

AGING WITHOUT VIOLENCE

In 2018 the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH) received funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, through Ontario's Senior Strategy, to lead a 4-year training and resource project focused on ending violence against older women in Ontario (Jan 2019-March 2021).

The Aging without Violence (AWV) project is guided by an inter-sector provincial advisory including stakeholders with expertise in violence against older women, public education, service provider training, research, and improved community responses.

Goals of the AWV project include:

- Showcasing existing responses, programs and research in the area of older women who've experienced violence
- Providing opportunities to connect across the VAW, health, residential care, housing sectors
- Identifying gaps in service delivery, resources,

systems and research to inform specific service provider training

Overall, the project will promote a holistic approach and an integrated response in the development of service provider training to address violence against older women in Ontario, in addition to the following principles:

- Inclusion
- Choice and Self Determination
- Diversity
- Safety and Security

The overall aim of the project is to enhance responses and advocacy efforts when supporting older women impacted by violence, in alignment with Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors.

Sources:

www.oaith.ca/oaith-work/aging-without-violence/i-provide-professional-support/vaow-handouts-and-tools.html



Aging Without Violence is sponsored by OAITH and funded by the Government of Ontario



WORD TO THE WISE
Gender-neutral terms contribute to the invisibility of violence against older women

For more information, visit www.oaith.ca

Why use the term “Violence Against Older Women?” rather than “Elder Abuse” or “Family Violence”?

By using the term **Violence Against Older Women (VAOW)** in research, policy, and practice rather than the gender neutral terms of “elder abuse” or age neutral terms of “family violence” or “violence against women” we recognize:

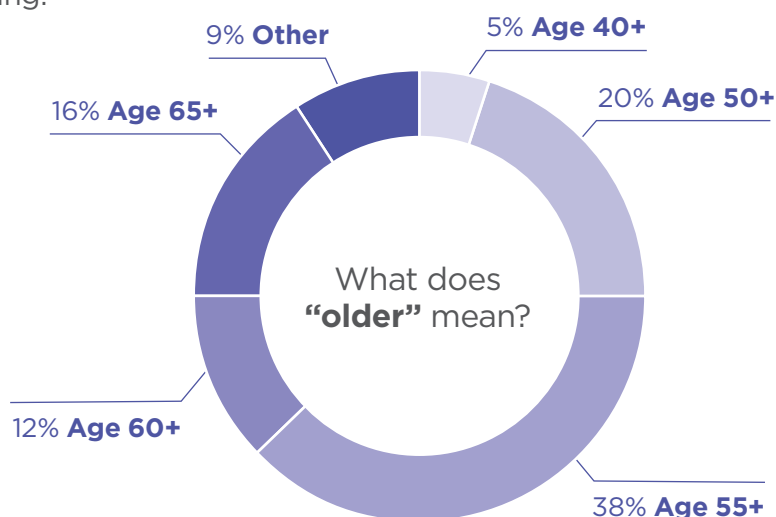
- The context of **gender** when recognizing and responding to violence against older women
- Implications of **aging** related to women’s experiences of violence
- The importance of an **intersectional approach** which considers systemic oppression including ageism, racism and sexism

Types VAOW may include: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, financial abuse, spiritual abuse, psychological/emotional/verbal abuse and stalking.

Perpetrators may include: partner, ex partner, family member, friend, professional service provider, neighbour, co-worker, acquaintance, stranger or anyone in a position of power and trust in her life.

At what age does a woman become “older?”

Although a variety of sources may identify older to include those above ages 50, 60, and 65, Aging Without Violence research indicates **55+ as the most common age** connected with the term “older”.¹



What is “wisdom” anyways? Researchers such as Dr. Dilip Jeste are expanding our understanding of what it means to be “wise” through neuroscience. Dr. Jeste and his colleagues describe wisdom as a universal concept, based in understanding rather than knowledge and measurable through neuroscience.² Common components of wisdom include: social decision making, emotional stability, pro-social behaviours (empathy, compassion), insight (self-reflection), and ability to be uncertain and see multiple perspectives while being decisive when necessary. As we age we are more likely to gain wisdom from our experiences and help develop perspectives which are rooted not only in knowledge, but a complex understanding of the world and our relationship within it.³ Aging Without Violence recognizes the vast, collective wisdom across sectors and of the older women we serve. This wisdom is an invaluable asset as we move forward in our work towards ending violence against older women.

How common is violence against older women?

Ontario has the largest percentage of older women than anywhere else in Canada and these numbers are on the rise; older adults aged 65+ are the fastest-growing age group in Ontario; it is projected by 2031 there will be 5.1 million women aged 65+ in Canada, representing **24.2% of all women nationally**.⁴

More than three-quarters of a million Canadian older adults experienced some form of abuse in 2016 including physical, sexual, psychological, financial abuse and neglect. These rates have more than **doubled since 1989**.⁵ **Older women experience rates of violence 19% higher than their male counterparts.**

Overall, 1 in 3 Canadian women will experience abuse or sexual assault in their lifetime⁶. Indigenous women and women with disabilities are at an increased risk of violence.

What is the impact of violence on an older woman?

Impacts of violence can accumulate over a woman’s life and **compound effects of violence experienced throughout the life stages**. For example, women who experience intimate partner violence are more likely to experience depression if they have a complex history of trauma beginning in childhood. Impacts of violence are also compounded by systemic oppression and intergenerational trauma (residential schools, for example) which also increases stigma leading to barriers in accessing support.

INFANCY

- » Injury
- » Difficulty with regulation of emotions
- » Attachment problems
- » Developmental and growth delays

CHILDHOOD

- » Anxiety/mood disorders
- » ADHD
- » Behavioural difficulties
- » Low self-esteem
- » Peer difficulties
- » Academic problems

ADOLESCENCE

- » Conduct disorders
- » Substance abuse
- » Suicide attempts
- » Risky behaviours (e.g. unprotected sex)
- » Eating disorders
- » Dating violence prevention

ADULTHOOD

- » Personality disorders
- » Chronic disease and pain
- » Relationship problems
- » IPV perpetration
- » Mistreatment of own children

OLD AGE

- » Depression
- » Decreased life expectancy
- » Financial problems

Content from: MacMillan, H.L. & Wathen, C.N. (2014). *Research brief: Interventions to prevent child maltreatment*.

PreVail: Preventing Violence Across the Lifespan Research Network. London, ON. —adapted from Learning Network Newsletter, Issue 16, March 2016.

1 97 Survey Respondents- Aging Without Violence Gap Analysis 2018

2 Bangen, K.J., Meeks, T.W., & Jeste, D.V. (2013). Defining and assessing wisdom: a review of the literature. *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 21 (12), 1254-1266.

3 Jeste, D. "Seeking Wisdom in Greying Matter" - TEDMED talk, November 2018. <https://www.tedmed.com/talks/show?id=526815>

4 Statistics Canada. (2016). *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*

5 Statistics Canada. (2002). *Statistical Profile: Assessing Violence Against Women*

6 Ibid.

WORD TO THE WISE

www.oaith.ca

GET THE FACTS: CONSENT

Consent means agreeing to sexual activity—for example, kissing, touching, intercourse—with another person. Consent is voluntary. In Canada, you must be 16 years old or older to Consent to sexual activity. Even if you Consent to sexual activity, you can still change your mind (decide you want to stop). Without permission (consent), it is a Sexual Assault. Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres has created a Consent Fact Sheet about “**What is Consent?**” to share with members, students or colleagues. This brief pamphlet is available in a variety of languages, including French, Arabic and Urdu. You can find it and other information on Consent at sexualassaultsupport.ca/get-the-facts-consent/



WHAT IS CONSENT?: CONSENT MEANS



SISTERS IN SPIRIT VIGILS



October 4th
Sisters in Spirit Vigils
A movement
for social change

Each year, family members, Indigenous community members, and concerned citizens gather for a vigil on **October 4** to honour the memory of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Vigils take place in many communities across Canada as well as internationally. These gatherings assist in raising awareness and providing support to families who have lost a loved one. 2019 marks the 14th year of The Sisters in Spirit (SIS) vigils. The vigils also commemorate the women, girls, communities, and families affected by this crisis by honouring their lives.

OSSTF/FEESO, along with the Canadian Labour Congress, Ontario Federation of Labour and affiliates, have been long-time supporters of the event. The October 4th Sisters in Spirit Vigils are a part of a movement for social change and the number of vigils has grown from 11 in 2006 to well over 200 vigils last year.

OSSTF/FEESO is encouraging all members to attend their local vigils to remember and demand justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) produced a document that is designed to help friends and supporters responsibly engage with addressing the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). In addition to fact sheets on MMIWG and the root causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls, the NWAC Community Resource Guide contains useful tools for getting involved and making your SIS Vigil a success. Through the guide, members can get the information they need to know about the SIS Vigils so that they can best deliver the important message of this community-based project and participate more fully. To access this resource guide click this link—[NWAC Community Resource Guide](#).

To register your vigil:
www.nwac.ca/browse/

Vigil events:
ofl.ca/event/sisters-in-spirit-vigils-for-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-and-girls-mmiwg/



FACELESS DOLLS PROJECT

“Each statistic tells a story, and so to remind everyone not to let the individual lives lost become just another number, NWAC created the Faceless Doll Project”. The Native Women's Association of Canada wanted a physical and visual reminder of all the “strong and beautiful Aboriginal women who have become faceless victims of crime. The project gave those women and girls left behind a place to grieve and share the stories of their beautiful mothers and daughters who are missing or murdered.

The Native Women's Association of Canada, announced on June 21, 2019—National Indigenous People's Day, that they had launched Phase Two of the Faceless Dolls Project “Putting a Face on Justice: From Calls for Justice to Action” in conjunction with the recently released National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The number of Indigenous women and girls that the NWAC knows have gone missing or have been murdered in Canada is one thousand one hundred and eighty one. The faceless doll project was launched in 2012.

Phase Two of the project encourages youth in our classrooms to engage and “help them connect their hearts, spirits and sense of self.” NWAC's Honouring Project bag contains a toolkit, guide, colouring book and pencils, coloured felt sheets, doll patterns and accessories to create dolls—all the materials necessary to give a face to the once faceless—a fitting tie in to the release of the National Inquiry's final report ‘Reclaiming Power and Place’. To get a faceless doll template please click on the link: www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2013_Paper_Doll_Template_Pink_Dress_girl.pdf



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AT WORK

Domestic violence (DV) is a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another with whom they have or have had an intimate relationship. It can include physical, emotional, sexual, financial, psychological and/or spiritual abuse as well

as stalking or harassment. It exists in same-sex and opposite-sex relationships and may be between people who are married, divorced, common law, separated, or dating. canadianlabour.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Web_Map_EN.pdf



#DNEWAITING

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/feminist-printable-coloring-sheets_n_58f12369e4b0bb9638e3cc8e
- www.canadianwomen.org/sexual-assault-training-provincial-territorial-judges/#newmode-embed-6074-12080
- news.trust.org/item/20190815174135-2870f/
- www.nationalreview.com/2019/09/sex-trafficking-children-sold-for-sex-are-not-criminals/
- ipolitics.ca/2019/09/03/process-nerd-could-a-collection-of-backbench-mps-really-bring-in-abortion-restrictions/
- www.gwhatchet.com/2019/09/03/diversity-and-inclusion-education-director-teaches-course-on-black-feminism/
- www.connectsavannah.com/savannah/armstrongs-feminists-united-begin-period-pantry/Content?oid=13210645
- www.thecrimson.com/article/2018/1/24/gao-identity-politics/

COMING SOON:
Status of Women regional

November 8-9, 2019

Delta Hotel, Thunder Bay!

Watch for more information soon.