



Companion Guide to Filing a Complaint

against

sexist

and

sexual

images and messages
in the media

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RESEARCH

This is an updated version of the *Guide d'accompagnement pour porter plainte contre les messages et publicités à caractère sexiste et sexuel dans les médias*, originally published in 2011 in French only, resulting from research done by:

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Foreword

YWCA Montreal

Founded in 1875, the YWCA Montreal is one of the the city's oldest community organization. Over time, the YWCA evolved, learning how to adapt to the needs of women and girls through different eras and helping hundreds of thousands on their path to a better future.

The mission of the YWCA Montreal, that of **working together to build a better future for girls, women and their families**, takes place over two levels. First and foremost, it consists of providing services directly to women and girls and their families so they can participate in and contribute to society to the best of their abilities. In addition, by developing tools for community stakeholders and working with decision-makers, we can increase awareness of the **issues of exclusion, social and gender inequality as well as all forms of violence against women and girls**. All this is with the objective of improving practices and building long-lasting social change.

The YWCA Montreal targets its intervention at the following sectors: Housing Services, Employability Services, Community Services, and also Youth Services, the objective of which is to prevent violence, exclusion and social and gender inequality.

YWCA Montreal Youth Services

Over the past twenty years, YWCA Montreal's Youth Services has developed proven expertise in regards to prevention and raising awareness of issues affecting girls and young women, such as hypersexualization, sexual exploitation, and also egalitarian relationships between youth.

The mission of the Youth Services team therefore consists of designing, developing and implementing innovative projects so as to prevent the occurrence of violence witnessed or experienced by girls and young women, and the social and gender inequalities that they might face.

In fact, initiatives undertaken seek to increase the feeling of well-being and develop leadership, so that informed decisions are taken.

Consequently, we understand how important it is to raise awareness of media images and to develop critical thinking.

The projects and tools that have been developed fit into a process of continuous improvement.

Thus, research and field-based experience complement each other, thereby responding effectively to current and emerging needs of girls and young women in Montreal.

To this end, the team is involved both with youth and intervention workers, respectively through workshops and on-site support, in order to guarantee the long-term viability of actions taken.

As a part of their many mandates, YWCA Montreal's Youth Services can count on the support of a solid network of educational, community and university partners. It is because of these connections, among others, that almost 4000 youth and adults were able to participate in different programs, workshops and activities provided between July 2018 and June 2019.

1. The reasons for this guide

1.1 The YWCA Montreal continues to encourage reporting of sexist advertising.

In 2011, the YWCA Montreal Leadership Service (now called Youth Services) and the Service aux collectivités de l'UQAM produced a companion guide to provide information on how to file a complaint against sexist images and messages in the media. This work was born of the mutual concern both organizations had regarding the increased media broadcasting of sexist, sexual and pornographic images and messages.

It seems that consumers of all genders are more against overtly sexist messages; however, advertising continues to portray women and men in stereotypical roles. This is perhaps even more pernicious now, as it is more difficult to identify.

That is why it was important to update this guide. We stated earlier that gender-based stereotypes in sexist advertising has not evolved much, but the use of digital technology has changed, making it necessary to update this guide with respect to filing a complaint.

It is important to note that in the last 8 years, gender-based stereotypes in advertising have not evolved much.



Anonymous photo of an ad, decried by the public, posted in the London Underground.
Source: renaudfavier.com/2016/06/15/le-nivellement-par-le-gras-pas-de-panique-cest-dans-le-metro-a-londres-pas-a-paris-plages-pour-linstant-areyoubeachbodyready

The United Kingdom announced a ban on sexist advertising as of June 2019 following the appearance of an ad in the subway that shocked the public. This example shows how public mobilization can bring about change¹.

¹ Olivia PETTER, "Ban on ads promoting harmful gender stereotypes comes into force", *Independent*, <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/sexist-ad-ban-adverts-gender-stereotypes-women-asa-advertising-agency-a8957171.html> (accessed on July 5, 2019).

1.2 Definitions of terms

Sexism

Sexism is a form of gender-based discrimination that is founded on an internalized set of stereotyped beliefs, values, attitudes and ideals.

Gender-based stereotypes

Gender-based stereotyping is when roles, behaviours or characteristics are attributed to people based on their gender, with no regard to their individuality².

EXAMPLES

“Boys don’t cry!” or **“Girls are bad at math”**



© 2019, SamSoutien

² Montreal Hooked on School, “Gender Equality And School Perseverance”, <https://www.researeussitemontreal.ca/en/key-topics/4565-2> (accessed September 6, 2019).

1.3 Identifying sexist advertising

The *Coalition nationale contre les publicités sexistes* (National Coalition against Sexist Advertising - CNCPS) has created an evaluation chart (available in French only) to help determine the presence of sexist elements in an advertisement image³.

In looking at an advertising image that represents women, pay attention to four elements in particular:

1. The environment in which the women are depicted

Generally, it's a confined space, inside, but often blurry and undefined. In the case of outdoor spaces, an exotic location is usually shown, one that verges on being unreal. Sometimes, the environment depicted gives off a vibe of being violent and dangerous.

2. The activities they are engaged in

They are often shown doing passive activities, whereas men are almost always shown doing something active. In addition, they are sometimes shown in seductive and lascivious poses.

3. The clothes they wear

They are often shown wearing tight-fitting, revealing or even wet clothing. Or instead, their clothing might be diaphanous and filmy, almost transparent.

4. The position of their bodies

They are shown in strange, artificial positions, often forced. Their legs might be splayed, their breasts exposed and mouth slightly open, implying sexual availability. Their hair is often long and dishevelled.

³ Coalition Nationale Contre les Publicités Sexistes, Grille d'analyse, February 2013, https://www.cncps.org/uploads/1/4/6/6/14664770/cncps_grille_d_analyse_version_fevrier_2013.pdf (accessed September 9, 2019).

1.4 What messages are conveyed by these images?

Women are encouraged to meet a certain “beauty standard”⁴

Women are constantly bombarded by the message that they are never attractive enough, that they have to constantly work on their appearance. They have to aspire to look like the model depicted by the beauty industry. But this model is not representative of the diversity of our current society and “unconventional” standards of beauty. In addition, images are modified and touched up, transforming the model into an image that is simply unattainable. Knowing that certain industries (such as the beauty industry) feed upon women’s complexes to make them purchase products, it is clear that this is a battle that women will never be able to win.

Women are sexualized

Women are constantly sexualized by advertising, which exploits sexuality to promote a product or service that has no relevance whatsoever to this topic. This sexualization also pertains to images of girls under the age of 18, and even children as young as 7 or 8. Women are deprived of their individuality and presented as sexual objects, subject to the goodwill of men.

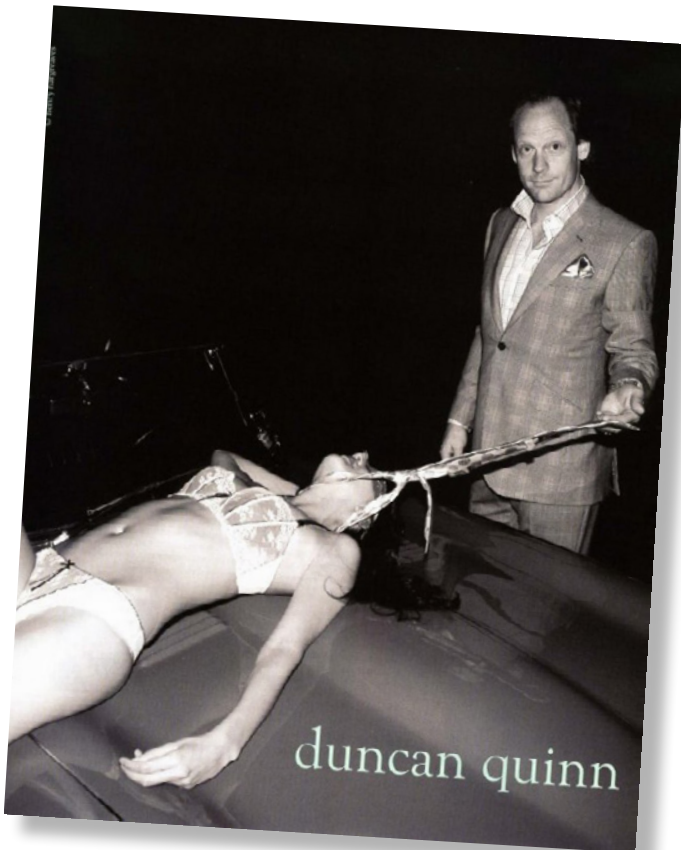
Consequences of gender-based stereotyping

Gender-based stereotyping reinforces inequalities between men and women and influences the behaviour of individuals. The impact is particularly pronounced among youth, who are at a vulnerable stage in their emotional development. Girls and boys can feel obliged to conform to sexist norms that they do not feel comfortable with. **These stereotypes condition girls and boys to engage in specific occupations and activities and to adopt certain behaviours attributed to their gender**⁵.

⁴ Coalition Nationale Contre les Publicités Sexistes, Grille d’analyse, February 2013, https://www.cncps.org/uploads/1/4/6/6/14664770/cncps_grille_d_analyse_version_fevrier_2013.pdf (accessed September 9, 2019).

⁵ Website of CRIPS Ile-de-France, Le centre régional d’information et de prévention du sida et pour la santé des jeunes, “L’impact des stéréotypes sexistes chez les jeunes” (The effect of sexist stereotypes on youth - in French only) <https://www.lecrips-idf.net/professionnels/dossier-thematique/egalite-filles-garcons/impact-stereotypes.htm> (accessed October 5, 2019).

Examples of ads using sexuality or violence against women to sell their products



A strangled and bloody half-naked woman lying on a car. Source: <https://www.trendhunter.com/trends/duncan-quinn-suit-ad-depicting-strangled-woman>



Using sexuality to sell sandwiches. Source: <https://degradationofwomen.weebly.com/itll-blow-your-mind-away.html>



Glorification of domestic violence. Source: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/edmonton-hair-salons-black-eyed-ad-draws-fire-from-womens-groups/article592888>

2. Filing a complaint is taking action!

2.1 Approaches • THERE ARE TWO POSSIBLE SCENARIOS.

SCENARIO 1

I am shocked by a non-commercial message broadcast on the radio or on television.



Act quickly! You must send your complaint to the institutions in the three weeks following the broadcasting.

First, contact the broadcaster.

This is how many complaints are resolved.

Elements to include in your email or letter:

- ❑ Your surname, first name and contact information.
- ❑ The supporting media and the name of the program, the date, and the time of the broadcast.
- ❑ Include the name and address of your service provider (the cable provider, the satellite provider, or the wireless provider).
- ❑ Describe your concerns: list the facts, highlight the terms used, express your needs.
- ❑ Using the code as reference, (see the Code of Ethics in the Appendix), indicate that what you heard or saw was evidence that the code and the standards governing program content had been violated.
- ❑ Ask a question. In general, if your message consists of a question, the broadcaster is obliged to reply and to explain in what way it intends to deal with your complaint.
- ❑ Ask for a reply and do not forget to include your signature.
- ❑ Under your signature (or the equivalent if you are sending your letter electronically), indicate all the institutions and broadcasting networks (CBSC-CRTC) to whom you will be sending a copy of your original letter.


Are you not satisfied with the broadcaster's response or is it taking too much time?


Contact the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC)


This is a voluntary self-regulating organization created by private Canadian broadcasters to deal with complaints by listeners and viewers regarding broadcasts that they have heard or seen on one of the participating stations. The latter constitutes the majority of Canadian private sector radio and television stations.


Check if the broadcaster is an associate of the CBSC: [cbsc.ca/associates](https://www.cbsc.ca/associates)

How do you submit a complaint to the CBSC?

 Online: [cbsc.ca/make-a-complaint](https://www.cbsc.ca/make-a-complaint)

 By mail: P.O. Box 3265 Station D, Ottawa, ON K1P 6H8

 By fax: 613-233-4826

 By phone: 613-233-4607 | By phone, toll-free: 1-866-696-4718

For more information on the process and what happens after you make a complaint: [cbsc.ca/faqs](https://www.cbsc.ca/faqs)

In what cases should a complaint be filed?

When a television or radio show includes content that:

- promotes hate or violence;
- negatively represents or degrades a gender or social group;
- conveys stereotyping;
- stigmatizes and victimizes a social group;
- derides myths, traditions or practices of a specific group;
- broadcasts discriminatory content;
- exploits the image of women or men;
- uses inappropriate language or terminology.

The importance of context for categorizing a complaint

With regard to Clause 10 of the Code on fair representation regarding contextual factors, in certain cases, the CBSC will not necessarily identify something as an offence. The following examples, taken from decisions already made, show how certain images can be interpreted differently depending on the people called upon to judge them and the importance of documenting the arguments submitted in support of a complaint.

- “The use of women’s naked breasts does not necessarily constitute a form of exploitation or stereotyping.”
- “Depending on the context, the image used to advertise naked women or images where “sexual” parts are not covered cannot be considered as exploitation if the image of the woman is not entirely negative.”
- “Nudity does not constitute pornography.”
- “A striptease scene is not necessarily a scene that exploits and degrades women. It depends on the context.”
- “Erotic movies are not reprehensible if they avoid explicitly or implicitly denigrating men and women and if they do not exploit women or men.”
- “Sexuality can be present in a movie, as long as it does not exploit the persons concerned.”

Are you not satisfied with the CBSC's response?




Contact the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)

The CRTC is an administrative tribunal that regulates and supervises broadcasting and telecommunications in the public interest.

When should you file a complaint?

When the media violates broadcasting and telecommunications laws, policies or regulations, or licence conditions.

How do you submit a complaint to the CRTC?

-  By mail, to the following address: Secretary General, CRTC, Ottawa, ON K1A 0N1
-  By fax: 819-994-0218
-  By phone, toll-free: 1-877-249-2782

There is no online complaint form. All complaints pertaining to broadcasts must be submitted in writing. If you submit a complaint over the phone, you must also send in written version.

Your complaint must contain the following information

- Your name, as well as an e-mail address or a mailing address
- A description of the problem and/or your concerns
- The name or the call letters of the radio or television station, and the location
- The date, time and title of the program or advertisement that is the subject of your complaint

The CRTC does not respond to anonymous complaints.

Broadcasters and suppliers of services have the right to know who is behind a complaint and to know the nature of the complaint. They also reserve the right to respond. You can submit a complaint to the CRTC without worrying about retaliation on the part of the company.



You must submit a complaint regarding a program within four weeks following its broadcasting.

Why?

Because broadcasters keep the audio or video files of their broadcasts for four weeks. If they receive your complaint more than four weeks after the broadcasting of a program or advertisement, the audio or video files may no longer be available, and the CRTC will be unable to follow up.

Contact the CRTC as a last resort. Address this organization when all other avenues have failed.

SCENARIO 2:

I am shocked by commercial content.

Contact Ad Standards

The relevant organization is Ad Standards. It receives all complaints, regardless of the supporting media. Your complaint must relate to a recent ad, that you saw less than three months ago, in order to be easily identified by the Ad Standards.

Complaints are examined under the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards⁶. This code applies to advertising for products and services that appear in any type of media (radio, television, newspapers, magazines, billboards, online, brochures, etc.). It does not apply to foreign media.

Ad Standards accepts complaints submitted by the Online Complaint Submission Form or by mail.

Explain the reason or basis for your complaint, as well as where the provisions under the Code apply.

In order to determine whether or not an advertisement is sexist, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does the advertisement represent women and men in positions of **authority** in a manner that is egalitarian?
2. Are women and men shown as having the same power **as individual decision-makers** when it comes to purchases, including more costly items?
3. Does the advertisement refrain from the **inappropriate use of sexuality** or the exploitation thereof?
4. Does the advertisement portray men in a dominant or **violent** role vis-a-vis women?
5. Does the advertisement portray women and men in a full spectrum of **diverse, non-stereotyped occupations**? (For example, not just women are shown in advertisements for laundry detergent, and not just men are shown purchasing cars.)
6. Does the advertisement use language that **portrays women in a negative manner** or is offensive towards and excludes women?

How do you submit a complaint with Ad Standards?



Online: ecomplaints.adstandards.ca



By mail, to the following address:

33 Bloor St. East, Suite 303, Toronto, ON, M4W 3H1

⁶ "Gender Portrayal Guidelines", Ad Standards, <https://adstandards.ca/code/gender-portrayal-guidelines> (accessed May 20, 2019).

Your complaint must contain the following information:

- An explanation of the reasons or the basis for your complaint, as well as the applicable provisions of the code. You can find the different codes in **Appendix 2**.
- Your name, phone number and mailing address, in full.
- Your fax number and your email address, if applicable.
- Information on the product or service advertised, as well as the medium in which the advertisement appeared:



For **print advertisements**: identify the name and date of the publication(s) in which you saw the advertisement(s) and include a copy of the advertisement(s).



For **out-of-home advertisements**, such as outdoor, transit or similar advertisements: identify the date on and exact location at which you saw the advertisement.



For **broadcast advertisements**: identify the station, time and date on/at which you saw/heard the commercial and provide a brief description of the commercial.



For **cinema advertisements**: identify the title of the movie, the date of viewing, and the name and location of the movie theatre at which you saw the advertisement and provide a brief description of the advertisement.



For **Internet advertisements**: identify the date of viewing, website, and include a print-out of the advertisement and other applicable web pages (if any).

For more information on the process and what happens after you make a complaint: adstandards.ca/complaints

Does the advertisement portray men in a dominant or violent role vis-a-vis women?

3. Filing a successful complaint

3.1 What to do

Act as quickly as possible! The CBSC and the CRTC make their decision on the basis of an audio or video recording.

At present, radio and television stations are under no obligation to keep audio or video files for more than four weeks following the broadcast. It is therefore important to act quickly, particularly for programs or advertisements.

Use great precision when submitting your complaint: identify the terms used in the radio or television broadcast or in the advertisement. Focus on the facts: it is better to define your concerns. It is essential to demonstrate which scenes or statements are degrading, offensive, insulting, sexist or discriminating towards certain social groups (regarding their identity and their role in society).

Document your complaint well. If possible, check the CBSC site to view the list of panel decisions already made.

3.2 What not to do

The challenge is to effectively show your outrage and to put forth an argument that does not include:

- Interpretations, such as: “This movie is stupid.”
- Opinions that exhibit personal subjectivity, such as: “I don’t like this advertisement, it’s in poor taste and disgusting.”
- Value-based judgements, such as: “I’m shocked, this is unacceptable.”
- Violent statements or generalizations

If, for example, you are targeting a program, avoid criticizing other things, such as society in general, or media that promotes a poor image of certain social groups.

It is not about showing indignation in response to sex scenes that are not discriminatory or exploitive.

You cannot file a complaint about an advertisement that is no longer on display or being broadcast. (See 3.4 Alternatives Approaches)

Be sure to not submit a complaint about an advertisement that does not fall under the mandate of the Ad Standards, namely: The Code does not apply to: packaging, wrappers and labels; political and election advertising; foreign media.

3.3 Overview of codes to use based on the issue being reported

Please refer to Appendices 1 and 2 for more information on the contents of the clauses.

<p style="text-align: center;">SCENARIO 1: Non-commercial content</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SCENARIO 2: Commercial content</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Radio, television (CBSC, CRTC)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Advertising (Ad Standards)</p>
ABUSIVE OR DISCRIMINATORY CONTENT	
<p>Human rights: Clause 2 of the CAB (Canadian Association of Broadcasters) Code of Ethics Clause 2 of the CAB Equitable Portrayal Code</p>	<p>Clause 14 (a) of the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards (Unacceptable Depictions and Portrayals)</p>
PORTRAYALS, STEREOTYPES	
<p>Sexual stereotypes Clause 3 of the CAB Code of Ethics (exploitation, intellectual and emotional equality)</p> <p>Negative portrayal on the basis of prohibited criteria⁷: Clause 3 et seq. (4-8) of the CAB Equitable Portrayal Code Clause 3 - Negative Portrayal Clause 4 - Stereotypes Clause 5 - Stigmatization and Victimization Clause 6 - Derision of Myths, Traditions or Practices Clause 7 - Degrading Material Clause 8 - Exploitation</p>	<p>Egalitarian portrayal of women/men: Clauses 1 and 2 (authority, decision-making) of the Gender Portrayal Guidelines</p> <p>Diversity in the occupations and competencies of women/men: Clause 5 (diversity), Gender Portrayal Guidelines</p>
EXPLOITATION, SEXUALITY	
<p>Exploitation of women and men, sexualization of children: Article 8 du Code sur la représentation équitable de l'ACR</p>	<p>Clause 3 (sexuality) of the Gender Portrayal Guidelines</p>

LANGUAGE AND EXPRESSIONS

Clause 9 of the CAB Equitable Portrayal Code (on the basis of gender and other prohibited criteria)

Clause 6 (language) of the Gender Portrayal Guidelines

VIOLENCE

Violence against women:
Clause 7 of the CAB Violence Code

Violence against specific groups⁸:
Clause 8 of the CAB Violence Code

Violence, relationships of dominance between genders (force, threat):

Clause 4 (violence) of the Gender Portrayal Guidelines

Exploiting, condoning or inciting violence or behaviour that is violent (physical, psychological) or unlawful:

Clause 14 (b) of the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards (Unacceptable Depictions and Portrayals)

DENIGRATION, DISRESPECT

Demeaning, denigrating or disparaging behaviour (towards persons, firms, organizations, professions, etc.)

Clause 14 (c) of the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards (Unacceptable Depictions and Portrayals)

HUMAN DIGNITY, OFFENDING STANDARDS OF PUBLIC DECENCY

Clause 14 (d) of the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards (Unacceptable Depictions and Portrayals)

⁷⁻⁸ Race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or physical or mental disability.

3.4 Alternative approaches

What can you do when a complaint is not receivable through the official process? Do not lose your hope, there are always solutions. First you can try to contact directly the company that made the ads to talk about your concern.

- For sexist advertisements promoting alcoholic beverages, contact the *Conseil d'éthique de l'industrie québécoise des boissons alcooliques* (Ethics Council of the Alcoholic Beverage Industry in Quebec), Éduc'Alcool. Online complaint form: conseilethique.qc.ca/en/filing-a-complaint.php
- If the advertisement targets children under the age of 13, you can submit a complaint to the *Office de la protection du consommateur* (Quebec Office of Consumer Protection). For more information on the complaint process: www.opc.gouv.qc.ca/en/contact/consumer
- If your concerns pertain to a sign or billboard in a public space, you can also contact your municipality or local administrative offices⁹.
- For advertisements or movie trailers broadcast before a children's movie, you can also submit a complaint to the cinema management.
- For advertisements found in a school setting (for products, magazines, etc.), send a letter to the school's administration, calling for support from other parents. If the situation does not change, send a copy to the school board.

3.5 How do I make my complaint public?

Social media is a good way to share your concerns and challenge brands. You can share your complaint on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or Instagram. By sharing it with other users, your complaint can result in positive change, such as the removal of the advertisement by the offending company. You can also point out an advertisement's questionable content to social media administrators.

Beyond that, you can also send a letter to the media.

⁹ More information can be found in the guide "Hypersexualisation? Guide pratique d'information et d'action" published by CALACS, Rimouski, 2019, 82 pp.

4. “Femvertising”, the solution to sexist ads?

In the past few years we have seen a new trend, namely “femvertising”, a portmanteau made up of the words “feminism” and “advertising”.

This type of advertising, the goal of which is to promote feminist values, such as self-acceptance or pay equity, started specifically with a Dove advertising campaign in 2013 called “Real Beauty”. It involved a series of videos that aimed to celebrate differences rather than denigrate them, and to increase self-confidence in women. The campaign quickly went viral on social media and made the concept popular, and many other brands soon hopped on the “femvertising” bandwagon¹⁰.

While this type of initiative can, at first glance, seem very positive, it raises numerous issues.

Feminism in a powerful and important movement that is more relevant than ever. While several people continue to find the term too extreme and do not declare themselves to be feminists, the watered-down version of feminism (femwashing) is very popular on social networks, due in part to a commercial reappropriation of the movement.

It is good to call this into question when consumer society, which is a major contributor to weakening the position of women and perpetuating their stereotypical portrayal, uses the notion of feminism to sell sweaters costing \$710¹¹.

It is important to note that in the past few years, a form of feminism, one that is entirely devoid of its radical meaning, has become trendy.

The fundamental problem with these “femvertising” campaigns is that all too often, brands that promote feminist views in their public campaigns are far from applying them within their own organizations. For example, the Dove brand, the pioneer in this advertising trend aimed at empowering women to free themselves from beauty standards, belongs to the Unilever Group, which also owns the Axe brand.

At the same time that Dove was broadcasting these messages about self-love, Axe was featuring particularly degrading advertisements portraying women in a way that was entirely stereotypical and particularly hypersexualized.

This is just an example amongst other. This is our responsibility to keep ourselves informed and to demand some changes from the brands.



Picture of a Dove ad saying “Every woman is beautiful” published on Pignedepub Pinterest account.

Sniffing out the mother lode, companies are rushing to fill this market niche, financially benefiting from feminist ideas all while incarnating the exact opposite behind closed doors.

“Femvertising” thus seems almost more pernicious than openly sexist advertising, which is now quickly denounced on social networks, as companies are surfing on feminism’s (watered down, nonetheless) wave of popularity, all while not engendering the real social change that equality between women and men could contribute towards society¹².

As consumers, it is up to us to remain vigilant and not fall into advertising’s latest traps.



Picture of a man being chased by hundreds of women after spraying himself with Axe body Spray. Source : <https://unpeudetoutbeaucoupdemoi.wordpress.com/tag/axe-anarchy>

5. Conclusion

Even beyond the process of submitting a complaint, we have to learn to train our critical mind and the eye. Remember that images are created by people (businesses, organizations, etc.) with the goal of making a profit.

We have to ask the right questions. Who are the people behind these advertising images? What is the message they are trying to convey, consciously or not? We have to remember that in the context of advertising, what the brands want above all else is to convince us to buy their product. We have to be vigilant. We are citizens capable of making informed decisions regarding our lifestyle choices.

“The images are representative of our world, so being able to analyze them allows us to better understand our society, and especially to see behind the interpretation of those men and women who create the images.”

¹⁰ CURTIS, Carla, “ “Femvertising” does nothing for feminism”, The Next Web <https://thenextweb.com/opinion/2018/12/19/femvertising-does-nothing-for-feminism> (accessed June 12, 2019).

¹¹ LUBITZ, Rachel “Dior is selling a plain cotton t-shirt that says “We should all be Feminists” for \$710”, Business Insider, <https://www.businessinsider.com/dior-we-should-all-be-feminists-shirt-2017-3>, (accessed June 12, 2019).

¹² MARTELL, Katie, “The Problem with Femvertising (The #1 Marketing Trend to Leave Behind in 2018)”, Medium, <https://medium.com/@katiemartell/the-problem-with-femvertising-the-1-marketing-trend-to-leave-behind-in-2018-aec778585564> (accessed June 13, 2019).

APPENDIX 1

PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO RADIO AND TELEVISION (CBSC AND CRTC)

CAB Code of Ethics (Revised in 2002)¹³

CLAUSE 2 - HUMAN RIGHTS

Recognizing that every person has the right to full and equal recognition and to enjoy certain fundamental rights and freedoms. Broadcasters shall ensure that their programming contains no abusive or unduly discriminatory material or **comment which is based on matters of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status or physical or mental disability.**

CLAUSE 3 - SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPING

Recognizing that stereotyping images **can and do have a negative effect**, it shall be the responsibility of broadcasters to exhibit, to the best of their ability, a conscious sensitivity to the problems related to sex-role stereotyping. To do so, broadcaster shall refrain from exploitation and by the reflection of the intellectual and emotional equality of both sexes in programming. Broadcasters shall refer to the *Sex-Role Portrayal Code for Television and Radio Programming* [since March 17, 2008, replaced by the *Equitable Portrayal Code*] for more detailed provisions in this area.

CAB Violence Code

CLAUSE 7 - VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Broadcasters shall not telecast programming which sanctions, promotes or glamorizes any aspect of violence against women: ensuring, for example, that women are not depicted as *victims of violence* (unless the violence is integral to the story being told), and they shall be particularly sensitive not to perpetuate *the link between women in a sexual context and women as victims of violence.*

CLAUSE 8 - VIOLENCE AGAINST SPECIFIC GROUPS

Broadcasters shall not telecast programming which **sanctions, promotes or glamorizes** violence based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or mental or physical disability.

¹³ The Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB), <https://www.cab-acr.ca/english/social/codes/ethics.shtm#2> (accessed September 3, 2019)

CAB Equitable Portrayal Code

CLAUSE 2 - HUMAN RIGHTS

Recognizing that every person has the right to full and equal recognition and to enjoy certain fundamental rights and freedoms, broadcasters shall ensure that their programming contains no abusive or unduly discriminatory material or comment which is based on matters of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status or physical or mental disability.

CLAUSE 3 - NEGATIVE PORTRAYAL

In an effort to ensure appropriate depictions of all individuals and groups, broadcasters shall refrain from airing unduly negative portrayals of persons with respect to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or physical or mental disability. Negative portrayal can take many different forms, including, but not limited to stereotyping, stigmatization and victimization, derision of myths, traditions or practices, degrading material, and exploitation.

CLAUSE 4 - STEREOTYPES

Recognizing that stereotyping is a form of generalization that is frequently simplistic, belittling, hurtful or prejudicial, while being unreflective of the complexity of the group being stereotyped, broadcasters shall ensure that their programming contains no unduly negative stereotypical material or comment which is based on matters of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or physical or mental disability.

CLAUSE 5 - STIGMATIZATION AND VICTIMIZATION

Members of certain identifiable groups face particular portrayal issues. Broadcasters shall ensure that their programming does not stigmatize or victimize individuals or groups on the basis of their race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or physical or mental disability.

CLAUSE 6 - DERISION OF MYTHS, TRADITIONS OR PRACTICES

Broadcasters shall avoid the airing of content that has the effect of unduly deriding the myths, traditions or practices of groups on the basis of their race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or physical or mental disability.

CLAUSE 7 - DEGRADING MATERIAL

Broadcasters shall avoid the airing of degrading material, whether reflected in words, sounds, images or by other means, which is based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or physical or mental disability.

CLAUSE 8 - EXPLOITATION

- Broadcasters shall refrain from the airing of programming that exploits women, men or children.
- Broadcasters shall refrain from the sexualization of children in programming.

CLAUSE 9 - LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

- Broadcasters shall be sensitive to, and avoid, the usage of derogatory or inappropriate language or terminology in references to individuals or groups based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or physical or mental disability.
- Equality of the sexes must be recognized and reinforced through the proper use of language and terminology. Broadcasters shall employ language of a non-sexist nature in their programming, by avoiding, whenever possible, expressions which relate to only one gender.
- It is understood that language and terminology evolve over time. Some language and terminology may be inappropriate when used with respect to identifiable groups on the basis of their race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or physical or mental disability. Broadcasters shall remain vigilant with respect to the evolving appropriateness or inappropriateness of particular words and phrases, keeping in mind prevailing community standards.

CLAUSE 10 - CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Broadcasts may fairly include material that would otherwise appear to breach one of the foregoing provisions in the following contextual circumstances:
- Legitimate artistic usage: Individuals who are themselves bigoted or intolerant may be part of a fictional or non-fictional program, provided that the program is not itself abusive or unduly discriminatory;
- Comedic, humorous or satirical usage: Although the comedic, humorous or satirical intention or nature of programming is not an absolute defence with respect to the proscriptions of this Code, it is understood that some comedic, humorous or satirical content, although discriminatory or stereotypical, may be light and relatively inoffensive, rather than abusive or unduly discriminatory;
- Intellectual treatment: Programming apparently for academic, artistic, humanitarian, journalistic, scientific or research purposes, or otherwise in the public interest, may be broadcast, provided that it: is not abusive or unduly discriminatory; does not incite contempt for, or severely ridicule, an enumerated group; and is not likely to incite or perpetuate hatred against an enumerated group.

APPENDIX 2

PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO ADVERTISING

(Ad Standards)

The Canadian Code of Advertising Standards (The Code)¹⁴

CLAUSE 14 - UNACCEPTABLE DEPICTIONS AND PORTRAYALS

It is recognized that advertisements may be distasteful without necessarily conflicting with the provisions of this clause; and the fact that a particular product or service may be offensive to some people is not sufficient grounds for objecting to an advertisement for that product or service.

Advertisements shall not:

1. Condone any form of personal discrimination, including discrimination based upon race, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender identity, sex or sexual orientation, age or disability;
2. Appear in a realistic manner to exploit, condone or incite violence; nor appear to condone, or directly encourage, physically violent or psychologically demoralizing behaviour; nor directly encourage, or exhibit obvious indifference to, unlawful behaviour;
3. Demean, denigrate or disparage an easily identifiable person, a group of persons, a firm, an organization, industrial or commercial activities, a profession, a product or service, or attempt to bring it or them into public contempt or ridicule;
4. Undermine human dignity; or display obvious indifference to, or encourage, gratuitously and without merit, conduct or attitudes that offend the standards of public decency prevailing among a significant segment of the population.

¹⁴ The Canadian Code of Advertising Standards website, <https://adstandards.ca/code/the-code-online/>, (accessed October 2, 2019)

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