



# Integrating the Voices of Youth with Lived Experience as Co-researchers to Improve Research and Practice Approaches to Childhood Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence

Olivia Cullen<sup>1,3</sup> · Angelique Jenney<sup>1,4</sup> · Laura Shiels<sup>1,3</sup> · Katelyn Greer<sup>1,3</sup> · Katreena Scott<sup>2,5</sup>

Accepted: 13 April 2023 / Published online: 3 May 2023  
© The Author(s) 2023

## Abstract

**Purpose** Childhood experiences of intimate partner violence (CEIPV) is common, but youth voices are underrepresented in such research, and little is known about what they find helpful in counselling. The purpose of this research was to engage youth with lived experience to address the following questions: (1) What do youth with CEIPV identify as key competencies needed for CEIPV service providers? And (2) How can youth participatory action research (YPAR) (and participatory methods) be utilized to enhance research on CEIPV? This article is focused on the YPAR process and addressing the second research question.

**Methods** Utilizing a YPAR approach, 12 Canadian youth were engaged as members of the research team to include their voices, perspectives, and experiences in addressing the research questions.

**Results** Youth researchers highlighted strategies and principles to engage youth meaningfully in YPAR. These were: (1) recognizing and valuing lived experience as expertise; (2) recognizing the diversity in youths' experiences, skills, and strengths; (3) creating a safe space with no judgement; and (4) having adult researchers committed to the process and not just the outcomes of the research.

**Conclusions** The YPAR process used in the current study is an example of how youth with lived expertise successfully engage in research. Reflecting on what worked in the current study, youth researchers provided recommendations to improve youth engagement. When safety and relationships are prioritized, and youth feel heard and respected, they note finding value in participatory research to counter the impact CEIPV has had on their lives.

**Keywords** Youth Participatory Action Research · Intimate Partner Violence · Childhood Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence · Children and Youth · Research Methodologies

---

✉ Olivia Cullen  
Olivia.cullen@ucalgary.ca

✉ Angelique Jenney  
angelique.jenney@ucalgary.ca

✉ Laura Shiels  
laura.shiels@ucalgary.ca

✉ Katelyn Greer  
katelyn.greer@ucalgary.ca

✉ Katreena Scott  
kscot47@uwo.ca

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Applied Psychology, The Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, Western University, London, ON, Canada

<sup>3</sup> Faculty of Social Work, MacKimmie Tower, University Way N.W. Calgary, MTAlberta 301, T2N 1N4, Canada

<sup>4</sup> Faculty of Social Work, MacKimmie Tower (MT) 440, University Way N.W. Calgary, Calgary, AB T2N 1N4, Canada

<sup>5</sup> Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, Faculty of Education Building, Western University, 1137 Western Road, London, ON N6G 1G7, Canada

## Introduction

Childhood experiences of intimate partner violence (CEIPV) are a pervasive phenomenon. CEIPV can significantly impact the developmental and psychosocial functioning of young people (YP; Jenney, 2018; McTavish et al., 2016; Poleshuck et al., 2021). Thus, identifying how to best support and intervene is crucial. Yet, little is known about skills needed for CEIPV counsellors. While the inclusion of YPs perspectives in counselling research have increased in recent years (Callaghan et al., 2018; Cater, 2014; Källström & Thunberg, 2019), little is known about YPs direct experiences of therapeutic interventions, and what they find beneficial within the counselling process (Jessiman et al., 2017; Karver et al., 2018; Montserrat et al., 2022). Including their perspectives directly in research can improve the outcomes and experiences of those seeking support. The research study addressed the following questions:

1. What do youth with CEIPV identify as key competencies needed for CEIPV service providers?
2. How can youth participatory action research (YPAR) (and participatory methods) be utilized to enhance research on CEIPV?

This article will describe a YPAR approach and process to engage YP in research about CEIPV and will focus on addressing the second research question.

## Childhood Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence (CEIPV)

Intimate partner violence (IPV) can be understood as physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological abuse, which can also include controlling and coercive behaviors (such as restricting financial resources) and occurs between current or former intimate partners or spouses (Arai et al., 2021; McTavish et al., 2016). The General Social Survey of family violence, a nationally representative Canadian survey, found that 10% of respondents indicated experiencing violence between adults in their households (Burczycka & Conroy, 2018). IPV exposure, along with neglect, is the most frequently reported form of child abuse (Fallon et al., 2015) and it is estimated that close to one million children in Canada experience IPV (Trocmé et al., 2010). Though prevalence is difficult to measure, current estimates are likely under-representative of actual experiences (Izaguirre & Källström, 2021; McTavish et al., 2016). Of concern, even if children are not directly involved in, or observing abuse, they are directly affected by IPV (Callaghan et al., 2018; Morrison et al., 2020). It is essential to move beyond conceptualizing YP as passive victims of, or ‘witnesses’ to IPV

and to recognize that they are actively experiencing and surviving abuse (Callaghan et al., 2018; McTavish et al., 2016; Morrison et al., 2020). CEIPV is now being recognized as having impacts similar to physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect (Callaghan et al., 2018; McTavish et al., 2016). Within CEIPV research, it is particularly relevant and important to consider children’s agency and ability to cope with, or make sense of, these experiences. CEIPV has been associated with short- and long-term difficulties in areas of development and psychosocial functioning (Howarth et al., 2019; McTavish et al., 2016). CEIPV has been associated with an increase in trauma symptomology, difficulties in managing and expressing emotions, internalizing symptoms such as depression or anxiety, and externalizing behaviors such as violence or aggression (Bender et al., 2022; Evans et al., 2008; Howarth et al., 2019; McTavish et al., 2016; Wolfe et al., 2003). At the same time, YP show resilience despite these experiences, highlighting the importance of keeping in mind that those with CEIPV are not a heterogeneous group and many factors may influence or mediate the impact; some of these factors include age of onset and length of time experiencing violence, as well as availability and effectiveness of supports and interventions (Carlson et al., 2019; Howarth et al., 2019; Øverlien & Holt 2018). Individual factors such as coping abilities, temperament, and self-esteem have been identified as protective factors against negative outcomes of CEIPV (Carlson et al., 2019). Other factors, like peer supports and the relationship with the non-offending caregiver are shown to be influential in YPs resilience to CEIPV (Carlson et al., 2019). Having healthy adults to support a young person in expressing and responding to emotions, as well as helping them to make sense of and talk about experiences of IPV, have been shown to lead to more positive outcomes (Izaguirre & Cater, 2018). Increased attention must be paid to the importance of prevention and early intervention for CEIPV, with YP being specifically addressed rather than subsumed under prevention and intervention strategies for IPV in general (Carlson et al., 2019).

Understanding the range of strategies YP use to make sense of, or cope with, IPV and their emotional responses can help counsellors tailor services and supports to the specific needs of each young person. In responding to the violence, children and youth may take on more responsibility such as caregiving roles for the victimized parent and siblings or taking action to protect the targeted caregiver or siblings; this is seen in older children (Arai et al., 2021; Izaguirre & Källström, 2021). YP indicate that to protect themselves they might remove themselves or do something to drown out the violence like listen to music or play games (Arai et al., 2021; Izaguirre & Källström, 2021). Understanding how YP respond to, make sense of, and talk about

their experiences of violence, can help researchers and service providers better understand these experiences, the impacts of CEIPV, and how to best support YP to thrive.

### Young People’s Experiences of Counselling and Seeking Support

YP frequently note challenges in disclosing CEIPV as they do not believe that anyone can do anything to help (Howell et al., 2015). Additionally, violence in families, is often surrounded by silence and shame, potentially leading YP to feel they are betraying their family (Georgsson et al., 2011; Källström & Thunberg, 2019; Mullender & Hague, 2003). Because YP have often been seen as ‘witnesses’ or ‘secondary victims’ to violence, there has been less focus on supports specific to YP (Morris et al., 2020). Indeed, few have access to appropriate mental health supports and interventions (CAADA, 2014). Accessing appropriate supports may be particularly difficult for YP who still live with IPV, aren’t ready to share their experiences, feel like they are “breaking the silence,” or whose survivor parent may not be ready to engage with interventions/supports specifically for the child (Howarth et al., 2019). As noted, when YP talk about and make sense of their experiences, they are more likely to develop resiliency and thus have more positive outcomes (Dumont & Lessard, 2020; Izaguirre & Cater, 2018). Though parental readiness to engage in interventions can be a key factor in children’s successful engagement, YP also require access supports independent of their parents—though this may be easier for teens or those with outside supports (Howarth et al., 2019). In the limited research on children’s disclosures, it appears that when YP talk about their experiences in a supportive setting, they experience fewer behavioral problems, traumatic symptoms, have less perceived responsibility for violence, and may have more ability to cope with such experiences (Izaguirre & Cater, 2018).

While YP have their reasons for disclosing or not, research indicates that once a child or family presents with symptoms/characteristics of CEIPV, professionals often miss signs, report limited knowledge, or experience a lack of options in what to do next (Poleshuck et al., 2021). Similarly, service providers have noted that adequately including and listening to YP can take them out of their comfort zones and requires different approaches than working with adults (Flam & Handegard, 2015). This is true even for therapy and intervention programs with specific priorities to include and support children experiencing violence (McTavish et al., 2016; Miranda et al., 2022). This can not only limit the services provided, but can also limit the insight to be gained from understanding the impact of violence on the child or youth (Flam & Handegard, 2015; Miranda et al., 2022;

Houghton, 2015) notes that the shift in recognizing that YP are active participants in surviving abuse happened through listening to YP directly. Thus, recognizing the rights of children to be heard in all matters affecting them—as outlined in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC; 1989)—can serve to improve research and to adequately respect the rights of YP. Importantly, children themselves highlight that they want to be involved in talking about and understanding the violence (Flam & Handegard, 2015). In their research, Källström and Thunberg (2019) found that overall, YP want to be treated as equals in the counselling process and this may be particularly pertinent with CEIPV, as YP may feel silenced or as lacking control over their lives (Georgsson et al., 2011; Källström & Thunberg, 2019).

### Young People’s Involvement in Research

Historically, childhood has been considered a natural and universal experience, where children are generally seen as vulnerable and in need of protection. These understandings further impact research practices, especially in terms of who’s voices are included and who is believed to have knowledge or ability to do research. As a result, important voices, including those who hold critical forms of lived expertise, are often left out; this is particularly true for children and youth. Bozlak and Kelley (2015) point out that traditional research approaches with YP have often ignored youths’ “subjective experiences and perceptions” (p. 71) so that even when their perspectives are desired, their opinions are collected through surrogates like parent/caregivers or teachers. This is further exacerbated in research deemed sensitive, and the protectionist standpoint often taken by research ethics boards and researchers can outweigh the potential benefit of directly involving and amplifying YPs expertise. Thus, it is important to question the extent to which children’s rights are being considered and respected if their direct perspectives are not at the center of discussions in matters directly impacting them.

A children’s rights framework positions YP as having agency, autonomy, and the capability to “engage with the political, social, and economic spheres in which they live” (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2018, p. 81). The UNCRC (1989) has furthered the children’s rights agenda while providing an international set of rights and standards to which all ratifying countries must abide (Lundy et al., 2011). Important to the discussion of YPs inclusion in research are Articles 12 and 13 within the Convention. Article 12 outlines children’s rights to form and express their own views on matters affecting them and that these views will be given adequate weight (UNCRC, 1989). Article 13 further outlines the right to freedom of expression, which includes the right to seek

out, receive, and impart information and ideas (UNCRC, 1989). In recent years, largely because of the increased focus on children's rights, there has been an increased demand to include those with lived experience directly in research, increasing the popularity of participatory research (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2018; Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). However, in CEIPV research, YP remain underrepresented, impacting the effectiveness of interventions, relevance of research, utility of resources, and optimal outcomes for youth and their families (Houghton, 2015). Participatory research approaches are one such way that youths' experiences and expertise can remain at the forefront in order to better understand their experiences.

### Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)

Youth participatory action research (YPAR) engages directly with youth as co-researchers to investigate issues that impact them (Mirra et al., 2016). Underpinning a YPAR approach are beliefs that YP have a right to participate and be heard in matters impacting them, that youth hold expertise, capability to engage in research, and understand how to investigate and act on issues in their lives (Caraballo et al., 2017). When involved in research only as a data source, YPs views, analyzed solely through an adult lens or perspective, may be misinterpreted, underrepresented, or disregarded altogether (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). Involving YP directly can aid in challenging social hierarchies and exclusion, support democratizing research processes, and help build the capacity and critical thinking skills of YP (Cahill et al., 2010). In the context of CEIPV, where power and control are often key characteristics of relationships, and silence and shame surround families, a participatory approach can provide a promising avenue for YP to reaffirm their power (Rodriguez et al., 2018). For YP who may have difficult relationships with adults, participatory methods can be especially meaningful and impactful (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2018). The current project is informed by core underpinnings of YPAR as outlined by Ozer et al. (2010) which include: integration of research and action; training youth in research skills; engaging youth in critical thinking and strategies to influence change; and a sharing of power between youth and adults.

### Benefits of YPAR

Recent literature reviews (Anyon et al., 2018; Ozer, 2017; Shamrova & Cummings, 2017) have synthesized YPAR outcomes and benefits. Most commonly, participants shared benefits of increased sense of agency, empowerment, leadership skills, social responsibility, and critical consciousness. Social-emotional and cognitive development like feeling connected to peers and to one's community, having

a sense of belonging, identifying and sharing thoughts, feelings, and emotions, and developing problem-solving and decision-making skills were also identified as benefits (Anyon et al., 2018; Ozer, 2017; Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). Additionally, academic and career benefits like skills in writing, planning, implementing research methods, and presenting and public speaking (Anyon et al., 2018). Importantly, enhanced relationships with adult research partners were highlighted as a notable outcome across YPAR studies (Anyon et al., 2018; Ozer, 2017; Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). When adult researchers were genuinely willing to give up power and share decision-making, YP felt a better sense of connection, ability to work on multigenerational teams, and successfully navigate what is considered a traditionally 'adult' space (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). Finally, when youth are involved and findings are disseminated beyond traditional academic audiences, results have the potential to influence a larger audience, becoming more meaningful and impactful (Mirra et al., 2016).

### Challenges and Ethical Considerations in YPAR

While benefits abound, there are considerations to attend to throughout the process. Firstly is the issue of participation itself, with 'meaningful participation' an unclearly defined, leading to potential oversimplification of children or youths' involvement, or misrepresentation of their voices (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). Additionally, Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) note "the uncritical way in which they [participatory approaches] are often deployed in research" (p. 499), with an assumption that participation equates to good research and the more participation the better. Integrated without a genuine desire to center youth voices and experiences, participatory approaches may tokenize youth involvement and reinforce social inequalities (Torre et al., 2015), though Lundy (2018) also notes that tokenistic involvement may indeed be a starting point to engage in a respectful process of dialogue, and not including youth—tokenistic or not—may violate rights. Approaching participation as a right, not just a helpful or 'alternative' approach, we can challenge the fear of tokenism that can cause researchers to ignore YPs perspectives all together. As adult researchers, it is essential to be transparent with YP about what is feasible and take into consideration project timelines, funding, as well as youths' own needs, wants and interests (Allemang et al., 2021; Cullen, O., & Walsh, 2019). Importantly, Lundy (2018) argues for creating an environment for adults to engage seriously and sufficiently with YPs views, while dismissing participatory approaches for fear of tokenism.

Also important are issues of consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. Consent must be informed and ongoing. Further, Fargas-Malet et al. (2010) note that the quality of

the explanation directly impacts a youths' ability to provide informed consent, making it essential that researchers adequately describe the process while addressing questions and concerns. For YP who may have experienced a lack of voice, choice, or control due to CEIPV, having control and choice in the consent process can be key. Further, because family violence impacts all family members, YP may also have to negotiate these processes with others. In their YPAR study of domestic violence policy, Houghton (2015) noted that while youth found it important to have control in the consent process, they recognized the necessity of negotiating consent with their mother's, as involvement in the project would inevitably 'out' their families. Research ethics boards often require that participants, particularly when they are young, or considered vulnerable, remain anonymous and their participation remain confidential. This can also impede youths' rights and ability to take credit for their work (Cullen, O., & Walsh., 2019; Yanar et al., 2016). Youth in Yanar et al.'s (2016) YPAR project questioned how they could claim their work and use it to affect change if they were not acknowledged by name and did not have ownership in the process. Alternately, Lamb et al. (2020) discusses the ethical considerations and the necessity of anonymity in their study as children created digital stories to be shown in an intervention program for fathers who use violence. These examples highlight the importance of ongoing ethical considerations tailoring such considerations to specific youth, projects, and methods. Overall, youth value being consulted and having the power and choice to be able to make decisions about their participation (Cullen, O., & Walsh, 2019; Houghton 2015; Tucker, 2013).

Another important consideration when utilizing a YPAR approach is that of remuneration. While remuneration does not necessarily mean monetary payment, Bradbury-Jones and Taylor (2015) assert that YP must be given some form of compensation for their work and contributions and "to do otherwise would exacerbate power inequalities between adult and child researchers' (p. 168). While monetary payment may not always be possible, opportunities like public speaking or presenting, publications and authorship, and other opportunities that should be negotiated directly with youth (Gombert et al., 2016). However, opportunities beyond financial payment can be challenging when ethics boards require anonymity (Cullen, O., & Walsh, 2019). In research with marginalized YP, the issue of remuneration can be increasingly challenging and at times can itself feel exploitative (Campbell & Trotter, 2007). Thus, it is critical to think through remuneration processes in open and transparent ways with youth researchers to identify various forms of remuneration as well as potential increased risk or coercion in the research process (Campbell & Trotter, 2007).

## Research Methods and Processes

This article describes one part of a larger study seeking to identify clinical competencies for CEIPV service providers. YPAR was utilized to engage youth as researchers in the development of a competency framework for CEIPV. This section will briefly describe an overview of the research methods and processes of developing a competency framework, with the primary focus on the participatory methods and utility of such for engaging in CEIPV research. This research was approved by the [removed for blind review purposes] Research Ethics Board.

### Overview of Larger Study

In order to identify competency skills necessary for CEIPV clinicians, professionals from across Canada with 5+ years of specialized CEIPV experience participated in simulated counselling sessions via standardized client simulations (SCS). SCS is an immersive technique in which real-life conditions are created for the purpose of training/assessment of identified skills, wherein clinicians engage in a real-time demonstration (Lateef, 2010). In this instance, 18 professionals participated in a 20-minute SCS with an actor playing a youth client experiencing CEIPV. All sessions were video- and audio-recorded. Using an SCS is preferable to asking about previous clinical experiences as it does not rely on practitioner reporting bias, removes potential for breaches in client confidentiality, provides a standardized experience from which to develop practice theory, and enables clinicians to practice interventions without risk to vulnerable clients. This knowledge is necessary to develop a specific holistic competency model to inform educational curriculum for professionals addressing CEIPV to improve outcomes for children and create resources for clinical training.

### Overview of YPAR Phase

Youth researchers were engaged in a joint process of consultation, data analysis, knowledge production, and knowledge mobilization throughout the research study. Collaboratively, the research team: (1) engaged in meaningful discussions and sharing of experiences of CEIPV and of accessing counselling and supports, (2) reviewed SCS video data to identify clinical competencies, (3) developed resources, presentations, and digital stories, and (4) engaged in multiple knowledge mobilization strategies, including creating a written report, engaging in a podcast interview, and giving multiple presentations to various stakeholders. Meetings were audio-recorded and transcribed, with many group discussions being utilized as qualitative data. Prior



to beginning recruitment, the adult researchers met with a youth engagement consultant to review recruitment strategies and gain insight into best practices and ways to support youth throughout the project. This process allowed the adult researchers to begin to reflect on critical aspects of power-sharing and safety prior to recruiting youth researchers.

## Recruitment

Canadian youth, aged 18–26, who had childhood experiences of intimate partner violence (CEIPV) and had received counselling or other mental health supports, were invited to participate in this project. This research was conducted completely online. The maximum number of youths recruited for this project was 12. In collaboration with the youth engagement consultant, the research team decided on 12 as this would potentially allow for representation from each province/territory in the country. Further, setting this number allowed for diversity in perspective and geographic location, without having a group so large that engagement and individual and/or group safety would be at risk. Recruitment was done through professional networks and social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook and ran from October 2021 until January 2022. Recruitment included information on the ‘required’ research activities – reviewing SCS and clinical competencies – while highlighting that all other project decisions would be a collaborative process to ensure interested youth were fully informed of the extent to which this project would be fully participatory. As part of the recruitment process, a ‘pre-research information survey’ was utilized. This brief online survey allowed interested youth to share demographic information, confirm inclusion criteria, and identify how the adult researchers could best support them throughout the project. After the initial survey was submitted, an adult researcher met individually with each youth to review the research project, answer any questions or concerns, and to go through the informed consent process. Having individual meetings with each interested youth allowed the adult researchers to ensure that the informed consent process was robust (Fargas-Malet et al., 2010). This also assisted adult researchers to consider group dynamics early on and any additional supports that may be beneficial or necessary for more inclusive participation. In total, the research team received 17 interested responses; four did not meet inclusion criteria; and one young person was unable to participate due to external circumstances. All YP (whether they joined as a youth researcher or not) were provided with mental health resources and were asked if they would like to be informed of potential future opportunities. Youth researchers were from: Ontario (n = 7), Manitoba (n = 1), and Alberta (n = 4). Ages ranged from 19 (n = 2), 20 (n = 2), 21 (n = 1), 22

(n = 3), 24 (n = 1), and 26 (n = 1) with ten women, one gender nonconforming/non-binary, and one man. In addition, the ethnicity of youth researchers included: Metis (n = 1), Indigenous (n = 2), White (n = 7), and Pakistani (n = 2). Youth researchers were paid \$25.00 an hour.

## Building Relationships and Group Safety

Once recruitment was completed, the research team began to meet online twice weekly over a four-month period. Building relationships and creating an environment where everyone felt safe and comfortable to participate were of central importance. In each team meeting, there were at least two adult facilitators present, and a break-out room available for private check-ins if needed or desired. The research team spent time considering the possible difficulties that could arise throughout this research (such as being triggered by data or discussions) and identified ways of coping or managing difficult emotions. Building a list of coping strategies as a team allowed for the sharing of knowledge and expertise, while also providing practical supports. This early brainstorming provided the research team with ideas for various activities to incorporate into the meetings themselves. For example, icebreaker activities were utilized at the beginning of each meeting to check-in and build relationships as a group. Icebreaker questions were intentionally chosen by two of the adult researchers to ensure the questions were trauma-informed, fun, inclusive, and appropriate for youth. For instance, given that many of the youth researchers had difficult childhood experiences and memories of their parents, questions about family or childhood memories were excluded. Humour and play were tools intentionally deployed during the project to assist researchers in titrating content related to CEIPV. Further, the research team utilized various mindfulness or grounding activities to end each meeting. These activities allowed people to step away from, or decrease the intensity of, any negative thoughts, feelings, or memories they may have experienced in the session. In addition to focusing on coping and grounding activities, the research team began discussing endings early on. Part of this included talking about goals and intentions for participation as well as continuous discussions of how/if people wanted to remain in-touch after the project ended.

An essential activity for the group was creating ‘Group Rights’ and these were frequently referred back to. This was a collaborative activity wherein the group developed key points to support safety and community. In this document, youth researchers highlighted the importance of making sure that everyone felt safe and welcome in the group by noting that everyone was participating for a common goal. The group also highlighted that everyone’s feelings and experiences were valid, and that people only needed share what

they wanted to. Further, youth researchers also identified the importance of community care to check in and support one another and to recognize that no one had to be in distress alone. This community-care mechanism involved the youth sharing contact information and connecting either via the online chat and messaging mechanisms available in both the synchronous (e.g. Zoom) and asynchronous (Basecamp) digital platforms used. An additional mechanism used was survey responses (which could be submitted anonymously or not) that youth researchers could fill out at the end of each meeting or at any time in between meetings if they wished. This tool was decided on specifically by youth researchers, who wanted multiple ways to provide feedback, rather than just through open discussions in group meetings. Further, youth researchers noted wanting to be able to use this same tool as a form of memo-ing throughout the research process. This was a valuable tool, particularly for youth to share their reflections after group meetings as well as have a method of providing feedback. For example, one youth researcher provided anonymous feedback asking for more detailed meeting agendas to be provided in advance, while also indicating which meetings were SCS review sessions and which would be working meetings or research training sessions. With this feedback, adult researchers began posting detailed agendas at least three days in advance of meetings and indicating the focus of meetings in the shared calendar.

### **Group Discussions: Making Meaning of Individual and Shared Experiences**

The research team engaged in group discussion of youth researchers' experiences of CEIPV, particularly experiences of seeking and receiving support. These discussions focused on identifying what youth researchers found meaningful and helpful from counsellors, as well as challenges they had in seeking support and unhelpful skills or strategies utilized by service providers. These discussions became iterative rounds of data collection and analysis and provided rich, contextualized data. This can be understood as a layered collaborative qualitative approach (Cahill, 2005; Fallis & Opatow, 2003) where data collection and analysis are not always discrete activities, but instead happen simultaneously. Here, the focus on the process is critically important, and a distinction between the various research activities is not always obvious. Further, important data and results may arise within the dialogue and collaborative group work with the research team (Rix et al., 2020). Through these discussions, youth researchers identified key counselling skills as a group and began to thematically analyze and organize these skills. Other group discussions focused on the participatory research process. Youth researchers identified feeling like they had a lot of power and say in the current project and

discussions centered on what in this project felt different than other experiences or felt important for their ongoing participation. Youth who had been part of previous research projects shared frameworks for engagement, discussed previous experiences of being a youth researcher, and the research team had ongoing discussions about the societal implications for engaging youth in research. This further included reflecting on what was working well, what could be done differently, and developing resources and strategies that could be shared with others interested in YPAR. Thus, while some meetings specifically focused on competencies required for CEIPV clinicians, others were more focused on engaging in discussions of research and how youth with lived expertise want to be engaged.

### **Reviewing Simulated Client Scenarios and Identifying Competencies for Clinical Practice**

While the findings of SCS reviews and feedback on CEIPV clinical competencies are out of the scope of this paper (see Author et al., forthcoming), the process will be described here. After identifying skills for professionals (as noted above), the research team compared these to a list of CEIPV competency skills that had been previously identified through literature reviews of competency frameworks, as well as prior research and expert working groups (see Author et al., this edition). Importantly, without having seen the draft of CEIPV competencies, many of the competencies outlined by youth researchers were in alignment with this drafted list. Youth researchers provided further feedback on identified skills, their understanding of such skills, perceived importance, and identified any missing skills. After this, an overview and description of the fictional scenario used in the SCS was shared with youth researchers. This scenario was first discussed as a group so that youth were comfortable and aware of what may come up in the SCS prior to them viewing any sessions. Next, a five-minute clip of a SCS was shown so that youth researchers could see what the videos would look like before watching a full 20-minute scenario. Prior to beginning this study, all counsellors who participated in an SCS were informed of this YPAR study, the processes of youth researcher reviews, and asked to re-consent to have their videos used; 14 of a total 18 counsellor participants provided re-consent and in total, youth researchers reviewed 10 SCS. It was not possible to review all scenarios due to timelines of the research study as well as only utilizing videos to which counsellor participants had re-consented.

## Selected Findings: Strategies for Meaningful Engagement in YPAR

In addition to reviewing SCS and providing feedback on CEIPV clinical competencies youth researchers identified and presented on important considerations for researchers engaging in participatory research with YP. This section will focus specifically on what youth researchers identified as key strategies for engaging in meaningful participatory research. Through group discussions and collaborative meaning-making, including developing group consensus on engagement strategies, youth researchers identified four key findings: (1) recognizing and valuing lived experience as expertise; (2) recognizing the diversity in youths' experiences, skills, and strengths; (3) creating a safe space with no judgement; and (4) having adult researchers committed to the process and not just the outcomes of the research project.

**Recognizing and valuing lived experience as expertise** The recognition that people's lived experience gives them expertise on the topic was highlighted as an essential part of doing participatory research. The insider knowledge that youth with CEIPV hold undoubtedly provides important information for researchers, service providers, other youth, families, and communities at large. Particularly, youth researchers noted being hopeful that this type of participatory research will help researchers and professionals shift to recognizing lived experience as expertise and acknowledging those who hold this knowledge as equals in research. Rather than seeing a lack of formalized research training as a hinderance, youth researchers advocated for training and mentorship to be understood as essential, just as it would be in many other professional or academic settings. As one youth researcher said:

My intention for this project was to further my skills in research and use my lived experience voice to make an impact in the way people think about CEIPV. I want people to hear directly from the youth's perspective, and not make assumptions about what we think. Involve us so we can co-create ideas that will work in practice.

Youth researchers who had previous experience in research or in talking about their childhood experiences were able to mentor other youth and encourage one another to use their voices and advocate for the importance of their knowledge and expertise. Through valuing lived experience as expertise, the research team noted being hopeful that this would further lead to more respect for experiential learning. Importantly, the grant funding for this study required that youth researchers be paid a fair and livable wage, recognizing and

valuing lived expertise and ensuring researchers can use funding to compensate youth. Youth researchers highlighted the importance of adult researchers valuing their contributions and recognizing it financially whenever possible. They further noted that compensation worked to support minimizing power differences between adult and youth researchers as every member of the research team is being compensated for their labor. Some youth noted that this is especially important in research such as this, given the multitude of life difficulties that can come with CEIPV and remain into adulthood, such as trouble finding consistent, stable work, particularly for those experiencing mental health difficulties. One youth researcher noted that being appropriately compensated can support lifting YP out of poverty, further addressing the systemic inequalities that may be impacting YP. Thus, youth highlighted that being financially compensated, rather than given gift cards for coffee for example (as is common for research participants) gave them the feeling of having their expertise valued.

**Recognizing the diversity in youths' experiences, skills, and strengths** While recognizing the importance of lived experience was key, the research team also highlighted the need to recognize that not all YP are the same and each youth researcher (and adult research) comes with different strengths and skills. Taking time to understand how each youth researcher wanted to be involved was important. This further supports the diversity of youths' expertise and experiences and gives youth platforms to showcase skills as well as develop new ones. For instance, one adult researcher shared wanting to increase her knowledge in creative ways to share data, like art and social media. A few youth researchers shared wanting to better understand academic processes of conducting and writing up research. Other youth researchers shared wanting to become more social and work on public speaking or presenting skills. This collaborative activity highlighted the research teams diverse interests and skills and set the groundwork to better understand how adult researchers could support individual youth researcher's goals, as well as how youth researchers may support in mentoring one another. In developing a presentation, one youth researcher wanted to work on their public speaking but was nervous to do this alone. Another youth researcher with public speaking experience worked with this youth and they presented together. Creating space for mentorship and growth was important for youth researchers, one of whom successfully used the previous example in a job interview. As one youth researcher reflected, "I think this project has really helped me with my interpersonal and public speaking skills! And definitely improved my creative skills (with the poster and presentations!)" Another youth noted, "skills I have developed will stay with me for a lifetime. Having the



opportunity to be involved at this level in a research project has opened so many doors that felt like they were shut and locked for me due to my past experiences.” Still another youth researcher said:

I learned about research methods such as what data can look like and the different ways it can be analyzed. I also learned how to better relay information in an accessible manner through infographics and digital storytelling. Being part of this also gave me more insight into how research and academia operates in the “real world” as opposed to reading about it in textbooks (i.e., conferences, information sharing/collaboration, networking, etc.).

In this research study, the research team sought out different ways to share information beyond traditional academic methods. Youth researchers were interviewed for a podcast, and also created digital stories – creative short videos – to share their experiences. This allowed for people to engage in activities that felt more aligned with their interests, to try new things with the support of a team, or to simply choose activities that fit within their busy schedules better. Flexibility and choice were important considerations throughout the study.

**Creating a safe space with no judgement** Safety is always necessary within research and was particularly important when addressing potentially the potentially difficult subject of CEIPV. It was essential to work towards creating a space where youth researchers could share their experiences, hear about others’ experiences, reflect on and come to new understandings of such experiences, ask questions, and develop strategies to share research with the world. An important result of creating such a safe space was identified as the research team shared intentions and hopes for the research project. One youth researcher said, “my intentions were to be proud of myself, to know that others have the same story [and] I can relate to others with the experience of CEIPV,” while another said, “my intentions were to know that I wasn’t alone in my experiences [and] validating my experiences of CEIPV,” highlighting the importance of being able to break the silence and engage in collective sharing of experiences. Another youth researcher and co-author reflected:

I walked into this project expecting to feel uncomfortable and drained talking about these experiences. Like many, I suspect, I expected this would cause [me] harm, but I got to feel empowered and heard for the first time about these experiences. I am more at peace and capable of speaking up about those experiences

and take comfort in knowing that there are other people out there who want and are advocating for the same things.

The reflections above highlight the importance of creating safety for youth researchers. In this instance, harm was understood as causing or triggering emotional pain through sharing or hearing stories of CEIPV; if the potential for harm arises, having a safe space remains critical to help ensure youth researchers feel supported and are willing to reach out to adult researchers or other team members. Importantly, youth researchers noted feeling supported in the research process and feeling comfortable in raising any concerns or ideas. At the end of the research project, some youth researchers requested putting all the closing activities (e.g., mindfulness and grounding activities) into a list that everyone had access to. In reflecting on the overall research study, one youth, highlighting the importance of safety and a judgement-free space, said:

That I could come as I am and not have to filter myself or be a certain way, no idea is a bad idea - usually I’m one to overthink things before I say them or just be too scared to share, so I was surprised by how much feedback I’ve given throughout, how many times I’ve unmuted or just responded in the chat - and just how freeing it is to know that you aren’t going to be met with invalidation; especially in having the experiences we’ve had, in often feeling invalidated - it is freeing to know that you belong and that your voice is valued.

**Having adult researchers committed to the process and not just the outcomes** Youth researchers highlighted that beyond simply including lived experience perspectives in research as something to ‘check a box,’ they valued adult researchers’ commitment to the process and not just to the outcomes of the research. Putting time in to build relationships and being flexible were two things youth researchers noted as important to this. Just as youth researchers shared their intentions for the project, so did adult researchers, and as one co-author noted, “my intentions for the project were to...talk less, be curious, and listen more”. Further, adult researchers reflected on the importance of trusting youth researchers to take the lead, being available to provide support, and reflecting on how power and control are used (intentionally or unintentionally). To the surprise of adult researchers, youth described the icebreaker activities as one of the most important parts of supporting the process. Youth researchers noted that this was because the questions allowed the group to be silly and have fun together, integrating humour and play to titrate or build-up to difficult subjects. Further, at times group conversations could get a bit

off track but rather than always jumping in and ‘getting back on task,’ adult researchers encouraged these conversations to support team building and to give the research team space to decompress after reviewing SCS or having in-depth discussions. Committing to the process meant that adult researchers were prepared to re-evaluate and change research processes as needed or requested by youth researchers. It was important to adult researchers that youth researchers felt their opinions, perspectives, and needs were actively listened to and incorporated. For example, during one meeting, a youth researcher shared that a few team members were uncomfortable with, or unsure about, an upcoming research task. Rather than moving forward or quickly attempting to address the concerns, the research team paused what they were doing and engaged in group dialogue surrounding the concerns, identified miscommunications, and implemented new strategies to ensure everyone’s safety prior to moving forward. Youth noted feeling listened to and felt encouraged to be able to bring up future concerns. Finally, as part of being committed to the process and not just outcomes, follow-through from adult researchers was important. For instance, the research team discussed other remuneration strategies beyond financial compensation early on. Some of these included: resume-building and having adult researchers able to provide academic or job references or letters of support. Thus, committing to these things, even if they come up after the project has ended, is important to maintaining trust and following-through. For example, after the current study ended, a youth researcher asked an adult researcher to be a reference for an upcoming job interview. The adult researcher agreed but was also sure to check in regarding how much information the youth wanted shared about the research study topic and their involvement, again ensuring that youth have voice and choice throughout.

## Discussion and Conclusions

This YPAR study engaged youth with lived expertise as members of the research team to identify the CEIPV competencies necessary for clinicians working in this field. In addition to investigating these competencies, the research team spent time reflecting on the YPAR process, including ethical considerations, highlighting strategies to support youth engagement in research, and recommendations for those who wish to engage in YPAR in the future. These strategies and key principles include the importance of (1) recognizing and valuing lived experience as expertise; (2) recognizing the diversity in youths’ experiences, skills, and strengths; (3) creating a safe space with no judgement; and (4) having adult researchers committed to the process and

not just the outcomes of the research project. The following section will provide a discussion of these findings as well as implications for practice and research.

## Ethical Considerations in Using a YPAR Approach in CEIPV Research

Discussions surrounding anonymity and how people wanted to be identified and credited for their work were of key importance in this project. As CEIPV has been a source of silence and shame for many, it was important to the adult researchers that youth researchers were able to make choices about their participation that felt right for each individual. During this time, the research team had discussions around how, if, and to what extent a youth researcher’s participation could also impact or potentially ‘out’ other family members. Youth were able to reflect on this, ask questions, and have discussions with family members (when safe to do so). For each presentation, report, or project output, each youth researcher chose how they wanted to be identified. For instance, some chose to use their full names, others chose to use initials, while some remained anonymous. While this is a citational challenge, it accounted for the different needs, wants, and comfort levels of individual youth and gave them agency in how they preferred to be safely identified. In addition, prior to the first presentation done by the research team, youth researchers advocated for introducing the research team as a whole, rather than introducing adult researchers and youth co-researchers. This signified an important ethical consideration for many reasons. Firstly, identifying youth as co-researchers when adults are considered researchers was perpetuating the divide between youth and adult researchers. Secondly, youth researchers felt that by introducing everyone as a team, rather than differentiating adult and youth members gave them equal credit for the work they were doing. Finally, youth researchers noted that by being part of one large research team and introducing everyone as a ‘researcher’ rather than qualifying this with ‘youth co-’ they were not always automatically ‘outing’ themselves as having CEIPV in every forum. This further allowed for voice and choice and a sense of agency in determining how to identify oneself in different environments.

## The Value of a YPAR Approach in CEIPV Research

This study adds to the important and growing literature about the value and process of involving those with lived experience and expertise directly in research. CEIPV impacts many individuals across Canada, yet their perspectives remain relatively under-represented in research. Further, those with experiences of CEIPV may feel as though they are alone in such experiences (Howell et al., 2015; Izaguirre

& Cater 2018). Participatory research can be a way to challenge the shame or silence surrounding IPV through collective engagement and meaning making. Youths' reflections on strategies to support engagement, particularly recognizing youths' expertise, diversity in experiences, and creating a safe space with no judgement were of high importance in supporting youth researchers to feel like they were not alone in their experiences of CEIPV, and to feel that they could use their experiences to help and support others. This is aligned with previous research where YP have noted feelings of catharsis and found value in sharing with peers to help them feel less alone in their IPV experiences (Howell et al., 2015; Izaguirre & Cater 2018). The process of engaging in YPAR, especially regarding a topic surrounded by silence, could be seen as a therapeutic or healing process in itself. Houghton (2015) had similar findings where YP noted a sense of liberation from the control of IPV. In their research on resilience, Hamby et al. (2020) found that YP with experiences of victimization are more likely to show resilient mental health when they identify as having more meaning making strengths. As seen in youth researcher reflections above, engaging in this YPAR process was a means through which they were able to make meaning from their experiences, in both individual and collective ways.

Importantly, as discussed above, YP can often be excluded from research due to concerns for safety or the assumption that they must be protected (Cullen, O., & Walsh, 2019; Houghton 2015). However, through utilizing and integrating trauma-informed principles into the research process, working from a rights-based approach, focusing on building safety and community, sharing power and decision-making, and valuing the expertise YP are bringing, the research team was able to build an environment of support. In terms of understanding how to better support YP with CEIPV, a YPAR approach allowed for the research team to collaboratively discuss important skills and advocate for a variety of approaches. The research led to discussions about advocacy in counselling and seeking out counsellors with like-minded values. Youth researchers noted the value in watching different counselling sessions and learning about different approaches to better understand the counselling process and what they might like or not. Further, they noted how impactful it could be if all youth could see different counselling videos so that they had a better understanding of the process and to understand what they want from a therapist. As one way to make this knowledge more accessible, youth researchers created a poster presentation and subsequent downloadable poster indicating "Green Flags for Therapists" to indicate important skills and actions therapists can take to support YP. This resource was created using youth-friendly language and imagery and was meant to be a resource for YP as well as for therapists and counsellors. Feeling as though

their participation could benefit other YP in the future was important to youth researchers, which aligns with previous research on YPs engagement in IPV research (Houghton, 2015). Further, connecting individual experiences to larger societal ideas while challenging systems and structures that continue to marginalize YP are important aspects of developing critical consciousness and critical thinking skills, key aspects of YPAR (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Cammarota & Romero, 2011; Ozer, 2017).

YPAR was a helpful approach in the current study as it allowed for the individual members of the research team to decide the pace of the research as well as what research activities they wanted to be involved in. One of the goals of YPAR is to challenge social exclusion (Cahill et al., 2010); youth in the current study noted that CEIPV can have significant long-term impacts on one's mental health, wellbeing, academic and work abilities, and more, which is supported by previous research (Jenney, 2018; McTavish et al., 2016; Poleshuck et al., 2021). As such, they noted that this approach, in which youths' knowledge and expertise is valued, highlighted, and compensated, allowed for inclusion of oft excluded voices while also supporting them in tangible (e.g., financial) ways. In addition, some youth researchers noted struggling with feelings of self-worth, especially in relation to their identity, using their voice, and their academic abilities. The use of YPAR, where youth received research training, and engaged in a variety of research activities, supported youth in utilizing or developing various skills, while providing appropriate support and mentorship. This aligns with previous research on YPAR outcomes, wherein when YPAR is integrated meaningfully and youth feel heard, valued, and respected, a sense of empowerment is often felt (Anyon et al., 2018; Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). Further, research has shown that the practical skills YP can learn through engaging in YPAR can benefit them in many aspects of their lives, including personal feelings of self-worth, in relationships with others—especially adults—and in their professional or academic careers (Anyon et al., 2018; Ozer, 2017; Shamrova & Cummings, 2017).

In highlighting potential challenges in engaging in YPAR, the research team noted the importance of addressing burnout and vicarious trauma. Youth researchers specifically noted that because the topic was very personal and meaningful for each person, they wanted to 'give it their all.' However, they also recognized that this may not always be possible given the difficult nature of the topic. As such, addressing burnout and vicarious trauma, identifying what this might look like, and talking about strategies to mitigate any undue harm was critical. Having youth researchers themselves describe what harm might look like and working together to identify mitigation strategies was essential

in developing a common understanding for this particular topic and this particular research team. The initial work done to build safety and community was helpful here. In addition, utilizing check-in and check-out activities provided support. Finally, collaboratively developing ‘Group Rights’ supported each individual to take the time and space they needed created a concrete document that let each member of the research team know that others were there to support and validate them throughout.

Youth researchers provided important recommendations for researchers hoping to engage in YPAR to study CEIPV in the future. One recommendation was to ensure language was clear on all recruitment materials. Youth researchers recommended continuing the practice of utilizing a ‘pre-research information survey’ and noted that this gave the impression right from the start that adult researchers wanted youth to feel safe and informed. While this added a step to the recruitment process, which was an initial concern for adult researchers worried about the process feeling too lengthy, the overall benefit of this step was noted. Further, youth researchers recommended the practice of meeting individually with a member of the research team prior to beginning, as was done in the current study. They indicated value in this process and noted that for individuals who did not meet inclusion criteria or for any other reason did not move forward in the process, this was an opportunity to acknowledge their experiences as real and valid, while also providing resources for support.

### Implications for Practice and Future Research

This research adds to the literature on the importance in understanding YPs experiences and perspectives. Youth researchers found value in creating presentations and resources that they felt could make a difference for other YP with similar experiences. Having materials created by youth for other youth (such as digital stories in this research) can enhance the usefulness of such materials and support other YP to feel less alone in their experiences (Howell et al., 2015; Izaguirre & Cater 2018). In the discussion above, the benefit of a YPAR approach to CEIPV research was discussed. The current research study highlights that while YPAR to investigate CEIPV may heighten safety concerns, there are strategies that can be implemented to minimize these concerns and such concerns should not outweigh the rights of YP to participate and have their perspectives heard. Ultimately, the YPAR approach utilized in the current study shows that directly involving youth as equal members of the research team can have important benefits to youths’ self-worth and feelings of empowerment, practical skills like conducting research, writing, and presenting, and their sense of community and belonging. However, adult researchers must be

willing to listen to youth, be flexible and implement their feedback, and put in time and consideration for how to best support youth researchers.

In thinking about future research directions, youth researchers indicated an interest in better understanding how CEIPV is addressed in other approaches to mental health support beyond talk therapy. For instance, they expressed curiosity in what this would look like in peer support approaches or various cultural healing approaches. Youth researchers also highlighted the need to better understand the role that culture plays in talking about CEIPV and seeking support and what counsellors need to know to better support diverse clients. In addition, while this research highlights valuable outcomes in utilizing a YPAR approach to study CEIPV, further evaluation is necessary to better understand the specific benefits to youth researchers as well as how to best address harms. Finally, future research could address what skills, strategies, or expertise is needed from adult researchers to support YPAR projects that may address difficult subjects. For instance, in the current research study all adult researchers on the project work in the mental health field and thus had the clinical skills to support youth researchers throughout the process. This may not always be the case, so understanding what skills are needed or what strategies can be put in place to ensure that youth are not harmed in the research process could be beneficial to the field of participatory research.

### Limitations

The present study highlights the benefits of utilizing YPAR approach to study CEIPV. The findings and discussions should be considered in light of the limitations of such. Firstly, because YPAR is meant to be specific to the community involved, it is difficult to generalize findings to larger communities or populations. As such, strategies that worked well in the current study may not work as successfully in a different group. This highlights the importance of working collaboratively with one’s research team and tailoring research approaches to the specific needs and wants of the group. Because this study was focused on identifying clinical competencies, it was necessary that youth researchers had some experience of attending counselling or receiving mental health supports of some kind. Given the barriers to accessing and receiving mental health support in Canada, such as cost, location, accessibility, language, and more, this requirement is considered a limitation as it could have influenced who was able to participate. Further, gender of research team members was noted as a limitation in that the team was primarily comprised of women. Having more men and gender diverse voices represented in research regarding

counsellor competencies for CEIPV would be beneficial in understanding the varying needs of diverse groups.

## Conclusion

Despite the limitations identified, the current research study provides valuable insight into using YPAR as an approach to studying CEIPV. The article highlights strategies and considerations for engaging in YPAR, while also recognizing the importance of listening to the individual youth and tailoring approaches to different groups. CEIPV can have significant impacts on a young person and for this group of youth researchers, engaging in YPAR was shown to be meaningful and cathartic. Continuing to engage in participatory research to investigate CEIPV is one way that youths' voices and experiences can be highlighted, while ensuring that resources and interventions are accurately addressing youth's needs and preferences.

## Declarations

**Conflict of Interest** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

**Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

## References

- Allemang, B., Cullen, O., Schraeder, K., Pinston, K., & Dimitropoulos, G. (2021). Recommendations for youth engagement in Canadian mental health research in the context of COVID-19. *Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 30(2), 123–130.
- Anyon, Y., Bender, K., Kennedy, H., & DeChants, J. (2018). A systematic review of youth participatory action research (YPAR) in the United States: Methodologies, youth outcomes, and future directions. *Health Education & Behavior*, 45(6), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198118769357>.
- Arai, L., Shaw, A., Feder, G., Howarth, E., MacMillan, H., Moore, T. H. M., Stanley, N., & Gregory, A. (2021). Hope, Agency, and the lived experience of violence: A qualitative systematic review of Children's perspectives on domestic violence and abuse. *Trauma Violence Abuse*, 22(3), 427–438. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838019849582>.
- Bender, A. E., McKinney, S. J., Schmidt-Sane, M. M., Cage, J., Holmes, M. R., Berg, K. A., Salley, J., Bodell, M., Miller, E. K., & Voith, L. A. (2022). Childhood exposure to intimate partner violence and effects on social-emotional competence: A systematic review. *Journal of Family Violence*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-021-00315-z>.
- Bradbury-Jones, C., & Taylor, J. (2015). Engaging with children as co-researchers: challenges, counter-challenges and solutions. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 18(2), 161–173. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2013.864589>.
- Bradbury-Jones, C., Isham, L., & Taylor, J. (2018). The complexities and contradictions in participatory research with vulnerable children and young people: A qualitative systematic review. *Social Science And Medicine*, 215, 80–91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2018.08.038>.
- Burczycka, M., & Conroy, S. (2018). Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2016. *Juristat, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada*.
- CAADA (2014). *In plain sight: The evidence from children exposed to domestic abuse*. [https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/In\\_plain\\_sight\\_the\\_evidence\\_from\\_children\\_exposed\\_to\\_domestic\\_abuse.pdf](https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/In_plain_sight_the_evidence_from_children_exposed_to_domestic_abuse.pdf)
- Cahill, C. (2005). *Makes me mad! The Fed Up Honeys investigate stereotypes, gentrification, and the disinvestment of the lower east side* [Doctoral Dissertation, City University of New York]. New York.
- Cahill, C., Quijada Cerecer, D. A., & Bradley, M. (2010). 'Dreaming of. ': Reflections on participatory Action Research as a Feminist Praxis of critical Hope. *Affilia*, 25(4), 406–416. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109910384576>.
- Callaghan, J., Alexander, J. H., Sixsmith, J., & Fellin, L. C. (2018). Beyond "witnessing": Children's experiences of coercive control in domestic violence and abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(10), 1551–1581. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515618946>.
- Cammarota, J., & Fine, M. (2008). Youth participatory action research: A pedagogy for transformational resistance. In J. Cammarota, & M. Fine (Eds.), *Revolutionizing education: Youth participatory action research in motion* (pp. 1–11). Routledge.
- Cammarota, J., & Romero, A. (2011). Participatory Action Research for High School students: Transforming policy, practice, and the Personal with Social Justice Education. *Educational Policy*, 25(3), 488–506. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904810361722>.
- Campbell, C., & Trotter, J. (2007). Invisible' young people: The paradox of participation in research. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, 2(1), 32–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450120701214053>.
- Caraballo, L., Lozenski, B. D., Lyiscott, J. J., & Morrell, E. (2017). YPAR and critical epistemologies: Rethinking education research. *Review of Research in Education*, 41(1), 311–336. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732x16686948>.
- Carlson, J., Voith, L., Brown, J. C., & Holmes, M. (2019). Viewing children's exposure to intimate Partner Violence through a Developmental, Social-Ecological, and Survivor Lens: The current state of the Field, Challenges, and future directions. *Violence Against Women*, 25(1), 6–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801218816187>.
- Cater, Å. K. (2014). Children's descriptions of participation processes in interventions for children exposed to intimate Partner violence. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 31(5), 455–473. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-014-0330-z>.
- Cullen, O., & Walsh, C. A. (2019). A narrative review of ethical issues in participatory research with young people. *Young*, 28(4), 363–386. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1103308819886470>
- Dumont, A., & Lessard, G. (2020). Young adults exposed to intimate Partner violence in Childhood: The qualitative meanings of this experience. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35(8), 781–792. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-019-00100-z>.



- Evans, S. E., Davies, C., & DiLillo, D. (2008). Exposure to domestic violence: A meta-analysis of child and adolescent outcomes. *Aggression & Violent Behavior, 13*, 131–140.
- Fallis, R. K., & Opatow, S. (2003). Are students failing school or are schools failing students? Class cutting in high school. *Journal of Social Issues, 59*, 103–119.
- Fallon, B., Van Wert, M., Trocmé, N., MacLaurin, B., Sinha, V., Lefebvre, R., Goel, S. (2015). *Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect – 2013, Major Findings*.
- Fargas-Malet, M., McSherry, D., Larkin, E., & Robinson, C. (2010). Research with children: Methodological issues and innovative techniques. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 8*(2), 175–192. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718x09345412>.
- Flam, A. M., & Handegard, B. H. (2015). Where is the child in Family Therapy Service after Family Violence? A study from the norwegian Family Protection Service. *Contemp Fam Ther, 37*(1), 72–87. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-014-9323-5>.
- Gallacher, L. A., & Gallagher, M. (2008). Methodological immaturity in childhood research? Thinking through ‘participatory methods’. *Childhood, 15*(4), 499–516.
- Georgsson, A., Almqvist, H., & Broberg, A. G. (2011). Naming the unmentionable: How children exposed to intimate partner violence articulate their experiences. *Journal of Family Violence, 26*, 117–129. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-010-9349-x>.
- Gombert, K., Douglas, F., McArdle, K., & Carlisle, S. (2016). Reflections on ethical dilemmas in working with so-called ‘vulnerable’ and ‘hard-to-reach’ groups: Experiences from the Foodways and Futures project. *Educational Action Research, 24*(4), 583–597. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2015.1106958>.
- Hamby, S., Taylor, E., Mitchell, K., Jones, L., & Newlin, C. (2020). Poly-victimization, trauma, and Resilience: Exploring Strengths that promote thriving after Adversity. *Journal Of Trauma & Dissociation : The Official Journal Of The International Society For The Study Of Dissociation (Issd), 21*(3), 376–395. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299732.2020.1719261>.
- Houghton, C. (2015). Young People’s Perspectives on Participatory Ethics: Agency, Power and Impact in domestic abuse research and policy-making. *Child Abuse Review, 24*(4), 235–248. <https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2407>.
- Howarth, E., Moore, T. H., Stanley, N., MacMillan, H. L., Feder, G., & Shaw, A. (2019, Mar). Towards an ecological understanding of readiness to engage with interventions for children exposed to domestic violence and abuse: Systematic review and qualitative synthesis of perspectives of children, parents and practitioners. *Health And Social Care In The Community, 27*(2), 271–292. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12587>.
- Howell, K. H., Cater, A. K., Miller-Graff, L. E., & Graham-Bermann, S. A. (2015, Oct). The process of reporting and receiving support following exposure to intimate Partner Violence during Childhood. *J Interpers Violence, 30*(16), 2886–2907. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260514554289>.
- Izaguirre, A., & Cater, A. (2018). Child witnesses to intimate partner violence: Their descriptions of talking to people about the violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 33*(24), 3711–3731.
- Izaguirre, A., & Källström, Å. (2021). Differences in the reactions of adolescents to family violence. *Child & Family Social Work, 26*(3), 425–433. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12825>.
- Jessiman, P., Hackett, S., & Carpenter, J. (2017). Children’s and carers’ perspectives of a therapeutic intervention for children affected by sexual abuse. *Child & Family Social Work, 22*(2), 1024–1033. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12322>.
- Jenney, A., & Alaggia, R. (2018). The impact of exposure to domestic violence on children and youth: Considering strategies for intervention and cultivating resilience. In W. S. DeKeseredy, C. M. Rennison, & A. K. Hall-Sanchez (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Violence Studies* (pp. 264–276). Routledge.
- Källström, Å., & Thunberg, S. (2019). Like an equal, Somehow” – what Young People exposed to Family Violence Value in Counseling. *Journal of Family Violence, 34*(6), 553–563. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-018-00032-0>.
- Karver, M. S., De Nadai, A. S., Monahan, M., & Shirk, S. R. (2018). Meta-analysis of the prospective relation between alliance and outcome in child and adolescent psychotherapy. *Psychotherapy, 55*(4), 341–355.
- Lamb, K., Humphreys, C., & Hegarty, K. (2020). Research ethics in practice: Challenges of using digital technology to embed the voices of children and young people within programs for fathers who use domestic violence. *Research Ethics, 17*(2), 176–192. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1747016120936324>.
- Lateef, F. (2010). Simulation-based learning: Just like the real thing. *Journal of Emergencies, Trauma and Shock, 3*(4), 348.
- Lundy, L. (2018). In defence of tokenism? Implementing children’s right to participate in collective decision-making. *Childhood, 25*(3), 340–354. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568218777292>.
- Lundy, L., McEvoy, L., & Byrne, B. (2011). Working with young children as co-researchers: An Approach informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child. *Early Education & Development, 22*(5), 714–736. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2011.596463>.
- McTavish, J. R., MacGregor, J. C., Wathen, C. N., & MacMillan, H. L. (2016, Oct). Children’s exposure to intimate partner violence: An overview. *Int Rev Psychiatry, 28*(5), 504–518. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540261.2016.1205001>.
- Miranda, J. K., Olivares, N., & Crockett, M. A. (2022, Jan 8). Growing up with intimate Partner Violence at Home: Adolescents’ narratives on their coping strategies. *J Fam Violence, 1–12*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-021-00345-7>.
- Mirra, N., Garcia, A., & Morrell, E. (2016). *Doing youth participatory action research: Transforming inquiry with researchers, educators, and students*. Routledge.
- Montserrat, C., Garcia-Molsosa, M., Planas-Lladó, A., & Soler-Masó, P. (2022). Children’s understandings of gender-based violence at home: The role school can play in child disclosure. *Children and Youth Services Review, 136*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2022.106431>.
- Morris, A., Humphreys, C., & Hegarty, K. (2020). Beyond Voice: Conceptualizing children’s Agency in Domestic Violence Research through a Dialogical Lens. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 19*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920958909>.
- Morrison, F., Tisdall, E. K. M., & Callaghan, J. E. M. (2020). Manipulation and domestic abuse in contested contact – threats to Children’s participation rights. *Family Court Review, 58*(2), 403–416. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12479>.
- Mullender, A., & Hague, G. (2003). Could have helped but they didn’t: The formal and informal support systems experienced by children living with domestic violence. In C. Hallett, & A. Prout (Eds.), *Hearing the voices of children: Social policy for a new century* (pp. 155–173). Routledge.
- Øverlien, C., & Holt, S. (2018). Letter to the editor: Research on children experiencing domestic violence. *Journal of Family Violence, 34*(1), 65–67. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-018-9997-9>.
- Ozer, E. J. (2017). Youth-led participatory action research: Overview and potential for enhancing adolescent development. *Child Development Perspectives, 11*(3), 173–177.
- Ozer, E. J., Rittnerman, M., & Wanis, M. (2010). Participatory action research (PAR) in middle school: Opportunities, constraints, and key processes. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 46*, 152–166.
- Poleshuck, E., Wittink, M. N., Crean, H., Juskiewicz, I., ReQua, M. A., & Cerulli, C. (2021). A Biopsychosocial and Interprofessional Approach to the treatment of family and intimate Partner

- violence: It takes a village. *Frontiers In Psychiatry*, 12, 738840. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2021.738840>.
- Rix, J., Garcia-Carrizosa, H., Hayhoe, S., Seale, J., & Sheehy, K. (2020). Emergent analysis and dissemination within participatory research. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 44(3), 287–302. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727x.2020.1763945>.
- Rodriguez, R., Macias, R. L., Perez-Garcia, R., Landeros, G., & Martinez, A. (2018). Action Research at the intersection of Structural and Family Violence in an immigrant latino community: A youth-led study. *Journal of Family Violence*, 33(8), 587–596. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-018-9990-3>.
- Shamrova, D. P., & Cummings, C. E. (2017). Participatory action research (PAR) with children and youth: An integrative review of methodology and PAR outcomes for participants, organizations, and communities. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 81, 400–412. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.08.022>.
- Torre, M. E., Cahill, C., & Fox, M. (2015). Participatory Action Research in Social Research. In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 540–544). <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-08-097086-8.10554-9>
- Trocme, N., Fallon, B., MacLaurin, B., Sinha, V., Black, T., Fast, E., & Helie, S. (2010). *Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect, 2008: Major findings*. Public Health Agency of Canada.
- Tucker, S. (2013). Considerations on the involvement of young people as co-inquirers in abuse and neglect research. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 16(2), 272–285. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2012.704988>.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), November 20, 1989, <https://www.ohchr.org/en>
- Wolfe, D. A., Crooks, C. V., Lee, V., McIntyre-Smith, A., & Jaffe, P. (2003). The effects of children’s exposure to domestic violence: A meta-analysis and critique. *Clinical Child & Family Psychology Review*, 6(3), 171–187.
- Yanar, Z. M., Fazli, M., Rahman, J., & Farthing, R. (2016). Research ethics committees and participatory action research with young people: The politics of voice. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, 11(2), 122–128. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1556264616650114>

**Publisher’s Note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Springer Nature or its licensor (e.g. a society or other partner) holds exclusive rights to this article under a publishing agreement with the author(s) or other rightsholder(s); author self-archiving of the accepted manuscript version of this article is solely governed by the terms of such publishing agreement and applicable law.