



# The Invisible Boy: Time to Talk About Male Sexual Victimization

Sponsored By:  
Every Woman's Centre  
Sydney, Nova Scotia  
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# Who is Robert S. Wright?

A Sociologist and Social Worker

Private Practitioner, Direct Practice and Forensics

Clinical Member, ATSA

Former Long-time Child Welfare Professional

Former Correctional Mental Health Worker , WS Penn.

Former Exec. Dir., Child & Youth Strategy of Nova Scotia

Facilitator of ManTalk

PhD Student in Sociology – Race, Identity, Power



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We have some serious problems going on . . .

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# Increasing income disparity

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# Economic and demographic pressures

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# Poverty and homelessness

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# Crime and violence in disturbing patterns

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# Sexual violence, cyber facilitated bullying

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To make progress we need all hands on deck

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# Boys and Men are in Bad Shape

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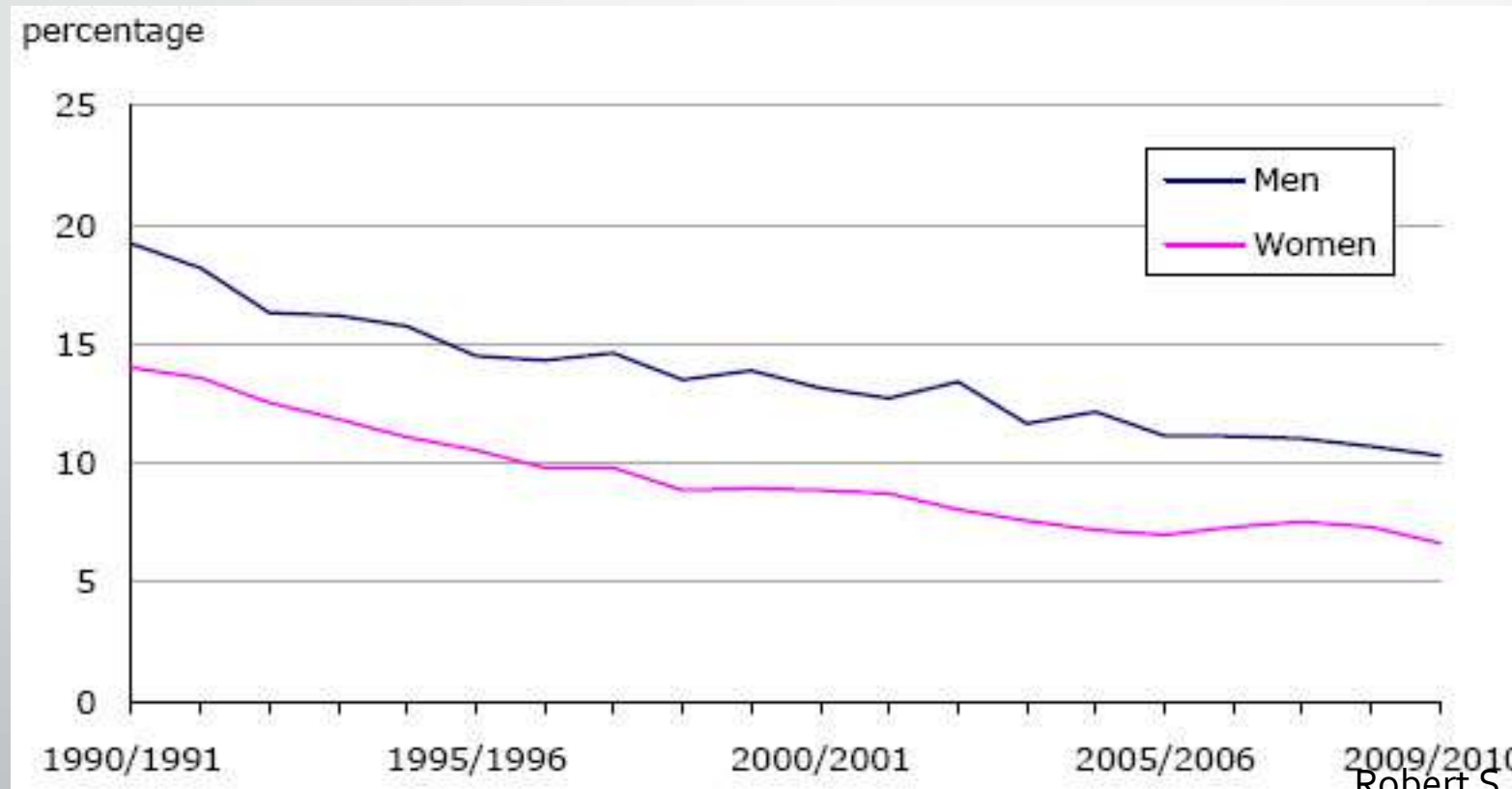
# Men Die Younger Than Women

(life expectancy of 79 vs 83)

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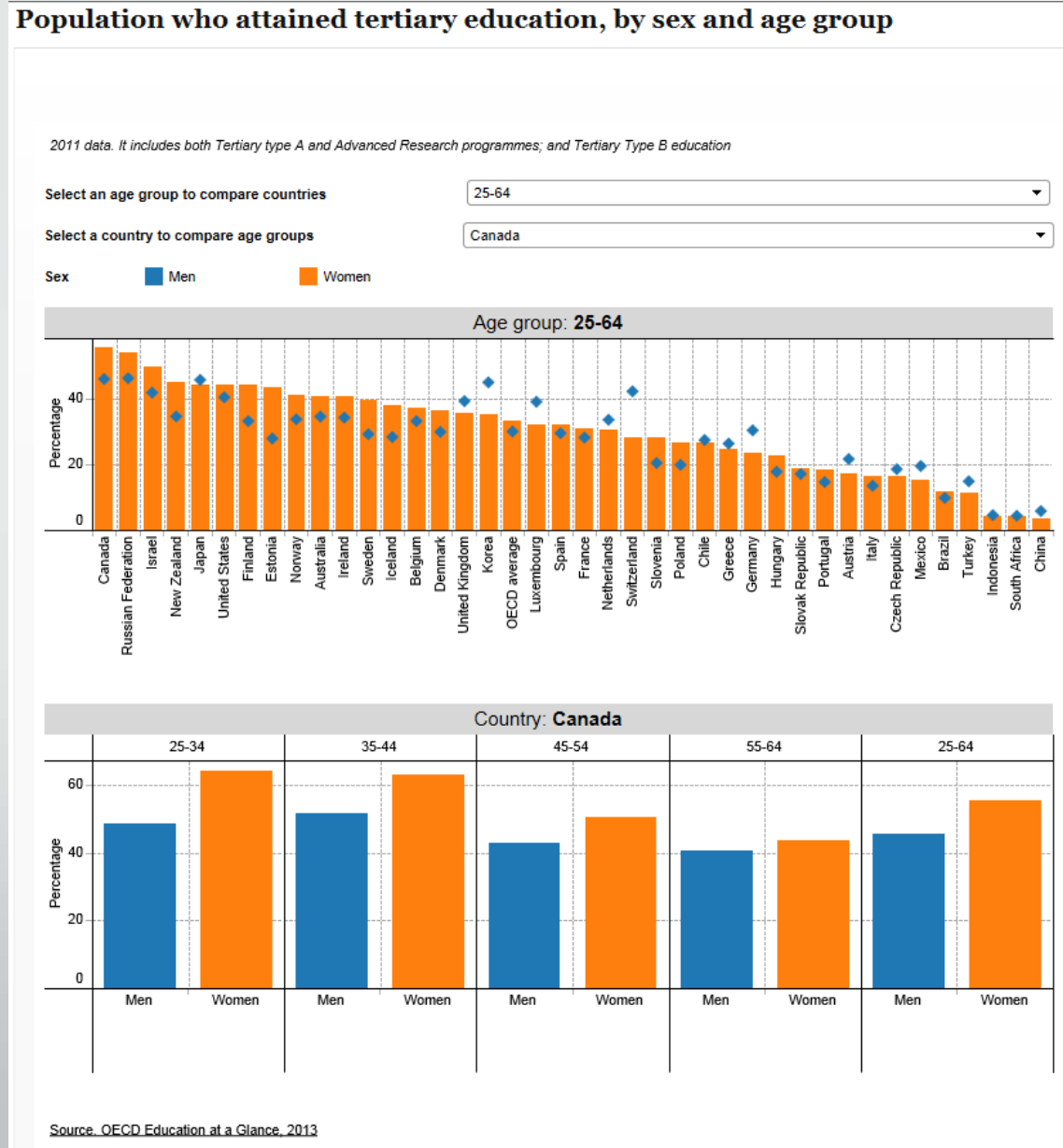
# Men Have Higher Dropout Rates Than Women

(Dropout rate, population aged 20 to 24,  
by sex, 1990/1991 to 2009/2010. StatsCan)



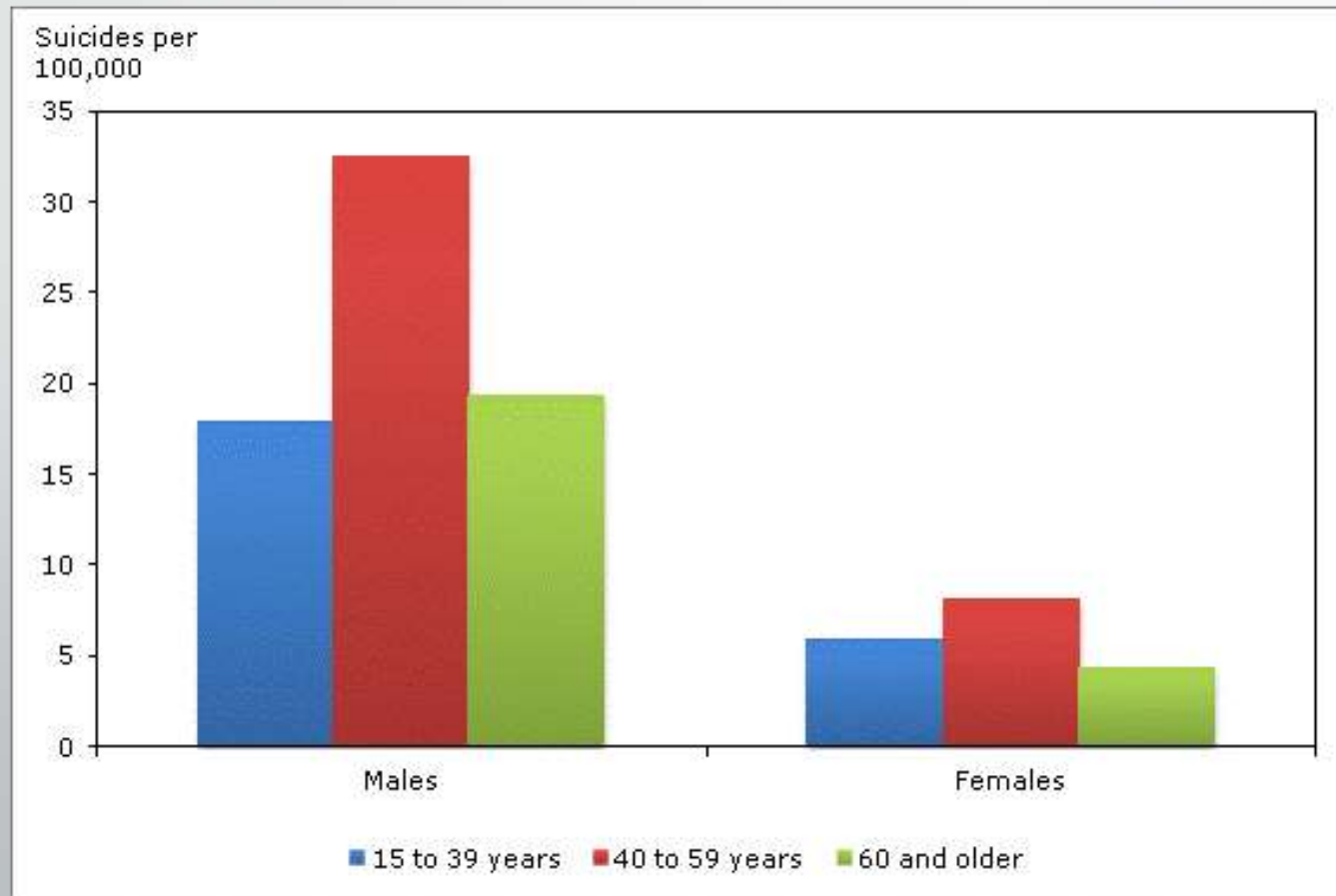
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# Men Have Lower Rates of Attaining Tertiary Education



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Men die by suicide at a rate  
3 times higher than women  
(Suicides per 100,000, by age group and sex,  
Canada, 2009. StatsCan)



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Men make up 90% of total admittances to  
custody in Canada


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# Boys and Men are in Bad Shape . . .

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. . . And we seem to have  
no clue how to help them

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The measure of victimization experience and  
trauma symptomatology among protective custody inmates at  
Washington State Penitentiary:  
Implications for returning persons to general population  
Robert S. Wright  
(Last updated on 5/28/97)

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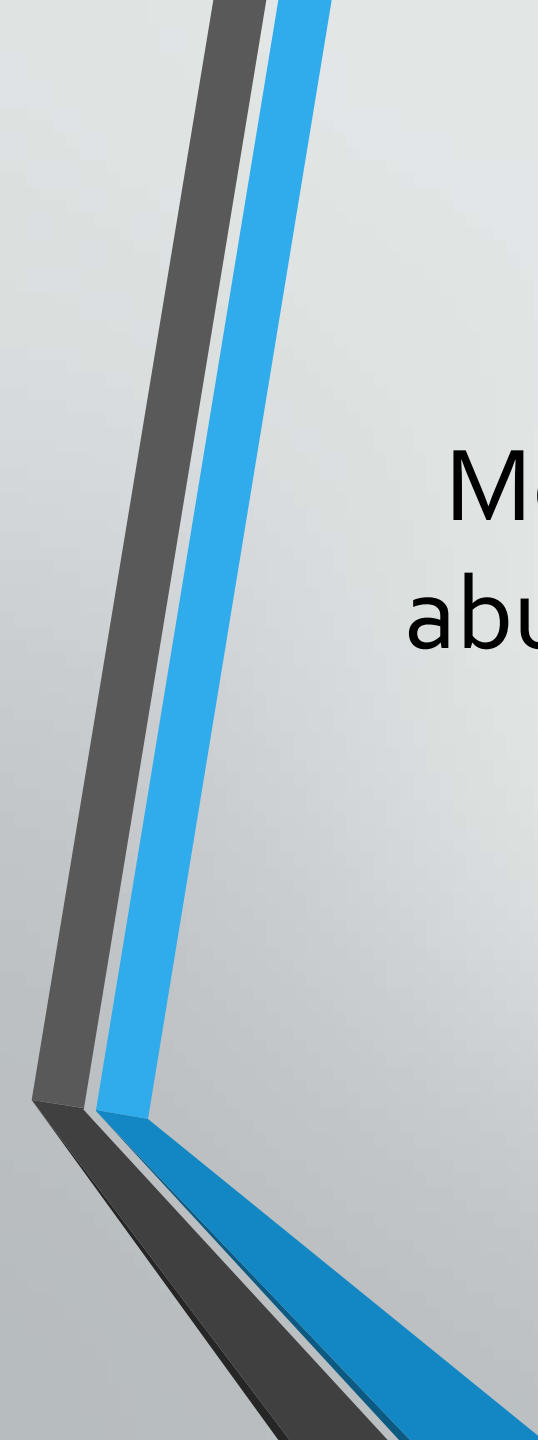
# Johnny's Story

- 21 year old man on PC Range for SA, and host of other charges from 1 incident
- Attended treatment as a diversion until I “fired him” as a client
- After detailed sexual history was able to make connections between victimization and perpetration
- Revelation: “I don’t think I’ve ever truly had consensual sex”
- Transitioned speedily into offender treatment and transfer



“Almost equal proportions of men and women had been the victims of intimate partner physical and psychological abuse.” GSS 1999

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Men are more frequently victims of sexual abuse than we once thought, yet report less frequently than women and receive little treatment

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Police Reported SA rate female victimization  
10x that of men

GSS Reported SA rate female victimization  
5x that of men

Field Researchers suggest female rate of  
victimization is 2x that of men

What is the actual rate?



So what?!


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To make progress we need all hands on deck

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Addressing men's problems is key to engaging men as healthy, whole citizens as partners in solving our shared problems

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As the Province of Nova Scotia advances a  
Provincial Sexual Assault Strategy  
the needs and experiences of boys and men  
need to be included in the discourse

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# What does “Male-Inclusion” look like?

- Including the needs and experiences of men in the SA discourse would simply add additional fuel to the dynamic and evolutionary changes already underway in the field
- Socio-economics, geography, increasing ethno-cultural diversity, disability, LGBTQ . . . The current SA service providers have already been expanding their understanding of the diverse needs of clients

# Matthews' Four Propositions

- Inclusivity must
  - Articulate diverse male-centred points of view
  - Support male victims as they search for balance in their struggle to heal
  - Honour and protect female victims' gains and women's leadership in breaking the silence about violence and abuse
  - Envision the empowerment of all stories into a coherent and inclusive perspective that we can collectively and respectfully own and use in the struggle to reduce and eliminate interpersonal violence.

# The Path Towards ManTalk

- Tim M. courageous client – got stuck on breaking the silence and group work
- Inspires ManTalk in Fall of 2011 as a closed 8 session group
- Repeats again in Spring of 2012. In Fall of 2012 ManTalk becomes continuous intake twice-monthly group, receives funding from DoH
- Open to adult persons who identify as male
- Includes some pro-bono individual work, including family meetings to “break the silence”, public education, outreach and recently a satellite group MTD180

# ManTalk's greatest accomplishments

- Established a pro-bono service to male victims
- Has been continuous since 2012 except for storm interruptions
- Men have contributed male voice significantly to current provincial discourse
- Have created a space for men without the misogynist lining which can plague such work
- Open acceptance by other SA service providers locally and provincially
- Has served a diversity of men ANS, trans persons, diverse SES, queer and straight
- Training ground for interns and associates

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# ManTalk's Greatest Challenges

- Restricted heavily by lack of funding or integration into established services\*
- Racial diversity is not where it should be
- Creating a safe space for "diversity" often challenges straight and questioning men
- Based in a private practice limits community based ownership



# Q & A



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# Next Steps?

- Consider how to integrate boys' and men's stories into your local discourse
- Participate in provincial SA Strategy evolution

# SA Strategy

- Pros
  - The province is paying attention to SA
  - Likelihood of movement towards more rational service and funding strategy
  - Establishes SA services as “core services” available everywhere
  - Likelihood of greater inclusion of currently un-told stories and unreached persons
- Cons
  - The Province is paying attention to SA
  - Rational service and funding strategy in the absence of dramatically increased funding will result in winners and losers
  - Danger of “institutionalizing” what has been community based service development and delivery
  - “Everything to everyone” efforts can turn into “very little to anyone” service

# Is Feminism Still Relevant?

- Like anti-oppression, africentricity, queer theory, non-violent civil disobedience, critical race theory and others, feminism is an emancipatory theory that seeks to right injustice and exclusion of a discriminated against segment of society. It is feminism, with its inclusive lens of intersectionality, that has been responsible for much of the progress made in the SA field.
- As male stories begin to be voiced more centrally in the SA discourse I believe we will see that male victimization is fueled in our society by the same forces that are at the root of the oppression of other peoples.
- Until a male-centric, emancipatory theory, with a powerful analysis, model of practice and critical mass of practitioners comes along, feminism seems still to be the most powerful tool in the project to advance the cause of male victims of SA.
- What we have seen from the Men's Rights movement is not a progressive emancipatory voice. The men's liberation movement (whether feminism informed or masculinism informed) has yet to show up as a legitimate foundation for this work.

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