

Nunes, K. L., Hermann, C. A., & Pedneault, C. I. (2018, July). *The development and validation of a measure of attitudes towards violence*. Paper presented at the Ohio State Symposium on Social Psychology: Cognitive and Metacognitive Processes in Attitude Formation, Change, and Strength, Columbus, Ohio.

**The Development and Validation of a Measure of Attitudes Towards Violence**

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Canada's Capital University

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**Attitudes in Forensic Theory, Research, and Practice**

- Violence scale of the Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA)
  - “It is reasonable to expect a fight from someone you cheated”
- Criminal Attitudes to Violence Scale (CAVS)
  - “When I get violent, what I want most is to teach the other person a lesson”

**at·ti·tude**  
/ˈædəˌt(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

**Attitudes in Social Psychology**

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

**Evaluative Attitudes Missing?**

THAT FEELING THAT YOU FORGOT SOMETHING

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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Violence is ...

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very negative						Very positive

CAVS are independently associated with violent behavior. Participants

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- Preliminary evidence that
  - evaluative attitudes towards violence may not be assessed by typical forensic measures
  - both evaluative attitudes and these other cognitions are independently related to violent behaviour

CAVS are independently associated with violent behavior. Participants

**Evaluation of Violence Questionnaire (EVQ): Development and Validity**



Chantal Hermann      Chloe Pedneault






**EVQ Development**

- Created large pool of items
- Administered to two separate samples of men from the community ( $N = 283$ ;  $N = 226$ ).
- Retained 17 items for the EVQ
- Retention/exclusion based primarily on
  - item variance (minimize floor effects)
  - inter-item correlations (minimize redundancy)
  - factor structure (ensure unidimensionality)

**Sample EVQ Item**

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
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**Sample EVQ Item**

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


Very bad	A bit bad	A bit good	Very good
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**Sample EVQ Item**

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



13

**Does the EVQ Measure Evaluative Attitudes Towards Violence?**

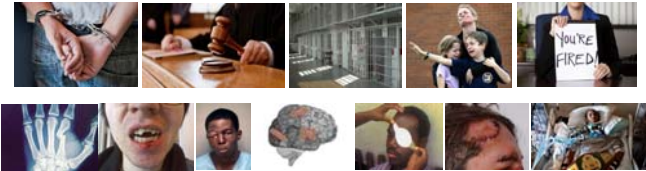

- If so, then its scores should change in response to established attitude-change procedures
- Randomized experiment
  - Attitude-change condition
  - Control condition
- $N = 510$  men from the community (Qualtrics Panel)



14

**Attitude-Change Condition**


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

15

You hitting a guy.


*bad*



16

You hitting a guy who hurts someone you care about.


*sad*



17

You hitting a guy who steals from you.

*spoil*

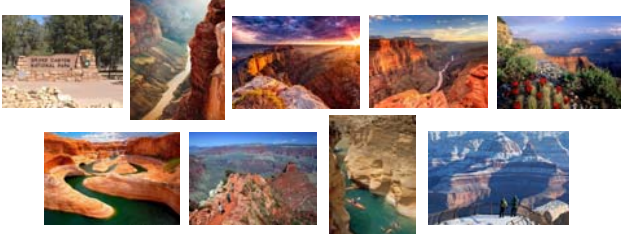


18

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**Control Condition**


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



19

You hitting a guy.


*bridge*



20

You hitting a guy who hurts someone you care about.


*page*



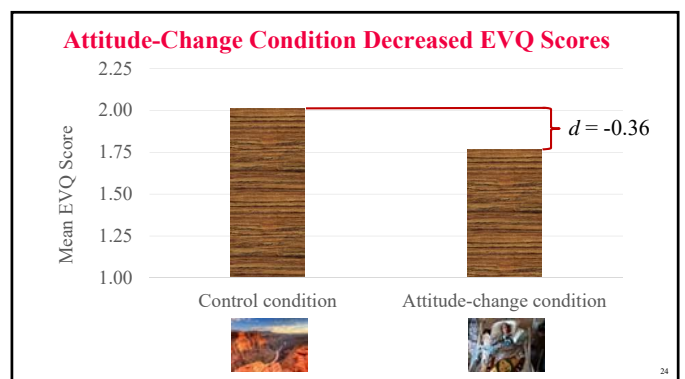
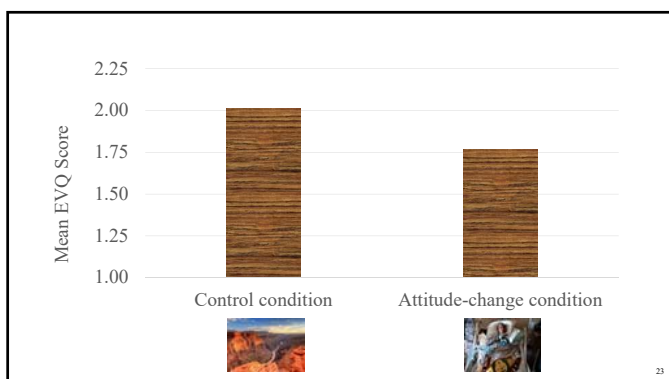
21

You hitting a guy who steals from you.

*section*




22



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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

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27

Aggressive Cognitions and Behaviour Research Lab



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28