



OTTAWA, May 31, 2023

Joint Statement Regarding the Death of Camille Strickland-Murphy

The Family of Camille Strickland-Murphy and the Correctional Service of Canada issue the following joint statement:

On July 28, 2015, 22-year-old Camille Strickland-Murphy took her own life while in a cell at Nova Institution for Women where she was an inmate.

Camille had well known and documented complex mental health needs. Her death followed a history of episodes of self-harm and previous suicide attempts while in custody in provincial and federal institutions, a number of which occurred while at Nova Institution for Women. Notably, Camille tried to hang herself in her cell on July 20, 2015, one week before her suicide. At that time, she was brought to the local community hospital and was diagnosed by the emergency physician as suicidal at admission. After further assessment, the next day, she was discharged from the hospital and returned to the institution.

The Correctional Service of Canada, pursuant to its policy, convened an internal Board of Investigation into Camille's death. Following concerns raised by the Office of the Correctional Investigator, Correctional Service of Canada subsequently retained a forensic psychologist to complete an external review of the Board of Investigation report. The forensic psychologist was of the opinion that the level of care Camille received at Nova was equal or exceeded that of community standard; hence, it was appropriate. Recommendations regarding enhancing care for complex needs cases such as Camille's were also provided.

Camille's parents filed a legal action against the Correctional Service of Canada seeking damages for the loss of their daughter, and to obtain a full record of the facts leading to her death. Camille's parents had significant concerns with the Board of Investigation report and the forensic psychologist's review. In connection with their legal action against Correctional Service of Canada, Camille's parents retained Dr. Bradford, a forensic psychiatrist, to review the treatment Camille received while incarcerated at the Nova Institution for Women. It was Dr. Bradford's opinion that the Nova Institution for Women failed to provide an appropriate level and standard of psychiatric treatment and care to Camille.

The Correctional Service of Canada acknowledges the comments and suggestions of the forensic psychologist it retained to complete an external review of the Board of Investigation report as well as Dr. Bradford's findings and opinions. It has considered these in its efforts to improve mental health services within federal correctional facilities and, in particular, the Nova Institution for Women. Correctional Service of Canada is committed to taking positive, concrete steps to prevent another loss of life in similar circumstances.

Camille's family and the Correctional Service of Canada have reached a settlement of the claims arising out of this tragic event. Correctional Service of Canada acknowledges, in hindsight, that more could have been done to support Camille's complex mental health needs.

The Correctional Service of Canada wishes to note that since that time, the Government has introduced legislative changes and made investments to improve the quality of healthcare in its correctional institutions.

Camille's family was represented by the law firm of Nelligan O'Brien Payne LLP. The law firm can be reached at 613-238-8080.