



Understanding the Effects of Impaired Driving in Saskatchewan: Perspectives of Family Members Regarding Police Interactions



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Background to the Study

- Saskatchewan is home to some of the highest rates of impaired driving and impaired driving causing death in Canada.
- UK study exploring the health, social, and economic impacts on the families of homicide victims
- CSKA, MADD, SK Ministry of Justice, SGI, and University of Regina
- The research team

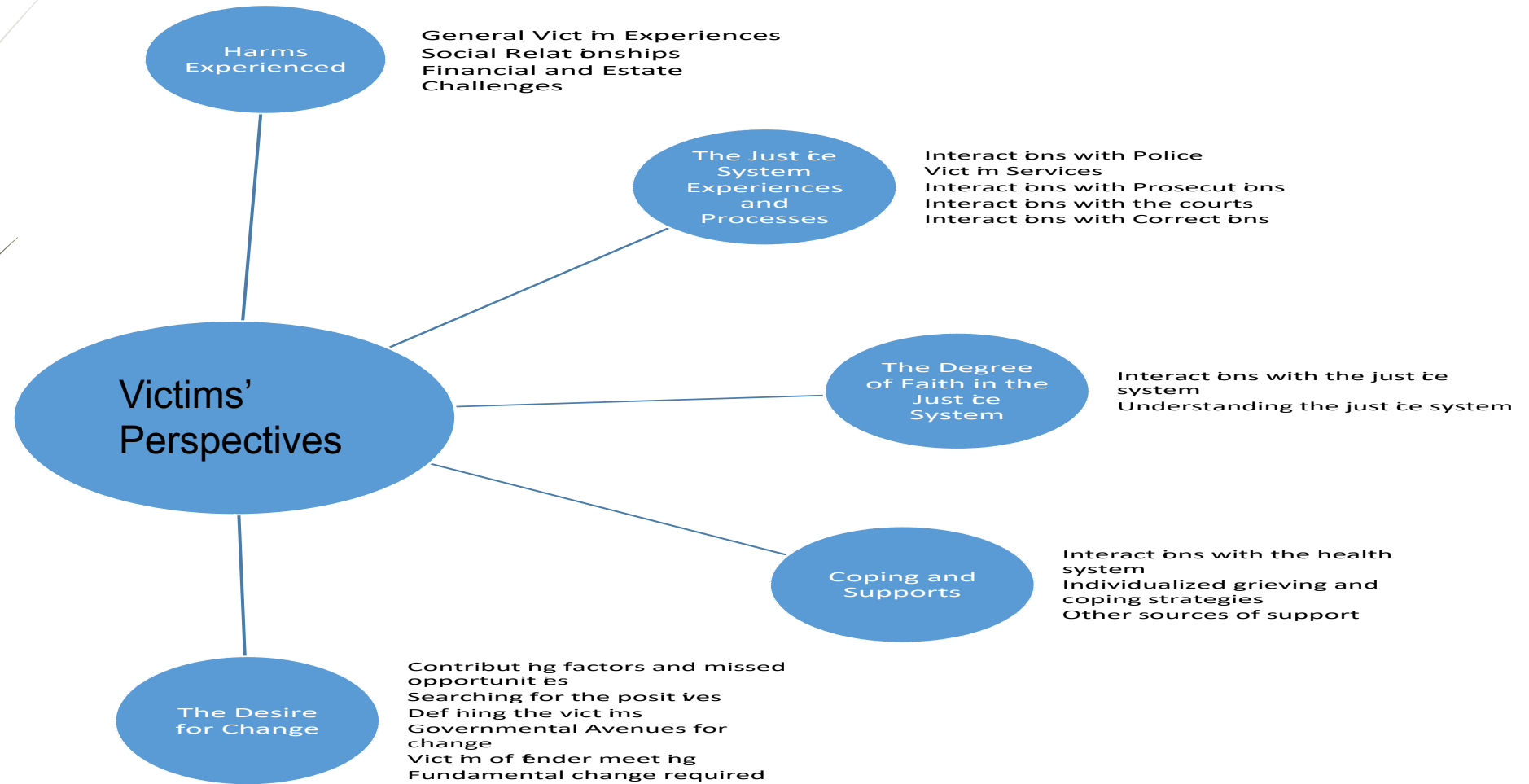
Research Framework

- Providing a platform for families to share their experiences, providing a new perspective on the effects of impaired driving causing death.
- How might a study focused on the families of those killed at the hands of impaired drivers, serve to inform public policy and help to change the narrative around impaired driving in Saskatchewan?
- Might such a study complement the existing mix of strategies in play in Saskatchewan?

Methodology and Analysis

- Sampling
 - Purposive and Snowball Techniques
- Participants
 - 13 Participants representing 8 impaired driving incidents
- Analytical Framework
 - Thematic Network Analysis

Results – Global Theme: Impaired Driving Causing Death – Victims’ Perspectives



Organizing Theme 2: Basic Theme 1: Issue Discussed - Perceptions of First Contact

- *When they came that night it was like they knocked, this police officer knocked at the door at 1:00 in the morning and told us and even then I didn't want, I didn't ask what happened, really, any more than I knew there were a few details and I didn't need to know any details and ask any more. (Melanie)*
- *"There's been an accident" is kind of what they said and, well "the children were involved". And that's about all they said. So then they said to me, do I have any questions? Well, when you don't know what's involved, it's tough to ask questions. So—but then he came back in the house and he said it was drinking and driving involved. (Marie)*
- *All of a sudden the police came and when you, you know that when the police came, and the police comes into your house you know that it's not right, it's not good at all. (Marilou)*

Organizing Theme 2: Basic Theme 1: Issue Discussed - Perceptions of Support Following Initial Contact

- *We don't have the best relationship with the RCMP because they're not very supportive in my brother's case. And I don't know if it's because we're from a remote community and he was native and alcohol was a factor. (Shirley)*
- *But the people in the hospital, the RCMP, the, like everybody in the initial stages that first week, very, very, very good and they did everything they could to help us. (Chad)*

Organizing Theme 2: Basic Theme 1: Issue Discussed - The Police as a Source of Information

- *And for him to come in and explain what he saw and what he did was really good. So from the RCMP standpoint that was good, like very good. (Chad)*
- *Like, we only heard from Kenneth—Kenneth's case from family members and the hospital. Nothing was from the cops. Like, the cops were even trying to say Kenneth was driving, and yet he was ejected from the vehicle. (Shirley)*

Organizing Theme 2: Basic Theme 1: Issue Discussed - Perceptions of the Emotional Pressure on Involved Police Officers

- *The RCMP that were first on the site—when that accident happened there was actually two, there was a cruiser going by and they were there less than a minute after it happened. The dust hadn't even settled, still floating in the air. The gentleman that was there and helped the kids and helped Chanda and Jordan, he actually came to the hospital and told us what he saw and what he did, and seeing his emotion and seeing it being real was good. I mean, yeah, it's hard, but also he understands what we were going through because he went through it, he was there. (Chad)*
- *I try to put my mask on when I'm dealing with that because, well, the prosecutor, the RCMP, they don't need my emotion. They don't deserve that. It's not a safe place for me. Let's get the facts, let's be realistic, and move on. (Amy)*

Organizing Theme 2: Basic Theme 1: Summary

- Participants' experiences with the police at the time of and the days after the incident ranged from great satisfaction to great disdain.
- Despite the context of the relationships with police, each participant identified the important role police play during such a traumatic event. Again, the need for empathy, direction, and pertinent information pertaining to both the case and the criminal justice system process was of importance to each participant.■



Recommendation 1: Victim Support

Recommendation 5: Support for First Responders and Case Personnel

- Secondary victimization due to impaired driving results in significant harms and affects families in multiple and diverse ways. Victim Services legislation and practices must reflect a much broader understanding of who victims are and what their needs might be.
- Recognize that first responders and judicial personnel may also experience trauma as a result of their involvement with a case and ensure that support services are provided to them as needed.
 - *It's not just us who are impacted by our accident, it's not just us. It's—you know, like I said before, it's the police, it's the emergency. I know the first responder who arrived at the scene, I know her personally, you know? I know her. I know some police officers not that went to that scene but I know that ...they go to others. Yeah. And I can imagine what they have to deal with. And don't tell me it doesn't affect them, you know? (Lou)*

Recommendation 2: Death Notification Process

- As part of the death notification process, police should ensure that immediate supports are in place for victims (circumstances and time permitting).
- *All of a sudden the police came and when you, you know that when the police came, and the police comes into your house you know that it's not right, it's not good at all. So I just went crazy and [a friend of her son] and my sister has to restrain me. I ran out to the cops and I told him, I said, "No, it's not my JP at all." I said, "You got it wrong," I said, "It's not my JP" and that's all and then I collapse. (Marilou)*

Recommendation 3: Victim Education

- Provide educational opportunities to victims to assist their understanding and navigation of judicial processes thereby establishing realistic expectations around case law and precedence.
- *“Where did we find our answers?” And like I say at the beginning, I think it was the RCMP, that like told us about Victim Services, for example, and gave us their card. And he said, yeah, he said that it would be Victim Services in Moose Jaw, should be, but that they would move it to Saskatoon because we were closer to Saskatoon, and then hopefully the court case would get moved there and so on as well. So it was him that, you know, connected us there.
(Melanie)*

Recommendation 4: Communication and Information

- Establish a clear and consistent mode of communication with victims to ensure they have accurate and timely case information throughout the entire justice system process.
- *The lead investigator was actually quite wonderful and helpful, and he went out of his way to let my husband know where things were at and what he knew, and gave us the court dates and all of that kind of stuff. (Alana)*