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Addressing Intimate Partner Violence at the Federal Level:

A Brief to the Federal Standing Committee on the Status of Women

March 2022

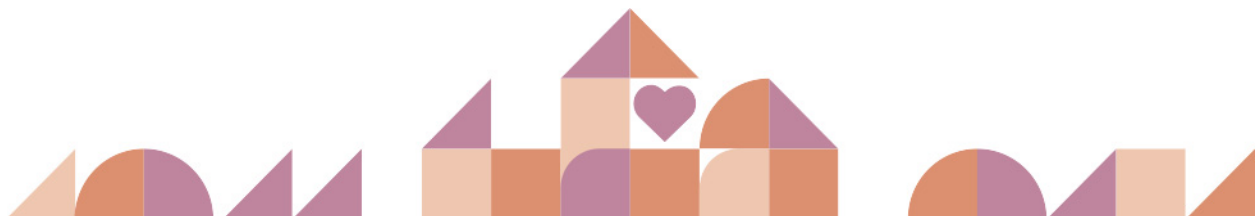
Interval House is the first centre for abused women and children in Canada. We are leaders in the campaign for women's empowerment, providing innovative, specialized services that help women survivors of intimate partner violence and their children transform their lives and break the cycle of abuse.

Interval House, with 50 years of experience, provides a continuum of services to help women and children escape violence for a better, violence-free life. We nurture families starting with crisis intervention, such as providing emergency shelter services and then addressing and supporting their re-integration into the community and the workforce through our innovative Building Economic Self-Sufficiency Program.

Based on our experience, we recommend the following strategies to the Standing Committee to address intimate partner violence in Canada:

Recommendations:

1. Enshrine Clare's Law federally - Change federal privacy laws so that disclosure of information by the police for intimate partner violence offences and violent crimes to a partner in danger for relevant members of society (medical professionals, shelter workers, etc.) is permitted. While provincial governments, like Saskatchewan, may adopt Clare's Law, the RCMP will not honour these requests for information as it is bound by federal privacy law.
2. Implement a Family Justice Centre Model federally – Safe Centre of Peel in Ontario is an example of the police and community agencies working in one location to provide services for those affected by abuse at every stage of their journey. During the 4th World Conference of Women's Shelters in Taiwan, Interval House Staff toured The Kaohsiung Juvenile and Family Court which provided space for various agencies and services most needed when leaving intimate partner violence. This model addresses the issue of access by providing a continuum of services that can improve outcomes.





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3. Subsidize cost of psychotherapy for women and children who have experienced intimate partner and domestic violence. Trauma resulting from abuse have long term effects that can manifest for years affecting the ability of women to seek employment and achieve their goals.
4. Provide funding for provinces to expand financial support for women leaving intimate partner violence situations. During the abusive relationship, financial abuse is commonly used to control women and keep them dependent. It requires money to leave an abuser and rebuild your life.
5. Mandate intimate partner violence training for police, lawyers, and judges – Increased knowledge and sensitivity about intimate partner violence and resulting trauma will inform more positive interactions that will increase abused women use of these systems.
6. Provide deportation protection for women reporting abuse - Reporting abuse should not lead to automatic deportation.
7. Provide funding for women leaving intimate partner violence to access legal services including divorce. Choosing to leave intimate partner violence will often involve child custody and divorce proceedings which require effective legal representation.
8. Implement Healthy Relationship Curriculum to children of all ages including signs of abuse and what a healthy relationship is supposed to look like.

While many recommendations may be under the purview of the provincial government or is being implemented in some areas, it is imperative that the federal government provides leadership and financial support to coordinate these efforts across Canada.

