



Defence Watch

# Rape survivor belittled about her mental health at DND sponsored symposium

*A number of people who did not realize their microphones were on started belittling a former air force member who in 1981 had been gang-raped by five military personnel.*

Get the latest from David Pugliese, Ottawa Citizen straight to your inbox

Sign Up >

David Pugliese • Ottawa Citizen

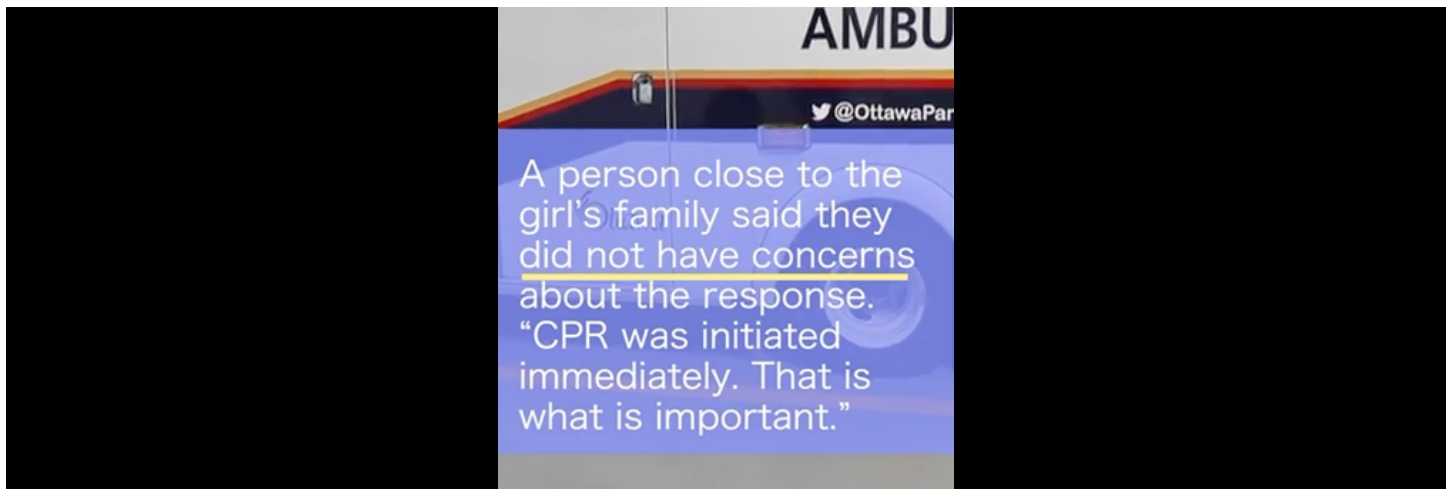
Published Dec 02, 2022 • Last updated Dec 03, 2022 • 4 minute read



A file photo of members of the Canadian Armed Forces. PHOTO BY JULIE OLIVER / POSTMEDIA

A former Canadian Forces member who survived being gang-raped was belittled and faced derogatory comments about her mental health after tuning in to what was billed as a healing symposium sponsored by National Defence.





Diane Rose, who deals with post-traumatic stress disorder and has been advocating for sexual misconduct survivors for more than a decade, joined the Restoring Hearts and Minds Symposium on Wednesday.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW



The virtual event was promoted by INJ20K, an organization that represents some sexual misconduct survivors, and was sponsored by National Defence in partnership with McMaster University and groups like True Patriot Love.

During the event, Rose asked an online question.

But during a brief break, a number of people who did not realize their microphones were on started belittling the former air force member who in 1981 had been gang-raped by five military

personnel.

They questioned why Rose had been allowed to ask a question, talked about her mental health and warned that she creates problems, according to Rose and others who listened in on the event.

“These people attacked me and not one person spoke up,” Rose said of the estimated 70 individuals taking part in the symposium. “What kind of human beings are they?”

The individuals didn’t stop attacking Rose until she informed the group that their microphones were on. Some of those who participated in the virtual event later reached out to see if she was okay. “Don’t stab me in the back and then turn around and pretend you’re concerned about me,” Rose said. “That’s beyond hypocritical.”

---

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

---

The event was billed as “a safe space for MST (military sexual trauma) survivors” to “share their experiences and heal alongside others.”

Organizers did not apologize to Rose for what happened.

But Lori Buchart, co-founder of the group It’s Not Just 20K (INJ20K), said one person who made comments later issued an apology. “This was not a person on the organizing committee, which I was part of, or with INJ,” she added.

Margaret McKinnon of McMaster University confirmed comments were made during the break, although she was unable to hear them in detail or determine who was saying them. “As soon as others noted comments were being made about a person with lived experience, I did come on screen immediately to intervene while also monitoring the closing of the live microphone,” she said.

McKinnon said no transcript or audio recording of the comments is available.

She noted one individual, Chief Petty Officer 1st Class Alena Mondelli, did apologize and agreed to leave the symposium.

Mondelli said in a statement she inappropriately commented on the interaction between Rose and the panellists and while it was not to be meant as an insult, “I clearly overstepped my boundaries.”

---

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

---

Defence Minister Anita Anand provided a pre-recorded video greeting for the event and did not hear the comments, her office stated.

National Defence spokesman Dan Le Bouthillier said the department is aware of the concerns about comments directed at Rose. “We are looking into it further, which includes making contact with some participants as well as the event organizers,” he added.

DND provided \$50,000 to McMaster for a series of symposiums.

Rose said she has been advocating for sexual misconduct survivors for 12 years. She is known for challenging the Canadian Forces' leadership on their lack of action over the years and said this incident will not put an end to her advocacy.

Earlier this year Rose and another rape survivor, Donna Riguide, faced a lawsuit from Buchart, who alleged the two had defamed her.

Buchart went to court in Calgary to claim the two women were behind an April 19 email sent to Veterans Affairs Canada, National Defence, media outlets and various health-care specialists involved with helping those dealing with military sexual trauma.

The email at the centre of the case was sent by a group called Canadian Veterans of MST and raised allegations about bullying by officials with INJ20K. The email alleged survivors of military sexual trauma were being booted from INJ20K because they disagreed with the organization's decision to work more closely with Canadian Forces senior leadership.

---

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

---

The contents of the email weren't made public until Buchart and INJ20K published portions of it online.

Buchart had denied all of the allegations raised in the email, including that she was ever

involved in any bullying. Buchart was suing Rose and Riguidel for \$100,000, according to court records.

But Justice James Farrington of the Court of King's Bench of Alberta struck down Buchart's statement of claim and ordered her to pay \$750 each to Rose and Riguidel.

Royal Canadian Navy Commander Nancy Setchell, an INJ20K advisory group member, suggested in a tweet that Buchart can still commence a new legal action against the two women.

## RELATED STORIES

[Twitter Share on LinkedIn Open more share options Breadcrumb Trail Links](#)  
[Defence Watch Legal action against two military sexual assault survivors struck down in court](#)









IES

## THIS WEEK IN FLYERS

[Subscribe](#)

[News](#) [Sports](#) [Opinion](#) [Business](#) [Arts](#) [Life](#) [Puzzles](#) [ePaper](#) [Subscribe](#)

Follow Ottawa Citizen



[Advertise With Us](#) [Digital Ad Registry](#) [Site Map](#) [Contact](#) [Privacy - Updated](#) [Terms of Use](#) [FAQ](#) [Copyright](#)  
[My Account](#) [Manage My Print Subscription](#) [Manage My Tax Receipt](#)

 POSTMEDIA

365 Bloor Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3L4

