

NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

REFLECTIVE CONVERSATION GUIDE

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge and respect the lək'wəḡən peoples on whose traditional territories the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

On this day of remembrance and action it is important to acknowledge the violent impacts—historical and current—of colonization on Indigenous women and girls. Intergenerational colonial violence manifests through the disproportionately higher rates of life threatening, gender-based violence: most notably, the high numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people in what we colonially call Canada.

On this day of remembrance and action we must honour the many years of work by Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people to raise awareness, support families of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and Two Spirit people, and end gender-based violence.

Last year we also acknowledged the discoveries of unmarked graves on the sites of former residential schools. These graves were referenced in the Truth and Reconciliation Reports ^[1] and were known about within Indigenous communities. Nonetheless, the actual discovery of these graves, with bodies of children as young as age three, was and continues to be a horrifying public confirmation of the levels of abuse and neglect at these so-called schools ^[2]. As more unmarked graves continue to be discovered at subsequent schools, we have the opportunity to reflect on the multiple forms of violence experienced by Indigenous communities, in the past and present, and how past violence has intergenerational effects into the present and future.

While we reflect and commit to action to end gender-based and sexualized violence, we must do so with the understanding of our shared responsibility to deconstruct harmful colonial systems to ensure justice and equality for all.

[1] <https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>

[2] <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/tshaht-first-nation-alberni-residential-school-search-begins-1.6518841>



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IN SUPPORT OF CANADA'S NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, UVIC HAS CANCELLED ALL CLASSES FROM 11:30 A.M.—12:30 P.M. ON DECEMBER 6.

It has been over 30 years since the murder of 14 young women at École Polytechnique de Montréal (December 6, 1989). This act of gender-based violence shook our country and led Parliament to designate December 6 as The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women.

Through the remembrance events of this day, we reflect and acknowledge why we make these commitments. Post-secondary institutions have and continue to uphold and reproduce patriarchal and colonial systems. We take this accountability seriously and are committed to ending gender-based violence and oppression on campus.

Gender-based violence and oppression dehumanizes and limits the ability to thrive as individuals and a community. This violence affects campus in numerous ways, including, but not limited to: sexist and transphobic comments and jokes, refusal to respect gender or pronouns, street harassment, physical violence, and sexual assault.

Certain communities disproportionately experience violence both on campus and in our community. This includes women, Indigenous Peoples, people of colour, people with disabilities, seniors, newcomers to Canada, 2SLGBTQIA+ (Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual), non-binary folks and gender non-conforming people.

It takes every member of our community to play a role in ending gender-based violence. We should recognize that acts of gender-based violence are rooted in conscious or unconscious bias, prejudice, and stereotypes, and that these attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours need to be actively addressed and unlearned to disrupt and prevent harm from happening. Today we are asking you to reflect on those we have lost, those who live in fear and experience oppression daily, and the responsibility that we as individuals and a larger community have to end gender-based violence.



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INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

On this day of remembrance and action to end gender-based violence, we invite all members of the UVic community to take time—either during the scheduled time or elsewhere during the week—to reflect on gender-based violence as a way to engage with this important annual event. Consider the significance/impacts of this ongoing social issue and what identifies our individual, collective, and institutional role(s) in making change.

The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women is about remembering those who have experienced gender-based violence and those who we have lost to it. It is also a time to take action. Working together, we can help prevent and address gender-based violence by remembering and learning from our past, listening to survivors, and speaking up against harmful behaviours and systems that reinforce and perpetuate all forms of gender-based and sexualized violence.

Ways to participate:

1. [Engage in personal reflection](#)
2. [Facilitate or participate in a group reflective conversation](#)
3. [Get involved and stay informed](#)
4. [Get support](#)

1. PERSONAL REFLECTION

Personal reflection is highly individual. Every person approaches this topic from their own experiences and current capacity. This topic can be emotionally activating. It is important to take care of yourself. We encourage you to find a way that feels safe and to seek the supports you need. If you are not triggered by this topic or have not considered it before, this is an opportunity to deepen your knowledge and commitment to a violence-free society.

Ways to reflect

- Take a walk
- Find a comfortable spot to sit or spend time
- Read or watch something on the topic (see [Appendix A: Context for this day](#))
- Write, draw, sing, dance or craft your reflections
- Write to or speak with someone on this topic if they would like to connect
- Filter through related hashtags on social media to gather other individual reflections and thoughts



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- Reflect on your own upbringing and the supports that got you to where you are today.
- There will be a designated space for a walking meditation labyrinth and to reflect within the Multifaith Centre on December 5th – December 9th from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm for anyone who wishes. All are welcome.

Questions for reflection

- How does my gender affect my relationship with violence?
- How has violence impacted my life? My community? My job?
- How do I practice setting my own boundaries with the people I interact with? How can I assess my own needs and desires, and communicate them with care?
- How do I practice respecting boundaries of the people I interact with? How can I ensure consent is in place for these interactions?
- How do I practice consent in my everyday interactions? How can I increase my consent practices?
- What are some resources or groups that I can connect with or join to learn more?

2. REFLECTIVE CONVERSATION

Anyone can host a conversation and it can be as structured or as open as you want. The purpose is to encourage small groups of friends, co-workers, or classmates to reflect on the impacts of gender-based violence and commit to taking individual and collaborative action.

PROCESS TO HOST AND FACILITATE A REFLECTIVE DIALOGUE

Consider the following elements to create a welcoming space:

- Ensure that the purpose of the conversation is clear
- Ensure that it is simple for people to either opt in or out of the conversation throughout
- Review some version of the guidelines below yourself and with the group
- Based on the group, use your own wisdom and their feedback to identify what else will contribute towards a place where people can listen and learn together

Consider the process to host and facilitate a reflective dialogue suggested in [Appendix B](#).



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GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGING IN REFLECTIVE DIALOGUE

The topic of gender-based violence is serious and discussing it is impactful. It requires courage, compassion, humility, and commitment to action. These conversations can be emotional, painful, and difficult. We recommend that you practice the following guiding principles in your reflective dialogue session:

Acknowledge and respect intersectionality

- Everyone is differently impacted by gender-based violence: each person comes from different social positions, rooted in interconnecting systems and structures of power that produce intersecting forms of privilege and oppression

Approach listening with openness and respect

- Be open to receiving and processing information and ideas shared by others. Try to understand what they mean. Do your best to suspend judgment while listening. Be mindful of any judgments that do arise.

'Move up/move back'

- Reflect on how you generally function in a group discussion. With that self-knowledge, consider how to contribute towards a balanced conversation. Do you need to listen more? Speak up? Wait before you speak? Let others take the lead?

Speak from your own position and experiences

- Speak from the 'I.' Talking for someone else often comes from assumptions that could be insulting or harmful.

Witnessing is participation

- No one is required to do anything that does not feel right to them, including sharing their opinions or suggestions. Witnessing is a form of participation and is a way of contributing to the conversation.

Be mindful when asking questions

- Be mindful of the difference between asking questions about theory and practice and asking questions of someone about their story or identity. Consider that some people are subjected to intrusive questions on a regular basis. This does not mean never asking, it just means being thoughtful and finding out if the other person truly wants to share.



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Consider if you are asking simply out of your own curiosity, or whether it is to inform the work that is being done.

Disagree with the idea, not the person

- Have a healthy respect for differences of opinion. Be open to receiving multiple perspectives. Recognize that each perspective offers something you can learn from.

Make space for people to come as they are

- No one can know more than they do at any given moment. All each of us can do is to try to move forward in a good way, seeking greater understanding and learning how to apply that understanding in tangible ways. Be responsible for your own learning and be mindful that not everyone will have the same level of understanding.

Maintain confidentiality

- Conversation participants should not share anyone else's personal stories unless they have express permission from the other person. Why?
 - Because the stories shared belong only to the people involved
 - Because participants may attend classes together, or be part of a team, or work together, it is especially important to respect and honour the space being held specifically for these conversations and that this will not impact other ways participants may engage with one another
 - Because participants should not feel like what they choose to share here, or their struggles as they engage in a good faith process of learning, could be used against them outside of this space

3. GET INVOLVED AND STAY INFORMED

ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS:

[Anti-Violence Project](#)

- Sign up for workshops, check out our blog, join the Men's Circle or become a volunteer!

The Anti-Violence Project (AVP) is committed to addressing and ending gender-based and sexualized violence on campus and beyond. We strive to provide anti-oppressive and sex-positive services, advocacy and action on-campus and off to people of all genders, in partnership and collaboration, in order to address and resist all intersecting forms of violence.



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[Gender Empowerment Centre](#)

- Learn more about gender, sex positivity, and anti-oppression by accessing books and resources at GEM!
- Check the website for information about upcoming workshops.

The Gender Empowerment Centre (GEM) is an inclusive space, focused on the needs of self-identified women, non-binary, and gender non-conforming folks to organize, network, access resources, attend workshops and events, study, and relax. Our space is open to both University of Victoria students and community members.

[Office of Student Life](#)

- Participate in the [Tools For Change](#) workshops and [Bringing in the Bystander](#) workshop (*Registration is only open to current students*)
- Find out how to become a facilitator for these workshops or a student leader!

The Office of Student Life at the University of Victoria is dedicated to promoting a safe and inclusive campus community in support of fairness, responsibility and respect for all. To reach this goal, the OSL investigates and responds to student non-academic conduct matters and collaborates with a number of university offices and student groups to offer preventative and educational programming intended to support the well-being and development of UVic students.

[Sexualized Violence Resource Office](#)

- Check out our website for information about sexualized violence, consent, alcohol and consent, UVic's Sexualized Violence Prevention Policy
- [Book a training or workshop](#) for your class, faculty, and/or staff team.

The Sexualized Violence Resource Office in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR) offers information, support, and education for all UVic community members. You can contact the office for confidential advice, to access support options, and to find out more about UVic's policy. You can reach us by phone at 250-721-8021 or by email at svpcoordinator@uvic.ca to book a virtual appointment. Our physical office is located in Sedgewick Building, Room C119.



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OFF CAMPUS OPTIONS IN GREATER VICTORIA:

[Victoria Sexual Assault Centre](#)

- Volunteer and/or donate to the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC).

VSAC is a feminist organization committed to ending sexualized violence through, healing, education, and prevention. We are dedicated to supporting women and all trans survivors of sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse, through advocacy, counselling, and empowerment.

[Moosehide Campaign](#)

- Join the movement.
- Check the website to find out how to get involved and upcoming events

The Moose Hide Campaign is “an Indigenous-led grassroots movement of men, boys, and all Canadians - standing up to end violence against women and children. “

4. GET SUPPORT

The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women can be challenging for many of us remembering loved ones we have lost, reflecting on our own experiences of violence, or times that we have witnessed violence. As we take this day to remember it is important that we take the time to care for ourselves.

The following are a list of available supports for students, faculty, and staff on campus and off campus.

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS ON CAMPUS:

The UVic [Student Wellness Centre](#)'s team of practitioners offer a variety of services to support students' mental, physical, and spiritual health. [Book an appointment](#) to meet with a counsellor, nurse, physician, or spiritual care provider.

The [Anti-Violence Project](#) offers in person peer support on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11am-1pm and 2pm-5pm, as well as phone support by appointment (call 778-400-5007). If you need support outside these hours, please send an email to support@antiviolenceproject.org and someone will connect with you. Please visit the website for up-to-date support hours throughout the year.

[SupportConnect](#) is a free, confidential 24/7 mental health support service for UVic students. Call toll-free to get connected to a qualified counsellor: 1-844-773-1427



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RESOURCES FOR STAFF/FACULTY TO ASSIST STUDENTS:

UVic [Student Wellness Centre](#) staff are available during business hours to consult with faculty and staff regarding student wellbeing concerns at 250-721-7909.

After hours, or anytime, faculty and staff can consult with [SupportConnect](#) about how to support students: 1-844-773-1427

RESOURCES FOR STAFF/FACULTY:

[LifeWorks](#) is the UVic employee and family assistance program. UVic staff and faculty and dependents can access professional counselling, information and referral services: 1-844-880-9142

UVic Human Resources provides a list of mental health resources for staff and faculty on their [website](#)

OFF CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS, STAFF AND FACULTY:

The [Vancouver Island Crisis Line](#) provides 24/7 short-term support, information and resources: 1-888-494-3888

Native Youth Crisis Hotline: 1-877-209-1266

[KUU-US Crisis Line Society](#) provides 24 hour crisis services for Indigenous people through education, prevention and intervention programs:

Toll free: 1-800-588-8717

Adults: 250-723-4050

Youth: 250-723-2040

[Men's Therapy Centre](#) supports any man*: cis, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, 2spirit, queer, gender fluid+ who has experienced emotional, physical or sexual trauma in childhood or as an adult. To make an appointment call 250-381-6367 or email info@menstherapycentre.ca



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APPENDIX A

CURRENT CONTEXT

As we mourn the loss and honour the memory of these students, we reaffirm our commitment to fight the hatred that led to this tragedy, and the misogyny that still exists today. In Canada and around the world, women, girls, 2SLGBTQIA (Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual) and gender diverse individuals face unacceptable violence and discrimination. While the dynamics of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to evolve, we know that gender-based violence in Canada has been magnified and amplified by the pandemic. There have been reports from police services, shelters and local organizations of an increase in calls related to gender-based violence across Canada during the pandemic.

Freedom from gender-based violence is a human right

Women have the right to live free from violence. This right is upheld by international agreements which Canada has signed on to including the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) and the 1993 [UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women](#).

According to this Declaration, violence against women is “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

As we reflect and commit to action to end gender-based and sexualized violence, it is important to remember that women, girls, Indigenous Peoples, 2SLGBTQIA+, non-binary and gender non-conforming people, racialized, those living in northern, rural and remote communities, persons with disabilities, newcomers to Canada, children, youth, and seniors are more at risk of experiencing gender-based violence. As such, our commitment to prevent and eliminate all forms of gender-based and sexualized violence must include a human rights approach and an intersectional lens.

See the Government of Canada’s strategy [It’s Time: Canada’s Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence](#) to prevent and address gender-based violence.

[UVic Engineering](#) is deeply committed to [equity, diversity and inclusivity](#) at all levels; including a strong commitment to increasing the number and improving the experience of women, trans and gender nonconforming students pursuing an engineering degree. It is critical that our all students, including women, trans, and gender nonconforming feel welcome, supported and able to see themselves as a vital part of the profession.



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The Shadow Pandemic: COVID-19 and the rise of violence against women and girls

Within the context of the ongoing pandemic, the rates of violence against women are rising. According to the [UN Women](#) (2020), “since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and reports from those on the front lines, have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified.” This is being called the [Shadow Pandemic](#) that is growing as the pandemic continues to put significant pressure and strain on health services, shelters and essential services.

Furthermore, an intersectional perspective shows that people with intersectional marginalized identities such as race, ethnicity, disability, class, migration status, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, and faith, face an increased risk of violence. The combination of other forms of identity with gender further reduces access to support services. These services were grossly underfunded prior to the pandemic and are more so now.

Read [Home is not safe for everyone: COVID-19 pandemic impacts on gender-based violence in Canada.](#)

Watch this [video](#) on the rise of domestic violence during COVID-19.

Support for the Iranian Community

People in Iranian communities are hurting, the tragic death of Mahsa Amini has sparked social and political protests in Iran and across the globe. Here at UVic, we have more than 300 students, staff, and faculty from Iran. On October 21, 2022, a Spotlight on Iran: An event in support of the UVic Iranian Community, was held for the Iranian community to share their experiences, discuss how they are doing and reflect together. This event provided a platform for us to show solidarity and support for our Iranian community, especially for those who are hurting. To stay updated on events, try following [UVic’s Iranian Students Association](#) or the [Victoria Iranian-Persian Cultural Society](#).

The Unfinished Story of Yes

A short, animated [video](#) from WEST COAST LEAF explains how activism has shaped Canada’s laws about sexualized assault over the years and the deep problems that remain.

UVic recognizes the ongoing imperative to address gender based violence by taking strong action and supporting those who have experienced harm. Visit the [Sexualized Violence Prevention Office](#).



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APPENDIX B

PROCESS TO HOST AND FACILITATE A REFLECTIVE DIALOGUE

Preparation

1. Consider reviewing the [Leading Groups Online Guide](#). This is a great resource that provides concrete principles for inclusive online engagement. They include:
 - i. Be you
 - ii. Practice the technology
 - iii. Minimize people's multitasking
 - iv. Engage frequently and in varied ways
 - v. Manage energy
 - vi. Honor people's emotional state in this crisis
 - vii. Track participation
 - viii. Let people know you "see" them
 - ix. Oppression is compounded by technology
 - x. Release yourself and your group of perfection

Getting started

1. Start with a territorial acknowledgement and connect to reflecting and committing to action to prevent and eliminate gender-based violence
2. Review technical tools (Zoom/Microsoft Teams/Google Meets/Etc., use of chat function, will there be a chat moderator, etc.)

Guiding principles

1. Review guiding principles
2. Discuss if anything should be added, clarified, removed
3. Invite the group to support one another to hold the space for the dialogue and keep each other accountable to the guiding principles

Engage in reflective dialogue

1. Begin/facilitate the dialogue using any/all of the following questions:
 - Start with individual/personal reflection questions:
 - What brought you to this dialogue today?
 - What comes to mind when you hear the term gender-based violence?
 - The research and media tells us that there is an increase in gender-based violence under the COVID-19 pandemic. What factors might have contributed to this? What interventions could reduce the incidence of violence?
 - Collective/group:
 - What are the factors that contribute to gender-based violence?



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- What are some of the risk factors on campus for violence?
- What changes—educational, structural, organizational or other—could reduce violence and increase safety?
- What are the impacts of gender-based violence on: Victims and survivors; witnesses; marginalized communities; perpetrators; UVic
- Systemic:
 - How do we see gender-based and sexualized violence reinforced in our everyday lives?
 - What more could/should UVic be doing to prevent and eliminate gender-based and sexualized violence on campus?
- Action:
 - What are the game changers to ensure that gender-based violence prevention and response is prioritized?

Commit to action

1. Conclude the session with a discussion on commitments to action.
2. Share the commitments with us by emailing: svpproject@uvic.ca

Feedback on the process

If you can, tell us how reflecting went. We do not need to hear about the content of the discussion or thoughts (unless you'd like to share), but feedback on what worked well in the process, what was helpful in the guide and what else we could do to improve it would be greatly appreciated. Feel free to email any comments, questions, or suggestions to svpproject@uvic.ca or eqhr@uvic.ca.

