

Field Notes 8: The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Published 11/27/2025 by [Emily Zabanah](#)

Welcome to Field Notes, a series from the Reconciliation & Inclusion team, offering curated resources to support deeper learning and inclusive practices across Seneca Polytechnic. Each issue features a bespoke collection of resources – such as books, TV shows and events – that the team has personally engaged with, reflected on and found meaningful in our own learning.

December 6, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, invites us to honour the 14 women who were murdered at Montréal's École Polytechnique in 1989 and to recognize the ongoing reality of gender-based violence in Canada. This day sits within the *16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence*, an international campaign running from November 25 to December 10 that calls communities to learn, reflect and take action to end violence against women, girls, Two-Spirit, trans and gender-diverse people. Engaging with this day means acknowledging the harm, listening to the voices of survivors and recommitting ourselves to build environments rooted in safety, accountability and collective care.

READ

[And Sometimes They Kill You: Confronting the Epidemic of Intimate Partner Violence](#), by Pamela Cross

A grounded, Canadian examination of intimate partner violence and the systems that fail survivors.

Why: It highlights how preventable gender-based violence is and why communities must push for real accountability and safety.



Catch and Kill by Ronan Farrow

Ronan's investigative account of exposing sexual abuse within media and entertainment. It is a story of intimidation; cover-ups and the lengths institutions go to protect powerful men.

Why: It shows how truth-telling can break cycles of harm, and why believing survivors matters when entire systems are designed to keep them quiet.



Kitty Genovese: A True Account of a Public Murder and Its Private Consequences, by Catherine Pelonero

A re-examination of the 1964 murder of Kitty Genovese, moving beyond the myth of the "bystander effect" to uncover the real people, relationships and grief overshadowed by sensationalized reporting.

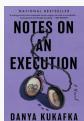
Why: It reframes a widely misunderstood story, reminding us that victims deserve to be remembered for their humanity, not reduced to a lesson or headline.



Looking for Jane: A Novel by Heather Marshall

A novel following the lives of women connected to an underground abortion network in Canada, weaving together secrecy, resistance and care in the face of restrictive laws.

Why: It shows how control over women's bodies is tied to broader issues of safety and honours those who supported others in times of vulnerability.



Notes on an Execution by Danya Kukafka

A literary novel that tells the story of a serial killer's life as he approaches his execution date. His story is told through the voices of his mother, childhood friend, and sister-in-law, whose lives were affected by the tragedies.

Why: It moves readers beyond the fascination with perpetrators and challenges us to think about empathy, accountability and how harm goes far beyond the moment of the crime.



Queering Sexual Violence: Radical Voices from Within the Anti-Violence Movement, edited by Jennifer Patterson

A collection of essays from trans, queer and Two-Spirit writers examining sexual violence through lenses often left out of mainstream conversations.

Why: It expands our understanding of harm and healing, making space for communities who often experience violence differently and whose voices need to be centered in anti-violence work.

Sexual Violence Policies and Sexual Consent Education at Canadian Post-Secondary Institutions by D. Scharie Tavcer and Vicky Dobkins

A research-focused look at how colleges and universities approach consent, prevention and survivor support, highlighting gaps and inconsistencies across the sector.

Why: It calls for stronger, clearer and more compassionate systems that help students feel safe, informed and supported on campus.



The Yellow Wallpaper by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

A short story depicting a woman's mental deterioration under oppressive medical "treatment" and controlling domestic expectations.

Why: It is a stark reminder of how dismissing women's autonomy and experiences leads to lasting harm.

WATCH



The Witness

A documentary following Bill Genovese as he investigates his sister Kitty's murder,

challenging decades of harmful narratives and misinformation.

Why: It restores dignity to a victim whose story was distorted by media, reminding us that remembrance requires truth, compassion and seeing victims as people.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Yellow Brick House

An organization in York Region offering emergency shelter, counselling, legal support and safety planning for women and children fleeing violence.

Why: Women's Support Network of York Region has partnered with Consent@Seneca in facilitating trainings on healthy relationships and anti-human trafficking. They have sat on Consent@Seneca panels, participated in resource fairs, and joined Consent@Seneca art drop-ins, too!

Women's Support Network of York Region

A community-based organization offering crisis support, counselling, advocacy and prevention education for survivors of sexual violence.

Why: Yellow Brick House kicked off our 16 Days of Activism virtual event series with their *An Introduction to 16 Days of Activism* workshop. They sit on Seneca's Sexual Violence Advisory Committee and share information at Consent@Seneca panels and resource fairs.

The Reconciliation & Inclusion team knows the best learning happens in conversation. Let us know if you explore any of the resources above, or if there's something you'd recommend we include in future editions. Share your thoughts and suggestions in the comments, or email us at ri@senecapolytechnic.ca.

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