



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.



Artwork in inks by a young local artist

From our Executive Director

epidemic 1 of 2 adjective

epi-dem-ic (e-pe-de-mik «)

[Synonyms of epidemic](#) >

- 1 : affecting or tending to affect a disproportionately large number of individuals within a population, community, or region at the same time
| typhoid was epidemic
- 2 a : excessively prevalent
b : **CONTAGIOUS** sense 4
| epidemic laughter
- 3 : characterized by very widespread growth or extent : of, relating to, or constituting an epidemic
| the practice had reached epidemic proportions

This month marks one year since the **Culleton, Kuzyk and Warmerdam Inquest** in Renfrew County, which resulted in **86 recommendations**.

The first, most symbolic *and* most significant recommendation is **to declare Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) an epidemic**. And **many municipalities** are doing just that, following the early example of Lanark County. (Our Provincial Leadership? Not so much.)

There is nothing in the Merriam-Webster definition that does not apply – except I would be inclined to include not just IPV, but Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in all its forms:

Disproportionately affecting more than 50 percent of the world's population? *Check.*

Excessively prevalent? Have you seen our service stats, or tried to get into a local women's shelter lately? *Check.*

Contagious? Have you been paying attention? Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Reproductive and gender freedom in the USA. Women in Iran. Women in Afghanistan. *Check, check, check, check!*

IPV has reached *epidemic proportions*. Whether or not a symbolic gesture will help is not really the point. How can it make it worse? As Luke's Place says: the cost to declare IPV an epidemic is \$0 - The cost not to declare one? \$7.4 billion... and untold lives lost or ruined.

For many years, Thunder Bay has had one of the highest rates of IPV and sexual assault of any municipality in Canada. Last week, NOWC, with support from the

Thunder Bay and District Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse and Naadmagewin Indigenous Domestic Violence Committee, pitched the possibility of declaring a GBV epidemic to the City of Thunder Bay's Community Safety and Well-Being Advisory Council. We emphasized that the issue of violence against Indigenous women alone in this City was good reason to take this step. They agreed to take it forward.

While a symbolic gesture, such a declaration serves to acknowledge the impact that intimate partner violence has on women, children and the community as a whole. Other reasons to do this:

- acknowledge and validate the experience of so many GBV survivors (especially Indigenous women) who are given the message that the violence is their fault. It would go along way to stop victim blaming.
- put pressure on governments to act
- support organizations that work tirelessly to support survivors or respond to abusers with few resources
- create a focus on intervention and prevention in our legal and social service systems
- increase access to justice for survivors and helpful accountability for perpetrators
- decrease healthcare and social service costs

If the safety, dignity and autonomy (AKA EQUALITY) of women and children was a priority in the public response to GBV, women would not be murdered or further harmed.

We have been doing this work for 50 years – believe us, it is not getting better. As Erin Lee from Lanark County Interval House says, let's **See it, Name it, Change it!**

Oh yeah, and it's Pride month! Have a Happy Pride--then call your City Councillor!

Gwen O'Reilly

Drop-in Financial Literacy Sessions

MONEY MATTERS: an informal learning circle for women

with Heather McLeod, CFP, RIS



These are tough times! Join us at the Women's Centre to talk about money stuff in plain language, while learning about resources and strategies to help increase your economic security. These drop-in sessions will be informal conversations over coffee/tea and snacks.

No prior financial knowledge needed, and no registration or fee involved--just drop in with your money questions!

MONDAY, JUNE 5, 12, 19
from **12-1pm**
73 N. Cumberland St.



Heather McLeod is a Certified Financial Planner who loves to share good information about money and its management. She's been advising people on insurance, debt and investments for over a decade. Before that she was a singer songwriter & recording artist for a decade, then a journalist for another decade (she likes to think she looks younger than she is). Heather has personal experience from both the secure and the insecure side of finances. She welcomes questions about all aspects of money management including (not limited to): managing money emotions, being and following money management examples, understanding and improving your credit rating, money & relationships (marriage, common-law and beyond) insurance (WSIB, ODSP, work benefits...), budgeting, saving and managing debt, taxes (the Child Tax Benefit, Disability Tax Credit, tax deductible business expenses...); investing vs. savings & your investment account options (RSP, TFSA, RESP, RDSP...) If she doesn't have the information you need at hand, she will go researching to try and get it to you. Heather also has an independent podcast (which is not about money management) rooted in and rooting for Thunder Bay called Something Different This Way Comes.

For more information, email Stacey at communications@nwowc.org

 nwowomenscentre.org  [@nwowc](https://www.facebook.com/nwowc)



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Do you have financial questions but don't know where to look for answers? Do you find money stuff hard to understand or overwhelming in general, especially these past few years? Would you like to meet up with some like-minded women to chat about money issues and strategies in a comfortable setting? (No need to share details about your personal finances!)

This month, we're hosting **Money Matters: an informal learning circle for women** with Heather McLeod, a local Certified Financial Planner who also has prior lived experience with economic insecurity. No registration necessary. Drop in and learn with us!



GOOD FOOD BOX

ORDER your June GFB from your host site by **June 12**

PICK UP from your host site on **June 22***

**pick up is on a Thursday this month as Indigenous Peoples Day is on the third Wednesday*

[Learn more about the GFB](#)



Order Your Locally Grown Good Garden Box!

It's all about **PURPLE** in this year's garden box! Just a few boxes are still available; pick up on June 8th at the Women's Centre. Support the Thunder Bay Good Food Box Program and local growers!

[Reserve by email](mailto:GFB@nwowc.org)



Craftivism at the Women's Centre has shifted to a hybrid (in-person with virtual option) format over the last year. We hosted a series of facilitated workshops and informal sessions, and are looking to plan for the upcoming months. This is a good time to evaluate what we want and don't want, and how we can improve the program for everyone. If you're interested in Craftivism with us, we hope you'll share your feedback to help us plan what's next!

[Craftivism Survey](#)



Celebrate our diverse 2SLGBTQIA+ community by taking part in fun events, supporting 2SLGBTQIA+-led initiatives, and exploring affirming resources!

RESOURCES:

- **The ArQuives:** Canada's largest LGBTQ2+ Archives
- **Canadian Centre for Gender + Sexual Diversity:** empowering gender and sexually diverse communities through education, research, and advocacy
- **Egale:** resources/education in English and French, including **Pride Safety Toolkit**
- **Fierte Canada Pride** (national association of Canadian Pride organizations): **Stories of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQ+ Indian Residential and Day School Survivors**
- **LezSpreadtheWord:** **Ma-Nee Chacaby**
- **The Ontario Human Rights Code:** Gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation are protected grounds
- **NFB - 2SLGBTQI+:** Featuring a wide range of stories about identity, family, community and everyday life, this selection of films explores the multitude of 2SLGBTQI+ realities and experiences in Canada and abroad
- **Queer as Fact:** Queer history podcast covering content from around the world and throughout time
- **Syrus Marcus Ware & adrienne maree brown:** **The Pleasures of "Post-Binary" Community**
- **Rainbow Health Ontario:** creates opportunities for the healthcare system to better serve 2SLGBTQ communities
- **Rainbow Railroad:** helps LGBTQI+ people escape state-sponsored violence around the world
- **RiseUp!:** A digital archive of feminist activism in Canada (1970s-1990s): **LGBTQ+ Organizing**
- **Senior Pride Network:** Older 2SLGBTQI+ Issues
- **The519:** A registered charity and City of Toronto agency with an innovative model of Service, Space and Leadership
- **Trans Lifeline** provides peer support. Toll-free in Canada: (877) 330-6366

LOCAL SERVICES + RESOURCES:

- **Loud Women Collective** (feminist bookstore)
- **NorWest Community Health Centre** (health and counselling services)
- **The Other 10%** (Children's Centre)
- **Two-Spirit & LGBTQ+ Mentor** (Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre)
- **Pride Central** and **Gender Equity Centre** (Lakehead University)
- **Rainbow Collective of Thunder Bay** and **Thunder Pride**
- **Umbrella Clinic** (sexual health services for all ages, all genders, and all orientations)

PRIDE 2023 Event Schedule

Community Events + Additional Resources

JUNE is also host to **Indigenous History Month & Indigenous Peoples Day (21st)**, **summer solstice (21st)**, **Seniors Month**, and **Stop Cyberbullying Day (16th)**

EVENTS

- June 6th | 7-9pm: **2SLGBTQIA+ Youth "Gay-mes" Night** at Howl at the Moon for ages 13-18 only (TBIFC)
- June 21st | **National Indigenous People's Day:** **City of Thunder Bay events** (as of the date of this newsletter, the City's page is not yet updated to reflect 2023 details, so check the link closer to the 21st)
- June 23rd | 8pm: **Sober and Clean Dance** (scent-free) at Oliver Road Community Centre; \$10 at the door. More info: 344-4817
- June 29th | 12-5pm: **Two-Spirit Mini Pow Wow** at Current River Park (TBIFC)
- June 30th - July 2nd: **Fort William First Nation Annual Summer**

Pow Wow

RESOURCES

- [age BIG](#) (local)
- [Age Friendly Thunder Bay](#)
- [Residents' Bill of Rights: Your rights if you live in a long-term care home](#) (CLEO)
- [Bad Forecast: The Illusion of Indigenous Inclusion and Representation in Climate Adaptation Plans in Canada](#) (Special Report by Janna Wale, *Yellowhead Institute*, May 2023)
- Indigenous author [Lee Maracle \[1950-2021\] delivers the 2020 Margaret Laurence Lecture](#) (Writers Trust of Canada)
- [Indigenous Peoples Living with Disabilities, special edition](#): stories from the perspectives of Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse+ (WG2STGD+) Peoples living with disabilities (*KCI-NIWESQ Magazine*, Issue #18, NWAC)
- [A quick guide on sexual image based abuse](#) (YWCA Canada)
- [Revisiting the "Private Use Exception" to Canada's Child Pornography Laws: Teenage Sexting, Sex-Positivity, Pleasure, and Control in the Digital Age](#) (Lara Karaian & Dillon Brady, *Osgoode Hall Law Journal*, 56.2, 2019)
- [Supporting Youth Experiencing Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence](#) (Learning Network)
- [Tech Safety Canada](#) (Women's Shelters Canada)
- [The Facts about Online Hate and Cyberviolence Against Women and Girls in Canada](#) (Canadian Women's Foundation)
- [Unacceptable: Responding to Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence](#) (LEAF)

PODCASTS:

- [Don't Call Me Resilient \(S5: EP37\): Trans scholar and activist explains why trans rights are under attack](#)
- [Indigenous Climate Action Pod](#)
- [On Aging: Canadian Conversations](#)
- [Queer as Fact](#)
- [Something Different This Way Comes](#) (local)



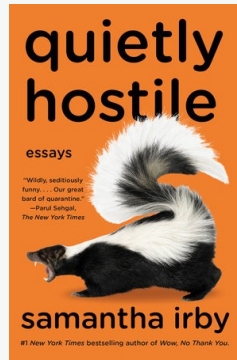
Mutual Aid Opportunity

While we continue to advocate for changes to policies and practices that make women disproportionately vulnerable to violence and poverty, we know that access to some basic material items can still be helpful. We also recognize the importance of taking care of one another, and we know that many NOWC supporters might appreciate an opportunity to extend support to women in our community in other ways. Informed by our conversations with women who visit the Centre, these items would be especially helpful lately:

- [adult monthly bus pass](#)
- reusable water bottles
- new socks
- grocery or Tim Hortons gift cards
- prepaid phone cards
- mini first aid kits (or packs of Band-Aids)
- toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss
- sunscreen
- sun hats
- menstrual pads (light or regular)
- Poise pads (for incontinence)

If you'd like to donate any of these items, please drop by the Women's Centre

(M-Th between 9:30am and 5pm) or get in touch with Stacey to make alternate arrangements: communications@nwowc.org.



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 typically meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month in store at Goods & Co Market. The book for June is *Quietly Hostile* by Samantha Irby. Check out the LWC for availability.

[Find out more](#)

From the Feminist Archives

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

- *Women Unite!: An Anthology of the Canadian Women's Movement*
- 41 years ago: *Fireweed: A Feminist Quarterly - Issue 13 - Summer 1982*
- 40 years ago: *HERizons - Vol. 1, No. 2 - April 1983*

Gender Based Violence: How we can help

Our Gender Based Violence Navigation Advocate provides support for women who are experiencing (or at risk of experiencing) physical and/or sexual violence or coercive control by a partner, family member or acquaintance. Women navigating various court systems may also access court advocacy.

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 Violence Against Women service providers to ensure that critical information is shared
- Assisting with preparing for court
- Ensuring coordination between legal sectors (criminal, family, immigration etc.)
- Providing court accompaniment and emotional support

This service is intended to enhance the effectiveness of the existing VAW response, not duplicate or replace it. For more information or to make a referral, contact Jennifer:

Email: navigator@nwowc.org Phone: (807) 935-8042



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](#)



Barley enjoying a canoe ride at Quetico Provincial Park!

Contribute to the Feminist Dispatch!

Submit a photo of your original artwork, a short piece of writing, a helpful resource, or a link to a community event that aligns with our **mission**! All newsletter-related inquiries and submissions can be directed to Stacey at communications@nwowc.org.

Helping Women Find Their Way Since 1973!

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 the Investing in Women's Future Program of the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada, Canadian Women's Foundation, and the Johnson Scholarship Foundation.

Support Our Work

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