# The Alberta Men's Survey

A Conversation with Men about Well-being and Healthy Relationships

**ALBERTA MEN'S NETWORK**

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## A Conversation with Men about Well-Being and Healthy Relationships

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### *Leadership and Support:*



*In memory of Patrick Dillon, champion of*
*Alberta Father Involvement Initiative and founding member of Alberta*
*Men's Network. We continue our shared journey.*

# THE TEAM

*The research project was made possible by the collective effort 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 (ME), 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 project also received tremendous support from many individuals and organizations that contributed in different capacities at various phases of the initiative.*

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# AN ALBERTA CONVERSATION

## *2214 MEN RESPONDED TO THE ALBERTA MEN'S SURVEY, AN ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT MEN'S WELL-BEING AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS*

## WHY ALBERTA MEN'S SURVEY?

*Alberta Men's Survey [AMS] was one of the milestones in a shared journey of Albertans from various backgrounds, nations and experiences; a journey towards healthy relationships free of gender based violence. The AMS was never meant to be a one-off academic exercise. This collective voyage began when a group of men and women[1] allies realized that answers to ever-increasing violence against women had to be found within the dominant beliefs, cultural practices and ideologies that inform and influence men themselves. The daily practices of masculinity, gender norms (rigid gender identity) and other forms of isolating or oppressive realities were considered. In addition, men's often unacknowledged quest for well-being and personal healing emerged as having a central role in preventing violence in the next generations. In that spirit, the journey of this group, now identifying as **Alberta Men's Network [AMN]**, was inward looking as a first step toward becoming transformational.*

*There is increasing focus on the importance of gender socialization and the societal expectations put on men and boys, as more evidence surfaces on the relationship between dominant forms of masculinity, and violence against women and children. As the call for men's accountability and increasing roles in violence prevention grew louder, groups of Albertan men from different ethno-cultural backgrounds met frequently to explore ways to reduce violence against women and children. Grassroots groups such as Men's Action Network Calgary (supported by the Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary and the University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work), MEN Edmonton (ME) (supported by the City of Edmonton) and other organizations convened men in separate localities, before joining with a number of partners to form an emerging network. From coffee shops and home-based gatherings, to university classrooms, they delved deeper to contend with questions such as: Are men inherently driven to be oppressive? Does the perception of men about themselves have anything to do with their attitude towards women and children in particular, and society in general? How can individuals change a global social condition that men seem to have carried for generations?*

*After many months of discussions, debates, social actions and community-building, the group felt that they had to take an in-depth look at men's sense of well-being and capacities to build and sustain healthy relationships. A need was felt to acknowledge the vulnerabilities of men that had not been explored in depth across cultural backgrounds and experiences. We sensed a palpable gap between men- persons as we truly are, and men- as super imposed by cultural ideologies and expectations. In the light of our own sharing, we knew that men longed to be cared for, to be heard and to be helped when confronted with life's dilemmas. However, various*

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[1] While the terms "men" and "women" are used in this report, we acknowledge that gender and gender identity is beyond this binary, and support everyone's right to identify gender orientation and / or counter gender categorization.

*factors including cultural expectations and peer pressure have not given many men an opportunity to explore these areas in a deeper way.*

*Against this backdrop, and the desire to challenge gender norms that can hinder men from having healthy relationships with women and anyone across the span of gender-identities, the AMS took root. Beginning with an initial survey developed for Calgary by a grassroots group of men belonging to Men's Action Network Calgary, a wave of support from Edmonton, Strathcona County and other partners across Alberta turned our work into a provincial effort.*

*While the preliminary findings of our survey are now circulating in the community, the most reassuring of them is that from more than 2,200 men who responded, there was a resounding "Yes" to the question that men at times need support for their well-being and the development of healthy relationships. Breaking down a pervasive gender stereotype is like a breath of fresh air!*

*As shown in this report, over-arching message of the AMS is that **'this world needs more of healing',** as tweeted by late Alberta MLA and tireless child-advocate Manmeet Bhullar who attended our AMS launch in Calgary in November 2015. Manmeet's message will continue to reverberate and inspire our group as we take forward the much-needed focus on well-being, healing as groundwork for a future without violence.*

*          **Binu Sebastian & Liza Lorenzetti for Alberta Men's Network [AMN]***

## 1.0                                                                        INTRODUCTION

Effective and significant change in the prevention of gender-based violence requires a greater involvement of men. According to World Health Organization [WHO] (2013-2016), violence against women (VAW) and girls is a global phenomenon. Research underscores that intergenerational patterns of abuse (including the abuse of both boys and girls), socialization towards traditional male and female roles, and male dominance in both the public and private spheres contribute to all forms of interpersonal violence, including violence against women (Ahmed, van Ginneken, Razzaque & Alam, 2004; Flood, 2010; Kaufman, 2001; Lorenzetti & Este, 2010; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). Social, political, and economic institutions all play important roles in reinforcing violence against women (Hajjar, 2004; Levy, 1996).

The United Nations identified domestic violence as the most pervasive form of VAW (United Nations General Assembly, 1993). In Canada, men commit the majority of sexual assaults, physical assaults with a weapon and homicides, and women account for the majority of domestic violence victimization (Statistics Canada, 2013; Ursel, Tutty, & LeMaistre, 2008). Domestic violence affects people from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds (Fong, 2010); it is not a cultural problem, but an issue primarily related to power and oppression. The literature draws associations among colonization, racism, social isolation, economic oppression/poverty, other forms of discrimination, and domestic violence (Carillo & Tello, 2008; Smith, 2004); these issues must be addressed in concert with one another.

Male violence and rigid gender/sexuality stereotypes and expectations can also have negative consequences for men and boys, as they do for everyone on the gender spectrum (Kaufman, 2001; Lorenzetti, Wells, Callaghan, & Logie; 2014). Researchers associate gender diversity and gender non-conformity to increased levels of violence against boys and young men in particular (Egale, 2011; Goodmark, 2012; Tomsen & Mason, 2001). Moreover, societal expectations put upon men to demonstrate and uphold 'masculinity scripts' can lead to risk-taking behaviours that can decrease physical and mental health, and men's self-care and help seeking activities (Katz, 1995; Northern Health, 2011).

While the participation or engagement of men is critical to preventing and ending domestic violence (Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach, & Stark, 2003; Kaufman, 2001; Murphy, 2008), there is still little understanding of the services and supports that men need in order to engage in more nurturing relationships and lead healthier lives. This lack of knowledge contributes to the barriers that men face in accessing existing programming related to healthy relationships. It also creates a design challenge when developing new services to address men's needs.

Research suggests that for people who experienced unhealthy parenting or trauma in their childhood, participation in reflective conversations can help them develop a better understanding of their lives, and build healthier relationships with their own children; in the absence of this reflection, they are more likely to transfer unhealthy parenting models to their children (Siegel & Hartzell, 2004; Rumble, 2010).

The Alberta Men's Survey promotes a primary prevention approach to gender-based violence and other forms of interpersonal violence by establishing key insights into men's well-being, healthy relationships, and supports and services for men. AMS began as a collaborative project of community members, agencies and academics that originated from pockets of conversation regarding domestic violence, gender equality and masculinity. In 2014, we gathered several Alberta groups that were working on these issues. We identified a common interest in engaging men in an extended dialogue on barriers and accessing appropriate supports and services. Our work was guided by an understanding of intersectionality of such factors as class, race, ability/ies, gender and sexual identity/ies; the pursuit of social justice; and, the desire to foster relationships of equality and respect.

This project was an attempt to identify, explore and understand the capacities and resources required by a diverse population of Albertan men over 18 years of age; the research engaged men to investigate the strengths and challenges they experience related to well-being, healthy relationships and violence prevention. The survey was collaboratively designed by 71 men and women committed to enhancing men's roles in violence prevention. A tremendous strength of the project was a culturally-diverse team of community-based Research Assistants, supported by a leadership group of 18 organizations and numerous volunteers. The AMS was distributed from July through October 2015, using an on-line survey site (Survey Monkey) and administered in person by trained Research Assistants. The survey was circulated throughout the province, and gathered responses from **over 2,200 men in 42 unique localities and over 20 ethno cultural groups.** Survey respondents represented a wide range of ages, cultural, national and socio-economic backgrounds, and gender and sexual identities. Calgary, Edmonton and Strathcona County were the top three municipalities that drew respondents.

| **2.0** | **AMS OBJECTIVES** |
|---------|-------------------|

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To explore the strengths and challenges regarding healthy inter-personal relationships and personal well-being among diverse populations of men in Alberta.
2. To catalyze dialogue and action within community, agency and policy spheres.
3. To build the capacity of community researchers through training and leadership development.

## 3.0                                        LEADERSHIP

Leadership Team members and community-based Research Assistants (all identified as "co-researchers") guided the project. The Leadership Team (see page 3 for a list of members) was involved in the design and administration of the survey and also analyzed the findings, created action from this research, wrote and presented the finding.

The Leadership Team provided direction and guidance to the project; the structure was collegial, with the flow of communication, updates and decision-making coordinated by the Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary (ECCC), the University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work and the City of Edmonton. The Leadership Team met regularly, with Skype and phone patch made available in the 2 host venues to ensure that offsite members could participate. The physical venues for meetings were either the University of Calgary or the ECCC office (for Calgary members) and City of Edmonton (for Edmonton members) and members from other localities. Meetings were agenda-based and participatory. Decisions and action items were identified through consensus and results were followed up through e-mail, phone and in the succeeding meetings.

## 4.0                                        METHODOLOGY

### 4.1   Theoretical Lens

A theoretical framework based on three key theories guided the AMS: Intersectionality, Social Justice and Anti- Oppressive Practice (AOP).

An intersectionality approach to understanding interpersonal violence accounts for the ways that colonization, race, class, gender, sexual identity and other socially constructed categories can act as barriers to well-being and healthy, positive relationships (Bopp, Bopp & Lane, 2003; Brownridge, 2003/2008; Crenshaw; 1989; Ristock & Timbang, 2005). The AMS incorporated an intersectional approach to creating, implementing and analyzing our survey, which was led by men and women from diverse backgrounds including age, sexual orientation, ethno-cultural backgrounds, country of origin, educational background and Indigenous nationhood. Further, survey questions drew on a number of issues which were potentially relevant to men who experience marginalization or barriers to participation and equity in society. These include questions that focus on income struggles, credential recognition, past trauma and discrimination. Intersectional oppression should be considered in understanding and creating violence prevention frameworks, policies and practices.

The work of the AMS Leadership Team was based on a social justice approach to understanding and addressing domestic violence. Barker (1999) defines social justice as "a condition in which all members of a society have the same basic rights, protections, opportunities, obligation and social benefits" (p. 451). The rationale for social justice as a second framework theory was drawn from our understanding that

violence prevention is connected to a reduction in oppression and the promotion of a just social environment in which to thrive. A social justice approach included looking at ways that men could be supported to identify and minimize barriers to healthy relationships, and promote greater equity across the spectrum of oppression, including gender. Fostering men's ally roles in working with women on violence prevention was seen as promoting greater social justice within society.

The AMS was conceptualized as an anti-oppressive practice to address and prevent violence. Anti-oppressive theory/practice (AOT/P) focuses on strategies to minimize power differences in society and secure the rights to which all people are entitled (Dalrymoke & Burke, 1995; Dominelli, 2002). AOT/P guided the collaborative development, implementation and analysis of the survey. The survey questions were designed to be a welcoming invitation to men to examine conditions that support and create barriers to well-being and healthy non-abusive relationships. The survey does not specifically ask men if or why they might use abusive or oppressive behaviours. Coming from an anti-oppressive lens centered on primary prevention; we instead sought to engage men in the reflection of what factors and supports could enable them to expand their capacity to develop healthy and non-oppressive interpersonal relationships.

**Anti-Oppressive Practice**
- Engagement of men & women from diverse backgrounds
- A community-created survey tool

**Social Justice**
- Men's ally roles with women
- Healthy relationships & well-being

**Intersectionality**
- Accounting for gender, race, class, etc.
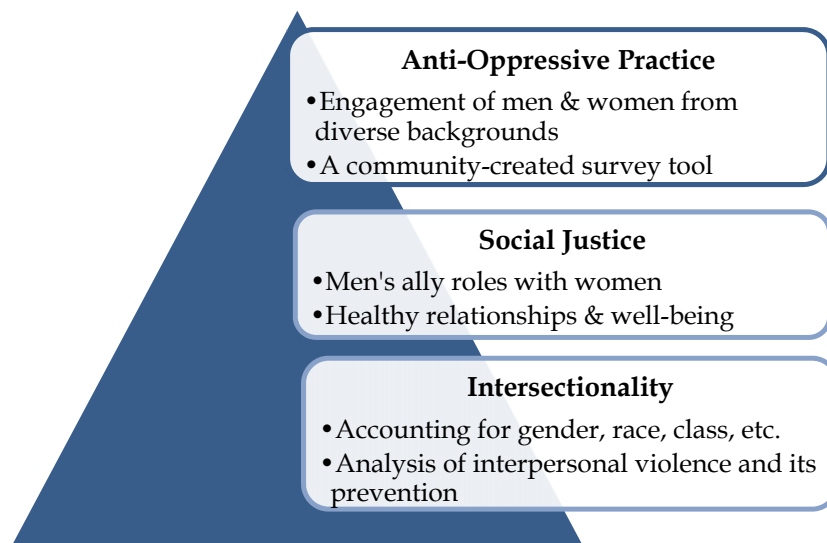- Analysis of interpersonal violence and its prevention

**Figure 1: Theoretical Framework**

**Key Working Principles**

Based on the theoretical framework, the AMS Leadership Team incorporated several principles:

- Consistent and meaningful involvement of community members, organizations and academics
- Collaborative survey development, implementation, analysis and knowledge exchange
- Ethno-cultural diversity as a key strength
- Training and capacity-building
- Volunteerism
- Shared leadership
- Opportunities for key members to present, author and lead aspects of the work
- Perseverance
- Recognition

## 4.2    Research Questions

This project aspired to respond to the following key research questions:

1. What are men's views regarding enablers and barriers to well-being and healthy relationships?
2. What supports and services do men identify as helpful in addressing men's well-being and the promotion of healthy relationships without violence?

## 4.3    Community-Based Participatory Action Research

Community-based participatory action research (CBR/PAR) is "a complex process which includes adult education, situation analysis, critical analysis, and practice as sources of knowledge for understanding new problems, necessities and dimension of reality" (Fals Borda, 1998, p. 85). PAR theory and methodology was developed, and is frequently used to address issues related to oppression and marginalization (Lorenzetti & Walsh, 2014). PAR focuses on participation, knowledge development, people's empowerment and social justice as key aspects of a research process (Fals Borda & Anisur Rahman, 1991; Reason & Bradbury, 2008). PAR promotes "possibilities for change on multiple levels" (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 72).

The AMS engendered multiple levels of participation. Two grassroots groups, Men's Action Network Calgary and MEN Edmonton (ME) were the community-based driving force behind the project. The Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary, the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary and the City of Edmonton provided a foundation of support to the community men and women who led the project. The two key community groups are described below.

### Men's Action Network Calgary (MAN-C)

The initial design of this survey emerged from MAN-C, supported by the Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary and the Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary. MAN-C is a community-based group of men and women from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds and walks of life who are committed to engaging men and boys in building healthy relationships free from violence. MAN-C identified the needs, capacities and opportunities to expand and deepen men's leadership work with men and boys in the area of violence prevention.

*How MAN-C Emerged in the Community*

- Male leaders across different cultures were gathered to establish a strong and cohesive group (community-based participatory action research).
- As a process, Indigenous and white men were invited to the project to build a collective foundation.
- Men discussed their roles in violence prevention, which included formative conversations on gender, culture, decolonization, immigration, resettlement, and racism.
- Women violence prevention workers were invited into this gender-collaborative engagement, which fostered mutual respect, equality and understanding. A decolonizing lens became an integral element of group discussion.

### Men Edmonton (ME)

As a collaborative community building network, ME played an integral role in the development of the survey by bringing the survey questionnaire to young men and ethno-cultural communities in Edmonton for feedback. ME also trained Research Assistants (RAs) in Edmonton, and collected respondent data. It was through the ME Network that REACH Edmonton's Cultural Navigators joined the project, participated in the training sessions and shared the survey with Edmonton's Sudanese, Oromo, and Somali communities.

The Leadership Team expanded to include a number of other agencies and funding organizations that guided the project. While some community members and agency representatives were involved in all aspects of the project, others received email updates, were invited to meetings, training sessions and research launches. AMS meetings were open to Leadership Team members, Research Assistants and any other interested person.

## 4.4    Research Design

Based on the PAR approach described in Section 4.3, and the exploratory nature of the study, the Leadership Team used a needs survey to gather data on men's well-being and healthy relationships. A survey method was used for data-collection in order to reach a large number of Alberta men and male-identified persons within a brief time period at a limited cost.

A structured questionnaire containing 23 quantitative and qualitative questions was prepared to collect the relevant information (see Appendix A for Survey Tool). To facilitate access by various ethno-cultural/language groups, the tool was translated into Spanish, Farsi, Arabic, French, and Mandarin. The following information was collected:

- Background information of the respondents such as place of origin, partnership status, ethno-cultural identity and nationality, gender and sexual identity, education and economic status
- Health related information such as the presence of a disability or mental health concern
- Opinions about well-being and enablers/barriers to healthy relationships
- Opinions on masculinity
- Interests in services and supports
- Opinions on men's roles in violence prevention

## 4.5    Data Collection

The survey was administered during a three-month period, from July to October 2015. Targeted and snowball sampling techniques were adopted to collect data. Data was collected on-line through Survey Monkey. AMS volunteers created a website on which the survey was embedded and the public could respond. Additionally, fifty-one individuals were trained as Research Assistants (RAs) for in-person data collection; thirty-five were men and sixteen were women. Research Assistants entered paper questionnaire data into Survey Monkey by web-link or manual entry.

RAs were tasked to reach out to respondents from diverse communities. However, to ensure that Indigenous men, diverse ethno-cultural men, young men, sexually diverse men, and all abilities men could be reached, men and women RAs were recruited who had the capacity to engage with men from these groups.

- One RA living with a disability
- Three Indigenous RAs
- One RA from Latin American heritage
- Two RAs from Caribbean heritage
- Nine RAs from African heritage
- Twelve RAs from Asian and Middle Eastern heritage
- Twenty-five RAs from European heritage.
- Four RAs from the spectrum GBTQ* gender and sexual identities

Four training sessions were held for community-based researchers. The training included an overview of the research objectives and intent, a grounding in community based research, survey research, ethical codes of conduct and developmental evaluation. The survey script and protocols were shared with opportunities to role-play the recruitment process and discuss the project implementation. A full-day training session was recorded to serve as a continuous learning tool for community members engaged in the work[2].

## 4.6    Data Analysis

Survey responses were analyzed collaboratively, under the leadership of the data manager and research leads. The Survey Monkey platform was used to filter, compare, and produce outputs of aggregated quantitative data. Additional data processing was done in SPSS and shared with teams consisting of community, agency, and academic leads that worked together to code and analyze certain data sets. While 2425 individual surveys were submitted, over 200 were removed due to errors, because they did not fit with the participant inclusion criteria or because their submissions were incomplete. The final number of surveys included in this report is 2214.

In addition to quantitative responses, men were asked to self-describe their location, country of origin and ethnicity, and provide other qualitative information. For these questions, specific co-researchers mined the data in order to perform the initial coding in Excel, and then sent this information back to the data manager for processing. For example, in order to ascertain the number of Indigenous respondents, an Indigenous co-researcher with cultural expertise identified all the Indigenous respondents in an Excel exported file, and created a new identifying column for this group. The new Excel file was imported into SPSS to facilitate data analysis for this population. Similarly, all demographic groups that could not be adequately processed through Survey Monkey were first identified by knowledgeable co-researchers in Excel, and then analyzed in SPSS. By nature of the survey being province wide and co-researchers living in different cities, each had to work on separate "Excel" files and then email them back to the lead data manager for SPSS processing at the University of Calgary. Once the aggregated data was produced, co-researcher teams engaged in a process of thematic analysis (Guest, 2012) to manually review, analyze and code responses. Each team member first analyzed data separately, then compared codes and collectively developed key categories. One of the research leads and the data manager participated in the analysis, coding and final categorization of each data set.

Overall, ninety-one individuals were involved in the survey tool development, translation of the survey into four languages, development of a website, promotion and recruitment of participants, survey encoding, analysis, presentations of the results, community dialogues[3] and development of the research report. As of

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[2] For more information, see AMS YouTube clips at:
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Alberta+Men%27s+Survey
[3] See section 6 for more information on community dialogues

September 12 2016, a total of 8498 volunteer hours were contributed to the project by fifty-four male/male-identified and thirty-seven female/female-identified volunteers; sixty-one from Calgary and thirty from Edmonton, Sherwood Park, Leduc, Fort Saskatchewan, and Beaumont. Data analysis for this survey is ongoing, with the intention of producing research briefs related to specific populations or issues that will be shared in the coming months on the following themes:  Immigrant men; Indigenous men; Edmonton men; Calgary men; Strathcona County men; Gender and sexually diverse men; Men's views of masculinity; and, Men's views on supports and services.

## 4.7    Limitations of the Study

The AMS is a community-based survey and therefore is not representative of Alberta men, or specific populations of men within Alberta. The study was intended to create an Alberta conversation, and set the foundation for further research and action by community, agency and government stakeholders.

Although numerous efforts were extended to include the perspectives of men who are Indigenous, newcomer/immigrants, racialized, gender and sexually diverse, all-abilities, young, and senior, the results may not incorporate the views and experiences of many individuals and communities of men.  Snowball sampling was a convenient and appropriate approach to use for a community survey. This approach, however, may be reflected in the demographics of the respondents.

While the survey tool was translated into five languages, only the English and Spanish versions were used. A lack of volunteer availability to recruit language-specific survey respondents during the brief survey recruitment period prevented these tools from being implemented.

Further issues affecting inter-personal relationships and personal well-being (for example media, school, culture and others) were not investigated through this survey.

While thousands of volunteer hours were contributed to this project, the process of data analysis and report writing took more time than anticipated. The unexpected high number of respondents and complexity of the qualitative data required a significant time commitment on the part of the research leads, coordinators and analysis teams.  Therefore, the timelines for this project were stretched considerably.

## 5.0                                                                    STUDY FINDINGS

### 5.1    Background Characteristics of the Respondents

**Geographic Locations**

A total of 2214 men responded to the Alberta Men's Survey. Respondents were drawn from a number of different cities and towns (See Table 1).

**Table 1: Geographic Locations**

| Cities/Town | Sample | % |
|---|---|---|
| Calgary | 819 | 37.0 |
| Edmonton | 643 | 29.0 |
| Strathcona Country | 383 | 17.3 |
| Lethbridge | 31 | 1.4 |
| St. Albert | 24 | 1.1 |
| Leduc | 21 | 1.0 |
| Fort Saskatchewan | 18 | 0.8 |
| Red Deer | 18 | 0.8 |
| Airdrie | 16 | 0.7 |
| Beaumont | 16 | 0.7 |
| Cochrane | 15 | 0.7 |
| Fort McMurray | 11 | 0.5 |
| Medicine Hat | 11 | 0.5 |
| Cold Lake | 10 | 0.4 |
| Other localities | 178 | 8.0 |
| **Total Participants** | **2214** | **100** |

Other localities:  *Athabasca, Banff, Bentley, Blackfalds, Bonnyville, Boyle, Brooks, Calmar, Camrose, Chestermere, Coaldale, Consort, Darwell, Drumheller, Edson, Fort Macleod, Fox Creek, Gibbons, Grande Prairie, Grimshaw, Hanna, High level, High Prairie, High River, Hinton, Innisfail, Irricana, Jasper, Josephburg, Kinuso, La Crete, Lac La Biche, Lac St. Anne County, Lacombe, Lake Louise, Langdon, Legal, Lloydminster, Lougheed, Lymburn, Mountain View County, Nanton, New Sarepta, Okotoks, Olds,  Parkland County, Peace River, Priddis, Raymond, Redwater, Rocky Mountain House, Rockyview, Rosebud, Siksika, Slave Lake, Springbrook, Spruce Grove, St. Paul, Stony Plain, Strathmore, Swan Hills, Sylvan Lake, Three Hills, Tofield, Vegreville, Westlock, Wetaskiwin, Whitecourt, Winfield.*

## Nationality / National Origins

Of the total respondent group, **83 persons (4%) identified themselves as Indigenous**. The majority of respondents, 1572 (72%) were born in Canada[4] and 615 **(28%) were immigrants** (first generation Canadians). Among the immigrant respondents were Canadian citizens, permanent residents, refugees, temporary foreign workers and international students (See Figure 2).
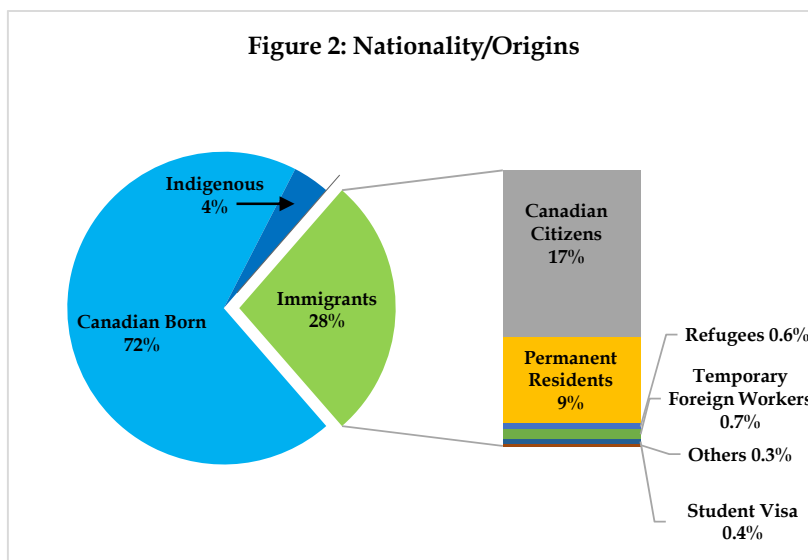
**Figure 2: Nationality/Origins**

Indigenous 4%
Canadian Born 72%
Immigrants 28%
Canadian Citizens 17%
Permanent Residents 9%
Refugees 0.6%
Temporary Foreign Workers 0.7%
Others 0.3%
Student Visa 0.4%

## Gender and Sexual Identity

While a majority of respondents, 1979 (91%) reported that they were heterosexual or "'straight", 172 (8%) stated that they were gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (GBTQ). Another 25 men (1%) provided alternative self-descriptions of their gender and sexual identities (See Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Gender and Sexual Identity**

Heterosexual Straight, 91%
GBTQ, 8%
Self Described, 1%

---
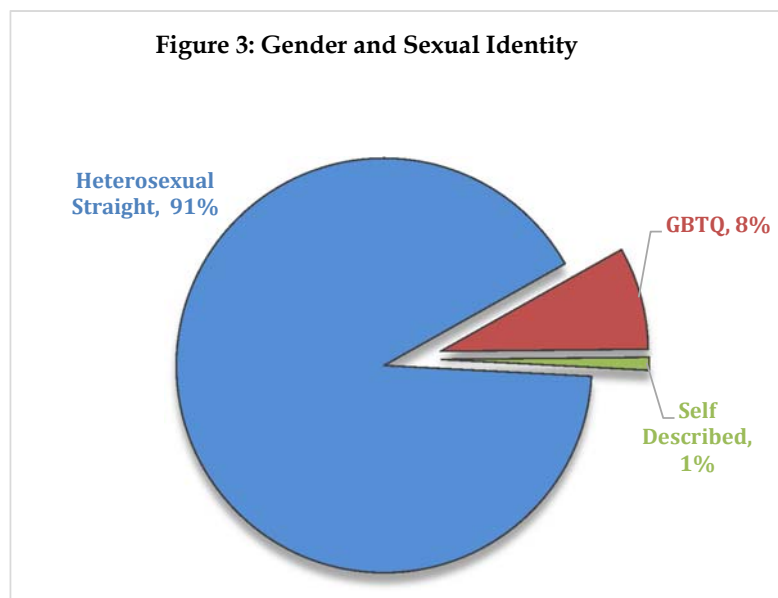
[4] Indigenous men in this study are those who identified themselves with any of the following descriptors: Indigenous, Aboriginal, Inuit, **Métis**, or by specific Nation.

## Living with Disabilities

**Figure 4: Living with Disabilities**

Yes
8%

No
92%
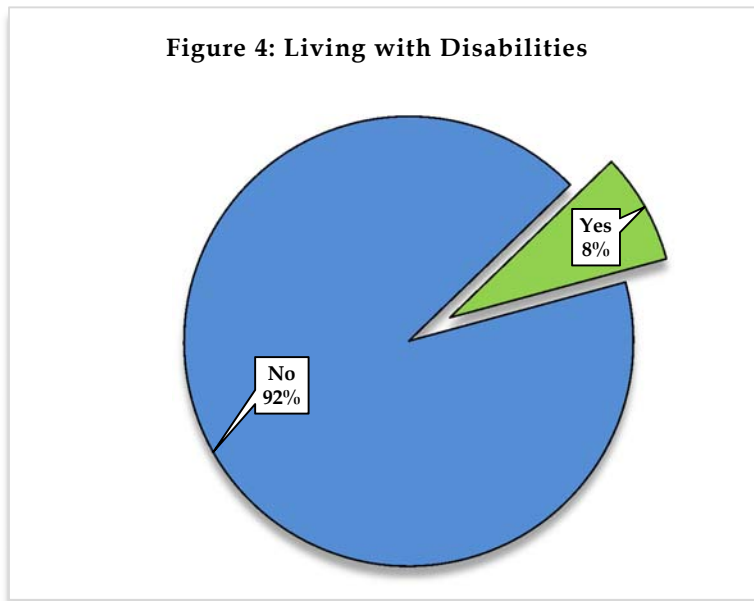
Almost one out of ten (176, 8%) respondents stated that they have one or more disabilities, while 2030 (92%) indicated that they do not (See Figure 4). Men described a number of different challenges through qualitative responses.

## Mental Health Challenges

**Figure 5: Living with Mental Health Challenges**

Yes
21%

No
79%
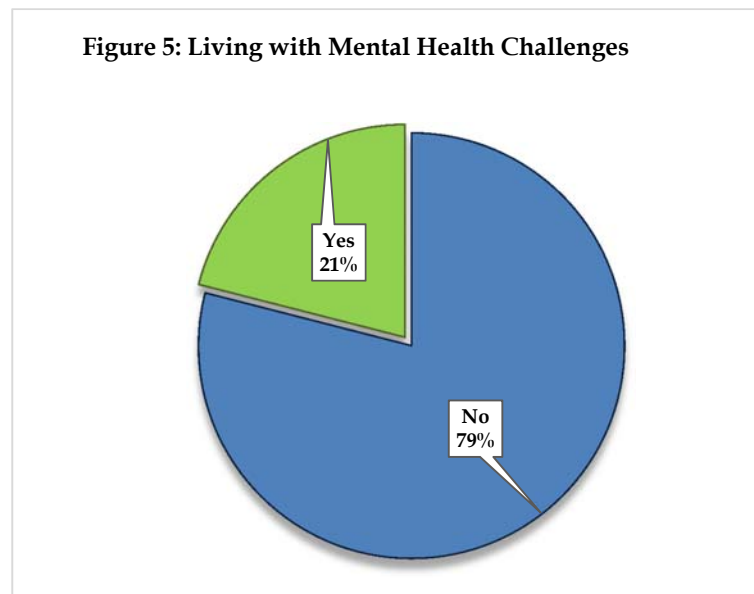
More than one out of five (462; 21%) respondents reported that they live with mental health challenges, and the rest 79% (1742) said no (See Figure 5). The top three responses were depression, anxiety, and trauma or PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder).

### Financial Circumstances

To better understand men's financial circumstances, respondents were asked to subjectively comment on their financial well-being, rather than report their annual income. While a majority of men (80%) stated that they could pay their bills, approximately half (46%) reported that their earnings were not sufficient to meet their daily expenses and retain a safety net of savings. Almost one out of five men stated that they struggled or could not meet their daily expenses (See Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Financial Circumstances**

- others — 3%
- Cannot pay bills — 2%
- Struggle to pay bills and expenses — 15%
- Enough to pay bills and expenses — 26%
- Can Pay bills, expenses & save money — 54%
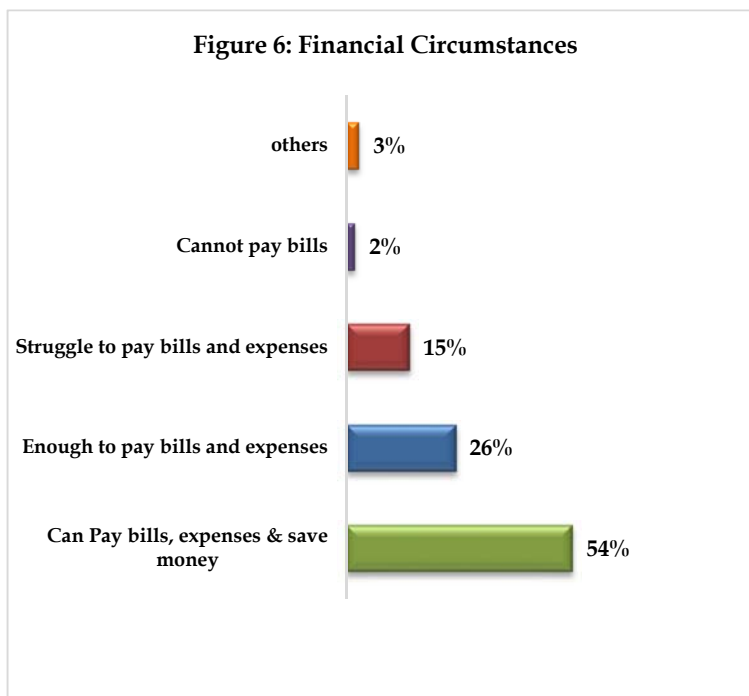
## 5.2    Enablers and Barriers to Well-Being and Healthy Relationships

### Promotion of Well-Being

Men were asked to specify the five most important factors responsible for personal well-being and healthy relationships. The majority perceived **family (74%) and financial stability (71%) as the two main factors.** Friends (53%), a good job (48%) and appropriate and stable housing (45%) were additional key factors (See Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Personal Well-Being**

- Family — 74%
- Financial Stability — 71%
- Friends — 53%
- Good Job — 48%
- Appropriate & Stable housing — 45%

## Barriers to Well-Being

**Figure 8: Main Barriers to Well-Being and Healthy Relationships**

Past negative or traumatic experiences — 44%
Unsuccessful job/career — 45%
Addictions (alcohol or other) — 46%
Family conflict/relationship problems — 55%
Financial Challenges — 65%
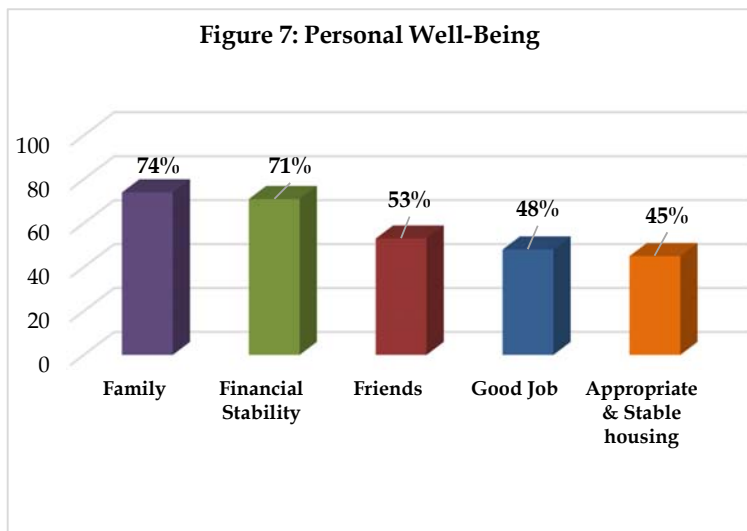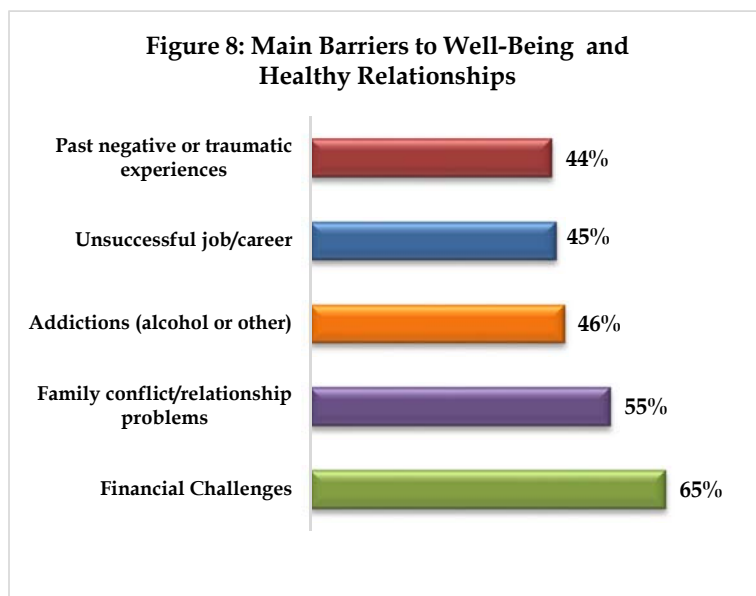
More than three out of five respondents **(65%) identified financial challenges as the main barrier to well-being and healthy relationships**. This was followed by family conflict (55%), substance misuse (46%), an unsuccessful career (45%) and trauma or past negative experiences (44%) (See Figure 8).

## 5.3    Supports and Services

## Would Men Access Services?

A highly notable response from this survey was men's interest in services and supports. **Almost all men (96%) reported that men do need supports and services** for well-being and healthy relationships (See Figure 9). However, less than one out of four men (24%) stated that they were aware of the services that are available to them. As a consequence, **a large majority (76%) did not know where to go and whom to approach.**

**Figure 9: Do men need support for Well-Being and Healthy Relationships?**

No 4%

Yes 96%
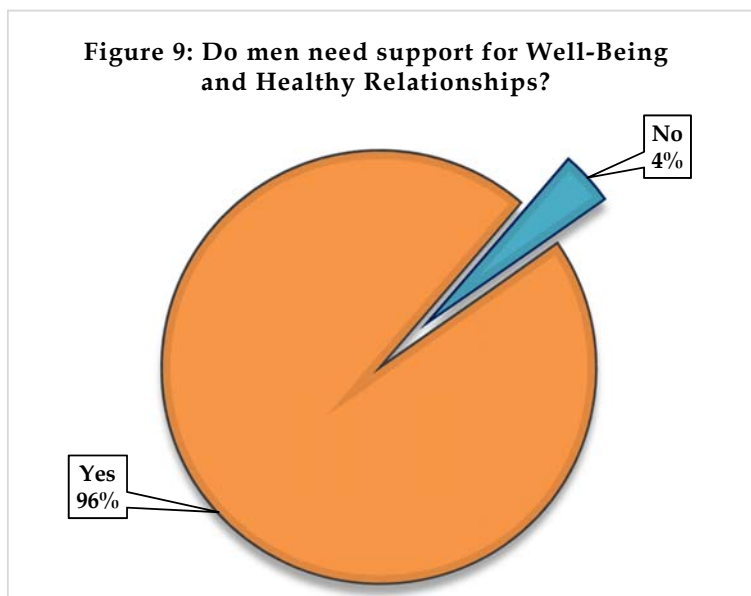
## Types of Services and Support Men Would Use



Figure 10: Types of Support Men Would Use (Top Five)
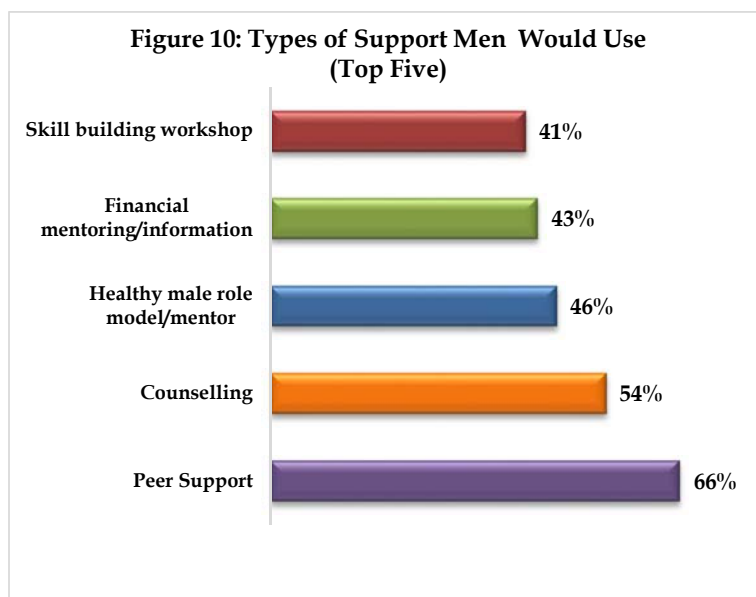
When asked about the types of support men would use, **approximately three out of five (66%) stated that they would seek peer support**. A substantial number of men also expressed that professional support such as counselling (54%), healthy male role models (46%), financial mentoring (43%), and workshops focused on skill building (41%) would be helpful (See Figure 10).

The statements below, shared by respondents, provide examples of the reasons why men identified these support mechanisms.

### Peer Supports

*"My first place to look for support would always be my family and friends so anything else would need to provide services that I could not get there..."*

*"Helpful people who care about you"*

*"I'm an introvert so a workshop and peer group seem awful to me. I trust in the people close to me with my personal well-being"*

*"A place where men regardless of their race can talk"*

*"A place where I can feel comfortable talking to other like if it was among friends"*

### Counselling

*"I would prefer going to a counselling men's group"*

*"Counselling where we can talk our personal issue with confidentiality"*

*"Mental health group therapy for work/ injury related PTSD"*

*"Financial counselling and dad's skills"*

*"Addiction counselling"*

*"A male oriented counsellor"*

**Healthy Male Role-Models**

> *"Men need to be shown that it is OK to express fear & sadness to other men. We need leaders willing to role model that behaviour. Honest expressions of vulnerability are true actions of courage"*
>
> *"For me healthy role models have been very important, given the lack of healthy role models in many TV shows…"*

**Financial Mentoring**

> *"A place where men can get support about issues that men face regarding employment etc.…"*
>
> *"A place that can help in financial support when we need help"*

## 5.4    Masculinity: What It Means to be a Man

Men were asked to name qualities that best describe a man; six thousand one hundred and sixty-six words were provided. The research team coded these responses into several categories. Almost 40% of all responses (2379) were grouped under the theme *'Traditional or Normative Masculinity'* (characteristics usually ascribed to men). This masculinity category contained words or concepts such as "strong; determined; hard-working; father; provider; protector."

**Box 1. What It Means To Be a Man: Top 28 Descriptors**



The second most prominent theme was *'Ethics Masculinity'*, which encompassed 26% (1631) of total responses. This category included words or concepts that centered on being a good person, such as "responsibility; dependability; honesty; truthfulness".

*'Non-traditional or Non-Normative Masculinity'* (characteristics usually ascribed to women) was the third most common theme, representing 20% (1245) of the total. Within this category were words or concepts such as "nurturing; emotional; loving". Responses categorized under Normative/Traditional Masculinity, Non-Normative/Non-Traditional Masculinity and Ethical Masculinity encompassed 86% of all descriptors. A variety of other descriptors characterized the remaining 14%, including terms related to anatomy, a rejection of gender-specific binary language and gender-neutral characteristics.

Most respondents named qualities from multiple categories, indicating that they have a multi-faceted understanding of what characteristics they believe describe a man - acknowledging that men embrace traits beyond normative masculinity. This mosaic of responses suggests that many men may find normative masculinity too restrictive. Understanding men's perceptions of masculinity was an important aspect of this research, as identity and behaviours are associated with values, beliefs and idiosyncrasy constructed around notions of masculinity.

**Figure 11. Musculinity Discriptors (Top 9 Words)**

| Descriptor | Value |
|---|---|
| Integrity | 116 |
| Respectful | 132 |
| Provider | 170 |
| Family | 174 |
| Hard Working | 176 |
| Responsible | 181 |
| Caring | 310 |
| Honest | 345 |
| Strong | 517 |

## 5.5    Masculinity Pressures and Help Seeking

While men's perceptions of masculinity varied, a significant majority of respondents **(68%) indicated that societal pressures and masculinity norms would not prevent them from accessing support**. This finding contrasted with popular myths regarding men's unwillingness to seek help for their well-being or interpersonal relationships. Men respondents recognized the need for support, and several stated that they looked for help from their families, friends or services (counselling, support groups); confidentiality and safety were viewed as important.

Men's reasons for seeking help were categorized into four main theme areas:     (1) acceptance of imperfection as part of being human - emphasizing that men are human and should seek help like anyone else; (2) an internal locus of control - with respect to their masculinity these men felt confident that being a man includes seeking services when needed; (3) age or time - over the course of their lives these men have changed and are no longer concerned about what society says; and (4) a rational or logical approach to problem-solving - whereby appropriate help is sought for any problem.

**Acceptance of Human Imperfection as Universal**

*"Everyone needs help sometimes so it's not really a barrier for me. I recognize when need help and I look for it."*

*"I want my wife and children to see me as a good man, and they would only encourage me to seek help that would allow me to become a better one. I have no patience for machismo."*

## Internal Locus of Control

*"Those are external factors that do not define me as a man. I am comfortable in my being, and am accepted by my family and friends for all my good qualities and my faults. If external support assists in getting to that comfortable and confident place then go for it."*

*"I am rarely concerned about how others perceive me"*

*"I am comfortable with who I am and recognize that I am not perfect and may have some issues that still require resolution. To seek help and accessing support is no doubt a courageous step but one that I realize may be necessary and a healthy decision."*

*"[I] try to figure everything out on my own, that's just my personality and not really gender specific. I have good self-esteem and I won't care much about what others think."*

## Age and Time

*"When I was younger they would have been more of a barrier to seeking support"*

*"I've long let that one go. Life is far too short to put that on myself..."*

*"I have learned over the years how important it is to have these supports and realize the individual has to be strong to accept his issues and stand up and seek out the support"*

*"Probably did when I was a young adult however now I don't hesitate to go for therapy or find a friend to talk about what's bothering me. And I share more with my wife which helps a lot"*

## Rational or Logical Approach

*"I think it is important to address the problem whether it is accessing support and talking to someone it helps get better soon"*

*"I am confident in seeking support or advice when I feel I need it"*

*"If I was to find myself in that much of a problem I would likely go find support using the programs"*

*"No I would use any support system as necessary I don't believe in the 'male' specific/societal/cultural expectations. I was brought up to be independent and strong as a person, not a 'man'*

*"If I thought I needed help, I would ask for it"*

*"Whether self-identified or pointed out by someone else, if I had something I needed to address about myself I would seek the supports to do so"*

## 5.6    Roles in Violence Prevention

Men were asked whether they could take action to contribute to men's well-being and healthy relationships without violence and abuse. While 44% of respondents agreed that they could contribute, another 44% said that they were not sure if they could take any actions or make a contribution.  Only 12% said they did not think they could contribute (See Figure 12). Among those who "agreed to contribute", their suggestions were grouped into the following broad categories:  (1) sharing personal experiences to encourage others; (2) using spiritual and professional resources such as counselling or encouraging others to access help; and (3) speaking out on the issues of healthy relationships and violence in various forums. Men who were unsure or did not think that they could contribute were not asked to elaborate on their responses; therefore further insight into these responses was not available.

**Figure 12: Contributing to
Well-being & Healthy Relationships
without Violence**

Don't Know
44%

Yes
44%

No
12%
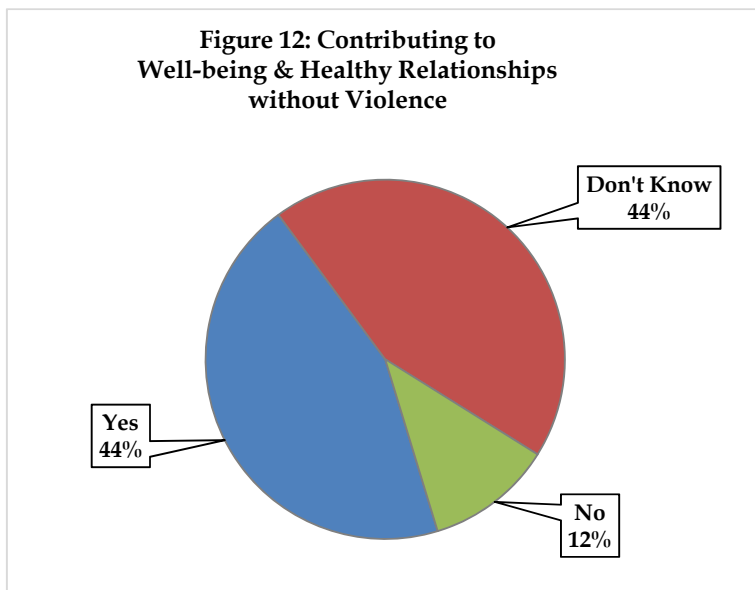
## 6.0     EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

A key objective of AMS was to "*catalyze dialogue and action*" within community, agency and policy spheres. In response, we initiated a series of dialogues with groups of men, service providers and funders. AMS volunteers organized and led a number of the workshops. A total of thirteen dialogues and two information sessions were conducted, using the survey findings as a platform for conversation. A total of 347 participants were involved (See Table 2). A number of insights and suggestions shared during these dialogues confirmed AMS findings. Mental health, accessing supports and services, and contributing to men's well-being and healthy relationships were main areas of discussion.

## 6.1     Dialoguing about AMS Results

### 1)     *Mental Health*

Most dialogue participants expressed that they were surprised with the percentage of survey respondents who indicated that they had mental health challenges (21%). This finding, however, corresponds with Canadian statistics wherein approximately 20% of Canadians experience mental health concerns (Smetanin et al., 2011). The responses from dialogue participants suggest the need to further engage communities in conversations about mental health/ mental illness, vulnerabilities and resilience, and stigma associated with these issues. Related to this, both survey and dialogue participants expressed interest in the idea of a hub where men could go for help/support/advice with whatever stressors and challenges they were experiencing.

### 2)     *On Accessing Supports and Services*

*Social Expectations*. Questions were raised as to why only one-third of survey respondents identified that societal expectations about being a man prevented them from seeking supports. Several dialogue participants stated that they would expect that number to be higher.

*Barriers*. A number of dialogue participants agreed with AMS respondents, stating that financial/economic challenges are one of the main barriers to well-being. Further, they indicated that these challenges create difficulties in accessing supports and services.

*Someone to Talk to*. AMS respondents stated that one of the barriers to men's well-being was not having people to talk to or depend on. Dialogue participants agreed with this assessment, and further noted that for some men who have 'buddies' to talk to, these friends may lack the capacity to articulate their feelings and emotions. Additionally, dialogue participants stated that society often determines which role models are available to many men, and where men get information about relationships. Apathy and a lack of care or awareness of the need to seek supports were highlighted as barriers for men. Dialogue participants also commented that homophobia and the fear of being labeled may prevent men from talking openly about emotions, relationships, or developing deep male friendships. This statement corresponds with the AMS

finding that approximately 1 out of 3 men would not seek supports due to pressures related to traditional masculinity.

*Services and Supports They Know.* During the community dialogues, participants agreed with many AMS respondents that they would first rely on friends and family for support prior to seeking professional help. However, participants also suggested that better outreach is needed to increase men's awareness of professional services and supports; this resonated with AMS results, wherein 76% of respondents didn't know where to find services.

Dialogue participants expressed a number of important considerations regarding professional services for men: services should be adequate (no long waiting lists for counselling), affordable, connected (referral and back referral between professional service providers and informal/peer support groups), and tailored to fit men's needs and preferences (concurrent service like a Men's Shed where men could go for social purposes but could also seek services if needed).

### 3)      On Contributing to Men's Well-being

A number of dialogue participants pointed out that the final survey question, "can you contribute to men's well-being and healthy relationships without violence" was unclear, which may have contributed to producing a high respondent group that stated they were 'unsure'. The ambiguity of the question, they claimed, may have left it open to respondents to contemplate how and in what capacity they could contribute, which may have discouraged them to answer 'yes'. Dialogue participants further shared that some men may feel as though they aren't qualified or permitted to take action on the issues identified in the survey.

*What Is Needed for Men's Well-Being?* Participants indicated that there was an irony in having to ask men such a fundamental question. For some, the need for further conversations on men's well-being was underscored by the lack of awareness on men's mental health and wellness. However, consonant with AMS findings, supportive friends, families, mentors and/or counselling were suggested—someone that men can talk to and get good advice.

### 4)      Women's Perspectives

The two women's groups asked for a presentation and dialogue about the AMS , and were inspired by the work done by Alberta Men's Network. Many expressed hope that the results of the survey would promote healthy relationships between men and women and reduce the incidence of domestic violence.

With the proper support and human resources, the Alberta Men's Network anticipates that these dialogues will become a mechanism to engage men in extended conversations, strategies and actions toward enhancing healthy relationships, maintaining good mental health, and accessing appropriate supports and services.

**Table 2. Thirteen Dialogues and Information Sessions since November 2015**

|  | *Date* | *Place* | *#Organizations* | *#Participants* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | November 23rd, 2015 | Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary | 33 | 68 |
| 2 | November 25th, 2015 | Latiude 53 Visual Culture Centre, Edmonton | 20 | 125 |
| 3 | December 16th, 2015 | Community Initiative Against Family Violence (CIAFV), United Way Capital Region | 10 | 18 |
| 4 | February 8th, 2016 | Mustard Seed, Calgary | 2 | 12 |
| 5 | February 25th, 2016 | East Calgary Health Centre | 12 | 19 |
| 6 | March 21st, 2016 | Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary | 2 | 5 |
| 7 | April 2nd, 2016 | Buckingham Pub, Edmonton | 5 | 5 |
| 8 | April 21st, 2016 | Sexual Exploitation Working Group Conference, Edmonton | 2 | 25 |
| 9 | April 22nd, 2016 | Panciteria Manila, Edmonton | 2 | 10 |
| 10 | June 2nd, 2016 | Murray Fraser, University of Calgary | 2 | 18 |
| 11 | June 11th, 2016 | Edmonton Clinic Health Academy (ECHA), University of Alberta | 3 | 35 |
| *Information Session with Women's Organizations* | | | | |
| 1 | April 23rd, 2016 | Babae Council for Filipina Canadian Women, Centre for Newcomers | 1 | 60 |
| 2 | April 23rd, 2016 | Calgary Vietnamese Women's Association (CAVWA); Bay 5, 801 30th Street NE | 1 | 15 |
| **Total Participants** | | | **95** | **347** |

| **7.0** | **IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY RESULTS** |
|---|---|

## 7.1   Practice Implications

A majority of the Alberta men who responded to the AMS indicated that services and supports are important for men's well-being, but most did not know where to seek help. This general view was re-affirmed in community dialogues held in Calgary and Edmonton following the completion of the survey. Therefore, more work is needed to improve outreach and service access for men.

Results from this survey emphasize that financial stability, a good and stable job, and appropriate housing are the key factors that contribute to personal well-being and healthy relationships. Further, while many respondents emphasized that support from family and friends promote a sense of well-being, family conflict, relationship problems, substance misuse and negative or traumatic past experiences were key barriers.

Men's priorities and identified barriers as outlined in the survey findings can be used as guides for the design and implementation of men's services and supports. Consider offering activities to men based on their identified service preferences: peer-support, counselling, and healthy role-models.

Healthy relationships are intimately connected to mental health and well-being of men. Practitioners need to learn how to support/ facilitate/ help men to improve or better manage their mental health and well-being.

An intersectional lens is needed to understand the impact on well-being of factors such as racism, and other forms of discrimination, poverty, trauma and addictions. Service provider organizations should engage in a planning process that will address the outstanding needs of men in their respective communities.

Consider discreet programs in a men's 'shed-like' facility[5] and the removal of clinical elements or environments; a place where men could feel like they were going there to make friends, seek support and engaged activities because it is beneficial, not because they are "broken".

Consider offering support groups where reflective conversations are encouraged to help develop mindsight capacities (Siegel, 2011), such as identifying thoughts, feelings, sensations, perceptions, beliefs, memories, attitudes and intentions, an awareness of family of origin and the management of conflict and stress which are essential to well-being.

Opportunities should be provided for men to experience mentoring, sharing and talking about their concerns, challenges, and successes. As a result, men will have the chance to learn from each other as well as create a sense of bonding from each other's experiences; creating a sense of connectedness.

## 7.2    Policy Implications

The enablers and barriers to well-being and healthy relationships uncovered in this survey are centered on finances / jobs, family and friends relationships and housing. With the adoption of Housing First approach in Alberta, it may be considered that significant efforts have been initiated in the area of housing rights. However, the fact that respondents identified stable housing and financial well-being as a major factor means that more needs to be done to make housing more accessible and affordable. A human rights approach to housing has the capacity to involve and compel different levels of government to treat this as a priority and invest in housing programs expeditiously (Walsh, Lorenzetti, St. Denis, Murwisi, & Lewis, 2016). For first generation Canadians (immigrants), financial stress and under-employment are linked to lack of recognition of foreign education credentials and various other forms

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[5] A Men's Shed is a community-based, non-profit, non-commercial organization that is accessible to all men and whose primary activity is the provision of a safe and friendly environment where men are able to work on meaningful projects at their own pace in their own time in the company of other men. A major objective is to advance the well-being and health of their male members. AMSA 2016

of discrimination. Canadian professions are largely controlled by Professional Associations who may have interests at variance with the expected outcomes of immigrants such as the desire to maintain or raise salary levels and standard of living.

The Federal and Provincial governments must creatively find solutions to these issues. Suggestions include: (1) having clear, accessible and affordable upgrading professions programs in all provinces, subsidized for first generation Canadians; (2) policies directed at job creation and access, and at family-friendly working conditions, (3) diversifying the Alberta economy beyond reliance on oil for available and sustainable jobs; (4) continued and increased investment in job skills training; and (5) addressing racism and other forms of discrimination embedded within policies and systems.

The role and capacity of faith and places of worships to engage men in building healthy relationships are underscored throughout this survey. Policymakers must keep in mind the dual role of religion which encourages people to stay in relationships – even if they are at times abusive. At the same time, faith and family can also be an incredibly supportive force in healing from violence in relationships (Wells et al., 2013). Policies should be used and directed at improving the coordination and referral systems between faith communities and non-profit agencies, and supporting multidirectional training and capacity-building opportunities.

More investment is needed in services for mental health and substance misuse. Creative engagement and multi-lingual and community-based supports and mentors are beneficial to men from a diversity of backgrounds.

The innovative development of a men's wellness hub in every city should be investigated for desirability, necessity and viability. A number of survey respondents stated that they would be interested in a place for men to access services and supports –primarily from an informal and community-based approach.

Policies that support identification and capacity-building of mentors and role models for boys and men will benefit all age groups. It should be written into funding policies that recreational services to young boys include components on healthy relationships and personal wellness.

Consider government-led broad scale social media campaigns that focus on men's abilities and capacities to "be a mentor" in their places of work, homes and communities. This should be matched with training and support for mentors and role-models.

## 7.3   Community Implications

When men were asked whether they could take action to contribute to men's well-being and healthy relationships without violence and abuse, almost half responded that they were not sure if they could take any action or make a contribution. Those who were not sure could be a focus population for community engagement by existing organizations and collaborative groups. Supporting and funding existing and emerging community and collective actions in engaging men is suggested.

The AMS drew a large number of men respondents from across the province. Participants included a wide range of ages, ethno-cultural diversity, national and socio-economic backgrounds, abilities, and gender and sexual identities. As such, it is best to consider diverse members of the Alberta Men's Network in the further dissemination of the results and ensuing dialogues. These men and women may be able to help agencies, researchers, and decision-makers to engage communities, and support research, practice and policy initiatives that are relevant to a diverse population of men.

## 8.0                                    COMMUNITY BASED PAR: LEARNINGS

### SHARED LEADERSHIP

The complementary roles of ECCC, University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work, and the City of Edmonton were vital supports to the AMS project. These agencies served as a backbone to 15 other organizations that participated in this collaboration. The three lead agencies coordinated various work processes based mainly on their individual and collective strengths and resources. However, a lot of flexibility was provided to give leeway for other members of the collaborative to take the lead. Nevertheless, the three lead agencies worked as a team to ensure that the work was delegated and accomplished.

### COMMUNICATION

Communication was a challenge for such a large-scale initiative that included members from various backgrounds and affiliations located in different regions. The Leadership Team met regularly, often 3 to 4 times a month. Email and Skype were widely used. The collaborative learned that openness and feedback were very important to avoid miscommunication.

### DIVERSITY AS A KEY STRENGTH

The diversity and composition of the people involved in the AMS greatly assisted the group to develop a survey tool that resonated with men from many communities; diversity was also an essential factor in generating a tremendous number of survey responses from a wide spectrum of men. The ethnicity and mix of student/community volunteers, male-female identified, (all) abilities, different economic realities, experience and academic knowledge, and wide range of age groups represented assisted this survey to be shared in a broad range of networks.

### SOCIAL CAPITAL

There were observed networks that developed among the participating individuals, including cross-cultural connections between men and women from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds, including relationships, and learning provided by Indigenous members. Two-way learning and mentoring between veteran researchers and the research learners / students were other strengths. A close bond and friendship were

observed between the Edmonton and Calgary men and women. There was also an intergenerational connection that developed among members from various ages.

## PARTICIPATION IN ALL ASPECTS

The AMS was strongly participatory in that it engaged the community at all levels and in all stages of the project, thereby strengthening community ownership. One pertinent example is the recognition of community members as co-authors and co-presenters in the collaborative. A further example is that community members worked hand in hand with agencies and the University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work in the analysis of the findings, using collaborative and community-based processes.

## 9.0                                    KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Broaden the scope of services for men and boys, with a focus on creative outreach, and 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, improved access to services, and primary prevention strategies focused on decreasing child maltreatment/trauma and shifting rigid gender norms.
5) Support and fund community-based supports, and culturally and locality appropriate collaborations that reach-out to men within their existing social environments.

## SUMMARY

Even before a person is born, societal influence has an impact on shaping his/her life. Society has countless gender and sexuality expectations, and family and extended family are the primary agents of socialization (Yapko, 1997); media, education systems, peers, teachers, ethno-cultural and faith institutions are among other mechanisms of social conditioning.

We know that boys quickly learn to act and perform in socially acceptable ways, and tend to compare themselves against a scripted and untenable masculinity ideal which values control, power, strength and invincibility (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Kaufman, 2001). These pressures play out throughout the lives of boys and men, beginning with childhood teachings meant to suppress the expression of natural emotions such as joy, fear, nurturance, and love.

The issue of gender norms does not only impact boys and men; rigid gender scripts are unhealthy for everyone. As discussed in the introduction to this report, research

underscores the association between dominant forms of masculinity, patriarchy and male violence against women and girls.  Ironically, the mythological notion of what it is to be a man today can have harmful, and in some cases, devastating effects on men's well-being; this impact is increased for those who do not conform to societal expectations, are transgender or genderqueer.

The social and economic pressure for men to be the 'provider' and breadwinner for their families and loved ones can also have a significant negative impact on men's health and wellness. Social conditioning can affect men's ability or willingness to seek support and assistance when dealing with problems, or when in distress. The development of  'social and emotional intelligence' (Gottman, 1998) is often not encouraged or prioritized. It therefore, becomes essential to teach boys and men to be sensitive, open and expressive, and help them learn to value themselves and others. Creating environments that support, prioritize, and promote empathy, compassion, critical thinking, inquiry, and social connectedness are priority actions (Siegel, 2013).

A substantial number of men who participated in the AMS identified masculinity expectations as a deterrent to their ability and comfort in accessing services. In order to make a significant shift from current dominating masculinity perceptions, changes are needed in social norms, policies and service delivery. When proposing services for men, it must be kept in mind that partners and families also require services and supports where beliefs and gender stereotypes can be challenged. Changing relationship dynamics necessitates shifting social norms wherein respect, trust and security in relationships are not reliant on rigid and pre-defined gender constructs. *Looking at and beyond gender* is essential to include an intersectional analysis of power, dominance and oppression.

The Alberta Men's Survey Leadership Team believes that AMS results and the Men's Dialogues will increase the community's understanding of the needs, perspectives and strengths of men in Alberta with regards to well-being, healthy relationships and the prevention of gender-based violence. The learning from AMS can support the efforts of governments, and the numerous organizations and community members that are working on the creation, implementation, and evaluation of preventatives services that include men and boys. Most importantly, through the work of the AMS, the newly emerging Alberta Men's Network hopes to work collaboratively across the province to connect with and support men and boys in their communities, schools, workplaces and other social environments.

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## *Appendices*

Appendix - A
Survey Questionnaire
# ALBERTA MEN'S SURVEY

Thank you for participating in the Men's Survey. **This intended to be completed by male or male-identified persons who are 18 years of age or older and living in Alberta.** This survey asks questions about what helps men feel good about themselves, as well as what leaves men feeling angry, frustrated, or upset. Some questions are about families, partners, spouses, or dating relationships. This survey was created by over 50 men and 10 women who are concerned about men's well-being, healthy relationships and violence prevention. The purpose of this survey is to learn about different strategies that can help men have healthy and positive relationships where there is no violence or abuse. We want to know more about the types of people and services that can support men, so that we can strengthen our communities, work together, and provide these supports for men. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete this survey.

It is our hope that this survey will benefit men by assisting community agencies, leaders and researches to gain a better understanding of men's strengths and challenges when it comes to personal well-being (feeling good about themselves) and the services and supports that will help men with personal well-being, increase their ability to have happy and healthy relationships with others and also help prevent domestic violence from taking place. We also want to understand the unique needs, perspectives, and strengths of men from diverse backgrounds so that supports and services can be inclusive of all men.

There are no risks to you if you choose to answer this survey. You have the right to skip any questions that you do not wish to answer, and you may withdraw from this study at any time by not submitting your answers through SurveyMonkey or to the research assistant who requested you fill out the survey. However, please note that any completed survey responses that you provide before the point of your withdrawal will be kept by the researchers.
If you choose to participate in this survey, any information you provide will remain completely anonymous and confidential. Only L. Lorenzetti, PhD (c) and Dr. D. Este, PhD, from the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary with a small group of Research Assistants will have access to this data. Your feedback will only be reported anonymously and in the form of group data. Individual or identifying personal details will not be used. Your responses will be protected and kept confidential at the University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work for a period of five years before being destroyed. By filling out this survey, you consent to have any information you provide to be used in future community reports and journal publications.

Please note that the online survey is being administered by Survey Monkey©, an American software company. As such, responses are subject to U.S. laws, including the USA Patriot Act. The risks associated with participation are minimal, however, and similar to those associated with many e-mail programs, such as Hotmail© and social utilities spaces, such as Facebook©

**Thank you for your time and assistance with the Men's Survey!** If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact: L. Lorenzetti, PhD (c) @ 403-606-6949 lakloren@ucalgary.ca, or Dr. D. Este (dissertation supervisor) Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary @ 403-220-7309 deste@ucalgary.ca. If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact an Ethics Resource Officer, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 210-9863; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca.

**Q1) What city / town do you live in?**

_____

**Q2) What is the name of your neighbourhood / community? (_if applicable_)**

_____

**Q3) What is your age? (_Please write it in the box below_)**

☐

**Q4) What is your country of origin?**

☐ Canada

☐ Other (please indicate where): _____

**If born outside Canada, how many years have you lived _in_ Canada?**

_____

**If born outside Canada, what is your (immigration) status in Canada?**
☐ Canadian Citizen
☐ Permanent Resident
☐ Refugee (sponsored)
☐ Refugee Claimant
☐ Temporary Foreign Worker
☐ Student Visa
☐ Other - specify

**What is your ethnicity or culture? (Feel free to define ethnicity in whatever way fits for you - e.g., Filipino, Asian-Canadian, East Indian, Sudanese, Euro-Canadian, African-Canadian, German, Latino, Indigenous, Métis, Inuit, First Nations, choose not to say, etc.)**

_____

**Q5) Formal Education (please indicate <u>ONLY your highest educational attainment</u> by checking the appropriate box/boxes below):**

| Particulars | Within Canada | Outside of Canada |
|---|---|---|
| No *formal* schooling. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Some elementary (e.g., grades 1 - 6) | ☐ | ☐ |
| Some high school (e.g., no diploma). | ☐ | ☐ |
| High school diploma. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Some trade/technical school. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Completed trade/technical diploma, certificate, ticket, etc. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Some college or university. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Diploma | ☐ | ☐ |
| Undergraduate degree | ☐ | ☐ |
| Master's degree | ☐ | ☐ |
| Ph.D. | ☐ | ☐ |

**Q6) What is your current relationship status? (Please check the most appropriate box):**

☐ Married     ☐ Common-Law     ☐ Separated     ☐ Other

☐ Divorced     ☐ Single     ☐ Dating     ☐ In a Relationship

**Q7) Employment Status/Source(s) of Income (*please check all that apply*):**

☐ Paid Work that is…..

☐ Full time          ☐ Part time/Seasonal          ☐ By contract

☐ Unpaid Work at home (e.g., caring for children/family/others)

☐ On a social program (e.g.: SFI, AISH etc.)

☐ Student

☐ Volunteering

☐ Unemployed

☐ Looking for work.

☐

**Q8) Financial Circumstances (put x or checkmark in box):**

☐ I can pay my bills and living expenses, and still have money left to set aside for savings or other things.

☐ I have enough to pay my bills and living expenses.

☐ I struggle to pay my bills and living expenses.

☐ I cannot pay my bills.

☐ Other (please specify) _____

**Q9) What is your sexual orientation? (Put x or checkmark in box):**

☐ Heterosexual/Straight          ☐ Bisexual          ☐ Homosexual/Gay

☐ Two-Spirited          ☐ Queer

☐ Other (please describe): _____

**Q10) What is your gender identity? (Put x or checkmark in box)**

☐ Male (and/or male-identified)

☐ Transgender / Transsexual

☐ Intersex

☐ Female-identified

☐ Two-Spirited

☐ Other (please specify):_____ _____

**Q11) Are you someone living with a disability?**

☐ No

☐ Yes

If yes, please explain what type of disability:

---

---

**Q12) Do you have mental health challenges (e.g., depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, schizophrenia, etc.?)**

☐ No

☐ Yes

If yes, please explain what type of mental health challenge:

---

---

**Q13) In a few words, can you name the qualities that you believe describe a man?**

---

---

**Q14) If well-being is happiness, prosperity, comfort and health, how important are the following factors in your personal well-being (*please check your top 5*).**

- [ ] Someone to talk to about things that are important to me
- [ ] A good job
- [ ] Being treated fairly by others
- [ ] Family
- [ ] Friends
- [ ] Spirituality
- [ ] Meaningful goals
- [ ] A place to go if help is needed
- [ ] Having someone to trust
- [ ] Financial stability/security
- [ ] Having a healthy role model
- [ ] Having someone who cares for me
- [ ] Having stable and appropriate housing

**Q15)  What do you think are barriers to personal well-being (Please check your *top 5*)**

- [ ] Pressure to prove yourself a man
- [ ] Insufficient work, training, or qualifications
- [ ] Education/training/qualifications not recognized
- [ ] Discrimination
- [ ] Financial challenges
- [ ] Family conflict/relationship problems
- [ ] Unsatisfactory job/career
- [ ] Addictions (alcohol or other)
- [ ] Not having an intimate partner
- [ ] No close friends to talk with about important things
- [ ] Don't know where to go for help
- [ ] Past negative or traumatic experiences
- [ ] Homelessness/insecure housing
- [ ] Other (Please specify):_____

**Q16) What personal skills are needed in order to form healthy relationships? (*Please check the five most important*).**

☐ Listening

☐ Patience

☐ Trust

☐ Self-talk/self-reflection/introspection

☐ Self-acceptance

☐ Taking care of yourself

☐ Being able to express your feelings

☐ Being able to manage your stress

☐ Understanding and caring about others people's feeling

☐ Being flexible to adapt to changes

☐ Other (Please specify): _____

**Q17) Do men sometimes need support for their own well-being and to have healthy relationships?**

☐ **No**        ☐ **Yes**

**If "Yes", what supports and services would you use?** *Please check any that apply.*

☐ A safe place to go for men and hang out

☐ Peer-support (e.g., talking to friends)

☐ Healthy male role models or mentors

☐ Counselling

☐ Skill-building workshops

☐ Spiritual guides/prayer/religious or faith support

☐ Dad's skill training

☐ Support groups

☐ Financial mentoring/information

☐ Social programs

☐ Other (Please specify)

**Q18) Do you know of any available services and supports in your city/town that help men with personal well-being and relationship issues?**

☐ No

☐ Yes; *if yes, please name them*

---

**Q19) Would you go to a center specifically for men (i.e., a place for men to find supports and services) if it was available?**

☐ **Yes**; if yes, what kind of place would it be?

---

---

☐ **No**; if no, please provide your reason(s) below:

---

---

**Q20) Do societal/cultural expectations about being a man (e.g., pressure to prove yourself as a man, be tough/masculine, independent, etc.) prevent you from accessing support?**

☐ Yes          ☐ No

**Please explain:**

---

---

**Q 21) What actions can you take, if any, to contribute to men's well-being, healthy relationships without violence or abuse? (Check one and explain if you choose "Yes")**

☐ **No. I don't think that I can contribute.**
☐ **I am not sure if I can contribute.**
☐ **Yes. I can contribute (Please explain how): _____**

---

## *Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!*

**Appendix - B**
**Facilitator's Guide: Community Dialogue**

| ACTIVITIES | In-charge | TIME |
|---|---|---|
| Materials: Laptop and projector, Flip chart stand, flip chart, markers, Sign-in sheet, Agenda, Participant's Evaluation form, Facilitator's Evaluation form, pens, resource card | | |
| **I. SETTING THE CONTEXT** | | |
| Introductions: | | |
| Make sure everyone signs in and first name is visible on name tags | | |
| Form a circle, introduce yourself and your relationship to the Alberta Men's Survey or Alberta Men's Network and acknowledge participation. | | |
| Have each person state name and affiliation (community/organization) | | |
| Process Ground Rules: | | |
| Confidentiality: Each participant will agree to keep confidentiality about what it is said in the dialogue. | | |
| Time: Begin on 6:00 pm and end on 7:00 pm | | |
| Respect: Each member agrees to treat each other with all respect | | |
| Be sure you don't interrupt someone else | | |
| You give others time to speak | | |
| Communication: Each participant will agree to listen respectfully and each one will have opportunity to talk and share views. | | |
| Learn and understand: Differences will be seen as an opportunity to learn and understand others people point of view. | | |
| Participation: | | |
| Invitation to be fully involved in the dialogue, sharing your own view, experiences, beliefs and culture. | | |
| It is perfectly acceptable to disagree | | |
| All ideas are good ideas | | |
| Everyone's encouraged to speak | | |
| Safety: | | |
| Hand out the resources card case they feel they need to chat to someone. | | |
| The topic may be sensitive to some and may impact adversely instantly. They may opt out anytime and some ground rules on hand signals may be agreed upon so people who are opting out of the discussions are recognized and may be supported (to distinguish from people going to washroom for example). | | |
| Arrange for in-house or on-site support if possible. | | |
| Ask the group if they will like to add another rule for this group | | |
| Emphasize that the goal of the project (Alberta Men's Survey) is to learn about different strategies that can help men have healthy and positive relationships where there is no violence or abuse. | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| That the information gathered from the dialogue will be reported anonymously and in the form of group data. Individual or identifying personal details will not be used. | | |
| State Goal of Discussion: | | |
| To present and share AMS survey results | | |
| Get feedback on the results from a variety of stakeholders (community, agency, policy, academics etc.) | | |
| Engage the community in discussions about Family Violence and violence prevention | | |
| Engage the community on discussions about Healthy Relationships and wellbeing | | |
| Document the community's recommendations for the next steps of this work | | |
| Further involve the community in developing the Alberta Men's Network | | |
| **ACTIVITIES** | | |
| **II. AMS POWERPOINT PRESENTATION** | | |
| See AMS Complete Presentation PowerPoint for sharing. Ask them if they have any questions about it afterwards | | |
| **BREAK** | | |
| **III. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION** | | |
| Questions: | | |
| 1. What is the most surprising result of the Survey? | | |
| 2. Which result resonated most with you? | | |
| 3. What do you think men need for their wellbeing? | | |
| 4. Other Questions: | | |
| What is healthy relationship? | | |
| What does it take to have healthy relationship? | | |
| What are the effects of Family Violence in our society? | | |
| What questions do you have about the Survey results? | | |
| CHECK: All the ground rules on the flip chart-board and discussed with the group; All participants actively contribute; the discussion isn't dominated by a few; Keep the discussions on track to achieve the topic's purpose; Actions are being discussed | | |
| NOTETAKING: Note how many participants are from community/organizations; If uncertain, check with the person before you write the thoughts down: "So GV, what you're saying is (X)?; Try to capture ideas in themes; Try to capture the participant's cultural background and/or nationality | | |
| **IV. EVALUATION and WRAP-UP** | | |
| Administer the evaluations. | | |
| End the discussion with a circle, where the participants will share their experience. | | |

**Appendix - C**
**Alberta Men's Network Discussion Evaluation Form - Participants**

Date (dd/mm/yy)   _____/_____/_____

1.  Did this discussion meet your expectations?
    (Circle one)  Yes completely          Mostly                    A little
          Not at all
2.  Please explain
    _____
    _____

3.  Did this discussion help you to think about how you could become involved in
    building healthy relationships for you and others?  Did you learn anything new?
    (Circle one)  Yes / No /Not Sure          Please explain
    _____
    _____

4.  Did you feel encouraged to contribute to the dialogue?
    (Circle one)  Yes / No /Not Sure          Please explain
    _____
    _____

5.  Was there anything discussed today that made you uncomfortable?
    (Circle one)  Yes / No /Not Sure          Please explain
    _____
    _____

6.  What do you think should happen next? (eg: resources for men, a group etc.)
    Please explain
    _____
    _____

7.  Other Observations:
    _____
    _____

8.  If you would like to learn about future discussions, talk with one of our facilitators
    or join the Alberta Men's Network, feel free to fill in your contact information
    below or subscribe at this email address: www.albertamen.com for future updates.
9.  Info (Optional):
    Name_____  Email_____

## Appendix - D

## Alberta Men's Network Dialogue Evaluation Form - Facilitator

1. What do you think worked best in the dialogue tonight?
   _____
   _____

2. What was surprising or unexpected about today's dialogue?
   _____
   _____

3. What would you do differently in the dialogue? Why?
   _____
   _____

4. What do you think are the key learning(s) from the workshop?
   _____
   _____

5. What do you think worked best in the dialogue tonight?
   _____
   _____

6. What was surprising or unexpected about today's dialogue?
   _____
   _____

7. What would you do differently in the dialogue? Why?
   _____
   _____

8. What do you think are the key learning(s) from the workshop?
   _____
   _____

   Facilitator(s) Name:
   Date (dd/mm/yy) _____/_____/_____

   Group Name: _____

   Location: _____

# The Alberta Men's Survey

A Conversation with Men about Well-being and Healthy Relationships

**ALBERTA MEN'S NETWORK**

www.albertamen.com