**“Quand je ne veux pas, je dis non!” Let’s talk about sexual abuse and violence**

*“My name is Genevieve, Sarah, Annabelle…. “*

*“I am a young woman with an intellectual disability.”*

*“And I was a victim of sexual abuse. Three times. “*

*“There are many of us who have lived with violence. We have to talk about it, so that the violence stops.*

*“When I talk about it, I feel stronger.”*

It’s time to break the taboo surrounding violence against women with disabilities. Talking about it makes it easier for women with disabilities to speak out about their experiences. It also puts pressure on those responsible at different levels of governmental to set up programs so that women can get the support needed. Many women with disabilities live in a cycle of violence without being supported, believed or even listened to.

**Some important facts:**

* 80% of people with intellectual disabilities are victims of violence at one time or another during their lives.
* The perpetrators are often family members, caregivers or even institutional staff.
* The victims feel they have no support. They don’t always understand the situation; they are scared to talk about it; and they don’t know who they can talk to.
* Sexual violence is about power and control; not sexual attraction and desire.

On November 28th, 2015, as part of the 12 Days of Action on Ending Violence Against Women, DAWN-RAFH Canada and AQIS will host “Quand je ne veux pas, je dis non!”, an event that brings together women with disabilities and their supporters to reflect and act against this on-going violence and the taboo surrounding it. Together we will strategize on how to stop it and learn to say NO!

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