

Implementing Best Practices in our New Service Delivery Strategies

As we move through stages of re-opening, we have given a lot of thought to how women and children with lived experiences of violence are navigating this environment and its many different expectations.

Specifically, we've been thinking about the unique challenges that mandatory mask-wearing presents to anyone who has been physically silenced during acts of abuse. Similarly, we are aware that the ability to read non-verbal body language like facial expressions is crucial for someone still healing from the impacts of trauma.

We wholeheartedly agree that precautions are necessary to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and look to Peterborough Public Health and HKPR Public Health Unit for guidance in implementing best practices. Our goal is to incorporate their recommendations into our physical spaces and service delivery in a manner that is trauma and violence-informed.

It is a privilege to do this work with women and children and we are committed to making our services as accessible and effective for them as possible.



Our Support Team continues to adapt and find safe ways of engaging with women and their supports daily.

Safe Shelter & Support for Women & Children | A New Reality

As the reality of COVID-19 landed in Ontario, reports were being released from other countries indicating that demand for violence against women services had as much as tripled following self-isolation. For us, this means that every bit of work we've been doing during the entirety of this crisis has been accomplished while knowing to expect a significant boom once restrictions ease and women are more free to access help. It is overwhelming to imagine how we'll meet 3 times the need in the absence of matching financial resources, especially in a context that continues to be uncertain as we move through the rest of this year.

During the period of self-isolation, shelter services categorized as "essential" continued without disruption. Our crisis lines, both in Haliburton County and in Peterborough, continued to operate 24/7 to receive calls while staff employed in programs that didn't fall under "essential services" used technology to continue their work with women from home. While we continued to meet demands for our help in every context, a tremendous amount of adjustment was required with regard to our provision of services. Working from home or working on-site during a global pandemic with numerous provincial orders in place meant making significant adjustments to how we do our work and what was asked of us.

Staff reported that calls from women decreased during the strictest parts of self-isolation, often due to women simply being too unsafe to reach out while stranded at home with an abuser. Those who did reach us during this time presented with a remarkable level of risk, to such an extent that the risk of reaching out to us was necessary for survival.

We've received an unprecedented number of calls from family members, friends, community advocates, and even neighbours or passersby who witnessed or overheard acts of violence and reached out to the authorities to seek help for the victims, later calling us to debrief and receive support. Of all the calls we received during this time, these were some of the ones most inspiring to us as they speak to our community collectively rallying against violence and advocating for protection of women and children in our area.

We have always felt your support, with every like on social media, every message of encouragement you've shared and every act of generosity you've provided, but seeing a different kind of social resistance unfold during a period of enhanced vulnerability has been an inspiring gift this community and its concerned and engaged citizens have given us. Thank you!



A message from Kim Dolan
YWCA Executive Director

Like you, we have experienced many changes in the past few months. Our efforts to flatten the curve contributed to reduced transmissions in our region, and also changed the delivery of programs by social service and health organizations.

The uncertainty has been difficult especially for those in need. As Ontario opens up the YWCA will balance our commitment to addressing gender-based violence, the impact of isolation on emotional wellness and physical safety of women who rely on our services, and reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmissions.

As my 6th month at the YWCA draws to a close and more becomes known about COVID-19, we are preparing for a longer state of uncertainty. This means developing new ways to connect with women at risk for violence, implementing new technology, providing new training and capacity building, and working with community partners to share best practices.

I look forward to sharing more about our progress in our Fall Newsletter. In the meantime, I hope you'll reach out with any questions at 705-743-3526 x112 or kdolan@ywcapeterborough.org.



Nourish | Belonging Through Food

Nourish has been working diligently with local agencies to get nutritious food to those people who are most vulnerable to COVID-19. These agencies include: Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre, Curve Lake Health Centre, Havelock community group, Lovesick Lake Native Women's Association, Food For Kids, One Roof Community Centre, the Elizabeth Fry Society of Peterborough, PARN, city neighbourhood groups, the Psychosis Assessment and Treatment Clinic - PRHC, and the Lynx Program - CMHA. Unfortunately, we haven't had the capacity to take individual requests for the time being, but hope to return to taking individual requests by the end of the summer.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have distributed more than 3,000 emergency food boxes by adapting the existing infrastructure of our affordable JustFood box program. With these boxes, we are able to serve about 700 people every two weeks.

This has been made possible with the generous support of the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough, the City of Peterborough, the United Way and the Community Food Centres Canada Good Food Fund. We would also like to thank our dedicated volunteers who have helped with packing and delivering boxes and Peterborough Public Health for their unwavering support and guidance.

Community Garden Update

On April 25, 2020, Ontario announced that community gardens are considered essential services during the COVID-19 emergency orders; welcome news to our region's many community gardeners! Many of our local community gardens are now open under safety measures established by Public Health. New protocols include

cleaning and disinfecting commonly used equipment and surfaces, as well as required physical distancing where gardeners will need to stay two metres apart from those who don't live in their household.

Nourish is here to help support our community gardens, and coordinators throughout the season!

Learn more about Nourish at www.nourishproject.ca.



Advocacy | Understanding Trauma Differently

Trauma, such as abuse, neglect and household dysfunction, has a devastating impact on us. It affects every aspect of how a person understands and navigates their world, and these impacts can be long-lasting.

Yet many of the behaviours and health outcomes that mark survival of trauma, things like missed work, lack of physical activity, smoking or drug use, are typically met with judgment rather than with empathy and understanding. This is because our society doesn't recognize these behaviours and health challenges as indications of the survival of trauma, endured without adequate support or intervention. Our society is not yet trauma and violence-informed.

When we at YWCA Peterborough Haliburton interact with the women we serve, we are able to see the wounds of repeated exposure to trauma, often dating back to their childhood. We can see risky or less healthy behaviours as indicators of traumatic experience rather than deficits in their capacity or character. We see these as the marks of survival, resistance, strength and resourcefulness. And we're reaching out, to help others do the same.

For more information, please visit *A Question of Care's* Training Calendar at www.questionofcare.com.

Advocacy | Ending Food Insecurity through Higher Incomes rather than Food Charity

Looking at poverty through the lens of hunger suggests easy, intuitive solutions like free or inexpensive food. But really, food insecurity is a result of not having enough money to buy food. That means the only real solutions are income-based.

Income solutions are proven to work. Food insecurity rates among Canadian seniors are low because they receive what is essentially a basic income from the federal government. Old Age Security (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) can change people's lives overnight on their 65th birthday. Likewise, the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) reduced the rate of severe food insecurity among low-income families by 1/3 after its introduction in 2016.

Although these results are promising, many families continue to struggle. Valerie Tarasuk, PROOF's principal investigator, says, "To have a stronger impact on food insecurity, the government would need to put more money in the hands of the lowest-income families." To eliminate poverty entirely, a basic income is needed for every individual living on a low income.

Read the full article, written by Nourish's Elisha Rubacha, online at www.broadview.org/food-security-income.



Did you know?

YWCA Peterborough Haliburton, in partnership with Kawartha Sexual Assault Centre, offers virtual workplace training in Trauma & Violence-Informed Care and Resiliency through *A Question of Care*.



A New Way to Help | YWCA Virtual Challenge

At a time when rates of gender-based violence are increasing all around the world, people are looking for opportunities to help create change. Earlier this year, we launched a new YWCA Virtual Challenge website where supporters can create a personalized virtual challenge page and invite family, friends and co-workers to assist them in reaching a fundraising goal.

"We wanted to offer as much flexibility and creativity as possible so that anyone could take part in a way that feels both manageable and personally meaningful. People of all ages and abilities can choose from a list of challenge ideas or create something entirely new. We're here to help every step of the way!"

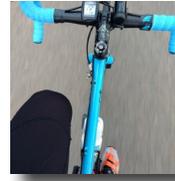
- Ria Nicholson, YWCA Major Gifts Officer

All funds raised leading up to October 2020 will help to ensure that strong, reliable support is here for women who experience violence, now and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Visit www.ywcapeterborough.org to get started today or connect with Ria at rnicholson@ywcapeterborough.org or 705-743-3526 x113 for more information.

YWCA Virtual Challenge Ideas...

[Find more ideas on our website](#)



Athletic Challenge

Ask friends and family members to support you in completing a set number of km's to cycle/run/walk, a certain number of planks, flights of stairs, jumping jacks, sit-ups, etc. by making a donation to your page.



'Out of your Comfort Zone' Challenge

Set a fundraising goal and commit to doing something wild (i.e., shaving your head, jumping into cold water, etc.) when you achieve it. Don't forget to share photos/video with your supporters!



Giving in Memory

Remember a loved one who impacted your life in a special way by setting up a personalized tribute page that friends and family can donate to. Donating or fundraising in memory of someone is a very special and meaningful way to remember them – honouring their life and helping others at the same time.



Skill Share Challenge

Collect donations and help others learn a new skill. Host an online yoga or meditation class, exercise routine, cooking class, etc.



"Proud to be promoting in-home health care and supporting YWCA Peterborough Haliburton's 2020 Virtual Challenge. We're honoured to be helping local women safely create change in their lives." - Sally Harding, Nightingale Nursing



If you or someone you know needs help, call us day or night.

24 Hour Support & Crisis Line:

CALL | 1-800-461-7656

TEXT | 705-991-0110

YWCA Administrative Office

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Office Hours | Monday-Friday, 9:00 am - 4:30 pm

Charitable Registration # | 12981 9819 RR0001

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