

MODULE 2:

# GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND YOU



Canadä

These gender-based violence awareness modules have been created in partnership with Women and Gender Equality Canada, YWCA Canada, Wisdom2Action, FOXY/SMASH, Platform, White Ribbon Canada, The Centre for Sexuality, GRIS-Montréal, Possibility Seeds and We Worthy Women.

# INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence (GBV) can be a tough thing to discuss — but talking openly about GBV helps raise awareness about the issue and reduces its stigma. This can help break the cycle and promote a safer, more compassionate society in which violence is prevented before it ever happens.

> Plus, if GBV has impacted you or you have witnessed it, sharing your experiences with others who can offer support, or offering support and empathy to others, can be an important part of the healing process.

In this module, we'll explore how to talk about GBV with your friends and family. We'll also talk about an important concept called intersectionality, which can determine how someone may be affected if they are subjected to GBV themselves.



Not sure what a term means?

A glossary of highlighted terms is available on page 21.

#### Before you begin

While talking about GBV can be important for healing and raising awareness, it's also essential to protect yourself and be *mindful* of your personal *triggers*. Triggers are anything that might cause a person to recall a traumatic experience they've had. For example, graphic images of violence might be a trigger for some people. Less obvious things, including songs, odours, or even colours, can also be triggers, depending on someone's experience.

If anything in this module triggers you, it's okay to take a step back and focus on your personal **safety** and well-being. Seek out resources if needed, or try self-care strategies like exercise, meditation, or spending time with loved ones to help you feel more grounded and in control.



#### Need someone to talk to?

You can find a list of cross-Canada resources, including hotlines, counselling services and support groups for youth on the youth-based resources database



SECTION 1

# TALKING ABOUT GBV



# WHAT IS HEALTHY COMMUNICATION?

Healthy communication is not just about talking. It's a two-way street that involves listening, being respectful, and discussing difficult topics without insulting or hurting each other. It's not about anyone getting their way but being there to support each other.

# 8 TIPS FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNICATION



- Use "I statements." Say things like, "I feel upset when you \_\_\_ "instead of, "You're making me upset." Steer clear of blaming or accusing them of purposely trying to hurt you.
- 2. **Be clear and direct.** No one can read your mind, so tell them what you think, feel, and need.
- Don't push aside your feelings. Bring up things that bother you early, so they don't build up and become bigger problems.
- 4. Build trust. Unless someone has given you a reason not to, believing that they're telling you the truth and assuming that they mean well helps establish trust.
- Ask questions. Ask questions if you don't understand what they're saying or why. Don't make assumptions.
- Talk in-person. It's really easy to misunderstand or misinterpret a text message or email. Talking in person or through video chat allows you to hear their tone of voice and see their body language.
- Don't yell. Getting angry or defensive during an argument is totally normal. But if you're feeling upset or angry, take a break until you both cool off.
- Be willing to apologize. Everyone makes mistakes.
  Saying you're sorry (and meaning it) goes a long way in helping to move on after a fight.

# STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Conversations around gender-based violence can be challenging for everyone involved.

Before starting a conversation, it is important to be self-aware and consider your well-being and safety, physically and emotionally.

#### Before you start

- Take a few deep breaths.
   This can help calm your nerves and help you focus.
- Ask yourself: Do I feel safe to have this conversation?
   Am I somewhere safe?
   Do I feel safe and comfortable with this person? Will this put my safety at risk?
   Do I have the capacity physically and emotionally?
   Am I ready to hear what the other person has to say?

#### **During the conversation**

 Focus on your body. Think about how it feels and any sensations you notice.
 This can help you stay present in the moment and be self-aware.  Take breaks. If the conversation becomes overwhelming, take a break. Let the person know that you need a moment to collect your thoughts and step away for a few minutes. Use this time to breathe, stretch, or take a walk.

#### After talking about GBV

- Try some self-care. Do
   activities that help restore
   your energy and make you
   feel grounded. This could be
   taking a relaxing bath,
   meditating, spending time
   in nature, or connecting with
   a friend or your community.
- Connect with others. This could be friends, family, a support group or an online community. Reach out for help processing your emotions and thoughts about the conversation.

"Don't hesitate to set boundaries for yourself.
You only have to share what YOU feel comfortable sharing."

— Niko C. Youth Leader



# STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Remember, staying grounded during the conversation is vital not only for your own well-being but also to ensure that the discussion remains respectful and productive. By taking care of yourself, you can approach the conversation with compassion and understanding.





# 5 WAYS TO COOL DOWN FROM DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

# 1. DO A QUICK STRESS RELIEVER

- Relax your shoulders
   Make small circles with your shoulders,
   then lower them to let the tension go
- Take a deep breath
   In through your nose, out through your mouth
- Keep your thoughts positive
   Stop the chain of negative thoughts by thinking of something positive or neutral, like counting to 10

## 2. FEEL AND VENT YOUR EMOTIONS

Let the feeling out in a positive way by doing something that helps you unwind

## 3. PAMPER YOURSELF FOR FREE

Massage yourself, relax in the bath, take a nap or go outside, for example

## 4. TAKE A MINDFUL MINUTE

Sit still, close your eyes and imagine a beautiful, relaxing place you can let yourself escape to

# 5. FOCUS ON POSITIVES AND YOUR STRENGTHS TO STAY HOPEFUL

# MAPPING YOUR STRENGTHS

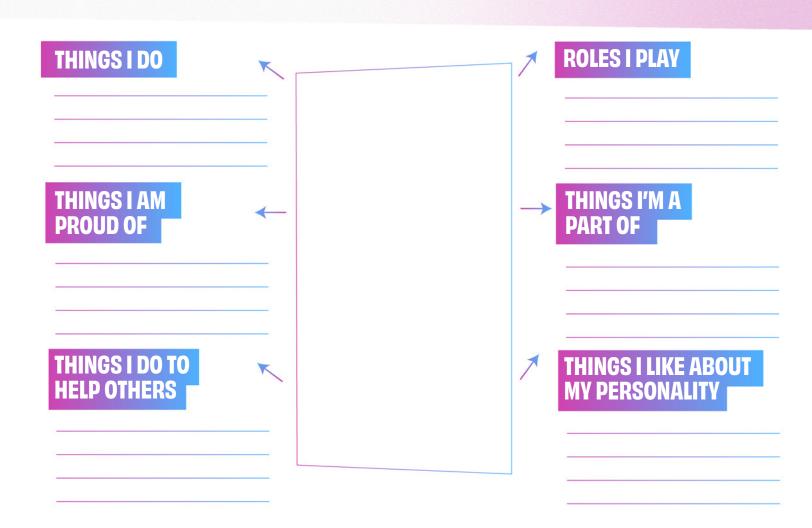
Understanding yourself and your strengths helps you create meaningful relationships with the people around you by making you more authentic and self-aware in your interactions with others. Plus, it can empower you to have meaningful, informed, and empathetic conversations about gender-based violence, contributing to a safer and more equal society for everyone.

Creating a map is one way you can identify your strengths and abilities — and maybe even find some you've never thought about! To start:

- 1. Write your name in the middle of the page
- 2. Create categories by filling in the prompts
- 3. After creating your categories, brainstorm some of the personal qualities associated with those aspects of your life — for example, if you put "create art" under Things I Do, maybe that says you're a creative person

Design: Create a mind map like below with the following headlines:

- Things I do
   Hobbies & activities
- Things I'm a part of Communities, teams, clubs
- Roles I play
   Friend, child, sibling, etc.
- Things I like about my personality
- · Things I am proud of
- Things I do to help others



# BEING AN ALLY TO SOMEONE IN NEED

It can be tough to know or think someone you care about is in an unhealthy or abusive relationship. You may be worried about their safety and want to help them get out of the situation. But it's important to remember that every person has the right to make their own decisions — including ones that may be bad for them.

# Here are some things you can do to help a friend or family member who may be affected by GBV.

- Find a good time
   to talk to them
   Make sure you have some
   privacy and won't be
   interrupted. Try to speak to
   them in person if you can.
- Be honest with them about times when you were concerned about them. Let them know that abuse is not okay. They might not respond right away, or they might not want to talk about it at all. That's okay just let them know you care and are here to support them.
- Be a good listener
   It can be hard to talk about abuse, so just listen and tell them you're there for them.
   If they want help, ask them what you can do.
- Offer specific help
   You might offer to listen
   or find resources.

- Don't blame them or make them feel ashamed Don't tell them what to do. Instead, tell them that you're scared for them and that you understand how hard their situation is.
- Help them make

   a safety plan
   You can work with them to figure out how to stay safe.

   This might include packing

figure out how to stay safe. This might include packing essential items, coming up with a code word for danger, and figuring out a safe place to meet if they need to leave quickly.

Encourage them to talk to someone who can help You can help them find a local domestic violence agency or hotline. Many resources are available 24/7 to offer support and help find local services. As one example, you can access support services for youth in your province, territory, or nationwide by searching this database.

 Encourage them to do things outside of the relationship
 It's important for them to spend time with friends

and family.

- Be supportive no matter what they decide to do
   It can be hard to understand why a person would stay in an abusive relationship, but everyone has their own reasons. Let them know you're there for them and support them no matter what.
- Keep offering help if they decide to leave
   Leaving an abusive relationship can be very hard, and your loved one may need help getting services from community groups or agencies.
- Let them know that you'll always be there for them It can be tough to see a loved one in an abusive relationship, but don't give up on them. If you end your relationship with them, they might not have anyone else to turn to. Let them know you care, and help no matter their decision.



Remember: Always consider your safety when helping someone subjected to GBV. If you think a situation may be dangerous or put you at risk, ask for help.

# REFLECTING ON YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Read pages 5 to 7 in this module and refer to the glossary on page 21 if you're unfamiliar with any terms.

After reviewing, reflect on the relationships in your life and the way people talk about them. Ask yourself:

- HOW DO THE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE (FAMILY, FRIENDS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS) TALK ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS?
- IN WHAT WAY, IF ANY, HAVE YOUR COMMUNITIES, FAMILY AND FRIENDS AFFECTED YOUR UNDERSTANDING OR VIEWS ABOUT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE? WHAT IMPACT DO THESE VIEWS HAVE ON YOU?
- WHO ARE THE ROLE MODELS IN YOUR LIFE? WHY?
- WHO IN YOUR LIFE EXEMPLIFIES THE VALUES OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION?

SECTION 2

# IDENTITY, POWER AND AND PRIVILEGE



# WHAT IS INTERSECTIONALITY?

Every person's *identity* is made up of many different parts — some we're born with, like our date of birth or race, and some we develop over time, like our language, skills and abilities. Some parts of our identities are visible, like the way you look, while other parts, like your values and beliefs, are invisible.

When we talk about intersectionality, we're looking at the way all these different parts of our identity overlap or intersect, and how that changes the way we experience the world.

For example, imagine you have two friends, Omar and Caroline. Caroline is a 15-year-old Caucasian girl living in a big city, while Omar, also 15, is Black and lives in a small town. Because they're both 15, Omar and Caroline have a lot in common — but they also have a lot that makes them different. As a girl, Caroline has dealt with gender stereotypes her whole life, which Omar has not. As a person of colour, Omar has experienced discrimination based on his skin, which Caroline has not. And as someone from a small town. Omar has faced different challenges, like having limited resources, that Caroline hasn't.

Now, imagine if Caroline and Omar have more differences. Maybe Omar has a physical disability, and Caroline is gay. These additional parts of their identities make their experiences even more unique from each other, even though they're both 15 with similar hobbies and interests.

Intersectionality helps us understand that people's lives and experiences are shaped by every part of their identity. It reminds us that everyone is more than just one thing, and we should consider all the pieces that make up who they are when thinking about their feelings, experiences, and needs.



**Intersectionality 101 video** 

# HOW IS INTERSECTIONALITY RELATED TO GBV?

Gender-based violence affects
everyone — but it doesn't affect
everyone equally. Women, girls, and
gender-diverse people are at higher
risk of being affected by GBV. But if
they are also part of any of the groups
below, they may face GBV more often
or differently than some of their peers.

- · People with disabilities
- Indigenous people
- Black and racialized people
- People in rural areas
- People in
   2SLGBTQI+ communities
- · Newcomers to Canada
- Women and girls under 25

When it comes to GBV, intersectionality reminds us that not everyone's experiences are the same. Some people might face extra difficulties because of how the different parts of identity overlap. It's essential to consider all the possible parts of someone's identity when we talk about issues like violence and treat everyone with fairness and respect.

# WHAT IS PRIVILEGE?

We know from Module 1 that power is not always equal. The systems and biases in our society can cause some people to have *privileges* that others do not have. People with privilege may have an easier time finding a job or housing, or may be less likely to face gender-based violence.

Privilege can be hard to recognize when you're on the receiving end.
When you're used to having certain advantages, they may not stand out to you because they're part of your everyday experience. Learning to recognize privilege takes self-reflection, empathy and a willingness to listen to the experiences of others.

When we think about intersectionality, we must also think about the advantages we might have and the unfairness that exists in the world. It's essential to use our advantages to help others and to stand against the unfair systems that allow gender-based violence to happen.





Complete the Identity Wheel using your identities. Remember: you only have to share what you feel comfortable sharing! If you're not sure about any of the terms on the Wheel, check out pages 15 to 18 for further explanation.

Before starting this activity, read pages 12 to 13 and <u>watch this video</u> to learn more about intersectionality and how it relates to gender-based violence. Then, brainstorm some of your **visible** and **invisible** identities.



# FILLING OUT YOUR IDENTITY WHEEL

Below are several examples of the terms included in the Identity Wheel.

This is not an exhaustive list, and you can choose more than one identity for each factor. Feel free to use your own wording when creating your Identity Wheel!

# **EXTERNAL FACTORS**

#### **Home situation**

# What type of housing do you live in?

- House
- Apartment
- Shelter
- Transitional housing
- · Moving a lot
- · No home

#### Citizenship and immigration status

Citizenship refers to the country where the person has citizenship. A person may have more than one citizenship. Immigration status refers to whether the person is a non-immigrant, an immigrant, or a non-permanent resident.

- · Canadian Citizen
- Refugee
- · Permanent Resident
- · Non-Permanent Resident
- Student visa
- Other

#### **Geographic location**

# What type of location do you live in?

- Rural
- Urban
- Small city
- Major city
- Remote or Northern community

#### **Education level**

# What grade are you in? Did you skip or redo a year? What space are you accessing for education?

- · Home-schooled
- · Private school
- Public school
- · Remote learning
- Grades 9–12
- Secondaire 5
- · Cegep
- College
- High school equivalency certificate (e.g., GED program)
- · Not in school

#### **Relationship status**

# Are you currently romantically involved with someone?

- Single
- · In a relationship
- · Seeing someone
- · Seeing multiple people
- Separated
- Married

#### Family environment

# Who lives with you? Who is your support system?

- Living on your own
- · With a legal guardian
- · With your parents
- · With one parent
- With another member of your immediate family
- With a partner or spouse
- With a member of your community
- Other

# **PERSONAL FACTORS**

#### Physical appearance

Here, you can describe yourself physically.

#### Race

# What racial groups do you identify with?

- · Arabic or Middle Eastern
- Black
- · Central Asian
- East Asian
- · Hispanic or Latin American
- Indigenous
   (e.g. First Nations,
   Métis, Inuit)
- Pacific Islander
- · South Asian
- Southeast Asian
- White
- Multiracial
- · Other

# Ethnicity, heritage, and culture

What is your ethnicity, heritage, and cultural background?

# Class and economic situation

# What is your family's economic situation?

- My family (or I) have enough or more money to support our needs.
- My family (or I) have just what we need financially to support our needs.

- My family (or I) do not have money to support our needs.
- My family (or I) are getting financial or material support from organizations and foodbanks.
- Other

#### **Gender identity**

How do you identify? It's okay if you are not sure how to identify; your identity can also change over time.

- Cisgender: A person who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth (boy or girl)
- Gender-fluid: A person
   whose gender identity varies
   over time and may include
   masculine, feminine, and/or
   non-binary gender identities
- Intersex: A person with variations in their sex characteristics, such as sex chromosomes, reproductive organs, genitalia, and/or secondary sex characteristics (muscle mass, breasts) that fall outside of what is typically categorized as male or female
- Non-Binary/Genderqueer:

A person who does not identify exclusively as a boy or girl, which may include boy and girl, androgyny, fluidity, no gender, or a different gender outside of the girl-boy spectrum

- Queer: Historically a slur against 2SLGBTQI+ people, this term has been reclaimed by many as a positive way to describe themselves and include the many diverse identities not covered by the 2SLGBTQI+ acronym
- Questioning: A person who is uncertain about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity; this can be a transitory or a lasting identity
- Transgender or trans:

   A person whose gender
   identity differs from what
   is typically associated with
   the sex they were assigned
   at birth
- Two-Spirit, 2S, Two-Spirited or Indigiqueer: A term used to broadly capture concepts traditional to many Indigenous cultures, used by some Indigenous people to indicate a person whose gender identity, spiritual identity, and/or sexual orientation comprises both male and female spirits
- Other

# **PERSONAL FACTORS**

#### Romantic and Sexual Orientation

# Who are you attracted to and want to have relationships with?

- Aromantic: A person who lacks romantic attraction or interest in romantic expression, who may experience sexual attraction and may have sexual and/or romantic partners
- Asexual: A person who lacks sexual attraction or interest in sexual expression, who may experience romantic attraction and they may have sexual and/or romantic partners
- Bisexual/Biromantic:
   A person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to two or more genders
- Gay: A person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of their own sex or gender identity
- Heterosexual/Heteroromantic:
   A person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of a different sex or gender identity than themselves
- Lesbian: Typically, a woman who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other women

- derogatory term used as a slur against 2SLGBTQI+ people, this has been reclaimed by many 2SLGBTQI+ people as a positive way to describe themselves and include the many diverse identities not covered by the 2SLGBTQI+ acronym
- Questioning: A person who is uncertain about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity; this can be a transitory or a lasting identity
- Two-Spirit, 2S, Two-Spirited or Indigiqueer: A term used to broadly capture concepts traditional to many Indigenous cultures, used by some Indigenous people to indicate a person whose gender identity, spiritual identity, and/or sexual orientation comprises both male and female spirits Other

#### Age

Please insert your age.

# Faith, Beliefs, Values and Ideologies

What faith, religion, or spirituality, if any, do you practise? What values are the most important for you?

## Physical and Developmental (Dis)ability

Developmental disabilities are a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behaviour areas.

A physical disability is a limitation on a person's physical function, mobility, agility, or endurance.

- Disabled
- · Temporarily disabled
- Able-bodied

# There are four main types of developmental disorders:

- Nervous system disabilities
- Sensory-related disabilities
- Metabolic disabilities
- Degenerative conditions

# **PERSONAL FACTORS**

# Mental and Emotional (Dis)ability

A disability that impacts a person's ability to effectively recognize, interpret, control, and express fundamental emotions, for example:

- Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Post-Traumatic Stress
   Disorder (PTSD)
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Phobias
- · Autism
- Learning disability

#### First & other languages

What is the language you use the most in general? What is your first language? What language do you speak the most with your community?

# Nationality and Birthplace

What is your nationality? Where were you born?



# ACTIVITY 4 REFLECTING ON VOUR IDENTITY

After creating your own Identity Wheel, take time to reflect on it by answering the following questions. This is an individual exercise in which you may want to reflect on personal aspects of yourself and your life. Please don't feel pressured to share the answers of this exercise with others.

1.	What identities are you most aware of or think about most often?
2.	What identities are you least aware of or do you think about least often?
3.	Which of your own identities would you like to learn more about?
4.	Which identities have the most impact on how you perceive yourself?



# REFLECTING ON YOUR IDENTITY

5.	Which identities have the most impact on how others perceive you?
6.	Why is it important to reflect on our identities?
7.	How do our identities give or take away power and privilege in society?
8.	How do your identities influence your sense of belonging at work/home/school or in the communities that you are part of?
9.	How can different identities be used in allyship with one another?
<i>-</i>	

# **YOUR GBV GLOSSARV**



Not sure about a word or phrase found in this module? Gain a better understanding of gender-based violence by learning the terms below.

## **2SLGBTQI+**



- 2S, at the front, recognizes Two-Spirit people as the first 2SLGBTQI+ communities
- · L: Lesbian
- · G: Gay
- · B: Bisexual
- T: Transgender
- Q: Queer
- I: Intersex (considers sex characteristics beyond sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression)
- +: Inclusive of people who identify as part of sexual and gender diverse communities and use additional terminologies.

#### **ALLYSHIP**



Supporting and standing up for someone who's not being treated right because of who they are; using your power and privilege to help others.

## **BYSTANDER**



Someone who observes or witnesses an event or situation but does not actively participate or intervene.

## **EMOTIONS**



A complex psychological and physiological response to something that can include feelings, thoughts, physical sensations, and behaviours.

## **FEELINGS**



A subjective experience or emotional reaction that is often influenced by personal beliefs, experiences, and perceptions.

# GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)



Violence and harmful behaviour that happens in response to someone's gender, including physical, emotional, financial or sexual violence.

## IDENTITY



The attributes, characteristics, and beliefs that define a person may include gender, sexuality, beliefs, culture, and experiences.

## **INTERSECTIONALITY**



The overlap of different identities, experiences, and social systems that shape a person's experiences and perspectives.



#### **MICROAGGRESSION**



Subtle or indirect verbal or nonverbal slights, insults, or actions that communicate discriminatory or prejudiced attitudes towards a particular group.

## **MINDFULNESS**



The practise of being present, aware, and non-judgmental of one's thoughts, feelings, and environment.

## **POWER DYNAMICS**



Social relationships and interactions in which one person or group has more power, influence, or control than another.

## **PRIVILEGE**



A special right, advantage, or <u>immunity</u> available only to a certain person or group.

#### SAFETY



The condition of being free from harm, danger, or injury; often refers to physical, emotional, and psychological safety.

## **SOLIDARITY**



Unity and support among individuals or groups who share a common cause, goal, or identity; taking action in allyship with individuals or communities.

## **STIGMA**



A negative perception or stereotype that people have towards a particular group, often leading to discrimination, prejudice, and isolation.

## **TRIGGERS**



Situations, events, or circumstances can cause overwhelming or difficult emotional reactions or symptoms in a person.

## **WELLNESS**



A holistic state of being that involves physical, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.

# WHERE CAN I FIND SUPPORT?

If you are experiencing gender-based violence, you are not alone. Support is available, whether you just want someone to talk to or need help getting out of an unsafe situation.

# **24/7 SUPPORT SERVICES**

<u>Kids Help Phone</u>: Confidential chat, text and phone mental health support services for kids, teens and young adults.

1-800-668-6868

<u>Hope for Wellness Help Line</u>: Counselling and crisis intervention offering immediate help to Indigenous peoples across Canada.

1-855-242-3310

<u>Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline</u>: Chat and text support to connect human trafficking victims and survivors with support services.

1-833-900-1010

<u>Trans Lifeline</u>: Confidential peer support and resources for trans and gender-diverse people, not connected to the police.

1-877-330-6366

# FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

Rights. Reports. Supports: A quick guide on sexual image based abuse (YWCA Canada)

**Project Shift** 

**Internet Safety Tips for 14-17 Year Olds (MediaSmarts)** 

**Queering Gender-Based Violence Prevention & Response in Canada (Wisdom2Action)** 

# SOURCES

These modules were developed using information from our partners and the following sources:

**Canadian Women's Foundation** 

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Center For Disease Control and Prevention

https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/facts.html#:~:text=Developmental%20disabilities%20 are%20a%20group,last%20throughout%20a%20person%27s%20lifetime

The Center for Nonviolent Communication

**Equally Safe at School** 

https://www.equallysafeatschool.org.uk/about-esas/

**Government of Newfoundland and Labrador** 

https://www.gov.nl.ca/vpi/information-about-violence/warning-signs-of-violence-and-abuse/

Harvard University: Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

**Kansas State University** 

**Kids Help Phone** 

https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/how-overcome-obstacles-when-reaching-out/

https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/trauma-what-it-is-and-how-to-cope

https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/my-fill-in-the-blanks-safety-plan-for-any-time/

Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children

https://metrac.org/resources/are-you-cool-brochure/

**Planned Parenthood** 

**Right to Be** 

**Statistics Canada** 

https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Var.pl?Function=DEC&ld=85010

https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Var.pl?Function=DEC&Id=103339

**United Way for Southeastern Michigan** 

https://unitedwaysem.org/wp-content/uploads/2021-21-Day-Equity-Challenge-Social-Identity-Wheel-FINAL.pdf

U.S Department of Health and Human Services: Office on Women's Health

https://www.womenshealth.gov/relationships-and-safety/get-help/how-help-friend

Women's Centre of Calgary

**YWCA Edmonton** 

**YWCA Regina** 

YWCA St. Thomas-Elgin

**YWCA Vancouver**