

September 10th 2021

Take A Stand
City of Brampton Mayor's Youth Advisory Council
Brampton, Ontario

RE: Take A Stand Delegation - Written Remarks (Intimate Partner Violence)

One in three women worldwide are survivors of intimate partner violence. Everyday, 137 women are killed by a member of their family. Fewer than 40 percent of the women who experience violence seek help of any sort. Intimate partner violence is not an issue that stays behind closed doors. It seeps into the lives of our children and challenges our communities. A 2019 report by statistics Canada details the alarming rise in family violence over the past three years. Coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen the emergence of what UN Women describes as a '*shadow pandemic*'.

For the past year, the Take A Stand team (as an extension of the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council) has been examining existing public policy, consulting past research, and meeting with young people across the city to create a comprehensive report that provides policy recommendations focused on a trauma-informed approach, a gender-informed approach and an anti-colonization approach to both intimate partner violence response and prevention. To supplement our presentation, we have submitted our policy paper which contains extensive details on our methodology, research and recommendation framework.

Our policy paper is divided into three sections; the principles, concerns, and our recommendations. Our principles serve as the foundation and guiding statements behind each of our recommendations. Each of the recommendations has been evaluated against how well it allows us to achieve our principles. Our concerns section highlights the key facets of the issue, specifically focusing on the sectors where we believe the most reform is required. Lastly, our recommendations use our research and the prior two sections to discuss what we believe the most effective policy to address the issue would look like. To address some of the gaps in our paper, we have also included a limitations section.

The policy paper focused on six areas of concern. The COVID-19 pandemic, intimate partner violence education, intimate partner violence in the LGBTQ2+ community, Indigenous and racialized communities, equitable treatment options, and police-public relations, policy and legislation.

A full list of our principles can be found in the policy paper however we would like to highlight the principle that all people have the right to be protected from intimate partner violence in all its forms. Similarly, a full list of our concerns can be found in the policy paper however we would like to highlight the concern that policies relating to intimate partner violence do not offer support to those affected in secondary and tertiary forms like children.

We would now like to present our recommendations.

We recommend that existing awareness campaigns like the “It’s Not Okay” campaign should continue, particularly expanding the number of languages the campaign is translated into. We also recommend that additional statistical evidence be collected by the City and that this data is shared with community organizers and leaders such that they can better understand the needs of their communities

To address intimate partner violence in the LGBTQ2+ community, we recommend that the City’s equity office evaluates the number of LGBTQ2+ organizers required to increase representation in domestic violence services and intimate partner violence prevention.

To address the racialization of domestic violence and the increased rates of domestic violence in racialized communities, the City of Brampton should place emphasis on achieving the steps outlined by the Federal Truth and Reconciliation Commission by auditing their efforts and progress against the demands of the commission. Media created by the city should actively avoid the racialization of domestic violence and should be made in conjunction with equity seeking groups.

In order to address the lack of equitable treatment options, we recommend City-wide training programs specifically designed for treatment staff like shelter staff. This will equip them with the necessary skills to accommodate queer people, people from varying ethnic backgrounds, and those with mental health or substance abuse concerns. Lastly, police-public relations, policy, and legislation can be better by having town halls and consultation events concerning mandatory charging, particularly what mandatory charging means for racialized communities.

We would also like to briefly highlight the key limitations of our policy paper. The first limitation is that we do not place heavy emphasis on people with disabilities who also experience domestic violence. This is largely because of the very limited data that exists for such groups. The second limitation is that we were not able to receive input from Indigenous community organizers during our community consultations, therefore their perspective is not as represented as we would have liked.

Thank you for your time and your engagement with the youth of the City of Brampton. We hope our presentation provided meaningful and comprehensive information on some of the steps the City can take in order to rectify the issue.