

Written Brief to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women
for the Study on Intimate Partner and Domestic Violence in Canada
From
The Alliance of Canadian Research Centres on Gender-Based Violence

March 16th, 2022

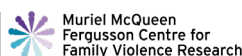
FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children
The Tri-Prairie Research & Education for Solutions to Violence (RESOLVE)
the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC),
Recherches Appliquées et Interdisciplinaires sur les Violences intimes, familiales et structurelles
(RAIV)
Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research (MMFC)



The Alliance of Canadian Research Centres on Gender-Based Violence recommends that the Government of Canada bolster its commitment and support for action-oriented research and educational initiatives intended to address domestic and intimate partner violence (D/IPV). Further, the Alliance recommends that the Canadian Government support the establishment and infrastructure of a new centre of research in Northern Canada. The goal of this centre would be to support and enhance action-oriented Indigenous research and education focused on addressing D/IPV in underserved Northern communities.

On December 6, 1989, a gunman shocked the nation by murdering 14 young women and wounding 14 more at École Polytechnique de Montreal. After that horrific episode in Canada's history, which came to be known as the 'Montréal Massacre', the federal government made a \$3 million investment through the Ministry of Health in partnership with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to address public policy, education, legislation and applied research on violence against women and children. In 1991, this resulted in the development of five sister centres of excellence in research and education on violence against women and, more broadly, gender-based violence. From western to eastern Canada these centres include: FREDA Centre for Research on Gender-based Violence Against Women and Children, Simon Fraser University; the Tri-Prairie Research & Education for Solutions to Violence (RESOLVE), Universities of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Calgary; the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC), University of Western Ontario; Centre de recherche interdisciplinaire sur la violence familiale et la violence faite aux femmes (CRI-VIFF), Université Laval (UL) and Université de Montreal, which was renamed Recherches Appliquées et Interdisciplinaires sur les Violences intimes, familiales et structurelles (RAIV) in 2020; and the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research (MMFC), University of New Brunswick. Over the next 30 years, the centres have conducted more than 400 studies, many employing community-based research methods, raised nearly \$50 million dollars in research funding and trained nearly 2,000 scholars to conduct studies into gender-based violence. This important work has engendered knowledge, social and institutional change, and action across Canada and the globe.

However, as Canada continues to navigate COVID-19 it has become increasingly clear that this work is far from complete. Greater attention to the shadow pandemic of domestic and intimate partner violence is essential. Further, there is a need to increase the scope and reach of this network to ensure that underserved communities and individuals are better supported. Whereas the work of the Alliance and the individual research centres across Canada has yielded promising work and results, there is an ever-growing need for applied and action-oriented research intended to understand, address and prevent D/IPV in the post-pandemic world. Supporting unique, accessible, and innovative research will: build knowledge of ways to assist women and girls who live in risky or unsafe situations; help service providers remove barriers that women and girls face while attempting to escape dangerous circumstances; and, contribute to a body of knowledge that will foster new strategies and novel techniques for preventing D/IPV and educating survivors and perpetrators.





The important work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (NIMMIWG) has accented that Colonial and Western perspectives have dominated most research involving and concerning Indigenous Peoples. The authors of the final report of the NIMMIWG (2019) argue that “a more equitable representation” of Indigenous perspectives (p. 85) are needed in the development of research, policies and educational programs. This notes the importance of centering “Indigenous worldviews in research frameworks, epistemologies, and research terminology” (NIMMIWG, 2019, p. 87).

The important work of the TRC and the NIMMIWG accents the need for a new, far-ranging, and serious commitment to anti-colonial methods, indigenous scholars and scholarship, and vital research infrastructure. With this in mind, we recommend that the Government of Canada make a serious pledge to establishing a new Indigenous-led centre of research in Northern Canada focused on D/IPV and gender-based violence. Centering Indigenous perspectives requires institutional transformation; transformation capable of responding to the calls for decolonizing research methodologies advocated by scores of Indigenous scholars. This transformation can be possible with the help of the Indigenous-led centre of research and can contribute to positive social change to address gender-based violence. Historically, research involving Indigenous peoples has been based on Western theories and methodologies. This has resulted in the exploitation and exclusion of Indigenous worldviews and the construction of stereotypes and narratives that have subsequently hurt Indigenous peoples. Indigenous scholars have expressed concerns that researchers trained in Western theories and methodologies tend to view all Indigenous peoples as the same, operate from an assimilation perspective, sometimes financially coerce participation in research and, fundamentally misrepresent data and communities resulting in ill-informed policies. Therefore, there is a need to create a space for Indigenous Sovereignty in research practices that will contribute to the development of constructive well-informed policies that respect Indigenous perspectives. By fostering an Indigenous research space, the research hub we propose will be well positioned to center the findings and recommendations of the report of the NIMMIWG while also augmenting vital Indigenous research in the field of D/IPV. Further, it will be well placed to enhance important action-oriented Indigenous research and education in underserved Northern communities.

Thank you for considering the recommendations of the Alliance of Canadian Research Centres on Gender-Based Violence. We look forward to reviewing and considering the findings of committee’s study on D/IPV in Canada.

Sincerely,

The Alliance of Canadian Research Centres on Gender-Based Violence

National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2019). Reclaiming power and place : the final report of the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

