

BULLETIN

December 6: Take action against gender-based violence

December 6, 2020

On Dec. 6, 1989, 14 women were murdered in an act of misogynist violence at École Polytechnique in Montréal. It was perpetrated by a man claiming to be “fighting feminism,” who first opened fire on women in a mechanical engineering class. Women were targeted because of their gender, and 13 students and one administrator were killed.

In 1991, the Parliament of Canada designated December 6 the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Vigils are held across the country to pay tribute to the women who lost their lives in this horrific act. It is also a day to reflect on the ways in which gender-based violence manifests today, over three decades since the shooting, and to take a stand against all forms of gender-based violence.

The COVID-19 crisis has had an alarming impact on women’s physical and emotional safety. A recent national survey conducted by Women Shelters Canada revealed that 52 per cent of participating shelters and transition houses reported that their clients were experiencing more severe violence – that violence was happening more frequently, or that new cases of physical violence were emerging.

COVID-19 isolation measures have meant that women, non-binary, and trans people are more likely to be confined for longer periods of time with perpetrators, and financial stress as a result of the pandemic has been a catalyst for gender-based violence. [HSA members working in transition houses in BC have also highlighted how women are struggling to access resources and supports in the midst of the pandemic.](#)

While half of women in Canada will experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, gender-based violence disproportionately impacts people with disabilities, young women, people of colour, and Indigenous peoples. According to a 2014 Statistics Canada survey, Indigenous women are more than three times more likely to experience violence than non-Indigenous women. And the issue of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women remains a national crisis, stemming from Canada’s legacy of colonization, requiring urgent action.

December 6 takes place during the 16 days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, which begins every year on Nov. 25 and ends on International Human Rights Day. It follows the Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20. On these dates and throughout the year, HSA encourages its members to take action against all forms of gender-based violence.

Here are some actions you can take:

1. [Send an email to your MP](#) calling for a robust, fully-funded National Action Plan on Violence Against Women. This means increasing funding for services and supports for survivors of violence, and expanding public education. Encourage others to do it too.
2. Reach out to your local transition house, sexual assault crisis centre, women’s resource centre, or friendship centre.
3. Speak out about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, intimate-partner and sexual violence, and injustice in Canada’s criminal justice/prison system. Read the [Calls for Justice](#) from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

4. Believe sexual assault survivors and promote a culture of consent. Distribute tools and resources on consent, [such as this one](#).
5. Educate yourself and others about the root causes of gender-based violence.



Type:
[Bulletins](#)

Topic:
[Issues, Campaigns and Government Relations](#)

- [Print](#)
- [PDF](#)

180 East Columbia
New Westminster, BC V3L 0G7

Website
www.hsabc.org

Telephone 604-517-0994
1-800-663-2017