

CONFIDENTIAL

Briefing Note

Fall 2021

Domestic Violence Supports

Health and Social Services
Women and Gender Equity
Directorate
Justice

Recommended response:

- We are very saddened by what has occurred in Faro and our hearts go out to the families of the victims and the community. We know that domestic violence is a very real problem in the Yukon with rates nearly four times the national average.
 - Unfortunately, it doesn't affect us all equally: 80 percent of victims identify as women and Indigenous Yukoners are twice as likely to experience domestic violence as non-Indigenous Yukoners. Across the country, 25 percent of intimate partner homicide is committed against members of a visible minority in Canada.
 - We are committed to working with partners including the RCMP, First Nation governments, and equality-seeking organizations to improve services and supports for victims of domestic violence in the Yukon.
 - Confidential support can be accessed 24/7 from the transition homes in Dawson City, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse, no matter where you are in the territory. Trained staff are available to support victims to navigate their individual or family safety and connect to other services.
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Context:

- Two people were killed and one critically injured by a shooter on October 26, 2021 in Faro. A 61-year-old man has been charged and is in police custody.
- RCMP confirmed that the initial call they responded to was about a "domestic dispute".

Background:

- In 2021-22, Government of Yukon is providing over \$2.7 million in funding annually to three transition homes in Yukon:
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Prepared for:
Minister McPhee, Health and Social Services and Justice
Minister McLean, Women and Gender Equity Directorate

Date prepared: October 28, 2021
Last updated: November 15, 2021
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- \$1,682,701 to Yukon Women's Transition Home Society in Whitehorse;
 - \$395,420 to Dawson Women's Shelter in Dawson City, and
 - \$604,000 to Help and Hope for Families in Watson Lake.
- In person services for victims of domestic violence are limited in Faro.
- In 2012, the Government of Yukon began providing funding to the Yukon RCMP to facilitate the creation of a Specialized Response Unit (SRU) to investigate domestic violence and sexualized assault. The SRU was established in 2013 and continues to be staffed by three RCMP officers who work collaboratively with all partner and stakeholder agencies to address and investigate domestic violence and sexualized violence in Yukon communities.
- One of the 2021-22 Yukon policing priorities includes enhancing prevention, investigation and enforcement activities related to violence against women, girls and the LGBTQ2S+ population. These priorities are established through collaboration between the Department of Justice, the Yukon Police Council and community partners.
- Victims of intimate partner violence may access independent legal advice through the Independent Legal Advice Program at Victim Services. Independent lawyers provide advice on a variety of types of intersecting law including criminal, family, civil, immigration and employment related matters.
- Victims can seek court orders under the *Family Violence Prevention Act*.
- Under this Act, a victim can apply for an Emergency Intervention Order (EIOs), which are short term and deal with urgent situations. Emergency Intervention Orders have conditions that focus on immediate safety, such as removing an abusive partner from the home, directing no contact between the respondent and applicant, and imposing sole occupancy of a residence.

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- Emergency Intervention Orders (EIOs) can be heard in person or over the phone and granted by specially designated and trained Justices of the Peace within 24 hours of the application.
- Another tool under the *Family Violence Prevention Act* is a Victim Assistance Order, which is similar to an Emergency Intervention Orders, except they for a longer term and can provide additional conditions around property and finances. Victim Assistance Orders are heard by a judge of the Territorial Court
- Victim Services has offices located in Dawson City, Watson Lake and Whitehorse. Victim Services provides itinerant service to all other Yukon communities in person, by phone and through technology facilitated services. Staff members assist with safety planning and explore other options with clients such as protective orders under the *Family Violence Prevention Act*.
- Victim Service workers work with victims to develop ongoing safety plans, explore options for next steps and connect victims with supports and referrals, including legal advice if desired.
- Victim Services is available by phone, text, email and itinerant travel.
 Phone: 867-667-8500
 Toll free: 1-800-661-0408, extension 8500
 Email: victim.services@yukon.ca
- Yukon's *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit Plus Strategy* includes action 2.5 on improving victim-centered and crisis-response supports for victims of gender-based violence.

Approved by:


Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

November 15, 2021


Date

Prepared for:
 Minister McPhee, Health and Social Services and Justice
 Minister McLean, Women and Gender Equity Directorate

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Health and Social Services
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Deputy Minister, Women and Gender
Equity Directorate

November 16, 2021

Date



Deputy Minister, Justice

November 15, 2021

Date

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Recommended response:

- Victims of domestic violence across the Yukon can access supports through Victim Services, transition homes, the RCMP and other support agencies.
- Support can be accessed 24/7 from the transition homes in Dawson, Watson Lake and Whitehorse, no matter where you are in the territory. These services are confidential and operated by trained staff who can support victims to navigate their safety along with that of their children, and to access other services.
- Victim Services can assist with safety planning, exploration of options, assistance to report to police, and access to other support services. These services are voluntary and confidential.
- Victim Services has offices located in Dawson, Watson Lake and Whitehorse. Victim Services provides itinerant in-person service along with connection by phone and other means to all other Yukon communities including Faro.
- Victims of domestic violence may access legal advice through the Independent Legal Advice Program at Victim Services. Independent lawyers provide advice on a variety of types of intersecting law including criminal, family, civil, immigration and employment related matters.

Additional Response

- Victim Services, Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services, Department of Education, partner agencies such as the Canadian Mental Health Association Yukon, the Yukon RCMP, and others worked

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Justice

together to coordinate an initial crisis response to the October 26, 2021 shootings in Faro.

- This response was rapid and coordinated, with a goal of not overwhelming the community in the early days.
- In the weeks since, these agencies all continue to provide supports to the community of Faro, and are now each taking on their specific role and carrying out their mandates for service.
- Victim Services continues to work with community members to provide victim specific supports, access to the victims of crime emergency fund, and updated court and system information.
- Victim Services attended the community rapidly following the shootings and since then has returned for additional in-person service. Victim Services will continue to have an increased travel schedule in the coming months.

Context:

- Two people were killed and one critically injured by a shooter in Faro on October 26, 2021. A 61-year-old man has been charged and has been remanded.
- On November 15, 2021 Members of the Official Opposition asked about services for victims of domestic violence in Faro

Background:**Supports for Victims of Domestic Violence across Yukon**

- Access to in-person services are limited in some communities, including Faro.
- Victim Services has offices located in Dawson, Watson Lake and Whitehorse. Victim Services provides itinerant service to all other Yukon communities including Faro. This is provided through in-person service when workers are in Faro or victims of crime are in Whitehorse, and/or by phone and text during other times.

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- Victim Service Workers assist with safety planning, supporting individuals to report to police, and explore other options with clients such as protective orders under the *Family Violence Prevention Act*.
- Victim Services is available by phone, text, email and itinerant travel.
 - Phone: 867-667-8500 or toll free: 1-800-661-0408, extension 8500
 - Email: victim.services@yukon.ca
- Support can be accessed 24/7 from the transition homes in Dawson, Watson Lake and Whitehorse, no matter where you are in the territory. These services are confidential and operated by trained staff who can support victims to navigate their safety along with that of their children, and to access other services.

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- In 2021-22, Government of Yukon is providing over \$2.6 million in funding annually to three transition homes in Yukon:
 - \$1,682,701 to Yukon Women's Transition Home Society in Whitehorse;
 - \$395,420.85 to Dawson Women's Shelter in Dawson City, and
 - \$604,000 to Help and Hope for Families in Watson Lake.
- One of the Yukon's policing priorities for 2021-22 includes enhancing prevention, investigation and enforcement activities related to violence against women, girls and the LGBTQ2S+ population.
- In 2012, the Government of Yukon began providing funding to the Yukon RCMP to facilitate the creation of a Specialized Response Unit (SRU) to investigate domestic violence and sexualized assault.
- Victims of intimate partner violence may access legal advice through the Independent Legal Advice Program at Victim Services. Independent lawyers

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provide advice on a variety of types of intersecting law including criminal, family, civil, immigration and employment related matters.

- The Family Violence Prevention Act sets out orders including Emergency Intervention Orders (EIOs), which are short term and deal with urgent situations. Emergency Intervention Orders have conditions that focus on immediate safety, such as removing an abusive partner from the home, directing no contact between the respondent and applicant and imposing sole occupancy of a residence.
- Emergency Intervention Orders (EIOs) can be heard in person or over the phone and granted by specially designated and trained Justices of the Peace within 24 hours of the application. Victim Assistance Orders are heard by judge of the Territorial Court at a hearing date that is set by the Court.

Additional Victim Services in Faro following October 26, 2021

- Two Victim Service Workers travelled to Faro and provided both specific victim services along with leading the on-the ground coordination of psycho-social supports.
- Staff from Whitehorse assisted by taking referrals, attending court, assisting with Victims of Crime Emergency Fund applications and more.
- The Victim Service Workers returned to Whitehorse for a rest and then travelled back to the community the following week for Court and to continue to connect in person with victims.
- The Victim Services team will continue to provide service to all victims referred to our service. Of note, victims can also self-refer.
- Victim Services will increase its travel schedule to the community in order to provide additional in-person service over the coming months (with the recognition that COVID-19 restrictions might interrupt our ability to travel).

Initial multi-agency response following October 26, 2021

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As part of the initial response, departments worked together to share information and coordinate responses, this included:

- Staff, along with additional Department of Education resource persons provided crisis supports to students at the Del Van Gorder School and were there to welcome and support students and families throughout the following days.
- Victim Services and Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services coordinated the psycho-social response/crisis response and ensured crisis counselling supports were in place and broadly accessible.
- A schedule of supports was developed and communicated to the community, with drop in supports available. Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services, Victim Services and the Canadian Mental Wellness Association of Yukon worked together to deliver this service.
- Canadian Mental Health Association travelled to the community as part of the schedule of supports, with travel assistance from Victim Services.
- Victim Services sent two staff members to work in person with direct victims and also to coordinate the psycho-social response/crisis response.
- Mental Wellness and Substance Use sent staff members to provide immediate, critical assistance and counselling.
- Family and Children's Services has an office in Faro and also sent additional team members to support in the community.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Justice_____
Date

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Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Justice

2021-11-16

Date