

# Dating Violence among Nordic Youth

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Report and  
Recommendations  
from the 2016  
Nordic Expert  
Conference on  
Violence in  
Adolescents'  
Intimate Relationships



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RESOURCE CENTRE FOR MEN

# FOREWORD

The recommendations in this report were developed by the participants at the Nordic Expert Conference on Violence in Adolescents' Intimate Relationships which took place in Oslo in April 2016. The participants were a diverse group of practitioners, researchers, and officials working on the issues of gender equality and dating violence among youth in the Nordic countries. Delegates from Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, and Norway shared their experience and knowledge.

"Dating Violence among Nordic Youth: Nordic Expert Conference on Violence in Adolescents' Intimate Relationships" was funded by the Nordic Council of Minister's gender equality fund." The project was organized by the Norwegian gender equality centre Reform in collaboration with Pro-feministmiehet (Finland), Nordic MenEngage (Denmark), and Män för Jämställdhet (Sweden).

The purpose of the project has been to develop a set of shared recommendations and guidelines for Nordic work against violence in youth's intimate relationships. By connecting a group of experts in the field, we aimed to facilitate increased collaboration in the Nordic region when it comes to gender equality and violence prevention among youth. It is only through working with and learning from each other that we can end dating violence. We hope that this report will inspire to continued networking and the sharing of best practices.

*Hedda Hakvåg, project coordinator  
Oslo, fall 2016*

## ABOUT NIKK

The Nordic Council of Minister's gender equality fund is administered by NIKK and finance projects where at least three organisations, from three or more Nordic countries, cooperate to work for Nordic gender equality. NIKK (Nordic Information on Gender) is a Nordic cooperative body for the Nordic Council of Ministers. NIKK's mandate is to gather and share knowledge about policy and practice, facts, and research on gender equality throughout the Nordic countries and to a broad group of stakeholders. The aim is to provide knowledge that can serve as a basis for policy discussions in the Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the self-governing regions Greenland, Faroe Islands, and Åland Islands.

## ABOUT REFORM

Reform is Norway's only resource centre working primarily with a male perspective on gender equality. The purpose of the foundation is to work for gender equality and against discrimination on the basis of gender, as well as to render visible men as a gender in society. Reform receives core funding from the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth, and Family Affairs (Bufdir).

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# RECOMMENDATIONS

## A Summary of Our Recommendations to Authorities and to Organizations

### **1.** **CONDUCT REGULAR PREVALENCE STUDIES ON DATING VIOLENCE AMONG YOUTH**

There are large gaps and discrepancies in what we know about the prevalence of dating violence among youth in the Nordic countries. While some countries have conducted recent studies on experiences of dating violence and sexual abuse among youth, other countries by and large lack such data on prevalence. Studies measuring prevalence rates of dating violence need to be conducted in all the Nordic countries and should be repeated at regular intervals to detect and measure possible changes. We need knowledge on both the status quo and any emerging patterns in order to develop targeted prevention measures and make sure that support services reach vulnerable groups of youth.

### **2.** **FACILITATE NORDIC COLLABORATION AND SHARING OF BEST PRACTICES**

We strongly recommend increased Nordic collaboration to counter and reduce the extensive problem of dating violence. While we acknowledge that there are differences between the Nordic countries in their approach to and understanding of gender, gender equality, and violence, we believe that the similarities between the countries are greater. We therefore encourage increased collaboration and sharing of best practices.

This collaboration could take the form of a joint Nordic action plan or strategic commitment to ending intimate partner violence among youth. A joint action plan would encourage increased inter-Nordic learning and state commitment, by allowing countries to make comparisons and hold each other accountable.

Another possibility is the development

of joint surveys and other research studies across the Nordic region (see Recommendation 1). This could enable the systematic, large-scale collection of data on dating violence in the Nordic countries, and would allow for comparisons to be made in regards to prevalence rates and patterns. Nordic research collaboration on this topic could also improve our knowledge on violence against members of minority groups, such as LGBTI youth, youth with disabilities, and ethnic minority youth, by increasing the pool of minority respondents.

On the practitioner-level, we suggest the development of a Nordic network of NGOs, researchers, politicians, and state employees working against intimate partner violence among youth. An informal network is already emerging out of the 2016 expert conference, and we hope there will be political support for expanding and formalizing this network. It is for example possible to imagine the creation of a shared resource bank, where interested parties can share and find relevant information such as research, sample action plans, and educational tools.

### **3.** **ENSURE LONG-TERM AND STABLE FUNDING FOR PREVENTION PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

When it comes to prevention efforts and support services, we see many examples of good work and initiatives by NGOs, activist groups, and others. Many of the prevention efforts are however project-based, making the initiatives time-limited and unsustainable. Organizations providing support services often find themselves on a year-by-year funding scheme, which creates insecure work conditions and prevents long-term planning. Sudden funding cuts can result in the closure of successful programs and high turnover of staff, draining organizations of valuable competency.

We see it as a major problem that so much of the funding available for violence prevention programs, whether government or private funding, is available only as short-term project funding. Project funding limits the reach of effective programs and initiatives, and poses a barrier to long-term, integrated violence prevention efforts. It is crucial that governments allocate money for the prevention and elimination of dating violence among youth, and that the funding schemes are structured so as to enable sustainable prevention efforts.

### **4.** **ADOPT A COORDINATED, MULTI-LEVEL APPROACH TO PREVENTION**

We need to think strategically about prevention and work on different levels. In this process, both timing and setting matters. Firstly, we should differentiate between primary and secondary prevention, and make sure we have targeted efforts for both types of prevention. While the problem of dating violence among youth is receiving increased attention, it is our experience that it is not yet taken seriously enough. Efforts predominantly focus on revealing and intervening, as opposed to preventing the violence from happening in the first place. We wish for the state to make a strong and long-term commitment to primary prevention.

Secondly, the message needs to be communicated at different levels and in different venues. Schools are a key venue for this work: Research as well as clinical experience highlight the need for school-based programs that address the role of bystanders and include the incorporation of skill-building components. Still, prevention programs for youth cannot target schools only, if we are to reach all young people. In our work, we must target the people working with youth (teachers, sports coaches, youth workers) as well as the youth themselves, and we should

work towards a variety of settings, including youth centres, homes, and public spaces.

### **5.** **INCREASE COLLABORATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT ACTORS**

In order to eradicate dating violence among youth, we need more collaboration between different actors. Academics, policymakers, educators, and NGOs need to work together and share knowledge with each other to a larger extent. Too often we work in isolation, missing out on important opportunities to strengthen and coordinate our efforts. Governments can facilitate such collaboration by providing funding for networks that connect researchers and policymakers with NGOs and educators.

### **6.** **BASE PREVENTION PROGRAMS ON RESEARCH AND EVALUATION**

Actors and organizations engaged in prevention work would do well to consult available research on prevention programs. There has been much research on prevention programs, what is effective and what is not. When doing prevention work we do not have to reinvent the wheel; we can and should avail ourselves of established best practices. Sometimes we see that time and money is wasted on duplicate efforts, through the recycling of programs that have already been shown to be less effective or by the failure to use available effective methods. While we cannot uncritically assume that what works one place will work in another place, efforts would be better spent on modifying and adapting existing programs to local contexts than on building each and every program from scratch.



**7.**  
**USE LANGUAGE THAT REFLECTS THE EXPERIENCES OF YOUTH**

It is crucial that we help youth see that their experiences of violence at the hands of partners or close acquaintances are indeed a form of intimate partner violence. As many of our experts noted, youth often downplay the violence that happens to them, associating terms like “violence in intimate relationships” with the experiences of adults only. When we speak about violence, we need to make sure that we use words and examples that reflect youth’s experiences and make it possible for them to recognize the violence

for what it is. Our language should aim to capture the many different forms that dating violence can take, including physical, verbal, emotional, digital, sexual, and economical violence. It also needs to acknowledge gendered and sexual diversity.

**8.**  
**DEVELOP CONTENT AND STRATEGIES FOR DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS**

Youth is not a singular group, and there is a huge difference between developing programs for a 13-year-old and a 20-year-old. Different prevention programs and support services need to define their target age group(s) and adopt age-appropriate measures for that group. We also need to look at what age groups are not receiving enough attention. For example, several of the conference participants mentioned the lack of treatment programs for youth under 18 who are perpetrating sexual violence.

**9.**  
**ADDRESS THE ROLE OF SOCIAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA**

Social and digital media is increasingly playing a part in dating violence. Yet the topic of digital violence is too often overlooked, both by adults in general, such as teachers and parents, and by violence prevention efforts towards youth. We need to start addressing digital violence as a major problem. Youth need guidelines to navigate social media more safely, particularly when it comes to interactions like flirting, sharing of pictures, and sexual harassment. As adults, we need to create spaces for youth to talk about online experiences of intimacy, the good as well as the bad. Teachers and parents need knowledge to facilitate conversations and raise awareness about these issues with youth in the everyday. Finally, practitioners should further explore the benefits and advantages of using social and digital media

as a tool in violence prevention and outreach efforts. Among other things, youth need access to good online resources on sexuality, to prevent pornography from becoming their only available source of information on this topic.

**10.**  
**ENSURE IMPROVED AND HOLISTIC SEX EDUCATION**

Across the Nordic countries, we experience that the sexual education given in schools is providing youth with inadequate information on sexuality and sexual health. The quality of the education too often depends on the interest and knowledge level of individual teachers and school nurses, leaving many youth with little or no information on the topic. This is a major failing. Holistic sexual education is crucial for violence prevention, particularly the prevention of sexual assault and harassment. Sexual education needs to be about more than sex; youth have to learn about bodies, sexuality, and boundaries from an early age in order to make good choices for themselves and learn to respect the bodily autonomy and integrity of others. In line with Recommendation 8, the content of the education should be made age-appropriate, taking into account the maturity level of the student group in question. Finally, sex ed curriculum and teaching must be non-heteronormative and sensitive to sexual and gendered diversity.

**11.**  
**APPLY A GENDER-SENSITIVE AND INTERSECTIONAL FRAMEWORK**

In order to be effective, dating violence prevention programs and support services must be gender-sensitive. This includes recognizing that dating violence more often than not is a distinctively gendered experience. Girls are more likely than boys to be subjected to physical and sexual dating

violence, and boys are perpetrating most of this violence. At the same time, boys are often overlooked as victims of dating violence, and the violence perpetrated by girls is not always taken seriously. Furthermore, within the assumed dichotomy of male perpetrator and female victim, the dating violence that queer and gender-diverse youth experience receives little attention.

Violence prevention work towards youth should be inclusive of sexual and gendered diversity and challenge heteronormativity. Talking with youth about gender norms and expectations is an important part of challenging the conditions underpinning dating violence. As part of this, we should be careful not to lock boys to the role of perpetrator. Services and programs need to be sensitive to the facts that boys too are subjected to dating violence, if sometimes in less visible ways.

In addition to working with a gender-sensitive framework, violence prevention efforts should take into account how other aspects of identity might impact youth’s experiences of violence. Applying an intersectional analysis to dating violence is crucial in order to ensure that our prevention, intervention, and support initiatives reach all the young people who are in need of them. In our work, we must look at how different aspects of social identity like ethnicity, migrant status, ability, and social class might make youth more vulnerable to dating violence or prevent them from accessing information or support.

# What is dating violence?



Dating violence, *kjærestevold*, intimate partner violence, violence in adolescents' intimate relationships – the problem we are trying to solve goes by many names. What we in essence are talking about, is the many forms of violence that youth might experience at the hands of a partner or ex-partner, a boyfriend or girlfriend, or someone they are seeing or are otherwise intimate with. When it comes to sexual violence, we also include violence perpetrated by acquaintances and friends.

Dating violence can be physical, verbal, emotional, digital, sexual, or economical. It can manifest itself in a single act, happening only once, or it can be a long-term pattern of abusive behaviour and violence. It can become bluntly visible through cuts and

bruises or, as is too often the case, go unnoticed by the abused youth's immediate environment. It can take the form of a sexual assault or something as seemingly benign as checking your partner's phone. While we do not have reliable statistics on the prevalence of all forms of dating violence, we do know that dating violence in all its forms affects young people's lives.

In our work as practitioners, educators, or policymakers, we need to think critically about the language that we use and clarify what we are talking about – and what we are not. Dating violence is a complex phenomenon, and there is no singular term in place that accurately sums up the problem. Just looking at the key note speeches for this conference, we see different terms being used, ranging

from "adolescent dating violence" to "intimate partner violence" and "violence in adolescents' intimate relationships." When it comes to the Nordic languages, some have a specific word for intimate violence between youth (i.e. *kjærestevold/kærestevold*) and others do not.

What is important is not so much agreeing upon one word to be used, but being clear on the meaning we put into the words that we choose to use. We need to be aware that our audience might ascribe a different meaning to the same word. Above all, we need to make sure that the youth understand what we are talking about. Youth need to see their experiences reflected in the words and language that we use to talk about violence. Too many youth live with violence every day, yet downplay the magnitude of the violence being done to them.

Other youth perpetrate dating violence without necessarily realizing its consequences, having never received education or other guidance to help make sense of boundaries, gender relations, and intimacy.

On the next pages of the report, we have compiled the introductory and key note speeches given at the conference. It is our hope that the key note speeches will give a good overview of the status quo and pressing concerns of dating violence among youth in the different Nordic countries. No doubt, they will make clear some of the differences and the similarities between the Nordic countries.

# Opening speech

by Are Saastad, Manager, Reform – Resource Centre for Men

On behalf of the organizers Profeministimiehet (Finland), Nordic MenEngage (Denmark), Män för Jämställdhet (Sweden), and us in Reform – Resource Centre for Men (Norway), I want to welcome you to "Dating Violence among Nordic Youth: Nordic Expert Conference on Violence in Adolescents' Intimate Relationships." I want to thank NIKK and the Nordic Council of Ministers for cooperation and funding and the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth, and Family Affairs for letting us use their facilities.

In my welcome, I would like to give you a small peak into Reform's "Stop the dating

violence" project (Stopp kjærestevolden), in which we facilitate workshops for teenage boys and girls. In the workshops, we ask the youth what they would look for in a partner. Their answer is something everyone would sign up for: someone to talk to, someone supportive, someone to trust, someone who can keep a secret, and so on. So we are really impressed by the values and goals of the youth participants. What we then discuss with them is: how do you do this in practice? And most often they never have talked about this. We then discuss things like: How do you in practice ask and signal sexual consent?

What is rape, what is violence, and what is sexual harassment?

When it comes to sexual harassment, there is a pattern to break. It is common for boys to sexually harass other boys. Their motivation for this is probably to assert themselves. In a recent survey, 56% of boys in upper secondary school reported that they had been sexually harassed by a peer boy. This is a practice through which many boys learn to harden themselves and also to harass girls.

In our sessions, we ask the youth about their experiences of sexual harassment.

For instance, we ask them if they have been touched on the breast or between the legs entering the cramped corridors of the school, or if they have seen this happen to others. Almost all the arms of the girls go up in the air when this question is asked. Why is this the case? Is it because boys are told to have a sexually dominant attitude, and get the message that they should always explore opportunities to have sex? I think most will agree that this kind of masculine script drastically increases the risk of non-consensual sexual acts. We see examples that boys who do not follow this sexually dominant script risk being labeled as unmanly or gay.

Just this past week, Reform criticized a Norwegian television program sending out this type of message to boys and men. It is a practical joke show featuring two known football players competing against each other. This week the challenge took place in a shopping centre, and the challenge was this: Touch as many random men on their genitalia as possible. And the discomfort of the random men, who without notice was touched on the balls and filmed, was made fun of and aired as entertainment.

Sexual harassment and "kjærestevold" affect everyone, and girls and women in particular. To be effective in preventing violence, I think it is important to also acknowledge boys and men - not just as perpetrators, but as victims. With a focus on youth, with all of you experts from all over the Nordic countries, we are eager to take our mutual knowledge a step further, to stop dating violence, or "kjærestevold", from happening in the first place and from developing into adult abusive relationships.



# Opening speech

by Kai Morten Tarning, State Secretary, Ministry of Children and Equality

Thank you very much for the invitation. I am very pleased to be able to open this meeting today which is addressing an important issue, dating violence. I would also like to thank Reform for your long-lasting commitment against violence.

We know that the prevalence of dating violence and abuse is high among teenagers. An ongoing study, covering five European countries, shows that a high share of both boys and girls have experienced this form of violence. In Norway, the rates of online violence were particularly high. Thirty-eight percent of the girls and 20% of the boys had experienced such violence. Norwegian and Nordic children and teenagers have a very high use of the internet. They also have a high awareness of internet safety, but they encounter more risk. The study also shows high rates of physical violence: 18% of the girls and 8% of the boys had experienced this kind of violence.

Experiencing violence makes it harder to cope with everyday life. Many young victims of violence are at risk of dropping out of school. Violence also has long-term consequences, and it will most likely forever change the life of these young people. The figures cited above are also concerning because experiencing violence in a teenage relationship increases the risk of experiencing violence later.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The primary goal should be to prevent children and young people from being subjected to violence and sexual abuse. I heard a presentation about Reform's prevention program for 15-year old teenagers. It seemed very interesting and promising. A lot of good work is also done at school – even though a lot more could be done. Moreover, preventive assistance, treatment, and support can help to reduce the adverse impacts of such experiences.

Another important issue is to ensure that victims receive help as early as possible. A first step is to enable them to identify violence or abuse. These teenagers may be experiencing their first relationship. They are in love, and they do not necessarily know where to set the limits. The police launched a campaign last year aiming at raising awareness on what violence is. A website was developed where people can check whether they are subjected to violence or subjecting someone to violence. Part of the campaign is targeting young people. The website ung.no provides professional answers to young people on all issues, including violence and abuse. I think these anonymous, low-threshold services are very useful.

Another big challenge is to crush the shame and the fear which hold victims back from seeking help and speaking up. Violence, and especially sexual violence, is still very much a taboo in our societies. The challenge is even larger for youth with migrant background where taboos are even stronger.

The Norwegian government is strongly committed to fighting violence against children and violence in close relationships. In November 2014, we launched an action plan to intensify the efforts against violence and abuse. The action plan is called "A good childhood lasts a lifetime." It combines the joint effort of four ministries.

We are currently preparing a strategic plan against violence and abuse against children. It will be presented this autumn. I hope the conclusions of today's meeting will give us some recommendations on which measures the government can put in place to reduce dating violence. I wish you a very good seminar and fruitful discussions.

# Key notes from the Nordic countries

## Adolescent Dating Violence:

# A GLIMPSE OF DANISH EFFORTS AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Rikke Holm Bramsen, Department of Psychology at the University of Southern Denmark

In order to combat the problem of dating violence among youth, we need to find common grounds. In this presentation, I will propose a framework for discussing dating violence, before turning to Danish efforts and international experiences.

### WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

The first question we need to ask ourselves is how to define and comprehend dating violence. The specific setting, culture, and political landscape influence our current understanding of the term, but in order to collaborate and move forward we need to find common grounds. In this regard, I propose to use the definition of dating violence put forward by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2016):

*Dating violence is a type of intimate partner violence. It occurs between two people in a close relationship. The nature of dating violence can be physical, emotional, or sexual [...] Dating violence can take place in person or electronically, such as repeated texting or posting sexual pictures of a partner online.*

Moreover, building on a joint understanding of dating violence, we need to explore the nature, magnitude, and consequences for both victims and perpetrators of dating violence. Most importantly, actions must be taken to eradicate the problem before it occurs.

### DANISH EFFORTS

In Denmark, there has been a shift in rhetoric and focus when it comes to dating violence. The Danish governmental action plans to combat violence have shifted their focus from violence against women (Regeringen, 2002) to a focus on violence in families and intimate relationships (Regeringen, 2014). Alongside this shift, Danish studies have shown a marked

prevalence of dating violence and violence against men (Statens Institut for Folkesundhed, 2012). We have thus seen a political shift towards more focus on dating violence and more focus on men as victims of violence.

The current Danish action plan (Regeringen, 2014) dictates two specific focus areas in regards to dating violence:

1. Increase information on the consequences of DV
2. Improve counselling and treatment for victims of DV

Several Danish efforts accommodate these two areas through providing services like telephone hotlines, conducting media and awareness campaigns, creating educational material, etc. In Denmark, these efforts are primarily funded by public and private funding, with some being run by voluntary NGOs.

Examples of current services and campaigns in Denmark are:

- Det kriminalpræventive Råd m.fl./ For vild med dig (<http://www.dkr.dk>)
- Bryd Tavsheden (<http://www.brydtavsheden.dk/>)
- Danner/Viden om kærestevold (<http://www.videnomkaerestevold.dk>)
- Red Barnet (<https://redbarnet.dk/>)
- LOKK (<http://www.lokk.dk/>)
- Dialog Mod Vold/Voldsom Kærlighed (<http://dialogmodvold.dk/>)
- Mary Fonden/Kærlig Talt (<http://www.maryfonden.dk/>)

### INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

In terms of improving prevention efforts there is much to learn from international prevention programs and evaluation efforts. Employing a public health approach, identified as best practice by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2010) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), allows for the development and testing of

effective approaches to address the underlying causes of dating violence.

### THE PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH IS EVIDENCE-BASED AND INVOLVES FOUR STEPS:

1. Defining the problem
2. Identifying why the problem occurs
3. Developing and testing prevention strategies
4. Disseminating information/widespread adoption

The following builds on a public health model in order to outline key international findings about dating violence.

### STEP 1: DEFINE THE PROBLEM

According to a meta-analysis conducted by Wincentak et al. (2016), one in five adolescents aged 13-18 report having experienced physical dating violence and one in 10 report sexual dating violence. Interestingly, gender differences in physical teen dating violence were significant for perpetration (boys 13% and girls 25%), but not for victimization (21% boys and girls). A different pattern was observed for sexual teen dating violence, with girls reporting lower rates of perpetration and higher rates of victimization (Wincentak et al., 2016).

International research and meta-analysis help us identify the extent of dating violence among youth. However, we need to bear in mind that cultural and translational challenges exist. Dating violence or the Danish phrase "kærestevold" are not necessarily comparable terms. As noted in the introduction, different researchers and participants might operate with different conceptualizations of what constitutes dating violence.

### STEP 2: IDENTIFY WHY THE PROBLEM OCCURS

The causes and correlates of dating violence - that is, modifiable factors that increase or decrease the risk of occurrence (risk and protective factors) - are identified. It is important to consider the interplay between factors on different levels, including how these factors are influenced by age, gender, and culture.

### STEP 3: DEVELOP AND TEST PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Using the information identified in Step 2, we need to design, monitor, and rigorously assess the effectiveness of dating violence prevention efforts through outcome evaluations. Most efforts focus on improving knowledge, changing norms and attitudes, improving problem solving, and changing behaviors. While changing people's knowledge base is relatively simple, altering their behaviors is quite hard. Thus, we need to make sure that the methods of our prevention efforts match our area of focus and ultimate goal.

Moreover, effective prevention programs demand collaboration between practitioners, researchers, and policymakers. Therefore, it is imperative to move away from silo thinking.

A meta-analysis by De La Rue et al. (2016) looked at 23 studies of different school-based interventions aiming to prevent or reduce violence in teen dating relationships. The results showed that DV programs do influence dating violence knowledge and attitudes. However, they do not affect DV perpetration or victimization behavior to a significant degree. De La Rue et al. therefore recommended that prevention programs incorporate skill-building components and address the role of the bystander. The insights from this metaanalysis point to both the importance of evaluating prevention efforts and the importance of coordinating these efforts.





**”Effective prevention programs demand collaboration between practitioners, researchers, and policymakers. Therefore, it is imperative to move away from silo thinking.”**

#### **STEP 4: DISSEMINATE INFORMATION**

Step 4 focuses on disseminating information on the effectiveness of prevention efforts and increasing the scale of programs proven effective. It is imperative to continue to evaluate, adjust, and document as projects proceed. At present, there is too much repetition of efforts, including repetition of unsuccessful programs, which only serves to waste money and time. Practitioners working with dating violence prevention need to look to the literature and collaborate with researchers and policymakers in order to build evidence-based programs and initiatives.

#### **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

In conclusion, I will sum up my recommendations for Nordic dating violence prevention efforts going forward.

In order to prevent dating violence among youth, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers need to start collaborating. To move the field of dating violence forward, more attention should be allocated to addressing prevalence rates (what are the prevalence rates of DV?); treatment (what is the best treatment for victims and perpetrators of DV?); and prevention (how can we prevent DV?). At the political level, large-scale national and/or Nordic strategies based on international best practice should be prioritized. Moreover, strategy plans need to be accompanied by the allocation of resources, including long-term funding for successful projects. On the practical level, we need to be vigilant that the projects we invest in are evidence-based with well-documented positive effects.

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# DATING VIOLENCE IN FINLAND

Jonna Saxberg, Kalliola Youth Association  
Tommi P. Pesonen, Kalliola Youth Association

Dating violence is an existing problem in Finland, but studies looking specifically on dating violence have not been done. The extent of the phenomenon is unknown as there is a difficulty in defining “dating” and “violence.” This is especially the case in regards to young people, which adds to the difficulty when trying to gather data via surveys.

## ABOUT DATING VIOLENCE IN FINLAND

In regards to the larger child victim research, there was a master’s thesis done on the topic of dating violence among youth in 2010 (Niemi, 2010). In this study, data was gathered from ninth graders in schools all over Finland. The data consists of 5,775 answers, and the study discusses the experiences of violence in general, not one’s own actions of violence in relationships.

Due to the way the questions in the survey were posed, reliable estimates of the extent of dating violence cannot be made. The survey only asks about “the last violent experience,” which may or may not have been perpetrated by a partner. It also only collects data in regards to “the first sexual experience,” which may or may not have been a violent experience. Possible sexual violence enacted by partner(s) after the first sexual experience with the individual is not captured in the survey. Additionally, the survey also excludes many forms of dating violence. In fact, it only includes physical violence and the threat of it, and sexual violence. Experiences of social control, destruction of social relationships, and invasion of personal privacy, among other more subtle forms of violence, are not mentioned. Neither does the study consider the psychological, social, and emotional effects of dating violence.

However, the study shows that dating violence does indeed exist and something needs to be done about it. Most of this

violence would be classified as “mild violence,” which in turn causes “mild injuries.” The most common experience in regards to dating violence seems to be threats of violence. Young women experience violence at a more severe level than boys, and it generally happens behind closed doors. Most of the girls who experience dating violence get physically injured by it. Boys, on the other hand, experience dating violence in public places and do not suffer physical injuries. One quarter of youth who experience dating violence do not tell anyone about it; parents or other adults are rarely informed.

Dating violence seems to have direct links to one’s social and economic status. The backgrounds of youth facing dating violence often include unemployment, financial difficulties, alcoholism, witnessed and/or experienced violence at home, parents’ relationship problems, and fighting. However, a difficult background does not automatically translate to violent relationships. It is evident that early dating experiences influence later dating experiences. Studies have also shown that harmful social patterns in forming relationships seem to pass on from generation to generation. More studies need to be done on this topic, both quantitative to measure the extent of the issue and qualitative to understand the nature of it.

## OUR WORK AT GIRLS’ HOUSE AND BOYS’ HOUSE IN HELSINKI

**(Jonna):** In my work at Girls’ House, I meet girls and young women with experiences of sexual violence. Some of them have, or have had, a violent relationship. Most clients who have experienced dating violence are from “good families,” but truthfully have a difficult background. Commonly this includes violent relationships with parents and a lack of emotional care as a child and teenager. These young women are desperate to

manage life on their own. They have not been able to trust their parents’ care and support during their lives. Most of them have not seen a happy and healthy parental relationship at home. Some have not seen a parental relationship of any kind from a close distance and perceive men in general as more or less strange and unknown.

Girls and young women do not easily recognize violence in their relationships. Social control, forced sexual acts, threats, and name-calling are considered “not that serious” when it happens to them. They do not consider this “bad enough” to seek help or to tell someone. The girls also tend to blame themselves as a way of understanding why their partners behave the way they do. “I made him behave like that” is a common explanation. If they hear it happening to someone else, they may take it more seriously. It takes time, trust, and a lot of talk about the person’s life before the violent actions can be seen for what they are.

After a violent relationship, the girls and young women are left traumatized, afraid of men, dating, and sex. They have trouble trusting new people and find it very hard to start new relationships. There is always the risk of ending up in a new violent relationship. They need a lot of support to see themselves as worthy of good things and respectful relationships.

**(Tommi):** In my work at Boys’ House, I meet boys, young men, transgender youth, and youth pondering about gender. They too have difficulties recognizing violence in intimate relationships, and they struggle to speak of the violence that they have faced. Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and aversion towards one’s own body can build up a wall preventing happiness and keeping the young person from talking about their violent experiences.

In public campaigns, intimate relations-

hip violence is often presented as physical violence that happens in heterosexual relationships, which casts boys and men as violent and girls and women as victims. Boys, young men, and transgender youth find it difficult to identify themselves as victims of violence. As the LGBTQ community has been strongly promoting equal marital rights in Finland, it has become even harder to speak about violence in intimate relationships inside this community.

## WHAT HAS BEEN DONE

“Youth dating violence” (or dating violence) is not a clearly visible topic in Finland. Lately the big focus has been on violence and sexual violence towards women. This is due to the current political climate in regards to the immigrant and refugee situation. In fact, most talk is focused on irrelevant matters that do not help our efforts.

There have been a few public campaigns and projects in the past few years that touch on the topic of dating violence. These include:

- My Body. My Rights. (Mun kroppa. Mä päättän.) by the National Institute for Health and Welfare. Promoting sexual rights among youth aged 15-17.
- Right to Choose, by the Ministry of the Interior. Promoting knowledge on sexual harassment and sexual violence among vocational school students by organizing seminars for students and teachers, including workshops and the use of short movies. This campaign featured on social media, blogs, and Cosmopolitan magazine.
- The previously mentioned master’s thesis by Jenni Niemi (2010).
- The National Institute for Health and Welfare has published a handbook “Turvataitoja Nuorille” for youth that includes a chapter on dating violence.
- Many websites for youth have a chapter

”My boyfriend raped me”

## – VIOLENCE IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG YOUTH IN ICELAND

Hjálmar G. Sigmarsson, Stígamót – Education and Counseling Center for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Violence.

### ABOUT STÍGAMÓT

Stígamót is an education and counseling center for survivors of sexual abuse and violence. Since it was established in 1990, its main focus has been twofold: firstly, providing various free services for survivors of sexual violence (including individual interview sessions and self-help groups) and secondly, raising awareness on sexual violence. From the start it has been an integral part of Stígamót’s work to develop approaches and to develop and implement political strategies on improving normative frameworks and services for survivors of sexual violence. In the last few years, the organization has been focusing on improving services and outreach for various marginalized groups, including disabled survivors, male survivors, and lately we have also been stressing the importance of looking closer at sexual violence against youth, and how to increase awareness about the frequency and forms of sexual violence against and amongst youth.

### YOUTH AT STÍGAMÓT

Even though the services are for individuals over 18, the majority of survivors that come to Stígamót were subjected to sexual violence when they were younger than 18. Looking at our data from 2009 to 2011, it shows that 68.5% of survivors that came to Stígamót were younger than 18 when they were first subjected to violence. Those that endured violence before 18 reported a significantly higher percentage of the most common after-effects of sexual violence than those that were older than 18. Interestingly, a higher percentage of those that were subjected to sexual violence after 18 had not struggled with addiction. A significant number of perpetrators were also younger than 18, although a lesser proportion than among the survivors. In 2015, 22.5% of reported perpetrators were younger than 18;

more specifically, 16.5% of the perpetrators were aged 14-17 (Stígamót Annual Reports).

### SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND YOUTH

Research on sexual violence amongst youth in Iceland is not very extensive, even though some research in recent years indicates the extent and nature of the problem (UNICEF, 2013; Tausen, 2014). Recent research on the prevalence of sexual abuse amongst 10th-graders indicates that the prevalence is comparable to other Northern European countries (i.e. 14.6% of girls and boys had been subjected to sexual violence) and that sexual violence is one of the most significant health threats to Icelandic youth (Arnarsson, 2016).

Even less is known about violence in intimate relationships amongst youth. However, in 2012, a regular survey for ninth- and 10th-graders (15-16 years old) in all schools in Iceland inquired for the first time about sexual violence committed by someone their own age or in the same age group (Rannsókn og greining/Unicef, 2013). This survey showed that both girls and boys were more likely to be violated by someone their own age. According to this survey, 10.9% of the girls and 4.5% of the boys had been subjected to sexual violence, and 5.1% of the girls and 2.1% of the boys had been violated by someone in their own age group. At Stígamót, we are seeing indications of increased prevalence of sexual violence in intimate relationships amongst youth. This has also been noted by other organizations like the Women’s Shelter in Reykjavík (2016), where a growing number of women under 20 are seeking help because of violence they are subjected to from their boyfriends. It is important to not only further research on this issue, but also to point out the fact that this group of mostly young women are faced with a lack of services and awareness of this issue.

explaining what youth dating violence is. Unfortunately, sexual education in schools, which includes talk about dating and dating violence, relies on the teacher’s personal will and ability to bring up the topic of dating violence. When it comes to the handbook for youth published by the National Institute for Health and Welfare, we do not know whether or not it is being used.

We assume that when a young person discusses their experience of dating violence, the support given by professionals is random and depends on the individual’s competencies on the topic. At present, there are seven Girls’ Houses and two Boys’ Houses in Finland that have the ability to provide help. There are also some crisis centers and violence work centers that are run by non-governmental organizations. Support phone lines and internet services, including chat services, exist. But the larger problem is how to recognize dating violence as an actual problem and to encourage

youth to seek help.

Dating violence needs to be made well-known as a term and as a phenomenon among youth. It is important to educate both youth and the adults working with them. We who work with young people need to pay attention to the way we talk about dating and violence. We need to make sure that everyone can tell their story.

### REFERENCES

Niemi, J. (2010). Seurusteluväkivalta nuorten kokemana, Pro Gardu tutkielma. Tampereen Yliopisto, Sosiologian laitoks.

In public campaigns, intimate relationship violence is often presented as physical violence that happens in heterosexual relationships, which casts boys and men as violent and girls and women as victims. Boys, young men, and transgender youth find it difficult to identify themselves as victims of violence.



«One of the crucial shifts in recent years has been the emergence of survivors' voices. In addition, spaces of action and resistance have been multiplying, with young women and men bringing these issues into the debate, highlighting where society and its institutions are not fulfilling their role in preventing and addressing the various forms of sexual violence.»

Interesting research on various aspects of young people's experiences has however been emerging in recent years. This includes research on the consumption of, or exposure to, pornography. A recent study looking at the consumption of pornography amongst high school students (aged 18-19) showed that 86.1% of those participating in this study had consumed pornography (Benediktsdóttir, 2016). Last year, 4.1% of survivors that came to Stígamót came because of pornography. Stories of such consumption leading to abusive behavior in intimate relationships have been increasing among our younger survivors.

Also in the last few years, an increasing number of survivors have shared stories of being victims of digital and online sexual violence, including revenge porn and creep shots. This issue has gotten increased attention in the last few years. For example, various service providers and institutions have started addressing the issue; a draft law was proposed in the parliament; an awareness raising campaign "Ber það sem eftir" (i.e. "stays with you forever") was undertaken in all elementary schools; and various research projects were started (Þorvaldsdóttir, 2015).

#### REVOLUTIONS/SHIFTS

Recent years have seen more feminist activist spaces emerging, with the establishment of feminist associations in the majority of high schools in Iceland and even in a growing number of elementary schools. In this context, and along with extensive celebrations of the 100th anniversary of women's rights to vote and established campaigns like the Slutwalk (Icelandic: Drusluganga), last year also saw various grassroots and social media initiatives emerging that focussed primarily on sexual violence issues. One such, #theFreeTheNipple campaign ("brjóstabyltingin"

or "the Breast Revolution"), emerged almost spontaneously after female high school students posted pictures and statements, calling out the hypocrisy of gendered beauty standards and the issue of online sexual violence. Another "revolution" emerged early last summer, in a closed Facebook group called "Beautytips," a site where young women share tips and advice on fashion, beauty, and health. One member shared her experience of sexual violence, inquiring if the same perpetrator had abused anyone else. In a show of support, hundreds of women shared their own stories, some also describing or naming their abusers. This led to a wider discussion on other social media, including a social media campaign where people were encouraged to use particular yellow and orange profile pictures on their social media accounts, to show that they were either survivors themselves or knew/supported survivors.

Not only are more people engaging with the issue of combating sexual violence and violence against women, but the discussion has also progressed towards addressing more diverse aspects of rape culture and challenging them more concretely. This has included bringing the issue of perpetrators into light. This was most evident with the "Beautytips" revolution, where perpetrators were discussed more openly. It has however been highlighted that it is important to be aware of how we approach the discussion about perpetrators and how do we ensure that the discussion is respectful to the experiences and needs of survivors.

#### PREVENTION EDUCATION

The last few years has also seen an increase in governmental and municipal actions addressing sexual violence towards youth. The most extensive one was an inter-ministerial three-year project simply called "Vitundavakningin" (Raising Awareness).

The project focused on sexual, emotional, and physical violence against children. The project produced a number of educational materials, including videos focused on specific age groups and handbooks for educators and experts within the judicial system. This included "Stand by Yourself," a short film about self-respect, violence, and boundaries for the intermediate level of primary school, and "Get a yes," a short film for secondary and upper secondary school. The material was designed with a clear objective of reaching the intended audiences, but there was also a very clear focus on the issue of consent. It thereby addressed the issue of sexual education and sexual abuse, putting communication and consent at the center of these issues. Consent has also been the focus of grassroots initiatives, including the Consent Collective (Icelandic: Samþykkishópurinn).

#### MOVING FORWARD

As pointed out above, one of the crucial shifts in recent years has been the emergence of survivors' voices. Stígamót has contributed to this development by producing videos where survivors appear in person, sharing their experiences of sexual violence. In addition, spaces of action and resistance have been multiplying, with young women and men bringing these issues into the debate, highlighting where society and its institutions are not fulfilling their role in preventing and addressing the various forms of sexual violence. The call for men's participation in combating violence against women has also become more explicit. In all of this, prevention measures are crucial, both as part of a formal education curriculum and through media and various activities. It has however been pointed out that not only do prevention education initiatives need to be more extensive and sustainable, they also need to address more concretely

the issues that youth are dealing with, not ignoring their realities, but respecting and providing the appropriate information, skill sets, and services. The education and training of professionals that work with children also need to become more integrated into educational institutions and programs that work with children. It is essential to take concrete steps to make it easier for children and youth to share their experiences of sexual abuse. Recently, it has been pointed out that in most schools there are no clear procedures in place to handle these cases. All of these measures need to be in place in order to address the issue of sexual violence, including dating violence, amongst youth in a sustainable and inclusive way.

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# YOUTH IN SWEDEN – A VULNERABLE GROUP

Sibel Korkmaz, the County Administrative Board in Uppsala County

This presentation looks at how youth have been identified as a group vulnerable to being subjected to violence, and how, during the last couple of years, an effort to address that has been made. In Sweden, action has been taken to focus on preventing violence and to strengthen the focus on boys, men, and masculine norms within the work for gender equality, including violence prevention.

## REGIONAL WORK AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The County Administrative Board is a government agency that can be seen as a link between the national and the regional, implementing national goals on a regional level. This includes the work towards the national goal for gender equality: That men and women shall have equal power to shape society and their own lives. This national goal is brought down to four objectives, and one of them is that men's violence against women should cease. The County Administrative Board has been commissioned to support the regional work towards gender equality and, specifically, actions taken to prevent men's violence against women, including violence in intimate relationships, violence in the name of honor, prostitution, and human trafficking.

## YOUTH – A VULNERABLE GROUP

In the Swedish government's action plan to fight men's violence against women (skr 2007/08:39), women between the ages of 16 and 24 are identified as a group vulnerable to being subjected to violence. In 2014, the National Council for Crime Prevention released a report regarding offences in close relationships (2014:8). This report studied what portion of the population (16-79 years) had been subjected to offences in a close relationship during the past year (2012), or at some other point in life. The associated

factors that appear to be most relevant when it comes to victimization are: age, family relations, education, living conditions, and financial conditions. The victimization is highest among young adults, and within that group women age 20 to 24 have been identified as a risk group. During the year of 2012, 12.1% of women between the ages of 16 and 24 had been subjected to offences in a close relationship (Brå, 2014).

## BINDING REGULATIONS ADDRESS VIOLENCE IN ADOLESCENTS' INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

The National Board of Health and Welfare has established binding regulations and general advice (SOSFS 2014:4) for the social services and the health care sector when dealing with domestic violence. These binding regulations state that people under 18 years can be victims of violence in an intimate relationship by a partner, and if so, the social services should assess the child's situation and offer needed help and support.

## FOCUS ON PREVENTING VIOLENCE

During the last couple of years, an effort to focus on preventing violence has been made. Here are some examples:

- The Swedish government has given The Swedish National Agency for Education the commission to evaluate the Mentors in Violence Program. The evaluation will be reported back to the government by April 1, 2018.
- The Swedish government has signed an agreement with The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL) to strengthen the focus on boys, men, and masculine norms within the work for gender equality, including violence prevention.
- In February 2014, the Swedish government appointed a commission to form a national strategy to end men's violence

against women and violence in the name of honor. The strategy (SOU 2015:55) was presented in May of 2015 and addresses the need to focus on preventing violence in all levels of society.

- The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society has in association with Unizon and the organization Men for Gender Equality developed a handbook on violence prevention, targeting children and youth. The handbook aims to enable the development of a knowledge-based violence prevention practice. The handbook contains important information on violence, gender, and prevention. During the year of 2016, The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society will arrange regional conferences in association with The County Administrative Board, with the aim to distribute the handbook nationwide.

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SOSFS 2014:4. Våld i nära relationer. Föreskrifter och allmänna råd. Socialstyrelsen.

SOU 2015:55. Nationell strategi mot mäns våld mot kvinnor och hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck. Statens offentliga utredningar.

«In Sweden, action has been taken to focus on preventing violence and to strengthen the focus on boys, men, and masculine norms within the work for gender equality, including violence prevention.»

# RESEARCH AND PREVENTION INITIATIVES IN NORWAY

Per Hellevik, Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies

«Young people often lack knowledge about what constitutes a normal, healthy intimate relationship. This can make it difficult for them to identify abusive behavior.»

In this presentation, existing research on intimate partner violence among Norwegian youth will be described. Additionally, Norwegian prevention and intervention initiatives will be presented. Finally, suggestions on how to address the issue of IPV in young people's lives will be discussed.

## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIPS IN NORWAY?

A few studies have looked specifically at intimate partner violence (IPV) in young people's relationships in Norway. Most of these studies have researched violence perpetration and victimization among young people in general, but have included measures of IPV among the forms of violence. The studies have used different measurement tools and definitions of what constitutes IPV, so the results are difficult to directly compare. Nevertheless, the findings shed light on a severe issue that many young people in Norway have to face.

Pedersen and Aas (1995) found that in a random sample of 465 adolescents, 5.6% of girls had experienced sexual victimization from a boyfriend at the age of 12, while 18.5% had experienced sexual victimization from a boyfriend at the ages between 13 and 19. Pape (2003) performed a longitudinal study of Norwegian junior high students and found that 4% of the women and 6% of the men had been the victim of physical violence by an intimate partner within the past six months. Pape also found that having behavior problems correlated with later IPV victimization. Mossige and Stefansen (2007) looked at experiences of violence among senior high school students, and found that 4.5% of girls and 0.5% of boys had been injured as a result of being the victim of intimate partner violence. Mossige and Stefansen further found that living in a violent home was associated with experi-

encing IPV. They also found that 14.3% girls and 5.8% boys had been the victim of an unwanted sexual incidence involving a friend, intimate partner, or acquaintance. Øia (2007) took part in an extensive study of youth in Oslo. The study included 11,500 respondents and focused on living conditions and social differences among teenagers aged 14 to 17 years. Øia found that 1.8% of girls and 2.1% of boys had sustained injury as a result of violence from an intimate partner. In a nationally representative study of violence and rape in adolescence, Myhre, Thoresen et al. (2015) researched experiences of violence among 16- and 17-year old Norwegian youth. They found that 3.1% of girls and 4.6% of boys had experienced physical violence in an intimate relationship, 17.8% of both girls and boys had experienced controlling behavior, and 24.1% of girls and 16.4% of boys had experienced stalking. Finally, in a study of IPV among Norwegian teenagers, using a non-representative convenience sample of 994 respondents aged 14-17, Hellevik and Øverlien (2016, in press) found that 18% of girls and 8% of boys had been the victim of physical violence, 32% of girls and 19% of boys had been the victim of psychological violence, 38% of girls and 20% of boys had been the victim of digital violence, and 28% of girls and 9% of boys had been the victim of sexual violence.

## WHAT IS BEING DONE TO PREVENT IPV IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIPS IN NORWAY?

The government has issued four consecutive action plans on preventing intimate partner violence (IPV). These action plans have mainly focused on domestic violence, more specifically, violence in adult intimate relationships. This includes child abuse and neglect in the family setting. Little attention has been given to IPV in young people's relationships. Much of the aggression and vio-

lence where young people are both the perpetrator and the victim has been categorized as bullying/cyberbullying. This overlooks many of the intricacies of different forms of violence and associated factors. Still, the latest action plan, "Childhood Comes but Once: National Strategy to Combat Violence and Sexual Abuse among Children and Youth (2014-2017)" does specifically mention IPV in young people's intimate relationships, both offline and online. However, cyberbullying and grooming are more in focus in regards to online activities.

On the other hand, NGOs in Norway are increasingly acknowledging teenage intimate partner violence, offline and online. For example, Reform, Jentevakta, Oslo Refuge for Abused Women, and Stiftelsen Tryggere have worked extensively on preventing IPV in young people's relationships. At the same time, schools are recognized as one of the main arenas for prevention work. The curricula cover violence and sexual abuse, but not IPV in young people's lives specifically. Courses and training that address IPV exist, but is usually one-off and not systematic and continuous. Furthermore, awareness among professionals of IPV in young people's lives is low, and knowledge about the use of digital media in connection with this violence is even more absent. Similarly, young people themselves lack specific knowledge about IPV. Some experience it personally, while others know of someone who are victimized. Few know how to address the issue. Additionally, young people often lack knowledge about what constitutes a normal, healthy intimate relationship. This can make it difficult for them to identify abusive behavior.

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

There needs to be a greater recognition of the severity and prevalence of IPV in young people's lives. This includes law making, governmental policies, inclusion of NGOs,

curricula in school, and information directed towards families, adults, and young people themselves. In the work against intimate partner violence, the focus has largely been on adults. However, IPV among young people shows similar patterns as IPV in adult relationships. This includes severe physical beatings, power and control, and comprehensive use of digital media to threaten, monitor, stalk, and abuse victims. Furthermore, experiencing IPV in adolescence increases the likelihood of experiencing IPV as an adult. To prevent IPV the focus needs to be on both adults and young people's intimate relationships.

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APPENDIX A:

# Program

FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 10:00 – 16:45

09:30

**Registration and coffee**

10:00

**Welcome**

Are Saastad, Reform – Resource Centre for Men

10:10

**Official opening of the conference**

Kai-Morten Terning, State Secretary, Ministry of Children and Equality

10:20

**Introduction of participants**

Key notes: What do we know about youth's intimate violence in the Nordic countries?

10:40

**Denmark**

Rikke Holm Bramsen, Department of Psychology at the University of Southern Denmark

11:00

**Finland**

Jonna Saxberg and Tommi Petteri Pesonen, Kalliola Youth Association, Satu Lidman

11:20

**Short break**

11:30

**Iceland**

Hjálmar G. Sigmarsson, Stígamót – Education and Counseling Center for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Violence

11:50

**Sweden**

Sibel Korkmaz, the County Administrative Board in Uppsala County

12:10

**Norway**

Per Hellevik, Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS)

12:30 Lunch

13:30

**Spoken word performance**

by Jeaninne Masika Lukusa, Tekstlab Unge Stemmer [TextLab Young Voices]

13:50

**Discussion of key notes**

14:10

**Group work:** Challenges and recommendations

15:30

**Coffee break**

15:45

**Group presentations**

and plenary discussion

16:25

**Concluding thoughts:**

What have we learnt and where do we go from here?

APPENDIX B:

# Conference participants

## ICELAND

**Tryggvi Hallgrímsson** is a specialist advisor at the Centre for Gender Equality, Iceland. He has supervised a governmental advisory panel on men and equality, proposing, in 2013, measures to increase the participation of men in dialogues about gender equality. Currently, Tryggvi is on sabbatical leave in Tromsø, reading peace and conflict transformation.

**Anna Bentína Hermansen** is a 46-year old feminist from Iceland. She is a theologian and holds a master's degree in gender studies. For the last five years she has worked as a counselor at Stígamót which is a counseling and information center for survivors of sexual violence. At Stígamót she does individual counseling sessions and leads organized self-help groups.

**Hjálmar G. Sigmarsson** is a counsellor for Stígamót, and his responsibilities include: Bringing prevention education to schools and youth centers, improving services for male survivors of sexual violence, and engaging men in anti-VAW prevention. For over a decade, Hjálmar has been working on men's involvement and engagement with feminist issues and how to develop sustainable and effective approaches in politicizing men. Hjálmar has worked on gender-based violence issues within academia, grassroots organizations, governmental gender mechanisms, and international organizations.

## SWEDEN

**Tomas Agnemo** was the Secretary General of Swedish Men for Gender Equality (Män för Jämställdhet), as well as co-coordinator of the network MenEngage Europe and board member of MenEngage Global. MenEngage Europe is a network of feminist and pro-feminist organizations working with gender justice and transformation of masculinities. Men for Gender Equality is a feminist organization that works in Sweden and internationally with engaging men and boys for gender equality.

**Sofie Kindaht** is a sociologist with a master's degree in gender studies. She works as a coordinator for the prevention project "A municipality free from violence" at Men for Gender Equality (Män för Jämställdhet). Sofie has a background within the young women's empowerment center movement and has previously worked as a research officer at the Swedish agency for youth and civil society with multiple government assignments on youth, gender equality, and violence.

**Sibel Korkmaz** is a social worker with a master's degree in social work. Sibel is the Development Manager Men's Violence Against Women at the County Administrative Board in Uppsala County.



## APPENDIX B: CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

### FINLAND

**Satu Lidman** (PhD) is an Adjunct Professor of the History of Criminal Law at University of Turku Faculty of Law. Multidisciplinary research interests include gendered violence, crime, and sexuality in historical and topical perspectives.

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**Bert Bjarland** is a men's activist since the 70s and vice chair of Profeministmiehet, a profeminist men's organisation active mostly in Helsinki.

### DENMARK

**Herdis Bergmann** is a social worker with a bachelor's degree in Vulnerable Children and Youth and a master in Evidence-Based Social Work. Herdis is a lecturer in Social Work at the Institute of Social Work, Faculty of Social Science and Education, at Metropol University College, Copenhagen. Herdis is associated with the organization Bryd Tavsheden (Break the Silence) that works with children and youth who experience violence in intimate relationships, whether in their family or in a dating relationship.

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**Peter Michael Toft** is a lawyer, conflict mediator, and therapist. He is a member of the resource group Men Engage Nordic. Peter Michael is a board member of two women's shelters and White Ribbon Denmark; a member of the network organization Viden om Mænd (Knowledge about Men); and an advisor and conflict mediator at Mandecenteret (the Men's Centre), women's shelters, and the municipality of Høje Tåstrup.

**Jonna Saxberg** has a Bachelor of Rehabilitation, and is a sexual counsellor and sexual therapist. She has worked for Kalliola Youth Association since 2013. Her first coordinating job was the e-Talo project (e-House is Girls' and Boys' House on the Internet) and as a counsellor in sexual violence work. Since August 2015 she has worked with girls and young women aged 13 to 28 who have suffered from sexual violence of some form.

**Ida Dal Gravesen** (Master of Communication and Cultural Encounters) is the coordinator of the project "Voldsom Kærlighed". Ida has experience with working with domestic abuse and honour based violence from the Danish Organization of Women's Shelters, The National Board of Social Services and her master's thesis on male victims of domestic violence.

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**Dorte Fredskilde Braad** works in The Mary Foundation – HRH Crown Princess Mary's Foundation, as Senior Project Manager for the main focus areas of Domestic Violence and Loneliness with responsibility for developing and operating projects and partnerships within the focus areas.

**Tommi P. Pesonen** is a social educator, sexual counsellor, and gestalt therapist. He has worked for Kalliola Youth Association since October 2013 at Boys' House as a counsellor in sexual violence work working with boys and young men from 13 to 28 who have suffered from sexual violence of some form.

**Rikke Kann** (Master of Science and Psychology / Clinical Psychologist) is the psychologist in "Voldsom Kærlighed" and part of the constant development of the project. Through therapeutic conversations and community dialogue she is supporting adolescents in developing love relations without violence. Rikke has previous experience as an educational psychologist and as a therapist working with traumatized refugee families.

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**Rikke Holm Bramsen**, PhD, is an Associate Professor and Head of Studies in the Department of Psychology at the University of Southern Denmark. Since 2014, Dr. Bramsen has been the head of ThRIVE, The Research Group on Interpersonal Violence Europe. Dr. Bramsen's research interests focus on interpersonal violence. Specifically, her research aims to prevent adolescent sexual violence and improve the multidisciplinary approach to survivors of sexual assault.

### NORWAY

**Kaja Hegg** is a sociologist and advisor at Save the Children Norway. She has responsibility for the work to protect youth against sexual abuse, with a strong focus on risks in youth's online environment. Save the Children has a strong focus on child participation, both in the work to define the risks themselves and also in building solutions to strengthen the systems to protect children better.

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**Per Hellevik** is a Ph.d candidate at the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) and the Institute for Media and Communication at the University of Oslo. He is a sociologist specializing in Internet and social media use among young people in connection with violent and abusive behavior.

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**Are Saastad** is the director of Reform – Resource Centre for Men since 2012. In Reform, Are has managed several projects related to violence prevention and men's health. Are has previously been a nursing assistant within the field of psychiatry and has extensive experience as a labour union representative.

**Live Mehlum** is a senior advisor at Reform – Resource Centre for Men and a sociologist with specialization in masculinity, gender equality, and health. She has worked for Reform since 2013, and is the project leader for Reform's violence prevention education towards youth, "Stopp kjærestevolden." Other primary responsibilities include projects relating to men's health, violence in intimate relationships, dating violence and violence prevention, and men who buy sex.

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**Ole Bredeesen Nordfjell** is a senior advisor at Reform – Resource Centre for Men and a sociologist with specialization in men and masculinity. He has worked for Reform since 2008, and has previously been an advisor at the Gender Equality Centre (now a part of the Norwegian Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman). Ole has a primary responsibility for Reform's work relating to boys' and men's upbringing and quality of life, divorce and separation, paternity, masculinities, education and gender divisions in the labour market.

**Daniel Paul Getz** is an advisor at Reform – Resource Centre for Men since 2013. Daniel is a social worker with experience from NGOs and child welfare services, and took the initiative to start celebrating November 19 as the International Men's Day in Norway. In Reform, he works on the "Stopp kjærestevolden" project educating youth about dating violence, and on other gender equality issues, with a particular focus on the situation of immigrant men.

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**Hedda Hakvåg** is an advisor at Reform – Resource Centre for Men since 2015. Hedda has a master's degree in Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice and prior experience working with sexual assault education and violence prevention. In Reform, she works on the «Stopp kjærestevolden» project educating youth about dating violence and on other gender equality issues.



# Dating Violence among Nordic Youth

## NORDIC EXPERT CONFERENCE ON VIOLENCE IN ADOLESCENTS' INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

The purpose of the project *Dating Violence among Nordic Youth: Nordic Expert Conference on Violence in Adolescents' Intimate Relationships* has been to develop a set of shared recommendations and guidelines.

The recommendations presented in this report were developed at a conference which took place in Oslo in April 2016, with delegates from Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, and Norway. Participating in the conference were practitioners, researchers and officials, working on the issues of gender equality and dating violence among youth.

The project *Dating Violence among Nordic Youth* is funded by the Nordic Gender Equality Fund. It is organized by the Norwegian gender equality centre Reform - Resource Centre for Men, in collaboration with:

**PROFEMINISTIMIEHET** (Finland)

**NORDIC MENENGAGE** (Denmark)

**MÅN FÖR JÄMSTÄLLDHET** (Sweden).

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