



Unsafe and Unheard: IPV Survivors' Experiences of Canadian CPS

Presented by Jamie Pfau, PhD(c) and
Dr. Kendra Nixon
University of Manitoba

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Outline

Methodology

Overview of
Participants across
Provinces

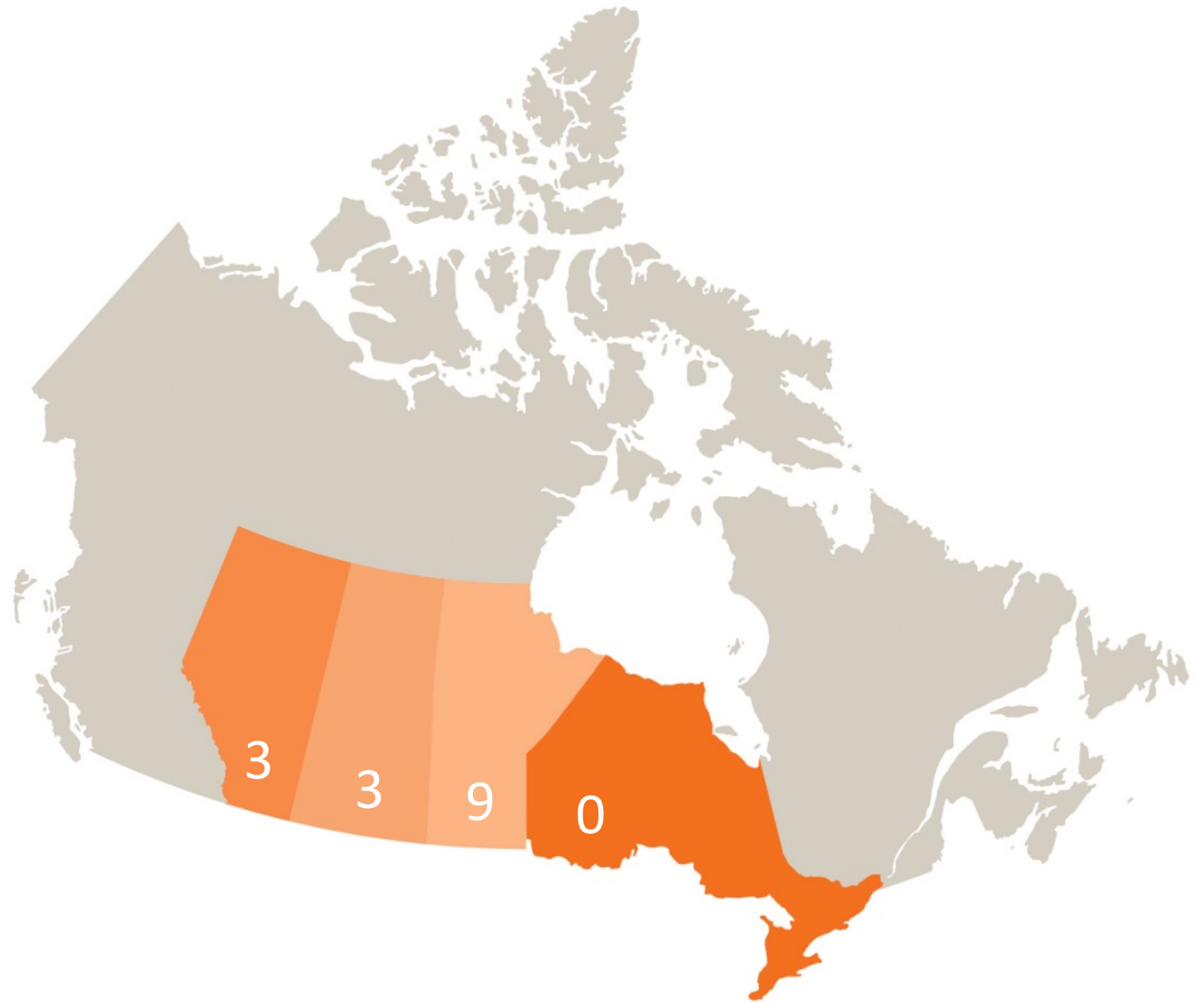
Thematic Analysis

Recommendations

Methodology



Overview of Survivor Participants



Participant Demographics

ALBERTA

Location

Urban: 2

Rural: 1

Age

Range: 23-47

Salary:

Low income: 1

Median income: 2

Race/Ethnicity

Indigenous: 1

Asian: 1

White: 1

SASKATCHEWAN

Location

Urban: 3

Age

Range: 28-41

Salary:

Low income: 2

Median income: 1

Race/Ethnicity

Indigenous: 1

Métis: 1

White: 1

MANITOBA

Location

Urban: 5

Rural: 4

Age

Range: 23-44

Salary:

Low income: 8

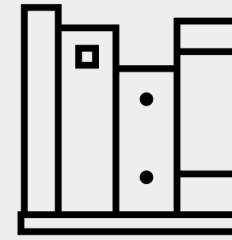
High income: 1

Race/Ethnicity

Indigenous: 2

Métis: 1

White: 6



Thematic Analysis

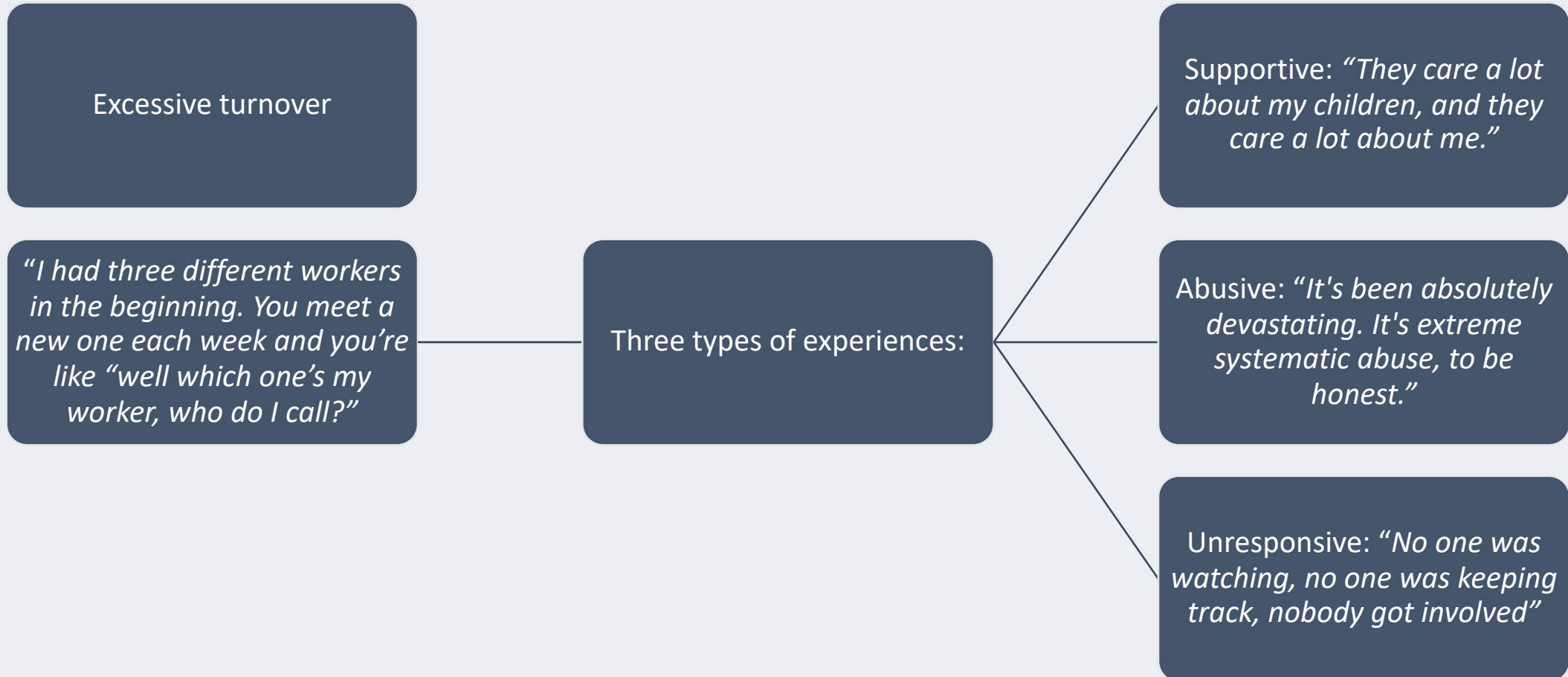
- Lack of Support
 - Limited resources
 - Inconsistent response
 - Unrealistic expectations
- Fear, Trauma, and Distrust
- Sense of Injustice
 - Unfair balance of expectations
 - Continual harm

Lack of Support: Limited Resources

- Most participants did not feel adequately supported
- Overall lack of community resources and supports
- Many participants were not referred to any community supports
- Those who were did not find them helpful
- Survivors who felt supported found their own resources



Lack of Support: Inconsistent CPS Worker Response



Lack of Support: Unrealistic Expectations

- High expectations, jumping through hoops

“They told me what I had to do to get them back but didn’t provide any support.”

- Unrealistic expectations
 - Self-representation in court proceedings
- Adding new expectations after others have been met

“I just felt judged, and I was never treated fairly. I kept proving them wrong all the time and doing everything that they didn't think I could do. I did everything they asked, and I was just like it always felt like it was never enough.”



Fear, Trauma and Distrust

- Most traumatic experiences: apprehending children (or threats of)
- Apprehensions resulted in separating children, and abrupt reunification with limited planning or support
- Compliance without meaningful engagement prevents opportunity for growth
 - “They closed the file because they couldn’t find anything that I don’t do”

“The kids are threatening suicide. They don't want to go to the visits. The visits are being forced upon them. They're being emotionally manipulated throughout the visits. And so, it's voluntary, but I keep being threatened that if I pull out of this voluntary agreement, the police are going to show up at my door and take my kids.”



Sense of Injustice: Unfair Balance of Expectations

- Limited engagement with perpetrator
- Lack of consequences for perpetrators
- Victim blaming

I would just say anything anyone leaving an abusive relationship, needs support, so they need to be helped. And not under continual questioning. And I think for both kids and adults, as victims, we should not be blamed in any way.

They wouldn't include the children in the protection order because the Justice of the Peace said that she did not feel comfortable making a decision that interferes with child access. So, we didn't have that put in place. I refused to let the kids go with him any further because he had made threats to take them and not return them previously.



Sense of Injustice: Continual Harm

- Feeling unheard
 - Abusive ex-partner believed over survivor
 - *“There were a few times that he breached his orders. Instead of staying a distance away, he would come up and he would bump my shoulder and walk right past or mumble something under his breath. And when I told my worker, she just would brush it off, and say, ‘Maybe it was an accident; he probably didn't mean that; you probably just heard it wrong.’”*
- Lack of CPS worker knowledge
 - *And then I think with CPS they need to stop using their own opinions. They need to be trained more when they meet people, because you meet a well-spoken, he's a car dealer, he sells cars, like, of course he's good at talking. He's in another relationship so I'm the broken one? Because I'm choosing not to jump into another one? No. I finally have gotten the help I need! ... I think they need to be more educated with domestic violence and understand that women don't automatically leave, they need support and help.”*
- Reports about abuse were rarely investigated

Recommendations

- More supportive instead of adversarial
- Holistic approach
- More education
- Consistent response
- Address systemic racism

Home / RESOLVE

In Search of Promising Approaches: Canadian Child Protection Responses to Cases of IPV



In Search of Promising Approaches: Canadian Child Protection Responses to Cases of Intimate Partner Violence is a four-year project funded by SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada) Insight Grant. The goal of the project is to develop a better understanding of new policies and practices that have been implemented by Canadian CPS systems in response to children exposed to violence in the home, as well as to identify policy and practice gaps. Four provinces serve as the primary sites of investigation – Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, where varying policy and practice changes have been developed. Specific recommendations for policy and practice will be developed for each of these provinces.

Contact Us

Project Website:

<https://www.umanitoba.ca/resolve/search-promising-approaches>

Jamie Pfau:

ummolter@myumanitoba.ca

Kendra Nixon:

kendra.nixon@umanitoba.ca

Thank you!

Questions and Comments

