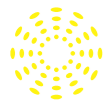


# WHAT IF WE LED WITH **COMPASSION,** **CARE** AND **ACCOUNTABILITY?**

*Applying a caring masculinity lens to  
the prevention of men's violence against  
women and girls*

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**equimundo**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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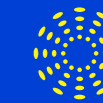
The authors are deeply grateful to the many advocates for women's rights and gender justice around the world who have advanced this field over decades. Their courage, persistence, and vision have shaped the evidence base, the policy landscape, and the moral imperative that underpin this work.

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*We thank every practitioner, researcher, and community member whose work informs these pages. Most of all, we thank the individuals and families whose lives remind us why compassion, care, and accountability must be at the center of efforts to end gender-based violence.*

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## INTRODUCTION

**MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IS A PERSISTENT AND PREVENTABLE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUE, EMBEDDED IN GENDERED NORMS, POWER RELATIONS, AND STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES.**

There is widespread recognition that to prevent and reduce this violence, we need to involve men and boys in positive change and reframe dominant models of manhood.

A caring masculinities lens offers powerful tools for this, foregrounding care, empathy, relationality, and interdependence as core to how men understand themselves and engage with others. A caring masculinities lens invites men into active, ethical participation in violence prevention through the cultivation of care as both a value and a practice. It acknowledges and invites men to be proactive and positive stakeholders in creating households, public spaces, workplaces and a world where women and girls are free from violence by men and boys.

This report advances a dual call to action. First, it calls on men to care: to actively reject violence, practice empathy and accountability, and contribute to cultures of respect and equality. The report recognizes that most men do not use violence or abuse against women and girls and that many contribute to non-violence through care. Second, this report calls on communities, institutions, and systems to care for men, both because men are deserving of care and because care for men helps prevent violence. It recognizes that men's relationships to violence include victimization as much as they do perpetration, and calls for building the social, emotional, and structural supports that enable men to embody caring masculinities.

This report is part of Equimundo's global MenCare Changemaker Journey. This global initiative mobilizes leading influencers from business, the media, culture, civil society, and government to find solutions to critical challenges related to men, boys, and masculinities. The MenCare Changemaker Journey involves people in taking and supporting social action across seven 'tracks', including online spaces, cities and regions, democracy and civic engagement, men's health, workplaces, care policies, and boys and education. A focus on men's role in the prevention of and response to gender-based violence is woven throughout all the action tracks.



## THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

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Close to a billion women have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate male partner or sexual violence by a non-partner<sup>[1]</sup>. About one in three women (30%) have been subject to this violence. That also means that close to a billion men have used violence against a female partner or another woman. As those who commit the violence that affects, limits and harms the lives of women and girls, men and boys must be a key focus of efforts at prevention and response.

Most intimate partner violence and sexual violence is violence by men against women; some is violence by men against other men and boys. While in many contexts most men do not use such violence, when such violence occurs, it is largely by men, against women. There is, of course, also violence by women, including against men, violence in lesbian and gay relationships, and violence against and by non-binary people.

Men's relationships to the issue of intimate partner violence against women and girls are diverse:

- Over two billion men and boys aged 15 and older have probably not used violence against a female partner and do not support it.
- Over 800 million men and boys aged 15 and older have used violence of some form against a female intimate partner<sup>[2][1]</sup>.
- Roughly 1 billion boys and young men have not yet had intimate partner relationships.<sup>[1]</sup> They are learning now how they will treat others, and it is an open question whether their involvements in relationships will be non-violent or violent.

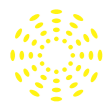
While over 800 million men and boys in the world have used physical and sexual violence against an intimate partner – about one-quarter of all men and boys – a higher number have likely used some form of violence against a woman or girl, including physical and sexual violence, coercive control, and sexual harassment.

However, men's and boys' relationships to violence go much further.

Violence is a routine part of many men's and boys' lives in other ways. Few boys make it through childhood without suffering or witnessing violence, usually by another boy or man. Many men and boys are the victims of violence. Many at some point will use violence against another boy or man. This recognition of the ways men's and boys' lives are also affected by violence, nearly always at the hands of other boys and men, offers us a largely untapped pathway to engaging men as fully invested partners in ending violence for women and girls, and all humans. We return to a more detailed account of men's and boys' subjection to violence further below.

Many men and boys both do harm and suffer harm, and the two often overlap. Men's and boys' use of violence against women and girls is part of a wider experience of violence perpetration and victimization.

**MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS OVERLAPS WITH VIOLENCE AGAINST OTHER MEN AND BOYS, AND BOTH ARE SHAPED BY PATRIARCHAL GENDER HIERARCHIES AND GENDER NORMS THAT HARM WOMEN'S LIVES AND ALSO RESTRICT AND HARM THE LIVES OF MEN<sup>[3]</sup>.**



## ENGAGING MEN IN CHANGE

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The violence prevention field has long recognized the need to engage men and boys in prevention. To prevent men's violence against women, we must:

- change the behavior of those men and boys perpetrating violence
- change the behavior of those men and boys who condone, are complicit or are silent in other males' violence
- harness the positive influence of non-violent men and boys on other boys and men and identify and build on their stake in a world free from violence; and
- change the social conditions that allow violence against women to continue, including violence-supportive masculine norms, dynamics of male peer support, and patriarchal social relations and cultures.

Efforts to prevent domestic and sexual violence recognize that they must address males because, largely, it is males who perpetrate this violence, because constructions of masculinity play a crucial role in driving this violence, and because men and boys also have positive and vital roles to play in helping to stop this violence<sup>[4]</sup>. Based on such recognitions, there are growing efforts to engage men and boys around the world: through education programs in schools and universities, initiatives in sporting leagues and workplaces, communications campaigns in local and large-scale settings, and advocacy and mobilization<sup>[4, 5]</sup>.

**VIOLENCE PREVENTION WORK WITH MEN AND BOYS HAS BOTH STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES. MOST IMPORTANTLY, THERE IS A GROWING BODY OF EVIDENCE THAT, IF DONE WELL, THIS WORK CAN SHIFT THE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE.**

This is documented in six systematic reviews or meta-analyses<sup>[6-11]</sup> and a number of other reviews<sup>[5, 12-16]</sup>. There are other strengths too. Education programs and campaigns have shown success in reaching and engaging men and boys and involving them in change. Much of the work is guided by feminist or 'gender-transformative' approaches,

intended to transform the gender-related risk factors shown to drive this violence as well as other factors. Much of the work is carried out by or in partnership with women's rights and violence prevention organizations and networks<sup>[5]</sup>. There has been an expansion in the number and type of violence prevention interventions among men and boys. There is also growing policy support for engaging men and boys in violence prevention, including in national prevention frameworks and policies. And there is a growing sense of the standards or principles that should guide this work<sup>[17]</sup>.

Efforts to engage men and boys in preventing men's violence against women and girls also are limited in some ways. The work is small and scattered, and few initiatives address institutional and structural levers of change<sup>[14, 18]</sup>. There is insufficient attention to diversities and inequalities among men and boys associated with class, sexuality and, to a lesser extent, ethnicity<sup>[19]</sup>. Some educators and organizations focusing on men and boys lack connections or accountability to women's rights and violence prevention organizations and networks. In some contexts work focused on men has risked the marginalization of women's voices and leadership and threats to women – and girl – only or focused programming<sup>[20, 21]</sup>. While these risks are real, we view these as challenges to overcome and face rather than reasons to retreat from work with men and boys to end violence against women. Indeed, this limited but important base of programming experiences has yet to achieve large-scale impact nor bring a critical mass of men and boys to see themselves as partners and stakeholders in preventing men's violence against women and girls.

There are persistent challenges in violence prevention efforts with men and boys, including appealing to and engaging them, making the case that violence against women is an issue of personal relevance, and responding to resistance and backlash.

**THERE ARE PERSISTENT QUESTIONS THAT MEN AND BOYS ASK: WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME? IS THIS ANTI-MALE? ARE YOU CALLING ME A PERPETRATOR? WHAT ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN? AND SO ON. A GROWING BODY OF EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE DOES PROVIDE VALUABLE GUIDANCE IN ADDRESSING SUCH CHALLENGES AND RESPONDING TO SUCH QUESTIONS [5]. AT THE SAME TIME, TO REALLY ADVANCE THE WORK OF ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS, A CARE LENS PROVIDES POWERFUL WAYS FORWARD. FIRST THOUGH, WHAT IS A CARE LENS?**



## **A CARE LENS**

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Applying a “care lens” means viewing social issues through a focus on care, relationships, interdependence, and responsibilities for others’ well-being. A care lens draws on two overlapping streams of work, both driven primarily by feminism: an attention to the work of caring for others and an argument for an ethic of care.

First, a care lens highlights the practical activities of caring for others, nurturing and providing for them [22]. Feminist work has emphasized that care is a foundational social, moral, and economic practice rather than a private or naturalized duty. While women and men are equally capable of caring for children, caring for elders, and providing emotional support, these activities often are undertaken far more by women, systematically undervalued, and unpaid or underpaid. Feminist scholarship examines the unequal distribution of care work and critiques policy frameworks that make care invisible within markets and states, whether carried out by women or men. Indeed, research, including Equimundo’s State of the World’s Fathers reports highlighted later in this report, have found that while promoting individual men’s responsibility for care work is vital, even more transformative is changing social norms, policies, workplaces practices and the economic systems that both hinder men’s involvement in care work and make it invisible to the detriment of women, men and all of us.

**A CARE LENS HIGHLIGHTS THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF CARE, INCLUDING HOW GENDER INEQUALITY, ECONOMIC STRESS, AND CULTURAL NORMS CAN LIMIT PEOPLE’S ABILITY OR WILLINGNESS TO CARE OR CAN NORMALIZE DOMINANCE AND HARM [23, 24].**

Second, a care lens involves an approach to morality or ethics comprising an ‘ethic of care’, emphasising interdependence, relationality, and responsibility and placing care and relationships at the heart of how we think about right and wrong [25-27]. Rather than emphasising abstract universal principles and individual autonomy, a care-focused moral framework centers relationships, interdependence, and compassion as the foundations of ethical life.

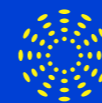


**IT ALSO REQUIRES US TO EXAMINE HOW THE LACK OF CARE IN MEN'S AND BOYS' LIVES IS ALSO a CONTRIBUTOR TO CYCLES OF VIOLENCE. WE EXPLORE EACH OF THESE BELOW. a CARE LENS THUS ENRICHES OUR VISION OF MEN'S AND BOYS' ROLES IN PREVENTION.**

Applying a care lens to violence prevention produces four practical orientations:

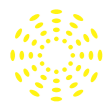
- A care lens reframes violence not only as individual wrongdoing but as a failure of care within relationships, communities, and institutions. Prevention therefore involves building people's capacity to care for others, including empathy, respect, and non-violent ways of interacting and responding to conflict.
- A care lens foregrounds relational accountability and restorative justice, where individuals recognize their responsibility for how their actions affect others' well-being.
- A care lens centers victim-survivor well-being, prioritising safety support rather than procedural or punitive responses.
- A care lens highlights structural conditions of care and neglect, directing attention to gender inequality, economic precarity, and social norms that devalue care and legitimize dominance. This aligns with feminist primary prevention strategies that seek to transform gender relations, promote equitable caregiving, and challenge harmful masculinities for the well-being of women and girls and men and boys <sup>[28]</sup>.

Applying a care lens to violence prevention work with men and boys makes four vital contributions. It emphasizes men's contributions to non-violence through caring, builds on what brings men to non-violence, highlights men's own subjection to violence, and invites a spirit of compassionate accountability in responding to the men who use violence.



A care lens:

- Highlights men's contributions to non-violence:
  - Men's positive care for children nurtures non-violence
  - Men with stronger orientations to care are less likely than other men to use violence and abuse against women and girls
  - Men's involvement in caring contributes to progress towards gender justice
  - Men's involvement in caring is increasing, although considerable gender gaps persist
  - An intersectional analysis is necessary to understand the opportunities for and constraints on care among men, such as workplace norms, societal norms about men's roles as providers, the lack of policies to encourage and support men's caregiving, and others.
- Builds on what brings men to non-violence
  - Men's care for women and girls is an important motivator of support for efforts to end men's violence against women
  - Caring for others can bring men to non-violence
- Highlights men's own subjection to violence by other boys and men and thus their stake in creating a world free from violence. We believe this can be done in a way that moves beyond zero-sum thinking in the space.
- Emphasizes compassionate and relational accountability, and restorative justice, in responding to men's use of violence



## MEN CONTRIBUTING TO NON-VIOLENCE THROUGH CARE

### **A CARE-FOCUSED LENS HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANT LINKS BETWEEN CARING AND NON-VIOLENCE IN MEN'S AND BOYS' LIVES.**

There are associations between men's involvement in parenting and their non-violence against female partners and children. In households in which men have higher levels of parenting involvement or divisions of caregiving are more equitable, there are lower levels of intimate partner violence and violence against children, according to studies in the USA <sup>[29]</sup>, Norway <sup>[30]</sup>, and countries in the Asia Pacific <sup>[31]</sup>. The links between positive father involvement and lower violence may reflect that father involvement feeds into non-violence or non-violence invites greater fathering involvement. Equally, both may be shaped by other factors such as men having more gender-equitable attitudes: such men may be more likely than other men to be involved fathers and to be non-violent in their households.

### **MEN'S POSITIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN NURTURES NON-VIOLENCE.**

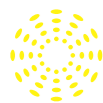
- Positive parenting, whether by men or women, feeds non-violence. For children, experiencing positive parenting, close relationships with a non-violent parent, and effective family communication can be protective against domestic violence <sup>[32]</sup>.
- Men who practice care among children both provide role modelling that shapes children's social learning and support the developmental pathways for sons and daughters to internalize ideas of non-violence, self-regulation and emotional security, increasing the likelihood that they will be non-violent in their interpersonal relationships.
- If boys grow up with involved and nurturing fathers, they are more likely to be more nurturing and gender-equitable as fathers themselves and less likely to become violent in their intimate partner relationships <sup>[33, 34]</sup>. If girls grow up with involved and nurturing fathers, they are more likely to value equitable partner relationships.

Thus, just as abuse and neglect can be passed down from generation to generation, so can nurturance and care. Boys who are 'well held' – cared for by consistent, nurturing and non-violent caregivers – are less likely to perpetrate multiple forms of violence. It may be particularly important for fathers and father figures to take up such roles, given the evidence from two US studies that both fathers' active encouragement of non-violence and parents' communication on violence with sons are less common than mothers' encouragement and parents' communication with daughters <sup>[35, 36]</sup>.

This does not mean that father involvement is always and everywhere a positive force. Some fathers' presence in their children's lives is abusive and harmful. Family courts responsible for decisions about children's contact with parents should limit and regulate children's contact with any caregivers, male or female, who behave in violent or controlling ways to their children or to the children's other parent <sup>[37]</sup>.

### **A FURTHER LINK BETWEEN CARING AND NON-VIOLENCE IS THAT MEN WITH STRONGER ORIENTATIONS TO CARE ARE LESS LIKELY THAN OTHER MEN TO USE VIOLENCE AND ABUSE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS.**

- Among men, having attitudes involving greater acceptance of violence, greater hostility towards women, and greater support for male dominance in relationships and families is a consistent predictor of the perpetration of domestic and sexual violence <sup>[38]</sup>.
- A large volume of scholarship demonstrates that:
  - Men are more likely to use violence against women and girls if they condone, minimize, excuse, or justify that violence <sup>[39-42]</sup>.
  - Men are more likely to use sexual violence in particular if they subscribe to 'hostile masculinity': they are interested in sexual dominance over their



## MEN CONTRIBUTING TO NON-VIOLENCE THROUGH CARE

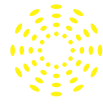
intimate partners, they have hostile and distrustful attitudes toward women, they see male-female relationships as inherently exploitative and manipulative, they accept rape myths, and they see force as a legitimate way to gain compliance in sexual relationships<sup>[40]</sup>.

- The attitudes, beliefs and orientations that predict men's use of domestic and sexual violence are the very antithesis of caring, and they have also been linked to negative outcomes for men (substance abuse, risk-taking behavior, suicidal ideation). In contrast, men are less likely to use violence against women if they see violence as unacceptable, are attracted to equitable relationships, and regard women as deserving of rights and respect.
- An important element of caring for others is having empathy for them, and the research shows that empathy is associated with men's non-violence. Men with higher levels of empathy for others are less likely to use domestic and sexual violence<sup>[43-45]</sup>. Further, empathy can buffer or weaken the effect of other risk factors for abusive behavior, in effect overriding other factors that might otherwise increase risk such as rape supportive attitudes and pressure from peers<sup>[46]</sup>.
- Engaged, non violent caregiving undermines the patriarchal masculinities premised on domination and control which are strongly associated with abuse. This does not mean that men who are involved fathers will never use violence against women. But when men learn to interpret and respond to others' needs and to share responsibility for others' well-being, they develop skills and self concepts that are less aligned with domination and more aligned with accountability and respect.

**MEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN CARING ALSO CONTRIBUTES TO VIOLENCE PREVENTION THROUGH ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROGRESS TOWARDS GENDER JUSTICE.**

Men's involvement in care – whether through fathering, intimate relationships, community work, or professional care roles – can lessen important forms of gender inequality.

- The social organization of care work, including parenting, care of family members, domestic labor, and emotional support, is deeply entwined with gender inequalities<sup>[47]</sup>. The patriarchal social norms and economic structures of most societies assign responsibility for caring to women while undervaluing or rendering invisible the time, skill, and work it entails. Men's historical absence from practices of care sustains gender hierarchies in both the household and the labor market. It limits women's economic autonomy and workforce participation and advancement, while enabling men's<sup>[48]</sup>. Men's roles as 'uncaring' are sustained both by social and economic structures and by cultural representations of men as stoic, work-focused providers and breadwinners, all social norms that also limit the lives of men and often keep them distant from the care that nourishes those in their households and that also provides deep meaning and well-being in their own lives.
- When men engage meaningfully in care, they contribute to redistributing labor and emotional responsibilities that have historically constrained women's economic and personal autonomy. Involvement in care can also expand men's relational capacities and reduce their involvement in stereotypical forms of masculinity premised on independence, control, and emotional restraint. Caregiving men may take up qualities of empathy and mutuality, traits essential to equitable gender relations. Men's greater involvement in caregiving, as Equimundo has seen in its State of the World's Fathers, contributes to happiness and well-being for men and women.
- Structural and cultural shifts that enable men's greater involvement in care work – such as parental leave provisions, workplace accommodation of care responsibilities, and the social valuing of care work – may reshape the structural conditions that sustain male dominance and thus feed into men's violence against women. For example, more equitable divisions of unpaid labor in heterosexual couples and families reduce



## MEN CONTRIBUTING TO NON-VIOLENCE THROUGH CARE

women's economic dependence on men, increase women's economic empowerment, reduce their social isolation, and enable their greater participation in public institutions, potentially contributing to lower rates of intimate partner violence <sup>[49,50]</sup>.

- In these ways, men's care contributes to progress towards gender equality in ways that simultaneously reduce the conditions under which women are more vulnerable to violence and also allow us to think about well-being, happiness and deeper life purpose, in short to imagine and achieve lives that are both violence-free and also fulfilling.

### **GIVEN THAT MEN'S CARING CAN CONTRIBUTE TO GENDER JUSTICE, IT IS GOOD NEWS THAT MEN'S INVOLVEMENTS IN CARING ARE INCREASING, ALTHOUGH CONSIDERABLE GENDER GAPS PERSIST.**

- Fathers in countries across the globe are doing more care work than in the past, although mothers are still doing more, according to Equipundo's *State of the World's Fathers* report <sup>[51]</sup>.
- The gender gap in housework has been closing over the last half century. Analysis of time use data from surveys in 19 countries over 1961-2011 finds an overall trend towards greater gender equality in the performance of housework <sup>[52]</sup>.
- Country-specific data generally shows similar trends. For example:
  - Since the 1980s in the USA, UK, France, Italy, Netherlands and Sweden, men's time spent caring for children has increased, with increases from 18 minutes per day in the Netherlands to 39 minutes per day in the United States. This involved gender convergence in some countries, but in others women's childcare levels increased even more, producing greater gender divergence <sup>[53]</sup>.

Nevertheless, men's share of total childcare increased across these countries.

- In Canada, over the 40 years from 1986 to 2015, more fathers participated in household work and spent more time on it, and there was a significant increase in fathers spending time providing help or care to children, although mothers continue to do considerably more <sup>[54]</sup>.
- In some countries however, this increase is only small or stagnating. In Australia for example, men's average hours per week spent caring for their children and disabled or elderly relatives went from an average of 5 hours per week in 2002 to an average of 5.5 hours in 2022, while their average hours spent on housework were the same in 2022 as they were 20 years earlier <sup>[55]</sup>. Australia's gender gap in unpaid care work was not significantly different in 2020 from the gap in the previous 18 years <sup>[56]</sup>.
- An intersectional analysis, grounded in recognition of the intersection of multiple forms of privilege and disadvantage in men's lives, is necessary to understand the opportunities for and constraints on care among men. Structural inequalities shape the opportunities of men in different social groups and situations to be involved in caring for their children. For example, Black and ethnic minority men's fathering may be constrained by low-wage and unstable employment, disproportionate incarceration, and institutional biases in family courts and welfare systems <sup>[57]</sup>, while blue-collar men's fathering may be constrained by poorer access to flexible hours and parental leave, precarious jobs, inflexible schedules, and economic instability <sup>[58]</sup>.



## MEN COMING TO NON-VIOLENCE THROUGH CARE

### **A CARE LENS BUILDS ON WHAT BRINGS MEN TO NON-VIOLENCE. MEN'S CARE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IS AN IMPORTANT MOTIVATOR OF SUPPORT FOR EFFORTS TO END MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.**

- Growing, albeit still small, numbers of men have become active in efforts to end men's violence against women. Although there are diverse pathways to such involvement, one involves closeness to and care for women. Some men become sensitized to issues of domestic and sexual violence through hearing women's experiences of violence, whether female family members, friends, partners or other women <sup>[59]</sup>.
- Men's care for the women and girls in their lives also can inspire a broader support for gender equity efforts, thus indirectly driving progress towards ending domestic and sexual violence. One dynamic here is the 'daughter effect', the documented pattern in which fathers who have daughters show greater support for public policies designed to address gender equity than fathers with sons <sup>[60-62]</sup>. Certainly, it should not require fathering a daughter for men to recognize the injustices of gender roles and relations. Also, having a daughter is no magic wand, easily transforming deeply patriarchal men into feminist advocates. It would be ideal if men in all life situations came to rich feminist understanding. Still, if men's involvements in parenting are one route to such understanding, this should be supported as a meaningful on ramp for greater investment in gender justice by some men <sup>[63]</sup>.
- Men's care for women and girls may be limited as a motivator for support for ending violence against women, if it is grounded in paternalism, or chivalry, or even a patriarchal agenda of guarding one's property or the women and girls of one's community against the predations of other men. Far-right groups and mainstream politicians in recent years have weaponized the issue of violence against women and girls to further a racist, anti-migrant agenda <sup>[64]</sup>. These efforts should not be allowed to become excuses or distractions from feminist-grounded and care-focused efforts to engage men and boys in ending violence against women.

- Men's care for women and girls and their freedom from violence ideally is rooted in human rights – in “a fundamental care and respect for women's and girls' rights, autonomy, and bodily integrity” <sup>[65]</sup>. It should apply to all women and girls: not only the women and girls each man knows but the women and girls he does not know and will never know.

### **CARING FOR OTHERS CAN BRING MEN TO NON-VIOLENCE. MEN WHO BECOME INVOLVED IN CARING, WHETHER IN PRIVATE SETTINGS FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND FAMILY MEMBERS OR IN PROFESSIONAL SETTINGS AS CARERS, SOCIAL WORKERS AND NURSES, CAN DEVELOP STRONGER INVESTMENTS AND SKILLS IN CARE.**

There are likely to be two-way processes in play here: men with stronger orientations to care are more attracted to such roles, and participating in these roles intensifies their commitments to and skills in caring.

Focusing on fathering:

- Men, like women, have a fundamental capacity for nurturance. Men's paternal capacity for care is grounded in similar biological capacities to women's, has been shaped by evolution, and is enabled by the right social and cultural conditions <sup>[65]</sup>.
- Fathers who undertake sustained caregiving develop greater competence and maintain higher levels of involvement over time, according to quasi-experimental and longitudinal studies of parental leave <sup>[66, 67]</sup>. Involved fathers can 'learn by doing', developing increased confidence in parenting and shifts toward more emotionally expressive and relational identities <sup>[68-70]</sup>.



## MEN COMING TO NON-VIOLENCE THROUGH CARE

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- Men's caring identities and competencies develop in part through everyday interaction. The experience of parenting can foster men's nurturance in several ways, including practice, interaction and feedback, and identity change:
  - Routine caregiving tasks (feeding, soothing, bathing) can cultivate fathers' practical competence and confidence.
  - Infants' and children's responses can reinforce fathers' sensitivity and empathy.
  - Involved fathers may shift from provider-oriented to care-oriented identities or self-concepts.
- Fathers' (or any adult caregivers') development of skills in and orientations to care is not inevitable. It is shaped by various factors, including their pre-existing attitudes and identities and competencies, the level and character of their parenting involvement, and the factors that enable or constrain this: co-parenting dynamics, community norms, and institutional and policy supports such as parental leave. For example, in an Australian qualitative study among first-time fathers, men reported feeling constrained by hegemonic masculine ideals, facing conflict between traditional masculine discourses and progressive discourses ideals encouraging fathers to be caring and nurturing <sup>[71]</sup>.

Focusing on professional caring roles:

- Men who take up paid work in caring roles can develop stronger orientations towards and skills in care. For example, in an Australian study of men working in frontline care work as personal carers and assistants and aged/disabled carers, the men emphasized their building of 'strong relationships', 'bonds', or a 'genuine connection' with the people with whom they worked and their centering of compassion and kindness <sup>[72]</sup>. Some talked about developing an 'other-centered' disposition, focused on care or concern about others, and some said that being connected to their clients improved their own mental health. Similarly, in a study of men in nursing in the Czech Republic, some men reported their development of greater emotional sensitivity,

emotional intelligence, and relational sensitivity <sup>[73]</sup>. As the author describes, "Men who provide care become more attuned to others' needs, enabling them to express tenderness, respond sensitively to others' intimacy, and offer relief through kindness and care" <sup>[73]</sup>.

- Again, men's development of greater caring orientations is not inevitable. Some men in female-dominated professions instead distance themselves from associations with femininity and frame their work in stereotypically masculine ways, e.g. as physical or heavy or hard technical or heroic, to sustain normative performances of masculinity <sup>[73, 74]</sup>. Nor should we overly romanticize the work of care or the structural constraints on care-giving in neoliberal economic contexts <sup>[72]</sup>.

It is clear nevertheless that involvements in care can foster nurturance and non-violence.

**CARE IS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN CAPACITY, ONE THAT CAN BE LEARNT AND DEVELOPED THROUGH INVOLVEMENT. CARING ORIENTATIONS AND COMPETENCIES AMONG MEN ARE SOCIALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY CONTINGENT, RATHER THAN BIOLOGICALLY FIXED.**



## MEN, CARE, AND NON-VIOLENCE CARING ABOUT MEN

**THIS REPORT NOT ONLY CALLS ON MEN TO CARE, BUT CALLS FOR CARING ABOUT MEN. EFFORTS TO ENGAGE MEN AND BOYS IN THE PREVENTION OF MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN LONG HAVE BEEN GROUNDED IN A CARE AND COMPASSION FOR MEN AND BOYS THEMSELVES.**

In applying a care lens to violence prevention, this report extends this. It calls for recognition of the breadth and depth of men's and boys' own subjection to violence and for a spirit of compassionate accountability in responding to those men who use violence.

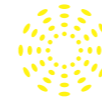
Care and compassion for men and boys long has been part of feminist-informed work with men and boys for violence prevention. This was visible from the beginnings of anti-sexist men's advocacy alongside the second wave of feminism in the 1970s and 80s, with commitments to be 'male-positive' or to 'enhancing the lives of men and boys' [75, 76]. There is a widespread but not universal consensus in the 'engaging men' field that men

and boys are stakeholders and beneficiaries in progressive change and benefit from progress towards gender equality and non-violence [5, 77].

In practice, violence prevention programs among men and boys often use 'strengths-based' or 'positive' approaches in engaging men and boys. These include:

- Using positive messages about men's potential roles in personal and social change
- Addressing men as allies and pro-social bystanders and not only as potential perpetrators
- Acknowledging and building on men's and boys' existing commitments to and involvements in non-violence and equality
- Appealing to men's positive and pro-social aspirations, and
- Supporting efforts at positive change [5].

As work with men and boys has developed, there have been calls to extend positive or strengths-based approaches, for example by recognising trauma among men [78] and by adopting approaches that 'call men in' rather than only 'call men out' and that adopt 'compassionate accountability' [79]. In articulating a care-based approach to work with men and boys, we extend such calls, particularly by highlighting men's own relationships to violence both as victim-survivors and as perpetrators.



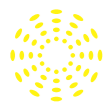
## MEN, CARE, AND NON-VIOLENCE CARING ABOUT MEN AND BOYS AS VICTIM-SURVIVORS

**EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE ARE A COMMON PART OF THE LIVES OF MANY MEN AND BOYS.**

Although violence prevention efforts aimed at men and boys routinely acknowledge the fact of male victimization, the sheer scale of this victimization deserves stronger recognition – and a stronger affirmation that acknowledging the violence in men's lives does not nor should not reduce our attention to violence against women. Men and boys are disproportionately the victims of violence, typically at the hands of other men and boys.

**IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, LARGE NUMBERS OF MEN AND BOYS GROW UP SEEING OR SUFFERING VIOLENCE AS CHILDREN IN THEIR FAMILIES.**

- Substantial minorities of boys – about one in five (20.6%) according to a recent systematic review of studies across the globe – have been the victims of physical violence within domestic and family settings by 18 years of age. About one in six boys and young men (16.6%) have witnessed physical violence within their domestic and family relationships [80].
- Many boys – anywhere from 40% or 50% to over 90% depending on the country – have experienced corporal punishment in the home, parents' or others' use of physical force for disciplinary purposes. The prevalence of this violence is similar for boys and girls, but in some countries, boys (especially at a younger age) are more likely to experience physical punishment in the home [81].
- Boys are more likely than girls to be subject to physical punishment in schools, as a recent global systematic review documents [82].
- Boys and young men who have grown up with violence in their families are more likely to go on to use violence themselves, although most will not. Exposure to childhood domestic and family violence consistently is identified as a predictor of adult perpetration of domestic and sexual violence [38]. At the same time, this



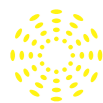
is neither inevitable or deterministic. Many males who faced violence as children will never use violence as adults, while many adult male perpetrators of domestic or sexual violence were not exposed to domestic and family violence as children.

- One fifth to one third of boys have experienced bullying in schools.
  - Global data finds that the prevalence of bullying is 34.8% among boys aged 13-15 [83].
  - US data from over 2011 to 2019 among high school students finds that among males, 10.18% had experienced bullying on school property, 3.87% had experienced bullying online, and 6.08% had experienced both [84]. Other US data shows that 29.9% of teenage boys aged 12-17 (and 38.3% of teenage girls) have been bullied in the past 12 months [85].

### **MEN AND BOYS OFTEN EXPERIENCE VIOLENCE, PARTICULARLY FROM OTHER MEN AND BOYS.**

- Globally, males are much more likely than females to be victims of fatal and serious assaults, and about 90% of this violence is perpetrated by other males [86].
- Substantial proportions of men and boys have experienced physical violence, as nationally representative data from various countries shows. For example:
  - In Australia, one third of men (34%) have experienced physical assault, with most of this by male perpetrators [87].
  - In Germany, a nationwide study among male patients found that 43.6% reported being victims of violence (comprising 18.6% who reported being victims without having perpetrated violence themselves and 25% who reported being both victims and perpetrators of violence) [88].

- Males, including boys and young men, show higher rates of involvement in physical fighting than females:
  - In a US national survey among high school students, 18.2% of males (and 8.8% of females) reported involvement in physical fighting on school property in the last 12 months [89].
  - In a study of the prevalence of very frequent physical fighting ( $\geq 12$  times per year) among youth in 27 countries and cities, boys were more likely to report frequent fighting than girls in 20 of those [90]. For example, in the USA 39.26% of boys and 22.9% of girls had engaged in any fighting, and 3.99% of boys and 0.99% of girls had engaged in very frequent physical fighting.
  - In a study among 63 low-and middle-income countries, overall, males were over twice as likely to report frequent fighting in the past 12 months than females [91].
  - Physical fighting among adolescents is overwhelmingly male on male, with boys far more likely to fight other boys than to fight girls [91].
- Anywhere from one in six to one in 30 boys and young men have experienced child sexual abuse, as a series of studies document [92-94]. Most of the perpetrators of child sexual abuse – 80% to 95% - are male [95-97].
- Men and boys are 81% of all victims of homicide globally [98]. Their assailants overwhelmingly are other men: 90% of the suspects brought into formal contact with the police for intentional homicides (including against both men and women) are men [98]. Most men and boys killed by homicide are killed by someone outside their family, with only 11% killed by a family member or intimate partner.



Men also can be the victims of intimate partner violence and sexual harassment, including by female perpetrators:

- In Australia for example, 1 in 8 men (12%) have experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member, 1 in 14 men (7.3%) have experienced violence by an intimate partner, and 1 in 44 men (2.3%) have experienced violence by a boyfriend, girlfriend, or date [87]. (The respective figures for women are 27%, 23%, and 9.3%.) In the last 12 months, 4.5% of men and 13% of women experienced sexual harassment [87]. The harassment men experienced was evenly split between male and female perpetrators, while most of the harassment women experienced was by men.
- In the USA for example, about 1 in 6 men (17%) have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime [99]. (The rate for women is 34%).

**WE SHOULD CARE ABOUT MEN AND BOYS AS THE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE FOR THE SAME REASONS WE CARE ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS: THIS VIOLENCE CAUSES PROFOUND HARM, VIOLATES THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS, AND CONTRIBUTES TO SOCIAL INJUSTICE. RECOGNISING MALE VICTIMIZATION EXPRESSES A FEMINIST ETHIC OF CARE, GROUNDED IN COMPASSION, EMPATHY, AND THE RECOGNITION OF OTHERS' NEEDS. MOREOVER, ADDRESSING MALE VICTIMIZATION CAN CHALLENGE THE VIOLENCE-SUPPORTIVE SOCIAL NORMS AND CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER THAT FEED INTO MEN'S AND BOYS' VIOLENCE AGAINST BOTH MEN AND BOYS AND WOMEN AND GIRLS.**



**WHILE MANY MEN AND BOYS SUFFER VIOLENCE, MANY ALSO INFLICT IT ON OTHERS; MANY BOTH SUFFER VIOLENCE AND INFLICT IT.**

A wide range of studies have found that substantial minorities of men and boys have used physical or sexual violence against women and girls<sup>[38]</sup>. For example, international studies find that substantial proportions of men, and in some cases the majority of men, have used violence against female intimate partners or other women:

- The UN Multi-country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific, across six countries, found that at least one-quarter, and in some cases four-fifths, of ever-partnered men had ever perpetrated physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence in their lifetime<sup>[100]</sup>.
- The International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), in eight low- and middle-income countries, found rates of perpetration among men varying from 17.5% to 46%<sup>[101]</sup>.

Sexual violence is similar, with substantial minorities of men and boys having ever perpetrated sexual assault. To highlight some of the largest-scale studies:

- Over one-third (29.3%) of male university students in the USA and Canada have perpetrated sexual violence in their lifetimes, according to a systematic review of studies involving 78 samples comprising 25,524 college men<sup>[102]</sup>. About one in five male university students, 19%, have perpetrated sexual coercion (defined as any type of sexual intercourse obtained via verbal tactics such as verbal pressuring behavior, expressions of anger, threats to the relationship, and so on), and about one in fifteen, 6.5%, have perpetrated rape (defined as any type of sexual intercourse obtained via incapacitation, physical force, or threats of physical force)<sup>[102]</sup>.
- In the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), proportions of men ranging from 2 to 25% had ever perpetrated sexual violence against a woman, with men's lifetime reported use of sexual violence around 9% in most countries<sup>[103]</sup>.
- Similar findings, documenting that anywhere from one in seven to one in 20 men have used sexual violence, come from studies from a wide range of countries and contexts<sup>[38]</sup>.

**MEN'S AND BOYS' PERPETRATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IS PART OF A WIDER PATTERN OF VIOLENCE PERPETRATION.**

For example, large proportions of males have used physical violence against another person:

- In a study of young men in eight low- and middle-income countries during 2018–2023, lifetime rates of violence perpetration ranged from 12.4% to 44.9%<sup>[104]</sup>.
- In a large-scale study in Germany, 27.8% of men reported having perpetrated physical violence<sup>[88]</sup>.
- In a US study among over 4,000 adolescent men observed from ages 13 to 32 years, and focused on three forms of physical violence, there were three patterns over time: non-violent males (69%), who were consistently not violent across waves; desistors (18%), who were violent in adolescence but discontinued violence in young adulthood; and escalators (13%), who were not violent in adolescence but initiated violent behavior in young adulthood<sup>[105]</sup>.
- In a US study among male adolescents aged 13-19 years and living in lower-resource neighborhoods, two thirds of the participants (67.8%) reported youth violence perpetration (including physical fighting, threats with a weapon, or injuring someone with a weapon)<sup>[106]</sup>.

The men who perpetrate violence also deserve care – not to excuse their actions, but to better engage with them and to understand and transform the conditions that sustain their violent behavior.

A feminist ethic of care emphasizes relational responsibility and the potential for empathy and change within social systems. Caring about perpetrators means recognizing that their violence often emerges from learned patterns of dominance, trauma, and patriarchal settings and systems.



**ADDRESSING THESE  
ROOTS REQUIRES  
COMPASSION  
WITHOUT  
COMPLACENCY:  
ENGAGING  
MEN THROUGH  
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INTERVENTIONS,  
AND COMMUNITY-  
BASED  
PREVENTION  
GROUNDED IN  
JUSTICE AND  
RESPECT.**

Caring about perpetrators involves the recognition that many were themselves victims of violence, without letting this diminish their accountability for their use of violence. Acknowledging men's histories of trauma can enhance their felt responsibility for their behavior and their personal accountability for change <sup>[107]</sup>. Feminist approaches to men's violence include the promotion of spaces where men can confront the emotional, cultural, and ethical dimensions of their violence and work towards a social reimagining of masculinities toward equality and non-violence.

In calling for caring about the men and boys who perpetrate violence against women and girls, we emphasize some cautions:

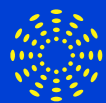
- The accountability of perpetrators for their violence, and the safety and well-being of victim-survivors, must be paramount in any engagement with those who have used violence.
- Work with perpetrators can and should acknowledge their histories of trauma and oppression <sup>[107]</sup>, but not in ways that excuse or minimize their violence or their responsibility for it.
- It should be acknowledged that perpetrators of violence both gain and lose from their use of violence. The men who practice intimate partner violence or sexual violence may gain power and control and compliant partners in relationships, sexual access to unwilling women, release from perceived threats to masculinity, status among male peers, and other benefits <sup>[5]</sup>. On the other hand, they may face loss of intimate and family relationships, social stigma, and criminal legal sanctions.
- A care-based approach is compatible with the use of criminal legal responses to perpetrators, although we acknowledge feminist and other debates over carceral responses <sup>[108-110]</sup>.

**A CARE LENS MUST ALSO INVOLVE INTERSECTIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE CLASS AND RACIAL INEQUALITIES THAT STRUCTURE WHO IS SEEN AS WORTHY OR UNWORTHY OF CARE AMONG THOSE USING VIOLENCE OR COMMITTING OTHER CRIMES <sup>[111]</sup>.**

For example, if they are economically privileged and from a historically privileged ethnic group, male perpetrators are more likely to escape sanction, less likely to be held accountable and criminalized, and their crimes are less likely to be seen as linked to their ethnicity <sup>[5]</sup>. Classism, racism, and other forms of social injustice shape not only how perpetrators are treated but how institutions respond to and communities view domestic and sexual violence.

Recent calls for work with men and boys to take up 'compassionate accountability' or 'relational accountability' embody the care-based approach articulated here. Compassionate accountability begins with empathy to validate men's experiences and build motivation for change, creating spaces for critical self-examination without shame-induced defensiveness, holding harmful behavior accountable, and using relational processes whether one-on-one or in groups to promote self-awareness, peer support and skills <sup>[112]</sup>.

This work can involve 'calling in' men and boys, inviting them into change through relational trust and non-judgmental challenge, in ways that are more likely to strengthen relationships, promote learning and build responsibility. 'Calling in' contrasts with 'calling out', holding individuals or groups publicly accountable for public behavior, often through punitive declarations, public shaming and 'cancellation'. Although this strategy may be appropriate in some circumstances, it can also trigger denial, defensiveness and social isolation and thus lessen the potential for change. Excessive punishment and public shaming also can push men or boys away from potential sources of support and towards other, harmful networks such as online anti-feminist spaces. 'Calling out' has been criticized by feminist and social justice advocates for perpetuating cycles of harm, treating people as disposable, creating cultures of fear that are damaging and unlikely to prompt change, being based only in anger and not also in love, and failing to meet people where they are rather where we want them to be <sup>[79]</sup>.



## FOSTERING AN ETHIC OF CARE AMONG MEN AND BOYS TO END CYCLES OF VIOLENCE

**A CARE-CENTERED APPROACH TO ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS IN ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS PROVIDES POWERFUL WAYS TO ENRICH VIOLENCE PREVENTION WORK WITH MEN AND BOYS AND EXTEND ITS REACH AND IMPACT.**

It provides a language for both more expansive forms of manhood and personhood and the kinds of communities and culture we seek to build.

Applied to the work of engaging men and boys in violence prevention, an ethic of care emphasizes the need for men to not only 'care about' but to 'care for'. To care about is for men to have knowledgeable and empathetic responses to men's violence against women. When men genuinely care about men's violence against women, they see the issue as important and pressing and they also recognize how they are implicated in the issue and have a responsibility to address it <sup>[47]</sup>.

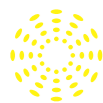
To 'care for', however, is to act to prevent and reduce this violence. Men's 'caring for' should involve everyday actions to care for others: "intervening as bystanders, enacting consent in our everyday intimacies, holding one another accountable for harm committed, responding to disclosures, and supporting survivors" <sup>[47]</sup>. Applied to violence prevention, an ethic of care involves engaging men not only as potential perpetrators but as carers, allies, community members, and victim-survivors. It also recognizes men's and boys' need for, and the ways they deserve, care.

Violence prevention work with men and boys invites them into a more relational rather than autonomous personhood or sense of self. This relational way of being involves a valuing of relations with others, a recognition that we are all located in complex webs of interrelationships, and empathy with the experiences of others <sup>[113]</sup>. Men who have developed an ethic of care feel empathy for others and responsibility towards them. In relation to violence against women, this means acknowledging harm and pain among women, seeing these as unjust, seeing how one may be implicated in the causes of that harm, taking responsibility for this, and challenging it <sup>[113]</sup>.

**FOR MEN, COMING TO CARE ALSO MEANS RESISTING OR REJECTING SOME ELEMENTS OF STEREOTYPICAL MASCULINITY, IN EMBRACING VALUES AND PRACTICES THAT ARE TRADITIONALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE FEMININE AND WITH WOMEN <sup>[113]</sup>.**

Bringing a care lens to engaging men in violence prevention has further implications. A range of strategies are relevant, whether directly for preventing domestic and sexual violence or more broadly for fostering caring masculinities. Although this is not a comprehensive plan, the following are vital strategies:

- Draw on fatherhood and caregiving as key entry points in seeking to reach and engage men <sup>[34]</sup>, and include appeals to care and caring as part of messaging to men and boys.
- Integrate caring into boys' and young men's early socialization and education, by including curricula that normalize care, empathy, and emotional literacy among boys and legitimating boys' participation in nurturing roles, whether through caregiving or support for peers <sup>[51, 114-116]</sup>.
- Engage men and boys in critical reflection on masculinity norms and their impacts on emotional and relational practices, e.g. in group-based work and creative online approaches that use dialogic and experiential methods to build empathy and accountability <sup>[17, 117, 118]</sup>.
- Strengthen supports for men's involvements in equitable and nurturing relationships, by
  - Supporting couple- and family-based interventions that promote equitable divisions of care and shared decision-making, drawing on well-evaluated models such as the gender-transformative parenting and couples intervention *Bandebereho* <sup>[119-122]</sup> and the *Indashyikirwa* couples programme <sup>[123-128]</sup>.
  - Fostering peer cultures among men that affirm care, vulnerability, and non-violence, such as men's groups and mentoring networks in-person and online <sup>[129]</sup>.
  - Encouraging men's active participation in community care, in schools, health, and volunteering



## FOSTERING AN ETHIC OF CARE AMONG MEN AND BOYS TO END CYCLES OF VIOLENCE

- Support men's own care needs, including by improving men's access to mental health, parenting, and relationship support services and reducing stigma around help-seeking and emotional expression <sup>[130-132]</sup>
- Reform workplaces and organizations, including by:
  - Expanding access to and uptake of paid parental leave for men, including non-transferable 'use-it-or-lose-it' entitlements <sup>[133]</sup>
  - Normalizing flexible work arrangements without career penalties
  - Embedding care as an organizational value, including in leadership models and performance metrics
- Promote positive cultural change and public narratives, including by:
  - Promoting diverse representations of men as caregivers in media and public campaigns <sup>[51]</sup>
  - Challenging framings of manhood in terms of dominance, emotional restriction, or breadwinning alone <sup>[134]</sup>
- Provide policy and structural support for men's involvement in care, including by:
  - Designing social policies that incentivize men's caregiving <sup>[51, 135-137]</sup>
  - Addressing economic precarity, given that financial insecurity is a consistent driver of traditional caregiving arrangements in which men are absent from care <sup>[133]</sup>

### **AN ETHIC OF CARE, FINALLY, EXPANDS OUR VISION OF THE COMMUNITIES AND CULTURES WE SEEK TO BUILD.**

A culture of care reorients social life around connection and interdependence rather than dominance, competition or autonomy.

### **IN THE CONTEXT OF PREVENTING AND REDUCING MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, A FEMINIST CULTURE OF CARE CHALLENGES THE PATRIARCHAL NORMS THAT SUSTAIN VIOLENCE: IDEALS OF MASCULINE ENTITLEMENT, EMOTIONAL SUPPRESSION, AND CONTROL OVER OTHERS.**

By promoting empathy, accountability, and collective responsibility for well-being, it fosters conditions in which men learn to value care for others and to engage in relationships grounded in equality and respect. A feminist culture of care also challenges the material and structural inequalities that sustain violence. It supports policies, institutions, and communities that prioritize safety, social support, and relational repair.

Cultivating a gender-equitable culture of care, in short, transforms the social relations that enable violence against women, shifts the social norms that feed that violence, creates spaces for men to practice non-violence and relational accountability, and centers care as a shared societal ethic necessary for gender justice.

### **GIVEN THE EXTENT OF MEN'S EXPERIENCES OF AND USE OF VIOLENCE, IT IS EASY TO BELIEVE THAT VIOLENCE IS THE DEFAULT FOR MANHOOD.**

A care lens applied to violence prevention allows us to see the ways men and boys already care, the care they need and the care they can and want to provide. The end goal of global efforts to end men's violence against women and girls is that they are respected and safe in all the spaces where they live. Period. At the same time, we posit the perhaps obvious need to go further: from non-violence to thriving, well-being and happiness. Using care as a lens for violence prevention enables us to imagine and see flourishing, gender justice and well-being in more expansive ways for the good of women, girls, men and boys and all people.



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- [I]** According to this global review, around 27% of females aged 15-49 have ever experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence from a male partner in their lifetime.

There are about 3.08 billion women and girls in the world aged 15 years and older. Assuming that the 27% figure holds for all women and girls 15 and older and not just those aged 15-49, then 831 million women and girls in all have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence. (Although women aged 50+ have lower rates of physical and sexual violence victimization in the past 12 months, their lifetime rates of victimization are likely to be at least as high if not higher than those of younger cohorts, given that they were once younger women. This would only be untrue if rates of intimate partner violence were considerably lower in the prior decades when those women were young, and there is no evidence of that.)

- How many men and boys are the perpetrators of this violence? The proportion of men and boys who assaulted their female intimate partners may be higher or lower than the 27% of women and girls who were assaulted. Some factors may make the rate lower than 27%:

- Some of the men who use physical or sexual violence against intimate partners do so against multiple partners, in one relationship after the next. There is debate over the extent to which domestic violence and sexual violence cases involve repeat or serial perpetrators: that is, in this case, men assaulting multiple intimate female partners.

Some factors may make the rate higher than 27%:

- Many of the women who have ever experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence have experienced violence by multiple male partners in successive relationships. In data regarding lifetime prevalence of intimate partner violence victimization, there is little data on the extent to which this was by multiple partners.

- Putting this the other way around, multiple men may have had relationships with the same woman, whether successively or concurrently, and assaulted her.

In addition;

- Women and girls are likely to underreport their experiences of physical and sexual intimate partner violence, such that 27% is an underestimation.

- These figures do not include the perpetration of non-physical forms of violence, including cases of coercive control in which a person systematically controls and subordinates their intimate partner.

There are about 3.14 billion men and boys in the world aged 15 years and older. Assuming for the moment that the 27% figure can be transposed from victim-survivors to perpetrators, then physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence against a female partner was perpetrated by 847.8 million men and boys.

- [II]** There are 1.01 billion males aged under 15, and most have not had ongoing intimate partner relationships.

# WHAT IF WE LED WITH **COMPASSION,** **CARE** AND **ACCOUNTABILITY?**

*Applying a caring masculinity lens to  
the prevention of men's violence against  
women and girls*

*Author: Professor Michael Flood with Gary Barker,  
Giovanna Lauro, and Taveeshi Gupta*

**equimundo**