

# MEN'S ISSUES AWARENESS

info@equalitycanada.com

www.equalitycanada.com

ON  
CAMPUS

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## THE NEED FOR A MOVEMENT CENTERED ON MEN'S ISSUES

With the passing of time, it seems as if most segments of society have evolved and progressed for the better. There have been tremendous advances in race relations, significant reforms for individual rights and freedoms, and labour and social security. There have been huge strides made in the LGBTQ movement, the women's movement, and the environmental front. The most significant achievement of these co-movements is the success in publicizing and normalizing the issues and concerns they wish to address.

It's important to note here that men form a part of all of these movements, often from the beginning. The women's movements globally, for instance, has had significant contributions from reformist men. Men have played important roles in projecting a benevolent and compassionate masculinity into both the human rights and environmental discourses. A growing number of heterosexual men are playing a central role in pushing LGBTQ rights. Without allies, no movement can attain the critical mass necessary to stir the political cauldrons. This brings our attention onto men themselves, a segment of society whose vulnerabilities and evolving role have never been adequately studied on their own terms.

Providing social and political currency to men's issues is not antithetical to the pre-existing movements mentioned above. Such activism can actually build a discussion that would perfectly complement the agenda of other movements. The uncomfortable truth is that our current conversation about gender is embarrassingly simplistic. In assigning to men the permanent and primeval role of Oppressor, the complicated role of human psychology, biology and social gender norms that historically provided few rights - but many obligations - to both men and women, is never really addressed.

We are concerned - justifiably - with the overrepresentation of men in elected office, but take it as normal the overrepresentation of men behind bars, even for the same crime when all factors other than gender are held constant. We are concerned - justifiably - with the wage gap where women are paid less for the same work, but take for granted the death gap where men account for most cases of death in the workplace or the battlefield. We are concerned - justifiably - when fathers fail to make support payments, but do little when mothers deny fathers visitation rights. We are concerned - justifiably - that some aspects of healthcare have neglected women, but take it for granted that men die younger and suffer higher levels of suicide. We excuse cases of male disadvantage as a product of choice or biology, but demand action, funding, study and policy change - all justifiable - to deal with the serious issues effecting women.

When a man is unemployed, underemployed, left unloved, not cared for, and otherwise neglected, the consequences can be severe on him, on his family, on his society. The sufferings of men, especially when left unaddressed, negatively affect women, children, neighbourhoods, and cities. Tangible objectives of a movement centred on "men's issues" include improved awareness of men's health concerns, more attention to the boys crises in education, and better legal protections under family law, to name a few. As discussed in these pages, this new movement will be a positive force that complements the activism of other progressive elements in society.

Support the #MensCentreCampaign

Watch the video at [EqualityCanada.com](http://EqualityCanada.com)

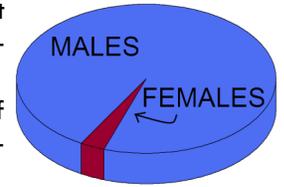


# Men's Health and Safety

Other than a couple of magazines on men's health and fitness subjects, there's not a whole lot in terms of men's health awareness. Everyone seems to have men in their lives with health problems. But it seems that few are equipped with the tools and knowledge when it comes to addressing the challenges of men's health.

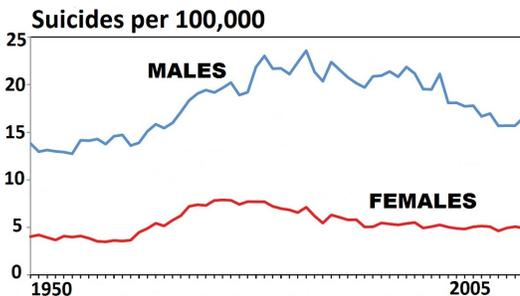
Men themselves are irresponsible when it comes to their health, but it's unfair to write off these men so casually. Many have no choice but to work endless night shifts, driving taxis or manning production lines. Some work in ugly mining operations where workers are constantly exposed to harmful airborne toxins and regular structural hazards. It's hard to tell someone living in these conditions to cut back on their few source of escapism, even when these consist of cigarettes, alcohol, and TV. "Take it like a man" is no longer an acceptable response. Most men - and women - need a little help when it comes to managing their health.

We need to help tie-in men's health into the public discourse in order to protect men from preventable illnesses, occupational hazards, sources of mental instability, and promote wellness overall.



97% of workplace fatalities are male deaths. Source: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2008

## The Boys Crises



Statistics Canada, 2012

Canada in 2005 there were 38% fewer men in undergrad than women. Boys' poorer performance is manifested by lower test scores, higher drop-out rates and more severe educational penalties, all of which are on the increase. We're excited by the rising success of girls, but outreach efforts are required to confront these disturbing trends for boys. As stated by Dr. Paul Cappon of the Canadian Council on Learning, in studying the "boys crises": "The big problem is the gap in literacy, reading and writing. reading and education are viewed as girl activities... [we] need to change culture and social norms affecting the development of boys' values & self images"

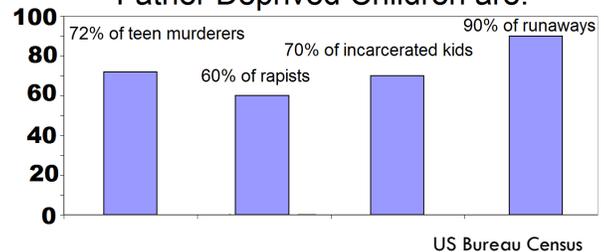
- Suicide: Men kill themselves three times more often than women for all ages, but suicide is especially high for men in their teens and twenties.
- Bullying: Bullying - especially physical bullying - a worse problem for boys than girls, according to the Canadian Public Health Association Safe School Study (2004). The gender disparity is especially severe with respect to bullying based on sexual orientation, with boys over twice as likely to suffer harassment based on sexuality.
- Educational performance: The average of the 57 countries of the OCED (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) shows that 41% of boys compared to 53% of females graduate and go on to university. In

## Family Issues

Consequences of fatherlessness are becoming better understood - and increasingly frightening. Father-deprivation is a more reliable predictor of criminal activity than race, environment or poverty. Children who grew up fatherless are twice as likely to quit school, five times more likely to commit suicide, eight times more likely to go to prison, and ten times more likely to abuse chemical substances. Compounding this is the real problem of parental alienation which occurs when one parent deprives his or her children of the love and support of the other. While every province in Canada has a government agency dedicated to enforcing child support payments, not one contains agencies dedicated to enforcing custody and access orders, which makes parental alienation very difficult to solve.

This is in no way meant to deny the heroism of the many single mothers thrust into situations where they are left having to raise children on their own. The main culprit is actually the family law system and its outdated belief that a father's wallet is more important than his love and involvement. In 2006, 77.7% of sole custody orders were granted to the mother, 5.2% to the father, while mothers have physical custody 88% of the time, fathers 6.4% of the time. Currently, 20.7% of all families in Canada are single mother families. If the default following divorce were equal shared parenting these numbers would be totally different, given they in no sense reflect the actual rates at which mothers and fathers seek custody.

### Father Deprived Children are:



## Men's Issues Awareness on Campus Activities

- \* Lectures
- \* Group discussions
- \* Social events
- \* Film screenings
- \* Outreach and awareness activities (eg. tabling)
- \* Dialogue and discussion with other campus groups

## Other Major Areas of Concern include:

- \* Workplace and Gender
- \* Men and Violence
- \* Crime and Punishment/Legal Biases
- \* Media, Social and Cultural Misandry (hatred and contempt for men)

### On Feminism

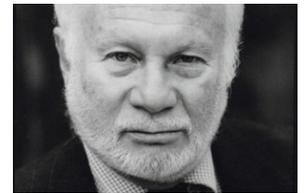
Our goal is to build a movement that incorporates into the conversation on gender and equality, for the first time, an exploration of men's issues. That's it. We are neither defined as pro-feminist nor anti-feminist. On certain issues we are likely to be aligned with many feminists, on other issues with very few. That is why responding to the simple question "Where do you stand on feminism?" is almost impossible, and mostly unproductive.

Indeed, the pressure on any organization interested in gender issues to define themselves in relation to feminism is a concern in that it suggests a single perspective - or set of perspectives - has established hegemonic power over a discourse that ought to be marked by diversity in opinions and points of view. But since the question hangs in the air, here's one attempt below at a more comprehensive response:

### Examples of Past Events:

#### MALE ORIGINAL SIN:

How did men get to be so defective? Lionel Tiger, Charles Darwin  
Professor of Anthropology  
Rutgers University



#### THE NEW MALE STUDIES:

Should men be studied through the lens of feminism?  
Robert Kenedy, York University  
Sociologist



#### FAMILY LAW:

Barbara Kay,  
National Post Columnist



### Are We Anti-Feminist?: A Response To Feminists Everywhere

by Edward Sullivan, McMaster University

*In several years of talking to people about men's issues, this is perhaps the question I've been asked the most. Sometimes it's with genuine curiosity, other times it's spat like a curse. For the longest time I simply didn't have an answer, but it turns out it was simpler than I thought. Seeing as I've gone and built up to it, I might as well let you in on the secret: "It depends."*

*Feminism is one of the widest-ranging movements in the world. It crosses national borders and has countless factions, divisions and schools of thought. Between its many, many offshoots, it addresses almost every issue under the sun, from almost every perspective. All too often, different factions are diametrically opposed on individual issues. I've met feminists who agree with us almost word-for-word, and who I'd be proud to call allies. I've met feminists who claim that men are subhuman rapists and murderers simply by virtue of possessing a penis. I've met feminists who support raising awareness of men's issues, and others who claim that fighting for "men's rights", as they define it, makes us worse than slave owners, Nazis, Charles Manson and the Ku Klux Klan. I've met feminists who genuinely believe that the entire world is one giant conspiracy to oppress women, and others who understand that our current system oppresses everyone, and is the product of biological and environmental pressures rather than any one group of people. I've met feminists who are pro-choice, pro-life, pro-porn, anti-porn, transpositive, transphobic, religious, atheist, sex-positive and sex-negative. If an issue exists, I can bet you that there's a feminist who has an opinion on it, and another one who thinks that the first is full of shit.*

*How, then, could I possibly give a single simple answer? While it's certainly true that I could comment on the overall actions of people calling themselves feminists, none of that would help me make a decision about Jane (or Joe) feminist standing in front of me. There simply isn't one thing I can say that would encompass all that feminism is. Whether we oppose feminism has very little to do with our beliefs, and everything about what feminism means to you. If your feminism is about genuine equality based on the facts and information available to us without prejudice, ideology and bias, we welcome you with open arms. If your feminism is based on exclusion, myths and misandry, that's not a movement that either men or women will find helpful.*

## About CAFE

The Canadian Association for Equality (CAFE) is a non-profit organization committed to achieving equality for all Canadian men, women, girls and boys. Our current focus is on our Men's Issues Awareness Campaign, meant to provide balance to a gender discourse that has not yet incorporated a number of significant issues and vital perspectives. CAFE will work through public education, consciousness-raising activities, campus outreach, multimedia, press engagement, and efforts to effect public policy on men's issues, always underpinned by evidence-based research



## ADVISORS



Robert A. Kennedy is Professor of Sociology, York University and Executive Board member of the "New Male Studies: An International Journal"



Jackie Orsetto is Course Instructor and Research Co-ordinator, Department of Sociology, Trent University



Lionel Tiger, Charles Darwin Professor of Anthropology at Rutgers University



Paul Nathanson is senior researcher in the Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University. He is co-author (with Katherine Young) of the book *Legalizing Misandry*



Kris Titus, Director of Research, Gender Issues Education Foundation



William Breen is an economic geologist. He was a founding member of the Brandon University Men's Collective



Nicolas Fleet is a veteran of the Royal Canadian Navy (HMCS Calgary) and a graduate from the University of Ottawa (B. Economics and Statistics)



Fred Litwin speaks and writes frequently on boys issues, suicide and education. He is the Founder and President of the Free Thinking Film Society of Ottawa



Heidi Nabert: co-Host of the popular Divorced Dad podcast: DADcast



Danny Guspie is Executive Director of Fathers Resources International.



**Contact us to get involved with a Men's Issues Awareness Society at your campus!**

Canadian Association for Equality

PO Box 46092

College Park, 777 Bay Street, Toronto, ON, M5G 2P6

[www.equalitycanada.com](http://www.equalitycanada.com) [info@equalitycanada.com](mailto:info@equalitycanada.com)



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**Contributions to this newsletter provided by:**

Egi Troka, York University

Tahbit Chowdhury, University of Waterloo

Edward Sullivan, McMaster University



Bradley Corbett is the spokesperson for the Canadian Association for Equality. He is Assistant Prof at the Richard Ivey School of Business and Adjunct Research Prof in the Dept of Sociology at the University of Western Ontario.