



Early Childhood Exposure To Domestic Violence: You Can Help

A toolkit for individuals working with children
between the ages 0-5





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Women's Contact Society



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Part I: Background



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: WHY YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IT

Domestic violence is everyone's problem. Globally, about 1 in 3 women report being abused by their intimate partners at some point in their life. According to Statistics Canada (2017), 1 in 10 Canadians have witnessed violence by a parent or guardian against another adult in their home before the age of 15. Around 70% of these child witnesses also reported being the victim of childhood physical and/or sexual abuse. Those who witnessed violence between their parents also reported experiencing the most severe forms of physical abuse.¹ By working together we can reduce the impacts of domestic violence on children.²

A child who sees, hears or is aware of violence against one parent or guardian by another is being exposed to domestic violence. While not all children are affected in the same way by this exposure, there may be significant long-term impacts that can negatively affect these children's physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and social development.³

It is not only exposure to domestic violence that can harm a child. They may be harmed by physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect. Any form of child abuse or neglect must be reported to the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA). More information on reporting child abuse and neglect is on page 10-12.

WHY YOU PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 5

When domestic violence is identified early, we can provide more effective interventions and supports for children and their families.⁴ Having supportive adults and stable environments in their lives can have a positive effect on children's development, even if they are exposed to domestic violence. For this reason, individuals who work with children between the ages 0-5 are in a unique position to make a difference.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

The purpose of this toolkit is to raise awareness and provide information about how to recognize the signs of exposure to domestic violence for children ages 0-5, and to provide tips for how to safely respond. You will also find key provincial resources and helpline numbers at the end of this toolkit. This toolkit is intended as a practical guide of helpful tips, but it is not exhaustive or meant to be used as a stand-alone training tool.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is meant for any individual who works with young children, including but not limited to: Early Childhood Educators, Child Care Providers, Home Visitors, Infant Development Practitioners, Indigenous Early Years Practitioners, Child Minders, Sunday School Teachers etc. Throughout this document the term "*early years provider*" will be used to refer to all professionals and/or helpers who work with children between the ages of 0-5 and their families.

A WORD ABOUT LANGUAGE

While men, two-spirited, transgender, gender fluid people, and same sex couples also experience domestic violence, women are victimized by men in greater numbers, and experience more severe forms of violence. For this reason, this document will highlight violence against women and children's exposure to violence.⁵ The tips and strategies for helping victims of domestic violence and their children can be used for all genders and sexual orientations.

There are many different ways to define a person who uses domestic violence against their intimate partner such as: perpetrator, offender, or abuser. In this document, the term "*offender*" will be used throughout.

Part II:

What is Domestic Violence?



DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is also known as intimate partner violence, spousal violence, family violence or violence against women. Though every situation is different, domestic violence is a pattern of physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, financial and/or spiritual abuse by a **current** or **former** intimate partner, to maintain **power and control** over one's partner.⁶

Sexual Abuse

Includes sexual exploitation, unwanted sexual touching, rape and other sexual activities considered by the victim to be degrading, humiliating, painful and committed without consent or the ability to consent, against a person's will, obtained by force or threat of force or intimidation.

Financial Abuse

Includes taking control of all finances and financial decisions, stealing from or controlling money or valuables and unauthorized use of property, money or valuables. Forcing one to work or denying one's right to work.



Spiritual Abuse

Includes preventing expressions of spiritual or religious beliefs, preventing attendance at a place of worship and putting down or mocking of religious beliefs, traditions or cultures.

Emotional and Psychological Abuse

Includes verbal abuse, constant criticism, insults, emotional blackmail, isolation from loved ones and support networks, humiliation, yelling, put-downs and threats, stalking behaviours, harming pets, damaging property and threats to harm or kidnap children.



Physical Abuse

Includes hitting, biting, choking, throwing objects, pushing, punching, slapping, kicking, starving, sleep deprivation, hair pulling, stabbing or mutilation.



QUICK FACTS ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Rates of **domestic abuse related homicide** are **4.5** times greater for **women** than men.



70% of **relationship violence** is not reported to the police.

Children **under the age of five** are more likely to live in a home where **domestic violence occurs**.⁷

Children who are **exposed to domestic violence** are more likely to experience child abuse and neglect. In Canada, **almost one third** of confirmed child abuses cases involve exposure to **domestic violence**.⁸



In 2015, approximately

18,000 **women and children** accessed transition houses and safe homes to escape **violence or abuse in BC**.⁹



Relationship violence accounts for

over 1/4

of all violent offences reported to the police.

Every 4 days a **woman is killed** by a family member in **Canada**.¹⁰

Pregnancy increases a woman's risk of experiencing **domestic violence**.¹¹



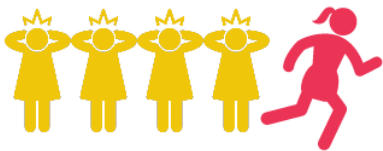


WHO EXPERIENCES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence can happen to anyone, regardless of gender, age, ethnic background or income. However, there are some people who are at increased risk for domestic violence: Lesbian—Gay—Bisexual—Transgender—Queer/Questioning and other (LGBTQ+) communities, Indigenous communities, people with disabilities, women and immigrant and refugee communities.¹²

Did you know?

On average it takes a woman at least **five attempts** to leave a violent relationship before permanently ending it.¹³



Victims may still be at risk of violence even after leaving an abusive relationship. In fact, domestic violence murders are most likely to occur after a couple has separated.¹⁴ As domestic violence is usually about **power and control**, when a victim leaves it can be one of the most dangerous times for themselves and their children.

There are many reasons someone may choose to stay in an abusive relationship. Some of these reasons are:^{15 16}

- **Lack of money and family support.**
- **Fear of the justice and/or child welfare systems.**
- **Fear of retaliation or being blamed for breaking up the family.**
- **They love the abuser and believe the offender will change.**
- **Cultural or religious reasons.**
- **Shame, guilt or feelings of failure**
- **Language barriers or uncertainty about immigration status or other legal issues.**

As helpers, it is not our place to judge why someone chooses to stay, but rather to be compassionate, create a safe place where a victim can feel heard, provide support to create a safety plan (whether they stay or leave the relationship), and offer resources in our communities.

THE CYCLE OF ABUSE

Domestic violence differs from other forms of violence because it is usually not limited to a one-time event. The majority of abusive relationships display what is known as the cycle of abuse.¹⁷



The cycle has four stages:

Abusive behaviour: An offender may use physical, sexual, financial, spiritual, psychological and/or emotional abuse to **coerce and control** their partner. During this phase it is not uncommon for offenders to use the children against their partners. For example, some offenders might say things like: *"I'll take the kid(s) and leave"* or *"if you report me to the police, the Ministry will take the kid(s)"* or *"you'll never see your children again."*

Apology/Excuses: During this time the offender may apologize and promise domestic violence won't happen again, make excuses, blame their partner, or minimize what happened. Victims may also deny or minimize the impact of the violence. This is a common



survival or coping strategy. As helpers it is important that we are aware of our biases about both victims and offenders.

Calm: Things appear to be normal and the couple gets back into their daily routines.

Tension Build-up: Eventually the tension builds, the cycle begins again, and the offender uses domestic violence against their partner.

The cycle of abuse can vary in how often it happens as well as how intense the abuse is. Remember, domestic violence can look different from situation to situation.¹⁸

post-traumatic stress disorder.^{21 22} Traumatized children are often initially misdiagnosed with ADHD, when in fact, it is their exposure to violence that is contributing to their problematic behaviours.



Some common behavioural changes in children who are exposed to domestic violence can include:

- **Sleep problems.**
- **Irritability, emotional distress.**
- **Fear of being alone.**
- **Immature behaviour.**
- **Problems with toilet training.**
- **Delayed language development.**

Social problems can also appear where children don't make friends easily, have a hard time having empathy for others, and/or display bullying behaviours.^{23 24 25}

Not all children are affected in the same way.²⁶ In fact, some children don't appear to demonstrate any impacts that are related to having been exposed to domestic violence. For this reason, it is important that you remain supportive and open-minded as you learn more about the situation.

Did you know?



90% of a child's brain development happens before age 5.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN?

Children experience a period of rapid brain development between ages 0-5 and exposure to domestic violence can prevent or slow down their healthy growth. We are continually learning more about the impact to children who are exposed to domestic violence, and more specifically, the mental and emotional stress that children experience in tense and unpredictable environments.^{19 20}

One of the hormones that the brain releases under periods of stress is called cortisol. When there is too much cortisol in the body, especially for long periods of time, it can cause health problem such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder-like behaviours (ADHD), anxiety, depression or

Part III: Duty to Report



Did you know?

Domestic Violence is a crime in Canada.



Aboriginal Agency (DAA). It also clarifies what is considered to be domestic violence. For example:

- **Violence between the child's parents, regardless of whether they live together.**
- **Violence between a parent and a non-parent (e.g., a girlfriend or boyfriend of the parent).**
- **Violence between people whom the child lives with, who are not necessarily his/her parents (e.g., the child's grandparents, if they live with him/her).**

Did you know?

Under BC law **EVERYONE** has a **duty to report suspected child abuse and neglect.**



WHEN AND WHAT TO REPORT

A "duty to report" means you personally have a legal obligation to let a child welfare worker from MCFD or a DAA know if you have reason to believe a child of any age (up to age 19) has been or is likely to be abused or neglected, or is emotionally harmed, or likely to be physically harmed by living in a home with domestic violence. "Reason to believe" means that, based on what you have seen or information you have received, you believe a child has been harmed or is likely to be harmed.

CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ACT (CFCSA)

In BC, the CFCSA sets out when a child is in need of protection. As of June 1, 2014 there have been updates to the CFCSA, which bring a stronger focus to the seriousness of domestic violence. These changes also clarify that harm to a child is likely to increase if the child is living in a home where there is domestic violence, even if the violence is not directed at the child.

An important change is that the CFCSA now considers domestic violence as a circumstance that may need to be reported to the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) or a Delegated

To make a report, please call MCFD Centralized Screening at 1-800-663-9122 any time of the day or night.

If you believe a child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1 or your local police. Police can respond immediately and contact a child welfare worker once the child is safe.





The CFSCA sets out the circumstances under which you must make a report to an MCFD or a DAA child welfare worker. You must report when you have reason to believe that a child or youth may need protection because:

- **A child or youth has been, or is likely to be, physically harmed, sexually abused or sexually exploited by a parent or another person and the parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child or youth.**
- **The child or youth has been or is likely to be physically harmed because of neglect by the child's or youth's parent.**
- **The child or youth is emotionally harmed by the parent's conduct.**
- **The child or youth is deprived of necessary health care.**
- **The child's or youth's development is likely to be seriously impaired by a treatable condition and the child's or youth's parent refuses to provide or consent to treatment.**
- **The child's or youth's parent is unable or unwilling to care for the child or youth and has not made adequate provisions for the child's or youth's care.**
- **The child or youth is or has been absent from home in circumstances that endanger the child's or youth's safety or well-being.**
- **The child's or youth's parent is dead and adequate provision has not been made for the child's or youth's care.**
- **The child or youth has been abandoned and adequate provision has not been made for the child's or youth's care.**
- **The child or youth is living in a situation where there is domestic violence by or toward a person with whom the child or youth resides.**



REPORTING CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

You do not need to have all the details to make a report, nor do you need proof – it is the child welfare worker's job to determine whether abuse or neglect has taken place. Your role is to report your concern, including any information or warning signs you have noticed. You will be asked for as much information about the concern as you can provide.

It is possible that a report may not be required when a child is living in a situation where domestic violence is occurring. An individual must **also** believe that the child is being emotionally harmed, physically harmed or likely to be physically harmed. However, if you are unsure, it is best to err on the side of caution and make the report.

When making a report to a child welfare worker, it is helpful to include your name, your phone number and your relationship to the child. It is important that the person who has first-hand information be the one who makes the report. This means that **you**, not your supervisor or other person(s), need to make the report.

Typically, the child welfare worker will want to know:

- **The child's or youth's name, age and location.**
- **Any immediate concerns for the child's or youth's safety.**
- **Why you think the child or youth is at risk.**
- **What the child or youth has said.**
- **Any information about the child's or youth's parents and/or the alleged offender(s).**
- **Whether any other children or youth may be affected.**
- **Whether the child or youth has any disabilities or speaks a language other than English.**
- **The names of other people or organizations involved with the child, youth and/or family.**



Anyone who is unsure about reporting can anonymously contact MCFD Centralized Screening to discuss their concerns. MCFD Centralized Screening will determine – based on the conversation – whether or not the situation needs to be reported, and will advise the individual accordingly.

Again, that number is: **1-800-663-9122**.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU REPORT

There are many reasons that may make it personally challenging to make a report of child abuse or neglect. However, we must all remember that it is our legal obligation to report child abuse and neglect or if a child is at risk of harm.

When you report to a child welfare worker that a child may have been abused or neglected, or harmed from living in a home with domestic violence, the child welfare worker may talk to you about what happens next.

After the assessment process is complete, if the child or youth is not at immediate risk of harm, the child welfare worker may:

- **Offer the family support services.**
- **Refer the child, youth and/or family to a community agency.**
- **Take no further action, if no further action is needed.**

FAILURE TO REPORT AND MAKING FALSE REPORTS

Failing to promptly report suspected abuse or neglect to a child welfare worker is a serious offence under the *CFCSA*, so is making a false report. Both offences carry a maximum penalty of a \$10,000 fine, six months in jail, or both. No action for damages may be brought against you for reporting information under the *CFCSA* unless:

- **You knowingly report false information.**
- **You did not make the report in good faith. To have good faith means that you have honest intentions when making the report.**

As an early years provider you have a key role in keeping children safe. [The BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect for Service Providers](#) provides more detailed information on reporting concerns and how to help and is available on the internet. The purpose of this handbook is to:

- **Provide information about identifying and reporting all forms of suspected child abuse and neglect.**
- **Provide an overview of relevant laws and government policies.**
- **Clarify the roles and responsibilities of service providers.**
- **Ensure that responses to suspected child abuse and neglect are effective, consistent and sensitive to the needs of children.**



Part IV: What You Can Do To Help



Did you know?



Parents and children experiencing domestic violence have much better outcomes and are safer when they have the right social supports like access to education, help with safety planning, choice-making and problem-solving, referrals to community resources and help with accessing these resources?²⁷

Early years providers can be excellent supporters and advocates for children and their victimized parent. It can be difficult for some people to accept help from others. Be patient and supportive.

SIGNS A CHILD MAY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Included are some common warning signs, adapted from other toolkits, which show a child may be exposed to domestic violence.^{28 29}

However, it is important to remember there are other reasons that young children may show these problems, and children displaying them may not necessarily have been exposed to domestic violence.³⁰

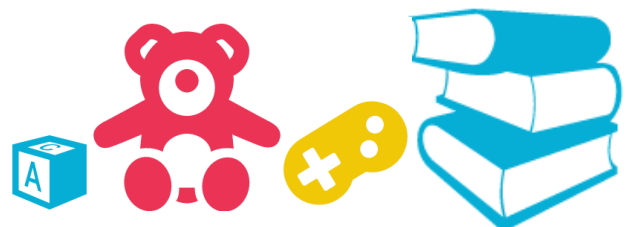
The Toddler

- A toddler may copy violence that they have witnessed by hitting, biting, hurting animals, screaming, yelling or breaking toys. Hurting themselves or someone else is also common.
- The toddler may react to the tension in the home by whining, clinging, crying, having eating or sleeping problems, or withdrawing.
- To comfort themselves, some toddlers excessively soothe themselves by rocking, sucking their thumbs or touching themselves.



The Pre-Schooler

- Some preschoolers may be excessively obedient and try hard to please those around them.
- Others might copy abuse by hitting, being cruel to animals, destroying toys or property, fighting with others, being rebellious, swearing, name calling and yelling.
- Sometimes pre-schoolers may lose skills they have previously learned, like naming colours, toilet training, or eating with their fingers.
- Some complain of headaches, stomach aches, and have difficulty sleeping.
- Some may have extreme separation anxiety, which can look like wanting to be with their siblings all the time. Some children may be easily startled.





The School Aged Child

As school-aged children (ages 5 and up) sometimes accompany their parents or younger siblings to early years settings, it is important to provide some warning signs for this age group. For example:



- The child may copy abusive behaviours seen at home by bullying/fighting with other children, displaying aggression, destroying property, swearing/name calling, being defiant, and showing disrespect for females.
- Children who experience anxiety or fear often have difficulties with school work.
- Some children escape the difficulties of their home life by running away, getting in trouble at school or with the law, or by experimenting with alcohol and other drugs.

- Some children display anxiety, withdrawal, lack of confidence, depression, eating and/or sleeping problems. They may complain of frequent sickness.
- Some children may be loyal to their victimized parent and afraid of the abuser. This might look like being overly obedient and cautious, or trying to help out their victimized parent and younger siblings beyond what is typically expected of a school-aged child.

HOW TO SUPPORT A CHILD WHO MAY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Young children benefit from supportive caregivers and safe places. Below are some common tips for supporting children who are or have been exposed to domestic violence.

BEHAVIOUR	TIPS
SEVERE SEPARATION ANXIETY AT DROP OFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for future separation anxiety by making a plan or routine with the child (i.e. arrive, hang up coat, go to classroom, find teacher, give parent hugs, kisses, wave goodbye and reassure child that mommy or daddy will come back later)
WANDERING AND AIMLESS BEHAVIOUR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help the child find an activity to master because this helps give the child a sense of control over his/her environment
RE-OCCURRING VIOLENT PLAY THEMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not judge or try to shut down the child. Listen, watch and comment on how they might feel. In some situations you will have to intervene to ensure safety of child and others
NEEDING TO SEE SIBLINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set times for siblings to be together (i.e. after nap) and follow through on this as it builds trust with the child
INATTENTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep activities short • Sit the child close to an adult • Praise all attempts to participate • Follow the lead of the child (i.e. discuss topics of interest to the child)
ANXIOUS BEHAVIOUR DURING NAP TIME <i>(i.e. fidgeting, excess movement)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have child join naptime after most of the others are asleep • Do not demand sleep but use this time as a chance to nurture and reassure the child that they are loved, valued and safe • Encourage the use of transition objects (i.e. blankets, stuffed toys)
A LACK OF FOCUS DURING CHANGES IN ACTIVITIES <i>(i.e. running around, poking others, increased movement)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind children about upcoming changes in activities both individually as well as in groups • Make a chart of pictures outlining the daily schedule and refer to it often • Draw a clock and have the child tell you when it is time to let the group know about the new activity

HOW TO SUPPORT A CHILD WHO DISCLOSES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Early years providers are in a position of trust and children may tell them about domestic violence and/or child abuse and neglect. The following are helpful responses you can use if a child tells you about domestic violence:

- **Allow the child to tell their story without pressuring them to speak or asking them leading questions. Remember your role is to support the child, and not to gather evidence or investigate the situation.**
- **Actively listen to the child's story.**
- **Reassure the child by acknowledging their feelings and letting them know that the violence is not their fault.**
- **Do not criticize or speak negatively about the offender. Children often have confused or mixed feelings about either parent in these situations and can feel angry and loyal to a parent at the same time.**
- **Do not make promises or commitments to the child that cannot be kept. For example, keeping the violence a secret if the child asks you to, or promising the child that you will keep the child and their victimized parent safe from further violence or threats of violence. It is more helpful to tell a child you will do everything you can to help them stay safe.**
- **Take the child's lead and support them to move on to another activity when they have finished speaking.**
- **Keep in mind that the child may have chosen this time to tell you because the situation at home may have changed or gotten worse and the child's normal copings strategies have been overwhelmed. Responding supportively to a child's story will increase their sense of security and their willingness to share concerns in the future.**^{31 32}

Keep in mind, that some children do not talk about domestic violence directly, but communicate about what they have experienced indirectly. For example, through their behaviours, emotions, art, writing, appearance or the fears that they express.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH

Did you know?

Three things you can always let a child know:

- ✓ 1. It is **not your fault**.
- ✓ 2. Never try to get in the middle or stop a fight - your only job is to **stay safe**.
- ✓ 3. You are **not alone**.

The experience of witnessing domestic violence may be traumatic. Building strong and positive relationships with parents of children in your care will help you to create a safe and supportive place for children who suffer from this kind of trauma.

Trauma is defined as experiences that overwhelm an individual's capacity to cope. Experiences such as child abuse, witnessing violence or other events that are outside of one's control certainly create stress and can induce trauma.

CAUTION!

Before getting involved in any domestic violence situation, ask yourself "is it safe?" If anyone is in immediate danger, call the police. If you become aware that a child is being exposed to domestic violence, do not attempt to speak to the offender about the violence. Not only would you be endangering yourself, but the offender may later become more violent with their partner or their child.





People who are under stress may struggle to talk clearly about their situation or remember helpful information that they have been given. This is true for both adults and children. A trauma-informed approach recognizes this and aims to treat those who have suffered abuse, neglect or other traumatic experiences with compassion and understanding.³³

One of the best ways to support children and to promote their safety is to support their victimized parent. Practically, a trauma-informed approach includes doing the following:^{34 35}

- **Create an environment where the potential for further trauma or re-traumatization does not occur. For example, not judging a victim's decision to stay or leave a relationship.**
- **Give as much choice as possible. For example, letting the victim decide where and when to have discussions regarding concerns about the children and/or their behaviour.**
- **Offer the victim a quiet and safe place to talk. It is important to be aware that victims may respond to your concern in different ways and they may have had unhelpful experiences with professionals and government systems in the past.**
- **Be patient and remember that it may be difficult for the victim to remember all that is discussed. Ask how you can help them with this.**
- **Be aware that Indigenous victims have the compounded issue of intergenerational trauma and have likely experienced systemic violence as well.**



WHAT YOU CAN DO AND SAY TO HELP

If you choose to speak to the victim, show them that you can be trusted:

You can say...

*"I'm concerned about you."
"Is anything wrong?"
"I am here for you if you want to talk."*



If the victim discloses domestic violence, be non-judgemental and supportive.

Assure them that the violence is not their fault, help them develop an immediate safety plan and refer them to appropriate resources.

(See Safety Planning section)

You can say...



*"No one deserves to be treated like that"
"It isn't your fault"
"Help is available at ..."
"Would you like me to help you to contact this resource?"*

If you suspect that a child may be exposed to domestic violence, make sure that you have a clear idea of what specific behaviours are concerning you before talking to the victimized parent. You can:

- **Try to have this conversation in a safe and private place, away from the children and other parents.**
- **Mention that you've noticed some behaviour changes in their child and ask what the victimized parent is noticing at home and whether they have any ideas about what might be bothering their child.**



- **Do not leave a telephone message about the potential problems in the home as this may endanger the victim and the child. If a phone message is the only way to reach the victim, simply leave your name, the organization you work for and the number you can be reached at, along with the message that you would like to speak about the child’s progress in your program. Similar cautions should be taken with contacting the victim through email and social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), as it can be possible that the offender is monitoring these communications.**



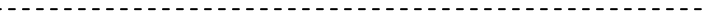
SAFETY PLANNING WITH VICTIMS

Victims of domestic violence experience greater safety when they are connected to an anti-violence worker who will help them develop **comprehensive safety plans** for themselves and their children. An anti-violence worker can include staff from the local transition house, community-based or police-based victim services, Children Who Witness Abuse Programs and/or Stopping the Violence Counselling Programs.

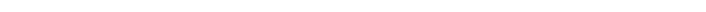
It is essential that you provide a victim of domestic violence with the contact information for these anti-violence organizations in your community and ask them if they would like help contacting these services.

In the meantime, if appropriate, you can help the victimized parent develop an **immediate safety plan** for themselves and the children, whether they decide to stay or leave. Don’t underestimate the important role you can play in helping a victim and their children stay safe. Safety planning tips are found in the next section.

In addition, with the victim’s permission, you may want to contact an anti-violence worker for guidance. Better outcomes are achieved for everyone when professionals work together when responding to domestic violence. You don’t have to do this alone.



Consider having a bulletin board with the contact information or brochures for community or provincial organizations that a victimized parent can access (e.g., MCFD, DAA, immigrant/settlement services, disability organization, legal aid, LGBTQ+ organization).



Remember that it is often not easy to talk about domestic violence or other family problems. These issues are often treated with great secrecy. Sometimes secrecy is a way of maintaining safety. In addition, victimized parents may be afraid of having their children removed by MCFD or a DAA if they seek help for domestic violence.

By showing your support, you are letting the victim know you are caring and approachable. By building trust, you make it easier for the victim to see you as someone they may choose to talk to in the future if they are experiencing violence or other problems that affect their child.

Domestic violence can negatively impact even the strongest parent-child relationship. It is the quality of the relationship and attachment between the victimized parent and child that increases a child’s healing and resilience when they have been exposed to domestic violence.^{36 37 38} You can help to protect this relationship by offering information on parenting strategies.



One major provincial resource that may be helpful is **VictimLinkBC**. This resource provides information and referral services to all victims of crime, and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence.

Call **1-800-563-0808** or visit www.victimlinkbc.ca.



THINGS TO BRING WHEN LEAVING

- Money
- Keys to: Car, house, work
- Extra clothes
- Medicine
- Important papers for you and children such as birth certificates, Social Insurance Number (SIN Card), school and medical records, banking information, driver's license, car registration, insurance papers, address book
- Passports
- Permanent Resident Cards and work permits
- Lease/rental agreement
- Unpaid bills
- Personal protective orders, divorce papers and custody orders
- Pictures, jewelry, or sentimental things, items for children (toys, blankets, etc.)

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE FOR IMMEDIATE SAFETY PLANNING

A safety plan must include what a victimized parent can do to keep themselves and their children safe. Often, victims of domestic violence have already taken steps to protect themselves and their children. Find out what those steps are and support the victimized parent to build on these.

If you or the victimized parent believes that they or the children are in immediate danger, together you must determine what steps must be taken to keep everyone safe. This will likely include:

- **Calling the police.**
- **Going to a transition house or other safe housing.**
- **Calling MCFD or a DAA.**

By helping the victimized parent to think about a safety plan, they will know the best ways to respond when they are in danger. Included over the next few pages are some additional tips for safety planning if:

- **They decide to stay.**
- **They are thinking of leaving.**
- **They have already left.**





SAFETY PLANNING TIPS

- Ensure the person has **important phone numbers nearby**; numbers to have are the police, hotlines, friends and the local shelter.
- Keep a journal** of all violent incidents, noting dates, events, threats and witnesses.
- Suggest that the person consult **a lawyer and keep any evidence** of physical abuse (such as photos).
- If the person has suffered sexual abuse, tell them to go to Emergency and **ask the staff to document their injuries**.

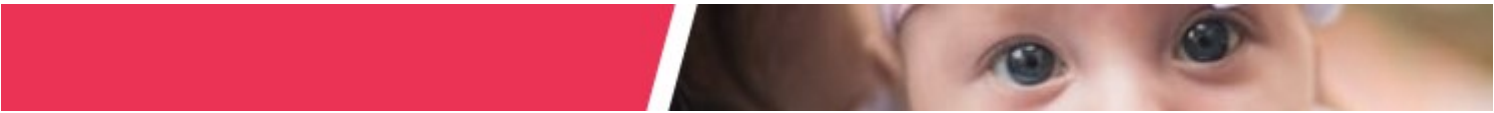


- If need be, suggest that the person contact a shelter or the police and ask for an officer that is part of the Domestic Violence Unit or Vulnerable Person Unit; **the officer or shelter staff can help the person to do further safety planning**.
- Even if the person does not plan to leave, get them to think of **where they could go**.
- Ask them to **identify the safer places in their home** (places where exits exist and no weapons/harmful objects are kept) and try to get the person to go to one of these safer places if a situation escalates.
- Get the person to **think of how they might leave**, such as doing things that get them out of the house - taking out the trash, walking the pet or going to the store.
- Ensure the person has friends or neighbours they could tell about the abuse. Ask the neighbours to **call the police if they hear angry or violent noises**.
- If there are weapons in the house, **ensure that the person knows the locations of these weapons**.



- Make sure **ID is handy** (passport, driver's license, Social Insurance Number card, BC Services Card aka Care Card).
- Suggest putting together a **bag of things used every day** and get them to hide the bag at a trusted person or friend's house or even at work.
- Ensure that the person **teaches their children how to dial 911** and suggest making up a code word that they can use to communicate when help is needed.





SAFETY PLANNING TIPS

If the person is planning on leaving the abuser, help them to consider...

4

places they can go if they leave.



Who might **help** them if they leave.



Who could keep a **bag of important things** for them.



Who might **lend them money**.



Where to make a **phone call** or **get a new cell number** or phone.



Changing daily routines like going to different stores or taking a different route to work.



Disabling GPS or **location tracking** on cell phone(s) and social media accounts.



Safety plan for **pets**.



Opening a new **bank account** or getting a **credit card** in their name.



Keeping a **photo of the abuser** and their children with them.



Safety plan for **children**.



SAFETY PLANNING TIPS

If the person has left the abuser...



Identify a **support person**.



Get a **protection order** from the court and keep a copy at all times and share it with important people (police, school, work).



Establish a **safe communication plan** to speak with the abuser.



Change the **locks**.



Create a **safety plan** for the workplace.



Tell someone at work what happened and ask them to **screen work calls**.



Consider putting in stronger doors, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, a security system and outside lights.



Tell people who take care of the children **the names of people** who can/can't pick them up.



Avoid going to the same stores or businesses.



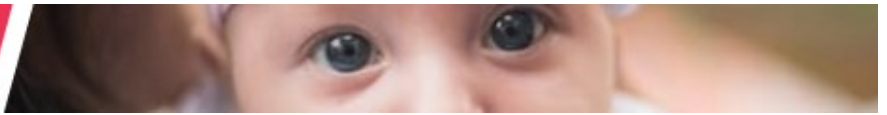
Tell friends and neighbours that the abuser no longer lives with them and to **keep an eye out**.



Never confront the abuser unless accompanied by the police.



Memorize and practice the **safety plan**.



SAFETY PLANNING WITH CHILDREN

Pick Up Arrangements

When engaging in safety planning, it's also important to consider your day-to-day interactions with the children and other adults in their lives. It is essential that you know who can pick up the child and who cannot.

In addition you can:

- **Check the child's file on an ongoing basis to ensure that plans have not changed. This will depend on how information is shared in your setting. Make sure you know your organization's policies and procedures, if applicable.**
- **Ensure that you and/or your organization has a plan in the event that a parent who is not allowed attempts to pick up a child (e.g., Who will stay with the child? Who will call the police? Who will explain to the parent that the police have been contacted?).**
- **Ask the victimized parent, or child welfare worker (if involved), for copies of the court order(s) that identify legal guardianship, parenting time and any contact issues between a parent and the child (e.g. a protection order that indicates that an offending parent is not permitted contact with the child).**
- **If the victimized parent does not have documents that show this information, encourage them to seek legal advice.**

Safety Education

Many programs provide general safety education for preschoolers. This information is helpful to most children. Children should never be made to feel responsible for their own safety or that of family members.³⁹ If you have the victimized parents' permission, teach children to phone or go for help in emergency situations.

To teach children to phone for help, you should have them practice how to call an emergency number and to give their address and phone number. This can be done with individual children, or can be taught in a more generic way to all children.⁴⁰

For example:

- **Dial 9-1-1.**
- **The person answering the phone will say: "Police, Fire, Ambulance."**
- **The child says: "My name is _____ and I need help. Send the _____."**
- **The child describes the problem: e.g., "Our house is on fire." ; "Someone is being hurt."**
- **The person answering the phone says: "Can you tell where you are?"**
- **The child says: "I live at _____ and my phone number is _____."**

As some children may not have access to a telephone, you may wish to consider developing activities that can teach a child to identify who a safe person they can go to might be, including a safe neighbour.



Remember to ask the victimized parent for permission to teach a child to call for help, as there are situations where a parent may NOT want certain information taught to their child. For example, sometimes it is not safe for a young child to know his/her address because this information may be relayed to the offending parent and the safety of other family members may be compromised.

Part V:

Diverse Community Considerations



Early years providers work with children and families from diverse cultural backgrounds. It is important to be aware of cultural and social norms relating to domestic violence to help with this work. This section provides helpful tips and considerations for working with Indigenous communities, immigrant and refugee communities, people with disabilities and LGBTQ+ communities.

CONSIDERATION FOR WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN

Did you know?

The rate of violence against Indigenous women is **three times higher** than for women of other cultures.⁴¹

Indigenous women are also more likely to experience **more severe forms of violence** compared to women of other cultures.⁴²

Indigenous women in rural areas are almost **twice as likely to experience physical and/or sexual violence** compared to Indigenous women in urban areas.⁴³

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A complex set of factors contribute to the fact that Indigenous people are more likely to experience violence. This includes the long-term impacts of colonialism, the intergenerational trauma resulting from residential schools, systemic discrimination, racism and poverty.

For Indigenous people, government policies that

restricted access to traditional lands and eroded culture, language, and traditions have also greatly contributed to violence in their communities.⁴⁴

Indigenous communities continue to use traditional forms of healing to address past and current abuse and honour those that break the cycle of violence.

Did you know?

Indigenous people may be hesitant to accept professional help due to a **negative perception of services** because of previous experiences of systemic discrimination and historical oppression.

WHY INDIGENOUS VICTIMS MAY NOT REPORT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Indigenous victims of violence and their children experience unique circumstances that may prevent them from talking about or seeking help in situations of domestic violence. Below are some more examples of why it may be difficult for an Indigenous victimized parent to approach a service provider to ask for help:⁴⁵

- **Lack of cultural understanding by service providers.**
- **Fear of child welfare involvement.**
- **Violence may be taboo or normalized.**
- **Lack of knowledge of Indigenous-specific community supports.**
- **Culture shock from moving from a rural to an urban setting.**
- **Service providers may have stereotypes of Indigenous people and alcohol and other substance use.**⁴⁶



Rural and on-reserve communities are often small, close knit, and isolated from other towns, making services limited and riskier to seek out. Additional challenges for those living in rural or on-reserve communities may be:

- **Poverty and lack of employment.**
- **The possible normalization of violence.**
- **Limited housing or concerns of losing housing.**
- **Lack of cultural ties in the community necessary for accessing traditional forms of healing or support.**
- **Fear of leaving their community of origin.**
- **Lack of confidentiality.**
- **Offender may be an important person in the community.**
- **Fear of being shunned by extended family and community.**

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROVIDING SUPPORT

The main role of an early years provider is to be supportive and provide information about key provincial and community programs or resources. In working to build a strong relationship with a victimized parent, keep in mind that an understanding and appreciation for the context, culture, current life experience and social history of the individual is central to the creation of trust.

Before you provide information and resources, check with the victim if they would like to be connected to or know more about Indigenous-specific programs and services in the community. Avoid assuming that because they are Indigenous, they automatically want to be connected to Indigenous services.

Caution: Be aware that Indigenous-specific services may also compromise a victim's privacy and security. For example, acquaintances and family members may work for those organizations, especially in small communities. Take care not to disclose the victim's private information without their consent.

It is always best to start the conversation with something like:

"Were you wanting Indigenous-specific resources, or are you okay with general services?"

If they do not know, then you can ask more detailed questions to get an idea of how comfortable or connected they are with their Indigenous identity. Indigenous people may feel more comfortable with Indigenous services as these organizations may provide culturally safe and appropriate supports.

Here are some tips on how you can provide culturally sensitive support to an Indigenous victimized parent:⁴⁷

- **Have an understanding of the historical context not only of the victimized parent, but of the area you work in. Know the surrounding First Nations and/or Métis communities and their unique histories in relation to colonization.**
- **Encourage your agency to develop working relationships with surrounding First Nations and/or Métis leadership and different departments within the Band or Nation.**
- **Get involved with Indigenous communities/organizations and incorporate the acceptance of all cultures into your work. Wherever possible, attend community events, workshops, seminars, or read resources.**
- **Have an up to date understanding of Indigenous specific supports in your community.**
- **Ask curious questions about cultural traditions and practices. If they are willing, children and their families can teach us about their culture.**
- **Get to know a safe elder or cultural guide in the community who can mentor you and ensure you are being respectful of local protocols.**
- **If possible, and with the permission of the child's parent(s), take children to Indigenous cultural events.**
- **Be flexible in the support you provide. Some victims may need information on how they can get help with employment, budgeting, food and nutrition and/or transportation etc.**
- **Remember, it is not your job to teach the child or family about their culture. If they are willing, connect them to people who are knowledge keepers in this area or point them in the right direction if they are not connected.**



Resources to Learn More: Available on the Internet

[BC Society of Transition Houses. \(2016\). Access to Transition Housing for Aboriginal Women.](#)

[Ending Violence Association of BC. \(2011\). Increasing Safety for Aboriginal Women: Key Themes and Resources.](#)

- Fear of deportation if the abuse is disclosed.
- Lack of knowledge of their rights.
- A mistrust of the authority, including the justice system.
- Being rejected or ridiculed by their community.
- Fear of losing children.
- Fear of retribution from extended family members.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR WORKING WITH IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

Immigrant and refugee victims may also be separated from their families and support systems from their home countries, increasing the isolation experienced by many victims of domestic violence. You can help by connecting them to a local multicultural or

Did you know?

Over **185,000 new residents** arrived in BC between 2006 and 2011 from over **140 countries.**⁴⁸



Did you know?

BC introduced an exemption from citizenship requirements to ensure income and disability assistance is available for single parent families without citizenship status who are fleeing an abusive situation, and are unable to leave BC because of child custody considerations or the health of family members.

Visit the [website](#) for more information or check out the “Income Disability Assistance Office” in the Resource Section.

Victimized parents who have immigrated or come as refugees from other countries and are experiencing domestic violence may also experience challenges in seeking support.^{49 50}

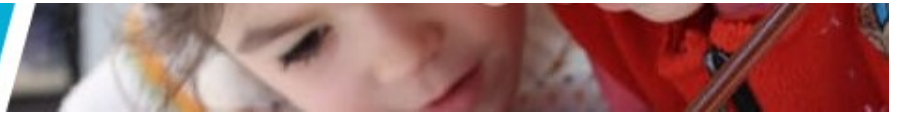
These may include:

- Language and cultural barriers.
- Dependence on an abusive partner for immigration status or money.

Resources to Learn More: Available on the Internet

[MOSAIC and Ending Violence Association of BC. \(2016\). A Forced Marriage Risk Assessment Framework. Without Consent: Strategies for Identifying and Managing Risk in Cases of Forced Marriage.](#)

[BC Society of Transition Houses and AMSAA. \(2014\). Knowledge Exchange Toolkit: Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Women and Children Dealing with Violence in Relationships.](#)



CONSIDERATIONS FOR WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

People often assume that a disability can only be physical. However, people with disabilities experience visible and invisible challenges, including:

- **Mobility.**
- **Deaf and hard of hearing.**
- **Blindness or visual impairment.**
- **Mental health issues.**
- **Developmental disabilities.**
- **Perceptual or print disabilities.**

Did you know?

1 in 5 women in Canada live with a disability.⁵²

Women with disabilities are 4 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than women without disabilities.⁵³

Children with disabilities are 3 times more likely to have experienced violence than non-disabled children.⁵⁴

You can help by ensuring that your approach and/or services are accessible, meaning they are easy to understand and easy to use by the person with the disability. Other ways you can help are by removing the challenges that a victim may have in accessing services in the community. For example:

- **Learn about potential disability-related service providers in your community. Refer the victim to the disability organization, along with the anti-violence organization in your community. Provide the victim with assistance to connect with both services, if needed or wanted.**
- **Ensure that the victimized parent's disabilities are considered when you are safety planning with them. For example, do they need help from the police or another adult gathering their belongings if they leave their home?**

- **Are there medications that should be included in their grab-and-go bag? Is there medical equipment that they will need to take if they leave the home?**
- **The key question to ask when safety planning with a victimized parent with a disability is: How might their disabilities impact the safety plan?**

Did you know?

Persons with disabilities fleeing abuse are exempt from certain income and disability assistance requirements, and are entitled to an expedited assessment of their applications for income and disability assistance. See the Resources in Section 6 for more information.

Resources to Learn More: Available on the Internet

[Disability Alliance BC. \(2016\). "Right to Be Safe" - Creating Inclusive Services for Women with Disabilities Experiencing Violence. A Resource Booklet for Service Providers.](#)

CONSIDERATIONS FOR WORKING WITH THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

Violence in same-sex/gender relationships, is often ignored, minimized or misunderstood by families, friends, communities and service providers, but it is a reality. Abusive partners in LGBTQ+ relationships use all the same tactics to gain power and control as abusive partners in heterosexual relationships: physical, sexual or emotional abuse, financial control, isolation and more. Additionally the LGBTQ+ offender may:⁵⁵

- **Threaten to 'out' the victim.**
- **Verbally abuse the victim's gender identity or sexual orientation.**
- **Force sexual acts that deny the victim's**

trans/intersex identity.

- Withhold access to medical services or medication (e.g., gender affirmation procedures/hormones).
- Take over support resources that are needed for the victim to leave or find safety in an LGBTQ+ relationship. For example, a female offender in a same sex relationship threatening to follow the victim into a transition house if she leaves.

Did you know?

Domestic violence is common in the LGBTQ+ community.⁵⁶ In one study, almost half of those who identified as lesbian, and a quarter of gay men reported domestic abuse.⁵⁷



Did you know?

37% of bisexual men (compared to 29% of straight men) and **61% of bisexual women** (compared to 35% of straight women) reported physical violence, rape, or stalking at the hands of a partner.⁵⁸

Even when LGBTQ+ victims of domestic violence are aware of services or resources available to them, previous negative experiences with service providers or police, or the perception that they could have negative experiences with service providers may discourage them from seeking help.

You can help by:

- **Promoting a gender inclusive environment, meaning your approach and/or services are inclusive and accepting of all genders and sexual orientations including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirited.**
- **Asking the victim about their 'partner' or their preferred pronoun(s), this way you do**

not presume a gender identity or sexual orientation.

- Providing resources specific to LGBTQ+ people, where such resources exist. This might include a list of LGBTQ+ specific support groups or web-based resources.

Did you know?

Because many existing resources are designed for heterosexual female victims, sexual and gender minority victims of domestic violence **may not know where to turn for information or services** that address their experiences.⁵⁹

Did you know?

LGBTQ+ people face numerous challenges in accessing safe housing/shelter when leaving a domestic violence situation. This may be especially true for gay men and transgender people who have even fewer options.⁶⁰

Resources to Learn More: Available on the Internet

The National Domestic Violence Hotline.
LGBTQ ABUSE. 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).

[Rainbow Health Ontario.](#)
[Because LGBTQ health matters.](#)

CONCLUSION

Domestic violence has negative impacts on everyone involved. There are many things to keep in mind when dealing with domestic violence: how to recognize it, how to safely respond, and how to provide support.

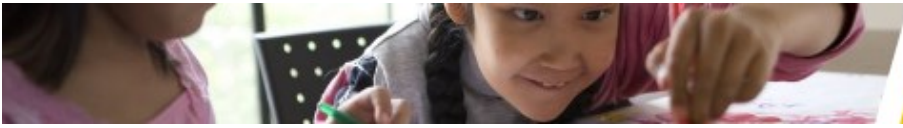
All professionals, including those who work in the early years field, have an important role in educating, advocating and providing resources to those impacted by domestic violence. Thank-you for the work you do every day to support children and their families.



Part VI: Resources

If anyone is in immediate DANGER or you fear for anyone’s safety: Call the Police right away : 9-1-1.

ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE or CONTACT INFO
Aboriginal Organizations and Services in BC	<u><i>A Guide to Indigenous Organizations and Services in British Columbia</i></u> is a provincial listing of most First Nation, Métis and Indigenous organizations, communities and community services.	The Guide data is also in an Excel format and can be found by searching the DataBC catalogue at: www.data.gov.bc.ca
Aboriginal Infant Development Program (AIDP)	The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) and MCFD continue to support Aboriginal Infant Programs in BC (AIDP). Aboriginal Infant Development Programs in BC offer support to families of infants who are at risk for or have been diagnosed with developmental delays.	Website: https://aidp.bc.ca/about-us/ Phone: 250-388-5593 Toll-Free: 1-866-338-4881
Assisted Living Registrar	The mandate of the assisted living registrar is to protect the health and safety of assisted living residents. Assisted living services include housing, hospitality services and one or two personal assistance services (referred to as prescribed services), such as regular assistance with activities of daily living, medication services, or psychosocial supports.	Website: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/accessing-health-care/assisted-living-registrar Email: HLth.assistedlivingregistry@gov.bc.ca Phone: Toll-Free: 1-866-714-3378
BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC)	BCAAFC is the umbrella association for 25 Friendship Centres throughout the province of BC.	Website: www.bcaafc.com/ Click here for a contact list of Friendship Centres across BC.
BC Housing	If you live in BC, have a low income and meet the eligibility criteria, you may qualify for subsidized housing. Individuals fleeing abuse can also access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s Transition Housing and Supports Program • Transition House and Safe House Homes List • Second-Stage Housing Provider’s List • Priority Placement Program 	Website: www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/parents-fleeing-violence Email: wthsp@bchousing.org Phone: 604-433-1711



ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE or CONTACT INFO
Crime Stoppers	Crime Stoppers allows citizens to anonymously provide the police with information about a crime or potential crime of which they have knowledge without fear of retaliation.	Website: www.bccrimestoppers.com/
Crisis Line Association of BC	This association represents 14 crisis lines throughout the province of in BC.	Website: www.crisislines.bc.ca
Children Who Witness Abuse Counselling Programs	<p>The Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA) is a free confidential program across BC for children and youth aged 3 to 18 who have been exposed to domestic violence. CWWA is part of the BC Society of Transition House programming.</p> <p>View a list of programs here: http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/victims-of-crime/vs-info-for-professionals/directory/children-who-witness-abuse-counselling.pdf</p>	<p>Website: http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/bcs-criminal-justice-system/if-you-are-a-victim-of-a-crime</p> <p>https://bcsth.ca/</p>
Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP)	CVAP assists victims, immediate family members in coping with the effects of violent crime, including domestic violence. It provides financial benefits to help offset financial losses and assist in recovery. See website for complete list of benefits available.	<p>Website: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/bcs-criminal-justice-system/if-you-are-a-victim-of-a-crime/victim-of-crime/financial-assistance-benefits</p> <p>Phone:</p> <p>Toll-Free: 1-866-660-3888</p> <p>E-mail: cvap@gov.bc.ca</p>
Children with Special Needs	Services and funding options may be available for children or teens who have special needs and their families from MCFD. See website for a complete list of benefits.	List of CYSN offices: http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/search?id=3101EE72823047269017D08E55AF6441&tab=1&q=special+needs
Deaf, Hard of Hearing, & Deaf-Blind Well-Being Program	Deaf, Hard of Hearing, & Deaf-Blind Well-Being Program (WBP in short) provides mental health services for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind people throughout British Columbia. WBP was created to provide accessible mental health services for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind clients, and in some situations, with their families.	<p>Website: http://deafwellbeing.vch.ca/contact-us/</p> <p>Phone: 1-604-456-0900</p> <p>Text: 1-778-987-4174</p> <p>Deaf or hearing impaired: 1-604-456-0901</p> <p>Toll-free deaf or hearing impaired: 1-800-949-1155</p>
Disability Alliance BC (DABC)	DABC supports people with all disabilities and champions issues impacting the lives of people with disabilities through direct services, community partnerships, advocacy, research and publications. Check out their website for a full list of programs.	Website: http://disabilityalliancebc.org



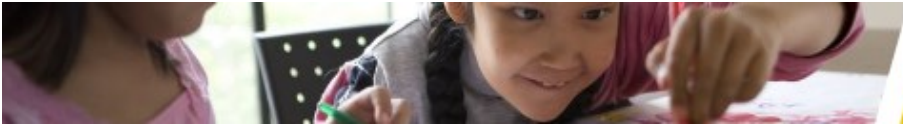
ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE or CONTACT INFO
Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC)	EVA BC works to coordinate and support the work of victim serving and other anti-violence programs in BC through the provision of issue-based consultation and analysis, resource development, training, research and education.	Website: http://endingviolence.org/ Map of domestic violence services: http://endingviolence.org/need-help/
First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)	The FNHA is responsible for planning, management, service delivery and funding of health programs, in partnership with First Nations communities in BC. Services are largely focused on health promotion and disease prevention. Please visit the website for a complete list of services.	Website: www.fnha.ca/
Government of BC: Domestic Violence Website	Check out the government of BC website for more information about domestic violence, as well as provincial services .	Website: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/domestic-violence
HealthLink BC	HealthLinkBC is a government-funded tele-health service which provides non-emergency health information to the residents of BC, through combined telephone, internet, mobile app, and print resources. Translation services in over 130 languages on request.	Website: www.HealthLinkBC.ca Phone: Toll Free: 8-1-1 from anywhere in BC, 24 hours every day, seven days a week. Deaf or hearing impaired dial 7-1-1.
Helpline for Children	Helpline for Children is a confidential helpline for children and youth under the age of 20. It provides anonymous and free phone and web counselling 24/7. From trouble with homework to dealing with loss and grief to thoughts of suicide, kids can talk to Kids Help Phone about anything.	Website: http://youthinbc.com/2008/06/12/helpline-for-children/ Phone: 310-1234 (no area code required, 24 hours a day).
Income Disability Assistance Office	If you are in need and have no other resources, you may be eligible for income assistance. Persons fleeing abuse are exempt from certain requirements and are entitled to an expedited assessment of their application.	Website: http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance Phone: 1-866 866-0800 Visit a local office: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance/access-services Citizenship info: http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/application-and-intake/citizenship-requirements



ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE or CONTACT INFO
Legal Services Society (LSS)	<p>The LSS is a non-profit organization that provides legal information, advice, and representation services to people with low incomes. While the priority is to serve the interests of people with low incomes, services are available to all British Columbians.</p>	<p>Website: www.lss.bc.ca/legal_aid/ Phone: Greater Vancouver: 1-604-408-2172 Toll free: 1-866-577-2525</p>
Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)	<p>If you are aware that a child may be abused or neglected you are required to report it to MCFD or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA).</p>	<p>Website: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/protecting-children/reporting-child-abuse Phone: Centralized Screening For Child Abuse and Neglect: 1-800-663-9122 Greater Vancouver: 1-604-660-4927</p>
MOSAIC	<p>MOSAIC provides employment, settlement, and language supports and programs to immigrants in BC.</p>	<p>Website: www.mosaicbc.org/ www.endforcedmarriages.ca/ Phone: 1-604-254 9626</p>
The National Domestic Violence Hotline	<p>The National Domestic Violence Hotline provides tools and immediate support to enable victims to find safety and live lives free of abuse. Experienced advocates to offer compassionate support, crisis intervention information and referral services in over 170 languages.</p> <p>Online chat available everyday from 7 a.m. – 2 a.m. Central time.</p>	<p>Website: www.thehotline.org/help/ Phone: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) For Deaf and Hard of Hearing: 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)</p>
Network to Eliminate Violence in Relationships (NEVR)	<p>The NEVR campaign collaborates with community stakeholders and partners, in order to advocate, educate, & work to end violence in relationships. NEVR works with its partners to hold events that promote healthy relationships, conferences, and educational opportunities to support the campaign's focus.</p>	<p>Website: www.kpu.ca/nevr</p>
Provincial Office of Domestic Violence (PODV)	<p>PODV is the permanent lead for the BC government in coordinating and strengthening services for children and families affected by domestic violence.</p>	<p>Website: www.gov.bc.ca/officeofdomesticviolence</p>



ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE or CONTACT INFO
QMUNITY	The QMUNITY building provides a safe space for LGBTQQ2S (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning and two-spirit) people and their allies to fully self-express while feeling welcome and included. Services include: information and referrals; diversity training and consulting services; all ages events and drop-in programming; counselling and social support groups; volunteer and practicum opportunities; community meeting space.	Website: http://qmunity.ca/ Email: resource@qmunity.ca Phone: 1-604-684-5307
Representative for Children and Youth (RCY)	The RCY supports children, youth and families who need help in dealing with the child-serving system. The Representative also provides oversight to this system and makes recommendations to improve it.	Website: www.rcybc.ca
Seniors Abuse & Information Line (SAIL)	SAIL is a safe place for older adults, and those who care about them, to talk to someone about situations where they feel they are being abused or mistreated, or to receive information about elder abuse prevention. Language interpretation is available for SAIL callers from Monday through Friday, 9am to 4pm.	Website: http://bcceas.ca/ Phone: 1-604-437-1940 Toll free: 1-866-437-1940
#SaySomething	In March 2015 the BC government launched a social media and radio campaign to focus attention on the serious issue of domestic violence. Information about sexual assault and domestic violence is available on the website in 5 languages.	Website: www.saysomethingbc.ca
BC Society for Transition Houses (BCSTH)	BCSTH works to enhance the continuum of services and strategies to respond to, prevent and end violence against women, children and youth. BCSTH provides support to Transition, Second and Third Stage Houses, Safe Homes and Children Who Witness Abuse and Violence is Preventable Programs in BC.	Website: http://bcsth.ca
VictimsInfo.ca	This website provides a range of information and links to services for victims of crime in BC in multiple languages.	Website: www.victimsinfo.ca/
VictimLink BC	VictimLink BC is a toll-free, multilingual, confidential telephone service available across BC and Yukon 24 hours a day, 7 days a week that provides information and referral services to all victims of crime and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence	Website: www.victimlinkbc.ca Email: VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca Phone: Toll free in BC and Yukon: 1-800-563-0808 Deaf or hearing impaired: 1-604 875-0885 To call collect please call Telus Relay Service at 7-1-1.



ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE or CONTACT INFO
<p>Community Based Victim Services Information for Service Providers</p>	<p>Community Based Victim Services and Crime Prevention responds to crime through a comprehensive range of services from crime prevention to support for victims of crime, and women and their children fleeing violence in their relationships.</p> <p>A Directory of Victim Services Across BC can be found here: www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/bc-criminal-justice-system/if-victim/publications/victim-service-directory.pdf</p>	<p>Website: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/victims-of-crime/service-providers</p> <p>Phone: 1-604 660-5199</p>
<p>Violence Against Women Programs— Stopping the Violence Programs</p>	<p>Stopping the Violence Counsellors (similar to the Children Who Witness Abuse Counsellors) are employed by more than 180 programs across BC and are trained to provide counselling to women fleeing violence in their relationships and children who witness abuse.</p>	<p>A Directory of Stopping the Violence Programs can be found here: www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/victims-of-crime/vs-info-for-professionals/directory/stopping-the-violence-counselling.pdf</p> <p>To connect with a Victim Service program or Violence Against Parents program in your area, please call VictimLink BC at 1-800-563-0808.</p>
<p>Youth Against Violence Line</p>	<p>A 24/7 one-on-one support line for youth. Concerned parents, teachers, caregivers, service providers and others are also welcome to call for information and assistance.</p>	<p>Website: www.youthagainstviolenceline.com/</p> <p>Email: info@youthagainstviolenceline.com</p> <p>Phone: Toll free: 1-800-680-4264, 24 hours every day.</p> <p>Deaf or hard of hearing: 1-604-875-0885.</p>



My Community Resources

As this is a provincial document, the resources in Section 5 are intended to be a starting point. We encourage you to write down YOUR community or regional specific resources. Some of the organizations you may want to consider becoming familiar with are suggested below.

ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE	CONTACT INFO
CHILDREN WHO WITNESS ABUSE PROGRAM		
COMMUNITY BASED VICTIM SERVICES		
DELEGATED ABORIGINAL ORGANIZATION		
DISABILITY ORGANIZATION		
FRIENDSHIP CENTRE		
LGBTQ+ ORGANIZATION		
MULTICULTURAL OR SETTLEMENT ORGANIZATION		
MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE		
POLICE BASED VICTIM SERVICES		
TRANSITION HOUSE/ EMERGENCY SHELTER		
STOPPING THE VIOLENCE PROGRAM		

Endnotes



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