



Media Release

Indigenous-led research project will improve support services for Indigenous women and children facing intimate partner violence

October 18, 2021 – There has been a dramatic increase in intimate partner violence against Indigenous women since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. An Indigenous-led survey entitled “*Intimate Partner Violence against Indigenous Women in BC: Unintended Impacts of COVID-19*”, will provide information to improve support services for Indigenous women, and their children, who are facing intimate partner violence.

The survey is part of a multi-phase research project led by the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) and Battered Women’s Support Services (BWSS) and conducted by Indigenous health researchers at the University of Victoria.

“The continued overrepresentation of Indigenous women and girls in cases of gender-based violence indicates a clear need for Indigenous-led support services that are culturally safe, relevant, and accessible,” said Leslie Varley, Executive Director of the BCAAFC.

The number of women and girls killed by violence in British Columbia is among the highest by region in Canada (Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, 2021). Indigenous women and girls are 12 times more likely to be murdered or missing than non-Indigenous women, a number that is even higher for Indigenous women and girls in the North (National Inquiry, 2019).

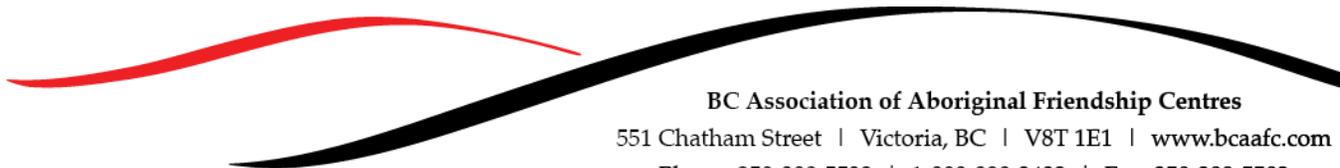
“Canada is in a crisis, gender-based violence towards Indigenous women, girls, trans, two spirit and non-binary people is the worst it has ever been. This survey will clearly identify the barriers and what still needs to happen to protect Indigenous women and girls from not only the threat but the act of gender based violence,” said Summer-Rain, Manager, Indigenous Women’s Program, BWSS.

The knowledge shared by participants in the research study will help social service organizations, such as BC Friendship Centres and the BWSS, improve and increase support services that address the needs of Indigenous women and girls experiencing gender-based violence.

A report on the research findings will amplify the voices of Indigenous women and girls, and call for the design, development and delivery of anti-violence supports that serve them.

The survey is available online at <http://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/IndigIPVResearch>.

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About BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres - <https://bcaafc.com/>

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) is the umbrella organization for the 25 Friendship Centres located throughout the province. BC Friendship Centres are not-for-profit, Indigenous-led, social service organizations that develop and deliver accessible programs and services to support Indigenous people living in urban areas and away from home to achieve their vision of health, wellness and prosperity. The BC Provincial Government estimates approximately 85% of Indigenous people in BC live off reserve or in urban areas. Collectively, BC Friendship Centres employ over 1,200 people and have over 600 community partnerships—making them the largest Indigenous service delivery infrastructure in the province. The BCAAFC works with Friendship Centres, partner organizations, and government institutions to establish best practices for Indigenous program delivery and advocate for equitable resource allocation for services by Indigenous people, for Indigenous people.

Learn more:

- [2021 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People National Action Plan: Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People](#) (MMIWG National Action Plan Core Working Group, June 3, 2021)
- [Gender-based Violence is on the Rise](#) (Battered Women's Support Services, July 21, 2021)
- [Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) (National Inquiry, 2019)
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#) (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015)