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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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### Human Trafficking Awareness Day

In 2020, the federal government declared February 22nd Human Trafficking Awareness Day in Canada. Human Trafficking Awareness Day is about educating ourselves, raising awareness, and recognizing its real impact.

Between 2013 and 2023, Canada recorded a total of 3,558 victims of police-reported human trafficking. According to the [Government of Canada](#), approximately 93% were women and girls.

Of these victims, about 23% were children and youth under the age of 18, while men and boys represented 7%. Human trafficking is not always what social media or movies portray it to be; it frequently begins with individuals known to the victims. The [Government of Canada](#) also reports that 91% of the victims were trafficked by someone they knew, and 34% were trafficked by an intimate partner.

Supporting victims and survivors of human trafficking starts with compassion and understanding. Many victims and survivors carry deep trauma, fear, and uncertainty about their future. We can help support victims or survivors of human trafficking by listening without judgment and offering help without pressure.

Beyond immediate safety, victims and survivors need access to necessities such as safe housing, medical care, legal support, and, most importantly, hope. Providing resources and standing by them through their journey can make a real difference. Help empower victims and survivors as they rebuild their lives.

If you or someone you know is a victim of human trafficking or exploitation, support is available:

Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline (24/7)

Call: 1-833-900-1010 | Email: [hotline@ccteht.ca](mailto:hotline@ccteht.ca)

Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (Mon-Fri, 8AM - 4PM)

Call: 1-877-232-2610 | Text: 613-208-0747 | Email: [crcvc@crcvc.ca](mailto:crcvc@crcvc.ca)

A New Day (Mon-Fri, 9AM- 5PM)

Call: 613-747-2223 | Email: [inno@anewdayyas.com](mailto:inno@anewdayyas.com)

Please note: If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, please contact your local police.

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## Understanding Human Trafficking

[The Government of Canada](#) defines human trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, harbouring, or control of a person's movements for the purpose of exploitation. It is the exploitation of human beings for profit or personal gain.

Trafficking can take many forms, often forcing victims into providing sexual services or labour through coercion, deception, or abuse of trust, power, or authority. Traffickers use tactics such as emotional, physical, and psychological abuse to maintain control, manipulating vulnerabilities to gain power over their victims. Human trafficking causes significant physical, psychological, and emotional trauma for victims and survivors.

Some signs that may indicate a person is a victim of human trafficking include changes in behaviour, physical appearance, belongings, or relationships with family and friends. Signs to watch for include, but are not limited to:

### Behavior & Activities:

- Frequently goes missing, stays out late, or skips school
- Appears secretive, anxious, fearful, or controlled by someone else
- Works long hours, remains unpaid or underpaid, repays a "debt"

### Relationships & Social Life:

- Withdraws from family and friends
- Has a secretive or much older partner/friend
- Is not allowed to speak for themselves or controlled by someone

### Physical Signs & Possessions:

- Has expensive new items they can't afford
- Shows signs of abuse (bruises, burns, fractures)
- Lacks control over money, ID, or belongings

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime created a [Comprehensive List](#) of trafficking indicators to help the public recognize signs that a person may have been or is being trafficked. By educating yourself and your loved ones, you can play a role in identifying and supporting victims.

The City of Calgary has become a major human trafficking hub as criminal activity increases, Acting Deputy Chief Jeff Bell told the Calgary Police Commission. Bell **elaborated**, “Currently, the trending (of activity) is going upwards, and it’s due, number one, to awareness and when we look at Calgary, it’s a strong economic climate [...] and the fees (for sexual services) charged in Calgary are quite a bit higher.” **Statistics Canada** detailed that there were 260 police-reported human trafficking incidents in Alberta from 2021 to 2022.

In December 2024, the Government of Alberta **pledged** \$5.5 million in grants to agencies working to prevent human trafficking and to support victims. This is a part of the province’s \$20 million budget for anti-trafficking efforts over the course of three years. Public Safety and Emergency Services Minister Mike Ellis stated, “The goal of this grant is to provide specialized awareness of the challenges faced by victims and reduce the risk of re-exploitation of survivors.”

On February 13, 2025, an Edmonton police investigation resulted in three Montreal men being charged with running a cross-Canada sex trafficking ring that investigators believed has been active for over a decade. Otherwise referred to as “Project Endgame,” the **Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT)** began the investigation in May 2023 following a 911 call detailing the assault of a sex worker. ALERT’s **investigation** found that the perpetrators worked in Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Lloydminster, Red Deer, Grand Prairie, Fort McMurray, Cold Lake, and Estevan, Sask. A total of 23 charges were laid against Clyde Elien-Abbot, Kevin Dorcelus-Cetoute, and Jean Rodnil Dubois.

ALERT is a non-profit agency that was established by the Government of Alberta in 2006 to combat organized and serious crime. ALERT brings together roughly 400 officers from a variety of units to investigate a range of crimes, from drug trafficking to violence. Since 2006, ALERT has arrested over 13,000 suspects and laid over 39,000 charges.

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## Black History Month

February is Black History Month. This is a time to honour the lasting legacies and contributions of Black people and their communities. This year, the Government of Canada’s chosen **theme** for Black History Month is “Black Legacy and Leadership: Celebrating Canadian History and Uplifting Future Generations.” This theme underscores the positive legacy Black Canadians have left in shaping Canada’s history and recognizing their rightful role in Canada’s narrative.

### Carter G. Woodson

Though not Canadian, it is critical to acknowledge the **origins** of Black History Month. Dating back to 1915, historian Carter G. Woodson and minister Jesse E. Moorland founded what is now known as the **Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)** which was dedicated to researching and promoting the achievements of Black Americans. Woodson **recognized** that African American contributions were often “overlooked, ignored, and suppressed by writers of history textbooks.” In 1926, the ASALH dubbed the second week of February as “Negro History Week.” Woodson’s concept was later expanded to Black History Month, as his legacy continues through the empowerment and education of Black individuals’ achievements.

### Dr. Daniel Grafton Hill (1923-2003)

Dr. Daniel Grafton Hill was a pioneer in human rights in Canada. **Dr. Hill** was the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s first director from 1962 to 1971 and was its first Black Chair from 1971 to 1973. Hill set up local offices across Ontario to investigate cases of alleged discrimination, which was the **first of its kind** in Canada. One of Dr. Hill’s sons, Lawrence Hill, **stated about his father**, “He encouraged people to make complaints. He made people aware of what the reach of the Human Rights Code was.”

In 1978, Dr. Hill co-founded the **Ontario Black History Society** with his wife, Donna Hill, and other colleagues to celebrate Black heritage and contributions by preserving and promoting Black history. Dr. Hill was a critical and visionary leader who was greatly significant to the prosperity of Canadian society, leaving a profound impact on our current institutions and attitudes today.

### The Honourable Jean Augustine

Born in 1937, Jean Augustine made history in 1993 as the first Black woman elected to Canada’s Parliament. Some of her **roles** included Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Minister for Multiculturalism and the Status of Women, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Deputy Speaker. Throughout her **career**, both within and outside of politics, Augustine was involved with grassroots organizations and supported community issues at the federal level, bringing light to women’s rights, immigrant rights, and equity and diversity.

In the mid-1990s, Augustine was instrumental in formally recognizing February as Black History Month in Canada. Motivated by the Ontario Black History Society’s achievement of formally declaring Black History Month in the City of Toronto, Augustine put forth a motion in Parliament, asking, “That this House take note of the important contribution of Black Canadians to the settlement, growth, and development of Canada, the diversity of the Black community in Canada, and its importance to the history of this country.” The motion was passed unanimously in December 1995.

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## The Impact of Historical Trauma on Black Communities

The effects of historical trauma carry through generations. From slavery to segregation to ongoing discrimination, Black communities continue to experience the impact of systemic harm, leaving them more vulnerable to violence and injustice.

Historical trauma is a form of trauma that is often overlooked. It refers to multigenerational trauma experienced by a specific cultural group, accumulating over time. Examples include the transatlantic slave trade and slavery, where forced displacement, enslavement, and systemic oppression created trauma within Black communities. Similarly, residential schools forcibly removed Indigenous children from their families, stripping them of their culture and exposing them to abuse for practicing any aspect of it. These events have led to deep-rooted psychological, economic, and social harm. The effects of these historical events are still felt today, contributing to internalized oppression, mental health struggles, economic disparities, health inequities, cycles of poverty and violence, and ongoing discrimination.

Black individuals in Canada are often unfairly targeted and labelled as threats in everyday situations due to systemic racism and bias. A [2024 Report](#) revealed that Black individuals, who make up 4.3% of the Canadian population, accounted for 16.3% of inmates in Canada's Structured Intervention Unit system (SIU), highlighting the disproportionate use of solitary confinement. According to [Think Tank](#), actions that are considered normal for others are frequently criminalized when performed by Black people. Some examples include: having or associating with a group of friends from your neighbourhood, school, or the same ethnic/cultural background being labeled as gang membership and activity, or making too much or too little eye contact with a person in authority being seen as suspicious or criminal.

Healing starts with reconciliation. As discussed, historical trauma is deeply rooted in injustices and discrimination. We must do more than acknowledge the past. Addressing the historical and ongoing impacts of anti-Black racism means investing in systemic change, supporting Black individuals in sharing their stories, and ensuring that victims of racial violence, exploitation, and systemic oppression receive the justice and resources they deserve. Healing comes through education, policy reform, and community participation. True reconciliation requires not only recognizing past harms but also committing to a future where Black communities are free from discrimination and systemic barriers to justice. Supporting victims means standing with them, pushing for real change, and making sure they have the resources to heal and move forward.

Healing and justice require access to the right support. Listed below are some Canadian organizations and services dedicated to supporting Black individuals:

[Black Mental Health Canada \(BMHC\)](#) – Advocates for equitable mental health support for Black Canadians.

Call: 1-866-302-7358 | Email: [info@blackmentalhealth.ca](mailto:info@blackmentalhealth.ca) | Website: [blackmentalhealth.ca](http://blackmentalhealth.ca)

[Across Boundaries](#) – Provides mental health and addiction support through an anti-Black racism lens.

Call: 416-787-3007 | Website: [acrossboundaries.ca](http://acrossboundaries.ca)

[Black Legal Action Centre \(BLAC\)](#) – Offers free legal services to low-income Black Ontarians.

Call: 1-877-736-9406 | Email: [info@blac.clcj.ca](mailto:info@blac.clcj.ca) | Website: [blacklegalactioncentre.ca](http://blacklegalactioncentre.ca)

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## Former Africville Residents Still Fighting 50 Years Later

[Africville](#) was a primarily Black community located on the outskirts of Halifax, Nova Scotia. The first records of Black families in Africville date back to 1848, and the community only continued to grow for more than 120 years. However, the City of Halifax refused to provide the community with many basic amenities, such as access to clean water, garbage disposal, and sewage. In January 1964, Halifax City Council voted to authorize the relocation of all Africville residences, without meaningfully consulting its residents. In the 1980s, the Africville Genealogy Society was formed to seek compensation for the suffering that resulted from the destruction of the community.

In 2010, former Halifax mayor Peter Kelly expressed, “We realize words cannot undo what has been done. But we are profoundly sorry and apologize to each and every one of you. The repercussions of what happened to Africville linger to this day. They haunt us in the form of lost opportunities for the young people who never were nurtured in the rich traditions, culture, and heritage of Africville.” The apology was backed by a settlement of \$3 million from the City of Halifax, \$1.5 million from the Government of Nova Scotia, and \$250,000 from the Government of Canada.

However, more than 50 years after Africville was demolished, its former residents are still fighting for compensation in anticipation of an upcoming court ruling. Nelson Carvery, who was born in Africville, is the sole named plaintiff in the ongoing action, but court documents list 51 other plaintiffs as of 2012.

Carvery **stated**, “I would like to see the community given back to us—all the land that’s not being used given back to the people of Africville.”

Robert Pineo, the lawyer involved in the case, argued in front of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court that residents who farmed, fished, and ran businesses in Africville were not adequately compensated for their immense loss. Former residents of the community are currently awaiting another court ruling that they hope will pave the way for redress and reparations. February 26, 2025 **marks 15 years** since the City of Halifax offered an official apology to the former residence. At a council meeting on February 25, 2025, Halifax mayor Andy Fillmore acknowledged that work still needs to be done to ensure the community is at the forefront of the city’s plans going forward.

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## Women’s Memorial March

The Women’s Memorial March, honouring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit Peoples (MMIWG2S+), took place on February 14, marking its 34th year. Led by elders and grassroots activists, this annual gathering raises awareness of violence against Indigenous women, honours and remembers MMIWG2S+, and provides a space for mourning while demanding action to confront systemic injustices.

The march began in 1992 in downtown Vancouver after the murder of Cheryl Ann Joe, an Indigenous woman. In response to this tragedy, the community came together, and the march has since grown into a powerful movement for remembrance and justice.

According to the **Government of Canada**, Indigenous women make up approximately 5% of the female population in Canada but accounted for 22% of all women killed by an intimate partner between 2019 and 2023. Additionally, the National Inquiry into MMIWG2S+ **Final Report** highlights ongoing violations of Indigenous rights as the root cause of this crisis. Indigenous women and girls continue to face violence and discrimination due to the persistent disregard for their rights. These statistics highlight the urgent need for awareness and action, as MMIWG2S+ families are often left unsupported and mistreated. The march raises awareness of these injustices and encourages those who can to take action to prevent further harm.

The Family Liaison Information Unit supports all families of missing and murdered Indigenous people by providing resources, guidance, and emotional support: **Family Information Liaison Units Directory**.

## 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:** 6:30 pm EST March 27th, 2025

**Where:** Virtually

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



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