

# **Domestic Violence at Work Impacts and Issues in Newfoundland and Labrador**

**(DV@WorkNL)**

**DV@Work NL**



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## Executive Summary

In Canada, most provincial governments and the federal government are working to address the need for more research to better understand the scope and impacts of domestic violence (DV). The aim is to improve policies and frontline services in areas such as justice and policing, health, workplace and occupational health and safety, education and community services. In Newfoundland and Labrador, as in other jurisdictions, police reported data provide only a small window into the dynamics of domestic violence. Due to the low percentage of survivors who come forward to report domestic violence to police and the sporadic release of police reported data, people working and advocating to help improve the lives of those affected by DV often lack the evidence-based research that could assist them in understanding and advocating for improved programs and services. Even less research is available on the impacts of violence in workplaces. Access to accurate and current data is desperately needed.

The DV@Work NL project was developed to address the knowledge gap concerning the impacts of domestic violence on workers and workplaces in this province. Given that women experience domestic violence at a disproportionately higher rate than men, the St. John's Status of Women Council was determined to learn more about the domestic violence they experience and the ways it impacts their health and economic stability. We know that the rate of reported incidents of domestic violence in the province as a whole are slightly above the national average but the rate in Labrador is significantly higher than on the island. The rate of violence against young women and girls (16-24) in Labrador is an alarming 4.6 times higher than young women and girls in Newfoundland, and 6.4 times higher than in Canada overall.<sup>1</sup> We know that women experiencing domestic violence have a more disrupted work history, frequently moving from job to job, often taking casual and part-time jobs, all resulting in lower annual incomes. We also know that labour force attachment - having a job and keeping it - is a key pathway to leaving abusive relationships, to ensuring a safe home and a decent standard of living, for women and their children. Research is needed to inform new legislation, policies and programs so that everyone can improve their responses to domestic violence.

While statistics may give us a preliminary overview of the issue, there is much more to understanding the impacts of domestic violence than reporting numbers. We felt there was an urgent need to mobilize the knowledge held by DV survivors, their co-workers, and the frontline workers who offer support and services. Over the course of the past year, 241 people - survivors, service providers and agency representatives - from all over the province gathered in meetings, interviews, focus groups and public Roundtables to discuss 'DV@Work.' They offered ideas about how to make the violence in their lives more visible (for those who need to know) and address its dangers and impacts on their lives and in their workplaces. In addition, almost 1600 people completed our online survey comprised of a series of questions about their direct and indirect experiences of DV in their workplaces.

## Research Highlights

The following summary provides an overview of some of the main issues from our research findings. Additional detail is provided in Section II of the report.

### About the Respondents:

- 1567 people completed the survey (88.5% of respondents were female, 9.5% male, 0.5% trans and 1.5% non-binary). 42% of respondents had dependent children and 9% had other dependents (i.e. older family members);
- Most (85%) of the survey respondents were born in NL;
- 10% of respondents were Indigenous, 5% identified as a person of colour; and
- 58% were permanent employees, and 51% were unionized.

### Experiences of DV:

- 54% of respondents experienced domestic violence from an intimate partner. Looking more closely we see that 55% were women, 31% men, 60% Indigenous people and 67% LGBTQ2S+ people. Of those who were working, 47% were unionized and 48% were non-unionized. The remainder (5%) were self-employed.
- 57% said the DV caused them financial stress and over 36% indicated that they stayed in the abusive relationship for financial reasons;
- Almost half of DV survivors (47%) said they had to move homes or change their living situation;
- Our survey found that health is negatively correlated with reported experiences of domestic abuse. This means that people who have poor physical and mental health are much more likely to have experienced DV than people enjoying better health; and
- 70% of respondents said they did not report the DV to the police. 82% of DV survivors said they did not deal with the criminal law system as a result of the DV.

### Impacts on Workplaces:

- Domestic violence, regardless of where it occurs, can negatively impact a person's ability to get to work, to stay at work and to continue working well. Over 85% of respondents reported that the DV they experienced at home continued in their workplace (abusive phone calls and text messages, abusive person stalked or harassed the worker, and/or made a disruptive personal visit to the workplace);
- Over 93% of these workers reported that DV negatively affected their work performance in at least one way (due mainly to distraction, feeling unwell, and fatigue as a direct result of DV);

- 47% said they had to take time off work because of DV (physical injury, physical restraint and withheld transportation - were the most common reasons);
- 38% of those experiencing domestic violence said it had influenced their career choice or career path;
- 42% of DV survivors said they confided in someone in their workplace – most often a co-worker. 57% said their co-workers were negatively affected by the DV situation;
- Over 65% of respondents said they felt employers are not aware when DV is impacting workers; and
- 44% of respondents who were unionized said that union officials are not aware or prepared for DV situations in their workplaces. 91% said when they are aware, they act in supportive ways.

## **Summary of Recommendations**

The recommendations listed below are for local, provincial and, federal governments, community organizations and workplaces (including employers, unions, and workers). They are intended to provide ways to reduce worker risk and vulnerability and promote healthy, violence-free workplaces. These recommendations should be understood as part of ongoing discussions (including regulatory protections) that aim to eliminate DV perpetration, increase the safety of DV survivors, and provide all agencies and employers with ways to ensure DV survivors' ongoing employment and economic stability.

## **Recommendations for the Government of Canada:**

- Ensure that the federal government works with the provincial government to enact the recommendations from the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. This would entail stable and ongoing funding for new services and improvements to existing programs and services in rural and remote Indigenous communities in NL and on First Nations' Reserves;
- Use the International Labour Organization (ILO)'s Convention Concerning the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work to improve workplace practices within its jurisdiction across the country;
- Fund more 'targeted employment' support programs for Indigenous women and stabilize funding for transition houses and long-term violence prevention programs in Indigenous communities; and
- Implement paid DV leave for all federal workers, agencies and businesses accessing contracts with the federal government.

## **Recommendations for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador:**

- Increase the number and presence of trained staff to support enforcement of the new amendment (effective January 2020) to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, which outlines obligations that all employers must address DV issues in their workplaces;
- Develop and implement a provincial strategy on gender-based violence that incorporates a political economy lens. This requires making correlations between the violence in women's lives and their position in the labour force; women are currently stratified in mainly low wage occupations and they represent 2/3 of minimum wage workers and 2/3 of part-time casual (precarious) workers. In addition, NL has the second largest gender wage gap in the country;
- Provide all Transition Houses with increased funding to purchase vehicles to increase the safety of DV survivors;
- Revisit, prioritize and streamline housing and transportation policies that impact access to emergency shelters. For example, emergency access to taxi 'authorizations' for transition houses for all front-line agencies providing emergency DV supports. The unnecessary delays and red tape impact safety and increase the vulnerability of DV survivors;
- Add "experience of DV" to the provincial Human Rights Code's list of grounds on which discrimination is prohibited;
- Ensure that data from the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Intimate Partner Violence (RNC IPV) Units are released to the public on an annual basis; and
- Provide adequate and consistent funding for services for survivors and perpetrators of DV.

## **Recommendations for Workplaces:**

- Foster a supportive workplace culture where employers, managers, supervisors and unions work together to find ways to make violent behaviours unacceptable in workplaces;
- Foster a supportive role for unions in educating workers about workplace violence to counter inflexible top-down policies such as zero tolerance;<sup>2</sup>
- Provide mandatory training to all employees on the impact of DV and how to respond;
- As part of the OHS changes effective January 2020, all workplaces in the province should have a policy explaining what accommodations and supports are available to workers who are experiencing DV;

- Employers and unions must work together to ensure that any employee who is affected by violence (survivors, perpetrators, or co-workers) is able to access trauma-informed resources and supports through the workplace during their scheduled work time;
- DV survivors must be assured that coming forward about their experience will not result in negative repercussions at work, including job loss. Employers and unions must work with survivors to develop and implement a workplace safety plan, including salary advances for new housing. Consultations with survivors must be an integral part of all decisions concerning safety plans;
- Review workplace security measures and have a protocol for locking/securing the workplace when needed;
- Require DV perpetrators to participate in a treatment program as a condition of continued employment. Accommodations should be made, when possible, to permit perpetrators to arrange their work schedule to allow for participation in treatment programs;
- DV Workplace Policies must state that disciplinary action can be taken against employees who use workplace resources during work hours - to stalk, harass, or perpetuate other abuses against their current or former partners;
- Ensure that DV counselling is adequate and covered by employee health benefit programs; and
- For workplaces with daycare centres, provide a minimum 6 weeks of free childcare services to DV survivors as part of their workplace supports.

## **Section 1: Environmental Scan**

### **Introduction**

The St. John's Status of Women Council (SJSWC) is a feminist organization that since 1972 has continuously worked to achieve equality and justice through political activism, community collaboration and the creation of a safe and inclusive space for all women. The Council operates the St. John's Women's Centre, Marguerite's Place Supportive Housing Program and the Safe Harbour Outreach Project (SHOP).

The Domestic Violence at Work NL (DV@WorkNL) research began in 2018 as a three-year project studying the impacts of domestic violence (DV) in workplaces throughout the province, with a particular focus on DV as a barrier to women's economic participation in the workforce. While partial data from DV advocacy organizations and police reports suggest that DV is increasing in this province, there are some research gaps such as workplace impacts and the dynamics of DV which this project tries to address, at least in part. Throughout this project, the SJSWC will develop resources and supports for domestic violence survivors and co-workers to assist with education, workplace safety and retention. We also hope to increase the capacity of employers, management, front-line supervisors and union representatives by assisting with appropriate policies and procedures to address domestic violence in workplaces.

This Environmental Scan is part of the DV@Work NL project and consists of a review of existing research related to the impacts of domestic violence in workplaces and briefly reviews the legislation, policies and programs that have been put in place to address this very complex issue. It scans some key public and private sector policies and programming that aim to educate staff about the dynamics of DV in workplaces in Newfoundland and Labrador. It reviews the current role and capacity of the SJSWC in carrying out the DV@Work recommendations going forward with an Action Plan focused on strategically addressing new and emerging trends and issues relating to workplace domestic violence. Therefore, it will help inform the work of the SJSWC regarding the services and programs provided by the organization as well as the role of partner organizations - the other Status of Women Councils, transition houses, employers, and government.

This Scan begins with some statistics about DV in Canada and situates DV in the context of the economic security of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. It positions the feminist political economy lens that we utilize for this research. Through it we explore existing economic data and previous research on the impacts of DV on workplaces and survivors, and finally, on perpetrators in Canada and other jurisdictions. The legislative and policy frameworks that have been put in place to support DV survivors are then discussed, with a focus on the roles that businesses and workplaces can take to support their obligations to ensure safer workplaces for women and reduce the likelihood of violence in society.

## Statistics on Violence Against Women

In 2017, one third of all police-reported violent crimes across Canada named an intimate partner as the perpetrator of the crime and most of the survivors were women.<sup>3</sup> This appalling statistic varies somewhat by province and territory but it clearly indicates that new approaches to research and a coordinated cross-jurisdictional approach to policies and programs are needed to better understand the complex, gendered dimensions of violence and to finally address and eliminate it from Canadian society.

When discussing the impacts of domestic violence in the workplace, it is often presumed that we are speaking about worker-on-worker violence and harassment that can be placed on a continuum of gender-based violence happening within workplaces. From a 2018 Angus Reid Institute poll, we know that more than one in four Canadians (28%) have been sexually harassed at work. Women reported being more than three times as likely as men to experience such harassment (43% versus 12%).<sup>4</sup> While these are issues that require further investigation, they are not the focus of our work here. Rather, we are interested in the ways that domestic violence (by a current or past intimate partner) is perpetuated in workplaces and increases risks to both the safety and economic security of women. We define domestic violence as any form of physical, sexual, verbal, cultural, spiritual, emotional or psychological abuse, including financial control, neglect, stalking and harassment. It occurs between opposite or same-sex intimate partners, who may or may not be married, common law, or living together. It can also continue to happen after a relationship has ended.<sup>5</sup>

## Women's Economic Wellbeing

The SJSWC recognizes that DV is a common social problem with many complex dimensions. The links between domestic violence and women's economic security demand that we place this research within a feminist political economy lens as we acknowledge the broader struggle for social and economic equality that impacts all of society.<sup>6</sup> A feminist political economy framework positions the economic security of women within the context of social hierarchies that lead to political, social and economic injustices in all their forms. Violence against women is inextricably linked to the gendered division of labour in the family/private sphere (typically narrowly defined). Violence shapes labour markets in ways that disadvantage and discriminate against women within education, employment and justice systems. It does so by reinforcing their subordination and increasing their vulnerability to violence and control across private, public and political spheres. Violence controls the position of women within the larger global labour market where capitalist competition seeks out gendered, precarious and cheap sources of labour in increasingly deregulated investment environments. In NL, we see this global downward pressure on wages in both women's and men's annual incomes for a growing percentage of residents of the province.<sup>7</sup> Although the gendered impacts of eroding wages are different for women and men, the overall effect increases household instability and women's vulnerability to domestic violence. Violence shapes larger markets worldwide but at the micro level, women who experience domestic violence have more disrupted work histories characterized by lower annual incomes, frequent job changes and

increased likelihood of holding multiple jobs including part-time and casual work.<sup>8</sup> This is particularly true for racialized, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgendered, queer, questioning, intersexual, allies and two spirited (LGBTQ2S+) and Indigenous women. In short, at a macro level, violence against women doesn't necessarily start in the home: rather, home and work are interlinked social sites where violence is often fostered and perpetuated.<sup>9</sup>

At the core of the work of the SJSWC is a determination to eliminate inequalities based on gender and empower women with a sense of security and safety in the present and the future. Women's social and economic well-being determines their ability to absorb the impacts of transitions especially when they leave violent relationships, deal with financial setbacks, meet financial goals, and maintain adequate income throughout their lives, for themselves and their families. Given that we are applying a feminist political economy lens to our work, it seems appropriate to begin with a review of women's economic status.

Drawing on data over a 2-year period from March 2017 to March 2019, women made up 48 percent of the labour force in Newfoundland and Labrador (aged 15-64, employed and unemployed). Fifty percent of those employed were women, compared to 48 percent of those employed in Canada as a whole during that timeframe. Women made up 47 percent of full-time workers in NL and 69 percent of part-time workers.<sup>10</sup>

Analysis of 2016 tax filer data shows that NL has the second largest gender wage gap in Canada. Women's average income from wages, salaries and commissions in 2016 was \$35,020 (\$38,490 in Canada) compared to men's average income of \$55,250 (\$55,240 in Canada). For every dollar a man earned in NL in 2016, a woman earned, on average, 63 cents. Based on median income, for every dollar a man earned in NL in 2016, a woman earned 65 cents. In Canada, women earned 69 cents on average for every dollar a man earned in 2016.<sup>11</sup> While statistical averages can be good indicators of women's annual income, it is important to point out that Indigenous, racialized, and newcomer women, and women with a disability-experience even larger pay gaps. Indigenous women working full-time, full year, earn an average of 35% less than non-Indigenous men and racialized women earn 33% less than non-racialized men.<sup>12</sup> There are several reasons why the gender wage gap in the province is so large, including the fact that women make up 55 percent of all minimum wage workers and 66 percent of part-time workers in NL. Looking across sectors of the economy of the province, which is heavily dependent on resource development, occupations where women predominate tend to be restricted to three main sectors: Health, Education, and Business-Finance-Administration. Despite the opportunities for employment and higher wages in resource development projects in mining, oil & gas and related construction, women make up only about 6.5 percent of those employed in skilled trades workers. Of the tradeswomen going through the apprenticeship system, approximately 8 percent have reached journey level status.<sup>13</sup>

## **Previous Research on Domestic Violence in Workplaces**

### **Impacts on Workplaces**

The reality in today's work world is that boundaries between home and work, for an increasing number of workers, are dissolving. This makes it even more difficult to isolate what happens in the domestic sphere from what happens in employment settings. Businesses can no longer refuse to address the environmental, social and human rights implications of their business relations. Along with governments, they have a key role to play and, we would argue, a social responsibility to formulate and implement strategies for addressing complex social problems such as domestic violence.

In every country where DV has been studied, it has been shown to have significant socio-economic impacts on workforce productivity. The obvious importance in protecting women from violence is an ethical and legal responsibility, but it also has financial ramifications. In the USA, DV is estimated to cost the economy \$8 billion a year in lost productivity and healthcare costs alone.<sup>14</sup> In the UK, the combined cost of decreased productivity, lost wages and sick (pay resulting from domestic violence) has been estimated at \$2.7 billion. The cost is high in Canada as well, estimated in 2009 to be \$7.4 billion (equivalent to \$8.7 billion in 2018). These estimates include \$6 billion for victim's services (80.7%); \$545.2 million (7.3%) cost to the justice system; and \$889.9 million (12%) cost for third parties including social services, program costs for children exposed to violence, government expenditures, and costs to employers.<sup>15</sup>

In Canada and elsewhere, researchers have tried to estimate the financial costs of DV to businesses. The direct impacts are estimated to cost Canadian employers about \$78 million a year.<sup>16</sup> The lifelong intergenerational impacts of trauma and economic instability on survivors of violence, most of whom are women and their families, is harder to determine but estimated to be in the billions.<sup>17</sup> Zhang and colleagues estimate the losses to employers to be approximately \$77,918,560 in 2009 (equivalent to \$91,233,327 in 2018). This amount includes \$68,541,415 due to tardiness and distraction, \$7,970,806 in lost output, and \$1,406,339 due to administrative costs. While distraction and absence from work experienced by survivors of violence are costly for employers, other workplace behaviours have costly impacts but are not included in these estimates. This includes increased administration costs due to absence and turnover (recruitment and retraining) when employees quit or are fired as a result of DV.

The impacts on businesses and workplaces are not restricted to financial costs. Workers who are survivors of violence, their co-workers, supervisors and managers are also impacted by upheaval, time constraints, stress and worry. In extreme situations, everyone in the workplace can be put at risk to varying degrees. Previous research from Australia and Canada shows that survivors of violence were most likely to confide in someone at work (mainly co-workers); they also recognize that the violence had a negative effect on their co-workers. Similarly, co-workers reported experiencing pressures from increased workloads, resentment, concern and stress.<sup>18</sup> The research noted above makes it obvious that it is no longer possible for employers to distance themselves from the impacts of domestic violence in workplaces and it is no longer possible for businesses and governments to avoid finding solutions that deal with those impacts.<sup>19</sup>

## Impacts on Survivors

In Canada, women make up almost 85% of survivors of domestic violence - one in five women will be abused by an intimate partner in her lifetime.<sup>20</sup> For most women, abuse is not a single event and most of the time the perpetrators of violence are well known to them. In fact, many women go to work each day hoping that her abuser won't disturb her while she is at work, and then she often comes home and endures further physical and/or emotional abuse. These are high-risk situations that tend to repeat themselves in cyclical patterns that escalate in intensity with ripple effects that are widely felt across generations.<sup>21</sup>

There are many ways that domestic violence manifests itself in workplaces. When an abuser attempts to harass, stalk, threaten, or injure a victim in their workplace, it can affect employee productivity, lead to absenteeism, affect workplace morale, and put workers and the entire workplace at risk. Given these impacts, the need for appropriate action and workplace resources to address incidents of DV is obvious and urgent. In addition, employers have a legal obligation to address situations in workplaces where an employee's safety may be at risk. Research shows that a combination of legislation, employers who take a proactive approach to education and workplace policies, supported by strong links to community support agencies, can and do have a positive impact in contributing to the safety and well-being of those experiencing domestic violence while at work.

In 2013, a pan-Canadian study conducted by the University of Western Ontario through the Center for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC) and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) highlighted some of the key issues concerning domestic violence in workplaces.<sup>22</sup> This research found that 34 percent of the 8429 respondents experienced domestic violence in their lifetime and 80 percent of survivors reported that the domestic violence negatively affected their working lives. 75 percent had difficulty concentrating on work, 40 percent had difficulty getting to and from work, and 19 percent reported causing or nearly causing workplace accidents due to the violence they were experiencing. 8.5 percent of survivors said that they lost their jobs because of domestic violence. Almost 40 percent of survivors said they turned to a co-worker to confide in and/or look for safety supports in their workplaces.

The effects of physical and emotional trauma that a survivor experiences are felt 24/7 and can often lead to missing work. This makes employee absenteeism one of the most obvious impacts of DV in workplaces. DV can keep a woman from going to work if she is in pain from an altercation or even if she is physically able to work, she might want to stay home to conceal the physical evidence of abuse, such as bruising. She might not disclose information about her situation because she wants to keep work and home-life separate and private. She may also be embarrassed or afraid of losing her job.<sup>23</sup>

Research shows that almost half of all women survivors of DV in Canada suffered an injury and 40 percent of injured women reported taking time off from everyday activities including work.<sup>24</sup> However, it is not only physical injuries that keep survivors at home. Seventeen percent of survivors with no physical injury took time off work, which suggests that women's mental health and well-being are also at risk from DV. The trauma of DV can often lead to depression, anxiety and sleep deprivation, all of which impact work performance and

contribute to absenteeism. An American study found that women who were survivors of DV lost an average of 7.2 days of work as a direct result of the DV.<sup>25</sup> About one in eight employees who experienced stalking lost five or more days from work. It is estimated that female survivors of spousal abuse in Canada missed a total of 145,147 days of work in 2009 due to incidents of abuse. This included hospital stays, recovery time at home, emergency room visits, and other time off directly related to the abuse.<sup>26</sup> The cost of turnover among staff is also known to be high, with retraining and training new employees quite costly.

If survivors have adequate supports in place at work, they are more likely to be able to continue in their work roles and reduce the need for employers to retrain or recruit.<sup>27</sup> One of the main supports that has been the focus of much attention is paid leave to assist workers with their exit strategies. This aids survivors, once safety is assured, to leave an abusive partner. When survivors do not have the time off that they need to take care of legal issues, find housing and child support and deal with health care issues that can arise from abusive relationships, they can remain stuck in abusive relationships. Legislated paid leave and proactive workplace policies also help address the stigma around domestic violence by encouraging discussion and adding visibility to the issue. This leads to more open dialogue, better public education and improved collaboration between various groups, agencies, employers and governments.<sup>28</sup>

Researchers have also begun to focus on some of the health impacts of domestic violence. In the UK, the results were recently released of a study utilizing primary care data to investigate the links between domestic violence and the mental health concerns of more than 18,000 women who reported domestic violence to their general practitioners. Their doctors discovered almost 50 percent of the women had some form of mental illness compared with 24 percent from a control group. After considering other factors that could influence mental health and domestic abuse, the study concluded that domestic abuse survivors had nearly triple the risk of mental illness.<sup>29</sup>

A review of the impacts of DV in workplaces must incorporate an intersectional approach that recognizes ways that social relations and structures create different experiences of violence based on race, age, gender, class, ability, and geography. Violence affects women and girls, men and boys of all ages, cultures, ethnicities, geographic locations, and socio-economic backgrounds - in their homes, their communities, educational institutions and workplaces. However, some populations are more vulnerable to violence than others. Women are the victims of almost 85 percent of DV in Canada and they are often the targets of extreme incidents of violence in workplaces, universities and colleges.

In Canada, a female is killed every two and a half days - 148 women and girls lives were ended by violence. This statistic has remained largely the same for 40 years, according to the 2018 annual report on national femicide rates by the Femicide Observatory. Females accounted for approximately three in ten (or 29%) of homicide victims in Canada. The lowest rate was in Quebec. Nunavut has the highest rate of murders of women and girls, followed by Yukon, New Brunswick and Manitoba. Indigenous women and girls made up 36 per cent of homicide victims but make up less than five per cent of Canada's population. The home remains the most dangerous place for women, with 53% killed by male partners and another 13% killed by male family members.<sup>30</sup>

A 2013 global study by the World Health Organization (WHO) highlighted the links between LGBTQ2S+ communities and the health consequences of gender-based violence. Their results highlighted the vulnerabilities due to discrimination and neglect, noting that one of the main ways their health and well-being is compromised results from their accounts of violence being dismissed and downplayed by personal support networks and health providers.<sup>31</sup> Other research has found that people who identify as bisexual are not only more likely to experience violence: they are at a heightened risk of experiencing more severe consequences as a result of violence.<sup>32</sup>

Sex workers experience disproportionately high levels of violence and this has been linked to the criminalization of sex work.<sup>33</sup> Research has found that between one third and one half of cisgender women working in street-based sex work, reported experiencing workplace violence in the past year.<sup>34</sup>

We also know that Indigenous women in Canada are more likely to be unemployed than non-Indigenous women, have lower levels of education and consequently lower levels of income. Indigenous women, on average, earn about \$5000 less each year than non-Indigenous women, and experience higher levels of poverty and homelessness. The socio-economic impacts of colonialism and the continuing institutionalized discrimination based on race, gender, class and culture, faced by both Indigenous women and men, directly contributes to the high rates of violence and to the genocide of Indigenous women in Canada.<sup>35</sup>

Our environmental scan drew on previous work done by the Federal Department for Women and Gender Equality that addresses some of the core intersectional dimensions of violence:

- women are at a 20% higher risk of violent victimization than men when all other risk factors and crimes are taken into account;
- young women are particularly at risk, of all sexual assault incidents, 47% were committed against women aged 15 to 24;
- Indigenous identity is a key risk factor for victimization among women. Indigenous women are more than three times as likely to report being a victim of spousal violence as non-Indigenous women;
- women with a disability were nearly twice as likely as women without a disability to have been sexually assaulted;
- lesbian and bisexual women are 3.5 times more likely than heterosexual women to report spousal violence;
- six in ten (58%) senior victims of family violence were female, with a rate 19% higher than that of male seniors; and
- women living in the territories are victimized at a rate eight times higher than those living in the provinces. Women living in the territories are 45% more at risk of violence compared to men in the territories. Remote and isolated communities face particular challenges related to access and availability of resources and supports that result in women experiencing higher levels of violence.<sup>36</sup>

## Impacts of DV on Perpetrators

Perpetrators of DV often do not confine their violent behaviours to the home. Workplaces are therefore vulnerable to perpetrators who use worktime and workplace resources to perpetuate the DV. This results in lost productivity, inappropriate use of costly workplace resources, and increased safety risks leading to workplace accidents, affecting themselves, their victim and co-workers.

Mankowski (et al.) investigated the dynamics and impacts of violence perpetration in workplaces. Their research conducted with 198 adult men in batterer intervention programs, found that most men said that DV affected their work performance.<sup>37</sup> Another study conducted by Schmidt & Barnett with male participants (in Vermont) in a batterer intervention program found that participants: “lost a total of 52,731 days of work - equivalent to 27 years of full-time employment and \$5.4 million in estimated lost wages - over their work lives as a result of consequences related to domestic violence. 23% (30 men) collected unemployment to make up for lost wages. Further, 19% had caused or almost caused a workplace accident and 80% said that their job performance was negatively impacted by the DV perpetration. Some of the participants lost their jobs due to their behaviours and had to collect employment insurance. Nearly one-third of participants took time off from work to perpetrate DV or deal with the aftermath of an incident of abuse. 83% of respondents stated that their supervisors were aware that their time off work was related to DV, but only 32% of supervisors took action to address the DV with the employee.<sup>38</sup>

In 2017, researchers at the University of Toronto and Western University conducted a survey with male participants in the Partner Assault Response (PAR) programs across Ontario and published a report on the impacts of DV perpetration on workplaces. They studied lost work productivity, the degree to which DV perpetration occurred, and workplace responses to DV perpetration issues. Approximately one-third of survey respondents reported being in contact with their current or former partner during work hours to engage in (mostly) emotional abuse and/or monitoring. Almost 20% of the participants who said they engaged in conflict, emotional abuse, and/or monitoring during work hours stated that someone at work (most often a co-worker) was aware of what they were doing. 38% of the men surveyed reported that the violence had an impact on their job performance. Some participants described making mistakes at work due to distraction while perpetuating the violence. Almost 25% of the participants surveyed reported that they lost their job as a direct or indirect result (e.g., absenteeism, distraction, poor productivity) of their violence perpetration.<sup>39</sup>

The pan-Canadian research published in 2016 by CREVAWC and the CLC found that workplaces are generally ill-prepared to provide survivors and perpetrators of violence with the resources and services they may need.<sup>40</sup> In 2019, CREVAWC and the CLC, with funding support from Labour Canada, partnered once again on further research to address the impacts and responsibilities of employers concerning domestic violence perpetration. The latest phase of this long-overdue research was launched in March 2019.

## **Current Legislation and Policies to Address Domestic Violence in the Workplace**

Research on the impacts of domestic violence in workplaces is ongoing in Canada and other countries such as Australia, USA and within the EU. There is little doubt, however, that the majority of research and advocacy work done to highlight the importance of workplace violence has been spearheaded by labour unions in Canada and beyond. This section outlines the legislative and policy approaches that have been taken to address DV in workplaces. Advocacy has tended to focus on legislation or collective bargaining that would secure paid DV leave. This enables workers experiencing violence to take the time they need to seek the supports and services they require to help them exit an abusive relationship. Having paid leave helps reduce the financial burden on those who are most vulnerable and who may not be able to afford to take time off without pay.

The International Labour Organization's Convention Concerning the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work adopted in 2019 recognizes the many forms of violence in workplaces. It states that "violence and harassment in the world of work affects a person's psychological, physical and sexual health, dignity, and family and social environment," and further notes that "domestic violence can affect employment, productivity and health and safety, and that governments, employers' and workers' organizations and labour market institutions can help, as part of other measures, to recognize, respond to and address the impacts of domestic violence."<sup>41</sup>

### **Australia and New Zealand**

Some of the earliest research was done through a National Domestic Violence in the Workplace Survey conducted in 2011 by the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse (ADFVC) in partnership with the Australian Council of Trade Unions. The survey found that, of those who reported experiencing family violence, nearly half the respondents reported that the violence affected their capacity to get to work-the major reason being physical injury or restraint. 19% reported that the family violence they experienced at home continued in the workplace, with 12% indicating it consisted of abusive phone calls and emails and 11% stating that it occurred by way of the violent person showing up at the workplace.<sup>42</sup>

Following the 2011 survey and the advocacy work of unions, many Australian employers began implementing paid leave provisions for survivors of family and domestic violence. It is estimated that at least 1.6 million Australian workers (or over 15% of all paid employees) currently have access to paid leave provisions in dealing with DV. Australia was one of the first countries to stress the importance of paid domestic leave in maintaining income and stability in the lives of affected workers while they attempted to escape a violent situation. This advocacy is also aimed at reducing the financial constraints that keep survivors "trapped" within violent family relationships. In 2018, the Government of Australia passed the Fair Work Amendment (Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Act which includes an entitlement to unpaid family and domestic violence leave as part of the National Employment Standards (NES). This entitlement

applies to all employees, including part-time and casual employees. In 2019, New Zealand brought in new legislation to protect survivors of DV and offer paid leave from work. Under the new legislation, employers must grant survivors up to ten days leave to give them time to escape abusive situations, which could include moving out of their homes or attending court hearings.

## Canada

Following up on the success of the Australian study, researchers and unions began to look more closely at the dynamics of domestic violence in workplaces in Canada. In 2013 the CLC teamed up with researchers at CREVAWC to study the impacts of domestic violence in unionized settings across Canada. The pan-Canadian survey results were released in 2014 and revealed considerable challenges with low participation in many provinces and territories. Almost 75 percent of the survey respondents lived in two provinces - Ontario and British Columbia. The researchers were therefore not able to draw any significant conclusions about workers experiences of DV, particularly in Atlantic Canada and the North. Following the pan-Canadian survey, other provinces joined the DV@Work Network established by CREVAWC and the CLC and conducted their own research. This included Saskatchewan and Manitoba<sup>43</sup> who later passed legislation to allow for paid leave and protections for those experiencing domestic violence at work. As of 2019, most provinces have taken some steps to better support domestic violence survivors and their families. There is still much work to do as some provinces and territories such as British Columbia, Nunavut, Yukon, and the NWT have not yet introduced legislation for domestic violence leave. It is notable that new research is focusing on addressing the needs of DV perpetrators.

The federal government of Canada is moving forward with its plan to give federally-regulated workers paid time off to deal with the trauma of DV. Consultations with stakeholders, employers and unions were ongoing through 2018-2019 on the proposed benefit to allow survivors ten days off - five of them paid. Once passed, the legislation will impact about 900,000 employees in federally regulated private sector workplaces such as banks, marine shipping, air and rail transportation and telecommunications. Similar protections for direct government employees are being negotiated by individual public service unions such as PSAC.

In May, 2019 the federal government successfully negotiated contracts with more than 30,000 public servants that include 10 days of leave for victims of domestic violence. These agreements cover some members of the Professional Institute of the Public Service (PIPSC), the Association of Canadian Financial Officers (ACFO) and a local (Ottawa) chapter of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW).

The Government of Ontario was the first to recognize domestic violence as a workplace issue when Bill 168 amended the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* in 2010 to define

violence as a workplace hazard and named domestic abuse as a form of workplace violence. This Bill requires employers to conduct risk assessments and to take steps to protect workers from domestic violence in the workplace.<sup>44</sup> The Ontario government followed Bill 168 with Bill 26 to amend the Employment Standards Act (2000). Bill 26 allows for accommodations and domestic or sexual violence leave as job-protected leave of absence, providing up to 10 days and/or 15 weeks off in a calendar year. This leave can be taken for specific purposes when a worker or a worker's child has experienced or been threatened with domestic or sexual violence. The first five days are paid. Manitoba was the first province to legislate leave for domestic violence survivors. The leave includes 10 days - five of which are paid - in a 52-week period, or 17 weeks taken in one continuous period. Manitoba has passed an amendment to its workplace safety legislation to include domestic violence and stalking/harassment.<sup>45</sup> To support the amendment, the provincial government has developed a toolkit on DV for workplaces.<sup>46</sup>

Legislation provides for a maximum of ten days of (unpaid) leave per year in Saskatchewan for either a worker who is experiencing violence themselves, or who has a child or someone else under their care who has experienced violence. Similarly, in Alberta, workers can take ten days of unpaid leave for each calendar year. This leave can be taken if DV occurs to either the worker, the worker's dependent child, or a protected adult living with the worker. In Quebec, workers who are survivors of DV or sexual violence are entitled to a leave of 26 weeks over a period of 12 months with two paid days available under Personal Emergency Leave provisions.

In 2018 the New Brunswick government passed legislation allowing for a leave of absence for workers if they or their child, are survivors of domestic, sexual or intimate partner violence. The leave includes up to ten days which may be taken intermittently or in one continuous period. There is also a separate Violence Leave of up to sixteen continuous weeks but workers can take both types of leave in any given year with the first five days of leave being paid. In 2019, survivors of DV or parents of survivors in Nova Scotia can take up to 16 continuous weeks of unpaid leave. Workers are also provided with ten intermittent days (all unpaid) to allow them to seek out services and supports to leave a DV situation. In Prince Edward Island, workers are entitled up to ten days - three paid and seven unpaid if they are experiencing DV or sexual violence in their personal relationships.

In 2018, the Newfoundland and Labrador government passed an amendment to the *Residential Tenancies Act* allowing tenants experiencing DV to terminate rental agreements early without penalty. Then in the fall of 2018, government amended the *Labour Standards Act* to allow survivors of DV up to ten days leave from work each year - three paid, and seven unpaid - to allow workers the time they need to seek medical attention, attend counseling or court, and/or find a new housing. An amendment to the regulations of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* comes into effect on January 1, 2020 and requires planning, investigation and training for workplace violence issues such as harassment and worker-on-worker violence. The regulations also address domestic violence in a limited

way by requiring: “where an employer becomes aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, that family violence would likely expose a worker to physical injury may occur in the workplace, the employer shall take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the worker.”<sup>47</sup>

In 2017, the SJSWC implemented a new policy for employees dealing with domestic violence that included three days of paid leave per year. The organization had hoped that other employers in the province would develop their own policies and help reduce the stigma attached to domestic violence. In 2018, Rio Tinto (parent of the Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC) located in Labrador West) announced a package of measures to protect and support employees in North America who are experiencing domestic and family abuse or who have an immediate relative who is experiencing abuse. Employees can now access up to ten days of paid leave, flexible work hours, financial aid and emergency accommodation. Rio Tinto is also providing training to assist leaders and human resources team members with the knowledge and skills to address family and domestic violence issues.<sup>48</sup>

## **Conclusions**

This Environmental Scan has provided a review of the economic status of women in NL and the scope of the existing literature concerning issues impacting workplaces, survivors and perpetrators. It reviews current and ongoing legislation and policies in Canada and other countries and the range of approaches being adopted to improve supports for DV survivors and those most affected in workplaces. The overall aim is to reduce incidents and impacts – individual and intergenerational, that impact DV survivors and their families by increasing public awareness and responsibility. This includes a key role for frontline service providers, legislators and employers. This scan was undertaken with the view that businesses are key social actors, not just economic actors, with a very important role and responsibility to address the human and economic cost of DV.

## **Section II: Needs Assessment Research - Introduction**

In 2017, representatives of the SJSWC, the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour (NLFL), the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), and Unifor Atlantic, formed a working group to conduct a preliminary review of legislation and policies being implemented in other jurisdictions to address the impacts of domestic violence in workplaces. At that juncture, the SJSWC also implemented its own domestic violence leave policy which allows employees three paid days off work per year for the purpose of accessing necessary services and supports. The SJSWC hoped this would motivate public agencies, unions, private businesses and community organizations to adopt similar policies. The working group also advocated for the provincial government to bring about legislative change to improve supports to DV survivors in the *Labour Standards Act* for DV Leave legislation, the *Residential Tenancies Act* for an amendment to protect tenants escaping DV situations, and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to recognize domestic violence as a serious workplace hazard.

With funding for three years from Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) and the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour starting in 2018, the SJSWC designed this province-wide DV@Work project, starting with a needs assessment. Key partners included the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC), all of the Status of Women Councils in NL, and the NL Federation of Labour. We set out to address the knowledge gap regarding how to improve supports and services for women experiencing domestic violence. We know DV survivors have a more disrupted work history, frequently moving from job to job, often taking casual and part-time jobs, all resulting in lower annual incomes. We see this in part, as a labour market issue because labour force attachment - having a job and keeping it - can be a key pathway for survivors to exit an abusive relationships and can contribute significantly to the ability of DV survivors to establish a safe home for themselves and their children and a decent standard of living.

To assist the project staff at SJSWC from the outset and at several key points along the way, an informal Advisory Committee was formed at the start of the project and consisted of representatives from the following organizations:

- The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour;
- Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women and Children, University of Western Ontario;
- All of the Status of Women Councils in the province;
- Iris Kirby House (St. John's), Hope Haven (Lab West) and the Willow House (Corner Brook);
- Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- The Office to Advance Women Apprentices;
- Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network;
- AnanauKatiget Tumingit Regional Inuit Women's Association, and
- Unifor – FFAW.

An intersectional approach to research is very important to the SJSWC and reflects our need to better understand the ways that social relations, policies and structures create different experiences of violence based on race, age, gender, class, ability, and geography. Violence affects women and girls, men and boys of all ages, cultures, ethnicities, geographic locations, and socio-economic backgrounds - in their homes, their communities and workplaces. However, some populations are more at risk of experiencing violence. Women are the victims of over 80% of intimate partner violence in Canada. Women are often the targets of extreme incidents of violence in workplaces, universities and colleges. In Canada, a female is killed every two and a half days - a statistic that has remained largely the same for 40 years, according to the first annual report on national femicide rates by the Femicide Observatory.<sup>49</sup>

Limited studies show that people in LGBTQ2S+ communities (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, two-spirit, +) often face higher levels of physical, emotional, and sexual violence in their lives than the general population.<sup>50</sup> Recent research in Canada also highlights the importance of multiple forms of stigma and violence that vulnerable groups such as sex workers face. This may include difficult relationships with law enforcement and health care providers due to the criminalization of sex work, in addition to the violence faced in their personal lives. Reaching out to female-identified sex workers directly through the Safe Harbour Outreach Project (SHOP) helped us begin to understand the impacts of violence and the types of supports that are needed to resonate with the reality of their lives.<sup>51</sup>

Indigenous women in Canada are especially vulnerable and targeted for violence - twelve times more likely to be murdered or go missing and three times more likely to experience physical and sexual assault compared to other women. This finding is from the most recent General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization, which found that Indigenous women had an overall rate of self-reported violent victimization that was nearly triple that of non-Indigenous women. As well, Indigenous women were more likely than non-Indigenous women to be a victim of spousal violence in the five years that preceded the GSS on Victimization.<sup>52</sup> The final report from the inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), found that at its roots, colonialism, discrimination and genocide are the main causes of the high rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ2S+ people. The violations and abuses perpetrated historically and maintained today by the Canadian state, designed to displace Indigenous Peoples from their land, social structures, and governance and to eradicate their existence as Nations, communities, families, and individuals – is the cause of the disappearances, murders, and violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ2S+ people. This continuing violence experienced by Indigenous women was the focus of Marion Bueller’s speech at the release of the final report from the MMIWG Inquiry held on June 3rd, 2019 where she stated: "The significant, persistent and deliberate pattern of systemic racial and gendered human and indigenous rights violations and abuses perpetrated historically and maintained today by the Canadian state...the cause of the disappearances, murders, and violence experienced by Indigenous women...and this is genocide."<sup>53</sup> Our engagement with Indigenous women, sex workers, refugees and migrant workers challenged our narrow definition of violence and helped us understand the importance of cultural traditions and practices as key resources in dealing with the impacts of discrimination, racism, colonialism and war.

## **Methodology**

From the outset, the SJSWC approached this project by grounding it in core feminist principles which prioritized consultation with a broad range of organizations and groups in the province early on in our project timeline. The representatives on our Advisory Committee helped ensure that key organizations involved in violence prevention and women's economic empowerment were engaged in the project upfront and able to provide input into the online survey, focus groups and other research activities, and will continue to guide our future work on DV@Work in the province.

## **Qualitative Methods**

The present study enriches the existing quantitative research on the impacts of DV in the workplace through a series of qualitative components such as public Roundtables (RT), closed focus groups (FG), and interviews (KI) conducted with survivors, workers, frontline service providers, managers, advocates and union representatives. In partnership with Advisory Committee members and other organizations, sessions were held throughout the province in the fall of 2018. One Roundtable was dedicated solely to Indigenous women. One focus group was designed for female migrant workers, another for refugees, another for Indigenous women living in coastal Labrador and another for sex workers. Outreach and recruitment of participants was done by the community-based organizations in the immediate local area. Each focus group/Roundtable was conducted using the following set of general questions:

- What are some of your concerns about the impacts of domestic violence in your work/workplace? What does this mean for you and your co-workers?
- What types of policies, programs or services are needed to address the ways DV affects women's work lives?
- What DV issues are particular/specific to women in terms of the jobs they hold? Are there differences in rural areas of the province?
- What roles/responsibilities can you identify for community organizations, governments, unions, and businesses? Are there any successes that you can share?

The discussions that took place in the focus groups and Roundtables were documented anonymously by a note taker. Anyone who felt they needed to speak privately with researchers were given the option to have a private individual interview and researchers conducted four such interviews. These interviews were unstructured and guided by the concerns of the interviewee. The full list of direct outreach/sessions completed for this research is listed below and broken down by region of the province.

**Table 1: Qualitative Outreach**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Type and Number of Sessions</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Eastern	1 Community Roundtable	30
	3 Closed Focus Groups	25
	2 Closed Group Presentations	10
	1 Public Group Presentation	23
	3 Individual Interviews	3
	1 Closed Group Presentation	35
Central	1 Community Roundtable	25
Western	3 Closed Focus Groups	20
	1 Community Roundtable	29
Labrador	1 Public Group Presentation	20
	1 Closed Group Presentation	10
	2 Closed Focus Groups	10
	1 Individual Interview	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>21 Sessions</b>	<b>241</b>

## Quantitative (Survey) Methods

Surveys to gather data to better understand the impacts of domestic violence in workplaces have been conducted in a few countries, including Canada, but data on workplaces in Newfoundland and Labrador is seriously lacking. Research is urgently needed to inform policy makers, front line service providers and employers about best practices in responding to this issue. This survey set out to fill this gap by allowing for cross-jurisdictional comparison where possible, and by providing some additional knowledge about DV and ways that it affects workers and workplaces in our province. Our survey was initially based on the 2014 pan-Canadian survey developed by the CLC and researchers at CREVAWC at the University of Western Ontario. Given the concerns with lack of participation from residents of NL in the 2014 pan-Canadian survey, special efforts were made to redesign this survey for distribution in Newfoundland and Labrador. Representatives of the Advisory Committee and other organizations throughout the province were invaluable in shaping questions for the newly constructed survey. We were all aware of how important statistical data can be in forming new legislation, frontline services and in developing workplace policies that support violence prevention and safety of DV survivors, as too often, if you aren't counted, you don't count.

The present survey was active online from July 2018 to January 2019 and utilized a Qualtrics Software database managed by CREVAWC at the University of Western Ontario. It was open to all residents of the province, all genders, aged 15 years and older, and workers in all occupations. An open sampling method was used where the survey was made public and accessible to everybody who could read the English language (although we did hire a translator for our session with Syrian refugees - Arabic). Survey responses were collected online (via the CREVAWC database) through links provided on the websites of the SJSWC, the NLFL and affiliated unions, Unifor, the Office to Advance Women Apprentices, all Status of Women Councils, and other helpful partners. In communities where people did not have stable Internet access (such as northern remote communities), the SJSWC provided print copies of the survey. Responses from completed print surveys were entered into the CREVAWC database.

The survey consisted of over 140 closed and open-ended questions that focused on worker demographics and their experiences with domestic violence and the workplace, including questions regarding whether they were personally experiencing or had ever experienced domestic violence. Those with personal domestic violence experience were asked additional questions such as how the violence affected their work and their co-workers, whether they discussed the violence with anyone at work, and what types of support they received. They were also asked if they were aware of co-workers who might be experiencing or perpetrating domestic violence. Finally, a section of the survey focused on a range of questions about the respondent's health and well-being.

Closed-ended questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS V.24 software. When possible, chi-square tests were conducted to examine some of the intersectional differences between respondents based upon gender, age, health/disability, nationality, sexual orientation, and their experiences of DV, etc. A thematic analysis of open-ended questions added further insight and richness to some of the issues raised in the survey questions. The report that follows outlines the main findings from this research.

## **Research Results**

### **Demographics of Survey Respondents**

In total 1,567 people participated in the online survey: 88.6% were female and 9.5% were male. The remainder identified as trans women (.2%), trans men (.3%), and non-binary individuals (1.4%). Over 77% of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 54 (See Table 2 below for a full description of age ranges). Most respondents were Canadian citizens: 20% were permanent residents, .1% were in Newfoundland and Labrador on a student permit, and .2% on a work permit. The vast majority were born in Newfoundland and Labrador (85%), while 11% were born in another Canadian province and 4% were born in another country. 97% of respondents said that English was their first language. One hundred sixty respondents (10%) identified as an Indigenous person of Canada. 61% of the Indigenous respondents identified as First Nations, 16% were Inuit-Nunatsiavut, 3.6% were Inuit-NunatuKavut, 8.6% were Métis and 10% identified as other. 7% of the respondents self-described as a person of colour or a visible minority.

**Table 2. Age Range/Percentage of Respondents**

<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
15 - 24	140	10.0%
25 - 34	394	28.2%
35 - 44	387	27.7%
45 - 54	298	21.3%
55 - 64	149	10.7%
65 - 74	24	1.7%
75+	4	.3%

Survey participants also identified their sexuality and 69% identify as heterosexual, while 3% identify as lesbian, 6.6% as bisexual, .7% as gay, 4% as queer, .5% as two-spirit, .2% as intersex, and 1.0% as trans.<sup>54</sup> Among the respondents, 661 (42%) reported having a disability: 4.4% of these had a physical disability, 4% reported having a learning disability, 19% had a mental health challenge, 2.5% reported low vision or a vision disability, 2.7% reported to be hard of hearing, .2% reported being culturally deaf (e.g., sign language is the first language) and 2.5% reported having another type of disability.<sup>55</sup>

## **Employment**

Over 93% of respondents worked in Newfoundland and Labrador. The majority had permanent employment (58%) and over half were unionized employees (50.6%). The majority of respondents indicated that they work on average between 30-39 hours per week. The remainder reported working 60+ hours per week (8.4%), 40-59 hours per week (36.5%), 20-29 hours per week (5%), and less than 20 hours per week (6.6%). 9.7% of the respondents indicated that they were currently on leave from work. Of these, 23% indicated they were on temporary layoff, with 18.5% on short-term disability or sick leave, 18% on permanent layoff, 12% on parental leave, and 11% on long-term disability. 32% of respondents indicated that their workplace had under 20 workers, 26% indicated 20-99 workers, 16% indicated 100-500 workers, 13% indicated more than 500 workers and 5.6% of respondents worked alone.

Survey respondents were employed in a wide range of sectors (see Table 3 below), including health care and social assistance (23.8%), educational services (7.3%), construction (6.7%), public administration (6.2%) and law enforcement and justice related occupations (3.6%). We were interested to know if there were any links between occupations and DV, which has been rarely studied. Analysis of our survey data showed that there were no significant differences in rates of violence in any particular occupational sector.

**Table 3. Workplace Sectors of Survey Respondents**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Health care and social assistance (incl. community support work)	<b>304</b>	23.8%
Educational Services	<b>93</b>	7.3%
Construction	<b>86</b>	6.7%
Public administration	<b>79</b>	6.2%
Administrative & support, waste management, remediation services	<b>74</b>	5.8%
Professional, scientific and technical services	<b>68</b>	5.3%
Accommodation and food services	<b>48</b>	3.8%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	<b>47</b>	3.7%
Law Enforcement/Security	<b>46</b>	3.6%
Finance and insurance	<b>38</b>	3.0%
Retail trade	<b>29</b>	2.3%
Information and cultural industries	<b>28</b>	2.2%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	<b>27</b>	2.1%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	<b>24</b>	1.9%
Transportation and warehousing	<b>21</b>	1.6%
Housecleaning and/or paid domestic labour	<b>16</b>	1.3%
Management of companies and enterprises	<b>12</b>	0.9%
Utilities	<b>12</b>	0.9%
Manufacturing	<b>10</b>	0.8%
Sex Work	<b>5</b>	0.4%
Real estate and rental and leasing	<b>2</b>	0.2%
Wholesale trade	<b>1</b>	0.1%
Other	<b>206</b>	16.1%

### **Experiences of Domestic Violence**

Over half of the respondents (53.5%) reported having experienced domestic violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime, with 13.5% indicating it was from a current partner and 89.1% indicating it was from a past partner.<sup>56</sup> Further, 21.4% indicated that they had experienced domestic violence in the past 12 months. Approximately half of DV survivors (47%) said they had to move homes or change their living situation. Further, 57% said the DV caused them financial stress and over 36% indicated that they stayed in the abusive relationship for financial reasons.

Unsurprisingly, more women (55%) than men (31%) report experiencing domestic violence. Although the number of LGBTQ2S+ respondents was small, they were much more likely to experience violence (67%) than people who identify as heterosexual (51%). Two thirds of trans women and three quarters of trans men reported experiencing domestic violence. Almost 85% of non-binary people said they experienced domestic violence.

Our study showed that people who identify as an Indigenous person of Canada experienced more domestic violence (59%) than people who do not identify as Indigenous (53%). However, we found no significant difference between the number of Indigenous women who experienced domestic violence (57%) and the number of women who are not Indigenous (55%). The percentages for both groups are very high, especially when compared to the findings from the national CLC survey. Similarly, there was no significant difference in our study between the amount of domestic violence reported by women who describe as being part of a visible minority (57%) when compared to women who are not part of a visible minority (55%).

Unlike the results of national studies, youth was not a major determinant in the DV experienced by survey respondents. People aged 35-44 reported the most violence (58.4%) but there was a high proportion of violence reported in most age groups. Overall, the number of respondents experiencing DV was the same for those who were unionized (N = 323, 47.4%) and non-unionized (N = 327, 47.9%).

There was a strong correlation among people who experienced domestic violence and those likely to have a health concern and/or a disability (see Table 4 below). In general, the study found that health is negatively correlated with experiences of abuse, [ $r(1191) = -.161, p < .001$ ].<sup>57</sup> This suggests that people with poor health experience more domestic violence than people with better health. Further, mental health is negatively correlated with experiences of abuse, [ $r(1191) = -.287, p = .001$ ]. This means that people with poor mental health experience more violence than people with better mental health. The association between mental health and domestic violence is stronger than the association between overall general health and domestic violence.<sup>58</sup> Also, self-reported quality of life is positively correlated with experiences of abuse, [ $r(1184) = .265, p < .001$ ], suggesting that people who self-report with a better quality of life are less likely to have experienced domestic violence. In our focus groups, advocates also spoke of the additional stress DV survivors experience from AESL (re: Income Support) policies that require single parents to seek child-support payments from perpetrators as such policies can sometimes place survivors at risk.

**Table 4. Experience of Domestic Violence by Type of Disability**

<b>DV over Lifetime?</b>	Yes
<b>Physical Disability</b>	68.2%
<b>Learning Disability</b>	54.8%
<b>Mental Health Challenge</b>	74.4%
<b>Vision Disability</b>	65.8%
<b>Hard of Hearing</b>	61.0%
<b>Culturally Deaf</b>	0%
<b>Other Disability</b>	70.3%
<b>No Disability</b>	47.4%

### **The Impacts of DV in Workplaces**

The vast majority (85.5%) of respondents who experienced DV at home said that it continued into their workplace. Of these, 22.4% said they received abusive phone calls or text messages while at work, 11% indicated that an abusive person stalked or harassed them near the workplace, 9.1% indicated that an abusive person made a disruptive personal visit to their workplace, 7.5% indicated that they received an abusive email, and 7.1% indicated that an abusive person contacted their co-workers, employers, or potential employers. Only 14.5% of survey respondents indicated that the DV they experienced at home did not impact them at work.

Of those respondents who experienced domestic violence, 93.5% said that it had at least one negative impact on their work performance. The most common impacts include feeling distracted (stress, abusive phone calls, emails - 31%), feeling unwell (anxiety, depression, headache, etc. as a direct result of the DV - 29%), and feeling tired (mainly due to sleep deprivation from the DV - 28%). The vast majority of participants in both our focus groups and in the survey stressed the value and importance of having paid time off to deal with the impacts of DV. This was of crucial importance to DV survivors who needed to remain working in order to retain some financial independence and stability. Approximately half of DV survivors (47%) indicated that they had to take time from work because of the DV they were experiencing.

Workers in transition houses and shelters stressed the importance of having up-to-date policies and trained staff to provide adequate services to LGBTQ2S+ survivors and perpetrators who seek their help. Many advocates and survivors spoke about the loss of access to transportation when exiting an abusive relationship and the problems this causes for women trying to maintain employment. Problems were wide-ranging and included abusers who withhold transportation, poor or non-existent public transportation especially in smaller towns and the increased risks incurred from having to rely on a perpetrator for transportation.

*“DV affects women’s confidence and self-esteem. It keeps women out of the workforce. It also predetermines where they work and what hours they can work. Can’t do a shift? Can’t travel to work? Can’t work where there might be other men and jealousy is a constant issue? If you aren’t ‘dependable’ it limits your growth potential. Women are stuck in entry level positions.” (FG-4)*

**Overall, 31.5% of DV survivors reported that the violence impacted their ability to go to work.** The most common barriers included being physically injured (20%), being physically restrained (15%), and car keys or transportation money hidden, stolen, or withheld (12%). Survivors also reported they received threats that an enforcement agency would be contacted (10%) and that perpetrators refuse to care for children (10%). Further, 10% of people experiencing domestic violence reported that it made them late for work, while 12% reported that it made them absent from work.

**Of those who experienced domestic violence, 38% stated that it influenced their choice of career path or career trajectory.** 38% women and 17% men reported that DV had some influence on their career. In focus groups, many women stated that they lost or quit their jobs because of the impacts of DV in their workplaces. Participants disclosed that DV survivors sometimes had their employment terminated while they “get their home situation in order.” Losing jobs because of domestic violence was also raised by sex workers who talked about the lack of workplace and community supports to deal with domestic violence which, in some cases, resulted in them engaging initially in sex work (FG-1-).

The impacts of DV on employment status, career paths and career trajectories were notably evident among Indigenous women in our survey. Certainly, the trauma of DV and its health impacts can prevent women from seeking work altogether. In our Roundtables, Indigenous women talked about how DV trauma interacts with exclusion, racism and/or discrimination to create challenges in engaging with and accessing the labour market. Without adequate programs designed for Indigenous women, these impacts further undermine self-esteem, perpetuate poor treatment of Indigenous people and maintain social barriers.

Focus group participants also linked DV with their views on women’s occupational choices: “Some women are just not allowed or supported to have jobs where they work with men” (FG-4-2). Others, interestingly, said that making a ‘career choice’ is sometimes a part of the healing journey for DV survivors who steer themselves into a wide range of female-dominated helping occupations. Their personal lived experience of DV is seen as a ‘skill set’ that they believe can be of value to others because they are able to empathize with the experiences of other DV survivors. This career switch to helping occupations aligns the survivor’s own personal healing journey with their desire to support and empower others to escape violence. Working with other women in a wide range of ‘helping professions’ helps some survivors of DV with a fulfilling purpose in their

work lives. It is important to note, however, that survivors of DV who work in helping occupations often need workplace supports that are trauma-informed, gender-based and flexible. This is due to their own need to process the trauma they experienced directly and to also find healthy ways to deal with the ongoing secondary trauma they may experience as a result of disclosure by other women in their workplaces.

The finding that DV can direct women's career choices points to another distressing concern that efforts these past few decades to encourage women and girls to broaden their occupational choices may be severely constrained by the presence of domestic violence in their lives. We also must be aware that the impacts of DV in their work lives is in addition to the stunning finding from the 2018 Angus Reid poll that found that more than one in four (28%) of Canadians have experienced sexual harassment at work, with most of these being women. This is clearly an area that requires further research to determine the myriad ways that gender-based violence impacts the gender wage gap through its correlation with career choices, sectors, and the career trajectories among DV survivors and those closest to them. It also points to the need for reassessing frontline career counselling services, ensuring that employment readiness and pre-employment programs are trauma-informed, and adequately preparing and supporting the training needs of counselling staff in employment support agencies.

### ***Impacts on Co-workers***

**Almost 42% of respondents who experienced domestic violence discussed it with someone in their workplace.** Of those respondents, 14% talked to a co-worker, 8% talked to a supervisor or a manager, 2% talked to human resources or the personnel department, and 1% talked to the union representative. 1% of respondents reported talking to someone else, such as a counsellor provided through an employee assistance program (EAP). Of those who confided in a co-worker, 66% said that the co-worker was helpful, mostly by providing a listening ear. However, 60% of those confiding in a co-worker also said that these co-workers were negatively affected by the DV. Impacts ranged from co-workers being stressed or concerned (24%), increased workload (11%), intercepting phone calls and messages (8%), to co-workers themselves being harmed or threatened (2%).

Participants in the focus groups and Roundtables also shed light on the impacts of DV on both workers and co-workers. Concerns focused on shifting workloads due to absenteeism - and that co-workers of DV survivors often have no choice but to take on an additional workload. When this additional work is unrecognized by supervisors, it can easily result in co-worker resentment, especially when co-workers are not aware of what is happening with those experiencing DV. Focus group participants also talked about the unrecognized danger and personal risks associated with assisting a co-worker who is attempting to leave an abusive partner without the presence of useful supports. Some talked about being ignored by management when advocating for a DV survivor and their feelings of frustration with the lack of training and supports in the workplace to deal with all of the compounding aspects of domestic violence.

Women who work in businesses, service agencies and front-line organizations open to the public feel particularly vulnerable. This is especially true for women in rural communities because often there are no other options for shopping or services. One woman who witnessed a homicide in her rural workplace talked about her feelings after such an incident. She explained that she felt naïve and personally responsible for not understanding the seriousness of her co-worker's situation. In an interview with us, Beth<sup>59</sup> (pseudonym) told us about her experiences of feeling all alone while trying to support her co-worker in a rural health clinic where she worked as a nurse:

*Beth's co-worker, Marie, did everything she could to let those around her at the clinic know that she needed help. She told managers, and co-workers. She asked for cameras to be installed. She asked for support getting to and from work. With Beth's support, Marie sent emails about the general safety of the building, especially that you couldn't see who was approaching the building at the main entrance. None of this worked. One day Marie's ex-partner pulled up in front of the clinic and the clinic staff had no idea he was coming in with a gun. They had just finished their lunch and Beth, a nurse in the clinic, was in the washroom. That's when she heard the shots and peeked out, only to see Marie lying on the floor. She heard him pacing back and forth near the reception desk yelling: "Are you happy now?" Then she heard another shot, as he shot himself. She ran out of the washroom and out of the building to the elementary school across the road which was locked down immediately. Both Marie and her ex-partner died that day. Beth spent the next nine months on leave from work.*

*Today, six years later, Beth is a strong advocate for safer workplaces for nurses – for such things as keeping the front doors to clinics locked so staff can monitor people coming inside. But she still can't get the importance of their safety through to the managers, who say: "the likelihood of this (incident) ever happening again is so slim!" She told us that nurses are constantly being told they have to be nicer to people coming into the clinics. The union tells nurses: "Don't go to the manager when something violent happens. Call the police immediately." She said: "We've endured this all these years!" (KI-1)*

Beth's direct exposure to this violent situation at work and her response to it indicate the possibility of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). For co-workers in general, however, who often are the likely confidants for disclosure of DV, we need to also be aware that they may be at increased risk of vicarious trauma, sometimes referred to as secondary trauma.<sup>60</sup> This is the internalized effect of indirect trauma that can occur when people are exposed to difficult or disturbing images and stories second-hand. It is crucial that vicarious trauma be acknowledged and addressed in workplaces as part of a comprehensive and multifaceted set of workplace resources to address DV at work.<sup>61</sup>

Survey respondents were also asked about their views on co-worker's experiences of DV in their workplaces. Over 37% said that they believe they have at least one co-worker who is experiencing, or has previously experienced, domestic violence. Only 23% reported that they did not believe any of their co-workers experienced DV. 57% of respondents said that their co-worker's DV situation affected their ability to work. Another 10% said they did not think their work was affected and 33% were unsure. The most common ways in which work performance was affected was distraction (due to stress, abusive phone calls, emails - 26%), feeling unwell (anxiety, depression, headaches from the DV - 24%), and feeling tired (due to sleep deprivation from the DV - 2%).

When asked if they recognized any warning signs that a co-worker may be experiencing domestic violence, the most commonly reported signs were anxiety and fear (11%), missing work or lateness for work (10%), and emotional upset or flatness, tearfulness, depression, aggression, anger, and/or suicidal thoughts (8%). Almost 14% of the sample reported that they believed they had at least one co-worker who is being abusive, or has previously been abusive, toward his/her partner. 46% said they were unsure and 40% said they did not think so. When asked if they recognized any warning signs that a co-worker may be a perpetrator of DV, the most common responses included that they didn't know/weren't sure (30.63%), followed by talk that puts their partner down (9.8%) and lying to make themselves look good (8.62%).

## Workplace Supports

Focus group participants described some situations where employers and union representatives stepped in and supported DV survivors, often by arranging for job relocation or time off. Most participants however, said women are more often not supported in addressing DV in their workplaces. Advocates stated overwhelmingly that the onus is usually put on women to deal with and address the DV:

***“Some are lucky enough to have a boss who is helpful. But most women are told outright to stop bringing their baggage to work. Sometimes women are lucky, and a boss moves a shift around. We've seen other women charged because they fight back! And sometimes the employer doesn't even know what's going on.”*** (FG-4-1)

In our survey, over 65% of respondents said that they feel that employers are not aware when DV is impacting workers in their workplaces. Only 37% said they were aware of

any employer or union-provided resources or supports related to DV. Participants in the focus groups echoed the disconnect with employers on DV issues. Those from front-line service organizations talked about the lack of basic education about domestic violence and felt that most people don't really understand the scope and depth of DV issues and therefore do not even recognize when it happens. Most people think: "if he doesn't hit me, it's not violence" (FG-4-6). Many organizational representatives spoke about the importance of making basic education about DV mandatory in the school system as well as in programs offered by the Community Youth Networks throughout the province. They feel that training on DV should be a standard requirement in every workplace in the province.

Of the DV survivors who reached out to people at work, 59% reported that their supervisor or manager was helpful to them by providing paid time off (19%) and by assisting with changing work arrangements (15%). Over half of the respondents who experienced domestic violence reported that the human resource or personnel department was helpful (57%), mostly by helping DV survivors arrange for paid time off (19.6%) and 13% said that they helped with arranging counselling services. Only 17% of respondents said they received DV related resources in their workplaces.

In our survey, 44% of DV survivors said that someone besides a co-worker, supervisor, manager, or human resources person provided them with assistance at work. The most common way in which this person was helpful was by assisting to create a safety plan (15%), alerting security staff in an emergency (15%) and by helping to arrange paid time off (15%).

Our survey asked about the role of union officials as well. 44% of unionized workers in our sample said that shop stewards and/or union representatives were not aware or prepared for DV situations in their workplaces. However, 91% said that when they are aware, they act in supportive ways such as assisting with making changes to working arrangements or practices (21%) and assisting with arranging paid time off (21%). Only 18% of respondents who were unionized said the union provided resource information about DV. Participants in our focus groups discussed the important role of unions in educating workers about workplace violence. They were adamant that unions can be much more successful in reducing the impacts of DV and violent behaviours than top-down zero tolerance policies from distant managers that raise the stakes for perpetrators and even exacerbate ill-feelings and conflict in the workplace.

Some workplaces have a designated person in place to assist workers with DV issues. Only 17% of respondents stated they were aware of a designated person in their workplace. Among those who were aware of a designated person, 6% indicated that they discussed the DV with this person and 58% of these found the designated person to be helpful, mainly by assisting with counselling services (26%) and arranging time off (7%).

Overall, the vast majority of respondents (80%) said they believe that DV impacts the lives of workers either quite a bit or a whole lot. Most respondents (71.4%) also agreed

that workplace supports such as paid leave and safety policies for DV survivors are necessary and can reduce the impact of DV on the lives of workers. Only 28% didn't know or weren't sure how effective these supports could be in their workplaces.

In total, 42% of respondents stated that mostly positive things happened as a result of them discussing the DV with people at work. Further, 63% indicated that they did not experience any negative actions from their employer, union, or co-workers as a result of discussing domestic violence in the workplace. For those disclosing situations of DV, confidentiality is very important. Only 50% of respondents who disclosed said that the information about their situation was held in confidence and shared only with those who needed to know to protect their safety and privacy. Employers, union representatives, HR personnel, supervisors and co-workers all need to be trained in confidentiality procedures in DV situations at work.

In our Roundtable in a small rural community one participant explained their struggle with ensuring confidentiality and the fact that “it feels impossible in a small community but it is unlikely that someone will reach out for help unless it can be assured.” Another woman explained: “When it comes to DV, everyone here knows them. Every person and every workplace knows...they just pretend they don't see.” (RT3-3)

### ***Supports in Rural and Remote Communities***

An important concern highlighted in the focus groups was the difficulty of living in small rural communities while trying to escape DV situations. Staff at the Status of Women Councils throughout the province are often the first point of contact for women escaping violence, especially in communities without a local shelter. The Councils act as a referral agency trying to support DV survivors, often by negotiating the red tape associated with housing DV survivors or accessing transportation services to take women to communities where shelters exist. While women in rural communities are generally able to rely on a network of close supports, other concerns were raised regarding the overall safety of their extended community supports, lack of police support, lack of services and assistance (financial and otherwise) relating to relocation options, and the dangers associated with having close proximity to perpetrators on a daily basis.

In smaller communities where situations of abuse may be common knowledge throughout the community, women struggle with housing options when they need to relocate. For instance, participants described the attitudes of landlords who try to ‘avoid exposure’ to such problems. Similar challenges were described in women's places of work as 12% of survey respondents who had experienced DV reported that they were actually working in the same workplace as their abuser.

Other women noted that leaving an abusive relationship often means losing access to the family vehicle. With no other options for transportation to and from work, women sometimes have no choice but to rely on their ex-partners who control access to the vehicle. This close proximity of DV survivors to their perpetrators makes them even more vulnerable to further violence and employment instability. Frustrated and fearful, DV survivors often quit their jobs to help ensure their safety or are fired by employers who offer no support whatsoever. In workplaces where the survivor and perpetrator are both employed, the close proximity poses particular challenges for employers and unions who have responsibilities to protect them both and ensure the safety of everyone, including co-workers who may also be affected by the abusive behaviours.

## Experiences with Public Safety Providers

When DV survivors decide to leave a violent relationship, they are entering an intensely dangerous period of time. Having appropriate, timely and safe supports in place for DV survivors is one of the most important challenges facing both the victims of violence and the agencies mandated with their protection. These supports can be found in a range of community agencies, businesses, and government services including shelters, legal services, policing and the justice system. This research aimed to gain some insight into how DV survivors experience these protections because we recognize that there are complex barriers and deterrents associated with reporting DV. **Almost 11% of DV survivors in our survey indicated that their perpetrator worked in a field that directly impacted their decision to seek such support services (i.e. police officer, lawyer, at the local hospital, etc.).**

### *Experiences with the Police*

In Canada, DV is a serious social and legal issue and its criminalization is intended to act as a deterrent to perpetration. According to the Statistics Canada 2016 report on Family Violence in Canada, 70% of survivors did not report spousal violence to the police. Of these reported incidents, only 19% were self-reported directly by the victim.<sup>62</sup> Our present study asked about the experiences of DV survivors and the effectiveness of their interaction with the police and the justice system. Among those who experienced DV, 31% said they reported the DV to the police. This is higher than the 2016 national study referenced above. Most said that the police were very helpful (26%) or somewhat helpful (41%), while 30% reported that they were not helpful at all (see Table 16). Only 18% of those who had engaged with the police and/or taken other legal routes reported that they received some workplace supports concurrently with police supports during that time.

The importance of documenting Indigenous women’s experiences with police requires further investigation because, as the Missing and Murdered Inquiry states, the police have historically ignored and continue to ignore their concerns. The Inquiry recommendations call for more responsive, transparent, and accountable policing: including investigations, prosecutions, and oversight.<sup>63</sup> In our focus groups, Indigenous women discussed the fact that the overall lack of trust combined with the gaps and neglect in policing services, makes reaching out for assistance very difficult. **In our survey, Indigenous women found the police to be less helpful than people who were not Indigenous** (see Table 17).

**Table 16. Rating Police Helpfulness**

**When reporting DV, please rate the overall helpfulness of the police?**

Gender	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not at all helpful	Don’t know/not sure
Woman	26.9%	41.7%	28.0%	3.4%
Man	0%	20%	80%	0%
Trans	0%	100%	0%	0%
Non-binary	20%	40%	40%	0%

**Table 17. Indigenous Women’s Rating of Police Helpfulness**

Indigenous Woman?	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not at all helpful	Don’t know/not sure
Yes	20%	40%	35%	5%
No	28%	42%	27%	3%

Participants in our focus groups and Roundtables voiced concerns that police officers were not drawing on the knowledge in communities and gaining the benefits of community-based training to inform their knowledge of domestic violence like they had in previous years. One participant said: “It feels like we are going backwards. There used to be ‘police training’ and workshops done through our community organizations here in town. These days domestic violence seems more buried” (FG-2). This concern about the lack of police training was reiterated by police officers themselves who described their training as “on the spot” (RT1-1).

Participants in our focus groups raised the issue that rural police stations are particularly challenged in dealing with internal DV issues as they can employ husband and wife teams of officers who are not easy to replace on short notice. In addition, a police supervisor said they currently do not have any clear guidance or policy direction on dealing with internal DV situations in their stations.

In other focus groups, participants described the interactions between DV survivors and the police and the justice system in rural communities throughout the province. They reported ways that court processes are not working for DV survivors and can actually compound the risk that women face. In one busy court in Labrador for example, the huge backlog with constant ‘staying’ of proceedings provides no justice or reduction in risk for women trying to escape violence in small communities. They also outlined how hospitals and clinics do not have adequate supports for survivors of sexual assault. In fact, women sometimes have no choice but to sit in the same hospital waiting room as their perpetrators. As a result, women get frustrated, scared and end up dropping the charges. Instead they are left on their own to find their own supports, make their own safety plans, and develop strategies to help keep themselves and their children as safe as possible (FG1-6). For some women this means quitting their jobs.

In our focus group with female-identified sex workers, they talked about developing alternate informal strategies and protocols to keep themselves safe. This group of workers have to endure stereotyping, criminalization, and are often forced to work outdoors where they are exposed to increased violence. Rather than engage with police officers, they described coming together and developing their own security system which consists of a ‘Bad Date’ notice board at a local support organization. They also depend on active social media networks to flag violent men so other sex workers can avoid them and protect themselves.

Both our survey and focus group participants were asked about the effectiveness of more institutionalized forms of protection such as Emergency Protection Orders (EPOs). Many participants in the focus groups raised concerns that EPOs give survivors a “false sense of security” and are available only for incidents of intimate partner violence and not for situations

of violence from other family members. This restriction causes problems for many women who found that the narrow definition itself of ‘domestic violence’ interferes with and prevents adequate responses to the varying types of violence in their lives. It also ignores the intersecting conditions that increase the likelihood of violence. Migrant workers and refugees stated that, should they report DV, they and/or their extended family members might risk extradition. Like many Indigenous women, migrant women also worry that they risk being separated from their children.

Our survey found that among those experiencing DV, 17% tried to get an emergency protection order. Perceptions of the process itself and its helpfulness were mixed, as 24% found the process to be very helpful, 31% somewhat helpful, but 43% found the process to be not at all helpful. Only 12% of this group reported that an emergency protection order was eventually put in place, and 60% stated that the emergency protection order included their workplace as a place not to be approached by the abuser. In our focus groups, advocates also raised concerns about the helpfulness of EPOs, especially in terms of ensuring that women can remain employed. One advocate described supporting a woman who had an EPO taken out against her partner. She pressed charges but then he was released by the police. He breached the restraining order three times so clearly it was not being enforced. She was a working professional and finally had to quit her job and leave town (FG3-3).

### ***Experiences with Family and Criminal Law Systems***

Survey respondents were asked about their engagement with other areas of family law as well. Of the total experiencing DV, 31% reported that they had tried to use the family law system to deal with separation issues (custody, access, support, property division, etc.). The most common way in which people used the family law system was through court (35%). Of those who used the family court system, most reported it as somewhat helpful (42%). However, 38% reported that it was not at all helpful, and 15% reported it as very helpful. Of those who used lawyer negotiations, most found it somewhat helpful (38%) and 23% reported that it was very helpful. However, 35% reported that it was not at all helpful. Of those who used mediation, most reported that it was not at all helpful (53%). However, 26% reported that it was somewhat helpful, and 13% reported that it was very helpful. Of those who used some other type of family law (e.g., victim services, family aid), most reported that it was not at all helpful (45%). However, 28% reported that it was somewhat helpful, and 6% reported that it was very helpful.

Of those who used the family violence intervention court (St. John’s), 29% reported that it was somewhat helpful and 10% reported that it was very helpful. 37% said it was not at all helpful.

When asked about reaching out to the criminal law system for support in dealing with a DV situation, 18% of respondents reported that they had some level of interaction with this system. Most (46%) reported that the criminal law system was not at all helpful whereas 10% reported that it was very helpful and 37% reported that it was somewhat helpful.

## Limitations of the Research

This research investigates the ways that domestic violence impacts workers and workplaces in Newfoundland and Labrador. It does not focus on the many other forms of violence that occur in workplaces such as physical violence, psychological violence (including harassment and bullying and verbal abuse), or sexual violence (including sexual harassment and assault). Nor does it address other forms of discriminatory harassment such as racism, criminal violence, and technology-based violence including cyber-bullying. None of these types of violence are mutually exclusive, and each form raises particular challenges for legislators, employers, unions and workers - that need to be recognized and addressed. The relationship between the target of violence and the perpetrator is, of course, relevant. One group of workers that we regretfully were not able to adequately reach was live-in domestic workers.

Domestic violence is complex and pervasive, and by necessity, our research tried to keep a narrow focus - on the relationship between intimate partners and the ways DV behaviours infiltrate and impact workplaces. For many participants in our focus groups/Roundtables (and for the researchers at times) this narrow definition was challenging and difficult to accept. Some survey participants struggled to fit the violence they encountered at work from extended family and next-door neighbours, for example, into our DV@Work framework. In this regard we can only point to the need for more research that can encompass the many forms of violence that women encounter in their lives, all of which impact their economic stability. We also point to the need for targeted research especially with members of LGBTQ2S+ communities, temporary migrant workers and those who work alone such as personal care workers and as noted above, migrant domestic workers. We also recommend that future research focus on youth of all genders.

While we made great efforts to inform the public about the online survey and made it accessible to everyone, we are proudly a women-serving organization and as a result, many survey respondents would by default be women most interested in and impacted by DV in their work or their workplace. This may have influenced both the gender breakdown of respondents and the number of workers who said they experienced DV at work. Its effect is likely minimal, though, as women are disproportionately the targets of violence in their homes and in their workplaces. We would argue instead, that our advocacy-based position added to the richness and improved the participation of women in this research because women are so often left out of decisions related to crucial issues in their own lives. As an organization committed to the importance and value of doing rigorous community-based research, we are grateful to have the opportunity to conduct this research using qualitative and quantitative methods. We hope it begins to fill in the persistent knowledge gap that impedes frontline service providers, the police, and policy makers from providing survivors and their families with the supports they so deserve.

## **Section III: Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

In an effort to help address the concerns of both employees and employers, the following policy areas have been identified: transportation, access to housing/childcare and other basic services, improved supports for Indigenous people, rural sustainability, justice system/policing, and workplace supports. Some additional recommendations intended to direct the work of the SJSWC are also included, such as programming using an intersectional framework, advocacy seen through a feminist political economy lens which connects violence to occupational segregation, the valuing of paid/unpaid work and the gender wage gap. These recommendations will be used to develop strategic plans by the SJSWC to help focus its future work.

#### **1. Transportation**

*“I was with an abusive partner because at the time, I did not have my own car and couldn’t provide transportation for my daughter to and from school while I was at work...I had no other choice than to ‘ride it out’ until I was able to pull enough money together to do what was necessary.”*

The need for stable affordable transportation was identified as one of the main concerns in our focus groups with DV survivors, staff from transition houses and advocates from the Status of Women Councils. Access to timely and affordable transportation is a key determinant of whether or not DV survivors are able to remain safe and employed. Timely access to emergency transportation is critically important to women’s safety and it can pre-determine their safe access to other support services.

Public transportation is limited and/or not available at all in many rural and remote communities and taxis are prohibitively expensive for DV survivors. The limited routes of bus services in larger centres and their hours of operation are inadequate for workers dealing with DV. As a result, many women said they had no other choice but to rely on perpetrators to get to/from work.

1. Revisit, prioritize and streamline AESL policies that relate to issues such as taxi ‘authorizations’ which should support transition houses and all front-line agencies providing emergency DV supports. Currently, unnecessary delays and red tape interfere with efforts to ensure safe and time-sensitive supports for survivors of DV.
2. Workplace assistance with transportation needs to be included in any/all safety plans and workplace policies.
3. Increased funding for vehicles (and their annual maintenance) is immediately required for all transition houses in order to ensure survivors keep their jobs and have access to work-related supports.
4. Family Violence Leave (as recently enacted) needs to be extended to 10 paid days in NL in order to address the additional time required to access basic services particularly in those regions that do not have public transportation.

## 2. Access to Services Including Shelters, Childcare and Housing

*“This survey didn’t allow me to speak to all my jobs – my main full-time job and my part-time jobs including sex work. Working alone in any area of work can be a significant factor around domestic violence because it further isolates someone and they don’t have the same supports to turn to as in a larger workplace.”*

Affordable childcare and housing present major problems for DV survivors and directly impact their ability to both find and keep jobs. Survivors report being stuck in violent situations because of a lack of affordable housing and other financial barriers. Shelter capacity continues to be an issue due to overcrowding and time constraints/curfews.

The current cost of childcare for survivors is a grave concern for women, particularly those doing ‘shift work,’ where the shifts are often long and/or irregular. Securing evening/night-time childcare supports for single parents - is nearly impossible. Often, survivors attempting to exit violent situations with their children, find it suddenly necessary to take on additional shifts to help address the financial burden.

Some specific recommendations for policy change include the following:

1. Review the safety implications of AESL (re: Income Support) policies that require single parents to seek child-support payments from perpetrators as they often place survivors at risk.
2. Revisit curfew policies in Transition Houses that make it challenging for survivors to work during evenings and nights. More childcare supports within Transition Houses are also required.
3. Mental health supports need to be improved for both survivors and perpetrators of DV. New programs and delivery models are needed for service providers to ensure an efficient expansion of mental health supports for survivors and perpetrators of DV.
4. Temporary Migrant Workers (TMW) entering the province through the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP) report being forced to rent rooms from their employers when they first arrive and having to share rooms with strangers. The Labour Standards Act needs to be revised to address the overt racism by employers/managers towards newcomers/racialized people. Proactive and timely enforcement of employer conformance to standards by the Labour Standards Division is urgently required. Currently, worker complaints are relied upon to trigger investigations. Enforcement efforts are minimal and viewed by survivors to be ineffective.

### 3. Improved Supports for Indigenous People

*“A large circle of people can sometimes be negatively affected by the abuser, not just the person they are abusing, I would recommend looking at the bigger picture or taking a broader perspective.”*

Responses to the needs of Indigenous people require a ‘strength-based paradigm’ where individual needs are acknowledged but in the context of a health/wellness approach. A more holistic view of workplace/community often lies at the core of how Indigenous survivors conceptualize violence and this broader view impacts how/where/when and if they reach out for help. The problem is seen as ‘shared.’ Drawing from our study and the recommendations in the final report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019), so too are the solutions:

1. Temporary and deficit-based approaches do not increase capacity for self-determination or self-governance, and fail to adequately provide protection and safety, or substantive equality in the lives of Indigenous women and girls. Future funding must support strength-based programs delivered by well-resourced community-based Indigenous women’s organizations.
2. Indigenous grassroots leaders point out that useful DV resources already exist, but that stable funding is needed so that the resources may be adequately allocated and relationships nurtured over time. Short-term or project-based funding models in service areas are not helpful or sustainable and represent a violation of their inherent rights to self-governance.<sup>64</sup>
3. Fund support groups for perpetrators and their sons. Funding should be vectored at accountability and relationship-based work within communities and must in no way take resources away from Indigenous women’s organizations.

### 4. Programs and Services in Rural Communities

*“Elected officials at all levels in rural communities can be the biggest abusers and bullies and nothing is done because with few options, women fear for their jobs!”*

Many rural and remote areas are in desperate need of service agencies that are prepared to assist DV survivors. This is mainly due to the inadequate number of transition houses in the province and the higher use of transition houses in rural communities compared to urban ones. In smaller communities, this work is downloaded onto the regional Status of Women Councils that are sometimes mistaken for ‘transition houses,’ such that frontline staff and survivors are put at increased risk.

The physical proximity of DV survivors to their perpetrators poses a considerable challenge in securing supports. Survivors sometimes have no choice but to use the same health clinics, supermarkets and banks as perpetrators. Likewise, small businesses have specific challenges when it comes to providing DV accommodations and safety plans. One thing is clear - DV@Work should be much more immediately correlated to any province-wide initiatives aimed at rural sustainability.

1. Workplace policies must address the fact that many couples work at the same job site. Carefully tailored workplace accommodations need to be developed. Policies in/around confidentiality must be firmly outlined and accommodations for a couple working at the same site or in the same small community – identified and secured.
2. Strategies to help survivors and their children to relocate more quickly from one community to another need to be identified. There are long wait times to get access to courts. CSSD policies in/around custody arrangements (and their protracted timelines) need to be actively reviewed.
3. Additional resources are needed to support families dealing with mobile work that takes them away from their communities for weeks/months at a time. Seasonal outmigration is a considerable challenge for families attempting to access services. Survivors become lone parents who, rather than getting the flexible supports they require, ‘meter out’ how long they will have to put up with abuse, until their partners leave again.

## 5. Justice and Policing

***“Eight years after his physical abuse to me and my two children...we are still going to ‘family court’ to maintain child and spousal support. I planned to go to university to finish my degree - but all my money goes to legal fees and retainers.”***

In order to understand the basic scope of violence and improve protections for DV survivors, everyone needs at least accurate statistical data. The ongoing lack of police-reported data in this province needs to be addressed. The RNC’s IPV Unit has had an analyst charged with collecting and interpreting their data for several years. Yet, no report on this data has been made available to the public, or even to support agencies doing work in the area.

There are myriad reasons why survivors do not engage with police on DV issues and these require further research of a different type. There are some indications that reporting is improving slightly but only 30% of DV survivors in our study reported the DV to the police. There is still a long way to go in improving police relations with women and women’s support organizations and especially with Indigenous women. Court system backlogs and the constant ‘staying’ of proceedings are currently identified as key reasons for the little justice or validation for survivors. Survivors are tired of hearing from government officials that “it’s an infrastructure issue.

1. More female officers are needed in the RNC IPV units. In our focus groups, they were uniformly recommended by survivors for providing more compassionate and appropriate interventions. More training for RNC and RCMP officers is broadly required. Also, both RNC and RCMP need to develop their own DV workplace policies. In 2004, only 9% of RNC officers were women. In 2019, the graduating class is almost 23%. The retention rate of female RNC officers is not known at this time.
2. Legal fees and retainer fees make it all but impossible for survivors to have legal support when escaping violence. The legal process is onerous on survivors and it should be reviewed/audited. Survivors report being legally tethered to perpetrators in unending custody cases. The Department of Justice, Legal Aid and the Law Society of NL must take some responsibility for ensuring this does not continue. We recommend expanding Legal Aid through the addition of a DV Unit.
3. “Experience of DV” should be added to the provincial Human Rights Code’s list of grounds on which discrimination is prohibited.
4. Survivors with minor criminal records are finding it very hard to re-enter the labour force and/or move forward with their education.
5. Despite the federal government’s commitment to decreasing the incarceration of Indigenous women, their numbers continue to increase in the prison system. Improved community-based frontline services and supports that better meet their needs would go a long way as an intervention in decreasing their incarceration.
6. Criminalization of sex work has forced sex workers to build their own ‘security and reporting system’ with a social media network where they can flag perpetrators for one another. More ongoing and meaningful consultation is urgently required with sex workers and the organizations that support them.

## 6. Workplace Supports and Strategies

***“Education needs to take place in the workplaces – so that folks understand that if a woman ‘leaves’ her abusive relationship, that is the point when she is most in danger and her ‘ex’ is most likely to kill her. So, encouraging someone to leave is not always the safest thing to do at a specific juncture.”***

Currently, survivors and co-workers feel that employers do not take DV@Work seriously. They report having petitioned their employers for accommodations, but these requests were often ignored. Workers have been stigmatized for causing drama/disruptions at work and some have been fired due to DV. Employers need to take DV in the workplace

seriously and allocate time for ongoing dialogue in order to improve their understanding. Front line workers who are already prepared to do anti-violence and healthy relationships workshops report difficulty getting into the schools - even when programs are ready to go.

Many community-based organizations that provide employment supports also need policies or programs that relate to DV@Work.

1. A province-wide workplace training strategy is needed immediately to help workplaces of all sizes learn about, develop and implement DV@Work supports.
2. All workplaces need clearly articulated and communicated DV policies. Employers need to work with survivors to implement a workplace risk assessment. A designated on-site ‘DV@Work’ advocate, who can ensure confidentiality, also needs to be made a key priority. Some recommended accommodations may include the following: better lighting in/around the workplace, a check-in buddy system, protocols for potential relocations, a plan to control social media and the installation of security cameras.
3. All employers, large and small, need policies to address perpetrators that require that they participate in treatment programs. Employers also need a policy that enforces disciplinary action against employees who use workplace resources to abuse their partners.
4. A policy/process for incident debriefing is needed for workplaces that have experienced violent episodes and/or protracted DV dynamics. It is important to acknowledge and provide supports for all survivors of vicarious trauma experienced by co-workers, witnesses and confidants.

## **Conclusions**

This research report has provided a scan of existing and ongoing legislation and policies related to the impacts of DV on workers and in workplaces in Canada and other countries. Drawing on the results of our province-wide survey and focus groups, it outlines a range of findings and recommendations as identified by DV survivors and their advocates in front-line service organizations. The recommendations for action relate to policy, frontline services and protection services, all of which will directly contribute to the economic stability of DV survivors and help reduce workplace violence in this province. These recommendations are therefore directed at securing the health and safety of all workers within their workplaces and to increase public awareness.

The SJSWC views businesses as key social actors, not just economic actors. As such, they have the potential to be very influential members of our province in relation to the high and increasing human and economic cost of DV. New legislation that provides paid leave for DV survivors will allow for more of the supports that workers need while escaping

domestic violence. Similarly, the new OHS regulations coming into effect in January 2020, will require employers to assess their workplaces for exposure to all forms of violence, including domestic violence, and make policies and plans to address the violence. This is a good starting point but there is much work ahead of us. As Jim Stanford helpfully explains, the whole point of economic progress is precisely to enhance people's quality of life, and relatively simple measures which enhance the ability of workers to enjoy a life free from domestic violence and fear surely make a positive contribution to quality of life for generations. In short, we can no longer ignore the high personal, social and financial costs of violence against women in Newfoundland and Labrador and the country. For most businesses with a goal to survive global competition, demand, and workforce challenges, it is no longer a matter of if they will confront and eradicate DV from their workplaces, but how we can all work together to make this possible. This challenge makes it imperative that employers, community organizations and government agencies establish closer working relationships, starting by working together to ensure everyone gets the training they need and improved front-line support services are put in place for DV survivors.

# **Services for People Experiencing Domestic Violence in Newfoundland and Labrador:**

Domestic Violence Help Line 1-888-709-7090

Violence Prevention Regional Coordinating Committees:

<https://violencepreventionae.ca/about-us/regional-coordinating-committees/>

## **Carbonear Area**

O'Shaughnessy House: 709-596-8709

Toll-Free: 1-888-596-8709

Communities Against Violence (CAV):

709-596-0726

## **Clareville**

Violence Prevention Avalon East:

709-757-0137

## **Corner Brook Area**

Corner Brook Status of Women Council:

709-639-8522

Willow House: 709-634-4198

Toll Free: 1-866-634-4198

Violence Prevention West:

709-634-6606

## **Gander Area**

Gander Women's Center: 709-256-4395

Cara Transition House: 709-256-7707

Toll Free: 1-877-800-2272

Roads to End Violence: 709-651-2250

## **Grand Falls-Windsor Area**

Status of Women Central: 709-489-8919

Violence Prevention South and Central

(VPSC): 709-489-8828

## **Happy Valley-Goose Bay**

Mokami Status of Women Council:

709-896-3484

Libra House: 709-896-3014

Toll Free: 1-877-896-3014

Violence Prevention Labrador

(Goose Bay): 709-899-3231

## **Hopedale**

Selma Onalik Safe House: 709-933-3420

## **Lab City-Wabush**

Labrador West Status of Women Council:

709-944-6562

Hope Haven: 709-944-7124

Toll Free: 1-888-332-0000

Hope Haven Crisis Line: 709-944-2200

## **Marystown Area**

Grace Sparkes House: 709-279-3562

Toll Free: 1-877-774-4957

Burin Peninsula Voice Against Violence:

709-279-4030

## **Nain**

Nain Safe House: 709-922-1229

## **Natuashish**

Natuashish Safe House / Women Shelter:

709-478-2390

## **Port aux Basques Area**

Gateway Women Centre/Status of

Women Council: 709-695-7505

## **Port Saunders Area**

NorPen Status of Women Council:

709-861-4842

## **Rigolet**

Kirkina House: 709-947-3334

## **Sheshatshiu**

Nukum Munik Shelter: 709-497-8868

## **St. Anthony**

Violence Prevention Northern Peninsula:

709-454-3351

## **St. John's Area**

St. John's Status of Women Council/

Women's Centre: 709-753-0220

Iris Kirby House: 753-1492

Toll Free: 1-877-753-1492

Violence Prevention Avalon East:

709-466-4676

## **Stephenville Area**

Bay St. George Status of Women:

709-643-4444

Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's

Network (NAWN): 709-643-4563

Violence Prevention South West:

709-643-1022

Community Action Committee:

709-643-5399

For a listing of Mental Health Services and Resources throughout the Province: <https://www.bridgethegap.ca/adult/service-directory/>

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<sup>55</sup> Participants can report more than one disability.

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<sup>57</sup>  $\chi^2(1, N=1264) = 16.86, p < .001$ . These two variables are significantly negatively correlated,  $r = -.115, p < .001$ .

<sup>58</sup> This suggests that variance in mental health explains more variance in the domestic violence variable.

<sup>59</sup> All names used in this report are pseudonyms. No real names of people or places are used.

<sup>60</sup> The term vicarious traumatization (VT) was coined by Pearlman & Saakvitne (1995) to describe the profound shift in perspective that occurs in helping professionals when they work with individuals who have experienced trauma: helpers notice that their fundamental beliefs about the world are altered and possibly damaged by being repeatedly exposed to traumatic material.

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# APPENDIX

## DV@WORK NL INTERIM ACTION PLAN 2019

**DV@Work NL**



# Introduction

The following Action Plan offers a series of recommendations and actions that have been developed to build long-term capacity in government departments and agencies, community organizations and businesses - to reduce the incidents and impacts of DV and support DV survivors. In making recommendations, we felt it was necessary to begin with our own organization - the St. John's Status of Women Council. Overall, the recommendations range from improved services and infrastructure to targeted support programs that help ensure the continuity of care for DV survivors and others in workplaces throughout NL. Grouped into themes, each recommendation has been drafted to enhance interjurisdictional cooperation. This Action Plan is grounded in the following five guiding principles:

1. Actions must aim to address root causes of violence, reduce risk at all levels, and improve the quality of life for DV survivors - who may require long-term and engaged support. Support programs must therefore recognize the gendered, social, economic, political, cultural and often racist marginalization of survivors. Sustainable core funding is required for front-line community-based organizations and agencies offering supports - in order to build no-barrier programs/services for survivors.
2. Programs and policies must be trauma-informed - acknowledge the impacts of trauma and respond appropriately to the signs of trauma. All safety plans must be survivor led (focused on dignity, community support and cultural safety). Programs and services should be strengths-based and take into account not only the physical – but also the emotional, psychological, cultural, social and moral safety of survivors.
3. Our approach to building workplace supports requires coordinating services between community organizations, businesses and government agencies. This challenges businesses to look beyond a narrow business model that prioritizes profit and externalizes harm. Instead, DV@Work NL encourages new business structures that prompt employers to address DV 'in house' while also working with community organizations and agencies to reduce the jurisdictional gaps that often result in the denial of supports and/or services for all those in need.
4. Specific funding is needed to develop and deliver DV PREVENTION education/ awareness programs at all levels.
5. Programs and services need to be flexible and distinctions-based (identified and supported by intersectional data), with regionally specific plans developed through consultation.

## St. John's Status of Women Council - Interim Action Plan

This research on DV@Work found that women experience DV at alarming rates and its impacts are making their way into many workplaces in NL and across a range of sectors. In our discussions with DV survivors and their advocates, they overwhelmingly stressed that employers tend to ignore the experiences of DV survivors, marginalize them for “causing disruptions” in the workplace, and even terminate their employment due to their DV situation. It seems obvious, therefore, that DV@Work will not be eliminated with perfectly packaged toolkits, well-lit parking lots and newly built emergency hatches. A lot of work needs to be done to prepare workplaces to support survivors. As early as possible, they must be provided with trauma-informed care and a safety plan that liaises with front line service organizations, at a minimum. The type of informed support that we advocate for requires having a comprehensive and interconnected suite of policies and services and requires proactive coordination across a wide range of jurisdictions, including our police force. Workplace DV toolkits and action plans, to be useful, need to be relevant to the specific realities of Newfoundland and Labrador survivors and adapted to each sector of the provincial economy.

**Issue:** SJSWC delivers ongoing programs and services that work with DV survivors. When combined with the knowledge learned in this recent research/needs assessment, we are poised to be an invaluable regional hub and resource centre for workplaces who need guidance in launching their own specific DV@Work programs and safety protocols. SJSWC researchers are proposing to create and pilot a community-led, survivor/trauma-informed, multifaceted suite of DV policies tailored to specific agencies and workplaces.

**Action:** Over the long-term, our aim is to sustain this type of engagement and collaboration with workplaces throughout the province.

**Issue:** To prevent DV, all the key regional survivor support agencies and the province's business sector need to work together. This level of cooperation and collaboration ensures that when survivors reach out for help, they are immediately provided with appropriate services such as legal support, affordable housing, relocation, mental health counselling, childcare, re-training for new positions and just as crucially, with the safe transportation they need to get to and from work. As employers, unions and co-workers become more educated and engaged in providing these supports, our workplaces will be much better prepared to diversify its workforce and eliminate all forms of violence.

**Action:** SJSWC's front-line counsellors and the program facilitators for our empowerment programs have been doing this work in the province for nearly 50 years and our aim is to continue to build multi-disciplinary teams that are prepared to advance this work. In partnership with other front-line service organizations, the SJSWC is determined to assist workplaces with developing the knowledge they require to offer the 'in house' DV support to their employees thereby making workplaces safer for everyone.

**Issue:** This research highlighted the fact that DV survivors are financially vulnerable and more likely to increase their paid work hours. They do shift work, take on extended shifts, and work evenings/night shifts and weekends which means they are less able to access community-based supports. This includes the growing numbers of migrant workers and refugee women who need access to ongoing trauma-informed services but work long hours. The focus groups we undertook with survivors who work as migrant workers and those refugees (more often than not - actively looking for work) showed us that we have a long way to go in building programs that are relevant and able to reach DV survivors, racialized women and migrant workers.

**Action:** The SJSWC will work to make its programs more flexible to align with DV survivors' demanding work schedules and the long hours women work in precarious work environments. Capacity and funding are two barriers for the SJSWC: our future work will focus on securing more program space and resources, allowing for outreach to DV survivors, racialized women, migrant women and the LGBTQ2S+ communities. We are currently working on securing the funding necessary to move our Empowerment Group model to an online platform, so that women could avail of those supports on their own schedules. Such work would require further consultation to adapt current material to meet the needs of the marginalized communities mentioned above and align with concurrent improvements in frontline services.

**Issue:** Our research demonstrates the important role that access to affordable transportation plays in connecting DV survivors to their crucial supports. Indeed, coordinators at the SJSWC have been advocating for a vehicle for several years. The provincial government needs to fund and stabilize transportation supports for organizations providing frontline services to DV survivors so that they can link/access cross-jurisdictional supports. The SJSWC will request funding to acquire a vehicle for our Centre.

**Action:** The SJSWC will seek additional funding for transportation supports so that programs built for DV survivors will be more effectively cross-jurisdictionally linked.

**Issue:** Women working alone (childcare and homecare providers, sex workers, foreign domestic workers, etc.) are especially vulnerable to DV in their workplaces. Working with its sister organization SHOP, a program with in-house experience/expertise in the development of safety protocols for women working alone, the SJSWC can learn to improve their supports to these workers. SHOP's work needs to be expanded and shared with other organizations. Communities of women doing sex work have expertise to share in terms of building innovative safety protocols and strategies and drawing women who work alone out of isolation. SHOP's leadership role here can not be overstated. Survivors who work as poorly paid domestics and personal care workers, migrant workers and/or sex workers can be difficult to reach. Yet, it is critically important that further research focus on their work and the types of violence they encounter. Drawing from the formal and informal networks of these workers, we can build our knowledge and provide the unique supports that will ensure these workers/survivors know that they are not alone.

**Action:** The SJSWC will plan to do more intersectional outreach, community-based research and cross-jurisdictional advocacy.

**Issue:** Like most workplaces in the province, SJSWC needs to more actively engage in innovative Indigenous-led trainings/workshops - followed by the development of our own, specific anti-racist and anti-oppression policies. SJSWC cannot apply a 'one-size fits all' approach to women who are stratified by different intersectional realities. Levels of racism and Islamophobia are on the rise, and along with cis-gendered power differentials that leave LGBTQ2S+ survivors more vulnerable to violence and economic instability, there is so much work to be done. The normalization of racism, homophobia, and transphobia creates conditions that increase the likelihood of other types of violence. These marginalized survivors need to be re-centred in the programming at the SJSWC. Our women's centre needs to do more anti-racist advocacy and build anti-oppression more deliberately and more visibly into its programming before it will be identified as a safe place for our city's most marginalised women. Decolonizing our practices begins with individual and organizational self-reflection; we are ready and anxious to do this work.

**Action:** The SJSWC will actively undertake capacity building work to do more anti-racist advocacy and build anti-oppression strategies much more deliberately into all of its programming, including developing resources for employers.

**Issue:** The province of Newfoundland and Labrador has the second highest gender wage gap in country. Women make up 2/3 of the minimum wage earners and 2/3 of part-time workers. In addition, the boom-and-bust nature of the provincial economy puts families under increasing stress and makes women and children more vulnerable to DV. Trapped and financially vulnerable, DV survivors often find it impossible to enact safe exit strategies. Our research has only just begun to lay bare the correlations between the violence in women's lives and their economic stability, including their position in the labour force. With so many survivors precariously linked to low wage job sectors, there is more research, programming and policy work that needs to be done to better understand the best types of pre-employment programs that would work in rural and urban parts of the province. We know that programs have to be flexible depending on the local economy and the pre-employment needs of women in the area. In addition to the current project we have underway, we plan to do more to help develop and implement a meaningful province-wide strategy on gender-based violence that incorporates a political economy lens.

**Action:** SJSWC will work with the Provincial Action Network on the Status of Women (PANSOW) and other women's advocacy groups and agencies in the province to do more of this needed research. We will work together to develop and implement a province-wide strategy on gender-based violence that will provide more capacity and support to these organizations.

# STAKEHOLDER ACTION PLAN

## AFFORDABLE TRANSPORTATION

Recommendations/ Observations	Actions	Responsibility				
		PROVINCIAL GOV'T.	FEDERAL GOV'T.	LOCAL GOV'T.	COMMUNITY ORGS/NGOS	EMPLOYERS /UNIONS
When survivors leave abusive relationships, they often lose access to a family vehicle, making transportation a critical issue to ensure their safety. Policy changes are needed to address the delays and red tape which interfere with efforts to ensure safe and time-sensitive transportation supports for DV survivors.	Re-design and streamline AESL policies - such as those in Income Support, i.e. taxi 'authorizations' for women seeking help from transition houses and community organizations. These frontline organizations need to be empowered to prioritize emergency supports for DV survivors.	✓			✓	
All Transition Houses require vehicles.	Increase funding for Transition Houses to purchase vehicles (and allow for their annual maintenance) to ensure that survivors can travel safely and efficiently to community supports, workplaces and schools.	✓			✓	
All public transportation consultations and reviews need a GBA+ analysis that recognizes the risks DV survivors face when escaping violence. Municipal proposals that suggest additional bus shelters and/or extended routes, along with 'shared-ride' services and mobile apps - need to be part of a province-wide strategy to deal with the lack of affordable transportation options in NL and address concerns about its safety and its current limited uptake.	Consult with DV survivors and advocacy organizations in any/all reviews of the public transportation system so that recommendations adequately address their needs, priorities and safety concerns.	✓		✓	✓	
All workplace safety plans must include safe transportation to and from the workplace as a core element of DV safety planning. These transportation supports must be available for all shifts, not just during the daytime.	Provide transportation supports (carpooling, taxi service and/or bus passes) to/from a place of work, for survivors experiencing DV - in all rural/urban communities. Where possible, recruit a co-worker/friend to accompany the DV survivor to and from work.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

# ACCESS TO CHILDCARE, HOUSING AND OTHER BASIC SERVICES

Recommendations/ Observations	Actions	Responsibility				
		PROVINCIAL GOV'T.	FEDERAL GOV'T.	LOCAL GOV'T.	COMMUNITY ORGS/NGOS	EMPLOYERS /UNIONS
To ensure their socio-economic stability, DV survivors require affordable childcare. Childcare is also needed within Transition Houses and Women's Centres – in order to support survivors' exit strategies.	Implement a universal affordable childcare program throughout the province. For DV survivors, employers who currently operate childcare centers should make childcare services available for free to survivors for a minimum of 6 weeks.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transition Houses' policies and practices (i.e. curfews, lack of childcare, limited access to safe transportation) can make it difficult for DV survivors to remain employed/working - particularly for women who work evening, night and week-end shifts.	Redesign policies in Transition Houses/Shelters that make it challenging for DV survivors to continue to work while they are residents. From a trauma-informed perspective, DV survivors should have as much choice/control over their environment as possible. All Transition Houses/Shelters in the province should operate from a trauma-informed perspective and work towards fewer rules/regulations.	✓			✓	
Current AESL policies may compromise the safety of DV survivors and their children. For example, AESL forces single parents to help identify/track-down/seek child support payments from ex-partners who are sometimes perpetrators of DV, as a condition of receiving Income Support.	Review the safety implications of AESL policies that put DV survivors and their children at risk.	✓			✓	
Shelter capacity is a critical issue. More funding is needed to address overcrowding, especially regarding the need for additional safe spaces for LGBTQ2S+ survivors, supports required by male-identified survivors and for survivors of specific cultural and religious groups. A lack of supports for LGBTQ2S+ exists due to stigma, stereotypes and misinformation about the community in urban and rural areas. Transition Houses in rural communities have the highest rates of usage in NL.	Increase funding to address overcrowding and increase capacity of Transition Houses/Shelters throughout the province, especially in rural communities.	✓		✓	✓	

Recommendations/ Observations	Actions	Responsibility				
		PROVINCIAL GOV'T.	FEDERAL GOV'T.	LOCAL GOV'T.	COMMUNITY ORGS/NGOS	EMPLOYERS /UNIONS
Affordable, safe housing is required by survivors in all regions - in order to implement successful exit strategies.	Develop innovative strategies to address the housing crisis. For example: develop projects to build women-owned housing co-ops. Research is needed to study housing impacts on women.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The normalization of racism creates conditions that increase the likelihood of other types of violence, including DV. Racialized survivors overwhelmingly report racism on the job from employers, co-workers and the general public. Efforts to reach out for help are currently not met with appropriate responses.	Incorporate intercultural, anti-oppression and human rights education in the onboarding and job descriptions of all civil servants and within community organizations. Ensure anti-racism and anti-Islamophobia education in workplaces. Provide more funding to the Human Rights Commission to pilot pre-complaint and community-centred processes in collaboration with community organizations.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Employer practices can compromise the safety of survivors who come here to work as Temporary Migrant Workers (TMW). TMW survivors need protections from employer abuses. Weak government oversight of migrant worker programs - is the key issue - not TMW's 'unwillingness/reluctance' to report abuses and infractions.	Hire additional field staff and revise the Labour Standards Act to strengthen legislation and policies to ensure workers are protected from employers who house them in cramped/ substandard conditions. Ensure that TMW are not penalized for attempting to leave abusive relationships. Proactive and timely enforcement efforts should not rely on survivors' complaints to trigger investigations. Establish and actively maintain an employer monitoring system.	✓	✓			✓
Work visas that divide families further entrench the gendered and racist precarity of DV survivors. Most TMW report receiving trusted/key assistance from other migrant workers. Cultural women's organizations offering peer-to-peer counselling and supports for informal networks of TMWs are currently providing most of the trusted supports to these DV survivors.	Provide capacity-building funding to formalize the work that is already ongoing in these communities via women's organizations - so that they can reach out to TMW who are trying to escape violence. Follow a peer-to-peer model that is worker/survivor focussed and reinforces community-based networks.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Being a survivor is associated with a wide range of poor mental health outcomes including high levels of anxiety and depression. These require trauma-informed mental health services throughout the province for DV survivors and those vicariously impacted - such as co-workers.	Improve employment supports and employment counselling programs with updated mental health supports for DV survivors and their co-workers that are trauma-informed and address gender-based violence and its intergenerational impacts.	✓	✓		✓	

## STRENGTH-BASED SUPPORTS by/for INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Recommendations/ Observations	Actions	Responsibility				
		PROVINCIAL GOV'T.	FEDERAL GOV'T.	LOCAL GOV'T.	COMMUNITY ORGS/NGOS	EMPLOYERS /UNIONS
Indigenous women's organizations need ongoing stable funding so that programs and resources can be delivered adequately and shared. DV resources have been built by/for Indigenous survivors but the funding for their community organizations must allow that work to be shared and mobilized.	Provide stable long-term funding and support for Indigenous women's organizations.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Indigenous women and girls continue to experience some of the highest rates of violence, poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, unemployment and barriers to education. Short-term and deficit-based approaches to program development/evaluation fail to ensure the safety for DV survivors.	Increase the development of strength-based programs to be delivered by well-resourced, community based, Indigenous women's organizations. All pre-employment programs need to be reviewed and redesigned to ensure they are trauma-informed and address the continuum of gender-based violence in workplaces.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indigenous women draw on their own strengths, agency and expertise to develop culturally-based and relevant programs. Employers at all levels in the public and private sector need to understand that Indigenous survivors are likely to take a broader view of DV as it manifests in their workplaces.	Engage qualified elders in delivering innovative Indigenous-led trainings (re: Cultural Humility) in a spirit of partnership and respect. As workplaces develop specific DV policies, it is important to build a workplace culture that reinforces holistic obligations to the community and develops long-term relationships of respect and reciprocity with all marginalized groups.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indigenous perpetrators require support and needs-based programs that value, develop and stabilize relationships over time and that directly address the effects of colonialism. Indigenous survivors are more likely to experience mental/health concerns as a result of the multigenerational trauma that they continue to experience.	Support and sustain intergenerational trauma-informed programs that highlight accountability and centre life-long relationship-based work within Indigenous communities. Short-term and project-based funding models are ineffective and unsustainable.	✓	✓	✓	✓	

## RURAL SUSTAINABILITY

Recommendations/ Observations	Actions	Responsibility				
		PROVINCIAL GOV'T.	FEDERAL GOV'T.	LOCAL GOV'T.	COMMUNITY ORGS/NGOS	EMPLOYERS /UNIONS
The physical proximity of DV survivors to their perpetrators in rural and remote communities poses considerable challenges and risks to everyone involved in providing supports to DV survivors in workplaces.	Consult with front-line service agencies in rural and remote regions to identify specific strategies for their communities that would effectively improve their safety. Offer relocation as a work option wherever possible.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Often mistaken (or standing in) for Transition Houses, Status of Women Councils in rural areas require more supports to adequately address the range of violence that staff cope with on a regular basis.	Increase core funding for Women's Centres/Status of Women Councils to improve supports to DV survivors in rural/remote communities. Build more Women's Centres in rural and Indigenous communities.	✓	✓		✓	
There are usually long wait times to get access to court services in rural and remote regions of the province. Close proximity, financial dependency and custody arrangements can put the lives of survivors and their children at risk. Social workers are also at risk of violence and vicarious or secondary trauma in protracted DV cases.	Review CSSD and Justice policies relevant to DV- related emergency custody arrangements and the correlation between DV exposure, job loss and protracted court timelines that tether survivors and their children to violent perpetrators. Develop procedures to assess the intergenerational risk to children in families experiencing DV. Provide trauma-informed supports to minimize the effects of vicarious trauma for social workers and Justice staff who interact with DV perpetrators.	✓	✓		✓	
The triggers for family violence are not well understood. Additional research is needed to determine if rural families engaging in mobile work need different types of DV supports.	Build violence prevention programs that are flexible enough to address the seasonal movement and priorities of mobile families. Research is urgently required to help define how supports might serve to prevent DV from occurring within mobile workforces.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regionally informed mental health supports need to be improved for both survivors and perpetrators of DV in rural and remote regions. Regionally specific supports need to be put in place in the various health boards to ensure front line health care managers and supervisors are trained in DV workplace policies and procedures.	Ensure an efficient expansion of mental health supports and public awareness for survivors and perpetrators of DV in rural and remote areas. New DV workplace policies as well as training and evaluative frameworks for health service providers are required immediately to ensure the safety of frontline staff in health clinics and other services open to the public.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

# JUSTICE

Recommendations/ Observations	Actions	Responsibility				
		PROVINCIAL GOV'T.	FEDERAL GOV'T.	LOCAL GOV'T.	COMMUNITY ORGS/NGOS	EMPLOYERS /UNIONS
The ability of the existing legal responses to protect survivors' safety, autonomy and to ensure offender accountability need to be improved. Women are losing their jobs because of the impacts that DV have in their workplaces.	Legal responses must improve flexibility and consider workplace DV impacts such as job loss, sick leave, DV-related criminal charges and the resulting economic insecurity that puts DV survivors at increased risk. Expand the scope of free access to pardons for DV survivors with minor crimes related to their DV situation. Expand the list of grounds under which discrimination is prohibited in the provincial Human Rights Code to include "experience of DV."		✓	✓		✓
The court system backlog and the endless "staying" of proceedings has been identified as contributing to double victimization and is certainly re-traumatizing to DV survivors. Survivors are offered few opportunities to exercise agency in justice processes.	Add skilled resources to the court system so DV survivors are provided with adequate, affordable and timely supports and protections.		✓	✓		
Police officers report learning about DV 'on the spot.' Like all workplaces, the RNC and RCMP management must immediately develop and implement their own workplace DV policies/programs.	Engage with frontline community groups and DV survivors to deliver DV training for all RNC and RCMP officers and support staff. Establish IPV Units in high risk areas.		✓	✓	✓	
The RNC's Intimate Partner Violence unit (IPV) have not yet released their research report providing police-reported data on DV in the province.	Ensure accountability each year for the RNC's IPV unit in providing police-reported data as part of their work funded by the Government of NL's Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI).		✓		✓	
Legal fees and retainers are prohibitively expensive and continue to pre-empt survivors from engaging in exit strategies.	Restore and improve supports and resources to Legal Aid. The Department of Justice, Legal Aid and the Law Society of NL must take some responsibility for ensuring this does not continue. We recommend expanding Legal Aid through the addition of a DV Unit.		✓	✓		✓
Women doing consensual sex work speak about the trauma of being criminalized. Sex workers with criminal records find it hard to do their work, to stabilize their lives and keep their families safe. They are also restricted in terms of where they can work and are forced to work outdoors where they encounter more violence.	Decriminalize consensual sex work - on human rights grounds. The continued criminalization of sex work has an exponentially harmful effect on trans people, particularly in conjunction with existing anti-transgender discrimination. Eliminate municipal regulations that prevent sex workers from working indoors.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## WORKPLACE SUPPORTS

Recommendations/ Observations	Actions	Responsibility				
		PROVINCIAL GOV'T.	FEDERAL GOV'T.	LOCAL GOV'T.	COMMUNITY ORGS/NGOS	EMPLOYERS /UNIONS
When survivors report DV to employers, they describe being ignored or stigmatized for causing workplace disruptions.	Create a multifaceted suite of DV policies - specific to each workplace and industry. Facilitate ongoing discussions to accommodate workers and improve the safety of workplaces. Types of accommodations include: better lighting in/around the workplace, line of sight with those entering public buildings, paid leave, a check-in buddy system for DV survivors, worker relocation, a pay advance policy, a plan to monitor/control social media and installing security cameras. Work with survivors to implement workplace risk assessments.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Concerns about confidentiality and safety planning are paramount in any/all efforts to support survivors.	Ensure that every workplace has a designated on-site DV@Work trained advocate who understands the scope and responsibilities associated with confidentiality in workplaces. In collaboration with Workplace NL and community-based organizations, offer workplace training to help build and implement DV workplace policies. Individual workplace safety plans depend on a given worker's level of risk and readiness. Union supports for training are crucial.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Perpetrators should be required to undertake treatment programs.	Develop policies that outline and identify access to treatment programs and enforce disciplinary action against employees who use workplace resources to abuse their partners. Engage unions in workplace training for both DV survivors and perpetrators.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Debriefing after episodes of workplace violence is key to reducing the impacts of secondary trauma.	Develop a policy/process for both incident debriefing and for ongoing DV situations that address the vicarious trauma experienced by co-workers, witnesses and confidants. Community supports and unions can assist with trauma-informed sessions for workers.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Organizations doing violence prevention work need access to schools on all levels. Frontline workers who are trying to do anti-violence work in schools report difficulty getting access to schools, even when programs are already developed.	Ensure access to schools for organizations doing DV prevention work. Develop a needs-based plan to increase the number of instructional resource teachers, school counsellors, educational psychologists and student assistants trained in recognizing and addressing the impacts of DV. Bring all the relevant sectors together to ensure that mandatory DV education/curriculum is offered in schools throughout the province.	✓		✓	✓	
Survivors and perpetrators require access to counselling throughout their workplaces.	Secure appropriate mental health supports for all employees. Offer DV survivors 10 days of paid leave to address the impacts of DV on themselves and family members. Unions need bargaining language.	✓	✓		✓	✓

