

Building A Bigger Wave

ONTARIO NETWORK FOR
VAW COORDINATING COMMITTEES

Hey Ontario!!!

We have a provincial election coming in the Fall 2018! Let's feed the momentum that we saw with the January marches. It is not too early to start planning to ensure women's rights and women's issues are part of the political discourse now and in the next election. What is the record of every candidate and their party on women's issues? Violence against women is a non-partisan issue. We need to know where leaders stand!

VAWCCs are funded to support community agendas. As such VAWCCs are perfectly situated to organize and host all candidates meetings on women's issues in the lead-up to the election. Let's make a plan! In the next issue we will share ideas about how to organize an event.



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**BUILDING A
BIGGER WAVE**

Ontario Network for VAW
Coordinating Committees

BBWON News

Mandatory Charging Project: Phase 2

To the Building a Bigger Wave Members,

At the time of writing, we are heading into the last few days of the Mandatory Charging Project online surveys. We are excited to find out what people are saying.

Data will support more informed and engaged dialogue about mandatory charging in Ontario that can support future policy conversations on how to maximize benefits and reduce negative impacts.

The project is not intended to question the policy of mandatory charging or make recommendations about changes to the policy.

This is our first research project as a network, it's a big deal. It has private sector funding. That is also a big deal.

Thank you for being on this incredible journey.

Best

Erin Leigh

Executive Director/Directrice générale

Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW)

Coalition d'Ottawa contre la violence faite aux femmes

(COCVFF)

OF NOTE:

In January, Premier Kathleen Wynne made important changes to the structure of government by elevating the Ontario Women's Directorate to the Ministry of the Status of Women. At the same time, the Seniors Secretariat became the Ministry for Seniors Affairs.

UNFOUNDED

Globe and Mail, Robyn Doolittle article, Saturday Feb. 4 2017
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/investigations/unfounded-sexual-assault-canada-main/article33891309/>

What is the role for Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee's (VAWCC) in this tragedy of women who are **not believed** and whose sexual assaults are deemed by police as **unfounded**?

VAWCC's include many experts working in the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault sectors who collectively have a credible province wide voice. The Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres and community Sexual Assault Centres are key partners of the Building a Bigger Wave Ontario Network and with a shared goal of ending violence against women.

Sexual Assault Centre's have the expertise to focus light on the inconsistencies and issues with the police response to sexual assault that have surfaced through the 'Unfounded' report. VAWCCs across the province can help bring this expertise forward and get important community conversations started by reaching out to their local SAC's. VAWCCs can look at what role they need to play to ensure that the expertise and experience of sexually assaulted women and their advocates is brought forward in a meaningful way at this time. VAWCCs across the province can ask 'How can we help to sustain the conversation in the community and keep the light on the explosive findings from the Unfounded report'?

VAWCC's and Sexual Assault Centres are a resource that could work with police to:

- o Change outdated practices of interviewing victims
- o Bring local Trauma and Violence Informed training for officers and community
- o Inform or assist in set up of special Sexual Assault units in police services
- o Encourage police services to work with community to develop peer support or engage social workers to support victims
- o Direct previous unfounded victims to appropriate local supports
- o Continue to report unfounded numbers to VAWCC's and community
- o Ask Statistics Canada and Canadian Police Chiefs to standardize definition of 'unfounded' Police reporting category
- o Inform every victim of an 'unfounded' sexual assault prior to 2010 that they may come forward to police and have their case reevaluated

This should not be a behind closed doors process but a very public process that shows accountability, collaboration, and demonstrates necessary and measurable change. The police are at the VAWCC tables all across Ontario – what could the conversation sound like in your community?

ADVOCACY

Keeping Natalie Novak's Lesson Relevant If Only ... Natalie's Story

May 15th, 2006 was the crucial day. Life was irreversibly changed for me. My beautiful daughter Natalie was murdered in the early morning hours. She was attacked and murdered by a former boyfriend. Natalie was 20 years old at the time. She had just completed her third year at Ryerson University in Toronto.

These surreal circumstances took control of our family's lives. Natalie's life and death were in the newspapers and on TV. All privacy was disregarded. Grief and judgement shrouded me. There were preliminary hearings, delays, a homicide trial, more delays and then appeals. It would take over seven years for the process to be completed.

Much of my understanding of partner violence stems from these lived experiences.

During the legal processes I learned many facts about my daughter's abusive relationship. I learned of the roles that services and agencies provided in terms of intervention and mitigation. I learned about many missed opportunities to intervene that never came about.

After the trial finished I tried to piece together all the information we had heard. Using court transcripts, trial notes and documents I plotted the interactions of all the various agencies and services involved.

The details resulted in the document, "A Constructive Analysis of the Murder of Natalie Novak" as well as my unwavering belief that Natalie's death was both preventable and predictable. I concluded that sharing what happened to Natalie may have a positive effect on the lives of others.

Creating an educational video "If Only ... Nat's Story", seemed the natural next step. The audience needed to meet Natalie, first through the words and memories of her friends and family and secondly through family photos that chronicle the passage of her life. Launching the video, "If Only ... Natalie's Story", in 2010 has resulted in my ability to reach thousands of people. Although the video was produced with students in mind, it seems to speak to many ages.

I know when I speak that I bring Natalie and her story to life for my audience. I am a living link to a real life account; a tragic narrative that could be anybody's story.

In my eight years of speaking, the audience attention to the authenticity of Natalie's story has never diminished. Students have cried openly, many have hugged and clung to me, some have disclosed their fears, horrors and abuse to me. These reactions have been universal throughout the province. They strengthen my resolve to continue bringing this message to students.

As an educator I understand the need for relevant and interactive learning experiences. Activities such as group work and focused brainstorming, drama and improvisation, or planning and practice through role-play allow students to demonstrate both skills and knowledge. It is inspiring to work with young people.

Today my talks and workshops with students are more interactive and focus on the spectrum of relationship possibilities. I want students to grasp that any relationship can range from being healthy to unhealthy to abusive and anywhere in between. I want them to see that a relationship is not static but something dynamic and changeable according to internal or external influences that may be involved. I want them to keep safe from harm and promote a tolerant, gender equal environment free from violence.

When I first started my public speaking I was unaware that my identity as the mother of a murdered daughter would command such audience attention. I bring uncomfortable, even taboo information forward. Dating violence, sexual assault and homicide are not popular topics for any age group.

The truth is I continue to grow and develop along with my message. If only ...

DAWN NOVAK



<https://vimeo.com/119986104>

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/4910007/a-constructive-analysis-of-the-murder-of-natalie-novak>



Dawn has brought If Only ... Natalie's Story, to students and front line professionals, throughout the province for the past eight years. She is an experienced educator and a captivating presenter.

Sexual Violence Survivors and Jury Duty, Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC)

The Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC) membership includes 28 Anglophone sexual assault centres from across Ontario.

OCRCC is concerned about jury duty selection in Ontario, and how this process has recently revealed a practice of exclusion to survivors of sexual assault in sexual violence justice cases.

As most of us are aware, selected jurors are responsible for determining questions of fact in a civil trial or one or more verdicts in a criminal trial¹. Understandably, there are identified professional persons who do not qualify to serve as jurors; as well as other criteria that may disqualify a potential juror for a particular case. However, it has recently come to our attention that in more than one case in Ontario, potential jurors were (1) asked to self-identify if they had experienced sexual violence in the past and (2) those who disclosed themselves as survivors of sexual violence were disqualified from jury duty in sexual violence cases.

We flag this as a problematic practice for a number of reasons. To ask a potential juror about his or her past experience with sexual violence is unnecessarily intrusive and, in our opinion, irrelevant to the duties required. Asking women and men to declare their experience in an open forum is unacceptable: the court needs to provide an opportunity for people to declare their request to be exempt from jury duty in a private setting. Disclosing past violence cannot be treated the same as asking if a financial hardship exists or other personal, self-identified limitations. As you can imagine, survivors may be adversely affected and, in this, simply opt out of jury duty.

The practice of asking jurors about their past experiences of sexual violence is also inconsistent with querying jurors about other past experiences. We don't imagine the question is asked in other crime: i.e. "have you ever been robbed?" in a trial for robbery or fraud. Such a query concerning sexual assault can inadvertently suggest doubt, pathologization or marginalization of survivors' opinions and capacity to determine questions of fact – a suggestion to which we strongly disagree. This prejudicial practice, in our opinion, reflects dated stigma, particularly about women and survivors of sexual violence, reproducing "the traditionally negative characteristics considered to be feminine: ...suggestibility, instability, weakness, passivity, excessive emotionality"², and an inability to be impartial in the face of factual data.

We believe that survivors of sexual violence have the capacity to objectively consider and determine questions of fact in a civil trial or criminal trial, just as any other potential juror. We also believe that survivors of sexual violence hold important factual experiential knowledge about sexual violence, and many other subjects.

Last, we also have serious concerns about the social and politically democratic implications of the exclusion of survivors of sexual assault in sexual violence cases. One of the purposes of jury duty is to provide cases before the courts with a jury of

peers, and reflective of the diversity of our communities. Yet as advocates, we know that the threat of violence continues to be a reality in the lives of Canadian girls and women disproportionately to that of men and boys: 51% of all Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of sexual or physical violence³.

Should self-identified survivors of sexual violence be excluded from jury duty as common practice, this can incidentally skew representation of women from jury selection. Moreover, it will certainly exclude certain populations of men and women overall, distorting the jury of peers further: consider, for example, that sexual violence affecting First Nation women and men in Canada is statistically far greater than for their non-First Nation peers⁴. Research on sexual violence and harassment shows that women and young women from marginalized racial, sexual and socioeconomic groups in Canada are more vulnerable to being targeted for sexual violence⁵. This data has clear implications for the current practice of excluding self-identified survivors of sexual violence for jury duty in sexual violence cases. From a human rights and equity standpoint, we disagree with the current practice and its implications.

We agree that the Ministry of the Attorney General has a responsibility to reduce bias in jurors where possible. However, the exclusion of sexual violence survivors, as we have seen in recent incidents, is unsuitable and a simplistic practice – and one that may be informed by assumptions or misconceptions about sexual violence victims.

Our recommendations to the Ministry of the Attorney General:

- o Reconsider the practice of excluding survivor of sexual violence from jury duty in sexual violence cases
- o Share our concerns, outlined in this letter, with other stakeholders in decision-making positions who can support the Ministry of the Attorney General in moving away from this practice
- o Cease the practice of requesting that survivors self-identify openly during jury selection. If your Ministry is committed to continuing to inquire about this, survivors should at the very least be able to disclose in a confidential setting, without other jury members/court personnel present.

OCRCC shares many of the Ontario government's priorities. We value our allies' interest and dedication to addressing forms of gender-based violence, including sexual violence.

To learn more about OCRCC contact Nicole Pietsch, Coordinator, Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres at 905-299-4428.

Web: www.sexualassaultsupport.ca Campaign: www.draw-the-line.ca

¹Ministry of the Attorney General. Jury Duty. Online:

²Bankey, R. "La Donna é Mobile: Constructing the Irrational Woman". *Gender, Place and Culture*, Vol. 8, No. 1. 2001, 40.

³METRAC. Sexual Assault Statistics Sheet.

⁴2004 Amnesty International report, "Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada."

⁵Wolfe and Chiodo, CAMH, 2008, p. 3.

ARTICLES *and Updates*

College of Physicians and Surgeons – When the fox is in charge of women's safety



I have two concerns with a January 24th news story written by Diana Mehta, (The Canadian Press). In it, Mehta reported on the public rebuke of Stanley Dobrowolski by the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons. The headline reads; *Ontario's medical regulator says the former psychiatrist's abuse of women patients is one of the worst cases of misconduct it has ever dealt with.*

The story situates the College as a shocked bystander. That is my first concern. We need much more from journalists than passive reporting on

important cases. The second more serious concern is that the College positions itself as a shocked bystander.

Not being a journalist, I can only say; WTF. Read the College's discipline history of Dobrowolski, starting in 1991 and you will see that they are anything but a bystander. The College is clear now that Dobrowolski's actions are egregious, but where were they in 1989 when the first complaint was made? And when the College investigated after he had an affair with a twenty-two year student who had been a suicidal patient, they disciplined him in 1995 for not having his paperwork in order. No shit. They never determined he was guilty of sexual impropriety. In my mind, the College has no right or authority to be indignant when they hold the keys to the kingdom.

Had the College upheld its obligation to public safety, they would have acted on the first complaint in 1989. The College sanctioned Dobrowolski in 1995, 1999, 2004 and then again in 2015, when they finally took his license to practice. It is too little and much too late. What exactly is the responsibility of the College?

In response to a civil suit launched by some of Dobrowolski's victims, the College maintains it is "not responsible" for the sexual abuse. Yet it was his doctor's license that literally gave Dobrowolski the license to prey upon women. How is that "not responsible"? And, the College says it is immune from liability as outlined by the Regulated Health Professions Act. The RHPA is a shield from behind which they can choose not to ever take brave or appropriate action. What is the incentive to make a tough call when you are never going to be held accountable, unless you are publicly humiliated by the avalanche of evidence, such as the 10,000 photos in Dobrowolski's possession. It will be interesting to see what the amendments to the RHPA will bring this coming spring when Bill 87 goes for final reading. The College has launched a cross-claim against Dobrowolski just in case it ends up that they do have to pay damages.

All of this raises a final concern; what lesson has the College learned? Of all the women we know about and all of the bad publicity - has it made any difference? What actions have the leaders taken to protect the public from the (many) other predatory doctors still on the roll? Unless there has been substantive policy changes and comprehensive training that is mandated, how is the supervisory and regulatory role of the College not like leaving the fox in charge?

See: http://www.lfpress.com/2017/01/24/stanley-dobrowolski-ontarios-medical-regulator-says-the-former-psychiatrists-abuse-of-women-patients-is-one-of-the-worst-cases-of-misconduct-it-has-ever-dealt-with?utm_source=addThis&utm_medium=addthis_button_mailto&utm_campaign=Ex-doctor%20slammed%20for%20'egregious%20misconduct'%20%7C%20The%20London%20Free%20Press#.WleQw3DiNV0.mailto

Regulated Health Profession Act: Protecting Patients Act Bill 87: Schedule 4

Bill 87 was introduced in the legislative assembly of Ontario and has already received first reading. With a majority government it will likely pass and receive Royal assent sometime in late spring. There will be some type of consultation before finalizing the Bill.

It is important to remember this is an omnibus bill with many different sections. It is not devoted entirely to the sexual abuse of patients. This bill proposes changes to the Regulated Health Profession Act (1991) RHPA. This is the statute which governs 26 regulated health professions in this province. Professions are governed by Councils comprised of elected and appointed members. Elected members elected by the profession and appointed members are appointed by the government.

The RHPA 1991 provided for comprehensive review of the statute every 5 years. This has not been completed so the PPA is a long time in coming.

The proposed Bill reaffirms that regulatory bodies must act in the public interest and not in the best interest of the professions they regulate.

Last year folks may recall the Sexual Abuse Task Force Report penned by Dr McPhedron (now Senator McPhedron) and Sheila Macdonald from Women's College Hospital. All recommendations from that task force report have been accepted by the Minister. Bill 87 responds to those recommendations.

It is important to remember there is a long way between accepting the recommendations and enacting them. The Task Force report articulated a lack of trust the public has in the regulatory College system. This is not just in Ontario. Recently media reports out of Alberta and B.C. have highlighted the lack of transparency in health regulation. This Bill speaks to the lack of confidence in self-regulation.

Proposed changes that are of particular interest to women and their advocates are as follows:

- o definition of when a person ceases being a patient and hence can become romantically involved.
- o provision of legal counsel for person alleging sexual abuse
- o providing a support person through the process
- o expanded of the definition of what constitutes sexual abuse
- o mandatory revocation if convicted of intercourse, genital to genital masturbation, encouraging patient in masturbation

The proposed Bill gives the Minister of Health some far reaching powers to ensure regulated professions act in the public interest. Some of the proposed changes are as follows:

1. All terms and conditions placed on a practitioner's license must be on the public register
2. Cautions delivered to a practitioner will always remain on the public register. Presently they are time limited to the public register website
3. Details of any courses or monitoring of a practitioner are required as a result of an Inquiries Complaint Records Committee ICRC will remain on the public register.
4. Permits ICRC panels to order restrictions/limitations on a member. Presently that is the prevue of a discipline panel.
5. Full reasons for a discipline decision must be on the website of each College

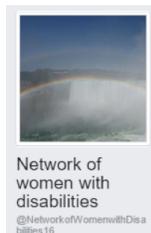
The changes are long overdue for some regulatory colleges and for others it just validates their record of transparency and embracing the role of public protection.

MARIANNE M. PARK, MA

Founder Network of Women with Disabilities NOW

You can view the legislation at: http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&Intranet=&BillID=4477

Join the Network of Women with Disabilities NOW - for the latest information on the issue of violence against women with disabilities please check us out. A place to hear about events, research and meet folks and their allies.



The Toronto Star recently wrote an article following two Toronto femicides, titled: When Men Kill Their Partners; warning signs often missed

Excerpt: [The recent murders of Suraiya Gangaram and Elana Fric-Shamji] highlight what researchers, police and those in the criminal justice system know too well: that while intimate partner homicide crosses socio-economic, religious, age and cultural lines, the deaths usually fit a well-worn template.

The relationship is over, or ending. There is a history of abuse in the relationship. There were threats of violence. While important steps have been taken to help women when these telling red flags arise, domestic violence experts say significant work remains to be done.

"I think we are quite good at identifying who is high-risk," said Pamela Cross, legal director at Luke's Place, a Durham-based organization that provides family law support for abused women. "I think the challenge is: so then what do we do about that."

In Ontario, the major risk factors are made clear through 12 years of data collected by the provincial chief coroner's Domestic Violence Death Review Committee. The data show that, on average, 28 people die in an intimate partner homicide every year in Ontario. Eighty-one per cent of the victims are female, and 90 per cent of the perpetrators were male.

In three-quarters of the cases, there was a history of domestic violence. In the majority of cases — 68 per cent — the couple were in the midst of actual or pending separation.

Despite "comprehensive and innovative" public education initiatives aimed at preventing domestic violence, the committee noted that among the general public — neighbours, friends, and family who may suspect domestic violence — there is still an unwillingness to intervene.

"I think there is a sort of societal reluctance to admit the reality that men kill women who they say they love," Cross said.

As a result there can be a downplaying of the risk, even by players within the justice system, who Cross said tend to look for the "lowest possible way to intervene." She said she believes courts should "over-respond" in high-risk cases — namely, when a couple is separating and when there's a history of violence.

That could mean making it easier to get restraining orders or restrictive bail conditions, given the high stakes. "Let's over-respond and keep her alive and sort it out properly later," Cross said.

Peter Jaffe, academic director at Western University's Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children, said strides have been made to increase awareness about domestic violence, especially on college campuses.

He said it is important that the general public be aware of signs of domestic violence, particularly in cases where the women may not yet be in contact with the criminal or family law system — either because they choose not to be or they don't think they need to be. He also said a need for greater awareness and training among certain professions remains, including within the justice system.

"You may have judges who get appointed to the bench who may not have a background in family law but in the business corporate commercial world and suddenly they are dealing with cases of domestic violence and they may not have the training," he said.

Barb MacQuarrie, also with Western's violence on women and children research centre, stressed the need to find ways of reaching those who are at risk through means other than the police — "many people for many different reasons are reluctant to involve police in their lives," she said.

One still untapped area is the workplace, MacQuarrie said. It's a good place to provide information, resources and support when it comes to domestic violence, particularly because in some abusive relationships, work may be the only place victims are allowed to go alone.

A supportive workplace can make a significant difference to a woman who is trying to leave a relationship or find some means of help, she said.

"We know this. This is not speculation. We have survivors who are really vocal about what it means to have or not have support from workplace. We spend so much time there and it is so critical to our well-being to have jobs and the ability to do good work."

A significant improvement, MacQuarrie said, would be legislative change to provide paid leave for someone experiencing domestic violence — funds to be used toward counselling, moving, going to court and more.

This is important, she said, because employment status can have a major effect on someone's ability to leave a relationship.

Jaffe stressed that domestic violence that doesn't end in homicide can still leave the victims — including children — with long-term mental and physical damage.

"If someone is being stalked by an ex-partner who is threatening them, has threatened them repeatedly in the past, you have think about quality of life for that victim," he said. "It may be a homicide or it may be a death by a thousand cuts."

Shamji, who hasn't yet had a bail hearing, returns to court Jan. 26. A trial date has not yet been set for Allen.

Article written by

ALYSHAH HASHAM and **WENDY GILLIS**

See: <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2017/01/09/when-men-kill-their-partners-warning-signs-often-missed.html?platform=hootsuite>

Comment:

When your VAWCC is planning activities for the coming year — consider including activities to bring Neighbours, Friends and Families and Make it our Business into your community. They are two proven public education campaigns that teach bystanders — neighbours, friends, family and co-workers how to recognize and respond to warning signs. The Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children would be happy to talk with you about ideas and possibilities. Contact Barb MacQuarrie at: bmacquar@uwo.ca

Bill 26 – Paid leave for victims of domestic and sexual violence

See: http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&tranel=&BillID=4174

On March 8, 2016, Ontario NDP Women's Issues Critic, MPP Peggy Sattler introduced a Private Member's Bill called the Domestic and Sexual Violence Workplace Leave, Accommodation and Training Act which provided up to 10 days of paid leave. The bill also allowed for additional "reasonable" unpaid leave, as well as mandatory workplace training for domestic violence and sexual violence. While the bill received all-party support, the prorogation of the legislature in the fall meant the bill died on the order paper.

On September 27, 2016, the bill was re-introduced into the new session of the legislature as Bill 26. It passed second reading on Thursday, October 20, 2016 with all-party support.

Victims of domestic violence and sexual assault need to be accommodated with paid time off to see a doctor, attend a crisis centre, find a place to live, find child care, get counselling for themselves and their children, or go to court.

Legislation that includes mandatory training is needed to help employers, and their employees, recognize the warning signs, impacts and risks in order to develop informed, effective and appropriate workplace policies and plans.

Every member of the provincial legislature should vote in favour of Bill 26 because it moves women in Ontario closer to the goal of being able to live without the fear of violence.

Final reading is slated for April. VAWCCs can write to the Premier asking her to pass Bill 26. Be sure to copy both Kevin Flynn, Minister of Labour and Indira Naidoo-Harris, Minister of the Status of Women.

ELDER ABUSE – VAWCCS SURVEY

Intersection of Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse

Elder Abuse Ontario would like to thank the Violence Against Women Coordinating Committees (VAWCCs) for participating in our survey on the inclusion of older adults in community response protocols. The results (26 responses) provided insights on current trends, challenges and suggestions for future directions to enhance our community response to elder abuse and increase the level of knowledge about the intersection of domestic and sexual, family violence and elder abuse.

The survey information points to a need to engage agencies representing older adults on the VAWCCs. Only 6 (35%) of the committees currently have membership from local elder abuse networks, or health care services such as CCAC. Every Committee stated their willingness to integrate elder abuse intervention, support information and safety planning to meet the unique needs of older adult's at-risk or experiencing abuse into community response protocols.

... we would be interested in building its capacity to more effectively support older adults who are victims of domestic violence, especially given that none of our member organizations is specifically geared to older adults"

Although the incidence of domestic violence among older adults is not as often reported, agencies on VAWCCs indicated their rate of referrals is increasing and some agencies are now offering support groups for older adults, safety planning, shelters, risk assessment, support/outreach services, counselling, drop-in programs or crisis support lines. Generally, intervention services have not been specialized for older adults in domestic violence situations. Given the complexities of domestic violence and elder abuse, the VAWCCs identified significant issues to consider in future planning to support seniors at-risk and experiencing abuse.

"I'm very glad you are putting this on our radar. As our population ages a lack of elder specific services and elder safety concerns are only going to increase"

EAO invites all VAWCCs to continue the conversation!

Join us: Webinar to Launch and Promote the **Safety Planning Toolkit** on March 29th, 2017 from 11 am – 12:30 pm

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8398656233215778563>

VAWCC events, cool projects and local updates

Community Updates



Submitted by the Sisters in Spirit Working Group and Violence Prevention Grey Bruce

On October 5, 2016 at Public Health in Owen Sound, Ontario, the Sisters in Spirit working group held a moving and inclusive "Honouring Our Sisters in Spirit" event.

The event featured a circle gathering with prayers and drumming for those whose lives have been impacted by violence, a soup feast to celebrate the

strength and resilience of Indigenous families in the Grey-Bruce community, followed by a Faceless Dolls project to facilitate a conversation about the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The event was a success, with over 50 people in attendance. The completed Faceless Dolls blanket was subsequently displayed at the Public Health building to encourage continued conversation about the issue of violence against Indigenous women. There are plans for the blanket to travel to different locations in the community to increase community awareness of the issue and commitment to addressing violence within our community.

The funding provided by Violence Prevention Grey Bruce allowed the working group to hire a Métis family catering business to cater the feast, and provide the materials needed to create the Faceless Dolls project.

Violence Prevention Grey Bruce was honoured to support Sisters in Spirit and the working group in 2016, as it has every year since the BBW Forum in 2011. Thank you to the Working Group and everyone who attended and expressed their care and concern for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Sisters in Spirit Working Group 2016

Windsor

On November 7, 2016, at beautiful Caesars Windsor, 108 people from 22 different organizations gathered for the biannual Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee Windsor-Essex conference.

Theresa Simms, Cultural Resources Coordinator at the Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre, open and closed the day with an inspirational and tradition First Nations prayer. Spoken word artist, Holly Painter, motivated us with some of her slam poetry. Keynote speaker Dr. Lori Haskell's subject, Trauma Informed Practice – Understanding the Neurobiological and Psychological Effects of Violence and Abuse, did not disappoint. Lori was invited back, after popular demand, following our conference of 2014.

When asked "what word best describes this training?" participants responded with:

- o "Educational"
- o "Reinforcing"
- o "Outstanding"
- o "Intense"
- o "Should be mandatory for everyone" (I know....more than one word!)

Additional feedback included comments such as:

"...could listen to Lori for long period of time"

"Incredible!! So informative, insightful and put in a way that was more easily understood."

"Well done. Very professional."

DOROTHY DAVIS, Coordinator
VAWCCWE

Oxford

The Oxford Domestic Assault Review Team held a one-day conference on LGBTQ Positive Space Training on October 6, 2016. Those in attendance reportedly felt they benefitted greatly by the information shared by Dr. Carys Massarella, a leading expert and advocate for the transgender community; Deirdre Pike, LGBTQ Positive Safe Space Trainer; and Cass Wender, Specializing in harm reduction, psychosocial rehabilitation and trauma-informed practices.

During the 16 Days of Activism, DART once again partnered with the Zonta Club of Woodstock in support of the International Zonta Says NO campaign. It seemed fitting to promote their message during this time by highlighting the significance of several of the 16 Days. This marked the third year of this union which also supports DART's missions and values.

Beginning with November 25th, in recognition of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Shine the Light Campaign, both purple and orange lights were hung from the trees and bushes in front of the Woodstock Police Service Headquarters, where they were to remain turned on throughout the 16 Days.

There was also the opportunity during this time for a few members of DART to go into some of the area schools, setting up and staffing information displays, where they were able to interact with the students. One of the unique ways in which they did this was to hand out small chocolate bars with messages written on attached labels, addressing the issue of unhealthy/ healthy relationships. Many conversations with students were sparked by the messages they read.

Oxford DART continues to look at ways of bringing awareness to the issue of domestic violence and gender based violence to the community of Oxford County. Their social media initiative, #righttthing on Facebook has been a successful way of reaching all age groups. Please visit and like our page at #righttthing.

LINDA ARMSTRONG, Coordinator/Public Educator
Oxford Domestic Assault Review Team

“Bringing Home the Bacon”

Developing Youth Financial Literacy, November 14, 2016

London, ON – Credit Counselling Thames Valley, a program of Family Service Thames Valley and mindyourmind.ca are excited to launch a web-based game designed by young adults for young adults to encourage financial literacy and skills development. The app, made possible through Prosperity Funding from Libro Credit Union, is loaded with information about budgeting, saving, and loans. “Bringing Home the Bacon” debuted on November 15th, as part of Financial Literacy month November 2016.

“It’s an awesome way to help young people learn about a topic that tends to be dull, by presenting it in a way that is relevant and appealing to them” Scarlett, Co-design Team Lead, age 22

“I just had the chance to play the game in full, and I’ve learned so much! Thank you!” Kelsey, Student, age 20

Finance and credit can at often times be a grueling and stressful topic for young adults. There are many life decisions involving financial details that many young adults are ill prepared to make; often falling prey to contracts that they don’t understand or not fully understanding how credit works. Credit Counselling Thames Valley and mindyourmind.ca noticed this knowledge gap and created “Bringing Home the Bacon” to help address the need for financial literacy amongst young adults aged 17 to 28. Mindyourmind organized a focus group, comprising of 10-12 young adults, who researched and co-designed this interactive method of reaching younger generations who may not yet be thinking about finances. With a jeopardy-like format, players have the option to play as a single player, in pairs up to

4 teams. The team format will help team leaders and educators use the game in a classroom, educational or group setting. The game provides links to financial resources and offers tips to help players learn a little bit more about managing their money.

While youth empowerment was a cornerstone in the development of the app, more than young adults will benefit from the app’s educational features. The game is web-based, and can be accessed via mobile devices allowing increased access to information for those that are more likely to be browsing the web through a cellphone.

For more information:

Twitter: @TheBaconGameApp

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