



DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN) Canada  
Réseau d'Action des Femmes Handicapées (RAFH) Canada

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## DAWN Canada Key Accomplishments 2017-2018

DAWN Canada's work is focused around four areas – Research, Education, Policy and Advocacy. This is a summary of our key accomplishments in each of these areas over the past 18 months.

### *Research*

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*We work with community-based researchers and academic partners to shift the discussion around how research and community development can and should be done using an intersectional approach.*

#### **Ground-breaking Research on Women and Girls with Disabilities**

Our interventions on Canada's implementation of the CRPD, in particular the absence of any significant data on Canadian women and girls with disabilities resulted in a call for research proposals on this subject, which was awarded to our organization, and which led to our ground-breaking research to be published in fall 2018.

This statistical analysis, literature review and environment scan will provide for the first time a complete picture of the situation of women and girls with disabilities, as well as an analysis of gaps in existing data. As such, it will provide critical information on how to address inclusion for women and girls with disabilities.

#### **Girls Without Barriers: Investing in Future Leadership**

Building the future leadership of young women and girls with disabilities is another important area of DAWN Canada's work. We have partnered with the Canadian Women's Foundation on a four year project called Girls Without Barriers aimed at 9-13 year old girls with disabilities. The project includes a needs analysis as an important

first step in addressing the dearth in evidence-based information about girls with disabilities.

### **Youth the Future**

As part of our partnership with the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW), we are hosting a "Youth the Future" job placement programs for women only at our head office. This ground-breaking pilot has been specifically designed to support young women and girls with disabilities aged 15 – 30. Through this pilot DAWN Canada and CCRW are seeking to better understand the wrap around services needed to improve the rate of unemployment for this group.



*Figure 1 YTF cohort celebrates their final day*

### **Legislation, Policy and Service Responses to Violence Against Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women in Canada**

As part of our project, Legislation, Policy and Service Responses to Violence Against Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women in Canada (LPS), DAWN Canada conducted a review of legislation and policy at the national level and in three provinces – Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia, along with an environmental scan of the violence related programs and services in each of the three provinces.

### **Applying A Critical Feminist Disability Framework in Violence Against Women Research**

As a member of the Violence Against Women Hub of the Community-First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE) led by Carleton University, we produced a research paper entitled "Applying A Critical Feminist Disability Framework in Violence Against Women Research." The objective of the paper is to provide practical guidance on how a Critical Feminist Disability (CFD) framework may be used in future Violence Against Women (VAW) research. It demonstrates how a CFD framework operates as an interesectional lens that is highly relevant to VAW research.

## *Education*

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*DAWN Canada develops curriculum tools to expand the body of knowledge about women and girls with disabilities and to increase skill in the practice of inclusion.*

### **Accessibility Training for Service Providers**



Using our curriculum tool “Our Health Matters” we conducted a workshop on health equity with health care workers at Sunnybrook Hospital’s new accessible maternity unit in Toronto. In April 2018, we also conducted an accessibility audit of Interval House, a women’s shelter, using our audit tool, the National Accessibility and Accommodation Survey.

### **More Than A Footnote Social Media Platform**

One of the most exciting outcomes of our project on addressing systemic barriers to

ending violence against women with disabilities was the launch of

our on-going social media platform to bring attention to the many ways that women with disabilities have been excluded from policies and programs.



*Figure 2 More Than A Footnote logo*

## Intersectional Training for Women's Organizations



In February 2018, we hosted a “Journée de réflexion sur l’intersectionnalité”, a workshop on intersectional feminist practice at the Maison Parent Roback, a feminist collective which houses our national head office and many other women’s organizations in Montreal. We led a discussion on ways in which we could create practical opportunities for implementing feminist intersectional practices among members of our collective.

## Bringing a Feminist Disability Perspective to the Violence Against Women Sector

We presented a workshop at the Ending Violence Association (EVA) BC annual training forum in November 2017 which draws close to 400 participants from all across the province. DAWN Canada shared the findings of our project on addressing systemic violence against women with disabilities and Deaf women. Using our *More Than a Footnote* platform, we launched a call to action aimed at ensuring that women with disabilities and Deaf women are represented in violence-related policies, programs and services.

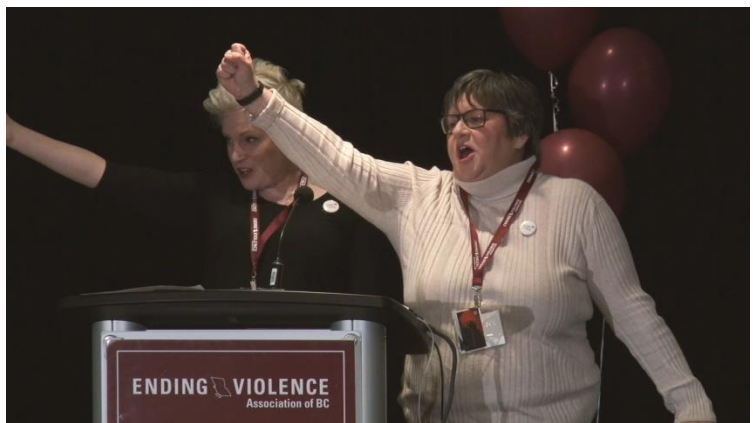


Figure 3 Jewelles Smith and Bonnie Brayton at EVA BC

## Policy

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*We continue to challenge and engage policy-makers in the review and development of policies so that they are informed by community-defined needs.*

### **Government of Canada's Advisory Council on Gender-Based Violence**

As a member of the federal government's Advisory Council on Gender-based Violence, DAWN Canada's National Executive Director is able to provide input on all major violence-prevention initiatives funded by the government of Canada.



Figure 4 Bonnie Brayton at the Senate Committee on Human Rights

### **Policy Briefs to Government of Canada**

DAWN Canada submitted a brief and appeared before the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO) in view of its study of Bill C-337, An Act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code related to sexual assault (April 2017).

Bonnie Brayton, National Executive Director of DAWN Canada, was a witness to the Standing

Committee on the Status of Women Canada (FEWO) for their study of violence against young women and girls in Canada. (November

2017)

In March 2017 on International Women's Day, Bonnie Brayton appeared before the Senate Committee on Human Rights in relation to their study of the issues relating to the human rights of prisoners in the correctional system.

DAWN Canada also prepared a brief on the impact of trafficking on women with disabilities and Deaf women for submission to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights for their study on human trafficking (June 2018).

### **Public consultations on Proposed Accessibility Legislation**

As an active member of the Alliance for an Inclusive Canada, we hosted consultations with women with disabilities and Deaf women to get feedback and input on proposed federal accessibility legislation. (June 2017)

### **Monitoring Compliance with UN treaties**

Despite limited resources, we have been developing the ability to monitor Canada's compliance with three United Nations treaties (the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women) and to contribute to civil society reports with support from our partners.

We have used our *More than A Footnote* platform to successfully leverage those civil society reports and the subsequent UN Committee Reports to Canada in a number of ways.

### **Universal Periodic Review**

We are one of only a handful of disability organizations involved in Canada's Universal Periodic Review in 2018 and have provided important input to Canada's current review.

### **Bilateral Meeting with UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women**

We prepared and submitted a brief to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (UNSRV) in advance of her recent visit to Canada (April 2018). We were one of few organizations who were successful in securing a bilateral meeting with her and her team. DAWN Canada noted and filled some gaps in their knowledge regarding violence against women with disabilities, including the important connection between violence against women and brain injury.

**UN CSW - 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

In March 2018, DAWN Canada presented at a side event during the 62nd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women on disability, violence, and survival of rural women globally.

**UN New York Conference of State Parties**

DAWN Canada was part of the Canadian civil society delegation that attended the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of State Parties on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in June 2017.



*Figure 5 Bonnie Brayton, National Executive Director of DAWN Canada*



## *Advocacy*

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*We are committed to ensuring that the voices of women with disabilities and Deaf women are represented at decision-making tables in the areas that matter to us most.*

### **Women with Disabilities as Victims of Trafficking**

In June 2017 DAWN Canada's National Executive Director led a Canadian delegation in Washington, DC as part of Leadership Program entitled "Healing the Wounds of Trafficking: A project for Canada" hosted by the United States Department of State.



The Canadian delegation learned and exchanged knowledge about trafficking with a particular focus on the vulnerability and needs of people with disabilities as victims of trafficking.

### **Changing the Conversation: A Disability Lens for All Canadians**

In September 2017, DAWN Canada presented at a webinar on how to address societal barriers to accessibility and inclusion, from an intersectional perspective by applying a disability lens in government initiatives. The webinar was hosted by the Office for Disability Issues.

### **Beyond Accommodations Panel Examines Intersectional Human Rights**

DAWN Canada's National Executive Director moderated a panel at the Canadian Human Rights Commission's national symposium on the importance of a human rights framework that goes beyond disability accommodations and that takes into account the intersection of various grounds of discrimination. (September 2017)

### **National Policy Roundtable on Violence Against Women with Disabilities**

In December 2017, DAWN Canada hosted a national policy roundtable on violence against women with disabilities in Ottawa. Close to 40 participants representing the disability and women's sectors, academics, government policy makers and labour were present. At the event, DAWN Canada presented the key outcomes of our review of Legislation, Policy and Service Responses to Violence Against Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women in Canada (LPS), a project funded by Status of Women Canada.

### **Identifying Barriers in Access to Justice for Victims with Disabilities**

Bonnie Brayton presented at a webinar on Barriers to Justice for Victims with Disabilities hosted by the Policy Centre for Victim Issues of the Department of Justice. (December 2017)



Figure 6 DAWN Team, June 2018