# Disrupting AI:
# Addressing AI-enabled forms of GBV

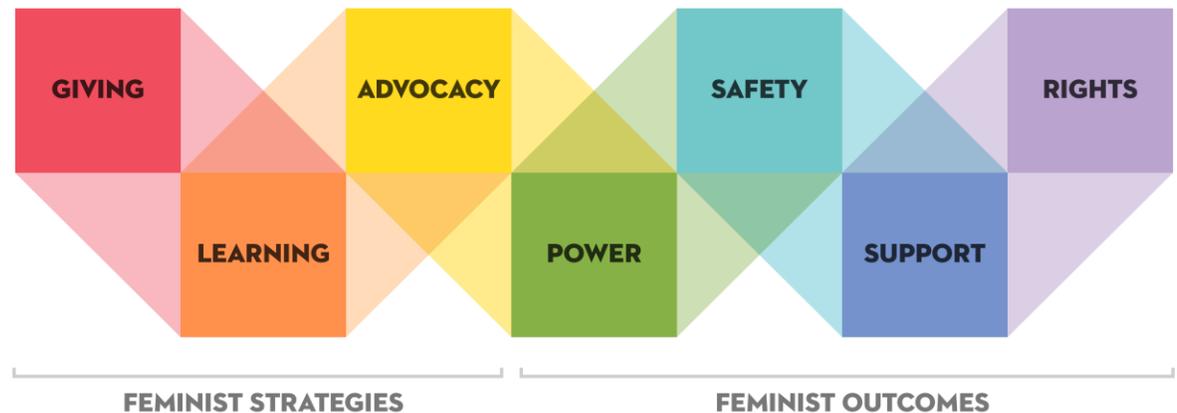Mitzie Hunter, President and CEO Canadian Women's Foundation

# Canadian Women's Foundation

We are **Canada's public foundation for gender justice and equality**.

We advance this by growing support for **grassroots feminist action**, partnering with communities and organizations to improve conditions, and building diverse leadership and knowledge for sustainable change.

**Since 1991**, our generous donors and supporters have contributed more than $270 million to fund over 3,400 **life-transforming programs** throughout Canada.

Every woman, girl & gender-diverse person
can thrive, today and tomorrow.

GIVING

ADVOCACY

SAFETY

RIGHTS

LEARNING

POWER

SUPPORT

FEMINIST STRATEGIES

FEMINIST OUTCOMES

# Foundation Work to End Gender-based Violence

Two Foundation grant programs specifically focus on gender-based violence:

- **Rebuilding Lives grants** help survivors find safe housing, sexual violence support, counselling, legal support, and help child witnesses to violence

- **Teen Healthy Relationship grants** enable young people of all genders to learn about dating violence, sexual assault, and how to build safe, healthy, and equal relationships.

These are **multi-year programs** with a priority on reaching Indigenous and Black women, girls, trans, Two Spirit, lesbian, bisexual and non-binary people, and people living with disabilities, particularly those who face multiple challenges.

The Foundation develops and shares research into aspects of GBV, partners with a range of organizations working on GBV, and advances policy recommendations to decision-makers and funders.
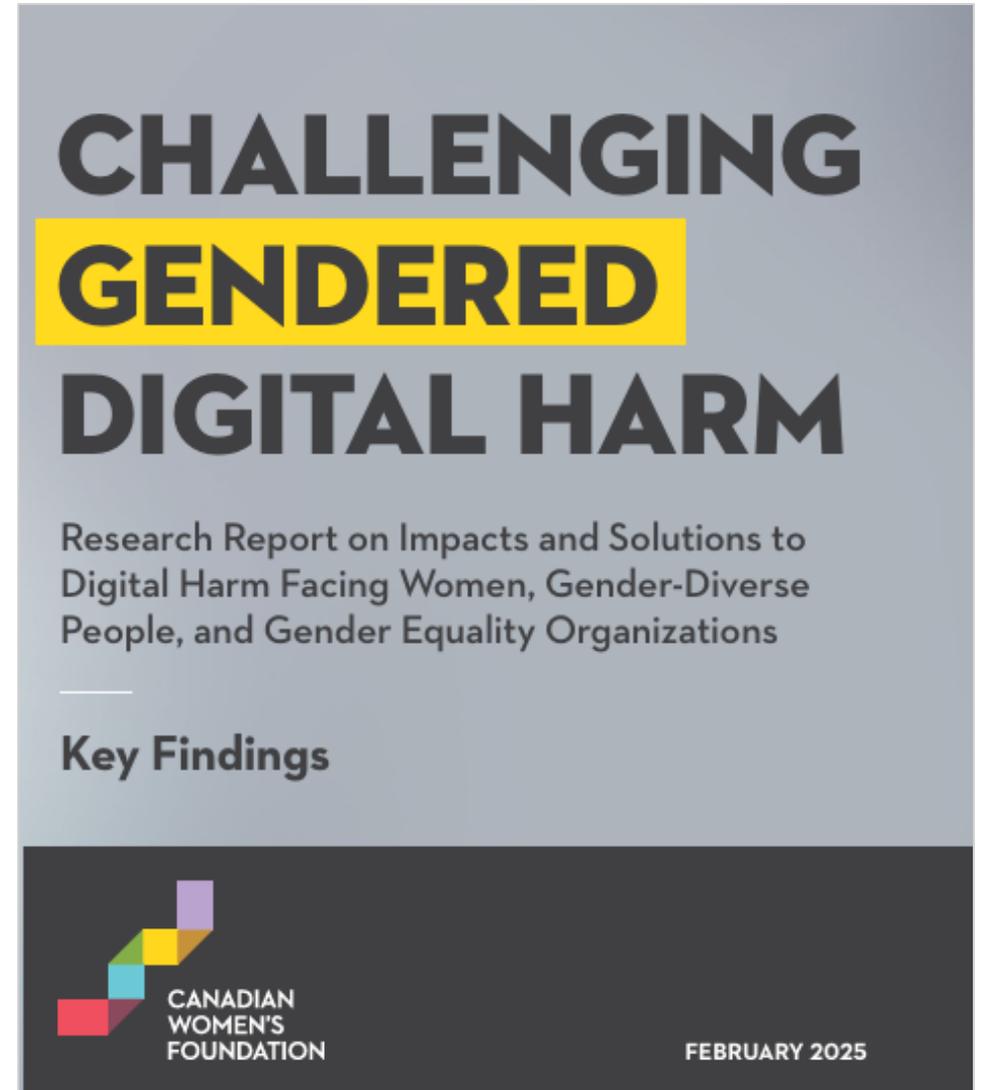
# An Intersectional Lens on Gendered Digital Harm

Gendered digital harm:

- is widespread and rising fast

- is intersectional and disproportionately affects Black, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, youth and people with disabilities

- has serious mental health and safety impacts

- silences participation and undermines public life

Online Course          Key Findings Report



CHALLENGING GENDERED DIGITAL HARM

Research Report on Impacts and Solutions to Digital Harm Facing Women, Gender-Diverse People, and Gender Equality Organizations

Key Findings

CANADIAN WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

FEBRUARY 2025

# Tech-facilitated GBV Data Snapshot

Black women were twice as likely (30% over 15%) to have their desire to live impacted as a result of TFGBV*.

Experiencing TFGBV* impacts everyone's mental health, with women and gender-diverse people who are also Indigenous, racialized, belong to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, or have a disability being more impacted.

- **61%** of women and gender-diverse people in Canada have faced gendered digital harm
- **60%** of racialized women and gender-diverse people believe law enforcement is ineffective
- **71%** of racialized women and gender-diverse people feel social media is a public space and should have stronger protections
- **More than 50%** of women and gender-diverse people reduce their online presence or self-censor to avoid harm
- **43%** of survivors suffer serious mental health issues like anxiety and depression

# AI-enabling GBV



AI is already reshaping gendered digital harm, emerging as an amplifier that is increasing the scale, speed and anonymity of abuse by enabling:

- creation of non-consensual explicit images (deepfakes)
- automated harassment
- fabricated content (synthetic histories)
- biased facial recognition systems.

# GBV online: Prevalence and Forms

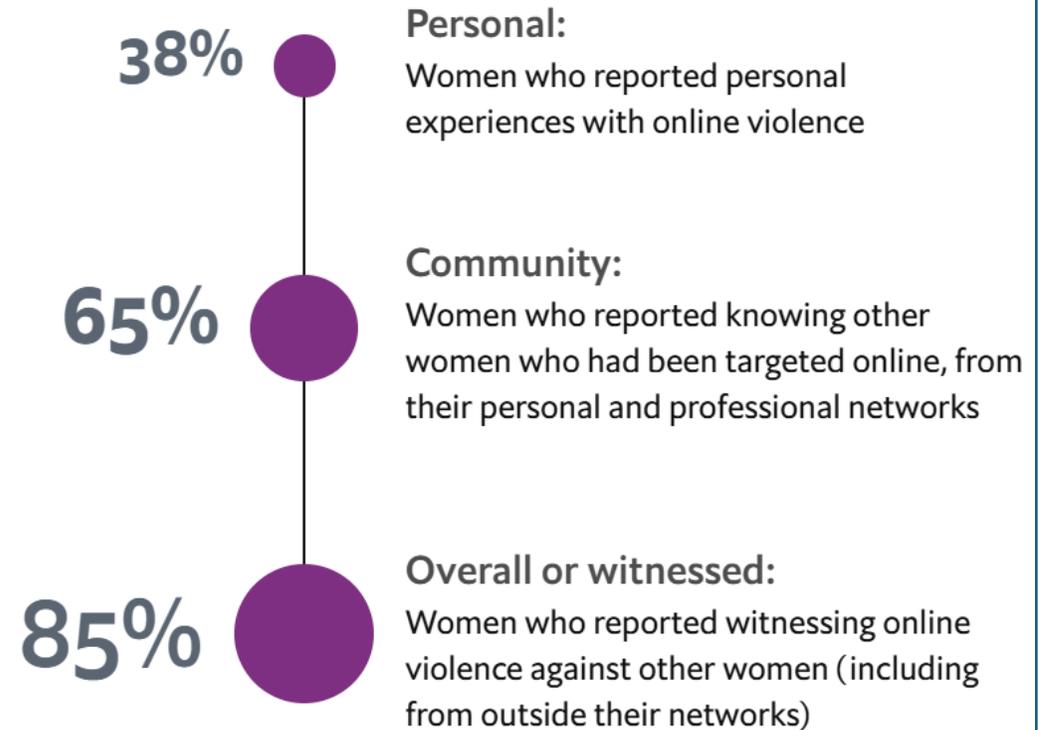**The overall prevalence of online violence against women globally is**

85%
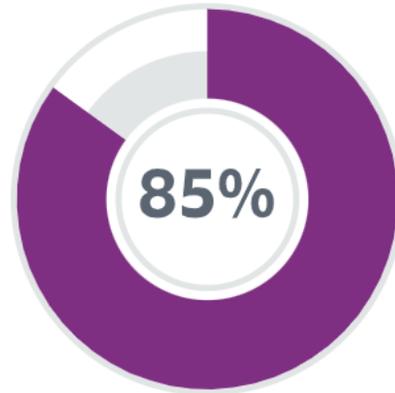
Younger women are more likely to have personally experienced online violence.

45% Generation Z and Millennials

31% Generation X and Baby Boomers

38% **Personal:** Women who reported personal experiences with online violence

65% **Community:** Women who reported knowing other women who had been targeted online, from their personal and professional networks

85% **Overall or witnessed:** Women who reported witnessing online violence against other women (including from outside their networks)

*prevalence was measured at three levels, all data pertains to the year between May 2019 to May 2020.

# Bias: AI was asked...



AI was asked to create an image reflecting on the uncertainty in the world today. This is what it produced.



AI was then asked to use a feminist lens to generate an image reflecting on the uncertainty in the world. This is what it produced.



AI was then asked for an image on the same topic using an intersectional feminist lens. Here's what it produced.

# Disrupting AI - Addressing AI-enabled forms of GBV

**There is an urgent need for an intersectional, human-rights and survivor-centred approach, and collaboration across sectors to ensure:**

Women, girls and gender diverse people can safely and fully engage in digital spaces.

Gender equality and other non-profit organizations/ groups are better positioned to address digital harm they experience directly and to support survivors of gendered digital harm.

People in Canada have practical strategies and resources to develop digital literacy, engage safely in digital spaces, and help end gendered digital harm.

Policymakers, technology decision makers and civil society work together to create safer digital spaces while protecting rights and democracy.

# Potential Strategies

- Build gender into AI governance and design
- Move away from tools to reduce TFGBV that place responsibility on the victim rather than the technologies and perpetrators
- Adopt a multi-stakeholder approach requiring action from content distributors, content generators, civil society, policy makers and individuals
- Employ data protection and privacy laws and human rights frameworks, prioritize user consent and autonomy, address bias, ensure clear accountability and liability mechanisms
- Ensure tech companies adhere to human rights standards

# Thank you!

mhunter@canadianwomen.org

https://canadianwomen.org/help-end-gender-based-digital-harm/



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