

Trends in perceptions of gender-based violence and gender equality, identity and expression in Canada

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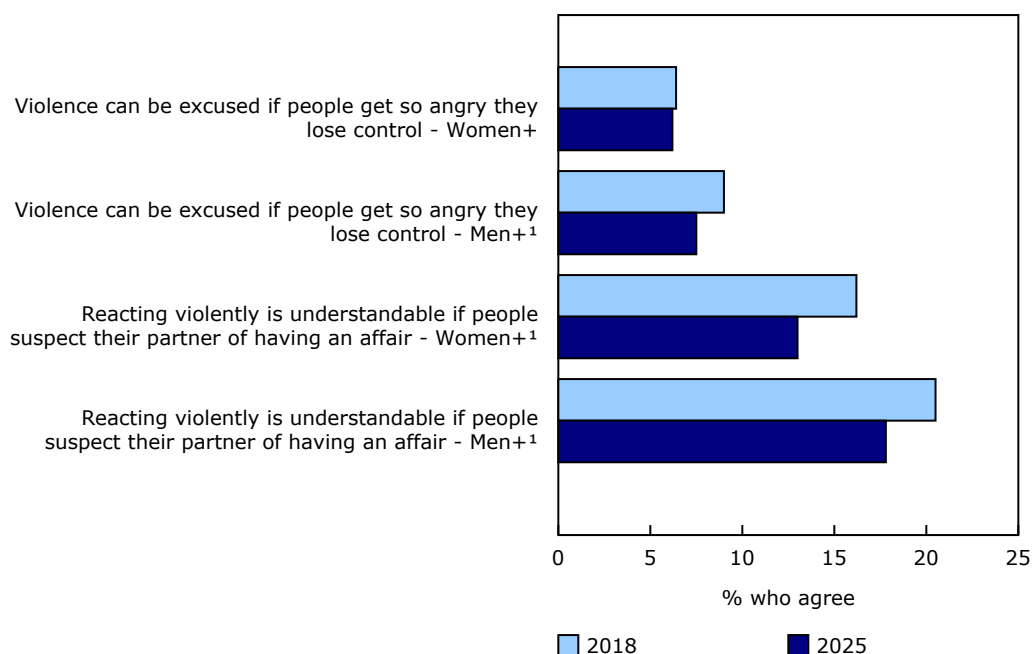
In 2025, most people in Canada agreed that violence between intimate partners is unacceptable, that everyone should be free to express their gender however they choose, and that women face obstacles making it harder for them to get ahead compared with men. While agreement with these perceptions was high in both 2018 and 2025, some changes were seen during this period. For example, support for people being able to express their gender however they choose declined in 2025 from 2018, among both women (from 85% to 77%) and men (from 78% to 70%).

Released today, the *Juristat* article "[Perceptions of gender-based violence and gender equality, identity and expression in Canada, 2025](#)" uses self-reported data from the 2018 and 2025 Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS) to examine how opinions on gender-related topics have evolved over time. Key trends are highlighted, as are the ways in which perceptions differ according to certain sociodemographic characteristics.

People less likely to see intimate partner violence as excusable in 2025

From 2018 to 2025, fewer people in Canada saw violence between intimate partners as excusable in certain situations. For example, in 2025, a smaller proportion of women (13%) agreed that it is understandable that someone would react violently if they suspected their partner of having an affair, compared with 2018 (16%). A similar trend was noted among men, with 18% in agreement in 2025 versus 20% in 2018 (Chart 1).

Chart 1
Perceptions of intimate partner violence, by gender, Canada, 2018 and 2025



1. Difference between estimate for 2018 and estimate for 2025 is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Note(s): All differences between estimates for women+ and men+ are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with these statements. Possible responses were "strongly agree," "agree," "neither agree nor disagree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree." For analysis, answers of



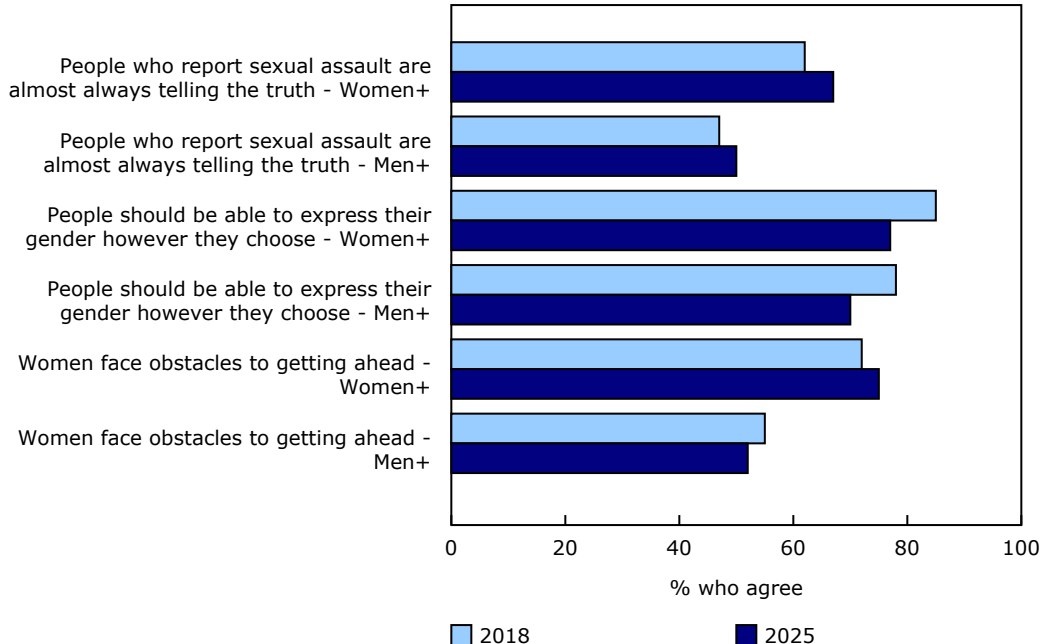
"strongly agree" and "agree" were combined and referred to simply as "agree." The category "women+" includes women, as well as some non-binary respondents and some respondents who did not state their gender, while the category "men+" includes men, as well as some non-binary persons and some respondents who did not state their gender. In 2025, responses from respondents who had indicated their gender as non-binary and those who did not state their gender were combined with responses from those who had indicated their gender as women or men, in order to safeguard confidentiality and data quality in line with Statistics Canada standards. To enable trend comparisons with the 2018 survey, the same process was applied retroactively to responses received in 2018. For this reason, proportions for 2018 reported in this chart will not match those in reports published previously. Percent calculations include missing responses.
Source(s): Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (5256), 2018 and 2025.

Similarly, among men, the proportion who agreed that violence between partners can be excused if people get so angry they lose control declined from 2018 (9%) to 2025 (7%). Among women, no change was noted (6% in both years).

Increase in proportion who agree that victims of sexual assault are almost always telling the truth

Sexual assault is fundamentally a gendered crime, most often perpetrated by men and boys against women and girls. It is also the type of violent crime that is most under-reported to police, and the [prevalence of prejudicial beliefs about sexual assault and the credibility of victims](#) is a key barrier to reporting. Results from the 2025 SSPPS suggest that among both women and men, perceptions are shifting away from doubting the credibility of those who report sexual assault. When asked whether they thought that those who report sexual assault are almost always telling the truth, 67% of women agreed, up from 62% in 2018 (Chart 2). Among men, the proportion who agreed also increased, from 47% to 50%.

Chart 2
Perceptions of gender-based violence, gender expression and gender equality, by gender, Canada, 2018 and 2025



Note(s): All differences between estimates for women+ and men+ and between 2018 and 2025 are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with these statements. Possible responses were "strongly agree," "agree," "neither agree nor disagree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree." For analysis, answers of "strongly agree" and "agree" were combined and referred to simply as "agree." The category "women+" includes women, as well as some non-binary respondents and some respondents who did not state their gender, while the category "men+" includes men, as well as some non-binary persons and some respondents who did not state their gender. In 2025, responses from respondents who had indicated their gender as non-binary and those who did not state their gender were combined with responses from those who had indicated their gender as women or men, in order to safeguard confidentiality and data quality in line with Statistics Canada standards. To enable trend comparisons with the 2018 survey, the same process was applied retroactively to responses received

in 2018. For this reason, proportions for 2018 reported in this chart will not match those in reports published previously. Percent calculations include missing responses.

Source(s): Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (5256), 2018 and 2025.

Fewer people agree that people should be able to express their gender however they choose

When it came to their perceptions of gender diversity, women were more likely than men to agree with statements supportive of people's rights to gender expression. In 2025, more women (77%) than men (70%) agreed that people should be able to express their gender however they choose, and that they would support a family member if they came out as transgender (77% of women versus 65% of men).

Among both women and men, decreases were seen in terms of support for people's right to express their gender however they choose. Among women, those who agreed that people should have this right decreased from 85% in 2018 to 77% in 2025. Among men, a similar decrease was noted (from 78% to 70%).

Among 15-to-24-year-olds, support for diverse gender expression high among women, low among men

Gender, age and other demographic characteristics were associated with different levels of support for people's right to express their gender however they choose in 2025. For example, support of diverse gender expression was high among young women aged 15 to 24 (82%), but men in that age group were much less likely to agree (68%) (Table 1). In fact, agreement with diverse gender expression among men aged 15 to 24 was more in line with that of men in the older age groups—the opposite of what was seen among women.

First Nations women, people with university education more often support diverse gender expression

Overall, agreement with people's right to diverse gender expression was similar between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, among both women and men in 2025. The exception was First Nations women, among whom support was more common (79%) than it was among non-Indigenous women (77%).

Whether or not individuals agreed with people being able to express their gender however they choose varied according to education level, with support highest among both women (81%) and men (74%) who had completed university.

Increase in women, decrease in men who agree that there are obstacles to women getting ahead

Research shows that [women continue to face inequality when it comes to economic well-being, access to health care, political influence and other aspects](#) of modern life. When asked if they thought that there are significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead compared with men, in 2025, women were considerably more likely to agree (75%) than men (52%). Additionally, while agreement with this perspective among women increased from 2018 (72%), it decreased among men (55%).

Agreement with the notion that women face obstacles to getting ahead was higher among younger women aged 15 to 24 (78%), following a substantial increase from 2018 (68%). In 2018, the highest levels of agreement had been among women aged 55 and older (77%); agreement among these women decreased slightly in 2025 to 74%.

LGB+, transgender and non-binary people more likely to agree that women face obstacles

LGB+ people—that is, persons whose reported sexual orientation is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or another sexual orientation that is not heterosexual—more often agreed that women face obstacles to getting ahead. Almost 9 in 10 (89%) LGB+ women agreed, compared with 74% of heterosexual women. An even larger difference was noted among LGB+ men (76%) versus their heterosexual counterparts (51%). Additionally, a larger proportion (87%) of transgender and non-binary people agreed, compared with 75% of cisgender women and 51% of cisgender men (see Note to readers).

Table 1
Perceptions related to gender diversity and gender equality, by gender and selected characteristics, Canada, 2025

	Women+	Women+	Women+	Men+	Men+	Men+
	% who agree	95% confidence interval - from	95% confidence interval - to	% who agree	95% confidence interval - from	95% confidence interval - to
People should be able to express their gender however they choose						
Total	77	77	78	70²	69	70
Age group (years)						
15 to 24	82	80	83	68 ³	66	70
25 to 34 (reference category)	81	80	83	73 ²	71	74
35 to 44	76 ¹	75	78	69 ³	67	71
45 to 54	75 ¹	73	76	68 ³	67	70
55 and older	76 ¹	75	76	69 ³	69	70
Indigenous identity						
Indigenous person (reference category)	79	76	81	69 ²	66	72
First Nations	82 ¹	78	85	71 ²	66	75
Métis	77	73	80	67 ²	63	72
Inuit	74	68	79	71	64	77
Non-Indigenous person (reference category)	77	77	78	70 ²	69	70
Sexual orientation						
Heterosexual (reference category)	76	75	77	68 ²	68	69
LGB+	96 ¹	95	97	93 ³	91	94
Lesbian or gay	96 ¹	94	98	93 ³	90	95
Bisexual or pansexual	96 ¹	94	97	93 ³	90	95
Sexual orientation not elsewhere classified	94 ¹	90	97	94 ¹	87	98
Highest level of education completed						
Less than high school diploma	72 ¹	70	74	65 ³	63	67
High school diploma	76 ¹	74	77	68 ³	66	69
College or trade school certificate or diploma	75 ¹	74	76	68 ³	67	69
University certificate, diploma or degree (reference category)	81	81	82	74 ²	73	75
Marital status						
Married or common-law	75 ¹	75	76	69 ²	68	70
Separated, divorced, or widowed	76 ¹	75	77	70 ²	68	72
Single, never married (reference category)	82	81	83	70 ²	69	72

Table 1 - continued

Perceptions related to gender diversity and gender equality, by gender and selected characteristics, Canada, 2025

	Women+	Women+	Women+	Men+	Men+	Men+
There are significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than men						
Total	75	74	75	52²	52	53
Age group (years)						
15 to 24 (reference category)	78	77	80	48 ²	46	50
25 to 34	78	76	79	49 ²	47	51
35 to 44	72 ¹	71	74	48 ²	46	50
45 to 54	73 ¹	71	74	49 ²	47	50
55 and older	74 ¹	73	75	59 ³	58	60
Indigenous identity						
Indigenous person	78 ¹	76	80	52 ²	49	55
First Nations	80 ¹	76	83	52 ²	47	57
Métis	78	75	81	52 ²	47	56
Inuit	65 ¹	58	71	48 ²	41	55
Non-Indigenous person (reference category)	75	74	75	52 ²	52	53
Sexual orientation						
Heterosexual (reference category)	74	73	75	51 ²	50	52
LGB+	89 ¹	88	91	76 ³	73	79
Lesbian or gay	89 ¹	85	92	73 ³	69	77
Bisexual or pansexual	90 ¹	88	91	78 ³	73	82
Sexual orientation not elsewhere classified	89 ¹	84	92	83 ¹	74	89
Highest level of education completed						
Less than high school diploma	67 ¹	65	69	51 ³	49	53
High school diploma	74 ¹	72	75	51 ³	49	52
College or trade school certificate or diploma	73 ¹	72	75	50 ³	49	51
University certificate, diploma or degree (reference category)	78	78	79	56 ²	54	57
Marital status						
Married or common-law	72 ¹	72	73	54 ³	53	55
Separated, divorced, or widowed	75 ¹	74	76	53 ³	50	55
Single, never married (reference category)	79	78	80	49 ²	48	51

1. Significantly different from reference category only ($p < 0.05$).2. Significantly different from estimate for women+ only ($p < 0.05$).3. Significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$) and estimate for women+ ($p < 0.05$).

Note(s): Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with these statements. Possible responses were "strongly agree," "agree," "neither agree nor disagree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree." For analysis, answers of "strongly agree" and "agree" were combined and referred to simply as "agree." The category "Women+" includes women, as well as some non-binary respondents and some respondents who did not state their gender, while the category "Men+" includes men, as well as some non-binary persons and some respondents who did not state their gender. Percent calculations include missing responses.

Source(s): Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (5256), 2025.

Note to readers

This release is based on results from the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS), conducted for the second time in 2025, following the initial cycle in 2018. The SSPPS collects information on experiences and characteristics of violent victimization as well as the continuum of other unwanted sexual experiences while in public, online, at school or at work. In addition, the SSPPS collects information on respondents' perceptions of the following statements:

Violence between partners can be excused if people get so angry they lose control;

It is understandable that someone would react violently if they suspect their partner of having an affair;

People have the right to check who their partner has been calling or texting at all times;

There are significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than men;

People should be able to express their gender however they choose;

People who report sexual assault are almost always telling the truth;

I would support a family member if they came out as transgender; and

Same-sex and opposite-sex couples should have the same rights to adopt children.

See the Juristat article "[Perceptions of gender-based violence and gender equality, identity and expression in Canada, 2025](#)" for a full analysis of respondents' perceptions of each of these statements.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement. Possible responses were "strongly agree," "agree," "neither agree nor disagree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree." For analysis, answers of "strongly agree" and "agree" were combined and referred to simply as "agree." Answers of "strongly disagree" and "disagree" were combined and referred to as "disagree."

The SSPPS also collects a variety of sociodemographic data which were not presented in this release (including, but not limited to, racialized population group, place of birth, employment status, income) but which are in the corresponding Juristat article. This also includes information on people's experiences of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and experiences of unwanted sexualized behaviours in public and private spaces.

The term transgender refers to persons whose gender does not correspond to their sex at birth. Non-binary refers to persons whose gender is not exclusively male or female, and cisgender refers to persons whose gender corresponds to their sex at birth. Given that the non-binary population is small, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is sometimes necessary to protect the confidentiality of responses. In these cases, individuals in the category "non-binary persons" are distributed into the other two gender categories. Unless otherwise indicated in the text, the category "men" includes transgender and cisgender men, as well as some non-binary persons and some respondents who did not state their gender, while the category "women" includes transgender and cisgender women, as well as some non-binary persons and some respondents who did not state their gender. To enable trend comparisons with the 2018 survey, the same process was applied retroactively to responses received in 2018. For this reason, proportions for 2018 reported in this release will not match those in earlier reports.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5256](#).

The article "[Perceptions of gender-based violence and gender equality, identity and expression in Canada, 2025](#)" is now available as part of the publication *Juristat* ([85-002-X](#)).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfo-medias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).