

INTRODUCTION

- **Purpose:** Advocate for improved policies and services for GBV survivors in Peel
- **Brief Overview:**
 - Peel is a **diverse** region with unique challenges
 - GBV declared an **epidemic** in Peel (2023)
 - **Ontario** Bill 173 introduced (2024)
 - In 2022- 2025 **REVIVE** started a **Barriers** and **Solutions** research project funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada

ADDRESSING BARRIERS & SOLUTIONS FOR SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN PEEL

A Policy-Driven Approach to Community Support

Presented By Carrie Campbell, RSSW

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Feminist Collective Research Project for REVIVE**



**Femmes et Égalité
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Equality Canada**



RESEARCH STUDY BACKGROUND

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

Research

Participants Needed



- Are you **18 years and older**?
- Have you experienced gender based violence (e.g., intimate partner violence, domestic violence, sexual assault)
- Do you want to share your experiences on Barriers and Solutions to Reporting Gender Based Violence?

If so, you are invited to participate in a research study:

"Barriers and Solutions to Reporting Gender Based Violence: The Experience of Survivors"



The Goals of the Study are to:

- Understand formal and informal community resources that can mitigate barriers to reporting gender based violence and mitigate the cycle of violence
- Explore how these experiences or resources are unique to survivors who encounter multiple forms of oppression
- Identify recommendations to develop survivor-centric, community-based responses to support survivors of gender based violence

Other details

- Participants will complete a 45-60 minute virtual interview
- Completely voluntary; you can withdraw at any time
- All information provided in the interview is strictly confidential No one will know whether or not you decided to participate in this research study
- Participants will receive a \$200 e-gift card in appreciation for their time



Research Team

- Laura MacDiarmid, Principle Investigator - lmacdiar@uoguelph.ca
- Carrie Campbell, External Co-Investigator - campcarr@sherdancollege.ca
- Savina Nankoo, MEd Candidate at OISE - savina.nankoo@mail.utoronto.ca

Interested?
Contact: research@feministcollectiveproject.com

This study has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board for Compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants (REB #23-06-012).

 Women and Gender Equality Canada  Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

The research was guided by a Community Advisory Board (CAB)

- CAB consisted of **14 community members** strong representation of women with **lived experience as survivors** of gender-based violence (GBV).
- Most of the CAB members defined themselves as either **professionals in the GBV field** in the Region of Peel or women who had lived experiences of GBV.
- The CAB played a **critical role** in shaping the research, meeting monthly in a hybrid format. Their **participation was essential** in providing feedback on the research design, ensuring the questions were relevant and reflective of **priorities identified by community**

THE PROBLEM – GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND ITS IMPACT IN PEEL

“I was living in poverty, not having full-time income, not having the ability to move around and have the freedom that having certain aspects of financial security enables you to do.” - study participant

- **Key Statistics:**
- In 2023, Peel police responded to just over 16,000 incidents of family and intimate partner violence
- 62% of Canadian human trafficking cases originate in the GTA
- **Barriers to Seeking Help:**
- Fear, financial dependence, language barriers, cultural stigma
- Distrust of legal approaches
- Social Impacts: Stigmatization, isolation, intergenerational trauma
- Economic Impacts: Workplace absenteeism, financial instability
- Health Impacts: Strain on healthcare, need for culturally sensitive mental health services

SURVIVOR PERSPECTIVES & BARRIERS

- Key Findings from Study (**60 Participants**):
- Top needs: Safety, mental health support, housing, financial stability
- **Barriers: Fear** (88%), financial barriers (81%), distrust of police (62%)
- 50% of survivors felt unsupported by law enforcement
- **Over 50% relied on family and friends** for emotional and financial support. Cultural Stigma and fear of judgment **sometimes prevented survivors from reaching out for help**

“Like, not really knowing what to do, who to call, what would happen if I called” – Study Participant

MIXED EXPERIENCES WITH ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES

- Survivors reported **varied levels of satisfaction** with formal social services.
- **Counseling was the most widely used service** (72% of survivors), with **62% reporting satisfaction**.
- **Housing services had the lowest satisfaction**, with many survivors struggling to access safe and affordable housing.
- Survivors reported **long wait times, bureaucratic challenges, and lack of culturally relevant services**. **66% cited lack of knowledge** about available services as a major barrier. **Financial barriers** prevented survivors from accessing therapy and legal help.

“Nowadays, there's just so much waiting times to get help and you (survivor) get caught in that web. You feel like you're never going to get help. They advertise places you can go and that, but you wait so long...” - Study Participant

CURRENT GAPS IN SUPPORT SERVICES

- Challenges Identified:
 - Limited culturally relevant shelters and services
 - Inconsistent police response and lack of female officers
 - Economic barriers to leaving abusive relationships
 - Lack of survivor-centered justice alternatives

“to actually just speak to an officer for them to take my details...Took five days”

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy paper developed by the research team will be available in late March 2025.

- 1. Strengthen Legal Protections
- 2. Enhance Support Services
- 3. Education & Prevention Programs
- 4. Targeted Support for Marginalized Communities
- 5. Data Collection & Research

MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

- **Strategy 1: Building Inclusive Leadership and Representation in GBV Response Services**
- **Goal:** Enhance diversity and cultural competency in leadership and frontline roles within GBV-focused services to better represent the Peel community's demographics.
- **Strategy 2: Removing Systemic Barriers to Accessing GBV Support Services**
- **Goal:** Address systemic obstacles such as language, immigration status, stigma, and economic dependence to make GBV services more accessible to marginalized communities.

CONCLUSION & CALL TO ACTION

In Summary: Addressing GBV is **critical** for safety, equality, and community strength

- **Request to City Council:**

- Explore committing funding to the enhancement of survivor **support** services
- Support policy changes for **better legal** protections
- Promote a **community-driven** approach to GBV response
- Engage with community-based agencies to **learn** about their **needs and trends**.

THANK YOU

[A complete policy paper will be available by March 30th 2025. Our team is looking forward to sharing a copy with you following its completion.](#)

[I can be reached via email at the address below](#)

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COMPASSIONATE SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS

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