

GLOSSARY

OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE TERMINOLOGY

ABUSE

Abuse is behavior used to intimidate, harm, isolate, dominate, or control another person. Abusive behavior encompasses actions, words, and neglect, and may be a pattern of occurrences or a single isolated incident. The abuse can be sexual, physical, verbal, spiritual, emotional, financial, neglectful or psychological in nature. Abuse can happen to anyone, of any age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or gender. It can affect people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels.

ALLY

A person who works to end a form of oppression that gives them privilege(s). Allies listen to, and are guided by, communities and individuals affected by oppression. Forms of oppression include able-ism, ageism, audism, classism, biphobia, homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, and others.

COERCIVE CONTROL

Coercive control is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. This controlling behaviour is designed to make a person dependent by isolating them from support, exploiting them, depriving them of independence and regulating their everyday behavior. Coercive control creates invisible chains and a sense of fear that pervades all elements of a victim's life. It works to limit their human rights by depriving them of their liberty and reducing their ability for action.

CONSENT

Consent is defined in Canada's Criminal Code as the voluntary agreement to engage in the sexual activity in question. The law focuses on what the person was actually thinking and feeling at the time of the sexual activity. Sexual activity is only legal when both parties consent, either through words or conduct. Silence or passivity does not equal consent.

DEADNAMING

Referring to a transgender person by the name they used before they transitioned – this is also often described as referring to someone by their “birth name” or their “given name”. This can be done inadvertently, but when done deliberately is harmful and discriminatory and constitutes a form of violence.

DOMESTIC HOMICIDE

Domestic homicide is defined as the killing of a current or former intimate partner, their child(ren), and/or other third parties. An intimate partner can include people who are in a current or former married, common-law, or dating relationship. Other third parties can include new partners, other family members, neighbours, friends, co-workers, helping professionals, bystanders, and others killed as a result of the incident. Domestic homicide is a form of gender-based violence rooted in historical patterns of inequality, exclusion, and discrimination.

ECONOMIC ABUSE/FINANCIAL ABUSE

Economic abuse incorporates a range of behaviours which allow a perpetrator to control someone else's economic resources or freedoms. Economic abuse is wider in its definition than financial abuse, a term usually used to describe denying or restricting access to money or misusing another person's money. In addition to that, economic abuse can also include restricting access to essential resources such as food, clothing or transport, and denying the means to improve a person's economic status (for example, through employment, education or training). There are four different 'types' of financial abuse: interfering with employment; controlling access to financial resources; refusing to contribute to financial costs; and generating financial costs.

ELDER ABUSE

Elder abuse is a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person. Elder abuse often occurs when there is an imbalance of control. The abuser either limits or takes control over the rights and freedoms of the senior. The abuse/violence is used to intimidate, humiliate, coerce, frighten or simply to make the senior feel powerless.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the repeated use of controlling and harmful behaviours by a perpetrator to control a victim, most likely a woman. As a result of emotional abuse, a woman lives her life in fear and repeatedly alters her thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, and denies her needs, to avoid further abuse. Emotional abuse includes verbal abuse, stalking and harassing, isolation, threats, intimidation, sexual and financial abuse, and neglect. Emotional abuse is the greatest predictor of physical violence.

EQUALITY/EQUITY

As it relates to social questions of fairness and justice, equality entails a principle of impartiality and sameness of treatment for all people—that is, of ensuring equal treatment to all people, without consideration of individual and group diversities. By comparison, equity entails a principle of ensuring fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people, with consideration of individual and group diversities.

FAMILY VIOLENCE

Family violence is considered to be any form of abuse, mistreatment or neglect that a child or adult experiences from a family member, or from someone with whom they have an intimate relationship. Family violence is a gender-based crime as most victims are women and girls. One out of four violent crimes in Canada reported to police involves family violence.

The different terms used for family violence can have slightly different meanings depending on where and how they are used, such as in a courtroom or a hospital. For example:

- Domestic violence can sometimes mean family violence and sometimes it means intimate partner violence.
- Intimate partner violence refers to physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse and can also be called dating violence between couples who are not married.
- The terms violence against women and gender-based violence are also used.
- Child abuse is sometimes called child maltreatment or neglect, and elder abuse is sometimes referred to as neglect.

FEMICIDE

Generally understood to involve the intentional killing of women or girls because they are women or girls, but broader definitions include any killings of women and girls. Under the Criminal Code of Canada, an offence found to be motivated by bias or hate based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression is considered an aggravating factor which could result in a more serious sentence.

GASLIGHTING

Gaslighting involves the attempt by the gaslighter to undermine his victim's self-trust: her conception of herself as an autonomous locus of experience, thought, and judgment. The gas lighter's motivation is a strong desire to neutralize his victim's ability to criticize him and to ensure her consent to his way of viewing things (specifically with regard to issues relevant to the relationship, perhaps in general), and thus to maintain control over her. The gas lighter pursues this goal by means of a strategy of manipulation, fabrication, and deception that specifically relies upon his victim's trust in him as a peer or authority in some relevant sense.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence ('GBV') is violence that is committed against a person because of that person's gender identity, gender expression, or perceived gender. Women, girls and young women, Indigenous women and girls, 2SLGBTQ+ and gender diverse individuals, women living with a disability, and women living in northern, rural, and remote communities are at greater risk of experiencing gender-based violence.

Forms of gender-based violence

GBV can take many forms including physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, economic, cyber, and societal violence. GBV can include any word, action, or attempt to humiliate, degrade, control, coerce, deprive, threaten, or harm another person. It can occur in public or private life.

GROOMING

A deliberate process through which a person gains the trust of someone – most often a minor – for the purpose of manipulating, exploiting or abusing them. This may result in a survivor understanding that a crime has occurred and/or being reluctant to disclose the incident to others.

HARASSMENT

This covers a wide range of behaviours of an offensive nature including name-calling, displaying pictures that embarrass someone, unwanted touching, or unwanted sexual contact. Broadly, it refers to engaging in a pattern of conduct that induces fear of harm, and/or upsets or disturbs another. Certain forms of harassment such as unwanted sexual touching, stalking, threatening and/or intimidation are serious Criminal Code offences. Human Rights legislation prohibits harassment on the basis of race, religion, sex, ethnicity, and other prohibited grounds for discrimination.

HATE CRIME

Criminal acts which promote hatred against identifiable groups of people, motivated by bias, prejudice or hate. Although individuals and groups that promote this destructive form of human rights-based discrimination often defend their right to 'free speech,' it is a criminal offense to disseminate hate propaganda and/or to commit hate crimes." Under the Canadian Criminal Code, both the "public incitement of hatred" and the "willful promotion of hatred" are considered crimes punishable by law.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Broadly, human trafficking is the trade of humans for the purpose of forced labour, sexual slavery or commercial sexual exploitation for the trafficker and/or others. It can be international or domestic in nature and does not necessarily involve the movement of the person from one place to another. Although people of all genders are affected by this form of violence, woman and girls are often specifically targeted. Indigenous women and girls are disproportionately vulnerable to human trafficking in Canada.

INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

Intergenerational trauma is the transmission of historical oppression and its negative consequences across generations. It is a collective complex trauma inflicted on a group of people who share a specific group identity or affiliation-ethnicity, nationality, and religious affiliation. It is the legacy of numerous traumatic events a community experiences over generations and encompasses the psychological and social responses to such events.

INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

Interpersonal violence refers to violence between individuals and can be subdivided into family and intimate partner violence and community violence.

Family and intimate partner violence includes child maltreatment, intimate partner violence, and elder abuse.

Community violence is broken down into acquaintance and stranger violence and includes youth violence; assault by strangers; violence related to property crimes; and violence in workplaces/institutions.

INTERSECTIONALITY

The overlap of different social identities related to systems of privilege or oppression, that, when intersecting, create a whole with multiple social identities, privileges and experiences of oppressions, that is more complicated than each of the individual identities. These social identities can include, but are not limited to, gender, race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and disability. Intersectionality recognizes that survivors of gender-based violence are impacted differently based on varied and overlapping experiences of oppression and their social location.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Intimate partner violence is domestic violence by a current or former spouse or partner in an intimate relationship against the other spouse or partner. It can take a number of forms including physical, verbal, emotional, economic and sexual abuse and controlling behaviors by a current or past intimate partner. Couples may be dating, cohabiting, or married, and violence can occur in or outside the home.

MARGINALIZATION

A process that keeps groups or individual from having access to all or part of the social, economic, cultural and political institutions of society. That is, these individuals or groups are on the “margins” of society. Marginalization can occur as a result of several factors, alone or in combination. These factors might include, but are not limited to, poverty, race, gender, discrimination, a lack of education and training, or disadvantaged geographic or social location.

MASCULINITIES

Masculinities refer to the culturally constructed social norms for behavior, comportsment, and characteristics assigned to men and boys. Scholars talk about multiple masculinities instead of a singular masculinity because the category varies according to context, culture, geographic location, and historical period. Hypermasculinity refers to the overexpression of male stereotypes, including callous attitudes towards women, the valorization of violence as an expression of manliness, and danger-seeking behaviours.

MISANDRY

Misandry is hatred of, contempt for or ingrained prejudice against men and/or boys.

MISOGYNY

Misogyny is hatred of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women and/or girls.

PATRIARCHY

Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and privilege within families, communities, societies and government and woman are largely excluded from this power. Historically, patriarchy has manifested in social, political, religious, economic and legal organizations across a range of cultures.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is the most obvious kind of gender-based violence, but it is not the most common and is not necessarily the most serious. It is the intentional infliction of pain or injury by slapping, shoving, punching, strangling, kicking, burning, stabbing and/or shooting; using a weapon or other objects to threaten, hurt or kill; abducting a woman or keeping her imprisoned.

PRIVILEGE

Systemic advantages based on certain characteristics that are celebrated by society and preserved through its institutions. In North America, these can include being white, having money, being heterosexual, not having a disability, etc. Frequently people are unaware that these characteristics should be understood as privileges as they are so effectively normalized.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Subjecting or exposing another person to behaviour that may results in psychological harm or trauma including anxiety, chronic depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder. It is often association with situations of power imbalance in abusive relationships.

RAPE

Rape is non-consensual penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth by a penis, any other body part or object. This includes non-consensual penetration between intimate partners. Rape is considered a form of sexual assault in Canada's Criminal Code.

REPRODUCTIVE COERCION

Reproductive coercion consists of threats or acts of violence against a women/girl's reproductive health or reproductive decision-making and is a collection of behaviours intended to force, pressure or coerce a woman/girl into initiating, keeping or terminating a pregnancy.

SEX WORK

Sexwork is the voluntary exchange of sexual services, performances or products between consenting adults for material compensation. This term emphasizes the labour and economic implications of this type of work. This term is preferred over "prostitution" or other terms, because it acknowledges the agency of the sellers of these services.

SEXISM

Sexism stems from a set of implicit or explicit beliefs, erroneous assumptions and actions based upon an ideology of inherent superiority of one gender over another and may be evident within organizational or institutional structures or programs, as well as within individual thought or behaviour patterns. Sexism is any act or institutional practice, backed by institutional power which subordinates people because of gender. While, in principle, sexism may be practiced by either gender, most of our societal institutions are still the domain of men and usually the impact of sexism is experienced by women.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Under the Criminal Code, sexual assault is an assault which violates the sexual integrity of the survivor/victim. It is unwanted contact in sexual circumstances of person A by person B without person A's consent. This offence becomes more serious (in terms of legal repercussions) if it involves weapons, threats to a third party, bodily harm or disfigurement or endangering a survivor/victim's life. Canada has a broad definition of sexual assault, which includes all unwanted sexual activity, such as unwanted sexual grabbing and kissing, as well as rape.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual advances or obscene remarks, including verbal and non-verbal conduct. Examples include unwanted touching, unwelcome jokes, whistling, rude gestures, unwanted questions about your sex life, requests for sex, staring at your body in an offensive way, or promising rewards in exchange for sexual favours. It can happen anywhere including public spaces, online and in workplaces.

Certain forms of sexual harassment, such as unwanted sexual touching, stalking, intimidation and/or threatening are serious Criminal Code offences (see Stalking definition). Sexual harassment is a type of discrimination under the NWT's Human Rights legislation. Such behavior may also fall under WSCC policies and legislation which require employees who witness harassment in the workplace to report it to their employers, who must respond and ensure that harassment is prevented or minimized in the future.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE/ABUSE

A broad category of gender-based violence that is about exerting power and control over another through physical or psychological violence carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality. It includes various forms of sexual violence including, but not limited to childhood sexual abuse, sexual assault, rape, sexual cyber harassment, sexual exploitation, and sexual harassment.

STALKING

Conduct directed toward a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear (even if the actor does not intent to cause fear). Stalking behaviours may include, but are not limited to following, spying, unwanted phone calls, text messages, letters or gifts, waiting at places for the person, monitoring their computer use. A stalker may be someone who is known or unknown to the survivor/victim. Legally, this falls under harassment in the Criminal Code.

SURVIVOR

A survivor is a person who has experienced interpersonal violence. Many prefer the term survivor to victim as it reflects the reality that many abused individuals cope and move on with personal strength, resourcefulness, and determination. Increasingly, the term “person with lived experience of violence” is being used for those individuals who do not accept either label nor agree to be defined by their experience of interpersonal violence. Always use the terminology that the person who has experience violence prefers.

TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Actions that harm others based on their gender or sexual identity or by enforcing harmful gender norms, which are carried out using the internet and/or mobile technology. Actions may include stalking, bullying, sexual harassment, defamation, hate speech, and exploitation.

TRAUMA

The Canadian and American Psychological Association define an event as traumatic if the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health uses the following definition:

The definitions provided in this Glossary have been sourced from the work of stakeholders throughout the GBV field. In this regard, the Glossary aims to reflect the rich theoretical and conceptual insight of scholars, advocates, support workers, policymakers, and survivors involved in addressing this important issue.

Primary references are Western University Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women and Children Learning Network Gender-based Violence Terminology Glossary and the Reporting on Gender-Based Violence: A Guide for Journalists.

<http://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/glossary/index.html>

http://equalpress.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/EP_Guidebook.pdf

“Trauma is a term used to describe the challenging emotional consequences that living through a distressing event can have for an individual. Traumatic events can be difficult to define because the same event may be more traumatic for some people than for others.

However, traumatic events experienced early in life, such as abuse, neglect, and disrupted attachment, can often be devastating. Equally challenging can be later life experiences that are out of one’s control, such as a serious accident, being the victim of violence, living through a natural disaster or war, or sudden unexpected loss.”

VERBAL ABUSE

A form of emotional abuse that may include constant criticism, repeated insults, and name-calling. Depending on the circumstances, such behavior may constitute a criminal offence or a human rights or workplace safety violation. This is often present in intimate partner violence or domestic violence.

VICTIM BLAMING

Victim blaming is a devaluing act that occurs when the victim(s) of a crime or an accident is held responsible — in whole or in part — for the crimes that have been committed against them. This blame can appear in the form of negative social responses from legal, medical, and mental health professionals, as well as from the media and immediate family members and other acquaintances.