



# Family Violence: Relevance in family law

## Introduction

This report offers an examination of data on violence within families, highlighting how it may be a relevant factor to consider in a family law dispute. In a family law context, violence, abuse and neglect within families can have wide ranging, long-term effects. Family and criminal courts may offer contrary rulings that confuse and frustrate matters and may put family members at risk. And ultimately, there are costs – both financial and human.

## Family violence is common

Family violence is more common than many people may realize. The language and terms have changed over the years, partially to reflect society's growing awareness of the seriousness of the violence. Family violence may also be called domestic violence, spousal violence, conjugal violence, or intimate partner violence (IPV), and may also include elder abuse and child abuse. Abuse within families can cover a spectrum of behaviour that includes emotional abuse, controlling behaviour, stalking, physical violence, sexual assault and homicide.

- In 2015, police reported over 86,000 people in Canada experienced family violence, representing over a quarter of all people subjected to a violent crime<sup>1</sup>.
- In the 2014 General Social Survey (GSS) on victimization, 4% of Canadians living in the provinces with a current or former spouse or common-law partner (approximately 760,000 people) reported having been physically or sexually abused by their spouse during the preceding five years<sup>2</sup>.
- A 2017 study found that 12% of residents of the territories reported being subjected to spousal violence by a current or former spouse or common-law partner in the previous five years<sup>3</sup>.
- About 284,000 women (one in fifty Canadian women aged 15 and older) experienced stalking by an intimate partner in the five years previous to the 2014 GSS<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Burczycka, Marta and Shana Conroy. 2017. "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2015." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/14698-eng.pdf> [Accessed 20 February 2018]

<sup>2</sup> Burczycka, Marta, Dyna Ibrahim and Maisie Karam. 2016. "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2016001/article/14303-eng.pdf> at pp 5 and 8. [Accessed 6 September 2017]. These data reflect responses from the provinces only.

<sup>3</sup> Perreault, Samuel and Laura Simpson. 2017. "Criminal victimization in the territories, 2014." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2016001/article/14470-eng.pdf> at p 12. [Accessed 15 December 2017].

<sup>4</sup> Burczycka, Marta and Shana Conroy. 2018. "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2016." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54893-eng.pdf> [Accessed 17 January 2018]



- Family violence is highly gendered. About 74% of people who report being stalked by an intimate partner - a current or former spouse or common-law or dating partner - are women<sup>5</sup>.
- According to the 2014 GSS, 35% of survivors of spousal violence reported being pushed, grabbed, shoved or slapped. About 25% reported having been sexually assaulted, beaten, choked, or threatened with a gun or a knife. A similar proportion (24%) reported having been kicked, bit, hit, or hit with something<sup>6</sup>.
- Women reported being subjected to the most severe types of spousal violence more often than men<sup>7</sup>.

## Violence often occurs after separation

There is growing understanding that it is not always easy to leave an abusive situation. In fact, the most dangerous time for a victim/survivor of violence is immediately after separation. In some cases, violence begins or intensifies after separation. From 2007 to 2011, a woman's risk of being killed by a spouse she was separated from was nearly six times higher than the risk faced by a woman from a spouse she was living with<sup>8</sup>.

- 13% of people who were separated reported experiencing spousal violence by a former spouse in the previous five years, compared to 2% of people who reported spousal violence in their current relationship<sup>9</sup>.
- Of people who reported being subjected to spousal violence after separation, 16% of survivors reported that the violence started once they were living apart<sup>10</sup>.
- Almost half of survivors (49%) indicated that violence increased in severity after the breakup of the relationship<sup>11</sup>.
- More than 90% of offences involving criminal harassment and harassing or indecent phone calls were committed after a separation<sup>12</sup>.

## People rarely report violence to the police

People sometimes question why survivors of violence don't report assaults to the police. The reasons are varied – from fear that no-one will take them seriously, to concern that reporting will result in embarrassment or cause violence to escalate. Survivors may consider the violence to be a private matter that is not something for the police to deal with. In some cases, they may want to protect the

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<sup>5</sup> Burczycka, Marta and Shana Conroy. 2018. "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2016." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54893-eng.pdf> [Accessed 17 January 2018]

<sup>6</sup> Burczycka, Marta, Dyna Ibrahim, and Maisie Karam. 2016. "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2016001/article/14303-eng.pdf> at pp 5 and 8. [Accessed 6 September 2017]. These data reflect responses from the provinces only.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Sinha, Maire. 2013. "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2011." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11805-eng.pdf> [Accessed 21 February 2018]

<sup>9</sup> Burczycka, Marta, Dyna Ibrahim and Maisie Karam. "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. 2016. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2016001/article/14303-eng.pdf>. [Accessed 6 September 2017].

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Taylor-Butts, Andrea, Pascale Beaupré, and Tamy Superle. 2015. "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2013." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2014001/article/14114-eng.pdf> [Accessed 21 February 2018].

perpetrator's reputation, or they may want to avoid repercussions within their communities. Data show that it is more common for survivors *not* to report than to report.

- Only one in five (19%) persons reported their experience of spousal violence to the police while one in ten (10%) reported that the police became aware of the violence in some other way<sup>13</sup>. The majority (70%) of people who experienced spousal violence never alerted the police about the abuse<sup>14</sup>.
- The police were not informed of the violence in 76% of cases where the violence was directed at a man and in 64% of cases where the violence was directed at a woman<sup>15</sup>.

## Effect of obtaining protective orders or laying criminal charges

Where there is a risk of violence, individuals may request protective orders, such as a restraining order, for their own personal safety. If they are targeted by violence that is also a criminal offence, they may also request that criminal charges be laid. Data show that these options are not widely used, and that they may not always have the desired effect.

- Only 22% of cases of stalking by an intimate partner that were reported to the police resulted in charges being laid<sup>16</sup>.
- According to the 2014 GSS, 19% of women reported they obtained a restraining order against their current or former spouse, a rate four times higher than the number of men (5%<sup>E</sup>) who reported obtaining such an order<sup>17</sup>.
- In 37% of intimate partner stalking cases reported to police, restraining or protective orders were obtained<sup>18</sup>. Almost half of the time, these orders were violated (47%); about 78% of people who experienced such violations, reported the breach to police<sup>19</sup>.

## Violence is relevant to the family justice system

Some forms of family violence may be criminal in nature, while others do not constitute a criminal offence. It is important to note that family violence may be raised in a family law dispute, whether or not the family violence was reported to police or child protection authorities. There is often inadequate sharing of information among different courts so judges may not be aware that people facing criminal charges in one court are also arguing for custody in another. Decisions from different courts may contradict each other and confuse or frustrate families<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Burczycka, Marta, Dyna Ibrahim, and Maisie Karam. 2016. "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2016001/article/14303-eng.pdf>. [Accessed 6 September 2017]

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Burczycka, Marta and Shana Conroy. 2018. "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2016." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54893-eng.pdf> [Accessed 17 January 2018]

<sup>17</sup> Burczycka, Marta, Dyna Ibrahim, and Maisie Karam. 2016. "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2016001/article/14303-eng.pdf>. [Accessed 6 September 2017]

<sup>18</sup> Burczycka, Marta and Shana Conroy. 2018. "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2016." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54893-eng.pdf> [Accessed 17 January 2018]

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Neilson, Linda. 2013. "Enhancing Safety: When Domestic violence Cases are in Multiple Legal Systems." [http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/famil/enhan-renfo/neilson\\_web.pdf](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/famil/enhan-renfo/neilson_web.pdf) [Accessed 27 February 2018]

- The Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family (CRILF) conducted a review of data collected in 2011 and 2012 related to 328 court files of ‘complex’ divorce cases in Alberta where the divorcing couples had at least one child. Family violence was mentioned in 14.6% of the files examined<sup>21</sup>.
- In a 2013 Department of Justice report, a review of court files where the court made a final determination on custody issues between 2000 and 2005, revealed that family violence was mentioned in 8% of divorce cases<sup>22</sup>.
- In a 2016 Canadian survey of family law lawyers and judges, lawyers reported that family violence was an issue in 21.7% of their cases, while judges reported it was an issue in 25.3% of their cases<sup>23</sup>.
- Studies from the United Kingdom (UK) suggest that data collected from self-reported surveys show higher rates of violence in divorce cases than what is indicated by data obtained from court case reviews or lawyer-reported surveys<sup>24</sup>.
- The 2016 survey results noted that 93.9% of judges and 68.8% of lawyers reported that in family law cases involving violence, parties in family court were *occasionally* or *often* dealing with criminal offences at the same time<sup>25</sup>.
- Survey respondents indicated that the most common family law court responses to family violence was by making a civil order restraining harassment or regulating contact between the parents (lawyers = 54.7%; judges = 71.0%), denying custody to the abusive parent (lawyers = 38.7% judges = 50.0%), and ordering access supervision (lawyers = 36.2%; judges = 54.6%) or exchange supervision (lawyers = 30.4%; judges = 48.5%, and making use of counselling services (lawyers = 37.3%; judges = 23.3%)<sup>26</sup>.

## Children are often exposed to violence

Violence can have a profound effect on children. Children who witness violence or are victims of abuse are at risk for long-term physical and mental health problems<sup>27</sup>. Children can suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and can struggle to develop the skills for life-long trusting

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<sup>21</sup> Kleiner, S., Boyd, J.-P. E., Bertrand, L.D. and Paetsch, J. 2017. “Analysis of Data from the Federal Justice Divorce File Review Study: Report on Findings for Alberta, 2011.” Calgary, AB: Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family. <http://crilf.ca/Documents/Analysis%20of%20Alberta%202011%20Divorce%20Court%20Data%20-%20Jun%202017.pdf> [Accessed 22 May 2018]

<sup>22</sup> Department of Justice. 2013. “Making the Links in Family Violence Cases: Collaboration among the Family, Child Protection and Criminal Justice Systems.” Volume I, Report of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Ad Hoc Working Group on Family Violence. <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/mlfvc-elcvf/mlfvc-elcvf.pdf> [Accessed 22 May 2018]

<sup>23</sup> Bertrand, Lorne D., Joanne J. Paetsch, John-Paul E. Boyd, Nicholas Bala. 2016. “The Practice of Family Law in Canada: Results from a Survey of Participants at the 2016 National Family Law Program.” Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family. [http://www.crilf.ca/Documents/RSD\\_2016\\_NFLP\\_Survey\\_of\\_Family\\_Court\\_EN.PDF](http://www.crilf.ca/Documents/RSD_2016_NFLP_Survey_of_Family_Court_EN.PDF). [Accessed 18 December 2017].

<sup>24</sup> Zhang, Ting, Josh Hoddenbagh, Susan McDonald, and Katie Scrim. 2012. “An Estimation of the Economic Impact of Spousal Violence in Canada, 2009.” Page 35. [http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/rr12\\_7/rr12\\_7.pdf](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/rr12_7/rr12_7.pdf) [Accessed 22 May 2018]

<sup>25</sup> Bertrand, Lorne D., Joanne J. Paetsch, John-Paul E. Boyd, Nicholas Bala. 2016. “The Practice of Family Law in Canada: Results from a Survey of Participants at the 2016 National Family Law Program.” Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family. [http://www.crilf.ca/Documents/RSD\\_2016\\_NFLP\\_Survey\\_of\\_Family\\_Court\\_EN.PDF](http://www.crilf.ca/Documents/RSD_2016_NFLP_Survey_of_Family_Court_EN.PDF). [Accessed 18 December 2017].

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children. December 2012. “Children Exposed to Domestic Violence”, issue 3. [http://vawlearningnetwork.ca/sites/vawlearningnetwork.ca/files/LN\\_Newsletter\\_December\\_2012\\_Issue\\_3\\_Final.pdf](http://vawlearningnetwork.ca/sites/vawlearningnetwork.ca/files/LN_Newsletter_December_2012_Issue_3_Final.pdf) [Accessed 8 June 2018].

relationships<sup>28</sup>. They may be at risk for experiencing or perpetuating violence in their own future relationships as adults<sup>29</sup>.

- 51% of parents who reported experiencing spousal violence also reported that their children may have heard or seen assaults on them<sup>30</sup>. Child protective services were alerted in 31% of situations where a child witnessed the spousal violence<sup>31</sup>.
- About 72% of individuals with children who experienced violence after separation indicated that a child had seen or heard the violence<sup>32</sup>.
- The 2008 *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS)* studied incidents of child maltreatment involving children 15 years and younger as investigated by child welfare systems. The categories of child abuse identified most frequently as the primary child welfare concern were exposure to IPV and child neglect, each representing 34% of all substantiated investigations<sup>33</sup>.
- A subsequent report comparing results from the CIS to substantiated investigations of abuse and neglect of First Nations children noted that for every 1,000 substantiated child maltreatment investigations involving First Nations children, there were 19.9 investigations in which the primary maltreatment category was exposure to IPV, almost 5 times the rate for non-aboriginal children (4.2 per 1,000)<sup>34</sup>.

## False allegations of abuse

There is no definitive research on the rate of intentionally false reporting of family violence in the context of a family law dispute, although intentionally false allegations are generally understood to be rare<sup>35</sup>. With respect to child abuse, it is important to distinguish between a false allegation that is deliberately made to gain an advantage in a custody or parenting dispute and an unfounded allegation that is based on a misunderstanding but driven by concern for the child. Studies have shown that most false claims are the result of honest mistakes, parental anxiety and misinterpretations of children's statements, rather than intentional lies<sup>36</sup>. Research on reports of

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<sup>28</sup> Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children. April 2017. "Links between the Maltreatment of Girls & Later Victimization or Use of Violence", issue 20.

[http://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/sites/vawlearningnetwork.ca/files/Newsletter\\_Issue\\_20\\_1.pdf](http://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/sites/vawlearningnetwork.ca/files/Newsletter_Issue_20_1.pdf) [Accessed 8 June 2018]

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Burczycka, Marta, Dyna Ibrahim, and Maisie Karam. 2016. "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2016001/article/14303-eng.pdf>. [Accessed 6 September 2017]

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Lindsay, Melissa. 2014. "Violence Perpetuated by Ex-spouses in Canada." <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/cnmcs-plcng/cn32503-eng.pdf> [Accessed 28 February 2018]

<sup>33</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada (2011). "Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect – 2008: Major Findings." Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada. <http://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/en/CIS-2008-rprt-eng.pdf> at pp 30-31. [Accessed 18 December 2017].

<sup>34</sup> Sinha, Vandna, Nico Trocmé, Barbara Fallon, Bruce MacLaurin, Elizabeth Fast, Shelley Thomas Prokop, et al (2011). "Kiskisik Awasisak: Remember the Children. Understanding the Overrepresentation of First Nations Children in the Child Welfare System." Ontario: Assembly of First Nations. [http://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/en/FNCIS-2008\\_March2012\\_RevisedFinal.pdf](http://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/en/FNCIS-2008_March2012_RevisedFinal.pdf) at p 84. [Accessed 15 December 2017].

<sup>35</sup> See Martha Shaffer & Nicholas Bala, "Wife Abuse, Child Custody and Access in Canada" (2003) *Journal of Emotional Abuse* vol 3 p. 253-275.

<sup>36</sup> Bala, Nicholas & John Schuman, "Allegations of Sexual Abuse When Parents Have Separated" (2000) 17 *Canadian Family Law Quarterly* 191; Department of Justice Canada, *Allegations of Child Abuse in the Context of Parental Separation: A Discussion Paper* by

child maltreatment to child welfare authorities provide some data, as there are mandatory “duty to report” provisions in child protection legislation in every province and territory<sup>37</sup>. Child maltreatment may include a range of behaviour such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment, and exposure to intimate partner violence<sup>38</sup>. The *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS)* tracks intentionally false allegations of neglect and abuse reported to child welfare agencies, based on investigations by child welfare workers<sup>39</sup>.

- Of all reports of child maltreatment where there was also a child custody dispute between the parents, 10% were determined by child welfare investigators to be intentionally false<sup>40</sup>.
- These intentionally false reports could have been made by custodial or non-custodial parents, or by other family members, neighbours, professionals (such as teachers) or anonymous sources<sup>41</sup>.
- In contrast, in 60% of cases where there was also an ongoing custody dispute, the report of maltreatment was either *substantiated* or *suspected* by child welfare investigators<sup>42</sup>. In a further 18% of these cases, the report of maltreatment was considered *unfounded*, but investigators determined there was no malicious intent by the person who made the report<sup>43</sup>. A further 12% of these cases were deemed unfounded, but it was not known if the report was malicious or not<sup>44</sup>.

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Nicholas M C Bala et al, 2001, online: [http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/divorce/2001\\_4/pdf/2001\\_4.pdf](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/divorce/2001_4/pdf/2001_4.pdf) ; Nico Trocmé & Nicholas Bala, “False Allegations of Abuse and Neglect when Parents Separate” (2005) 29:12 Child Abuse & Neglect 1333.

<sup>37</sup> Note that the mandatory nature of the duty varies by jurisdiction and may differ depending on variables such as the age of the child and/or specific forms of maltreatment.

<sup>38</sup> Fallon, Barbara, Rachael Lefebvre, Meghan Seto, and Melissa Van Wert (2013). “Malicious Referrals, Custody Disputes and Police Involvement in the Canadian Child Welfare System: Data Tables from the 2008 Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect.” Prepared for: Department of Justice Canada. <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/famil/mrcd-smcp/mrcd-smcp.pdf>. [Accessed 7 September 2017].

<sup>39</sup> Bala, Nicholas & John Schuman, “Allegations of Sexual Abuse When Parents Have Separated” (2000) 17 Canadian Family Law Quarterly 191; Department of Justice Canada, Allegations of Child Abuse in the Context of Parental Separation: A Discussion Paper by Nicholas M C Bala et al, 2001, online: [http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/divorce/2001\\_4/pdf/2001\\_4.pdf](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/divorce/2001_4/pdf/2001_4.pdf) ; Nico Trocmé & Nicholas Bala, “False Allegations of Abuse and Neglect when Parents Separate” (2005) 29:12 Child Abuse & Neglect 1333.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. Table 4 of the report provides a percentage breakdown of all reports made by each of these groups. While 16% of reports by neighbours or friends and 23% of reports by anonymous sources were found to be intentionally false, such reports represented 12% of all reports by custodial or non-custodial parents, noting that data limitations prevented the separation of custodial and non-custodial parent categories.

<sup>42</sup> Fallon, Barbara, Rachael Lefebvre, Meghan Seto, and Melissa Van Wert (2013). “Malicious Referrals, Custody Disputes and Police Involvement in the Canadian Child Welfare System: Data Tables from the 2008 Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect.” Prepared for: Department of Justice Canada. <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/famil/mrcd-smcp/mrcd-smcp.pdf>. [Accessed 7 September 2017].

<sup>43</sup> When reports of child abuse are investigated by child welfare workers to ensure that a child is not placed at risk, there are three possible outcomes:

- **substantiated**: the balance of evidence indicates that child maltreatment has occurred;
- **suspected**: worker cannot rule out maltreatment, but has insufficient evidence to substantiate it;
- **unfounded**: the balance of evidence indicates that maltreatment has not occurred. Unfounded does not mean that the report of maltreatment was inappropriate or malicious.

<sup>44</sup> Fallon, Barbara, Rachael Lefebvre, Meghan Seto, and Melissa Van Wert (2013). “Malicious Referrals, Custody Disputes and Police Involvement in the Canadian Child Welfare System: Data Tables from the 2008 Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect.” Prepared for: Department of Justice Canada. <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/famil/mrcd-smcp/mrcd-smcp.pdf>. [Accessed 7 September 2017].

## There are substantial personal and societal costs of family violence

There is no doubt that family violence imposes a huge personal cost on people who experience it and witness it. Such costs may be passed down from generation to generation. Governments should also be concerned that family violence is costly; it imposes huge financial burdens on the people involved, the community, and court systems.

- In a 2012 study of the economic impact of spousal violence<sup>45</sup>, it was estimated that the justice system bore 7.3% (\$545.2 million) of the economic impact of spousal violence where \$320.1 million was borne by the criminal justice system and \$225.1 million by the civil justice system.
- Of civil justice system costs, it was estimated that \$181,903,737 (80.8%) was attributed to child protection systems, \$40,941,889 (18.2%) to separations and divorces, and \$2,272,200 (1.0%) to civil protection orders<sup>46, 47</sup>.

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<sup>E</sup> “E” is used by Statistics Canada as a warning to “use with caution”.

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<sup>45</sup> Zhang et al. 2012. “An Estimation of the Economic Impact of Spousal Violence in Canada, 2009.” Department of Justice Canada. [[http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/rr12\\_7/rr12\\_7.pdf](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/rr12_7/rr12_7.pdf)] at pp xiii-xvi. Accessed 18 December 2017.

<sup>46</sup> Zhang et al. 2012. “An Estimation of the Economic Impact of Spousal Violence in Canada, 2009.” Department of Justice Canada. [[http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/rr12\\_7/rr12\\_7.pdf](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/rr12_7/rr12_7.pdf)] at pp xiii-xvi. Accessed 18 December 2017.

<sup>47</sup> In a survey of Canadian civil courts, 34% of civil cases (about 318,000) for 2012/2013 were family law cases. Of these, 1% involved adoption as the primary legal issue, 10% involved child protection, 8% involved child support, 22% involved an uncontested divorce, 26% involved child custody or access and the remainder involved other family law issues. See Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. 2014. “Family law cases in the civil courts, 2012/2013.” Mary Allen. [<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2014001/article/13005-eng.pdf>] at p 6. Accessed 7 September 2017.