



## FREDA 2012

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A presentation by Lana M. Wells, the Brenda Strafford  
Chair in the Prevention of Domestic Violence

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THE PROJECT TO END  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

# The Story...



- Complexity of domestic violence
- Working with academics, community and policymakers

# The Issue

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



# Domestic Violence is Complex



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# Domestic Violence is Pervasive

In Canada, over 1.14 million people reported they had been either physically or sexually assaulted by their partner or spouse in the last five years

On Average, every six days a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner.

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. (2011). Family Violence In Canada: A Statistical Profile. Catalogue no. 85-224-X. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.

"Homicide in Canada, 2009," Sara Beattie and Adam Cotter, Juristat, Volume 30, Number 3, Statistics Canada, page 14. Available: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2010003/article/11352-eng.pdf> (These figures are for current and ex-partners, married/commonlaw/boyfriend.)

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# Domestic Violence is Pervasive in Alberta

Alberta has the second highest rate of self-reported spousal assault in the country.

Statistics Canada, (2008). *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2008*. Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Ministry of Industry, Ottawa, ON

Between April 2009 to March 2010, Alberta's women's shelters accommodated 6,169 women and 5,601 children.

Retrieved September 23, 2011 from [http://www.acws.ca/annual\\_stats.php](http://www.acws.ca/annual_stats.php).

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# Domestic Violence is Costly

- The cost of addressing family violence in Canada is in the billions
- In Alberta, addressing family violence for women after they have fled an abusive situation has cost Albertans more than \$600 million over the past five years
- Costs in Alberta were well over 1 billion in the last 5 years

Greaves, L., Hankivsky, O., & Kingston-Riechers, J. (1995). Selected Estimates of Costs of Violence against Women. Centre for Research on Violence against Women and Children, London, ON.

Wells, L.M., Boodt, C., & Emery, H. (2012). Preventing domestic violence in Alberta: A cost savings perspective. SPP Research Papers, 5(17), 1-13.

# Domestic Violence is Preventable



*Mayan Drenu*

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

Gloria Steinem, 2002

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# Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence

Shift is focused on creating transformational change using a primary prevention approach to stop first-time victimization and perpetration of domestic violence

# Defining Primary Prevention

Primary prevention is defined as action before the condition of concern develops. It means reducing the number of new instances of domestic violence by intervening before any violence has occurred

World Health Organization (WHO), (2007). Primary Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence: Background paper for WHO expert Meeting May 2-3. World Health Organization, Geneva

# Shift's Role

1. Research and knowledge mobilization
2. Community learning, engagement and mobilization
3. Collaboration with
  - Government
  - Community based organizations
  - Institutions and systems
  - Grassroots organizations
  - Citizens, community groups, informal and formal leaders

# Guiding Principles of Project

- Primary prevention
- Readiness and momentum (e.g. early adopters)
- Champions (leadership)
- Change at scale (population)



# Purpose of Our Research

- Influence policy makers and the public
- Leverage existing practices and influence service providers
- Set the context for the implementation of best practices
- Lay the ground-work for generating evidence
- Influence social change



# Research and Developmental Learnings

# Research Journey

Research revealed:

- Limited understanding of risk and protective factors
- Very few primary prevention practices that have been shown to actually reduce domestic violence
- No existing evidence-based models for primary prevention of DV that can simply be replicated.

## Research Projects

- Scan on international literature
- Scoping review on DV plans
- Review of promising practices for higher risk communities (e.g. Ethno cultural and Aboriginal communities)
- Research with the Filipino community and Ethno Cultural Council of Calgary
- Scan of how policy has been used to support primary prevention
- Scan of evidence-based social marketing strategies
- Research on the role of news media
- Research on the role of alcohol outlet density



## Community Engagement

*Community Mobilization*, including meetings with:

- Youth
- Ethnocultural communities
- Faith leaders
- Geographic Community (Vista Heights)

*Community Capacity Building*, including:

- Compendium of services and supports in Calgary
- Scan of data collected by local services and focus groups with service providers
- Presentations, conferences and consultations
- Government relations

GOA asks us to help in the re-  
design of the Prevention of  
Family Violence Strategy

**Government  
of Alberta** 

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# Key Levers for Change

1. Children, youth-at-risk and young adults especially those who are or are soon to be parents
2. Socio-cultural norms and environments that influence and reinforce behaviours
  - Reduce Alcohol (density, hours of operation, age – consumption)
3. Engage men and boys in violence prevention
4. Embrace that interventions happen in neighbourhoods and at kitchen tables
5. Family Violence is a process, not an event

# Stop children from being exposed to violence in the home

- Prevent unplanned and teenaged pregnancies
- Promote positive fathering programs
- Enhance home visitation programs and invest in long-term nurse support for new moms and dads
- Train mental health, health, education and child intervention systems to deal with people who have experienced trauma
- **Prohibit corporal punishment (repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada) and create a 'no-spanking' culture by promoting positive forms of discipline**

# Teach young people how to be in healthy relationships

- Evidence-based healthy relationships and healthy dating programs in all Alberta schools, including post-secondary(e.g. Fourth R (Relationship))
- Support youth-serving community agencies to provide healthy relationship skills to youth and at-risk youth
- Work with faith, ethno cultural, community and sport leaders to support young people to be in healthy relationships

# Engage men and boys in domestic violence prevention

- Positive fatherhood involvement
- Positive gender and male sexual identity to support the development of healthy families and non-violent communities
- Promote healthy male norms through sports and recreation (peers, coaches and mentors)
- Social marketing campaign to support men and boys to change unhealthy relationship behaviours and to be engaged bystanders

# Embrace that interventions happen in neighborhoods and at kitchen tables

- Support local leadership and networks to prevent and respond to family violence. (e.g., faith groups, businesses ethno cultural groups, local community groups, etc.)
- Social marketing campaign to educate peers and bystanders on how to respond

# Understand that family violence is a process, not an event

- Strengthen support for women leaving women's shelters to access basic needs, housing, education, health and employment supports for themselves and their children
- Long term support for trauma
- Apply a gender-based analysis to the issues and solutions of preventing family violence
- Foster healthy, non-violent environments (e.g. workplaces, limit access to alcohol)

# Thanks to my team

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- Thom Dennett, Research Assistant

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# Thank You

Questions?  
Comments?



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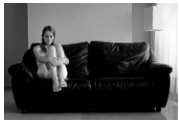
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# SHIFT TO STOP VIOLENCE BEFORE IT STARTS



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Initiated by The Brenda Strafford Chair in the Prevention of Domestic Violence