

#OFOVCCOMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



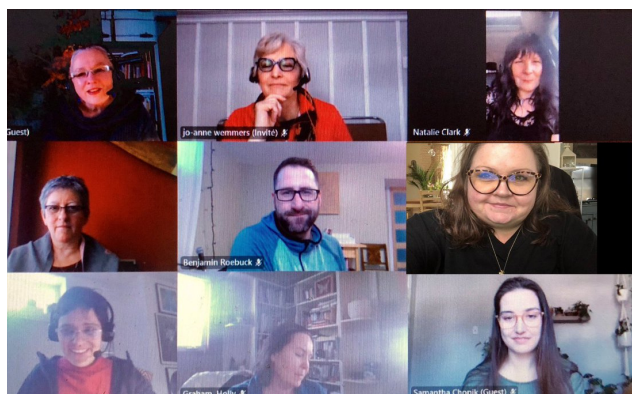
Welcome back #OFOVCCommunity! As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve into the summer, we hope that you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy. The Ombudsman and the OFOVC team have had a busy spring season serving victims and survivors of crime, as well as engaging with stakeholders and partners. We want to remind you that as always, we remain available to support you through these challenging times.

EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

Since March, the Ombudsman and Executive Director have been keeping busy with meetings with stakeholders and partners to continue their work on strengthening victims' rights and encouraging action on our recommendations.

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On March 4th, the Ombudsman's Academic Advisory Circle met for a productive discussion on intimate-partner and domestic violence. Check out our [research corner](#) for reports written by the Victimology experts who make up this Circle.

Screenshot from our Academic Advisory Circle meeting. From left to right: Top row: Hannah Scott, Jo-Anne Wemmers, Natalie Clark. Middle row: Carmen Gill, Benjamin Roebuck, Ombudsman Heidi Illingworth. Last row: Dr. Nadia Ferrara, Holly Graham, Samantha Chopik.



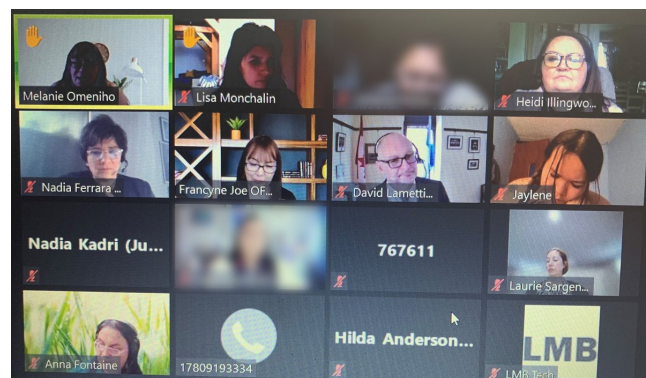
On March 15th, the Ombudsman and the Executive Director met with the Honourable David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, to discuss proposed legislation that affects Canadian victims of crime such as: Bill C-21 related to firearms, Bill C-22, an Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and Bill C-23, an act to amend the criminal code relating to COVID-19 response.

From April 13th to 15th, the Ombudsman presented at the Police Victim Services of British Columbia's training symposium. This symposium provides police-based victim services providers, first responders, and criminal justice personnel with advanced learning opportunities to better support victims and survivors of crime and trauma. We look forward to further work with Police Victim Services in the future.

On April 27th, the Ombudsman appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the judicial system. Keep an eye out for the submission in the [recommendations section of our website](#).

On May 5th, the Ombudsman joined the Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention (CMNCP) as a [speaker for the launch](#) of their [Peaceful Homes Report: Preventing violence in the home during and after lockdowns](#), which we helped inform.

On May 11th, the Honourable David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada joined us as we held our fourth Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC) meeting to discuss the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the need to address injustices, combat prejudice and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against Indigenous peoples, including elders, youth, children, persons with disabilities, women, men, and gender-diverse and two-spirit persons. The Circle also discussed Bill C-15 and the government's response to the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.



Screenscapture from our IAC meeting. From left to right: top row: Melanie Omeniho, Lisa Monchalin, Heidi Illingworth. Second row: Dr. Nadia Ferrara, Francyne Joe, Honourable David Lametti, Jaylene. Third row: Nadia Kadri, Laurie Sargent. Fourth row: Anna Fontaine, Hilda Anderson.

ANNUAL REPORT

The OFOVC's [2019-2020 Annual Report](#) was tabled in the House of Commons on May 5th. It presents our work on behalf of victims and survivors of crime, and includes our accomplishments, recommendation letters and submissions.

VIRTUAL SHARING CIRCLE ON THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: YUKON

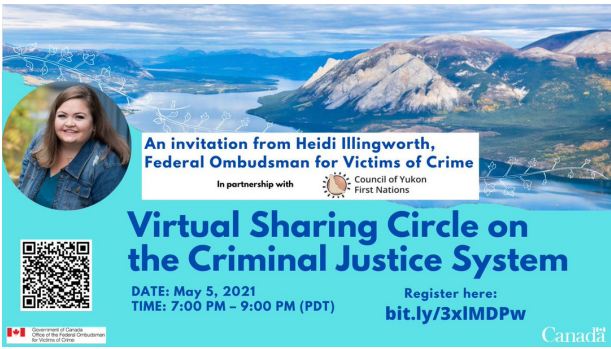
The Ombudsman has been holding forums across Canada to engage with survivors and victims of crime, with a particular focus on northern and remote communities we have not heard from before. On May 5th, the Ombudsman held a virtual Sharing Circle with residents of the Yukon to inform them of the work that we do and to listen to residents' experiences and issues with the criminal justice system.



Cover page of the 2019-2020 Annual Report



We heard from many victims/survivors/affected family members, victim service providers, criminal justice system personnel, and residents from the region about access to information, safety, accountability, violence prevention, victims’ rights, Indigenous-lead initiatives, and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. We are grateful to those who participated, and we thank all those who shared their lived experiences with us. A full report titled What We Heard will be released soon.



Poster for the Virtual Sharing Circle on the Criminal Justice System: Yukon.

RECOMMENDATION LETTERS

The OFOVC has recently written several recommendation letters to various ministers and federal agencies to ensure that victims and survivors of crime are treated fairly:

- On March 7th, letter to the Minister of Seniors, the Honourable Deb Schulte on the crisis of elder abuse in Canada.
- On March 26th, to the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Harjit Sajjan on the hostile, sexualized culture in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and the Ombudsman’s support for creating an independent oversight body for reporting allegations of sexual assault.
- On March 29th, to House Leaders on the need for a Parliamentary review on Bill-32, the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights (CVBR).
- On April 19th, to the Chairperson of the Parole Board of Canada, Ms. Jennifer Oades on Elder-Assisted Hearings for non-Indigenous offender(s).

LOOKING AHEAD



The OFOVC has a newly published report titled Information as a Gateway Right. The report examines the most frequent complaint received from victims and survivors at the OFOVC in relation to the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, which is their Right to Information not being respected. Look out for more internal reports such as a Special Report on Restitution and a Victim – Offender Dichotomy Research Paper!

On November 4th and 5th, the Ombudsman will be joining Humane Canada for their Canadian Violence Link Conference, an event that examines the link between interpersonal abuse and animal abuse, looking at the vulnerabilities in both populations and how they intersect. This conference brings together criminal justice system stakeholders that work to prevent and address violence against people or animals for cross-sectoral training on how to collaborate and stop the cycle of violence.

Once again, we want to thank everyone who participated in our Virtual Sharing Circle on the Criminal Justice System in Yukon. We are planning another one in September that will take place in Nunavut. We look forward to sharing the outcomes with you in our future newsletters!

LET'S STAY CONNECTED

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