

**Exhibit: National Inquiry into Missing and
Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

Location/Phase: Part III: Quebec City

Witness: Panel 1

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Add'l info: des cultures. l'exploitation sexuelle

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Intials

I/D

Entered

63

A22

"Talk about it.
Cuz they avoid the
subject, they never talk
about it. At the worst,
it's disrespect and at the
best, it's ignorance. But
at least, talk about it,
open the discussion"
[translation] - Chaton

LISTEN

It can be difficult for Indigenous women
to ask for help

References

Farley, M., Lynne, J., Cotton, A.J. (2005).
Prostitution in Vancouver: Violence and the
colonization of first nations women.
Transcultural Psychiatry, 42, 242 - 271.

Research and Statistics Division (2017). *Just
facts: Victimization of Indigenous women and
girls*. Retrieved from <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/jf-pf/2017/docs/july05.pdf>

About La Concertation des luttes contre l'exploitation sexuelle (CLES)

La CLES is a coalition of individuals and
organizations that are critical of the sex
industry. Established in 2005, CLES
brings together 50 member groups,
more than 150 individual members, and
many more supporters who believe that a
world without prostitution is possible.
CLES provides direct services to women,
works to raise awareness, provides
trainings, and engages in political action.

About the Research

In 2014, CLES conducted research to
learn about the needs of prostituted
women and survivors. The research was
carried out using an abolitionist
framework with a goal of improving the
material conditions of women's lives. As
part of this research, 16 Indigenous
women in Val d'Or and Montreal
were interviewed or completed
questionnaires. The participants ranged
in age from 20 - 53 years old.

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NATIVE
WOMEN AND
PROSTITUTION:
A REALITY CHECK

Since white male settlers brought the sex industry to Canada, Indigenous women have been over-represented in prostitution (Farley et al., 2003). Harmful ideas, practices, and legislation, such as the Indian Residential School System and the Indian Act, negatively impacted and continues to impact Indigenous women and girls in particular ways because they are female.

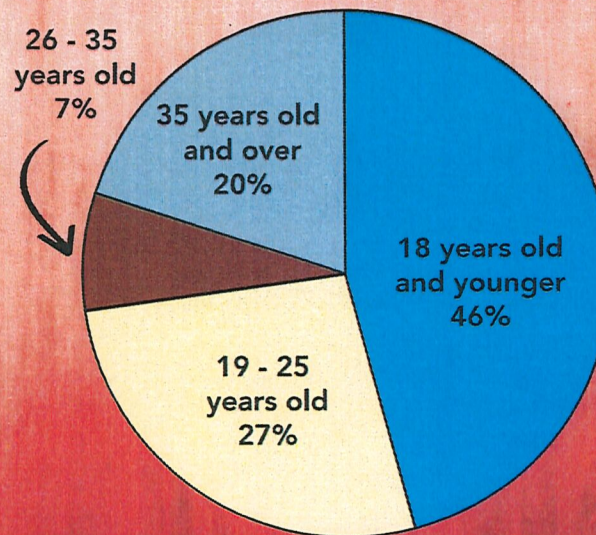
Indigenous women continue to be harmed by systemic sexism, racism, and capitalism that contributes to high rates of male violence against Indigenous women, child apprehensions, poverty, disability, addictions, and other issues.

These inequalities also work to funnel Indigenous women into prostitution and to normalize the purchase of sex and other types of male violence by devaluing Indigenous women and creating conditions whereby Indigenous women have limited social, economic, & political participation and options.

56% of Indigenous women who reported being assaulted by a domestic partner reported the most severe types of violence, such as sexual assault, being beaten, choked, or threatened with a gun or knife (Statistics Canada, 2017).

"When I was involved in [prostitution] I learned to disconnect from my body to be able to do the things they asked me to do" [translation] - Chantale

Age of Entry into Prostitution



91%
of participants wanted to exit
the sex trade
only 6%
knew of resources to help
them exit the sex trade

23% of participants prostituted indoors only
15% prostituted on the street/outdoors only
62% prostituted both indoors and outdoors

Factors that Pushed Women into Prostitution

- men propositioning women for sex
- loss of children • familiarity with prostitution through a friend or family member
- poverty/lack of money • addiction issues
- forced into prostitution • raped previously
- thought it would be easy money

"I would have liked to know how to do something else besides prostitution. When I was in care, I'd have liked for someone to help me with finding a job and things like that instead of just saying, "well you're 18 now, out you go, find a place, you're on your own" [translation]" - Sylvie

What do Indigenous Women Need to Leave Prostitution?

- alternative sources of income
- a holistic approach to health needs
- opportunities to speak with women who have also been in prostitution
- assistance addressing addictions
 - healing from the violence
 - spiritual support
 - safe housing

For Indigenous women, prostitution is not only an expression of male violence and entitlement to women's bodies, but it is also connected to racist beliefs, actions, and systems of colonization.