

Family Violence Awareness Week

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Family Violence Awareness Week. This week is recognized across the country, and takes place from October 21 to 27, 2018.

Statistics Canada reports that, in 2016, family violence accounted for one-quarter of all violent crimes. These are criminal acts perpetrated against the most vulnerable members of society: youth, seniors, women and girls. In 2016, two thirds of all victims of family violence were women and girls.

Mr. Speaker, this is not okay. The national violence rates are concerning enough, but the fact that the Northwest Territories has maintained the second highest rate of violence in our country demonstrates the importance of the work being done to end this crisis.

We all need to take this issue seriously and recognize that working to end family violence is a shared responsibility. The Government of the Northwest Territories is being proactive in supporting initiatives that not only provide support to those experiencing family violence but also to those who perpetrate it. We recognize the need for strong services that address the root causes of family violence and give our families, communities and survivors an opportunity to heal.

Mr. Speaker, our government is working as a team to provide services to victims, perpetrators and the general public. In addition to our own programs, we are providing funding to partner organizations that offer community-level support to people affected by family violence. These services include prevention and awareness activities, shelter for those fleeing violence, healing programs and the development of protocols for first

responders, such as the RCMP. Throughout this week, activities to create awareness will be taking place across Canada and here in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT and our partners are working hard to address family violence, but this is a social issue. We need everyone to support our efforts to raise awareness and keep the conversations going. We must speak openly about family violence and pledge that we will not tolerate it in our homes or in our communities. Sharing experiences, cultural practices and positive alternatives helps those experiencing family violence. Sharing also reminds us that we need to be role models in our own actions and take a stand against family violence. We must stand together, so that our families and our communities are empowered and supported in wellness.

Mr. Speaker, this week was set aside to create awareness about family violence and to promote change in attitudes and behaviour. This year's theme is "Let's Stand Together to End Family Violence." This is a fitting theme, as it will take all of us working together to end family violence. I encourage everyone to participate in Family Violence Awareness Week activities to show support and solidarity to those struggling with family violence. I also urge you to carry on the conversations in your homes and communities, not just this week, but right up to the day a Minister can stand in this House and announce that family violence is no longer an issue in our territory.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.