



ALBERTA MEN'S NETWORK

AMN Foundational Training

A Community Report, 2020



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The Alberta Men's Network

Community. Practice. Research. Equity Movement.

AMN Foundational Training

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Treaty 7 Territory Land Acknowledgements

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that we live, work, play, raise our next generation and build community on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.






Introduction

The Alberta Men's Network (AMN) in collaboration with the Alberta Network of Immigrant Women (ANIW) and the University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work, received funding from the Family and Community Safety Program, Alberta Government, to coordinate the *Men as Agents of Change: Peaceful Families, Harmonious Communities project* (Apr 2019 - March 2020). Building on AMN's previous work, the project aim was to prevent and reduce domestic violence and increase well-being by supporting men in maintaining healthy relationships and decreasing gender-based violence. One of the core activities of the project was to develop foundational training for Network members and staff, community members and organizational partners to enhance skills and capacities for community-led violence prevention work. AMN's Foundational Training focuses on knowledge and facilitation skills for Men's Groups, Community Dialogues and Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention.

Who is Alberta Men's Network?

The Alberta Men's Network is a community committed to nonviolence and working across the gender spectrum to create healthy families and communities. We are supported by a number of community partners including Men's Action Network Calgary, Alberta Network of Immigrant Women and the University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work. We support healthy masculinities and gender equity by identifying and working within a human rights, feminist and anticolonial framework. AMN is made up of dedicated members who belong to community, non-profit, academic, social service, government, business, and other sectors in Alberta. Our human rights, feminist and anticolonial lens is a firm foundation from which to build community supports and programs to transform our structures and the social norms that perpetuate violence and inequality. We work inclusively with men from diverse backgrounds and across genders to foster peer-support, and share knowledge of community-supports and services. With diversity as our strength, AMN believes that cultural humility, respect, and solidarity through love are cornerstones of men's violence prevention work. Through the development of an online and in-person resource network, AMN supports men and their families and communities to access supports to improve and maintain healthy relationships, learn about various aspects of their own mental health, and develop and contribute to positive peer networks for richer community supports.



What is: human rights and anticolonial work with men?


AMN works to promote healthy and positive masculinities by recognizing and working to end all forms of oppression, including, patriarchy and gender inequity, colonization, racism, white privilege, economic inequality, gender and sexual stigma, ableism and other dehumanization. We understand that historical relationships of power and oppression create various levels of marginalization and social exclusion, which together, maintain enduring systemic inequality over generations. In the Canadian context, historical and intergenerational trauma through European colonization and ongoing colonial relations maintain white, male hetero/cisgender privilege. This resonates with the histories of communities around the world. Human rights organizations worldwide recognize the need to involve men in gender equity work, with a focus on capacity-building and peer mentorship roles as primary strategies for the prevention of gender-based violence and intersectional oppression. Building on this momentum, organizations and communities in Alberta have important roles to play in shifting social norms and advocating for progressive policy changes.

Overview of AMN's Training

AMN's Alberta wide Men's Survey (Lorenzetti L., Lantion, V., Murwisi, P., Hoyt, M., Oliphant, F., Sadhwani, H., Oshchepkova, T., Wolfleg, A., & Este, D., 2016) highlighted a need for and absence of training and support to assist emerging leaders to effectively engage and work with groups of men and community members to address gender inequity, violence prevention and men's wellbeing from an intersectional, feminist, anticolonial and antiracist lens.

Building on AMN's foundational experience in the field and working with community partners, we developed a Foundational Training to advance our work with men. The training was in direct response to requests by Network members and community partners for capacity development and support in facilitating men's groups and community dialogues on topics such as: domestic and sexual violence prevention, men's wellbeing, healthy masculinities, gender-equity; migration and racism, healing and anticolonial perspectives. The training offered by AMN builds knowledge and capacity in the following areas:

- AMN values, framework & mandate
- Gender-equity, human rights, anticolonialism and antiracism
- Indigenist philosophy around masculinity, personality, and being
- First Nations teachings, cultural knowledge and relevant history
- Violence prevention feminist participatory action research

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- Sexual violence and prevention
 - Introduction to working with men's groups, with empathy and safety

Training Learning Goals


The training curriculum developed by AMN focused on achieving the following learning goals for participants:

1. Through AMN's approach, to understand the important work of including more men in Alberta in the collective effort of violence prevention, advancing gender equity and promoting men's wellbeing.
2. To understand how the intersections of racism, colonialization, gender inequity, ongoing systemic oppression of communities and men's negative mental health outcomes are implicated in both domestic and community violence.
3. To see the relevance and importance of understanding Indigenous teachings, cultural knowledge and history in Alberta and Canada.
4. To increase awareness and knowledge about relationship violence (sexual and domestic violence) and healthy relationships.
5. To increase knowledge of resources and supports available to address relationship violence and ways to promote healthy relationships.
6. To learn the basics of group facilitation and build confidence to facilitate men's groups and community discussions (i.e. Men's Talks) focused on topics such as: violence prevention, gender equity, healthy masculinities, men's wellbeing and healing from past trauma.
7. To establish leadership by learning to participate as advocates, educators, and organizers in AMN's community work.
8. To contribute to building a virtual and in-person platform where members from different communities can enhance networks and work collaboratively.

Box 1. What are Men's Talks? (See also AMN Men's Talks Community Brief [2020] at www.albertamen.com)

Men's Talks provide a space for men and other interested community members to discuss everyday challenges men face, not usually discussed, and to share ways we can all help create a society that is free from violence, gender inequities and oppression. These casual but deep conversations include topics such as:

- The social expectations placed on men & boys and the challenges of living up to those expectations.
- Roles men can play to prevent violence and promote gender equity.
- The consequences and implications of perceptions and beliefs around masculinity and how it affects men's, women's, two-spirit, trans and non-binary lives differently.
- Resources and supports for men if they need.



With the objectives and training curriculum developed by the coordinator and training team, and the date and venue set, an invitation poster was shared with various networks, community partners and groups. Due to the success and requests for the AMN Foundational Training for Facilitating Men's Groups and Community Dialogues on June 23, 2019, subsequent Foundational Trainings were held on September 6 & 7 and on Feb 22, 2020, with a total of 48 participants (15/18/15). AMN will continue to offer these trainings, at least twice a year moving forward.

Guiding Principles


Each AMN training followed the outline below and is founded on the following principles to ensure as much as possible that the learning goals are met and that every participant is fully able to participate.



Fanny Oliphant leading one of the training modules

- ***Safety and Inclusion*** – this is an important principle to ensure that everyone feels safe and welcomed to both enjoy the training and fully participate in the training sessions. Any confidential matters discussed were safeguarded and kept within the group.



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- ***Anti-oppressive environment*** – it is important to be aware of the culture and prevalence of oppression of all forms in our society. As organizers and facilitators, we should not only acknowledge that inequities, privilege and power differentials among individuals and community groups exists but to take measures to empower, encourage and provide space for individuals and community voices that experience oppression in all forms.
 - ***Collective expertise*** – we acknowledge that knowledge and expertise not only reside in individuals from positions of influence and power but also from among community members and groups. A space for equal sharing and mutual learning should be created for knowledge exchange.
 - ***Intersectionality*** – often it is only through an intersectional lens that the complexities of violence, oppression, inequities that exist in every community could be more thoroughly understood. For every example or analogy used in training sessions, we are encouraged to see each through an intersectional lens.

Training Protocol/Outline

Though the nature and context for AMN trainings may vary, the categories below form the basic framework for AMN's Foundation Training.

1. Arrival and Welcome
2. Opening prayer and Land Acknowledgement by Elder
3. Overview of training and introductions
4. Establishment of group guidelines
5. Interactive training modules facilitated by lead trainers (see details on training modules below)
6. Closing reflections and sharing
7. Evaluation

Notes on set up and training environment:

- When deciding on a venue, it is important to find a space that is private with no outside interruptions to the group. We also ensure that the space is accessible and large enough for break out small-group activities if we needed.
- An extra room is considered for concurrent child-minding for parents and guardians attending the training sessions. Childcare workers are hired to organize the child-minding activities.
- Seating is arranged in a semi-circular fashion with the facilitators at the front/top of the semi-circular arrangement. This arrangement promotes a sense of inclusion and everyone should be able to see each other.
- Sufficient time should be spent at the beginning of the training workshop, during the establishment of guidelines, to talk about how everyone could feel safe and welcomed as well as contribute to each other's safety.
- Food and refreshment are provided during the training which we feel is essential for community-based training.



Training Modules



Module 1: Introduction to AMN values, framework & mandate

This training module covers:

- Description of the Alberta Men's Network
- Core Values
- Collective Cultures Organizing Model (Lorenzetti & Lantion, 2016).
- Main strategies/approaches to the work
- Alberta Men's Survey overview and results

Module 2: Indigenist Philosophy on Masculinity, Personality, and Being

- This training module covers:
- Who am I?
 - Relationships
- What is it all about?
 - Relationships
- Safety
 - Relationship to the land (in Alberta)
 - Medicine wheel & traditional territories
- The Circle and applications
 - Day, Seasons, Stages of life, Aspects of Self, Colours, Gifts
- Activity: Self-test, learn your "Style Indicator"
 - Personality Type explained
- The Circle: Reasons we Act
 - Needs not met/Reasons we act
- Links to Intergenerational Trauma
- Sacred Circle Teaching
- Remembering Elders and individuals





Module 3: Violence Prevention Research

This training module covers:

- Reflection on origin of AMN
- Honoring the land - we are one
- Need for feminism and gender equity
- Violence against women
- Domestic violence
- Why involve men in making change?
- How is violence maintained and transmitted?
- Compounding factors – intersectionality
- Violence connected and heightened by inequality
- Common perspectives on prevention in domestic violence
- Questions & critiques
- Socio-ecological understanding of violence
- Experiences of well-being and healthy relationships

Module 4: Sexual Violence and Prevention


This training module covers:

- Advisory on language and content throughout presentation
- Messages about *what it means to be a man?*
- Rape + rapist culture implications for men
 - Canadian sexual assaults statistics
 - Difference between stereotype and reality
- Making sense of rape culture
 - What is rape culture?
 - For reference see: “Lights on at the end of the party”, are lads’ mags mainstreaming dangerous sexism? (Horvath, Hegarty, Tyler, and Mansfield (2012).
- Impacts and implications
 - Sexualized homosociality
- What is sexual violence?
- Why does rape culture persist?
- Prevention in men’s work
 - The male privilege checklist
 - 10 Tips for Feminist Fathers
 - Walk like a women (tips)

Module 5: Introduction to working with men’s groups, with empathy and safety

This training module covers:

- How to organise a men’s group
 - Group process for learning

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- Enhancing self-awareness
 - Program design
 - Facilitator guidelines
 - Ground rules
 - Safety
 - Mindfulness breathing exercise

Module 6: Basics of group facilitation

This training module covers:

- Spending the time to be well-prepared
- Understanding your audience/participants
- Choosing the appropriate venue/space and be familiar with space
- Arriving early and setting up
- Welcoming and setting expectations
- Co-facilitating sessions (if possible)
- Co-development of ground rules
- Time management
- Ensuring equitable participation by all
- Handling conflicts
- Evaluation and follow-up

The training team were from diverse genders, ages and ethno-cultural backgrounds, including Cree, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Italian, Latino, mixed-race and Blackfoot (Siksika). Trainers included: leaders, educators and practitioners in the field of sexual and domestic violence research and prevention, healthy masculinities and Indigenous teachings. The training team included: Abbas Mancey, AMN Project Coordinator; Adrian Wolfleg, First Nations Educator in Calgary and Alberta Men's Network Traditional Knowledge Keeper; Carla Bertsch, MSW, RSW, Sexual Violence Support Advocate, University of Calgary; Fanny Oliphant, Psychologist; Kiara Mikita, PhD, Educational Development Consultant, Research in Teaching and Learning, Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning, University of Calgary; Lemlem Haile, Social Worker; Liza Lorenzetti, PhD, Educator, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary.



AMN Foundational Training: Evaluation

Participants were provided with an evaluation survey after each training session, which included demographic questions, such as gender, age, and ethnicity. They were also asked to reflect on the learning gained from the workshops and their plans to implement this new knowledge within everyday contexts. An evaluation survey was also provided to training facilitators with both demographic and feedback questions. Completing the questionnaire was completely voluntary, and participants and facilitators were not required to answer all the questions posed in the survey. The training evaluation was approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board. Of the 48 training participants receiving training sessions, 27 (56%) completed the evaluation form. Three of 7 (43%) facilitators also provided feedback.

PART I: Participants Response

The majority of participants who completed the evaluation were based in Calgary, primarily male identified, with diverse age and ethno-cultural identities.

Age ranges	Ethno-cultural Identity (self-described)	Residing City	Gender Identity
18 – 29 (2)	Asian (1)	Calgary (22)	Male (17)
30 – 39 (7)	Caucasian (1)	Cochrane (2)	Female (9)
40 – 49 (6)	Chinese & Vietnamese (1)	Victoria (1)	Not disclosed (1)
50 – 59 (5)	East European (1)	Not disclosed (2)	
60 & older (1)	Eritrean Black (2)		
Not disclosed (6)	Euro-Canadian (1)		
	Filipino (4)		
	Latino (3)		
	Mexican (1)		
	Mixed race (2)		
	Polish (1)		
	Not disclosed (9)		

Key Learning Themes

Narrative feedback from participants emphasized the importance of Indigenous approaches and knowledge in working with men. Gaining an awareness of men's needs, of social resources for men and men's responsibilities in the work of violence prevention were resonant themes. Male privilege was recognized, especially among male participants. Collective leadership and collaborative networks were fostered among participants. Key narrative results were categorized as follows.



The importance of Indigenous approaches/knowledge.

Following AMN's commitment to antiracism and anticolonialism, the training sessions provided increased understanding on *Indigenist Philosophy around masculinity, personality, and being* by AMN's Traditional Knowledge Keeper (Adrian Wolfleg).

Education about the land, Indigenous history and Indigenous approaches to sexual violence prevention were included. Participants commented highly on learning about Indigenous knowledge.

- *"There is an important relationship between knowledge of the land, history and native people with our work in community."*
- *"Excellent training from Adrian (as always)."*
- *"The Indigenous information is timely relevant for us as immigrants."*
- *"Deeper understanding on Indigenous Community [was a key learning]."*
- *"Native learning, healing with men [was a key learning]."*
- *"Indigenous knowledge can help with exploring issues of masculinity and domestic violence men."*

Men's needs, resources and responsibilities.

1) Most participants said that their awareness of men's issues was raised after the training. In addition, participants were informed about resources for men. Participants noted that while some resources are available for men, men's help-seeking might not be encouraged because of traditional masculinity. The gap between men's needs and access to services was recognized among participants.

- *"Men's services and needs through networks [was a key learning]."*
- *"Root, causes of men's issues [was a key learning]."*
- *"Men truly need help."*
- *"I think there is a gap on what men need and the services provided."*
- *"Men's service is needed."*
- *"Resources are available for addressing issues of sexual and domestic violence and learning about issues on masculinity [was a key learning]."*

2) As a response to the concept of "Men as Agents of Change", men's roles and responsibility for ending sexual violence were addressed in the training sessions. Participants mentioned that they realized the importance of men's involvement in sexual violence prevention as well as community work.

- *"Male responsibility to educate ourselves on sexual violence and advocate for women's safety [was a key learning]."*
- *"Men's help is very important for the community."*
- *"I will start actively referring men and to deliver information."*
- *"Being more aware of my own use of language and correcting others and trying to educate them."*



Awareness of male privilege.

Specifically, feedback from some male participants presented the impact of AMN's training. Some male participants challenged their privilege as a man, and acquired a deep understanding of gender violence.

- *"The knowledge helped me challenge my previous judgments and made me more comfortable to have those difficult discussions."*
- *"Recognize the gender subtlety of gender violence, i.e. micro-aggression, language."*

Enhanced leadership and networks.

1) Many participants reported their willingness and plans to share what they had learned from the training sessions with their communities, where they would potentially play roles as advocates, educators, and organizers.

- *"[Will]bring it [what I have learned] to our community"*
- *"[Will] spread/organize and incorporate these issues in the community."*
- *"Our response to do in community should be based on what people say they want."*
- *"Community Planning and [undecipherable] the future work plan of AMN [was a key learning]."*
- *"[Will] make plans based on consulting and validating actions based on community voice."*

2) Further, among the training group, participants recognized how significant and necessary it is to work collaboratively and collectively in this field. This training also provided those who are working, or will potentially work, with men's groups with a platform where they were able to develop their networks socially and professionally.

- *"There are many ideas of how to work together."*
- *"Very uplifting to be part of a like-minded community working for change together!"*
- *"Working with community [was a key learning]."*


Overall program evaluation satisfaction.

Generally, participants presented their satisfaction of the training sessions by commenting as "Excellent" and "Very good", in terms of the context, environment, and approaches, etc.

- *"It was a well-balanced dialogue, respectful and inclusive."*
- *"Open format, everybody had a chance to speak."*
- *"Very useful and helpful."*

More time required.

Many participants expressed that the sessions were very informative. As key learnings, they highlighted the involvement tools with men, evidence-based facts about sexual violence, men's issues, and Indigenous knowledge, etc. However, because of the limited



time, some participants also commented that sessions were too busy. Participants encouraged more training time and/or follow-up training sessions.

- *“Put more dedicated time to training activities”*
- *“[Need] more specific small groups follow ups.”*
- *“[Need] workshop for one day.”*
- *“Sessions/lectures are very informative but a little bit crammed. There was not a lot of time for sharing feedback from participants.”*
- *“Try not to cover so much, focus on one or two, issues per session.”*

Interactive time and activities.

Participants expressed interest in further participatory and interactive activities, including group discussions.

- *“It would be great to practice the skills Fanny [the name of a facilitator] mentioned. A balance of knowledge, discussions and practice.”*
- *“A lot of the presentation was on research (which is great!), but I was looking for more skill development and learning how to actually practice facilitations with men groups.”*
- *“More interactive exercises.”*
- *“More time for discussions by participants.”*

Multiple supporting materials required.

Multiple supporting materials were required, including hearing and visual materials, hard copies, etc.

- *“[May] include organizing technique in the future lectures.”*
- *“Lots of hearing materials -maybe some physical activities would be helpful.”*
- *“Short summary of facts & resources would be useful.”*
- *“[May] use clipboard to collect and reflect ideas.”*

PART II: Insights from Training Facilitators

Three of seven facilitators provided their insights on the training. They commented that they were impressed by the diversity of participants and level of engagement. They also highlighted the need for more time and space for participants to practice effective ways of working in the community.

- *[Surprised by] how much people wanted the space and time to talk to each other about sexual violence (causes + solutions).*
- *“We all need to work on/at the bottom of pyramid, less severe acts of violence.”*
- *I could see that we need to be more interactive – to provide participants the opportunity to share what they are seeing in the community and develop ways to respond.*

Facilitators also suggested more training time and follow-up sessions, where deeper discussion on men’s isolation issues and violence prevention should be included in the context. More experiential activities were emphasized as important for future trainings.

- *“More time would be helpful, felt rushed.”*

- *“We need more time.”*
- *“I am thinking that we need to focus further on experiential activities.”*
- *“Give more time for violence prevention.”*
- *“How we are just scratching the surface of men's isolation [was a key learning].”*

Facilitators recommended sustainable partnerships with more communities and agencies interested in working with men's prevention roles.


- *“I was happy to see many new faces. A part of networks was seen as the Migrante [one grassroots organization] brought their community members.”*
- *“I look forward to us reaching out to other communities and leaders and perhaps co-partnering in the design and facilitation of future training.”*

Summary of Outcomes

1. The training sessions were provided within anti-oppressive approaches, where participants received Indigenous knowledge and history, and where an intersectional lens was used to address gender inequity, domestic and sexual violence prevention and men's issues.
2. The training sessions were effective in providing knowledge and tools for community leaders.
3. Sessions also raised participants' awareness of healthy masculinity, and information of resources to promote men's wellbeing and to violence prevention.
4. Sessions reached out to diverse individuals and groups. Enhanced collaboration was achieved by establishing a platform where members from diverse backgrounds, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and professions became involved.
5. AMN's trainings achieved wider influence as participants committed to sharing knowledge within their respective communities.

Recommendations and Next Steps

1. Follow-up sessions and deeper conversations are encouraged to promote further learning, network building and collaboration.
2. A recruitment strategy should be developed to further engage community members and potential partners.
3. AMN's training framework should continue to develop, focusing on further strengthening participants' feminist, gender equity, antiracist and anticolonial values and skills.
4. Multiple materials, including hard copies of presentations and resources for men need to be provided in upcoming sessions.
5. Experiential learning activities and take-away material should be developed. Also, lectures, interactive activities, and practice activities should be balanced in future sessions.

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6. Policy makers, practitioners and researchers should develop multiple approaches, both formal and informal, to increase service use by men's groups cross-generationally.



References

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Thank you to all our participants for sharing your feedback and for your ongoing support of Alberta Men's Network.

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For more information about AMN, contact coordinator@albertamen.com



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