

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

DAY
#6

CARING FOR CHILDREN

November is Woman Abuse Prevention Month, which includes the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, a global campaign calling for an end to gender-based violence. It begins on November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, includes The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on December 6th, and ends on December 10th: Human Rights Day.

Thunder Bay City Council formally declared GBV and IPV an epidemic on September 25th immediately following our deputation. In addition, City officials have invited us to present to the local social services administration board and the Intergovernmental Affairs committee, and also supply a list of actionable goals for City Council to better support survivors of GBV in our community.

Our 2023 16 Days campaign will focus on these actionable goals - efforts at the municipal and personal levels to address gender-based violence.

Why it Matters

- Child custody, access and financial support are used as weapons by abusers. Women who try to protect their children in these matters are disadvantaged and often discredited.
- In cases where abusers are harming children directly, the protective parent may be seen as manipulative or vindictive if they make these accusations. "Unfriendly parent" rules can actually result in a loss of custody / care and control because it is extremely difficult to prove physical or sexual abuse in younger children. They are then at higher risk of harm.
- Child welfare involvement can confuse matters, especially when the protective parent is the only one working with / surveilled by child welfare
- Children experience and are harmed by coercive control, in addition to witnessing abuse directly and indirectly. Abusers also attempt to alienate children from their other parent.
- Children can become targets of violence when abusers seek revenge
- Lack of affordable, reliable childcare keeps women with abusive partners for financial reasons. Women navigating IPV/GBV issues need safe, reliable childcare to maintain employment or education, attend appointments related to housing, income assistance, legal matters, healthcare/counselling, etc.

ACTION

- National Action Plan on GBV Pillar Five: Social Infrastructure and Enabling Environment includes **strengthening and improving access to affordable early learning and childcare** (https://National_Action_Plan_on_Gender-based_Violence_-_In_Brief_-_English.pdf)
- Provide temporary daycare services for survivors' children during court matters.
- Free passes to City-run recreational programs/spaces for children and teens
- Provide emergency funding for clothing and other material items for children of survivors
- Provide emergency childcare at a City-run daycare centre or contract a social service organization who could offer it
- Provide mandatory violence and trauma-informed training for City-run daycare staff
- Advocate for local school boards to provide violence and trauma-informed training for teachers and frontline staff as part of Professional Development activities

Children and teens are impacted by Intimate Partner Violence. Keeping mothers safe also helps to ensure their safety.

Resources

- Gender-based violence: the importance of affordable, accessible childcare <https://sexualassaultsupport.ca/gender-based-violence-the-importance-of-affordable-accessible-childcare/>
- Mothering in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: Realities and Resistance <https://gbvlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/briefs/mothering-brief.html>
- Children Experience Coercive Control: What You Need To Know https://gbvlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/issuebased_newsletters/issue-37/index.html
- Understanding Coercive Control Against Children: Impacts and Supportive Responses <https://gbvlearningnetwork.ca/webinars/recorded-webinars/2022/webinar-2022-9.html>
- TRAUMA- AND VIOLENCE- INFORMED APPROACHES: SUPPORTING CHILDREN EXPOSED TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE https://gbvlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/issuebased_newsletters/issue-31/Newsletter_Issue_311.pdf
- Preventing Revictimization and Use of Aggression Following Girls' Maltreatment: A life course approach https://gbvlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/reports/discussion_paper_18.html
- Issue 16: Boys' Victimization & Adult IPV Perpetration: https://gbvlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/issuebased_newsletters/issue-16/index.html
- Issue 21: Sibling Violence: https://gbvlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/issuebased_newsletters/issue-21/index.html
- Support for Survivors and their Families: <https://nationalactionplan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Support-for-Survivors.pdf>
- Understanding Resilience in Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence — What We Know From Current Literature: <https://gbvlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/briefs/brief-38.html>
- Child Witness Program (Beendigen, Healing Our Own Counselling Unit): <https://www.beendigen.com/programs/healing-our-own/>
- Tomorrow without Violence (Thunder Bay Counselling) is a group for children/teens to learn about the impacts of domestic violence including physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse; it is a safe space to discuss the violence, begin to heal from its effects, and learn that it is not okay and not their fault: <https://www.tbaycounselling.com/groups/tomorrow-without-violence/>

