



Women and COVID-19

Each **March 8th**, we mark International Women's Day, and this year's theme is **#breakthebias**, which Region of Queens Municipality will commemorate. This year, as we appear to be reemerging from the last two years of COVID-19, it is important to examine the impact of the pandemic on women specifically.

At a basic level, more women than men have been diagnosed and died from COVID-19 since the onset of the pandemic. The Canadian Women's Foundation states that this could possibly be because of higher numbers of women living in nursing homes and seniors' facilities. Furthermore, a high ratio of women work in the front lines of health services, caregiving, and cleaning, thus women have been at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19.

The isolation measures and lockdowns also increased risks to women. There has been an increased risk of gender-based and domestic violence, as pandemic-related stressors become triggers to abusers, and the abused have little to no place to flee, leaving them more vulnerable to abuse. Isolations have also impacted women economically. Women accounted for 63% of pandemic related job losses, with 70% of those were people between 25 and 54 years of age. Women have seen increased responsibilities in caregiving and housework during the pandemic and there has been an overall reduction to access of support services.

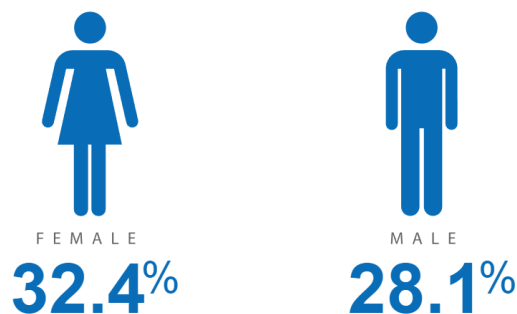
The impacts of COVID-19 on women is compounded when examined with a racial equity lens. Indigenous, Métis, and Inuit women face a large number of systemic barriers to health and safety including limited access to health care, isolation, declining infrastructure, and other legacies and policies of colonialism. East Asian communities saw a significant increase in targeted racism and discrimination during COVID-19, including hate crimes and other overt acts of violence and discrimination. In general, racialized women experienced higher unemployment rates than non-racialized women, and that gap only increased throughout the pandemic.

This year for International Women's Day, it is crucial for all to support women around the world, so these COVID-19 changes don't become another "new normal."

WOMEN AND DISABILITY

Women tend to have higher rates of disabilities partly due to their longevity. Unfortunately, most women with disabilities have experienced violence or domestic abuse. A NS report called '*Nothing without Us*' brought together various government and non-profit organisations to hear first hand stories and attempt to guide standards and supports. Women also tend to be the primary care givers of people with disabilities.

Nova Scotians with at least one disability by gender



<https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/prevalence/>

Intersectionality is where layers of marginalisation overlap and even worse barriers are created. Women, girls and non-binary people with disabilities, particularly Indigenous and those of African heritage experience the highest rates of gender-based violence, victimization and subsequent criminalization in Canada.

NS League for Equal Opportunities (NSLEO) is a broad cross-disability voice of Nova Scotians with disabilities, including a branch with a focus on women. They are affiliated nationally with the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) and offer various supports including scholarships. See www.nsleo.com

Listed on NS.211.ca as a public support : **DisAbled-Womens-Network Canada (DAWN)** is a national, feminist, cross-disability organization that provides advocacy and resource information for women with disabilities and Deaf women experiencing poverty, isolation, discrimination and violence.

One of their projects is *Do the Rights Thing*, which focuses on developing and implementing a system-level response, addressing systemic barriers to services and employment faced by women with disabilities and Deaf women.



<https://www.dawncanada.net>

SPECIAL AWARENESS DAYS

- March 8 - International Women's Day
- March 21 - International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- March 21 - World Down Syndrome Day
- March 31 - International Transgender Day of Visibility