

Welcome to our Learning Network Resource Spotlight

It's Time to End Violence Against Women in Politics

Date & Time: Thursday, March 25, 2021 | 1:00-2:00 PM EST

- All attendees are muted during the resource spotlight.
- If you are experiencing issues, please type into the chat box.
- If you have a question for the speaker, please type into the Q&A box and we will spend 15 mins near the end on Questions and Answers.
- There will be an evaluation link in the chat box at the end of the resource spotlight, please fill out the form as your feedback will guide our future resource spotlights.
- Presentation slides are posted on our website, there will be a link in the chat box.
- The resource spotlight recording will be posted on our website within the next few days:
<http://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/ln-kh-webinars>

Western  Centre for Research & Education on
Violence Against Women & Children



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**It's Time to End
Violence Against
Women in Politics**

March 25, 2021

Arezo

She/her/they/them

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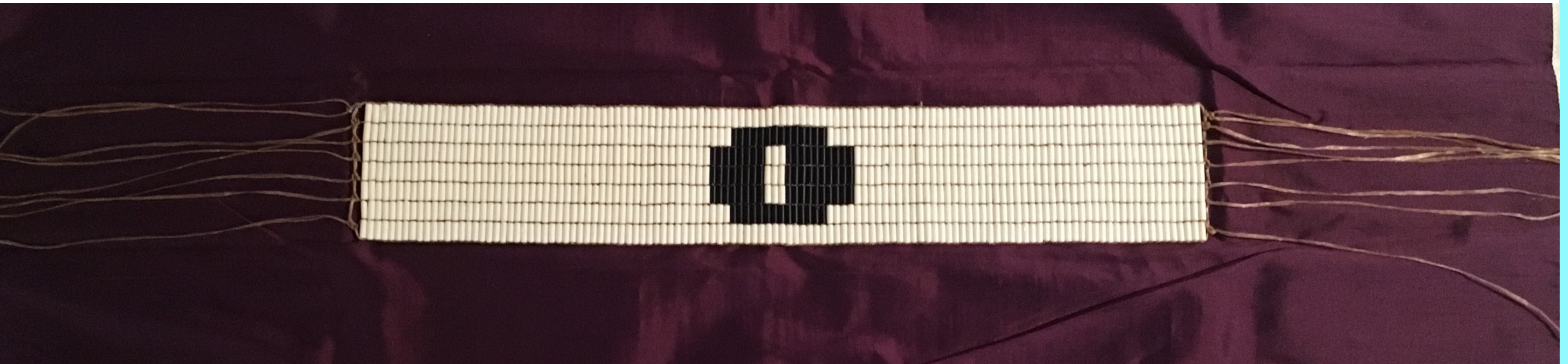
We are a civic leadership platform for Black, Indigenous, and racialized young women and gender-diverse youth.

We work through an anti-oppressive, intersectional, and transformational lens.



Land Acknowledgement

- Whose land are you on?
- What is your relationship to this land?
- What are your responsibilities?



Today we will explore

- gender-based sexual violence in Canadian politics through an intersectional lens
- the root causes of gender-based sexual violence against women in politics; and
- strategies to challenge gender-based sexual violence against women in politics

"There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives."

Audre Lorde

Intersectionality

Coined by Kimberle Crenshaw, the term Intersectionality refers to a method of analysis that examines why, and how, people with multiple intersecting identities are simultaneously marginalized based on their social location(s).

Violence against women in politics

"Physical, psychological or sexual aggressions taken to shorten, suspend, impede or restrict the exercise of their office, or force a woman to make decisions against her will."

The International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics

Violence against women in politics

Gender Binary

Essentialist classification of gender into two distinct, opposite forms of masculine and feminine.

– Women are maternal and emotional and men are logical and aggressive.

Violence against women in politics

Gender Policing

- The enforcement of normative gender ideals associated with the gender binary onto individuals.
- Devalue or delegitimize expressions that deviate from normative conceptions of gender, thus reinforcing the gender binary.
- **Normative gender performances are encouraged and rewarded, while non-normative performances are discouraged through punishment or generally negative reactions.**

Violence against women in politics

Women stepping out of the private sphere and entering fields dominated by men and associated with masculine gender expression is viewed as an **anomaly**.

Violence against women in politics is punishment.

Violence against women in politics

A historical perspective

Witch Hunts

- Women's power, knowledge, and wealth threatens capitalism and patriarchy
- The witch hunts served to displace women as reproductive knowledge-holders and matriarchs, land owners
- Public and state-sanctioned punishments against women who did not adhere to patriarchal expectations

Violence against women in politics

A historical perspective



Anne Boleyn

- Queen of England from 1533 to 1536
- Mother of Queen Elizabeth I
- 2nd wife King Henry VIII
- Accused of practicing witchcraft, executed for adultery and treason

Violence against women in politics

A historical perspective



Anne Boleyn

- Advocated for redistribution of church revenues to the poor
- Involved in passing 'Poor Law' so local officials had to find employment for the poor
- Critic of Thomas Cromwell's foreign policy

Violence against women in politics

A historical perspective

Decolonizing History

- Prior to colonization, women across many Indigenous cultures participated in public life and held leadership positions, responsible for land holdings and allocation of resources.
- Colonization and enforcement of Euro-Christian Patriarchy undermined women's place as leaders in their communities.

Violence against women in politics

A historical perspective

Decolonizing History

- Patriarchal violence against women is a tool of colonization
- Forceful conversion to Christianity and promotion of men's violence as a means to convert and control Indigenous women and children

Violence against women in politics

A historical perspective



"When enslaved African Muslims were originally brought to the colonies, they quickly became known for rebellion... until the abolition of slavery, the vast majority of black women were subject to regimes of punishment that differed significantly from those experienced by white women."

Angella Davis

Violence against women in politics

A historical perspective



Five Black Muslim women, all Somali-Canadians wearing hijabs, have been attacked or threatened in Edmonton in the first three months of 2021.

2 Muslim women were attacked in Calgary just 3 days ago.

Violence against women in politics

Violence against women in politics is an extension of everyday violence against women and serves a crucial purpose to maintaining the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (bell hooks)

Even when women are assimilated into patriarchal institutions of power, our inferiority is asserted through continued objectification and tokenization because the nature of power remains oppressive.

Violence against women in politics

We must broaden our definition of women in politics to include all women who engage with our civic spaces, not just elected officials, to get a clear understanding of how GBV impedes on women's ability to lead and engage with civic institutions.

This must include consultants, staffers, lobbyists, public servants, volunteers, visitors, journalists, and elected and appointed officials.

Violence against women in politics

Sexual Assault

Any kind of physical sexual contact without mutual consent. It can include unwanted kissing, groping, rape, or any other unwanted act of a sexual nature.

- Can occur at partisan gatherings, rallies, campaigns, offices, and on legislatures, or outside of civic/political spaces
- Can be perpetuated by anyone, regardless of gender and position

Violence against women in politics

"I felt so shocked and offended that this well-known supporter and donor would objectify me in such a public setting... everybody saw or noticed this literal slap my behind as he walked away and they resumed the conversation as if I had not literally been physically assaulted by a man."

A Black campaign volunteer

Violence against women in politics

Harassment

Unwelcome conduct of a sexual and sexist nature that affects the working, learning, or living environment, or leads to adverse consequences for the one directly subjected to the harassment.

- Unwanted attention of a sexually oriented nature such as personal questions about one's sex life, persistent requests for a "date"
- Unwelcome remarks about someone's hair, voice, body shape

Violence against women in politics

Cyber-violence

A form of gender-based harassment that includes sexist and abusive electronic communication.

- Sexist and threatening digital communication
- Doxing and leaking private information and images like nudes

Violence against women in politics

Intersectionality Matters

Misogyny and sexism merge with other systems of oppression to undermine Black, Indigenous, and racialized women's voices.

Violence against women in politics

- Black women politicians are **84% more likely to be targets of abusive tweets** than white women.
- Asian and Muslim women are the most likely to **receive threats mentioning ethnic, racial, and religious slurs**.
- Latinx women are **81% more likely to receive tweets that are physically and specifically threatening** than white women.

Violence against women in politics

We must go beyond the 'gender-first' lens.

Violence against women in politics



Catherine McKenna said in one incident a man in a car pulled up alongside her and her children, swore and called her a "climate Barbie".

Violence against women in politics



Former MP Celina Caesar-Chavannes

called out Maxime Bernier on his white-privilege which led to racist harassment against her.

Her colleagues, and a majority of people, were silent on her treatment by Bernier and his supporters until 3 weeks later when #HereforCelina emerged.

Violence against women in politics



Former MP and Leader of Ontario's Progressive Conservative Party, Patrick Brown was accused of sexual misconduct by two women.

- Stepped down from his role in provincial politics and denied those allegations
- **Current Mayor of Brampton**

Violence against women in politics

Violence against women in politics is not a bug, but it's a feature of a political culture built on imperialist white-supremacist patriarchal power.

Challenging Violence against women in politics

Reject representation politics and respectability politics.

Representation politics assumes that the voices, opinions, and perspectives of citizens, especially those with intersecting marginalized identities is expected or assumed to be “present” when a member of that marginalized group gains access to power and influence within a dominant system

Challenging Violence against women in politics

Reject representation politics and respectability politics.

Respectability politics are rules for marginalized people to follow in order to “earn” respect in mainstream culture and access dominant power.

Violence against women in politics



Jody Wilson-Raybould was celebrated as Canada's first Indigenous woman Minister of Justice, but was pushed out (expelled from caucus) once she stopped being a "team-player" and led based on her Big House.

Challenging Violence against women in politics

Invest in long-term culture shifts toward consent culture

- Develop strong anti-harassment policies that reach women from across the civic landscape
- Provide ongoing training on recognizing and addressing gender-based violence, including sexual violence
- Develop survivor-centred internal and external mechanisms for reporting and responding to gender-based violence

Challenging Violence against women in politics

#AddWomenChangePolitics won't work unless women in positions of power are committed to challenging the status quo and challenging sexism.



“I am struck by how many women on television news wear sleeveless dresses — often when sitting with suited men.”

Former PM Kim Campbell

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