

Our Mission

Victoria Women's Transition House Society collaborates, advocates and educates to address and prevent intimate partner violence and abuse of women and children through supportive shelter, housing, counselling and other community-based services.

Victims and Survivors of Crime Week and VWTH

May 12 to 18 is national **Victims and Survivors of Crime Week**, and the theme is *The Power of Collaboration*. At Victoria Women's Transition House (VWTH), we know that the partnerships we've developed and nurtured during the past 50 years are essential in our efforts to end gender-based violence in our community, and beyond. With financial support from the Department of Justice Canada, this week we will bring awareness to the scope of intimate partner violence and the programs and services VWTH offers to women and children who are impacted by abuse. Today's focus is **Empowering Women to Overcome Abuse**.



Stopping the Violence Program

The Stopping the Violence (STV) program provides individual and group trauma-informed counselling for women currently experiencing abuse or who are leaving or have left an abusive relationship. Clients are guided to recognize the different forms of abuse and to explore the impacts of abuse. Counsellors help them to develop a safety plan, learn to set boundaries and build self-esteem. Women are also connected to VWTH programs, as well as referred to other community services and programs.

In 2023/24, three experienced staff members held **2,104** individual counselling sessions, **40** group sessions, and served **217** women of all ages and walks of life. Our STV counsellors have a caseload of over 100, and see more than 20 women per week.



How to Reach Us

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Charitable No. 10817 3501 RR0001

Department of Justice Canada / Ministère de la Justice Canada

We acknowledge and thank the Department of Justice Canada for making this publication possible, as part of Victims and Survivors of Crime Week 2024.

Sometimes when a woman first considers leaving an abusive relationship, the transition can be confusing and challenging. Victoria Women's Transition House (VWTH) offers over a dozen support programs and counselling services at no cost to clients, including the 50+ Outreach Program, Spousal Assault Victim Support Program, Homelessness Prevention Program, and more.

Family Law Advocacy Program

At Victoria Women's Transition House (VWTH), our clients are often going through a very difficult time in their lives and the not-so-simple thought of navigating family law, court processes and the justice system to facilitate the resolution of their legal issues can be overwhelming. Our Family Law Advocacy program can help. The VWTH Family Law Advocate (FLA) offers specialized family law support, advocacy and education to survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV). Their expert, non-judgmental guidance is life-changing and empowering for many of our clients. This year, 81 clients sought advice from VWTH's Family Law Advocate.

We sat down recently to chat with our VWTH Family Law Advocate to learn more.

What is your background?

My background is in family law. I practiced family law in Vancouver, Surrey and Langley, B.C., specializing in family law litigation. I am also a certified Family Law Alternative Dispute Resolution professional. I bring extensive knowledge and experience of family law and the legal and court process, to the position of FLA.

What made you want to work at Victoria Women's Transition House?

Access to justice! People fleeing IPV need excellent legal information and support in navigating our family law system. The process can be daunting and confusing at the best of times. When finances and trauma, childcare and legal procedure are added to the stack of barriers, there is no procedural fairness.

What does this type of position bring for women who are needing help in this area?

An in-person intake meeting to sort through legal issues and concerns is step one. Then, where appropriate, I offer referrals to other sources of



information and support. For the family law issues that I can assist with, I offer legal information. If the client needs specific legal advice, I refer them to Legal Aid or other sources of legal advice. Once admitted to the FLA program I can continue to support and assist them even if they have a lawyer. I offer in-person or phone appointments, assistance with document drafting and editing, clarification of legal information, caselaw, etc.

What brings you joy and meaning to your work here?

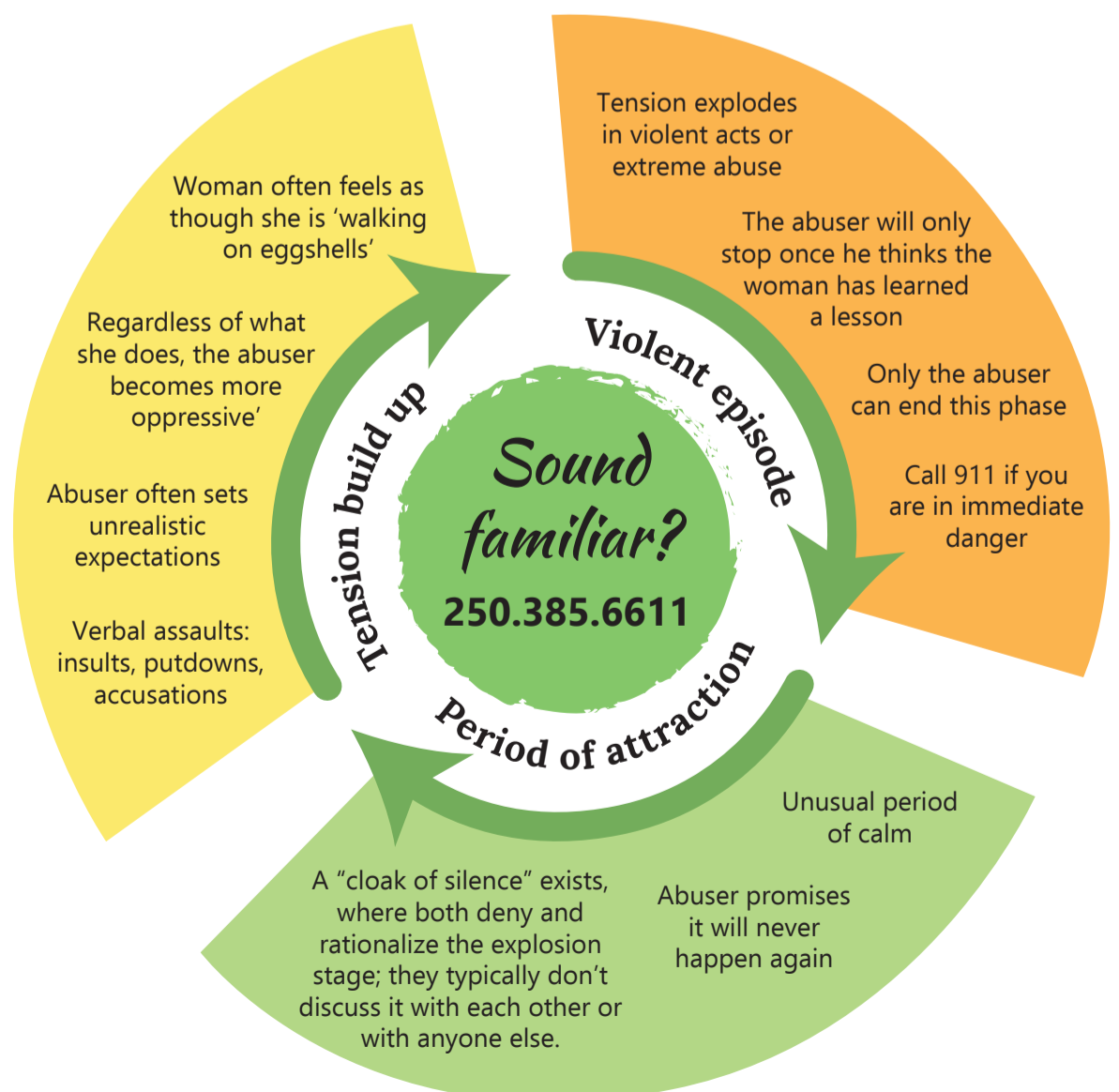
Seeing the confidence and empowerment that legal information gives to VWTH clients. I get to see our clients transform from feeling vulnerable, sometimes confused and overwhelmed, to recognizing that the family law process can be navigated and that they will be guided, connected to resources, and supported along the way. This a totally free service, and I am proud to be a part of it!

Donor Reflection

"I watched my mother suffer terribly from emotional abuse and control from her second husband, to the point where our family facilitated a rescue and she left him. I was a young adult at the time, my father and her first husband having died by suicide after years of depression and alcoholism. My mother, a classic giver, had given all she could to this second partner, and her life with him was undermining her health and confidence. For this reason, I am always glad to contribute to Transition House when I can. Thank you for all you do." ~ David B.

The Cycle of Abuse

An abusive relationship typically goes through three cycles – starting with a **buildup of tension**, leading to a **violent episode**, then to a period of **attraction (or the honeymoon stage)** – each with its own characteristics. Women may find that their reactions during these stages range from fear or anger to depression or denial.



Do you recognize your relationship in these descriptions? Call Victoria Women's Transition House for help.