

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Grievers must be our top priority; NSCSW and CASW call for a public inquiry into the Portapique mass shooting

**KJIPUKTUK (HALIFAX, NS)** – The Nova Scotia College of Social Workers (NSCSW) and the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) call on the provincial and federal ministers of justice to reconsider their position on holding a full public inquiry into the mass shootings that began in Portapique, Nova Scotia (the worst mass shooting in Canadian history).

“The joint independent review that the governments of Nova Scotia and Canada have initiated falls short of what victims’ families, national women’s organizations, senators, and many others had asked for nor does it embrace restorative principles that are trauma informed,” states CASW President Joan Davis-Whelan. “People across Canada join Nova Scotians in their state of collective grief stemming from the trauma of April 18-19, 2020.”

A trauma-informed restorative approach to grieving means listening to those who grieve. It means hearing what they ask for from their friends, from helping professionals, from supporting organisations and from their government. It means heeding their calls to action.

NSCSW President Lynn Brogan notes, “If we are to take a trauma-informed restorative approach to this horrific event, then we must commit to listening and responding to those who are grieving. We must acknowledge that our fellow Canadians are suffering, and we must assure them that they are not suffering alone.”

Serena Lewis, an RSW in Colchester County, [has shared some of what her community is experiencing in a blog post on the NSCSW website](#). She writes, “There is no closure, there is no magic cure for grief; it’s a lifelong process that can be affected by the compassionate, responsive understanding by the people around us.” As Lewis says, “The grievers must be our top priority.”

“The joint independent review silences the stories of grievers by keeping documents and testimony from government institutions out of the public eye, removing the public’s ability to engage their hearts and minds with the process,” says Brogan. “Grievers need to be able to express their loss and have others acknowledge and connect through empathy. A full public inquiry would support open and honest dialogue, and create opportunities for collective healing and necessary social change.”

NSCSW and CASW stand in solidarity with grieving members of the Colchester County communities, and call on both the federal and provincial governments to abandon the independent review and move to a full public inquiry.

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### About us:

The [Nova Scotia College of Social Workers](#) serves and protects Nova Scotians by effectively regulating the profession of social work. We work in solidarity with Nova Scotians to advocate for policies that improve social conditions, challenge injustice and value diversity.

The [Canadian Association of Social Workers](#) is the national association voice for the social work profession, with a mission of promoting the profession in Canada and advancing social justice.

For more information or to arrange interviews, contact: **Rebecca Faria**, Communication Coordinator for the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers (902-429-7799 ext. 227, [rebecca.faria@nscsw.org](mailto:rebecca.faria@nscsw.org)).