

# A Tool Kit for Community Champions



Responding Safely to Situations of  
Relationship Violence



## HOW TO USE THIS TOOL KIT

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.

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A Collaborative Project Between:



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# What Is Relationship Violence?

Relationship violence (also known as intimate partner violence, domestic violence, and spousal violence) is a serious, preventable public health and crime issue that affects millions of people. Relationship violence refers to: physical violence, sexual violence, stalking and psychological aggression (including intimidating acts) by a current or former intimate partner.

Relationship violence can occur with a family member, partner or someone they know where there is a power imbalance. It can also occur between heterosexual couples, same-sex couples, or between a child and adult and does not require sexual intimacy. It can vary in frequency and severity and occurs on a continuum, ranging from one episode that might or might not have lasting impact to severe episodes over a period of years.

## PHYSICAL ABUSE

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

## EMOTIONAL/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 and harming pets and damaging property.

## SPIRITUAL ABUSE

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

## 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

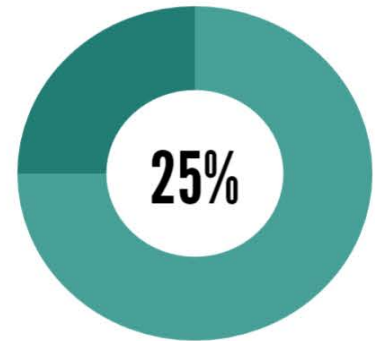
Includes taking control over all finances and financial decisions. Stealing from or controlling money or valuables and unauthorized use of property, money, or valuables. Forcing one to work or denying one's right to work.

# Did You Know...



On average, in Canada, a woman is killed by her intimate partner every six days.

Relationship violence accounts for over  $\frac{1}{4}$  of all violent offences reported to the police.



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



The cost directly related to relationship violence is an estimated **64 Million** dollars annually for the criminal justice system of Canada.



Currently, there are over **3,000** women living in emergency shelters along with their **2,900** child(ren).



The self-reported rates of abuse between men and women are similar but the severity of abuse against women is far worse.

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



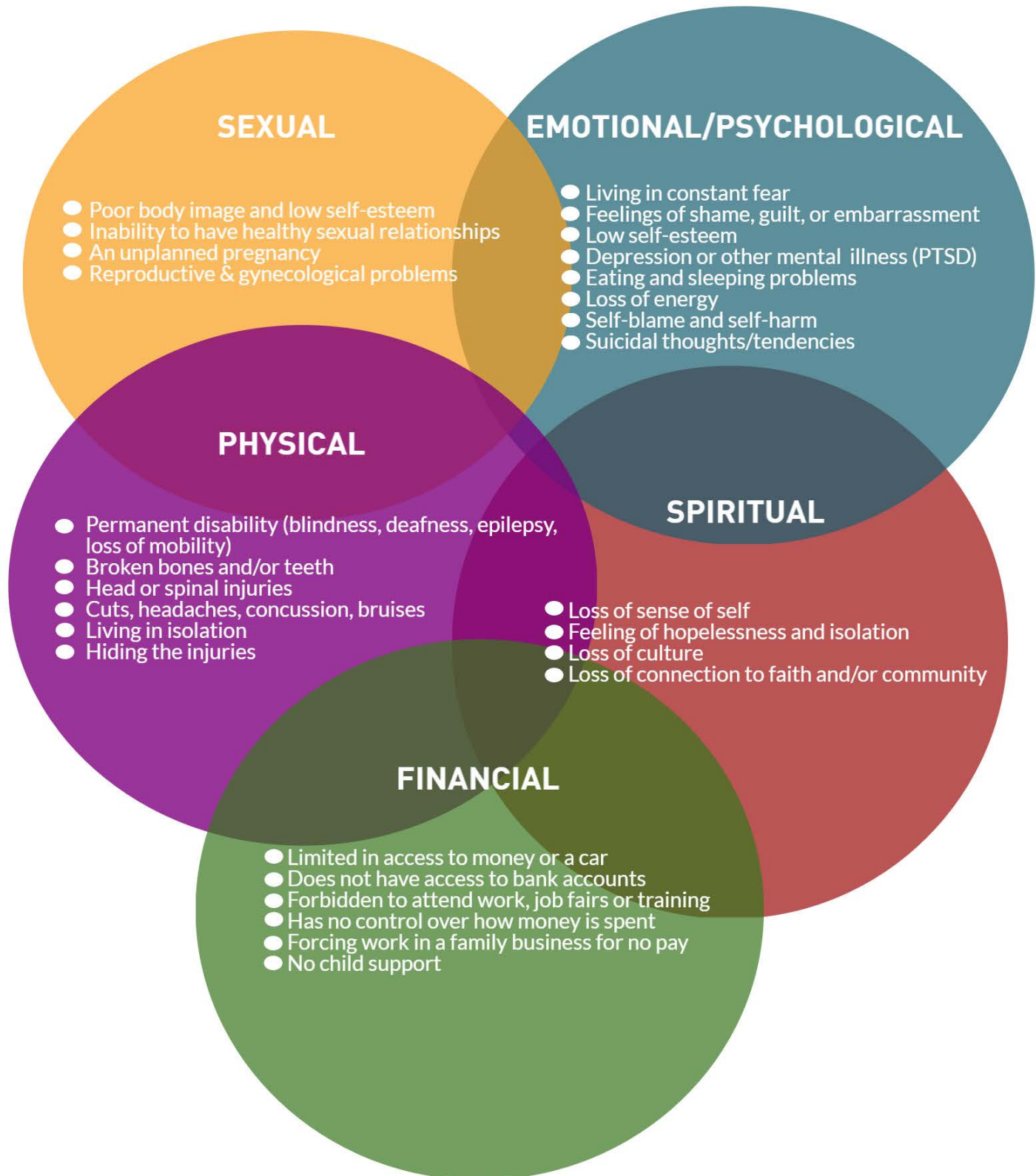
Some populations are at greater risk for relationship violence. For example Aboriginal peoples, immigrant groups and individuals with disabilities.





# What You Might Notice...

Recognizing the signs of relationship violence is one of the most important things you can do to help someone who is in an abusive relationship. Below are some things you might see:



# Warning Signs & Risk Factors

The abused person or child might



- Be apologetic and makes excuses for the abuser's behaviour.
- Become aggressive and angry when you talk about the abuser's behaviour.
- Be nervous about talking when the abuser is there.
- Seem to be sick and miss work.
- Try to cover their bruises or injuries.
- Make excuses at the last minute about why the abuser can't meet you.
- Try to avoid you on the street.
- Seem sad, lonely, withdrawn and afraid.
- Use more drugs or alcohol to cope.

The abuser might



- Put their partner down.
- Do all the talking - dominate the conversation.
- Threaten children and other family members.
- Check up on partner all the time, even at work.
- Try to suggest they are the victim and act depressed.
- Try to keep their partner away from friends and family.
- Act as if they own their partner.
- Lie to look good or exaggerate their good qualities.
- Always be around their partner.

**Caution**

Before getting involved, ask yourself "is it safe?"

If the situation is already violent or appears to be escalating quickly, do not intervene directly, call the police.

Do not try to "rescue" a person experiencing relationship violence or fight off an abuser: Not only are you endangering yourself, but the abuser may take out their anger on the abused person/child later.

# Intervening Safely - the 3 **D**'s

## **D**istract

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.



## **D**elegate



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?"

## **D**irect

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."





# #SaySomething

WWW.SAYSOMETHINGBC.CA



## TAKE ACTION

*Spread the word through the power of social media*



In March 2015 the B.C. government launched a public awareness campaign to focus attention on the serious issue of domestic violence. The campaign focuses on social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, and offers practical advice and tips to encourage everyone, especially bystanders, to speak up and learn safe ways to help.

Envisioned as a multi-year campaign, in March 2016 government expanded the campaign to focus attention on the issue of sexual violence. In June 2016, the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence with support from the Ministry of Justice joined NEVR to expand the campaign to include all relationship violence.

The #SaySomething website provides information and resources under three main categories:

**I need help.**

**Where to get help.**

**I want to help.**

The website includes animated videos, images and tweets. Information is available in Punjabi, Mandarin, Cantonese, and English.

# Supporting a Person Experiencing Relationship Violence

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## **Express your concern:**

Be non-judgmental; this may help the person feel comfortable in opening up.  
Accept that the person may deny the abuse.  
Reinforce that you are there for them if they need to talk in the future.  
Don't force the person to talk about their abuse.  
Follow your instincts.

## **Assure the person that the violence is not their fault:**

This is an important thing for a person experiencing violence to hear

You can say:

*"No one deserves to be treated this way."*

*"You are not to blame."*

*"What's happening is not your fault."*

2

3

## **Support, but don't give advice:**

Do not try to make the person leave the abuser if they are not ready to.  
Pressure on the person to leave may isolate them further.  
Give options and offer your support and help.  
Respect their choices and let them make their own decisions.  
Emphasize they have control over their situation.

## **Offer resources:**

Refer the person to the community resources found at the end of the Tool Kit.

4

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## **Keep it confidential:**

Assure the person that anything they say will stay between the two of you unless children are at risk or a person's life is threatened.



# What You Can Say...

*"I am glad you were able to tell me and I'm willing 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."*

*"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?"*



## 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."*





# Non-Verbal Interventions



**Make your disapproval known using body language.**



**Offer your presence. Do not look away. The abuse is less likely to escalate if there are witnesses.**



**Call the police or security if a threat of immediate danger exists.**

Encourage the person to talk to someone who can help.

Provide them with the VictimLinkBC number (604-563-0808) and visit the #SaySomething website.

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 for many reasons.

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.

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



Ensure the person has important phone numbers nearby; numbers to have are the police, 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.



Make sure ID is handy (passport, license, Social Insurance Number card, Care Card).

# Safety Planning

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

## DO THIS!



4

4 places they can go if they leave.



Who might help them if they left.



Who could keep a bag of important things for them.



Who might lend them money.



Safety plan for pets.



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



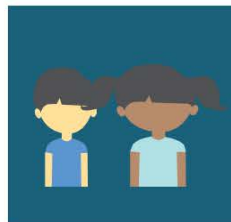
Disable GPS or location tracking on cell phone(s) and social media accounts.



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



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



Safety plan for children.



Keeping a picture of the abuser and their children with them.

**THEY SHOULD LEAVE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE AND NOT TELL THE ABUSER!**



# Safety Planning

If the person has left the abuser...



## DO THIS!



Identify a support person.



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



Establish a safe communication plan to speak with the abuser.



Memorize and practice the safety plan.



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.



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.



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



Change the locks.



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

**\*The blue boxes only apply if the abuser is no longer living with them in the home they once shared.**

# 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 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.).



# A Few Thoughts...

By educating yourself on how to recognise and respond to signs of relationship abuse or disclosures of violence, you have the potential to make a meaningful difference in people's lives. Remember, you are not alone. Resources and professionals are available to help you along the way. Talking about relationship violence is tough, but we can't stop it if we don't all speak up.



**#SaySomething**

Resources in this Tool Kit have been borrowed from various sources, all referenced at the back of this document.



A special thank-you to Kwantlen Polytechnic University Nursing Students for their hard work in contributing to previous tool kits, which informed the development of this one.



# Community Resources in the Lower Mainland

## Assisted Living Registrar

If you believe someone is being abused in an assisted living facility

Call Toll-free: 1.866.714.3378

Email: [hlth.assistedlivingregistry@gov.bc.ca](mailto:hlth.assistedlivingregistry@gov.bc.ca)

## Atira Womens's Resource Society

Providing direct services, increasing awareness and education to end violence against women

Call: 604.531.9143

Visit: <http://www.atira.bc.ca>

## Battered Women's Support Services

Education, advocacy and support services to assist battered women

Crisis + Intake Line: 604.687.1867

Toll Free: 1.855.687.1868

Email: [information@bwss.org](mailto:information@bwss.org)

Visit: <http://www.bwss.org>

## BC211

24/7 confidential, bilingual texting and telephone service that provides free information and referrals to a wide range of community, social, and government services

Call or text 2.1.1

Visit: <http://www.bc211.ca>

## BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support (BC CEAS)

Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL)

Call: 604.437.1940

Toll Free: 1.866.437.1940

Available 8am-8pm daily

E-mail: [info@bcceas.ca](mailto:info@bcceas.ca)

Visit: [www.bcceas.ca](http://www.bcceas.ca)

## BC Crime Stoppers

Provide anonymous tips on crime

Available 24/7 in 115 languages

Call: 1.800.222.8477

Visit: <http://www.bccrimestoppers.com>

## Government website about domestic violence support services

Victim Service Programs, Police-based help, and

Community-based help for victims of abuse

Visit: <http://www.domesticviolencebc.ca>

## BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH)

List of Transition, Second and Third Stage Houses & Safe Homes

Call: 604.669.6943

Toll Free: 1.800.661.1040

E-mail: [info@bcsth.ca](mailto:info@bcsth.ca)

Visit: <http://www.bcsth.ca>

## BC Society for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse

Therapy for men who have been sexually abused

Call: 604.682.6482

Visit: <http://bc-malesurvivors.com>

## Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP)

Financial assistance and benefits to eligible victims

Call: 604.660.3888

Toll-Free: 1.866.660.3888

E-mail: [cvap@gov.bc.ca](mailto:cvap@gov.bc.ca)

Visit: <http://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>

## Crisis Centre (Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC)

Helping people help themselves in dealing with a crisis

Provide an online crisis and youth chat

Community Education Program

Call: 1.800.784.2433

Visit: <http://crisiscentre.bc.ca>

## Deltassist Family & Community Services Society

Offer counselling and community-building in the form of workshops, events, senior support, outreach programs, and information services.

Alternatives to Violence Program for female victims of relationship violence

North Delta Office: 604.594.3455

Visit: <http://www.deltaassist.com>

## Delta Police Victim Services

Supporting victims of crime and trauma

Call: 604.940.5019

Visit: <http://deltapolice.ca/services/victimservices>

Warning! Email option may not be suitable for victims, as contact by email may leave a trail for an abuser to trace. It is suggested that victims contact the aforementioned agencies through telephone or other means of communication.

# Community Resources in the Lower Mainland

## **DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society**

Wide range of services and programs for the culturally diverse community

Call: 604.597.0205

Email: [counsellingservices@dcrs.ca](mailto:counsellingservices@dcrs.ca)

[info@dcrs.ca](mailto:info@dcrs.ca)

Visit: <http://www.dcrs.ca/services/family-services>

## **Dixon Transition Society**

Support, safe housing, outreach services, counselling and education for women and children fleeing from abusive relationships

24 hr intake line: 604.298.3454

Call a Counsellor: 604.298.2549

Visit: <http://dixonsociety.ca>

## **Domestic Abuse Services – Our Lady of Good Counsel Society**

Assist any women and children seeking recovery and safety from abuse

Phone: 604.585.6688

Helpline: 604.640.7549

Toll-free: 1.888.833.7733

Email: [das\\_olgcs@telus.net](mailto:das_olgcs@telus.net)

Visit: <http://domesticabuseservices.ca>

## **DOVE (Delta Opposes Violence Everywhere Committee)**

Comprised of members from community services in Delta

Prevention of violence in relationships through education and awareness

Visit: <http://deltapolice.ca/services/victimservices/dove>

## **Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC)**

Referrals, support, and information to connect victims with the appropriate services

Call: 604.633.2506

Visit: [www.endingviolence.org](http://www.endingviolence.org)

## **Forensic Nursing Service- Surrey Memorial Hospital**

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) provides care for sexual assault victims.

Call: 604.953.4723

Email: [forensicnursingservice@fraserhealth.ca](mailto:forensicnursingservice@fraserhealth.ca)

Visit: [http://www.fraserhealth.ca/find-us/services/our-services?&program\\_id=9921](http://www.fraserhealth.ca/find-us/services/our-services?&program_id=9921)

## **Fraser Health Crisis Line**

24/7 immediate, free, confidential emotional support, crisis intervention and community resource information

Call: 604.951.8855

Toll Free: 1.877.820.7444

Visit: <http://www.options.bc.ca/fraser-health-crisis-line/about-the-fraser-health-crisis-line>

## **Free (Pro Bono) Legal Clinics**

Volunteer lawyers that provide free legal help, if you qualify.

Client line: 604.878.7400

Toll Free 1.877.762.6664

Visit: <http://accessprobono.ca>

## **HealthLinkBC**

Call 8.1.1 to speak with a nurse any time of day or night on any health-related topic

Visit: <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca>

## **Kids Help Phone**

Free, national, bilingual, confidential 24-hour telephone & online counselling service for ages 20 & under

Call a counsellor: 1.800.668.6868

Visit: <http://org.kidshelpphone.ca>

## **Langley Police Victim Services**

Information, emotional support, referrals, and assistance to victims and witnesses of crime and traumatic events

Call: 604.532.3214

Email: [langleyvictimservices@shaw.ca](mailto:langleyvictimservices@shaw.ca)

## **Lawyer Referral Services**

Public access to lawyers

Call 604.687.3221 or 1.800.663.1919

Visit: <http://www.cbabc.org/For-the-Public/Lawyer-Referral-Service>

## **Legal Services Society (Legal Aid)**

Provide legal information, advice, and representation services to people with low incomes

Call: 604.408.2172

Visit: [www.legalaid.bc.ca](http://www.legalaid.bc.ca)

# Community Resources in the Lower Mainland

## Links to brochures about abuse and family violence

Visit: <http://www.legalaid.bc.ca/publications/subject.php?sub=4>

## Moving Forward Family Services

Professional counselling and support services with a "pay what you can" model

Call: 778.321.3054

Visit: <http://movingforwardfamilyservices.com>

## Multicultural Victim Services (MOSAIC)

Specialized services to multicultural men and women victims of crime.

Call: 604.254.9626

Visit: <http://www.mosaicbc.com/family-programs/family-programs/multicultural-victim-services-program>

## Options Community Services

Helping people help themselves and promoting healthy and safe communities through a variety of programs

Main office in Surrey: 604.584.5811

Newton office: 604.596.4321

Email: [Info@options.bc.ca](mailto:Info@options.bc.ca)

Visit: <http://www.options.bc.ca>

## Provincial Office of Domestic Violence

Visit: <http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/podv>

## #SaySomething

Social media campaign to raise awareness and end the silence about domestic abuse

Strategies on how to seek help and lists resources

Visit: <http://www.saysomethingbc.ca>

## Surrey RCMP Victim Services

Assisting victims of crime and other traumatizing events

Telephone available 7 days a week, 6am-3am

Call: 604.599.7600

## Surrey Women's Centre

Provide counseling and clothing, food & shelter support services

S.M.A.R.T. (Surrey Mobile Assault Response Team)

Crisis Line in partnership with Surrey Memorial Hospital: 604.583.1295

Visit: <http://www.surrey womenscentre.ca>

## Threshold Multicultural Outreach

Outreach services for women, immigrants & refugees who are experiencing abuse

Call: 604.572.5883

Visit: <http://www.options.bc.ca/stop-the-violence/threshold-multicultural-outreach>

## Vancouver & Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society

Free and confidential services in over 20 languages for women and families experiencing family violence

Call: 604.436.1025

Email: [againstviolence@vlmfss.ca](mailto:againstviolence@vlmfss.ca)

Visit: <http://www.vlmfss.ca>

## Vancouver Police Department Victim Services

Providing victims, witnesses, and family members of crime and trauma with professional support and justice related information

Call: 604.717.2737

Email: [vpd.vsu@vpd.ca](mailto:vpd.vsu@vpd.ca)

Visit: <http://vancouver.ca/police/crime-prevention/victim-services/index.html>

## Vancouver Rape Relief & Women's Shelter

Free and confidential services, such as support groups, counselling and free legal clinics

Call: 604.872.8212

Visit: <http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca>

## VictimsInfo

A resource for Victims & Witnesses of Crime in BC

Services for victims, reporting a crime, to charge, about court & after sentencing

Visit: <http://www.victiminfo.ca>

## VictimLink BC

24/7, confidential & multilingual

Referral services and crisis support

Toll free: 1.800.563.0808

Visit: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/victims-of-crime/victimlinkbc>

## Victim Safety Unit (VSU)

Victims can register to be notified about status of offenders

Call: 604.660.0316

Toll-Free: 1.877.315.8822

E-mail: [vsug@gov.bc.ca](mailto:vsug@gov.bc.ca)



# Community Resources in the Lower Mainland

## **Victim Services and Crime Prevention Ministry of Justice**

Information and guidance about services and resources available to victims of crime in B.C.

Visit: <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/index.htm>

## **Victim Services Directory**

Search for Victim Services near you

Visit: <http://www.canada.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-ip/victims-victimes/vsd-rsv/index.html>

## **Warriors Against Violence**

Helping First Nation families live in non-violent families and communities

Call: 604.255.3240

Visit: <http://wav-bc.com>

## **Youth Against Violence Line**

24/7, safe, confidential and anonymous

Text: 604.836.6381

Toll-free: 1.800.680.4264

Email: [info@youthagainstviolenceline.com](mailto:info@youthagainstviolenceline.com)

Visit: <http://www.youthagainstviolenceline.com>

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