

**Informed Consent Form Non-Interventional Study
Professional Participants**

STUDY TITLE:	<i>Culturally Responsive Healthcare to Reduce Gender Based Violence</i>
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:	<i>Dr. Nancy Ross, School of Social Work, Suite 3204, Mona Campbell Building, 1459 LeMarchant Street, PO Box 15000, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 4R2 Phone: 902-494-4049 Fax: 902-494-6709 Email: Nancy.ross@dal.ca</i>
FUNDER:	<i>This study is being funded by the Nova Scotia Covid-19 Health Research Coalition, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada</i>

1. Introduction

You have been invited to take part in a research study. A research study is a way of gathering information on a treatment, procedure or medical device or to answer a question about something that is not well understood. Taking part in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether to be in the study or not. Non-participation in this research study will not affect employment or evaluation. Before you decide, you need to understand what the study is for, what risks you might take and what benefits you might receive. This consent form explains the study.

You are eligible to take part in this study if you are a healthcare provider or service professional in Nova Scotia and:

- Hold positions of influence over health and social policy and service delivery in Nova Scotia (e.g. management, policy makers)
- Provide direct services to African Nova Scotians seeking health and social services whether it is in direct response to gender based violence or not
- You are a member of the African Nova Scotian community and are involved in establishing programs, services and supports at formal or informal levels

2. Why is there a need for this study?

This research will build upon two substantive related research projects illustrative of a dangerous confluence of factors for Nova Scotia's African heritage populations at this time, namely: the complexity of gender-based violence and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in African

Nova Scotian (ANS) communities; the foundational social and health inequities faced by these same communities; and the compounding impact of a pandemic that mandates stay at home orders that effectively confine women and children at home with an abusive partner/family member without relief.

From 2017-2020, a 3-year partnership (Pathways to Justice) between the Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW) and the Be the Peace Institute (BTPI) was funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE). Pathways to Justice focused on understanding and amplifying what justice means for ANS women experiencing gender-based violence (GBV). Main findings of this project were that: (1) participants acknowledged that most ANS women do not report experiences of violence to colonial systems; (2) ANS communities have a general mistrust of systems where they often do not see workers who look like them or understand the complex cultural dynamics in ANS communities and; (3) are reluctant to subject ANS men who are violent to policing and justice systems that treat them harshly, in racially biased ways. A list of recommendations from the study participants included a desperate need for culturally appropriate programming, resources and services to prevent GBV that are specific to the ANS community.

“Weighing Justice”: Do pro-arrest, pro-charge and pro-prosecution policies remain the most effective response to domestic violence in Nova Scotia? is a two-year project funded by Justice Canada, awarded in 2018-2020 to Nancy Ross, School of Social Work, Dalhousie University. A key finding of this project (which included a scoping and systematic review of all relevant literature) was that those who are socially, racially, and economically marginalized in Canada are more vulnerable to experience the negative impact of these policies and in general less likely to have their needs met within carceral and criminal justice responses. Many feminists and particularly feminists of color, offer alternatives to carceral responses and reliance on law enforcement that include restorative and transformative community interventions. Health care sites, including mental health and addiction services, can be unique community locations that intervene early in response to family violence that includes both gender-based/intimate partner violence and violence experienced by children.

In this project, health and social services is an inclusive term that refer to formal (e.g. at a hospital, health centre or community clinic, may require a referral) and informal (e.g. walk-in or self-referral, community-based group, may not require a referral) services, programs and resources that are provided/offered by the health authority (e.g. NSHA), social departments of the government (e.g. Department of Community Services) and non-governmental organizations (e.g. charities, non-profit organizations, community run groups, church-based groups). This broad understanding of health and social services was adopted to align with a social determinants of health approach. Pandemics lead to times of uncertainty that are linked to a myriad of risk factors for increased violence against women and children (Peterman et al., 2020) that are then compounded by social and health inequities experienced by ANS communities.

This project will explore in what ways health and social systems can better respond to family violence within the African Nova Scotian communities by exploring the following questions:

1. How will new learning from the impact of Covid 19 inform social policy and healthcare measures to better respond to gender-based violence within the African Nova Scotian communities?
2. What cultural and structural factors contribute to experiences of family violence within the African Nova Scotian community?
3. How can health care systems incorporate culturally appropriate programming, resources and services to support better responses to GBV in African Nova Scotian communities?
4. What principles are required to guide innovative policy and health systems innovation to become effective in responding to adverse childhood experiences and gender-based violence within the African Nova Scotian communities?

3. How Long Will I Be In The Study?

The length of this study for participants is approximately 10-20 minutes to take part in an online survey. The entire study is expected to take about one year to complete and the results should be known in two years.

4. How Many People Will Take Part In This Study?

It is anticipated that about 250 people will participate in this study throughout Nova Scotia, Canada. It is expected that about 100 -200 people from the Nova Scotia Health Authority will participate in an online survey with 30-50 community members and key informants taking part in focus groups and individual interviews.

5. How Is The Study Being Done?

This study will be completed in three phases. The first phase includes an initial round of qualitative data collection (focus groups) from community participants. A second round of individual interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders from the same community to fill gaps in data collection. In Phase 2, a preliminary data analysis will inform further development of an online survey for healthcare providers and social services professionals in Nova Scotia. In Phase 3, qualitative analysis will be done to determine main themes and outcomes of data collected from both groups. Descriptive statistics will be completed from survey data to provide non-identifiable information that describes the population (e.g. position, length of time in practice) who took part in the survey. To take part in this study, you are being requested to take part in an online survey (Phase 2 of the study).

6. What Will Happen If I Take Part In This Study?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey. Survey questions are about your experience providing services to the African Nova Scotian community. All survey participants will remain anonymous and, unless you share identifiable data, your responses will not be linked to your identity.

You may choose not to participate in the survey at any time by clicking the ‘x’ in top left corner of the screen. Any responses you have provided up to the point of ceasing to participant will not be withdrawn from the study.

7. Are There Risks To The Study?

You may find the questions posed during the course of the study upsetting or distressing. You may not like all of the questions that you will be asked. You do not have to answer those questions you find too distressing.

There is a potential that you may feel discomfort or embarrassment should there be survey questions posed that you feel you have a lack of knowledge about.

You may become uncomfortable during the survey should any of the questions posted remind you of any previous experiences in your personal life in relation to gender-based violence or Adverse Childhood Experiences.

To minimize these risks, we are taking the following precautions:

- Providing an opportunity to obtain and review this consent form in advance of a focus group or interview
- Detailed questions about instances of gender-based violence of Adverse Childhood Experiences are not required for this research project. Participants will not be asked for these details or expected to share them
- Contact information for the researcher team will be available should participants wish to provide feedback about their experience completing the questionnaire (please note that this action may reveal your identity)
- Participants will be in their own home or in a location that is comfortable and familiar to them for the duration of the survey
- All research team members are required to adhere to strict ethical and confidentiality and consent requirements for data collection, storage, access and deletion processes
- Survey participants will remain anonymous to all research team members and responses will not be linked to any one participant in particular

8. Are There Benefits Of Participating In This Study?

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this research. However, possible benefits include feeling positive about contributing to research the impacts of a pandemic on gender-based violence in African Nova Scotian communities. Your participation may also help to increase knowledge about how to move towards the provision of health and social services in Nova Scotia that is culturally competent.

9. What Happens at the End of the Study?

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be published and or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified, except with your express permission.

If you wish to obtain a copy of the study results, please contact a member of the research team with your request and your email or mailing address and a copy will be sent to you when it is available.

10. Can My Participation in this Study End Early?

Yes. If you chose to participate and later change your mind, you can simply stop completing the survey by clicking the 'x' in the top left corner of the screen. Because each survey respondent will not be linked to their responses or asked for any identifying information, your specific data can not be withdrawn.

Also, the Nova Scotia COVID-19 Health Research Coalition, the Nova Scotia Health Authority Research Ethics Board and the principal investigator have the right to stop patient recruitment or cancel the study at any time.

11. Will It Cost Me Anything?

The only expected costs to you for your participation in this research study is your time.

12. What About My Privacy and Confidentiality?

Protecting your privacy is an important part of this study. Every effort to protect your privacy will be made. Results shared or presented to the public will not be linked to you as an individual.

While the study data is active (e.g. being collected, analyzed and used to disseminate knowledge), all individual (raw data) files will be password protected and stored on one computer that is password protected and not used on public networks (e.g. public wifi). Only de-identified transcripts and collated data (e.g. preliminary data reports) will be shared among research team members for ongoing data analysis. Files will be shared using Dalhousie's Secure File Exchange Network or Microsoft Teams on Dalhousie's network according the data sharing policy outlined by Dalhousie's Information Technology Services.

Use of Your Study Information

The research team and the other people listed above will keep the information they see or receive during the project confidential, to the extent permitted by applicable laws. Even though the risk of identifying you from the study data is very small, it can never be completely eliminated (e.g. you share with someone about your participation in this study).

The research team will keep all study data in a secure and confidential location for 7 years and then destroy it according to NSHA policy. Any personal information divulged in the survey will be removed prior to qualitative analysis.

You have the right to be informed of the results of this study once the entire study is complete.

13. Declaration of Financial Interest

The Nova Scotia COVID-19 Health Research Coalition is reimbursing the principal investigator and/or the principal investigator's institution to conduct this study. The amount of payment is sufficient to cover the costs of conducting the study. The PI has no vested financial interest in conducting this study.

14. What About Questions or Problems?

For further information about the study you may call the principal investigator, who is the person in charge of this study.

The principal investigator is Dr. Nancy Ross
Telephone: 902-494-4049

15. What Are My Rights?

You have the right to all information that could help you make a decision about participating in this study. You also have the right to ask questions about this study and your rights as a research participant, and to have them answered to your satisfaction before you make any decision. You also have the right to ask questions and to receive answers throughout this study. You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, and/or concerns or complaints about this research study, you can contact the Nova Scotia Health Authority Research Ethics Board manager at 902-473-8426 or Patient Relations at (902) 473-2133 or 1-855-799-0990 or healthcareexperience@nshealth.ca.

By visiting <https://surveys.dal.ca/opinio/s?s=63196> and clicking "I consent to participate in this study", you are consenting to take part in this research study and expressing that you have read and understand this study information/consent form in full.