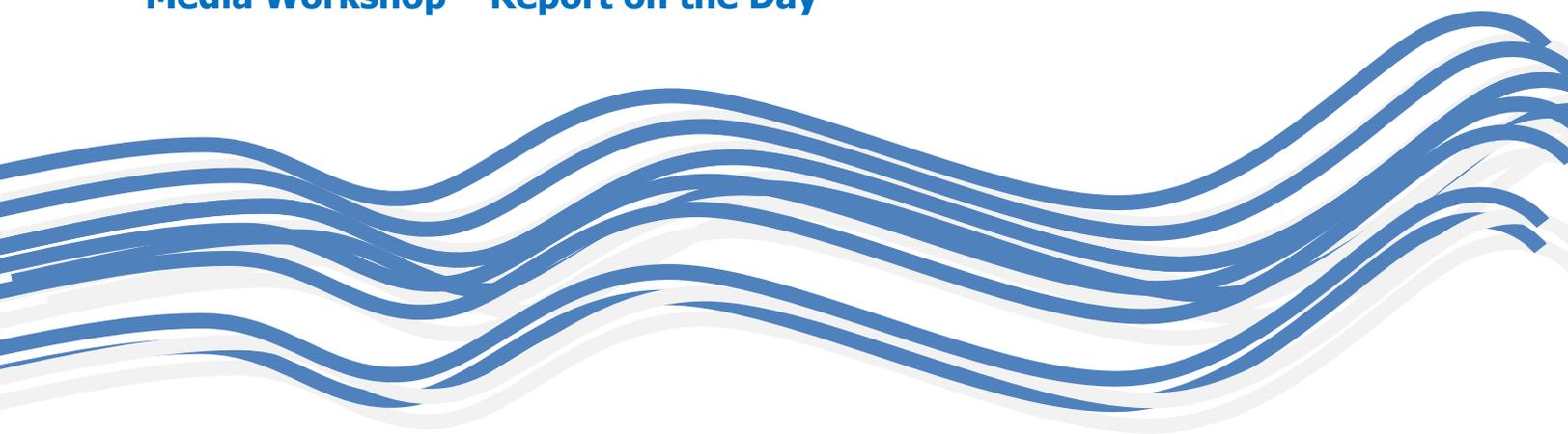


Building a Bigger Wave Ontario Network
Media Workshop – Report on the Day



BBWON Media Workshop – June 6, 2016

This report-back outlines the topics and discussions that took place during the media workshop held in Toronto on June 6, 2016. Our hope is that it will also serve as a discussion document for VAWCCs to consider how we can strengthen and coordinate our collective VAW media voice, presence and actions in the coming year. You will find many ideas and actions throughout the document. Priority actions have been identified below and it is hoped that each VAWCC will consider acting on at least one.

Strategic Priorities and Actions

1. Develop a media policy at your VAWCC

ACTION: Develop a policy on how your committee wants to respond to and/or initiate contact with the media. Identify the person who is the committee's first point of contact and set out a process by which decisions will be made. See page 4 for more ideas. (Note – if your committee already has such a policy in place, please share with BBWON)

2. Identify good and bad reporting on VAW news at a provincial level

ACTION: VAWCCs to share examples of good and bad reporting of local and provincial news stories. Send the links of stories to: info@buildingabiggerwave.org. ALSO share your op-ed or letters to the editor if you respond to the story. Ask for support from other VAWCCs through the Network.

3. Raise the profile of femicide and sexual violence

When women are killed or sexual violence trials take place, too often the news remains local.

ACTIONS: Share local news to paint a provincial picture. Use BBWON to alert all VAWCCs and allies when a woman is killed in your community or a sexual violence trial is taking place.

Support the OAITH femicide list – send your local information to marlene@oait.ca (please cut and paste the actual article – not just the link)

4. Support social media action requests from other VAWCCs and allies

ACTION: Tweet, retweet and like when issues are happening. Distribute social media requests to your VAWCC membership – ask them to tweet, retweet and like. Use common hashtags such as #beenrapedneverreported, #ibelievesurvivors, #usetherightwords, #endVAW etc.

BBWON Media Workshop – June 6, 2016

Sixty representatives from approximately 30 VAWCCs attended the workshop. The report provides an overview of the day, key messages and possible next steps. We want to begin a process of developing greater capacity as a Network to:

- work with media **more effectively** to **raise the profile** of VAW issues, **educate and engage the broader public**, and **influence reporting** that perpetuate myths and stereotypes
- build **individual confidence** to interact with media
- identify **common messages** that can be reinforced through repetition across the province
- identify a few **actions** that can help us learn and build capacity

Highlights – Morning Session with Pam and Julie

Pamela Cross is a feminist lawyer and long-time VAW advocate often sought out by media. She began the day with her thoughts on the importance of working effectively with politicians and the media to make system change. It needs to become an integral part of our work.

Pam noted that:

- VAW is under reported
- We need to make the decision to engage media, not only when we are upset or promoting an event.
- Takes work and skills to build this relationship and develop a sense of confidence
- There are great people in media who want to tell our story, but they need information to do that.
- We know a lot – we are experts on VAW and we have expertise in many different aspects. For example: experience of women and access to survivor voices, what happens when a shelter is full, prevention.
- Ideally the relationship between VAW advocates and media is a mutual relationship – they need us for information and stories and we need them to tell the stories and get our information out to the community.

Two kinds of responses:	
Proactive	Reactive
A situation you can plan in advance and where you have control of the information	A situation that is not planned (a murder, sexual assault, legislative announcement etc.) when a reaction is needed Responding to a call from a reporter, or because something has happened and a VAW perspective needs to be heard
You can use a media release, a letter to the editor and/or op-ed	When media calls, you can ask for time – I will call you back when I have the information you need. Call back asap – within 30 minutes



Start a 'media' contact book to document your contact with media. Don't rely on your memory – the relationship may be episodic – with long periods of time between contacts. It is good to know what you spoke about and with whom.



VAWCCs and VAW organization need **policies and procedures** around media involvement. Select the person who will be your first point of contact with media. Avoid the rogue board members or excited staff person who suddenly take initiative. Note that government members will have to declare conflict of interest and abstain from voting.

- **Be intentional** - have a coffee with reporters – get to know them so you know who to contact later.
- **Reporters need contacts too!** Ideally the relationship between VAW advocates and media is a **mutual relationship** – they need us for information and stories and we need them to tell the stories and get our information out to the community.
- **Learn how to say 'no'** to a reporter and be able to redirect a reporter to a person who would have better information.
- Be willing to **'practice, practice, practice'** – people are not born media savvy, but learn. Use your passion for change in the work with media.

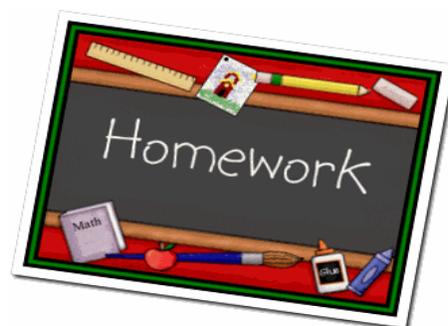


Question: *What components are in a policy/procedure on media for VAWCC?*

- Include a statement that your committee/organization is building a positive relationship with media.
- Identify the person(s) who are the media contacts and the process by which interviews and statements will be made
- Provide consequences for people who speak out on behalf of the VAWCC or VAW without regard for the policy

Pam offered to work on developing a policy template. She suggested it would be a good opportunity **for BBWON to gather existing VAWCC media policies and procedures** and use the expertise already in the sector.

Julie Carl is a feminist advocate and Toronto Star city desk editor. She began her talk by describing the self-image of the 'heroic' journalist righting wrongs, bringing social change and shining the light into dark corners. Julie acknowledged that journalists need help to shine the light in the right direction. Getting the 'right' information is key to how the story gets told.



Journalists also need to work on building relationships. Relationships with community leaders and advocates can help journalists reduce the fear about working with them and also challenge the stereotype that they (always) have an agenda and will trick or expose you just to get a story. Good journalists do care about the background story.

Helpful
Tips

TIP: Don't send lengthy, multi-page information and background. Journalists don't have time to read or digest it.

Understanding the context: a CRISIS event

When a crisis happens, it is a very challenging situation for journalists. There is lots of superficial reporting and people are throwing everything at the crisis with very little nuance or background information.



There is no time in a pack mentality and a rush to get the headline.

On the side of the community, there can be high levels of fear and anger because of past experience with media – journalists need to understand where the fear and anger comes from.

What is helpful is to have relationships in place. Julie spoke of an experience where she needed information quickly and she had one name as a contact. The person responded right away and they developed a relationship where all of their mutual needs around the story were met.

Build the relationship with Media:

- Study the media in your area and find the reporter or producer who covers your kind of material.
- Phone or email the reporter or producer early in the day and say 'I liked your article on
- Understand that journalist get a lot of very negative and at times angry and threatening feedback.
- You can tell them your area of expertise (VAW, Shelter, youth, etc.) and that you would be happy to talk anytime you are looking for that information
- Provide your contact information (phone numbers, email, website url).
- When the reporter calls and you aren't there, call back right away. When you do:
 - Be honest if you don't have the answer they are looking for
 - Refer to someone who does (know in advance who to refer to)
 - Ask for some time to do the research you need to answer the questions.



Tips on press releases: Short, short, short - never more than one page with all the information (what the story is and why it is significant – in 15 inches of newspaper). Send this to your favorite reporter and to the assignment editor. Then you will send this again to the reporter and assignment editor. If you pitch the story with the right reporter you can get the front page!

More Tips from Julie for working with media:

- ✓ Think of other places to get coverage – community newspaper
- ✓ Write letters to the editor
- ✓ Use your Cable TV station
- ✓ Don't pitch an event when there is another big thing happening
- ✓ Have an event on Monday or Tuesday – these are typically slow days for media – and you are more likely to get coverage. Newspapers do more planning – weekends are usually full.

- ✓ Don't feel forced to comment when you don't know – say 'can't comment' and say that to all media.
- ✓ CBC and Toronto Star are ideologically more likely to cover VAW stories (and some smaller newspapers)
- ✓ Don't forget that reporters will advocate for your story when there is a relationship
- ✓ Be organized working with reporters and keep the information organized: 'the three most important things are...'
- ✓ Use **certain words** to get attention: you are the **first** reporter I have called... I am giving you an **exclusive**... I have the **most** recent... etc.



More tips from Pam on working with media:

Novelty is important and so is organizing the content – Pam spoke about the example of Jian Ghomeshi trial. She did a lot of commentary during the trial and on the day of the verdict.

Her learning: **keep notes of what you say** to reporters to keep the information straight, and for call backs by reporters – you need to know what you said to the reporter (the reporter is the most important person you have talked to – you don't want them to think you forgot what you said to them).

- ✓ **Have a plan** when there is an important media event coming up – **make time** to plan before the event, to do some research so you are ready (know the tone you want have, background info)
- ✓ If you are writing an Op-Ed: **find out the word limit** before you start writing. Be prepared to 'sell' or 'pitch' your idea and call your contact and **ask** if they are interested, would print.
- ✓ Not all media are appropriate for VAW stories – for example 'talk radio' can be difficult. Once you are on the air, it can be an attack. It's OK to decide that you won't be on a radio station where their goal is to undermine or dispute VAW.
- ✓ **Connect** your story that gets published to **social media** – tweet out the story, put on Facebook to keep the story live, and to make connections between the different forms of media.



Question: *Astute media may pick up differences in stats. What do you do?*

A: Be honest. Talk about your stats and your interpretation of them.



Question: *What do you do when your words are changed or edited and the content or meaning gets changed or lost.*

- ✓ Keep saying the same thing to make sure your message gets through.
- ✓ Talk to the reporter about your concerns.
- ✓ When you have a good contact with media keep it – journalists move around so keep in touch

Question: *What do you do about the woman hating media – is there any point or way of getting the message out.*

- ✓ Be persistent. Some brave souls address trolls (not recommended).
- ✓ Go to the press council (they don't like that)
- ✓ Take an organized approach – it's most effective. Work together to show solidarity.

Question: *Do you send a Press Release do you put it in the body of the message or as an attachment?*

- ✓ Send a press release in the body of the message and as an attachment, so the content gets to media.
- ✓ ALWAYS INCLUDE CONTENT IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF THE EMAIL MESSAGE (don't send a subject line that says 'Press Release' because that is not helpful.
- ✓ Missing a subject line or contact information and it doesn't get published

Cara Campbell: Point of view as a TV reporter



Cara has worked as a CBC and CTV TV reporter. She brought her camera equipment to the workshop for participants to practice live interviews. Cara offered her perspective about what it's like to be a television reporter and what reporters are looking for.

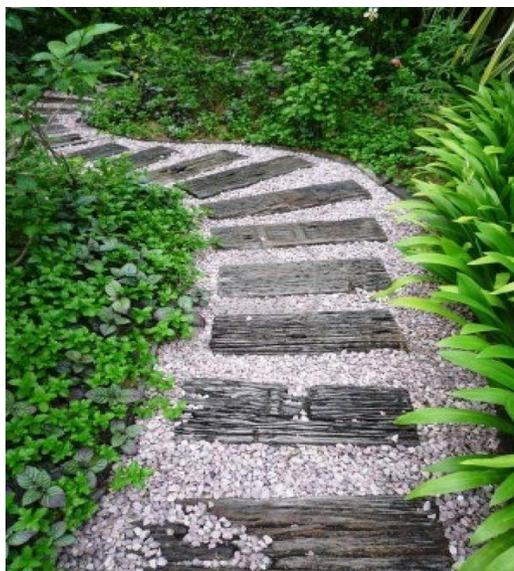
The day starts at 10:00 am in the morning in the News Room searching for a story that will appear at 6:00 pm. This makes for very tight timelines for the reporter.

If the reporter calls and you need to call back, do it in no more than 30 minutes.

The worst thing you can say to a TV reporter is "I can talk to you tomorrow" it's a total turn off and you will not get called back.

As a TV reporter, Cara writes, shoots, edits and reports on her own stories.

Most time for a story is 1 minute 30 seconds.



Cara says: if you are doing a live interview remember:



Think of your audience – you need to talk as though you are speaking to 6 year olds. Don't give too much information and don't talk about complexity – keep the message clear and simple!

You can ask for the questions ahead of the interview. You may not get them but ask – you can even insist. Often the producer will call and provide an overview of the content they are looking for.

Have your talking points organized ahead of time for the interview and for a TV audience.

Don't assume that the interview questions come from the reporter – they ask questions because that is what they (or their producer) think we need to cover. The reporter may be very clear about the background whys, so don't assume they are being ignorant or insensitive.

When the reporter first contacts you, ask about the general nature of what they are looking for. If you are not best person to be interviewed, redirect the reporter to the 'right' person. They will appreciate your help.

Pam's Tips for TV interviews



- ✓ Practice in front of a mirror, or a smart phone – we all do odd things with our hands and faces that we don't see
- ✓ Pay attention to how often we use 'like' 'you know', 'so', 'well', etc. Get rid of these. Practice with a written script. People want to know what you are saying. Start in a confident way and don't use 'well.....'
- ✓ Check your teeth!
- ✓ Keep your phrases short, concise. Take a breath so your listener can take it in. One idea to a sentence. Be confident and forceful in your tone – short bits. If you speak in a complete sentence, it is harder for interviewer to interrupt.
- ✓ Repeat the question before you answer - 'Yes, I am concerned about the number of sexual assaults' so that your answer is linked to the question. It makes less likely it will be used out of context.
- ✓ Don't ramble – this is not a chat with your friend. Be focused. Use your three messages. Always be prepared and know your subject matter. Be clear about your stats.
- ✓ Be proactive in collecting information and planning how to 'frame' the interview.
- ✓ Make sure that you are aware of the policies and procedures in your organization on limitations with media. Work these things out internally.

Table discussions



Participants looked at a series of news stories to identify key messages in each situation.

There are 'stock' answers and information that is good to provide...

- It is never the fault of the victim of the assault, it is always on the offender
- This one reason why sexual violence is under reported and then provide statistics
- It has nothing to do with what a woman is wearing
- We know that in the vast majority of cases the woman knows her abuser – we need to talk about that

- Provide information about community resources on sexual violence prevention and support
- In a college/university/workplace situation – it is the responsibility of the institution to maintain a safe environment – the need for institutional safety and the employer /institutional responsibility

Groups looked at possible questions that a reporter might ask and how to answer

1. Should women not walk alone when there are so many sexual assaults?

Use a statement such as; “it’s outrageous to me that women are not safe walking on this campus / in this community”

Don’t answer with a question... “why shouldn’t women feel safe to walk alone...?”

The question is common myth that women are responsible

Women’s freedom of movement should not be curtailed by criminal activity

What is common sense is that men need to stop sexually assaulting women.

2. What is needed to keep women safe?

We need education to prevent sexual assault before it happens – it’s too late after an assault

Colleges / universities / workplaces /communities need to take action – not tolerate sexual violence and sexual assault

3. What about those women who are asking for it?

No woman asks to be sexually assaulted

4. Are you saying the police should not warn women?

It is important for police to say that they are holding men accountable

Instead of warning women, let perpetrators know police are taking action

Sexual assault is not just a woman’s problem – police can warn university, community, men and women and provide accurate information for women so they can make choices about their activities.

Highlights – Afternoon Session

The afternoon session began with a viewing of a YouTube video that went viral when two female sports reporters asked men to read the comments they were receiving from trolls. The video was intended to demonstrate the power of social media to engage people, start discussion and draw attention to issues. Social media can help us as a movement – but first we need to learn the basics of Twitter and Facebook and then think strategically about how to use them and build support for events and messages.

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJG6Hw0wotk>



Afternoon Panel

Farrah Khan is a co-chair of the provincial VAW Roundtable, a member of femifesto and the Sexual Violence Coordinator at Ryerson University. She led the first portion of the afternoon by teaching the group to tweet. Farrah advised participants who are social media novices to concentrate on learning one social media platform – Facebook and Twitter are the most obvious choices.

Mainstream media tells the story from the perspective of police, mainstream, so we use Facebook, Twitter, social media to include women and the other half of the story. We post on Facebook and Twitter to tell the story from the woman's perspective.

Impactful hashtags:

[#WhyIStayed](#) [#WhyILeft](#) are powerful examples of voice - women tweeted personal statements such as... 'we were only married one month when he hit me. I wondered what people would think'

[#BeenRapedNeverReported](#) went viral after the Ghomeshi story broke and women were questioned in the media about why they didn't report.



Use existing successful hashtags to show support and solidarity. You don't have to start a new hashtag each time there is an event. We want to focus the message to a few key points.

Tweeting Tidbits



Engage, even if they don't tweet back

TWEET something every day – for example LEAF is tweeting a recommendation from the TRC every day. ***BBW committees can retweet this every day to support the initiative.

Images boost your tweets

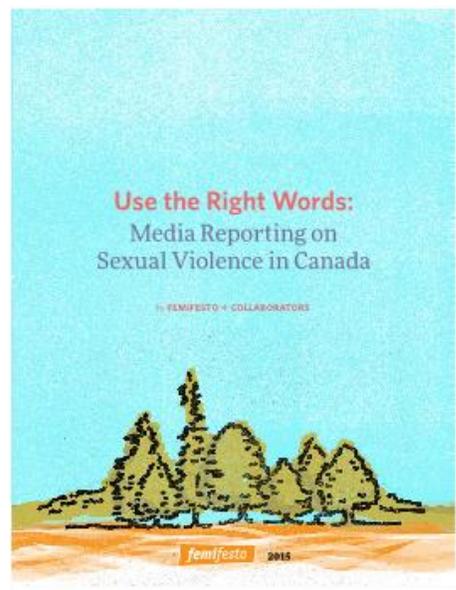
Teach people how to TWEET – especially important for survivors.

Let the Network know when you are posting – ask for support!

#UseTheRightWords – Social Media Advocacy

Farrah spoke about social media advocacy and referenced the Femifesto guide *Use the Right Words*.

Social media supports multiple sites for action. A campaign approach was taken on the day of the Ghomeshi trial. A 5 point strategy allowed individuals to show support for survivors in different ways. BBW distributed information from OCRCC (Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres) with a request to tweet – retweet [#WeBelieveSurvivors](#). A rally was organized in Toronto. Messages were promoted: Take Care of the People Around You, a colouring book was created, Self-Care tweets were sent, Court Support was provided, people were encouraged to learn what to do if a person discloses.



See the Difference: put a quote from mainstream media with 'corrections' to make the point of how language is used to blame women or condone sexual violence (quote – changed a

headline that read “a tryst with a 13 year old victim” to a ‘sexual assault’ of a 13 year old victim. Pick a headline to ‘correct’ and tweet out.

LANGUAGE CHECKLIST WHEN REPORTING ON SEXUAL ASSAULT

femifesto conducted a scan of Canadian media stories on sexual assault from 2010 to 2015. The scan provided us with clear examples of promising practices for reporting on sexual violence.

reports
Woman ~~confesses~~ that
she was sexually assaulted by
~~star athlete forced her to~~
~~perform oral sex~~

The graphic features a yellow background with a red title. On the right, there is a white rectangular area with a torn-paper edge containing a headline. The original headline is crossed out with red lines, and the word 'reports' is written above it in red italics. The words 'she was sexually assaulted by' are written in red italics below the crossed-out text.

See: www.UseTheRightWords.com

Erin Lee: Media in Rural Communities

Lanark County
INTERVAL
HOUSE
35 years

Rural Media; reaching way out

BUILDING A BIGGER WAVE, TORONTO MEDIA DAY
JUNE 6, 2016

The slide has a dark purple background. In the top left corner is the Lanark County Interval House 35th anniversary logo. The main title 'Rural Media; reaching way out' is in white. Below it, the event information 'BUILDING A BIGGER WAVE, TORONTO MEDIA DAY JUNE 6, 2016' is written in smaller white text. On the right side, there is a small photograph of a person standing in a green field.

Erin is Executive Director at Lanark County Interval house.

In her presentation, Erin noted that rural communities are constantly consuming news that is not about them, but instead is about the urban areas around them. This common occurrence gives testimony to the belief that nothing really happens in rural communities.

There are many such misconceptions in mainstream media and in urban

communities about rural life. Rural communities do struggle with limited bandwidth and cell service, anonymity, higher risks for women because everyone knows the family. It’s all about relationships – connection with media, relationships with media, including media as part of the solution to end VAW is vital.

Erin made several suggestions:

- ✓ Write your own articles – you will provide the stats, quotes and perspectives.

- ✓ Take a very active approach with media – send lots of press releases – send out everyone.
- ✓ Meet with all the media outlets once per season – talk about all the things coming up, trends and issues – you are feeding information to them in advance.
- ✓ Demonstrate how VAW connections can help them – i.e. 'I'm sure you want to be current on the Ghomeshi trial' so they know they can contact you as a VAW contact.



- ✓ Radio talk shows are popular. Stay aware of the time – so all of the key messages get out within the allowed time. Also make it very clear what you are NOT going to talk about.
- ✓ In a rural community the local newspaper is really important, and may also be the primary source of information.
- ✓ Attend the local council meetings because it is where the media is.
- ✓ Use all of your affiliations – police, other services
- ✓ Think long term with relationships with media – make sure you correct mistakes, but gently and provide the proper information.
- ✓ In a rural community it is difficult to respond to negative letters to the editor, or through letters to the editor – it is not a safe way to deal with issues.

Erin also reported on very successful Forums in Lanark this past winter that came about as a result of a series of murders. Organizers are making plans for rural coalition building through the Rural Secretariat.

Nneka MacGregor – responding to advertising



Nneka is the Executive Director of WomenatthecentrE, a provincial non-profit organization that works to eradicate violence against women through personal, political and social advocacy.

As the only organization created by survivors for survivors, we use our shared experiences to help change public perceptions and policy.

Nneka spoke about the organization's recent experience in challenging the big budget advertising of the X Men movie and Fox Media. The billboard ad

showed the strangulation of a woman by a man with a heading 'only the strong will survive'. A decision to challenge the image was made and the Board and staff developed a strategy of outreach to multiple media sources. Nneka wrote a letter to the studio, describing the issue and the need to address it. They eventually received an apology.

The process sparked an article by Huffington Post in which they interviewed Rose McGowan. McGowan also objected to the image with tweets and Facebook posts. HP reached out to WomenatthecentrE for comment. CBC also contacted the organization for information and wrote an article. Survivors are critical to inform the work as experts.

For Nneka, there is a moral to the story for survivors: *We are the newsmakers – we are either the object or the newsmakers – we can control and inform the narrative. Stick to the script and be prepared before setting forth.*

Exercise – Writing the Op Ed



Participants looked at a sample news stories and a sample op-ed. A template was provided to help guide the writing process.

- ✓ Start by reading op eds in your local paper...
- ✓ Check the style and number of words
- ✓ Know your audience and have a goal
- ✓ Start with a strong compelling statement
- ✓ Include personal perspective and experience
- ✓ Provide facts and information
- ✓ Engage your audience in your goal
- ✓ End with a call to action
- ✓ Proof read carefully - important for credibility and clarity
- ✓ Be ready for feedback from your op-ed
- ✓ Send along a short bio and contact information with the op-ed.
- ✓ Be prepared that some papers want to have a head shot
- ✓ Follow up if the op-ed is not published – ask why



Being More Strategic in the Province (how to)

Participants talked in the large group about the role VAWCCs play in bringing media attention to the issue and how BBWON can support them.

- BBWON will have a website with information on media available for VAWCCs
- Create a 'go to' list of provincial VAW experts – this is not to discourage anyone from engaging with media but is meant to be a resource
 - Direct reporters to OAITH, OCRCC, AO – provincial VAW organizations
 - VAW Roundtable
 - Researchers
 - Advocates
- Amplify and share local news
 - When a woman is killed – let the BBW network know so that all VAWCCs can tell the story, so all women are noticed and we make the extent of the issue clear
 - Participate in campaigns - support other VAWCCs and provincial VAW groups – tweet – retweet – share on Facebook
 - OAITH keeps an annual femicide list – we can support this initiative. Cut and paste the news information (links get taken down and info gets lost) and send to OAITH
 - When stories break about charges or lawsuits – share through the BBW network and talk about the impact in different communities
- Use some common messages across the province to bring emphasis to a few key points. Example: "it's never the victims fault'.
- Use existing social media hash tags: #BeenRapedNeverReported, #EndVAW,
- Send out Op-eds to other VAWCCs through the BBW network
- Talk about the importance of using media at the VAWCC tables and use the BBW to broadcast local efforts – there is some reluctance at some VAWCC tables to get involved with media.
- WomenatthecentrE is planning a media workshop to support survivors taking a more active role with media. Women at the CentrE is a resource for VAWCCs who have survivors who need to be connected for support and training.
- Do more work on preparing a plan to deal with social media trolls, and on line safety planning, use of blocks, Google crawl to contain trolls.
- TWEET!

What do VAWCCs need from the BBWON?

- Access to expertise and information that other VAWCCs have – make this more available on the BBWON website
- More information on planning for an effective media response – case examples, learning from one another.
- Engage MCSS to work with MAG to direct justice partners not to interfere with community actions - they should not prevent or obstruct a community agenda

- Support for organizing provincial campaigns, especially around themed months (May is Sexual Violence Prevention Month, November is woman abuse month).
- Perhaps more media workshops in regions – putting our good minds and hearts together.

A few final thoughts

As individuals in a Network, we have set a goal to become more competent and confident using media and social media. We acknowledge that not everyone is cut out to be doing interviews, and it is good to know our strengths and limits. There are other meaningful ways people can support the goals that does not involve being out in front – such as doing research, writing articles, op-eds and letters to the editor, supporting each other. Find your place and feel good about your contribution. Every contribution matters and goes toward our overall evolution. Be open to, and invite constructive critique, in the spirit of ongoing learning. There is lots of learning to do.

Be careful when working with media, regardless of your perspective. It is emotionally challenging work – find your own emotional support, be prepared for increases in community response, ensure that there are resources to respond to new demand as a result of media campaign.