

**FEDERAL STRATEGY ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
BRIEFING NOTES FOR STATUS OF WOMEN CANADA AND THE DEPARTMENT
OF JUSTICE CANADA**

ISSUE: Prevention of Gender-Based Violence

In addressing gender-based violence, prevention and intervention are intricately linked. It is important to recognize the integral role that community-based anti-violence programs play in both intervention and prevention, including social awareness campaigns, bystander intervention initiatives, and preventing further violence via support services provided to victims/survivors and their families.

KEY POINTS

- In addition to traditional concepts of violence prevention (e.g., education campaigns), it is important to recognize the role of intervention services in preventing further violence. The “prevention lens” that separates intervention from prevention does not acknowledge the many ways that intervention programs work to prevent violence. At its most basic level, because of the recurring nature of domestic and sexual violence, effective early intervention serves a powerful secondary prevention function by stopping violence from recurring.
- Programs that help children or youth deal with the impact of victimization, or exposure to violence, will reduce the chances that experiencing or being exposed to violence will result in young people repeating the pattern by becoming abusers or victims themselves. Child and youth intervention programs, therefore, are powerful tools for prevention.
- A key aspect of primary prevention is the effort to change the attitudes, values, and behaviours that allow violence to occur in the first place. Community-based anti-violence programs across Canada are working every day to create social change through initiatives such as:
 - *Be More Than a Bystander*, a ground-breaking bystander intervention program that asks everyone, and especially men, to speak up against gender-based violence (partnership between the Ending Violence Association of BC and the BC Lions Football Club).
 - *#IBelieveYou*, a social awareness campaign encouraging people to stand with survivors of sexual assault by embracing *believing* as a first response (Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services).
 - *Draw the Line*, a campaign that engages Ontarians in a dialogue about sexual violence (Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres).
 - *Neighbours, Friends and Families*, a public education campaign to raise awareness of the signs of women abuse (Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children, at Western University).

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- Ensure all federal anti-violence awareness campaigns are led by and/or partner with organizations that represent front-line community-based gender based violence programs.
 - *Gender-based violence prevention programs need to either be run by women who are in the anti-violence movement, or with these women as partners with men. Men’s burgeoning involvement in anti-violence work is encouraging, but has had the effect of marginalizing prevention campaigns developed by women’s organizations that have been doing this work for 20 to 30 years.*
- In consideration of the harmful effect of victim blaming on individuals, families and communities, it is imperative that gender based violence prevention programs be targeted towards first responders, friends and family, perpetrators or potential perpetrators and not towards survivors or potential survivors.
- Provide support for provinces and territories seeking to implement or expand existing bystander intervention programs (e.g., the Ending Violence Association of BC and BC Lions *Be More Than a Bystander* program), which prevent gender-based violence through targeting the social conditions that allow this violence to occur in the first place.
 - *Bystander education and training has been found to be effective in shifting attitudes and social norms on the issue of gender-based violence (Banyard et al., 2007; Reed et al., 2015).*
 - *A large – and growing – body of research suggests that bystander training increases intentions to intervene (Katz et al., 2014; Katz & Moore, 2013).*
- Support the development of corporate policy addressing gender-based violence that incorporates violence prevention training.
 - *The Canadian Football League (CFL) recently collaborated with the Ending Violence Association of Canada to develop their new Policy on Violence Against Women. The implementation of this new policy was accompanied by violence against women training for all CFL players, coaches, and staff.*
- Prevention efforts must account for the ways in which social inequities shape gender-based violence, with people who are marginalized by race, immigration, poverty, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or disability facing greater risk of both sexual and domestic violence.

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