



Neighbours, Friends & Families

www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2017

INVESTING FOR SOCIAL IMPACT – MEET THE NEIGHBOURS, FRIENDS & FAMILIES - FAMILY

The Ontario government is a global leader on addressing domestic and sexual violence. Starting in 2002, findings from the Ontario Domestic Violence Death Review Committee taught us that when domestic violence is happening in a family, it is most often neighbours, friends and other family members who are most likely to see the warning signs, but often not know how to respond.

From the research, the Neighbours, Friends and Families (NFF) public education campaign was funded by the Ontario government and developed in partnership with an expert panel in 2005 to teach Ontarians to:

- **Recognize** warning signs and risk factors
- **Respond** safely and effectively as bystanders
- **Refer** and find help in the community

Over time, the seeds from the original NFF campaign have taken hold and grown into a variety of campaigns that all work toward the common goal of teaching everyone to Recognize – Respond – Refer. Seen together, the campaigns form the basis for a social impact strategy, targeting different audiences with the same messages and calls to action. The approach supports social change theories that contend the way to interrupt and shift complex social issues is by teaching 1-3 repeatable actions across populations.

Community leaders and coordinating committees could consider a social impact approach in developing projects that put the NFF campaigns to work to reach into varied and diverse communities.

Meet the original NFF Family¹:

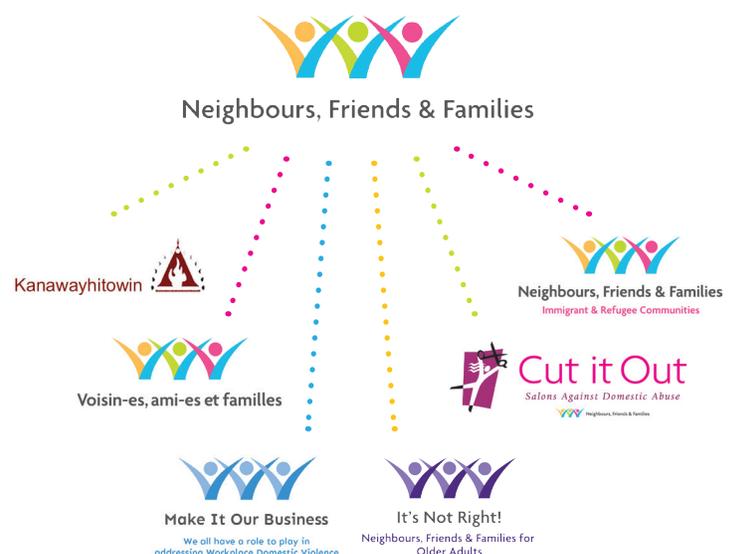
- **Neighbours, Friends & Families** – a community campaign to teach everyone to recognize – respond and refer. Available in 16 languages (CREVAWC)
 - **Kanawayhitowin** – developed by an Indigenous expert panel to make the campaign culturally relevant for Indigenous peoples (OFIFC)
 - **Voisin-es, ami-es et famille** – adapted for the Francophone community (AOCVF)
 - **NFF for immigrant and refugee communities** (OCASI)
- NFF - 2nd Generation (developed by the Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women & Children)
- **Make It Our Business** (MIOB): In 2010, the Liberal Government passed the first legislation in the world to

protect workers from domestic violence in the workplace. MIOB teaches coworkers and supervisors how to recognize-respond-refer at work.

- **Cut it Out** – Women often have long relationships with their hair dressers. For this reason, salon professionals are well placed to be trained as bystanders. Adapted from a U.S. campaign, Cut it Out teaches salon professionals to recognize-respond-refer with clients.
- **It's Not Right! Neighbours, Friends & Families for Older Adults** – developed in partnership with the Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse as a national pan-Canadian project to engage the neighbours, friends and family members to recognize, respond and refer in situations of abuse or neglect of older adults.

It is a common phrase to hear, “everyone has a role to play”. NFF campaigns include basic education and practical ‘do-able’ actions that can support individuals, workplaces and communities to take the critical steps toward a whole community response that has broad social impact. Together we make the difference.

¹ Check out the websites and order brochures free of charge.





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IT'S NOT RIGHT! NEIGHBOURS, FRIENDS AND FAMILIES FOR OLDER ADULTS CHANGING THE CONVERSATION ON ABUSE OF OLDER ADULTS IN ONTARIO

Ontario is changing the conversation to stop abuse of older adults. In January 2017, the Ministry of Seniors Affairs, Elder Abuse Ontario and Western University launched a provincial initiative to educate Ontarians as bystanders. Bystanders are those neighbours, friends and family members who are most often first to see warning signs with someone they know, but may not know how to respond. We want people of all ages to be able to recognize warning signs of abuse and to know how to respond safely and effectively. Small actions can make a big difference!

The goal for the project is to reach 10,000 Ontarians in 2017 through presentations, workshops, social media and word-of-mouth. We are building momentum by starting with a series of workshops that were held in February and March in eight communities. The workshops were designed to train champions to deliver basic INR education on abuse and

neglect of older adults. The project asks; how far beyond the workshops can our collective actions ripple into Ontario? Participants are tracking their activities on a map to show the progress and to demonstrate that every contribution adds up toward a shared goal.

Who doesn't want to live in violence-free communities? Creating the opportunities to learn and talk about the issues is a good first step. Together, we find the courage to support each other in taking small steps toward safe and effective action when we first see the warning signs show up. Social change is more than possible when people work together for common goals. INR-NFF was created for just this purpose.



REMEMBERING THOSE WE HAVE LOST

Domestic violence doesn't discriminate. Domestic abuse can be found across every age group, ethnicity and income level. Dr. Elana Fric' is a recent stark reminder of this fact. We wrote about her in a recent [blog post](#) for the Neighbours, Friends and Family campaign. We know that finding appropriate support and a way out of an abusive relationship can be incredibly difficult. In many instances, if the appropriate support networks are not in place or not available, it can be almost impossible for a woman to leave a violent relationship. We know that leaving an abusive relationship puts a woman in the most vulnerable and dangerous position. Data from the [Domestic Violence Death Review Committee](#) show that almost 70% of women who are murdered as a result of domestic violence, die during the process of separation. It's because of all this that we need to increase support and protection.

While many people are working hard to evoke change in this area, including those fighting to implement the [paid domestic and sexual violence leave bill](#) there is still so much to be done. The system still fails victims, leaving them isolated and unsupported. This devastating reality was highlighted in our recent [Survivors blog series](#). Over the course of three weeks, we shared the real-life stories of three courageous and loving sisters, whose mother was unfairly and tragically taken from them as a result of domestic violence. They share their feelings

of frustration and helplessness when even contacting the police did not help them to find the support they needed. When no one followed up with them, they were left isolated and alone to try to manage the abuse. As Maha details in her [blog post](#), they looked into every possible avenue they could think of to help their mother leave the relationship, but these only ever resulted in dead ends. The extended family left them to cope with the violence on their own and after a brief intervention, so did the system. In the end, it cost their mother her life.

One of the most important messages of the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign is that we can increase safety by decreasing isolation. For an in-depth look at how to do this watch the [NFF webinar](#).

We are thankful to Maha and her sisters Ahlam and Houda for sharing their stories, their memories of their mother, and their feelings on being survivors of domestic abuse as well as how they're coping. These stories are so incredibly important, as they help us work toward evoking necessary changes and supports. They also show us that there is still so much work to be done on many fronts, especially when it comes to protection and support of domestic violence victims.

If you would like to consider contributing your voice or story to our blog, please reach out.