

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

**ISSUE: Training on Gender-Based Violence**

Effective training on gender-based violence for justice, health and social service personnel, including community-based anti-violence programs should be built into basic and professional training, as well as into ongoing in-service training budgets. Training should (a) be both discipline-specific and cross-sectoral, (b) be delivered by or with representatives of front-line, community-based organizations, (c) cover the range of topics essential for effective trauma-informed intervention with *all* victims/survivors of gender-based violence, and (d) be supported by federal project funding grants.

**KEY POINTS**

- The area of gender-based violence is a complex one: the legal and policy landscape is often challenging and frequently changing, responses are required from a broad range of sectors, coordination of both services and information-sharing is key, and the stakes are high – lives are often at risk.
- While some discipline-specific training on gender-based violence is clearly appropriate, it is important to recognize the particular value of cross-sectoral training that brings together those sectors that are expected to work together, such as police, Crown, community and system victim services, sexual assault centres, counselling services, shelters, child protection, hospitals and other health care agencies, including community health, mental health and addictions services.
- Even where training is discipline-specific, the value of participation of other sectors in development and delivery of training on gender-based violence cannot be over-estimated – for example, police and Crown participation in training for hospital-based sexual assault responders and domestic violence service providers, support services and health worker participation in police or Crown training, or support services and police participation in child protection training.
- The benefits of such collaborative, cross-sectoral training include:
  - Disciplines learn about each other’s roles, responsibilities and perspectives.
  - Participants get to know each other through both formal and informal interaction, allowing them to “put a face to a name” and exchange contact information. This provides opportunities to dispel myths, correct misperceptions, and allay fears.
  - Participating in shared tasks enhances participants’ ability to work together.
  - Participants learn and practice collaborative models of working together, including risk assessment and safety planning.
  - Service provision to victims/survivors of power-based crimes is enhanced.

- It is important to recognize diversity in all training on gender-based violence, rather than marginalizing diversity by addressing it only in diversity-specific training initiatives. Diversity training should include consideration of culture, race, ethnicity, immigration status, disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, age and geographic location.
- All training on gender-based violence and victimization should include a gendered and intersectional analysis, and an analysis of power-based crimes.
- Funds currently dedicated to training for community-based anti-violence services are insufficient. Given the increasing cost of training, and the fact that the legal, policy, procedural and practice environment is constantly changing, dedicated federal project funding should be made available to train community-based anti-violence services and systems personnel on an ongoing basis.
- A number of government departments, educational institutions, hospital programs and anti-violence organizations have developed training initiatives on gender-based violence. Organizations with proven track records have much to contribute to the ongoing development and implementation of training on gender-based violence.

## **SUGGESTED ACTIONS**

- All sectors – including police, Crown, corrections, court services, the judiciary, community and system based anti-violence services, child protection, and health care – should take formal steps to ensure that training on gender-based violence:
  - Is adequately supported through federal project funding grants for both system-based staff and contracted organizations, including core training for new community-based anti-violence workers;
  - Is delivered in basic training and in the colleges, universities and professional schools that train future service providers and responders to gender-based violence, as well as in-service training;
  - Is developed and delivered cross-sectorally, wherever appropriate, and inclusive of those who will be expected to work together, including community-based service providers;
  - Is trauma-informed and acknowledges the short- and long-term impacts of gender-based violence, the implications of re-victimization, and the risk of vicarious trauma for first responders;
  - Stresses the importance of proactive coordinated responses, collaborative working relationships as a key safety issue, and identification of risk factors for domestic violence lethality;
  - Includes a gender analysis and an analysis of power-based crime, incorporates an intersectional analysis, and involves representatives of diverse groups.

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