

# Family Violence and Equal Parenting

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QUESTION: Which is more accurate?

A: 76% of Victims FV are Female

B: 57% of Victims of FV are Male

Source: NS Police Reported (2016)

Source: Statistic Canada (2016)

Why a 33% difference?

# Connection between FV and Equal Parenting

- Family violence / family disputes often result in police interaction with families
- FV often has life-long impacts on victims and children. (Ex. Child Abuse, PTSD)
- FV is very often used by a parent with intent to gain the upper hand in custody matters.
- Police policies and procedures often “sets the narrative” which is later used with child protection and family courts to prevent equal parenting.
  - Ex: Police will not enforce court orders for parenting time, and this often increases the conflict, or allows the FV to continue.

# Types of Family Violence

The DOJ Canada defines four types:

- Coercive and Controlling, (Most Serious)
- Reactive,
- Situational, and
- At the time of Separation.

# Progress

- Over past 20+ years there have been semi-regular initiatives to understand FV and develop approaches to address its impacts
- Most initiatives are ideological and led by experts who receive funding to continue research in only a specific area.
- This has led to repeated failures to address these issues.
- There are now 4 laws active in Nova Scotia that identify Coercive and Controlling Family Violence
- The Federal DOJ identifies that police should be using the current criminal code to address FV (ex: Harassment, Intimidation, Assault, etc).

# Progress

- Police are first responders and protect society in many ways.
- Police also respond to situations they are not trained to address.  
(Ex. mental health, FV.)
- HPD will not enforce Family Court Orders related to parenting time.
- HPD will not enforce Criminal Code of Canada in relation to the parenting time, S.282, 283.
- Canadian studies show ~25-50% of Police time is spent on family disputes.

# Prognosis

- The frequency of coercive and controlling family violence is increasing.
  - Taxpayers/residents are becoming more knowledgeable regarding FV.
  - Untrained officers may unknowingly support FV.
  - Equal Shared Parenting after separation reduces family conflict / violence but often requires police to enforce court orders / CCC.
  - Additional Funding is being directed toward non-ideological studies of FV and pressure to change policies / procedures already exists.
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- HPD will need to adapt to changes in service delivery needs -- or risk liability.

# Proposed Plan

- Develop a non-ideological collaborative consultation approach to FV (Ex. National Indigenous consultation with Child Protection Services)
- Consult / collaborate with those impacted by family violence, regardless of genetic characteristics, country of origin, etc.
- Recall some people/groups may not come forward for the consultation or even know they are victims of FV but need to be included. (ex. men, those who speak limited English/French, others).
- Identify the core issues (ex. coercive control) and develop a work plan to close gaps in policy, procedures, tools, knowledge, etc.

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Family Violence is not a gendered issue.

Family Violence is a Human Issue.