

Community Champion Toolkit to Assist Men Suffering Relationship Violence

*A guide to safely responding and supporting
individuals experiencing relationship violence*

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How To Use This Toolkit

This Tool Kit is a resource that has been designed to provide awareness and information on how best to recognize the signs of relationship violence, how to safely respond to that violence and how to support someone experiencing violence.

The Tool Kit is intended to be a practical guide for those who may be unfamiliar with how to respond to or support someone experiencing relationship violence.

This Tool Kit is meant to inspire people to get involved and become Community Champions against relationship violence.

Community Champions are individuals who use the knowledge obtained from this Tool Kit to safely intervene in relationship violence. Relationship Violence is any abuse between two or more people who know each other.



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What is Relationship Violence?

Relationship violence (RV) is any form of violence that occurs between multiple individuals where there is a pre-existing relationship. This can include but not limited to this power imbalance within the relationship

RV is also known by many other terms which include, but it is not limited to intimate partner violence (IPV), domestic violence, neglect, dating violence, family violence battery, child neglect and child abuse, bullying and cyberbullying, seniors or elder abuse, male violence, and stalking (Gurm et al., 2020). RV is considered a serious crime that affects millions of people in Canada; however, more appropriate practices and policies that address inequalities can prevent it.



Different Forms of Relationship Violence

- 1 Physical Abuse
- 2 Emotional Abuse
- 3 Spiritual Abuse
- 4 Financial Abuse
- 5 Sexual Abuse

Types of Relationship Violence

Relationship violence can take place in a number of ways, listed below are some examples of what this violence may look like:



Physical Abuse

- Hitting
- Shoving
- Biting
- Choking
- Throwing objects
- Pushing
- Punching
- Sleep deprivation
- Starving
- Stabbing
- Slapping
- Use of weapons
- Hair-pulling



Emotional Abuse

- Verbal abuse
- Belittling
- Constant criticism
- Emotional Blackmail
- Humiliation in front of friends/family even on social media
- Insults
- Acts of jealousy
- Harming pets
- Damaging property
- Stalking
- Isolation from loved ones and support network
- False accusations



Spiritual Abuse

- Prevention of attending their place of worship
- Prevention of expressing their spiritual beliefs
- Using spiritual beliefs to humiliate someone
- Being pressured to do things that are against someone's will



Financial Abuse

- Unauthorized use of any asset
- Being in complete control of finances and financial decisions
- Stealing money or valuables
- Ruining someone's credit history
- Forced access to personal banking information or paycheques
- Denying or forcing someone to work



Sexual Abuse

- Unwanted sexual touching
- Sexual exploitation
- Rape
- Other sexual activities considered by the victim to be degrading, humiliating, painful and to be committed without consent or the ability to consent, against a persons will, obtained by force or or threat of force and intimidation.

Risk Factors:



Signs to Watch For:



Stalking or Harassment

- Following, showing up unexpectedly or spying
- Harassing the victim and their social network via in person or online



Threatening Behaviours

- Threatening to harm or kill the victim and/or anyone around them
- Threatening to take the children away or faking stories to the authorities
- Possessive and controlling towards the victim: extremely jealous, dominant in conversations, forcing behaviors on victim



Destroying Property

- Breaking, trashing and/or destroying objects, property and other personal possessions



Sexual Abuse Tactics

- Belittling partner
- Withholds any affection or sex as punishment
- Forcing or pressuring sexual actions from partner

Being able to spot the signs of abusive behaviour in a relationship is extremely important in order to be able to help the individual affected.

Through interacting with individuals and watching for unsafe behaviours, you can try to identify if there are any reasons to believe relationship violence is occurring.

If you suspect it, this would be a good opportunity to reach out to the individual and offer them support and help in however they choose.



What You Might Notice in Men Experiencing Relationship Violence?

Recognizing the signs of relationship violence in men living in abusive situations is very important in being able to provide help and support to these individuals. Listed below are some of the things you may see:



Spiritual

- Loss of sense of self
- Feelings of hopelessness and isolation
- Loss of culture
- Loss of connection to faith and community



Financial

- Limited access to money or transportation
- No access to bank accounts
- Not allowed to work, attend job fairs or training
- Has no control or say in how money is spent
- Forcing work in a family business where there is no pay
- No child support



Emotional/Psychological

- Living in constant fear
- Feeling shameful, guilty or embarrassed
- Low self-esteem
- Depression or other mental illnesses such as PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder)
- Problems sleeping or eating
- Loss of energy
- Self-harm or self-blame
- Suicidal thoughts or tendencies



Physical

- Permanent disability such as blindness, deafness, loss of mobility
- Broken bones and/or teeth
- Head or spinal injuries
- Cuts, concussions, headaches and bruises
- Living in isolation
- Hiding injuries



Sexual

- Low self-esteem and poor body image
- Inability to have health sexual relationships

Relationship Violence Against Men Specific to the LGBTQIA2+ Community

Did You Know?

26 percent of gay men and 37 percent of bisexual men have experienced rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner, in comparison to 29 percent of heterosexual males (Human Rights Campaign., n.d.).

This community is extremely affected by relationship violence of all forms, though the support available and abuse experienced may differ from the violence heterosexual men experience. Unfortunately, a major barrier to seeking help in this community is the lack of services and support available to this specific population, which result in a lack of understanding from professionals. Though there are some resources and housing options available specific to this community., this population is underserved .

Raincity Housing:

Providing housing to LGBTQ2S+ youth aged 18-25
Call: 604.351.2855 or <https://www.raincityhousing.org/about/programs/>

Ending Violence Association of BC:

Has LGBTQ specific information about relationship violence and what to do
<https://endingviolence.org/need-help/types-of-violence-and-abuse-2/lgbtq/>

Specific Forms of Abuse They May Experience:



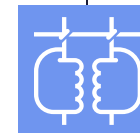
Threatening to expose your sexuality to friends, family, colleagues or other people within your circle.



Accusations of not really having the sexual orientation that you believe you have.



Pushing false narratives on the individual such as the police won't help someone of their sexuality.



Makes you feel like you can't leave the relationship and when you try, comments back by saying you are homophobic.

Did You Know...

In roughly half of police-reported sexual assaults, **47%** of victims were male and the accused was someone who had a pre-existing relationship with the victim. This included friends, acquaintances, or intimate partners (Statistics Canada, 2015).

MEN ARE

more likely to become the victim of hitting, biting, kicking, or being hit with something in comparison to women (Lysova et al., 2019)

THE CANADIAN NATIONAL SURVEY OF VICTIMOLOGY CLAIMS

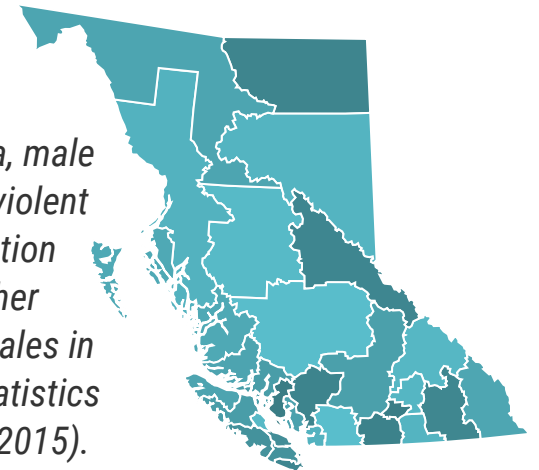
22%

of males reported experiencing severe physical violence along with high controlling behaviors (Lysova et al., 2019).

49%

In 2008, a similar number of men and women reported violent victimization (Statistics Canada, 2015).

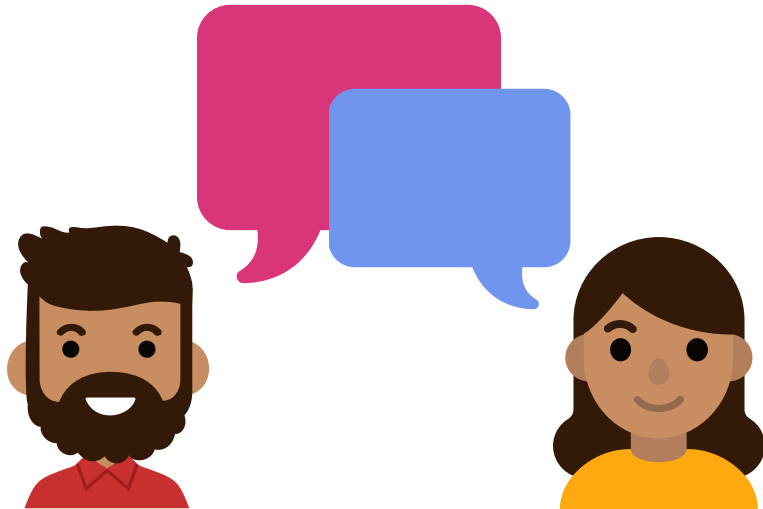
In British Columbia, male rates of violent victimization were higher than females in 2008 (Statistics Canada, 2015).



Why Relationship Violence Against Men is Under Reported?

Some reasons why relationship violence against men is under-reported include:

- Fear of humiliation and not being believed.
- Lack of available services tailored for men or men with children.
- Fear of systemic harassment they may experience when reporting or seeking help.
- Being in denial that these actions have occurred or being confident that they can fix it.
- Confused about whether or not this is relationship violence.
- Fearful or guilty of leaving and coping alone. Worried about leaving the children if they are unable to take them.
- Beliefs they deserve it or are to blame for the situation.
- Scared that if they leave, the violence will still continue.
- Concerned about their financial security if they leave the situation.



Stigma and Its Role in Relationship Violence Against Men

Stigma is having negative attitudes, beliefs and preconceptions about a person or group based on defining characteristics.

There are two types of stigma:

Public Stigma:

- When the public enforces a stereotype towards a specific group (Caddwell, J., 2020)
- Example: When a police officer or hospital worker does not acknowledge that men experience abuse due to the public misconceptions and stereotypes that men cannot be abused.

Self Stigma:

- When an individual begins to internalize the stereotypes or beliefs the public has enforced (Caddwell, J., 2020)
- Example: Feeling shame or guilt after forms of violence because they believe that they were not strong enough as men.
- The traditional beliefs and stigma surrounding masculinity act as a major barrier as to why men are less likely to seek help (Gurm, et al., 2020)
- This is especially relevant when men are subject to forms of sexual abuse, due to the false belief that "males are always in control of their sexual experiences" or "men do not experience the degree of emotional pain associated with sexual abuse, as do women ". These are false statements that diminish the abuse that these men experienced and enforce the stigma surrounding this topic (Gurm, et al., 2020).
- However, men may cope with their experiences using alcohol or drug abuse, family violence, social dysfunction or suicide which is why it is extremely important to be aware and educated on the impacts that traditional stereotypes, stigma and lack of support can have on individuals (Gurm, et al., 2020).



How to Help Someone You Know?

"It's not your fault"

1

Express Your Concern

Be non-judgemental.

This will help the person feel comfortable opening up and seeking support from you. Be aware and accept that the person may deny the abuse. Reinforce the point that you are there for them and support them if they ever need you in the future. Don't force the person to speak about the abuse. Use a gentle approach.

3

Support but don't give advice

Don't force someone to leave the abuser if they aren't ready to do so themselves. Putting pressure on someone is a form of control and the survivor is already suffering from control. Give them options and offer your support and help. **Respect their choices** and let them make their own decisions. Emphasize that they have control over their choices.

5

Keep it confidential

Ensure that any information shared is kept private between you and the victim. **The exception to this is when there is an at-risk child or when someone's life is threatened.**

2

Assure the person that it's not their fault

Assuring the individual that **the violence is not their fault** can be very important in these situations.

Making comments like:
"No one deserves to be treated this way".
"You are not to blame".
"What's happening is not your fault".

4

Offer resources

Offer trusted sources of information that can be found at the end of this toolkit.



What Should You Say?

"There is help available when you are ready, and I can help you access it."

"Here is the number to various resources that can help you find a place to stay, and help with navigating the legal system and finding personal support."

"I've noticed that you have some bruises" (or state the physical signs you see).

"What can you do to stay safe when others are not around?"

Some phrases or comments to use when speaking to a person that's experiencing relationship violence

"I am glad you were able to tell me and I'm always here to listen."

"You aren't responsible for the abuser's actions; the abuser is responsible for their actions."

"I am hearing you blame yourself, but the abuse is not your fault."

"Everyone has the right to be safe in their home."



Things to avoid saying:

"You need to leave your partner."

"Tell me if this person is hitting you."

"How can you put up with that?"

"Why didn't you stop the abuser/say something/do something about it?"

"You shouldn't provoke them."

"You should tell them off and get out of there."

"I can't believe you went back."



Intervening Safely: the 3 **D**'s



Distract

Distracting is an indirect way of intervening. Not only does it prevent the situation from potentially escalating, but it buys you time to check in with the abused person/child to see if they are okay. Plus, it's an easy way to divert the abuser.

Examples: Ask for directions, the time, or ask for help in finding a lost item.

Direct

Be subtle. A direct approach might anger the abuser and danger the person/child later on. Use your presence and make it obvious that you are watching the situation. Do not give advice or judge the situation.

What you can say: "Your words/actions are having a negative effect on _____"
OR "I don't agree with what you're doing/saying."

Do not judge or blame the abused person/child for what is happening. Voice your concern and show that you want to help. Assure the person/child that the abuse is not their fault.

What you can say: "I'm concerned about what just happened. Is anything wrong?" OR "No one deserves to be treated like that," or "That wasn't your fault."

Delegate

Asking someone else for help. Someone who knows the couple/family or another bystander, might be in a better position to intervene if you do not feel comfortable yourself.

What you can say: "Look, I'm concerned about that person/child because the person they are with seems really angry. Would you be able to check in on the situation?"

Non-Verbal Interventions

How to help without verbally getting involved? These are some non-verbal interventions you can use:



Body Language

Make disapproval known through your body language.



Presence

Offer your presence. Do not look away from what is happening. If there are witnesses, the abuse is less likely to happen.



Call for Help

Call the police or security if immediate danger or threats exist.



Other Ways To Help:

1

2

3

4

Encourage the person to talk to someone who can help. Provide them with the VictimLinkBC number: (604-563-0808) and visit the BC211 website or the app www.isawrisk.com/

If the person decides to leave, continue to offer support. Despite the relationship being an abusive one, they may feel sad and lonely once it is over. Check in with them to let them know you are there for them.

If the person decides to stay, be supportive. They may leave and then go back many times. It may be hard to understand, but people stay in abusive relationships or many reasons.

You can't "rescue" them. They have to decide it's time to get help. Provide supports no matter what. However, when a child is involved or there is an immediate threat there is a "duty to report".

Safety Planning Tips

Here are some important tips to remember when safety planning



- Ensure the person has **important phone numbers nearby**. Numbers to have are the police (911), hotlines, friends and the local shelter.
- Ensure the **person has friends or neighbors they could tell about the abuse**; ask the neighbours to call the police if they hear angry or violent noises.
- 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.
- 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 one of these safer places if a situation escalates.
- If there are weapons in the house, ensure that the person **knows the locations of these weapons**.
- Even if the person does not plan to leave, get them to think of **where they could go**.
- Get the person to think of **how they might leave**, such as doing things that get you out of the house - taking out the trash, walking the pet or going to the store.
- 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.
- 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.
- Suggest that the person **consult a lawyer** and keep any evidence of physical abuse (such as photos).
- Keep a journal** of all violent incidents, noting dates, events, threats and witnesses.
- If the person has suffered sexual abuse, tell them to go to Emergency** and ask the staff to document their injuries or ask to be seen by a forensic nurse.
- Make sure ID is handy** (passport, license, Social Insurance Number card, Care Card).

Safety Planning: Do This



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



4 places they can go to if they leave



Who would help them if they left



Who could keep a bag of important things for them



Who might be able to lend them money



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



Where they can make a phone call or get a new phone/number



Disabling tracking devices and social media accounts



Changing daily routines such as the route to work or different store



Safety plan for the pets



Safety plan for the children



Keeping a picture of the abuser and their children

Safety Planning: Do This



If the person has left the perpetrator, help them consider...



Identify a support person



Get a protection order from the court and keep a copy at all times; share it with important people



Establish a safe communication plan to speak with the abuser



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



Never confront the abuser unless accompanied by police



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



Create a safety plan for the workplace



Memorize and practice the safety plan



Avoid going to the same stores or businesses

Applicable if the abuser is no longer in the house once shared



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



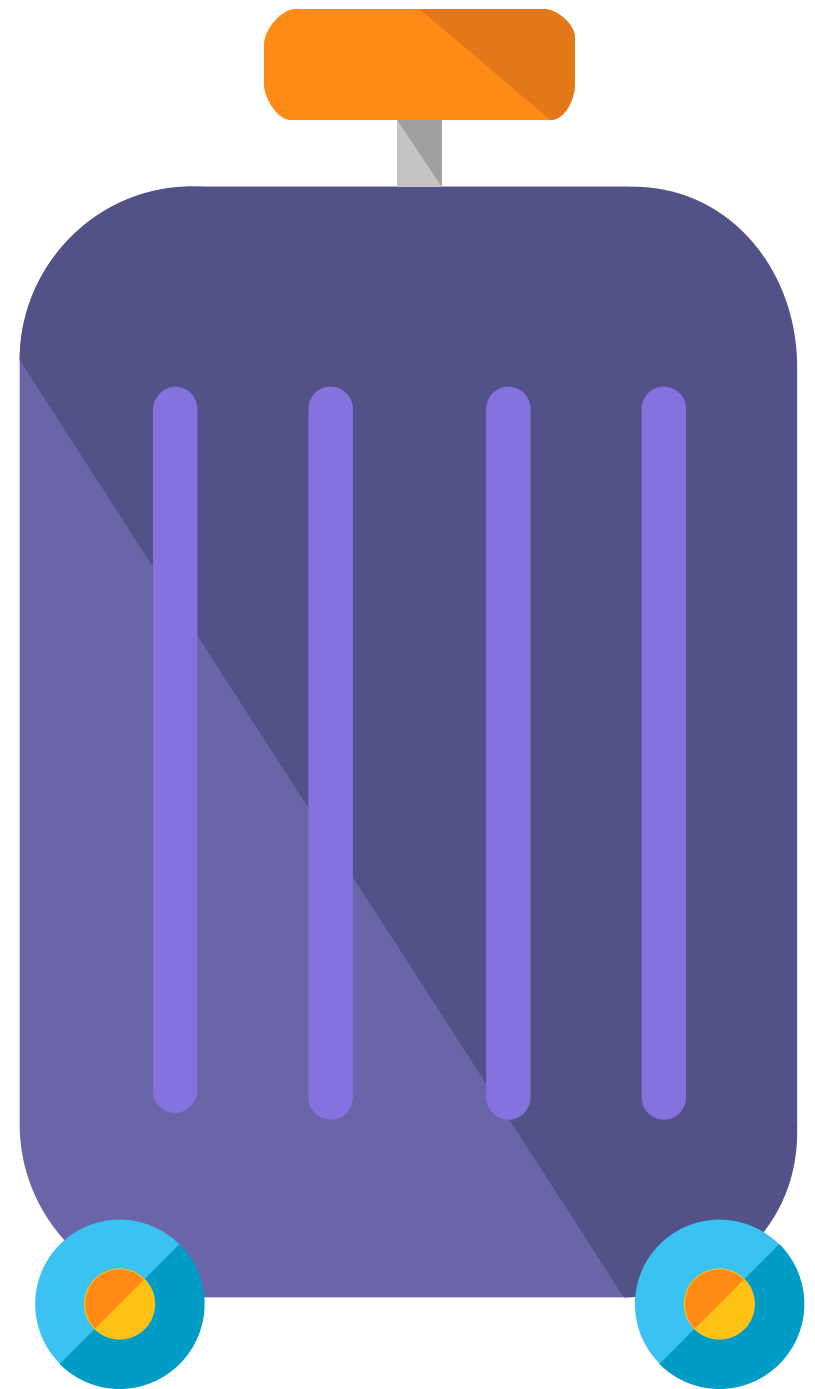
Tell friends and neighbours that the abuser no longer lives with them and to keep an eye out



Change the locks

Things to Bring When You Leave

- 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
- Permanent Residency 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.)
- Passports



Men's Only Shelters

Available in British Columbia



**House of Hope
Salvation Army**
45746 Yale Road,
Chilliwack
604-392-8510



**Russell Housing
Centre**
740 Carnarvon Street,
New Westminster
604-529-9126 ext. 101



**Stevenson House
For Men**
32 Elliot Street,
New Westminster
604-526-4783



**Belkin House
Men's Shelter**
555 Homer Street,
Vancouver
604-694-6636



Sutherland Shelter
138 East Cordova
Street, Vancouver
604-646-6846 (During
evening hours of
operation call (604) 833-
2142)



**Covenant House
Male Youth**
326 West Pender Street,
Vancouver
604-647-4480; Toll-free:
1-877-685-7474



The Beacon
138 East Cordova
Street, Vancouver
604-646-6846



The Haven
128 East Cordova
Street, Vancouver
604-646-6806



**UGM Emergency
Shelter For Men**
601 East Hastings
Street, Vancouver
604-253-3323 ext. 305



**Aboriginal
Shelter**
201 Central
Street, Vancouver
604-682-5556





**Fraserside
Emergency Family
Shelter**
604-525-3929
Intake allows Males
and Females with
children





**Vi Fineday Family
Shelter Society**
604-736-2423
Intake allows Males and
Females with children

Legend:

 Men's only:
19+ and no children

 Men's only line up shelters:
19+ and no children

 Men's only:
Youth aged 16-24

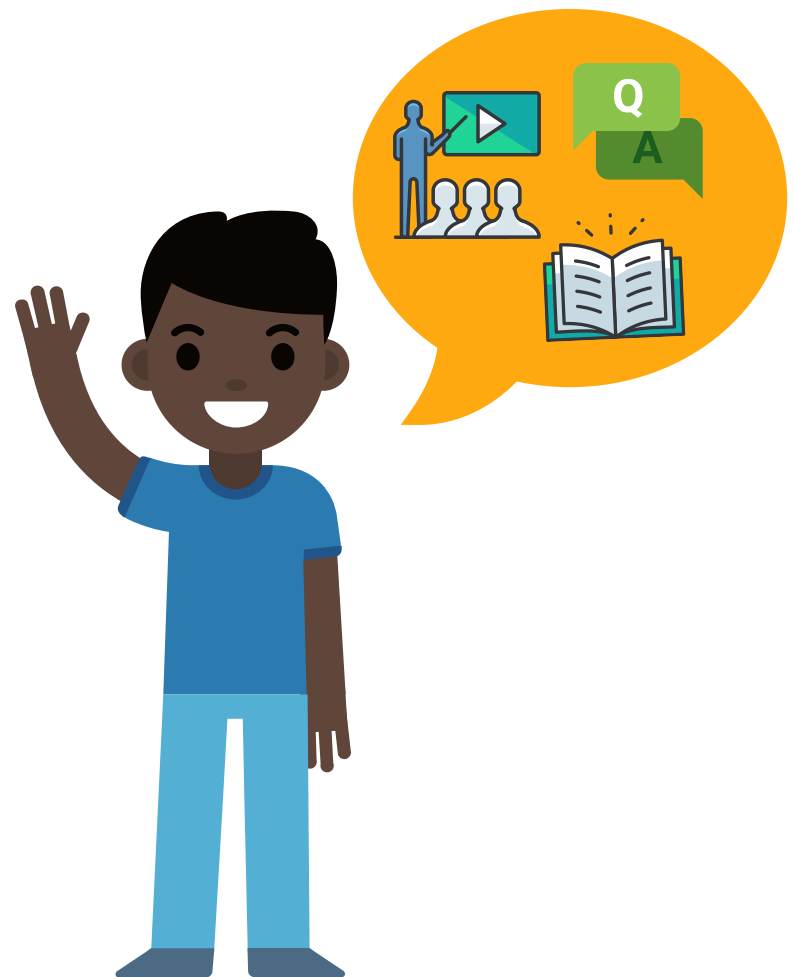
 Women and Men Shelters:
Allow men with children

For additional information please refer to:
<https://shelters.bc211.ca/bc211shelters>

The importance of spreading awareness and educating people about relationship violence in men

Why is it so important to know?

- It's more common than most people think.
- Educating our society about relationship violence against men is essential in fighting the stigma and discrimination surrounding this topic.
- It teaches us how to help and support those who are experiencing it as well as recognize the signs and risks for ourselves.
- Increased knowledge and awareness of the topic can help promote policy change and increased funding for gaps in support for men experiencing relationship violence. This includes creating facilities like men's only shelters that welcome children and more local resources and organizations for men in relationship violence situations.
- The lack of services available that are tailored to men result in discomfort or secondary victimization as they are unequipped to work with this population.



Resources and Support

If you are in an emergency or life threatening situation, please dial 911

Organization	What they do?	Contact information
British Columbia Society for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse (BCSMSSA)	BCSMSSA is a non-profit society that offers support for men who have experienced any form of sexual abuse. They offer educational materials, support services for the victim and individuals affected by the abuse and consult with the government as advocates for sexual abuse towards men.	URL: https://bc-malesurvivors.com/
Police Victim Services of British Columbia	This is a non-profit association that works to support victims of crimes or trauma. This includes emotional support, additional information or assistance in justice system, and court support if applicable.	URL: https://www.policevictimservices.bc.ca/ Police Victim Services of British Columbia Directory: https://www.policevictimservices.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/PVSBBC-Directory-Nov-2018.pdf
National Domestic Violence Hotline	The National Domestic Violence Hotline is an American resource that provides support and help to anyone in domestic violence situations. This organization also offers great information about men in domestic violence situations, when you search "men" in the search bar.	"Men can be Victims of Abuse Too" https://www.thehotline.org/resources/men-can-be-victims-of-abuse-too/ Myths around Men Experiencing Abuse: https://www.thehotline.org/resources/myths-around-men-experiencing-abuse/
VictimLink BC	This service is a toll free line that helps give information and referral services to any forms of crime or victim support services of a crisis. This is a 24 hour multilingual line.	Call or Text: 1-800-563-0808 Email: VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca URL: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/victims-of-crime/victimlinkbc
Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC	They offer a distress services program that allows for 24/7 access to crisis lines for anyone in British Columbia. They also offer an online chat network that offers the same level of support for adults and children.	Phone Number: 1-800-784-2433 Online Chat Link: www.CrisisCentreChat.ca (Noon to 1am)
Tri-City Transitions Society	This is a non-profit registered charity that offers support to anyone experiencing abuse. They offer a specific section called victim services that supports women, youth, children and men.	URL: https://www.tricitytransitions.com/ Phone Number: 604-941-7111
ManKind Initiative	Organization based out of the United Kingdom that offers important resources and information to men in domestic violence situations.	URL: https://www.mankind.org.uk/



Resources and Support

If you are in an emergency or life threatening situation, please dial 911

Organization	What they do?	Contact information
Moving Forward Family Services	Provides accessible counselling to empower underserved communities.	URL: https://mffs.ca/
National Gang Center	Prevent gang violence, reduce gang involvement, and suppressed-gang related crime	URL: https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/
Caring Dads	Provides family based intervention programs to eliminate gender-based violence within the framework of gender equality in general.	https://caringdads.org/
Abused Men in Scotland	Work with men over 16 concerned about domestic abuse, regardless of sexuality, transgender status or history, age, dis/ability, religion, race, nationality or ethnic origin. Promote full recognition for male victims, early intervention, and prevention of domestic abuse	https://abusedmeninscotland.org/
RAINN	RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) anti sexual violence organisation providing programs to prevent sexual violence, help survivors, and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.	https://www.rainn.org/



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