



Canadian Network of Women's  
Shelters & Transition Houses

Réseau canadien des maisons  
d'hébergement pour femmes

**Family Violence Does Not Happen in a Vacuum - New Report Fails to Contextualise the Violence within our Society where Gender Inequality Remains Prevalent**

Ottawa, October 21, 2016

The Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses commends the Chief Public Health Officer's Report issued today on family violence in Canada. It is a societal issue of concern to everyone. As the report indicates, everyone is responsible for stopping it.

The impact of family violence in Canada is the harsh daily reality for the more than 500 shelters across the country. What brings women to our shelters is their urgent need for safety. Every six days a woman in Canada is killed by an intimate partner.

The report has rightly documented the extent of family violence and its widespread impact. Although it does note that women, indigenous people and people with disabilities are especially at risk, it does not provide an indication of the significant differential impacts of domestic violence in terms of level of severity, frequency and lethality.

"Our main concern with the report is that it appears to be gender neutral on many levels. The report does not make the link between gender inequality and domestic violence. It fails to acknowledge the current societal context which is far too often misogynistic" said Lise Martin, Executive Director of the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses.

Having domestic violence recognized as a public health issue is important. Looking to the determinants of health, namely those linked to poverty and housing is key to addressing domestic violence and violence against women.

We have a unique opportunity to bring about meaningful change to this serious public health issue. The government is currently developing a National Housing Strategy, a Poverty Reduction Strategy and a Gender Based Violence Strategy. "I cannot overstate the importance of having these strategies build on one another with coordinated policies. And of course, they must be backed up by financial resources" said Lise Martin.

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The Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses is a network of 13 provincial and territorial shelter networks representing. It works as a unified voice to collaborate, educate, and innovate for systemic change that ends violence against women.

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