



MEDIA ADVISORY: When the Motive IS Violence Against Women

Thursday April 13th, 2017

Background

Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses (OAITH), consisting of 67 Violence Against Women Organizations, has collected 27 years of media reported data of women murdered by their current/former intimate partners and family members across Ontario.

When we are informed through media reports of a woman being murdered, OAITH maintains that these acts of violence are neither individualized, random, isolated, or the result of a private family matter. Rather, the MOTIVE, is the end result of on-going and escalating violence towards women, and of continued systems failure, that leads to domestic-violence related death.

These tragedies are acts of domestic violence and gender-based, in that, they are primarily experienced by women and most often occur inside their home, by either a current or former partner. These heinous preventable crimes are the final defining act in what is most often a history of escalating abuseⁱ that is usually known to friends, family, co-workers and the systems around them that should be supporting and protecting them.

It is the behavior of abusive men that takes the lives of women every 6 days in Canadaⁱⁱ. Women are most at risk of violence from those that are closest to themⁱⁱⁱ. Indigenous Women, LGBTQ People, Older Women, Immigrant and Refugee Women and Women Living with Disabilities are at increased risk of experiencing violence in their home and communities because of systemic barriers. Femicide and Violence Against Women is a public issue, requiring a public response.

OAITH Media Reported Data Between 2015-2016 Reveal:

In 2015-2016, 96% of media reports we reviewed about women murdered by current or former partners in Ontario failed to acknowledge a history of domestic violence, perpetuating the belief these are isolated incidents. They are not. In these situations, women were most at risk from those closest to them^{iv}.

All media reported murders of Femicide were committed by Men in 2015-2016, and they all knew the women they murdered. Last year we remembered 29 women who lost their lives in Ontario^v.

OAITH Media Reported Data Between 2009 and 2014 Reveal:

- 50 % of women murdered by their intimate partners had children, while for another 39% of women it is unknown, as media didn't report those details
- 50% of women lost their lives due to trauma. An additional 28% of media reports noted "Other" as the death factor. This category included less frequent death factors such as drowning, falls from heights, vehicle collisions, and fires (often in conjunction with trauma). Death factors involving a shooting comprised the third largest category (16%), followed by asphyxia (6%). Cases in which the death factor was not indicated in the media reports were excluded from this analysis (9%)

To learn more about our ongoing work on Femicide Research in Ontario and to view our analysis of media reporting [click here](#).

- Women between the ages of 36-54 were killed more frequently by their ex-partners, husbands, common-law partners, and family members
- Women between the ages of 18-35 were killed more frequently by their boyfriends, strangers, and acquaintances
- 20% of women killed were over 55 years of age

Creating a Narrative to Drive Change

Every year on December 6th, OAITH releases the names and stories of women and their families who've lost their lives to Femicide, to remember who they are and act for change. In 2017, we released our Critical Examination of Media Reports on Femicide. Starting December 10th, 2017 (Human Rights Day), we will begin the release of our **Annual Review of Media Reporting** on Femicide in Ontario.

We ask all media outlets work with Violence Against Women Organizations, in framing narratives that contextualize these heinous preventable acts of violence against women, to inform about available supports and services, and hold our systems accountable. We make the following recommendations to support your work when reporting about violence against women, femicide, and other forms of gendered violence resulting in the lethality of women:

- ✓ Identify each case as a femicide & as violence against women.
- ✓ If identified, report on any history of intimate partner violence, & contextualize the gendered violence as part of a larger social problem.
- ✓ Provide personal information about the victim (to humanize each case).
- ✓ Use sources of information such as family, friends, violence against women experts, instead of relying on traditional voices of authority such as police and government.
- ✓ Add information about available resources & supports for those experiencing intimate partner abuse/violence.

Violence Against Women Organizations in Ontario

In Ontario, there are 96 Provincially Funded Violence Against Women Organizations providing expertise through; emergency shelter, counselling, risk assessment, safety planning, 24-hour crisis lines, and outreach services. These services are available to all women and their children, up to 18 years of age, regardless of gender. Any woman experiencing physical or sexual violence, financial or emotional abuse, stalking or monitoring can receive trauma-informed care and support while prioritizing community safety. Women don't have to leave their relationship to receive services.

To learn about where to find organizations who provide specific expertise on VAW please visit sheltersafe.ca

To learn more about gender-based violence and how to support survivors of violence, please visit oaith.ca

To learn more about what Violence Against Women Organizations do in Ontario [click here](#)

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Media Advisory End Notes

ⁱ Office of the Chief Province of Ontario (2016). Domestic Violence Death Review Committee. 2015 Annual Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/sites/default/files/content/mcscs/docs/DVDRC%202015%20Annual%20Report%20English%20Accessible.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Homicide in Canada, 2014, Statistics Canada, Table 6. In 2014, 67 women were killed by their intimate partners; this number divided by 365 days in the year comes out to 5.4. Available: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14244/tbl/tbl06-eng.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. (2016). Family violence in Canada: a statistical profile, 2014. (Statistics Canada). Retrieved from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2016001/article/14303-eng.pdf>

^{iv} Mackenzie-Cooper, A., Simpson, A., Westbere, A., Smith, C., Pogrebtsova, E., Kantemneni, A., Morton, M., & Ham, M. (2017). Executive Summary: A Critical Examination of Ontario Femicides. Ontario, Canada

^v Mackenzie-Cooper, A., Simpson, A., Westbere, A., Smith, C., Pogrebtsova, E., Kantemneni, A., Morton, M., & Ham, M. (2017). Ontario Femicide Media Analysis: How the Media Reports on Femicide. Retrieved from: <https://public.tableau.com/profile/publish/OntarioFemicideMediaAnalysis/Story1#!/publish-confirm>

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