

# Outreach - Contribution - Mobilization Commitment to Community Voices

## Crime Prevention Week - November 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Crime Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility



# Responding to Violence Against Women

Violence against women is not a private issue. It is a community issue affecting the health and well-being of not only the victim and her abuser, but also everyone around them. Violence against women happens in all ethnic, religious and racial communities, at every income group, at every age, and to women across all education levels. Violence can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or verbal abuse, financial abuse, spiritual abuse or criminal harassment/stalking. Statistics on the prevalence of violence vary, but the consequences for individuals, families, and communities are devastating.

## Impacts of Abuse on Children & Youth

Although, women in abusive relationships work hard to shield their children from the abuse and to keep them safe, children are not passive witnesses to the noise, tension and violence in the home.

- In Canada, it is estimated that each year 800,000 children are exposed to a woman being abused. Abuse can be in the form of seeing a woman being assaulted or demeaned; hearing loud conflict and violence; seeing the aftermath, injuries or damage to property; or being blamed for the abuse. When children witness abuse they receive the message that violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflict and therefore a normal part of a relationship.
- Children often become victims of physical violence as well. Children are harmed in 10 percent of spousal assaults against women and 4 percent of spousal assaults against men.
- The impact of witnessing abuse depends on the age and developmental stage of the child, the frequency and severity of the abuse along with the support systems in place for the child. Many children experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including fear, anxiety, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and intrusive memories of the abuse, anger outbursts and hyper-arousal.
- Witnessing abuse can often result in children and youth displaying inappropriate attitudes about the use of violence in resolving conflicts, along with inappropriate attitudes about violence against women or condoning violence in intimate and dating relationships.

*~ A child who lives with violence is forever changed, but not forever "damaged." There is a lot we can do to make tomorrow better. ~*

## Safety Planning for Children

Providing children with a safety plan ahead of time can help them if a parent experiencing abuse is in danger.

1. If the child is in danger, they may not be able to remember the safety plan. Teach the child how to call 9-1-1 for help and to request for the police. Teach your child their home address, or ways to identify where they are located to assist help in getting to them.
2. Help the child identify phone numbers of those they can call if they are not feeling safe. These can include a relative, a friend or a friend's parent, or a neighbour.
3. Teach the child a code word that signals help is needed, along with whom the child should call or what to do.
4. Help the child identify places they can go to if they do not feel safe. i.e. a room in the house, a friend's/neighbour's house. Teach the child how to get to the safe place.
5. If you are a parent experiencing abuse and do not feel safe at home, help your child identify people he/she can trust to tell them what is going on. This may include a friend's parent, a teacher or principal, or another adult in the community who your child has contact.

## Computer and Social Media Safety

An individual's computer can contain critical information that can put them in danger. An abuser can monitor online activity. Anything written can create a lasting record on the computer.

- When researching safety plan options, use a computer at work, a friend's house or the library.
- Always log out of any profiles before leaving the computer. Never share any passwords. Learn how to clear your browsing history.
- If you have left the abusive relationship, abstain from using any form of social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc). Close social media accounts.

\*\*Authored by RCMP "E" Division and BCCPA with content excerpted from *little eyes, little ears; how violence against a mother shapes children as they grow* – Centre for Children & Families in the Justice System



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## Responding to Violence Against Women

Getting support is the key to addressing violence in intimate relationships. Often, waiting for the problem to lead to contact with police is not a solution. Women experience violence in their relationships; family members, friends or neighbours who believe they know someone is experiencing violence, need to know there are resources available. Many organizations provide women the support they need to help prevent violence, escape from violent situations and recover if they become victims of violence.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1, or your local police emergency number.

### Resources for Children and Youth

#### Kids Help Phone

Free, confidential and anonymous counsellor service, available 24 hours a day 7 days a week for children ages 20 and under.

1-800-668-6868 / [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)

#### Children who Witness Abuse Programs

Aimed at helping youth and children between 3 and 18 years of age to understand and cope with violence against their mother and the effects of this violence on themselves.

Contact *VictimLink BC* for information on a local program.  
1-800-563-0808

#### Legal Duty to Report

If you think a child or youth under the age of 19 is being abused or neglected, you have a legal duty to report your concerns to a child welfare worker.

1 800 663-9122 any time of the day or night.

### Victim Services

#### VictimLink BC

1-800-563-0808 or [www.victimlinkbc.ca](http://www.victimlinkbc.ca)

Free and confidential services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in over 110 languages, providing crisis and referral information to victims of crime.

#### Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General – Victims and Witnesses of Crime and Violence

[www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/victims-of-crime](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/victims-of-crime)

A website that provides information to victims and witnesses of crime, violence, or abuse.

#### SherterSafe

[www.sheltersafe.ca](http://www.sheltersafe.ca)

An online resource to assist women and their children connect to the nearest shelter or transition house that can offer safety, hope and support.

#### Victim Services Directory

[www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/victims-victimes/vsd-rsv/index.html](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/victims-victimes/vsd-rsv/index.html)

Created by the Policy Centre for Victim Issues of the Department of Justice Canada to help victims and individuals locate services for victims of crime across Canada.

### Prevention Initiatives

#### BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

Provides information on programs available to Aboriginal individuals on and off reserve; visit [www.bcaafc.com](http://www.bcaafc.com)

#### Domestic Violence - It's Never OK

A website providing information and resources for those experiencing or wanting to assist a loved one who is experiencing relationship violence; visit [www.domesticviolencebc.ca](http://www.domesticviolencebc.ca)

#### Moose Hide Campaign

A resource for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men. There is information on counselling and support services in communities across BC to support the goal of ending violence against women; visit [www.moosehidecampaign.ca](http://www.moosehidecampaign.ca)

#### Public Health Agency of Canada - Stop Family Violence

Provides a one-stop source of information on family violence, including a listing of abusive men's treatment programs; visit [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sfv-avf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sfv-avf)

#### West Coast Men's Support Society

Provides information on resources available to men throughout BC; visit [www.westcoastmen.org](http://www.westcoastmen.org)

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[www.bccpa.org](http://www.bccpa.org)

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