



Lift Her Up: Power and Control Wheel for Women in Political Office

Alberta Council of Women's Shelters

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Acknowledgements

Traditional Lands

ACWS acknowledges the traditional lands upon which we live, work, and play. We recognize that all Albertans are Treaty people and have a responsibility to understand our history so that we can learn from the past, be aware of the present, and create a just and caring future. ACWS celebrates and values the resiliency, successes, and teachings that Indigenous people have shown us, as well as the unique contributions of every Albertan. The ACWS office is located on Treaty 6 land, which is the traditional territory of the Plains Cree and an ancient gathering place of many Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. These lands have also been home to and a central trading place of the Blackfoot, Nakota, Assiniboine, Dene, and the Métis people of western Canada. We honour the courage and strength of Indigenous women. We honor them as life-givers and caregivers as we honor and learn from their continuing achievements, their consistent strength, and their remarkable endurance. Our members – and the participating shelters in this project - serve all nations and all peoples; they are located on Treaty 6, 7, and 8 lands across this province which include the six Metis regions of Alberta.

Contributors

This report and its affiliated campaign, #LiftHerUp, could not have been completed without the generous contributions of Alberta women who were willing to share their experiences while seeking or serving in public office in our province. We thank them and honour their courage in sharing their stories with the intent of creating a safer and more equitable future.

We also thank the members of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, our Board of Directors, our staff, and contracted researchers who contributed to the #LiftHerUp campaign, research about women's experiences in politics, and the development of the Power and Control Wheel for women in politics. This report was prepared by Jill Shillabeer for the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, with support from Jan Reimer and Christie Lavan. It builds on work begun by Amanda LaBonte and Eoin Murray, with the support of Jordan Dillabough.

#LiftHerUp was funded during different phases in part by the Canada/Alberta Jobs Grant, the formerly named Status of Women ministry with the Government of Alberta, and through the operational grant provided by the Government of Alberta Ministry of Community and Social Services.



About ACWS

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) is the provincial network organization of women's shelters in Alberta. ACWS supports 40 members operating 54 shelters across the province for women, children, and seniors facing domestic abuse.¹ We support our members and work with them to end domestic violence through culture-shifting violence prevention programs, collective data and research, and front-line training. With support from ACWS, Alberta shelters are helping to enhance individual safety, support families, and improve communities.

When a woman participates in politics, she should be putting her hopes and dreams for the future on the line, not her dignity and not her life.

Madeleine Albright, former U.S. Secretary of State²

Introduction

Decisions, comments, and actions made by and about our society's leaders - our elected officials - have a direct impact on the culture we live in. When actions occur in the political sphere that abuse, demean, or disempower women, it reinforces a message of misogyny that underpins all violence against women. The exacerbation of a power dynamic where men use violence against women in politics sustains and creates a social license for a broader culture of misogyny and violence against women in all spheres.

In early December 2016, a crowd of approximately one thousand demonstrators, mostly men, gathered outside the Alberta Legislature in Edmonton, chanting "lock her up" about the Premier and leader of the Alberta provincial New Democratic Party, Rachel Notley. The group was there to protest an environmental tax but the gathering quickly shifted into a personal attack on the then Premier.

This was not the first, nor the last, incident of gender-based threats and harassment directed at Premier Notley. In 2015, the then leader of the provincial Progressive Conservative Party, Jim Prentice, infamously jabbed "I know that math is difficult"³ at Notley during a debate between nominees during the provincial election, and former Wildrose Party leader Brian Jean joked he was disappointed "it's against the law to beat Rachel Notley."⁴ Countless

¹ As of March 2020. Membership may vary slightly year to year.

² Albright, Madeleine. "A hidden reality: Violence against women in politics" *cnn.com* March 8, 2016. URL: <https://www.cnn.com/2016/03/07/opinions/madeleine-albright-protect-women-in-politics/index.html>

³ *Calgary Herald* Staff. "How 'Math is Difficult' (or #mathishard) Blew Up on Social Media" *calgaryherald.com* April 24, 2015. URL: <http://calgaryherald.com/news/politics/how-math-is-difficult-or-mathishard-blew-up-on-social-media>

⁴ Trynacity, Kim and Roberta Bell. "Wildrose Leader's 'Beat Rachel Notley' Joke Provokes Widespread Condemnation" *cbc.ca* August 31, 2016. URL: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/wildrose-leader-s-beat-rachel-notley-joke-provokes-widespread-condemnation-1.3743095>

threats and abuse, both on and offline, have been directed at Notley, including an image of her photo through a rifle's scope, videos of golfers using a large photo of her for target practice, and later running over the picture in a golf cart⁵. "F*** Notley," "ditch the bitch" and other abusive car decals directed at Notley were easily available for purchase online⁶.

Notley is not alone. Provincial opposition leader Jean-Francois Lisse ridiculed Quebec Solidaire spokesperson Manon Masse for having upper lip hair⁷; a man invaded the home of Claresholm, Alberta town councilor Donna Courage, physically attacked her, and told her to "leave town"⁸; former federal Member of Parliament (MP) and Parliamentary Secretary Celina Caesar-Chavannes cited threats to her safety as informing her decision not to run for a second term⁹; and the Rebel News Network and others, including by Conservative MP Gerry Ritz repeatedly referred to former Federal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna as "climate Barbie"¹⁰.

These are only a handful of the disturbing occurrences illustrating the environment of hostility toward women in politics in Canada. Despite attempts by various groups and individuals to garner fair treatment of women, politics – like many other public and private spaces – remains an unsafe place for women, fettered by threats of violence, online harassment, and sexual misconduct from those in positions of power.

⁵ Dias, Jerry. "Online Threats Against Rachel Notley are Part of a Disturbing Trend" *huffingtonpost.ca* August 17, 2016. URL: https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/jerry-dias/rachel-notley-misogyny_b_11564686.html

⁶ Ohler, Quinn. "Does Profane Call to Oust Prime Minister and Alberta Premier Go Too Far?" *globalnews.ca* April 26, 2016. URL: <https://globalnews.ca/news/2663795/does-profane-call-to-oust-prime-minister-and-alberta-premier-go-too-far/>

⁷ Valiante, Giuseppe. "PQ Leader Apologizes After Joke about Female Opponent's Facial Hair" *ctvnews.ca* URL: <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/pq-leader-apologizes-after-joke-about-female-opponent-s-facial-hair-1.3790366>

⁸ Battochio, Matt. "'It's a Huge Conflict of Interest': Inside the Claresholm Council Dispute" *globalnews.ca* January 25, 2018. URL: <https://globalnews.ca/news/3988390/its-a-huge-conflict-of-interest-inside-the-claresholm-council-dispute/>

⁹ Collier, Cheryl N. and Tracey Raney. "Another barrier for women in politics: Violence" *theconversation.com* May 5, 2019. URL: <https://theconversation.com/another-barrier-for-women-in-politics-violence-113637>

¹⁰ Thomson, Stuart. "Conservative MP Apologizes for Calling Environment Minister 'Climate Barbie'" *nationalpost.com* September 20, 2017. URL: <http://nationalpost.com/news/politics/conservative-mp-apologizes-for-climate-barbie-remark-about-environment-minister>



Lift Her Up

Rutgers University Professor of Political Science, Dr. Mona Lena Krook argues that violence against women in politics is perpetrated against women as women. Krook writes:

In the name of traditional gender norms, relatives, and party colleagues may sabotage women's political campaigns; feminist activists may become targets of online bullying, ridicule, and rape or murder threats from often-anonymous sources; and female citizens may be barred from voting or coerced to vote in a particular way by religious or traditional leaders or their own husbands. These dynamics of intimidation and harassment are often intertwined with threats and acts of physical violence up to and including murder. Restricting the participation of women as women in these ways is meant to send a broader and unambiguous message that women as a group should have no part in political life.¹¹

The targeting of women as women in the political sphere is analogous to the domestic sphere. By using the building blocks of culturally accepted gendered norms and stereotypes and applying a consistent and pervasive threat of violence, men establish power and control for themselves through a variety of tactics that sustain a context of fear, limiting women's agency. The tactics used to support this dynamic in the political and domestic spheres are similar and systemic. For example, in our resource-rich and industrially-driven province, the gendered power imbalance manifests through the strategic cultivation of and political support for the false narrative that investing in businesses and natural resource extraction and development always translates to economic empowerment for all – an economic approach that favours men and exacerbates the social and economic divide between men and women. Increasing women's numerical representation in politics is vital to changing the landscape for equality, however, understanding and dismantling the power and control dynamic that limits equal participation is fundamental.

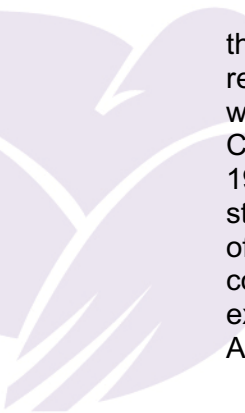
Recognizing the links between abuse of women in the domestic and political spheres, the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) launched the #LiftHerUp campaign in 2016. ACWS member Shelter Directors created the campaign to raise awareness about the harassment, violence, and hostility women face while running for or holding positions of political power, being involved in politics, or expressing political opinions. ACWS is driven by the belief that the issues of violence and abuse are the responsibilities of the entire community including, legal, social and political structures, and in seeing violence against women in politics manifest explicitly in Alberta, we felt compelled to act to further our vision of a world free from violence and abuse.

There are numerous organizations and campaigns focused on increasing the number of women in politics. Alberta is home to ParityYEG¹², Ask Her YYC¹³, and two local chapters of

¹¹ Krook, Mona Lena. "Violence Against Women in Politics" *Journal of Democracy* vol.28 no. 1. January 2017. PP75.

¹² ParityYEG. www.parityyeg.ca/ Accessed April 2021.

¹³ Ask Her YYC. askheryyc.org/ Accessed April 2021.



the national organization, Equal Voice¹⁴, to name a few. There are campaign schools, online resources, and toolkits available to support women's candidacy. Books about the need for women in leadership and the stories of paths to power are in abundance. Since the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women was adopted in 1979, the United Nations has been providing recommendations and calls to action to member states to address barriers to women's full participation in public life, including holding elected office.¹⁵ #LiftHerUp is not intended to replace or recreate this work - it is designed in complementary alignment with these organizations, resources, and movements as an exploration focused on violence against women in politics in the Canadian, and particularly Albertan, context.

The Role of Women's Shelters

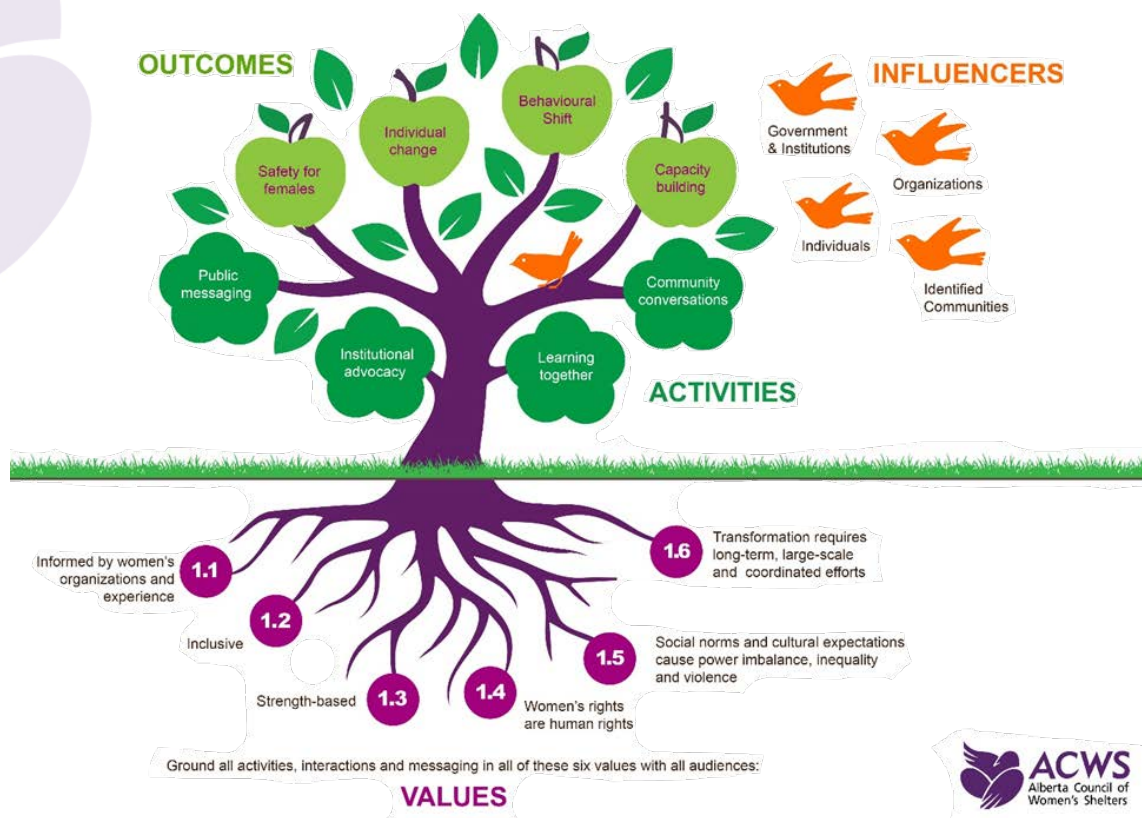
The primary activity of women's shelters is to offer a safe place for women and children fleeing domestic violence. However, their capacity extends beyond this vital function as they hold vast knowledge of the multi-layered social, economic, and political systems that support a culture of gender-based violence. Shelters see first-hand the effects of structures that foster gender inequality, and they have a unique perspective on points of leverage to affect change, informed by the lived experiences of the women accessing their services.

To meet our vision of a world free from violence, ACWS has a dual-pronged mission; we support our members, and we work to create culture change that will end violence and abuse against women. In support of this mission, our member shelters identified the need for ACWS to invest in a primary prevention strategy. ACWS prevention initiatives began in the later 1980s. As we evolved, our organization formalized this work with the creation of the Leading Change™ Call to Action – a multifaceted effort to create lasting culture change to end gender-based violence. Leading Change™ takes a strengths-based approach, asking individuals, organizations, and systems to explore what they can do to foster a culture of equality and non-violence. The Inspired Communities Model (Figure 1) guides our efforts for holistic and sustainable social change, ensuring values alignment, focus, and intention in our prevention activities.

¹⁴ Equal Voice. www.equalvoice.ca/ Accessed April 2021.

¹⁵ UN Women. "Global norms and standards: Leadership and political participation" [unwomen.org](https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/global-norms-and-standards) URL: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/global-norms-and-standards> Accessed April 2021.

Figure 1: Leading Change™ Inspired Communities Model



ACWS is a global leader in women's shelter advocacy, having hosted the first world conference women's shelters which led to the formation of both national and global shelter networks. We were asked to develop a module on women's shelters for the United Nations' Virtual Knowledge Centre. ACWS has published books, developed primary prevention curricula, and developed leading-edge tools and training for shelters in supporting women seeking safety, including culturally informed tools for supporting Indigenous women. We participate in a global community of practice to engage men and boys in ending violence against women and girls and, in 2019, hosted the first primary prevention conference in western Canada.

Organizationally, ACWS believes that any effort to end violence against women needs to address gender inequality. We employ feminist principles, including centering women's lived experience and knowledge in our work. ACWS and our members are long-standing feminist voices in Alberta with vast knowledge of the implications of gender inequality and the spectrum of violence. Frontline shelter expertise guides our approach and areas of focus in fostering systemic social change. It was ACWS Shelter Directors who identified the link between the abusive treatment of women in politics and women in abusive domestic relationships. Understanding the ripple effects of any violence perpetrated against women as women, they united to take action to raise awareness about the violence perpetrated against women in politics which gave rise to the Lift Her Up Campaign.

Methodology

#LiftHerUp took a multi-faceted approach to raising awareness, addressing violent behaviours, and creating safe(r) spaces for women in politics. Leveraging the cross-provincial municipal elections taking place in Fall 2017, #LiftHerUp launched its first two phases. Phase One engaged ACWS member shelter directors from across Alberta in an effort to highlight the parallel experiences of women in politics and women living with abusive partners. For example, limiting a woman's social interactions and opportunities (Using Isolation) and employing menacing and fear-inducing language (Using Coercion and Threats) are established tactics in the original Duluth-model Power and Control Wheel. A crowd of demonstrators chanting "Lock her up" was triggering for many and a signal that normalizing controlling and threatening language toward women in the public sphere could have rippling and dire social consequences.

Phase One also focused on broad public awareness about the need to create safe(r) spaces for women taking part in the 2017 municipal and school board elections. Alberta holds municipal elections on a common cycle, with all cities, towns, villages, counties, municipal districts, and specialized municipalities going to the poll on the same day.^{16 17} ACWS developed, distributed, and promoted a pledge for candidates to sign, committing support for women's inclusion in public life, the undertaking of a campaign of respect for all candidates that prevented instances of violence, and holding one another accountable should instances of violence or sexism arise. The pledge was distributed across 26 communities¹⁸ and signed by 232 municipal and 92 school board candidates.

Figure 2: Pledge participation

	Municipal Elections	School Board Elections
Total Candidates Contacted	588	326
Signed Pledges	232	92
Signature Rate	39.5 %	28%

¹⁶ Summer Villages are an exception due to the seasonal tenancy of many residents.

¹⁷ Government of Alberta. "Municipal elections – Overview" *alberta.ca* URL: <https://www.alberta.ca/municipal-elections-overview.aspx> Accessed April 2021.

¹⁸ The 26 communities are Banff; Brooks; Calgary; Camrose; Cold Lake; Edmonton; Fairview; Fort McMurray; Grande Cache; Grande Prairie; High Level; High River; Hinton; Lac La Biche; Lethbridge; Medicine Hat; Peace River; Pincher Creek; Rocky Mountain House; Red Deer; St. Paul; Slave Lake; Strathcona County; Strathmore; Taber; and Whitecourt.

Figure 3: Pledge Distribution



In addition to individual pledges, social media took to the hashtag and individuals shared the message of #LiftHerUp to diverse audiences across Alberta.¹⁹ ACWS created 50 Facebook posts to promote the campaign, each of which was shared across the platform and users shared their commitment to non-violent campaigns on multiple platforms.



Monique Auffrey @moniqueauffrey · Jan 22, 2018

Hey friends @womenshelter look how our #liftherup Campaign is working!!! Actually lifting women up- I ❤️ it! #intendedpurpose



1



2



7



Amarjeet Sohi @AmarjeetSohiYEG · Sep 19, 2017

Add women, change politics. Thanks, @womenshelter, @EqualVoiceCA & Famous Five Foundation for your work on #LiftHerUp.

...



Linda Johnson @lindajohnsonyyc · Oct 11, 2017

Proud to add my name to @womenshelter's #LiftHerUp campaign. Every voice counts. acws.ca/has-your-candi... #yycvote #yycward11



3



7

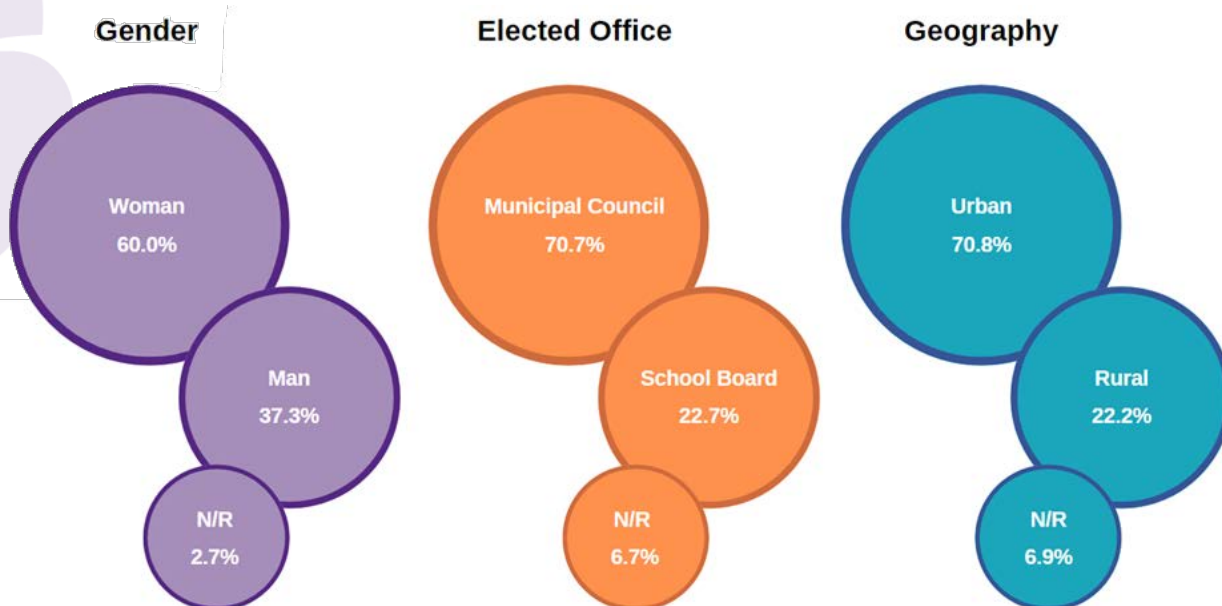


Phase Two explored the efficacy of the campaign and began researching the experiences and perceptions of those involved in the 2017 municipal elections. ACWS distributed a follow-up survey to candidates and 75 responses were received. The majority of respondents self-reported as being women (60%), being from urban centres (68%), or running for municipal council (71%).²⁰

¹⁹ Due to uses of the hashtag for purposes beyond the campaign, data for social media engagement is not available.

²⁰ Not all respondents chose to answer all survey questions and some described their region as being both urban and rural (this could apply to counties or school board regions that include both rural and urban centres)

Figure 4: Survey Respondent Demographics*

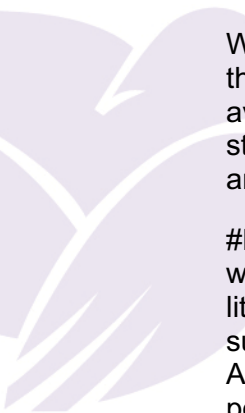


*Note: N/R indicates no response provided

The results indicated that women experienced the electoral campaign differently than men. Notably:



- Women were **four times more likely** than men to note the overall tone of the election as mostly negative or sometimes negative, with **44 percent** of women incumbents noting the 2017 campaign as more negative than previous elections;
- Women respondents were **four times more likely** than men to report that the nature of criticisms received was always or almost always focused on themselves (choices of clothing, pregnancy or decision to have children, racial identity, religion, sexuality, etc.) as opposed to their political platform;
- Women were **three times more likely** than men to report experiencing repeated discriminatory interactions with at least one individual, group, or media outlet; and
- **63 percent** of women respondents reported at least one misogynistic or discriminatory attack, with **43 percent** reporting this as a regular occurrence.



While over a quarter of women respondents reported that the #LiftHerUp campaign helped them “substantially” or “somewhat,” over half reported that there were not adequate supports available to women entering politics in Alberta. This further illustrates the need for continued study of and action upon the barriers to women’s political participation, including personal and systemic violence against women.

#LiftHerUp is now in its third phase - an in-depth study on the nature of violence against women in the political sphere. The research is informed by the campaign’s first two phases, a literature review about women’s experiences of violence in politics and speaking directly with survivors through two focus groups and seven interviews. This research has culminated in ACWS developing a Power and Control Wheel specific to the experiences of women in politics. The wheel is based on the Duluth model, developed in the 1980s to represent the coercive controlling tactics used by men who physically and sexually abuse women. Rooted in the voices of women who experienced domestic violence, the Duluth model has stood the test of time as a tool to describe coercive controlling violence in monogamous heterosexual relationships, and adaptations have been developed over time to illustrate the dynamics of power and control in other contexts.

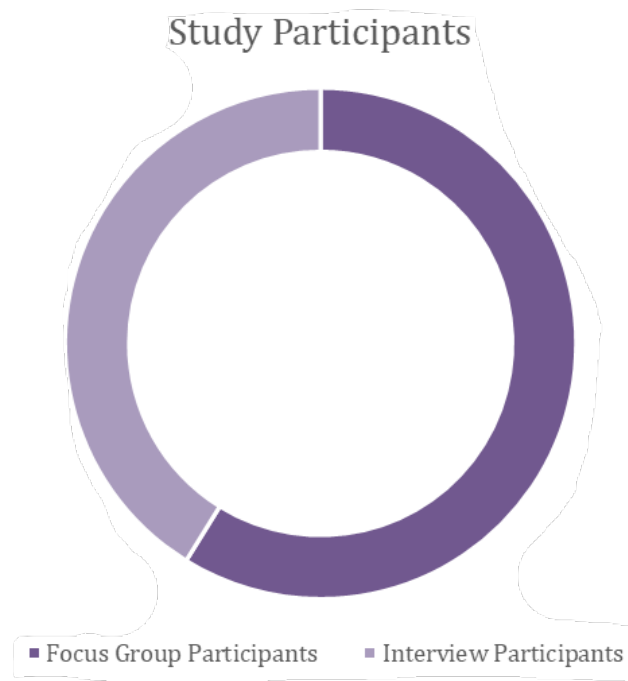
In abusive relationships, as the threat of physical and sexual violence is pervasive, the tactics used to create and sustain dominance for the man are imbued with additional implied threats and require the woman to consistently consider her safety in how she behaves or responds to her partner. With the threat of violence ever-present and growing for women in politics, the subtle and overt tactics employed to silence women’s voices at decision-making tables and to discourage their participation in the political system take on additional meaning for survivors, as they unify the behaviours of those threatening violence and propagate patriarchal stereotypes of gender roles and power.

Project Scope

The research context for this study is centered on the experiences of women in Alberta, Canada, who have run for and/or held political office at the school board, municipal, provincial, or federal level. Seventeen individuals participated in focus groups and interviews held between 2018 and 2021. In alignment with research ethics principles and to support the safety of participants, the identities, political parties, and positions held by participants in the study are confidential.²¹

²¹ See Appendix A, B

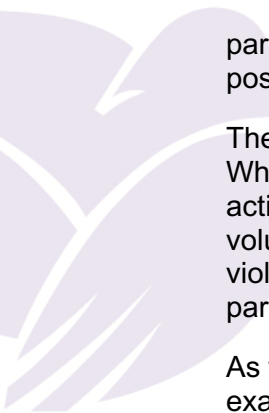
Figure 5: Participants



Diversity of experience and background of participants was key to ensuring the validity of the information gathered and, as such, the project researchers actively sought and interviewed participants representing multiple groups. Participants included individuals who were both successful and unsuccessful in their campaigns for public office, candidates from rural and urban areas, candidates in government and opposition, and candidates from various levels of public office. They represent diverse ethnicities, races, religions, ages, political beliefs, and economic groups. Participants also reflected diverse family status, marital status, and sexualities. The study explored the experiences of women in politics as women, recognizing that women with additional diversity factors, particularly Black, Indigenous, and Women of Colour, 2SLGBTQI+, and gender non-conforming women, are more likely to face more frequent and more extreme violence.

Limitations

The study did not research the experiences of women running for or holding elected office in First Nation or Metis Councils, respecting that the context of Indigenous government is unique from its colonial counterpart. While there may be similarities in experiences of women running for and holding elected office for Indigenous governments, we recommend a separate study of this experience to ensure appropriate cultural context is represented and



participants in the study and their communities have ownership, control, access, and possession of the data collected about their experiences.

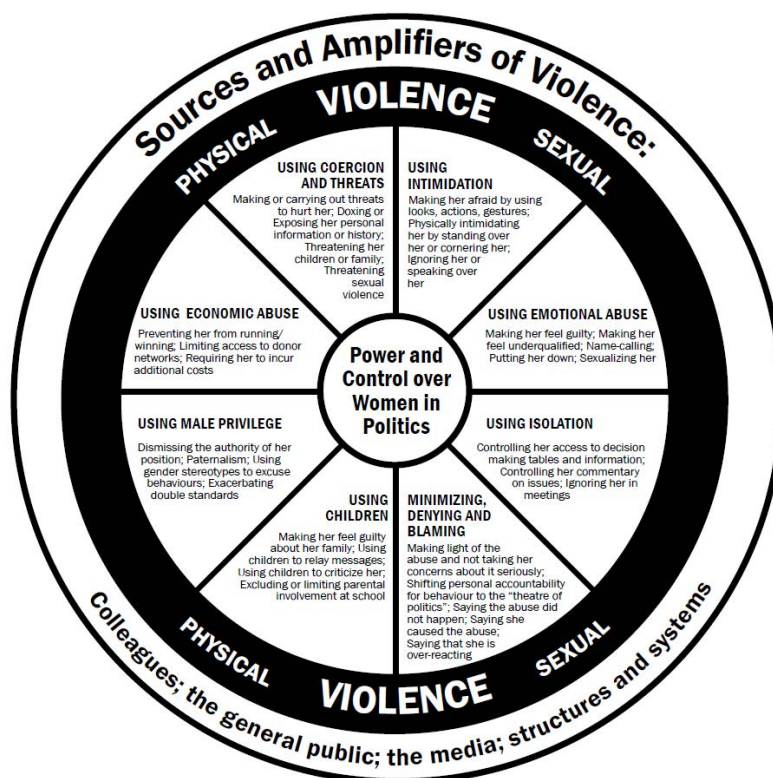
The study also limited its scope to women who ran for or held public office as candidates. While many of the tactics described below are also used toward women who are politically active in diverse ways – as campaign or political staff, political party members, organizers, volunteers, activists, and voters – we also recommend a further study of the varied nature of violence against politically active women to explore the use of violence to thwart women's participation in social advocacy in general.

As women continue to hold minority representation in public office in Alberta, specific examples of encounters are limited in this report to protect the anonymity and safety of study participants. Where possible, we have generalized or compiled information to represent the nature of various interaction(s) without providing details that could put participants at risk or identify them. We have included incidents in Alberta and other jurisdictions that have been publicly reported as illustrative examples that complement the stories we heard directly from survivors.

Power and Control Wheel

Violence directed toward women in the political sphere manifests in a variety of ways and can come from multiple sources. These manifestations are derivations of multiple tactics performed by various individuals, groups, and systems, and operate collectively to create a consistent threat of violence against women in politics and sustain the experience of fear in the subject. Though the tactics are not necessarily coordinated, they amplify one another to create a context where the threat becomes pervasive.

Figure 6: Power and Control Wheel for Women in Politics²²



The wheel is a summary representation of the breadth of tactics commonly used to create and sustain this dynamic. Not every woman in politics who experiences violence will experience all the tactics listed nor will she necessarily experience them with the same frequency or to the same degree. Not every agent of that violence will employ all tactics listed. Every experience of violence is unique and the breadth and depth of how these tactics are used are different in each instance. The effect on each individual will also be different, depending on a variety of factors, including the scope and source of the violence and that individual's personal history. Nonetheless, there remains a consistent experience of violent threat and resulting fear for one's own safety or autonomy.

²² Full page image in Appendix C



Outer Rings

In the original Duluth Model Power and Control Wheel, the dynamic of power is specific to men who abuse women in domestic relationships. In developing the Power and Control Wheel for women in politics, the dynamic of violence emerged differently, with multiple, overlapping sources creating, amplifying, and exacerbating the threat of violence. Survivors reported experiencing threats and acts of violence in multiple contexts, combined with additional systemic factors that heightened male dominance and privilege, limiting their ability to equally participate in politics without fear of attack. Their lived experience was aligned with the logic of power and control in the original wheel but in a more elaborate social interplay.

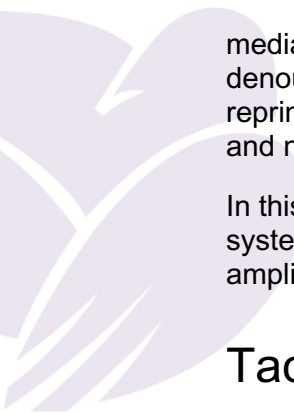
The study identified four primary sources employing these power tactics - colleagues, including other elected officials or candidates, their staff/volunteers, and public sector employees in positions of power; the general public, including a representative's constituents and individuals using social media; the media, including television, radio, and the internet; and structures and systems that limit women's equal participation, including the physical layout of buildings, leave provisions, policies for addressing harassment, and more.

It is important to note that while each of these four sources can perpetrate acts of violence, their actions are neither predetermined nor necessarily homogenous – each source is a collection of individuals or systems supported/created by individuals. As individuals have agency both independently and collectively, each source also has the power to limit the violence employed by other groups and to intervene to foster a more safe and equal culture.

To represent this layered dynamic, an additional outer ring has been incorporated into the wheel. These four categories are called “Sources and Amplifiers of Violence” to describe how each category has the agency to foster a context of violence and to illustrate the interplay among the categories. For example, if a colleague employs tactics of violence against a woman in elected office, the media has the agency to not only choose to report the incident publicly but also to choose the tone of reporting and influence the assignment of blame. Constituents can then respond by lauding or condemning the violence, and existing structures (such as mediation, anti-harassment, or resolution policies) can serve to resolve the issue, take no action, or condone the original violent tactic. These ripples can amplify the original event and re-traumatize the woman over time in both private and public contexts, but they also have the power to interrupt and denounce perpetrators.

The December 2016 demonstration at the Alberta Legislature provides a prime example for this complex interplay. The rally was hosted by the Rebel Media group and attended by politicians and constituents from across Alberta. Speakers and organizers at the event neither quelled nor discouraged the crowd's chants of “lock her up”. In subsequent media reporting, event speaker Chris Alexander reported feeling “uncomfortable” with the language, though video from the event shows him smiling and nodding to the chanting crowd.²³ The

²³ Ross, Andrea and Kyle Muzyka. “Albertans Chant ‘Lock Her Up’ about Rachel Notley at Rally Against Carbon Tax” *cbc.ca* December 4, 2016. URL: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/chris-alexander-lock-her-up-chant-anti-carbon-tax-1.3880911>



media reports offered space for additional commentary by other elected officials who denounced both the chanting and the lack of leadership from attending politicians. The only reprimand levied against the event and its participants was done in the court of public opinion and no policies were enacted to avoid a similar situation from taking place in future.

In this example, all four categories were represented—colleagues, the public, media, and systems. While they did not act as homogeneous groups, each exhibited its capacity in either amplifying or denouncing the violent language directed at the Premier.

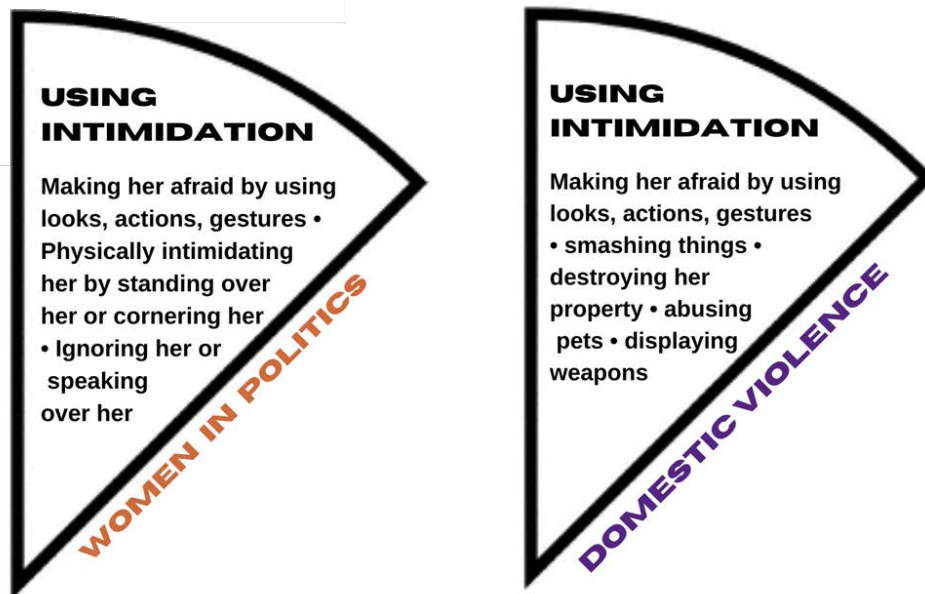
Tactics

Through research and interviews with survivors about their lived experience, it became clear that the categories of tactics used to wield power over women in the political sphere align closely with those used in violent domestic relationships, however the way those tactics are expressed vary. As such, the wedges of the Power and Control wheel for women in politics mirror the original wheel design, with variance in the description of each aspect.

Also, as there are multiple sources employing the various tactics, there are various methods and venues in which each controlling tactic can manifest. In the case of women in politics, the power and control tactics were found to take place in private, in public, online, and within institutional contexts such as council meetings and legislative sessions.

Using Intimidation

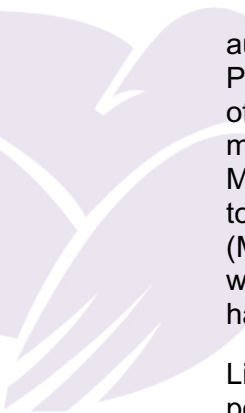
Making her afraid by using looks, actions, gestures; Physically intimidating her by standing over her or cornering her; Ignoring her or speaking over her



Intimidation is an action or series of actions intended to create a sense of fear in another. The intimidator strives to display their ability to control a situation and achieve their own goals, often through force and at the expense of those around them. As such, intimidation underscores many wedges of the Power and Control wheel. As a stand-alone category, the focus is those actions and activities specifically intended to make a woman feel inferior and lacking control. Whether through a display of aggressive physicality, a verbal attack, or a lack of recognition of a woman's presence or right to speak, intimidation results in a loss of personal authority which affects a woman's agency to fully engage in elected office.

Study participants frequently referenced the use of intimidation tactics as a way of limiting their ability, opportunity, or confidence to participate in politics. Examples included having a male colleague purposefully stand uncomfortably close to them in otherwise open spaces, having a group of elected officials collectively make enough noise that her voice would be drowned out in a debate or at an event, having constituents or colleagues ignore them when speaking during meetings, limiting her access to the microphone or providing less speaking time at events, or having individuals follow them to their cars after work or public engagements. Participants reported these tactics taking place one-on-one, in groups, in person, and online.

In addition to the experiences shared by study participants, there have been numerous public reports of this type of behaviour employed to diminish women's presence in politics. In a town hall-style debate leading up to the 2016 United States presidential election, Donald Trump followed Hillary Clinton around the stage, standing closely behind her as she addressed the



audience.²⁴ In 2020, during the American Vice-presidential debate, then Vice-president Mike Pence frequently interrupted or spoke over candidate Kamala Harris enough that her reply of "I'm speaking" resonated widely enough to become the source of both internet memes and merchandise.²⁵ Male party leaders "drowned out" Canadian Green Party leader Elizabeth May during a discussion of women's reproductive rights in the English-language debate prior to the 2019 Canadian federal election.²⁶ In Alberta, Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) Sandra Jansen was literally run out of the United Conservative Party leadership race when violent tactics against her candidacy culminated into volunteers chasing her down a hallway at a party convention in 2016.²⁷

Like violence in domestic relationships, intimidation is the abuser's way of manifesting his position of power. Once an abuser or group of abusers establish a context of intimidation, they can sustain that context with little effort as the effects of each action accumulate over time. Intimidation tactics sustain the power imbalance by reinforcing the capacity of the abuser to be violent or use violence to prove their dominance. In politics, this can create an echo effect that reverberates into public and domestic spheres by modeling men as having power over women or assuming more authority for their gender in a highly visible space.

²⁴ Jamieson, Alastair. "2016 Presidential Debate: Trump Accused of 'Stalking' Clinton on Stage" *nbcnews.com* October 10, 2016. URL: <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/2016-presidential-debates/presidential-debate-trump-accused-stalking-clinton-stage-n663516>

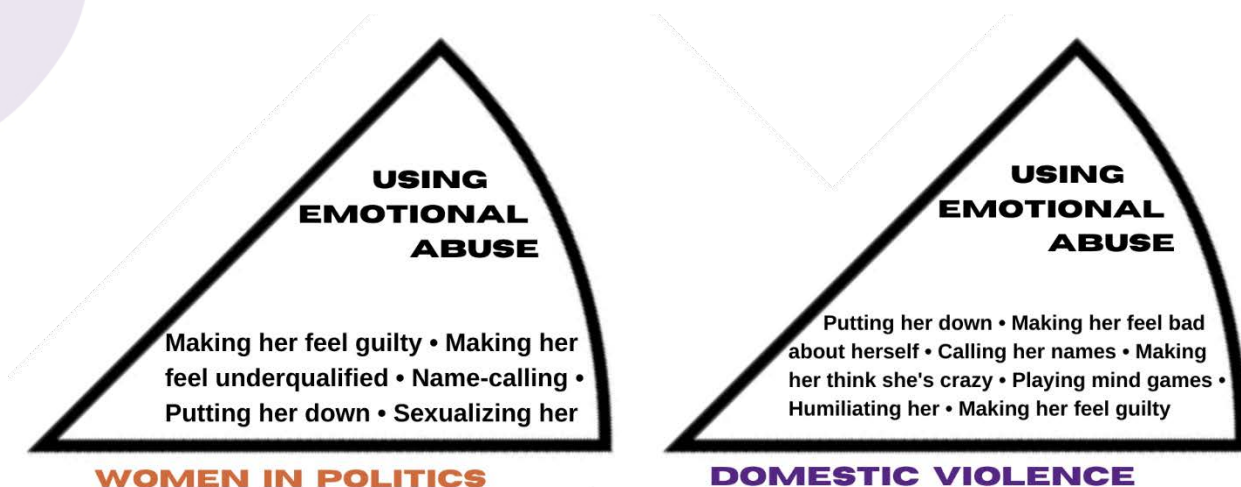
²⁵ Morris, Seren. "Kamala Harris 'I'm Speaking' Debate Moment Sparks Memes and Merchandise" *newsweek.com* October 8, 2020. URL: <https://www.newsweek.com/kamala-harris-im-speaking-mike-pence-debate-1537354>

²⁶ Kingston, Anne. "The 2019 election revealed that sexism is status quo" November 5, 2019. URL: <https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/the-2019-election-revealed-that-sexism-is-status-quo/>; Gibson, Victoria. "'This is not a place for me': female politicians reveal frustrations on the campaign trail" *ipolitics.ca* October 18, 2019. URL: <https://ipolitics.ca/2019/10/18/this-is-not-a-place-for-me-female-politicians-reveal-frustrations-on-the-campaign-trail/>

²⁷ *Postmedia News* Staff. "Shock as the two women candidates drop out of Alberta PC leadership race over 'harassment,' 'intimidation'" *nationalpost.com* November 8, 2016. URL: <https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/shock-as-the-two-women-candidates-drop-out-of-alberta-pc-leadership-race-over-harassment-and-intimidation>

Using Emotional Abuse

Making her feel guilty; Making her feel underqualified; Name-calling; Putting her down; Sexualizing her



Emotional abuse, like intimidation, serves to undermine a woman's ability to see herself as a capable, independent, and worthy person, equal to those around her. Pairing with intimidation tactics that serve to build the abuser up, emotional abuse tactics serve to directly break a woman down. Whereas intimidation tactics use an abuser's authority or physical power to create a sense of impending threat, emotional abuse actively undermines the woman's sense of self, positioning her as innately inferior and dependent.

Name-calling is a key tactic of emotional abuse as it erodes an individual's identity or personhood. Study participants identified multiple instances of being called gendered pejoratives including "shrew," "bitch" and "little girl" as ways to diminish their validity as candidates or elected officials. They also referenced opponents refusing to use their given names at all. Public news reports have also highlighted the language used to insult women in politics. While attacks and strong language can permeate political dialogue, the language used against women focuses on them as women. Tweets directed at former federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna, used the term "Barbie" as frequently as they used the term "environment."²⁸ An opposition staffer openly criticized Alberta Minister of Health, Sarah Hoffman, for her weight.²⁹ During House of Commons sessions, Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay called MP Belinda Stronach a "dog" and

²⁸ Proudfoot, Shannon. "Why would anyone hate Catherine McKenna?" *macleans.ca* November 4, 2019. URL: <https://www.macleans.ca/politics/ottawa/why-would-anyone-hate-catherine-mckenna/>

²⁹ CBC News Staff. "Sarah Hoffman weight insults show sexism still an issue in politics, expert says" *cbc.ca/news* June 2, 2015. URL: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/sarah-hoffman-weight-insults-show-sexism-still-an-issue-in-politics-expert-says-1.3096679>

male parliamentarians called Deputy Prime Minister Sheila Copps a "slut" and a "bitch," and told her to "quiet down, baby."³⁰

Women's presence in political spaces is also brought into question in relation to traditional gender roles in families. Study participants referenced attacks from constituents, colleagues, and opponents suggesting they were ignoring family responsibilities by participating in politics and should return to the kitchen "where they belong." Study participants also experienced sexualizing or objectifying attacks from individuals and media aligned with the name-calling above, including judgments related to whether they were too attractive or not attractive enough, and too feminine or not feminine enough to be in the public sphere. These tactics operate to normalize a social idea of limiting women to the sphere of objects intended for men's pleasure, mothers, and caretakers.

Further, study participants commonly reflected on experiences with constituents and colleagues who dismissed their contributions and experience or were openly surprised by their knowledge of a subject area. To combat this assumption of ignorance, study participants also reported feeling a need to be over-prepared for meetings and debates. Matched with intimidation tactics of ignoring or speaking over women, participants noted compounding challenges in being heard or regarded as worthy of the authority of their positions in multiple contexts.

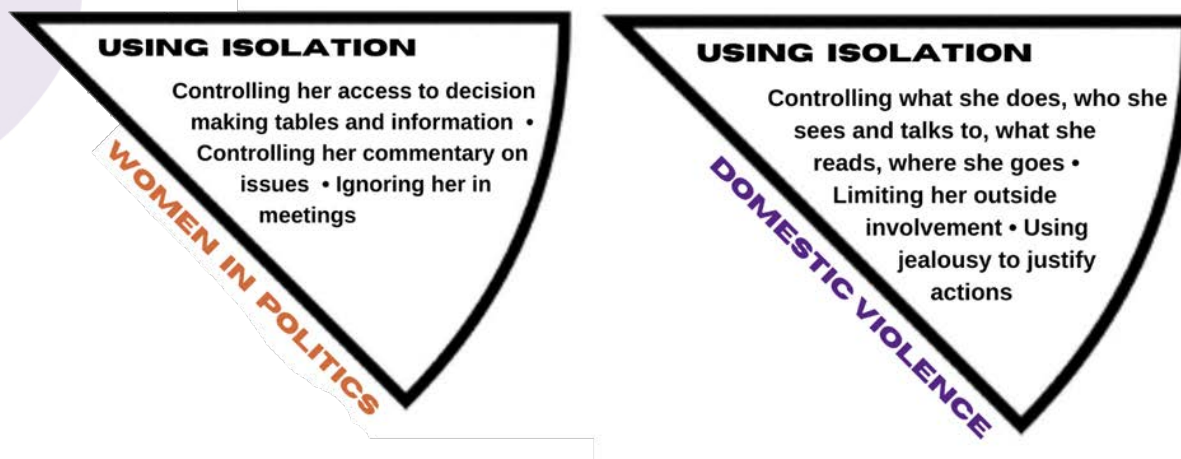
This construction of power imbalance through derisive language, objectification, and dismissal serves to undermine women's sense of validity in public space. Emotional abuse destabilizes her sense of safety, confidence, and self. Like in domestic violence, emotional abuse devalues her personhood and, subsequently, validates the power of the abuser in its place. By undermining her personhood, a woman's beliefs, ideas, contributions, and perspectives can be more easily dismissed and she becomes more easily controlled. Positioned as "lesser than," the notion that a woman does not fully grasp the complexity of an issue or have the capacity to contribute to a solution can become normalized, despite both evidence to the contrary and the breadth of research that supports the value of women's voices in leadership and decision-making³¹. By using emotional abuse to invalidate women's subjectivity, abusers are able to sustain notions of normalcy in men's power and control in politics.

³⁰ Stewart, J.D.M. "Mr. MacKay's remarks have a long, unfortunate pedigree" *theglobeandmail.com* October 25, 2006. URL: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/mr-mackays-remarks-have-a-long-unfortunate-pedigree/article1108009/>

³¹ United Nations Women. "Women's leadership and political participation" *unwomen.org* URL: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation> Accessed June 2021.

Using Isolation

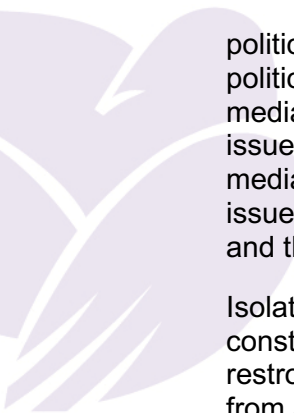
Controlling her access to decision making tables and information; Controlling her commentary on issues; Ignoring her in meetings



By controlling who someone engages with, how, and when, an abuser achieves two outcomes. First, they control the information and ideas a woman has access to, and second, they position themselves as vital, creating a gatekeeper role for themselves. Isolation is a key tactic used in abusive relationships to limit access to supports, control behaviour, and create dependence on the abuser. In politics, isolation tactics arise in both decision-making settings and in public discourse.

In decision-making settings, men isolate women by controlling their presence and participation in meetings and at informal gatherings where decisions are made and deals negotiated. This tactic arises first in managing who holds key roles, such as ministerial portfolios and committee posts, and second in who is welcomed and supported to participate, either through invitation or recognition. As noted above, speaking over a woman or ignoring her contributions in meetings can be intimidating, but it also serves to isolate a woman from the discussion at hand and control her influence over decisions being made. Study participants reflected on experiences of being made to feel invisible in meetings when colleagues dismissed their contributions or ignored their efforts to participate. They also referenced informal and social gatherings among male colleagues, such as playing golf or attending hockey games, that would lead to alliances on issues and weakened their influence in formal discussions.

Women in politics are further isolated by limiting the topics they are welcomed to discuss in the media and the frequency of their appearances. Canadian non-profit organization Informed Opinions reports that in 2015, women's voices made up only 24 percent of



politicians quoted in newspaper articles and broadcast media with national reach.³² While politicians are often included in media stories, study participants frequently reported that the media only approached them to comment on policies related to children, family, and health issues – items aligned with traditional gender norms. This limitation on women’s voices in the media creates a cyclical effect where women’s voices are not heard on a wide variety of issues, further entrenching the concept that women are unqualified in relation to those issues, and therefore women are unwelcome to speak on those issues.

Isolation can also be a factor of systems and structures. As many legislative buildings were constructed before women had the right to vote or hold office, the simple question of restroom access can isolate a woman politician by extending the period of time she is away from a meeting or session. The absence of flexible childcare options can exclude a woman from evening meetings or events – study participants also noted that they would not be invited to events at times due to the unverified assumption they might have childcare concerns. Not having maternity or parental leave provisions can exclude potential candidates from running if they are considering having children. Further, rules about the presence of children in legislative assemblies and offices are under review across the world, as more mothers assume elected office. In particular, the perceived propriety of breastfeeding in legislative chambers has drawn international attention and mixed reactions with some suggesting that allowances for nursing would open assemblies to ridicule³³, commentary that aims to further isolate women from full participation in elected office. These systems foster a sense of women’s absence (as opposed to creating measures to ensure their presence), furthering their isolation from their colleagues and their constituents. By controlling their access, power rests with those present (namely, men) and those present are perpetuated as gatekeepers to the authority that lies in elected positions.

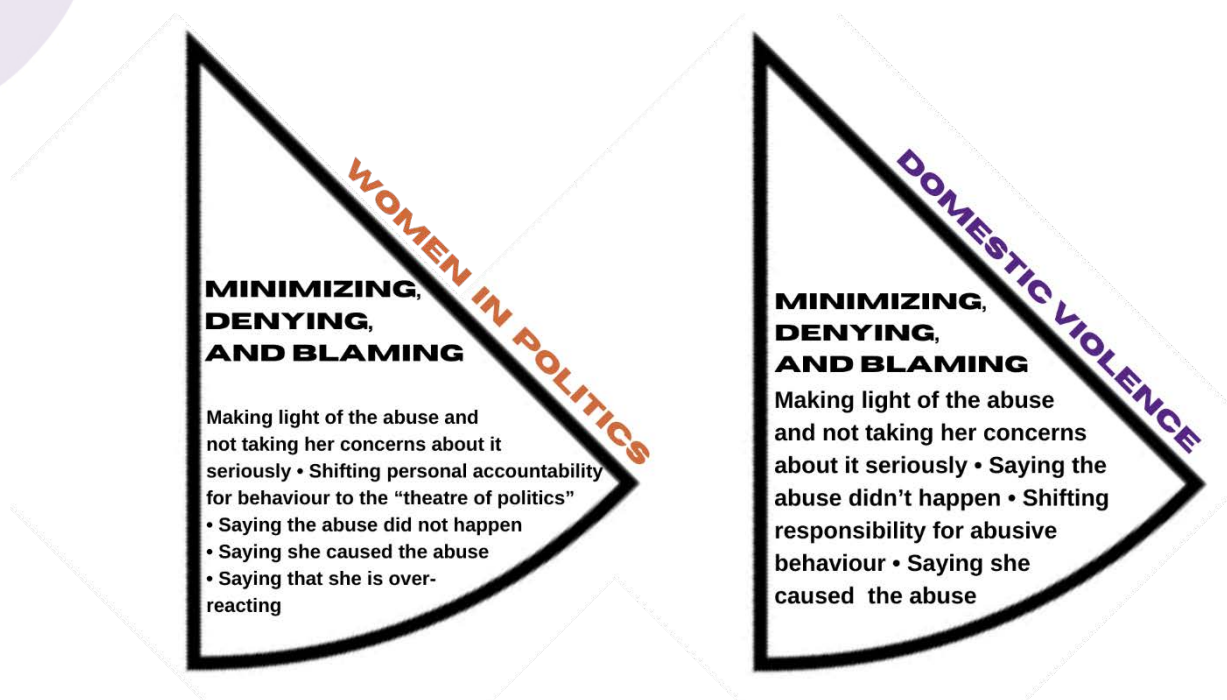
In addition to being a tactic used to distance women from decision-making tables and functions, isolation can also come as a result of other tactics described in the wheel. Acts of intimidation, use of her children, and coercion and threats may make her feel a need to pull away from activities; emotional abuse, male privilege, and minimizing, denying, and blaming may cause her to question her worthiness of being present in various contexts; economic abuse might eliminate participation as an option. The tactics are interwoven and isolation serves to amplify the effects of each further widening the gap between men and women’s experiences in politics.

³² Morris, Marika. “Gender of sources used in major Canadian media” *informedopinions.org* January 2016. URL: <https://informedopinions.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Gender-of-sources-in-Canadian-media-Informed-Opinions-FINAL.pdf> Accessed April 2021.

³³ BBC News Staff. “Breastfeeding in the Commons ‘would risk tabloid ridicule’” *bbc.com/news* November 10, 2015. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-34780275>

Minimizing, Denying, Blaming

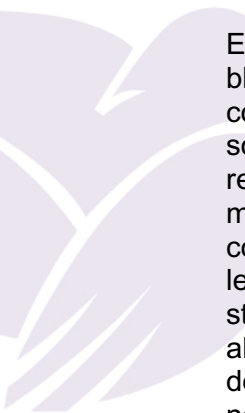
Making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously; Shifting personal accountability for behaviour to the “theatre of politics”; Saying the abuse did not happen; Saying she caused the abuse; Saying that she is over-reacting



It’s part of the game.
If you can’t handle it, don’t run for office.
It’s not personal.
“Quiet down, baby.”³⁴

Minimizing, denying, and blaming are tactics commonly used by abusers to normalize or justify their actions and deny the validity of any effects on the person experiencing the abuse. Tied closely to emotional abuse, this wedge of the wheel represents the undermining of a woman’s authentic experience by downplaying and denying abuse or suggesting that she is at fault for what has happened to her.

³⁴ Stewart, J.D.M. “Mr. MacKay’s remarks have a long, unfortunate pedigree” *theglobeandmail.com* October 25, 2006. URL: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/mr-mackays-remarks-have-a-long-unfortunate-pedigree/article1108009/>



Existing social norms around gender roles contribute to a culture of minimizing, denying, and blaming. Normalized ideas about how women are expected to behave and the typical concepts of leadership create a double bind for women in politics and other leadership roles; society expects women to be nurturing and likeable and politicians to be assertive and results-driven.³⁵ When women in politics deviate from either of these constructed identities, men are able to explain away personalized attacks by suggesting that the woman is not conforming to either of these roles. For example, in response to Premier Alison Redford's leadership, which was frequently reported as aggressive, MLA Len Webber criticized her by stating she was "not a nice lady."³⁶ Research by academic Melanie Thomas indicates that about 20 percent of Canadians think women are "too nice" for politics.³⁷ Playing on this double bind, abusers assume social permission to attack women in public spaces as they are not behaving "as they should," no matter if they are too nice or not nice enough.

Also, within this category, two intertwined behaviours of abusers arise with frequency in the political context – dismissing or downplaying abusive language as jokes and assigning abusive behaviours to the so-called "theatre of politics." Study participants shared stories of their experiences in meetings, sessions, and at events where inappropriate and abusive comments directed at them were played off as jokes and where personalized heckling and taunting were chalked up to "normal" behaviour in political forums. A publicly reported example from 2016 highlighted Alberta Wildrose party leader Brian Jean addressing a question about housing in a town hall meeting by saying, "I've been beating this drum for 10,11 years. I will continue to beat it, I promise. But it's against the law to beat Rachel Notley."³⁸ Though he apologized for the comment shortly thereafter as an "inappropriate attempt at humour,"³⁹ the inherent violence in the language was not addressed in the apology.

Study participants shared stories of colleagues teasing them for having "emotional" responses, dismiss sexualized suggestions as jokes, and suggesting that being on the receiving end of personalized attacks was a sign of having "made it" in politics. Participants referenced a tacit understanding that if you lack resilience for personal attacks that you should not be in politics – an idea that does not address the disproportionate amount of highly violent and personalized attacks lobbied against women.

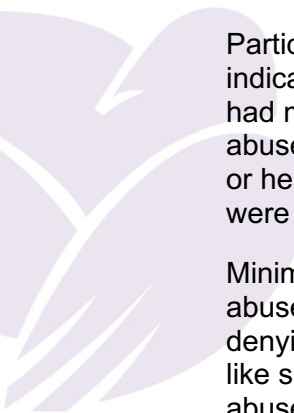
³⁵ Cooper, Marianne. "For Women Leaders, Likability and Success Hardly Go Hand-in-Hand" *hbr.org* April 30, 2013. URL: <https://hbr.org/2013/04/for-women-leaders-likability-a> Accessed April 2021.

³⁶ Bennett, Dean. "'Not a nice lady:' Alberta Tory backbencher quits over Redford leadership" *cp24.com* March 13, 2014. URL: <https://www.cp24.com/news/not-a-nice-lady-alberta-tory-backbencher-quits-over-redford-leadership-1.1727587>

³⁷ Allford, Jennifer. "Will it always be a man's world? The push for equal representation in politics" *explore.ucalgary.ca* February 1, 2019. URL: <https://explore.ucalgary.ca/gender-equality-women-in-politics>

³⁸ Thurton, David. "Alberta Wildrose leader Brian Jean apologizes for comment about beating Notley" *cbc.ca/news* August 31, 2016. URL: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/alberta-wildrose-leader-brian-jean-apologizes-for-comment-about-beating-notley-1.3742353>

³⁹ Bennett, Dean. "Premier Rachel Notley 'bemused' by Opposition leader Brian Jean's assault joke" *globalnews.ca* September 1, 2016. URL: <https://globalnews.ca/news/2916903/premier-rachel-notley-bemused-by-opposition-leader-brian-jeans-assault-joke/>

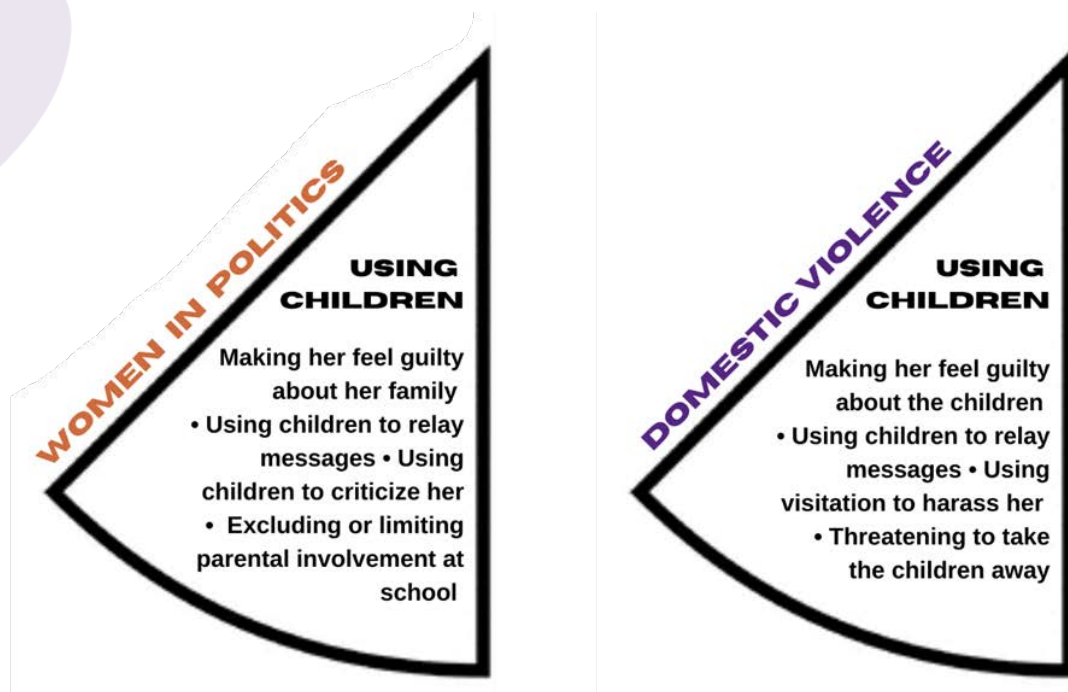


Participants also referenced systemic challenges in reporting abusive behaviours. Some indicated that colleagues would often question the veracity of their claims or suggest that they had misunderstood the action or statement made against them. Some participants noted that abusers would leverage this attitude by making attacks when they were less likely to be seen or heard by others, for example, when cameras or other elected officials were not present or were otherwise focused, making the abuse more difficult for the woman to prove.

Minimizing, denying, and blaming tactics shift responsibility for a woman's experience of abuse away from the abuser and on to the woman. She is positioned as being at fault for denying social norms; for being inappropriate; for existing beyond her allocated space. Much like suggesting that boys will be boys, questioning the truth of a survivor's disclosure of abuse, or challenging a woman for not leaving her abusive husband, victim-blaming is an entrenched social behaviour that positions abuse as a woman's fault and subsequently her problem to manage and solve. Minimizing, denying, and blaming tactics push the conversation of abuse to the sidelines by focusing on a perceived issue with the person experiencing abuse as opposed to the abuser themselves.

Using Children

Making her feel guilty about her family; Using children to relay messages; Using children to criticize her; Excluding or limiting parental involvement at school



Gender norms around child-rearing affect women in all occupations. Women are frequently questioned about how they balance family and career, while men do not face the same scrutiny.

Not all study participants were parents at the time they ran for or held office, but the question of children nonetheless applied. Study participants reported both media and constituents asking about their parental status throughout their campaigns. If they were parents, further questions arose about how they would balance public office and a family and if they were not parents, they were asked why not with a subtext equating motherhood with maturity or competence. In addition to creating a no-win scenario for women, this questioning lies in stark contrast to the Alberta Human Rights Act which prohibits employers from requiring applicants to disclose their family status.⁴⁰ In contrast, men are frequently lauded for having a family and are not asked about childcare arrangements or work-life balance during

⁴⁰ Alberta Human Rights Act. *Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, c.A-25.5*. Alberta. Alberta Queen's Printer. Web. June 11, 2018. URL: https://www.qp.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=A25P5.cfm&leg_type=Acts&isbncln=9780779744060

campaigns. Fatherhood, like motherhood, symbolizes maturity and stability but does not have the same associated liability⁴¹.

While knowledge of a woman's family status does not constitute violence, how this information is used can. Study participants shared experiences including constituents using their own children to relay messages to the woman's children and back to her, adults approaching the woman's children directly and uttering threats, and being excluded from parental involvement in their child's school due to their elected position or campaign.

Study participants referenced feeling persistent concerns for their children's safety specifically in relation to their holding public office; some actively sought to keep their children's identities private. This is echoed in a study of federal MPs which notes that "some women actively avoid mentioning their parental status in their campaigns and communications to constituents out of fear of the safety of their children" while "None of the men ... mentioned security concerns as a factor in deciding whether or not to present their families, and in particular, their children, to the public."⁴²

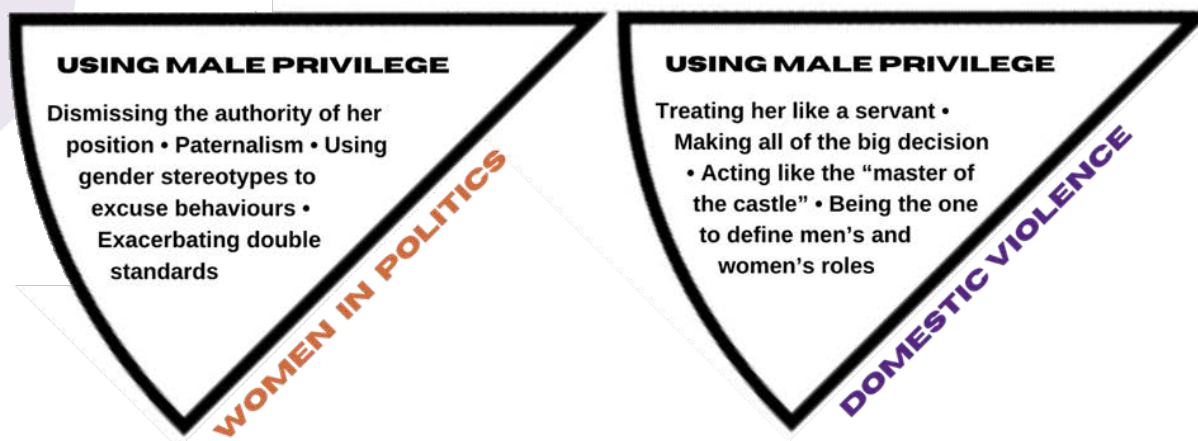
By employing the children as leverage, abusers seek to control or manipulate women in elected office. By questioning her ability to serve in elected office based on her family status, they normalize the idea that women are not fit for office, either due to the limitations of her caregiving responsibilities or by not having maternal experience and maturity. By threatening the children or using them as pawns to relay information, abusers exacerbate a context of fear and a culture of violence that limits a woman's ability to participate freely as an elected official.

⁴¹ Thomas, Melanee and Bittner, Amanda "Gender, parenting and politics: Women are damned if they do and damned if they don't when it comes to politics and parenting." *Policyoptions.irpp.org* October 4, 2017 URL: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/october-2017/gender-parenting-and-politics/>

⁴² Bittner, Amanda and Thomas, Melanee. "Moms in Politics: Work is Work." *Canadian Parliamentary Review* vol. 40, no. 3 revparlcan.ca November 2017. URL: <http://www.revparlcan.ca/en/vol40-no3-moms-in-politics-work-is-work/> Accessed April 2021.

Using Male Privilege

Dismissing the authority of her position; Paternalism; Using gender stereotypes to excuse behaviours; Exacerbating double standards

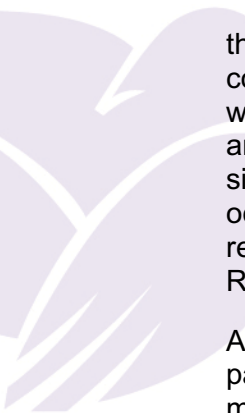


Male privilege refers to the beneficial position men hold in society due to gender norms assigned to masculinity. The more pervasive these norms are, the more subtly and pervasively they operate to benefit men and perpetuate gendered power imbalances.⁴³ A common example of male privilege explored in the ACWS gender-based violence prevention program, Leading Change™, is the scope of effort women undertake to address their personal safety in comparison with men. For example, men will self-report little to no active effort to avoid sexual assault, whereas women will report myriad choices made on a daily basis to reduce their likelihood of being attacked. Men and boys attending Leading Change sessions frequently report having been unaware of the amount of time and effort women commit to avoiding harassment and assault before attending a session.⁴⁴ In abusive dynamics, male privilege is positioned as a defense for violent behaviours and tactics due to a perceived “natural” dominance of men over women. In politics, male privilege has multiple manifestations that sideline women and discount their validity or authority as elected officials.

One of the subtlest yet most pervasive expressions of male privilege in politics is the diminishing of a woman’s status by using only her first name. For example, a University of Utah study found that Hillary Clinton was referred to by her first name four times more often

⁴³ Male privilege is linked to a socially defined concept of ideal masculinity. As such, men who do not perform their gender in alignment with this concept do not benefit from male privilege to the same extent as those that do. Male privilege also disadvantages those who are two-spirit, trans, non-binary, gender fluid, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming.

⁴⁴ ACWS Leading Change internal evaluations.



than her 2008 democratic primary rival, Barack Obama.⁴⁵ The use of a first name can connote a sense of familiarity or relatability, however, it is rarely applied to men in the same way as women, highlighting that a different dynamic is at play – one of professional respect and formality. The contrast between the two exacerbates a gendered power dynamic and signifies women as lacking the same social authority as men. While first names are also occasionally used for male leaders, they tend toward folksy nicknames that show a degree of relatability or familiar deference, such as “Steady Eddie” for Premier Ed Stelmach or “King Ralph” for long-serving premier Ralph Klein.

Another subtle form of reinforcing male privilege comes in paternalistic behaviours. Study participants shared experiences of male colleagues who would position themselves as mentors and offer to guide the women through the political world under the guise of protecting them and making presumptions of the women’s ignorance. A twist on the isolation tactic, this behaviour serves as a subtle reinforcement of men’s power to act as gatekeepers in political spheres. Experiences of paternalistic dynamics were shared by women with diverse political roles, including some with additional positions of authority such as cabinet portfolios. A flip on paternalism and more explicit display of male privilege also arose in stories from study participants who faced abusive behaviour from men in roles lower in the hierarchy than theirs in response to the perceived imbalance in authority, including direct disregard for their positions on councils and committees.

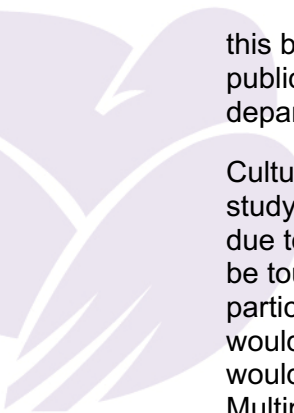
Male privilege is also used to directly explain away abuse, particularly sexual misconduct. As in Minimizing, Denying, and Blaming, society cites gender norms such as “boys will be boys” to downplay men’s responsibility for their abusive behaviour. As a result, constituents, the media, and other politicians tend to overlook misconduct among men and assume a less punitive approach than they do with women in the court of public opinion. For example, Ontario Progressive Conservative leader Patrick Brown resigned from the party leadership in 2018 amidst sexual misconduct allegations and was subsequently expelled from caucus but was also elected mayor of Brampton later that same year,⁴⁶ reflecting a degree of social permission for his alleged behaviours. A 2018 survey by the Canadian Press notes that 58 percent of women MPs had “personally been the target of one or more form of sexual misconduct while in office, including inappropriate or unwanted remarks, gestures or text messages of a sexual nature.”⁴⁷ In the survey, 63 percent noted that they perceived the level of sexual harassment as on par with most workplaces,⁴⁸ highlighting a social perception of

⁴⁵ Uscinski, Joseph E. and Goren, Lilly J. “What’s in a Name? Coverage of Senator Hillary Clinton during the 2008 Democratic Primary” *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 64, No. 4, December 2011, PP 884-896
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23056354?seq=1>

⁴⁶ Aiello, Rachel and McGregor, Glen. “Patrick Brown denies sexual misconduct allegations from two women, resigns as Ontario PC leader” *ctvnews.ca* February 22, 2018. URL: <https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/patrick-brown-denies-sexual-misconduct-allegations-from-two-women-resigns-as-ontario-pc-leader-1.3774686>;
Goodfield, Kayla “Patrick Brown elected mayor of Brampton; defeats incumbent” *ctvnews.ca* October 23, 2018. URL: <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/patrick-brown-elected-mayor-of-brampton-defeats-incumbent-1.4145251>

⁴⁷ Smith, Joanna “Canada’s female MPs speak out on sexual misconduct: ‘The best friend of violence is silence’” *globalnews.ca* January 2, 2018. URL: <https://globalnews.ca/news/3941933/sexual-misconduct-canadian-politics/>

⁴⁸ *ibid*



this behaviour as normalized. Reports have shown replication of these attitudes in other publicly-funded, traditionally male-dominated fields as well, including police departments, fire departments, and the military.

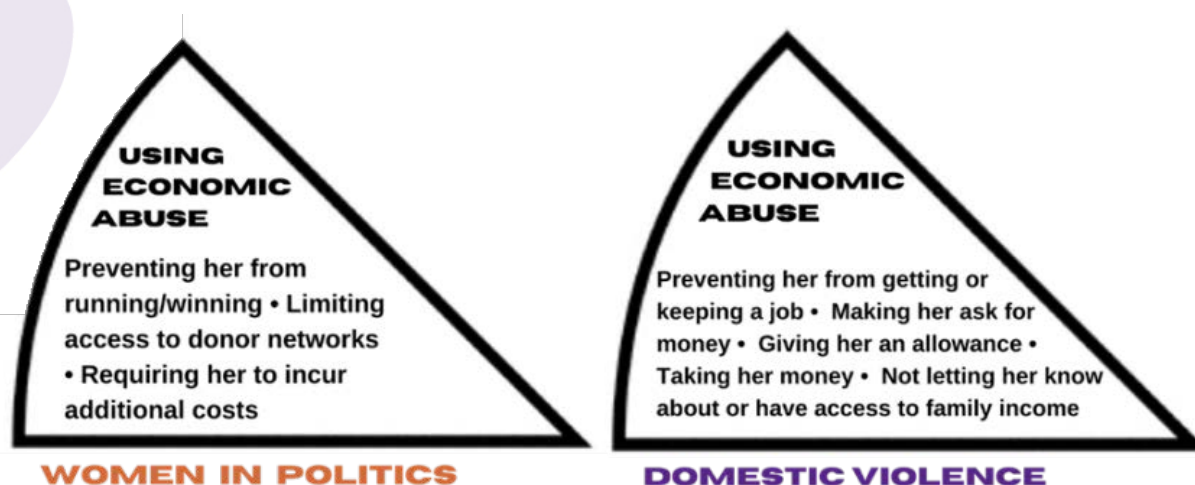
Culture is shifting with growing social awareness and discussion of male privilege, however, study participants noted that there remains a tacit hesitance to report abuse and harassment due to systems that continue to favour men. With the above noted double bind of needing to be tough enough to handle the theatre of politics and also perform their gender “nicely,” participants shared their reluctance to seek formal reprimand for abusers so they themselves would appear neither weak nor shrill. They also shared a sentiment that male perpetrators would be unlikely to face the same scrutiny as accused that the women would as accusers. Multiple widely reported cases of abuse and harassment reinforce this perception, including the United States Supreme Court appointment of Brett Kavanaugh in 2018 despite multiple accusations of sexual misconduct⁴⁹.

These threads culminate in a consistent refrain for women in politics and onlookers—politics is a male sphere by default and women are not equals in the space. The dynamic of male privilege underscores all other tactics of abuse on the wheel, as it is the basis for assumed differences of power, and it sustains ongoing social permission to lobby abuse toward women who challenge male power.

⁴⁹ Hauser, Christine. “The Women Who Have Accused Brett Kavanaugh” nytimes.com September 26, 2018. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/26/us/politics/brett-kavanaugh-accusers-women.html>

Using Economic Abuse

Preventing her from running/winning; limiting access to donor networks; Requiring her to incur additional costs

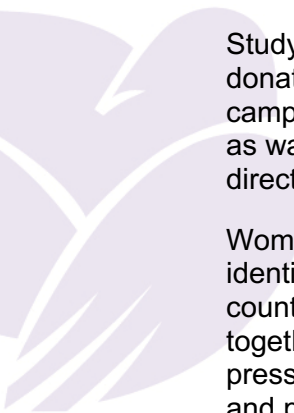


Economic abuse of women in politics tends to be less direct or individualized than other types of abuse, as it is often a result of systems and structures designed to favour men. Nonetheless, women face an economic disadvantage in politics that, in combination with the other power and control tactics, restricts their equal participation and diminishes their roles as leaders.

Despite ongoing efforts by multiple organizations to encourage women's candidacy, structural barriers to their accessing office differ from men. The challenges are as fundamental as accessing nominations within party structures. In a meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, academic Jeanette Ashe reported on her research findings that "men are six times more likely to be selected as candidates by party members than are women."⁵⁰ Academics Melanee Thomas and Marc André Bodet studied women's candidacy in federal elections and found that women were more likely to be "sacrificial lambs," run as party candidates in ridings strongly held by opposing parties.⁵¹ By limiting women's access to nominations to those that are unlikely to be won, parties can present an outward face of diversity and inclusion while simultaneously sustaining male power and control over decision-making roles. This constitutes an economic disadvantage for women on two fronts: first, as a limiting factor in accessing the job of an elected official, and second, as a limiting factor in how much a donor may want to support what is perceived as an "unwinnable" campaign.

⁵⁰ Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on the Status of Women. *Evidence*. 42nd Parl., 1st sess., Meeting No. 108. 2018. *Parliament of Canada*. Web. June 12, 2018. URL: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/FEWO/meeting-108/evidence>

⁵¹ Thomas, Melanee and Bodet, Marc André. "Sacrificial Lambs, women candidates, and district competitiveness in Canada." *Electoral Studies*, vol. 32, no. 1, March 2013, PP 153-166



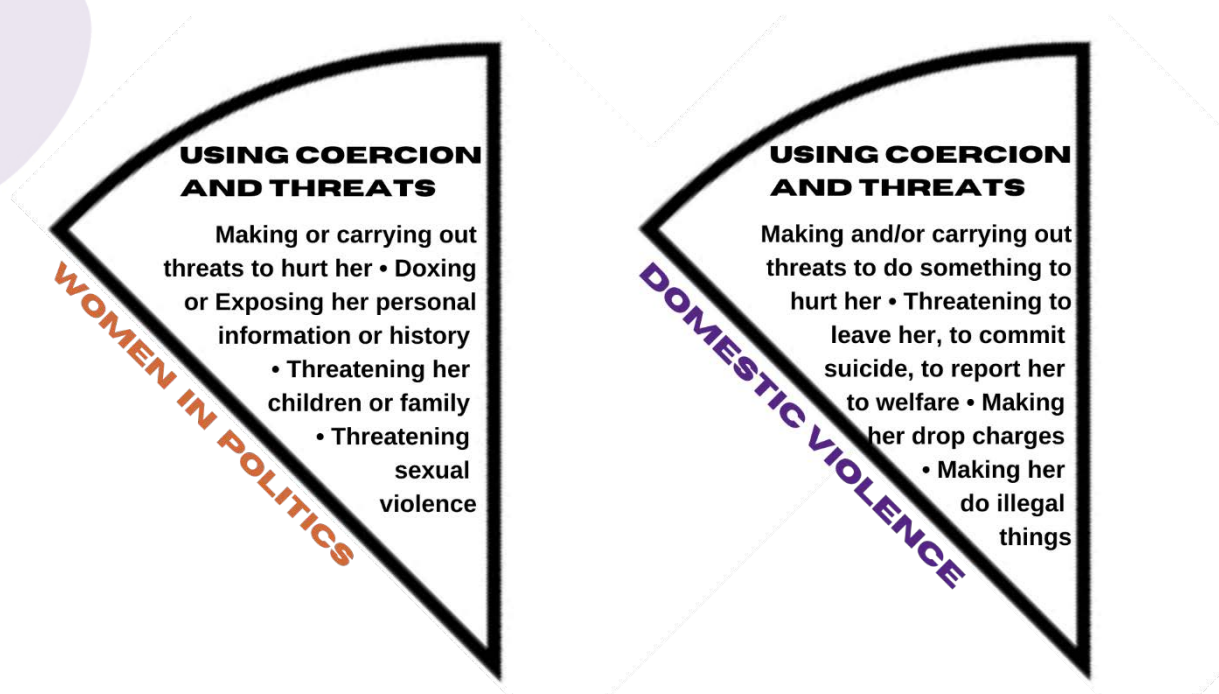
Study participants noted some barriers in access to campaign funding, particularly for in-kind donations. While volunteer labour and food were noted as readily available to their campaigns, access to free office space, phones, and other resources did not come as easily as was perceived for male candidates. Multiple participants referenced a feeling of unease in direct fundraising, and none reported having access to existing networks of funders.

Women also face a gendered imbalance in relation to their expenses. Study participants identified differing levels of scrutiny of their expense claims than those of their male counterparts. They highlighted a need to present themselves more professionally “put together” than their male colleagues to garner equal consideration in public forums, a pressure that comes with associated time, effort, and expenses for maintaining wardrobes and personal grooming. In addition, study participants noted childcare expenses as a consideration in their ability to run for or hold office, including whether the party would consider childcare an allowable campaign expense as a deciding factor in their candidacy.

While other wheel tactics involve explicit actions directed at women in politics, economic abuse is often more subtle and is perpetuated by systems designed to sustain existing gender roles that privilege men. Unequal distribution of resources, access to resources, and fiscal pressures shift power dynamics in the highly competitive election period. And with women being excluded from viable opportunities to gain nominations or seats, it also shifts their capacity to even the playing field for future women candidates.

Using Coercion and Threats

Making or carrying out threats to hurt her; Doxing or Exposing her personal information or history; Threatening her children or family; Threatening sexual violence

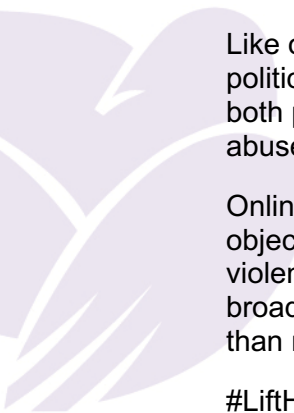


Unfortunately, public accounts of threats made against women in politics are countless. Ranging from derisive comments or “jokes” on social media to threatening phone calls to extreme violent attacks like the murder of Jo Cox in 2016 and the shooting of Gabrielle Giffords in 2011, the threat of violence against women in politics is palpable. In 2017, a CBC report noted Rachel Notley as being “Alberta’s most threatened Premier”, having received over 400 “inappropriate contact and communication(s)” in 2016 alone.⁵² In addition, Alberta Justice tracked the non-social media threats against the five Alberta Premiers who held office between 2003 and 2015; Notley, who held office for less than 1 year of the period tracked, and Alison Redford, Alberta’s only other female Premier to date (2011 To 2014), received 64 percent of those threats between them.⁵³ In 2018, a freedom of information request showed that Notley had received at least eleven death threats over three years as Premier, including a pre-arranged funeral application.⁵⁴

⁵² Trynacity, Kim. “Rachel Notley: Alberta's most threatened premier” *cbc.ca/news* February 14, 2017. URL: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/notley-threats-alberta-history-1.3982276>

⁵³ *ibid*

⁵⁴ Trynacity, Kim. “‘A wake-up call’: Documents detail litany of threats against Premier Rachel Notley” *cbc.ca/news* May 4, 2018. URL: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/notley-premier-threats-security-1.4644989>



Like other power and control tactics, threats are used to destabilize women's safety in the political sphere. A commonly reported platform for threats is social media, as comments are both public and in print. The Digital Harassment of Women Leaders report looked at online abuse against women in leadership roles, including politicians and noted that:

Online rape and death threats are commonplace, as are vulgar, graphic, sexual and objectifying comments, threats and insults. These experiences reflect existing patterns of violence and discrimination against women and girls, both in the political sphere and more broadly: women are more likely to experience severe forms of online harassment and abuse than men, including cyberstalking and death threats.⁵⁵

#LiftHerUp study participants rarely discussed specific incidences with social media threats, with many noting that the vulgar and violent language used on social media platforms had caused them to create a buffer between them and their accounts by assigning other staffers to manage online interactions. A recent report from the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) exploring technology-facilitated gender-based violence, abuse, and harassment (TFGBV)

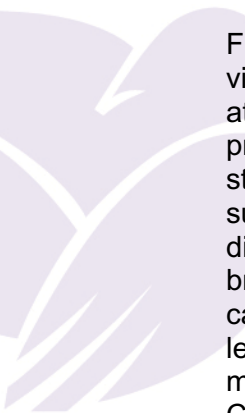
noted that women's online engagement is directed affected by multiple forms of violence, limiting their full participation in the online exchange of ideas. The report showed alignment with study participants choice to delegate their online accounts:

TFGBV relegates women and girls to secondary status online and in the world. They are rendered unable to freely and fully participate in society and prevented from enjoying true or equal protection of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The most common response to facing online abuse and harassment is that women reduce their online activities, avoid certain social media platforms or conversations, withdraw from expressing their views, or self-censor if they continue to engage online. This curtails their ability to participate in the contemporary public sphere, including engaging in activism and advocacy, influencing public opinion, or mobilizing social, cultural, or political change. The current state of affairs amounts to a systemic democratic failure and must be addressed as such.⁵⁶

More commonly discussed were threats made by phone and in person. Study participants reported individuals verbally threatening and chasing them while campaigning, making threatening phone calls in the middle of the night, and approaching them and their staff at their constituency and campaign offices to utter verbal abuses. The individuals made threats against the women and their families, and some participants reported experiencing a heightened sense of alert while out in any public spaces, particularly while with younger children.

⁵⁵ Stevens, S. (2018) *Digital Harassment of Women Leaders: Issues and Solutions Factsheet*, VAWG Helpdesk Research Report No. 214. London, UK: VAWG Helpdesk.

⁵⁶ Khoo, Cynthia. "Deplatforming Misogyny: Report on Platform Liability for Technology-facilitated Gender-based Violence, Executive Summary" *Women's Legal Education and Action Fund Technology-Facilitated Violence (TFV) Project*, Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, 2021. URL: <https://www.leaf.ca/publication/deplatforming-misogyny/> Accessed June 2021.



Frequently associated with the #GamerGate harassment campaign against women in the video game industry starting in 2014, doxing⁵⁷ has also become a commonplace tactic attacking women in politics. Doxing is a form of cyberbullying where attackers publicly reveal private information about an individual, which can lead to identity theft, emotional abuse, stalking, and more. Notably in Alberta, MLA Debra Drever was publicly shamed and suspended from caucus in 2015 when a series of photos of her pre-political life were distributed online.⁵⁸ The photos were mined from her personal social media accounts and brought to wider attention through reposting on various platforms. Her suspension from caucus was reported as based on homophobic comments made under a photo of opposition leadership candidates, but public attention focused on images of her with a t-shirt bearing a marijuana leaf t-shirt, a photo where an unidentified person is giving the finger to the Canadian flag, and a heavy metal album cover in which she is posed as a woman being sexually attacked.

More recently, a freedom of information request has shown that five members of the Lethbridge Police Service had searched MLA Shannon Phillips' name eight times over eleven months in 2018 and accessed her personal information despite having no investigative purpose for the searches.⁵⁹ The access of Phillips' private information without cause raises concern for doxing activities and heightens an overarching sense of threat against women participating in politics.

While study participants did not report specific acts of doxing, they did express concerns about the possible release of their personal information on social media as a threat to their safety, including pictures of their children or the location of their children's schools.

Coercion and threat tactics are employed as a consistent reminder to the abused of the risks of overstepping their allowed role. They aim to put the abused into their proverbial sense of place. In the political sphere, the threats aimed at women from multiple sources undermine her fundamental right to participate in public discourse and act as a decision-maker.

⁵⁷ Sometimes noted as doxxing

⁵⁸ CBC Staff. "How Calgary MLA Deborah Drever went from online shame to redemption" *cbc.ca/radio* March 10, 2016. URL: <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/dnto/life-after-online-shaming-1.3481925/how-calgary-mla-deborah-drever-went-from-online-shame-to-redemption-1.3482214>

⁵⁹ Dunn, Carolyn. "Alberta MLA was monitored by 5 different police officers, documents show" *cbc.ca/news* March 8, 2021. URL: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/lethbridge-police-service-search-photograph-mla-shannon-phillips-1.5932495>



Participant Perspectives

The above stories represent the experiences of study participants from across Alberta. They relate to experiences both on the campaign trail and in office. All participants reported some combination of these tactics, and each participant had a unique experience with gender-based violence in relation to her bid for or holding of public office. All participants highlighted a need to do additional work to address the violence, particularly explicit or implicit safety planning for themselves and their families.

Notably, while participants of all ages reported experiences aligned with some or all of these tactics, younger participants were more likely to identify the behaviours as discriminatory, violent, and part of a pattern of abuse of women in public spaces. One participant noted that the simple idea of “women in public spaces is radical.”⁶⁰ The common experiences of women in politics reported both in the study and in the media would indicate so.

Effects

When employed, these tactics compound to send a clear message to women in and considering entering politics that they are not welcome, not safe, and not equal. While individual actions and experiences have varying direct effects for the women who experience them and each woman’s experience is unique, the tactics coalesce to sustain a larger context of threat and oppression that steepens additional significance into each subsequent action. By fostering a context where the subjugation of women in politics is normalized, the meaning imbued in each tactic or action becomes larger than the action itself. And, as many of these actions, attitudes, and behaviours play out in the public eye, it sets a standard for “acceptable” treatment of women in society.

Ultimately, the power dynamic discourages women’s political participation and interrupts the democratic process by denying equal access to decision-making tables. It also creates additional hurdles for those women who choose to participate in politics, leading to both exhaustion and burnout as they battle imbalances daily. Changing the culture will take the combined efforts of all genders to alter their own attitudes and behaviours and to change the systems that create an exclusionary context for women in politics. There have been some advances to create a more welcoming space for women in politics, including allowances for maternity and parental leave for elected officials in Alberta.⁶¹ The Canada Elections Act includes childcare as a valid personal expense for candidates.⁶² These types of policies signal structural efforts toward inclusion but until interpersonal actions change, the imbalance remains.

⁶⁰ Study participant

⁶¹ Municipal Government Act. *Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000*, c. M-26. Alberta. Alberta Queen’s Printer. Web. June 2, 2021. URL: <https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/acts/m26.pdf>

⁶² Canada Elections Act. *Statutes of Canada 2000*, c.9. Canada. 2000. Justice Laws Website. Web. May 31, 2000. URL: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-2.01/> Accessed April 2021.

Summary and Recommendations


As part of its Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations has highlighted gender equality as a key factor in building “peace and prosperity for people and the planet.”⁶³ Target 5.5 points specifically to ensuring “women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.”⁶⁴ As more women stand for elected office increase, awareness and understanding of violent tactics used to attempt to “lock up” their voices is essential in changing behaviours to ensure women’s full participation in all aspects of public life and maintain the momentum of current campaigns encouraging equality. From commentary on women’s physical appearance through to direct threats of harm, the normalization and actualization of violence against women in public office must end. The following recommendations are offered for consideration by organizations with the resources, capacity, and knowledge to take action:

1. Complete a study and Power and Control Wheel for Indigenous women in Politics, to ensure appropriate representations of diverse Indigenous governments and to support Indigenous ownership, control, access and possession of collected data;
2. Complete a study and Power and Control Wheel for women engaged in social advocacy and other politicized spaces;
3. ACWS complete an Equity and Accountability Wheel for women in politics in collaboration with electoral parity and women’s organizations;
4. Develop and promote toolkits to support and sustain safe spaces for women in politics and work with local and provincial organizations to ensure wide distribution and application;
5. Develop and deliver campaign schools for political candidates of all genders focused on anti-violent rhetoric and fostering constructive discourse; and
6. Work with governments of all levels to advance policies that foster equality and non-violence in the public and private spheres.
7. Advocate to establish campaign monitoring mechanism with consequences in the form of fines and/or expulsion

By fostering a safe and inclusive political space, a culture of equality is modeled that can have ripple effects throughout society. When women are treated as equal in public contexts, attitudes of equality are more likely to be normalized and present in private contexts.

⁶³ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. “The 17 Goals” *un.org* URL: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> Accessed April 2021.

⁶⁴ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. “Goals: 5” *un.org* URL: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5> Accessed April 2021.



While our research is informed by the Canadian, and more specifically Albertan, experience, we hope our findings inform the further study of women's experiences and inspire interventions to lead to equality in all elected offices.

The reason women are critiqued for being too loud or too meek, too big or too small, too smart to be attractive or too attractive to be smart, is to belittle women out of standing up publicly. The goal is to 'critique' into submission. & That applies to anyone challenging power.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, U.S member of the house of Representatives⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Ocasio-Cortez, Alexandria [@AOC]. "Tweet Message." *Twitter.com*, May 28, 2019, URL: <https://twitter.com/aoc/status/1133383123503321090?lang=en>

Appendix A: Ethics Debrief for Study Participants

Ethics Debrief for Women in Politics Study

This ethics debrief was written in accordance with the research ethics guidelines set out by the Canadian Research Ethics Board for research involving human subjects. For more information, please view the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 (2018) on the Government of Canada Panel on Research Ethics website.

Thank you so much for your interest in the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) study on violence against women in politics. We are grateful for your willingness to share your experiences with us, and to set aside time from your busy schedule to participate. ACWS has high ethical standards for the work we do, and follows the guidance of the National Research Council of Canada (NaRCC). Because you are agreeing to participate in our research, both our Ethical Moral Framework and the NaRCC requires us to provide you with this ethics debrief.

The purpose of this document is to provide you with information on the purpose of this study, as well as what the researchers are looking for. It also aims to help you understand your rights as a participant, what is expected of you, and the potential risks and benefits of participating. This information combined will assist you to make an informed decision regarding whether or not you wish to participate.

It is imperative that you read this document thoroughly and consider its contents with regard to your participation. The researcher will also read this document aloud for participants prior to beginning the discussion to provide the opportunity to ask questions, voice concerns or withdraw their consent at that time if they so choose.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to understand the effects of violence and abuse against women who enter public life, both in terms of the types and intensity that is experienced. We are seeking women who have campaigned, previously served or are currently serving in public positions to speak about their experiences during campaigning and service (if applicable).

The focus group/interview helps ACWS gain insight into the experiences of women in public life, and to try to discern common themes within the types and intensity of violence that is encountered.



Design and Data Collection

To obtain the necessary data, participants will be asked to engage in a focus group or interview online (via Zoom). The focus groups will be limited in number of participants so that all will have the opportunity to speak if they wish, and to keep the discussions to no more than two hours in length. All discussions will be recorded and transcribed by either the staff in the session or by a third-party firm that protects confidentiality so that we can ensure accuracy and clarity on the content and intended message or theme that each speaker is trying to convey.


Intended Use of Data

Participant responses fall into a category of information known as “qualitative data.” The qualitative data collected will be used in future and current research conducted by ACWS regarding violence against women in politics. This specific study aims to use the data collected to help inform a Power and Control Wheel related to women’s experiences in public office. For more information on Power and Control Wheels, please visit the Domestic Abuse Intervention programs website at <https://www.theduluthmodel.org/wheels/>.

Participant Rights

Participants in this study hold the following rights:

- Participants have the right to refuse to answer a question at any time, as well as the right to decide what they wish or do not wish to share. Participants have the right to decline a reason for doing so. Refusing to answer a question does not affect the ability for further participation in the focus group or in further research conducted by ACWS, or any future relations with any ACWS members.
- Participants have the right to privacy and confidentiality regarding their information. ACWS will not share information or responses outside of the project unless given written permission to do so by the specific participant, unless ACWS is legally required to do so. Participants also have the right to expect that other participants will not share any responses or information to others outside of the study.
- Participants have the right to know who will view their responses. First and foremost, the project researchers will have direct access to responses, both through facilitation of the focus group and through reviewing transcriptions. The researcher’s supervisors will also have access to responses to ensure clarity and quality of transcription.
- Participants have the right to expect that the researchers will share transcripts of the specific focus group they are involved in, on request, for the purpose of providing clarity and/or further elaboration on responses given, or to withdraw any response the participant no longer wishes to have included in the study.
- Participants have the right to expect that the researcher will use due care and sensitivity in the manner in which questions are asked or responses are handled.



ACWS recognizes that violence against women is an incredibly sensitive and personal topic, and that discussions of such can be triggering for participants. Participants have the right to expect that the researcher will make all efforts to minimize the risk of emotional harm when asking questions and handling answers and the right to withdraw at any time.

- Participants have the right to know how responses will be used. Participants have the ability to ask prior to, during, and after the focus group about how the data will be used, or about the study itself. Please note that, due to the requirement for privacy and confidentiality of other participants, questions regarding information about other participants that is not shared by participants within the confines of the focus group will not be answered.
- Participants have the right to withdraw consent from the focus group at any time, and/or to ask the ACWS to not use their responses as part of the study. Participants are not required to provide explanation for doing so. Withdrawal of consent will not affect the participant's ability to engage in further research with ACWS, or any working relationships with any ACWS member shelters as members will have no access to the data (i.e. transcripts or list with individual names) in this project.

Participant Expectations


Participants are expected to adhere to the following:

- Participants undertake to keep the information and responses of other participants private and confidential. No information or responses shared by other participants may be shared without the specific, prior, and informed consent of the participant who shared it. Participants are expected to refrain from sharing any information, stories, or details that do not specifically involve themselves or their own lived experience, or that they have not personally witnessed. Participants are expected to not use any of the information and/or stories shared in the focus group to gain advantage in current and/or future political campaigns, or to further an affiliated party's agenda.
- Participants are expected to discuss only the research topic, and to refrain from using the focus group as an opportunity to discuss any other issue, subject or agenda.

Potential Risks of Participation

In keeping with the guidelines outlined by the NaRCC, ACWS acknowledges that participants may face some risk through participation in a focus group-faced study. This may include one or all of the following:

- Participants may experience feelings of regret and/or remorse regarding sharing personal information and experiences with others, including the researchers.

- 
- Participants may experience feelings of anxiety surrounding the sharing of personal information and experiences with colleagues and/or public servants affiliated with opposition and/or other parties.
 - Participants may experience emotional and/or mental distress or discomfort at answering certain questions, or recalling upsetting and/or painful memories of the violence directed at themselves. These emotions may also surface when listening to the stories and experiences of others within the focus group.
 - Participants may not see all of their input reflected directly in the resulting tool, and may experience feelings of dissatisfaction.

Benefits of Participation

There are benefits which participants will gain from engagement, either through the direct experience of participation, or through the research outcomes. They may include one or all of the following:

- Participants may benefit from speaking about their experiences aloud. This may provide some emotional and mental relief.
- Participants may benefit from feelings of community and/or solidarity with other participants upon hearing stories of similar experiences.
- Participants may benefit from hearing other experiences because it will help them provide clarity on how best to handle violence directed against them, and how to help others when they witness this behaviour in assembly, staff meetings, online, or in other arenas.

On behalf of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, we would like to thank you again for your participation and for sharing your experiences with us.

Any questions or concerns regarding this ethics debrief and/or the study can be directed to:
Alberta Council of Women's Shelters
Email: liftherupmodel@acws.ca

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

Violence Against Women in Politics

Participant Consent Form

Title: Violence Against Women in Politics as it Relates to the Power and Control Wheel

Investigator: The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters

Please read the attached ethics debrief prior to completing the remainder of this sheet.

Please read the following and circle your response. For any items for which you have circled 'No,' please contact ACWS at liftherupmodel@acws.ca prior to signing.

Do you understand that you have been asked to participate in a research study?	Yes	No
Have you received and read the attached ethics debrief?	Yes	No
Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study?	Yes	No
Have you been given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the study?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you are free to leave the study at any time without having to give a reason, and without affecting future participation in research with Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, or any future working relationships with ACWS members?	Yes	No
Has the issue of confidentiality been explained to you?	Yes	No
Do you understand who will have access to your responses?	Yes	No

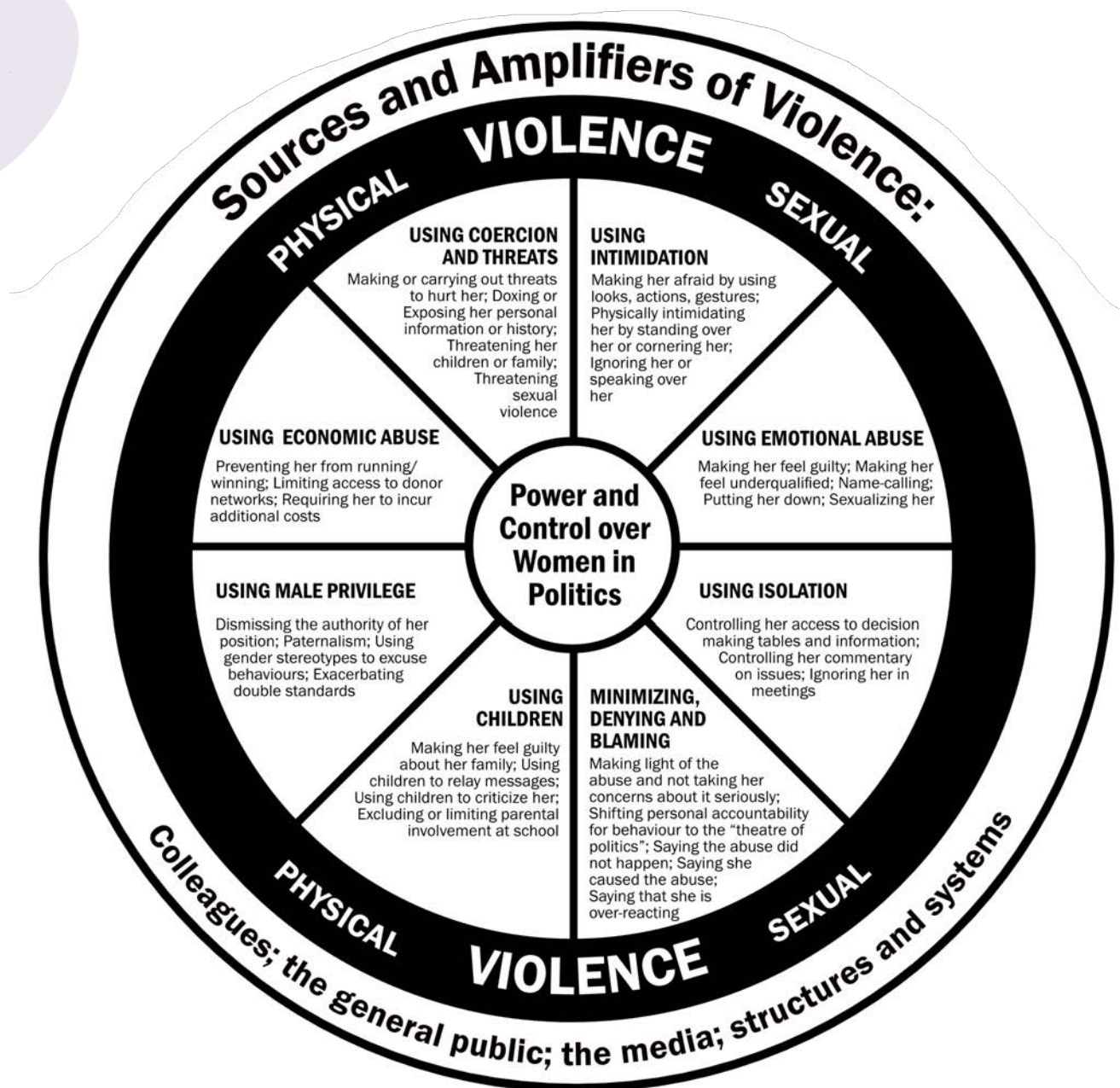
Signatures

Participant Name (Print, Signature & Date)

Witness Name (Print, Signature & Date)

ACWS representative Name (Print, Signature & Date)

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Adaptation of the original Power and Control Wheel
approved by The Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs
TheDuluthModel.org