

Report to the National and Provincial Council of Women
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Key issues:

MEDIA \ VIOLENCE -

Andrea Martinez of the University of Ottawa in her review of scientific literature for CRTC Commission says that there is a lack of consensus about the impact of media violence on real world aggression; however she concludes her study by saying that there is a relation “between exposure to television violence and aggressive behavior.” Recently, there is a growing violence at schools, Universities and on the City streets in USA and in Canada – it is a sign of a **social crisis**.

In 2003, 5,570 young people in USA (ages 10-24) were murdered – an average of 15 a day. Of these victims, 82% were killed with firearms (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006)
Source: www.cdc.gov/ncpcic/factsheets

One of the risk factors quoted in literature is **peer/school relation** – low commitment to school, poor psychosocial adjustment, social rejection by peers, lack of connection with family, bullying behaviors, poor family functioning. Frequent exposure to violence in movies, TV and lack of positive role models diminishes the ethical values and creates a lot of chaos and anxiety among youth

GUN CONTROL

The recent Virginia Tech massacre has revived the gun control debate (Toronto Star, April 18, 2007). Multiple shootings bring proof that tough gun controls and laws are essential. In Canada the Conservatives were against the gun registry introduced by Liberals. Stephan Dion raised the issue of more gun control. The gun registry law took effect on Dec.06, 1995 and it should be reinforced. Tougher laws are needed.

How many years and how many incidents will it take to understand that it is a serious issue and that something needs to be done to make guns less accessible?

The Provincial Council of Women should urge the Government of Canada to tighten the gun control and to bring more restrictive rules for its use.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Interesting article by Jim Coyle in Toronto Star (February 17, 2007) brings public attention to the subject of abuse of women at home. “When love turns deadly, its women who pay” says Coyle. So many murders that occur are committed by those who are known and “once dear to the victim”. Very often the cause is a male sense of ownership of women, hurt ego and a sense of failure in love. - “Sexuality has always been a focus of violence” and “the most common killing in our culture is that of a male killing of his intimate partner”

These issues are linked. There is a need for better public awareness of the impact of media on attitudes, and behaviours. There is a need for social change. Obviously parents and teachers play a very important role in this process but the role of a family and of a community is very essential.

It is very timely to encourage all women organizations to organize debates and forums aimed at youth to find ways of getting them involved in the process of influencing the change. What if PCWO would propose to organize a conference on the subject with greater involvement of youth and media?

Positive role models

One is inspired by a female community activist, June Callwood who died at the age of 82. She helped so many women in need and dedicated her life to social justice. It is this type of a story that can create a role model for younger girls. (See Globe & Mail article - April 16, 2007 "This is what's its all about: It's kindness")