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## **Standing Committee on the Status of Women**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, September 28, 2016**

**Chair**

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu**



## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

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• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)):** I call the meeting to order.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome.

We are going to have an exciting time today. The first exciting thing for me is that we have gender parity on our committee today for the first time. Welcome to Chris Bittle, Jean Rioux, and Garnett Genuis, who are joining us today. That's wonderful.

From the YMCA, we have Ann Decter, who is the director of advocacy and public policy, and Raine Liliefeldt, who is the director of member services and development. We also have, by video conference, Stephanie Guthrie, complainant in the R. v. Elliott criminal harassment trial at the Ontario Court of Justice.

Welcome to all of you, ladies. We'll have 10 minutes for Stephanie to speak, then we'll go to the YMCA for five minutes each, and then we'll go to our regular round of questioning.

Welcome, Stephanie. You can begin your 10 minutes.

**Ms. Steph Guthrie (Social Justice Advocate, As an Individual):** Thank you very much. Thank you for inviting me to testify today.

My last experience giving testimony was during a criminal harassment proceeding against a man who tirelessly followed my movements online and sent a plethora of unwanted communication in my direction. Based on my experiences, I strongly believe that the criminal legal system is not a constructive way to address cyberviolence against women and girls. Criminalizing this behaviour is a reactive approach that will not end the suffering, and in fact in some cases is likely to prolong the suffering of women and girls online.

Finally, because of existing biases in our society and among our police, a criminalization approach stands to disproportionately penalize and incarcerate indigenous and racialized people while giving a pass or a cushier ride to middle-class white men who inflict cyberviolence. Like other people who have testified before this committee on this issue, I believe that the best way to prevent cyberviolence is early and lifelong education initiatives informed by research. I also believe that we need non-adversarial interventions for survivors that prioritize ending and acknowledging the harm, rather than punishing the persons who inflicted the harm and asking them to be accountable to the state rather than to their community and the survivors whom they have harmed.

While preparing me for my testimony in my own case, the crown prosecutor said something I'll never forget. She told me, "Remember, the only opinion that matters is the judge's." To me, that statement was emblematic of many of the problems I encountered with the criminal legal system. If the judge's opinion is the only one that matters, what happens to the opinion of the person who was harmed? What if the judge doesn't have an adequate grasp of the key issues that are informing the proceeding? What if the judge fails to understand the nuances of what it is like to move through the world in a body or skin colour different from his own?

First of all, let's be frank. The judge's opinion, even if it is the only one that matters, doesn't form in a vacuum. It is influenced by the judge's station in society. It is influenced by the opinions and stations in society held by the police officers who conduct the investigation and the counsel who argue the case. No human being is without bias, and our biases are shaped by the stereotypes, norms, and power differentials of the society we live in. If a judge, a police officer, or a lawyer does not intimately understand the realities of being a young woman, they are, frankly, not qualified to assess the "objective danger" of the situations young women and girls are facing online.

Second, legal workers often also lack forms of digital literacy—

**The Chair:** We have a bit of technical difficulty. Just hang on for a minute while we restore the audio.

We'll pause your testimony, and we'll start with our guest from the YMCA.

I'll start with you, Ann, for five minutes.

**Ms. Ann Decter (Director, Advocacy and Public Policy, YWCA Canada):** Good afternoon. I am Ann Decter. I am the director of advocacy and public policy at YWCA Canada. We are both from the national office of the YWCA, not the YMCA. We do end up correcting that a lot.

It is nice to see so many men here to learn about violence against young women and girls.

For almost 150 years, YWCA Canada has worked to improve the lives of young women and girls....

Did you want to go back to Steph? It might be easier for her.

•(1535)

**The Chair:** It would be easier for her. Is that all right? Stephanie, we'll continue with yours.

**Ms. Ann Decter:** You haven't got sound on.

**The Chair:** We haven't got the sound yet.

Okay, great; now we do. I'm sorry about that. We'll go back to you, then.

**Ms. Steph Guthrie:** There's no need to apologize.

I'm not sure what the last part you heard was. The next thing I would say is that legal workers often also lack forms of digital literacy that are crucial to cyberviolence cases. Regardless of which side they took on the verdict in my case, many observers commented on how the judge's decision revealed what was, on his part, a very limited grasp of how the Internet works, and Twitter in particular, which is where the harassment occurred.

Let me be clear that the judge in my case did work very hard to understand how Twitter works by asking many follow-up questions. He was very thorough. However, you don't learn what it's like to use Twitter by asking questions. You learn what it's like to use Twitter by using it.

While on the stand, I explained what it means to put a period in front of someone's username in a tweet. I explained the mechanics of blocking someone on Twitter and what it actually achieves, which is not very much. I explained what the sticky-outtie tongue emoticon means.

But how do you explain to someone who has never used Twitter what it's like to be someone who uses Twitter as your primary means of sharing your voice with the world? How do you explain to that person who never uses Twitter just how much it impacted your life to no longer be able to use it freely, and to feel fear every time you sign in that your harasser is going to be there to greet you? The answer is that you can't, but that person who doesn't use the Internet will have the power to determine the official public narrative of what happened to you on the Internet. That person will compare Twitter, a privately owned corporation, to a public square. That person will characterize your choice to have a public Twitter account as inviting the world into your living room, without acknowledging that you should be able to kick that person out of your living room if they are behaving in a way that scares you.

In other words, that person will essentially conclude that you asked for it, that this kind of treatment is to be expected and tolerated, and that the onus is on potential victims to do everything in their power to prevent others from preying on them.

The adversarial nature of the criminal legal system means that survivors are bombarded with scrutiny of their actions, a scrutiny which in many cases is not equally levied at the accused. In this case, the criminal legal system simply reproduces the victim-blaming and impossible standards of behaviour that our society already imposes on survivors of gender-based violence, and also reproduces the comparative leniency experienced by those who inflict it in broader society.

My fear was characterized by the judge as unreasonable because I at times lashed out angrily about the man who was harassing me.

Judges are called upon to apply an objective standard to determine the reasonability of a victim's feelings. "Reasonable"—that's a funny, subjective word, isn't it? It's easy to see the many ways in which societal stereotypes about appropriate victim behaviour and who makes a good or a bad victim might inform these judgments.

The criminal legal system, frankly, fetishizes an objectivity that in many cases does not exist. The reality is that many crimes relating to interpersonal violence, including crimes that fall under the gender-based violence umbrella, such as cyberviolence, involve a significant degree of subjectivity. We're talking about feelings, about interpretations of other people's feelings, about intuition based on non-verbal communication. There is often not a smoking gun, and there's often no objective crow's nest that any participant can sit in to assess the situation.

Even my own judge openly stated in his ruling that his lens on the law is shaped by his lens on society, which is in turn shaped by his social location, in this case as a man. He quoted from another judge's ruling and said, "We may try to see things as objectively as we please. Nonetheless, we can never see them with any eyes except our own", yet he still found me unreasonable to fear for my safety when I was, by his own admission, being harassed by an unhinged and vulgar man.

In my own case, I often wonder what might have happened if my harasser had been a young black man instead of a middle-aged, middle-class white man with a white-collar job. I wonder how the police might have responded had I not been a middle-class, well-educated white woman. A legal principle at the end of the day is only a principle. How it looks in action and not on paper tends to shift and change depending on the relative power of the parties involved.

I understand why the rights of the accused are theoretically paramount in a criminal case. The stakes are high. We're talking about incarceration. We're talking about a permanent record. These things are a big deal.

•(1540)

I can tell you right now that I didn't go to the police because I wanted my harasser thrown in jail. I didn't go to the police because I wanted his reputation destroyed. I just wanted him to leave me alone.

I had already done everything in my power to achieve that, but with no success. I wanted help. I wanted a third party to intervene and to support me in conveying to him the harm that he was causing to me. I'm a middle-class woman, and the narrative I've been peddled since childhood for when I need to be protected and when I need safety was to call the police. Doing that just raised the stakes to a level that I didn't want. It raised the stakes to a level that discourages many men who use violence and intimidation from ever being willing to admit to the harm they caused, because if they admit to the harm that they caused, then they might be incarcerated. It also meant that I gave up my agency to speak openly about what happened to me. This is the first time I've done that. I handed my official narrative to a judge, the only person whose opinion apparently matters, and a man who was not there and did not understand many of the particulars of the case.

What if we had more options for intervention that don't seek consequences like incarceration, but that simply seek an end to, and an acknowledgement of, the harm? I can tell you that I would have called a service like that in a heartbeat. I've talked to many survivors who feel the same.

Restorative and transformative justice processes offer these types of approaches, but these programs are few and far between, they're underfunded, access is extremely limited, and outcomes from these types of proceedings are often not afforded the same societal legitimacy as outcomes from criminal proceedings.

Restorative and transformative practices offer models of justice that research shows are more in step with the type of support that most survivors are seeking when they contact police. These processes are rooted in the practices of indigenous communities and communities of colour. They offer safer alternatives for survivors who don't feel safe contacting police because of the violence, historically and currently, inflicted by police upon their communities, such as black and indigenous people, sex workers, undocumented people, and transgendered people.

Survivors of cyberviolence need support to heal, and those who inflict it need to be reminded of the survivor's humanity and the right to live in peace. I don't believe the criminal legal system is truly capable of either of these things. As a survivor of both cyberviolence and the violence of our criminal court system, I'd like to see state resources diverted away from law enforcement and criminal courts and toward holistic, trauma-informed, survivor-centred processes of healing and accountability.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for sharing your story. That was excellent.

Now we will go to the YWCA—thank you for correcting me—and we'll start with Ann, for five minutes.

**Ms. Ann Decter:** Hi. Thank you for the invitation to be here today.

For almost 150 years, YWCA Canada has worked to improve the lives of young women and girls through programs, projects, and policy advocacy. As Canada's single largest provider of shelter for women and children fleeing violence, we place a high priority on ending violence against young women and girls. Empowering girls, developing young women's leadership, changing societal attitudes, advocating for violence prevention policies and education, and innovative programs and tools are all strategies in our approach.

To prevent violence against young women and girls, we need a societal shift in attitude similar to shifts in public acceptance of drinking and driving, and smoking in public places. Long-term public awareness campaigns were essential to making those changes and will be essential to preventing violence.

These need to be combined with preventive program initiatives and supportive responses for young women and girls who have experienced violence. Addressing violence against young women and girls requires a commitment to reconciliation and to inclusion, as well as specifically addressing both systemic and individual forms of violence against indigenous young women and girls.

Developing empowered young women and girls requires programs and spaces that foster leadership, empowerment, and self-affirmation. These gendered programs include safer spaces for young women to meaningfully engage in conversations around issues such as violence prevention that are adapted to girls and to young women.

Through our Power of Being a Girl initiative, girls 12 to 17 develop leadership by hosting events for World YWCA's annual Week Without Violence. YWCA GirlSpace provides an opportunity to raise awareness about violence and its root causes through workshops and projects, and our forthcoming Rights Guide for girls, young women, and gender non-conforming youth will empower girls by providing access to information on their rights.

Preventing violence against young women and girls also requires changing the behaviour of men and boys. A major issue on that front is consent to sexual activity. In a consent culture, everyone from judges and defence attorneys to campus sports teams and police officers understands, respects, and applies the law of consent that both people need to say yes to sexual activity; that silence does not mean yes, only yes means yes; and that it is illegal to have sexual contact with someone who has not consented, is unconscious, or is too impaired to give voluntary consent.

Social norms need to be shifted through consent education in public schools and post-secondary campuses as well as through mandatory training, leadership, and enforcement across police and court systems, up to and including removal of judges who fail to apply the law.

Public education strategies are needed to shift the stigma of sexual assault off those who are assaulted and onto the attacker, confirming that it is no more shameful to have been sexually assaulted than it is shameful to have your car stolen or your house robbed. It is shameful and criminal to commit sexual assault.

Girls and young women need safe, supportive homes. Most girls who leave home do so due to sexual abuse and violence. Others are escaping homophobia. First nations, Métis, and Inuit girls and young women may be leaving foster homes and group homes, or aging out of care without supports.

For teenage girls, homelessness carries the risk of violence, sexual exploitation, addiction, and criminalization. Teenage girls who have experienced homelessness stress the need for girls-only housing to provide a home that is free from sexual harassment and violence. Emergency shelters for young women are also key. Across the country, local YWCAs have initiated live-in programs for young mothers and their children, providing housing, support, education referrals, and advocacy as well as continuing outreach supports on transitioning out of programs.

YWCA Canada's award-winning Safety Siren smart phone app is an innovative tool to add to young women's safety. It's a free, downloadable application for iPhones, BlackBerry, and Androids that sends an emergency email to a pre-set contact with appropriate geolocation coordinates and places an emergency outgoing call to a pre-programmed number. It geolocates the user to nearby sexual assault centres, emergency hotlines, health centres, and clinics and offers a wide range of facts and information on women's health and wellness as well as women's health resources.

Finally, YWCA Canada's #NOTokay campaign aims to engage the general public in identifying violence against women in popular culture, social media music videos, television shows, and gaming, and to empower them to step up and say that's not okay.

● (1545)

Hashtag NOTokay aims to foster a society that instead of using violence against women, supports women and young women to fully exercise their rights and their freedoms.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Very good.

Now we'll let Raine have five minutes.

**Ms. Raine Liliefeldt (Director of Member Services and Development, YWCA Canada):** Good afternoon. My name is Raine Liliefeldt. I'm honoured to be here with you on the traditional territory of the Algonquin and Anishinabe people.

I'm here to paint you a picture. Stroke.

I had to go to school every day with another girl calling me a snake. I felt that if I didn't block her and just let her and her friends bully me, it won't be as hard as in real life. Stroke.

When I was going through a case when I was being told to kill myself and slit my throat and things, the schools, my family, and police didn't do anything but shrug their shoulders at me, but my friends tried to help me to stop it from happening.

Young women and girls in Canada experience deliberate violence because of their gender. Information and communication technologies and the spread of social media have presented new opportunities and enabled various efforts to address violence against women and girls. When girls and women are driven off the Internet, they lose the ability to be part of the platforms where more and more public debates take place. This is why the YWCA embarked on an initiative to better understand and support young women.

Project Shift, which creates a safer digital world for young women, is a national multi-year project led by YWCA Canada and funded by Status of Women Canada, and even though I'm talking

about girls and young women, our work acknowledges and recognizes that cyberviolence also greatly impacts transgender and gender-nonconforming youth.

Let's zoom in. We use the term "cyberviolence" to mean any harmful act carried out through network technology. We've chosen to use this term because it respects the serious harm that these behaviours can do. This includes many of the behaviours often described as cyberbullying, such as spreading rumours about someone, impersonating them online, spreading intimate or embarrassing images, and targeting them with threats or sexist language, as well as stalking or monitoring them and so on. It may be carried out by peers, friends, strangers, or romantic partners. It's important to recognize that this is often connected to off-line violence. Online harassment can easily move off-line when harassers release their targets' personal information or an abusive relationship plays out online.

Cyberviolence impacts the daily lives of young women and girls. Girls are significantly more likely than boys to feel that the Internet is an unsafe space for them. A lot more girls than boys fear they could be hurt if they talk to someone they don't know online. One third of youth who experience violence online have symptoms of depression. Online harassment or abusive relationships can have effects that lasts for years or a lifetime. As well as the emotional impacts, cyberviolence against women also narrows their horizons by forcing them out of spaces where they don't feel safe or welcome.

Project Shift establishes the need for a gender lens to understand violence online. It makes recommendations for a range of public and private sectors, from educational institutions to parents, counsellors, police, and the information communication technology sector, also known as ICT.

As part of our work, YWCA has convened leaders from over a dozen ICT organizations. The round table, as we call it, hopes to move forward on creating systemic change on the issue of cyberviolence against young women and girls. Guided by YWCA's leadership and the connection to the issue, the members of the round table have agreed to share knowledge and resources within the ICT round table and across the sector with students, interns, employees, and colleagues; to cultivate a culture of empathy across the sector; and to provide leadership to advance the sector on accountability.

Here is how you give can support. To create systemic change and to end cyberviolence against girls and young women, we recommend that the government support women-centred training and education for the legal community and law enforcement and work with those who have experienced cyberviolence in a supportive and non-judgmental way; change the legal definition of abuse and harassment under the Criminal Code, and include cyberviolence to better protect young women and girls; continue funding YWCA Canada's work with the ICT sector to create a safer digital world; and fund the first national cross-sectoral conference on online safety, led by YWCA.

Cyberviolence happens to many women and girls who quit social networks after being harassed. We are failing as a democracy if we allow harassment and other forms of cyberviolence to keep girls and women from being able to exercise their full rights. It is the government's responsibility to ensure that girls and women are safe everywhere, online and off-line. Let's paint a different picture together.

Thank you.

• (1550)

**The Chair:** Excellent. Very good.

Now we're going to go into our questioning. We're going to begin our questioning with Mr. Fraser, for seven minutes.

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.):** Excellent. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'll start with you, Ms. Guthrie, and to each of our witnesses, thanks very much for your testimony. I really enjoyed the context that you provided.

You mentioned partway through your presentation that we should be directing resources away from the criminal legal system, law enforcement, and the criminal justice system and toward a trauma-informed, victim-centred strategy. Could you shed a little more light on what that might look like? I know you specifically mentioned that if there had been a service that you could have called, you would have, in a heartbeat. Do you have any other suggestions on what features that kind of a service would have?

**Ms. Steph Guthrie:** Sure. There are a number of examples and lots of different ways to do restorative practice.

One model involves a prosecution referral. What would happen is someone from the office of the crown contacts the survivor and offers them the option of a criminal proceeding, a civil proceeding, or a restorative proceeding. The survivor chooses, and then if the person who's deemed responsible for the harm also consents to a restorative practice, they enter into what is essentially a mediated conference in collaboration with friends and family members chosen by both of them to be there to support them. The conference is geared toward the victim or survivor having a chance to articulate what type of harm they experienced, what they feel the person is responsible for, and how they feel that person could act in order to make themselves accountable, which could take a number of forms. It could be financial reparations for their therapy. It could be a public apology. It could look like any number of things, but it's about figuring out what the survivor or victim needs to feel a sense of

justice and working with the person responsible to effect those changes.

• (1555)

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Tell me if this assumption is off base. Given your experience trying to explain Twitter to someone who doesn't use Twitter, I assume there would have to be a heavy dose of specialized training to the people involved in the restorative process to make sure they understand the cyber aspect in 21st century social networking.

**Ms. Steph Guthrie:** Absolutely. Really, if I had the power to, I would mandate that everyone working in the legal system and everyone working in education, especially anyone who is ever going to be in a circumstance where they're working with youth, is literate on these platforms. That's not just generally literate in social media; no one should be working on a cyberviolence case that occurred on Twitter if they don't understand how Twitter works, if they're not a Twitter user themselves. I really do feel that a baseline level of competency is required in a number of different sectors to deal with cyberviolence effectively.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** It's actually a nice segue to some questions I have for the folks from the YWCA, and thanks very much for being here.

You two discussed the importance of embedding institutions with the knowledge about violence against women more generally but also modern technology and how that might impact it. I think you referred to law enforcement, campuses, and courts, among other institutions. Could you give some thoughts on the other communities we should be trying to educate through some kind of public awareness campaign?

**Ms. Raine Liliefeldt:** In terms of our work around cyberviolence, we've looked at connecting with who we call "trusted adults", meaning anyone who's a parent, teacher, counsellor—anyone young women could go to to learn more about something or to report. Often before it even gets to the point of entering the legal system, it's young women connecting directly with their parents or with a teacher, with someone they trust. For us that's a really key starting point. We're building a resource right now with an organization called MediaSmarts to do just that, to provide a base of information for trusted adults.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** So really a digital literacy initiative is what we're talking about.

**Ms. Raine Liliefeldt:** It's something like that. It's also that our focus is on support, non-blaming, and non-judgment, so it's not just about bridging the digital divide; it's about how to approach the issue when it arises.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** You mentioned as well—and I think each of the witnesses referred to it, at least in some terms—how we're driving young women off this new social platform that seems so important, and we've heard this from many witnesses now. Are there strategies that we can undertake to ensure that women are encouraged to remain part of these new discussions, part of the new economy and the new social platforms that we have?

Maybe we'll start with the YWCA, but I'd like to get your thoughts as well, Ms. Guthrie.

**Ms. Raine Liliefeldt:** There are a couple of pieces around that. One of them is about supporting young women to give them opportunities around the coding, what's happening behind the scenes in terms of the technology, and looking at STEM opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and math.

Some of our YWCAs are working with young women that way so that they have a greater understanding of the sphere of the environment. We're also working with Ladies Learning Code and to support young women to learn how to code so that they're creating the spaces themselves and they have an understanding of what's possible. That's one way.

**Ms. Ann Decter:** The ICT round table that Raine has convened has folks on it from Facebook and Microsoft. We need more co-operation from those kinds of providers, which is coming very slowly.

The Internet was really developed a bit like the Wild West. It's a freedom place and everybody gets to do everything, and they're slowly realizing that there is some social responsibility involved. I would hope that some day they bring the kind of savvy to this issue that they bring to developing technology.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Ms. Guthrie, what are your thoughts on what we can be doing to promote women's continued access to cyberspace?

**Ms. Steph Guthrie:** That's such a challenging question because, quite honestly, I think a lot of this comes down to a need for a change in social norms, a change in hearts and minds. A lot of that can really only happen through individual consciousness-raising. I do think that a lot of the social platforms that are most dominant in our online sphere of conversation are primarily run by homogeneous groups, mostly younger white men. I think that they often possess a real lack of understanding of what online harassment can look like.

Their moderation teams, I think, need significant training and ongoing training on not just online harassment but specifically on anti-oppression, because I think that there's a real lack of understanding of the difference that women and girls experience or that gender non-conforming people experience.

• (1600)

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Even though I am out of time, as a younger white man, thank you very much for helping inform my perspective.

**The Chair:** I did allow some extra time there.

Now we're going to go to Mr. Genuis for seven minutes.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It's a real honour for me to be able to be subbing in this committee.

Before getting elected, I spent four years volunteering on the board of a great organization in my riding called the Saffron Centre. It does work on consent education as well as on counselling.

I really appreciate the testimony of the witnesses. I want to probe a little bit, initially at least, this issue of awareness about these issues—public awareness, public attitudes on consent—and maybe what we can do about it.

To start with, to Ms. Decter and Ms. Liliefeldt, we talk about the positive importance of informing people about consent, but there's also the side of countering or trying to stop negative messages that are coming to young people and others from other places about consent.

One of the eye-opening things for me as part of the organization that I previously mentioned was realizing that a lot of the initial awareness about sexuality for a lot of our young boys is coming from violent sexual images that they're consuming on the Internet. It's a real problem that their basic presumptions about the way sexuality works are shaped by these initial images that they don't really have any kind of context for understanding.

You referred to the Internet as being the Wild West. At the same time, there are other countries that I think try to be a little bit more interventionist around some of these issues.

I would like you to first comment on what we as legislators or what civil society can do to counter some of these negative messages. Then I want to ask you about the positive side of consent education after that.

**Ms. Ann Decter:** On the issue of young boys first encountering information about sex and depictions of sex on the Internet through porn, the way to get to that is to educate them at a younger age with better content, right? Something like the Ontario government's new sex education curriculum is really exactly what's needed. It's really about consent.

I worked in day care, and children in day care can be taught that you have to ask before you touch something or someone and you have to ask before you grab something, and that's really what consent is in the simplest form.

As difficult as it is as a legislator to try to get through to people, the best thing you can do is teach a healthy sexuality as young as possible.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Being from Alberta, I'm personally not that familiar with the details of the Ontario curriculum, but I think we would all agree that to see discussion of the consent piece, at least in curricula, is very important. That's the positive side, and that seems to me like the easy part, not that it is necessarily always easy. We should all be teaching what consent is early on.

Even with consent discussed in school, potentially, young boys still are able to access hard-core images that may seem much more immediate to them than something they're hearing in school. Do you think we should be pursuing strategies for limiting the access of those images at the same time, at least for people who are minors?

**Ms. Ann Decter:** Through legislation?

• (1605)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Well, through legislation, through collaboration—



**Ms. Ann Decter:** Certainly as a parent I would pursue that. I would be talking to my son if that's where he's learning about sex—not that I have a son. With legislatures, it's a thorny issue. I think the frame that we would bring to it is things that are exploitative and things that are promoting hatred and misogyny, rather than “that's a depiction of sexuality”.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Right, and I'll pick up on that. My sense is that there's a need for parents to be involved. We need to think about getting information to parents about what's going on out there, whether it's digital literacy or just being aware of some of the things that are going on in youth culture.

Could you maybe talk a little bit about parent education and engaging parents with this information so they can support their kids as well?

**Ms. Raine Liliefeldt:** In terms of the work that we're doing with girls with the trusted adult guide, one of the recommendations is to not wait until something is a burning issue, but to create a culture where those items are discussed all the time. There are conversation starters, and we talk about “dishwasher” conversations or “waiting for the bus” conversations or “watching TV” conversations that trigger an opportunity to engage in that discussion.

We also recommend providing information around hypermasculinization and hypersexualization to parents so that they can have those kinds of conversations.

Another big part of the work that we want to do is to enhance critical thinking for all youth and adults.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Thank you very much.

I think I have little bit of time left and I want to go to Ms. Guthrie.

It was interesting to hear you talk about restorative practices in the justice system. I'm assuming that at some point, restorative practice assumes that the accused has to acknowledge that they've done something wrong. They have to be willing to accept the restorative process and its outcomes. I would imagine that there would be plenty of cases in which a person would not do that.

I'm curious if you have comments on that aspect. Are there changes that could be made to the criminal justice system as it currently exists? I was even thinking about the classic question of judges versus juries. Maybe juries have a closer experience of more people's lived reality; I don't know. Maybe you could explore those two pieces.

**Ms. Steph Guthrie:** You're absolutely right that restorative practice can't be facilitated effectively with someone who's not willing to admit to wrongdoing. That said, a lot of the incentive to not admit to wrongdoing comes from feeling fear of incarceration, fear of social isolation, and fear of other consequences that someone may feel may come from admitting that they caused harm. This is backed by research.

If people who have caused harm are approached by a program option whereby they're not going to be incarcerated as a consequence and they're actually going to have some measure of community support in being accountable for the harm they caused, the research shows that the rate of people consenting to a restorative practice is quite high. They usually want to, when that's an option.

**The Chair:** That's time.

We'll go to Ms. Malcolmson for seven minutes.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Thank you to all the witnesses.

As you can tell, our time is short. I'm going to start with asking you questions that I think will get a yes/no answer, or if not just tell me, and then I'll try to get a bit more conversational afterwards.

To Ms. Guthrie, in relation to some of your comments around digital literacy education, can I take it that you would recommend that digital literacy be delivered to workers in the public education system, to police, and to people working in the justice system?

**Ms. Steph Guthrie:** Yes.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** To our YWCA witnesses, from your experience with service delivery across the country and working with all of your networks, have you found that victims' access to services, to justice, and to protection is equal across the country?

The context is what we can do to knit together services, because we're coming from the federal level, while a lot of the things we're talking about are completely outside the federal realm. The federal government could take some leadership and bring provinces together to bring in some of those best practices, which Ms. Decter cites as being, for example, the consent education in the Ontario education system or flashes of brilliance around digital literacy.

To any of the three witnesses, could you describe to us the benefits of that national weaving together of strategies, particularly as YWCA is a signatory for the blueprint for a national action plan to end violence against women and girls?

•(1610)

**Ms. Ann Decter:** It's interesting. I just finished writing a brief for the federal strategy on gender-based violence, which is what we're going to get instead of a national action plan on violence against women and girls. It recommended that we seek national standards. It would have to be a collaborative process with the provinces and territories. Even just access to shelter, for example, for someone in Toronto versus someone in Inuvik.... In remote communities, it's very hard. In the very small communities, shelter might just be a room in someone's house. You might have to go to the jail, which is probably a room in someone's house, and you have to be flown out to get to safety. It's those kinds of things.

There's a lot of work to be done around standards in general. I think national standards would be really excellent. The federal role in those kinds of things is going to be leadership and coordination, trying to get the provinces and territories to some kind of standard. It will also take more funding to the territories.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Is there anything from either of the other witnesses on the benefits of federal leadership knitting together the response to services that are within provincial or territorial jurisdiction?

**Ms. Steph Guthrie:** I think Ann covered it well.

**Ms. Ann Decter:** Also, you would get cross-pollination, learning about what's happening in different provinces and different areas, which would promote change faster. We're a national organization, and for us to get a message out across the country is obviously much more difficult, much more expensive, than to have the federal government get a message out when, say, all the status of women ministers are meeting or all the justice ministers are meeting.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I have a further question for YWCA. Do you think that the federal government should be reviewing the justice mechanisms, including policing and prosecution and alternative justice, as we look at these cyberviolence questions?

**Ms. Raine Liliefeldt:** I think so, yes.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Are there any comments around the rate of reporting for victims of cyberviolence in relation to their belief that the police will honour their story or will treat them well?

**Ms. Raine Liliefeldt:** We do consultations with young women across the country as part of our needs assessment, and what we heard from young women is that they don't report, so we don't have qualitative data. From what I understand from conversations with some of the folks at the OPP, the OPP have very limited quantitative data as well. Essentially what we're hearing is that young women aren't reporting because of the situations they witness when someone is brave enough to come forward.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Have any of you heard good examples of school-based curriculums that get at cyberviolence or digital literacy or consent culture? Are there any good models that we should be recommending?

• (1615)

**Ms. Raine Liliefeldt:** There's an organization, MediaSmarts, based in Ottawa, that has developed a range of really great resources for parents and teachers. I think their resources are being used in some communities, but it's not everywhere. I don't have a specific example of a school that's consistently using digital literacy, but I think it's happening, and we can certainly agree that it needs to be happening more.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Is it your sense that some individual teachers are showing leadership, but it's out of a more personal passion as opposed to a directive from their school board or from their provincial education system?

**Ms. Raine Liliefeldt:** Absolutely. There's also the Canadian Teachers' Federation. They are also taking a lead on disseminating resources to their members. I think it is a matter of particular focus from those who are leading the way, but there's not a systemic understanding of digital literacy.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** All right. We're going to go now to Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** Thank you, all three of you, for appearing before our committee. This has been quite enlightening to hear your comments.

Ms. Guthrie, I want to applaud your bravery in pursuing the case as you did and continuing to talk about it as well. I'm curious about what your thoughts are in terms of federal legislation that might help prosecution in a case like yours. I know you'd like to see a more of a restorative justice side to it. If that harassment had happened to you

off-line, is there anything different that could have been used that doesn't exist for online harassment?

Maybe the answer is no.

**Ms. Steph Guthrie:** It's a good question.

The reality is that the way the law is written does encompass any form of communication. The criminal harassment law is completely written in such a way that does encompass online communication, so I don't think the law itself is the problem. The prosecutor in my case performed to the expectations of her profession. I think the problem is more with the way the system is designed, in that there is no one in the process whose job is to support the survivor and advocate for the survivor.

As I said, I understand why the system was built that way, but it means that in situations like gender-based violence, the system just reproduces existing inequities.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** People don't come forward.

**Ms. Steph Guthrie:** Exactly. I've had so many people tell me that they won't come forward because they saw what happened to me.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I don't know if it was you, but we did talk about moderating online cyberviolence and we talked about how it would be of benefit to have more women involved in STEM and that type of career. Do you have any other suggestions for how that can be moderated? We have a fine line between the moderating and the free speech aspect, so I'm wondering if you have any other suggestions on how it can be moderated.

**Ms. Steph Guthrie:** I think for me the bright line is human rights. If there were a more nuanced and deeper understanding of human rights among the people who moderate, say, Facebook pages or Twitter, then there would be a greater understanding of why somebody tweeting at you about your stinky vagina or whatever is in fact a violation of your human rights. That kind of thing is frequently not taken seriously by these platforms as a form of hate speech, so that's where I think the lack of understanding is.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Thank you.

This is to the ladies from the YWCA.

You run a program called Turning Point across nine provinces and one of the territories. One of the things that has come up in the minister's consultations has been the need for more specific programs that are adapted specifically for the north.

I'm wondering how you see your gender-based violence programs. Do you use the same format right across the country? Do you run into issues in terms of different communities? Does it need to be adapted for that?

• (1620)

**Ms. Raine Liliefeldt:** The Turning Point programs are actually very specific to the community and to the YWCA and based on their community needs. They're reflective.

I guess it starts there. If a community has a higher need to support girls and young women's programming, then that violence intervention piece is a Turning Point program. There are also Turning Point programs that are employment-based. It's about recognizing the need of women in that community and reflecting that need. These programs can be adapted across the country, because they're community-based.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** This question can be for both of you.

I'm wondering if you see any ways that social media can be leveraged to combat gender-based violence. We had Carol Todd and Leah Parsons here at our previous meeting talking about cellphone companies. One of the things that struck me was that Bell Media is doing a fantastic program called Bell Let's Talk, which raises awareness about mental health. I'm wondering if you have any thoughts on those types of public awareness programs being used to curb gender-based violence.

**Ms. Ann Decter:** We use social media extensively in our work, promoting everything we do. We push policy papers, press releases, programs, and projects out on social media, so they're there on Facebook and Twitter. I haven't gotten into the other programs, such as Instagram.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** There's only so much your brain can take in at one time.

**Ms. Ann Decter:** In addition, I did bring some cards. There's the Safety Siren, which you can download to your phone. That's a safety application that exists because of digital applications. That's a way for any woman to be safer. Our #NOTokay campaign is a media literacy tool you can use online to call out abusive or violent images, videos, music videos. It's a tool for answering back.

For us it's not just a problem; it's also a tool. I think that's what you're hearing a bit when Steph says she needs access to Twitter to live her life. The answer to cyberviolence is not for young women and girls and us not to be in the digital world; the answer is to set some limits so that there is controlled behaviour.

**The Chair:** We'll go to Mrs. Vecchio.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Thank you very much.

I want to start with the YWCA. You spoke about the #NOTokay program, which is trying to highlight how misogyny and violence have been integrated into many different shows, music videos, and video games.

What individuals do you feel are best to take on this message that children and young adults are seeing from these sorts of media? What is the best way of getting that to the children? Is it through

family, through teachers? What is the best method, and who should be bringing that message to the kids?

**Ms. Raine Liliefeldt:** I think it should be a holistic approach. We keep going back to public health messaging, about washing hands and how that had to move through a range of different communities. It started with children, and then it was in workplaces everywhere. I think it's a responsibility we all have. In every action and every moment we have, we must recognize the compassion and empathy we can have for one another. This should trickle down into online and off-line spaces so that organizations and institutions are trying to create empathy and accountability and compassion in all the work they do. That's the direction I think we should be going.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** It may be easier to coordinate these things in the education and health systems because they already have platforms to educate or to share the message. The biggest thing I find as a parent—and I think many other parents feel the same—is that we have a disconnect. Once they leave school, we have to recognize that these things are on all the time.

You mentioned MediaSmarts. How can we make parents more aware, and how can we educate them in the best methods? What is the best way of communicating this to them, to get them on board to make sure that our children are safe?

• (1625)

**Ms. Raine Liliefeldt:** I have a dream that when you buy something from Staples, Best Buy, or Future Shop, you would find in the box a pamphlet of information with an online code that provides you with a connection to the information you need. It's right there when you're purchasing the device. It would give parents and everyone an opportunity to think about some of issues associated with online practices. It would provide a better understanding of what you post and how long it will live online. It would back to the connection with accountability and empathy.

That's my personal opinion and hope—

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** No, thanks very much—

**Ms. Raine Liliefeldt:** Make it happen—

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** I think we all have a dream for that sort of idea as well. How can we reach those accomplishments? Would it be something through the federal government? Would we have organizations like the YWCA and other cross-country organizations work together to do this? What is the solution to make sure that we're educating our parents, and what do you think is the first step to do so?

**Ms. Raine Liliefeldt:** The first step?

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** And the second, third, or fourth.

**Ms. Ann Decter:** I think the work that Raine is doing, bringing together the sector, is really important. You can tell just from the ideas she had that it requires those of us with some knowledge of what's happening in the field and then the big commercial companies that everyone's buying their devices from. For us to help with that, we would need some federal government funding, but it's those kinds of partnerships.

Also, I think that the federal government should be looking at organizing something like the ICT round table that Raine has convened.

We saw what happened when Facebook was at the CRTC. That's not the venue; it has to be co-operative. The way we do it is to be co-operative and collaborative. Those should begin to exist.

In a way, the Internet providers and social media are immature industries. We have to help them grow up and behave like the rest of society so that they understand that these things are okay but these other things are not okay, and we're all going to agree not to do them.

We need help with that, and I think the federal government can lead on it without punitive measures.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** That would be the leadership role, taking on—

**A voice:** Yes.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Okay.

**The Chair:** That's our time.

Anyway, thank you very much. All of you who are our witnesses here today did a fabulous job of sharing your ideas.

Now we're going to suspend for two minutes while we set up the next witness panel. We'll start sharp at 4:30 p.m.

• (1625) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1630)

**The Chair:** We are ready to go with our second panel today.

With us we have, from the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, Lianna McDonald, who's the executive director, and we also have Signy Arnason, who is a director as well, but is also experienced in Cybertip, which we heard about last week when we had the RCMP with us.

Lianna will start off and give an overview, and then we'll have Signy give us 10 minutes, then Lianna can finish up with the rest of her 10 minutes, and then we'll go to our questions.

Take it away, Lianna.

**Ms. Lianna McDonald (Executive Director, Canadian Centre for Child Protection):** Good afternoon, everybody.

What a very important opportunity for us, and I thank you so much. I know you're coming to the end of your day, so hopefully we will engage in a good conversation about the work of our organization.

This worked out very well. We do many presentations on this issue of online child sexual abuse and exploitation, and have over the course of many years, but today, because of the way this is rolling, I

wanted to give you a little background about who we are. Then Signy is going to jump in and talk specifically about what we see day in and day out through the work of Cybertip.ca, and then I am going to talk about industry.

It was perfect timing for us to hear the last presenters talk about some of those important questions that you were asking about the role of the private sector, and I will speak to that. Then I will conclude with roughly five pointed recommendations for your considerations.

We will start with you, Signy.

**Ms. Signy Arnason (Director, Cybertip.ca, Canadian Centre for Child Protection):** Good afternoon. My name is Signy Arnason. I'm the associate executive director of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection as well as the director of Cybertip.ca.

As Lianna mentioned, we're a national charity dedicated to the personal safety of children. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection provides programs and services to the Canadian public, one of which includes Cybertip.ca, which is Canada's tip line for reporting the online sexual exploitation of children.

During its 14 years of operation, the tip line has processed over 200,000 reports from the public. Over 90% of those pertain to concerns regarding child sexual abuse images and videos, what is otherwise known as child pornography.

Child pornography involves the recording of a child being sexually exploited or abused. The image or video becomes a permanent record of the child's abuse and can propagate indefinitely. In order to produce the image, a child has to be assaulted or posed deliberately in a sexualized way.

We release studies every few years. In January 2016 we released a report that was an overview of reports to the tip line over the last eight years, and we had a particular focus on child sexual abuse images. The report examined close to 44,000 unique images and videos classified by the tip line as child pornography.

This report provides important insight about child sexual abuse and the abusive acts these offenders are perpetrating against children. The harsh reality is that young girls are disproportionately represented in these images, since 80% of the children in the imagery are female. Of that number, 79% of them appear to be prepubescent—under the age of 12—and of that number, about 65% are under the age of 8.

The abuse depicted in the images is severe. Fifty per cent of the images assessed by analysts involve either sexual assaults or extreme sexual assaults. Additionally, there is alarming concern that as the age of the child decreases, analysts are more likely to see sexual assaults being committed against the child. When babies and toddlers are seen in imagery, 60% of the abuse perpetrated against that child involves either a sexual assault or an extreme sexual assault.

There are also a disproportionate number of men who appear in the images depicting child sexual abuse. As assessed by analysts, 83% had a male visible in the image. When only an adult male is visible with the child in the child sexual abuse content, 97% of the content involves either a sexual assault or extreme sexual assault.

Cybertip.ca also receives reports from Canadians on sexualized child modelling. Sexualized child modelling occurs on sites that portray images of children who are fully or partially clothed, have been deliberately posed in a highly sexualized way, and who are not marketing any specific product or service other than the child herself or himself. The tip line started classifying this category of websites and images in 2006. While the current definition of child pornography in Canada is broad enough to capture the most egregious of sexualized child modelling pictures under the Criminal Code definition, the majority would fall outside of it.

In the last three years, the tip line has analyzed close to 50,000 sexualized child modelling images. In the past year, analysts assessed 20,000 such images, with 92% of them involving girls. The majority of children in these images are prepubescent—76% of them—and they are deliberately posed in a sexual manner 40% of the time. Thong underwear, high heels, and knee-high stockings are some of the most popular garments observed on the children in these images. Ten per cent of the time, sexualized child modelling images are found on adult pornography sites, which sends the message that children, particularly girls, are sexual commodities. These sites negatively impact societal beliefs and attitudes towards children by showcasing them as sexual objects and normalizing a sexual interest in children.

● (1635)

In addition, as identified through various tip lines around the world that do work similar to what Cybertip.ca does, there have been numerous cases in which children identified in child sexual abuse imagery first appeared in sexualized child modelling images. These images arguably assist in fuelling the demand for illegal images among adults who have a sexual interest in children. In short, the hypersexualization of young girls in the form of sexualized child modelling poses a serious risk to children's personal safety and security.

When it comes to cyberviolence, we know that women and girls are particularly vulnerable. In some cases, the violence comes at the hands of an adult, and in other cases it comes at the hands of peers. When cyberviolence is perpetrated by adults, it often manifests itself online as luring or sextortion.

Cybertip.ca has seen a worrying rise in teenagers reporting cases of sextortion surrounding live streaming with adults posing as teenagers. Within platforms that allow users to communicate by video, offenders often secretly record teenagers. They typically deceive the children about their identity and then manipulate them into sharing further sexual images or videos.

The tip line is now receiving at least 15 reports a month dealing with online extortion, where the youth either has paid money to have the threats stop or has been asked to produce more sexual images to send to the offender and in some capacity has complied. While that number may not seem significant, we know it's the tip of the iceberg. The majority of these reports, 70%, involve girls.

When cyberviolence is perpetrated by peers, it often takes the form of sexting and cyberbullying. Developmentally, youth seek independence, place peer relationships over parents, exhibit attention-seeking behaviour, and crave acceptance, all of which are normal developmental milestones. They are also willing to take on more risk in exploring their sexuality, without realizing the long-term consequences of their behaviour.

When these typical adolescent attributes are combined with the ever-present availability of technology and the permanent nature of digital images, it is easy to see that there is a perfect storm for sexual harm, especially for teen girls.

Girls also face the additional layer of harm that comes from shaming when sexual images and videos circulate among peers. There still exists the social stigma that women and girls are somehow acting inappropriately if they go against traditional expectations tied to sexual behaviour. We need to challenge attitudes and beliefs that relate to victim blaming and degrading sexual labels if we are to change the damage being done to youth—something that the tip line intersects with on a daily basis.

In closing, our organization witnesses, day in and day out, the prevalence of violence and abuse being perpetrated against children, particularly girls. Cybertip.ca currently receives an average of 3,300 reports per month, and we only see that number rising in the future. The evolving advantage of technology, combined with the shield of anonymity, has resulted in the offending community having an enormous advantage in exploiting the innocence and vulnerability of children, and our statistics reflect that reality.

My colleague will speak to our recommendations for action at the end of her speech.

I thank the committee members for their time and attention.

● (1640)

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** Just to follow up on Signy's comments, I have a couple of things that I did not mention, just so everybody is clear.

Our organization is independent of government and police. We are a charitable organization, a non-partisan organization. We work very closely not only with a variety of stakeholders but also with provincial governments in navigating some unique options when we're looking at regulations or other remedies that we can move forward on in terms of the protection of our children.

Again, as mentioned, I am the executive director of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection and I was really asked to come here today to talk a little bit about industry.

I understand that Leah Parsons and Carol Todd were both here. Our organization worked very closely following the deaths of their children and with numerous other families. We work, so you're clear, day in and day out. It's very different from some of the academics. While everything we present will be evidence-based, and we provide the statistics, as Signy has alluded to, our organization really works in the trenches. We work first-hand with families. We work first-hand with youth who are contacting us because they have been negatively impacted by a sexual violence situation.

I'm going to spend a few minutes talking about the way in which our organization collaborates with industry and addressing what we all know is their shared responsibility in addressing the online sexual exploitation of children. Then I'm going to move on to a couple of other areas that I think are very relevant to the conversation you are all having.

We certainly believe that protecting children from online sexual exploitation and bringing those who victimize children to justice require the collaborative approach that I've just mentioned. It is not enough to say this is just a police problem; we're not going to arrest our way out of it. This isn't just an industry responsibility, and it isn't us putting all the onus on parents, who then have to take full responsibility when they didn't sign up to figure out, as every age milestone is hit, how they can keep their kids safe. It is certainly something that not only Canada but all nations are significantly wrestling with.

What has happened? A number of years ago we set up the Canadian Coalition Against Internet Child Exploitation. We abbreviate that as CCAICE. Basically it is a voluntary group of private and public sector entities that work to look at ways that we can take on the war of child pornography and child sexual exploitation. We established this organization back in 2004. Its mandate is to examine and provide tangible solutions to reducing online sexual exploitation of children. Again I have to underscore that this really fits into this dilemma we have when we look at public safety versus competing priorities on privacy. This is a voluntary group coming together to work together. We come together one to two times a year.

Essentially the catalyst of this coalition coming together was the abduction and subsequent murder, which many of you will remember, of a 10-year-old girl named Holly Jones in Toronto. That time was sort of the genesis of the Internet; everything was exploding. Mr. Briere was the man who took her. She was basically a victim of opportunity. What he did talk about and admit in the court process was that he had been viewing child pornography, and basically she was essentially a victim of opportunity. That resulted in industry stepping up and understanding—even though we look at the telcos as the pipes and the content providers—that they needed to be at the table.

Over the past 12 years that we have been operating the coalition, we have had some significant results, and it is very important that you hear and have the opportunity to digest some of those successes, because Canada certainly has been doing some innovative work in leading the way. At the same time, we're not patting ourselves on the back and saying more does not need to be done. We recognize that.

One of our biggest achievements was Cleanfeed Canada, back in 2006. It is an initiative that aims to reduce Canadians' exposure to what we call child pornography or child abuse images, and it creates a disincentive for those who access and distribute such images by preventing Canadian customers from viewing non-Canadian websites that are hosting child abuse images. To date we have had nearly 30,000 total URLs added to Cleanfeed. Participating Internet service providers prevent customers from accessing an average 600 websites at any given moment in connection with the Cleanfeed list, a list that we maintain. We verify that the images within that list are typically prepubescent children, and day in and day out we stop Canadians from gaining access to that content.

● (1645)

What we know is that 80% of the content features young girls, so again this is an important tool in addressing this unique problem.

Cleanfeed is one of the most important examples of CCAICE looking at worldwide solutions. We are, and always will be, working with other governments looking at innovative solutions. We know we're not going to arrest our way out of it and we know this is a serious problem. For this committee, in looking at the concept of gender-based violence, we really have to look at the continuum. It starts with very young girls and goes all the way up the line. The Internet has really, as Signy said, created this perfect storm.

We also worked with police to create what we're calling the LER, the law enforcement request letter. The LER was used at a pre-warrant stage in relation to police obtaining Internet subscriber and address information. As mentioned, anonymity creates a very serious problem when police can see a very disturbing activity going on but do not have enough information to get a warrant. This whole process was successful up to and until the Spencer decision, which many of you may be aware of.

We have been working very long and hard. The coalition meets regularly, and I hope you're aware of the introduction in 2011 of the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service. Providers are required to notify law enforcement and, in some specific incidences, our agency if they're notified of an incident concerning Internet child pornography. Law enforcement in Canada receive the bulk of this information today.

Also, what we will say for sure is that industry has been very open. We were listening to the previous presenters in terms of what can the telcos do. They are very engaged. To date we've carried out 15 national campaigns with many of the providers in terms of public education about reporting and the importance of reporting. We are working with some of those companies in connection with people signing up for new technology, such as a new phone, and knowing what the developmental milestones are. We have to look at it from a relevant age perspective in terms of educating them and arming their parents, which is an ongoing challenge.

These are some of the things right now that industry is doing. We recognize it is a moving dialogue with the various electronic service providers and Internet service providers that make up some of the content about what their role may be in this complicated space.

There are a couple of things I wanted to raise to the committee that tie directly into what you're looking at. In May 2016 our organization released preliminary findings on a report we have on our site, and all of you can grab it. We have an executive summary as well as a very comprehensive piece on *Abducted Then Murdered Children: A Canadian Study*. Basically, we wanted to look historically at all cases of Canadian children under the age of 16. This is quite distinct from the murdered and missing aboriginal indigenous women and children issue.

We looked at all Canadian children from when CPIC began to gain insight into the children who were being abducted and the histories of the offenders and to identify intervention and prevention strategies. These findings are available on our site, and I welcome you to all take a look at them.

There are two last things I want to mention. One is that we are right now conducting the first international survey of the first generation of victims of child pornography since the onset of the Internet. Many of these victims are now 22 and upwards. We are meeting with an international working group here in Ottawa next week and we'll be looking at that.

Finally, I want to close with five specific recommendations.

The first is that we encourage the committee to continue to support our organization, which the Government of Canada has done, in our efforts to identify and rescue more victims found in child abuse material and to increase public awareness of this problem.

● (1650)

Second, we would like the support for our agency in becoming that unique resource centre assisting victims whose child sexual abuse has been recorded and currently is being distributed on the Internet.

Third, and perhaps more importantly, we would like you to consider legislation that targets communications and recordings that advocate harm to children. We are talking beyond child pornography, because that is covered. We mean the depictions of violent sexual abuse by adults, the sexual commodification of children, the marketing of children as sexual objects, and communications within those pedophile networks that normalize the distorted sexual views of children and guide members on how to create pretenses to gain access to them.

Fourth, we ask you to support efforts related to gender-specific education. With the overrepresentation of girls in imagery, we would like supplementary educational material that helps children understand what is not normal, what to do about child sexual abuse, and what action to take.

Finally, the issue of cyberviolence against girls should be considered as a precursor to cyberviolence against women. For example, the way in which it is experienced, the impact of victimization, and the available tactics and remedies that may be

available could be much broader for girls, given their status as children. In addition, the protected status of children, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography must be part of the consideration and evaluation.

In closing, we thank you very much for the opportunity to throw all this at you, and we welcome any questions you may have.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

This is wonderful information. I know we're going to have a great session of questions.

We're going to start with seven minutes from Ms. Nassif.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to thank the two witnesses for their participation in our work.

I represent the riding of Vimy in Laval. There's a non-profit organization there called the Centre des femmes de Laval, which helps vulnerable women using the financial means it has. The women are mainly from ethnic minorities, members of the LGBT community and newcomers.

I have attended several meetings and heard many sad stories. I know that you work more with girls who have experienced online violence and so on. Are there other organizations in Quebec, especially in Laval, working in this area?

[English]

**The Chair:** Is there any translation?

● (1655)

[Translation]

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** I can speak French, but I'm more comfortable in English.

[English]

Yes, we do have....

Certainly we are a bilingual organization. A number of reports come to us from Quebec. We work with the SQ and all the Quebec police agencies.

We consider ourselves a bit of a broker. People who are dealing with very serious issues who need grassroots organizations there to support them, so we work with a number of organizations in Quebec that support families who are dealing with a continuum of issues. Again, so that we are clear, we focus primarily on children. Our work is within that context. We deal with families of missing children and exploited children.

The Marie-Vincent Foundation would be one of the great organizations we deal with in Quebec, as well as *Enfants-Retour*. There are a number of organizations. Depending on the unique requirements of the individuals who come to us, we would triage them and put them in touch with those entities.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** There have been a number of cases reported recently in Laval of girls who have run away to join child pornography organizations. Are you aware of this?

[English]

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** Yes, we are. Beyond working directly with families who come in, we are the front door and the clearing house.

[Translation]

In French, it's called Cyberaide.ca. A lot of people go

[English]

to Cyberaide and make reports.

Over and above that, we work closely and specifically with the police agencies. There's a continuum of support that victims may need. I mentioned the survey of the first generation of victims of child pornography. We have a number of reports that have come in exactly from what you're talking about, which we would define as "organized abuse". That's abuse by multiple offenders committing crimes against either one group or multiple groups of children.

We probably have the most robust data in the reporting that we receive and in the detailed information pertaining to the victims themselves. One of the things we're trying to do as an organization is look at some of the ways in which the policing community needs to be better resourced to address some of these crimes and also some of the ongoing remedies for victims who have unique needs.

If a person has experienced, let's say, an incident of a severe sexual assault, that is a historic incident. There was no recording of that abuse, but it's still traumatic. What we're hearing from the population you're referring to is that because of the propagation and the ongoing distribution of the material, their past is their present. They need ongoing support. This is a very big and serious issue that we have to look at in a much broader scope than we could have ever imagined.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** Madam Chair, do I have time to ask some more questions?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** Okay. Thank you.

Your principal activities include best practices research activities to ensure the safety of children.

Could you tell us a bit about some research activities related to protecting young women and girls from cyberviolence that we could draw information from and use to base a government initiative on, in terms of both prevention and reaction?

[English]

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** Thank you for that.

I've talked a lot about intervention. Fifty per cent of our mandate is prevention and education. In the social value reports that we have distributed, you will see a lot of programming.

To your question about education, we recently created a site and a resource that has probably been our most taken up resource. It is called NeedHelpNow. It allows any young person who has been negatively affected by a sexual picture or action to come in and understand what they can do, what safe adults are available, and how they can get the content down. This whole idea that it's permanent and it's never going anywhere is not necessarily true. There are a number of steps that can be taken to start mitigating those challenges. That is one such resource. It has been taken up right across the country. School resource officers right across the country are using it, and educators right across the country are using it as well.

Then we have two other resources. One deals with the complicated issue of the age of consent and the age of protection. As we can all imagine, young people experience confusion about sexual development. We have adolescent brain development and the party mix and technology coming together. We've created programs that have been tested and piloted, and I'm happy to provide the committee with any of the evaluations that we do with our programs

• (1700)

**The Chair:** That's time.

We go to Ms. Vecchio, and if Ms. Vecchio wants to follow up, then that will be fine.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Thank you very much. Those were tremendous presentations from both of you today, and I greatly appreciate them.

Signy, you were talking about sexual predators, which is of great concern for many of us, and then going into the age group when children and young girls are showing their independence by doing posing and things like that. This is where we left off in the last conversation about when it becomes consensual for them.

What is that? I know there's not a "miracle age", but what are we looking at between something like child exploitation and their giving consent? What is that age in which we can expect those changes?

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** I'm going to add a couple of things.

The answer is, very simply, it all depends, and there is no answer.

It depends on the imbalance of power, the power relationship, what they're doing, and the influences surrounding what's happening. We have laws that address some aspects. We have built-in age exemptions that allow for healthy sexual exploration. We don't want kids not to be sexual. They're sexual as they become adolescents. It's about looking at some of the considerations.

I think this is an area that the government can look at carefully. How do we understand this? What are the ways that we need to start educating kids?

Start to get into the resources that we've created. We do it through scenarios. We'll list out that a 16-year-old and a 14-year-old are at a party, and here's the scene that unfolds, here's what happens. They really have to do some critical problem-solving.



**Ms. Signy Arnason:** I also think we can tell a horror story, as you heard; I'm the grim reaper talking in my speech.

At the end of the day there are lots of things we can be empowering children with, and we're very committed to that—the concept of healthy relationships, how children deserve to be treated, what they should expect when they're entering into a sexual relationship and what that looks like.

I don't think we do a very good job, because I quite frankly don't think most adults know what a healthy relationship looks like.

We have to be prepared to educate children about this additional layer that's been entered into the equation, which is as lethal as it comes. That's technology. Once the image is out there, you're in big trouble. This is where we see the Amanda Todds, the Rehteah Parsons. Depending on the age, they really do believe their life is over. That's normal. That's totally normal.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Yes, absolutely.

**Ms. Signy Arnason:** We need to get in front of this and do a better job of intervening early, supporting them properly, really taking their concerns seriously if we're to start making a dent in this issue.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Excellent.

You mentioned that in 2011 the legislation that was then making service providers.... Have you seen an impact from that? Are people using it? Are we getting results from that legislation?

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** We are, but again it all depends. It's about the content provider. I think there's some confusion; the Internet service providers, which are primarily the pipes, are not necessarily the companies—

**Ms. Signy Arnason:** They're not serving up the content.

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** They're not serving up the content. The Facebooks, the Twitters, the content providers have a more important role.

We're hearing from our police partners, certainly the RCMP's NCECC that I believe you heard from the other day. They've received quite a big pickup in those reports coming in. I also think there needs to be a lot more education about how we do that. If we look even at computer repair shops and we start looking at how we engage people to start understanding....

The one point we want to make today is that the idea of child pornography being a picture and being an isolated issue completely misses the mark. I trust, in terms of your proper understanding of this, that you see that it's not only about a recording of a child who's been sexually abused, but it's the way in which it moves around, and the propagation, the normalization. That child is being re-victimized every single time that it's looked at. We have to understand the seriousness of this problem that we are talking about.

• (1705)

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** We talk about the normalization of hypersexuality. We talk about young girls. You're talking about being fully dressed, or just the sexual posing. Is this a healthy thing to be teaching our children? How do we start working with our children on what's healthy and what's not healthy? Should it be

normalized, or do we put them at greater risk? What are your personal opinions on that, if you don't mind?

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** We have resources to address this exact issue you're talking about. It is not simple. We recognize that it's an ongoing educational process. What a 13-year-old and a 16-year-old experience are going to be completely different things, so the conversation about what constitutes a healthy relationship is really relevant to the ages by which those kids are experiencing this thing.

I think also we want to be clear that when Signy was talking about sexualized child modelling, it is absolutely separate from adolescents who are exploring their sexuality and taking provocative poses and putting them on the Internet. Those are very distinct things.

**Ms. Signy Arnason:** Yes. Critical in this equation, which I don't think is considered enough, are the developmental milestones. When you look at children—when you look at where they're at and where their brains are at and what they're prepared for—I don't think you'll see that we have a good understanding of those things. I think those aspects can start to shape what's appropriate and not appropriate, in addition to those other layers, in getting kids to trust their instincts when they're asked to do things they're uncomfortable with doing and saying no.

When girls are falling in love and they think they've met the person, and they're experimenting, these can be very serious challenges for them. I think that in terms of sex and sexuality, we have an enormous problem in society with grooming children, which presents some very serious challenges raising them.

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** I'll say just one last thing, because I can't stop.

The other thing is this whole idea—and you're going to hear a lot about it—of digital literacy. It's not so simple. People are people. This idea of parents owning all of this and that it's a parental responsibility to be monitoring their children full time—it's impossible.

**Ms. Signy Arnason:** It's ridiculous.

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** We cannot be telling Canadian parents that they have to own this, that this is their burden. It's impossible. Anyone who's raised a child absolutely knows that part of the time you're snowed. You're not going to know everything, nor should you.

**The Chair:** Time is up. I'm really sorry. We're very pressed today because we've got votes at 5:30.

We'll go to Ms. Malcomson for seven minutes.

**Ms. Signy Arnason:** We could go on.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I'll invite Ms. Arnason to finish her sentence. I want to hear.

**Ms. Signy Arnason:** Well, it's crazy that we hand this over to parents as if somehow it's a parental problem. We all grew up with our parents knowing very little of what we did as teenagers, and you think you're going to know what they're doing online? Are you half out of your mind?

Do parents need to be more tuned in? Take, for example, sextortion. We have this problem when we see children in their bedrooms. They're tweens or teens, and they're on video. They're doing things that might be provocative, and outside the door—we've had a couple of these—you could hear mom say, "Get to bed now", not realizing what their child is doing.

I do think there needs to be insistence that parents need to be more aware of the access and what kids are doing, but to hand this over as if we're solving this problem if parents are more tuned in is absurd. It's absolutely absurd.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Thank you.

I meant to start by saying I'm so grateful for your work and for your presentation. It was very powerful, and it was horrifying, and we need to hear both of those, so thank you for your work.

I'm particularly interested in the role that your group has taken on to coordinate the national efforts around child protection in all its forms. I note that you're collaborating with non-profit agencies, with government, with industry, with law enforcement, with educators, and with families, so I'd like to hear more about your experience with that—whether you've identified gaps, how that collaboration works, and whether there are ways that the federal government could address some of those collaboration gaps.

• (1710)

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** I know you can't. This is probably the million-dollar problem.

The biggest issue we face as an organization is the challenges with the various provincial educational systems. As you would all know, where there isn't any jurisdiction federally, the biggest problem is getting consistency in the educational programming and making sure that it's being used. We work with all the provinces and territories in doing that. It is a very significant challenge. What a family in Quebec may expect is going to be very different from what a family in British Columbia expects, depending on the lay of the land. That is very significant.

We have no issue getting people at the table. We have no issue in terms of getting people to step up and want to get behind the work we're doing. The challenge at the end is really how we are touching every Canadian in a way that's meaningful for them, in a way that's valuable, and in a way that's making a difference in how they're able to parent and how they're able to protect their children.

We are always looking at legislative changes. We have a federal action plan that we tabled last year and we're happy to send it to anyone. It's on our website and it asks for concrete legislative steps.

The biggest thing is at the end of the day is that the most important people around a child have the opportunity to protect that child, to disrupt or uncover anything that's getting in their way to either hurt them or take away some avenue of protection. How do we do that public awareness? In a way, as I mentioned, having that touch point is probably the most significant thing. At the end of the day, though, we do believe educators in schools, who are with kids every single day, have a very significant role, and we haven't completely figured that one out in terms of how we make sure every child in Canada is getting that type of education.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** If you haven't already tabled that federal report, would you be able to send it to the clerk?

**The Chair:** Absolutely, please.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Then it would be in evidence, and we can all draw on it.

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** Thank you.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I'm going to leave it there. What you've told us is all-encompassing, and I know we're short on time, but thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay, very good.

Then we will go over to Mr. Serré for seven minutes.

**Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

The same here. Thank you so much for your time and your insight and caring to make a difference on this issue. Thank you so much.

I know we've talked a lot about education and I'm really happy that you indicated how absurd and ridiculous it is to put all this onus on parents.

I want to shift a bit to what you said earlier. I had my own ISP. I worked in the cable industry for 15 years. I want to talk a bit about Cleanfeed.

You mentioned 600 sites. You mentioned "many" providers. I would like to see all providers in Canada participate. If I'm hearing you correctly, this is voluntary. How can we make it mandatory? It is absurd that we have these content providers offshore that are doing this and we're not doing anything to stop them. What can we do?

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** Signy can speak to that.

Here's one of the issues we see. It goes back into—and I think this is a larger conversation that we, as a global community, have not reconciled—what the public expects in terms of privacy versus this conversation about public safety.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** It's children.

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** Our stance is the idea that all children have the right to be protected and safe. When we run into this whole conversation about encryption and who should have access to what information, it becomes a larger, very difficult conversation.

When we set this up, we knew that if it wasn't a voluntary system, we would have pushback from many civil libertarians, who would come back and say "Where's the judicial oversight in what you're doing?", so we had to work within a place where we could start.

Cleanfeed is how we can do this in a way that would satisfy people looking at this situation, who would say, “We’re good with that”, so that’s what we did. To continue your point, I think there needs to be a proper dialogue about that collision between those rights. I think there also needs to be the conversation about the Internet service providers being regulated to some extent through the CRTC and other regulatory bodies, while the content providers are not.

• (1715)

**Ms. Signy Arnason:** To Lianna’s point, Cleanfeed went under extreme scrutiny, because accessing child pornography in Canada is essentially illegal. It’s like radioactive material. What we put on the list was very narrow and, as Lianna mentioned, it was voluntary. We have most of the major ISPs. I’d say we probably have 90% coverage amongst Canadians related to Cleanfeed, but certainly we’d like to see participation from the smaller providers and some of those stragglers among the larger-scale providers.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Ms. Todd and Ms. Parsons talked about images that are online right now.

There are two things. One is that there is a law that it’s illegal to share these images. I quote them as saying that many providers don’t seem to know that it is illegal.

The second one is that I’d like to get your thoughts on how to remove those images. They were very concerned about the challenges in removing these images.

**Ms. Signy Arnason:** As a direct result of a number of tragedies, which would include Amanda Todd and Rehtaeh Parsons, and through what we were seeing coming into the tip line, we created this offshoot called NeedHelpNow. We did that purposely because we know that when teens come in to us with their concerns, they are certainly at their wits’ end, but I can promise you that their first request isn’t to involve police and tell their parents. Their first request is “Oh, my God, help me get the content down and let me move on with my life.”

It doesn’t justify what the acting-out youth are doing, but that is the number one request that we have when they come in.

This was a service that we established as a first entry point to try to tackle this issue, knowing that child exploitation units across the country have a huge caseload dealing with people committing hands-on offences against very young children. This is a very important issue, but if you’re asking them to reprioritize teens sharing sexual images over those cases, you’re asking them to do a very challenging thing, so NeedHelpNow was designed to take that first stab at it.

Then if it involved uttering threats or extortion, it hit a different level, a different threshold, in terms of the criminal activity that may be going on in that context. That’s certainly where it warrants police getting involved. The impetus behind that site was really to support and assist youth who feel as though they have no way out and they want the content to come down.

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** There are two other things.

One is notice and takedown. We trigger that with providers so that they remove content. We have about a 95% response rate in terms of getting content down when they’re notified.

The other thing, which we’re just beginning, is that our organization is working on a new global tool to reduce the public availability of child abuse imagery on the Internet. We hope to show what that will look like within the next six months.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** We probably don’t have time now, but at a later point, can you provide the committee with your recommendations related to Facebook, Twitter, and the privacy laws that they’re not following? To put it on the record, they’re not following those laws. It’s in advertising and it’s hurting, so if you have any specific recommendations on that to bring to the committee or if it’s part of your legislative package, we need to look at addressing that aspect.

**The Chair:** We’ll keep the questioning going as long as we can. We’ll go to Mr. Genuis for five minutes.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Thank you so much to both of you for your testimony.

I wanted to ask a little about international models around monitoring online and these sorts of things, because I found an article, Ms. Arnason, in which you talked about the British model—this is from 2013—and expressed some cautious optimism about that. As I understand the British model, it’s proactive filtering with the option for people to opt in to a wide range of different kinds of material. It’s done currently on a voluntary basis, but there has been ongoing discussion about legislating.

I wonder if you kept up with the detail on the British model and can comment on how applicable some of those lessons might be to us here.

• (1720)

**Ms. Signy Arnason:** I don’t know where that British model is at and whether that even went through, but it was an interesting concept about putting the filters on at the front end and then deciding to opt out of that, which, in terms of exposure and what we’re seeing going on within some of the households, was an interesting thing to be considering.

My commentary really pertained to the fact that when you’re looking at other models around the world, certainly there are things that are worth consideration. I can’t comment on where that is at, unless you can provide me insight on it.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** No, I know that’s—

**Ms. Signy Arnason:** Maybe you can give me an update on what’s going on in that space.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** I’m sorry to ask a very specific question. I don’t mean to put you on the spot. I’m just curious if there are international models used in other countries that are doing something that we’re not doing here and that we should learn from.

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** I think what you’ll see is one of the things that we talk about in the federal action plan. We pulled out 10 points in that document and highlight some of them.

In a nutshell, as I had said to one of your colleagues here, we are figuring out some ways we can use technology in Canada that we believe will be leading the globe in starting to remedy some of these problems. At the same time, we're paying attention to some very interesting legislative things right now, and there are gaps that need to be fixed.

In this larger debate and conversation, those will give some of the teeth that we need to take action against those who misuse and abuse technology and abuse children and also allow us to stop the abuse of children. We're happy to share some of those things that are percolating for us. As an organization we are also watching very closely what is going on around the world. We will be presenting on some of these innovative things at Interpol in November. We're happy if those recommendations come forward to share with this group.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** That's excellent.

I appreciated the comment about not putting all the weight on the shoulders of parents. I'm a young parent. I have kids one and three. I'm listening very nervously to all this discussion about where we're going.

Could you share some advice for me and for parents in general about strategies we should be following to be more effective in reducing the risk to our kids, given all the information we're hearing?

**Ms. Signy Arnason:** I'll do little ones, because I have a six-year-old.

First, you don't begin this discussion once they're a tween. As soon as they're picking up technology—a three-year-old picks up an iPad—you're beginning to enter into that discussion and that dialogue. I think it's really important that children are accustomed to hearing from you about what they're doing online. It isn't a foreign thing for you to be invested and interested in what they're doing.

I think where some of the defensiveness comes is that all of a sudden parents enter into it. They're terrified, they're aggressive, and kids tell them to back off; it's none of their business. Then they're a teenager and they want to tell you nothing about what's going on. I'm not saying you won't get pushback, but it won't be strange for them to hear you talk about those concerns.

As we mentioned, our material walks through the different ages, recognizing that you can be very rule-based with an eight-year-old; good luck on trying that with a 13-year-old. It doesn't work. You have to evolve your messaging as your children age. If you miss that piece, you will have some problems.

You also can't bury your head in the sand. This is not an issue that happens to marginalized children; it happens to every child, whether they're exploited by someone online, whether they're being sexually abused. This is not a problem that happens to a certain segment of our population or somewhere else in the world.

**The Chair:** We are now going to go to the last five minutes, with Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** First I want to thank you both for all the work you've done for as long as you've done it. Quite honestly, I can't imagine being faced with the types of things you have been faced with for so long. I commend you both for your efforts.

While we were here, I went to NeedHelpNow. It is an outstanding resource. It's amazing. How many people know about it?

• (1725)

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** Not enough.

**Ms. Signy Arnason:** We need your help.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Yes. It's just outstanding.

That leads to one of my questions, actually. Do you think you have enough resources to do the work you are doing, making sure kids know that there is a website like this, where they can go to get the resources they need?

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** No.

We manage very well. Our slogan is "You get more than you paid for." We are happy. Our mission drives what we do. We receive funding from the federal government, for which we are very grateful. We have asked for increased funding, but we also have to be wise. You can't just pour endless amounts into this effort. We have to be very smart.

One of the things we are really pleased with is that our relationship with the policing community is very strong. All school resource officers—back to your point—use NeedHelpNow because they are getting the calls. They are funnelling all that material out.

We are giving out, free, millions and millions of pieces every year to educators, which is huge. We are trying to figure out how to manage this, knowing that there is never going to be enough. We need to work smart and hard, not necessarily in that order.

Right now we are looking at some of the solutions I talked about. We have been doing this a long time. We have recently taken stock, and we are starting to look at the rates of return, in terms of where we need to be putting those resources. Yes, we have requested some increased funding, but we also recognize that it can't be endless. We have to figure this out. We are working on that.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** When we had the RCMP here, they were really hesitant to provide us with any information on where the gaps were in the legislation. Will the material you are providing to us give us that?

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** Yes.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Okay.

Witnesses who come to testify have data only for 13 or 15 and up. I think StatsCan collects data only for 15 and up. There seems to be a real lack of information on the pre-13-year-olds. Is that an accurate statement? You track it, but in terms of other organizations.... Kids are going online much younger, but we are not tracking what's going on at a younger age.

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** We are. It's one of the things on which we probably need to do a better job at, because we use it to funnel. We do student advisory groups for young children all the way through Canada. We run these in schools. We take the information, and it helps set out the change in trends. What a grade 4 child was facing three years ago is very different from what a grade 4 child is facing today. Kids are on Snapchat in grade 4.

We are adapting things as we need to. There could be some benefit, but I would be very careful and cautious in how we structure the research or evaluation we would want to do, how carefully we would construct those questions, and what exactly we are looking at.

There is a big difference between what kids are doing in terms of technology and the issues they are facing, and looking at the issue of how children are being sexually abused and sexually exploited, because there are whole bunch of different factors around that. We always benefit from getting better data and information. We collect it rigorously. I wouldn't at all hesitate if those limits were in place.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** When you are—

**The Chair:** Thank you so much.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I have 30 seconds left.

**The Chair:** Yes, okay; you can have your 30 seconds, exactly.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Do you do much work with campus-aged people, or is it predominantly children?

**Ms. Lianna McDonald:** It's children.

We have been asked, though, because of the age of consent issue, and the things surrounding affirmative yeses are not that simple. As an example, if a young person is intoxicated, they can't ever consent. We are sort of inserting ourselves into that dialogue, because we are seeing from the outside that this is going to be a problem.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. That was fantastic testimony. It's been very helpful. It's very hard for me as the chair to have to cut you off when I want to hear the extra answers that you have, but I invite you to send the materials that we talked about to the chair.

I just want the committee members to know that at the next meeting, we will have a visit from the Canada-United Kingdom Inter-Parliamentary Association for the first hour. It's coming to talk about best practices for eliminating violence against women. This was previously set up.

Then, in the second hour, we're hearing from the Children and Youth in Challenging Contexts Network. That will be excellent.

I think we'll have a subcommittee meeting before then, because the Liaison Committee has asked us to plan out any travel expenses the committee has until June. I know several people have asked for extra witnesses to be added to the current study, and we've had some people ask to appear before the committee. We will schedule that steering committee.

Otherwise, I will see the rest of you again next meeting.

The meeting is adjourned.

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