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Innovations in Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Trauma- and Violence-Informed Health Promotion An National Conference October 1–2, 2025

Conference Report

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Knowledge Hub:

The Knowledge Hub is a project of the Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children, Western University. www.kh-cdc.ca

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KH Presents Conference

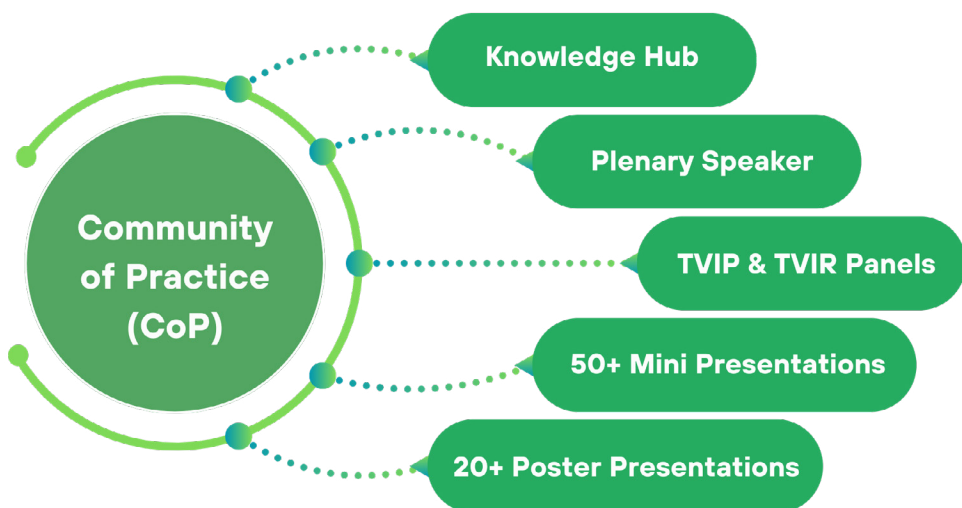
More than 370 people attended the Knowledge Hub (KH) Presents Conference: Innovations in Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Trauma- and Violence-Informed Health Promotion, held in Toronto on October 1–2, 2025.

Practitioners in the gender-based violence (GBV) and health sectors, researchers, policymakers, and students came together to share and learn from innovative programs and research in trauma- and violence-informed health promotion across Canada.

Shaping Canada's Future GBV and Health Promotion Practice

The KH Presents Conference delivered a comprehensive two-day agenda featuring nearly 80 GBV and health promotion presentations, including speaker and project spotlights, interactive workshops, creative sessions, panel discussions, and structured networking opportunities, each designed to advance collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Presentations reflected the breadth of the sector, with contributions from members of the Public Health Agency of Canada–funded Community of Practice (CoP), mini-presentations from subject matter experts, and poster presentations highlighting student-led research and emerging practices. Collectively, the knowledge shared throughout the conference contributes to informing and strengthening future GBV and health promotion practice in Canada.



Opening and Closing Ceremonies

Alice Echaquan and Thérèse Niquay opened and closed the conference with traditional ceremonies and reflections. The KH Team welcomed participants and introduced the conference agenda, while Anna Ferdinand energized attendees through trauma-informed movement sessions.



97%

agreed that the conference was relevant to their professional work or personal interests



92%

agreed that the conference enhanced their knowledge of trauma- and violence-informed practice and/or research



The Knowledge Hub and Community of Practice

The Knowledge Hub (KH) at the Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children (CREVAWC) facilitates a trauma- and violence-informed Community of Practice (CoP) conducting projects funded through the Public Health Agency of Canada's "Preventing and Addressing Family Violence: The Public Health Perspective" investment. CoP projects focus on intervention programming and research for individuals and families affected by family violence.

The conference featured more than 30 CoP member presentations highlighting learnings from three- and four-year projects engaging individuals and families impacted by family violence. Projects addressed all stages of the lifespan using relevant tools and approaches, including:

- Arts-based interventions for healing and empowerment
- Trauma- and violence-informed parenting and family programming
- Trauma- and violence-informed health promotion
- Collaborative and intersectional strategies addressing intimate partner violence
- Research and programs addressing traumatic brain injuries and systemic inequities
- Digital and virtual innovations
- Interventions promoting healthy relationships and preventing violence



KH Presents Plenary:

Trauma- and Violence-Informed Approaches to Support Survivors of Gender-Based Violence

The KH Presents plenary, led by Dr. Nadine Wathen, wove together the voices of practitioners and researchers who work with survivors and those affected by violence, alongside emerging practices, and the systems supporting this work. Together, these insights highlighted both the current state of trauma- and violence-informed care (TVIC) and its growing potential across the GBV sector.

The GBV sector must continue to evolve its understanding of and approaches to care for clients and communities with diverse experiences and backgrounds, including understanding the use of violence across different types of relationships. Realigning from a trauma-informed to a trauma- and violence-informed framework shifts the lens: focusing on the “V” in TVIC not only highlights the harms of interpersonal violence but also the broader impacts of structural, systemic, and stigmatizing forms of violence that shape health and care experiences. Issues surrounding substance use, mental health, and stigma or discrimination often present the most persistent challenges in practice.

Dr. Wathen emphasized the importance of recognizing cultural safety and substance use health as integral components of care and advocated for embedding TVIC and equity-oriented approaches as core practices across the GBV service sector.

Effectiveness

Interventions (to support survivors or prevent men from using violence) are only effective when they incorporate an understanding of structural and root causes.

Equity

The ‘big V’ brings focus to issues of systemic violence, including the “-isms” and stigmas that make it hard for marginalized people and groups to get good care and find better paths.

Empathy, Safety, & Respect

TVIC asks organizations to ensure that their staff and clients are safe and well, including creating spaces and processes that foster welcome, respect, and trust.



“

Trauma is the experience of, and response to, a negative event(s) that threatens a person's safety, life, or integrity, and overwhelms their ability to cope. What trauma 'looks like' will differ between and within people and groups.

– Dr. Nadine Wathen, Plenary Speaker

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TVIR & TVIP Panels

Community of Practice panels reflected on their experiences with trauma- and violence-informed care (TVIC) principles in research (TVIR) and practice (TVIP) .

Panelists emphasized approaches rooted in an understanding of the pervasiveness of trauma and diversity of contexts in achieving TVIC goals of safety and empowerment.

Key considerations included:

- Building relationships, trust, flexibility, and safety into research and practice
- Bridging gaps with ethics committees to integrate TVIC principles into research reviews
- Recognizing participants' right to tell their stories and educate others
- Embedding equity at all levels of program and research design

Advancing trauma- and violence-informed approaches as standard practice requires critical reflection, cultural relativity, co-development, peer-based support, and flexibility across all levels of engagement.



Mini Presentations & Poster Session

More than 50 mini-presentations from experts, service providers, advocates, and changemakers across Canada highlighted work at the intersection of violence, justice, equity, and innovation, addressing urgent issues affecting individuals, families, and communities.

Topics included justice, housing, Indigenous and racialized perspectives, LGBTQ+ inclusion, youth relationships, parenting, elder abuse, coercive control, trafficking, child welfare, programming innovations, substance use, rural responses, digital innovation, military families, ethics in medically assisted death, animal safety in shelter services, and best practices in training and frontline response.

The poster session engaged students and organizations in sharing research and practice innovations in a lively, creative, and collaborative environment.



Knowledge Mobilization and Collaboration

The conference provided many opportunities to explore how trauma- and violence-informed approaches are being implemented across diverse communities, sectors, and populations. Participants personalized their experience by selecting sessions and topics most relevant to their work.

Simultaneous English and French interpretation was provided in the main presentation room.

“Very respectful and safe place. I enjoyed the French inclusion rather than just lip service that we are a bilingual country. It was truly inclusive of our French and Indigenous heritage.”

[CoP project stories](#) showcased four years of learning and innovation, promoting sustainable components such as online tools, training resources, and service provider supports. A KH Presents Conference [LinkedIn](#) series amplified project resources and outcomes, creating additional opportunities for learning and connection.

[Mini Presentations](#) highlighted the ecosystems in which interventions exist, reflecting both historical and

contemporary perspectives; from A Living History: How the Experiences of Early Activists Shaped the Violence Against Women Movement in Ontario (2019) to Decolonizing GBV Work – Aanji Bimaadiziwin (A Changed Life) and Akinoo’amaadiwaad ji nookidiziyang (“they who come together with/on the land to teach each other a gentle life”).

Presentation video recordings and PowerPoint slides will be available on the [Knowledge Hub website](#) in English and French.

“

Enjoyed all sessions and the opportunity to hear about cutting-edge research and resources available.

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Moving Forward

The Knowledge Hub Presents Conference strengthened the capacity of GBV interventions and health practice across Canada. It fostered solidarity, new learning, and collaboration that will continue to improve outcomes for survivors, service providers, researchers, and policymakers, collectively advancing the goal of preventing and ending GBV in Canada.

We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who participated in the conference, and a special thanks to all the speakers and presenters who shared their expertise and insights.

As we carry these learnings forward, we remain inspired and motivated to continue advancing collaboration, innovation, and inclusion to improve health outcomes for individuals and families across Canada.

The diversity of sessions was great! It was nice to have the opportunity to meet people from around the country and learn about what they were doing.

Resources

CREVAWC : [Training and Certificate](#)

Staff Well-Being

- Provider: <https://equiphealthcare.ca/resources/trauma-and-violence-informed-care/staff-well-being>
- Organizational: <https://equiphealthcare.ca/resources/rate-your-organization-discussion-tools/rate-your-organization-strategies-for-organizations-to-support-staff-well-being>

Equip Health Care, Equipping Health and Social Services for Equity

- Browne et al.(2018). [Int J for Equity in Health.](#)

Safe not soft: trauma- and violence-informed practice with perpetrators as a means of increasing safety (Scott, K. L., & Jenney, A. (2022). *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 32(7–8). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2022.2052389>)

Trauma responses: A complex interaction of genetic, biological and social factors



Implementing Trauma- and Violence-Informed Care – A Handbook

