

COVID-19 SUPPORT REPORT

EMPOWERING E-NEWS AND RESOURCES FOR BC'S ANTI-VIOLENCE SECTOR

ISSUE 2: May 7, 2020



Coming to you every two weeks
with tremendous thanks and gratitude
for all the challenging work you do
in your communities.

REMEMBER: YOU ARE ALL HEROES.

Image: Sheila Norgate

WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED

We continue to respond directly to your COVID-19 needs

EVA BC staff keep working hard, both in the office and from home, to try and make your **frontline jobs more manageable** during COVID-19. Here are some of our recent and ongoing activities:

- **Phones for Survivors at Risk:** As of early May, we've received requests for 161 of our 200 smart phones, loaded with data and unlimited minutes, which will go to our members and ICATs supporting those at risk. We've also had 44 requests for SIM cards, which we'll distribute to high-risk clients as well. The province-wide distribution process will roll out in phases. Many thanks to Telus for their generosity in supporting our anti-violence community and the people we serve.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** We have bought 7,000 medical masks, which we will distribute to members. Thank you to the **BC Women's Health Foundation** for their support in this. We have also put in a request for 7,000 pairs of disposable gloves. (See below under "A Caring Community" for an additional PPE story.)
- **Laptop Bulk Purchase:** We're still working to raise funds for a bulk buy of laptops for your use.
- **New High-risk Protocol:** On May 1, we distributed via listserv the new **Rapid Response Protocol** to ensure the safety of people in high-risk situations of domestic and sexualized violence.
- **New EVA BC Website Links:** We've added **new drop-down sections** on COVID-19 Resources from EVA BC, Indigenous Communities - Resources and Responses to COVID-19, and on Information, Resources and Updates from Government and Other Organizations. We continue to add more webinars and supports for victims and survivors almost daily.
- **Five New PSAs:** Five BC Lions players and alumni have each recorded a different PSA, from scripts we wrote, from their home, modelling social distancing. These will soon be available on social media. Each message reinforces how domestic and sexual violence increase during a disaster like COVID-19 and includes the VictimLinkBC number.
- **Informational Bulletins:** As part of an ongoing series, we've now completed five new bulletins that each cover a different topic, from *Stay Resilient During COVID-19* to *Are You Worried About Someone's Safety During COVID-19?* These are in addition to the one-pager *Are You Worried*

We will share these, one by one, on our social media feed and post them [on our website](#). We encourage you to distribute these widely and display them prominently. Watch for another one, now in the works, that addresses **women without permanent residency status** who are dealing with abuse in their relationship.

- **Ongoing Teleconferencing:** We continue to work **closely with government** and executive directors, CBVAP staff, STV Counsellors, STV Outreach and Multicultural Outreach Workers, VAWIR and ICAT chairs, and others, serving as your communication bridge. We are listening carefully to what you are saying and trying to solve the issues you raise.
- **Media Interviews:** Tracy Porteous, our Executive Director, continues to speak out on behalf of victims and survivors, reinforcing the link between increased gender-based violence and disasters such as COVID-19. She has recently appeared on CBC Radio, CKNW, and soon will appear on Vancouver's Co-op Radio.

In the **COVID-19 Support Report**, we'll keep providing as much **new content** as possible, besides some of the most important links from our website. Let us know what you'd like to see here. Share your own news, tips, and inspirational COVID-19 stories. Send your comments or content to conn@endingviolence.org.

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A CARING COMMUNITY

Uber donates 1,000 free deliveries of equipment to EVA BC

EVA BC recently gained **1,000 free deliveries** for equipment and supplies to help frontline workers and clients in Metro Vancouver during COVID-19, thanks to our partnership with Uber.

Uber announced April 23 that it was supporting survivors of gender-based violence by providing **50,000 free rides** and additional support in more than 35 cities across 17 countries.

"EVA BC is proud to partner with Uber since they set an excellent example of **how corporations can use their assets for great good**," says EVA BC Executive Director Tracy Porteous. "Uber's generous offer ... will help ensure that equipment our frontline workers need to do their jobs will get delivered to them without taxing our already swamped office. Because of this initiative, victims and survivors of gender-based violence will **gain greater support** during this challenging COVID-19 period and beyond."

See [Uber Newsroom story](#)

- UFCW Local 1518 donation to cover new equipment for EVA BC

The **United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)** local 1518 in New Westminster, BC has generously donated \$20,000 to EVA BC to help us get much-needed equipment to our programs during the pandemic.

Local 1518 has a [web page](#) containing resources for people experiencing domestic abuse and sexualized violence during COVID-19, which includes a link to EVA BC's website.

-- Protect Our Frontline donates 300 handmade masks to EVA BC

EVA BC will be distributing **300 homemade COVID-19 masks** to frontline workers and others. They are donated by **Protect Our Frontline**, a Vancouver community group of volunteers. During the pandemic, Protect Our Frontline has made **thousands of masks** for others. We thank them for their thoughtfulness, generosity, and kind gesture.

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UPDATES FOR ANTI-VIOLENCE WORKERS & THE PUBLIC

BCSTH Digital Services Toolkit a valuable resource on technology

Many people in the anti-violence sector, working from home during the pandemic, have recently scrambled to assess which and how technology-based tools will best serve their clients. Whether you choose online chat, text messaging or smartphones, you'll find valuable related **links and resources** in the [Digital Services Toolkit](#), offered by the **BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH)**.

The Society adapted the toolkit specifically for a British Columbia audience in cooperation with the **National Network to End Domestic Violence** in the US. The information ranges from informed consent, safety, and privacy issues to promising practices for **digital service delivery**. All resources provided are designed for anti-violence programs that support women, children, and youth experiencing domestic and sexual violence.

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Workplace sexual harassment can happen offsite during COVID-19

Although many people during the pandemic are working from home, they can still experience **sexual harassment in the workplace**. This can range from inappropriate emails and social media comments to unwanted suggestive talk during online chats or teleconferencing.

To help employees know their rights and to inform employers of their related responsibilities to provide a workplace safe from sexual harassment, **SHARP Workplaces** has produced a brochure and new series of posters. These documents also provide **an overview of the training components** SHARP Workplaces offers to the public, with a focus on **Small Businesses, Indigenous Communities, and Non-profits**.

Call 604-682-8820 or [email](#) to inquire about or to set up a **training session for fall 2020**.

You can view and download the brochure and posters on the [SHARP Workplaces page](#) on EVA BC's website. Please feel free to share them widely and display them prominently. And watch for an upcoming one-pager that outlines different forms of workplace sexual harassment.

Find tips to greater safety in self-isolation with an abusive partner

Clearing computer browsing history and not wearing scarves and jewellery are some tips that **Luke's Place** offers to women in self-isolation with an abusive partner. This centre, based in Oshawa, ON, helps victims and survivors of gender-based violence and their children through **the family law process**.

You'll find [website links](#) to useful family law and family court information and tips such as **how to co-parent with an abusive ex-partner** and how to serve family court documents on an abusive former partner.

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New info hub available on gender-based violence and COVID-19

A new [centralized hub](#) for resources related to gender-based violence and COVID-19 is available on the website of **The Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children** at the University of Waterloo in London, ON. You'll find links to the latest research on women and children during pandemics and information on domestic violence and work safety strategies during COVID-19, and more. The resources also include topics such as how to engage men and boys, and Indigenous communities.

The Centre's [Infographics web page](#) also offers free COVID-related graphics to add to flyers, posters and other pandemic-related communications.

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THE PANDEMIC IN OUR PROVINCE

Indigenous communities to receive medical masks from Taiwan

Indigenous communities across Canada will receive some of the **500,000 medical masks** recently donated by the Government of Taiwan, thanks to efforts by the **Birdtail Sioux Dakota Nation** and the **Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council (DOTC)**.

Twenty-five thousand masks will go to British Columbia and Alberta, distributed by the Red Cross to the hospitals and communities that need them. The DOTC has been collaborating with the Government of Taiwan while the Birdtail Sioux have submitted a proposal to the federal government called **Operation: Star Blanket**. This is an initiative to obtain medical supplies from Taiwan to distribute to First Nations communities and receive funding for **personal protective equipment (PPE)**.

[See CTV News story](#)

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First Nations Leadership Council addresses GBV during COVID-19

For more resources on **gender-based violence in Indigenous communities** during COVID-19, check out the new web page on the **First Nations Leadership Council website**. It contains features like Quick Facts, How to Seek Help, Health and Wellness support, and outlines financial support available from the Federal Government during the pandemic.

The First Nations Leadership Council is made up of the political executives of the **BC Assembly of First Nations**, **First Nations Summit**, and the **Union of BC Indian Chiefs**. They work together to develop coordinated approaches to issues relevant to Indigenous communities throughout BC.

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Legal Aid BC offers free online services and resources during pandemic

Legal Aid BC is encouraging people to use its **free online legal aid services** during COVID-19. They offer a guided pathway that helps people who are dealing with domestic or sexual violence [form a safety plan](#). You can find answers to legal questions via their LiveHelp online chats on [Family Law in BC](#). They also have a dedicated page that offers information on how COVID-19 is affecting family law in BC.

Through free [publications](#) and [YouTube videos](#), they continue to provide information about legal aid, court services and new procedures. Since most of their staff members are working from home during the pandemic, they have switched to [phone-only applications for legal aid](#).

- Nanaimo school closures prevent access to anti-violence program

Current school closures mean children are no longer accessing important content such as the in-person **“violence is preventable” program** offered by **Haven Society**, a Nanaimo-based anti-violence organization. “It’s particularly worrisome for us that children no longer have the **safe space of the classroom**,” says the Society’s Executive Director Toni Wheeler.

The Society creates and delivers videos to teachers to include in their virtual classrooms. During the pandemic, it is maintaining other services such as its **24/7 crisis line** (1-888-756-0616), which has seen increased calls during COVID-19.

[See Nanaimo News Now story](#)

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GOVERNMENT ROUND-UP

CVAP will accept online signed application forms during COVID-19

Due to COVID-19, the BC Government’s **Crime Victim Assistance (CVAP) program** is now accepting electronically signed CVAP applications via [email](#). On their [web page](#), you will find instructions and application forms for victims, family members, and witnesses.

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Know criteria for new BC Emergency Benefit for Workers

Since May 1, eligible individuals have been able to **apply online** for the new \$1,000 **BC Emergency Benefit for Workers**. This is a tax-free, one-time payment for BC residents whose ability to work has been affected due to COVID-19.

To be eligible for the emergency benefit, **you or your client must meet the following criteria**

- Be eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)
- Have been approved for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit
- Be at least 15 years old
- Have filed, or agree to file, a 2019 BC income tax return
- Not be on income assistance or disability assistance.

You can apply over the phone by calling 1-855-955-3545 (toll-free) from 8:30 am to 4:30 but note that this process will take longer than an online application. **Documentation isn't required when applying**, but proof of eligibility may be requested at a later date.

The \$1,000 payment will be made by **direct deposit**. It is anticipated the funds will be in personal bank accounts within ten business days for those who apply online.

See [this link](#) for more information and to access the application form.

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Keep updated on BC's COVID-19 testing guidelines

The **Provincial Health Services Authority** continues to update **testing recommendations for COVID-19** in British Columbia based on **the virus's changing epidemiology**, various facilities' testing capacity, and the Province's evolving understanding of the test sensitivity in clinical settings.

Currently, any doctor in the province can order a test for COVID-19 based on their clinical judgment. Please note that **false negative results can occur** both in the early stages of the infection and in severely infected patients. Therefore, a negative test result does not definitely rule out COVID-19 infection. The **Medical Health Officer** may recommend additional COVID-19 testing for priority populations in their jurisdiction.

It is important to use the latest guidance document regarding COVID-19 testing, which is available from the **BC Centre for Disease Control** at [this link](#).

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COVID-19 BEYOND BC

9 strategies for quarantining in a non-LGBTQ+ affirming environment

Queer writer Wren Sanders, quarantined in New York City, offers helpful tips for the LGBTQ+ community who, due to the pandemic, might have to spend "daunting amounts of time" with family members, roommates, and others who question or reject their identities. Some suggestions include "Tell those you're quarantining with how you feel" and "share a helpful article or video."

See [blog article](#).

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Alberta man's open letter to men honours memory of murdered partner

In the wake of the recent tragic murders in Nova Scotia initiated by gender-based violence, Albertan Mike Cameron has written an open letter to men. He talks of white male privilege and asks men to challenge their sexist attitudes and beliefs that may have been instilled since childhood, and to challenge their male friends when they treat or talk about women as "lesser than."

“Alberta has one of the highest rates of reported intimate-partner violence in the country,” he writes. “All while good men go about their day-to-day lives.”

Cameron’s partner, Colleen Sillito, was murdered by her former common-law partner in 2015. In response, he started the charity **Ignore No More — Run for Respect** to raise awareness about domestic and sexualized violence.

See [CBC.ca story](#)

STAY AWARE WITH WEBINARS

***The Courage of Conviction: Activism and Change* webinar May 20**

Facing today’s global pandemic has brought **monumental changes to grassroots advocates**, activists, and frontline workers. We could all use some additional help with coping with change, especially in the fast-paced world of COVID-19. As a remedy, the University of Waterloo’s **Tamarack Institute** is offering the May 20 webinar ***The Courage of Conviction: Activism and Change***, delivered by Moira Were and Liz Weaver.

Moira is a cross-sectoral social entrepreneur and advocate in Australia for women and people who are disadvantaged. Liz is co-CEO of the Tamarack Institute and focuses on **five strategic areas**: collective impact, collaborative leadership, community engagement, community innovation, and evaluating community impact.

[Click here](#) to register and find out more

For links to more webinars, see EVA BC’s [featured website section](#).

THE WELLNESS WINDOW

Counsellor offers 12 questions kids need and long to hear

Sometimes a simple question like, **‘What do you need when you get those upset feelings?’** can be transformational for a child. Counsellor, trainer, and life coach **Vince Gowmon** shares a story of how this question helped a teacher end the communication barriers between her and a grade two student. Once she stopped trying to push her own agenda in response to his behavioural problems, he let her know what he felt drawn to do – to go into the hallway and draw – and his behavioural issues stopped. By the end of the school year, he was voted **most improved student**.

See [web page](#).

For links to more self-care content, please see [Health and Wellness Resources](#) on EVA BC’s website.

A COVID-19 Success Story

“When I heard that my neighbour, in his seventies, was in the intensive care unit at Lions Gate Hospital on a respirator due to COVID-19, I was deeply concerned. His wife had recovered from the virus but remained at home, unable to



“Do not demonize your fear, and also, do not let it rule you. Instead, let it speak to you. In your stillness, listen for its wisdom. What might it be telling you about what is at work, at issue, at risk, beyond the threats of personal inconvenience and illness?”

-- Kristin Flyntz, An Imagined Letter from COVID-19 to Humans

*Image: Coyboy Photography,
CC BY-NC-ND 2.0*

visit him. Our close-knit community, 75 kilometres away, was in shock. Would he pull through?

“For days, our neighbourhood waited and worried about his fate, sharing what little we knew via phone and email. Several weeks passed. No news. We tried to support his wife as best we could.

“Then we heard: He was coming home. His wife had set up a recovery room for him. About a week later, a neighbour reported that he had seen him walking his dog, and that he sounded good. What relief.”

-- Heather Conn

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| 604-633-2506 ext. 16 or toll-free (members only) 1-877-633-2505 |
Endingviolence.org

See what's happening on our social media sites:

