

Violence Against Women And Children

→ What is Violence Against Women?

- The United Nations defines violence against women as:
- “Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, → including **threats of such acts**, **coercion** or **arbitrary deprivation of liberty**, whether occurring in public or in private life.”²³
- Spousal abuse can include:²⁴
 - **Physical abuse:** Slapping, choking, or punching her. Using hands or objects as weapons. Threatening her with a knife or gun. Committing murder.
 - **Sexual abuse:** Using threats, intimidation, or physical force to force her into unwanted sexual acts.
 - **Emotional or verbal abuse:** Threatening to kill her (or to kill the children, other family members or pets), threatening to commit suicide, making humiliating or degrading comments about her body or behaviour, forcing her to commit degrading acts, isolating her from friends or family, confining her to the house, destroying her possessions, and other actions designed to demean her or to restrict her freedom and independence.
 - **Financial abuse:** Stealing or controlling her money or valuables (of particular concern to older women). Forcing her to work. Denying her the right to work.
 - **Spiritual abuse:** Using her religious or spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate, and control her.
 - **Criminal harassment/stalking:** Following her or watching her in a persistent, malicious, and unwanted manner → Invading her privacy in a way that threatens her personal safety.

→ Why is it urgent to address gender-based violence?

1. Because it costs women their lives: approximately every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner.

2. Violence against women costs taxpayers and the government billions of dollars every year: Canadians collectively spend \$7.4 billion → to deal with the aftermath of spousal violence alone.
3. It has a profound effect on children: Children who witness violence in the home have twice the rate of psychiatric disorders as children from non-violent homes.

→ Is gender violence a serious problem in Canada?

- **All Canadians pay a steep price for gender-based violence**. It's estimated that each year, Canadians collectively spend \$7.4 billion to deal with the aftermath of spousal violence alone, according to the Department of Justice. → This figure includes (1) **immediate costs**, such as emergency room visits and related costs, such as loss of income. → It also includes (2) **tangible costs** such as funerals, → and (3) **intangible costs** such as pain and suffering.¹

What are the facts?

- **Half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16**.²
- 67% of Canadians say they have personally known at least one woman who has experienced physical or sexual abuse.³
- **Approximately every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner**. Out of the 83 police-reported intimate partner homicides in 2014, 67 of the victims—over 80%—were women.
- On any given night in Canada, 3,491 women and their 2,724 children sleep in shelters because it isn't safe at home.⁵
- **On any given night, about 300 women and children are turned away because shelters are already full**.⁶
- **There were 1,181 cases of missing or murdered Aboriginal women in Canada between 1980 and 2012**, according to the

RCMP.⁷ However, according to grassroots organizations and the Minister of the Status of Women the number is much higher, closer to 4,000.⁸

- Indigenous women are killed at six times the rate of non-Indigenous women.⁹

→ What is the Regional Breakdown of gender-Based Violence

- Rates of gender-based violence vary widely across Canada. As is the case with violent crime overall, the territories have consistently recorded the highest rates of police-reported violence against women. The rate of violent crime against women in Nunavut in 2011 was nearly 13 times higher than the rate for Canada. → Saskatchewan and Manitoba, which have consistently recorded the highest provincial rates of police-reported violent crime, had rates of violence against women in 2011 that were about double the national rate. Ontario and Quebec had the lowest rates of violence against women.¹¹
- Cyber violence [?], which includes online threats, harassment, and stalking, has emerged as an extension of violence against women.¹² {{{Young women (18-24) are most likely to experience online harassment in its most severe forms, including stalking, sexual harassment and physical threats.}}}

→ Has Domestic Violence Fallen Over Time?

- Like most violent crime in Canada, rates of police-reported domestic violence have fallen over time.¹⁴ This decline is partly due to increased social equality and financial freedom for women, which makes it easier for them to leave abusive relationships at earlier stages. It is also due to years of effort by groups who are working to end domestic violence. → Their achievements include improved public awareness, more treatment programs for violent men, improved training for police officers and Crown attorneys, having the police lay charges rather than the victim, more coordination of community

services, and the creation of domestic violence legislation in some areas of Canada.

***Caveat → It's also important to remember that the rate of domestic violence is likely much higher than we know; 70% of spousal violence is not reported to the police

→ Can Gender Violence Be Stopped

- public education, violence prevention programs, and a strong criminal justice response can bring an end to violence against women in Canada.
- Rising awareness about gender-based violence is also due to the courageous advocacy work of survivors and the family members of victims. It's not easy to publicly identify the abuse, challenge gender inequality and victim-blaming, and how our society deals with violence against women, but it contributes to broader social awareness and change.
- Research shows that high school violence prevention programs are highly effective → students experienced long-term benefits such as better dating relationships, the ability to recognize and leave an unhealthy relationship, and increased self-confidence, assertiveness, and leadership.