

Alberta Survey Shows 96% of Men Want Support for Healthy Relationships

There is a stereotype that men don't like "relationship" talk, however the Alberta Men's Survey revealed that may not be the case. The survey reached over 2,200 men in 32 Alberta localities and found well-being and healthy relationships are an important topic for 96 percent of men surveyed.

There is increasing focus on the importance of including men in "relationship" talk and domestic violence prevention. "As the call for men's accountability and increasing roles in violence prevention grew louder, groups of Albertan men and women responded by coming out with a survey to determine what are the enablers and barriers to attaining a healthy well-being and healthy relationships", explains Vic Lantion from the Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary. Vic co-led the survey with Liza Lorenzetti and Dr. Dave Este with the Faculty of Social Work, and Michael Hoyt with the City of Edmonton. Men's Action Network Calgary and Men Edmonton were the volunteer-led grassroots organizations that helped bring the survey into the community, along with a number of other partners.

"The survey reported 76 percent of men did not know where to access support or whom to approach," said Michael Hoyt, City of Edmonton social worker. "More work will need to continue to improve outreach and service access to create awareness and engage men in healthy relationship development and domestic violence prevention."

"This survey was an attempt to take a step-back from the reality of domestic violence to understand how we got here", states Liza Lorenzetti. "This included looking the social roles and beliefs that contribute to men's violence against women, the external stressors and experiences with trauma that negatively impact their relationships and the resources and supports that might help men when they need it most."

The survey drew men and women of diverse ethno-cultural heritage, sexual identity, geographic regions and socio-economic backgrounds. "Five recommendations have emerged from the Alberta Men's Survey." says Dr. David Este, co-lead researcher for the project, "These recommendations reflect what the men surveyed told us, and could lead to an improvement in men's well-being and their ability to maintain healthy relationships with their families, partners, and others." The Five recommendations are:

1. Broaden the scope of services for men and boys, with a focus on creative outreach, education; the delivery of supports should be enabled by community-based, peer-based and informal organizations and networks.
2. Support families, individuals, community leaders and faith leaders to build their capacities as role models, peer supporters and mentors.
3. Identify a strategy (policies and practices) to address social and economic inequality, including various forms of discrimination.
4. Address and prevent trauma through mental health supports for men and families, and primary prevention strategies focused on (improving access to services), decreasing child maltreatment/trauma and shifting rigid gender norms.

5. Support and fund community-based and culturally and locality appropriate collaborations that reach-out to men within their existing social environments.

For more information and the full survey report visit, albertamen.com.

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Background

Alberta domestic violence rates are among the highest in Canada, with men most often implicated but also deeply affected by the consequences. In addition, the financial recession and job insecurity facing our province can undermine personal wellbeing and mental health of men. Men's mental health and wellbeing are two factors that, if ignored, can contribute to gender-based violence, family violence, depression, isolation, and suicide. The Alberta Men's Network conducted a province-wide survey on the capacities, services, supports and resources men need for their well-being and the development of healthy relationships. The survey elicited responses from more than 2,200 men in 42 unique localities, from over 20 ethno-cultural groups. After the results came out, the survey team organized dialogues with almost 350 men and women for further in-depth discussions on the results.

The survey was supported by the Alberta Human Rights Commission, the City of Edmonton, Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary, The Calgary Foundation, United Way of Calgary and Area, and University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work.

This research project was made possible by the collective efforts of the Alberta Men's Survey Leadership Team composed of representatives from Alberta Father Involvement Initiative, Alberta Human Rights Commission, Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services, Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA), Calgary Sexual Health Centre, City of Edmonton, Community Members, Edmonton/Evergreen Family Violence Committee, Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary (ECCC), MEN Edmonton, Men's Action Network Calgary (MAN-C), Norwood Family Center, REACH, The Calgary Foundation, United Way of Calgary and Area, and University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work, in collaboration with various community organizations and other service providers in Alberta. The survey was funded by Alberta Human Rights Commission, The Calgary Foundation, and United Way of Calgary and Area.

The Alberta Men's Network is planning to host further dialogues around the province and invites Albertans of all gender identities to join in our work. For more information: www.albertamen.com