

# Trauma Informed Approaches to Gender- Based Violence Information Presentation

Presented by Ninu Kang, Executive Director  
Ending Violence Association of BC

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## We Thank and Honour the First People of This Land

EVA BC offices are located on the traditional, unceded, and ancestral territories of the hən̓q̓əmin̓'əḿ' (Hulquminum) speaking x̣ẉməθḳẉəỵəm (Musqueam) and sə̣ḷiḷẉətaʔ̣ł̣ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and the Ṣḳẉx̣ẉú7̣mesh sṇị́chim (Squamish Snichim) speaking Ṣḳẉx̣ẉú7̣mesh Ụ́x̣ẉuṃix̣ẉ (Squamish) Nation.

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## Outline

- A note on language;
- Prevalence of gender-based violence in our society;
- Intersectional Analysis: Who is most often impacted by GBV?;
- Impacts of trauma;
- Trauma-informed approaches;
- Disclosures vs reports;
- How to receive a disclosure or report;
- Safety and support resources.



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## Content Warning

Discussing Topics like sexual harm and violence. Please reach out for support with someone you trust if this presentation brings up difficult feelings

## Supports Available

- **VictimLinkBC**  
Call 1.800.563.0808  
Text 604.836.6381
- **Ending Violence Association of BC**  
[www.endingviolence.org/needhelp](http://www.endingviolence.org/needhelp)
- **Victoria Sexual Assault Centre**  
Call 250.383.3232



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## A Note on Language



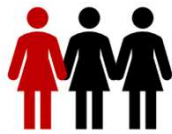
- Use of **gendered** language
- Person who **was harmed**  
Complainant  
Victim  
Survivor
- Person who **caused harm**  
Responder  
Perpetrator

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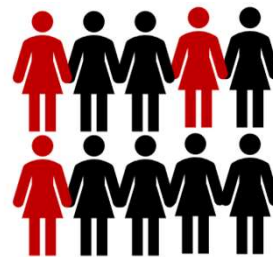
## Scope of Gender-Based Violence

Sexual assault is a gendered crime: women are victimized at a rate more than 7 times that of men.



**1 in 3**

Women have experienced  
**unwanted sexual behaviours**  
in public.

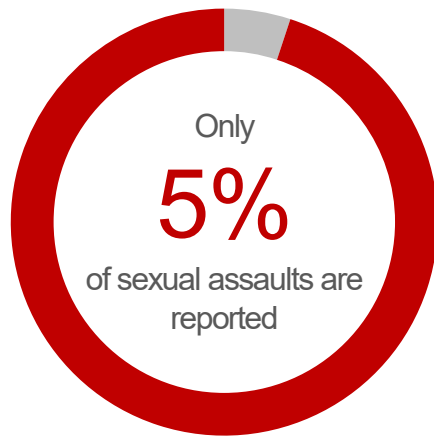


**3 in 10**

Women aged 15+ have been  
**sexually assaulted at least**  
**once** since age 15.

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## Sexual assault is the most under-reported of all violent crime



and yet, on average in 2017,  
**74** sexual assaults were reported **each day** to police in Canada.

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## Disclosing and Reporting



**Disclosing** is telling someone about what happened (e.g., friend, family member, support worker)



**Reporting** is making an official or formal report to authorities (e.g., police, workplace)

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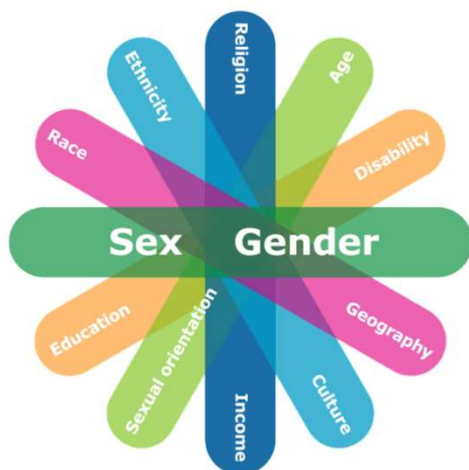
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## Barriers to Disclosing and Reporting

- Inadequate institutional responses, or prior poor experiences
- Known perpetrator
- Fear for safety
- Fear of being 'outed'
- Fear of story being a reflection of an entire community
- Community stigma/perpetrator part of community
- Fear of not being believed, or being blamed

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## Some communities are more often impacted by gender-base violence and face more barriers to accessing support



### ***Intersectionality:***

An analytic framework that identifies how **interlocking systems of power** affect those who are disproportionately targeted in society

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## Facts on GBV:

- The rate of domestic homicide is **eight times higher for Indigenous Women** compared to non-Indigenous women in Canada
- **Transgender people are nearly twice as likely** as cisgender women to experience intimate partner violence in their lifetimes
- **Women with disabilities are more than twice as likely** as women without disabilities to have been physically or sexually abused by a current or former partner

x 8

x 2

x 2

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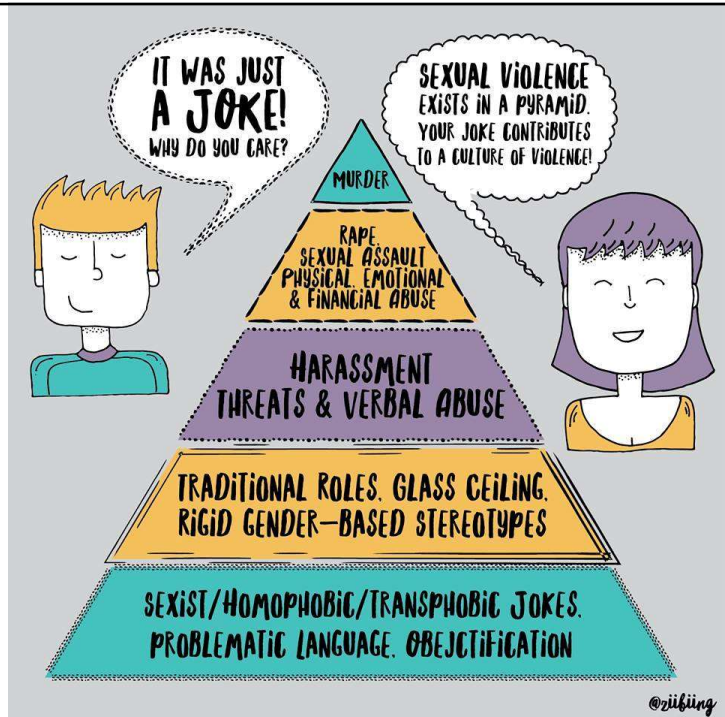
## What is Privilege?:



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## Continuum of Gender-Based Violence



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## Trauma Informed Approaches to Addressing Gender-Based Violence

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# Trauma

An event that "is **extremely upsetting**, at least temporarily **overwhelms the individual's internal resources**, and **produces lasting psychological symptoms**"

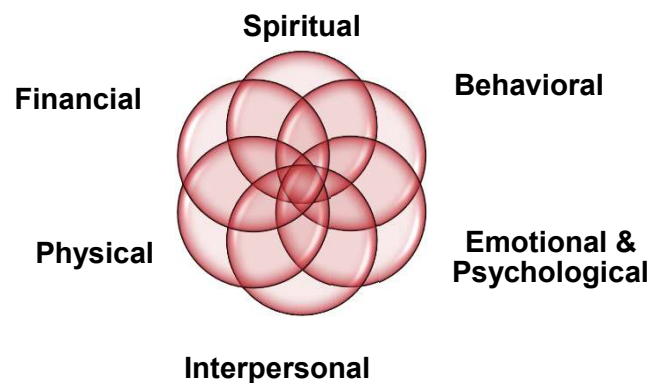


(Briere & Scott, 2015, p. 10)

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# Impacts of Trauma



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## Impacts of Trauma

Severity of what happened doesn't determine severity of Impact:

- Impacts are **Individual**
- Anyone can be traumatized by an experience, but not everyone is traumatized
- **Do not presume the impact of the harm**

A person who has been harmed may experience:

- Humiliation
- Constant fear
- Shame
- Hopelessness
- Emotional overwhelm

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## Trauma-Informed Approaches to Gender-Based Violence

recognize that experiencing gender-based violence, sexual harassment or assault can often be traumatic and integrates knowledge about how people are affected by trauma in our systems, practices and interactions.



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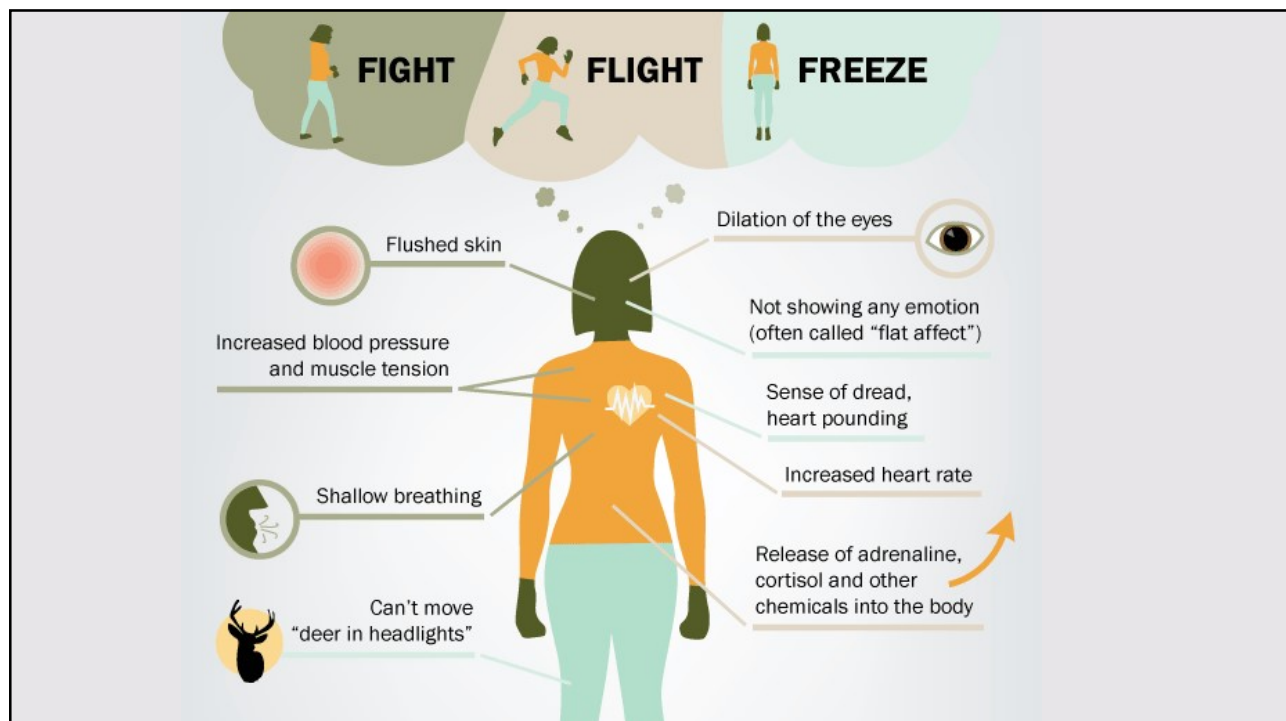
## Trauma-Informed Approaches

1. Understand the pervasiveness of trauma.
2. Promote environments of healing and recovery.
3. Consciously seek to do no harm and provide services which will not inadvertently re-traumatize.

(University of Buffalo: Buffalo Centre for Social Research, 2021)

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## Supporting Someone Who Is Experiencing a Fight/Flight/Freeze Response

How can we support someone who is experiencing a fight/flight/freeze response?

- "Calm creates calm."
- Communication
- Allow for Choice and Control (as much as possible)

Remember that the brain and body can be affected by the physiological changes that trauma causes (e.g., release of adrenaline and other hormones) for several hours after a traumatic event.



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## Receiving a Disclosure



- Listen
- Inquire
- Validate
- Enhance Safety
- Support



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## Listen

- Listen actively both verbally and non-verbally
- Be patient; let the survivor set the pace
- Mirror language
- Avoid asking unnecessary questions/press for details
- Respect the survivor's personal space
- Avoid overreacting

"I'm here to listen."

"What I hear you saying is..."

"Thank you for sharing with me what you have gone through."

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## Inquire

- Phrase your questions as invitations to speak
- Ask open-ended questions
- Repeat or restate
- Reflect feelings
- Explore as needed
- Ask for clarification
- Help identify and express needs and concerns

"What would you like to talk about?"

"How do you feel about that?"

"Could you tell me more about that?"

"It sounds as if you are feeling angry about that..."

"You seem to be saying that..."

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## Validate

- Assure the survivor it was not their fault
- Validate experiences
- Normalize responses
- Reassure the survivor that you'll help them get the support and with next steps

"It's not your fault. You are not to blame."

"It's okay to feel what you're feeling. This is totally normal and valid."

"You are not alone and support is available if you want."

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## Enhance Safety

- Focus on immediate needs such as safety
- Recognize their resiliency in sharing
- Identify existing supports
- Help them regain control
- Refer to resources for specialized support

"What would help you feel safer right now?"

"I would be happy to help you get connected to talk to someone."

"There are services that can provide more information and ongoing support."

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## Supports Available

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Text 604.836.6381
- **Ending Violence Association of BC**  
[www.endingviolence.org/needhelp](http://www.endingviolence.org/needhelp)
- **WorkSafeBC Crisis Support Line**  
Call 1.800.624.2928 (toll free)



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