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High School Boys' Experiences of a Violence Against Women Prevention Program

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Graduate Program in Education

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Abstract

Violence against women and girls is a global burden that requires increased action, especially among males. Although the engagement of males in violence prevention programs have recently spiked, there is minimal evidence that outlines positive changes in males' attitudes and behaviours when addressing violence against women and girls. The present study examined high school boys' experiences of a one-day violence against women prevention program with respect to their attitudes and intentions to address violence against women and girls. Guided by the Transtheoretical Model for Behaviour Change and the theory of Moral Disengagement, a pre-event questionnaire was utilized to assess 156 southwestern Ontario high school boys' attitudes about violence against women, and a post-event questionnaire assessed their level of satisfaction with the event, and their intentions to engage with the issue. Five post-event focus groups were conducted with twenty-five participants to contextualize the pre- and post- event questionnaires. Key findings revealed that many of the participants were aware of the issue of violence against women and girls, and felt responsible, and felt that they had a role to play. Participants' self-reported defensiveness was not related to their overall event satisfaction. Participants' favourable attitudes and overall event satisfaction ratings predicted their willingness to raise awareness in their schools. Given these findings, future research may benefit from a more randomized sample of participants. Future prevention programs may benefit from more complex questionnaires that address adolescent males' attitudes and intentions about violence against women, and utilize post-tests that assess male participants' behaviour when addressing violence against women.

Keywords: Violence against women and girls, VAWG, prevention, adolescent males, allies, mixed methods, focus groups, Transtheoretical Model for Behaviour Change, Moral Disengagement.

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High School Boys' Experiences of a Violence Against Women Prevention Program

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Global and National Issue of Violence Against Women

Violence against women is a serious issue. Thirty percent of women in relationships across the globe experience physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence in their lifetime (Ellsberg et al., 2014; Peltzer & Pengpid, 2014). Violence against women is also a substantial issue in Canada. In 2011, Canadian police-reported data revealed that 173,600 women aged 15 and older were victims of violent crimes (Statistics Canada, 2013). In the same year, approximately 27,000 females aged between 12 and 17 were violently victimized, and 83% of the offenders were male (Statistics Canada, 2013). Self-report data about male sex offenses indicate that a significant proportion of adolescent males perpetrate sexual offenses (Peacock & Barker, 2014). Males' disproportionate involvement in perpetrating violence against women has triggered the need to engage males in the prevention of violence against women and girls (Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2014). Although interventions that engage males in addressing violence against women and girls have increased across the globe (Jewkes et al., 2014), many gaps still exist (Peacock et al., 2014). To improve the engagement of males with this social issue, interventions must prioritize males as potential allies in addressing violence against women (Peacock et al., 2014). Furthermore, interventions may benefit from differentiated approaches based on participants' willingness or resistance to address the issue of violence against women (Blostein, Bridgemohan, Turnbull, Carolo, & Bojin, 2014; Jewkes et al., 2014).

In light of efforts made to engage males in addressing violence against women, the present study aims to assess males' attitudes and intentions about violence against women based on a single-event prevention program. To outline the present study, previous research in this area will be highlighted as well as an examination of the relationship between masculinity and violence. A

summary of key prevention programs that aim to end violence against women and girls will be provided. This study was guided by two major theories related to personal change on social issues. One of the theories is Moral Disengagement [MD], a process where “self-regulatory mechanisms governing moral conduct...are selectively disengaged from inhumane conduct” (Bandura, 1999, p. 193). The other theory is the Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change [TTM], which assesses an individual’s readiness to apply positive behaviour change based on their perceptions of the respective risk behaviour (Prochaska & Di Clemente, 1982). The TTM and MD may offer key frameworks to understand adolescent boys’ perceptions of violence against women since some approaches might lead to their increased defensiveness and reduced sense of responsibility about the issue. The findings from this study may help to inform future approaches that engage high school males in addressing violence against women.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were to assess high school boys’ experiences of a violence against women prevention program by assessing their attitudes and intentions to further engage with this social issue. It was hoped that the findings from this study may inform future approaches to engage males in addressing this issue.

The data collection for this study took place at a high school prevention forum on addressing violence against women. The event was called *The Father's Day Breakfast - Coaching Boys into Men: Embrace Your Full Potential and Be a Part of Change* [Father’s Day Breakfast]. The event was initially designed to promote positive role modelling among male teachers or coaches with male high school student leaders, while emphasizing the need for males to get involved with addressing violence against women. The event, which was the focus of this study, was the ninth annual breakfast. It was supported by two local school boards and is usually attended

by approximately 300 senior students and their coaches. Although voluntary and anonymous feedback had been collected each year, the ninth event incorporated a voluntary and anonymous pre- and post-event questionnaire, along with five semi-structured focus groups to gather more feedback. The mixed-methods approach was designed to assess the students' position on the stage of change, along with understanding their potential to report attitudes related to moral disengagement and violence against women.

Ultimately, the purpose of this study was to synthesize high school boys' perceptions about a violence against women prevention program, to gauge their willingness to further engage with addressing violence against women, and to create recommendations that may influence future violence prevention programs and events.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Defining Violence against Women

In its declaration of the Elimination of Violence against Women, the United Nations defined the term *violence against women* as:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. (United Nations, 1993, p. 2)

As the UNs definition also notes, violence is not limited to physical acts. Rather, violence can occur in many different forms ranging from mild to severe, physical, emotional, and/or psychological acts.

Violence against women is an umbrella term that includes *domestic violence* and *dating violence* due to women's common experiences with these issues. Domestic violence is defined as both a social and legal concept that refers to abuse that is deemed physical, emotional, sexual, or financial and usually occurs between intimate partners (Castle, 2014). In this context, women experience a disproportionate amount of violence relative to men. For instance, in 2011, males were responsible for 83 percent of police-reported violence committed against women (Statistics Canada, 2013). Women are almost four times more likely to be victims of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and about 51 percent of these women experience some type of injury (Statistics Canada, 2013).

Research on gender-based violence [GBV] also addresses reoccurring forms of violence against women. GBV is defined as an act or acts of violence that are typically perpetrated by men against women and includes intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and criminal harassment

(Statistics Canada, 2013). GBV is also a significant global health issue that includes any type of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse, which includes, but is not limited to, IPV, sexual assault, and sexual harassment (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006; Jaime et al., 2014; Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). In the context of this preent study, gender-based violence can be considered as any act of violence that is committed against a woman due to her gender, or, its general effects on women in a disproportionate way relative to violence against males (Connell, 2003). Many studies have confirmed that GBV is experienced by one in three women both nationally and globally (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006; Krug et al., 2002; Jaime et al., 2014; Watts et al., 2002). Based on the males' disproportionate engagement in perpetrating violence against women, all males have a key role to address this serious issue; especially adolescent males.

Why Engage Adolescent Males?

In terms of identifying appropriate approaches when engaging adolescent males in addressing violence against women, developmental considerations such as gender norms and timing of intervention may assist with guiding program success. For example, prevention programs are needed for adolescent males to address the prevalence of commonly held unhealthy gender norms and expressions related to violent behavior (Katz, Heisterkamp, & Fleming, 2011; Kaufman, 1987). Males' saturation of unhealthy gender norms begins during their early years of development (Kaufman, 1987). By the time males reach their adolescent stage, they may experience a "macho paradox" (Katz et al., 2011, p. 587) where males are expected to subscribe to social dominance while ignoring their own thoughts, perceptions, and emotions (Kaufman, 1987). Consequently, some adolescent males are ambivalent because they are expected to be emotionally silent, yet culturally dominant through the use of violence (Kaufmann, 1987).

Maintaining traditional interpretations of gender norms have been associated with adolescent males' supportive attitudes about violence against women (Reyes, Foshee, Niolon, Reidy, & Hall, 2015). The relationship between males' traditional gender norms and violence against women was explored through a longitudinal study that examined adolescent males' attitudes towards gender roles and dating violence (Reyes et al., 2015). Key results from the study revealed that boys who possessed more traditional attitudes about gender roles tended to be more accepting of physical dating violence (Reyes et al., 2015). However, boys' supportive attitudes about dating violence is only one part of the issue. Global self-report data on male sex offenses highlighted that the majority of males' first incident of sexual violence perpetration occurs in their teenage years (Peacock et al., 2014). Research suggests that addressing harmful gender with adolescent males may be a great way to encourage healthy attitudes and behaviours toward women (Ellsberg et al., 2014). Educating adolescent males about the problematic link between traditional gender norms and violence against women is an essential step in violence prevention research.

The cultural normalization of males' violence against women has informed the practice of antiviolence education interventions. For example, interventions that target masculine-related issues and perspectives have shown some positive and effective outcomes compared to interventions that do not address gender norms and social inequalities (Ellsberg et al., 2014). The "one size fits all" model fails, because it does not consider the complexity of adolescent males' attitudes about violence against women. For instance, although the majority of intimate partner violence is perpetrated by males (Statistics Canada, 2011), the majority of males in Canada are not necessarily violent. Subsequently, some males may be willing to join initiatives that address violence against women, whereas other males may be very resistant to discuss the topic.

Subsequently, interventions that identify the relationship between male gender norms and violence against women may also benefit from approaching males during their adolescence.

The Timing of Prevention Programs

High quality prevention programs must be implemented at a time that strategically resonates with the respective participants. In the case of this study, adolescence may offer a prime time to educate males on preventing violence against women and girls since their sense of self and society is more malleable, thereby increasing participants' receptiveness to behavioural change (Carmody & Carrington, 2000; Laner, 1990; Ricardo, Eads, & Barker, 2011). While adolescent boys may be receptive to addressing violence against women, participants may also feel defensive about discussing the social issue.

Adolescent Males' Defensiveness about Violence Against Women and Girls

Future attempts to engage adolescent boys with the issue of violence against women and girls must manage boys' tendency to be defensive about the topic. For example, some males feel that their experiences of violence is minimized in relation to society's perceptions of women's experiences, thereby making them feel defensive about discussing violence against women (Flood, 2006). Research has also highlighted that a many males feel personally blamed when discussing the issue (Crooks, Goodall, Hughes, Jaffe, & Baker, 2007; Flood, 2006). In an attempt to mitigate males' potential defensiveness, males can be approached as equal partners in creating solutions to address violence against women and girls (Crooks et al., 2007). Males may also need to be approached with discretion when they are being recruited for violence prevention programs so they do not feel reduced to simply perpetrators of the issue (Flood, 2010). Managing males' potential defensiveness may also assist with mobilizing bystanders into active agents who address violence against women.

The Bystander Prevention Approach

A bystander is traditionally depicted as an individual who is present during a conflict but likely does not get involved (Twemlow & Sacco, 2013). The bystander phenomena was largely inspired by Latané and Darley's research in the 1960s. Latané and Darley (1968) argued that diffusion of responsibility, evaluation apprehension, and pluralistic ignorance were three key factors that reduced the chances of individuals intervening in critical situations. Since Latané and Darley's key research findings, further research has indicated that bystanders are more likely to effectively intervene in harmful scenarios if they have knowledge and awareness of the issue, feel a sense of personal responsibility, and possess the appropriate skills to intervene (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2007). In the same vein, males may be more likely to address violence against women after engaging in bystander-based education.

The present study integrates principles of bystander research to better understand high school males' potential involvement in addressing violence against women. For instance, boys must be aware about the issue of violence against women, and they must also feel empowered to intervene while possessing the necessary skills to do so (Banyard et al., 2007). By focusing on education that mobilizes bystanders to intervene in situations of violence (Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenback, & Stark, 2003; Katz et al., 2011; Twemlow et al., 2013), anti-violence advocates can "amplify the voice of the silent majority", thereby placing more pressure on the perpetrators to be accountable for their inappropriate actions (Fabiano et al., 2003, p. 110). Exploring the bystander approach in violence prevention education may help to inform approaches that engaging engage males in addressing the issue of violence against women.

Violence Prevention Programs

Although this study focuses on the implications of a one-time violence prevention event, a thorough review of anti-violence prevention programs was conducted to inform the direction of the present study. Research indicates that the majority of violence against women prevention programs show some promise, but effectiveness lacks in many aspects related to observing positive changes in attitude and behavior (Ellsberg et al., 2014). For instance, research conducted on anti-violence programs for adolescents indicates that males tend to be resistant to treatment and achieve very modest success with program outcomes (Levesque, 2006; Wolf, Crooks, & Chiodo, Hughes, & Ellis, 2012). Programs that engage both males and females, and only males, are reviewed to provide an overview of some successes and potential barriers to engaging males in anti-violence education.

Research that assesses high school males' attitudes and intentions to address violence against women dates back over 30 years. In the late 1980s, a primary prevention program about wife assault and dating violence was administered and evaluated across four high schools in southwestern Ontario (Jaffe, Sudermann, Reitzel, & Killip, 1992). The intervention consisted of a large group presentation followed by small group discussions led by community professionals. The large group discussion involved speakers from community agencies, the police department and school board, videos about wife assault, student-led plays, and closed with a survivor of abuse (Jaffe et al., 1992). Students' knowledge, attitudes, and behavioural intentions were evaluated before, immediately following, and up to six weeks following the intervention.

The study revealed students' reported awareness of violence within their community along with identifying key misconceptions about violence against women. One finding was that many students reported high levels of awareness of abuse in family contexts (Jaffe et al., 1992). At the

same time, the study revealed some students' misconceptions about assault against women. For instance, over a quarter of students believed that women were more likely to experience assault by a stranger on the street compared to an assault at home. This belief indicated a significant gap in students' knowledge about violence against women since research in this field repeatedly finds that women are at least 10 times more likely to experience domestic over assaults perpetrated by strangers (Jaffe et al., 1992).

Following the intervention, reports indicated that male participants generally possessed less favourable attitudes about violence against women compared to females. For instance, males were significantly more likely than females to condone rape, and almost one fifth of males excused male perpetrated date rape if the female 'led him on' (Jaffe et al., 1992). Male participants reported they were less likely to assist females who experienced threats of verbal abuse compared to that of female participants (Jaffe et al., 1992). These findings revealed that some of the boys possessed troubling attitudes and intentions pertaining to violence against women. Although many years have passed since the addressed study, recent research on violence prevention programs that engage males have observed similar challenges. The successes and challenges of these prevention programs have been documented in a special issue of *The Lancet*, which highlights many international efforts that aim to end violence against women.

The Lancet's publication entitled *Violence Against Women and Girls* (2014) provides a comprehensive review of international efforts that aim to end the issue of violence against women. One key intervention that has gained widespread acceptance is entitled *The Fourth R: Strategies for Healthy Youth Relations*. The Fourth R is a curriculum-based program that works with high school boys and girls to promote healthy relationships and the reduction of risk behaviours, while meeting the Ontario Ministry of Education's expectations and outcomes (Crooks, Chiodo,

Zwarych, Hughes, & Wolfe, 2013; Crooks, Scott, Ellis, & Wolfe, 2011; Wolfe, Crooks, Chiodo, Hughes, & Ellis, 2012). The program's focus on delivering skills-based strategies offers participants with tangible ways to integrate the practice of healthy relationship practices into their daily lives.

One randomized control trial of The Fourth R highlighted unique findings about some adolescent males' experiences of physical dating violence perpetration (Wolfe et al., 2009). Overall, results from the study indicated that addressing dating violence prevention with lessons on sexual health, healthy relationships, and substance use reduced physical dating violence (Wolfe et al., 2009). Key findings highlighted that the reduction of physical dating violence effected male participants significantly more than female participants (Wolfe et al., 2009). Results from this study revealed some promising advances in preventing physical dating violence among adolescent males. Though further research on the Fourth R revealed some challenges with engaging males in applying some healthy relationship skills.

Another evaluation of the Fourth R assessed the use of peer resistance skills during situations of peer pressure. Two years after grade 9 students received The Fourth R's training, post-intervention test results indicated that the intervention significantly enhanced students' peer resistance skills (Wolfe et al., 2012). These skills included the ability to negotiate, delay, yield to negative pressure, refuse, and comply (Wolfe et al., 2012). A follow-up assessment was conducted that observed students who applied resistance skills while being pressured to engage in sexual acts, drugs, and violence (Wolfe et al., 2012). Key observational data and teacher ratings both revealed that boys were less effective at applying resistance skills than girls (Wolfe et al., 2012). Although research on the Fourth R has reported some positive changes in highlighting healthy relationship

skills among youth, unique opportunities remain in observing improvements of boys' application of healthy relationship skills.

Another critically acclaimed healthy relationships program entitled *Safe Dates* engages adolescents in healthy relationship education through a ten-session curriculum that addresses dating abuse through activities such as a play and a poster contest (Ellsberg et al., 2014; Whitaker, Murphey, Eckardt, Hodges, & Cowart, 2013). Some of the program's success could be related to its group-based curriculum in a school environment, and its activities that involve the wider community (Whitaker et al., 2013). Although multiple evaluations on the Safe Dates program indicated effectiveness on some outcome measures, assessments have also indicated its limitations on reducing violence among male participants (Foshee et al., 2014). For example, a randomized control trial of *Safe Dates* assessed program effectiveness on preventing perpetration rates and weapon possession one year following the intervention (Foshee et al., 2014). Post-test results indicated that the rate of peer violence perpetration was more than doubled for male participants compared to female participants, and that boys were six times as likely as girls to bring a weapon to school (Foshee et al., 2014). Although analyses on the Safe Dates program have revealed some reductions in participants' experiences of psychological and physical dating violence, unique challenges still exist that relate to reporting the reduction of dating violence perpetration among males (Foshee et al., 2005).

The *Mentors in Violence Prevention* (MVP) program is another a violence prevention program that trains participants to take action against any form of gender-based violence (Katz et al., 2011). According to Ellsberg et al., (2014) the MVP program is a popular intervention in the U.S. that aims to decrease sexism and peer aggression. The MVP program is designed to uniquely facilitate critical thinking around male-specific gender norms that can reinforce conformity or

silence about violence against women and girls (Katz et al., 2011). One program evaluation indicated that boys who received the intervention were significantly more likely to identify wrong behaviours compared to boys who did not receive the intervention (Katz et al., 2011). However, post-tests indicated that exposure to the intervention did not change either groups' intentions to use aggressive behaviour (Katz et al., 2011). In spite of the MVPs success in altering some attitudes and behaviours towards the use of violence, program evaluations remain formative and yield inconsistent results (Cissner, 2009).

In contrast to The Fourth R, Safe Dates, and MVP, *Coaching Boys into Men* (CBIM) focuses exclusively on males by calling on their coaches to engage student athletes to address violence against women. Coaching Boys into Men is an intervention that focuses on delivering its program to American school-aged children who are engaged in athletic programs (Miller & Rollnick, 2012b). Key findings from a program evaluation demonstrated that the athlete participants from grades 9 to twelve had small to moderate increases in their intentions to intervene in situations of dating violence. However, there were not significant changes in participants' recognition of abusive behaviours, attitudes of gender equality, and reductions of dating violence perpetration (Miller et al., 2012b).

Although there are some encouraging findings in the development of violence prevention programs with adolescent boys, there is a theme related to limitations in reporting positive changes in attitudes and behaviours related to addressing violence against women. Some of these limitations may relate to the difficulty in unpacking the issue of violence against women with adolescent boys who exhibit resistance or defensive attitudes about the issue. Insights into males' resistance may be gleaned by examining research on court-mandated treatment programs for male batterers. Since research on the population of male batterers has indicated high levels of resistance

to program outcomes (Cuevas & Bui, 2016), perhaps the reported successes from these programs can help to inform other approaches that engage adolescent males in violence prevention programming.

Research on court-mandated interventions for male batterers has encountered much attention and has reported some promising findings. The shared goal of court-mandated programs for males who have a history of abuse is to engage participants in preventing future violence against women. Although programs vary in design and execution, many share a history of high participant dropout rates (Cuevas et al., 2016). In a meta-analysis that assessed 11 studies on group programs, participant dropout rates ranged from twenty two 22-99 percent (Daly & Pelowski, 2000). While some studies found that many interpersonal risk factors were associated with high attrition rates (Jewell & Wormith, 2010), some research highlighted ways to reduce program attrition through the application of Motivational Enhancement Therapy [MET] (Scott, King, McGinn, & Hosseini, 2011).

Motivation Enhancement Therapy is an intervention strategy that is designed to increase participant engagement and improve the outcomes of like-minded interventions (Miller et al., 2012a). In response to high dropout rates, MET utilizes an empathetic and non-confrontational approach when working with males who have battered (Scott et al., 2011).

One study that applied an MET-based intervention with male participants prior to the court-mandated therapy revealed promising findings (Scott et al., 2011). Results from the quasi-experimental design suggested that highly resistant batterers who attended six weeks of MET sessions prior to regular programming completed the batterer intervention at a substantially higher rate than both resistant and non-resistant clients in the standard intervention (Scott et al., 2011). Although there are very obvious differences between court-mandated interventions in comparison

to the one-time violence prevention session assessed in this study, a consistent theme in the research that examines males' roles in addressing violence against women points towards the use of non-confrontational approaches to prevent males' resistance when addressing the social issue (Crooks et al., 2007; Ricardo et al., 2011; Twemlow et al., 2013). By way of analogy, MET may be an approach that can help interventions to manage resistance among male participants, and potentially increase high school boys' receptiveness to addressing the issue of violence against women and girls.

In spite of some remarkable advances made in violence education research, some males are not being reached. Perhaps the theme of males' resistance in addressing violence against women presents an opportunity to differentiate the ways males are invited to engage with the issue. As noted in the Lancet's special issue about violence against women, "interventions that seek to reduce the violence of men who are bound by social norms might need to be different from those targeting men who are positioned at society's margins, especially men who are highly violent" (Jewkes et al., 2014, p. 4). In order to improve males' engagement with addressing violence against women, a theoretically guided assessment of boys' attitudes and intentions to address violence against women may help to inform how future interventions can appropriately encourage males to address the issue.

Theoretical Influence

The present assessment of adolescent males' attitudes and intentions to engage with the issue of violence against women will be guided with a theoretical foundation. The role of theory is in "framing research questions, informing analysis, and promoting reflexivity on the significance and relevance of research" (Wright, 2008, p. 1). There have been a number of challenges when engaging males about the issue of violence against women (Crooks et al., 2007; Flood, 2006). In

response to these challenges, the two theories that may help to guide the present study are Moral Disengagement [MD] (Bandura, 1999) and the Transtheoretical Model for Behaviour Change [TTM] (Prochaska et al., 1982). While both theories use different approaches to address harmful and prosocial behaviours, the application of these theories may help to better understand adolescent boys' attitudes and intentions about violence against women.

When understanding high school boys' attitudes and intentions to address violence against women and girls, it is important to address males' attitudes that relate to Moral Agency (Bandura, 1999). Under the classification of social cognitive theory, moral agency "is manifested in both the power to refrain from behaving inhumanely and the proactive power to behave humanely" (Bandura, 1999, p. 193). Subsequently, *moral disengagement* occurs when "moral self-censure [is] disengaged from reprehensible conduct", and "there are many psychosocial maneuvers by which moral self-sanctions are selectively disengaged from inhumane conduct" (Bandura, 1999, p. 193-194). Addressing the particular elements of moral disengagement may assist the current study with better understanding males' potential to resist addressing violence against women.

The four elements of moral disengagement are cognitive restructuring, minimizing one's role in relation to a particular act, disregarding or distorting the outcomes of a negative act, and viewing the victim as partially responsible for the act (Hymel & Perren, 2015). Cognitive restructuring is the process of morally justifying negative behaviour, using euphemisms to make it seem more palatable, or using extreme comparisons to make the behaviour seem less severe (Hymel et al., 2015). The second mechanism, minimizing one's role for a given act, is realized through displacement or diffusion of responsibility onto others (Hymel et al., 2015). The third mechanism, disregarding or distorting the consequences of a negative act, is another way where individuals may distance themselves by focusing on the potential of positive outcomes (Hymel et

al., 2015). Cognitive distortions can also be defined as “inaccurate ways of attending to or conferring meaning on experience” (Pornari & Wood, 2010, p. 82). The last mechanism, viewing the victim as partially responsible for the act, is blaming or dehumanizing the victim to frame them as somewhat responsible for the behaviour (Hymel et al., 2015).

Research on MD has assisted with understanding youth and children who perpetrate bullying behavior. Research has highlighted a consistent relationship between moral disengagement and bullying in youth and children (Paciello, Fida, Tramontano, Lupinet, & Caprara, 2008). Furthermore, a recent meta-analysis of 27 separate studies found that children and youth who bully are significantly more likely to score higher on moral disengagement scales (Gini, Pozzoli, & Hymel, 2014). Just as scholars have effectively applied concepts of moral disengagement to help explain issues of bullying behaviour among youth, this study uses moral disengagement as a conceptual guideline to address adolescent boys' attitudes that may relate to engagement or disengagement with violence against women. Just as mechanisms of moral disengagement can help to understand destructive conduct, the same principles can help explain prosocial conduct (Bandura, 1999), thereby potentially assisting with the development of further prevention approaches that engage males in addressing violence against women. For example, some boys may perceive violence against women as an unimportant matter that they do not feel responsible to change.

The present study is also guided by elements of the Transtheoretical Model, or TTM (Prochaska et al., 1982). One key aspect of the TTM is its stages of change, which assesses an individuals' progression through changing attempting to reduce their risk behaviour (Prochaska et al., 1982). The framework tailors specific strategies to facilitate a subject's movement through the stages of change, coupled with an intervention that aims to eliminate specific risk behaviours,

thereby eventually ending the risk behaviour. Although the TTM was initially used to help adults quit smoking, it is now effectively used to reduce many health-related behaviours, including ending domestic violence in male offenders (Hall & Rossi, 2008). The present study recognizes that the TTM is a robust and comprehensive theory that includes multiple stages of change. However, focus will be placed on the *precontemplation* and *contemplation* stages of change since they have provided the most meaningful distinctions in recognizing individuals who will benefit from an intervention

The TTMs precontemplation stage is generally characterized by individuals who may deny the need to change, and they may be unaware of problems associated with their behaviour (Hellman, Johnson, & Dobson, 2010; Noar, Benac, & Harris, 2007; Prochaska et al., 1982; Scott & King, 2007). If individuals in the precontemplation stage acknowledge the issue, they may get defensive and blame others for causing the problem, or be resistant to treatment (Miller, Forcehimes, & Zweben, 2011; Scott et al., 2007). To effectively address individuals in this stage, interventions are encouraged to emphasize the positive benefits of changing one's behaviour (Hall et al., 2008). In a study that applied the TTM to help increase participants' practice of safe sex, participants who used condoms inconsistently and did not intend to use them within the next six months aligned with the precontemplation stage (Redding et al., 2015). For individuals in the precontemplation stage, the goals were to raise their consciousness about safe sex by emphasizing the benefits of using condoms during sex (Redding et al., 2015). In essence, participants in the precontemplation stage are the most resistant to changing their risk behaviour though they may respond well to learning about the benefits of making positive behaviour changes.

The contemplation stage follows the precontemplation stage where individuals recognize the unhealthy behaviour and intend to take action within the next 30 days (Redding et al., 2015).

In a study that investigated stages of change as a predictor of outcome in a batterer treatment program, individuals in the contemplation stage showed more positive changes in communication, empathy, and healthy behaviour than individuals in the precontemplation stage (Scott & Wolfe, 2003). In another study, the stage of change was found to be a predictor of attrition among men in a batterer treatment program (Scott, 2004). For instance, men were more than two times more likely to drop out of treatment if they were in the precontemplation stage than men in the contemplation stage (Scott, 2004). To encourage program advancement through the stages of change, participants required encouragement about the advantages of behaviour change (Di Clemente et al., 1991). In relation to the present study, boys' who indicate resistance to addressing violence against women may benefit from learning about the positive aspects of engaging with the issue.

The TTM-based intervention that aligns closest with the direction of the present study was aimed to encourage youth to make positive changes in their behaviour related to dating and peer violence (Levesque, 2006). Deborah Levesque (2006) and her research team created a two-phase research project that developed a valid and reliable stage-based expert intervention computer program designed to reduce forms of teen dating violence and other forms of violence. The intervention was tailored to address individuals who were identified as high risk or low risk in terms of experiencing or perpetrating dating violence within the previous year. Ultimately, the aim of the study was to match the appropriate intervention approach based on the participants' gender and their readiness to use healthy relationship skills that could prevent violence in dating and peer relationships.

Results of the project's first phase reinforced the need for a tailored, stage-based intervention that could help reduce teen dating violence (Levesque, 2006). For instance, for males and females who dated within one year prior to the study, there was a significant relationship

between their stage of change and the number of violent incidents experienced (Levesque, 2006). Another unique finding was that once males moved from the precontemplation to the contemplation stage, the number of violent incidents perpetrated decreased by 75 percent (Levesque, 2006). The findings from this study underscored the utility of encouraging participants to move along the stages of change, while tracking their progression through the stages, which may improve their readiness to end the identified risk-behaviour. For the purposes of this study, the TTM will help to frame high school boys' readiness to engage with a violence prevention program. The present study recognizes that participants may either see violence against women as a non-issue (precontemplation) or may be motivated to make change in addressing the issue (contemplation).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Though past research on anti-violence interventions have revealed some positive changes in helping to increase males' awareness about the issue about violence against women, some males more work is required to build on past success. The present study attempts to respond to the gaps addressed in the literature while uniquely linking concepts of Moral Disengagement and the Transtheoretical Model to understand a group of high school boys' perceptions of a violence against women prevention event. This study's research method included a three-part questionnaire and semi-structured focus groups that addressed a group of high school boys' perspectives about a one day violence against women prevention event. Since boys must be a part of the solution to end violence against women (Crooks et al., 2007; Flood, 2011, 2013; Jaime et al., 2014; Pease & Flood, 2008), research must continue to highlight opportunities to better engage males in addressing violence against women.

Based on a group of high school boys' feedback about the *Coaching Boys into Men* event, the objective of this study was to assess a group of high school boys' attitudes and intentions to engage with the issue of violence against women. This objective was accomplished by first administering a questionnaire that assessed the boys' attitudes about violence against women prior to the Father's Day Breakfast event. The pre-event questionnaire assessed the participants' attitudes of violence against women before the event. After completing the pre-event attitudes questionnaire, the event included breakfast, guest speakers, and opportunities for small and large group discussions. Following the event, participants completed the second part of the questionnaire which evaluated their total satisfaction of the event, their intentions to raise awareness and their willingness to take action in the school communities. Once the participants completed the questionnaire, they were invited to engage in focus groups to reflect and share their views about the event and how future interventions could be improved to increase participant engagement. The broader goal was to encourage adolescent boys to consider their potential role in ending violence against women and girls as peers and allies. This study used a mixed methods approach to gather "complementary results by using the strengths of one method to enhance another" (Morgan, 1988, p. 372). Based on the gap in understanding boys' attitudes and intentions to address violence against women, this study asked the following questions and tested the following hypotheses:

Research Questions

Question 1: Do boys' attitudes about violence against women indicate a willingness to engage in addressing the issue?

Question 2: Do boys' defensiveness about the issue of violence against women predict their satisfaction with a violence prevention event?

Question 3: Do boys' attitudes about violence against women and their reported total satisfaction predict their willingness to take further action on this issue when they return to their schools?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Pre-event defensiveness about the issue of violence against women will indicate participants' resistance to engage with the issue.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant relationship between pre-event defensive attitudes ratings about violence against women and total event satisfaction ratings.

Hypothesis 3: Responses from the attitude questionnaire and the total event satisfaction will predict participants' intention to raise awareness about the issue of violence against women.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Participants

A total of 156 male students from two local public school boards in southwestern Ontario were sampled for this study using convenience sampling. Only secondary school-aged males from the two local school boards were selected for this study. Of the 156 students, 27 were in grade nine (17.8%), 62 were in grade 10 (40.4%), 45 were in grade 11 (29.6%), nine were in grade 12 (5.9%), and nine were in grade 12+ (5.9%), meaning, these students stayed for a fifth year of high school. The mean grade was 10.41 ($SD = 1.04$). Participants who omitted responses were not included in the present study's final analysis.

Participant Recruitment

Participant recruitment was managed through the local school boards who obtained parental permission for the respective students to attend the event at a banquet hall in London, Ontario. The inclusion criterion for the event was based on high school teachers' selection of male students who were deemed leaders in their respective school. The Father's Day Breakfast committee was comprised of public school teachers and administrators, researchers, and community leaders. The committee requested student-leaders be recruited so that the event's message would have a greater potential to spread across the respective schools. Once the students arrived at the event they were given an assent form that explained the opportunity to volunteer in the anonymous questionnaires and focus groups. All the feedback gained from this event was used with the intention to improve the following events and possibly to inform the direction of similar initiatives at the two local school boards.

Recruitment for Information/Consent Form Distribution

The present study obtained ethics approval from both the University of Western Ontario's Research Ethics Board (Appendix A) and the two participating school boards from southwestern Ontario. Informed consent was also obtained from the students' legal guardians (Appendix E), which permitted the students to attend the Father's Day Breakfast and participate in the study. In addition to obtaining parental consent, the participants' assent was requested (Appendix G) to complete the surveys and focus groups, in order to uphold ethical standards and abide by the school board's policies. Forms were collected prior to the study, and students who chose to discontinue or not engage at any point during the study had the opportunity to complete individual homework in a separate room at the breakfast venue with the supervision of their respective teacher.

Event Description

The Father's Day Breakfast was a 135 minute experience where students were instructed to fill out a pre-event survey. The survey was followed by oral presentations relating to violence against women. The students then completed post-event surveys and had the opportunity to engage in small group discussions facilitated by male community members including graduate students and community leaders.

Since a broader goal of the event was to motivate boys to be agents of change in addressing violence against women and girls in their schools, credible speakers were recruited for the event. Greg Marshall represented the Western Mustangs football team as the head coach. Greg focused on athletic social prestige, which gives athletes a unique responsibility to speak against violence against women both during training, games, and other contexts. The keynote speaker, Jeff Perera from the White Ribbon Campaign, discussed unhealthy forms of masculinity and its relationship with the mistreatment of women. To offer a concrete example, Jeff's presentation highlighted the

story of a woman who registered for the Boston marathon in the 1960s under a male's name since women were not allowed to register. Jeff's presentation then included a photo of the woman being grabbed by men who tried to stop her from finishing the race. The point of Jeff's story was to highlight that in spite of the changes made in improving the treatment of women, men and boys can be better allies for women who promote their access to human rights. Throughout the event, both speakers encouraged participants to be "upstanders", a term that refers to people who are "empowered by a fundamental human instinct toward doing good for others [altruism]" (Twemlow et al., 2013).

Measures

Questionnaire Items

The survey measures were developed for this study and are described in detail below. The completed questionnaire can be found in Appendix B. The measures were influenced by Bandura's theory of Moral Disengagement (1999), and the TTM (Prochaska et al., 1982) in relation to adolescent males' roles in addressing violence against women based on their experiences of the Father's Day Breakfast. Table 1 highlights the links between the pre-event attitude items and its theoretical implications. Table 2 reports the links between the post-event reflection items that relate to participants' satisfaction of the event, and its theoretical relationship. Table 3 summarizes the link between the post-event action items and its theoretical links.

Both Moral Disengagement and the TTM represent different approaches that may help to understand the present study's central focus: addressing adolescent males' experiences of a violence against women prevention event. Consequently, some of the items made for this study may indicate areas where the two theories overlap. For example, for the item "I have a role to play to reduce violence against women", favourable responses could indicate that participants report

attitudes related to personal agency (Bandura, 1999), thereby potentially aligning them with the TTMs contemplation stage (Prochaska et al., 1982). However, less favourable responses could indicate that participants possess attitudes that relate to minimizing personal agency (Bandura, 1999), thereby potentially aligning them with the TTMs pre-contemplation stage. Thus, participants' responses to each item will determine which aspects of MD and the TTM best relate to their experiences of the violence against women prevention event. With this explanation in mind, the pre-event survey was created to gauge the boys' general attitudes about violence against women prior to the event. The post-event survey was designed to gauge their level of event satisfaction, their intention to raise awareness in their schools, and lastly, their willingness to take action in their schools to address violence against women.

The first part of the questionnaire asked for the students to report their grade level. Students then completed the pre-event attitudes questionnaire made of eight statements designed to assess their attitudes about the issue of violence against women before experiencing any potential influence from the event. The response options for the pre-event test were "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree", and "Strongly Disagree".

The attitudes questionnaire was presented as follows (Table 1). The first statement was: "When people talk about violence against women, it often seems like they are picking on men." Since many studies have reported hostility and defensiveness in males when addressing their role in stopping violence against women, it was important to gauge the males' potential defensiveness about the issue (Crooks et al., 2007; Flood, 2006). The TTM also recognizes that defensiveness is common for individuals in the precontemplation stage when attempting to change a risk behaviour (Miller, et al., 2011). The purpose of this statement was to gauge boys' level of defensiveness to

the issue before the event, which precedes questions that gauged their readiness to make a difference in their schools.

The second statement was: “I have never really thought about the topic of violence against women.” This statement also positions participants in the precontemplation stage because individuals may not be aware of the issue (Prochaska et al., 1982; Noar et al., 2007; Scott et al., 2007). This statement was also designed to gauge the participants’ general awareness of the issue. The third statement was: “People exaggerate the problem of violence against women.” Influenced by the theory of MD, this statement was meant to gauge the boys’ level of issue minimization through the process known as cognitive distortion (Hymel et al., 2015). Since the issue of violence against women is a public health problem (Jewkes, et al., 2014), the statement indicates a degree of issue distortion. Issue distortion relates to the element of moral disengagement that minimizes one’s role for a given act (Hymel et al., 2015). The more people deny the existence of violence against women, the less morally responsible they will feel. Denial may also position individuals in the precontemplation stage, since they are unlikely to take action in addressing the issue (Prochaska et al., 1982). The consecutive phrase was: “I have a role to play to help reduce violence against women.” This statement differs from the prior one since a positive response indicates a recognition of the issue, relating it to the contemplation stage of the TTM (Levesque, Gelles, & Velicer, 2000).

The fifth statement read: “If there is a problem with violence against women, only professionals like police officers and counsellors can do something about the problem.” Like statement three, the fifth statement minimizes the issue and the participants’ potential role in addressing the issue by diffusing the responsibility onto others (Hymel et al., 2015). The sixth statement pointed out: “I would like to help but I have no idea what I can do to make a difference

in reducing violence against women.” This question is indicative of the contemplation stage in the TTM model since the individual has acknowledged the issue, but they have yet to take make advances in minimizing the issue (Levesque et al., 2000).

The seventh phrase was: “It’s my responsibility to intervene or do something when I see violence against girls.” This phrase is indicative of the contemplation stage of the TTM, since the individual recognizes the issue and is willing to take future steps to mitigate the issue (Levesque et al., 2000). This item also assesses participants’ attitude toward minimizing responsibility, a key element of moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999). The final phrase for the pre-test was: “Most girls who experience violence bring it on themselves.” This statement relates to victim blaming, where the victim is dehumanized and blamed for being involved in the moral unjust action (Bandura, 1999). In essence, the pre-event test survey was designed to address participants’ attitudes toward the issue of violence against women based on the degree to which they may possess attitudes that relate MD, or to assess their position in the TTMs precontemplation or contemplation stages.

Table 1

Pre-Event Attitude Items: Stage of Change and Moral Disengagement

Conceptual Purpose	Item
Pre-Contemplation (TTM)	When people talk about violence against women, it often seems like they are picking on men.
Pre-Contemplation (TTM)	I have never really thought about the topic of violence against women.
Pre-Contemplation (TTM) Distortion of Negative Consequences (MD)	People exaggerate the problem of violence against women.
Contemplation (TTM) Minimizing Agency (MD)	I have a role to play to help reduce violence against women.
Contemplation (TTM) Minimizing Agency (MD)	If there is a problem with violence against women, only professionals like police officers and counsellors can do something about the problem.
Contemplation (TTM)	I would like to help but I have no idea what I can do to make a difference in reducing violence against women.
Contemplation (TTM) Minimizing Agency (MD)	It's my responsibility to intervene or do something when I see violence against girls.
Pre-Contemplation (TTM) Victim Blaming (MD)	Most girls who experience violence bring it on themselves.

Note. TTM = Transtheoretical Model, MD = Moral Disengagement

To investigate whether the eight item pre-event attitudes section could be used as a scale, a reliability analysis was conducted and the correlation matrix was inspected. The reliability coefficient was found to be unreliable ($\alpha = .31$), indicating that the items did not function as a cohesive construct. Furthermore, the correlation matrix (Table 2) indicated moderately low correlations among items, with only a few in the significant range. Item six, “needs

guidance”, correlated negatively with the others, and was removed from subsequent analyses. The remaining items were used as individual indicators of participants’ receptivity about the issue of violence against women, rather than as a scale.

Table 2

Correlations Matrix of Pre-Event Attitudes of Violence Against Women

<i>Pre-Event Attitudes</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Defensive	--							
Never Thought about VAW	0.14	--						
VAW Exaggerated	0.29**	0.02	--					
I Have a Role	0.13	0.18	0.03**	--				
Professionals address VAW	0.04	0.09	0.14	- 0.01	--			
Needs Guidance	- 0.06	- 0.21	- 0.05	- 0.23**	- 0.14	--		
My Responsibility	- 0.03	0.20*	0.10	0.14	0.14	- 0.03	--	
Victim Blaming	0.08	0.25**	0.28**	0.17	0.14	- 0.10	0.16*	--

Note. Statements are abridged for concision. *VAW* is an acronym for Violence Against Women. * $p = 0.05$, ** $p < 0.05$

The post-event survey was entitled “Reflections after the Presentation” (Table 3). This section assessed students’ satisfaction about of event, and their intentions to raise awareness in their schools. Students responded by indicating their position on a five-point Likert-type scale and the response options were the same as the attitudes questionnaire. The first two questions gauged participants’ satisfaction of the event by focusing on the speakers: Greg Marshall and Jeff Perera. The first survey statement was: “Greg Marshall’s presentation made me think about the importance of talking about violence against women and girls.” Greg Marshall, the head football coach for a local university, focused on the importance of athletes taking a stand for injustice and the mistreatment of women on and off the field. He cited recent negative examples of high profile athletes who are notable for their abusive behaviour towards the women in their lives. The second survey statement focused on Jeff Perera’s talk on healthy forms of masculinity while promoting positive and supportive treatment of women. The second survey statement was: “Jeff Perera’s presentation made me think about the importance of taking action on the issue of violence against women and girls.” The third statement is indicative of participants’ position on the TTMs contemplation stage of change (Prochaska et al., 1982), and their perceptions of personal agency (Bandura, 1999): “I plan to tell my peers about what I learned today.” The fourth statement is also indicative of the TTMs contemplation stage (Prochaska et al., 1982), and perceptions of personal agency (Bandura, 1999): “I will do something in my school to raise awareness about violence against women and girls.” The final question of the post-event test pertained to event satisfaction: “Overall, this was a good learning experience.” This question was important to gain the boys’ general impressions of the event.

Table 3

Post-Event Reflection Items: Event Satisfaction, Stage of Change, and Moral Disengagement

Conceptual Purpose	Item
Participant Satisfaction	Greg Marshall's presentation made me think about the importance of talking about violence against women and girls.
Participant Satisfaction	Jeff Perera's presentation made me think about the importance of talking about violence against women and girls.
Contemplation (TTM) Personal Agency (MD)	I plan to tell my peers about what I learned today.
Contemplation (TTM) Personal Agency (MD)	I will do something in my school to raise awareness about violence against women and girls.
Participant Satisfaction	Overall, this was a good learning experience.

Note. TTM = Transtheoretical Model, MD = Moral Disengagement

The second post-event questionnaire entitled *Taking Action* was designed to assess participants' intentions to take action based off a posed scenario related to violence against women and girls (Table 4). The scenario was: "If your female friend was in a violent relationship, how likely would you do the following." The available responses to the seven action statements were made up of a three-point Likert-type scale: 'Not Likely'; "Somewhat Likely"; and "Likely". The first five action statements addressed who the participants may talk to if they witnessed a situation of violence: "Talk to her about what is happening"; "Tell another trusted adult what is happening"; "Tell another trusted adult what is happening"; and "Call a hotline to talk about what is happening." These statements are indicative of the TTMs contemplation stage (Prochaska, 1982), and illustrates actions related to personal agency (Bandura, 1999). The final action statement in section four was: "End your friendship if your friend kept seeing the person who was being violent

toward her.” This statement aligns with Bandura’s section on victim blaming, because it assumes that the victim of violence can control her circumstance (Bandura, 1999; Hymel et al., 2015).

Table 4

Post-Event Action Items: Stage of Change and Moral Disengagement

Conceptual Purpose	Item
Contemplation (TTM) Personal Agency (MD)	Talk to her about what is happening.
Contemplation (TTM) Personal Agency (MD)	Tell your parent/guardian what is happening.
Contemplation (TTM) Personal Agency (MD)	Tell a school staff person what is happening.
Contemplation (TTM) Personal Agency (MD)	Tell another trusted adult what is happening.
Contemplation (TTM) Personal Agency (MD)	Call a hotline to talk about what is happening.
Pre-Contemplation (TTM) Victim Blaming (MD)	End your friendship if your friend kept seeing the person who was being violent toward her.

Note. TTM = Transtheoretical Model, MD = Moral Disengagement

The final section of the survey gave the participants an opportunity to provide examples about what they did or what they intended to do to help address violence against women and girls. The question was: “What are three things you are doing or will do to help prevent violence against women and girls in your school community?” This question was created to gather specific examples from the boys to understand what they did or what they plan to do to address the mistreatment of women and girls. This section was also created to make the participants feel welcome to share their past or future actions.

Semi-Structured Focus Group Questions

While the quantitative items of this study provided participants with closed-ended response options, the purpose of the focus group questions were designed to provide participants with the opportunity to give open-ended responses about their attitudes and intentions related to addressing the issue of violence against women. The complete list of questions can be found at Appendix C. The questions were designed to better understand the participants' overall thoughts about attending the event; participants' opinions on preventing defensiveness among their demographic when addressing this topic; to suggest realistic opportunities for engagement, and to describe appropriate ways to share the message among this demographic.

Procedure

The quantitative data was collected at the Father's Day Breakfast by the researcher and employees of a local research centre through the administration and collection of questionnaires. The researcher's supervisor provided participants with verbal instructions on how to complete the questionnaires. Following the talks, the researcher and staff of a local research centre collected the participants' completed questionnaires.

After the event, participants and teachers from five different schools stayed behind to participate in one of five focus groups. The focus groups were conducted in the same room as the event, and each group sat at different tables located throughout the room. A total of approximately twenty-five students participated in the focus groups and each group varied in size. Each focus group was led by one facilitator, which was either a researcher or community leader. Before the focus group questions were asked, the focus group facilitators introduced themselves and explained that the questions were designed to provide participants with the opportunity to provide feedback about their experiences of the event. The facilitators asked one question at a time, then

provided participants with time to respond. The facilitators transcribed valuable responses, dialogue, and observations with pen and paper. Direct quotes were indicated through the use of quotation marks around the respective phrase. Facilitators did not identify participants in the transcriptions. Each focus group lasted approximately 15 minutes. To conclude each focus group, facilitators thanks the participants for their participation and for donating their time.

Data Analysis

The present study included a combination of quantitative (pre- and post- event surveys) and qualitative (focus group) data. Survey responses were inputted by the researcher of this study onto a password protected computer at the university. Reverse coding occurred so that higher ratings reflected more desirable responses compared to lower ratings. Prior to operating statistical analyses on the questionnaire responses, the data were tested for normality using the *Shapiro-Wilk Test*. Since the data was not normally distributed, the present study utilized non-parametric tests. Descriptive statistics were used to assess participants' attitudes about violence against women before the event, in addition to their total sense of event satisfaction, willingness to raise awareness, and their likelihood to take action following the event. Spearman's correlation coefficient tests (r_s) were used to evaluate correlations. Multiple linear regression models were used to predict participants' willingness to spread awareness about the issue of violence against women. A p-value of < 0.05 indicated statistical significance. All quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23.0 (IBM Corporation, 2013).

Analyses of the semi-structured focus groups were conducted by the researcher using a content analysis procedure (Creswell, 2014). First, the researcher reviewed each comment made in response to each question to get a general sense of meaning before coding the responses. The initial codes were more general topics or categories that shaped the final themes that appear in

Table 9. The facilitators' use of quotation marks around a sentence indicates a participant's direct speech. Text that is not surrounded by quotation marks indicates a synthesis of ideas and words from the participants as recorded by each facilitator.

Chapter 4: Results

Description of Results

The results are divided into four parts. First, the descriptive statistics were computed for the pre- and post-test responses to address the first hypothesis. Second, the inferential statistics were computed to address the second and third hypotheses. Third, a descriptive chart was derived from the semi-structured focus groups.

Subject Demographics

Participants of the present study were mostly in grade ten (40.8%) and grade 11 (29.6%). See Table 5 for a complete breakdown of subject demographics.

Table 5

Subject Demographics

Participant Grade	All (N=156)
Grade 9	17.8% (27)
Grade 10	40.8% (62)
Grade 11	29.6% (45)
Grade 12	5.9% (9)
Grade 12+*	5.9% (13)

Note. *Students who are registered in a fifth year of high school.

Pre-Event Results—Attitudes

The pre-test attitudes questionnaire addressed participants' perceptions about violence against women. Table 3 reports the frequencies of participant responses. Higher ratings indicated the participants reported more perceptive thoughts about the issue of violence against women and girls. Participant defensiveness was mostly split between agreeing (24%), neutral (32.8%), and

disagreeing (27.9%). The majority of participants disagreed that they had never thought about the issue of violence against women (52.3%), almost half disagreed that the issue was exaggerated (45.2%), and the majority agreed that they had a role to play in addressing violence against women (52.6%).

Table 6

Pre-Event Attitude Results—Violence Against Women

(%)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<i>Pre-Event</i>					
Defensive	7.1	24.0	33.8	27.9	7.1
Never thought about VAW	2.6	11.0	18.7	52.3	15.5
VAW is exaggerated	1.3	8.4	32.3	45.2	12.9
I have a role in reducing VAW*	15.6	52.6	25.3	5.2	1.3
Only professionals can address VAW	0.6	2.6	9.7	54.2	32.9
Need guidance in addressing VAW	5.2	46.5	33.5	12.9	1.9
I'm responsible to do something to address VAW*	34.2	49.7	14.8	0.6	0.6
Girls bring violence on themselves	0.6	3.2	30.3	39.4	26.5

Note. Statements are abridged for concision. *VAW* is an acronym for Violence Against Women.

* Reverse Coded

Post-Event Results—Event Satisfaction and Intention to Raise Awareness

The first part of the post-event test addressed participants' satisfaction with the event and their intentions to raise awareness about violence against women. Complete results are found in Table 7. The majority of participants agreed that Greg Marshall (62.1%), and strongly agreed that Jeff Perera's (57.5%) presentations made them think about the importance of addressing violence against women and girls. Almost three quarters of participants agreed to tell their peers what they learned about the event (69.1%), and the majority agreed that they would do something in their schools to raise awareness about violence against women and girls (51.6%).

Table 7

Post-Event Results— Event Satisfaction and Intention to Raise Awareness

(%)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<i>Post-Event</i>					
Marshall encouraged me to talk about VAW	35.9	62.1	2.0	0.0	0
Jeff Perera encouraged me to talk about VAW	57.5	38.6	3.9	0.0	0
I plan to tell my peers about what I learned today.	12.5	69.1	17.8	0.0	0.7
I will raise awareness about VAW	10.5	51.6	35.9	2.0	0
Overall good experience	56.6	40.1	3.3	0.0	0

* Statements are abridged for concision. *VAW* is an acronym for Violence Against Women.

Post-Event Results—Taking Action

The third section of the questionnaire entitled Taking Action was designed to gauge the degree to which participants' reported a willingness to take action in their schools to address violence against women and girls. Complete results are found at Table 8. In the event that participants' had a female friend who was in a violent relationship, the majority of participants reported that they would likely speak with her about the matter (79.7%), many reported they would encourage her to end the relationship (80.9%), and many would not end their friendship with her if she continued to date the person who was abusive (81.0%).

Table 8

Post-Event Results—Taking Action

(%)	Not Likely	Somewhat Likely	Likely
<i>Post-Event: Taking Action</i>			
Talk to her about what is happening	1.3	19.0	79.7
Tell your parent/guardian what is happening	25.5	49.0	25.5
Tell a school staff person what is happening	28.8	53.6	17.6
Tell another trusted adult what is happening	14.4	48.4	37.3
Encourage your friend to end the relationship	1.3	17.8	80.9
Call a hotline to talk about what is happening	60.1	30.1	9.8
End your friendship if your friend kept seeing the person who was being violent toward her*	81.0	14.4	4.6

Note. Statements are abridged for concision. *VAW* is an acronym for Violence Against Women.

*Reverse coded.

Results from Semi-Structured Focus Groups

The following qualitative themes were derived from five semi-structured focus groups that took place during the Father's Day Breakfast by using the content analysis procedure (Creswell, 2014). Complete results can be found at Table 9.

Inspired to Lead

The participants were inspired by the event's positive messaging, which may have influenced their desire to take on leadership in their school communities. Participants reported that "we can influence the grade nines" by "go[ing] back [to school] and start change." Lastly, some voiced they "need to do things that other people are scared to do."

Engaging Speakers

Students felt that both Greg Marshall and Jeff Perera's talks "focus[ed] on the positive." While some students reported that Jeff Perera was an engaging speaker, others enjoyed the connections Greg Marshall made with sports culture and speaking out against violence against women, especially his insights about "not sitting on the side-line" and being an "upstander."

A Safe Space for Boys

Boys felt that the event was a safe space to discuss issues related to violence against women and girls. Some "did not feel they were being attacked during the event" and that the event was about "making our environment safe" with the use of many "positive messages".

Reducing Stigma

Some key messages surfaced in regards to changing the stigma towards violence against women. Some participants expressed there is too much "focus on the negative" and voiced that

“we haven’t all been physically abusive to women.” In contrast, people need to “focus on a positive future” just like it was encouraged by the speakers.

Defensiveness

Defensiveness was a unique theme with the groups. One focus group noted that defensiveness was present at their table during the event, and that some boys can be defensive when they believe that other people think that all boys hurt women.

Being a Positive Role Model

The boys focused on being positive role models to reduce peer pressure toward the mistreatment of women and girls. While one student expressed the need to “be role models”, others example students emphasized the importance of having a plan to address violence against women, the need to be informed, and to respond to negative messages expressed in social media, around the school hallways and the dressing rooms.

Taking Action

The boys listed a number of different ways they can intervene. From working “as a team to call out strangers”, to using social media, telling parents and teachers if they see something, and calling the police. Participants also expressed concrete ways to take action, such as completing larger group presentations, and posting messages on school bulletin boards to create larger discussions.

Raising Questions

Some boys asked for help in how to appropriately stand up for themselves when experiencing violence at the hands of women and girls. Some students were also curious about addressing cyber bullying and covert forms of violence that takes place in schools.

Table 9

Content Analysis of Focus Group Discussions—Themes and Examples

Inspired to Lead	Engaging Speakers	A Safe Space for Boys	Reducing Stigma	Defensiveness	Being Positive Role Models	Taking Action	Raising Questions
“We can influence the grade nines” and “be role models”	Like that speakers “focus on the positive”	“we did not feel like we were being attacked [during the event]”	Did not like that people tend to “focus on the negative”	This feeling [of defensiveness] was present at the table	Be informed, know what to do when a situation arises	Work as a team to call out strangers.	How to address violence when women abuse men [which lead to men] “wrongfully” responding with violence?
Boys were inspired to “go back [to school] and start change”	Thought Jeff Perera was an engaging public speaker, and enjoyed the connections Greg Marshal made with sports.	The event was about “making our environment safe”	Try to reduce the belief that “we haven’t all been physically abusive to women”	Boys get defensive because people think that all boys hurt women	Have a plan. Stand up and say something if you see it	Use social media social media, post on bulletin boards, and creating larger group presentations (back at school)	How to address cyber bullying and the more covert violence that is taking place in schools?
“We need us to do things that other people are scared to do”	Important to learn how to be an “upstander”, “not sitting on the side-line”	The event had positive messages	We should “focus on a positive future”, as encouraged by the speakers	“We did not feel like we were being attacked [during the event]”	Speak out through social media, in the school hallways, and dressing rooms	Tell teachers, parents, and police	

Hypothesis 1 Results: Varying Levels of Defensiveness

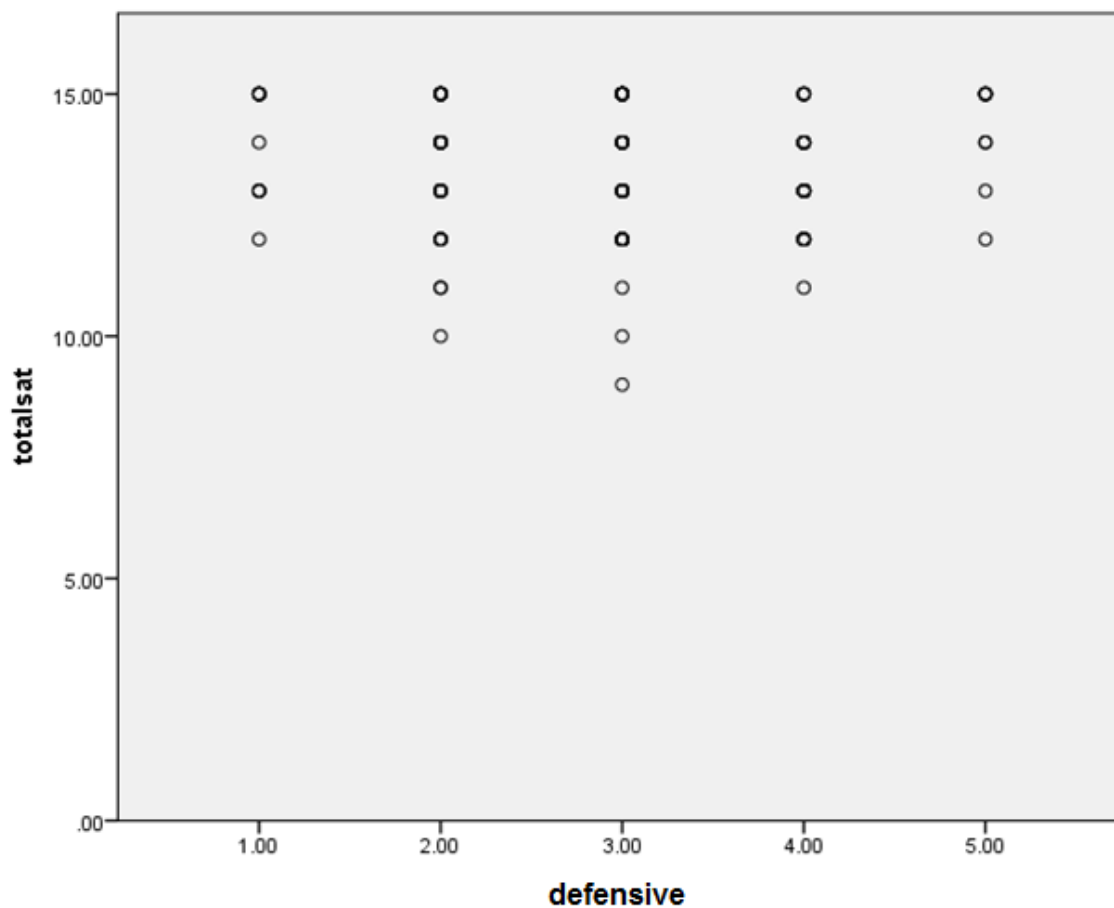
The first hypothesis stated that students' pre-event defensiveness would indicate a resistance to engage with the issue of violence against women and girls. However, participants' levels of defensiveness varied. Some participants agreed that they felt defensive (24%), some felt neutral (33.8%), and some did not feel defensive (27.9%). Focus group responses also highlighted that participants' reported attitudes of defensiveness were mixed. While some participants noted that they did not feel like they were being "attacked" during the event, others noted that a sense of defensiveness was present in their group (Table 7).

Hypothesis 2 Results: Students' Defensiveness Not Related to Event Satisfaction

Hypothesis two stated that there would be a significant and positive relationship between participants' reported degree of defensiveness to the issue of violence against women and their total event satisfaction scores. Results from the Spearman's rho test indicated that there was a nonsignificant correlation between students' reported degree of defensiveness to the issue of violence against women and their reported total event satisfaction ($r_s = -0.07, p > 0.05$). Further investigation indicated that this lack of relationship reflected high levels of satisfaction with the event, independent of attitudes. Figure 1 shows that high levels of satisfaction occurred across all degrees of reported defensiveness about the issue of violence against women.

Figure 1

Reported Total Levels of Event Satisfaction



Results from the Spearman's rho test (Table 10) also indicated a significant relationship between students' degree of defensiveness to the issue of violence against women and their intention to raise awareness about the issue ($r_s = 0.22, p < 0.05$). In addition, there was a significant relationship between students' reported total event satisfaction and their intentions to raise awareness about violence against women within their schools ($r_s = 0.43, p < 0.05$).

Table 10

Correlation Coefficient Values between Students' Degree of Defensiveness about the Issue of Violence Against Women, Total Satisfaction, and Intention to Raise Awareness

<i>Pre-Event and Post-Event Ratings</i>	1	2	3
Defensive	--		
Total Satisfaction	- 0.07	--	
Intention to Raise Awareness ^a	0.22**	0.43**	--

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$. Note: Refer to Appendix B for complete survey questions. ^a Reverse coded.

Hypothesis 3 Results: Students' Attitudes and Event Satisfaction Predicts Intentions to Raise Awareness

A multiple linear regression model was created and tested to determine the effect of participants' attitudes about violence against women with their intentions to raise awareness about the issue in their respective schools. First, the adjusted r squared ($R^2 = 0.12$) indicated that the model was satisfactory since it appropriately predicted the students' intention to raise awareness about violence against women. Table 11 reinforces this finding and shows the results of the multiple linear regression model using the Enter method. Key results indicated that the extent to which students reported a sense of responsibility to address violence against women ($\beta = 0.19$) was the most influential predictor. The extent to which students reported a sense of responsibility ($t = 2.46, p < 0.05$) and the extent to which students reported being defensive ($t = 1.97, p = 0.05$) about violence against women were significant predictors of their intentions to raise awareness

about the issue. Since the other dependent variables did not significantly contribute to the model, they were removed from future models to increase parsimony (Table 11).

Table 11

Multiple Linear Regression Model to Predict Participants' Intentions to Raise Awareness About Violence Against Women

Variable	Standardized Coefficients (β)	<i>t</i>
(Constant)		4.86**
Defensive	0.16	1.97*
Never Thought	0.05	0.66
VAW Exaggerated	0.93	1.07
Role to Reduce VAW ^a	0.13	1.61
Only Professionals Intervene	0.07	0.90
My Responsibility ^a	0.19	2.46**
Victim Blaming	0.09	1.05

Note. Dependent Variable: Intention to Raise Awareness. *VAW* = Violence Against Women. Refer to Appendix B for complete survey questions. * $p = 0.05$, ** $p < 0.05$. ^a Reverse Coded

To evaluate the impact of event satisfaction over and above attitudes, students' reported satisfaction of the event was added to the model. Complete results can be found in Table 12. The adjusted r squared ($R^2 = 0.27$) indicated that the addition of satisfaction scores provided a greater explanation of variance of students' intentions to raise awareness. The degree to which students reported their total event satisfaction ($\beta = 0.42$) was the strongest predictor. All three predictor variables (Table 12) were shown to be statistically significant, though most importantly, students'

satisfaction with the event increased their reported intention to raise awareness, even over and above their attitudes about the issue ($t = 5.82, p < 0.01$).

Table 12

Subsequent Summary of Multiple Linear Regression Model for Students' Intention to Raise Awareness About Violence Against Women

Model	Variable	Standardized Coefficients (β)	t
1	(Constant)		
	Defensive	0.24	3.03**
	My Responsibility ^a	0.25	3.20**
2	(Constant)		1.32
	Defensive	0.25	3.61**
	My Responsibility	0.16	2.25**
	Total Satisfaction	0.42	5.81***

Note. Dependent Variable: Intention to Raise Awareness. * $p = 0.05$, ** $p < 0.05$.^a Reverse coded.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Study Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine high school boys' experiences of a violence against women prevention event. In an attempt to accomplish this goal, a mixed methods analysis was utilized. One hundred and fifty six students from southwestern Ontario secondary schools attended the 9th Annual Father's Day Breakfast event, where two credible speakers discussed the issue of violence against women while expressing the need for adolescent males to engage further in addressing the issue. Prior to the presentations, participants completed an attitudes questionnaire about violence against women, then following the presentations, participants completed a questionnaire that addressed their reported degree of event satisfaction, likelihood to raise awareness, and likelihood to take action in their schools to prevent the issue. Semi-structured focus groups were facilitated by the researcher and community leaders, allowing students to engage in open-ended discussion about the issue of violence against women.

To better understand the participants' perceptions and willingness to engage with the issue of violence against women, hypotheses and focus group questions were derived from the theoretical guidance of MD (Bandura, 1999) and the TTM (Prochaska et al., 1982). The theory of MD helps to explain why good people can do cruel things through selectively disengaging from certain moral standards (Bandura, 1999, p. 193-194), while the TTM assesses an individual's readiness to act on a healthy behaviour while offering strategies to promote future change (Prochaska et al., 1982). Based on the theory of MD and the TTM, it was hypothesized that participants' pre-event attitude ratings would indicate a resistance to engage with the issue of violence against women. The second hypothesis stated that there would be a significant relationship between participants' defensiveness and total event satisfactions scores. The third

hypothesis stated that participants' attitude and event satisfaction scores would predict their intentions to raise awareness.

Overall Findings

The overall findings from the present study indicated that the majority of the participants' experiences of the event were indicative of attitudes related to moral engagement and the TTMs contemplation stage in regards to addressing the issue of violence against women. These findings were evident through participants' reported awareness and openness about the issue, acknowledgement of its seriousness, and reported feelings of responsibility to take on a role to address the issue. Regardless of students' reported degree of defensiveness about violence against women, almost all students reported high levels of overall event satisfaction. Subsequently, high scores of overall event satisfaction, low ratings of defensiveness, and high responsibility ratings positively predicted participants' willingness to raise awareness about the issue at their school. Thus, students' reported experiences about the event were illustrative of attitudes that relate to moral engagement and indicated a readiness to engage further in addressing violence against women.

Reported Awareness

Quantitative results and focus group data provided insight on the participants' awareness and openness about the issue of violence against women. The majority of participants reported that they had thought about the issue of violence against women and that many were open to the issue. During the focus groups, one boy noted: "We did not feel like we were being attacked [during the event]." The boys' reported awareness and openness to engaging with the issue of violence against women may relate to the TTMs contemplation stage (Prochaska et al., 1982). According to the TTM, individuals in the contemplation stage are aware of the risk behaviour and

intend to take further action to diminish the issue (Prochaska et al., 1982). The boys' position on the contemplation stage contrasted other research that highlighted males' tendency to be defensive and resistant to violence against women addressing the problem (Crooks et al., 2007; Flood, 2006). For example, in a study that applied the TTM to understanding teens' experiences of dating violence, the male participants were almost twice as likely as the girls to be in the precontemplation stage, thereby indicating a resistance to engage with the issue (Levesque, 2006). Accordingly, the participants' reported awareness and openness may have aligned them with the TTMs contemplation stage.

Acknowledging the Seriousness of Violence Against Women

Another key finding was that the almost all of the participants acknowledged the seriousness of violence against women. Rather than indicating that the issue of violence against women was exaggerated, the majority of participants disagreed thereby acknowledging that seriousness of the issue. This finding relates to the TTMs contemplation stage because it indicates that the participants were aware about violence against women. Participants' reports that violence against women was not exaggerated also aligns with positive elements of moral agency, since many participants did not distort the negative consequences related to violence against women (Bandura, 1999). As phrased by Bandura (1999), "if minimization does not work, the evidence of harm can be discredited...ignored, minimized, distorted, or disbelieved [leaving] little reason for self-censure to be activated" (p. 199). In result, the participants' reported attitude that the issue of violence against women was not exaggerated is related to moral engagement and may align them with the TTMs contemplation stage.

The participants' reported attitudes that violence against women was a serious issue appeared to be rather progressive in comparison to other studies that assessed males' stance on the

issue. For example, one meta-analysis assessed self-report studies about masculine ideology and sexual aggression among college youth across America. The meta-analysis reported that one third of males reported that they were somewhat likely to rape a woman if they were not caught or punished (Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002). The participants' who reported their preference to sexually dominate a woman in the absence of punishment may indicate a resistance to accepting the seriousness of violence against women. In essence, the participants from the present study who acknowledged the serious nature of violence against women may not be consistent with the views of other males outside this study.

Reported Sense of Responsibility and Playing a Role

The majority of boys reported that they felt responsible and had a role to play in addressing violence against women. For example, many participants reported a sense of responsibility to address the issue, and almost three quarters reported that they were responsible and had a role in reducing violence against women. During the focus groups, participants also expressed a desire to work as a team to call out situations of violence and to use social media to raise awareness.

The participants' reported recognition of responsibility and desire to take a role with the issue of violence against women may be explained by both the TTM and the theory of moral agency. Participants who acknowledged that they had a role and felt responsible about addressing the issue of violence against women may align them with the TTM's contemplation stage, where individuals both recognize the problem and intend to take future action to reduce the problem (DiClemente et al., 1991). These findings are indicative of moral agency since many participants reported a high sense of personal responsibility. Participants' sense of personal responsibility was evident when participants indicated that professionals were not the only people who could intervene in situations of violence against women, thereby resisting a desire to displace or diffuse

responsibility onto others. In result, the students' reported roles and sense of responsibility were positive indicators of the boys' willingness to engage further with addressing violence against women.

The students' sense of responsibility may have been reinforced by the speakers' use of ally-based language during event. For example, based on the direction of the event organizers, the event speakers encouraged the boys to be "upstanders" in situations of violence against women. During the focus groups, the participants appreciated the speakers' "focus on the positive" and valued the emphasis placed on being an "upstander". According to the TTM, individuals in the contemplation stage are more likely to uptake with positive behaviour when learning about the benefits of reducing the risk behaviour (Prochaska et al., 1982). Recent research has also recognized the importance of anti-violence education to address boys as allies and potential agents of change to facilitate upstander behaviour (Jewkes et al., 2014). Since the majority of boys' responses were aligned with the contemplation stage, the ally-based language used by the speakers may have reinforced their reported sense of personal agency to address violence against women.

Nonsignificant Relationship between Degree of Defensiveness and Overall Satisfaction

A key finding was that students' degree of defensiveness did not significantly relate to their overall event satisfaction. Although many participants reported an openness to discussing the issue of violence against women, almost an equal amount agreed or strongly agreed with the following item: "When people talk about violence against women, it often seems like they are picking on men". Although males' defensiveness is a notable issue in the research that addresses their experiences with anti-violence education (Crooks et al., 2007; Flood, 2006), in the present study, the participants' level of defensiveness was insignificantly related to their level of overall event

satisfaction. Students' responses from the focus groups also indicated that the speakers were engaging and the students felt inspired to go back to the school and start positive behavior change.

The speakers' positive approaches to engaging males in addressing violence against women could also reflect a shift in the intervention literature. For example, major research has outlined that all males must be engaged as allies to stimulate further action to prevent violence against women (Jewkes et al., 2014). Engaging males as allies in addressing violence against women is a theoretically sound approach which contrasts past interventions that assumed males were mostly perpetrators of violence (Jewkes et al., 2014). The shift in approaching males as allies was likely in response to the tendency for males to be defensiveness while engaging with interventions that addressed violence against women (Crooks et al., 2007; Flood, 2006). Other research suggests that appealing to males' altruism and their sense of responsibility may increase their engagement with the issue (Katz et al., 2011). Based on the focus group responses from this present study, participants felt encouraged by the speakers to be upstanders by not "sitting on the sidelines." One participant explicitly stated that "we did not feel that we were being attacked [during the event], while another reported that the event was "about making our environment safe".

Appealing to males' altruism and sense of responsibility is consistent with the aspects of the TTM. For example, individuals who relate to the TTMs precontemplation and contemplation stages are more likely to advance through the stages of change when interventions focus on the benefits of changing one's behaviour (DiClemente et al., 1991). Highlighting the benefits of taking responsibility about violence against women may also promote attitudes that relate to moral engagement. For example, the intention to take personal responsibility resists passive bystander behaviour which diffuses or displaces responsibility onto others. Thus, the speakers' attempts to

promote a sense of responsibility and acts of goodwill may help to explain students' positive attitudes about the event.

Attitudes and Overall Satisfaction Predicts Intentions to Raise Awareness

Based on the first regression analysis, students' willingness to raise awareness about violence against women in their school was predicted by their open attitudes and feelings of responsibility about violence against women. Many students' attitudes aligned with the TTM's contemplation stage based on their openness and sense of responsibility to intervene in situations of violence against women. Students' sense of responsibility also indicated positive levels of moral engagement. Accordingly, both theories support the finding that students' attitudes indicate an openness and sense of responsibility to addressing the issue of violence against women, which relates to their desire to raise awareness about the issue. For example, research that linked the TTM with teen dating violence found that males in the contemplation stage were significantly more likely to apply healthy relationship skills compared to males in the precontemplation stage (Levesque, 2006). In a meta-analysis that addressed MD and traditional aggression in school children, taking personal responsibility was negatively related with traditional aggression (Pornari et al., 2010). Hence, mechanisms of the TTM and MD may help explain the relationship between students' openness and sense of responsibility and their willingness to raise awareness about violence against women.

The final regression analysis incorporated students' overall event satisfaction in addition to their attitudes about the issue. The results indicated that students' overall event satisfaction increased their reported intentions to raise awareness about the issue, even over and above their attitudes about the issue. It is important to note that almost all of the participants reported that they strongly agreed and agreed that the event was an overall good experience, and that the major

presenters' talks encouraged the participants to further discuss the issue of violence against women. During the focus groups, participants also expressed appreciation for the speakers' positive focus about addressing the issue. For instance, one participant appreciated one of the presenter's emphasis on being an upstander by "not sitting on the sidelines". Thus, the participants' favourable attitudes about the speakers and their encouraging messages may have influenced their overall intentions to raise awareness about violence against women in their schools.

Results from the final regression analysis may underscore the importance of encouraging positive attitudes and high satisfaction with interventions that attempt to engage males in addressing violence against women. By analogy, research has outlined successful methods in reducing high attrition rates in court-mandated treatment for male batterers may reinforce the value of approaching males in non-confrontational ways. In one study, highly resistant batterers who attended six weeks of Motivational Enhancement Therapy sessions completed the regular batterer intervention programming at a significantly higher rates than both resistant and non-resistant clients in the standard intervention (Scott et al., 2011). Subsequently, results from the present study and the MET intervention indicated that males were more likely to engage in efforts to address violence against women when programs applied non-confrontational approaches.

Limitations

Although many of the participants of this study reported favourable experiences of the event, the study's findings must not be overgeneralized. The key limitations of this study were related to the sample bias and the post-test that was administered immediately following the event.

Sample Biases

The participants' generally positive ratings may be related to the biased participant sample. For instance, regardless of the students' knowledge about violence against women, they may have

felt obligated to attend the event and provide favourable responses that reflected a high awareness of the event's central issue. It is also important to note that the event committee advised teachers to recruit student leaders, such as athletes, based on their proven leadership abilities. Subsequently, the student leaders could have possessed generally positive attitudes about addressing social issues, thereby influencing their decision to report high levels of awareness about violence against women. In contrast, participants could have been keen to address the issue of violence against women because they believed that leadership relates to speaking out about issues in their school.

Students' reported awareness could have also been influenced by recent high profile media cases of violence against women. To raise one example, just months before the event, a multiple-month media-frenzy erupted after a high-profile NFL athlete was caught on camera while beating his fiancée into an unconscious state, which resulted in the athlete's termination (Van Natta & Van Valkenburg, 2014). Due to the coverage from this case, it was likely that both the student athletes and non-student athlete participants alike were aware of the issue. Thus, students' reported awareness and openness about violence against women could be explained by their potential sense of obligation or motivation to provide favourable responses, and their awareness of high-profile cases of violence against women.

Sampling Students Immediately Following Event

Immediately following the event, participants were asked to report their intentions to take action in addressing the issue of violence against women. In response, many students' reported a desire to raise awareness about violence against women in their schools. On one hand, sampling students' perceptions of the event and their intentions to address the issue could have reduced the possibility of confounding effects (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013). At the same time, if the event had any effect on the participants' perceptions about violence against women, the effects on

participants would have to be measured over time (Cohen et al., 2013). Thus, the post-test from the present study may not be the most valid measure of students' perceptions about violence against women. By extension, the gap between students' generally positive intentions to address violence against women and their eventual actions must be critically addressed.

Anti-violence research has critically explored the relationship between an individual's attitudes and their changes in behaviour. However, post-tests that occur immediately following the event may not be the most valid method to test students' changes in behavior. In fact, many violence prevention interventions strive to raise awareness with an assumption that behaviour change will occur (Jewkes et al., 2014). A systematic review about interventions that engage males in ending sexual violence found that there is scant evidence that interventions actually decrease males' perpetration of violence behaviour (Ricardo et al., 2011). The assumption that positive attitudes will be preceded by action can severely impede the improvement of interventions. One study critically examines the 'attitude to action' assumption by postulating that human behaviour is not necessarily a reasoned affair, and that emotions and other non-cognitive factors must be considered (Ajzen, 1991). In spite of boys' reported intentions to raise awareness about the social issue in their schools, no causal relationship can be drawn between participants' intentions to act and their actual actions that may occur after the event. Post-tests results would likely differ if students' intentions were tested one month, or six months following the event.

Future Directions

Based on the present study's sample biases and issues related to post-test validity, the present study raises a number of possible future directions for research in this area. Future studies may benefit from more randomized participant samples, realigning and enriching questionnaires

alongside larger interventions, and implementing testing methods that assess students' behaviours related to addressing violence against women.

Sample Randomization

Rather than recruiting boys based on their leadership potential and potentially biasing the sample, future studies may benefit from a more randomized sample of high school boys. The more randomized the participant sample, the more likely students' responses will vary, which could provide a more accurate representation of adolescent males' perceptions of the event. Variations in participants' responses may also help to increase the study's generalizability.

Future studies could benefit from surveying a more diverse group of students. Many of the participants reported morally engaging attitudes and intentions about addressing the issue of violence against women, thereby aligning participants with the contemplation stage. The generally positive self-reports provided little variability in the questionnaire and focus group responses which limits possibilities for further analysis. A more randomized sample of students, however, may increase the chances of students reporting attitudes and intentions that relate moral disengagement and the TTMs precontemplation stage. Furthermore, non-student leader participants may be less influenced by the speakers' messages, thereby reducing their potential to report generally positive responses. In essence, a more randomized sample of boys may possess greater generalizability within the sample of high school boys from southwestern Ontario.

Realigning and Enriching Future Questionnaires

Many interventions have experienced modest success in indicating changes in males' intentions and attitudes to address violence against women. Perhaps larger interventions, such as The Fourth R (Wolfe et al., 2011), could benefit from implementing pre-event and post-event questionnaires that assess boys' position on the TTMs stage of change, and attitudes related to

moral disengagement when addressing the issue of violence against women. To reduce participants' potential to provide overly positive responses, post-tests could be implemented both one month and six months following the intervention to indicate potential changes in boys' attitudes and intentions over time. Highlighting boys' attitudes related to moral disengagement and their readiness to change could inform how larger scale studies could modify their programming to encourage upstander behaviour among male participants.

The questionnaires that address participants' attitude and intentions may also be benefit from further complexity in addressing violence against women. The questionnaire designed for the present study was limited in its variability due to time restraints during data collection. In future studies, a lengthened questionnaire could include more demographic items and more items that address participants' subtle attitudes and intentions about addressing violence against women. With a more randomized group of participants, the questionnaire could collect nuanced information related to participant demographics, which could reveal participants' diverse experience with the event. Identifying participants' race, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, and gender could reveal differences in attitudes and intentions between groups. For example, participants who may self-identify as a non-heteronormative male may be less influenced by a high profile football coach compared to individuals who identify with heteronormative characteristics. Thus, future studies may benefit from highlighting demographic differences within a more randomized group of students. Addressing demographic differences using a modified questionnaire could assist with noting differences between groups that could inform varying approaches based on demographic trends.

Since the questionnaire for the present study touched upon limited expressions of violence against women, an extended questionnaire could address participants' more subtle attitudes and

intentions about the social issue. Multiple items could be generated to address the mechanisms of moral disengagement and the stages of change. For example, one study that used moral disengagement to understand bullying among adolescents used four to five items per mechanism (Hymel et al., 2015). The multiple items could address various forms of violence, such as physical, sexual or psychological harm, which were priorities issues addressed by the United Nations (1992). Providing participants with different options to report attitudes that relate to mechanisms of moral disengagement about violence against women may help to identify subtle differences in students' attitudes and intentions to address violence against women.

Incorporating previously evidence-based measures into future questionnaires could also help to address participants' subtle attitudes about violence against women. For example, the *Gender-Equitable Men Scale* [GEM Scale] was tested and validated in the Instituto Promundo Program H intervention on gender-based violence to for males' gender-related norms that put women and girls at risk for various forms of violence against women (Blostein et al., 2014). The GEM Scale was also recognized as an appropriate tool by researchers from the *United States Agency for International Development* [USAID] and has been widely used (Bloom, 2008). The questionnaire items that address household decision making, violence, and communication may be especially relevant since items address gender-based assumptions that can also occur outside of the students' school community.

Methods to Assess Changes in Behaviour

Future studies may benefit from tests that bridge the gap between boys' intentions and actions to raise awareness in their schools about violence against women. As stated in the Lancet's special issue about violence against women, "the focus of many prevention interventions has tended to be to raise awareness...with an assumption that behaviour change will follow; yet

decades of behaviour change research shows the association between attitudes and behaviour to be complex and bidirectional” (Jewkes et al., 2014, p. 4) The assumption that participant attitudes will translate into action may be confounded by intervention research that highlights the overreliance on self-reported data, and the lack of documentation of concrete behavioural change (Blostein et al., 2014). To address the complex relationship between intentions and actions, research has highlighted that behaviour observation research methods hold a unique position in theory-driven intervention research (Snyder et al., 2006). The following behaviour observation methods may help to address the gap between participants’ intentions and actions in addressing violence against women.

Engaging students in *Forum Theatre* could be one way to assess students’ application of upstander behaviour during situations of violence. Form Theatre encourages participants to engage in dramatic exercises that promote social action during situations of oppression (Boal, 1990). The use of forum theatre, or role-playing, has used by the Fourth R to assess students’ applications of healthy relationship skills with a degree of success (Crooks et al., 2007; Wolfe et al., 2011). Future studies that apply role-playing exercises could enable students to engage in and respond to different scenarios of violence against women, while teachers record observational data. The observational data could then be compared with the students’ pre-event and post-event attitudes that relate to students’ intentions to take action in addressing violence against women within their schools.

Other forms of observational tests could be administered both before, during and after the respective interventions. For example, anonymous peer reports that address respectful and non-sexist behaviour could be administered to boys and girls within the respective schools who participated in the intervention. The anonymous peer reports could be driven by scales that address

sexism, such as the *Ambivalent Sexism Inventory* [ASI], which has been used in the context of high school students (Zakrisson, Anderzen, Lenell, & Sandelin, 2012). The ASI scale could enable participants to report their observations of hostile and benevolent forms of sexism (Zakrisson et al., 2012). Hostile sexism occurs when women are negatively characterized based on the belief that women threaten hegemonic masculinity, whereas benevolent sexism is a positive adherence to hegemonic gender roles (Zakrisson et al., 2012). Data from the anonymous reports could also provide further explanations for students' position on the stages of change, while indicating their potential to morally disengage. The anonymous peer reports could be also administered in both intervention and control schools so students' anonymous reports can be compared for potential differences between schools. The implementation of anonymous peer reports about sexism in students' schools could provide further ways to bridge the gap between boys' intentions and actions in addressing violence against women.

Conclusions

The present study may highlight some benefits of differentiating ways to engage adolescent males in addressing violence against women. Based on theories of making personal changes (TTM) and taking social responsibility (MD), 156 adolescent boys' attitudes and intentions about violence against women were assessed based on their experiences of a violence prevention presentation. The present study found that many of the participants were reportedly open and aware about violence against women and felt that they had a role to play to raise awareness about the issue. The students' degree of defensiveness was not related to their high scores of overall satisfaction with the event. Participants' positive attitudes and high degrees of event satisfaction predicted their willingness to raise awareness about the issue. Key limitations from the present study included sample biases and testing participants' intentions to address violence against

women immediately following the event. Future recommendations pointed to the benefits of sampling a more diverse group of boys, realigning and enriching questionnaires alongside larger interventions, and implementing methods to assess students' behaviours. The present study's future directions may provide support for future interventions to differentiate their approaches when engaging adolescent boys in addressing violence against women.

Adolescent boys have a unique opportunity to serve as allies in addressing violence against women within their school communities. Increased male engagement can help to reduce this violence so that all students benefit from safe school experiences. It is essential that boys work together with girls to address harmful attitudes and behaviours that support violence against women within their school communities. This study demonstrates some encouraging attitudes on the part of boys in leadership roles and the possibility that different boys may benefit from different prevention approaches based on boys' readiness to address the serious social problem of violence against women.

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Appendix A

COACHING BOYS INTO MEN: 9TH ANNUAL FATHER'S DAY BREAKFAST

STUDENT FEEDBACK K

Today's breakfast presentation deals with the topic of violence against women – As leaders of your school community, we welcome your honest opinion about this topic by answering the following questions on a 5 point scale. Your responses are anonymous.

I am in grade: 9 10 11 12 12+

For each statement, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree (check the box that best applies).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
When people talk about violence against women, it often seems like they are picking on men	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have never really thought about the topic of violence against women	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People exaggerate the problem of violence against women	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a role to play to help reduce violence against women	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If there is a problem with violence against women, only professionals like police officers and counsellors can do something about the problem	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to help but I have no idea what I can do to make a difference in reducing violence against women	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It's my responsibility to intervene or do something when I see violence against girls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most girls who experience violence bring it on themselves.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

(Do not complete questions on the next page until AFTER the Presentations)

Reflections after the Presentation

Student Feedback	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Greg Marshall's presentation made me think about the importance of talking about violence against women and girls.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeff Perera's presentation made me think about the importance of taking action on the issue of violence against women and girls.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I plan to tell my peers about what I learned today.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will do something in my school to raise awareness about violence against women and girls.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, this was a good learning experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Taking Action

If your female friend was in a violent relationship, how likely would you do the following:

Action	Not Likely	Somewhat Likely	Likely
Talk to her about what is happening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tell your parent/guardian what is happening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tell a school staff person what is happening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tell another trusted adult what is happening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encourage your friend to end the relationship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Call a hotline to talk about what is happening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
End your friendship if your friend kept seeing the person who was being violent toward her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What are three things you are doing or will do to help prevent violence against women and girls in your school and community?

Appendix B

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS for STUDENTS STAYING BEHIND

Questions to discuss

1. What did you think about this event and the benefits of attending?
2. Often boys feel defensive when they hear about this topic – feel like people are picking on boys and men – how can we avoid this response in some boys?
3. What can boys be asked to do to help in this area that is realistic for them?
4. What are other ways to get messages out to boys about this topic

Appendix C

Recruitment Script for Information/Consent Form Distribution

Name of Study: High School Boys' Experiences on a Violence Against Women Prevention Program.

Investigators:

Peter Jaffe, Ph.D., C. Psych - Western University

Mark Wayne Henshaw, M.A. (candidate) - Western University

Recruitment Script

As students from [school name], you are being asked to complete a short survey examining moral disengagement and decision making behaviour as it relates to violence against women. The whole study will take approximately 60 minutes to complete. You will be participating among your peers from our school and other schools at the Marconi Club. There will be questions about your understanding of moral disengagement and decision making behaviour as it relates to violence against women. If you choose not to participate at any point during the study, you will have the opportunity to complete individual homework in another room of the Marconi Club without any penalty.

In order to participate, you are required to read the Information Letters and provide signed copies of both sets of Consent Forms. The information you give the researchers is confidential, and this confidentiality will be protected to the extent permitted by law. If you tell one of the researchers about a child being hurt (please note that a child refers to an individual under 18 years of age), or that you intend to hurt yourself or someone else, or that you have perpetrated or experienced violence, the researchers are required to contact the proper authorities. Identifiable, verbal disclosures of dating abuse perpetration and victimization will be directly reported by the researchers to the appropriate authorities.

Your responses will not be linked back to your name. Your name on your consent form will be kept separate from the other information you provide. At the end of the program the researcher will shred any papers with your name on it. The information collected during this research may be used for educational purposes or become part of a published scientific report. This information will only be reported in terms of group findings. NO information will be reported that would allow anyone to be identified individually.

It is possible you might feel uncomfortable or embarrassed about answering personal questions in the survey or during the group discussion. You will not be required to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable. The researchers will provide you with information on moral disengagement and decision making as it relates to violence against women at the end of the study. If you experience distress please talk to the researchers. They will provide you with information on community supports and/or supports within the school that you can access.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Even if your parent has signed the consent form allowing you to participate, your participation in the study is still voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your academic status.

There has been increased media exposure to issues related to violence against women, especially with professional sports, which has made the topic more prevalent in the lives of many adolescent males. Thus, inviting males to participate in this study gives them an opportunity to take a positive approach and use their leadership skills and take a step toward issues addressing violence against women. In addition, this research may provide significant social and scientific benefits through the knowledge that will be gained about the phenomenon of violence against women.

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Research Ethics, Western University. Further contact information is provided on your Information Letter.

Distribute the following (4 forms should be given to each student)

- **Parental Information Letter**
- **Youth Information Letter**
- **Parental Consent Form**
- **Youth Assent Form**

***Please ensure that each student has received 1 copy of each letter. As well, please remind them that their consent/assent forms need to be brought back signed in order to participate.**

Thank you for your participation and help! ☺

Appendix D

Parent Information Letter

Name of Study: High School Boys' Experiences on a Violence Against Women Prevention Program.

Investigators:

Peter Jaffe, Ph.D., C. Psych - Western University

Mark Wayne Henshaw, M.A. (candidate) - Western University

As a parent of a student attending [school name], your son/daughter is invited to participate in a research project being conducted with the [school board name]. We are seeking your consent and that of your son/daughter to participate in a research study, as described below, developed by Western University. Approximately 275 participants will take part in this study.

Procedures

We are welcoming students from your son's school who are participating in the "Father's Day Breakfast – Coaching Boys into Men: Embrace Your Full Potential and Become a Part of Change" to complete a short survey, which will take approximately 30 minutes in addition to a semi-structured interview that will take 30 minutes, completing the study no more than 60 minutes. If you give your child consent, they will be asked to participate in the study that follows the above event. Students who wish to not participate in the study will have the opportunity to complete individual homework in a separate room at the Marconi Club under the supervision of a teacher from their school before returning to your school. However, if you do give your child permission to participate, he will be asked to complete a short survey on your use of Moral Disengagement and Violence Against Women, your readiness to change attitudes and behaviours regarding violence against women, and experiences and involvement with violence against women. In addition, he will be asked about his willingness to intervene in situations related to violence against women. Students who choose to discontinue their participation at any point during the study will also have the opportunity to complete individual homework in a separate room at the Marconi club with the supervision of your respective teacher. Your student will not be penalized for withdrawing at any time or for not participating in the study.

If you agree that your son may participate, he will complete the survey at the Marconi Club. The survey will ask questions about their level of moral engagement and likelihood of intervening in situations related to violence against women. The focus groups will also give your son the opportunity to discuss their knowledge of and experiences with violence against women. If students choose not to participate or discontinue their participation at any point during the study, they will not be penalized and will be asked to complete individual work in another room at the Marconi Club, while being supervised by a teacher.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The information your son gives us is confidential, and this confidentiality will be protected to the extent permitted by law. If your child is to reveal to one of the researchers information about a

child being hurt (please note that a child refers to an individual under 18 years of age), that he intends to hurt himself or someone else, or that he has perpetrated or experienced abuse or violence, the researchers will, however, be required to contact the proper authorities. If your child discloses this information to his teachers or any other school personnel, they too will be required to report it. Identifiable, verbal disclosures of dating abuse perpetration and victimization will be directly reported by the researchers to the appropriate authorities.

Your son's name or information which could identify him will not be used in any publications or presentation of the study results. Only the investigators and their research assistants will have access to this information. At the end of the project we will shred all papers with your son's name on it and destroy informal notes.

The information collected during this research may be used for educational purposes or become part of a published scientific report. This information, however, will ONLY be reported in terms of group findings. NO information will be reported that would allow anybody to be identified individually.

Risks

It is possible that your child might feel uncomfortable or embarrassed about answering personal questions about their experiences with violence, moral disengagement and bystander behaviour. He will not be required to answer any questions that make him uncomfortable. The researchers will provide students with information on violence against women, moral disengagement and bystander behaviour at the end of the study. Students who experience distress or have any questions or concerns will be encouraged to speak to the researchers. Researchers will provide students with information on community supports and/or supports within the school that he can access.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in the study is voluntary. He will not be required to answer any question that makes him/her uncomfortable. You or your son/daughter may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on his grades or school involvement.

Potential Benefits Associated with Participation

There has been increased media exposure to issues related to violence against women, especially with professional sports, which has made the topic more prevalent in the lives of many adolescent males. Thus, inviting males to participate in this study gives them an opportunity to take a positive approach and use their leadership skills and take a step toward issues addressing violence against women. In addition, this research may provide significant social and scientific benefits through the knowledge that will be gained about the phenomenon of violence against women.

This letter is yours to keep. Please complete the attached consent and assent forms and give them to your son/daughter to return to his or her teacher.

Appendix E

Youth Information Letter

Name of Study: High School Boys' Experiences on a Violence Against Women Prevention Program.

Investigators:

Peter Jaffe, Ph.D., C. Psych - Western University

Mark Wayne Henshaw, M.A. (candidate) - Western University

As a student in [school name], you are invited to participate in a research project conducted with the [school board name]. We are seeking your agreement to participate in a research study, as described below. Students from your school in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 will be asked to participate in this study, developed by Western University.

Study Procedures

We are asking students to fill out surveys, which will take approximately 30 minutes to complete, followed by a semi-structured focus group. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in the study following the "Father's Day Breakfast – Coaching Boys into Men: Embrace Your Full Potential and Become a Part of Change". Students wishing not to participate will have the opportunity to complete individual homework in a separate room at the Marconi Club under the supervision of your teacher before returning to your school. You will be asked to complete a short survey on Moral Disengagement and your readiness to change attitudes and behaviours of violence against women. Then you will be asked about your experiences and involvement along with your willingness to intervene in situations related to violence against women. Students who choose to discontinue their participation at any point during the study will also have the opportunity to complete individual homework in a separate room at the Marconi club with the supervision of your respective teacher. You will not be penalized for withdrawing at any time or for not participating in the study.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The information you give us is confidential, and this confidentiality will be protected to the extent permitted by law. If you tell one of the researchers about a child being hurt (please note that a child refers to an individual under 18 years of age), that you intend to hurt yourself or someone else, or that you have perpetrated or experienced abuse or violence we are required to contact the proper authorities. If you tell this information to teachers or any other school personnel, they too will be required to report it. Identifiable, verbal disclosures of dating abuse perpetration and victimization will be directly reported by the researchers to the appropriate authorities.

Your responses will not be linked back to your name. Your name on your consent form will be kept separate from the other information you provide. At the end of the program we will shred

any papers with your name on it. The information collected during this research may be used for educational purposes or become part of a published scientific report. This information will only be reported in terms of group findings. NO information will be reported that would allow anyone to be identified individually.

Risks

It is possible you might feel uncomfortable or embarrassed about answering personal questions about your experiences with violence. You will not be required to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable. The researchers will provide you with information on violence against women at the end of the study. If you experience distress or have any questions or concerns please talk to the researchers. They will provide you with information on community supports and/or supports within the school that you can access.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. Even if your parent has signed the consent form allowing you to participate, your participation in the study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your academic status.

Potential Benefits Associated with Participation

As leaders of your school environment, you have already been noticed by your teachers as positive role models in your school. As a leader, it is important to be aware of the issues that are present in your school so you can continue to lead in a positive way. For this reason violence against women may be a topic of interest to males who are leaders in their school. Violence against women is also something that female high schools students experience across Canada. Collectively this means that it can affect males who have a mother, sisters, girlfriends, or female teachers. In addition, this research may provide significant social and scientific benefits through the knowledge that will be gained about the phenomenon of violence against women. This letter is yours to keep. Please sign the attached assent form, and return it and the parental consent form to your teacher.

Questions

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a student who is a participant in this study you may contact the Office of Research Ethics, Western University at 519-661-3036 or ethics@uwo.ca. For any other questions about this study, please contact:

Peter G. Jaffe, Ph.D., C. Psych.
Western University

Appendix F

Youth Assent Form

Study: High School Boys' Feedback On A Violence Against Women Prevention Program.

I have read the letter of information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate in the study. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Your name (please print)

* Signature

Date

Principal Investigator:

Peter G. Jaffe, Ph.D., C. Psych.

Western University

Curriculum Vitae

Mark Wayne Henshaw, B.A., O.C.T., M.A. (2016)

EDUCATION

- 09/15-16 Master of Arts (2016): Educational Studies
 Thesis: Assessing High School Boys' Experiences from a Violence Against Women Prevention Event
Supervisor: Dr. Peter Jaffe
 88% Academic Average
 Western Education
 Western University, London, Ontario, Canada
- 09/13 Bachelor of Education (OCT Certified)
 Western Education
 Western University, London, Ontario, Canada
- 05/10-06/13 Bachelor of Arts
 Honours Specialization, English
 Minor in History
 Western University, London, Ontario, Canada
- 09/07-12/09 Bachelor of Arts
 English and History
 The University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

- 08/15-Now Research Analyst
 Avon-Maitland School Board
 Independent Contractor
- 12/12-08/15 Knowledge Mobilization Network Assistant
 Knowledge Network of Applied Education Research- Réseau d'échange des connaissances pour la recherche appliquée en éducation (KNAER-RECRAE)
 Tripartite Agreement: The Ministry of Education, Western University, University of Toronto
- Co-creator and executor of the knowledge mobilization plan to meet and exceed all contractual deliverables
 - Increased Twitter followers from 1000 to 1800 in eight months and created bi-monthly blogs focusing on Ministry of Education priorities and knowledge mobilization

- Transcribed research interviews, created a 500+ client database, managed front end communications
- 05/15-07/15 Student Experience Project Assistant
The Faculty of Education, Graduate Programs, Professional Programs
Western University, London, Ontario, Canada
- Improve the foundation and continuity between students in the professional programs
 - Execute a multi-modal communications project that shares knowledge of with future cohorts
- 06/14-09/14 Recreation Assistant
Inspirit Retirement Residences
- Created a delivered programming for the elderly population
 - Co-created special events based on a quarterly basis
- 11/12-09/13 Supervisor of Visitor Experiences
Educational Programs and Visitor Experiences
The London Regional Children's Museum, London, Ontario, Canada
- Independently created and updated educational programming that boosted registration during a teachers strike
 - Effectively created over six new and innovative partnerships for summer events while co-managing the summer staff team
 - Managed a Canada Day event and its attendance increased by 400 visitors from the previous year
- 05/10-11/12 Visitor Experiences Animator
Educational Programs and Visitor Experiences
The London Regional Children's Museum, London, Ontario
- Maintained exceptional guest relations which increased the guest loyalty amid staff restructuring
 - Programmed and executed summer and public programs in a dynamic work environment
- 01/11-11/12 Lead Host
Guest Experiences
Milestones Grill + Bar, London, Ontario, Canada
- Effectively maximized seating capacity while leading a team in an unpredictable and stressful environment
 - Successfully trained new staff who advanced into serving positions
- 07/11-08/12 Assistant Program Director and Facilitator
"Games in da Hood"
Southdale Chaplaincy, London, Ontario, Canada

- Successfully co-coordinated inclusive team initiatives for children in government-subsidized housing, resulting in a registration increase of over 45%
- Created an innovative behaviour reward system that enhanced the children's participation and safety

- 09/08-12/10 Assistant Program Developer and Facilitator
Student Opportunities for After-School Resources (SOAR)
City of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada
- Executed innovative and cost effective programming for children targeted at-risk while maintaining reputable relations with the parent community
- 09/08-12/10 Student Liaison Representative
Liaison and Student Recruitment
University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada
- Enhanced relations with prospective students and families to increase student registration
 - Executed professional and personable presentations to prospective students and families that led to an increase of student inquires about the University of Windsor
- 05/09 Social Skills Camp Programmer and Counselor
Parks and Recreation
City of London, London, Ontario, Canada
- Empowered children of low socio-economic environments to develop social skills that improved their communication skills
 - Acted as a liaison on behalf of co-staff to professionally address concerns pertaining to workplace efficiency

ACADEMIC AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS, and DISTINCTIONS

- 09/14-06/15 Academic Average: 88%
Advanced Statistics for Graduate Students: 88%
- Final Paper: Factor Analysis + Multiple Linear Regression Models (91%)
- 09/13-06/14 Dean's Award of Distinction
Bachelor of Education, Junior/Intermediate
Western Education, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada
- Course Overload: Catholic Studies, Independent Study
 - Class President (elect)
- 09/12-05/13 Innovation Award
Student Mentor, Leadership and Mentorship Program
Student Success Centre
Western University, London, Ontario, Canada

- 07/10 Blue and Gold Scholarship
Awarded to the student-athlete who has excelled in his/her sport
Institutional
The University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada
\$500.00
- 11/09 Canadian Interuniversity Sport, Cross Country, Bronze Medalist
- 12/09 Blue and Gold Scholarship
Awarded to the student-athlete who has excelled in his/her sport
Institutional
The University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada
\$1, 675.00
- 09/09 Orientation Volunteer: Operations Award
Windsor Welcome Week
The University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada
- 08/09 Blue and Gold Scholarship
Awarded to the student-athlete who has excelled in his/her sport
Institutional
The University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada
825.00
- 07/08 Blue and Gold Scholarship
Awarded to the student-athlete who has excelled in his/her sport
Institutional
The University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada
\$500.00
- 07/08 Internal Scholarship: Entrance Bursary
Awarded to an incoming University of Windsor student who has applied with a minimum average of 80%.
The University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada
\$1000.00
- 02/08 Blue and Gold Scholarship
Awarded to the student-athlete who has excelled in his/her sport
Institutional
The University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada
\$1, 800.00
- 09/08 Orientation Volunteer of the Year Award
Windsor Welcome Week
The University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada

04/08 Rookie of the Year
Lancer Cross Country Team
University of Windsor
The University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada

LEADERSHIP and VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

- 01/15-Now Event Steering Committee
Coaching Boys into Men: Embrace Your Full Potential and be a Part of Change
Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children
Western University, London, Ontario
- Collaborated with a team of 10 faculty, staff, and community leaders to design and implement the event
 - Over 300 participants attended from two school boards, the London Police, and nine other community organizations
- 04/15-05/15 Event Steering Committee
Consent & Compassion: A Forum on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence
Western University, London, Ontario
- Worked with a team of 8 staff and students to design and implement a community-wide event
 - Secured a \$10,000 event grant
- 04/15-05/15 Committee Member
Women's Concerns Commission
Society of Graduate Students
Western University, London, Ontario
- Collaborated with a team of graduate students to plan two discussions on Feminism
 - Supported the design of a the "International Graduate Students and Family Drive"
- 09/14-05/15 Executive Director
Students Teaching Students
Western University, London, Ontario, Canada
- Directed 12 dialogues that engaged over 50 graduate and bachelor students in the Faculty of Education
 - Enabled the executive to ensure proper finances and event coordination was conducted
 - Completed a final report to increase sustainable programming
- 09/13-09/14 President
The Faculty of Education Students' Council (ESC)
Western University, London Ontario, Canada

- Founded and managed the Global Community Committee that successfully formed bridges between international students and teacher candidates
- Networked with local school boards and educators to create motivational “Ed Talks” that inspired teacher candidates to be cutting edge in a very competitive job market
- Managed the revision of the ESC constitution and created by-laws to ensure greater efficiency at board meetings
- Led my executive team to professionally address student-targeted issues around discrimination, which led to both effective resolutions while boosting the student body’s moral

- 09/13-12/13 Community Captain
London Youth Advisory Council
London, Ontario, Canada
- Grass roots non-profit that aims to give a voice to youth in municipal politics
 - Work with a team of youth that engages in issue-identification to create solutions and assess its growing success
- 07/13 Event Coordinator
Canada Kicks MS/Skin Cancer’s A\$\$
3rd Party Event, Canadian Cancer Society and MS Society of Canada
London, Ontario, Canada
- Networked with the Canadian Cancer Society and the MS Society of Canada to accredit and promote the event
 - Managed a volunteer team to help develop \$734.51 in one night of fundraising
- 09/12-05/13 Student Mentor, Leadership and Mentorship Program
Student Success Centre
Western University, London, Ontario, Canada
- Increased student engagement by creating introductory videos for our leadership team which contributed to receiving the Innovation Award
 - Managed a fund-raising project by working with co-volunteers to create a spirit wear campaign, raising \$100 for the Western University Food Support Services
- 11/12-02/13 Volunteer Team Leader
Alternative Spring Break: Outreach 360, Jinotega, Nicaragua
Student Success Centre
Western University, London, Ontario, Canada
- Created and executed an engaging presentation about Community Service Learning to our volunteer team
 - Worked with my co-leaders to plan and execute an experiential learning opportunity with the Ronald McDonald House which enhanced group cohesion and understanding of service

- Worked with my co-leaders to effectively problem solve and carry out solutions regarding our team's development while in Nicaragua

- 07/10-04/12 Volunteer Event Coordinator
Coffee House for MS
3rd Party Event, Canadian MS Society
London, Ontario, Canada
- Recruited over 15 performers to help fundraise over \$1500 dollars for M.S. research
 - Managed five volunteers that assisted in raising funds and advertising
- 01/12 Volunteer Undergraduate Participant
Gathering Our Voices: Indigenous Services Strategic Planning
Western University, London, Ontario, Canada
- Networked with the staff and community members of Western's Indigenous Services and learned that the members of the indigenous community were concerned about representation and autonomy in Canadian culture
- 02/11 Volunteer Student Participant
Alternative Spring Break: Youth Opportunities Unlimited, London, Ontario
Western University, London, Ontario, Canada
- Learned to "stand back" to support my team's understanding of local community issues
 - Worked effectively as a team to accomplish marketing, recruitment and labour activities for Youth Opportunities Unlimited
- 03/07 National Team Member
World Cross Country Championships
Contact: Thelma Wright
Athletics Canada, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 07/15 Domestic Violence Facilitator
Domestic Violence Facilitator Training
The Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women & Children
Western University, London, Ontario, Canada
- 05/15 KNAER-RECRAE Ambassador: Network Assistant
2015 Canadian Knowledge Mobilization Conference
Le Grande Bibliothèque
- 05/15 Graduate Student Participant
It's Not Right: National Conference on Elder Abuse

The Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and
Children
Western University, London, Ontario, Canada

- 05/13 Undergraduate Participant
The Teacher Candidate Showcase
The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada
- 04/13 Undergraduate Participant
Robert MacMillan Graduate Research Symposium in Education
The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada
- 01/12 Undergraduate Participant
Gathering Our Voices: Indigenous Services Strategic Planning
The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada