



THE FEDERATION
of COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES of BC

Altogether better.

Life in BC Snapshot: 2017

Gender-based violence

Things aren't getting better for the people of BC

Two years ago, The Federation of Community Social Services of BC scoured the news, research, and literature to take a snapshot of what life in BC was like. We wanted to understand how good things were for the people of our province. We also wanted to investigate important aspects of day-to-day life that get overlooked by a government focused on economic prosperity.

Things didn't look that great. And two years later, they are no better. We have updated these snapshots to prove that point and to help you talk about the state of our province and the things that need to change in order for the people of British Columbia to actually prosper and thrive.

News headlines about gender-based violence in BC

- ⇒ BC isn't doing enough to end domestic violence - *CTV News*, 7/12/2016 (1)
- ⇒ BC welfare laws rob women of choice in relationships - *The Province*, 9/26/2016
- ⇒ Family violence a 'serious public health' issue in Canada - *CTV News*, 10/21/2016
- ⇒ Violence needs to end - *Squamish Chief*, 9/21/2016
- ⇒ NDP wants BC to adopt law protecting jobs of battered women - *Vancouver Sun*, 3/21/2016 (2)
- ⇒ Talk about sexual assault is good, but what will the premier do about it? - *Vancouver Sun*, 6/9/2016
- ⇒ Sexual violence on campus a small part of a much bigger problem - *Vancouver Sun*, 6/19/2016
- ⇒ Northern resource development tied to violence against indigenous women - *Globe & Mail*, 11/3/2016

Case study: The cards are stacked against single mom Val

“ Last year, Val and her young son moved from northern B.C. to Langley to escape ongoing threats of violence from her ex-partner. After one such incident with her former boyfriend, she missed two days of work and was laid off because, unlike other provinces, BC doesn't provide job security to women fleeing domestic abuse. Now, Val and her son live in Langley with her new boyfriend but she is about to lose her monthly benefits because BC social assistance laws deem them a “joint financial unit” even though they've only lived together for three months. No matter what Val does, the cards seem stacked against women like her.

50%

50% of women in Canada have experienced sexual or physical violence.⁴

13,000

The number of requests for support Battered Women's Support Services receives each year.¹



Why these issues matter

Gender-based violence is an issue that affects every community in BC. Whether you see it or not—it's there. Recent government action to address this issue has only focused on awareness campaigns, on-line services, and one-time funding to select organizations. That's not enough. It's time for real, substantial change. Things need to start getting better for the people of BC.

200

Rape crisis centres report wait lists of up to 200 women and 1.5 year delays before women can access counselling services.⁷

Raising awareness about these issues

- Approximately 1 in 3 women will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime.⁶
- BC has made little progress to end violence against Indigenous women, and has indicated that it does not intend to report publicly on future progress.⁷
- Sexual assault is the most under-reported violent crime in Canada, with less than 10% of incidents reported to police.⁶
- Despite two provincial plans aimed at addressing violence against women, progress remains stagnant.⁷

32+

On average, more than 32 abused women seek shelter in BC on any given day.³

Talking points about gender-based violence in BC

"We have only been able to scratch the surface [...] due to the lack of political will."¹

- Angela MacDougall,
BWSS Executive Director

"We have seen a dramatic increase in violence across BC."²

- Maurine Karagianis,
Opposition Critic for
Women's Issues

"The key to breaking the silence around violence against women is working together."³

- Stephanie Cadieux,
Minister for MCFD



20,000

The number of women who experience relationship violence each year in BC.⁴

About The Federation

The **Federation of Community Social Services of BC** is a social justice umbrella organization. We work tirelessly to improve the social conditions in BC on behalf of our members: community social service organizations across the province. We believe that:

- ⇒ Healthy, happy, and supported communities make good economic sense.
- ⇒ For your family to succeed, all families must succeed.
- ⇒ Job creation alone is not the solution to our province's social problems.

Learn more at www.fcssbc.ca or email us at info@fcssbc.ca

\$115,000

Total economic cost of each incident of domestic violence (personal, court, social service & health care).⁵

ADDITIONAL SOURCES:

- (3) *Province in partnership to stand together against violence*. B.C. Government News Release. July 2016.
- (4) *What Is Violence Against Women?* www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/domestic-violence. Sept 2016.
- (5) *Economic Impact: The Cost of One Incident of Domestic Violence*, The Circle Project Assoc. Inc. June 2016.
- (6) *Campus Sexual Violence: Guidelines for a Comprehensive Response*. Ending Violence Association of BC. May 2016.
- (7) *2015 CEDAW Report Card*. West Coast Leaf. Nov 2015.