

PATHS News

Promoting Access to Justice for Survivors of IPV in Saskatchewan

PATHS has recently been funded by the Law Foundation of Saskatchewan to conduct a two-year project to address intimate partner violence in Saskatchewan with a focus on reducing barriers to justice and an overall reduction in incidents and impacts of IPV. During this project, PATHS will collaborate with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice to address identified barriers to justice for victims of intimate partner violence in Saskatchewan. Project activities will include: the creation of a working group, consultation with PATHS membership and other key informants, identification of key issues, identification of promising practices, the development of an action plan to address the identified key issues, and implementation of the action plan.

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The Law Foundation of Saskatchewan has a mandate to identify areas and issues needing study and analysis, to encourage and support projects that assess current law and the administration of justice and, where appropriate, promote reform in accordance with current knowledge, values, and technology.

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for community safety and well-being in Saskatchewan and has shown a commitment to addressing the issue of interpersonal violence and abuse in collaboration with community groups such as PATHS. The Ministry of Justice, through the Interpersonal Violence and Abuse unit, provides operational funding and oversight to PATHS' member agencies, as well as financial support to PATHS. For domestic violence shelters and counseling services, working directly with survivors of violence means hearing about the issues that impact them. We plan to draw on this knowledge to guide our work.

The stated vision of the Law Foundation is "Justice accessible to all." Too often, victims of intimate partner and family violence feel that they do not receive justice. Women who experience abuse, particularly those from marginalized groups such as low-income earners and Indigenous and newcomer women may be intimidated by the justice system. They may have economic or physical barriers such as lack of transportation to accessing available services. They may feel uncomfortable in telling their truths, feel rushed, not heard, or distrustful of the system.

The goal of this project is to bring together stakeholders in the justice system response to IPV to work toward evidence-based promising practices and legislation designed to support survivors and appropriate services for offenders in order to reduce the incidence of IPV in Saskatchewan. 

Saskatchewan Set to Become the First Canadian Province to Adapt Clare's Law

On November 5, 2018, a First Reading in the Saskatchewan legislature took place to begin the process of turning the *Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Protocol (Clare's Law) Act* into law.

"We have seen too many cases of interpersonal, domestic and sexual violence in our province," Justice Minister Don Morgan said in a statement. "If we are able to identify risk and inform those at risk, we hope to help protect people in Saskatchewan from violent and abusive behaviour by a partner." The legislation has been described as allowing for the "right to ask" by the individual at risk and the "right to tell" for police.

Clare's Law will allow for applications from individuals at risk of violence, their family members and service providers such as medical professionals, counselors, the police and shelter workers. A panel of individuals that includes law enforcement as well as domestic violence advocates will make a recommendation on whether the risk to the partner outweighs the offending individual's right to privacy. If a decision to share the information is made, only the person at risk will have access to it and they will sign an undertaking not to share that information.

While the protocols are still being developed it appears that stakeholders in the justice system are in agreement to make as much pertinent information available as possible. That means that evidence such as police occurrence reports for domestic conflict calls will be shared rather than only charges or convictions. A key part of the process will be to provide those at-risk individuals receiving this information with risk assessment, safety planning and support. Women's shelters and family counseling services should be prepared to support individuals receiving disclosures under Clare's Law. Anti-violence agencies around the province may also receive requests to have a representative sit on a local panel to decide when disclosure should be made.

Many long-time shelter and service workers have had the experience of working with a woman knowing that her partner has abused his previous partners but in order to protect the confidentiality of the previous client were unable to share that information. Now a worker in this position could recommend that their client apply under the Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Protocol knowing they would likely receive that information. As stated above, shelter and service staff will be able to file the applications on behalf of their clients but only the clients will receive the information. It is important to note that not all perpetrators have been involved with the police so an application that turns up no information does not necessarily mean that the client is not at risk.

"Clare's Law" originated in the United Kingdom and is named for Clare Wood. In 2009, Wood was murdered by a former dating partner. Despite having gone to the police several times to report stalking and other abusive behaviours, Clare was not informed of his criminal conviction for a past violent sexual assault. After Clare's death, her father petitioned the British government to change laws to allow police to disclose a person's criminal history to their current or former partner if police feel it is necessary. Clare's father believes that if she had had access to this information she would be alive today. While this law will not end the epidemic of intimate partner violence in Saskatchewan, it does have the potential to save lives by informing potential victims of their risk and making connections to provide support and safety planning. 



Regina's Women's March, January 2019. Photo credit: Evie Ruddy

4th World Conference of Women's Shelters November, 2019: Kaohsiung, Taiwan

This fall a global event is taking place that will shine a light on violence against women and the many organizations who work with, and on behalf, of survivors (fourth.worldshelterconference.org). The website for the event describes it like this:

"The World Conference of Women's Shelters is the largest and most diverse global gathering on protection services and prevention of violence against women.

Organized by the Global Network of Women's Shelters and hosted by the Garden of Hope Foundation, the 4th World Conference of Women's Shelters (4WCWS) will be held in Kaohsiung on November 5- 8, 2019. 4WCWS will bring together 1,500 people from 120 countries to network and share ideas on how to strengthen women shelters and end violence against women. The theme of 4WCWS is "Impact • Solidarity" to highlight the leading role that shelters play in developing systematic approaches to combatting gender-based violence.

The goals of 4WCWS are to strengthen the role of women shelters in systematic approaches to combating violence against women; reinforce, mobilize, and increase the effectiveness and influence of the global and regional shelter networks as leaders in the effort to end violence against women; kick-start global projects and initiatives to support women shelters and combat violence; and raise awareness among governments, international organisations, the corporate sector, and the general public about the problems of violence against women to stimulate actions to support shelters."

Shelter staff, and the regional and national organizations that support them, will come from around the world to share common issues and concerns as well as innovative ways of working and promising practices.

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PATHS' staff will be attending and are looking forward to bringing back ideas and information to share with our member agencies.

We are excited about the key theme areas that will be explored during the three-day conference:

Theme 1: Emerging Issues

This session will be an open space for discussion on new and emerging issues such as data collection, privacy, LGBTQ shelter management, institutional abuse, and more.

Theme 2: Art and Advocacy

From the Vagina Monologues to the #MeToo campaign, the arts and culture industry is a key player in changing public opinion on violence against women. This session will discuss using the arts to stop gender-based violence.

Theme 3: New Methods in Shelter Management and Social Work

This session will challenge participants to think out of the box about protecting survivors by looking at innovative systems, integration of resources, and services that meet the diverse needs of survivors.

Theme 4: Policy and Legislation

This session will critically examine international standards and goals, explore innovative strategies to improve accountability and coordination, and identify laws and policies that help protect victims and end abuse.

Theme 5: Equality and Economic Empowerment

This session will look at ways to increase the productive earning power of women and develop inclusive communities, reduce poverty and violence, and empower women and girls.

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On January 20th, despite the freezing temperatures, people came together in Regina — and across North America — to march in protest of gender inequalities and gender-based violence. This year, the Women's March focused on Truth and Reconciliation and called attention to the disproportionately high number of Indigenous women and girls affected, victimized, missing, or murdered as a result of violence. This newsletter contains some of the photos from Regina's Women's March.

Regina's Women's March, January 2019. Photo credit: Evie Ruddy

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We encourage our member agencies to consider attending this conference. The conference website has information on the cost to attend (Early Bird registration ends March 31) and includes ideas to help fundraise for attendance.

Why your peers should support you to attend 4WCWS

1. Violence against women and girls is a global violation of human rights. One in three women experience physical and/or sexual violence, usually by an intimate partner. Working on the frontline to protect survivors, shelters not only provide safety, but are critical partners in the effort to eliminate violence against women and girls. Yet shelters often lack necessary support to carry out this role.
2. 4WCWS will bring together over 1,500 like-minded people from all over the world. You will have the opportunity to network with peers in other countries and regions around the world, and through unity and collective energy, be empowered and motivated to take action beyond the scope of immediate service work.
3. The wide range of topics in the conference agenda, the exhibition area, and display booths, workshops and study tours will promote and encourage peer-to-peer links, and build connections between academics, experts from other fields, government officials, and corporate leaders. These networking opportunities will help to spark global projects and initiatives to support women shelters in ways that would not have been possible before.
4. 4WCWS will feature influential speakers and leading female change-makers from politics, civil society and the corporate world. These keynote speeches never fail to make an immediate impact on the audience.

Consider approaching foundations, local businesses or unions, holding steak nights or other fund raisers.

Hope to see you there! 🌍

In partnership with the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, PATHS will be delivering two 1/2 day *Make It Our Business* training sessions in Regina:

Wednesday, April 10– 9 am– noon
Thursday, June 6– 9 am– noon

For more information and to register, please visit: bit.ly/2SDqiHI

Make It Our Business outlines how employers and employees can recognize abusive relationships, respond to domestic violence, and refer people experiencing violence to supports that offer help.



Regina's Women's March, January 2019. Photo credit: Evie Ruddy

Creating Safer Spaces for the Gender and Sexually Diverse

Last year PATHS partnered with Moose Jaw Pride on the Safer Transitions to Shelter project which was funded by the Canadian Women's Foundation. The goal of the project was to increase awareness of the needs of gender and sexually diverse individuals who may be seeking support and shelter due to experiencing intimate partner or family violence. Project lead, Laura Budd, worked with four PATHS member agencies to explore their current policies and practices with a view to creating safer spaces for those seeking service. Many of the policies and practices identified as being supportive will work for any workplace. See below for things you can do to make your workplace a safer space!



How do I create safer spaces for gender and sexually diverse persons in my workplace ?

- Try not to make assumptions. Not everyone is cisgender, heterosexual, or monogamous. Don't make assumptions about people's sexual orientation or gender identity.
- When someone feels safe enough to share information about their identity, support them completely. Never share that information without permission. Practice inclusion by using language like "partner" and "significant other" until you know how a person refers to their partner(s).
- Encourage others to be inclusive allies. Be supportive, not punitive.
- Be prepared to have conversations about gender and sexual diversity with clients and with outside services and supports.
- Ensure referral agencies are welcoming and inclusive of gender and sexual diversity. Be sure that they are invited to any diversity training you have.
- Refuse to participate in transphobic, biphobic, or homophobic jokes or discussions.
- Use every communication tool you have to express your support of diversity: Wear ally buttons, and prominently display Safer Space posters, stickers, and information in your workplace. In newsletters, websites, social media, and events, let people know you support diversity.
- Visibly participate in community events put on by local pride committees, or pro-mote such events.
- Be an advocate for change by keeping current on LGBTQ2+ causes and issues. Read the pamphlets and resources available to you in your environment. Don't have some? Get some!

Intersectionality: The way that parts of people's identities interact, positively or negatively.

Recognize that gender diversity and sexual orientation intersect with cultural identities, disability, class, and age. Remember that age, cognitive or physical disability does not prevent someone from being gender or sexually diverse. Similarly, someone's racial, religious, or cultural background does not determine their gender or sexual identity.

Have a policy that is inclusive and respectful of diverse women

- Does your workplace have policy that specifically states that you include all women?
- Does this policy specifically state that gender diverse and transgender women will be welcome and respected here?
- Does your procedure manual give direction on how to achieve this welcoming environment?
- Are your forms inclusive of diverse identities?
- Does your workplace have clear policies around transgender men and non-binary folks? If your workplace is not able to support someone, be sure that you know where to direct them for help. 



The Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA) is used by the staff of PATHS member agencies. It is an actuarial tool for estimating the risk that a domestic violence offender will assault a partner again, indicating how a domestic offender compares with other domestic offenders in terms of risk for re-offense. The ODARA is easy to score and interpret, it has shown excellent inter-rater agreement, and scoring accuracy improves with brief training. Thus, the ODARA is an important part of efforts to promote a coordinated, cross-sector response to domestic violence.

Recently, PATHS was part of a partnership with the Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care and the Ontario Network of Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centres, funded by the Department of Justice Canada, to develop a new version of the online training program for the ODARA.

PATHS member agency staff provided valuable input and case examples that contributed to the development of the new training program.

ODARA 101 now includes new case examples and training videos. In addition, there is now the option to complete the certification test in written or video format.

ODARA 101 takes approximately 4 hours to complete. To request access to ODARA 101, email Crystal (paths.research@sasktel.net).



Regina's Women's March, January 2019. Both photos: Evie Ruddy



I want to donate to the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan!

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Please make cheque payable to PATHS

Please mail to PATHS, Suite 202, 1102 8th Ave., Regina, S4S 5R8

All charitable donations will be acknowledged with a tax deductible receipt.





THE PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION OF TRANSITION HOUSES AND SERVICES OF SASKATCHEWAN

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MEMBER AGENCIES

Battlefords Interval House
(306) 445-2742

Envision Counselling & Support Centre
Estevan (306) 637-4004
Weyburn (306) 842-8821
Carlyle (306) 453-2405
Oxbow (306) 483-5555

Family Service Regina
(306) 757-6675

Family Service Saskatoon
(306) 244-0127

Hudson Bay Family and Support Centre
(306) 865-3064

Moose Jaw Transition House
(306) 693-6511

North East Outreach and Support Services
(306) 752-9464

PARTNERS Family Services
(306) 682-4135

Piwapan Women's Centre
(306) 425-3900

Project Safe Haven
(306) 782-0676

Qu'Appelle Safe Haven Shelter
(306) 322-6881

Regina Transition House
(306) 757-2096

Saskatoon Interval House
(306) 244-0185

Shelwin House
(306) 783-7233

SIGN
(306) 783-9409

SOFIA House
(306) 565-2537

Southwest Crisis Services
(306) 778-3692

Waskoosis Safe Shelter
(306) 236-5570

Wichihik Iskewwak Safe House (WISH)
(306) 543-0493

YWCA Isabel Johnson Shelter
(306) 525-2141

YWCA Saskatoon
(306) 244-2844

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