

# BACKGROUND: DECLARING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) AN EPIDEMIC IN THUNDER BAY

## Culleton, Kuzyk & Warmerdam Inquest (Renfrew County Inquest) Recommendation #1

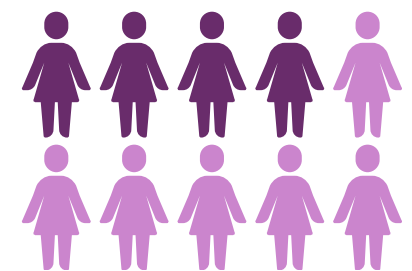
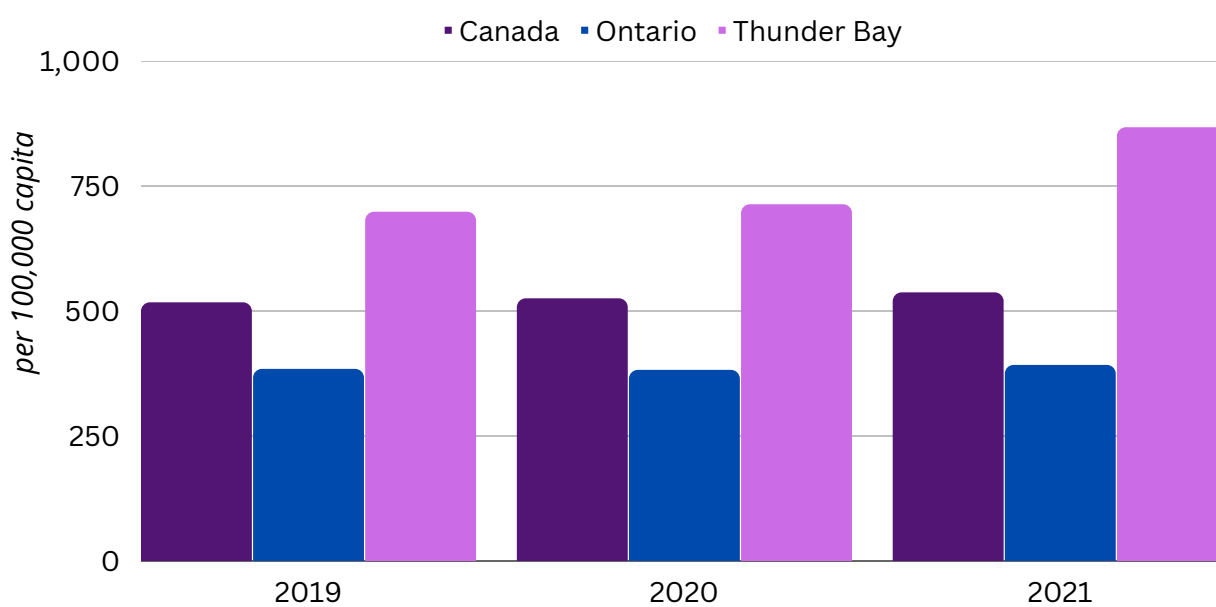
### Formally declare intimate partner violence as an epidemic.

As of August 1, 2023 more than **40 municipalities** in Ontario independently supported a declaration elsewhere or declared their own IPV epidemic

On **September 25th** the NIDVCC and TBDCCEWA will bring a joint deputation to City Council to declare IPV an Epidemic in Thunder Bay

Rates of Intimate Partner Violence in Thunder Bay are **2 times** higher than Ontario's provincial rate and **1.5 times** higher than that of all of Canada

*Police Reported Cases of IPV Against Women*



More than **4 in 10 (44%)** women in Canada have experienced IPV in their lifetime



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- On the morning of September 22, 2015, in rural Renfrew County, Ontario, Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam were murdered by a man with whom each had had a past relationship. An inquest was held in 2022 and resulted in 86 recommendations. The first recommendation is for the Provincial government to **declare Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) an epidemic**.
- Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a prevalent form of gender-based violence (GBV) perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner, dating partner, common-law partner or spouse, in public and/or private spaces, to maintain power and control. It can include physical abuse, stalking, sexual violence, emotional/psychological abuse, financial/economic abuse, spiritual abuse, reproductive coercion, coercive control, and/or technology-facilitated violence/cyberviolence (Women and Gender Equity Canada). IPV is also known as Gender-Based Violence, Domestic Violence, Family Violence, Spousal Abuse, Woman Abuse, or Violence Against Women.
- We use this definition of *epidemic* from *Merriam-Webster*: "affecting or tending to affect a disproportionately large number of individuals within a population, community, or region at the same time." The World Health Organization has declared violence against women "a global public health problem of epidemic proportions, requiring urgent action." In the Thunder Bay District, IPV / GBV is an issue that disproportionately impacts women, especially Indigenous women, in both immediate and long-term ways, and deeply affects our community.
- 44% of women (6.2 million) in Canada have experienced IPV in their lifetime (Statistics Canada, 2021).
- Indigenous women (61%) were more likely to have experienced IPV in their lifetime (since the age of 15) when compared to non-Indigenous women (44%) (Statistics Canada, 2021).
- Two-thirds of women who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or another non-heterosexual orientation have experienced IPV in their lifetime, and they are two times more likely than heterosexual women to experience most types of IPV (Statistics Canada, 2021).
- Three in five Trans women (64%) experienced intimate partner violence since the age of 16 (Trans PULSE Canada, 2019).
- Young women (ages 15-24) are at high risk for IPV; there is a high prevalence of physical and sexual assault among high school and post-secondary students. Some form of IPV was experienced by more than four in ten (43%) of young women aged 15 to 19 years in the 12 months preceding the survey (Statistics Canada, 2021).
- In 2019, police-reported rates of IPV in Canada were more than 3.5 times higher among women than among men (Women and Gender Equality Canada).
- Women are disproportionately subjected to the most severe forms of IPV (i.e., choking; sexual assault; threats with a weapon), and experience violence more frequently and with more injuries (Statistics Canada, 2021).
- Women victims of homicide are more likely to be killed by an intimate partner than anyone else (Statistics Canada, 2021). Every 2.5 days a woman or girl is murdered in Canada, and Indigenous women are six times more likely to be killed than non-Indigenous women (National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence, 2021). In 2021-22, there were 52 femicides in 52 weeks in Ontario (OAITH: More than a Number).
- According to Statistics Canada, for many years, Thunder Bay has had among the highest per capita rate of IPV and sexual assault of any municipality in Canada.
- In 2022, Thunder Bay Police report 2300 IPV reportable incidents, 703 charges and 267 individuals charged with IPV.
- In May, on behalf of TBDCCEWA and NIDVCC, a presentation by NWO Women's Centre to the City of Thunder Bay's Community Safety and Well-Being Committee resulted in unanimous agreement to bring a recommendation to City Council to make this declaration.
- Declaring IPV an epidemic would acknowledge IPV / GBV as an issue that disproportionately impacts women, especially Indigenous women, seriously affects children exposed to it, and deeply affects our community as a whole. It would acknowledge and validate the experience of survivors, recognize the tireless work of organizations that support survivors or respond to abusers with few resources, and it would put pressure on governments to act on the other recommendations.