



A Message from the Executive Director

A New Opportunity

Victoria Women's Transition House (VWTH) is excited about an opportunity to provide additional support services for women and children survivors of domestic abuse. This new opportunity is to offer safe, supportive and affordable **Second Stage Housing**.

Currently, Transition House offers shelter and support for women and their children in our **Emergency Shelter**, where they can stay for up to 30 days. This is usually not enough time, however, for a woman to seek financial, legal and medical assistance; arrange for counselling support; follow up on referrals; and find next-step housing. Financial, emotional and legal issues can be overwhelming, leading many women to feel hopeless and possibly return to their abusive partner. VWTH's Second Stage Housing will give these women more time to transition into permanent housing, regain stability, access support services and continue the process of rebuilding their lives.

Studies and anecdotal evidence, including the experience of VWTH front line staff, tell us that women who leave an abusive relationship struggle to find appropriate, affordable housing — especially in the Victoria area, where the vacancy rate is 0.7%, one of the lowest in the country. Many people do not leave an abusive situation because they are concerned for the housing and safety of

their children. **A key factor in a woman's ability to permanently leave an abusive relationship is the availability of housing** as well as the opportunity to make a sustainable living.

As part of the national move to end homelessness and to support women fleeing intimate partner violence, VWTH's goal is to develop a new Second Stage Housing facility. We are proposing a unique housing model that offers Second Stage Housing with options for **short and long stays**. Available to women and their children when they leave the Emergency Shelter, short-term stays will give women three to six months accommodation in fully furnished apartments. Long-term stays will provide 12-18 month housing, giving women more time to make plans for independent living, free from violence and abuse. The VWTH Second Stage Housing project will be combined with other VWTH programs offering counselling services, supports and referrals, as well as assistance to secure long-term housing.

VWTH is experienced in overseeing similar large-scale housing projects, having developed and built our Emergency Shelter and a 23-unit Third Stage Housing complex for older women. The Second Stage Housing will fill a much needed gap in services so that women who have exited our Shelter can transition seamlessly through each stage of housing, moving towards a fully independent life.



To provide this Second Stage Housing support, **VWTH is looking for land or property** in the Victoria region. If you have information that might help us, please contact me at our Community Office, 250-592-2927 or makennar@vwth.bc.ca

Thank you.
Makenna Rielly, Executive Director

Our Mission

Victoria Women's Transition House Society, working collaboratively, provides shelter, support, counselling and education to women of all ages, with or without children, so that they can live free from the effects of abuse in intimate relationships. The Society strives to prevent and eliminate abuse through education, advocacy and partnerships.

How to Reach Us

Crisis and Information Line
250.385.6611

Community Office
Suite 100 3060 Cedar Hill Road
Victoria, BC V8T 3J5

P 250.592.2927

F 250.592.2995

E info@vwth.bc.ca

W transitionhouse.net

Charitable No.
10817 3501 RR0001





Marie-Claire's Story*

I was in love with Mark. He was everything I was looking for in a partner. But the first time he screamed at me because the green beans I served with dinner were overcooked, I was shocked. It sounds ridiculous now but it was terrifying. The yelling and put downs continued throughout the first few months we were together. The hitting started soon after.

I couldn't understand why Mark would do this. He was well-educated, respected in the community and had a good job. He seemed like a nice guy and we had great chemistry. We adored each other.

Housing is expensive and when he asked me to move in with him to live as a couple, it made sense – at first, anyway. Eventually, I began to recognize when Mark was going to be angry. We disagreed on so many things and our home was not what I thought it would be. To make matters worse, he lost his job.

I noticed that these conflicts built up. He got more and more resentful about the way I did things, little things, like forgetting to take out the garbage. He became possessive of me, getting jealous for no reason, forbidding me from going out with the few friends I had. He called me names, saying I was worthless, telling me I couldn't do anything right. I tried not to care, but those words hurt. And so did his hitting, although like many abusive partners, he made sure to not leave bruises. No one knew what was happening in my home.

Anything would set Mark off. He would explode in anger and get violent, throwing things at me and destroying stuff that was meaningful, like family photos. He'd say that I had it coming to me. I deserved it. I started to believe him. I was ashamed of my situation.

Often, after one of his rages, Mark would walk away like nothing happened or he would start to feel guilty. He got so sad, remorseful.

He seemed so vulnerable. I could see that he would start to worry that I'd call the police or run away. He threatened me if I hinted at leaving him but he always apologized and got affectionate, offering me compliments or small gifts, promising that it would never happen again.



I felt badly for Mark. I thought he couldn't help himself. I felt powerless. I wanted so badly for our relationship to improve; I wanted to believe that we could make it as a couple. We were passionate. We loved each other!

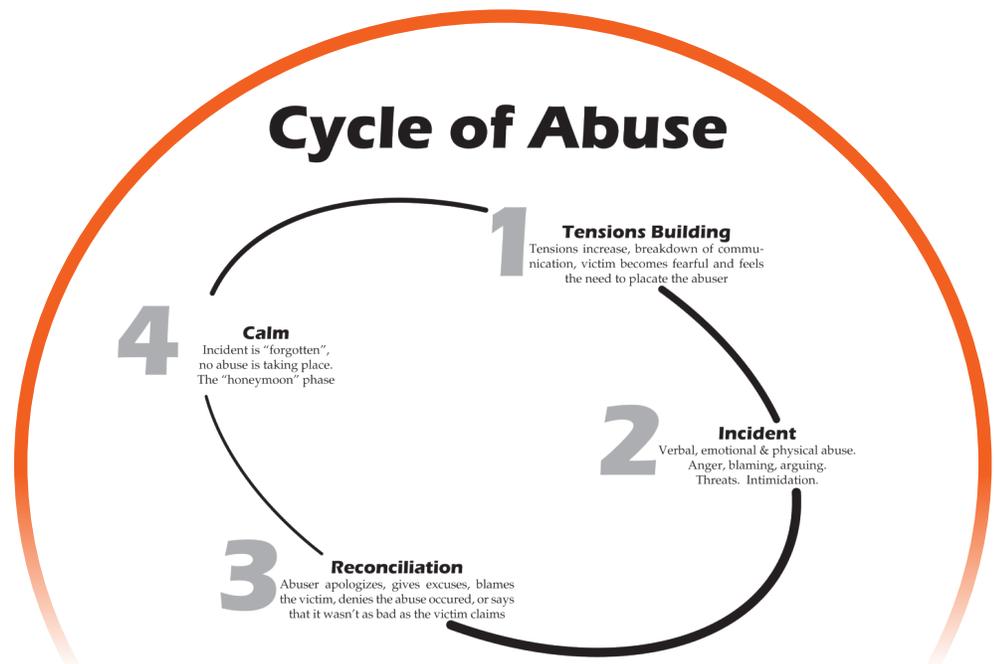
But it never lasted. The misunderstandings and the demands would ramp up again. The tension in the apartment would start to be unbearable, the abuse would escalate and the cycle just continued.

Marie-Claire has described The Cycle of Abuse, a distinct pattern of behaviour typically found in domestic abuse that follows four main stages: Tension Building, The Incident, Reconciliation/The Honeymoon and the Calm Phase. These four phases repeat continuously until intimate partners disengage – typically, when the victim leaves or, tragically, when one of the partners is seriously injured or killed.

Help is available. Marie-Claire is now safe, away from Mark after calling VVTH and getting help and support. If you, a friend or relative is in an abusive relationship, please contact our 24-Hour Crisis and Information Line. Counselling staff are available to provide support, help build a safety plan and determine if room is available in our Emergency Shelter – where women and their children can stay for up to 30 days. We offer counselling for women with specialized counselling for older women and for children who witness abuse.

We can also provide a safe haven for pets while women are in the Shelter, through a boarding program with our local SPCA. Please call today 250-385-6611.

*Names have been changed





Transition House Updates



Shelter Improvements

Over the past few months, the VWTH shelter playground was closed due to equipment deterioration and safety concerns. But we have good news! Thanks to grants provided by **BC Housing, Western Communities Foundation** and **Vital Youth Victoria** via the Victoria Foundation, the playground will soon be repaired and reopened and our shelter children will have lots of time for supervised, healthy, creative, outdoor play in a safe environment.

Drop In Support Group

Generous funding has allowed the weekly VWTH **Women's Drop In Support Group** program to continue this fall and into next year. Facilitated by two specialized counsellors with special guests, each two-hour, psycho-educational group counselling session for women survivors of domestic abuse explores healthy relationships, stress management, communication skills and more. Childminding, bus tickets and snacks are provided. For more information, contact our Community Office, 250-592-2927. Thanks to the **City of Victoria, Victoria Foundation** and **First West Foundation** for support and to another Victoria agency for their partnership on this program.

Older Women

One-on-one and group counselling programs continue for our older women clients including **Turning the Page: A Wellness Project for Older Women**, thanks to year-long funding from the **Tony and Mignon Fenton Trust**; and the **Women's Ceramics Circle—Creativity for Healing** with grants from the **BC Arts Council** and the **CRD Arts Development Service**. Launching in September, the 10-week, once-per-week, arts-based **Ceramics Circle** program is a partnership with the Arts Centre at Cedar Hill, and will offer ceramics studio sessions with VWTH support and counselling to help promote social inclusion and work to reduce isolation for survivors of domestic abuse. It is our hope that this program will also foster healing and enhanced quality of life through community engagement.



Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA)/PEACE Children's Summer Camp

The VWTH Children's Summer Camp program was a big success. This specialized, integrated counselling and recreational day camp for children and youth who have witnessed domestic abuse in their home, ran for two, two-week sessions. The program encouraged youth to better identify and express their feelings, set and



assert boundaries, as well as safely try out new activities in a safe, fun environment. Camp mornings were dedicated to quiet, group counselling activities, with the afternoons out in the community – kayaking, wall-climbing, zip lining, beach combing, swimming, and more. Children participated in camp free of charge with snacks provided. Thank you again to **Harbourside Rotary, Peninsula Co-Op, the TLC Fund, CFAV Santas Anonymous, the Norgaard Foundation**, and the generous **staff at Colliers Victoria** who funded this program as well as our March Spring Break Camp.

Violence is Preventable (VIP) and Back to School

VWTH is booking **VIP school workshops** for the fall and winter of 2018-19. Facilitated by two trained VWTH counsellors, the 60-75 minute interactive workshop offers information to youth about healthy relationships, dating violence, communication, boundaries and other key topics. As part of the presentation, a teacher is present and has the opportunity to increase their own awareness about domestic abuse and how to offer support to their students. One of the key values inherent in the VIP Program is the belief that every student benefits from increased awareness of the issue of interpersonal violence. For more information or to book VIP for your school or classroom, contact our Community Office, 250-592-2927. VIP is free of charge thanks to funding provided by **100+ Women Saanich Peninsula, the Foord Foundation** and the **BC Society of Transition Houses**.



VWTH Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, September 11 | 2:00-4:00pm
Oak Room at Carlton House of Oak Bay

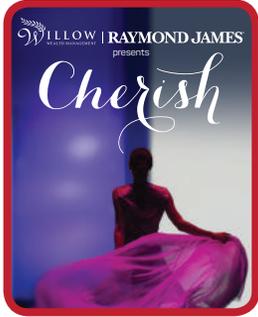
If you would like to join us at our AGM, please RSVP to Samantha Flood at samanthaf@vwth.bc.ca



Cherish: A Glamorous Evening of Fashion and Philanthropy

Thursday, October 4th
Doors at 6:45pm | Show at 8:00pm
Crystal Ballroom & Palm Court
Fairmont Empress Hotel

\$85* plus service fees
**Tax receipt for a portion provided*



Don't miss *Cherish!* Sold out last year! Sixteen energetic dancers will dance down the runway in the Crystal Ballroom to the urban beat of DJ Jansom, spotlighting a

dance genre of choice – ballet, tap, contemporary, flamenco – and modelling the latest in men's and women's fall fashions from Victoria's **Tulipe Noire, Hughes, and Outlooks for Men.** Expect amazing fashion ensembles, gorgeous hair and make-up, and incredible auction items, all in support of VWTH and Dance Victoria. Glass of wine and light canapés provided.

Hosted by **Tess Van Straaten**, *Cherish* is generously sponsored by

Kirsty Thomson, Willow Wealth Management of Raymond James.

Tickets are available by phone or in person at the Royal and McPherson box office, 250-386-6121, or at rmts.bc.ca

Cherish Community Champion donor program – contact Elizabeth O'Brien to join with contributions of \$300 or more: elizabetho@vwth.bc.ca

Women's Fundraising Golf Event a Huge Success

Victoria Women's Transition House sincerely thanks donors, sponsors, and attendees of the **Women, Wine, Golf and Dine** fundraising event at the Victoria Golf Club (VGC) in June. This sold-out women's event was fun-filled and hugely successful, raising over **\$24,000** to support the Transition House Emergency Shelter and support services.

We wish to thank Committee Chair, **Shelley Evans** and our event sponsor **Dave Schneider, Wellington-Altus Private Wealth, Schneider Wealth Management.** Thank you to **Island Window Coverings Ltd** and **Island Floor Centre Ltd** for sponsoring the dinner and to **Bill and Wendy Brown** for generously sponsoring the wine reception. **Caddy Bay Liquor Store,**

Trialto Wine Group, Kris de Ruiter, Maude Hunter's Pub and Liquor Store and **Joanne Turner** all helped supply wine.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to all of the **hole sponsors, hospitality providers, auction and prize donors,** and all those who donated to, or attended, the event. We also want to thank our **team of dedicated volunteers** for their help setting up, managing activities on the course, and overall making the event go smoothly. Thanks also to the fantastic **VGC staff** for always being professional, supportive, friendly and helpful. We are very grateful to all for helping to make this such a fun, successful event.

For over twenty years, the VGC and its members have generously supported VWTH through golf tournaments and events, raising funds to assist our Shelter, counselling programs and services. VWTH values the friendships that have developed over the years with the VGC members and staff, and we are extremely grateful for their support.



Thank you.

YES! I wish to support Victoria Women's Transition House

I would like to give a gift of:

\$1000 \$500 \$100 \$50 Other \$ _____ A tax receipt will be issued for all donations over \$10

Mail: 100 - 3060 Cedar Hill Road Victoria, BC V8T 3J5

Online: Visit transitionhouse.net and click on Donate

Phone: Call 250-592-2927 to make a credit card donation

Enclosed is my cheque payable to Victoria Women's Transition House

I prefer to use my Visa Mastercard AmEx

Card No: _____ Expiry: ____/____

Cardholder Name: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Email: _____ Sign up for e-news

Please send me information about donating stocks or securities

Please contact me about monthly giving

Please send me information about making a gift in my will to VWTH

I have already included VWTH in my will

VICTORIA WOMEN'S
Transition House
 SOCIETY

HOW TO REACH US:

#100 3060 Cedar Hill Road
 Victoria BC V8T 3J5

P 250-592-2927

E info@vwth.bc.ca

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transitionhouse.net

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