

# THE PATH FORWARD

REPORT TO COMMUNITY  
2019-2020



# IMPACT

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DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

# MESSAGE FROM THE IMPACT CO-CHAIRS

As we write this, we are still in the midst of a global pandemic which impacted our society, businesses, and daily lives. It also resulted in a 30 percent increase in domestic violence rates across the world as people were quickly isolated at home with their abusers. This “shadow pandemic” of abuse not only added pressure to our sector, but it also forced IMPACT to move quicker and solve larger problems than it had ever faced before.

This pandemic has highlighted exactly how quickly domestic and sexual violence rates can rise in times of stress. It has made it very clear how much stronger we are when we work collectively to solve problems. In these unprecedented times, we know our province’s resilience is dependent on working together.

Since the beginning of the year, IMPACT staff and members have stepped up to respond to the effects of the pandemic and the needs of our sector, which has required cooperation and collaboration among all stakeholders. We have, as a collective, used the strength of our existing network to exchange ideas and create province-wide solutions. Solutions to increase access to services in rural areas. To align on priorities and the path forward. To eradicate domestic and sexual violence.


We have been on the ground—coordinated, adaptable, focused—responding to urgent needs and steeling ourselves for the long, difficult road ahead. As this pandemic has struck at the very nature of our connection to one another, we have found new ways to strengthen our relationships and bolster our members.

In this report, we will not only highlight IMPACT’s impressive COVID-19 response, but also explain how we got here. Our path to where we stand today has been difficult at times, but ultimately worth the challenges.

Two years ago we gathered at our IMPACT summit to discuss the areas of domestic and sexual violence prevention that needed immediate focus and solutions. Hard discussions

**“We are doing something new that hasn’t been seen in our sector before. We aren’t just solving the same problems over and over. At IMPACT, we are doing something different.”**

– Bill Kaye, IMPACT Co-chair



took place, and our members passionately spoke about the problems they were facing.

Through these conversations, we realized that instead of focusing on fixing things after they happened, we needed to prevent it before it started. We believe violence is preventable, and we are focused on changing society as a whole.

**“Intervention is purposeful, but prevention will allow us to change society. I’m looking forward to a future where our message is so ingrained that violence of any kind is completely unacceptable.”**

- Lisa Watson, IMPACT Co-chair

Domestic and sexual violence is an epidemic in our province and needs to be treated as such. In order to change this, we need to try things that have never been tried. No longer will we sidestep the issue. We will eradicate all domestic and sexual violence in Alberta.

We know this is a lofty goal. This isn’t something that will happen overnight. But, our work to date, our overall framework, and our governance structure have all started us on a path to make it possible.

We will explain each of these in more detail in the report ahead, and if you like what you see, we hope you’ll join us. Our membership is growing each day.

We have realized that we will get through this pandemic together. The last few months have taught us the profound strength of community. We will continue to be courageous and bold. Together, we can—and we will—rebuild the place we live, transforming it into the one we envision, a home free of domestic and sexual violence.

When we look back years from now, we will be proud of our collective action of working together to build a better future.

[Signatures from Bill and Lisa]



## OUR GOAL

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To eradicate domestic and sexual violence in Alberta.





# IMPACT: ALBERTA'S COLLECTIVE INITIATIVE

## OUR STORY

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At its core, the IMPACT Initiative is a provincial collective initiative whose purpose is to define a common understanding of the issue of domestic and sexual violence and then to eradicate it. We will, as a collective, create a movement to achieve our goal, capitalizing on the strength of existing networks and using the resources, ideas, and influence of our collective membership to instigate systemic change in provincial perspectives, practices, policies, and legislation.

# OUR OBJECTIVES

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In order to eradicate domestic and sexual violence in Alberta, we will:



**Rethink** the norms, attitudes, conceptions, perspectives, ideas and definitions surrounding domestic and sexual abuse.



**Engage and impact** in widespread systemic change by influencing decision-makers, leveraging available resources, and learning together as a collective group.



**Identify**, solve, and uproot the underlying problems and drivers of domestic and sexual violence in society.



**Be guided** by our shared values of trust, bravery, humility, vulnerability, and curiosity.



**Provide** evidence-based guidance to policymakers, organizations, businesses and communities on how to strategically prevent violence before it begins.

## COLLECTIVE IMPACT

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The thing that truly sets IMPACT apart from other initiatives is that it is focused on collective impact. This means that we have created a framework to address complex social issues, and create deep, sustainable change.

While both a 'collaborative' and a 'collective' share ideas and work together towards a common goal, a 'collective' focuses on high impact opportunities for change. This means that we want to find solutions for the entire population instead of just focusing on a solution that works for one individual.

**“Being part of IMPACT has created new hope and energy in the sector. The initiatives have been an amazing opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals, to engage with forward-thinking-Alberta-focused visionaries and to share successes and discuss concerns with openness.”**

Nathan Foerger  
Registered Provisional Psychologist  
Program Coordinator, Community Initiatives Against Family Violence

Our members all subscribe to a shared vision and a shared approach to working together to define the problem and develop solutions for the long term. With this extensive network across Albertan organizations, universities, businesses, government, and police departments, we are able to bring our message to policy-makers and the public in a coordinated and aligned way. Collectively, we can have a greater impact on change in our province.



## REACHING OUT ACROSS ALBERTA

IMPACT currently consists of over 275 entities across Alberta, which represents thousands of people.

# INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

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At IMPACT, we know we are stronger if we work closely with Indigenous communities across the province and meaningfully include them in our initiative. We are all treaty people, and we are all each other's responsibility. Our understanding of the best and most effective ways to live these values of connectedness are still emerging. We will continue to invite and include indigenous leaders and voices to be a part of our collective work and guide us in making sure we honour the recommendations of the TRC and our obligations as treaty people.

# EQUITY SEEKING GROUPS

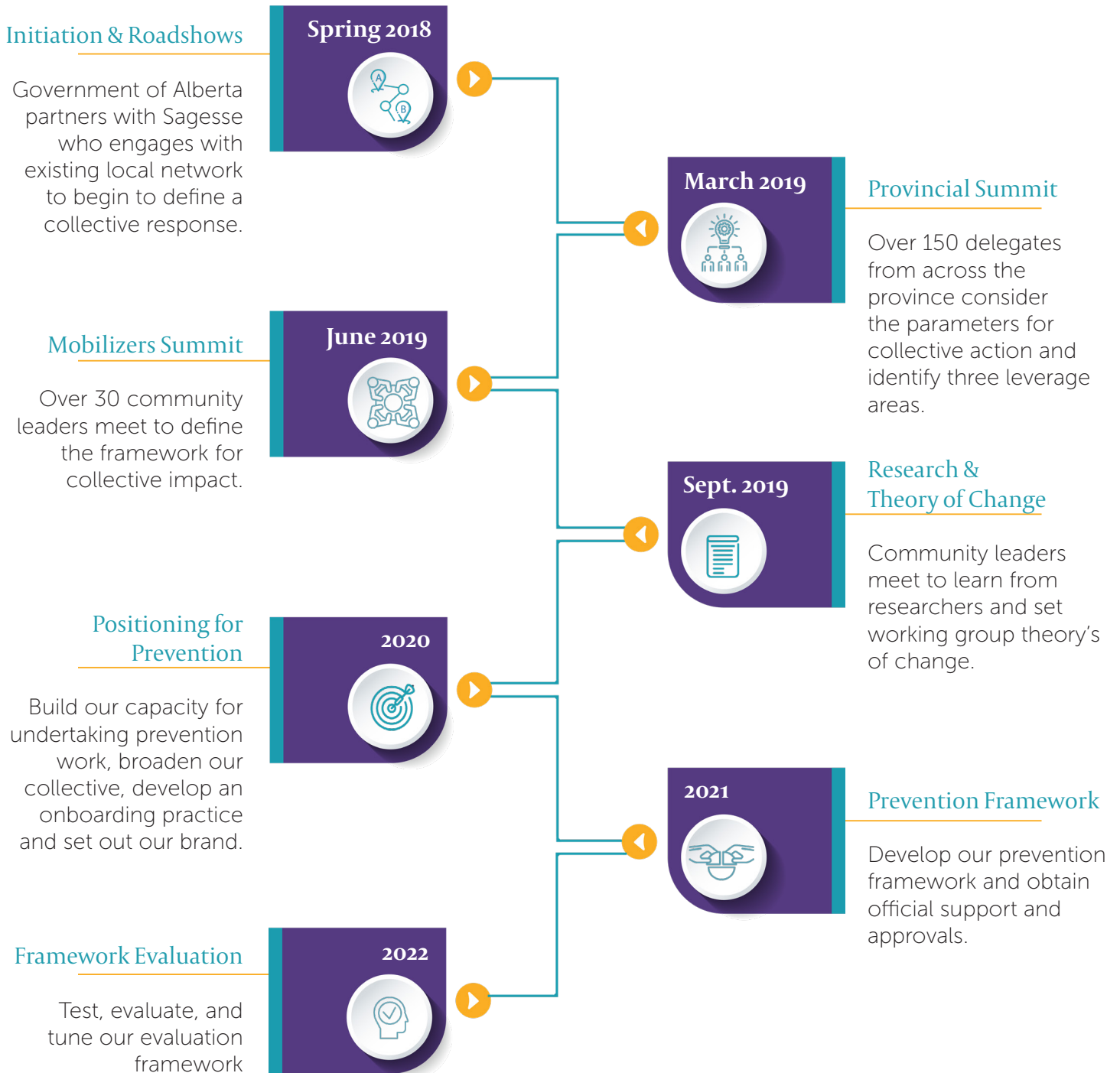
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IMPACT membership also includes Equity Seeking Groups who are represented by Mobilizers across the province. Equity seeking groups are those that identify barriers to equal access, opportunities, and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation. These groups may face challenges receiving support and services when dealing with domestic or sexual violence.

We recognize that this is an ongoing issue and are glad to have Equity Seeking Group as members who can influence decisions and programs as part of the collective.



# IMPACT MOVING FORWARD





# 2019-2020 HIGHLIGHTS

## A STRONG BEGINNING

IMPACT has come a long way in two years. It did not always come easily though. In March 2019, we held a Provincial Summit with over 150 delegates. These individuals represented organizations and agencies across the province who worked within the domestic and sexual violence prevention and response sector.

This group started the hard work of creating the parameters for collective action and identifying the important challenges IMPACT should tackle. The conversation continued in June 2019 at a Mobilizers Summit where over 30 community leaders met again to define the framework for collective impact.

To start this process, IMPACT went through a Causal Layered Analysis to help understand the underlying issues facing the sector. Collectively, they worked to find common definitions and build a theory of change that fit this initiative.



## DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

During IMPACT's March 2019 General Summit, seven potential areas of focus came to light. The group passionately discussed these seven areas and attempted to bring the focus down to three that IMPACT would work to solve. Due to different priorities for different agencies, and various challenges that were faced across the province, these were difficult conversations.

The collective voted on the three main issues of focus. It was a hard journey to collectively decide on only three areas, the issues of domestic and sexual violence are pervasive and complex. The delegates worked together to come to consensus on where to focus.

As IMPACT Mobilizers began to tackle the work of creating a framework for the three priorities areas, the group realized that actually all three areas, in fact all seven areas originally discussed, all met upstream at the same point: primary prevention of domestic and sexual violence. We needed to look at what was happening upstream and prevent the cause of the problem.

We weren't looking for solutions, we were looking for a paradigm shift. We were looking to eradicate the epidemic of domestic and sexual violence.

## PRIMARY PREVENTION

We believe that violence is preventable. Through identifying what drives and contributes to violence, we can stop it before it begins.

We focus our efforts far upstream of violent events to better understand and interrupt the patterns that eventually lead to sexual and domestic violence. In parallel, our members continue to provide expert intervention services when violence occurs.

## SHIFT: THE PROJECT TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

IMPACT has partnered with Shift to develop the primary prevention framework. Shift conducts research that informs primary prevention practices, programs, policies and legislation. They have a long history in Alberta of partnering with other researchers and academics, policy-makers, community leaders, NGOs, community-based organizations and collectives to implement and evaluate effective primary prevention solutions. The primary prevention framework we are developing in collaboration with Shift, will be evidence based, including best practice research and knowledge from around the world.

In 2020, we obtained funding from Max Bell and the Government of Alberta to undertake development of our primary prevention framework. This framework will allow us to take our efforts to the next level.

## COMMON UNDERSTANDING

The decision to focus on a Primary Prevention Framework has allowed IMPACT to work on all seven areas of focus brought to light in the March 2019 summit. It allowed us to find a common set of values, vision, mission, purpose and definition. The difficult conversations have allowed us to unite in the work to eradicate domestic and sexual violence across Alberta.

Our journey to a common understanding is still underway. Right now, we agree that:

- An issue as complex as domestic and sexual violence is a component of large-scale social change.
- The presence of domestic and sexual violence in our society is problematic.
- The issue of domestic and sexual violence is extremely complex.
- The optimal pathway to achieving our vision of ending domestic and sexual violence is through collaboration and partnerships across community stakeholders, systems and government.
- Research shows that structured cross sector coalitions are much more effective.
- We have agreed we need to eradicate domestic and sexual violence. Our mandate is to figure out the best vehicle to do this.

# COMMON DEFINITIONS

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In 2020, IMPACT engaged in a research process to create a common understanding of our definition of domestic and sexual violence. IMPACT Mobilizers agreed to adopt the definition of sexual violence as used by the Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Services. These are working definitions and will be updated as needed.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic Violence is “the attempt, act or intent of someone within a relationship, where the relationship is characterized by intimacy, dependency or trust to engage in purposeful controlling or coercive pattern of which takes place over time in order for one individual to exert power, control or coercion over another. Controlling or coercive behaviour are:

- Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
- Coercive behaviour is a continuing act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence is defined as any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting including but not limited to home and work. In this document, the term sexual violence is used and is intended to be inclusive of sexual harassment, sexual abuse and sexual assault.

**“IMPACT has been an avenue for information sharing and connection across anti-violence sectors during a very hectic and difficult time. AASAS is excited to focus our collaborative efforts to support the development and implementation of IMPACT’s primary prevention framework.”**

- Deb Tomlinson  
Chief Executive Officer  
Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Services



# COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Collective Impact as a model is largely dependent on achieving impact in areas that have traditionally not responded well to other forms of intervention. IMPACT will lean on the concept of I2L2 as defined by ORSIMPACT.

**Influence:** the range of norms, practices, policies, and alignments that constitute the informal and formal system features in which human lives and the environment exist

**Leverage:** the flow of capital and resources for addressing social and environmental well-being

**Learning:** the application of knowledge and adaptive practices that are intrinsic to well-designed efforts to create positive impacts.

More specifically, IMPACT will gauge the level of “energy” available for a given theme in order to determine what the collective will work on. In principle, the community’s assessment of their ability to impact the level of influence, leverage and learning possible for a given theme will be considered to be the level of impact that the collective can have in that area.



*To learn more about the I2L2 model, visit <http://orsimpact.com>*

## OUR STRUCTURE

Ours is a high-impact initiative that relies on a collective infrastructure, consisting of the input, values, research, and resources from its members, as well as the support of a backbone organization that stewards the collective vision, strategy, decision-making and distribution of funds. As agents of adaptability, we recognize that our structure, approach, and priorities may alter as we embrace new and emerging ideas, so long as our primary vision remains the same. We measure results and impact through the formula of influence + leverage + learning.

Over the past two years, IMPACT has not only created the structure of the collective, but has also worked to ensure that the right people are at each decision making table.

Our structure looks like this:



At the core of our structure is our co-chairs and IMPACT's backbone agency, Sageesse.

Our **co-chairs** are representatives from different parts of the sector who have committed resources to achieving the goals of the collective. Our **backbone agency**, Sageesse, provides resources as needed for the collective to operate.

In the next two levels, our Stewards and Mobilizers drive the work of the collective forward.

**Stewards** are formal or informal leaders in Alberta with a deep understanding of the issues and who have stepped up to guide the direction of the collective.

**Mobilizers**, who are leaders within their organizations, have stepped up to undertake the work of the collective through working groups and other initiatives.

**Working Groups** are small groupings of IMPACT members with an interest and specialization in a specific area who work to develop solutions.

Finally, we have our **associate and general members**, which can include anyone who is actively working on domestic or sexual violence issues in Alberta.

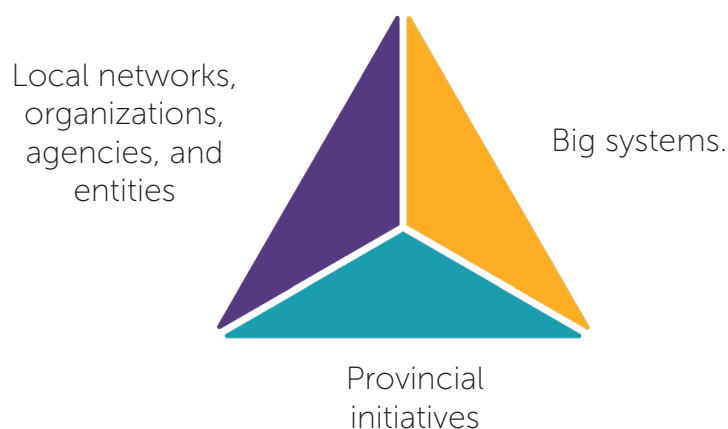
Our members come from a wide variety of stakeholders across the province including front-line staff, researchers, decision-makers, and community members. This is key to ensuring that the work of the collective is grounded in the experience of staff across Alberta.

# WE ARE A SUM OF OUR PARTS

Our provincial architecture brings together the expertise, capacity, and resource of organizations, agencies, and representatives from across Alberta. By aligning with IMPACT, members can share information, resources, training, facilitators, and experts between each other. This means that no one needs to start from scratch to work towards our collective goals.

We have been able to build relationships with others across the province that are doing similar work in a way that we have not been able to do in the past, which has directly improved our capacity, learning, skills and knowledge around eradicating domestic and sexual violence.

In Alberta, this means that we don't only work closely with local organizations with boots on the ground, but we also include the big systems and other provincial initiatives. We are able to move forward quickly and made change because each of these pieces come together to make IMPACT a strong and influential initiative.



Each piece of our provincial architecture adds value to our initiative. The various representatives interacting with one another adds greater knowledge, experience, and influence. We are much more effective together than when acting in isolation.

**“IMPACT excites me because I can see the potential for making real change in the province of Alberta around interpersonal violence through this collective. It is amazing to see so many dedicated people in a diverse range of fields and backgrounds coming together to work on a common issue.”**

Jamie Seiyama  
Family Resource Coordinator, Town of Penhold

## LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS, AGENCIES, AND ENTITIES

Local networks, organizations, agencies, and entities have the opportunity to bring their personal experience and challenges to a larger stage. Not only can they quickly access information from other members who have faced similar challenges, they can also influence the direction of IMPACT from within. These local groups also help IMPACT know the needs and challenges of people across the challenges.

**Highlight on IMPACT Grande Prairie (IMPACT Mobilizer):** In June 2020, Prevention of Family Violence Network Grande Prairie changed their name to IMPACT Grande Prairie. Becoming IMPACT Grande Prairie allowed this local network to align with the provincial IMPACT work, get recognized because of this alignment, and allow more remote communities to have influence at a provincial level.

## BIG SYSTEMS

IMPACT is funded and supported by the Government of Alberta and works closely with existing structures to have a voice at larger tables. These big systems are already positioned to have a broader reach, wider knowledge base, and valuable resources that can be shared with our membership. IMPACT also has the opportunity to ensure that these systems are informed about the real challenges and needs of the sector in all areas of the province.

**Highlight on Alberta Health Services (IMPACT Mobilizer):** Throughout the pandemic, Alberta Health Services was a key part of IMPACT's quick response. Representatives answered questions about COVID-19 itself and the requirements for non-medical personal protective equipment. We have also worked closely with them to show support for universal screening for domestic and sexual violence in Connect Care and all Alberta hospitals and clinics.

## PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATIONS

Other IMPACT members already have a province-wide reach. These members help bring viewpoints from all areas of Alberta. They also bring forward deep knowledge on specific topic areas. For example, the Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Council—an IMPACT Mobilizer—provides insight on elder-related issues and needs across the province.

**Highlight on Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services (IMPACT Mobilizer, Steward):** AASAS has been key to helping define the conversations about sexual abuse in our province. They have worked closely with IMPACT to provide resources, definitions, and expertise in this area that is helping to shape the overall narrative of our work.

# OUR FRAMEWORK

Work has begun on the Primary Prevention framework. The framework will address key social and economic determinants of domestic and sexual violence and support current provincial momentum in a consolidated and sustained way through evidence-informed policy, coordinated action and appropriate resource allocation. This involves:

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

In order to properly build a framework for the entire province, we need to work closely with both local and provincial government bodies. By building relationships and discussing current and future policy and program plans, we can build an informed and accurate framework.

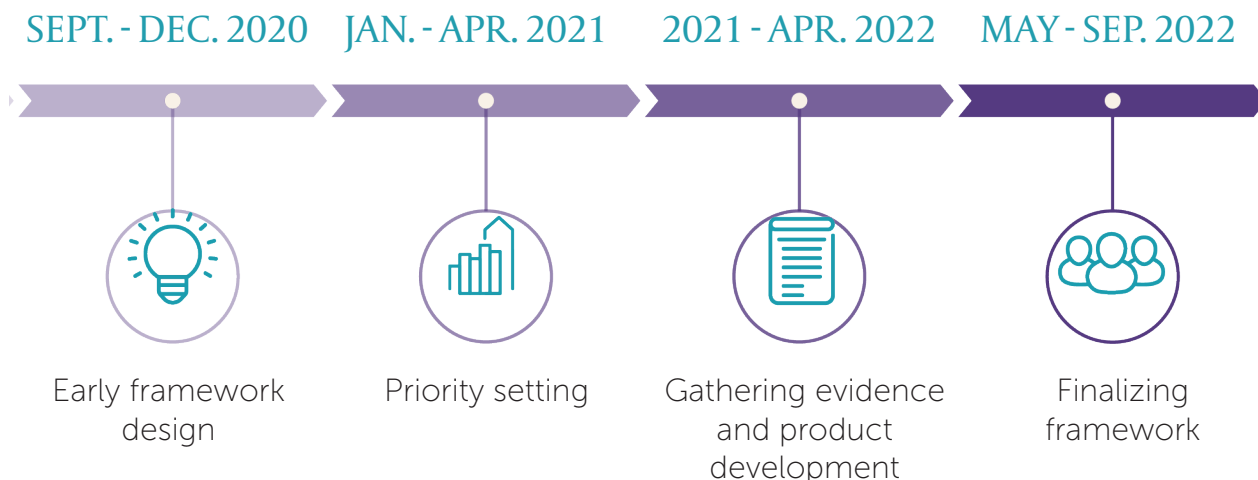
## RESEARCH

During the next 15 months we will be taking time to learn all we can about primary prevention and how we can build the architecture across our province to be able to engage in primary prevention.

## MOBILIZATION

After drafting the framework, we will work closely with our IMPACT members, the government and private enterprise.

We hope to have a framework in place by September 2022. This work will occur in four phases:



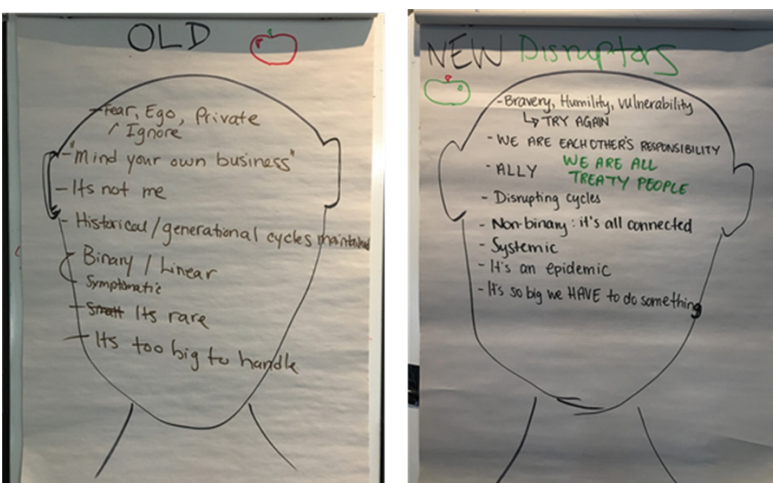
We would like to thank the Max Bell Foundation, Silver Gummy and the Government of Alberta for supporting this work.



# OLD AND NEW MENTAL MODELS

Mental models determine how we see the world. They usually exist in our subconscious, but they shape the way we act and are difficult to change because they represent deeply held beliefs and assumptions.

The new mental model developed is an attempt to shift to a new level of awareness and a new way of thinking. Adopting a new mental model supports theories of change more effectively, because “doing things the way we did before”, or using the old mental model, will lead to the same outcome as before.



True innovation and system improvements are much more likely to succeed when rooted in a shift in thinking.

Drawing on discussion during the Causal Layered Analysis process, participants reflected on the old and new mental model, and noted that the new mental model would help achieve the desired goal of eradicating sexual and domestic violence.

Below are examples of old vs. new mental models that IMPACT has been working with:

## Old mental model

- Fear, ego, private, ignore
- “Mind your own business”
- It’s not me
- Historical/generational cycles maintained
- Binary/linear
- Symptomatic
- It’s rare
- It’s too big to handle

## New mental model (disruptors)

- Bravery, humility, vulnerability
- We are each other’s responsibility/  
We are all treaty people
- Ally
- Disrupting cycles
- Non-binary: it’s all connected
- Systemic
- It’s an epidemic
- It’s so big, we HAVE to do something

# SPECIAL PROJECTS

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IMPACT also takes part in 'ad hoc' activities and special projects. These initiatives are areas that the Mobilizers agreed are important to focus on, but they fall outside of the primary prevention framework. They are usually term limited and have a clear end date or outcome. In 2020, we participated in the following special projects:

## **CLARE'S LAW**

This project engages IMPACT in providing feedback into Clare's Law, Bill 17, The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme. This project is slated to provide comment in early 2021 with the launching of Clare's Law.

## **REMOTE THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS**

This project will build on existing research to create a resource for the sector around delivering virtual/online interventions with a focus on domestic and sexual violence specific considerations. This project will be completed by December 31, 2020.

## **EMERGENCY PLANNING**

This project is in place to create a universal emergency plan that all IMPACT members can access. The plan will support organizations to have most of an emergency plan in place, having to only customize 20% of the plan for their own use. This project will be completed by November 1, 2020. A big thank you to Darren Barber for his help in this work.

## **GUN CONTROL**

Guns often feature prominently in violence against women, especially in rural areas across Canada. With this in mind, IMPACT, along with the Calgary Domestic Violence Collective, has been actively supporting the Canadian Coalition for Gun Coalition's work to ensure that safety comes first in regards to gun control. This project supports a ban on civilian possession of military assault weapons, strict safe storage requirements, measures to reduce smuggling and illegal trafficking, and effective implementation of the law, as well as defending the law in court, working towards showing support for the ban on military assault weapons in Canada.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

In March 2020, Alberta went into a lock down that required organizations to limit or stop providing service. During this time, individuals across the province had to isolate at home with their abusers and organizations were thrown into a tailspin while they tried to navigate this new world.

IMPACT worked tirelessly to determine member needs and find solutions to key issues that were occurring across the province. We not only created and delivered enhanced programs, we also expanded our reach in communities across Alberta.



IMPACT was called on by its members to share experiences, best practices and the latest research to support clients and staff as they navigated this new world. We supported IMPACT members by:



### PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE).

In the early weeks of the shutdown, IMPACT members expressed a need for personal protective equipment (PPE) among non-emergency frontline service providers. IMPACT staff responded by making connections with Alberta-based distributors to gather the requested items for distribution, including: masks, gowns, hand sanitizer and soap to agencies that requested them. This was a colossal task in terms needs assessment, consultation, coordination and distribution.



## MEMBER NEWSLETTER.

We created a member newsletter, which was distributed weekly at the height of the shutdowns and switched to biweekly in July. Informally, members have reported that the content has been very useful many have been sharing the information among their own networks.



## PROVIDING RESOURCES

Developing briefing notes and process documents to support organizations in their pandemic response.



## VIRTUAL SESSIONS.

Offering virtual sessions on a variety of important topics (offered via Zoom). The 1-hour virtual sessions offered valuable access to resources, training, information and services for communities and individuals that are geographically disparate and isolated.



## PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SAFETY.

A specific province-wide campaign was run with pharmacists and pharmacies to raise awareness about domestic violence that allowed pharmacists to act as a entry point for those experiencing domestic violence, especially during the lock down when very few businesses were open.

As we explore what continued programming looks like during the non-emergency COVID-19 times, IMPACT recognizes the positive impacts of virtual programming for individuals impacted by domestic violence in rural and remote communities with limited community resources and accessibility.

# OUR BRAND

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In 2019 we also created a new brand for IMPACT. The foundation of our brand is to find new and disruptive solutions to domestic and sexual violence, impacting society, and collaborating in a collective environment to determine an innovative and effective approach to the issue at hand. Our approach is continually evolving as new ideas, needs, and perspectives come into play.

We chose the name “IMPACT” because the name is both a verb and a noun denoting a force of impression or affect. Our name reflects our mission to support high-impact opportunities surrounding the issue of domestic and sexual violence and to impact societal norms.

This bold brand ushers in an era of confidence and change for our initiative.

Together, we will eradicate domestic and sexual violence.

## Our logo

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### The Flame

signifies the potential for individuals impacted by domestic and sexual violence to emerge free from abuse and rise to a higher level of purpose.

### The Torch

symbolizes the values we cling to and the base from which we will trigger change.

### The Hand

represents the collective membership holding up the torch, lighting the way through the darkness.



The logo evokes feelings of hope and possibility.

**Purple**, recognized as the colour of domestic violence, also symbolizes peace, courage, survival and honour.

**Teal**, the colour used to raise awareness for sexual violence, combines the calming properties of blue with the renewing properties of green and represents open communication and rejuvenation.

**Orange**, on the other hand, combines the energy of red with the happiness of yellow, representing enthusiasm, determination, and success in addition to hope, joy, and confidence.



# JOIN US

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As a collective, we focus on the work and our purpose – not on terms of reference. In working together to accomplish a common purpose, we build and maintain trust, increase knowledge, and ultimately, we get more done.

Each additional member brings new experience, knowledge, and resources to the table. So, the larger we grow, the closer we get to eradicating sexual and domestic violence in Alberta.

In addition to having access to our member only resources, educational modules, seminars, and conferences, members also can share resources with sector experts, researchers and leaders in the sector. It is a great opportunity to network, learn, and influence the discussions about domestic and sexual violence in the province.

Join us.  
Join the movement.



**WANT TO  
KNOW MORE,  
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