

**Mayor Lefebvre Statement at Council
Intimate Partner & Gender-Based Violence Epidemic
November 7, 2023**

November is Violence Prevention Month and November 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Sixty-nine municipalities and regions have declared Intimate Partner Violence and/or Gender Based Violence an epidemic (www.buildingabiggerwave.org/actions/gbv-epidemic)

And I am bringing a motion to Council this week that Greater Sudbury do the same.

Through this declaration, Council would be recognizing survivors and offering hope to those who are experiencing gender-based violence or may experience it in the future.

This week, I met with my colleagues of the Northern Ontario Large Urban Mayors – and all their councils have already recently declared intimate partner violence and/or gender-based violence an epidemic.

Horrific recent events in Sault Ste. Marie have added urgency to the need to act now. The troubling reality is that gender-based and intimate partner violence is experienced every day across the province.

Gender-based violence include forms of physical and emotional abuse that women, girls, Two-Spirit, Trans and non-binary people are at highest risk of experiencing.

Abuse can be experienced regardless of background, socioeconomic status, identity, but some women, girls, and gender diverse people face even higher risks due to barriers or discrimination based on their race, disability status, or housing status.

This kind of violence can happen between two people who know one another well, such as between romantic partners, families, work colleagues, friends – or it can happen between strangers.

Unfortunately, gender-based violence and intimate partner violence are on the rise, particularly since the COVID 19 pandemic. And as high and shocking or troubling as these statistics may be, research has consistently shown that these are underreported.

Women, girls, gender diverse people and their children need access to safe spaces, including shelters and transitional housing, as well as resources and organizations that can provide safe escape plans.

With this declaration, we call on the provincial and federal governments to increase funding to support funding for intimate partner and gender-based violence prevention, counselling, protection and support for survivors, and additional funding in programmatic areas that women, girls, and gender-diverse people require.

After all, experiences of gender-based violence impacts all facets of life, from education and employment settings, to food security, housing stability, and health status.

Women who experience violence often have higher rates of depression or a clinical mental health diagnosis. They are at higher risk of traumatic brain injury.

Children who experience or witness violence in the home are more likely to experience negative health and mental health outcomes, the impacts of which can compound over time.

Violence of any kind is unacceptable. Gender-based violence and intimate partner violence are unacceptable. We need to provide a better system for women, girls, Two-spirit, Trans, and non-binary persons to be able to access secure, immediate support and continued resources and protection.

Our community needs to speak up and say, "we will not look away from this issue any longer". This is part of my commitment as Mayor to creating a more welcoming, safe and inclusive city.

To deal with this epidemic, I am calling upon the federal and provincial governments to urgently provide more funding to this sector.