

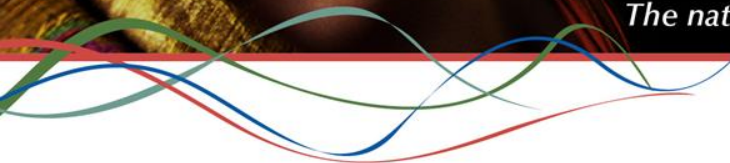


NATIVE WOMEN'S
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
L'ASSOCIATION DES FEMMES
AUTOCHTONES DU CANADA

Violence Against Aboriginal Women:



The national voice of Aboriginal women in Canada since 1974.



Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls: Exploring Challenges Creating Solutions



Edmonton, December 2, 2015

Dawn Lavell-Harvard, PhD.





We remember that a beautiful Aboriginal woman or girl is represented by every number shared, that each statistic tells a story. Over 1181 missing or murdered.



Experiences of Violence

- Aboriginal women are 8 times more likely to be killed than non-Aboriginal women.
- Rates of spousal assault are more than 3 times higher than non-Aboriginal women. (Spouse is not necessarily Aboriginal).
- More severe and potentially life-threatening forms of spousal violence (54% versus 37% of non-Aboriginal women).
- More likely to be the victim of a serial killer.

The Most Vulnerable Members of Canadian Society.

- More likely to experience poverty, child welfare involvement, homelessness, domestic violence, sexual violence, racism, gender discrimination, incarceration...



The Roots: Gendered Racism

Historically, Aboriginal women commanded the highest respect, and had significant authority in their communities. But then....

Colonial laws and policies were developed targeting the threat of “empowered Aboriginal women.”

Demeaning and demoralizing portrayals became the identity of the Aboriginal woman in Canada





Over 40% of Aboriginal women live in poverty – and more than half of all Aboriginal children.



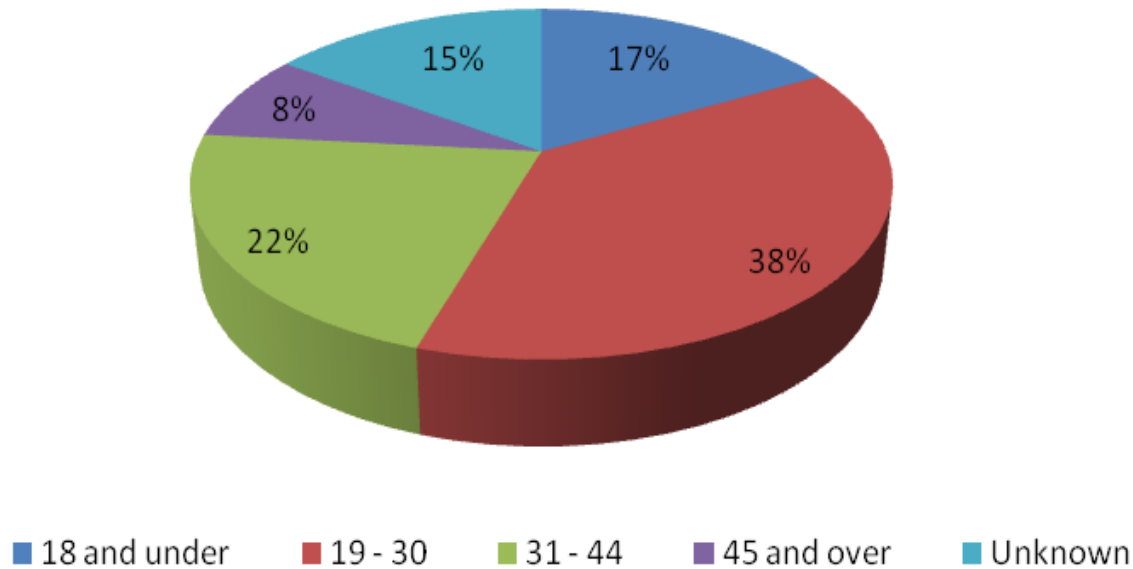
Majority of Urban Aboriginal Families Lead by Single Mothers.

- Larger families - more than one third have more than 3 children per household.
- ***71% of Aboriginal single-parent households live off-reserve. Over 80% of those households are headed by single female parents***
- More than half of all female single-parent households live in core housing need



Majority of Cases Involve Young Women

Figure 5: Age of Woman at Disappearance or Death



Child Welfare Apprehensions

Estimated that 30-40% of children in care are Aboriginal and as high as 70 or 80% in some provinces.

More children now in care than were in the residential schools



Aboriginal children less likely to come into care for physical or sexual abuse but twice as likely to be apprehended for neglect.



Link to Sex Trafficking...

- Previous child welfare involvement cited as most common factor among girls who entered the sex trade.
- The cycle continues.....



Native Canadian women sold on U.S. ships: Report says First Nations women from Thunder Bay trafficked in sex trade in Minnesota.

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Aug 21, 2013



Community-Based Solutions

- “We need programs to reduce school dropout rates and develop economic opportunities in Aboriginal communities; raise public awareness of human trafficking for Aboriginal leaders, government officials, and the public; and support and strengthen Aboriginal family and community networks, such as survivor-led shelters, transition programs and specialized services for Aboriginal women and children vulnerable to trafficking.” (Barrett, 2010, p. iii)



What Have We Learned?

- “We are all treaty people” – educate yourself.
- Need to continue to improve the socio-economic outcomes for Aboriginal women and families.
- Policy MUST be informed by evidence and by those that are impacted by it.
- We can’t do it alone – to make this a priority for government we need all allies, partners, to work together
- Leadership at all levels of Government needs to speak out.
- Men must take a stand and be part of the solution.
- Urgent need for a National Public Inquiry **and** implementation of a comprehensive Plan of Action

Why support a National Public Inquiry?

- A National Public Inquiry would enable the federal government—and, if it was constituted as a joint inquiry, then also the provincial and territorial governments—to conduct a comprehensive national investigation into violence against Aboriginal women and girls in Canada.
- A National Public Inquiry would support a comprehensive investigation that considers the overlapping responsibilities of all levels of government. It is hoped that this would provide an independent, unbiased and public review that addresses the crisis of confidence felt in the Aboriginal communities in relation to government responses to violence against Aboriginal women and girls.
- It could increase public awareness of this human rights crisis in terms of its lack of safety and protection of Aboriginal women in Canada and provide assurance to Aboriginal Peoples that all levels of government recognize the severity of the issue and are committed to ending these cycles of violence.



Change begins with one step...



*Merci
Chi-Miigwetch
Nia:wen Ko wa
Thank you*

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