

Canadian National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women December 6

The Canadian Federation of University Women continues the series on significant days to facilitate the conversation about the Sustainable Development Goals. Our purpose is to overlay a recognized Theme Day with the SDG lens in order to shine a light on and bring the conversation to the grassroots level.

We believe the elimination of violence can only be realized with the understanding that aggression against one woman is abuse against all women. The individual cannot be separated from the community and therefore national epidemics of violence have a global impact. Whether actors are enablers, bystanders or bullies, each act of violence against women has active perpetrators and conspirators who must be held accountable for attempting to diminish the personhood of the divine feminine.

For this significant Canadian National Day of Remembrance and Action to eliminate Violence Against Women the CFUW is intentionally making connections to SDG #4, #5, #16 and #17 (However, connections to any other SDG may be implied).



This is the sixth feature in the series of nine Theme Days (Mother's Day, Father's Day, World Day to end Human Trafficking, International Literacy Day, International Day of the Girl Child, National Day of Remembrance of Violence Against Women – Canada, International Women's Day, Earth Day, and 50/50 Day).

This initiative provides a critical opportunity to discuss the interconnectedness of the SDGs to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. We also aspire to highlight the intersectionality of women's issues and the need to engage all stakeholders in the conversation.

The 2030 Agenda is for all, and achieving its goals requires action at all levels. In the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, contributors from diverse backgrounds have offered a perspective that we hope you can connect to and extend the conversation beyond your circle.

It Has Been Twenty-Eight Years and What Has Changed?

Violence against women takes many forms: physical, mental, verbal, and sexual. In 1989, 14 young women were murdered, an event now referred to as "The Montreal Massacre". At the time, the public expressed shock and outrage; something had to be done to prevent this type of thing from happening again. But, what has really changed since then? Not much apart from the fact that we now have a national day of remembrance. During the 28 years since that event how many Indigenous women have been murdered or gone missing? In most cases, authorities did not take the situation seriously. How many victims of sexual assault have not come forward because they fear being victimized again by the system and even by court officials themselves? This kind of behaviour on the part of males, even ones in positions of great responsibility, has become normalized as their bragging of their actions has been dismissed as "just boy talk".

While we do have that day of remembrance, nothing will change until men form a bigger part of the discussion and they are made to see how their actions have affected their women victims.

**Valerie Hume, Member of the International Relations Committee,
(CFUW)**

I Hear You Loud and Clear

I hear your voice telling me how old you are
Some of those years you were here in the flesh with us
The rest of your time has been in Spirit
We mourned that you could not realize your dreams
We cried that you did not make it to graduation
Mothers held their bellies because it was a punch in the gut for them
Fathers fell to their knees because they lost their strength
You were their strength
You were everyone's hope
Evil got wind of your potential and decided to steal your life
Drain you of the life blood that sustains you
I say Evil can never and will never win
Your life is not stolen
Your blood still flows through the rest of us
At times it boils
Your memory is not lost
You are stronger now than you ever were
The wind cradles your Spirit and takes it to and fro in the Earth for all to hear
Girls are walking down the path you laid for them
Sisters are owning their dreams because you had a similar one
Misogyny is a crime
You will never be forgotten
You are now immortal
I hear you every day for you are the Spirit Sister that keeps us all company
December 6th, I light a candle for you

**VP International Relations, Canadian Federation of University
Women (CFUW), Regional VP North America, International Al-
liance of Women (IAW)**

Two Feet Deep into the Infinite

The master gardener doesn't stop at one foot deep.

She goes two feet into the soil. Down there the nutrients conspire to renew the earth.
The grubs don't go that deep and the roots are safe.
The three sisters enjoy that space.
The corn grows tall.
The squash covers the earth and keeps the weeds down while the beans use the corn as their high rise condo.
No rent necessary, just respect!
Deeper still, six feet down is where the frost does not go.
It's the place of rest.
It embraces the whole body.
My sister you have found your holy rest.
Do you miss being violated?
Do you talk with the oak's strong roots?
Is the weeping willow taking your cries to the river bank?
Will you send the message back with the maple sap?
The sap that if not tapped will drip like golden blood.
We see pure golden, precious life.
There is more to you when we distill your sap.
Golden blood.
Golden blood from black earth.
This is your eternal flow of life.
Sister, daughter, friend, mother, spouse, aunt, niece, cousin your story is never buried.
It is our story too and the Earth's.
Time in its eternal consciousness will forever hold your story and spread it with the wind.

VP International Relations, Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW), Regional VP North America, International Alliance of Women (IAW)

Reflections on Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Violence is born from fear and confusion
From the belief that there isn't enough

- Money
- Jobs
- Power

If I view the world with a scarcity mindset, I believe

- Life is a zero-sum game
- There is no win/win
- There is only win/lose

And if I believe I am entitled

- But have too little
- Or have less than my fair share

To increase my share, I take from someone

- Less entitled
- Less powerful

No one is less powerful than

- A child
- A woman
- Someone who is disenfranchised

People of all genders are affected by

- Domestic violence
- Intimate partner violence
- Family violence

In Canada

- \$7.4 billion the economic impact of violence against women
- 636,000 self-reported sexual assaults (2014 GSS estimate)
- 20,735 police recorded victims of assault (2016 StatsCan)
- 4,000 Missing or murdered Indigenous women and girls (1980 – 2012)
- 87% sexual assault victims are women
- 80% assault victims are women and girls
- 73% women & children turned away from shelters due to lack of capacity
- 30% increase in sexual violations against children

- 14% increase in violations causing death other than homicide
- 11% increase in offences related to commodification of sexual activity
- 6% increase in aggravated sexual assault
- 0.3% of all founded sexual-assault reports lead to conviction
- Every day, in 234 shelters and transition houses
 - 1760 women and 1915 children are housed
 - 416 women and children sought shelter
- Every 6 days, a woman is killed by her intimate partner

The Agreed conclusions of 2015 called on all United Nations member states to have a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women to meet the 2030 Agenda. Unfortunately, Canada still has no comprehensive national plan or strategy in place to deal with violence against women.

Cheryl D Ambrose, BSc PhD - VP Advocacy, Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)

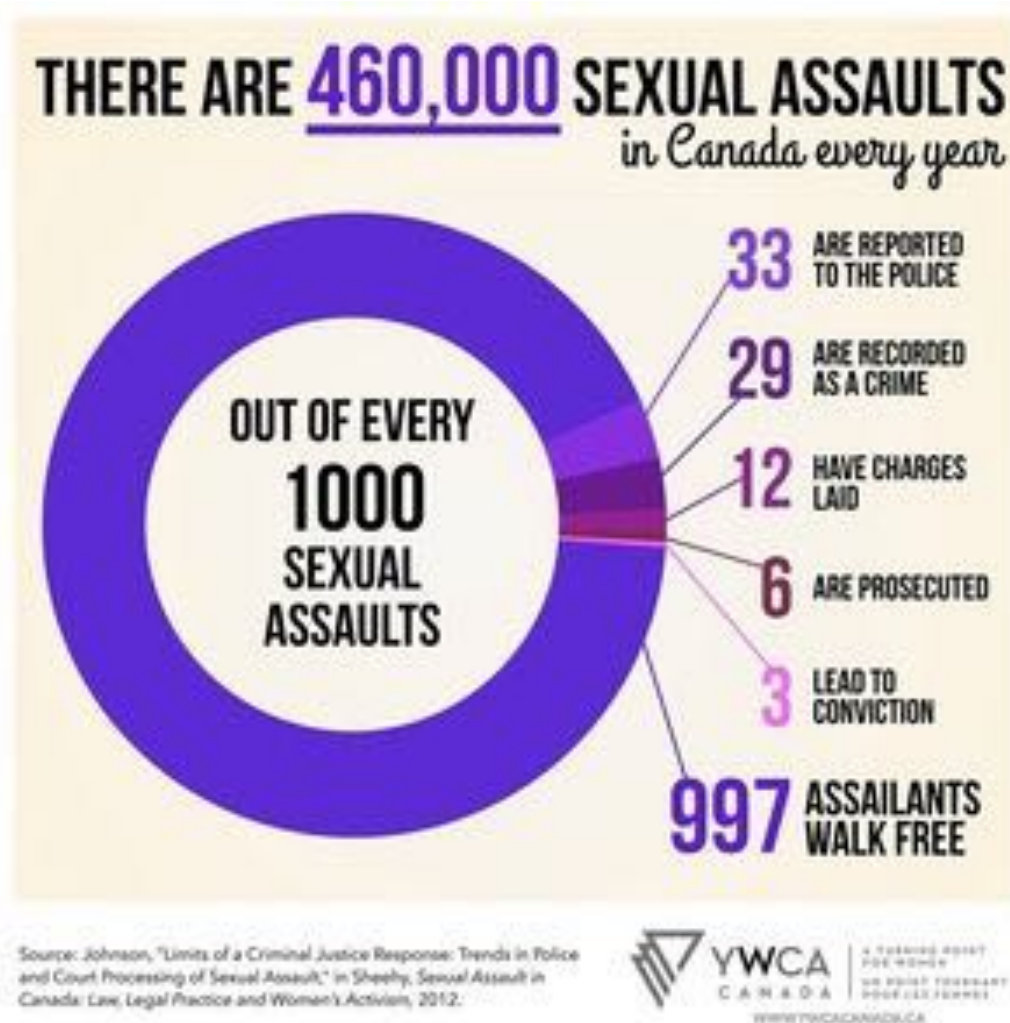
Why Statistics on Violence vs. Women in Canada are Essentially Unknown

A report from Statistics Canada based on data collected 2009-14, From arrest to conviction: Court outcomes of police-reported sexual assaults in Canada, revealed that sexual assault is one of the most underreported crimes in Canada. This statement caught the attention of a Toronto Globe and Mail reporter.

“Police-reported crimes exclude incidents reported to police that were deemed ‘unfounded’.”

In February of 2017, the results of a 20-month-long investigation into 870 police forces’ handling of sexual assault across Canada were published, finding flaws at every step. In short, the newspaper research found that every year, an average of 5,500 cases of reported sexual violence to Canadian police were ruled “unfounded”, long before a Crown prosecutor, judge or jury had a chance to weigh in.

An infographic by the YWCA gives one reason why sexual assaults (87% against women) are so unreported.



It is encouraging that both police and Statistics Canada are now aware their statistics are seriously skewed. In conjunction with newly defined police reporting standards, requested by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Statistics Canada will have a new report on “unfounded” cases by July 2018.

Nancy Mayberry BA, PhD, Member of the International Relations Committee, CFUW

We Remember December 6, 1989

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