



December 6, 2012

## OPEN LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

It was 23 years ago today that 14 young women were killed at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal, singled out because they were women. On this National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, we remember those young women and their families, as well as all women who have experienced violence.

December 6th is also an opportunity to recommit to preventing violence against women by raising awareness and encouraging all Canadians to take a stand and speak out. It is important that we include boys and men in this endeavour.

It is unacceptable that half of all women age 16 or older in Canada report experiencing at least one incident of physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. This rate is even higher for aboriginal women, who, when we include spousal violence, are almost three times more likely than non-aboriginal women to report being the victim of a violent crime.

As nurses, we are frequently the first point of contact for abused women and children. As part of a predominantly female profession, we also know nurses who have experienced violence themselves. We've seen firsthand the physical and psychological effects of gender violence as well as the enduring emotional scars.

Accordingly, CNA speaks out nationally and internationally against gender violence. For example, we endorsed *Ghosts of Violence*, an [Atlantic Ballet Theatre of Canada](#) production that tells the stories of women who have lost their lives at the hands of an intimate partner, and signed-on to the [International Campaign to Stop Rape and Gender Violence in Conflict](#), which calls for action to prevent violence against women in areas of war and other armed conflict.

In recognition of this National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, I encourage nurses and all Canadians to come together, to speak out, and to break the cycle of violence in our communities.

Sincerely,

Barbara Mildon, RN, PhD, CHE, CCHN(C)  
President, Canadian Nurses Association