



SASKATCHEWAN
MISSING PERSONS
PARTNERSHIP

SMPP Newsletter

Fall 2021

Missing Persons Week 2021

The Saskatchewan Missing Persons Partnership raises awareness about why people go missing and promotes measures to prevent or respond to such situations. The SMPP is made up of Indigenous and community groups, police agencies and government representatives. As of August 2021, there are 133 long term missing persons (missing 6 months or longer) listed on the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police Website.

Since 2013, Missing Persons Week (MPW) has been proclaimed annually in Saskatchewan. The ninth annual MPW is **September 19 to 25, 2021** with the theme *“What We Can Do”*.

This year’s theme provides an opportunity for individuals or organizations to highlight **what we can do** to prevent people from going missing, to respond to missing persons, and to support those impacted when a loved one goes missing.

This unique partnership was formed in 2005 and has formerly been known as the Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons. The name has been updated to reflect the focus on support and response for missing people within Saskatchewan.

People often have questions about missing persons issues such as: what can the police do when a person is reported missing? Who activates search and rescue volunteers and what can they do? What are some ways I can prevent a family member or friend from going missing? This year is about learning and understanding some of the steps and considerations that organizations take for prevention, response, and support. Some community organizations focus on raising awareness and promote prevention and education tools to help children and vulnerable people. Police agencies and volunteer search and rescue organizations focus on the direct response when a person is reported missing. There are other community groups and agencies that provide meaningful supports to families who experience the pain of ambiguous loss when a loved one goes missing.

Table of Contents

- 1) Missing Persons Week 2021
- 2) What We Can Do: Structuring Safety
- 3) 25 Years of Search and Rescue in SK
- 4) Family Information Liaisons Show Solidarity for MMIWG
- 5) What We Can Do for... Missing Persons Week



Missing Persons Week September 19-25, 2021

What We Can Do

What We Can Do: Structuring Safety Before, During, and After a Person Goes Missing

For Missing Persons Week 2021, we are highlighting what we can do to practice prevention and be supportive by embracing the idea of “structuring safety” before, during, and after a person goes missing.

Structuring safety before someone goes missing

When it comes to thinking about safety we can sometimes get stuck in the mindset that being safe or not safe are the only two options when it comes to planning for prevention. It can be helpful to think of safety in degrees of safeness, using terms such as “safe-enough”, “safer”, and “some safety”.

For people who work with vulnerable clients, we can ask questions such as:

How does this space foster safety?

How do my tone of voice, posture and attitude make people feel safe?

How do I acknowledge my own privilege and cultural awareness in order to foster safety?

Finally, we can all help clients and loved ones establish safety plans. A safety plan can be as simple as telling someone where they are going, using the buddy-system, and taking precautions with online interactions, such as taking someone with them when meeting someone new, or meeting in public places.

Structuring safety during a Missing Person’s Investigation

When conducting and assisting with missing person’s investigations, it is important to recognize that some members of vulnerable and marginalized groups do not trust police or other government agencies to ensure their safety.

One way that we, as service providers, can structure safety is to recognize when other community partners need to step in. Reviews of missing persons investigations, such as “Missing and Missed”, point to the value of including members of the missing person’s community in investigations. Community members can assist with interpreting cultural nuances, as well as by easing concerns of witnesses and others who may have information about a case.

Structuring safety after an investigation is concluded

The final way we can help structure safety for missing persons investigations is by ensuring people are not (re)traumatized upon the conclusion of an investigation. According to trauma researchers, the key concepts to embrace include: safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment.

Practically speaking, what we can do to ensure individuals are not retraumatized at this stage is to ensure collaboration in decision-making, such as providing flexibility with interview times and input in terms of who is included in post-investigation processes. For example, it may not always be appropriate for certain family members to participate in certain aspects of a case, or an individual may respond differently to a service provider of a specific gender.

What We Can Do :
Be Supportive
Educate One Another
Practice Prevention
Find Resources to Help



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25 Years of Search and Rescue in Saskatchewan

Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers (SARSAV) is the provincial organization responsible for professional volunteer Search and Rescue in Saskatchewan. SARSAV provides support, training, oversight, funding, representation and coordination for 21 chapters across the province representing 450 volunteer members. SARSAV members are also part of the [Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada](#) (SARVAC).

SARSAV was born out of tragedy, when a young girl lost her way and ultimately her life south of Tisdale in 1994. The case inspired a massive volunteer led search which eventually inspired a goal of organizing community volunteers to assist the RCMP should such an incident happen again. The RCMP in turn realized they would need to have trained people to help with such a search.

The RCMP met with community representatives and in 1996 SARSAV became the umbrella to community oriented member chapters and started getting trained in search and rescue tactics under the direction of the RCMP. SARSAV continues to offer high quality standardized search and rescue training to develop professional level search teams both paid and unpaid.

The relationship between SARSAV and RCMP has evolved into a partnership for search and rescue efforts.

The SARSAV volunteers include educators, accountants, managers, doctors, paramedics, courier drivers, retired individuals and many more. They are dedicated to hours of training, practices and actual searches for lost and missing people. At short notice they drop their work or family obligations, grab their orange jackets and join in on the estimated 1,300 searches conducted every year in Canada.



SARscene 2021

Celebrating 25 years of Search and Rescue in Saskatchewan

SARSAV has also been deployed for disaster and emergency response at the community, provincial and national levels.

2021 marks the 25th anniversary of SARSAV. As a special way to mark this important milestone, Saskatchewan was awarded the opportunity to host the SARscene national conference which will be an entirely virtual event this year.

Registration for SARscene 2021 is now open for September 25 – October 3, 2021 and there is no charge. Go to our website www.sarscene2021.ca to check out the interesting topics presented by speakers from across Canada and beyond. Whether it's ground, air, marine or another SAR discipline, there's something for everyone. The conference will feature a virtual games format that is sure to be a fun test of SAR skills with teams competing in the three disciplines of ground, air and marine searches.

Follow SARSAV on social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn to find information and highlight our speakers and presentation topics over the next several weeks. Please share the posts using hashtag #sarscene2021 and spread the word to your friends and family who may be interested in search and rescue. You can check out the [SARscene 2021 video on YouTube](#). 2021 is a milestone year for Search and Rescue in the Province of Saskatchewan and we couldn't be more proud of our team of professional volunteers and our SAR partners!

Family Information Liaisons offer Solidarity and Support for MMIWG

Red dresses and handprints have become haunting symbols representing thousands of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) across this land.

This summer, five women came together on the banks of the Saskatchewan River wearing red dresses for photos to raise awareness and show support for those who never came home. They are often witnesses to the toll of violence and grief for MMIWG because most of them work directly with families who have lost loved ones.

Danielle Carrier is the program manager for the Family Information Liaison Unit (FILU) and works with the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) and Métis Nations. She helped organize and participated in a red dress photo project to create awareness and advocacy for MMIWG. Two of the women also work with the FILU and another works as a contract therapist for FSIN. A fifth Métis woman was invited to join after working on the makeup.

The role of family information liaisons is to provide direct outreach to families to connect them with culturally appropriate supports, advocate on their behalf and help them engage with police and justice partners. Danielle says it requires compassion, empathy, and strength of will to take on this work, but building trust with the families is the most critical part.



“It’s about what the families need and just respecting what they’re going through. We’re never going to know what they’re going through,” Danielle commented.

“We’re not doing anything compared to what the families are doing to advocate for their missing or murdered loved ones every day,” Danielle said.

MMIWG is a considerable national issue, but focusing on individual cases brings it home on a personal level. Every case is different, which is why the FILU provides unique supports to each family.

“It’s about what the families need and just respecting what they’re going through. We’re never going to know what they’re going through. We’re never going to feel that pain. But we can do our best to facilitate their needs and be present for them,” Danielle commented.

Family liaisons often attend or help plan memorial events and ceremonies with families. They spend years building relationships and are trained in trauma-informed and culturally sensitive practices.

“We put the culture into practice as best we can, we are never going to know everything because there are so many different cultures for Indigenous people. I think the openness and willingness to learn about it is what’s more important,” Danielle said. “We might not know what is going on culturally, but we can ask and we can be open and be empathetic and learn about it.”

The FILU began in 2016, sparked by the launch of the National Inquiry into MMIWG. You can read the [final report and Calls for Justice here](#). In 2018 the FSIN added two Indigenous family liaison outreach workers to collaborate with the FILU. In 2021, Métis Nations joined the FILU and added one Family Information Liaison Outreach Worker to better serve Métis families. These services extend to families of male victims on request and any family may register based on their personal definition of missing and murdered, including suicides or accidental deaths.

What We Can Do for Missing Persons Week 2021

The Saskatchewan Missing Persons Partnership encourages Saskatchewan organizations, groups, and individuals to participate in Missing Persons Week 2021 in the way that best suits you and your community. MPW is a way for Saskatchewan people to connect with one another and focus on public awareness, prevention and responses among community partners, justice agencies, individuals, and governments. This year, the week will highlight the theme of **what we can do** by sharing some of the important work underway in Saskatchewan.

You are welcome to join Missing Persons Week online, by following the SMPP Social Media channels for videos, posts and resources shared from our wide range of partners related to prevention plans and tools, response actions, awareness and supports when people go missing. The SMPP will share a calendar of events in the week ahead.

There are also several locations you can visit dedicated to honouring and remembering missing people including:

- The “Wicanhpi Duta Win” Red Star Woman monument to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls located in front of the Saskatoon Police Service Building.
- The Missing Persons Oak Tree in Wascana Park, Regina. To find the tree, walk south down Old Broad Street where you will see a sign titled Arboretum Park (near Wascana Park and the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre). Continue walking south down the cement path. Once you reach a point where the path merges west, turn right and you will see the Missing Person Oak Tree.
- The Place of Reflection Medicine Wheel on the grounds near the RCMP Heritage Centre in Regina.

You may also choose to mark Missing Persons Week individually by wearing a teal and yellow ribbon to remember the 133 long term missing people in this province.

For more information about the Saskatchewan Missing Persons Partnership, please contact:

Facebook: [Sask Missing Persons Partnership](#)

Twitter: [@SaskMissingPersonsPartnership](#)

Instagram: [@SKMissingPersonsPartnership](#)

YouTube: [Sask Missing Persons Partnership](#)

Hashtags: [#skmpw2021](#) and [#skmissing](#)



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