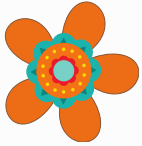


# #OFOVCCOMMUNITY

## NEWSLETTER



Welcome back, #OFOVCCommunity. The past few months have been a whirlwind, with many unique challenges for all. We hope that you and your loved ones are staying safe, healthy, and hopeful for the future. The inequalities highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic have kept us busy hosting and attending virtual engagements with our stakeholders, writing recommendations to the federal government, and serving victims and survivors of crime. We especially want you to know that our team remains available to support you.

## Events and Engagements with Stakeholders

We've had a busy few months! In February, the Ombudsman was welcomed to Ambrose Place, which provides safe & affordable housing to homeless Indigenous individuals and couples in Edmonton, Alberta. They focus on rehabilitating and supporting those who suffer from mental illness and substance abuse. Next, the Ombudsman and Executive Director attended a training session on advanced issues in the Ombuds practice with Osgoode, where they learned about various innovative and effective approaches and best practices in the field. The Ombudsman and team also made an appearance at the second annual Indigenous Human Trafficking Awareness Day in Ottawa. In March, the Ombudsman delivered a presentation for the Ontario Serious Fraud Office on best practices for restitution orders. Then, the OFOVC partnered with Safer Cities Canada once again for a successful Indigenous stakeholder engagement session as we develop an online campaign to prevent victimization. During the session, knowledge keepers shared their perspectives on challenges facing victims from First Nations, Inuit, & Métis communities. The month ended with a productive meeting between the Ombudsman, Executive Director, and the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Carolyn Bennett. This was an opportunity for us to propose a way forward in actionizing the Calls for Justice based on input from our Indigenous Advisory Circle (more on this on p2!).



From right to left: OFOVC's Indigenous Advisor Francyne Joe, Executive Director Nadia Ferrara, and Ombudsman Heidi Illingworth at Indigenous Human Trafficking Awareness Day in Ottawa.



Title slide from the Preventing Victimization Campaign's Indigenous Stakeholder Engagement Session

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## Community Forum in Yellowknife

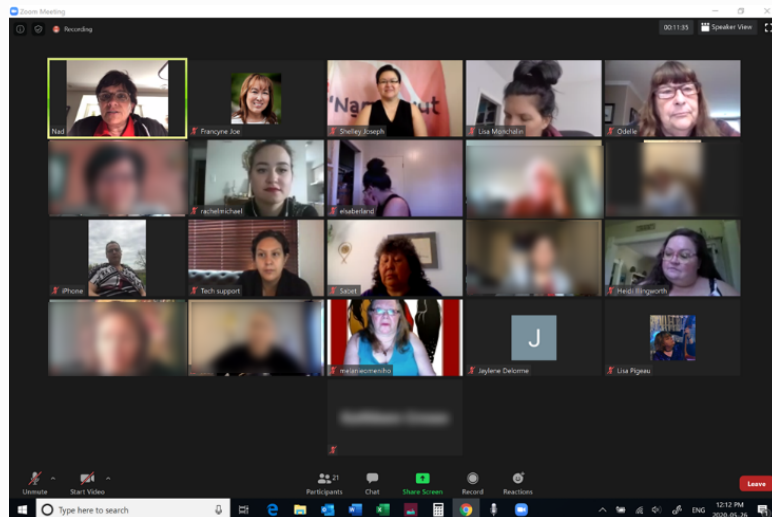
In case you missed it, the OFOVC planned to hold forums across Canada as part of the Ombudsman's priority to increase engagement with victims of crime, with a focus on communities the Office had not engaged with before – particularly Indigenous groups and individuals in the North. On March 11th and 12th, the OFOVC held our first Community Forums in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. We chose Yellowknife as the first location because of the context faced by victims of crime in that region: The NWT has a small, predominantly Indigenous population spread out over a vast territory, creating vulnerabilities in terms of victimization and safety. We heard from victim service providers, justice system personnel, the RCMP, and residents in the region about their experiences with victimization, criminal justice in the North, the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, and safety and accountability. While in Yellowknife, the Ombudsman spoke to [APTN news](#) about the challenges faced by victims of crime in the North! Be sure to keep an eye out for our What We Heard Report for the full account, which will soon be released.



OFOVC pictured with Elder Emelda King, who said opening prayers at the Community Forums in Yellowknife.



## Indigenous Advisory Circle



Indigenous Advisory Circle Members meeting virtually with OFOVC.

On March 31st, we held our first Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC) meeting virtually. The OFOVC IAC was created in partnership with Reconciliation Canada, in order to bring the perspectives of Indigenous women and girls into our work, and come up with ways to influence the decolonization of the Canadian criminal justice system. During the first meeting, participants introduced one another and the group established several guiding values to keep in mind going forward. Some of these included equality, reciprocity, inclusiveness, passion, and love – a positive way to set the stage for future meetings. The

second IAC meeting was held on May 26th, in anticipation of the Ombudsman's meeting with Minister Bennett and the approaching anniversary of the MMIWG Final Report, which was on June 3rd. We'll be sharing updates on IAC developments in our next newsletters! Stay tuned.

*Because the OFOVC values inclusion, our new information brochure, "Empowering Victims and Survivors of Crime," is now available in [Algonquin](#) and [Inuktitut](#).*

## Academic Advisory Circle

The OFOVC held a second Academic Advisory Circle (AAC) meeting on April 29th. AAC members shared their expertise with the OFOVC on a variety of subjects, namely the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on increased levels of intimate partner violence, our upcoming progress report on the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights (more on this in the next newsletter!), and our preventing victimization campaign. Other topics discussed included Canada's pandemic planning response to victimization and violence, and data gaps with regard to black and racialized communities, and children and youth. We're looking forward to working with our AAC on more research moving forward. If you haven't already, check out our [research corner](#) on our website, where we will be featuring work commissioned by the OFOVC by experts in victimology and criminal justice.



## Recommendations to Government

An important part of our work is to recommend ways that the federal government can make its laws, policies, and processes more responsive to the needs of victims. We've been extremely active these past few months seeking fairness for victims and survivors of crime. We wrote to the Parole Board of Canada in March regarding victims' participation in parole hearings during the Covid-19 pandemic, and we made an impact! We also wrote an open letter to Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Theresa Tam, to recommend the inclusion of violence prevention strategies in Canada's pandemic response. Read these, along with our other recent [recommendations](#) on our website.

## Attention Organizations working with Domestic Abuse Victims!



Red Rover is offering a grant to create more pet-friendly emergency shelter options for those fleeing abuse with pets, in response to the increased demand for shelter space due to Covid-19. They are accepting [grant applications](#) until October 30th – be sure to check it out.

## Let's Stay Connected.

Follow us on social media for updates about our office, helpful resources, and information.



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