



DECLARATION ON STOPPING VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN and GIRLS

PURPOSE

This Declaration is intended to broadly and publicly signal that Aboriginal peoples, communities and organizations in British Columbia are uniting with a common vision and purpose—to act individually, collectively and with all interested parties—to stop all forms of violence against Aboriginal women and girls.

This Declaration respects the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly during its 62nd session at UN Headquarters in New York City on September 13, 2007; and specifically, Article 22 which states:

1. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration.
2. States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.

As the original Peoples of this land, WE DECLARE:

We respect and honour women and girls;

We are sustained by the values, teachings and laws passed to us by our ancestors who cared for and protected all of our peoples;

We recognize the damage and disruption colonization brought to our communities and families through residential schools, foster care and other assimilation policies that replaced our ancestral ways;

We acknowledge that lateral violence, domestic violence, systemic violence, stranger violence and racism are not “normal” behaviours for our communities to experience but have become “normalized”;

We recognize that all forms of violence require action, and that a holistic approach that provides support across the life-span is required;

We are strong, resilient and courageous and we will heal ourselves and lift our families up; we will reclaim our healthy ways of caring for each other and create safe families and communities wherever we may live;

We will empower our Aboriginal men and women to take up our rightful and traditional roles and to be the solution to healing ourselves, our families and our communities;

We acknowledge that if we do not stand up against violence we are condoning it through our silence and inaction; as such...

...we commit to standing up to end violence against Aboriginal women and girls and call on political, organizational and community leadership everywhere to join us.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

1. Take a public stand against violence.
2. Identify and support community champions.
3. Identify partners; find ways to work together.
4. Find out what resources, people and supports are available in your community, region, provincially or beyond.
5. Start a men's support group.
6. Listen to your women, young men, young women, children and Elders—they will tell you what is needed.
7. Celebrate success.

This Declaration may be adopted or adapted by all leaders, communities, organizations or individuals who commit to stopping violence against Aboriginal women.