



National Justice Network Update



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Welcome to the **December** issue of the *National Justice Network e-Update*, a publication of the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime. PLEASE SHARE THIS **FREE** NEWSLETTER WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES OR HAVE THEM SIGN UP TO RECEIVE IT DIRECTLY AT:

<http://crcvc.ca/en/newsletter/en/newsletter/>.

This e-newsletter was written and compiled with assistance from Matthew Prokopiw, Carleton University and Kristina Musca, University of Ottawa.

Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime

Visit: <http://www.crcvc.ca>

Email: crcvc@crcvc.ca

Phone: 1.877.232.2610



Department of Justice
Canada

Ministère de la Justice
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LINKS OF INTEREST:

[Policy Centre for Victim Issues](#)

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[National Office for Victims](#)

[Victim Services, Correctional Service Canada](#)

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COPING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

The holiday season can be very difficult for people that have been impacted by violence and can be a time of sadness, pain or anger for families and victims. Although this is true, there are certain strategies that can help you get through this difficult time.

First and foremost, families and victims must give themselves permission to feel whatever it is that they

UPCOMING EVENTS

CRCVC STAFF WISH YOU A HEALTHY AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON

The CRCVC would like to extend best wishes to our NJN subscribers. We hope that you have a safe and peaceful holiday season, and a Happy New Year.



OFFICE HOURS: The CRCVC will be closed on December 23rd at 12:00 p.m. and will re-open on January 3rd at 8:30 a.m.

NATIONAL VICTIMS OF CRIME AWARENESS WEEK 2012

The National Victims of Crime Awareness Week 2012 website is now live! Visit www.victimswk.gc.ca to see the exciting new graphic design and updated information about planning Victims Week events in your community. Additional resources will continue to be posted to the website, so check back regularly.

SNAPSHOTS



CANADIAN RESOURCE CENTRE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME
Ensuring the equitable treatment of crime victims in Canada



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are feeling and recognize that it is normal to feel sadness and grief throughout the holidays. As a result, you should not try to hide or ignore your emotions. If you feel sad, you should cry; if you feel angry, you should allow yourself to express it.

Do not be afraid to ask for help. It is okay if you need help from others to make it through the season. Try not to feel as though you are a burden. Your friends and family members want to be there for you.

Since everyone grieves differently, families should celebrate the holidays in a way that is best for them. For instance, you can celebrate old traditions or start new ones. For some, old traditions may be too painful to endure. Others may find it important to continue old traditions. Whatever the decision, the loved one can still be incorporated in your celebrations or traditions. For instance, your loved one's stocking can be hung with the rest of the stockings.

It is important to continue to eat healthy and get plenty of rest. The holiday season is already a stressful time. As a result, the stress associated with grief can make things worse. Staying healthy can lower stress levels and help make the holidays more pleasant.

You may want to consider donating a gift or money in order to commemorate a loved one. This is a wonderful way of remembering someone that has been lost and helping others in need at the same time. Families can also commemorate loved ones in other ways. A candle can be lit in the loved one's memory or family members can gather together to share fond memories and special stories.

NWAC & FAFIA ASK UN TO CONDUCT INQUIRY INTO MISSING AND MURDERED ABORIGINAL WOMEN IN CANADA

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women is prepared to conducting an inquiry into the murders and disappearance of Aboriginal women and girls across Canada. The committee is composed of 23 independent experts from around the world and is the UN's main authority on women's human rights. The UN can open an investigation when it believes there have

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

On December 6, a number of ceremonies took place across Canada to remember females who have been victims of gender-based violence. Established in 1991 by the Parliament of Canada, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada marks the anniversary of the murders of 14 young women that took place at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal in 1989. They were murdered because they were women.

In addition to the commemoration of these women, December 6 represents an opportunity for Canadians to reflect on the phenomenon of violence against women in our society. CRCVC staff attended a rally on Parliament Hill on December 6th to honour École Polytechnique victims and oppose weakening gun control laws. The moving ceremony was attended by nearly 400 people.

LEGISLATION COMES INTO FORCE PROVIDING TOUGHER SENTENCES FOR MURDERERS

On December 2, 2011, two Acts which provide tougher sentences for murderers came into force in Canada. The "Protecting Canadians by





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been "grave or systematic" violations of its conventions and the government involved is not seen to be actively resolving the issue. Canada is expected to comply with the inquiry but federal consent must be granted before it can begin.

The inquiry is expected to take place as the committee believes that there are very serious violations of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* in Canada. In January and in September of 2011 the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), and the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) requested the committee launch an inquiry in the failures of the Canadian government to take action regarding the murders and disappearances. At the present time the UN is in correspondence with the federal government and has plans to discuss the matter in February.

"FAFIA and NWAC requested this Inquiry because violence against Aboriginal women and girls is a national tragedy that demands immediate and concerted action," said Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, the president of NWAC. "Aboriginal women in Canada experience rates of violence 3.5 times higher than non-Aboriginal women, and young Aboriginal women are five times more likely to die of violence. NWAC has documented the disappearances and murders of over 600 Aboriginal women and girls in Canada over about twenty years, and we believe that there may be many more. The response of law enforcement and other government officials has been slow, often dismissive of reports made by family members of missing women, uncoordinated and generally inadequate."

STUDY SUGGESTS CANADIANS GENERALLY FEEL SAFE FROM CRIME

The 2004 General Social Survey on Victimization discovered that the vast majority of Canadians aged 15 years and older were satisfied with their personal safety from crime. In 2009, this survey produced similar results, indicating that 93% of Canadians felt safe from crime. Although this is true, victimization rates remain high. Nevertheless, 84% of Canadians aged 15 to 24 years old and Canadians aged 65 years and older indicated that they felt very or somewhat

Ending Sentence Discounts for Multiple Murders Act" ensures that multiple murderers serve parole ineligibility periods consecutively. Under the former system, individuals convicted of multiple murders served their life sentences concurrently and were therefore subject to only one parole ineligibility period.

The "*Serious Time for the Most Serious Crimes Act*" repeals the "faint-hope clause" which means murderers will no longer be able to apply to be eligible for early parole. Those given a life sentence for first-degree murder are not be eligible to apply to the Parole Board of Canada for parole until they have served at least 25 years. Those given a life sentence for second-degree murder are not eligible to apply until the imposed period is served, which could be up to 25 years.

Advocates across Canada have long called for these two pieces of legislation to be passed to ensure truth in sentencing and hold killers accountable for their crimes.

CARLETON UNIVERSITY TO OPEN SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE

A recent string of sexual assaults has prompted the Council of the Carleton University Academic Staff Association to pass a resolution in support of a





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satisfied with their personal safety from crime.

The majority of Canadians also stated that they felt safe in their neighbourhoods at night. Approximately 83% of Canadians indicated that they were not afraid of being home alone at night and 90% indicated that they felt safe walking alone at night in their neighbourhood.

In order to prevent personal victimization, about 39% of Canadians reported having used a crime prevention method in the 12 months prior to the survey. It was proven that crime prevention methods were used more frequently by Canadians who had been previously victimized (57%) compared to those who had not (32%). The most common crime prevention method was to change routine or avoid certain people or places. Others included the installation of new locks, security bars, burglar alarms and motion detector lights.

Altogether, individuals living in the eastern part of Canada, where victimization rates and police reported crime rates are generally lower, reported a higher level of satisfaction in personal safety compared to individuals living in the west. Among census metropolitan areas, levels of personal safety were highest in Kingston, Moncton, Guelph and Oshawa and lowest in Vancouver, Winnipeg and Edmonton.

VICTIMS RECEIVE MORE OPTIONS FOR REPORTING SEXUAL ASSAULT IN CALGARY

Thanks to a pilot project involving medical staff, police and prosecutors, sexual assault victims in Calgary now have up to a year to decide whether or not to report the crime to police. In addition, sexual assault victims are now able to decide whether or not they want police to receive forensic evidence acquired during a medical exam. Finally, sexual assault victims are able to make an immediate decision on whether they wish to involve police or not.

Connect Family and Sexual Abuse Network, a combination of 15 local agencies, launched the program in April. Before this initiative was established, victims of sexual assault had to decide whether to report the incident while seeking treatment at the

sexual assault centre at the University.

"By supporting this resolution, Council has said that it supports a safer campus for faculty, staff and students at Carleton," said Jennifer Evans, Chair of CUASA's Equity Committee. "We hope that the University administration will take this opportunity to commit to finding space and funding for a sexual assault centre as soon as possible."

Since 2007, students have been working towards a university-funded sexual assault centre. Similar centres are present on university campuses all across Canada.

MEDIA IN MONCTON PERPETUATES SEXUAL ASSAULT MYTHS

Following three sexual assaults in Moncton, an online story published by CBC on September 8 urged women to avoid walking home alone at night and informed citizens that there was a suspect at large in connection to all three attacks. While it was intended as warning to the public, the story was problematic because it advocated a change in lifestyle for women in the community, not the perpetrators.

According to Megan Glenwright, a sociology and women's studies student at





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hospital. Now, victims are able to have forensic evidence collected and stored for a year upon seeking treatment in any hospital. At any point throughout the year, the individual can choose to submit the evidence to police. If victims refuse to do so, evidence will be confidentially destroyed.

According to Danielle Aubry, Executive Director of Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse, this initiative provides a more compassionate response towards sexual assault victims as it recognizes the extreme trauma experienced by sexual assault victims.

FUNDING GRANTED FOR SASKATCHEWAN MISSING PERSON CASES

The New Year will bring additional support services for the families of Saskatchewan's missing persons. On December 6th the federal government and Justice Canada announced \$329,000 for three liaison positions within the victim services units of the Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina police departments to develop services and support for families of missing persons. Funding for the project is not permanent and will be re-evaluated after 15 months of operation.

"We have a very active police-based victim services program in Saskatchewan, but what was missing was a specialized focused on the needs of families of missing persons," said Pat Thiele, Director of Victim Services for the ministry of justice and attorney general in Saskatchewan.

In addition, Thiele stated, "These new positions will be the specialists who will take on any new files or existing files where there are missing persons and families are requires support and services."

The positions the funding will created will provide front-line services for families and will also develop programs and resources for police forces around the province. Although the services will be available to all residents of Saskatchewan the project is part of a larger effort to address the alarming number of missing aboriginal women in western Canada.

the University of New Brunswick, this message blames women for their victimization. At the same time, this message discourages women from presenting themselves in a way that would provoke victimization. Instead, Glenwright suggests, the message should teach young men to avoid assaulting people altogether.

Chris McCormick, a St. Thomas University criminology professor, agrees. While precaution is never a bad idea, the onus should not be on women. According to the Fredericton Sexual Assault Crisis Centre (FSACC), 98 percent of attackers are men and 82 percent of the victims are women. Despite these facts about sexual assault, the media in Canada continue to report myths which rarely depict the truth. They often warn communities about a stranger ready to attack. The truth is over 90 percent of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim. In the end, these myths allow victim-blaming to prevail which results in many unreported cases (only 6-8% of sexual assaults are reported to police annually).

SIMON FRASER UNIVERISTY REPORT TARGETS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN B.C.

Four years ago British Columbia vowed to combat domestic violence but today





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The CRCVC is very pleased by this announcement and hope to see similar efforts in other provinces and territories.

INMATES USING SOCIAL NETWORKING IN PRISON TO INTIMIDATE VICTIMS

Across the United States, inmates are using social networking sites to harass their victims and intimidate witnesses. It is believed that smart phones are being smuggled into prisons, allowing offenders to access the internet.

In California alone, the corrections department confiscated 12,625 cell phones within a 10-month period this year. According to California officials, there have been many instances in which inmates used social networking sites to taunt victims or make unwanted sexual advances. Although this is true, officials say that it is difficult for authorities to determine who is actually sending these threatening messages. At the same time, inmates who are caught rarely face serious consequences.

These instances are especially problematic since the law has yet to catch up with changing technologies. According to Timothy Heaphy, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Virginia, inmates' use of social networks has made his job difficult since witnesses are often afraid of being identified. If inmates continue to gain access to the outside world, it will be more difficult for lawyers to gain cooperation from witnesses.

The increased use of cell phones within prisons has caused California legislators to approve a new law in which corrections employees and visitors can face up to six months in prison for smuggling mobile devices into state prisons. Furthermore, inmates caught with cell phones can now lose 180 days of early release credit. However, no additional time can be added to their sentence, minimizing the deterrence factor.

In California, prison officials are working with social networking sites to identify inmate accounts in order to shut them down. However, these actions tend to take place only after the damage has been done.

is falling behind its targets. In 2007, Peter Lee killed his estranged wife Sunny Park, their 6-year old son, and her elderly parents before committing suicide near Victoria. Since then, the B.C. Coroners Service held an inquest in which the province spent \$250,000 while examining 29 deaths, providing risk-assessment training and recommendations.

This month, Simon Fraser University released a report concluding that the government typically only takes action after high-profile cases. The report calls on the government to develop a plan to protect women and children as the rate of family-related homicides in B.C. are slightly higher than the Canadian average. Of the 73 people murdered in domestic disputes between January 2003 and August 2008, 75% of the victims were women.

The report released by SFU suggests that the province institute a framework to decrease domestic violence, emphasize prevention techniques and bridge gaps in services already available. It is noted that victims must be encouraged to come forward about abuse in the home but also ensure that victims know how to access available services to help them cope and escape.

