



MANITOBA ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S SHELTERS

News Release

For Immediate Release

“Centering the Rights of Women from the Margins” – Manitoba Association of Women’s Shelters launches project to build intersectional, culturally respectful, accessible and barrier-free gender-based violence support services for underrepresented women in Manitoba.

December 10, 2021.

Winnipeg, Manitoba — To commemorate Human Rights Day, the Manitoba Association of Women’s Shelters (MAWS) is hosting a virtual event to launch our project “Centering the rights of women from the margins.” The project will focus on delivering culturally respectful, equitable, low-barrier and non-discriminatory gender-based violence (GBV) services to survivors who all have a right to safety. Find more information on the project [here](#).

The right to safety is an urgent human right enshrined in International treaties and conventions like the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The right to safety is also reflected in Canada’s Constitution. Violence can happen anywhere, at any time, and can affect anyone, regardless of their age, background, ethnic identity, gender identity, or income. However, some groups face historic and ongoing systemic discrimination and barriers to justice and care, which make them more vulnerable to violence. These groups include: Indigenous women and girls; women and girls; 2SLGBTQQIA folks; trans women; immigrant, newcomer and refugee women; seniors; people with disabilities; those experiencing mental illness and/or substance use dependence; and women from rural, northern and remote areas, to name a few.

Stopping gender-based violence is key to advancing true equality for all Canadians. However, substantive equality is not achieved by creating “one size fits all” systems of service. Consistent with the MMIWG Call for Justice 4.7, Manitoba needs more inclusive, low-barrier and non-discriminatory GBV services to support women and survivors that present with intersectional needs. With this project, MAWS will take a human rights-based approach and center the needs and lived experiences of survivors while assessing existing program design and service delivery. We will be working with those who have experienced violations of their right to safety and have faced obstacles in accessing service, as well as with service providers to identify gaps in services and build a framework that respects and honours the inherent dignity of every person who seeks to access GBV services.

Deena Brock, Provincial Coordinator, Manitoba Association of Women’s Shelters, says “The pandemic has increased the risks and severity of gender-based violence, particularly for those already facing barriers that would make them vulnerable to abuse. Gender-based violence is an urgent crisis and now more than ever, we need accessible, barrier-free and non-discriminatory GBV services that acknowledge each

survivor’s lived experiences, intersectional needs, and their right to access safety services, no matter where they are in the province.”

MAWS would like to thank the Government of Canada for their support of this project through Women and Gender Equality Canada’s Gender Based Violence Program.

During the pandemic, the rates and severity of gender-based violence increased. Home is not the safest place for everyone. However, everyone has the fundamental right to be safe wherever they are and the right to access safety services without discrimination. It is vital that governments, service providers and communities come together to plan for a post-pandemic future that provides safety for all.

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Quote:

“We all benefit when women, girls and people of all gender identities and expressions are safe to live their lives to the fullest. Our government has provided over \$430,000 to the Manitoba Association of Women’s Shelters to support this project and help organizations remove barriers and reduce discrimination for those seeking gender-based violence services. Together we can continue to empower the next generation and build a more inclusive Canada for all.”

– The Hon. Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth.

Quick Facts and Links:

- Manitoba Toll-Free 24/7 Crisis and Support Line: 1-877-977-0007
- About MAWS: The Manitoba Association of Women’s Shelters (MAWS) is dedicated to providing a unified voice for women, children and all those who are affected by violence and abuse. In the mid-1980s, women’s shelters in Manitoba began to work together to provide support to the sector’s frontline professionals, reduce the isolation of shelter directors, and stop the competition between shelters for funding dollars. The organization evolved and was incorporated in 1991 as the Manitoba Association of Women’s Shelters Inc. Membership includes ten provincially funded women’s shelters, as well as Associate members working on the area of family violence. Visit the MAWS website here: <https://maws.mb.ca/>

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