

# Am I Safe?

What are my options?

*Help, Hope & Healing*



### **Indian Residential School Survivors Society**

Toll-free phone: 1-800-721-0066 or 24-hour  
National Survivors Support Line: 1-866-925-4419  
Website: [www.irsss.ca](http://www.irsss.ca)

Information, counselling, traditional healing  
and support for residential school survivors.

### **Warriors Against Violence Society**

Phone: (604) 255-3240  
Website: [www.wavbc.com](http://www.wavbc.com)

Men's groups, Women's groups, co-ed groups,  
youth groups, one-on-one counselling and couple's  
counselling to address family violence.

### **B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres**

Phone: (250) 388-5522  
Website: [www.bcaafc.com](http://www.bcaafc.com)

BCAAFC is the umbrella organization for the  
24 Friendship Centres in B.C. that provide services  
to urban Aboriginal communities.

### **Métis Nation British Columbia**

Métis Women's Secretariat-BC.  
Toll-free phone: 1-800-940-1150  
Website: [www.mnbc.ca](http://www.mnbc.ca)

Culturally relevant programs and services for Métis  
communities.

*"Toll-free" means that there is no charge to the individual  
placing the call.*

## **Are you and your family safe from violence?**

Violence is any behaviour used to injure, abuse or harm  
another individual. Women of all cultures experience  
violence and abuse, but Aboriginal women and girls are  
at higher risk of violence.

Violence is never acceptable. Aboriginal women and their  
families have the legal right to be safe and to live free from  
violence, abuse and threats. Physical and sexual violence  
(including rape) are crimes and are against the law.

The information in this brochure can help you to recognize  
actions based on power and control. These are considered  
violent behaviours. Non-violent behaviours are respectful  
and promote equality.

You are not alone. There are options that can help you to  
build a more positive environment for you and your family.

Programs and services in communities across British  
Columbia can offer you support. Services like transition  
houses, safe homes and counselling programs are there  
for all women in B.C., including Aboriginal, First Nations,  
Métis and Inuit women.

Some services focus specifically on Aboriginal women  
and families, including residential school healing  
programs and specialized counselling, addiction support  
and educational services. Phone numbers you can call are  
listed on the back of this brochure.

## Behaviours Based On Power and Control

### Using Coercion and Threats

- Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her
- Threatening to leave her, to commit suicide, to report her to welfare
- Making her drop charges
- Making her do illegal things

### Using Intimidation

- Making her afraid by using looks, actions, gestures
- Smashing things
- Destroying her property
- Abusing pets
- Displaying weapons

### Using Emotional Abuse

- Putting her down
- Making her feel bad about herself
- Calling her names
- Making her think she's crazy
- Playing mind games
- Humiliating her
- Making her feel guilty

### Using Isolation

- Controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to, what she reads, where she goes
- Limiting her outside involvement
- Using jealousy to justify actions

## Behaviours Based On Power and Control

### Minimizing, Denying and Blaming

- Making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously
- Saying the abuse didn't happen
- Shifting responsibility for abusive behaviour
- Saying she caused it

### Using Children

- Making her feel guilty about the children
- Using the children to relay messages
- Using visitation to harass her
- Threatening to take the children away

### Using Male Privilege

- Treating her like a servant
- Making all the big decisions
- Acting like the "master of the castle"
- Being the one to define men's and women's roles

### Using Economic Abuse

- Preventing her from getting or keeping a job
- Making her ask for money
- Giving her an allowance
- Taking her money
- Not letting her know about or have access to family income

*"The negative effects of behaviour go from generation to generation in a vicious circle. Through understanding and healing we can break it."*

## Behaviours That Promote Equality

### Negotiation and Fairness

- Seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict
- Accepting change
- Being willing to compromise

### Non-Threatening Behaviour

- Talking and acting so that she feels safe and comfortable expressing herself and doing things

### Respect

- Listening to her non-judgmentally
- Being emotionally affirming and understanding
- Valuing opinions

### Trust and Support

- Supporting her goals in life
- Respecting her right to her own feelings, friends, activities and opinions

*“I was unable to recognize that I was in an abusive relationship. When a doctor told me that I needed to go to a battered women’s support group, I was offended. I didn’t like being labeled, especially since I was First Nations. It made me feel ashamed. It took some time for me to get the help I needed. When I did, it was one of the best things I did for myself.”*

## Behaviours That Promote Equality

### Honesty and Accountability

- Accepting responsibility for self
- Acknowledging past use of violence
- Admitting being wrong
- Communicating openly and truthfully

### Responsible Parenting

- Sharing parental responsibilities
- Being a positive non-violent role model for the children

### Shared Responsibility

- Mutually agreeing on a fair distribution of work
- Making family decisions together

### Economic Partnership

- Making money decisions together
- Making sure both partners benefit from financial arrangements

*“Balance is imperative! If I knew I was going to live so long I would have looked after myself better.”*

Adapted from the “Power and Control Wheel” and the “Equality Wheel”, with permission from the DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROJECT, Duluth, MN, [www.duluth-model.org](http://www.duluth-model.org)

## Emergency Numbers

**IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER,  
CALL YOUR LOCAL POLICE OR DIAL 9-1-1,  
IF AVAILABLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

**VictimLink BC - [www.victimlinkbc.ca](http://www.victimlinkbc.ca)**

**Call toll-free 1-800-563-0808**

A 24-hour telephone help line providing crisis support and assistance in up to 130 languages.

VictimLink BC can connect you to:

- Safe emergency shelter (transition houses, safe homes);
- Counselling programs for women, children, men and families; and
- Other treatment and healing programs.

**Stopping violence against women  
is everyone's responsibility.**

**Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General**

**[www.gov.bc.ca/pssg](http://www.gov.bc.ca/pssg)**

***"I learned that I don't have to carry the shame  
and guilt."***

The information in this brochure was adapted from the following:

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