

Victims and Survivors of Crime Week 2021

# Supporting Women and Children Escaping Intimate Partner Violence and Abuse

VICTORIA WOMEN'S  
*Transition*  
 *House*  
SOCIETY

## Our Mission

Victoria Women's Transition House Society (VWTH) 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.

## Emergency Shelters

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

## Volunteer Reflection

*My volunteer experiences with VWTH began a few years ago as I was seeking out opportunities to be a 'hands-on' volunteer. I reached out to the VWTH and was immediately connected to their warm and attentive volunteer coordinator, who matched me with opportunities in two different areas.*

*The first was representing VWTH as a spokesperson at the monthly Soup Sisters event. I found this experience enriching in so many ways—witnessing the Soup Sisters in action made it easy to speak to groups of people each month about the importance of VWTH and the impact the contributions have with those individuals attending the events. Second, it was full circle for me when I visited the Shelter as a volunteer cook to see the stacks of soups in the freezer and know the story behind the soups.*

*Preparing and providing meals for the women and children is such an easy way to offer my time and enjoy doing what I love—cooking. Every week, someone pokes their head into the kitchen to ask, "what's for dinner?" then offers sincere interest, thanks, and appreciation for having a cooked meal prepared for them and their family.*

*The staff, clients and other volunteers make me feel a part of a small community working to support each other—showing gratitude, flexibility, and acceptance along the way.*



Photo: Containers of cream of carrot cheddar soup prepared and packaged by Soup Sisters volunteers for VWTH, 2019

## How to Reach Us

**Crisis and Information Line 250.385.6611**

### Community Office

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

☎ 250.592.2927

✉ info@vwth.bc.ca

🌐 transitionhouse.net

📘 @VWTHS

📷 @Victoriawth

Charitable No. 10817 3501 RR0001

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. *Thank you.*

 Department of Justice Canada    Ministère de la Justice Canada

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## Engaging Boys and Men in Anti-Violence Work

Police-reported data shows that in cases of family violence, girls and women are more than twice as likely to be victims of offences involving violence or the threat of violence and are 5.5 times more likely to be a victim of a sexual offence compared with boys and men. *Source: Statistics Canada, 2019*

As organizations and communities, in addition to supporting survivors of violence and abuse, it is also important to focus on prevention. Research tells us that children who witness abuse in the home are more likely to enter into abusive relationships as victims or abusers. Add into the mix, factors such as toxic masculinity; gender stereotypes; the need for power and control over a partner or family member; lack of accountability and there's a higher likelihood that boys and men might become violent or abusive towards girls and women.

By offering supports and engaging men in counselling and anti-violence work from a young age, we can start to have conversations of understanding and healing, encourage real change in behaviours, attitudes and actions and create powerful anti-violence advocates and change-makers.

VWTH's PEACE/Children Who Witness Abuse Program offers Violence is Preventable (VIP)



workshops for students in school and individual and age-appropriate counselling for boys aged 12-14, as well as individual and group counselling for girls, *Shine*. These counselling programs provide a safe space for understanding and learning how to cultivate healthy relationships. Topics include issues related to consent, anger, assertiveness, boundaries and self-esteem.

Organizations such as the Moosehide Campaign and Next Gen Men are also working towards hopeful change by engaging boys and men in anti-violence work and offering programming that provides the skills and support to develop healthy relationships.

## Ways to Help if You Suspect Abuse

### Key Facts:

- In 2018, police-reported data showed close to 100,000 people in Canada experienced intimate partner violence (IPV)
- Women were the vast majority of those who experienced IPV, accounting for 79% of survivors

*Source: Statistics Canada, 2018*

Abuse and intimate partner violence (IPV), also called domestic abuse, can happen to anyone, regardless of age, gender identity, race, religion, level of education or socioeconomic background.

Many warning signs can indicate that a person may be experiencing IPV or abuse.

**Emotional:** seeming sad, lonely and withdrawn; becoming aggressive and angry; appearing scared or intimidated after a phone conversation; nervousness when the partner is around.

**Physical:** the person makes last-minute excuses about why they can't meet; absences from work and other activities; covering bruises or other signs of trauma, use of drugs or alcohol to cope.

**Performance-based:** poor concentration; mistakes; inconsistent work quality.

If you recognize these signs in someone—a loved one, neighbour, colleague or community member, there are ways you can help:

- **Talk to the person** about what you have noticed and express your concern for them
- **When reaching out, offer support** in a manner that is respectful, calm and non-judgemental
- **Never blame the survivor** and recognize that the violence is not the survivor's fault
- **If they deny the abuse**, assure them that you are there to listen anytime they want to talk and encourage them to reach out to resources like VWTH when safe to do so

VWTH staff can help women create a safety plan and alert them to local resources.

## Stopping the Violence Program

The VWTH **Stopping the Violence (STV) Program** offers individual and group trauma-informed counselling for women currently experiencing abuse or survivors who are leaving or have left an abusive relationship.

Counsellors guide clients to recognize the different forms of abuse and understand the dynamics of relationship violence and abuse. Through counselling

and psychoeducational and wellness groups, women are able to explore the emotional and psychological impacts of abuse, develop a safety plan, set healthy relationship boundaries and build self-esteem and assertiveness skills. Fun and engaging trauma-informed exercise classes that support women in their healing journey are held every week. STV clients are also connected to and can access other community-based services and programs.

## Community Education Workshops

Globally, about one in three (30%) women worldwide have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. *Source: World Health Organization, 2021*

VWTH offers free, informative, intimate partner violence public education workshops. The workshop takes participants through some of the root causes of intimate partner violence and abuse, as well as the types of violence that often emerge from these dynamics: including emotional (also referred to as psychological), physical, sexual, spiritual, systemic and financial abuse. Evidence-informed counselling tools and models are discussed, such as the Power and Control Wheel, which represents the lived experience of victims and survivors of abuse.



Participants leave with an understanding of the complexity of abuse and the many reasons why people may stay in an abusive relationship. The workshop also provides an overview of VWTH's services and supports, including our 24-hour Crisis & Information Line and outlines how we all can take an active role in supporting women who find themselves in an abusive situation.

In-person presentations are available for small groups in a COVID-safe environment or online via Zoom. Contact us to book a workshop.

*Pictured: Basic adaptation of the Power and Control Wheel (The Duluth Model), Domestic Abuse Intervention Project*

**24-Hour Crisis & Information Line: 250.385.6611**