



# Conducting research with survivors of domestic violence and loved ones of homicide victims: Methodological challenges and realities

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Preventing domestic homicide: From research and lived experiences to practice Conference

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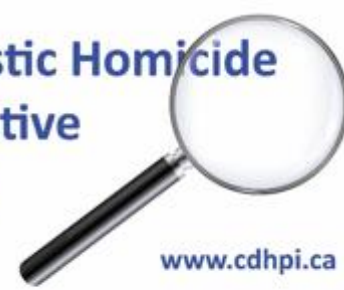


Social Sciences and Humanities  
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# Focus on Phase 3

Phase 1

Literature review and national database

Phase 2

Survey and interviews with key informants

Phase 3

Interviews with survivors and proxies

## Phase 3: Survivor & Proxy Interviews

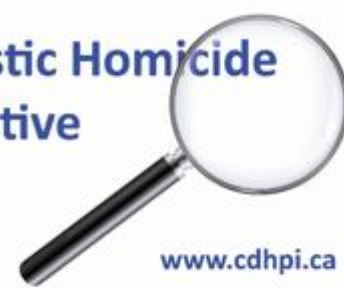
### Objective:

- To understand the context around high-risk domestic violence within four populations that have an increased vulnerability to domestic homicide.
- Narratives highlight:
  - risk factors associated with populations;
  - barriers to help-seeking;
  - gaps in services and missed opportunities for intervention;
  - effective practices and policies;
  - recommendations for practices around prevention.
- Interviews provided opportunity for survivors and others to share their perspectives and have their voices heard.

# Designing the research

- Partnership meeting (November 2018) - research protocol, narrative interview structure, planning and implementation, and gathering feedback
- Conducted practice interviews and recorded for training purposes
- Training day (June 2019)
- RA interview training (July 2019) – Conducting Phase 3 interviews – process and procedure including screening, consent, interview, follow-up





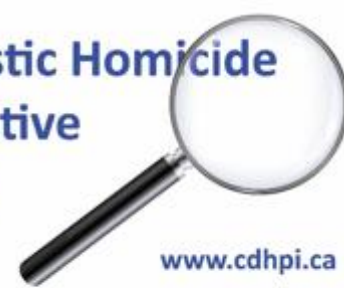
# Ethics

- Primary REB inquiries: Security of online platforms; potential for court-order to provide participant information from project; Indigenous community engagement and participant privacy
- Guelph REB certificate obtained March 2019, Western May 2019, followed by 11 other Co-Investigator affiliated universities and two territorial licensing bodies
- Amendment to include question about COVID-19 (April 2020)
  - *Imagine you were in a similar domestic violence situation during the COVID-19 pandemic. What would you do differently to manage the violence during this time?*
  - *What advice would you give someone who is currently experiencing domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic?*



# National launch (September 2019)



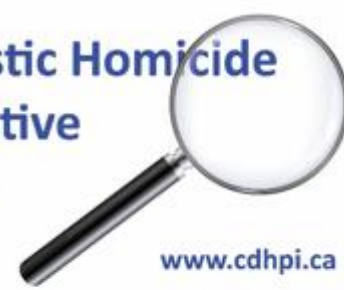


# Participation criteria

- Survivors identified with one or more of the following populations:
  - Indigenous
  - Rural, remote or northern
  - Immigrants and refugees
  - Children exposed to or killed in the context of domestic violence
- Proxy participant pool broadened to include those who were close to a victim of domestic homicide from any population
- 18 years of age or older
- Currently safe
- Criminal proceedings completed
- Experiences between 2006 to 2016
- Willing to have interview audio-recorded



# Regional approach



- Research Coordinators in 5 regions
  - conducted screening and selected/coordinated how full interview was conducted
- Interviews occurred between August 2019 and December 2020
  - August 2019 to March 2020 by phone, video conference, or in-person
  - March 2020 to December 2020 by phone or video conference





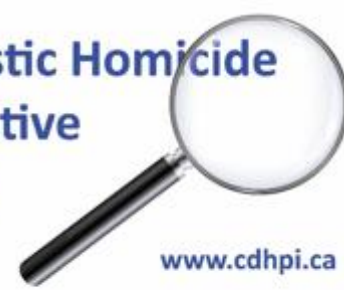
# Trauma-informed approach

## 6 GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH



[https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/infographics/6\\_principles\\_trauma\\_info.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/infographics/6_principles_trauma_info.htm)

# Type of Interview Sample (N=127)



- 38 Proxy interviews



- 29 – Child



- 24 – Rural, Remote, Northern



- 13 – Indigenous



- 1 – Immigrant/Refugee

- 28 – more than one population

- 89 Survivor interviews



- 73 – Child



- 47 – Rural, Remote, Northern



- 31 – Indigenous

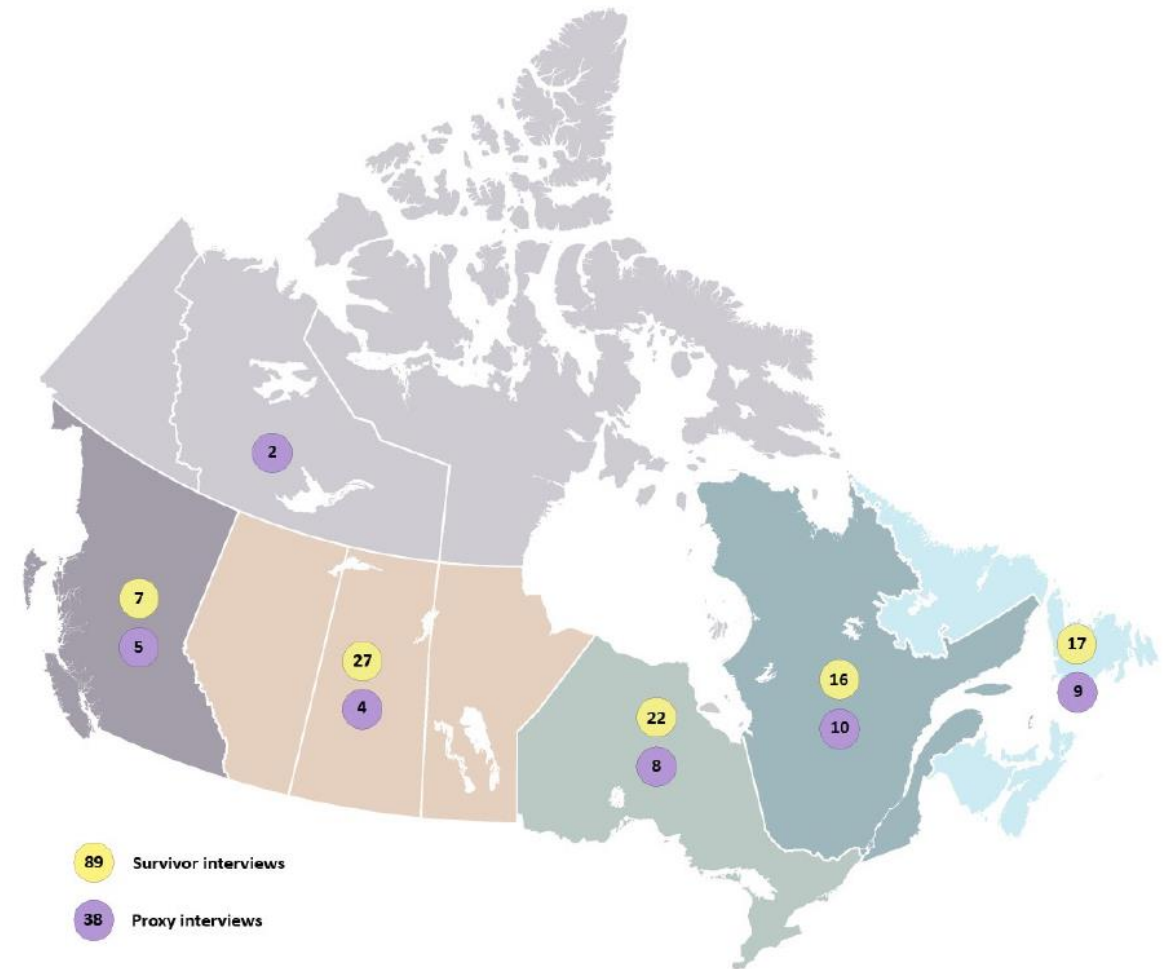


- 23 – Immigrant/Refugee

- 72 – more than one population

# Regional Breakdown Sample (N=127)

- 38 Proxy interviews
- 89 Survivor interviews
- Region
  - 5 – BC
  - 2 – North
  - 4 – Prairies
  - 8 – Ontario
  - 10 – Quebec
  - 9 – Atlantic
- Region
  - 7 – BC
  - 0 – North
  - 27 – Prairies
  - 22 – Ontario
  - 16 – Quebec
  - 17 – Atlantic



# Relationship at time of Violence Sample (N=127)

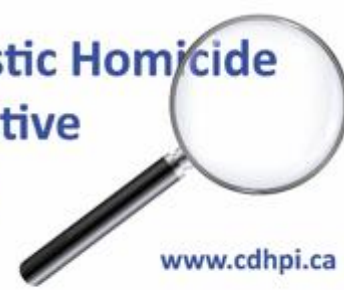
- 38 Proxy interviews

- Dating – 1
- Ex-dating – 5
- Married – 11
- Common-law – 8
- Ex-Common-law – 1
- Separated, including CL – 3
- Parent-child – 1
- Unknown - 1

- 89 Survivor interviews

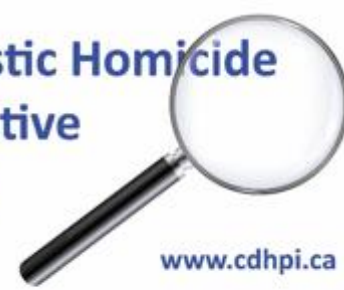
- Dating – 11
- Ex-dating – 1
- Married – 35
- Common-law – 28
- Ex-common-law – 0
- Separated, including CL – 3
- Parent-child -7
- Divorced – 1





# Challenges

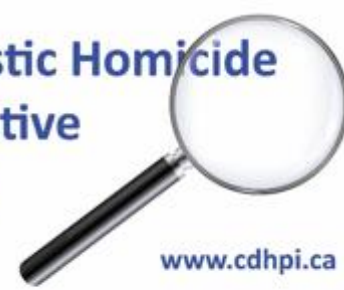
- Balancing expectations of those who did not meet criteria but were eager to have their voices heard
- Differing views of whether potential participant was currently safe – participant versus research coordinator
- Screening out those with ongoing court proceedings - family court cases often ongoing until children “age out” of the system
- Limited proxies that could speak to experience of victim who identified with at least one of the populations
- Limited intersectional representation



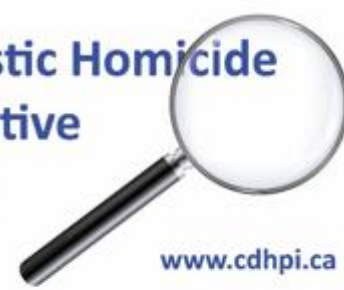
# Challenges due to COVID-19

- In-person interviews suspended
- Unstable internet connections
- Regional plan for Indigenous opening ceremony followed by in-person interviews cancelled

# Participant engagement and what this research has meant to them



- Wanting to know findings
- Volunteering for conference clips, or to speak again in future
- Attending the conference
- Interest in learning
- “I know this is going to help somebody. To be part of a study that’s really going to contribute to some real tangible changes, I’m happy to do it. It makes me happy to know that if nothing else, at least the story can go towards helping make some changes.”



# Themes from interviews

- It can happen to anyone
- Leaving is a process
- How do you find help?
- We want more listening, less judgment
- Impact after separation (including using family court as a weapon)
- Role of culture, custom, race in relationships and service provision



# Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative



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Canadian Domestic Homicide  
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Initiative canadienne sur la  
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homicides familiaux