

April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024



CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE:

Addressing Domestic
Violence in Calgary
and Area

Prepared by



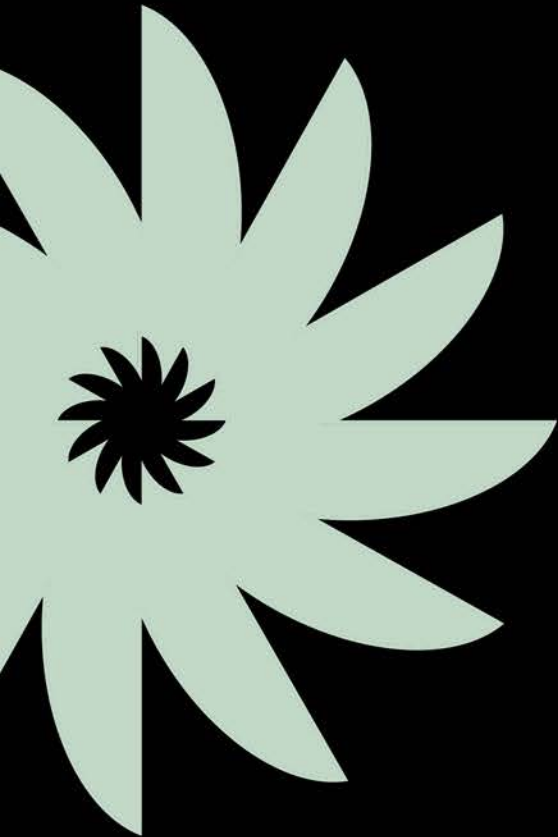
FearIsNotLove

Radiance



In the spirit of respect and truth, we recognize that we live and work on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Iyârhe Nakoda Nations, and the Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Métis Nation within Alberta, Districts 4, 5, and 6. We are committed to using our voices to foster respectful relationships with Indigenous communities and individuals. Please join us in amplifying Indigenous voices, celebrating the vibrancy of Indigenous culture, and supporting all people to thrive.

We recognize that domestic violence affects people from all areas of life. We are committed to supporting everyone to heal and thrive, regardless of their age, ethnicity, culture, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other aspect of their identity.



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Executive Summary

We are ten dedicated organizations in the greater Calgary area, united in our mission to combat domestic violence by providing shelter-based supports, community outreach, preventative services and more. This report, spanning April 2023 to March 2024, showcases our transformative work through service delivery and strong collaboration. Every day we focus on key areas of impact to address both the immediate effects and underlying causes of domestic abuse and violence.

Collectively we strive to impact the following areas for the people we serve:



Safety – We ensure immediate safety and build safe communities through shelter, outreach and domestic violence prevention and education. This is the cornerstone of our work.



Support – We offer a wide range of direct supports and connect participants to other community organizations. This has an ongoing positive impact on well-being, even after individuals are no longer directly accessing our services.



Community – We help survivors of domestic violence to rebuild positive connections to natural supports, including family, friends, neighbours, and culture.



Housing – Access to safe and affordable housing is a critical part of helping survivors leave domestic violence. We are seeing success in this area, but there is still a continued need for more affordable housing in our communities.



Finances – Increasing financial access means greater agency and choice for survivors. While some factors are beyond our control, we are committed to helping survivors improve their financial circumstances.



Hope – Believing that things can change and will get better is key to individuals making changes in their lives to move forward and heal. Whether provided directly or simply embedded in our day-to-day work, offering hope empowers change and the possibility of a brighter future.

Shelters provide a safe space, time to recover, and the essential elements to live a life free of violence. We are incredibly proud of the work we do together and within our organizations to address domestic violence. We are committed to expanding our impact so we can continue to save lives, uplift individuals and create a safe community for all.

Introduction



“When I came to the shelter, I was lost, very worried. I had two kids with me. The whole staff helped me in every possible way to make me stable. Now I have my own place, I am comfortable and above all I can peacefully take care of my kids.”

Domestic violence and abuse inflict immeasurable harm on individuals and the broader community. Tackling this complex issue demands a comprehensive approach that addresses both the immediate effects and the underlying causes. We are a group of ten dedicated organizations in the greater Calgary area, united in our mission to combat domestic violence and abuse in our community by providing shelter-based supports, outreach, preventative services, and more.

This report, spanning April 2023 to March 2024, highlights the transformative work we are undertaking through our service delivery and strong collaboration. Our services encompass essential areas of healing: safety, support, community, housing, finances, and hope. In this report, we highlight key strategies that enhance individual lives and fortify the community. Additionally, many of the organizations participating in this report have extensive services and supports for children and youth. For the purpose of this report, we have chosen to focus primarily on adult outcomes. By focusing on these positive changes, we demonstrate our commitment to evolving our support systems and expanding the impact for women, children, and men. Every day, we create meaningful change in the community, uplifting lives, and in some instances saving them. Our unwavering dedication is clear in the transformations we facilitate, building safer, more supportive environments for all. Shelters provide a safe space, time to recover, and so much more!

Organizations contributing to this report:

Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society
Big Hill Haven
Discovery House
FearIsNotLove
Maskan Family Association

Radiance Family Society
Rowan House Society
The Brenda Strafford Foundation
YWCA Banff
YW Calgary



Safety is the First Step

When working with survivors of domestic violence and abuse, addressing safety is the first step on the journey to thriving. We take a wide range of approaches to ensuring safety.

Impact

We are having an impact and increasing safety for participants using our services. After accessing emergency shelters, second stage shelters, outreach programs, or court support services, 86% of surveyed participants at six organizations said that they felt safe or had increased safety for themselves and their children. We are committed to continuing to offer supports that meet safety needs.

86%

Participants who said they felt safe or had increased safety for themselves and their children.



Services

Emergency Shelters

Emergency shelters provide both physical and emotional safety for adults and children fleeing abuse. In the 23-24 fiscal year, the seven emergency shelters in this report provided immediate safety and shelter to over 750 adults and 1,000 children.

Crisis Lines

Emergency shelters also run crisis lines, which provide safety planning and access to programs and safety supports. This year, crisis line staff provided support for over 22,000 calls, or an average of 62 calls per day.

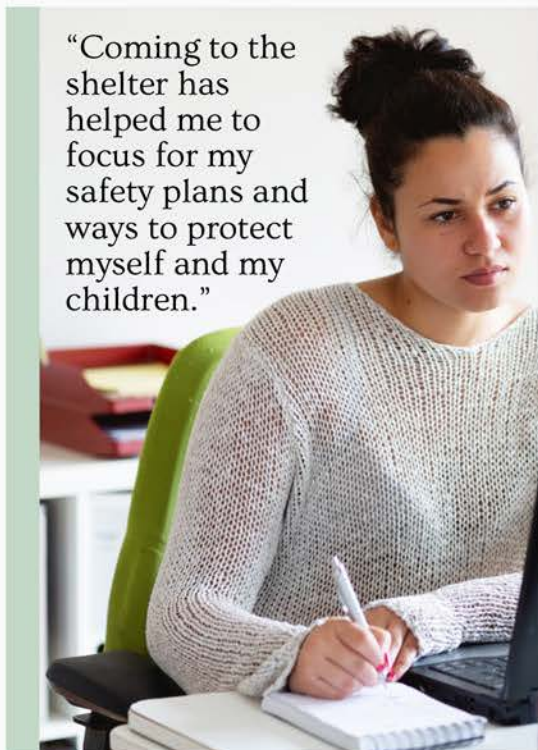
Second Stage Shelters

Some participants need longer-term support to stay safe. Second-stage shelters offer affordable housing and extended support for continued healing. Second-stage shelters helped over 150 adults and 200 children in Calgary and area this past year.

Outreach

Outreach programs support participants who do not access shelter or are transitioning out of shelter to ensure their safety. The outreach teams in this report supported over 4,000 people this year.

“Coming to the shelter has helped me to focus for my safety plans and ways to protect myself and my children.”



Prevention Programming

Prevention programming aims to increase the skills and knowledge of individuals, so they can have healthy relationships and respond to domestic violence if they see it. Organizations participating in this report provided domestic violence prevention programming to over 15,000 participants in the past year, including offering healthy relationships education to over 10,000 children and youth. After receiving prevention services, **93% of surveyed participants at two organizations said they knew more about domestic abuse and healthy relationships.** 91% of youth participants at one organization said they were willing to make changes in their relationships to ensure that everyone was safe and healthy.

Innovative Approaches

IMMINENT RISK HOTELLING

In December 2023, FearsNotLove found a need in the community to shelter individuals and families at high risk of experiencing imminent harm, when there were no beds available in the shelter system. Within a week, we implemented an Imminent Risk Pilot Project. This project accesses hotel rooms for those who are at imminent risk of serious harm or homicide, and unable to access shelter beds due to a lack of capacity in the shelter system. By providing the wrap around supports needed, we can ensure immediate safety and stability for those at the highest risk while finding personalized longer-term solutions for each individual or family.

PODCASTING

Let the Truth Talk is a podcast created by the Harmony Project, based out of YWCA Banff. It focuses on raising awareness and dialogue around sexual violence, including how to be an upstander. The conversations on Let the Truth Talk help listeners learn about important topics in safe and healthy relationships, such as boundaries and consent.

<https://www.letthetruthtalk.ca/>

+10,000

Children and youth participated in healthy relationships education programming.



Support



Increasing access to supportive resources in the community enhances well-being for survivors. Support can mean multiple things. Direct supports are provided by staff in all the programs covered in this report. For example, crisis line staff at the seven emergency shelters in this report provided direct services like emotional support and crisis counselling to thousands of callers this past year. Staff at emergency and second stage shelters provide many kinds of direct supports, including sheltering, counselling and skill development opportunities for adults, and trauma-informed supportive programming for children.

Supports are also provided by other organizations and our staff connect participants to these services. This can look like helping someone to access appropriate medical care, the food bank, or parenting programs. Increasing supports is an important part of our work and we believe that doing this will continue to have a positive impact on well-being even after individuals are no longer directly accessing our services. In the 23-24 fiscal year, 86% of surveyed participants at five organizations said they had increased access to supports in the community, beyond the program they were accessing and 94% said that they had increased knowledge of the supports available to them in the community. This data is from surveys in multiple emergency shelters, outreach programs, and second-stage shelters, highlighting the impact that this work has regardless of the type of services an individual receives.

86%

Participants who said they had increased access to supports in the community.

94%

Participants who had increased knowledge of the supports available to them in the community.

Innovative Approaches



SHELTERLINK

The ShelterLink App is a groundbreaking tool that shares shelter bed availability of emergency, transitional, and second stage shelters between over twenty emergency and non-emergency service providers, including Calgary Police Service and Calgary Counselling Centre. Access to real time information streamlines service providers' ability to effectively support individuals and families experiencing domestic violence who are seeking physical safety. This makes it easier for individuals to get the support they need, as previously individuals would have to call multiple shelters to learn about the options available to them.

Once an individual connects to a shelter, it is critical that an imminent risk assessment is completed, ensuring those whose risk requires shelter are offered shelter, and those whose risk can be managed in the community are offered alternate and accessible community-based services. Regardless of the level of risk, we are committed to addressing safety and helping individuals get the support they need.

SHARED INTAKE

The three Calgary second-stage shelters – run by Radiance Family Society, the Brenda Strafford Foundation's Heart Home Network, and Discovery House – share an intake staff and intake processes. This streamlines access to second-stage shelters, which makes it easier for individuals to find the support they need. Participants only need to apply and tell their story once, reducing stress and trauma.

CENTRALIZED CRISIS LINE

Beginning in July 2023, YW Calgary and FearsNotLove have united their crisis lines into a single, streamlined service. With a shared intake process, accessing support has never been easier. Now, just one phone call connects individuals to the right resources from both organizations, ensuring they get the help they need swiftly and efficiently.

“ I did not know there was this much support for people going through this and it makes my heart so happy.”





“I’m reconnecting with friends, and I’ve made new friends. I started volunteering again. I’m still not 100% there yet but I am on my way.”

Connection to natural supports, including family, friends, and neighbours, is an important part of healing and thriving for survivors. Perpetrators will commonly cut people off from others in their life as a way of maintaining or increasing control and hiding the abuse. We are committed to supporting program participants to rebuild positive connections and are continually working towards expanding our effectiveness in this area.

Innovative Approaches

PHYSICAL COMMUNITY

Community can sometimes refer to your physical community. Big Hill Haven offers scattered site shelter spaces, which are safe and secured suites in different locations. This ensures that families in Cochrane and area do not have to choose between being safe and leaving the community where they live, work, and play.

CULTURE

Community is also about connection to your culture. Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society offers multiple programs to connect individuals affected by family violence to Indigenous culture. The Journey to Mental Health program supports men who have been either perpetrators or survivors of abuse to heal and evolve by connecting with traditional cultural teachings.

Impact

This past year, after participating in outreach, emergency shelter, second stage shelter, and court support programming across four organizations, 87% of surveyed participants said they had positive connections and relationships with other people in their lives. We also recognize the importance of empowering individuals to support others in their lives to have healthier relationships. After participating in prevention and education programming at one organization, 86% of surveyed participants felt they were better able to support others to achieve healthy relationships.

87% Participants who said they had positive relationships with other people in their lives.

Housing

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Access to safe and affordable housing is a critical part of helping survivors leave domestic abuse situations. Many survivors tell us they feel they have to stay with their abuser because they cannot find anywhere else to go. This is only exacerbated by the housing crisis that we are experiencing in the Calgary area. Regardless of how challenging it is, we are committed to supporting survivors to access the housing they need.

Services

- Emergency and second stage shelter staff focus on helping participants transition from shelter to adequate housing.
- Outreach staff work with individuals living in the community to maintain their housing or secure housing that is more appropriate for their needs.

Highlights

This year, 60% of surveyed participants at four organizations reported that they were in safe and stable housing in the community when they finished programming. This demonstrates the continued importance of increasing access to affordable housing in our community.

60% Participants in safe and stable housing when they finished programming.



“Thank you for listening
and helping me find a
safe place for me and
my kids to call home.”

Innovative Approaches

SAFE AT HOME

The Safe at Home program offered by Rowan House Society is an alternative approach for individuals who have perpetrated violence or believe they are at risk of doing so. Individuals are provided one to one outreach support as well as group education sessions. If de-escalation is needed, the perpetrator is supported to temporarily move out of the family home. The perpetrator experiences the disruption of relocation, while the survivor and children remain in the stability of the family home.

YW TAYLOR FAMILY HOME

YW Calgary recognizes the need for more affordable Housing in Calgary. In 2023, YW opened YW Taylor Family Home, which provides 21 two- and three-bedroom suites for women and children impacted by domestic violence. By offering safe, appropriate, and affordable housing, we are supporting women and children to heal, put down roots, and thrive.

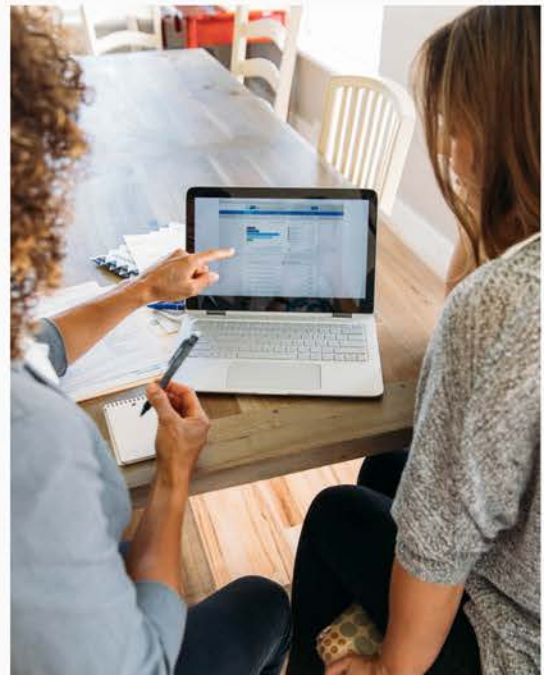
Finances

Increasing financial resources means increasing choice and agency for survivors of domestic violence and abuse. Many survivors tell us finances are a reason they feel they cannot leave abusive situations. We support survivors to increase their income and access to financial supports in many ways, including financial education, help with budgeting, and accessing government benefits, such as the Canada Child Benefit. By increasing their income and access to financial resources, we can increase the options available to survivors as they navigate the complexities of recovering from domestic abuse.

“You helped me to stay focused and get a job and move on with a plan.”

Impact

In the 23-24 fiscal year, 37% of participants surveyed in two organizations reported that their financial situation was stable after participating in programming. Another organization reported 86% of participants made progress on their goals related to employment or education. One second-stage shelter reported the average income of participants increased by 48% from intake to discharge, a significant and promising impact for those participants. We recognize that finances are both an area where we are having influence but where there is still room to improve. Access to financial resources is compounded by factors outside of the control of our organizations or the individuals we serve, such as inflation and the unemployment rate. However, we are committed to helping survivors change their financial circumstances because we know that will help to change their lives.



Innovative Approaches

BRIGHTER FUTURES

The Brenda Strafford Foundation's Brighter Futures program is an eight-week essential skills training initiative designed to support women impacted by domestic violence in the Calgary area. By offering training and certification in administrative occupations, mentorship, coaching, and employment support, the program aims to help marginalized women achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Hope

Believing that things will get better inspires people to make change in their lives.

Hope is a critical factor for increasing well-being. A belief that things can change and will get better underlies the transformations individuals make in their lives as they move forward and heal. We are committed to fostering a sense of hope so the adults and children we support can have a brighter future.

"Before coming to the shelter, I was living in an abusive situation for many years. My daughter and I had been so isolated that the thought of living by ourselves seemed impossible. Once we arrived at the shelter, I began to recognize how strong I was and felt I really could live independently. We found a new stable home with the help of staff. The confidence I know feel from being able to live independently with my daughter is something I can't quite explain. We are safe and healthy and excited for the future!"

"Talking about healthy relationships, learning about red flags, talking about the abuse I have experienced and the ways I managed to stay alive through all of it gives me hope that I can get through this. I know how to look after myself. I believe in myself."

Impact

This year, after participating in emergency shelter, second-stage shelter, and outreach programs at four organizations, 91% of surveyed individuals said they were feeling hopeful about the future. A fifth organization asks about overall well-being, and 84% of their participants reported their lives were better after accessing programming.



91% I feel hopeful about the future.

84% My life is better after getting help.

Conclusion

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Domestic violence and abuse continues to have devastating impacts every day for individuals and families in the greater Calgary area. We are a group of ten dedicated organizations, united in our mission to combat domestic violence by providing shelter-based supports, outreach, preventative services and more. We are committed to addressing immediate individual needs and strengthening the whole community.

Shelters provide critical services that focus on key factors for healing and well-being for adults and children. By focusing on these areas, we show our commitment to evolving our services and expanding our impact. This year, we supported thousands of individuals to meet their safety needs, learn about domestic abuse, connect to supports and community, access appropriate housing, increase their financial resources, and have hope for the future. We are incredibly proud of the work we have done together and within our organizations to make this difference. Every day, we are uplifting and saving lives and creating a safe community for all. **Thank you for joining us.**

Who We Are

We are a group of ten dedicated organizations in the greater Calgary area, united in our mission to combat domestic violence and abuse in our community by providing shelter-based supports, outreach, preventative services, and more.



AWO TAAN HEALING LODGE

awotaan.org

**Crisis Lines: (403) 531-1972
(403) 531-1976**



BIG HILL HAVEN

bighillhaven.com

**Crisis Line: (403) 796-6564
(Business hours only)**



DISCOVERY HOUSE

discoveryhouse.ca

Intake: (403) 860-9412



FEARISNOTLOVE

fearisnotlove.ca

Crisis Line: (403) 234-7233



MASKAN FAMILY ASSOCIATION

maskanfamily.com

Main Office: (403) 971-2774



RADIANCE FAMILY SOCIETY

radiancesociety.ca

Intake Line: (403) 860-9412



ROWAN HOUSE SOCIETY

rowanhouse.ca

Crisis Line: (403) 652-3311



THE BRENDA STRAFFORD FOUNDATION

hearthomenetwork.ca

Intake Line: (403) 860-9412



YWCA BANFF

ywcabanff.ca

Crisis Line: (403) 760-3200



YW CALGARY

ywcacalgary.ca

Crisis Line: (403) 266-0707

DEFINITIONS

- **Court support program** – Assists survivors of domestic violence in navigating the court system.
- **Domestic violence** – A pattern of violent or abusive behaviours in an intimate, dependent or trusting relationship. When someone experiences domestic violence, it threatens their well-being, safety, and survival. It may also be called family violence, domestic abuse, gender-based violence, or intimate partner violence. There are many types of domestic abuse, including but not limited to physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, financial abuse, technological abuse, and coercive control.
- **Emergency shelter** – A safe location where survivors and children can access temporary accommodations, get help and connect with supports.
- **Outreach program** – Case management for individuals who are living in the community or transitioning out of shelter. Services may include safety planning, connection to formal supports, and providing information about domestic violence.
- **Perpetrator** – The individual performing or enacting the violent or abusive behaviors. They may also be called an abuser or batterer.
- **Prevention programming** – Services that address the root cause of social issues.
- **Second stage shelter** – Short-term affordable housing for survivors and their children that helps them to permanently leave and start a new life.
- **Survivor** – The individual who is experiencing or has experienced domestic violence and abuse.