

Is violence against women a hate crime?

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Hate Crime

- A hate crime is a legal category used to describe **bias-motivated violence**:
"assault, injury, and murder on the basis of certain personal characteristics: different appearance, different color, different nationality, different language, different religion."

Two Lenses on Violence Against Women

- ◉ Individual level, psychological, behavioural whereby we need to understand the risks, traumas, etc. of individuals
- ◉ Population level – how social institutions, such as gender, norms, beliefs and practices encourage and shape individual behaviour

Violence Against Women in Canada

“Violence against women is a persistent and ongoing problem in Canada and around the world. It affects women’s social and economic equality, physical and mental health, well-being and economic security”.

From : Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends, Statistics Canada, 2006

Violence Against Women in Canada

- Thirty-six percent of female victims of spousal violence and less than 10% of victims of sexual assault reported these crimes to the police in 2004.

United Nations Population Fund

- Gender-based violence both reflects and reinforces inequities between men and women and compromises the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims. It encompasses a wide range of human rights violations, including sexual abuse of children, rape, domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment, trafficking of women and girls and several harmful traditional practices. Any one of these abuses can leave deep psychological scars, damage the health of women and girls in general, including their reproductive and sexual health, and in some instances, results in death.

World Health Organization

The United Nations defines violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Systemic & Structural Violence

- ◉ Systems and structures that perpetuate gender-based violence against women (or men)
 - > Intransigent and difficult to remove
 - > Resistance is subtle and persistent
 - > Police, medical, or court policies that treat everyone “the same” – inequity denied
 - > Child welfare policies that make women afraid to contact police

Misogyny: the basis of VAW

Misogyny

- The denigration of the feminine
- Deeply held beliefs that women are mysterious, dangerous, different, unknowable
 - > Religion
 - > Psychiatry
- Biological determinism – mothers must put children first under all circumstances
- Etc.

A World without Misogyny

- ◉ Where would men who feel belittled and de-masculinized by society direct their anger?
- ◉ What would marketing of cosmetics, cars, beer, etc. look like?
- ◉ What would education systems look like and would boys stay in school longer?
- ◉ What would happen to the statistics on sexual assault, “domestic” violence, date rape drugs...?
- ◉ Who would be leading change?