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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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### OPP Launches Project Atlas to Prevent Cryptocurrency Scams

In November 2024, the Ontario Provincial Police's (OPP) Cyber-Enabled Fraud Team (CEFT) launched [Project Atlas](#), an initiative to combat global cryptocurrency investment fraud. This project prioritizes supporting victims in recovering stolen funds and educating the public about cryptocurrency investment scams. The OPP works proactively to reach out to individuals who have sustained losses or are believed to know information that can aid an investigation to prevent further investments and harm.

Cryptocurrency investment fraud occurs when individuals are tricked into putting their money into fake cryptocurrency opportunities. These can be advertised on social media, popular search engines, or through trading apps. As of October 31st, 2024, the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre \(CAFC\)](#) reported that \$503 million was lost as a result of fraud scams.

In a digitally advanced age, it can be difficult to detect frauds and scams. According to the [National Bank](#), some common indicators of a cryptocurrency scam are:

- Displays of urgency that offer a limited-time deal or an offer that promises a higher than normal return with minimal risk.
- Cryptocurrency investment sites that are not registered with provincial or national regulatory agencies.
- The only option for transactions is via cryptocurrency. No credible financial institutions will require their customers to exclusively pay with cryptocurrency.
- Suspicious messages from a trusted source, like a bank or family member friend. If you receive a message, separately contact the individual/institution that is “contacting” you to confirm whether or not it was actually them.

If you are the victim of a cryptocurrency scam, here are some steps you can take to protect yourself, according to the [CAFC](#):

- Immediately report the incident to your bank and change all of your passwords.
- Report the incident to your local police service and the CAFC through their Fraud Reporting System.
- Gather all information and evidence of the fraud, including documents, receipts, and any digital communication.

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## OPP Launches a New Online Portal for Victims of Serious Fraud

The Ontario Provincial Police's (OPP) Serious Fraud Office (SFO) has launched a new portal and website for victims of fraud. The [portal](#) is a secure and user-friendly online platform designed to enhance communication and support for victims impacted by SFO-investigated fraud. The SFO understands fraud's serious impacts on individuals and is committed to prioritizing accessibility and support. The SFO is working hard to ensure that the portal is accessible, reliable, efficacious, and confidential for victims of fraud. The portal helps fraud victims access case details and resources, communicate with victim liaisons, and obtain updates on ongoing cases.

According to [Solicitor General Micheal Kerzner](#), "This new portal will provide seamless support and protection to victims of crime as they rebuild their lives and regain their confidence and security. By streamlining resource sharing, case updates, and other communications between police and victims, we're putting those who have been harmed first while ensuring criminals are held accountable."

If you are experiencing fraud, report the fraud to your local police service. If your local police service is the Ontario Provincial Police, you can use the [detachment locator](#) to find your nearest detachment.

When reporting fraud to your local police, depending on where you live.

You can:

- Report in person by proceeding to your local police service.
- Report over the phone by calling your local police service.

An additional resource is the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre \(CAFC\)](#). You can contact CAFC toll-free by calling 1-888-495-8501 or through the [Fraud Reporting System](#).

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## New Compensation Fund for Victims of Unethical Immigration Consultants in Canada

In Canada, immigration is seen as a pathway to new opportunities, but navigating the system can be overwhelming and complex. As a result, many people seek professional assistance. Unfortunately, some individuals exploit this vulnerability by posing as immigration consultants and offering unethical services. Victims of these fraudulent practices often suffer significant financial losses, delays in their immigration process, and emotional distress.

To address this growing problem, [Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada \(IRCC\)](#) has proposed a new set of regulations set to take effect in 2025. These regulations could provide compensation for victims of dishonest immigration consultants. The compensation fund aims to offer financial relief while also implementing additional measures to better protect vulnerable individuals as they seek help with their immigration processes.

### Who Is Eligible?

Victims who have been misled, defrauded, or harmed financially by a consultant's dishonesty can apply for compensation. [The College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants \(CICC\)](#) will evaluate these cases to determine whether a financial loss has occurred and if the individual is [eligible](#) for money.

The new regulations are set to take effect in 2025. Once implemented, you can follow these steps to have your case evaluated.

#### Confirm Your Eligibility

- How to check: If a consultant has been found guilty of dishonesty, the CICC will notify you.
- When you need to apply: If the CICC can't verify your financial loss or the consultant's license was revoked, you must apply yourself.

#### Gather Your Documents

- What you need: Collect all documents showing payments to the consultant (receipts, bank records) and any communications (emails, contracts).

#### Submit Your Application (When regulations are in effect)

- Find the form: Go to the CICC website to access the application.
- Complete the form: Fill in your personal details, consultant info, and a description of your loss.
- Submit: Send your completed application along with your supporting documents.

#### Wait for the Decision

- What happens next: The CICC will review your case. If approved, you'll be notified about compensation.

#### Follow Up if Needed

- Keep track: Regularly check in with the CICC to ensure your case is being processed.
- Next steps: If approved, you will be informed directly by the CICC on how to access funds.

How to Report an Unethical Immigration Consultant:

If you suspect an immigration consultant has engaged in unethical behaviour, reporting them to the CICC or local authorities can prevent them from harming others. You can file a formal complaint through the [CICC complaints process](#). This helps ensure that unethical consultants face legal consequences and cannot continue their fraudulent practices.

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## Supporting Intimate Partner Violence Survivors

In Canada, [44%](#) of women and girls aged 15 and up have reported experiencing some kind of psychological, physical, or sexual abuse within the context of an intimate partner relationship. [90%](#) of intimate partner violence (IPV) survivors experience a brain injury, ranging from mild concussions to severe head injuries.

Brain injuries as a result of IPV are not widely studied. The students and researchers at [Algonquin College's Victimology Research Centre](#) (VRC) have partnered with Neurovine, an Ottawa-based company specializing in concussion recovery technology, to develop wearable technology that provides live feedback on brain activity. This allows for healthcare providers to develop customized treatment and recovery plans based on the individual's data. This project aims to address a gap in healthcare services for survivors of IPV who have experienced mild traumatic brain injury. The data is collected using virtual surveys that ask questions regarding the individual's experience with violence, their symptoms, and engagement with the app. This collaboration will directly improve Neurovine's smart electroencephalogram (EEG) headband, which measures a person's brain activity, and an app that visually displays the EEG results so survivors can understand their brain health.

If left untreated or unnoticed, head injuries are associated with high rates of post traumatic stress, anxiety, and depression, amongst other symptoms that can last for a few months to years. Dr. Sandy Shultz, a professor in the Department of Nursing, Health, and Human Services at Vancouver Island University, [states](#), "There is no current standard of screening, and even if they are screened, the brain injury symptoms can be misidentified as emotional distress. This means these patients do not receive the care or support that other brain-injured patients receive."

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## B.C. Declares Gender-Based Violence an Epidemic

On January 16th, 2025, [City News Everywhere](#) reported that Premier David Eby declared gender-based violence (GBV) an "epidemic" and is calling on ministers to address and deliver to the needs of women fleeing violence.

Advocates for GBV say this is the right step, but action is needed. "The declaration will only be as useful to what extent that action follows. We don't want performative gestures; we need to see results," said Angela Marie MacDougall from [Battered Women's Support Services \(BWSS\)](#). BWSS wants the government to increase funding for victim services, improve their enforcement of protection orders and expand transitional housing.

According to [YMCA Metro Vancouver](#), “Acknowledging GBV as an issue of epidemic proportions is a critical step in recognizing its severity and coordinating efforts to address its root causes. At least one woman or girl is killed every two days across Canada and in BC, nearly 30 percent of women have experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence.”

The [Government of Canada](#) states that GBV is not limited to physical violence, noting, “It can include any word, action, or attempt to degrade, control, humiliate, intimidate, coerce, deprive, threaten, or harm another person. Neglect, discrimination, and harassment can also be forms of GBV.”

If you are experiencing GBV or are aware of someone who is, please speak to a trusted individual, such as a friend or family member. Additionally, it is advisable to seek a safe location until you are able to determine your next steps. If you are in immediate danger, please contact emergency services by dialing 9-1-1.

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## Senate of Canada Passes Bill C-320

In December 2024, the Senate of Canada met and passed Bill C-320, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (disclosure of information to victims). This [enactment](#) amends the *Correctional and Conditional Release Act* to propose that information on eligibility and review dates disclosed to a victim of crime regarding an offender’s temporary absences, releases, or parole must include an explanation of how the dates were determined.

In order for bills to be [passed](#) in Canada, they must be approved by both the House of Commons and Senate following a process of debating, reviewing, and then voting. Bills can be introduced in either the House of Commons or the Senate, but both chambers must undergo three readings to debate on the principle of the bill in order for it to be enacted. Once a bill has been voted in by both chambers, it goes to the Governor General for Royal Assent to become Canadian law.

According to the [Parliament of Canada](#), the House of Commons first heard Bill C-320 on March 5th, 2023. After successfully completing three readings, it was heard by the Senate on February 29th, 2024. Following its third hearing in the Senate on December 17th, 2024, it was passed without amendments. For the bill’s third hearing, CRCVC’s Executive Director, Sarah Crawford, acted as a witness and offered opening remarks alongside Krista MacNeil, Executive Director of Victim Services of Durham Region, and Karine MacDonald, Criminologist and Chief Executive Officer of Association québécoise Plaidoyer-Victimes.

In her opening statement, Crawford [states](#), “[W]hen victims request information about the offender, they are told that the offender’s rights to privacy supersede their right to know. This imbalance reinforces a clear hierarchy where the rights of the offender outstrip those of the victim. Bill C-320 would be a crucial step in the right direction. By requiring corrections officials to explain how key dates related to parole and temporary absences are determined, the bill promotes transparency, increases trust, and addresses a critical power imbalance.”

Find Sarah Crawford’s full speech and the Senate’s discussions [here](#).

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## National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia

On January 29th, 2017, 6 individuals lost their lives and 19 individuals were severely injured during their prayers by a gunman at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec in Sainte-Foy. In 2021, Parliament designated January 29th as the National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia. This year has marked 8 years since this tragedy.

CRCVC is committed to taking action against all hate and violence.

## Upcoming Events

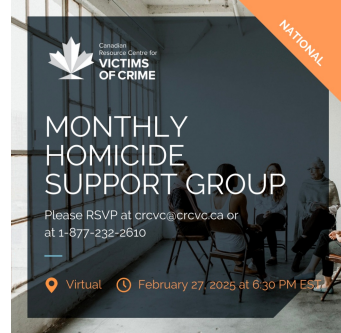
### Homicide Support Group

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:** 6:30 pm EST February 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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