making

CHANGES



Cut or tear along this line. Fold up and keep in a safe place.

Safety Alert

If you have experienced domestic abuse, know that you are not alone, and that there are a variety of supports available to you.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

If you are seeking help or are looking for information about abuse, you can call the **Transition House Association of Nova Scotia 24-hour toll-free line**: 1-855-225-0220

Women's, Men's, and All Genders Helplines: 211

Help Lines

Crime Stoppers 1-800-222-8477

Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868

Mental Health Crisis Line
Serves all of Nova Scotia (24/7)1-888-429-8167

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre
Crisis Line 902-422-4240

Your local number:

_____

Quick connect

Community and social services 211
ns.211.ca

HealthLink 811
Hearing impaired 711
811.novascotia.ca

Women's, Men's, and All Genders Helplines:211

Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centres

Millbrook 902-756-3440
Toll-free: 1-800-565-4741

We'koqma'q 902-756-3440
Toll-free: 1-800-565-3440

Transition Houses and Shelters Crisis Lines

Amherst, Autumn House 902-667-1200

Antigonish, Naomi Society. 902-863-3807

Bridgewater, Harbour House 902-543-3999

Digby, Juniper House 902-742-8689
Toll-free: 1-800-266-4087

Halifax, Bryony House 902-422-7650

Kentville, Chrysalis House 902-679-1922
Toll-free: 1-800-264-8682

New Glasgow, Tearmann House . 902-752-0132
Toll-free: 1-800-831-0330

Port Hawkesbury, Leeside Transition House
. 902-625-2444
Toll-free: 1-800-565-3390

Shelburne, Juniper House 902-742-8689
Toll-free: 1-800-266-4087

Sydney, Cape Breton Transition House
. 902-539-2945
Toll-free: 1-800-563-2945

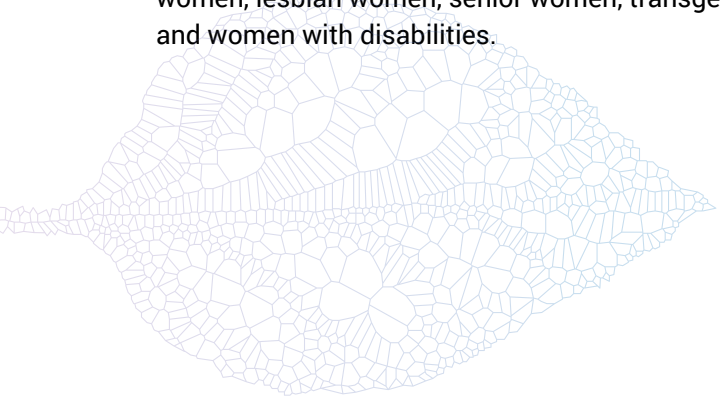
Truro, Third Place 902-893-3232
Toll-free: 1-800-565-4878

Yarmouth, Juniper House 902-742-8689
Toll-free: 1-800-266-4087

Cut or tear along this line. Fold up and keep in a safe place.

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the expertise, time, and commitment of all contributors. To ensure that the book is helpful to women in all their diversity, women from various communities were consulted, including African Nova Scotian women, Mi'kmaq women, lesbian women, senior women, transgender women, and women with disabilities.



a book for women
experiencing intimate partner abuse

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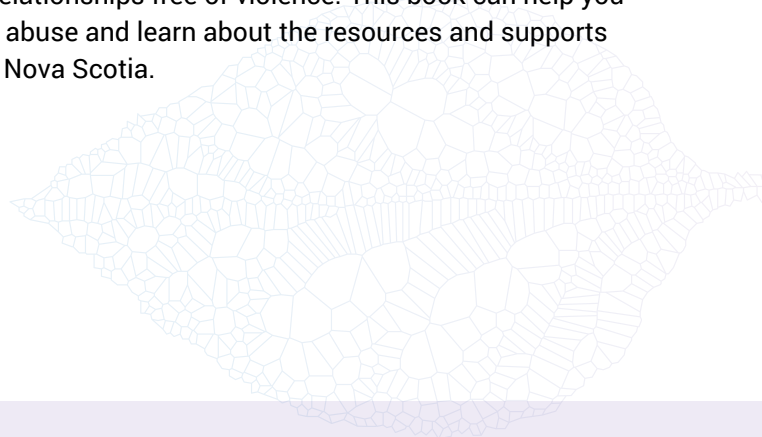
Who is this book for?

If your partner is abusing you, or if you have been abused in the past, this book can help you. A lot of the information is also relevant to men and non-binary people who have experienced abuse. Everyone wants respectful and caring relationships with their intimate partners, and safe lives for themselves and their children.

It can be difficult to admit that you are being abused, but it is important to do this so that you can make changes to keep yourself and your children safe.

Many couples want to stay together. Relationships are not always easy, but everyone can work toward change and have respectful relationships free of violence. This book can help you understand abuse and learn about the resources and supports available in Nova Scotia.



If you are a friend, family member, service provider, or other support person, reading this book may help you better understand how to support someone who has experienced abuse. A lot of the information is also relevant to non-binary people who have experienced abuse.

RESOURCES

If you have questions about the information in this book, or if you or someone you know needs help and support, you can call the transition house in your area. You can also call them if you just want to talk. You can find contact information for transition houses in the Resource section of this book. You can also call or text the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia any time of day for free at 1-855-225-0220.

Someone is always ready to listen 24/7. Call 211 to connect with resources and supports.

When you call a transition house, you do not have to give your name. If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or need a translator, interpretation may be available.

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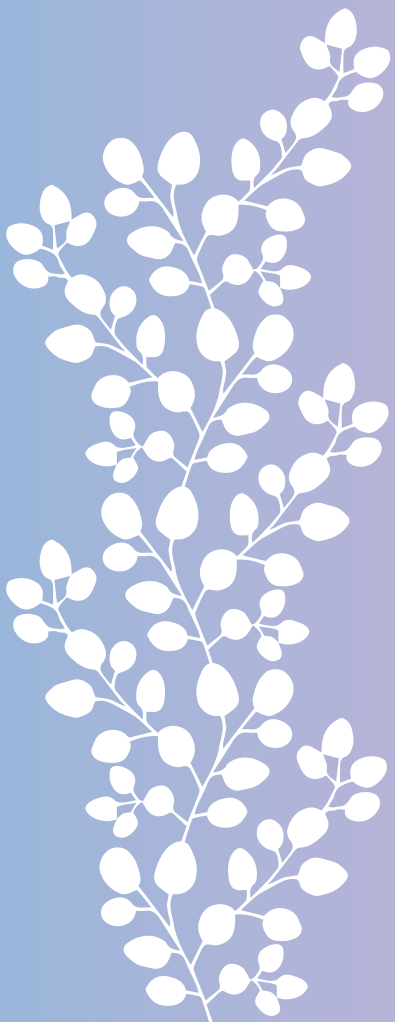
Understanding Abuse



Abuse is also called
gender-based violence,
family violence,
domestic violence,
or intimate partner violence.

What is abuse?

Abuse takes many forms. It can include someone hitting their partner, sexual abuse, controlling their partner's money or behaviour, controlling them emotionally, or coercive control.

Coercive control is a pattern of behaviours used to assert control over a person through repeated acts that disempower them in a number of possible ways including through fear for the safety of self or others, isolating them from support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, removing or threatening to remove the victim's rights and liberties, depriving them of independence, resistance, and escape, and regulating their everyday behaviour.

More than one type of abuse can happen at the same time. It may be a single act or a series of acts forming a pattern.

Children and young people may be harmed by being exposed to abuse in adult relationships, being the direct victims of violence, or both.

Abuse is also called gender-based violence, family violence, domestic violence, or intimate partner violence.

In this book, we use the word "abuse."

In an abusive relationship there may be:

Psychological or emotional abuse, including:

- controlling someone
- threats to harm children or family, a pet, or belongings
- damage to belongings
- hurting or killing pets
- keeping someone from having control over their own money or from making their own decisions
- following or stalking a person
- bullying or picking on someone
- online harassment
- taking someone's phone, or reading their emails and text messages
- lying about someone to their pastor or imam or rabbi
- gaslighting
- embarrassing someone on purpose

Verbal abuse, including:

- yelling and screaming
- name-calling
- making threats
- criticizing

Physical abuse, including:

- pushing
- hitting
- punching
- choking/strangling
- kicking
- biting
- forced confinement (not letting someone leave)
- keeping someone from having things they need, like food
- trying to physically abuse someone

Sexual abuse, including:

- unwanted sexual touching
- forcing someone to have sex
- unwanted violence during sex, such as choking a person without their consent
- trying to sexually abuse someone

LEGAL INFO

Some forms of abuse are criminal offences in Canada, including:

- hitting, punching, strangling, or other physical assault
- sexual assault
- threats to harm or to kill
- withholding food and medical treatment
- taking another person's money through fraud or threats
- creating fear by repeatedly following, communicating, or attempting to communicate with a person (stalking or criminal harassment)
- forcing someone to work (forced labour)
- forcing someone into sex work (human trafficking and sexual exploitation)

Healthy relationships

A healthy relationship involves respect and care from both partners.

In a healthy relationship, neither partner should be afraid of the other partner. A healthy relationship is non-violent and involves equality between partners.



We all deserve healthy relationships with our partners.

Healthy relationships include:

Negotiation and Fairness
Non-threatening Behaviour
Economic Partnership
Respect, Trust and Support
Shared Responsibility
Responsible Parenting
Honesty and Accountability

Healthy relationships include:

Negotiation and Fairness

This means that both partners:

- seek mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict
- accept change
- are willing to compromise

Non-threatening Behaviour

This means that both partners:

- talk and act in a way that allows both of them to feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves

Economic Partnership

This means that both partners:

- make money decisions together
- benefit from financial arrangements

Respect

This means that both partners:

- listen to each other openly and without judging
- are emotionally supportive and understanding
- value the other's opinions

Trust and Support

This means that both partners:

- support each other's goals
- respect each other's right to their own feelings, friends, activities, and opinions

Shared Responsibility

This means that both partners:

- mutually agree on a fair distribution of work
- make decisions together

Responsible Parenting

This means that both partners:

- share parental responsibilities
- provide a positive, non-violent role model for the children

Honesty and Accountability

This means that both partners:

- accept responsibility
- take responsibility for past use of violence
- admit being wrong
- communicate openly and truthfully

Is it abuse?

Most couples argue from time to time, but there is a difference between having a disagreement and being afraid of your partner. When fear becomes part of the relationship, it can be a sign of abuse.

It is not easy for most of us to recognize and accept that our partner is abusing us. Some people struggle to identify their situation as abusive.

You may feel that your partner loves you because partners who hurt their partners often express love toward the people they hurt. Remember that anyone can choose not to hurt others, and that there are other ways to behave toward the people we love.

Everyone has to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

You may feel sorry for your partner, or hope you can change your partner. Perhaps your partner is insecure, has problems, or was abused. There is no excuse for abuse.

We all have to learn to feel good about ourselves without putting others down. It doesn't mean you don't love your partner if you want your partner to change and stop abusing.

Regardless of why someone is abusive, their behaviour cannot be justified.

Abuse is always wrong.

It could be abuse if ...

Your partner ...

- gets jealous when others are around
- destroys, or threatens to destroy, your possessions
- uses put-downs, name-calling, or threats
- makes you choose between your friends/family and your partner
- blames you when things go wrong
- pushes you
- hits you
- threatens to take your children
- hits the walls
- yells at you
- harms, or threatens to harm, your pet
- threatens to harm your family members or friends
- threatens suicide or self-harm

If you feel you have to ...

- ask permission to spend money or go out
- take the blame when things go wrong
- "make things right" just for your partner
- do what your partner wants
- make excuses for your partner's behaviour

If you feel ...

- afraid to make decisions because you fear your partner's reaction or anger
- isolated from friends, family, and activities
- afraid to express your own opinions or say "no"
- afraid to leave your partner

If the lists above sound familiar to you, you may be experiencing abuse.

Why does abuse happen?

There are many reasons why a partner hurts someone they love. A partner may abuse because they:

- learned this behaviour in their own family
- feel it is acceptable to control others
- believe abuse is a way to have power
- have low self-esteem or are insecure
- are unemployed
- think that there are few, if any, consequences to their violent acts
- have a mental illness or suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- abuse alcohol or drugs

There is no easy answer to why abuse happens.

Many factors can influence why people choose to be violent. For example, traditional gender roles may lead family members to believe the man is the legal head of the household and should control the family.

Some people are brought up to believe that it is okay to use force to control their partners or solve family problems.

Some people say they feel like they are being treated like property, belonging first to a parent and later to a partner.

Traditional gender roles can also influence the dynamics of abuse in gender-diverse relationships and relationships in which one or more of the partners are queer or transgender. One partner may shame the other for being too feminine or too masculine, for not "passing" according to socially accepted gender norms, for being out, for not being out, or other reasons. See page 26 for more discussion about how abuse can impact gender-diverse partners.

Many of us grew up in families where there was a lot of conflict or where violence was common. Violence is on television, in movies, in video games, in advertisements, and online. It is often considered normal to be dominant and even to be violent, especially for men.

Social expectations can play a role in abuse. People may feel pressured to act out traditional male and female gender roles. Social expectations can lead people to believe that it is acceptable for men to be "tough" and abusive, and for women to be caregivers and make sure everyone in the home is happy. These gender roles can make people feel pressured to show their strength through controlling their partners.

Gender roles can also make it seem that a power imbalance in relationships is normal and acceptable. The pressures of traditional gender roles often lead to women being blamed if their home is not happy, even if their partner chooses to abuse them. These pressures can also lead to women blaming themselves.

People who abuse often believe that ending the abuse is not their responsibility. They often blame the victim. They might say "my partner made me" or "my partner drove me to it."

Abusive partners sometimes confuse abusive behaviour with expressing anger. Anger is an emotion that everyone experiences, and it can be expressed in healthy ways.

Abuse is never acceptable.

Sometimes people react in self-defence in response to being abused. If you respond to abuse by yelling, putting your partner down, slapping, or using aggressive behaviour, it does not in any way excuse your partner's abusive behaviour.

No one has the right to abuse others.

Is there a pattern to abuse?

In an abusive relationship, your partner might only be abusive on a rare occasion, or they might be abusive to you only once. Other abusive partners are abusive many times during a relationship. Abuse and violence starts early in some relationships. In other relationships, the abuse may start later—sometimes during pregnancy, or when a partner is about to leave. Violence and abuse may be used to maintain power and control over you. You may notice that there is a pattern to this behaviour.

It could look like this:

- Tension and anger start to build up. Sometimes you and your partner may argue.
- Your partner physically abuses you or makes threats about becoming violent.
- Then there is a cool-down, make-up, or calm stage. Your partner may apologize and promise that it will never happen again. Your partner may reinforce these statements with "quick fixes" such as buying you gifts or a special dinner. Often these actions are focused on making the abuser feel better rather than trying to make you feel better.

Some abusive partners begin to take responsibility and work on long-term solutions such as seeking help from family, friends, or counsellors.

If a partner uses "quick fixes," the changes are often temporary. In some cases, the tension builds up again, and the abuse starts over.

Over time the abuse may increase in intensity. Even if your abusive partner takes responsibility, change may take time. Sometimes, the abuse happens again in spite of the progress your partner has made. You have to decide for yourself if you want to continue to work on, or leave, your relationship.

There is a pattern to abuse...

Tension and anger

Abuse

Quick fix

...but you can step out of the cycle.

The effects of abuse

People who are abused often live with constant fear, worry, guilt, and self-blame. If you have experienced abuse from your partner, you may:

- begin to feel worthless, helpless, or ashamed
- feel like a failure
- feel isolated and degraded

The effects of emotional or psychological abuse cannot be seen, but can be just as harmful as physical abuse. If you have experienced abuse of any kind, you may feel that no one could ever love you. You may feel stupid, ugly, and alone. You may begin to lose your self-respect. You may begin to use alcohol or drugs to escape.

You may feel like the hardest thing is feeling the loss of:

- self-respect
- respect for your partner
- someone to be with
- a sense of hope
- happiness
- love
- the feeling of safety that a relationship can provide
- companionship
- independence
- your future goals and dreams
- laughter and joy
- your own identity
- freedom
- the ability to make decisions

RESOURCES

Even if you are not ready to make changes, sometimes it helps to talk. Transition houses are there to offer this support. You can also call or text the **Transition House Association of Nova Scotia** any time of day for free at 1-855-225-0220. Call even to just talk.

For information about children and abuse, see page 105 of this book.



Remember

There is no excuse for abuse.
Abuse of any kind is never okay.

The abuse is not your fault.
No one deserves to be abused.

It takes a lot of courage
to face these issues.

Diversity and abuse

Abuse can happen to anyone, but some people are more likely to be abused by their partners. They may also find getting help more difficult. They may be:

- people with disabilities
- Indigenous people
- Black and African Nova Scotians
- other people of colour
- immigrants
- people with less education
- people with lower income
- 2SLGBTQQIA+ people

Some people feel that their families and friends expect them to act in ways that make it difficult to stop or leave the abuse. They may feel they can't talk to anyone outside their family or culture, or they may feel they cannot leave their relationship. They may feel they cannot tell people about their partner because they haven't told family and friends about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

People who have experienced abuse all have different experiences, but many things are the same. Many victims feel isolated and alone. They may feel responsible for their partner's abuse and emotional state. Sometimes they blame themselves for the abuse.



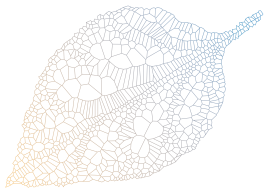
People who have experienced abuse may keep it a secret because they fear that if they tell anyone they will:

- break up their family
- lose their children
- lose their support and social networks, friends, family, and community
- bring dishonour and shame to the family
- have to live in poverty
- have to talk about their sexual orientation or preferences
- have to talk about their gender identity
- make their partner angry or retaliate

People from diverse groups often face additional challenges in leaving abuse. Perhaps a person's faith or tradition says they must stay at home with their family even if they are being abused.

Some people have had bad experiences with the police or the courts, with doctors or nurses, or with government agencies. They may face language barriers, racism, or discrimination based on gender identity or sexual preference. They may also fear being deported, feel isolated in their communities, and face disbelief from their neighbours and friends. There can be barriers that keep them from reporting the abuse and dealing with it.

People from different backgrounds and identity groups are affected by abuse in different ways. Race, class, sexual orientation, and ability can make it harder to leave abuse and to find support.



Women living in poverty

Women living in poverty face additional challenges in leaving abuse. For example, they may not leave an abusive partner because they feel they can't afford to live on their own. If they have children, they may also worry about being able to support them without their partner's income.

Sometimes women living in poverty have more than one job to make ends meet. This can make accessing support services difficult. For example, they may not be able to get time off to see a lawyer or support person. They may not have money to get to support agency offices.

Poverty can make relationships harder. Though there is never an excuse for abuse, poverty can create emotional and psychological stress that can make abuse worse.

Women in rural communities

Women in rural communities may face barriers in finding support to leave the abuse. Rural women often do not tell anyone about abuse because it can be hard to keep things private in a small community.

In a small community, there may also be fewer support services. Women may need to look for support outside their community, which can be difficult if there are no reliable and affordable transportation services in the area.

If a women leaves her community, she may be isolated from the support of friends, neighbours, and family. She may have to take her children out of school and away from grandparents and other family members, and their friends.

RESOURCES

No matter where you live, you can call or text the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia at 1-855-225-0220. It is free from anywhere in Nova Scotia. You can talk about your options any day, any time of day or night.

Call 211 to learn about services near you.

Women with disabilities

Women who have physical and intellectual disabilities can be more vulnerable to abuse. They may also face more barriers if they leave abuse or try to access support services.

An abusive partner may use a woman's disability to abuse her. The abuser may threaten to destroy assistive devices, or make other threats to stop the woman from leaving. An abuser may make a woman feel worthless for having a disability, or that the disability is the reason for the abuse. A woman with a disability may feel that she will lose an essential support person by leaving an abusive partner.

Women with disabilities may have difficulty explaining the abuse to police and service providers. They may also face physical obstacles when trying to access offices for support services (for example, if a service is not wheelchair accessible).

African Nova Scotian Women

African Nova Scotian women may also face additional challenges in leaving abusive partners and finding the help they need. For example, historical and present discrimination and experiences of racism have resulted in many African Nova Scotians not trusting the police and the justice system.

Some African Nova Scotian women may worry that reporting abuse will expose their partners to racism from police and the justice system. They may also worry that reporting abuse will keep in place stereotypes that African Canadian men are violent.

For many African Nova Scotian people, extended family and kinship are important. Some African Nova Scotian women may fear having to leave their community and family support network if they report abuse and seek help.

RESOURCES

Call 211 or see the Resources section at the end of this book for resources for African Nova Scotian women.

Indigenous Women

Indigenous women may fear that support services staff will not understand their cultural needs. They may also worry about dealing with police or the courts because of experiences of oppression and racism.

Indigenous women may worry about leaving abuse because it can mean they have to leave their community. This would take them away from family, supports, and their cultural roots.

They may also worry about how people outside their community see them. They might be afraid of adding to negative stereotypes about Indigenous people and family violence.

Many Indigenous people live off-reserve and in urban areas. They may face similar challenges and barriers to reaching out for support services.

Most Indigenous families have felt harm and loss because of the effects of the Indian Residential Schools, the Sixties Scoop, and the hundreds of Indigenous women in Canada who are missing or murdered.

RESOURCES

Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centres (MFHC), located in We'koqma'q and Millbrook First Nations, deliver treatment and prevention services to all 13 First Nations of Nova Scotia. Healing centres offer culturally relevant holistic programming to all First Nation men, women, and children who have experienced family violence. Healing centres are always open, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

All counsellors and support staff are committed to helping Mi'kmaw adults and children to develop and maintain a healthy and violence-free lifestyle. Families receive treatment in their own communities with counsellors who know their language, values, and culture.

If the healing program refers people to off-reserve programs, the counsellor will ensure that the person gets the services they need.

Services:

- protection, safety, shelter, and basic life necessities to women and children
- 24-hour crisis support telephone line
- support and information to women, men, and children to enable them to develop and maintain a healthy and violence-free lifestyle
- individual and group support for women, men, and children
- outreach services to women, men, and children
- referral and follow-up to other social services programs
- community education in family violence intervention, healing, and prevention

We'koqma'q Family Healing Centre. 902-756-3440

Millbrook Family Healing Centre. 902-893-8483

The Native Council of Nova Scotia serves Mi'kmaq/ Aboriginal people who live off-reserve throughout traditional Mi'kmaq territory. It operates the Welkaqnik Next Step Shelter, a second-stage housing program. A full-time Community Support Counsellor can help you see your situation clearly and find good options.

Welkaqnik Management Committee
Toll-free: 1-800-565-4372
ncns.ca

The Native Social Counselling Agency helps off-reserve Aboriginal clients facing social problems with confidential support referral services.

N.C.N.S. Community Support Counsellor
P.O. Box 1320, Truro, N.S. B2N 5N2
Phone: 1-902-895-1738
ncns.ca/programs-services/native-social-counselling-agency

For more resources, see the Resources section at the end of this book.

Immigrant Women

People who are new to Canada can feel isolated from family and friends. They may not speak or read English or French well. Cultural differences can also make life even harder if their partner is abusive.

People who are new to Canada may not understand Canadian laws and their rights in Canada. They may worry about being on their own.

Newcomers may also worry about how leaving an abusive partner could affect their immigration status.

In Canada, abuse is not okay. If you are a sponsored spouse or partner and your sponsor is hurting or neglecting you, you do not have to stay in that situation. Your partner or sponsor must still support you financially if you stop living with them. You may also qualify for income assistance from the Government of Nova Scotia.

You can call **Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada** at 1-888-242-2100 to talk about your immigration status. Whatever you say during this phone call will be kept confidential.

RESOURCES

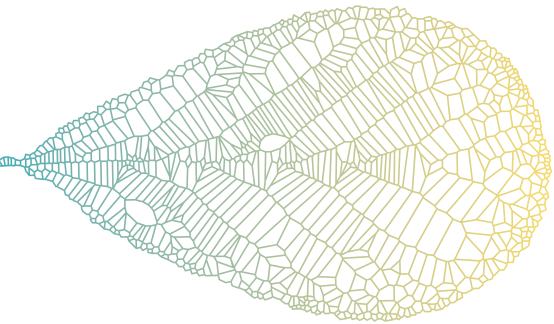
The Immigrant Settlement Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) welcomes immigrants to Nova Scotia. ISANS offers services and creates opportunities for immigrants.

For more information, visit: isans.ca.

211 Nova Scotia has a lot of information and can connect you with services in many languages on their website: ns.211.ca
Or you can text or call 211.

You can call 811 for health information and advice. They can help people in 125 languages.

The Resource section at the end of this book also has information for immigrants and migrants.



2SLGBTQQIA+ people

Non-binary, transgender, bisexual, queer people, lesbians, and gay men experience abuse as often, and in some cases more often, than women in heterosexual relationships.

cisgender – A word to describe someone whose gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth.

non-binary – A word to describe people who do not fit the traditional gender binary of men and women. They may identify as having no gender, more than one gender, or moving between genders.

queer – Though this word has historically been used as a slur, many gender-diverse people have reclaimed this word to describe themselves. Queer can mean many things to different people, but is generally used by those who fall outside of the norms of gender and sexuality.

trans – A word to describe people who identify with a different gender than the one they were assigned at birth.

Some 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in abusive relationships do not tell anyone about the abuse because they fear they won't be believed, or because their partner may use their sexual orientation or gender identity to hurt them. For example, they may fear that their abusive partner will tell their families, friends, employers, or community about their sexuality or gender identity.

Women in abusive relationships with other women may worry that others will not believe the abuse because they assume that only men abuse. Women in same-gender relationships may be told that violence in their relationship means both partners are equally responsible. Men in relationships with other men also hear this myth.

Transgender and non-binary people may be afraid to leave or report abuse because they do not know if support services such as transition houses have transgender-inclusive policies and staff who are trained to be sensitive to their needs and concerns.

In the Halifax area, Adsum House, Alice House, and Avalon Sexual Assault Centre have formal transgender-inclusive policies.

RESOURCES

See the Resources section at the end of this book for contact information and services for 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Other organizations in Halifax and other parts of the province may also be welcoming and supportive. If you are a transgender or non-binary person leaving abuse, it can be helpful to talk to members of your community who might know from their own experiences which services are well-equipped to provide a safe, supportive space for you.

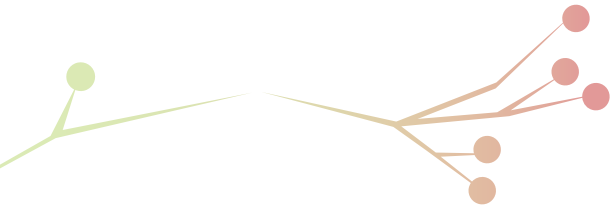
Abuse is wrong regardless of your sexual orientation or gender identity.

No matter who you are or who you love, you do not deserve to be abused.

Emergencies



What to do in an emergency



If you are in danger, you should call 911 immediately.

If you call and hang up, the 911 operator will call you back to see if anything is wrong. If you don't answer, the police will come to find out what is wrong.

If calling the police doesn't seem right for you, call someone you trust to help.

If you cannot use the phone, try to go somewhere safe. This might be the home of a friend or relative, or a public place.

If you or someone you know is having a mental health crisis, call the **Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team** at **1-888-429-8167**, or go to the closest emergency department.

It is important that you are prepared in case you have to act quickly. Here are some things to consider:

- Where can you go in an emergency?
- How will you get there? Is there someone who can come and get you? Can you take a car, taxi, or bus?
- Is there someone you can call to let them know what is happening and where you are going?
- Is there someone you can leave your pets with?
- If you need to go to a transition house, do you know how to get there?

It may be a good idea for you to get legal and other advice now, even before there is an emergency.

EMERGENCY BAG CHECKLIST

You may want to pack an emergency bag in case you need to leave quickly. You should pack what you would need for a few days. You may want to leave the bag with a friend.

If you don't feel safe packing an emergency bag, you may want to make a list of things to take, and make sure you know where they are kept.

Some items you may want to bring are:

- money, financial statements, credit cards
- clothes for yourself and the children for a few days
- house keys, car keys
- a cell phone and charger cable
- copies of your lease, mortgage, mortgage statements or deeds
- car registration, driver's license, car insurance identification
- important papers – birth certificates, marriage certificates, social insurance numbers, divorce papers, custody documents, court orders, restraining orders, income tax returns, work permits
- health cards for yourself and the children
- medical and vaccination records
- any medicine you or the children may need
- First Nations status card
- immigration/citizenship papers, passports for you and the children
- the children's favourite toys, books, and special blanket
- picture of your partner (for identification)
- your address book and list of important phone numbers
- your favourite possessions, or other things that will bring you comfort.

If you can, keep electronic copies of important paperwork where you can access them easily. For example, you may want to scan documents or take photos of them and send them to yourself or a friend by text message or email.

Leaving in an emergency

If you are afraid of your partner, you might want to leave your home even if you do not call the police.

If you want to leave, you can ask someone you trust or the police to wait while you get your things. You can ask the police to take you to a safe place like a transition house, motel, or the home of a friend or relative. If you have children, you have the right to take your children with you.

LEGAL INFO

If you take your children with you, you will need to apply for custody of the children as soon as possible. Do not take the children out of the province without talking to a lawyer first.

The police will not help you remove your children later without a court order.

If you leave in an emergency and decide not to go back for a while, the police can return with you to get the rest of your personal belongings. They will protect you, but they're not allowed to help you carry things. They will not usually enter the property. You may want to bring a friend to help, or to be a witness.

What happens when the police are called?

When the police come, their first job is to stop any abuse and make sure everyone is safe. The police will ask you and your partner questions.

For safety reasons, the police will try to ask you and your partner questions separately rather than in the same room.

The police might arrest your partner if you've been hurt, or if it is likely that the assault will continue or happen again.

The police will need to know who might have seen or heard anything. They may ask other people about what happened. They may interview your neighbours, friends, or anyone else who might have seen or heard something. If anyone has physical injuries or must go to a clinic or hospital, the police may want to talk to the medical staff who treated them.

The police may take pictures of injuries, people involved, or damage to property where the abuse happened. They may ask you to go to the police station to have pictures taken.

You can decide whether or not to talk to the police about what happened. If you decide to talk to the police, you should give as much detail as you can. You should let them know about any injuries to people, and any damage to belongings or the home.

The police will arrest and remove the person who has been charged with an offence. If police think both you and your partner have been violent or caused damage to belongings or the home, they may charge both of you with an offence. This does not mean that you are guilty or that you have a criminal record.

If you are arrested, you have the right to speak to a lawyer. You should speak to a lawyer before you say anything more to police.

If you decide not to leave and your partner is not arrested, you should write down the names of the police officers who come in case you need to talk with them later.

Assault and making threats are criminal offences. If the police think a criminal offence has occurred, they must lay charges.

Police Priorities

Priority 1
Stop the abuse and make sure everyone is safe.

Priority 2
Ask questions and take pictures.

Priority 3
Arrest and take away anyone who is being charged with a crime.

The police's main concern is for everyone's safety.

What happens if the police lay charges?

The police might lay charges. This means they believe the person has broken the law or committed a crime, and the person will have to go to a court to talk about what happened.

If the police lay charges, they may need help collecting evidence of the abuse. You should prepare to share your story by doing these things:

- identifying torn or bloody clothing and any weapons used (a weapon can be anything that is used to hurt a person)
- taking photos of injuries, broken furniture, or other damage
- saving any threatening text or voicemail messages, letters, emails, Facebook posts, etc.
- keeping a record of times and dates, what happened, and any injuries

You should also keep a record of the names and badge numbers of any police officers involved.

If the police do not take pictures, you can ask a friend to do it. Pictures can be good evidence in a trial because your camera or phone keeps the date for each picture. If you print the photos, the person who took them should sign and date them because they may be important evidence in a trial. Typically, however, the police take photos and gather evidence. It is the job of the police to collect evidence. You can help the police by telling them about possible evidence. Evidence like photos, torn clothes, or broken items help to show police and the court what happened.

If the police lay charges, they will take the accused person from the home. They will usually hold them at the police station, usually for under 24 hours. In some situations, the police do not let an accused person leave the police station until a judge decides on their release.

Whether police release your partner depends on the kind of charges they face, how much force your partner used, and if your partner has a previous criminal record.

If your partner is charged with domestic assault, police may release them if they agree to some rules. This is called an "undertaking" or a "recognizance" with a no-contact order. Your partner would sign these rules.

A **no-contact order** means someone is not allowed to contact you directly or indirectly.

Direct contact is if your partner speaks to you in person or on the phone, writes to you, leaves voice mail, emails, texts, or comes near you.

Indirect contact is when your partner communicates, or tries to communicate, a message to you through another person, or by leaving something for you where they know you will find it.

Your partner may also have to:

- not contact or communicate with you, your children, or other people
- stay away from your home, workplace, or other locations
- not drink alcohol or use non-prescription drugs
- not have or use firearms
- follow any other rules that the police or judge feel will help to keep you safe

The police, crown attorney, or judge can also put other rules in place that they feel will help. The court expects your partner to follow these rules until the criminal case is over in court.

LEGAL INFO

If an accused person does anything they said they would not do, or if they break any of the court's rules, they could face more criminal charges.

For more information on no-contact orders, see page 38.

You might want the no-contact order changed because you want to have contact with your partner. But only the accused person can apply to court to make this change. The court will consider whether you would like contact with your partner, but the bigger concern of the court is protecting public safety.

If your partner does not follow their release conditions, they can be held in jail until the charges are dealt with by the court.

SAFETY

If you feel that your partner may violate a no-contact order, you may want to prepare a safety plan before your partner is released. For more information on safety planning see the section starting on page 45.

If the police lay charges, they may suggest you talk to services such as a transition house or provincial Victim Services. You do not have to leave your home or stay in a transition house to get help from a transition house or Victim Services. These agencies can give you emotional or practical support.

They can also give you information about community resources and how the police do their work.

The police must tell you about what happens to your partner if they are arrested for assault.

If your partner has abused you, you can talk to the police to find out the rules your partner must follow when they are released.

You can also ask for a copy of any paperwork related to your case. If there is a no-contact order, you should keep it with you at all times.

You can get information from the police who made the arrest, police Victim Services, or a provincial Victim Services office. For more contact information see the Resources section at the end of this book.

If the police lay criminal charges against your partner, you may have to go to court to say what happened.

The provincial Victims' Services Program and some police Victim Services departments can help you get ready to tell your story in court. Transition houses also offer information and support.

RESOURCES

To find the provincial Victim Services office nearest you, call their toll-free number 1-888-470-0773, or visit novascotia.ca/just/victim_services/contact.asp

The judge may say that your partner must go to an intervention program. These programs work with people to help them change the way they act. They encourage people to accept responsibility for their behaviour and to create respectful, non-abusive relationships with their partners.

If English is not your first language, or if you are deaf or hard of hearing, you may need a translator or interpreter when you speak with the police, the court, or transition house staff. Most of them can give you this support. You can find a list of services and contact information in the Resources section at the end of this book.

If you need an interpreter or translator, ask for one as soon as you can. It can take time to get an interpreter or translator.

In small communities, people are likely to know one another. If you are worried about confidentiality and privacy, you can ask for the interpreter's name before the interpreter is given your name, and before you meet. You can refuse an interpreter who is known to you and your family.

RESOURCES

For more information about going to court to testify, you can read Being a Witness in a Family Violence Case at www.legalinfo.org/family-violence-abuse/being-a-witness-in-a-family-violence-case-1

If you need help or information about abuse, call the **Transition House Association of Nova Scotia's** 24-hour toll-free line: 1-855-225-0220.

You can also contact the local transition house in your area. Call 211 to find resources near you. The Resources section at the end of this book has a complete list.

What happens if Child and Family Wellbeing Services gets involved?

Anyone who thinks a child has been hurt, is in danger, or is being neglected must call Child and Family Wellbeing. When Child and Family Wellbeing gets a call about a child, they will investigate. This could mean contacting the child's parents, talking to friends or family, talking to the child's school, or visiting the home. They will suggest ways to help the family and may assign a case worker to the family. They can take a child from the home if they think they need to in order to keep the child safe.

If your child is taken from your home, contact Nova Scotia Legal Aid right away to see if you qualify for their services (nslegalaid.ca, or call 1-866-532-2311 toll-free). Tell them you need a lawyer for a child protection matter and tell them your first court date if you know it.

Five days after your child is taken into care, you will get a letter with a court date.

When you go to court, the judge may order that your child can come home or that they will stay in care.

If your child comes home, the court may order you to allow Child and Family Wellbeing to check in with your family to make sure there are no problems. **You may have to**:

- go to therapy or parenting classes
- get help for alcohol or drug use
- make changes in your home
- make sure the children have no contact with a certain person

If your child stays in care, Child and Family Wellbeing will give you a schedule to visit. You may visit somewhere that a case worker can be with you. You should tell your case worker right away if you will miss a visit. When a child is in care, you go to court again in about 30 days. If you and Child and Family Wellbeing cannot agree where the child will live and how often you can visit, the judge will decide.

You will go to court again about 3 months after your child is taken into care. Then the judge will decide if your child can live with you and what services your family needs. You may have to go to court more times over the next year to see how things are going.

If you are asked to sign anything, or if your child is removed from your home, you should contact a lawyer immediately. Nova Scotia Legal Aid can provide child protection information. Domestic violence outreach services or a transition house can give you information and support, including information about how to get legal advice. See the Legal Matters section of this book, or call 211 or 1-855-225-0220 any time of day for services.

Child protection can be very complicated. It can affect a family for a long time. In some cases, children are removed permanently from their parents. If Child and Family Wellbeing becomes involved with your family, speak to a lawyer as soon as possible.

LEGAL INFO

Sometimes Child and Family Wellbeing will ask parents to sign an agreement to allow services to be put in place while the children stay in your care.

If they ask you to sign this, call Nova Scotia Legal Aid. Nova Scotia Legal Aid can sometimes help parents who need this kind of advice.

RESOURCES

For more information, see the "Your Children" section of this book starting on page 105.

Find the Legal Aid office nearest you at:
nslegalaid.ca/contact-us

For more information about child protection,
visit the Family Law Nova Scotia website:
www.nsfamilylaw.ca/child-protection

Child and Family Wellbeing offices can be found on page 135.

Mi'kmaq Family and Children's Services are listed on page 135.

For more information about domestic abuse and the law visit the Family Law Nova Scotia: nsfamilylaw.ca/family-violence

Safety Planning



Are you safe?

It can be hard to figure out if your partner will hurt you or your children. You may find it helpful to talk with someone at a transition house, or with a counsellor at a men's program.

Women's centres or even family or other people you trust can give you information and support.

A counsellor or transition house worker can help figure out how safe you are and suggest ways you could be safer. They can also help you plan your next steps.

You may decide that you want to live at a transition house or shelter for a few weeks until you can figure out if you want to stay and work on improving your relationship, or if you want to move toward a temporary separation or divorce.

A safety plan

A safety plan is a plan to help you be safe and ready if your partner abuses you. It can help you think about what to do if your partner hurts you or your children, or how to stay safe if you end the relationship.

It can help to memorize your safety plan because it can be difficult to think about everything in an emergency. If you write down your safety plan, keep it where your partner will not find it.

Call a transition house and talk to the staff. Work out a code word with them so they know who is calling if there is a crisis. You can call or text the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia any time of day for free at 1-855-225-0220. The person who answers will help you reach the right transition house for you. **In an emergency, call 911**.

SAFETY PLANNING CHECKLIST

It is important that you are prepared in case you have to act quickly. Here are some things to consider:

- Establish an escape route. Know a safe place to go, even if only to make a phone call.
- If your partner has abused you in the past, make sure the police or someone you trust know your situation. If you can, keep a record of any abuse. Keep it where your partner will not find it.
- Have emergency numbers (a transition house, family, neighbours, those who will help) programmed into a safe phone.
- Call a transition house and talk to the staff. Work out a code word with them so they know who is calling if there is a crisis. You can also call or text the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia any time of day for free at 1-855-225-0220. The person who answers will help you reach the right transition house for you. In an emergency, call 911.
- Speak with your family or neighbours and other trusted people. Let them know what's going on so they can pay attention and call for help if they become concerned.
- Talk to your children. They need to know where to run in an emergency and how to use the telephone to call police.
- If you can, put some money aside for things such as emergency taxi fare or bus fare or gas money, as well as a spare set of car keys so you can leave quickly.
- You may want to pack an emergency bag. See page 32 for an Emergency Bag Checklist.

Support for your partner

If your partner wants to stop hurting you, they will have to take steps to deal with the problems that led to the abusive behaviour.

This could include:

- counselling for alcoholism or drug use
- addressing their own trauma
- dealing with memories of past victimization
- understanding expectations
- dealing with feelings of insecurity and desperation
- finding healthy ways to deal with things

SAFETY

Transition houses can tell you about services available to you. Call 1-855-225-0220 to find one near you, or to get help. Someone answers this number all day, every day, and you can call for free from anywhere in Nova Scotia.

If you are in danger now, call 911.

To find out where you can get help in your area, call 211.

Finding a counsellor or support person

You can find support through private or publicly funded counselling. Family therapists are listed under Marriage and Family Therapy in the Yellow Pages. Many employers offer employee assistance programs that will help with counselling referrals.

In addition to individual counselling, you and your partner can seek counselling together if you feel safe enough to do this. Many couples benefit from having counselling together. This type of counselling is offered through a local family services association or at programs designed to help men heal and repair the effects of their abusive behaviour on their families. Call 211 or look in the Resources section at the end of this book for resources.

If you have a no-contact order, you and your partner cannot go to couples counselling until the court changes the order.

You and/or your children may be eligible for free counselling from the Criminal Injuries Counselling program. See page 136 for contact information.

COUNSELOR CHECKLIST

You may find it helpful to talk with someone you can trust like a friend or relative, a spiritual leader or elder, a doctor, or a counsellor.

A support person should be able to offer:

- the opportunity to explore the advantages and disadvantages of continuing your relationship rather than telling you that you should leave
- an understanding that you know more about your relationship and your partner than the counsellor or support person
- support to improve your relationship, or support to end your relationship, depending on what you choose for yourself
- the ability to accept if you change your mind about staying or leaving, and not pressure you to choose one option over the other
- acceptance that your partner can be abusive but also loving and caring, which can make the decision to stay or leave difficult
- access to resources and referrals
- assistance, if asked for, in making a safety plan

Counsellors and support people should avoid:

- labelling your partner as “abusive”
- labelling your relationship as an “abusive relationship”
- seeing your partner only as an “abuser”
- not validating any positive things that happen in the relationship

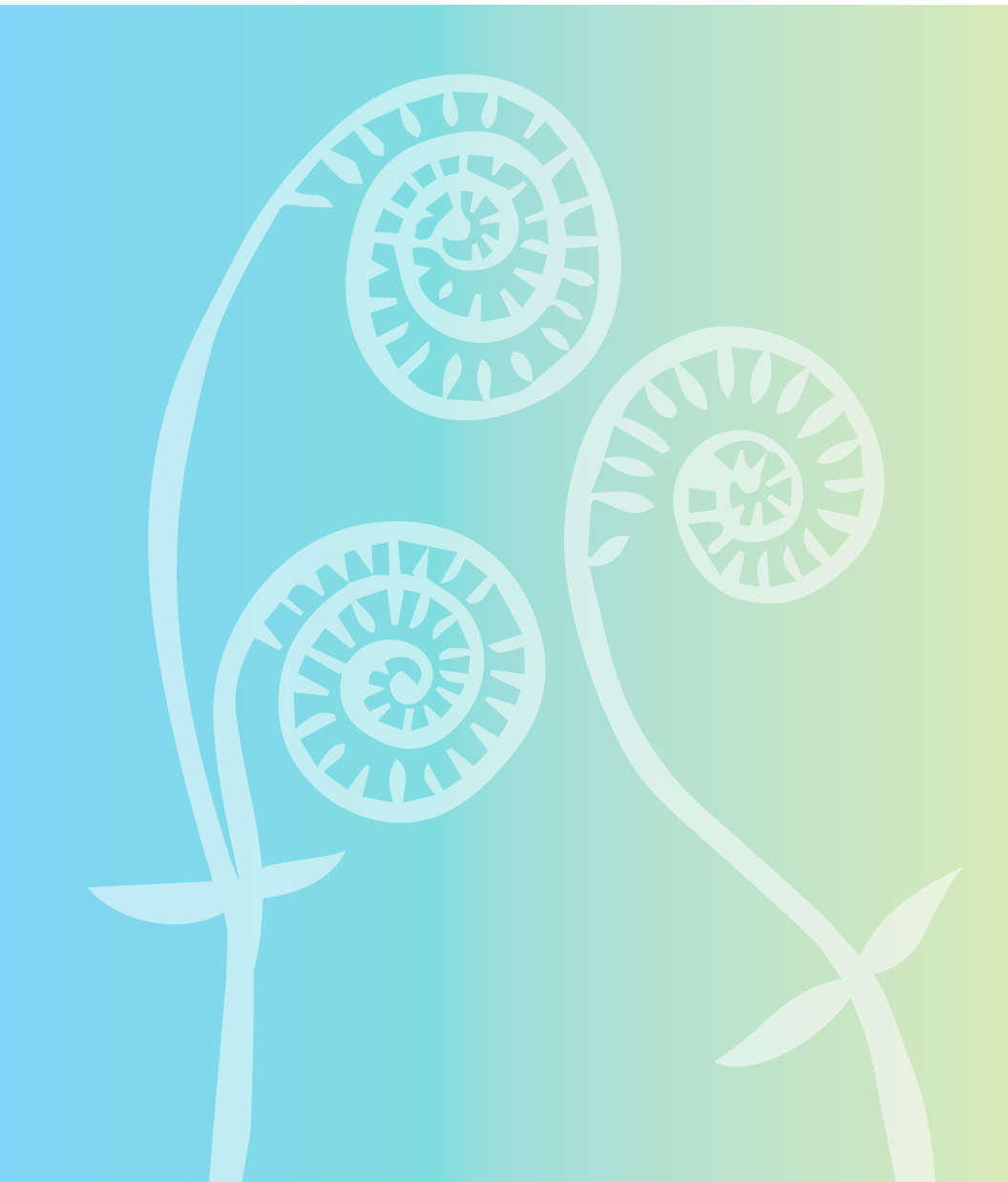
There are always people you can talk to, such as a trusted friend or relative, or a person at the local transition house. You can call a transition house anytime to get information, support, and safety planning from staff, even if you do not live at the transition house.

Transition house staff will give support on the phone. These phone calls are confidential and you do not need to give your name. You can call the 24-hour crisis line: 1-855-225-0220. If you want to, you can visit the transition house to speak with someone in person.

Some houses have workers who can meet you in your home or somewhere safe.

Transition houses can help you even if you are not staying at one.

Do I Stay or Leave?



How safe is it to stay?

Before you can make positive choices about your life, you need to be safe.

It can be difficult to know how safe you are. For example, if you are in a relationship where the abuse has increased gradually over time, it can be hard to tell how dangerous your situation really is.

Sometimes you might not want to tell anyone how serious the danger is because you blame yourself or feel ashamed about what is happening. **Remember: the abuse is never your fault.**

Making the choice to stay or leave can be difficult. There are people who can help you decide what is right for you, your relationship, and your children. It can be helpful to talk with someone who has walked this journey with others.

Call or text the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia's 24-hour toll-free number to just talk: 1-855-225-0220.

SAFETY

The situation may be dangerous if you answer YES to any of these questions:

- Has your partner ever threatened to kill you or anyone else?
- Does your partner own a weapon?
- Has your partner tried to physically prevent you from leaving?
- Do you think your partner might hurt you or your children?
- Has your partner ever harmed or threatened your pets?
- Has your partner ever assaulted you when you were pregnant?
- Has your partner been violent toward people outside your family?
- Has your partner abused you or someone else when drinking alcohol or taking drugs?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, you may find it useful to talk to someone about how to stay as safe as possible while planning what to do next.

You should NOT tell your partner if you are planning to leave.

What if I am worried about my safety?

If you feel like you are in danger now, call 911 right away.

You can call police and report abuse at any time. It does not have to be an emergency.

If you don't feel comfortable calling police, you may want to call a friend, family member, or someone you trust. You can also call or text the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia any time of day for free at 1-855-225-0220. Call 211 for information about organizations that can help. Ask about the Women's Helpline, Men's Helpline, or All Genders Helpline.

But if you are afraid your partner will seriously hurt you, you should call police right away.

If you live with a partner who abuses you:

- tell someone you trust that your partner is abusing you
- think about ways your partner has hurt you in the past. This will help you predict the level of danger you and your children face and when it might be safest to leave
- plan where to go in an emergency
- create a plan to get out of your home safely. If you have children, practice getting out of your home safely with them
- ask neighbours, friends, and family you can trust to call the police if they hear the abuse
- if you and your partner are starting to argue, move to a place where you can get outside easily
- try to avoid rooms where there are potential weapons, like the kitchen, workshop, or bathroom

- always back your car into the driveway and keep it fuelled
- hide your keys, a cell phone, and some money near your escape route
- have a list of phone numbers to call for help. Call the police if itis an emergency

If you are worried your abusive partner will hurt you, you can also apply for an emergency protection order (EPO) or a peace bond.

Emergency protection orders

If your partner has already hurt you and you are worried it will happen again, or you can apply for an emergency protection order. Ask local police, someone at a transition house, or Victim Services office about applying for an EPO and making safety plans for you and your children.

LEGAL INFO

EPOs are short-term, temporary orders that help protect victims of abuse in a crisis.

An EPO can be put in place right away, and can last up to one year.

An EPO can

- give you the right to be in your home for up to one year, and can keep your partner out of your home for that time
- give you the sole right to use personal property, such as a car
- give you or someone else temporary possession or custody of your children

It can also tell a peace officer, like a police officer, to

- remove your partner from the home
- go with you to your home to get your personal things
- go with your partner while they get their personal things

An EPO can also tell your partner to

- stay away from certain places, such as your home and work
- not contact you or another person
- not take, sell, or damage property
- not abuse you

You can ask for an EPO over the phone by calling 1-866-816-6555. You can also go to a transition house. They have trained staff who can help you apply. Police and Victim Services officers can also help you apply for an EPO at any time. You may be able to get an interpreter if you need one.

If a judge agrees to give you an EPO, the police will tell the abusive person as soon as possible. Once they've been told, the abusive person must follow the rules in the EPO. This does not mean they will have a criminal record, but if they don't follow the rules in the EPO, they may be charged with a crime.

An EPO lasts one year. After this, you can ask for more time if you need it.

To apply for an EPO:

- you must be at least 16 years old
- you must have been abused by a person you are, or were, in an intimate relationship with
- you must live with the abusive partner now, or you must have lived with them in the past, or you must have a child together even if you have never lived with each other

Peace bonds

Anyone can apply for a peace bond any time they fear that someone will harm them. A peace bond is a court order the abusive person signs to say that they will not harm you, your family, or your property. A judge will hear your reasons for the peace bond and decide whether to give you one.

A peace bond says that your abusive partner must stay away from you for up to one year. It can say that they must:

- not have direct or indirect contact or communicate with you, your children, or others
- not drink alcohol or use non-prescription drugs
- not have or use firearms
- stay away from your home, workplace, or other places you go
- follow any other rules that the judge feels will help to keep you safe

Only a judge can give you a peace bond. Usually both you and the abusive person will go to a court hearing for a peace bond.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or need a translator, you may be able to have one with you at court.

Applying for a peace bond may take some time. If you have an emergency protection order and you think you might want to apply for a peace bond in the future, you may want to talk with a lawyer. In most cases, you can apply for a peace bond at Provincial Court. Family Courts and Supreme Court (Family Divisions) usually do not deal with peace bonds.

Unlike an EPO, when you apply for a peace bond, the person named is told that you have applied for a peace bond, and they have a chance to respond.

RESOURCES

If your situation is urgent you may want to talk with a lawyer, the police, Victim Services, or transition house staff about applying for an EPO. An EPO can help you in a crisis.

Once the crisis is over, you might want to think about a peace bond to give you some protection for a longer time. Peace bonds last for one year.

Deciding to stay

Understanding reasons for staying

Often people ask “Why don’t you just leave?”

There are many reasons you might stay, even if you do not love your partner or even if you believe your relationship will not get better. Often there is more to your relationship than just your partner’s abusive behaviour. Rather than judging you, others should try to understand your reasons for staying.

Here are some common reasons someone might stay with an abusive partner.

Emotional reasons for staying

- afraid to live alone
- your partner has made threats toward people you love
- afraid that your partner will take revenge if you leave
- afraid to go to court or to call the police
- feel like you have failed
- feel like you are breaking up your family
- afraid you will be lonely
- you still love your partner and hope that they will change
- believe that you are to blame for your partner’s abuse
- afraid your family or friends will blame or reject you
- afraid you will lose your partner if you leave for a short time
- afraid your partner will keep the children
- afraid your partner will kill themself, you, or the children
- ashamed of being seen as a victim
- not recognizing that you are being abused
- afraid that your partner will “out” you

Financial reasons for staying

- no income of your own
- a lower income than your partner
- lack of job skills
- fear that government assistance will not be enough to live on
- feelings of shame if you need government assistance
- lack of affordable childcare and housing
- debt you share with your partner
- fear of leaving the family home
- fear of losing the family home if you leave
- a belief that your partner will not pay maintenance or support
- lack of information about your legal rights

Social, cultural, and religious reasons for staying

- fear of being blamed
- fear that friends or family will say the abuse didn't happen, or they don't recognize it as abuse
- social pressure on women to be responsible for things working out
- beliefs about gender roles or marriage
- cultural pressures such as concerns about shame and family honour
- services that don't understand your culture
- fear that family or friends will not approve of your separation or divorce
- belief that you can change your partner
- belief that you need a partner
- belief that children need parents who live together
- lack of support from family and friends
- being away from family and friends
- lack of support from or fear of police and the legal system
- fear of being away from your community

RESOURCES

Transition house staff can help you even if you are not staying at a transition house. They can give you support over the phone, or you can arrange to visit the transition house and speak with someone in person. Some transition houses have workers who can meet you in your home or somewhere safe. No one will tell your partner or family that you called, and you do not need to give your name. Call or text the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia any time of day for free at 1-855-225-0220.

You may feel more comfortable talking with people in your community about where to get help. You can get more information by calling 211. This information line can give information on nearly every service in many languages.

Deciding to leave

Making decisions and changes can be confusing and difficult. We need to remind ourselves that we are strong.

Reading this book is a start.

SAFETY

If you are in danger now, call 911.

If you need help or information on abuse, call 211 or call or text the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia's toll-free emergency line at 1-855-225-0220. You can call any time of day or night, and it's free anywhere in Nova Scotia.

The most dangerous time for someone in an abusive relationship is when they leave or are planning to leave.

If the abuse gets worse or you feel that you are in danger of being seriously hurt or killed, you may need to leave quickly.

Even if you are afraid your partner will kill you, you may also be afraid to leave or feel that you cannot leave.

You always have the option to leave for a while, or you can leave permanently. You have the option to leave even if it's not an emergency situation.

Leaving can be a very hard decision to make. You may find that leaving for a while and returning works for you. This may show your partner that you need them to change. However, your partner may promise to change, but keep abusing you.

If you leave, your abusive partner may try to convince you to return.

Your partner may:

- be very loving and generous
- shower you with gifts and attention
- try to scare you into returning
- use relatives or friends to pressure you

Sometimes the only way to stop the abuse is to leave for good. You can leave even if it's not an emergency.

Whether you leave in an emergency, for a short time, or for good, you have every right to take your children with you, especially if you think they will be in danger if they are left behind.

LEGAL INFO

If you take your children with you, there may be fewer problems later. Get legal advice if you want to take your children out of province. See the section called Your Children, starting on page 105, for more information.

Where can you go to be safe?

When you leave, you need to go somewhere safe. You may want to think about where your partner might look for you, and where your partner will not find you. You might be safe if you stay with a friend or a relative, or at a hotel or a transition house.

Some people may not feel comfortable going to a transition house. If this is true for you and you need to leave suddenly, go somewhere public where you feel safe so you can make a plan or call someone for help. Call 211 to talk about places you can go and organizations in your area that can help you.

Transition houses are emergency shelters for women and female- identifying individuals, with or without children, whose partners are abusing them.

There are transition houses in Nova Scotia. They all take children. Transition houses have staff who will help you understand your options. Some transition houses are wheelchair-accessible. Transition houses do not allow pets.

Transition houses usually keep their addresses secret. When you call a transition house, staff will plan to meet with you. If the police go to your home because of abuse, they can drive you to a transition house.

You can call the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia's free number (1-855-225-0220) to find the nearest transition house. You can also call 211. See the Resources section of this book for a list of transition houses and phone numbers.

Someone at the transition house will listen to you. They can give you advice about your medical, legal, and financial situation. They will help you figure out what you can do. They will not force you to do anything. You can decide what's best for you.

What you tell transition house staff is private. However, there are some things they must tell police or Child and Family Wellbeing Services. Ask them to tell you about these things.

If someone knows a child is being abused, they must tell Child and Family Wellbeiing Services about it. This includes transition house staff.

At transition houses

- you can stay for up to six weeks
- they will give you food, clothing, and other things you need
- you can stay for free, but you are expected to help with cooking and housework, and to follow house rules

There will be other women, female-identifying individuals, and children at the transition house. It may help you to talk with someone who has had an experience like yours.

If you stay at a transition house, you and your children may be given a private room, or you may have to share a room with others.

All transition houses have programs and workers who can continue to help you once you leave the transition house.

If you decide not to stay at a transition house, their staff can still help you with information and referral services.

Some transition houses have wheelchair-accessible rooms and baths (see pages 153-155 for houses that are wheelchair-accessible).

If the abuse continues

Once you leave, your partner may keep abusing you. The abuse may get worse. Your abusive partner may try to control you financially, through the children, through the courts, through physical abuse, or by threatening and harassing you.

One way you can handle this is to have as little contact with your partner as possible. You can do this by only talking through your lawyer or the police if you need to. If you don't have a lawyer and don't feel comfortable asking the police for help, you can limit contact with your partner by only talking to them by text or email. Ask a friend or relative to go with you if you need to see your partner or talk to them in person.

If you are still afraid, you can apply for a peace bond if you don't have one yet.

If your partner keeps trying to contact you, they may be breaking the rules of their release, or they could be charged with criminal harassment. You should keep a written record of all contact with your abusive partner as well as what your partner does or says. You should also keep any written or recorded messages from your partner. You should tell the police, your partner's probation or parole officer (if your partner has one), and your lawyer if your partner contacts you.

Transition house staff, the police, the probation or parole officer, provincial and police victim services, your lawyer, a counsellor, or a supportive friend can help you get through this period. You shouldn't be afraid to ask for help. You don't deserve to be harassed. You deserve a better life free from violence.

RESOURCES

To find your nearest transition house, see pages 153–155, or visit thans.ca/our-members/

For provincial and police Victim Services contact information, see page 156.

You can learn more from the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia at legalinfo.org

Internet and computer safety

Computers and mobile devices can store a lot of private information, including:

- emails
- texts
- instant messages
- web searches
- bookmarked webpages
- webpages viewed
- internet-based phone and IP-TTY calls
- online purchases
- banking

SAFETY

If you are in danger, it is important that you try to use a safe computer that your partner cannot access. You can use a computer at a public library, at a community centre, or at a trusted friend's house.

Learn more about how to keep yourself safe online at: sheltersafe.ca/about/staysafe/

It is not always possible to delete or clear all of your activity on your computer and online. Also, it may be dangerous to change your computer activity (for example, by suddenly deleting the entire internet history if that is not your regular habit).

Email, instant messaging, text messaging, and social media posts are not safe or confidential ways to talk to someone about the danger or abuse in your life. If possible, you should call a crisis line on a safe phone instead.

RESOURCES

If you need support, you can call or text the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia (THANS) provincial toll-free line: 1-855-225-0220. You can reach them every day, any time of day or night. **If it's an emergency, call 911**.

If you use email or messaging to communicate about the abuse, make sure to use a safe computer or mobile device, and an account your partner does not know about. On social media, be aware that someone may not be who they say they are. Some people make fake profiles to get personal information or bully others. This is sometimes called "catfishing."

Online harassment

If someone is harassing you online or sharing intimate images without your consent, you are protected under the law.

Cyberbullying means posting things online or sending messages intended to hurt someone. Some examples are:

- pretending to be someone else to embarrass them or cause trouble with friends and family
- sharing private information online
- threatening someone online
- sending pornography, intimate images (including images created using artificial intelligence (AI)), or sexual messages without consent
- claiming someone committed a crime without proof
- telling someone to hurt or kill themselves
- posting or sending racist or sexist messages

You can speak to someone at the CyberScan unit of Nova Scotia. CyberScan staff can help you find a solution to cyberbullying or the sharing of intimate images (including images created using AI). They can contact the person who shared the images or cyberbullied you to try to resolve the matter informally using negotiation, mediation, and restorative practices.

CyberScan staff can help you gather evidence that might help you stop the cyberbullying.

CyberScan can also answer questions about the justice system and help you understand your options. This is a free service.

RESOURCES

Call the CyberScan Unit at 1-855-702-8324, or 902-424-6990 in Halifax, for information or to report online bullying.

Visit novascotia.ca/cyberscan for more information.

LEGAL INFO

What you need to know about the Intimate Images and Cyber-Protection Act: nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/intimate%20images%20and%20cyber-protection.pdf

Cyber-protection orders

If you're a victim of cyberbullying or unwanted sharing of intimate images (including images created using AI), or if you are a parent or guardian of a victim under the age of 19, you can apply to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia for a cyber- protection order under the Intimate Images and Cyber-protection Act.

A cyber-protection order can be issued to stop the bullying or image- sharing.

These orders may tell someone to:

- stop sharing an intimate image (including images created using AI)
- stop posting communications that would be considered cyberbullying
- stop contacting the victim
- take down or block access to an intimate image (including images created using AI) or communication
- participate in dispute resolution
- pay damages to the victim

You must pay to apply for a cyber-protection order. The cost is $218.05. You must also get a law stamp from the Court Administration Office for $25 + HST.

If your income is below a certain amount, you may apply to have the court fees waived so you won't have to pay them. To do this, you will have to fill out a Waiver of Fees Application and take it to the Court Administration Office.

LEGAL INFO

Court Administration Offices: courts.ns.ca/locations

You can apply for a protection order from the Justice of the Peace Centre by calling 1-866-816-6555.

Abuse and the workplace

Abuse can affect every aspect of your life, including your job. You may:

- miss work
- be distracted
- be less productive
- be more stressed than usual
- worry that you will lose your job if you talk about the abuse

It might help to tell your employer about the abuse. Some employers handle tough situations like this well, and some might not. In smaller workplaces and smaller communities, people know each other, and those ties affect how businesses and organizations work. No matter where you live, your employers may be able to help you stay safer at work. Think about how your employer might respond if you talk about abuse.

If you feel safe telling your employer that your partner is hurting you, your employer may be able help you stay as safe as possible at work.

You could also do some things that will help them to keep you safe. You could:

- tell your employer if you have protection orders or restraining orders, and if the workplace is mentioned in the orders. It may also help to give your employer a copy of the orders
- give your employer a recent photo or description of your partner to help security and reception staff know who to look for or screen
- talk to your employer about scheduling or other practices that could help you

If your partner abuses you while you are at work, write about it somewhere safe. Say how the abuse affects your work. That way, you can tell your boss what you are going through if they think you are not working.

Your employer may be able to do other things to help keep you safer at work. Some of the items below might help you, depending on your situation. **You may want to ask:**

- if you could work where visitors or customers cannot see you or talk to you
- to give you shifts during the day or when other people are working
- to remove your contact information from public records and directories
- if someone else can answer phone calls
- for a new phone number
- to have your partner's email address blocked from the office system
- to have a panic button installed in your work area
- for a well-lit parking spot near your office building
- if a co-worker could escort you to and from your car or bus stop

If you work with your partner, your employer can take other steps to keep you as safe as possible. These steps could include:

- making sure that your partner does not work closely with you or have access to your workspace
- giving both employees different work schedules and work sites
- holding your abusive partner accountable for any unacceptable behaviour in the workplace
- calling the police if your partner engages in violence, stalking, or harassment
- making sure your job is not negatively impacted because you told your employer about the abuse

(This list was adapted from Safety Planning at Work, Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children: makeitourbusiness.ca/guidelines/safety-planning-at-work.html.)

Domestic violence leave

If your partner abuses you or your children, you have the right to take time off work to do things you need to do for yourself and your family.

You can take up to 10 days off. You can take them as separate days or all together. Your job must pay you for five of those days. The other days are unpaid.

If you need more time off, you have the right to take another 16 weeks of unpaid time off. These weeks must be taken all together.

You can take domestic violence leave from work to:

- get medical help for you or your child for physical or psychological harm, or disability caused by the domestic violence
- get other counselling for you or your child
- get services from a victim services organization, transition house, the Department of Justice, police, or a lawyer to get ready to go to court about the domestic violence
- to move or look for a place to live

As an employee, you have a right to take time off if:

- you have worked at your job for at least three months
- you or your child (under 18) experiences domestic violence

If you need to take domestic violence leave, let your boss know in writing as soon as you can.

RESOURCES

For more information, you can contact Nova Scotia Labour Standards: 902-424-4311

Toll-free: within NS 1-800-315-0110
Email: LabourStandards@novascotia.ca

Once you have left

Once you are safe, you can take some time to decide what to do next. You will need time and space to make decisions that are best for you and your children.

Some of the first things you may need to find out are:

- where you can stay to be safe
- your legal rights
- what to do if you don't have enough money
- how to get child support and child custody

The following sections tell you about these issues.

You will also want to think about the people who are most important to you and how to talk with them about what has happened. They may have expectations about what you should do and how you should live. Take your time to think about what is right for you and how you can talk with them about it.

Where can I live?

When you leave a relationship where your partner is abusing you, you might need somewhere else to live. You can go to a transition house, a motel, or you can stay with your friends or family. In some communities, you may be able to get low-cost housing.

RESOURCES

The Housing Nova Scotia website has information and application forms for low-cost housing. (beta.novascotia.ca/apply-funding-create-affordable-housing-affordable-housing-development-program). You can also call 211 to find out more about housing.

If you need somewhere to live for a longer time after abuse, you may be able to stay at second-stage housing. Second-stage housing is safe and affordable housing where people leaving abuse can stay for up to two years. Your local transition house will have information about second-stage housing. You can call 211 for more information.

The process for getting a place in second-stage housing is different depending on the organization. For example, to get the support you need, you may have a telephone interview and then a follow-up meeting. Some second-stage housing organizations have a support worker who will work with you to figure out your housing needs. You may have to go through an application process. For more information, you can contact the second-stage housing organization nearest you. Call 211 for the best telephone number for you.

Renting an apartment or house

This section aims to help you find a new place to live without someone taking advantage of you. Websites like Kijiji and Facebook Marketplace are good places to start looking for an apartment. The classified ads in newspapers may also contain information about what is available, the cost of rent, and what is included.

When you rent an apartment, you usually sign a lease. A lease is a contract saying who is renting the place, how long it will be rented for, the cost of rent each month, and which services will be paid by the tenant and landlord. By law the landlord must give the tenant a copy of the lease.

You usually have to pay a damage deposit when you sign a lease. A damage deposit cannot be more than half a month's rent. If the apartment is not damaged when you move out, the landlord must return this money to you. If the apartment is damaged when you move out, the landlord may keep all or some of the money to pay for the damage. If the landlord does not give you this money when you move out, you can apply to the Residential Tenancies Board to get your damage deposit back.

For information on tenancy issues and contact information for Residential Tenancies, visit novascotia.ca/residential-tenancies-tenants-and-landlords/.

LEGAL INFO

The law says that a landlord cannot refuse to rent an apartment to someone because they have children. They can, however, refuse to rent to people with pets.

If a landlord refuses to rent to you because you have children, you have the right to file a human rights complaint. You can learn more at the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission website: humanrights.novascotia.ca.

If you are receiving Income Assistance, ESIA may pay the damage deposit if the health and safety of you or your family are in question. YWCA Halifax's December 6th fund may also be able to help: ywcahalifax.com/programs/gender-based-violence-supports.

APARTMENT CHECKLIST

What do I want in an apartment?

When you call to ask about an apartment, you should ask about the safety of the building, the cost, whether heat and lights are included, the damage deposit fee, the amount of space, and how close the building is to schools.

You should ask yourself some questions such as:

Safety

What do you need to be safe from your partner?

_____

_____

Do you need to be on the third floor or higher?

○ yes ○ no

Do you need a building with security?

○ yes ○ no

Cost

How much can you pay for rent?

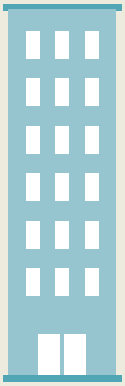
_____

How much can you pay for heat and lights?

_____

Are heat and lights included in the rent?

○ yes ○ no



Space

How many bedrooms do you need?

_____

How much space do you need?

_____

Location

How close do you need to be to work?

_____

Do you need to be close to schools?

○ yes ○ no

Other options

Do you want to live alone or share an apartment?

_____

If you have children, would you like to share with another single parent?

○ yes ○ no

My apartment list:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

If you receive Income Assistance, you may pay only a certain amount for rent. You can visit the Income Assistance website to find out how much assistance is available: novascotia.ca/coms/employment/income_assistance/index.html

You can learn more about the government's Income Assistance program by calling 211 or reading the section "What if I do not have enough money?" in this book.

Adsum's Housing Advocacy and Eviction Prevention program provides one-time emergency funding to eligible community members who are at risk of eviction, or to folks who are in the process of securing permanent housing. Adsum also supports women and gender-diverse individuals experiencing gender-based violence in applying for the Survivors of GBV Benefit through the government. For more information, visit: adsumforwomen.org/eviction-prevention/

Ending a lease early

If you are renting a home or apartment and your partner is abusing you, you may be able to end your lease with only one month's notice and without paying extra money to your landlord.

RESOURCES

For information on how to end your lease early, or to begin your application for a Domestic Violence Certificate, you can contact the Nova Scotia Victim Services office in your area: visit novascotia.ca/just/victim_services/contact.asp, or call their toll- free line: 1-888-470-0773. They will help you with the application process to get a Domestic Violence Certificate and explain how you should submit the notice to your landlord.

For more information about ending a lease early because of abuse, visit: nsfamilylaw.ca/family-violence/ending-lease-early-domestic-violence-certificates

What happens to our house?

If you are married or in a registered domestic partnership, you and your partner have equal legal rights to the house. If you are in a common-law relationship, you may also have some right to a property that you and your partner share.

You should talk with a lawyer about your property rights.

RESOURCES

For information about the differences between a marriage, a registered domestic partnership, and a common-law relationship, visit the Nova Scotia Family Law website: www.nsfamilylaw.ca/separation-divorce/common-law/common-law-relationships-registered-domestic-partnerships

Unless there is a court order or written agreement saying otherwise, both partners have a right to live in the matrimonial home. This is the home you lived in as a married couple, even if only one person's name is on the deed.

If you are married or in a registered domestic partnership, your partner cannot sell the house without your consent even if it is in your partner's name. You should still get advice from a lawyer as soon as you can.

If you are not married or in a registered domestic partnership, you might not have the right to stay in the home if your name is not on the deed or lease. If this is the case, you still have the right to remove anything that you owned before the relationship or bought during the relationship. Your personal things are still yours. This includes clothing, jewellery, furniture, electronics, and other personal items. Things you bought with your partner must be shared or split evenly.

If your children are with you, you may also take their things.

For information about taking the children with you, see page 110.

If you cannot agree about what happens to the house, you will have to go to court. A judge will decide what will happen with your house.

Can I keep my partner out of our shared home?

You can apply to the Nova Scotia Supreme Court or Supreme Court (Family Division) to get an "exclusive possession order." The laws that apply to homes on reserves also allow you to apply for an exclusive possession order. If you live on a reserve and your partner is a member of a First Nation and you are not, you can still apply for an order. It is a good idea to speak with a lawyer about your options.

You cannot keep your spouse or partner out of a matrimonial home without a court order such as a family court order, a peace bond, or an emergency protection order.

Your spouse or partner has no right to enter a property you have rented if their name is not on the lease.

For information about ending a lease early because of abuse, see page 82.

RESOURCES

For more information on abuse and your rights, visit The Nova Scotia Legal Information Society's factsheet on Domestic Violence: legalinfo.org/i-have-a-legal-question/family-law#family-violence-2

You can also find general information, legal FAQs, and resources concerning abuse at the Family Law Nova Scotia website: legalinfo.org/i-have-a-legal-question/family-law

What happens if our house is located on a reserve?

If you or your partner is a member of a First Nation and you live in a property on a reserve, different laws apply for dividing matrimonial property.

Under Canadian law, First Nation communities are allowed to create their own matrimonial property laws. If the First Nation has not made its own matrimonial property laws, there are federal laws that apply. These federal laws also apply to common-law couples.

The division of property on a reserve depends on whether a spouse or common-law partner is a member of the First Nation where the house is located. You should speak with a lawyer who can tell you how the law applies to your situation.

What if I do not have enough money?

If you don't have enough money, you may have a few options:

- you may be able to get support from your partner
- you may be able to get a job
- you may be able to get income assistance from the government
- if your partner is not paying support they owe you, you can sign up for the Maintenance Enforcement Program

Learn more about the **Maintenance Enforcement Program** (MEP) at: mep.novascotia.ca

You can also ask for help from friends or faith organizations or other community programs, like Schools Plus or food banks.

Support from your partner

Money your partner gives you to help you with costs is called "spousal support" or "spousal maintenance." Often the partner with a higher income pays money to the partner who has a lower income. A person is not automatically entitled to spousal support, and only a few common-law partners pay spousal support. The laws about spousal support are complicated, and courts think about many different factors when they decide to order spousal support. Ask a lawyer about whether you should apply for spousal support.

Learn more about spousal support at:
nsfamilylaw.ca/spousal-support/general-information

Getting a job

Many agencies in Nova Scotia provide support for career planning and job searching. Some agencies work only with women. Call 211 and see the Resources section at the back of this book for a list.

These agencies can help you prepare to go back to paid work, including helping you figure out:

- how to look for work
- what skills you have
- the type of work you would like
- what jobs exist
- what job training courses are available

It can help to tell everyone you know that you are looking for a job. Sometimes people know about jobs you can apply for. Public libraries also can help in many ways. Their resources can help you learn a new skill, search for a job, or improve your language skills.

RESOURCES

The government of Nova Scotia has resources to help you find a job: novascotia.ca/coms/employment/employment_services/index.html

The government of Canada also has information to help you find a job: canada.ca/en/services/jobs/opportunities.html

YWCA Halifax provides small loans with no interest, and other help, to women who want to leave abuse, but feel they need to stay because they don't have enough money or they can't find the housing they need, among other reasons.

Visit ywcahalifax.com/programs/violence-against-women or call 902-423-6162 to find out how to apply.

Income assistance

If you don't have enough money to pay for the things you need, you may qualify for the Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) program. The ESIA program helps with money for basic living needs and medication. It can also help you work towards being able to pay for things yourself. You may qualify for help from ESIA right away in an emergency.

RESOURCES

To apply for ESIA, you can contact the local Department of Opportunities and Social Development office. You can find a list of offices at novascotia.ca/coms/department/contact, and in the Resources section of this book, or by calling 211. Any information you give to ESIA will be kept confidential. A caseworker will meet with you to fill out an application and consent form and let you know if you are eligible. You can appeal any decision made about your eligibility.

If you are able to work, ESIA staff will help you make and follow an employment plan. If you cannot work, they will help you receive money to support yourself and your family.

You may be eligible for basic income assistance. The amount of assistance you receive depends on your circumstances. Find out more at: novascotia.ca/coms/employment/income_assistance/index.html

Income Assistance only allows a certain amount of money for housing. Find out more at: novascotia.ca/coms/employment/income_assistance/what-you-receive.html

If you do not get the Nova Scotia Child Benefit or the National Child Benefit Equivalent for a dependent child under the age of 18, you can ask for a Child Benefit Adjustment. You must file your income tax each year to get your Child Tax Benefits. Ask your caseworker for more information.

If you receive Income Assistance from the Government of Nova Scotia and your partner is not making support payments, you can register for the Maintenance Enforcement Program. This program will track and collect your maintenance payments for you. This means that if your partner is not making payments regularly or not making payments at all, ESIA will not include the support payments as income towards the income assistance that you receive.

Maintenance Enforcement Program

Once you get a child support order, your partner should send you money for the children regularly (usually every month). If they are not making payments, you can register your court order with the Nova Scotia Maintenance Enforcement Program (MEP).

MEP aims to make sure you get your child support or spousal support payments.

The Maintenance Enforcement Program will register your file as a "caution" case if they are aware that:

- your partner has abused you
- there are concerns for your safety
- you have a peace bond in place

This means they will tell you when they contact your partner.

If your partner threatens you or tells you to leave the program, you can contact the police and tell Maintenance Enforcement. Staff will work with you to make sure you get your payments.

You may want to open a personal bank account at a new bank and arrange for your cheques to be deposited directly. Your partner will not be able to access the money in your personal account.

You can learn more about the Maintenance Enforcement Program at mep.novascotia.ca/en/my-account.

RESOURCES

If you move

If you receive government benefits and you move or make other changes, you must tell those offices and the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

This includes changes to:

- your address
- your marital status
- your income
- how many children you have

Government benefits include:

- Nova Scotia Child Benefit (NSCB)
- National Child Benefit (NCB)
- Goods and Service Tax Credit (GST Credit)
- Nova Scotia Affordable Living Tax Credit (ALTC)

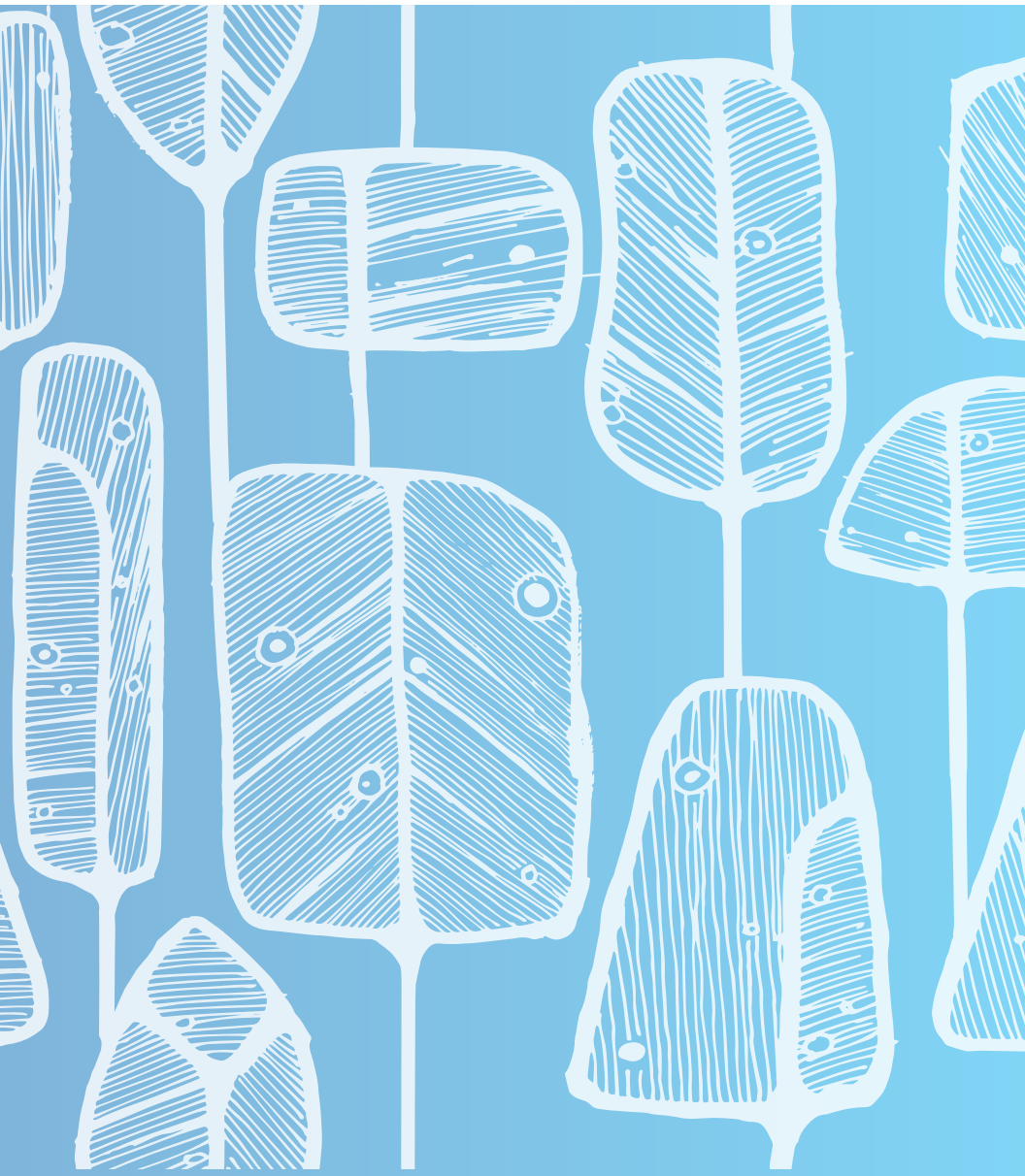
You can update your information with the Canadian Revenue Agency online (www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/e-services/digital-services-individuals.html), or by phone.

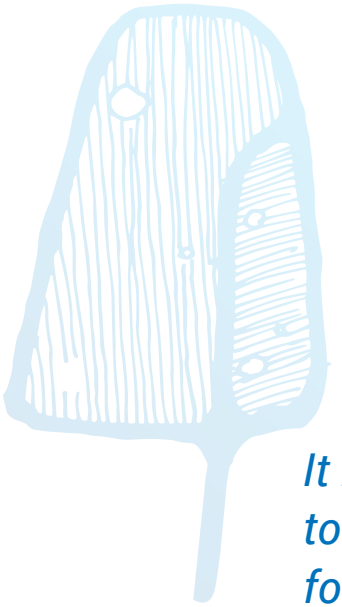
Canada Revenue Agency benefits contacts

Individual income tax and trust enquiries: 1-800-959-8281
Universal Child Care Benefit,
Canada Child Tax Benefit: 1-800-387-1193
GST/HST credit for individuals: 1-800-387-1193

If you leave your home and are expecting a cheque in the mail, call the office that sends those cheques. You can ask them not to mail them to your home address. You should call as soon as possible. You can also ask Canada Post to send your mail to a new address for a fee. It takes 5 to 10 days for the post office to start sending your mail to your new address.

Legal Matters





It may be helpful to ask friends or co-workers for names of good lawyers.

Finding a lawyer

If your partner is abusing you, you may need to know more about your rights. A lawyer can help with this.

Lawyers can give you professional legal advice about getting a peace bond, custody of the children, separation or divorce, and other legal matters. You might be scared or nervous about going to a lawyer. Laws and rules can be different from province to province. Nova Scotia lawyers can only give advice on laws, programs, and services that exist in Nova Scotia.

You may worry that you can't afford a lawyer, but you do have options. This section tells you where you can get free legal information and advice, how to find a free lawyer, how to choose a lawyer if you want to hire one, and information on other services that help families facing domestic violence or abuse.

More information about the law, lawyers, and legal matters is available from the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia (LISNS): legalinfo.org

LEGAL INFO

You should not sign any papers that might affect your legal rights until you speak to a lawyer.

Free legal advice

If you can't afford a lawyer, you can contact **Nova Scotia Legal Aid** (see page 145 for the location nearest you). This agency may provide free legal services on family law, criminal law, and social justice matters. If you meet the income criteria and have a legal issue that Legal Aid covers, you can get full legal representation at no cost.

RESOURCES

Find a Nova Scotia Legal Aid Office near you at:
nslegalaid.ca/legal-aid-offices

Legal Aid does not help with peace bonds or emergency protection orders.

Legal Aid works to provide some level of service to all people in the areas of law that they cover. This includes things like problems with Income Assistance, Canada Pension Plan, or public housing. Even if you do not qualify financially, you may receive some services. This could range from summary advice (brief, basic legal advice) from a Legal Aid lawyer to full representation in court.

In some situations, Legal Aid may also enter into repayment agreements for people who don't qualify, but cannot afford a private lawyer. Legal Aid will consider the person's specific circumstances (for example, whether that person has experienced abuse).

You can call your local Legal Aid office for more information or to book an appointment. You can also apply for Legal Aid online at nslegalaid.ca/online-application.

LEGAL INFO

Legal Aid can't work for both you and your partner. If your partner calls first, Legal Aid lawyers can't represent you, but they can provide a Legal Aid certificate you can take to another lawyer if you qualify for aid.

Find the Legal Aid office nearest you at:
nslegalaid.ca/legal-aid-offices

You can also talk to **Summary Advice Lawyers** who work at the family courts in Nova Scotia. They give basic legal advice free of charge, no matter how much income you have. The Summary Advice Counsel is a court-based service provided by Legal Aid to answer questions about family law. It is separate from the summary legal advice provided by Legal Aid lawyers. Summary Advice Counsel helps people who need advice on family law matters, but do not have a lawyer of their own.

You can find contact information for the **Summary Advice Counsel** nearest you at:
nsfamilylaw.ca/summary-advice-counsel

The Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia offers a low-cost **Lawyer Referral Service**. You can book your first meeting with a lawyer for up to 30 minutes for $20 plus tax.
legalinfo.org/i-have-a-legal-question/lawyers-legal-help

Call Monday to Friday during regular business hours:
Phone: 902-455-3135
Toll-free: 1-800-665-9779
You cannot leave a message for a return phone call.

Hiring a lawyer

It may be helpful to ask friends or co-workers for names of good lawyers.

When you see a lawyer, you may find it useful to bring a list of questions and as much information with you as you can.

The lawyer may ask you for some information that helps them get ready to go to court:

- your marriage certificate or proof of registration for your registered domestic partnership
- the lease, deed, or mortgage to your house or apartment
- your partner's most recent pay stubs or income tax return
- your income tax return
- bank statements
- immigration papers/passport
- a written record of your partner's abusive actions
- any court orders and notice of court applications

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR LAWYER CHECKLIST

Here are some issues you may want to discuss with the lawyer:

- legal fees
- custody and access to the children
- who can take the children
- spousal support and child support
- applying for income assistance
- managing debts and assets
- what money is yours
- separation and divorce
- property rights
- concerns about your immigration status
- who has rights to the house and belongings that you and your partner shared
- going to court and what to expect in court
- what the judge will ask
- whether you should apply for a peace bond or an emergency protection order
- whether you or your partner can leave the province or country

Free legal information

There is information on legal matters throughout this book, but other places also offer reliable free legal information.

The **Family Law Nova Scotia website**, nsfamilylaw.ca, is a good resource for legal information on family law matters.

Transition houses with the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia give good information on police procedures, how the justice system works, and legal matters. The staff at the transition house can also help you get legal advice. You can talk with a transition house worker even if you are not staying there.

RESOURCES

Family Law Nova Scotia: nsfamilylaw.ca

Transition House Association of Nova Scotia: thans.ca or call 211 to find a transition house near you.

If you need legal information and resources in French, you can contact the Association des juristes d'expression française de la Nouvelle-Écosse (AJEFNÉ). Through its bilingual Justice Access Centre, AJEFNÉ provides free legal information in person, by telephone, and online.

RESOURCES

You can contact AJEFNÉ 902-433-2085
Toll-free: 1-844-250-8471
or visit their website: ajefne.ns.ca

The **Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia** (LISNS) gives free legal information to anyone. They offer information on their website, online chat, and a legal information line. You can also email your legal questions to them.

RESOURCES

Website: legalinfo.org
Online chat with a **Legal Information Counsellor** at legalinfo.org
Legal information line: 902-455-3135
Email questions about the law to questions@legalinfo.org

Nova Scotia Legal Aid also gives free legal information in online chat. You can chat privately with a lawyer about family law or social justice issues. Family law includes separation and divorce, parenting arrangements, child support, and child protection. Social justice includes Income Assistance, disability benefits, landlord-tenant issues, and Employment Insurance benefits.

RESOURCES

The **Nova Scotia Legal Aid** family law chat is available on Tuesdays, 3-5 p.m.
The social justice chat is available on Wednesdays, 3-5 p.m.
Visit: nslegalaid.ca to find a time to chat.

Some **RCMP and police departments** have Victim Services which provide information and support to people who have been abused. Victim Services also provide information about community resources, and what to expect as the case moves through the justice system.

There are also **Nova Scotia Victim Services** offices across the province. Staff at these offices can answer questions about your case and the criminal justice process, keep you informed of court proceedings, and help you prepare to testify in court.

RESOURCES

Find out more about **Victim Services** by calling 211.

Help on family law matters is also available in Cape Breton and Halifax Regional Municipality at **Family Law Information Program Centres** at the Family Division of the Supreme Court. nsfamilylaw.ca/programs-services/family-law-information-program

Independent legal advice for sexual assault survivors

To give adult survivors of sexual assault better support, the province of Nova Scotia created the **Legal Advice for Sexual Assault Survivors program**. This program provides two hours of free legal advice from a lawyer.

To use this service, you must be 16 years or older, and the assault must have taken place in Nova Scotia.

RESOURCES

You can call 211 to learn more about this program. You don't have to talk about what happened. You only have to say that you were sexually assaulted in Nova Scotia, and that you would like to speak with a lawyer. If more time is needed, you call 211 again and they will send you another certificate number for another two-hour session of legal advice.

If you're not sure if you were sexually assaulted, you can still call 211 and register for the program. When you meet with the lawyer, they will help you define what happened to you according to the law.

After you register, they will send you a package with a certificate number for two hours of legal advice. They can send it in the mail or by email, depending upon your needs. The package includes a list of lawyers, information about them, and their contact information.

The certificate is for you to talk to a pre-approved lawyer about your sexual assault and for you to get legal advice about the sexual assault. The certificate can only be used for this purpose. It is not for legal representation in court.

Once you choose a lawyer, you can contact them to speak with them and provide them the two-hour certificate number. This is how they will know that you are part of the program.

You can meet with the lawyer in person, by telephone, or online.

During your session, the lawyer will help you figure out your legal options, like deciding if you want to report to the police, pursue civil action, or take no action.

Confidentiality

Before you share what happened to you, the lawyer will explain what confidentiality means. Once you understand these limits, you can choose to go through with the session or not. A lawyer will keep anything you tell them private, unless they have to tell someone to protect you or another person from physical harm, or to prevent a crime that is about to happen.

Translation services

If English or French is not your first language, translation services are available for free. Because it can take more time to have an effective meeting with a translator, you will have three hours with the lawyer and a translator for every two-hour certificate you use.

The program was developed by Nova Scotia's Department of Justice, but the Department does not have access to your names or contact information. When the lawyers send in their invoices, they use only the certificate number.

RESOURCES

Independent legal advice for sexual assault survivors:
novascotia.ca/sexualassaultlegaladvice

Domestic Violence Court Program

People in Cape Breton and Halifax Regional Municipality who have been charged with a crime related to their partner may use a special Domestic Violence Court Program. If the accused person pleads guilty, the Domestic Violence Court will offer services like counselling, anger management classes, and parenting classes to that person.

The court may also put rules in place for that person, such as people or places they must stay away from and when they must be in their own place. If the accused person follows the rules and works well with the services, they may not have a criminal record when they finish their program.

To use the Domestic Violence Court Program, the person charged must:

- be 18 years of age or older
- live in, or be connected to, the Cape Breton Regional Municipality or Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), or the offence must have occurred in Cape Breton or HRM
- be willing to plead guilty to the charges against them and accept responsibility for the harm caused
- be assessed to see if they are a good fit for the program
- be accepted for the program
- have the consent of the Crown attorney

RESOURCES

For more information on the **Domestic Violence Court Program**:
Sydney . . . . . (902) 563-3510
Halifax . . . . . (902) 233-0386
Email: DVCP@novascotia.ca
Web: courts.ns.ca/courts/provincial-court/domestic-violence-court-program

Your Children



Children and abuse

Children often see and hear more than we think. They have probably seen or heard the abuse, and it has likely affected them.

Children who see or hear abuse at home can be as severely affected as children who are direct victims of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse. They might:

- be scared, confused, and unhappy
- have physical signs such as headaches or stomach aches
- blame themselves
- experience insomnia, nightmares, or bed-wetting
- have speech difficulties or stop talking
- harm or cut themselves
- behave aggressively or become withdrawn
- cling to the abused parent or try to take care of them
- exhibit disrespectful or abusive behaviour toward the abused parent
- feel responsible for the abuse
- seek attention by lying or stealing

When children experience abuse in their home, even at a young age, they are at risk of getting stuck in a cycle of abuse.

Children who are exposed to abuse often believe that it's okay to hurt people they love. They learn that it's normal for someone who loves them to hurt them.

Children from violent homes may end up believing that:

- it's okay to hit, boss, or control their partners
- abuse is normal
- abuse is a way to win arguments and get your own way
- it's okay to bully and control others
- some people are naturally inferior to others
- some people must put up with abuse to be in a relationship
- "real men" don't feel or show weakness, fear, sadness, or confusion
- adults have power they often misuse
- all men are bullies who push women and children around, and women are weak and can be pushed around
- punishment means love
- women can't take care of themselves or their children
- you can only express anger through aggression and abuse

If a child is exposed to family violence, it is the responsibility of all community members and professionals to report it to Child and Family Wellbeing. The Nova Scotia Children and Family Services Act (2018) recognizes family violence as a form of child abuse. This includes a child being directly exposed by witnessing and/or being harmed during an incident as well as a child being indirectly exposed to violence, such as seeing or hearing an incident of violence or being aware of the violence through seeing physical injuries, tension in the home, broken objects, or arguments.

It is important to note that exposure to family violence as defined in the Children and Family Services Act includes circumstances where "the child has been exposed to, or has been made aware of, violence by or towards a parent or guardian, or another person residing with the child, and the parent or guardian."

Anyone who suspects that a child under the age of 19 is experiencing child abuse or neglect is required by law to report it. Anyone who suspects a child under the age of 16 is being abused by a third party is also required by law to report it.

The safety of children is always a priority for people who work with victims of violence and abuse. In all cases of family violence service providers, outreach services, and transition house staff must report to Child and Family Wellbeing if they suspect abuse or neglect. This includes direct and indirect exposure to abuse.

Indirect exposure is when children can see or hear family violence.

When incidents of alleged abuse or neglect are reported to Child and Family Wellbeing, a social worker may visit your home to talk to you and gather information to ensure everyone is safe. If safety planning is needed, the social worker can help you find services and supports.

Bullying and being bullied

Children who are exposed to abuse may become insecure and be at risk of bullying or cyberbullying. They may also become bullies themselves.

Bullying is when someone repeatedly tries to hurt another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, reputation, or property.

It is also bullying to help or encourage someone to bully another person.

Bullying is an expression of aggression and an abuse of power that is similar to the abuse children might see at home.

Help for children and youth

Children and youth who are exposed to abuse are probably confused, scared, and angry. They may need help dealing with their feelings.

Children need to know that:

- they are safe and will stay safe
- the abuse is not their fault
- they are loved
- it's alright to feel whatever they are feeling
- it's okay to talk about it
- they will be listened to and understood
- it's not okay for anyone to hurt other people

You may need to tell your children it is still okay to love the abusive parent, but they also need to understand that it's not okay for someone to hurt another person. They need to know that you are alright even if you cry or get upset.

__Remember:__ Children show their anger and fear to the people they trust. They need to learn how to express their feelings without using abuse.

Children may need someone to blame. They may see you as the one to blame because you are the one who left or reported the abuse. Perhaps they often saw your partner blame you for things, and so they do the same.

It can be difficult for you if your children blame you. You will need to have patience in order to help your children understand why change is necessary.

What about parenting responsibilities?

Get legal advice right away about parenting responsibilities. If you want decision-making responsibility for your children, apply for a **Parenting Order** right away. The most important thing in parenting arrangements is what would be in the best interest of the child. A judge will consider the abuse when they decide what is in a child's best interests.

Usually you apply for decision-making responsibilities at the court closest to where the children usually live. The Justice Centre in your area can provide the name and location of the court where you can start the application.

Court staff can give you information about the documents you need to apply for a parenting order. It is best if you speak to a lawyer before you start your application, but you can get a lawyer at any time during the court process, even if you start the application on your own.

If your partner does not follow the terms of the parenting order, you should contact your lawyer.

RESOURCES

For more information about Parenting Plans or Parenting Orders, you can refer to the Family Law Nova Scotia website: nsfamilylaw.ca/children/general-information/parenting-arrangements-faqs

If you are afraid that your partner may try to take the children to another country, you can ask the **Passport Office** to put the children's names on a security list so that you are called if your partner tries to get passports for them.

You can apply in person or by mail and must give them:

- your own identification
- the children's birth certificates
- court documents (such as parenting arrangements, peace bonds, etc.) and
- a letter explaining why you want the children's names on the security list

The Passport Office usually keeps names on this list for 90 days. After 90 days, you must reapply or provide related court documentation.

To learn more about this, visit: www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-passports/child-passport/child-safety-list.html

To find the nearest Passport Office, visit: cic.gc.ca/english/passport/map/map.asp

If your children have another nationality and you are concerned that your partner will try to take them to another country, you can contact that country's **embassy or consulate** and ask them to refuse to issue passports for the children. Consulate and embassy phone numbers can be found in the government blue pages in the phone book, or at travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies-consulates

You can also learn more from the government of Canada at www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-passports/child-passport/child-safety-list.html

The law says that you and the other parent must both agree if one of you wants to take the children out of the province, or even move to another city, town, or community in your province. If you want to move and take the children and the other parent doesn't agree, you need to apply for a court order.

Supervised parenting and exchange

Courts often decide that it is in the child's best interests to continue their relationship with both parents. In some cases, a judge might decide that a child should only see a parent when another adult can be there, too.

This is called the **Supervised Parenting and Exchange Program**. It provides a safe setting for visits or exchanges. Safety is the top priority in supervised parenting and exchange.

Supervised parenting time allows children to visit with the parent who doesn't have decision-making responsibilities while a trained person from a community agency supervises the visit.

Supervised exchange allows the parents to drop off and pick up the child without having to meet.

If the judge or court thinks your child needs supervised parenting time with their parents, the judge will make a court order.

If the court thinks a parent needs help or support caring for a child, the judge might also order that a family friend or family member, like a grandparent, supervise visits.

To find out more about the different types of exchange, visit nsfamilylaw.ca/programs-services/supervised-parenting-and-exchange-program

Supervised parenting and exchange visits are meant to last only a short time. A typical order might be 12 visits for an hour and a half, or 18 one-hour visits. After that, there should be a plan in place to help parents work toward caring for children on their own during parenting visits. But the court can give more time for supervision if parents need more support.

Contact a court near you to find out if they offer a Supervised Parenting and Exchange Program.

For more information about the Supervised Parenting and Exchange Program, visit: www.nsfamilylaw.ca/sites/default/files/editor-uploads/supervised_access_parent_brochure_rev.pdf

Child support

If your children live with you, you can apply for child support or maintenance from their other parent.

You must try to get a **maintenance order or maintenance agreement** for yourself and your children if you want to apply for Employment Support and Income Assistance. For more information, visit: novascotia.ca/coms/employment/income_assistance/index.html.

You can apply for maintenance through the Family Court. The court will work out the amount of support to be paid. Support payments can also be worked out during a divorce proceeding.

Transition house staff can give you information and may be able to help you apply. You can also get forms and ask questions about them at Family Law Information Centres in Family Courts across the province. If you have questions about applying for maintenance, you can read more at nsfamilylaw.ca or call the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia at 1-800-665-9779.

Try to get legal advice about child support. The court can only work out the amount of child support if the other parent gives their financial information. If your partner will not give you the information, a lawyer may be able to help.

If you do not have a maintenance order or if you think your child support or maintenance payments are too low, you may be referred to the Maintenance Enforcement Program.

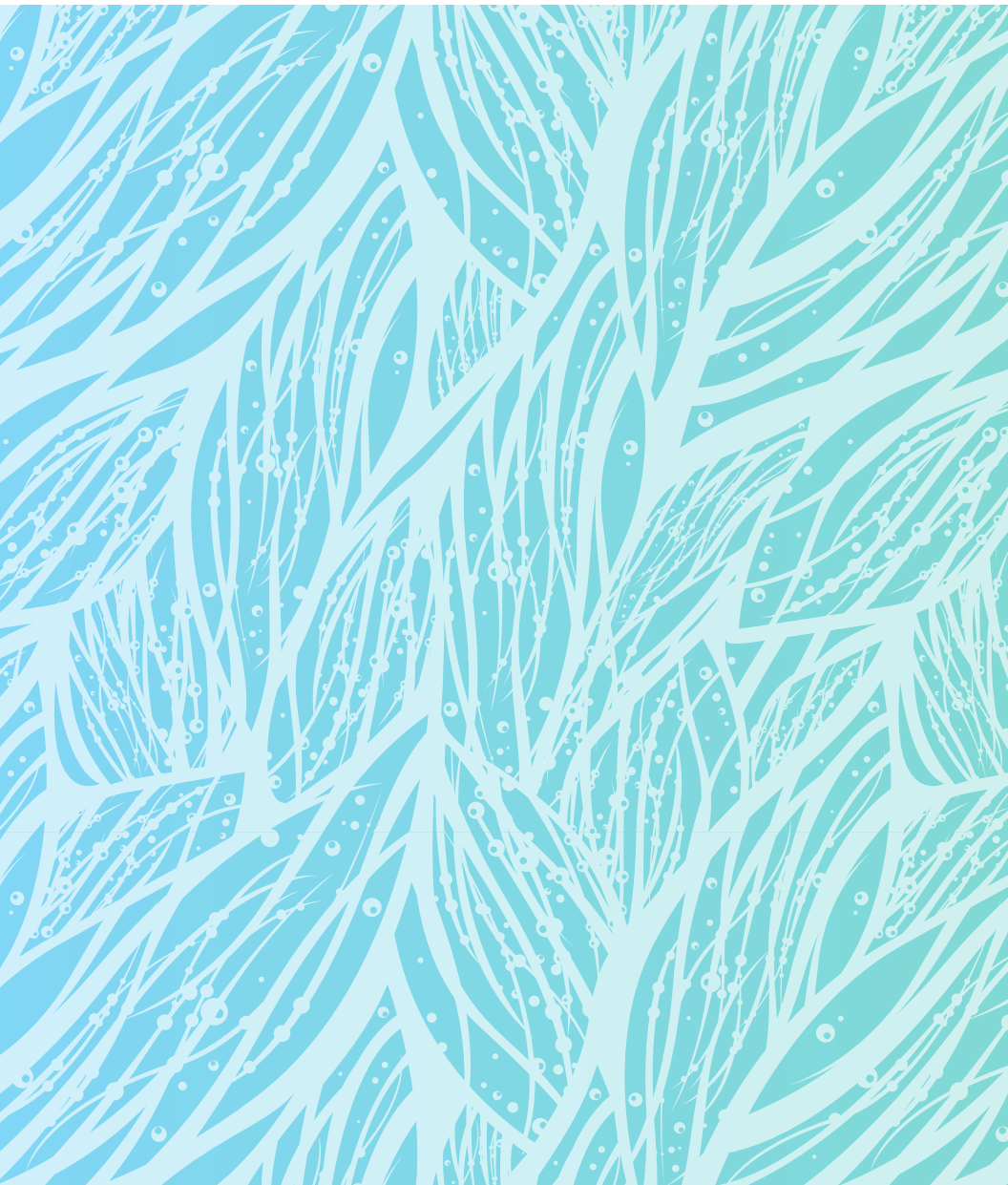
Maintenance Enforcement Program

Once you get a child support order, your partner should send you money for the children regularly (usually every month). If they are not making payments, you can register your court order with the Nova Scotia Maintenance Enforcement Program.

This program aims to make sure you get your child support or spousal support payments.

You can find out more about the Maintenance Enforcement Program on page 86.

How Neighbours, Friends, Families, and Co-workers Can Help



There are steps you can take if you suspect someone you know is abusing their partner, or if someone you know is being abused. This section provides information and suggestions for neighbours, friends, families, and co-workers of people who are experiencing abuse. While this book talks about women who experience abuse, most of the information is true about anyone who experiences abuse.

See “Understanding Abuse,” starting on page 1, to learn about different forms of abuse.

Remember: it is against the law for children to be exposed to abuse. If you know of a child who may be experiencing or seeing abuse, you must report this to Child and Family Wellbeing.

Dealing with your thoughts and fears

If you think that someone is abusing their partner or that someone is being abused, you might want to help, but not know how. The first thing you can do is reflect on your own thoughts and fears about abuse.

Sometimes the abusive person feels ashamed about their behaviour. If you want to talk to them, you should assume that they would prefer to have a relationship without abuse.

Sometimes both partners are ashamed about the abuse. The shame might cause them to say the abuse is less serious than it really is, or even deny that it is happening.

Sometimes the abusive person is confused about who is responsible for their abusive behaviour. Sometimes they want to stop abusing their partner, but think that it is the abused partner's responsibility to stop it. Sometimes they say things like "If she disrespects me, then I will disrespect her," "She made me do it," or "She drove me to it." Remember, only the abusive partner is responsible for the abuse.

Sometimes women who have experienced abuse are also confused about who is responsible. They may blame themselves for their partner's behaviour. It is not the abused partner's fault. There is no excuse for abuse.

Often people who abuse are not abusive all the time. They can also be respectful and caring to their partners, family, and friends. People often think a person who is abusive could never act this way. It can be confusing to friends and family to learn that a person they know as loving and caring has been abusive toward their partner.

Friends and family may think the abuse can't be serious if someone stays with their partner. Read pages 61–63 to understand why women may stay with a person who abuses, and how difficult it can be for women to make changes. Many women love their partners and just want the abuse to stop. It may be helpful to read pages 121–126 about how to be a good support person.

Steps you can take

Learn about violence against women and others and the supports available. Reading this book is a good place to start. It is important to be supportive, but it is also important to get professional help if it is needed. It can be helpful to talk to a counsellor who works with these issues, especially for long-term support. You can contact a transition house in your area to talk to someone about how you can help. You can also text or call 211 to ask about resources in your area or visit ns.211.ca. You do not have to tell them your name. Call 211 to learn about these services.

RESOURCES

Neighbours, Friends, and Families is a public education and awareness program with a toll-free information line to help people learn about the signs of abuse and what can be done to prevent further abuse.

Call 1-855-225-0220, or visit women.novascotia.ca/womens-safety/offering-support/neighbours-friends-and-families for information about this program.

Let her know you are there for her

Asking someone if they are being abused can be very uncomfortable, but you only need to ask "Do you need to talk?" or say "I've been worried about you."

Never tell your friend or family member what to do. She has to make choices for herself. Telling her to leave will not help. You can make suggestions and ask her what she thinks. If you are unsure what she wants from you, ask.

Know that you are not responsible for her choices. What she does is her choice. Don't take the credit or the blame for her decisions.

Be a good listener

Being a good listener can be emotionally demanding. Details about abuse are often painful. You have to be balanced and stable yourself, and able to handle your friend or relative's stories and emotional stress. Your job is to be there for her, to just listen. By listening, you can help her work through what is happening and the impact it is having on her and her children. You can affirm that the abuse is not her fault.

Patience is essential when supporting someone who is being abused. Making changes is a process, not a single act: often it takes months, or even years. Your friend or relative may talk for a very long time before she acts to change or leave her relationship.

Help her make a safety plan if she wants one

Your friend or family member may need to plan an escape route, where she could go to in an emergency, and how she would get there.

See pages 46–48 for information on safety planning.

Encourage her to call police if she is being threatened or hurt. Officers are trained to handle abuse cases and have procedures they must follow. Some departments have Victim Services.

If she is not comfortable speaking to police, it might be helpful to talk with her about who she can call for help in an emergency.

See pages 34–35 of this book to find out what will happen if she or a neighbour calls the police.

Let her know help is available

Let your friend or family member know that she can get help and support from a counsellor, and that there are programs that can help her partner stop their abusive behaviour. The back of this book has lists of support agencies and programs. Call 211 to find services near you.

Go with her to appointments

Your support will mean a great deal, even if it is simply accompanying your friend or relative to appointments.

Talking to doctors, police, and lawyers can be a scary experience. So can attending court. Offer to go with her as a support person. Looking after her children or helping with transportation so she can go to appointments can also be a big help.

If she wants to leave, help her find a safe place to go.

Think carefully before you offer your home. Having a woman and her children live with you can be extremely stressful. Having good boundaries will help you help them in the best way you can.

Help your friend or relative connect with counsellors at a local shelter to discuss her options before you make any decisions. It may be useful to help her brainstorm places to stay, look for an apartment, or reach out to community groups that provide support.

Be aware of her needs

Your friend or relative may have specific needs. She may have experienced racism or homophobia or transphobia. She may have felt excluded and isolated in the past when thinking about getting help. This may make her reluctant to turn to particular organizations or people for support.

Read pages 16–27 to see if any of the information applies to your friend or family member. You may be able to help her find support from someone who understands her needs.

Dos and don'ts when offering support

You can help your friend or family member and her partner learn about what supports are available to them. You can listen and support both of them. You can give them information about abuse and organizations that can help.

At the same time, you cannot make decisions for them. You cannot assume you know what is best for them. You may think you know what is best for your friend or family member, her partner, and her children. However, it is up to your friend or family member to decide for herself what they want to do.

Don't blame your friend or family member for her partner's choice to abuse. Even if she has done things you don't agree with, she is not responsible for her partner's choices.

You can encourage your friend or family member to take responsibility for her own choices, but not her partner's choices. Many women say their friends or relatives offered practical support that helped them, but being blamed for their partner's choices made them feel worse.

Don't say "I told you so." Resist the urge to say "I knew this would happen." No one wants to hear that, and it isn't helpful.

Don't make judgmental statements. Many women say that they didn't tell someone about the abuse because they heard statements such as "I think some women like being controlled by a strong man," or "No one would ever get away with abusing me!"

Do take care of yourself. Be aware that your friend or relative's abuse may trigger memories of your own. If this happens, think about helping her find someone else to support her.

Do find a support person for yourself. Find someone you can talk to about your own feelings, but be careful not to share your friend's personal or private information.

Sometimes the abusive person will feel threatened by your conversations with the person experiencing the abuse. In these situations, it can be helpful to reach out to the abusive partner to find out how they might be supported as well. Many women want the abusive partner to have support even if they are no longer together in a relationship.

Call the police or make a safety plan if you are being threatened in any way.

Resources



Cut or tear along this line. Fold up and keep in a safe place.

Safety Alert

If you have experienced domestic abuse, know that you are not alone, and that there are a variety of supports available to you.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

If you are seeking help or are looking for information about abuse, you can call the **Transition House Association of Nova Scotia 24-hour toll-free line**: 1-855-225-0220

Women's, Men's, and All Genders Helplines: 211

Help Lines

Crime Stoppers 1-800-222-8477

Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868

Mental Health Crisis Line
Serves all of Nova Scotia (24/7)1-888-429-8167

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre
Crisis Line 902-422-4240

Your local number:

_____

Quick connect

Community and social services 211
ns.211.ca

HealthLink 811
Hearing impaired 711
811.novascotia.ca

Women's, Men's, and All Genders Helplines:211

Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centres

Millbrook 902-756-3440
Toll-free: 1-800-565-4741

We'koqma'q 902-756-3440
Toll-free: 1-800-565-3440

Transition Houses and Shelters Crisis Lines

Amherst, Autumn House 902-667-1200

Antigonish, Naomi Society. 902-863-3807

Bridgewater, Harbour House 902-543-3999

Digby, Juniper House 902-742-8689
Toll-free: 1-800-266-4087

Halifax, Bryony House 902-422-7650

Kentville, Chrysalis House 902-679-1922
Toll-free: 1-800-264-8682

New Glasgow, Tearmann House . 902-752-0132
Toll-free: 1-800-831-0330

Port Hawkesbury, Leeside Transition House
. 902-625-2444
Toll-free: 1-800-565-3390

Shelburne, Juniper House 902-742-8689
Toll-free: 1-800-266-4087

Sydney, Cape Breton Transition House
. 902-539-2945
Toll-free: 1-800-563-2945

Truro, Third Place 902-893-3232
Toll-free: 1-800-565-4878

Yarmouth, Juniper House 902-742-8689
Toll-free: 1-800-266-4087

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Resources

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2SLGBTQQIA+ People

Egale Canada 416-964-7887
egale.ca

Halifax Pride
halifaxpride.com/nsresources

Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project
nsrap.ca

PFLAG Canada Ltd
pflagcanada.ca

Pride Cape Breton
pridecb.com

Youth Project 902-429-5429
youthproject.ns.ca

African Nova Scotian Women

African United Baptist Women's Institute 902-434-8837
www.aubans.ca

Association of Black Social Workers 902-407-8809
nsabsw.ca

Coverdale Courtwork Services
Supporting women through the justice system.
Halifax 902-422-6417
coverdale.ca

Cumberland African Nova Scotian Association
Cumberland County 902-661-1509
www.facebook.com/p/Cumberland-African-Nova-Scotian-Association-CANSA-61554305182948

Elizabeth Fry Society
For women in conflict with the law.
Halifax 902-454-5041
efrymns.ca

Cape Breton 902-539-6165
efrycb.com/home.html

Preston and Area Family Resource Centre 902-462-7266
prestonareafamilyresource.ca

YWCA Halifax 902-423-6162
ywcahalifax.com

Children's Services

Nova Scotia Child Benefit . . . . . Toll-free: 1-877-424-1177
novascotia.ca/coms/families/ChildBenefit.html

Child Care Information and Subsidies

Child Care Directory
nsbr-online-services.novascotia.ca/DCSOnline/ECDS/loadSearchPage.action

Child Care Subsidy Program. 1-844-804-2084
childcarenovascotia.ca/families/child-care-subsidy

Child and Family Wellbeing Services

Child and Family Wellbeing Services, Department of Opportunities and Social Development

Call Opportunities and Social Development if you believe a child is in immediate danger.

Weekdays, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm . . . . . Toll-free: 1-877-424-1177
novascotia.ca/coms

Regional Offices
Call 211 to find the regional office nearest you.
novascotia.ca/coms/department/contact/index.html

Mi'kmaw Family and Children Services
mfcs.ca
Eskasoni 902-379-2433
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-263-8300
Sipekne'katik. 902-758-3553
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-263-8686
Bear River 902-376-3553
Dartmouth Office 902-758-3553
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-263-8686

Counselling Services for Children

IWK Community Mental Health
Intake 902-464-4110
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-888-470-5888
iwk.nshealth.ca/mental-health

Kids Help Phone . . . . . .Toll-free: 1-800-668-6868
kidshelpphone.ca
Text "Connect" to 686868

Counselling Services for Adults

Family Service Association . . . . . Toll-free: 1-888-330-5952
www.familyservicens.ca/contact

Criminal Injuries Counselling Program
Phone services 902-424-4651
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-888-470-0773
General inquiries 902-424-3309
novascotia.ca/just/victim_services

Employment

Employment Outreach Agencies

Job Junction Employment and Career Resource Centre
Halifax 902-455-9675
jobjunction.ca/services

Team Work Cooperative 902-422-8900
www.teamworkcooperative.ca

Service Canada Centres (ESDC)
Employment Insurance (EI). . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-206-7218
CPP/Old Age Security . . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-277-9914
canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/portfolio/service-canada.html

Labour Standards 1-888-315-0110
novascotia.ca/lae/employmentrights

Employment Support and Income Assistance

Department of Opportunities and Social Development
Call 211 to find your regional office.
novascotia.ca/coms/department/contact/index.html

Family Courts

courts.ns.ca/Courthouse_Locations/Courthouse_Locations_Map.htm

Family Division

Yarmouth 902-742-0550

Justice Centre and Family Court Office

Amherst 902-667-2256
Antigonish 902-863-3676
Bridgewater 902-543-4679
Kentville 902-679-6070
Port Hawkesbury 902-625-2665
Shubenacadie 902-758-4546
Yarmouth 902-742-0500

Justice Centre

Annapolis Royal 902-532-5462
Digby 902-245-4567
Pictou 902-485-7350
Port Hawkesbury 902-625-2665
Truro 902-893-5840

Supreme Court (Family Division)

Halifax 902-424-3990
Sydney 902-563-2200
Truro 902-893-4272

Family Law Resources

Family Law Nova Scotia

nsfamilylaw.ca
Legal information, court forms, and guides to applying to court.

Summary Advice Counsel 1-877-420-6578

nsfamilylaw.ca/summary-advice-counsel
Free basic advice about family law. Available across the province.

Family Law Information Program (FLIP)

Halifax 902-424-5232
Sydney 902-563-5761
nsfamilylaw.ca/family-law-information-program-flip-centre

Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia 902-455-3135
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-665-9779
legalinfo.org

Family Resources

Antigonish and Pictou Counties

Kids First Family Resource Centre

Antigonish 902-863-3848
Guysborough 902-533-3881
Pictou County 902-755-5437
St. Mary's (Sherbrooke) 902-870-7437
kids1st.ca

Cape Breton

Special Needs and Moving On

Baddeck 1-800-840-5465
specialneedsproject.ca

Family Place Resource Centre

Inverness 902-258-3002
Sydney 902-562-5616
Port Hawkesbury / Richmond County 902-345-2250
Victoria County, North of Smokey 902-336-2208
Victoria County, South of Smokey 902-295-2956
familyplace.ca

Military Family Resource Centre

Sydney . . . . . .902-563-7100 ext. 7107
halifaxmfrc.ca

Colchester and Cumberland County

Maggie's Place

Amherst 902-667-7250
Truro 902-895-0200
maggiesplace.ca

Digby, Yarmouth, and Shelburne Counties

South Shore Family Resource Centres

Digby County 902-245-2300
Lunenburg County 902-543-3119
Queens County 902-354-7176
Shelburne County 902 875 3256
southshorefamilyresource.org

Le Centre provincial de ressources prescolaires
Saulnierville 902-769-5850

Parent's Place
Yarmouth. 902-749-1718
yarmouthparentsplace.com

Guysborough County

Kids First Family Resource Centre
Guysborough 902-533-3881
kids1st.ca

Halifax Regional Municipality

Bayers Westwood Family Support Resource Centre
Halifax 902-454-9444
facebook.com/bwfrc

Chebucto Family Centre.. 902-479-3031
chebuctofamilycentre.ca

Eastern Shore Family Resource Association
Porters Lake 902-827-1461
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-866-847-1461
esfamily.org

Fairview Resource Centre 902-443-9569
frcns.com

Family SOS
Head office 902-455-5515
familysos.ca

Memory Lane Family Place. 902-864-6363
facebook.com/memorylanefamilyplace

Mi'kmaq Child Development Centre 902-422-7850
www.mymnfc.com/daycare

Military Family Resource Centre . . . . . Toll-free: 1-888-753-8827
CFB Halifax: 902-427-7788
CFB Shearwater. 902-720-1885
halifaxmfrc.ca

PACT: Parents and Children Together
Dartmouth 902-434-8952
pactfrc.com

Musquodoboit Valley Family Resource Centre 902-384-2794
www.facebook.com/MVFRC

North End Parent Resource Centre 902-492-0133
neprc.ca/about

The North Grove 902-464-8234
thenorthgrove.ca

Preston and Area Family Resource Centre 902-462-7266
prestonareafamilyresource.ca

Kings and Annapolis Counties

Kids Action Program
Canning 902-698-0269
kidsactionprogram.com

Greenwood Military Family Resource Centre. 902-765-5611
cfmws.ca/greenwood/military-family-services

Kings County Family Support Centre
Kentville. 902-678-5760
kcfrc.ca

Family Matters – Annapolis County Family Resource Centre
Lawrencetown, Resource Centre 902-584-2210
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-399-7119
family-matters.ca

Family Resource Centre of West Hants
Windsor 902-798-5961
www.frcwesthants.ca

Lunenburg and Queens Counties

Better Together Family Resource Centre
Bridgewater 902-543-3119
southshorefamilyresource.org/include/lunenburg.htm

Queens Family Resource Centre
Liverpool 902-354-7176
southshorefamilyresource.org/include/queens.htm

Chester and Area Family Resource Centre 902-275-4347
chesterfamilycentre.ca

New Ross Family Resource Centre 902-689-2414
nrfrc.ca

Francophone Women

Fédération des femmes acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse
Dartmouth 902-433-2088
ffane.ca

The Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CDÉNÉ) 902-422-2752
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-866-554-3363
cdene.ns.ca/en/services/employment-assistance

Centre Accès Justice. 1-844-250-8471
ajefne.ns.ca/acces-justice/

Government Programs and Services

Federal Government

Information line 1-800-622-6232
TTY/TDD 1-800-926-9105

Provincial Government

Information about government programs and services

Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services 1-800-670-4357
www.novascotia.ca/government/service-nova-scotia

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission 902-424-4111
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-877-269-7699
humanrights.novascotia.ca

Department of Labour, Skills & Immigration 902-424-5301
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-844-424-5301
www.novascotia.ca/government/labour-skills-and-immigration

Nova Scotia Ombudsman's Office 902-424-6780
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-670-1111
ombudsman.novascotia.ca

Health

Addiction/Drug Dependency Services

Marguerite Centre
General information line, Halifax 902-876-0006
themargueritecentre.com

Mental Health and Addictions Support . . . . . Toll-free: 1-855-922-1122
iwkhealth.ca/mental-health-and-addictions-support

Provincial Addiction Services Offices
mha.nshealth.ca/en/services
Call 211 to connect with mental health and addiction services near you.
Mental Health Crisis Line . . . . . .Toll-free: 1-888-429-8167

General Health Services

Health Link . . . . . Toll-free: 811
811.novascotia.ca

IWK Health Centre
Halifax 902-470-8888
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-888-470-5888
iwkhealth.ca

North End Community Health Centre
Halifax 902-420-0303
nechc.com

Public Health Services
Call 211 to connect find public health services nearest you.
www.nshealth.ca/public-health

Housing

Housing Programs and Services
novascotia.ca/housing-programs-and-resources

For issues related to public housing, please contact 211 for the Housing Authority office nearest you.

Housing Nova Scotia
Call 211 to find the Housing Nova Scotia office nearest you.
housing.novascotia.ca/housing-nova-scotia-offices
Halifax: Shelter Nova Scotia 902-406-3631
shelternovascotia.com

Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency
The Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency maintains, manages and operates public housing for low-income Nova Scotians. Also check at your local transition house about second stage housing. Call 211 to find your Regional Housing Authority.
nspha.ca

Immigrant Women

Citizenship and Immigration Canada . . . . . Toll-free: 1-888-242-2100
. . . . . TTY: 1-800-855-1155
canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship.html

Halifax Refugee Clinic 902-422-6736
www.facebook.com/Halifax.Refugee.Clinic

Immigrant Settlement Association of Nova Scotia 902-423-3607
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-866-431-6472
isans.ca

Nova Scotia Interpreting Services 902-425-5532
interpretingservices.ca

Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration 902-424-5230
. . . . . Toll-free (NS): 1-877-292-9597
www.novascotia.ca/government/labour-skills-and-immigration

YMCA Immigrant Services 902-457-9622
ymcahfx.ca/yreach

Legal

Besides the services listed below, transition houses can often help you with information about the court process and other legal matters. Also see Family Law Resources for more help.

Legal Aid

Nova Scotia Legal Aid
Call 211 to find the Nova Scotia Legal Aid office nearest you.
nslegalaid.ca

Dalhousie Legal Aid
Can help with residential tenancy issues.
Halifax 902-423-8105
dal.ca/faculty/law/dlas.html

Legal and Justice Support Services

Coverdale Courtwork Services
Supports women through the justice system.
Halifax 902-422-6417
coverdale.ca

Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia
For women in conflict with the law.
Halifax 902-454-5041
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-877-619-1354
Truro. 902-897-0852
efrymns.ca

Elizabeth Fry Society of Cape Breton 902-539-6165
efrycb.com/home.html

John Howard Society 902-429-6429
jhsns.ca

Maintenance and Child Support

Federal Child Support Guidelines . . . . . Toll-free: 1-888-373-2222

Maintenance Enforcement Program
Halifax Regional Municipality. 902-862-4275
Outside Halifax Regional Municipality 1-855-322-0934
InfoLine (24-hour access) . . . . . Toll-free: 1-855-322-0934
mep.novascotia.ca

Men's Domestic Violence Intervention Programs

Amherst/Cumberland County

New Directions 902-667-4500
www.autumnhouse.ca/services

Halifax

New Start Counselling 902-423-4675
newstartcounselling.ca

The Peoples' Counselling Clinic 902-832-1593
thepeoplescounsellingclinic.ca

Sydney/Cape Breton Island

Cornerstone 902-567-0979

Truro/Colchester and East Hants counties

Bridges 902-897-6665
www.bridgesinstitute.org

Pictou, Antigonish, Guysborough counties

Pictou County Opportunity for Men Association 902-396-2440
pcofma.ca

Mental Health Services

Emergency/Crisis Services **911**
Mental Health Crisis Line (24/7) 1-888-429-8167
Call 211 for mental health services near you.

HealthLink **811**
For people who are deaf or hard of hearing 711
811.novascotia.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
NS Division . . . . . Toll-free: 1-877-466-6606
novascotia.cmha.ca

Healthy Minds Cooperative 902-404-3504
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-855-901-6463
healthyminds.ca

Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia (SSNS) 902-429-8167
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-888-429-8167
www.hope4mentalhealth.ca

CMHA 902-455-5445
cmhahaldart.ca

Adult Community Mental Health and Addictions Services
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-855-922-1122
mha.nshealth.ca/en/services/adult-community-mental-health-and-addictions-services

Laing House 902-425-9018
lainghouse.org

Well Woman Clinics
www.nshealth.ca/clinics-programs-and-services/well-woman-clinics

Mi'kmaq Women

Provincial

Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network . . . . . Toll-free: 1-877-379-2042
Dartmouth 902-468-0381
Eskasoni 902-379-2042
Kentville . . . . . Toll-free: 1-877-379-2042
Truro. 902-895-1141
mlsn.ca

Native Council of Nova Scotia . . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-565-4372
ncns.ca

Nova Scotia Native Women's Association 902-893-7402
nsnativewomen.ca

Child Help Initiative Project
Head office 902-895-1738
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-565-4372
ncns.ca/programs-services/child-help-initiative-program-chip

Halifax

Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre 902-420-1576
mymnfc.com

Truro

Native Social Counselling Agency . . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-565-4372
ncns.ca/native-social-counselling-agency

Welkaqnik Next Step Shelter 902-895-1738
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-565-4372
www.ncns.ca/program-services/welkaqnik-next-step-shelter

Mi'kmaq Family and Children's Services
Bear River 902-376-3553
.. . . . .Toll-free: 1-800-263-8686
Dartmouth. 902-758-3553
. . . . . Toll-Free: 1-800-263-8686
Eskasoni 902-379-2433
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-263-8300
Sipekne'katik. 902-758-3553
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-263-8686
mfcs.ca

Mi'kmaq Family Healing Centres

Millbrook First Nation

Truro. 902-893-8483
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-565-4741

We'koqma'q First Nation

Whycocomagh 902-756-3440
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-565-3440
thans.ca/mikmaw-family-healing-centre

Policing

Police and RCMP – Emergency 911

Many RCMP detachments and police departments offer victims' services or victims' assistance programs to help you. Ask if these services are available to you.

RCMP

General inquiries 902-720-5000
Non Emergency 1-800-803-7267
Call 211 to find your local detachment.
rcmp-grc.gc.ca/detach/en/find/NS

Online Bullying

CyberScan

Helps with cyberbullying/someone posting intimate images.
Halifax Regional Municipality. 902-424-6990
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-855-702-8324
novascotia.ca/cyberscan

Second Stage Housing

Second stage housing offers safe and affordable housing for abused women and their children. You can also contact your local transition house.

Antigonish: Naomi Society 902-863-3807
naomisociety.ca

Halifax: Alice House 902-466-8459
alicehouse.ca

New Glasgow: Brenda's Place, Tearmann House
Follow-Up Counsellor / Brenda Place Coordinator: . . . 902-755-3123
or 902-753-0077

Sydney: Willow House, Cape Breton Transition House
Crisis line. 902-539-2945
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-563-2945
www.cbtha.com/services

Truro: Welkaqnik Next Step Shelter (priority to Indigenous women)
. 902-895-1523
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-565-4372
ncns.ca/programs-services/welkaqnik-next-step-shelter

Senior Women

Nova Scotia Senior Safety Programs
Call 211 for senior safety programs near you.
novascotia.ca/seniors/senior_Safety_Programs.asp

Sexual and Reproductive Health

IWK Health Centre
Women's Clinic 902-470-8888
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-888-479-5888
iwkhealth.ca/index%2ephp/gynecology

Well Woman Clinic
Call 211 to find a Well Woman's Clinic near you.
www.nshealth.ca/clinics-programs-and-services/well-woman-clinics

Sexual Health Centres

Call 211 to find a sexual health centre near you.

Sexual Heath Nova Scotia
shns.ca

Amherst: Sexual Health Centre for Cumberland County . . 902-667-7500
sexualhealthmatters.ca

Bridgewater: Sexual Health Centre
Lunenburg County 902-527-2868
southshoresexualhealth.com

Halifax: Halifax Sexual Health Centre 902-455-9656
hshc.ca

Kentville: The Red Door Youth Health & Support Centre
(for youth 13-30). 902-679-1411
thereddoor.ca

New Glasgow: Pictou County Centre for Sexual Health . . 902-695-3366
facebook.com/PCSHCentre

Sheet Harbour: Seahorse Sexual Health 902-391-3693
seahorsesexualhealth.ca

Sydney: Cape Breton Centre for Sexual Health 902-539-5158
facebook.com/Cape-Breton-Centre-for-Sexual-Health-887431781392027

Sexual Assault Centres

Antigonish: Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association 902-863-6221
awrcsasa.ca

Halifax: Avalon Sexual Assault Centre 902-422-4240
Crisis Line **902-425-0122**
avaloncentre.ca

Truro: Colchester Sexual Assault Centre 902-897-4366
colchestersac.ca

Support/Referral/Advocacy Organizations

Halifax: YWCA 902-423-6162
ywcahalifax.com

Transition Houses

Transition houses offer emergency shelter, information, and support for women in abusive relationships. For more information on services call the **Transition House Association of Nova Scotia** 902-429-7287
thans.ca
If you need support call or text the provincial toll-free line,
. . . . . 1-855-225-0220, available 24/7
You can also call a transition house in your area. Call 211 to find the transition house nearest you.

Amherst: Autumn House (Wheelchair accessible) (will accept collect calls)
24 hour crisis line **902-667-1200**
Office 902-667-1344
autumnhouse.ca

Antigonish: Naomi Society
Office/Crisis **902-863-3807**
naomisociety.ca

Bridgewater: Harbour House (Wheelchair accessible)
Crisis line **902-543-3999**
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-888-543-3999
Office: 902-543-3665
Outreach: 902-543-9970
Child & Youth Outreach & Counselling Services 902-514-6701
harbour-house.ca

Digby: Juniper House Outreach
Crisis line **902-742-8689**
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-266-4087
juniperhouse.ca

Halifax: Adsum House (For homeless women and children)
. 902-423-4443
adsumforwomen.org

Halifax: Bryony House (Wheelchair accessible, one room accessible, accessible bathroom, bilingual staff as required)
24 hr Crisis line. **902-422-7650**
Counsellor: 902-423-7183
Office 902-429-9002
bryonyhouse.ca

Kentville: Chrysalis House (Wheelchair ramp, bathroom accessible)
Crisis line. **902-679-1922**
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-264-8682
Office 902-679-6544
chrysalishouseassociation.org

New Glasgow: Tearmann House (Wheelchair ramp, main floor accessible)
Crisis line. **902-752-0132**
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-888-831-0330
Office 902-928-0774
Outreach 902-752-2591
tearmann.ca

Millbrook: Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centre
(Wheelchair ramp, main floor accessible)
24 Hour Help Line **902-893-8483**
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-565-4741
thans.ca/millbrook-family-healing-centre

Port Hawkesbury: Leeside Transition House (Wheelchair accessible)
Crisis line. **902-625-2444**
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-565-3390
Office/Outreach: 902-625-1990
www.leesidesociety.ca

Shelburne: Juniper House Outreach
Crisis line. **902-742-8689**
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-266-4087
Outreach 902-749-7170
juniperhouse.ca

Sydney: Cape Breton Transition House
(Wheelchair lift, bilingual staff as required)
Crisis line 902-539-2945
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-563-2945
Outreach Program 902-562-3045
transitionhousefoundation.com

Truro: Third Place
(Wheelchair ramp, one room, partial bath, and common areas accessible)
Crisis line 902-893-3232
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-565-4878
Family support worker 902-893-4844
. 902-893-3232
Outreach 902-895-9740
thirdplaceth.ca

We'koqma'q: Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centre
(Wheelchair ramp, main floor accessible)
Office 902-756-3440
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-565-3440

Yarmouth: Juniper House Outreach
Crisis line 902-742-8689
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-800-266-4087
Office 902-742-4473
Outreach 902-740-0645
juniperhouse.ca

Victim Services

Victim Services provides information and confidential support services to victims of crime and their families. Your local RCMP detachment, police department, or transition house can also provide support and assistance.

Provincial Victim Services

Call 211 to find victim services near you.
Head Office Halifax 902-424-3309
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-888-470-0773
novascotia.ca/just/victim_services

Police-based Victim Services

Halifax Regional Police Victim Services Unit 902-490-5300
Text 902-497-4709

Women's Centres

Women's Centres Connect
womenconnect.ca

Amherst: Lilac Place 902-664-1272
lilacplace.ca

Annapolis: The Women's Place Resource Centre. 902-363-2030
womensplace.ca

Antigonish: Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association 902-863-6221
awrcsasa.ca

Digby: Tri-County Women's Centre
Outreach 902-245-6866
tricountywomenscentre.org

Lunenburg: Second Story Women's Centre 902-640-3044
secondstory.ca

New Glasgow: Pictou County Women's Resource & Sexual Assault Centre 902-755-4647
womenscentre.ca

Port Hawkesbury: Strait Area Women's Place 902-625-1614
www.leesidesociety.ca/strait-area-womens-place

Sheet Harbour: LEA Place Women's Centre 902-885-2668
leaplace.com

Shelburne: Tri-County Women's Centre
Outreach 902-875-4777
tricountywomenscentre.org

Sydney: Every Woman's Centre 902-567-1212
everywomanscentre.com

Truro: Lotus Centre 902-895-4295
thelotuscentre.net

Yarmouth: Tri-County Women's Centre 902-742-0085
Toll-free: 1-877-742-0085
tricountywomenscentre.org

Women with Disabilities

Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate
Halifax: (provincial) 902-424-8280
. . . . . Toll-free: (NS) 1-800-565-8280
. . . . . TTY: 902-424-2667
. . . . . Toll-free/TTY: (NS) 1-877-996-9954
novascotia.ca/accessibility

Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities .Phone/TTY: 902-455-6942
. . . . . Toll-free: 1-866-696-7536
nsleo.com

reachAbility Association 902-429-5878
reachability.org

Caregivers Nova Scotia . . . . . Toll-free: 1-877-488-7390
caregiversns.org

DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN) Canada . Toll-free: 1-866-396-0074
dawncanada.net

Additional Resources

Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children

Information, research, online training, and resources about domestic violence. learningtoendabuse.ca

Ending Sexual Violence Association of Canada

A national non-profit sexual violence organization whose main purpose is to educate and respond to gender-based violence at the national level. endingviolencecanada.org

Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia

Provides information about the law in this province. legalinfo.org

National Information Center on Health Services

Provides information on, and resources about, domestic violence. nlm.nih.gov/nichsr

Neighbours, Friends and Families

A public education campaign to raise awareness of the signs of woman abuse so that those close to an at-risk woman or an abusive man can help. neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca

Nova Scotia Status of Women Office

Provides information about the issue of domestic violence. women.novascotia.ca/our-work/gender-based-violence

Nova Scotia Domestic Violence Resources

Provides information about domestic violence, information on providing support, and links to support services across Nova Scotia. nsdomesticviolence.ca

Public Health Agency of Canada

Information about family violence, tips for staying safe, and ways you can provide support. Information in both English and French. canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/stop-family-violence.html

Transition House Association of Nova Scotia

Member organizations provide crisis and transitional services to women and their children. You can locate a shelter and other resources through this site. thans.ca

