

# MMIWG2S & NWAC Faceless Dolls Project

...

# What this presentation will explore?

- What does the acronym stand for?
- What Indigenous Women represent in Indigenous culture?
- What are the roles of Indigenous Women in their communities?
- Who is the NWAC, what is the Faceless Dolls Project
- Importance of the Faceless Doll in Indigenous Culture
- MMIWG2S: Issues, Progress, Causes
- Video
- How can I help?
- Important Dates
- Doll demonstration video

# What does the acronym stand for?

MISSING

MURDERED

INDIGENOUS

WOMEN

GIRLS

TWO-SPIRITED



... MMIW has expanded since 2012 to now include girls and two-spirited

# What is the MMIWG2S Movement?

...A Social movement to bring recognition to the disappearance and murders of Indigenous women, girls, including two-spirit and trans individuals...



# What do Indigenous Woman represent to Indigenous culture?

Representative:

- Land (Mother Earth)
- Language
- Culture (Niitoyiis Tipi Teachings)
- Creation Stories (First Man and Woman)
- Homefire “backbone and strength of the home and community





# Roles

Indigenous women have held and continue to hold important positions within their communities as political leaders, ceremonial leaders (relating to culture and tradition), nurturing and maintaining the family, they are **life givers**, and holders of sacred knowledge and traditional Indigenous medicine (healers).



So, when Indigenous women go missing not only are these things disturbed, they dismantle the culture. We must NEVER forget that these women are someone's Grandmother, Mother, Aunt, Sister, Cousin, Niece, Daughter.

# NWAC

Established in 1974, The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) is a National Indigenous Organization representing the political voice of Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people in Canada, inclusive of First Nations on and off reserve, status and non-status, disenfranchised, Métis and Inuit.



Native Women's  
Association of Canada



L'Association des femmes  
autochtones du Canada

# Faceless Dolls

NWAC's Faceless Doll Project (established in 2010) is a collection of faceless felt dolls that will be used to create a travelling art exhibit in memory of the more than 600 (582 known cases/baseline number) of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada.

It is an interactive, and hands on activity used to help engage, educate and inspire community members and bring awareness surrounding MMIWG2S.

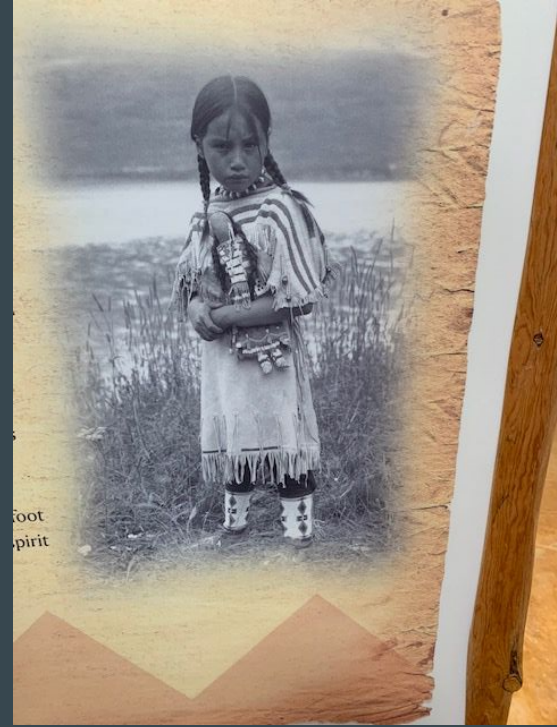
More importantly the dolls are created, donated to SIS committees, blessed and a vigil--where the dolls will be displayed--is held to pay respect to the victims each year in participating communities. (Oct. 4, Lethbridge)





# Why are dolls faceless in Indigenous culture?

It is believed that by giving the doll a face, you are giving the doll a spirit. The doll may look similar to someone that has passed on, so it was believed that if you give the doll a face you are disturbing that person that has moved on.



# Purpose and Intent

We recognize that there is bad energy and good energy, so when we move in to creating our own dolls we want to only use the power of our positive thoughts channelling good energy. We are only putting good energy in to our dolls. It is believed when you're creating art (beadwork, etc.) you only harness good feelings when your doing so as to not pass anything on to someone who is receiving the work.



# MMIWG2S Issues

- 2014 RCMP report identified 1,181 reported cases of Indigenous female homicides and unresolved missing Indigenous women 1980-2012
- 2001-2015 the homicide rate was 6x higher for Indigenous women compared to non-Indigenous women (Statistics Canada, 2017)
- Highway of tears: the site of the murder and disappearance of between 18-40 Indigenous women, girls and 2s since 1969
- In 2019, a National Inquiry was conducted to investigate MMIWG2S across the country and the government report stated “there is no reliable estimate (numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, 2s)
- The same national inquiry took 3 years to conclude, with two extensions-- pointing to the fact that there are many contributing factors aside from the theory of native on native crime.
- From 1980 to 2015, the number of Indigenous women who have fallen victim to homicide has increased by 15% from 9% (1980) of all female homicides in Canada to 24% (2015)
- Indigenous women are 4 times more likely to go missing and murdered than non-Indigenous women
- Since the beginning of Covid 1 in 5 Indigenous women have experienced domestic violence (NWAC)

# MMIWG2S Progress

- In 2010 The National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains NCM PUR was developed in response to MMIWG2S
- Concluding the National Inquiry on MMIWG, a 1200 page document of recommendations was created totalling 231.
- Recommendations included: recognizing Indigenous language as an official languages, support the increase in representation of Indigenous people in media, provide more financial support for families and communities of MMIWG2S, etc.
- Sisters in Spirit committees are nationwide, providing education and action in communities
- Lethbridge has officially made October 4

# MMIWG2S Database

Created by University of Lethbridge  
Doctoral student Annita Lucchesi, the  
database contains almost 3,000 entries of  
MMIW, including their names, where they  
lived, if they were a mother, if other women  
in their family went missing or were  
murdered, if they experienced domestic  
violence and any other details.

<https://www.sovereign-bodies.org/request>





# Causes of these crimes

- The ongoing colonization of Indigenous people
- Anti-Indigenous racism and sexism which create harmful stereotypes that can have a dehumanizing effect
- Violence against Indigenous 2SLGBT2Q+IA
- Poor government protections and harmful policies that impact Indigenous lands and communities
- Lack of adequate emergency services (Example: poor police response time, runaways always come home)

# MMIWG2S Survivor Videos



# Red Dress Project



# How you can help?

- Become an ally
- Share posts and articles on social media
- Educate yourself and those around you, information gather
- Support Indigenous grassroots organization (Sisters in Spirit)
- Vote for political leaders who take action for MMIWG2S
- Volunteer for community events
- Honor May 5th which is the National Day of Awareness
- Attend October 4ths, Lethbridge SIS Vigil
- Lend an ear

# Important Dates

October 4- Official Sisters in Spirit Day

May 5- National Day of Awareness MMIWG2S



## SISTERS IN SPIRIT VIGIL

October 4th

6:30 pm: Gather at City Hall for Sisters in Spirit walk

7:00 pm: Vigil at Galt Gardens



Georgina Faith Papin



Kelly Morrisseau



Shelly Joseph



Lise Faye Sheepskin

The purpose of this vigil is to honour and raise public awareness about missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two spirited people.







<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3r5UHpVWK0>

# Walking With Our Sisters

