

2018

ANNUAL  
REPORT



# WOMEN'S WELLNESS WITHIN

SERVING CRIMINALIZED WOMEN

@WITHINWOMENS

[WWW.WOMENSWELLNESSWITHIN.ORG](http://WWW.WOMENSWELLNESSWITHIN.ORG)

## WHO WE ARE

Women's Wellness Within (WWW) is a registered non-profit organization that provides support to criminalized women and trans individuals who are pregnant or parenting young children in Nova Scotia. The group began working together in 2012 and we served our first incarcerated client in 2014. WWW is a registered non-profit organization.

WWW's 70+ members include formerly incarcerated women, doulas, health care providers, lawyers, students, researchers and mentors. WWW volunteers have security clearance to provide support at the Nova Institution for Women Federal Prison, the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility Provincial jail, the Nova Scotia Youth Facility and for women on bail and parole in the community.

## WHAT WE DO

First and foremost, WWW supports individual clients who have experienced criminalization or are currently incarcerated while pregnant or parenting young children. We provide doula support, lactation support, and navigation of health and community services. WWW facilitates monthly workshops on women's health for imprisoned women at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility on topics determined by the women inside.

Education is an important part of WWW's mandate. WWW leads seminars for health professionals and students and speaks publicly to raise consciousness of the rights and reproductive health experiences of criminalized women. WWW sees criminalization through a health lens and aims to improve general understanding of how health intersects with the experience of criminalization, and how this process can be redressed.

WWW works in close partnership with the Chebucto Family Centre, the Elizabeth Fry Societies of Cape Breton and Mainland Nova Scotia, Mi'kmaq Childhood Development Centre, Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network (MLSN) of Eskasoni First Nation, the IWK Health Centre, and the Halifax Branch of the Women's Legal Education Action Fund. WWW has received grants and funding from NSPIRG, the Nova Scotia Health Coalition, Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the Chebucto West Community Health Board and the Dartmouth Community Health Board.



# 2018 OVERVIEW



- In partnership with Chebucto Family Centre, we facilitated 12 workshops with women imprisoned at the Central Nova Correctional Facility (Burnside) on themes including sexual health, self-care, and parenting skills. Approximately 150 women attended these workshops.
- We delivered 16 guest lectures, panels, and public presentations, including for the Dalhousie School of Social Work, the St. Francis Xavier University School of Nursing, and the Dalhousie University School of Nursing.
- We presented at 6 regional and national academic conferences and were invited to present a keynote at the Nova Scotia Health Coalition conference and AGM in Halifax, NS.
- We presented at four international academic conferences and were invited to present a keynote at the Human Milk Banking Association of North America Biannual International Conference in Denver, Colorado.
- We were invited to deliver a presentation and submission to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Physical and Mental Health Dr. Dainius Puras.
- We received grants from NSPIRG (Nova Scotia Public Research Interest Group), Chebucto West Community Health Board, the Dartmouth Community Health Board and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women.
- We supported many clients at the Central Nova Correctional Facility, the Nova Institution for Women Federal Prison, The NS Youth Facility and in the community.
- We participated in Community Resource Fairs at the Nova Institution for Women in October.
- In collaboration with the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia and East Coast Prison Justice, updated and published Version 3 of the Resource Guide, with important expansion to include resources available to women in communities across Nova Scotia. (link <https://www.womenswellnesswithin.org/resources-1/>).
- We provided expert clinical opinion for Family Court proceedings in Nova Scotia, and for the Human Rights Tribunal in Ontario.
- We brought on our first employee through the Canada Summer Jobs program, who supported research and development for evidence-based educational modules.



# EDUCATION

## TRAINING, TOOLS & RESOURCES

WWW develops training modules and manuscripts about the perinatal and reproductive health and parenting of criminalized women. WWW collaborates with community organizations to facilitate doula training for criminalized women and Indigenous women. WWW encourages First Voice presenters and collaboration. In consultation with imprisoned women, WWW contributes to annual updates to a practical and comprehensive Community Resource Guide, available in hardcopy or as a PDF on our website.

## EDUCATION MODULES

### *PARENTING THROUGH TRANSITIONS*

This module focuses on the unique challenges criminalized women experience parenting through the various transitions through the justice system, information on parenting and parenting supports and resources that criminalized women can access.

- Trena Gallant

### *NEONATAL ABSTINENCE SYNDROME*

This module provides evidence-based information on neonatal abstinence syndrome, a term for a group of problems a baby experiences when withdrawing from exposure to opioids. The focus of this module is to provide information on treatment options and supports for families.

- Karlee Dunlap

### *RESILIENCE*

This module focuses on the benefits of being able to successfully cope with crisis and the behaviors and mental processes that can promote strengths and protect oneself from the negative effects of stressors. A companion workbook includes exercises for participants.

- Hazel Ling

The stated needs of the criminalized women we work with and support drove topic selection for these education modules. We validated module content with women who participate in our monthly, inmate-led workshop at the Burnside jail, Nova Institution and the women at the Elizabeth Fry Society Mainland Holly House. Thank you to our research consultants, Trena, Karlee and Hazel, for their hard work in developing these valuable resources for WWW!

# DOULA TRAINING

With the support of funding from the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, we hosted our first doula training weekend in partnership with the Elizabeth Fry Society of Cape Breton and the Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network (MLSN) of Eskasoni First Nation in September 2018.

The impetus for this training arose from the expressed need for birth support training for those working with the MLSN and Elizabeth Fry of Cape Breton. The objective was to provide a low barrier training for the staff of both agencies. We provided the training in September 2018 free of cost to participants and a total of 14 individuals attended and completed the training. The participants included: Elizabeth Fry staff, MLSN staff, Maternal Child Health workers from the Eskasoni Health Board and Whycomomagh Health Board.



The training itself is the introductory level curriculum developed by the Doulas of North American (DONA) regulatory body. Demand for this training exceeded our capacity and participant evaluations highlighted strong satisfaction with the training quality, content, and actionability. Some feedback included: it was “a great learning module to support moms” and “absolutely amazing learning opportunity”. Being the first training of its kind in Cape Breton, CBC Nova Scotia News and CBC Information Morning provided pre and post coverage of the event.



# E V E N T S

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FEATURING GUEST KEYNOTE BY IDIL ABDILLAHI

Nijhawan MacMillan Petrunia Barristers hosted our 2017 AGM in April. With support from the Nancy's Chair in Women's Studies at MSVU, Idil Abdillahi provided a keynote address on surveillance, policing, criminalization, racism and women's bodies. Idil Abdillahi is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work at Ryerson University is a community organizer, strategist, public intellectual and academic, unapologetically committed to the freedom, fight and joy for Black lives.

## LUNCH WITH ANGELA DAVIS

We sat down with Angela Davis for one hour over lunch when she was in town in October to receive an honorary Doctor of Laws from Dalhousie University and deliver the inaugural lecture in the Viola Desmond series. She asked us about prison abolition, sexual violence, racism, and the state of feminist activism in Nova Scotia.

## BURNSIDE PRISON STRIKE

We stood in solidarity the prisoners in the Burnside jail who took part in an international prisoner strike in August. Prisoners engaged in a 20-day peaceful process and shared a manifesto containing 10 demands for improvements to in basic services such as healthcare, air quality, and library access.

## FUNDRAISERS

We held two energetic and well-attended fundraising events in 2018. In February, our Fundraiser and Silent Auction held at Good Robot Brewing Company was a huge success, owing largely to the extraordinary volunteer work of WWW member Marianne Welsh. In June, we were back at the Good Robot to host a Fundraiser and Letter Writing Campaign organized by WWW member Delaine Tiniakos-Doran. Many thanks to our volunteers and those who attended these events!





## CONFERENCE

On November 24-25, WWW hosted our second annual conference “Reproductive Justice and Anti-Racist Action” in Halifax Nova Scotia, sponsored by the NSPIRG and coordinated by volunteer Ella Vermier. This was a working conference focused on learning together, talking together, and planning together for future collaborative, transformative action, and featured critical group discussion on key issues and opportunities for anti-racist action, defining reproductive justice, and how do we go from here.

Hosted at the Chebucto Family Centre in Spryfield, the sold-out conference was attended by 45 individuals and provided a day and a half of topics and featured key note speaker Robyn Maynard, author of *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*, a national bestseller in its second printing. Other presentations included:

Raising your Voice Against Family Injustice and Reproductive Justice – Benjamin Perryman, Human Rights Lawyer and Counsel for Abdoul Abdi whose deportation was overturned by the Federal Court and collective advocacy

Mi'kmaq Women and Justice- Paula Marshall, Executive Director, Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network, Eskasoni First Nation

Bianca Mercer- Experienced Advocate for criminalized women

Black Leadership in Healthcare – Keisha Jefferies, Registered Nurse and PhD Student at Dalhousie University

Media Relations for Social Justice Work – Martha Paynter, Registered Nurse, Activist and Chair of WWW

Creative Writing in Activist Work – El Jones, Poet and Nancy's Chair for Women's Studies at MSU and WWW Board Member.

The NSPIRG provided funding for our conference Artist in Residence, Mo Phung, who took head shot photos of every interested conference participant. These head shots can then be used when participants submit editorials, need a head shot for speaking engagements, etc. This is art building activism in action!

# ADVOCACY

## CURRENT CAMPAIGNS

### BELL LET'S TALK

Women's Wellness Within: An Organization Serving Criminalized Women (WWW) challenges Bell Canada to align its messaging surrounding the company's annual mental health campaign, "Let's Talk," with the restrictions put on federal prisoners' phone transactions. The restrictions impact prisoners' mental health by keeping them from being able to contact their support system. Bell has a monopoly on prison telephone services and charges high fees of each call. Prisoners make \$1.95 a day<sup>[4]</sup> in their CORCAN jobs. CSC bans most prisoners from Internet use and cell phones are considered contraband. We believe Bell's prison policies and practices are unjust and the time is now to make change. We are asking Bell to "Walk the Talk" by making all phone calls free for prisoners, if not every day, at least on January 31. Second, we ask that Bell and CSC allow prisoners to load their phone cards any and every day of the month.

### FUND HEPATITIS C TREATMENT FOR ALL INFECTED PRISONERS IN NOVA SCOTIA

Women's Wellness Within: An Organization Serving Criminalized Women (WWW) calls for the provincial government to fund Hepatitis C treatment for all infected prisoners in Nova Scotia provincial carceral facilities immediately. Hep C is a progressive, life-limiting, infectious, curable disease. Incarcerated individuals experience extraordinarily high rates of Hep C; research has found between 15–30% of prisoners are infected. The rate among women is higher. The right to this therapy among those incarcerated is clearly protected by existing law. Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, "the right to life, liberty, and security of the person," asserts the right to seek health care. It is a moral imperative that prisoners be offered Hep C therapy. It is also sound Public Health practice; as with all infectious disease, reducing disease burden in the population reduces the risk of infection for us all. WWW urges the government to immediately take the necessary steps to make this therapy available to all Nova Scotians, especially those most in need.

### ELIMINATE CRIMINAL RECORDS

Women's Wellness Within: An Organization Serving Criminalized Women asks for the elimination of criminal records in Canada. Criminalized people are vulnerable and marginalized people. Having a criminal record is stigmatizing. The principle behind the Canadian criminal justice system is to punish an individual for their behaviour and to correct that behaviour through rehabilitation once they have served their sentence and debt to society. However, in reality, having a criminal record under the current Record Suspension system becomes a life sentence of discrimination, restriction, and oppression due to the barriers of time and money. Being criminalized and stigmatized does not just affect the individual — it affects their families, their children, and their communities. The research backs this up. Criminalized individuals need support and compassion to integrate into society in a positive and pro-social way.



## ABOLISH ADMINISTRATIVE SEGREGATION

Women's Wellness Within: An Organization Serving Criminalized Women calls for the abolishment of administrative segregation (solitary confinement) for all criminalized women, and especially pregnant women in Canadian correctional facilities. We believe that administrative segregation violates sections of the Charters of Rights and Freedoms. There is significant evidence of the adverse effects of administrative segregation, including an increased risk of self-harm and suicide, psychological stress, and serious mental health effects. Most criminalized women have histories of sexual and physical abuse, traumas that put them at risk of self-harm, and issues with addiction and mental illness. Administrative segregation of this population only perpetuates and exacerbates the pre-existing discrimination and disadvantages these individuals experience.

## GRANT CITIZENSHIP FOR CHILDREN, AND FORMER CHILDREN, IN STATE AND FOSTER CARE IN CANADA

Women's Wellness Within: An Organization Serving Criminalized Women (WWW) believes that all children in state and foster care in Canada who are eligible for citizenship must be granted citizenship immediately. Adults who should have been granted citizenship as children in state or foster care, such as Abdoul Abdi, must also be granted citizenship immediately. Abdi served his sentence in the Canadian criminal justice system. If he were a citizen, as he should have been, he would have returned home to his daughter at the end of his sentence. Instead, he was detained and nearly sent to a country from which he fled as a child, where he has no family, no way to survive, and would be in great danger. The deportations of Abdoul Abdi, Fliss Cramman, and Debra Spencer, were rightfully stayed, but only with pressure from advocacy groups such as WWW. The practice of ordering deportations of people who have experienced criminalization after coming to Canada who should have been granted Canadian citizenship as children is inhumane. As described by Abdoul Abdi's lawyer, Benjamin Perryman, these children were "denied the right to even have rights."

# IN THE MEDIA

**DEC  
8**

.....

"Mi'kmaw man says poor treatment he received at the PEI Correctional Facility left him hospitalized and in fear of his life."

THE HALIFAX EXAMINER | INTERVIEWER EL JONES

"Women and the right to healthcare in Nova Scotia prison.

THE NOVA SCOTIA ADVOCATE | INTERVIEWER REBECCA HUSSMAN

.....

**NOV  
21**

**NOV  
9**

.....

"Alberta prisoners made 67 allegations of sexual assault in the last five years; only one resulted in a criminal charge."

THE EDMONTON JOURNAL | INTERVIEWER JONNY WAKEFIELD

"NS says more freedom coming for some segregated inmates."

CBC MAINSTREET. 90.5FM | INTERVIEWER BOB MERCER

.....

**OCT  
24**

**OCT  
24**

.....

"NS says more freedom coming for some segregated inmates."

CBC NEWS | INTERVIEWER JEAN LAROCHE

OCT  
13

.....

"Presiding judge at Wagmatcook court was force behind on reserve justice."

THE CHRONICLE HERALD | INTERVIEWER ANDREW RANKIN

"City Hall loosens requirement for criminal record check."

THE COAST | INTERVIEWER MOIRA DONOVAN

.....

SEP  
6

AUG  
30

.....

"Black August North: 'We don't pick and choose who gets human rights.'"

THE COAST | INTERVIEWER SANDRA HANNEBOHM

"Mother at jail protest info meeting: you just don't feel human anymore."

THE NOVA SCOTIA | INTERVIEWER YAZAN KHADER

.....

AUG  
29

JUN  
4

.....

"Nurse Steps Up for Incarcerated Pregnant Women."

THE CHRONICLE HERALD | INTERVIEWER ALLISON LAWLOR

**MAR  
26**

.....

"Former Alberta inmate carried stillborn baby for weeks after seeking help from staff."

THE EDMONTON JOURNAL | INTERVIEWER JONNY WAKEFIELD

"Why people in jail don't have access to Hep C treatment."

CBC NEWS | INTERVIEWER MOIRA CAMPBELL

.....

**MAR  
9**

**JAN  
31**

.....

"Prisoners at Nova Institution deserve a phone break: women's group."

THE CHRONICLE HERALD | INTERVIEWER FRANK CAMPBELL

# OPINION PIECES

"Our Lunch with Angela."

THE HALIFAX EXAMINER | PAYNTER,  
M., JONES, E., HALPERN, M. (2018).

"Nurse: We should support  
prisoners' demands for better  
health care."

THE HALIFAX EXAMINER | PAYNTER, M. (2018).

#Not1Day. The  
Radical Nurse.

PAYNTER, M.(2018).

"Legal marijuana and  
necessary amnesty.  
Impact Ethics."

ONLINE PUBLISH | PAYNTER, M. (2018).

"End prison  
segregation now."

THE COAST | PAYNTER, M. (2018).

# PARTNERS



# SPONSORS



# CONTACT US

✉ [womenswellnesswithinns@gmail.com](mailto:womenswellnesswithinns@gmail.com)

🐦 [@withinwomens](https://twitter.com/withinwomens)

🌐 [womenswellnesswithin.org](http://womenswellnesswithin.org)

f [facebook.com/womenswellnesswithin](https://facebook.com/womenswellnesswithin)

“

BUT THEN THEY TELL ME WHITE IS THE EQUIVALENT  
OF PURITY  
AND SINCE WE CAN'T BE INNOCENT WE SHOULD  
BOW TO THEIR AUTHORITY  
WE CAN'T WIN, WE CAN'T WIN  
NOT WHEN SESSION IS IN  
NOT WITH HISTORIES UPON HISTORIES ABOUT  
SAVAGES AND SIN  
IF YOU'LL ALL RISE FOR THE JURY THE COURT WILL  
BEGIN  
SELECTING ONE WHITE TWO WHITE ALL WHITE JURORS.

”

- **EL JONES**