Domestic Violence Death Review Committee

On September 28, 2026, the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee provided the Minister of Justice with a review report. The report includes the following advice and recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO PREVENTING A SIMILAR DEATH IN THE FUTURE

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS REPORTS WHICH PERTAIN TO THIS CASE:

Recommendation to support enhanced housing supports for victims of gender-based violence, including integrated access to wraparound services

1. Continue supports for the expansion and enhancement of the provincial housing strategy to build and support affordable housing initiatives, including Second Stage Housing for victims of gender-based violence. It is imperative that this housing provides integrated access to wraparound services in all new and existing housing developments, including in rural areas.

This recommendation aligns with other recommendations, like those made by the MCC Inquiry (V2, V7, V8c, V9, V15, V16, C1, C14); and the MMIWG calls to justice (1.6, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 7.2, 4.3, 5.6).

Increased housing options that provide integrated access to wraparound services are critical for those experiencing gender-based violence. Several government departments and community organizations are engaged in this work (e.g., Status of Women Office, Department of Growth and Development, Department of Opportunities and Social Development, and community organizations like Transition Houses, Mi'kmaw Healing Centres, Adsum for Women and Children, Alice House, YWCA, the Elizabeth Fry Society, the John Howard Society, and Wabanaki Two-Spirit are all involved in housing).

Ongoing cohabitation in abusive relationships due to an inability to afford separate housing can increase victims' exposure to coercive control, escalating violence, and heightened homicide risk. Access to safe, stable, and affordable housing can support earlier separation, reduce instability and dependency, and create safer conditions for individuals attempting to leave abusive relationships.

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations to promote safer family law services:

1. Explore working with the NS Barristers' Society to determine whether domestic violence screening tools could be incorporated into family law practice standards.

In Ontario, the e-SAFer model (e-SAFeR - e-SAFeR - Western University),was designed to promote a consistent, comprehensive framework for assessing family violence (FV) in the context of family law litigation. It is intended to be used by family law professionals (lawyers, assessors, advocates) following a disclosure or suspicion of FV during standard screening with family law litigants.

2. We recommend that government explore working with the province's universities and colleges to implement domestic violence training and assessment tools in family law courses and family law continuing education.

It is important that new and upcoming legal professionals in family law are aware of the risk

factors and warning signs of domestic violence, at the earliest opportunity. It would be of benefit if this education could be incorporated as part of the educational process in this field so that family law professionals are not waiting to receive this important training until after their career has already begun.

Some of this work has already begun with the Access to Justice and Law Reform Institute funded under the National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence.

Recommendations to increase public awareness and actions anyone can take to prevent domestic violence:

3. We recommend that government and community organizations should continue to explore innovative multimedia, public, gender-based violence awareness campaigns.

As part of the multi-media public gender-based violence awareness campaign, Government and community organizations should explore the enhancement of a targeted campaign for men and boys to help prevent gender-based violence. Media campaigns should be culturally relevant and consider how different generations might be socialized to understand gender and gender dynamics.

4. We recommend that the government explore new ways to increase public awareness about how family, friends, and professionals can seek a temporary firearm removal when they observe risky behaviors in an intimate partnership.

Many members of the public may not be aware of the paths that can be taken to request a temporary firearm removal by police in the event that they are concerned about domestic violence and firearms under the same roof. Furthermore, it is important that members of the public understand the significant, increased risk of fatality when domestic violence occurs in a relationship where at least one of the parties has access to firearms.

These set of recommendations support the Desmond Fatality Inquiry recommendations (10, & 11), the MCC Inquiry (V12, & C26).

Recommendation to strengthen police response to potential IPV incidents and identify firearms risks:

5. We recommend that government consider strengthening police training on safety assessments when responding to domestic violence incidents, and specifically on strengthening the quality of documentation in these cases.

The committee learned that for crucial firearms protections to be triggered, police must properly code a call as domestic violence. If this code is not applied in relation to the call, these firearms processes do not kick in. It is important that all police understand this crucial element and are aware of when and how they can and cannot code a call when they suspect domestic violence may be present, even if charges are not laid.