



Greetings!

Welcome to the **March** 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/>.

This newsletter was written and compiled with the assistance of Carleton University Criminology student, Benjamin Rayner, and KU Leuven Criminology student, Frauke Billen, as well as volunteer Stephanie Casanova.

Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime
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Growing concern over victims being prevented from participating in offender parole hearings

[Sonya Lucas](#), a 52-year-old repeat child sex offender was granted day parole this month. As a result of the growing concerns about COVID-19, Lucas and her lawyer were present for her parole hearing through teleconferencing, however, the family of the victim were not granted the opportunity and were therefore unable to attend. The family was notified that they would not be permitted to attend only two days before the hearing. [The victim's aunt](#), who will not be named in order to protect the victim's identity, states that she is "furious. I wasn't even given an opportunity to give my victim statement. I feel like I've been scammed. Under this country's Victim's Bill of Rights... which is there for a reason... victims have a right to speak and that's the law. It seems like it's all about the offender."

The victim's aunt says that she understands the seriousness of the situation surrounding COVID-19, but is curious as to why the criminal justice system only took measures to accommodate the offender and not the victim. Furthermore, before Lucas' conviction for sexual assault towards a child as well as the

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(MOSTLY*)**

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**CANADIAN
RESOURCE
CENTRE FOR
VICTIMS OF
CRIME**

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HELD VIRTUALLY/OVER THE
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You Can Save a Life.

With your support, you ensure that when a victim contacts us, we'll be there, ready to help.

The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime is a lifeline for victims of crime across Canada, especially during this difficult time.

You can help Canadian crime victims for as little as \$20.

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

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recording of the assault, she had already been registered as a sex offender after sexually assaulting her two teenage sons in 2004.

The victim's aunt reached out to the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime in light of her traumatizing experience and the Centre wrote a formal complaint letter to the Parole Board of Canada (PBC), as well as an advocacy letter to Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Bill Blair and Parole Board of Canada Chairperson, Jennifer Oades, on behalf of the aunt. [Aline Vlasceanu](#), executive director of the CRCVC wrote "we believe the offender's rights are taking priority over the participatory rights of the victim which is unfair, dangerous to public safety and horribly revictimizing. It further affirms how victims feel as though they are simply a second thought within the justice system and contributes to the lack of public confidence in the PBC."

In her victim statement, the victim's aunt hoped to express the financial and health troubles faced by the family as a result of the crime. Of further concern, Lucas will only have served two-and-a-half-years of her eight-and-a-half-year sentence in custody, which the victim's aunt believes is incredibly short considering the type of acts committed by Lucas. When talking about the parole board's decision, the victim's aunt shared her frustrations, [stating](#) that "the justice system is failing victims" and that she doesn't feel that justice has been granted for her niece.

Unfortunately, this victim's troubles are shared by many others who have also been affected by the changes that have been implemented as officials attempt to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Lisa Freeman, whose father was murdered in 1991, was set to present her victim statement at the day parole hearing of John Terrance Porter. The introduction of remote hearings is one change that has been implemented amidst the COVID-19 pandemic but it appears to only benefit the offender. Rather than postponing the hearing until all parties could be included, the Parole Board of Canada [intends](#) to move forward with the hearing, only offering the victim the chance to submit her statement in writing, which the victim [feels](#) will reduce her experience to simply "words on paper."

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

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

QUICK LINKS

Accused killer Kalen Schlatter testified in his defence that Richey was alive the last time he saw her. [Read more here](#).

[Eleanor Hands](#) contacted police every three or four weeks, hoping for a breakthrough in her daughter's homicide investigation. After many years of waiting, Hands finally received a call to inform her that the police made an arrest for the case. [Read more here](#).

Toronto police are trying to identify a group of males who were caught on camera dumping the body of the city's latest homicide victim outside of a hospital in North York. [Read more here](#).

Jason Coulas, who "ruined" a Sudbury woman's life, likely denying her the chance to ever own a home, was sentenced to 10 months in jail for fraud as well as being ordered to pay back \$70,000. [Read more](#).

Decades later, [women read victim impact statements](#) at their former violin teacher's, now offender's, hearing.



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In this case, and many others like it, it appears PBC does not have victims in mind. Freeman asked to be included in the hearing via live stream, however, her request was denied due to security concerns. Leo Russomanno, a criminal defence lawyer and law professor at the University of Ottawa [argues](#) that Canada's justice system needs to begin adapting during these uncertain and changing times. With the advanced technologies that exist today, it does not appear all that difficult to meet Freeman's request to virtually attend the parole hearing of her father's murderer, however, the Canadian court system must make it a priority to meet these needs.

Heidi Illingworth, Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, echoed these concerns and further [explained](#) that many individuals have been impacted thus far and that there are likely to be many more individuals facing the same problems. Connecting to hearings by telephone is just one suggestion given by Illingworth to help combat this problem. In her official [statement](#), Illingworth expressed the need to accommodate victims using the technology we have. She further explained that these accommodations are a [right](#), that is to say, not a favour, as defined in the Canadian Victims' Bill of Rights. At the end of her statement, Illingworth assures that both Public Safety Canada and the Parole Board of Canada have been brought into this conversation and updates will be provided as soon as possible.

The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime continues to advocate on behalf of victims during these uncertain times. With the number of victims registered with CSC/PBC at an all-time high, specifically 8480 registered victims [in 2018](#), we continue to campaign for the idea of allowing victims to attend parole hearings via teleconference and/or videoconference to ensure victim rights, extended through the Canadian Victim Bill of Rights, are being upheld. We are also calling for policy changes to make sure that there is proper infrastructure in place to support them, as well as methods of recourse for moments, much like right now, when rights are infringed. We believe this is all very crucial in order to avoid the revictimization of individuals and families. We continue calling on Minister Blair and PBC chairperson Jennifer Oades in an attempt to gain answers for the lack of support and transparency

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ottawa Monthly Drop-In Support Group for "Loss to Violence" (momentarily on hold)

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

When: Last Thursday of every month (*Due to COVID19 precautions, momentarily on hold until further notice*)

Trauma and Violence Intervention Research:

Promoting safety and well-being across the lifespan. Trauma is prevalent in our world and many of the people we work with live with its physical, mental and emotional impacts.

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



afforded to victims at this time, and we will continue to work on ensuring the justice victims deserve is granted.

Five-day employer-paid leave for victims of sexual assault implemented in B.C.

A widely unacknowledged concern for victims of sexual assault has been addressed in British Columbia after Labour Minister [Harry Bains](#) introduced a bill to amend the Employment Standards Act, after consultations with the public indicated that an overwhelming 90% of respondents were in favour of the idea. The amendment would allow for [5 days of paid leave](#) for victims of domestic and sexual assault. Changes in 2019 mean that currently, employees can access a total of ten days of unpaid leave, with an additional 15 weeks of non-consecutive unpaid leave. Furthermore, no police reports or similar documents would be required to gain access to the paid-leave.

[Maura Gowans](#), the interim director of the Aboriginal Mothers Centre, stated that "one of the biggest reasons women don't leave [abusive relationships] is because of financial reasons." [Sarah Thomas](#), a colleague of Gowans at the Aboriginal Mothers Centre, indicated that she knows many individuals who have lost their jobs because they needed to take time off of work as a result of trauma. [Gowans and Thomas](#) further support the government's decision because "women, especially indigenous women, don't believe in the [criminal justice] system," so this policy change will give them a sense of support.

However, concerns about the need for this amendment have been made, with [Bains](#) noting that other regions that employ the policy have found that few people actually use the policy. [Mitzi Dean](#), the parliamentary secretary for gender equality addressed this point by emphasizing that regardless of the actual utilization of the five days of paid leave, the availability of the option for people who need it is key. [Dean](#) recalled coming into work to find one of her team members distraught as a result of a sexual assault she endured the previous weekend. She noted that her team member clearly needed time to heal yet she was still at work. Working through the situation with the team member, Dean was able to support the woman. With the new bill, [Dean](#) says that all employers will have the ability to resolve the

When: Cancelled until further notice.

Where: RBC Place, London, ON

Victim Support Europe 2020 Annual Conference "Celebrating our past. Creating hope for the future."

When: Cancelled until further notice.

Updates available [here](#)

Stonewall 50 Across Canada

When: Postponed until Fall 2020

Where: Various cities across Canada, [click here](#) to see where.

Victimology, Victim Assistance, & Criminal Justice

For two weeks, international experts and students will congregate at Stockton University to share victimological research across multiple disciplines in an intensive short-course format.

[Click here](#) for more info.

When: 12 July-26 July 2020

Where: Stockton University Atlantic City, John F. Scarpa Academic Center, Atlantic City, New Jersey



challenges victims of sexual assault and domestic abuse initially face after experiencing the crime.

Second Chance at Parole Coming Soon

[Marco Muzzo's](#) second parole hearing is two months away, and concerns are beginning to arise over how easy it may be for Muzzo to complete due to him having gone through a parole hearing in the past. Muzzo undoubtedly knows the types of questions that he will need to answer, and therefore he may know the most beneficial responses to give as well. What is of greater concern is that if Muzzo is granted parole, it means that he will have only served four and a half years for the deaths of four members of the [Neville-Lake](#) family, despite having been sentenced by Ontario Superior Court Justice [Michelle Fuerst](#) to 10 years in prison with a 12-year driving ban to follow upon his release.

As a result of this second parole hearing, the Neville-Lake family will be back in court for the second time since Muzzo's sentencing. Notably, it was only late 2018 when the Neville-Lake's were last in court for Muzzo's first parole hearing. At that time Muzzo was denied parole because the [parole board](#) found him to "lack an understanding of the issue of impairment." In complete contrast to the time that Muzzo has had to prepare, ["the Neville-Lake family, meanwhile, is been afforded no peace"](#) considering the daunting challenge of facing "the [possibility](#) of the man who took away their children's lives being released, and again speak before [a boardroom of] strangers about his devastating impact on their family." With parole being at the forefront of a criminal justice system and a heavy emphasis placed on "[rehabilitation](#) and reintegration" a large burden of recovery is placed on the shoulders of victims of crime, and not those who cause the harm. What is inherent in this, is that "families become inadvertent, perpetual [casualties](#) of the system."

The Life Means Life Bill could restore the perception of a balance concerning recovery. Tabled in 2015 by the [Conservative Government](#), the bill was a move to ensure that individuals convicted of serious violent crimes such as first-degree murder or sexual assault would be denied the possibility of parole. Although this bill would not have had much of a practical impact

Register: by emailing Mariah Duffey at Mariah.duffey@stockton.edu

SNAPSHOTS

Minassian admits planning his attack in Toronto

Alex Minassian admitted to planning and carrying out the attack in which he killed 10 people when he drove a van into crowds of pedestrians on a sidewalk in Toronto. He faces 10 counts of first-degree murder and 16 of attempted murder for the attack. His lawyer, [Boris Bytensky](#), argued against the admissibility of the statements his client gave to the police shortly after his arrest. His right to remain silent was violated, the questions they asked were inappropriate because the answers were potential evidence. [Minassian](#) told the police he carried out the attack in retribution for years of sexual rejection and ridicule by women. He also told a detective that he had "accomplished" his mission. He conceded making those statements, which now form part of the agreed set of facts in the case. [Philip Butler](#), an officer who was a witness at the scene said that he took Minassian to his car and advised him of his rights, including his right to consult a lawyer.

Safe zone for online transactions



since most dangerous offenders are denied parole anyway, it would serve to prevent victims from experiencing the revictimizing impact of the parole process. This bill would also have not affected Muzzo's case, due to the nature of the crime, but it has come into the conversation as the case exemplifies the traumatic effect this type of hearing can have on victims. Considering that the [Neville-Lakes](#) have already experienced significant trauma through the deaths of their loved ones, "it seems [doubly cruel](#) that, every couple of years, the justice system would call them in to speak to it again."

Ford Government backtracks on cancelling of rape crisis centre funding

Attorney General [Doug Downey](#) announced in early March that the Ford Government was cancelling plans to provide Ontario rape crisis centres with a \$1 million boost in funding. However, just one day later [Jill Dunlop](#), Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues, announced instead that \$2 million would be added to the annual funding for rape crisis centres. Originally, the funding was to be distributed by the previous Liberal Government, but they had lost power in the provincial election before the funding could be added. [Dunlop](#) noted that the new funding will be "part of a broader modernization to provide better services to victims across Ontario" supported by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Office of Women's Issues, and the Ministry of the Attorney General. The hope is that the funding will improve the effectiveness of work in the area and will "cut the red tape" in desired areas of improvement, [Dunlop](#) said.

Rape crisis centres are unsure of how new opportunities for development will be created with the funding, as the government may put restrictions on how the funding may be used in certain areas. [Deb Singh](#), who works as an advocate and counsellor at the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre/Multicultural Women Against Rape, indicated that funding previously provided to the organization by the Liberal Government in the past led to the hiring of three new staff members and significantly reduced wait times. If there are restrictions on the use of the funding, [Singh](#) says that the three new workers would have to be

Edmonton police are providing a safe zone for individuals buying or selling items online to complete their transactions. They will create a safe place to meet others when selling or purchasing items online. This is in response to a growing number of reports of criminal activity in such transactions. The zone is intended to provide citizens with a safe alternative to placing themselves in potentially vulnerable positions when meeting someone for the first time while selling or purchasing items for sale online. Last year Edmonton saw nearly one robbery a week with this type of transaction. Signs are used to indicate the zones, and it has been reported that people feel safe using them. It has also been noted that very few incidents happen at these sites, suggesting they are a positive addition to the community. Although it is suggested that individuals use these sites during daylight, they are open as late as 8 PM on weekdays and are monitored by video cameras 24/7.

Political firestorm for the murder of Marylène Levesque

[Eustachio Gallese](#), who was out on day parole while serving a life sentence for killing his ex-wife in 2004, pleaded guilty to first-degree murder in Marylène Levesque's death. Gallese had been granted day parole for



released, resulting in wait times going back up. Due to these concerns, [Singh](#) is urging the government to improve its communication with rape crisis centres and ensure that the centres are fully informed on the details surrounding the \$2 million in funding.

Proactive policing, not gun buybacks or CCTV cameras: Ottawa Police Service

The Ottawa Police Service would rather invest in proactive policing and work with communities than fund gun buybacks or CCTV cameras. In 2019, [Rawlson King](#) asked the mayor to lobby the federal government to ban handguns and for police to be proactive in their efforts to deal with gun violence. The premise of a gun buyback is essentially that by removing firearms in a city, police will decrease shootings. But, as shown by statistics, this premise isn't accurate. Buybacks work by putting legal guns into the possession of the police.

Ottawa police have tried various forms of buybacks in the past. In 2013, police traded digital cameras for guns in the Pixels for Pistols program and took in more than 1,000 firearms, 178 handguns and replica weapons. [Carl Cartright](#) said that the cost and energy that is spent on this could be spent on other programs that have greater value, such as neighbourhood policing. The same program has been overseen in Toronto and was seen to be successful as it provided a visual sense of achievement and ensured the removal of guns that were being stored in improper and unsafe ways. This means it was less likely for these guns to be converted into crime guns through theft. However, [Sloly](#) believes that the effort may be more effective if it was put into a neighbourhood resource team or a project that targets offenders. According to [Sloly](#), the government is still in the early stages of drafting legislation. Police maintain that they aren't opposed to closed-circuit television cameras, but that again, the evidence just isn't there to show that they prevent crimes. Police continue to build their approach on the street violence and gang strategy developed with Crime Prevention Ottawa. By the end of 2020, police plan to have launched six neighbourhood resource teams who will continue the proactive work.

good behaviour after serving 15 years of his life sentence for brutally killing his ex-wife. Gallese admitted to planning the murder, concealing a knife and stabbing Levesque in the abdomen 30 times. Police found the body of the 22-year old at a hotel in Quebec City's Ste-Foy district after Gallese turned himself in to local police on January 23. Hearings are currently being held to find out why Levesque's killer was released on parole. The heads of Canada's prison service along with the parole board say that they are committed to taking steps to prevent another event like this from happening again. The House of Commons saw a political firestorm over Canada's parole board system and its decision to allow a man with a record of deadly violence against women to be released on parole and to be alone with women. [Jennifer Oades](#) responded to this claiming that the parole board takes public safety as its foremost interest in all decisions and that violent incidents occurring after the board releases an offender into the community are very rare. Conservative MP [Pierre Paul-Hus](#) said he was outraged that Gallese, with a violent history against women, was released on day parole and that his correctional plan included a strategy that allowed him to meet women to meet his "sexual needs." Some former parole members said changes to the nomination process introduced by the Trudeau government in 2017 led to a shortage of



Canada's Domestic Violence Crisis

There are many similarities amongst domestic violence cases, and considering that [one in six](#) Canadian domestic violence cases are preceded by a history of family violence, domestic violence should be a major concern for policymakers and the public. As well, the statistic indicates that there are opportunities for victims, who are largely women, to get help, yet resources and shelters continue to fail these women. Due to such circumstances in the [United States](#), the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention has deemed domestic or interpersonal violence as a preventable issue. [Canada](#) is moving to adopt this view too in light of information that suggests about 90% of the 100,000 domestic violence victims it sees are killed each year.

P.E.I Support Program for Women:

A unique program offered to victims of domestic violence in Prince Edward Island by the P.E.I Family Violence Prevention Services is called [Circles of Safety](#). The program is "for [women](#) who have left an abusive relationship and are considered at high risk of being killed by their former partners." Circles of Safety came into existence after [Gloria Dennis](#), an outreach worker for P.E.I's Family Violence Prevention Services was struggling to help one of her clients. As a result, [Dennis](#) contacted those close to the victim and organized a meeting to discuss a safety plan. [Dennis](#) acknowledges that Circles of Support will not be able to address every risk that victims face, but the program can increase the safety of a victim by bringing as many members of a victim's support network together to develop a plan.

When groups meet, the first step taken is to come up with a plan from which the group can base their safety initiatives. The planning stage also ensures that the victim can identify what they feel is going to put them most at ease, such as the installation of security alarms. [Hannah Povey](#), a recent client of [Dennis'](#), said that having the group ask her questions "centred" her, and gave her the ability to "think rationally about the situation." [Dennis](#) added that by preventing the victim from thinking that they are alone, the discussion amongst the support group can be focused on the victim.

experienced members. [Paul-Hus](#) said eight former parole board members wrote to the Liberal government in 2017 warning that the changes could create risk. [Oades](#) explained that there is typically a big change in the makeup of the board whenever there is a change in government, but the board members are all qualified and properly trained to do the job. A board of investigation has been requested to fully examine the circumstances that led to this tragedy.

SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH

Program to help workers facing sexual harassment on the job

Community Legal Assistance Society (CLAS) and the Ending Violence Association of British Columbia (EVA BC) have launched a new program geared towards helping workers experiencing sexual harassment on the job. People who experience workplace sexual harassment may receive help with the new SHARP Workplaces program. The program provides free legal advice, education and information to address workplace sexual harassment in British Columbia. A 2017 study by Insights West indicated that more than 50 percent of working women in Canada say they have experienced sexual harassment at some point during their careers. Only about a quarter of those



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In [Povey's](#) case, she found it best to notify the police about where she was living and working, and what her phone numbers were. With the police in possession of this knowledge, [Povey](#) could be sure that there would be a quick response to any emergency phone call she made from her phone. Povey also planned for her new boyfriend to drop her off and pick her up from work. The emergency shelter in her area was also notified of her situation in case she needed a place to stay on short notice.

Unfortunately, the Circles of Support program is not well funded as it relies on donations and government grants. However, [Dennis](#) has begun to train nine new workers from women's shelters in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the Yukon. The executive director of the Help and Hope for Families Society, [Rosemary Rowlands](#), thinks bringing the program to shelters in the north is a good move since it benefits shelters by helping them avoid situations whereby they are unable to properly accommodate women due to short term notice. However, shelters still have issues with occupancy and are sometimes unable to take in women because they are over capacity.

Shelters in Ontario:

In Canada, shelters turn away [620 women and children](#) who are leaving domestic violence relationships each day. In eastern Ontario specifically, around twice that number were turned away from shelters last year, which is more than the amount that shelters served. In 2018 and 2019, shelters helped more than 2,280 individuals, however, 4,416 individuals were turned away. [Keri Lewis](#), executive director of Interval House Ottawa notes that people are "trying to leave an unsafe situation, but there's absolutely nowhere for them to go." [Lewis](#) can even recount stories she's heard of "women sleeping in cars, women sleeping on the streets, women having to return home to abusive partners and then being assaulted."

Notably, many shelters are reporting that there are affordable housing crises in their communities, which is largely seen as the problem contributing to issues with shelter capacity. This also causes problems for women fleeing domestic violence situations as it can take months for them to find an affordable place to reside. Furthermore, women approaching the shelters

women say they complained or reported the issue. The SHARP Workplaces program will provide up to five hours of free confidential legal advice to individuals needing assistance. It is available to anyone with a complaint regarding workplace sexual harassment in B.C. Anyone can access SHARP Workplaces' legal advice by calling 604-673-3143 or toll-free: 1-888-685-6222, by emailing SHARPWorkplaces@clasbc.net or by [following this link](#).

Victims of Crime Desperately Need Help in Kahnawake

Natalia Fedosieieva of [The Eastern Door](#) recently explored work by The Mohawk Council of Kahnawake (MCK) Justice Services who surveyed the Kahnawake community to identify gaps in the support services provided for victims of crime. The research is part of the Kahnawake Victims of Crime research project which aims to "establish a culturally-sensitive support service for people who have suffered physical or emotional harm, property damage or economic loss because of crime in Kahnawake." To reach members of the Kahnawake community, researchers set up kiosks to provide community members with information on the initiative and to conduct in-person surveys. Carole Brazeau, Victims of Crime research coordinator, says that the data currently collected



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can be as young as sixteen, but some are beginning to see older women too.

Mental health and addiction are also becoming an ever-present issue in shelters, and there is also an increasing volume of immigrants and refugees looking for shelter services. To address these and other concerns, shelters often share resources and will sometimes send women long distances to other shelters to accommodate them. Despite having access to safe housing, crisis lines, counselling, workshops, as well as housing and financial advice in shelters, some issues still need to be resolved.

Personalized Website for Women of Domestic Violence:

Fortunately, there is a new online program expected to be available this summer that can help to address domestic violence concerns in Canada. [Marilyn Ford-Gilboe](#), a nursing professor and chair of women's health research at Western University, was part of the team that developed the new program. [iCAN Plan 4 Safety](#) is "the first interactive, online health and safety resource of its kind for Canadian women, specifically." When a woman accesses the website, they will first be asked a number of questions that determine what kind of risks they face, and recommendations about what they can do to address their risks. [Ford-Gilboe](#) added that one of the benefits of the website is that it provides a service based on evidence, rather than simply just information on what a woman could do.

In the development of the plan, [Ford-Gilboe](#) described how she assisted in a study examining the impact of the plan on two groups of women, one that used a personalized version of the plan, with another using a shorter and less personalized version of the plan. The study found that both versions led to improvements in women's status, but with the most improvement seen in women who used the more personalized version of the plan. Some [characteristics](#) of the women in the study included having "children under the age of 18, those experiencing severe abuse, those not living with their abusive partner at the start of the study and those living in medium to large urban settings." [Ford-Gilboe](#) noted that it was important for the study to include women with these characteristics in the groups because "they are groups of women who have a great risk of harm or poor outcomes." In Canada,

affirms "that the community is underserved, and that a culturally-sensitive victim support service would balance access to justice."

Brazeau says that if culturally-sensitive victim services are implemented into the community, the services would "include accompanying the victim of crime through the legal system and the court process, transportation, translations from French to English," and promoting a balanced service. Brazeau stresses the importance of each of these aspects of the victim service because a lack of immediate support provided to victims of crime may lead to depression. "They really need to have somebody to do outreach to the victims here in Kahnawake," she says. Furthermore, many victims in Kahnawake "isolate themselves," indicating that information on victim's rights and the legal steps victims can take to gain access to compensation programs will be valuable to the Kahnawake community. Holistic support also needs to be considered within any service accessible to victims. Holistic support is a plan for healing that includes resources such as physical and emotional support and would be essential for any victim services that aim to become culturally-sensitive.

Another issue that needs to be addressed to help Kahnawake's victims of crime is the access to and location of victim and shelter services.



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only one in five women who are assaulted by their partner access support services such as shelters, and hopefully when the website is launched this summer, it will “complement existing services such as shelters and agencies that provide counselling” as it is intended to, says [Ford-Gilboe](#).

The Issue of Representation:

With research into the diverse range of issues facing victims of domestic and interpersonal violence clearly demonstrating a need for support in the area, one would think that steps have been taken to address these issues. [Monique Roberts](#), a victim of domestic violence who has first-hand experience of how the criminal justice system interacts with victims of crime, responds to this assumption by stating that this is not the case.

[Roberts](#) says she had to live on adrenaline for years after her ex-partner, who assaulted her, chose to live “182 metres” away from her floating home, on open water. [Roberts](#) said to herself at the time that she would “be damned if he succeeds in not only assaulting me but forcing me away from my home.” Unfortunately, there were several hurdles she had to face while navigating the legal system, and she had to do a lot of the work on her case by herself, essentially putting her life aside. This type of isolation can be seen as a factor that may lead to a feeling of revictimization.

While reporting a crime to the police, victims can be under immense amounts of stress, and unfortunately, they may be going through the process entirely on their own. In contrast, those who are accused have a lawyer and “full access to the case to hash out a strategy.” For victims, the Crown is not a lawyer, and a victim's participation in their case can be largely restricted to duties as a witness. Furthermore, victim services are not legal entities, and while [Roberts](#) says that there were many instances in her case whereby she “could have greatly benefitted from a legal entity acting on [her] behalf,” she could only access services such as “safety advice, resources, and emotional support.” For example, [Roberts](#) was unable to successfully challenge the conditions of her offender's restraining order because only a judge at a trial can change them, but a trial can take up to a year to occur. [Roberts](#) notes that without any legal

Brazeau pointed out that the nearest Crime Victims Assistance Centres (CAVAC) is located in Chateauguay, and is difficult to get to from Kahnawake if one does not have a car. Furthermore, language may also be an issue, with CAVAC delivering the majority of its services in French. Brazeau notes that “a traumatized person must be able to speak in their language to receive adequate support. Additionally, a victim should not need to explain [their] culture, [or] history, to a therapist.”

The Quebec Ministry of Justice reports that only twelve Indigenous people from the South Shore region and six from Montreal used CAVAC's services between the 2017 and 2018 fiscal years. These figures are quite low, and Brazeau alludes to the low amount of funding allocated for serving victims of crime in South Shore as a contributing factor to the lack of individuals accessing victim services. Brazeau says that “In all the Monteregie, [an administrative region in the south of Quebec, a] ... minimum of \$1,023” was spent on victims of crime and services. Brazeau also claims that the situation is even worse in Montreal, where no funds are spent on CAVAC for Indigenous matters and thus “victims of crime have little support.” In Kahnawake, police reports indicate that 84 assaults occur per year. However, the actual number is likely to be higher because not all victims of crime report the



representation, it is up to the victim “to press the Crown to increase or update the restraining order.”

“This lack of representation extends to the trial itself,” says [Roberts](#). In her case, the Crown lawyer tried to convince [Roberts](#) that he would be unable to bring her ex-partner’s “previous sexual assault conviction up to the judge, as he had obtained a pardon.” However, [Roberts](#) found out through her work that the judge could be informed about the pardon, and further, Pardons Canada indicated to her that “a pardon is like a driving licence,” and can be revoked. As such, [Roberts](#) feels that had a victim’s legal representative brought this to the Crown lawyer, the Crown would have been able to address Roberts’ concern “in time for [her] ex’s conviction.”

Despite her ex-partner being convicted, he still lived within “[200 yards](#)” from her for six weeks while waiting for his sentence. [Roberts](#) says that “the Crown had their man, and they made me feel expendable.” As a result, [Roberts](#) suggests that there needs to be “a legal representative to do the leg work for victims, and to keep them from being re-victimized.” While [Roberts’](#) offender was given a sentence of five months in jail, he was released in three.

To the saying “I can’t refer to it as the justice system; It’s a legal system”, [Roberts](#) says nothing but “I wholeheartedly agree,” clearly indicating that there is a significant amount of room for Canada’s Criminal Justice System to improve how it interacts with victims of crime.

Fraudsters Using Coronavirus to Target Victims in Canada, CAFC Warns

The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) is warning Canadians to be vigilant online when trying to take precautions against COVID-19. The [CAFC states](#) that “Fraudsters want to profit from consumer’s fears, uncertainties, and misinformation. Fraudsters are exploiting the crisis to facilitate fraud and cybercrime.”

The CAFC notes that Canadians should be wary of “spoofed government, healthcare or research information, and of unsolicited calls, emails and texts

crime to the police. On March 31st, Brazeau will have tabled a report to Kevin Fleischer, the Kahnawake Justice Commissioner, that will include recommendations for the development of justice services in the community.

Shazie Kanatiostha Phillips, assistant coordinator at Sken:nen A’Onsonton (To Become Peaceful Again), an alternative dispute resolution program in Kahnawake, was invited to be part of the research by Brazeau. She notes that by conducting research that explores the idea of providing services to people that are in conflict within the community, the program coordinators are looking at expanding their project to include more justice practices. Phillips believes that conflict is a normal part of everyday life, but when it occurs in a small group, the conflict can “really put separation in the community.”

Concerning what Brazeau and Phillips describe, Fleischer says he expects that with the research report identifying gaps in the services Kahnawake provides to victims in the community, he will know whether or not to proceed with measures moving towards the establishment of culturally-sensitive support service. Fleischer believes that the current research being conducted is important because it will shed light on the issues that victims are facing that aren’t easily



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giving medical advice or requesting urgent action or payment." Canadians should also be aware of what products they are buying, as "high-priced or low-quality products bought in bulk by consumers and resold for profit... may be expired and/or dangerous to your health." Offers that should raise concern for individuals include miracle cures, herbal remedies, vaccinations, and faster testing.

Some of the scams reported by the [CAFC](#) include:

- Cleaning or heating companies promising to clean ducts or install air filters to protect against COVID-19
- Power companies threatening to disconnect your power for non-payment
- The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention or the World Health Organization offering to sell lists of those known to be infected by COVID-19
- The Public Health Agency of Canada indicating that you have tested positive for COVID-19 or attempting to trick you into providing your health card and credit card numbers for a prescription
- The Red Cross or other charities offering free medical products, such as masks, in return for a donation
- Government departments doing any of the following:
 - sending coronavirus-themed phishing emails
 - tricking you into opening malicious attachments
 - tricking you into revealing sensitive personal and financial details
- Financial advisors pressuring you into investing in "hot new stocks" related to COVID-19, or offering you loans or financial aid to help you through the crisis
- Door-to-door salespeople offering decontamination services
- Private companies:
 - Offering fast tests for COVID-19
 - Only hospitals can perform tests, and no other tests are genuine and guaranteed to provide accurate results
 - Selling fraudulent products that claim to treat or prevent the disease

identifiable for the service providers. At the moment Fleischer claims, "a lot of our community members aren't accessing victim services and we are not exactly sure why." Furthermore, Fleischer notes that offenders in the Kahnawake community have access to a plethora of services, "so we are trying to balance the skills of justice" by conducting the research to determine what issues victims face and what can be done to support them.



- Selling unapproved drugs threatens public health and violates federal laws

The full CAFC Bulletin on COVID-19 Fraud can be found here: [COVID-19 Fraud Bulletin](#)

Shelters in Alberta preparing for a surge in domestic-violence-related to COVID-19

Alberta's women's and sexual assault shelters are preparing for increased calls for help as a result of the economic stress and anxiety caused by mass quarantines in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. Relief organizations have reported that these factors intensify abusive relationships as evidence shows that sex and gender-based violence appear to increase after natural disasters and emergencies. [Mary Jane James](#), CEO of the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton, says that "there is no doubt that the demands on the capacity of our agency and agencies across the province and the country are going to increase as this pandemic sticks around." Already the Centre has experienced more calls for assistance and as a result, has "doubled its staff and volunteers." [James](#) also indicated that seniors experiencing homelessness and individuals with mental health issues are among those who are most vulnerable in this time of crisis. "When you layer any one or more of those onto trauma that they've experienced or are continuing to experience, then you've got a situation that's quite explosive and quite dangerous actually," stated [James](#).

[Omar Yaqub](#), the executive director of the Islamic Family and Social Services Association notes that domestic violence is more likely to occur because keeping people in a closed environment over a long period leads to the development of tension and anxiety. Furthermore, [Yaqub](#) says that it will be difficult to help those being victimized or who are survivors of violence because those who test positive for COVID-19 will be unable to travel to the shelter to receive help.

The executive director of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, [Jan Reimer](#), says that her organization is reaching out internationally to see



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what other organizations have done to keep their operations up and running. Reimer has specifically contacted shelters in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. For the time being, however, the capacity of shelters to support victims is limited. Data from [Reimer's](#) organization shows that shelters in Edmonton turned down 6,000 requests for accommodation last year. Current requests for counselling at the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton have gone overcapacity, with a five to the six-month waitlist for an appointment now in place. As a result, [Reimer](#) says that shelters have the greatest need for support right now.

Fortunately, the Alberta provincial government announced a \$60 million fund for charities and non-profit groups to help those most heavily impacted by COVID-19. [James](#) says that she hopes the funding will allow the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton "to hire some more qualified and experienced psychologists to deal with this trauma," and importantly, to provide some relief to the services already in place.