



UNBOXING MEN: Community-Centered and Culturally Relevant Approaches to Healthy Relationships and Violence Prevention

Liza Lorenzetti, Jun Naraval, Kamal Khatiwada, Badri Karki, Danial Jamal, Sarah Thomas, and Dave Este



We would like to acknowledge that we work, live and build community on Traditional Blackfoot Territory, the land of Treaty 7 Nations

Siksika

Piikani

Kainaiwa

Tsuu T'ina

Nakoda (including Bearspaw, Chiniki, and Wesley)

Métis Nation Division 5 & 6



(Treaty 7 First Nations Chiefs' Association,
(n.d.))

We invite you to join us in our ongoing commitments to the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the 231 Calls for Justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People

Land Acknowledgement and Commitment

The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtià:ke/Montréal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples.

Nous reconnaissons la nation Kanien'kehá:ka comme gardienne des terres et des eaux sur lesquelles nous nous réunissons aujourd'hui. Tiohtiá:ke/Montréal est historiquement connu comme un lieu de rassemblement pour de nombreuses Premières Nations et, aujourd'hui, une population autochtone diversifiée ainsi que d'autres peuples, y résident.


Eagle Activity





Alberta Men's Network: *Our Vision*

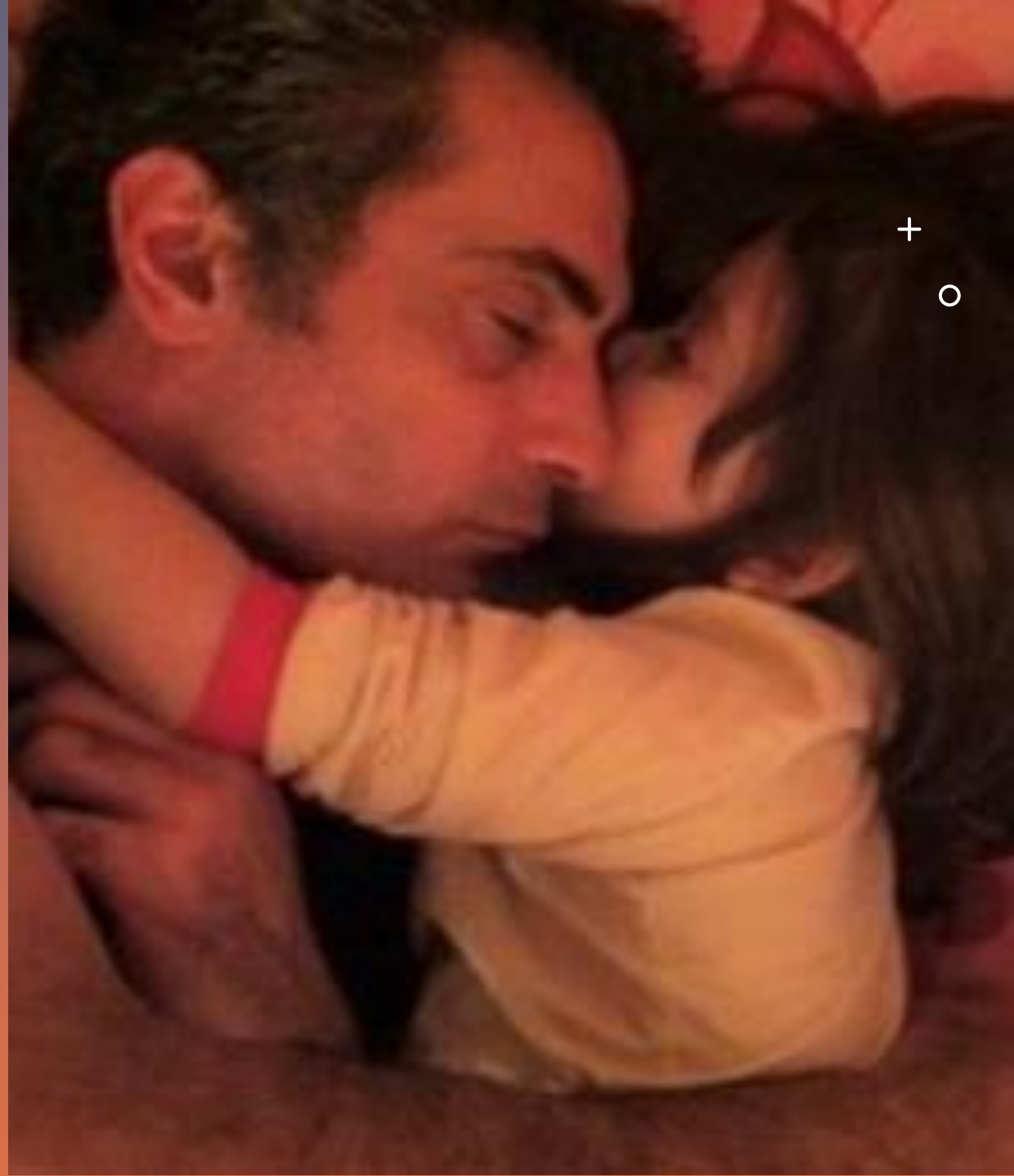
We believe in a society where families and communities are free from violence and oppression. We are a community committed to nonviolence and working with men and individuals across the gender spectrum to strengthen healthy families and communities. We work within a feminist, anticolonial, antiracist, and human rights lens.



Shifting our vision beyond violence prevention to...

**Equity-Based Relationships as
a Reflection of a Just Society**

ARYA BOUSTANI & PARISA LORENZETTI



The Alberta Men's Survey

We need to hear from men...

What are the barriers/enablers of wellbeing and healthy relationships for men?

How do men see their roles in violence prevention?

(Alberta Men's Survey Launch in Edmonton & Calgary, Nov, 2015)





Survey Design

Collaborative
survey
development. (N=
70)

Leadership team
members + 3 focus
groups of men

21 questions – both
quantitative &
qualitative

Survey monkey
tool (direct and
linked to AMN
website)

Survey translations:
Spanish, Farsi,
Arabic, French,
Mandarin.

Trained
community research
assistants
(N = 50)

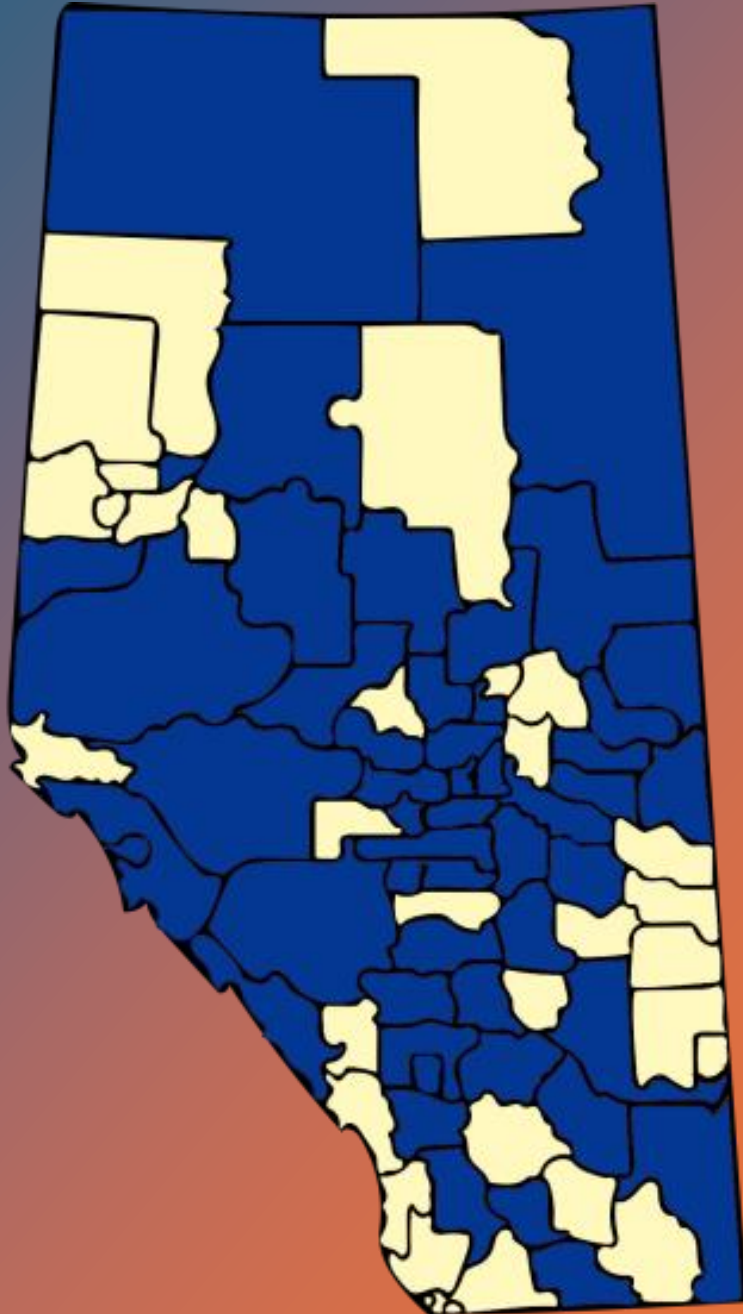
Data collection: 3-
month time span

Collective data
analysis:
community, agency,
academic co-
researchers (N =
11)

Online and in-
person

Targeted and
snowball





Alberta Men's Survey

Over 50 Community-Based Researchers gathered surveys

2214 men responded from across the province

Approx. 30% immigrant men

Respondent counties in blue

Participants were asked if men need supports and services for well-being and healthy relationships:

96% said Yes

However, **76%** of respondents did **NOT** know how or where to access supports

Perspectives from Latino (N=123), South Asian (N=89), and African-Canadian Men (N=153)

Enablers

Latino Men

- Family (85%)
- Financial stability (61%)
- Good job (47%)
- Spirituality (48%)

South Asian Men

- family (89%)
- good job (73%)
- financial stability (72%)
- friends (57%)
- spirituality (53%)

African-Canadian men

- family (77%)
- a good job (67%)
- spirituality (60%)
- friends (51%)
- financial stability (50%)
- meaningful goals (42.5%)
- being treated fairly (42.5%)

Barriers

Latino Men

- Financial challenges (65%), non-recognition of education or experience (45%)
- Family or relationship conflict (51%)
- Discrimination (48%)

South Asian Men

- financial challenges (78%)
- discrimination (60%)
- unsatisfactory job (54%)
- family conflict (49%)
- education not recognized (48%)

African-Canadian men

- Financial challenges (61%)
- discrimination (59%)
- family conflict/relationship problems (48%)
- Insufficient work, training, or qualifications (47%)
- lack of recognition of education, training, or qualifications (46%)

Men's Roles in Violence Prevention

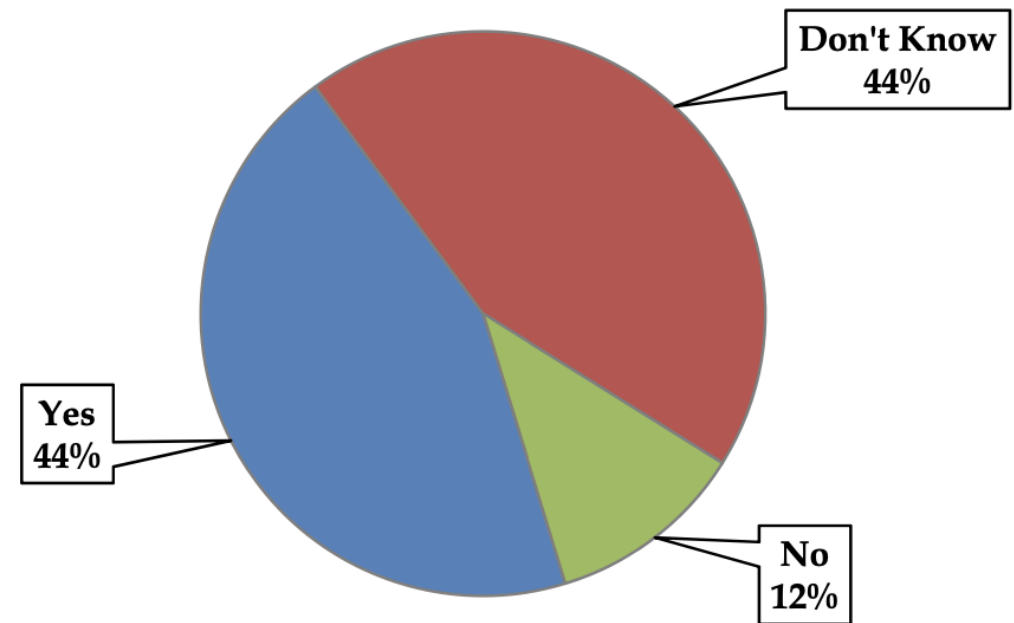
Respondents were asked, "What actions can you take, if any, to contribute to men's well-being, and healthy relationships without violence or abuse?"

-44% agreed that they could contribute towards the prevention of violence.

-44% were unsure if they could contribute.

-12% did not think that they had a role to play.

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



Supports For Men's Well-Being and Healthy Relationships

**When asked about the type
of support men would use:**

- Peer support
- Healthy role models
- Financial mentoring
- Counseling
- Multiple supports

“Being older I have gone through a lot of life and mentoring or facilitating groups would be a great way to support men in interpersonal relationships.”

-A survey respondent on men's roles in violence prevention

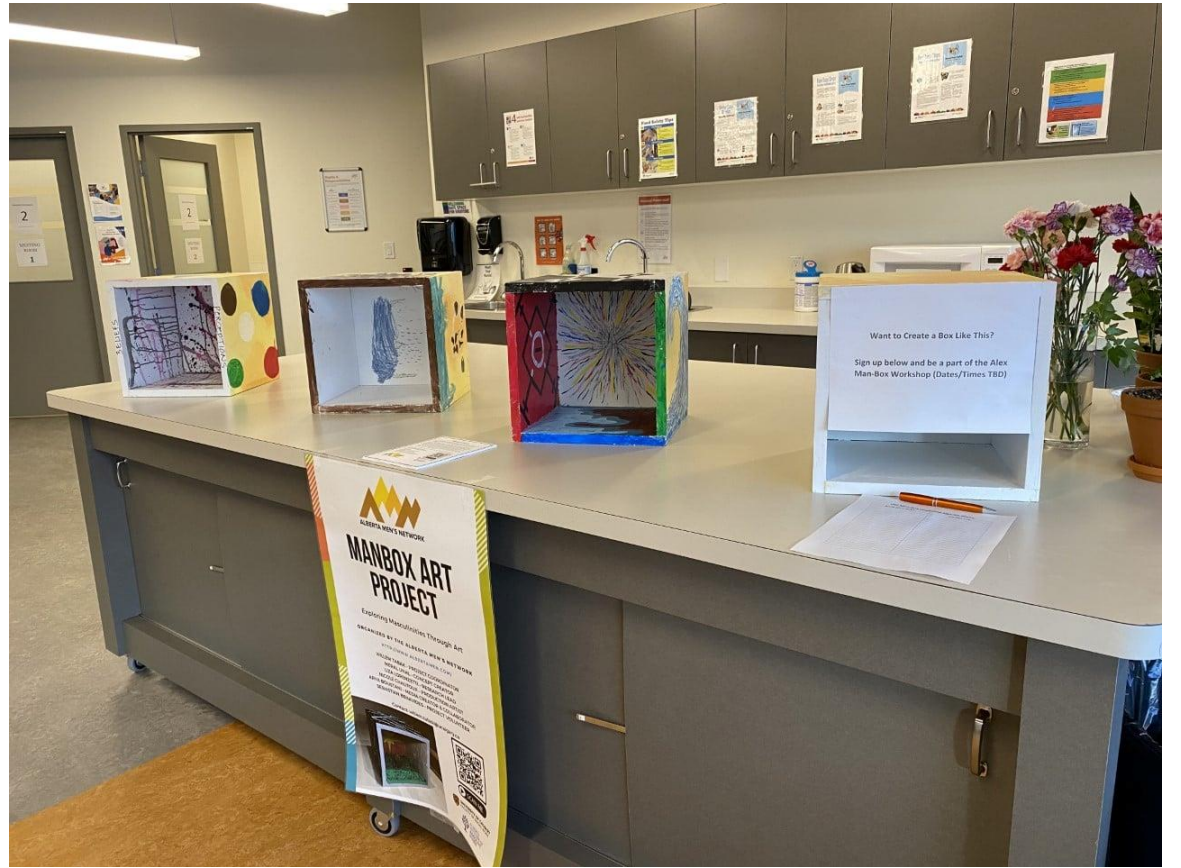
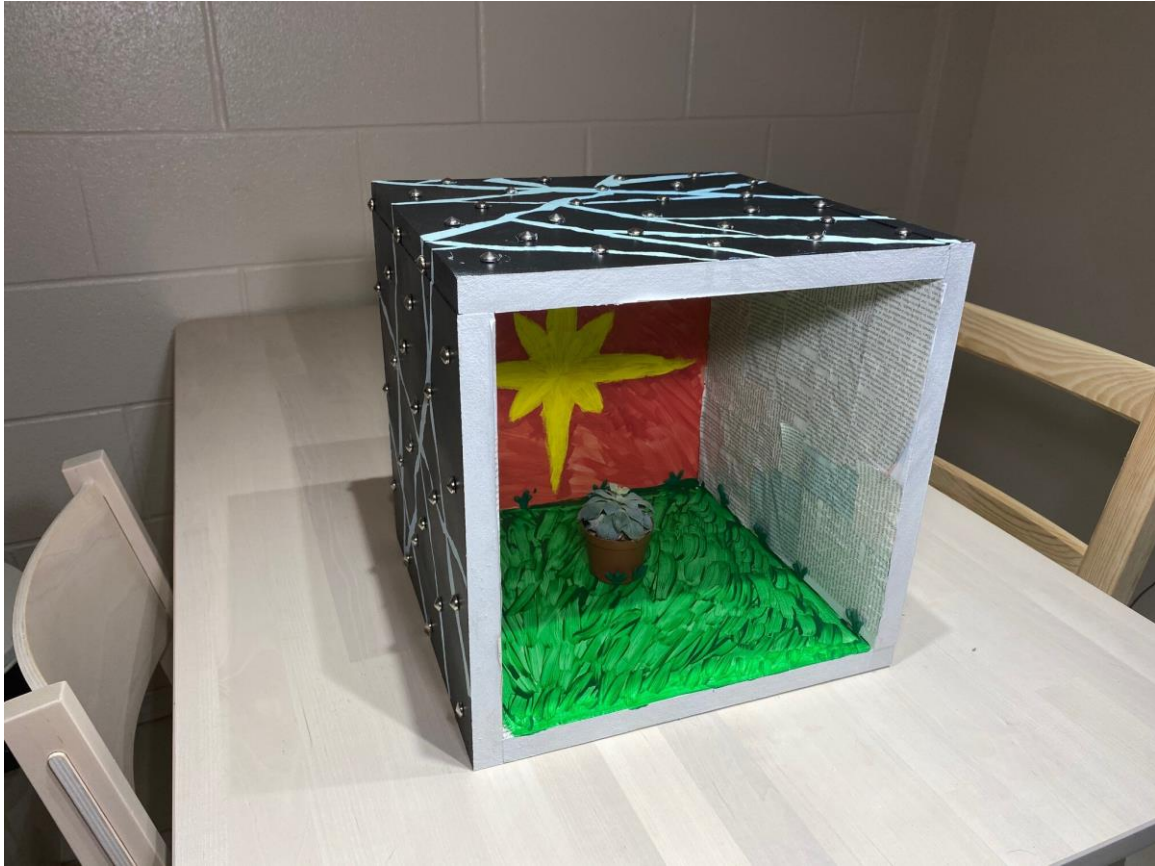


ManBox Art Project

The Manbox Art Project is an art-based project that builds on the concept of the 'manbox' or the social constructs that define how men should experience their own masculinity.

In creating their own manbox, men explore the various aspects of their masculinities through creative ways.





FATHERS IN FOCUS

a photovoice research project

We are looking for men to contribute their story for our research project *Fathers in Focus* (Fatherhood: Storytelling Through Photography).

This project is being conducted by the University of Calgary Faculty of Social Work in collaboration with Alberta Men's Network.

if you are...

- 18 years and older and identify as a man
- in a fatherhood role, which means you provide care and role-modeling for a child
[This includes- but is not limited to- biological fathers, step-fathers, guardians, and grandfathers]
- interested in sharing your perspectives and stories about fatherhood through photography
- and can participate in research activities between May to September, 2021

Send us an email at coordinator@albertamen.com

Or register at <https://forms.gle/ywowZr8EHhoT2aAr9>

Visit <http://www.albertamen.com/getinvolved> for more information



The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculty Research Board has approved this research study (REB Certification-REB20-0758)



Fathers in Focus: Immigrant Fathers' Stories through Photovoice

A photovoice research guided by the University of Calgary Faculty of Social Work and its community partners.

The aims:

- To show the experiences and stories of fatherhood in Alberta.
- Open space for men to reflect on their roles as men and fathers.
- Encourage fathers to make connections between their roles and aspirations as fathers, their own well-being, and healthy relationships within the family.

Narrative Inquiry and Photovoice Methods

The photo narrative or photo storytelling method was used i) to explore the transformative experiences of men in fatherhood roles, and ii) to express and document events or experiences, offer insights, and invite others to see the world through someone else's lenses.

20 men recruited, 14 of completed the entire project.

Participants were all racialized immigrant men who identified themselves as fathers.

Participants' heritage included: Filipino, Iranian, Nepalese, Nigerian, and Pakistani

Research questions for the project

What does being a dad mean to you?

Does being a dad changed your view of being a man?

What in your life (past/present) helped or challenged you in being a dad?

Narratives from Respondents



DEEPAK'S STORY

"Being a dad means something new, something unique, something additional extended dimension of life what I realized because when I remember the context of our family, fun, marries, love stories, everything."



ERIC'S STORY

"It means to me like this photo, she is in a lake, which can be very scary for a young person. So, it is also our responsibility as a father to teach them their identity and who she is as a person and who she is in our side as our daughter"





My Reflection as a Participant/ Research Assistant

- Being a dad/ father means just transferring the gene to another generation. It also transfers my value, belief, culture, and relationship style.
- After the birth of my elder daughter, I learned the value of a father, a healthy relationship, and the importance of family.
- Before the birth of my two kids, I found myself as a person without a destination. Now I changed my past views, aiming to be a good dad.
- I came to Canada from Nepal, and I raise my kids based on my eastern values, which is the most challenging part for me to raise my kids here in Canada.

Community Exhibition: “Fathers in Focus: Stories from Immigrant Dads.”



The final in-person community exhibition included food sharing and testimonials from the fathers who took part in this project and their children. Children also performed!

The creative photos and narratives were shared through an online exhibit and in-person community event at The Alex Community Food Centre on June 18, 2022, in time for the Fathers' Day Celebration

Result and Key Learning

Result:

- Immigrant fathers' journeys and their quests to develop healthy and nurturing relationships with their children.
- Diverse interpretations and meanings of being a father and a man, with a particular focus on the intersectional barriers, strengths and resilience of immigrant and racialized fathers.

Key Learnings:

- The importance of developing relationships, at grassroots levels, with the community.
- We learned how art and photos can be used to express the voices of those whose stories are mostly not heard in our society.



Peer-Led Men's Well-Being Groups

- Developed through 30 years of community practice in Calgary's Latino communities by Mexican trained psychologist Fanny Oliphant with the support of our team.
- First groups ran in Spanish from a Collectivist Cultures and Migrant Experiential lens.
- **14 Facilitators trained** from Bhutanese, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Filipino, Iranian, Mexican, Nepal, Norwegian-Scottish, Peruvian, Pashtun, and Anishanaabe (Indigenous) heritage.
- Trained leaders have adapted the group process to their own cultures, faiths and language.
- Men learn and develop new skills through the curriculum content and theory, experiential exercises, activities, and peer support conversations.



Context of the Work

- **COVID 19 and increasing domestic violence**
- **There is a huge interest to promote:**
 - men's well-being & way of being
 - healthy relationship and
 - community building & connection
- **Immense pressures on racialized men**
 - Critical to our work around challenging racism, impacts systemic barriers to men's well-being & relationships
 - Societal expectations from men
 - Downloading of stress to families
- **Men's traditional roles that contributes to gender inequality**
- **Potential to grow a movement**
- **Gender transformative**

Who are the men

- Racialized men – diverse cultural group
- Mostly married
- Mix of men with good and challenging relationships
- From countries with embedded patriarchal culture
- High stress level
- Issues on communications and expression of emotions
- A strong desire to change
- Structural and systemic barriers
 - High level of discrimination / racism experiences
 - Dissonance of past, current and future state
 - Downgraded and re-labelled in work



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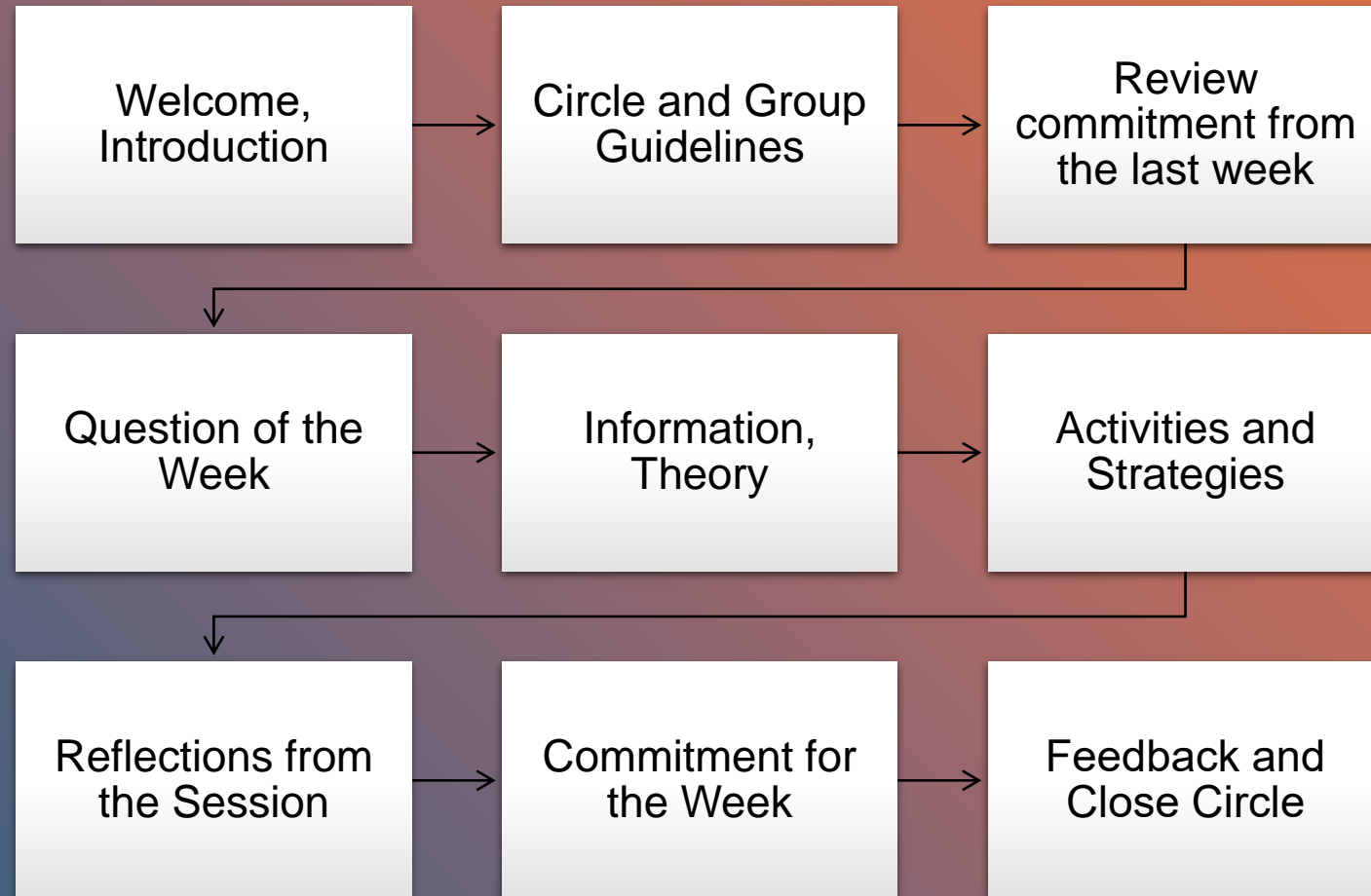
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Topics and Areas of Focus

1. Welcome and Introduction. Learning to Be Safe.
2. Life in Time of Change
3. Recognizing and Understanding Emotions
4. Family of Origin, Values, and Beliefs
5. Self Care and Male Idiosyncrasies
6. Managing Stress and Conflict
7. Effective Communication and Positive Relationships
8. Caring Parenting
9. Strength and Resilience
10. Healthy Relationships and Graduation Ceremony

Session Format



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Loving Thoughts



My Reflections as a Facilitator for Nepali Men's Group

Beginning

- Initially, I felt excited and curious about facilitating the men's well-being group.

During the Session

- It is not easy to de-learn masculine norms that we have gained from society, and I realized that facilitating a men's well-being group would help men to de-learn masculine norms.

After the Session

- I learned different techniques and stories. One participant mentioned that he holds biweekly family meetings and practices making inclusive household decisions by involving everyone. That idea really encouraged me to do the same with my family.
- At the end of the session, participants committed to starting a Men's group in their community.

Reflection from Filipino Men's Well-Being Group

Well-being Process

-Empathy is crucial

Lessons Learned

- Personal experiences are deeply rooted with structural and systemic barriers.
- Intergenerational gaps between fathers and children.
- Inaccessible and inadequate services.



Reflection from Bhutanese Men's Well-Being Group

Facilitating in Native language was impactful.

Active listening and empathy cultivated a sense of community and solidarity.

Cultural nuances shaped men's perspectives on well-being and masculinity.

Providing ongoing support and resources tailored to Bhutanese men's specific needs will be essential in promoting long-term well-being.

Reflections of the Group

Learning and Skill Acquisition:

- Consistent reports of learning valuable lessons across all surveys.
- Planned practice of positivity, mindfulness, and communication skills evident.

Appreciation for Supportive Environment:

- Participants value sharing experiences and receiving helpful suggestions.
- Positive feedback on the interactive nature of sessions and leadership.

Interest in Specific Topics:

- Common interest in discussing coping strategies for stress and dealing with unsafe situations.
- Desire for more discussions on **technology's impact**, further **mental health support**, **migration trauma**, and **porn addiction**.

Behavioral Changes and Intentions:

- Participants show commitment to practicing learned skills throughout the week.
- Reported changes include maintaining positivity, active listening, and self-care activities.



***Quotes from
Participants***

"(I will practice) Looking in the mirror which causes me great pain as my internal talk is very negative regarding my looks and how others might perceive me."

"Men (Filipino Canadians) are experiencing a lot of struggles in family life/careers and have the capacity to cope yet some need these capacities to be strengthened"

"Never run from the problem. Always (deal) with it slowly"

"Changes will happen. But keeping up with changes will help. Sharing is important."

"How we can manage our behaviour during unsafe moments and recollection of previous incidents."



Acknowledgements

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Thank You

Contact:

Liza Lorenzetti: lakloren@ucalgary.ca

Learn more about AMN or hear about upcoming events!

- WEBSITE: www.albertamen.com
- YOUTUBE: [@albertamensnetwork707](https://www.youtube.com/@albertamensnetwork707)
- FACEBOOK: [@albertamensnet](https://www.facebook.com/albertamensnet)
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