



DisAbled Women's Network of Canada

Réseau d'action des femmes
handicapées Canada

Parliamentary Brief

Amplifying the Voices of Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+
Living with Disability: A Call for Intersectional Approach in
Implementing the Red Dress Alert

Prepared for the Standing Committee on the Status of Women
(FEWO)

Evelyn Huntjens Director of Indigenous Initiatives

DisAbled Women's Network of Canada

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ABOUT THE DISABLED WOMEN'S NETWORK (DAWN) CANADA

The DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN)

Canada is a feminist cross-disability human rights organization that works to address systems of oppression. We focus on addressing issues of disability and through our four pillars of research, education, policy and advocacy. We amplify the voices of women across the gender spectrum through an intersectional lens.

DAWN's mandate to end the poverty, isolation, discrimination and violence experienced by Canadian women with disabilities and Deaf women and promote the advancement and inclusion of women and girls with disabilities and Deaf women by creating change at a systemic level.

Contact:

469, Jean Talon W. #215
Montréal (Quebec)
H3N 1R4

Telephone: (514) 396-0009
Fax: (514) 396-6585
Toll free (Canada): 1-866-396-0074

Email: admin@dawncanada.net
Web: www.dawncanada.net

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Introduction:

DAWN Canada is putting recommendations forward on the ways to operate, administer and control the implementation of an alert system with the aim to and take action on the ongoing violence towards Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons. DAWN Canada commends the action being taken by the government to consult on such an incredibly important initiative. This brief aims to shed light on the intersectional challenges faced by Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons living with disability, emphasizing the urgent need for a comprehensive and an inclusive approach in implementing the Red Dress Alert system. Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons living with disability encapsulates the intersectionality of multiple marginalized identities. They also encounter compounded discrimination, hindering their access to resources and services and perpetuating disproportionate levels of vulnerability and marginalization. DAWN Canada advocates for the recognition of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons living with disability within this framework, emphasizing the imperative to address intersecting forms of discrimination and vulnerability.

Addressing Root Causes: The intersection of gender, ethnicity, and disability amplifies existing discrimination against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons with disabilities, stemming from colonization, gender-based violence, and ableism. This triple intersection leads to high rates of school abandonment, unemployment, poverty, incarceration, illness, and even death. Interconnected issues such as poverty, violence, and health inequities contribute to the vulnerabilities experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons, particularly those with disabilities. Contributing factors include systemic barriers in accessing healthcare, education, employment, and justice systems. The current justice systems in Canada often disregard the distinct needs and vulnerabilities of this marginalized group, perpetuating systemic invisibility and neglect. Additionally, prevalent biases and stereotypes exacerbate marginalization, impeding their ability to seek protection and support.

Empowerment and Inclusion: Empowering Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons living with disability requires their active participation in decision-making processes. They must be represented at all levels of policymaking and service provision to ensure their needs are adequately addressed. Culturally sensitive approaches and inclusive support services are imperative to mitigate the unique challenges faced by this marginalized group. Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons living with disability must actively partake in all aspect of implementing and administering this alert system. Their lived experience needs to be grounded in the work that needs to be done to make this initiative a reality, allowing for leadership opportunities.

Recommendations for Inclusive Implementation: **Accessibility Standards:** Enforce accessibility standards to ensure the Red Dress Alert system accommodates diverse disabilities. This encompasses alternative communication formats, physical accessibility measures, and culturally competent support services.

Cultural Competency Training: Provide cultural competency training for emergency responders and service providers to sensitively address the specific needs of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons living with disability.

Indigenous Gender Based Analysis Plus: Implement IGBA+ throughout all aspects of the development and implementation of the Red Dress Alert system.

Community Engagement: Prioritize community engagement initiatives that center the voices and experiences of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons living with disability in developing and implementing the Red Dress Alert system.

Intersecting Data Collection: Integrate data collection mechanisms recognizing intersecting identities (disability status, Indigenous identity, gender, and sexual orientation) for accurate representation and targeted responses.

Collaborative Partnerships: Foster partnerships among Indigenous organizations, disability advocacy groups, and government agencies to co-create and effectively implement the Red Dress Alert system.

Conclusion:

Adopting an intersectional framework is crucial in acknowledging the diverse experiences and needs of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons particularly those living with disabilities, within the Red Dress Alert system. By acknowledging intersecting challenges and adopting inclusive approaches, we can strive towards a more equitable and effective response to the crisis of missing Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons. It is imperative to prioritize the safety, rights, and empowerment of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons living with disability, ensuring their full inclusion and participation in all aspects of society. By centering intersectionality in policy and practice, we can advance towards a more inclusive and effective alert system, leaving no one behind.

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