

# Supporting Individuals Experiencing Family Violence

**A guide for the public**

**October 2022**

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## What is family violence?<sup>1</sup>

Family violence is the attempt by one person in an intimate relationship or other trusting relationship to dominate and control the other person. It may include a single act of violence, or several acts forming a pattern of abuse using assaultive and controlling behaviour. Patterns of abuse may include:

- Psychological/mental abuse
- Physical/threat of physical abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Spiritual abuse
- Social abuse
- Cultural abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Intellectual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Involving children through manipulation or threat of abuse
- Abuse of pets and property
- Using social media

Children who are exposed to abusive behaviour directly (being abused themselves) or indirectly (witnessing the abuse) are at a higher risk of developmental damage and developing long-term social and health consequences.

## What can I do if I think my neighbours, friends or family are experiencing family violence?

### Check-in

Find out how the person you are concerned about is doing. Sometimes it is as simple as sparking a conversation to show that you care.

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<sup>1</sup> *Am I being abused?* A Safe Place. (n.d.). Retrieved October 19, 2022, from <https://www.asafeplace.ca/learn/about-abuse/am-i-being-abused/>

## **Support and Empathize**

Share messages of support and empathy when someone discloses fear or experiences of family violence. Believe them, even if you haven't seen it and even if you know and care about the person harming them. Your response to a disclosure of family violence will significantly impact their ability to reach out and trust others.

## **Help Find Support**

Refer them to a professional (see resources on the next page for a list of supports). Do not take on the role of "protector" for someone in this situation. It is important to seek out an expert for support as family violence can quickly escalate, particularly when the victim is contemplating leaving.

## **Assurance**

If the individual experiencing family violence is not ready to take action, respect this and assure them they can reach out for support at any time.

Strathcona County Family and Community Services (FCS) is here to support you. The social support team provides a safe channel to talk about family violence concerns or experiences. Individuals who contact FCS regarding family violence will have their stories heard and get support creating a plan and accessing important resources such as counselling services, support to meet basic needs or a safe place to stay.

## Community Supports and Resources for Family Violence

Organization	Description	Phone Number
<b>911 Emergency Line</b>	If you or someone you know is in immediate danger	<b>Text/Call 911</b>
<b>Family and Community Services</b>	Strathcona County Family and Community Services are available by phone to connect residents to appropriate support.	<b>780-464-4044</b>
<b>A Safe Place</b>	A Safe Place's crisis line is open 7 days a week 24 hours a day, including holidays and weekends. Counsellors are available to provide support and provide directions to the shelter if needed.	<b>780-464-7233</b>
<b>Family Violence Information Line</b>	Get help anonymously 24/7 in more than 170 languages. Webchat is available on the website.	<b>310-1818</b>
<b>Child Abuse Hotline</b>	Support line for reporting children being neglected, abused or sexually exploited. If you believe a child is at risk, you must report it. Help is available in multiple languages 24/7.	<b>1-800-387-5437</b>
<b>Strathcona County Victim Services</b>	Victim Services works in partnership with the RCMP to assist victims of crime and trauma within Strathcona County and are trained to offer support and referrals.	<b>780-449-0153</b>
<b>SAFFRON Sexual Assault Centre</b>	SAFFRON Centre Ltd. is a non-profit organization working to support the healing and empowerment of those who have been affected by sexual violence.	<b>780-449-0900</b>
<b>AltView</b>	The altView Foundation for Gender Variant and Sexual Minorities' provides resources and support to sexual minority and gender-variant persons in Strathcona County and surrounding regions.	<b>780-666-5428</b>
<b>Strathcona County Elder Abuse Line</b>	The Strathcona County Elder Abuse Line provides 24- hour confidential support for Strathcona County seniors experiencing abuse and those concerned for the well-being of a senior.	<b>780-464-7233</b>
<b>Alberta Supports</b>	Alberta Supports can help residents to access more than 30 programs and 120 services for seniors, people with disabilities, job seekers, parents and families, homelessness, financial assistance, abuse, and family violence prevention.	<b>780-644-9992</b>
<b>Protection for Persons in Care</b>	Protection for Persons in Care requires the reporting of abuse of adult clients receiving care in publicly funded facilities.	<b>1-888-357-9339</b>
<b>Abuse Helpline</b>	If you suspect an adult or child is being abused or neglected, the provincial abuse helpline will connect you to resources, supports, services and referrals to address your concerns. Callers can remain anonymous.	<b>1-855-4HELPAB 1-855-443-5722</b>
<b>Alberta SPCA</b>	SPCA will care for pets, giving individuals that are going through challenging times the space and time to focus on accessing support.	<b>780-447-3600</b>