



CANADIAN COUNSELLING AND
PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE
COUNSELING ET DE PSYCHOTHÉRAPIE

Canada's Counsellors and Psychotherapists acknowledge National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

OTTAWA (December 6, 2013) Today, the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) acknowledges and recognizes the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada.

This special day was established in 1991 by the Parliament of Canada, marking the anniversary of the murders in 1989 of 14 young women at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal.

“As counsellors and psychotherapists, we note this day as an opportunity to honour these 14 young women who tragically lost their lives as a result of gender-based violence,” said CCPA President Blythe Shepard. “This day also provides an opportunity for us to collaborate and explore ways we can all work together to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.”

According to Statistics Canada, half of all Canadian women have experienced physical or sexual violence; 66% of these women who faced sexual violence are under the age of twenty-four (11% are under the age of eleven). The rates of violent crime against women aged 15 to 24 is 42% higher than rates for women aged 25 to 34, and nearly double the rates for women aged 35 to 44. Women aged 15 to 24 are killed at nearly three times the rate for all female victims of domestic homicide. Often unnoticed in these statistics are the 60% of children who experience abuse and the 80% of children who witness the abuse. A conservative estimate is that between two and six children in each school classroom have witnessed some form of abuse in the home in the past year. With these unfortunate occurrences come the potential for devastating psychological effects.

Victims of violence and witnesses of that violence often experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including fear, anxiety, irritability, difficulty concentrating, intrusive memories of the abuse, anger outbursts and hyperarousal. Sometimes these feelings are accompanied by unexplainable aches and pains.

Often, women and girls who have experienced or witnessed physical or sexual violence feel that they have no effective way of changing the problem, expressing the issues, or seeking help. CCPA would like to remind all Canadians that talking can help. Counselling and psychotherapy services offer a safe, supportive environment to talk about the situation, to help improve safety by creating a protection plan and by connecting people to appropriate community resources through referral, advocacy and coordination.

“Breaking the silence around threats, violence, and abuse is the first step to healing.” added Shepard. “CCPA would like to ensure that all Canadians have access to timely, qualified, and effective support to stop the cycle of violence. Processing the traumatic memories in a safe and nurturing environment, getting assistance with coping strategies around trauma symptoms and learning that there are alternatives to violence are part of a confidential dialogue related to violence. Qualified counsellors and psychotherapists can make a positive difference in the lives of those affected by threats, violence, intimidation, and harassment both as independent professionals and as part of support teams and referral agents.”

CCPA strongly encourages anyone who may be experiencing threats, domestic violence, or abuse, or who knows someone who has mentioned personal safety issues, to seek immediate support. Talk to a trusted friend, dial 911, a crisis centre, a local police, or a health facility. Do not stay silent. If you are looking for therapeutic support, go to www.ccpa-accp.ca, where you can search for a Canadian Certified Counsellor in your region. Members of the public can also find authoritative information about the profession of counselling and psychotherapy by visiting CCPA’s new public website, www.talkingcanhelp.ca.

CCPA remains dedicated to the enhancement of the counselling and psychotherapy profession in Canada and advocates for accessible, effective, professional mental health supports, particularly for those who are vulnerable or oppressed. As a national bilingual association of professionally trained counsellors and psychotherapists engaged in the helping professions, CCPA has over 5,000 members who work in diverse areas such as education, employment and career development, social work, business, industry, mental health, public service agencies, government and private practice.

“Violence against women and girls affects us all,” concluded Shepard. “Today we remember the women who died and we invite all Canadians to join us and help us take action on violence against women and girls to ensure our streets, homes, and communities are safe.”

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The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) is a national bilingual association providing professional counsellors and psychotherapists with access to exclusive educational programs, certification, professional development and direct contact with professional peers and specialty groups. CCPA promotes the profession and its contribution to the mental health and well-being of all Canadians. For more information on the counselling and psychotherapy profession, please visit www.ccpa-accp.ca or www.talkingcanhelp.ca.

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