

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

DAY
#12

MULTIAGENCY COLLABORATION

November is Woman Abuse Prevention Month, which includes the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, a global campaign calling for an end to gender-based violence. It begins on November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, includes The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on December 6th, and ends on December 10th: Human Rights Day.

Thunder Bay City Council formally declared GBV and IPV an epidemic on September 25th immediately following our deputation. In addition, City officials have invited us to present to the local social services administration board and the Intergovernmental Affairs committee, and also supply a list of actionable goals for City Council to better support survivors of GBV in our community.

Our 2023 16 Days campaign will focus on these actionable goals - efforts at the municipal and personal levels to address gender-based violence.

Why it matters

- The Coroner's Death Review Committee maintains that most femicides are both predictable and preventable. Timely sharing of relevant information with regard to risk factors and the perpetrator's location and status can prevent harm and femicide. Many institutions and services that respond to GBV work in information silos, and very little communication crosses over without intentional collaboration, such as that provided by Domestic Violence Community Coordinating tables. Naadmaagewin and the TBDCCEWA are longstanding local examples of these DVCCCs. The information gap between these service provider-led advocacy groups and the criminal legal system is very problematic, and results in service providers (who have the most contact with women survivors) being unable to obtain time sensitive information about risk from legal system actors (who have the most contact with perpetrators). Because community advocates have been repeatedly refused access to the Crown Attorney's High Risk table, NOWC (in cooperation with the TBDCCEWA) has developed a separate, community based high risk protocol to respond to IPV. (See CKW Recommendation #44)
- Laws and legal rules regarding privacy and disclosure often mean that social service and legal professionals feel restricted in terms of sharing information that may suggest a woman is at risk, especially historical charges from previous relationships. Conversely, some professionals may see their duty to report as a way to offload responsibility for assessing risk. The best way to keep women and children safe is to ensure that everyone working with all concerned have updated/ongoing information about potential risks. Safety trumps privacy in all cases, and the law protects these disclosures, as recently affirmed by the Provincial Privacy Commissioner.
- CKW Recommendation #78 to The Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario: "Working together with the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee (DVDRC), justice partners and intimate partner violence service providers, develop a plain language tool to empower intimate partner violence professionals to make informed decisions about privacy, confidentiality, and public safety."

ACTION

- Read the Privacy Commissioner's response to CKW Recommendation #78 about information sharing: <https://www.ipc.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-02-08-ltr-david-cameron-solgen-en.pdf>
- Read about Clare's Law (the right to know someone's past abusive behaviour): <https://www.alberta.ca/clares-law.aspx>
- Improve the coordination of services addressing substance use, mental health, child protection, and IPV perpetration, and encourage cross-agency service provision and case management (CKW Recommendation #36).
- If you work for an organization or institution, find out if there is an internal policy about the response to clients or employees who may be survivors at risk, or perpetrators of IPV, and how that information is shared.

Resources

- CKW Inquest Jury Recommendations (June 2022): https://lukesplace.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/CKW-Inquest-Verdict-Recommendations-SIGNED_Redacted.pdf
- Forty-four percent: A short history of intimate partner violence: <https://lukesplace.ca/forty-four-percent-a-short-history-of-intimate-partner-violence/>
- Keeping Children & Mothers Safe and Engaging Men who use Abusive Behaviours: VAW and CAS Perspectives: <https://gbvlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/briefs/brief-15.html>
- Preventative Information Sharing Between Post-secondary Institutions: Privacy, Human Rights & Safety in the Context of Campus Gender-based Violence: https://possibilityseeds.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Unsettled-Questions_-Information-Sharing-Whitepaper.pdf
- Making the Links in Family Violence Cases: Collaboration among the Family, Child Protection and Criminal Justice Systems: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/mlfvc-elcvf/v012/p13.html>
- Safe At Home Model (perpetrator leaves the home, rather than the survivor): <https://womanact.ca/projects/safe-at-home/>



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