

**Foundations for IMPACT:
A Guiding Document for Engagement**

DRAFT

Purpose of this Document

Welcome to Foundations for IMPACT. This document serves as the cornerstone from which all members of our collective can draw guidance and direction. It is crafted not only as a reference but also a living framework that evolves with our collective insights and the continually evolving landscape we navigate.

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Vision Mission Values & Guiding Principles

Members have agreed upon the following:

Vision

Safe, secure, and healthy relationships within our Alberta community.

Mission

Eradicate Domestic/Sexual Violence

Values

- Domestic and sexual violence are problematic because they inhibit the growth and prosperity of all Albertans.
- An issue as complex as domestic and sexual violence is a component of large-scale social change.
- Despite its complexity we have reached consensus on the need to eradicate domestic and sexual violence (DV/SV) and we have identified primary prevention as the most effective vehicle for change.
- The optimal pathway to achieving our vision is through a collective impact model involving partnerships across communities, systems, and government.
- We use a gender transformative lens.
- We are intersectional (Equity Seeking).
- We are all treaty people with our own sets of rights and responsibilities.

Guiding Principles

- **Alignment with Historical and Current Contexts:** We ground our priorities in the historical achievements and ongoing efforts of our members, while also considering the broader social, cultural, and political contexts that influence our work.
- **Complexity Theory:** We recognize and incorporate complexity theory into our work, understanding that the issues we address are dynamic and multi-layered.
- **Unified Vision and Approach:** Our members are united by a common vision and understanding of the challenges we face, and we commit to a collaborative approach in addressing them.
- **Transparent Communication:** We prioritize clear, open communication to build trust, ensure shared goals, and energize our collective.
- **Balanced Neutrality:** While we maintain neutrality to uphold the confidence of all, we do not equate neutrality with silence, especially on matters that perpetuate inequities. IMPACT aims to be an ally to our communities, adding a constructive voice to societal discourse without engaging in political, racial, religious, or ideological disputes.
- **Supportive Infrastructure:** A robust backbone of support underpins IMPACT, steering our vision and strategy, mobilizing resources, and advancing policy initiatives.

Approach & Definitions

Operational Tenets

- **Community Coordination and Consultation:** Our activities are orchestrated through systematic community consultations, which we revisit and refresh at intervals of three to five years to stay responsive and relevant.
- **Data-Driven Measurement:** We are creating processes to collect pertinent data to monitor and assess our influence.
- **Practical Iteration:** We define iteration in practice as a disciplined method of periodically reviewing and updating our strategies to ensure they remain effective and responsive to new insights and changing conditions.
- **Informed Evolution:** Our decisions and definitions are developed with care and are adapted when necessary. Changes are always informed by significant changes in societal attitudes or new research findings.

Definitions

Common definitions for domestic violence, sexual violence and primary prevention used by IMPACT members are as follows:

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is the act, attempt, or intent of one person in an intimate, dependent, or trusting relationship to control or coerce another. This purposeful pattern of behaviour occurs over time and includes:

- Controlling behaviours - 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 lives.
- Coercive behaviours - 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.

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is a broad term that describes behaviours and actions that are sexual in nature and are unwanted, coerced, and committed without consent.

Sexual violence often refers to sexual abuse, assault, and harassment among other things. Sexual violence is highly prevalent, and it affects all individuals, families, and communities – either directly or indirectly.

- Child Sexual Abuse is the inappropriate exposure of a child to sexual contact, activity, or behaviour.
- Sexual Assault is any form of unwanted sexual contact without voluntary consent.
- Sexual Harassment is any unwelcome conduct, comment, gesture, or contact that is gender-related or sexual in nature that makes the recipient feel uncomfortable, unsafe, offended, or humiliated – whether intended or not.

(Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services, n.d.)

Primary Prevention

Primary prevention means changing the cultural and structural conditions that create opportunities for perpetrators to commit violence while eliminating risk factors and building protective factors to stop initial perpetration of domestic and sexual violence. This means, if we want to stop producing perpetrators of violence, we must transform our cultures (i.e., our values, beliefs, and social norms) and our institutions, laws, policies, and practices (i.e., structures) that create or enable them. Primary prevention is long-term social change work that should involve every citizen (Wells, Litviniuc, Lee, & Hansen, 2023).

Organizational Structure

Co-chairs

At the pinnacle of our structure are the co-chairs, who serve as the ultimate decision-makers for the collective. Esteemed leaders from various sectors and communities, the co-chairs guide the work of the collective, supporting and advocating for the needs of both the collective and the broader sector. Their leadership ensures that the collective's objectives are pursued with vision and integrity.

Stewards Committee

The Stewards are recognized leaders from a diversity of sectors who possess a deep understanding of the issues and the communities they serve. As the guiding voice of the collective, they lead the activities and champion the work of IMPACT within their communities. Their guidance ensures that all efforts undertaken by IMPACT align with the broader vision and are informed by the diverse communities and sectors supported by our members.

Mobilizing Members / Working Groups

Mobilizing Members are key leaders within their respective organizations who play a crucial role in advancing the collective's agenda. As the "doers" of IMPACT, these members bring both expertise and energy to the table, driving innovation through their participation in working groups and other key projects. To participate in these working groups, one must be a Mobilizing Member of IMPACT. This group actively supports the forward motion of the collective's work, applying their innovative ideas and dedicated efforts to bring about tangible changes and achievements in line with IMPACT's goals. Their involvement is essential in translating strategic visions into practical outcomes that positively impact our communities.

Network Membership

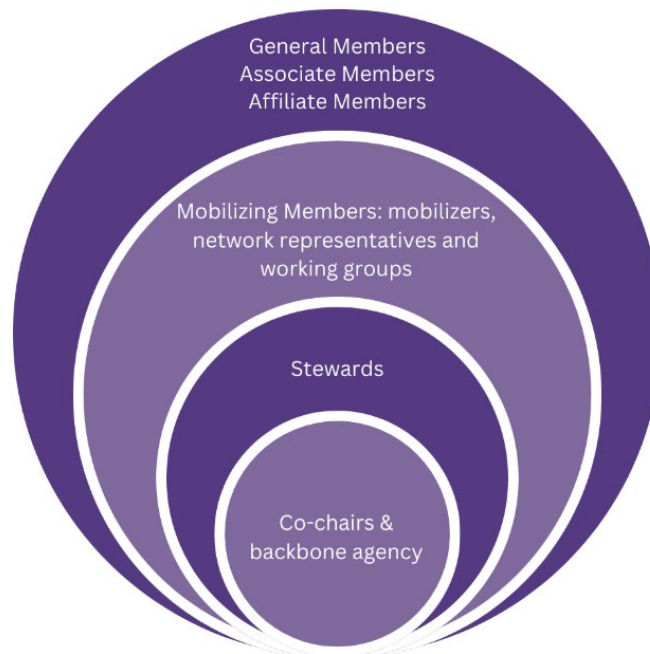
Our structure extends to include local networks that operate independently but align with our collective efforts provincially. These networks conduct activities within their communities and contribute local insights to our shared initiatives. This integration strengthens our collective's reach and effectiveness across Alberta, ensuring that local experiences are leveraged to enhance the broader strategic impact. When a local network takes out a Network Membership in IMPACT, all their members become Affiliate members of IMPACT.

Affiliate, Associate, and General Membership

Diverse participation is encouraged through our Affiliate, Associate, and General Membership tiers, welcoming all who are actively contributing to addressing domestic or sexual violence within Alberta.

Backbone Support

Providing the essential resources necessary for operational success, our backbone agency, Sagesse, allows experts to focus on their work without the distraction of administrative burdens. They manage the day-to-day operations of the collective and its activities, making efficient use of the members' time and capacity.



For more information about the membership levels, [click here](#).

The Importance of Membership Fees

The implementation of membership fees serves a strategic purpose: it allows us the flexibility to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. This financial support is vital for maintaining our readiness and ensuring that our actions are both timely and impactful. Fees underpin our capacity to mobilize resources quickly, support our members effectively, and maintain the autonomy necessary to innovate without delay. While important to the sustained health of the collective, membership fees will never be a barrier to participation in IMPACT.

To view the current fee guide, [click here](#). To view an outline of the benefits for each membership tier, [click here](#).

Our Shared Priorities

Four priority areas were identified in the research by SHIFT: The Project to End Domestic violence and in consultation with IMPACT membership. The four priorities can be found on the AlbertaPrimaryPrevention.ca site and underpin the action areas for IMPACT Alberta and individual member organizations and networks.

The four areas are as follows:

Enhance Social Inclusion

“Social inclusion is the process of improving the terms upon which individuals and groups take part in society—improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity.” (World Bank, n.d.)

- SHIFT research has established that membership in a disadvantaged group vulnerable to social exclusion increases the likelihood of experiencing violence.
- A priority of IMPACT, therefore, is to seek out or create new opportunities for equity deserving groups to participate meaningfully in our communities and social structures as a way of adding a protective factor against victimization.

Engage Men and Boys

Domestic and sexual violence have a strong gender bias; most victims are female, and most perpetrators are male. Therefore, it is a priority to engage men and boys as allies in the effort to eradicate violence in the province.

- To meaningfully engage men and boys, we not only have to meet men where they are at and change their hearts, minds, and behaviours but must also target the social norms, settings, systems, and institutions where they live, learn, work, socialize, play and worship to support healthy attitudes, and behaviours.

Activate Informal Supports

Informal supporters are the social connections that shape our everyday lives. Victims of violence are more likely to turn to informal support rather than formal programs or services. In some communities' informal support may be all that is available.

- Even though informal support networks typically lack professional training in domestic or sexual violence, their access and trust make informal supporters an essential resource for violence prevention and eventually for societal change. That is why this is a priority area for IMPACT.

Improve Economic Conditions

Domestic and sexual violence occurs in all economic and social groups, from the wealthy to the disadvantaged. Economic inequality represents a power imbalance.

- The historical oppression of equity-deserving groups, including Indigenous people and women, have limited their ability to fully participate in the economy making them more vulnerable to violence.
- IMPACT sees equal participation in the economy as a key variable in the prevention of violence.

Working Groups

At IMPACT, we believe that the most effective way to leverage our members' expertise while respecting their capacity and time is through focused working groups. These groups enable us to undertake decisive action on priority areas. To ensure that outputs from these working groups align with the broader objectives of IMPACT and remain relevant to the local contexts they will be used in, the Mobilizers and Stewards will have strategic oversight of the working groups.

The focus areas for our working groups have been initially determined based on activities narrowed down by IMPACT Stewards and Mobilizers. As we continue to assess our capacity and momentum, we remain open to exploring additional areas of interest and opportunity that may arise, allowing us to adapt and expand our efforts effectively.

IMPACT's Working Groups will focus on the following areas:

- **Iterative Editorial Board:** ensuring that albertaprimaryprevention.ca remains an up-to-date and continuously changing resource for IMPACT members and the community to learn how they can align with prevention priorities across the province
- **Policy Monitoring Initiative:** This group will meet as needed to address potential policy advocacy opportunities.
- **Primary Prevention Priority Working Groups:** these working groups concentrate on three key areas: Enhancing Social Inclusion, Engaging Men & Boys, and Activating Informal Supporters. These groups are essential for our work today and a starting point for our future goals.

Research and Community-Driven Priorities

Our working group priorities stem from SHIFT research and have been refined with input from our Stewards and Mobilizers. This ensures our collective efforts are rooted in evidence and community consensus.

Aligning with Alberta's Prevention Framework

We encourage you to engage with and align your activities with the strategies outlined on the Alberta Primary Prevention site, wherever possible. This site is specifically designed to coordinate and guide community actions in line with provincial prevention efforts. IMPACT Alberta will take the lead in advancing specific areas of this work, particularly where there is significant interest and momentum among our members.

Objectives of the Working Groups

The initial role of the working groups is specifically to identify and implement effective strategies to engage men and boys, activate informal supporters, and enhance social inclusion. These groups are tasked with making it simpler for our members to comprehend, adopt, implement, and advocate for promising practices and prevention strategies aimed at ending violence in our province. They oversee projects that not only align with our foundational principles but also evaluate and promote the best methods to support and scale innovative practices throughout Alberta. This targeted approach allows for focused progress in these priority areas while laying the groundwork for a broader, long-term impact.

Impact = Influence + Leverage + Learning (I2L2)

IMPACT will align to I2L2 model. Backbone Staff will ensure alignment and hold accountability to the collective to inform Members of misalignment.

See: APPENDIX A: Impact = Influence + Leverage + Learning (I2L2)

Collective Accountability

IMPACT is accountable to its members and funders. It is responsive to Albertans through our daily interactions at our agencies/organizations and networks.

IMPACT's Backbone agency, Sagesse, is accountable to the members of IMPACT.

- Sagesse will conduct an Annual Impact Members Survey (AIMS) which may trigger a discussion at the stewards/mobilizers tables if results are below 65%.
- Prevention Team Lead reports to the Executive Director of Sagesse.
- If there is an issue with the ED of Sagesse in relation to IMPACT, community co-chair(s) will determine the next suitable steps.

Process for updating/upgrading Foundations of IMPACT

The Foundations document is subject to a structured review and update process to ensure it remains current and effective for our members. This process is carried out on an annual basis by the Backbone team, in collaboration with the co-chairs and when needed the Stewardship Committee.

Annual Review

Each year, the Backbone team, along with the IMPACT Co-Chairs, undertakes a review of the Foundations document. This annual review is designed to assess the relevance of the content and the need for updates based on the evolving organizational needs and external factors. The goal is to ensure that the Foundations remains a dynamic tool that effectively guides the collective's strategies and operations.

Update Process

The process of updating the Foundations document is categorized into two types of changes: minor and major.

- **Minor Changes:** Minor updates, clarifications and edits can be made by the backbone team.
- **Major Changes:** For major updates involving significant revisions, the Backbone team, along with the Co-Chairs, will present the proposed changes to the Stewards committee for review.

Appendix A: Impact = Influence + Leverage + Learning (I2L2)

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 OSIMPACT2.

- 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.

APPENDIX B: Developing a Primary Prevention Framework and Activities for IMPACT

Overview of the Process for Developing the Alberta Primary Prevention Framework

In 2021, IMPACT Alberta embarked on a significant collaborative initiative aimed at developing a primary prevention framework to address domestic violence in Alberta. This initiative was a partnership with SHIFT: The Project to End Domestic Violence and the Government of Alberta, which played crucial roles in spearheading the research and development efforts.

Research and Collaboration

The foundation of the framework comes from the research conducted by SHIFT: The Project to End Domestic Violence, informed by IMPACT members. This research involved a series of [14 comprehensive papers](#). These papers provided a solid research base, offering insights into effective strategies and interventions for preventing domestic and sexual violence at its roots.

The Alberta Primary Prevention Document Review Working Group

To ensure the research accurately reflected the community's experiences and perspectives, the Alberta Primary Prevention Document Review Working Group was established. This group brought together a diverse group of sector experts from the Stewards Committee and the Mobilizer Table, who played a crucial role in reviewing the SHIFT papers. Their expert feedback and recommendations ensured the documents were grounded in community-based experiences and needs.

Community Consultations

A pivotal aspect of the development process was engaging with the community through consultations held in 2021 and 2022. These consultations were instrumental in gathering direct input from our members, ensuring that the framework reflected the real needs and circumstances of Alberta’s diverse communities. The feedback collected during these sessions was vital in shaping the direction and content of the framework.

Integration into Digital Resources

Throughout 2022 and into 2023, a dedicated website, [Alberta Primary Prevention](#), was developed to serve as a dynamic resource for the sector. This choice to build a website rather than produce a static printed document was made to ensure the resource could evolve with ongoing learning and facilitate collaboration across the sector. Launched at the IMPACT Summit in 2023, the website acts as a central hub, disseminating research findings and community insights, and guiding the implementation of prevention strategies throughout Alberta. Designed to be adaptable, the platform is set to continuously integrate new knowledge and emerging practices in domestic violence prevention, ensuring it remains a relevant and valuable tool for stakeholders.

Narrowing Down Activities

In 2023, under the guidance of Consultant Mark Cabaj, IMPACT adopted a more strategic approach, epitomized by Cabaj's principle: "shrinking the change." This phase involved a brainstorming and planning process, where Stewards and Mobilizers played key roles in narrowing down the broad recommendations from the prevention research and framework. The goal was to identify and prioritize specific activities that IMPACT will initially undertake, setting a clear path for immediate action while also planning for future initiatives. This selective focus was essential for effectively using resources and creating a practical, step-by-step approach to implementing the primary prevention strategies against domestic violence. This operational plan not only addresses immediate needs but also lays the groundwork for scaling up efforts as more insights and capacities develop.

References:

Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services. (n.d.). About sexual violence. Retrieved from <https://aasas.ca/about-sexual-violence/>

Wells, L., Litviniuc, A., Lee, L., & Hansen, B. (2023). *Winning against domestic and sexual violence: Alberta's primary prevention playbook*. Retrieved from [Shift: The project to end domestic violence | Winning against domestic and sexual violence: Alberta's primary prevention playbook \(preventdomesticviolence.ca\)](#)

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