



News Release

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Representative for Children and Youth renews calls to provincial government to address gender-based violence made in recent ground-breaking report

Victoria, B.C. - The Representative for Children and Youth is renewing her call for the provincial government to prioritize an “all-in” approach to addressing violence as a worldwide campaign, 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-based Violence, draws to a close.

“I am deeply concerned about the profound and lasting impacts that this kind of violence is having on our young people,” said Representative Jennifer Charlesworth. “I am concerned that as we continue to grapple with this issue, we are missing the point that young people who observe violence, are more than witnessing it. They are in fact also experiencing violence and its impacts.”

Charlesworth’s report *Don’t Look Away*, released this past July, highlights several systemic child well-being issues that according to the Representative require both urgent short-term action and larger transformational change. In highlighting the stories of a number of young people, Charlesworth says violence is the most troubling and pervasive experience that these children and youth share.

“The common theme of violence that we see as we review the circumstances of young people who are either critically injured or pass away while receiving government services is frankly staggering,” said Charlesworth adding that almost 60 percent of the young people that her office learns of have experienced some form of violence.

Charlesworth’s report highlights several repeated system-wide shortcomings including fear and secrecy which leads to a lack of reporting of incidents, a lack of adequate assessment and follow-up, a lack of support for male perpetrators to break the cycle of violence, a normalization of violence and a lack of understanding of the impact of intergenerational trauma and violence on the well-being of young people.

“It’s time for us to collectively work together to recognize that we need to do more not just for the adults being impacted by gender-based violence, but also to recognize that our young people are being seriously harmed as well,” said Charlesworth. The report points to a number of these harms which include short and longer term developmental and psychological impacts, as well as the loss of parents through domestic homicide.

In the report, the Representative makes a number of recommendations aimed at government, which she is now renewing including:

- Revising the provincial government’s Gender Based Action Plan to include a specific focus on the profound impact of violence on children and youth. Planning must also include dedicated resources for culturally relevant victim’s services for children and youth.
- Developing a provincial inventory of family violence resources.
- Updating and strengthening existing Ministry of Children and Family Development policies and practices to recognize children who witness intimate partner and/or family violence are also suffering its impacts and must be adequately supported.

The full *Don’t Look Away* report, along with a summary report and recommendations can be found on the RCY website: [Don’t Look Away - How one boy's story has the power to shift a system of care for children and youth | Office of the Representative for Children and Youth - RCYBC](#)

Learn more about the 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based violence: [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence | UN Women – Headquarters](#)

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