

Nunes, K. L. (2018, April). *Attitude check: What about evaluative attitudes towards violence?* Keynote presentation at the 12th Annual Risk and Recovery Forensic Conference, Hamilton, Ontario.

Attitude Check: What About Evaluative Attitudes Towards Violence?

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Attitudes in Forensic Theory, Research, and Practice

- “Lots of people are out to get you”
- “A lot of times, sexual assaults are not planned . . . they just happen”
- “I see myself as a violent person”
- “Rape is unlikely to happen in the woman’s own familiar neighborhood”
- “Sometimes you have to threaten people to get them to do the right thing, even if you don’t like doing it”

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at·ti·tude
/ˈadəˌt(y)oʊd/
noun

a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior.

"she took a tough attitude toward other people's indulgences"

synonyms: view, viewpoint, outlook, perspective, stance, standpoint, position, inclination, temper, orientation, approach, reaction

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Attitudes in Social Psychology

- “Degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior” (Ajzen, 1991)
- Attitudes = evaluations

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Violence is bad

“Lots of people are out to get you”

Violence is good

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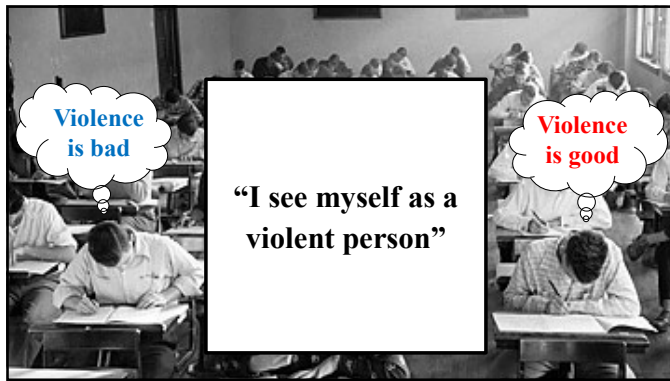
Violence is bad

“A lot of times, sexual assaults are not planned . . . they just happen”

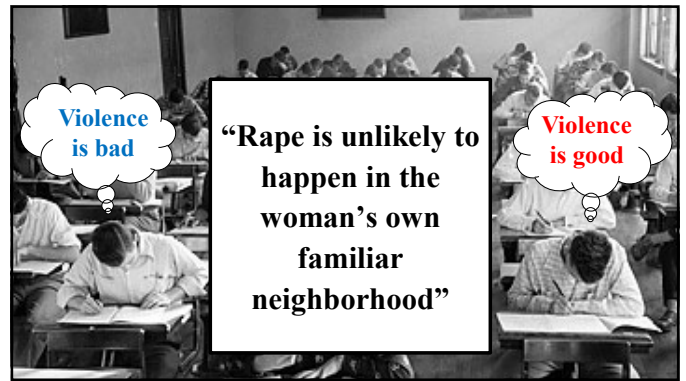
Violence is good

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Questions

- Do measures of attitudes towards violence assess evaluative attitudes?
- Are both attitudes and evaluative attitudes independently associated with violent behaviour?

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Article

Thinking Clearly About Violent Cognitions: Attitudes May Be Distinct From Other Cognitions

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Abstract
The purpose of the current study was to explore whether measures such as the Violence Scale of the Revised Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA-R-V) and the Criminal Attitudes to Violence Scale (CAVS) assess attitudes toward violence (i.e., evaluation of violence) and whether attitudes and the cognitions assessed by the MCAA-R-V and CAVS are independently associated with violent behavior. Participants

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Evaluation of Violence Scale

Violence is ...

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very						Very
negative						positive

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MCAA-R Violent Attitudes Scale
(Mills & Kroner, 2007)

Sometimes you have to fight to keep your self-respect

1 2 3 4

Disagree Agree



13


Criminal Attitudes to Violence Scale (CAVS)
(Polaschek et al., 2004)

Fighting between men is normal

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Strongly

disagree agree



14

13

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Violent Behaviour Scale (VBS)


From when you were 16 years old to today, how many times have you started a physical fight with someone?

Never 3 times 6 times

Once 4 times 7 times

Twice 5 times 8 times

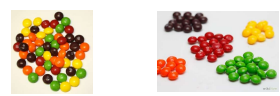

9 times or more



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Measuring the Same Thing or Different Things?

- Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

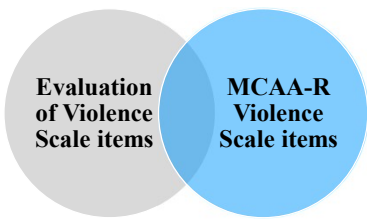




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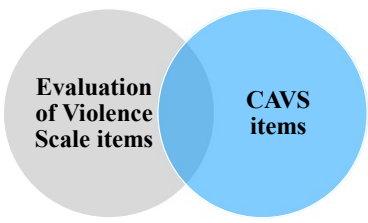

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Measuring Different Things: Two Factors

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Measuring Different Things: Two Factors

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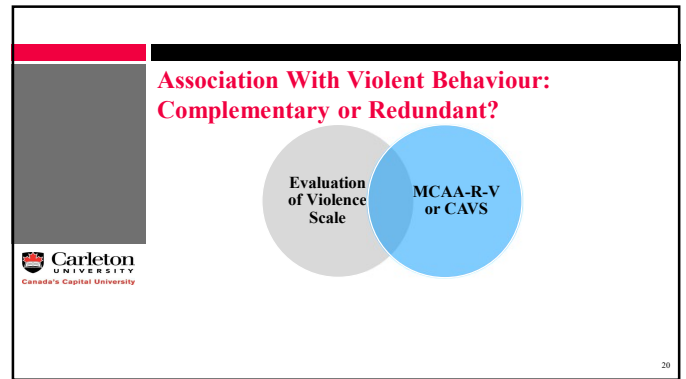
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Correlation with Violent Behaviour

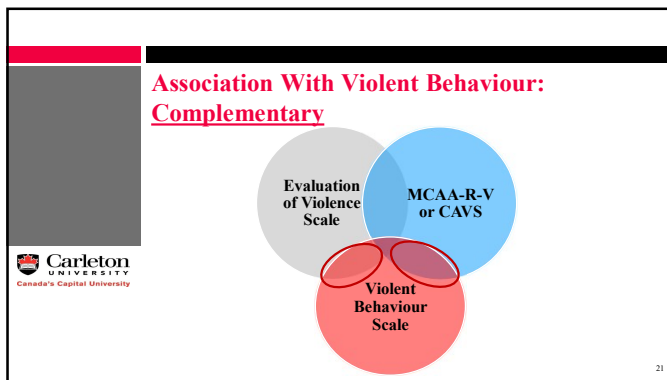
	Past violent behaviour
Evaluation of Violence Scale	.37*
MCAA-R-V	.37*
CAVS	.43*

* $p < .05$

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Attitude May Be Everything, But Is Everything an Attitude? Cognitive Distortions May Not Be Evaluations of Rape

Sexual Abuse
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Abstract
Cognitive distortions are often referred to as attitudes toward rape in theory, research, and clinical practice pertaining to sexual aggression. In the social-psychological literature, however, attitudes are typically defined as evaluations; thus, in this context, attitudes

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Evaluation of Rape Scale

Rape is ...

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very						Very
negative						positive

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RAPE Scale (Bumby, 1996)

Victims of rape are usually a little bit to blame for what happens

1	2	3	4
Strongly			Strongly
disagree			agree

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Modified Coercive Sexuality Scale
(Rapaport & Burkhart, 1984)

Since age 16, how many times have you touched a female's genital area against her will?

Never	3 times	6 times
Once	4 times	7 times
Twice	5 times	8 times
	9 times or more	




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Likelihood to Rape
(Malamuth, 1981)

What is the likelihood that you would rape someone if you could be assured of not being caught and punished?

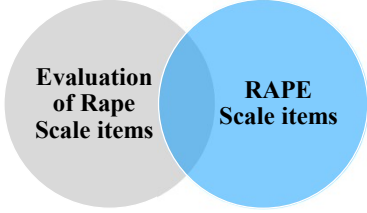

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all likely				Very likely



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**Measuring Different Things:
Two Factors**

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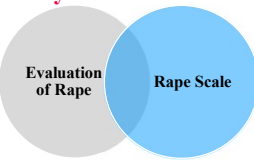

Correlation with Sexually Aggressive Behaviour

	Past sexual aggression	Likelihood to rape
Evaluation of Rape Scale	.25*	.32*
RAPE Scale (cognitive distortions)	.26*	.35*

* $p < .05$

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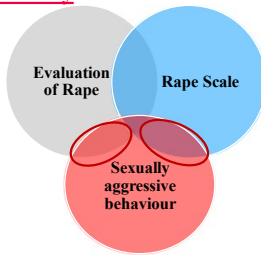

**Association With Sexual Aggression:
Complementary or Redundant?**

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**Association With Sexual Aggression:
Complementary**


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Replication and Extension


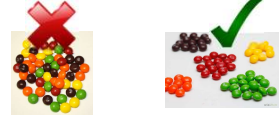
- Hermann, C. A., Nunes, K. L., & Pedneault, C. (2016). *Further evidence that evaluation of sexual aggression may be distinct from cognitive distortions*. Manuscript in preparation.
- Hermann, C. A., & Nunes, K. L. (2016). *Implicit and explicit evaluations of sexual aggression predict subsequent sexually aggressive behavior in a sample of community men*. Manuscript submitted for publication.



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Summary: Evaluative Attitudes were Distinct


- Measures of evaluative attitudes towards violence formed a distinct factor from other measures



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Summary: Evaluative Attitudes were Relevant

- Measures of evaluative attitudes towards violence and the other measures were independently associated with violent behaviour
- Together, evaluative attitude scales and the other measures were more strongly associated with violent behaviour than either one alone





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Typical violent attitude measures may not assess evaluative attitudes



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But, how well did our measures assess evaluative attitudes?



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Evaluation of Violence Questionnaire (EVQ): Development and Validity



Chantal Hermann Chloe Pedneault



Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada



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You hitting (for example, punching or kicking) a guy who hurts someone you care about.


Very negative A bit negative A bit positive Very positive



37

You threatening to physically hurt a guy who owes you money.


Very bad A bit bad A bit good Very good



38

You using a weapon (for example, a baseball bat, knife, or gun) on a guy who has sex with your girlfriend/wife or boyfriend/husband.


Very unpleasant A bit unpleasant A bit pleasant Very pleasant



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Does the EVQ Measure Evaluative Attitudes Towards Violence?

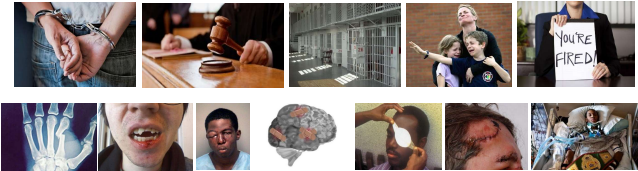

- If so, then its scores should change in response to established attitude-change procedures
- Randomized experiment
 - Attitude-change condition
 - Control condition



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Attitude-Change Condition


- Violence is a “lose-lose” situation, with negative consequences for everyone involved.

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You hitting a guy.

bad




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You hitting a guy who hurts someone you care about.


sad



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You hitting a guy who steals from you.

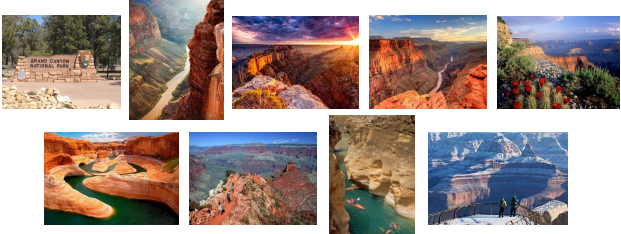
spoil



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Control Condition


- The Grand Canyon is an impressive site with something for everyone to enjoy.



45

You hitting a guy.


bridge



46

You hitting a guy who hurts someone you care about.


page



47

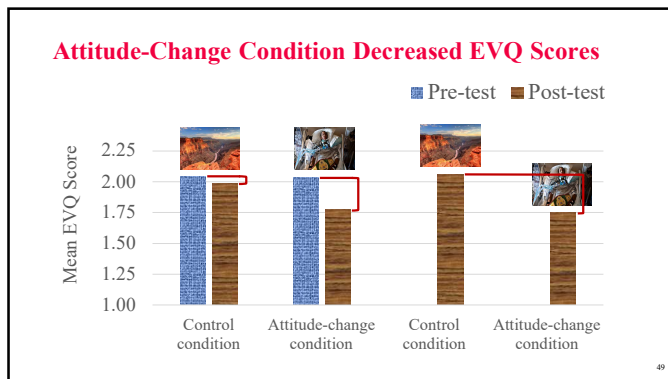
You hitting a guy who steals from you.

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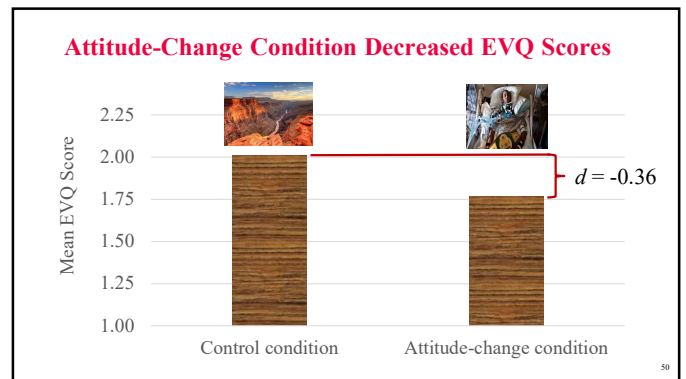


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Results suggest that the EVQ does assess evaluative attitudes towards violence

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Next Steps

- Further tests of construct validity
- Further tests of distinctiveness
- Causal effect on violent behaviour?
- Alternative approaches; e.g., implicit, interview
- Other types of violence and populations; e.g., sexual violence, IPV, women

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Conclusion

- Evaluative attitudes towards violence may have been overlooked, but may be relevant
- EVQ promising for further research
- Precision and clarity of conceptualization and measurement → better understanding of causes → better assessment and intervention → reduce violence

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Aggressive Cognitions and Behaviour Research Lab

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