

**ENDING  VIOLENCE**  
**Association of Canada**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2019 - 2020**

# ABOUT US

## Why EVA Canada?

Over the last 40 years, there has been a great deal of organization and action in the area of violence against women and gender-based violence in Canada that has culminated in a range of policy frameworks, programs, initiatives, and coalitions involving numerous feminist, anti-violence advocates, survivors, and allies often supported by federal and provincial government ministries and departments.

There are many national organizations that have been involved over time and who have been doing excellent work. This breadth of involvement and work is reflective of the complexity of, and intersections between the issues. At the same time, there are challenges to working across anti-violence sectors where those of us involved continue to experience barriers to access to information, expertise, and support, and witness sectors still working in silos. There is a need for bringing together all organizations that have an interest in issues of violence against women and gender-based violence, and for working more collaboratively across sectors.

EVA Canada has formed in response to that need to foster a national voice, to bring together all of the sectors involved in the array of anti-violence issues for national dialogue and action, for collaboration across provinces and territories to develop comprehensive and coordinated responses, for developing and sharing information and best practices, promoting safety of workers in the field, and creating more effective gateways to services.

## Our Values and Work

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a complex issue that requires an integrated analysis and a national conversation to include all of the sectors needed to respond or foster prevention. EVA Canada, as a national organization, holds as its overall aim the end of gender-based violence in Canada. Knowing that GBV manifests in different ways with some forms holding more public space and investments than other forms, we have focused much of our recent work on sexual violence as it has been an underserved issue across Canada.

EVA Canada prides itself on being responsive to opportunities that present themselves, and filling gaps that are in the GBV sector. Our focus is on building intersectional frameworks that are centered on relationship-building with collaboration between sectors and jurisdictions. We acknowledge that we are part of a movement that is fluid and in continuous growth and change.

## What we do

The Ending Violence Association of Canada (EVA Canada) is a national non-profit organization whose main purpose is to educate and respond to gender-based violence at the national level. EVA Canada works with other national organizations, educational institutions, businesses, government, provincial and territorial community-based organizations to promote and sustain multi-disciplinary, cross-sectoral collaboration and information exchange at the national level. Historically, our work has included:

- Leading institutional change work, including policy development, training, and consultation in the Canadian Football League (CFL), the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), and the RCMP
- Engaging in legislative and policy reform to promote systemic changes that will better respond to the needs of GBV survivors and the organizations supporting them
- Facilitating and supporting regional, jurisdictional, and cross-sectoral collaboration to develop collective and consistent positions, practices, and approaches on GBV issues
- Leading and supporting federal, provincial and territorial advocacy initiatives to bring issues of importance to the GBV sector to the attention of governments and decision-makers
- Leading and participating in community-based research to better understand the needs and challenges of the GBV sector

## Who we are

Ending Violence Association of BC	Tracy Porteous (Co-Chair)
Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services	Deb Tomlinson (Co-Chair)
Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan	Kerrie Isaac
Ending Violence Across Manitoba	Mary Lobson
Ontario Network of SA/DV Treatment Centres	Sheila Macdonald
Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres	Jacqueline Potvin
Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses	Marlene Hamm
Association Quebecoise Plaidoyer-Victimes	Marisa Canuto
Sexual Violence New Brunswick*	Jen Richard
Avalon Sexual Assault Centre*	Jackie Stevens
PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre*	Rachael Crowder
Newfoundland & Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre*	Sandra McKellar
Yukon Status of Women Council	Aja Mason

\*Member of the Atlantic Network of Sexual Assault Centres

### Advisors to the Board:

DisAbled Women's Network of Canada

Bonnie Brayton

Sandgate Women's Shelter

Michelle Smith

### Staff:

Executive Director

Erin Whitmore

Administrative & Communications Coordinator

Katelyn Barker

# MESSAGE FROM EVA CANADA'S ED AND CO-CHAIRS

It's been a year of change and growth for EVA Canada as it continues its work to address gender-based violence in Canada, and to strengthen collaboration across regions, jurisdictions, and sectors involved in supporting survivors of gender-based violence.

With its successful receipt of Capacity-Building funding from Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) in April, 2019, the year started out with increased resources and new opportunities to further develop the organization. In particular, in September, 2019, EVA Canada hired its first staff member and Executive Director, Erin Whitmore. Following closely after hiring its Executive Director, EVA Canada secured office space in the downtown Ottawa area, and hired a second staff person in the role of Administrative and Communications Coordinator in January 2020.

EVA Canada held its first in-person strategic planning meeting in February 2020 in downtown Ottawa. The objectives of the meeting included fostering relationships between board members, and discovering a clear direction for EVA Canada moving forward including its scope, vision, mission, guiding principles, and membership criteria and roles. Members had an opportunity to get to know each other in person, and have important and foundational conversations about shaping the future of EVA Canada.

Over the course of the year, EVA Canada brought its members together virtually many times in order to share ideas, troubleshoot common challenges, and strategize on advocacy and policy initiatives. EVA Canada also worked to strengthen its relationship with other national equality-seeking organizations, and to participate in conversations about addressing gender-based violence at the national level.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, 2020 has greatly changed the landscape of anti-violence services and advocacy. With the increased risk for gender-based violence fostered under pandemic conditions, the importance of continuing to ensure that gender-based violence organizations have access to the funding and resources needed to provide services has become even more urgent. As we continue to navigate this difficult situation, EVA Canada will continue to draw attention its unique impacts on gender-based violence survivors and the organizations that support them.

Heading into the next year, EVA Canada is looking forward to continuing to strengthen its organizational structure, build and grow its relationships with other organizations and stakeholders, and contribute to a strong, collaborative movement aimed at ending gender-based violence in Canada.

Erin Whitmore, Executive Director

Tracy Porteous, Co-Chair

Deb Tomlinson, Co-Chair

# 2019-2020: YEAR IN REVIEW

## April – September 2019

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- EVA Canada receives 4-year Capacity-Building grant from Women and Gender Equality (WAGE)
- EVA Canada partners with CISSA-ACSEI and Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), on 3-year project funded by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and led by the YMCA – Halifax to support collaboration between the anti-violence and settlement sectors
- EVA Canada Board of Directors welcomes new Executive Director, Erin Whitmore, and opens office in Ottawa

## October – December 2019

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- EVA Canada ED participates in meeting of 29 national organizations at the Gender Equality Network Canada Meeting in Montreal
- EVA Canada ED participates in and moderated panel at [Humane Canada's LINK Violence Coalition Conference](#)
- EVA Canada organizes and hosts information- sharing sessions on VAW Advocate Case Review
- EVA Canada Co-Chairs speak at public events with CFL Commissioner about the EVA Canada-CFL partnership
- EVA Canada participated in the Department of Justice Policy Centre for Victim Issues Canada's [Knowledge Exchange on Responding to People with Disabilities](#), and DAWN Canada's Forum on Applying an Intersectional Human Rights Framework
- EVA Canada participates in 2-day meeting of the Gender-Based Violence Settlement Sector Strategy Project team in Toronto, Ontario to continue work on enhancing collaboration between the anti-violence and the settlement sectors









## Building Capacity for the Sexual Violence Sector

EVA Canada's current membership includes strong representation from the sexual violence sector. Over the past year, EVA Canada leveraged this membership base to begin to strengthen collaboration among organizations, networks, and service providers whose work focuses on or involves supporting sexual violence survivors and the systems that impact them.

These collaborative opportunities included multiple information sharing calls with representatives from across the country to discuss Violence Against Women Advocate Case Review (VACR); strengthening the criminal justice system's response to sexual violence; advocating at the national level on the [unique needs of the sexual violence sector within the National Action Plan](#), and foregrounding the [unique impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on sexual violence services](#).

These information-sharing opportunities and advocacy initiatives demonstrated the usefulness and need for opportunities for those working in the sexual violence sector to come together to identify common challenges, build a community of practice, and coordinate advocacy and action efforts in ways that recognize the similarities across regions and jurisdictions while also attending the distinct realities and experiences of survivors and the organizations that serve them in all their diversity.



## Gender-Based Violence Settlement Sector Strategy Project

EVA Canada's partnership with YMCA Halifax, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), and CISSA-ACSEI under the IRCC-funded Gender-Based Violence Settlement Sector Strategy Project Project was strengthened over the past year through its participation in the project activities and milestones.

Over the past year, the project team conducted a [needs assessment and environmental scan](#) on promising practices in the GBV and Settlement sectors on supporting immigrant, refugee, and newcomer survivors of GBV; conducted interviews with key stakeholders; and produced a [research bulletin](#) for the anti-violence and settlement sectors. In addition, EVA Canada Executive Director, Erin Whitmore, and EVA Canada Co-Chair, Deb Tomlinson, and EVA-BC representative, Ninu Kang participated in a 2-day meeting in Toronto to begin preliminary work on a National Strategy for GBV for the Settlement Project

More information about the project and the resources it is developing are available on the [project website](#). This website will continue to be developed over the course of the project.





## COVID-19 and Gender-Based Violence Services and Survivors

At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March, 2020, EVA Canada staff closed its office Ottawa and began working from home. The COVID-19 pandemic had an immediate and significant impact on EVA Canada's member organizations, and anti-violence services in general. Many of the measures put in place to manage the spread of the pandemic, such as isolating at home and office, business, and school closures, and the added stress and economic precarity that accompanied these closures, created conditions for increased violence. They also created challenges for those experiencing violence to seek services.

Shortly after the start of the pandemic, EVA Canada hosted weekly video calls with its members to discuss the challenges they were facing as organizations and to facilitate information sharing amongst organizations. In particular, our discussions focused on the impacts of the pandemic on sexual violence services and survivors, and the need for [additional funding to this part of the sector](#).

Efforts to support the anti-violence sector over the course of the pandemic are ongoing.

EVA Canada would like to thank its funders for providing the support necessary for us to continue the work of ending gender-based violence in Canada.



Women and Gender  
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité  
des genres Canada



Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship Canada  
Immigration, Réfugiés  
et Citoyenneté Canada



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