

# For Immediate Release



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## Statement from Yellow Brick House on the Sentencing of Former Music Instructor Steven Lehmann

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On March 4, 2026, a court sentenced Steven Lehmann, a former music instructor in the Waterloo Region, to five years in prison after he pleaded guilty to the sexual exploitation of a teenage girl. Court proceedings revealed that the abuse began when the victim was 16 years old and continued over several months while Lehmann, who was twenty years older, used his position of trust to manipulate and exploit the young person.

Cases like this are deeply disturbing and reflect patterns of abuse that organizations supporting survivors encounter far too often. Abuse in relationships involving authority figures can develop through gradual boundary violations, emotional pressure, and manipulation that place young people in situations where it becomes difficult to refuse, speak out, or seek help.

Yellow Brick House recognizes the profound impact that sexual exploitation and abuse can have on survivors. When the perpetrator holds a respected or trusted role within a community, coming forward can be particularly difficult. Survivors frequently face complex emotional, social, and systemic barriers when disclosing abuse. It is critical that their experiences are taken seriously and that they are met with informed, trauma aware support and services.

This case also highlights the broader responsibility of institutions and community organizations that work with youth to ensure strong safeguarding practices, clear reporting pathways, and environments where young people feel safe speaking about harm. When adults in positions such as teachers, instructors, coaches, or mentors misuse their influence, the consequences for survivors can be profound and long lasting.

At Yellow Brick House, we support individuals who have experienced domestic violence and abuse in relationships of trust. We see firsthand how the impact of these experiences can affect mental health, relationships, and a person's sense of safety well beyond the period when the abuse occurred.

While criminal sentencing is one form of accountability, preventing abuse requires collective awareness and action. Communities, institutions, and systems must recognize early warning signs of manipulation and exploitation and respond quickly to protect young people.

Anyone experiencing abuse or exploitation, or anyone concerned about a young person, should know that support is available. Survivors deserve to be believed, supported, and safe.

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### About Yellow Brick House

Since 1978, Yellow Brick House has been providing life-saving services and prevention programs to meet the diverse needs of individuals, families and communities impacted by violence. Our Vision is Freedom from violence. Equality for all. The organization is committed to providing a wide range of free and confidential support services to women and children experiencing abuse and violence and empowering them to transition to a violence free lives.

For more information about Yellow Brick House, visit [yellowbrickhouse.org](https://yellowbrickhouse.org)

Crisis and Support line: 1-800-263-3247 (call or text)

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