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Chair

Ms. Marilyn Gladu

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)): Good afternoon, and welcome to the status of women committee. I hope all of our members enjoyed a good constituency week.

We are pleased to have with us today, from the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, Sylvia Maracle and Courtney Skye.

As well, we have from the BC Lions football club, Jamie Taras.

Jamie, I understand you're involved with a program called More Than a Bystander.

Mr. Jamie Taras (Director of Community Relations, BC Lions Football Club): Yes. It's Be More Than a Bystander.

The Chair: Excellent.

Thank you for being with us today. We're going to begin with the Ontario Federation providing their 10 minutes of comments. Then, Jamie, we'll let you make 10 minutes of comments, and then we'll go to our questions.

Sylvia, you can begin.

Ms. Sylvia Maracle (Executive Director, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres): Thank you.

I want to begin by acknowledging the first nation of the traditional territory on which we are meeting. I send my thanks and greetings to the Algonquin Nation, and also to you, the status of women committee, for interest in some of our programs and for giving us this space.

I'm not one to read, although they sent me to school and I can, but I'm much better in 10 minutes if I take you on a little trip. If you want to put your seat belts on, we'll do that.

I work for an organization of indigenous friendship centres. There are 28 in Ontario. We provide the services and programs—cultural, recreational, educational, social support, addiction, and anti-violence work—for people who live in towns and cities. We're part of a national network. There are 118 indigenous friendship centres, and probably some of you have one in your riding.

What we were asked to talk about is some of our programming, specifically working with men and boys about ending violence.

The federation has a long history of doing this. We have enjoyed fairly long and committed support from the province, through a beginning with the NDP, through Conservatives, and through

Liberals. Really since we began in 1971, but formally in the early 1990s, we began programming.

For a long time, we worked from the perspective of the victim. We provided supports, circles, counselling, and some court support, through what I think is still called the aboriginal courtwork program. Everybody is changing their lexicon, and we all have to rush to keep up, I guess.

A number of years ago, it came to us that the only way we were going to end violence against indigenous women, which is who I am here to talk about, is for men to stop it. It's a simple answer. It's a hard process. We had to look at what we were doing and what we could do better. We also have learned in the past 30 years of doing this that the answers for our community have to be distinct. They are not going to be the same thing that the mainstream or everyone else does.

We've also found that working with men takes some savvy in getting them to come in and begin to feel and not just to talk, and not having to go to a program. It's not a thing you do while you're in provincial or federal jail, but it's something that's important.

One of the programs in particular that I want to talk about is named Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin, which is Ojibwa for “I am a kind man”. It speaks to a long history of not having violence, of not behaving in that way. To make it easier—if it is easier for you in English—it means “I am a kind man”.

The elder who named it was very clear that it's about taking responsibility. It's about picking up your culture and traditions, a tradition that does not in any way, shape, or form tolerate violence against women, young women, or girls. It couldn't be packaged nicely in terms of family violence. Sometimes we have to have a verb in this, and it has to be about ending violence. It can't just be about wanting to talk about it forever.

Kizhaay very recently was expanded to a number of sites in Ontario, to all of our friendship centres, and there are a few other places we deliver it. It has four components. The first one is education, acknowledgement that sometimes things become normalized for you and you don't understand that you were raised and taught violence. Children learn what they live, so people who had an experience where there was violence in their lives, of course, went on to continue that.

It was also to re-establish our traditional teachings, long conversations with respect to residential schools, child welfare, federal corrections, to all kinds of reasons that people have been moved and displaced from understanding our culture.

• (1535)

It's to inspire men to help other men, and for them to know that any violence against women can't be solely the responsibility of indigenous women or all women, that men have a role to play.

Last but not least, it's to support men who choose not to use violence. We do that through a variety of programming, including cultural programming. We have a course that runs 12 weeks or 16 weeks. It has a curriculum. It deals with histories of violence, intergenerational trauma. It talks about examining your own attitude and beginning to change it toward your relationships, your intimate relationships in particular. It has one-on-one counselling supports, group-based activities, circles, and a variety of activities where men can network, can support each other. It is a very simple model.

Indigenous men in Kenora supported take-back-the-night initiatives. They got a local business involved. It gave them coffee, and they handed out coffee all night and protected the parade route. They encouraged men to come and be supportive. While they were there they were teaching them very simple ways of dealing with their power and pulling back and, even if they were just walking in the same direction, not having to walk behind a woman. They could wait a few minutes. They could walk across the road. They could do all kinds of very simple things that lots of people unfortunately don't know about. We can have all kinds of public education campaigns, but if they're not targeted at certain people, they're not in a language or if they're not produced in ways that are familiar to our community, they're not going to be particularly relevant.

The other issue I have to mention here is that not all violence that is directed at young indigenous women and girls and women generally comes from inside our community. It's important that a committee like yours take a broad perspective. When taking a broad perspective, you can't forget that indigenous issues may not exactly follow your public education proposals or your campaigns. There may be other things.

We have created a series of recommendations for you. One is that you create a national initiative that is focused on any violence against indigenous girls and young women, which is the mandate you asked us to talk about today. In that program you also need to consider young people and youth. The earlier we normalize positive behaviours, and less violence, the more successful we're going to be. We need to be able to transmit it not just to youth groups where some violence in relationships will already have been learned and will occur, but as early as we can.

In Kizhaay we have a young men's peer program and a young men's mentorship program where a young man works with our Kizhaay workers in the community and learns to talk about this among his peer groups. We also believe that indigenous cultural competency and anti-racism training, which is part of what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission talked about, is good for everybody and we should do that and some of the roots of violence will become clearer. When you understand where they come from, you can understand better the behaviours and we have a better chance of addressing them.

We do support the capacity development of indigenous organizations. We need to do some of this work, but this isn't the kind of money we usually get to work.

The last thing I want to talk to you about is that this committee could play an important role. We have had a number of indigenous women's summits. We're about to have the fifth one. At those national indigenous women's summits across the country, we talk about how the situation for indigenous women could be improved. We've made tons and tons of recommendations. It's a federal, provincial and territorial process, but nobody monitors the implementation of the agreement. You could play a very important role in strategically talking about ending violence against not just girls and young women but indigenous women by monitoring that. If you said every once in a while you wanted to know the kind of progress being made on these things and what is being done, it might make it easier to integrate what is being done. You would play an important role in having the provinces and the federal government actually talk to each other, and not just talk but perhaps be accountable for something for a change.

I'll leave my remarks there.

• (1540)

The Chair: That's very good. Thank you very much.

Now we'll go to Jamie Taras from the BC Lions Football Club. You have 10 minutes.

Mr. Jamie Taras: Greetings from British Columbia. Thank you so much for inviting me to be part of the call today.

I bring regrets and regards from Tracy Porteous, the executive director of the Ending Violence Association of BC. She is in Ireland today speaking about our program. I got to come to this square room with a TV, and she got to travel to Ireland, but I'm delighted to be here to discuss an honour for our organization, the BC Lions Football Club, to be involved with over the last six years. I want to talk a little about how it started, because this truly is a partnership.

Tracy approached the BC Lions organization about an idea she had. In some ways, I was saying it was crazy, but she thought the way to help change the situation of violence against women was to get men involved, and in particular, sports icons and these gruff rough-and-tumble football players.

She came up with this concept because the vast majority of the work to date had been done by women's organizations: how do we help the victims; how do we keep them safe; how do we teach them the warning signs; how do we deal with victims after something terrible has happened; how do we bring back their identity and their confidence; how do we deal with the perpetrators? All that work has been done.

All this wonderful work was being done by women and women's organizations, but the voice of men was missing. This issue had been seen as a women's issue for so many years, when in fact it's a men's issue because men are committing the vast majority of this crime.

She came to us with this idea that we as athletes could use our platform and our voice to help speak to men specifically and boys about what gender violence is and about how we can be part of the solution. That's where the idea evolved.

Tracy always says that we jumped on board right away, but there was much discussion. Obviously, it was a big risk for our organization. If we look at the history and the future of our organization, there is going to be a time when somebody screws up, when a player or someone in our organization does something in a negative way as it relates to violence against women, and we will be sticking our neck out waiting for the axe to come down.

As our leadership said, there is a need in our community. We have an opportunity to make a difference, so we're going to. We're going to deal with any issue that comes up, and we'll deal with it appropriately. We won't hide from it. But we have an opportunity to make a difference, and we want to be part of the solution. That's how it all started.

Anyway, what exactly are we doing? Our program is called *Be More Than a Bystander*. It's about two things. It's about entering into the conversation. No one was speaking about violence against women. This conversation wasn't happening. It's not something that men talk about. If you bring up the topic in a room, men will go completely silent. There is a need for the conversation, and there is also a need for the call to action and for action. That's what the *Be More Than a Bystander* program is all about.

While the vast majority of the crimes are being committed by men, the vast majority of men aren't perpetrators. Many of us have friends or have been witnesses to off-putting jokes or negative attitudes about women, or we may know someone, maybe a friend, who is struggling in their relationship, and we don't do anything about it, because we don't know how to. We don't want to get involved. We don't feel it's our place. That's the challenge. How can we get the vast majority of men, who are good men, kind men, to take action and get involved in the conversation, in the solution, rather than being part of the problem? By being silent, we're saying that what's happening is okay.

We wanted to be more than a bystander. We wanted to break the silence on violence against women. That's what we're doing. We're doing it in three ways.

One, we have presentations primarily at the high school level throughout the province of British Columbia. Our players go into the schools and speak to hundreds, sometimes thousands, of students about the issues: what's happening, what the facts are, what the statistics are, what it might look like in their school or their community, and then about how they can be part of the solution, some simple things they can do to be more than a bystander if they witness something. That's the presentation part of what we do.

● (1545)

Two, there is the advertising and promotion, the public service element, in which we have our players on television and radio and in the stadium promoting the message of being more than a bystander and talking about simple ways that we can get involved in a positive way and trying to raise the awareness and get more people to engage in the conversation.

Finally, three, we were able to create a legacy film, which was distributed throughout the province to all of the high schools and a number of the organizations that deal with violence against women, so that we have a resource that will live on when we're no longer around. The program has been an outstanding success.

That's what we're doing. I'll give you some of the numbers.

We've reached over 86,000 students across the province through our presentations over the last five years, and we're going into our sixth year in the program. That's a huge number. We're proud to say that the students are very willing to enter into this conversation. There is a huge hunger for this conversation amongst the students. We've also had over 500 million impressions—and thank God I didn't have to be the one counting them—with our publicity ads, our radio ads, our website stuff, and the hits on our web and on EVA's web, so we're having a lot of success in terms of getting the message out there as well.

I think one of the key measures of success is that we are getting inquiries from a whole lot of other organizations to help them create *Be More Than a Bystander* programs in their organizations, whether it be British Columbia Institute of Technology, Simon Fraser University, the Winnipeg Blue Bombers or Saskatchewan Football, to name a few of the organizations that we work with, along with the Ending Violence Association of BC, to help them develop their own program to spread the message. We know it's working because people are really interested in what we're doing and the success that we're having in getting the message out.

Certainly we haven't done it without help. Status of Women Canada, the federal government, the province, and even the corporate community, through such organizations as Encana, as well as the unions, and the BC Federation of Labour have been partners. We also have the municipal partners, the City of Surrey and the City of Vancouver. Without their support, there's no way we could do the program.

Tracy spoke to the United Nations. As I mentioned, she's in Ireland. We won a B.C. Association of Broadcasters award, which awarded us, I think, \$2 million in free advertising. That really helped us. We've had a whole bunch of successes in terms of the program itself.

I would say that some of the challenges really relate to the resources that we have to spread around. As I always remind Tracy, while she is a non-profit organization focused on ending violence against women, we're actually a professional football organization focused on winning championships and providing outstanding entertainment. It is challenging our resources. Certainly I would say one of the main concerns we have is with long-term funding for the program. The way we look at it with Tracy, we have to treat this like anti-smoking or drinking and driving. It's going to take years and decades to change attitudes, to change behaviours. Unfortunately, with the process as I know it, you're running a two- or three-year grant, but then, when it's over and you've done all this great work and you have all this sweat work to do, you can no longer apply for the same program, so we have to come up with some unique twists and turns. Maybe that's something you guys can really help with. Is there a place for long-term funding? I do believe that's what it's going to take to change this over the long term.

At the end of the day, this program is all about leadership. I will ask those of you in the room, just by a show of hands, how many of you have a woman in your life that you care about. Really, that's what it's all about. It's not about men coming to the rescue. That's not what it's about. It's about us joining forces with women in a partnership to create a change, to create a solution. I think that's really what the Be More Than a Bystander program is all about. I want to stress how important that partnership really is.

That is one of my main concerns as the director of community relations. We aren't experts on gender violence; we're experts at playing football, and yet we've learned a lot, and with the guidance of EVA BC, we've been able to get the message out. I think it works because of that partnership. For whatever reason, children and young men will listen to us. Perhaps their teacher told them or their parents told them or someone else told them the same message and they never heard it, but they finally heard it when we said it, because for some reason they put us on a pedestal.

• (1550)

Once again, it's been an outstanding six years—we're going on six years—and I thank you for allowing me to speak about it today.

The Chair: That's excellent. Thank you very much.

We're going to begin our round of questioning with my colleague Ms. Damoff for seven minutes.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Thank you to everyone for being here and online.

Jamie, I'm going to start with you. First, congratulations on your win.

Mr. Jamie Taras: Thank you.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Good luck against Calgary. I'm an Argos fan, though, and we weren't even in the mix this year.

I love your program. Have you tried getting it across the country with other CFL teams? You've mentioned a few—I think they were Winnipeg and Saskatchewan minor football—but there are all the teams across the country.

I know that the Argos have Huddle Up against bullying. Each team seems to have their own individual programs. Have you tried to get this across Canada more?

Mr. Jamie Taras: That's a great question. There are two things that I should have mentioned. One, the CFL itself has invoked a policy on violence against women for all members of the Canadian Football League, including the athletes, the coaches, and all the employees. That's one thing that I'm going to say came out of our initiative, and it certainly came out of part of what we started and the work of Ending Violence BC.

They've also started the Ending Violence Association of Canada and have worked not only with Winnipeg, but with Calgary, Edmonton, and Toronto, and there has been an interest from Hamilton. We are certainly a part of that. One of the long-term goals is to get the rest of the CFL organizations involved. To this point, we've been pretty successful with the ones we've helped.

As strange as it sounds—you know how competitive football is—I'm travelling to Winnipeg, along with the members of EVA BC, to train the Winnipeg football players in this program. For sure we have put the competition aside in saying, "Hey, what's best for the community as it relates to this issue?"

Ms. Pam Damoff: That was another thing that came up: getting the right people in the room to listen to the conversation when you're talking about having men and boys being part of the conversation. I went to a seminar recently at Sheridan College in Oakville. In the room, we were 90% women, I would say, so we didn't necessarily have the right people in the room. I think with your program you're getting everyone in the schools involved. Is that basically what you're doing? Is it assemblies?

Mr. Jamie Taras: Yes, absolutely.

To get into more of the detail, we have a major assembly with the entire school. I remember that when we first showed a video of this to the women who had been on our steering committee and had been involved in the program for 32 years, they literally were in tears, because when they spoke to a school, they'd get 15 people in the room and, to your point, 14 of them were women. We have a thousand people in the room, boys and girls, young men and women, and we speak to the whole group.

We do an overview of the issue and how they can get involved. Then we do a breakout session with a leadership group from the school. We have 20 to 25 students there, and we get more in depth with it and go through scenarios that would be relative to their school. Then we talk about how they can make a difference and create change in their own school.

We have found the same thing that you have, which is that if you leave it open and say to come to a lunch and learn about and meet the BC Lions, you're likely to get more women and not the right people in the room. We've found that working with the schools has been our best approach.

Ms. Pam Damoff: That's great. Thank you. I'm really happy to see what you're doing.

Does your program focus on cyber-violence as well?

• (1555)

Mr. Jamie Taras: It touches on a lot of those things. In one of the scenarios, we talk about texting and how if you have a friend who is controlling his girlfriend, and always needing to know where she is or what's she's doing, that's a real sign of a problem. We do get into some of those issues in social media as well. Of course, that is an area that is obviously expanding, unfortunately, and an area where the perpetrator can hide a lot more easily.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you.

Ladies, your program is fantastic. Thank you for what you're doing. One of the things we've heard from other groups working with men is that it's an underfunded area, that there's only so much funding to go around. You probably find this as well in your programming in B.C., where you have funding, but you want to focus on the victims, so after that pie gets cut, there isn't a lot left to focus on the men and boys with. Have you encountered that?

Ms. Sylvia Maracle: Yes, we've encountered it. We've been doing programming through an initiative provincially called the aboriginal healing and wellness strategy. That's the only comprehensive one in Canada. Through the success of that, to speak to some of the points Jamie raised and you asked in your question, women in our community have been further ahead in their healing. They've been doing it longer. We've found that we have to make space for men to have the conversation. It works well. The Kizhaay group leader is himself a kind man. The people who attend want to be kind men and are prepared over a number of weeks to open themselves up and create that situation.

Our youth groups, both male and female, do a lot more cyber activity generally, whether it's about stalking, bullying, harassment, or whatever. I look around the table, and I'm sure some of you are incredibly savvy, but let's face it, you probably have children who could break into National Defence quicker than anybody else.

We are spreading it out. We are watching it move, and absolutely it's underfunded. In our case, if you look at federal corrections, you're talking about anywhere from 30% of the total population to 70% or 80% in your provinces and territories. It's a captive audience. I guarantee that they were hurt in some way. That's why they're there and why they behave that way. We could run these programs. We're having a conversation with the RCMP right now, but I have to tell

you that a lot of men are not going to want to go a circle run by the RCMP.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Yes.

Ms. Sylvia Maracle: We're talking to them in training about their community liaison people. We have a requirement that you need to have the credentials to be a kind man. First off, a woman who is not related to you, was never involved with you, and who's known in the community has to stand up and say, that yes, she will support this. You need to have an organization support you, and your own references; there are CPIC issues. You have to be ready to want to do this, because there are dangers in terms of creating environments where people can behave even worse.

There isn't a lot of money. Frankly, I have to credit the current premier of the province, who's really committed to dealing with the sexual harassment—

The Chair: I'm sorry, that's your time.

We'll go now to Ms. Harder for seven minutes.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): My first question is for you, Sylvia, with regard to the program you run. I think you are doing tremendous work, by the way, and certainly you're to be commended. When you look at violence against women, particularly against indigenous women, what would you outline as being the main causes for that?

Ms. Sylvia Maracle: The residential schools legacy, the child welfare system and its legacy, the criminal justice system and its legacy, poverty, the Indian Act and its legacy with respect to gender politics—these are huge, huge issues. I have to be honest that people internalize the poor behaviours they learn, and eventually you don't need to colonize people. They'll do it themselves when they live it long enough. These are huge clocks to try to turn back. When we look at violence and where the learned behaviour comes from, it comes from all those kinds of things in our communities. It comes, frankly, from racism as well. I mean, we're going to be hearing that loud and clear in the missing and murdered indigenous women's inquiry, no ifs, ands, or buts. As to why we tolerated it as a society for so long, we're all not going to like the answer, but those are the underpinnings.

I think that the children going through those systems were hurt. They weren't parented well. They didn't get a hug. They had physical violence, or mental, emotional, or spiritual. They were sexually abused. They're going to act out. Part of the issue for us is to try to get involved earlier and earlier. I was involved in the founding of a national program called aboriginal head start. You can teach children good touch, bad touch. You can talk about who's safe in their life, who they can talk to, and all those kinds of things. What if we didn't have to be 27 years old, or 37 years old, or have a title when we disclosed that we were a victim of violence? What if we could do that earlier? What if we had the supports for girls and for boys to address it? I think we would all be healthier and happier.

• (1600)

Ms. Rachael Harder: Thank you.

How do you go about getting men and boys interested in taking your program and participating in that?

Ms. Sylvia Maracle: We try to do the kinds of things that Jamie does.

We talk about that we have it, and a few brave people will come forward. Usually they're ready. They maybe have already turned themselves into a kind man, but they want to understand where all this history comes from. We have cultural events. We serve food.

People come to us through court referrals, particularly where the crown will agree. These aren't diversions per se, but in our province we have something called a partner assault response system where people agree to do certain things. Some people are court ordered, and it's a little bit harder to work with them. That's the difference between a 12-week program and a 16-week program, right? I have to convince you a little bit more.

We have people who have picked up the phone to disclose and talk about it, and they go through one to one. They'll come more formally into the program and eventually participate.

We have groups of students at university who are really keen, and in our youth groups, they want to do something different. These people are peer mentors or peer counsellors, peer support, and want to do it. I think people come in all kinds of ways.

We have women involved in healing and wellness programs. If they are with their partner, it's not unknown to us, and Kizhaay will reach out and offer supports. There are things that like it or not are public secrets. There are places where people can go.

They tell me in some small communities it's hanging out at the Tim Hortons, that eventually everybody will come through and you can chat with somebody.

People who open the door for these first steps are really important people, and how they're trained and their orientation becomes really important as well.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Thank you very much.

Jamie, my next question is for you.

I'm wondering if you can outline some of the big surprises that you have found in running this program in terms of going into high schools and interacting with students. What are some of the most surprising things?

Mr. Jamie Taras: I'd say that the biggest surprise was the appetite for the conversation. Before we started, I was really concerned that it was a very serious topic. Our organization had done a lot in the schools. I would say it was all light and fluffy, and this was a serious topic. I didn't know how the schools would respond to it, or how the students would. I was surprised at how engaged the students are, because they see it. They are at the stage in high school where they're starting relationships and some of this stuff is coming up: the awkwardness, and what do I do, and is it okay, and the issues of consent, and what that looks like. Literally, we could be there all day talking with them, so I was very surprised in terms of their engagement.

We had a situation where we did a follow-up because we are trying to use technology and Skype calls. One of our players spoke to a group that he had visited, and in that instance he saw the guys laughing about something. He questioned them on it, and what came out of that was a disclosure of someone who was targeting high school students by drugging their drinks.

In having these conversations, we were able to get the RCMP involved. We were able to get the police and the school involved. As I said before, no one was having these conversations, and without having the conversation, we can't uncover what's actually happening in that school or that community.

• (1605)

Ms. Rachael Harder: Very briefly, Jamie, can you outline what your high school presentations look like?

I only have about 30 seconds for the answer.

Mr. Jamie Taras: It's a large assembly, with our player and a power point that we put on with videos and everything else. Then it's a breakout session where we go through scenarios with the students in a smaller group.

I hope that was 30 seconds.

The Chair: That's your time.

Ms. Malcolmson, you have seven minutes as well.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Thank you to all the witnesses. To the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, that is fantastic work. I don't need to ask you any questions, because your presentation was so clear, and we're going to take up a lot of your recommendations. I so appreciate your work.

BC Lions, because I'm elected on Vancouver Island, we hear a lot about your program. The Haven Society domestic violence shelter in my riding of Nanaimo brags a lot about the partnerships and the impacts of the work that BC Lions has done, always saluting the Ending Violence Association, the NGO that has really led a lot of the sports teams. I'm feeling especially relieved about the way that some leaders in sports are using their authority and their power and influence to really change the conversation.

Anne Taylor, the executive director of the Haven Society, was describing leaving a training session with a whole bunch of violence against women activists and educators, being at the top of an escalator where a whole bunch of young bucks down the escalator were kind of horsing around. There was a little bit of jostling going on and some regular members of the public were being affected, and from the very top of the stairs comes someone who had gone through the BC Lions training, his big voice saying, "Hey man, respect", and everybody fell into line like that. All these women from the movement to end domestic violence said they could never have done that. They wouldn't have had the same impact. It was such a great example of leadership. It was a small thing, but it makes a big difference to people who have been on the front lines for so long. We're not going to fix this without solidarity, so thank you.

I was also really affected by a story I heard that came from a Jackson Katz presentation. He's the guy who was training the BC Lions. Is that right?

Mr. Jamie Taras: Yes, he trained us.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Could I prompt you to tell the story—I hope you know it too—about starting off a session by asking the male participants about their safety plan?

Mr. Jamie Taras: Well, he sat us down, and we're all big men, obviously—professional football players—and we had some of the University of British Columbia football players with us. He asked us all what our plan of action was, what our safety plan was, when we go out for a night on the town. We're all looking at each other wondering what he's talking about. He said, "What do you guys think about? What do you guys do when you're going out at night into a dark parking lot or you're going out to a bar?" We're said, "What are you talking about? You know, we make sure we shower, make sure we put deodorant on, and then away we go."

We were so confused. Then he said, "Well, what do you think women do?" We started thinking about making sure they parked near a lighted area, making sure they don't get on an elevator if someone else is on it, or if men are on it, making sure that they have someone with them when they're walking through the parking lot, and all those types of things.

I've been married 23 years, and being a somewhat obtuse man, I remember going home and asking my wife Jen if she actually thinks about these things when she goes out alone at night, and she said, "Of course I do."

You know, I hadn't really put myself in her shoes. Part of our training was understanding the reality for women, because I can honestly say I've never really gone out and feared for my safety. I think putting yourself in someone else's shoes gives you the perspective to have empathy in caring for them, and I think that's

what we're trying to do for men who may never have thought of this, and for the young boys who are our future.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: That's how I heard it described as well, that women continuously actively plan for their own safety and that without an exercise such as what was described when Jackson Katz did the initial training for the BC Lions, it was impossible to relate to that state of mind. It was a very powerful opening to the conversation, and it then made the rest of the teaching that much more accessible. It brought allies into the conversation in a way that was a kind of magic, the way I heard it described.

Can you tell me a bit more about how the BC Lions' experience influenced the CFL's policy around violence against women? I understand that the Ending Violence Association was involved in that work as well.

• (1610)

Mr. Jamie Taras: Again, when we started the program, other CFL teams got interested in what we were doing and how we were doing it, and then the CFL itself did.

I think part of what triggered it is the horrific incident in the NFL with Ray Rice, when that video went viral. Then the CFL looked at its own policies and whether they actually had one around violence against women in the workplace. Then learning that there wasn't one, there was the ability to work with the Ending Violence Association of BC and Tracy and with us in our experience with the program to help to shape the policy for the entire CFL.

Right now, every employee of the CFL and every player has to go through training each year. We just completed our training with our players in November. We get to sit with a group of the players and talk about these issues. That's never been done. There is more to the policy than that in terms of what happens if an incident comes up on the field or with an employee. How are we going to deal with that? No incident is going to be ignored, and actions are going to be taken. Actions are not just going to be punishment in saying to Ray Rice that he is now out of the NFL. How is that helping the situation, the relationship? That relationship is ongoing, and there are now more financial issues with that relationship.

The CFL took a much more progressive approach, saying they're not going to ignore any issue but they're also going to deal with it proactively, getting help for the player or for the employee who needs it, and making sure that the situation is progressing in a positive way, rather than just kicking somebody out.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Thank you.

The NDP will be advancing your recommendations around recognizing the appetite for young kids to start this education as early as possible, and also looking at operational funding that doesn't leave these organizations scrambling from year to year.

Thank you very much to all the witnesses for your work.

The Chair: That's excellent.

We'll go to Ms. Vandenbeld for seven minutes.

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): I want to thank all our witnesses for acknowledging the very important piece of this, which is that the solutions have to also come from men. It can't be a conversation just among women. It has to be both men and women.

Specifically regarding the friendship centres, you mentioned at the beginning of your presentation that when it comes to indigenous men and women the answers have to be distinct. You talked about traditional knowledge, about having cultural competency.

Could you perhaps elaborate on how the kind of programming you're doing might differ for instance from the kind of thing that the BC Lions or other groups working with other men do? How would you approach it?

Ms. Sylvia Maracle: When I responded to the question about the root causes, those causes are different for us. Canada as a whole did not experience something called the Indian residential schools because guess what its name was: Indian residential schools. It wasn't called something else.

The displacement from the land, the Indian Act, all these things are unique to our community, as is the land, as is the language. The fact that we chose a title, which is translatable...we've done some work in British Columbia recently, and they don't have any problems using the language that is appropriate to them with the same concepts.

For us, it is an early intervention with respect to identity. It is the loss of identity through a variety of attacks that we believe have displaced them. If I can use my own cosmology as a Mohawk woman, our own sense of saying *Skennen'kó:wa* is a part of a greeting. It means "is the great peace with you". If somebody's beating you up, guess what: the great peace isn't there. If you are using your fists or sexual violence against women, guess what: the great peace isn't with you.

For us, on those kinds of notions that come, some of our elders and traditional people, some of our philosophies, might argue that we're waking up our blood memories. We're going back, and as part of our recovery we see ourselves and understand ourselves differently, understanding why you're just pissed off. I don't know if those are polite words for your committee, but you're all human beings.

Those are important notions for us. It's not that I don't think they are for everybody else, but we have a different twist to it. A lot of our recovery, a lot of our sobriety, a lot of the issues in terms of dealing with all kinds of addictions in our community, and modern issues such as pornography.... Government will pay for a big satellite in our community, but they don't want to pay for a healing and wellness program at our schools, so we're really starting I think from that different context.

I think issues of when people begin to own stuff, and they understand they can be self-determined, and they understand these things around them, those expressions are often different in our community.

We have an enormous number of children in care, and the kids who aren't in care, 27% are in female-led households, so they don't even have healthy men in their lives to see how to behave. I think all of those created a different pedagogical approach that we need.

I'm trying to use words that aren't—

● (1615)

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld: Thank you very much. That is very compelling.

Both witnesses actually talked about the fact that there seemed to be reluctance at first for men to engage in these conversations, and yet once they do, there is an awakening, a realization, a hunger, to have these kinds of conversations.

What I got from both of you is it matters who is leading the conversation. You mentioned the RCMP as not necessarily the right one, and of course, a sports hero is somebody young people will listen to.

How do you engage those people who become the thought leaders, the ones who will actually be listened to? This question is for both of you.

We'll start with Ms. Maracle.

Ms. Sylvia Maracle: I think Jamie has mentioned it. This is work. This is work that should be paid. It's something that should continue. If you can create a new job for an indigenous man in a community, you're leaps and bounds ahead of everybody. If you can create job descriptions that are so specific like traditional knowledge, a kind man, and no addictions, and on and on, you're going to get the *crème de la crème* of the community coming forward. That's important.

There are people who have been doing this for a long time. There are men who have been doing this for a long time. There are male elders and traditional people who I worked with 30 and 40 years ago trying to figure out who I was who were kind men. We simply took a cultural concept that we knew was there and said it's not everybody anymore, and we need to return to that.

I would like to tell you it's difficult to do, but it's actually not that difficult. There's a bit of tongue in cheek when I say this, but the thing about men is whatever space you give them, they will fill it up so give them the space then.

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld: Mr. Taras, did you want to comment on the issue of how you used that leadership that people would listen to?

Mr. Jamie Taras: We do it much like we choose our football team. We select the guys. We know the guys on our team who would be interested, who have the right character, and who would also have the ability and the availability to do this. It is work for them. It is absolutely work for them.

We give them an honorarium if we're asking them to be involved in a program on a long-term basis. We make sure that we give them a little something to thank them for their work. With some of these trips, they're gone for four or five days from their families. They're visiting eight different schools, up in Prince Rupert or what have you. We certainly select them, and we train them.

Thank goodness for the Ending Violence Association. They're really our leaders in terms of the messaging and the issues and all those things. We went through three eight-hour days of training with Jackson Katz. It wasn't something that we just took a half an hour to talk about and then went out and did it. We are invested in it. It's from the leadership down. Our owner, our president, vice-president, have all gone through gender violence training. We are invested as an organization.

• (1620)

The Chair: I'm sorry, but that's your time.

We're going to our final five minutes with Ms. Vecchio.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): If you don't mind, I'm going to start once again and carry on with Jamie.

I am a huge sports fan myself, so I have watched a lot of sports, and there's been a lot of commentary on violence in sports.

Do you feel that is unfair? The violence against women is not because of something like a hockey fight, the scums that happen in different sports. Do you think that's unfair, or do you see that sometimes a tendency for violence in sports can lead into the home life?

Mr. Jamie Taras: I think that the issue happens everywhere, and certainly the professional sports community is not immune in terms of violence against women and in terms of violence.

To your point, it's something that we have to deal with as an organization when we see it. When it happens, we have to deal with it. We do get questions about the violence in football and being against violence against women. The answer is that we love doing what we do. When I played, I played for 16 years. I loved getting into that physical confrontation. I call it controlled aggression. It's what we're paid to do. It's what we're trained to do. It's what we love to do.

There's a huge difference between that and beating up your wife or your girlfriend, or another man for that matter. That's a situation where you have a dominance or a power, and the person being attacked is certainly not willingly entering into that situation.

Those are two totally different things that I think we're able to differentiate between. I think in some weird way that's why our message works. They see us as this strong powerful person, but when you get to know us, we're actually very sensitive and somewhat intelligent.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: I one hundred per cent agree with you. One of my good friends plays in the NHL. You'll see him drop the gloves, but I can tell you he's the kindest father and the best son you could ever ask for, and a great husband—not my husband—to his wife. I wanted to see about that.

Is there any appetite for the different national sports organizations like the NBA, the MLB, NFL, CFL to all join together to do something like this? You were talking about resources. I recognize that when we're all doing something, it's costly for everybody. Would there be the appetite for national sporting organizations to all join together to try to do something like this? Do you see other organizations.... You talked about football. In our city of London, we

have the London Lightning, which is one of the professional Canadian basketball teams, and they were at an event for violence against women.

Would there be a way of trying to get all these together, so the resources wouldn't be duplicated and that we could do a better job? What are your thoughts on that?

Mr. Jamie Taras: I think the more people that enter into the conversation, the more people that jump on board to be part of the solution, the better. It's a matter of figuring out the best way to facilitate that. We have been approached by other organizations. We've helped other organizations. I think the more people we can get on board, the more likely we are to create change. I agree with you.

It is difficult, because every team has their own agenda in terms of the community as well. There are so many different community issues that they're being approached to support, whether it be cancer or what have you. The teams only have so many resources. That is an issue.

They have to look at what they are able to do, and what they are also prepared to do in terms of the organization. Each sports organization has their own platform there.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: That's excellent. Thank you very much.

Sylvia and Courtney, thank you very much for the presentation.

Sylvia, earlier today we started discussing Motion No. 47 regarding pornography. The reason I'm bringing this up is that you were mentioning that sometimes when we talk about it we will say that some of the first nations don't have the infrastructure. Do you feel that pornography is one of the key issues when it comes to violence against women? Do you see a correlation between the two?

Ms. Sylvia Maracle: I see a correlation between the two. One of the big issues for us in healing is about learning boundaries, learning about good boundaries and what's acceptable behaviour. When you've never had them, if you've been a child and someone else has controlled them, it's very difficult. When you have a lot of people living in a house and you have pornography that's available however many hours a day, I think it blurs the boundaries about what's acceptable behaviour and what's good behaviour. Yes, it has an impact, and yes, I think we should address it. I think there are a lot of alternatives.

• (1625)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Yes. When we talk about some of the reasons you see your situation where it is with the residential schools, we all can understand what you're saying as to how could this be an effect, but we're looking at today's technology and seeing the same effects. You're saying that even within your own culture you're seeing this creeping in as well.

Ms. Sylvia Maracle: Absolutely, yes.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

The Chair: That's the end of our time.

Thank you very much to all of our witnesses for the excellent programs you have and for what you're doing to try to eliminate violence against women.

We're going to suspend our committee while we switch the panels. Thank you for being with us.

- _____ (Pause) _____
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The Chair: We're back for our second panel discussion.

I'm very happy to welcome from the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association, Lucille Harper, who is the executive director; from the Regroupement québécois des centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel, Mélanie Sarroino; and from the SAFFRON Sexual Assault Centre, Katie Kitschke.

Each of the ladies will have 10 minutes for their remarks, and then we will go to our questions.

Lucille, we'll start with you.

- (1630)

Ms. Lucille Harper (Executive Director, Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association):

First, I want to thank you for allowing me to come to speak. I appreciate the previous speakers, but I want to say that I want to live in a world where what women say matters, where women are heard and change attitudes and policy. I want to live in a world where 15,000 women turn out to hear women, and 15,000 men turn out to hear women. That's where I want to live, but that's not my point.

The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre provides support services and programs to women, adolescent girls, and youth living in rural and small-town northeastern Nova Scotia. We bring a feminist lens and an understanding of the complexities of living rural to the work we do with young women, indigenous, newcomer, immigrant, and refugee women and girls. Every day we hear stories from young women and girls about their experiences of being subjected to sexualized violence and the impact it has on their lives. That will be my focus today. Conscious of time, I want to start with the recommendations and then proceed with the context so that they're on the table.

Turning to the issue of sexualized violence, we live in a rape culture where the perpetration of misogyny and the devaluing of women is normalized. It permeates our institutions, policies, and program delivery. Any sexualized violence requires all levels of government to work together and with communities, institutions, agencies, and organizations to address the myriad forms of systemic social and economic inequality that women face. It requires addressing women's poverty; creating a universal child care program; implementing a living wage; improving the response of the criminal justice system; supporting sexual assault centres and women's violence prevention and response organizations, and more. The federal government must take a lead in doing this.

We need to address access of children to pornography. Our recommendation is that we negotiate an opt-in, opt-out system with the Canadian Internet service providers that would restrict children's

access to Internet pornography along the lines of the U.K. model, so ask me about that.

End the trafficking of women and girls. Look at the Swedish government's approach to ending the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls. Along with enacting laws to reduce the demand for purchasing sex, and rules making it easier to confiscate the proceeds of crime, it funds comprehensive services for trafficked and other women leaving the sex industry. The Canadian Criminal Code governing trafficking is strong, yet convictions are few. Make changes to prioritize the prosecution of traffickers and johns, protect immigrant and refugee women, and provide women with the services and supports they need to escape, heal, and live financially stable lives.

Review and amend immigration policies and legislation to ensure the secure status and protection of non-status refugee and immigrant women in Canada. Ensure services and supports for survivors of violence are made available to all women regardless of immigration status. Amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to guarantee protection to non-citizen survivors of trafficking, including access to services and permanent residence.

Keeping women in situations of insecure status can be deliberately used by abusive partners to maintain control over women. The Immigration and Refugee Board must implement guidelines for gender-based analysis of refugee determination. In particular, the designated country of origin should be ended, as women fleeing gender-based violence are particularly impacted by a system that deems certain countries as safe, while violence of women there may be endemic.

Address the criminal justice system. Until the criminal justice system makes changes, there will be no justice for survivors of sexual assault. As a first step, train police and crowns to work from a trauma-informed approach so they can reduce the re-traumatization of victims, can conduct competent interviews and investigations and increase the rate of successful prosecution, and ensure sentences reflect the seriousness of these crimes as a deterrent, but also to reflect the often lifetime impact of such crimes on their victims and the victims' families.

- (1635)

I'll provide a bit of background.

We live in a small town and in our town is a university, St. Francis Xavier University. Some of you may have heard of it. The population of our town of 5,000 doubles when the university is in session. As a sexual assault centre, we work with a lot of students who have been sexually assaulted.

One in four women is sexually assaulted while at university, many in the first months of their first year. This takes place in a rape culture of normalized sexualized violence, hypersexualization, slut-shaming, and slut-blaming that work together to obscure the act of violence, remove responsibility from the perpetrator, and stigmatize and silence the victim. Women who have been sexually assaulted are blamed and told to blame themselves. Few of these assaults are reported to police or even to campus authorities.

In our hypersexualized society, adult sexuality is imposed upon children and young people before they are capable of dealing with it mentally, emotionally, or physically.

We work with girls, and girls as young as 12 years of age tell us they've been sent unwanted pictures of their classmates' genitals. These are kids. They're pressured to respond with naked pictures of themselves. Embarrassed, confused, and not sure what to do or how to respond, they wonder if it's something about them. Do their peers see them as sluts? They tell us they're asked to perform oral sex on their peers, and to submit to anal sex. You can't get pregnant with anal sex.

Women are slut-shamed and slut-blamed, and slut-shaming is an effective tool of subjugation and used as a justification for perpetrating sexual violence. It removes the focus of responsibility from the perpetrator to the victim. Unfortunately, they have just elected a president in the United States who is a perfect example of it.

Incidents of sexual violence perpetrated against young women, captured on camera and shared through the Internet, are acts of sexualized cyber-violence. Too many girls have taken their own lives after being subjected to sexual assault and sexualized cyber-violence, and we need to take that really seriously.

It's interesting that you asked about pornography. With the advent of wireless Internet tablets and smartphones, children can and do access pornography that contains disturbing, violent, misogynistic images that link sex to violence against women. On average, boys view their first porn as young as 11 to 12 years of age, and this is all as they're developing. They're trying to figure out who they are as sexual beings, so of course there is an excitement to it that immediately gets linked with violence against women.

Scrolling through the Eastlink cable TV channel, children, young people, and adults see listings they may or may not be able to access, but just the listings say things like *Red Hot Blowjob*, *Teen Girls Next Door*, *Joanna Angel Filthy Whore*, *Teens Got a Tight Pussy*, and *Grandpa's Perversions*, and on it goes. This is just on cable TV as you're flipping through the channels.

While many of us grew up in a text-based world, today's children are growing up in an image-based culture, and images impact a part of the brain different from the part affected by text. We will not know for a number of years the full impact that pornography has on the developing brain; however, research is telling us that it is harmful to

a young person's healthy development. They're learning that sex is violent and degrading to women. It teaches boys that this is the way they must perform sex, and girls that this is what they must expect and accept. I could tell you story after story after story that we've heard from high school students and university students. In the U.K., legislation was proposed to protect children by limiting child and youth access to these sites. I hope you ask me about that.

• (1640)

I also want you to ask me about luring and trafficking, because we're seeing girls as young as 13 recruited and procured into sexual slavery by predators who profit from exploiting their bodies. This is on craigslist. It's unbelievable and it's, like, everybody's girls. The RCMP estimate that the annual financial gain for every woman and girl trafficked is \$280,000 to the trafficker. The younger the woman or girl, the more profitable she is. They're often forced to perform sex acts 365 days a year and are required to hand over all the money to the traffickers.

That's probably it.

The Chair: That's your time, but we will ask you about those things.

We're going to go now to Mélanie for 10 minutes.

[Translation]

Ms. Mélanie Sarroino (Liaison and Promotion Officer, Regroupement québécois des Centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel): Hello. Thank you for having me today.

[English]

I'm prepared in French so I'm going to present in French, but I'm very capable of answering in English. Most of my presentation has just been said, so thank you very much for bringing up those recommendations and those ideas.

[Translation]

The Quebec coalition of sexual assault centres, or CALACS, was founded in 1979. However, some CALACS are over 40 years old. We bring our members together, and we provide training and opportunities to discuss issues. We play an intermediary role with the provincial and federal governments. We also speak to the media to educate the public on the issue of sexual assault.

Our centres provide direct assistance to women and teenagers over the age of 14 who are victims of sexual assault. The centres also provide services to the victims' family members so they can learn how to help the victims.

Prevention and awareness are important, especially in secondary schools. Last year, we spoke to 30,000 secondary school students. We also educate and train socio-judicial workers. We're being increasingly asked to take action at the university level.

Our third area of action is rights advocacy.

As I told you, we carry out a great deal of prevention work in schools. With the support of Status of Women Canada, we're developing a prevention program by collecting the best practices established by our CALACS over the years, in order to provide a better prevention service in schools. This coincides with a Quebec government pilot project under way to reinstate sex education courses in schools.

Unfortunately, we don't know what will happen after the two-year pilot project ends next year. We really want the Quebec government to continue providing sex education courses.

Through the program, we also aim to provide training to the people who work in schools so that they don't convey sexist and sexual stereotypes. People who work in schools say that, when they speak about the issue, sometimes teachers—who are usually male—make sexist jokes and take a bit away from their efforts. It's very important to educate school staff on how to handle the disclosures that students—mainly women, but also men—may make after a visit from representatives of a CALACS.

Our work is also innovative. We make video clips for parents to help them reinforce what their children learn in our workshops. The clips also give parents the tools to hold these types of conversation.

I'd like to share a story. Yesterday, my six-year-old son asked me whether I was sexy. This is to give you an idea. It gave me quite a turn, and I told myself that I wasn't ready for this conversation. Fortunately, I work in the field and I have access to tools to help me hold these conversations. He's only six years old and he's already talking about the word "sexy". I may be too old, but I find that very shocking.

The issue that often arises and that has been mentioned a great deal is hypersexualization and pornography culture. You've probably talked at length about it in your two months of hearing people speak, but it's a real problem. We believe this issue, among others, is responsible for rape culture because it trivializes sexual violence against women and girls. Obviously, and unfortunately, it sends the message that women and girls are sexual objects at the disposal of men and that our reason for existing is really to please men. The message conveyed to men is that women are sexual objects that they can take, purchase and force to do as they wish, with very few consequences.

All these issues make rape culture increasingly pervasive. The phenomenon is blatant. Recently, in Quebec, more and more events have been showing the magnitude of the problem. Sexual assaults have been occurring on our university campuses. Many, if not all, initiation rites on university campuses have sexual connotations. At a demonstration, a young woman accused a provincial liberal MNA of sexual assault. The list goes on.

The Quebec government has responded by launching a strategy to prevent and combat sexual assault. It's a good strategy. Unfortunately, it focuses too much on the legal aspect of the issue.

Too much money and too many measures focus on the legal aspect. It's not that the legal aspect isn't important. We want to see attackers convicted and sentenced. However, the figures show that only 5% of victims file complaints. However, very few measures or resources are allocated to the 95% of victims who need support.

That's something deplored by people who work in the field in Quebec, including the Quebec coalition of CALACS. Other sexual assault centres in Canada have already mentioned the enormous shortage of resources needed to accomplish our main task, which is to help victims of sexual assault. Half our centres currently have waiting lists, and that's unacceptable. It takes everything for a woman to pick up the telephone, call and ask for help. It's unacceptable that she's told that she will receive help, but only in six months.

We need more resources to help us carry out prevention work in a larger number of schools.

I'll move straight on to the recommendations in case I run out of time. We can talk more about it later.

We're asking both the federal and provincial governments for the same thing.

First, we want them to develop and launch an awareness campaign for the general public that addresses, among other things, the harmful effects of hypersexualization and pornography on women and young girls.

We then want them to conduct an intersectional analysis of the issue that takes into account all the systems of oppression and systematic causes that make certain women more vulnerable. These women include aboriginal women, racialized women, immigrant women, refugee women, women who have a disability, women who are deaf, women who live in poverty, women in prostitution, and LGBTQ women. We want the government to conduct an in-depth study on the impact of hypersexualization, while also taking into consideration these systems of oppression.

We also want Statistics Canada to conduct a new national survey on violence against women, particularly sexual violence. The last data is from 1993. I know the methods used to conduct the 1993 survey were criticized. We want sensitivity to be demonstrated. Women must not be asked questions in the forms or over the telephone in a way that makes them feel guilty. However, we need data to help us carry out our work in the community.

We also want the provinces to be strongly encouraged to reinstate sex education courses in schools. I think something of that nature is being done in Ontario. There's a pilot project in Quebec, as I said earlier. However, it must be done across Canada.

Lastly, we want an acknowledgement of the expertise of community contacts who work each day in the field with women and girls who are victims of sexual assault. We want the community contacts to constantly work with their respective provincial governments and with the federal government. Thank you again for giving us this opportunity to speak.

We want more funding so that we can actually meet the demand.

Since I have some time left, I'll talk a bit about the legal system.

This myth of consent and myth that a woman is always sexually available makes things very difficult for the victim once she ends up in the legal system. These myths and prejudices are echoed by both prosecutors and defence lawyers. We saw it in the Ghomeshi case, and we've also seen it in Quebec recently. We also saw the case of an Alberta judge who asked a young woman why she hadn't kept her knees together. A great deal of awareness needs to be raised. Before that's done, I admit that I have a great deal of trouble encouraging women to go through the legal system. It's a trying and difficult experience. Often, if the attacker is found guilty, he will receive a slap on the wrist. In other words, his sentence will fall short of the crime committed.

There's still much work to be done. In the meantime, we must at least support organizations that truly help women in the community.

Thank you.

•(1650)

The Chair: Thank you.

[*English*]

Katie Kitschke is next, for 10 minutes.

Ms. Katie Kitschke (Executive Director, SAFFRON Sexual Assault Centre): Thank you. I could just say ditto for what these ladies said. I don't know if you watched me as they were talking, but I was nodding my head. A lot of these are issues that we all feel, and work towards. I'll read my preamble and then I'll talk a bit more and answer questions for sure.

First of all, my name is Katie Kitschke. I'm the Executive Director at SAFFRON Sexual Assault Centre located in Sherwood Park, a suburb of Edmonton. We're a community of about 100,000 people. SAFFRON provides two core services at our centres. We provide counselling for people who have experienced sexual violence as well as for their family members and supports. Our second core area of service is public education.

When I started with SAFFRON in 2008 as their public education director, we were offering presentations to students starting in grade 10. I asked why we were only presenting to students in grade 10, and the response was that's when the issues are starting. I said that we need to start in kindergarten, that we need to start having these conversations as young as possible. It took me a few years to convince the powers that be, so I was able to do junior high and then eventually move down to grades 4, 5 and 6, and eventually down to kindergarten. I actually had an epiphany the other day. This is not in my notes. I was attending an inter-agency meeting in my community. There's a parent group in our community. They were talking about some fall programs they have about how to tell if your child is developing naturally. They're for zero to five years old. I said that this who we need to be talking to, that we need to be talking to the parents of the zero- to five-year-olds, because that's the piece we're missing. We're missing the parents. We are in the schools, and we have this captive audience with the students, which is wonderful, but the key piece we've been missing is the parents. It's hard to get the parents engaged, especially as the children get older, because it's

never their children who are at risk, or it's never their children who are perpetrating anything.

My epiphany is that we need to talk to them in that zero-to-five age range. We need to talk to them about how to talk to their kids about sexuality, how to model healthy relationships, how to create appropriate boundaries. We are seeing parents giving babies who are 18 months olds, if not even younger, iPads. We're seeing children having access to technology so much younger but they're missing that piece of education, because their brains aren't ready to understand it. That's the piece we really need to take on and focus on, that education piece with parents, as young as possible so that those tools—what a healthy relationship looks like and what boundaries are—can be given to our children as young as possible. We have to talk to them as young as possible about consent, and not force them to hug uncle Frank or whatever if they don't feel comfortable.

Part of the problem is that a lot of parents don't know how to have these conversations, and they definitely don't think they need to have those conversations in the zero-to-five age range. I think they do, and I think they need to do so in an age appropriate way. We spend so much time teaching our children how to walk and talk and to have all these other life skills, but we forget to teach them about sexuality. That's a really important component of what we're missing, but I digress. Sorry.

The public education program we currently have goes from kindergarten up to grade 12. We talk to them about healthy relationships, consent, boundaries. We tell the very young ones that if they don't want to be hugged, they don't have to be hugged, and if they want to hug somebody, they have to ask for permission to get a hug. We give them the right tools and the right words to say if they're feeling uncomfortable, or if they're feeling that their power is being taken away from them. As they get older, again in an age appropriate way, we talk to them about what sexual assault and sexual harassment are, because very often we have people growing up in these families, and it's been normalized. A lot of our clients who have come into our centre have said that they didn't know this wasn't normal in other people's families. We have conversations about what healthy relationships look like and what healthy sexuality looks like.

•(1655)

We also provide professional development training. This is really important, and this is also one of my recommendations. SAFFRON is part of the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services providers. There are 12 agencies in Alberta, and we're all part of this group.

We all strive to create an environment in Alberta where everyone who lives in Alberta, whether in remote areas or in urban centres, receives the same level of care. That's one of the recommendations that I think we need for the federal government. It shouldn't matter where people live in Canada. Everyone should have the same level of care.

Across the provinces and in the municipalities, we should be looking at what are we doing, at what is being provided. Are we all providing the same level of care and the best care that we possibly can?

We also know that sexual violence is linked to many other social issues, including addictions, mental health, sexual exploitation, medical problems, self-harm, suicide, parenting issues, poverty, homelessness, domestic violence, etc.

The majority of our clients are not just dealing with sexual violence. The majority of our clients are dealing with many of these social issues. We are seeing an increase in the number of our clients who have mental health issues and extreme mental health issues. As soon as they go to a doctor or to a mental health agency to report that they've been sexually assaulted, their mental health is put aside and they are sent to us.

We need to have better partnerships with sexual assault centres and mental health agencies so that we can provide the best care for our clients. We also need training in the sexual assault centres on how to work with individuals who are suffering from certain types of mental health issues.

As my colleagues mentioned here, we're living in a culture where violence against women has become common. Street harassment, cyber-violence, and disrespectful behaviour not only exist, but are almost encouraged and condoned. I have five children, and my four daughters will not walk on the streets. My daughters go to school in downtown Edmonton, and they are terrified to take the bus. They are terrified if they ever have to walk on the street because almost every single time they've ever had to do it, they've received some type of harassment.

Very often what we see is that there is a perpetrator of that street harassment and there are the people who are encouraging the behaviour. It has become a reality for many people, and not just for young people. I've definitely received street harassment, as well.

We need to understand that this is a reality not just in Edmonton, Ottawa, Toronto, or Vancouver, but in communities of 100,000 people and in communities of 20,000 people because it's allowed to be there. There's a tolerance for it.

In the work we do with our clients, we definitely see a lot of cyber-violence. We see cyberstalking and sexual exploitation, and again, it is regardless of where people live. It used to be that people would move to the small towns to get away from the big bad crime and things like that, but now with the Internet it can happen to anyone anywhere, even in the most remote communities.

Disrespectful behaviour towards women and girls is so prevalent in our society. We see it on TV. We see it in movies. We see it in social media. Now we're even seeing it in politics. It's a scary time.

On one hand, it's a wonderful time because we're here talking about sexual violence, and that thrills me, and on the other hand, it's a scary time because we are fighting so much to get to a place where this no longer exists, but we're fighting what almost sometimes feels like a losing battle.

I think that we have to decide as a country that this is not going to be the reality for our women and girls. We need to engage men and boys, as everyone here has said. This is a huge piece of what we need to be doing.

• (1700)

As was mentioned, all men and boys are not committing sexual violence. It is some who are committing the sexual violence. We need to engage those who want to help out and do something to stop it.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll start our questioning with Mr. Fraser, for seven minutes.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): I hope all of you submit all of your recommendations in writing to the clerk. There was a lot to take in and process in a very short amount of time. I thank you for your concise submissions.

I'm struck first and foremost by the importance of independence. I'm picking it up as a theme, whether it's independence from street harassment, not having a safety plan, or independence from poverty. Whether you're a vulnerable person, maybe with a disability, a refugee, or an immigrant, it seems to me there's a theme of independence. As a six-foot, seven-inch, white, North American male, I've never really had to think about that when I'm walking through the streets at night.

Ms. Harper, we're trying to make recommendations to the government that we hope will be adopted. I know you hit on poverty as one source of the lack of independence that really is an increased risk factor. Could you describe how we could make a recommendation that would best help overcome this systemic barrier?

Ms. Lucille Harper: Poverty is a whole conversation. I know that another standing committee is looking at poverty issues.

Poverty really keeps women trapped. When women are trapped, it makes them vulnerable. When women are trapped and then objectified and seen as valuable primarily for their bodies, that poverty keeps women in extremely vulnerable situations.

When we're looking at who lives in poverty, we're looking at racialized women, indigenous women, and women with disabilities. We're looking at women who have a really tough time breaking out of the poverty they grew up in, accessing education, or after education, accessing the kinds of employment they need in order to have economic independence. That's one of the factors that keeps women trapped very often.

I'm going to tell you a story.

Two of our staff did a workshop for Mount Saint Vincent University on girls. They were sitting in the cafeteria at the library in Halifax. They overheard a conversation of two high school girls sitting beside them. The girls were being offered money for sex, and the conversation was about what an insult is. Twenty dollars is an insult, so at \$20 you're not validated. It's kind of a blow-off, a comment about who you are. The higher the offer of money is, the more you're validated. These are high school girls.

There is story after story I could tell you about some of this stuff, but that is an everyday casual conversation girls are having that was overheard. That's some of what we're dealing with. That's on your question about poverty, but it really is a very clear marker of the way in which women's sexuality has been attached to some kind of access either to men with wealth or to other ways of trying to earn an income. It's a really big question, Sean.

Mr. Sean Fraser: It is. I appreciate that.

I have just a few minutes remaining, and perhaps another big question. I would ask you to be as concise as possible.

Ms. Harper, you led with a comment about how you hope everyone can be listened to. Ms. Kitschke, you mentioned at the end that some men and boys are the perpetrators.

I find it difficult to engage the people who don't want to be engaged, the potential perpetrators. There are a lot of people who have all the best will, and who attend these seminars during frosh week or in their communities. How can we best tap into the group of potential perpetrators of sexual violence or violence against women and girls?

Maybe, Ms. Kitschke, you could go first.

• (1705)

Ms. Katie Kitschke: I think we need to engage those men and boys who are not potential perpetrators. As was mentioned by Jamie from the BC Lions, the bystanders in some cases are encouraging the behaviour. We need to change them, have them be the watchdogs, I guess, for lack of a better word, and really try to spread a message such as the comment about the inappropriate behaviour and the gentleman yelling, "Respect".

That's where we need to start, because there's more—

Mr. Sean Fraser: Perhaps I could jump in because I only have about a minute and a half.

I don't necessarily think the federal government is the best group to be doing this. We've heard from many witnesses that community-based organizations are much more successful in responding to the needs of their community. How can we as a federal government provide families or community organizations with the tools they need to promote this awareness among the potential intervenors?

Ms. Katie Kitschke: As has been mentioned by everyone, the answer is funding. We are only limited by the amount of funding we receive. If we had unlimited funding, what we could do.... We would blow your socks off.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Regarding community organizations specifically, is that the best return on investment?

Ms. Katie Kitschke: I think so because they're front line. They are the ones that are working....

Mr. Sean Fraser: I see some heads nodding in agreement. Perhaps I can take it that the other witnesses agree.

Ms. Mélanie Sarroino: Yes, but perhaps I could add something quickly.

I don't know how it is elsewhere, but sometimes in Quebec we're accused of trying to create our own jobs by asking for funding. That's so insulting because honestly, all of our workers, all of our counsellors, the only thing they would wish for is not to have jobs anymore because that would mean that there wouldn't be any more violence against women. Could people please stop saying we're creating jobs for ourselves. That's not it at all.

Ms. Lucille Harper: I just want to say that it's really tough work when you are working with survivors. When you're working with women, the issue of sexual violence underlies so many other issues that women bring into our centre—and I'm sure with all of us—and you're hearing those stories day after day after day, it's really tough work. In some ways, the people who are doing that work are really—

The Chair: I'm sorry, but that's your time, Sean.

We're going to Ms. Vecchio for seven minutes.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Ms. Harper, I'm going to start with you, if you don't mind, regarding the opt-in, opt-out U.K. model when it comes to pornography. We don't have a lot of time, so could you just explain a little more about that for us?

Ms. Lucille Harper: That's a really interesting model. The U.K. government approached their primary Internet providers, namely, Virgin, BT, Talk Talk, and SKY. They worked with them to put an automatic pornography filter on all new accounts. This means that on all of the various devices that kids have, they can't automatically go into pornographic sites. Now, they are smart and they will figure out a way around it at some point, but they don't have that pop-up stuff. If you want to access pornography, you need to be 18 years of age and your name needs to be on the account. If you're the account holder and you're 18 years of age, you just call your Internet provider and tell them that you want to opt in and you can access whatever it is you want to access. It's not perfect, but it works really well to keep it out of the hands of young children.

The one thing we spend so much of our time doing is trying to undo the culture in which we're living. To get to those conversations that we're talking about, there's a whole lot that needs to be undone and if that one thing was done, limiting the exposure of very young children to pornography, it would be hugely helpful.

•(1710)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: We all had touched on the culture of pornography and hypersexualization and it was refreshing to hear from the three of you. Sometimes we're being told that it's a way for women and young girls to show their sexuality and that it's okay, but we recognize that there can be end results that are life-changing for them as well. It's interesting that you're coming on the side that I sit on as well. Thank you very much. When it comes to the....

Ms. Lucille Harper: Can I just add one point to that though? Part of what's happening now with the trafficking and luring of girls is that it's primarily men who are watching this pornography, and if they don't have a partner who's willing to engage in some of these porn acts that they are seeing, they go out and hire girls to do them. These underage girls are being hired to do some of these quite violent, very degrading sexual acts that these guys have an appetite for because they've been watching pornography. We hear it from university students about what the girls are expected to do, and again, what they're expected to perform is highly influenced by....

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: It's interesting that you said that, because as I was doing my research for my speech last night, I came across Elizabeth Smart's story, where she is talking about pornography being her hell. It's interesting that you're saying that today, because it was exactly the case. The perpetrator was married—he's not normal in the first place—and she was fulfilling those pornographic things he needed for some reason.

It's interesting. Just last week I had a discussion with one of my constituents, Sue. We were talking about yelling at your children and how she said to her daughter one day that she had to stop yelling at her children. She yelled at her children, and that's why her daughter is yelling at her children. Do you think we could almost say it's the same? It's very different, but it's the same thing: what they see is what they do. If you're a parent who yells at your child, your most effective way of parenting is by yelling at your child. It's the same thing when it comes to violence. Do you think we can deal with it almost in the same way as learning how to parent our children? Yes, it can be very challenging, but when it comes to discussions with your children, it's so much easier to yell, and that's what we find.

That's the same idea when people get involved in violence against women and violence against mothers, for instance, and that will see young boys tend to...that will happen as well. Do you think that is a discussion that we can have? They're similar tracks. What are your thoughts on that, anyone?

Katie, go for it.

Ms. Katie Kitschke: I grew up in a very destructive, very abusive environment, and I chose not to do that with my own children. I think that if children grow up in an unhealthy environment, it could potentially lead to choosing unhealthy partners and being in unhealthy relationships. As parents I think we have to give our kids the best tools we can give, and realize that they will be capable of making their own choices as time goes on.

Going back to what Lucille was saying, we are talking about children as young as 12. We've dealt with children who are 10, who are sending naked pictures of themselves and performing oral sex at 10, which makes me so disgusted and horrified. I think the education has to start younger, with the parents. We have to instill in our

children, male or female, as young as possible, respect for themselves and for each other, so when you're 10, 12, 14 or 30, whatever, when somebody asks you to engage in sexual activity you're not comfortable doing, you have the confidence to say no, because you respect yourself and your body, and you expect them to do the same.

•(1715)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: All right.

The Chair: We're going to Ms. Malcolmson for seven minutes.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: We've been hearing some killer testimony from all the panellists and your work is in the same vein and is greatly appreciated. We are hearing things like domestic violence costing the Canadian economy \$12 billion a year, yet we don't seem to be resourcing getting at the solutions to that.

All three of your organizations have been around since the late seventies to early eighties, so you've seen the spread of time from the federal government side, both Liberal and Conservative funding models.

I'm hoping that you can talk more about the impact of the lack of secure, consistent funding for your front-line operations, not just the program funding where as previous witnesses said, you have to invent a new model, or something more innovative, or you have to show you're collaborating. We keep hearing groups say that they collaborate, that it's natural, but they can't manufacture it just for the sake of spending the time on the funding application, instead of spending time with the women on the six-month waiting list. We saw the funding for immigrant support organizations cut under the Conservatives. We saw shelter funding, operation funding, cut under the Chrétien government.

I'm hoping you can humanize for us the impact on your organization of having that bit of a roller-coaster of access to funding, and what it might mean to your clients and your survivors to be able to have the doors open when they need to be open.

Ms. Mélanie Sarroino: I'd like to speak to the waiting list. As I said, I get a lot of calls at my office. We have a list of all our member centres, and we can dispatch depending on where the women live. I know which of my centres have waiting lists. Most of them are in big centres like Montreal, Quebec City, or Sherbrooke. Most women that call me are from Montreal, and I'll be with them for an hour on the phone. I'm not a counsellor and I'm not trained to be one. I do more of the advocacy work. It's heartbreaking after an hour. The woman had been waiting for months and it took all her courage just to pick up the phone and call. I'm trying to send her to one of my centres, and I know very well that when she calls the centre, she'll get a message on the answering machine saying that they will call her back, but presently they have a six-month waiting list. You can guarantee that woman will never call back and will live with whatever she is going through for a very long time. That's the first impact.

It's been happening more and more because, like I said, in Quebec, it's been in the media a lot lately, so we're getting more and more calls. Right now, our provincial government is in an austerity mode, so they're not financing anything that's community-based. We haven't seen a rise in our funding for 10 years now, which is a huge problem.

Quebec is a huge province. In the whole north of Quebec where there are a lot of first nation communities, there are no services whatsoever. They get little bits and pieces here and there. Our native association would be better versed in telling you exactly what their situation is. I know that even for non-native women, there are no services in the north of Quebec.

In other regions, we have two workers that have about 1,000 kilometres to cover. They don't have the money for transportation to reach the communities that are out there. They don't have the money to be able to go into all the schools, as I mentioned, as much as they would like to.

When we are able to deploy our prevention program, our centres will be scared of being the victims of our success because it's going to be a stellar program; I can guarantee you that. They're terrified because they don't have the resources, and they're afraid that there's going to be too much demand and that they won't be able to go into all the schools. That means all those young people won't have access to those workshops. As we said, it works on their self-esteem. It works on being critical about the images and the messages they receive. It goes with all of that. If they don't have access to that kind of information....

Regarding the question that was asked before about the role of the parents, yes, parents should be role models, but unfortunately, not all parents are the same. Some have a lot of baggage. It's a lot of pressure to put on them and it's a lot to expect from all parents. We don't have the same backgrounds. Some of us had it harder than others. Ideally, parents would be role models. They would be in an equal relationship, where both parents have the same roles and the same respect, but unfortunately, that's not reality. Schools have a big role to play, and that's why we need more funding. It's so we don't have to tell those women that they have to be on a waiting list. It's also to help our youth to question the images and hypersexuality which they are bombarded with and which is in their faces every day.

• (1720)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: I just have a minute and a half left.

Ms. Lucille Harper: I'd like to speak to the rural issue around funding.

Sexual violence trauma therapy is a specialization. It requires particular skills, a particular knowledge set. It's a field in which there is more and more new learning all the time. In rural areas, mental health workers, by virtue of the fact that they need to respond to everybody, are generalists. They're not trained in doing that specialized sexual violence trauma work. When someone goes to mental health in our area, they're immediately referred to us if they identify sexual violence as part of the issue.

Nova Scotia is in hard economic times, but there's this idea that this is being done by others such as mental health, and it's not, at least not in Nova Scotia. The specialization that is concentrated in sexual assault centres across the country is invaluable. It's the difference between coping and healing. When someone is actually able to do healing work, they're able to move on with their lives and they're not in and out of centres, or in-patients, etc.

When all they can do is get the supports to be able to cope, that is a good thing. People need to be able to cope, but it means that they're cycling through the health system again and again. It's that specialized work that needs to be funded.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Unfortunately, we are at the end of the time. I want to thank all of our witnesses for their tremendous work and their great testimony to us today.

We mentioned the recommendations, but if there are other comments you're thinking of, I'd invite you to send those to the clerk.

We are going to continue with 10 minutes of committee business, but I need the unanimous consent of the committee to stay in the public realm. Do I have unanimous consent? Very good.

Ladies, if you don't want to stay, you don't have to stay for this part.

Members, basically, you got the subcommittee report where we discussed what we're going to study next, and I need a mover for that report.

It is moved by Ms. Damoff.

Is there any discussion about the report?

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: I have a question on this.

I like the study and I want to do it, but I want to do the domestic violence shelter funding study first.

I want to vote yes to this study, but I would like to take the clerk's suggestion that was floated during the subcommittee meeting that we might be able to do a short study in between the two studies, because the economic one is going to be long and extensive.

The Chair: Then the motion that was moved is to do the economic study first.

My suggestion would be that you vote against that and then bring the motion for the study that you would like to do.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: That is within the motion. Does it say "first" in the wording of the motion?

The Chair: Yes, the next study.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Okay, then I'm voting against it, although I love the subject area, and I kind of co-wrote the motion.

The Chair: That motion is passed.

(Motion agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Ms. Malcolmson, did you have another motion that you wanted to make?

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Yes. I would like to resurrect my motion from April. It was brought up again at the last meeting, Motion No. 10 on the list, which is:

That the Committee study the shelter and transition house system in Canada; that the study include an examination of the current gap between need and available beds in shelters and transition houses; that the study include an examination of current federal programs and funding in support of shelters and transition houses; that the study consider possible solutions to address the gap between need and supply; that the Committee report its findings to the House; that the Committee request a government response to its report.

• (1725)

The Chair: Is there a timing associated with your motion?

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: This study would be conducted between the current study and the economic study.

The Chair: The motion is on the table. Is there any discussion of the motion?

Ms. Vecchio.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Although I respect where you're coming from with this motion, I think it's such an important thing that it needs to actually be studied properly. Doing two or three sessions on it would not do it the justice it needs. At the same time, I know it's a little bit different because I thought this was more on housing, but it's more on shelters. It is something that Minister Duclos is currently reviewing under his housing strategy. There will be a housing report coming out on November 22, and even during my own consultations, those are things we also made sure we were looking at, because we need to look at more than just affordable housing. We need to look at the transitional housing and the shelters as well.

I think that we should also wait for that report. There may be more information in there as well.

The Chair: Ms. Harder.

Ms. Rachael Harder: I would share my colleague's sentiment, and I would suggest that perhaps it would be helpful to define the number of meetings that you would want this study to have to give us an idea with regard to what exactly we're voting for.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: The proposal that I had in mind was five meetings with the same kind of model that we've had on this past study, which is usually seeing four different groups within the course of a single meeting, so two and two.

I definitely recognize that this committee has a lot of other work that it wants to do, but also my understanding is that the study that HUMA is doing is not focused on domestic violence shelters. We could invite some of the several national shelter organizations. There are two ministries that are deeply involved: Infrastructure and Communities and Families, Children and Social Development. The YWCA Canada would be an example of an across-the-country body.

The witnesses that I scoped out with my staff were two ministries, four across-Canada network organizations, and then potentially, because it has been a focus around federal funding, maybe some of the indigenous organizations, Native Women's Association, Pauktuutit, or Women of the Métis Nation. I'm confident we would be able to do it within five meetings.

It might be able to inform the next budget cycle, and certainly, as some of my colleagues have suggested, if we weren't able to go into it in depth, or we found out after the next budget cycle that we needed to do more work, it's certainly an area that the committee could revisit.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Damoff.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I echo what Karen said. There's currently housing strategy consultation going on—not through the committee, but Minister Duclos is doing it—and I know that a number of my colleagues and I'm sure a number of yours as well have been ensuring that the shelter aspect, especially transitional housing, is included in that consultation. I think we've just voted to do the economic empowerment next, so we would basically be overturning that motion and saying we're not going to do that next.

It's a really important issue and I don't think that we shouldn't look at it. It actually falls under Minister Duclos' mandate with support from Status of Women, so I think we should let that process flow through and then see where we are once that's come out and where we are with this study. Then we can revisit it if we need to.

The Chair: Is there any further discussion on the motion?

(Motion negated)

The Chair: Is there any other committee business?

Go ahead, Ms. Harder.

Ms. Rachael Harder: I put forward a motion with regard to a study, and I've been advised that instead of having an entirely new study, we should just add it to our present study. It was with regard to particular online and social media applications, specifically algorithms.

That topic came up in a lot of our discussions when we were studying cyber-violence, so I'm wondering if the committee would find it suitable to add three meetings to this present study to look specifically at the use of algorithms within social media and media contexts.

I can read the motion to you, but honestly, that's much more concise.

• (1730)

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Damoff.

Ms. Pam Damoff: You're absolutely right, and we all agree that algorithms came up in particular with.... It's a concept that I don't totally understand, but it certainly is an important one.

The question I have for our analysts is in terms of timing. I know you were hoping to get some direction and take this off in January. Maybe we don't need three meetings. It could be that we need two or.... Do we have time in there to include this portion?

The Chair: There are three meetings.

The analyst wants to say something.

Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard (Committee Researcher): Just to clarify, we've been requested to provide a summary of evidence before the break. If you were to add this, the new information would mean that it would not be possible to get that translated in time. What we could do then is either provide a summary of evidence after the break or skip the summary of evidence and just go straight to the draft report. That would mean, though, that you would be giving your guidance for the report without any real documentation in front of you. However, you've all listened to most of the testimony, so we could do that step instead.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Fraser.

Mr. Sean Fraser: I would find the summary of evidence very helpful. This has been a massive study, and I don't want to lose it.

Rachael, do you have an idea of which witnesses or how many witnesses we would need? Also, would even adding one meeting skewer the possibility that we're going to get a summary of evidence before the break?

Maybe Rachael could go first, and then we could come back to our analyst.

Ms. Rachael Harder: I did a little preliminary research on witnesses we might want to call to the table, which is why I framed it as three meetings. Could we cut back? Sure. Maybe together we could decide what is most pertinent.

I'll give you some of my suggestions. Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada could be one. The CRTC is definitely one that we want to hear from. We may want to hear from Internet service providers, but it would be more important, I would say, to hear from Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, BuzzFeed, Google, and so on, because they are the ones implementing these algorithms that many would argue are facilitating violence against women.

Then there's a member of Parliament in France and another one in Israel who have passed bills that relate but are not exactly the same, so I would be willing to give them up. They passed bills with regard

to putting a minimum BMI on the weight of models, in other words, in relation to media images of girls. I'd be willing to give those up, because they don't exactly relate. Then there's also the director of the Children's Digital Media Center who could also be helpful to hear from.

Mr. Sean Fraser: This may inform your answer, but is it possible to get a summary of the evidence for everything except for this piece before the break? Is that something the committee would entertain?

Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard: If you look at the parliamentary calendar, you see at this point we've committed to getting a summary of evidence to you to look at before the meeting on December 5, and on December 5 to get your guidance for the study. We could try pushing it to December 7. We'll still be sitting at that point, and that would give room for one additional meeting if we wanted to try to cram witnesses in. The other challenge, of course, is getting the witnesses on short notice.

You could get the summary of evidence without those portions, and then that portion could be added to the report at the end, of course.

The Chair: Mr. Serré.

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): This is very important, and I'd be concerned about having just two or three meetings. We already tried with Facebook earlier, and they said no. They don't want to be a witness, so that's something we'll have to address.

• (1735)

The Chair: We can entice them with cookies.

Mr. Marc Serré: No, there's a reason they don't want to come.

I'm torn because it is so important, but having just two or three sessions, and probably a further recommendation after, I guess we could do that, but we have to really select the witnesses so that we are concise on what we want the outcome to be. This is the first of other steps, so I would like to make sure that we think about the witnesses we're going to bring in who will be a complement to the study we've done now, and then other witnesses would be something we would do later on.

We need to look at this in a broader perspective if we want to change the laws, if we want to change the ISPs, and we can't just bring in one ISP. It's not going to work. It's going to be a study that's going to have no...but it could be phase one of others.

The Chair: Ms. Damoff.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Some of it Marc has already touched on. When we invited Facebook, they said no, and they're not going to change and they are Instagram, so it's the same company. Twitter has already been asked to appear, and are coming, so we can certainly ask them about that when they're here.

Personally, I would prefer to hear from people who actually can explain algorithms and how they work and what they are and what the federal government can do, if anything, around that as opposed to the people who are running these sites.

If there are experts out there—and I can't tell you right now who they are—who can explain what it is, and if there's anything a federal government can even do to regulate it... We could very well find out that there isn't.

I don't know, but I think as opposed to bringing in all the people who are providing, like Instagram and BuzzFeed, I would much rather have some experts come in, whether that's in a department—I'm not sure that it is—or whether it's academics, but someone in the country who can speak to that and give us some guidance. I think that would cover what we're looking for, which is how we deal with these algorithms and what we can do to rein it in.

The Chair: Ms. Harder.

Ms. Rachael Harder: That's an excellent point, and certainly, I would be happy to go in that direction with our witness list.

I have one recommendation. Within our government at the federal level, there's a spectrum, information technologies and telecommunications division. I have a contact person there who I think we could bring forward to talk a bit about that, but we definitely could apply our energies and find further witnesses, experts, in that area. Yes, I certainly would agree.

The Chair: Ms. Malcolmson.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: My interest is also in making sure that we are able to wrap this study up in time, that we do get a summary of evidence, and that we give the analyst the full month of January to do the report writing. I think at the subcommittee level we already discussed extending the study in order to add Twitter, because they had said no, and then they said yes. We created some extra room already. I think we were also going to give them the question that Ms. Harder had proposed so that they were ready, or maybe we're recommending that Ms. Harder feed directly to them to give them advance notice of the depth of questions that she'd be asking.

To me, if it's possible to add another day of testimony, and especially if we can get someone who can talk from a layperson's perspective about what this means and whether it is regulatable by the federal government, then I would support that, but not if it throws off the ultimate goal of making sure we protect time for the analyst to do work while Parliament is not in session.

The Chair: Are you then proposing to amend the motion to just one session extra to talk to algorithms?

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: That is just what I'm proposing.

The Chair: I thought so.

Is there any discussion on that amendment?

Ms. Damoff.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Very quickly, if out of that day it turns out that we need more, that can certainly be one of our recommendations, that the committee look at that particular issue, or that the committee ask whatever the other committee is to do it. There are committees looking now at cybersecurity. The public safety committee is looking at the national security framework. Maybe it's something that we recommend someone else take on as well. I think it would give us the overview. If it turns out that it's much bigger, we can recommend that it be studied further in depth.

The Chair: Mr. Fraser.

Mr. Sean Fraser: No comment.

The Chair: On the amendment, then, the amendment is to add one session to talk about algorithms.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: We'll go back to the motion. This means the motion is amended to be just the one extra session to study algorithms as part of this existing study on violence against women.

(Motion as amended agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Mr. Fraser.

• (1740)

Mr. Sean Fraser: Madam Chair, in terms of identifying the witnesses to come to this one extra session, I think Ms. Harder has a head start. Is the steering committee going to be getting together before that meeting?

The Chair: My suggestion is that if there are witnesses you want to call, you submit their names to the clerk. The clerk, seeing those, perhaps will schedule a session with the subcommittee. We could look at the witness list briefly.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: I just connected with my friend who works for DND and is an IT specialist to ask who we would go to for algorithms, so I will give you whatever I can find out.

The Chair: Forward that to the clerk, if you will, and then the subcommittee....

Can you send those ideas for the witnesses for algorithms to the clerk by Friday?

Some hon. members: Yes.

The Chair: That's excellent.

I have a reminder for you that the subcommittee report we approved today says that you're going to think about witnesses for the economic study and also send those in, and there's a timeline. You can look to that.

Mr. Sean Fraser: By Friday?

The Chair: That one's not for Friday. That one's for the 21st.

Have a wonderful night. Thanks for staying late.

The meeting is adjourned.

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