



Older women and domestic homicide

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November 26, 2020

We have experienced an ongoing sense of frustration, traumatic disbelief, and sorrow that more could not have been done to save lives in the face of so many warning signs in the vast majority of domestic homicides.

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PREVENTING DOMESTIC HOMICIDES

Lessons Learned from Tragedies





We dedicate this book to the victims of domestic homicide as well as their surviving family members and friends who wonder what society could do differently in the future to prevent these tragedies.



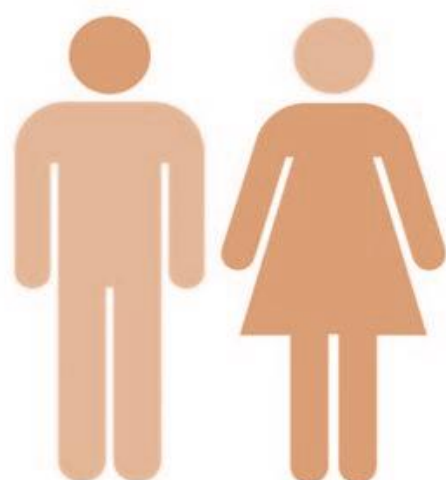
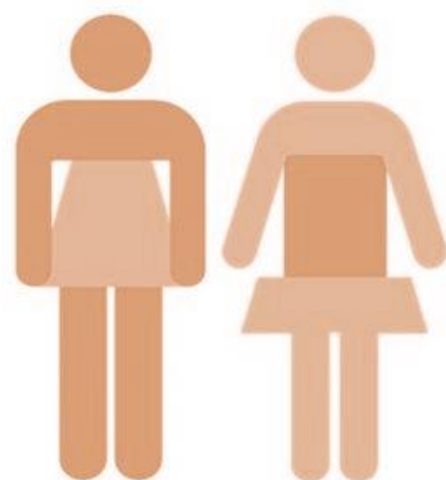
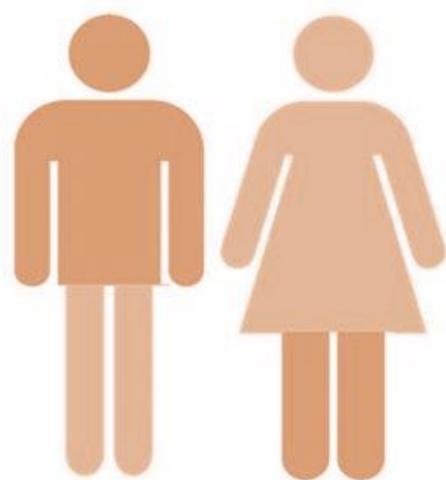
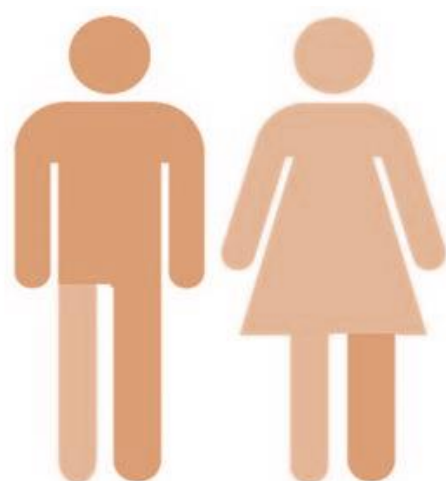
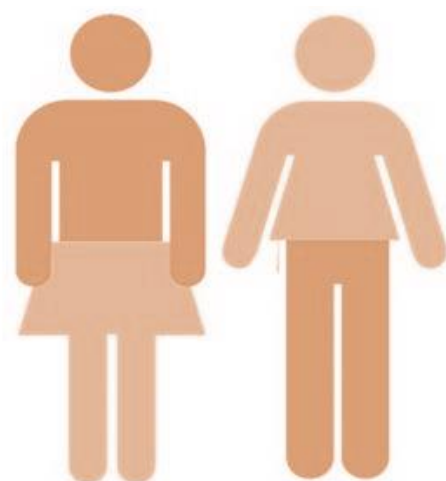
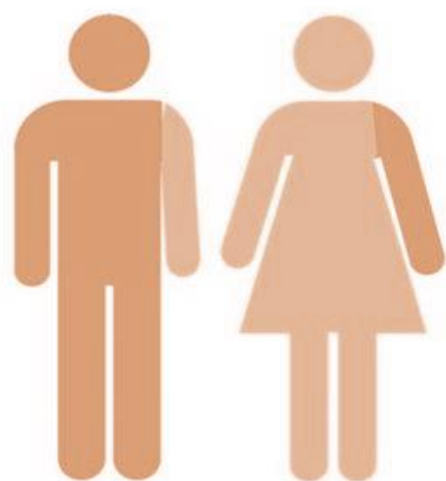
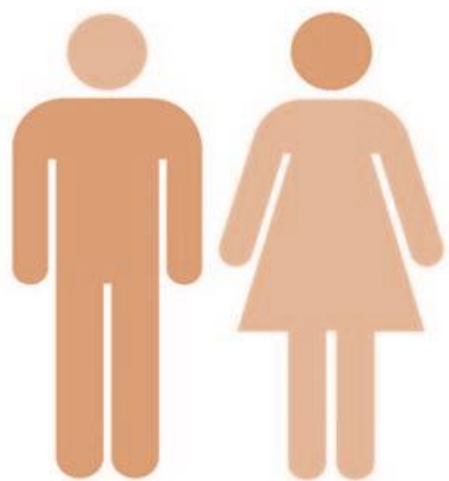
Violence Against
Women & Girls

VAWG

INITIATE • INTEGRATE • INNOVATE

**BRIEF ON VIOLENCE AGAINST
OLDER WOMEN**









Gender is a factor

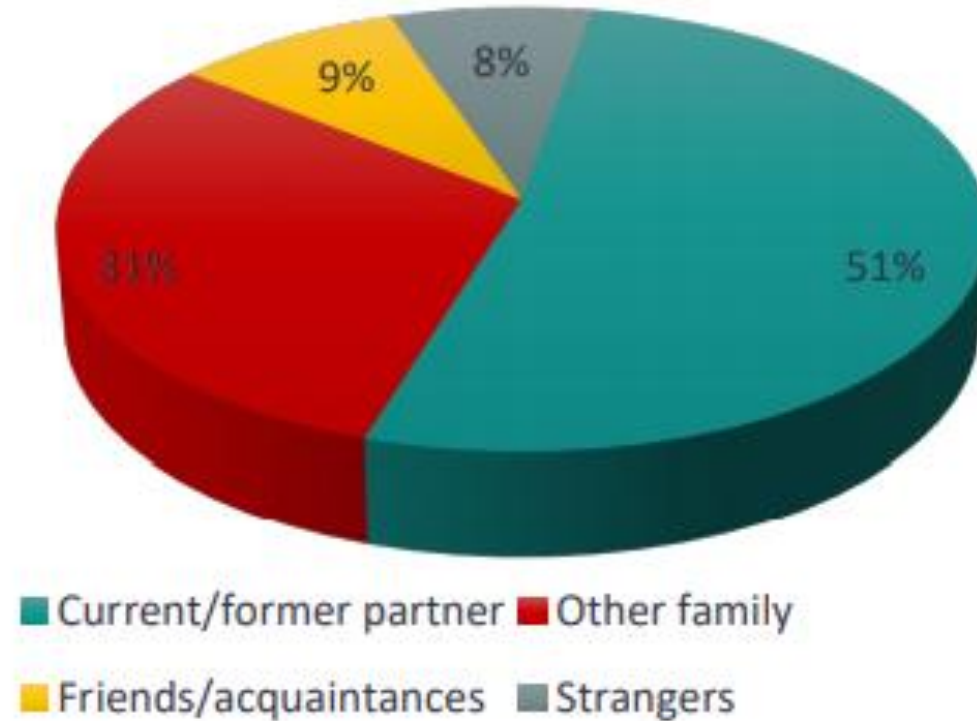
We need to understand gender differences to address and prevent violence more effectively

- Men experience highest overall rates of violence - are most likely to be killed by another male (Stats Canada)
- Women are more at risk of domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment (Canadian Women's Foundation)
- Women are more likely to be killed by a partner/ex-partner.
- 80% of domestic homicide victims involved women, with an even higher percentage of accused men
- LGBT people experience similar rates of domestic violence



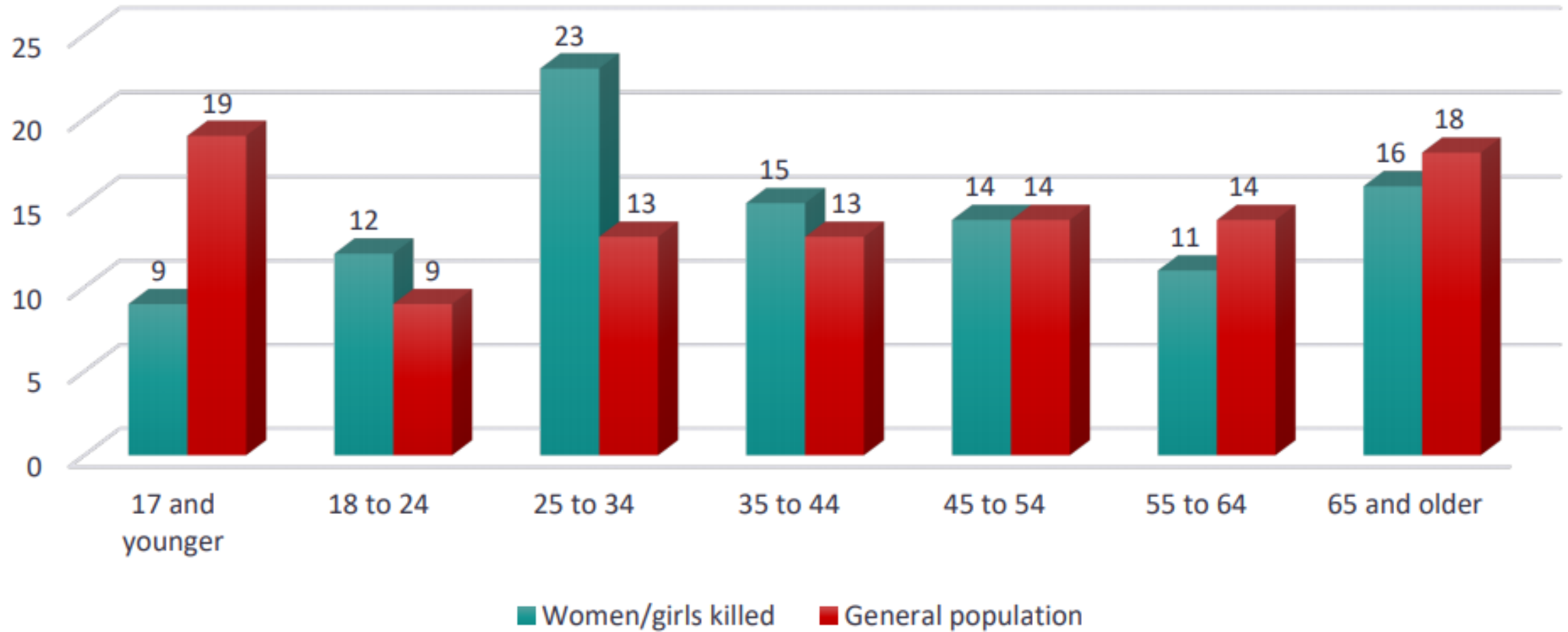
Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability

Observatoire canadien du féminicide pour la justice et la responsabilisation



8 women or girls were killed by men for every month in 2019
About half of them were killed by an intimate partner

Age distribution of women and girls killed by male accused / offenders compared with general population



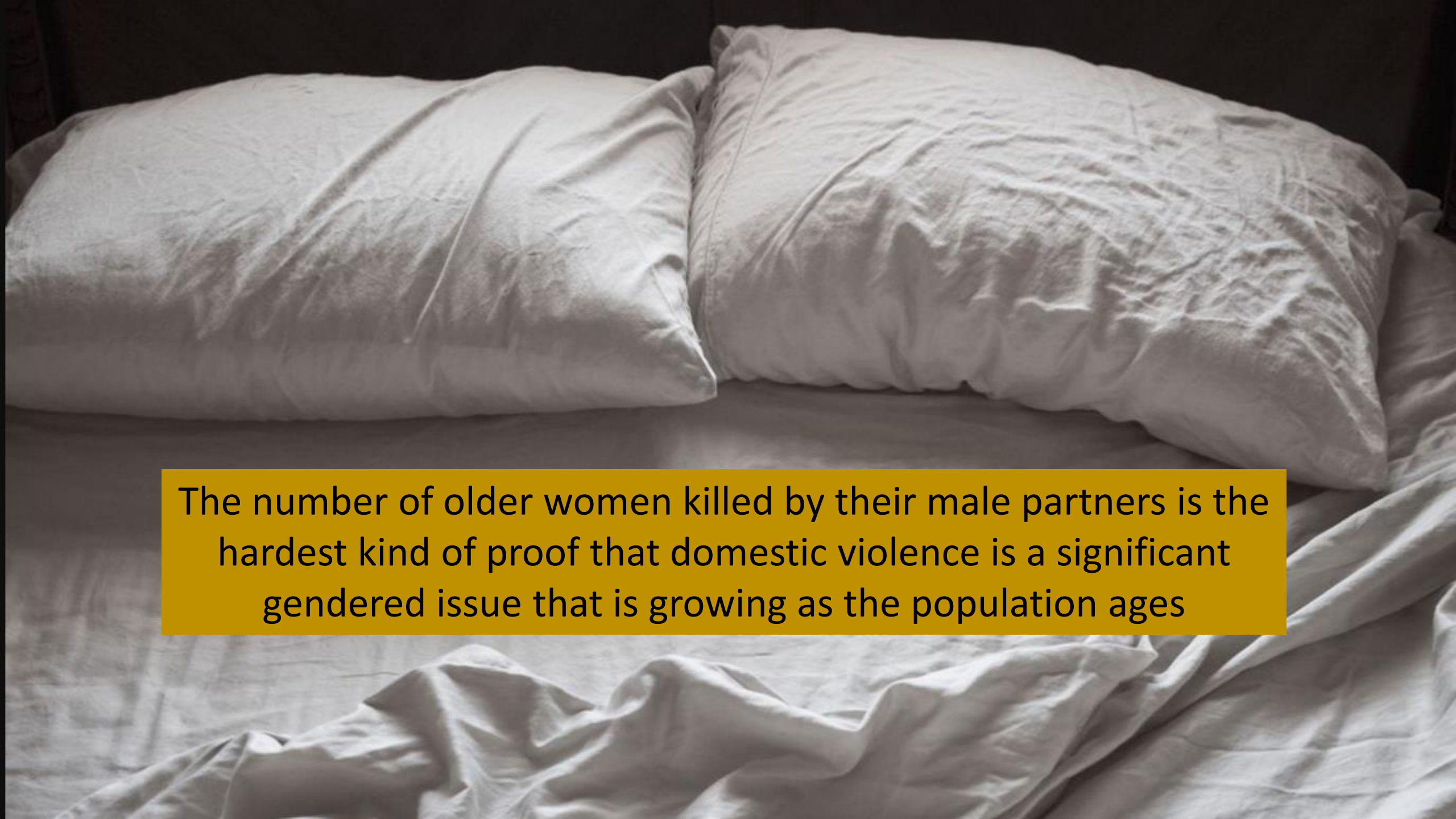
Mercy killing likely in couple's murder-suicide

Associated Press

Thursday, Sept. 1, 2016 | 3:07 p.m.

BOXVILLE, Ky. — Autopsies have confirmed that an elderly couple in Kentucky was a murder-suicide, and the coroner believes it was probably a "mercy killing."





The number of older women killed by their male partners is the hardest kind of proof that domestic violence is a significant gendered issue that is growing as the population ages



Ageism

The triple threat

- Being a woman
- Being an older woman
- Being an older woman experiencing violence

PLUS

- Intersections of oppression

Structural Violence

The idea that domestic violence only affects younger women is due in part to systemic ageism that operates as structural violence in excluding old-age cohorts from study samples.

Global and national surveys of intimate partner violence have included women only up to the age of 49.



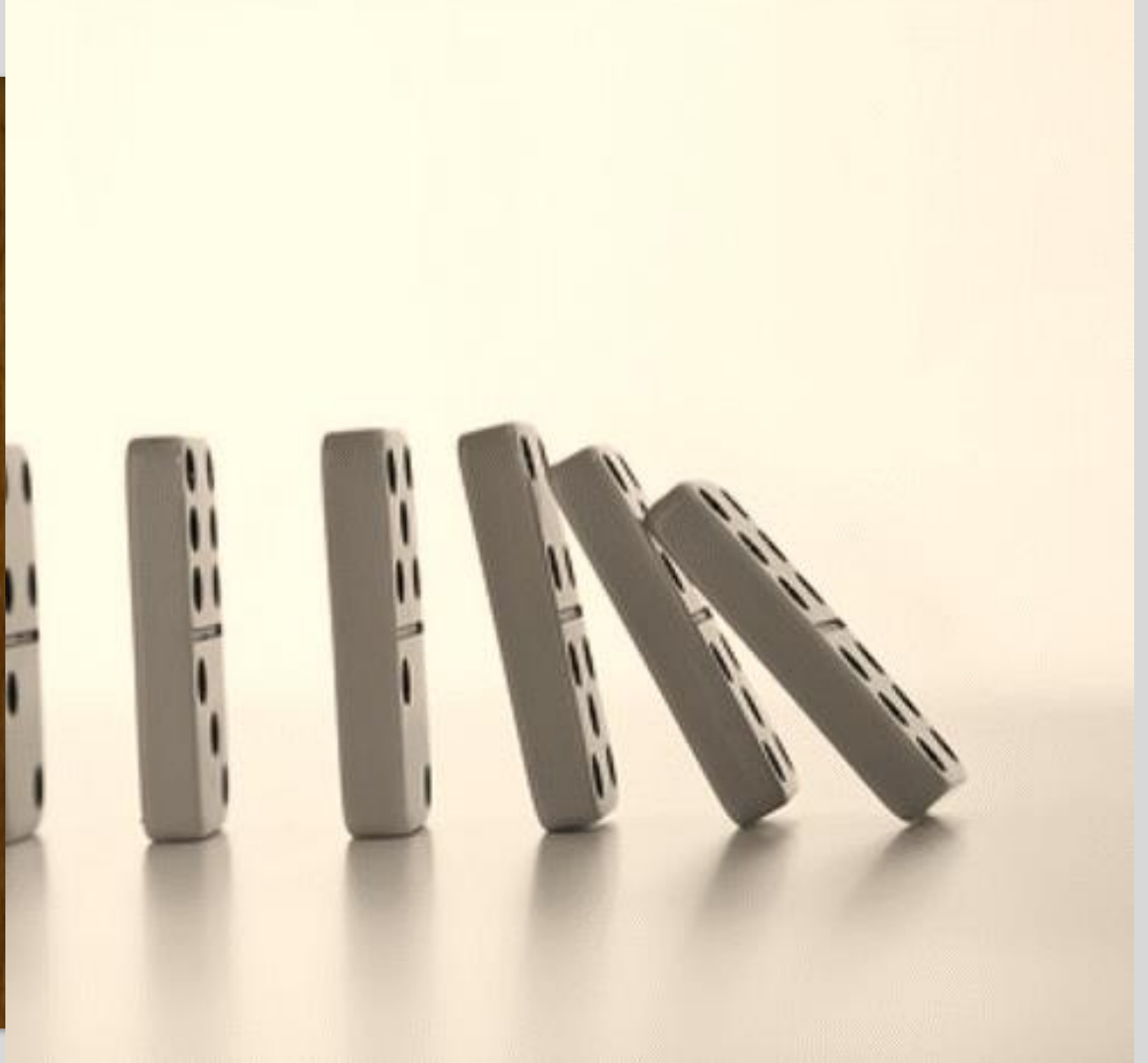


Gaps in Research

40 year age range

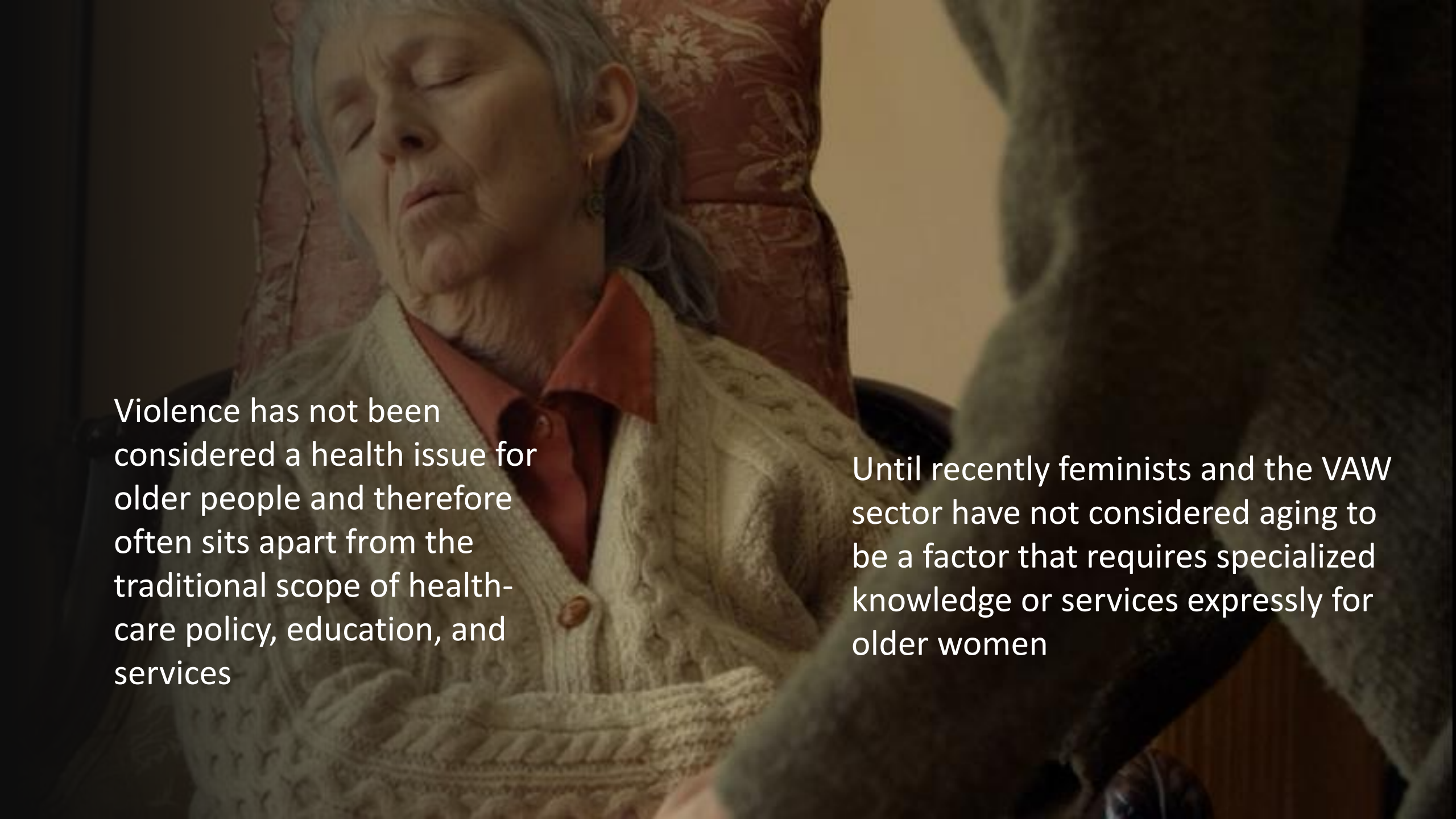
3 competing paradigms

- Social gerontology
- Geriatrics
- Violence against women





Sector Differences

An elderly woman with short, wavy grey hair is seated in a chair with a red and gold floral patterned backrest. Her eyes are closed, and her expression is one of weariness or distress. She is wearing a light-colored, textured knit cardigan over a red collared shirt. In the foreground, the arm and hand of another person, wearing a grey sweater, are visible, reaching towards her. The lighting is soft and indoor, creating a somber and intimate atmosphere.

Violence has not been considered a health issue for older people and therefore often sits apart from the traditional scope of health-care policy, education, and services

Until recently feminists and the VAW sector have not considered aging to be a factor that requires specialized knowledge or services expressly for older women



Health professionals working most closely with seniors are not usually trained to recognize warning signs and risk factors of domestic violence



As women age,
“their horizons for action
diminish and they see
themselves as having
fewer life choices within
the scope of decreasing
power”

....many older abused women
were surprised to learn that their
experiences were abnormal or
worthy of any special services.

T. Zink





Change is
possible

Forward thinking

Canadian government has made significant investments to develop health equity-oriented curriculum that acknowledges the intersections of oppression and violence as health issues that persist in relationships, systems, and society.



Forward thinking

Equity-oriented education across disciplines is a strategic direction that has the potential to bridge long-standing research and sector tensions by anchoring education in human rights.



Forward thinking

An equity orientation provides the foundation for the development of shared principles and practices using a common language that is well versed in the relationship between social location, trauma, and violence at all levels of society



EQUIP Health Care

Research to Equip Health Care for Equity

We can become Trauma and Violence Informed

Universal precautions:

- Everyone has had trauma of some kind
- You don't have to know their story to be caring
- People don't do things without reason



Teach
everyone!



It's Not Right!

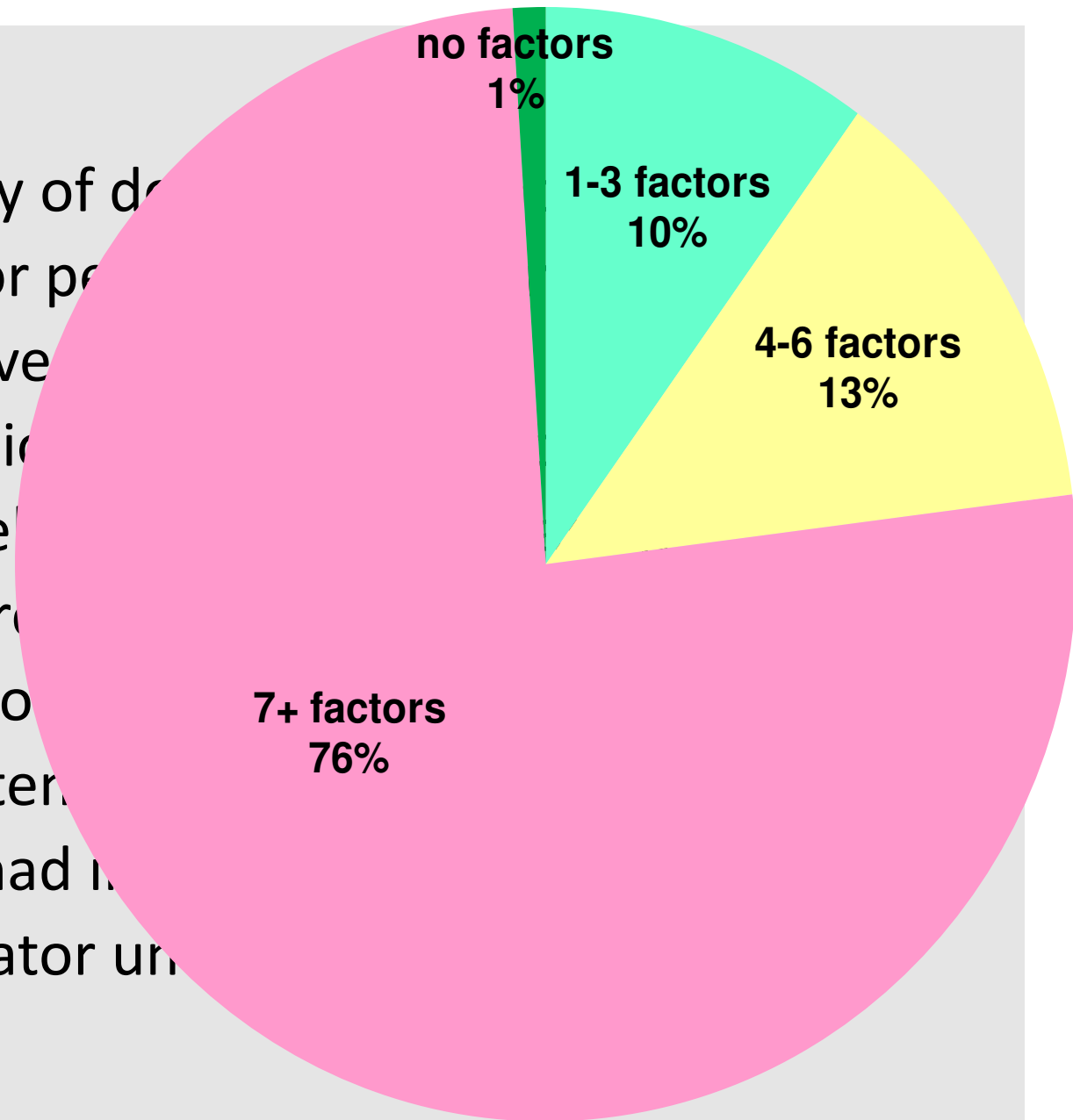
Neighbours, Friends & Families for Older Adults

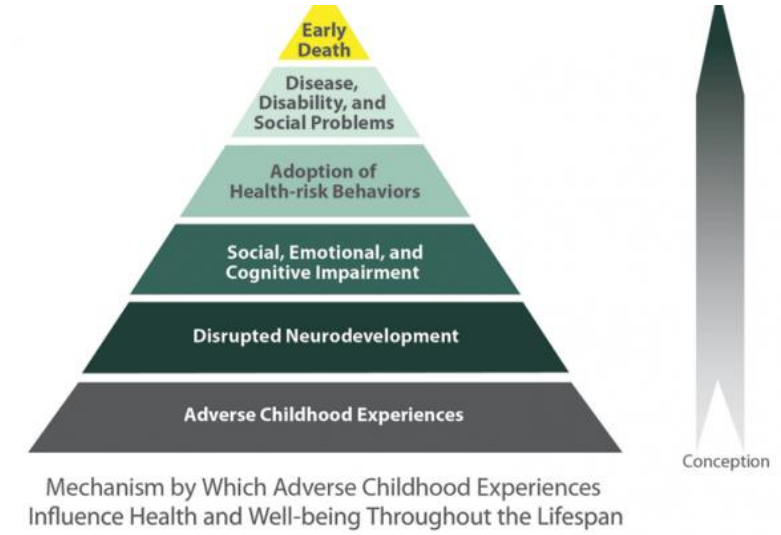
Most common risk factors for lethality

- A history of domestic violence
- Actual or pending separation
- Obsessive behaviour
- Depression of the perpetrator
- The level of violence is increasing
- Prior threats / attempts of suicide
- Threat to kill
- Prior attempts to isolate victim
- Victim had intuitive sense of fear
- Perpetrator unemployed

Most common risk factors for lethality

- A history of domestic violence
- Actual or perceived mental illness
- Obsessive or jealous behavior
- Depression
- The level of access to weapons
- Prior threats or attempts
- Threat to the victim's life
- Prior attempts at suicide
- Victim had no other support
- Perpetrator unemployed





Risk factors

Learning to
manage risk
as a
community

Everyone
has a role to
play



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Thank you
Merci
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