

# NORTH SHORE COORDINATING COMMITTEE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN RELATIONSHIPS

An integrated response to ending  
violence on the North Shore

NS VAWIR

## ANNUAL REPORT: 2019



Photo: Brent Richter North Shore News

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# ABOUT THE NORTH SHORE VAWIR COMMITTEE



The North Shore VAWIR Committee is a cross-sectoral network of North Shore agencies working toward an integrated and effective response to ending violence against women in the community. In 2019, we had over fifteen agencies represented on the committee. Hosted and administered by the North Shore Women's Centre, the goal of the Committee is to keep women safe by meeting its objectives in the following areas:

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## KEY OBJECTIVES

1. **Service Delivery:** Striving to identify and address community services gaps and safety needs where collaboration and partnerships are emphasized.
2. **Education:** Providing opportunities for networking, training, and information sharing to build capacity for both Committee members, as well as North Shore service providers at large. The Committee endeavors to raise public awareness about violence against women through a range of initiatives, such as recognition of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women (December 6th), the Strength and Remembrance Pole Ceremony (2019), and organizing forums like Men as Allies (2018).
3. **Systemic Response:** Aiming to understand and address the systemic nature of violence against women including policy and legislation as well as liaise with other response networks/prevention organizations. We currently have a Sexual Assault Subcommittee working toward improving response to sexual assault in our community.



# 2019 ACTIVE MEMBERS

## NORTH SHORE AGENCIES WITH COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION

1. BC Ministry of Children and Family Development
2. District of North Vancouver
3. Family Services of the North Shore
4. Hollyburn Family Services
5. Ministry of Justice: Victim Services and Crime Prevention
6. North Shore Community Resources
7. North Shore Crisis Services Society
8. North Shore Community Corrections
9. North Shore Restorative Justice
10. North Shore Women's Centre
11. North Vancouver Family Justice Centre
12. North Vancouver RCMP Crisis Intervention Unit
13. North Vancouver RCMP
14. Squamish Nation
15. Tsleil-Waututh Nation
16. West Vancouver Police Department

For more information about the Committee, our work, and activities, please visit our website at [www.northshorevawir.com](http://www.northshorevawir.com)

# COMMITTEE COORDINATION

2019 marked the third year that the Committee had paid coordination, thanks to ongoing financial support from North Shore municipalities. The Coordinator carries out a wide range of duties including providing support to Committee members, organizing Committee meetings, coordinating education and training events, providing outreach through our website and social media, assisting with fund development, and reporting on important Committee work. This year, the Coordinator role was expanded from 5 hours a week to 10 hours a week from May 2019 – May 2020. This temporary expansion was due to Civil Forfeiture funding from the Province of BC as part of the Committee's statistical gathering project.

Having paid coordination continues to be an essential component of the Committee's achievements. Without the Coordinator position, the Committee would not have been able to take on ambitious projects and carry out cross-sectoral coordination that are much needed in the community. Aside from the coordinator, all other members do committee work on a voluntary basis in addition to their existing roles in the community.

## YEAR IN REVIEW

As you will read in this report, 2019 saw the continuation of the Committee's regular bi-monthly meetings which include guest speakers, discussions around best-practices, and the coordination of the committee's primary sub-committees and projects.

The North Shore VAWIR Committee was hard at work throughout 2019, and with the ongoing support of the community, was able to embark on, and complete, some ambitious initiatives with an energy that we are looking forward to bringing into 2020.

Highlights from 2019 include the completion of the 3-year project bringing the Strength and Remembrance Pole to the North Shore, embarking on our statistical gathering project looking at how survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault access support, and connecting with local decision makers at our bi-monthly meetings about Committee members' experiences in supporting women and girl in our community.







## 2019 EVENTS

THIS SECTION DETAILS THE EVENTS THE COMMITTEE  
CARRIED OUT IN 2019

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### **STRENGTH AND REMEBRANCE POLE CEREMONY**

OCTOBER 25TH 2019

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### **A WALK TO REMEMBER**

DECEMBER 6TH 2019

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# STRENGTH AND REMEMBRANCE POLE CEREMONY

**THIS PROJECT IS THE CULMINATION OF 3 YEARS OF WORK LED BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS CPL. CRYSTAL SHOSTAK OF THE NORTH VANCOUVER RCMP DETACHMENT AND SQUAMISH NATION ELDER AND LEADER DORIS PAUL**



**GROUND BLESSING  
CEREMONY**  
DECEMBER 2017



**POLE DURING  
CARVING PROCESS**  
SPRING 2019



**THE POLE BEING  
PLACED**  
OCTOBER 2019

## BACKGROUND

On December 6th, 2016, members of the NS VAWIR Committee, Squamish Nation members, and community members walked in remembrance for all women who have been victims of gender-based violence, for the murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls, as well as the many women who still suffer in silence living in fear of violence each day. Despite the incredible outpouring of positive feedback surrounding the event and its impact, Committee member Cpl. Shostak recognized that the North Shore needed a permanent place where community members could go and reflect on the personal and societal impacts of gender-based violence. On December 6th 2016, Cpl. Shostak spoke with Squamish Nation Elder Shucks Nahanee about a vision he had of placing a totem pole in the Stella Joe Dean Plaza in front of the North Vancouver RCMP Detachment and hence, the Strength and Remembrance Pole Project was born. Shucks identified the project carver to be Jody Broomfield for his traditional Coast Salish carving style as well as Jody's connection to the Squamish Nation community. Jody is a Squamish Nation member and well-known Coast Salish carver. Work was done throughout 2017 on planning and fundraising for this project.





# EVENT TIMELINE

## December 2017

Members of the North Shore VAWIR Committee joined with community members and with First Nations partners for the ground blessing ceremony. Spiritual leader Gene Harry conducted the ceremony in which he blessed the ground that the Strength and Remembrance Pole would be placed on.

## December 2018

A revised design of the Pole is presented by carver Jody Broomfield. The top of the pole is the main focal figure - honouring and uplifting the Women wrapped in a blanket. Squamish Nation members see women as their life-givers, care-takers, mothers, grandmothers, aunties, and matriarchs. The middle figure is the majestic eagle, presenting the soaring guiding spirit, the one that is able to carry prayers to the Spirit world.

## February 2019 to September 2019

Onni Group of Companies along with their partnering agencies began their work on the base for the Pole. The base of the Pole is created out of cement. Carver Jody Broomfield is working to complete the Pole during this time.

## October 8, 2019

The Pole is transported by truck to the Stella Joe Dean Plaza where it is hoisted into place using the truck's crane. JFO Construction designed the steel plate and the pedestal which would connect the Pole to its base.



# EVENT TIMELINE

## October 18, 2019

Members of the NS VAWIR Committee and their Indigenous partners attended a Burning Ceremony led by Spiritual Leader Gene Harry. Indigenous belief is that the end of this life marks a transformation from this world to the spirit world. Family members who have crossed over are considered ancestors. They care for their ancestors by feeding them and sending them clothing through a spiritual burning. During this ceremony, Gene called the ancestors to the burning ceremony from all four directions of the earth.



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# EVENT TIMELINE

## October 25, 2019

Members of the Committee along with Indigenous partners and Speaker Alroy Baker held a reveal and blessing ceremony for the Pole. Eight family members of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls were honoured at the ceremony. A blanket was placed on each family member *Esemku* (wrapped to cover their heart in order to comfort and protect them). The family members, carver, and Pole were blessed and cleansed by Squamish Nation singers, while the drummers sang and drummed. Roses were placed at the base of the pole by the family members and those in attendance.

With the Pole now completed, the Committee and the community at large looks forward to using the site as a space for solidarity, remembrance, and solace.





# STRENGTH AND REMEMBRANCE POLE CEREMONY

OCTOBER 25TH 2019





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# A WALK TO REMEMBER

DECEMBER 6TH 2019



Members of the Committee, joined by community members and members of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) marched in recognition of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, MMIWG, and for those who suffer in silence. Members carried placards with messages of strength and anti-violence, the names of the fourteen women killed at L'Ecole Polytechnique, and MMIWG. Members marched down St. Georges Avenue, arriving at the Pole where Squamish Nation Elder Doris Paul explained the significance of the Pole and its meaning. She invited everyone to draw on the strength of the pole and to use the memorial as their own. We welcomed guest speakers from the CFUW, West Van Police, North Vancouver RCMP, Squamish Nation Councilor Carla George, and MLA Bowinn Ma.

**THANK YOU TO ALL  
COMMUNITY  
MEMBERS,  
REPRESENTATIVES,  
AND AGENCIES WHO  
PARTICIPATED IN  
THIS ANNUAL EVENT.**





# PROJECTS

THIS SECTION OUTLINES THE LONG-TERM PROJECTS THAT THE COMMITTEE CARRIED OUT IN 2019

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## ELIZABETH IFE FUND

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## STRENGTHENING RESPONSES PROJECT

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## VAWIR SUBCOMMITTEES

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# ELIZABETH IFE FUND



On March 20th, 2017, our colleague Betty Ife passed away suddenly. As a passionate advocate for women's safety, Betty helped to set up the North Shore ICAT (Interagency Case Assessment Team - now part of the work of the Domestic Violence Unit), and she was very active on the NS VAWIR Committee. In Betty's memory, the Betty Ife Fund was established and made available for women and their children facing immediate financial barriers to getting themselves safe. In 2019, five applications for the Fund were accepted to cover the emergency costs of moving and storage, the purchase of motion-sensor lights, groceries, and taxis.

## IN HONOUR OF OUR COLLEAGUE

The money in the Elizabeth Ife Memorial fund have now been used and the fund is now closed. We are grateful to the donors that made this Fund possible. The VAWIR Committee will continue to honour Betty's memory in our work

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# STRENGTHENING RESPONSES PROJECT



## BACKGROUND

The under-reporting of domestic violence and sexual assault is well established and presents a major barrier to implementing policies and services that reflect the true need of the community. Current statistics that rely exclusively on police or victim services data cannot fully capture the entirety of women's experiences of violence. Survivors often disclose violence to non-conventional service providers. Existing data may be gathered in different ways and for different time periods, making it difficult to have consistent information.

Funding of projects and services that support individuals who have experienced gender-based violence requires strong statistical data. Having an accurate understanding of the types of violence being reported and the services already being accessed by survivors is instrumental to this process. Currently, this data does not exist on the North Shore, and is a barrier to developing accessible and relevant services for those who need it most. This project addresses the challenges of understanding the full scope and nature of violence against women in a community, and the direct impact of these challenges on women experiencing domestic violence and sexual assault.

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# STRENGTHENING RESPONSES PROJECT

The NS VAWIR Committee reached out to nearly 100 agencies including libraries, churches, and community services to participate in a community count over a 6-week time period to gather statistics about domestic violence and sexual assault. When violence was disclosed to a service provider, we asked the participants to fill out the brief, four-question survey, only filling in the information that was volunteered. The questions gathered information on 1) gender of the survivor, 2) type(s) of violence disclosed, 3) survivor/perpetrator relationship, and 4) gender of the perpetrator. Participants were asked to fill in the survey either online or on paper to be collected by a Committee member. Our findings will be made public in report to be released in the spring of 2020.

## KEY ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

1. Formed a sub-committee of Committee members, and have met on multiple occasions to help guide the vision and direction of the project.
2. Obtained volunteer consulting advice from an international researcher in the field of women's health and safety who has worked on a United Nations committee looking at existing databases on domestic violence and sexual assault and how they can be improved.
3. Secured a grant that funded a co-op student from Simon Fraser University who helped us carry out the project.
4. Designed online and paper versions of the data gathering tool to collect statistics over a six-week period on reports of domestic violence and sexual assault across our community.
5. Developed a comprehensive information package to explain our data gathering initiative for service providers across our community. The complete package can be viewed on our website.
6. Met with participating organizations such as the North Shore Multicultural Society, to provide an overview of the project, expectations from participants, and answer questions.
7. Personal engagement with each community partner allowing for increased awareness and connection between service providers and the supports that are available for survivors.

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

1. Synthesize data and draw conclusions to be presented in the final report and made available for the public.
2. Host an education forum for all service providers on the North Shore which is scheduled for February 4th, 2020.


*To read the information package for this project, visit:*

**[www.northshorevawir.com/strengthening-responses-project](http://www.northshorevawir.com/strengthening-responses-project)**

# THE SURVEY

## North Shore VAWIR

2019 Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Survey



North Shore VAWIR  
Creating Change & Empowering Women

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**Section 1: Recorder's Information**

Agency Name

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Job Position

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**Section 2: Characteristics of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault**

Q1. Gender of Survivor (choose one answer)

☐ Non-Binary/Gender Variant

☐ Transgender

☐ Two-Spirit

☐ Woman (Cisgender)

☐ Unknown

Q2. Type of Violence Experienced by Survivor (choose any that apply)

☐ Physical

☐ Psychological/Emotional

☐ Sexual

☐ Unknown

Q3. Survivor/Perpetrator Relationship (choose any that apply, if more than one perpetrator)

☐ Acquaintance

☐ Intimate Partner (Current)

☐ Intimate Partner (Former)

☐ Other Family Member

☐ Stranger

☐ Unknown

Q4. Gender of Perpetrator (choose any that apply, if more than one perpetrator)

☐ Man (Cisgender)

☐ Non-Binary/Gender Variant

☐ Transgender

☐ Two-Spirit

☐ Woman (Cisgender)

☐ Unknown

Thank you very much!

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***Thank you to all 30+ agencies who participated!***



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# VAWIR SUBCOMMITTEES

*Subcommittees are made up of 3-5 members who work on a dedicated project outside of regular committee meetings.*

## SEXUAL ASSAULT SUBCOMMITTEE

### Background

This year, the Sexual Assault Subcommittee has focused on advocating for specific sexual assault services as Lions Gate Hospital (LGH), with a special focus on bringing Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE). Currently, survivors must travel to Vancouver General Hospital if they are seeking forensic evidence collection or sexual assault specific medical care within the first 7-days following an assault. Ensuring that survivors have adequate access to sexual assault examination in their own community is a crucial component to implementing a coordinated sexual assault response on the North Shore, and to ensuring the safety and well-being of all survivors of gender-based violence when accessing medical care.

### Meeting with LGH

Following previous meetings in 2018, in August of 2019 members of the Sexual Assault Subcommittee and a representative from WAVAW Rape Crisis Centre in Vancouver met with representatives from LGH. LGH representatives outlined the barriers to providing SANE, citing lack of staff, the difficulty of acquiring adequate training, general lack of resources, questions on sustainability, and more.

In lieu of SANE, LGH representatives proposed a volunteer ride program where volunteers from LGH ride along with survivors of sexual assaults to VGH where sexual assault specific services are available. The subcommittee voiced several concerns with this potential program, including issues around first disclosure, safety, and liability. Sub-committee members expressed that the volunteer ride along program is not sustainable and suggested considering solutions that are more trauma-informed and survivor-centered.

LGH and the subcommittee remain in conversation with each other around this issue, and are in the process of arranging further meetings to discuss this important issue.

### Other Notable Achievements

The subcommittee continues to engage and work with local politicians and decision makers including MLA Jane Thornthwaite, MLA Bowinn Ma, and the City of North Vancouver. We hope to continue to work together with local representatives to bring adequate and trauma-informed medical care to survivors of sexual assault.

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# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT SUBCOMMITTEE

## The North Shore Domestic Violence Unit (NSDVU)

The North Shore Domestic Violence Unit is a co-located unit that brings together resources of the **North Vancouver RCMP, West Vancouver Police, Hollyburn Family Services, Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)**, and the **Squamish Nation**. The NSDVU is the first domestic violence unit in the Province of British Columbia to have a partnership with an Indigenous Community. The unit continues to grow and develop into a unique and pro-active resource that is involved with high risk domestic violence cases responded to by the North Vancouver RCMP and the West Vancouver Police. The NSDVU works with both victims and offenders from files that are involved in the court system and also assists victims and offenders that have yet to become involved in the court system. In the latter cases, the purpose of the NSDVU involvement is to address the underlying issues to avoid future conflict and subsequent court involvement.

In 2019, the NSDVU continued to work on high risk domestic violence cases from both North and West Vancouver. In cases where children are presented or affected by violence, the NSDVU involved the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Referrals to the NSDVU come from the North Vancouver RCMP, West Vancouver Police Department, Hollyburn Family Services, MCFD, and Provincial Crown Counsel. The NSDVU also accepts referrals from other Domestic Violence Units within the province where they assist in providing support to victims who now reside on the North Shore.

The NSDVU continues to work on its service delivery model to best serve the victims, families, and communities affected by domestic violence.



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# BI-MONTHLY MEETINGS

## January

The Committee discussed the activities from 2018, with a focus on supporting the sub-committees and various fundraising efforts.

## March

Committee member Bev Porter from the Family Justice Centre gave a presentation about the Family Justice Services Division. The presentation included relevant topics such as the services available, how the agency approaches cases with family violence, and more.

## May

Lydia Luk from PeerNet BC presented on serving trans and queer women of colour who experience gender-based violence, and the nuances that need to be considered. Her presentation included the importance of taking both personal complexities and systemic inequality into consideration when providing services.

## July

In July, the Committee welcomed MLA Bowinn Ma and MLA Jane Thornthwaite to the meeting. MLA Ma spoke to the current, relevant successes of the BC government including the appointment of Mitzi Dean as Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equality in 2018, as well measures being taken to increase the accessibility of housing, education, childcare and more. MLA Thornthwaite spoke about the current lack of SANE at LGH, and the need to increase education on preventing sexual assault and increase existing services.

Following their presentations, the committee discussed the current issues they see in their day to day work, and presented MLA Ma and MLA Thornthwaite with areas of growth to best support women and girls who experience domestic violence on the North Shore.





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# BI-MONTHLY MEETINGS

## September

Administrative Crown Counsel Adrienne Lee presented to the Committee in September. She discussed the role of each actor in the Justice System, and how to advocate for potential clients and equip them with accurate information. She also outlined the relevant structures of the justice system that women and girls who experience violence are likely to encounter, and how best to navigate through them or support someone who is.

## November

Committee member Cst. Carlos Rockhill (North Shore Domestic Violence Unit – RCMP) delivered a presentation on strangulation and what it means in the context of domestic violence. He highlighted that strangulation is something to be taken very seriously, common signs and symptoms, and how to support a survivor if they disclose that their partner has strangled them. The meeting concluded with a roundtable discussion led by Family Services around the existing gaps in service on the North Shore and how we might fill them.



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# FUTURE DIRECTIONS

## LOOKING FORWARD INTO 2020

### Website Development

Our website, [www.nsvawir.com](http://www.nsvawir.com) is a place where service providers, survivors and the public can go to find resources, support, and information about violence against women. As much as this information changes, our website must keep up as well. We hope to be able to continue to update this important resource for the North Shore community into 2020 and beyond.

1

### Newsletter

The committee newsletter aims to disseminate the ongoings of the Committee to the general public, as well as service providers who are unable to regularly attend meetings. The quarterly newsletter began in 2018 to share the Committee's projects and events, and we hope to be able to consistently inform a broader range of communities and individuals moving into 2020.

2

### A Walk Through the Justice System Event

Building on the success of the 2017 Walk Through the Justice System event, the Committee plans to host and coordinate this educational initiative again in 2020. As was done in 2017, community members and service providers will receive first-hand insights into the criminal justice system response to relationship violence through visits to the police station and courthouse. The emphasis in 2019 will be on engaging the public more directly to pass along important information and raise awareness.

3



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# FUTURE DIRECTIONS

## LOOKING FORWARD INTO 2020

### Sexual Assault Services at Lions Gate Hospital

The Sexual Assault subcommittee and the NS VAWIR Committee in general will continue to increase support for survivors of sexual violence in our community, including by advocating for the essential service of sexual assault specific care at LGH moving into 2020. We also hope to introduce a more broad support system for survivors by pursuing services such as a sexual assault centre for the North Shore.

4

### Expanding Statistics Gathering

Building off of the successes of our Strengthening Responses Project, we hope to further develop our data collection tool to be used annually by increasing numbers of service providers in the community. Having this data allows for a more accurate snapshot of how survivors are accessing services on the North Shore, and allows for advocates to present current and relevant statistics to stakeholders.

5



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# THANK YOU TO OUR 2020 FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS

**City of North Vancouver**

**District of North Vancouver**

**Province of BC**

- Civil Forfeiture Crime Prevention  
and Remediation Grant

**QuadReal Property Group**

## Strength and Remembrance Pole Project

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**BC Building Science**

**Lower Mainland Steel**

**BMZ Structural Engineers**

**Marcon**

**CapWest**

**Onni Group of Companies**

**Government of Canada**

- Family Violence Initiative Fund  
- RCMP North Vancouver Detachment

**Province of BC**

- Community Resilience Through Arts  
and Culture Grant

**JFO Construction**

**Squamish Nation**

**Lafarge**

**Tsleil-Waututh Nation**

**Villa Roofing**


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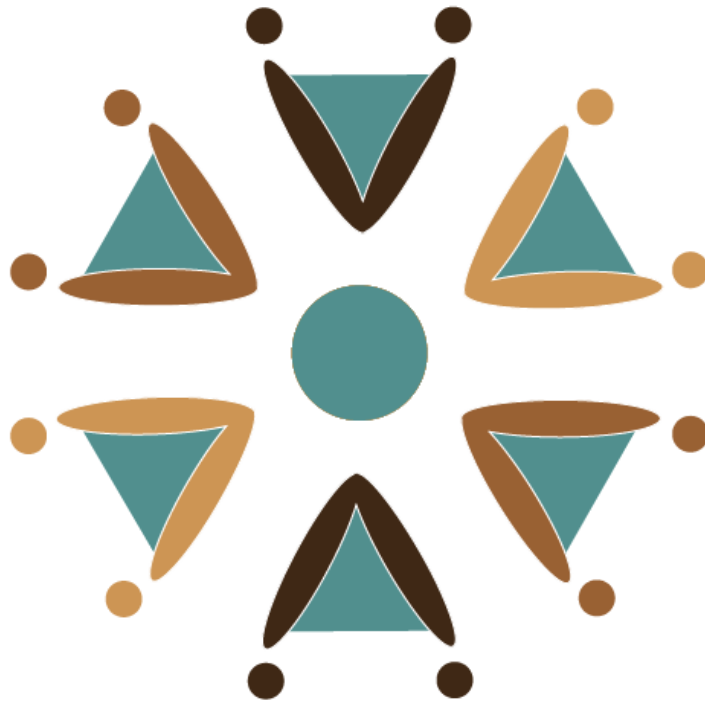
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# North Shore VAWIR

*Coordinating Committee to End Violence Against Women*