



**MODULE 3:**

***SEEKING SUPPORT FOR***  
**GENDER-BASED**  
**VIOLENCE**



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

Canada

**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

Dealing with **gender-based violence (GBV)** can be an incredibly challenging and isolating experience, but you are not alone. It's not just you. Support is available, whether you just want someone to talk to or need help in getting out of an unsafe situation.

In this module, we will provide you with insights, resources, and strategies to navigate the process of finding that support. We'll explore common barriers to seeking help, talk about practical ways to overcome them, and highlight the importance of creating a supportive environment for **healing** and recovery.

Whether you have directly been subjected to GBV or are supporting a friend who has, this module will equip you with the knowledge to help yourself or others through this situation.

## Don't overdo it.

GBV is a tough topic to talk about. If anything in this guide makes you feel anxious or upset, you can find self-care tools to help on page 17.

➔ **Not sure what a term means?**  
A glossary of **highlighted terms** is available on page 30.

## SECTION 1

# SETTING BOUNDARIES AND STAYING SAFE



# WHAT ARE PERSONAL BOUNDARIES?

Personal *boundaries* are rules you set for yourself to feel safer and more comfortable in your relationships. Boundaries may be about what actions you're willing to take, what you're willing to talk about, or what information you're willing to share.

**Learn what your personal boundaries are and respect them. Trust your instincts.**



**Remember:**

You deserve to feel safe and comfortable in your relationships.



# WHAT DO PERSONAL BOUNDARIES LOOK LIKE?

Everyone has unique personal boundaries they set for different reasons.

Here are some examples of personal boundaries:

- I can distance myself from people who disrespect my gender identity and expression and build relationships with those who affirm and respect me.
- I'm cool with following each other on social media, but not with sharing passwords.
- I'm comfortable with some touching with my partner, but I'm not ready to have sex.
- I can try a new activity if I assess that my physical well-being isn't at risk.
- I like that my parents bring me to my dentist appointment, but I prefer when they stay in the waiting room.
- I'm okay with regularly texting, but I don't want to text multiple times an hour or during class.
- I want to spend time alone with my friends or family on weekends.
- I prefer when my coach asks me if they can touch me to help me with a difficult move. I am comfortable with it only when it feels normal and is done around my teammates or people I trust.
- I'm okay with fixing my mistakes, but I'm not responsible for my friends' or parents' emotions.
- I can go to new places and try new things if I can reach out to people I trust at any time.
- I want to give consent before exploring new activities or ways of doing things.



# WHAT IS SAFETY?

It can be hard to imagine what safety feels like if you've been feeling unsafe — especially since safety can look and feel different for everyone. Throughout this section, consider what safety means to you. What does it feel like, or how do you hope it may feel? And how can you take big or small actions toward achieving that feeling?

**If you're having difficulty imagining this, you can ask yourself the following questions:**

- When was the last time I felt safe?
- What were the signs of safety to me then? Where was I? Who was there? How did I feel?
- What does safety mean to me? Is it a feeling in my body? A place, person, state of mind, or gesture?
- How does safety feel in my mind and body? Do I feel calm? Are my muscles relaxed?
- What is the smallest change I could make to help me get closer to a feeling of safety again?

Sometimes, it can be tough to leave if you're with someone or in a place that could be unsafe. But you can always do *something* to make yourself a bit safer. Instead of trying to find long-term safety, just focus on making yourself safer right now. Your immediate safety is the most important thing, so even a small thing to keep yourself safe in the moment is a good way to begin.

**Remember:  
Your safety  
is always  
a priority,  
whether it's  
at home, at  
school, in the  
community, or  
anywhere else.**

# WHAT IS A SAFETY PLAN?

You are important and you deserve to feel safe. If you're in a potentially harmful situation, knowing what actions you can take lets you put your safety first, take care of yourself, and get support if needed. A safety plan can help you know your options if you recognize an unsafe situation.

## STARTING YOUR SAFETY PLAN

**Before you start, think about what information you may want or need to include in your safety plan. Based on your situation, use the questions below to figure out what you need to know as you plan for your safety.**

- Where can I keep my safety plan so it's as easy to find and as private as possible?
- When and where might I need to use my safety plan?
- What are some signs that tell me things may be getting unsafe?
- What are my go-to **coping strategies** to manage difficult thoughts, feelings, and behaviours?
- Who do I trust to talk to about what I'm going through?
- Who can I connect with when I need support, and how can I contact them?
- Where are some safer places I can go when I don't feel safe where I am? How can I get there? What might I need to bring with me?
- What do I hope and dream about for my life in the future?
- What are the emergency and community services available in my area? How can I contact them when I need support?

If you're in immediate danger, emergency services are available across Canada. Mobile crisis support and other community services are also available in some areas.

You can use **Resources Around Me** to find what's available near your location. The Get Support section on page 27 of this Module also includes 24/7 resources, services and information.



## ACTIVITY 1

# CREATING A SAFETY PLAN

**The tool below is a fill-in-the-blank safety plan for any time from Kids Help Phone. You can find a foldable, pocket-sized version of the tool on the [Kids Help Phone website](#).**

In this tool, you'll find a series of questions you can use as prompts to add your own responses and fill out a safety plan. There are questions about signs you might be in danger, places you can go if you don't feel safe, who you can ask for help, how you can contact emergency or community services, and more. You can complete this activity alone or with someone you trust.

Try to keep in mind that this resource isn't supposed to tell you what to do — you don't have to do anything you don't want to do or follow the prompts exactly. You also don't have to complete every section in this activity. This tool is simply a guide, and you can choose which examples work best for you.

If you find that parts of your plan aren't helpful in moments you feel unsafe, consider trying another strategy from your plan or connecting with someone you trust for support.

Whether you're navigating a harmful situation, planning ahead just in case, or supporting someone you care about, safety planning can bring up many emotions. No matter what you're experiencing, you deserve to feel safe and thrive in your world — and you don't have to figure it out on your own.

Safety planning is an ongoing process, and Kids Help Phone's free, confidential services are available 24/7 to support you along your journey. No challenge is too big, and no feeling is too small.

**Call: 1-800 668-6868**

**Text: 686868**

**Visit: [kidshelpphone.ca](https://www.kidshelpphone.ca)**



# MY SAFETY PLAN

<i>I will keep my safety plan:</i>		<i>Some warning signs I might be in danger are:</i>	
<i>The last time I felt safe was:</i>  <i>I was at:</i>  <i>I was with:</i>			
<i>If I don't feel safe, I can go to:</i>		<i>To get to a safer place, I can:</i>	
<i>A person I can trust and contact for support when I feel unsafe is:</i>	<i>My code word or signal for help is:</i>	<i>When I use my code word or signal for help, the person I trust should:</i>	
<i>Some things I can say or do to distance myself from someone I feel unsafe around are:</i>		<i>Things I can do to create mental space and let others around me know I'm unavailable to engage with them for now are:</i>	
<i>The contact info for an emergency or community service near my area is:</i>		<i>When I contact emergency or community services for help, I can say:</i>	

# STAYING SAFE FROM TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED VIOLENCE

*Technology-facilitated* or online gender-based violence (GBV) means using technology to hurt someone because of their gender, gender expression, or gender identity. This can include things like:

## **Cyberbullying:**

Involves using technology to harm, intimidate, or embarrass someone. It can include spreading rumours, leaving mean comments, or sending threatening messages.

## **Doxing:**

When someone on the Internet finds and shares information about someone else's identity and private life with the aim of harming them. The information can include their full name, address, social security number, or bank account number.

## **Online harassment:**

When someone is targeted with offensive or hurtful messages, comments, or posts based on their gender. It can also involve stalking, hate speech, or sharing inappropriate content with a gender-based focus.

## **Non-consensual sharing of intimate images:**

Sharing or distributing intimate images without the consent of the person in them, which can cause significant harm and distress.

## **Sextortion:**

When someone uses a sexual photo or video to blackmail or coerce someone else into doing what they want. For example, they may threaten to share a nude or semi-nude photo of someone unless that person gives them money, sends more sexual photos or videos, or meets them in person.

## **Swatting:**

Involves sending an emergency law enforcement response (for example, a SWAT team) to a victim under false pretenses. This is done by calling emergency lines like 911 and falsely reporting a violent emergency, such as a shooting or hostage situation.

# 8 TIPS TO STAY SAFE ONLINE

## 1. RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF GBV

Be aware of signs of gender-based violence online, like receiving hurtful or threatening messages, feeling constantly monitored or controlled, or being coerced into sharing intimate images.

## 2. TRUST YOUR FEELINGS

If something happens online that feels uncomfortable or wrong, trust your instincts. If someone makes you feel scared, upset, or threatened, it's important to take it seriously and seek help.

## 3. USE YOUR PRIVACY SETTINGS

Learn how to use privacy settings on social media platforms and online accounts. Limit who can see your posts and personal information. Review and update these settings regularly.

## 4. BE SELECTIVE WITH FRIEND REQUESTS

Only accept friend requests or follow requests from people you know and trust. Avoid connecting with strangers online, especially those who show suspicious or inappropriate behaviour.

## 5. PROTECT YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Avoid sharing personal information like your full name, address, phone number, or school name publicly online. Keep your personal details private and only share them with people you trust.

## 6. REPORT AND BLOCK AS NEEDED

If you are subjected to or witness gender-based violence or abusive behaviour online, report it to a trusted adult and use the reporting tools available on the social media platform or website. Consider blocking the person to limit further interactions.



## 7. SEEK SUPPORT

Reach out to an adult you trust or try to find other supports if you are subjected to gender-based violence or harassment online. Remember, you are not alone, and there are people who can help you.

## 8. BE A GOOD DIGITAL CITIZEN

Treat others online with respect and kindness. Avoid spreading rumours or engaging in online drama. Support and stand up for those who may be experiencing tech-facilitated abuse.

By understanding what *technology-facilitated* GBV is and taking steps to stay safe, you can navigate the online world with confidence. Remember to talk to a trusted adult about any concerns you have or incidents you encounter online.

➔ For more information about tech-facilitated violence, check out the [Youth Guide to End Online Gender-Based Violence \(PDF\)](#).



**Stay safe, be kind, and enjoy all the positive aspects of the internet — just be mindful of its potential risks.**

## SECTION 2

# TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF



# WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Your brain and body's most important job is to protect you and keep you safe, and they have many ways to do this. **Trauma** is the word used to describe the body and brain's reaction to a stressful event or situation.

What the brain and body consider stressful is unique for everyone and causes different reactions in each person. Because of this, trauma can be hard to define and recognize — something traumatic for one person might not be traumatic for another. No matter what you're feeling, how you're feeling matters, and your mental health is important.

## WHAT CAUSES TRAUMA?

- Whether or not something is traumatic for you depends on how stressful your brain and body consider it to be. Something like a word, smell, or picture can upset someone if it relates to a traumatic experience.
- For example, walking into the kitchen isn't stressful for many people. But depending on a person's experience, walking into the kitchen could bring up strong reactions. If their parent or sibling thought it was funny to jump out and scare them at home, walking into their kitchen could be a nerve-wracking experience.
- Trauma can occur in a situation that's happening to you directly, in real-time, but it can also occur when it feels like something dangerous, scary or unknown could happen. Some events or experiences that may cause trauma include:
  - Abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, financial)
  - Sexual violence
  - Death or loss
  - Racism, prejudice, and discrimination
  - Illness, injury, or medical procedures
  - Intergenerational trauma (trauma passed along from generation to generation)
  - Tragedy (climate disasters, political conflict, war, sudden accidents, etc.)
  - Being forced to move or leave your home
  - Bullying or cyberbullying
  - Experiencing a global pandemic

## HOW DOES TRAUMA FEEL?

Trauma can affect you in many ways, including the emotions you feel and sensations you experience in your body. One way you can feel and experience trauma is something called the “fight, flight, or freeze” response. When your brain senses what it thinks is a threat, it tells your body to get ready to fight it, run away from it, or stay still until the threat is gone. You might not notice this happening because your brain and body do it automatically. You may feel anxious, like you want to run away, like you want to fight back, like you’re stuck, or maybe like you’re not sure what to do at all. There is also the “fawn” response: here, someone may try to avoid or minimize the harm, danger, or distress they’re experiencing by trying to please or appease the person who is threatening them.

These responses are meant to protect you from danger or harm, and any and all of these reactions are valid.

When your brain and body are working to protect you, it can interfere with your daily life. For example, if your body is in freeze or fight mode and feels like it has to defend itself, you may have trouble doing things like focusing on homework or having a conversation.

The fight, fawn, flight, or freeze reaction is just one example of how trauma can feel. Each person’s response to trauma will look and feel different. Because of this, it can be hard to know if what you’re experiencing is trauma. The following are some more examples of responses you may experience.

## TRAUMA RESPONSES CAN BE:

### Emotional

- Having difficulty with focusing or concentrating
- Having nightmares or flashbacks
- Feeling disconnected from yourself and the world around you (dissociation)
- Losing interest in hobbies and activities
- Fearing your surroundings or being unable to relax
- Avoiding things that remind you of the event
- Having difficulty with developing or maintaining relationships
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Experiencing changes in mood, including a variety of emotions
- Causing self-injury and/or having suicidal thoughts

### Physical

- Feeling jittery, nervous, or jumpy
- Shaking uncontrollably
- Feeling out of control of your body and/or in shock
- Having headaches
- Having nausea or an upset stomach
- Experiencing changes in appetite and weight
- Having trouble sleeping
- Being reminded of the traumatic event(s) by a sound or smell
- Experiencing discomfort when touched by others



# HOW CAN I COPE WITH TRAUMA?

Everyone copes with trauma differently based on their unique experiences. While it can take time to recognize trauma and find what helps you to manage it, your feelings and thoughts can get better as time goes on. Though the event or experience may remain a sad, scary, or difficult memory, there are ways to process it and learn, grow, and adapt over time. Your coping tools may also change over time.

## NAME IT TO TAME IT

is a strategy you can use when experiencing strong feelings and emotions. When this happens, try pausing, taking a deep breath, and naming the feelings. When you take time to name the feelings, it can help your brain recognize and process what's going on. Naming your feelings can be simple phrases like "I'm feeling angry" or "I feel anxious in my body." You can try describing what you're feeling and labelling your emotions out loud or to yourself.

Once you have a clearer sense of what you're feeling, it can help you to figure out what you need. It can also help you tell others how you're feeling and ask for support (if you want it). It can be helpful to know that you don't have to navigate trauma alone.

## NAME IT TO TAME IT

1. YOU HAVE A STRONG FEELING

2. PAUSE

3. TAKE A DEEP BREATH

4. DESCRIBE WHAT YOU FEEL  
IN YOUR BODY

5. NAME THAT FEELING

6. FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU NEED

### ➔ Self-care tools

Your well-being is important. We encourage you to use the following exercises and information above about coping tools. Refer to the Get Support section on page 27 if you need to speak to someone, or to find services or information.

# CHECK IN

## TAKE A DEEP BREATH

(Inhale slow. Hold. Exhale slow.)

## NOTICE ANY SENSATIONS IN YOUR BODY

## NAME WHAT YOU'RE FEELING IN THIS MOMENT

## THANK YOURSELF FOR THIS MOMENT AND YOUR STRENGTH

# GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

## THINK ABOUT:

- ⇒ 5 things you can see
- ⇒ 4 things you can hear
- ⇒ 3 things you can touch
- ⇒ 2 things you can smell
- ⇒ 1 thing you can taste



# OTHER COPING TOOLS FOR TRAUMA

- Speaking with a professional counsellor or therapist
- Cognitive behavioural therapy to learn how to change unhelpful thoughts and behaviours
- Connecting with people and community where you feel happy and safe
- Practising self-awareness through guided activities or journaling
- Making time for self-care and activities and hobbies you enjoy
- Practising mindfulness through a breathing exercise, body scan, or colouring activity

Remember to be gentle with yourself. Trauma does not look the same for everyone, so coping mechanisms will also be different.

**“There is no ‘one size fits all’ when it comes to healing... Something that worked so gorgeously for me, may not work for you. Something that worked for you, I may not want or benefit from at all. And that’s okay.”**

— Marlee L.  
*Youth Leader*

## SECTION 3

# FINDING HELP AND SUPPORT



# DO I NEED SUPPORT?

**Facing gender-based violence (GBV) or being in an unhealthy or abusive relationship can leave you with a lot of difficult feelings. One way to deal with these feelings is to seek support. This can come in many forms, like talking to a friend or family member, calling or texting a support line, or looking for help to leave a toxic relationship. It may also include learning and practising self-care strategies, which we'll talk about later in this module.**

Sometimes, we can minimize the things we've gone through. This can lead us to think that our problems aren't big enough to seek help for. But if you feel like you need someone to talk to, that's enough of a reason to reach out. Help is available, no matter who you are or what your situation is.



# WHAT IF SOMEONE ELSE THINKS MY RELATIONSHIP IS UNHEALTHY?

Think back to the green, yellow, and red flags from Module 1. Imagine someone sees a red flag in a situation you're in or person you're with, but you don't share the same perspective. In that case, it's important to approach the conversation with empathy, openness, and respect for their point of view.

## Here are some tips for approaching the situation:

### 1. Listen actively

Give the person your full attention and actively listen to their concerns. Let them express their thoughts and feelings without interrupting or dismissing them. Show empathy and try to understand their reasons for seeing it as a red flag.

### 2. Ask for clarification

If you don't immediately understand why they consider it a red flag, politely ask for more information or examples to help you grasp their perspective better. This demonstrates your genuine interest in understanding their point of view.

### 3. Reflect on their perspective

Take some time to reflect on the information shared and their concerns. Put yourself in their shoes and consider whether there might be something you haven't considered. Be open to the possibility that your initial assessment may have overlooked important details.

### 4. Share your perspective

Once you have listened to their concerns and taken time to reflect, respectfully share your own perspective and reasoning. Explain why you don't see it as a red flag, offering additional information or insights that may help them understand your viewpoint.

### 5. Maintain respect

Throughout the conversation, it's important to maintain a respectful and non-judgmental attitude and avoid becoming defensive or dismissive.

➔ Find more info about healthy relationships in **Module 1**.

# WHAT CAN I DO IF I HURT SOMEONE ELSE?

Sometimes, your emotions can get the best of you. If you don't handle them well, they might make you do things that hurt others, like trying to control them, not being understanding, or being overly critical. Some of your reactions may come from generational patterns, copying behaviours you have seen before.

Finding ways to better recognize and communicate your emotions can help you avoid repeating harmful patterns. There's always room for learning and growth in your relationships. It's okay not to have all the answers and make mistakes.



## ACTIVITY 2

# WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO SEEKING SUPPORT?

Seeking support for gender-based violence (GBV) isn't always as easy as picking up the phone. There are many reasons a person may not want to seek support. These reasons are called *internal* and *external barriers*.

**Internal barriers** are things that are inside a person and influence their choices about getting help for GBV. These things include how they see themselves, how they feel, and what they know about places where they can get help.

**External barriers** are things outside a person that can affect whether they ask for help with GBV. These include the beliefs and opinions of their society and culture, or laws that might make it hard to get help. Sometimes people don't seek support because they're afraid of being judged or punished

Often, it's the combination of several of these barriers that make it easier or harder for someone to ask for help dealing with GBV.





Take 10-15 minutes to think about the barriers you see as important or relevant to you and use them to complete the list below.

## Internal barriers

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## External barriers

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Next, review your list of barriers and choose the top three that you believe may have the most impact or are the most challenging to overcome.

## Top 3 barriers

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**Now, choose one barrier from your top three and write a short paragraph explaining why you believe this barrier is significant and how it may impact someone seeking support in GBV. Think about potential solutions or strategies to address these barriers in your life, communities, or society.**

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**When you're done, take a few minutes to review your writing and reflect on any patterns or common themes that come up.**

# WHERE CAN I FIND SUPPORT?



If you have been subjected to 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

### Kids Help Phone

Confidential chat, text and phone mental health support services for kids, teens and young adults.

**1-800-668-6868**

### Hope for Wellness Help Line

Counselling and crisis intervention offering immediate help to Indigenous peoples across Canada.

**1-855-242-3310**

### Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline

Chat and text support to connect human trafficking victims and survivors with support services.

**1-833-900-1010**

### Trans Lifeline

Confidential peer support and resources for trans and gender diverse people, not connected to the police.

**1-877-330-6366**

## PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Use this list of cross-Canada resources to learn more about provincial, territorial, and national GBV fact sheets, research, policies, and more.

- [Alberta](#)
- [British Columbia](#)
- [Manitoba](#)
- [New Brunswick](#)
- [Newfoundland and Labrador](#)
- [Northwest Territories](#)
- [Nova Scotia](#)
- [Nunavut](#)
- [Ontario](#)
- [Prince Edward Island](#)
- [Quebec](#)
- [Saskatchewan](#)
- [Yukon](#)
- [National](#)

## YOUTH-BASED SUPPORT SERVICES NEAR YOU

Access support services for youth in your province, territory, or nationwide by searching [this database](#).

# HOW DO I ASK FOR SUPPORT?

When you're struggling with a problem, it's important to find support that can help you solve it. But figuring out how to get the support you need can sometimes be part of the challenge.

**Here are some common obstacles you may be facing when reaching out for help and a few ideas on ways to overcome them:**

## **You're reaching out for the first time.**

It takes a lot of courage to tell someone what's on your mind. If you're reaching out for the first time, you may be anxious, nervous, or afraid about asking for help. Try to stay calm, take a deep breath, and remember that you can do this. Talking about a problem is often the first step to feeling better, so by asking for help when it's needed, you're doing the right thing. There is no problem too big — or too small — to talk about.

## **You're not sure where to start.**


You may not know what support services are out there or even how to find them. You can ask a parent or caregiver, teacher, guidance counsellor, or other safe adult for information about services in your community. Say, "I need information about or help with X. Do you know where I can go?"

You can also explore your options online to find a service that works best for you by using [Resources Around Me](#) or calling a Kids Help Phone counsellor at **1-800 668-6868**.

## **You're not sure what to say.**

There are many ways to start a conversation. You can begin by saying, "I have a question, and I'm wondering if I can talk to you about it?" or "I'm really struggling and need someone to speak to. Would you be able to point me in the right direction?" Try to pick a good time for you and find a safe, private place to talk. You can write down what you want to say ahead of time if that makes things easier.





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## You're reaching out again.

Sometimes, you may need to reach out for help more than once. That's okay! The road to recovery isn't linear — it may take a few tries to find the support that's right for you. You may need to search online for a new support service, ask your doctor about changing your medication or treatment, or talk to your counsellor about trying a different therapy.

## You're in crisis.

If you're crying a lot, self-injuring, having thoughts of suicide, or feeling unsafe, reaching out for help may seem overwhelming. However, it's important to remember that you deserve to — and can — find the best resources and coping strategies available to you, no matter what you're going through. Try to slow down, ground yourself, and think about your next step. Check out page 27 for non-judgemental, 24/7 services you can contact.

**Just talking about a problem is often the first step. If you're unsure where to start or what to say, remember that help is always available, no matter who you are or what you're going through. You're never alone.**

# YOUR GBV GLOSSARY

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

## ACCOUNTABILITY



Taking ownership of what happens as a result of your choices and actions. This involves not blaming others for your mistakes or making excuses, and doing what you can to make amends when things go wrong.

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## BOUNDARIES



Rules you set for yourself to feel comfortable in relationships. These rules may be about what actions you're willing to take, what you're willing to talk about, or what information you're willing to share.

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## COERCION



A situation where someone is pressured or manipulated into doing something against their will or better judgment. This can involve force, threats, lies, manipulation, or other forms of control to make someone comply with a request or demand.

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## COPING STRATEGIES



Positive or negative techniques, actions, or behaviours that individuals use to manage and navigate challenging or stressful situations. Coping strategies usually aim to reduce distress, strengthen your ability to bounce back, and promote well-being.

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## EMOTIONAL ABUSE



Can include threats, humiliation, intimidation, insults, controlling behaviour, stalking or cyberstalking, deadnaming or denying someone's gender identity, and isolation from friends and family.

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## FINANCIAL/ ECONOMIC ABUSE



Can include stealing financial information like PINs, pressuring or blackmailing someone to give them money, controlling someone's purchases, and preventing someone from going to work or school.

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## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)



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



## HEALING



The process of recovering and restoring mental and emotional well-being after experiencing distress, trauma, or difficulties.

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## PHYSICAL ABUSE



Can include any form of physical contact that is aggressive and unwanted. This could be slapping, hitting, choking, punching, pinching, kicking, tripping, spitting, or threatening with a weapon.

Physical abuse can also involve blocking exits, driving too fast, or locking a person out of their place of residence.

Disability-specific types of physical abuse can include withholding medication from an individual or over-medicating them, using mobility aids to commit abuse, or taking away assistive technology.

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## RACIAL ABUSE



The act of targeting and mistreating individuals or groups based on their race or ethnicity. This may include verbal insults, discriminatory actions, microaggressions, or hate speech aimed at demeaning or devaluing someone's racial identity.

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## SEXUAL ABUSE



Can include any form of sexual contact that is unwanted. This can be kissing that is unwanted or unwelcome, using verbal or physical force to convince or make someone engage in an unwanted or unwelcome intimate or sexual act, verbally threatening or intimidating someone into engaging in sexual acts that are unwanted or unwelcomed, removing a condom without consent, and being forced to get naked or send a nude image.

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## TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED VIOLENCE



Refers to any harm, abuse, or violence enabled or committed using technology, such as cyberbullying, online harassment, or non-consensual sharing of intimate images.

Disability-specific types of technology-facilitated violence include the removal of assistive technology such as devices for communication or misusing assistive technology to control communication of the person who needs it.

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## TRAUMA



Refers to a deeply distressing or disturbing experience that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope, resulting in long-lasting psychological, emotional, and physical effects. Trauma can be caused by just one event, including violence, abuse, natural disasters, or accidents.

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## VERBAL ABUSE



Can include using words to hurt others, for example, name-calling, swearing, yelling, insulting, being condescending, threatening someone or their family or loved ones, using degrading or humiliating comments, or comments that make someone feel worthless, devalued, empty, lonely, hurt, angry or sad.

# 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

[Kids Help Phone](#): Confidential chat, text and phone mental health support services for kids, teens and young adults.

1-800-668-6868

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[Hope for Wellness Help Line](#): Counselling and crisis intervention offering immediate help to Indigenous peoples across Canada.

1-855-242-3310

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[Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline](#): Chat and text support to connect human trafficking victims and survivors with support services.

1-833-900-1010

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[Trans Lifeline](#): 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 \(YWCA Canada\)](#)

[Safer Spaces for Women and Girls \(World YWCA\) \(PDF\)](#)

[Victim Services Toronto](#)

[Queering Gender-Based Violence Prevention & Response in Canada \(Wisdom2Action\) \(PDF\)](#)

[LGBTQ2+ Youth Priorities for Addressing Gender-Based Violence \(Wisdom2Action\) \(PDF\)](#)

[Creating a Safety Plan \(British Columbia Ministry of Justice\) \(PDF\)](#)

[School Specific Resources in Atlantic Canada \(Action Now Atlantic\)](#)

[Community Organizations in Atlantic Canada \(Action Now Atlantic\)](#)

[General Tools and Support \(Action Now Atlantic\)](#)

[Accessing Campus Healthcare: A Workbook for Gender-Based Violence Survivors \(Possibility Seeds\) \(PDF\)](#)

# 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%20are%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&id=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**