



Women’s Rights

TEACHER GUIDE

Canadian Press reporter Laura Kane looks at how a Toronto women’s shelter had to fight for everything they gained and laid the groundwork for the problem of domestic violence to be brought to light. In the early 1970s, domestic violence was still a problem with no name — a private reality for many women, but not an issue considered the business of government or police. It was in this setting that a group of young feminists set about opening the first shelter for abused women and children in Canada.

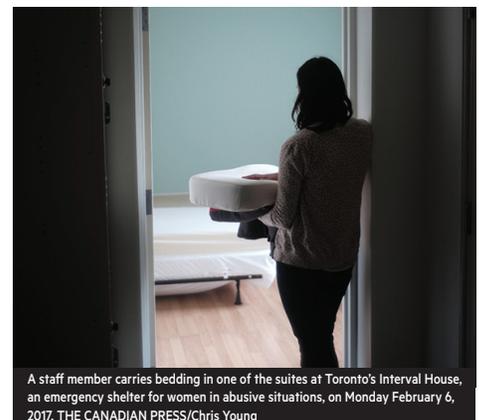
The women’s movement changed the discussion around violence in the home. Before the 1970s, experts thought of abuse as a symptom of family dysfunction and poverty. Feminists rejected this because it placed equal blame on the perpetrator and the victim. But convincing politicians it was the community’s responsibility to help abused women was an uphill battle.

Additional discussion/research points:

- In the 1960s and 1970s, what other social justice causes were gaining momentum?
- In addition to raising awareness about domestic violence, what other issues did feminists campaign for at that time?
- What kinds of support exist for domestic violence victims today and where are gaps in services?
- Research a prominent Canadian woman (current or historical) in politics/science/business/arts.
- Women faced a number of uphill battles for rights in the 19th and 20th centuries. Research how Canadian women fought for: the right to own property, the right to vote, the right to hold political office, equality in the workplace.
- One section in this story looks at 10 women’s issues that will be front and centre in the future in Canada. Pick one of these issues and explore further with research. Why is this issue important? What changes need to happen? Is this a global issue or unique to Canada, and why?
- What social justice causes have had increased awareness in recent years in Canada? In the world?
- What causes are important to you? What can you do in your community to contribute?



From left to right, Joice Guspie, Darlene Lawson, Billie Stone, Lynn Zimmer and Martha Ireland, original founders of Toronto’s Interval House, an emergency shelter for women in abusive situations, are pictured on Monday February 6, 2017. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Chris Young



A staff member carries bedding in one of the suites at Toronto’s Interval House, an emergency shelter for women in abusive situations, on Monday February 6, 2017. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Chris Young