



Want to Hold an Event?

Special events can be a great way to attract attention, share information, fundraise (depending on the event, gain support), and sign up supporters such as, Change Makers for We Can End All Violence Against Women. Major events such as arts festivals, rallies, information fairs, sports events, memorial displays, and concerts can uplift people's spirits, build excitement and inspire individuals and groups from different backgrounds to support a common goal. For greater attention, Special Events are best held in conjunction with a commemorative date such as: March 8, International Women's Day, Feb. 14 Aboriginal Missing persons, April 6-12 National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, April 13-19, 2014 BC Prevention of Violence Against Women Week; Oct. 1 International Day for Older Persons, Oct. 18 Canada's Persons Day (commemorates the day that women were declared to be persons, Nov. 20 International Children's Day, Nov. 25-Dec. 10 International 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence-Nov. 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Dec. 3 International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Dec. 6 Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women - commemorates the Montreal Massacre where 14 women were killed because they dared to take engineering, and Dec. 10 Human Rights Day.

Funding is often available for events during Canada and BC's Crime Victim Awareness weeks, and posters, materials, etc are available for Crime Victim Awareness Weeks and 16 Days of Action. Events can be as complex or simple, expensive or inexpensive as you and your resources can do.

Organizing an Event

Every successful event requires advanced planning and organization. The more complex the event, the earlier and detailed the planning and organization is required. You can organize a planning committee or join an existing committee. Broad based partnerships are the best way to increase public awareness of your event and the issue you are raising. As mentioned above, organizing an event for a commemorative date or in association with other events makes it easier to gain public and media attention.

Your first step is to decide your primary audience-who the event or activity is intended for, next decide what kind of event, what your goals are and who you should contact. Remember if you are going to hold your event in a public or popular location you will probably need to book your event well ahead of the date you are planning to hold it. Federal Victims Week

<http://www.victimswweek.gc.ca/event-evenement/org.html> has an excellent detailed list on the steps to planning an event.

What follows is a sample listing of events, with how to, links etc. below

- Art Exhibits
- Butterfly Releases
- Candlelight Vigils
- Clothesline Projects
- Commemorative Displays-Commemorative Quilts, Empty or Shoe Memorial, Memorial Displays and Silhouette Displays to name a few
- Concerts
- Denim Day
- Dramatic or Theater Presentations
- Educational Forums
- Flash Mobs
- Information and Resource Fairs
- Initiative Announcements
- Media Outreach
- Mock Trials
- Rallies
- Social Media
- Theatre Events
- Tree Plantings
- Walk/Run Events
- Youth Events-Art Poetry and Essay Contests, Poster Contests

Art Exhibits

Through art, victims and survivors find a unique medium to express their pain, anger and suffering to search for peace, find hope and begin recovery. The Tapestry Project has held numerous workshops in the Lower Mainland and around the Province of BC. Simple and inexpensive, it involves cutting out 12" squares of cardboard or similar material, collecting "craft" material such as puzzle pieces, paints, crayons, felt, magazines, etc and inviting people to come together and express their feelings towards violence using the materials on a square. Squares are then assembled together (Vancouver used long lengths of heavy ribbon and/or fabric, velcroing the backs of the squares with corresponding Velcro on the lengths of material). Using lengths of ribbons, allows for the Tapestry to fit a variety of venues. The Vancouver Tapestry is currently 70' in width if all the squares are included. The Tapestry as it is called is powerful; stopping people to look at each individual portrayal of violence. If you would like to learn more about creating a Tapestry in your own community please contact pkelln@telus.net Other exhibits have been an exhibit of art by crime victims and their advocates with a local artist presenting demonstrations, and an art therapist speaking. Mothers against Drunk Driving (MADD) also display posters created during a youth poster contest in a public location.

Butterfly Releases

During the American National Crime Victim's Rights Week, many community organizers plan butterfly releases to symbolize the metamorphosis from victim to survivor. The San Diego district attorney and county sheriff released 100 butterflies donated by the Wings of Hope to serve as a "silent but strong symbol of the meaning of Crime Victims Rights week." Residents in Ocala, Florida kicked off the week with a mayoral proclamation as well as a day of festivities, walks, and a butterfly release.

Doves have also been used to symbolize peace, but we urge you to consider the survival of any creature released i.e. if it is too cold for them to survive when released.

Candle Light Vigils

Candle Light Vigils are held for numerous occasions, allowing community members to gather in silent, solemn unity to remember those who have died and to honour those who remain. A well known easy to organize event, they usually include speakers to allow for information sharing and give a focus to the Vigil. Normally held in the evenings to allow the candles to glow, the weather can be a large factor. Plastic cups with appropriate sized holes in the bottom and other items have been used to shield the flame from the wind. Cups around the candles also help the wax from dripping on hands and clothes. If the weather is cold, serving hot chocolate or some coffee is always a good idea.

Clothesline Projects

The Clothesline Project was started by a group of women in 1990. Historically, it was a vehicle for survivors of violence to express their emotions by decorating a shirt on a clothesline to be viewed by others as testimony to the problems of violence against women. It has since been used to portray the feelings of a variety of groups or individuals who have experienced violence. Each shirt should reflect an individual's personal experience, memorabilia, dates or images.

Commemorative Displays

Throughout the world communities display commemorative quilts, memorial walls, personalized tiles, silhouette, empty place and shoe exhibits, and photo montages to raise public awareness and help victims heal and recover

Commemorative Quilts

The Aids Quilt is one of the most well known of all commemorative quilts. Since 1994 groups in Fresno California have been gathering patches for the community's crime victim remembrance quilt, and in 2013 this quilt was comprised of 400 pieces.

Empty Shoe Displays/Canada's Dec. 6 Shoe Memorials

Started in Vancouver, BC Dec. 6 Shoe Memorials have been erected since Dec. 6, 2001. Dec. 6 Shoe Memorials have been held around BC by various groups and individuals with great success. Held in various locations from Art Galleries to the Parliament Steps in Ottawa; pictures and easy to follow step-by step instructions can be found at www.shoememorial.com.

Memorial Displays

"Memorial Walls" can be comprised of Victims names and/or displaying letters, poems and artwork by victims, survivors and family members and friends. You might find an actual wall to attach these type of items, or they can be attached to sheets of Core-Plas. These are made of plastic, are weather proof and are 4' by 8,' which can be easily cut down to whatever size you wish. The sheets come in a few different colors and are light weight. It may not be called Core Plas in your area; however, you should be able to find similar material at your local building or Arts and Crafts store.

Silhouette Displays

Silhouette displays remind the community of lives lost or forever changed through victimization. The Silent Witness project began in 1990 with a group of 8 women from the St. Paul/Minneapolis area who decided to address the issue of domestic violence murders in their community. The display is comprised of life size female plywood silhouettes, each with a plaque naming one victim and her story. www.silentwitness.net has more information. It should be noted that this project involves contacting family members for information and their permission.

Concerts

Musical events can attract enthusiastic crowds and share powerful messages. Jams for Justice in Austin Texas, hosted its annual benefit concert, which drew many members of the media, and helped raise awareness about crime victims and their rights.

Denim Day

Denim Day, which began after a 1999 Italian Supreme Court decision found a rapist innocent, because the victim had been wearing fitted jeans, has become an international form of protest against sexual assault. Though not well known in Canada, the California Victim Compensation Program hosted a Denim Day clothing drive to gather much needed supplies for victims of sexual violence and raise awareness of sexual assault during Crime Victims Week.

Dramatic Presentations

The Vagina Monologues written by playwright and activist Eve Ensler is probably the best known dramatic presentation concerning violence against women. Based on dozens of interviews Ensler conducted with women, the play addresses women's sexuality and the social stigma surrounding rape and abuse, creating a new conversation about and with women. Once a year, in Feb. March and April, groups around the world are allowed to produce a performance of this play as well as other works. In addition, they can use proceeds for local individual projects and programs that work to end violence against women and girls. For more information, please refer to www.vday.org. "They Are Here" is an original composition in the words of survivors of violent crime taken from their victim impact statements. Ghosts of Violence a ballet about domestic violence created in the Maritimes, was successfully hosted by We Can BC and is now touring across Canada.

Educational Forums

Often comprised of a panel of "experts" that include survivors of violence, transition house workers, police victim services workers, community based victim services. A large portion of the forums normally include a question and answer period, and/or a portion where the audience is broken down into small groups (such as those at a table) and asked to discuss one or more predetermined questions. Rape Relief of Vancouver, BC has held very successful educational forums for Dec. 6.

Flash Mobs

A newer style of event to raise interest in an issue, Flash Mobs can be as simple as asking people to come to a specified location at a specific time. You could then play a song and ask them to join in to an extravagantly choreographed dance where a core group comes together ahead of the specified date to practice. <http://www.spiral16.com/blog/2012/04/10-steps-on-how-to-organize-a-flash-mob/> and <http://www.wikihow.com/Organize-a-Flash-Mob> offer steps to organizing a flash mob.

Information and Resource Fairs

Resource fairs allow multiple organizations to display material about their organization and programs they offer. Often a local mall, library or community centre will allow your and others organizations to set up booths/tables to provide information to passerbyers.

Initiative Announcements

Commemorative days such as International Women's Day or Crime Victim's weeks present a unique opportunity to focus widespread attention on victims and survivors and are often used by politicians to announce initiatives. Sign up for our News Letter to learn when we post We Can BC's **How To: Media, Proclamations, and Letters to the Editor.**

Media Outreach

From a media event where a variety of media are invited to hear an announcement and/or a variety of speakers/panelists to media releases through billboard and television ad campaigns, media is limited to how interested your local media is and how much money you have to spend. If you can, Public Service Announcements are one way to have your message broadcasted for free by television or radio stations. Ads could be taken out in your local news papers, radio or

television stations. Sign up for our News Letter to learn when we post We Can BC's **How To: Media, Proclamations, and Letters to the Editor.**

Mock Trials

Organizations and communities sometimes present mock trials during crime victim's week to give the public firsthand experience of how trials actually work. One such event was a mock sexual assault trial where lawyers, law students and the public could watch an assault trial unfold.

Rallies

Rallies can be as simple or complex as you would like. They are excellent to remember those lost to violence (also see Commemorative Events above), and to remind lawmakers and politicians of the desire of a community. Remember politicians are elected by you, and can be swayed should sufficient numbers demand a course of action such as legislation, enforcement etc. Guest speakers can remind survivors, victims, law enforcement and service providers of the issues and hopefully a solution.

Social Media

A cost effect method to "get your message out there," in particular to a younger crowd, is through using social media such as Facebook or twitter. If you are not familiar with these types of communications there are numerous web sites and books on the subject. We do suggest though, that people who have been raised with these types of media communicate best with those of the younger crowd. In addition getting your message out their does not necessarily translates into action or behaviour changes on behalf of the readers.

Theatre Events

Cinema offers a powerful medium for educating people and reaching a large audience. Miss Representation <http://therepresentationproject.org/films/miss-representation/> is a non-profit organization that created and offers films that can be shown to a small or large audience for a fee. A panel and or speaker often are involved to further discuss the film with the audience. One university in Idaho organized a conference on domestic violence and victimization, and had a feminist author and filmmaker discuss cinematic depictions of women that often lead to higher rates of domestic violence.

Costs for the rights to show the film can be prohibitive, though often universities and schools often have an arrangement to allow certain films to be shown on campus. MADD was able to find the funding to place ads on movie screens in 15 theatres and digital television ads in ten gas stations throughout the state.

Tree Plantings

Many survivors find peace and strength by planting a tree in memory of a person who has been killed. A tree signifies new life, rebirth and healing in the face of a loss. In addition, numerous causes have successfully held "Ribbon Ceremonies" where ribbons of their cause were tied around trees. Purple is the accepted color for domestic violence. In one event, family members of homicide victims tied a green ribbon around a tree that had been planted in honour of their loved one.

Walk/Run Events

Walk or Run events are held by individuals or crowds and often utilized as a fund raising event. Participants find companies or individual donors who pledge to pay a certain amount depending on how well they did-i.e. so much per mile completed. Larger national events are organized by professionals though you could always organize a smaller event.

There are specific Walk/Run events to support victims and raise awareness, such as Walk a Mile in Her Shoes <http://www.walkamileinhershoes.org/>, Take Back the Night <http://takebackthenight.org/plan-an-event/> and Slut Walks <http://www.slutwalktoronto.com/> to name a few. You can organize an event under their umbrella using their manuals and/or materials, and more importantly become a part of a much larger event. Or, you can use your imagination and find others to support it.

Youth Events

Though any of the events listed above can be organized by youth and/or be youth specific, art, poetry, essay and poster contests are normally targeted at youth and easiest when they involve teacher or school approval and/or participation. The largest challenge in this type of event is to motivate youth to both do and submit entries. The same holds true of any contest, and once you have announced a contest, in order to be seen as professional and encourage; rather than distract people from your message, you must follow through with any award, or posting of announcement that you stated in the contest.

Art, Poetry, Poster and Essay Contests

These types of contests are normally held in conjunction with some type of commemorative date when the winner or awards are announced. Asking students to write essays on victimization for Crime Victim's Week is an example of this type of contest. Your first decision is what type of contest you want to hold, second what are the parameters ; i.e. what topic, what ages, what size, how many words etc. Make sure that your topic is age appropriate, for instance, essays on rape would definitely not be appropriate for elementary schools, and may not be appropriate at all depending on your community. Also, include in any advertising of the event the following: what the prize or award is, when the contest will end and what you will do with the submissions. All of the award winning submissions can go up on a web site, be professionally printed, be included in a newsletter or magazine, or whatever else you may decide. The second step is outreach; trying to get your contest out to as many youth as possible. Schools and/or teachers could greatly assist with this, by having the contest as part of their curriculum or class. For example, an art class would be a great place to hold art or poster contests. In one city, all the fourth, fifth and sixth grade students were asked to create posters to depict what the world would look like without violence.

Everyday Feminism How to Organize a Feminist Poster Campaign- A Guide for Campus Organizers [Untitled - Everyday Feminism](#) is an easy to follow guide.