

Signal for Help Campaign Launches to Help People Experiencing Gender-Based Violence During Home Isolation

'Signal for Help' hand signal provides those experiencing violence in home isolation a way to discreetly communicate when they need help

TORONTO; April 14, 2020 -- Today, the Canadian Women's Foundation is proud to announce its support for *Signal for Help*, an online initiative to assist those experiencing violence as a result of home isolation during the pandemic. Strict isolating measures have led people in Canada to increasingly turn to video calls to stay connected. *Signal for Help* is a simple single-hand gesture that can be visually and silently displayed during video calls, to alert family, friends, or colleagues that an individual needs help and that they would like someone to check in safely with them.

There's ample [evidence](#) that disaster situations often lead to a surge in violence that women, girls, and trans and non-binary people are at highest risk of experiencing. This includes intimate partner violence, emotional abuse, and sexual violence. The COVID-19 pandemic is no different: other countries have already seen dramatic increases in gender-based violence, and Canada is bracing for a surge in the coming weeks and months.



“Public health directives on home isolation compound the danger for those living in abusive situations, and abusers may monitor their devices to ensure that what is going on inside the home is not shared,” said Paulette Senior, President and CEO of the Canadian Women's Foundation. “This new reality requires new methods of communication to help those facing gender-based violence. We know that internet and video calling are not readily accessible to some. Shelters and support services are doing everything they can to respond to the surge in violence. *Signal for Help* seeks to contribute to these efforts.”

The Canadian Women's Foundation is calling on other organizations to help spread awareness of *Signal for Help*. Their hope is that support services and organizations will encourage the use of this gesture to let women, girls, and trans and non-binary people know that they don't need to suffer in silence.



To learn more about what you can do if you see someone use the signal please, or to download and share the signal, visit: canadianwomen.org/signal-for-help. Here you will find tips on checking in safely and ways to find support resources in your community, and a downloadable toolkit of social media posts.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911 or your local emergency services (police, fire, ambulance).

About the Canadian Women's Foundation

The Canadian Women's Foundation is a national leader in the movement for gender equality in Canada. Through funding, research, advocacy, and knowledge sharing, the Foundation works to achieve systemic change that includes all women. By supporting community programs, the Foundation empowers women and girls to move themselves out of violence, out of poverty, and into confidence and leadership.

Launched in 1991 to address a critical need for philanthropy focused on women, the Canadian Women's Foundation is one of the largest women's foundations in the world. With the support of donors, the Foundation has raised more than \$100 million and funded over 1,950 programs across the country. These programs focus on addressing the root causes of the most critical issues and helping women and girls who face the greatest barriers.

The Canadian Women's Foundation aims to be inclusive of diverse people across gender and sexuality spectrums. We focus our efforts on supporting those who face the most barriers and have least access to relevant services. This includes people who identify as women, girls, trans, genderqueer, non-binary, and 2SLGBTQI+.

To learn more, visit canadianwomen.org, sign up for the [e-newsletter](#), and read the [blog](#). Follow the Foundation on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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