



(The electronic version is available for download under Social Justice Publications at bctf.ca.)

Spotlight on Women's Issues

December 2020

As we approach December 6th, the 31-year anniversary of the massacre at École Polytechnique in Montréal, we are reminded that women continue to be vulnerable to discrimination and violence in every corner of life in Canada. The number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls has reached a crisis point; Black, Indigenous, and Women of Colour face disproportionate challenges in accessing the hard-won gains for women's rights, and too often trans women still must fight for inclusion and recognition.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to build momentum, structural inequities have been starkly exposed in the health care, social protection, and economic security of women. While the focus shifts to the broader societal emergency, regression in measures to rectify longstanding inequities is not just a looming threat but an unfolding reality.

Women's unpaid care work has long been recognized as a driver of inequality, with direct links to inequities in hourly wages, yearly incomes, and physical and mental health stressors. Before the pandemic, women provided nearly three times more unpaid care and domestic work than men. Since the pandemic, existing gender norms have put the increased demand for childcare and domestic work on women.

Violence against women, especially intimate partner violence, has intensified under the pandemic. Because of — not in spite of — COVID-19, commitment to the principles of equity, fairness, and safety for all women are paramount.

Explore this edition of *Seeds of Social Justice*, as well as the [Status of Women webpages](#) for resources, lesson plans, and workshops to support teachers in this important work.

- Trish Mugford, Status of Women Action Group,
Committee for Action on Social Justice

BCTF Social Justice Program Calendar of Events



December

From **December 1 to 10**, the last ten days of the [16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence](#), explore activities in the [What You Can Do](#) resource.

On **December 1**, [World AIDS Day](#), explore 2020 [resources](#) for this year's theme, *Global Solidarity, Shared Responsibility*.

On **December 2**, the [International Day for the Abolition of Slavery](#), visit the Canadian Human Rights Museum webpage, [The Story of Slavery in Canadian History](#).

This year's theme for the [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#), on **December 3**, is *Building Back Better: Toward a Disability-Inclusive, Accessible and Sustainable Post-COVID-19 World*. Visit the BCTF [Disability Justice webpages](#) for resources, lesson plans, and workshops.

December 6 is the [National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women](#). Lesson plans, teaching resources, and information on support services are available on the [BCTF Gender-Based Violence webpages](#).

The theme for [Human Rights Day](#), **December 10**, is *Recover Better: Stand Up for Human Rights*. Visit [Recover Better](#) for a variety of resources to use in your classroom.

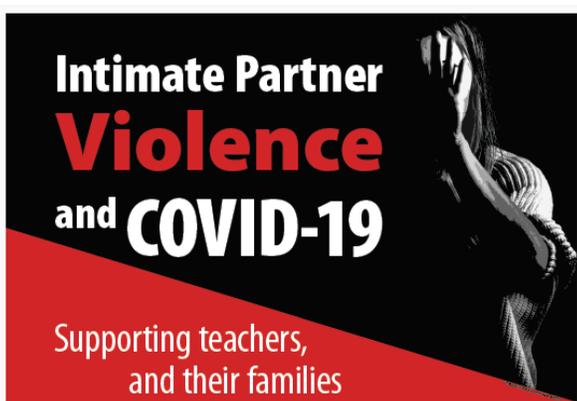
On **December 18**, celebrate [International Migrants' Day](#) by exploring [Nasrin's Journey zine](#) and lesson plans.



Resources



Status of Women



Isolation and increased stress stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and associated social distancing measures have contributed to a heightened incidence of intimate partner violence. During the pandemic, teachers may be one of the few consistent contacts for students and their families. This resource provides information on accessing supports to respond to intimate partner violence.

Find additional resources, including the *16 Days of Action* [poster](#) and [BCTF Statement on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women poster](#), on the [BCTF Status of Women webpage](#).

To request hard copies of posters, pamphlets, and stickers, fill out the [Social Justice Resource Order Form](#) on the BCTF member portal.



[Engaging Men and Boys to Prevent Gender-Based Violence](#)

Workshop participants will deepen their understanding of how socialization contributes to the development of oppressive attitudes and behaviours based on gender. Teachers will begin by examining the varying degrees of violence against women. After considering the concepts of gender identity, power, and privilege, participants will reflect on their own values related to these topics and begin to develop a plan to uphold them.

Teachers will leave the workshop equipped with a deeper understanding of the role men and boys can play in overcoming violence, along with an enhanced commitment to taking on this role.

Visit the BCTF [Social Justice Workshops webpage](#) to book this or other Status of Women workshops, including [Promoting Healthy Youth Relationships](#), [Sexual Health Education: It's fun!](#), [Assertive Communication](#), and [In the shoes of the bully, the bystander, and the victim](#).

Equity and Inclusion



Status of Women



BCTF members have a long history of organizing for equity for women. The AGM and Representative Assembly (RA) women's caucuses, the Women in Negotiations cadre, and the annual Women's Institute are examples of member-driven and Federation led initiatives whose goals are to raise women's voices and improve their access to leadership roles within the BCTF and locals.

African American scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term [intersectionality](#) to describe how different aspects of our identities, such as race, gender identity, physical ability, and sexual orientation, compound themselves to influence our experience of oppression. If we consider this notion of intersectionality along with poet [Maya Angelou](#)'s words, "No one of us can be free until everybody is free," it becomes difficult to ignore the urgency of addressing the additional barriers women who identify as BIPOC, LGBTQ2S+, people with disabilities, or members of other equity-seeking groups face in our schools, communities, and local and provincial unions.

The BCTF has been working hard over the past several years to improve equity and inclusion. The BCTF RA Task Force has been meeting this fall to develop recommendations for strategies to transform policies and structures to make the RA more inclusive for members of equity seeking groups. In addition, delegates to the Spring 2020 RA approved funding for several initiatives to support locals in advancing equity and inclusion. This [document](#) summarizes the funds that can be used to support your local in working towards this goal.

Opportunities for Members



We are accepting applications for **Social Justice Workshops facilitators**. The BCTF will provide release time to allow facilitators to co-deliver virtual workshops on antiracism and equity and inclusion to BCTF members. The Federation will provide training in virtual workshop facilitation skills as well as the workshop content. Training in additional social justice workshops will be provided later. More information is available at this [link](#). **The application deadline is December 4, 2020.**

Do you have a social justice issue or classroom activity you would like to share with BC teachers? The BCTF is currently accepting articles for the **Winter/Spring 2020 Social Justice Newsletter**. For more information, see the [Social Justice Newsletter Submission Guidelines](#) document on the [Social Justice Newsletter webpage](#).

Grants



Awards



Funds are still available for **Equity and Inclusion Grants**. The Federation will provide up to 10 grants of \$6,000 to support locals in conducting an audit of local processes and practices and developing plans for greater equity and inclusion in the engagement, leadership, and work of the local. We encourage locals using this grant to begin by booking the SURT, [Building a stronger union through a local equity audit](#).

Do you know a teacher who has made an outstanding, sustained contribution toward social justice within the BCTF, local teachers' association, school, and community? Consider nominating them for a [Bob Rosen Social Justice Award](#). The award winner will be honoured at the BCTF AGM. **The deadline to submit nomination forms is January 31, 2021.** Read about past award winners [here](#).

To learn about these and additional BCTF Social Justice Grants and awards, including the [Ed May Social Responsibility Fund](#), [Local Social Justice Grant](#), [Provincial Social Justice Initiatives Grants](#), and [Regional Social Justice Conference Fund](#), visit the [Grants and Funds page](#) on the BCTF Social Justice web pages.

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