



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

feminist DISPATCH



We believe survivors



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.

May is Sexual Violence Prevention Month

Here in **Ontario**, May is *Sexual Violence Prevention Month*. In other locations, the month may instead be referred to as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). **Draw the Line** (OCRCC)'s use of language offers a helpful distinction:

In 2022, the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC) discussed how since #MeToo, the drive for awareness was successful. Disclosures that were shared began to lift the shame and stigma attached to conversations around sexual violence. With this culture shift, the OCRCC chose to shift from awareness to prevention. The choice of wording, in using 'violence' as opposed to 'assault,' was also intentional, in an effort to move away from a legal term and shift emphasis to the experience and impact of sexual violence.

Here are resources to organizations supporting and empowering survivors:

- **Survivors 4 Justice Reform:** a non-profit organization with a collective focus on survivor-led advocacy & voluntary membership with occasional compensated opportunities supported by grants, partnerships & donations.
- **Ending Sexual Violence Association of Canada:** a national non-profit that provides a unified voice on sexual violence through research, education, advocacy, and policy change, promoting solutions to address its root causes.
- **Aftermetoo:** dedicated to ending sexual violence in the workplace

- Get access to a **Restorative Justice International Resource Guide**, which includes global organizations, podcasts, books, documentaries and more
- Video: **Consent on Stolen Land** (*Learning Network Forum, 2022*)
- **Sex Only with Consent! (2021)**: infographic about what consent is and when consent cannot be given
- **The Facts About Sexual Assault and Harassment** (*Canadian Women's Foundation*)

Find supports for sexual violence survivors in Thunder Bay

At our IWD Flag raising last year, our guest speaker, Karen Slomke, spoke to her own understanding of how trauma informs and impacts our community on an individual and collective basis in this time of technology, with an emphasis on the local event in 2025 where citizens of Thunder Bay were **charged with exploiting other citizens through the sharing of intimate, stolen images of local women.**

Read more on our NOWC blog!



May 5th is Red Dress Day

Red Dress Day, held every May 5th, is a National Day of remembrance and activism honouring the lives of **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirited People (MMIWG2S+)**. Red Dress Day matters because it makes the invisible visible. It forces this country to confront the truth. It reminds us that every single life matters, that these lives still matter, and we will never stop fighting for justice.



Join ONWA at the **Thunder Bay Art Gallery** for the opening of *Witness in Red*, a community art installation grounded in truth, remembrance, and collective responsibility. This exhibit opens May 5th, with a reception hosted from 12-2pm in the Community Room; this exhibit brings together community voices through powerful artwork reflecting on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls & 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, as well as the broader impacts of gender-based violence.

Witness In Red
ART INSTALLATION

Join us for the opening of *Witness in Red*, a community art installation grounded in truth, remembrance, and collective responsibility.

 Red Dress Day | May 5th, 2026

 12pm - 2pm EST

 Thunder Bay Art Gallery | Community Room



Events & Programming updates from NOWC



*From the Desk of the
Executive Director*

From the Desk of the ED: “Together, we can build something better —but only if we are willing to be honest about what is broken”

This spring, the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre marked a big transition with the hiring of our **new Executive Director, Katie Bortolin**. Here are a few words from her as she settles into the role:

Hello! Bonjour! Boozhoo! Let me take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am Katie and for the past eighteen years I have been working in Thunder Bay supporting women alongside advocates, allies, and community members. I have sat in so many rooms where the stakes were painfully real and where the systems did not show up the way they should have. However, women continued to show up for themselves and for each other while refusing to let anyone push them further to the margins, despite it all.

[Read more on our blog here](#)



At the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre, we believe survivors of sexual violence.

At the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre, we believe survivors of sexual violence. We are continuing our **Sexual Violence Education series** this spring with two upcoming workshops. Upcoming sessions include:

- **Thursday, May 14th: “Supporting Survivors: peer-to-peer support models”** in partnership with Human Rights & Equity Office - Lakehead University
- **Thursday, May 28th: “SV Kit Procedural: What to Know”** in partnership with the SADV Treatment Centre at TBRHSC

Sessions are open to self-identified women and girls (age 18+) and will take place from **6:30 - 8pm** at the **Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre (278 Bay Street, Suite 201)**. Attendance at all sessions is not required. Light refreshments provided. To register, please contact Caro at navigator@nwowc.org or (807) 935-8042.

WE BELIEVE SURVIVORS



Sexual Violence Education Workshops for Self-Identified Women



Thursday, May 14th: "Supporting Survivors: peer-to-peer support models" in partnership with Human Rights & Equity Office - Lakehead University

Join this in-person educational workshop on identifying and unpacking gender-based violence, along with looking at peer-to-peer support models to support survivors.

Thursday, May 28th: "SV Kit Procedural: What to Know" in partnership with the SADV Treatment Centre at TBRHSC

Join this in-person educational workshop on demystifying sexual assault evidence kits, the process around completing one, and the choices available to survivors moving forward.

 **Hosted at the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre**
(278 Bay Street, Suite #201)

 **6:30 - 8:00pm**

Attendance for all sessions is not required.
Bus tickets & light refreshments provided.

To register, please contact Caro Whipp at navigator@nwowc.org | 807-935-8042



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LEGAL INFORMATION SESSION WILLS & POWERS OF ATTORNEY

Tues, May 12th | 2:00-3:00pm

In-person at the Northwestern Ontario
Women's Centre (278 Bay St, Suite 201)

with Megan Stuckey

LAWYER WITH ADVOCACY NORTH FOR ELDERS & SENIORS AND
THE SUDBURY COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINIC

Legal Information Session: Wills & Power of Attorney

We will be hosting a legal information session on **Tuesday, May 12th from 2-3pm** about drafting a will and powers of attorney. We are excited to welcome our facilitator Megan Stuckey, Lawyer with [Advocacy North for Elders & Seniors](#) and the [Sudbury Community Legal Clinic](#)

This information session will discuss the basics of making a will, the common traps, and what happens if you do not have one. It will also cover how to get a free POA and what you need to consider before you sign them.

This session will be hosted in-person at the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre. Email Caro at navigator@nowoc.org to register or to ask questions or make alternate arrangements.



Become a NOWC Sustaining Donor

For 2026, the NOWC has a goal of securing 10 new monthly donors! The first ten new monthly donors will receive a beautiful pin hand-crafted by local artisan Feral Wife (featured in the photo!)

Become a Sustaining Donor today!

Why consider becoming a monthly or sustaining donor?

By giving a small amount each month, you help create a consistent source of revenue that allows us to respond quickly to requests from women using the Centre, such as hygiene supplies, water bottles, bus passes, grocery cards, Good Food Coupons, winter gloves/hats. Monthly support also allows us to meet our increased rent expense and other costs associated with moving, plan specific programs, keep our resource centre updated, and build our LU Bursary fund.

For more information on how to set up a monthly Donation through Canada Helps or by PAD through your financial institution, visit our ['Donate' page](#) or contact Lori at admin@nwwoc.org to arrange



Stay tuned for upcoming programming in the spring!



GOOD FOOD BOX

May Orders

ORDER your GFB from your host site by **May 11th**
PICK UP from your host site on **May 20th**

[Order Online](#)

FULL SEASON Locally Grown Fundraising Boxes

The Locally Grown Good Food Fundraiser Boxes are an annual fundraiser in support of the Thunder Bay Good Food Box Program. This FULL SEASON item orders ALL 6 MONTHS of the Locally Grown Fundraiser Boxes at once.

FULL SEASON orders open on MAY 1st, order before June 16th.

Individual Locally Grown Fundraiser Boxes for July to December are available starting June 17th.



[Learn more about our FULL SEASON opportunity](#)

Community Events & Resources

Commemorations and Days of Recognition for this month:

- MAY is **Asian Heritage Month**
- May 4th to 8th is **Elizabeth Fry Week & Mental Health Week**
- MAY 5th is **Red Dress Day**
- May 17th is **International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia**



A Walk for Healing - Heartbeat of the Drum in Honor of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

May 10th, 2026 10am opening at Waverly Park.

Walking down Red River Rd to Marina Park.

Please bring your drums, rattles and voices.

Why We Are Walking

Indigenous women face disproportionate rates of violence, yet many cases remain unsolved. By walking and drumming together, we honor their memory, raise awareness and demand change. Through awareness, advocacy and community support, we can create a future where Indigenous women are safe and valued.

**For any questions please reach
out by phone or email to:
807-345-5840 ext 9096 or
imhw@bifc.ca**

No More Stolen Sisters



Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre's main goal is to honor Frances Welsey's 2016 A Walk for Healing-Heartbeat of the Drum. Frances Wesley created this event to honor Missing and murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and their families

Join the **Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre** on **Sunday, May 10th at 10am** at Waverly Park to walk, drum, and raise their voices together in honour of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The gathering will walk down Red River Road to the Marina Park. Please bring your drums, rattles, and voices as we gather in remembrance, awareness, and unity.

Indigenous women face disproportionate rates of violence, and many cases remain unsolved. By walking and drumming together, we honor their memory, raise awareness, and stand for change.



**MOOSE HIDE
CAMPAIGN**

**CAMPAGNE
MOOSE HIDE**

TAKE ACTION TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

THUNDER BAY WALK TO END VIOLENCE

DATE/TIME: May 14th 2026 @ 12 pm

LOCATION: Lakehead University Agora

Gather at the Agora @ 11:30

DETAILS: Walk begins @ Noon

Arrive 1077 Golf Links Road @ 12:15

Arrive Confederation College @ 12:45

Guest Speakers outdoor theatre @ 1PM

CONTACT: mricher@onwa.ca / Cell: 807-355-0293

Join **ONWA** on **May 14, 2026 at 12pm** for Moose Hide Campaign Day. Community will gather at the Lakehead University Agora at 11:30am, with the walk beginning at 12pm. The walk will move down Golf Links Road and arrive at Confederation College by 12:45pm. Guest speakers will begin at the outdoor theatre at 1pm. Contact mricher@onwa.ca for any additional event details or questions.

The **Moose Hide Campaign** is a grassroots movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys who are standing up against violence towards women and children. Wearing the moose hide pin signifies your commitment to honour, respect and protect women and children in your life and speak out against gender-based and domestic violence.

Cabaret for a Cause: supporting EFSNWO

On **May 9th**, join for a night of advocacy and awareness supporting the [Elizabeth Fry Society of Northwestern Ontario](#)

The evening also includes poetry and art from Lady Fantasia LaPremiere, along with contributions from incarcerated women.

[Buy your tickets](#)



Community Events

- **May 4th to 8th | Elizabeth Fry Week** (event details above and webinar opportunities shared below)
- **May 10th | Walk for Healing - Heartbeat of the Drum in honour of MMIWG** hosted by TBIFC at Waverly Park (details shared above)
- **May 12th | Legal Information Session** at the NOWC about wills & Power of Attorney from 2-3pm (more details shared above)
- **May 14th | Moose Hide Campaign Walk** hosted by ONWA at Lakehead University and Confederation College (details shared above)
- **May 14th: Sexual Violence Education session: "Supporting Survivors: peer-to-peer support models"** at the NOWC in partnership with Human Rights & Equity Office - Lakehead University (more details shared above)
- **May 28th | Sexual Violence Education session: "SV Kit Procedural: What to Know"** in partnership with the SADV Treatment Centre at TBRHSC (more details shared above)

Resources

- Join the [Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies](#) on **May 6th at 12pm for a free panel, "Community Responses That Work"**, where speakers will share prevention-focused, trauma-informed, and community-based approaches that interrupt pathways into criminalization and support dignity, safety, and stability without relying on punishment. [Register today!](#)
- Join [CLEO](#) on **Thursday, May 7th from 1 - 2:30pm EST** us for a webinar on changes to the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP). [Register today!](#)
- [Statistics Canada](#) is hiring in our community for the **2026 Census!** The time frame for census jobs is between March and July 2026, depending on the position and location. Learn more on their [website!](#)
- [Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses](#) reviews mainstream media reports of femicides and shares a snapshot of their research monthly. The recently shared their [March Femicide Snapshot](#), additional insights can be found on their [website](#)
- **"Abortion is healthcare, and we want Canadians to know it":** [Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada](#) is launching a national advertising campaign, with billboards and digital mobile ads that speak the truth: "Abortion is Healthcare". [Learn more here](#) and consider [donating](#) to the advertising campaign.
- [Steps to Justice](#) has [updated information](#) about the [federal minimum wage](#) increase that takes effect on April 1, 2026. The new federal minimum wage

is \$18.15 an hour.

Gender Based Violence: 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 Caro at navigator@nwowc.org or by phone (807) 935-8042.

Sexual Violence Program: Supporting Survivors

To help meet the needs of survivors since the Thunder Bay Sexual Abuse Centre closed, **Faye Peterson House** has developed a Sexual Violence Program. There is currently one Sexual Violence Counsellor working out of Faye Peterson offering a 20-week individual counselling program.

To access counselling for any kind of sexual violence (recent or past), you can call Faye Peterson House's 24/7 Crisis Line: (807) 345-045. **You do not need to access shelter services or report to police to access counselling.**



Sexual Violence Program

Our Sexual Violence Program supports self-identified women aged 16+ who have experienced any form of sexual violence in person or online: sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual harassment, non-consensual distribution of intimate images, stalking or sex trafficking.

We aim to provide survivors with:

- a space to be heard, believed, and supported
- legal and systems advocacy, when appropriate
- free supportive counselling and other resources to rebuild their lives from the negative impacts of sexual violence

www.fayepeterson.org

SVP supports available at no cost:

- 24/7 crisis line: (807) 345-0450
- 10-week support groups
- Accompaniments (hospital, police, court), where appropriate
- Advocacy
- Referrals
- Public education
- 20-week individual counselling offered at two locations:
 - Faye Peterson House (807) 345-0450
 - Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre (807) 620-9156

Our SVP is designed to serve the diverse experiences of members of our communities, including, but not limited to, Indigenous/Metis/Inuit, 2-Spirited, non-binary, LGBTQ, Black/racialized, disabled, sex workers, and sex trafficking survivors.



For more details about all of our programs and services, please visit:

www.fayepeterson.org



In partnership with:
Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre

www.nwowomenscentre.org



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Mutual Aid Opportunity

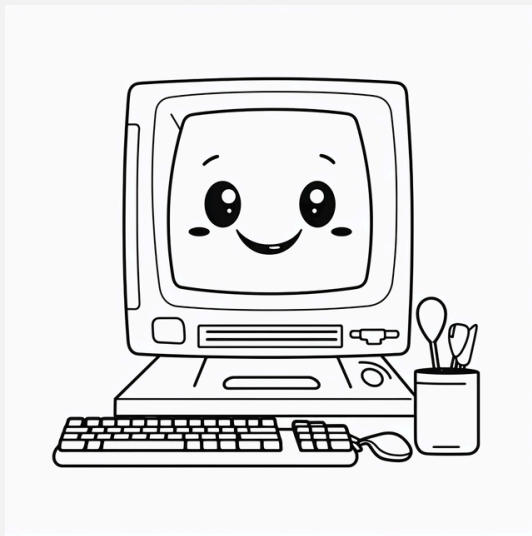


While we continue to advocate for changes to policies and practices that make women disproportionately vulnerable to violence and poverty, we know that access to some basic material items can still be helpful. We also recognize the importance of taking care of one another, and we know that many NOWC 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:

- Small, travel-sized lotions (scented and scent-free)
- Bus tickets, such as a **10 Ride Multipass**

- Large Ziploc bags, for carrying and storing to-go items
- New socks (individuals, in packs) - unworn please
- Fresh Co. or Tim Hortons gift cards
- mini first aid kits (or packs of Band-Aids)
- Oral hygiene: toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, lip balm (travel-sized)
- Menstrual pads (light or regular)
- Depends (MED-LRG size) and 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 Steph to make alternate arrangements: communications@nwowc.org.



Computer Resources Available

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

- Printing forms
- Job Interviews
- Virtual Legal Clinic
- Lawyer's Appointments
- Virtual Court Matters

To book an appointment, please contact Caro at navigator@nwowc.org

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 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

[AAGBV](#) [Advocacy](#) [Good Food Box](#) [Public Education](#) [What's New](#)



Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre

278 Bay Street, Suite #201, Thunder Bay, ON P7B 1R8

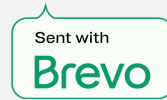
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