



Safety Planning During COVID-19

This resource is made for anyone who identifies as a woman, trans woman, or non binary person experiencing violence within their intimate relationships, family, or otherwise.

Violence against women (VAW) is a global pandemic of its own and continues to grow in Ontario in recent years. VAW is not isolated to any one part of the world or any one group of people. It spans relationships across all cultures, socio-economic status, and sexual orientations. However, when a woman is in an abusive relationship, the risk of violence is at its peak during or just after a woman has left the abusive person.

Planning for safety at all stages of an abusive relationship is critical. This resource is a tool to help women plan their safety and includes templates for personalized safety plans for while in the abusive situation, preparing to leave, and after leaving the abusive situation. An abusive person can be anyone, including current or former intimate partners or family members.

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When creating a plan, consider...

- There is no perfect safety plan.
- Avoiding violent incidents may not always be possible, but increasing safety is.
- Who can you trust to include in your plan?

Keeping in contact with people who are supportive, like a friend, family member, co-worker, counsellor

- Do you have an old cellphone to call 911 if you are in danger?
- Keep a bag packed with your necessities in case you need to go quickly.

Did You Know...

Violence against women increases dramatically during natural disasters, economic crashes, and pandemics. Since COVID-19 hit, VAW has tripled in areas of the GTA.

See the end of this package for COVID-19 specific information.

Domestic violence agencies and hotlines are there for you!

If you are in immediate danger please call 911

Canada: ShelterSafe.ca

Ontario:

Assaulted Women's Helpline: 1-866-863-0511

Abushnaabe Kwewag Gamig Northern Ontario

First Nations: 1-800-388-5171

Fem'aide (Francophone): 1-877-336-2433

Toronto:

Central Shelter Intake in Toronto and GTA:

1-877-338-3398

Anduhyaun Native Women's Shelter:

416-920 1492

The 519 for LBGTQ2S+ Youth Ages 16-29:

416-355-6782

Dr. Roz's Healing Place: 416-264-4357

Ernestine Women's Shelter: 416-746 3701

Evangeline Residence: 416-762 9636

Interim Place Crisis Line: 905-403-0864

Interval House Crisis Line: 416-924-1491

Juliette's Place: 416-724-1316

North York Women's Shelter Crisis Line:

416-635 9630

Red Door Family Shelter: 416-469-3457

Women's Habitat: 416-252 5829

Yorktown Shelter for Women: 416-394-2999

Toronto Community Hostel: 416-392-5650

YWCA Toronto: 416-693-7342

Safety Planning When in an Abusive Relationship

1. I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I may have to give the abusive person what they want to calm them down. I have to protect myself until I am out of danger.
2. When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that has fewer risks, such as _____.

Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchens, places with sharp objects or weapons, and rooms without access to an outside door.

Avoid wearing long earrings necklaces or scarves, and avoid having hair in ponytail or braid.

3. If violence is unavoidable, I will make myself a small target – I will go to a corner and curl up into a ball with my face protected and arms around each side of my head.
4. I will try to avoid areas where my children are, as the abusive person may hurt them as well.
5. I will create emotional boundaries – A phrase I can say to myself is: _____.

Example: "I am strong," "I will get through this," "It's going to be okay"

6. If possible, I can sleep in a separate room like the _____ or _____ to lessen risk of sexual abuse.
7. If I decide to leave, I will use the _____.

*What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, or fire escapes would I use?
I will practice how to get out safely on my own and/or with my children.*

8. I will use _____ as a code word to my children, or my friend(s) or family member(s), so they can call 911 for help.
9. I will plan what I will do if my children tell someone, or if the abusive person finds out about my plan.
10. I will let trusted friends, family and neighbours know of my situation and develop a plan and visual signal for when I need help. I can tell _____ and _____ about the violence and request they call 911 if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home.
11. I can keep my wallet, car keys, and important documents together in the _____ in order to leave quickly. If I have a car, I will make a habit of keeping it fueled.
12. If I have to leave my home, I will go to _____. If I cannot go there – then I can go to _____ or _____.
13. I will document any incidents including date, location and details, and take pictures of any injuries as soon as I can.

Decide this even if you do not think there will be a next time.

Safety Planning When Preparing to Leave

1. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____, so I can leave quickly.
2. I will keep copies of important documents or keys at _____.
3. To increase my independence, I will open an individual savings account by _____ (date), or I will find a safe place to hide cash. I will change passwords to my online accounts.
4. Other things I can do to increase my independence include:

_____.
5. The Assaulted Women’s Helpline number is 1-866-863-0511 (a free 24/7 crisis counselling line for women and seniors in the province of Ontario). I will call to find out the procedure for admission to a transition house on _____.
6. I can check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
7. I can leave extra clothes and other personal belongings with _____.
8. I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ (no more than six weeks) in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence.
9. _____ (an advocate or friend) has agreed to help me review this plan.
10. I will delete my browser and caller history on my phone and computer. I won’t use a shared computer to research resources for my plan.

Important items I will have prepared to take with me:

IDs and legal papers:

- Driver’s license
- Birth certificate (and children’s birth certificates)
- Passport or immigration documents
- Health Cards and insurance documents
- Social Insurance Card
- Debit, Credit Cards, Money
- Banking information
- Protective orders
- Rental/lease agreement or home ownership documents
- Car registration and insurances papers
- Divorce and custody papers

Emergency numbers:

- Local police and non-emergency numbers
- Assaulted Women’s Helpline, 1-866-863-0511
- Local domestic violence organizations
- Friends, family, support workers and counsellors
- Family doctor

Other items:

- Medications
- House keys (and car keys)
- _____
- _____
- _____

Safety Planning After You Have Left

1. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible; or replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
2. I can install security systems, including additional locks, poles to wedge against sliding doors and windows, and/or an electronic system.
3. I can install an outside lighting system with motion detectors that lights up when a person is coming close to my house.
4. I will teach my children to tell me if someone is at the door, and to not answer the door on their own.
5. I will tell people who take care of my children (school, day care, baby sitter, neighbour, family member, friend) that the abusive person is not permitted to leave with my children.
6. I will tell my neighbours, coworkers, friends, and family members that if they see the abusive person near by, to inform me immediately or call 911 if I have a no contact order.
7. I will put my kitchen utensils and knives in the cupboards – so they are not as accessible.
8. I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls than the ones I used when I lived with the abusive person. I also will find a new _____, _____, and _____.
9. I will delete or create **all** new social media accounts, block the abusive person and people close to them, and tighten my privacy settings. I will limit what I share on social media and not share private information.
10. I will disable location and GPS functions on my phone, tablet, and computer.
11. I will block the abusive person's calls and not accept calls from private numbers.
12. I will change my voicemail to an anonymous message.
13. Other things that I will do to increase my safety are:

Safety Planning with Children

Depending on your children's age and your circumstances, you can tell them about your safety plan, and help them develop safety as well. Whether or not children witness any incidents, children are always impacted by the situation. It is important to communicate with children to minimize any guilt, fear, anxiety, and any other negative emotions children will often internalize.

1. I will teach my children how to use the phone to contact 911 and what to say.
2. I will teach my children our safety word in case I want them to call 911. Our safety word is _____.
3. I will instruct them to leave the home if possible when things begin to escalate and provide a safe option of where they can go (i.e. my neighbour's house, friend, or relative).
I will instruct them to go to _____ or _____.
4. I will teach them to never intervene, even though they may want to protect me.
5. We will create a list of people that they are comfortable talking with and expressing themselves to, for example: _____, and _____.
6. I will tell them that only I or _____ can pick them up and to tell their teacher, babysitter, friend's parent, or another adult if someone else tries to pick them up.
7. I will talk to them about not sharing this plan with others.
8. I will reach out to children's mental health organizations to learn how to best talk to my children about the situation (see p. 12).

How to talk to Children after an Incident

Benefits of talking about the abuse:

- Children can learn that violence or family challenges is not their fault
- Children can learn that violence is not an acceptable way to solve problems
- Children can feel cared for and understood and learn that it's okay to talk about feelings

What children need to hear you say:

- It's not your fault, I am sorry that something I did made you feel worried, hurt, or unsafe
- I will listen to you; I am sorry that you saw/heard/experienced that.
- What I/we did wasn't okay, violence/name calling/etc is never okay
- There is nothing you could have done to prevent/change it
- You can tell me how you feel, how you feel is important, it's okay if you're mad or sad, I would be too
- We can talk about what to do to keep you feeling safe
- You do not deserve to have this happen in your family
- What happened was not okay, I should not have done what I did
- It must have been scary for you
- I am getting help so that we can all be safe

What you can do to rebuilt trust and safety:

- Continue to communicate with children and provide a predictable and safe environment
- Respond to the children's needs, nurture children and show them positive attention
- Provide activities that the children can enjoy and be successful at
- Maintain respectful behaviours towards people, especially those who are important to the children
- Be consistent in moods and behaviours and continue to work to improve parenting skills

Safety Planning During Pregnancy

Pregnancy can be an especially dangerous time for women in abusive relationships and abuse often begins or escalates during the pregnancy. There is always a heightened risk during violent situations if you are pregnant, including violence directed to your stomach.

1. I live in a home with stairs, I will try to stay on the 1st floor as much as possible.
2. If I am being attacked, I can lay on the floor in the fetal position with my arms around my stomach.
3. If safe to do so, I can tell my doctor about the violence during a visit. If the abusive person goes to appointments with me, I will try to find a moment when they're out of the room to ask the doctor or nurse to create an excuse to talk to me alone.
4. I can call Legal Aid Ontario for a free consultation with a family lawyer who can tell me what my legal rights are regarding myself and baby.

Safety Planning for Unsupervised Visits

If you have separated from an abusive partner and are concerned about your children's safety when they visit your ex-partner, develop a safety plan. The plan should be tailored to your children's age.

1. Come up with ways that your children can stay safe using the same model as you would for your own home. Have them identify where they can get a phone, how they can leave the house, and who they can go to.
2. Give a cell phone to your children when they go for visits that could be used in case of an emergency.
3. Avoid exchanging custody at your home, or your partner's home. Instead, meet in a safe public place such as coffee shops or restaurants. I will meet at _____ or _____.
4. Bring a friend or relative with you to the exchanges or have them make the exchanges if that's an option. I will bring _____ or _____.

Safety Planning with Pets

You may feel you are not able to leave an abusive situation because you are concerned about what will happen to your pets if you leave. If possible, don't leave pets alone with the abusive person. Talk to your friends, family or your veterinarian about temporary care for your pets. You may also contact an organization, **SafePet (safepet.ca)** – and they will care for your pets until you are safe and stabilized. However, your safety comes first.

When leaving with my pets:

1. If I can, I will pack:
 - a. Food
 - b. copies of medical records
 - c. veterinarian and insurance phone numbers
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
2. I will contact transition houses or shelters to see if they allow pets.
3. After leaving, I will change veterinarians and pet stores.
4. If I left and did not bring my pets with me, it might be an option to ask police (non-emergency) for assistance in retrieving them.

Safety Planning When at Work:

Friends, family, and coworkers can help support you, so consider telling them that you are experiencing violence and that you may be at continued risk.

1. I can inform my manager/boss, and _____ (co-worker) about my situation.
2. I can ask _____ to help me screen my phone calls at work.
3. When leaving work, I can walk out with _____, or call _____ while I'm leaving.
4. I will let _____ know when I have arrived home safely.
5. When driving home, or taking public transit, if problems occur, I will call _____ and _____ for assistance, or go _____ instead of home.
6. I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls than the ones I used when I lived in the abusive home. I also will find a new _____, _____, and _____.
7. I will always remember to be careful and watchful of my surroundings.

Safety Planning with a Protection Order

It may be necessary to ask the police and the courts to enforce your Protection Order (Restraining Order or Peace Bond) if the abusive person is breaching the conditions of the Order, for example contacting, harassing, or coming near you.

1. I will keep my Protection Order or other legal documents that place conditions on myself or the abusive person in _____. I will also keep a copy on me at all times in case I need to show police.
2. I will keep important court and safety phone number on me at all times.

Toronto Police Non-Emergency: 416-808-2222

Peel Police Non-Emergency: 905-453-3311

Ontario Victim Support Line: 1-888-579-2888 or 416-314-2447 for Toronto

Ontario Court Locations:

https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/courts/Court_Addresses

3. I can call the Ontario Victim Support Line or Victim Services at my nearest courthouse, if I have questions regarding Protection Orders.
4. I will inform my employer, friend, and _____ (trusted person) that I have a Protection Order in effect.
5. If the abusive person violates the Protection Order, I can call 911 and report a violation, contact the Crown, and/or call my counsellor. Do not respond if possible and document everything.

Resources for Getting a Protection Order

A Protection Order is a legally enforceable order that you can get from a judge or justice of the peace either at a courthouse or with assistance from the police or a lawyer. If you are uncomfortable going to the police, you can go directly to a courthouse. There are different kinds of Protection Orders.

You can get a **Peace Bond** from the criminal court system, and it can be against anybody that you have reason to believe may harm you, your children, or your property.

You can get a **Restraining Order** from the family court system, and it can be against a partner or ex-partner you have lived with for any period of time, someone you are or were married to, or someone you have children with.

Ministry of the Attorney General - [Restraining Order – A Self Help Guide](#)

Ontario Women's Justice Network – [Protection Order Guide](#)

*If you have experienced family violence, you may qualify for a free 2-hour consultation with a lawyer through **Legal Aid Ontario**: 1-800-668-8258.*

Safety Planning When Substance Use is Involved

Using substances (alcohol or drugs) can reduce your awareness and ability to act quickly to protect yourself. Substance use may also make the violence more intense and frequent, when used by an abusive person.

To enhance my safety, if drug or alcohol use is present, I can:

1. Use substances in a safe space and with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety, like _____ or _____.
2. If I can, avoid using with the abusive person. But If I find myself using with my partner, I will limit myself to _____ amount of _____ substance.
3. I will avoid mixing substances.
4. I will avoid using substances while my children are present.
5. If I feel triggered to use substances, I will first do _____ and _____.
6. I can practice other coping mechanisms to help myself get through stressful or painful moments. I will practice _____ and _____.
7. If the abusive person is using at home, I can leave the home and go to _____ or _____.
8. I will contact _____ if I feel unsafe while using substances or while the abusive person is using.
9. I can go to my local pharmacy or Shoppers Drug Mart for a free Naloxone kit and 20-minute training.

Naloxone can temporarily reverse the negative effects of overdose from opioids like: Fentanyl, Heroin, Morphine, Dilaudid, Demerol, Percodan, Percocet/ Oxycodone/OxyContin and Codein.

10. I can contact ConnexOntario to find support for family members of people struggling with substance use, or to inquire about substance use counselling or other mental health treatment or counselling (1-866-531-2600).

Emotional Safety:

The experience of violence and abuse is exhausting, so it's important to have a safety plan in order to conserve emotional energy and resources.

1. If I feel down and am thinking of returning to a potentially abusive situation, I can call _____ or _____.
2. When I have to communicate with the abusive person face to face or by phone, I can ground myself before and after the interaction by _____ and _____.
3. When I have to interact with the abusive person, I can write down my thoughts before hand to prepare and have confidence about my goals during the interaction.
4. I can try to use "I" statements to express myself and practice saying "no" to be more assertive with others.
5. I can tell myself " _____ " whenever I feel others are trying to control or manipulate me.
6. I can read/watch _____ to help me feel stronger.
7. I can call _____ and _____ as a source of support for myself.
8. Other things I can do to help myself feel strong are _____, _____, and _____.

What hobbies, exercise, and mindfulness/meditation will you practice to increase your self esteem, mental health, and emotional strength?

Leaving an Abusive Home When I Have Tenant/Rental Obligations

Many women often cannot afford to break their lease or don't know how to end their lease and leave a rental unit in a financially or physically safe way. However, there are simple legal mechanisms in place that can be used to leave a rental unit at any point within the rental period and without informing your partner, ex-partner, or any tenants.

Any tenant who is being abused or whose child is being abused, or who has reasonable fear of abuse by a partner or ex-partner (even if they do not live in the unit) or by someone who lives in the unit and is related to you or your child, has the right to end their tenancy. To do this, you must:

- 1) Complete and sign the "N15 - Tenant's Notice to End my Tenancy Because of Fear of Sexual or Domestic Violence and Abuse" Form from the Landlord and Tenant Board
- 2) Attach a copy of a protection order, or if you do not have one, attach a signed "Tenant's Statement About Sexual or Domestic Violence and Abuse" Form from the Landlord and Tenant Board.
*You **do not** need to provide details of the abuse, however you must sign a statement indicating that there is domestic violence, abuse, or fear of abuse.*
- 3) Give these forms to your landlord at least 28 days before you intend to leave. If you have already left, you will still be responsible for paying the next 28 days of rent.
- 4) If all tenants in the unit have separate leases, or if no other tenants from your lease will remain living in the unit, you may apply last month's rent deposit to this last month.
- 5) Keep copies of these forms for yourself for at least a year after you move.

If you have a joint tenancy with your partner/ex-partner or with anyone else, you do not need to tell them about your plan. The lease will automatically be left to them alone. If you are the only tenant, your lease will just end.

The **landlord cannot under any circumstances disclose this information** to anyone, including any remaining tenants, or put up ads that identify the unit until you have left. They may inform only necessary employees. The landlord and employees can face fines up to \$100,000 if they breach your confidentiality.

You can find the correct forms and instructions on the [Landlord and Tenant Board](http://www.sjto.gov.on.ca/ltb/forms) website. (www.sjto.gov.on.ca/ltb/forms).

Moving With Little or No Income

If you are on social assistance (receiving OW or ODSP) and do not have enough money to move, you can contact your worker and ask them to help you apply for the [City of Toronto's Housing Stabilization Fund](#) to cover your first and last month's rent in a new unit.

Legal Resources to Help Create My Safety Plan

[Shelter Safe \(www.sheltersafe.ca\)](http://www.sheltersafe.ca) is an online resource for women and their children seeking safety and have an interactive map that helps connect women with their local shelters.

The [Centre for Legal Education Ontario \(www.cleo.on.ca\)](http://www.cleo.on.ca) publishes several up-to-date pamphlets and handbooks on [domestic violence](#), including:

- Do You Know a Women Who is Being Abused? A Legal Rights Handbook
- Children’s Aid: Information for Parents
- Elder Abuse, the Hidden Crime
- Family Violence When a Woman is Sponsored by a Spouse or Partner

[Steps to Justice \(stepstojustice.ca\)](http://stepstojustice.ca) also provides basic legal information in various areas of law, including answering common questions on [how to protect yourself from an abusive partner after you leave](#).

If you are having issues related to domestic violence, criminal law or family law, you may qualify for a free consultation or representation through [Legal Aid Ontario \(www.legalaid.on.ca\)](http://www.legalaid.on.ca) or 1-800-668-8258).

If you require assistance with other legal issues like Landlord and Tenant, Social Assistance, Human Rights, Employment, or Immigration, you can reach out to the nearest [Community Legal Clinic](#) for help. You can find these listed on [Legal Aid Ontario](#)

Mental Health and Substance Use Resources in Toronto

MEDICAL ADVICE

Telehealth Ontario 1-866-797-0000

The nurse will help you decide whether to:

- handle a problem yourself
- visit your doctor or nurse practitioner
- go to a clinic
- contact a community service
- go to a hospital emergency room

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

The Access Point theaccesspoint.ca
info@theaccesspoint.ca
416-640-1934

Central mental health and addictions access point where you can apply for individual mental health and addictions support services and supportive housing in Toronto.

The Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH)	250 College Street 416 535-8501 1-800-463-2338 www.camh.ca	Phones and Emergency Room – 24/7 Drop-In Bridging Mental Health Clinic - Monday to Friday 8:30-4:30.
	Press 2 for Addiction Referral Service	Services: In-patient and out-patient addictions, substance use, gambling, and multiple kinds of mental health treatment programming, therapy and psychiatry.
Women’s College Hospital Women's Mental Health Program	76 Grenville Street 416-323-6230 womenscollegehospital.ca	Hours: Monday – Friday. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Services: Crisis, mothers programs, support, therapy, and treatment groups for general psychiatry and mental health, trauma, and abuse.
St Michael’s Hospital Family Health - Sumac Creek Health Centre	73 Regent Park Blvd 416-864-3022	Inpatient and outpatient services.
William Osler Health System. Etobicoke General Hospital	101 Humber College Blvd Etobicoke North 416-494-2120 option 7 www.williamoslerhs.ca	Acute care hospital - inpatient and outpatient services
Skylark Children, Youth and Families	255-40 Orchard View Blvd info@skylarkyouth.org 416-482-0081 www.skylarkyouth.org	Free mental health services for children, youth and their families. No health card is necessary. Youth Wellness Hub - Walk-in Clinic at 40 Orchard View Blvd 'What's Up' Walk-In Clinic 65 Wellesley St E, Unit 500
The Life Line Canada	https://thelifelinecanada.ca	Online tools, resources, and the Life Line App with support options for mental health and suicide prevention.

SUBSTANCE USE AND REHABILITATION

Elizabeth Fry Toronto	215 Wellesley Street E 416-924-3708	Addictions counselling services for women who are on parole or probation, or who are mandated to complete a substance use program by a court.
Jean Tweed Centre For Women & Their Families	215 Evans Avenue Etobicoke 416-255-7359	Services for women experiences substance use and/or gambling issues.



info@jeantweed.com

Includes Residential Programs, Day Programs, and more.

Bellwood Health Services

175 Brentcliffe Rd
East York
416-495-0926
Crisis phone
416-495-0926

Services for women and men over 18 years, with substance and/or gambling, eating disorders, sex addiction, or trauma related issues.

Services: Residential and outpatient addiction treatment, including individual, family and couples counselling

Salvation Army.
Scarborough Satellite.
Homestead Addiction Services

Scarborough Central
2085 Ellesmere Rd

Addiction Counsellor
416-431-4379 ext 221

For women, men and trans people over 18 who identify with substance use issues or are stabilized on methadone/suboxone.

Service: Assessments and treatment planning, day treatment programs, counselling, group counselling, classes, and supportive housing.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Aisling Discoveries
Child and Family
Centre

325 Milner Avenue, Suite 110
Scarborough

416-321-5464 press 0
email@aislingdiscoveries.ca
<https://aislingdiscoveries.ca>

Ages: Prenatal to 12 years old
Provides services for children at risk of developing social, emotional or behavioural problems, and for children and youth with autism spectrum disorder.

Adventure Place Child
and Family Centre

McNicoll Public School
155 McNicoll Avenue

416-744-7650
contact@adventureplace.ca

Education and treatment programs for parents.

Early childhood specialists, social work, psychological, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and day treatment programs for children.

Skylark Children,
Youth and Families

255-40 Orchard View Blvd
info@skylarkyouth.org
416-482-0081
www.skylarkyouth.org

Free mental health services for children, youth and their families. No health card is necessary.

Youth Wellness Hub - Walk-in Clinic
40 Orchard View Blvd

'What's Up' Walk-In Clinic
65 Wellesley St E, Unit 500

YouthLink

Main Office
636 Kennedy Rd.
Scarborough
416-967-1773

Wide range of supports for emotional and mental health and intellectual development for youth ages 12-24 and their families.

What's Up? Walk-In
counselling clinic
636 Kennedy Road

Scarborough Village Pathways
to Education
1 – 3545 Kingston Road,
Scarborough
647-351-0091

Griffin Centre Mental
Health Services

1126 Finch Avenue West,
Unit 16
416-222-4380
contact@griffincentre.org

Broad range of programming and counselling for children, youth, transitioning youth and adults, including assessments, mental health, recovering from abuse, conflict with the law, disabilities, conflict with family, peers, and discrimination.

The Etobicoke
Children's Centre

Main Office
65 Hartsdale Drive, Etobicoke
416-240-1111
ecc@etobicokechildren.com

Services for children, youth, and their families with mental health or autism related issues, including a Walk In Clinic.

Satellite Office and Walk In
Clinic
200 Ronson Drive, 4th Floor,
Etobicoke
416-240-1111

East Metro Youth
Services

1200 Markham Road
Suite 200, Scarborough
416-438-3697

A large variety of programs, treatment, and services for adolescents and their families in need of mental health and addictions services, including trauma counselling and gendered based violence counselling

LGBTQ2S+

The 519 Community

519 Church St
416-355-6782
vwatson@the519.org
www.the519.org

For LGBTQ2S Youth Ages 16 to 29
Community support, domestic violence and housing support

Friends of Ruby
(Formerly Egale Youth
Services)

489 Queen St. E
416-359-0237
info@friendsofruby.ca
<http://friendsofruby.ca>

For LGBTQ2S Youth Ages 16 to 29
Community support, domestic violence and housing support

LGBT Youth Line

1-800-268-9688
Text 647-694-4275
www.youthline.ca

Peer support by and for people 29 and under

CRISIS HOTLINES

ConnexOntario Mental Health Helpline	1-866-531-2600	Province-wide information available 24/7 and connection with appropriate mental health services in Ontario.
Gerstein Centre	416-929-5200 www.gersteincentre.org	A crisis centre, including mobile unit, for people of all ages, genders, and sexual orientation
The Scarborough Hospital Mobile Crisis Program	416-495-2891	A crisis response service for adults in Scarborough and East York

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION EMERGENCY SERVICES

Ambulance or police	911
CAMH – Emergency Room	250 College St 416-979-6885
Toronto Western Hospital - Psychiatric Emergency Service	399 Bathurst St 416-603-2581
St. Michael's Hospital Psychiatric Emergency Service	30 Bond St 416-860-4000

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE SPECIFIC

South Asian Women's Centre	800 Lansdowne Ave 416-537-2276 info@sawc.org www.sawc.org
	Satellite Location, Frontline Community Services 2761 Markham Road Scarborough 416-840-4425

Programs and Services:

- Settlement Programs and Services
- Wellness Group
- Violence Against Women Program
- Women and Forced Marriages and Trafficking Project
- Tax Clinic

Services available in multiple languages

COVID-19 Specific Information and Resources

Elizabeth Fry Toronto continues to deliver essential services through the COVID-19 pandemic. While lock downs and social distancing has been a challenge for everyone, it was evident right away that the challenge would be greater for many service users.

Isolation, job loss, financial stress, family stress, housing insecurity, and less overall opportunity to leave the home, on top of general COVID anxiety – creates a hot bed for intimate partner violence (IPV). IPV includes verbal, emotional, physical, spiritual/cultural, and financial abuse, harassment, surveillance, stalking, and other abusive or controlling behaviour by either current or former partners – issues already drawing increased concern in Ontario prior to COVID-19.¹

“Stay at home” measures are crucial in collectively protecting one another during this pandemic.

However, many women are facing a different kind of pandemic at home.

Unfortunately, quarantine creates new and more isolated opportunities for abusive partners to terrorise others in the home. It also potentially increases negative coping mechanisms such as substance use, which again can trigger more IPV incidents. Quarantine and social distancing can also elevate psychological consequences, such as frustration, anger, anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.²

Did you know...

- The United Nations has expressed concern over the “horrifying global surge” in domestic violence since the virus outbreak.³ Canada is no exception.
- Since the pandemic restrictions, there have been at least three intimate partner homicides committed against woman in Canada.⁴
- Stats Canada released a survey on the effects of COVID-19, finding 1 in 10 women are “very or extremely concerned about the possibility of violence in the home”.⁵
- Some regions of the GTA report that the number of women seeking emergency help have tripled.⁶
- Less than on third of women who experience IPV will report it.⁷

Common ways to seek help – like using an outside phone to call services, meeting in private with a trusted friend, or temporary stays with family or at hotels, are no longer viable options. Women are also reporting increased anxiety about accessing already limited shelter space for fear of spreading or contracting the virus.

To accommodate the changing climate, our counsellors are spending more time safety planning with clients, conducting counselling calls, and finding new ways to support women – like through video call, phone, or text.

Elizabeth Fry Toronto advocates for women and non-binary people who experience criminalization by delivering feminist, anti-oppressive and trauma informed counselling and support services to women and their families in the Toronto community, court system, and prisons system.

It is important to know that you are not alone. Even if you are unable to leave your home at the moment, you can still access support through a helpline (Assaulted Woman’s Helpline at 1-866-863-0511). If you are in immediate danger, please call 911 and ask for the police.

Change in Resources During COVID-19

Shelter and Mental Health Access

The **Assaulted Women's Helpline** is facilitating shelter intake for women leaving domestic violence situations (1-866-863-0511).

Many organizations across the city continue to provide mental health and substance use services over the phone or online. For children, youth, caregivers, and young adults, you can call **Yorktown Family Services** - no health card needed- at 416-669-352, or **Kids Help Phone** at 1-800-668-6868.

Legal Aid and Housing

Legal Aid Ontario (1-800-668-8258) has broadened services to provide free 2 hour consultations with anyone experiencing domestic violence. They are also providing 20 minute consultations for any family law issue.

All eviction hearings are postponed until further notice, except for urgent disputes like those involving illegal acts or safety concerns. All scheduled evictions are postponed, and no new eviction orders will be made, except those involving serious urgent disputes. Your landlord can still give you an eviction notice, but this **does not mean you have to move**. If you receive an eviction notice, you should call your local [Community Legal Clinic](#) (1-800-668-8258) for advice or the [Landlord and Tenant Board](#) (1-888-332-3234) for information.

If you have any specific concerns about COVID-19, **Infection Prevention and Control Canada** has a hotline set up at 1-833-784-4397.

Endnotes:

1. CBC News, Topic Series: Stopping Domestic Violence, 2020, online: cbc.ca/stoppingdomesticviolence.
2. S.K. Brooks, et al. *The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: rapid review of the evidence*. Lancet. 2020 (395: 912-920).
3. UN News, "UN chief calls for domestic violence 'ceasefire' amid 'horrifying global surge'", United Nations, April 6 2020, online: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061052>.
4. Jordan Heath-Rawlings, "COVID-19 and domestic violence: A meeting of two pandemics," The Big Story Podcast, April 16 2020, online <https://thebigstorypodcast.ca/2020/04/16/covid-19-and-domestic-violence-a-meeting-of-two-pandemics/>.
5. Statistics Canada, "Canadian Perspectives Survey Series 1: Impacts of COVID-19," Government of Canada, April 8 2020, online: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200408/dq200408c-eng.htm>.
6. Alastair Sharp, "A spike in domestic violence happening in Toronto due to COVID-19 experts say," Canada's National Observer, April 28 2020, online: <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2020/04/28/news/spike-domestic-violence-happening-toronto-due-covid-19-experts-say>.
7. Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services "Statistics – Domestic Violence," Government of Ontario, May 4 2015, online: http://www.women.gov.on.ca/owd/english/ending-violence/domestic_violence.shtml.