



Women's House
Serving Bruce and Grey

Women's House Serving Bruce & Grey

Newsletter - Spring 2022

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Toll Free #: 1.800.265.3026
Local #: 519.396.9655
Sexual Assault #: 1.866.578.5566



Programs & Services

- Women's Shelter
- 24/7 Crisis Lines
- Outreach Counselling
- Group Counselling
- Community Development
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Transition & Second Stage Housing Services
- Sexual Assault & Human Trafficking Services
- Child Witness Counselling

Pandemic Recovery: Changing the Norm BY MICHELLE LAMONT, COMMUNITY & FUND DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

As we are recovering globally from the pandemic, and life begins to return to “normal”, it is important to note that returning to “normal” standard practices is incredibly problematic in terms of gender-based violence (GBV) and the support systems that are available for victims. Before COVID-19, it had been said that there was a pandemic of violence in terms of GBV. And while institutions have been doing their best with limited resources available, and were well-aware of the shortcomings of policies and government initiatives, the needs and limiting gaps went unnoticed by the governing bodies. The global pandemic of COVID-19 brought these deficiencies into focus for the government and the general public to see. According to a recent article and survey entitled “*Pandemic Meets Pandemic: Understanding the Impacts of COVID-19 on Gender-based Violence Services and Survivors in Canada*” (written collaboratively by the Ending Violence Association of Canada and Anova, in association with the Department of Women and Gender Equality (WAGE)), the “normal” before the pandemic was “not serving women who experience violence well. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the pandemic of GBV, creating the potential for increases in the prevalence of violence, demand for services, and the costs of providing services for an already overburdened and under-resourced sector. GBV advocates are clear that post-pandemic planning and recovery cannot simply ‘return to normal’ but must involve a fundamental reimagining of how GBV work is supported and connected to other large systems in ways that ensure an intersectional, systemic approach.”

While the situation was dire prior to COVID-19, we also know that “crises are catalysts for gender-based violence – GBV is a predictable and consistent side effect of economic, epidemiological and environmental crises such as COVID-19. Stress of social isolation and employment interruptions create conditions for violence to occur and barriers to escaping. The findings from this survey echo existing research that emphasizes the negative impact of pandemics and other disasters on gender-based violence. We know that without a doubt, the pandemic and its ongoing impacts have created a situation of increased vulnerability and harm for those at risk of or experiencing GBV and for the organizations that serve them. Over the course of the pandemic, the GBV sector has been dedicated to ensuring services continue to be available even as survivors’ experiences of violence and their accompanying needs have become increasingly complex and multi-faceted. Unfolding against a preexisting backdrop of inadequate funding, long waiting lists, space shortages, and many other challenges, it is clear that the pandemic and its impact on GBV workers and survivors has created a precarious situation that demands immediate attention and action. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the pandemic of GBV, creating the potential for increases in the prevalence of violence, demand for services, and the costs of providing services for an already overburdened and under-resourced sector,” stated the article.

The pandemic has further compounded issues that will continue to make the situation worse without intervention and changes in the status quo. Isolation and inability to get the support they need have led to increased vulnerability, mental illness, addiction, job loss, poverty, precarious housing and homelessness. Safe, affordable housing is one of the first steps towards a survivor transitioning to a better life, and the current housing and rental market is even more of a barrier to this than it ever was. Abusers have used this to their advantage, knowing their victims have nowhere else to go. They are exploiting information about the pandemic to gain control, justifying the necessity of isolation while controlling access to technology and limiting privacy for computer time or telephone calls, all in an effort to increase the ability to escalate power and control and limit the survivor’s ability to reach out for help. Fortunately, when the options are limited and the situation is critical, Women’s House has been able to work

with the most vulnerable in our area to provide private cell phones for the most at-risk women that we work with, so they have a lifeline outside of the abusive home. But, that is a limited and temporary solution to a huge problem that can go wrong in so many ways. With a finite number of phones or without options like this, technology might be their only means of reaching out, and that puts desperate victims in a vulnerable position.

One of the ways we've been seeing the most vulnerable taken advantage of, often via technology, is through sexual exploitation and human trafficking, and incidents have been on a steep increase in recent years. According to the White Ribbon Campaign*, "Online sexual exploitation [and human trafficking] is the actual or attempted abuse of someone in a position of vulnerability by using power or trust to manipulate that person for sexual purposes, monetary gain and/or influence, and it can happen to anyone using the internet and digital technology". Between 2009 and 2018, police services in Canada have reported that Nova Scotia and Ontario recorded average human trafficking annual rates higher than the national average. Accounting for 39% of the total Canadian population, Ontario alone has accounted for 68% of all police-reported human trafficking incidents throughout Canada. As quoted from the White Ribbon Campaign, based on information provided by the Government of Canada and the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, "in 2020, child luring online increased by 15% compared to the year before. And 97% of victims of police-reported incidents of human trafficking in Canada are women or girls, more than 1 in 5 are 17 years of age or younger and 74% are 25 or younger. Often, traffickers target youth from vulnerable communities, such as 2SLGBTQ+, Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities, and newcomer and immigrant youth. With the assumption that human trafficking only takes place in large urban centres, surprisingly for many, human trafficking is on the rise in Grey and Bruce Counties.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

WHY ARE GREY & BRUCE COUNTIES VULNERABLE?

Source: Violence Prevention Grey Bruce Anti-Human Trafficking Committee Resource Manual

Easy & direct driving routes to larger urban centres allow traffickers easy access into and out of the region

High poverty rates in much of the region create situations that increase risk, while lucrative local industries (tourism, power generation industry) create transient populations with disposable income

Isolation, ability to move around undetected, communities have false sense of security

Since Human Trafficking is not widely understood in the general population, this may create a potential market for the traffickers to exploit.

24 hour Sexual Assault Support Line: 1-866-578-5566

Available for all genders aged 12 -17 and for women over 18 years of age.

We offer trauma and violence-informed:

- 1 Individual counselling
- 2 Group programming
- 3 Advocacy
- 4 System navigation
- 5 Case planning
- 6 Referrals and resources

To speak with a Counsellor please call **1.519.396.9814 ext. 236** or go to www.whsbg.on.ca for more information

Women's House recognized the desperate need for support, advocacy and guidance for those that are vulnerable to this heinous crime. So, we searched for, and received, funding for a part-time position to work towards preventing human trafficking in our area through education and support of survivors and those that have fallen victim. Very soon afterwards it became apparent that the need was far too great for a part-time position, so in spite of only having partial funding from the OPP and the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services, we transitioned it to a full-time position to help meet the needs, with a plan to fundraise to meet the additional costs. In addition to providing therapy, trauma support and counselling for survivors and those impacted by this crime, the counsellor will be working to build partnerships with local OPP, municipalities, schools and Indigenous communities, to work together toward prevention and bringing awareness of services while creating solutions to fill gaps in services. These counselling services will be provided to all genders aged twelve (12) to seventeen (17) years who are victims of sexual violence and/or human trafficking, and to women aged eighteen (18) years and older who are victims of, or at risk of, human trafficking. Our new Youth Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking counsellor is already hard at work making a difference: making connections with key players like police services, municipalities and school systems; working to incorporate information into the school curriculums; and support groups being formed, with a pilot group currently meeting: E.R.A. (Empower. Response. Ability). There's a long way to go, but we've made a start towards change and recovery. If you wish to help with a donation, or for more information on this, and how you can help, read further in this newsletter or go to our website: www.whsbg.on.ca/services

If you or someone you know needs help now, reach out for support:

Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline: **1-833-900-1010**

Women's House 24/7 Sexual Assault Support Line: **1-866-578-5566**

Women's House 24/7 Crisis Line: **1-800-265-3026**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING: HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

Stages of Sexual Exploitation



STARTS WITH RECRUITMENT

- Pretending to be a boyfriend/girlfriend/friend
- Lured by friends that have already been recruited
- Positive attention, trust building, asking victim to do a "favour"
- Contacting via social media or ads for jobs/opportunities

TARGETING THE MOST VULNERABLE

- Teens with unsuspecting parents allowing "privacy or independence" in computer time
- Women from abusive situations looking for a way out
- Financially unstable, mentally ill or drug-dependent persons looking for support



GROOMING

- Showering victim with gifts
- Promises of a better life, money, clothes, work etc.
- Usually male, exploiters don't work alone – they often have female accomplices to help gain trust

CONTINUES WITH ISOLATION / EXPLOITATION

- Threatening & kidnapping
- Moving around to isolate them from family/friends/areas they know
- Kept in different hotels, provinces or rural properties with little outside contact
- Violence & intimidation
- Forced drugs/addiction to drugs
- Fear for their own safety or someone they know



STAYING SAFE ONLINE

Ensure all social media accounts are private

Don't "add" or "friend" people you don't know

Don't provide personal info online (address, phone number, etc.)

Be careful who you trust online – a person may not be who they say they are

Don't meet someone in person without checking with your parents/caregivers

suddenly being showered with attention

suddenly being given expensive things (e.g. clothing, purses, jewelry, hair, nails)

new partner they won't introduce you to

isolated or turned against family and friends

sudden change in appearance (e.g. wearing clothing that is not age appropriate)

sudden change in behaviour (e.g. skipping school, failing grades, withdrawn, secretive)

staying out late, missing curfew, inconsistencies in their story



becomes defensive when questioned about changes in appearance and behaviour

STAYING SAFE AT A PARTY

Ensure someone knows where you are at all times

Use the "buddy system" – always stay close to trusted friends

Keep your phone charged and always close by

If you ever feel unsafe, leave to go somewhere you are more comfortable

Always keep in mind that your judgment may be impaired if you have been drinking or taking drugs

If you are already a Women's House donor, sponsor, or supporter, thank you for your generosity and we hope you enjoy our newsletter!

Please help Women's House in our goals to help the environment AND save money so we can provide more for the women and children we serve by requesting that you receive this newsletter electronically. Contact mlamont@whsbg.on.ca to make your request. Thank you for your part in making this a better world for everyone!

I would like to support the work of Women's House Serving Bruce & Grey throughout the year!

My donation of \$_____ will help to ensure the continuation of all programs to assist women and children in crisis.

I am enclosing my cheque for: \$50 \$75 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other _____ I would like a charitable receipt

I prefer to use my: VISA MASTERCARD

Signature for credit card: _____

Card number: _____ / _____ / _____ Exp. Date: _____ / _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Scan this code with your phone's camera to be directed to our online CanadaHelps donation page, or visit whsbg.on.ca/donate/

Please consider an affordable monthly donation, as it gives us the security of your continued support when we need it most.



Cheques can be mailed to: **Women's House Serving Bruce & Grey Box 760 Kincardine, ON N2Z 2Z4**

Need more information or options to make a donation? contact **Michelle** at mlamont@whsbg.on.ca or 519-396-9814 ext. 225 for any donation questions

THIS YEAR'S WOMEN'S HOUSE FUNDRAISING TARGET IS \$125,000

Women's House provided services to **537 women and 109 children** from April 1, 2021 - March 31, 2022. We couldn't do it without your support. Thank you!
*Due to the pandemic, the shelter has operated at 50% capacity

Upcoming Events

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes

A springtime walk with men donning red high heeled shoes to catch the eye of passersby and to help raise funds through pledges, while also raising awareness about domestic abuse and women's issues. We start the conversation, and try to keep it going.

2 chances to participate in events this year:

Kincardine: Saturday, May 28th, starting at Ewyn Studios and ending at Bruce Steakhouse

Saugeen Shores: Sunday, May 29th, Queen's Bar & Grill

- Registration can be done in advance or on Walk Day for each event – Registration and Pledge drop-off starts at 12pm at each location (find Pledge and Registration Sheets at whsbg.on.ca/are-you-man-enough)
- Walk starts at 1:00pm and wraps up with awards and light refreshments
- Prizes for highest pledges collected!

Don't forget about our annual spring events,

such as Wrapped in Courage and Woman Abuse Awareness Month (November) and our various community hosted events – we'll keep you posted on our social media pages!

 @WomensHouseServingBruceGrey

 @womens.house.bruce.grey

 @WomensHouseSBG

 @womenshouse.bg

 www.whsbg.on.ca



Please support our community partners that are currently holding Host events to raise funds for Women's House:

- **Mom's Market Grey County:** www.themommarketco.com/grey-county
- **Harbour Rose Boutique T-shirt Fundraiser:** www.harbourroseboutique.ca/women-empower-women-tee.html

 **Got an idea for a fundraiser?** Contact Michelle at 519-396-9814 ext. 225 or mlamont@whsbg.on.ca to share your thoughts or to learn how you can hold your own Host Event to help raise funds for Women's House.

Special Thanks
TO OUR TOP SPONSORS



United Way
Bruce Grey
Change starts here



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THANK YOU TO OUR

Women's House Donors

All Donors from Oct 1, 2021 to Mar 31, 2022 & All Annual Sponsors from April 1, 2021 to present*

Champions Sponsors: \$10,000+

- Bruce Power L.P.
- Community Foundation Grey Bruce
- Society of United Professionals

Innovators Sponsors: \$7,500-\$9,999

- The Co-operators and Jennifer Cook & Associates Inc.

Believers Sponsors: \$5,000-\$7,499

- The Blackburn Foundation
- Bannerman Foundation
- Bannerman Contracting Ltd
- United Brotherhood of Carpenters - Local 2222
- Power Worker's Union

Friends Sponsors: \$2,500-\$4,999

- Unifor Social Justice Fund
- Enzo Foundation (Anon-Scotiastrust, Aqueduct Foundation)
- Enbridge
- Bayshore Broadcasting
- Town of the Blue Mountains
- Ontario Power Generation
- Greenfield Global

Friends Sponsors continued: \$2,500-\$4,999

- Bruce Telecom
- Town of the Blue Mountains

Contributors Sponsors: \$1,000-\$2,499

- Carol & Roy Martin
- Grace United Church
- Kincardine Community Investment Grant
- Lucknow Kinsmen
- Farm Credit Canada
- The Best You
- Rotary Club of Port Elgin
- Kincardine Artist Inc (Victoria Park Gallery)
- Corporation of Meaford
- Retired Teachers of Ontario District 10
- UNIFOR LOCAL 2458
- Williams Canada
- Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
- CUSW Bruce Unit
- Keith & Linda Battler

All Donors \$100 and up

- Kincardine United Church
- Canadian Federation of University Women
- Hepworth Sauble Beach Pastoral Charge
- Grey Bruce Labour Council
- Georgian Shores United Church
- County of Bruce
- John Ernewein Limited
- Bluewater Occasional Teachers' Local
- Montgomery Ford

All Donors \$100 and up continued

- Faith Lutheran Church Women
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- Lighthouse Blues Festival Incorp
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- VG Renovations
- Epsilon Alpha Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi Sorority
- Grey Matter Brewery
- United Church Women of Port Elgin United
- Tara Rotary Community Support Fund
- St. Paul's Anglican Church Women
- St. Joseph's C.W.L. Cargill Bazaar
- Royal Canadian Legion, Br 295
- St John's United Church
- Tiverton Lions Club
- Mary Immaculate Catholic Women's League
- Eden Grove Cargill Women's Institute
- Royal Canadian Legion Branch #6
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- Knox Presbyterian Church
- Lucknow & District Kinettes
- Lucknow United Church Women
- South Kinloss Ladies Aid
- Clifford Pastoral Charge UCW
- Tara United Church - Esther Grp
- Canadian Federation of University Women
- Immaculate Conception C.W.L.
- Catholic Women's League

*For privacy reasons, we do not include donations from individuals, unless under their professional name