



# Rooting Resilience

DAWN Canada in collaboration with  
Women and Gender Equality Canada's Gender-Based Violence Knowledge Centre

December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020

*“While the issue of gender-based violence against women with disabilities clearly establishes that women with disabilities require unique supports - systemic and attitudinal barriers continue to prevent access. This is why the practice of peer support is so important to our collective efforts, as it’s grounding our work in community, empowerment, and lived experience.”*

*Dr. Jihan Abbas*

# Rooting Resilience: Peer Support for Women with Disabilities in Canada

*WAGE funded 5 year project*

- Based on collaborative research on peer support programs, best practices, and their application, working with and supporting Indigenous and Black women, girls and gender non conforming people with disabilities and the issue of gender-based violence;
- Preventing violence against Indigenous and Black women, girls and gender non conforming people must be our primary goal and research confirms that the risk of violence is significantly reduced when a strong peer support response is available.
- Indigenous and Black women, girls and gender non conforming people with disabilities live with significantly higher risks of repeated and long-term abuse or violence where again, peer support becomes critical.

# Rooting Resilience: Peer Support for Women with Disabilities in Canada

*WAGE funded 5 year project*

- This project has been designed to build off of the expertise of our implementing partners, WomenatthecentrE, Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT), and the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS)
- Along with our research partners, lead by Dr. Jihan Abbas, supported by Ms. Sonia Alimi our Research Coordinator, our Research Committee and advisors from the Institute for Research and Development on Inclusive Society (IRIS) and the NNMH (National Network for Mental Health),
- Our choice in partners for this project was deliberate & strongly linked to sustainability. Each of these organizations has direct and/or programmatic experience with peer support. Each represents an entry point for providing services for women with disabilities through the communities they serve.

# Jihan Abbas

Lead Researcher

Our research is being led by Jihan Abbas, a Vanier Canada Graduate Scholar who holds a PhD in Sociology from Carleton University. Dr. Abbas has extensive professional and advocacy experience related to access and inclusion.

Jihan's work aims to build a more inclusive and equitable society.



# Nneka MacGregor, Executive Director WomenatthecentrE

Nneka MacGregor is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Women's Centre for Social Justice, better known as WomenatthecentrE, a unique non-profit organisation created by and for women and trans survivors of gender-based violence globally.

Nneka is an advocate who works with governments, organisations and individuals to transform lives and build violence-free communities.



# Wendy Porch, Executive Director Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT)

Wendy Porch is the Executive Director of the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto ([www.cilt.ca](http://www.cilt.ca)).

CILT is a consumer-controlled community-based resource centre that operates on the philosophy of the independent living movement to support choice, autonomy and control for people with disabilities.



# Neil Belanger, Executive Director

## British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS)

Neil Belanger is the executive Director of the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) and a Member of the Lax Se el Clan within the Gitxsan Nation.

BCANDS uses it's knowledge, experience and relationships to fulfill our vision of an inclusive and accessible Canada for all Indigenous persons and families living with disabilities, where their disability and health priorities are identified, planned for and addressed.



# Discussion 1:

Reflecting on the important work we have ahead, the early research and all this expertise on peer support, DAWN Canada and our Partners have already come to some early and hopeful observations. In a first discussion together, it is already clear that using our research to advance intersectional community based peer support has the potential for other important results.

**Can we talk about how this community lead research is a form of peer support in development? Does that resonate with you?**

# Discussion 2:

Intersectionality has its roots in the oppression of Black women. As other rights holders have taken up this idea, we have seen how easily Indigenous and Black women, girls and gender non conforming people with disabilities have been foot-noted and forgotten. We still do not have a single shelter or front-line service that is fully accessible.

**Is it possible to develop an intersectional response to Gender Based Violence?**

# Discussion 3:

As with all research projects, we cannot know all of what Rooting Resilience is going to teach us, but DAWN Canada's goal is to see the beginning of boots on the ground – that's why we have been so deliberate in choosing these Partners – all on the front lines in communities. We have an audience of research and policy folks here with us today.

**How are we going to move this from our work to the larger sectors, F/P/T and municipal governments and ultimately to communities where women, girls and gender non conforming people with disabilities live and urgently need a front line response?**



# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Resources:**

<https://www.dawncanada.net/>

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