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It can be difficult for Indigenous women to ask for help.

LISTEN

It's disrespect and at the worst, it's ignorance. But at least, talk about it. Cuz they never talk about it. At the worst, it's disrespect and at the best, it's ignorance. But at least, talk about it.
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.

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

- 26 - 35 years old 7%
- 35 years old and over 20%
- 18 years old and younger 46%
- 19 - 25 years old 27%

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.