

# COVID-19 SUPPORT REPORT

## EMPOWERING E-NEWS AND RESOURCES FOR BC'S ANTI-VIOLENCE SECTOR

ISSUE 4: June 18, 2020



Coming to you monthly  
with tremendous thanks and gratitude  
for all the challenging work you do  
in your communities.

**REMEMBER: YOU ARE ALL HEROES.**

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**WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED**

### **We continue to respond directly to your COVID-19 needs**

EVA BC keeps working hard, both in the office and from home, to try and make your **frontline jobs more manageable** during COVID-19. Here are some of our recent and ongoing activities:

- **Smart Phones:** We have made a new deal with **Freedom Mobility** for **153 Samsung A50 phones** with 10GB of data, unlimited calling for a year, and 1 GB of data for roaming. For the additional 99 phones needed for our programs that are not covered by Freedom Mobility's catchment areas, we are pursuing other avenues. We will be in touch with all those who signed up for phones.
- **Telus Support:** In previous communications, we let you know that we had received a donation from Telus for 600 smart phones with data plans for one year. Here is the update: **Telus** has generously donated **200 smart phones with data plans** for one year for **survivors facing high-risk situations**. Telus also generously donated another 200 SIM cards. However, it turned out that the other 400 phones for frontline workers did not come with data plans. We had to respectfully decline because the one-year cost for the phone plans would have been \$192,000.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** We've shipped out PPE via Canada Post and courier, with the help of **Fairware**. Some packages started arriving on the Lower Mainland during the first week of May. Elsewhere, PPE should arrive in mid-to late June. The PPE includes 28,800 masks, 10,944 bottles of sanitizer, 6,000 pairs of gloves, and 400 face shields.
- **Ongoing Teleconferencing:** We are still working **closely with** executive directors, CBVAP staff, STV Counsellors, STV Outreach and Multicultural Outreach Workers, VAWIR/VIR and ICAT chairs, and others, serving as your communication bridge to government. We are still listening carefully to what you are saying and trying to solve the issues you raise.
- **Media Interviews:** Tracy Porteous was interviewed June 8 by **CBC Radio Victoria** and on June 14 by the **Victoria Times-Colonist** regarding the recent murder-suicide on Saltspring Island. She also made presentations to the **BC Government's**

We will keep providing as much **new content** as possible, including some of the most important links from our website. Let us know what you'd like to see here. Share your own news, tips, and inspirational COVID-19 stories. Send your comments or content to [conn@endingviolence.org](mailto:conn@endingviolence.org).

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## **EVA BC receives \$10 million for Sexual Assault Response services across the province**

The BC Government has named the Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC) administrator of a **new \$10 million grant program** designed to provide coordinated emergency response services for emergency sexual assault response.

**Public Safety Minister Mike Farnworth** announced May 26 that over the next three years, EVA BC will work in partnership with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, the Minister of Finance's Gender Equity Office, and the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women.

EVA BC will support a grant process to fund emergency response for survivors of sexualized violence, including in Indigenous communities.

We will work with the **Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Final Report's Call for Justice**, which calls for Indigenous-led solutions and services, as well as the calls from the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)* and the *Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples*. All of the recommendations contained in these important reports and historic agreements recognize the historical, cultural, and colonialist barriers that have repeatedly denied Indigenous organizations equal access to government grant funds and culturally appropriate services.

**Elsa Berland, EVA BC's Indigenous Services Program Manager**, will lead the EVA BC team in creating a model that will make the grant application process as accessible as possible, towards ensuring **an equitable flow of funds to Indigenous communities**. We are committed to supporting the creation of space and resources for Indigenous people to exercise their right to self-determination in addressing sexual violence in a way that is culturally relevant and meaningful.

See [media stories](#) on EVA BC website

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## **A CARING COMMUNITY**

### **VGH Anesthesiology allies give to EVA BC during COVID-19**

In late April, **Dr. Bevan Hughes**, an Anesthesiologist at **Vancouver General Hospital (VGH)**, discussed with his partner how he could give back meaningfully, from his heart, to those left most vulnerable by COVID-19. Later in May, **Tatiana Buba**, his partner, told him about the increased rate of gender-based violence during the pandemic. Bevan felt compelled to act and immediately approached his colleagues in the **Anesthesiology Department**. Since much of the COVID-19 response has focussed largely on emergency medical needs, they wanted to choose longer-term, sustainable support for survivors. They decided to support the partnership between the **BC Women's Health Foundation (BCWHF)** and EVA BC.

Within two days, VGH Anesthesiology raised **\$8,000 to donate to EVA BC** – and that amount rose to \$23,000 by late May, standing at \$50,000 by June 10. This collective contribution inspired the **BCWHF Board of Directors** to match their gift and "double the impact." Currently, the total is more than \$100,000, and this number is growing daily.

"I'm still a little bit stunned at how quickly and positively this all came together," said

Tatiana, Senior Director of Communications at the BCWHF. "Ally to ally. Frontline worker to frontline worker. The best of humanity in a very difficult time for most people."

Currently, the BCWHF is striving to raise \$600,000 for EVA BC, which includes the monies raised by the Anesthesiology Department. As part of the Foundation's fundraising drive, they've designed a **personal, protective mask** with an original graphic and the **logos of both EVA BC and BCWHF** (see Fundraising Focus story below).

We would like to extend **tremendous thanks** to Bevan, Tatiana, the Department of Anesthesiology at VGH, Christie Buono of the BCWHF, and its Board of Directors for their generous efforts on behalf of us and our province-wide anti-violence workers.

"Know that you and your team and the women that you serve are supported," Tatiana said in an email to **Tracy Porteous**, EVA BC Executive Director. "I know we are all grateful here at the Foundation for our **partnership with EVA BC**."

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### **UFCW Local 1518 donates \$20,000 to EVA BC for PPE**

Local 1518 of the **United Food and Commercial Workers** (UFCW) has generously donated \$20,000 to EVA BC to help us purchase and distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) to anti-violence workers across the province to help keep front line workers safe during the pandemic.

"We'd like to thank UFCW Local 1518 for this tremendous donation and acknowledge them as a **community ally** during COVID-19," says EVA BC Executive Director **Tracy Porteous**. "The PPE that we purchased and will distribute as a result of this donation will make a huge difference in helping frontline workers stay safe as they support victims and survivors."

"We are very proud to make this donation to the Ending Violence Association," said **Kim Novak**, UFCW Local 1518 President. "EVA BC has made an incredible difference in the lives of survivors of sexual assault, relationship violence, child abuse, and criminal harassment. Their landmark work on preventing violence and abuse is more important than ever as reports of domestic violence have increased exponentially through the COVID-19 pandemic, and people in abusive situations need help now."

See website [media release](#)

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### **Be More Than a Bystander receives donation from Ventana Construction**

Our **Be More Than a Bystander** (BMTAB) program just got a big boost, thanks to an \$8,000 donation from **Ventana Construction Corporation** of Burnaby. This money will go towards Bystander training and public service announcements that carry the BMTAB message. "You do great work and we are glad to be able to contribute," said Carl Anderson, Chair of their Charity Committee.

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## **UPDATES FOR ANTI-VIOLENCE WORKERS**

### **For Phase 3 return to work, know WorkSafe BC rules**

If your organization has decided to **reopen its office** during phase 3 of COVID-19 restrictions, you will undoubtedly have questions and concerns regarding related safety issues. **What will a return to work look like** for you and your colleagues?

Be aware that there must be a **written COVID-19 Safety Plan** posted on the premises and available by request from WorkSafe BC. **WorkSafe BC** offers a [template/guide](#) for a Safety Plan and provides ongoing [updates](#) regarding its pandemic activities and responsibilities. You can find other related forms and resources at [this link](#).

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## THE PANDEMIC IN OUR PROVINCE

### Free COVID-19 Town Hall and support for Indigenous People

The **BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres** provides many COVID-19 resources that address sources of financial and emergency support and mental health and wellness for Indigenous people across the province. This includes **free emotional and cultural support online** and over the phone:

Carrier Sekani Family Services Call: 250-567-2900 and ask for an ARP Team  
Kackaamin Family Development Centre Call: 250-723-7789 or Toll-free: 1-833-205-6946  
Namgis Treatment Centre Call: 250-974-8015  
Nenqayni Wellness Centre Call: 250-989-0301  
North Wind Wellness Centre Call: 250-843-6977 or Toll-free: 1-888-698-4333  
Telmexw Awtexw (Sts'ailes First Nations) Call: 604-796-9829  
Tsow Tun Le Lum Call: 250-268-2463 or Toll-free: 1-888-590-3123  
Wilp Si'Satxw Healing Centre Call: 778-202-0162 or 778-202-1349

A **virtual Town Hall** with the **First Nations Health Managers Association** provides a weekly Q&A with Indigenous medical representatives and is offered every Thursday at 10 am Pacific time. They will take questions by email and answer them live during a weekly broadcast with various speakers. Email [FNHMA@ihtoday.ca](mailto:FNHMA@ihtoday.ca) with your questions.

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### Respect for Indigenous sovereignty vital during pandemic, says Grand Chief Stewart Philip

On **Amnesty International (Canada)**'s new website section [Building Immunity in Community](#), **Grand Chief Stewart Philip** of the **Union of BC Indian Chiefs** shares this [message of unity](#): "In a time where **social distancing and isolation** threatens to erect new barriers premised upon discrimination, social class, and privilege, we must not allow this to create disconnection and apathy. Just as the world assembles each day to cheer on the global healthcare community in a show of unbridled concord, **we must continue uplifting and supporting one another.**"

Amnesty International created this **interactive web page** last month to feature different **Indigenous communities**, their worries, and solutions they have formed in facing COVID-19. You can click on points on a **global map**, watch short videos, and read stories directly from Indigenous communities. The Chief's comments appeared under Vancouver, BC on the interactive map.

The website states: "[I]n a time of crisis and pandemic, **recognition of and respect for the sovereignty of an Indigenous nation** is paramount to ensuring the well-being of a people."

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### - Race-based data on COVID-19 patients not available in BC or Canada

British Columbia is not tracking information on the **race or ethnicity of COVID-19 patients**, although this issue has prompted a lot of discussion, says Provincial Health Officer **Dr. Bonnie Henry**. Instead, the Province gathers data on whether patients self-identify as Indigenous for all communicable diseases, including COVID-19.

In Ontario, public health departments in Ottawa and Toronto have announced that they have begun gathering and compiling race-based data on the effect of COVID-19 in their respective cities.

Canada has not done this, unlike the United States. Public health officials south of the border have revealed that **the virus disproportionately affects BIPOC communities**.

For example, the Associated Press has found that Black people in the US comprise **42 per cent of COVID-19-related deaths**, which is double their share of the population. Contributing factors included health disparities, a higher chance of working frontline jobs, less access to health care, and the greater likelihood of living in crowded, denser neighbourhoods.

See [Global News story](#)

See [CBC story](#)

See [CTV story](#)

See [AP News story](#)

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## GOVERNMENT ROUND-UP

### **MMIWG Action Plan, scheduled for release this month, delayed**

The Canadian government announced in late May that because of COVID-19, it would not release a scheduled **Action Plan** this month, based on the final report from the National Inquiry into **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls** (MMIWG).

**Lorraine Whitman**, president of the **Native Women's Association of Canada**, said, "They're using the pandemic as an excuse. We're in crisis as Indigenous women — the crisis of COVID and the crisis of violence — and they're both inseparable."

Whitman reinforced that during the current pandemic, **Indigenous women in Canada**, who are already two-and-a-half times more likely to experience gender-based violence, continue to be **at greater risk while isolated at home**.

See [TVO story](#)

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## COVID-19 BEYOND BC

### **Feminist magazine *Herizons* offers free spring issue during pandemic**

Since so many women's spaces and bookstores are closed during COVID-19, the feminist quarterly magazine ***Herizons***, based in Winnipeg, MB, has opted to offer its spring 2020 issue as a **free download**. Check out its cover story "Combing Through Black Beauty Culture" and articles such as "Response to COVID-19 Must Address Climate Crisis"; "How Kenyan Girls Changed Their World"; "Needs of Young Women With Disabilities Overlooked"; "Indigenous Film Captures Resistance to Racism"; and "Truth and Wreckonconciliation."

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### **EVA Canada survey examines impact of COVID on GBV workers**

What impact does the COVID-19 pandemic have on gender-based violence service providers and volunteers across the country?

That's what a survey from the **Ending Violence Association of Canada** and **Anova**, an Ontario-based sexual and domestic violence organization, is trying to find out. They're hoping to use the data received to **better inform advocacy efforts** on issues related to gender-based violence.

You can complete the survey in either [English](#) or [French](#). Feel free to circulate it among your networks by email, pinning a tweet on EVA Canada's [Twitter](#) feed or by posting it on your own social media. EVA Canada offers help with the latter in their [social media package](#).

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### **Federal Victims of Crime Ombudsperson meets Indigenous Advisory**

## Circle member in Yellowknife

When **Heidi Illingworth**, Canada's Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, recently made her first visit to the **Northwest Territories**, she sought feedback from **Indigenous frontline workers**.

**Jaylene Buggins** in Yellowknife told her that her own sexual assault trial was temporarily halted to enquire about the well-being of a male juror. "He was just bored," she said. To Buggins, this exchange represented a **gap in the territorial justice system**.

Buggins is a member of the first **Indigenous Advisory Circle** working with the office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime. **Elsa Berland**, EVA BC's Indigenous Services Program Manager, is also a member. This **watchdog group** strives to hold the Federal Government accountable in its responsibilities towards victims of crime. Illingworth will meet with the Advisory Circle in July.

See the [APTN National News](#) story

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## STAY AWARE WITH WEBINARS

### Spiritual Activism 101 addresses race-related wounds

Are you looking for a compelling way to contribute to **lasting, effective racial justice**?

Check out the 90-minute webinar **Spiritual Activism 101**, offered by healer and racial justice educator **Rachel Ricketts**. She addresses internalized oppression and whiteness/white supremacy, offers a **safe space** to share hurts/struggles/frustration regarding race and gender, includes spiritual tools and anti-racism practices, plus **guided meditation** and transformational breathwork. There is also the opportunity for intentional journaling to **unpack personal blind spots**.

Ricketts says: "Folks will leave feeling **supported and empowered** in their journey to better show up for themselves and the collective, and most importantly, in supporting people of colour (particularly Black and Indigenous folks)."

[Click here](#) to register and find out more.

For links to more webinars, see EVA BC's [featured website section](#).

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## THE WELLNESS WINDOW

### 'Caring for Myself' Grounding Circle offers soothing relief

A new **Grounding Circle** for **African, Black, and Caribbean service providers** offers nurturing body work, soul support, and self-care during this high-stress, high-trauma time.

**Mosa McNeilly**, an interdisciplinary artist and educator, is hosting **one-hour sessions** every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from June 10 to July 10. These will address holistic lifestyle choices and self-care practices grounded in **Pan-African wisdom traditions**. They start at 8 am. [Pre-registration](#) is required.

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### Buddhist creates 'Great Vow for Mindful Activists' to combat burnout

After his close friend **Baba Ibrahim Farajajé**, a queer, Black, Sufi scholar and activist, died of a heart attack at 63, **Mushim Patricia Ikeda** describes in *Lion's Roar* magazine how they had sat together six months earlier on an Oakland, CA stage under a **#BlackLivesMatter banner**. Ikeda writes of his friend: "Baba had been targeted for multiple forms of oppression throughout his life and had not been silent about it. When he

died, I was sad and angry.”

Ikeda asks: “How many of us ... are on a similar path toward burnout? Is it possible for us ... to **engage with systemic change**, grow and deepen our spiritual practice, and, if we’re laypeople, also care for our families? How can we do all of this without collapsing? In my world, there always seems to be way too much to do, along with too much suffering and societal corruption and not enough spaces of deep rest and regeneration.”

To **prevent becoming overwhelmed by despair or cynicism**, Ikeda came up with a “Great Vow for Mindful Activists”:

*Aware of suffering and injustice, I, \_\_\_\_\_, am working to create a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. I promise, for the benefit of all, to practice self-care, mindfulness, healing, and joy. I vow to not burn out.*

See the [Lion's Roar story](#)

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## How do you identify anxiety in your response to the Corona virus?

By now, we’ve heard that **brain fog, fatigue, and poor sleep** are common responses to the pandemic, but anxiety can also manifest in surprising and perhaps not immediately recognizable ways.

Several **clinical psychologists** offer their insights on this issue In the [Huffington Post article](#) “**10 Sneaky Ways Your Coronavirus Anxiety is Coming out.**”

*For links to more self-care content, please see [Health and Wellness Resources](#) on EVA BC’s website.*

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## FUNDRAISER FOCUS

### Support EVA BC’s work by purchasing a special COVID-19 mask

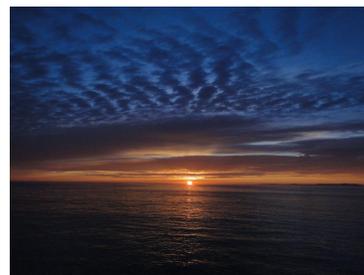
Want to support EVA BC’s COVID-19 advocacy while staying safe with personalized PPE? When you purchase a new **Ending Violence Together face mask** from the **BC Women’s Health Foundation (BCWHF)**, 100 per cent of the net proceeds will go to EVA BC and its support efforts during the pandemic.

The non-medical masks, made in BC with local designer Fer Rivera, are \$17.99 for a youth size and \$19.99 for medium and large (see photo below). You can purchase masks on the BCWHF’s dedicated [Shopify page](#).



**New EVA BC fundraiser mask**

**Wally Buono**, former BC Lions



*“There’s no separation between self and other, and everything is interconnected. Once you are aware of that, you are no longer caught in the idea that you are a separate entity... [Y]ou realize that*

head coach, models the new *Ending Violence Together* mask, created by **BC Women's Health Foundation** as a fundraiser for **EVA BC**. It includes the logos of both EVA BC and BCWHF.

Wally received the 4th annual **Be More Than a Bystander Award** at EVA BC's Annual Training Forum in November 2019.

*Image: Christie Buono*

***happiness and suffering are not individual matters. You see the nature of interconnectedness and you know that to protect yourself, you have to protect the human beings around you."***

**-- Thich Nhat Hanh**

*Image: Greenland Travel CC BY 2.0*

**Ending Violence Association of BC** | [conn@endingviolence.org](mailto:conn@endingviolence.org)  
| 604-633-2506 ext. 16 or toll-free (members only) 1-877-633-2505 |  
[Endingviolence.org](http://Endingviolence.org)

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