

I completed my placement with Elizabeth Fry Mainland Nova Scotia, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting women and gender-diverse individuals who are impacted by the criminal justice system. This placement was extremely transformative for me, as it provided the kind of concrete, real-world experience I had been hoping to gain from an internship. Elizabeth Fry focuses on advocacy for prison reform, education, and rehabilitation, while also offering essential support services such as housing assistance, employment resources, and community-based programming. Through this work, the organization plays a critical role in addressing systemic inequalities and supporting individuals navigating complex and often stigmatized circumstances.

Although most of my work was completed remotely, there were opportunities to attend the office in Dartmouth. Due to the commute, I primarily chose to work from home, which still allowed me to remain engaged and productive. My supervisor was incredibly supportive and organized, which made a significant difference in my overall experience. At the beginning of each week, she clearly communicated expectations and outlined tasks that aligned with my required hours. She was also highly receptive to feedback, ensuring that my workload remained manageable and meaningful. At the start of the semester, she took the time to understand my interests, which allowed her to assign work that was both engaging and relevant to my academic and career goals. This level of mentorship contributed greatly to my learning and professional development.

Throughout my placement, I was involved in a wide range of tasks, with a strong emphasis on research and social media content creation. A significant portion of my work focused on intimate partner violence (IPV), particularly in the context of public education and advocacy. This research was connected to a series of panels organized in memory of Logan Alexander Russell, a woman who was tragically killed by her partner in Cape Breton. Engaging with this topic was both challenging and impactful, as it required me to critically examine the gaps in support systems and legal protections for individuals experiencing IPV.

My research explored what IPV victims need in order to safely leave abusive situations, including access to housing, financial resources, and legal protections. I also examined potential policy changes and social interventions that could better support survivors. This included looking at both government-level responses and community-based approaches. Through this work, I developed a deeper understanding of how complex and multifaceted IPV is, particularly when considering barriers such as fear, economic dependence, and lack of accessible resources.

One of my first major contributions was developing a call to action in Logan's name. I proposed advocating for the implementation of Clare's Law in Nova Scotia. Clare's Law, which has already been enacted in provinces such as Newfoundland and Labrador, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, allows individuals to request information from law enforcement about a partner's history of violence. The goal of this legislation is to provide people with the information they need to make informed decisions about their safety. This initiative felt particularly important given that intimate partner violence was declared an epidemic in Nova Scotia, yet there has

been limited legislative action to address it. Working on this project allowed me to engage directly with policy-based solutions and understand how advocacy can be used to push for meaningful legal reform.

I also had the opportunity to attend and assist with one of the panels organized in Logan's memory. This panel focused on recognizing red flags in relationships and how friends and family members can respond when they notice signs of abuse. The event featured a range of speakers, including therapists, Elizabeth Fry staff members, and individuals with lived experience. Hearing from these panelists was incredibly impactful, as they provided both professional insights and personal perspectives on IPV. Logan's family was also present, along with members of the media, which highlighted the importance and urgency of raising awareness about this issue. Being part of this event allowed me to see firsthand how community education and open dialogue can contribute to broader social change.

In the later weeks of my placement, my focus shifted toward exploring intersectionality within intimate partner violence. This involved examining how IPV disproportionately affects marginalized communities, including Indigenous women, racialized individuals, LGBTQ+ people, and those living in poverty. I researched how systemic barriers such as discrimination, lack of access to culturally appropriate services, and mistrust of institutions can make it even more difficult for individuals in these groups to seek help. This work reinforced the importance of taking an intersectional approach when addressing IPV, as a one-size-fits-all solution fails to account for the diverse experiences and needs of survivors.

Overall, my placement with Elizabeth Fry Mainland Nova Scotia was an incredibly valuable experience that deepened my understanding of the criminal justice system and the social issues connected to it. It allowed me to apply the theoretical knowledge I have gained in my studies to real-world contexts, particularly in relation to advocacy, policy, and community support. I also developed practical skills in research, writing, and professional communication, all of which will be beneficial as I continue my academic and career journey.

Most importantly, this experience strengthened my interest in pursuing a career focused on legal reform and social justice. It showed me the importance of organizations like Elizabeth Fry in advocating for systemic change while also providing direct support to individuals in need. The work I was able to contribute, particularly in relation to intimate partner violence and policy advocacy, felt meaningful and impactful. This placement not only helped me build confidence in my abilities but also reinforced my commitment to using law and policy as tools to create positive change.