

CHALLENGING **GENDERED** DIGITAL HARM

Research Report on Impacts and Solutions to
Digital Harm Facing Women, Gender-Diverse People,
and Gender Equality Organizations



CANADIAN
WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION

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Challenging Gendered Digital Harm

Research Report on Impacts and Solutions to Digital Harm Facing Women, Gender-Diverse People, and Gender Equality Organizations

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About The Canadian Women's Foundation

The Canadian Women's Foundation is Canada's public foundation for gender justice and equality. The Foundation builds a gender equal Canada by transforming lives with programs that help women, girls, and gender-diverse people move out of violence, out of poverty, and into confidence and leadership; improving communities by strengthening the organizations and the groups that help those who need it most; and changing systems by challenging biases, building awareness, and advocating for policies and practices that make life better for everyone impacted by gender injustice.

This publication was created as part of the Canadian Women's Foundation **Challenging Gendered Digital Harm Project**. The Project filled intersectional research gaps on gendered digital harm; developed an online curriculum to build skills, knowledge, and provide resources to engage safely in digital spaces and help end gender-based digital harm; and convened civil society and decision makers to work together to create safer digital spaces for all.

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[Deplatforming Misogyny: Report on Platform Liability for Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence](#) (Khoo, C., 2021) was an invaluable resource throughout this project:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Canadian Women's Foundation aimed to understand how women and gender-diverse people in Canada experience digital harm, especially underserved communities. The purpose was to identify the impacts of gendered digital harm and recommend solutions to create safer digital spaces and promote systemic change. This research also explored public perceptions, and gaps in resources to support survivors and organizations facing digital harm.

Key Findings

Digital Harm is Widespread:

- 61% of women and gender-diverse people in Canada have experienced gendered digital harm, compared to 53% of the general population.
- Over 70% of gendered digital harm incidents have occurred within the past three years, showing an alarming trend.

Underserved Groups Face Greater Harm:

- Black, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, youth (18-25), and people with disabilities are targeted most frequently.
 - + Indigenous women and gender-diverse people identified their Indigenous identity as a top reason for being targeted.
 - + Black women often face harassment linked to their race, gender, and skin tone.
 - + Women and gender-diverse people with disabilities were twice as likely to have misleading information posted about them.

Common Types of Digital Harm:

- Harassment (unwanted contact), hate speech, sharing of unwanted sexual images, stalking, and unauthorized access to accounts are most frequently reported.
- 55% of perpetrators were identified as men and in 23% of cases, the survivors didn't know the gender.

Severe Psychological and Emotional Impacts:

- 43% of survivors reported serious impacts on mental health, including stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Women and gender-diverse people who are Black, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, or have disabilities face higher rates of trauma and isolation.
- Youth (18-25) and underserved groups are twice as likely to think about or engage in self-harm or suicidal behaviors due to digital harm.

Silencing and Disengagement:

- Over 50% of women and gender-diverse people reported reducing their online presence or self-censoring to avoid harassment.
- Many survivors leave platforms altogether, particularly in conversations about gender, race, or social justice issues.

Gender Equality Organizations Under Pressure:

- 88% of gender equality organizations surveyed reported experiencing digital threats, including hacking, doxxing, and harassment.
- 82% of organizations focus on addressing gender-based violence but over 60% lack resources to address gendered digital harm.
- More than half reported that their employees or volunteers have been directly targeted, impacting their safety and ability to carry out their work.

Platform and Legal Gaps:

- 48% of women and gender-diverse people experienced digital harm on social media. However, reporting harmful content often results in little or no action.
- Law enforcement is seen as ineffective by 60% of racialized women and gender-diverse people.
- 71% of women and gender-diverse people believe social media spaces should be treated as public spaces, requiring stronger protections and accountability.

Recommendations

Gendered digital harm affects the majority of people in Canada. Addressing gendered digital harm requires cross-cutting priorities:

Public Accountability:

Recognize that 70% of Canadians see addressing gendered digital harm as a shared responsibility and want to see collaboration across government agencies, education institutions, healthcare, technology companies, community groups, and non-profit organizations to better address gendered digital harm.

Mental Health and Safety:

Prioritize resources and interventions that address the profound mental health impacts of gendered digital harm, particularly for Black women, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, people with disabilities, and other people with intersecting marginalized identities, who report significant impacts on their mental health when targeted by digital harm.

Intersectional Focus:

Develop targeted interventions that reflect the diverse experiences of gendered digital harm, from linguistic differences to racialized, transphobic, and sexualized harassment.

Increased Resources:

Government and private companies should provide increased funding and human resources to support efforts to address gendered digital harm.

Ultimately, we are calling for increased gendered digital safety in Canada, and a safer digital public sphere for all.

Digital harm is a serious issue that affects women, girls, and gender-diverse people across Canada, particularly those with intersecting marginalized identities. It limits their safety, mental health, and ability to engage fully online. Collaborative action and accountability from governments, technology companies, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, and communities are essential to meaningfully address gendered digital harm and make digital spaces safer for everyone.

“

[Feeling safe] would mean completely being able to be yourself, to post about your feelings, to talk about political views without people threatening you. Basically, just being able to speak as if you were in a coffee shop with a friend and not have to feel that you were in danger because of what you've posted.”

– Woman with a visible disability

Help End Gender-Based Digital Harm



For more information:

canadianwomen.org/help-end-gender-based-digital-harm

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“

I have a lazy eye and people used to make fun of me [in real life] for years. So, a lot of that is what actually led me to hiding myself [online].”

– Woman with a visible disability.

BACKGROUND

The Canadian Women's Foundation is Canada's public foundation for gender justice and equality. The Foundation builds a gender equal Canada by transforming lives with programs that help women, girls, and gender-diverse people move out of violence, out of poverty, and into confidence and leadership; improving communities by strengthening the organizations and the groups that help those who need it most; and changing systems by challenging biases, building awareness, and advocating for policies and practices that make life better for everyone impacted by gender injustice.

Challenging Gendered Digital Harm Project Overview

Digital harm refers to any form of psychological, emotional, physical, social, or financial harm inflicted through digital technologies and online platforms. This includes but is not limited to cyberbullying, harassment, doxing (exposing personal information), hacking, non-consensual image sharing, phishing, trolling, identity theft, hate speech, stalking, and exploitation. Digital harm often impacts individuals' sense of safety, privacy, and well-being and can occur on social media platforms, gaming spaces, messaging services, or other online environments.

Gendered digital harm is a specific type of digital harm that disproportionately targets individuals based on their gender and other intersecting aspects of their identity. It often involves harassment, abuse, or exploitation rooted in sexism, misogyny, or other gender-based discrimination. Examples include sexualized threats, image-based abuse (e.g., revenge porn or deepfakes), stalking, and online hate speech targeting women, girls, Two-Spirit, trans, non-binary people, and other gender-diverse people. Underserved groups, such as Black, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+ people and people with disabilities, often experience more severe and compounding forms of gendered digital harm.

“

My fear escalated... I didn't want to leave my house. I didn't want to be in the office in case they showed up there. You know, I didn't want to be hanging out doing social events with my friends.”

– Woman with an invisible disability

This type of harm perpetuates gender inequalities, silences voices in online spaces, and limits the digital participation of those targeted. Addressing gendered digital harm requires an intersectional approach to understand and mitigate the compounded effects of sexism, misogyny, and other forms of systemic discrimination.

The Foundation wanted to better understand how and why women and gender-diverse people in Canada experience digital harm in order to develop practical e-learning resources and promote systemic change. This research report is part of a larger project funded by Canadian Heritage that addresses technology-facilitated violence, hate, and harassment targeting diverse women, girls, and gender-diverse people. This project aims to:

- **Close research gaps** by studying digital harm and gendered digital harm, including its impact on underserved groups and gender equality organizations.
- **Provide practical tools** to:
 - + Help targeted people stay safer online,
 - + Equip frontline workers, advocacy groups and all gender equality organizations to address digital harm they face, and better support survivors of gendered digital harm,

- + Improve the digital media literacy of people in Canada to recognize harmful content, engage safely in digital spaces, and help end gendered digital harm.

- **Promote systemic change** by bringing together policymakers, technology leaders, researchers, advocacy groups, and people with lived experience to mobilize knowledge and solutions.

Our research focus areas include:

Experiences of Digital Harm

Underserved women and gender-diverse people—such as Black, Indigenous, racialized people, people with disabilities, 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, and youth—face disproportionate digital harm. This research studies their unique experiences, which are often overlooked.

Public Digital Discourse

Gendered digital harm silences women and gender-diverse people online, reducing their voices in digital spaces. This impacts public discussions on gender equality and increases tolerance of harmful ideologies like sexism and misogyny. This research explores what people in Canada think and know about digital harm and gendered digital harm.

Policies and Interventions

Many platforms and legal systems fail to meet the needs of those harmed online. This research explores effective policies, practices, and interventions to better support survivors of gendered digital harm.

Gender Equality Organizations

Non-profit organizations and community groups face direct digital attacks and lack the resources to address them effectively. This research identifies challenges, strategies, and resource needs for gender equality organizations/groups to address online harm directly and to better support the communities they serve who also face online harm.

Understanding Gendered Digital Harm

Gendered digital harm is a growing issue in Canada, disproportionately targeting women, girls, Two-Spirit, trans, and non-binary people, particularly those with intersecting identities such as Black, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, immigrants, religious minorities, and people with disabilities (Cahill et al., 2024; Canadian Women's Foundation, 2019; Khoo, 2021; UN Women, 2023). These individuals often face digital harm tied to their identities—sexist or sexualized harm against women and gender-diverse people, racist harm against racialized individuals, and discrimination targeting immigrants, among others. People with intersecting marginalized identities experience a combination of these harms.

Forms of gendered digital harm include doxing, hate speech, threats, trolling, voyeurism, impersonation, stalking, sextortion, and harm involving non-consensual images or deepfakes (Khoo, 2021). Social media platforms like X, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are hotspots for such harm, which is often hidden in content like memes (Matamoros-Fernández & Farkas, 2021). Online gaming spaces also amplify racialized sexism, especially for women of color, who face harassment for not conforming to the “white male norm” (Gray, 2011; Brisson-Boivin, 2019).

Research highlights that underserved groups are at higher risk:

- Indigenous, Black, and 2SLGBTQIA+ women and people with disabilities are the most frequent targets of online harm (YWCA Canada, 2024).
- Young people with disabilities are nearly three times more likely to experience cyber harm than their peers without disabilities (Statistics Canada, 2024b).
- Black people, 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, and Jewish people most commonly experience cyber-related harm (Statistics Canada, 2024b).

Institutional barriers worsen these harms, including gaps in legal protections, insufficient culturally specific victim services, and weak content moderation on digital platforms (UN Women, 2023). Online cultures increasingly normalize discriminatory harm, leaving survivors with few options for protection or support.

To better understand these issues, an intersectional feminist lens is essential. Intersectionality, a concept developed by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, examines how overlapping systems of oppression like racism, ableism, and transphobia intersect with factors like gender, race, and class to create unique experiences of harm (Crenshaw, 2013). For example, women and gender-diverse people from underserved groups experience more severe and frequent online harm (Plan International, 2020; UN Women, 2023).

Applying an intersectional approach is crucial for addressing the distinct ways gendered digital harm impacts underserved communities. This lens helps develop survivor-centered solutions to counter digital harm and its systemic roots, ensuring responses are tailored to the unique needs of those most affected.

A Note on Terminology

Our surveys and interviews focused on experiences of technology-facilitated violence (TFV) and technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). Like digital harm and gendered digital harm, TFV and TFGBV acknowledge that various forms of technology can be used to perpetrate harm.

For the purposes of this report, we refer to digital harm and gendered digital harm, which reflects our findings that TFV and TFGBV is happening in digital and online spaces.

**More information is
available at**



[Online Hate and
Cyberviolence | Canadian
Women's Foundation.](#)





METHODOLOGY

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys, focus groups and interviews to examine the impacts of gendered digital harm and identify effective solutions. The methodology focuses on four key areas: lived experiences, public attitudes, solutions and supports, and civil society insights.

- To understand lived experiences, the study conducted nationally representative surveys with women and gender-diverse people in Canada, supplemented by focus groups and individual and paired interviews with racialized women, Indigenous women, trans people, non-binary people, and women with disabilities, providing nuanced insights into their experiences and recommendations for support.
- Public attitudes and experiences were explored through nationally representative surveys of the Canadian population, examining societal perceptions of gender equality, digital harm, and individual experiences.
- Questions about potential solutions and support systems were incorporated into both the surveys and focus groups to identify effective interventions and reveal gaps in existing policies and practices.
- Additionally, surveys of 290 gender justice and gender equality organizations across Canada were conducted to better understand their challenges, strategies, and resource needs for addressing online harm.

Between August and October 2024, 8,058 individuals aged 18 and older were surveyed through two national online surveys conducted in English and French, with disaggregated and intersectional data analysis to ensure diverse perspectives were captured. The survey results were weighted to ensure representation of the Canadian population based on the 2021 Census. This included oversampling and disaggregation for groups who are often underrepresented in statistics but overrepresented in harms, such as women and

gender-diverse people who are Black, Indigenous, racialized, youth (aged 18-25), 2SLGBTQIA+ people, and women and gender-diverse people with disabilities.

Qualitative data was collected through 62 interviews, including focus groups and individual or paired interviews. Participants were recruited from the nationally representative survey of women and gender-diverse people, and included people who self-identified as Indigenous women, racialized women, trans people, non-binary people, and women with disabilities.

All national surveys and qualitative interviews were conducted in collaboration with Leger 360, a Canadian market research and polling company who partnered with CRC Research to conduct the qualitative research.

We also gathered insights from gender justice and gender equality organizations in November 2024 using an online survey available in both official languages. This survey was designed by the Foundation and administered via SurveyMonkey.

A Grey Literature Review of community-based research and thought leadership, peer-reviewed studies, and legal, government, and census data informed the survey design and analysis, ensuring a community-informed and evidence-based approach. This comprehensive methodological approach integrates quantitative and qualitative data, centering lived experiences and intersectional perspectives to inform actionable recommendations and drive systemic change.



Research Limitations

The research methodology has some potential limitations that may affect its findings and generalizability:

Sampling Limitations

- **Representation of underserved groups:** Oversampling and disaggregating data aimed to capture the perspectives of underrepresented groups (e.g., women and gender-diverse people who are Black, Indigenous, racialized, youth (aged 18-25), 2SLGBTQIA+ people, and women and gender-diverse people with disabilities). However, this approach may still miss insights from some smaller or less-visible subgroups.
- **Self-selection bias:** The study recruited participants for interviews and focus groups from survey respondents. People who chose to participate may have different experiences or viewpoints compared to those who did not, potentially skewing the findings.
- **Geographic limitations:** While the survey represents the Canadian population, it may not fully reflect regional or local differences, especially in rural or remote areas.

Data Collection Methods

- **Reliance on online surveys:** The study used online surveys, which may exclude people without reliable internet access or those who avoid digital spaces due to prior harm.
- **Language accessibility:** The surveys were only available in English and French, which may have excluded perspectives from people who primarily speak other languages, such as immigrants and refugees.

Scope and Depth of Qualitative Data

- **Sample size for interviews:** The study conducted 62 interviews, which is a small number compared to the size of the population being studied. This may limit how well the findings reflect the diverse experiences of different groups.
- **Focus on specific groups:** The interviews and focus groups focused on underserved populations, which may have unintentionally overlooked other underserved groups.

Potential for Social Desirability Bias

- **Public attitudes survey:** People responding to the surveys might have given socially acceptable answers instead of sharing their true feelings or experiences, which could affect the accuracy of the results.

Temporal Limitations

- **Timeframe of data collection:** The study collected data between August and November 2024. This short time frame provides only a snapshot of experiences and attitudes, which may not account for seasonal or evolving trends in digital harm.

By highlighting these limitations, we hope readers will better understand the context of the findings and use this report to guide future research and action.



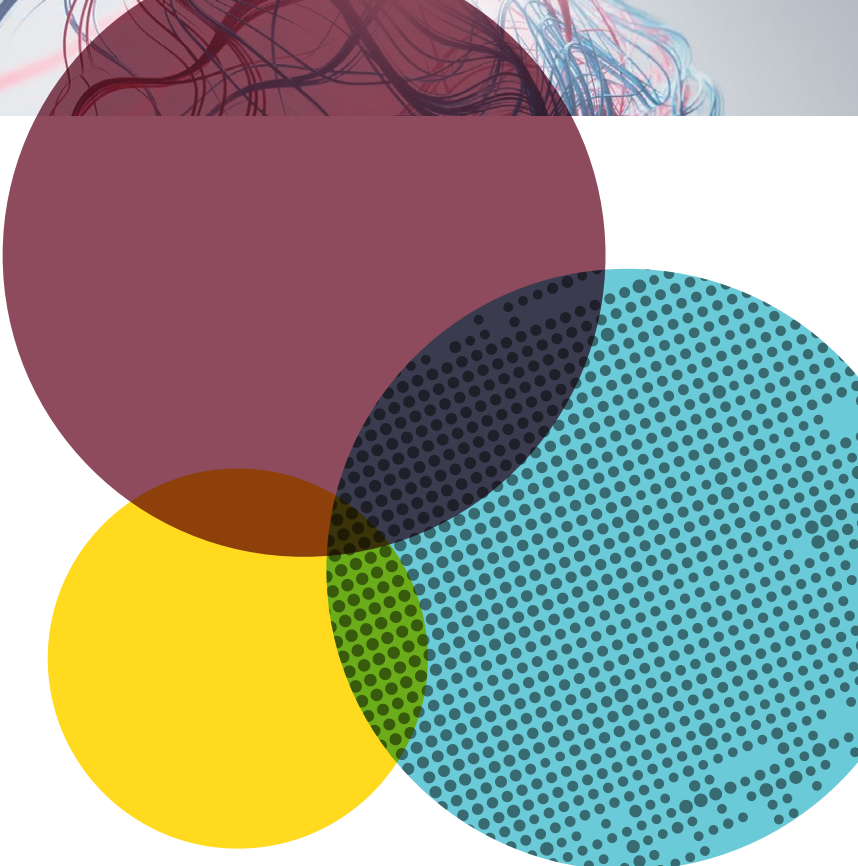
DIGITAL HARM IN CANADA

In the past 3 years, 54% of women and gender-diverse people in Canada and 50% of people in Canada experienced digital harm.

Our research shows that 1 in 2 people in Canada experienced digital harm in the past 3 years, with more women and gender-diverse people experiencing gendered digital harm.

Women and gender-diverse people in Canada have faced rising levels of gendered digital harm and technology-facilitated violence since 2021, reflecting global rises in polarization and hate. Technology continues to amplify and evolve these harms. Gendered digital harm extends to online gaming, where women of colour experience racialized sexism for not conforming to the “white male norm” (Gray, 2011; Brisson-Boivin, 2019). Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) has further enabled gendered digital harm, such as creating fake explicit images or automating harassment, with little technical skill required (Narvali et al., 2023; Chowdhury & Lakshmi, 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital reliance, leading to increased exposure to online hate and harassment, particularly for racialized, Indigenous, and LGBTQI+ people (Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2023; UN Women, 2023). In Canada, these harms intersect with systemic issues like racism, colonialism, and gender inequality, compounding the impacts on underserved communities. Digital harm mirrors real-world disparities, further excluding women and gender-diverse people from digital and public spaces (Brisson-Boivin, 2019; Henry & Witt, 2024).

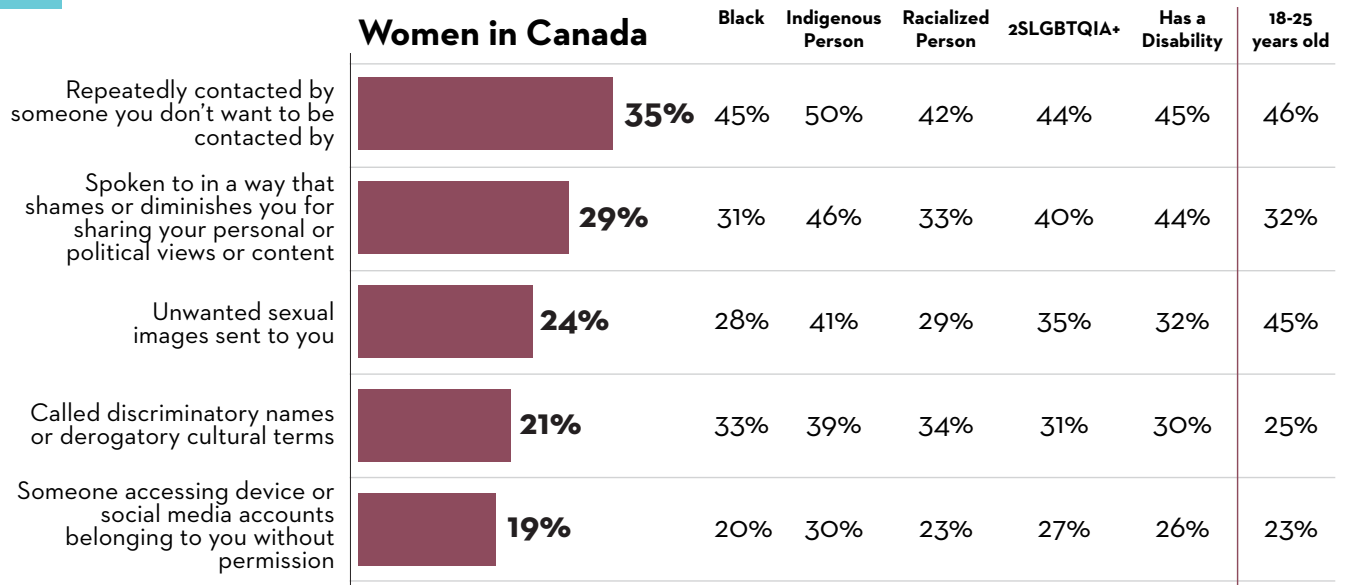


INTERSECTIONAL EXPERIENCES OF GENDERED DIGITAL HARM

Over 60% of women and gender-diverse people in Canada have experienced gendered digital harm.

Gendered digital harm disproportionately affects women and gender-diverse people, particularly those who are Black, Indigenous, racialized, living with disabilities, young, 2SLGBTQIA+ and otherwise marginalized. Our research found that these groups experience higher rates of gendered digital harm and are more severely targeted in online spaces. Over 60% of women and gender-diverse people in Canada indicated they have experienced gendered digital harm, with 70% of this digital harm being experienced in the last three years. Our research found that the most common forms of gendered digital harm included being repeatedly contacted by someone they did not want to be contacted by

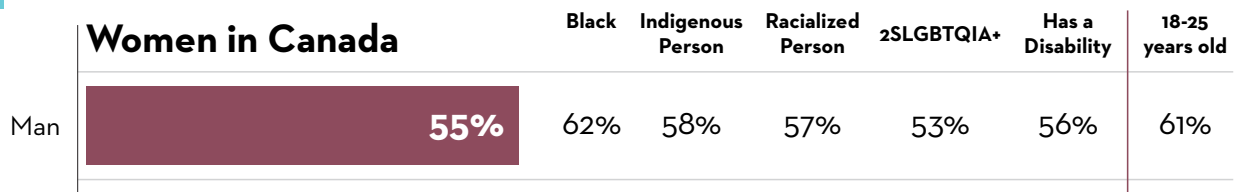
Figure 1: Experiences of Gendered Digital Harm



	Women in Canada	Black	Indigenous Person	Racialized Person	2SLGBTQIA+	Has a Disability	18-25 years old
Repeatedly contacted by someone you don't want to be contacted by	35%	45%	50%	42%	44%	45%	46%
Spoken to in a way that shames or diminishes you for sharing your personal or political views or content	29%	31%	46%	33%	40%	44%	32%
Unwanted sexual images sent to you	24%	28%	41%	29%	35%	32%	45%
Called discriminatory names or derogatory cultural terms	21%	33%	39%	34%	31%	30%	25%
Someone accessing device or social media accounts belonging to you without permission	19%	20%	30%	23%	27%	26%	23%

Source: Survey of Women and Gender-Diverse People in Canada

Figure 2: Perpetrator of the Incident(s): Gender



	Women in Canada	Black	Indigenous Person	Racialized Person	2SLGBTQIA+	Has a Disability	18-25 years old
Man	55%	62%	58%	57%	53%	56%	61%

Source: Survey of Women and Gender-Diverse People in Canada

(harassment); being spoken to in a way that shames or diminishes them for sharing personal or political views or content; having unwanted sexual images sent to them; being called discriminatory names or derogatory cultural terms; and having someone access devices or social media accounts that belong to them without their permission. When asked if they knew the gender of the person who caused the harm, 55% of women and gender-diverse people said that men caused the harm, compared with 32%

who said that the harm was caused by women; 23% didn't know the gender and 2% said the harm was caused by a different gender.

Men were also less likely to intervene when witnessing digital harm perpetrated against women or gender-diverse people in comparison to women and gender-diverse peoples' intervention rates.

We asked women and gender-diverse people in Canada who experienced gendered digital harm if



55%

of gendered digital harm perpetrators were men.

Women and gender-diverse people who are Black, Indigenous, racialized, aged 18-25, as well as women and gender-diverse people with disabilities, were most likely to be targeted by men.

they were targeted because of any specific aspects about themselves. Women and gender-diverse people who are also Black, Indigenous, racialized, youth, 2SLGBTQIA+, or who have disabilities were targeted most often because of their gender or an aspect of themselves that mirrors their identity, compared to women and gender-diverse people in Canada. For example, Indigenous women and

“

I find that we, as women and as visible minorities, have more and more to do nowadays in order to protect ourselves, to feel safe online... Like when I'm selling things [online] I'll have to change my photo to maybe one of my cats.”
(edited for clarity)

– Indigenous woman with a disability

gender-diverse people identified their Indigenous identity as a top 3 reason why they experienced gendered digital harm; similarly, 2SLGBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people indicated that their sexual orientation was one of the top 3 reasons.

We asked people in Canada the same question: if they experienced digital harm, were they targeted because of any specific aspects about themselves? We found that digital harm often maps onto identity-based factors similarly to gendered digital harm. For example, Black people in Canada identify race, skin tone, and ethnicity or culture as the top 3 reasons for being targeted by digital harm; and people with invisible disabilities in Canada identify a physical, mental health, or cognitive disability as a reason why they experienced digital harm.

These findings strongly indicate how experiences of digital harm and gendered digital harm are directly related to intersectional identities. This finding points to the need for tailored support and interventions, which is discussed further in the Recommendations section.

Top 3 Self-Reported Reasons for Experiencing (Gendered) Digital Harm

	Women & gender-diverse people in Canada		All people in Canada	
			People	Men
Overall	1	Gender	1	Gender
	2	Beliefs about social or political issues	2	Beliefs about social or political issues
	3	Height or weight/age	3	Height or weight
Black	1	Race	1	Race
	2	Gender	2	Ethnicity or culture
	3	Ethnicity or culture	3	Skin tone
Indigenous	1	Gender	1	Gender
	2	Indigenous identity	2	Height or weight
	3	Height or weight	3	Race/Sexual orientation
Racialized	1	Gender	1	Race
	2	Ethnicity or culture	2	Ethnicity or culture
	3	Race	3	Gender
Invisible disability	1	Gender	1	Gender
	2	Beliefs about social or political issues	2	Beliefs about social or political issues
	3	A physical, mental health or cognitive disability/Height or weight	3	A physical, mental health or cognitive disability/Height or weight
Visible disability	1	Beliefs about social or political issues	1	Beliefs about social or political issues
	2	Gender	2	A physical, mental health or cognitive disability
	3	A physical, mental health or cognitive disability	3	Gender
Youth 18-25	1	Gender	1	Gender
	2	Height or weight	2	Race/physical characteristics
	3	Physical appearance	3	Ethnicity or culture
2SLGBTQIA+	1	Gender	1	Gender
	2	Beliefs about social or political issues	2	Beliefs about social or political issues
	3	Sexual orientation	3	Height or weight

Source: [Survey of Women and Gender-Diverse People in Canada](#) ; [Survey of General Population in Canada](#)



Figure 3: Experienced Online Harassment

	Women in Canada	Black	Indigenous Person	Racialized Person	2SLGBTQIA+	Has a Disability	18-25 years old
Online harassment because of your gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, gender expression, etc	13%	17%	28%	21%	25%	21%	21%

Source: **Women and Gender-Diverse People in Canada survey**

Black and racialized women and gender-diverse people were most commonly targeted in relation to their race, gender, and ethnicity or culture. In interviews, many participants reported experiencing microaggressions tied to their racial identity, such as documented instances when Black women received online hate for the colour of their skin, and Asian interview participants experienced hate for having

an Asian name. Asian women also reported facing online harassment based on racial stereotypes like the assumptions that they are ‘fragile, subservient or docile’.

For Indigenous women and gender-diverse people, targeting was most commonly related to their gender, height or weight, and beliefs about social or political issues. During interviews, Indigenous women and gender-diverse people reported they are primarily targeted for their gender; they also reported often choosing to conceal their Indigenous identity online to avoid online hate. Indigenous women and gender-diverse interview participants reported feeling an urge to respond to online abuse out of anger or a need to defend themselves. While some shared success in pushing back on predatory online behaviours, many shared that responding tends to escalate the cycle of digital violence. Indigenous women and gender-diverse people were also twice as likely to receive unwanted sexual images and be physically threatened online compared to non-Indigenous women and gender-diverse people.

Women and gender-diverse people with disabilities were most likely to be targeted in relation to their gender, height or weight, beliefs about social or political issues, and their physical, mental health or cognitive disability. Women with invisible disabilities also generally experience digital harm more than women with visible disabilities. In interviews, women and gender-diverse people with disabilities reported primarily



Online harassment related to identity like gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, and gender expression was more likely to be directed towards Black, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, and women and gender-diverse people with disabilities, as well as those aged 18-25 (compared to women and gender-diverse people in Canada who do not have these identities).

feeling targeted for being women, and their disabilities exacerbate these experiences. Many respondents felt restricted in seeking help due to mental barriers or embarrassment. Interview participants with disabilities shared that they often prefer to keep that part of their identity private due to past online discrimination. They are also less likely to report misconduct in professional settings for fear of job loss, compared to people without a disability. Women and gender-diverse people with disabilities shared that they often feel disconnected from resources, feeling the need to hide their vulnerabilities as they believe they are at a disadvantage in comparison to people without disabilities. They were twice as likely to have misleading information about themselves posted online compared to people without disabilities.

2SLGBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse survey respondents indicated their gender, social and political beliefs, and sexual orientation as key factors for why they experience online hate. In interviews, trans and non-binary people with feminine names shared that they believe they experience more harassment than those with masculine names. They expressed frustration with automated moderation systems saying they unfairly suppress content about gender identity, which silences important discussions. Deprioritizing or shadowbanning this type of content does not necessarily trigger hate but still feels oppressive as voices are systematically marginalized. Posts using the words 'queer' or 'gay' that were downranked or less frequently featured were examples of digital silencing. Despite challenges online, bisexual people, trans people, and non-binary people also identified peer support groups as vital resources used for connecting with others, offering solidarity and helping combat isolation and backlash.

Women and gender-diverse youth (age 18-25) were twice as likely to experience gendered digital harm on image sharing social media like Instagram and video sharing social media like Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube compared to other age groups. It is

“

When I play games online, I typically use my real name and it's kind of Asian. So then, there are lots of guys online who fetishize Asian women. So that's definitely a component to the kind of harassment you get. So now I stopped [using my real name].”

– Racialized woman

“

I don't like using an avatar [Bitmoji of themselves] because I don't want my brown face out there.”

– Indigenous woman

“

With already having a history of emotional and sexual abuse as a child, it's a lot to have someone say something [non-consensual sexual advances] like that to you.”

– Woman with an invisible disability



important that social media companies like these have adequate and responsive content moderation policies in place that are relevant to youth. Young people were twice as likely to be targeted by non-consensual sharing of explicit images and to have personal nude or sexual images shared of them or posted online without their permission compared to other age groups.

The research found that the targeting of individuals based on forms of identity, especially gender, race, social and political beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity and culture, had significant impacts on women and gender-diverse people's experiences of digital harm, pointing to the importance of approaching digital harm through an intersectional framework.

IMPACT OF GENDERED DIGITAL HARM

Gendered digital harm has greatly impacted women and gender-diverse people's feelings of safety online and offline. Over 85% of women and gender-diverse people in Canada and over 70% of people in Canada reported they believed most forms of gendered digital harm to be extremely harmful; for example, acts like sharing personal nude or sexual images of someone else without their consent, physical threats, blackmailing, sextortion, networked harassment, monitoring, tracking or spying, and doxing. Fear of experiencing one of these forms of digital harm has led to self-censorship of women and gender-diverse people and dropping out of the digital public sphere altogether, threatening gender equality and democratic participation. The overwhelming agreement that these experiences are harmful reinforces the importance of addressing them.

Psychological and Emotional Safety

Approximately 2 in 3 women and gender-diverse people in Canada think online content that threatens the psychological and emotional safety of women and gender-diverse people is increasing. 43% of women and gender-diverse people who experienced gendered digital harm reported that their mental health, including stress, anxiety, or depression, was seriously negatively impacted. Women and gender-diverse people who are Black, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, or who have a disability were more likely to experience negative impacts on mental health.

Additionally, women and gender-diverse people who are Black, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, or who have a disability reported experiencing discrimination, and feeling alienated, isolated, or

“After the hateful incident [I experienced] on PlayStation, I changed my name to ‘Jesse’ which could be a girl’s or a boy’s name but I don’t turn on my mic so they don’t really know whether I’m male or female just to avoid any kind of targeted hate.”

– Trans and non-binary person

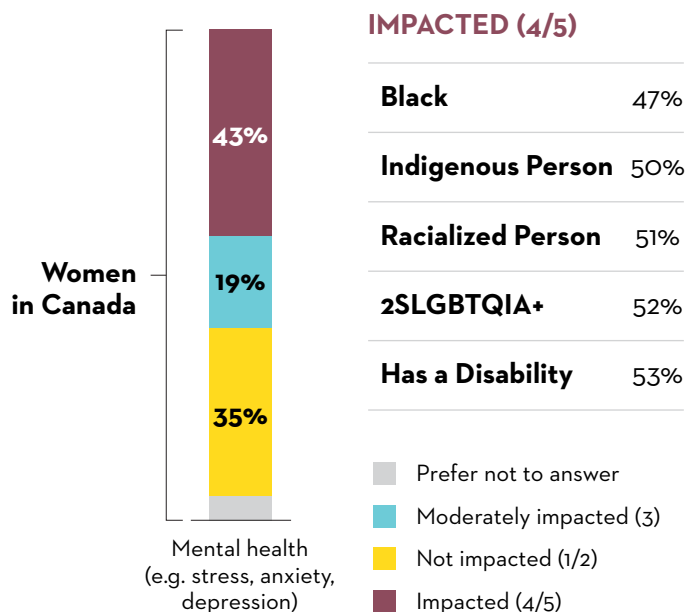
unwelcome in online spaces. Compared to women and gender-diverse people who do not share these identities, these groups were more likely to feel ashamed and suffer trauma and safety concerns as a result of online violence. Notably, Black women were twice as likely as other groups to have their desire to live impacted as a result of gendered digital harm. Youth, Indigenous, racialized and 2SLGBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people and women and gender-diverse people with disabilities were twice as likely to engage in or think about self-harm and suicidal behaviours as result of gendered digital harm.

Silencing

50% of women and gender-diverse people in Canada believe that content promoting physical violence against women and gender-diverse people is increasing. This gendered digital harm silences many women, girls, and Two-Spirit, trans, and non-binary users, threatening their right to freedom of speech. Women and gender-diverse people in Canada indicated that they do not feel comfortable engaging with offensive content online and do not find it helpful to engage with anyone posting negative content about them online.



Figure 4: Impact of Incidents on Women and Gender-Diverse People



Note: Women and gender-diverse people in Canada rated the impact on their mental health on a scale of 1-5

Source: **Women and Gender-Diverse People in Canada survey**



Publicly, just some of the hate that you see and some of the toxicity, I find it just brings my anxiety way up. So much so, it got to the point where I pretty much stopped [posting online].”

– Woman with an invisible disability



3 in 5 women and gender-diverse people in Canada view online harassment, hate, and abuse as

equally harmful as experiencing it offline, illustrating how digital life is a mirror of our lives offline. This is especially true when technology is used to perpetuate gender-based violence offline.

Digital Safety and Distrust

Concerns about online privacy and platform integrity also compromised women and gender-diverse people's feelings of safety. For respondents, feeling safe online means the freedom to express themselves without fear of bullying, negative comments, or threats. Respondents seek a judgment-free zone where they can authentically be themselves without anxieties of being targeted online and offline.

In the focus groups and interviews, participants shared that digital safety also means having the assurance that the individual they were communicating with online is who they claim to be, preferring to interact only with verified or known accounts. It is important to acknowledge this is particularly relevant in relation to perpetrators of digital harm who falsely identify as someone they are not.

While digital anonymity poses risks, needing to disclose one's identity also poses risks. Some users adopt alternative identities online for self-expression and safety. For example, sex workers often use aliases to protect their privacy and maintain boundaries between personal and professional lives (Pivot Legal Society, 2021). Trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse individuals who no longer identify with their dead names—the names given at birth—may use chosen names and pronouns online that differ from government-issued identification. The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) emphasizes that failing to respect chosen names and pronouns can amount to discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC, 2023). Similarly, Egale Canada (2021) notes that using the correct name and pronouns is critical for affirming the identities and safety of 2SLGBTQI+ individuals, especially in digital spaces.

Respondents had privacy concerns related to popular social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook and TikTok. They shared fear of

“

People have different monikers. They don't necessarily post under their own names. They feel freer to provide hate speech because they don't have to own it.”

– Woman with a visible disability

unauthorized access to personal information, home addresses, and even their children's school details. These concerns reflect a deep-rooted distrust of digital spaces, particularly on social media platforms, messaging apps, and public forums, leading to growing skepticism about how secure these environments truly are and the forms of harm that are possible.

Digital Strategies

In the focus groups and interviews, participants shared strategies to combat gendered digital harm. The most common responses included blocking or muting accounts, increasing privacy settings on social media, taking a break from social media, stopping or reducing posting on certain platforms, and deleting or deactivating a social media account. Participants acknowledged that while blocking perpetrators is an effective tactic to stop the digital harm they are experiencing, it is a temporary solution that does not stop the perpetrator from targeting others or using different accounts to reach the survivors that blocked them initially. The option to block harmful accounts or content also requires the person being harmed to protect themselves, while leaving those causing harm unaccountable.



Muting harmful words was another strategy that participants used to help filter hate or negativity on their social media platforms, but this was reported to be easily bypassed by perpetrators, who, for example, would make a new account or slightly alter their names. Many participants attempted to leverage platform algorithms to curate their feed and gain a sense of control over the content they see and engage with.

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Similarly to muting harmful words, these strategies remain susceptible to harmful content. For gamers, participants reported avoiding voice interaction to minimize exposure to verbal abuse when their voice was identifiable as a feminine voice or a

voice belonging to an Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, or racialized person. Participants also strengthened privacy settings to avoid digital harm, but like many of the other strategies shared, this does not address the root causes of gendered digital harm, such as racism, transphobia, and misogyny. These strategies also put the onus on survivors to take action and don't put pressure on those causing digital harm to change their behaviour.

The fear of digital harm and its associated consequences in the physical world, such as stalking or physical violence, has resulted in the reduction of gender-based discussions online and offline. When these conversations do happen online, for example, on the rights of trans youth, the voices of women, girls, Two-Spirit, trans, and non-binary people are often absent due to concerns of being targeted by trolls or other abusers. From leaving platforms to fearing threats associated with discussing the realities of gendered digital harm in public spaces, digital harm is not only silencing people online but discouraging dialogue on gender-based violence more broadly.

“

I like to curate my personal experience. So, I don't follow people that post content that I don't like, or I keep my own personal account private. So, you know people that I don't know, I don't approve as followers. It just kind of controls what I see.”

– Racialized woman

“

I'm not [accepting] you as a friend, unless you're a friend of a friend...I protect myself this way; I only accept people I know and limit myself to what I'm familiar with.”

– Woman with an invisible disability

CAPACITIES OF GENDER EQUALITY ORGANIZATIONS

Our survey of gender equality organizations offers insights into what the sector experiences, understands, and needs related to gendered digital harm, filling a key gap in Canadian-specific literature. Organizations surveyed include community groups and non-profit organizations focused on gender-based violence, service provision, economic development, education and rights advocacy.

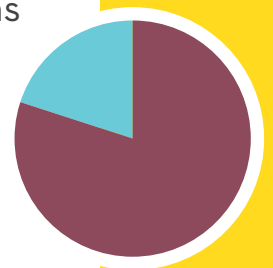
In Canada, gender equality organizations play a critical role in addressing gendered digital harm while often becoming targets of such harm themselves. Grassroots and community organizations supporting women, gender-diverse people, youth, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, and racialized communities face online harassment, hacking, and doxxing, which undermine their operations and safety. For example, over 88% of organizations surveyed have experienced digital threats and intimidation related to their work or workplace (the organization or a representative of the organization).

Despite these challenges, gender equality organizations are leading efforts to combat digital gender-based violence by providing services, resources, education, and policy advocacy. Their work highlights the urgent need for systemic solutions to protect both individuals and organizations from digital harm.

OVER 55%
of gender equality organizations surveyed have been repeatedly contacted by someone they don't want to be contacted by (the organization, or a representative of the organization).

53% of gender equality organizations surveyed address **'issues of spying and monitoring through account hacking or interception of private communications'** as part of their work.

8 IN 10 gender equality organizations surveyed have had members of the communities they serve experience gendered digital harm.



82% of the Foundation's survey group identified gender-based violence as a core focus of their work. Over 68% identified that their work aims to address gendered digital harm or support those who have experienced digital harm. The organizations surveyed also experienced gendered digital harm directly.

Over half of respondents have had employees or volunteers in their organization experience gendered digital harm as a direct result of their gender equality work. This most frequently included threats and intimidation, stalking, and hate speech. 66% of respondents also reported that their organization or representatives of their organization have been spoken to or about in a way that shames or diminishes the organizational or political views

or content; 66% also experienced being called discriminatory names or derogatory cultural, often racist or sexist, terms.

Gender equality organizations can play a central role in supporting community members that are impacted by gendered digital harm as, according to a survey respondent, "community-based organizations are there to support and educate individuals who fall victim to violence or can be used as a tool for people struggling with violent tendencies, so the role they play is important."

Capacity Building: Strengthening existing support organizations

Community-based organizations, service providers and advocacy groups play a key role in supporting survivors of gendered digital harm, but they need more resources to meet community needs. Survey respondents highlighted the importance of government support, school education campaigns, non-profit organizations, and tools for online safety. Over 60% of service providers and advocacy groups surveyed reported lacking resources, such as tools for managing algorithms, definitions of digital harm tactics, and templates to respond to these harms.

Non-profit organizations, especially grassroots groups, play a crucial role in building the capacity of underserved communities to understand and respond to gendered digital harm. These organizations are trusted by the communities they serve and provide culturally relevant support that meets people where they are. Many community members prefer non-legal options for support and non-profit organizations offer these services, helping individuals navigate their options without engaging with the legal system. For those who want to involve law enforcement, non-profit organizations can also provide guidance. These non-legal resources are vital for underserved communities, as they often face historical barriers to the legal system and benefit from support that is tailored to their unique needs.

“

Team members have been targeted personally due to their work with the organization, having had pictures and personal identifying information disseminated online in an attempt to harass and bully them. We also frequently receive sexually/violently harassing messages/calls/emails through our phone and messaging services. We have had to take down our staff information page to limit these targeted transactions.”

– Gender equality organization respondent

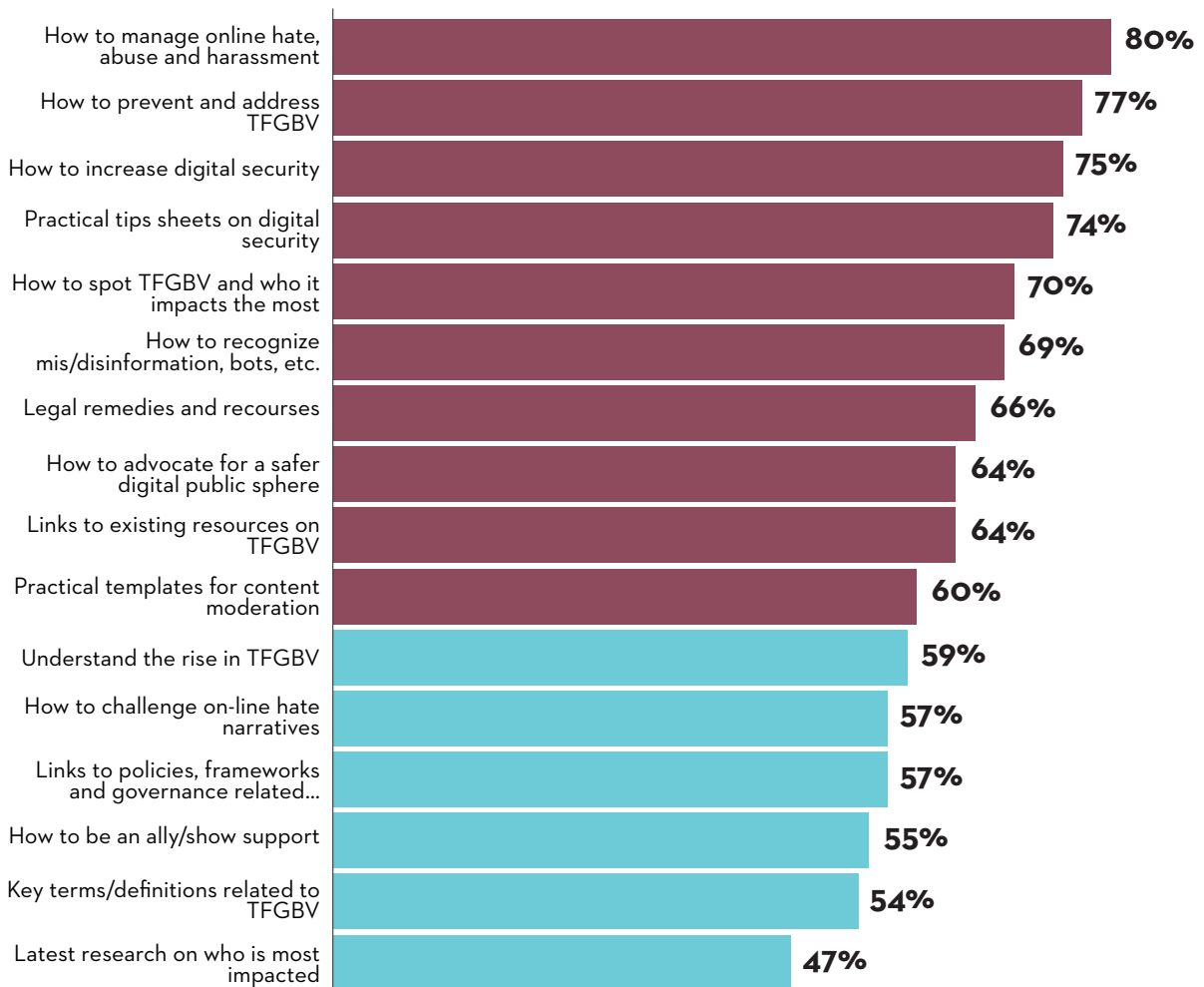
“

Indigenous women, girls, gender diverse [people] do not have culturally safe resources to meet their specific needs due to the lack of funding for Indigenous [non-profit] agencies in this area.”

- Gender equality organization respondent



Figure 5: This is a list of skills, knowledge, and resources that could help to eliminate technology-facilitated gender-based violence/hate/harassment (TFGBV). 115 gender equality organizations/groups indicated which ones they would find “very useful”



Only about 60% of organizations surveyed felt like they have the skills or knowledge needed to help a woman, girl, or gender-diverse individual who experienced an incidence of digital harm, even though 83% of the organizations surveyed said the communities they serve experience gendered digital harm.

Many organizations expressed interest in workshops and resources to train staff and volunteers to recognize, prevent, and address digital harm. This training would not only strengthen the organizations but also better support the communities they serve. Some organizations are already positioned to include gendered digital harm education in their existing programs on gender equality and healthy relationships.

POLICIES, PRACTICES AND INTERVENTIONS

We asked women and gender-diverse people in Canada, all people in Canada, and gender equality organizations about their opinions on existing policies, practices, and interventions, and their ideas about how they can be improved.

Developing People-Centred Tools and Resources

Our interviews highlighted key resources to help create safer digital spaces, especially for women and gender-diverse people experiencing digital harm. Respondents suggested guidelines on digital security, as well as resources like scripts, tech-safety plans, counseling, and peer support groups to help survivors manage the psychological and physical impacts of digital harm. They emphasized the importance of continually testing these resources to ensure their effectiveness and keep them accessible and user-friendly.

In Canada, only 9% of people feel they have the skills to support someone facing gendered digital

“

The problem seems to be growing incrementally each year—we need more resources to [combat] this ever-growing issue.”

– Gender equality organization respondent

“

They [platforms] need to look at it this way: They not only have a responsibility to their shareholders, they have a responsibility to every single person that has signed up with them in good faith.”

– Woman with a visible disability

harm, which reinforces the need for educational initiatives to improve digital literacy. Respondents recommended e-learning modules tailored to different groups, including teens, older women, and racial minorities, with real-world examples and case studies. They also wanted interactive sessions with live presenters and discussions to help people understand and address digital harm. There was strong support for introducing training programs in schools and organizations, encouraging or even mandating participation in these programs to promote safe online navigation and awareness of the specific impacts of gendered digital harm on underserved communities.

Platform Accountabilities

48% of women and gender-diverse people and 44% of people in Canada indicated the digital harm they experienced happened via social media. Over 60% of the gender equality organizations we surveyed indicated that content moderation by social media companies is important when it comes to addressing gendered digital harm.

Social media platforms unquestionably play an essential role in gendered digital harm prevention. All survey respondents who reported experiencing some form of digital harm named social media platforms as the most common place they experienced harm. In addition, using blocking and other privacy settings was a common response to digital harm. However, very few people reported the harm they experienced and those who did report it did not find social media companies very effective in responding to the harm. Interviewees also expressed a desire for more effective technological tools and better responses from social media companies. In many cases, social media companies are best positioned to provide timely responses to gendered digital harm. They have the most data and information on the types of harm that occur on their platforms and have the financial resources earned from the monetization of their sites. In focus groups and interviews, participants identified that digital platforms have the most responsibility to ensure user safety standards. Respondents believe that platforms should be more proactive in tackling gendered digital harm. They argued that technology companies should be held accountable for the harms that happen on their platforms, and should be mandated to establish online safety infrastructure, such as 'online safety' or 'online vigilance' departments.

Human moderation, rather than automated moderation, was also a key area of interest. Respondents believe that platforms should employ real people to monitor, flag, and respond to complaints to ensure accountability, accurate responses, and timely action. Potential moderator responses to perpetrators of online hate

SUGGESTIONS FOR PLATFORM REFORM:



automated moderation to flag accounts that have been blocked or reported by multiple users



warnings for derogatory language or abusive behaviour (by identifying common emails or IP addresses opening new accounts)



incorporate open text fields in reporting measures to capture details and context of the event



temporarily remove harmful content while it is under review



increase response times for addressing reports of digital violence (eg. within 24 hours or more quickly in severe cases)



status reports and consistent follow-up/updates on actions taken in response to digital harm



human moderation is still necessary (but currently, people feel unheard, harmful content reported is dismissed as 'not meeting the standards' for removal)

included flagging accounts blocked or reported by a specific number of users to safeguard against future occurrences. Respondents also advocated for the option to speak to a real person for a more personalized reporting experience, including providing coping support and access to resources such as local helplines.

Legal Frameworks and Law Enforcement

Respondents believed that platforms should be mandated to partner with government bodies to ensure they are consistent with Canadian safety protocols. They advocated for collaborative action and accountability from both platforms and government bodies at a systemic level to drive meaningful change. Respondents advocated for clear guidelines on what constitutes online harassment. There is a call for government collaboration, including a legal body, with most respondents advocating to treat various forms of digital harm as a serious crime with stronger penal consequences as a deterrent. Participants reported they believe social media spaces should be understood as a public space under Section 319 of the Criminal Code, which deals with hate crimes. 71% of women and gender-diverse people in Canada view it this way. Therefore, violence online should be addressed with the same urgency and accountability as violence in physical public spaces.

Women and gender-diverse people in Canada indicated that law/policymakers, governments, and police have the most responsibility to help end the violence that happens online to women, girls,

and gender-diverse people. Given the historical and present state violence against Indigenous communities, some Indigenous women and gender-diverse people expressed hesitancy toward government involvement, driven by a deep-rooted mistrust in these systems and preferred support from Indigenous-specific services and organizations. In focus groups and interviews, participants outlined the importance of legal interventions. Racialized women and gender-diverse people were more likely to select law/policy makers as a key group who are responsible for stopping gendered digital harm; however 60% of racialized women and gender-diverse people also find police to be ineffective; 53% find government services to be ineffective; and 35% find lawyers to be ineffective in addressing the issue. These differences indicate that expectations of support from law enforcement and the legal sector are not being met.

“

Ideally, it [content moderating] would really be a real person. We can't actually leave the entire responsibility to AI to judge whether or not something is offensive or whether or not something is harmful. In fact, I think there should be a collaborative effort [of AI and human monitoring], at least a review afterwards.”

– Racialized woman



RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Gendered digital harm and digital harm affect the majority of people in Canada (61% of women and gender-diverse people and 53% of all Canadians). Addressing gendered digital harm requires cross-cutting priorities:



Public Accountability:

Recognize that 70% of Canadians see addressing gendered digital harm as a shared responsibility and create opportunities for collaboration across government agencies, education institutions, healthcare, technology companies, community groups, and non-profit organizations.



Mental Health and Safety:

Prioritize resources and interventions that address the profound mental health impacts of gendered digital harm, particularly for Black women, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, people with disabilities, and other people with intersecting identities.



Intersectional Focus:

Develop targeted interventions that reflect the diverse experiences of gendered digital harm, from linguistic differences to racialized, transphobic and sexualized harassment.



Increased Resources:

Government and private companies should provide increased funding and human resources to support efforts to prevent and address gendered digital harm.

Policy Recommendations

These recommendations reflect the need for collaborative action and accountability at a systemic level to meaningfully address gendered digital harm. This requires digital platform accountability, government action, societal awareness, and institutional support.

Legal frameworks and law enforcement should develop the resources, expertise, and trauma-informed practices that would meaningfully support survivors of gendered digital harm. While there have been some positive changes in recent years with new laws introduced and more training in the legal system related to these issues, there are still significant gaps in addressing gender-based violence generally and gendered digital harm specifically. Research continues to show that in many cases people want technical, social, and emotional support from community-based organizations and rarely go to law enforcement for help with gendered digital harm. These non-legal spaces are where resources should be prioritized. However, there are circumstances where a legal intervention is warranted and there is a need for legal systems to continually evolve to better enforce the rights of survivors of gendered digital harm.



Government

• Resources:

- + Provide resources for the research, training, and support systems needed to address gendered digital harm, such as evidence-based research projects, public education campaigns, and funding for organizations that provide support to people harmed by gendered digital harm from small, grassroots organizations and initiatives to larger, social service organizations, as well as the education sector.

• Strengthen Legal and Policy Frameworks:

- + Adequately enforce existing laws that can apply to gendered digital harm. Develop human rights-based approaches when introducing new laws and policies to address these harms, including laws that address the role of social media companies in preventing this harm.
- + 71% of women and gender-diverse people in Canada view social media spaces as public spaces. Recognize social media as a public space to ensure that violence online is addressed with the same urgency and accountability as violence in physical public spaces.
- + Launch public education campaigns clarifying how existing laws apply to online violence, addressing the 31% of women and gender-diverse people unsure if their experiences of gendered digital harm broke any laws making it difficult to decide whether to engage with the legal system.
- + Implement the UN Global Digital Compact, because Canadians recognize gendered digital harm as a transnational issue, and Canada can play an important role as a thought-leader in creating safer digital spaces for all.

• Law Enforcement Accountability:

- + Provide targeted training for police and law enforcement on gendered digital harm, ensuring their responses align with public expectations and address the current gaps identified by survivors, in particular around recourses available to survivors of digital harm.
- + Implement an independent oversight mechanism to evaluate how police handle online violence cases and enforce prevention, transparency, and accountability of police misconduct.

• Intersectional Approach:

- + Develop policies that account for differences in how gendered digital harm is experienced, including linguistic divides (e.g., English vs. French speakers) and the disproportionate impacts on people with intersecting marginalized identities.
- + Provide sustainable funding to non-profit organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society to develop tailored and ongoing support for gendered digital harm.



Educational Institutions

• Educator Training:

- + Provide training on healthy behaviors online, digital literacy, gendered digital harm prevention, identification, and response to educators, counselors, and administrators at all educational institutions. This training should take a human-rights based, survivor-centred, and intersectional approach.

• Digital Literacy Programs:

- + Incorporate education on digital rights and responsibilities into school curricula to help

young people understand how gendered digital harm is a legal and a societal issue.

- + Create student-led peer education programs for students to learn to identify harmful online behaviors, report incidents, and access legal and psycho-social support.

- **Reporting Mechanisms:**

- + Establish or strengthen trauma-informed reporting mechanisms in schools to ensure students have access to a confidential and survivor-centered reporting system that includes gendered digital harm.

- **Community-Specific Support:**

- + Provide tailored resources and counseling for students who have a disability or who are 2SLGBTQIA+, Black, racialized, or Indigenous, to address their specific experiences with gendered digital harm.

- + Publish reports on the risk mitigation practices in place for the platform.
- + Work with non-profit and non-governmental organizations and civil society to develop community-specific policies that address the unique lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, young, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, and people with disabilities.

- **Empowering Users:**

- + Offer robust tools for users to control their online experiences, including better filtering options, as well as more effective and simplified reporting processes.
- + Consult with and meaningfully engage frontline workers, non-profit and non-governmental organizations and civil society to help develop policies and practices for social media platforms.
- + Provide ongoing funding to non-profit and non-governmental organizations and civil society working to address gendered digital harm.

Social Media Companies

- **Improved Moderation and Reporting:**

- + Ensure rights-based moderation policies that include rapid and easy to understand response mechanisms for users facing threats or intimidation based on gender, race, or sexual orientation.
- + Collaborate with the government to create transparent reporting systems that demonstrate adequate enforcement of the company's terms of service and content moderation policies, including responses to harms and hate speech prohibited under Canadian law.

- **Transparency and Accountability:**

- + Regularly publish data on how cases of online violence are handled, ensuring accountability for content moderation decisions.



Non-Profit and Non-Governmental Organizations

- **Capacity Building:**

- + Offer self-directed e-learning courses, group training and resources for non-profit/gender equality organizations to educate their staff and volunteers about digital security, recognizing and addressing gendered digital harm, and to support the communities they serve.
- + Incorporate safety planning, prevention information, education on healthy/safe digital experiences as part of standard staff training.
- + If the non-profit/non-governmental organization offers programming, also provide programs to target and change perpetrator behaviour.

• Legal and Psychological Support:

- + Develop legal support networks to assist those navigating the complexities of reporting online violence.
- + Ensure staff and volunteers impacted by gendered digital harm have access to trauma-informed mental health services and support.
- + Establish peer support networks where staff and volunteers can share their experiences, challenges, and strategies for coping with gendered digital harm.

• Awareness and Advocacy:

- + Work with governments to raise awareness of gendered digital harm as a societal issue requiring collective responsibility, supported by 70% of Canadians who believe we all have a role to play.
- + Advocate for equitable representation of underrepresented voices in public and online spaces, ensuring that public figures are not subject to harassment based on gender identity or sexual orientation.
- + Connect with existing and emerging organizations, institutions, networks and spaces where issues related to internet governance and digital technologies are addressed (eg. Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, Canada Internet Governance Forum, UN Global Digital Compact, AI research networks, etc.)

Health & Social Services Sector

- Train health and social service providers on gendered digital harm and its impact in order to provide trauma-informed support to survivors, with a focus on the unique needs of people with intersecting identities.

Research Community

- Work with policymakers to measure progress and evaluate outcomes of the policy recommendations.
- Conduct regionally specific and community specific research, taking an intersectional approach, for example conducting future research on remaining gaps in gendered digital harm literature including the lived experiences of: 1) Girls and gender-diverse people under age 18; and 2) Sex workers.
- Conduct research on currently available legal, technical and social supports and begin to assess the effectiveness of available supports.
- Conduct research on the effectiveness of legal and non-legal responses.
 - + Conduct ongoing research on existing and emerging trends, take an intersectional approach to research analysis.

More on Areas for Further Research

In Canada, research on digital harm often fails to take an intersectional approach, focusing separately on topics like “gender and digital harms” or “race and digital harms,” but rarely addressing the intersections of identities such as race, gender, and digital harm, or gender and disability. There is also a lack of national research on the unique experiences of women, girls, Two-Spirit, trans, and non-binary individuals with intersectional underserved identities, such as Black, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, immigrant, religious minorities, people with disabilities. Similarly, research on the experiences of girls and gender-diverse youth under age 18 and sex workers is lacking. These groups experience digital harm in distinct ways that are often overlooked in current research.



While the Canadian government has a “Gender-based Analysis Plus” policy (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2024d), it does not require consistent collection of intersectional data on gendered digital harm. For example, Statistics Canada provides data on youth aged 15-24 but does not explore how experiences of digital harm may differ based on gender, race, sexuality, or other intersecting identities such as age or occupation (Statistics Canada, 2024). One in five women reported experiencing online harassment in the past year (Statistics Canada, 2019), but there is limited data on the experiences of Two-Spirit, trans, non-binary people, girls and gender-diverse youth under age 18, and sex workers.

Additionally, there is a lack of consistent definitions for gender diversity, which complicates the collection of accurate data. For instance, Communications Security Establishment Canada defines gender diversity broadly, while the Canadian Department of Justice uses a more specific definition that may apply more to non-binary and Two-Spirit people (Canadian Department of Justice, 2023). This inconsistency creates challenges for research and data collection on these groups.

More research is needed on the unique experiences of Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, trans, non-binary people, girls and gender-diverse youth under age 18, and sex workers facing digital harm. While some reports acknowledge the increased likelihood of online hate targeting Indigenous people (Public Policy Forum, 2019; Khoo, 2021; YWCA, 2022; Canadian Women’s Foundation, 2024), they often rely on quantitative data without fully addressing the distinct histories and relationships Indigenous communities have with technology (Archipel Research and Consulting Inc, 2024). To improve this, consultation with Indigenous and underserved communities must be based on trust, community involvement, and accountability, and must be adequately resourced for the implementation of recommendations.

A Note on the Role of Generative Artificial Intelligence

The rise of generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies has created new threats for gendered digital harm, particularly targeting women, girls, Two-Spirit, trans, and non-binary people. These technologies are now easier to use, requiring little technical skill to produce convincing content that can cause harm (Narvali et. al, 2023; Ward et. al, 2023; Henry & Witt, 2024). AI can be used to create non-consensual explicit images, fabricate fake histories, and automate cyber-harassment (Chowdhury & Lakshmi, 2023). While gender-based violence is not new, AI has amplified and transformed how these harms are enacted, including through deepfakes that target women, often in discriminatory and racist ways. AI systems also replicate and reinforce racist stereotypes, with facial recognition technology being less accurate on Black and Indigenous faces, leading to further discrimination and harm.

AI and gender-based violence are often treated as separate issues (De Silva de Alwis & Vialle, 2024), but it is important to examine how they intersect. Research highlights the need for a multi-stakeholder approach to address how AI can be used for gender-based violence (The Economist Intelligence, 2021; Chowdhury & Lakshmi, 2023; Ward et al., 2023). This includes improving data protection, integrating human rights frameworks, addressing embedded gendered biases, and ensuring accountability for those who create or use harmful AI (Ward et al., 2023). Feminist AI perspectives are also crucial for understanding and addressing the inequalities built into AI systems. Additionally, clearer regulations are needed to prevent digital harm, as laws in places like the UK and some U.S. states are beginning to address the non-consensual sharing of deepfakes (Duboust et al., 2023). However, ongoing technological advances create uncertainty about how well existing laws can keep up. Addressing the systemic issues, especially misogyny, that fuel technology-facilitated gender-based violence is essential to developing solutions.

CONCLUSION

As far as we know, this research is the first of its kind to present nationally representative, disaggregated data on how people in Canada experience gendered digital harm.

It is among the first of its kind to specifically collect data on and examine the experiences of women and gender-diverse people who are Black, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, youth (aged 18-25), or who have a disability. It is among the first of its kind to disaggregate the experiences of people with visible and invisible disabilities.

This research reveals that digital harm is a pervasive issue, requiring a swift and unified response.

“

[Feeling safe] would mean completely being able to be yourself, to post about your feelings, to talk about political views without people threatening you. Basically, just being able to speak as if you were in a coffee shop with a friend and not have to feel that you were in danger because of what you've posted.”

– Woman with a visible disability

Women, girls, and gender-diverse people deserve to feel safe and empowered to fully engage in online spaces without fear of being targeted because of who they are.

There is an urgent need for an intersectional, human rights and survivor-centered approach, and collaboration across sectors to ensure:

- Women, girls and gender diverse people can safely and fully engage in digital spaces.
- Frontline workers, advocacy groups and all gender equality organizations/community groups are better positioned to address digital harm they experience directly and to support survivors of gendered digital harm.
- People in Canada have practical strategies and resources to develop digital literacy, engage safely in digital spaces, and help end gendered digital harm.
- Policymakers, technology decision makers, and civil society work together to create safer digital spaces while protecting rights and democracy.

Ultimately, the Canadian Women's Foundation calls for increased gendered digital safety in Canada, and a safer digital public sphere for all.

Help End Gender-Based Digital Harm



For more information:

canadianwomen.org/help-end-gender-based-digital-harm

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APPENDIX A: TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, ABUSE, AND HARASSMENT (TFGBV)

TFGBV refers to a spectrum of activities and behaviours that involve technology as a central aspect of perpetuating violence, abuse, or harassment against (both cis and trans) women and girls. This term also captures those who hold intersecting marginalized identities, such as 2SLGBTQQIA, Black, Indigenous, and racialized women; women with disabilities; and women who are socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Activities that fall under the umbrella of TFGBV include;

Doxing

Definition: The act of publicly revealing or publishing private information about an individual without their consent, typically with malicious intent.

Example: Posting someone's home address, phone number, or workplace on social media.

Hate Speech

Definition: Any speech, gesture, conduct, writing, or display that may incite violence or prejudicial action against or by a particular individual or group, or because it disparages or intimidates a particular individual or group.

Example: Online posts that use derogatory terms to insult a racial, ethnic, or religious group.

Threats and Intimidation

Definition: The act of making threats or using intimidation tactics to instill fear or coerce someone into doing or not doing something.

Example: Sending messages threatening physical harm if the recipient does not comply with demands.

Trolling

Definition: Deliberately posting provocative, inflammatory, or off-topic messages in an online community to disrupt discussions or provoke emotional responses.

Example: Posting derogatory comments on a support forum for victims of abuse to upset and disturb the participants.

Voyeurism

Definition: The practice of spying on individuals engaged in private activities without their knowledge or consent, typically for sexual gratification.

Example: Hacking into someone's webcam to watch them in their home without their knowledge.

Impersonation

Definition: Pretending to be someone else, typically to deceive or defraud others.

Example: Creating a fake social media profile using someone else's photos and information to deceive their friends or family.

Spying and Monitoring through Account Hacking or Interception of Private Communications

Definition: Unauthorized access to someone's personal accounts or interception of their private communications.

Example: Hacking into an email account to read private messages or intercepting text messages between individuals.



Online Mobbing

Definition: The collective harassment or bullying of an individual by a group of people online.

Example: A large number of users attacking someone on social media by posting abusive comments, spreading rumors, or sharing defamatory content.

Coordinated Flagging Campaigns

Definition: Organizing a group to systematically flag and report a person's online content to get it removed or the person banned from the platform.

Example: A group of people deciding to repeatedly report someone's YouTube videos for inappropriate content, despite the videos not violating any guidelines.

Sexual Exploitation Resulting from Online Luring

Definition: The act of using the internet to entice or lure someone into a situation where they are sexually exploited.

Example: An adult convincing a minor to meet in person after grooming them online, leading to sexual exploitation.

Defamation

Definition: The act of communicating false statements about a person that often results in damaging their reputation.

Example: Posting false allegations on social media that someone is involved in illegal activities, harming their personal and professional reputation.

Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images (NCDII)

Definition: Sharing intimate images or videos of someone without their consent.

Example: An ex-partner sharing private, explicit photos of their former significant other online without permission.

Image-Based Abuse (Including Both Deepfakes and Shallow Fakes)

Definition: The use and/or distribution of manipulated images or videos, either through sophisticated technology (deepfakes) or simpler editing techniques (shallow fakes).

Example: Creating and sharing a deepfake video that places someone's face on the body of a person in explicit content.

Sextortion

Definition: A form of blackmail where someone is threatened with the exposure of their private, sexual information or images unless they comply with demands.

Example: A person threatening to release nude photos of someone unless they pay a sum of money or provide more explicit material.

Stalking

Definition: Unwanted and/or repeated surveillance or contact by an individual or group toward another person. Stalking behaviors are interrelated to harassment and intimidation and may include following the victim in person or monitoring them.

Example: Continuously sending unwanted messages, showing up at someone's workplace or home, and monitoring their online activity.

APPENDIX B: POLICY REVIEW

November 7, 2024

Alexis-Carlota Cochrane and Rachel Mansell

In 1995, the Government of Canada committed to using the “gender-based analysis plus” framework (GBA+) to advance gender equality in Canada, as part of the ratification of the United Nations’ Beijing Platform for Action (Women and Gender Equality Canada 2024b). Since then, all federal ministries, most provincial governments, and most Canadian universities and colleges include a gendered lens in their strategic plans, mandate letters, and policy platforms. At the federal level, GBA+ is “a key competency in support of the development of effective programs and policies for Canadians” (Women and Gender Equality Canada 2024c).

Social media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), SnapChat, and TikTok all have content moderation policies.

A brief scan of current international, public, and private policies that address, or notably do not address, TFGBV include:

Government of Canada

- Introduced the Online Harms Act (Bill C-63) to combat harmful content online, including sexual exploitation. Bill C-63, among other measures, establishes a new Digital Safety Commission and Ombudsperson to enforce the framework and support users. It also proposes to enhance laws to protect children from online sexual exploitation; increase criminal penalties for hate-related offences; and require major tech platforms (such as Facebook, Twitch, PornHub) to promptly remove “harmful content”

Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS)

- According to CBC News, In February 2024, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) warned that the “anti-gender movement” poses a significant threat of extreme violence against the 2SLGBTQI+ community, which is expected to persist over the coming year. This warning follows a knife attack on a gender studies class at the University of Waterloo, leading to terrorism charges against the attacker.
- The Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre (ITAC) has been monitoring potential threats, especially during Pride events, noting a rise in online threats and real-world intimidation against trans and drag communities.

Provincial Governments

- Each government has 1 or more Ministries that are responsible for addressing issues related to women, girls and gender-diverse people. However few have policies in place to specifically address TFGBV.

Facebook

- Currently, no specific TFGBV policy.
- According to Facebook Community Standards, satire and self-referential use of slurs may be allowed “if the intent is clear”. The guidelines also state that they may permit some gender-specific spaces/groups (for example support groups) and the policy makes an exception for “certain gender-based cursing in a romantic break-up context.



TikTok

- Currently no specific TFGBV policy, and uses a combination of technology and human moderators to detect and remove accounts and content.
- According to the TikTok safety center, they “do not allow hate speech and hateful ideologies, and will not recommend content that contains negative stereotypes about a person or group with a protected attribute.

X (formerly known as Twitter)

- Currently no specific TFGBV policy and very little content moderation.

Instagram

- Currently no specific TFGBV policy, but does note sex, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation as protected grounds in their community guidelines, which states that “[i]t’s never OK to encourage violence or attack anyone based on their race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, disabilities or diseases.”

YouTube

- Currently no specific TFGBV policy, but does note that women and gender diverse people have a “protected group status.” Mainly relies on user reports to review content.

SnapChat

- Some reference to TFGBV in their community guidelines.
- The community guidelines specifically mention that Snapchat bans “misogynistic... slurs, memes that ridicule or call for discrimination against a protected group, and abuse in the form of intentional deadnaming or misgendering.” Furthermore, Snapchat consults with civil rights organizations, human rights experts, and safety advocates (paragraph 5) to ensure their policies are enforced responsibly and protect vulnerable communities. If users report any hateful content targeting women or other groups, Snapchat says they will remove it and lock the accounts of repeat offenders.

United National Global Digital Compact (adopted on Sept 22 2024)

- Explicitly acknowledges TFGBV as a global problem to be addressed. Stating that “[w]e must urgently eliminate and prevent technology facilitated gender-based and sexual violence, hate speech, discrimination, information manipulation and disinformation, cybercrime, cyberbullying and online child sexual exploitation and abuse. We acknowledge our collective responsibility to establish and maintain robust risk mitigation and redress measures that also protect privacy and freedom of expression.”
- Following the political declaration adopted at the occasion of the United Nations’ 75th anniversary in September 2020, the Secretary-General proposed a Global Digital Compact to be agreed at the Summit of the Future in September 2024 through a technology track involving all stakeholders: governments, the United Nations system, the private sector (including tech companies), civil society, grass-roots organizations, academia, and individuals, including youth. The Global Digital Compact is expected to “outline shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all”

APPENDIX C: CHALLENGING GENDERED DIGITAL HARM GREY LITERATURE REVIEW

November 7, 2024

Alexis-Carlota Cochrane and Rachel Mansell

About Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) is a growing issue in Canada (Cahill et. al, 2024). Women, girls, two spirit, trans, and nonbinary people, especially those with intersectional marginalized identities such as Black, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, immigrant, religious minorities and peoples with a disability, are disproportionately targeted with online hate and harassment (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2019; Khoo, 2021; Arce, 2022; UN Women, 2023). TFGBV can include doxing, hate speech, threats and intimidation, trolling, voyeurism, impersonation, spying and monitoring through hacked or interception of private communications, online mobbing, coordinated flagging campaigns, sexual exploitation, online luring, defamation, non-consensual distribution of intimate images (NCDII), image-based abuse (including both deepfakes and shallow fakes), sextortion and/or stalking (Khoo, 2021) Please see Appendix for additional detail on TFGBV.

To better understand the ways social categorizations like gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, class, and disability uniquely influence experiences of online hate (Centre for Countering Digital Hate, 2023; Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2023), we approach this work through an intersectional feminist lens. The term 'intersectionality' was developed by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, a leading scholar of critical race theory. Crenshaw's approach addresses the ways that social categorizations like gender, race, class, sexuality, religious affinity, disability, and socioeconomic status are interconnected, influencing and impacting each

other (Crenshaw, 2013). For example, in a report on Gender and Online Hate in Canada, YWCA Canada found that marginalized people are most likely to experience online hate (2024). This included Indigenous people, Black people, people with a disability, and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Statistics Canada found that young people with disabilities are almost three times more likely to experience online hate than young people without disabilities (2024b). Furthermore, the most common cyber-related hate crimes are geared towards Black people and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, followed by those targeting the Jewish population (Statistics Canada, 2024b). Plan International also reported that girls are most commonly targeted with online hate based on their ethnic minorities and sexualities (2020).

For many women, girls, two spirit, trans, and nonbinary people online, the experience of misogynist, racist, sexualized, and otherwise prejudicial abuse is normalized. Intersectional gendered harms are not new phenomena but manifest in new forms of oppression while existing within an ever-innovating digital landscape. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become key sites for racism, misogyny, and other forms of prejudicial abuse, often spreading covertly through content like racist and misogynist memes (Matamoros-Fernández & Farkas, 2021; Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2023). Furthermore, UN Women found that "young women, girls, LGBTIQ+ persons, women with disabilities and racialized, minority and migrant groups of women" are at an increased risk of experiencing more extreme online hate, and more frequently (2023). These more severe experiences of online hate for Women, girls, two spirit, trans, and nonbinary people also extend to online gaming spaces. Communications and Gender scholar Kishonna L. Gray finds that women of colour are profiled for failing to "conform to the



white male norm” of many online gaming spaces and often experience racialized sexism that stems from their intersecting, marginalized identities (Gray, 2011; Brisson-Boivin, 2019).

Furthermore, the emergence of generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies introduces new avenues for TFGBV that disproportionately targets women, girls, two spirit, trans and non-binary people. These advances have made AI technologies more accessible to use for harm, requiring little to no technical knowledge to create convincing, professional outputs (Narvali et. al, 2023; Ward et. al, 2023; Henry & Witt, 2024). According to a survey led by the Centre for International Governance Innovation (2023), approximately six out of ten women, transgender and non-binary people have experienced technology-facilitated gender-based violence. While gender-based abuses are not new, technological innovations continually transform and amplify the ways in which they are enacted. This includes producing non-consensual explicit images, referred to as ‘image-based abuse’, fabricating harmful synthetic histories, and even creating templates to automate cyber-harassment (Chowdhury & Lakshmi, 2023).

Intersectional identities increase the likelihood of experiencing online hate (Canadian Women’s Foundation, 2019; Khoo, 2021; Arce, 2022; Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2023; UN Women, 2023). And so, an intersectional feminist lens can help us to understand how women, girls, two spirit, trans, and nonbinary people with intersectional identities experience online hate and harassment more severely, and the unique ways that these instances manifest. Approaching gendered digital harms through an intersectional lens is crucial for understanding and addressing the unique and intensified ways online and technology-facilitated violence, hate, and harassment are perpetrated against marginalized identities and formulate responsive, survivorcentric solutions.

Impact of Technology-Facilitated Gender Based Violence

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) has greatly impacted users’ feelings of safety online and offline. As result, this has led many women, girls, and two spirit, trans, and nonbinary users to filter or restrict comments on their pages, self-censor, limit their digital usage, and finally, leave platforms altogether due to the fear of online hate and what it manifests offline (Plan International, 2020; Joseph, 2022). These digital harms silence many women, girls, and two spirit, trans, and nonbinary users, threatening their rights to freedom of speech (PLAN International, 2020; Global Witness, 2023; UN Women, 2023). Written in the South African context, Global Witness finds that gendered hate speech threatens not only women’s freedom of speech and democracy, but also their “livelihoods, and personal safety” (Global Witness, 2023). For example, creators that stream to Twitch, a video live-streaming service that focuses on video games but also includes various other categories such as music, creative content, Esports, and ‘just chatting’, have reported their income was impacted due to multiple threats of sexual and physical violence that pushed them off the platform (Joseph, 2022). Research produced by Women and Gender Equality Canada found that online violence results in psychological, physical, sexual, and economic harm, causing depression, anxiety, fear and suicidal tendencies, increasing the risk of physical harm or sexual harm, as well as potentially impacting a victim’s ability to find work when their private information or photos are posted without their consent (2024a). The manifestation of physical harm is also seen through anti-Indigenous racism on social media. For example, targeting Wet’suwet’en, mainly Indigenous identifying protesters in which users online encouraged real-life violence against Indigenous peoples on the picket lines (Malone, 2020).

YWCA’s national report on *Centering Survivors and Taking Action on Gendered Online Hate in Canada*, written by Jolin Joseph, argues that “women, girls



and gender diverse people do not enjoy freedom of speech because they are silenced, shut down and driven away from digital platforms by others whose exercise of free speech entails hate speech, intimidation, and threats” (Joseph, 2022). Focusing on the experiences of youth, Plan International found that online hate and abuse resulted in girls feeling unsafe physically, losing self-esteem or confidence, feeling emotionally stressed, and struggling at school (2020). Furthermore, online hate speech can facilitate prejudicial disinformation, or intentionally fabricated, misleading content (Arce, 2022). Disinformation and online hate mobilization was seen throughout coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic that intensified anti-Asian racism in Canada, suggesting Asian, especially Chinese, people were responsible for the spread of the virus (Jonas, 2021).

The fear of online hate and its associated consequences in the physical world such as stalking or physical violence has resulted in the reduction of women, girls, and two spirit, trans, and nonbinary voices and gender-based discussions online and offline. From leaving platforms to fearing the threats associated with discussing the realities of TFGBV in public spaces, online hate is not only silencing people online but discouraging dialogues on gender-based violence more broadly.

Like many digital technologies, artificial intelligence is frequently misused as a tool for gender-based violence that uniquely targets women, girls, two spirit, trans and nonbinary people. Deepfakes, a combination of the words ‘deep learning’ and ‘fake’, use generative artificial intelligence to produce digitally altered images, videos or audios. Women and girls comprise over 99% of individuals targeted using deepfakes (De Silva de Alwis & Vialle, 2024). Concerns about the consequences of deepfakes gained widespread global attention when sexually graphic deepfakes of American musician Taylor Swift went viral in January 2024. The deepfake was viewed over 47 million times in just 17-hours before it was removed from the X (previously Twitter) platform (Henry & Witt, 2024). Women-identifying celebrities are frequent targets

of deepfakes due to their public visibility and the vast number of images available online for manipulation (Henry & Witt, 2024). Over 98% of these deepfakes are pornographic (De Silva de Alwis & Vialle, 2024) and are most often created without the consent of the featured person (Duboust et. al, 2023; Ward et. al, 2023). Deepfakes are also increasingly used to target girls under the age of 18 (minors), as seen in Almendralejo, Spain where classmates created nude deepfakes of 20 victims ranging from ages 11 to 17 (Narvali et. al, 2023).

AI-generated harms also target women, girls, two spirit, trans and non-binary people through the fabrication of harmful synthetic histories. Like image, video and audiobased abuse, this AI-generated content is intended to appear ‘real’ or ‘convincing’, most commonly to share deliberately false information, or ‘fake news’ (Government of Canada, 2023).

Generative AI has been used to intentionally discredit women-identifying journalists and public figures, create false narratives, and even undermine election integrity. Women in journalism, politics, and other public figures are the most frequent targets of harmful AI-generated content (Chowdhury & Lakshmi, 2023). These harms are further exacerbated by the automation of digital harms, such as through the usage of bot accounts. These bots, or ‘robots’, are software applications that are programmed to undertake a certain task. Employing artificial intelligence, these bots can be used to harass users online using credible accounts, or personas, to appear like multiple, different people. They often participate in the sharing of harmful content designed to increase its reach, and can even create ‘harassment templates’ to further automate harms (Chowdhury & Lakshmi, 2023).

AI-generated digital harms like deepfakes and automated harassment have been reported to silence women, girls, two spirit, trans and non-binary people, resulting in detrimental impacts on their mental health such as “anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, social isolation” and damaging their reputation and career prospects (Henry & Witt, 2024). Furthermore, women reported feeling helpless,



unsafe, embarrassed, experiencing emotional harm and harm to personal relationships, with the families of those targeted feeling unsafe, experiencing offline physical harm, and losing or being required to change jobs due to digital harms (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2021). These technologies exponentially affect “politically outspoken, disabled, Black [and] LGBTIQ+” women and girls (PLAN International, 2020, p. 2), diminishing their access to digital public spaces, and endangering their freedom of speech and engagement in democracy (De Silva de Alwis & Vialle, 2024). Previously targeted victims of online violence reported thinking twice about posting again, reducing their online presence, making their profile private, and even stopping their usage of the platform altogether due to the harms they experienced (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2021). Women, girls, two spirit, trans and non-binary people are disproportionately targeted by digital harms, which often push them out of online spaces, discussions, and democratic participation, leaving them further marginalized and silenced. To create an effective response to TFGBV, it is essential to further examine how artificial intelligence is uniquely utilized to facilitate gender-based violence and misogyny.

Policies, Practices, and Interventions

Policies

In 1995, the Government of Canada committed to using the “gender-based analysis plus” framework (GBA+) to advance gender equality in Canada, as part of the ratification of the *United Nations’ Beijing Platform for Action* (Women and Gender Equality Canada 2024b). GBA+ is a framework to take the range of personal attributes such as sex, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age and mental or physical disability and into consideration of various decisions and ensure that these factors do not limit success and inclusion” (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2024c). Since then, all federal ministries, most provincial governments, and most Canadian universities and colleges include a

gendered lens in their strategic plans, mandate letters, and policy platforms. At the federal level, GBA+ is “a key competency in support of the development of effective programs and policies for Canadians” (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2024c).

There is ongoing debate surrounding what is considered hate speech, and what falls under one’s freedom of speech in Canada. According to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, freedom of speech is defined as “the freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication” (Government of Canada, 2024). Therefore, there is some uncertainty surrounding when something is considered hate speech versus when it is protected by freedom of speech. In Canada, hate is defined as “content that expresses detestation or vilification of an individual or group of individuals on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination, within the meaning of the Canadian Human Rights Act, and that, given the context in which it is communicated, is likely to foment detestation or vilification of an individual or group of individuals on the basis of such a prohibited ground” (Government of Canada, 2024). More simply, hate is defined as content that shows strong dislike or intense criticism of a person or group based on protected characteristics such as race, gender, or religion and someone cannot express hate as part of their free speech. However, there is not one single definition of hate when it comes to TFGBV, policy, or other related issues.

Without a consistent definition of hate, TFGBV, and other related terms, it becomes much more difficult to collect information on, and in turn, develop policies and strategies to address TFGBV. Bill C-63, also known as the “Online Harms Bill” was tabled in the House of Commons on May 30, 2024 and contains “a variety of measures to address a range of harmful content online as well as hate speech and hate crimes both online and offline,” including definitions. While some see Bill C-63 as providing muchneeded clarity (Department of Justice Canada, 2024), some 2SLGBTQIA+ communities fear the bill



could “disproportionately curtail their online freedoms and even make them police targets”, Indigenous people are worried the bill could “give more power to law enforcement agencies to target their online organizing, community, and protest activities” and they fear their “acts of resistance would easily be framed as antigovernment or manifestations of Indigenous cyberterrorism, while racialized groups (such as the Black Lives Matter movement) are concerned their posts could be “mistakenly labelled hate speech and removed”, further isolating their voices (Woolf, 2022). These concerns underscore the need for community consultation with marginalized and racialized communities and disaggregated data that highlights intersectional experiences.

Social media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), SnapChat, and TikTok all have content moderation policies. However, For Canadian youth, X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and YouTube are the platforms most consistently reported to engage in these more covert forms of hate speech or using language that is “negative towards a particular group but is not aimed at a particular person who is present,” which MediaSmarts calls *casual prejudice* (Brisson-Boivin, 2019).

In general, clearer regulations are needed to counter digital harms. While the UK’s Ministry of Justice, Taiwan and U.S. states like California, Texas and Virginia consider the sharing of deepfakes without a person’s consent grounds for prosecution, ongoing technological advances create uncertainty about how laws continue to address TFGBV and AI-generated harms (Duboust et. al, 2023).

Practices

There are various proposed strategies to address and combat TFGBV and online hate. The Centre for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) offers the acronym ‘STAR’, which stands for Safety by Design, Transparency, Accountability, and Responsibility, to address the need for regulation of online hate on social media. Similar to Bill C-63, CCDH argues that

technology companies must ensure their products are safe for the public, especially minors; offer transparency of how their algorithms, rules and advertisement functions; take accountability for associated harms of their products; and have real consequences for the harms caused (Centre for Countering Digital Hate, 2023). Public Policy Form’s policy approaches to online hate advocate for the creation of safer environments; improving funding, resources and education to combat hate; and clarifying the distinction between free speech and hate speech (2019). In a national report on *Centering Survivors and Taking Action on Gendered Online Hate in Canada*, written by Jolin Joseph for YWCA, Joseph advocates for increased statistics and resources that display the severity of online hate; increased digital literacy resources; the creation of alternative counternarratives that “reclaim online spaces by offering alternative viewpoints; centering survivor voices; creating opportunities for community education and collective healing; producing preventative measures such as mandatory anti-oppression training; and continuing to innovate the ways in which safe online spaces can be created (2022, p. 33).

However, the disproportionate impact of online hate on Women, girls, two spirit, trans, and nonbinary people must also be uniquely addressed. Bill C-63, the Online Harms Bill, proposes to update the previously proposed Bill C-36, which is the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act, more commonly known as the Prostitution Criminal Law Reform. Maria Woolf argues that while Bill C-36, was created with the aim of combating online hate, it could disproportionately impact the freedoms of 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous, and racialized groups, as well as sex workers and folks at the intersections of these groups (2022). Women, girls, two spirit, trans, and nonbinary people’s experiences of online hate are also not taken seriously when reported to police, often being told to stop posting content or avoiding digital platforms instead of addressing the root of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (Arce, 2022).



Black, Indigenous and racialized individuals may also be less likely to report hate crimes due to concerns about racial profiling and police brutality. Extending to the online gaming space, Kishonna L. Gray advocates for gaming companies, developers, and the larger gaming industry to be more conscious of the ways their games deploy “hegemonic whiteness and masculinity to the detriment of non-white and/or non-male users within the space” (2011, p. 425). Similarly, Jolin Joseph argues that online hate’s origins in racism, misogyny, patriarchy, ableism, homophobia, transphobia and “other corrosive forces of discrimination” must also be addressed (2022, p. 33) when seeking solutions to TFGBV. In order to confront the complexity of technology-facilitated gender-based violence, Cynthia Khoo for Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) emphasizes the importance of intersectional approaches, legislative reform that addresses how TFGBV is enacted on digital platforms, legal obligations for platform and technology companies, as well as additional research, education and training to better understand and combat TFGBV (2020).

Interventions

Various bodies of research in the Canadian context fail to take intersectional approaches with much of the consulted literature approaching topics such as ‘Gender and Digital Harms’ or ‘Race and Digital Harms’, but rarely the intersections of identities like race, gender and digital harms or gender, religion and digital harm. Canadian online hate research also rarely considers the different and unique experiences of Women, girls, two spirit, trans, and nonbinary people with intersectional marginalized identities such as Black, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, immigrant, religious minorities and peoples with disabilities on a national scale. While the Canadian federal government has some requirements based on its “Gender-based Analysis Plus” policy (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2024d), there is currently no standardized requirement for collecting and incorporating the intersectional perspectives of marginalized groups who experience TFGBV

during the policy development process. For example, data available from Statistics Canada focuses on youth aged 15-24 but does not necessarily delve into the various identity markers (such as gender, race, sexuality) that exist within this demographic and how their experiences may vary (Statistics Canada, 2024). Also according to Statistics Canada, one in five women reported experiencing online harassment in the 12 months preceding their survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (Statistics Canada, 2019). Much of Canadian online hate data disaggregates findings to male and female experiences, with a considerable lack of Canadian data that focuses on two spirit, trans, and nonbinary experiences.

The lack of Canadian disaggregated data combined with the absence of consistent definitions for social identifiers adds further complications. For example, Communications Security Establishment Canada defines gender diversity as “noting or relating to a person whose gender identity or gender expression does not conform to socially defined male or female gender norms” which, by definition, includes trans people (2022). However, the term gender diverse has also been defined as persons that “do not identify as exclusively male or exclusively female” which may relate more to non-binary or two spirit persons (Canadian Department of Justice, 2023). These nuances raise concerns about two spirit, trans, and nonbinary inclusion in consulted research and the accuracy of disaggregated data because these experiences are often combined into one category or not noted at all.

Furthermore, there must be an increase in research that focuses on the unique ways Indigenous women, girls, two spirit, trans, and nonbinary people face digital harms. While various research reports note Indigenous people’s increased likelihood of experiencing online hate (Public Policy Forum, 2019; Khoo, 2021; YWCA, 2022; Canadian Women’s Foundation, 2024), many fail to engage beyond quantitative data. Research on Indigenous online safety argues Indigenous people’s distinct experiences, histories, and relationships with technology and the internet must also be considered



to address the unique ways online harms impact Indigenous communities (Archipel Research and Consulting Inc, 2024). However, the report also notes how Indigenous participants have repeatedly shared their experiences without seeing tangible improvements, leading to distrust and consultation fatigue. Therefore, consultation with Indigenous communities, as well as more broadly with racialized and minority communities, must be community-grounded and done in reciprocal and accountable ways.

Artificial intelligence and gender-based violence are often explored as two separate phenomena (De Silva de Alwis & Vialle, 2024). However, to effectively respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence, further investigation into how these issues intersect is essential. Research on TFGBV emphasizes the need for multistakeholder engagement and a multidisciplinary approach to address the unique ways AI can be employed as a tool for gender-based violence (The Economist Intelligence, 2021; Chowdhury & Lakshmi, 2023; Ward et. al, 2023). This includes strengthening data protection and privacy laws and integrating human rights frameworks that prioritize user consent and autonomy, addressing embedded gendered biases, and ensuring clear accountability and liability mechanisms are in place for “developers, organizations, and users of AI systems addressing GBV” perpetuating harm (Ward et. al, 2023, p. 9).

Incorporating Feminist AI perspectives that address the inequalities upheld by AI must also be employed to understand these intersections. One example is the International Development Research Centre’s Feminist AI Research Network (FAIR), a collaborative network of scientists, economists and activists working to make AI and emerging technologies more inclusive. FAIR addresses digital biases and develops solutions that reflect “feminist principles” (IDRC, 2024, p. 1). Finally, addressing the underlying systemic inequities that fuel technology-facilitated GBV, particularly misogyny, that drive TFGBV is crucial for developing comprehensive solutions. Such efforts are essential for combating these digital harms, which disproportionately affect women, girls, two spirit, trans and non-binary people.

Capacities of Civil Society Organizations

Published data and literature on the capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the Canadian context is limited. Research from the YWCA advocates for increased resource allocation to support survivors of online hate, but notes funding limitations and lack of long-term granting investment (Joseph, 2022). Various barriers exist for CSOs to support making change, such as dependence on funding cycles, external approvals, and complicated granting processes. In this report, YWCA member associations and other consulted community organizations advocated for simplified, streamlined processes to fund projects responding to online hate and digital harms, as well as an increased investment in creating safer online spaces, such as ensuring content moderators have access to training and therapy support (Joseph, 2022). Furthermore, as CSOs are often on the frontlines of advocacy, they themselves are often targeted by online hate. However, as CSOs are notoriously underfunded and as result, understaffed, they can lack the resources to protect themselves, their staff, and their community members from online hate. YWCA reports that they have seen an escalation of digital hate since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and have even been “Zoom-bombed by white supremacists” (Jonas, 2021).

Building capacity for CSOs is an essential step in better understanding how technology facilitated violence, hate, and harassment are perpetrated against intersectionally marginalized identities. CSOs, especially grassroots organizations, are often community centered, having built trust and a sense of safety with the communities they serve. As such, CSOs can play a core role in “collecting data on online hate and facilitating the reporting of hate incidents” (Housefather, 2019). CSO support could also solve for the lack of trust in law enforcement marginalized communities can experience due to historical and systemic inequalities.

APPENDIX D: SURVEY OF WOMEN AND GENDER-DIVERSE PEOPLE IN CANADA

Preface

This survey aims to understand the severity, frequency, and impact of violence (hate, harassment, abuse) that happens using technology (technology-facilitated violence). The severity, frequency, and impact of technology-facilitated violence can vary depending on individuals' unique combination of identities, many of which have not been thoroughly studied. This research seeks to fill that gap by providing a deeper understanding of these experiences. Your participation will help us gain valuable insights to support those most affected.

Confidentiality and Anonymized Data

Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary, and your responses will be kept strictly confidential. All data collected will be anonymized to ensure that no personal identifiers are linked to your responses. The information gathered will be used solely for research purposes and will be analyzed in aggregate form. By ensuring your privacy, we aim to create a safe space where you can share your experiences openly, contributing to meaningful and impactful research that respects and protects your identity.

1. How old are you?

- ☐ 18-21 years old
- ☐ 22-25 years old
- ☐ 26-32 years old
- ☐ 33-40 years old
- ☐ 41-54 years old
- ☐ 55-64 years old
- ☐ 65+ years old
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

2. What province or territory do you live in?

- ☐ Alberta
- ☐ British Columbia
- ☐ Manitoba
- ☐ New Brunswick
- ☐ Newfoundland and Labrador
- ☐ Northwest Territories
- ☐ Nova Scotia
- ☐ Nunavut
- ☐ Ontario
- ☐ Prince Edward Island
- ☐ Quebec
- ☐ Saskatchewan
- ☐ Yukon

3. Which term(s) best describe(s) your current gender identity?

Note: A cisgender man or woman is a person whose sex assigned at birth is identical to their current gender identity (e.g., a person assigned female at birth who identifies as a woman). Select all that apply.

- ☐ Cisgender man
- ☐ Cisgender woman
- ☐ Trans man
- ☐ Trans woman
- ☐ Gender creative or non-conforming person
- ☐ Non-binary person
- ☐ Self-describe: ____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

4. An ethnic group or origin refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of a person's ancestors. Which ethnicity/cultural origin best describes you? Select all that apply.

- ☐ North American Indigenous Origins (First Nations, Inuit, Métis)
- ☐ African Origins (Central & West African Origins, North African Origins, Southern & East African Origins, etc.)
- ☐ Asian Origins (West Central Asian & Middle Eastern Origins, South Asian Origins, East & Southeast Asian Origins, etc.)
- ☐ Caribbean Origins (Antiguan, Bahamian, Barbadian, Bermudan, Carib, Cuban, Dominican, Grenadian, Guadeloupean, Haitian, Jamaican, Kittitian/Nevisian, Martinican, Montserratian, Puerto Rican, St. Lucian, Trinidadian/Tobagonian, Vincentian/Grenadian, West Indian, Caribbean Origins, etc.)
- ☐ British Origin
- ☐ French Origin
- ☐ Other European Origins (Western European, Northern Europeans, Eastern European, Southern European, etc.)
- ☐ Latin, Central & South America Origins (Arawak, Argentinian, Belizean, Bolivian, Brazilian, Chilean, Colombian, Costa Rican, Ecuadorian, Guatemalan, Guyanese, Honduran, Maya, Mexican, Nicaraguan, Panamanian, Paraguayan, Peruvian, Salvadorean, Uruguayan, Venezuelan, etc.)
- ☐ Oceanian Origins (Australian, New Zealander, Pacific Islanders)

5. What race category best describes you? (please select all that apply)

- ☐ Black (African, Afro-Caribbean, African Canadian descent)
- ☐ East Asian (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese descent)
- ☐ Southeast Asian (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian)
- ☐ Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuk/Inuit)
- ☐ Latinx (e.g., Latin American, Hispanic descent)
- ☐ Middle Eastern (e.g., Arab, Persian, Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, etc.)
- ☐ South Asian (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, etc.)
- ☐ White
- ☐ Another race category best describes me [please specify] _____

6. People are often described by their race or racial background. Do you consider yourself to be a racialized person?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7. According to the Employment Equity Act, people with disabilities means persons who have a long-term or recurring physical, mental health-related, sensory, cognitive or learning impairment and who:

- a) Consider themselves to be disadvantaged by reason of that impairment, or**
- b) Believe that an employer or potential employer is likely to consider them to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of impairment. This includes persons whose functional limitations owing to their impairment have been accommodated in their current job or workplace. Do you consider yourself to be a person with a disability?**

- ☐ Yes, I do identify as a person with an invisible disability(ies)/impairment(s)
- ☐ Yes, I do identify as a person with a visible disability(ies)/impairment(s)
- ☐ No, I do not identify as having a disability/impairment
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

8. Do you experience any ongoing physical, sensory, learning or mental health challenges? Ongoing challenges can be expected to last for at least six months, which may create limitations while participating in society. Ongoing challenges can be permanent OR episodic (i.e., episodes of challenges that 'come and go' over time).

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. Please indicate the challenge(s) that you experience. Select all that apply.

- ☐ Physical challenges
- ☐ Sensory challenges
- ☐ Learning challenges
- ☐ Mental health challenges
- ☐ Cognitive challenges

10. How do you access the internet? Select all that apply.

- ☐ On your personal smartphone or tablet
- ☐ On a smartphone or tablet you share with someone else (e.g. with another family member)
- ☐ On your personal computer (e.g. desktop or laptop)
- ☐ On a personal computer you share with someone else (e.g. with another family member)
- ☐ On a work computer that only you access
- ☐ On a work computer that you share with someone else (e.g. another colleague; hot desks)
- ☐ On a public computer (e.g. at the library, school, or an internet café)
- ☐ I do not access the internet
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

11. Please indicate how often you do the following:

- Send text messages or instant messages (e.g. Whatsapp, WeChat, Signal, Discord)
- Use professional instant messaging software (e.g. MSTeams, Slack, GoogleChat)
- Look at social media or message boards (e.g. Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, Reddit)
- Post on social media or message boards (e.g. Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, Reddit)
- Look at video streaming sites (e.g. TikTok, Reels, YouTube)
- Post on video streaming sites (e.g. TikTok, Reels, YouTube)
- Play online games (e.g. Candy Crush, Fortnite, Halo, Call of Duty)
- Use dating websites or apps (e.g. Hinge, Bumble, Tinder)
- Use apps for on-line shopping, personal banking, or other tasks
- Blog
- Create content for websites
- Create content for social media or video streaming sites (e.g. Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, YouTube)
- Host/Produce podcasts

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Multiple times a day
- ☐ Once a day
- ☐ Few times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Less than once a week
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

12. What kind of an internet user are you? (Select all that apply)

Please think of your presence online and the activities you undertake online while selecting the options applicable to you.

- ☐ Accesses internet for personal use
- ☐ Advocate/activist
- ☐ Blogger
- ☐ Business person/run a business online
- ☐ Creator (e.g. making websites or online content)
- ☐ Gamer
- ☐ Journalist
- ☐ Podcaster
- ☐ Politician
- ☐ Social media influencer
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

13. Do you feel like you have any influence over what you see on the internet?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

14. Would you want to have any influence over what you see on the internet?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

15. Do you feel like you have any influence over what you see on social media platforms?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

16. Would you want to have any influence over what you see on the internet?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

17. Below is a list of resources and services which may be available in your community to help respond to violence that happens online to women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals. For each of these, please rate the effectiveness of resources available in your community to help respond to online gender-based violence on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 is no resources available and 5 being very effective resources.

- Community organizations that support survivors of gender-based violence (e.g. helplines, food banks, shelters, counselling, legal services etc.)
- Not-for-profit or community organizations that work on addressing gender-based violence
- Content moderation by online gaming companies
- Content moderation by social media companies
- Companies that create dating websites/apps
- Companies that create other websites/apps
- Education campaigns in schools
- Government services (e.g. provincial help lines, funding designated for survivors of gender-based violence)

- Information on how to protect yourself online (e.g. how to use privacy settings or block someone online)
- Laws
- Online gender-based violence organizations
- Police
- Public education campaigns
- Technical support for internet security (e.g. information technology/cybersecurity specialists)

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ 1 – Very ineffective resources or services
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 – Very effective resources or services
- ☐ Don't know/not aware of the given resource or service
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

18. On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not important at all and 5 being very important, how important do you think the following mediums/resources are in addressing violence that happens online to women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals?

- Community organizations that support survivors of gender-based violence (e.g. helplines, food banks, shelters, counselling, legal services etc.)
- Not-for-profit or community organizations that work on addressing gender-based violence
- Content moderation by online gaming companies
- Content moderation by social media companies
- Companies that create dating websites/apps
- Companies that create other websites/apps
- Education campaigns in schools
- Government services (e.g. provincial help lines, funding designated for survivors of gender-based violence)
- Information on how to protect yourself online (e.g. how to use privacy settings or block someone online)
- Laws
- Online gender-based violence organizations
- Police
- Public education campaigns
- Technical support for internet security (e.g. information technology/cybersecurity specialists)

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ 1 - Not at all important
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 - Very important

- ☐ Don't know/not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

19. Please rank this list from 1 to 11, placing the organization you think has the most responsibility to help end violence that happens online to women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals at the top (Rank 1) and the organization that you think has the least responsibility at the bottom (Rank 9).

- ☐ Police
- ☐ Social media companies
- ☐ Online gaming companies
- ☐ Companies that create dating websites/apps
- ☐ Companies that create other websites/apps
- ☐ Elementary Schools/Secondary Schools (High Schools)
- ☐ Universities/Colleges
- ☐ Civil society organizations/non-governmental organizations (not-for-profit organizations, community organizations)
- ☐ Law/policymakers
- ☐ Governments
- ☐ Other internet users/Community members
- ☐ Don't know/not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

20. If a woman, girl, or gender-diverse individual you know experienced an incidence of online violence, do you feel like you have the skills or knowledge needed to help them with their problem?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

21. How would you help with their problem?

- ☐ Using skills (e.g. trauma-informed responses, counselling)
- ☐ Using knowledge (e.g. education, support navigating next steps)
- ☐ Using resources (e.g. financial)
- ☐ Something else

22. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that violence that happens online to women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals is prevalent in the following sectors in Canada:

- Politics
- Journalism
- Health
- Education
- Business
- Law Enforcement
- Government
- Social Services
- Non-profit and Volunteer Organizations
- Places of Worship and Religious Organizations
- Arts and Culture
- Housing
- Sports and Recreation

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Don't know/not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

23. How much would you say you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

- Experiencing on-line harassment, hate, and

abuse is not as harmful as experiencing harassment, hate and abuse offline (eg. in a physical setting, like home, work or institution).

- I think it is helpful to engage with people posting negative things about me online.
- If people post negative things about me online, I feel I need to engage with them so that my voice is heard.
- If I see something offensive online, I feel safe engaging with it.
- If I am engaging in a difficult or sensitive conversation, I prefer to have it online instead in-person.
- I think digital platforms (social media, websites, apps) are a good way to teach people about harmful behaviour.
- I think it is helpful to engage with people posting negative things about other groups online.
- I think harmful and negative media content are the same thing.
- Online content promoting physical violence against women and gender-diverse individuals is increasing.
- Online content threatening the psychological and emotional safety of women and gender-diverse individuals communities is increasing.
- Section 319 of Canada's Criminal Code says that communicating statements in any public place that incites hatred against any identifiable group could be guilty of an indictable or punishable offence. Social media platforms are a public place.

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

24. Have you sought out any form of mental health support because of experiences with online hate or harmful content on social media or elsewhere on the Internet?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

25. How harmful would you consider these online behaviours? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not very harmful and 5 is extremely harmful.

- Physically threatened online (e.g. a death threat, rape threat, threat of physical harm)
- Blackmailed online (e.g. threatened to post private information about you/someone you know unless one did something in return, including sextortion)
- Monitored, tracked or spied on online (e.g. by GPS location, or someone keeping track of what you/someone you know say or do online)
- Someone accessing device or social media accounts belonging to you or someone you know without permission
- Called discriminatory names or derogatory cultural terms (e.g. sexist or racist names)
- Spoken to in a way that shames or diminishes you for sharing your personal or political views or content (eg. insults, negative comments)
- Personal nude or sexual images of you/ someone you know shared or shown to someone else or posted online without permission

- Unwanted sexual images sent to you/ someone you know
- Being doxed (e.g. having personal contact information or address posted online without permission)
- Lies posted online about you/someone you know (disinformation)
- Misleading information posted online about you/someone you know (fake news)
- Online impersonation (e.g. someone makes a fake account of you/someone you know)
- Repeatedly contacted by someone you/they don't want to be contacted by
- Networked harassment (i.e. if a group of people organized online attacks against you/ someone you know)
- If you/someone you know experienced harassment online because of your/their gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, gender expression, or other marginalizing factors

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ 1 – Not very harmful
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 – Extremely harmful
- ☐ Don't know/Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

26. Have you ever personally experienced any of the following?

- Physically threatened online (e.g. a death threat, rape threat, threat of physical harm)
- Blackmailed online (e.g. threatened to post private information about you/someone you know unless one did something in return, including sextortion)
- Monitored, tracked or spied on online (e.g. by GPS location, or someone keeping track of what you/someone you know say or do online)
- Someone accessing device or social media accounts belonging to you or someone you know without permission
- Called discriminatory names or derogatory cultural terms (e.g. sexist or racist names)
- Spoken to in a way that shames or diminishes you for sharing your personal or political views or content (eg. insults, negative comments)
- Personal nude or sexual images of you/ someone you know shared or shown to someone else or posted online without permission
- Unwanted sexual images sent to you/ someone you know
- Being doxed (e.g. having personal contact information or address posted online without permission)
- Lies posted online about you/someone you know (disinformation)

- Misleading information posted online about you/someone you know (fake news)
- Online impersonation (e.g. someone makes a fake account of you/someone you know)
- Repeatedly contacted by someone you/they don't want to be contacted by
- Networked harassment (i.e. if a group of people organized online attacks against you/ someone you know)
- Online harassment because of your gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, gender expression, or other identity factors

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

27. What language were these incident(s) in?

- ☐ English
- ☐ French
- ☐ Another language

**28. When did you experience the incident(s)?
Select all that apply.**

- ☐ I am currently experiencing it.
- ☐ Last week
- ☐ Last month
- ☐ Last year
- ☐ 1-3 years ago
- ☐ 3+ years ago

29. What platforms or messaging apps were involved in these incidents? Select all that apply

- ☐ Communication based social media (e.g. Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter))
- ☐ Image sharing social media (e.g. Instagram)
- ☐ Video sharing social media (e.g. Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube)
- ☐ Messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp, Signal, WeChat, QQ, Viber, Telegram)
- ☐ Professional instant messaging software (e.g. MSTeams, Slack, GoogleChat)
- ☐ Message boards (e.g. Reddit, 4Chan, Tumblr)
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Professional websites (e.g. LinkedIn, workplace intranet)
- ☐ Text message (received directly to your phone, not via a separate messaging app e.g. iMessage; text message)
- ☐ Video conferencing apps (e.g. Zoom, Skype, MSTeams)
- ☐ Cloud storage (e.g. iCloud, Dropbox, Google Drive)
- ☐ Tracking program (e.g. GPS phone locator, cellphone monitoring app, girlfriend tracker)
- ☐ Smart home devices (e.g. home security system, cameras, doorbells)
- ☐ Pornography websites
- ☐ Other:
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

30. Where were you when the incident(s) happened? Select all that apply.

- ☐ In your home
- ☐ At work
- ☐ A public place
- ☐ Another in-person environment
- ☐ Somewhere else

31. On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is not impacted at all and 5 is very negatively impacted, how much do you think each of these following areas of your life is impacted by those incidents?

- Ability to engage freely online
- Ability to focus (e.g. on school or work-related tasks)
- Ability to parent effectively
- Close relationships (including friends/family/partner)
- Desire to live (e.g. suicidal feelings)
- Employment or business
- Your financial situation
- Freedom to express your political or personal views
- Mental health (e.g. stress, anxiety, depression)
- Personal reputation
- Physical safety
- Sexual autonomy/freedom

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ 1 – Not impacted at all
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 – Very negatively impacted
- ☐ Don't know/Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

32. Did you take any of the following actions in response to any of these online incidents that you have experienced? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Changed your contact information (e.g. got a new email, phone number, social media account)
- ☐ Changed your profile information (e.g. used a different picture, used a fake name)
- ☐ Deleted or deactivated a social media account
- ☐ Stopped posting about a certain issue
- ☐ Stopped/Reduced posting on a certain platform
- ☐ Stopped participating online altogether
- ☐ Changed the privacy settings on your social media accounts or devices (e.g. made account private or changed your password)
- ☐ Blocked or muted someone (e.g. on social media, their phone number, or email)
- ☐ Took a break from social media
- ☐ Searched for content about yourself online (e.g. Googled your name, set a Google alert for your name, reverse image searched your images)
- ☐ Replaced your device with a new one
- ☐ Changed part of your identity (e.g. how you look, your legal name)
- ☐ Moved to a new address
- ☐ Acted differently in the real world to protect your safety (e.g. changed the routes you normally walk, avoided certain locations)
- ☐ Changed your behaviour in a relationship (e.g. with a romantic partner or coworker)
- ☐ Bought something to add to your security (e.g. home security system, pepper spray, a weapon)
- ☐ Took time off work or school
- ☐ Asked someone else to take on parenting tasks that you would normally handle

- ☐ Avoided social occasions or events
- ☐ Other
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

33. Thinking of the incident(s), do you think you were targeted because of any of the following aspects about yourself? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Your Indigenous identity
- ☐ Your race
- ☐ Your ethnicity or culture
- ☐ Your status as an immigrant
- ☐ Your religion or creed
- ☐ Your language
- ☐ Your accent
- ☐ Your gender
- ☐ Your sexual orientation
- ☐ Your age
- ☐ A physical, mental health or cognitive disability
- ☐ Your neurodivergence
- ☐ Your income level
- ☐ Your clothing
- ☐ Your height or weight
- ☐ Your hair style or colour
- ☐ Your jewellery, religious symbols, or tattoos
- ☐ Your skin tone
- ☐ Your physical characteristics (eyes, nose, arms, legs, etc.)
- ☐ Your beliefs about social or political issues
- ☐ Your vaccination status
- ☐ Other
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

34. Thinking of the incident(s), who was the perpetrator? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Current intimate partner
- ☐ Ex intimate partner
- ☐ Co-worker
- ☐ Another student
- ☐ Client/customer
- ☐ A service provider (social worker, lawyer, government worker)
- ☐ Teacher/coach
- ☐ Family member
- ☐ Friend
- ☐ Someone that you trust
- ☐ Politicians or public authorities
- ☐ Member of an identifiable online group (e.g. community group, religious group or alt-right group)
- ☐ Someone I've never met
- ☐ A random group of people (e.g. online mob)
- ☐ Anonymous person
- ☐ Someone else that you know
- ☐ Could not be determined
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

35. What was the gender of the perpetrator? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Another gender
- ☐ Do not know the gender
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

36. Did you reach out to any of these people or organizations after the incident? Select any that apply.

- ☐ Spouse/Partner
- ☐ Family

- ☐ Friend
- ☐ Someone that you trust
- ☐ Police
- ☐ Lawyer
- ☐ Online platform (e.g. Instagram, YouTube, etc.)
- ☐ Doctor/health care provider
- ☐ Government services
- ☐ Counsellor/therapist/mental health worker
- ☐ Faith-based organization
- ☐ Victim/survivor support organization
- ☐ Helpline
- ☐ Employer/Labour union representative
- ☐ Civil society organization/non-governmental organization (non-profit, advocacy, community organizations)
- ☐ School/University
- ☐ Other
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

37. How effective were the people or organizations you contacted in helping you with the incident?

[ASK FOR EACH SELECTED]

- ☐ Very effective
- ☐ Somewhat effective
- ☐ Somewhat ineffective
- ☐ Completely ineffective
- ☐ Don't know/Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

38. Do you think the act(s) committed against you broke any laws?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

39. What impact did your personal experience(s) of online violence have on you? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Felt alienated / isolated / unwelcome
- ☐ Felt angry or resentful
- ☐ Felt anxious
- ☐ Felt ashamed
- ☐ Felt depressed
- ☐ Felt scared and insecure
- ☐ Felt targeted
- ☐ Felt vulnerable
- ☐ Had safety concerns
- ☐ Had trust issues
- ☐ Felt a sense of injustice
- ☐ Suffered from lower self-esteem, self-confidence, or self-worth
- ☐ Suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder
- ☐ Suffered from psychological distress
- ☐ Experienced discrimination
- ☐ Experienced interpersonal conflicts
- ☐ Experienced normalization of hate
- ☐ Experienced financial losses
- ☐ Experienced poor physical health (e.g., chronic pain, eating disorder, sleep disturbances)
- ☐ Suffered from sexual and reproductive health problems
- ☐ Suffered from physical harm or injury
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

40. How did you cope with the impact of personally experiencing online violence? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Engaged in self-care
- ☐ Built social connections

- ☐ Focused on personal strengths and resilience, practicing positive self-talk, and finding meaning and purpose in the experience
- ☐ Engaged in activism
- ☐ Sought professional help
- ☐ Sought online wellness resources (e.g. trauma-informed practices)
- ☐ Took legal action, such as reporting the incident to law enforcement or community organizations
- ☐ Learned and educated about the causes and impact of hate, harassment, abuse
- ☐ Focused on positive change to address hate
- ☐ Denied or ignored experiences of hate, harassment, abuse
- ☐ Denied aspects of identity that were targeted
- ☐ Suppressed emotions
- ☐ Responded to self or others with anger or aggression
- ☐ Engaged in self-blame
- ☐ Sought revenge
- ☐ Engaged in negative self-talk
- ☐ Engaged in alcohol or drug use
- ☐ Engaged or thought about self-harm or suicidal behaviour
- ☐ Escaped from the reality of experience of hate by using excessive TV, social media, or video games
- ☐ Avoided certain people, situations, or spaces that trigger trauma (unwanted/disruptive emotional, psychological, physical responses)
- ☐ Withdrew from places/spaces I would normally go/use
- ☐ Disengaged from social relationships or community involvement
- ☐ Quit my job/found a new job
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

41. What changes would make you feel safer in online spaces and on social media? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Better moderation of comments
- ☐ More control over DMs (direct messages)
- ☐ Ways to better anonymize yourself
- ☐ Zero tolerance policies for harassment and bullying
- ☐ Ways of reporting online violence to digital platforms
- ☐ Ways of reporting online violence to law enforcement
- ☐ Better resources and services in your community
- ☐ Automatic trigger word censoring
- ☐ Automatic suggestions for seeking support when experiencing online violence
- ☐ Policies that require online spaces and social media to serve the public interest
- ☐ Something else

The following questions are for statistical purposes only.

42. Have you ever been exposed to:

- ☐ Physically threatened online (e.g. a death threat, rape threat, threat of physical harm)
- ☐ Blackmailed online (e.g. threatened to post private information about you/someone you know unless one did something in return, including sextortion)
- ☐ Monitored, tracked or spied on online (e.g. by GPS location, or someone keeping track of what you/someone you know say or do online)
- ☐ Someone accessing device or social media accounts belonging to you or someone you know without permission
- ☐ Called discriminatory names or derogatory cultural terms (e.g. sexist or racist names)

- ☐ Spoken to in a way that shames or diminishes you for sharing your personal or political views or content
- ☐ Personal nude or sexual images of you/ someone you know shared or shown to someone else or posted online without permission
- ☐ Unwanted sexual images sent to you/ someone you know
- ☐ Being doxed (e.g. having personal contact information or address posted online without permission)
- ☐ Lies posted online about you/someone you know
- ☐ Online impersonation (e.g. someone makes a fake account of you/someone you know)
- ☐ Repeatedly contacted by someone you/they don't want to be contacted by
- ☐ Networked harassment (i.e. if a group of people organized online attacks against you/ someone you know)
- ☐ Online harassment because of their gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, gender expression, or other identity factors

43. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following would best describe the gender and/or sexual orientation of the person/people who experienced the incident(s) you witnessed?

Note: A cisgender man or woman is a person whose sex assigned at birth is identical to their current gender identity (e.g., a person assigned female at birth who identifies as a woman).

Select all that apply

- ☐ Cisgender woman (an adult)
- ☐ Girl (a child/youth)
- ☐ Trans Man
- ☐ Trans Woman
- ☐ Gender-diverse individual (adult or youth)
- ☐ Cisgender man (an adult)
- ☐ Boy (a child/youth)
- ☐ Man or boy who is 2SLGBTQIA+ (not heterosexual)
- ☐ Woman or girl who is 2SLGBTQIA+ (not heterosexual)
- ☐ Male public figure (journalist, politician, celebrity, etc.)
- ☐ Female public figure (journalist, politician, celebrity, etc.)
- ☐ Gender-diverse public figure (journalist, politician, celebrity, etc.)
- ☐ Public figure (journalist, politician, celebrity, etc.) who is 2SLGBTQIA+ (not heterosexual)
- ☐ Another gender and/or sexual orientation

44. What language were these incident(s) in?

- ☐ English
- ☐ French
- ☐ Another language

45. When did you witness the incident(s)? Select all that apply.

- ☐ I am currently experiencing it.
- ☐ Last week
- ☐ Last month
- ☐ Last year
- ☐ 1-3 years ago
- ☐ 3+ years ago

46. What platforms or messaging apps were involved in these incidents? Select all that apply

- ☐ Communication based social media (e.g. Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter))
- ☐ Image sharing social media (e.g. Instagram)
- ☐ Video sharing social media (e.g. Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube)
- ☐ Messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp, Signal, WeChat, QQ, Viber, Telegram)
- ☐ Professional instant messaging software (e.g. MSTeams, Slack, GoogleChat)
- ☐ Message boards (e.g. Reddit, 4Chan, Tumblr)
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Professional websites (e.g. LinkedIn, workplace intranet)
- ☐ Text message (received directly to your phone, not via a separate messaging app e.g. iMessage; text message)
- ☐ Video conferencing apps (e.g. Zoom, Skype, MSTeams)
- ☐ Cloud storage (e.g. iCloud, Dropbox, Google Drive)
- ☐ Tracking program (e.g. GPS phone locator, cell phone monitoring app, girlfriend tracker)
- ☐ Smart home devices (e.g. home security system, cameras, doorbells)
- ☐ Pornography websites
- ☐ Other:
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

47. Where were you when you witnessed the incident(s)? Select all that apply.

- ☐ In your home
- ☐ At work
- ☐ A public place
- ☐ Another in-person environment
- ☐ Somewhere else

48. On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is not impacted at all and 5 is very negatively impacted, how much do you think each of these following areas of your life is impacted by witnessing those incidents?

- Ability to engage freely online
- Ability to focus (e.g. on school or work-related tasks)
- Close relationships (including friends/family/partner)
- Ability to parent effectively
- Desire to live (e.g. suicidal feelings)
- Employment or business
- Your financial situation
- Freedom to express your political or personal views
- Mental health (e.g. stress, anxiety, depression)
- Personal reputation
- Physical safety
- Sexual autonomy/freedom

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ 1 - Not impacted at all
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 - Very negatively impacted
- ☐ Don't know/Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

49. Did you take any of the following actions in response to any of these online incidents that you witnessed? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Changed your contact information (e.g. got a new email, phone number, social media account)
- ☐ Changed your profile information (e.g. used a different picture, used a fake name)
- ☐ Deleted or deactivated a social media account
- ☐ Stopped posting about a certain issue
- ☐ Stopped/Reduced posting on a certain platform
- ☐ Stopped participating online altogether
- ☐ Changed the privacy settings on your social media accounts or devices (e.g. made account private or changed your password)
- ☐ Blocked or muted someone (e.g. on social media, their phone number, or email)
- ☐ Took a break from social media
- ☐ Searched for content about yourself online (e.g. Googled your name, set a Google alert for your name, reverse image searched your images)
- ☐ Replaced your device with a new one
- ☐ Changed part of your identity (e.g. how you look, your legal name)
- ☐ Moved to a new address
- ☐ Acted differently in the real world to protect your safety (e.g. changed the routes you normally walk, avoided certain locations)
- ☐ Changed your behaviour in a relationship (e.g. with a romantic partner or coworker)
- ☐ Bought something to add to your security (e.g. home security system, pepper spray, a weapon)
- ☐ Took time off work or school
- ☐ Asked someone to take on parenting tasks that you would normally handle
- ☐ Avoided social occasions or events
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

50. Thinking of the incident(s) you witnessed, do you think they were targeted because of any of the following aspects? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Their Indigenous identity
- ☐ Their race
- ☐ Their ethnicity or culture
- ☐ Their status as an immigrant
- ☐ Their religion or creed
- ☐ Their language
- ☐ Their accent
- ☐ Their gender
- ☐ Their sexual orientation
- ☐ Their age
- ☐ A physical, mental health or cognitive disability
- ☐ Their neurodivergence
- ☐ Their income level
- ☐ Their clothing
- ☐ Their height or weight
- ☐ Their hair style or colour
- ☐ Their jewellery, religious symbols, or tattoos
- ☐ Their skin tone
- ☐ Their physical characteristics (eyes, nose, arms, legs, etc.)
- ☐ Their beliefs about social or political issues
- ☐ Their vaccination status
- ☐ Other:
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

51. Thinking of the incident(s) you witnessed, who was the perpetrator? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Current intimate partner
- ☐ Ex intimate partner
- ☐ Co-worker
- ☐ Another student
- ☐ Client/customer
- ☐ A service provider
- ☐ Teacher/coach
- ☐ Family member
- ☐ Friend
- ☐ Politicians or public authorities
- ☐ Member of an identifiable online group (e.g. community group, religious group or alt-right group)
- ☐ Someone I've never met
- ☐ A random group of people (e.g. online mob)
- ☐ Anonymous person
- ☐ Could not be determined
- ☐ Other:
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

52. What was the gender of the perpetrator? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Another gender
- ☐ Do not know the gender
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

53. Did you reach out to any of these people or organizations after the incident(s) you witnessed? Select any that apply.

- ☐ Spouse/Partner
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Friend
- ☐ Someone you trust
- ☐ A co-worker
- ☐ Police
- ☐ Lawyer
- ☐ Online platform (e.g. Instagram, YouTube, etc.)
- ☐ Doctor/health care worker
- ☐ Government services
- ☐ Counsellor/therapist/mental health worker
- ☐ Faith-based organization
- ☐ Victim support organization
- ☐ Helpline
- ☐ Employer/Labour union representative
- ☐ Civil society organization/non-governmental organization (non-profit, advocacy, community organizations)
- ☐ School/University
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

54. How effective were the people or organizations you contacted in helping you with the incident?

[ASK FOR EACH SELECTED]

- ☐ Very effective
- ☐ Somewhat effective
- ☐ Somewhat ineffective
- ☐ Completely ineffective
- ☐ Don't know/Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

55. Do you think the act(s) you witnessed broke any laws?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

56. What impact did witnessing online violence have on you? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Felt alienated / isolated / unwelcome
- ☐ Felt angry or resentful
- ☐ Felt anxious
- ☐ Felt ashamed
- ☐ Felt depressed
- ☐ Felt scared and insecure
- ☐ Felt targeted
- ☐ Felt vulnerable
- ☐ Had safety concerns
- ☐ Had trust issues
- ☐ Felt a sense of injustice
- ☐ Suffered from lower self-esteem, self-confidence, or self-worth
- ☐ Suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder
- ☐ Suffered from psychological distress
- ☐ Experienced discrimination
- ☐ Experienced interpersonal conflicts
- ☐ Experienced normalization of hate
- ☐ Experienced financial losses
- ☐ Experienced poor physical health (e.g., chronic pain, eating disorder, sleep disturbances)
- ☐ Suffered from sexual and reproductive health problems
- ☐ Suffered from physical harm or injury
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

57. How did you cope with the impact of witnessing online violence? Select all that apply

- ☐ Engaged in self-care
- ☐ Built social connections
- ☐ Focused on personal strengths and resilience, practicing positive self-talk, and finding meaning and purpose in the experience
- ☐ Engaged in activism
- ☐ Sought professional help
- ☐ Sought on-line wellness resources (e.g. trauma-informed practices)
- ☐ Took legal action, such as reporting the incident to law enforcement or community organizations
- ☐ Learned and educated about the causes and impact of hate, harassment and abuse
- ☐ Focused on positive change to address hate
- ☐ Denied or ignored experiences of hate, harassment and abuse
- ☐ Denied aspects of identity that were targeted
- ☐ Suppressed emotions
- ☐ Responded to self or others with anger or aggression
- ☐ Engaged in self-blame
- ☐ Sought revenge
- ☐ Engaged in negative self-talk
- ☐ Engaged in alcohol or drug use
- ☐ Engaged or thought about self-harm or suicidal behaviour
- ☐ Escaped from the reality of experience of hate by using excessive TV, social media, or video games
- ☐ Avoided certain people, situations, or spaces that trigger trauma (unwanted/disruptive emotional, psychological, physical responses)

- ☐ Withdrew from places/spaces I would normally go/use
- ☐ Withdrew or reduced my online participation
- ☐ Disengaged from social relationships or community involvement
- ☐ Quit my job/found a new job
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The following questions are for statistical purposes only

58. How would you describe the community where you live:

- ☐ Urban
- ☐ Suburban
- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Remote
- ☐ Northern
- ☐ Other

59. Were you born in Canada?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

60. How long have you lived in Canada?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11-20 years
- ☐ 21-30 years
- ☐ 31 + years

61. What is your current status in Canada?

- ☐ Canadian citizen
- ☐ Permanent resident
- ☐ Refugee claimant
- ☐ Temporary resident (e.g., migrant worker, international student)
- ☐ Undocumented migrant
- ☐ My current status in Canada is not listed. It is [please specify]

62. Do you identify as...

- ☐ Atheist
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Christian
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Sikh
- ☐ Traditional (Indigenous) Spirituality
- ☐ No religious affiliation
- ☐ I identify as [please specify] _____

63. Do you describe yourself as...

- ☐ Extremely liberal
- ☐ Moderately liberal
- ☐ Slightly liberal
- ☐ Neither liberal nor conservative
- ☐ Slightly conservative
- ☐ Moderately conservative
- ☐ Extremely conservative

64. What is your current relationship status?

- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ In a romantic relationship (e.g., dating)
- ☐ Living common law
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Single
- ☐ Widowed

65. What is your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Asexual
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Gay
- ☐ Heterosexual / Straight
- ☐ Lesbian
- ☐ Pansexual
- ☐ Queer
- ☐ Questioning
- ☐ Two-Spirit
- ☐ I prefer to identify as [please specify] _____

66. What is your highest level of education?

- ☐ No formal education
- ☐ Grade school (primary education)
- ☐ High school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate
- ☐ Trades certificate or diploma
- ☐ College or other non-university certificate or diploma (other than trades certificates or diplomas)
- ☐ University certificate or diploma below the bachelor's level
- ☐ Bachelor's degree (e.g., B.A., B.Sc., B.Ed.)
- ☐ University graduate degree (Master's or Ph.D.)
- ☐ Professional degree (e.g., Medicine, Law, Engineering)
- ☐ My highest level of education is [please specify] _____

67. What is your current employment status?

Select all that apply.

- ☐ Full-time worker (30 hours a week or more)
- ☐ Homemaker
- ☐ Not employed (looking for employment)
- ☐ Not employed (not looking for employment)
- ☐ Part-time worker (Less than 30 hours a week)
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Self-employed, or own your own business
- ☐ Student
- ☐ My current employment status is [please specify]

68. What is your best estimate of your total household income received by all household members, from all sources, before taxes and deductions? Note: Income can come from various sources such as from work, investments, pensions, or government. Examples include Employment Insurance, social assistance, child benefits and other income such as child support, spousal support (alimony), and rental income.

- ☐ No income
- ☐ Less than \$45,000
- ☐ \$45,001 to \$80,000
- ☐ \$80,001 to \$130,000
- ☐ \$130,001 and above
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

69. We're inviting you to participate in an upcoming focus group based on your experiences with the topics covered in this survey. The focus group will either be an open discussion with 5-6 other participants, a paired interview, or one-on-one interview, hosted by CRC Research. Duration: 60-90 minutes

Compensation: If selected and you complete the discussion, you will receive \$100-125 via e-transfer or cheque after the session.

Format: The discussion will take place over Zoom.

This is a great opportunity to share your thoughts and experiences while connecting with others. If you're interested and would like to be further contacted by CRC Research to schedule a time, please provide your information below!

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

A) Contact information

First name: _____

Last name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

B) We understand that everyone's comfort levels with sharing may vary. Below is a list of options available to you. Please select all of the options that you would feel comfortable participating in.

- ☐ Discussion group: 5-6 participants in addition to yourself and a moderator.
- ☐ Paired interview: One other participant in addition to yourself and a moderator.
- ☐ One-on-one interview: Just yourself and the moderator.

C) Consent

- ☐ I would like to participate and consent to having my information shared with CRC Research to be contacted for an online focus group.
- ☐ I do not wish to participate in an online focus group.

Outro

We have come to the end of the survey. Thank you very much for your time. We realize some questions may have been difficult, should you feel the need to seek support, we have included a list of some of the available helplines and other resources that you may contact. Once again, we appreciate the time you took to respond to this survey and share your thoughts and experiences.

Resources list:

<https://canadianwomen.org/support-services/>

This concludes the survey. Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX E: SURVEY OF GENERAL POPULATION IN CANADA

Preface

This survey aims to understand the Canadian public's attitudes and perception about the severity, frequency, and impact of violence (hate, harassment, abuse) that happens using technology (technology-facilitated violence). Ideas about the severity, frequency, and impact of technology-facilitated violence can vary depending on individuals' unique combination of identities, many of which have not been thoroughly studied. This research seeks to fill that gap by providing a deeper understanding of these experiences. Your participation will help us gain valuable insights to support those most affected.

Confidentiality and Anonymized Data

Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary, and your responses will be kept strictly confidential. All data collected will be anonymized to ensure that no personal identifiers are linked to your responses. The information gathered will be used solely for research purposes and will be analyzed in aggregate form. By ensuring your privacy, we aim to create a safe space where you can share your experiences openly, contributing to meaningful and impactful research that respects and protects your identity.

Intro:

Welcome! We are glad to see you here. Thanks for taking the time to participate in our survey. We appreciate your help.

[DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION]

1) How old are you?

- ☐ 18-21 years old
- ☐ 22-25 years old
- ☐ 26-32 years old
- ☐ 33-40 years old
- ☐ 41-54 years old
- ☐ 55-64 years old
- ☐ 65+ years old
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

2) Which province or territory do you live in

- ☐ Alberta
- ☐ British Columbia
- ☐ Manitoba
- ☐ New Brunswick
- ☐ Newfoundland and Labrador
- ☐ Northwest Territories
- ☐ Nova Scotia
- ☐ Nunavut
- ☐ Ontario
- ☐ Prince Edward Island
- ☐ Quebec
- ☐ Saskatchewan
- ☐ Yukon

3) Which term(s) best describe(s) your current gender identity?

Note: A cisgender man or woman is a person whose sex assigned at birth is identical to their current gender identity (e.g., a person assigned female at birth who identifies as a woman).

Select all that apply.

- ☐ Cisgender man
- ☐ Cisgender woman
- ☐ Trans man
- ☐ Trans woman
- ☐ Gender creative or non-conforming person
- ☐ Non-binary person
- ☐ Self-describe: ____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

4) An ethnic group or origin refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of a person's ancestors. Which ethnicity/cultural origin best describes you? Select all that apply.

- ☐ North American Indigenous Origins (First Nations, Inuit, Métis)
- ☐ African Origins (Central & West African Origins, North African Origins, Southern & East African Origins, etc.)
- ☐ Asian Origins (West Central Asian & Middle Eastern Origins, South Asian Origins, East & Southeast Asian Origins, etc.)
- ☐ Caribbean Origins (Antiguan, Bahamian, Barbadian, Bermudan, Carib, Cuban, Dominican, Grenadian, Guadeloupean, Haitian, Jamaican, Kittitian/Nevisian, Martinican, Montserratian, Puerto Rican, St. Lucian, Trinidadian/Tobagonian, Vincentian/Grenadian, West Indian, Caribbean Origins, etc.)
- ☐ British Origin
- ☐ French Origin
- ☐ Other European Origins (Western European, Northern Europeans, Eastern European, Southern European, etc.)
- ☐ Latin, Central & South America Origins (Arawak, Argentinian, Belizean, Bolivian, Brazilian, Chilean, Colombian, Costa Rican, Ecuadorian, Guatemalan, Guyanese, Honduran, Maya, Mexican, Nicaraguan, Panamanian, Paraguayan, Peruvian, Salvadorean, Uruguayan, Venezuelan, etc.)
- ☐ Oceanian Origins (Australian, New Zealander, Pacific Islanders)

**5) What race category best describes you?
(please select all that apply)**

- ☐ Black (African, Afro-Caribbean, African Canadian descent)
- ☐ East Asian (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese descent)
- ☐ Southeast Asian (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian)
- ☐ Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuk/Inuit)
- ☐ Latinx (e.g., Latin American, Hispanic descent)
- ☐ Middle Eastern (e.g., Arab, Persian, Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, etc.)
- ☐ South Asian (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, etc.)
- ☐ White
- ☐ Another race category best describes me [please specify] _____

6) People are often described by their race or racial background. Do you consider yourself to be a racialized person?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7) According to the Employment Equity Act, people with disabilities means persons who have a long-term or recurring physical, mental health-related, sensory, cognitive or learning impairment and who:

a) Consider themselves to be disadvantaged by reason of that impairment, or

b) Believe that an employer or potential employer is likely to consider them to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of impairment. This includes persons whose functional limitations owing to their impairment have been accommodated in their current job or workplace.

- ☐ Yes, I do identify as a person with an invisible disability(ies)/impairment(s)
- ☐ Yes, I do identify as a person with a visible disability(ies)/impairment(s)
- ☐ No, I do not identify as having a disability/impairment
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

8) Do you experience any ongoing physical, sensory, learning or mental health challenges? Ongoing challenges can be expected to last for at least six months, which may create limitations while participating in society. Ongoing challenges can be permanent OR episodic (i.e., episodes of challenges that 'come and go' over time).

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9) Please indicate the challenge(s) that you experience. Select all that apply.

- ☐ Physical challenges
- ☐ Sensory challenges
- ☐ Learning challenges
- ☐ Mental health challenges
- ☐ Cognitive challenges

10) How do you access the internet? Select all that apply.

- ☐ On your personal smartphone or tablet
- ☐ On a smartphone or tablet you share with someone else (e.g. with another family member)
- ☐ On your personal computer (e.g. desktop or laptop)
- ☐ On a personal computer you share with someone else (e.g. with another family member)
- ☐ On a work computer that only you access
- ☐ On a work computer that you share with someone else (e.g. another colleague; hot desks)
- ☐ On a public computer (e.g. at the library, school, or an internet café)
- ☐ I do not access the internet
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

11) Please indicate how often you do each of the following:

- Send text messages or instant messages (e.g. Whatsapp, WeChat, Signal, Discord)
- Use professional instant messaging software (e.g. MSTeams, Slack, GoogleChat)
- Look at social media or message boards (e.g. Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, Reddit)
- Post on social media or message boards (e.g. Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, Reddit)
- Look at video streaming sites (e.g. TikTok, Reels, YouTube)
- Post on video streaming sites (e.g. TikTok, Reels, YouTube)
- Play online games (e.g. Candy Crush, Fortnite, Halo, Call of Duty)
- Use dating websites or apps (e.g. Hinge, Bumble, Tinder)
- Use apps for on-line shopping, personal banking, or other tasks
- Blog
- Create content for websites
- Create content for social media or video streaming sites (e.g. Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, YouTube)
- Host/Produce podcasts

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Multiple times a day
- ☐ Once a day
- ☐ Few times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Less than once a week
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

12) What kind of an internet user are you? (Select all that apply) (randomize list)

Please think of your presence online and the activities you undertake online while selecting the options applicable to you. Select all that apply.

- ☐ Accesses internet for personal use
- ☐ Advocate/activist
- ☐ Blogger
- ☐ Business person/run a business online
- ☐ Creator (e.g. making websites or online content)
- ☐ Gamer
- ☐ Journalist
- ☐ Podcaster
- ☐ Politician
- ☐ Social media influencer
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

13) Do you feel like you have any influence over what you see on the internet?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

14) Would you want to have any influence over what you see on the internet?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

15) Do you feel like you have any influence over what you see on social media platforms?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

16) Would you want to have any influence over what you see on social media platforms?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

17) Do you agree or disagree that Canada is an inclusive society where everyone is provided with equal opportunity to contribute and succeed?

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

18) Do you agree or disagree that sexism is a problem in Canada? (sexism is when women, girls, and gender-diverse people are not treated equally or seen as valuable in society)

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

19) On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not important at all and 5 being very important, how important do you think the following resources/services are in addressing violence that happens online to women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals?

- Civil society organizations/non-governmental organizations (not-for-profit, advocacy, community organizations)
- Content moderation by online gaming companies
- Content moderation by social media companies
- Companies that create dating websites/apps
- Companies that create other websites/apps
- Education campaigns in schools
- Government support (e.g. provincial help lines, funding designated for survivors of gender-based violence)
- Helplines
- Information on how to protect yourself online (e.g. how to use privacy settings or block someone online)
- Laws
- Online gender-based violence organizations
- Police
- Public education campaigns
- Technical support for internet security (e.g. information technology/cybersecurity specialists)

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ 1 - Not at all important
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 - Very important
- ☐ Don't know/not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

The next few questions will ask you to rank how responsible you think certain organizations are for helping to end violence that happens to different groups of people (women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals).

20) Please rank this list from 1 to 11, placing the organization you think has the most responsibility to help end violence that happens online to women at the top (Rank 1) and the organization that you think has the least responsibility at the bottom (Rank 9).

- ☐ Police
- ☐ Social media companies
- ☐ Online gaming companies
- ☐ Companies that create dating websites/apps
- ☐ Companies that create other websites/apps
- ☐ Elementary Schools/Secondary Schools (High Schools)
- ☐ Universities/Colleges
- ☐ Civil society organizations/non-governmental organizations (not-for-profit, community organizations)
- ☐ Law/policymakers
- ☐ Governments
- ☐ Other internet users/Community members
- ☐ Don't know/not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

21) Please rank this list from 1 to 11, placing the organization you think has the most responsibility to help end violence that happens online to girls at the top (Rank 1) and the organization that you think has the least responsibility at the bottom (Rank 9).

- ☐ Police
- ☐ Social media companies
- ☐ Online gaming companies
- ☐ Companies that create dating websites/apps
- ☐ Companies that create other websites/apps
- ☐ Elementary Schools/Secondary Schools (High Schools)
- ☐ Universities/Colleges
- ☐ Civil society organizations/non-governmental organizations (not-for-profit, community organizations)
- ☐ Law/policymakers
- ☐ Governments
- ☐ Other internet users/Community members
- ☐ Don't know/not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

22) Please rank this list from 1 to 11, placing the organization you think has the most responsibility to help end violence that happens online to gender-diverse individuals at the top (Rank 1) and the organization that you think has the least responsibility at the bottom (Rank 9).

- ☐ Police
- ☐ Social media companies
- ☐ Online gaming companies
- ☐ Companies that create dating websites/apps
- ☐ Companies that create other websites/apps
- ☐ Elementary Schools/Secondary Schools (High Schools)
- ☐ Universities/Colleges
- ☐ Civil society organizations/non-governmental organizations (not-for-profit, community organizations)
- ☐ Law/policymakers
- ☐ Governments
- ☐ Other internet users/Community members
- ☐ Don't know/not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

23) How big of an issue do you think violence that happens using technology is for...?

- Men in in Canada
- Women in in Canada
- Transgender individuals in Canada
- Non-binary individuals in Canada
- Non-heterosexual individuals (e.g. Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual/Queer) in Canada
- Disabled individuals in Canada
- Racialized individuals in Canada
- Newcomers to Canada (people who have been in Canada for less than 5 years)
- Immigrants to Canada (not newcomers)
- Refugees to Canada
- Men across the rest of the world
- Women across the rest of the world
- Transgender individuals across the rest of the world
- Non-binary individuals across the rest of the world
- Non-heterosexual individuals (e.g. Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual/Queer) across the rest of the world
- Disabled individuals across the rest of the world
- Racialized individuals across the rest of the world
- Newcomers across the rest of the world (people who have been their new country for less than 5 years)
- Immigrants across the rest of the world (not newcomers)
- Refugees across the rest of the world

[GRID COLUMNS]

- ☐ 1 - Not a problem at all
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5- Very big problem
- ☐ Don't know/Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

The next few questions will ask you about whether you feel like you have the skills/knowledge needed to help different groups of people who might experience violence online (women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals).

24) If a woman you know experienced an incidence of violence online, do you feel like you have the skills or knowledge needed to help them with their problem?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ I don't know any women

25) How would you help with their problem?

- ☐ Using skills (e.g. trauma-informed responses, counselling)
- ☐ Using knowledge (e.g. education, support navigating next steps)
- ☐ Using resources (e.g. financial)
- ☐ Something else [OPEN TEXT]

26) If a girl you know experienced an incidence of violence online, do you feel like you have the skills or knowledge needed to help them with their problem?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ I don't know any girls

27) How would you help with their problem?

- ☐ Using skills (e.g. trauma-informed responses, counselling)
- ☐ Using knowledge (e.g. education, support navigating next steps)
- ☐ Using resources (e.g. financial)
- ☐ Something else

28) If a gender-diverse individual you know experienced an incidence of violence online, do you feel like you have the skills or knowledge needed to help them with their problem?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ I don't know any gender-diverse individuals

29) How would you help with their problem?

- ☐ Using skills (e.g. trauma-informed responses, counselling)
- ☐ Using knowledge (e.g. education, support navigating next steps)
- ☐ Using resources (e.g. financial)
- ☐ Something else [OPEN TEXT]

30) How harmful would you consider these online behaviours? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not very harmful and 5 is extremely harmful.

- Physically threatened online (e.g. a death threat, rape threat, threat of physical harm)
- Blackmailed online (e.g. threatened to post private information about you/someone you know unless one did something in return, including sextortion)
- Monitored, tracked or spied on online (e.g. by GPS location, or someone keeping track of what you/someone you know say or do online)
- Someone accessing device or social media accounts belonging to you or someone you know without permission

- Called discriminatory names or derogatory cultural terms (e.g. sexist or racist names)
- Spoken to in a way that shames or diminishes you for sharing your personal or political views or content (eg. insults, negative comments)
- Personal nude or sexual images of you/ someone you know shared or shown to someone else or posted online without permission
- Unwanted sexual images sent to you/ someone you know
- Being doxed (e.g. having personal contact information or address posted online without permission)
- Lies posted online about you/someone you know (disinformation)
- Misleading information posted online about you/someone you know (fake news)
- Online impersonation (e.g. someone makes a fake account of you/someone you know)
- Repeatedly contacted by someone you/they don't want to be contacted by
- Networked harassment (i.e. if a group of people organized online attacks against you/ someone you know)
- If you/someone you know experienced harassment online because of your/their gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, gender expression, or other marginalizing factors

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ 1 – Not very harmful
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 – Extremely harmful
- ☐ Don't know/Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

31) Experiencing on-line harassment, hate, and abuse is not as harmful as experiencing harassment, hate and abuse offline (eg. in a physical setting, like home, work or institution).

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

32) I think that people have a right to discuss the gender identity of public figures (politicians, celebrities, journalists, etc.) online.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

33) I think that people have a right to discuss the sexual orientation of public figures (politicians, celebrities, journalists, etc.) online.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

34) Who do you think is responsible for addressing violence that happens online to women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals in Canada? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Everyone
- ☐ People who experience violence
- ☐ People with advantages in society based on factors such as higher level of education, higher social status, and wealth, etc.
- ☐ People with disadvantages in society based on their social identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, economic status)
- ☐ Community and non-profit organizations
- ☐ Social institutions (e.g., education and healthcare)
- ☐ Government agencies
- ☐ Companies/organizations that create the technology
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

35) Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that violence happens online to women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals in the following sectors in Canada:

- ☐ Politics
- ☐ Journalism
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Business
- ☐ Law Enforcement
- ☐ Government
- ☐ Social Services
- ☐ Non-profit and Volunteer Organizations
- ☐ Places of Worship and Religious Organizations
- ☐ Arts and Culture
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Sports and Recreation

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Don't know/not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

36) I think that there is enough awareness in Canada about the effects and impact of violence that happens online to women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

37) Have you ever felt unsafe because something negative was said about you online?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

38) What kind of online content made you feel unsafe? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Communication based social media (e.g. Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter))
- ☐ Image sharing social media (e.g. Instagram)
- ☐ Video sharing social media (e.g. Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube)
- ☐ Messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp, Signal, WeChat, Slack, QQ, Viber, Telegram)
- ☐ Message boards (e.g. Reddit, 4Chan, Tumblr)
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Professional websites (e.g. LinkedIn, workplace intranet)
- ☐ Text message (received directly to your phone, not via a separate messaging app e.g. iMessage; text message)
- ☐ Video conferencing apps (e.g. Zoom, Skype, MSTeams)
- ☐ Cloud storage (e.g. iCloud, Dropbox, Google Drive)
- ☐ Tracking program (e.g. GPS phone locator, cell phone monitoring app, girlfriend tracker)
- ☐ Smart home devices (e.g. home security system, cameras, doorbells)
- ☐ Pornography websites
- ☐ Other
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

39) How often do you see negative (derogatory) information online about:

- ☐ Black persons
- ☐ Indigenous persons
- ☐ Jewish persons
- ☐ Muslim persons
- ☐ Women
- ☐ Persons with disabilities (physical, mental health, cognitive)
- ☐ Women with disabilities (physical, mental health, cognitive)
- ☐ Racialized persons/visible minorities
- ☐ Racialized women/visible minority women
- ☐ Persons of minority sexual orientation or gender (2SLGBTQIA+)
- ☐ Transgender individuals
- ☐ Non-binary individuals
- ☐ Refugees
- ☐ Immigrants
- ☐ Someone's height or weight
- ☐ Someone's hair style or colour
- ☐ Someone's jewellery, religious symbols, clothing or tattoos
- ☐ Someone's skin tone
- ☐ Someone's physical characteristics (eyes, nose, arms, legs, etc.)

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Every day
- ☐ 3-4 times per week
- ☐ Once per week
- ☐ 2-3 times per month
- ☐ Less than once per month
- ☐ I've never seen this

40) Where do you see this content? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Communication based social media (e.g. Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter))
- ☐ Image sharing social media (e.g. Instagram)
- ☐ Video sharing social media (e.g. Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube)
- ☐ Messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp, Signal, WeChat, Slack, QQ, Viber, Telegram)
- ☐ Professional instant messaging software (e.g. MSTeams, Slack, GoogleChat)
- ☐ Message boards (e.g. Reddit, 4Chan, Tumblr)
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Professional websites (e.g. LinkedIn, workplace intranet)
- ☐ Text message (received directly to your phone, not via a separate messaging app e.g. iMessage; text message)
- ☐ Video conferencing apps (e.g. Zoom, Skype, MSTeams)
- ☐ Cloud storage (e.g. iCloud, Dropbox, Google Drive)
- ☐ Tracking program (e.g. GPS phone locator, cell phone monitoring app, girlfriend tracker)
- ☐ Smart home devices (e.g. home security system, cameras, doorbells)
- ☐ Pornography websites
- ☐ Other
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

41) I think it is the role of technology companies to make sure that nothing hateful or violent against a particular group(s) is posted.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

42) Do you feel like you have to intervene if you witness violence that happens online to women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

43) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

- I think it is helpful to engage with people posting negative things about me online.
- If I see something offensive online, I feel safe engaging with it.
- If people post negative things about me online, I feel I need to engage with them so that my voice is heard.
- If I am engaging in a difficult or sensitive conversation, I prefer to have it online instead of in-person.
- I think digital platforms (social media, websites, apps) are a good way to teach people about harmful behaviour.
- I think it is helpful to engage with people posting negative things about other groups online.
- I think harmful and negative media content are the same thing.
- Online content promoting physical violence against women and gender-diverse individuals is increasing.
- Online content threatening the psychological and emotional safety of women and gender-diverse individual communities is increasing.
- Section 319 of Canada's Criminal Code says that communicating statements in any public place that incites hatred against any identifiable group could be guilty of an indictable or punishable offence. Social media platforms are a public place.

[GRID DOWN]

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

44) Have you sought out any form of mental health support because of experiences with online hate or harmful content on social media or elsewhere on the Internet?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

45) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

- I feel safe from hate, harassment, and abuse online
- We need to make changes so online spaces and social media are safer for everyone
- It is the responsibility of social media companies to keep people safe from hate, harassment, and abuse on their platforms
- I take actions to make sure I can feel safer or shield myself from hate, harassment, and abuse online
- The Internet should serve the public interest

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

46) How confident are you that you would know what to do/say to support someone if they disclosed, they are experiencing or had experienced the following?

- Physical assault in person
- Sexual assault in person
- Emotional and/or psychological abuse in person
- Emotional and/or psychological abuse online
- Sexual violence online
- Physical threats online

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Very confident
- ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Not very confident
- ☐ Not at all confident
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

For each of the following questions, please choose the most correct response.

47) Doxing is:

- ☐ [CORRECT RESPONSE] Publicly revealing or publishing private information about an individual without their consent, typically with malicious intent.
- ☐ Making threats or using intimidation tactics to instill fear or coerce someone into doing or not doing something.
- ☐ Deliberately posting provocative, inflammatory, or off-topic messages in an online community to disrupt discussions or provoke emotional responses.
- ☐ A form of blackmail where someone is threatened with the exposure of their private, sexual information or images unless they comply with demands.
- ☐ Organizing a group to systematically flag and report a person's online content to get it removed or the person banned from the platform.

48) Trolling is:

- [CORRECT RESPONSE] Deliberately posting provocative, inflammatory, or off-topic messages in an online community to disrupt discussions or provoke emotional responses.
- Publicly revealing or publishing private information about an individual without their consent, typically with malicious intent.
- Making threats or using intimidation tactics to instill fear or coerce someone into doing or not doing something
- A form of blackmail where someone is threatened with the exposure of their private, sexual information or images unless they comply with demands.
- Organizing a group to systematically flag and report a person's online content to get it removed or the person banned from the platform.

49) A coordinated flagging campaign is:

- [CORRECT RESPONSE] Organizing a group to systematically flag and report a person's online content to get it removed or the person banned from the platform.
- Publicly revealing or publishing private information about an individual without their consent, typically with malicious intent.
- Making threats or using intimidation tactics to instill fear or coerce someone into doing or not doing something.
- Deliberately posting provocative, inflammatory, or off-topic messages in an online community to disrupt discussions or provoke emotional responses.
- A form of blackmail where someone is threatened with the exposure of their private, sexual information or images unless they comply with demands.

50) Sextortion is:

- [CORRECT RESPONSE] A form of blackmail where someone is threatened with the exposure of their private, sexual information or images unless they comply with demands.
- Publicly revealing or publishing private information about an individual without their consent, typically with malicious intent.
- Making threats or using intimidation tactics to instill fear or coerce someone into doing or not doing something.
- Deliberately posting provocative, inflammatory, or off-topic messages in an online community to disrupt discussions or provoke emotional responses.
- The act of using the internet to entice or lure someone into a situation where they are sexually exploited.

51) Defamation is:

- [CORRECT RESPONSE] The act of communicating false statements about a person that often results in damaging their reputation.
- Publicly revealing or publishing private information about an individual without their consent, typically with malicious intent.
- Making threats or using intimidation tactics to instill fear or coerce someone into doing or not doing something.
- Deliberately posting provocative, inflammatory, or off-topic messages in an online community to disrupt discussions or provoke emotional responses.
- Organizing a group to systematically flag and report a person's online content to get it removed or the person banned from the platform.

52) Do you think the following action is a form of violence that happens online to women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals:

- **Doxing**
 - Definition: The act of publicly revealing or publishing private information about an individual without their consent, typically with malicious intent.
 - Example: Posting someone's home address, phone number, or workplace on social media.
- **Hate Speech**
 - Definition: Any speech, gesture, conduct, writing, or display that may incite violence or prejudicial action against or by a particular individual or group, or because it disparages or intimidates a particular individual or group.
 - Example: Online posts that use derogatory terms to insult a racial, ethnic, or religious group.
- **Threats and Intimidation**
 - Definition: The act of making threats or using intimidation tactics to instill fear or coerce someone into doing or not doing something.
 - Example: Sending messages threatening physical harm if the recipient does not comply with demands.
- **Trolling**
 - Definition: Deliberately posting provocative, inflammatory, or off-topic messages in an online community to disrupt discussions or provoke emotional responses.
 - Example: Posting derogatory comments on a support forum for victims of abuse to upset and disturb the participants.
- **Voyeurism**
 - Definition: The practice of spying on individuals engaged in private activities without their knowledge or consent, typically for sexual gratification.
 - Example: Hacking into someone's webcam to watch them in their home without their knowledge.
- **Impersonation**
 - Definition: Pretending to be someone else, typically to deceive or defraud others.
 - Example: Creating a fake social media profile using someone else's photos and information to deceive their friends or family.
- **Spying and Monitoring through Account Hacking or Interception of Private Communications**
 - Definition: Unauthorized access to someone's personal accounts or interception of their private communications.
 - Example: Hacking into an email account to read private messages or intercepting text messages between individuals.
- **Online Mobbing**
 - Definition: The collective harassment or bullying of an individual by a group of people online.
 - Example: A large number of users attacking someone on social media by posting abusive comments, spreading rumors, or sharing defamatory content.
- **Coordinated Flagging Campaigns**
 - Definition: Organizing a group to systematically flag and report a person's online content to get it removed or the person banned from the platform.
 - Example: A group of people deciding to repeatedly report someone's YouTube videos for inappropriate content, despite the videos not violating any guidelines.

- **Sexual Exploitation Resulting from Online Luring**

- Definition: The act of using the internet to entice or lure someone into a situation where they are sexually exploited.
- Example: An adult convincing a minor to meet in person after grooming them online, leading to sexual exploitation.

- **Defamation**

- Definition: The act of communicating false statements about a person that often results in damaging their reputation.
- Example: Posting false allegations on social media that someone is involved in illegal activities, harming their personal and professional reputation.

- **Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images (NCDII)**

- Definition: Sharing intimate images or videos of someone without their consent.
- Example: An ex-partner sharing private, explicit photos of their former significant other online without permission.

- **Image-Based Abuse (Including Both Deepfakes and Shallow Fakes)**

- Definition: The use and/or distribution of manipulated images or videos, either through sophisticated technology (deepfakes) or simpler editing techniques (shallow fakes).
- Example: Creating and sharing a deepfake video that places someone's face on the body of a person in explicit content.

- **Sextortion**

- Definition: A form of blackmail where someone is threatened with the exposure of their private, sexual information or images unless they comply with demands.
- Example: A person threatening to release nude photos of someone unless they pay a sum of money or provide more explicit material.

- **Stalking**

- Definition: Unwanted and/or repeated surveillance or contact by an individual or group toward another person. Stalking behaviors are interrelated to harassment and intimidation and may include following the victim in person or monitoring them.
- Example: Continuously sending unwanted messages, showing up at someone's workplace or home, and monitoring their online activity.

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

53) Who do you think experiences the following:

- **Doxing**
 - Definition: The act of publicly revealing or publishing private information about an individual without their consent, typically with malicious intent.
Example: Posting someone's home address, phone number, or workplace on social media.
- **Hate Speech**
 - Definition: Any speech, gesture, conduct, writing, or display that may incite violence or prejudicial action against or by a particular individual or group, or because it disparages or intimidates a particular individual or group.
 - Example: Online posts that use derogatory terms to insult a racial, ethnic, or religious group.
- **Threats and Intimidation**
 - Definition: The act of making threats or using intimidation tactics to instill fear or coerce someone into doing or not doing something.
 - Example: Sending messages threatening physical harm if the recipient does not comply with demands.
- **Trolling**
 - Definition: Deliberately posting provocative, inflammatory, or off-topic messages in an online community to disrupt discussions or provoke emotional responses.
 - Example: Posting derogatory comments on a support forum for victims of abuse to upset and disturb the participants.
- **Voyeurism**
 - Definition: The practice of spying on individuals engaged in private activities without their knowledge or consent, typically for sexual gratification.
 - Example: Hacking into someone's webcam to watch them in their home without their knowledge.
- **Impersonation**
 - Definition: Pretending to be someone else, typically to deceive or defraud others.
Example: Creating a fake social media profile using someone else's photos and information to deceive their friends or family.
- **Spying and Monitoring through Account Hacking or Interception of Private Communications**
 - Definition: Unauthorized access to someone's personal accounts or interception of their private communications.
Example: Hacking into an email account to read private messages or intercepting text messages between individuals.
- **Online Mobbing**
 - Definition: The collective harassment or bullying of an individual by a group of people online.
Example: A large number of users attacking someone on social media by posting abusive comments, spreading rumors, or sharing defamatory content.
- **Coordinated Flagging Campaigns**
 - Definition: Organizing a group to systematically flag and report a person's online content to get it removed or the person banned from the platform.
Example: A group of people deciding to repeatedly report someone's YouTube videos for inappropriate content, despite the videos not violating any guidelines.
- **Sexual Exploitation Resulting from Online Luring**
 - Definition: The act of using the internet to entice or lure someone into a situation where they are sexually exploited.
Example: An adult convincing a minor to meet in person after grooming them online, leading to sexual exploitation.

- **Defamation**

Definition: The act of communicating false statements about a person that often results in damaging their reputation.

Example: Posting false allegations on social media that someone is involved in illegal activities, harming their personal and professional reputation.

- **Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images (NCDII)**

Definition: Sharing intimate images or videos of someone without their consent.

Example: An ex-partner sharing private, explicit photos of their former significant other online without permission.

- **Image-Based Abuse (Including Both Deepfakes and Shallow Fakes)**

Definition: The use and/or distribution of manipulated images or videos, either through sophisticated technology (deepfakes) or simpler editing techniques (shallow fakes).

Example: Creating and sharing a deepfake video that places someone's face on the body of a person in explicit content.

- **Sextortion**

Definition: A form of blackmail where someone is threatened with the exposure of their private, sexual information or images unless they comply with demands.

Example: A person threatening to release nude photos of someone unless they pay a sum of money or provide more explicit material.

- **Stalking**

Definition: Unwanted and/or repeated surveillance or contact by an individual or group toward another person. Stalking behaviors are interrelated to harassment and intimidation and may include following the

victim in person or monitoring them.

Example: Continuously sending unwanted messages, showing up at someone's workplace or home, and monitoring their online activity.

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ More men than women
- ☐ More women than men
- ☐ More gender-diverse individuals than others
- ☐ All genders more or less the same amount
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

SECOND SECTION - PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

54) Have you ever personally experienced any of the following?

- Physically threatened online (e.g. a death threat, rape threat, threat of physical harm)
- Blackmailed online (e.g. threatened to post private information about you/someone you know unless one did something in return, including sextortion)
- Monitored, tracked or spied on online (e.g. by GPS location, or someone keeping track of what you/someone you know say or do online)
- Someone accessing device or social media accounts belonging to you or someone you know without permission
- Called discriminatory names or derogatory cultural terms (e.g. sexist or racist names)
- Spoken to in a way that shames or diminishes you for sharing your personal or political views or content (eg. insults, negative comments)
- Personal nude or sexual images of you/someone you know shared or shown to someone else or posted online without permission
- Unwanted sexual images sent to you/someone you know
- Being doxed (e.g. having personal contact information or address posted online without permission)
- Lies posted online about you/someone you know
- Online impersonation (e.g. someone makes a fake account of you/someone you know)
- Repeatedly contacted by someone you/they don't want to be contacted by
- Networked harassment (i.e. if a group of people organized online attacks against you/someone you know)
- Experienced harassment online because of your gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, neurodivergence, gender expression, or other marginalizing factors

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

55) What language were these incident(s) in?

- ☐ English
- ☐ French
- ☐ Another language

56) When did you experience the incident(s)? Select all that apply.

- ☐ I am currently experiencing it.
- ☐ Last week
- ☐ Last month
- ☐ Last year
- ☐ 1-3 years ago
- ☐ 3+ years ago

57) What platforms or messaging apps were involved in these incidents? Select all that apply. Select all that apply.

- ☐ Communication based social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)
- ☐ Image sharing social media (e.g. Instagram)
- ☐ Video sharing social media (e.g. Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube)
- ☐ Messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp, Signal, WeChat, Slack, QQ, Viber, Telegram)
- ☐ Message boards (e.g. Reddit, 4Chan, Tumblr)
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Professional websites (e.g. LinkedIn, workplace intranet)
- ☐ Text message (received directly to your phone, not via a separate messaging app e.g. iMessage; text message)
- ☐ Professional instant messaging software (e.g. MTeams, Slack, GoogleChat)
- ☐ Video conferencing apps (e.g. Zoom, Skype, MTeams)
- ☐ Cloud storage (e.g. iCloud, Dropbox, Google Drive)
- ☐ Tracking program (e.g. GPS phone locator, cell phone monitoring app, girlfriend tracker)
- ☐ Smart home devices (e.g. home security system, cameras, doorbells)
- ☐ Pornography websites
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

58) Where were you when the incident(s) happened? Select all that apply

- ☐ In your home
- ☐ At work
- ☐ A public place
- ☐ Another in-person environment
- ☐ Somewhere else [OPEN TEXT]

59) On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is not impacted at all and 5 is very negatively impacted, how much do you think each of these following areas of your life is impacted by those incidents?

- Ability to engage freely online
- Ability to focus (e.g. on school or work-related tasks)
- Ability to parent effectively
- Close relationships (including friends/family/partner)
- Desire to live (e.g. suicidal feelings)
- Employment or business
- Your financial situation
- Freedom to express your political or personal views
- Mental health (e.g. stress, anxiety, depression)
- Personal reputation
- Physical safety
- Sexual autonomy/freedom

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ 1 – Not impacted at all
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 – Very negatively impacted
- ☐ Don't know/Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

60) Did you take any of the following actions in response to any of these online incidents that you have experienced? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Changed your contact information (e.g. got a new email, phone number, social media account)
- ☐ Changed your profile information (e.g. used a different picture, used a fake name)
- ☐ Deleted or deactivated a social media account
- ☐ Stopped posting about a certain issue
- ☐ Stopped/Reduced posting on a certain platform
- ☐ Stopped participating online altogether
- ☐ Changed the privacy settings on your social media accounts or devices (e.g. made account private or changed your password)
- ☐ Blocked or muted someone (e.g. on social media, their phone number, or email)
- ☐ Took a break from social media
- ☐ Searched for content about yourself online (e.g. Googled your name, set a Google alert for your name, reverse image searched your images)
- ☐ Replaced your device with a new one
- ☐ Changed part of your identity (e.g. how you look, your legal name)
- ☐ Moved to a new address
- ☐ Acted differently in the real world to protect your safety (e.g. changed the routes you normally walk, avoided certain locations)
- ☐ Changed your behaviour in a relationship (e.g. with a romantic partner or coworker)
- ☐ Bought something to add to your security (e.g. home security system, pepper spray, a weapon)
- ☐ Took time off work or school
- ☐ Asked someone else to take on parenting tasks that you would normally handle
- ☐ Avoided social occasions or events

- ☐ Other
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

61) Thinking of the incident(s), do you think you were targeted because of any of the following aspects about yourself? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Your race
- ☐ Your ethnicity or culture
- ☐ Your status as an immigrant
- ☐ Your religion or creed
- ☐ Your language
- ☐ Your accent
- ☐ Your gender
- ☐ Your sexual orientation
- ☐ Your age
- ☐ A physical, mental health or cognitive disability
- ☐ Your neurodivergence
- ☐ Your income level
- ☐ Your clothing
- ☐ Your height or weight
- ☐ Your hair style or colour
- ☐ Your jewellery, religious symbols, or tattoos
- ☐ Your skin tone
- ☐ Your physical characteristics (eyes, nose, arms, legs, etc.)
- ☐ Your beliefs about social or political issues
- ☐ Your vaccination status
- ☐ Other
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

62) Thinking of the incident(s), who was the perpetrator(s)? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Current intimate partner
- ☐ Ex intimate partner
- ☐ Co-worker
- ☐ Another student
- ☐ Client/customer
- ☐ A service provider (social worker, lawyer, government worker)
- ☐ Teacher/coach
- ☐ Family member
- ☐ Friend
- ☐ Someone you trust
- ☐ Politicians or public authorities
- ☐ Member of an identifiable online group (e.g. community group, religious group or alt-right group)
- ☐ Someone I've never met
- ☐ A random group of people (e.g. online mob)
- ☐ Anonymous person
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Could not be determined
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

63) What was the gender of the perpetrator? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Another gender
- ☐ Do not know the gender
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

64) Did you reach out to any of these people or organizations after the incident(s)? Select any that apply.

- ☐ Spouse/Partner
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Friend
- ☐ Someone you trust
- ☐ Co-worker
- ☐ Police
- ☐ Lawyer
- ☐ Online platform (e.g. Instagram, YouTube, etc.)
- ☐ Doctor/health care worker
- ☐ Government services
- ☐ Counsellor/therapist/mental health worker
- ☐ Faith-based organization
- ☐ Victim/survivor support organization
- ☐ Helpline
- ☐ Employer/Labour union representative
- ☐ Civil society organization/non-governmental organization (non-profit, community organizations)
- ☐ School/University
- ☐ Other
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

65) How effective were the people or organizations you contacted in helping you with the incident?

- ☐ Very effective
- ☐ Somewhat effective
- ☐ Somewhat ineffective
- ☐ Completely ineffective
- ☐ Don't know/Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer



ADDITIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The following questions are for statistical purposes only

66) How would you describe the community where you live:

- ☐ Urban
- ☐ Suburban
- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Remote
- ☐ Northern
- ☐ Other

67) Were you born in Canada?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

68) How long have you lived in Canada?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11-20 years
- ☐ 21-30 years
- ☐ 31 + years

69) What is your current status in Canada?

- ☐ Canadian citizen
- ☐ Permanent resident
- ☐ Refugee claimant
- ☐ Temporary resident (e.g., migrant worker, international student)
- ☐ Undocumented migrant
- ☐ My current status in Canada is not listed. It is [please specify] _____

70) Do you identify as...

- ☐ Atheist
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Christian
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Sikh
- ☐ Traditional (Indigenous) Spirituality
- ☐ No religious affiliation
- ☐ I identify as [please specify] _____

71) Do you describe yourself as...

- ☐ Extremely liberal
- ☐ Moderately liberal
- ☐ Slightly liberal
- ☐ Neither liberal nor conservative
- ☐ Slightly conservative
- ☐ Moderately conservative
- ☐ Extremely conservative
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

72) What is your current relationship status?

- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ In a romantic relationship (e.g., dating)
- ☐ Living common law
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Single
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

73) What is your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Asexual
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Gay
- ☐ Heterosexual / Straight
- ☐ Lesbian
- ☐ Pansexual
- ☐ Queer
- ☐ Questioning
- ☐ Two-Spirit
- ☐ I prefer to identify as [please specify] _____

74) What is your highest level of education?

- ☐ No formal education
- ☐ Grade school (primary education)
- ☐ High school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate
- ☐ Trades certificate or diploma
- ☐ College or other non-university certificate or diploma (other than trades certificates or diplomas)
- ☐ University certificate or diploma below the bachelor's level
- ☐ Bachelor's degree (e.g., B.A., B.Sc., B.Ed.)
- ☐ University graduate degree (Master's or Ph.D.)
- ☐ Professional degree (e.g., Medicine, Law, Engineering)
- ☐ My highest level of education is [please specify] _____

75) What is your current employment status ? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Full-time worker (30 hours a week or more)
- ☐ Homemaker
- ☐ Not employed (looking for employment)
- ☐ Not employed (not looking for employment)
- ☐ Part-time worker (Less than 30 hours a week)

- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Self-employed, or own your own business
- ☐ Student
- ☐ My current employment status is (please specify) _____

76) What is your best estimate of your total household income received by all household members, from all sources, before taxes and deductions? Note: Income can come from various sources such as from work, investments, pensions, or government. Examples include Employment Insurance, social assistance, child benefits and other income such as child support, spousal support (alimony), and rental income.

- ☐ No income
- ☐ Less than \$45,000
- ☐ \$45,001 to \$80,000
- ☐ \$80,001 to \$130,000
- ☐ \$130,001 and above
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

Outro:

We have come to the end of the survey. Thank you very much for your time. We realize some questions may have been difficult, should you feel the need to seek support, we have included a list of some of the available helplines and other resources that you may contact. Once again, we appreciate the time you took to respond to this survey and share your thoughts and experiences.

Resources list EN: <https://canadianwomen.org/support-services/>

Resources list FR : <https://canadianwomen.org/fr/vous-cherchez-un-soutien/>

This concludes the survey. Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX F: SURVEY OF GENDER JUSTICE AND EQUALITY ORGANIZATIONS

Help Us Challenge Gender-Based Digital Harm

About the Survey

Hate, abuse, and harassment have become normalized in our digital world, with women and gender-diverse people being especially targeted. Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) occurs when people use technology to harm others. The severity, frequency, and impact of technology-facilitated violence can vary depending on individuals' unique combination of identities, and we don't have a lot of information on what's happening in Canada.

The "Challenging Gendered Digital Harm" project by the Canadian Women's Foundation aims to:

- Fill gaps in research on those most affected by TFGBV.
- Provide communities with tools and resources.
- Convene stakeholders to share knowledge and work together to make digital spaces safer.

As part of the national project, this survey seeks to understand how to best support feminist and gender justice organizations, as well as individuals and communities impacted by digital hate, harassment and abuse. Participation will provide important insights on how to support targeted organizations and communities identify and address digital harm through tools, resources and advocacy.

Confidentiality and Anonymized Data

Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary, and your responses will be kept strictly confidential. All data collected will be aggregated and anonymized to

ensure that no personal identifiers are linked to your responses. The information gathered will be used solely for research purposes and will be analyzed in aggregate form. By ensuring your privacy, we aim to create a safe space where you can share your experiences openly, contributing to meaningful and impactful research that respects and protects your identity.

Tips for Success

- Please allow 15-20 minutes to complete the survey.
- Please answer all questions on behalf of your organization (not a specific individual). If you're not sure, please choose the best response or select "not sure."
- It may be easiest to complete the survey in a browser window (not on a phone screen).
- Chrome and Firefox are the best internet browsers to use to complete the survey.
- If you experience any barriers to completing this survey, please let us know either by filling out the question at the end of the survey or emailing us at engagement@canadianwomen.org
- At the end, there will be an option to enter a draw to win one of 3 gift cards valued at \$100.00. You do not have to enter the draw. If you do choose to enter the draw, your contact information will be collected separately and will not be connected to your answers in any way.

Welcome!

We are glad to see you here. Thanks for taking the time to participate in our survey. We appreciate your help.

Please answer all questions on behalf of your organization (not a specific individual). If you're not sure, please choose the best response or select "not sure."

This section is going to ask you about your organization.

1) Is your organization any of the following, or do you or the focus of your work on any of the following?

- 2SLGBTQIA+
- Advisory Council
- Anti-poverty
- Anti-trafficking
- Anti-gender-based violence
- Arts
- Community Organization (Community Legal Clinic, Farm Women's Organization, Multi-service Agency, Refugee, Immigrant or Non-status peoples Organization)
- Disabilities
- Economic Development (Business & Professional Women's Group, Social Enterprise, Training/Employment Organization, Women's Enterprise Bureau)
- Education/Literacy
- Advocacy
- Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre
- Environment Focused
- Faith-based
- First Nations, Métis, Inuit
- Foundation
- Francophone
- Health Services (addiction, assault crisis, counselling, health education, hospital, mental health/wellness)
- National Women's Group
- Collaborative Network
- Research Network
- Older Women's Groups
- Policy/Advocacy

- Provincial Secretariat
- Racialized Community
- Sex Worker Rights
- Sexual Reproductive Rights
- Shelters
- Gender-Based Violence
- Sport Focused
- Unions/Labour organizations
- Women Focused
- Women's Centres
- Youth Centres/Groups

[GRID DOWN]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2) Please tell us how important these different types of technology-related activities are to your work.

- Communication based social media (e.g. Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter))
- Image sharing social media (e.g. Instagram, Snapchat)
- Video sharing social media (e.g. Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube)
- Messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp, Signal, WeChat, Slack, QQ, Viber, Telegram)
- Professional instant messaging software (e.g. MTeams, Slack, GoogleChat)
- Message boards (e.g. Reddit, 4Chan, Tumblr)
- Email
- Professional websites (e.g. LinkedIn, workplace intranet)
- Text message (received directly to your phone, not via a separate messaging app e.g. iMessage)
- Video conferencing apps (e.g. Zoom, Skype, MTeams)
- Cloud storage (e.g. iCloud, Dropbox, Google Drive)
- Tracking program (e.g. GPS phone locator, cell phone monitoring app)
- Smart home devices (e.g. building security system, cameras, doorbells)

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Very Important
- ☐ Fairly Important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Slightly important
- ☐ Not at all important
- ☐ We don't use this technology-related activity

3) Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) happens when people use technology to harm others through violence, abuse, or harassment.(for example, digital harassment or online threats to their safety)?

Based on this definition, do you currently work on addressing TFGBV or supporting those who have experienced TFGBV?

- ☐ Yes (select "Yes" even if it was in the past)
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

4) Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) happens when people use technology to harm others through violence, abuse, or harassment. (for example, digital harassment or online threats to their safety)?

Based on this definition, as a result of their work, have any employees or volunteers of your organization experienced TFGBV?

- ☐ Yes (select "Yes" even if it was in the past)
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

5) Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) happens when people use technology to harm others through violence, abuse, or harassment. (for example, digital harassment or online threats to their safety)?

Based on this definition, have any members of the communities you serve experienced TFGBV?

- ☐ Yes (select “Yes” even if it was in the past)
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

6) Do you hear of or address any of these actions in your work?

- Doxing
- Hate Speech
- Threats and Intimidation
- Trolling
- Voyeurism
- Impersonation
- Spying and Monitoring through Account Hacking or Interception of Private Communications
- Online Mobbing
- Coordinated Flagging Campaigns
- Sexual Exploitation Resulting from Online Luring
- Defamation
- Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images (NCDII)
- Image-Based Abuse (Including Both Deepfakes and Shallow Fakes)
- Sextortion
- Stalking

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

7) Has your organization or someone from your organization experienced any of the following in the course of their work (as an employee or volunteer)?

- Physically threatened online (e.g. a death threat, rape threat, threat of physical harm)
- Blackmailed online (e.g. threatened to post private information unless one did something in return, including sextortion)
- Monitored, tracked or spied on online (e.g. by GPS location, or someone keeping track of what your organization says or does online)
- Someone accessing organizational devices or social media accounts without permission
- Called discriminatory names or derogatory cultural terms (e.g. sexist or racist names)
- Spoken to in a way that shames or diminishes you for your organizational or political views or content (eg. insults, negative comments)
- Personal nude or sexual images of someone who works for your organization shared or shown to someone else or posted online without permission because they are a part of your organization
- Unwanted sexual images sent to your organization or someone who works for your organization because they are a part of your organization
- Having personal contact information or address posted online without permission)
- Lies posted online about your organization or someone who works for your organization (disinformation)
- Misleading information posted online about your organization or someone who works for your organization (fake news)
- Online impersonation (e.g. someone makes a fake account of your organization or someone who works for your organization)
- Repeatedly contacted by someone you don't want to be contacted by

- Networked harassment (i.e. if a group of people organized online attacks against your organization or someone who works for your organization)
- Experienced harassment online because of your organization's work with gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, gender expression, or other marginalizing factors or someone who works for your organization's gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, gender expression, or other marginalizing factors

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know/not sure

8) Does your organization have any of these resources in place to support team members who experience TFGBV because of their work?

- Social media/digital communications moderation policies
- Staff/team members dedicated to social media/digital communications
- Internal procedure(s) to report and address instances of TFGBV
- Training for staff/team members who work with social media/digital communications
- Access to external supports (eg. legal services, community of practice, another organization)
- Access to an employee assistance program (EAP, psycho-social services, counselling)
- Useful templates (eg. form responses to digital comments)
- Key terms/definitions of digital harm tactics
- Tips for how to troubleshoot or respond to digital harm in the moment
- Tips on curating your algorithm
- Tips for digital security (online safety)

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know/not sure

This section is going to ask you about your organization's opinions, experiences, and ideas about technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

9) How important do you think the following resources/services are in addressing violence that happens online to women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals?

- Civil society organizations/non-governmental organizations (not-for-profit, advocacy, community organizations)
- Content moderation by online gaming companies
- Content moderation by social media companies
- Companies that create dating websites/apps
- Companies that create other websites/apps
- Education campaigns in schools
- Government support (e.g., funding designated for survivors of gender-based violence)
- Helplines
- Information on how to protect yourself online (e.g. how to use privacy settings or block someone online)
- Laws
- Online gender-based violence organizations
- Police
- Public education campaigns
- Technical support for internet security (e.g. information technology/cybersecurity specialists)

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Not at all important
- ☐ Slightly important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Fairly important
- ☐ Very important

10) Do you think there is any difference in services/ resources provided for women, girls, or gender-diverse individuals? Please explain.

11) Below is a list of resources and services which may be available in your community to help respond to violence that happens online to women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals.

For each one, please rate the effectiveness of resources and services available in your community to help respond to online gender-based violence.

- Community organizations that support survivors of gender-based violence (e.g. helplines, food banks, shelters, counselling, legal services etc.)
- Not-for-profit or community organizations that work on addressing gender-based violence
- Content moderation by online gaming companies
- Content moderation by social media companies
- Companies that create dating websites/apps
- Companies that create other websites/apps
- Education campaigns in schools
- Government services (e.g. provincial help lines, funding designated for survivors of gender-based violence)
- Information on how to protect yourself online (e.g. how to use privacy settings or block someone online)
- Laws
- Online gender-based violence organizations
- Police
- Public education campaigns
- Technical support for internet security (e.g. information technology/cybersecurity specialists)

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ 1 – Very ineffective resources or services
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 – Very effective resources or services
- ☐ Don't know/not aware of the given resource or service
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

12) Please rank this list from 1 to 11, placing the organization you think has the most responsibility to help end violence that happens online to women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals at the top (Rank 1) and the organization that you think has the least responsibility at the bottom (Rank 11).

- Police
- Social media companies
- Online gaming companies
- Companies that create dating websites/apps
- Companies that create other websites/apps
- Elementary Schools/Secondary Schools (High Schools)
- Universities/Colleges
- Civil society organizations/non-governmental organizations (not-for-profit organizations, community organizations)
- Law/policymakers
- Governments
- Other internet users/Community members
- Don't know/not sure

13) Do you think there is any difference in who is most responsible to help end violence that happens online for women, girls, or gender-diverse individuals?



14) If a woman, girl, or gender-diverse individual you know experienced an incidence of online violence, do you feel like you have the skills or knowledge needed to help them with their problem?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Not sure

15) How would you help with their problem?

- Using skills (e.g. trauma-informed responses, counselling)
- Using knowledge (e.g. education, support navigating next steps, provide tools (eg. safety planning))
- Using resources (e.g. financial)
- Something else

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

16) How have experiences with TFGBV impacted your organization/team?

17) How have experiences with TFGBV impacted the communities you serve?

For this next set of questions, imagine that you get to write the ‘rule book’ to eliminate technology-facilitated gender-based violence/hate/harassment.

18) This is a list of skills, knowledge, and resources that could help to eliminate technology-facilitated gender-based violence/hate/harassment (TFGBV). Please select the ones that would be useful for you. Please indicate how useful they would be to your work.

- How to recognize TFGBV and who it impacts the most
- Understand the rise in TFGBV
- How to increase digital security
- How to prevent and address TFGBV, for your organization and for the people served by your organization
- How to manage on-line hate, abuse and harassment (eg. managing settings, reporting, how and when to respond etc.)
- How to advocate for a safer digital public sphere
- How to recognize mis/disinformation, bots, etc.
- How to be an ally/show support for people impacted by digital harm
- How to change narratives of hate and misogyny in digital spaces
- Key terms/definitions related to TFGBV
- Legal remedies and recourses for people/organizations experiencing TFGBV
- Practical tips sheets on digital security in the workplace and for communities being served
- Practical templates for content moderation (eg. sample scripted responses)
- Links to existing resources on TFGBV
- Shareable content for your communications channels (memes, videos, text)

- Latest research on the experiences and impact of digital harm on women, girls and gender-diverse people
- Links to policies, frameworks and governance related to technology-facilitated gender-based violence
- Other

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Not very useful
- ☐ Not at all useful

19) A self-directed e-learning course, with downloadable resources is being developed for individuals impacted by gendered digital harm, the community sector and the general public. How useful do you think this is?

- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Not very useful
- ☐ Not at all useful

20) Why did you choose “{{ Q19 }}” for the previous question?

Previous question: A self-directed e-learning course, with downloadable resources is being developed for individuals impacted by gendered digital harm, the community sector and the general public. How useful do you think this is?

21) Would you consider taking a self-directed e-learning course, with downloadable resources developed for individuals impacted by gendered digital harm, the community sector and the general public?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

22) Why did you choose “{{ Q21 }}” as your answer for the previous question?

Previous question: Would you consider taking a self-directed e-learning course, with downloadable resources developed for individuals impacted by gendered digital harm, the community sector and the general public?

23) Would you recommend a self-directed e-learning course, with downloadable resources developed for individuals impacted by gendered digital harm to clients you serve, people you work with, or people you know?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

24) Why did you choose “{{ Q23 }}” as your answer for the previous question?

Previous Question: Would you recommend a self-directed e-learning course, with downloadable resources developed for individuals impacted by gendered digital harm to clients you serve, people you work with, or people you know?

25) Is there anything else you think we should know about what’s needed to eliminate technology-facilitated gender-based violence/hate/harassment in Canada?

This section is for analytic purposes only.

26) Is your organization:

- ☐ Incorporated as a non-profit
- ☐ A registered charity (if you are both a non-profit and a charity, please select this option)
- ☐ A grassroots organization (not incorporated as a non-profit AND not a registered charity)
- ☐ Another type of organization

27) Is your organization:

Categories based on Statistics Canada

- ☐ Grassroots: 0 employees (all volunteers)
- ☐ Small: 1-4 employees (contract, full or part-time)
- ☐ Medium: 5-19 employees (contract, full or part-time)
- ☐ Large: 20+ employees (contract, full or part-time)

28) Please select which grant(s) you have received from the Canadian Women’s Foundation

- ☐ Teen Healthy Relationship Grant
- ☐ Economic Development Grant
- ☐ Girls’ Fund Grant
- ☐ Investment Readiness Program Grant
- ☐ Rebuilding Lives Grant
- ☐ Community Needs Grant
- ☐ Northern Women and Girls Grant
- ☐ Emerging and Urgent Issues Grant
- ☐ COVID-19 Emergency Funding
- ☐ Not Currently A Grantee
- ☐ Don’t know/not sure
- ☐ Other

29) Do you serve or work with any of the following age groups?

- 18-21 years old
- 22-25 years old
- 26-32 years old
- 33-40 years old
- 41-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65+ years old

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

30) Does your organization work in any of the following provinces?.

- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Northwest Territories
- Nova Scotia
- Nunavut
- Ontario
- Prince Edward Island
- Quebec
- Saskatchewan
- Yukon

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

31) Do you serve or focus your work on any of the following gender identities?

Note: A cisgender man or woman is a person whose sex assigned at birth is identical to their current gender identity (e.g., a person assigned female at birth who identifies as a woman).

- Cisgender men/boys
- Cisgender women/girls
- Trans men/boys
- Trans women/girls
- Gender creative or non-conforming persons
- Non-binary persons

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

32) An ethnic group or origin refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of a person's ancestors.

Does your organization focus on communities from any of these specific ethnicity/cultural origins?

For example, and organization that focuses on First Nations communities would select “yes” for “North American Indigenous Origins (First Nations, Inuit, Métis)”

- North American Indigenous Origins (First Nations, Inuit, Métis)
- African Origins (Central & West African Origins, North African Origins, Southern & East African Origins, etc.)
- Asian Origins (West Central Asian & Middle Eastern Origins, South Asian Origins, East & Southeast Asian Origins, etc.)
- Caribbean Origins (Antiguan, Bahamian, Barbadian, Bermudan, Carib, Cuban Dominican, Grenadian, Guadeloupean, Haitian, Jamaican, Kittitian/Nevisian, Martinican, Montserratian, Puerto Rican, St. Lucian, Trinidadian/Tobagonian, Vincentian/Grenadian, West Indian, Caribbean Origins, etc.)
- British Origin
- French Origin
- Other European Origins (Western European, Northern Europeans, Eastern European, Southern European, etc.)
- Latin, Central & South America Origins (Arawak, Argentinian, Belizean, Bolivian, Brazilian, Chilean, Colombian, Costa Rican, Ecuadorian, Guatemalan, Guyanese, Honduran, Maya, Mexican, Nicaraguan, Panamanian, Paraguayan, Peruvian, Salvadorean, Uruguayan, Venezuelan, etc.)
- Oceanian Origins (Australian, New Zealander, Pacific Islanders)

[GRID DOWN]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

33) Does your organization focus on any specific racialized communities?

For example, an organization that works with the Chinese community would select “yes” for “East Asian (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese descent)” .

- Black (African, Afro-Caribbean, African Canadian descent)
- East Asian (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese descent)
- Southeast Asian (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian)
- Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuk/Inuit)
- Latinx (e.g., Latin American, Hispanic descent)
- Middle Eastern (e.g., Arab, Persian, Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, etc.)
- South Asian (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, etc.)
- White
- Another race category best describes those we serve [please specify]

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

34) Does your organization focus on people with disabilities?

According to the Employment Equity Act, people with disabilities means persons who have a long-term or recurring physical, mental health-related, sensory, cognitive or learning impairment and who:

a) Consider themselves to be disadvantaged by reason of that impairment,

or

b) Believe that an employer or potential employer is likely to consider them to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of impairment.

This includes persons whose functional limitations owing to their impairment have been accommodated in their current job or workplace.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

35) Do you serve any of the following communities?

- Major metropolitan area (1 million people or more)
- Large population centre (100,000 to 999,999 people)
- Medium population centre (between 30,000 and 99,999 people)
- Small population centre (between 1,000 and 29,999 people)
- Small population centre (between 10,000 and 29,999 people)
- Rural (999 people and under)
- Rural (under 10,000 people)

[GRID ACROSS]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

36) We want to ensure that our surveys are as accessible as possible. Do you have any suggestions for future surveys, or is there something that could have made this survey more accessible for you?

37) If you are comfortable, please share the name of your organization

We have come to the end of the survey. Thank you very much for your time.

We realize some questions may have been difficult, should you feel the need to seek support, we have included a list of some of the available helplines and other resources that you may contact.

Once again, we appreciate the time you took to engage in this survey to share your thoughts and experiences.

Resources list English:

<https://canadianwomen.org/support-services/>

Resources list French:

<https://canadianwomen.org/fr/vous-cherchez-un-soutien/>

As a thank you, we would like to offer you a chance to receive 1 of 3 gift cards valued at \$100.00. You do not have to enter the draw. If you do choose to enter the draw, your contact information will be collected separately and will not be connected to your answers in any way.

If you would like to be entered into our draw please click here and a new window will open to collect your information.

If you do not want to enter the draw, please exit this page.



APPENDIX G: GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS PLUS REVIEW

November 25, 2024

Background

The Canadian Women's Foundation's **Challenging Gendered Digital Harm Project** addresses online and technology-facilitated violence, hate, and harassment against diverse women, girls, and gender-diverse communities in Canada. The project's research questions explore four interwoven subjects of study: 1) Experiences of gendered digital violence, 2) Public digital discourse and attitudes/perceptions, 3) Policies, practices and interventions, and 4) Civil society organizational capacity. In collaboration with the Foundation, partners Rachel Mansell, Leger 360, and CRC Research conducted a literature and policy review, quantitative national polling, and supplementary qualitative research from May to December 2024. The research is anticipated to directly impact academics and researchers, policymakers, technology decision makers, civil society, and the public.

GBA+ Overview

Gender-Based Analysis is a process to analyze systemic inequalities and their impacts. This involves assessing how women, men, and gender diverse people may experience programs and initiatives differently (WAGE, 2024). The '+' in GBA+ represents intersectionality, a term coined by critical race scholar Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw. Intersectionality describes the relationships between social identities and systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, and ableism (Crenshaw, 1989). GBA+ is applied to move beyond single categories of analysis and account for the ways in which race, ethnicity, Indigeneity, class, religion, migration status, language, age, dis/ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, and occupation interact and reinforce the experiences of women, men, girls,

boys, and gender-diverse communities. In research, GBA+ is conducted to guard against individual and systemic biases, identify power dynamics, address equity challenges, and build transparency and accountability with research participants and partners.

GBA+ Framework and Methodology

The GBA+ for the Challenging Gendered Digital Harm Project was framed by the research life cycle, focusing on intersectionality and power in agenda setting, research design and methodology, data collection, analysis and interpretation, and knowledge mobilization. It was conducted by GBA+ research consultants, Julia Falco, Chanel Grenaway, and Temma Pinkofsky during the data analysis phase in November 2024. This GBA+ team reviewed the research questions, methodology, quantitative surveys, and qualitative discussion guides and engaged the Foundation in discussions to learn about the research process, practices, and partners. The consultants employed the Foundation's Anti-Racist Intersectional Research Guidelines to assess how the project meets and can improve towards this internal guidance.

GBA+ Findings and Recommendations

The GBA+ revealed strengths and opportunities in four key areas: 1) Target populations and intersectional analysis, 2) Meaningful engagement and decision-making power, 3) Iteration, cultural safety and trauma-informed approach, and 4) Anticipated impacts and benefits.

1) Target Populations and Intersectional Analysis

Strengths: The project employed an intersectional and equity-based approach by identifying women and gender-diverse people who experience



disproportionate rates of digital abuse and prioritizing the following highly targeted populations in the research questions and design: Black and Indigenous women, Two Spirit, trans and non-binary people, women with disabilities. This approach will meet the gap in robust disaggregated data that includes gender, racialization, Indigeneity, ability, sexuality, and location. Demographic questions were designed in alignment with the Foundation's internal guidelines and all questions were meticulously vetted in English and French to ensure race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and disability were framed and translated according to promising practices.

Opportunities: While youth under the age of 18 were included in the overall project, the research was limited to girls and gender-diverse youth over 18 because of specific methodologies required to engage girls under 18. Girls and gender-diverse youth face unique experiences of technology-facilitated violence and harassment, and specific research protocols and resources are required to engage youth under 18 in research. Future research should target youth, including girls and gender-diverse people under 18, to address this gap. In addition to the identified highly targeted populations, women and gender-diverse people engaged in digital sex work experience unique and disproportionate rates of technology-facilitated violence and harassment. Future research should embed a stronger lens to integrate, destigmatize, and address digital occupational violence and hate that sex workers experience on platforms such as OnlyFans.

2) Meaningful Engagement and Decision-Making Power

Strengths: The Foundation developed the proposal for the **Challenging Gendered Digital Harm Project** in response to a call for proposals from the Department of Canadian Heritage. The proposal and Scope of Work were informed by previous research and feedback from Foundation grantees to address Statistics Canada's gap in intersectional data on technology-facilitated violence, hate, and harassment against diverse women, girls, and gender-

diverse communities in Canada. A Project Advisory Committee made up of sector leaders consults on all phases of the project, including research, curriculum development and knowledge mobilization.

Opportunities: The decision-making power for this project rested internally with the Foundation and research partners. Promising practices explore how researchers can challenge traditional power structures and binaries between the decision makers/decision receivers and project implementers/beneficiaries to empower the voices, needs, and interests of the communities most impacted by the subjects of study. The Foundation's Anti-Racist Intersectional Research Guidelines recommends striving for a research process that is an equitable exchange and partnership rather than a process of data extraction. This can be done by engaging communities most impacted by the subjects of study to co-design the methodology and co-identify findings through a Community Advisory Committee, for example. This participatory approach can benefit future research by ensuring diverse representation and knowledge in the research design and strengthening buy-in, participation, mobilization, and uptake of the research and its findings.

3) Iteration, Cultural Safety, and Trauma-Informed Approach

Strengths: The project took an iterative approach to some elements of the methodology, which allowed for reflexive learning and continuous improvement. For example, the facilitator of the first focus groups made suggestions that were adapted into the facilitation of future focus groups and interviews. Trauma-informed principles of confidentiality and choice were prioritized; for example, participants had the option to participate in an interview or dyad should they not wish to share their experiences in a focus group environment. Given the sensitive nature of the research topics and risks of re-traumatization, informed consent was embedded before, during, and after participation in both the quantitative and qualitative methods. Resources for seeking services and support were shared with both focus groups/interviews participants and survey respondents.



Opportunities: The qualitative research faced limitations in meeting some participant targets. As a result, some focus groups could not be facilitated with identity-specific groups and were instead facilitated with a mixed group. Identity-specific groups and facilitators can be difficult to ensure, particularly when working with contract partners, however this is another measure that contributes to cultural safety. For example, many Black and Indigenous women, Two Spirit, trans and non-binary people, and women with disabilities are more likely to attend and fully participate in focus groups by and for their communities. In addition, the presence of Elders for Indigenous focus groups/interviews is recommended as a promising practice for engaging First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities in research.

4) Anticipated Impacts and Benefits

Strengths: The Foundation plans to produce the research in English and French and share the findings through a report, webinars, panel discussions, and a media release. The research is anticipated to directly impact academics and researchers, policymakers, technology decision makers, civil society, and the public and the Foundation hopes to explore bringing affected groups together to advance the research recommendations.

Opportunities: Promising practices highlight the value of engaging research participants until the end of the research process, including in knowledge mobilization. At the minimum, participants should directly receive the research findings and be thanked again for their contributions. In this case, it is recommended that Leger 360 share the research with the individuals who participated in the survey and focus groups/interviews and that the Foundation shares the research directly with its grantee network. The research team may also consider what power dynamics will surface in advancing the research recommendations, and how platforms and power can be shared with survivors of technology-facilitated violence, hate, and harassment.



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