



ONTARIO COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEES MEETING

September 24, 2016

Status of Women & Human Rights Committee

Topic: Current status of women's safety from gender-based violence and harassment on post-secondary campuses & society with suggestions for future action (morning & afternoon)

Speaker: Professor Joan Simalchik, University of Toronto Mississauga

Violence and harassment towards women continues despite huge attempts in the 20th & 21st century to rid our society of these behaviours and attitudes. We continue to live in a patriarchal society where women are seen as the "others". Professor Simalchik quoted Gloria Steinem who said when asked whether she has seen any changes in actions and attitudes that the term *domestic violence* is new, previously gender-based harassment and violence were called "life".

We must find new solutions if we ever want to solve such a multi-dimensional "wicked" problem. Wicked problems defy conventional approaches for solutions. Instead, we need a paradigm shift. We must shift from circles of silence to building circles of solidarity. It is key to make men allies in the solution. Violence against women and harassment must become socially unacceptable. Perpetrators of violence and discrimination must be seen as the pariahs. Visualize an attitude shift similar to how we now view people who smoke or drink and drive.

Overlapping circles of connection in the family, institutions, and society should be used to build solutions by making gender-based violence the anathema.

Anne Cordon

Chair, Status of Women and Human Rights