

ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN CANADA

FEDERAL STRATEGY AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Having identified the achievement of gender equality as a priority for the Government of Canada, Prime Minister Trudeau has mandated Status of Women Canada to lead the development of a *Federal Strategy Against Gender-Based Violence*. Status of Women Canada (SWC) Minister Maryam Monsef is responsible for this strategy.

Gender-based violence is understood as both a **product** of an unequal society and a **barrier** to achieving gender equality. The *Federal Strategy* will focus on two key forms of gender-based violence: that which is **interpersonal** (perpetrated by an individual, community, or group against another individual, community, or group) and that which is **structural** (structural inequality or institutional discrimination that puts a person or group at a disadvantage). More specifically, gender-based violence includes any act of violence or abuse that can result in *physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering*.

During the summer of 2016, former SWC Minister Hajdu established an advisory council to facilitate discussions regarding perspectives, promising practices, and research on issues related to gender-based violence. This engagement process has involved:

- Federal government
- Provincial/territorial governments
- Front-line service providers and academics
- Survivors of gender-based violence

The Government of Canada's long-term vision for this work is the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence, in public and private spheres.



(Former) SWC Minister Hajdu EVA BC office
July 2016

From left to right: Habiba Rashid, Nancy Boyce, (Former) SWC Minister Patty Hajdu, Lucia Lorenzi, Kate Rossiter, Mona Chan, Jessica Lee, and MP Anju Dhillon

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

The term 'gender-based violence' refers to violence perpetrated against someone based on their gender expression, gender identity, or perceived gender.

Status of Women Canada's *Federal Strategy Against Gender-Based Violence* uses the term to highlight the reality that some genders are disproportionately at risk of violence – in particular, women and girls, and transgender and gender non-conforming people.

EVA BC supports 'gender-based violence' as a term that is more inclusive of transgender and non-conforming individuals, who have historically been left out of conversations about violence against women. As an organization, we have been using the term 'gender-based violence' in many contexts (e.g., universities and colleges) to be more inclusive of those most impacted by interpersonal violence.

“To develop the [gender-based violence] strategy, we need to build on the important work already underway by provincial and territorial governments. We also need the help of experts, advocates, survivors, academia, civil society and others to ensure that we address the diverse needs of all Canadians, especially those who are most at-risk of being victimized. In short, we need to listen.”

*The Honourable Patty Hajdu
Former Minister of Status of Women Canada*

EVA BC'S CONTRIBUTIONS

As the *Federal Strategy Against Gender-Based Violence* takes form, EVA BC has been advocating for the needs and interests of our member programs to Status of Women Canada (SWC) through:

- Participating in regional and topic-based roundtables
- Facilitating a meeting between former Minister Hajdu and a survivor of gender-based violence
- In partnership with EVA Canada, developing a series of **federal briefing notes** for SWC on:
 1. Effective Referral to Community-Based Anti-Violence Services
 2. Addressing Gaps in Services for Women
 3. Specialized Support for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence
 4. Coordination of Responses to Gender-Based Violence and Information Sharing
 5. Addressing Sexual Assault
 6. Barriers to Women's Participation in the Criminal Justice System
 7. Protection Orders to Keep Survivors Safer
 8. Treatment for Assaultive Men
 9. Domestic Violence Death Review Committees and a National Death Review Initiative
 10. Training on Gender-Based Violence
 11. Prevention of Gender-Based Violence
 12. Disaster Preparedness and Support
 13. Anti-Violence Worker Safety and Wellbeing

ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY

Status of Women Canada recently issued a call for proposals for Funding to Advance Gender Equality in Canada, which would include the development of a pan-Canadian network of 150 key women leaders, which will support collaborative action to advance gender equality in Canada.

Recognizing gender-based violence as a systemic barrier to women's full and equal participation in many institutions and workforces, EVA BC submitted an application identifying three women leaders here in BC: Tracy Porteous (EVA BC), Ninu Kang (MOSAIC), and Chastity Davis (Minister's Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women).

If successful, our proposed project, entitled *Advancing Gender Equality in the Workplace: Transforming Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response through Policy and Training*, will work to improve responses to gender-based violence through Indigenous, refugee/immigrant, and corporate systems and institutions across BC.

RESOURCES

Federal Strategy Against Gender-Based Violence (Status of Women Canada)
<http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/violence/strategy-strategie/engagement-en.html>

Federal Briefing Notes to Address Gender-Based Violence (Ending Violence Association of Canada)
<http://endingviolencecanada.org/14-new-briefing-notes-address-gender-based-violence/>