



CREATING A CULTURE OF PREVENTION

How Ottawa is addressing violence
against women

September 2017

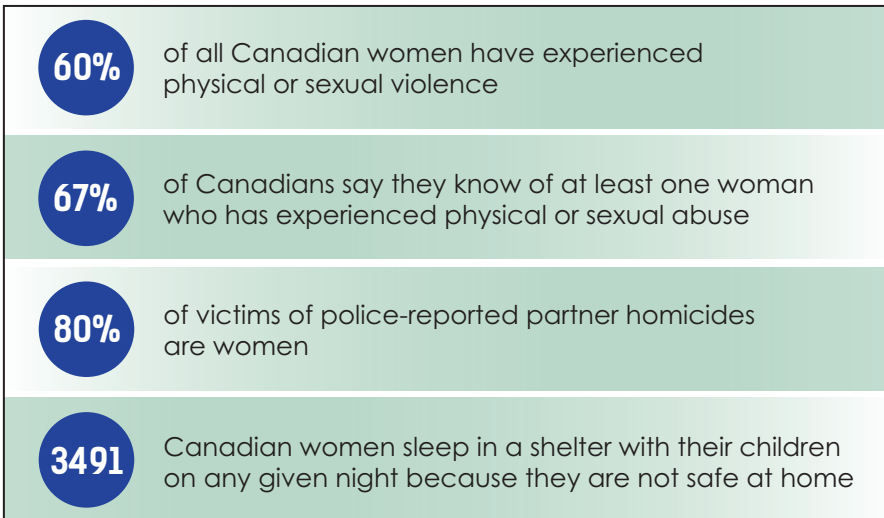
Crime Prevention Ottawa would like to acknowledge the expert guidance of the Violence Against Women Reference Group. For 10 years, the group's members—both past and present—have provided valuable expertise and insights to guide our work on current and emerging issues. Thank you for your leadership and advice.

Caroline Andrew, Larisa Silver, Holly Johnson (resigned), Michelle Mann-Rempel (resigned) and the late Lucya Spencer.

This report is dedicated to the memory of Lucya Spencer, former Executive Director and co-founder of the Immigrant Women Services Ottawa. Lucya also served as a member of the Board of Directors for Crime Prevention Ottawa. She was a tireless advocate for immigrant women and children.

Overview

This report details the collaborative efforts of Crime Prevention Ottawa and our community partners to address violence against women in the city over the past decade. It also offers case studies featuring three innovative funded projects that are helping us build a prevention culture among youth, boys and men, and community volunteers.



Source: Canadian Women's Foundation

Violence against women in Ottawa

“Violence against women represents so much more than statistics. The problem is one that happens to girls and women from all backgrounds every day—at home, at school, online and in the workplace. If we hope to address it in a meaningful way, we must continue to devote the resources, energy and ideas needed to make a difference.”

Shad Qadri, City Councillor and Chair, Crime Prevention Ottawa

For more than a decade, Crime Prevention Ottawa has focused support on violence against women as one of our three strategic priorities. Our goal? To reduce and prevent violence against women. Through collaboration with partners across the city, we are working to create a prevention culture. Together, we're making progress and seeing results.

Ottawa has become a leader in Canada through our efforts to prioritize the prevention of violence against women. We support research, awareness, capacity building, education and prevention initiatives.

Research, awareness and capacity building

Through research projects, public awareness campaigns, training and events, we serve as a critical knowledge broker for the city's residents, community leaders and service providers. Our research projects have delved deeply into important issues and trends related to violence against women, including:

- Safety issues for women and girls in public spaces
- Sexual violence and social media
- Intoxicated women and sexual assault
- Sexual violence, youth and drinking

Our Speaker Series events and conferences have also addressed violence against women in meaningful ways by introducing research, creating awareness, encouraging dialogue and building capacity.

Among the event topics covered over the years:

- Focus on Family Violence in Ottawa
- Safety and the Sex Trade
- Building Prevention: Sexual Violence, Youth and Drinking
- Women and Girls' Eyes on the Neighbourhood: Feeling Safe in Public Space
- Indigenous Missing and Murdered Women and Girls
- Violence Against Women: It's a Men's Issue
- Together We Can: Men Speak Out on Violence Against Women
- Romance Fraud
- Sexual Violence, Social Media and Youth
- Violence in Ottawa: Statistics and Stories from the Trauma Centre
- Are Any Sex Crimes Necessary?
- Violence, Gender and Disability: Deepening our Understanding
- Rising Strong: Disability, Abuse and Prevention
- Human Trafficking
- Sisters in Spirit
- Engaging Men in Family Violence Prevention
- Reaching Further: Ending Violence Against Women

We have also invested in awareness raising and education programs, including:

- I Can MANifest Change social media campaign and peer-to-peer training
- The Fourth R program on healthy relationships in Ottawa high schools
- Man Up!
- In Love and In Danger program to educate and empower youth on the issue of dating violence
- Don't be That Guy poster campaign in bars and OCTranspo buses
- Abuse of People with Disabilities brochure
- Neighbours, Friends and Family

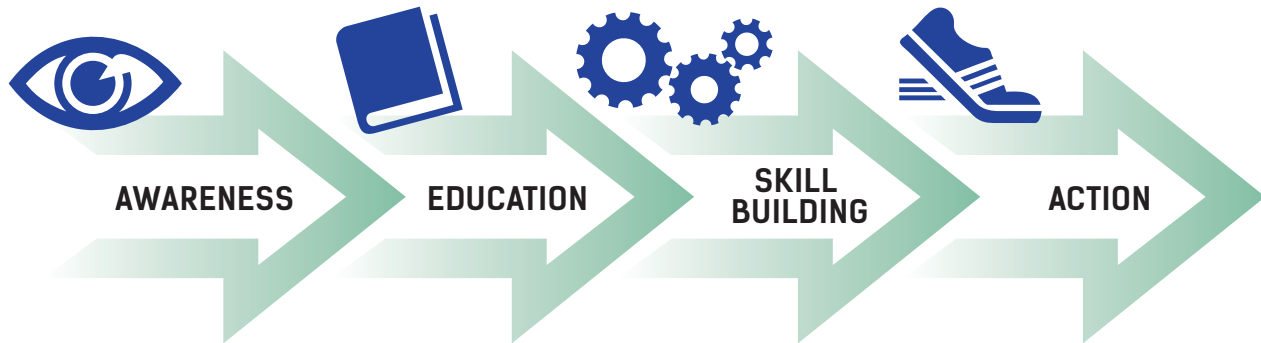
Innovative projects aimed at prevention

Our holistic and often innovative approach to addressing violence against women with our partners has garnered attention—across Canada and beyond. Schools, local governments, media and social service agencies are inquiring about our solutions.

In particular, a number of recently funded projects have earned national and international recognition for their use of current research and fresh ideas to make a real impact by:

- Engaging men and boys
- Supporting grassroots youth initiatives
- Expanding the work on gender-based violence to include festivals

Each of these projects—I Can MANifest Change, Man Up! and Project SoundCheck—is contributing to education and awareness, while also stimulating changes in behaviour.



AWARENESS – Our projects make people aware of a problem and encourage them to think about things in a new way using social media, information articles, posters and other public campaigns.

EDUCATION – We commission and share our research on violence against women and community safety issues with partners, service providers, frontline workers and neighbourhoods.

SKILL BUILDING – We invest in projects and host events on violence against women to deliver training and knowledge that teaches people what they can do to address the issues, and how to do it.

ACTION – We are seeing meaningful change as residents, community partners and service providers take the skills and information they have gained and put them into practice.

I Can MANifest Change

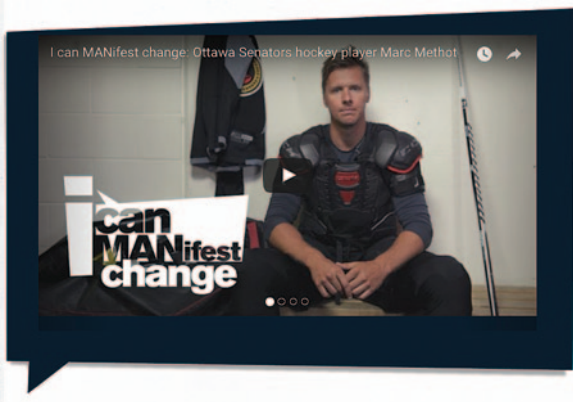
“There is a positive role for men in ending violence against women. It’s difficult and it takes time, but there is a real opportunity, and people are excited about that.”

Matt Schaaf, Project Lead, I Can MANifest Change

Led by the Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women since 2011, the project has received leadership and financial support from Crime Prevention Ottawa. It began as a series of public conversations and workshops to help men and boys build skills in preventing violence. Rather than shaming men or asking them to protect women,

the focus is on discussing the problem openly and encouraging men to be allies in a difficult situation.

In 2014, ICMC launched an innovative social media awareness campaign encouraging men to make an online pledge to help put a stop to violence against women. The Ottawa Police Service supported the campaign by creating videos featuring prominent and everyday men from Ottawa who pledged to address violence against women by taking action. The videos were widely shared on social media. The campaign



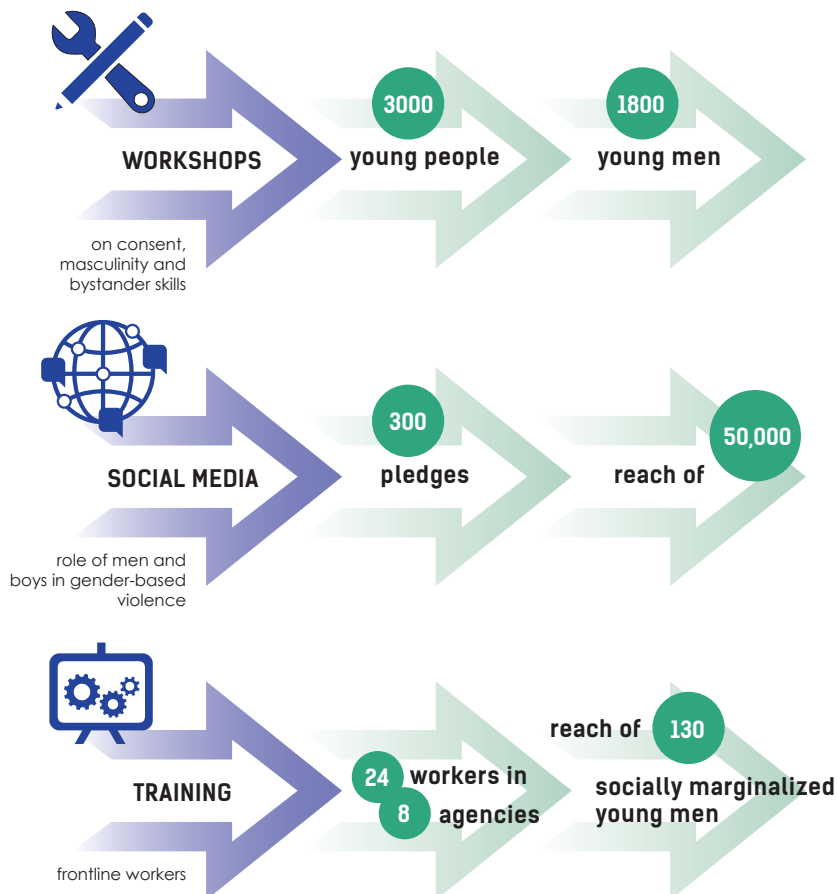
resulted in 300 pledges by men of all ages and walks of life, and received an overwhelmingly positive public response.

Through open conversations and workshops, ICMC is reaching out to sports teams, university students and a variety of sub-cultures. They approach their audiences with new information and a provocative set of questions. "Most men want to do something but they lack the skills," says Matt Schaaf, Project Lead. "ICMC encourages men to learn about healthy masculinity, challenge their assumptions and have the courage to act."

Healthy masculinity means having a positive vision of men's roles in their lives, families and communities that allow them to exercise communication skills, recognize boundaries and claim roles that make everybody stronger.

More recently, the program has extended to include train-the-trainer events with local organizations and youth-serving agencies. ICMC trainers recently provided training to staff from the Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa, who will in turn share their messages with young men in detention centres. Facilitators at Odawa Native Friendship Centre's Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin - I Am a Kind Man project have also received ICMC training to help with their work in ending violence against Indigenous women.

"I am very proud that these partners are taking ICMC work and translating it into their own organization in a way that will last for a long time," says Schaaf.



Designed by and for men in partnership with women experts in preventing gender-based violence, ICMC looks forward to creating sustainability for the project. The program plans to do so through ongoing partnerships with people of all genders and other women-led organizations to help men define their role in ending violence against women.

“We are on the leading edge of this kind of work in the province,” says Schaaf. “Not every city has this level of activity in the area of violence against women, thanks to the support of community partners and Crime Prevention Ottawa.”

Man Up!

In 2014, CPO invited a group of 10 students from Longfields-Davidson Heights Secondary School to participate in a Crime Prevention Ottawa funded Speaker Series event on violence against women. They were particularly inspired by Glen Canning's presentation. Canning is the father of Rehtaeh Parsons, a Nova Scotia teen who died following a suicide attempt. She was sexually assaulted and suffered intense bullying when images of her assault were shared online.

“It is a universal truth that humans are flawed and that no one is immune from making poor decisions. I believe the difference, however, between a man and a boy is how one learns from said mistakes and recognizes the accountability one has to his own actions by proactively being the change in one's own community.”

Alec Verch, Man Up! participant

When teachers Aaron Leach and Travis Wing saw that the boys shared a genuine interest in addressing the problem, they felt a responsibility to act. They organized a retreat to allow the boys to develop the shape and scope of the Man Up! project.

An essential part of the program is the monthly “buddy lunches,” where boys each invite a friend to participate in open conversations about a specific topic, often with guest speakers. Once the boys have learned more about the issue, they are challenged to come up with solutions they can put into action.

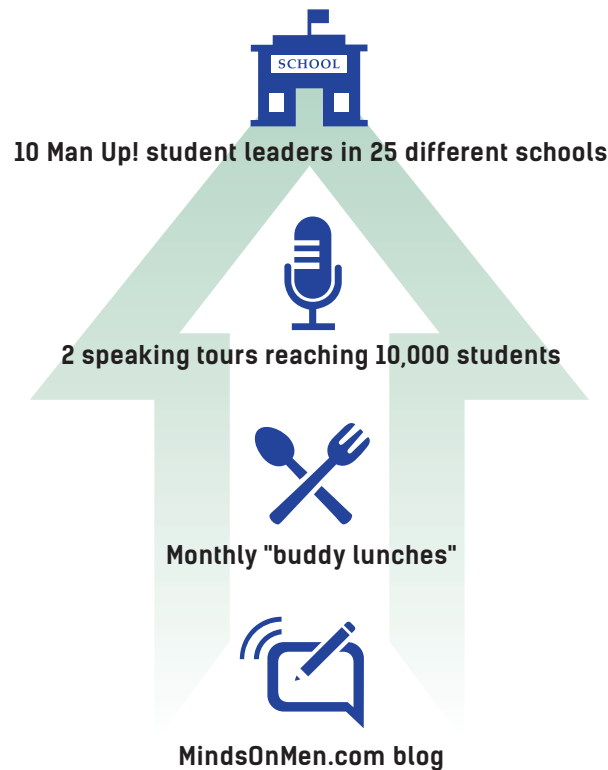
Looking to recognize the group for their efforts, Wing and Leach created a popular poster campaign to feature the boys and their personal statements throughout the school. They have also launched a blog, Minds on Men, to create a space for men to gather and share thoughts on life, leadership and stewardship in a masculine context.

The boys are getting a lot of attention elsewhere, as well. The project has expanded to 25 schools throughout Ottawa and surrounding areas. CPO funded the Man Up! speaking tours in Ottawa and Owen Sound, reaching nearly 10,000 students. The group was also invited to act as advisors to a violence against



women task force that was formed by members of the Provincial Legislature, and have received speaker requests from schools in Toronto.

Wing and Leach credit community support from partners such as CPO for helping this youth-led initiative thrive. Too often, says Leach, adults think they know best about how to address a problem, but buy-in from the kids is essential for a project like this to succeed. "These boys do this on their own. They come up with the ideas and drive what is done. As a result, they are making their school a better place for girls."



Project SoundCheck

Project SoundCheck is partnering with organizers of festival events to help prevent sexual assault and create a safe(r) and more fun environment for everyone.

The initiative, a partnership between the Sexual Assault Network and the Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW), with initial funding from Crime Prevention Ottawa and other partners, trains staff and volunteers of festivals and large events in bystander intervention.

The project was launched in 2015 in response to research by the Ottawa Hospital that reported an increase in sexual assault, particularly of young women, after large events and mass gatherings, such as New Year's Eve, Canada Day, summer festivals and music concerts.

Project SoundCheck reached 11 festivals and events in its first year and to date has provided over 10,000 volunteers and staff with bystander intervention training and materials. The project has enjoyed

natural, authentic growth each year, with the addition of safety audits in 2016 and plans to include safe(r) spaces tents, prevention messaging, messages to artists, and address all aspects of prevention.

Bystander intervention is a prevention strategy that encourages people to recognize warning signs, comments or situations that are potentially harmful and step in to stop things from progressing further.

Project Coordinator Stefanie Lomatski feels that the project has resonated with the Ottawa festival community because there is a recognition that creating a safe and fun space for all requires preventing all forms of violence.

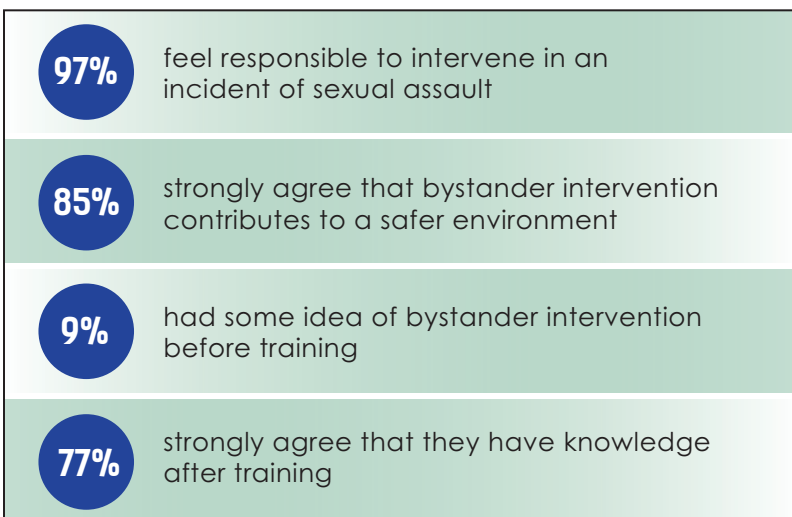
The initiative has consistently generated a great deal of media interest and has been featured on CBC Radio's q, CBC Ottawa, *Metro Ottawa*, the *Los Angeles Times*, VICE, *Noisey* and media outlets in Austria. They have been sought out by concert organizers and special events coordinators in Montreal and New Brunswick.

Lomatski says her team is energized by how community members, festivals and artists have engaged in the conversation of safe(r) spaces and sexual assault prevention, and she is thrilled to see the project going national.

"Project SoundCheck trains volunteers and staff at festivals, but these are also individuals in our community," says Lomatski. "As volunteers are trained in bystander intervention, our community is being trained in prevention."

She adds that help from partners has been key to the project's success. "OCTEVAW saw that something needed to be done, and CPO funding allowed us to do it. From the beginning, CPO has believed in our vision. This investment and perspective has made Ottawa a leader in sexual assault prevention at large events."

Project SoundCheck 2016 evaluation results



**Based on a survey of participants in the Project SoundCheck training*



Looking ahead

Since 2007, Crime Prevention Ottawa has invested \$725,000 in evidence-based research, awareness raising, education, training and capacity building projects designed to address violence against women in our city.

We know that the best way to contribute to progress on an issue as critical as violence against women is to encourage dialogue and education, and try different approaches. Our investments are yielding results.

Ottawa is fortunate to have so many groups dedicating their time and resources to dealing with this society-wide problem. As a city, we are emerging as true leaders in Canada. By involving men, empowering youth and encouraging everyone to step in, we are beginning to see real change.

Crime Prevention Ottawa remains committed to working with our partners to support this change. Together, we make a difference.

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