



Raising Awareness for Violence Against Women

Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association Recognizes Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

OTTAWA (December 8, 2014) On December 6th it was declared by Canada's Parliament as the [National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women](#) following the murder of 14 women at L'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal on this day 25 years ago. The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) also remembers this horrific event that has become the basis of recognizing and supporting action against widespread violence committed against women in our society.

“Counsellors and psychotherapists in our association can assist with the emotional needs and institutional challenges faced by women and children who experience family violence,” said Blythe Shepard, CCPA President. “On this day CCPA raises community awareness of the social and personal impacts of domestic violence and the supports available to those affected. It is essential that we raise community awareness of domestic violence and violence against women. As counsellors and psychotherapists, we need to ensure those who are experiencing or witnessing violence against women know how to access help and stay safe. We also need to encourage people who have used violence against women to seek support to change.”

On any given night in Canada, approximately 3,300 women along with their children will sleep in shelters to escape abuse, and regrettably about 200 women per night will be turned away due to lack of room.

Statistics Canada indicates that half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence. Although violence prevention programs are having a positive effect in reducing the rates of violence, violence against women remains a very serious issue. More worrisome is Statistics Canada's assertion that, compared to non-Aboriginal women, Aboriginal women are 3.5 times more likely to be victims of violence and eight times more likely to be killed by their intimate partner.

“Given the alarming number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women, tackling the issue of violence against Aboriginal women must be a priority. Immigrant women, too, are also more vulnerable to domestic violence and are less likely to report physical or sexual violence for fear of further victimization or even deportation” added Shepard. “And women are not the only victims. Between two and six children in each 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. Counselling and psychotherapy can assist in regaining psychological well-being.”

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.

CCPA is reminding those faced by violence of the importance of speaking about their experience. “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 access community resources through referral, advocacy and coordination,” concluded Shepard.

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, 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.

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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