



NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S CENTRE  
EMPOWERING WOMEN BY PROVIDING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT TO EXPLORE THEIR NEEDS

## feminist DISPATCH

The Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre is a non-profit, community-based feminist organization in Thunder Bay, Ontario. We work with self-identified women to increase their access to knowledge, skills and resources so they can make informed choices.



mixed media collage from craftivism workshop with Natalie Hotson (May 2022)

### From our Executive Director

Gender Based Violence (GBV) has had a high profile lately, for all the wrong reasons – inquiries or inquests into the femicides and murders committed by two different abusive men in Renfrew County, Ontario and Portapique, Nova Scotia. It is chilling to listen to the descriptions of these men and their coercive behaviour, because they match the patterns of ex-partners reported by the women we work with daily. It is also empowering (in a grim sort of way) to hear the testimony of so many women's advocates who have come to the same conclusions as we have at NOWC: that the safety of women experiencing GBV is not a priority. And, that the system that was supposedly designed to protect them often puts them at further risk.

The reports, statistics and inquest recommendations listed below all speak to the same issue: there is an epidemic of GBV--exacerbated by the COVID pandemic--putting the safety of many women, gender-diverse people, and children at risk across the country. Indigenous women are especially vulnerable to both serious harm and criminalization when seeking help from institutional services. (See BC Report) And despite all our training and institutional policy and protocol, no one seems able to make abusers accountable for their violence, most especially the legal system. Our daily court watching activity confirms that abusive men, even those with serious charges and/or long histories of GBV, are routinely released with minimal conditions and dubious sureties. And they breach those conditions with astonishing regularity and frightening lack of consequence. (We have, however, been seeing some encouraging actions by Crowns and Justices of the Peace in recent weeks). According to the recently released Violent Crime Severity Index, Statistics Canada records that (reported) sexual assaults have risen 48% in Thunder Bay, resulting in the highest rate per capita of all metropolitan centres in Canada. Previous reports have established that

Thunder Bay has one of the highest rates of domestic (Intimate Partner) violence reports. So, it is long past time for some serious systemic change.

The Jury Recommendations from the Renfrew County Inquest into the murders of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk & Nathalie Warmerdam direct the Government of Ontario to take a more global and cross sectoral approach to addressing GBV. Among other things, they recommended:

- formal acknowledgement that GBV is an epidemic
- connection of records and data systems (including information from family and criminal court)
- provision of emergency and transportation funds for survivors
- disclosure of perpetrator's history of GBV to current partners (e.g. Clare's Law)
- more effective use of risk assessments
- more services for perpetrators of GBV
- to disallow return of confiscated firearms
- and to provide annualized funding to services like ours that support survivors

Unfortunately, the full set of recommendations is couched in gender neutral language, using the term "Intimate Partner Violence" throughout. As you will see if you read Pam Cross's report to the jury "Forty-four percent," Gender Based Violence results from the inequality of women – that is, patriarchal structures that prop up toxic masculinity, colonialism, and white supremacy. Only a gendered (intersectional, anti-colonial) analysis will create effective policy.

One central direction is to create a Survivor Advocate role for survivors who are navigating the legal system. This is exactly the role played by NOWC's GBV Navigator, a position we developed in 2019 in partnership with other service providers at the TB & District Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse as part of a GBV High Risk Navigation protocol. In combination with our Court Advocate, this is proving to be a highly effective means to keep survivors informed, safe, supported and connected to various systemic players. It also keeps those system players informed about escalating levels of risk or breaches of conditions by perpetrators. Although funding would be nice, we are not waiting for a cheque to arrive! We are, however, looking at providing education and training around risk assessment, coercive control in family law and alternative responses for survivors, such as the Mutual Aid movement. Stay tuned!

Gwen O'Reilly, ED

## Reporting on gender-based violence (GBV), intimate partner violence (IPV), and femicide

### From the archives:

**Who is JANE DOE?** (*Chatelaine*, January 1999, Vol. 72, No. 1)

### Some recent news articles show how the justice system is (still) failing survivors:

- **Canada's shadow pandemic: Femicide** (*The Conversation*, July 28)
- **Canadian experts say sexual violence in hockey, other sports has existed for decades** (*CBC Sports*, July 27). See also: Ending Violence Association of Canada's **Statement Regarding Hockey Canada's Handling of Sexual Assault** (July 22)
- **Toronto woman set on fire: Violence against women and girls should be treated as a hate crime** (*The Conversation*, July 13)
- **Woman claims Quebec man groped her days after conditional discharge for sexual assault** (*CBC News*, July 11)

- [Jury at triple-homicide inquest makes 86 recommendations to prevent intimate partner violence](#) (*CBC News*, June 28)

### Media Reporting Resources:

- Femifesto's [Use the Right Words: Media Reporting on Sexual Violence in Canada](#) and [Checklists and TipSheets](#)
- OAITH's [Femicide Reporting Recommendations](#)
- The 519's [Media Reference Guide](#) to fair & inclusive reporting with 2 Spirit, trans, and gender-diverse communities

### Recent GBV-related reports and resources:

- [Why coercive control is a warning sign for violence in relationships](#), CBC video clip with journalist Anna Maria Tremonti sharing her personal experience
- [Pilot Survey of Prevalence and Costs of Intimate Partner Violence in the Workplace](#) by Audra J. Bowlus and Barbara J. MacQuarrie (May 2022)
- [Forty-four percent: A SHORT HISTORY OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE](#) prepared by Pamela Cross, Legal Director, Luke's Place Support & Resource Centre for the Inquest into the deaths of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam (June 2022)
- [GBV in Canada: Behind the Stats](#), a video conversation with award-winning journalists Anna Maria Tremonti and Eternity Martis (July 2022). See also: [Welcome to Paradise](#), Tremonti's podcast about surviving IPV, and [They Said This Would Be Fun: Race, Campus Life, and Growing Up](#), Martis' memoir.
- [Intersections Between Employment and Safety Among Racialized Women](#) by Woman Abuse Council of Toronto ([WomanACT](#), July 2022)
- [The Road to Safety: Indigenous Survivors in BC Speak Out against Intimate Partner Violence during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) ([BWSS](#), July 2022)



### Good Food Box

Order from your host-site by August 8th  
Pick up from your host-site on August 17th

### Locally Grown Good Food Fundraiser Boxes:

Order from the Women's Centre by August 8th  
Pick up at the Moose Hall on August 17th

Available July - December for \$60/box (\$20 tax receipt). Limited quantities! Email [GFB@nwowc.org](mailto:GFB@nwowc.org) to reserve your Locally Grown Good Food Box today! Find details [here](#).

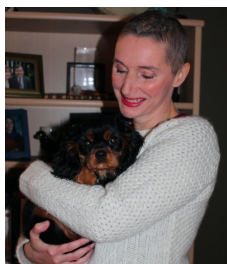
[Learn more about the GFB](#)

### Community Events + Additional Resources

- August 22: [Post-Art: An Art Journey Through the Mail](#) by EGALE for Ontario 2SLGBTQI youth (14-29) using an arts-based format to reflect on the themes of consent and healthy relationships. Art supplies provided! [Register](#) by August 14
- August 23: [Introduction to Radical Reproductive Justice](#), an online workshop with Rania El Mugammar (6:00-8:30 PM EST)
- Oshdeebeganwin – (Oshdee: cross your heart, Begaa-win: written agreement): Talking Treaties with Michele Solomon, Nicole Richmond, and Gene Nowegejick is now available to watch on [Thunder Bay Art Gallery's YouTube channel](#)

- List of [Abortion Services + Supports in Thunder Bay Area](#)
- [Misrepresenting Reproductive Justice: A Black Feminist Critique of 'Protecting Black Life' \(2021\) by Carolette Norwood in \*Signs\*](#). (Note: *Signs* is making several [reproductive justice and abortion-related articles](#) free until November 2022)
- [Shaking It Off: Papal Apologies and Narratives of Exceptionalism in Canada](#) by Patty Krawec (Gender & Generational Justice Brief, Yellowhead Institute)
- [Stolen: Surviving St. Michael's](#) is a podcast by investigative journalist Connie Walker about her family's experience of the residential school system
- [TELLING OUR STORIES: Immigrant Women's Resilience](#), a one-of-a-kind graphic novel by and for immigrant women

## Tributes



### Jody Porter

(July 19, 1972 - July 19, 2022)

Respected storyteller and journalist Jody Porter recently passed away on her 50th birthday after living with ovarian cancer for a number of years. Known for her longstanding dedication to truth-telling about colonialism, right relations, and reconciliation, we were delighted to feature Jody in our self-published book *40 Fabulous Feminists & Amazing Activists of Northwestern Ontario* (2016). At the time, she said, "I feel a responsibility to do the work I do, to share stories that--hopefully--help people understand one another better." In addition to raising her daughter, receiving a 2013 Debwewin Citation, a recognition of her reporting on Indigenous issues as 'speaking truth from the heart,' was noted as one of her proudest achievements. At our 2011 AGM, Jody spoke candidly about some of the childhood experiences she eventually wrote about in "Pathfinding," a personal essay about hiding from her own pain while writing about others. Read her full essay published by *maisonneuve* in 2020 [here](#) (note: Jody shared a trigger warning with readers on twitter).

See also: [CBC journalist Jody Porter remembered for her compassionate storytelling, commitment to truth](#) for more about Jody's work and her impact on friends, colleagues, and communities. The photo of Jody above is one she shared for [Choosing to talk with cancer](#) in the [ ] *Review of Journalism*.

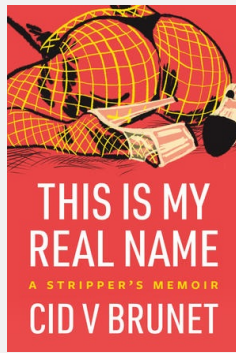


### Miriam Ketonen

(December 31, 1952 - August 29, 2021)

A 'fierce feminist' and social justice advocate, Miriam Ketonen was a union steward and longtime friend of the Women's Centre. Her support of our work continues even in her passing, thanks to generous donations made by her friends and loved ones in her memory. Read Miriam's full obituary [here](#).

To honour Miriam one year after her passing, her dear friend Joan Williams has penned a heartfelt tribute: [The Anniversary Looms](#).



## Loud Women Book Club

The Loud Women Collective's monthly book club reads exclusively feminist non-fiction covering a wide range of topics, encouraging learning, personal growth, and allyship. Thunder Bay chapter meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month in store at Goods & Co Market. The book for August is *This is My Real Name: A Stripper's Memoir* by Cid V Brunet.

[Find out more](#)

## From the Feminist Archives

**Rise Up!** is a digital archive of feminist activism in Canada from the 1970s to the 1990s

- 37 years ago: [Northern Woman Journal – Vol. 9, No. 2 – August 1985](#)
- 43 years ago: [Upstream – Vol. 3, Issue 8 – August 1979](#)

## Gender Based Violence: How we can help

### Navigation Advocacy

The GBV Navigation Advocate provides support for women experiencing or at risk of experiencing physical and/or sexual violence or coercive control by a partner, family member or acquaintance. We can help by:

- Ensuring that women who are experiencing or at high risk of gender-based violence have access to ongoing and appropriate support and referrals
- Coordinating with VAW service providers to ensure that critical information is shared

For more information or to make a referral, contact Jennifer at [navigator@nwowc.org](mailto:navigator@nwowc.org) or (807) 935-8042.

### Court Advocacy

The Gender Based Violence Court Advocate works directly with self-identified women who are navigating various court systems. We can help by:

- Assisting with preparing for court
- Ensuring coordination between various legal sectors (criminal, family, immigration etc.)
- Providing court accompaniment and emotional support

For more information or to make a referral, contact Emma at [gbvcourt@nwowc.org](mailto:gbvcourt@nwowc.org) or (807) 935-8599.



## Computer Space Available

Women can access a computer or video conferencing in a private space at the Women's Centre for:

- Counselling or Healthcare Appointments
- Job Interviews
- Virtual Legal Clinic
- Lawyer's Appointments
- Virtual Court Matters

[Find out more](#)

## those Dog Days of Summer...



The Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre relies on government funding and private donations to continue our work. We gratefully acknowledge the support of volunteers, donors, and funding from the Investing in Women's Future Program of the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, and Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE).

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