Men’s Attitudes and Behaviours Toward Violence Against Women

Ontario Men’s Survey

October 30, 2012

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Director of Programs
White Ribbon Campaign
Background
Background: Ontario Men’s Survey

- WRC developed the survey instrument
- Polling conducted by Leger Marketing

Inspired by:
- Australian National Survey on Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women (VicHealth, 2009)
- New Brunswick Attitudinal Survey on Violence Against Women (Province of New Brunswick, 2009)
- Alberta Survey on Men’s Attitudes and Behaviours Toward Violence Against Women (Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters, 2012, in partnership with WRC)
**Background: Ontario Men’s Survey**

- 15 minute telephone survey conducted in May, 2012
- Random sample of 1,064 men residing in Ontario, 18 years and over
- Centre ontarien de prévention des agressions (COPA) adapted the English survey for use with the Francophone community (50 Francophone men included in sample)
- Margin of error is +/- 3.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20
Background: Ontario Men’s Survey

- Goal: to understand men’s attitudes to help inform, shape, and influence future initiatives

- Objectives:
  - Measure men’s attitudes towards gender-based violence (GBV)
  - Determine gender equity scores, to measure the extent to which men in Ontario believe in equality between men and women and to correlate those beliefs with attitudes towards GBV;
  - Identify specific perceptions and attitudes towards sexual assault and rape;
  - Determine the extent to which behaviours and attitudes are changing; and
  - Identify venues to inform men and boys on the issue and what they can do to help.

- To establish benchmarks against which changes in attitudes can be monitored over time
Background: Ontario Men’s Survey

Limitations and Considerations:

- Responses were self-reported - this methodology alone does not allow for verification or measurement against actual behaviours.

- Responses were limited to the questionnaire script and time allocated – some men reported a desire to explain answers more deeply.

- These kinds of surveys are an entry point to further research, particularly around some of the more challenging findings.
Survey Findings
GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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### UNDERLYING ATTITUDES ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Base:** Male Residents of Ontario (n=1,064)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence can happen in any family, regardless of cultural background or economic situation</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence against women and girls is a concern to me</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence against women and girls affects all women including the women I care about in my life</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexist, violent language and the sexualization of women in media and popular culture helps to normalize violence against women</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most women could leave a violent relationship if they really wanted to</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence is a private matter to be handled in the family</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## WHEN ARE UNHEALTHY BEHAVIORS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control through threats to partner or family members</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushing to cause harm or fear</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forcing partner to have sex</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventing partner from seeing family and friends</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting partner down to try to make them feel bad about themselves</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A parent slapping a child’s face</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withholding money</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yelling at a partner</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Male Residents of Ontario (n=1,064)
SERIOUSNESS OF THESE SITUATIONS:

**NOT SERIOUS**
- Control through threats to partner or family members (n=174) - 12%
- Pushing to cause harm or fear (n=192) - 9%
- Forcing partner to have sex (n=288) - 17%
- Preventing partner from seeing family and friends (n=339) - 17%
- Putting partner down to try to make them feel bad about themselves (n=337) - 19%
- A parent slapping a child’s face (n=417) - 35%
- Withholding money (n=463) - 24%
- Yelling at a partner (n=752) - 48%

**SERIOUS**
- Control through threats to partner or family members (n=174) - 88%
- Pushing to cause harm or fear (n=192) - 89%
- Forcing partner to have sex (n=288) - 81%
- Preventing partner from seeing family and friends (n=339) - 82%
- Putting partner down to try to make them feel bad about themselves (n=337) - 78%
- A parent slapping a child’s face (n=417) - 63%
- Withholding money (n=463) - 73%
- Yelling at a partner (n=752) - 48%

Base: Male Residents of Ontario who think respective situation is sometimes or never domestic violence

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When it’s **never** acceptable to physically assault...

- Makes him look stupid or insults him in from of his friends: 96%
- She refuses to have sex: 94%
- She argues or refuses to obey him: 92%
- She doesn’t keep up with the domestic chores: 92%
- She admits to having sex with another man: 91%
- She does something to make him angry: 91%

Base: Male Residents of Ontario (n=1,064)
SEXUAL ASSAULT AND RAPE
The use of pornography, strip clubs, and the purchase of sex (prostitution) contribute to harmful attitudes towards women.

A woman could say she was raped if she was pressured to have sex with a man while both were drunk.

Men don’t usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.

If a woman doesn’t try to stop you, she really can’t say that it was rape.

Many so-called rape victims are actually women who had sex and “changed their minds” afterwards.

Base: Male Residents of Ontario (n=1,064)
Women often say "no" when they mean "yes" - 78% disagree, 12% agree

Sexual assault is less traumatic for a woman that is more sexually experienced - 80% disagree, 11% agree

When women talk and act sexy, they are inviting rape - 86% disagree, 10% agree

If a woman wears provocative clothing, she's putting herself at risk for rape - 89% disagree, 8% agree

Base: Male Residents of Ontario (n=1,064)
Both partners in a relationship are free to say if they don’t want sex
98%

Both partners in a relationship have the right to initiate sex equally provided there is consent
97%

It is important that a woman be as happy as a man in a sexual relationship
96%

It’s possible for a woman to be raped by someone she is in a sexual relationship with
88%

Base: Male Residents of Ontario (n=1,064)
ATTITUDES TOWARDS SEX IN RELATIONSHIPS

11%  
A man should not touch his partner unless they want to be touched

14%  
Men should never get their partners drunk to get them to have sex

77%  
It’s a woman’s job to bring up protection before sex

Base: Male Residents of Ontario (n=1,064)
CHANGING ATTITUDES
AND GETTING INVOLVED
ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS ARE CHANGING

Compared to 5 years ago, are men and boys...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESS AWARE</th>
<th>JUST AS AWARE</th>
<th>MORE AWARE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...about the problem of violence against women.

- 87% claim violence against women and girls impacts the women they care about.
- 91% would likely intervene if they knew someone in a violent relationship.
- 21% have witnessed abusive or harassing behavior in public and most (74%) got involved.
- 94% of men feel that violence against women and girls is a concern to them.
- 97% agree that “men can personally make a difference in promoting healthy, respectful, non-violent relationships.”

Base: Male Residents of Ontario (n=1,064)
Thought to yourself that what the man did was wrong: 92%

Acted: 77%

Checked with the victim to see if she was okay or needed help: 69%

Said or did something to challenge the man's behavior: 54%

Reported the incident to the police: 14%

Did not get involved: 24%

Base: Male Residents of Ontario who have witnessed abusive or harassing behavior towards a woman in public (n=214)

Base: Male Residents of Ontario (n=1,064)
REASONS FOR NOT GETTING INVOLVED WHEN WITNESSED ABUSIVE OR HARASSING BEHAVIOR

- Felt that it was a personal matter: 35%
- Didn't want to get involved: 28%
- Was concerned about personal safety: 17%
- Thought someone else would intervene: 6%
- Other: 2%
- Don't know: 16%

Base: Male Residents of Ontario who have witnessed abusive or harassing behavior towards a woman but did not get involved (n=49)
Fathers should educate their sons about healthy, equal relationships and respecting women - 9.6
Fathers should educate their daughters about their right to healthy, equal relationships - 9.5
Men and boys should speak out against violence against women - 9.1
Men and boys should be involved in education and awareness programs to end violence against women - 8.6
Male political leaders, business leaders, faith leaders, and celebrities should speak out about violence against women - 8.4
Athletes should speak out against violence against women - 8.1
Governments should do more to support programs and campaigns to engage men and boys in ending violence against women - 8.0

Base: Male Residents of Ontario (n=1,064)
AVENUES TO BRING THE MESSAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVENUE</th>
<th>EFFECTIVENESS (OUT OF 10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor's office or health clinic</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational campaigns</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community or Friendship Centres / Community organizations and/or events</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith groups</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community leaders</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media (TV, newspapers, radio)</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace or union</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports organizations</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate advertising</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Male Residents of Ontario (n=1,064)
GENDER EQUITY SCORE
Half of male Ontarians received a medium gender equity score, while one-in-five received a high score.
Higher gender equity scores among men in Ontario are associated with:

- stronger opposition to violence against women;
- positive attitudes towards equal relationships;
- greater importance of speaking out about violence against women;
- greater personal concern towards violence against women;
- greater likelihood to think unhealthy behaviours such as using threats as a form of control or forcing partner to have sex are forms of domestic violence;
- more likely to believe that it’s never acceptable for a partner to use physical violence;
- greater disagreement that women are in any way to blame for getting raped;
- more likely to stress the need for equality and consent in sexual relationships.
SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

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There is some great news from Ontario men:

- Men in Ontario recognize the universality of violence against women and most agree that domestic violence is a public issue.

- The vast majority of men in Ontario are personally concerned about violence against women.

- The vast majority of men in Ontario believe it’s never acceptable to physically assault a woman under any circumstance.

- Gender equity beliefs are directly correlated with men’s positive attitudes and beliefs towards violence against women in Ontario.
There is some great news from Ontario men:

- Ontario men do not believe women are to blame for rape and sexual assault
- Men in Ontario believe in equality in sexual relationships
- The majority of men in Ontario think that men and boys are more aware about violence against women today than they were 5 years ago
- The vast majority of men in Ontario recognize they have an important role to play in ending violence against women
However, we definitely have some work to do:

- The impact of emotional, social and psychological forms of violence against women are not always well understood by men in Ontario and most feel a woman could leave a violent relationship if she really wanted to.

- The use of physical violence towards children in the home is not always accepted as a form of domestic violence and a significant number of men feel it’s not serious.

- While the majority of Ontario men who witnessed abusive or harassing behaviour towards women in public intervened, one quarter did not get involved.
However, we definitely have some work to do:

- Men in Ontario are unsure how pornography, strip clubs, prostitution, sexist and violent language, and the sexualisation of women in media and popular culture contribute to harmful attitudes towards women.

- Men in Ontario show a degree of ambivalence and misunderstanding in their beliefs towards rape and sexual assault.

- In particular men need more information and awareness as it relates to seeking and understanding consent.

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Further research is needed:

- To dig deeper into problematic attitudes and beliefs (i.e. physical vs emotional, social and psychological forms of violence; violence against children; consent; by-stander interventions)

- To further understand differences in attitudes among specific groups of men (i.e. fathers, young men, immigrant/newcomer men, racialized men, gay/bisexual men, aboriginal men)
For more information:
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