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DURHAM REGION WOMEN ABUSE PROTOCOL

A Community Response to
**ABUSED WOMEN AND THEIR
FAMILIES**

Revised Edition
September 2012

DURHAM REGION PROTOCOL

A COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO WOMEN, CHILDREN & SENIORS IMPACTED BY ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

Providing a seamless response to violence against women, children and seniors.
Working collaboratively to eradicate violence and abuse
throughout the Durham Region



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The Approach Section

Woman abuse occurs because of the pervasive intent and desire of a male to assume power and exercise control over his partner. This continual control places the woman in a position where she is terrified, uncertain, without choices about her life, and ultimately unable to escape the situation, due to physical and/or sexual danger and emotional trauma. This reality is played out continually in a cycle that repeats itself over and over. (Refer to Approach Section C pg. 20, "The Dynamics of Abuse").

While the combination of danger and lack of choice are difficult dynamics to respond to simultaneously, effective intervention in situations of woman abuse must respond to the woman's inability to change or leave the situation, the criminal act of assault, and the need to work with the woman to assist her in gaining/re-gaining control of her life and self-esteem.

Introduction

The practical approach to ensuring standardized, quality service to abused women and their families is to develop guidelines for systems and organizations. While this approach is essential, the effective utilization of guidelines must also encompass a solid understanding of the underpinnings and dynamics of woman abuse.

Woman abuse, by definition, is recognized as a societal problem, which manifests itself as a man's perceived right to have power and control over his female partner. The approach section reflects this awareness, stating that all forms of violence are symptoms of the use of power and control. The protocol recognizes that the resulting dynamics are complex. Professionals require a sound awareness and understanding of these many interrelated dynamics and factors at play in situations of woman abuse, in order to facilitate effective intervention.

The Approach Section will provide an overview of the knowledge and skills, which will assist professionals to work effectively with abused women and their families. Following the Approach Section are the Protocol Guidelines for various systems.

The goal of intervention is to empower women to be able to make choices about their lives and the lives of their children, which are safe, and in their best interests. Effective intervention combines an understanding of the dynamics of abuse and the woman's experience of those dynamics with knowledge of practical information and steps.

Section A: Responsibilities of Systems

The responsibilities of the criminal justice system is to enforce the act of assault as a criminal offence, ensure the abuser is held accountable for his behaviour, and provide deterrents for the individual and society at large. Attempts to provide safety and protection for abused women and their children are a priority. This responsibility is premised on the recognition that a woman should not be responsible for her partner's behaviour and may be incapable of making choices or becoming safe when she is living with the threat and reality of constant danger.

The primary responsibility of community and related services is to support the emotional and physical needs of the woman by assisting her to gain/re-gain control of her life and her self-esteem. Community services should recognize the criminal nature of assault by supporting the woman in contacting the police and working co-operatively with the criminal justice system. Community services are also responsible for providing programs for perpetrators, which hold them responsible for the abuse while simultaneously allowing them to learn new approaches to dealing with their feelings and their relationships.

With respect to community medical services, an abused woman's medical provider may be the first to identify abuse. Even when a woman has a long-term relationship with her family physician or nurse practitioner, she may be reluctant to disclose the abuse. The medical practitioner needs to be aware that unexplained patterns of physical injuries, or a wide variety of chronic physical or mental ailments, may represent abuse. The practitioner has the responsibility to determine whether abuse is present, address the woman's physical needs, safety and that of her children as first priorities, and then refer her to appropriate community resources with ongoing follow-up appointments as needed.

These community responsibilities are premised on the recognition that abused women must have easy and timely access to services which support their empowerment and that services which do not bypass criminal consequences

must be available for men.

These divisions of responsibility mean that a woman's choice is removed by the criminal justice system. When a woman contacts a community service she will not be mandated to report the offence. This division ensures that a range of responses, which recognize the dynamics and realities of woman abuse, will exist within the community.

Section B: A Philosophical and Theoretical Base for Understanding Woman Abuse

1. THE ROLE OF VALUES AND THE IMPACT OF SOCIALIZATION

What we are taught to value as a society has a direct impact on how we view specific groups and, subsequently, influences how we then approach them in providing service.

The following list provides a simple overview of the common societal values and beliefs, which most directly affect the family and relationships:

- the family is a sacred and private place
- certain subjects are taboo and should be kept silent and secret
- the attainment of perfection is a goal
- achievement and success are important
- cognitive skills and abilities are valued more than feelings
- approval from others is more important than inner happiness
- being powerful and in control are positive attributes and goals
- there is always a right and wrong answer
- leadership and decision making are important
- love must be exciting and immediate
- romance is wonderful
- marriage vows are forever
- the man is the head of the household
- men should be strong, tough, and in control
- women should be passive, dependent, and nurturing

The majority of these values promote qualities of achievement, perfection, or attainment of goals with clearly defined rights and wrongs and the promotion of power and control as the means. The values indicate that there is always a goal, however unattainable, which is to be strived for.

A society based on these types of values has overlooked the role and importance of caring and equality. Human needs for intimacy, love, acceptance, and care without competition or control are considered to be of secondary or lesser value.

Generally these values and the qualities associated with them are those that we ascribe to men and for which men are socialized. The result is that men and men's qualities are more highly valued than women and women's qualities and the social structures and value base reflect this attitude.

Asserting individual needs and goals is associated with men, while caring, nurturing and pacifying is associated with women.

Ideally the process of socialization should include all of these qualities for both men and women and should develop them in a manner which promotes equality and equal value. This approach would work towards developing equal, caring and fully functioning human beings. Unfortunately gender roles often develop in a manner that is rigid and encourages men to have and use power and control over women. This polarization and inequality has significant impacts in woman abuse.

The result is that some men who have not developed the caring, emotional and intimate side of the character can become dependent upon the woman in their lives to provide the emotional depth and intimacy. In some situations this results in men experiencing a need to control or be in control of their partners' lives and relationships.

Women who are socialized to nurture and take care of people and relationships will often compromise themselves and their needs to gain love and approval from others, particularly the men with whom they are in intimate relationships. They will consistently believe that love and care will effect changes and will cling to this hope and belief. Simultaneously, they do not develop a strong sense of self or individual rights for self to respond effectively to control by men.

(This comment is not intended to suggest that a stronger sense of self would in any way assist women in offsetting the terrors and dangers of intimate abuse. It is intended to highlight the role of socialization in establishing the gender based power and control dynamics, which underlie the occurrence of abuse).

2. A DEFINITION OF WOMAN ABUSE

For the purpose of the protocol, woman abuse is defined as **“any form of abuse directed by a man against his female partner in an attempt to control and intimidate her in any way”**. It may include only one episode of abuse resulting in physical or emotional damage, but most frequently involves repeated, escalating incidents resulting in physical, emotional, psychological, and/or financial damage. These numerous and varied consequences of abuse subsequently interfere with her well-being of the victim and that of her family, and act to further deplete her ability to protect herself (and possibly her children) from further abuse and harm.

For the purpose of this protocol, control is defined as “attempting to force compliance against a woman’s will”.

3. FORMS OF ABUSE AGAINST WOMEN

Emotional Abuse: Includes any abuse which attacks self-esteem by acts such as name calling, shouting, screaming, any form of degradation, denial of her ideas and feelings, humiliation, and blaming her for his abusive behaviour.

Psychological Abuse: Includes using fear inducing mind games involving the woman, her family, her children, family members or extended family such as threats including deportation, control of eating and sleeping habits, or use of weapons. Psychological abuse includes all other acts, which are designed to manipulate, intimidate or terrorize her into compliance.

Physical Assault: Any act that threatens, injures, or attempts to injure such as slapping, pinching, spitting, pulling hair, biting, choking, burning, clubbing, punching, and slashing.

Sexual Abuse: Any sexual act directed towards the woman against her wishes, such as physical attacks on breasts or genitals, forced sexual activity accompanied by physical violence, or threats of physical violence. Also includes degrading comments regarding her sexuality, using coercion to force her to have sex against her wishes, refusing to respect her wishes regarding birth control, and knowingly passing on a sexually transmitted disease.

Isolation: Any act that controls or limits a woman in her environment or limits

her access to others and the outside world.

Economic Abuse: Any act that limits or controls her knowledge of or access to financial resources (family income, employment opportunities, and educational/training opportunities).

Property Damage: Any act that destroys or threatens to destroy property, including a woman's belongings, cherished possessions, pets, or home.

Male Privilege: Any act or action that uses as its foundation the assumed right of men to have privilege over women solely on the basis of gender. This includes tactics such as making decisions, consistently assigning his needs and wants a higher priority than those of his partner, and feeling entitled to treat his partner as a "servant".

4. ASSESSING THE EXISTENCE OF CONTROL

It is recognized that underlying the abuse towards women lays the abuser's need to control. When abuse is understood from this perspective, specific understanding, knowledge and skill are required from service providers that include:

- knowing and understanding what control is
- knowing and recognizing the indicators of when control is being used
- knowing and recognizing the tactics used to maintain control
- understanding what is learned from living under control
- knowing and recognizing the responses to control

While this information is provided to assist professionals, the only valid and certain way of assessing control is to listen to the experience of the woman, which must be explored, understood, and respected in each individual situation.

5. RECOGNIZING AND UNDERSTANDING CONTROL

A man's control over a woman results in:

- the woman being unable to escape, by being kept in a constant state of fear and/or danger, being made responsible for being silent, and keeping the family unit together as the priority
- the man becoming omnipotent, by being the person who is the source of fear and also the source of solace or respite from abuse
- the woman being dependent upon gaining the abuser's indulgence as a means of survival
- the woman giving total compliance to gain the abuser's indulgences
- the woman surviving by continually and vigilantly monitoring and attempting to pacify the abuser's moods and behaviour
- the woman's sense of autonomy and self being destroyed

6. TACTICS OF CONTROL

A) Isolating her:

Results:

- deprives woman of all support
- eliminates feedback from other sources about man's behaviour
- weakens ability to resist
- makes woman dependent upon abuser

B) Keeping her focused on him:

Results:

- maintains attention upon predicament
- develops intense and singular concern with man and situation
- eliminates information which competes with anything controlled by abuser
- frustrates all actions not consistent with compliance

C) Creating exhaustion and depleting her inner resources:

Results:

- weakens mental and physical ability
- destroys esteem and confidence
- develops anxiety and despair

D) Occasional Indulgences:

Results:

- provides incentive for hoping things will change and thus ensures compliance
- creates feelings of guilt or shame for portraying men as bad

E) Being all powerful

Results:

- develops fear and thus belief that resistance is futile

F) Degrading comments:

Results:

- makes cost of resistance more damaging to self esteem than compliance
- destroys esteem and confidence
- develops anxiety and despair

G) Threats:

Results:

- keeps reality of danger as primary focus
- terrifies her and keeps her energies focused on abuser
- reinforces power of abuser

H) Enforcing Trivial Demands

Results:

- develops habit of compliance
- keeps focus on abuser and his demands and away from self
- weakens resources of woman

7. INDICATORS OF CONTROL

Indicators of a woman who is being controlled:

- protective of her partner
- minimizes, denies abuse
- minimizes, denies danger to self and/or children
- hopeful, believing abuse will not happen again
- views abuse as her fault, believes she provoked it
- dependent upon approval from others, particularly men
- esteem and sense of self defined by other's views and expectations
- may have witnessed abuse or been abused in childhood
- looks to others and her partner for direction and approval
- focuses on warm, caring aspects of partner; views abusive behaviour as a minor aspect of the relationship
- rationalizes or explains abuse in relation to partner's problems or stresses
- numb, flat affect
- maintains partner's problems and feelings as more important than hers
- responds to small indulgences or minor changes as indicators of abuse stopping
- inaccurately views self as weak, dependent and needy of partner

A man who uses control may exhibit some or all of these characteristics:

- holds sexist or negative attitudes of women
- holds beliefs that within relationships the man is the boss, the decision-maker, and his way is the right and only way
- denies, minimizes abuse
- rationalizes abuse as women asking for it or provoking it
- views abuse as a legitimate response to his anger or her behaviour
- is extremely jealous and possessive of partner
- will often create fantasies regarding her involvement with other men which he convinces himself are true and which can become obsessive
- “stalks” partner, repeatedly following her, monitoring her every move and action
- is unable to resolve or “let go” of past history

- “holds on” to past behaviours, comments, actions, both real and imagined, and uses them to degrade her, taunt her, terrify her, and convince her she has been terrible to him
- views partner's friends and/or family as negative influences and usually isolates her from them
- shows little or no respect or value for partner's opinions, thoughts or feelings; will often interrupt her, cut her off or answer questions posed to her
- is often extremely remorseful of abuse immediately after and makes promises of abuse not recurring in an attempt to manipulate and charm her into staying or returning
- may appear to others as a nice, caring, charming man
- has low self-esteem and poor image of self but masks this and uses it only to pull in partner's sympathy
- has limited range of feelings, is generally "fine" or "angry"
- is very dependent upon his partner, at least emotionally, while simultaneously denying and hating this reality
- in presence of others, uses subtle forms of language and insults to degrade and reduce her to a childlike, dependent status

8. INDICATORS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

- injuries, such as bruising, cuts, burns, hair pulled out, choke marks, black eyes
- injuries, which may not be visible such as bruising, sprains, pulled muscles, internal bleeding, punctured eardrums
- injuries which do not match the explanation given by the woman
- continual and repeated injuries such as those above which are explained as accidents or clumsiness
- old or untreated injuries
- patterns of similar injuries
- drug/alcohol abuse or non-compliance with medication
- prolonged use of drugs such as tranquilizers, anti-depressants
- the intermittent or continual presence of stress reactions such as tension, hyperactivity, headaches, insomnia, pain in the back, chest or stomach
- the intermittent or continual presence of fear, anxiety, depression, hopelessness

- isolation and a lack of social support
- indicators of suicidal thoughts and/or behaviours
- presence of any or all of the above indicators with statements that the situation is alright and hopefulness that the situation will improve

This list is neither exhaustive nor accurate for all situations. The only true account of physical abuse is obtained by sensitive and thorough exploration with the woman

9. THE APPROACH

The approach in work with abused women begins with the professional's awareness that an abused woman is an adult who, when given support, choices, safety and opportunity can and will work in the safe and responsible interests of herself and her children.

While often frustrating for professionals, the ambivalence, denial, and helplessness, which often characterize abused women are in fact learned messages, which have allowed her to survive the abuse. By nurturing, giving in, pacifying, and anticipating the moods and needs of the abuser, a woman, while never able to control or stop the abuse, often buys time to leave, call for help, or decreases the severity or duration of the incident.

The approach recognizes that abused women have sometimes been socialized to care for and consider others before themselves and maintain as their primary concern and responsibility the needs and interests of their relationship and family. Intervention in woman abuse asks the abused woman to completely change her socialized instincts and training and place her needs first. The approach recognizes that this is a monumental task for any woman and more difficult for abused women whose confidence, esteem, and identity have been destroyed by the abuse.

Thus, the ambivalence, often characteristic of abused women, is the struggle between caring for herself and the learned messages she has which tell her that:

- no one would believe her anyway
- leaving him is wrong as partnerships and marriages are for good and bad times

- leaving him is abandoning him when he is sick or has severe problems
- leaving him splits up the family and he is a good provider/good father
- leaving him could be fatal to her, the children, or significant others or to him if he becomes suicidal

The approach recognizes that the natural and expected response when people have difficulty in relationships or marriages is that they work together to address and solve the problems. This concept in woman abuse is neither safe nor workable while abuse exists. However professionals must recognize that expecting women to leave or begin focusing on themselves and their safety and needs is a complete and total deviation from what they have learned. It is not usually what would be suggested regarding any other problem.

This reality is complicated by the fact that many institutions or agencies do not define abuse as grounds for charges or separation. They may fail to state that traditional methods such as couple counselling are not effective.

The approach recognizes that in addition to the internal struggle, men, families, and society place pressure on abused women to remain in the relationship.

In summary, professionals need to understand that for an abused woman to leave an abusive relationship she must:

- give up the denial and helplessness which have been part of her survival
- acknowledge the extent, severity and danger of the abuse despite the fact that denying the abuse has served to keep her sane
- begin feeling, thinking and acting in her own interests with clarity, strength and decisiveness even though she has endured abuse and may or may not have been taught these qualities prior to the abuse
- act in spite of the threats of harm to her, to himself, or to the children used by the abuser and simultaneously take action to protect herself and her children

- accept and deal with the reality that he may follow or find her
- accept and deal with the reality that leaving may place her in further danger
- deal with threats of losing the children through him taking them or going for custody
- overcome the belief that he is all powerful and omnipotent
- listen to and ignore or refuse to answer his constant phone calls where he cries, pleads, tells her he can't live without her, begs her to return or promises anything she wants in return for coming home or letting him come back
- recognize that his threats of suicide and/or homicide are tactics of control for which he is responsible, but may indicate the need for further protective action on her part
- deal with unsupportive responses of friends and colleagues who thought he was a “nice guy”, and who express shock and disbelief when the woman discloses his abuse
- deal with the statements of people or professionals who subtly or blatantly tell her it was her fault, it couldn't have been that bad, she had to be part of the problem
- overcome the cultural, religious, political, and family messages which blame her and suggest she should stay and work it out
- deal with and address the sadness and insecurity of her children who miss Daddy and plead with her to take them home
- accept that he will not give her money unless she returns
- accept that she may have to request Income Support
- accept that often, at least temporarily, she has lost her home and security
- cope with all this and remain strong and decisive when she is usually alone as she has lost or has been isolated from her friends and family

As a result, women may leave and return many times during their process of working through these issues.

Section C: Approaches in Work with Abused Women

1. INTERVENTION

Given the realities outlined in the previous section, professionals will begin to understand the difficulties abused women face. This means that professionals **cannot** push or force abused women to take action but need to work with them in a supportive, ongoing process which assists them in facing the realities, overcoming internalized and socialized messages, and gaining or re-gaining their confidence and esteem.

An abused woman is accustomed to being controlled and directed. The goal and focus of all intervention is to empower her ability to make safe and responsible decisions for herself and her children. This means that the professional must support women in doing as much as they can for themselves. Professionals must **always** allow women to make their own decisions and respect those decisions as correct for the woman at that point in her process without in any way blaming, judging, or abandoning her.

Intervention should:

- **not** blame her for the abuse, for remaining in the relationship, or for not taking other action such as seeking counselling or calling the police
- maintain the safety of the woman and her children as the top priority
- believe her experience and respect her as the expert on her own experience
- value and help her to value that whatever she has done or felt has allowed her to survive
- build on this value to assist her to begin to utilize those survival strengths towards her own safety and well-being
- recognize that for some women, a focus on self and caring for self is a deviation from socialized messages of caring for and receiving approval from others, and as such is difficult, scary and a new experience. For abused women, this significant shift is complicated by the existence of real danger and the belief that if the abuser is not nurtured and pacified, injury or death will result

2. DYNAMICS OF ABUSE

While earlier research shows that there are defined phases within abuse, more recent knowledge indicates that there are consistent dynamics, which appear to exist within abuse, which professionals need to recognize. The actual pattern and experience of the dynamics is individual to every situation and can be understood only by carefully and gently exploring them with each woman.

At some point, a woman becomes aware of the man's tension and possibly his anger. Feeling trapped and terrified she will respond with what she has been taught and what she believes and hopes will prevent further abuse. This often is pacifying, nurturing, and/or avoiding the man. All of her time and energy is invested in this effort. Even if a woman wants to leave or change the situation at this point, her entire physical and emotional energy is being used to hyper-vigilantly watch and anticipate the man's needs and moves as a way to avoid abuse.

While objectively these responses appear to be a denial of the reality and danger and more obviously, do not work, a woman is simply doing what she has been taught and understands to be the best and only response to the situation.

The man, sometimes not physically abusive at this point, is using many forms of emotional and verbal abuse to convince the woman she is stupid, useless, etc. and to firmly plant in her mind the belief that what is occurring is her fault. The abuse is usually coupled with control tactics which monitor her actions, ensure her isolation, and may also include threats of abuse to her, her children, or significant others.

These actions on the part of the man would appear to be exactly what should drive the woman away. In fact throughout this phase, his inability to take responsibility for his own feelings, behaviour, and actions and his attitudes to women result in just that.

While objectively this suggests that the woman should leave, the combination of fear and danger combined with the socialized belief that she should help him and her lack of physical or emotional energy keep her trapped.

However, as much as a woman wants to believe that she can control and prevent further or actual physical abuse, more abuse will follow. At this point, the woman is either physically assaulted or severely abused in other ways. Injured and/or hurt and given that the man has vented his rage; (although the venting and abuse can sometimes go on for days) there may be a brief period when the abuse lessens or stops.

What may continue is the ongoing control of her although many women describe this time as a respite if physical or severe emotional abuse stops or lessens temporarily. **(This respite or lessening of abuse does not occur in all situations. If it does exist, the respite time may lessen as the abuse increases.)**

Sometimes a woman becomes aware at this point that her earlier efforts have not worked and may become angry at how she is being treated. A woman may reach out for help or take action to leave the situation. The pain of physical injuries breaks through denial of the danger and the intensity of anger and betrayal breaks through traditional roles and expectations.

It is at this time that a woman, given protection and support, is most able to begin counselling, take some action, leave, and stay away from the man. If, however, protection and support are not available, it is extremely difficult to do it alone.

The man, having vented his rage, is often terrified that he has really driven her away. In some instances, men are shocked or remorseful about their behaviour for a brief period of time. They may apologize, promise to get help, or do anything to make it up to her. While it may appear that the woman has some power at this point and that leaving the man and the situation is logical, it must be recognized that the man, aware that he has driven her away, now places all his physical and emotional energy in getting her back.

The man may, at least briefly, become the charming and loving person that the woman has hoped will return or there may be a brief respite from abuse. **(This is not true in all situations and must be gently explored with women as in some cases the abuse begins again so quickly that the woman does not have enough time to heal let alone take any action on her own behalf.)**

If the woman is alone and without outside support, her partner is often the only person who provides any respite or security and she will stay or return, hoping that the abuse will not recur.

While often frustrating and confusing for professionals, the dynamics of abuse and the woman's responses are understandable, given the danger she is in and her beliefs.

3. STEPS OF INTERVENTION

1. listen to her story of experiencing abuse
2. believe her experience
3. support her for:
 - her courage in disclosing
 - her courage and ability to survive
 - her courage and strength in reaching out
4. provide an understanding of abuse:
 - dynamics
 - that she is not alone
 - that it is not her fault
5. provide information regarding:
 - legal rights and options
 - financial options
 - shelter availability
 - supports and counselling
6. focus on self and safety:
 - safety plans
 - physical/medical needs
 - right to live free from abuse
 - right to support and building a support system
7. assess children's safety
 - effects on children who witness abuse

As may be evident, the focus and steps of intervention are aimed at empowering the woman and breaking down the power and tactics of control used by the abuser. Much of the process is "undoing" the damage created by the abuse.

Throughout the process, the professional is constantly assessing the dangers and discussing these with the woman. While all decisions are left up to the woman, this feedback assists in breaking down the denial and validating for her the danger. This enables her to begin acting in the interests of her safety. While the steps will not unfold in the order listed, it is important to cover, at least briefly, all areas in the first contact with a woman. This may be the only contact.

It is also critical to recognize that if ongoing contact is maintained, that the various issues and themes will be addressed and re-addressed (i.e. a woman who has not blamed herself for many months may begin believing it is her fault). Each time this occurs it is important to remember that it is a signal of the power of the abuser or an indicator of internalized or socialized messages, which need to be explored by her.

1. GUIDELINES FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN IN INTERVENTION

- be involved and interactive, but don't direct, rescue, or tell her what to do
- make suggestions and review options, then ask what she thinks or feels about them, enquiring if she would feel safe doing them
- check out her experience and understanding by using questions such as "help me to understand how that felt for you" or "could you tell me some more about that so I can understand what it was like for you?"
- choose questions which help her explore her thoughts, feelings, and needs, not ones that require yes or no or have you doing much of the talking
- ask for and encourage her feedback and comments
- encourage and applaud her efforts
- share with her sensitively your feelings if they are appropriate. (i.e.: *"That sounds very frightening. I would have been frightened in that situation."*)
- be clear and open about realities and what she may need to do but don't force, push or control. (i.e.: *"It sounds to me as if the only safe option now is to be away from the house for a while. I hear that's not what you want but I'm really concerned about your safety right now."*)

AGENCY PROTOCOLS

Catholic Family Services/Family Services Durham

Commitment

To ensure that the safety of abused women and their children is not compromised, whether the client is the woman, her children, or the abusive partner.

We will:

- provide individual and group support to abused women
- provide individual and group counselling to children who have been exposed to violence
- provide transitional support services for abused women
- provided individual and group intervention for men who have abused their partner
- address the immediate safety issues with women, children or men and then refer to the appropriate specialized program
- recognize woman assault as a crime
- encourage women and children to utilize police intervention as a means of making the abuser accountable for his behaviour through prosecution
- ensure clients requesting couple counselling will be asked about domestic violence and if woman abuse is occurring, couple counselling will not be offered but appropriate support and treatment groups are discussed and safety measures are explored
- ask “has there been any physical violence?” and “what usually happens during arguments?” when clients are requesting couple counselling
- increase a woman’s safety and the safety of any children involved by providing safety planning and empowerment
- validate a woman’s experience
- hear her feelings
- help her to increase her self confidence
- identify violent and controlling behaviours of a woman’s partner to reduce her minimization and denial
- in the development of services, make priority services for women and children

INTAKE IN WOMAN ABUSE CASES

Commitment

To ensure that all potential clients are asked directly and specifically about the occurrence of woman abuse.

We will:

- complete safety checks with the woman where abuse or the possibility of abuse is identified
- not offer couple counselling if woman abuse is occurring
- provide appropriate support and treatment group options and safety measures will be explored
- obtain clear direction from the woman regarding calls to her to ensure her safety
- explore who in the home knows about the referral; when is a good time to call back; is it okay to leave a message
- respond within 24- 48 hours with a worker who is trained specifically to assess and explore the risk factors and safety issues for both the abused woman and her children
- address the woman's safety needs while she is on a waiting list and until she no longer seeks service
- give information regarding alternative resources available (shelters, distress lines, police intervention, legal assistance, etc)
- advise men that agencies will not provide letters to the criminal justice system for men on a waiting list for treatment
- consider specific measures to ensure the safety of the woman when a man is requesting couple counselling
- explore options such as an assessment session in which both partners are seen individually and safety and control factors are assessed; send the man a release of information form to be signed to allow the intake worker to contact his partner for a safety check
- during a clinical interview provide a safe setting to disclose information about woman abuse; if woman abuse is suspected during a couple interview, partners are interviewed separately to provide the opportunity for safe disclosure
- recognize that marital therapy is inappropriate and dangerous as the initial intervention in cases where woman abuse is occurring or has occurred within 1 year

- recognize that marital therapy is contraindicated if the man continues to use violent or controlling behaviour; if he refuses to take full responsibility for his behaviour; if the woman does not feel safe or is intimidated by her partner; if the woman is unable to safely express her needs, anger and differences of opinion in her partner's presence; if the woman is uninterested in working on the couple relationship
- acknowledge that not heeding these precautions places the woman at risk of being assaulted outside of the session and that frequently men who are calm during the counselling interview are abusive and controlling after leaving the session
- establish a procedure to determine when both partners are ready for couple therapy
- avoid conceptualizations which view violence and abuse as family or couple dysfunctions rather than abusive acts committed by one individual against another, or which in any way hold victims responsible for the behaviour of abusive individuals
- recognize the use of mediation in woman abuse cases is inappropriate since mediation is based on the assumption that both partners have equal bargaining strength and once again, a woman's safety may be jeopardized by the process
- respond to special needs groups with an understanding of their particular issues; the needs of differently abled clients will be addressed; clients of diversity will be provided service in an anti-oppression framework
- recognize that although we frequently refer to male/female issues in wife abuse, that abuse can and does occur in same sex relationships and relevant support and counselling will be provided in such cases

TREATMENT FOR CHILDREN

Commitment

We recognize the importance of addressing the severity of the impact that woman abuse has on children. It is recognized that the results of children witnessing the emotional and physical abuse of their mother is often as damaging as if they themselves were the primary victim. Child witnesses of woman abuse present with some of the same symptomology as children who have been physically or sexually abused. Such children would therefore clearly require the same kind of help provided for children who are physically or sexually abused. Treatment of children who have witnessed abuse is fundamental in breaking the inter-generational cycle of violence.

Safety of the children and their mother will always be the first treatment priority.

We will:

- interview children individually to explore their personal experience of living in a home where their mother has been abused
- explore the full extent of the children's exposure to the violence, finding out what the children's thoughts and feelings are about the violence, and assessing how the children feel about themselves and who they see as supports
- assess the children's overall functioning, at school, with peers, etc.
- assess the safety of the child; if there is evidence of physical or sexual abuse, neglect, or deprived basic needs, these issues will be addressed with the non-abusing parent and appropriate action will follow, including referral to the Children's Aid Society
- recognize that in some situations, for example when a child has been injured during an assault, the abused woman can be empowered in reporting the incident herself, and in seeking support and assistance from the Children's Aid Society, including providing input about what feels safe to her
- assess the most appropriate mode of intervention
- determine whether the child will receive group or individual counselling
- recognize that group treatment is often the treatment of choice
- assess the family status at the time of the referral and during the treatment program
- determine the status of the abusive parent and his relationship to the child; the current family makeup and any changes in the parent/child relationship

during treatment will impact on safety issues as well as emotional issues for the child

- assess the stage of understanding that the child's mother and father have concerning the abuse; the assaulted woman will be interviewed individually, apart from the abusive partner, and will be asked specifically what has happened to the children and what her safety plan is for them
- offer support and treatment program for the abused woman and the abusive man in conjunction with the child's treatment or these programs may be established as prerequisites before treatment of children
- Where possible and safe for all parties, consent for counselling of the children will be sought from both parents. (unless otherwise indicated by a court order)

Contact Information

Catholic Family Services
115 Simcoe Street South, 2nd Floor
Oshawa, ON L1H 4G7

Phone: (905) 725-3513

Fax: (905) 725-3515

Website: www.cfsdurham.com

Regional Municipality of Durham
Department of Social Services
605 Rossland Road East
PO Box 623
Whitby, ON L1N 6A3

Phone: (905) 668-7711

Fax: (905) 666-6217

Website: www.region.durham.on.ca

Crown Attorney's Office

Commitment

To vigorously prosecute all cases of woman assault where there is a reasonable prospect of conviction and to provide support and information to abused women during their involvement with the justice process. They can also support women and attempt to ensure their co-operation in the criminal justice process by providing information to women and their families about the availability of community services. Crown Attorneys, within the limits of the Crown policy manual, will co-operate with the efforts of community services.

We will:

- provide advice to police agencies as requested in relation to domestic assault occurrences and investigations
- take carriage of the prosecution of domestic assault cases; at all stages of the prosecution, including bail hearings, the safety of victims and their families is a paramount factor for crown counsel to consider in the exercise of discretion
- review and screen domestic assault occurrences at an early stage of proceedings to determine whether further investigation by the police agency appears appropriate and to determine whether the accused person is eligible for an Early Intervention Program
- interview, where possible, the complainant in domestic assault cases, to keep the complainant informed as to new developments in the case, and to give the complainant an opportunity to provide input on sentencing
- upon sentencing, where deemed appropriate, to request that the court consider a condition requiring the offender to participate in an approved Partner Assault Response program (PAR)
- to share appropriate information with probation and the PAR program to help ensure a coordinated approach to the prosecution of domestic violence

Contact Information

150 Bond St.

3rd Floor

Oshawa, ON L1G 0A2

Phone: (905) 743-2700

Fax: (905) 743-2784

Website: www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca

Distress Centre/Rape Crisis Centre

Commitment

To provide 24-hour phone service to anyone calling who needs information and support or who may be in crisis. If the crisis call is specific to sexual assault the caller can also call the Durham Rape Crisis Centre crisis line as well as the Domestic Violence / Sexual Assault Care Centre at Lakeridge Health Oshawa.

We will:

- provide a confidential, non-judgmental format to listen and provide information to women who may be calling about an abusive situation
- be knowledgeable of the dynamics of woman abuse and be able to provide practical information as well as support
- identify if abuse exists
- assess danger (imminent or possible) and respond appropriately
- provide intervention
- provide information and support
- listen effectively
- believe the caller without judgment
- let her know that it is not her fault and that she cannot take responsibility for the abuser's actions or behaviours
- let her know how much courage it took to disclose
- assist in the development of a support network
- not criticize the offender but stress that it is the offender's problem
- let her know she is not alone
- talk about safety for herself and her children
- assess if the woman and/or her children are in immediate danger and if so, call the police
- assess if the woman has taken medication and if so, call the police
- assess if the woman has a defined plan for harm to herself or others which she intends to implement immediately and if so, call the police
- encourage a woman to utilize the criminal justice system if an assault has occurred
- not collude with an abuser around any blaming of the victim or removal of the total responsibility from him

- provide basic information on legal rights, financial rights and types of services available
- encourage a woman to call back and let workers know how she is

Contact Information

Distress Centre Durham
306 Brock St. N.
Whitby, ON L1N 4H7

Phone: (905) 430-3511
Fax: (905) 430-1381
Helpline:(905) 430-2522 1-800-452-0688

Website: www.distresscentredurham.com

Durham Rape Crisis Centre
PO Box 567
Whitby, ON L1N 5V3

Phone: (905) 444-9672
Fax: (905) 444-9277
Crisis: (905) 668-9200

Website: www.durhamrapecrisiscentre.com

Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Care Centre

Commitment

We will, within the mandate of our services be inclusive and provide equal treatment for all people accessing our services, while being sensitive to issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and/or abilities of individuals.

We will:

- provide emergency medical treatment to females 16 years of age or older who have incurred recent physical injuries as a result of domestic violence
- assist victims/survivors in understanding medical, legal and counselling options available to them
- provide physical care and emotional support to women through the process of assessment, medical treatment, documentation (which may include photographs), risk assessment, safety planning and referral
- discuss making a report to the police
- in accordance with the Child and Family Services Act, if there are any child welfare concerns, the SA/DV Nurse will notify Children's Aid Society
- ensure the patient has a safe place to stay
- give the patient verbal and written information about community referrals and provide the initial support
- make referrals to Transitional Support Workers in the Durham Region
- schedule an appointment for the purpose of re-documenting injuries (re-photographing injuries)

Accountability

Concerns regarding the quality or nature of the services can be directed to the clinical director. All complaints will be responded to in accordance with the Lakeridge Health Policy and Procedures Manual.

Contact Information

Emergency Services
Lakeridge Health Oshawa
1 Hospital Court
Oshawa, ON L1G 2B9

Phone: (905) 576-8711

Counselling Services
419 King Street West
Galleria Towers
Pinewood Suite 125
Oshawa, ON L1J 2K5

Phone: (905) 571-3344 ext. 105

Website: www.dvsacc.com

Durham Children's Aid Society

Commitment

We will, within the mandate of our services:

- ensure the protection of children by providing and utilizing services which promote the safety of women and children
- provide services that promote the well-being of children and their families by advocating that children grow up in violence free homes
- educate families about the impact of child abuse, woman abuse and family violence on children
- engage caregivers of children in services that can help to end family violence and deal with the effects of violence on family members

We will:

- assess the existence and the impact of violence on children
- determine the nature of our involvement to assist with protecting children from exposure to violence and assisting caregivers to keep themselves and their children safe
- provide services as required or refer to other community services which can assist caregivers and children
- liaise with community partners to advocate for services for our clients

Durham Children's Aid Society has a collaboration agreement between the Children's Aid Society and Violence Against Women Agencies of Durham Region. This goal of this agreement is to increase the safety of children by helping women to be safe, and by making the best use of the means available to hold the perpetrator accountable for harming and being a risk to the woman and their children.

This document outlines the mandate of each participating agency, the values and assumptions that underlie the collaboration, the principles of intervention for this collaborative work, and a conflict resolution process. Six points where the involvement of the VAW and CAS sectors intersect are identified, with suggested outcomes, collaborative actions to be taken by involved parties, and training references being provided by each.

This document is available for further review at any of the VAW agencies and/or the Durham Children's Aid Society.

Accountability

If you have sought or received services from Durham Children's Aid Society and have concerns about these services, you have the right to complain. In many cases, you can discuss and resolve any concerns directly with your case worker or their supervisor in a way that provides good solutions for everyone involved. When this is not possible you can complain directly in writing to Durham Children's Aid Society to initiate a formal complaint under the Child and Family Services Act.

It is the desire of the Durham Children's Aid Society to hear the concerns of the children, families and the community we serve. We encourage questions and comments regarding the services provided. A copy of our complaints procedure may be obtained from any of our staff or upon request at our office location.

Contact Information

1320 Airport Road
Oshawa, ON L1H 7K4

Phone: (905) 433-1551
Fax: (905) 433-0603

Website: www.durhamcas.ca

Hours of Operation

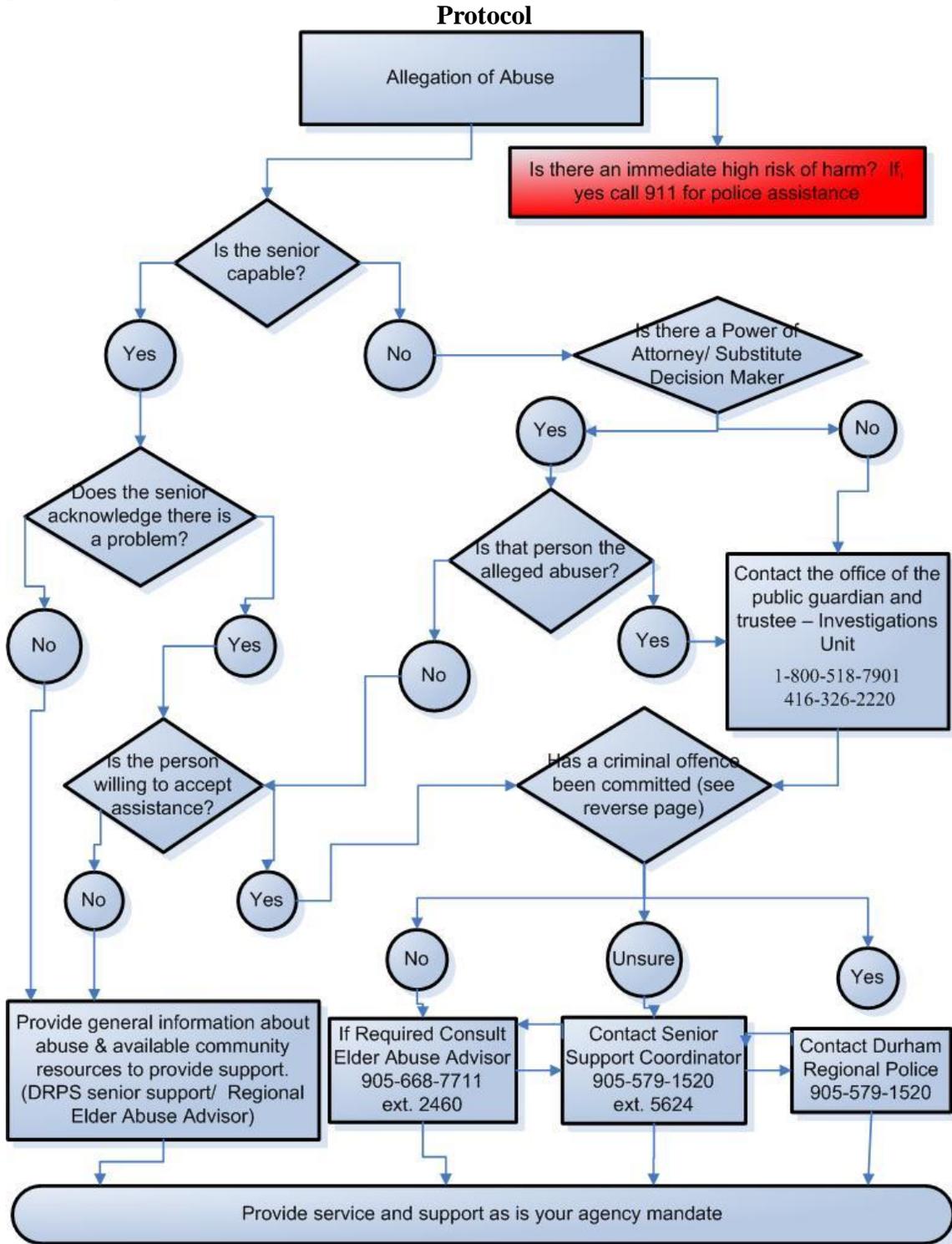
8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Emergency After Hours Service – 24 hours/day, 7 days/week

Durham Elder Abuse

Senior Support Coordinator & Elder Abuse Advisor partnership

Durham Regional Police Service and The Regional Municipality of Durham have committed to the safety and dignity of older adults in Durham by developing a partnership to address elder abuse issues.



We will:

Senior Support Coordinator

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Elder Abuse Advisor

- Provides advisement directly to individuals, families, organizations and police services on issues related to elder abuse.
- Provides support to staff in long term care, retirement homes, community agencies and hospitals as they are dealing with cases of suspected abuse
- Provides assistance in the development of agency protocol, education and resources in relation to elder abuse issues.
- Provides education and awareness raising session as requested related to elder abuse and related issues.

Contact Information:

Senior Support Coordinator
Durham Regional Police Service
905-579-1520 ext. 5624

Elder Abuse Advisor
Long Term Care & Services for Seniors Division
The Regional Municipality of Durham
905-668-7711 ext. 2460

Durham Family Court Clinic (DFCC)

Commitment

We will, within the mandate of the Durham Family Court Clinic be inclusive and provide equal treatment for all people accessing our services, while being sensitive to issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, domestic violence and/or the abilities of individuals.

We will:

- provide free information about divorce, separation, child custody, access, support, property division and child protection at the Family Law Information Centre (FLIC) at the Oshawa courthouse
- assist individuals in understanding the options available to them related to alternative dispute resolution such as family mediation, arbitration and collaborative family law
- provide community resource information that supports families during a very difficult time in their lives and are specific to the needs and circumstances of the family
- where mediation is assessed as appropriate, provide a third party to assist in reaching agreements on a variety of issues including the division of property, child custody, child access, support and other important issues
- where child protection mediation is assessed as appropriate, provide a third party to assist in reaching agreements related to the family's ability to care for and support their children
- provide a safe and supportive environment for families
- assess every family for issues of domestic violence and power imbalance to ensure mediation is appropriate and outcomes are sustainable for the family
- provide assessment and counselling for youth in conflict with the law with an awareness of the connection between domestic violence and youth
- make appropriate safety plans and referrals to community services
- provide professional development for all staff related to issues of domestic violence

Accountability

All concerns regarding the quality or nature of any DFCC service should be directed to the Executive Director.

DFCC is accountable to the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) for the Family Mediation and Information Service. Clients are encouraged to provide feedback using the electronic surveys at

<http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/infoctr.asp>

Contact Information

Executive Director
Durham Family Court Clinic
44 Richmond Street, W., Suite 201
Oshawa ON L1G 1C7

Phone: (905) 436-6754

Website: www.dfcc.org

Family Law Information Centre (FLIC)
Information and Referral Coordinator
150 Bond Street East
Oshawa, ON L1G 0A2
Phone: 905-579-1988

Family Court
150 Bond Street East
Oshawa, ON L1G 0A2
Phone: (905) 743-2630

Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS)

Commitment

The Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS) is committed to working in partnership with our communities to provide a vigorous, effective response to the serious and prevalent problem of domestic violence. **Any** call for service, whether or not a criminal offence has been committed, relating to persons who have, or ever had an intimate relationship, must have a report submitted on. Our response to such calls will address the need to consider and satisfy both the immediate and long-term needs of the victim, while conveying to the accused and the community at large that such behaviour will **not** be tolerated. This Directive has been developed to provide our members with a clear and consistent approach to addressing incidents of domestic violence.

Domestic violence, as per the legislative/regulatory requirements of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (Ministry) Policing Standards Manual (2000), **means**:

- Domestic violence is any use of physical or sexual force, actual or threatened, in an intimate relationship, including emotional / psychological abuse or harassing behaviour. Although both women and men can be victims of domestic violence, the overwhelming majority of this violence involves men abusing women.
- Intimate relationships include those between the opposite-sex and same-sex partners. These relationships vary in duration and legal formality, and include current and former dating, common-law and married couples.
- Criminal Code offences include, but are not limited to homicide, assault, sexual assault, threatening death or bodily harm, forcible confinement, harassment/stalking, abduction, breaches of court orders and property related offences.

These crimes are often committed in a context where there is a pattern of assaultive and/or controlling behaviour. This violence may include physical assault, and emotional, psychological and sexual abuse. It can include threats to harm children, other family members, pets and property. The violence is used to

intimidate, humiliate or frighten victims, or to make them powerless. Domestic violence may include a single act of abuse. It may also include a number of acts that may appear minor or trivial when viewed in isolation, but collectively form a pattern that amounts to abuse.

One of the dynamics of domestic violence is that the severity and frequency of the violence is likely to escalate over time if there is no police intervention.

We will:

- investigate domestic violence occurrences in accordance with the Ministry's mandatory charge policy, lay charges in every case where there are **reasonable grounds to do so**
- ensure a detailed General Occurrence (GO) report is filed in response to all domestic violence and domestic incident complaints, whether or not an offence has been committed; this includes breach of conditions resulting from domestic violence charges; in cases where charges are not laid, the report shall clearly explain why that decision was made
- be aware that the Victim Services Unit (VSU) maintains a current list of community agencies available to assist victims of crime; a list of these agencies is available on MediaOne, under Victim Services Unit - 'Community Agency Referral List'
- separate the involved parties and provide access to immediate medical assistance if required
- ask victims if they have been physically assaulted and sustained injuries noting both the victim's response and their own observations in their memo book and the domestic violence GO report
- ask victims if they would like to go to the Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Care Centre (DVSACC)
- if a child is present at the scene of an incident, make relevant memo book and report notations concerning their apparent physical, mental and emotional status, being particularly sensitive when dealing with children who have experienced, or witnessed instances of domestic violence
- interview and where possible, take a recorded statement on videotape if a child has witnessed the incident obviously taking into account the age and mental state of the child

- encourage a child's primary caregiver to consider obtaining assistance for the child from agencies with experience in assisting child witnesses of domestic violence
- consider children "at risk" in the following situations, notifying the Children's Aid Society (CAS) forthwith, by telephone or by faxing a copy of the GO report as soon as possible wherever;
 1. a child has suffered physical or emotional harm as a result of domestic violence,
 2. a child has witnessed a domestic violence incident,
 3. the non-offending caregiver is unable to care for the child due to their own physical or emotional condition,
 4. the pattern or degree of violence involved is so severe that there is a risk of harm to the child in the home
- consider involving Victim Services of Durham Region (VCARS) to assist in the immediate care of the children until alternative arrangements can be made where children are at risk and CAS has been notified; communications/9-1-1 will arrange to have volunteers sent to the scene or address requested
- conduct a thorough investigation of all domestic violence and domestic incident occurrences, whether or not any of the involved parties deny or attempt to minimize what happened
- submit a detailed report for every domestic violence or domestic incident occurrence
- gather and fully document all relevant evidence that may later be required for court purposes
- ensure that injuries are noted
- whenever possible, transport victims to the DVSACC to obtain photographs of any injuries sustained
- have SOCO take the photographs if attendance at the DVSACC is not possible; if a SOCO officer of the same gender as the victim is not available, the member shall arrange for a SOCO officer of the same gender to attend as soon as is practicable
- interview all victims, suspects and witnesses separately, ensuring if practicable, an audio or videotaped statement is obtained from the victim
- ask the victim direct questions about any history of abuse

- promptly investigate additional offences disclosed during investigative statement taking
- in all cases, where charges may be laid, ensure that they interview the victim for the purposes of completing the *"Domestic Violence Supplementary Report"*, the form shall be included in the Crown Brief
- provide appropriate interpreter services independent of the involved person's friends and immediate family except in emergency situations if the language spoken by persons involved in a domestic violence or domestic incident occurrence becomes a barriers to the effective investigation of the incident
- provide support and information if the victim involved in the incident is concerned that the incident may adversely affect their present or pending immigration status in Canada
- not preclude the laying of an appropriate charge in the absence of a statement from the victim nor should a victim's state of intoxication preclude from conducting a full investigation of the matter; it shall remain the responsibility of the members involved to pursue the investigation when it becomes practical to do so
- try to determine who is the predominant aggressor
- not be influenced in the decision of determining whether or not to arrest the suspect and / or lay charges by:
 1. marital status or cohabitation arrangements of the involved persons,
 2. the disposition of previous police calls involving the same victim and suspect
 3. the victim's apparent unwillingness to attend court proceedings or the member's apprehension that the victim will not attend,
 4. the probability of successfully prosecuting the charges in court,
 5. verbal assurances from either the victim or suspect that the violence will cease,
 6. denial by either party that violence occurred when evidence exists to the contrary,
 7. the concern about possible reprisals carried out against the victim by the suspect,
 8. sex, race, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic status, or occupation of the victim or suspect,

9. affiliation of the involved persons as members of any police service,
10. the fact that both parties claim to have been assaulted, therefore the mindset that both parties should be arrested.

- at the request of the victim, ensure that transportation to a shelter or other place of safety is arranged, and that details of such arrangements remain strictly confidential
- ensure that the victim is made aware of the services offered by both Victim / Witness Assistance Program (VWAP) and the DVSACC
- ensure that the victim is made aware that the VSU can upon their request, assist them with developing a victim safety plan designed to protect them in the event of future domestic violence occurrences
- supply the victim with a copy of the DRPS "Victim Witness Information Guide", ensuring that it includes the investigating member's name, badge number, and the incident number
- if requested, attend the residence to ensure peaceful re-entry when the victim returns to take possession of personal belongings; if peaceful entry cannot be ensured, or there is an issue over the ownership of property, advise the parties involved to seek a civil remedy
- prior to attending the residence for the purposes of keeping the peace, brief the victim as to the role to be played by the police and suggest that an impartial person accompany the victim for the purposes of rendering any required assistance
- when at a residence for the purposes of keeping the peace while a victim collects personal belongings and necessities remain as an impartial observer and do not become involved in the physical removal of property
- if the accused requests that counter charges be laid against a victim, assess whether reasonable grounds exist to do so; and if not, provide the accused with information regarding the process of appearing before a justice of the peace
- clearly explain why charges were not laid
- make the victim aware of available legal options if the victim expresses concerns about personal safety or security, such as:
 - a recognizance to keep the peace
 - a restraining order
 - an exclusive possession order
 - the provisions of the Trespass to Property Act

- remain at the scene until satisfied that there is no further threat to the victim or other persons present
- explain to both the victim and accused that it is a police responsibility to lay a charge when there are reasonable grounds to believe that an offence has been committed
- explain to both the victim and accused that neither they, nor the police can have a charge withdrawn; **only** the Crown attorney can withdraw a charge
- attempt to verify the existence and provisions of a court order if the victim makes a reference to one and cannot produce it
- ensure every reasonable effort is made to immediately apprehend the suspect if the suspect is not on the scene but reasonable grounds exist to lay charges
- ensure that the victim is kept fully apprised of the efforts made to apprehend the suspect and the results obtained
- consider advising the victim to relocate to a place of safety, until the suspect is apprehended
- ensure the victim is promptly notified of the release conditions when an accused involved in a domestic violence occurrence is released

Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU) (DRPS)

We will:

- provide a prompt, supportive follow up call or letter to all victims of domestic violence occurrences
- provide the victim with relevant information, emotional support and appropriate referrals to community agencies
- provide information and referrals regarding the criminal justice system
- provide victim safety plans and Criminal Injuries Compensation Board applications and ensure that all victim inquiries regarding ongoing investigations or pending charges are appropriately directed, and victims are encouraged and assisted to contact the investigating member for details
- provide both members and the public with information concerning the VSU and related community service agency resources

Bail Safety Program (DRPS)

Commitment

This program involves a partnership between Durham Regional Police, Victim Witness Assistance Program and the Crown Attorney's Office. The Bail Safety Program strives to contribute to victim safety and awareness and the use of community-based services. The Bail Safety Program generates additional risk information that supports the Crown's bail recommendations, informs the Judiciary's decisions, leads to additional Police investigations and facilitates linkages to further assistance appropriate to victim's safety and security needs.

We will:

- request that victims attend a pre-bail interview at the Bail Safety Program office
- call victims the next day to facilitate an interview
- use a project-set interview protocol during victim interviews about "agreed-upon" risk factors
- provide support, safety discussions, information about the court systems and service linkages during, throughout and/or after the pre-bail interview
- document bail recommendations and supporting evidence using the interview information and additional justice system history
- increase victim participation in the justice system until trial/case resolution

Police Services Accountability

The Durham Regional Police Service takes the issue of Domestic Violence very seriously. However, there may be times when members of the public are not satisfied with the way the police investigate a domestic related incident. If a member of the public has concerns with the DRPS handling of a domestic related incident, they can attend the station where the incident occurred and speak with a Supervisor for clarification or resolution. If this does not satisfy the member of the public, they can file a formal complaint with the Office of the Independent Police, Review Director (OIPRD). Information on this process is available at any station and can be found at www.oiprd.on.ca When dealing with the OIPRD, the affected member of the public is required to file a complaint in writing within 6 months of the occurrence.

Contact Information

Durham Regional Police Services
605 Rossland Road, PO Box 911
Whitby, ON L1N 0B8

Phone: (905) 579-1520

Website: www.drps.ca

Vulnerable Persons Unit
480 Taunton Road East
Whitby, ON L1N 5R5

Phone: (905) 579-1520 ext. 5616

Fax: (905) 721-4293

Website: www.drps.ca

Bail Safety Program
150 Bond St. E.
3rd Floor
Oshawa, ON L1G 0A2

Phone: (905) 444-4323

Fax: (905) 444-4320

Website: www.attorneygeneral.ius.gov.on.ca

Hospitals

Commitment

To identify, evaluate, document, intervene and refer clients of domestic abuse. We will, within the mandate of our services be inclusive and provide equal treatment for all people accessing our services, while being sensitive to issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and/or abilities of individuals.

We will:

- screen all clients concerning the possibility of domestic violence
- take into consideration anyone accompanying the patient to maintain confidentiality and safety issues
- offer the services of the Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Care Centre
- be aware of the physical and emotional health of the client and their safety needs during all phases of examination and assessment
- assist and support a client in making choices that will increase their safety
- make every effort to encourage the client that the police be called if there are significant or serious injuries to the client
- assess the needs and safety of any children in the home and contact Durham Children's Aid Society under the Child and Family Services Act
- document all injuries, including the use of photographs
- review previous medical history/visits provided in the Emergency Department
- ask the partner to remain in the waiting room while the client is being examined if abuse is suspected
- in instances where the situation remains unclear but an Index of Suspicion exists, continue to observe and ask direct questions to determine if abuse is occurring
- provide information and support about resources which are available in the community

Accountability

Concerns regarding the quality or nature of the services can be directed to the nurse manager of the Emergency Department and/or the hospital ombudsman.

Contact Information

1 Hospital Court
Oshawa, ON L1G 2B9

Phone: (905) 576-8711

Fax: (905) 721-4749

Website: www.lakeridgehealth.on.ca

Housing Services

Commitment

The Durham Region Local Housing Declaration of Mutual Principles was prepared with input from a working group of representatives from the community's VAW and housing sectors in order to provide guidelines for an effective collaboration between local VAW agencies and the members of Durham Region's housing sector. The goal is to promote effective collaboration between agencies in order to assist women who have experienced abuse to secure and sustain affordable housing, and to facilitate women's referral to VAW services when they access social housing programs following abuse.

We will:

- recognize that access to safe and affordable housing is fundamentally important for the empowerment and well-being of women and children who are leaving or who have left abusive relationships
- base the belief that in order to effectively address the housing needs of women and children, co-operation between the VAW and housing sectors is essential
- recognize that this involves both effective service coordination between the two sectors and a shared understanding of woman abuse and its impact on children
- in the Declaration of Mutual Principles outline the purpose and objectives of the collaboration, the mandate of each participating agency, the guiding principles underlying the document and a conflict resolution process
- present a mutually agreed-upon set of guidelines outlining which services are to be provided to abused women and by whom
- outline the five basic points where the role of the VAW worker intersects with a worker from the housing sector:
 1. when a VAW worker refers a client for priority placement on the central waiting list
 2. when an abuse survivor makes an application for housing with no prior contact with VAW services
 3. when a Special Priority applicant is offered a unit or is housed in social housing
 4. when a social housing tenant identifies a need for VAW support

services

5. when a survivor of domestic violence is at risk of eviction

- ensure this document is available for viewing at VAW agencies and at the Housing Services office

Contact Information

605 Rossland Road East

PO Box 623

Whitby, ON L1N 6A3

Phone: (905) 668-7711

Fax: (905) 666-6225

Website: www.durham.ca

The Humane Society

Commitment

To assist women who are seeking to escape an abusive situation but are reluctant because they would be leaving behind a beloved pet(s).

We will:

- with a referral from an agency/organization coordinate a time and date for the person to bring the animals to us
- require the person to sign a contract guaranteeing the date they will pick up the animal(s)
- require a contact number where the person can be reached for emergencies
- board the animal(s) up to two weeks free of charge while the person tries to find a place to live or another safe place for the animals to go
- welcome visitation of the animal(s) everyday while in our care
- offer the option of putting the animal(s) up for adoption if needed

Contact Information

199 Waterloo Street, Unit #2
Oshawa, ON L1H 3W9

Phone: (905) 433-2022

Fax: (905) 433-3965

Website: www.humanedurham.com

Income and Employment Support

Commitment

To provide a fair and consistent response to women who are attempting to leave an abusive situation.

We will:

- ensure all Income Support Workers receive provincial training in woman abuse
- ensure that the safety of the abused woman and her family are of the utmost importance at all times
- provide women with accurate information about eligibility for ongoing assistance
- assist women in obtaining appropriate ongoing assistance whether they reside in a shelter, board with family or friends or move into a new location independently
- complete an application for assistance within 24 hours (excluding weekends) when a woman identifies herself as an abused woman and appears to be high risk
- respond to a woman if a woman states she has been abused or identifies herself as an abused woman
- ensure an abused woman will not be placed in a situation where she is forced to contact her abusive partner for information
- recognize that financial abuse may be a factor and the partner may control the resources and denies her access to money or to information about financial status
- always ask an applicant if they are applying for assistance because they are leaving or wish to leave, an abusive situation
- explore the possibility of emergency assistance to finance the leaving of an abusive situation if an applicant has a source of income that precludes entitlement for assistance
- take into consideration that an applicant may not have all the required identification for application and may be given a period of time to obtain the documentation
- not restrict eligibility for assistance if an applicant does not have access to financial records or resources because of the abusive situation

- at the discretion of the income support worker, defer participation in Ontario Works if the applicant has declared she is a victim of woman abuse
- grant an initial temporary support waiver for three months to those applicants who have left the home because of a violent situation; in this situation, assistance is granted or continued during this three month period without regard to joint financial resources, including support, if financial need exists
- ensure that a woman feels safe and wishes to pursue support and at all times be cognizant of the client's feelings and the risk to her in pursuing support

Accountability

If an abused woman or an advocate for an abused woman has questions about information given or decisions made regarding assistance, a review of the specific situation can be requested by contacting the office of the Income and Employment Support director.

When this designated woman abuse staff member is contacted regarding the Division's response to a situation, she will refer the situation to the appropriate Area Manager for review.

The Area Manager will review to ensure the Protocol/Guidelines are being followed. The person who made the original complaint will be contacted to determine if he/she feels that the situation was resolved to his/her satisfaction.

Contact will also be made with the client. If the client is still not satisfied, they will be advised of the Internal Review Process and their right to appeal to the Social Benefits Tribunal.

Contact Information

140 Commercial Avenue
Ajax, ON L1S 2H5

Phone: (905) 428-7400

Fax: (905) 428-7401

South: (905) 436-6747

Main: (905) 666-6239

Uxbridge: (905) 852-4566/1-800-361-3268

Central Intake: (905) 428-8982/1-877-978-6333

Website: www.durham.ca

Luke's Place Support & Resource Centre for Women & Children

Commitment

Luke's Place supports abused women and their children throughout the family law process and provides them and the Durham community with specialized resources and information about family law and woman abuse.

We will:

- provide short and long term support to abused women focusing on family law issues:
 - provide each woman with the opportunity to discuss her situation, needs and goals
 - provide an overview of the family law process and details specific to her case
 - provide assistance with recording historical information and gathering evidence
 - preparation for lawyer appointments and court within Durham and an opportunity to debrief
 - safety planning and referrals to community supports
 - information and support about abuse recovery
 - provide a facilitated peer support group specific to family law and woman abuse
- provide specialized resources and a centralized resource library for use by abused women and their advocates:
 - provide multimedia resource materials addressing family law, parenting after separation, effects of abuse on children, recovery after abuse, and children's resources
- provide consultation, education and training on family law and woman abuse to the service community and the general public
- ensure that services are provided within an anti-oppression, anti-racism, feminist framework

Accountability

- concerns regarding the quality or nature of services can be directed to the Executive Director
- the Executive Director is accountable to the organization's Board of Directors and its funders

Contact Information

PO Box 54040

8 King Street East

Oshawa, ON L1H 1A9

Phone: (905) 728-0978

Fax: (905) 728-6105

Website: www.lukesplace.ca

Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

New Choices Partner Assault Response Program (PAR Program)

Commitment

Male batterer programs, an essential part of the strategy to criminalize woman abuse, are one approach to addressing violence against women. They are also part of a broader strategy to eliminate violence against women. Male batterer programs are intended to assist in the elimination of violence against women by male partners and increase women's safety by enabling men to eliminate their violent and controlling behaviour against women. The treatment is specifically for men who have been through the Criminal Justice System and referral for treatment would occur at the time of sentencing. In Durham this arrangement exists between Probation and Parole and Family Services Durham (New Choices Partner Assault Response Program – PAR Program).

We will:

- contribute to the safety of women, including partners of program participants during the men's involvement in the program
- enable men to eliminate their violent behaviour toward women
- encourage program participants to accept responsibility for their violent behaviour
- improve the accessibility to male batterer services for members of the local community by ensuring that the community diversity is represented in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of programs
- respond to the diverse needs of the abused partners and other women who may contact the program, particularly those who face multiple disadvantages including immigrant women, Francophone women, racial minority women, women with disabilities and women from rural and remote areas

Contact Information

Regional Municipality of Durham, Lower Level
605 Rossland Road East, PO Box 623
Whitby, ON L1N 6A3

Phone: (905) 666-6240

Fax: (905) 666-6217

Website: www.region.durham.on.ca

Website: www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca

Probation and Parole Services

Commitment

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services contributes to the protection of public safety through effective supervision of adult offenders in community and institutional settings. Working together within the community for a safer Ontario.

We will:

- make every reasonable attempt to contact the victims as a source of information for the pre-sentence reports in all woman abuse cases
- not record a victim's address and telephone number as well as similar identifying information of her family members in the pre-sentence report
- whenever possible, contact the victim for probation case supervision
- explain specific conditions of the probation order as it pertains to the victim
- explain roles of probation and parole officer
- clarify the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, particularly, the privacy provisions
- provide victim with information regarding the court process

Contact Information

Durham East (Oshawa/Clarington Area)

1916 Dundas Street East, Unit 1
Whitby, ON L1N 2L6

Phone: (905) 571-3774

Fax: (905) 436-6882

Ajax/Pickering (Pickering, Ajax, Whitby area)

1099 Kingston Rd., Unit 3
Pickering, Ontario L1V 1B5

Phone: (905) 831-2600

Fax: (905) 420-5720

Port Perry Sub-Office (Scugog/Brock area)

Phone: (905) 985-9794

Website: www.mcscs.ontario.ca

Public Health Nurses

Commitment

Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) is a free voluntary program to support expecting parents and families with children from birth to age six. Public Health Nurses and Family visitors work together to assist families to meet their goals.

The Public Health Nurse is a registered nurse who works with individuals, families and groups to promote optimal health. A Public Health Nurse can identify needs and provide health education, counselling and referrals to resources/services.

The Family visitor works with families to listen, support, encourage and help to create a healthy environment that promotes healthy child development.

We will:

- recognize domestic violence negatively impacts the health of women and children
- recognize domestic violence negatively impacts parenting and child development
- in response to safety concerns, visit clients in various settings in the community
- screen and assess clients for risk factors associated with domestic violence
- complete referrals to community services based on assessment
- assist and support clients in decision making related to safety for themselves and their family
- provide health education to meet clients' needs. Common topics include physical/emotional/mental health, child health and development, healthy family dynamics and positive parenting
- provide clients verbal and written information regarding community resources
- provide active listening and emotional support
- document all interactions as per the College of Nurses and the Family Visitor program documentation guidelines
- report any child welfare concerns to Children's Aid Society in accordance with the Child and Family Services Act S.72
- collaborate with community partners in addressing and preventing domestic violence in Durham Region

Contact Information

605 Rossland Road East
2nd Floor
PO Box 730
Whitby, ON L1N 0B2

Phone: (905) 668-7711
Fax: (905) 666-6214
Toll Free: 1-800-841-2729

Website: www.region.durham.on.ca

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday 9:00 am – 6:00 pm

Shelters

Commitment

To provide a safe refuge and support for abused women and their children. The average length of stay is up to 12 weeks and is dependent upon the individual needs of a woman.

We will:

- ensure the environment is supportive, empowering, and non-judgemental
- provide a setting where a woman can begin to make decisions for herself and re-gain control of her life
- make specific efforts to ensure the physical setting is safe and secure
- attempt to meet the distinct needs of children from abusive environments
- inform and educate the community and professionals on the needs and realities faced by abused women
- participate in community efforts to eliminate abuse of women
- recognize the criminal nature of violence against women by supporting and holding accountable the efforts of the criminal justice system
- advocate for, and support the development of, services for abused women and their children
- provide support and services to women experiencing abuse who choose not to reside at shelters
- provide services that are sensitive and respectful to the needs of all women
- accept referrals by anyone in the community however, the individual requesting service must speak with shelter staff directly prior to admittance
- accept referred dependent children with the abused woman or later during her residency
- re-admit a woman to shelter an unlimited number of times using the same criteria that applies for admission
- provide a safe and protected environment
- provide 24-hour crisis line and 24-hour staffing
- provide supportive short-term crisis counselling for women and children, information, referrals, support and advocacy
- provide short-term crisis accommodation
- maintain as confidential all information received by a woman and/or recorded in files; confidentiality may be overridden if files are subpoenaed or if a worker makes a report as legislated by CFSA

- work cooperatively with other services during a woman's stay; due to the short period of time a woman resides in shelter it is important for agencies to continue to provide service to women to provide a collaborative effort at attempting to ensure her safety

Contact Information

Bethesda House
PO Box 82
Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K8

Phone: (905) 623-6045
Fax: (905) 623-6054
Crisis: (905) 623-6050

Website: www.bethesdahouse.ca

The Denise House
Oshawa Centre Postal Outlet
PO Box 30560
Oshawa, Ontario L1J 8L8

Phone: (905) 728-7311
Fax: (905) 728-1240
Crisis: (905) 728-4394

Website: www.thedenisehouse.com

Herizon House
314 Harwood Ave. S.
P.O. Box 21012
Ajax, ON L1S 7H2

Phone: (905) 426-1064
Fax: (905) 426-8275
Crisis: (905) 420-7694
1-888-437-4066 or 4966

Website: www.herizonhouse.com

Y's WISH Shelter
33 McGrigor Street
Oshawa, ON L1H 1X8

Phone: (905) 576-6743
Fax: (905) 576-8371
Crisis: (905) 576-2997

Website: www.ywcadurham.org

Survivor Advocacy Committee

Commitment

Act as a committee to ensure that the voices of women with lived experience of violence or abuse, influence the way services are delivered throughout the Durham Region. Women will be empowered as advocates for change.

We will:

- represent survivors of violence and abuse with integrity, dignity and respect
- provide women with opportunities to share their experiences and have input regarding best practices that meet the needs of them and their families
- receive input, information and direction from the Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (VPCC) and funding agency – Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), working together with the survivor Advocacy Coordinator and Sub-Committee
- represent the Survivor Advocacy Committee when invited by the VPCC
- advise and make recommendations to the VPCC, present findings and discuss issues to increase understanding of survivors' experiences
- provide training opportunities, education and resources to women, business and service providers
- identify needs to better assist women
- participate in special projects
- develop awareness and education campaigns
- meet regularly as a committee (monthly)
- open membership to survivors who would like to participate as a member of the Committee
- have each potential member complete a readiness questionnaire
- provide advocacy training for new members

Accountability

We are accountable to the violence Prevention Coordinating Council (VPCC) and funding agency-Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS)

Contact Information

Violence Prevention Coordinating Council

Coordinator

314 Harwood Ave., S.

PO Box 21001

Harwood Place

Ajax, Ontario L1S 2J1

Phone: 905-728-4968

Email: info@vpccdurham.org

Website: www.vpccdurham.org

Victim Services of Durham Region (V.C.A.R.S.)

Commitment

To provide dedicated and specially trained volunteers recruited from within the community to ensure that all victims receive compassionate care in a manner of respect, dignity and confidentiality.

We will:

- work in partnership with the Durham Regional Police Services to provide short-term emotional support and practical on-scene assistance to victims of crime
- strive to lessen the severity of trauma for victims of crime or tragic situations
- provide victims with the means to cope with the impact of crime or any other tragic circumstance
- facilitate victims in accessing appropriate support services in their community
- provide the opportunity for the community to be more involved in dealing with the effects of crime and in mobilizing crime prevention efforts

Supportlink

Commitment

To provide assistance for people at risk from sexual assault, domestic abuse or stalking by enhancing personal safety strategies. The program works with other community services to provide clients with fair, equitable and effective service in an environment of confidentiality, respect and dignity.

We will:

- enhance personal safety strategies for people most at risk from domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking
- develop an intensive personal safety plan with the assistance of the program coordinator
- provide a wireless cell phone, pre-programmed to dial 911 to clients identified as high risk
- provide ongoing support as well as updates and reviews to the personal safety plan
- accept referrals from Victim Services, Shelters, Crown Attorneys, Police Officers and Sexual Assault Centres or by the client

Contact Information

480 Taunton Road East
Whitby, ON L1N 5R5

Phone: (905) 579-1520 ext. 1846

Fax: (905) 721-4293

Website: www.drps.ca

Hours of Operation

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Victim/Witness Assistance Program

Victims & Vulnerable Persons Division

Commitment

The mandate of the Victim/Witness Assistance Program is to provide information, support and assistance to victims and witnesses of crime throughout the criminal justice process in order to increase their understanding of, and participation in, the criminal justice process.

We will:

- keep individuals informed of all court dates and explain the processes of these court dates. (This information can be provided by calling our office the next business day after 3:00 pm following each of the accused person's court appearances.)
Assist individuals in obtaining copies of the accused person's release conditions, bail order, probation order, etc;
- provide emotional support and referral services to appropriate community agencies for support and/or counselling
- provide individuals with information on the court system and case specific information
- assist individuals in communicating concerns to the Crown Attorney and/or police, as they relate to the case and to the victim's role in the case
- provide information on the court/trial process, including courtroom tours and court accompaniment on trial/preliminary hearing dates
- assist individuals in applying to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB)
- provide information regarding Victim Impact Statements

Additional Information:

- VWAP staff persons are unable to discuss evidence with victims and witnesses. Victims and witnesses who wish to discuss their evidence will be referred to the police or to the Crown Attorney.
- VWAP staff and volunteers are bound by an oath of confidentiality. This oath of confidentiality is subject to disclosure obligations.
- The aim of the Victim Witness Assistance Program is to assist you in

having your voice heard in the legal process and to provide you with information on this process. Any involvement with our office is strictly voluntary and can be discontinued any time.

Accountability

Complaints or concerns regarding the quality or nature of services of VWAP can be directed to the manager of the Victim/Witness Assistance Program. The manager is accountable to the regional manager, Central East Region, Vulnerable Victims and Persons Division, Ministry of the Attorney General.

Contact Information

150 Bond St. E.
3rd Floor
Oshawa, ON L1G 0A2

Phone: (905) 743-2790
Fax: (905) 743-2796

Regional Manager

Phone: (905) 868-8185
Fax (905) 868-8655

Website: www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca

Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre of Durham Region (WMRCC)

Commitment

Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre of Durham Region (WMRCC) provides information and support programs and services to immigrant and refugee women and abused women, youth and children from diverse cultural, racial and religious backgrounds. This is done through one to one counselling, group counselling, support groups, interactive workshops, violence prevention workshops, referral, etc. Services are culturally sensitive and will reflect feminist principles including promoting anti-discriminatory conduct based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, health and ability.

We will:

- provide a safe and non-threatening atmosphere for our clients
- ensure that our counsellors provide supportive, non-judgemental and confidential services
- provide resources for women to gain knowledge in self-empowerment and self-advocacy
- provide information, individual and group support, counselling and referrals to abused women, youth and children
- provide culturally sensitive services to women of colour, immigrants and refugee women through language or cultural interpretation
- advocate for and promote the development of services for abused women and their children through community outreach and public education awareness campaign
- make a woman's safety our first priority by ensuring she and her children are in a safe place and that it is safe to continue the call
- assure her that we respect her rights to confidentiality
- determine her immediate needs and concerns
- refer women in immediate danger to 911, Mobile Crisis Unit or the Assaulted Women's Hotline; refer to shelters
- provide information of resources that she will need to take with her if she is planning to leave (i.e. birth certificates, bank statements, OHIP, immigration documents, etc)
- determine if future contact is necessary and if so when you will be in contact

- schedule counselling for her at the first available time that meets her needs, if she requires counselling
- listen actively with compassion, offering support by being non-judgemental and believing her
- ensure her that the abuse is not her fault and that she is not alone
- comfort her and praise her for having the courage to disclose
- discuss the importance of safety for herself and her children and possibly safety plans if she is not yet ready to leave
- provide our services without prejudice; we acknowledge and respect the human rights of all women, youth and children
- acknowledge our primary obligation is accountability to the women, youth and children we provide services to
- fulfill our commitment to provide a high quality of services and maintain the best interests of the women, youth and children with respect and integrity
- contribute to society's understanding of the issues of violence against women, youth and children and assist with public efforts to reduce and prevent violence

Accountability

We are accountable to the community, our funders, members and clients of the centre.

Contact Information

1355 Kingston Road, PO Box 66164
 Pickering, ON L1V 6P7
 Phone: (905) 427-7849
 Fax: (905) 427-9299
 Toll Free: 1-877-454-4035

Website: www.wmrccdurham.org

Hours of Operation

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday with some flexibility for evening and Saturday appointments.