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We respectfully acknowledge the CRCVC office is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the Omàmiwininiwag (Algonquin peoples) Nation.

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New Funding to Support Victims and Survivors of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation

On March 5, 2024, the Department of Justice and Executive Director for La Sortie announced a new [three-year funding plan](#) of \$442,921 in support of victims and survivors of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in the Montreal area.

[La Sortie](#) is a non-profit organization to provide assistance and support to women victims of human

trafficking and sexual exploitation between the ages of 18-35 years old. Their services include housing, medical care, guidance, individual follow-ups in support of leaving the sex industry, thematic workshops, and social integration activities. The mission of La Sortie is to bring empowerment, respect and security to the lives of women affected by human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Their vision is to educate the public on the realities of the sex industry and to offer victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking a real way out.

The funding will support La Sortie's Alternative to the Sex Industry Program. This program implements a stable life plan for each woman deciding to leave the sex trade. Through guidance and support, this program aims to improve the physical, psychological and socio-legal well-being of women victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation through assistance and support, nurse assessments and follow-ups, various training and educational workshops, and reintegration into relationships with loved ones and their community.

National Impaired Driving Prevention Week

[The National Impaired Driving Prevention Week](#) began in 2018 and continues to be designated on the third week of March every year. The prevention week aims to educate Canadians on the different forms of impaired driving, whether from alcohol, drugs, fatigue or distraction. Impaired driving applies to any method of transportation, such as cars, motorcycles, boats, ATVs, snowmobiles, etc.

The hope for National Impaired Driving Prevention Week is to create awareness of the risks and consequences of impaired driving. It promotes educating Canadians about the consequences of impaired driving which destroys the lives and health of thousands in Canada. For example, impaired driving, whether by alcohol or drugs, kills or injures more Canadians than any other crime and is the most important factor contributing to serious road crashes.

Canada is Set to Introduce the Online Harms Bill in 2024

This spring the [Canadian Government](#) is set to introduce its Online Harms Act, [Bill C-63](#). Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated this Bill will have a serious focus on protecting children from being subjected to "hatred, to violence, to being bullied and seeing and being affected by terrible things online". This legislation ensures that social media platforms are held accountable for harmful content creates a safer space for all individuals online, especially children and youth.

Though the full scope of the new legislation has not yet been made public, this Bill addresses desired changes to the *Criminal Code* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (CHRA) that will hold online websites more accountable for harmful content such as hate speech, terrorist content, incitement to violence, the sharing of non-consensual images, child exploitation, and rising sexually explicit AI pornography. The Bill also wants changes to the *Mandatory Reporting Act*, making it mandatory for social media platforms to report internet child pornography.

The Online Harms Act proposes that social media platforms will have three duties:

- A duty to act responsibly;
- A duty to protect children; and
- A duty to make certain content unattainable. In particular, non-consensual images and any content that sexualizes children or revictimizes a survivor.

The Bill would also establish a Digital Safety Commission of Canada and a Digital Safety Ombudsperson of Canada to enforce the new Bill and act as a resource and advocate for users and victims online.

The expectation is for the Government to prevent hateful content from getting online in the first place as opposed to relying on platforms to remove the content after it has already been published. However, the Bill would also give Canadians the means to report and request the removal of harmful content that sexualizes children, is non-consensual, or revictimizes survivors. Canadians will have the opportunity to submit complaints to the Digital Safety Commission and to contact the Digital Safety Ombudsperson to receive support and referrals to appropriate resources. Canadians will also be able to file complaints with the Canadian Human Rights Commission if they are victims of hate speech online.

The proposal is still under review but once approved, the Governor in Council will ensure the Bill takes effect, the Digital Safety Commission will be established and all the necessary rules and regulations will be enforced. For more information, please go to [Proposed Bill to address Online Harms - Canada.ca](#)

Mourning the 6 Victims of the Barrhaven Massacre

On March 6th, 2024, a woman, her four children and a family acquaintance were tragically killed inside a home in the South Ottawa suburb of Barrhaven. The father of the children suffered injuries but is expected to make a full physical recovery. A 19-year-old individual has been apprehended and charged with six counts of first-degree murder and one count of attempted murder and will be appearing in court this month.

The Ottawa community held a candlelight vigil to mourn the loss of the six victims where hundreds of people attended, shared stories and memories and gifted flowers, cards, and stuffed animals to the memorial that remains at Palmadeo Park in Barrhaven. The Buddhist Congress of Canada expressed great gratitude for the community support and donations to a GoFundMe campaign that raised more than \$150,000 for the victims' families.

We extend our deepest sympathies to the surviving family, friends and loved ones. If you or a loved one requires support please reach out to CRCVC, your local Distress Centre, or 9-8-8, Canada's 24/7 Crisis Helpline.

Bill to Criminalize Coercive Control

The NDP introduced a bill that would criminalize coercive and controlling abuse. The Bill to Keep Women Safe passed a second reading in the House of Commons and is now at the committee stage. This Bill will add coercive behaviour to the criminal code which would include threats, humiliation, isolating a person from support, and depriving them of independence. Notably, **coercive control** is defined as patterns of control and abuse that cause fear or terror, including coercion (using force and/or threats to alter behaviour) and control (regulating or dominating a partner's behaviour and choices, isolation, and restricting access to employment, education, or medical care).

Accordingly, coercive abuse would be criminalized and would give the police the power to lay charges whether physical abuse takes place or not in a relationship. Lindsay Mathyssen, London Fanshawe MP, explained to **CTV News** that presently, charges can only be laid when physical abuse is present. As such, this bill will allow police officers to identify the abusive relationship as more than just the physical aspect of it.

Jennifer Dunn, the Executive Director of the London Abused Women's Centre, explained that some women do not realize they are victims of abuse as they think of abuse as only being physically hit. Dunn believes the ability to charge someone with coercive control would be a huge step forward.

Additionally, Jennifer Kagan, Keira Kagan's mother, wrote to CTV News that she wants judges to be better educated in recognizing coercive control before the Bill to Keep Women Safe is passed. Some may recall that Keira was killed by her biological father, Robin Brown, in a murder-suicide in February 2020. Before Kiera's murder, Jennifer repeatedly warned the courts about Brown's abusive behaviour and went to court seeking Kiera. As such, Kiera's Law was created. In April 2023, **Empower** reported on Bill C-233 (Kiera's Law) being implemented to help change the way the courts, judges and those in power view domestic abuse and intimate partner violence.

Upcoming Events

Homicide Support Group

Our Homicide Support Group is for family members, friends, and close loved ones of homicide victims and is intended to offer peer support to those dealing with violent loss. This support group is offered nationally meaning that we can connect with and support survivors from across the country. *English only.*

When: Thursday, April 25th, 2024 at 6:30 PM EST

Where: Virtually

To RSVP: email us at crcvc@crcvc.ca or call us at 1-877-232-2610



Victims and Survivors of Crime Week 2024

The Policy Centre for Victim Issues has announced dates for its annual **Victims and Survivors Crime Week 2024**. The virtual events will take place from Monday, May 13 to Friday, May 17, 2024.

The theme for this year's events will be **"The Power of Collaboration"**.

Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more information closer to the event.

When: May 13 to May 17, 2024.
Where: Virtually

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