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# GOVERNMENT ACTION PLAN ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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2018-2023

**LET'S ACT  
AGAINST  
DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE**

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This publication was produced by the Secrétariat à la condition féminine, in collaboration with the departments and organizations involved in developing the 2018-2023 Government Action Plan on Domestic Violence.

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**T**he consequences of domestic violence are devastating, both for the victims and their families. Domestic violence is a serious act that can shatter a person's life and mark them forever. As Premier, and as a father and a citizen, I cannot bear to think that anyone should have to experience such pain.

We all have a responsibility to take a stand against violence between spouses, to speak up when we see signs of it and to support those around us who may be suffering from its consequences. Together, we must promote relationships based on respect for each other and for our differences.

Although we have taken action in the past, we must step up our efforts. It may be that we can never completely eradicate domestic violence, but we can always do better to prevent and counter it.

Our outrage over such acts must be transformed into concrete actions. That is what this action plan proposes, in order to respond to the concerns and face the challenges of domestic violence. Our message is clear: domestic violence is unacceptable. There will be zero tolerance for psychological, verbal, physical or sexual violence or acts of economic dominance within a couple.

Let's act together, on behalf of all victims.

**Philippe Couillard**

Premier of Québec



Over the years, we've made significant progress in our fight against domestic violence. However, Qu ebec continues to face several challenges related to domestic violence: it is still too often trivialized in the public sphere, and many people are not familiar with the multiple forms that it can take.

The scope and devastating effects of domestic violence, both for the immediate victims and for the children and adolescents exposed to it, must not be underestimated. Domestic violence is not about a loss of self-control. It is a deliberate way of controlling another person. It may take the form of psychological, verbal or economic abuse, or repeated physical and sexual assaults that worsen over time. It is our duty to make every effort to end this social scourge, which affects mostly women.

The fourth government action plan – published since the *Policy on Intervention in Conjugal Violence* adopted in 1995 – reiterates the importance of this issue and the determination of the Qu ebec government to address it. This plan also shows the commitment and mobilization of the government departments and organizations to act to eliminate domestic violence. In total, 56 new commitments will strengthen and enhance the government's actions over the next five years.

These new or enhanced actions aim to continue work to detect domestic violence and to ensure the effectiveness of psychosocial, police, judicial and correctional interventions, both for victims and for people with violent behaviour.

In Qu ebec, domestic violence was first recognized as a societal problem, and no longer strictly a private one, at a time when couples still typically got married. Yet the profile of domestic violence victims has changed significantly over the years. Service providers must adapt their work to meet the challenges arising from the realities of different groups within the population, such as young people, seniors, immigrants, people from ethno-cultural minorities, LGBT people, people with disabilities, and male victims. These are the challenges that we hope to address together with this new action plan, which takes into account the realities of today and tomorrow.

The work that we have been carrying out for the past several decades relies on the valuable contribution of the Qu ebec government's partners in the parapublic, community action and research sectors. Their recommendations have served to enrich our reflection and our endeavours. I would like to thank them not only for the time they have invested in the consultation process, but also for their involvement, their determination and the work they do every day.

**H el ene David**

Minister responsible for Higher Education  
and for the Status of Women



**D**omestic violence is a crime. In a society that cherishes respect, dignity and security of the person as well as gender equality, it cannot be tolerated.

Although most victims are women, domestic violence can affect anyone, regardless of their sex, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic profile or ethnic origin.

It is often difficult for victims to report the abuse they have suffered, whether for emotional, financial, family or other reasons. It is therefore essential for us to set up conditions conducive to building a climate of trust, where victims will feel they are being heard, supported and, above all, protected, so that they can regain control of their lives.

To this end, the Québec government, police forces, judicial actors and community organizations will intensify their efforts to offer victims innovative solutions in order to counter the pernicious effects of domestic violence in various environments. They will also strive to ensure that the judicial system takes prompt action with respect to the victims and perpetrators of violence.

For these reasons, the government action plan calls for structuring measures that aim to help victims report these acts of violence and to get the support they need, when they need it. With its many commitments, this new government action plan will give the actors concerned additional tools and concrete means to face the challenges inherent to domestic violence in Québec.

Domestic violence often leaves indelible marks on its victims. I am therefore proud to see that a consensus is taking shape, through an unprecedented mobilization, so that our society can actively and effectively support those who are vulnerable.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of all actors and partners in developing this plan. The measures it contains are meant to carry hope and inspire change for a more just Québec.

**Stéphanie Vallée**

Minister of Justice  
and Attorney General of Québec

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many different people from the parapublic, community and research sectors participated in developing the 2018-2023 Government Action Plan on Domestic Violence.

We would like to thank all the organizations and individuals from civil society who expressed their views during the consultation process, *Vers un nouveau plan d'action en matière de violence conjugale*, which served to identify the major issues in domestic violence between intimate partners as well as concrete solutions to be put in place to counter this problem.

Their recommendations and expertise served as the basis for the work and discussions of the departments and government organizations that have undertaken to implement, over the coming years, a certain number of actions in response to those issues considered priorities.

### PARTICIPATING DEPARTMENTS AND GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

CNESST	Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (Direction de l'indemnisation des victimes d'actes criminels [Direction de l'IVAC])
CQLC	Commission québécoise des libérations conditionnelles
CSF	Conseil du statut de la femme
D CPP	Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions
ENPQ	École nationale de police du Québec
Famille	Ministère de la Famille (including the Secrétariat aux aînés [SA])
INSPQ	Institut national de santé publique du Québec
ISQ	Institut de la statistique du Québec
MAMOT	Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Occupation du territoire
MEES	Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur
MIDI	Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion
MJQ	Ministère de la Justice (including the Bureau de lutte contre l'homophobie [BLCH])
MSP	Ministère de la Sécurité publique
MSSS	Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux
MTESS	Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale
OPHQ	Office des personnes handicapées du Québec
SAA	Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones (Ministère du Conseil exécutif)
SAJ	Secrétariat à la jeunesse
SCF	Secrétariat à la condition féminine
SHQ	Société d'habitation du Québec

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>CONTEXT</b> .....	1
History .....	2
The broader context of violence against women .....	3
What is domestic violence? .....	3
<b>OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION</b> .....	7
An issue of continuing concern .....	8
A few statistics .....	10
Progress made .....	12
<b>COMPLEMENTARY GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS</b> .....	13
Domestic and family violence among First Nations and the Inuit .....	14
Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021 .....	15
2016-2021 Government Strategy to Prevent and Counteract Sexual Violence .....	16
2017-2022 Governmental Action Plan to Counter Mistreatment of Older Adults .....	16
Concerted Action Plan to Prevent and Counter Bullying 2015-2018 .....	17
<b>CONSULTATIONS</b> .....	19
<b>THE ACTION PLAN AT A GLANCE</b> .....	21
Structure of the Action Plan .....	22
Investments .....	23
<b>ACTIONS</b> .....	25
<b>FOCUS 1</b>	
Prevention, awareness and information .....	26
<b>FOCUS 2</b>	
Detection and psychosocial intervention .....	33
<b>FOCUS 3</b>	
Police, judicial and correctional intervention .....	40
<b>FOCUS 4</b>	
Sharing of expertise and knowledge development .....	46
<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b> .....	53
<b>APPENDIX</b> .....	55
Renewed or recurrent actions .....	56





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# CONTEXT

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## HISTORY

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Since the first women's shelters for victims of domestic violence were set up in the 1970s, services offered in Québec in the area of domestic violence have greatly evolved. In addition to providing a safe haven for victims, many shelters now offer telephone crisis lines, external follow-up, individual and group meetings, and assistance with social-legal, medical or administrative procedures.

Meanwhile, support organizations for spouses who exhibit violent behaviour emerged in the mid-1980s, offering both individual follow-up and group therapy.

Over the years, many organizations have expanded or adapted their interventions to respond to the realities of the individuals struggling with domestic violence who use their services. These organizations include women's centres, crime victims' assistance centres, sexual assault prevention and assistance centres, and institutions in the health and social services network.

In 1986, aiming to reduce social tolerance for domestic violence and to clearly assert its criminal nature, the Ministère de la Justice and the Ministère de la Sécurité publique published a policy on judicial intervention in such cases. Then, in 1995, Québec adopted its *Policy on Intervention in Conjugal Violence*.<sup>1</sup> The three action plans that followed have enabled the Québec

government to carry out concerted action on several fronts with the goal of detecting, preventing and ending domestic violence and providing help for victims.

Government work carried out over the last 30 years has served to consolidate a vast network of resources to aid victims of domestic violence in Québec, to support the deployment of government and community initiatives that focus on raising awareness about domestic violence and its prevention, and to promote the development of psychosocial, judicial and police intervention practices.

The 2012-2017 Government Action Plan on Domestic Violence sought to intensify efforts in order to better ensure the safety and protection of victims of domestic violence, including children, and to improve the assistance and support mechanisms offered to people exhibiting violent behaviour in a domestic context. It also served to implement several initiatives intended specifically for people living in situations that make them particularly vulnerable to domestic violence. Finally, through a dedicated component, it sought to better respond to the particular needs of First Nations and Inuit communities.

The 2018-2023 Government Action Plan on Domestic Violence (Action Plan) seeks to enhance, through 56 new commitments, the efforts made to date to counter this societal issue.

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1. The Québec government released an abridged version of the policy in 1998 under the title *Policy on Intervention in Conjugal Violence: Preventing, Detecting, Ending Conjugal Violence; Highlights*, <http://scf.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/Documents/Violences/Politique-Prevenir-depister-contrer-EN.pdf>.

## THE BROADER CONTEXT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Despite the significant progress accomplished in the area of equality between women and men in the last 20 years in Québec, the 1995 *Policy on Intervention in Conjugal Violence*, which placed the problem of domestic violence within the broader context of violence against women, is still relevant today. Moreover, sexist socialization increases social tolerance for domestic violence.

Even today, domestic violence can still be said to stem largely from the perpetuation of historically unequal relationship dynamics between women and men.

It is therefore important to remember that the inequalities that remain between women and men in various spheres of life have repercussions on the persistence of violent acts against women, including domestic violence.

This observation reinforces the idea that egalitarian socialization of young people and countering sexual and sexist stereotypes in all settings form the keystone for eliminating this form of violence, of which women are the primary targets.

*Each year in Québec, the government supports the organization of activities as part of the Days of Action Opposing Violence Against Women, which take place from November 25 to December 6. In particular, these initiatives serve to raise public awareness with the goal of reducing tolerance for violence against women, including domestic violence.*

## WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?<sup>2</sup>

The conception of domestic violence as explained in the *Policy on Intervention in Conjugal Violence* remains at the heart of the government commitments presented in the current Action Plan.

Domestic violence is characterized by a series of repetitive acts, usually of increasing frequency and intensity. Specialists refer to this progression as the “cycle of violence” (or sometimes “spiral of violence”). In the person committing the abuse, it proceeds according to a defined cycle, through successive phases marked by mounting tension, abuse, rationalization, reconciliation and a calm period. For the victim, these phases correspond to fear, anger, a feeling of responsibility for the violence and, lastly, the hope that the situation will improve. It should be noted that not all of these phases are always present and they do not necessarily follow that order.

2. For more information: <http://www.scf.gouv.qc.ca/violences/violence-conjugale/>.

Domestic violence includes psychological, verbal, physical and sexual abuse as well as acts of financial domination. It is not the result of a loss of control, but is rather a means chosen to dominate another person and assert one's power over that person. Domestic violence can be experienced in a marital, extra-marital or dating relationship, and at any age.<sup>3</sup>

**Psychological abuse** involves putting down the other person: it translates into hurtful attitudes and words, humiliation, belittling, blackmail and neglect. It may also take the form of forced isolation by the abuser, who, often motivated by jealousy, forbids the victim from seeing certain people or restricts the victim's movements outside the house. It damages self-esteem and self-confidence, and fosters doubt in the mind of the victim as to the abuser's responsibility in the situation. The more socially isolated a victim becomes, the more the person becomes vulnerable to other forms of violence. In some cases, abusers may use spiritual beliefs to justify their domination and power over their victims.

**Verbal abuse** is most often a product of psychological abuse: it involves sarcasm, insults, yelling, degrading and humiliating comments, blackmail, threats or orders given in an aggressive manner. Verbal intimidation lays the groundwork for physical violence, creates insecurity or fear and prevents the victim from escaping the situation.

**Physical abuse** asserts the abuser's dominance: it is manifested by hitting and all kinds of physical harm, from pushing to burning, biting or breaking bones, to murder. Physical abuse is often disguised as an accident.

**Sexual abuse** damages the victim's sexual integrity: it goes beyond sexuality itself in the sense that, through violence, the abuser aims to dominate the other person on the most private and intimate level. It involves sexual assaults, harassment, intimidation, manipulation, brutality for the purposes of non-consensual sexual relations, and so on. Certain victims consent to sexual relations in the hopes of maintaining the peace and avoiding violence.

**Economic abuse** is characterized by domination by the abuser that deprives the victim of the financial and material resources necessary to properly run the household. Victims' economic activities are controlled and monitored, such that they do not have the power to make any decisions in this regard, regardless of whether they work outside the home or not. These acts lead to economic dependence.<sup>4</sup>

The real reasons behind domestic violence are often confused with related factors, such as alcohol, drugs or personal or financial difficulties. However, **domestic violence, whether between intimate partners or ex-partners, is a way of controlling the other person; it is not the result of a loss of self-control.** In such a situation, the perpetrator uses multiple strategies to dominate the victim, to make sure the victim doesn't leave or to convince the victim to resume the relationship.

Assaults committed in a domestic context often occur within what is referred to as "the cycle of domestic violence." This cycle, set up and orchestrated by the perpetrator, enables the perpetrator to continue to dominate their partner. In a domestic relationship marked by violence, the cycle is repeated over and over and accelerates over time.

3. Gouvernement du Québec, *Preventing, Detecting, Ending*, 2012-2017 Action Plan on Domestic Violence, 2012, 1, [http://www.scf.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/Documents/Violences/Plan\\_d\\_action\\_2012-2017\\_version\\_anglaise.pdf](http://www.scf.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/Documents/Violences/Plan_d_action_2012-2017_version_anglaise.pdf).

4. Ibid.

Note that domestic violence can be connected to other forms of violence within the family that go beyond the intimate partner relationship.

While the majority of domestic violence victims are still women, the Action Plan aims to prevent and counter domestic violence experienced by any person.

There are other types of violence between intimate partners as well. One example would be violent counterattacks used by the victim to resist the violence or control exerted by their partner and to defend or protect themselves. The same is true in certain situations where violence is not the result of an attempt to gain power or control, but arises during periods of tension within the couple. This type of violence, considered “situational,” may be committed by men or women, and may be reciprocal, especially among young adults.<sup>5</sup>

It is therefore important to make a clear distinction between the notion of domestic violence as it has been defined earlier in the text, that is, a “coercive” type of violence, and other types of violence that may occur between intimate partners. This distinction allows for consideration of the different dynamics, characteristics and effects associated with each type of

violence so that the appropriate interventions can be determined.

***The Québec government recognizes that domestic violence can be perpetrated by either partner, regardless of the person’s sex or gender identity.***

A number of measures have been taken in recent years to support men who are victims, including the production and distribution of a brochure on domestic violence that aims to raise awareness and provide helpful information as well as a list of resources for male victims and the people close to them.

In 2016-2017, the project *Violence dans les relations amoureuses et intimes entre hommes (VRAIH)* sought to prevent domestic violence among gay and bisexual men through cross-training sessions with the various actors concerned (community organizations and police officers). This project illustrates how the government’s approach to this issue is not based solely on a heteronormative conception of intimate relationships.

5. Institut national de santé publique du Québec, *Rapport québécois sur la violence et la santé*, 2018, 131-134, [https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2380\\_rapport\\_quebecois\\_violence\\_sante.pdf](https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2380_rapport_quebecois_violence_sante.pdf).



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# OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION

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## AN ISSUE OF CONTINUING CONCERN

The implementation of the 2012-2017 Government Action Plan on Domestic Violence provided the government and its partners with the opportunity to pursue efforts aimed at preventing and countering this form of violence and to help the people who are victims of it.

The number of victims of domestic violence each year remains unacceptable. The ways in which it is manifested have evolved with new technologies – for example, harassment carried out using mobile devices and social networks. Regardless of its form, the scope and devastating effects of domestic violence should not be underestimated, either for direct victims or for the children and adolescents exposed to it. This Action Plan demonstrates that the government recognizes the severity and complexity of this societal issue and intends to continue its efforts to resolve it, in concert with its partners.

### Ongoing challenges

#### TRIVIALIZATION AND MISUNDERSTANDING OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence concerns society as a whole. Every individual and every milieu can play a part in preventing and countering it. Speaking out against messages that trivialize controlling behaviour in public spaces and taking a clear stand against this type of action contribute to making domestic violence socially unacceptable. Yet to do this, the population must be able to recognize the different facets of

this violence as well as the behaviours, attitudes and prejudices that perpetuate it. General awareness, especially among young people, of this form of violence helps to reduce social tolerance toward it, as does the promotion of egalitarian relationships between women and men.

#### REASSERTING THE UNACCEPTABLE AND CRIMINAL NATURE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

More than 30 years after the Ministère de la Sécurité publique and the Ministère de la Justice adopted the first *Policy on Intervention in Conjugal Violence* (Politique d'intervention en matière de violence conjugale) in 1986, it is still necessary to emphasize the criminal nature of domestic violence. Efforts are still being made to make abusers accountable for their actions and to make the public aware of the fact that, regardless of the circumstances, violent conduct between intimate partners is unacceptable at all times and can, in many cases, constitute a criminal offence.

#### PROMOTION OF EGALITARIAN RELATIONSHIPS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

In Québec, recent surveys conducted using self-reported data depict a disturbing prevalence of violence in intimate relationships among adolescents.<sup>6</sup> According to police data, the rate of infractions committed in a conjugal context toward victims aged 12 to 17 increased by 21.9% from 2008 to 2015.<sup>7</sup> Egalitarian socialization and education and the promotion of relationships based on respect and non-violence therefore represent promising paths for the prevention of violence between intimate partners among the adults of tomorrow. Given that the victims and perpetrators of domestic

6. Institut national de santé publique du Québec, *Rapport québécois sur la violence et la santé*, 2018, 102, [https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2380\\_rapport\\_quebecois\\_violence\\_sante.pdf](https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2380_rapport_quebecois_violence_sante.pdf).

7. Ministère de la Sécurité publique, Direction de la prévention et de la lutte contre la criminalité, statistic reported, May 2018.



violence are younger and younger, numerous awareness-raising and educational efforts continue to be carried out among young people to promote respectful relationships and to prevent violent behaviour.

### **INFORMATION ON AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND THE ROLE OF WITNESSES**

The more a person is able to step back from a situation of domestic violence they have experienced, the more likely that person will be to turn to available resources for assistance and support. It is therefore important that local outreach workers, victims, abusers and the people close to them are familiar with these resources. Witnesses to acts of violence are, in fact, part of the solution. They are allies who are often well placed to intervene in the face of signs of domestic violence, to report the situation to authorities or to encourage the victim or the abuser to turn to the appropriate resources for help. Their ability to play their role well also depends on access to information on the topic and on awareness of the existing assistance and protection resources in Québec.

### **DETECTION**

Because domestic violence can take many forms and occur across diverse realities, detection involves a number of challenges. Consequently, it requires the collaboration of multiple people at various key times in the daily lives of victims of domestic violence and of the children exposed to it. Situations of domestic violence may be detected in many settings, such as workplaces, schools, childcare centres and institutions in the health and social services network. Training stakeholders in various fields to recognize the signs of domestic violence, and raising their awareness of the services available, will improve their ability to direct people facing a situation of domestic violence to the appropriate specialized resources.

### **PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTION**

Public, parapublic and community organizations that offer services to people affected by domestic violence are continually faced with challenges in adapting to the needs and realities of various groups within the population, such as immigrants or people from ethnocultural minorities, young people, seniors, people with disabilities, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) or men who are victims of violence.

Discrimination or social injustices experienced by certain segments of the population can create precarious living conditions or contexts of vulnerability that heighten the risks of domestic violence. As well, children exposed to domestic violence have particular needs and require particular services. In the coming years, as the profile of victims seeking help changes, intervention will have to be adapted to a wide range of situations.

### **SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS FROM POLICE AND JUDICIAL SERVICES**

Police, judicial and correctional interventions play an important role, both in ensuring victims' safety and in directing victims to the resources they need. These interventions include following up with victims on the progress of their file as well as their participation in the judicial process. Genuine understanding of the issue of domestic violence by those called on to support and guide victims through the judicial process helps to create a climate of trust where victims feel they are being taken seriously and protected.

### **SUPPORT FOR SPOUSES WITH VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR**

If we are to put an end to domestic violence, we must recognize that offering support to spouses who exhibit violent behaviour is part of the solution. Training police officers on new tools and research findings on the topic helps to ensure suitable interventions

for rehabilitating abusers. This is an essential condition for breaking the cycle of violence and preventing abusers from finding new victims. Moreover, rigorous assessment of the danger posed by abusers and appropriate management of them by the judicial system can help prevent the risk of homicide in crisis situations.

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## A FEW STATISTICS

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The data that we have in Québec is derived primarily from the documentation of offences committed in a domestic context and the evolution of this phenomenon. The data is taken mainly from offences recorded by police, which is then analyzed by the Ministère de la Sécurité publique du Québec.<sup>8</sup>

Domestic violence is a crime that can be particularly difficult to report to police authorities. The special relationship that unites victim and abuser, fear of reprisals, the presence of children, and functional and financial dependence are just some of the factors that may prevent a victim from reporting the abuse and keep them in a threatening situation. It is therefore important to remember that the police statistics available represent only part of the true picture of domestic violence in Québec.

That said, year after year, police statistics show that women are the main victims of domestic violence, regardless of the category of offence committed.

In fact, of the crimes committed in a domestic context each year, women account for nearly all victims of kidnappings, sexual assault, forcible confinement and intimidation, as well as a very large proportion of victims of aggravated assault and criminal harassment. Police statistics show that the large majority of spousal homicides are committed by men against women.

While the most frequent offence committed in a domestic context is assault, nearly one third of these offences are committed by former intimate partners.

Finally, according to the most recent data, young people aged 25 to 29 and 18 to 24 show much higher rates of victimization than the other age groups. In contexts of domestic violence, the alleged perpetrators are predominantly males aged 25 to 29.

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8. Data on offences against the person committed in a domestic context published by the Ministère de la Sécurité publique comes from the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR 2.2), in which police forces participate. It should be noted that the data may include cases of situational violence or violent resistance that do not fall within the government definition of domestic violence.

## Offences against the person committed in a domestic context<sup>9</sup>

While there is a downward trend overall for crimes against the person in Québec, the number of offences against the person committed in a domestic context over the last decade has been steady, showing neither an upward nor a downward trend.

In 2015, police departments across Québec recorded:

**19 406**  
offences against the person committed in a domestic context

i.e. **30.2%**  
of all crimes against the person

### Data by type of offence

**1 539** | 7.93%

Other

**2 256** | 11.62%

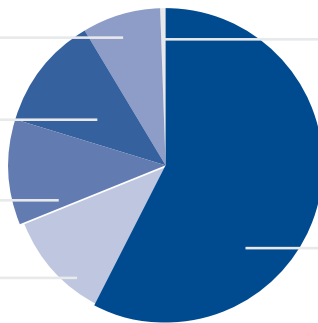
Criminal harassment

**2 097** | 10.8%

Threats

**2 212** | 11.39%

Level 2 assaults<sup>10</sup>



**95** | 0.48%

The most severe crimes:

48 | Level 3 assaults<sup>11</sup>

36 | Murder attempts

11 | Homicides

**11 207** | 57.75%

Level 1 assaults<sup>12</sup>

**78.0%**

of victims are women

### Proportion by type of crime

**100.0%**  
Kidnapping in a domestic context

**97.4%**  
Sexual assault

**96.9%**  
Forcible confinement



**91.3%**  
Intimidation

**87.5%**  
Level 3 assault

**86.3%**  
Criminal harassment

### Alleged perpetrators of the acts of violence

**45.6%** | spouses

**32.6%** | ex-spouses

**10.3%** | close friends

Of the alleged perpetrators whose sex is known, 80% are men.

9. Gouvernement du Québec, *Statistiques 2015 sur les infractions contre la personne commises dans un contexte conjugal au Québec*, 2017, <https://www.securitepublique.gouv.qc.ca/police/publications-et-statistiques/statistiques/violence-conjugale/2015/en-ligne.html>.

10. Level 2 assault: carrying, using or threatening to use a weapon or to cause bodily harm.

11. Level 3 assault: aggravated assault; wounding, maiming or disfiguring a person or endangering a person's life.

12. Level 1 assault: using force, directly or indirectly, against another person without their consent.

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## PROGRESS MADE

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Although it is clear that more work needs to be done, it should be emphasized that the Québec government has deployed considerable efforts in recent years to counter domestic violence, in partnership with community organizations.

Of particular note has been the annual funding the government has provided under the Programme de soutien aux organismes communautaires to support the overall mission of shelters for female victims of domestic violence and their children.

***Between 2012 and 2017, funding for shelters for female victims of domestic violence and their children averaged \$77 million per year.***

In March 2018, the government invested an additional \$6.4 million to strengthen the support interventions of second-stage shelters as well as the consultation and representation activities of the Alliance des maisons d'hébergement de deuxième étape pour femmes et enfants victimes de violence conjugale. This funding was also intended to help emergency shelters and organizations supporting spouses with violent behaviour to adapt their services to the needs of people of immigrant origin.

In the period from April 1, 2012, to February 28, 2018, more than \$2.5 million was invested in the renovation of shelters, particularly shelters for young people aged 28 or under and for female victims of domestic or family violence and managed by not-for-profit organizations

recognized by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS). This financial support was used to carry out work necessary for maintaining the safety, cleanliness and functionality of 197 dwellings, as well as to make them accessible to people with disabilities and adapted to the needs of children.

Also in recent years, partnerships have been established between all Crime Victims Assistance Centres (CAVAC) and Québec's police forces. These partnerships have helped to foster rapid intervention for these victims, including victims of domestic violence, and to inform them of resources, their rights and the avenues of recourse available to them.

It should also be noted that the *Act respecting labour standards* was amended in June 2018, in particular so that domestic violence and sexual violence would be recognized as valid reasons for absence. Thus, employees who are victims of this type of violence are entitled to 26 weeks of unpaid leave, with the first two days remunerated, under certain conditions.

Finally, the report on the 2012-2017 Action Plan on Domestic Violence, available online, presents the accomplishments achieved with respect to the 135 commitments made by the dozen departments and organizations that were in charge of its implementation. It highlights the measures and tools used by the government, over these five years, to prevent and detect domestic violence, to intervene with victims and abusers, and to support training, research and partnerships in this area.<sup>13</sup>

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13. The document can be consulted at the following address [in French only]: [http://www.scf.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/publications/Violence/Bilan\\_Plan\\_action\\_2012-2017.pdf](http://www.scf.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/publications/Violence/Bilan_Plan_action_2012-2017.pdf).

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**COMPLEMENTARY  
GOVERNMENT  
INTERVENTIONS**

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## DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE AMONG FIRST NATIONS AND THE INUIT

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The Québec government has been reshaping its way of working with First Nations and the Inuit, and this has an impact on its actions with respect to domestic violence. This work is in keeping with the main policy directions of the Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit 2017-2022 (2017-2022 Action Plan). Through this plan, the government hopes in particular to work with Indigenous partners to put in place a culturally relevant and reassuring approach that will contribute to the reconciliation and healing process.<sup>14</sup>

The 56 actions contained in the current Action Plan will be carried out for the Québec population as a whole, including members of the First Nations and Inuit communities. However, the departments and government organizations concerned have also committed to implementing a certain number of measures designed to meet the specific needs of Indigenous populations.

One will recall that the 2012-2017 Government Action Plan on Domestic Violence was an opportunity for the government and its partners to begin working together to develop an approach that takes into account

the realities of First Nations and the Inuit in the solutions put forward to address domestic violence.

The Indigenous component of the 2012-2017 Government Action Plan on Domestic Violence underlined the importance of integrating the family dimension when considering domestic violence issues. Because the problem of domestic violence is closely linked to other forms of violence experienced within Indigenous families, it goes beyond the partner relationship and therefore calls for a broader approach that includes both the couple and the family.

In keeping with the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015), the work of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the Public Inquiry Commission on Relations Between Indigenous Peoples and Certain Public Services in Québec, the 2017-2022 Action Plan underlines the importance of considering the issues specific to Indigenous women.<sup>15</sup>

To this end, the recommendations resulting from these inquiry commissions will help to identify the needs of First Nations and the Inuit with respect to domestic and family violence. Measures specific to the Indigenous population will be developed in collaboration with First Nations and Inuit stakeholders and integrated into the 2017-2022 Action Plan.

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14. Gouvernement du Québec, *Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit 2017-2022: Do More, Do Better*, 2017, 14-15, [http://www.autochtones.gouv.qc.ca/publications\\_documentation/publications/PAS/plan-action-social-en.pdf](http://www.autochtones.gouv.qc.ca/publications_documentation/publications/PAS/plan-action-social-en.pdf).

15. *Ibid.*, 17.

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## GOVERNMENT STRATEGY FOR GENDER EQUALITY TOWARD 2021

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The consultation exercise leading up to the current Action Plan clearly showed the underlying connection between the models of behaviour and couple relationships that children and young adults are exposed to and the perpetuation of violence and domination behaviours between intimate partners. Social tolerance of these behaviours reinforces the likelihood of future generations reproducing these unhealthy scenarios.

In the coming years, prevention work already being carried out with adolescents and young adults will be bolstered by the implementation of the Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021 (Equality Strategy). Certain specific actions of the Equality Strategy aim to foster egalitarian socialization and education, without sexual stereotypes or sexism and from an intersectional perspective—that is, with consideration for the various contexts or conditions that can lead to simultaneous forms of discrimination, such as discrimination based on sex and ethnic origin or sexual orientation. In addition, targeted campaigns against persistent and troubling inequalities between women and men will take gender stereotypes and sexism into account and will promote egalitarian relationships.

The discussions held prior to publishing the Equality Strategy also revealed the necessity of encouraging men to be part of the solution. Men's participation in achieving equality is a crucial element of this strategy. In keeping with this orientation, the current Action Plan seeks to strengthen the mobilization of men as allies in the fight against domestic violence.

### Gender-based analysis

The purpose of gender-based analysis (GBA) is to prevent the reproduction and creation of inequalities by identifying, based on the different realities and needs of women and men, the distinct effects that adopting a measure or implementing a project will have on women and men. Integration of GBA into government practices and those of local and regional decision-making bodies aims to help achieve equality between women and men.

Taking into account the distinct reality of women in relation to that of men has been part of government action on domestic violence from the start. The 1995 *Policy on Intervention in Conjugal Violence*, which serves as the foundation for the current Action Plan, thoroughly documents the gendered nature of this societal issue and its consequences.

For the purposes of developing this Action Plan, the different realities that women and men face because of their particular experiences and the influence of their social roles were considered, notably when identifying the priority issues requiring special or additional attention. These issues were identified following consultations with a large number of women's groups and centres. Among other things, these organizations were given the opportunity to report on how domestic violence affects women specifically and the various realities experienced by these women.

With respect to the actions contained in this plan, it should be noted that each department or government organization is responsible for taking GBA into account when developing, implementing and evaluating the commitments under its responsibility.



Finally, it is important to remember that, as with previous action plans, the bulk of the funding earmarked for countering domestic violence over the next five years is devoted to assistance and support measures for the victims, the majority of whom are women, and that its investment therefore takes into account the specific needs of female victims, especially in terms of protection and safety.

## 2016-2021 GOVERNMENT STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND COUNTERACT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Because it aims to curb sexual assault and sexual exploitation, the 2016-2021 Government Strategy to Prevent and Counteract Sexual Violence enables government departments and organizations engaged in its implementation to intervene with respect to various types of violence that may overlap with behaviours of domestic violence. This strategy therefore serves to tackle the continuum of violence against women, which includes violence committed between intimate partners, and contributes to the steps that must be taken to eliminate it.

## 2017-2022 GOVERNMENTAL ACTION PLAN TO COUNTER MISTREATMENT OF OLDER ADULTS

With the announcement of its second action plan to counter elder abuse, the Québec government has renewed its commitment to address the public's concerns by continuing to fight this problem in all living environments and by encouraging respectful treatment of its older citizens, so as to lay the groundwork for a more just society that is inclusive, healthy and safe.<sup>16</sup>

One measure of the 2017-2022 Governmental Action Plan to Counter Mistreatment of Older Adults, under the responsibility of the Secrétariat à la condition féminine, aims to "document the various collaboration models available to support female seniors who are victims of spousal violence, in order to target best practices and promote their dissemination." [Measure 52, page 65] Given the difficulty of reaching older women who are victims of domestic violence, for reasons such as social isolation, illness and other limitations, this measure is intended to find solutions to the problems inherent to providing assistance to this population.

16. Gouvernement du Québec, *Governmental Action Plan to Counter Mistreatment of Older Adults 2017-2022*, 2018, <https://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/fr/publication/Documents/PAM-english.pdf>.



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## CONCERTED ACTION PLAN TO PREVENT AND COUNTER BULLYING 2015-2018

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People experiencing domestic violence may be subject to various forms of bullying by a partner who is using violence to exert control. On November 18, 2015, the Québec Premier announced the Concerted Action Plan to Prevent and Counter Bullying 2015-2018, titled *Together Against Bullying: A Shared Responsibility*. This action plan, which was extended by another year in April 2018, gives concrete shape to the Québec government's commitment to counter bullying, which may occur at any age and in any environment, including cyberspace. More specifically, this action plan is structured around five orientations that include a total of 53 measures, from promotion of "living harmoniously with others" to financial support for projects that aim to prevent or counter bullying, and training for stakeholders and increased information to citizens.



# CONSULTATIONS

***This document was developed following a series of consultations held in winter and spring 2018. During the consultations, close to 150 organizations had an opportunity to talk about priority issues with respect to domestic violence as well as innovative solutions that could be implemented to address them.***

Four discussion days were held respectively in Gatineau, Rivière-du-Loup, Montréal and Québec City. A large number of participants representing women's shelters, women's centres, aid groups for spouses exhibiting violent behaviour, Crime Victims Assistance Centres, the public security sector and the research sector shared their experiences and recommendations. Representatives from departments and government organizations also took part in the meetings, attended by the Minister for Higher Education and for the Status of Women, Hélène David; the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Québec, Stéphanie Vallée; and Member of the National Assembly and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister responsible for Higher Education, David Birnbaum. At the same time, individuals and organizations

concerned with this issue were invited to submit briefs with their recommendations. In total, more than 50 briefs were received and taken into account in developing the current Action Plan.

Participants in these consultations bore witness to a range of situations and circumstances, depending on the sector of practice and the region of Québec. Consideration of the diverse profiles of victims (e.g. women with disabilities, older women, LGBT people, immigrant women and women from ethno-cultural minorities) was one of the main challenges raised during these discussions. There was a consensus on the need for organizations that specialize in domestic violence to participate in awareness-raising activities and the importance of considering children in the continuum of intervention. Finally, the necessity for greater collaboration among regional and provincial actors was emphasized.

Given the wealth of expertise of civil society partners in dealing with the problem of domestic violence, the government seeks to engage their participation in implementing several measures of the Action Plan.

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# THE ACTION PLAN AT A GLANCE

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## STRUCTURE OF THE ACTION PLAN

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The 2018-2023 Government Action Plan on Domestic Violence contains 56 actions, either new or significantly enhanced. Through reflection, discussions and the consultation process, aspects requiring more targeted attention or increased effort to counter domestic violence were identified. These priority aspects then served to determine the objectives that will guide government action on domestic violence for the next five years. Thus, the Action Plan contains 11 objectives, grouped into four areas of focus:

### FOCUS 1 – PREVENTION, AWARENESS AND INFORMATION

1. Support initiatives to raise awareness about domestic violence;
2. Diversify and adapt the methods used to inform the public and certain segments of the population about domestic violence, the resources available and avenues of recourse for victims;
3. Increase the level of knowledge among the general public of the various forms of domestic violence and how to be an active witness.

### FOCUS 2 – DETECTION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTION

1. Support the adaptation of services offered by certain resources specialized in domestic violence so as to better take into consideration individual circumstances or needs;
2. Increase, through training and tools, the capacity of certain public, para-public and community resources to detect domestic violence experienced by people using their services and to intervene appropriately.

### FOCUS 3 – POLICE, JUDICIAL AND CORRECTIONAL INTERVENTION

1. Make it easier for victims of domestic violence to participate in the police investigation and judicial process, and strengthen the measures put in place to protect them;
2. Improve the capacity of the judicial system to process domestic violence cases;
3. Improve the intervention capacity of actors in the police, judicial and correctional system in the area of domestic violence.

## FOCUS 4 – SHARING OF EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

1. Create opportunities for the various sectors concerned with domestic violence to share expertise;
2. Strengthen and diversify methods of communication and collaboration;
3. Support the development and dissemination of knowledge and data related to domestic violence.

It should be noted that the nine guiding principles of the *Policy on Intervention in Conjugal Violence*, titled *Preventing, Detecting, Ending Conjugal Violence*, will continue to shape government intervention in this area. These principles are as follows:

- Society shall reject and denounce all forms of violence.
- Society shall promote the respect of individuals and their differences.
- Gender equality is the primary condition for the elimination of domestic violence.
- Domestic violence is a criminal matter.
- Domestic violence is a means chosen to dominate and assert power over another person.
- The safety and protection of women victims and children are the priority when it comes to intervention strategies.
- All intervention strategies shall be respectful of victims’ autonomy and based on their capacity to regain control over their lives.
- All interventions shall take into account the effects of domestic violence on children and be designed to minimize these effects.
- Abusers are responsible for their abusive behaviour; the aim of intervention strategies shall be to have them acknowledge and assume responsibility for their violence.

## INVESTMENTS

Investments of \$86 million are planned to implement the 56 actions contained in this plan.

Several departments and government organizations currently carry out on a regular basis a significant number of actions related to countering domestic violence. These recurrent measures are financed from the appropriations of these departments and organizations. Some departments and organizations have also implemented measures that will continue under the Action Plan, without necessarily becoming recurrent. For the period covered by the Action Plan, these investments are estimated at nearly \$520 million. A list of these recurrent or renewed actions can be found in the appendix.

<p>OVER <b>\$600 MILLION</b></p>	<p>Total investments planned to prevent and counter domestic violence from 2018 to 2023</p>
<p><b>\$86 MILLION</b></p>	<p>Investments devoted to implementing the 56 actions in this plan</p>





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# ACTIONS

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## FOCUS 1 PREVENTION, AWARENESS AND INFORMATION

Preventing violence between intimate partners depends, first and foremost, on the promotion of egalitarian models and behaviour from a very young age and in various settings. For this reason, one of the guidelines of the Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021 aims for egalitarian socialization and education, free of gender stereotypes and sexism. Awareness-raising and information activities to prevent domestic violence are therefore still highly relevant, and addressing men and boys specifically is a promising avenue.

Moreover, people experiencing domestic violence need relevant information that is adapted to their circumstances, especially in terms of the resources available to help them. For example, information produced by the Québec government must be accessible to people with disabilities. As well, it is important to reach groups of the population – such as children exposed to domestic violence, seniors, LGBT people, immigrants and people from ethnocultural minorities – for whom specific tools will be dedicated.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Support initiatives to raise awareness about domestic violence;
2. Diversify and adapt the methods used to inform the public and some specific groups of the population about domestic violence, the resources available and avenues of recourse for victims;
3. Increase the level of knowledge, among the general public, of the various forms of domestic violence and how to be an active witness.

### ACTION 1

Support initiatives to raise awareness about domestic violence and about violence against women

The fight against domestic violence is a collective responsibility. Everyone can play an active role, including those close to victims or to perpetrators of violent acts, and witnesses. Society as a whole must therefore be aware and well informed, if people are to take a stand, rally together and denounce all forms of domestic violence.

Support will be provided for awareness-raising activities that take into consideration persistent or emerging issues related to violence between intimate partners. Various methods will be used depending on the setting and audience targeted, including traditional media, websites, social media and brochures.

Specific support will be provided for information and awareness-raising activities held as part of the days of action opposing violence against women (Journées d'action contre la violence faite aux femmes).

**Organization responsible: SCF**

**In collaboration with: DCP, Famille (including SA), MAMOT, MEES, MIDI, MJQ (including BLCH), MSP, MSSS, MTESS, OPHQ, SAJ**

## ACTION 2

Develop, adapt or recirculate information and awareness-raising tools so as to better reach groups of the population living in circumstances that make them vulnerable to domestic violence as well as children exposed to this violence

Accessing information on domestic violence, support resources and possible avenues of recourse can be difficult for some groups of the population who experience domestic violence. For example, immigrants or people from ethnocultural minorities may face language and cultural barriers when trying to access this information. Young children exposed to domestic violence may have trouble understanding or naming what they are experiencing, making it important to provide them with the necessary support. Prejudices and taboos surrounding the possibility of certain people being victims of domestic violence (e.g. seniors, LGBT people, people with disabilities) can also hinder their access to the information they need.

Tools tailored to these groups will therefore be produced and disseminated to enable these individuals to better understand domestic violence and its multiple forms, to be aware of the resources available and to know their rights. This action will take into consideration existing tools that have proven effective and will promote their use.

**Organization responsible: SCF**

**In collaboration with: Famille (including SA), MIDI, MJQ (including BLCH), MSSS, OPHQ, SAJ**

## ACTION 3

Support activities designed to raise awareness among men and boys about violence between intimate partners

Given that the majority of acts of domestic violence are committed by males, men and boys have a role to play in preventing this type of violence.

Fostering reflection among men and boys and their active participation in the fight against violence between intimate partners will help to strengthen their intolerance of such situations. More broadly, the influence of positive male role models can contribute to the changes in attitude and mentality that are required for the establishment of egalitarian relationships between partners.

Men and boys will be encouraged to take an interest in countering this type of violence, on the one hand as allies, active witnesses and positive role models, and on the other as people with potentially violent behaviours.

**Organization responsible: SCF**

**In collaboration with: DCP, Famille (including SA), MEES, MIDI, MJQ (including BLCH), MSP, MSSS, MTESS, SAJ**

**ACTION 4**

Support projects designed for and by young people to raise awareness about violence in intimate relationships

Inegalitarian relationships between women and men are at the origin of representations and perceptions that can influence young people's behaviour and lead to the perpetuation of violent behaviours in intimate relationships from one generation to the next.

The SCF, in partnership with the SAJ, plans to conduct a consultation exercise among young people aged 15 to 29 and to involve them in a reflection that will lead to the creation and dissemination of activities for raising awareness about violence in intimate relationships. These activities will be carried out in various settings where young people can be reached.

**Organization responsible: SCF**  
**In collaboration with: MEES, SAJ**

**ACTION 5**

Develop an information and awareness-raising tool focusing specifically on domestic violence experienced by seniors

Although a variety of information and awareness-raising tools exist, few are intended specifically for seniors. These individuals may therefore believe, wrongly, that the services offered do not apply to them.

The tool developed will aim to inform and raise awareness not only among seniors themselves but also within the general public regarding domestic violence experienced by this segment of the population. It will also be an opportunity to promote the services offered in the area of domestic violence and elder abuse.

**Organization responsible: Famille (SA)**  
**In collaboration with: MSSS, SCF**

**ACTION 6**

Support activities to raise awareness about violence between intimate LGBT partners

A certain heteronormative conception of domestic violence poses a barrier to a sound understanding of this problem when it is experienced by partners of sexual minorities.

This action aims to inform and raise awareness among people who work with victims and perpetrators of violence between intimate partners from sexual minorities. It will also contribute to greater knowledge and awareness of the topic by LGBT individuals.

**Organization responsible: MJQ (BLCH)**

**ACTION 7**

Promote awareness among teachers and school professionals of best practices for the prevention of violence in intimate relationships so as to ensure effective interventions with young people

Many young people experience violence in their very first intimate relationships. Violence in an intimate relationship is defined as "all behaviors that impair or negatively affect the development of another person, by compromising his or her physical, psychological or sexual integrity."<sup>17</sup>

Awareness-raising initiatives are planned for the education sector (school boards, private schools and their staff) in order to enhance and standardize knowledge and practices in the area of preventing violence in intimate relationships.

**Organization responsible: MEES**

17. Francine Lavoie et al., *ViRAJ: A Program for Teens Promoting Equality and Preventing Violence in Teen Dating Relationships*, Activity Guide (Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation, 1994), 13.

**ACTION 8**

Offer school staff pedagogical information, including models for in-class activities, to guide schools in implementing the planned sexuality education content with respect to preventing violence in intimate relationships

MEES has defined the sexuality education content for each year, from preschool up to the end of secondary school.

In secondary school, part of this content deals with adolescents' emotional and intimate lives. Through this learning, students become aware of the challenges of first intimate relationships and learn to recognize forms of violence in the context of a intimate relationship, as well as how to find solutions to prevent or end such violence.

MEES will provide all school boards and private schools with the pedagogical frameworks that schools have found useful for teaching the learning content related to preventing violence in intimate relationships, to help them prepare and carry out this learning with their own students.

**Organization responsible: MEES**

**ACTION 9**

Support initiatives in the workplace that aim to prevent and counter domestic violence

Both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence are likely to spend time in a workplace. This context is conducive to detecting situations of domestic violence and to offering support to the people concerned. Work environments provide the opportunity to involve colleagues and others as active witnesses and to influence social norms by promoting egalitarian, healthy and violence-free relationships.

This action therefore consists in developing, implementing and assessing a workplace prevention program to counter domestic violence.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

**In collaboration with: INSPQ, MTESS**

**ACTION 10**

Invite opinion leaders to take action to prevent domestic violence

Prevention of domestic violence does not only concern those directly affected. Aside from the general public, public figures such as journalists, influencers, video bloggers, CEOs, celebrities and sports personalities can play a role. By speaking out publicly on the topic, they can help debunk the myths that serve to trivialize domestic violence and raise public awareness, especially among young people, of the various forms this violence can take and of the support resources available in Québec.

This action seeks to encourage various public figures to promote media treatment of domestic violence and the conveying of information on this topic by the media in a way that increases public awareness and communicates essential information to victims.

A media kit, published online by INSPQ and currently being updated by MSSS, will be used to carry out this action.

**Organization responsible: SCF**

**In collaboration with: DCPP, Famille (including SA), MEES, MIDI, MJQ (including BLCH), MSP, MSSS, MTESS**

**ACTION 11**

Produce prevention and awareness-raising tools for victims of domestic violence that focus on safety issues arising from the use of geolocation functions on mobile technologies and social media

Geolocation functions and monitoring applications can be used to track the movements of users of mobile devices in real time.

Targeted prevention tools will enable victims in general, but especially women living in shelters, to become aware of safety issues related to the use of mobile devices and to help ensure their own safety by definitively breaking the control that may be exerted remotely by a partner or ex-partner.

**Organization responsible: MSP (Sûreté du Québec)**

**In collaboration with: MJQ**

**ACTION 12**

Produce and disseminate information and awareness-raising materials on post-separation domestic violence

Post-separation domestic violence can take different forms, including criminal harassment and threats. This violence can affect victims in several ways, in particular by making them fear for their safety and for the safety of their children. Moreover, separation is a risk factor associated with spousal homicide.

The creation and widespread dissemination of a tool intended for people in the judicial, civil and family sectors who work with victims of domestic violence will help raise awareness of this problem and of the context of criminal harassment.

**Organization responsible: MJQ**

**In collaboration with: Famille, MSP (Sûreté du Québec), MSSS**

**ACTION 13**

Improve government information on domestic violence provided to citizens through the Québec portal website

The Québec portal website provides information on domestic violence based on the information contained in the directory of programs and services that Services Québec employees use to refer clients based on their situation.

The Québec portal teams, in collaboration with partners, will conduct an analysis to determine what content to improve or to create, as well as how this content might be made more accessible on the Web.

In this way, citizens who consult the information provided on the Québec portal will be better informed about domestic violence and the services that might best meet their needs in this area.

**Organization responsible: MTESS (Services Québec)**

**In collaboration with: SCF**

**ACTION 14**

Continue to support regional and local initiatives aimed at preventing and countering domestic violence in communities, and take an inventory of them

For several years, the MSSS has provided financial support to regions across Québec to facilitate, among other things, the development of prevention and awareness-raising activities according to the needs identified in these communities. These initiatives may target various groups: women, men, children, adolescents, the general public and people living in vulnerable circumstances.

Maintaining this measure is vital for the continuity of effective prevention work. At the same time, the authorities responsible for supporting such initiatives would like to know what projects are being implemented in regions other than their own. An inventory of all initiatives developed over the years will enable regions to draw on the experiences of others to identify successful activities that can be implemented in their own community.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

## **ACTION 15**

Raise awareness among academic deans of the importance of integrating the topic of domestic violence into technical training programs

A number of means may be used to carry out this action, such as sending a letter to the academic deans of colleges on the importance of integrating this topic into learning activities, particularly for programs in the following areas:

- Special education
- Social Service
- Youth and Adult Correctional Intervention
- Police training course

MEES will conduct a survey among educational institutions to assemble a list of the means used to integrate the topic of domestic violence into their programs. These strategies can then be shared with all the colleges.

This action is intended for teachers, education consultants and, indirectly, students in college technical training programs, who may have to address this problem during their career.

**Organization responsible: MEES**



## FOCUS 2 DETECTION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTION

In the course of their work, individuals who provide various services to the public may encounter victims or perpetrators of domestic violence. In order to be able to guide them toward the resources and services available, training on detecting situations of domestic violence in various settings is essential. Not only does it give these allies the tools necessary to intervene effectively, but it can also lend them legitimacy and confidence in their role. At the same time, when victims of domestic violence decide to ask for help, they require support and guidance adapted to their particular circumstances. On this front, women's aid services and shelters as well as organizations for spouses who exhibit violent behaviour face a number of challenges in adapting their various services to increasingly complex realities. Given that the situations of some women require long-term support, the continuum of psychosocial intervention services can be strengthened by the sustained presence of second-stage shelters as well as access to post-separation services for victims and their children.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Support the adaptation of services offered by certain resources specialized in domestic violence so as to better take into consideration individual circumstances or needs
2. Increase, through training and tools, the capacity of certain public, para-public and community resources to detect domestic violence experienced by people using their services and to intervene appropriately

### ACTION 16

**Provide financial support to enable emergency shelters to adapt their services to the realities of people living in vulnerable circumstances**

Many emergency shelters have seen a significant increase in their immigrant clientele. As well, these resources may be called on to offer services to women in vulnerable circumstances, such as women who have a disability, who are elderly, who are geographically isolated or who belong to a sexual minority. In such cases, the people helping these victims must provide support and follow-up that is adapted to their situation. Such interventions can become highly complex.

The intention is to provide support so that emergency shelters can adapt their services to the realities of their clientele, which is increasingly composed of people living in vulnerable circumstances.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

**ACTION 17**

Provide financial support to enable organizations for spouses with violent behaviour to adapt their services to the realities of their clientele

Some organizations that offer help to spouses with violent behaviour have reported that, each year, immigrants represent a significant percentage of their clientele. These organizations also face various other challenges specific to the particular cases of the men using their services. Working with spouses who exhibit violent behaviour and who have particular profiles is especially difficult.

The intention is to provide support to enable organizations offering help to spouses with violent behaviours to adapt their services to the realities of a changing clientele.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

**ACTION 18**

Strengthen the network of second-stage shelters for female victims of domestic violence in situations of post-separation by supporting social housing

Some female victims of domestic violence who have decided to leave their spouse for good face challenges to their safety when their former spouse, unable to accept the separation, continues to threaten them with acts of violence. In addition, these women may have trouble integrating socially or have to take steps to ensure their personal and financial autonomy.

Second-stage shelters, present in several regions of Québec, provide transitional housing that is affordable and confidential to enable women to regain control of their lives safely and with professional support and guidance.

Financing will be granted to these shelters through community support for social housing to enable them to consolidate their assistance and support services for women and children, such as adding new rental units.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

## ACTION 19

Increase the number of rental units in the network of shelters for female victims of domestic violence

Transitional housing at a second-stage shelter offers female victims of domestic violence and their children a confidential place where safety is the priority, allowing them to continue searching for permanent housing.

In order to consolidate this offer of services, the SHQ plans to reserve housing units for women's shelter projects across the province, under the AccèsLogis Québec program.

**Organization responsible: SHQ**

## ACTION 20

Improve the content in the *Guide de référence pour contrer la maltraitance envers les personnes âgées on domestic violence experienced by seniors so as to better equip service providers on this issue*

The *Guide de référence pour contrer la maltraitance envers les personnes âgées*, a comprehensive, 600-page reference guide on countering elder abuse, was developed as part of the 2010-2015 Governmental Action Plan to Counter Elder Abuse, extended until 2017. Among other things, this tool aims to strengthen the ability of people working with seniors to take appropriate action in the face of a complex issue, in particular by offering guidelines on attitudes to adopt, services and tools available, and intervention strategies that can be put in place in various situations of elder abuse.

One section of the guide already focuses on interventions specific to seniors in situations of domestic violence. This content will be enhanced to better support people who work with this population, so that their actions are even more effective.

**Organization responsible: Famille (SA)**

**In collaboration with: MSSS**

## ACTION 21

Develop an activity to raise awareness among health and social services workers about the realities of seniors living in situations of domestic violence and best practices to put in place

Domestic violence among seniors is a complex phenomenon that is often overshadowed by the attention devoted to other situations of elder abuse. It is therefore important for people working with this population to be better equipped to deal with the realities of seniors living in situations of domestic violence, more specifically by:

- improving their knowledge of this phenomenon
- deconstructing certain myths
- facilitating the implementation and sharing of promising practices
- identifying these individuals and directing them to the appropriate resources

To this end, an activity will be developed to raise awareness about the realities of seniors experiencing situations of domestic violence. This first action will be directed at people working in Integrated Health and Social Services Centres (CISSS), Integrated University Health and Social Services Centres (CIUSSS) and community organizations to inform them about the distinctive aspects of intervening with these individuals and thereby enable them to provide optimal support.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

**In collaboration with: Famille (SA)**

**ACTION 22**

Develop a tool for detecting situations of domestic or sexual violence, intended for representatives of the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale working with clients

Although training is already provided to MTESS employees who work with clients (financial assistance programs, employment assistance services, etc.), a tool to help them detect situations of domestic or sexual violence will be an effective complementary action.

A tool aimed at facilitating the identification of people likely to be victims of domestic or sexual violence and to help refer them to the appropriate resources and services will be created.

**Organization responsible: MTESS (Services Québec)**

**In collaboration with: SCF**

**ACTION 23**

Foster the competency development of workers in the health and social services network with respect to early identification and intervention in domestic violence by offering training sessions and appropriate support

Training sessions will be developed to enable people working in the health and social services network to acquire the theoretical and practical knowledge necessary for early identification of domestic violence as well as intervention with the women, men and children exposed to it. Follow-up to this training (evaluation and update) is planned in order to meet the various needs of these employees and to provide them with adequate support.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

**In collaboration with: INSPQ**

**ACTION 24**

Develop a provincial training session on detecting the risk of intrafamilial and extrafamilial homicide in order to get workers and professionals in the health and social services network, in both health and other sectors, to act as sentinels

With respect to homicide risk assessment, workers and professionals in the health and social services network can help identify potentially homicidal situations or clients at risk without being experts in the psychosocial field (e.g. occupational therapists or orderlies). To do so, however, they need training that is adapted to their role.

The Centre de recherche appliquée en intervention psychosociale has developed a training program on detecting the risk of intrafamilial and extrafamilial homicide, but it is intended for people in the psychosocial field who have received college or university training in intervening with the targeted clientele. One of the existing modules will therefore be adapted to train other workers and professionals so that they can act as sentinels by identifying people at risk, in order to refer them to available psychosocial services in the area of assessing and managing homicide risk.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

**ACTION 25**

Ensure the continuity and fluidity of at-home support services for users of the health and social services network who avail themselves of women's shelters for victims of domestic violence

Ensuring continuity of at-home care and support services and seamless transitions are important issues for all health and social services clients, but especially for people in vulnerable situations.

This action therefore seeks to document and analyze problems related to at-home support services for women who have been temporarily accommodated in shelters for victims of domestic violence and, if needed, to implement solutions to improve the continuity and fluidity of these services.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

**ACTION 26**

Standardize practices for providing services for supervised access rights and consolidate the basic skills required to ensure quality and security in this area

In the fall of 2013, the Ministère de la Famille and the MSSS developed and offered province-wide training to ensure that the people responsible for supervised access services have the necessary skills to provide safe, effective service.

Although this training is still available, it is important to renew the offer of training in order to help standardize practices across Québec.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

**In collaboration with: Famille**

**ACTION 27**

Promote online training on bullying for organizations that work with women and men living in situations of domestic violence

Bullying is one of the multiple forms of violence that a partner may use to exert control. It refers to "any repeated direct or indirect behaviour, comment, act or gesture, whether deliberate or not, including in cyberspace, which occurs in a context where there is a power imbalance between the persons concerned and which causes distress and injures, hurts, oppresses, intimidates or ostracizes."<sup>18</sup> Bullying can be verbal, physical, social or material.

People experiencing domestic violence may be subject, among other things, to certain forms of bullying. For this reason, a special effort will be devoted to providing online training on bullying for people likely to be working with victims, witnesses or perpetrators of domestic violence, so as to improve their ability to intervene in such cases.

**Organization responsible: Famille**

**In collaboration with: MJQ, MSSS, SCF**

18. *Education Act*, s. 13, para. 1.1.

### **ACTION 28**

Carry out a pilot project to encourage police referrals to resources for men exhibiting violent behaviour when such men are being released under promise to appear

It is now clear that perpetrators of domestic violence must be part of the solution and that these people need help to break the cycle of violence. Yet at the moment, suspects released under promise to appear in court do not receive a police referral to resources in the community.

This action therefore seeks to work with organizations that help men who exhibit violent behaviour, in the regions targeted by the pilot project, to assess the impact of police referrals to these resources when men are released under promise to appear. If it is found that police referrals result in some men visiting an appropriate resource that can help them change their behaviour, the Sûreté du Québec may consider extending this practice to all of its regional stations.

**Organization responsible: MSP  
(Sûreté du Québec)**

### **ACTION 29**

Publish a brochure on sexting, intended for school staff and school partners, to guide their interventions with adolescents, in sexuality education and during preventive activities at school, and provide training to schools on this topic

Sexting refers to sexually explicit content (images or text) communicated by text message with a phone, tablet or on a Web platform, including social networks. In intimate relationships and during breakups, sexting is sometimes used as a means of blackmail or to exert psychological violence.

A short document on sexting will be produced for the staff of secondary schools and their partners, such as people in the health sector and community organizations. This brochure will aim to raise awareness and to provide practical information on ways to prevent sexting and to intervene when a student is a victim of this practice.

**Organization responsible: MEES  
In collaboration with: DCP, Famille,  
MJQ, MSP, MSSS, SCF**

**ACTION 30**

Develop a tool for people working in the health and social services network who are called on to act quickly in postvention with people affected by an intrafamilial homicide

Survivors of intrafamilial homicide (people who could have been killed during the event) or secondary victims or co-victims (close friends and family of people who were murdered) require rapid psychosocial intervention to prevent their situation from deteriorating.

To enable service providers to react appropriately in this postvention context, a study on best practices will be supported in order to develop a postvention tool that can facilitate this work.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

**ACTION 31**

Designate a resource person in charge of domestic violence cases in health and social services institutions

The objectives of designating a resource person in charge of domestic violence cases in health and social services institutions are as follows:

- To help staff members respond to the safety, protection and psychosocial support needs of victims of domestic violence
- To ensure that specific and adapted services are offered to children exposed to domestic violence
- To enable staff members to meet the needs of men who exhibit violent behaviours

These resources, recognized by the institution directors, will be designated on the basis of their knowledge of this issue and of their expertise. They will serve to support their colleagues and provide the necessary leadership during training sessions.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

## FOCUS 3

### POLICE, JUDICIAL AND CORRECTIONAL INTERVENTION

The training of police officers who intervene in cases of domestic violence gives them the ability to detect this type of situation and to inform and refer victims, as well as perpetrators, to the resources available. The capacity of the justice system to process domestic violence cases and the information that victims receive on their file's progress contribute to victims' positive participation.

Police, judicial and correctional teams who act at different stages, both with victims of domestic violence and with their abusers, must be equipped to meet the challenges specific to the immigrant population, same-sex couples and people with disabilities, to name a few examples. In short, increased knowledge on the various aspects of violence between intimate partners is essential to support the development of practices that are in line with the circumstances of the people concerned.

#### OBJECTIVES:

1. Make it easier for victims of domestic violence to participate in the police investigation and judicial process, and strengthen the measures put in place to protect them
2. Improve the capacity of the judicial system to process domestic violence cases
3. Improve the intervention capacity of actors in the police, judicial and correctional system in the area of domestic violence

#### ACTION 32

Adopt a program to facilitate a meeting between the criminal and penal prosecuting attorney and the victim of domestic violence

Participation in the judicial process can be a difficult transition for victims of domestic violence, who may hesitate to engage or continue to participate in this process. It is crucial for victims to meet with the criminal and penal prosecuting attorney in cases where they have been subject to a crime against the person. Without this opportunity to create a relationship of trust with the attorney, the victim can quickly become discouraged and drop the proceedings.

Creating a program that enables victims to meet with the criminal and penal prosecuting attorney as early as possible in launching the criminal proceedings should enable victims to receive enough information about their participation to keep them engaged in this process.

**Organization responsible: DCPD**

**In collaboration with: MJQ, MSP**



**ACTION 33**

Set up a coordination mechanism, through the Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions, to promote the standardization of practices in the area of domestic violence

Criminal and penal prosecuting attorneys across Québec must all handle domestic violence legal proceedings in the same way, without exception.

The Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions (DCPP) will therefore appoint a coordinator to promote systematic sharing of information and expertise. This coordination mechanism will promote dialogue among attorneys who specialize in domestic violence and help standardize practices across the province with respect to the cultural and regional realities involved, through development of a knowledge community.

**Organization responsible: DCPP**

**ACTION 34**

Promote priority treatment of domestic violence cases by the judicial system

Court delays in processing domestic violence cases can have a significant impact on victims' participation. These delays sometimes discourage victims and can even threaten their safety. Court orders designed to protect victims, such as those containing conditions for release, remain in effect for as long as legal proceedings continue. When victims decide to abandon legal proceedings, they lose the protection that had been provided by these orders.

Priority treatment for hearing these cases will ensure better support for victims and encourage them to stay involved throughout the legal proceedings. This action will also help to ensure that all the conditions are in place to guarantee the safety of the victim and of those close to them, at every step in the judicial process, through conditions for the release or detainment of the spouse who exhibited violent behaviour. This action aims to boost victims' confidence in the criminal justice system and to promote reporting of this type of offence.

**Organization responsible: DCPP**

**In collaboration with: MJQ**

### ACTION 35

Introduce, in some regions of Québec, an assessment service at the temporary release stage for spouses who exhibit violent behaviour

At the request of the court and with the consent of the attorney as well as the person accused, probation officers can carry out an assessment at the interim release stage for spouses who exhibit violent behaviour. This type of assessment provides additional information on the situation of the person accused and the alleged victim. It serves to recommend particular conditions that can be imposed on the accused and, if applicable, refer the person to resources that can be of assistance.

This process can facilitate the court's decision about whether or not to release a person facing accusations related to domestic violence and, in this way, helps protect the alleged victim and those close to them.

Under a pilot project, professionals will be hired to produce assessments in several judicial districts of the province. The service will be promoted among people working in the judicial system in the targeted regions.

**Organization responsible: MSP**

**In collaboration with: DCP, MJQ**

### ACTION 36

Promote access to and the use of civil protection orders

In Québec, civil protection orders were introduced in 2016 in the context of injunctions under the *Code of Civil Procedure*. The Superior Court of Québec can issue such an order when a person's life, health or safety is threatened. This measure can be used to protect a person from violence, such as in cases of domestic violence. Greater awareness of this measure is called for in order to promote its use in applicable cases.

Information will be disseminated so that the general public as well as practitioners are aware of the existence of this new civil protection order.

**Organization responsible: MJQ**

**In collaboration with: MSP**

**ACTION 37**

Raise awareness among Québec bar students about the issue of domestic violence

In practising their profession, lawyers are liable to come across situations of domestic violence. Given the complexity of this problem and its multiple legal implications (family law, civil law, criminal law, youth protection, immigration, etc.), it is crucial that all future law practitioners understand this issue so that they know how to act and what to do when their clients are faced with such a situation.

New content on domestic violence will be introduced into the École du Barreau (Québec bar school) training program that is followed by all future lawyers in Québec, so as to give them more tools to detect situations of domestic violence and to offer appropriate services to victims, in particular by advising them on their rights and avenues of recourse.

**Organization responsible: MJQ**

**ACTION 38**

Update the knowledge and tools used by police officers to ensure suitable and adapted police intervention in situations of domestic violence and to promote collaboration with organizations that help victims and abusers

Police officers are often the first people to intervene with victims of domestic violence. It is therefore important that their knowledge on the subject be updated regularly so that they can benefit from new tools and advances in research with respect to domestic violence prevention and intervention. It is also useful to emphasize the importance of acting in collaboration with community resources and, to this end, to propose new ways of working with groups that help victims and alleged abusers.

Mobilization, cooperation and partnerships in support of victims of domestic violence are important aspects of keeping service providers well informed and can have a direct effect on the quality of interventions. A variety of means can be used to provide information and training, such as holding a refresher day on domestic violence that brings together police officers and people working in community organizations.

In addition, the checklist on spousal homicide prevention that has been provided to police forces since 2013 will be reviewed by the research community and updated if necessary.

**Organization responsible: MSP**

**In collaboration with: DCP, MJQ, MSP (ENPQ), MSSS**

**ACTION 39****Development and dissemination of an information capsule on domestic violence intended for Québec police officers**

How police intervene with victims of domestic violence often determines the action that will be taken following the event. Appropriate intervention, follow-up and support will encourage victims to continue the process, thereby contributing to their safety and their protection.

In this context, a reminder of best practices for intervening with and providing guidance to victims of domestic violence can help keep police officers current with respect to the realities of people living in vulnerable circumstances and the repercussions of their own interventions.

**Organization responsible: MSP (Sûreté du Québec)**

**In collaboration with: MSP (ENPQ)**

**ACTION 40****Assess the relevance of promoting the implementation of the alarm system protocol among police departments in collaboration with their local partners**

Victims of domestic violence or post-separation violence who have suffered serious physical or psychological injuries often fear for their safety when they are alone or with their children at home. Conditions imposed on their abusers by the court are not always sufficient to ensure victims' protection or their feeling of safety. Moreover, in cases of a breach of conditions, threatening behaviour near the victim's home or an intrusion, it can be difficult for the victim to call for help or to give emergency services all the information

required for police to intervene quickly and effectively.

To better protect victims of domestic violence in exceptional or threatening situations, and to increase their feeling of safety, a protocol for the installation of an alarm system ("protocole ISA") has been put in place in some regions of Québec. This protocol aims to prevent new criminal infractions from being committed against the victims of domestic violence, to promote the arrest of individuals who violate a court order, and to optimize the work carried out in partnership with other community actors.

The first step will be to study whether this protocol can be adapted to regional realities across the province and to document the results of its implementation in the four cities (Montréal, Gatineau, Laval and Longueuil) where such a collaborative protocol already exists between community resources, the police departments, CAVACs and the Direction de l'IVAC (CNESST). Then, depending on the findings of this process, tools could be developed to promote or support the implementation of this protocol among the various partners and police forces in Québec, if desired.

**Organization responsible: MSP**

**In collaboration with: CNESST (Direction de l'IVAC), MJQ**

**ACTION 41**

Study the possibility of amending the *Regulation of the Superior Court of Québec in family matters* by adding the legal obligation to disclose any situation where one party is the object of conditions toward the other party

Domestic violence is a complex issue. It has repercussions on relations between the spouses and on the children who are exposed to it. In some cases, legal steps may be taken under both civil law and criminal and penal law. In order to ensure the safety of the parties and the children, the court must have all the elements it needs to make an informed decision that is not contradictory.

This action aims to promote better collaboration between the various authorities concerned so as to better protect victims of domestic violence.

**Organization responsible: MJQ**

**In collaboration with: Superior Court of Québec**

**ACTION 42**

Improve the competencies of members of the Commission québécoise des libérations conditionnelles in evaluating the risk of domestic violence

The criminal justice system has the double task of protecting victims while making sure the rights of the accused are respected. Finding a balance between the two is a major concern at all stages of the penal process, especially the conditional release stage.

Because situations of domestic violence are complex and highly diverse, the acquisition of knowledge specific to evaluating the risk of a violent act being committed would enhance the ability of CQLC members to analyze the file, thereby allowing for greater precision in their questions to the offender.

Improving CQLC members' knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence and the risk indicators would allow for a more accurate risk assessment and thus help increase victims' safety.

**Organization responsible: MSP (CQLC)**

## FOCUS 4

### SHARING OF EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

Interventions in domestic violence bring together people from various sectors, locally and regionally. Their mutual cooperation is often essential to the success of interventions. At the provincial level, opportunities for discussion and collaboration can promote the sharing of expertise among regions and among sectors of intervention, and give representatives from the public, parapublic, community and research sectors a chance to become more familiar with all of the actions being carried out across Québec.

Moreover, interventions carried out by organizations called on to work together to protect victims of domestic violence, including children or adolescents who are exposed to this violence, can be facilitated by access to the latest knowledge on the subject, in particular with respect to the tools and resources available in Québec. Consistency and complementarity of psychosocial, police, judicial and correctional interventions in the area of domestic violence can be fostered by a common and global understanding of the phenomenon.

Finally, a well-thought-out population survey that examines not only the prevalence of domestic violence but also the various factors associated with it could support the implementation of preventive actions to be carried out in the coming years.

#### OBJECTIVES:

1. Create opportunities for the various sectors concerned with domestic violence to share expertise
2. Strengthen and diversify methods of communication and collaboration
3. Support the development and dissemination of knowledge and data related to domestic violence

#### ACTION 43

##### Set up a partners' forum on domestic violence

Several local and regional discussion mechanisms have been put in place across Québec, allowing the various actors concerned with domestic violence to share ideas and align their interventions according to the specific realities of their community. The consultation exercise titled *Vers un nouveau plan d'action en matière de violence conjugale* revealed the desire of civil society groups to have a greater participation in province-wide exchanges and to be better informed of the implementation of government commitments in the area of domestic violence.

Starting in 2019, a partners' forum will be held once a year. It will bring together representatives from non-governmental organizations that work directly in the area of domestic violence, researchers studying the subject and members of the government apparatus who are involved in implementing the current Action Plan. Following the Action Plan's launch, these organizations and specialists will be consulted and given a chance to express their expectations regarding how the forum should work and the themes that should be addressed.

**Organization responsible: SCF**

**In collaboration with: DCP, Famille (including SA), MAMOT, MEES, MIDI, MJQ (including BLCH), MSP, MSSS, MTESS, OPHQ, SAJ, SHQ**

**ACTION 44**

Disseminate, through knowledge transfer activities, the *Rapport québécois sur la violence et la santé*, in particular the components on domestic violence and on violence in intimate relationships among young people

Violence has short-, medium- and long-term repercussions on people's health and well-being. When violence is suffered at a young age, the risk of becoming a victim or a perpetrator of violent acts as an adult is greatly increased. The latest scientific data on this issue shows this problem can be prevented through solutions that act on common factors and that target the early stages of life.

Steps will be taken to disseminate knowledge on the problem of violence from a lifelong perspective, with special attention given to violence exerted in intimate relationships among young people and domestic violence.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

**In collaboration with: INSPQ**

**ACTION 45**

Promote, in the health and social services network, the development and sharing of knowledge and expertise on domestic violence experienced by people with a disability

There is very little documentation on the problem of domestic violence experienced by people with disabilities. This situation affects both the day-to-day lives of these individuals and the intervention practices and training of people working with this population. In addition, knowledge and expertise from practitioners in the field are not always available on a province-wide level.

Various means will be put in place to promote the development and sharing of knowledge and expertise on domestic violence experienced by people with a disability, with the goal of improving the quality of interventions provided to them.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

**In collaboration with: OPHQ**

**ACTION 46**

Establish collaboration mechanisms to promote concerted interventions for children exposed to domestic violence and for their family

This action will be carried out by means of:

- a common understanding of domestic violence in accordance with the government definition of this problem and its guiding principles
- a shared knowledge of the legal and organizational context of the professional practices of the CISSS and CIUSSS and of the practices of their partners
- the holding of activities aimed at establishing dialogue and developing integrated intervention and collaboration practices among partners, notably by means of local or regional initiatives

Organizations and people who help families with children who have been exposed to domestic violence and have been otherwise abused face significant challenges with respect to collaboration, often tied to the fact that not everyone evaluates the issues related to the intervention and the possible solutions from the same perspective, as each is specialized in helping one or another member of the family.

The establishment of mechanisms for collaboration among the network of shelters for women who are victims of domestic violence, the health and social services network and any other actor concerned will foster concerted intervention for children exposed to domestic violence and for their family.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

**ACTION 47**

Ensure that women and girls who are immigrants or from ethnocultural minorities have tools that are adapted to their circumstances and relevant to the issues associated with domestic violence

Research shows that women and girls who are immigrants or from ethnocultural minorities are subject to multiple, systematic forms of discrimination that contribute to their social marginalization and isolation.

A multisectoral partnership bringing together departments and government organizations as well as community organizations that have developed an expertise working with women and girls who are immigrants or from ethnocultural minorities will help ensure, through concerted actions, that these women and girls have access to tools that are adapted to their circumstances and relevant to the issues associated with domestic violence.

**Organization responsible: MIDI**

**In collaboration with: MJQ, MSP, MSSS, SCF**



**ACTION 48**

Produce and distribute an information package on developing concerted intervention mechanisms to prevent the risk of intrafamilial homicide

To intervene in a concerted manner, the various actors in the field, such as health and social services organizations and police, judicial and community actors, must be able to exchange a certain amount of information, agree beforehand on effective and rapid communication and detection processes to be activated, and ensure suitable management of the risk of homicide in crisis situations.

Distribution of an information package on the topic will provide the various actors in the field with tools for setting up a regional or local model for managing homicide risk. Among other things, this will allow for concerted actions and the development of joint security plans when the situation so requires.

**Organization responsible: MJQ**

**In collaboration with: DCP, MSP, MSSS**

**ACTION 49**

Support better quantitative knowledge of the phenomenon of violence between intimate partners

The availability of reliable and up-to-date statistical data on domestic violence within the population of Québec as a whole will allow public authorities as well as community and research organizations to better direct their respective efforts. A population study aiming to measure the phenomenon of violence between intimate partners in Québec will serve to significantly enhance current data available on the subject.

**Organization responsible: SCF**

**In collaboration with: ISQ, MSSS**

**ACTION 50**

Continue research and support the transfer of knowledge related to domestic violence among women, men and children living in vulnerable circumstances

The development and transfer of knowledge, through support for research, are still necessary to obtain a deeper understanding of the diverse aspects of domestic violence and provide avenues for action that are likely to support the development of effective practices and interventions in this area. Research carried out as part of the program of concerted action on domestic violence, under the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et culture, has already resulted in funding for projects on priority themes identified in the previous government action plan on domestic violence.

One thing is clear: the situation of people living in circumstances that make them vulnerable to domestic violence is a concern shared by a large number of researchers and practitioners, who would like to maintain this measure. As a complement to the proposed actions, consultations will be held to determine new questions, needs and areas of knowledge to prioritize.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

### **ACTION 51**

Create a committee to review deaths linked to domestic violence

Studying the circumstances in which a crime took place provides information on what actions to take to prevent such crisis situations from occurring in the future.

A multidisciplinary committee, under the responsibility of the chief coroner, will examine files on domestic violence-related deaths in order to determine gaps and weaknesses in the current intervention process and, in this way, better protect victims of domestic violence in Québec.

This committee will prepare an annual report on the risk factors and trends identified through its work.

**Organization responsible: MSP  
(Office of the Coroner)**

**In collaboration with: DCP, MSSS**

### **ACTION 52**

Carry out a retrospective study of the coroner's files on deaths related to domestic violence and develop an analysis framework to systematically collect data that could be used to prevent this type of event

This action follows from the creation of a committee to review deaths linked to domestic violence (Comité d'examen des décès liés à la violence conjugale), under the responsibility of the Office of the Coroner.

The INSPQ will conduct a research study of past reports by the coroner on deaths that occurred in a context of domestic violence. The goal will be to develop a framework for analyzing the information contained in the coroner's files, to build a database of detailed information on victims, abusers and the circumstances leading to the deaths, and to create a tool that will enable the coroner to systematically collect data that can serve to better understand and prevent domestic violence deaths.

Findings from the research study will also support the work of this multidisciplinary committee by providing it with a clearer vision of the circumstances and events surrounding these deaths, allowing the committee to formulate precise and evidence-based recommendations.

**Organization responsible: MSSS  
In collaboration with: INSPQ, MSP  
(Office of the Coroner)**

**ACTION 53**

Publish a portrait of family homicides based on police data

Collecting information over a period of several years can help to evaluate a situation and, over the long term, to make comparisons, so as to identify trends and contemporary manifestations of the problem.

The MSP intends to produce, in 2021, a portrait of family homicides committed from 2015 to 2020, in order to better identify and direct strategies for prevention and intervention. This portrait will also shed light on the profile of victims and alleged perpetrators.

**Organization responsible: MSP**

**ACTION 54**

Conduct an inventory of training sessions intended for health and social services workers on domestic violence experienced by people with a disability

Workers in the health and social services network have identified the need for training, both on domestic violence (types, cycles, circumstances, detection) and on the existing references and resources for people with a disability.

It is therefore necessary to conduct an inventory of the training programs that exist and to determine the reasons why they are not offered to service providers or do not meet their needs. It will then be possible to identify the needs to be met in terms of content and the means of providing training.

**Organization responsible: MSSS**

**ACTION 55**

Conduct an inventory of Québec collective agreements that address the issue of domestic violence

Domestic violence is a current problem that many different actors are trying to address. It follows that questions are being raised in various workplaces to determine what efforts can be made to support victims and to promote prevention, so as to help counter this problem.

This action aims to take stock of initiatives being taken by actors in the workplace, whether employers or unions, to help counter domestic violence.

**Organization responsible: MTESS**

## **ACTION 56**

Create a directory of resources, tools and prevention and intervention projects related to violence against women

Numerous civil society groups and government organizations are involved in the prevention of violence against women in its many forms and in finding ways to counter it. Many resources and projects are funded under the policies, strategies and action plans that have been put in place by the Québec government over the years in order to take action against violence.

An electronic directory of prevention and intervention resources, tools and projects related to violence against women will enable the various actors to have an overall picture of the needs covered, the existing offer of services and the practices that need to be developed, among other aspects. Such a directory will also enable the sharing of resources.

**Organization responsible: CSF**

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# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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The 2018-2023 Government Action Plan on Domestic Violence will be implemented by the 20 departments and government organizations that contributed to its development, according to their respective missions and expertise.

For each action, the organization or organizations responsible will see to its realization and evaluation. The departments and organizations listed as providing collaboration will contribute their expertise.

The coordination of government intervention on domestic violence and sexual assault is under the responsibility of the Minister for the Status of Women and the Minister of Justice. While maintaining a close collaboration in consideration of ministerial decisions, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine is in charge of coordinating ongoing work related to the development and monitoring of the Action Plan. Throughout the year, the Secrétariat coordinates the government mechanisms for concerted action, including the inter-ministerial committees.

In accordance with the *Public Administration Act*, which established results-based management, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine will set up an effective monitoring procedure for this Action Plan.

In keeping with this practice, the Action Plan will be accompanied by an evaluation framework in order to comply with Treasury Board requirements for monitoring and evaluation. This framework will be used to follow the Action Plan's implementation, right from the start, and to measure its results at the end. The departments and government organizations in charge of implementing the actions are responsible for the accuracy of the information provided.

Finally, to publicize the government's work in the area of countering domestic violence, a document reporting on the Action Plan's implementation will be published twice during the period covered by the plan. These two publications, possibly in the form of charts, will be followed by a final report produced at the end of the Action Plan's implementation

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# APPENDIX

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## RENEWED OR RECURRENT ACTIONS

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Since the recognition of domestic violence as a societal problem in the 1970s, the Québec government has put numerous measures in place to address this issue. In particular, these measures stemmed from the *Politique d'aide aux femmes violentées* (policy to support abused women), adopted in 1985 by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, and the *Politique d'intervention en matière de violence conjugale* (domestic violence intervention policy) published in 1986 by the Ministère de la Justice and the Ministère de la Sécurité publique.

Since then, the 1995 *Policy on Intervention in Conjugal Violence* and the three resulting action plans have provided opportunities for Québec's departments and government organizations to adjust and improve their interventions so as to continue their concrete participation in the fight against domestic violence.

Parallel to the implementation of these policies and action plans, numerous initiatives to counter this form of violence have been funded under governmental calls for projects. Over the years, support for these one-time projects has helped to meet needs targeted by organizations in the field.

***Many of the actions implemented over the last few years have been integrated into government practices and have therefore become recurrent.***

Other measures, begun under the previous action plan, have been renewed for another period of time without necessarily becoming recurrent.

While not exhaustive, the list below illustrates the scope and diversity of ongoing government action on domestic violence.



Promote the introduction of awareness-raising and training activities targeting daycare and Ministère de la Famille personnel concerning the early identification of child victims of domestic violence and their referral to the appropriate resources.	Famille
Continue to carry out activities aimed at raising awareness and providing information on Québec values, including the clear message of zero tolerance for domestic violence, among adult francophones who have recently arrived in Québec as well as immigration candidates during information and integration sessions.	MIDI
Provide information and awareness-raising sessions on domestic and family violence, as well as issues of sexual aggression, to students in francization classes.	MIDI
Continue activities aimed at informing and raising awareness about domestic violence by maintaining and updating the sections in <i>Learning About Québec – Your Guide to Successful Integration</i> pertaining to: Québec values and foundations; and domestic violence and sexual abuse.	MIDI
Provide financial support to local organizations whose mandate is to raise awareness among individuals from immigrant populations or ethnocultural minorities, particularly those who are victims of domestic violence, about the rights and avenues of recourse available to them and facilitate access to assistance and protection services.	MIDI
Support the design and production of awareness-raising tools and information on domestic violence that encourage awareness among the public, victims and their inner circle as well as the perpetrators of violence to prevent domestic violence before it begins.	MJQ
Provide immigrants and people from ethnocultural minorities information and awareness-raising tools aimed at victims of domestic violence.	MJQ
Provide financial support for and ensure the development of CAVAC services, including those offered to victims of domestic violence, so that they may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continue to ensure access to CAVAC offices for people with a disability</li> <li>• offer free interpretation services for hearing-impaired persons</li> <li>• continue to ensure access to court support services offered to people from ethnocultural minorities</li> <li>• continue their partnerships with organizations that work with vulnerable populations</li> </ul>	MJQ

Continue the establishment and implementation of programs aimed at properly informing victims of crime, including victims of domestic violence crimes.	MJQ
Ensure that the rights of victims of crime, including victims of domestic violence, are respected across Québec, especially with regard to the <i>Victim impact statement</i> made before the courts or the Review Board for mental disorders.	MJQ, DCP
Review training programs for family mediators so that they may be better equipped to detect cases of domestic violence and ensure the safety of victims who are participating in a mediation process.	MJQ
Promote the participation of all Québec family mediators in domestic violence training.	MJQ
Support the implementation of measures to maintain and strengthen the skills developed by family mediators after they have undergone training on domestic violence.	MJQ
Provide financial support to <i>SOS Violence Conjugale</i> and ensure that its services meet the needs of victims of domestic violence who are in a vulnerable situation.	MJQ
Inform the public about residential lease termination for reasons of domestic violence and sexual abuse when the safety of the victim or the victim's children is threatened.	MJQ
Produce data on requests for residential lease termination for reasons of domestic violence and sexual abuse when the safety of the victim or the victim's children is threatened.	MJQ, DCP
Promote continued training for court officials to establish complementary practices that ensure the safety of individuals in domestic violence cases as well as the children exposed to this abuse, particularly those in a vulnerable situation.	MJQ
Prioritize projects related to crimes committed in a domestic violence context, identification of existing needs in terms of services, the development of knowledge and best practices in judicial intervention strategies for victims, particularly those who are in a vulnerable situation, within the Grant Program for Research, Information, Education and Training Pertaining to Assistance for Victims of Crime.	MJQ

Promote funding for studies on the judicial aspects of domestic violence.	MJQ
Set up a working group in charge of identifying best practices for ensuring the complementarity of rulings and decisions rendered in domestic violence cases in accordance with the constitutional right pertaining to how the courts are organized.	MJQ
Update the domestic violence training program for criminal and penal prosecuting attorneys and continue to dispense it.	DCPP
Ensure application of DCPD guidelines with respect to prosecutor intervention strategies for victims of crimes committed in a domestic violence context, particularly the VIO-1 guideline.	DCPP
Ensure application of the Stat A coding system designed to help identify files in which individuals who have committed a domestic violence crime have been sentenced to imprisonment, conditional imprisonment or supervised probation.	DCPP
Maintain the unified service and activities of authorized persons in correctional services with regard to victims, in particular by covering aspects related to the information to convey to victims and the processing of their written statements.	MSP
Provide specific information to victims of domestic violence when their abusers have received a custody sentence.	MSP
Continue to take into account victim impact statements in the evaluation and decision processes related to management of the offender's sentence.	MSP
Ensure the consistency of the conditions imposed by the Commission québécoise des libérations conditionnelles (CQLC) with those determined by the court.	MSP
Refer offenders to specialized adapted services and programs and require mandatory participation as part of their conditions for release.	MSP
Produce a statistical report on domestic violence crimes and distribute it annually on the website of the MSP through its publication on crime trends.	MSP
Ensure provincial coordination of domestic violence at the Sûreté du Québec level and ensure the development and updating of tools for police officers working in the field as well as intersectoral collaboration projects.	MSP

Carry out police interventions in domestic violence cases in the regions served by the Sûreté du Québec.	MSP
Participate in the judicial process and testify before the court in domestic violence cases that are under investigation by the Sûreté du Québec.	MSP
Provide financial support to community organizations working with victims of domestic violence.	MSSS
Provide financial support to community organizations working with spouses exhibiting violent behaviour.	MSSS
Compile and distribute assessment tools with regard to the dangerousness of spouses exhibiting violent behaviours in the relevant communities of intervention.	MSSS
Adapt intervention tools to the reality of populations vulnerable to domestic violence and ensure they are distributed to targeted stakeholders in the health and social services network.	MSSS
Strengthen intersectoral collaboration, regionally and locally, namely by: 1) ensuring coordinated action with regard to domestic violence in each region of Québec as well as regional coordination among partners; 2) ensuring that all partners affected by the issue of domestic violence are present at round tables; and 3) supporting, promoting and evaluating referral and intersectoral collaboration initiatives intended for victims, exposed children and spouses exhibiting violent behaviours.	MSSS
Improve knowledge about effective intervention strategies aimed at violence prevention, the promotion of egalitarian relationships, and the protection of exposed children and their parents in their care-giving role.	MSSS
Promote and update information on domestic violence resources and services offered in the health and social services network through the <i>Répertoire des ressources du domaine de la santé et des services sociaux</i> (health and social services directory).	MSSS
Continue to provide professional and technical support for the implementation of concerted actions in the prevention and promotion of non-violence that take into account risk factors for domestic violence and are focused on formative measures already in place in the school system, such as the <i>Healthy Schools</i> approach under the MELS-MSSS Agreement, sexuality education, and the government strategy to get all Quebecers to join the fight against bullying and violence in schools, which supplements the Action Plan to Prevent and Deal with Violence in the Schools.	MEES, MSSS

Continue to distribute the awareness-raising tool on violence in intimate relationships entitled <i>Épris sans mépris</i> (in love without scorn).	MEES
Distribute information to private schools on violence in intimate relationships among young people in order to prevent it.	MEES
Provide financial support to persons receiving last-resort financial assistance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• who are sheltered in a safe house for victims of domestic violence by providing an allowance for temporary limitations to employment for a period of (at most) three consecutive months and a special benefit of \$100 per month</li> <li>• by granting them a special allowance for moving costs when the move is due to domestic violence (interpreted as being a matter of health and safety, and justified by a medical certificate)</li> </ul>	MTESS
Grant an exemption to victims of domestic violence receiving last-resort financial assistance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• from parental contributions for young adults who can show that they were abused by their parents</li> <li>• for the value of their home, up to \$80 000, for one year following the date on which they moved out for health or safety reasons</li> </ul>	MTESS
Grant last-resort financial assistance to victims of domestic violence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• without requiring them to claim their rights to support payments, as is usually the case; however the MESS reserves the right to claim them itself</li> <li>• without requiring them to repay sums received without entitlement, for victims who can show that they were unable to declare their actual situation because of abuse by their spouse directed at them or their children</li> </ul>	MTESS
Provide domestic violence training to Emploi-Québec officials.	MTESS
Continue to offer various programs that aim to provide households with affordable housing and which may benefit, among other people, victims of domestic violence.	SHQ





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