

United to End Violence Against Women:

Collaborating, Educating and Innovating to Shape our Future
The 1st National Leadership Forum

Montréal · September 17-19, 2012

Hosted by the



Canadian Network of Women's
Shelters & Transition Houses

Réseau canadien des maisons
d'hébergement pour femmes

Who is the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses?

We are a national organization recently formed by Canada's 14 provincial, territorial, regional and Aboriginal violence against women (VAW) sheltering organizations. With support from Status of Women Canada, representatives have been coming together to advance our knowledge, explore our vital role, and present a unified voice to end violence against women. A more detailed description of the Network appears at the end of this document.

What is the Forum?

United to End Violence Against Women: Collaborating, Educating and Innovating to Shape our Future will be the first-ever gathering of its kind in Canada. The Forum represents an exciting next step in the development of our coordinated work. It is an opportunity to expand the conversations about our realities, what we do, how we do it, and why. It will also be a chance to celebrate our values and achievements, share knowledge, and affirm our collective goals. The Forum will provide an empowering opportunity for leaders from across our sector to become part of a national coordinated movement for change.

“
Women must continue to come together to fight to preserve what they have accomplished, to better their circumstances,
”
and to achieve equality.

- The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean
C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D., Pioneer of
Quebec women's shelter movement and
Patron of the Canadian Network

“
In Canada, the services and response to domestic violence depend on where you live – and this is wrong... We need to work together towards an equitable and cohesive response to
”
end violence against women for all of Canada.

- Nikki Trimble, Coordinator,
Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters

What will the Forum look like?

Interactive. Energizing. Inspiring. Renewing. The Forum - designed by us, for us - will be an opportunity to learn with, from and about each other and our collective potential.

Participants will bring first-hand perspectives and knowledge to the collaborative work of our Network. We will explore the “big picture” through **interactive large group plenary sessions** that illuminate our current landscape, the changing face of VAW sheltering, our different funding and policy realities and the Canadian Network efforts to date. We will share promising practices or Ways of Working in Shelters (WOWs) through **concurrent exchanges** on topics such as: creating inclusive spaces, engaging men, mental health and substance use, collaborative community safety planning, Aboriginal - non-Aboriginal VAW shelter partnerships, empowering young women and girls, human trafficking, novel counselling interventions, emerging trends and data, technology safety and global best practices.

We will listen to stories of progressive change in municipal, regional, provincial/territorial or national policy or legislation, and learn about what made them possible and their impact. In smaller groups, we will discuss how to transfer these successes to

other jurisdictions and make systemic change that improves the experience for survivors of violence and their supporters.

Activities will take place in both English and French with simultaneous interpretation. Lemon Cree and other guests will support our self-care and wellness. Online participation will be available.

“
Voices of sheltering coming together at all levels – front line and behind the scenes...this is needed and timely. It’s necessary to look at the big picture if we want to make it better for women and workers locally.”

- Ellen Ridgeway, PEI Family Violence Prevention Services Inc.

Who will participate?

The Forum is intended for those interested in collaborating and coordinating with other VAW shelters and associations – such as advancing innovative projects to advance high quality services or influencing policy and legislation to support VAW shelters and end violence against women.

Participants will include staff, management, board members, and volunteers of associations and VAW shelters, including survivors of violence from the Network’s 14 founding VAW sheltering organizations and their members.

We are committed to diversity, inclusion and representation of all faces and regions of Canada.

We strongly encourage women from diverse communities, including, but not limited to, Aboriginal women, women of colour, LGBT women and women with disabilities to participate. An in-person seat will be tentatively held for each local member of the 14 founding organizations until the June 30th registration deadline. After, an inclusion committee will review the participant list to identify any under-represented communities and make efforts to facilitate an equitable representation from communities and regions. Please see the Registration section for details on our Solidarity Scholarship Fund.

What is “Leadership”?

As advocates for women, we speak out to support women and children. As leaders, we walk alongside women and our communities as guides to a safer place. We are all leaders and leadership skills can be learned and enhanced. Shelter leaders can be staff, management or board members, volunteers and survivors. A strong leader recognizes the value of contributions that come from all levels of involvement.

When we come together, we are a collective leadership. We are respectful and eager listeners who are open to various viewpoints. We seek input from all kinds, from all places. We are passionate about the cause and intensely committed. We want to share knowledge and credit. We are optimistic. We are willing to take risks to make positive change. We understand that the unique voice we hold as advocates for women must be shared.

What will Forum participants gain?

The unique program and design of the Forum will redefine how we gather and collaborate. Participants will benefit from the opportunities to make new connections and strengthen existing ones, to contribute to national plans and efforts, and to gain new skills and insights.

Participants of the Forum can expect to bring back to their organization:

- 1) New appreciation of our shared accomplishments and our progress in collaborating to end violence against women.
- 2) Increased inspiration, alignment, and mobilization in ways that can help our collective goals move forward, including:
 - Sharing experiences and promising practices (WOWs)
 - Taking knowledge-sharing to the next level
 - Advancing national VAW legislation and campaigns
 - Deepening the understanding of our work
 - Mapping the “big picture” of our work
 - Identifying how we can make a positive difference individually and collectively

3) Enhanced understanding of the issues in VAW sheltering and ability to apply and leverage the approaches, tools, and alliances that will serve our collective purpose – both locally and nationally.

4) Enhanced professional and personal development including capacity building in knowledge exchange, legislation and public awareness and appreciative inquiry and generative conversations that enable our desired futures. All attendees will obtain a certificate of participation jointly issued by The Potential Group and the Canadian Network.

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Our realities and needs are different across Canada so our work is challenging, but also empowering. We can build on the strengths of our diversity to generate change for women.”

- Manon Monastesse, *Fédération de ressources d’hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec*

Where and when will the Forum happen?

The Forum will be held from Monday, September 17 to Wednesday, September 19, 2012 at the Delta Montréal, a full-service hotel located at 475 President-Kennedy Avenue in the heart of downtown Montréal, Québec.

Because in-person space is limited, please wait for confirmation of your registration before you reserve travel and accommodation. Your registration confirmation will provide you with all the details about the guest rooms and discounted travel rates we have reserved.

It is no coincidence that the Forum is being held in Quebec. We have planned it to coincide with the release of Quebec's latest Domestic Violence Action Plan, slated to launch in the same month as our Forum (September 2012). We hope the launch

of that Quebec Action Plan will draw attention to our Forum, and we hope to leverage its policy and legislation goals.

The Forum will also take place around a special day in Quebec, the Day of Action for the Elimination of Sexual Violence Against Women (Friday, September 21st). We think our Forum, which will be held during the same week, could help raise awareness and create momentum around this issue.

Please arrange for sufficient time to travel to and from Montreal so you don't miss any of the activities, which all build on each other – from social activities to networking opportunities. You won't want to miss any of this ground-breaking Forum!



“*Linking our organizations and ideas from the local, regional, provincial/territorial, and national levels increases our effectiveness and our level of influence as we take our places as beacons of change.*”

- Tracy Gierman, Executive Director,
Canadian Network



Registration

The registration fee of \$495 per in-person participant covers a participant kit (English or French), all Forum activities and materials, as well as breakfast, lunch, and refreshment breaks throughout the Forum.

Registration will open on May 11, 2012. More information on registration will be available on our website at: www.endvaw.ca/forum2012

The registration deadline is June 30, 2012.

After June 30th, an inclusion committee will review the participant list to identify any under-represented communities and make efforts to facilitate a representative Forum. Additional spaces may be offered - stay tuned for details.

Solidarity Scholarship Fund

As one way of striving to provide an accessible and diverse Forum, we are building a Solidarity Scholarship Fund to support participants from under-resourced and under-represented communities who otherwise would be unable to attend. The number of scholarships provided will depend on the availability of funds and applicants

will be notified by July 30 at the latest. We strongly encourage individuals to raise funds in your local community or regions. In addition, a fundraising kit to support raising funds in your local community or region to cover travel and registration costs is available at

www.endvaw.ca/forum2012/fundraising

Questions regarding registration or the Solidarity Scholarship Fund?

**Contact Stéphanie Bédard by phone at:
613-680-5119 or by email: info@endvaw.ca**

If you are unable to attend in person, we encourage you to take part in the online and social media components of the 1st National Leadership Forum.

For program developments, visit www.endVAW.ca