

PEI

Memorial honours those who lost their lives to gender-based violence

Ceremony marks National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

[Jenna Banfield](#) · CBC News · Posted: Dec 05, 2025 9:16 PM AST | Last Updated: December 5



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A candle lighting ceremony at the Confederation Centre of the Arts, commemorated victims of the Montreal Massacre and those impacted by gender based violence. (Camryn Farquharson/CBC)

A memorial to remember lives lost to gender-based violence was held in Charlottetown Friday, ahead of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, which is marked annually on Dec. 6.

The day is in honour of the victims of the Polytechnique Massacre. On December 6, 1989, [14 women](#) were fatally shot by a gunman at Montreal's École Polytechnique in an act of misogynistic violence.

A candle lighting ceremony at the Confederation Centre of the Arts commemorated the victims, as well as others who have been impacted by gender-based violence. The memorial was hosted by the P.E.I. Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Alyssa Coghlin, a trauma therapist at the P.E.I. Rape and Sexual Assault Centre, gave a speech during the memorial. She told CBC News she wants to let survivors know they are not alone, and that shame is not theirs to carry.



Trauma therapist Alyssa Coghlin gave a speech about seeing beyond shame during the memorial service Friday. She says shame is often 'used as a tool of control and power through systems that continue to perpetuate [gender-based] violence and harm.' (Camryn Farquharson/CBC)

"My presentation was about shame and seeing beyond shame," she said.

"Shame is often a body response and [a] complex emotional response to violation and to violence and... it's not survivors' to hold. It is not their shame and it means nothing about them, their worthiness of care [and] protection."

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P.E.I. singer-songwriter Catherine MacLellan performed a new original song she said she wrote at the request of the family of Mary Ann MacKinnon, a P.E.I. woman who was murdered in 1951 after standing up for her daughter, who was sexually assaulted.



P.E.I. singer-songwriter Catherine MacLellan debuted a new original song at Friday's memorial service to mark the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. The song was written in honour of a P.E.I. woman who was murdered for the stand she took against gender-based violence many years ago. (Camryn Farquharson/CBC)

MacLellan called writing the song "an honour," and said she was glad to be able to share it with MacKinnon's descendants in the audience.

"I hope the thing that people take away from the song is, [that] we have to mark these moments, these tragedies that happen, and violence against women happens way too often.

"But there's so much more to it than that. You know, there's the whole family, there's the love and the legacy of her love and her spirit that lives on. And that's true for all of these women that we that we honour."

With files from Camryn Farquharson

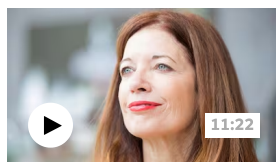
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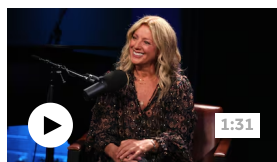
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