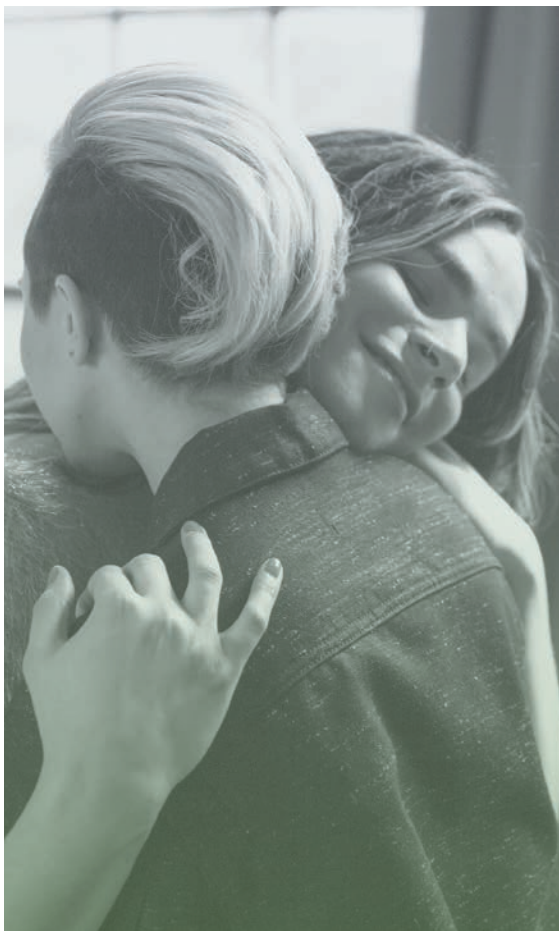


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# Safety in Relationships

Same-Gender

February 2020



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QMUNITY

Legal Aid BC



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This booklet explains the law in general. It isn't intended to give you legal advice on your particular problem. Each person's case is different. You may need to get legal help. Information in this booklet is up to date as of February 2020.

This booklet helps identify what can make a relationship unsafe and provides resources for people looking for support.

 **Caution:**

This booklet discusses and gives examples of abuse. Consider having someone with you for support, or plan other kinds of self-care, if reading it might make you feel anxious or distressed.

An abusive partner might become violent if they find this booklet or see you reading it. For your safety, read it when they're not around and keep it somewhere they don't go. If you're reading it online, make sure to delete your electronic trail. (At [getcybersafe.gc.ca](https://getcybersafe.gc.ca), click Protect Yourself, then Protect Your Devices.)

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If you're in immediate danger and feel able to seek help, call **911** or **211** or VictimLinkBC at **1-800-563-0808**.

Any phone with power and a working signal can call **911**.

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## Terms used in this booklet

**Healthy conflict:** conversation or a non-violent disagreement that leads to a solution.

**Survivor:** a person who is living in an abusive relationship or has left an abusive relationship.

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For these and other terms, see QMUNITY's publication *Queer Terminology*, in print or online: [qmunity.ca/resources](https://qmunity.ca/resources)

We've tried to make this resource inclusive, but language is always changing. To tell us how we can improve this booklet, please email [education@qmunity.ca](mailto:education@qmunity.ca) or [publications@legalaid.bc.ca](mailto:publications@legalaid.bc.ca).

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## Abuse Can Happen to Anyone

Healthy, safe relationships take many forms and can include healthy conflict. (see page 2) But healthy conflict isn't the same as abuse. A relationship becomes abusive when one person misuses their power to harm or control the other person. Abuse can happen in any relationship. Abuse comes in many forms, and can be psychological, emotional, financial, sexual, verbal, or physical. A relationship that includes abuse is unsafe.

### Some abuse can look like caring

Certain behaviours that seem romantic, or that your partner says they do out of love or concern for you, can become abuse.

- Moving quickly and pressuring you to commit to the relationship, such as by moving in together or sharing finances, can progress to controlling your movements or your finances.
- Calling or texting many times a day can progress to being jealous of the time you spend with others, accusing you of flirting or cheating on them, and questioning you about who you see and talk to when they're not around.
- Wanting to spend all their time with you can progress to isolating you from your other relationships, such as by accusing your friends of "making trouble."

## Some abuse can happen in any relationship

- Blaming you for their problems, feelings, or reactions.
- Damaging or destroying your personal property or threatening to do so.
- Interfering with your sobriety or recovery (such as saying “partying is important to me so you have to do it with me”).
- Not letting you go to work or school, or not letting you associate with friends, family, and the LGBTQ2S community.
- Threatening to have you deported from Canada.
- Treating you as an object rather than a person, because of one aspect of you, such as your abilities, weight, cultural background, sexual orientation, or wealth and privilege.
- Changing or threatening to change the dynamic of a polyamorous relationship without consent.
- Using your insecurity to lower your confidence and self-esteem.
- Shaming, revealing, or threatening to reveal your HIV, mental health, or other health status without your consent.

## Some experiences of abuse are specific to LGBTQ2S folk

- Outing or threatening to out you to children, family, friends, employers, and others.
- Saying you're confused or lying about your sexual orientation if you're bisexual or pansexual.
- Saying you must be cheating on them because you're bisexual or pansexual.
- Controlling, criticizing, or making fun of your appearance or gender expression (such as choice of clothing, hair, or makeup).





## Some abuse is a crime

All abuse is harmful. Some kinds are also against the law, and the abuser can be charged with a crime. These include:

- Physical assault, where the abuser hits or threatens another person.
- Sexual assault, which includes unwanted sexual touching and forced or non-consensual sex acts.
- Criminal harassment, which includes repeated, unwanted contact or behaviour that makes a person afraid for their safety or the safety of anyone they know, including their children.

Even if your partner isn't violent, you may feel unsafe. Your partner doesn't have to be violent for you to justify leaving.



## Abuse Isn't the Survivor's Fault

If you're in an unsafe relationship, it isn't your fault. Abuse is never the survivor's fault. An abuser might try to make you feel responsible or blame other factors, such as drugs or alcohol. But the abuser is responsible for their own behaviour. Only the abuser can stop the abuse.



## Leaving Can Be Hard

Leaving an abusive relationship is a big step. There are many reasons to stay, such as:

- You love your partner and hope that their behaviour will change. (Many abusers promise to change, but often this isn't enough.)
- You aren't sure you can support yourself and your children.
- You tried to leave before and weren't successful, or came back.
- You're afraid of losing your home, your financial support, or your immigration status.
- You're afraid of putting children or pets at risk.
- You're afraid of the stigma of identifying as a survivor.
- You're afraid of having to be near to your abuser through housing, work, social network, or shared property. A survivor in a small community might find it more difficult to avoid their abuser.

LGBTQ2S folk often have additional concerns, such as:

- Being outed while seeking support.
- Lack of LGBTQ2S-specific services nearby.
- Mistreatment or discrimination from police or service providers.
- Being isolated from family, friends, and their support network in the community.
- Leading others to think all same-gender relationships are dysfunctional.

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Myths about abuse and social attitudes toward LGBTQ2S folk can also make it hard for survivors to look for or get help. For example:

**The idea that abusive behaviours are natural for certain genders or gender roles.**

Abuse isn't specific to a gender or gender role. Any kind of relationship can involve abuse, and it's never okay. Faulty assumptions and stereotypes can mean:

- a survivor can be arrested along with their abuser
- an abuser could access a support group or shelter the survivor is using
- an abuser could convince others that they're the one being abused

**The idea that same-gender relationships can't be abusive.**

People may dismiss abuse as just "guys being guys" or think it can't be serious if a woman is doing the abuse.

**The idea that abuse between same-gender partners is normal or expected, doesn't count, or isn't serious.**

Nothing can excuse abusive behaviour or make it less serious. Everyone deserves to live safely.

**The idea that relationship violence or verbal abuse is normal in a relationship.**

Violence and verbal abuse can seem normal to someone whose relationships have included them. But violence and abuse in a relationship aren't normal and can be against the law.

**The idea that excessive jealousy or possessiveness is a sign of love.**

Extreme jealousy is a sign of mistrust and insecurity, not love. Possessiveness is a sign of seeing the other person as an object to be owned rather than a person to be loved.

**The idea that it's always best for children if their parents stay together.**

It's not always best. Violence or abuse between parents can damage a child's social and emotional development, and lead to behaviour problems, anxiety, and depression. Children can also learn to see abusive behaviours as normal and expected.

**The idea that abuse is less serious if it isn't physical, or if it doesn't happen very often, or if it happens only when the abuser is using drugs or alcohol or dealing with stress.**

All abuse is harmful, and abuse is always serious. Nothing can excuse abusive behaviour. Alcohol, drugs, and stress are not responsible for abusive behaviour; the abuser is.

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## When You're Ready for the Next Step

Many survivors have conflicting or changing feelings about the relationship, their abuser, or what they should do next, even if they've already left the relationship. As a survivor, whatever you're feeling is valid, and you have the right to choose what to do.

Some survivors plan to stay in the relationship and keep themselves as safe as possible during violent incidents; others plan to leave. Some survivors leave several times before making the break permanent.

Think about what changes you're ready to make now, and what changes you might be ready to make later. Evaluate the level of danger, severity of abuse, and available support when making your decisions.

This is a good time to get counselling for support and to learn about your options. A counsellor can also help you assess your current situation and create a plan for you and your family to be as safe and healthy as possible if you decide to stay. (See **Emotional help and counselling**, page 26.)



You're stronger than you think,  
and you have a choice.



## If You Decide to Stay

You're the expert on your own situation. You need to make the right choices for you at the time. Whatever you decide to do, it's important to have a safety plan.

### Make a safety plan

Having a safety plan can help protect you and your children from your abusive partner. When making a safety plan, you'll gather practical information, think about safety strategies, and find resources so you can get help when you need it.

A safety plan should be personalized for your needs and concerns, such as your:

- financial situation
- location (urban or rural)
- cultural background
- gender expression
- immigration status
- mental or physical disabilities
- substance use (drugs or alcohol)
- psychological and emotional well-being
- housing situation
- support network

## Get help to make your plan

- If possible, talk about your plan with a counsellor, victim services worker, advocate, or a trusted friend or neighbour. Ask them to keep your plan confidential.

## Ways to keep yourself safer when your partner is violent

- Plan your emergency exits. Go over the steps you'll take if you need to leave suddenly.
- Find the safest place, such as near an exit.
- Store kitchen utensils, knives, and tools out of sight.
- Consider asking neighbours to call the police if they hear loud noises or see anything suspicious.
- Have a code word with a trusted friend or neighbour that tells them you need help.
- Find out about emergency and support services in your community, such as police, LGBTQ2S-inclusive shelters, transition houses, and community-based victim services programs.



## Ways to keep your children safer when your partner is violent

- Teach children to go to a safe place in your home if your partner becomes violent.
- Teach children the emergency exits. Go over the steps they'll take if they need to leave suddenly.
- Set up a code word that tells them they need to call for help.
- Show children how to call 911 or a different community service for help, and how to give their name and address. (See **Where to Get Help**, page 25.)
- Tell children that their job is to protect themselves, not to protect you. Help them make their own safety plan so they feel safer.

## Have an escape plan in case you have to leave home in an emergency

- Know your home's emergency exits and make sure your children also know them.
- Keep your purse, wallet, identification, keys, medication, and cell phone in a safe, accessible place in case you need to leave suddenly.
- Hide a cell phone in a secure place to use in case of emergency.
- Find a public place where you can go at any time to make phone calls or think, such as a 24-hour café.
- If possible, confirm that you'll have a place to stay, such as a friend's place or an LGBTQ2S-inclusive shelter or transition house.
- Stay connected to your support network so you're not isolated.



## Document the abuse in case you decide to get legal help.

Evidence of abuse can be helpful in a legal case. Record your evidence as safely as possible:

- Take photos of injuries.
- Save sent and received emails and texts.
- Record voicemails and phone conversations.
- Keep copies of records of medical visits and police reports.
- Record arguments and incidents of abuse in a journal.
- Keep all records in a secure place.
- Make copies of important phone numbers, emails, and photographs.

## Research and contact support resources safely.

You'll be safest if your abuser doesn't know you're researching.

- Ask a trusted support person to research for you.
- Use a computer other than your own (such as at a library).
- Use a phone other than your own (such as a friend's phone or a public phone).

If you must use your own computer, cell phone, or other devices, take steps to protect yourself. But be careful not to make your abuser suspicious.

- Log out of email, social media, and other accounts when leaving devices unattended.
- Empty the Trash and Download folders on your computer after every use.

- Erase your activity from your Internet browser cache, computer operating system, phone, and other devices.
- Change passwords for your online accounts. Choose new security questions with answers your partner can't guess. Get password reset messages at an email address that your partner can't access.
- Set up two-factor authentication on accounts and devices that offer this extra layer of security.
- Protect your phone, tablet, and computer from being monitored. (At [getcybersafe.gc.ca](http://getcybersafe.gc.ca), click Protect Yourself, then Protect Your Devices.)
- Check whether your partner can access your phone's incoming and outgoing call lists.
- Tighten the privacy and security settings on your phone, computer, and social media accounts. Be aware which interactions are not completely private.
- Turn off the GPS (location services) on your phone so your movements can't be tracked.





## If You Decide to Leave

Abuse doesn't always end when a relationship does. In fact, the risk of violence can go up when a survivor leaves an abusive relationship or begins a new relationship. Having a safety plan in place can help you leave the relationship safely and stay safe in your new environment.

The following checklists can help you personalize your plan.

### Prepare before you leave

- Think about where you and your children can go. Choose somewhere safe, where your abusive partner won't look for you. (See **Housing help, page 30.**)
- Don't tell your partner that you're planning to leave. Wait until you are out of the home and safe in a new place. Then leave a note or call from a blocked number.
- Don't wait for permission to leave. Your partner might never agree with your leaving. Your family might not accept your decision either. You don't need their permission.
- Put some cash in a safe place, a little at a time.
- Keep your phone charged and a full tank of gas in your car.
- Plan how to keep your pets safe.
- Talk to a lawyer about making legal arrangements before you leave with the children so you aren't accused of kidnapping. (See **Legal help, page 28.**)

## Take these things with you

Pack these items in a bag and put it in a safe place (such as with a trusted family member or friend):



- clothes (including work clothes) and shoes
- extra set of house and car keys
- cash, if your bank card or credit card can be traced
- eyeglasses or contact lenses
- toiletries
- medications and prescriptions for yourself and your children
- supplies for your children or pets
- a favourite item or toy for each person
- photos of family members and other personal items
- contact information for support people or organizations
- a photo of your abusive partner (to show to police or others you need support from)

Gather originals, photocopies, or electronic copies of important documents for you and your children. Keep them in a secure place (such as in a bank safety deposit box) or leave them with a trusted family member or friend:



- birth certificates and identity cards
- marriage certificate
- passports, immigration documents, and status cards
- driver's licence, car insurance and registration papers
- BC Services cards/CareCards
- court orders
- work permits
- school and vaccination records
- bank cards, credit cards, and chequebook
- bank statements and investments papers
- rental agreement or property deeds, mortgage documents, insurance papers
- income tax returns, Social Insurance Number cards
- medical records

Make copies or take photos of documents about family income, assets, and debts. Include shared finances and any that are in your partner's name alone (such as pay stubs, tax returns, bank accounts, investments, RRSPs). Record your partner's birthdate, Social Insurance Number, and BC Services card/CareCard number.

## Get financial and legal advice

### Protect your financial resources

- Tell your bank(s) that you ended your relationship and ask about options related to any joint bank accounts, lines of credit, and loans. Change PINs and passwords. Close current accounts and open new accounts at a different bank.
- Speak to an LGBTQ2S-competent lawyer and a financial advisor to learn how to protect your rights to shared assets that are under your partner's name only.
- Cancel shared credit cards and see a credit counsellor to discuss possible effects on your credit or debt.
- Look into changing any documents your former partner is named in, such as your will, power of attorney, representation agreement, insurance policies, investments, RRSPs, and possibly employment pensions.

It's important to get professional advice to protect yourself financially and legally. (See **Legal help, page 28.**)

## Plan for dividing family property, debts, and other financial interests

Talk to a family law lawyer as soon as possible after you leave. Property division laws are complicated, and there are time limits.

- If you're married or you've been in a common-law relationship for at least two years, you're entitled to an equal share of the family property (including the family home) and are responsible for an equal share of family debts when you separate.
- Family property doesn't include property that either of you owned before you married or lived together (called "excluded property"). But if this property increases in value while you're living together, you're both entitled to an equal share of that increase when you separate.
- If you've been in a common-law relationship for less than two years, you're entitled to keep everything you brought into the relationship. A partner who believes they're entitled to part of property that's in only the other partner's name can make a legal claim to that property.



## Apply for a court order so your partner must leave and you can stay in your home

- An “exclusive occupancy” court order under the Family Law Act lets you live in the home and prohibits your partner from entering the home for a specific length of time. See a family law lawyer for legal advice about how to get such an order. (See **Legal help**, page 28.)

## Stay safe after you leave

### Prevent unwanted contact

- Block the abuser on your phone or get a new unlisted number. Make sure your phone account is in your own name.
- Turn off location services in your cell phone settings to be sure you’re not sharing your location. Delete the abuser in any “find my friends” services.
- Redirect your mail to another address, such as a post office box.
- Make sure your name isn’t listed on your mailbox, building directory, or any public lists (such as an employee directory).
- Change your routine, if you can. For example, shop at different places and times than before.
- Consider changing your doctor, dentist, or other professional service providers.
- Don’t use bank cards or credit cards if the statements will go to your old address.
- Change your social media accounts and privacy settings. Avoid using social media if you can’t guarantee privacy.
- Delete social media contacts you don’t know well, especially if you think your partner might use a fake account.



## If you think your former partner is stalking you

- Tell the police and your circle of support.
- Meet friends or service providers in busy, well-lit public places such as public libraries.

## Make your home safer

- Install safety features such as:
  - » a sturdy door with new locks, a peephole, chain, and lockable screen door
  - » outside sensor lighting and indoor alarm system
  - » outdoor security camera for video surveillance
  - » smoke detectors and fire extinguishers
  - » window bars and locks

## Keep your children safer

- Explain to your children why you all left and how they can help protect the family.
- Talk to your children about what to do and who to tell if your abuser is somewhere they shouldn't be.
- Tell the staff at the children's daycare or school who is and isn't allowed to pick up the children from school or call for information, and give them copies of any court orders and photos.
- If you need to meet your abuser (such as for child visitation), meet them in a well-lit public place with plenty of people around. Take a support person with you if you can.

## Be safe when you're away from home

- Have easy access to a phone. Screen your calls.
- Be aware of your surroundings and vary your shopping times, bus stops, and routes to work or school.
- Tell your employer and people at work about your situation and ask them to call for help if necessary.
- Travel with others or get a security escort when possible.
- Ask friends and co-workers not to tell anyone your new address or contact information.

## Stay safe in LGBTQ2S spaces and at events

- Work with service providers to make sure you and your abuser don't use the same resource at the same time, such as a LGBTQ2S support group.
- Go to events with friends who know about your abuser and also know the kind of support you need from them if your abuser arrives.
- Don't leave an event alone if your abuser is there.

## Get a protection order from the court

- Protection orders tell your former partner not to contact you, and may help others fully understand the seriousness of your need for safety. For more information, see the booklet *For Your Protection* at [legaid.bc.ca/publications](https://legaid.bc.ca/publications).



## Where to Get Help

If you're in an abusive relationship, you might feel ashamed, afraid, and alone. Abuse in relationships isn't a private family matter. You can get help for yourself and your children, whether you decide to stay in the relationship or leave. Support services and trained people can help you wherever you live in BC.

Organizations can change over time, so it's a good idea to call or email to ask about current LGBTQ2S inclusion policies, available services, and accessibility before going to their office.

### Services for LGBTQ2S folk

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#### QMUNITY, BC's Queer, Trans, and Two-Spirit Resource Centre

Referrals to lawyers, shelters, and other resources; free counselling, social and support groups, LGBTQ2S inclusion workshops, and publications (including *Queer Terminology*).



[qmunity.ca](http://qmunity.ca)



604-684-5307

#### Safe Choices

Healthy relationship workshops for the LGBT2SQ community; resources, referrals, consultation, and free LGBT2SQ relationship violence training and education workshops for service providers.



[endingviolence.org/prevention-programs/safe-choices-program/](http://endingviolence.org/prevention-programs/safe-choices-program/)



604-633-2506 (ext. 12)

## Emotional help and counselling

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### VictimLinkBC

Free, multilingual, 24-hour phone service. Offers referral services and information about accessing support resources.



[victimlinkbc.ca](http://victimlinkbc.ca)



1-800-563-0808

TTY: 604-875-0885

Text: 604-836-6381

### BC211

Provides free information and referrals to community, government, and social services.



[bc211.ca](http://bc211.ca)



Phone: 211

Text: 211

### Battered Women's Support Services

Crisis line, free counselling, support groups and other programs, and legal advocacy.



[bwss.org](http://bwss.org)



604-687-1868 (Greater Vancouver)

1-855-687-1868 (elsewhere in BC)

Crisis Line: 604-687-1867

## Canadian Mental Health Association

Provides various resources and support services throughout BC to help people deal with mental health issues.



[cmha.bc.ca/mental-health/find-help/](https://cmha.bc.ca/mental-health/find-help/)



**Free 24-hour phone support:**

Crisis Line: **310-6789** (no area code needed)

Kid's Help Phone: **1-800-668-6868**

(confidential, anonymous)

## Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC (Crisis Centre)

Non-profit volunteer organization that provides support to youth, adults, and seniors in crisis.



[crisiscentre.bc.ca](https://crisiscentre.bc.ca)



**Free 24-hour phone support:**

**604-872-3311** (Greater Vancouver)

**BC Suicide Line: 1-800-784-2433** (anywhere in BC)



**Online support** (noon to 1 a.m.):

**YouthInBC.com** (for youth)

**CrisisCentreChat.ca** (for adults)

## Domestic Violence BC

Provides information and links to resources about domestic violence.



[gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/  
domestic-violence](https://gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/domestic-violence)

### Ending Violence Association of BC

Resources and listings of community-based victim services; Stopping the Violence counselling/outreach; and multicultural outreach programs for survivors of relationship violence, sexual violence, criminal harassment, and child abuse.

 [endingviolence.org](https://www.endingviolence.org)

(Click Need Help, then Find a Service)

### Family Services of Greater Vancouver

Counselling for adults (sliding scale fees).

 [fsgv.ca](https://www.fsgv.ca)

 604-874-2938 (Vancouver services)  
604-279-7100 (Richmond services)


## Legal help

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### Access Pro Bono of BC

Lawyers provide free legal advice to people in BC who can't get legal aid or afford a lawyer. Legal advice is available for family, criminal, immigration, and civil legal issues. Legal representation is available for those who meet the eligibility criteria.


 [accessprobono.ca](https://www.accessprobono.ca)

 604-878-7400 (Greater Vancouver)  
1-877-762-6664 (elsewhere in BC)

## Family Justice Centres of BC

Province-wide services for British Columbians going through separation or divorce: short-term counselling, mediation, emergency and community referrals; other free services, including help with Family Law Act protection orders to prevent family violence.


 [justicebc.ca/en/fam/](https://justicebc.ca/en/fam/)

 1-800-663-7867

## Justice Access Centres

Help with family and civil law issues, including Family Law Act protection orders: information about legal and related issues and referrals to self-help and information services, dispute resolution and mediation options, legal advice services, community resources and agencies, and courses. Located in Vancouver, Nanaimo, and Victoria.


 [justiceaccesscentre.bc.ca](https://justiceaccesscentre.bc.ca)

 1-800-663-7867

## Legal Aid BC

Free legal information (publications and websites), advice services. Lawyers take cases for criminal matters, mental health and prison issues, serious family problems, child protection matters, or immigration problems. You must qualify financially.

 [legalaid.bc.ca](https://legalaid.bc.ca)

 604-408-2172 (Greater Vancouver)  
1-866-577-2525 (elsewhere in BC)

## Housing help

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### BC Housing

Listings for emergency shelters, transition houses, and subsidized housing available in BC.


 [bchousing.org](https://bchousing.org)

(Click Housing Assistance, then Women Fleeing Violence)

### BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH)

Listings of transitional housing offered by BCSTH members.


 [bcsth.ca](https://bcsth.ca)

 604-669-6943 (Greater Vancouver)  
1-800-661-1040 (elsewhere in BC)

### Government of BC

Provides emergency housing support, income assistance, and many other services for anybody in BC, whether they are a Canadian citizen or not.

 [gov.bc.ca](https://gov.bc.ca)


 1-866-633-7867



## Services for children and youth

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### Kids Help Phone (24 hours)

 1-800-668-6868 (free, confidential, and anonymous)

### Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling and Empowerment (PEACE) Program for Children and Youth Experiencing Violence

Group or individual counselling to help children understand the violence and help them better express their feelings, improve communication, and develop safety plans.


 [fsgv.ca/peace](https://fsgv.ca/peace)

 604-874-2938 ext. 4141

### Society for Children and Youth of BC

Free legal help for vulnerable youth and children in BC who have family law, child protection, human rights, or other legal issues.


 [scyofbc.org/child-youth-legal-centre/](https://scyofbc.org/child-youth-legal-centre/)

 778-657-5544 (Greater Vancouver)  
1-877-462-0037 (elsewhere in BC)

### Youth Against Violence Line

One-on-one support service for teenagers or youth who have safety concerns.

 [youthagainstviolenceline.com](https://youthagainstviolenceline.com)

 1-800-680-4264 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

 [info@youthagainstviolenceline.com](mailto:info@youthagainstviolenceline.com)

## Services for men

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### AIDS Vancouver

AIDS Vancouver provides quality health care to men affected by HIV/AIDS living in the Lower Mainland.



[aidsvancouver.org](https://aidsvancouver.org)



Support Program Coordinator:  
604-696-4658

### BC Society for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse

Victim services, therapy, and training for service providers. Counsellors aren't free or government funded; however, a government-funded service is available for men who are looking to report abuse or file a police report.



[bc-malesurvivors.com](https://bc-malesurvivors.com)



604-682-6482

### Health Initiative for Men

Low-barrier counselling and peer support services.



[checkhimout.ca](https://checkhimout.ca)



604-488-1001


## Services for immigrants

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### Legit Canadian Immigration for Same-sex Partners


Free services for immigration information and support to LGBTQ2S folk to combat discrimination in Canada's immigration regulations.


 legit.ca

 604-684-5307

### MOSAIC I Belong project


Providing practical settlement support to LGBTQ2S immigrants and refugees while also addressing the intersectionality of sexuality, gender, race, cultural diversity, class, criminalization, and colonialism.


 mosaicbc.org

 604-254-9626

### Rainbow Refugee


Support for LGBTQ2S/HIV refugee claimants.


 rainbowrefugee.com

 604-684-5307

### VAST (Vancouver Association for the Survivors of Torture)

Support for refugee mental health through counselling, documentation, education, and referrals.

 vast-vancouver.ca

 778-389-6652 (Greater Vancouver)  
1-866-393-3133 (elsewhere in BC)


## Services for sexual assault survivors

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### Sexual Assault Support Centre at UBC


Emotional support, legal advocacy, workshops, and referrals for students, staff, and folk connected with UBC who've experienced sexual abuse or other violence.


 [gotconsent.ca](https://gotconsent.ca)

 604-827-5180

### Victoria Sexual Assault Centre


Supports, empowers, and advocates for women and all trans survivors of sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse; primarily serves the Coast Regional District of BC; offers counselling and serves as a liaison between justice, medical, and community services.


 [vsac.ca](https://vsac.ca)

 250-383-3232 (24-hour Crisis and Information Line)

### WAVAW Rape Crisis Centre (Women Against Violence Against Women)

Free counselling, 24-hour crisis line, Indigenous program, trans-inclusive programming, and victim services.

 [wavaw.ca](https://wavaw.ca)

 **Crisis line:**  
604-255-6344 (Greater Vancouver)  
1-877-392-7583 (elsewhere in BC)

## Police complaints

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### Civilian Review and Complaints Commission

Civilian oversight agency created by Parliament, independent from the RCMP, that ensures public complaints about RCMP members' conduct are examined fairly and impartially.



[crcc-ccetp.gc.ca](http://crcc-ccetp.gc.ca)



1-800-665-6878

TTY: 1-866-432-5837

### Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner

Forum for complaints about homophobic treatment by municipal police when seeking support.



[opcc.bc.ca](http://opcc.bc.ca)



[info@opcc.bc.ca](mailto:info@opcc.bc.ca)



250-356-7458 (Victoria)

1-877-999-8707 (elsewhere in BC)



# How to get this and other free publications

**Read:** [qmunity.ca/resources](https://qmunity.ca/resources) or [legalaidsbc.ca/publications](https://legalaidsbc.ca/publications).

**Order:** [crownpubs.bc.ca](https://crownpubs.bc.ca)  
(under Quick Links, click BC Public Legal Education & Information)

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## Questions about ordering?

604-601-6000

[distribution@legalaidsbc.ca](mailto:distribution@legalaidsbc.ca)

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## Other publications available:

- *For Your Protection*
  - *Leaving Abuse*
  - *Live Safe, End Abuse*
  - *Mothers Leaving Abusive Partners*
  - *Safety in Relationships: Trans Folk*
  - *Sponsorship Breakdown*
- 

**QMUNITY** is BC's queer, trans, and Two-Spirit resource centre — the hub for lesbian, gay, trans, bi, queer, and Two-Spirit community programming, training, and advocacy. We envision a world where all queer people are included and free from discrimination.

**Legal Aid BC** is a non-profit organization that provides legal aid to British Columbians. Legal Aid BC is separate from the BC government, its primary funder. It also receives grants from the Law Foundation and the Notary Foundation (of BC).

# QMUNITY

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BC's Queer, Trans, and  
Two-Spirit Resource Centre

1170 Bute Street  
Vancouver, BC V6E 1Z6

[www.qmunity.ca](http://www.qmunity.ca)

604-684-5307 ext.100

**Legal Aid BC**



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