



Greetings!

Welcome to the **February** 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 & FRIENDS OR HAVE THEM SIGN UP TO RECEIVE IT DIRECTLY AT:
<http://crcvc.ca/en/newsletter/>.

Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime
Visit: <http://www.crcvc.ca>
Email: crcvc@crcvc.ca
Phone: 1.877.232.2610.

Could a National Policy on Gender-Based Violence be a Success in Canada?

The Canadian Government is preparing to implement its own "national plan to tackle gender-based violence" five years after the United Nations made a recommendation for all countries to implement a strategy to support violence against women. However, the Canadian government is taking a different and somewhat worrisome approach, by grouping the strategy's target population under gender-identity. Elizabeth Sheehy, a law professor at the University of Ottawa, argues that "If you're just lumping it all together under gender-identity... it's really hard to know what kind of phenomena we're dealing with." A 2013 report by Women's Shelters Canada noted that an effective action plan would be able to address the disjointed system currently in place, one that tends to inhibit the opportunities for victims of violence to re-establish a sense of safety and security. Women's Shelters Canada is among several other advocates urgently advising to implement a plan such as this.

In 2017, Justin Trudeau's government moved to create a federal gender-based violence plan, however, it was critiqued by a UN special rapporteur on violence against women, as "lacking a human rights-based holistic legal framework." Trudeau's most recent re-election platform promised that he would look to finance "a national action plan to end gender-based violence." The national action plan does not have a

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CRCVC's chat and text support for victims of crime who wish to access information as well as emotional support.

Text: Our number is 613-208-0747

Chat: Please access through our [website](#).



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scheduled implementation date set, but a spokesperson for the Minister for Women and Gender Equality, [Maryan Monsef](#), has stated that the government has begun to develop the plan. [Fae Johnstone](#), a trans educator, organizer and contributing writer at Xtra, sees the re-labelling of violence against women to gender-based violence as a “really positive shift” because it allows people to consider the different and intersecting ways in which violence is experienced, such as the intersection of sexism and transphobia felt by trans women. Monsef’s spokesperson claims that the plan will be in line with the federal strategy, meaning it won’t be women-specific but rather, will look at ending violence “based on gender expression, gender identity or perceived gender and protect those who are most vulnerable to it: women, girls, and LGBTQ2 individuals.”

However, [Sheehy](#) believes that although the plan may include LGBTQ2 individuals, violence is more complicated than just its diversity. “There are relationships among these different forms of violence... unless you study them separately, you will not see how they are also different.” [Sheehy](#) also indicates that due to the differences between various forms of violence, policy-makers need to identify the specific characteristics of each form for the plan to effectively comprehend the impact of the strategy's implementation. [Johnstone](#) suggested that the plan will miss its mark due to the overly broad definition of violence presented and by simply “using pretty language without delivering the change the most marginalized in our community need and deserve.” This aspect of specificity in the plan also links to the critique of the UN special rapporteur, who emphasized a particular need for attention to be given to Indigenous women. Indigenous women in Canada experience violence three times higher compared to non-indigenous women, “and are six times more likely to be murdered”, despite only representing 5% of the Canadian population. [Sheehy](#) notes that, ultimately, “clarity and specificity make for impactful policies.”

In contrast to Canada, [Australia](#) “has had a national action plan since 2010” with its focus being on women and children. The [National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety](#) operates almost as a support for Australia’s plan to “fill data gaps and conduct the research needed to drive good policy.” So far,

For hours of operation and other info, please click [here](#).
Hoping to connect with you soon!

QUICK LINKS

The [Edmonton City Police](#) have provided victims of sexual assault the opportunity to report the crime in a more accessible manner by expanding their online reporting options.

Further thoughts on the [Westboro bus crash](#) indicate that more needs to be done to prevent similar incidents from happening again.

Professor Elaine Craig from Dalhousie University says that the proposed bill requiring sexual assault awareness training for judges is “promising”. Read more [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ottawa Monthly Drop-in Support Group for “Loss to Violence”

The drop-in support group for family members of homicide victims addresses the gap in support within the community and offers a place for peers to support each other in healing.

Please “like” the CRCVC [Facebook page](#) or email crcvc@crcvc.ca to stay updated about the support



Australia's plan has seen success, with more Australians supporting gender equality in 2017 than previously reported, and reporting that they were "more likely to understand that violence against women isn't just physical." Patty Kinnersly, CEO of Our Watch, an organization tasked with driving cultural and behavioural change in attempt to prevent violence, noted that the important characteristics of an action plan are for it to be long-term, organized, supported by multiple levels of the government, be receiving ongoing funding, and be monitored and evaluated to measure change.

Lise Martin, the Executive Director of Women's Shelters Canada has been advocating for the level of support that Kinnersley described. Martin indicates that in Canada, most protection services are "basically" offered depending on one's postal code. Kinnersley is also promoting the idea that protection orders are validated for use across Canada, noting that the "split jurisdictions" make change "an incredibly complicated task." However, at the end of the day, Sheehy believes that obtaining more data is the first step before real change can occur. According to Breanon Holland, a government spokesperson, the government is already working with other agencies on the core concerns regarding the collection of data and also emphasized that the current agencies working with groups that experience gender-based violence at a disproportionate level will need to have proper funding to support the action plan's implementation too.

Liz Throssell, a media officer with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, notes that while progress has been made in addressing gender-based violence, it has been slow going. An area that Throssell mentions which can be used as motivation for future change "is domestic violence, which has gone from being considered a 'private issue' to a public priority."

Canada is still lagging in sexualized violence action: the Philadelphia model may provide a solution.

A model for improving sexual assault support and investigation that sprung from Philadelphia, USA,

group. We welcome all family and loved ones to join us!

Where: Room p107, P Building, Algonquin College, 1385 Woodroffe Ave, Nepean, ON K2G 1V8

When: Last Thursday of every month.

Women's March Ottawa 2020

In solidarity with the global marches occurring around the world, the Ottawa Women's March will be hosting a celebration event featuring local Ottawa speakers, poster making and a photo booth.

When: March 7th at 10:00 am

Where: Parliament Hill

For more information [click here](#).

Canadian Domestic Violence Conference

The ultimate goal of this progressive and formative conference is to strengthen and enrich those individuals who confront domestic violence and to challenge the current social determinants of domestic violence.

When: March 3rd to 6th

Where: Marriott Harbourfront Hotel Halifax, Nova Scotia



almost 20 years ago has gained attention in Canada due to the stagnation of sexual assault justice we are currently seeing. It has been found that the number of sexual assaults reported to police continues to decline while rates of actual sexual assault occurrence have not. This is troublesome because it points to an obvious systematic fault that has yet to be acknowledged by many.

It appears that police response to sexual assault claims is at the core of this discussion, as current laws that aim to create a channel for women to safely and effectively report assaults that they experience do not appear to be sufficient. Avoidance of police is cited as being a prime contributor to the decline in sexual assault reports. Many women are wary due to common concerns such as retaliation as a result of a report, however many have also claimed that their reluctance is linked to the potential of poor treatment on the part of the police and the court system.

While steps have been taken at present to help women overcome these barriers, they have yet to show their full intended effect. Some of these steps include police units that specialize in handling sexual assault cases, as well as joint efforts between police units and sexual assault support centers. A major problem area in terms of police response to sexual assault claims is the pattern of labelling claims as "unfounded", with some jurisdictions seeing up to half of all claims passed over as unfounded. This pattern suggests that police discretion remains clouded if and when women choose to report and regardless of efforts that aim to reduce reporting barriers. It has been discussed that these patterns are often linked to sexism and other uninformed practices within the Canadian justice system. Assessment of credibility is noted as one example of a flawed practice within the system, as sexual assault victims often face judgments based on non-legal factors such as clothing, substance use, emotional reaction to the assault and relationship to the suspect. The idea that one's characteristics will contribute to whether police take a claim seriously leaves many women with a sense of doubt and lack of confidence in the system. The notion of false rape accusations is one defence for this type of assessment, however, such a defence can be easily classified as invalid, as it has been found that "only between 2 and 10 percent of sexual assault complaints are false." Further, considering the various factors concerning

For more information [click here](#).

Violence link: Animal Abuse and Woman Abuse

Join Crime Prevention Ottawa (CPO) to learn about disturbing trends linking animal abuse and intimate partner violence. The Keynote Speaker will give an overview of the research and provide information on what you can do if you are a victim of violence or assisting a victim of violence. She will be followed by local experts who are building solutions for families caught in this cycle of violence.

When: Friday, March 6th, 2020, from 9:30 a.m. to noon

Where: Ben Franklin Place, 101 CentrepoinTE Drive, The Chamber

Panellists' remarks will be in English only with PowerPoints in both English and French. Questions will be encouraged in both official languages.

[R.S.V.P. to register](#)

Trauma and Violence Intervention Research:

Promoting safety and well-being across the lifespan. Trauma is prevalent in our world and many of the people



reporting sexual assaults, including dismissals and unfounded claims, " a perpetrator is held accountable in less than 1 percent of all sexual assaults." These statistics point to the fact that there is an absolute need for a re-evaluation of how sexual assaults are handled in Canada.

One remedy for these ongoing issues is the introduction of a model such as the one developed in Philadelphia. A model such as this would bring together police units and sexual assault support centres to reopen and review previously closed and unfounded cases. When these cases are reviewed, close attention is given to potential errors in judgment that may have resulted from rape myths or stereotypes. The connection between police and sexual assault support centres also aids in growing awareness and understanding of the impacts of sexual assault and how to better assist victims. The Ontario Human Rights Commission holds that the inadequacy we see among dealings with sexual assault cases at present is a form of systemic discrimination as well as a human rights violation and thus it is important to ensure that moving forward the parties involved are being held accountable and that their actions are fair and just.

There is hope, however, as Canadian police have begun following in the footsteps of the Philadelphia model and they have seen substantial improvements to how cases are being handled, as well as improved relationships between police and their surrounding community. We're proud that the Canadian adaptation of the Philadelphia Model (VACR) is now being implemented in 15 cities and counting. Advocates have worked hard to build it for over seven years and have reviewed thousands of [cases](#).

[This article](#) is part of the "Improving Canada's response to sexualized violence" special feature.

Ontario struggling to support victims of sexual assault: Centres urging the Government for support

Tremendous strides have been made following the start of the #MeToo movement, with countless sexual assault survivors coming forward to confront and address the lasting impacts that their experiences have

we work with live with the physical, mental and emotional impacts.

This conference aims to provide effective and compassionate support and this requires trauma-informed practise with a cultural and historical understanding of lived experience.

When: *Pre-conference workshops:* June 9th, 2020

Conference: June 10th to 11th, 2020

Where: RBC Place, London, ON

Conviction: Premiere Screening and Panel Talk

SAW Video and Elizabeth Fry Society, Ottawa are proud to co-present the Ottawa premiere of the critically acclaimed documentary, CONVICTION.

When: Mon, 2 March 2020
6:00 PM – 9:00 PM EST

Where: Arts Court Theatre
2 Daly Avenue
Ottawa, ON K1N 7B9

SNAPSHOTS Proposed bill on sexual assault awareness training



left. However, with the growing number of individuals seeking help for sexual assault, victim support centres are struggling to keep up with the increase in volume due to limited funding. Wait times to meet with a counsellor in Ontario are currently around [6 months](#), however, they had reached up to 18 months previously. The sentiment that is being expressed by advocates and counsellors is that no one should have to wait to get help.

In [2016](#), Kassidi Coyle, a young woman in Barrie, Ontario was assaulted during a Canada Day celebration. Upon seeking help after the assault, she was put on a waitlist, which placed her with a counsellor in four months. Her family has discussed the tremendous impact that the assault had on her mental state and her mother [claims](#) she was a completely different person afterwards. Sadly, Kassidi's struggles overcame her as she took her own life in October of 2016. After her death, Kassidi's rapist was tried and [sentenced](#), and along with that her mother and sister have continued to fight for justice for others who are facing the same struggles as Kassidi.

Other provinces are also facing similar issues in regards to long wait times, with one sexual assault centre in [Halifax](#), Nova Scotia being forced to stop adding people onto their waitlist when it reached 112 individuals mid-2019. The individuals in these centres work tirelessly to help those in need, however many have reached their limit and do not feel the support they need by their provincial and federal governments. It has also been [discussed](#) that the lack of standardization of services for victims of sexual assault across the country is a large problem area that needs more attention.

In Kassidi Coyle's case, her mother [believes](#) that had her daughter received the counselling she needed things may have turned out differently for the family. We see this sentiment echoed in Jennille Seedial's story, another sexual assault victim who faced a 6-month wait to see a counsellor in Toronto, Ontario. The twenty-three-year-old [discussed](#) the fact that at times she didn't believe that she would make it to 30. Likely facing similar struggles to that of Kassidi's, Jennille thankfully made it through her darkest times and is now [working](#) as a peer-support worker to bring those resources that helped her to others in need.

for judges 'above politics,' Ambrose says

Former interim Conservative leader Rona Ambrose says she expects all-party support to finally pass legislation that would require judges to undergo sensitivity training before they can preside over sexual assault cases.

The Liberals introduced Bill C-5, an Act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code, on Tuesday morning. If passed, it would ensure that all newly appointed provincial superior court judges undergo training to learn about the myths and stereotypes still associated with sexual assault cases. It also would require the Canadian Judicial Council to report on ongoing efforts to provide similar training to sitting judges and would amend the Criminal Code to ensure judges are putting their reasons on the record when they rule on sexual assault cases. The bill mirrors legislation Ambrose introduced during the last session, with some adjustments.

- [Ambrose to join Liberal ministers in re-introducing bill on sexual assault awareness training for judges](#)



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This issue has come to light recently due to both the increase in individuals seeking help, as well as the limited resources centres have to handle them. As of March 31, 2020, the previously granted one-time \$1 million funding afforded to 42 sexual assault centres in Ontario will be fully depleted. This offer of funding is given as a subpar remediation tactic after the Ontario Liberal government, who had [promised](#) to fund "up to \$14.8 million over three years", was defeated by the Progressive Conservatives in the 2018 Ontario general elections. While wait times were able to be reduced in some centres as a result of this funding, when this funding runs out at the end of March 2020 they will likely begin to rise once again, along with additional elimination of services that have since been introduced such as support groups, mobile counselling and various workshops.

The hope now is that after the [meeting](#) with current Attorney-General Doug Downey on February 27, TRCC counsellor Deb Singh and advocate Nicole Pietsch will be able to secure a commitment to an annually recurring additional \$1-million in funding for Ontario sexual assault centres. Having this funding renewed will mean that centres will be able to continue their efforts in reducing wait times and assisting the many individuals who require support.

- [Independent senators want rule changes to prevent partisan stalling on bills](#)

"There are some issues ... that are above politics," the former Conservative MP said today, flanked by Minister for Women and Gender Equality Maryam Monsef and Justice Minister David Lametti. "It's a great message to send to victims across the country that members of the House of Commons, who are here elected by people across Canada, are doing work to support victims of sexual assault, but also working hard to ensure we have more confidence in our system."

Ambrose pointed to a May 2019 Supreme Court decision to order a new trial for the man accused of killing Cindy Gladue — a case that unleashed public outrage over how the Indigenous victim was treated by Canada's criminal justice system.

The court found that the justice system failed to protect Gladue and that so-called "rape shield" laws were not followed during Barton's trial when the jury heard evidence of her past sexual activities before holding a separate hearing.

"She was the victim in the case. She was not referred to



as the complainant. She was referred to repeatedly during the trial as an Aboriginal prostitute and never did the judge say, 'This not appropriate language.' That is not appropriate language and that is clear in the law," said Ambrose.

All Victims Have Rights – Even When in Breach of Bail Conditions

"You should never think twice about calling the RCMP. And you should expect and have every confidence that if you're in trouble, they're there to help you." This statement, from Nunavut Justice of the Peace, Joseph Murdoch-Flowers appeared in a Globe and Mail article from justice writer Sean Fine.

An Inuk woman who was severely beaten by her boyfriend ended up being arrested and jailed for violating her bail conditions after her sister called the RCMP to report the assault.

Hers was just one of two similar cases mentioned by Justice of the Peace Murdoch-Flowers who, in a scathing ruling, called for an immediate end to these types of arrests and charges, as they deter women from reporting violence, and create more



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distrust between the Inuit and the RCMP.

Although the Justice of the Peace found both women guilty of breaching their bail conditions, he granted each an absolute discharge, meaning no conviction and no consequences. This ruling is in response to the Crown and the RCMP's decision to prosecute both cases.

"Such decision-making by the police and Crown is a failure to properly exercise the discretion which the law grants them to charge or not to charge. More importantly, it is a disservice to some of the most vulnerable people in our society – namely Inuit women who suffer from domestic violence."

In his ruling, Mr. Murdoch-Flowers worried that the message the police and the Crown sent could be construed as *'call us at your peril'* and continued to write; *"Such a no-tolerance approach serves only to dissuade victims, particularly A and K in these cases, from ever calling the RCMP for help."*

The CRCVC agrees with Mr. Murdoch-Flowers: no victim, no matter what legal issues they may have, should ever have to think twice about



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calling the police for help in a dangerous situation.

Victim of sex trafficking joins police

Durham Police unit is one of the first in Canada to team up with a human trafficking survivor for field operations. 31-year-old Karly Church goes on operations with police to help counsel and support people trapped in the sex trade. "I want them to see that there is a way out, that there are people who care." says Church. Human trafficking is a rapidly growing crime in Canada.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to measure because of its pervasive nature and underreporting of the crime. Since Church started working on the team, the number of investigations has doubled.

Undercover detectives set up fake 'dates' to try and meet up with the women at nearby hotels to make sure they aren't underage and that they aren't being coerced into sex. Church then works to build trust with the women. For her, a win isn't somebody leaving with them but building that relationship and rapport.

She also visits schools to share her story with students, as public outreach helps reduce stigma and encourages people



to speak out if they or someone they know is a target of sex trafficking.

SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH

9/11 study about PTSD

Survivors of the 2001 terrorist attack who developed PTSD have a lasting risk of premature death, a new study finds. This study finds that the longer the post-traumatic stress disorder lingered, the more likely the individuals were to die from any cause. Over 13 years of follow-up, more than 2,300 deaths were reported among the group. [Scherrer](#), an associate professor of family and community medicine at St. Louis University School of Medicine said: "Some patients may have symptoms but do not meet criteria for PTSD diagnoses at baseline, but if followed for six months, a year or 10 years, we expect to see some of these patients develop full criteria for PTSD." The study shows that civilians with PTSD had a 54% higher risk of premature death from any cause. [Dr. Jacqueline Moline](#) said, "it's important to find out if treating PTSD can also reduce the risk of early death from physical ailments."

There are five important factors to note about PTSD. The first one is that it can affect anyone who endures a distressing event including natural disasters, road accidents and terrorist attacks. Secondly, people with PTSD



can live productive lives with the aid of therapy and coping mechanisms. Also is there no established timeline for PTSD recovery. Further, PTSD can manifest weeks or even months after the triggering event. Lastly, it isn't helpful to shield someone from a trigger as it can have the opposite effect in that it might draw more attention to the trigger itself.

Valentine's Day is in February "Scams are in the Air" Are You Falling in Love or Falling Victim?

According to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, there were 972 "romance scam" complaints filed in 2019. This number includes 682 victims who lost over \$19 million.

Using false profiles on social media and through dating apps, scammers gain the trust of their victims. Once the "trusting relationship" is formed, the scammers then steal an average of \$28,000 per victim.

In a February 12th press release, The RCMP suggested to always be vigilant when forming online relationships.

- Always be suspicious of money requests (even in a perceived emergency)
- Never trust someone you have never met in



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person who is quick to profess their love

- Be wary of those who claim to live nearby but are working overseas
- Be wary of requests for financial information, as well as intimate photos or videos.

If you believe you, or someone you know, has become a victim of a romance scam:

- Stop all contact with the potential scammer
- Contact your financial institution to halt any outstanding payments
- Report the situation to your local police and include as much information as possible
- File a report with the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) through their confidential online reporting system or by calling 1-888-495-8501

Trauma-informed toolkit for legal professionals

Golden Eagle Rising Society and Myrna McCallum of Miyo Pimatisiwin Legal Services in North Vancouver were inspired to create a trauma-informed legal practice resource for members of the legal profession due to the lack of trauma-informed perspective



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in law schools and the courtroom.

The toolkit will help members of the legal profession recognize trauma; adopt a trauma-informed approach; and inspire members of the legal profession to fulfill the ethical obligation to serve clients and witnesses in a manner that does not harm.

The education offered in this toolkit will not only build trust and credibility in our legal processes but in doing so, will improve access to justice while educating lawyers and judges on vicarious trauma and how we must safeguard our mental health.

Feedback on the site is welcome. You can send your [feedback via the forms](#) until April 3, 2020.

If you are a lawyer, legal educator, law student, advocate, judge or member of the public, you can participate in building the [toolkit by clicking here](#).

Police-reported hate crimes lower in 2018, but not great.

The 1,798 hate crimes reported by police in 2018 was 13% lower than the record-high of 2,073 incidents reported in 2017. Despite the decline, police-reported hate crimes had been increasing since 2014 and the number reported in 2018 was the



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second highest since 2009.
Read more from Statistics
Canada [here](#).