



June 30<sup>th</sup> 2020

Since 1969, the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS) has advocated for and with criminalized women in Canada to ensure substantive equality in the delivery and development of services and programs through public education, research, legislative and administrative reform, regionally, nationally and internationally.

How we understand our work, and who is included in that work, has and continues to shift.

At our 2019 AGM, CAEFS passed a resolution that sought to expand our mandate to explicitly include trans, non-binary, and two-spirit people. This resolution was brought forward by our Atlantic Elizabeth Fry Societies and acknowledged that local Elizabeth Fry Societies – and CAEFS – have worked with trans, non-binary, and two-spirit people since our founding, whether it was known to us or not. As a network, we are working to develop more competencies in order to engage in this expanded mandate with intention, in collaboration, and without causing further harm.

This moment has also solidified for CAEFS that our work must be grounded in a framework of abolitionist feminism – which necessitates working towards a world that is not only free from prisons, but free from the oppressive systems and structures that make prisons possible, including: white supremacy, colonialism, hetero and cis normativity, patriarchy, and capitalism.

CAEFS, and our local societies, are predominantly led by white cis women - and very few of us have been incarcerated. This acknowledgement requires us to look inward to examine and address the ways that we at CAEFS and our network of local societies benefits from and upholds these systems in our own internal structures, processes, and policies.

We have taken small steps already (network wide trainings, reading groups, and internal discussions), but even as we begin this process, we know that we have a lot of work to do. Knowing that we are not capable of doing this restructuring work alone, we have begun reaching out for external oversight and guidance.

Women, especially and particularly, Black, Indigenous, and other racialized queer and trans women have always been at the forefront of fighting against state violence, including prisons. In this moment, their work has become more vital and visible than ever. We are grateful for the unrelenting commitment to justice and liberation, and the clarity of vision from Black Lives Matter and from movement leaders such as Marsha P. Johnson, Dr. Angela Y. Davis, Dr. Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Robyn Maynard, El Jones, Dr. Pam Palmater, and many, many others.



It is time for CAEFS to reposition ourselves as co-conspirators – taking our lead from those most impacted by state violence and working toward the shared goal of liberation for all. In the coming months, we will undertake the process of developing a revised mission, vision, and values that reflects this shift. As we do this, and in the years to come, we will work to align ourselves with these updated values, as we continue to evolve.

As Dr. Angela Y. Davis recently said, “I don't think we would be where we are today, encouraging ever larger number of people to think within an abolitionist frame, had not the trans community not taught us that it is possible to challenge that which is considered the very foundation of our sense of normalcy. So, if it possible for us to challenge the gender binary, then we can certainly, effectively, resist prisons, and jails, and police”.





(613) 238-2422



1-800-637-4606



admin@caefs.ca



www.caefs.ca