

Regional Domestic Violence Unit

In 2007, the tragic murder of a young six-year old boy and his family in a Victoria domestic murder-suicide prompted the creation of a new, specialized team, the Regional Domestic Violence Unit (RDVU), to monitor the region's highest risk domestic violence cases.

Since then, the RDVU has been working with select cases designated by the police as having significant potential for serious injury or death to women and their children. The RDVU includes police jurisdictions from Sooke to Sidney and is comprised of police investigators, VWTH victim support workers, and Ministry of Children and Family Development social workers. The RDVU monitors the highest risk offenders and provides intensive support services tailored to each survivor's needs.

Within the Unit, the VWTH Victim Service support workers' complex role includes **creating safety plans**, assisting women navigate the **legal system** with referrals to important **community services**, such as the VWTH Emergency Shelter, the Spousal Assault Victim Support Program and the Family Law Advocacy Program, among others. The team offers **ongoing support**, from the first time a woman presses charges until after the offender is on probation.

The RDVU plays a critical role in helping women rebuild their lives after a traumatic experience. The Unit's purpose is to **"increase victim safety and offender responsibility"**.


Highly regarded in the community, the RDVU demonstrates the importance and effectiveness of organizations working together to increase education, information-sharing and partnerships that will empower victims, encourage offender accountability and help create a society free from domestic abuse.

How to Reach Us

Crisis and Information Line 250.385.6611

 250.592.2927

 info@vwth.bc.ca

 transitionhouse.net

Charitable No. 10817 3501 RR0001

Tara's Story*

My name is Tara. I am 35-years old and have been married to my husband for 15 years. We have two children and recently immigrated to Canada from the Middle East. I have experienced abuse, physically and psychologically, throughout my marriage.

The abuse started slowly, mostly insults, putting me down as a parent, what I wore and the way I looked. Then it became aggressive. He threatened to hurt me, blocking me from leaving the room, escalating to physical violence. I was a young bride and I tried to be a good wife, but nothing I did was good enough for my husband. Things got worse and he started hitting me. He thought he could do anything to me. Separation or divorce in my family and culture was out of the question, so I felt I had no choice but to endure this.

With our arrival in Canada, I hoped that a new country could be a new start for us and that things would get better. But my husband just continued the beatings. I never felt safe. One night, my husband became furious with me and a neighbour heard my screams and called the police. The police came to our apartment and tried to talk to me about the assault, but I was cautious. I was mistrustful of police – they had never helped me before and what could they do now? And if I told the truth, what would change?

That night, the police made notes and took photographs of my injuries and my husband was arrested. He was later charged with assault and something called a No Contact Order was put in place

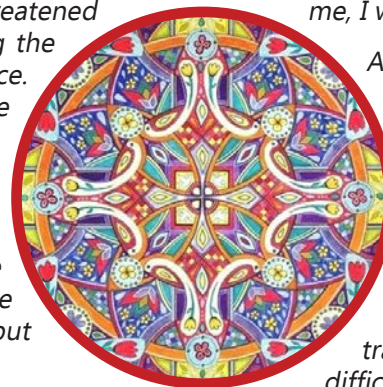
to protect me and my children, so that he would not have any direct contact with us.

I was immediately relieved, but scared at the same time because I have no family in Victoria and no friends. I didn't know what to do next. The same day that my husband was arrested, the police connected me to a counsellor at the Victoria Women's Transition House. Since he was arrested and not a threat to me, I was able to stay in our home.

Although we couldn't meet in person because of COVID, the Transition House counsellor talked to me and my children every day over the phone. Transition House also helped set me up for video conferencing for face-to-face conversations. This was so comforting. My English is not very good, but we used Google translate to help with the more difficult words. The counsellor helped me to communicate with the police, the children's school, immigration resources, the Justice Access Centre and the Crown Counsel. The counsellor dropped off a care package for me and for the children – books, snacks, small toys and games and other items.

Every day, I feel stronger. The support I got from the Spousal Assault Victim Support Program through Transition House was the reason I finally felt able to leave my abusive marriage. I am now on the wait-list for housing and am more confident that I will be able to testify at my ex-husband's trial. I will always be grateful to Victoria Women's Transition House and all the workers for their help, their kindness and understanding.

**Name has been changed for confidentiality.*



Women fleeing intimate partner violence and abuse can access our secure, **Emergency Shelter** located in a confidential location. While at the Shelter, all the client's basic needs will be provided – meals, accommodation, clothing, toiletries etc. Counselling and supports are available on-site for women and their children. Residents can stay for up to 30-days. For more information call the Crisis and Information Line, **250.385.6611**. Women in immediate danger should call **911**.



Victoria Women's Transition House is a registered charity and donations are gratefully appreciated. Give online at **transitionhouse.net** or call **250.592.2927**, Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm. We need your help now more than ever!



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