

Check Against Delivery

Men's Attitudes About and Behaviours Toward Violence Against Women Survey

March 7, 2016 – Edmonton

Honourable Irfan Sabir, Minister, Human Services

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge that today's event is being held on the traditional territory of Treaty 6 First Nations.

I am honoured to be here today on behalf of Premier Rachel Notley and the Government of Alberta.

I would like to thank Jan Reimer, Executive Director, Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, for hosting this important event.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of my colleague, the Honourable Stephanie McLean, Minister of Status of Women...

As well as Edmonton City Councillors, Scott McKeen and Bev Esslinger.

Let me start by saying something I think we can all agree on.

Violence, in any form, has no place in our society.

No one should have to live in fear for their safety.

And no one should have to suffer in isolation among those who should make them feel safe.

Unfortunately, Alberta has among the highest rates of violence against women in Canada.

That's why this survey is crucial now more than ever.

I want to thank Jan Reimer and her team at the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters for commissioning it.

The survey results will inform our collective work around prevention of violence against women in both government and civil society.

It is an opportunity to continue to work together – government and community – to address this complex issue.

It will allow us to look at new directions that we can take.

And, what we can do to strengthen our efforts going forward.

While violence can happen to anyone, the majority of victims are women and girls.

Understanding men's attitudes and behaviours about violence against women within Alberta is key to making real change.

This information will help us to strengthen and develop more effective programs to prevent violence.

Earlier, we were presented with the survey results.

I am encouraged by these results.

They signal that more Alberta men are aware of the issue than they were five years ago.

They believe in gender equality and that violence against women is unacceptable.

Two out of three men recognize that violence impacts the women they care about.

They also recognize that violence against women is an important issue.

While the results are promising, there is still much more work to be done.

Not only as men, but as a society, we must work tirelessly to ensure women and girls are safe at home and in our communities.

We need to continue to engage men and boys as allies in preventing violence and sexual assault.

The survey also revealed that men recognize the importance of education.

And that men and boys should be involved in education and awareness programs to end violence against women.

Research also tells us that work with men and boys must be done in partnership with women's organizations.

A good example of this work is the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters' Leading Change: Playing to Win program.

This program promotes men as allies in violence prevention through positive leadership in sports.

Our government is taking action – working with community partners to develop a province-wide plan to end violence against women.

That's why we have invested over \$1.5 million in Family and Community Safety grants in projects to engage men and boys.

Involving men and boys as part of the solution is essential to reducing and preventing violence against women.

We know this is something we must do.

Survivors of violence need our support.

Together, I am certain that we will be able to make a difference.

We will make sure our programs align and build on each other to get more impact.

And we will educate and help Albertans speak out about violence against women.

My hope is that future surveys will demonstrate even greater results.

I want to reiterate that our government is committed to partnering with advocates and communities to put an end to any assaults on the dignity of Albertans and humanity.

And I want to thank all of you for being here and supporting this important work.

Thank you.