

IT'S TIME: CANADA'S STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



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Gender-based violence (GBV) is a preventable and significant barrier to gender equality. Across the country, work is already underway to help change the norms, attitudes, and behaviours that contribute to GBV. The Government of Canada is building on these efforts with *It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence*.

As part of the \$100.9 million announced in Budget 2017, the Gender-Based Violence Knowledge Centre will be created within Status of Women Canada. New funding will also support key initiatives with the Public Health Agency of Canada, Public Safety Canada, the Department of National Defence, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

This whole-of-government approach is supported by other related government actions from Budget 2017 that will also contribute to the Strategy's goals, including the National Housing Strategy, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples. It will also build on actions announced in Budget 2016 (see Recent federal actions).

The Strategy is based on the following three pillars:

I. PREVENTION

Prevention is critical to ending violence. The Government of Canada will:

- enhance funding to implement and test ways to prevent GBV, including child maltreatment and teen dating violence;
- share practical knowledge on promising and best practices to prevent GBV with policy makers and service providers;
- engage youth, including men and boys, on GBV-related themes and the important role that they play in violence prevention through awareness initiatives;
- support programs and services that help meet the needs of urban Indigenous Peoples through the Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples; and
- continue to support a range of prevention activities for diverse populations, including Indigenous families.

“Everyone, including boys and men, must be part of the solution to end gender-based violence. All people living in Canada deserve the same opportunity to thrive and succeed, no matter their sex, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnic background.”

The Honourable Maryam Monsef,
Minister of Status of Women

IT'S TIME: CANADA'S STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



2. SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Funding is needed to improve supports for survivors as well as service providers to better meet the diverse needs of specific populations who have experienced GBV. The Government of Canada will:

- provide new funding to help organizations respond to the unique needs of survivors, including Indigenous Peoples, LGBTQ2 and gender non-conforming people, people with disabilities, and newcomer women and families;
- enhance efforts to address online child sexual exploitation;
- improve supports for members of the Canadian Armed Forces and their families affected by violence;
- increase access to housing and related supports, including for survivors fleeing family violence, through the National Housing Fund and the Homelessness Partnering Strategy;
- bring experts and service providers together by hosting a national symposium on women and housing;
- take action to ensure that Parliament and federal institutions are workplaces free from harassment and sexual violence;
- protect the jobs of survivors working in federally regulated workplaces by providing an unpaid leave of absence to seek care if they are victims of family violence;
- increase mental health supports for First Nations and Inuit communities;
- support trauma-informed and culturally appropriate training and resources for a range of service providers, including health practitioners and other service providers; and
- deliver and test programs that support survivors and victims of violence, including family violence.

Trauma-informed approaches are those that take into account the lasting effects that trauma – including violence – has on survivors. These approaches modify information, resources, and services to avoid re-traumatizing them.

Culturally safe approaches recognize and challenge unequal power relations between service providers and survivors by building equitable, two-way relationships characterized by respect, shared responsibility, and cultural exchange. Survivors must have their culture, values, and preferences taken into account in the provision of services.

3. PROMOTING RESPONSIVE LEGAL AND JUSTICE SYSTEMS

There must be improvements to the ways in which the legal and justice systems respond to GBV. To help reduce the incidence of GBV and increase survivors' confidence in these systems, it is important to take the needs and experiences of survivors into account. The Government of Canada will:

- support enhanced cultural and gender sensitive training for federal law enforcement officers;
- strengthen the family justice system response to family violence, including through funding for family justice activities and services;
- criminal law responses to gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence, human trafficking and sexual assault will be strengthened;

IT'S TIME: CANADA'S STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



- support programming on judicial education, ethics and conduct, including gender and diversity training for judges;
- provide funding for immigration and refugee legal aid, including for women who may be fleeing violence in other countries; and
- provide funding for community-based programs for Indigenous populations that use restorative justice approaches.

DEDICATED ACTION TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS GBV AGAINST INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

In the spirit of reconciliation, the Strategy puts forward a range of actions to specifically address violence against Indigenous women and girls, including:

- new funding to respond to the unique needs of Indigenous survivors;
- enhanced funding for mental health supports for First Nations and Inuit;
- funding to meet the needs of urban Indigenous Peoples, including through parenting programs and helping women transition out of shelters;
- funding for restorative justice approaches for Indigenous populations; and
- working with Indigenous organizations to undertake research initiatives.

While the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is underway, the federal government will continue to invest in a range of immediate actions to fill gaps and better support Indigenous Peoples and families.

FOUNDATION FOR CHANGE

To coordinate actions under the three pillars, the Government of Canada will establish the Gender-Based Violence Knowledge Centre within Status of Women Canada as the focal point of the Strategy. The Knowledge Centre will:

- serve as a hub to coordinate new and existing federal actions across the Strategy's three pillars;
- report to Canadians annually on the Strategy's results;
- undertake data collection and research in priority areas;
- share practical knowledge on GBV between federal, provincial and territorial stakeholders, as well as other key stakeholders; and;
- connect researchers with service providers, Indigenous organizations, and federal, provincial, and territorial governments to ensure that the Strategy aligns with and will help to inform their work.

Only by working together will we succeed in addressing GBV in Canada. This Strategy offers a roadmap for federal actions on prevention, support for survivors and their families, and promoting more responsive legal and justice systems. Through these actions, the Strategy will build on the work already underway, and ultimately help set the foundation for change—because it's time.