



Grande Prairie Leading Change: Inspired Communities Initiative Taking Action to End Gender Based Violence & Abuse

Gender based violence is violence that is directed against a person on the basis of gender. It constitutes a breach of the fundamental right to life, liberty, security, dignity, equality between women and men, non-discrimination and physical and mental integrity.

Most men are not violent, however men perpetrate most of the violence in the world. From early on boys and men are pressured to follow the “Man Code.” They fall in line in fear of having their “Man Card” revoked. Why does this happen? What messages are we communicating about what it means to “be a man”? Are these messages connected to aggression and violence?

Our words and actions reflect the beliefs and attitudes we have about the world. Unhealthy ideas about masculinity are linked to physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional violence; having serious damaging effects on relationships. Attitudes that lead to physical or sexual assault cannot be minimized or ignored as “just women’s issues.” When healthy men stand up against violence, male and female victims benefit. Violence, its causes, and its prevention, are also men’s issues and working together is the best way to lead change.

Emotionally and behaviorally safe and healthy men, in partnership with healthy women, have a responsibility and a great leadership opportunity, to prevent violence and model the building of respectful and safe relationships. By speaking up against unhealthy beliefs and promoting healthy ones, **Leading Change** lays the groundwork for putting an end to violence.

Community Partnerships & Presentation

Pace and Odyssey House have partnered with Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters to initiate Grande Prairie **Leading Change**. Through the **Leading Change** initiative, Regional facilitators have been trained to deliver workshops that address:

- Unhealthy gender stereotypes that lead to gender based violence
- Media and cultural portrayals of stereotypes that influence children and youth
- How active bystanders can be effective and integral in challenging and changing stereotypes
- Being a confident and informed bystander able to intervene when witnessing gender-based violence

"A crucial component...is the gender ideology that is transmitted to young people through media, and plays such a powerful role in their understanding of what it means to be a man or a woman."

-Jackson Katz, MVP from his book: *A Macho Paradox*

Leading Change Participation

Leading Change participation is open to anyone interested in understanding more about the unhealthy stereotypes that lead to gender based violence, and strategies for becoming an active bystander.

Leading Change tools for those who work with youth can be implemented during regular programming, practices or classes to help youth examine and challenge their ideas. Youth workers, teachers, coaches and parents, play a vital role in influencing youth decisions. Youth are bombarded with constant media messaging about norms, behaviors, and expectations and are especially susceptible to messaging around what is healthy and unhealthy as they are still changing, growing and learning. Leading Change facilitators may provide follow up support to help you implement these tools.

Leading Change Community Facilitator Contacts

If you are interested in hosting or attending a **Leading Change** workshop or if you have questions regarding the *Leading Change Grande Prairie Initiative* email or call one of our Coordinators:

Madi Wrzsoek Odyssey House: Grande Prairie Women's Residence Association Phone: 780-897-8543 education@odysseyhouse.ca	Buffy MacIntosh Pace Community Support, Sexual Assault, and Trauma Centre Phone: 780-539-6692 fund_development@pacecentre.com
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Leading Change acknowledges Jackson Katz, Darryl Fort and **Mentors in Violence Prevention** - on which this program is based.

Grande Prairie Leading Change Partners:

