

# ABUSE IS **WRONG** IN ANY CULTURE: INUIT





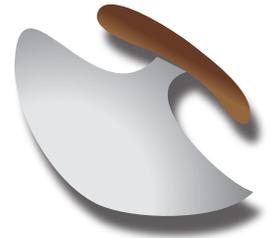


“You ain’t crazy  
How could you have known  
He’d kill a lifetime  
And break all your bones  
Irene  
High heels on a gravel road

My lovely Irene  
I love you Irene

Why didn’t you walk away  
You should have just walked away.”

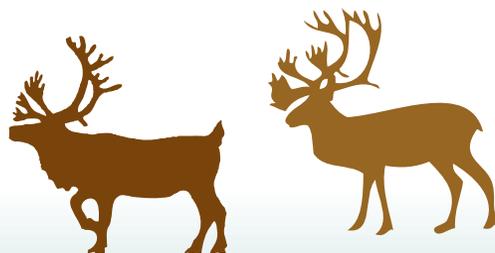
*From “Angel Street (Lovely Irene)” reproduced with the permission of Lucie Idlout*



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## About this booklet



This booklet is for Inuit women and girls who are hurting because of violence in their relationship or in their family.



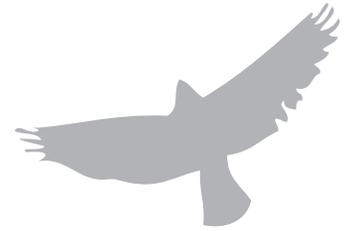
This booklet is written for Inuit women and girls, but anyone—man or woman, young or old, Inuit or Qallunaat—who is being hurt or who is hurting others is encouraged to get help.



Seeking help is not weakness but is a sign of strength in choosing to break cycles of violence and abuse.



If you know someone who is hurting, you can tell her she is not alone ... and you can show her this booklet in a safe place.



## To the reader

- You may feel alone, ashamed or afraid to talk to someone about what is happening, or people may be telling you to stay quiet for the sake of the family.
- You may even be told that the violence is your fault.
- But many people have found ways to stop the violence and live happier lives—for themselves and their children.
- This booklet is a starting place to answer some of your questions and tell you where to find help.
- In the pages that follow are real words from Inuit women who have faced violence in their relationship and their families.

**Disclaimer: Please note that the information in this publication is not a substitute for legal advice. To receive legal advice about your specific situation, you need to speak to a lawyer.**



***You are not alone!***

***Hurting is not part of caring!***

***Your life can be different!***

# Inuit women of Canada



Inuit women live in 52 communities in northern Canada, and in cities like Edmonton, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Montreal and Yellowknife.

In your community, there are women, children and elderly people who live in fear of violence every day—not from strangers, but from those they love.

Across these communities, thousands of women and children live with hurting bodies and broken hearts.



**You can choose to help break that cycle for yourself and for your children, so that your life, their lives and their children's lives will be different.**



## ***In an emergency***

- find a way to make you and your children safe
- call the police, or ask family or a friend to call them
- run to a friend's house, the police station, health centre, hamlet office, community centre or a church, if it's safe to do that
- scream or yell, or run outside, so the neighbours will see you or hear you, and call the police.

# What is abuse?

*“I thought what he was doing was normal ... it was happening to everyone and my mother went through it ... we never discussed it.”*

- When someone hurts you, batters you or treats you badly, it is abuse.
- Abuse can happen to anyone—it can come from your husband, your boyfriend, your brother, sister or cousin, one of your parents or an uncle or your in-laws ... or one of your grown-up children.
- Abuse can be a one-time thing, or keep happening—it can be actions or words or even neglect.
- Abuse is wrong and tolerating abuse has no part in Inuit culture or values.
- Most abuse is also a crime.

*“I think a lot of the things that happen, no one knows they are crimes.”*

Physical abuse is hurting your body on purpose against your will:



***These are crimes.***

**Sexual abuse is any sexual touching or sexual activity that you don't want:**

- ... being kissed, fondled or forced to have sexual intercourse with a partner when you don't want to, even if you are married
- ... not respecting you when you say "stop".

**Sexual abuse also includes:**

- ... sexual intercourse with your child, grandchild, brother or sister
- ... or where a child is too young to agree: under 16 (unless the two are close in age), under 18 (where the partner is a recreational supervisor, etc.)
- ... or where a child under 18 is involved in pornography or prostitution (including where sex is traded for drugs, alcohol, etc.).

*"I feel so ashamed ... but if I don't, he'll throw me out and where will my kids go?"*

**Emotional (or psychological) abuse is controlling, frightening, isolating or eroding your self-respect.**

**Some emotional abuse may be a crime:**

- ... making threats to kill or harm you or someone you know
- ... breaking your things or hurting your pets or threatening to do so
- ... following you around and watching you all the time and causing you to fear for your safety or for that of someone close to you (also called "criminal harassment").

***These are crimes.***

**Other emotional abuse may not be a crime, but it's still hurtful, and may also lead to criminal acts later on.**

No one should insult you and put you down, or yell at you and tell you that you are worthless.

Parents have a duty to care for their children and protect them from people who might hurt them or activities that might be dangerous. But no one should tell you—adult or child—where you can go and who you can be with, or stop you from seeing your friends and family or from participating in sports activities in any other situation.

Emotional abuse is serious. Inside wounds can take a long time to heal.

*“It’s your fault that I cut up your clothes. I’m watching you... I know you’re sneaking around with other men.”*

**Financial abuse is taking from you to benefit themselves.**



**Some financial abuse may be a crime, such as:**

- ... taking your pay cheque or pension cheque
- ... forging your signature to cash your cheque without asking
- ... stealing from you
- ... not providing necessary food, shelter, clothing or medical attention to you, your child under 16 years of age or a dependent family member.

**Other financial abuse may not be a crime, but it's still hurtful, and it's wrong for anyone to do these things to you:**

- ... pressuring you to share your home or your car, or babysit your grandchildren when you don't want to
- ... refusing to let you keep any money.

*“I’ll decide if you get to keep any of your money this week. And I told you ... you aren’t going over to your parents. No wonder everyone hates you ... you’re just a useless ugly bitch!”*



## Abuse is a pattern of ...

- ... trying to control or isolate you by making you feel afraid
- ... getting power over you by making you feel confused, guilty, ashamed or uncertain about what will happen next
- ... stopping you from leaving when you don't want to stay
- ... silencing you.

## Abuse is not okay because ...

- ... someone "lost control" of themselves, or was drunk or high
- ... you did or said anything.



*"I went over to my mom's but she said I deserved what I was getting so I should just go back to him and keep my mouth shut."*

***There is no excuse for abuse!***

***It is not your fault.***



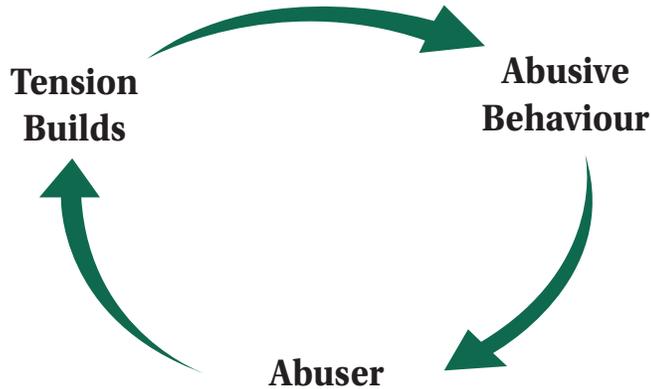
*“He said I made him do  
it and I believed him.”*

# It is not your fault!

Thinking and talking about abuse is difficult.

*“The silence is the worst ... I wish he’d just beat me up and get it over with.”*

Many people have found that there is a cycle of abuse. (The diagram shows how this cycle works.) The tension builds for a while until the person acts violently. After the “explosion” or violence, there is a period of calm or quiet. The person who was violent may say they are sorry and promise it will not happen again. He may promise to get help ... or even threaten to kill himself. However, in time, the tension builds and he usually becomes violent again. The violence usually gets worse over time and happens more often.



## Feeling torn

*“My grandson asks me for money all the time for drugs and liquor, and now he’s taken most of my cheque for this month.”*

One of the hardest parts of being abused is knowing you want the hurting to stop, but not knowing whether talking about it or changing anything will make things better or worse.

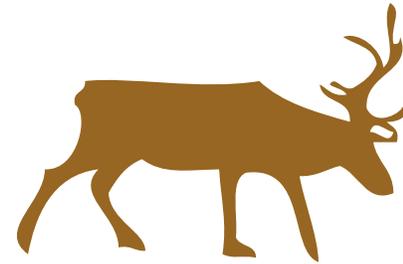
*“There is fear and shame about opening up ... people are afraid of being labelled as a victim and gossiped about.”*



Many women who are abused feel ashamed ... and afraid that their family and friends will not help them. Sometimes family and friends don't help at first, but say you should stay for the sake of the children or that you are exaggerating. You may be worried about what will happen to you, your family or even the person you love who is hurting you, if your family or living situation changes. But, remember, nothing you do makes it right for anyone to abuse you. This is not happening only to you.

Seeking counselling is not a sign of weakness but of strength. You can choose to make your life and that of your family better.

***“Denial by both the victim and the offender is a community-wide problem.”***



# It's not love if you're afraid



Relationships—like people—can be healthy or unhealthy, and sometimes you may need to get the right “medicine”. Sometimes counselling can help. In healthy relationships, there is no fear.

*“I was running around the truck with him chasing me with a knife and the kids saw that.”*

# What is happening to my children?



Parents must put children's needs first. It is shocking and overwhelming for children to see or hear a parent being abused. They get very, very frightened by:

...watching their mom get slapped and hit  
... hearing the screams and angry voices.

Children may:

... hide under the bed  
... try to be invisible  
... try to be super 'good'  
... feel helpless  
... feel terrified  
... feel like it's their fault  
... feel alone.

Children then are scarred for the rest of their lives.

*"Dad is drinking again today ... I'll be good and super quiet ... that way I can hide so he doesn't see me ... Mom looks really scared ... I'll have to protect her ... this is all my fault ... I should find my sister and take her to Auntie's house ... Hi Dad ... do you want me to bring in some iceberg?"*



# Harms to children

Children who see and hear adults in the family hurting each other can develop many problems that can even change their lives when they grow up. They may:

- have physical problems like headaches, stomach aches, infections, bedwetting, stuttering, being sick or tired or being hyper
- have social problems like bullying, lying, blaming, avoiding people or giving up
- have nightmares or school problems
- avoid going home, and turn to drugs, solvents and alcohol, cutting themselves or even suicide
- have relationship problems, as they can grow up believing that it's normal for people to hurt each other.

Children know that violence and abuse is going on, even if you hope they do not.



***“We can raise three kinds of children:  
a fragile egg, a hard stone, or a hu-  
man being”***

Inuit Elder Rhoda Karetak, [http://www.nccah-ccnsa.ca/76/Messages\\_from\\_the\\_Heart.nccah](http://www.nccah-ccnsa.ca/76/Messages_from_the_Heart.nccah)

When you’re being abused, it’s extra hard to take care of your kids. And they may learn from watching the person who is being abusive that they don’t need to respect you.

You may buy your children anything to try to mend their pain, even if it is not good for them and can’t help.

Plus, you’re so exhausted most of the time, it feels impossible to give them what they need. Encourage your children to reach out and spend time with a relative, Elder or friend who can give them support while you make the necessary changes in your life.

If your kids are also being hurt, get help right away. Child abuse is against the law.

Children must be protected from abuse!



***“It’s like people have a big hole in  
their soul.”***

# Why is this happening to me?

There are many reasons that someone will act violently or abusively. Often, abuse or violence is a way that is learned as a child. For example, boys who saw their father being violent to their mother sometimes believe that abuse is natural and normal ... they think that men are expected to control and abuse the women in their life, or that it's OK to "take it out on them" whenever things go wrong in their life or they are afraid or unhappy, and that being mean and violent to someone who loves them proves they are real men.

***"... men are just expected to be violent."***

Abuse is wrong within all families and communities, including Inuit families and communities. Although violence and abuse sadly exist across many societies and cultures, tolerating abuse has no part in Inuit culture or values.



Think about it. In history, violence was dealt with right away by the Elders in their camps. Inuit spouses and families needed to rely on each other to survive the harsh climate. Everyone—man, woman, child, Elder—had a role to play in making sure that the family not only survived but prospered from generation to generation. Men's roles were to protect their families from hurting, not to do the hurting. Denying responsibility for causing harm only led to illness or hunger for the members of the camp. Silence and denial only led to continued suffering.

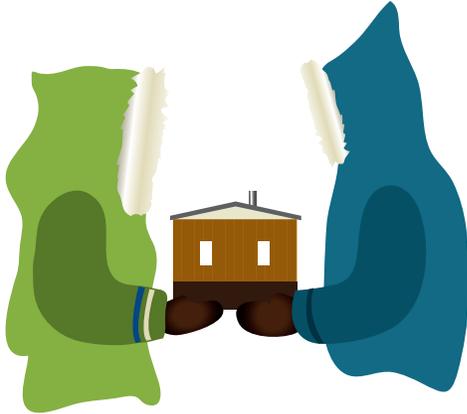
Many changes have happened in Inuit society in recent years. Some of these changes have been good for Inuit—such as fewer child deaths—but others—such as increased dependency on money and bought food and goods—have in many cases changed our respect for ourselves and for others. Through historic wrongs—such as residential schools, and involuntary relocations—Inuit have adopted some of the problems from other cultures along with the good.

One result of these changes to our respect for ourselves and for others is an increase in violence. Inuit women now experience violence at much higher rates than other women in Canada—often at the hands of Inuit men. In 2004, 28 per cent of women in Nunavut alone reported experiencing violence compared to 7 per cent in the provinces.

*“.. around here it is [seen as] ok to abuse and use each other.”*

Substance abuse, feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness caused by trauma experienced through loss of connection to Inuit culture and values and to the land, and unhealed hurt because of abuse suffered or witnessed as children, all feed continuing cycles of violence and abuse from one generation to the next. Some girls and boys have now been raised to believe that being abused is normal and just part of a woman’s life. Young people who grow up with violence are lost because they are told not to talk about it, and not to expect help from the adults around them, or to try themselves to change this pattern.

*“Some men have said that things are bad now because women are providers and working outside their traditional roles and that is wrecking families.”*



Another result of recent changes in Inuit society is that instead of caring and contact between the generations, now people are more likely to relate only to those who are close to them in age, rather than the more traditional daily contact between generations. This may result in loss of teachings about cultural values, including those on respect and violence, or confusion about how to apply them in one's own life.

Here are the words of one Elder in response:

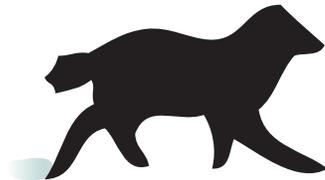
*“In terms of family responsibilities, ... both men and women are slowly beginning to acknowledge the need to share family tasks rather than emphasize separation of roles ... The additional income in some families earned by women working outside the home has helped families to meet harsh economic realities and improve the standard of living.”*

Ambassador Mary May Simon, *Inuit: One Future-One Arctic*, p. 41, The Cider Press, 1996

Here are the words of one Elder about what happened:

*“There is a culture-clash happening. Another culture, that is not a part of our Inuit culture has emerged in our communities. It was as if we dropped our traditions and our culture when we thought that we could not have strength if we did not lose it. We know that if we have strength we will have better relationships among ourselves. The Inuit way of life, or the elder’s voices are no longer being used, due to the fact that the Inuit way has been tampered with. Our culture has clashed. Too many people grabbed the culture that is not ours, this is where we shattered.”*

Meeka Arnakaq, as quoted in *Nuluaq Project: National Inuit Strategy for Abuse Prevention*,  
[http://www.pauktuutit.ca/pdf/publications/abuse/AHFNulvaqInuitHealing\\_e.pdf](http://www.pauktuutit.ca/pdf/publications/abuse/AHFNulvaqInuitHealing_e.pdf)



Abuse may begin because of jealousy, money, anger or loss of control. It may happen because victims of abuse often grow up to repeat the pattern of abuse. It may come about because of emotions triggered by overcrowded housing, unemployment or loss of cultural identity, or because of physical and psychological changes due to alcohol and substance abuse.

But it continues because someone believes they—and their feelings, wants, needs, hurts and uncertainty—are “more important” than someone they say they love. So they “allow” themselves to hurt that other person, often someone in their family who cannot fight back, such as a spouse, child or Elder. The person causing the hurt may not understand what they are doing. The family may need counselling to break the cycle of violence and abuse and achieve well-being.

You are not helping or protecting someone who has hurt you or someone in your family or a friend by not talking about it.

***“If other family members were intervening for the better, the whole community would accept it. You should not defend your partner when you know that he or she is abusing the children. If you know your wife is spanking and hitting the children, you should not defend her. It also works the other way. If the wife knows her husband is abusing the children, she should not defend her husband when they are confronted. If children were being deprived of food, or if they were physically [and sexually] abused they were to be protected at all times.”***

Aupilaarjuk, as quoted in *Interviewing Inuit Elders: Perspectives on Traditional Law*, <http://www.nac.nu.ca/OnlineBookSite/vol2/pdf/chapter3.pdf>



***So many times she's wondered  
How would her life have been?  
Where were the strong arms  
To keep her safe at nights?  
What made her laughter disappear?  
When will the hurting stop and the  
memories fade?***

**From "Anger and Tears", reproduced with the permission of  
Susan Aglukark and Jon Park-Wheeler**





# Is it better to stay or leave?



You have to think first about your safety, and the safety of your children.

You may choose to leave for a short time, or even permanently. Neither choice means you have to end your marriage or relationship.

You might be afraid that your family and friends will blame you for “breaking up the family.” And they might. It’s a hard choice. But hiding the actions of the abuser does not help that person to heal. And leaving children to learn violence is normal will affect their future as well.

If you are uncomfortable or feel unsafe, then you are likely in an abusive relationship. If you have been battered once, it will likely get worse, not better, unless you do something to stop it.

First, make sure you and your children are safe. In making your decision, ask yourself:

- Has he threatened to kill me or the children?
- Is he getting more violent each time?
- Has he forced me to have sex?
- Has he threatened suicide?
- Is he very controlling or jealous?
- Has he ever used a weapon, like a knife, stick, or gun to hurt me?
- Does he take drugs or drink a lot?
- Am I taking drugs or drinking to deal with the pain?
- Am I afraid for my children?
- Are my friends and family afraid for me?
- How is this tension and violence affecting me and my kids?

# What if I decide to stay?

*“He’s promised to stop hitting me and says it won’t happen again... I’ll give him another chance ... but just in case I’ll have an emergency plan ready.”*

You might decide to stay.

Sometimes women have been told that they have to keep the family together ... no matter what happens, or how bad things get. Many women face pressure to stay from their own family and their partner’s family—sometimes family members tell them that it is against God’s will for them to leave.



*“The whole town knows how he treats me... they’ll blame me for being a bad wife if I leave... and I still love him... but he almost killed me last time and the kids are going crazy... I have to do something.”*

In many communities women are blamed and put down if they talk about the abuse or leave their partner. And in many places no one tells you that abuse is wrong and may be a crime.

It is also hard to leave for many reasons, even for a short time, when you just want the violence to stop. It's hard to take the kids out of their home. And in small communities, there may seem to be nowhere to go.

And it's hard to leave when you still love him. You're not alone if you feel this way and it isn't wrong or bad to love him. Many women want to stay with their partner ... they just want the violence to stop. They hope with all their heart that he will just change into a caring and loving husband or partner.



Even if you do stay, you should still get medical treatment if you are injured, You do not have to tell anyone what caused the injuries. But it's easier for them to treat your injuries if you tell the nurse or doctor exactly what happened.

And it is still a good idea to have a plan ready in case you need to leave quickly. Remember, usually the abuse doesn't stop by itself. An emergency plan is really important for you and your children!



# What is an emergency plan?

An emergency plan is knowing in your mind what you will do when he attacks you again. It means being ready for that next attack.

Some women figure out how to leave before he attacks them again ... they start to see the signs that he is going to be violent.

*“I had nowhere to go so I walked around town with the kids for a few hours and just waited till he passed out.”*

Women who have been abused say it’s important to have a plan:

- Memorize the phone number of the police (these numbers are listed in the pages in the back pocket at the end of this booklet).
- If you do not have a police officer in your community you can call the closest community with a police officer:
  - ... they will usually accept collect calls
  - ... if language is an issue, find someone who can help you with the call
  - ... if you don’t get a response right away, don’t give up—keep trying!

- Memorize the phone number of friends and relatives you trust ... you can arrange to say a code word or phrase to them that means they should call the police.
- Plan how you would get to the health centre, hamlet office, church or friend's house if you had to get somewhere safe or somewhere with other people in a hurry.
- Leave some clothes, money and other valuable survival items at a friend's house in case you have to leave quickly ... or have a hidden bag with the things you will need.



# Emergency Checklist

- important papers, or photocopies, of birth certificates, health cards, child custody or other court orders (such as restraining order), your social insurance card, your partner's social insurance number
- money, credit cards, debit cards, cheque book, bank book, bank statement (save money if you can ... some women keep spare money wrapped in tin foil in the freezer, so it looks like leftover food)
- medicine
- your clothing and valuable jewellery
- driver's licence, car/skidoo/ATV keys
- house keys
- children's clothes and favourite toys
- an escape route and place to go all planned out.



***In an emergency, leave as quickly as possible!***

***Do not stop to collect the things on this list ... just go!***

# Where can I get help?

*“I don’t really know where to get help ... but if I go to the nursing station, and he sees me, I can just tell him I went in because I have a cold. That way he won’t know I’m looking for help ... and I won’t get a beating. I heard that the nurses here really help beaten-up women.”*

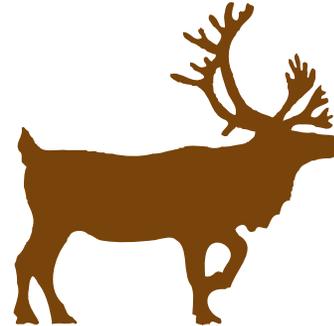
Every community has people who can help you if you are being abused. Call or go visit and ask what they can do or where else you should call or go for help:

- The police can protect you and your children, and help you find the services you need.
- Nurses, community health workers and social workers can help you get medical treatment and information about family violence, and can help direct you and your children to other services.
- Victim services workers or courtworkers can give you information and help you find the services you need.
- In some communities, registered psychiatric nurses, addictions and mental health workers can help you get addictions treatment.
- In some communities, women’s safe shelters can give you and your children a temporary place to stay, food and clothing as well as counselling, and they can help you get legal, financial and other services.



- Temporary emergency shelters or safe homes can be made available in every community to help provide you and your children a safe place until you can get to a women's safe shelter, if necessary.
- School community counsellors can help you get the information and services you need, particularly if you're still in school.
- You can call telephone crisis lines for help.
- Relatives, friends or Elders may give you support, or a place to stay.
- The priest or minister can give you information and help you find the services you need.
- Legal aid offices can tell you your rights and help you get a lawyer.
- Income support offices can help you financially.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call the police. They will come to your house to stop the violence, deal with the person who hurt or threatened you, tell you your rights and help you.



# What happens if I call the police?

If the police think you have been assaulted, or some other crime has been committed, the person who abused you may be charged with the crime. You will have to tell the police about the abuse. The police may also arrest him.

Most police officers are trained to deal with abuse in families and relationships. They can take you to a hospital, health centre or nursing station if you need treatment ... or they can help you and your children leave safely.

If the person is arrested, he might stay in jail until he appears in court at the bail hearing. In larger centres that may be only a few hours. After that, he may be allowed to leave, unless the court decides there is a good reason to keep him in jail.

If you are afraid for your safety, tell the police before the person who was abusive is let go. The court may set conditions for his release. For example, the court may order that he must not call you or see you. If he does not obey the conditions, the police can arrest him again.

If you are afraid he will hurt you when he is released, you may want to find a safe place to stay, like a temporary emergency shelter or safe home.

Or you can ask for an “emergency protection order” (civil, if available), a “restraining order” (civil or family) or a “peace bond” (criminal). These orders put conditions on what the person who hurt or threatened you is allowed to do in relation to you or your children. For example, the order can say that he isn’t allowed to contact you or communicate with you for some time, or that you and your children can remain in the house without him.

If the person who is being abusive doesn’t follow these rules he can be fined or go to jail.

If the judge or justice of the peace wants more information before granting an order he or she might ask you, and the other person, to come to a hearing. Each of you will have a chance to tell your side of the story. You don’t need a lawyer for this hearing, unless you want to have one.

It is often hard for abused people to ask for help. They feel loyal to family members and often count on them for everyday living. But an emergency protection order, restraining order or peace bond can help.



# What happens if the police charge the person being abusive?

If the person who is being abusive pleads guilty to assaulting you or your children, the court will sentence him. The sentence may be a fine, probation, time in jail, or a combination of these things. The person who is being abusive may have to get counselling as part of probation.

Whether he gets jail time or not will depend on a number of things such as whether or not this is a first offence and how bad the abuse was. If you are afraid, tell the Crown attorney or the victim services worker. The court can set conditions on his release, such as not contacting you. Or if you're afraid jail will mean you and your family have no food, then the court may agree to another punishment, such as spending time working for the community.

If the person who is being abusive says he is not guilty, you will have to be a witness at his trial. If you want, you may be allowed to provide your testimony from behind a screen or from another room by closed-circuit television so that you do not have to see your abuser while you tell your story.

You may also be able to have a support person near you, to make you more comfortable while you testify.

It may be several months before the trial starts. If the court finds the person being abusive guilty, he will be sentenced. The Crown attorney can tell you about victim services in your province or territory, who can help you and explain the court process.

The phone numbers for these people are in the back pocket at the end of this booklet.

If the person being abusive is found guilty by the court, he may be ordered to serve his sentence in the community under a "Community Sentence Order", sometimes called "house arrest". The judge can include many conditions in the order to help you and your children stay safe, such as that he keep the peace, not drink or use drugs, stay in his residence and not call or see you. Ask the Crown attorney and victim services worker before the trial starts what can be done.

# Is there any other help?

Most communities have Elders' committees who can provide guidance or help to you and your family if you ask.

You can go to a women's safe shelter if there is one in your community. If there isn't one, you can ask the police, nurse or victim services worker about going to the nearest temporary emergency shelter or safe home until other arrangements can be made.

The temporary emergency shelter or safe home (or women's safe shelter or transition home) is a safe place where you and your children can stay often for a few days or weeks. Most women's safe shelters have staff 24 hours a day. And most have a security system to keep people who are being abusive out.

The staff at the women's safe shelter will give you and your children a safe place to stay, and help you get food, clothing, diapers, toys, information and support. They will be able to help direct you to services such as legal advice, financial help, medical treatment and a new place to live, if that is what you want. The staff at the women's safe shelter

will not tell the person who is being abusive, or anyone else, where you are unless you agree to it.

The phone numbers of women's safe shelters in northern Canada are listed in the back pocket at the end of this booklet. If you live in a community in southern Canada, the phone numbers of women's safe shelters are available through the crisis lines listed in the back pocket at the end of this booklet.

You can call a women's safe shelter to ask questions or to tell your story. You do not have to tell them your name. Some women's safe shelters have toll-free numbers. And some of the women's safe shelter workers have been in violent relationships themselves so they will understand and won't judge you.

Most communities have nurses and community health workers who can help you and your children. They can offer a range of services, including for those who have suffered from physical and sexual abuse, trauma, depression and family violence. In some areas, a registered psychiatric

nurse or community mental health worker may also be available to help.

Some communities have victim services workers. These people can help you and your children find a safe place to stay, or help you ask for an emergency protection order (civil, if available), a restraining order (civil or family, if relevant) or a peace bond (criminal). Victim services workers can also help direct you to medical treatment and legal assistance. They can explain your rights and help you find the resources you need. Victim services workers can go with you to the police or the hospital. They will support you as you try to decide what to do.

They will also listen if you want to talk about what is happening and how you feel. Many people who answer the crisis line phones have been through abuse themselves. The phone numbers of the victim services workers and crisis lines are in the back pocket at the end of this booklet. Legal help is available from a lawyer or a legal aid office, and in some situations, may be free of charge. Contact a legal aid office, a law line, a court worker or victim services

worker to find out where you can get legal help and if you can get help free of charge.

As well, every region of Canada has access to crisis lines, with toll-free phone numbers. The people who answer the phone do not have call display and you do not have to tell them your name. They can tell you where to get help.

***IMPORTANT—if you call any phone number in the list in the pocket of this booklet, and your phone has a re-dial feature, then call some other number after calling the police, crisis line, women's safe shelter or victim services worker. Or if you called from a cell phone, don't forget to clear the number from your list of past calls. That way the abusive person won't know what you're doing or planning.***

# What about the children if I decide to leave?

If you leave an abusive situation, you can still apply for custody of your children. Your partner doesn't automatically get to keep your children because you had to leave without them.

If you think your children might be in danger, contact the police and ask them to escort you and your children to a shelter or a location where you will be safe. If you can't take them, tell the police about the danger your children are in.

If you have time before leaving your home, you should also speak with a lawyer about the best way to protect yourself and your children. A lawyer can help you apply to the court for a custody or parenting order.

If you are worried about your children's safety, your lawyer can ask the judge for an order that would allow your spouse to have only supervised visits with the children, or no contact at all. The judge will base their decision on what is best for the children. Keep in mind that it is rare for a judge to order no contact between a child and a parent. Even if visits are not supervised, you can always arrange for someone else to be with you for pick-up and drop-off to avoid problems.

Your safety and the safety of your children come first. Do not stay in a dangerous situation because you are worried about how you will support your children on your own. Shelters can provide you and your children with short-term help while you look for housing and long-term support. Your lawyer can also help you ask the judge to order the other parent to pay financial support for you and your children.

If you have a custody or parenting order, it is a good idea to keep a copy with you in case there is a problem. You can also give a copy to your children's school or daycare.

If you are concerned that the other parent or someone else will try to take the children out of the area, or even out of Canada, tell your lawyer. A judge can make an order that one or both parents not be allowed to remove the children from a specific area (such as a hamlet, province, territory or Canada). The judge can also order that the children's passports be kept by the court. More information on what to do if you are concerned about the children being taken out of Canada (called "international child abductions") can be found at this site: [http://www.voyage.gc.ca/faq/child-abduction\\_enlevements-enfants-eng.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/faq/child-abduction_enlevements-enfants-eng.asp).

# How can I get the courage and strength to deal with all this?

If you are having trouble deciding what to do, and feel confused, you can start by building up your own courage and strength.

There are many things you can do to feel stronger, more hopeful and independent:

- Talk things over with someone you really trust. You don't have to tell them everything, just what you feel comfortable saying.
- Almost every town has sewing groups, recreation programs, moms and tots groups, AA and Alanon groups, churches, adult education programs, friendship centre programs and a library. Going to these places and groups gives your mind and heart a break from all the worry, self doubt, guilt and fear. You will go home with renewed strength and self respect.
- Spend some time on the land by yourself, or with your children and trusted friends or family. Everyone says time away from town gives them courage, hope and inner peace.
- Many women have found that spiritual practices such as traditional ceremonies, prayer, healing circles, and going to church gives them courage ... and helps them see their situation, and their choices, more clearly.
- If you think you have an addiction problem yourself, you can see the local addictions counsellor and ask about treatment programs for you.



**Making a better life for yourself,  
and your children, happens...**

**ONE STEP AT A TIME!**

# Words used in this booklet ...

Disclaimer:

Although these explanations can help you understand, they are not complete legal definitions. If you need more complex, accurate definitions, please consult a lawyer.

## **assault**

An assault happens when someone uses force, or the threat of force, on someone else without that person's consent. (Consent that is forced or given out of fear is not true consent.)

## **bail hearing**

This is a court proceeding that takes place after a person has been arrested and charged. The court decides whether the person should be released with conditions, such as

being told he must not contact you. Or the judge at the bail hearing could decide the abuser should be held in jail until the charges are dealt with by the court. Bail is also called "interim judicial release".

## **criminal harassment**

If you are scared because someone is repeatedly following you or contacting you when you don't want them to, or watching you or behaving in a threatening manner toward you or your children, or family, that person may be committing an offence known as criminal harassment. This is sometimes called stalking.

## **Crown attorney**

This is the lawyer (also sometimes called Crown Counsel or Crown Prosecutor) who represents the government (known as "the Crown"). The Crown attorney presents the case to the court when a crime has been committed, and may require the victim or a witness to tell their story to the judge. The person who is charged will usually have his own lawyer, called the defence attorney.

## **custody or parenting order**

If you have custody of your children, you are legally responsible for making the major decisions about their upbringing and schooling. When you have custody, your children usually live with you, but will likely visit the other parent. Child custody can be sole custody, where one parent makes the major decisions about the children, or joint custody, where the parents must make the major decisions together. Another term, such as “parenting order” may be used in your province or territory. A parenting order sets out how decisions about the child are to be made, and how the child’s time is shared between parents.

## **court order**

If you are afraid for your safety, but do not want to call the police for help, you may be able to get an order from a civil or family court stating that the abuser must stay away from you, often known as restraining orders. You should get legal help to find out what types of civil or family court orders are available in your province or territory that might be useful to you.

Emergency protection orders or emergency intervention orders are civil protection orders that are available in most provinces and territories under specific family violence legislation. They can grant the victim temporary exclusive occupation of the home; remove the abuser from the home; set limits on contact and communication with the victim and other remedies.

You should get legal help to find out what types of family court orders or civil court orders are available in your province or territory and whether these are relevant to your situation.

## **peace bond**

If you are afraid for your safety, you may be able to get a peace bond, also called a “recognizance”. This is a criminal court order that sets conditions on the person who is being abusive. For example, that person may be forbidden to see you, write to you, or telephone you. If he disobeys the order, the police may arrest him. If you want to know more about a peace bond you can ask the police or a lawyer.

## **probation**

This is a criminal court order that can be part of a sentence for an offender. A person on probation will have conditions set on release, such as having to go to counselling.

## **sentencing**

Where a judge finds someone guilty of a criminal offence, they will sentence that person to jail, called a custodial order, or to serve their sentence in the community, called a community sentence order. Where someone must serve their sentence in the community, there are conditions placed on that person, such as not leaving their house except at certain times of day or for specific reasons, sometimes called “house arrest”. Or they may be ordered to work for the community, such as bringing in a caribou.

## Emergency Services for Abused Women and Children

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>RCMP</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Beaver Creek (867) 862-2677</li><li>○ Carcross (867) 821-2677</li><li>○ Carmacks (867) 863-2677</li><li>○ Dawson City (867) 993-2677</li><li>○ Faro (867) 994-2677</li><li>○ Haines Junction (867) 634-2677</li><li>○ Mayo (867) 996-2677</li><li>○ Old Crow (867) 966-2677</li><li>○ Pelly Crossing (867) 537-2677</li><li>○ Ross River (867) 969-2677</li><li>○ Teslin (867) 390-2677</li><li>○ Watson Lake (867) 536-2677</li><li>○ Whitehorse <b>911</b> or (867) 667-5555</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Victim Services</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Whitehorse (867) 667-8500 or 1-800-661-0408, ext. 8500 (toll-free)</li><li>○ Dawson City (867) 993-5831</li></ul></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Crisis Lines</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Kaushee's Place (867) 668-5733 (open 24/7) (can call collect)</li><li>○ Victim Link 1-800-563-0808 (toll-free) (open 24/7)</li><li>○ Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868 (toll-free) or on the internet at kidshelpphone.ca (open 24/7)</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Women's Shelters and Transition Homes</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Dawson City (867) 993-5086</li><li>○ Help and Hope for Families (Watson Lake) (867) 536-7233</li><li>○ Kaushee's Place (Whitehorse) (867) 668-5733</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Crown Victim Witness Program, Justice Canada - Whitehorse</b> (867) 667-8112</li><li>• <b>Law Line</b> (867) 668-5297 (Whitehorse) or 1-866-667-4305 (toll-free)</li></ul> |
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### NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>RCMP</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Aklavik (867) 978-1111</li><li>○ Deline (867) 589-1111</li><li>○ Fort Good Hope (867) 598-1111</li><li>○ Fort Liard (867) 770-1111</li><li>○ Fort McPherson (867) 952-1111</li><li>○ Fort Providence (867) 952-1111</li><li>○ Fort Resolution (867) 394-1111</li><li>○ Fort Simpson (867) 695-1111</li><li>○ Fort Smith (867) 872-1111</li><li>○ Hay River (867) 874-1111</li><li>○ Holman (867) 396-1111</li><li>○ Inuvik (867) 777-1111</li><li>○ Lutsel K'e (867) 370-1111</li><li>○ Norman Wells (867) 587-1111</li><li>○ Paulatuk (867) 580-1111</li><li>○ Rae (867) 392-1111</li><li>○ Sachs Harbour c/o Inuvik (867) 777-1111</li><li>○ Tuktoyaktuk (867) 977-1111</li><li>○ Tulita (867) 588-1111</li><li>○ Wha Ti (867) 573-1111</li><li>○ Yellowknife (867) 669-1111</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Victim Services</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Inuvik (867) 777-5493</li><li>○ Yellowknife (867) 920-2978</li></ul></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Crisis Lines</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ NWT Help Line 1-800-661-0844 (toll-free) and (867) 920-2121 in Yellowknife (open 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. daily)</li><li>○ Alison McAteer House 1-866-223-7775 (toll-free) or (867) 873-8257 in Yellowknife (open 24/7)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Holman Help Line (867) 396-3911</li><li>○ Inuvik (867) 777-3877</li></ul></li><li>○ Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868 (toll-free) or on the internet at kidshelpphone.ca (open 24/7)</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Women's Shelters and Transition Homes</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Aimayunga Women and Emergency Foster Care Shelter (Tuktoyaktuk) (867) 977-2000</li><li>○ Alison McAteer House (Yellowknife) 1-866-223-7775 (toll-free) or (867) 669-0235</li><li>○ Centre for Northern Families (Yellowknife) (867) 873-9131</li><li>○ Family Support Centre (Hay River) (867) 874-3311</li><li>○ Inuvik (867) 777-3877</li><li>○ Sutherland House (Fort Smith) (867) 872-5925</li><li>○ Yellowknife Women's Centre (867) 873-2566</li><li>○ For referrals in other centres -<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ In Fort Providence, call the Family Life Program at the Zhati Koe Friendship Centre (867) 699-3801</li><li>○ In Fort Liard, call the Family Violence Prevention Program of the Acho Dene Koe First Nation (867) 770-4001</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>• <b>Crown Victim Witness Program, Justice Canada</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Inuvik (867) 777-3075</li><li>○ Yellowknife (867) 669-6911</li></ul></li></ul> |
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## Emergency Services for Abused Women and Children

### NUNAVUT

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>RCMP</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Arctic Bay (Ikpiarjuk) (867) 439-0123</li><li>○ Arviat (867) 857-0123</li><li>○ Baker Lake (Qamanittuaq) (867) 793-0123</li><li>○ Cambridge Bay (Ikaluktutiak) (867) 983-0123</li><li>○ Cape Dorset (Kingait) (867) 897-0123</li><li>○ Chesterfield Inlet (Igluigaarjuk) (867) 898-0123</li><li>○ Clyde River (Kangiqlugaapik) (867) 924-0123</li><li>○ Coral Harbour (Salliq) (867) 925-0123</li><li>○ Gjoa Haven (Ursuqtuq) (867) 360-0123</li><li>○ Grise Fiord (Aujittuuq) (867) 980-0123</li><li>○ Hall Beach (867) 928-0123</li><li>○ Igloolik (867) 934-0123</li><li>○ Iqaluit (867) 979-0123</li><li>○ Kimmirut (867) 939-0123</li><li>○ Kugaaruk (Pelly Bay) (867) 769-0123</li><li>○ Kugluktuk (867) 982-0123</li><li>○ Pangnirtung (867) 473-0123</li><li>○ Pond Inlet (867) 899-0123</li><li>○ Qikiqtarjuaq (867) 927-0123</li><li>○ Rankin Inlet (Kangiqliniq) (867) 645-0123</li><li>○ Repulse Bay (Naujaat) (867) 462-0123</li><li>○ Resolute Bay (867) 252-0123</li><li>○ Sanikiluaq (867) 266-0123</li><li>○ Taloyoak (867) 561-0123</li><li>○ Whale Cove (867) 896-0123</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Women's Shelters and Transition Homes</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Community Wellness Centre (Cambridge Bay) (867) 983-2133</li><li>○ Innuitt Women's Group (Taloyoak) (867) 561-5902</li><li>○ Kataujaq Society Crisis Centre (Rankin Inlet) (867) 645-2214</li><li>○ Tukkuvik Women's Shelter (Cape Dorset) (867) 897-8915</li><li>○ Qimaavik Transition House (Iqaluit) (867) 979-4500</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Victim Services</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Iqaluit (867) 975-6308</li><li>○ Rankin Inlet (867) 645-2600</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Crown Victim Witness Program, Justice Canada</b><br/>Iqaluit (867) 975-4600</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Crisis Lines</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Nunavut Kamatsiaqtut Help Line (formerly the Baffin Crisis Line) (867) 979-3333 (Iqaluit) and 1-800-265-3333 (toll-free from every Nunavut and Nunavik community) (open 7 p.m. to midnight, 7 nights a week)</li><li>○ Kugluktuk Awareness Centre (867) 982-4673</li><li>○ Rankin Inlet Keewatin (867) 645-3333 (open Monday to Friday 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.)</li><li>○ Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868 (toll-free) or on the internet at <a href="http://kidshelpphone.ca">kidshelpphone.ca</a> (open 24/7)</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Community Justice Outreach Workers</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Arctic Bay (Ikpiarjuk) (867) 439-9918</li><li>○ Arviat (867) 857-2959</li><li>○ Baker Lake (Qamanittuaq) (867) 793-2045</li><li>○ Cambridge Bay (Ikaluktutiak) (867) 983-4182</li><li>○ Cape Dorset (Kingait) (867) 897-3686</li><li>○ Chesterfield Inlet (Igluigaarjuk) (867) 898-9045</li><li>○ Clyde River (Kangiqlugaapik) (867) 924-6565</li><li>○ Coral Harbour (Salliq) (867) 925-8222</li><li>○ Gjoa Haven (Ursuqtuq) (867) 360-6826</li><li>○ Grise Fiord (Aujittuuq) (867) 980-4099</li><li>○ Hall Beach (Currently Vacant)</li><li>○ Igloolik (867) 934-4065</li><li>○ Iqaluit (867) 975-6362</li><li>○ Kimmirut (867) 939-2001</li><li>○ Kugaaruk (Pelly Bay) (867) 769-6281</li><li>○ Kugluktuk (867) 982-5633</li><li>○ Pangnirtung (867) 473-8018</li><li>○ Pond Inlet (867) 899-8064</li><li>○ Qikiqtarjuaq (867) 927-8089</li><li>○ Rankin Inlet (Kangiqliniq) (867) 645-2039</li><li>○ Repulse Bay (Naujaat) (867) 462-4007</li><li>○ Resolute Bay (867) 252-3005</li><li>○ Sanikiluaq (867) 266-7905</li><li>○ Taloyoak (Currently Vacant)</li><li>○ Whale Cove (Tikirarjuaq): (867) 896-9961</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Law Line 1-800-873-3130</b> (toll-free, open every Tuesday and Thursday evening, from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.)</li></ul> |
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## Emergency Services for Abused Women and Children

### NUNAVIK (NORTHERN QUEBEC)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Police</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Kativik Regional Police Force 1-800-964-2644 (toll-free)</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Victim Services</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ CAVAC (Sapumijit) Centres d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels (Crime Victims Assistance Centres)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kuujuaq (819) 964-2086 or 1-866-778-0770 (toll-free)</li><li>• Salluit (819) 255-8328</li></ul></li><li>○ CALAC Centre d'aide aux victimes d'agression sexuelle de Montréal (Montréal Sexual Assault Centre) (514) 934-4504 (open 24/7)</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Crisis Lines</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Nunavut Kamatsiaqtut Help Line (formerly the Baffin Crisis Line) (867) 979-3333 (Iqaluit) and 1-800-265-3333 (toll-free from every Nunavut and Nunavik community) (open 7 p.m. to midnight, 7 nights a week)</li><li>○ Domestic violence hotline (S.O.S. violence conjugale) (514) 873-9010 in the Montréal area or 1-800-363-9010 (toll-free elsewhere in Québec) (open 24/7)</li><li>○ Tel-Jeunes (young person's help line) 1-800-263-2266 (open 24/7)</li><li>○ Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868 (toll-free) or on the internet at kidshelpphone.ca (open 24/7)</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Women's Shelters and Transition Homes</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Ajapirvik (Inukjuak) (819) 254-8401</li><li>○ Kuujuaq Tungasuvvik (819) 964-0536</li><li>○ Salluit Inistsiaq (819) 255-8817</li></ul></li></ul>
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### NUNATSIAVUT (NORTHERN LABRADOR)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>RCMP</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>911</b> or the following numbers in each community</li><li>○ Happy Valley-Goose Bay (709) 896-3383</li><li>○ Hopedale (709) 933-3820</li><li>○ Nain (709) 922-2862</li><li>○ Rigolet (709) 947-3400</li><li>○ Makkovik (709) 923-2405 (and for Postville (Qipuqqaq))</li><li>○ Sheshatshiu (709) 497-8700 (and for North West River)</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Victim Services</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Happy Valley-Goose Bay (709) 896-0446</li><li>○ Nain (709) 922-2360</li><li>○ St. John's (709) 729-0900</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Law Line</b> 1-709-896-5323 (Labrador) or 1-709-896-5051 (elsewhere)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Crisis Lines</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Hope Haven Crisis Line 1-888-332-0000 (toll-free) or (709) 944-6900</li><li>○ Kirkina House (Rigolet) (709) 947-3333</li><li>○ Libra House (Happy Valley-Goose Bay) 1-877-896-3014 (toll-free) or (709) 896-3014</li><li>○ Nain Safe House 1-866-922-1230 or (709) 922-1229</li><li>○ Nukum Munik Shelter Crisis Line (Sheshatshiu) (709) 497-8869</li><li>○ Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868 (toll-free) or on the internet at kidshelpphone.ca (open 24/7)</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Women's Shelters and Transition Homes</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Happy Valley-Goose Bay Libra House (709) 896-8251</li><li>○ Hope Haven Women's Shelter (Labrador City) (709) 944-7124</li><li>○ Kirkina House (Rigolet) (709) 947-3334</li><li>○ Labrador West Family Crisis Shelter (709) 896-8251</li><li>○ Nain Safe House (709) 922-1229</li></ul></li></ul>
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### NATIONAL (INCLUDING CITIES IN THE SOUTH)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Police</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>911</b> in cities</li></ul></li><li>• <b>On-line information</b> <a href="http://www.hotpeachpages.net/canada/index.html">http://www.hotpeachpages.net/canada/index.html</a></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Crisis Lines</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ National Center for Victims of Crime 1-800-FYI-CALL (toll-free)</li><li>○ Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868 (toll-free) or on the internet at kidshelpphone.ca (open 24/7)</li></ul></li></ul>
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