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## EMPOWER

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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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### Insight into Ontario's housing Insecurity overlapping Gender-Based Violence

The recent report, "*Nowhere to Go: Gender-Based Violence and Housing Insecurity*" in Ontario, Housing Rights Canada sheds light on the troubling intersection of domestic violence and housing instability. The report brings attention to how survivors of domestic violence often face housing instability due to a lack of resources, supportive services, and affordable housing options.

- Prevalence of Violence and Housing Crises: The report shows how gender-based violence

- contributes to housing insecurity. Survivors, particularly women, frequently experience difficulty securing stable housing due to financial constraints and trauma.
- **Barriers to Safe Housing:** Survivors face systemic challenges, including limited affordable housing, discrimination, and a lack of emergency shelters. These barriers further entrench housing instability.
  - **Economic Hardships:** Many survivors face financial insecurity due to job loss or disrupted income, making it even more challenging to maintain housing.
  - **Systemic Gaps:** The report criticizes the fragmented and underfunded support systems meant to assist survivors. Lack of coordination among agencies hinders access to essential services.

Some of the recommendations made include increasing funding for first-stage and emergency services. It also calls for affordable housing and enhanced services like legal, financial and mental health. Lastly, the recommendations call for change at the systemic level and policy reforms.

The report urges collective action to address these intertwined issues and create a more supportive environment for survivors of gender-based violence.

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## Elder Abuse in Gender and Sexual Minority Communities

The Gender-Based Violence Learning Network has released a backgrounder titled “*Elder Abuse in Gender and Sexual Minority Communities*”, which examines the specific issues faced by older adults within these communities.

The report delineates how underreporting due to concerns of discrimination and limited access to appropriate support services seems to be higher with elder abuse victims from gender and sexual minorities. Elder abuse has a unique nature because it also includes emotional and financial exploitation, which are intensified by societal stigma and isolation. The report points to a notable lack of resources and services tailored to the needs of these populations, leaving some individuals without sufficient support.

The Network concludes the report with recommendations such as specialized services, and inclusive policies along with awareness and training highlighting the abuses/vulnerability experienced by elders. Addressing elder abuse requires targeted efforts to ensure adequate support for all vulnerable individuals.

For further details on the report’s findings and recommendations, visit the [Gender-Based Violence Learning Network’s backgrounder](#). A virtual event on Sept 10th: [Elder Abuse in the Canadian LGBTQ2SA+ Community: Qualitative and Quantitative Findings](#)

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## Words matter when labelling Femicide

**CBC** reported that an Ottawa man has been charged with second-degree murder following the death of his wife, Jennifer Zabraylo. Jennifer was found with traumatic injuries at their home in the rural west end of Ottawa on Sunday, August 25, 2024.

The Ottawa Police have labelled Zabraylo’s death a femicide, linking it to intimate partner violence (IPV). This marks the first femicide of 2024 in Ottawa and the first time the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) has used the term “femicide” in a public statement. Advocates are “saying it’s about time.” This decision reflects input from organizations focused on violence against women.

Heidi Illingworth, the executive director of Ottawa Victim Services and a member of a violence against women committee advising OPS, emphasized the importance of Ottawa Police using the term “femicide”. She noted that this labelling helps organizations track deaths by femicide more effectively, raises public awareness, and advocates for government action and policy change to prevent this type of violence.

Illingworth has been advocating for police to recognize and label cases of femicide. She explained to **CBC** that this labelling is crucial and argues that using the term “femicide” brings necessary public attention to the often-hidden violence within the homes and opens the doors to finding solutions.

Erin Lee, executive director of Lanark County Interval House and Community Support, also emphasized the significance of using the term “femicide”, noting that it enables more open discussions about the issue. She highlighted the importance of **Bill 173**, which would declare IPV an epidemic in Ontario, following a recommendation from an inquest into three murders in Renfrew County.

Additionally, Illingworth noted that Ottawa Victim Services received municipal funding to develop a bystander awareness program to help people intervene safely in potentially dangerous and tragic situations. She stressed the need for public education to help individuals recognize the signs of unhealthy relationships and understand the broader societal issues, such as patriarchal structures, that contribute to hidden abuses, violence, and coercive control that happen in families.

## The Importance of Protection Orders

The Law Commission of Ontario's (LCO) "Improving Protection Orders" project focuses on addressing the limitations of protection orders preventing femicide and intimate partner violence (IPV).

According to the Coroner of Ontario, from 2002- 2017, 433 Ontarians who were murdered by IPV, were predominantly women, often following prior violent incidents. Despite existing legal tools intended to protect victims, these procedures have not been effective. These tools include restraining orders, peace bonds, bail conditions, and probation orders and aim at preventing both physical violence and psychological and emotional harm arising from the threat of violence. With the increasing online violence, the scope of protection orders must also address cyberstalking and other digital threats.

The LCO aims to develop recommendations for legal reform by examining the effectiveness of current protection orders and exploring improvements. The LCO plans to raise possible legal and policy issues.

LCO has made the following recommendations:

- The purpose and effectiveness of protection orders in addressing violence.
- Procedural concerns, such as eligibility, evidentiary requirements, and enforcement.
- Coordination between family, child protection, and criminal proceedings.
- Integration with other legal tools and services, including access to legal aid.
- New legislative responses like bail reform and "Clare's Law."
- Victims' experiences and barriers to justice.
- The need for better data and adaptation of laws to address online violence.
- Alternative dispute resolution models, including specialized courts and international approaches.

Please contact CRCVC, if you or anyone you know has experienced violence.

Tel: 613-233-7614

Toll free: 1-877-232-2610

Email: [crcvc@crcvc.ca](mailto:crcvc@crcvc.ca)

Text: 613-208-0747

## 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, September 26th, 2024 at 6:30PM

**Where:** Virtually

**To RSVP:** email us at [crcvc@crcvc.ca](mailto:crcvc@crcvc.ca) or call us at 1-877-232-2610



### Take Back The Night

Join CRCVC in the annual Take Back The Night (TBTN) march and rally against sexual and gender-based violence. This year's theme is Break the Violence: Stop Sexual Violence and Conflict. TBTN is a great opportunity for Ottawa residents to support survivors and help promote awareness, advocacy, and activism. March with us to help create safer communities and healthier relationships.

**When:** September 19, 2024

**Where:** Minto Park

**Time:** 6:00 pm

**NOTE:** Call out for speakers, reach out for further information.

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