that gets implemented when you don't actively make a different choice (e.g., computer programs come with default settings – you can customize how the program gets installed, but if you don't do anything, you get the options that the designers set in advance). Most people prefer choices that require less effort, so they'll often go with the default that has been set. This means that we can nudge different behaviours by structuring default choices that align with the behaviours we're trying to promote.

One of the most compelling examples of a default-based intervention is the way that some governments have approached organ donations. Countries that ask people to 'opt-in' (e.g., check a tick-box to be enrolled in the organ donation program) have low participation rates (below 30%), whereas countries with an 'opt out' policy (i.e., you're automatically enrolled in the organ donation program and have to take action if you want to be removed) have achieved rates of 98% or higher. The people in both the opt in and opt out countries share similar views on the value of organ donation, but their behaviour is radically different because of one little default setting.

*Examples Related to Gender Equality and/or Violence Prevention*

- Recruiting men to gender equality or violence prevention programs can be challenging,[130] but a default strategy could help: for example, a company might use this strategy to automatically enroll employees in a gender bias training workshop or a healthy relationships program, giving them the opportunity to opt out if they don't want to participate.

- In 2013, British Prime Minister David Cameron announced his plan to change the default settings on Internet Service Providers (ISPs), so that pornography would be automatically blocked and you'd have to change your settings to access it.[131] (Unfortunately the policy was never implemented, so we don't know how it might have impacted pornography use.[132]) How could default settings be used to promote healthy, gender-equitable behaviours in your setting?

## 5. Salience: "Our attention is drawn to what is novel and seems relevant to us"[133]

We are bombarded with information every day – and there's always far more going on than we can pay attention to. We handle this issue by ignoring anything that we think we can safely ignore and paying attention to anything we think is important, novel, interesting, or relevant. This filter – called salience bias – explains why, when you're pregnant, it suddenly seems like pregnant women are *everywhere*; or when you're buying a new car, you constantly notice all the other people who are driving that model. When something becomes 'salient' to us, it stands out.

Behavioural Economics designs interventions with this bias in mind by making messages or choices more salient – more novel, eye-catching, physically proximate (e.g., placing items where you can see them when you're standing in line at the grocery checkout), and/or personally relevant.

When the federal government changed the *Canada Food Guide* from a pyramid to a plate, they were making the information more salient (we don't arrange our food in pyramids; we put it on plates – so the proportions in that image are far more relevant, and therefore more memorable).

Social comparisons are a way of making information more personally relevant, and therefore more memorable. For example, a US energy conservation program created individualized reports that compared homeowners' energy consumption to that of their neighbours. This made the information far more salient than if they had simply compared each person's consumption to the national average – and it worked, resulting in a reduction in energy consumption that was "equivalent to reductions resulting from short-term increases in energy prices of 11–20 percent and a long-term increase of 5 percent."*[134]

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* Researchers point out that this approach can backfire, however: while households that consumed more energy than their neighbours lowered their consumption in response to the intervention, households whose average was *lower* than the average tended to *increase* their consumption. But – and this speaks to the power of social approval – "[t]his 'boomerang' effect was eliminated if a happy or sad face was added to the bill, thus conveying social approval or disapproval (Dolan, P., Hallsworth, M., Halpern, D., King, D., Metcalfe, R., & Vlaev, I. [2012]. Influencing behaviour: The mindspace way. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, *33*(1), pp. 268-269).

*Examples Related to Gender Equality and/or Violence Prevention*

- Social comparisons have been successfully used in Britain to increase gender parity in the private sector with messages like, "Today 94 of the FTSE [Financial Times Stock Exchange] 100 companies count women on their boards, as do over two thirds of all FTSE 300 companies."[135] One author notes that, after "years of very little movement," the move helped the United Kingdom to "more than double the fraction of women on its corporate boards – all without coercion."[136] How could information about gender parity (e.g., the percentage of women in leadership positions in a particular company, or the wage gap between men and women) be made more salient in the settings you've engaged?

- One of the reasons that the initiation into fatherhood is a potentially powerful time to engage men in gender-based violence prevention and gender equality is because most fathers care about their daughters' wellbeing; consequently, daily examples of sexism and gender-based violence suddenly resonate in ways that they didn't before.[137] The *Dear Daddy* video[138] that went viral a few years ago drew on this type of salience to encourage men to challenge sexist or violence-supportive jokes and remarks.*[139] How could messaging related to violence prevention and gender equality be made more salient for the men you work with?

## 6. Ego: "We act in ways that make us feel better about ourselves"[140]

Ego is the bias we have towards things that support a "positive or consistent self-image."[141] Marketers and salespeople have been capitalizing on this bias for eons. The 'foot in the door' strategy, for example, is based on our need to feel good about ourselves. The approach involves asking you to comply with a small, reasonable request (e.g., answer a short questionnaire) knowing that, if you say 'yes' to that request, you're more likely to keep saying yes as the salesperson ups the ante.[142] (You'll do this out of a desire to be consistent.)

Interestingly, the Ego bias is one of the reasons that hazing works to increase commitment to a group. If you put yourself through an extreme initiation process only to find that the group isn't that great, you'll question your own judgment (i.e., *Why did I allow myself to go through that personal hell for a group that sucks?!*). As an alternative to feeling badly about ourselves, we focus on the good things about the group and ignore the downside.[143]

*Examples Related to Gender Equality and/or Violence Prevention*

- In the Global South, the *We Can* campaign used an ego-based nudge to reduce violence against women. The campaign encouraged individuals to sign a pledge to make "small, incremental changes in their own attitudes and behaviours toward violence and gender equity and then to carry the campaign message to 10 others."[144] The campaign was based on

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* The video was salient because it elicited the concern of fathers; but as many of its critics pointed out, it also reinforced stereotypes and drew on tropes related to protecting women (Gleeson, H. [2015]. Dear daddy: Viral video highlights how sexist jokes contribute to culture of violence against women. Retrieved from: https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-12-16/viral-video-highlights-how-sexist-jokes-contribute-to-culture-o/7034644). This tension speaks to the complexity of this work.

evidence that if people make a public promise, they will often keep it because they want to be consistent and "will go to lengths to maintain this belief and appearance in public and private."[145] How could stepped or incremental commitments be used in your setting?

- Public commitments have been used to engage men in violence prevention. One of the best known examples of this is The White Ribbon Campaign[146] which originated in Canada after the École Polytechnique massacre[147] on December 6, 1989. The campaign encouraged men to publicly commit to ending violence against women by signing a pledge and wearing a white ribbon. How could public commitments be used in your setting?

## ➲ Cautions & Considerations

- By far, the biggest concern associated with Behavioural Economics is that it represents a form of 'soft paternalism' and puts too much power in the hands of policymakers and other 'social engineers.' However, as one author notes, *all* change efforts are about influencing behaviour in ways that we think are beneficial, so the issue is broader than this one approach: "Certainly, any time we make a decision about what is 'right' or 'good' as changemakers and work to create that change, we are asserting our perspective over others. This is not just an ethical issue with Behavioural Insights [or Behavioural Economics], but a broader ethical issue with influencing others to change. However, one important underpinning behind all of the principles [associated with Behavioural Economics] is that people still have the right and ability to make their own choices. […] In implementing [this approach], then, a gut-check for changemakers is: Does this take away an individual's ability to choose?"[148]

  Furthermore, there is no 'design-free world.' Our sociocultural and built environments are already sending signals that shape behaviour. This approach simply allows us to be more intentional about the kinds of signals we're sending.

- The approaches associated with Behavioural Economics have not been extensively tested in the field of violence prevention and gender equality – so we don't have a lot of examples or evidence to draw on in that area. However, research on behaviour change in other fields suggests that this approach could be promising for our work.

## ➲ Further Reading

Understanding the ideas behind Behavioural Economics and the implications of this powerful theory for our work can take a while – but digging into the resources listed below can help (and you might learn something about yourself in the process). The first two books listed here are highly readable and very interesting. The third resource helps to explain why this approach is important to social change efforts, and the fourth specifically outlines the implications for gender equality.

- Thaler, R., & Sunstein, C. (2009). *Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth and happiness.* New York, NY: Penguin Books.

- Ariely, D. (2008). *Predictably irrational: The hidden forces that shape our decisions.* New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

- MacLusky, G. (2019). *Small changes for big impacts: Behavioural insights for community change.* Waterloo, ON: Tamarack Institute.

- Bohnet, I. (2016). *What works: Gender equality by design.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, An Imprint of Harvard University Press.

## 2.2 Key Constructs

In addition to the academic theories that anchor the *Changing Contexts* approach, four key constructs help to distinguish it from other ways of engaging men in gender equality and violence prevention. These constructs are interrelated, each highlighting a different facet of the approach. They include:

- *Continuum of Programmatic and Non-Programmatic Approaches* – The Continuum serves to remind us that this approach is context-specific, emergent, and co-developed. Rather than delivering a pre-structured process (e.g., a series of workshops), we help key influencers develop the capacity to create change in their setting.

- *Micro-Interventions* – Most of the interventions that comprise this approach are small nudges or micro-interventions designed to disrupt and/or prevent gender-based violence and discrimination.

- *Flooding the System with Signals* – Micro-interventions comprise a type of signal or way of communicating norms and values within a system. These signals can have a very powerful influence on behaviour, but only if there are *lots* of them – a light sprinkling won't do; we need a *deluge*.

- *Changing Minds/Changing Contexts* – This approach focuses on changing contexts to change behaviour, but the relationship between minds and contexts is reciprocal and mutually reinforcing, and both are required.

In the sections that follow, we will explore each of these constructs in more depth.

### 2.2.1 Continuum of Programmatic and Non-Programmatic Approaches

From its inception, the EMC Learning Collaborative was focused on exploring *non-programmatic* approaches to engaging men in gender equality and violence prevention. The reasons for this approach included the following:

- Research indicates that men are less likely than women to engage in help-seeking behaviours and/or attend structured social programs – which may explain why male recruitment for violence

prevention programs is often challenging.[149] This suggests the need to explore non-programmatic approaches to engaging men in violence prevention.

- The Human Services sector tends to have a bit of a 'programs for problems' bias where our default response to many issues is to design a programmatic intervention. You may be familiar with the saying, "When all you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail." Complex social issues require more than one tool, and programmatic responses might not be the solution for every situation. The EMC process was designed to expand our collective toolbox, so that we have a more robust and varied set of options for addressing violence and gender discrimination.

As the *Continuum of Programmatic and Non-Programmatic Continuum* below shows, it's not always possible to draw a sharp distinction between programmatic and non-programmatic approaches. For example, some non-programmatic approaches will include programmatic elements (e.g., a training session) or will have some of the same features as a program (e.g., monthly meetings). For this reason, we've conceptualized the approaches as a *continuum* rather than as binary opposites. However, if you look at the examples listed at the bottom of the *Programmatic/Non-Programmatic Continuum,* you'll notice that they range from pre-structured interventions at one end (psychoeducational programming where you have a set curriculum, set number of sessions, etc.) to more emergent, organic interventions like #MeToo at the other. This reflects the central factor that distinguishes programs from non-programmatic approaches: non-programmatic approaches are *emergent,* whereas programs are largely pre-structured.

Non-programmatic approaches are characterized by the following:

- Emergent, opportunistic

- The "How" evolves and is co-developed with stakeholders

- Less predictable/controlled than programs

- The agents of change are the community members, not the service providers

- Based on meaningful relationships

- Power is shared (i.e., the agency does not hold the balance of the power and service providers do not enter the relationship as 'experts' but rather as supports)

- Focus on 'doing with' rather than 'doing for', with an emphasis on *co*-learning and *co*-creating

- Focused on changes in physical and sociocultural environments, and not solely on changes in individuals

- Context-sensitive (i.e., not standardized; responsive to the unique dynamics of each setting)

Another distinction is that whereas scaling for programmatic approaches is managed (e.g., an agency hires additional staff in order to implement the program in other jurisdictions and/or make it available to more people), non-programmatic approaches have the potential for unmanaged, natural scaling (#MeToo is a prime example – no one is managing the growth of that movement; it has evolved organically).

Questions that can be used to guide a non-programmatic approach and help us to avoid slipping back into our default mode (i.e., programs) include the following:

- Is the approach pre-determined or is it evolving?

- Are stakeholders engaged in co-developing the 'how'?

- Are we acting *with* or acting *upon*?

- Who calls the shots? Who holds the power? How are decisions made?

- Who are the agents of change?

- Is our approach relationship-based?

- Are we able to be opportunistic?

- Are we building the capacity of community members to lead change?

For a visual representation of the programmatic/non-programmatic continuum and comparison of the key features defining each approach, please see the graphic on the following page.

# Continuum of Programmatic and Non-Programmatic Approaches

*Programmatic and non-programmatic approaches are not separate entities; they exist along a continuum.*

## Key Characteristics of Programmatic Approaches

- Pre-Structured (e.g., Start and end dates, inclusion criteria, curriculum etc. determined in advance)
- Predetermined "How"
- More predictable/controlled
- Agent of Change = the Service Provider
- Expert-based, Agency holds the power
- Doing '*to*'/acting upon
- Focused on individual changes
- Replicable
- Scaling is managed

## Key Characteristics of Non-Programmatic Approaches

- Emergent, opportunistic
- The "How" evolves and is co-developed
- Less predictable/controlled
- Agents of Change = Community members
- Relationship-based, Power is shared
- Doing 'with'/Co-learning/Co-creating
- Focused on changes in communities/systems
- Context-sensitive
- Potential for unmanaged, natural scaling

**Programmatic Approaches** ←——————————→ **Non-Programmatic Approaches**

| Psycho-educational programming | Mentoring Programs | Community Development | Social Norms Approaches | Social Movements (e.g., #MeToo) |
|---|---|---|---|---|

### Examples

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## 2.2.2 Micro-Interventions

When we think about social change efforts, we often think of larger interventions like working to change public policy or developing a program. However, as Nudge Theory suggests, small interventions can have an outsized impact – particularly when they are numerous and consistent. In EMC, we began focusing on micro-interventions as a way of complementing other social change tools and approaches. Micro-interventions are small actions that can help to shift social norms. They include things like verbal comments and reactions, posts on social media, bumper stickers, attire, etc. As we'll discuss in the next section, when enough of these small cues flood a particular social environment, they can help to create new norms.

The Bystander Intervention Model commonly used in violence prevention initiatives is effectively a micro-intervention approach: bystander programs train people to respond to instances of violence or discrimination in ways that help to disrupt the problematic behaviour. This can involve anything from challenging a sexist comment to breaking up a fight or calling the police.[150] These actions are generally small and spontaneous – so to that extent, they are consistent with the idea of micro-interventions. However, the Bystander Intervention Model is largely *reactionary* – that is, the interventions that comprise the approach are usually taken in response to a problematic comment or behaviour. Because our learning collaborative was focused on primary prevention, we asked ourselves what *proactive* micro-interventions might look like. Are there small actions that could be taken *before* a problem arises? Are there things that men could do to promote gender equality and healthy relationships every day? How do we focus not only on problems related to gender-based violence and inequality, but also on opportunities for promotion and primary prevention?

The *Proactive and Reactive Micro-Interventions* visual on the next page outlines reactive and proactive micro-interventions that can be taken at the individual level (i.e., at the level of everyday interpersonal interactions).

### helpful tip

Trust the process: In the human services sector, we are used to bigger, more highly structured interventions, so practitioners can worry that they're 'not really doing anything' when they adopt this approach. Trust the research evidence and know that this 'small but mighty' approach can work. Another challenge for practitioners is that this approach can seem like nothing is happening for the longest time – but then you suddenly reach a tipping point and the system shifts. It may be helpful to remember that this pattern is common to social movements. It may feel like you're not getting anywhere, but you are contributing to a future tipping point.

# Spectrum of Micro-Interventions

## *Proactive* Micro-interventions

Individuals noticing and exploiting everyday opportunities to promote gender equality and healthy relationships

*Example:* Man posts something on Facebook about a female who serves as his role model

## *Reactive* Micro-interventions

Individuals noticing and responding to problematic behaviors related to gender equality and healthy relationships

*Example:* Man tells his friend that his sexist comment is not okay

**Problematic Behavior**
(e.g., sexist joke, verbal abuse, sexual harassment)

### Opportunity focused

Interventions designed to help ensure the problem doesn't arise in the first place

Helps to amplify the transmission of adaptive social norms

### Problem focused

Interventions designed to address problems as they arise

Helps to disrupt the transmission of harmful social norms

**Anticipated Long-Term Outcome**: Promotes a culture that promotes adaptive gender norms and healthy relationships and is intolerant of harmful behaviors related to gender inequality, oppression, and violence

### 2.2.3 Flooding the System with Signals

Research shows that there is a connection between very small 'signals' like sexist language or rape jokes and physical, sexual, and structural violence.[151] (The *Violence Pyramid* in Appendix 5 helps to illustrate these connections.) The opposite is also true: prosocial, gender equitable signals can disrupt toxic cultures and contribute to new social norms,[152] particularly if those signals are transmitted through a system consistently and in multiple ways. We refer to this idea as 'flooding the system with signals', and it is at the heart of our theory of change for this approach.

- By signals, we mean social cues (i.e., how people talk, react, and behave) and environmental nudges (i.e., processes, structures, and physical spaces that are intentionally designed to reduce gender bias and cue more prosocial behaviours). As Table 1 below suggests, these signals exist at various levels of social organization – from interpersonal signals to organizational or community-level signals, to structural or systemic signals.

- By flooding, we mean the daily transmission of *multiple* signals through a network consistently over time. A trickle won't do; people within a network need to be exposed to manifold signals to shift entrenched habits of thought and behaviour.[153]

Remember the story of fan violence at the start of this framework? Stott's approach worked, in part, because it flooded the system with "an unbroken array of consistent little signals"[154] that cued prosocial behaviours. In his write-up of the 2004 Football Championship story, author Dan Coyle notes that "By themselves, none of the signals matter," but "[t]ogether they build a new story."[155] That's what we're trying to do here: build a new story, one that supports healthy, equitable relationships.

To do this, we need to know what types of signals cue gender-based violence and inequality, and what ones contribute to healthy, equitable relationships. In the table below, you'll find examples of harmful and prosocial signals at various levels of social organization, including interpersonal, community/organizational, and structure/system-level signals. By working with people to amplify adaptive signals and disrupt harmful ones within their settings, you can help stakeholders to build a culture that increasingly supports non-violent relationships and gender equality.

## Table 1: Interpersonal, Organizational, Community and System-Wide Signals

| Signal Type | Harmful Signals (Signalling Violence & Inequality) | Prosocial Signals (Signalling Equitable & Non-Violent Relationships) |
|---|---|---|
| Interpersonal Signals* | Individuals reinforce sexist, violent, and homophobic norms in their conversations and behaviours.<br><br>For example, they:<br><br>• Use sexist and homophobic language<br>• Ridicule men who do not conform to normative ideas of masculinity<br>• Make or laugh at jokes about rape<br>• Ask other guys to rate the 'hotness' of the women in their office<br>• Scold their son for being a sissy<br>• Tell the guys they have to 'babysit' because their wife is out<br>• Post content that demeans women | Individuals exploit opportunities to promote gender equality and healthy relationships in their daily interactions with others.<br><br>For example, they:<br><br>• Share domestic responsibilities with their wife<br>• Gently intervene when other men make sexist or homophobic jokes<br>• Post articles about gender equality or healthy masculinities on Facebook<br>• Join their daughter in participating in the Women's March (and don't keep it a secret from their friends) |
| Community & Organizational Signals | Communities and organizations reinforce sexist, violent, and homophobic norms through their policies, practices, and incentive structures.<br><br>For example:<br><br>• The executive leadership team and board are almost entirely comprised of white, cis-gendered men<br>• The benefits package cannot be applied to partners in a same-sex relationship | Communities and organizations reinforce gender equality and healthy relationships through their policies, practices, and incentive structures.<br><br>For example:<br><br>• Corporations draw on evidence-based approaches to refine their recruiting, hiring, and promotion processes in order to reduce gender bias |

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* Interpersonal signals are really the same as 'micro-interventions' in that they are small reactions and behaviours that communicate norms and values. However, the term 'signals' includes other types of interventions, including large-scale undertakings like legislation change. (The last row of Table 1, *Structural/Systemic Signals,* offers examples of signals that require substantive work to implement and are therefore not considered micro-interventions.)

|  |  |  |
|---|---|---|
|  | • Women who report sexual harassment are treated as troublemakers<br>• Journalists critique the appearance of women politicians but not men<br>• Female leaders are labelled "bitches" for engaging in behaviours that are considered "strong" when performed by men | • Organizations that offer parenting classes ensure that men are equally represented in their promotional materials and the photos on their walls<br>• Women who have children are treated the same as men who have children (i.e., they do not experience a "child salary penalty,"[*] and are considered for promotion even during their child-bearing years, etc.) |
| Structural/ Systemic Signals | **Legislation, policies, institutional procedures, and sociocultural norms are unjust and inequitable.**<br><br>For example:<br>• Women are shown preferential treatment in child custody hearings<br>• Men are given all of the most important cabinet posts<br>• National institutions have sexual harassment policies in place but do not support them through their practices<br>• Priests who sexually assault children are simply moved to another parish when the institution is made aware of the issue | **Legislation, policies, institutional procedures, and sociocultural norms are just and equitable.**<br><br>For example:<br>• Marriages between same-sex partners are legalized<br>• Cabinets are gender-equal<br>• Maternity leave legislation is changed, so that fathers can also access these benefits<br>• The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is restructured to remove gender bias[†]<br>• The #MeToo movement results in powerful perpetrators of sexual assault being removed from positions of power |

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[*] "The *child salary penalty* is a well-known statistical fact for women, as is the *child salary premium* for men. Some of this is due to statistical discrimination, with employers expecting that mothers will be more likely than fathers to cut back on their hours and, maybe, leave the workforce altogether." (Bohnet, I. [2016]. What Works: Gender Equality by Design. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press: An Imprint of Havard University Press, p. 32).

[†] Women were underperforming in the SATs. Wanting to understand why this might be the case, one researcher worked to tease out the variables involved. She found that the exam benefited risk takers because of the way it was structured. The marking/penalty structure, combined with the odds of guessing the right answer to a multiple choice question, resulted in a benefit for risk takers (i.e., people who took a chance on guessing the correct answer vs. skipping it). The study found that women were more likely to skip the multiple-choice questions than men, and this one behaviour explained "up to 40% of the gender gap in SAT scores" (Bohnet, I. [2016]. *What works: Gender equality by design.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press. p. 169). When the penalty was removed, women began performing on par with men.

## 2.2.4 Changing Minds/Changing Contexts

Psychoeducational interventions are probably the most common approach to engaging men in violence prevention.[156] Often taking the form of a program, they involve working with men to build knowledge, shift attitudes, and cultivate the motivation to change violent and sexist behaviours. While this approach certainly works in some circumstances, there are a few reasons why it is limited as a stand-alone approach.

First, as we discussed earlier in *Behavioural Economics*, human decision-making isn't rational as we sometimes think, so logic models that are based on the idea that there are linear and casual connections between knowledge, attitudes, intentions, and behaviours may be overly simplistic. For example, research shows that there is a relatively weak association between intention to change and actual changes in behaviour. (This is referred to as the "intention-behaviour gap" in the literature.[157]) Studies show that intentions translate into behaviour change only 27-39% of the time.[158] (Experience shows the same thing, as anyone who has ever made New Year's resolutions probably knows.)

While counter-intuitive, research also suggests that our standard way of thinking about the relationship between attitudes and behaviours is limited. While a change in attitude can certainly lead to changes in behaviour, the association is tenuous.[159] Furthermore, the process often works in *reverse* with changes in attitudes coming *after* changes in behaviour change, rather than the other way around.[160]

Finally, behaviour is significantly influenced by the physical and sociocultural environments in which we're embedded – and research shows that these contextual factors can *override* individual attitudes, intentions, or beliefs.[161] (For example, a man can feel that gender equality is important, but still laugh at a sexist joke when he's with his friends.) If we focus solely on individual transformation and don't address contextual factors, we're less likely to see sustained changes in behaviour: men might cultivate a desire to behave differently through our programs, and then fail to act on those intentions because they return to an environment that reinforces violent or sexist behaviours. This is not to say that awareness campaigns, psychoeducational approaches, consciousness raising, and transformational learning are not important. They are. It's just that they comprise only some of the tools in the behavioural change 'toolbox' – and they're more likely to be effective if they're complemented by tools designed to change contextual cues.

This is not about substituting one approach for another; as the visual below illustrates, 'changing minds' and 'changing contexts'[162] approaches work hand in hand. That is, you can't change contexts without changing at

least *some* of the individuals within those contexts, so that they are willing and able to reshape social norms and other environmental factors that influence behaviours in their settings. At the same time, environmental signals can cue a different set of behaviours which can effectively help to change minds (because attitudes sometimes follow behaviour). For this reason, we need to draw on *both* approaches in our efforts to prevent gender-based violence and discrimination.

Complementary nature of 'changing minds' and 'changing context' approaches

**CHANGING MINDS**

Individuals help to shape the norms and behaviours in the environments they inhabit, so changing minds can lead to changing contexts

COMPLEMENTARY NATURE OF CHANGING MINDS AND CHANGING CONTEXTS APPROACHES

**CHANGING CONTEXTS**

Changing the contexts that influence human behaviour can help to change individual attitudes and behaviours

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# 3.0 PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES TO GUIDE THIS APPOACH

Having explored some of the foundational ideas that ground the *Changing Contexts* approach, we're now ready to consider the principles and practices that guide and define it. As you read through these sections, there are a couple of things to bear in mind: first, the principles and practices in this framework are complementary, so there is some overlap within and between them; second, the approach that we've outlined represents our best thinking to date – but it is still in development and we have not had an opportunity to rigorously test each of these principles and practices. We hope that as you begin implementing this approach, you'll share your insights and experiences with us, so that we're able to extend the framework and make it more robust.[*]

## 3.1 Principles

We have divided the *Changing Contexts* approach into principles and practices. In reality, though, the principles themselves are practices (because principles are meaningless unless they are actually demonstrated through the choices we make and the actions we take). So why have a principles section? Why not simply group everything under practices? While all of the suggestions below have implications for practice, the ones that are included as principles are more than ideas for implementation: *they represent high level values, commitments, and guideposts,* and compromising on any of them puts the approach at risk. They also provide a basis for oversight and accountability in this work.

The principles identified to this point include:

1. Context-specific
2. Relationship-based
3. Meeting men where they're at
4. Doing with, not for
5. Compassionate accountability
6. Managing risk

Practitioners who wish to take this approach need more than a passing understanding of these principles. They need to wrestle with them, think through the implications, and identify ways to use the principles to guide decision-making.

### 3.1.1 Context-Specific

One of the distinguishing features of this approach is that, rather than gathering a group of strangers together for a particular program or event, we work with *pre-existing networks* in settings where men already congregate (i.e., where they work, play, learn, worship, etc.), and we work with these men to create *custom interventions* that fit their specific context.

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[*] If you have suggestions or stories you'd like to share based on your implementation of this framework, please contact Lana Wells at lmwells@ucalgary.ca.

"The research on masculinities and the engaging of men in prevention suggests that prevention work should be undertaken in all of these broad settings that men populate and hold significant power and influence. Working in these settings creates important opportunities to reach large groups of men. Moreover, because these broad settings help produce, reinforce and maintain dominant forms and patterns of masculinity that underpin an overall system of gender inequality, a focus on them is vital. Within these settings, a number of specific sites of influence are consistently highlighted in the literature. These sites are seen to promote and sustain dominant forms of masculinity and may be particularly challenging in prevention efforts to engage men. They include workplaces, sport and other sites in which men engage in large numbers, such as pornography and online gaming."[163]

## ➲ *Why this matters*

- By working in settings where men already congregate, we have an opportunity to shift not only individual minds, but also the environments in which those minds are embedded. This is important because the behaviours that are cultivated in programs can slip away once men go back to their real-world contexts. [164]

- The groups we identify with are a key source of information about what is considered normal or appropriate; people outside our own groups are not as influential in helping us to adopt a new behaviour (and sometimes have the *opposite* effect[165]). Therefore, ad hoc groups of men who don't know each other are less likely to influence one another in a significant or ongoing way. [166] For this reason, change efforts may be more effective when they involve men who encounter one another in the course of their daily lives and see one another on an ongoing basis.[167]

- You can't take a one-size-fits all approach to engaging men in gender equality and violence prevention because what works in one sociocultural context may fail in another (e.g., something that works with firefighters might not work with police). We recognize the importance of cultivating an understanding of the local context when we do development work overseas, but the same principle applies to social change efforts at home: When we don't understand the community's norms, priorities, perspectives, customs, etc. we're unlikely to be effective in supporting meaningful change. That's why research stresses the importance of "'cultural embeddedness"[168] and developing a context-specific understanding of the dynamics that perpetuate gender-based violence and discrimination.[169]

- While engaging a core group of men within a particular setting has its challenges, it is far less challenging than trying to recruit strangers to a program delivered at your agency. Research suggests that approaches that "build on existing platforms" where men already gather generally achieve and maintain higher rates of engagement.[170]

## ➲ *What this looks like in practice*

Practitioners who take this principle seriously will focus on the following:

- **Working with pre-existing networks or settings:** In contrast to programs that pull together men who don't know each other, this is an 'embedded' approach where practitioners work with pre-existing groups of men.[*]

- **Developing deep relationships with people within those settings:** Every aspect of this approach rests on a relational foundation, including the ability to engage people to identify key dynamics, leverage points, and opportunities for change within their own system. (We explore this further in the next principle, *Relationship-Based,* below.)

- **Using a variety of approaches to make sense of the context:** There is so much to understand about a given context. For example: what values seem to guide people in this environment?[†] How is gender performed in this context? How is power used? How does inequality show up? Who are the key stakeholder groups in this setting, and what are their priorities? Where are there opportunities to enhance gender equality and non-violent relationships? What are the potential points of resistance?

> **helpful tip**
>
> Remember there's usually a big difference between *espoused* values (or what people *say* their values are) and *actual* values (i.e., the values that actually guide our day-to-day interactions or the ways that we show up in the world). To understand more about this key distinction, you might want to take a look at some of Chris Agyris's books, including *Organizational Traps: Leadership, Culture, Organizational Design* (2012).

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[*] In many cases, your groups will involve a mix of genders (necessarily so as it's not just men who reinforce patriarchy). In this framework, we refer to 'groups of men' because we are specifically interested in engaging men through this approach, but you don't need to limit yourself to one gender. The reason for focusing on men is to correct an imbalance (i.e., women have historically taken primary responsibility for challenging gender inequality and stopping violence against women). All genders need to take responsibility for this work. By focusing on men, we hope to include them in this work in a more meaningful and active way.

So how do you learn a system? We suggest drawing on a range of strategies (some of which are outlined in *Surfacing Culture*, below). These might include:

o   Meeting informally with members of the system (e.g., going for coffee) to gain a variety of perspectives. (This has the added advantage of supporting the relationship-building process – an important goal to keep in mind as you are working to understand the context.)

o   Reading through their website (if they have one) and any documentation (policies, procedures, strategic plan, etc.) that they might be able to provide. (You might also want to Google the organization to see if they've been covered in news articles.)

o   Hosting a community conversation.

o   Asking to shadow key members of the system, so that you get a sense of what their day is like.

o   Participating in key events, where possible.

o   Conducting an anonymous survey to gain a sense of members' attitudes, hopes, challenges/concerns, etc.

One of our members hosted a community conversation to get an initial sense of the context he was working in. He then extended and refined his understanding through one-on-one check-ins and small group conversations.

Appendix 6 offers a preliminary list of questions that you can use in initial conversations with members of the system. As with all the tools in this framework, be sure to adapt the questions to the specific context.

- **Mapping context-specific dynamics:** You'll need some way to capture the dynamics that you are identifying – that's where mapping comes in. Mapping is a way of making your ideas explicit by representing them in some way. It's an important step in articulating, clarifying, and extending your understanding of the context. By representing the dynamics in ways that can be shared, you also create opportunities for people in the setting to verify or challenge your ideas of how things work in their context.

While it can seem intimidating on the surface, the mapping process can start off with something as simple as writing down your impressions and explaining how you think the context functions. Try doing this with your core group at various points throughout your work with them. Your impressions

will probably be fuzzy and very incomplete at the beginning, but that's okay. Mapping is an iterative process, and you have to start somewhere. By using multiple inquiry methods (see above), checking your ideas with others, and actively looking for evidence that confirms or *dis*confirms your theories, your map will evolve into something that is increasingly more accurate and comprehensive.

The types of dynamics that you will ultimately need to understand include:

o Dynamics related to gender equality and violence, including power dynamics, gender performance, gender discrimination, relationship dynamics, etc. (Gender audits and organizational assessments might be helpful here. Appendix 7 lists some of the tools available for this work.)

o Cultural dynamics, including norms, habits, paradigms, worldviews, etc.

o Dynamics related to creating change in this setting, including champions, influencers, pockets of resistance, history of change efforts, needs, priorities, etc. (Systems mapping guides may be helpful here. For example, *Systems Change: A Guide to What It Is and How To Do It* [171] offers ideas for how to map needs, assets, influencers, resistors, and dynamics related to systems change.)[*]

As you engage in system mapping, remember that this is an ongoing process – not a 'one and done' kind of thing. There is always more to learn!

- **Customizing your approach:** The whole point of gaining context-specific knowledge and understanding is so that you can tailor your approach to fit the context. This includes customizing the language you use, the activities you engage in, the examples or scenarios you bring forward, the way you frame ideas, the supports you offer – and much, much more. Nothing about the *Changing Contexts* approach can be standardized; *everything you do should be adapted for your setting*.

**helpful tip**

One of the strategies that has proven very helpful with the EMC approach is to develop context-specific case studies or scenarios. For example, one group developed a set of about 20 different scenarios related to gender dynamics in their setting. They then routinely started their meetings by reading one of the scenarios and facilitating a group discussion. The scenarios were brief and sometimes very simple (e.g., one highlighted the fact that men in the office never emptied the dishwasher in the communal kitchen – the job always fell to the women), but they were very effective because they reflected the unique dynamics and realities of that particular environment.

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[*] Other helpful resources for understanding systems more generally include: *Thinking in Systems: A Primer* by Donella Meadows and *Systems Thinking For Social Change: A Practical Guide to Solving Complex Problems, Avoiding Unintended Consequences, and Achieving Lasting Results* by David Peter Stroh.

➲ *Cautions & Considerations*

- When you're mapping the system, you'll want to focus not just on what is happening, but *why* – i.e., why does gender inequality and/or violence persist in this particular content? What drivers and enablers perpetuate these dynamics? (Note: Enablers are "the conditions in the environment that allow [harmful behaviours] to happen. Drivers are the factors that cause or motivate patterns" of gender inequality and violence in these contexts.[172])

- Stakeholder analysis tools can also help you to better understand the context. You'll find an example of this type of analysis in Appendix 8.

- The social norms literature distinguishes between tight and loose groups, with 'tight' groups being more normative (i.e., not as tolerant of divergence) and loose groups being more lenient. "Tightness amplifies whatever gender values exist in a given culturally tight setting. For instance, gender-equal contexts that are culturally tight will allow little deviation from gender equal practices."[173] Remember that while Canadian society in general is relatively loose, subcultures within our society can be very tight. You may want to consider whether you're working with a tight or loose group, and what the implications might be for your work.

- EMC members worked with a range of formal and informal settings: at one end of the spectrum, we had a large bureaucracy; at the other end, we had a loosely structured community comprised of freelance theatre artists. Challenges exist in at both ends of the spectrum, but the *nature* of the challenges can differ. In large formal systems, you're more likely to struggle with rigidity (everything has to align with pre-existing goals and priorities), legitimacy (the initiative usually needs to be championed by formal leaders to be accepted), and momentum (approval for the initiative can take a while). Informal settings, on the other hand, can be difficult to engage in change processes because there are fewer formalized structures and processes to leverage, making change necessarily more grassroots in nature (i.e., slower and messier). Anticipating the types of challenges you're likely to experience, and adjusting your expectations accordingly can help to minimize frustration.

## 3.1.2 Relationship-Based

Relationships are key to this approach – without a foundation of mutual trust and respect, effective communication, and collaborative meaning-making, this work is unlikely to succeed. And this includes not only the relationships you have with people in the setting you're supporting, but also their relationships with one another. The type of work that these men will be engaging in is challenging – and they will need the support of at least some of their peers.

➲ *Why this matters*

- The approach that is outlined in this framework is essentially collaborative in nature: initiatives are co-designed, decisions are shared, and everyone (including the practitioner) is on a learning journey. Solid relationships and effective communication are critical to this kind of collaboration. (This idea is explored further in *Doing With, Not For* below).

- As an outsider, you will need to build relationships with men in the settings in order to have credibility with members of the system, understand how the setting works, and identify if/where your support might be needed.

- One of the reasons to engage in this work is to support the development of equitable, non-violent relationships in a variety of contexts. This is an opportunity for practitioners to demonstrate what that looks like. As Einstein purportedly said: *Example isn't another way to teach, it's the _only_ way to teach.*

- Aspects of this work can be highly triggering for men (something we'll discuss further in the *Meeting Men Where They're At* section on p. 68) and can involve difficult conversations. Men need to be able to process their thoughts, feelings, and frustrations in a safe environment[174] – and that kind of environment can't be cultivated without a significant investment in relationship-building.

- This approach involves working with groups to facilitate cultural shifts that will result in more equitable, non-violent behaviours. The capacity of a group to achieve this kind of shift is dependent on many things – but, as Daniel Coyle, author of *The Culture Code* points out, one of the key requirements for adaptive teams is a sense of safety, belonging, and mutual purpose among the group. Study after study shows that the most powerful predictor of high performance among teams is not skill or intelligence or strategy: it's *connectedness*.[175]

> "The key to creating psychological safety […] is to recognize how deeply obsessed our unconscious brains are with it. A mere hint of belonging is not enough; one or two signals are not enough. We are built to require lots of signaling, over and over. This is why a sense of belonging is easy to destroy and hard to build. The dynamic evokes the words of Texas politician Sam Rayburn: 'Any jackass can kick down a barn, but it takes a good carpenter to build one.'"[176]

## ➲ What this looks like in practice

There is no simple, procedural approach to relationship-building, so we can't lay out the 'steps.' Furthermore, outlining the art of building relationships is beyond the scope of this framework. However, in this section, we have attempted to describe some of the ways this principle shows up in practice.

These include:

- **Being curious and exploratory:** Find out as much as you can about the people you're working with. Try to move beyond the surface to dig for ideas, values, beliefs, goals, concerns, constraints, etc., so that you're building a deeper, more meaningful foundation for your work together.

- **Trying to see the world as they do:** The more you're able to see things the way those in the setting see them, the more you'll be able to understand how to frame the work, anticipate and address their fears, and help them increase or sustain motivation and engagement.

- **Focusing on *their* needs, not yours.** As practitioners doing this work, we do have an agenda: we want to reduce violence and enhance gender equality. However, this approach won't work if we are simply imposing that agenda on others. Instead, we need to be looking for alignment (i.e., what groups can we work with that are interested in at least an element of this as well? How can increasing gender equality and/or reducing violence serve their needs?) Initial meetings should be focused on understanding their issues/challenges and hopes/aspirations. Ask good questions and listen lots, paying particular attention to potential areas of alignment or synergy.

- **Being useful:** One of the fastest ways to build credibility and trust is to demonstrate that you can actually be helpful to the setting. This is closely tied to the principle of focusing on their needs. What are their 'pain points' or aspirations? Could this approach help them to address those? If so, how? For example, how could this approach benefit a tech company that is trying to attract more women coders? How could it help a peewee hockey team that is struggling with violent language and aggressive behaviours among parents? How could it help a restaurant that has had accusations of sexual harassment lodged against its owner? How could it help a community move forward together in healing the wounds and addressing the learnings that surfaced from the #MeToo movement?

- **Facilitating collaborative meaning-making and peer support:** This work involves not only cultural shifts, but individual transformation as well (i.e., the 'changing minds' part of the process that supports a change in context) – and this can be difficult, emotional work. The research literature suggests that building in a group process to provide peer support and ongoing meaning-making is important. (All three of our settings had informal peer groups that met regularly to offer mutual support and engage in collective sensemaking.) This also helps to ensure that the changes will be sustainable because you're helping to develop internal supports and peer networks that can continue even after you are no longer involved with the setting.

- **Greeting resistance with understanding and grace:** Even in those cases where most members of the setting are very keen on engaging in this approach, you can expect to encounter resistance from some quarters. Research shows that change can be perceived as pain: there is a loss response

associated with changes – good or bad.[177] Furthermore, because we are venturing into the realm of gender identity and potentially traumatic past experiences, the resistance could be very strong. Acknowledging resistance and investing in understanding the fears and concerns behind it is a way to build trust and engagement with those you are working with.

- **Following through on commitments:** You undermine trust when you don't follow through on commitments, so make sure you always do what you said you'd do, and don't overpromise or create commitments that you can't keep.

## ➲ *Cautions & Considerations*

- Building relationships takes time, and there's really no way to expedite the process. If you don't have a pre-existing relationship with a setting, this foundational work could take a year or more. This has significant implications for a sector that is largely funded and structured around programs. We will need to adjust our expectations around outcomes and how quickly they can be achieved. In those moments when we feel like we're not really doing anything or getting anywhere, we'll have to remember that building trust and credibility and identifying areas of mutual interest and concern is an organic process that takes time. Just as you can't speed up gestation, relationship-building can't be put on a schedule.

- Relationship skills are a key competency in this work, but they can be difficult to teach. This has implications for hiring practices related to this work. Managers will need to ensure that they are hiring for this particular skill set when their organization is seeking to do this work. (This is discussed further in *Capacities and Conditions Required to Do This Work* section on p. 112.)

## 3.1.3 Doing With, Not For

A community development approach is foundational to this work. By that, we mean that *members of the setting are the agents of change, not you*. Change efforts are co-developed with, and implemented by, the people in those settings. Your role is to support those efforts, not lead them. This is very different from a programmatic response where we are in the driver's seat and the approach has already been determined. Principles of co-development and shared power are central to this approach.

## ➲ *Why this matters*

- Social norms theory suggests that the greatest capacity to change social norms within a group comes from key influencers within that group; outsiders have little credibility or power to influence groups that they are not connected to. For example, consider what is likely to be more effective among the members of a hockey team: a left-leaning, feminist woman from a Human Services organization modelling gender-equitable behaviours in a one-day workshop, or a coach or prominent member of the team modelling those behaviours at every practice and game. As outsiders, we don't have what it takes to be the agents of change in these settings – it has to come from within.

- This leads to another reason that doing-with-not-for is so important. Creating changes in norms and behaviours requires a consistent array of signals flooding the system – but outsiders' engagements with these settings are episodic. We are reliant on insiders; they need to own the change agenda to make this happen.

- 'Environmental nudges' and some of the other interventions discussed in the *Practices* section of this framework can be deemed unethical or manipulative when they are designed and implemented by outsiders. However, when the people in those settings choose to intentionally shape their own culture and behaviours through these types of interventions, then this becomes a way of strengthening their autonomy, not weakening it.

- Practitioners come and go. For change to be sustainable, it's got to be managed and supported from within.

## ➲ *What this looks like in practice*

Practitioners who are serious about a community development approach will be seen:

- **Engaging in self-reflective practice:** Programmatic responses come naturally to many of us – they are our default position. Therefore, a shift of this nature requires disciplined reflection. Some of the questions that you should be asking yourself include:

  o *Is the approach pre-determined or is it evolving?* If you've already decided how things will play out, then you're definitely in the driver's seat…

  o *Are stakeholders engaged in co-developing the "how"?* This can be tricky because people within the setting might look to you for leadership. It's okay to bring your expertise to the process *as long as* you acknowledge that *they* are the experts on their own setting – and while you can offer ideas about what has worked elsewhere, members of the setting need to identify strategies that will be viable in their context.

  o *Who are the agents of change?* Programs tend to position practitioners as the experts and agents of change (e.g., if you look at our logic models, it's usually *our* actions that generate all the outcomes). While some programmatic elements may be involved in a non-programmatic response, they are never the central focus. This means that if the bulk of the 'interventions' your group has designed involve you delivering workshops or training sessions, you are the agent of change, not them.

  o Are we acting *with* or acting *upon*? This is related to the question above. Acting 'upon' means that we are 'doing to' – providing a program or service, imposing our sense of how things should go, controlling the process. Acting 'with' is about giving up control.

  o *Who calls the shots? Who holds the power? How are decisions made?* If you're ever in doubt, just look at how decisions are being made. This requires honest reflection, though, as it's easy to manipulate the decision-making process in ways that are really about meeting our own needs.

o *Is our approach relationship-based?* In an equitable relationship, goals are collaboratively determined, and decisions are arrived at together. How equitable is your relationship with members of your setting?

o *Are we able to be opportunistic?* Exploring this question will help you to identify points at which you are stuck in a programmatic approach, with elements of the initiative needing to conform to pre-existing ideas of how things should proceed.

o *Are we building the capacity of community members to lead change?* Capacity building is a key element of effective community development approaches. It represents an important way to mitigate power imbalances.

- **Checking in:** We tend to see ourselves in a favourable light – especially when we have good intentions. Don't rely on your own perceptions. Find people within the setting who aren't afraid to tell you the truth and check in with them on a regular basis.

⮕ **Cautions & Considerations**

- It is *SO* easy to fool ourselves when it comes to this principle. And it happens all the time. (Think about the number of public consultations that are designed to look like 'engagement' and collaborative decision-making but are actually simply about ticking the 'consultation' box.) Practitioners need to develop multiple strategies for keeping themselves 'honest' when it comes to this principle.

- One of the more challenging aspects of this is that many people actually *want* to be told what to do. This is a difficult dynamic to manage – especially if you need to demonstrate more heavy-handed leadership in the early stages to build confidence initially. You'll need to be aware of creating dependencies and/or expectations that will ultimately be self-defeating.

- We can't be too dogmatic about this principle as there will be times when we need to 'do for'. That's okay, as long as 1) we hold ourselves accountable to the questions and criteria listed above, 2) we're able to gauge when we need to step back, and 3) we continue to build the capacity of the group, so that they can become increasingly more self-reliant and self-directed.

- When we're off the beaten path and bushwhacking our way to context-specific strategies, we're going to feel lost and incompetent a lot of the time. That's because implementing something that has already been figured out (e.g., a best practice or structured program) is relatively easy – you just follow the recipe. Co-development, on the other hand, is time-consuming and effortful, and you're

**helpful tip**

One way of thinking about the relationship between providing options and maintaining the group's autonomy is to think of your role as something akin to a travel agent. Travel agents draw on their experience to lay out suitable options for clients and expose them to places they might not have heard of – BUT they leave decisions about when, where, and how to travel to their clients.

Another idea that can be helpful comes from an EMC member who is a clinician. He acknowledges that there are times when he plays a larger role in influencing his clients, but he is transparent about that, actively checking in with them *("Is this what you are asking for? Are we still going in the right direction for you?")* and being transparent about the process – something he calls 'influencing with permission'.

bound to feel frustrated. In those moments, remember that frustration is actually a positive indicator – it means that you're working at your edge. If you're never frustrated, then you're probably just doing things you already know how to do.[178]

- Any community development professional will tell you that this type of approach takes a *lot* of time and effort – and we need to adjust our expectations accordingly.

- The group may not be up for this kind of approach – they may want you to come in and direct them in a way that doesn't require much effort on their part.

This is a tricky issue to navigate. On the one hand, you might take this as an indicator that they're not ready for this type of approach and disengage prematurely. On the other hand, you can stay involved longer than you should. The best advice we can offer at this point is to recognize that it is common for groups to expect us to do work for them initially – so don't let that bother you too much. But you'll need to be watching for signs of ownership – and if those signs never materialize, you might need to have a frank conversation with the group to explore your options.

### 3.1.4 Meeting Men Where They're At

Needless to say, anyone interested in engaging and mobilizing men to promote gender equality and prevent gender-based violence has to be able to understand men's perspectives (in all of their richness and diversity) and know how to meet them where they're at. Like relationship-building, this is a complex skill set – one that is not developed quickly. And it can easily go sideways if you have not done your *own* work around power and privilege, gender socialization, and past traumatic experiences (discussed further in the *Capacities and Conditions Required to Do This Work* section on p. 112.)

In some cases, you will have an opportunity to work with a group of men at a deeper level. This is ideal as it's difficult to contribute to new norms related to gender and healthy relationships if you haven't been through some type of self-examination and transformational learning process.[*] In other cases, this will not be what the group feels they 'signed up for' – and you might not be able to go as deep in your meetings. The practices outlined below are important in either scenario.

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[*] This is one way in which 'changing minds' and 'changing contexts' intersect. While this framework focuses on the latter, the 'meeting men where they're at' principle is critical to any efforts to engage men in violence prevention and gender equality – so we dip our toes into the 'changing minds' approach briefly here.

## ⮕ Why this matters

- The effectiveness of engagement strategies will depend on the degree to which they accord with where men are at: for example, strategies that work to engage men who are curious and open to ideas about gender equality are unlikely to work with men who are resistant or openly hostile to those ideas.[179] The literature on behavioural change further confirms the importance of targeting efforts to discrete "stages of change."[180] (For a tool to support assessing where men are at, please see Appendix 9: *Engagement Continuum.*)

- Men have a lot to gain from gender equality, but they also have a lot to lose. If we are not sensitive to their fears and concerns, they're unlikely to see us as a credible ally and/or trust us to help them transform their setting.

- Funk (2018) points out that change efforts that don't take men's perspectives into account are unlikely to be successful: "If advocates and practitioners only attempt to engage men by developing initiatives and efforts that strive to reach through or past [their] defenses, we will only be partially effective. In order to increase the effectiveness of efforts to engage, mobilize, and organize men, advocates and activists need to more fully understand and be attentive to a wider [range] of possible explanations for men's hesitancy to become active."[181]

## ⮕ What this looks like in practice

Here are some of the ways that this principle shows up in practice:

- **Drawing on a trauma-informed approach:** Some of the men you work with will have had painful experiences where they themselves have been impacted by violence (including violence at the hands of women); some will have perpetrated violence themselves at some point; others will have experienced powerlessness, and will not relate to the idea of patriarchy at all because they do not feel they have benefited from it in any way. All of this pain can create triggers that shut down learning if men are not approached in a sensitive and trauma-informed way. Practitioner training in trauma-informed practice is therefore essential to this work. (This is discussed further in *Capacities and Conditions Required to do This* Work on p. 112.) If you do not have training and competencies related to trauma-informed practice, you should probably have some support on the frontlines from someone who does.

- **Drawing on an intersectional approach:** It's critical that facilitators have an analysis of the ways that racism, homophobia, and sexism intersect. Being able to discern these sometimes very nuanced intersections and knowing how to help men surface these complexities is critical to ensuring that the same power dynamics we're trying to change are not simply reproduced and perpetuated in this work. It's also key to understanding how a man who may experience some of the benefits of patriarchy can be oppressed and/or rendered powerless by other forms of power. Facilitating a better understanding of these intersections can also support men to improve their relationships with each other.[182]

- **Drawing on an inquiry-based approach**: It is critical that your conversations be rooted in *inquiry* and discovery, rather than persuasion. In the words of one EMC member, you want "permission to loiter" in the early stages of relationship-building in order to learn as much as you can. (You can't meet men where they're at unless you invest yourself in actually *learning* where they're at.) This involves drawing out men's experiences of violence, power, privilege, and gender dynamics, and asking for their perspectives. Be invitational, drawing out their hopes, needs, concerns, aspirations, and how they connect to this work.

- **Creating safe spaces:** Research emphasizes the importance of ensuring safe spaces when doing gender transformative work with men.[183] This means creating non-judgmental, accepting environments in which to have difficult conversations.[184] Unconditional positive regard, acceptance, and non-judgmental attitudes on the part of facilitators also decrease feelings of shame that men may experience. Furthermore, it allows space to sit with men's resistance as they are being challenged.[185] Some of the practices associated with creating safe spaces include:

   o Addressing concerns and fears that men may have around engaging in these types of conversations and being empathetic to those concerns (even if they are very different than your own).

   o Co-developing ground rules with the group and helping them to hold themselves accountable to those rules.

   o Asking men about their experiences and speaking to those experiences without judgement.

   o Assuming good intent.

   o Being attuned to the concerns of others.

   o Providing encouragement and support as needed.

   o Prioritizing the need to understand others' perspectives over the need to be understood yourself.

   o Avoiding generalizations.

- **Creating brave spaces:** Safety is critical, but we're limited in how 'safe' we can make a space because transformational learning "necessarily involves not merely risk, but the pain of giving up a former condition in favour of a new way of seeing things."[186] So (and this is tricky) we need to facilitate the development of a safe space while at the same time creating a space that supports "courageous conversations."[187] In practice, this involves:

o   Staying both curious and compassionate. For example, if a man makes a remark that triggers you because it seems really sexist, work to remain calm and genuinely curious, asking him questions, actively listening, and avoiding dismissive language. This doesn't mean you can't challenge him – but assume good intent and explore his choice of words with him in a conversational way (vs. a one-way diatribe about why you found his words offensive).

o   Using good judgment to decide when to confirm a group members' frame of reference and when to challenge it.[188] Facilitating activities that help the group to challenge the status quo and develop new perspectives can help with this. For example, the *Gender Box* activity in Appendix 10 can sometimes be helpful once you have laid a foundation of mutual trust and respect. The *Noticing Activity* in Appendix 11 can also be helpful.

o   Role modelling courage and vulnerability through self-disclosure and learning *(*Michael Flood recommends demonstrating that you are learning as well by "periodically say[ing] what YOU are getting out of the dialogue" and, when appropriate, "implicat[ing] yourself in both the problems and solutions" of addressing gender-based violence").[189]

o   Helping to normalize feelings of frustration and discomfort by explaining that these are indicators that the group is working at its edge – which is a really productive place to be if you are serious about transformational learning.

o   Ensuring that you have the relationships to actually move into this space.

o   Creating space within your core group for ongoing meaning-making, so that men can regularly dialogue and reflect on their learnings, challenges, and change efforts.

- **Exploring masculinities**: Gender inequality is deeply tied to social constructions of masculinity,[190] so this is a key area to explore with the men you're working with. However, it's important to remember that social constructions vary among groups of men depending on their social, economic, and political identities and experiences.[191] There is no 'one' way of being masculine – ideas about what it means to be a man vary through time and across different social settings. In your discussions with the men in your setting, then, it will be important to surface their own specific beliefs and experiences around gender and masculinity. This includes facilitating discussions about their own experiences of power and powerlessness, and their feelings and concerns about issues of masculinity.[192] These ideas can provide a good foundation for identifying potential change points in

the setting and designing effective social and environmental 'nudges' (discussed further in *Practices*, below). [193]

## ➲ *Cautions & Considerations*

- You'll need to develop some sense of readiness (i.e., To what extent are the men you're working with prepared to engage in conversations about gender identity, power and privilege, and equality?). There's no magic formula for figuring this out – these types of assessments require both good judgment and solid relationships. An important thing to keep in mind as you are trying to determine readiness is *why* you are making these types of assessments: it's not to judge men or hold them to your own standards. It is so that you are able to provide the appropriate type and level of support. For example, introducing an activity like *Gender Box* might work well in a context where most men are actively curious and engaged, but could be disastrous in a situation where a majority of men are feeling triggered by conversations about gender construction and equality.  For this reason, some sense of readiness is important. (But we need to remember to stay humble and provisional in our assessments.)

- The *Engagement Continuum* (Appendix 9) may be helpful as you are forming tentative assessments of readiness. However, something like this needs to be used with care so that practitioners don't develop over-simplified representations of complex realities. As an illustration of the inherent complexities involved in assessing where someone is at on the spectrum, consider that the same man can be at one point on the spectrum in one situation, and at a totally different point in another. For example, in conversations with his daughter, he might be an advocate for gender equality, encouraging her to pursue a career in a male-dominated field; whereas he might be highly resistant to changes at work that are designed to address gender bias in hiring, appraisal, and promotion.

- Most of the time, you will be working with diverse groups of men who represent different points on the spectrum of engagement. This lack of homogeneity can make it difficult to identify the kinds of supports and activities that are most appropriate for the group. On the upside, however, this kind of diversity can be very helpful as it offers opportunities for men who are further along the continuum to test out micro-interventions, gently challenging sexist remarks, and offering alternative perspectives. One EMC member noted that, because of the heterogeneity in her group, the men she worked with learned how to challenge sexism in more compassionate and effective ways because they were able to try things out in a safe environment with a skilled facilitator who could support their efforts. This increased their confidence in speaking out in other situations where the facilitator was not present.

- Just because there's resistance, doesn't mean that there is no readiness. In fact, given the challenging and emotional nature of this work, we need to *expect* resistance. One EMC member recounted an experience he had with a group of teachers. The men in the group reacted strongly, and he notes that "it would have been easy to write off those teachers and say 'they're just not ready' – but actually they were just processing."

- Many times, when facilitators work to engage men in discussions about masculinity, they approach the issue from a deficit model,[194] focusing only on toxic masculinities and all the things men *shouldn't* do, and never engaging them in conversations about what healthy or positive forms of masculinity could look like for them.[195] We need to make sure that we promote aspirational visions of masculinity, and don't simply focus on what's wrong.

## 3.1.5 Compassionate Accountability

It can be tricky to figure out how to respond to sexist or violent language, attitudes, and behaviours in ways that are productive. While publicly 'calling out' harmful behaviours can help to shift social norms,[*] that approach can be counter-productive in the context of a relationship-based, engagement approach like the one outlined here. Compassionate forms of accountability are critical to developing safe learning spaces where men can explore new ideas and grow their capacity to positively shape their environments.

> "[S]ome research shows that engaging men and boys in ways that are shaming or humiliating can be ineffective. These studies indicate that feelings of shame, fear and guilt act as barriers, and can provoke denial and other defensive reactions from men. [...] In fact, some studies found strategies that shame and humiliate may even provoke or increase aggression in men and boys who feel entitled and who have a narcissistic sense of self. This suggests strategies that evoke negative emotions rather than positive ones are less effective in engaging men in prevention work, and also less effective for interventions with men who perpetrate violence."[196]

## ➲ *Why this Matters*

- Over the past few years, the idea of 'calling in' has grown as an alternative to 'calling out', [197] in part, because of the alienating effect that calling out can have. Because calling out is usually public and declarative, it often triggers feelings of shame and humiliation in the person who has been targeted. People who are publicly humiliated can become very defensive and are likely to withdraw or shut down – neither of which is conducive to what we're trying to do. Calling in, on the other hand, is not as likely to trigger strong feelings of shame or humiliation because it provides a way of "address[ing] the behaviour without making a spectacle of the address itself."[198] (For a comparison of calling out to calling in, please see Table 2 below.)

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[*] The public nature of calling out helps to send signals to the group about the standards we wish to hold ourselves to – so it can be an effective tool for those working towards social change. But the approach has its limitations and needs to be used discerningly. For a good discussion of when 'calling out' is appropriate see: Ahmad, A. (August 29, 2017). When calling out makes sense. Retrieved from https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/when-calling-out-makes-sense

- Accountability to higher standards of justice, equality, and non-violence is critical in the context of this approach. After all, we can't expect men to challenge sexist remarks or violent behaviours if we're not willing to do so ourselves. And when we call people to higher standards in a compassionate way – one that promotes ongoing learning and growth – we model the behaviours that we're hoping to see in the men we work with.

- Accountability that involves public humiliation or shaming can look a lot like bullying, whereas compassionate accountability is central to healthy relationships – something we're trying to model and promote.

- The risks associated with calling in are lower because they are less likely to provoke strong feelings of anger and resentment. Therefore, this approach is less risky for the men you're working with (i.e., when they themselves try challenging sexist and violent behaviours).

## ➲ *What it looks like in practice*

People who engage in compassionate accountability…

- **Check their assumptions.** Instead of assuming bad intent, they recognize that "the majority of boundary crossings are accidental"[199] and try to understand where the comment or behaviour came from.

- **Focus on the behaviour and its impact.** They stay away from speculations about the other person's character or motivations and focus on the behaviour itself. Furthermore, they explain *why* the behaviour is harmful, rather than assuming that people should be able to figure that out for themselves.[*] And they provide concrete examples of how the same situation could be approached differently.

- **Understand that it is a *process*, not a one-time event.**[200] Compassionate accountability is based on dialogue, creates space for clarifying questions, and potentially involves follow up and ongoing support. For these reasons, it is usually best done in-person, so that there are opportunities for two-way communication, clarification, and expressions of support.

- **Ground themselves in inquiry.** They don't assume that they have nothing to learn. They ask questions and are not invested in being right.

- **Reinforce relationships and connection.** Some forms of accountability serve to distance the offender from the community and create 'power over' dynamics. Compassionate accountability is about

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[*] It's hard to move towards true equality and justice if people only learn the 'rules' for acceptable behaviour and not the rationale. When we don't explain the 'why', we miss a significant opportunity for growth – and not explaining is more common than you might think (perhaps because the why seems obvious to us). For example, our Prime Minister's recent 'black face' scandal generally focused on the fact that the behaviour was wrong, but most of the coverage failed to explain *why* (i.e., What harm does that behaviour create?), thereby missing a key opportunity for learning and potentially creating resentment about 'political correctness'.

deepening community connection (hence the term 'calling *in*'). Our commitment is ultimately to learning and growth; it's not about blame and shame.[201]

| Table 2: Calling Out vs. Calling In | |
|---|---|
| **Calling Out** | **Calling In** |
| One-way communication; an accusation or declaration | Two-way communication; a conversation |
| Tends to be public | Tends to be private, with an emphasis on face-to-face communication |
| Often punitive and based on the assumption of bad intent | Focuses on healing and repair, and is based on the understanding that most people do not intend to harm others |
| An event that typically begins and ends with a call for accountability (i.e., doesn't usually help to outline a reconciliatory path that would help the accused to know how to make things right) | A process that typically<br>• Involves active listening<br>• Offers space for clarifying questions and discussion<br>• Offers options for alternative ways of behaving<br>• Involves follow-up and support |
| Typically reactionary; can be done in a moment of anger | Thoughtful; requires calming yourself first and thinking about the best way to proceed |
| Often serves to isolate or exclude people from the community | Is about deepening the person's connection to the community by helping them to engage in ways that are less hurtful or alienating for others |
| Typically based on the assumption that the other person is the only one of the two of you who has something to learn | More humble by nature, and based on a goal of mutual learning as you try to better understand the dynamics that gave rise to the behaviour |
| Information in this table was drawn from the following sources: Ahmad, A. (August 29, 2017). When calling out makes sense. Retrieved from https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/when-calling-out-makes-sense; (Mariposa, M. (May 29, 2016) A practical guide to calling in. Retrieved from https://theconsentcrew.org/2016/05/29/calling-in/; Ferguson, S. (January 17, 2015). Calling in: A quick guide on when and how. Retrieved from https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/01/guide-to-calling-in/; and Make Sex Easy. (n.d.). Calling in. Retrieved from http://www.makesexeasy.com/calling-in/. | |

## ➲ *Cautions & Considerations*

- Compassionate accountability requires a lot of emotional energy, patience, and persistence. "Calling out" is faster and easier.

- While calling in tends to be a more productive avenue of accountability, it doesn't always work. The other person may not be able to move beyond their dominant frame of reference, or they might be dealing with their own trauma. Be patient and understand that compassionate accountability is not a time-limited event – it's a process that can take years.

- It's difficult to do this well if you are in a heightened state (i.e., highly triggered by the person): "Most often these conversations are easier if we are not personally experiencing trauma as a result of the other person's actions, or if we are a more neutral third party acting in a role of advocacy. Do not attempt to call someone in if you yourself are feeling traumatised by their actions. Do not attempt to Call In if you are feeling raw or triggered about the person or their actions or their effects on others. Reach out for support and ask someone else to have the conversation on your behalf."[202]

- Often calling in is a private conversation, but there will be times when you will need to gently challenge someone in a group situation. As an example, we had someone in EMC who made a comment that many people found offensive. We worked through it largely by using the same methods outlined here (i.e., being genuinely curious, asking questions, not assuming bad intent, managing our own reactions, practicing empathy, and assuring the member of his place in our learning community). When we explored his comment with him in a compassionate manner, he was able to articulate his concerns in a way that the group could better understand, and everybody learned from the experience.

- These kinds of conversations can be really difficult. "Embrace the clunkiness."[203]


## 3.1.6 Managing Risk

Accepting responsibility for shifting the status quo comes with several potential risks for the men we engage, including the risk of:

- Social exclusion or isolation
- Ridicule
- Lost opportunities (e.g., promotions)
- Strained/lost relationships

While we can never guarantee safety, we can play a role in helping the men we work with to anticipate and prepare for potential risks. We can also work with them to place the risks in the broader context of potential benefits/gains and the 'compelling why' that drives them. (Building a compelling why is explored further in the *Practices* section on p. 80.)

## ➲ Why this matters

- Practitioners have an ethical responsibility to help men understand the potential risks associated with their engagement in social change efforts, and to help them reduce these risks to the extent possible.

- Risk can be a huge source of anxiety for practitioners who feel responsible for what happens to the men they work with. Unfortunately, however, risk is inherent to any approach that disrupts the status quo. While it's not within our control to keep men 'safe', we *can* and *should* help to build their capacity to anticipate and mitigate risk as much as possible.

## ➲ What this looks like in practice

Below is a list of practices that we might expect to see among practitioners who support their group to anticipate and prepare for potential risks.

- **Help individuals in your group to articulate their 'why'.** Work with individuals in the group to identify their 'compelling why' for doing this work. Having a strong and compelling purpose can help to strengthen men's resolve and place the risks in a broader context.

- **Explore the potential risks and benefits.** Encourage discussion about the potential risks associated with the actions they are wanting to take. To balance this with potential benefits, you might want to explore worst-case and best-case scenarios, so that they are looking at the whole continuum of potential outcomes – including the good ones.

- **Put the risks in context.** While the risk of social exclusion or ridicule is real, there is ample evidence to suggest that men "routinely overestimate the extent to which their peers agree with violence and sexism"[204] and mistake silence for approval. Therefore, when they speak out, *they may in fact be speaking for the silent majority and giving voice to the discomfort or concern that others in their peer group feel.*

- **Explore ways to mitigate the risk.** The way that you challenge dominant norms and behaviours can sometimes make a difference in terms of the response you get. Working with your core group to explore different approaches might be helpful. For example, if the men you're working with want to challenge sexist comments in the workplace, you might help them to think about ways they could mitigate risk by:

  o Delivering comments in a compassionate and understanding way, using 'calling in' vs. 'calling out' strategies.

  o Positioning themselves as someone who is also learning and seeking to understand their role in perpetuating sexism (e.g., *"I'm as guilty as anyone at making these kinds of remarks, but I think we can support one another to change our behaviour"*).

  o Finding ways to help others identify sexist and/or violent practices, policies, structures, etc. for *themselves* (e.g., facilitating a Noticing Activity [Appendix 11] in their setting, or conducting a

gender equity audit, or contracting a consultant who can help move the organization towards more gender-equitable norms, etc.).

o Tying the intervention to the larger goals of the community or organization (e.g., *"I wonder if the gender pay gap is having an impact on retention?"*).

o Starting with less risky tactics and building from there - e.g., making space for women's voices in a meeting (*"I haven't heard from some of the women here today – I'd like to know what they think"*) without assigning blame.

- **Offer opportunities to practice.** Roleplay various scenarios with the men in your group, exploring the range of reactions they might get and how they could respond.

- **Support, support, support...** Ensure that the men in your group have ongoing support from:

o *You/your organization* – While you don't want to create dependencies, you do need to provide support, particularly in the early stages when other sources of support might not be established yet. Make sure you check in with the members of your core group regularly to ask them how things are going.

o *Peers (i.e., others who are engaged in similar efforts)* – This can be critical to combating the sense of isolation or exclusion that can sometimes result when men challenge sexist and violence-supportive comments and behaviours. The core group you're working with can often serve this function for one another, but there might also be opportunities to connect them with other men engaged in this work.

o *Other professionals, as needed* – In some cases, the men you're working with will have experienced violence, discrimination, or other forms of trauma themselves, and the experience of challenging prevailing norms and behaviours may trigger complex emotions. In these cases, it might be helpful to offer referrals to therapeutic supports.

## ➲ Cautions & Considerations

- Encouraging and building capacity for compassionate accountability can go a long way towards minimizing risks for the men you are working with. Calling people in can help them to feel a part of something (rather than accused of something) and may minimize the risks of social isolation and strained or lost relationships.

- The risks can be higher for men in smaller communities where everyone knows one another. If you are engaging men in rural areas, you may need to work with them to develop additional ways to manage risk.

- People who have experienced trauma can also be at a greater risk for being triggered through this process. In these cases, it is particularly important to help men 'predict and prepare' for how they might be triggered. Practitioners' training in trauma-informed practice is also important. (Discussed further in the *Capacities and Conditions Required for this Work* section on p. 112.)

- There may also be risks to you as a professional. Non-programmatic approaches require us to surrender control of the process to the group, and there may be unintended outcomes when lay people lead this work. (Of course, there can be unintended outcomes when we control the process, too!)

## 3.2 Practices

We've laid a theoretical foundation for this work and explored key principles to guide your approach. Now we're finally getting to the 'how' of the *Changing Contexts* approach – the *practices*. The first three practices lay the necessary groundwork, and the next four describe non-programmatic interventions that can be used to support more gender-equitable, non-violent behaviours in the settings you work with.

1. Building a compelling why

2. Surfacing culture

3. Identifying change points

4. Leveraging the power of environmental nudges

5. Leveraging the power of social nudges

6. Leveraging the power of reality checks

7. Working with key influencers

As you work through the practices in this section, there are a few things to keep in mind:

- **The process is more like a spiral than a straight line:** It's important to note that while there is a sequential logic to the order of these practices (i.e., some things need to happen before others), they intersect and overlap. Furthermore, they're not a 'one and done' kind of thing. You'll likely need to revisit them at multiple points over the course of your journey with a setting. In that sense, this approach is a bit like a spiral staircase where you keep coming back to the same point but each time you circle back around, you're at a different level.

- **Bespoke vs. straight off the rack:** It's also important to remember the *Context-Specific* principle in your approach to the practices described in this section. We rely on your expertise and understanding of the setting to tailor and adapt the language, activities, and sequencing inherent in each of these practices, so that the approach is appropriate and meaningful to the people you are working with.

- **Types and levels of readiness:** You'll notice that our listing of practices does not begin with a 'readiness assessment.' To some extent, that's because we're still learning how to assess the readiness of a setting for this kind of approach. We've learned a few things (discussed further in the *Capacities and Conditions Required to Do This Work* section on p. 112), but we still have a long way to go. Another reason is that readiness is something that needs to be assessed throughout your

relationship with a setting, not just at the beginning. Assessing readiness should be part of *every* phase of work.

- **Yoda-like facilitation:** All of these practices require good judgment and masterful facilitation – capacities that cannot be learned by reading a framework. If you don't already have these skills and/or are not supported to develop them, then this approach might not be for you.

- **Under construction:** These practices are still very much in development. What's been captured here simply represents what we've learned to this point*,* and there is still so much to explore. For this reason, you'll notice that some of the practices are more fully fleshed out than others.

## 3.2.1 Building a Compelling Why

Consistent with the principle of *Doing With Not For*, stakeholders need to come to this work with their own 'compelling why' – a problem they want to solve, an opportunity they want to seize, or an agenda that aligns in some way with gender equality, healthy relationships, healthy masculinities, and/or violence prevention. The practice suggestions outlined below are designed to help you support stakeholders in articulating and strengthening their motivation to contribute to a cultural shift in their setting.

> "Research has found that men are more motivated to engage in prevention work when they can make a personal or intimate connection to the problem of violence against women. […] This suggests that prevention efforts could be more effective if they can engage men's emotions, which can help build greater empathy and increase men's willingness to address violence against women. Importantly, this should be done in ways that do not inadvertently devalue women or reinforce the idea that men need to protect women."[205]

⮑ *Why this matters*

- As outsiders, we cannot facilitate cultural changes on the strength of our own agenda. It has to come from within – and for that to happen, there have to be people in that setting that want things to be different. This doesn't mean that they need to be able to fully articulate their 'why' right away – in many cases, we'll need to help them to identify and strengthen their motivation for this work – but if it feels like you're pushing more than you're supporting, then there probably isn't strong enough motivation for this work.

- Change is hard, and anyone who tries to change the status quo risks a lot of push back. In some cases, they could even face social or economic penalties. To persist in the face of resistance, stakeholders need to really want this. If they aren't able to strongly locate themselves in this work or understand why it matters, then they're unlikely to stick with it.

- Research shows that men tend to engage in violence prevention issues or initiatives when they feel a personal connection to the topic.[206] This may include knowing someone who has experienced violence, or being part of a peer group where there is support for getting involved.[207] Providing men with opportunities to connect violence against women to personal experiences of being judged or marginalized and/or experiencing victimization are also some of the factors that help to motivate anti-violence engagement.[208]

- The Diffusion of Innovation literature suggests that innovations (including the adoption of new behaviours) are most readily accepted when the new practice aligns with existing values or needs.[209] By connecting gender equality and violence prevention to issues that people really care about, those big hairy goals become more personal, more meaningful.

- Apte (2009) points out that transformative learning is additive: "People gain new information, develop understandings, and extend their skills within their current frames of reference."[210] This means you have to have a fairly good understanding of their existing frame of reference, so that you know how to work with it. Practices related to the 'compelling why' are all geared to understanding and working with 'current frames of reference'.

## ➲ *How this can be facilitated*

- **You have to start somewhere.** There are different types and levels of 'whys'. Ultimately, it will be very helpful if, in addition to individual-level motivations, the 'why' exists at a higher, organizational level (for those settings that are more formal in nature). But you have to start somewhere – and that may mean that you begin by working with a few men in the setting who are motivated to create change. Your work will then be to figure out how to grow that desire, so that others in the setting begin to feel the need for change.

- **Find out what matters to *them*:** Draw on an Appreciative Inquiry[211] approach to draw out what the men are seeing in their settings, what they care about, and what keeps them awake at night. You're trying to figure out what's important to them, so you might want to start by finding out how they're emotionally connected to their setting. For example, if you're meeting with hockey players, you could ask what they love about hockey and why it's important to them. Make sure you're not starting with your own views or agenda. Your role here is simply to learn more about them and find out what they think is important. You're trying to figure out the entry points that are most meaningful for *them – points of emotionally-significant connections* that you can draw on.

- **Explore and strengthen personal connections:** Build on this to explore how they are personally connected to issues of gender justice and/or violence prevention. While every person is different, research suggests that men are often motivated by the following:

o *Self-Interest:* [212] While self-interest is not always a primary motivator, it can be very helpful to identify how this approach might benefit your stakeholders individually and/or as a group. Ask questions and be alert to ways in which enhancing equitable, non-violent relationships might benefit the men you're working with (and/or the organizations/communities they represent). Ask what they're seeing and experiencing that maps onto violence and equality issues in *all* their various forms. For example, a company may find they're having trouble retaining women employees; a large organization might be criticized in the media for their response to rampant sexual harassment; or a group of individuals might feel that, as men, their socioemotional health has been impacted by expectations around traditional and rigid masculinities. What are their pain points (individually and/or as a broader organization or community)? What are their hopes? How do they personally connect to these issues?

o *Exposure to sensitizing experiences:* Some men have had experiences that make gender equality and violence against women more salient. For example, someone who was influential in their lives may have modelled non-traditional gender roles; or they may have witnessed domestic violence as a child; or they might have been bullied for not conforming to hegemonic masculinities. [213] Draw out those experiences (as appropriate*) and help stakeholders to leverage them in ways that heighten their motivation to engage. [214]

o *Relational motivations:* Many men are motivated to engage in this work because of their relationships with the women and girls in their lives – their daughters, wives, mothers, grandmothers, sisters, etc. (This is one of the reasons why fatherhood is a key entry point for

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* This is where the "Yoda-like" facilitation skills come in as this requires good judgment and enough self-reflection to avoid being manipulative. It also involves capacities related to trauma-informed practice.

engaging men in violence prevention.[*] [215]) Sometimes you can help them strengthen their 'why' by drawing out their hopes and fears for the women and girls in their lives.

- o *A desire for social justice:* Some of the men you work with may have a well-cultivated sense of social justice and may already have some experience with activism related to gender justice and violence prevention (or activism in other areas). This can be a powerful springboard to engage them in gender justice and violence prevention.[216]

Knowing that these are some of the key motivators for men's engagement, consider how you can frame questions to draw out and strengthen these connections. Your role in these meetings is to ask questions, listen carefully, and help them make connections between their situation and the bigger picture of gender justice and violence prevention.

- **Facilitate further connections:** In addition to drawing out existing connections to gender justice and violence prevention, you can help to build and strengthen new ones where appropriate. This set of practices is aligned with the kind of consciousness-raising that has been an integral part of other social justice efforts (e.g., feminism, civil rights, etc.). Suggestions for facilitating further connections include the following:

> **helpful tip**
>
> 'Whys' are most compelling when they connect not only to the head, but also to the heart, so be listening for what the men in your setting are passionate about and (where appropriate) draw on whatever emotional connections might support this work.

- o Explore men's experiences of power and powerlessness and/or their feelings and concerns about traditional and rigid forms of masculinities.[217] Supporting men to acknowledge the fears and trauma that masculinity ideologies have wrought in their lives is a powerful way of starting productive conversations.[218]

- o Facilitate activities that help men to wake up to the ways that dominant constructions of gender can limit human potential and create a lot of harm. The *Gender Box* (Appendix 10) and the *Violence Pyramid* (Appendix 5) are examples of activities that can be effective if they are brought in at the right time and facilitated well.

- o Drawing on videos, podcasts or readings that connect their setting to the issue can be helpful (e.g., the Dan Carcillo video[219] for hockey players; an article[220] on the impact of gender inequality on the bottom line for businesses, etc.).

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[*] Shift has done a lot of research in this area. If you're interested in exploring this particular entry point further, check out Dozois, E., Wells, L., Exner-Cortens, D., Esina, E. (2016). *No man left behind: How and why to include fathers in government-funded parenting strategies.* Calgary, AB: The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence.

- **Help them to articulate what's a stake:** Through your conversations with key stakeholders, you should be moving toward identifying problems they want to solve or opportunities they want to realize. Note: We will delve into this deeper when we get to *Identifying Change Points*, below – but this is an iterative process that begins in these early conversations with key stakeholders. Once they're able to identify problems and opportunities in their setting, help them to work through the stakes, so they deepen their sense of why this matters. Questions might include:

  - (*For an issue that they want to address*) Who does this problem impact? How? What is the extent of the problem? What will happen if it's not addressed?

  - (*For something they want to achieve*) Why is this worth pursuing? What difference would it make? For whom? What are the potential costs of *not* seizing this opportunity?

  Motivational interviewing and active listening approaches can be helpful here.

- **Help to build their sense of self-efficacy:** Gender justice and violence prevention can feel very big – so big, in fact, that men sometimes feel like they can't really make a difference. This sense of helplessness can be very de-motivating. So part of the 'why' work may be helping them to understand the potential impact of small, do-able actions or 'micro-interventions'. While identifying potential strategies to effect change comes later in the process, it can be helpful to foreshadow ways that small signals can change a setting, so that you're communicating a sense of 'do-ability' in the early phases. (The *Violence Pyramid* can be helpful in making those linkages.)

- **Reflect their why back to them:** As you gather a sense of both their individual and collective 'whys', try to articulate them back to the group. This serves two purposes. First, it offers you an opportunity to make sure you're hearing and interpreting their comments accurately (e.g., *Do I have this right? Would you phrase it a different way? What am I missing? Is there anything you would add or change?*). Second, it helps to consolidate the discussions into phrases that can be remembered and carried forward by the group. That kind of 'portability' is important as they will need to draw on their 'why' when things get difficult.

- **Gauge commitment:** Once you've worked with the group enough to get a sense of the strength of their 'why' (and/or the potential for growing their motivation in the near term), you'll need to assess whether there is enough alignment between the priorities of the group and the supports you're wanting to offer. That is, do they have a strong enough 'why' for doing this work? Because resources are limited, it's not usually worthwhile to invest heavily in a group that is less motivated than you are – it's like pushing a rock uphill. Do you see potential in this setting? Do the individuals you're working with wish to move forward? Is there a commitment to moving to the next step in the process?

> ! "[T]o engage in a change process, men need both a desired end state and small steps and mini-goals that will lead to the desired outcomes. The goal of developing new forms of masculinity and selfhood widely is seen as central to the goal of engaging men in violence prevention"[221]

- **Continue to grow the core group and extend the 'why':** A core group is critical to the culture change process. (It's really difficult if you only have one person you're working with). For the first few meetings, it is okay to work with only one or two people, but it will be important to identify and recruit others to the group as you go along. Each member will need to work through their own 'compelling why' process – so you'll need to think about ways to 'onboard' them effectively without impeding the momentum of the group.

## ➲ *Cautions & Consideration*

- There are different types and levels of 'whys': an individual's 'why' might be different from his organization's 'why' for example. Ideally (particularly in formal settings), you'll want to explore the 'whys' at every level, but you may not be able to do that right away.

- Don't expect to get to the 'why' in a single meeting. While that might happen for those individuals who are strongly motivated or have given this a lot of thought, it's relatively rare. Make peace with the fact that this process might take a while. Most EMC members found that they had to start small and build up on those conversations over a series of meetings.

- How quickly you can move depends on the relationship you have with the individuals you're working with. Remember that more emotionally challenging activities like *Gender Box* require a foundation of trust.

- This is an iterative process, so you can expect the 'whys' to grow or change over time. For this reason (and because it's a helpful motivating tool), it's good practice to occasionally help the group to revisit the 'whys' they've articulated.

- *All* of the practices outlined in this framework are dependent on good facilitation skills – but this one particularly. You need to be able to read where men are at and figure out what would be helpful to move the group forward. These are not skills that can be learned by reading a framework like this; practitioners need to come equipped with these skills – which has implications for organizations that are hiring for this type of work. (This is discussed further in the *Capacities and Conditions Required to Do this Work* section on p. 112.)

- If you and the group decide to move forward, you may want to ask whether there is another layer of leadership that you should connect with before deciding how to proceed. Leadership buy-in is critical when you are trying to implement broader organizational or institutional change (e.g., changing recruiting protocols or hiring practices). However, in situations where your group is wanting to change things that are not wholly influenced by leadership (e.g., sexist jokes in the lunchroom), it may not be necessary.

## 3.2.2 Surfacing Culture

Social norms and behaviours are transmitted through culture – so culture is a key starting point for interventions intended to amplify positive norms and disrupt negative ones. The problem with culture is that our own (be it family culture, organizational culture, ethnic culture, or some other kind of culture) feels natural, and therefore is largely invisible to us. Consider the following quote: "We dwell within the pool of our shared cultural system, much as fish dwell within water. Most of the time, fish pay no attention at all to the water. They are one with it. They move within it and are moved by its currents. It is their medium. Similarly, human beings dwell within their meaning-making systems without thinking about the system itself. In this way children grow into a complex web of acquired habits of thought and action without even trying to do so. It just seems to happen. But what is a people to do if the aggregate effect of their collective habits of thought and behaviour is life-threatening to themselves and future generations?"[222]

As long as our meaning-making systems feel natural or inevitable to us, we have no real way of examining and/or changing them. So we need to figure out how to make the 'water' we're swimming in visible. Your role in this phase of work is to support members of the setting to identify the particular pool that they're swimming in by helping them to surface relevant cultural dynamics and notice how social norms and behaviours show up within their context. This work provides a foundation for co-designing more meaningful interventions because it helps the group to move beyond surface-level dynamics to identify the drivers and enablers that impact behaviour.

> "The word culture comes from the Latin *cultura* which means to cultivate. Agriculture refers to the cultivation of plants, aquaculture to the cultivation of sea creatures. Similarly, culture refers to the system and environment in which humans are cultivated – it is the ground out of which we grow. Culture is the accumulation of influences, patterns and resources that can be accessed, learned, and built upon from one generation to the next. Through things like social norms, customs, prohibitions, and belief systems, culture transmits a complex web of rules that tells people what to pay attention to, what to care about, what to take responsibility for, and what to do in any given situation. In this way, culture shapes our attitudes, values, priorities, decisions, and behaviors."[223]

## ➲ Why This Matters

- Evolutionary biologist Mark Pagel points out that culture works "by coming to exercise a form of mind control over us,"[224] subtly telling us what to think, how to behave, and what to care about. By actively working to surface culture, we are better able to critically examine and potentially reconstruct our 'acquired habits of thought and action'. Given how central culture is to shaping behaviour, the process of making the specific dynamics and influences of our cultures salient is critical to the design of effective behaviour change interventions.

- In addition to potentially offering stakeholders a more sophisticated understanding of their context, this phase of work can also help to build their capacity for structural analyses as they begin to identify the forces that drive behaviour.

## ➲ How this can be facilitated

- **Lay the foundation:** You'll need to help the group understand why surfacing culture is so critical to change efforts. To do this, you might want to use the quote included at the beginning of this section and work with them to think through the implications.

- **Facilitate processes to surface culture:** The activities outlined below can help groups to make their own culture more visible, so that they're able to discern and leverage promising change points. Use as many of these as you feel is appropriate, being sure to modify them as needed.

  o *Noticing Activity* – EMC members found the Noticing Activity (Appendix 11) to be a powerful tool for raising a group's awareness of how their culture functions. The activity can be done as a one-off activity or it can be used as an ongoing exercise. You can also use the activity as is or work with the setting to design your own. (For example, instead of doing the activity as outlined, your setting might choose to simply have participants go through a whole day trying to see their environment through the eyes of someone who is another gender or someone who has a different role/level of authority.)

  o *Iceberg Activity* – Use the culture iceberg (Appendix 12) to facilitate a discussion around what lies below the surface of a galvanizing event or issue.

  o *Interviews (Pairs)* **–** Have people partner with someone who might have a very different experience of the setting (e.g., they are of a different gender or sexuality, they occupy a different place in the organizational hierarchy, etc.).

> **helpful tip**
>
> A facilitator in one of our settings used the Noticing Activity as a regular check-in exercise. She asked the men in her group to build the activity into their day and report their findings each time the group met. This was a powerful way of tracking the changes that were happening in the men she worked with as their insights evolved over time.

- o *Interviews (External Interviewer)* – Some settings may want to hire an external consultant to interview key stakeholders about what they're seeing in their setting and create a report that can be shared with the group.

- o *Participant Observation Research* – Contract a consultant to observe the dynamics in the setting and report back to the group. This is sometimes referred to as <u>participant observation</u>[225] or <u>ethnographic</u>[226] research.

- o *Anonymous Survey* – Conduct a survey to surface the attitudes and behaviours of people in the setting. (This is discussed further in *Leveraging the Power of Reality Checks*, below.) Note: When possible, use tools and surveys that already exist within the setting (e.g., many organizations use employee engagement or feedback surveys – you may want to add a few questions to these surveys to increase your understanding of the setting's culture).

- **Debrief the activity/activities:** An activity is only effective if stakeholders are supported to make meaning out of their experience, so high-quality debriefing is crucial. (Note: Suggestions for debriefing these activities are included in the appendices with the activities.) The discussions that ensue from these activities lead nicely into the next phase of work (*Identifying Opportunities for Change*). In fact, the next phase of work is so integrally connected to the debrief of this phase that in many cases they will happen simultaneously (i.e., as you debrief the activity, you will identify areas for change).

## ➲ Cautions & Considerations

- Thinking about changing culture can feel a bit overwhelming and out of our control. But there are a couple of things to keep in mind:

- o First, culture is not some big monolithic thing; it's comprised of a whole bunch of subcultures. So while Calgary itself shares a certain culture, it is comprised of a range of *smaller* cultures that govern millions of social networks, workplaces, families, etc. – and we know from social network theory that it is possible to shift those networks by working with key influencers to transmit different norms, values, and behaviours through the network.[227]

- o Second, there are some important parallels between natural ecology and human ecology, and these provide a reason to be hopeful. Think about an old-growth forest, for example. What we notice are the plants and trees, but what actually supports that growth are the nutrients and micro-organisms in the soil – bacteria, fungi, algae, protozoa. Similarly, culture (which is effectively 'the soil out of which humans grow') is created and sustained by millions of micro-players just like us – and when enough small players send enough signals, the culture shifts.[228]

- The more specific your group can get during this phase, the better. Having a detailed sense of specific norms, behaviours, drivers, enablers, and incentives/disincentives will make the next phase of the process more productive.

### 3.2.3 Identifying Opportunities for Change

This phase of work goes hand-in-hand with surfacing culture. This is where you begin to identify specific elements of the sociocultural system that, if changed, would have a positive effect on how those within the system operate. Some of these dynamics will come out when you facilitate activities and discussions about elements within the culture that are producing harmful or unequitable behaviours. However, in this phase you add a *diagnostic/strategic lens* and decide which elements can be most effectively leveraged to create change.

The focus here is not just on what is happening, but *why.* Why do gender inequality and/or harmful behaviours continue to exist in this particular context? What drivers or enablers serve to motivate and/or sustain the behaviours?[229] Once you've identified some of the key factors involved, you will support your group to identify which ones they want to focus their change efforts on.


helpful tip

In some cases, you will have been brought into an organization to achieve a specific goal rather then address a problem. For example, you might have been contacted to help a company create the conditions whereby they are better able to retain women employees. The same basic process outlined here still applies. (In fact, often, achieving a positive goal like staff retention involves addressing problematic behaviours in the system.)

➲ *Why this matters*

- Clarity and consensus around agreed-upon change is critical to moving forward in a way that is cohesive enough to effect change.

- The interventions you develop have to match the nature of the challenge you want to address. For example, social norms approaches won't work if the behaviour you want to change is not influenced by norms and social pressures. Designing an effective theory of change, therefore, requires a deep understanding of the nature of the problem.

- Fuzzy goals can lead to fuzzy outcomes. Having a good understanding of the specific dynamics and behaviours you want to change lays the foundation for targeted change efforts.


helpful tip

Not all of our behaviours are the result of a social norm. Some are simply pragmatic. For example, if you use an umbrella when it rains, it's probably because you don't want to get wet, and not because you feel social pressure to do so. Appendix 4 offers a decision tree for sorting out whether a particular behaviour is the result of a social norm.

➲ *How this can be facilitated*

The process for supporting the group to identify change points might look like this:

- **Identify the issue and the specific behaviours associated with it:** Ask the group to identify an issue they want to address and the specific behaviours that are associated with it (e.g., women's voices are shut down in meetings, sexist jokes are rampant in the lunchroom, management turns a blind eye to bullying and harassment). If there are a lot of behaviours, look for patterns and cluster them together. You may also need to have the group select the behaviours that they most want to focus on as there may not be time to unpack all of them.

- **Paint a detailed picture:** Ask the group to describe how these behaviours manifest, and draw out the specifics, so that the group shares a *detailed* understanding of how and when the behaviours are showing up in the system. For example, you might ask:

  - Is this an isolated behaviour (one or two people) or is there a pattern? Isolated incidents suggest the need to confront particular individuals, whereas patterns of behaviour suggest that something structural is at play – a social norm, a set of incentives, flawed processes, etc.

  - If it's a pattern,

    - In what circumstances does this behaviour tend to happen? (Understanding when it does and doesn't happen can offer information about the conditions required to support the behaviour as well as those conditions that tend to supress it.)

    - Who is enacting the behaviour – and what are their specific "interests, needs and motivations?"[230] (Identifying the specific group that is perpetuating the behaviour can help you to more effectively target interventions.)

    - Are there significant exceptions or 'positive deviants' who fit the general profile of those who exhibit the behaviour but do not indulge in it themselves? Understanding more about how and why these people abstain from a negative behaviour or exhibit positive behaviours can be a very fruitful source of information when designing interventions.[231] (For more information, please see 'Positive Deviance' in the glossary.)

  - You should end up with a detailed profile for each behaviour.

- **Develop a theory about what's causing the behaviour:** Draw on the detailed behaviour profile that you built in the previous step to develop a theory about what is driving and/or enabling the behaviour. (Drivers are factors that cause or motivate a particular behaviour; enablers are "conditions in the environment"[232] that allow the behaviour to happen.) For example, is the behaviour supported or driven by:

  - Social pressure to conform to a social norm (i.e., behaviours that individuals, groups or organizations follow because "they believe others do it […] and/or because they think others expect them to do it")?

  - Organizational policies?

  - Flawed processes (e.g., processes that allow for bias)?

  - Lack of oversight?

o   Lack of enforcement?[*]

Dig deep to gather as much information as possible. For example, if a social norm is driving behaviour:

o   What is the 'unwritten rule' underlying the norm?

o   Whose norm is it? (i.e., "Who is the 'group' that holds and enforces the norm?"[233])

o   Is it a direct norm or an indirect norm?[†]

o   How strong is the norm? (i.e., Is the behaviour considered obligatory or optional?) [234]

o   What social pressures (sanctions or rewards) are associated with the norm? (What are the potential consequences of violating the norm? [235])

Make sure you go back as far in the causal chain as you can. For example, if ineffectual whistle-blowing processes are identified as an enabling factor, dig deeper to understand *why* the processes are weak. This would include not only looking at flaws in the processes themselves, but also at the social and organizational dynamics that gave rise to weak processes and the conditions that allow them to persist.

- **Test your theory (where possible):** The interventions that the group designs will only be effective to the extent that they are working on the actual enablers and drivers of the behaviour, so it's important that the causal chain we develop is as accurate as possible. This may mean that your group needs to do some additional research to confirm their theories. For example, if the issue they're trying to address is that the organization is unable to retain women employees, then they might want to review data from exit interviews and complaint processes, and/or ask women within the organization what would make them want to stay with the organization.

- **Prioritize the points in the causal chain that the group wishes to target:** By now, you will have identified a range of potential change points. While a comprehensive strategy would involve working on all of the most significant factors, smaller groups are unlikely to have the capacity for that kind of approach, so you'll likely have to work with them to identify some promising starting points. There are a couple of ways to facilitate the prioritization process. The first is to identify the decision-making criteria that the group would like to use to determine the most promising change points. Another is to have them deliberate based on quick wins/low hanging fruit and potential impact. You can do this by asking participants:

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[*] This is just a sampling of prompts you could use – and not all of them will apply to your setting. Just use those that are relevant and think about other prompts that you could add to the list.

[†] It is important to understand the role that indirect norms can have on behaviour. For example, a particular man might find homophobic slurs abhorrent, but not say anything to discourage the behaviour in others because he's a polite Canadian. The indirect norm that is dictating behaviour in that instance is, *'You don't openly challenge people or call them out on their behaviour because it's considered impolite.'*

- o Which change points would be <u>easiest to change</u> or likely to produce 'quick wins'? Explore their rationale (i.e., Why do they think they'd be easy?). Circle each of the 'quick win' change points with one colour of felt pen.

- o Which change points do they think would be <u>most helpful or significant</u> (i.e., if we could just change that dynamic or policy or behaviour, it would make a huge difference)? Ask why they think that change point would be high impact. Circle these change points with a felt pen of a different colour.

> **helpful tip** ●
>
> Some change points may fit into both categories. This is ideal as it will make prioritizing change points easier. (Afterall, who wouldn't want to start with something that is relatively easy to shift *and* likely to have a high impact?) But don't feel badly if things don't work out that way – it's a relatively rare occurrence.

You can then support the group to build agreement around the change points they want to start with. (Note: There's no magic number you're looking for here – just go with the change points that the group seems to have energy for. It might be one big one or multiple smaller ones.)

- **Close the deal.** Ideally, you will come away from this meeting with a list of change points that the group is interested in focusing on. If that's not the case, then make sure you at least come away with some ideas about next steps, so that you have a sense of how you're going to get there.

## ⮑ *Cautions & Considerations*

- This phase is really about *what* needs to change; at this point, it's not about the *how.* While jumping to action can be motivating, it can be helpful to understand the full range of evidence-informed options available before the group begins to brainstorm potential strategies. This will help them to avoid always making the easiest or most obvious choice (e.g., *"Let's do a workshop!"*[*]). In the sections that follow, we explore three types of interventions that can be added to the group's toolbox to give them a broader range of options on which to draw. Practitioners will need to understand each of these approaches well enough to coach their groups on the options available to them.

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[*] Workshops certainly have their place, but they can sometimes be a default choice that we fall back on because they are relatively easy to implement.

## 3.2.4 Leveraging the Power of Environmental Nudges

By working with your group to cultivate a compelling why, surface sociocultural dynamics, and identify specific opportunities for change, you've laid a good foundation for designing and implementing interventions that can help to shift norms and behaviours within the setting. In the sections that follow, we explore three different types of non-programmatic interventions that can be used to cue more gender-equitable and prosocial behaviours. These include:

- Environmental nudges
- Social nudges
- Reality checks

We begin with *environmental nudges*. As described earlier (see *Behavioural Economics* p. 37), our behaviours are shaped by our physical environments (e.g., buildings, lighting, décor), symbolic environments (e.g., graphics, uniforms, text), and sociocultural environments (e.g., organizational structures, processes, policies, and procedures[*]). Even small tweaks to these factors can help to cue a different set of behaviours – a strategy we refer to as 'environmental nudges'.

## ➲ *Why this matters*

- We tend to focus on changing individual minds in order to change behaviour – but while educational efforts are important, they take a lot of time, whereas changes to the environment can sometimes produce an effect right away. In the context of behaviours that are causing harm, we don't have the luxury of time (because the longer the behaviours persist, the more extensive the harm). Changes to the context can help to change the behaviour in the near term (even while we continue to work on changing minds over the longer term).

- Overcoming bias ('changing minds') is incredibly difficult[236]– which is why the $8 billion that US corporations invest annually in diversity training has *no real evidence of impact*.[237] However, we can design processes and structures ('changing *context*') to help us reduce or eliminate bias.

- Evidence suggests that attitudes often *follow* behaviour, rather than the reverse.[238] Therefore, changing behaviours through changes to the context might in fact help to shift attitudes (i.e., changing contexts might help to change minds).

- The success of the approach outlined in this framework is dependent upon a steady, mutually reinforcing array of small signals. A 'trickle' won't work; we have to flood the system to change culture. Environmental nudges are another potential source of signals, and they can help to reinforce social nudges.

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[*] Note: Social norms also comprise a part of our sociocultural environments – but as they comprise such a significant part of the *Changing Contexts* approach, we've dedicated a separate section to 'social nudges.'

➲ *How this approach can be facilitated*

- **Do your research:** There is a lot that has already been learned about how to design environments in ways that increase gender equality and/or reduce violence. Iris Bohnet's *What Works: Gender Equality by Design*, for example, outlines specific, evidence-based approaches for developing bias-reducing recruiting, interview, and review processes that have proven effective in reducing the impact of gender bias in organizations. Other resources offer examples of how physical changes (e.g., more lighting in the staff parking lot for shift workers) and changes to policies or processes have helped to reduce violence.[239] Bringing these ideas forward might help your group to understand what has worked in other contexts.

- **Prime the group to be sensitive to the consequences of unconscious bias:** If you haven't already taken your group through a process that helps them to understand unconscious bias, it might be good to lay that foundation now, so that they understand why their processes, procedures, and physical spaces might need to be designed differently. Shift's forthcoming *Changing Minds* educational series will include ideas for how to facilitate this process, so we won't focus on it here. However, we have provided some resources that might be of value to this process in Appendix 13.

- **Brainstorm ideas:** Brainstorm contextual factors that may be influencing or producing any of the harmful behaviours that the group wants to change. The questions, examples, and suggestions outlined in Table 4 below might be helpful here.

- **Help the group to develop implementation strategies for the environmental nudges they prioritize:** Once your group has identified environmental nudges they want to implement, you'll need to help them develop a plan. Plans will vary considerably depending on the composition of your group (e.g., if a group wants to change company policy, but you do not have any executives on your team, you'll probably have to start by building a case and engaging senior management in the change effort). In building your plans, be sure to identify potential champions and resistors (together with strategies for how to amplify the voices of the former and mitigate the impact of the latter), and identify the resources required. While some of the changes outlined above are subtle 'nudges' that won't be consciously detected by members of the setting (and therefore are less likely to engender opposition), larger changes (e.g., policies, hiring processes) may require a more significant change management process.

| Table 3: Ideas for Facilitating Discussions to Identify Environmental Nudges |
|---|

| **Category #1: Physical Environment** |
|---|
| **Discussion Questions:** <br><br> • *How does our physical environment affect our ideas about gender?* <br> • *Does it support safe and healthy relationships?* <br> • *How could our physical spaces be designed differently?* |
| **Examples and Ideas to Spark Discussion:** <br><br> • **Décor**: The way a room is decorated or equipped can invoke gender stereotypes and affect behaviour.  For example, social service agencies providing parenting programs can reinforce heteronormative relationships and traditional gender roles when most of the photos on their walls are of women.[240] Similarly, when agencies try to make their waiting rooms more 'male-friendly' by introducing magazines based on gender stereotypes (e.g., *Car and Driver, Fly Fishing*), they can end up reinforcing limited gender stereotypes.[241] You may want to revisit some of the examples related to *priming* in the Behavioural Economics section for more ideas on how décor can be designed to nudge gender-equitable and prosocial behaviours. <br><br> • **Spaces**: The way we design our spaces can potentially mitigate violence. For example, in one study, an "overwhelming majority" of trans and gender-variant people reported having experienced some form of violence – including physical, sexual, and verbal abuse – when using gender-specific washrooms.[242] Gender-inclusive washrooms could therefore help to reduce violence while at the same time supporting inclusion and diversity. <br><br> • **Lighting/Maintenance:** The way our spaces are lit and maintained can also impact rates of violence. For example, when a US city began maintaining vacant lots (e.g., mowing, weeding, gardening), they experienced a 40% reduction in violent crime and assaults.[243] Increased outdoor lighting has also been associated with sizable reductions in crime.[244] |

## Category #2: Symbolic Environment

**Discussion Questions:**

- *Do our uniforms or dress codes reinforce gender stereotypes?*
- *Do our forms, templates, and/or graphics reinforce gender stereotypes?*
- *How do we make written and visual information about gender equality and healthy relationships more salient?*
- *How could our symbolic environment* be designed differently*?

**Examples and Ideas to Spark Discussion:**

- **Forms:** Forms can be modified to ensure that they signal gender equality (e.g., using "Ms" rather than "Miss" and "Mrs") and are inclusive of diverse genders. For example, one of the settings we worked with was a municipal government. When people in that setting began to apply a gender lens to their documents, they realized that the software used to write a ticket forced a choice between male and female; they did not have categories for nonbinary or transgender people. Forms are also a key opportunity to think about how we structure *default* options (p. 39). For example, are there ways that using an 'opt out' vs. 'opt in' strategy could help to promote gender equality and/or prosocial behaviours?

- **Uniforms & Dress Codes:** A uniform is a symbol that communicates something about the role of the person wearing it. Organizations can promote gender and cultural diversity by examining the messages they are sending through dress codes and uniforms and ensuring that these symbols do not serve to reinforce gender stereotypes. For example, the RCMP recently changed their dress code to allow both men and women to wear their hair in a bun, ponytail, or braid. (Prior to this change, women could only wear their hair in a bun, and men needed to keep their hair short.) The organization also changed its uniform and dress manual to remove any gender-specific language.[245]

- **Language:** Words are powerful symbols that shape our behaviours in unexpected ways. For example, research shows that the adjectives that are used in recruiting messages can affect whether a particular gender will apply for a job: when recruiting ads use adjectives that we tend to associate with women (e.g., 'warm', 'supportive', and 'collaborative'), men are less likely to apply; similarly, when adjectives like 'competitive', 'leader', and 'dominant' are used, fewer women will respond to the posting.[246] (Asking yourself why these particular words are associated with one gender or another is worth some reflection!)

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* The symbolic environment includes any visual marking or object that represents something else (an abstract idea, a process, a function, another object, etc.). This includes things that we overtly think of as symbols (e.g., putting rainbow tape on a hockey stick as a symbol of support for sexual diversity) as well as things that we might not think about as symbols (e.g., a uniform represents a particular function – we recognize police, nurses, and firefighters because of what they're wearing). Text is also a symbol – words are ways of signifying something else. Note: You do not need to use the term 'symbolic environment' with your groups if you don't think the phrase will resonate with them. You can simply ask them about uniforms/dress code, graphics, logos, and documents.

- **Written Information:** Remember our discussion of *salience* earlier in this framework (p. 39)? Are there ways that your group can make information related to gender equality and/or violence prevention stand out? Social comparisons are one method that has proven effective[247] (e.g., ranking industry leaders in terms of the number of women in senior leadership positions). Another is to make form letters or documents more personal. For example, the domestic violence orders in New South Wales were changed, so that they outlined the consequences of breaching the order, offered plain language examples, and were written in the first person (e.g., *"If you breech this order…"*), rather than the more informal third person (e.g., *"Any persons breeching this order…"*).[248] Note: You might also want to revisit the section on *framing* (p. 39) when thinking about the design of information.

## Category #3: Policies & Guidelines

**Discussion Questions:**

- *Do our policies and guidelines create behaviours that are harmful for one particular gender?*
- *Are they conducive to healthy and gender-equitable relationships?*
- *How could they be designed differently?*

**Examples and Ideas to Spark Discussion:**

- **Policy Changes:** Policies are strong signals that have enormous potential to shape behaviour (particularly when the setting's culture doesn't contradict the policy directive). Areas where formal policies are more likely to impact gender equality and non-violent relationships include policies related to:
  - Sexual harassment
  - Bullying and abuse
  - Hazing
  - Parental leave
  - Flexible working arrangements (e.g., working from home, working part-time)
  - Benefits (e.g., ensuring that same-sex partners can access health and dental benefits)
  - Data collection (e.g., using sex-disaggregated data where appropriate)
  - Staff and board quotas
  - Leadership and management training

- **Conduct Codes:** Codes of conduct can help to promote healthier behaviours provided they are effectively developed and enforced.[249] Finding ways of making these standards meaningful or salient to the group is also critical. For example, as part of the _Not in Our Space Campaign[250]_, theatre companies in Calgary now start off each rehearsal period with a statement saying that sexual harassment will not be tolerated. To make this statement more salient, some of the actors we worked with started asking questions and promoting discussion about the statement (e.g., *What*

*might sexual harassment look like in the rehearsal hall? How will we hold one another accountable? How could we prevent incidents of sexual harassment from happening in the first place? What could we do to create daily reminders?* etc.).

- **Gender Audits:** A range of gender audit tools and processes exist to support policy reviews. (See Appendix 7 for a sampling of what's available.) Harvard's _Women and Public Policy Program_[251] website is also a good resource. Its searchable database provides easy-to-read summaries of "scientific evidence – based on experiments in the field and the laboratory – on what works to close gender gaps in economic opportunity, political participation, health and education."[252]

## Category #4: Processes & Procedures

**Discussion Questions:**

- *Do our processes and procedures serve to perpetuate gender bias or mitigate it?*
- *Do they support healthy interactions between members of our setting?*
- *How could they be designed differently?*

**Examples and Ideas to Spark Discussion:**

- **Hiring processes:** Research shows that even when people are made aware of the ways in which gender (and other) biases can influence processes like recruiting and hiring, they are often powerless to avoid it without the aid of bias-reducing processes. Examples of recruiting and hiring processes that reduce bias include:

  o Creating blind assessment processes for job applicants,[*]
  o Conducting interviews in ways that are more likely to reduce bias,[†] and
  o Carefully constructing recruiting messages to avoid adjectives that tend to be associated with one gender or another.[253]

- **Performance reviews:** Women are far more likely to under-report their qualities and accomplishments than men.[254] This means that performance reviews that start with a self-appraisal can have negative consequences (particularly because of a bias called anchoring[255]). One way to design more effective performance reviews is to ensure that managers complete their appraisal independent of the information provided in the self-assessment. Another is to eliminate self-assessments all together. [256]

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[*] This involves anonymizing applications, so that indicators of gender or race are removed to ensure that potential job candidates are judged on their skills, education, and/or experience alone. There are now companies that will do this for you (e.g., GapJumpers https://www.gapjumpers.me/).
[†] For evidence-based approaches to reducing gender bias in interview processes, please see the section entitled "How to Design Talent Management" in Bohnet, I. (2016). *What works: Gender equality by design.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press.

➲ *Cautions & Considerations*

- Some people struggle with the ethical implications of influencing behaviours through environmental nudges. However, it's helpful to remember that:

  1. The *group* is driving this venture, not you. You are simply supporting them to be more thoughtful and deliberate in shaping their own contexts.

  2. "There is no design-free world. Organizations have to decide how to search for and select future employees. How they advertise open positions, where they post the job openings, how they view candidates, and how they make their final selections are all part of choice architecture. Why not design a bit more thoughtfully, increasing the chances that the best people are hired?"[257]

  3. Discriminatory environments create harm. We wouldn't stand by if someone in front of us were being physically harmed, but we sometimes feel more circumspect about intervening if the harm is not as salient or proximate. Harmful practices require a response from those who care about social justice and the wellbeing of others.

- Environmental nudges are not always appropriate. In Bohnet's words, "some atrocities require a hammer rather than a nudge,"[258] and unconscious bias is not at the root of *all* gender inequities. However, biases are "a clear cause of inequality, and behavioral designs can accomplish things that hammers cannot. There is no better tool in that toolbox to harvest some of the lowest hanging fruit. Women should not have to choose between competence and likability,[*] nor should organizations and society be deprived of their best talent."[259]

## 3.2.5 Leveraging the Power of Social Nudges

Another way to nudge gender-equitable and non-violent behaviour is by shifting the social environment that influences those behaviours. Social nudges are small signals (micro-interventions) that come from the way people in our group react and behave. When you're identifying potential social nudges, you want to figure out ways to weaken the existing norms and cue a different set of behaviours. And you need to find ways to flood the system with signals – one or two social nudges won't have much of an effect; you need a tsunami.

➲ *Why this matters*

- Our behaviours are shaped by our sociocultural environments and the myriad signals sent by others in the group that tell us how we should behave. Harnessing the power of these signals may be an important vehicle for changing behaviour.[260]

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[*] Numerous studies show that women in leadership positions are either considered likeable or competent, but rarely both. (Bohnet, I. [2016]. *What works: Gender equality by design.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press).

- While we are shaped by the social systems in which we're embedded, we also *contribute* to the behaviours of those systems. In that sense, the relationship is reciprocal: we shape culture and culture shapes us.[261] Social nudges, then, are a way of facilitating social learning and reshaping culture.

- Diffusion of Innovation theory suggests that behavioural norms may be changed if just 15% of a cohort adopts the new behaviour. Over time,[262] the behavioural change then diffuses throughout the system.[263] This makes behaviour change at scale far more do-able than the type of behaviour change that is achieved through individual programmatic interventions. While getting to 15% can be challenging, it is hopeful that such a small percentage of people can potentially change the behaviour of a much larger group.

## ➲ How this can be facilitated

- **Analyze the situation:** Social nudges are most effective in situations where the negative behaviours that the group wants to change are the result of a social norm. So it's important to build on the work you did earlier in the *Identifying Opportunities for Change* process to determine whether one or more social norms are driving the behaviour – and if so, what norms and in what circumstances? (A decision tree for determining whether a behaviour is driven by a social norm can be found in Appendix 3.) It's also helpful to identify the relative strength of the norm and the social pressures that are used to enforce it (e.g., How are people sanctioned when they deviate from the norm? How are they rewarded when they comply? Suggestions for determining the strength of a norm can be found in Appendix 4).

- **Identify the reference group:** A reference group is comprised of "the group of people who matter to a person's choices in a specific situation."[264] The construct is a bit more nuanced than a social network because we reference different people for different behaviours. For example, the people on a corporate team are part of the same group; however, the *reference* group will vary depending on the social norm. Consider the following:

  o *Who is most likely to influence decisions about how to dress for work in a corporate environment?* It's unlikely you'd reference *everyone* on your team; you are more likely to reference only those who identify as the same gender as you (and maybe, within that, only those you think have a sense of style). And if you're trying to move up the corporate ladder, you might look outside your team to how the executive team dresses. You might also be influenced by TV and magazines.

  o *Who is most likely to influence decisions about how to parent?* There might be members of your team who you look to as competent or wise parents, but most of your parenting behaviours are likely to come from norms that are transmitted through your family and peer groups.

  We reference different groups for different norms. For this reason, identifying the group that matters for the specific norm you wish to change is important. This is critical because our behaviour is not influenced by the norms of social reference groups that we don't identify with.[265] This can be

facilitated through conversations with the group and by asking questions like: *"Whose opinions matter when it comes to…?"; "Who influences…"; "Who do you look to for…"; "Who sets the tone for…?".* Case examples or vignettes can also help you to dig a little deeper and develop more nuance in your analyses. (See Appendix 14 for tips on creating vignettes.)[266]

- Identify *key influencers* within the reference group: Within each reference group, there will be people whose behaviours "are typically noticed more than others and are weighted more heavily by those who are trying to determine what is normal behavior."[267] In this approach, we refer to these people as 'key influencers'. If you're able to expand the membership of the core group you're working with to involve these types of people, the signals the group is trying to send are likely to be amplified. (We explore this further in *Working with Key Influencers*, below.)

- Build the core group's capacity for 'micro-interventions': Social nudges are small behaviours and reactions that cue ideas about what is appropriate within a particular reference group. As the *Micro-Interventions* visual (p. 50) shows, these signals can be reactive (i.e., a response to a problematic behaviour) or proactive (i.e., seizing an opportunity to promote gender equality and healthy relationships). Bystander programs are an example of how to build individual capacity to respond to problematic behaviours, and at

this point, we assume that some of the same dynamics apply to proactive behaviours as well.* The table on reactive and proactive micro-interventions below outlines what the capacity-building process might look like for both types of approaches.

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* While bystander interventions are well-documented in the research literature, the idea of *proactive* micro-interventions is not. We will need to continue to test this approach to see if and how processes associated with proactive micro-interventions differ from building capacity around reactive micro-interventions. For the moment, however, we assume that there is sufficient overlap to be able to apply the learnings from bystander interventions to the other approach.

| Table 4: Building Men's Capacity for Micro-Interventions | | |
|---|---|---|
| Key Steps in the Capacity-Building Process[268] | Building Men's Capacity for *Reactive* Micro-Interventions | Building Men's Capacity for *Proactive* Micro-Interventions |
| Build commitment to perform small reactive/ proactive actions that support gender justice and healthy relationships | Draw on the process outlined in the *Compelling Why* section (p. 80) to cultivate motivation among key influencers and others in the core group to intervene when problematic language or behaviours arise among other members of their group. Building the core group's capacity for empathy is also critical. | Draw on the process outlined in the *Compelling Why* section to cultivate motivation among key influencers and others in the core group to promote gender equality and healthy relationships in small subtle ways among one's reference group. |
| Build capacity to recognize a problem or opportunity | Active bystanders need to be able to recognize a behaviour as problematic before they can do something about it. (And remember that this can be tricky when the 'water' or meaning-making system feels normal or natural to us.) You can use case examples, statistics, films, personal accounts from those who have been impacted by gender inequality and violence, and facilitated discussions to build your core group's capacity to identify problematic behaviours. | Identifying a problem can be easier than coming up with proactive ideas for positive signals, but the same process you use for reactionary behaviours is likely to be helpful (i.e., case examples and discussion). Discussions might include identifying role models for this work. (*Who in your network or setting seems to convey a commitment to gender equality and healthy relationships? What do they do or say to send those types of signals?*) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Build confidence & capacity to perform micro-interventions related to gender justice and healthy relationships** | There are five steps that must happen for an individual to engage in helping behaviours. They include:<br>• Noticing the event<br>• Recognizing it as a problem<br>• Assuming personal responsibility to assist<br>• Knowing what to do<br>• Taking action[269]<br><br>Role play, case examples, and resources like the <u>Our Watch</u> videos[270] can help to build capacity and confidence to intervene. Appendix 15 offers further details on strengthening capacity for each of these steps.<br><br>Part of building capacity and confidence for these types of interventions involves helping individuals to anticipate and mitigate personal risk. (See *Managing Risk*, p. 76.) | Steps related to proactive actions might include:<br>• Assuming personal responsibility for being a "norm entrepreneur"[271] and creating change related to gender equality and/or violence<br>• Actively searching for and recognizing opportunities to promote gender justice and healthy relationships<br>• Following through on the opportunities and searching for more<br><br>You can help to build capacity for proactive or positive micro-interventions by:<br><br>• Supporting brainstorming sessions with your group (i.e., have them think about situations in which they might be able to send signals that affirm the importance of gender justice and healthy relationships).<br>• Helping the group to anticipate and manage potential blowback (i.e., responses from people who find their commitment to gender justice threatening). (See *Managing Risk*, p. 76.) |

## ➲ Cautions & Considerations

- Social norms, while important, are only one of many factors that could be driving harmful behaviours – and it's important to have a sense of the *range* of dynamics that are producing the behaviours and how they interact.[272] The processes described in *Surfacing Culture* and *Identifying Opportunities for Change* are intended to help you surface and map these various dynamics.

- Bystander interventions are most successful when they are part of a more comprehensive approach that includes modifying broader environmental factors (discussed further in the next section). For example, research conducted by VicHealth (2012) suggests that organizational policy and culture can either facilitate or impede an individual's willingness to take action as a bystander (that is, individuals are more likely to take action if they feel their approach is supported by their organization or community).[273]

- Social norms approaches are most effective when they're implemented with pre-existing groups (e.g., work colleagues), rather than ad-hoc groups (e.g., a group of strangers in a workshop).[274] Ad-hoc groups are less likely to be able to influence one another because they do not comprise a reference group. (They may reference one another within their meeting, but if they don't have relationships outside of the meeting, the norms that are cultivated by the group are unlikely to have a lasting influence.)[275] Change efforts may be more effective when they are targeted towards cohesive groups where:

    o Men are more likely to interact on an ongoing basis,

    o Feelings of comfort, friendship, and trust exist, and/or

    o They identify with or resemble the person who is providing normative information (e.g., they share the same nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, socioeconomic status, etc.).[276]

- It's possible to unintentionally reinforce harmful norms and stereotypes in this work. For example in order to cultivate a commitment to bystander approaches, a practitioner might draw on tropes related to protecting women or 'being a real man' – both of which can have negative implications for gender justice (the former by referencing women as the weaker sex in need of protection; the latter by invoking masculinity stereotypes). "Consistent with a gender transformative approach, messages should be screened to ensure they are not reinforcing other harmful norms and stereotypes."[277]

- In cases where the norm is strong and rigorously enforced, the individual attitudes of at least some key individuals have to change before social norms can change (because someone needs to start the process of projecting a different set of social expectations)[278] – which means we're back to 'changing minds' (although we don't stop there as "attitudinal change is insufficient on its own to shift social norms"[279]).

- This strategy requires that we flood the system with signals. This means that multiple people need to send multiple signals to create a tipping point where prosocial and gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours become the norm.

## 3.2.6 Leveraging the Power of Reality Checks

We've discussed one way to change social norms: flood the system with small signals that cue a different set of behaviours. Another way is to offer a reality check about what is, in fact, normative. As we discussed in the *Social Norms* section (p. 30), we take our cues from what we think others typically do (descriptive norms) and/or approve of (injunctive norms), and these perceptions often direct our behaviour.[280] However, our ideas about what other people in our group do and/or endorse can be *way* off base.[281] The gap between reality and our perceptions of reality is referred to in social norms literature as pluralistic ignorance.[282] One of the consequences of pluralistic ignorance is that people will change their own behaviour to match what they (incorrectly) think is the norm. (For example, a guy who does not approve of sexist and objectifying behaviours will join his friends when they start rating the breasts of women they know, despite feeling uncomfortable about doing so. He does this because he figures he's the only one who's uncomfortable with the behaviour, and he worries that the group will come down on him if he says something. Little does he know that most of the other guys in his group are also uncomfortable.)

The problem with pluralistic ignorance is that it creates a bit of a vicious cycle: in the example above, guys who approve of reducing women to their body parts will feel justified in perpetuating that behaviour because "everybody does it"; guys who are uncertain or ambivalent about that kind of behaviour might be more inclined to indulge in it for the same reason; and guys who *don't* approve of that kind of behaviour won't say anything because they think they're in the minority.

So how do you stop the cycle? By correcting those misperceptions: social norms theory suggests that, in cases where there are misperceptions, we can influence behaviour by highlighting the prosocial norm (e.g., publicizing survey findings that show that '75% of male students on our campus are uncomfortable with sexist language and behaviours').*[283]

## ➲ *Why it matters*

- Addressing misperceptions about what is normative has proven effective in changing behaviour. The approach was first used on college campuses to address alcohol misuse. Studies showed that when misperceptions of university drinking norms were corrected through messages that reflected the true norms, rates of heavy drinking among students declined.[284] The approach is now being used to reduce behaviours related to sexual assault.[285]

## ➲ *How this can be facilitated*

- **Draw out perceptions about descriptive and/or injunctive norms:** You'll need a foundational understanding of the kinds of norms that are producing negative behaviours within the network or setting you're working with. This understanding may have emerged in earlier phases as you worked with stakeholders to surface culture and identify potential change points. But you can build on this by presenting and discussing vignettes of hypothetical scenarios. Research suggests that when well-

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* Obviously this only works where there are, in fact, misperceptions about what people typically do and/or or approve of. In cases where negative attitudes or behaviours are in fact normative, a different approach is needed.

facilitated, these kinds of discussions are more likely to "elicit beliefs and expectations among a reference group"[286] than directly asking about social expectations. They can also "provide space in the conversation for unexpected findings."[287] For example:

- o   *To understand **descriptive** norms related to homophobic behaviours, you could ask:* If someone made a homophobic remark in the lunchroom, what do you think most people would do?

- o   *To understand **injunctive** norms related to the same subject, you could ask:* What do you think most people would think or feel in that situation? Would they be okay with it? Would it make them uncomfortable?

Asking about what 'most people' would think or do not only helps you to get a sense of what the group thinks is normative (i.e., typical behaviours or attitudes), but it also helps to depersonalize it (i.e., you're not asking individuals what they themselves would think or do), thereby increasing the chance that they will be honest and not simply tell you what you want to hear (another example of how social norms impact behaviour!). Appendix 14 offers tips on how to construct and facilitate these types of scenarios.

- **Determine whether misperceptions exist:** This approach only works in cases where group members' perceptions of norms do not reflect reality – so you'll have to figure out what people actually think and do, and whether or not this is consistent with the group's perceptions. One of the most reliable ways to gather this information is by surveying members of the group to find out 1) what they actually do, and 2) what they actually approve and disapprove of with respect to a particular issue or scenario. Tips for constructing, administering, and analyzing these types of surveys can be found in Appendix 16.

- **Broadcast information about the *actual* norm:** If your survey findings reveal that the perceived norm is not consistent with how people actually behave and/or what they actually feel is appropriate, then the next step is to broadcast that information to the group. How you do that will depend on the context, but it could include things like: a poster campaign, an email broadcast, a presentation to everyone in the setting, or a social media campaign. (Note: This approach will be even stronger if you are working with key influencers who are willing to consistently model the new behaviour – something we'll talk about in the next section.)

## ➲ Cautions & Considerations

- For a 'reality check' strategy to be effective, the counter-stereotypical information being presented has to be seen as credible.[288] Informal surveys and/or information coming from organizations that are perceived by the group to be political, self-interested, or biased will likely limit the effectiveness of the intervention. The source must be considered trustworthy.

- It's particularly important that you understand who the reference group[*] is for the specific norm you're trying to change, and that you focus your effort on that particular group – i.e., we are more likely to be influenced by what is normative among our peers and those we strongly identify with; in fact, presenting information on what a particular "outgroup" feels is normative is likely to backfire (e.g., presenting information on what Quebecers feel is normative is unlikely to influence behaviours in Alberta, and may even promote oppositional behaviours). Your setting will be comprised of a number of different reference groups, and you'll need to design your survey to ensure that it targets the group that your target population takes its social cues from.

- It is fairly common in the violence prevention sector to publicize rates of male violence against women. But the same impulse to conform to what other people are doing applies in situations where we highlight negative behaviours. Studies suggest that:

    "we can turn descriptive norms, what people are already doing, into prescriptive norms just by telling people about them. What *is* becomes what should be. People are generally more likely to adopt a behavior if they know that most others are already doing it. We sometimes refer to this as *herding behavior:* the behavior of others, the herd, informs us as to what is normal, appropriate, or beneficial to do."[289]

    So, *communicating statistics about the prevalence of male violence against women can end up simply normalizing this type of violence.* This isn't to say that prevalence statistics can't be used, but they should always be paired with information about injunctive norms that censure the behaviour (e.g., a statistic about domestic violence should be accompanied by data that show that a majority of men strongly disapprove of violence against women).[290] An alternative would be to broadcast positive descriptive norms such as, "A majority of men in Alberta do not use violence." (This is even stronger when paired with an injunctive norm – i.e., "and most feel strongly that violence against women is wrong.")

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[*] A reference group is essentially comprised of people who matter to us and who we reference (often unconsciously) to understand what behaviours are typical and acceptable in the group; they "consist of people who identify with each other or are important to each other in some way and among whom mutual expectations about what is appropriate behavior are generated, maintained, and applied. It is the approval or disapproval from these people, enacted through social rewards and punishments, that helps ensure compliance with the norms." (Scharbatke-Church, C., & Chigas, D. [2019]. *Understanding social norms: A reference guide for policy and practice.* Medford, MA: Henry J. Leir Institute, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University.). Reference groups can change based on the circumstances (e.g., the group you reference to inform how you dress at work may be different from the group you reference to decide how to dress for yoga class).

### 3.2.7 Working with Key influencers

Having identified the specific changes you want to achieve (e.g., changes to a social norm, a policy, a process, etc.), you'll need to consider who is most likely to have influence in each of these areas. Key influencers can have a formal leadership position, or they can simply be the most social or well-liked guy in the office – the *type* of influencer you need to engage will depend on your change point(s). For example, if you want to change organizational policy, you'll need a champion from senior management. But if you're trying to reduce sexist jokes in the lunchroom, your most influential person might not be someone in a position of authority; it might just be the comedian in the group, and/or the guy who has great relationships with those who frequent the lunchroom, and/or the guy whose opinion about what's appropriate matters to the target group. Engaging those who have the power to enact formal changes (e.g., in the case of policies and procedures) or influence norms is critical to the change process.

### ➲ *Why this matters*

- This approach is about flooding the system with signals – but not all signals are equal. For example, normative signals transmitted by people we don't like or respect are unlikely to impact our behaviours, whereas those sent by people we identify with, feel a connection to, and/or admire are much more likely to influence us.[291] Research on social norms and innovation shows that new norms are most likely to be picked up when the people that are transmitting the norm are similar to the target group (e.g., similar age, socioeconomic status, religion, sexuality, etc.).[292]

- Key influencers are critical to the change process because they can serve to legitimize the change, model the change for others (role models are a key source of behavioural learning), reduce barriers, and create momentum. Conversely, when influencers are *not* on board, they can serve to block change.[293]

**helpful tip**

If you're wondering why the *Key Influencers* section doesn't come earlier in the framework (i.e., why you don't start by identifying key influencers in a setting and work with them to implement change), it's because 'influence' is not an absolute quality – it's context-specific. People have influence in different spheres and over different things. So while it's probably a good idea to engage influencers early in the process, you'll have to re-evaluate the composition of your core group once you've identified your specific change points to determine whether the people you have engaged to this point can really help to create the change the group wants to achieve, or whether you'll need to seek out additional members.

- Key influencers (called *social referents* in the norms literature) are critical to norms change.[294] Social referents are people whose beliefs and behaviours are 'psychologically salient' – that is, they are noticed more than others.[295] While these referents may not be high in status or be formal leaders, their salience comes from the personal connection they have to individuals in the group as well as the number of connections they have throughout the target group/community.[296]

## ➲ *How this can be facilitated*

- **Identify key influencers:** Work with your core group to identify people who are most likely to be able to shift the dynamics related to each of the specific change points you've identified. (Keep in mind that the influencers may be different across change points. For example, someone who has the institutional influence to implement gender-equitable hiring quotas or make changes to the benefits package may not have the social influence to shift how men talk about women at the water cooler, so you need to consider potential influencers within the context of the change point.) How you do that will depend a bit on the group you're working with, but the practice literature suggests that people tend to struggle with exercises that ask them to identify and rank key influencers (e.g., *"Select the three most important people in your life whose opinions you listen to about roles of women and men in your household"*[297]). Instead, social norms guides suggest a more informal, conversational approach.[298]

  One way to approach it is to divide your change points into changes that require people with formal authority (e.g., policy decisions) and those that require people with social capital (e.g., social norms).[*] Identifying influencers for changes to an

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## helpful tip

Influencers can be divided into two groups: *formal* and *informal* influencers. Formal influencers have power by virtue of their position within an organization or system. Informal influencers are people with social capital. They might not have a formal position, but people reference them to determine how they should behave.

Formal influencers are relatively easy to identify – you can just look at an 'org chart' and find the people listed at the top. Identifying *informal* influencers (e.g., people who have social capital or are looked up to by the group but have no formal power) can be a little trickier. In those cases, the following questions might help:

- Who do you go to for advice on different issues?
- Who do your co-workers [or teammates or friends, etc.] go to for advice?
- Who is the 'life of the party'?
- What person is spoken of respectfully by others in the group?
- Who in the group do others emulate?
- Who in the group knows or connects frequently with other groups?
- Whose opinion in the group is valued by others?
- Who in the group enjoys the company of others?

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[*] This is a bit of an over-simplification as both types of influencers can be helpful to any change point. For example, while formal influencers are needed to implement a new policy, informal influencers might aid this effort by influencing people within that setting, so that they are more likely to see the benefits of the new direction and adopt, rather than resist, it.

organization's structure, policy, or procedures is probably relatively easy as you can generally figure that out from the organizational chart. Identifying influencers related to specific social norms or behaviours might be more challenging.

For people who can influence social norms change, you'll want to consider two key characteristics:

o *Quantity* of connections: Well-known individuals who have connections to lots of people within the group may have influence simply because of their reach – and because they're highly visible in the network, their behaviour is more likely to be observed. They are also more likely to serve as a bridge across various sub-groups within the setting, so that the norm or behaviour can be diffused more widely. One way to identify people with a lot of connections is by asking your group who they think seems to know everyone in the setting or who has the most relationships. Informal surveys are another option (e.g., in one study, the researchers identified highly connected influencers simply by asking students who they had hung out with that week. Social referents were those who were identified the most).[299]

o *Quality* of connections: People who are admired, well-liked, respected, and/or to whom other people feel attached are another type of influencer. The signals they send are more likely to resonate with the group because they are looked to as a reference for appropriate or desired behaviour.

- **Connect with key influencers:** If the members of your group don't have the power to influence the change(s) they wish to implement and decide they need to attract others to the group, then they'll need to decide on the best strategy for engaging key influencers. To do this, you'll likely need to figure out how to align the work of your group with the interests and priorities of the people you're trying to engage. In some cases, you might need to develop a business case; in others, you might need to draw on personal allegiances and/or figure out how your cause connects to the experiences, passions, values, or priorities of the key influencers.

- **Cultivate capacity and commitment among key influencers:** The same principles and processes that have guided your practices with the core group will need to be applied to key influencers. That is, you'll need to build relationships, develop a compelling why, and build their capacity to develop new norms and make them salient within the system.

- **Build a plan:** It's helpful if your group can collectively work to pull all of this together in a written plan that outlines 1) what each change initiative will require (methods/steps), 2) who will be responsible for what, 3) when you will complete each step, and 4) how you will know if the intervention(s) is working (What change would you expect to see? What indicators would you look for?).

- **Support, support, support:** The people that you are working with (including key influencers) will require lots of support throughout this process. Ideally, you will help to create the conditions whereby they're able to support *each other*, becoming less and less reliant on you to guide and bolster the group. One of the ways that EMC members did this was to have regular meetings with the core group to help them process what they were seeing and experiencing and be supported in

making meaning of it all. They modelled effective facilitation processes and structures for the group with the idea that eventually the group will be able to run itself.

## ➲ *Cautions & Considerations*

- Some EMC members worried that this approach felt a bit 'transactional' (i.e., "We're engaging you because we need something from you"). Unfortunately, however, social change is dependent upon engaging people who have influence over how others construct their values, priorities, responsibilities, actions, and ideas about what is normative – so engaging key influencers isn't really optional if we are serious about creating more just, equitable, and safe communities. However, that doesn't mean that you need to treat key informants in a transactional manner – in fact, unless you can help them to see how the change efforts align with their own values, priorities, and/or self-interest, they're unlikely to engage. There has to be something in it for them.

- It's also important that, in bringing key influencers into the core group, we're not 'dropping' existing members. Engaging key influencers is not about moving from one group to the next; it's about gradually increasing the level and scope of the core group's influence and ensuring that you are involving people who can facilitate the change you seek. To help the core group think about this as an *additive* approach, you might want to ask questions like: *What are the limits of our influence? Who else would we need to engage to create the change we're looking for?*

- We learned early in the project that if you only have one influencer or champion, you're probably hooped. People can change jobs/teams/communities, or lose interest, or be distracted by other priorities, etc. – so if having only one key influencer leaves the change initiative potentially vulnerable. It's also too much to ask of one person – the load needs to be distributed. Involving several influencers not only helps to distribute the work (and the risk), it also provides an opportunity for mutual support.

- Anyone who seeks to change the status quo in a system can be exposed to backlash, ridicule, social isolation, and other punitive measures. The *Managing Risk* principle is particularly important when it comes to working with key influencers. In many cases we are asking them to break through conceptual walls to create new norms, and as John W. Henry so vividly described, "the first one through the wall always gets bloody."[300]

# 4.0 CAPACITIES AND CONDITIONS REQUIRED TO DO THIS WORK

## 4.1 Individual Capacities

One of the biggest learnings to emerge from the EMC collaborative is that this work requires a complex constellation of skills – including a few skills that are not typically cultivated through practitioners' experience with programmatic work. Because the work is emergent and context specific, it also requires a level of discernment and creativity.

So what are the capacities required to do this work? They include:

- Facilitation skills
- Strategic capacities
- Adaptive learning capacities
- Socioemotional capacities
- Knowledge/understanding of key constructs and processes

We explore each of these inter-related skills in more detail below.

> **helpful tip**
>
> Given the range of skills required for this work, it might be best done by a team of two or three people with complementary skills. For example, you might pair someone who has content expertise and great facilitation skills with someone who has the capacity to map systems and identify leverage points.

## 4.1.1 Facilitation Skills

If you reflect on the principles and practices outlined in this framework, you'll quickly understand why the capacity to facilitate conversations, learning experiences, and shared meaning-making is so critical to the *Changing Contexts* approach. Key skills related to facilitation include the following:

- *Ability to facilitate transformational learning experiences:* Much of this work rests on a foundation of personal learning and reconstruction, where people are given the opportunity to examine their own power and privilege and explore assumptions related to gender. The ability to facilitate these kinds of learning journeys is foundational to this approach. (This is explored further in the *Changing Minds* educational series that Shift is developing.)

- *Ability to manage resistance and strong emotional reactions:* Conversations about power, privilege, and gender performance can be emotional, conflictual, and heated – and strong pockets of resistance are common. You'll need the skills to 1) not get overly activated yourself, 2) diffuse tension, and 3) help the group to work through the issue productively.

- *Ability to create both _safe_ spaces and _brave_ spaces:* These kinds of conversations also create a level of vulnerability that can be very uncomfortable for many people. You'll need to be able to manage the dynamics in the group in ways that help to create a sense of safety and mutual trust. However, safety should not be cultivated at the expense of being able to engage in challenging conversations. You'll need to figure out how to facilitate the group process in a way that honours men's need to

feel safe while cultivating the group's capacity to question and push one another in productive ways. *Meeting Men Where They're At* (p. 68) and *Compassionate Accountability* (p. 73) offer further ideas for managing this delicate dance.

- *Ability to facilitate effective meaning-making:* Aldous Huxley wrote, "Experience isn't what happens to you. Experience is what you *do* with what happens to you."[301] In other words, learning is dependent on how we make meaning of what we experience. A good facilitator will draw out individual experiences and observations in ways that help the group to make connections and develop insight.

- *Ability to build consensus around key decisions:* A lot of this work involves open-ended and exploratory conversations. However, there will be times when the group needs to make some critical decisions about the nature of the change they want to create and how to go about it. You'll need to be able to discern when to continue exploring and when the group needs to come to a decision.

## 4.1.2 Strategic Capacities

If this process were simply about personal transformation, then facilitation skills would be sufficient. But the *Changing Contexts* approach focuses on changing *contexts* – and that requires strategic capacity and an understanding of the dynamics inherent in the system you're trying to change. This skill set includes the following:

- *Ability to map the system (context) you're working in:* You won't be able to help the group move the work forward in their setting unless you understand the relationships and dynamics of the context in which they're embedded. Systems mapping involves understanding how the system works, including how various elements of the system (e.g., people, policies, practices/routines, resources, values, assumptions, etc.) behave and interact. You also need to understand something about the function or purpose of the system (i.e., what it is designed to do).[302]

- *Ability to discern meaningful patterns:* Patterns help you to manage complexity because they serve to distinguish the 'signal' from the 'noise' and keep you from getting lost in the details. Identifying patterns isn't hard – humans are built for pattern recognition. The problem is that we often see patterns that aren't actually there,[303] so pattern-recognition includes the capacity to be able to critically reflect on how you're making sense of the situation and discern *accurate* and *strategically significant* patterns.

- *Ability to help the group define the problem they are trying to solve:* We tend to focus on problem-solving, but problem-*finding* – the art of digging into the situation dynamics deeply enough to understand and define the most significant problems to solve – is a critical pre-requisite to designing effective interventions. Perhaps that is what Einstein was getting at when he said, "If I had 20 days to solve a problem, I'd take 19 days to define it."[304] Problem-finding includes not only framing the problem, but also understanding who is impacted by the problem, what sociocultural factors are involved, and how it plays out in the setting. In addition to analytical capacities, this requires good

facilitation skills as you are not doing this work in isolation; you are supporting your *group's* 'problem-finding' journey.

- *Ability to help the group identify ways of addressing the problem:* The three types of interventions outlined in this framework (environmental nudges, social nudges, and reality checks) provide a starting point for designing interventions, but practitioners will need to be able to help the group translate those ideas into specific actions.

- *Ability to help the group anticipate roadblocks and connect with allies to move the work forward:* A good strategist anticipates the ways that the initiative can go off the rails (e.g., competing priorities, resistors, unintended consequences) and seeks to preventatively manage those issues as much as possible. They are also able to engage champions and frame the initiative in ways that connect it to existing priorities within the setting.

## 4.1.3 Adaptive Learning Capacities

There are many situations where we can simply follow a set of procedures to produce an intended result (e.g., think of all the times you've done something new simply by watching a YouTube video and copying the steps). This type of learning feels good because it is fast and easy to acquire. Unfortunately, the approach we've outlined here can't be captured in a 'recipe' or taught as a set of steps; it requires context-specific learning as well as deep understanding and the ability to make meaning of complex-emergent situations. We refer to this kind of learning as adaptive learning.

Some of the capacities associated with adaptive learning include:

- *The ability to critically reflect on how you are constructing your mental models:* So often the mental models we develop aren't based on reality; they're based on what we want or need to believe about the situation, and usually reflect our own needs, fears, preferences, allegiances, habits, and beliefs. The function of adaptive learning is to develop mental 'maps' that actually correspond to reality and help us to navigate through life. (Just as inaccurate maps will get you lost when you're trying to get around an unfamiliar city, distorted models mess us up as we try to navigate life.) Adaptive learning requires the ability to 1) critically reflect on how we are making sense of the situation, and 2) check for errors, biases, and distortions in our mental models.

- *The ability to manage negative emotions associated with complexity:* Complexity can elicit feelings of incompetence, frustration, and uncertainty. Because these feelings are uncomfortable, we tend to find ways to avoid them (e.g., retreat to what is familiar, reduce your focus to something more manageable, blame one another for lack of progress, etc.) rather than making peace with them in ways that allow us to develop new insights and capacities. In the EMC Learning Collaborative, we experienced frustration and uncertainty throughout the project, and there were times when we wanted to give up. But we reminded ourselves of the patterns associated with complexity shock reaction (Appendix 17), and tried to normalize uncomfortable feelings by telling ourselves they are just part of the adaptive learning process.

- *Tolerance for slow learning:* Development of the *Changing Contexts* framework took far longer than any of us expected (and we still have a long way to go). This is the nature of adaptive learning: it usually takes far more time and effort than you think it will. This can be challenging in a context where we often expect to achieve major outcomes within one-to-three-year timeframes. Collectively, we will need to help practitioners, leaders, and funders in our sector develop a tolerance for slow learning.

### 4.1.4 Socioemotional Capacities

There are so many critical skills included in this 'bucket' of capacities, including the following:

- *Self awareness:* Practitioners need to have done the deep and difficult work of examining their own power, privilege, and gender biases as well as their own experiences of discrimination and oppression. If you haven't done your own work around this, you're at risk of replicating the same dynamics we're trying to change. You're also likely to have strong emotional reactions to some of the conversations that emerge, making it more difficult to figure out productive ways to move the group forward. (This is explored further in Shift' forthcoming *Changing Minds* educational series.)

- *Healthy relationship skills:* Relationship skills are critical for two reasons. First, as we explored in *Principles*, this work is built on relationships and mutual trust. Second, we have an important opportunity to model the kinds of relationships we're trying to support – ones that promote equality and limit harm (including discrimination, oppression, and violence).

> **helpful tip**
>
> Because it is difficult in the shorter term to demonstrate concrete change with this approach, you'll need to ensure that your organizational leaders understand the approach and are supportive of you/this work over the longer term. You may also want to consider forming a small peer support group, or engaging a developmental evaluator to provide the same kind of sense-making and moral support that we recommend for the core group of men you are working with in the setting. This work pushes us outside of our comfort zones and may challenge our professional credibility, so it's important to have colleagues who have your back.

- *Patience:* As discussed in some of the earlier sections of this framework, engaging men in violence prevention often involves strong emotions, defensiveness, resistance, and a very steep learning curve. We can tend to write people off when they behave in ways that are hypocritical or offensive and/or when they don't seem to be moving at a reasonable pace. But we need to accept that this kind of transformational learning is emotionally fraught, and changing long-established patterns of thought and action takes considerable time and effort.

In addition to having patience for the people we work with, we also need to be patient with *ourselves*. A *Changing Contexts* approach is not well-developed in our sector, and *we are all learning.* Because of this, there will be times when you feel incompetent and uncertain. And you'll probably

beat yourself up from time to time for not having handled things better. Normalizing these uncomfortable feelings and recognizing they are just part of the process can help you to be a little more patient with yourself.

### 4.1.5 Knowledge/Understanding of Key Constructs and Processes

We've already touched on many of the key constructs and processes needed for this approach. They include an understanding of:

- *Gender transformative approaches:* How to help others examine their own power, privilege, and ideas about gender (p. 26);

- *The relationship between gender inequality and violence:* How dominant gender norms, gender inequity, and imbalances in power and privilege contribute to violent behaviours (This will be discussed further in Shift's *Changing Minds* educational series);

- *Social norms:* How they influence behaviour and how they can be changed (p. 30);

- *Environmental nudges:* How physical and sociocultural spaces can be designed to promote gender equality and healthy relationships (p. 93);

- *Community development processes:* How to support meaning-making and capacity development among your groups, so that they are able to develop and implement their own change agenda (p. 65);

- *Intersectionality:* How, for example, homophobia and racism intersect with gender inequality and contribute to violence[305] (p. 69); and

- *Trauma-informed approaches:* Being sensitive to the ways in which trauma affects meaning-making and behaviour, and incorporating this understanding into your approach (p. 69).

## 4.2 Organizational Capacities

Some of the qualities that Human Services agencies require to effectively support practitioners in this work include the following:

- *Time & resources:* We learned that it is very difficult to do this type of work off the side of your desk. Instead of trying to load this work onto someone who already has a full plate, we need to resource this work appropriately. We are still learning what this takes, but at this point we estimate that it might require a 0.5 FTE position per setting. (Note: This will vary depending on the size and complexity of the setting.)

- *Organizational culture that supports innovation and adaptive learning:* This work can be messy and slow – so organizations, like practitioners, need to have a tolerance for ambiguity, complexity, risk-taking, failure, and longer time frames.

- *Understanding and commitment from leadership:* It's easier to tolerate the messiness when our leaders understand the value of this work and make a strong commitment to move in this direction.

- *Effective communication and support:* This approach is not yet common in our sector – and the practitioners who are pioneering it can sometimes feel isolated. Leaders can support their staff by communicating the nature of their work to others in the organization, and helping to connect their staff to others in the sector who are implementing this approach.

- *Organizational alignment:* This work is easier to support if the organization's mandate is related to supporting men, gender equality, healthy relationships, feminist principles, and/or social justice.

## 4.3 Sectoral Capacity

Some of the same commitments and capacities required at an organizational level need to be built at the sector level, meaning that funders, researchers, evaluators, and system leaders in the Human Services sector need to dedicate time and resources to this work and develop a tolerance for, and commitment to, adaptive learning. This might include changes to:

- Funding mechanisms, timeframes, and requirements
- Reporting mechanisms
- Funder expectations
- Evaluation approaches and methodologies
- Sector-wide paradigms and priorities
- Risk tolerance
- Ongoing capacity-building and professional development

These ideas will be explored more fully in a document that Shift is developing in partnership with Promundo. Slated for release in 2020, the document is designed to help funders and policy makers to more effectively support non-programmatic interventions to reduce gender-based violence and inequality.

## 4.4 Readiness Factors

We can have all the skills in the world, but if the people and settings we want to engage are not ready to take on this work, then it's unlikely to go very far. For this reason, we need to be able to assess readiness. However, that can be a difficult call to make if you haven't spent some time engaging with the group to understand what's possible. For that reason, we suggest that you build an exploratory phase into the process – one where you and the setting can get to know one another and mutually determine the fit.

We are still learning about the indicators of readiness for male-oriented settings, so the list below is provisional. However, at this point, it seems like the following can help to create the conditions for an effective partnership:

- *Existing relationships with the setting:* We've noted that this approach is relationship based – but relationship-building can take years. For this reason, it can be helpful if the Human Services agency

can leverage existing relationships with male-oriented settings. Interestingly, however, the approach *seems* to be less effective when the Executive Director of the agency has a relationship, but the practitioner doing the work does not.* This prompted EMC members to explore settings where they had personal relationships, and this seemed to work better. (For example, one member worked with a hockey team that her partner coaches.) However, it does require a blurring of personal and professional boundaries, which could create other challenges.

- *Compelling need for change:* The change agenda has to be owned by the setting, not the Human Services agency – so a key indicator of readiness is that the setting has identified a need for change and sees the benefits of engaging in this work (and/or understands the risks of not engaging in this work). Status quo bias is strong, and we tend to avoid change until *not* changing becomes sufficiently risky or uncomfortable. Perhaps that's why we tended to gain the most traction in settings where there was a compelling event that galvanized the group. (A compelling event might include: media accusations of sexual harassment or gender-biased hiring practices; or a policy directive; or community anger arising from the #MeToo movement; or the need for a hockey association to address abusive language from parents or to respond to hockey's '#MeToo moment'.)

- *Bench strength:* You may be invited into the setting by a single person – and that's fine. But if, after a couple of months, you are not able to engage a few more people, the project will be vulnerable. We learned that redundancy is important with this approach – if you are relying on a single member of the setting to shift norms and behaviours in their context, it's unlikely to work. We need to flood the system with signals, and those signals need to come from more than one person. (Also: That person is likely to burn out if they are carrying the load and don't have a peer group for moral support.)

- *Buy-in from senior leadership (formal settings):* When you're working with formal settings (e.g., corporations, bureaucracies, post-secondary institutions, etc.), access to/ buy-in from senior leaders is important. This is not to say that the approach can't be done without the involvement of senior leadership – for example, if a group of men want to change social norms related to sexist banter in the lunchroom, they don't necessarily require the involvement of their CEO. However, in many cases it is critical. EMC members who were working in a large bureaucracy noted that it took almost a year of socializing the project to get buy-in from senior leaders. They eventually got it by demonstrating how the initiative aligned with the organization's strategic direction, key priorities and existing polices. Knowing that their organization valued accountability and a clear articulation of outcomes, they also developed a theory of change and evaluation framework.

- *Interested in more than a superficial approach:* The setting you're working with may start off by simply wanting a workshop or short training – and that's fine. Workshops are a good way of initiating the process. Ultimately, however, this approach requires a deeper commitment – so if, over time, you sense that they're not interested in a *Changing Contexts* approach, then you may need to try another setting.

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* We do not have a big enough pool of experience to draw on to be confident in this assertion, but in a couple of situations, we did experience challenges because the Executive Director had orchestrated the partnership with an executive in the setting, but the practitioner and frontline staff in the setting had no history or relationship.

- *Sufficient resources:* Some change efforts will require very little in the way of financial or human resources. However, larger scale organizational change (e.g., shifting hiring practices or developing new policies) will require resources. In those cases, it is important to ensure that the organization can dedicate the necessary time and money to the initiative.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION: WHERE TO FROM HERE

Over the course of our collaborative, we learned a lot about implementing a *Changing Contexts* approach to engaging men in gender equality and violence prevention. But there is still so much more to figure out!

Over the next five years, we hope to secure funding to:

- Test the approach in a variety of contexts;

- Further extend and revise the principles and practices documented in this framework;

- Develop knowledge translation and sector-wide training opportunities, so that we are able to build capacity for this type of approach; and

- Produce 'Version 2.0' of the framework, integrating the new learnings that accrue as we continue to develop and test the model.

You can help in the further development of this approach by implementing the principles and practices outlined in this framework and sharing your experiences with us. We look forward to hearing from you!

# 6.0 GLOSSARY

*Note: All of the terms in this glossary are consistent with the research literature.* * *In an effort to create plain-language definitions, however, we sometimes drew on the phrasing included in non-academic resources (e.g., Wikipedia).*

**Automatic Processes:** Cognitive processes that happen without conscious awareness, thought, effort, or control (as opposed to conscious processes which take greater effort and attentional resources).[306]

**Behavioural Design:** A discipline that considers how elements of design (including physical, symbolic, organizational, and social design) can influence human behaviour.[307]

**Behavioural Economics:** An approach that applies "evidence from psychology to economic models of decision-making".[308] Behavioural economists focus on the ways in which "rationality [in humans] may be limited or bounded, and influenced by factors such as impulsiveness, limited willpower, social norms, and the context in which choices are made."[309]

**Behavioural Insights:** "[T]he application of behaviour science to policy and practice with a focus on (but not exclusively) 'automatic' processes".[310]

**Behavioural Psychology:**  The study of how our behaviours are influenced through conditioning processes. Behavioural psychology (also known as behaviourism) emphasizes the importance of discovering patterns in our thoughts and actions to modify or change behaviour.[311]

**Bias(es):** "Disproportionate weight *in favor of* or *against* an idea or thing, usually in a way that is closed-minded, prejudicial, or unfair. Biases can be innate or learned."[312]

**Bystander Intervention Model:** A "promising approach to sexual violence prevention [that] encourages the community to take ownership of sexual violence as a problem and speak up when they witness potentially dangerous situations or sexist language."[313] The various ways in which active or prosocial bystanders intervene are sometimes referred to collectively as the 'Four D's.' These include: direct, distract, delegate, and delay[314] (with some adding 'document' as a fifth 'D'[315]).

**Calling in:** A way of helping people to understand the harm their behaviour is creating and inviting them to take responsibility and make amends. Developed as a compassionate alternative to 'calling out' (below), 'calling in' serves to reinforce relationships and community connections.[316]

**Calling out:** Holding individuals, organizations, or groups publicly accountable for problematic behaviours. Calling out often takes the form of public shaming.[317]

**Change Management:** A term that describes systematic ways of preparing and supporting people to make and/or accept organizational change.[318]

**Context(s):** Physical environments, which include anything you can touch, see, smell or hear (e.g., buildings, objects, uniforms, lighting, décor, etc.) and sociocultural environments, which include anything that is

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* Where available. (Some terms were developed by EMC and do not appear in the literature).

socially constructed or transmitted (e.g., social norms and networks, processes, organizational structures, symbols, social sanctions/rewards, policies, procedures, etc.). 'Context' is also sometimes used to indicate a specific situation (e.g., becoming a father).

**Core Group:** A group that is actively engaged in working with practitioners to develop and implement context-specific change strategies related to gender equality and healthy relationships in a particular setting.

**Descriptive Norms:** Social norms that are based on what we see other people in our social network doing and/or what we think other people in our group typically do.[319]

**Diffusion of Innovation Theory:** A theory that describes how new attitudes, beliefs, ideas, behaviours, and/or technologies are spread and ultimately adopted by individuals within a network or setting (e.g., a community, workplace, social network, etc.).[320]

**Doing Gender:** A concept that describes gender as something that people *do*, rather than something that people *are*. The term helps to convey the idea that gender is socially constructed and performed, not biologically determined.[321] (Also see: *Gender, Gender Construction*, and *Gender Performance*.)

**Entry Points:** Defined by Shift as areas of opportunity or engagement where men and boys can become involved in learning, reflection, and action that will increase their potential to be involved in healthy, gender-equitable relationships, and decrease the likelihood that they will be abusive.

**Feminist Theory:** A theory that supports a structural and gendered analysis of power in order to aid efforts to end sexism, sexual exploitation, and gender-based violence and oppression.

**Flooding the System with Signals:** A construct that informs the *Changing Contexts* approach. The phrase highlights the importance of exposing settings to a constant array of tiny signals (social cues and environmental nudges) in order to cue more gender-equitable, non-violent norms and behaviours.

**Gender:** "The roles, behaviours, and expectations our culture creates and assigns to us based on whether your body is seen as female or male.[322] Gender is distinguished from sex, with some people identifying as "a gender that is different from the sex they were assigned at birth,"[323] and others embracing a non-binary gender identity.

**Gender-based Violence (GBV):** Violence that is directed against a person because of their gender. All genders experience gender-based violence, but the majority of GBV victims around the world are women and girls. Gender-based violence includes the perpetration of physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, spiritual, technological, and economic harm against women and girls.[324]

**Gender Bias:** A "preference or prejudice toward one gender over the other. Bias can be conscious or unconscious, and may manifest in many ways, both subtle and obvious."[325]

**Gender Binary:** "A system that constructs gender according to two discrete and opposite categories: boy/man and girl/women. It is important to recognize that both cisgender and transgender people can have a gender identity that is binary."[326]

**Gender Construction:** A "theory in feminism and sociology about the operation of gender and gender differences in societies. According to this view, society and culture create gender roles, and these roles are prescribed as ideal or appropriate behavior for a person of that specific sex."[327]

**Gender Equality:** A situation in which people of all genders experience the same access to, and control over "social, economic and political resources, including protection under the law (such as health services, education and voting rights). It is also known as equality of opportunity, or formal equality. Gender equality is often used interchangeably with gender equity, but the two refer to different, complementary strategies that are needed to reduce gender-based health inequities."[328]

**Gender Equity:** Accommodating the "different needs, preferences and interests" of people of all genders. "This may mean that different treatment is needed to ensure equality of opportunity. […] Gender equity is often used interchangeably with gender equality, but the two refer to different, complementary strategies that are needed to reduce gender-based […] inequities."*[329]

**Gender Expression:** The multiple ways in which a person's gender is expressed outwardly, through names, pronouns, clothing, behaviour, voice, physical mannerisms and characteristics, and/or the use of facilities (e.g., bathrooms, change rooms, etc. ) that match up with a person's own sense of gender.[330]

**Gender Identity:** An individual's own sense of maleness, femaleness, multi-gender, or transgender.[331]

**Gender Norms:** "[S]ocial norms that specifically define what is expected of a woman and a man in a given group or society. They shape acceptable, appropriate, and obligatory actions for women and men (in that group or society), to the point that they become a profound part of people's sense of self. They are both embedded in institutions and nested in people's minds. They play a role in shaping women's and men's [and other genders'] (often unequal) access to resources and freedoms, thus affecting [their] voice, agency and power."[332]

**Gender Roles:** The culturally-prescribed behaviours and traits that dictate how males and females should act.[333]

**Gender Parity:** "The relative equality in terms of the numbers and proportions of women and men, girls and boys. It is often calculated as the ratio of female-to-male values for a given indicator."[334] (Note: Gender parity as a concept is based on the assumption of a gender binary and does not typically consider nonbinary gender identities in its calculations.)

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* In this framework, we have chosen to use the term 'gender equality' rather than 'gender equity.' The reason for this is well-articulated in Sida's *Hot Issue: Gender Equality and Gender Equity* brief. The brief explains that the term 'gender equity' is helpful in that it underscores the need for a gender analysis when determining the needs of various genders. However, the idea of gender equity "has been picked up by conservative actors who emphasize the complementarity of women and men, talk about 'separate but equal' and go far in arguing for biologically given roles and obligations for women and men in society." Because the term 'gender equality' may be less subject to misinterpretation or manipulation, we find it preferable for use in this framework. For more information on the differences between the two terms, please see: The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida. (November 30, 2016). Hot issue: Gender equality and gender equity (Brief). Retrieved from: https://www.sida.se/English/publications/159464/hot-issue-gender-equality-and-gender-equity/

**Gender Performance:** A construct that emphasizes the idea that gender is not a quality that one possesses, but rather a set of activities that one does. Gender is 'done' in front of other people, where it is validated and legitimized by the evaluations of others.[335] (Also see: *Doing Gender* and *Gender Construction*.)

**Gender Transformative Approaches:** "Practices, programs, and/or interventions that reshape gender relations to be more gender equitable, largely through approaches that free both women and men from the impact of destructive gender and sexual norms."[336]

**Healthy Masculinities:** The development of masculinity-related beliefs, attitudes and norms that promote gender equality, non-violence, and social and emotional competencies. Developing healthy masculinities involves: 1) expanding traditional notions of masculinity to include a wider range of human qualities and experiences (e.g., nurturing, care-taking, being vulnerable), and 2) challenging aspects of traditionally-defined masculinities that reinforce existing power dynamics and limit the potential for gender equality.[337]

**Healthy Relationships:** Interpersonal "connections that increase well-being, are mutually enjoyable, and enhance or maintain each individual's positive self-concept."[338] "Healthy relationships are based on the belief that everyone has value and is equal, and that power in a relationship is shared. Characteristics of a healthy relationship include mutual respect, trust, support, accountability, honesty, shared responsibility, fairness, and non-threatening behaviour." When conflict (i.e., a disagreement of opinion or interest between people) occurs, it is "resolved through negotiation rather than the misuse of power".[339]

**Hegemonic Masculinity:** A dominant and socially legitimized form of masculinity that confers greater status, power and control on those who practice it, effectively subordinating women (as well as other men and other genders) who don't fit and/or identify with that particular version of masculinity.[340]

**Heteronormative:** The "view that institutionalized heterosexuality constitutes the standard for legitimate and expected social and sexual relations."[341] "Whereas homophobia and homonegativity consist of prejudiced attitudes toward sexual minorities […], heteronormativity is an internalized set of expectations about gender and sexuality. Indeed, heteronormative assumptions are those that view heterosexuality as natural, inevitable, and desirable."[342]

**Heuristic:** A "problem-solving method that uses shortcuts to produce good-enough solutions given a limited time frame or deadline. Heuristics are a […] technique for quick decisions, particularly when working with complex data. Decisions made using an heuristic approach may not necessarily be optimal," but the process has the advantage of being quick and easy.[343]

**Injunctive Norms:** Social norms that are based on what we think other people in our social networks would approve or disapprove of.[344]

**Intersectionality:** A theory developed by civil rights activist Kimberlé Crenshaw to indicate how overlapping or intersecting social identities, particularly minority identities, relate to systems and structures of oppression, domination, or discrimination.[345] Research shows that people who are affected by intersectionality face an increased risk of experiencing violence.[346]

**Interpersonal Violence:** Violence occurring between individuals (either known or unknown to one another).[347] It is distinguished from collective violence (violence involving larger groups of people), structural

violence (harm that is perpetrated through social structures and institutions), and self-directed violence (e.g., suicide, self-mutilation).[348]

**Key Influencer:** Someone who influences the norms, attitudes, and behaviours of others within a specific setting. Key influencers can be formal or informal, and sometimes are both. A formal influencer is someone in a leadership role with decision-making power within the organization, group, system/institution, or community (e.g., CEO, politician, coach). An informal influencer is someone who others consciously or unconsciously look to as a source of information about how to think, behave, and interact within a particular setting or group.

**Male-oriented Settings:** Settings that are biased towards, dominated by, and/or designed for men.[349]

**Micro-interventions:** Small actions and/or reactions designed to create positive change. In a *Changing Contexts* approach, micro-interventions are intended to contribute to more gender equitable and prosocial norms, attitudes, and behaviours within a particular network or setting.

**Non-programmatic Approaches**: Activities and interventions that are outside of traditional programmatic interventions (i.e., pre-determined, structured activities that are implemented by Human Services agencies) and more emergent in nature (i.e., more open-ended and not entirely pre-structured). Non-programmatic interventions exist on a continuum of approaches that range from policy and legislation to community development and peer-group interventions. Non-programmatic interventions consider individual learning and behaviour in the context of a broader ecology of influences (e.g., family, peers, sociocultural norms, legislative environment), and are more likely to be implemented in situ (i.e., in environments where people naturally congregate rather than in clinical offices or agencies).

**Normative:** An attitude or behaviour that is considered typical and/or consistent with some kind of evaluative standard or judgement (i.e., considered good, permissible, desirable, etc.).

**Nudge:** Small contextual shifts that have the potential to change behaviour without changing the choices available (i.e., nudges are suggestive, not coercive). The term comes from the idea that "[w]hen individuals are thinking automatically, a mere 'nudge' may change their behavior."[350]

**Nudge Theory:** A "concept in behavioral science, political theory and behavioral economics which proposes positive reinforcement and indirect suggestions as ways to influence the behavior and decision making of groups or individuals. Nudging contrasts with other ways to achieve compliance, such as education, legislation or enforcement."[351]

**Pluralistic Ignorance:** A "situation in which a majority of group members privately reject a norm, but go along with it because they assume, incorrectly, that most others accept it."[352] One of the consequences of pluralistic ignorance is that people will change their own behaviour to match what they (incorrectly) think is the norm.

**Power**: In a social context, power means the "ability to make decisions about one's life and the capacity to influence and/or effect desired goals. All relationships are affected by the exercise of power, which in turn is profoundly shaped by social identities, including gender, race, class, sexual orientation, age, religion, nationality, etc."[353]

**Patriarchy:** A system that values the masculine over the feminine in virtually every sphere (i.e., social, economic, physical security, sexual and reproductive rights, etc.). Patriarchy offers men a tremendous and disproportionate amount of power and privilege (although not all men benefit equally, and some men have very little power compared to other men).[354]

**Positive Deviance:** An approach "founded on the premise that at least one person in a community, working with the same resources as everyone else, has already licked the problem that confounded others. This individual is an outlier in the statistical sense – an exception, someone whose outcome deviates in a positive way from the norm."[355] Understanding how and why that person is able to behave differently can help to inform interventions to change behaviours among the broader group.

**Practice Framework:** An easy-to-read conceptual map that outlines key theories, principles, approaches, and techniques to guide practice in a particular area of work.[356]

**Primary Prevention:** An approach that focuses on taking action before the condition of concern develops. In the area of gender-based violence, it means reducing the number of new instances of violence by intervening before any violence has occurred.[357] Interventions can be delivered to the whole population or to particular groups that are at high risk of using or experiencing violence in the future.[358]

**Privilege**: The advantages that come from being a member of a dominant group (based on gender, race, class, ability or sexuality).[359] Invisibility of privilege is the idea that those who are dominant in a society may not be aware of their dominance or special status. This can result in people becoming angry when confronted with evidence or assertions of racism, classism, sexism, etc. because they are unaware of their own privilege and/or discriminatory attitudes and behaviours.[360]

**Programs:** Approaches that are clinical and/or educational in nature, delivered to individual(s), comprised of a structured curriculum with pre-defined activities and tools, formally scheduled (e.g., pre-determined start and end dates and times), focused primarily on individual change (such as changes in awareness, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours), and often scalable and replicable across populations and settings.

**Prosocial Behaviours:** "[V]oluntary actions that are intended to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals."[361]

**Reference group:** A group comprised of people who matter to us and who we reference (often unconsciously) to understand what behaviours are typical and acceptable in the group. Reference groups "consist of people who identify with each other or are important to each other in some way and among whom mutual expectations about what is appropriate behavior are generated, maintained, and applied. It is the approval or disapproval from these people, as enacted through social rewards and punishments, that helps ensure compliance with the norms."[362] Reference groups can change based on the situation, with a different set of people being referenced under different circumstances.

**Settings:** Physical environments (e.g., an office, a hockey rink) and/or sociocultural environments (e.g., a peer network, your team at work).

**Signals:** Words, actions and reactions provide information or messages to others. In a *Changing Contexts* approach, signals are a way of communicating expectations related to gender equal, non-violent attitudes and behaviours.

**Social Constructionism:** A theoretical orientation to understanding gender. As opposed to biological or 'essentialist' understandings of gender that presume that the gender expressions and differences we see are a result of biology (e.g., hormones, genes, etc.), social constructionists see gender as the outcome of historical, cultural, and socialization processes.[363] What this means is that the meaning and expressions of gender vary from culture to culture and within any one culture at any one time as well as over the course of a person's life.

**Social Networks:** A grouping of individuals, organizations, or systems that are connected to one another through different kinds of interactions and relationships.[364]

**Social Network Theory:** A set of measures, tools, and ideas that describe the set of assumptions that underlies how individuals and entities (e.g., organizations) connect with one another. Social networks go hand-in-hand with social norms theory. Numerous studies have shown that we are influenced by people we don't even know because norms travel through networks like a social contagion, with people picking up on others' behaviours, attitudes, and expectations.[365]

**Social Norms:** Implicit and explicit rules regarding the appropriateness of behaviour in any given situation.[366]

**Social Norms Theory:** A theory and approach based on the idea that social expectations (and the sanctions and rewards that accompany them) can be a powerful driver of behaviour. "As a result, a social norms intervention can be a catalytic addition to an existing programme focused on individual, structural, and/or material factors."[367] Social norms theory suggests that interventions to correct misperceptions of norms by bringing attention to and highlighting "the actual, healthier norm will have a beneficial effect on most individuals, who will either reduce their participation in the problematic behaviour or be encouraged to engage in prosocial, healthy behaviours."[368]

**Social Cues:** Ways that people talk, react (physically or verbally), and behave. These small actions and reactions can serve to communicate values, attitudes, beliefs, and priorities to others in the group.

**Stakeholder Analysis:** A tool used to identify the types of people impacted by a change or intervention. A stakeholder analysis should outline the characteristics of each stakeholder or stakeholder group, the potential impact of the change on each stakeholder, and possible reasons for their support or resistance. It should then identify ways to mitigate resistance and increase engagement as well as ways to support each stakeholder through the change process at various stages. Done well, a stakeholder analysis is a living process, undergoing continuous refinement as the change process evolves.

**Structural Violence:** The "avoidable limitations that society places on groups of people that constrain them from meeting their basic needs and achieving the quality of life that would otherwise be possible. These limitations, which can be political, economic, religious, cultural, or legal in nature, usually originate in institutions that exercise power over particular subjects."[369]

**System:** "A system is an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organized in a way that achieves something."[370]

**Systems Thinking** or **Systems-Level Approach**: A "discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static 'snapshots'."[371]

**Tipping Point:** "The point at which a series of small changes or incidents becomes significant enough to cause a larger, more important change."[372]

**Toxic Masculinities:** An umbrella term for various types of harmful attitudes, ideas, norms, and behaviours linked to unhealthy constructions of masculinity[373] that serve to foster domination, devalue women, perpetuate homophobia, and encourage violence.[374]

**Transformational Learning:** Learning that facilitates a shift in perspective. Based on "the principle that personal experience is an integral part of the learning process," transformative learning "suggests that a learner's interpretation of the experience creates meaning, which leads to a change in the behavior, mindset, and beliefs. When transformational learning occurs, a learner may undergo a 'paradigm shift' that directly impacts future experiences."[375]

**Trauma-informed Practice:** An approach that acknowledges the "widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization."[376]

# 7.0 APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: EMC Member Organizations

The following organizations participated in the learning collaborative and the development of the framework.

➲ *Tier 1 Organizations*

    Centre for Sexuality

    City of Edmonton

    YWCA Banff

➲ *Tier 2 Organizations*

    Calgary Counselling Centre

    Carya

    Catholic Family Service

    Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

    Families Matter Society

    Fort Saskatchewan Families First Society

    Immigrant Services Calgary

    Next Gen Men

    Sagesse

    United Way of Calgary and Area

    University of Calgary

## Appendix 2: EMC Theory of Change

# EMC THEORY OF CHANGE

HUMAN BEHAVIOR IS GOVERNED BY A SUBTLE BUT PERVASIVE SET OF SIGNALS (i.e., SOCIAL NORMS AND ENVIRONMENTAL CUES) THAT ARE TRANSMITTED THROUGH NETWORKS. IF WE BUILD THE HUMAN SERVICES SECTOR'S CAPACITY TO HELP MALE-ORIENTED SETTINGS AMPLIFY SIGNALS ASSOCIATED WITH GENDER EQUITY AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS, AND DISRUPT SIGNALS RELATED TO GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE, THEN PEOPLE IN THOSE SETTINGS ARE LIKELY TO ENGAGE IN INCREASINGLY MORE HEALTHY AND EQUITABLE RELATIONSHIPS. ULTIMATELY, IF THIS APPROACH IS TAKEN TO SCALE ACROSS THE PROVINCE, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ALBERTA WILL BE REDUCED.

**SHIFT BUILDS CAPACITY AMONG THE HUMAN SERVICE SECTOR**

BUILD CAPACITY AMONG GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS TO:

Understand systems and work in non-programmatic ways to change sociocultural norms and environmental cues

Understand structural dynamics related to gender inequality and violence including power & privilege, sexism, social constructions of gender, intersectionality and other causes of violence

Examine their own individual gender biases, patriarchal values, attitudes, and behaviours, as well as their own power and privilege

Engage male-oriented settings to participate in this work

**SO THAT**

**SERVICE PROVIDERS BUILD CAPACITY IN MALE-ORIENTED SETTINGS**

WORK WITH MALE-ORIENTED SETTINGS TO:

Commit to working towards healthy, non-violent and equitable relationships

Examine their own individual gender biases, patriarchal values, attitudes, and behaviours, as well as their own power and privilege

Understand gender and power dynamics in the setting, and surface ways that their culture may perpetuate inequitable norms and behaviours

Identify potential ways to shift norms and behaviours within their setting to enhance gender equality, prevent violence and promote healthy relationships within their setting

Identify people within the male-oriented setting who may be able to influence these change points (Key Influencers)

**SO THAT**

**KEY INFLUENCERS ARE WILLING AND ABLE TO CHANGE NORMS IN MALE-ORIENTED SETTINGS**

BUILD CAPACITY OF KEY INFLUENCERS TO:

Examine their own gender biases, patriarchal values, attitudes, and behaviours, as well as their own power and privilege

Build a relevant and compelling case for changing norms and environmental cues related to gender equity and heathy relationships

Co-develop and implement context-specific interventions that disrupt destructive norms/signals and amplify positive ones

Mobilize others to engage in these interventions

Adjust, scale and institutionalize these interventions to change social norms/environmental cues in their setting

**SO THAT**

SOCIOCULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS SHIFT, THEREBY PRODUCING A DIFFERENT SET OF ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

THE CONSTITUENTS OF THOSE SETTINGS ENGAGE IN HEALTHY, NON-VIOLENT AND EQUITABLE RELATIONSHIPS

RESULTING IN...
Decreased violence and increased gender equality among the constituents of those settings

SO THAT ULTIMATELY...
Violence against women in Alberta is reduced

© Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence, 2020

## Appendix 3: Process to Determine Whether a Social Norm is at Play

# HOW TO DETERMINE WHETHER A SOCIAL NORM IS AT PLAY

**01.** **IDENTIFY THE SPECIFIC GENDER-INEQUITABLE OR VIOLENCE-SUPPORTIVE BEHAVIOURS THAT CREATE PROBLEMS IN THE SETTING**

You'll need to get as specific as you can for this analysis.

**02.** **DETERMINE WHICH OF THE BEHAVIOURS MIGHT BE A SOCIAL NORM**

Circle all of the behaviours that you think might be associated with a social norm.

**USE THE QUESTIONS IN THE TABLE BELOW TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE BEHAVIOUR IS DRIVEN BY A SOCIAL NORM**

| COMPONENTS OF SOCIAL NORMS | YES | NO |
|---|---|---|
| Is this behaviour **typical** or common in the group? Are people engaging in the behaviour because others in the group do as well? | | |
| Is this behaviour perceived to be **appropriate** by others? Do people engage in the behaviour because others do and/or because they believe they are expected to even if their personal attitudes differ (i.e., they don't like the behaviour or they think it is wrong) | | |
| Is there a social punishment or reward associated with following the norm? Do people perceive there will be a negative social sanction for transgression of the norm, or a positive social reward for compliance? What is the **sanction**? | | |

**Source:** Scharbatke-Church, C., & Chigas, D. (2019). *Understanding social norms: A reference guide for policy and practice.* Medford, MA: Henry J. Leir Institute, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, p. 71.

**03.** **ANALYZE YOUR ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS ABOVE**

• If the answer to all three of these questions is 'yes', then you're likely dealing with a social norm.

• If you answered 'yes' to first and second questions, then it's probably a social norm (although if there is little chance of social reward or punishment associated with the behaviour, it may be a weak one).

• If you can only answer 'yes' to the first question, then the behaviour is unlikely to be driven by a social norm. Sharbatke-Church & Chigas point out that "it is not enough that the behaviour is frequent or common. If people engage in the behaviour to meet a need, like using an umbrella when it rains, then it is likely a custom and not a social norm." (Sharbatke-Church & Chigas [2019]. p. 72)

## 04. FIGURE OUT WHOSE NORM IT IS

Who specifically holds this norm? Who is the reference group? Who "imposes social punishments for deviating" from the norm or provides "rewards for complying" with it? (Sharbatke-Church & Chigas [2019]. p. 68)

## 05. ANALYZE THE DRIVERS AND ENABLERS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH EACH BEHAVIOUR

What factors (or combination of factors) are driving or enabling the behaviour? Is it: Attitudes? Skills? Mental models? Knowledge? Policies? Structures?

**ASK YOURSELF:** "What are the interests, needs, [fears] or motivations of those engaging in [the] behaviour?" (Sharbatke-Church & Chigas [2019]. p. 68)

## 06. IDENTIFY WHAT THE 'UNWRITTEN RULE' OR SOCIAL NORM MIGHT BE. PULLING TOGETHER ALL OF YOUR RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS ABOVE, TRY TO FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE

_____ (the group of people impacted by the norm) is expected to do _____ (the behaviour). If they don't, they will be punished with _____ (the social sanction); and if they do, they will be rewarded with _____ (positive social response).

**Note:** *If you can't fill in the blanks at this point, that is an indication that you need to gather more information.*

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The process is based on a method developed by Scharbatke-Church & Chigas (2019) in *Understanding Social Norms: A Reference Guide for Policy and Practice.*

## Appendix 4: Determining a Strength of a Norm

The table below is excerpted from Scharbatke-Church & Chigas' *Understanding Social Norms: A Reference Guide for Policy and Practice* (2019).[377] It is helpful in determining the relative strength or weakness of a social norm.

| ELEMENTS | STRONGEST — Behavior is perceived to be *obligatory*. | WEAKEST — Behavior is perceived to be accepted and common but *optional*. |
|---|---|---|
| Importance of Norm Compliance | Practically everyone in the group needs to behave in the same way to achieve its goals. | Little or no coordination needed to achieve outcome; i.e., deviating from the norm will not undermine group cohesion or goals. |
| Detectability | Behavior may be observable, or reasonable inferences from outcomes can be made. | Behavior is not directly observable, and linking outcomes to behavior is difficult. |
| Likelihood of sanction | Noncompliance is consistently (though not necessarily always) sanctioned; some deviations from the norm may occur. | Low or no incidence of sanction. |
| Consequences of sanction | Sanction may be harsh; consequences are serious (e.g., harm to professional advancement, harm to reputation, relationships, status, respect or dignity, etc.). The sanction may seem mild, but it is still consequential to the individual. | Sanctions have little impact on those who do not follow the norm. |
| Direct/indirect norm | Direct norm regulates/dictates behavior. A direct norm supported by an indirect norm would be even stronger. | Indirect norms sustain behavior, with other factors (material, attitudinal, institutional, etc.) competing with the specific behavior. |
| Degree of group cohesion | Relationships are tight to very tight. Individuals value membership in the group and have a strong group identity. Individuals are connected to multiple people in the group. | Loose or new affiliation of people or group may be big, with less dense personal connections, weak sense of group identity and loyalty. |

*HOW SOCIAL NORMS INFLUENCE CORRUPT BEHAVIORS*

**Figure 7: Strength of Elements**

## Appendix 5: Violence and Gender Justice Pyramids

### ⮕ *Violence Pyramid*

The Violence Pyramid emerged after an article by McMahon & Banyard (2012) that highlighted the connections between very small actions or reactions (e.g., sexist jokes, homophobic language, objectification of women, etc.) and acts of physical or sexual violence. The article points out that small acts of discrimination, objectification, and verbal abuse create the conditions for larger acts of violence because they signal that violence, discrimination, and gender-based oppression are okay. If we want to end gender-based violence, we have to address the smaller precursors of violence that currently flood our social systems.[378]

EMC Members found the Violence Pyramid (below) helped to take what, for many, feels like a huge, complex issue (gender-based violence) and showed how it is perpetuated by very small, violence-supportive comments, reactions, and behaviours – that is, by things that individuals control and contribute to. Breaking it down this way helps people to see that they can contribute to the issue on a micro-level within their own spheres of influence. This often helps to generate a greater sense of agency and self-efficacy among the group, and helps them to identify possibilities for meaningful action. (Note: As with everything in the EMC Framework, good facilitation skills are key to knowing when to introduce the Violence Pyramid and how to engage the group in working through the various levels.)

### ⮕ *Introducing an Aspirational Pyramid*

The Violence Pyramid shows how micro-actions lead to violence, but it doesn't show the reverse (i.e., how very small behaviours can lead to gender justice and healthy relationships). To address this gap, the EMC Learning Collaborative developed *The Gender Justice & Equality Pyramid* (below on p. 135). This 'aspirational' pyramid can be used with your group to think about proactive micro-interventions (i.e., those behaviours that are designed to prevent violence and gender discrimination from happening in the first place).

> ### helpful tip ⬤
>
> In presenting the Violence Pyramid to the men in their groups, EMC members found it helpful to ask the group to come up with examples that illustrate how the bottom layers of the pyramid (attitudes, beliefs, micro-aggressions, and verbal abuse) play out in their setting. This seemed to help them to make the connections between abstract ideas and actual behaviours in their setting. For example, how do sexist or homophobic attitudes show up in the setting you're working with? How are signals related to normative masculinity transmitted in the setting? What do stakeholders see or hear that suggests that gender-based stereotypes are at play in the setting?

# THE VIOLENCE PYRAMID

**PHYSICAL EXPRESSION OF VIOLENCE**

Femicide

Domestic Violence

Sexual Violence

**VERBAL EXPRESSION OF VIOLENCE**

Sexist jokes

Homophobic language/ name calling

Verbal abuse

**CULTURAL MICRO- AGGRESSIONS**

Policies that only benefit heterosexuals

Male-dominated leadership teams

Social exclusion

Violent pornography

**ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS**

Sexism and/or homophobic attitudes and beliefs

Strict gender roles and expectations

Normative masculinity

Gender-based stereotypes

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# THE GENDER JUSTICE & EQUALITY PYRAMID

**ULTIMATE OUTCOME**

Non-violent, just, and equitable society

**STRUCTURAL (SYSTEM) SIGNALS**

Legislation, policies, institutional procedures, sociocultural norms, etc. are just and equitable

**COMMUNITY & ORGANIZATIONAL SIGNALS**

Workplace leadership, policy and culture promotes gender equity and supports healthy relationships

Community leaders model gender equity and healthy relationships

Community groups have structures and norms that promote gender equity and healthy relationships

**INTERPERSONAL SIGNALS**

Individuals exploit opportunities to promote gender equity and healthy relationships in their daily interactions with others

*(e.g., on social media, in conversations, through their own behavioural examples)*

**PERSONAL ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS**

Individuals engage in learning experiences (formal and informal) that challenge their own sexist and heternormative stereotypes and cultivate gender equitable attitudes and beliefs

Individuals cultivate a sense of responsibility for helping to create a more equitable and just society

## Appendix 6: Questions to Guide Your Initial Conversations with a Setting

Below are some types of questions that might help you to develop an initial sense of the setting you're working with. As with all of the tools in this framework, you will need to select and adapt them based on the specific context you're working in. Please note: This is by no means an exhaustive list – we just wanted to provide something to get you started.

| Objective | Potential Questions |
|---|---|
| Get initial understanding of the issue they want to address | • What are you seeing or experiencing in your setting related to gender equality or healthy relationships?[*]<br>• What's working well?<br>• What issues are you trying to manage? How did you become aware of these issues?<br>• What are you hoping to achieve around gender equality and/or healthy relationships? |
| Explore what's at stake and for whom | • [Building on whatever issues they identified] What are the implications? What kinds of problems[†] does this issue create, and for whom? Can you offer examples?<br>• What are the potential benefits of addressing this issue? Who would benefit?<br>• What are the potential costs? Who would bear the costs? |
| Explore some of the dynamics that might be related to the issue of gender inequality | • What factors in your setting influence this issue? (e.g., social, cultural and/or historical factors)<br>• How is this type of behaviour currently rewarded in your system (either formally through policies or informally through individual language and behaviour)? How is it discouraged? How does the system perpetuate these behaviours? |
| Identify the change they want to see in their organization | • Ideally, what would you like to see happen in your organization?<br>• Are you able to identify one change (e.g., in policy, procedures, management style, employee interactions, attitudes, etc.) that you think would be significant in helping to address gender equality? Why is that particular change so important? |
| Determine whether there's interest in moving to the next step | • Would you be interested in exploring some of the cultural and systemic dynamics that might be contributing to the problem and could help point us to potential solutions? Note: Many settings will default to programs (e.g., "We just want a gender equality workshop"). Assessing readiness involves determining their appetite for a more systematic approach. You might need to help them to understand the limitations of programs in terms of creating lasting change (e.g., "Programs typically address individual factors – but if you only work at the individual level and don't change the social environments in which those individuals are embedded, then they will revert to old behaviours.") |

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[*] Often you'll find that people have not really given much thought to gender and how it plays out in their setting. So, it might be helpful to explore the idea first with questions like, "What differences do you notice between men and women in your setting? For example, are there differences in terms of the ratio of men to women in senior leadership positions? Are there differences in terms of compensation? Do you notice any patterns or behaviours related to gender?" etc. In some situations, the Gender Box activity may also be helpful.

[†] People don't always see the harm that gender inequality and gender-based violence creates, so you might have to work with them to imagine the impact that specific dynamics might be having on the women in their setting.

## Appendix 7: Gender Audit Tools

The resources listed below might be helpful if the settings you're working with would like to assess the degree to which their organization promotes gender equality.

| Resource | Notes |
|---|---|
| The Gender Audit Handbook: A Tool for Organizational Self-Assessment and Transformation. InterAction[379] | A participatory process that provides a baseline for collective discussion and analysis. |
| A Manual for Gender Audit Facilitators[380] | Highly technical and focused on comprehensive research within the organization. Significant time and resources are required. |
| The Power of Gender-Just Organizations: A Conceptual framework for Transformative Organizational Capacity-Building[381] | Outlines the approach to organizational capacity building for 'gender justice' and the understanding of how organizations change. |

## Appendix 8: Stakeholder Analysis

Understanding the needs, motivations, concerns, and points of resistance for each of the stakeholder groups in your setting is critical to strategy development. By stakeholder group, we mean different subsets of people in your setting. For example, in a pee wee hockey setting, you'd have coaches, parents, players, the board, the association, etc. In a theatre setting, you'd have actors, designers, stage managers, directors, artistic directors, general managers, etc. You'll need to figure out which stakeholder groups in your setting are relevant to the work you're doing and develop a profile for each of them. The questions below will help in this analysis. (There are also many stakeholder analysis tools available online, so you might want to check those out as well.)

1. Make a list of all the potential individuals and/or groups who may be impacted by the changes or interventions your group is planning to implement.

2. Draw on data from meetings, communications, interviews, documents, etc. to answer the following questions *for each stakeholder group*:

   - What is their assessment of the situation? E.g., what (if anything) do they think needs to change in their setting? Why? How would they define the problem? What would they like to see happen?

   - How will they be affected by this work?

   - What level and types of support might be required for this stakeholder group?

   - Do they have any motivation to change? If yes, how strong is that motivation? If no, how could motivation be cultivated?

   - What are the potential benefits of this work for this stakeholder group? How can you communicate those benefits to the group?

   - What are the potential risks? Is there any way to manage or mitigate those risks?

   - Why might they resist or hinder this work? How will you manage the potential pushback?

   - How are they positioned to help the process? How could you build relationships with them and support them to become champions of the work?

Note: This process is ongoing – as you learn more about each stakeholder group, you'll be able to fill in more details.

# Appendix 9: Men's Engagement Continuum

The *Engagement Continuum: A Model for Supporting Men as Agents of Change* (below) is adapted from Funk's *Continuum of Male Engagement*[382] and is intended to be used as a conceptual tool to help you assess individual engagement levels among the men you're working with.

## ⮑ *Purpose*

The purpose of this tool is to help practitioners identify where men are at in the process of change so that they can better tailor messaging, activities and coaching to the men they work with. For example, you may notice that some of the men in your group are interested in the work, but they're also hesitant or cautious. Recognizing where they are at on the continuum can help you to know what kinds of meaning-making opportunities and supports to use.

## ⮑ *Interpretation*

The stages of change in the Engagement Continuum ('status quo', 'aware', and 'advocate') may appear to be linear.  However, in real life, there can be a lot of overlap between each of the stages, and men can exist in multiple places at once, depending on the situation. (For example, a man might be openly supportive of his wife's career achievements, but struggle with gender parity in the workplace because he feels that it threatens his livelihood.) The dotted, overlapping circles around the three stages ('status quo', 'aware', and 'overlap') are intended to represent the idea that men can exist in different stages at once.  The words below the three main categories (e.g., 'hostile', 'opposed' etc.) describe some of the ways men may respond, react or behave in this work. Again, these reactions do not fit into nice, neat categories. (Hence the overlap.)

The jagged line near the bottom of the visual is intended to represent what can feel like a tilting, up and down process of meaning making for men. (Think: highs and lows; three steps forward, two steps back; cycling between insight and confusion or resistance.) Integrating ongoing opportunities for dialogue, reflection and processing with your core group is essential, so that they are supported to make meaning of new insights, experiences, challenges, and ideas. This work is highly transformative and can be disorienting as people engage in the process of learning and unlearning. It may also trigger men who have experienced a past trauma. Having a meaning-making process to make sense of what is being learned, heard, and disrupted is critical to the ongoing engagement of men, and is particularly important to the process of supporting men in the moveable middle who may transition to advocates in the work.

Finally, the arrow at the bottom of the page outlines the goal of this work: ultimately, we are trying to support men to move towards becoming agents of change in public and observable ways.

## ⮑ *Application*

The tool is intended to help practitioners to recognize and assess individual engagement levels among the men you're working with. By understanding roughly where men are on the continuum, you can more

efficiently target your interactions with them, including the types of resources and activities you expose them to and the levels/types of support you offer. For example:

- If you feel the men you are working with are 'curious' about the issues or changes related to gender equality (in the 'Aware' phase of engagement), then they may be more open to engaging in gender transformative learning activities like the Gender Box (p. 142).

- Conversely, doing the Gender Box activity with men who are 'Resistant' or 'Uninterested' can be disastrous. For these men, you may have to use the strategies in *Meeting Men Where They're At* (p. 68) to cultivate interest.

- If the men you're working with are further along on the continuum (e.g., 'Leading'), they might want to have more strategic conversations or be helped to develop a network of peers for additional support. Doing the types of conscious-raising activities that are appropriate for men in the middle of the continuum is less likely to be helpful with men who are further along.

Some key questions to consider while applying the tool might include:

- Where would you situate *yourself* on the continuum? Why?

- Where would you situate each of the men you're working with on this continuum? (Remember that this is a very provisional assessment – make sure you don't get too attached to the ideas you formulate at this point.)

- Where do you think they would they *like* to be on the continuum? What would help to get them there?

- What resources and supports do they need to stay involved in this work?

## ENGAGEMENT CONTINUUM:
## A MODEL FOR SUPPORTING MEN AS ADVOCATES FOR CHANGE

**PURPOSE:** To help practitioners identify where men are at in the process of change so that they are better able to tailor their messaging, activities, coaching, etc. to specific stages of change, and support men to become advocates for gender equality and violence prevention.

### STAGES OF CHANGE

| MAINTAINING STATUS QUO | AWARE | ADVOCATE |
|---|---|---|
| HOSTILE | HESITANT | INSPIRED |
| OPPOSED | CURIOUS | ENGAGED |
| RESISTANT | OVERWHELMED | INFLUENCING |
| UNINTERESTED | INTERESTED | LEADING |

### THE MEANING-MAKING PROCESS IS MESSY AND COMPLEX.
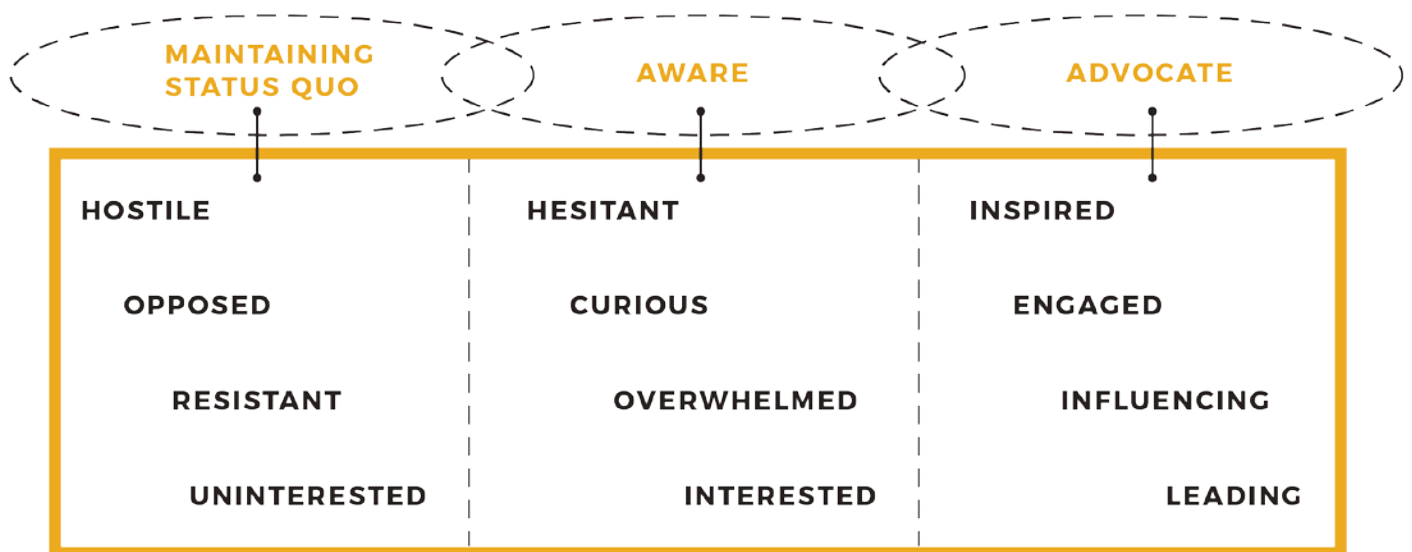
© Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence, 2020

Authors: Hurlock, D., Wells, L., & Dozois, E.

Adapted from Funk, R. (2018). *Continuum of male engagement: A conceptual model to engage men to prevent gender-based violence and promote gender equality.* Louisville, KY: Rus Funk Consulting.

## Appendix 10: The Gender Box

➲ *Purpose*

The purpose of the *Gender Box* activity is to examine unhealthy gender norms, gender scripts, and stereotypes, and then encourage participants to cultivate gender norms that help to disrupt gender-based violence and inequality.

In this activity, men will think about characteristics they ascribe to either boys/men or girls/women.[*] They will learn about the ideas of "stereotypes" and will consider whether gender stereotypes are fair or unfair. They will also discuss how it feels to not conform to socially-defined gender norms.

➲ Learning Objectives

The objectives of the activity are:

1) Define and acquire relevant vocabulary to talk about gender, gender identity, gender norms.

2) Identify and discuss the implications of gender stereotypes.

3) Illuminate ways gender stereotypes can result in unfair or harmful situations.

➲ Materials Required

- Chart paper

- Markers

➲ Activity

1. Draw a large square on two pieces of chart paper, leaving room around the margins, so that people can write both inside and outside the square). Write "Women/Female" at the top of one square and "Men/Male" at the top of the other.



EXERCISE: GENDER BOX

MEN          WOMEN

- STRONG        - NURTURING
- LIKE CARS      - LOVE PINK

- EMOTIONAL     - LEADERS
- LIKE FLOWERS   - LIKE MOTORCYCLES

---
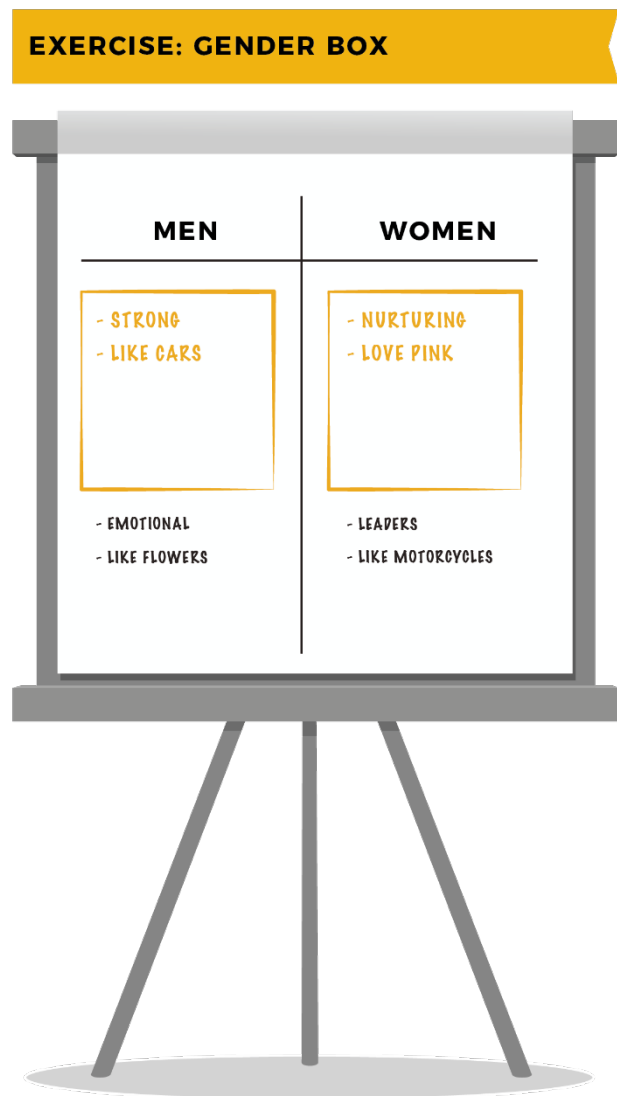
[*] The Gender Box activity does draw on a binary approach to gender (men/women). However, it has been effective in helping people to identify and articulate the gender-based biases that they hold (consciously or unconsciously).

2. Explain that the group will be talking about gender. Ask participants to help define the term 'gender'. Chart their responses without comment. After a brief discussion, share the definition of gender provided in the glossary (p. 120).

3. Ask men to define the word stereotype. Allow them to share a few examples of stereotypes they know. Emphasize that identifying a stereotype does not mean you believe it's true.

4. If men are confused about the meanings of the word stereotype, provide examples. You may clarify that a stereotype is an oversimplified and unfair belief that a group of people has particular characteristics or that all members of a group are the same. So, for example, a stereotype would be that, 'Women are good at cleaning and cooking; men are good at making things'.

5. If you have a large group, you can divide them into two groups.[*] (This can also be facilitated as a large group discussion.) Explain that they will be talking about gender stereotypes – that is, generally accepted ideas about how men and women should act or be.

6. Give one group the chart marked "women/female" and the other group the paper marked "men/male," along with several markers.

7. Challenge the group to think of as many gender stereotypes as possible to write or draw inside each square. Some examples to get them started might be "emotional" and "love to shop" for women, or "tough" and "love sports" for men.

8. Ask them to write/draw as many gender stereotypes as possible inside the box. (They might want to elect one person to be the scribe.) Questions for them to consider include:

   o How are all women/men supposed to behave?

   o What are they supposed to like or dislike?

   o How are they supposed to look, think, and feel?

   o What are they supposed to be good at?

   (It might be helpful to write these questions on another piece of chart paper, so that they can refer to them throughout the process.)

9. After participants have had sufficient time to fill in the squares, ask them: "What might make a woman on a man be <u>outside</u> of the box?" An example could be a man who likes flowers, or a woman who likes motorcycles. Have them write or draw these ideas outside the box.

10. Once the group has completed this, point out that although some people seem to fit into dominant gender norms or stereotypes more often than others, almost everyone has moments or parts of themselves that are outside the box.

11. Ask the group to share (or independently think about) a time when they felt like they were "inside the box" and a time they felt like they were "outside the box" for their gender.

---

[*] If you have a group of mixed genders, do not segregate them by gender.

12. Have the two groups come together to share and discuss their responses.

13. Explain that the boxes represent gender stereotypes or ways that other people think men or women should act. Then draw on the following questions to facilitate a discussion:

    o   What might be helpful and harmful about the stereotypes?

    o   How might these stereotypes be unfair or limiting to children as they grow up and decide what they like to do, what careers they strive for, what sports they want to play, and so on?

    o   How might a man feel if he does not fit into the box? How may a woman feel if she is outside the box?

    o   Why might it be important to accept people who don't fit into these boxes?

## ➲ Helpful Definitions

Below are some important definitions to have on hand:

**Conform:** To fit in with the group or a group's expectation.

**Stereotype:** An oversimplified and/or unfair belief or idea that groups of people have particular characteristics or that all people in a group are the same.

**Sex:** Refers to the biological differences between males and females, such as the genitalia and genetic differences.

For other definitions related to this activity (e.g., gender, gender expression, gender performance, etc., please see the *Glossary,* p. 120).

**Source:** Adapted from *Teaching Tolerance* - https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/what-are-gender-stereotypes

## Appendix 11: The Noticing Activity

Because our own culture is largely invisible to us, we need some help noticing potentially harmful dynamics that may feel natural, normal, or inevitable to us. The Noticing Activity[383] is designed to do just that – it is a mindfulness exercise that can help people surface dynamics related to gender performance, power, and privilege.

The Noticing Activity can be used in a few different ways, including:

- As a one-time exercise

- As an ongoing exercise

- Something that you do with your core group

- Something that the core group helps to facilitate with others in the setting

## ➲ *The Set Up:*

Ask your core group to spend a full day intentionally observing dynamics related to power, privilege, and gender performance in their organization/setting. (Note: Be sure that they have a working understanding of these terms before you do this activity.) Ask them to notice their own thoughts, feelings, and actions as well as the actions of those around them. You can explain that the activity is intended to help them understand more about the culture and dynamics related to gender norms and relationships that are at play in their setting.

Distribute photocopies of the Noticing Activity handout (next page) and/or email a copy to the group. Remember to set a date for the debrief, so that the group knows when they need to have completed the activity. (A well-facilitated debrief is critical to the success of this activity.)

 *Note: Please feel free to modify the activity to better meet the circumstances of your group.*

## ➲ *The Activity:*

The *Noticing Activity* handout on p. 147 outlines the process for the activity.

## ➲ *Debriefing the Noticing Activity*

Set a date to meet with your group after they have completed the Noticing Activity. The conversation you facilitate is every bit (or more) important than the exercise itself as it will help the group connect the dots and will lay the groundwork for the next phase of work when they identify change points to target in their setting. Start with an open-ended question about what the people in your group noticed when they did this activity, then follow up with questions to prompt specific observations. For example, you may want to ask:

- What they noticed about how gender norms and/or beliefs about what it means to be a man (or woman) impact the way they interact with others. For example, how did gender-related norms and beliefs…

  o Impact the assumptions they make about others?

  o How they relate to them? What they expect of them?

  o How they evaluate their contributions?

- Whether they noticed any situations or interactions in their setting where assumptions or beliefs about gender norms were at play? For example,

  o Did they see gender norms at play in the way people interacted in formal meetings or informal interactions?

  o Are gender norms evident in formal practice? Processes? Written materials?

- Whether they saw anyone challenging conventional ideas and/or behaviours about gender (i.e., speaking up in meetings, calling out sexism or racism, creating space for people with less power or privilege to speak and participate)

- What they noticed about power and privilege. For example, did they form any ideas about…

  o Who has more power? (Why?)

  o Who has less (Why?)

  o Any patterns related to power and privilege? (e.g., Did power seem to be allocated according to gender in any of the situations you observed?)

- How all of this connects to the work that you are collectively trying to do in their setting. Did the exercise help them to identify things they'd like to augment, reduce, and/or change in their setting?

# Noticing Activity Handout

**WHAT:** The Noticing Activity is a mindfulness exercise designed to help surface dynamics related to gender performance, power, and privilege. (You'll find definitions for each of these on the next page.) The process can generate insights that can be used in the planning process as you begin to identify key leverage points for change within your settings.

**WHY:** Attitudes, norms, and behaviours are transmitted through culture – so culture is a key starting point for systematic change. The problem with culture, however, is that our own (whether it's our family culture, organizational culture, ethnic culture, or something else) feels largely invisible to us as this quote highlights:

> *We dwell within the pool of our shared cultural system, much as fish within water. Most of the time, fish pay no attention at all to the water. They are one with it. They move within it and are moved by its currents. It is their medium. Similarly, human beings dwell within their meaning-making systems without thinking about the system itself. In this way children grow into a complex web of acquired habits of thought and action without even trying to do so. It just seems to happen. But what is a people to do if the aggregate effect of their collective habits of thought and behaviour is life-threatening to themselves and future generations?[*]*

If our meaning-making systems simply feel natural to us, we have no real way of examining and/or changing them. So we need to figure out how to make the 'water' we're swimming in visible to us. Mindfulness exercises like the Noticing Activity are useful in making the invisible increasingly more visible.

**HOW:** Please spend a full day intentionally noticing dynamics related to **gender performance, power, and privilege** (defined below) – both within yourself and within the environments you inhabit every day. The questions below can be used to guide your observations:

*Observing Dynamics within Yourself:*

- How do I perform gender? (e.g., clothes, body language, roles, socialized behaviours)
- What role does gender play in the assumptions I make about others?
- In what situations do I have more power or privilege than others? Why?
- In what situations do I have less power or privilege than others? Why?

*Observing Dynamics within Your Environment:*

- How do gender performance, power, and privilege play out in the various environments that I occupy every day? For example, what can I observe in:
  - Client/staff interactions
  - Formal and informal staff interactions (e.g., in meetings, staff room, in the halls)
  - Written materials
  - Family and peer interactions
  - Social media
  - Movies/TV shows/video games

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[*] Bopp, M. Bopp, J. (2006). *Recreating the World: A practical guide to building sustainable communities* (Second Edition), Calgary, AB: Four Worlds Press, p.4.

Write down your observations.

*For our next meeting,* please come prepared to discuss the exercise:

- Did it generate new insights? (If yes, what?)
- Would this type of activity have any value for others in your organization or entry point settings? (Why/why not?)
- What other methods can be used to spark awareness of gender performance, power, and privilege?

## DEFINITIONS:

**Power**: The ability to create or withstand change.[384] In a social context, power means the "ability to make decisions about one's life and the capacity to influence and/or effect desired goals. All relationships are affected by the exercise of power, which in turn is profoundly shaped by social identities, including gender, race, class, sexual orientation, age, religion, nationality, etc."[*]

**Privilege:** The advantages that come from being a member of a dominant group (based on gender, race, class, ability, or sexuality)[†]. Invisibility of privilege is the idea that those who are dominant in a society may not be aware of their dominance or special status. The invisibility of privilege results in people being unaware of the extent of discrimination and as a result, may become angry when confronted with evidence or assertions of racism, classism, sexism, etc. [‡]

**Gender:** There's a distinction between gender and the sex we are assigned at birth. Gender is based on "socially constructed rules and roles that exist to define what it means to be masculine or feminine."[385] In other words, gender is not a 'thing' that one possesses but rather a set of activities that one does. [§] Because our ideas about what is 'masculine' and what is 'feminine' are socially constructed, they *can* and *do* change.

**Gender Norms:** "[S]ocial norms that specifically define what is expected of a woman and a man in a given group or society. They shape acceptable, appropriate and obligatory actions for women and men (in that group or society), to the point that they become a profound part of people's sense of self. They are both embedded in institutions and nested in people's minds. They play a role in shaping women's and men's [and other genders'] (often unequal) access to resources and freedoms, thus affecting [their] voice, agency and power."[386]

**Gender Performance:** Gender gets expressed or performed in all kinds of ways – through names, pronouns, clothing, behaviour, and social norms (i.e., what a given group deems 'appropriate' or desirable behaviour for men vs. women). Gender is performed in front of other people, where it is validated and legitimized by the evaluations of others.[**]

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## Appendix 12: Cultural Iceberg

This activity is designed to help you go beyond the surface level of problematic[*] events or behaviours and 'unpack' the underlying sociocultural dynamics that serve to create and sustain a particular issue. If no problematic event or behaviour has been identified to this point in your setting, then one of the other activities might be more appropriate. If you *can* identify an issue or event that has salience for the group, then use that as a starting point for this activity.

For this activity, you might wish to have flip charts on the walls with the following headings (which correspond to the Iceberg diagram on the next page): Issue/Event(s), Trends & Patterns, Underlying Structures, Mental Models.

### ➲ *Introduce the Iceberg.*

You can start by showing your group the iceberg diagram below and explaining that this activity will help them to dig beyond the surface level to understand the underlying cultural dynamics that are producing, rewarding, and/or perpetuating gender-inequitable and violence-supportive behaviours.

### ➲ *Work with the group to explore each layer of the iceberg*

Facilitate a conversation about each of the layers listed below, recording the group's thoughts on the flip chart paper with the corresponding headings.[†]

- *Issue:* Start by agreeing on an issue that the group wants to unpack (e.g., unable to retain female staff, increased incidence of sexual harassment claims made in our organization, etc.).

- *Event(s):* Ask them to describe the issue with a particular focus on the 'what' (what do we see happening? How do we know this is an issue?) and not the 'why' (which comes later). How does this problem manifest? What are we seeing? How often? In what circumstances?

- *Trends and Patterns:* How does this issue fit into other events or behaviours in our setting? E.g., how do the behaviours that are associated with the 'issue' fit into other behaviours in our setting? Have them list all the events or behaviours that are related to the issue, and then ask them what patterns they see emerging. How has the problem changed over time (e.g., Has it gotten better, worse, stayed the same?).

- *Understanding Structures:*
  - Define "structure" for the group and/or ask them to list all the things that heading might include. You may want to offer this definition from *Systems Thinking for Social Change:*

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[*] For simplicity's sake, the instructions outlined above assume a negative event or problematic behaviour, but the exercise could be used to unpack positive events or behaviours (i.e., as a way of figuring out what enables gender-equitable, prosocial events, and behaviours and how to support more of them).

[†]Note: The facilitation process outlined here takes you through each layer of the iceberg, but your group's thinking in unlikely to be so neatly divided – don't worry if they're giving you responses that fit into other categories (e.g., If, when you're asking them to describe the *behaviours* they're seeing that are associated with the issue, they begin explaining the *structural dynamics that* are at play) – just capture their responses on the appropriate flip chart.
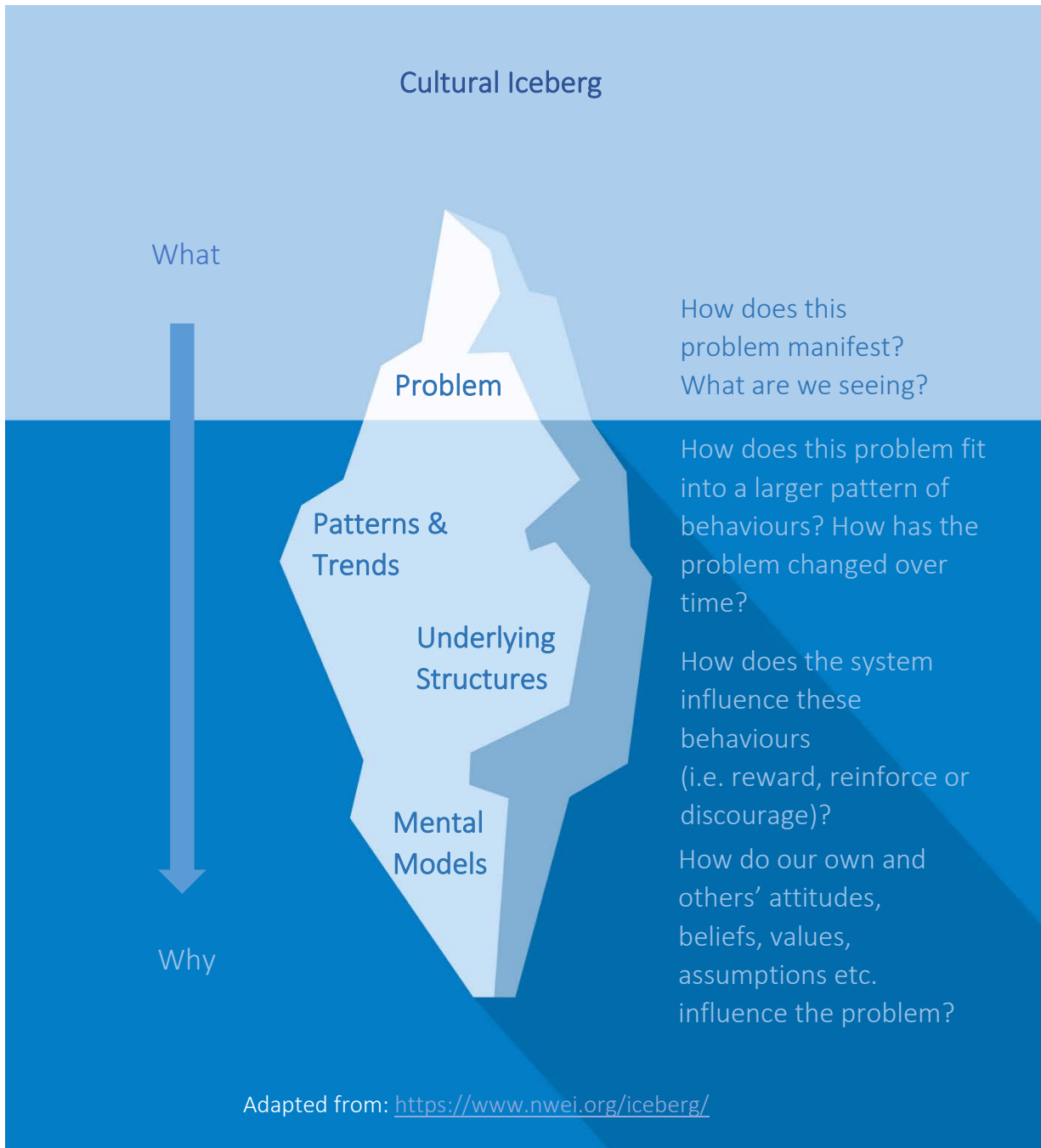
"System structure includes tangible elements such as the pressures, policies and power dynamics that shape performance. It also includes intangible forces such as perceptions (what people believe or assume to be true about the system) and purpose (the actual versus espoused intentions that drive people's behaviour). The deeper people's level of insight, the greater their opportunity to change the way the system behaves."[387]

- o Ask: In our setting, what structures reinforce, enable or incentivize the behaviour? What structures help to reduce the behaviour? Use various prompts to help the group consider the underlying dynamics. For example, how might the following contribute to the issue:
  - Policies
  - Practices
  - Social or organizational pressures
  - Organizational processes and structures (e.g., reporting mechanisms, how work is divided/assigned, performance reviews, etc.)
  - Power dynamics
  - Perceptions

- *Mental Models:* Mental models are beliefs and expectations about how the world works – many of which we acquire subconsciously, without our awareness. Ask the group to explore how the following might contribute to the issue:

  - Attitudes
  - Beliefs
  - Assumptions
  - Values (espoused *and* implicit[*] – and it can be really helpful to explore the gap between the two)
  - Instincts
  - Emotional responses
  - Expectations

## ➲ Debrief the Activity

The following questions can be used to debrief the activity:

- What new insights did this activity give you? Any ah-ha moments? Any new connections? How has your understanding of the situation shifted?
- What does the exercise tell us about the most important factors influencing our situation? (Make sure you capture their responses on a flip chart as this will be a starting point for thinking about potential interventions.)
- What are the implications of this for our setting?

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[*] Espoused values are what people say their values are; implicit values are the ones that actually guide how they behave. It can be very productive to explore the gap between the two.

Cultural Iceberg

What

Problem

How does this problem manifest? What are we seeing?

How does this problem fit into a larger pattern of behaviours? How has the problem changed over time?

Patterns & Trends

Underlying Structures

How does the system influence these behaviours (i.e. reward, reinforce or discourage)?

How do our own and others' attitudes, beliefs, values, assumptions etc. influence the problem?

Mental Models

Why

Adapted from: https://www.nwei.org/iceberg/

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## Appendix 13: 'Changing Minds' Resources

Below are some great resources that can help practitioners facilitate a transformative learning process designed to reduce gender-based violence and inequality.

- Promundo. *Manhood 2.0.* Retrieved from: https://promundoglobal.org/programs/manhood-2-0/#
- Flood, M. (2019). *Engaging men and boys in violence prevention. Brisbane, Australia: Palgrave Macmillan.*
- hooks, b. (2004). *The will to change: Men, masculinity, and love.* New York, NY: Routledge

Note: You can also find a number of helpful resources at www.xyonline.net

## Appendix 14: Designing Vignettes to Surface Social Norms

Vignettes "tell short stories about imaginary characters in specific contexts, with guiding questions that invite people to respond to the story in a structured way."[388] Vignettes or scenarios can be a helpful way to surface social norms because they depersonalize the information (i.e., they ask what 'most people' in your network or setting are likely to think or do rather than asking about your own views or behaviours).

*Applying Theory to Practice: CARE's Journey Piloting Social Norms Measures for Gender Programming,* outlines a process for developing vignettes to surface social norms. The suggested process includes the following steps:

- Develop a "hypothetical scenario based in [sic] the local context that leads a fictional main character(s) to a decision point about how to act."[389]

- Have the main character act *against* the norm to draw out the group's ideas about the "social sanctions that come into force for defying the norm, and whether and how these sanctions would influence the character's behaviour. A possible sign of the perceived strength of sanctions is whether publicly defying the norm is even perceived to be an option."[390]

- Then pose questions that will help you to explore "any exceptions for which it is considered more acceptable to act outside the norm. Are there individuals or groups who do not ascribe to the norm, and what makes it possible for them to do so?"[391]

The excerpt below helps to illustrate this process. While the example is based on a social issue from the Global South, the basic principles of vignette design can be applied to settings in the Global North. Notice the types of discussion questions that follow the vignette and what they help to draw out. Think about how you could adapt this approach to a situation that is relevant to your setting.

> "*I will tell you a story of a girl I will call Rehima (that is not her actual name) living in this woreda. I would like you to listen to the story carefully and discuss the questions that follow. Rehima is a 16-year-old student who lives with her parents. She attends school and helps her mother with household chores. One day Hindiya, Rehima's cousin, comes over to visit Rehima's family. They are about the same age. Hindiya announces that she is engaged and getting married in a month's time. She also strongly suggests to Rehima that she should also marry soon as she is getting old for marriage. Hindiya reveals that she also knows someone from their village who is interested in marrying Rehima.*
> - *What would most adolescent girls in Rehima's position do in this situation?* **[Descriptive Norm]**
> - *What would Hindiya and most other girls expect Rehima to do in this situation?* **[Injunctive Norm]**
> - *But Rehima doesn't want to marry young. She announces that she does not want to marry at this age. What would Hindiya and most other girls say about Rehima's decision?* **[Sanctions]**
> - *Would the opinions and reactions of her peers make Rehima change her mind about refusing the marriage?* **[Sensitivity to sanctions]**
> - *Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable for Rehima not to get married at her age?* **[Exceptions]***"[392]*

## Appendix 15: Building Bystander Capacity among Men

There are five steps that must happen for an individual to engage in active bystander behaviours. They include:

- Noticing the event
- Recognizing it as a problem
- Assuming personal responsibility to assist
- Knowing what to do
- Taking action[393]

The table below[394] outlines:

- Some of the obstacles that potentially exist at each of these points
- Examples of bystander beliefs that can contribute to inaction
- Ways of reducing obstacles to bystander actions
- And examples of strategies you can use for each step

| Table 5: Building Bystander Capacity Among Men | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Steps of Bystander Action | Obstacles to Bystander Action | Examples of Bystander Belief | *Reducing* Obstacles to Bystander actions | *Examples of Strategies* to use in each step |
| Notice the event | • The often-nuanced nature of some everyday sexism and heterosexism<br>• Distractions, like noise<br>• Self-focus (i.e., focussed on own activities) | *"I didn't realize the situation was that bad."* | • Inform people about how to notice everyday sexism, and train them to be alert to these barriers<br>• Build knowledge and awareness of what constitutes violence against women<br>• In the case of sexual violence, support and promote the idea that a variety of people, such as party hosts, designated drivers, etc. should assume bystanding behaviours as part of their role | • Conduct surveys to highlight the extent of the issues or problem<br>• Use of discussion groups to define the problem as well as exploring the role of gender construction in relation to the problem<br>• Media Campaigns (e.g., posters, radio ads, etc.)<br>• Videos to help people recognize everyday sexism and gender inequity (e.g., OurWatch) |
| Identify situations as problematic | • Influence of peer groups based on violence and/or aggressive masculinities<br>• Ambiguity regarding consent or danger | *"Is this a real problem or an excuse for attention?"* | • Build awareness and knowledge around the consequences and harm of violence against women | • Interviews with key informants in communities to understand how receptive the community may be to broader community change and social norms initiatives<br>• Share statistics and research about the issue (e.g., on DV, SV, etc.)<br>• Conduct needs assessment in community<br>• Media campaigns (e.g., posters, radio ads, etc.) |
| Take responsibility | • Fear of being a victim of violence themselves | *"I'm afraid I could be* | • Cultivate responsibility to intervene | • Share survey results about community norms |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | • Fears that masculinity will be called into question<br>• Relationship of bystander to potential victim and potential perpetrator<br>• Attributions of worthiness of the person being victimized (e.g., potential victims' provocativeness, level of intoxication, etc.) | *harmed if I get involved."* | • Promote information around normative information (i.e., norms about what people should do in these types of situations), emphasizing that peers believe bystander intervention is appropriate* | • Conduct media campaigns to spread information on survey results<br>• Use visualization activities to promote victim empathy<br>• Small Group Norms Correction Intervention – This approach combines several elements (i.e., direct feedback and media campaigns) to reduce participants' resistance to social norming messages. Facilitators of small groups present correct normative information and encourage group to discuss the information |
| Decide how to help/know what to do | • Perception that action would be ineffective – not knowing what to say or do | *"Someone else is better able to handle this situation than I am."* | • Provide specific information regarding action options and provide opportunities to develop skills in using those action options. Use active learning exercises, including role play | • Role play<br>• Use of narratives<br>• Use of video case studies to see a situation and facilitated dialogue to assess and brainstorm action options |
| Act to intervene | • No or limited knowledge in the ways to intervene in a situation; rigid or strong adherence to traditional gender roles; personal attitudes that support traditional notions of male dominance | *"I don't have the skills to effectively address this situation."* | • Provide simple phrases for prevention intervention (e.g., 'You're coming with us. We can't leave you here and put you at risk for sexual assault'); emphasizing that it's never the survivors' fault | • Development of bystander plans with specific examples of phrases for intervention<br>• Development of bystander pledges |

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* This is congruent with a social norms approach, and information should be derived from local surveys. In the case of campus sexual assault, for example, surveys of the university population should be conducted, and information from the survey that supports identifying peer group norms (i.e., 'Over 90% of U of C university men say that it's your responsibility to intervene when another person is at risk for sexual assault').

## Appendix 16: Developing a Survey to Surface Norms

Below are some ideas for developing a survey designed to help surface social norms.

- Pose a hypothetical situation and ask how people in the reference group would react (e.g., "*If a man in your company was to take a full year of parental leave instead of his partner, how would his friends/coworkers/manager react?*")
  o Ask open-ended questions such as these: As appropriate, one could ask open-ended questions such as, "Who is it important to consider when thinking or talking about whether or not to do [target behaviour]?" (*This helps to identify the reference Group.*)
  o Is [target behaviour] typical among them? (*This helps to identify descriptive norms.*)
  o Is [target behaviour)] socially approved of among them? (*This helps to identify injunctive norms*).
  o What do people say are the advantages of [target behaviour]? (*This helps to identify the potential reasons for the norm*.)
  o What do people say are the disadvantages of [target behaviour]? *(This offers some context for the social norm and a potential leverage point for motivating change.)* [395]

Another set of open-ended questions, developed by Montano and Kasprzk, are captured in the table below.

| Table 6: Developing a Survey to Surface Norms | |
|---|---|
| **Construct** | **Questions** |
| **Experiential Attitude** | How do you feel about the idea of behaviour A? What do you like about the behaviour? What do you dislike about the behaviour? |
| **Instrumental attitude** | What do you think are some advantages to performing A behaviour? What could be the benefits that might result from doing the behaviour?<br>What are some of the disadvantages of performing A behaviour? What could be the negative effects or repercussions of performing that behaviour? |
| **Normative influence** | Who do you think would support you if you performed behaviour A? Who do you think would not support you if you performed behaviour A? |
| **Perceived control** | What things or situations make it easy for you to perform behaviour A? What things or situations make it difficult for you to perform behaviour A? |
| **Self-efficacy** | How confident do you feel you could do behaviour A? What kinds of things do you think would help you to overcome barriers to doing behaviour A? |
| Source: Montano, D.E., & Kasprzyk, D. (2015). Theory of reasoned action, theory of planned behaviour, and the integrated behavioural model. In Glanz, K., Rimer, B.K., & Viswanath, K. (eds.). Health behaviour: Theory, research and practice. 5th Edition. San Franscisco: Jossey-Bass. (p. 95-124). | |

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## COMPLEXITY SHOCK REACTIONS

*Complexity and uncertainty trigger very uncomfortable feelings in most of us. Often, people adapt to the shock and discomfort in ways that help to reduce the discomfort but don't actually solve the problem. The visual below outlines common responses to complexity. Most of them make us feel better, not do better. Adaptive learning is the only approach that can help us to develop the capacities needed to manage complexity.*

**SCREENING OUT COMPLEXITY**

OUR BEHAVIOURAL AND CONCEPTUAL HABITS AND PATTERNS SCREEN OUT COMPLEXITY (INTERNAL AS WELL AS EXTERNAL COMPLEXITY) AND KEEP THE SCOPE OF OUR ATTENTION TO THE FAMILIAR AND ROUTINE. COMPLEXITY EXISTS, BUT WE'RE NOT REALLY AWARE OF IT.

COMPLEXITY

PATH OF HABITS AND NARROW CERTAINTIES

**COMPLEXITY SHOCK POINT**

WE CAN BE THROWN INTO COMPLEXITY SHOCK BY ANY EVENT THAT TAKES US OUT OF OUR ROUTINES AND PROMPTS US TO SEE THE SITUATION IN A NEW WAY. THIS MIGHT BE A NEGATIVE EVENT (e.g., A DEATH IN THE FAMILY, CANCER DIAGNOSIS, LOSS OF A JOB) OR SOMETHING WE CHOOSE (e.g., WHEN WE DECIDE TO GENUINELY DIG INTO A SOCIAL ISSUE AND DEVELOP NEW APPROACHES)

COMPLEXITY

ADAPTIVE STRIVING → ADAPTIVE LEARNING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT → INNOVATION

MUTUAL SUPPORT FOR ADAPTIVE LEARNING

UNCERTAINTY

COMPLEXITY

**NEW AND IMPROVED!**
MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO BUT CALL IT SOMETHING DIFFERENT

**SPIRAL DOWN INTO CONFUSION AND DISTRESS**

**FIND A SIMPLE RECIPE OR FORMULA**
*("Five Easy Steps!")*

**DRIFT ALONG PASSIVELY**

**FIND A GURU TO TELL US WHAT TO DO**

REVERT BACK TO THE OLD WAY OF DOING THINGS

UNCERTAINTY

COMPLEXITY

**NARROW OUR FOCUS TO OPERATIONAL TASKS AND THINGS WE ALREADY KNOW HOW TO DO**

**CREATE A SOCIAL BUBBLE OF POSITIVITY, COMFORT AND AFFIRMATION**

**OVER-SIMPLIFY THE SITUATION AND CREATE NAÏVE RESPONSES**

**TAKE ON THE ROLE OF RESCUER IN A WAY THAT IS MORE ABOUT FEELING GOOD THAN DOING GOOD**

**FIGHT, COMPETE, AND/OR STRENGTHEN TRIBAL ALLEGIANCES**

COMPLEXITY

Adapted from Low, Ken (2016). *The Human Venture & Pioneer Leadership Journey: Reference Maps.* 16th Edition. Calgary, Alberta: Action Studies Institute. Maps 143 and 144.

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[51] Social constructionists see gender as the outcome of historical, cultural, and socialization processes, rather than something that is determined primarily by our biology. This is not to say that we are "asexual blank slates." However, biology plays a much smaller role in gender differences than we typically think. (Kimmel, M.S., & Holler, J. (2017). The gendered society. Second Canadian Edition. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.). What this means is that the meaning and expressions of gender vary from culture to culture and within any one culture at any one time as well as over the course of a person's life. Social constructionist understandings of gender also take into account the influence of power dynamics in relation to gender.

[52] "A comprehensive account of masculinity considers how it is embedded in our societal structures, institutions and systems; how it functions within social norms, roles and expectations; and how it shapes the practices and subjectivities of individual men and boys." Our Watch. (2019). *Men in focus: unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women.* Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch. p. 23

[53] As the authors of *Transforming Masculinities: Towards a Shared Vision* point out*, binary and exclusionary approaches to gender is often an issue in work related to engaging men in violence prevention, and something that we all need to be aware of: *"Much of the work to engage men and boys fails to adequately go beyond a 'masculine' versus 'feminine' binary understanding of people's realities, or fully recognise and represent diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations. (Nolan, S., Hornbrook, T., & MenEngage Alliance Global Secretariat team. (2019). Transforming masculinities: Towards a shared vision. Retrieved from: http://menengage.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/MenEngage_digital_lowres.pdf p. 19.)

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[55] Our Watch. (2019). *Men in focus: unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women.* Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch. p. 22.

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[57] Our Watch. (2019). *Men in focus: unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women.* Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch. p. 19.

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[62] "The literature identifies a common pitfall in prevention work: the failure to effectively address the structural and material forces that help drive violence against women. Prevention work has often focused on individual attitudes and behaviours, and ignored the structural and institutional forces that are crucial to shaping men's violence against women. In Australia, prevention efforts that address masculinity have tended to focus on the norms and practices of masculinity, with little analysis of how these interact in complex ways with societal structures." (Our Watch. (2019). *Men in focus: unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women.* Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch. p. 41.

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[64] Our Watch. (2019). *Men in focus: unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women.* Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch. p. 20.

[65] "Legacy. What is a legacy? It's planting seeds in a garden you never get to see." Miranda, L. (2016). Hamilton: an American musical. In J. McCarter (Ed.), *Hamilton: the revolution* (pp. 23-26). New York: Grand Central Publishing.

[66] "It is clear that gender transformative work has its challenges. Dominant patterns of gender operate at all levels of society to maintain an unequal system of power. This is not an easy system to change. However, changing the patterns of gender is essential in order to help realise gender equality and prevent violence against women." Our Watch. (2019). *Men in focus: unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women.* Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch. p. 20.

[67] The *Men in Focus* report from Our Watch (2019) speaks to this issue. The authors write that while gender transformative approaches "encourage men to challenge existing negative forms and patterns of masculinity, it is also important to offer alternative models and to promote more positive, respectful forms of masculinity. As Flood argues, we must offer some kind of alternative for what men and boys can be rather than simply pointing out what they should not be. There is a robust discussion already taking place about which terms we should use to describe these alternatives. The terms 'positive' and 'healthy' masculinities have gained significant traction in the literature, and are increasingly employed in prevention efforts that engage men and boys. However, what are these healthier, positive masculinities, and what do they look like in practice? Often when we encourage men to embrace positive, healthier masculinities we in fact mean they should embrace the traits and behaviours commonly associated with women and being feminine, and which men and boys are not encouraged or supported to display. This suggests that promoting alternative forms of masculinity might not be the way forward, especially if our real aim is to move beyond binary thinking and to promote other ways for men to be that aren't tied up in categories of masculinity." Our Watch. (2019). *Men in focus: unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women.* Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch. p. 68.

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[71] Several models propose that individuals comply with social norms to avoid shame. According to [Jon] Elster [2009], (Elster, J., (2009). Social norms and the explanation of behavior. *Oxford Handbook of Analytical Sociology*. p. 195-217.) shame is an emotional response to the violation of social norms. The violation of social norms elicits contempt in observers, which in turn triggers the experience of shame in the violator[…]. Empirical evidence [..] suggests that the experience of shame does indeed activate norms, which in turn incites fear of social punishment. The desire to avoid punishment then motivates people to comply with gender norms. Shame thus operates as a red flag to prevent the person from transgressing the norm in the first place, thus acting to reinforce the norm. (Cislaghi, B., Manji, K., & Heise, L. (2018). *Social norms and gender-related harmful practices: theory in support of better*

*practice.* (Learning Report No. 2). London: Learning Group on Social Norms and Gender-related Harmful Practices, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, STRIVE, p. 17.)

[72] Scharbatke-Church, C., & Chigas, D. (2019). *Understanding social norms: A reference guide for policy and practice.* Medford, MA: Henry J. Leir Institute, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University.

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[78] Bohnet, I.  (2016). *What works: Gender equality by design.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press.

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[81] Alexander-Scott, M., Bell, E., & Holden, J. (2016). *DFID guidance note: Shifting social norms to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)*. London: VAWG Helpdesk, p.6.

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[83] Christakis and Fowler's study found that if "your friends are obese, your risk of obesity is 45 percent higher…. If your friend's friends are obese, your risk of obesity is 25 percent higher…If your friend's friend's friend, someone you probably don't even know, is obese, your risk of obesity is 10 percent higher." Christakis, N., In Thompson, D. (Ed.) Why the poor die young: A massive study of health and income found that smoking, obesity, and exercise are the most important determinants of longevity. Poor neighborhoods score worse in all of them. What's going on? *The Atlantic.* Retrieved from: https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/04/why-the-poor-die-young/477846/

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[87] Research suggests that 1) the majority of college students underestimate the extent to which their peers are uncomfortable with homophobic remarks (Bowen, A. M., & Bourgeois, M. J. (2001). Attitudes toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students: The contribution of pluralistic ignorance, dynamic social impact, and contact theories. *Journal of American college health*, *50*(2), 91-96.; Dubuque, E, Ciano-Boyce, C & Shelley-Sireci, L. (2002). Measuring Misperceptions of Homophobia on Campus. The Report on Social Norms: Working Paper #4, Little Falls, NJ: PaperClip Communications.), and 2) they may be more willing to challenge these remarks if they were aware that fact (Berkowitz, A. D. (2003). Application of social norms theory to other health and social justice issues. In H. W. Perkins (Ed.), *The social norms approach to preventing school and college age substance abuse: A handbook for educators, counselors and clinicians* (pp. 259-279). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.) Similarly, men underestimate other men's discomfort with sexist comments and are more willing to challenge those types of comments when they realize that other men feel the same way.

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[92] Scharbatke-Church, C., & Chigas, D. (2019). *Understanding social norms: A reference guide for policy and practice.* Medford, MA: Henry J. Leir Institute, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University.

[93] "In an empirical experiment conducted in a public toilet in New York, the simple presence of an observer doubled the percentage of people who washed their hands after having used the toilet. The third factor is whether (non-)compliance is more or less likely to result in sanctions. Norms exert a stronger influence when people anticipate strong sanctions. Finally, the fourth factor is whether the practice has a direct or indirect relation to the norm. Norms have stronger influence when they directly relate to the practice in question" (Cislaghi, B., Manji, K., & Heise, L. (2018). *Social norms and gender-related harmful practices: theory in support of better practice.* (Learning Report No. 2). London: Learning Group on Social Norms and Gender-related Harmful Practices, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, STRIVE, p. 19)

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[104] MacLusky, G. (2019). *Small Changes for Big Impacts: Behavioural Insights for Community Change.* Waterloo, ON: Tamarack Institute. p. 3

[105] In her book *What works: Gender equality by design* (2016), Iris Bohnet points out that "unlearning" is not easy to do. "Once an initial category-based assessment has been made, thereafter new information is interpreted in a biased way, favoring consistency with the initial impression, a process known as *confirmatory categorization*" (p. 36). For example, a meta-analysis of studies on reducing unconscious bias and automatic stereotypes found that suppression (i.e., actively trying to overcome a particular bias) does not work. "In extreme cases, instructions to resist stereotypes had the opposite effect, making stereotypes more salient and leading to an increase in biased

judgments. For example, students evaluated older job applicants more negatively after watching a diversity training video asking them to suppress unfavorable attitudes toward the elderly." (Bohnet, I.  (2016). *What works: Gender equality by design.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press. p. 49-50)

[106] MacLusky, G.  (2019). *Small Changes for Big Impacts: Behavioural Insights for Community Change.* Waterloo, ON: Tamarack Institute. p. 2

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[155] Coyle, D. (2018). *The Culture Code.* NY: Bantam Books. p. 193.

[156] The importance of non-programmatic approaches has been acknowledged by researchers and practitioners in the violence prevention field for many years. For example, Flood's *Spectrum of Prevention: From Micro to Macro* includes "Educating, strengthening and Mobilising Communities" and "Changing Organizational Practices." (Flood, M. (2019). Engaging men and boys in violence prevention. Brisbane, Australia: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 57). In *practice*, however, we tend to work at the programmatic and policy ends of the spectrum.

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suggests that "the simple observation of an out-group transgressing might increase observers' compliance with the norm" (Cislaghi, B., Manji, K., & Heise, L. (2018). *Social norms and gender-related harmful practices: Theory in support of better practice.* (Learning Report No. 2). London: Learning Group on Social Norms and Gender-related Harmful Practices, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, STRIVE.).

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[237] A comprehensive review of nearly 1000 studies found a no substantive evidence to support the effectiveness of diversity training. Furthermore, research shows that this kind of training can have a backfire effect (i.e., make people more biased, not less), perhaps because of moral licensing (where doing something good – in this case, diversity training – gives us license to do something bad). (Bohnet, I. (2016). *What works: Gender equality by design.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press. p. 51).

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