

Dec. 3, 2020

To the UTM community:

On December 6, Canada observes a [National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women](#). The day commemorates the 14 women murdered at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal in 1989—and the many other women who have lost their lives to gender-based violence since. It enables an opportunity to condemn misogyny, to understand systemic gender inequalities and to work toward a better future.

Gender-based violence continues to harm women disproportionately, especially Indigenous women, LGBTQ2+ women and women from other disenfranchised populations. COVID-19 has only exacerbated the disparity. During the pandemic, on top of other social, economic and physical pressures, rates of intimate partner violence against women have increased, both [in Canada](#) and around [the world](#). The necessity of social distancing, plus the isolating effect of required lockdowns, have made it harder for abuse survivors to access important support services and find a safe space.

At the University of Toronto, we have a collective responsibility to take action against gender-based violence, both in this challenging year and in the years to come. Most immediately, on December 4, from 10:00am—11:30am, I invite you to attend U of T's [virtual event](#) for Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, organized collectively by the Sexual Violence Prevention & Support Centre, the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering and Hart House. I also encourage you to participate in our ongoing initiatives, coordinated across the tri-campus system, that confront gender-based violence, educate our community and provide support to people in need.

The webpages below describe relevant resources available at U of T and exemplify our collective commitment to equitable action—to supporting, creating and sharing solutions against gender-based discrimination and violence.

- [Community Safety Office](#)
- [Sexual Violence Prevention & Support Centre](#)
- [Sexual & Gender Diversity Office](#)

Yours truly,

Alexandra Gillespie
Vice-President & Principal
University of Toronto Mississauga