

## FACT SHEET

The vision of the Prince George and District Elizabeth Fry Society is to live in a world of equality, free of violence and oppression.

In keeping with our vision, we have multiple programs that support women, men, and children who have witnessed and experienced violence, throughout northern British Columbia. As well, we strive to ensure that women are able to learn the skills needed for a better life through education and learning experiences. To support these goals, the Elizabeth Fry Society offers child care services for those attending our programs. We offer emergency shelter services and a number of long-term housing options to individuals with limited income.

Our ongoing commitment to working toward an equal and violence free future is further enhanced by our many community partnerships, as we know that no single agency can provide for all. It is only through collaboration and partnerships that we will succeed in our goals.

## DEFINING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

There are many definitions for violence against women. The Prince George and District Elizabeth Fry Society has adopted the internationally agreed upon United Nations (UN) definition. The 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines violence against women as:

*Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life [1].*

The term *women* includes all females, including girls under the age of majority.

## FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women takes place in many forms. The most common forms of violence perpetrated against women taking place throughout the world are: domestic and intimate partner violence, sexual violence (including rape), sexual harassment, and emotional/psychological violence [2]. Other common forms of violence which take place universally include: sexual exploitation, sexual trafficking, and harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), forced and child marriage [2].

There is no limit as to who may be affected by violence, though particular groups of women and girls may be more susceptible to experiencing violence. Women and girls most vulnerable are those living in cultural or racially marginalized situations, migrants, temporary residents or undocumented workers, women living with a (dis)ability or sexually transmitted disease, such as HIV/AIDS. Marginalization and exclusion increases vulnerabilities due to social isolation and related socioeconomic instabilities.

- Under-reporting remains high and masks the true extent and nature of all forms of violence against women and girls [3]

## WHAT IS INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE?

Intimate partner violence involves any form of violence – physical or emotional – committed by the partner of the victim, including partnerships between those who are legally married, separated, divorced, opposite and same sex partners, common-law, dating, or other intimate partners.

- In 2011, 8 in 10 victims of intimate partner violence were women [4]
- Both women and men are at a higher risk of intimate partner violence from a dating partner than a spouse [4]
- More than 1 in 10 victims of spousal violence were pregnant at the time of the assault [4]
- 6% of Canadian women currently or previously living in a spousal relationship experienced spousal violence in the previous five years [4]
- 53% of females who reported intimate partner violence experience ongoing, chronic violence [4]
- Domestic violence was experienced by 1.2 million Canadians from 2009 – 2013 [5]

## STATISTICS ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- About nine in ten (88%) of all sexual offences are committed by an individual known to the victim [6]
- In 2011, a greater number of women 15 years and older were victims of violent crime than men. The rate of violent crime for women in 2011, was 1,207 female victims for every 100,000 women in the population [4]
- In 2011, men were responsible for 83% of police-reported violence committed against women
  - 45% of violence was perpetrated by the woman's intimate partner (spouse or dating);
  - 27% by acquaintance or friend;
  - 16% by a stranger, and;
  - 12% by non-spousal family member [4]

- Women and men self-report spousal violence, though their experiences differ. Women are more likely to report multiple victimizations, incidents with physical injuries, and are more likely to self-report more severe forms of spousal victimization [4]
- 47% of police reported violent crimes against girls are sexual in nature [4]
- Aboriginal women have a higher likelihood of being victimized compared to non-Aboriginal women [7]
  - Aboriginal women often report more violent forms of intimate partner violence than non-Aboriginal women, such as sexual assault, being beaten or choked, or being threatened with a gun or knife [7]
- Women are accessing foodbanks at a rate of nearly 20 times the rate of average Canadians, for up to three years after leaving an abusive relationship [5]
- From 2003 – 2011, there were 147 intimate partner violence deaths in BC, with 106 females accounting for 72% of the victims [8]
- About nine in ten (88%) of all sexual offences are committed by an individual known to the victim [6]

## GANGS, YOUTH AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

There is a strong link between youth exploitation and involvement in gangs.

- Many girls and women become involved in gangs as a means to protect themselves from violence, abuse from other men in their lives, or for protection [9]
- Violence against girls under 12 years is often perpetrated by a family member, in the home [4]
- Among street-involved youth and youth in custody, gay, lesbian, and bisexual teens are more likely to be sexually exploited than heterosexual youth [9]
- More than 1 in 3 street-involved and marginalized youth have been sexually exploited [9]
- More than 1 in 5 youth were living at home when they were first sexually exploited [9]
- The peak age of police reported sexual exploitation offences is 14 years old (466 per 100,000 population) [6]
- One-third of sexual offences against children or youth are committed by another youth
- Eight in ten (81%) sexual offences against children and youth involved a male accused and a female victim [6]
- About three-quarters of youth sexual offences (74%) took place in a private residence in 2012 [6]
- In 2012, 72% of sexual offenses against children in youth were level 1 sexual assault [6]

- One-quarter (26%) of all sexual offences against children and youth reported to police in 2012 occurred in a previous year, compared to one in ten (9%) sexual violations against adults, and less than one percent of non-sexual violations against children and youth [6]

## STOPPING THE VIOLENCE

“Eradicating the problem of violence against women involves addressing the root causes of marginalization, notably sexism, racism and the ongoing pervasive effects of the colonization of Aboriginal peoples” [10].

Dispelling myths about women being helpless are research findings indicating that two-thirds of women who have experienced intimate partner violence actively seek support through informal sources, including: speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member [11]. Findings in the same study indicate that up to 39% of women sought formal support services from counsellors, physicians and nurses [11].

What to take if you want to leave:

- Driver’s Licence and other ID;
- Birth Certificate;
- Money, cheque book, debit and credit cards;
- Cellular phone or change for pay phone;
- Lease, rental agreement, house deed;
- Bank book and bank statements;
- House keys and car keys;
- Social insurance card;
- Address book and phone numbers;
- Carecard, medications, medical records;
- Marriage licence, separation and/or divorce papers;
- Child custody and access papers;
- Passport;
- Immigration papers or status card;
- Peace bonds and/or restraining orders [12]

- [1] United Nations, General Assembly, "Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women," A/RES/48/104., 1993.
- [2] United Nations, "Forms of violence against women," 2012. [Online]. Available: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/296-forms-of-violence-against-women-.html?next=297>. [Accessed December 2015].
- [3] Status of Women Canada, "Women and girls in Canada: Presentation to the social trends, policies and institutions Deputy Ministers' Policy Committee," 10 February 2015. [Online]. Available: <http://www.childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/15/09/women-and-girls-canada-presentation-social-trends-policies->. [Accessed 2015].
- [4] M. Sinha, "Measuring violence against women: Statistical trends," Juristat. Statistics Canada catalogue no. 85-002-X., 2013.
- [5] K. McInturff, "The gap in the gender gap: Violence against women in Canada," 2013. [Online]. Available: <http://www.policyalternatives.ca>. [Accessed 2015].
- [6] P. Cotter and A. Beaupre, "Police-reported sexual offences against children and youth in Canada, 2012," Juristat. Statistics Canada 85-002-x, 2014.
- [7] S. Brennan, "Violent victimization of Aboriginal women in the Canadian provinces, 2009," Juristat. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002, 2011.
- [8] British Columbia Coronors Service & Ministry of Justice, "Intimate partner violence in British Columbia, 2003-2011," 2012. [Online]. Available: <http://www.pssg.gov.bc/coronors/reports/docs/stats-domestic-violence.pdf>. [Accessed 2014].
- [9] Abbotsford Youth Commission, "Gangs, girls and sexual exploitation in British Columbia," Abbotsford, BC, 2010.
- [10] W. Oppal, "Forsaken: The report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry," Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, British Columbia, 2012.
- [11] B. Barrett, M. St. Pierre and N. Vaillancourt, "Police response to intimate partner violence in Canada: Do victim characteristics matter?," *Women & Criminal Justice*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 38-62, 2011.
- [12] BC Society of Transition Houses, "What to bring," 2010. [Online]. Available: <http://www.bcsth.ca/faq#n111>. [Accessed 2016].