

YORK REGION VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE PROTOCOL

2025

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MINISTÈRE DES
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DES SERVICES SOCIAUX ET
COMMUNAUTAIRES



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Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee

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The York Region Violence Against Women: Collaborative Response Protocol 2017, hereinafter referred to as “the protocol”, would not have been possible without the current members of the York Region Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee who provided their input into the redevelopment of this protocol .

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The York Region
Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee

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STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

We, the following agencies, have participated in the development of the York Region Violence Against Women: Collaborative Response Protocol 2017 and hereby affirm our commitment and accountability to the implementation of this protocol across York Region .

We recognize that an effective and comprehensive response requires a shared philosophy and coordinated strategy among those who work with women experiencing abuse and violence .

We recognize that historically, there has been an overwhelming silence about violence against women in certain communities, particularly around same sex partner abuse . We are committed to breaking that silence and acknowledging the existence of violence against women in all communities . The use of the word “woman” is intended to speak to all women, including those who identify as part of the LGBTTO community, as well as heterosexual women from all social, economic, racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds and all abilities.

We therefore agree to the following principles to guide our delivery of services to women experiencing abuse:

- All forms of violence against women are unacceptable and must not be tolerated .
- Many forms of violence against women are crimes and where reasonable grounds exist, police should lay charges against the abuser . Legal sanctions should be pursued and enforced consistently and vigorously .
- All women can be victims of abuse, regardless of their age, social, economic, racial, ethnic or religious group, sexual orientation or physical and developmental ability .
- A holistic and systematic approach that includes, but is not limited to, policy reform, community development, education, advocacy, social action, and other preventive measures provides the basis for ending all forms of violence against women and their destructive consequences .
- Abused women are never responsible for the abuser’s behaviour .
- Violence against women undermines the mental and physical well-being of women and their children .
- Women and their children have the right to be safe and live without fear of violence .
- The safety and ongoing protection of women and children who have experienced or are experiencing violence are paramount considerations in any response .
- The many forms of violence against women need to be understood in the context of unequal power relations . Abusers act out of a need to control and maintain power over the abused women .
- The dynamics of an abusive relationship make it difficult for the abused woman to end the relationship .
- A coordinated response to violence against women must provide equitable access to services regardless of a woman’s age, socio-economic status, race, culture, language, religion, ability or sexual orientation .

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

- The response to women who have been subjected to violence should take into account the diverse needs and interests of women . Women and children must have access to linguistically sensitive, culturally appropriate and accountable services . .5
- Violence against women is a serious societal problem that negatively affects the health, well-being and development of women, children, families and the community . This fact must be acknowledged by all members of society and should be addressed through public education .
- Services must be provided in ways that facilitate a woman's ability to exercise informed choices and enable her to be a full participant in the process . Information and support to victims should be provided in such a way as to empower the survivor .
- Women of all ages who have been subjected to violence have the right to services and resources that are appropriate, ensure her safety, meet her material and financial needs and provide her with emotional support .
- All staff are responsible for providing high quality and compassionate care to all survivors of violence against women . Staff will take responsibility for the services they provide and will emotionally support abused women .
- Abusers who use violence are responsible for their behavior and therefore must be held accountable for their abusive behavior .
- The emotional, developmental and physical safety of children is at risk when they are exposed to violence .
- Violence against indigenous women and girls is connected to the historical and ongoing cultural oppression, systemic racism, and the colonialism that has been perpetrated against the indigenous community . This applies both inside and outside of their immediate families and extended communities, and in broader society .
- Interventions are most effective when rooted in a gender-based, intersectional, anti-racist anti-oppressive analysis of violence against women .
- The safety of women and children are optimized when community partners work collaboratively to provide services and interventions to the woman, the abusive partner and the children .
- We are dedicated to assisting all abused women sensitively with the goal of empowering them to make the best choices for themselves and their children . In order to do this, it is important for us as professionals to have an understanding of the complexity of violence against women .
- In the development and implementation of policies and programs to address violence against women, we agree to be guided by these principles . We will endeavor to ensure that our services to abused women will be guided by policies, procedures, programs and training in accordance with these principles .

Dated May 2025

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

AIDS Committee of York Region

Blue Door Shelters

Abuse Hurts

Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag
Child and Family Services

Family Services of York Region

Jewish Family and Child Services

John Howard Society of York Region

Lance Krasman Memorial Centre
for Community Mental Health

Multilingual Community
Interpreter Services

Rose of Sharon Services for
Young Mothers

Sandgate Women's Shelter of
York Region Inc.

The Community of Women
Advisory Committee
(sub-committee of the YRVAWCC)

Victim Services of York Region

Victim / Witness Assistance Program

Women's Centre of York Region

Women's Support Network
of York Region

Yellow Brick House

Mackenzie Health, Domestic Abuse
and Sexual Assault Care Centre

York Region Children's Aid Society

York Region Crown Attorney's Office

Cedar Centre

York Regional Police

York Region Public Health

It is estimated that every year up to 362,000 Canadian children witness or experience family violence.

Children who witness violence in the home have twice the rate of psychiatric disorders as children from non-violent homes.

Research shows that children who witness violence are more likely to grow up to become victims or abusers.

GUIDING VALUES

The philosophy and approach of Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services is first and foremost, based upon the principles contained within the seven Grandfather Teachings of our people:

1. Wisdom “Nbwaakaawin” – This incorporates the idea of intelligence and the idea of “putting it to good use.” Wisdom means the commitment to use what we know for the betterment of all. 7
2. Love “Zaagidiwin” – Love includes the selfless and non-judgemental love of all others as well as self-love.
3. Respect “Mnaadendamowin” – The importance of showing respect for and appreciation of others is necessary to be able to earn respect.
4. Bravery “Aakdehewin” – The willingness to “do the right thing” and to accept the consequences that flow from that, to always act with integrity.
5. Honesty “Gwekwaadziwin” – Flowing from courage is the need to always be forthright, to withhold nothing, both with others and with ourselves.
6. Humility “Dbadendizwin” – This is compassion at its most basic level. We all share the same value in the eyes of our Creator, and we are called to reflect on that value in all of our dealings.
7. Truth “Debwewin” – We must be truth-tellers to all both those with whom we have dealings and with ourselves.
8. Building on these seven teachings, we also value:
9. Inclusivity – We encourage and foster an atmosphere that brings together all who have an interest to participate and bring support for children and families in need. We include all perspectives and faiths, both traditional and mainstream understandings that our people may be a part of and recognize that it is from the things that individuals value that they draw their strength and internal power from.
10. Wholistic – (Mind, Body, Emotions and Spirit) We believe that all aspects of life must be taken into account in arriving at good decisions with children and families.
11. The values and guiding principles contained herein, are meant to pertain to both service provider/client interactions and service provider to service provider interactions.
12. Valuing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
13. Valuing Intersectionality
14. Valuing Safety

15. Valuing Empowerment

- Valuing Respect, Communication and Understanding
- a) Valuing DEI:
 - Recognize and embrace the diversity of experiences, backgrounds, and identities among individuals affected by violence.
 - Ensure that collaboration efforts are inclusive and consider the unique challenges faced by different communities.
 - Ensure equity in all aspects of collaboration by addressing power imbalances and promoting equal opportunities for participation.
- Valuing Intersectionality:
 - Acknowledge and understand the intersectional nature of violence, recognizing that individuals may face multiple forms of discrimination based on various aspects of their identity.
 - A strong knowledge base and consideration of the impact of ethnic, social, religious, and cultural values and practices, oppression and racism on a woman's understanding and ability to respond in a situation of woman abuse maximizes the effectiveness of the intervention.
 - Collaborate with a commitment to addressing the interconnected factors that contribute to violence, considering race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and other intersecting identities.
- c) Valuing Safety:
 - Prioritize the safety of survivors and those at risk of violence in all collaborative efforts.
 - Create culturally safe environments that are free from judgment, stigma, and unconscious bias.
 - Implement and adhere to protocols that prioritize the physical and emotional safety of all participants involved in collaboration.
- d) Valuing Empowerment:
 - Foster a collaborative environment that supports survivors' rights to self-determination in their own decision-making related to intervention support and services.
 - Develop programs and initiatives that support the empowerment of survivors through education, skills development, and access to resources.
 - Empowering families to recognize and address safety and protection needs identified by women and children.
- e) Valuing Respect, Communication, and Understanding:
 - Cultivate a culture of respect among collaborators, recognizing and valuing the expertise and perspectives of each participant.

- Prioritize open and transparent communication, ensuring that information is shared in a timely and respectful manner, upholding the parameters of informed consent and the duty to report. Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, S.O. 2017, c. 14, Sched. 1 (ontario.ca)
- Foster a deep understanding of the complexities of violence against women and gender-based violence, encouraging empathy and compassion in collaborative efforts. 99
- Providing knowledge, resources, and support to enhance understanding of woman abuse and its effects on children.



An Introduction to the Protocol

1.1. What is the Violence Against Women Protocol?

The York Region Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee (YRVAWCC) promotes and encourages a response to the issue of Violence Against Women (VAW) that is consistent and coordinated . The York Region Violence Against Women: Collaborative Response Protocol 2017, is designed to encourage consistent practices and promote collaboration between York Region agencies in their response to the societal issue of VAW .

The Protocol provides agencies with best practice approaches in an effort to help them enhance services for survivors of VAW in York Region . It represents the ongoing commitment in York Region to develop a coordinated set of transparent procedures for organizations that provide services to address VAW . The Protocol recognizes that no single organization can wholly address the complexity of VAW and that survivors of VAW often require the assistance of a variety of services across different sectors .

This version of the Protocol emphasizes a strong commitment to understanding and responding

to VAW through an intersectional, gender-based lens . That is, the Protocol seeks to address the trauma of VAW by centering how race, sexuality, gender identity, income, ethnicity, religion, health and immigration status intersect as a means to understanding the complex lives of survivors of gender-based violence in general and VAW in particular .

1.2. How did the Protocol originate and how has it developed?

As a consequence of the 1997 McGuire Report, the York Region Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee (YRVAWCC) was established . It is a collaborative effort of social service providers, health care service providers, the Regional Police, the Crown Attorney's Office and a Board of Education .

Our mission is to develop and implement a coordinated plan for a comprehensive community-based service system . We contribute to the overall effort to eradicate violence against all women and their children through a leadership role in advocacy, education, and social action principles . Working together, with a common set of principles, will increase the likelihood that when VAW survivors seek services in York Region, they will obtain the appropriate help they need .

The YRVAWCC originally developed the Woman Abuse Protocol (WAP) in 1998 . In 2002-03 the protocol was revised, signed-off by member agencies and extensive training of front-line staff in the use of the protocol took place . In 2006 it became apparent that the revised

CHAPTER 1

An Introduction to the Protocol

WAP was not being widely used by service providers and as a consequence the WAP was revised for a 3rd time in an effort to increase the usability and relevancy of the Protocol . The 2006 WAP was used as a training tool for staff in the York Region community, provided a sense of cohesion and collaboration amongst YRVAWCC member agencies, and increased the capacity of community- based agencies to best serve those who had been impacted by VAW . However, due to the passage of time, the 2006 WAP has since become dated and in need of a revision

that reflects the context in which service providers and service users now find themselves .

VAW continues to be a serious issue and as such continues to necessitate a serious response . In an effort to increase the efficacy of the Protocol as a tool for service providers in responding to VAW, consultants were hired in 2017 to solicit feedback from the YRVAWCC on the direction for the 2019 revision of the Protocol . The following priorities emerged for the 2019 Protocol from these

consultations:

1. An intersectional, gender-based analysis of VAW was needed to better understand and respond to the complex experiences that inform the lives of survivors of VAW
2. A greater emphasis on the impact of trauma for survivors of VAW was needed
3. An enhanced understanding of how service providers can deploy practical trauma- informed strategies to better support survivors was necessary
4. The protocol aims to reflect language and information that represents the breadth of gender identities that comprises survivors of VAW . That is, the protocol firmly acknowledges that women tend to be most vulnerable to having violence be perpetrated against them, with that being said, it is also important to include trans women and non- gender conforming people in this category as well
5. To be most useful as a tool for front-line service providers, the protocol needed to be truncated and have useful information and strategies presented effectively and easily

It is expected that these changes to the Protocol will enhance its utility for service agencies, in particular front-line workers as they are the backbone of our programs and services that support survivors of VAW . It is worth noting that there was a high level of agreement for the protocol to eventually be expanded into an online training module for service providers .

Changes are necessary within the Protocol with the Designation in 2019 of Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child and Family Services as a Children's Aid Society to serve Indigenous children youth and families across much of Central Ontario, including York Region .

An Introduction to the Protocol

1.3. **How to use the Protocol**

The protocol outlines a foundational approach for York Region's community-based agencies in responding to VAW . To be useful today and into the future, the protocol is to be used as the foundation for continued work on the issues of VAW . This version of the protocol is an interactive PDF that is most useful when read in its PDF form as opposed to its paper form . Community agencies and the YRVAWCC will use the protocol to:

- Train new staff, board members of community agencies, and YRVAWCC members
- Refresh seasoned staff
- Integrate into daily professional practice
- Form the basis for sector-wide collaborative workshops on awareness building in the area of VAW
- Form the basis for YRVAWCC member agencies to facilitate agency-level workshops in the area of VAW





Contextualizing Violence Against Women

2.1. Understanding Violence Against Women through a Gender-Based / Intersectional Analysis

Violence against women (VAW) is often understood as a form of gender-based violence (GBV) . Gender-based violence is intimately tied to the patriarchal structure of society, and is further amplified by other forms of discrimination, including but not limited to, ageism, racism, colonialism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia and poverty . These structural inequalities maintain power imbalances and put some populations at greater risk of being victimized, and also act as a barrier to accessing supports .

It has been widely acknowledged that the majority of persons affected by GBV are women, as a consequence of the unequal distribution of power in society between women and men . Further, women and transwomen also suffer exacerbated consequences as compared to men that are survivors of GBV . That is, as a function of gender discrimination and lower socio-economic status, women and transwomen tend to have fewer options and fewer resources that they can dispense with to avert and exit abusive situations .

GBV is bolstered and supported by the indirect violence of gendered stereotypes that create rigid notions of gender roles (what it means to be a “woman” and what it means to be a “man”) as well as one’s sexuality (who should be attracted to whom and what kinds of romantic, sexual and family relationships are seen as “normal” or “acceptable”) . GBV is also the consequence of the indirect violence of attitudes that promote violence against women and girls, and other vulnerable groups (for example, images in the media/social media) . These indirect structural forms of violence create the mechanisms whereby direct forms of GBV (physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual, verbal, financial) can occur . ¹

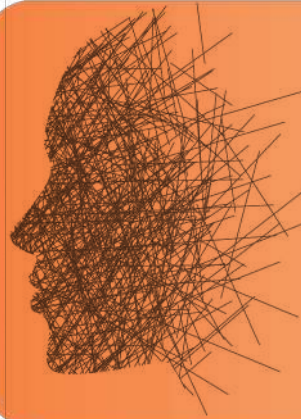
Indigenous women have an additional vulnerability within society due to the systemic racism and colonialism that has shaped their experiences over several centuries . Settler culture has systemically devalued and demeaned Indigenous women; the national inquiry around Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls showed that Indigenous females experience violence and murder inside and outside of their families at rates far beyond any other ethnicity .

The principle of understanding how systemic racism affects marginalized, racialized women and children, and women/children from equity seeking groups in accessing services, barriers related to immigration and cultural norms, should be considered in the safety planning for women who experience violence . A comprehensive plan should include a safety plan and community supports that focuses on intersectionality, which includes acknowledging the way different identities intersect, and have an impact on a women’s safety; e .g . Black women face both racism and sexism . The acknowledgement of systemic racism in safety planning creates a wholistic safety plan and plan for community supports that address the intersecting identity a woman may have

Appropriately responding to VAW necessitates that we acknowledge the complexities surrounding identity and oppression that impact every survivor of GBV . Grounding our response to VAW using an intersectional analysis can help us to do this .

CHAPTER 2

Contextualizing Violence Against Women



POINTS OF SELF-REFLECTION

We all have implicit and explicit biases. Our attitudes, ideas, and notions about ourselves and the world around us are shaped by media representations, our school system, patriarchy, our families, our friends, the books we have read, and the experiences we've had. An important step to mitigating the harmful impacts of our biases is acknowledging that we all have them and examining what they are. What implicit or explicit biases do you have about what it means to be a "woman", what it means to be a "man", and what it means to be a "transwoman"? How might these biases impact your work with survivors of VAW?

INTERSECTIONALITY

Social identity:
race, age,
gender identity

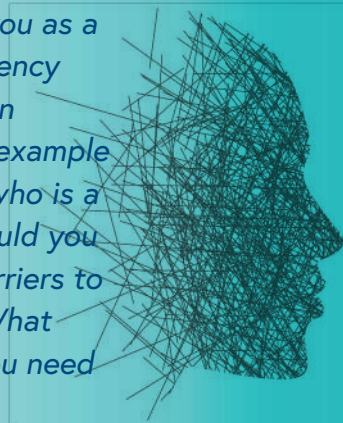
Systems of
Oppression:
racism,
colonialism,
transphobia

Multiple social
identities and
systems of
oppression
intersect

A person can be a woman, be black, Indigenous, and elderly which means she may experience racism, sexism, and ageism which could impact how she experiences VAW and accessible resources .

POINTS OF SELF-REFLECTION

What are some examples of how you as a service provider or your service agency work with survivors of VAW from an intersectional analysis? Using the example above of an elderly black woman who is a survivor of VAW, what referrals would you provide to her? What are some barriers to supports that may exist for her? What important considerations would you need to keep in mind?



What is an Intersectional Analysis and how can it be Applied to the Issue of VAW?

Intersectionality recognizes the unique experiences of women and the differences within communities, and explains how multiple systems of oppression work together and interact to reinforce conditions of inequality and social exclusion ²

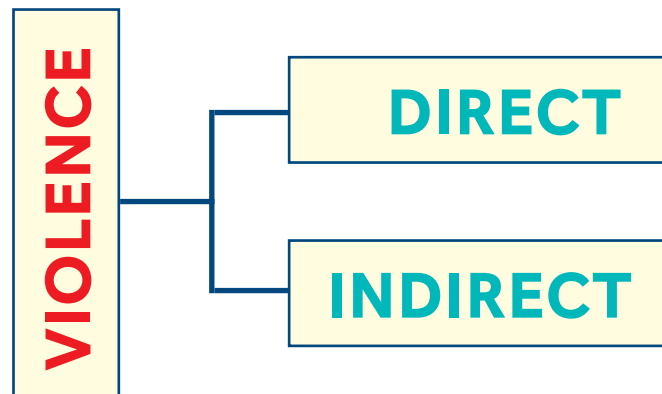
Intersectionality is made up of 3 basic building blocks: social identities (race, gender, religion etc), systems of oppression (transphobia, racism, islamophobia etc), and the ways in which they intersect

Intersectionality is a useful framework through which to examine how forms of privilege and disadvantage shape women's experiences of trauma and access to resources

From Miriam Dobson's website:
<http://miriamdobson.wordpress.com>

Contextualizing Violence Against Women

2.2. Direct and Indirect Forms of Gender-Based Violence



Direct violence against women includes but is not limited to physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence

Physical abuse/violence: Hitting, sleep deprivation, failure to provide for basic needs if partner is dependent on other for those needs to be fulfilled .

Sexual abuse/violence: Rape, sex trafficking, refusal to practice safe sex, sexual assault and harassment in all spheres of public and private spaces this also includes through the use of information and communication technologies .

Emotional/psychological abuse & verbal/spiritual abuse: Isolation from family/friends/social supports, unremitting criticism, spiritual violence, surveillance of everyday tasks such as grocery shopping, intercepting phone calls and emails, threats to harm, forced marriages, stalking behavior, humiliation .

Economic/financial abuse/violence: Depriving a person of access to cash and/or credit, deprivation of any control over all financial decisions and finances, running up debt in a person's name .

Indirect Violence

Structural violence that is enabled by norms, attitudes, and stereotypes around what it means to be a "man" and what it means to be a "woman" .

For example, men who subvert heteronormative ideas of masculinity (i.e. a man who sleeps with other men) are vulnerable to being physically or verbally attacked . This is a form of gender-based violence .

Looking at these attitudes can provide insight into the way in which these indirect forms of violence are created and sustained, and even more importantly, how they contribute to and support direct forms of violence against women . Inequalities - and the forms of violence connected to them - are intersectional .

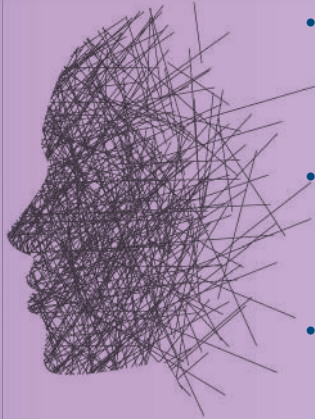
CHAPTER 2

Contextualizing Violence Against Women

2.3. Strategies for Using an Intersectional, Gender-Based Analysis for Addressing Violence Against Women

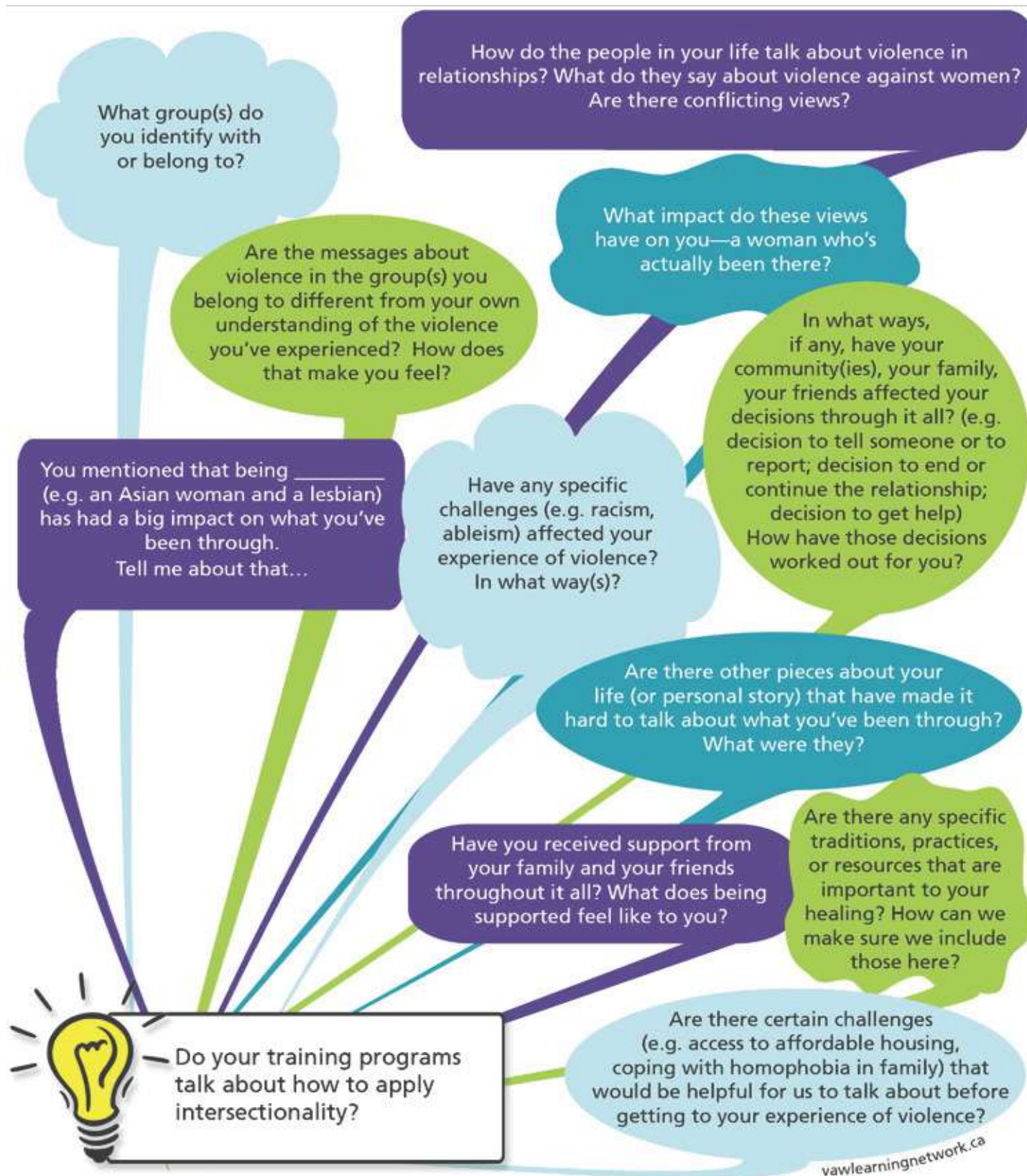


POINTS OF SELF-REFLECTION



- How are you seeking to minimize existing power-imbalances between you and the people you are there to support? i.e. are you allowing survivors to be the experts in their own personal experience or are you telling them how they should feel and respond?
- What assumptions are embedded in the language you use? i.e. asking has your partner ever physically hurt you vs. has your boyfriend or husband ever physically hurt you before ascertaining the gender identity of the person's intimate partner.
- How might your intervention or support of an indigenous transwoman in an abusive relationship be different than the ways you might support a heterosexual white woman in an abusive relationship? In what ways would the intervention or the supports offered be the same?

Contextualizing Violence Against Women



CHAPTER 2

Contextualizing Violence Against Women

2.4. What do the Statistics on Violence Against Women tell us?

A SNAPSHOT:

The Stats on VAW in Canada tell us:¹⁴

Partner-abuse is gendered .
Women are significantly more susceptible to being

victimized in intimate relationships than men .

Indigenous women are particularly vulnerable to experiencing VAW .

Younger women experience a greater risk to the accused

25⁷ being survivors of VAW than older women .

5 Women with a disability are much more likely to experience VAW than women without a disability .
Women who identify as lesbian or bisexual are at a greater risk for experiencing VAW than heterosexual women .

Women are most at risk to deadly injury after leaving an abusive relationship .

83

The percentage of women that represented all victims of spousal violence in 2007 ⁴

95

The percentage of women victims of spousal homicide in Ontario in 2011

6⁵

The number of times a woman is more likely to be killed by an

ex-spouse than a current spouse ⁶ **6 in 10** The number of spousal homicides that had a history of family violence involving the victim and

The number of times indigenous women are more likely to experience spousal violence than non-Indigenous women ⁸

The average number of attempts that a woman will make to leave her abuser before ending the relationship permanently ⁹

2

The number of times more likely a woman with a physical limitation or mental health illness is likely to experience VAW than a woman without these ¹⁰ limitations

6

The average number of days that a woman is killed by her intimate-partner in Canada ¹¹

3 to 4

The number of times more likely that women who identify as lesbian or bisexual were to report experiencing spousal violence when compared to heterosexual women ¹²

1 in 10

The number of women that report experiencing VAW during pregnancy ¹³

POINTS OF SELF-REFLECTION

How can you use statistics on GBV and VAW to decrease stigma, to bring awareness to the issue of VAW, and to reduce feelings of isolation?

Contextualizing Violence Against Women

2.5. How do Power and Control facilitate Violence Against Women?

VAW does not tend to occur as a singular physical assault or event but rather it tends to be a pattern of behaviors that are designed to exert power and control over a person's life . Research demonstrates that the abusive behaviors can intensify in degree over time . In other words, a woman is vulnerable to being victimized to more severe abusive behaviors as time lapses .

The Power and Control wheel demonstrates how abusive relationships often orbit around power and control . It's important to recognize how patriarchy, male privilege, and prevailing gender attitudes

create the necessary conditions for power and control to be used as a strategy for perpetrating violence against people in general and women in particular . Further, the Power and Control wheel calls our attention to the fact that physical violence is only one form of VAW . Intimidation, emotional abuse, isolation, minimizing, denying and blaming, using children, male privilege, economic abuse, and using coercion and threats are also other controlling tactics to consider when seeking to understand how power and control are the focal point of VAW .



CHAPTER 2

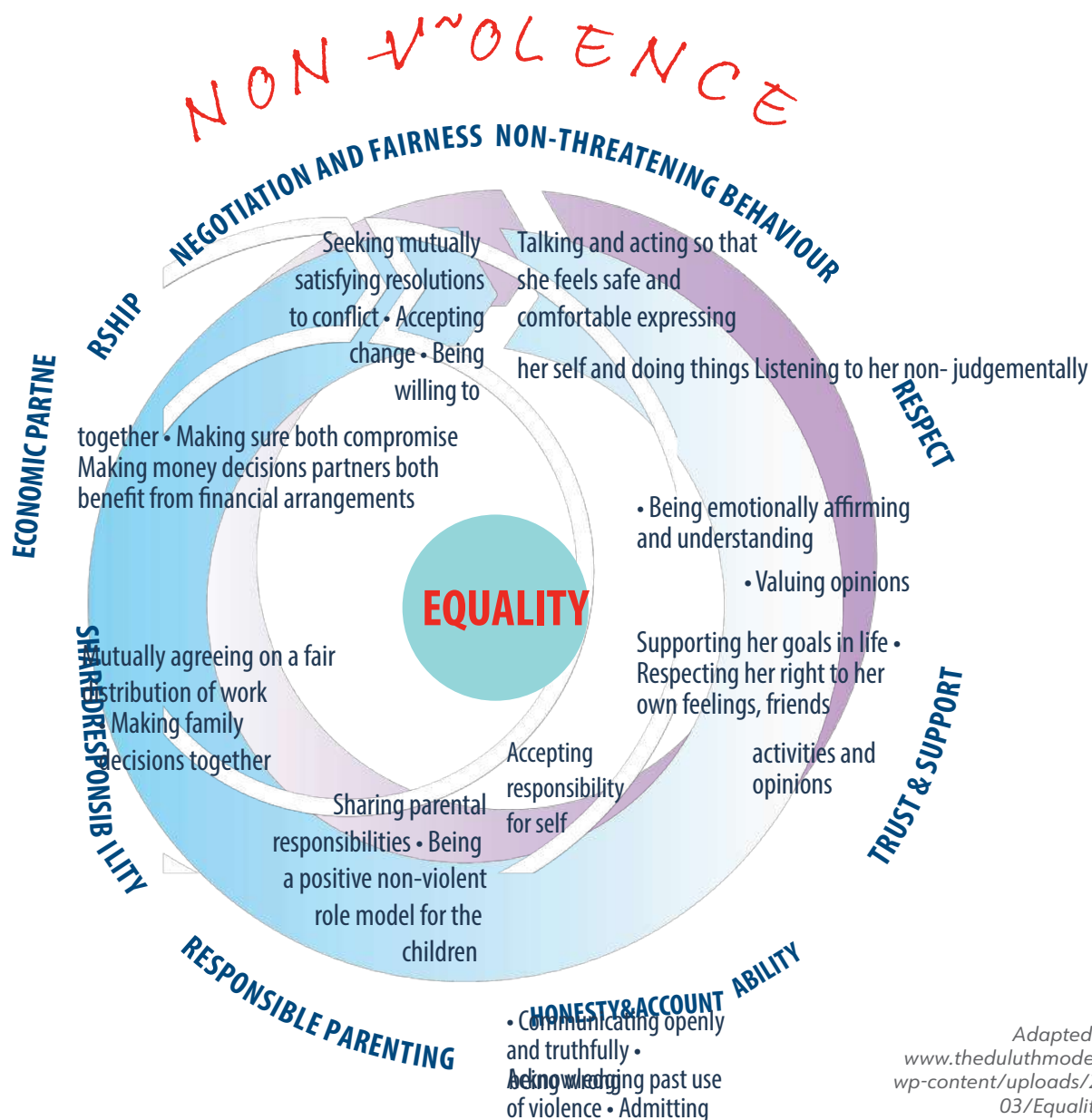
Contextualizing Violence Against Women

POINTS OF SELF-REFLECTION

How might a woman's value system i.e. religious beliefs complicate her understanding of what it means to be in an abusive relationship? How might it impact understandings around power and control?



What does a relationship that is centered around non-violence, healthy boundaries, and equality look like?



Adapted from:
www.theduluthmodel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Equality.pdf

Contextualizing Violence Against Women

2.6. Cycle of Abuse

VAW tends to take on cyclical patterns of behavior . Understanding the dimensions of this cycle can be helpful in recognizing abuse and challenging the manipulation that underpins the "honeymoon" stage:

Victim Response:

- Attempts to calm him/her
- Nurturing
- Silent/Talkative
- Stays away from family, friends
- Protects herself any way she can
- Police called by him/her/kids/neighbour
- Tries to calm abuser
- Tries to reason with abuser
- Keeps kids quiet • Leaves
- Agrees
- Fights back
- Withdraws

Victim Response:

- Sets up counselling appointments for abuser
 - Feels happy, hopeful

CHAPTER 2

Contextualizing Violence Against Women

2.7. Forced Marriage is a Form of Abuse

A forced marriage is a form of VAW . It is a marriage where one or both individuals do not consent to the marriage . Abuse, in its many forms, might be used to force one or both people to marry . A forced marriage may also involve someone who cannot legally give consent, such as a person who is too young to be married or who is not able to understand what marriage means because of an intellectual disability .

Forced marriage happens to individuals of any age, gender, sexual orientation, culture, religion, level of education, economic status, and in any area of the world, including in Canada . It also happens to Canadians travelling or living abroad .

Forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage . In an arranged marriage, parents or other family members may recommend a marriage partner to the individual, who ultimately chooses whether or not to marry . In an arranged marriage, the people getting married want to marry one another, and give their consent to the marriage .

are going on a trip to visit relatives, not knowing that a marriage has been planned for them while abroad . When they arrive in the foreign country, their passports and money are sometimes taken from them and they may be constantly watched to stop them from returning to Canada . They might be prevented from communicating with others to ask for help .

In cases of forced marriage, parents, relatives and community members might use emotional pressure, threats or violence to force someone to marry . The person may also be forced to have sex, or forced to get pregnant . In some cases, people are taken abroad against their will to be married . Sometimes a person might be told they

Forced marriage is recognized by the United Nations as a violation of human rights . Within Canada, it is a crime to force anyone, whether a child or an adult, to marry . It is also a crime to take someone under the age of 18 out of Canada to force him or her to marry in another country .

Responding to Forced Marriage Cases

The South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO) has done extensive work on the issue of forced/non-consensual marriages . SALCO has produced 'Forced/Non-consensual Marriages: A toolkit for service providers' . The Toolkit is structured around four central themes; forced marriage, identification, intervention, prevention and advocacy . In this toolkit you will find:

- Information about the practice of forced marriage
- Case studies to assist in determining prevention and intervention strategies
- Resources that can be shared directly with service seekers affected by forced marriages
- Activities to help service providers explore their own perspectives about forced marriages
- Activities to be completed in groups with youth and/or parents/caregivers/family members

Exercise

Review the SALCO Toolkit and print out pages from the document that can be used as a quick reference point in responding to cases of forced/non-consensual marriages .

Contextualizing Violence Against Women

2.8. Elder Abuse

Elder abuse or elder mistreatment is any action, behaviour or failure to act, by a person in a position of trust-like an adult child, family member, friend or caregiver-that causes or risks causing harm to an older adult . Elder abuse includes:

- physical, sexual or emotional harm
- damage to - or loss of - property or assets
- neglect

Elder abuse covers a whole range of behaviours including:

- hurtful comments
- dominating or controlling an older adult's activities
- isolating an older person from family, friends or regular activities
- unduly pressuring older adults to sign legal documents that they do not fully understand
- misusing a power of attorney
- not providing appropriate medication or medical attention
- any form of physical abuse



Information and Support for VAW in Older Adult Population

SENIORS SAFETY HELPLINE
24/7 confidential 1-866-299-1011

The Seniors Safety Line provides contact and referral information for local agencies across the province that can assist in cases of elder abuse . Trained counsellors also provide safety planning and supportive counselling for older adults who are being abused or at-risk of abuse . Family members and service providers can also call for information about community services .

CHAPTER 2

Contextualizing Violence Against Women

2.9. Women with Disabilities

Women with disabilities are more likely to suffer VAW and sexual assault than women without disabilities . Women with disabilities also report abuse that lasts longer and is more severe than women without disabilities . Like other women, women with disabilities usually are abused by someone they know, such as a partner or family member . In addition, women with disabilities face the risk of abuse by health care providers or caregivers . Given the increased vulnerability women with disabilities have to experiencing VAW, it is imperative that service providers screen, assess, and make referrals that are accessible when working with women with disabilities .



**Accessible Women's
Shelters in York Region**
Yellow Brick House
Sandgate Women's Shelter
of York Region Inc. Blue
Door Shelter Belinda's
Place

Contextualizing Violence Against Women

2.10. Indigenous Women

Indigenous women in Canada experience a disproportionate incidence of violence . In a 2009 government survey of the ten provinces, indigenous women were nearly three times more likely than non-indigenous women to report being a victim of a violent crime; this was true regardless of whether the violence was perpetrated by a stranger or by a spouse . ¹⁵

Not only do indigenous women face more frequent incidence of violence, the violence is also much more severe . A recent Statistics Canada report suggests that the national homicide rate for indigenous women is at least seven times higher than for non-indigenous women . There are also a disproportionate number of indigenous women and girls among long-term missing persons cases – cases where the reasons for the individual's disappearance and their eventual fate remain undetermined . ¹⁶

STATEMENT ON SUBSTANTIVE EQUITY

This is a direct consequence of decades of government policies that have impoverished and broken apart indigenous families and communities, leaving many Indigenous women and girls at heightened risk of exploitation and attack . Deep inequalities in living conditions and discrimination in the provision of government services have pushed many indigenous women and girls into precarious situations – ranging from inadequate housing to sex work – where there is a heightened risk of violence .

These same inequalities have also denied many indigenous women access to services needed to escape violence, such as culturally appropriate emergency shelters and transition houses .

Substantive equality is a legal principle that refers to the achievement of true equality in outcomes. It is achieved through equal access, equal opportunity and, most importantly, the provision of services and benefits in a manner and according to standards that meet any unique needs and circumstances, such as cultural, social, economic and historical disadvantage.

Substantive equality is both a process and an end goal relating to outcomes that seeks to acknowledge and overcome the barriers that have led to the inequality in the first place. When substantive equality in outcomes does not exist, inequality remains.

Achieving substantive equality for members of a specific group requires the implementation of measures that consider and are tailored to respond to the unique causes of their historical disadvantage as well as their historical, geographical and cultural needs and circumstances. First Nations children have experienced historical disadvantage due to Canada's repeated failure to consider their best interest as well as their historical, geographical and cultural needs and circumstances. For this reason, substantive equality for First Nations children will require that government policies, practices and procedures impacting them take account of their historical, geographical and cultural needs and circumstances and aim to safeguard the best interest of the child as articulated in the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment 11.



Contextualizing Violence Against Women

Services for Indigenous Survivors of VAW

Aboriginal Legal Services Toronto

416-408-3967

- Community legal clinic deals primarily with landlord and tenant issues, OW, ODSP and CPPD, human rights and police complaints
- Aboriginal Court Worker program provides support to those appearing in court
- Family and youth court workers are located at 311 Jarvis St .
- Youth Healing Circles for victims 16-25

Anduhyaun (Native Women's Shelter)

Provides programs and support to indigenous women fleeing abusive situations 24/7 telephone line
416-920-1492 | 1296 Weston Rd (mailing address) www.anduhyaun.org

Anishnawbe Health

Crisis Line 24/7 mental health crisis management service 416-891-8606 | aht.ca

Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag

Child & Family Services

A multi-service Indigenous wellbeing agency now Designated by Ontario as a Children's Aid Society . We provide a stable foundation for Indigenous children, youth, and families, through wraparound services that are culturally-based and family-focused . 1-844-253-2237 | www.binnoojiiyag.ca

Native Child and Family Services

Transitional Housing for Women

416-537-2261

- At-risk aboriginal women 16-24 with or without children
- Self-refer through youth drop-in at 655 Bloor St . West

Native Child and Family Services

416-969-8510

Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto

191 Gerrard St . East, Toronto
416-963-9963 | www.nwrct.caDn

CHAPTER 2

Contextualizing Violence Against Women

2.11. Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, harbouring and/or exercising control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in order to exploit that person, typically through sexual exploitation or forced labour . It is often described as a modern form of slavery .

Survivors often suffer physical or emotional abuse and often live and work in horrific conditions . They may also face fatal consequences if they attempt to escape . This crime represents a consistent and pervasive assault on the fundamental human rights of those perpetrated against .

Organized criminal networks, as well as individuals, perpetrate this crime, operating within Canada's borders and internationally . Traffickers reap large profits while robbing survivors of their freedom, dignity and human potential at great cost to the individual and society at large .

Traffickers control those being trafficked in various ways such as taking away their identity documents and passports, sexual abuse, threats, intimidation, physical violence, and isolation .

Sex trafficking is often characterized as a "low risk/high reward activity" because of the fact that the crime is clandestine, therefore difficult to detect and investigate, which contributes to the relatively low prosecution rates worldwide . Survivors can be exploited over and over for the financial or material benefit of the traffickers making this crime lucrative .



Information and Supports for Survivors of Sex Trafficking

360° kids for Kids & Youth 16-25
905-475-6694

BridgeNorth www.bridgenorth.org
905-895-9065

Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child and
Family Services

For Indigenous children and youth call
1-844-523-2237 Binnoojiiyag.ca

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Care
Centre (DASA)
905-883-1212 ext . 0 - page DASA nurse

Victim/Witness Assistance Program
Human Trafficking Specialist
1-855-245-1600

Women's Support Network of York Region
24/7 Human Trafficking Help Line:
905-758-5285

York Region Children's Aid Society For
children survivors of sex trafficking call
905-895-2318 Toll free: 1-800-718-3850

York Regional Police
Toll free: 1-866-876-5423

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

3.1. Confidentiality & Duty to Report

Protecting the confidentiality of clients' information is a professional, ethical and legal obligation, and a central value in community agencies. In this setting, the disclosure of client information without consent is prohibited with the exception of a few circumstances. Service providers should thoroughly explain the agencies confidentiality policy and the limits to confidentiality to all service seekers as soon as contact is established, where possible, in order to be transparent and contribute to the trust building process.

Service providers must be familiar with the reporting obligations under the Child Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA). The purpose of the CFSA is to promote the best interests, protection and well-being of children. Under the CFSA, people who have reasonable grounds to suspect a child under the age of 18 is or may be in need of protection, must immediately report the suspicion, and the information upon which it is based, directly to a children's aid society (CAS).

Under the CFSA, a "child in need of protection" includes a child who has suffered, or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect, or emotional harm. A person who has reasonable grounds to suspect a child is in need of protection must report directly to a CAS, and not rely on any other person to report on their behalf. The duty to report is ongoing. The CFSA requires that

service providers make a further report to the CAS if there are additional reasonable grounds to suspect that the child is or may be in need of protection. For more information on Duty to Report go to **Section 5.2** of the protocol.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY:

The loss of identity makes it nearly impossible to belong. As human beings, we are hardwired for belonging. As Indigenous peoples, interconnectedness, and our relation to all that is, forms our understanding for our reason for being. Knowing and understanding who we are in the world helps us move through it and connect with others. When we don't have it and we struggle to belong, we suffer.

Cultural identity, belonging and connectedness are protective factors that can reduce the impact of negative experiences and trauma. Cultural safety across government, public service, health, child welfare, etc. that has meaningful standards, and accountability is essential so that we are not repeating acts of colonization; and Indigenous-led support services, including identity supporting services like culture and ceremony are vital.

Individuals whose parents attended residential schools are at increased risk for greater depressive symptoms, suicide, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and general psychological distress (Bombay et al., 2008, 2009)



York Region
Children's Aid Society

To report a child protection issue / concern or to consult regarding a child protection concern

Call York Region Children's Aid Society 24/7
905-895-2318 | 1-800-718-3850

Where the child or a parent are believed to identify as Indigenous:

Call Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child and Family Services 24/7
1-844-523-2237

CHAPTER 3

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

3.2. Screening for Violence Against Women & Associated Indicators

This section provides some basic information on how to work effectively with women who may be experiencing VAW .

Half of all women in Canada will experience at least one incident of physical or sexual violence after the age of 16 . The statistics on GBV tell us that violence against women is prevalent and can often lead to devastating consequences for survivors and their children . Community agencies and emergency services are often the site of intervention for those who are experiencing VAW . They play a critical role in screening, assessing, providing support and making referrals for those that are experiencing VAW and their children . As such, it is helpful for service providers to be aware of the possible indicators of VAW and inquire into the nature and possible causes of the presenting problem .

In a private, confidential setting where the potential abuser is not present, introduce the topic:

1. Introducing the topic of violence against women:

"Violence is a problem for many people.

It can be harmful for your health and personal safety, because of how damaging violence in the home can be we often ask all women about it."

"Screening questions about abusive relationships are asked to help determine eligibility for special, specific programs and supports."

"Because of how common violence against women is in our society, we routinely ask all women about it."

"I'm not sure if you identify this as being present for you but many of the people we see are dealing with abusive relationships.

Some are too afraid or too uncomfortable to bring it up themselves so we routinely ask about it."

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

2. Then proceed to assessment questions:



"Does your partner ever humiliate you? Shame you? Put you down in public? Keep you from seeing friends or from doing things you want to do?"

"Do you feel controlled or isolated by your partner?"

"Has your partner or ex-partner ever hit you or physically or sexually hurt you?"

"Has your partner forced you to trade sex for money, food, drugs or a place to stay (sex trafficking assessment question)"

"Has she/he ever threatened to hurt you or someone close to you?"

"Do you ever feel afraid of your partner? Do you feel in danger? Is it safe for you to go home?"

CHAPTER 3

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

3. Listen to the survivor of VAW and provide them with validating messages:



"You don't deserve this. There is no excuse for domestic violence. You deserve better."

"I care. I am glad you told me. I want to work together to keep you as safe and healthy as possible."

"This is complicated. We'll work together to figure this out with what you need and when you are ready."

"Stopping the abuse is the responsibility of your partners', not yours."

"I am concerned. This is harmful to you (and it can be harmful to your children)."

"You are not alone in figuring this out. There are options. I will support your choices."

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

Screening Questions for VAW

Does your partner:

- tease you in a hurtful way in private or in public? Does your partner call you names such as "stupid" or "bitch"?
- act jealous of your friends, family, or co-workers?
- get angry about clothes you wear or how you style your hair?
- check-up on you by calling, driving by, or getting someone else to?
- insist on knowing who you talk with on the phone? Does your partner blame you for his problems or his bad mood?
- get angry so easily that you feel like you're "walking on eggshells"?
- hit walls, drive dangerously, or do other things to scare you?
- often drink or use drugs?
- insist that you drink or use drugs with him?
- read your mail, go through your purse, or other personal papers?
- keep money from you, keep you in debt, or have "money secrets"?
- threaten to hurt you, your children, family, friends, or pets?
- force you to have sex or have sex in ways that you do not want to?
- threaten to kill you or himself if you leave?
- Have you lost friends or no longer see some of your family because of your partner? Does your partner accuse you of being interested in someone else?
- Has your partner gone places with you or sent someone just to "keep an eye on you"?
- Has your partner kept you from getting a job, or caused you to lose a job?
- Has your partner sold your car, made you give up your license, or not repaired your car?
- Is your partner change the way they act in private and in public?

CHAPTER 3

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

Responding to Disclosures

If a client discloses being abused:

- Listen to her story in detail and validate her experience
- Acknowledge her fear, and the risk she takes in speaking with you
- Recognize and label abusive behaviour
- Treat her feelings of fear, anger, love and hope as legitimate
- Assume that her choices are rational ones
- Keep strict confidentiality
- Leave her in control of decisions that affect her
- Make her safety your top priority

Explain that she will reach someone who can talk with her about her situation, her safety, and the options available to her .

You should not tell her what you think she should do about the situation . Instead, provide her with information about resources in the community for herself and her children .

WHERE SHE CAN GET HELP:

For confidential information, support and referrals, provide her with the following information:

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Care Centre (DASA) - 905-883-1212 ext. 0 - page DASA nurse

Sandgate Women's Shelter of York Region Inc .
1-800-661-8294

Women's Support Network 24/7 Crisis Line
1-800-263-6734

Yellow Brick House 24/7 Crisis Line
1-800-263-3247

York Region Centre for Community Safety
1-905-836-7601 ext. 100

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

3.3. Listen, Respond, Inform & Plan

Increase a survivors safety and support in protecting themselves and their children by validating their experiences, providing support, and providing information about resources and options .

Provide information about violence against women to the person:

VAW is common and happens in all kinds of relationships.

Most violence continues and often becomes more frequent and severe.

Violence in the home can hurt children (if the survivor has children).

Abuse impacts the survivors' physical health and mental health.

The goal is not to get women to leave their abusers, or to "fix" the problem for the them, but to provide support and information.

Listen and respond to safety issues:

Provide the survivor crisis lines that offer support, information and referrals i.e. Assaulted Women's Helpline

Share safety planning template and take time to explain it. Also spend time developing the safety plan with the survivor.

Review ideas for how to keep information private and safe from the abuser.

Offer the survivor immediate access to shelter information and crisis supports.

Reinforce survivors autonomy in making decisions regarding her life and relationship.

If the survivor is at high risk and is planning to leave the relationship, explain that leaving without telling the abuser is the safest alternative.

Make sure the survivor has a safe place to go and encourage her to talk to someone they trust about the abusive relationship.

If the survivor says she or he feels she or he is in danger, take this very seriously.

CHAPTER 3

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

3.4. Safety Planning with Survivors of Violence Against Women

Violence in abusive relationships tends to escalate in severity over time . Statistics also demonstrate that the potential for serious escalations of violence tends to occur after a survivor has separated from her abuser . Having a safety plan or a strategy for staying safe whenever a risk to harm is identified can increase the safety of the survivor and her children .

Service providers assisting people to make safety plans should understand that personal safety is the paramount concern in any situation . If a person is in danger, they should leave immediately, if possible .

The role of service providers should be to explore the different options with a survivor of violence against women . The survivor will have a sense of her own safety requirements and these must be explored and integrated into her safety plans .

Each safety plan should be tailored to the unique situation of the particular person and what she feels they need to be safe .

Assisting survivors of violence against women to prepare their safety plans requires that service providers be aware of the unique barriers that some women may face and addressing these barriers . For example, non-status immigrant women, indigenous women, transwomen, disabled women, to name a few, might have specific concerns or challenges that need to be addressed and incorporated into each individual's safety plan .

If you are unable to safety plan with survivor then you should give the 24/7 confidential crisis lines outlined in **Section 3.5.** and they will safety plan with that person .



Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

SAFETY PLAN TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION

It is important to know that although you do not have control over your (ex) partner's violence, it is possible to increase your own, as well as your children's, safety when being subjected to this abuse . Creating a safety plan involves identifying action steps to increase your safety, and to prepare in advance for the possibility of further violence . This information package offers many suggestions and ideas which we hope you will find useful . However, don't try to do everything right away . Take it a step at a time, and start with the ideas which seem most doable for you .

In creating a safety plan it is important to remember that:

Although you cannot control your (ex) partner's violence, it may be possible to increase your own and your children's safety .

- A safety plan is needed whenever the possibility of abuse is identified .
 - This safety plan information is specifically designed for actions that you can take .
 - This safety plan information also includes actions you can take to increase your children's safety .
 - It is important to become familiar with and to review and/or revise your safety plan regularly .
- Abusive situations and risk factors can change quickly .

I. AN EMERGENCY ESCAPE PLAN

The Emergency Escape Plan focuses on the things you can do in advance to be better prepared in case you have to leave an abusive situation very quickly .

The following is a list of items you should try to set aside and hide in a safe place (e .g . at a friend's or family member's home, with your lawyer, in a safety deposit box):

- a) Take a photo copy of the following items and store in a safe place), away from the originals . Hide the originals someplace else, if you can .
 - passports, birth certificates, immigration papers, for all family members
 - school and vaccination records
 - driver's license and registration
 - medications, prescriptions, medical records for all family members
 - welfare identification
 - work permits
 - divorce papers, custody documentation, court orders, restraining orders, marriage certificate
 - lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book
 - bank books
 - insurance papers
 - address/telephone book
 - picture of spouse/partner
 - health cards for yourself and family members
 - all cards you normally use e .g . Visa, phone, Social Insurance, ATM

CHAPTER 3

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

SAFETY PLAN TEMPLATE

II. CREATING A SAFER ENVIRONMENT

There are many things a woman can do to increase her safety . It may not be possible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step . Here are a few suggestions;

1. AT HOME

If you are living with your abusive partner/spouse:

Get your Emergency Escape Plan in order and review it often .

Create a telephone list with numbers of local police, nearest shelter, assaulted women's help line, crisis help line, family members, counselors, children's friends .

Make arrangements with friends or family so that you can stay with them if necessary .

Try to predict the next likely violent episode and make plans for the children to be sent to friends, family etc . (Try to anticipate his "cycle," e .g . when there is a full moon .)

Teach the children to let you know when someone is at the door, before answering the door .

Teach your children how to use the telephone (and your cellular phone, if you have one) to contact the police and the fire department .

Create a code word with your children and/or friends so they know to call for help .

Teach your children how to make a collect call to you and to a special friend if your partner takes the children .

Plan your emergency exits, teach your children and know them well .

Teach your children their own Safety Plan .

If you are not living with your abusive partner/spouse:

Change the locks on the doors and windows . Install a peep hole in the door . Change the locks on your garage and mailbox .

Teach your children to tell you if someone is at the door and to not answer the door themselves .

Keep your restraining order near you at all times .

Make sure that the school, day care, and police have a copy of all court orders, including restraining orders, custody and access orders, as well as a picture of the abusive partner .

If possible, try to predict the next likely violent incident and be prepared .

If you have call display on your phone, be careful about who can get access to the store numbers (example, last number dialed, etc .) .

Have your telephone number unpublished, as it is harder to track than when it is unlisted . Block your number when calling out .

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

SAFETY PLAN TEMPLATE

1. AT HOME (continued)

Consider getting a cellular phone and pre-program numbers of people to call .

Consider moving your furniture around differently as this is something your partner may not anticipate, and cause him/her to bump into it and give you warning that he/she is in the house . Also put your kitchen utensils and knife block in the cupboards so they are not as accessible .

If you live in an apartment, check the floor clearly when getting off the elevator . Look in mirrors and be aware of doorways in hallways . Speak to security, or make an anonymous call, requesting safety in your building .

Purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from upper floors .

If you have a balcony, consider putting wire around it .

Replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors if possible .

Install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers for each floor .

Consider the advantages of getting a guard dog .

Install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to your house .

Do whatever you can to install security systems, including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system, etc . - anything to provide added security .

2. IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

- Tell your neighbours that you would like them to call the police if they hear a fight or screaming in your home .
- Tell people who take care of your children which people have permission to pick up your children
- . Tell people in your neighbourhood that your partner no longer lives with you, and they should call the police if he/she is seen near your home . You may wish to give them a photo and description of him/her and of their car .
- Ask your neighbours to look after your children in an emergency .
- Hide clothing and your Emergency Escape Plan items at a neighbour's house .
- Use different grocery stores and shopping malls, and shop at hours that are different from when you were living with your abusive partner .
- Use a different bank or branch, and take care of your banking at hours different from those you used with your abusive partner .
- Change your doctor, dentist and other professional services you would normally use .
- Do not put your name in your apartment building directory .

CHAPTER 3

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

SAFETY PLAN TEMPLATE

3. AT WORK

Each woman must decide for herself if and/or when she will tell others that her partner is abusive and that she may be at risk . Friends, family and co-workers may be able to help protect women . However, each woman should consider carefully which people to ask for help . If you are comfortable, you may choose to do any or all of the following:

- Tell your boss, the security supervisor, and other key people or friends at work of your situation .
- Ask to have your calls screened at work . It would also help to have these calls documented
- . Discuss the possibility of having your employer call the police if you are in danger from your (ex)partner .

When arriving or leaving work:

- let someone know when you'll be home
- carry your keys in your hands
- get a remote or keyless entry car door opener
- walk with someone to your car
- scan the parking lot
- if you have underground parking, consider parking across the street
- keep a sign in your car saying "call police"
- if you are walking, take a route that is populated
- change the patterns of when you arrive and leave work and the routes you take home
- if you see your partner on the street, try to get to a public place, e .g . a store
- if you see your partner on the street, call attention to yourself and request help



Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

SAFETY PLAN TEMPLATE

III. AN EMOTIONAL SAFETY PLAN

The experience of being abused and verbally degraded by partners is usually exhausting and emotionally draining . The process of surviving and building a new life requires much courage, and incredible energy . To conserve your emotional energy, and to support yourself in hard emotional times, there are a number of things you can do:

- Attend as many Crisis Counselling group sessions as you can
- . Become involved in community activities to reduce feeling isolated .
- Take a part-time job to reduce isolation and to improve your finances .
- Enroll in school to increase your skills
- . Join support groups of other women to gain support and strengthen your relationships with other people .
- Take time for yourself to read, meditate, play music, etc
- . Spend time with people who make you feel good and provide support .
- Take part in social activities, e .g . movie, dinner, exercise .
- Take care of your sleep and nutritional needs
- . Keep your Client Profile up to date so you feel prepared for upcoming events .
- Keep a personal journal to write about your feelings, especially when you are feeling low or vulnerable . Keep it in a safe place or burn it .
- Take time to prepare yourself emotionally before entering stressful situations like talking with your partner, meeting with lawyers, or attending court .
- Try not to overbook yourself - limit yourself to one appointment per day to reduce stress .
- Be creative and do whatever makes you feel good .
- Write something positive about yourself everyday - your personal affirmations .
- Do not find your comfort in excessive use of alcohol or food - it only serves to increase your depression .
- Avoid excessive shopping and impulse buying .
- Join a health club or start an exercise program . It will increase your energy level and increase your sense of well being .
- It's OK to feel angry, but find positive and constructive ways to express your anger .
- Remember that you are the most important person to take care of right now .

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Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

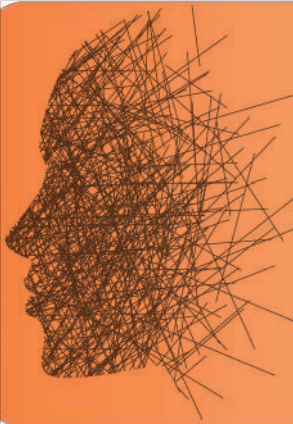
3.5. Referrals & Pathways to Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

Disclosure of abuse has been made

Provide 24/7 Confidential Assaulted Women's Helpline
1-866-863-0511 multi-lingual | 1-866-863-7868 TTY line

For over 30 years, the Assaulted Women's Helpline has served as a free, anonymous and confidential 24-hour telephone and TTY crisis telephone line to all women in the province of Ontario who have experienced any form of abuse .

They provide crisis counselling, safety planning, emotional support, information and referrals accessible in over 200 languages, 7 days a week, 365 days a year . They work in tandem with community partners and sister agencies towards bridging gaps in service and identifying emerging issues or trends relevant to the women they work with . Deaf, deaf-blind and hard of hearing services are also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week .



POINTS OF SELF-REFLECTION

Does your agency and / or office have this number and information posted in a visible space where women who are not comfortable disclosing but are experiencing abuse can access? How can this information be universally shared in your work setting in a way that doesn't compel a woman to disclose abuse but still allows her to access confidential, 24/7 supports?

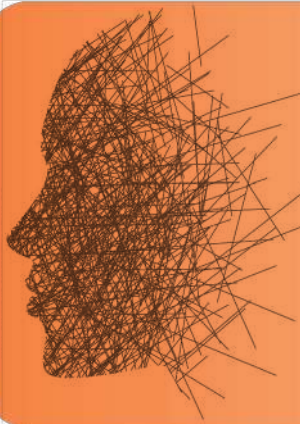
Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

3.5. Referrals & Pathways to Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

Nondisclosure of abuse but abuse is suspected

Introduce the topic of VAW "Unfortunately, VAW is common and happens in all kinds of relationships . Most violence continues and often becomes more frequent and severe . Due to how common and serious VAW is we make it a point to share support information with women in the event that they may know someone who is experience violence or they themselves are experiencing violence ."

Provide 24/7 Confidential Assaulted Women's Helpline
1-866-863-0511 multi-lingual | 1-866-863-7868 TTY line



POINTS OF SELF-REFLECTION

Does your agency have information on the Assaulted Women's Helpline on hand?

You can send in a request to have posters, brochures, and client cards sent to your agency to be shared with women.

CHAPTER 3

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

3.6. York Region's Violence Against Women Supports and Service Mapping

SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUPPORTS

Assaulted Women's Helpline - 24/7 hotline
1-866-863-0511 | TTY 1-866-863-7868

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Care Centre
(DASA) - **905-883-1212 ext. 0 - page DASA nurse**

Toronto Rape Crisis Center - 24/7 Help Line
416-597-8808 or TTY 416-597-1214

Victim Services of York Region
905-953-5363

Women's Support Network - Human Trafficking
24/7 Help Line **905-758-5285**

Women's Support Network - Sexual Violence
24/7 Help Line **1-800-263-6734**

York Region Centre for Community Safety
1-905-836-7601 ext. 100

York Regional Police
Toll free **1-866-876-5423**

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

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COUNSELLING

Addiction Services of York Region
1-800-263-2288

Jewish Family & Child Services
**Sliding scale fees for counselling services*
905-303-5838 | 416-638-7800

Canadian Mental Health Association
905-841-3977

Ontario's 24/7 Mental Health Helpline
1-866-531-2600

Catholic Community Services of York Region
**Sliding scale fees for counselling services*
905-770-7040

Rose of Sharon Services for Young Mothers
905-853-5514 | 1-877-516-3715

Cedar Center
1-800-263-2240

Sandgate Women's Shelter of York Region Inc.
1-800-661-8294

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Care Centre (DASA)
1-800-521-6004

Women's Centre of York Region
905-853-9270 | 1-855-853-9270

Family Services of York Region
**Sliding scale fees for counselling services*
905-895-2371 | 1-888-223-3999

Yellow Brick House
Community Counselling and Support Services
1-877-222-8438

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

3.6. York Region's Violence Against Women Supports and Service Mapping

SUPPORT GROUPS

AIDS Committee of York Region
905-884-0613 | 1-800-243-7717

Family Services York Region
905-895-2371 | 1-888-223-3999

Jewish Family & Child Services
905-303-5838 | 416-638-7800

Sandgate Women's Shelter of York Region Inc .
1-800-661-8294

Women's Centre of York Region
905-853-9270 | 1-855-853-9270

Yellow Brick House
Community Counselling and Support Services
1-877-222-8438



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Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

3.6. York Region's Violence Against Women Supports and Service Mapping

CHILD & YOUTH SUPPORT

360°kids for Kids & Youth 16-25
905-475-6694

Aids Committee of York Region
905-884-0613 | 1-800-243-7717

Blue Door Shelters for
Women, Children & Men
1-888-554-5525

Cedar Center
1-800-263-2240

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault
Care Centre (DASA) **905-883-1212 ext. 0 -**
page DASA nurse

Kids Help Phone - 24/7 Help Line
1-800-668-6868

Family Services of York Region
**Sliding scale fees for counselling services*
905-895-2371 | 1-888-223-3999

Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag
Child and Family Services
1-844-523-2237

Jewish Family & Child Services
**Sliding scale fees for counselling services*
905-303-5838 | 416-638-7800

Rose of Sharon
Services for Young Mothers
905-853-5514 | 1-877-516-3715

Sandgate Women's Shelter of York Region Inc .
Child Witness
1-800-661-8294

Sutton Youth Shelter
905-722-9076

Yellow Brick House Child Witness Program
Mothers in Mind, Child Counselling Program
1-877-222-8438

York Hills Child & Family Centre
1-866-536-7608

York Region Children's Aid Society
1-800-718-3850 | 905-895-2318

York Region Health Connection TTY:
1-866-512-6228 www.york.ca/nursechat
(Chat live with a registered nurse)

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

3.6. York Region's Violence Against Women Supports and Service Mapping

LGBQT SUPPORT GROUPS

AIDS Committee of York Region
905-884-0613 | 1-800-243-7717

Family Services York Region
905-895-2371 | 1-888-223-3999

York Rainbow Network
and York Rainbow
Information Support Line
**1-888-York-LGBT
(1-888-967-5542)**



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Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

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SHELTERS

360°kids for Kids & Youth 16-25
905-475-6694

Abuse Hurts for clothing and household items
when moving out of shelters **1-905-727-4357**

Belinda's Place for Single & Homeless Women
1-289-366-HOPE (1673)

Blue Door Shelters for
Women, Children & Men
1-888-554-5525

Francophone La Maison
Adm. 647-777-6433

Sandgate Women's Shelter of York Region Inc .
1-800-661-8294

Sutton Youth Services
905-722-9076

Yellow Brick House for Women &
Children/Dependants
1-800-263-3247

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Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

3.6. York Region's Violence Against Women Supports and Service Mapping

CRISIS & SUPPORT SERVICES

Colibri 1-877- 797-2060

Fem'Aide VAM Francophone Crisis Line
1-877-Fem-aide (336-2433)

ATS: 1-866-860-7082

Oasis Centre des femmes
416-591-6565

Ontario's Assaulted Women's 24/7 Helpline
1-866-863-0511

Sandgate Women's Shelter of York Region Inc .
1-800-661-8294

Victim Services of York Region
905-953-5363

Women's Support Network 24/7 Crisis Line
1-800-263-6734

Yellow Brick House 24/7 Crisis Line
1-800-263-3247

York Support Services Network 24/7 Community Crisis
Response - 1-855-310-COPE (2673)

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

3.6. York Region's Violence Against Women Supports and Service Mapping

HOSPITALS / HEALTH SERVICES

AIDS Committee of York Region
905-884-0613 | 1-800-243-7717

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Care
Centre (DASA) - 905-883-1212 ext. 0 - page
DASA nurse

Mackenzie Health
Local to Richmond Hill: 905-883-1212
Local to Vaughan: 905-832-4554
TTY Service: 905-883-2123

Markham Stouffville Hospital
Markham: 905-472-7000
TTY: 905-472-7585
Uxbridge: 905-852-9771
Crisis Pregnancy Centre: 905-472-4357

SouthLake Regional Health Centre
905-895-4521 | TTY 905-952-3062

Vaughan Community Health Centre
905-303-8490

York Region Health Connection
1-800-361-5653 | TTY: 1-866-512-6228
www.york.ca/nursechat
(Chat live with a registered nurse)

York Region Public Health
1-800-361-5653 | TTY: 1-866-512-6228

CHAPTER 3

Supporting Survivors of Violence Against Women

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LEGAL SUPPORTS

Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic

Located in Downtown Toronto

416-323-9149

South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)

Located in North York

416-487-6371

Community Legal Clinic of York Region

1-888-365-5226

Toronto Rape Crisis Center - 24/7 Help Line

416-597-8808 or TTY 416-597-1214

Community Legal Education Ontario

www.cleo.on.ca

Victim/Witness Assistance Program

Newmarket Courthouse

1-855-245-1600

Legal Aid Ontario

Toll Free 1-800-668-8258

Yellow Brick House

Family Court Support Worker

1-877-222-8438

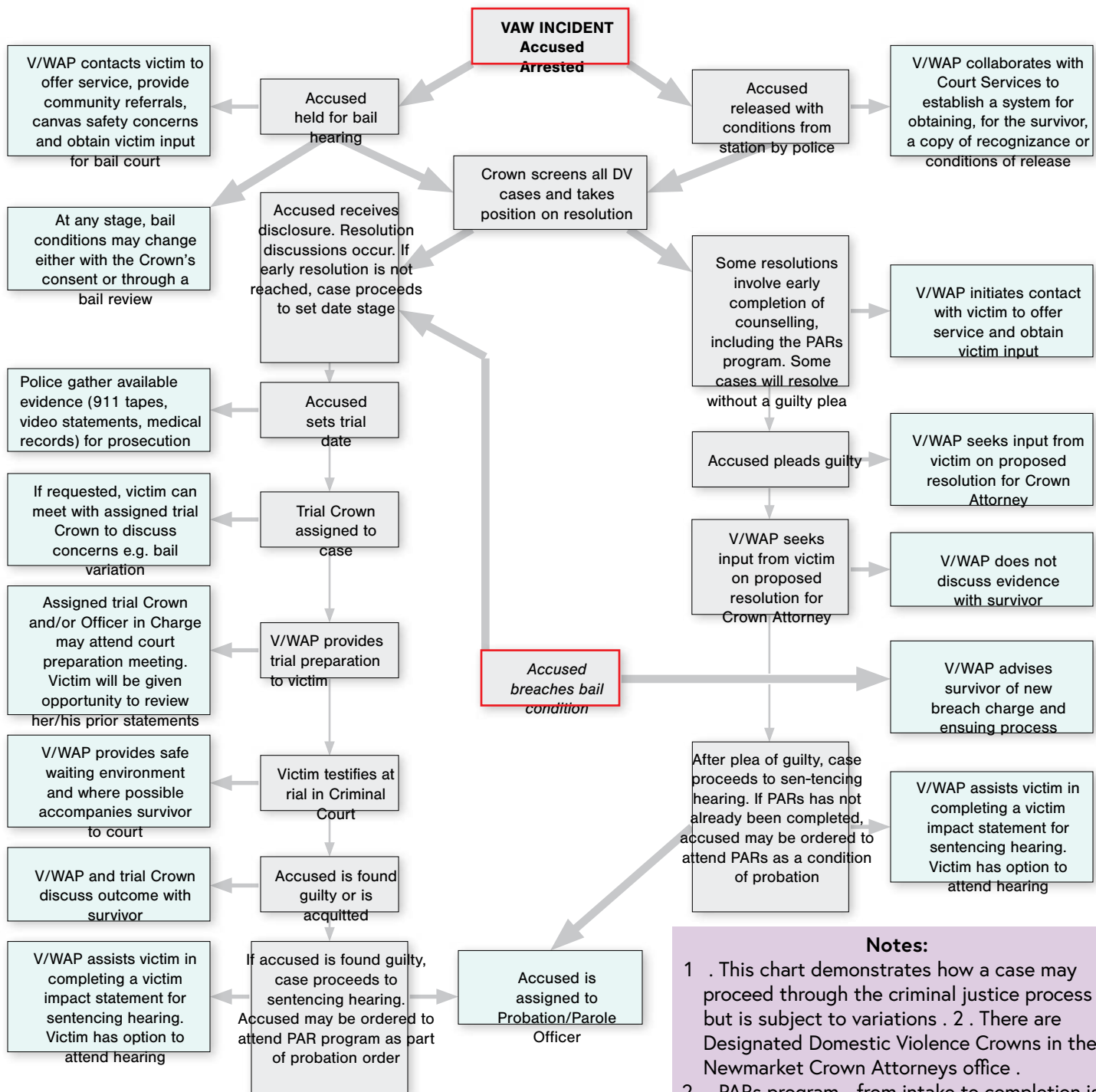
York Hills Child & Family Centre

905-853-4816



CHAPTER 4

Overview of the York Region Criminal Justice System in Domestic Violence Cases & the Legal Rights of Violence Against Women Survivors



Notes:

- 1 . This chart demonstrates how a case may proceed through the criminal justice process but is subject to variations . 2 . There are Designated Domestic Violence Crowns in the Newmarket Crown Attorneys office .
- 2 . PARs program - from intake to completion is approximately 12 to 16 weeks .

4nterpreter services are available for accused and/or victim throughout the process as required .

For comprehensive information on the legal rights of a woman being abused please read the Community Legal Education of Ontario's 2016 ["A Legal Right's Handbook"](#) for survivors of VAW .

What Survivors of Violence Against Women need to know when Navigating the Children's Aid Society

5.1. Background

In recent years a growing body of evidence demonstrates that domestic violence and child maltreatment often co-occur in families and that children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to experience behavioural, social, cognitive and emotional problems . The impact of exposure to violence on children can vary depending on factors such as frequency, intensity, developmental stage, cumulative exposure, co-occurring maltreatment, resiliency and protective factors . Routine screening of domestic violence occurs at every phase of the child protection process including at time of initial referral .

5.2. Duty to Report

Everyone has a duty to protect children and a duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect according to the Child, youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA) Section 72 . This duty to report applies to any child who is under the age of 18 years . The public, including professionals who work with children, must promptly and directly report any suspicions that a child is, or may be, in need of protection . A child in need of protection is one who is or who appears to be suffering from abuse and/or neglect . This includes physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect of basic needs and/or treatment, exposure to domestic violence, abandonment/ separation from their caregiver, caregiver incapacity such as substance abuse or mental health problems . The duty to report is ongoing, which means even if you know a report has already been made about a child, you must make a further report to the CAS if there are additional concerns .

Furthermore, the Federal legislation known as ***"An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families" (FNIM-CYF Act)*** which came into force in 2019 extends additional rights to First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and youth, their families and communities, with regard to their interface with the Child Welfare system . This federal legislation adds to and amplifies many of the rights contained in the CYFSA, but also allows for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities to develop and declare their own legislation, and to enter into an agreement with both the federal and provincial government where the Indigenous law is seen as superseding any provisions of the provincial law . The Indigenous law may also follow the child or youth and their family, so that even if they live outside their community, that law may apply . There are currently a number of First Nations across Ontario (and Canada) who are at various stages of developing or negotiating implementation of their own Child Well-Being laws.

CHAPTER 5

5.2. Duty to Report - CON'T

For reports pertaining to an Indigenous child, information is shared with the respective First Nation and/or community. Children's Aid Societies and Indigenous Child & Family Well-Being Agencies have a responsibility under section 72 of the CYFSA to consultation with bands and First Nations, Inuit or Métis communities. Information shared may include but is not limited to referral source and details of the referral.

Perceptions and biases can inadvertently influence our decision to call a Children's Aid Society or Indigenous Child and Family Well-being Agency. Factors such as ethnicity, religion, family structure, and history influence family practices. Child-rearing practices vary across families and cultures. There are various parenting practices that are safe and healthy but may differ from

5.3. Federal Law and First Nation Laws

- i..Bill -92 received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019. The Bill affirms Indigenous Peoples' inherent right to self-government, as recognized and protected under section 35 of the Constitution Act, includes jurisdiction over the regulation of child welfare matters.
- i The Bill provides a framework for Indigenous Peoples to exercise that jurisdiction, including through negotiated arrangements with federal and provincial governments and the incorporation of Indigenous laws into federal legislation.
- i The s could extend to community members no matter where they are located in Canada.
- iv. The laws created under this act need to be consistent with the minimum standards established by the act in sections 10 to 15 (provision of child and family services). Standards pertain to the following: promoting best interests of the child, substantive equality, providing notice, right to legal representation, priority to preventative care, cannot apprehend based on socio-economic conditions, and must show reasonable efforts were made to have child continue to live with family.
- v. If when Nations create their own laws, their laws will supersede the provincial and federal legislation.
- vi.iClause 2 of the Bill gives the force of federal law to the laws of an Indigenous group, community, or people that has exercised its legislative authority relating to child and family services.
- viiClause 22 provides that these Indigenous laws would then prevail over any conflicting federal, provincial, or territorial laws, subject to certain exceptions, such as the Canadian Human Rights Act.
- viii.iii. It also enables Indigenous groups and communities to transition toward exercising partial or full jurisdiction over child and family services at a pace that they choose.
- vii.iDnaa enmag Binnoojiiyag C&FS will advise if/when there are FN laws applicable to our joint work and will advise at each circumstance

CHAPTER 5

What Survivors of Violence Against Women need to know when Navigating the Children's Aid Society

What happens when I call a Children's Aid Society?

In York Region there are **three** CAS's that provide services:

- **Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child and Family Services** provides services for children, youth and families who are Indigenous (Status or non-Status Native, Inuit or Metis);
- **Jewish Child and Family Services** provides services where children, youth or families are of the Jewish faith; and
- **York Region Children's Aid Society** provides services to all other children, youth and families within the Region of York

All CASs provide emergency service 24 hours a day, seven days a week . When a report is made, an assessment is conducted to determine if a child protection response is warranted . When making a report to CAS a child protection worker will gather the following information as available to assess and determine response:

- Demographic data (including, name, age, gender, address, telephone number, etc .)
- All the information upon which the suspicion is based
- Information on child and family strengths, supports and protective factors
- Other relevant information to assist CAS to conduct a sensitive, customized response to the child and family

Service providers are encouraged to consult with a CAS when there is any uncertainty about making a report . Where there is uncertainty as to which of the 3 CAS's should be consulted, any of them may be consulted . A ***"Guide to Identifying Indigenous Persons"*** has been developed to assist professionals in determining when to contact Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag CFS and is appended to this protocol .



GUIDE FOR IDENTIFYING AN INDIGENOUS PERSON

Definitions

AGENCY

A business or organization established to provide a particular service, typically one that involves organizing interactions and/or transactions between two or more other parties. All organizations mentioned within this protocol are agencies.

ANCESTRY

A person's family or ethnic descent

HERITAGE

The customs, traditions, and beliefs passed down from a person's ancestors

INDIGENOUS

A general term and is a preferred term in international writing and discussion. In Canada, Indigenous collectively refers to people who identify as First Nations, Métis or Inuit. More specifically:

- **FIRST NATIONS** describes people who identify as First Nations, which have distinct cultures, languages and traditions and connections to a particular land base of traditional territory.
- **MÉTIS** is a French term for “mixed blood”, which refers to the specific group of Indigenous people who trace their ancestry to the Métis homeland and are accepted members of the Métis community.
- **INUIT** refers to a group of people who share cultural similarities and inhabit the Arctic regions of Canada, Greenland, Russia and the United States. Inuit is a plural noun, and the singular is Inuk. “Inuit” means “people” so it is redundant to say “Inuit people”

ABORIGINAL

Refers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit people and is no longer the preferred term; Instead use the term Indigenous.

INDIAN

The legal identity of an Indigenous person registered under the Indian Act. This is considered an outdated and derogatory term for Indigenous persons and should only be used when citing titles, works of art, etc., or when discussing history, legislation or constitutional matters.

ELDER

A term of respect for a member of the Indigenous community who has attained a high degree of understanding of traditional teachings, ceremonies, regalia and healing practices.

NON-STATUS INDIAN

For the purpose of this protocol means any person who has Status Indian ancestry or heritage but is not entitled to be registered as an Indian under the Indian Act R.S.C., 1985, c. I-5.

STATUS INDIAN

For the purpose of this protocol means any person who is registered or entitled to be registered as an Indian under the Indian Act R.S.C., 1985, c. I-5.

Identifying Indigenous Persons

All Agencies are responsible at the initial point of contact with a child, youth, or family and in an ongoing manner for confirming whether a person is Indigenous.

As per the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples it is important that children and youth who are identified as Indigenous or identify as Indigenous receive services appropriate to their culture. The Indigenous Identity of a child or youth in a family shall be the primary determinant in whether Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag will provide service.

The above listed Agencies shall determine whether any member of a family is Indigenous by using any of the following methods:

- Asking the parent(s)
- Asking for the referral source
- Asking the child
- Asking the youth
- Asking someone who knows the child, youth, or family
- Asking the First Nation, Inuit or Métis child welfare prevention/protection worker
- Asking the First Nations Designated Person, if applicable under the Regional

Protocol:

- Consulting a relevant First Nation membership clerk 45 59
- With consent, consulting with any Indigenous agency or organization that may have knowledge of the child, youth or family
- Keeping in mind that a youth or child might not necessarily know (or self -identify) whether they are Indigenous, in cases where there are legal proceedings
- If there is any question whether a child or youth is Indigenous, the Agency will contact Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada's Ontario regional Office in an effort to confirm Indian status. However, note that contacting the government will only identify Indigenous persons who are registered as Status Indians; if a person is not registered by the government, it does not mean they are not Indigenous.

Consultation with Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child and Family Services

At any point during an involvement when an employee of an Agency is uncertain about identifying an Indigenous child, youth or family they may call Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag for a consultation. During the conversation, the child, youth or family need not be identified by name.

Documentation of Indigenous Identity

The above listed Agencies will ensure their staff updates the case management system immediately and on an ongoing basis once the Indigenous identity of each person is determined.



STATEMENT REGARDING DECOLONIZATION AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Indigenous families are overrepresented in Child Welfare and the Criminal Justice system (self-reported victimization, police-reported homicide, and provincial and federal custody). Throughout the history of our people from first contact until today, there have been so many examples of situations where challenges in the relationship between Indigenous people, law enforcement and education has led to tragic outcomes. Despite many inquiries and government acknowledgements of the need to reset these relationships, there continues to be unsettling and uneven responses to Indigenous persons in conflict with the law; this has continued to sow seeds of distrust and lack of faith that we will be dealt with in a manner that respects both our treaty and inherent rights, and our dignity as fellow human beings.

The social determinants of health for Indigenous children, youth and families, include food security, connection to the land, housing, portable water, income distribution and employment, mental and physical wellness, early childhood education and education, prevention of family violence and access to language and culture. The World Health Organization Social Determinants and Indigenous Health: The International Experience and its Policy Implications, 2007. pg. 2, advised "colonization of Indigenous peoples...(is) a fundamental underlying broader health determinant." Whereas decolonization and self-determination is a critical mission to achieving equitable outcomes.

"The need to decolonize and Indigenize education stems from shared experiences of colonialism across the globe...Decolonizing education entails identifying how colonization has impacted education and working to unsettle colonial structures, systems, and dynamics in educational contexts." Yvonne Poitras Pratt, et al Indigenous Education and Decolonization, Jan 2018.

The Truth and Reconciliation 2015, Calls to Action for Education 6-12 include addressing gaps in education, funding discrepancies, providing annual comparative funding (Inc. educational and income attainments) reports, establishing federal education legislation, among others. Call to Action 57 states " We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools.... skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism." Calls to Action 62 and 63 outline curriculum development, best practices, teacher training, among others.

The social service system must act and answer the Calls to Action, they must listen and seek to understand, to be educated about First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, to have empathy for our

children, youth and families before making a call to the Children's Aid Society, Indigenous Child Well-being Agency or Police force. To first look within, challenge personal biases, find additional well-being supports that could be put in place, what additional educational supports could be accessed and what has been done to develop relationships with the parents/caregivers? Perceptions and biases can inadvertently influence our decision to call a Children's Aid Society or Indigenous Child and Family Well-being Agency. Factors such as ethnicity, religion, family structure, and history influence family practices. Child-rearing practices vary across families and cultures. There are various parenting practices that are safe and healthy but may differ from your own. Stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, poverty, and sexual orientation can also lead to over-reporting. While poverty is a risk factor for children and youth, it is not a cause of child maltreatment. It's important to question our inherent biases when making assessments about children, youth and families.

Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child and Family Services is firmly committed, in its' work with our community partners, to finding new and innovative approaches to the protection and well-being of children in the context of their families, communities and Nations; we seek approaches and relationships that rebuild capacity, that remove colonial barriers, that support and strengthen traditional Indigenous ways of caring for children and families, and that seek to reduce and eliminate institutionalized and systematic barriers to healthy living. We are determined to ensure that our children and the future generations of our children experience opportunities and outcomes that support their best lives.

SOURCES

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³ Retrieved from www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/issue-15-intersectionality

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¹⁶ Amnesty International . 2014 . Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada: A Summary of Amnesty International's Concerns and Call to Action .

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Prepared for



The York Region
Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee

Communicate

Collaborate

Coordinate

YORK REGION VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE PROTOCOL

2025

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MINISTRY OF
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