

Re: Coalition calls for curbs on kids' exposure to TV, music violence, Jan. 18.

While it is clear that the coalition of teachers and parents referred to a broad range of media (including music lyrics, video games and DVDs), they also referred to television, but lumping all these media together risks leaving a rather misleading perspective about the role of television.

The complainants made no mention of the effective steps taken by Canada's private broadcasters to deal with violence on television. Nor was there any mention of the steady decline in complaints about tv violence.

Why the decline? Broadcasters have taken responsibility for the issue. They created a Violence Code in 1993. They don't air violent programs intended for adult audiences before 9 p.m. or after 6 a.m. There is no gratuitous or glamorized violence on television at any time. Period.

They actively help audiences make informed viewing choices. Ratings icons run every hour and viewer advisories are broadcast at the start of dramatic programs and following every commercial break.

The best set of rules anywhere regulates children's programming. Very little violence, whether physical, verbal or emotional, can be included. Animated children's programming cannot suggest that violence is the preferred way to resolve disputes. It cannot encourage dangerous imitation. Nor can it even include themes that threaten a child's sense of security. And so on.

Private broadcasters prohibit both abusive comment and violence against women and other identifiable groups on television.

While assuring that, in this democracy, the presentation of the news ought not to be sanitized, broadcasters must be cautious in the use of violent or disturbing footage, taking into account the age of likely viewers at earlier times of day.

In the event that any one of the foregoing rules is breached, the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council deals with it. The disappearance of the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers is ample evidence of that commitment.

Whatever the other media (music, video games and film) have or have not been doing, Canada's private broadcasters and the CBSC have been on the case for years.

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