



Shaping the Conversation for Safer Communities

Crime Prevention Week - November 1st to 7th, 2015

Crime Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility

Addressing Violence Against Women in BC

Violence against women is not just a women's issue, it's everyone's issue. It affects entire families and communities. During Crime Prevention Week let us resolve to do our part in working together with our friends, families, and communities to end violence against women in British Columbia.

A Long-Term Strategy for BC

In February 2015, the Province of BC released A Vision for a Violence Free BC, a long-term strategy to address violence against women in our province. This strategy lays out a path to creating a province where all women have the supports they need to help prevent violence, escape from violent situations, and recover if they have been victims of violence.

Understanding the Scope of Violence Against Women in BC

- 113 women died as a result of domestic violence in BC from 2004 to 2014.
- From 2004 to 2009, it is estimated that over 160,000 British Columbians were victim to spousal violence.
- Research suggests that fewer than 1 in 4 victims of intimate partner violence report the crime to police.
- In 2013, there were more than 12,300 police-reported victims of intimate partner violence throughout BC.
- Over 3,200 sexual assaults were reported to police in 2013. An estimated 90% of sexual assault cases go unreported each year.
- Aboriginal women are nearly three times as likely as non-Aboriginal women to be victims of spousal violence and are significantly more likely to experience the most severe and potentially life-threatening levels of violence

Contributing Factors

Among experts in violence prevention, it is recognized that violence is the outcome of interactions among many factors at four different levels: the individual, the relationship, the community, and the societal.

Risk factors contributing to violence against women may include witnessing violence as a child; social isolation; poverty and marginalization; harmful learned behaviours and norms around masculinity and femininity; and, cultural norms that support aggression towards others.

Protective factors may include: family support/connectedness; coordination of resources and services among community agencies; and, strong health, educational, economic and social policies/laws.

Strategic Priorities in Violence Free BC

Violence Free BC identifies five strategic priorities:

1. *Preventing Violence by Changing Behaviours:* Negative attitudes and behaviours towards women have been shown to be important predictors of violence against women. If real progress is to be made towards preventing violence against all women, it is essential to shift the attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate it.
2. *Ensuring BC has Responsive, Innovative and Coordinated Services:* Services and supports need to be grounded in best practices and flexible enough to support both quality improvement and innovation. Evidence shows that services are most impactful when they are coordinated, responsive and tailored to meet specific needs.
3. *Supporting Women to Re-build after Violence:* Ensuring women experiencing violence have the necessary housing, employment and income assistance supports to successfully leave situations of violence and vulnerability and assist in re-building their lives.
4. *Addressing Violence Against Aboriginal Women:* Recognizing the unique needs and situations of Aboriginal women, as well as the systemic issues that may complicate issues of violence and present challenges in their ability to access information, services and supports.
5. *Fostering Strong Relationships and New Partnerships:* Foster partnerships in new and innovative ways with various levels of government, the private sector, business, industry, Aboriginal groups, nongovernmental organizations and concerned British Columbians.



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Towards a Violence Free BC

Moving towards a violence free B.C. means preventing violence before it starts, responding to violence when it happens, and rebuilding from the impacts of violence.

Preventing violence before it starts:

Violence prevention is perhaps the most challenging and critical element of the task ahead. The body of knowledge gathered to date points to a number of key elements that will help to address the root causes of violence.

- Educating children, youth and adults by promoting respectful and healthy relationships,
- Working with men and boys to understand and prevent violence,
- Changing attitudes and behaviours, and
- Addressing key socioeconomic and health factors.

Responding to violence when it happens:

When violence does occur, women, children and families need access to services and supports to help them escape violence and recover from its impacts. Effective responses to violence against women include:

- ensuring services meet the needs of BC's diverse communities;
- enhancing the policies, practices and training of service providers; and,
- supporting coordinated responses across ministries and service sectors.

Rebuilding from the impacts of violence:

The impacts of violence can have serious and long-term consequences including mental health problems, isolation and social exclusion, problematic substance use, and negative impacts on attainment in education and employment.

- Reducing the long-term consequences of violence is an important part of the rebuilding process.
- This involves addressing not just the violence itself but also ensuring wrap-around supports, such as counselling, housing, employment and income assistance, are available to assist in recovery from experiences of violence.

"These are the first steps of a long journey. Ending violence against women will take time. We all have a role to play in preventing violence before it starts, responding to violence when it happens, and rebuilding from its devastating effects. Stopping the violence starts with all of us – together."
- Premier Christy Clark

Additional Resources:

Violence Free BC Strategy

www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/shareddocs/pubs/violence-free-bc.pdf

#SaySomething

A social media campaign that provides practical advice and tips to help us take the first step in speaking up and better understanding how to safely help those who are experiencing violence.

www.saysomethingbc.ca

VictimLink BC

Free and confidential services are available 24 hours a day,

7 days a week in over 110 languages, providing crisis and referral information to victims of crime.

1-800-563-0808 or www.victimlinkbc.ca

Domestic Violence – It's Never OK

A website providing information and resources for those experiencing or wanting to assist a loved one who is experiencing domestic violence.

www.domesticviolencebc.ca

Ministry of Justice – Victims and Witnesses of Crime and Violence

A website that provides information to victims and witnesses of crime, violence, or abuse.

www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices



www.bccpa.org

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