

protection prevention **possibilities**

Information and resources for women in Oxford County impacted by domestic abuse and/or homelessness

September 2013

Your Future, Your Possibilities

If you are — or were — in an abusive relationship and are trying to make your life better, this book is for you.

You are not alone. Domestic violence happens in all types of families all over the world. In Canada it is estimated that one out of every four women is abused by her partner. That means that in Oxford County as many as 9,000 women are victims of domestic violence. However, because of the isolation, embarrassment and fear that usually goes along with abuse, it's normal for women to believe that they are alone and to be overwhelmed by the thought of leaving the relationship: "Where would I go?" "How would I cope?" "How could I provide for my children?" They may feel their situation is hopeless.

But it isn't. There is hope and there is help, right here in Oxford County. *Possibilities* is a start. This publication provides easy-to-find information that can help you as you work toward establishing a violence free life for yourself and your children.

And once you begin to take those first steps toward a better future and discover the support and resources available to help you, the possibilities for your future are limitless.

This book offers information and advice for women who are contemplating changes, for those in the midst of leaving relationships, and for those dealing with the aftermath of their decisions.

It includes the names, addresses, telephone numbers and email/ website addresses of various organizations that can assist with many of your practical and emotional needs. It also includes space for you to record your own notes and to add the names and phone numbers of other people and agencies that will become part of your support network. This book is meant to be a personal resource that can help you through this critical stage in your life.

One word of advice: at times, seeking help can seem like a difficult and frustrating process. Staff come and go. Programs and services change. New laws and policies replace old ones. And sometimes you need to call several times to get through to the right person or department. Don't give up. This may be one of the most important things you do for yourself.

If you have any questions or comments about this book, or if you want to find out how to obtain additional copies, please contact us at Domestic Abuse Services Oxford, 519-539-7488, ext. 236.

Emergency Assistance

If you have been abused or are afraid of being hurt...

Get to a safe place. Your first priority is the safety of yourself and your children. Leave the house if necessary; go to a shelter or to a friend or neighbour.

Go to a hospital, clinic or your doctor to get medical attention if you have been injured.

Call the police. Tell them you have been assaulted. Provide details and write down the officers' names and badge numbers.

Police Ambulance Fire } 911

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford 24-hour crisis line: 519-539-4811 or 1-800-265-1938

Regional Sexual Assault Treatment Centre St. Joseph's Health Centre 24 hour crisis line: 519-646-6100 ext. 64224

Sexual Assault Centre London 24-hour crisis and support line: 519-439-0844

Victim Assistance Services of Oxford County Business Hours: 519-537-2824

Children's Aid Society of Oxford County Tel. 519-539-6176 After Hours: 1-800-250-7010

See the Table of Contents on page 3 for a complete list of resources and services.



Together we can end domestic abuse



Our Vision

Our vision is to end the abuse of women and their children.

Our Mission

We are leaders in providing crisis intervention, shelter, counselling and advocacy for women and their children impacted by abuse in Oxford County.

Since its establishment in 1974, Domestic Abuse Services Oxford (formerly Women's Emergency Centre - Oxford) has provided essential services to women and their children in Oxford County impacted by domestic abuse and/or homelessness. All programs and services are free and are completely confidential.

- 24-hour crisis line, 519-539-4811 or 1-800-265-1938, available to women in Oxford County who are in crisis, or who need help, support and advice about an issue involving domestic abuse. It is also open to anyone in the community who has questions about abuse or is concerned about a friend, family member, neighbour or co-worker.
- Safe, short-term crisis accommodation in our 21-bed shelter (see page 19)
- Transitional and housing support (see page 47)
- Sexual assault counselling and support (see page 47)
- Women's support and counselling groups (see page 47)
- Children's/adolescents' support and counselling groups (see page 14)
- Community outreach (see page 47)
- Violence education and prevention.

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford

975 James Street, Woodstock ON N4S 0A5 24-hour crisis/information line: 519-539-4811 or 1-800-265-1938 All other calls: 519-539-7488; info@daso.ca Charitable Registration No. 10821 9767 RR0001

www.daso.ca

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DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES OXFORD protection I prevention I possibilities

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford thanks the many agencies and organizations who provided data for this publication.

Every effort has been made to ensure the information enclosed is accurate and up-to-date. Inevitably, however, changes to programming and services will occur. Readers may wish to confirm any details with the agencies/service providers directly.

Inclusion in this edition of *Possibilities* does not constitute endorsement by Domestic Abuse Services Oxford. Conversely, any omissions of programs and services are not intentional.

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What is Abuse?

Abuse is an attempt to have power and control over another person by hurting or mistreating them.

Types of Abuse

Physical: examples include hitting, punching, beating, slapping, pulling hair, use of weapons, mutilation, burning, biting, murder

Sexual: *any* sexual contact that you do not consent to, ranging from unwanted touching to harassment to rape (see also page 10)

Verbal: threats, insults, name-calling, blaming and accusing, swearing, shouting

Psychological/Emotional: withholding love, sympathy or understanding, inadequate physical or emotional care, isolation, intimidation, extreme jealousy, destroying property, threatening to commit suicide

Financial: taking money or pay cheques without permission, withholding money and/or denying access to employment opportunities, preventing access to household financial information

Spiritual: making fun of a person's spiritual beliefs or preventing them from attending church, synagogue or temple of their choice

Signs of an Abusive Relationship

If your partner uses physical force to hurt, scare or control you, even if just occasionally, the relationship is an abusive one.

Physical and sexual assault are **against the law**. No one – including your husband or partner – has the right to hurt you or to force you to perform sexual acts against your will.

It is also against the law to make death threats.

There are also many other behaviours that signal an abusive relationship. These behaviours may not be against the law, but they can cause serious emotional/psychological harm and have a devastating effect on a person's self esteem.

If you are being abused...

- You are not alone
- You are not to blame
- You have a right to be safe
- You can get help

Note: Throughout this book, the abusers/perpetrators of domestic abuse are referred to as males, and the victims as females. This reflects the reality that the majority of domestic abuse incidents are committed by men against women. Some of the information in this document may apply in other abuse scenarios, including violence perpetrated by women against female partners.

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford does not condone violence and abuse of any kind, by or against men or women and works to promote healthy relationships and violence free living for all members of the community.

What is Abuse?

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford 975 James Street Woodstock N4S 0A5 24-hour crisis line 519-539-4811 or 1-800-265-1938

- Call if you are being abused.
- Call if you need to talk about abuse in your family.
- Call if you want sound, confidential advice.

Your relationship may be abusive if...

- You are afraid to express your true feelings or tell your partner about your own needs and ambitions.
- You are kept away from, or are discouraged from seeing, family and friends.
- You are accused of cheating, even when you have done nothing wrong.
- You have to account for your whereabouts at all times.
- You are almost always tense and worried about how your partner will react.
- You feel responsible for making your partner happy and always take the blame when things go wrong.
- You are often making excuses or lying to family, friends and co-workers to hide the situation at home.
- You are constantly being criticized by your partner and feel you can never do anything right.
- You are told you are "crazy" or "too sensitive" when you try to talk about your concerns.
- You feel trapped and are unhappy in your relationship most of the time.

Abusers often use threats to keep their wives and girlfriends in a constant state of anxiety and fear and to maintain power and control over them.

If your partner is abusive he may threaten to hurt you, the children or your pets. He may also threaten to leave you, to take the children away, or to report you to the authorities if you don't do what he says. Some abusers will threaten to commit suicide if their partners leave them.

If you are being abused...

You are not alone.

Millions of women are abused by their partners each year.

You are not responsible.

You are not responsible for your partner's actions and you cannot change his behaviour.

You have a right to be safe.

You deserve to be respected and to live a violence-free life.

You can get help.

There are many good programs and services in the community, starting with Domestic Abuse Services Oxford's 24-hour crisis line, 519-539-4811 or 1-800-265-1938.

Facts about Domestic Violence and Abuse

There are many names for the violence that occurs in intimate relationships: domestic violence, wife beating, partner abuse, battering, wife assault, family violence, woman abuse. They are just different phrases to express the same thing -- a relationship where one person uses physical violence, threats, intimidation and fear to have power and control over another person.

Domestic abuse has long been considered a "family secret", making it difficult to assess the true nature of the problem and provide help to the victims. Today, more people are aware of the issue although there are still many myths and misconceptions.

The following are some facts...

Violence within families is not a new problem.

It has been happening throughout the centuries and in countries all over the world – including Canada – where it was accepted that the man was the "head of the household" and therefore could treat his wife and children however he liked, even if it represented a misuse of power. It is only in recent years that attitudes and laws changed and women were no longer considered the "property" of their husbands.

In Canada, laws were passed in the late 1960s making it illegal for a man to assault his wife and stating that physical and mental cruelty were grounds for divorce. Now, the judicial system takes the problem of domestic violence seriously. If there is evidence of assault the police will lay charges, and sentences for convicted perpetrators can include time in jail.

Abuse occurs in all types of families and relationships.

Domestic violence is a widespread problem. Studies indicate that as many as one out of every four Canadian women suffers some type of abuse during her lifetime and that at least one out of ten Canadian women is physically assaulted by her partner.

Domestic abuse is *not* just a problem common to lower income households or select ethnic groups. Abuse occurs in relationships and homes of *all* socioeconomic, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds. It affects women of *all* ages and may be present in intimate relationships of all types -- from couples who have just started dating to long-time marriages, and everything in between.

The majority of domestic abuse victims are women.

More than 92 percent of the charges involving domestic assault in Ontario are laid against men. Women suffer more frequent and extreme incidents of violence than men and are more likely to sustain serious or life-threatening injuries. Domestic abuse is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15 and 45. What is Abuse?

No one ever deserves to be beaten or emotionally abused.

Alcohol and drugs do not cause domestic violence.

Alcohol and drugs are, however, significant factors in domestic abuse incidents and victims are more likely to be seriously injured or killed when alcohol or drugs are used.

Some people believe men abuse their partners because they are under a lot of stress, have volatile personalities, or are mentally ill. But abusers are not generally known to be violent with other people (e.g. their bosses, co-workers, friends, and neighbours) and are usually able to control their behaviour and deal with stress appropriately. In their intimate relationships however, they feel free to behave abusively without worrying about any consequences.

Men who are physically violent often hurt their victims in ways that ensure the bruises and cuts won't be obvious to others. Mentally ill people generally wouldn't be capable of such careful, select violence.

The underlying cause of domestic violence is the perpetrator's desire for power and control.

Victims do not cause the violence by provoking their abusers. Most abusers do not accept responsibility for their actions. Instead, they blame their victims: "She made me do it" or "She pushed my buttons." But abused women report a wide range of events that triggered the assaults, some as trivial as "preparing dinner the wrong way."

If you are being abused, it is not your fault. It is your partner who has the problem and who needs help from professionals.

Domestic violence rarely "goes away" on its own.

It is unusual for abusers to stop their violent and controlling behaviour on their own, without some type of counselling or help. No matter how hard other members of the family try to please and placate the abuser, there is inevitably an "explosion" of some sort. This is when the physical and sexual abuse, or severe instances of verbal and emotional abuse, happens.

The explosion is one of the three main stages in the "cycle" that takes place in most abusive relationships. It is preceded by a "tension-building" stage that can last for days, weeks and even months before the violent episode occurs. After it does, there is usually a "honeymoon" stage, during which the abuser apologizes for his actions and may be very loving and attentive. During this stage it is easy to believe your partner's promises to change and to hope that everything will be alright.

However, unless there is some form of intervention, the cycle usually repeats itself with the "explosions" becoming more frequent and increasingly more violent.

Violence in Dating Relationships

Abuse is not just something that occurs between married couples or people who have been together for a long time. Abusive and controlling behaviour can be detected at the outset of a new relationship, sometimes as early as the first date.

Are you going out with someone who...

- 1. Is jealous and possessive towards you doesn't want you to spend time with your friends, checks up on you, won't accept breaking up or not seeing him all the time.
- Is bossy tries to control who you see and what you do, criticizes what you wear, wants to make all the decisions, gives orders, doesn't take your opinions seriously.
- 3. Is scary makes you worry about how he will react to what you say and do, threatens you.
- Is violent has a history of fighting with parents, siblings, friends, has a bad temper, brags about mistreating others, owns or uses weapons.
- Pressures you for sex thinks women are sex objects, tries to manipulate you or make you feel guilty ("if you really loved me you would..."), moves the relationship along too quickly.
- 6. Blames you when he treats you badly says you made him do it.
- 7. Has a history of bad relationships and blames everyone else for his problems.
- 8. Abuses drugs or alcohol; may pressure you to do the same.
- 9. Believes men should be in control and powerful and that women should be passive and submissive.
- 10. Has caused your friends and family to be concerned for your safety and to warn you about him.

These are some early warning signs of abuse and should not be ignored. If you answered "Yes" to one or more of the questions, your relationship may be an unhealthy one with the potential to become violent.

Speak to a counsellor or someone you trust. You can call Domestic Abuse Services Oxford's Crisis Line (519-539-4811) any time of the day or night to talk to someone who understands and who can help. You don't have to feel embarrassed or ashamed. Asking for help may be the first step in making your life better.

Criminal Harassment

Criminal harassment, also called stalking, involves a range of behaviours that cause the victim to fear for his or her own safety or the safety of loved ones. It is a type of abuse in which the stalker is trying to control someone by scaring or intimidating them. What is Abuse?

If you are involved with someone who makes you feel uneasy – even if you can't explain why – trust your instincts. Put your safety first and end the relationship. Women are most at risk of stalking and assaultive behaviour during the first several months after leaving an abusive relationship. Don't ignore or deny the danger you may be in. Take steps to provide for your safety and the safety of your children. Stalking involves a pattern of behaviours that may include...

- following a person, their children, or others they care about
- showing up uninvited at someone's home or workplace
- making annoying or threatening telephone calls
- · sending unwelcome letters, e-mail/text messages or gifts
- · vandalizing or breaking into someone's home or car
- damaging property
- stealing mail; trying to get personal/confidential information
- threatening someone, or their family, friends or colleagues

Stalkers are usually known to their victims; they are often ex-spouses or partners. Women who leave abusive relationships are particularly at risk for being criminally harassed. It is important not to ignore or deny the harassment; stalking can and often does get worse.

If you are being stalked ...

Avoid all contact with the stalker. Once you have made it clear that you do not want to see this person, do not respond to any further calls or messages.

Tell people (friends, family, co-workers) what is happening and emphasize the importance of keeping your phone number, address and other personal information confidential.

Report the harassment to the police. They will assess the risk to you and give you advice on how to plan for your safety. If they feel it is warranted, they will lay charges against the stalker.

Record every stalking instance, including the date, time, details and witnesses, if any. Keep everything the stalker sends; save phone, email and text messages.

Criminal harassment is against the law. You have the right to be safe. If charges are laid, the case will be heard in court and the stalker may be found guilty.

Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is any unwanted act of a sexual nature imposed by one person upon another. Forced or coerced intercourse, grabbing, touching or kissing can be defined as sexual assault. Like other forms of abuse, sexual assault is an act of violence and a vicious attempt to exert power and control over someone.

Some facts...

• Just over half of all Canadian women report they experienced at least one incident of sexual or physical violence (Statistics Canada).

- 80% of sexual assaults occur at home; 49% in broad daylight. (Sexual Assault Care Centre, Women's Care Centre, Sunnybrook & Womens, 1999, Myths and Facts About Sexual Assault)
- In cases reported to police, 80% of sexual assault survivors knew their abusers. About 10% were assaulted by a friend and 41% were assaulted by an acquaintance. 28% were assaulted by a family member, while the remaining 20% were assaulted by a stranger. (Statistics Canada, 2003)

Nothing you do gives anyone the right to assault you. It doesn't matter what you wear, who you are with or where you go. Even if you have consented to sexual activity with someone previously, you have the right to say no to something you don't want to do. If sexual activity took place while you were asleep or unconscious, or if the person you were with was in a position of authority over you, you were sexually assaulted. **Sexual assault is a crime**, even if the perpetrator is your husband or partner. If you are a victim of sexual assault you can get help:

Go to the hospital, a clinic or your doctor as soon as possible after the assault. You will receive medical attention for any injuries. You can also be tested for sexually transmitted diseases and get emergency contraception (e.g. the "Morning After" pill) to prevent an unwanted pregnancy.

The Sexual Assault Centre of London provides assistance and support 24 hours a day, seven days a week to survivors of sexual assault.

In addition to testing and emergency contraception, you can ask to have a medical examination done to collect evidence of the assault. This could be valuable if you press charges and the case goes to trial. To avoid losing the evidence, do not shower, change, use the bathroom, eat or drink until the examination is conducted. You can have the examination even if you do not know whether you want to press charges. The forensic evidence can be frozen for up to six months.

Call the police if you need protection or want to report the assault.

Get the support and comfort you need by calling a trusted friend or family member. You can call the Sexual Assault Centre of London at 519-439-0844. The Sexual Assault Centre can help you by: providing support and accompaniment to the hospital as well as advocacy services; individual and group counselling; and providing information about other local services you may want to access.

You can also call Domestic Abuse Services Oxford to schedule an appointment with a sexual assault therapist (519-539-7488 ext. 226).

Remember, the assault was not your fault. You are not responsible for the actions of your abuser.

What is Abuse?

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford Sexual Assault Counselling

- For women 16 and older
- Individual therapeutic counselling for women who have been sexually abused either as a child or as an adult
- 519-539-7488 ext. 226

Sexual Assault Centre of London 24-hour crisis and support line: 519-439-0844

St. Joseph's Health Care London: Regional Sexual Assault Domestic Violence Program 8:30 am - 4:30 pm: 519-646-6100 ext. 64224 After hours: 519-646-6000 (and ask to page the Domestic Violence Team)

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any type of unwelcome sexual talk or action that makes you feel uncomfortable, upset, embarrassed, trapped or confused.

Examples include:

- suggestive or lewd comments
- leering
- insulting remarks, name calling
- spreading rumours
- · repeated requests for dates or sexual favours
- grabbing, touching and other unwanted attention

Sexual harassment is hurtful. No one has the right to harass anyone else. You deserve to feel safe and to be treated with respect at home, in public, at work and at school. If you have been sexually harassed...

Don't minimize it. Trust your own feelings. If someone is flirting or engaging in good natured teasing, it is usually enjoyable and makes people feel positive. Sexual harassment, however, makes the victim feel uneasy, degraded, humiliated or helpless.

Don't ignore it. If left alone, the harassment can get worse. The harasser may begin to engage in even more abusive behaviour such as stalking, threats or assault.

Confront the harasser if it is possible and safe to do so. Be clear and direct and insist that the behaviour stop immediately.

Decide whether you want to report it. Workplaces and schools take sexual harassment very seriously and have policies in place to protect people and deal with this behaviour. You should not be ashamed to make a complaint about the harassment; it was not your fault. Speak to someone who can help you such as your employer, supervisor, manager, teacher, principal or other person in authority.

Keep track of the harassment. Makes notes on each incident, including the date, time, place, specific behaviour and any witnesses. This will be useful if you make a formal complaint at work or school, or if you need to involve the police.

Talk to someone you trust. You may want to speak with an understanding friend or a counsellor about your feelings.

Sexual Harassment violates the Ontario Human Rights Code.

You can file a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission. For more information call 1-800-387-9080.

Domestic Violence and Children

Protecting Your Children

All parents know that the safety, security and well being of their children are their main priorities. But for abused women living in fear for their own safety, guarding and protecting their children can be a tremendously difficult task. And yet, it is these children who are most in need of protection. Studies show that child abuse is more likely to occur in households where domestic violence is present, and that 50 per cent of the men who regularly assaulted their wives also abused their children.

If your children are being physically abused — or if you know of, or suspect, sexual abuse — it is your responsibility to report the abuse and to do whatever is necessary to provide your children with a safe and healthy environment.

Child abuse is against the law. It is highly destructive — both physically and emotionally — and often affects children for the remainder of their lives.

You can call the Children's Aid Society of Oxford County at 519-539-6176 to get help in protecting your children from the abuser. Caseworkers at the CAS will work with you to develop a plan that will protect your children. You can also contact other organizations in the community for advice and support such as Domestic Abuse Services Oxford's 24-hour crisis line, 519-539-4811.

You may be frightened, confused, and unsure of what you are going to do in the days and weeks ahead. But your children still depend on you and need you to do what is best for them. It is vitally important that you act promptly to stop abuse from occurring or to prevent any further damage. Don't hesitate to ask for help in keeping your children safe and secure.

The Impact on Children of Witnessing Woman Abuse

Even if children are not being physically or sexually abused themselves, they are deeply affected by abuse in the home. They may feel a range of emotions: fear, anger, confusion. Some children will try their best to be "good" in order to keep peace in the home. Others might act out more, sometimes out of frustration or as a way to focus the abuser's attention on themselves and away from their mother. Children's Aid Society of Oxford County 92 Light Street Woodstock N4S 6H1 Tel. 519-539-6176 Toll Free: 1-800-250-7010 After Hours: 1-800-250-7010 Email: info@casoxford.ca

1A Library Lane, Tillsonburg, ON 519-842-7204

Domestic Violence and Children

Children in abusive households need lots of love, reassurance and positive attention. They need to be told that they are not to blame for what is happening. Children are present in about 80 per cent of all domestic violence incidents. They often show symptoms similar to children who are themselves being abused. They may, for example, exhibit some or all of the following:

- · stomachaches, headaches and other physical problems
- excessive separation anxieties/whining, clinging (younger kids)
- eating disorders (e.g. overeating, undereating or hoarding food)
- aggressive behaviour, poor social skills
- insecurity and distrust
- · poor school attendance and difficulty with school work
- · clumsiness, prone to accidents, self harming
- depression and suicidal feelings
- tendency to get into serious dating relationships or to leave home too early (for adolescents 13 years and over)

Children and teens who see their mothers being assaulted may believe they are to blame for the violence. They tend to have significantly more behaviourial and emotional problems than children and teens from nonviolent homes.

Perhaps the most worrisome aspect of domestic abuse is the way it can go on to affect the next generations. Children learn what they see and usually repeat the behaviours themselves. *Boys who witness violence against their mothers are much more likely to become abusive as adults, while girls are more likely to become victims of abuse.*

Journeys: Children Exposed to Domestic Violence Program

There is help for children who have witnessed woman abuse in the home. The Journeys program is designed to help children and adolescents, and their mothers, deal with the trauma of domestic abuse.

During the 12-week program, children meet once an week in small groups where they are encouraged to express their feelings about violence and separation. They are given a chance to understand the abuse of power they have witnessed and that the violence is not their fault, or the fault of their mother. Children learn positive ways of solving problems and dealing with anger. Concurrently, mothers meet separately for support and to learn how to help their children heal. A goal of the program is to enhance self-esteem among all the participants and to promote healthy family relationships.

Participation in the program is free. For more information or to book an intake appointment, call 519-539-7488, ext 225.

Journeys - Support for children and adolescents Domestic Abuse Services Oxford 975 James Street Woodstock, ON N4S 0A5 Tel. 519-539-7488 ext, 225

First Steps to a Violence-Free Life

Stay or Go? Making the Decision

The decision to leave any relationship — particularly if you have been together for some time or have children — is usually a painful one, even if the relationship has been abusive. Ultimately, the decision to stay or leave is yours, no matter how much others may try to persuade you one way or the other.

Some people may not understand why anyone would stay in — or return to — a violent or abusive relationship, and might conclude that the victims somehow like being hurt. These people don't realize that there are many factors at play: a woman may stay out of fear of what may happen if she tries to leave. She might be worried about breaking up the family or concerned about how she can support herself and her children. She may be pressured by other family members to stay. Finally, she might still be hopeful that the relationship will improve.

If you are considering leaving an abusive relationship, you may be grappling with many worries:

- lack of money and/or job skills
- · concern about making ends meet and providing for the kids
- difficulty finding good, affordable accommodation
- · intimidated by the responsibility of running a household alone
- feeling guilty about taking the children away from their father
- reluctance to leave the home and/or give up your current lifestyle
- embarrassment about what family, friends, neighbours or co-workers will think
- fear of being alone
- fear of what your partner will do

You may have several other concerns, depending on your situation. It is normal to feel uncertain and frightened. Your self-esteem may be at an all-time low, particularly if you have been made to feel incompetent and incapable of handling anything by yourself. At the same time, you may still love your partner, and believe that you can do something to stop the abuse. Women attempt to leave abusive relationships an average of six times before they make the break for good.

First Steps to a Violence-Free Life

You are not alone. Help is available.

As a landed immigrant or permanent resident, you cannot be deported from Canada for leaving your partner or for reporting abuse, even if it was your partner who sponsored you.

If you were sponsored by your partner, but don't have permanent resident status at the time you leave the relationship, you can still apply for permanent residence status on "humanitarian or compassionate" grounds.

Get legal advice and/or contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada at 1-888-242-2100. Whether you decide to stay in the relationship or to leave, keep in mind...

You deserve to live a life free from violence and abuse. You do not have to answer to anyone else and you do not have to defend your actions, particularly to people who do not understand what you have been living with. You do not have to feel guilty or ashamed about ending the relationship; you are not the one committing the crime.

You have the capacity to be strong and capable. Contrary to what you may have been told, you can do things for yourself. You have probably had to develop certain techniques and skills in order to survive in your relationship. You can learn new skills to help you if you plan to live independently.

Support and help is available. This book lists several organizations in the community that can assist with a wide range of needs including housing, financial, employment, parenting, counselling, and more.

Your children may be at even greater risk if you stay. Men who assault their wives often abuse their children as well. Even if they are not being physically hurt, children suffer tremendous emotional trauma by witnessing abuse (see pages 13-14). There is also a strong chance they will grow up to repeat the behaviours they have learned.

You cannot change your partner's behaviour. You are not responsible for his actions and you cannot control them. Your partner may be sorry for hurting you and promise to change. But eventually the abuse begins again.

People can change their violent behaviour, but they usually need professional help in order to do so. Many abusers however, won't admit they have a problem and will not seek help. Even if they do, it will involve changing behaviours and beliefs they have had for a long time. That does not happen easily or quickly. You need to decide what is best for you and your children both in the short and long term.

Whether you decide to leave or to stay in the relationship, or if you think you will eventually leave, but are not ready to do so yet, you should create a "safety plan." This will help you prepare for an emergency, and provide an escape plan for you and your children in case you are at risk of serious harm at the hands of your partner. You can use the suggestions on the following pages to create a personalized plan.

Your Safety Plan

While you are still living with your partner, be ready in case you need to escape in a hurry...

- Collect and hide important documents (or copies) that you will need if you leave home see the list at right.
- Have ready access to house and car keys, bank and credit cards, health cards, emergency money and important telephone numbers.
- Pack a small "emergency" suitcase with some clothes and necessities for yourself and your children. Keep the suitcase hidden, but accessible.
- Consider keeping extra clothing, money, keys, etc. at a friend's or neighbour's home.
- Plan how you would leave the house in an emergency. Practice the steps.
- Know the telephone numbers and addresses of the local shelter and other places you can go (e.g. friends, family members).

Meanwhile, try to make your environment as safe as possible and prepare for any event...

- Don't keep the abuse a secret. Tell neighbours, friends, family members and/or co-workers who you can trust. Ask your employer and co-workers not to give out any personal information about you or your routine.
- Identify callers before answering the door. A wide-angle viewer can be installed in all exterior doors.
- Come up with a code word and give it to trusted friends, neighbours etc. Instruct them to call the police if you use that word.
- If they are old enough to understand, tell your children the code word. Teach them who to go to for help and how to call 911.
- If you sense a confrontation, try to move to areas in the home with an easy exit. Avoid being "trapped" in rooms like the kitchen, bathroom, or where there are objects that can be used as weapons.
- If possible, keep a charged cell phone with you at all times. ANY CHARGED CELL PHONE WILL CALL 911. Even if you have no cell phone plan or if you have run out of airtime, a charged cell phone will call 911. Purchase a refurbished cell phone, ask a family member for their old phone when they upgrade or call your local women's shelter.
- Save as much money as you can. Open a bank account in your own name; be sure that account statements are not mailed to your home.
- Prepare for the possibility of being on your own: learn about supports in the community; update your resume; acquire additional job skills.

First Steps to a Violence-Free Life

Things to take with you when you leave...

- driver's license, registration
- passports, birth certificates (yours and your children's)
- Social Insurance card
- Ontario Works identification
- immigration papers, work permits
- medications
- school and vaccinations records
- marriage certificate, separation agreement, divorce papers
- custody papers
- court orders, peace bonds
- bank books or statements, cheque book
- house deed or lease agreement
- insurance papers
- work permits
- recent income tax returns (yours and your partner's)
- health cards (yours and your children's)
- credit and bank cards
- quarters for the phone and emergency cash
- personal address/telephone
 book
- extra clothes, personal items
- children's items: diapers, bottles/feeding dishes, clothes, blankets or favourite toys
- valuable jewellery
- a few items of sentimental value
- It may also be important later to have your partner's SIN number, picture, birth date, and work/financial information.

First Steps to a Violence-Free Life

You have the right to protect yourself and your children. For emergency shelter, advice about your options, or help in developing your safety plan, call Domestic Abuse Services Oxford at 519-539-4811.

Victim Assistance Services of Oxford County (VASOC) 519-537-2824 Monday to Friday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm or 911 in an emergency • Try to stay healthy and strong. Eat properly, exercise, get enough sleep and do things that help you relax. Don't succumb to drugs and alcohol to deal with the stress. They will drain your energy and make it impossible for you to think clearly.

If you leave the relationship...

- If needed, obtain a protective court order. Keep it with you at all times and give copies to the police and others as required.
- Change the locks and/or install new doors, security systems, sensors, and smoke detectors.
- Tell your landlord, neighbours, friends and co-workers that you are no longer living with your partner; ask them to call the police if they see him near your home or place of work.
- Make sure teachers, daycare workers, babysitters, etc. know who may and may not retrieve your children.
- Teach your children what to do and/or who to call if they are approached by your partner.
- Take extra precautions when travelling to and from your home and workplace. Always park in well-lit areas and when in public, try to stay within sight and earshot of people, in case you need to call for help.
- Be aware of any stalking behaviour by your partner and report any incidents to the police (see pages 9-10).

Women are most vulnerable in the weeks and months just after they leave abusive relationships. Don't ignore any threatening actions on the part of your partner and don't underestimate the danger you may be in. Be extra careful and take steps to keep yourself and your children safe.

One of the community agencies and resources available to you is Victim Assistance Services of Oxford County (VASOC). Representatives can meet with you to provide emotional support and practical information to help you deal with your unique situation and with any questions you may have. VASOC can help you in obtaining appropriate support from community services.

Emergency Shelters

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford (DASO) operates a safe, emergency shelter for women (aged 16 and over) and their children impacted by abuse and/or homelessness. The shelter is open to women and children of all religious, ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. It is staffed 24 hours a day.

Residential services include...

- safe, supportive haven for women and their children
- transportation to the shelter available
- comfortable, homelike atmosphere
- wheelchair accessible
- food, personal care items, clothing provided
- confidential counselling for women who have suffered physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, financial or psychological abuse
- counselling and support for children and adolescents provided by Child and Youth Counsellors
- parenting support
- assistance in completing applications for custody, subsidized housing, financial assistance etc.
- · advocacy for clients dealing with other social service agencies
- · certificates for two free hours of legal advice
- transitional support services
- referrals to other counselling and community services

All services are free of charge and are confidential.

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford's programs and services help women make the transition to new, healthy lives, free from violence. The shelter adheres to a strict policy of non-violence. All residents must treat one another with respect and consideration.

If you are a victim of abuse you can call the 24-hour crisis line, 519-539-4811 (toll free 1-800-265-1938), or come to the shelter at **975 James Street in Woodstock**. Even if you do not wish to stay, shelter staff can provide advice and comfort as well as information, referrals and help in creating a personalized safety plan.

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford also provides individual support to women and children who are not staying in the shelter. See pages 14, 47, 48. Domestic Abuse Services Oxford 975 James Street Woodstock, ON N4S 0A5 24-hour crisis line: 1-800-265-1938 or 519-539-4811 All other calls: 519-539-7488 Fax: 519-539-1163 Email: info@daso.ca www.daso.ca

Brantford (Brant County) **Nova Vita Domestic Violence Prevention Services** Crisis Line: 1-800-265-0764 Office: 519-752-4357 Cambridge/South Dumfries **Haven House** Crisis Line: 519-653-2422 Office: 519-653-2289 Haldimand, Norfolk Counties Haldimand-Norfolk Women's Services Crisis Line: 1-800-265-8076 including Simcoe Office: 519-426-8048 Six Nations Ganohkwasra Native Shelter Crisis Line: 519-445-4324 Kitchener/Waterloo Anselma House Crisis Line: 519-742-5894 Office: 519-741-9184 YWCA Kitchener, Mary's Place 519-744-0120 London (Middlesex County) **Rotholme Women's and Family Shelter** Crisis Line: 519-673-4114 Women's Community House Crisis Line: 519-642-3000 1-800-265-1576 toll-free **Zhaawanong Shelter** Serves aboriginal women Crisis Line: 519-432-0122 1-800-605-7477 toll-free St. Thomas (Elgin County) Violence Against Women Services Elgin County Crisis Line: 519-633-0155 1-800-265-4305 toll-free, 24 hour Stratford (Perth County) **Optimism Place** Crisis Line: 519-271-5550 1-800-265-8598 toll-free

Strathroy (Middlex County)

Women's Rural Resource Services Crisis Line: 1-800-265-5390

Emergency Shelters

For shelters and emergency services in other communities, consult the local telephone directory.

Assaulted Women's Helpline:

24-hour Crisis Line: 1-866-863-0511 www.awhl.org Crisis counselling and referrals to shelters and services in Ontario

Shelters in Neighbouring Communities

Police / Judicial Procedures

Reporting Domestic Violence

Although more people are speaking up about domestic violence and there are more options for women seeking help, domestic abuse remains an under-reported crime. Only about 25 per cent of all physical and sexual assault cases are ever reported to the police.

One reason is a fear of reprisal: many women are afraid that they will suffer even more severe abuse and "punishment" for calling the authorities. They may also be intimidated by the police and the court system, or feel the system doesn't take them seriously or do enough to protect them.

The police and courts can play a critical role in your safety. They exist to protect victims and they have a duty to respond to your needs and to help you.

Why you should report assault to the police...

That call can save your life. Or it can prevent you from suffering even more severe abuse. Studies reveal that the average domestic abuse victim is beaten 30 times before the police are called. For some, help comes too late. On average, one to three Canadian women are killed by their current or former partner every week.

The police can help attend to your immediate needs ensuring you get to a hospital, making sure you and your children get to a shelter or other place of safety, connecting you with other supports and services in the community.

The incidents of physical abuse tend to decrease once the police have been involved. When the police lay charges or make an arrest, the chance of physical violence occurring again decreases by as much as half.

The police can enforce any court orders (for example restraining orders and peace bonds) and charge your partner with violating those orders.

Police records are particularly important if the case goes to court. Police officers can record details about the incident and take pictures of any injuries for evidence in court. In an emergency, call 911.

Try to speak as clearly as you can and give your name and address. Tell the dispatcher what is happening (e.g. you are being assaulted), whether there are weapons in the home, and if anyone has been injured.

Police / Judicial Procedures

Although the police and courts will do what they can to protect you, you must still exercise caution and good sense.

If you believe your husband/ partner's arrest will result in even more violence, gather the children and your "emergency" bags and go to a shelter or other safe place before he is released.

Let the police know how they can reach you so that you can be informed when your partner is released.

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford Transitional Support Program 519-539-7488 ext 224

- provides support, assistance, advocacy, court/ police accompaniment and legal information
- safety planning and risk assessments
- call for an appointment
- services are free

What Happens When You Call the Police

- You need to let the police into your home. The only time police will enter a home uninvited is when they believe someone is in immediate danger or if a 911 call has been received.
- If police have "reasonable and probable grounds" to believe that an offence has been committed by one intimate partner on the other, the police are required to lay a charge.
- Mandatory charges in a domestic situation are not just limited to assault. Charges may relate to any other offence in the Criminal Code or Provincial Acts such as uttering threats, forcible confinement, sexual assault, intimidation, property damage and break and enter. Charges also include failing to comply with court orders such as probation orders, peace bonds, restraining orders, any release orders after an accused is charged and non-communication orders while an accused is custody.
- The police lay the charge, not the victim. The victim is a witness in the matters before the courts. There is often other evidence such as the recorded telephone call to police, injuries to the victim and/ or accused, damage to property, statements of children, neighbours and other witnesses, utterances or statement of the accused etc.
- The police may need to investigate further by collecting additional evidence and getting statements from both the victim and the abuser. The police will ask you to give a sworn video statement. Be sure to describe the assault in detail and tell them about any injuries. whether they are visible or not. The police will take photographs of visible injuries. Provide information about other violent episodes or behaviour that is worrying you. Show the police any court orders you have. You will likely be distraught, but try to be as calm and cooperative as possible. The police are there to help you.
- The police will arrest the offender when there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe an offence has occurred. In some cases, after being charged, the offender will be released at the police station with a court date and specific conditions that the offender must abide by. In some cases, after being charged, the offender is held in jail and has the right to have a bail hearing to determine if there should be a release. Whether an offender is released at the police station or at the court house it is usually a condition of release that the offender is not allowed to return home or have direct or indirect communication with the victim. Also, while an offender is in jail, it is usually a condition that there is no communication with the victim.

 Any contact by an accused should be reported to the police immediately. Failing to abide by conditions is a criminal offence and could mean you are at more risk.

- Charges that have been laid by the police cannot be withdrawn, except by a Crown Attorney.
- If you or your children need medical attention, the police can make sure you get to the hospital. They can also contact someone from Victim Assistance Services of Oxford Country (VASOC) to meet with you and offer immediate assistance and support.
- If the police do not lay charges, ask them why. It is usually because there were "insufficient grounds". That does not mean that they do not believe you. You can lay charges yourself, although it is a more involved process (see page 24).
- If no charges are laid, but you don't feel safe staying at home, you can ask the police to wait while you gather some belongings and ensure you get to a safe place. They can also contact someone from Victim Assistance Services of Oxford Country (VASOC) to meet with you and offer immediate assistance and support.
- Write down the officers' names and badge numbers, as well as the "Occurrence Report Number" in case you need to follow up.
- If you are not happy with the way you were treated by the police, you can file a complaint with the officer's supervisor or superior. You may also contact the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIRPD), www.oiprd.on.ca.

Police / Judicial Procedures

Victim Assistance Services of Oxford County 615 Dundas Street Woodstock ON (Woodstock Police Station) Tel: 519-537-2824 - business hours for community referrals or information

- volunteers provide support, assistance and referrals to victims of crime
- accompaniment to hospital, residence, shelter or temporary accomodation (i.e. motel)
- services are free

Police / Judicial Procedures

Ontario Court of Justice Criminal Division 415 Hunter St, Woodstock 519-539-6187

Other Judicial Action

Laying Charges Yourself

If the police do not lay a charge against your abuser, you can lay one yourself. You need to go to court and talk to a Justice of the Peace. Provide all the necessary details and bring along any witnesses (or their written statements). After you "lay the information," the Justice of the Peace will conduct a hearing under oath and you will be asked to present your evidence. If your partner is ordered to appear in court to answer to the charges, you may be called upon to be a witness. There is no fee to speak with a Justice of the Peace.

Peace Bonds

If you are afraid that your partner will try to hurt you or your children, or destroy your property, you can talk to a Justice of the Peace about getting a peace bond — a written promise that he will "keep the peace and be of good behaviour." (You may also be asked to make the same promise). There might be other conditions as well. A peace bond may be valid for up to 12 months. Always keep a copy with you; if your partner violates it, it is a criminal offence and you must call the police right away. Once a peace bond is issued, it can only be lifted by the courts and as long as it is in effect, all parties must abide by the conditions. Therefore, if one of the conditions is that your partner stay away from the family home, you cannot decide to let him return or visit. If you also have conditions under the peace bond you could be charged if you do not abide by those conditions.

Court Orders

Concerns about safety, custody and access, support and division of property can be dealt with through a court order. You can arrange for a court order by speaking with a lawyer (*see page 25*). You can also request an order by visiting the Family Court office and picking up the appropriate forms (including a Notice of Motion and an Affidavit). The types of orders you can request include:

- custody of the children
- access to the children
- support for yourself or your children
- restraining order
- property order

A restraining order may be issued by the court if there is reason to believe that you are at risk or harm at the hands of your spouse/partner. The order may include specific instructions, for example, that your partner must not come to your home, place of work, children's school, etc. Restraining orders can be permanent, or valid for a certain amount of time (eg. several months). The restraining order must be served to your partner, but you do not have to do it yourself. The court, or your lawyer, can assist you with the procedures.

Try to keep a copy of the restraining order with you at all times. Call the police if your spouse or partner breaches the order. He may be arrested and charged.

Court Proceedings

- After a charge is laid, the offender has a "first appearance" in court. If he pleads guilty, there is no trial but he will be sentenced. If he pleads not guilty, a trial date is chosen by the judge.
- It can be several months before the trial takes place. During this time, you may feel intimidated or threatened by your partner. Document any incidents. Call the police if you believe you are in danger or your partner has not abided by court ordered conditions.
- You may have to appear in court to give evidence. You can call Domestic Abuse Services Oxford (519-539-4811), the Victim Witness Assistance Program (519-421-3903) or the Family Court Support Worker Program (see information at right) for guidance or to request that someone accompany you to the court. You do not have to be represented by a lawyer.
- If your partner is found guilty, the sentence will depend on the seriousness of the charge and other factors such as history of violence in the relationship and any previous criminal record.
- Whether or not your partner serves time in jail, his sentence may include a term of probation, which could last from six months to three years. The probation order could include such conditions as the following: that he not contact you directly or indirectly; that he not come within 100 metres of your home or workplace; that he report to a probation officer regularly; that he attend specific counselling/ treatment program; that he not own or possess a weapon; that he not use alcohol or drugs.
- You have a chance to tell the judge about the effect the violence has had on you and your family by preparing a "victim impact statement." You can do this with help from the police or victim services.
- To get updated information about the case, you can call the Victim Witness Assistance Program (519-421-3903). The Victim Witness Assistance Program can also arrange a meeting for you with the Crown Attorney or can provide information to the Crown on your behalf.

Police / Judicial Procedures

Family Court Support Worker Program

Family Court Support Workers provide direct support to victims of domestic violence who are involved in the family court process. A Family Court Support Worker will:

- provide information about the family court process
- help victims prepare for family court proceedings
- refer victims to other specialized services and supports in the community
- help with safety planning, such as getting to and from court safely
- accompany the victim to court proceedings, where appropriate.

Family Court Support Workers are based in communities across the province. In Oxford County, contact:

Children's Aid Society of Oxford County 2 Light Street, Woodstock Ontario N4S 6H1 519-539-6176 or 1-800-250-7010

Know Your Rights!

You have the right to live your life free from violence and abuse.

Spousal assault – including physical attacks, sexual abuse or threats – is a crime. You have the right to call the police and to be protected from your abuser. You have the right, and an obligation, to ensure the safety and well being of your children.

If you have no means of supporting yourself and your children, you have the right to financial assistance. It is your right to seek help and support from other programs and services in the community.

You and your children also have rights under the Family Law Act which covers custody, support and property.

Custody of Children

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, it is vital that you take your children with you when you leave an abusive relationship. If you are forced to leave your children behind, return for them as soon as possible. You can have the police accompany you if you are worried about your safety.

In cases of emergency, you should apply for **Temporary Custody** of your children as soon as possible. This will be in effect until a **Legal Custody Order** is granted by a judge. To get temporary custody and to file for final legal custody, call 519-539-6187 or visit the Family Court Office at 415 Hunter Street. You will have to fill out the papers, get court dates and have the papers served on your partner. The original papers are then brought back to the courthouse. You can also apply for a restraining order (*see page 23*) at the same time.

Free legal information is available at the **Courthouse**, 415 Hunter Street, Woodstock. Call for days and times.

You can also apply for custody through a lawyer. This may take longer, but you will not have to fill out the papers and serve them yourself.

Office of the Children's Lawyer

If there is a dispute between parents about custody and access, a judge may call upon the Office of the Children's Lawyer. When this happens, both parents have to fill out intake forms and the Office will appoint a social worker and/or a lawyer who will represent the child in court and make recommendations based on the child's preferences and best interests. There is no cost to either parent.

Family Law Information Centre Family Court Office Woodstock Courthouse 415 Hunter Street, 2nd Floor Woodstock ON 519-539-6187

Wednesdays 9 am - 4 pm (day/time subject to change)

Access Issues

If you have custody of the children, your partner still has a right to see them, unless the court has made an order for no access. That usually happens only when there is strong evidence that the children are at risk of abuse or neglect by the partner. Supervised access — when the children and the parents meet in a neutral location — may be ordered in certain cases.

Using a Lawyer

If you are leaving your partner, you should consider speaking to a lawyer to find out your rights and options. It is especially advisable to seek legal advice if you have minor children or if you are not a Canadian citizen.

A lawyer can help you:

- understand your rights under the Family Law Act
- keep you up-to-date about any new legislation or procedures affecting your situation
- write a separation agreement
- arrange for a court order

A **court order** specifies the terms of the agreement between two people who have separated. In putting together your court order a lawyer may ask the judge to grant you:

- custody of your children
- financial support from your partner
- your share of joint property and assets
- exclusive possession of your home

Lawyers are listed in the local telephone book or you can contact Domestic Abuse Services Oxford for a list of Legal Aid lawyers. Ask family and friends to recommend lawyers they have used. Some lawyers offer a free consultation; use this brief meeting to state your expectations and to determine whether you are comfortable with the lawyer's approach. You should also find out about the fees and payment schedule.

You can also get a free 30-minute consultation by calling the **Lawyer Referral Service at 1-800-268-8326**. You will be given the name and telephone number of a lawyer in your community. You will also get a six digit referral number which you will have to provide when you call the lawyer to make an appointment.

When you meet with your lawyer:

• Be on time; call if you have to cancel or reschedule the appointment.

Legal Issues

Merrymount Children's Centre Oxford County Supervised Access Centre 476 Peel Street Woodstock N4S 1K1 Tel. 519-533-1379 www.merrymount.on.ca

A safe, neutral place for supervised visits between a child and non-custodial parent. Also, supervised exchanges available for cases such as when the safety of a parent is a concern. Fee for service, based on income.

Lawyer Referral Service 1-800-268-8326

Legal Issues

Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) www.cleo.on.ca

Clear, accurate, and practical legal rights information

Elgin-Oxford Legal Clinic c/o Operation Sharing 22 Wilson Street Woodstock N4S 3N4 519-539-3361 Fax: 519-539-9648

- Be prepared. Keep a file with all the necessary documents (such as financial information, copies of deeds, proof of income for yourself and your partner, any custody or court orders, etc.). Bring the file each time you meet with your lawyer.
- Bring a list of your questions and write down the answers as you get them. Be sure you understand the information you are given. To keep legal fees to a minimum, you should avoid any unnecessary telephone calls to your lawyer.

If you can't afford a lawyer...

Legal Aid

You may be able to get Legal Aid to pay for a lawyer if you have little or no money left after you pay for basic necessities and your legal problem is one that Legal Aid covers (family matters, criminal charges, immigration and refugee matters). People with no income or on social assistance almost always qualify for Legal Aid, but you may still qualify even if you have a job.

Call the local Legal Aid office as soon as you know you need help. Find out the best times to visit the office and tell the staff if your situation is an emergency. Bring any relevant financial information including identification (S.I.N. card, driver's license, birth certificate or landed immigrant papers), any documents relating to your case (court orders, separation agreements, etc.), proof of your current income (pay stubs, Ontario Works cheque stubs, etc.), up-to-date bank book or statement, and proof of monthly expenses and bills. The staff will help you complete an application and may be able to predict right away whether you are likely to get Legal Aid.

Meanwhile, contact Domestic Abuse Services Oxford at 519-539-4811 to inquire about getting a certificate for **two hours of free legal service**.

Elgin-Oxford Legal Clinic

The Elgin-Oxford Legal Clinic can provide you with confidential legal information and legal representation for matters dealing with the following:

- Landlord and tenant matters
- Ontario Works
- Ontario Disability Program
- Employment Insurance
- Criminal Injuries Compensation
- Powers of Attorney
- Canada pensions

Call for application information. The services are free to those who meet eligibility requirements.

Housing

For women leaving abusive relationships, one of the most important (and usually most challenging) tasks is finding good, affordable accommodation. Since you have to provide a fixed address in order to get help from Ontario Works, your housing needs will be a high priority. The following information can help get you started...

Subsidized Housing

Oxford County Department of Human Services

Oxford County Department of Human Services oversees social housing programs in Woodstock and Oxford County. The rent in these units is set according to the income of the household (generally 30% of monthly gross income). There are also some market rent units available.

Types of housing available through the department include detached and semi-detached homes, townhouses and apartment buildings for families, singles and seniors, and some units have been modified for those with physical handicaps. Housing communities are located in Drumbo, Embro, Ingersoll, Norwich, Tavistock, Thamesford, Tillsonburg and Woodstock. There is a long waiting list for housing so it is important to get your completed application in and make sure your contact information stays up-todate. You can view the housing projects by looking through the catalogue at the Housing Office or on the website.

To apply for housing, visit or call Oxford County Department of Human Services at 21 Reeve Street, 519-539-9800 or visit the website at *www. oxfordcounty.ca* and click on *Services for You*, *Social Services*. You can fill out an application. You will be placed on a central waiting list according to the date your completed application was received.

Special Priority for housing is allowed for applicants whose personal safety, or whose family's safety is at risk because of abuse by someone with whom they live or have recently lived, and, from whom they intend to separate permanently. This may include a sponsor, if the applicant is a sponsored immigrant.

If you think you may qualify for Special Priority status, contact the Department of Human Services at 519-539-9800, or go to the website at *www. oxfordcounty.ca* and click on *Services for You, Social Services* or contact Domestic Abuse Services Oxford for Special Priority information and a verification form.

Persons who are homeless may receive Urgent Priority (one vacancy in every ten. If you think you may qualify for Urgent Priority status, contact the Department of Human Services. Oxford County Department of Human Services 21 Reeve St. P.O. Box 1614 Woodstock N4S 7Y3 1-800-265-1015 or 519-539-9800 ext. 3339/3334 www.oxfordcounty.ca

Applications are also available from...

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford 975 James Street Woodstock 519-539-4811 www.daso.ca

Ingamo Homes 432 Springbank Ave Woodstock 519-421-0383 www.ingamofamilyhomes.com

Family Violence Counselling Program 92 Light Street Woodstock 519-539-1276

Housing

Ingamo Homes 432 Springbank Ave. Woodstock ON N4T 1N7 519-421-0383 www.ingamohomes.com

How to apply: Obtain an application form from Ingamo Family Homes or contact:

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford 519-539-4811 or toll-free: 1-800-265-1938

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford Transitional and Housing Support Program 975 James Street Woodstock ON 519-539-7488 ext. 224 www.daso.ca

Ingamo Homes (Second Stage Housing)

Ingamo (Inuit for "a place of friends") is a transitional program specifically for women, with or without children, who have left abusive partners. Ingamo provides temporary (up to one year) affordable housing in a more secure townhouse complex along with individual and group supports to assist women in accomplishing short and long term goals.

Other services include:

- Ongoing safety; providing information, support and advocacy with the systems that impact on women's lives
- An understanding of what has happened
- Accompaniment to justice-related, social service or legal meetings
- Completion of forms and applications
- Help accessing community supports
- · Support with different life challenges and successes
- Finding and securing financial resources
- · Assistance in securing permanent affordable housing
- Parenting support
- Child activities and programs

Program expectations

Residents must make a commitment to comply with the guidelines for the safety and security of all residents, and to participate in support programs. Ingamo is committed to a non-violent, anti-oppressive, anti-racist environment.

What happens when I apply?

Applicants will be contacted by Ingamo Family Homes to be interviewed. Applications will then be reviewed by an intake committee and applicants will be notified of the committee's decision.

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford Transitional and Housing Support Program

DASO's Transitional and Housing Support Program offers a wide range of supports to women who are experiencing abuse, have left an abusive relationship recently or in the past, or who are considering leaving. The program is also available to women currently in, or leaving, the shelter and planning to establish new lives for themselves and their children.

The Transitional and Housing Support Worker will provide the following:

- Risk assessment and safety planning for women and their children
- Assessment, implementation and ongoing support for the AWERS (Abused Women's Emergency Response Service)

• Support in developing a transition plan. This will include establishing goals and identifying steps towards achieving them.

- Accompaniment, advocacy and referrals to police, court (family and criminal matters), hospital, lawyers, social services and community agencies
- Referral for two hours of free legal advice
- Support finding/maintaining affordable housing
- Support applying for financial assistance

Call 519-539-7488 ext. 224 to make an appointment.

Non-subsidized Housing

If you are not eligible for subsidized housing, or you do not want to wait until a unit becomes available, you can look for accommodation on your own. Homes, apartments and flats for rent are listed in the classified section of the local newspaper, The ads will provide some information – such as the number of bedrooms and the rent – but you will have to call to get more details. Specifically, you need to know...

- the location, address and type of dwelling
- other details about the layout and room sizes
- amenities provided (such as laundry facilities, parking, etc.)
- amenities for children (e.g. playground, nearby park)
- what utilities are included
- · if there are any special restrictions or rules
- whether there are any additional fees or charges
- when the home will be available
- whether the unit will be painted/decorated prior to moving day
- what is included (e.g. appliances, window coverings, furniture)

If a house or apartment sounds promising, make an appointment to see it. Try to do this during daylight hours. When you approach the home, look around the neighbourhood: does it seem safe? Are the homes/ buildings well kept? Is it relatively quiet? Are there schools nearby? Is it on, or close to, a bus route? Take your time when you inspect the home. Is it clean and in good repair? Does it provide adequate space for your family? Are the appliances in good shape?

If you do not have children or need much space, you might consider boarding with someone or renting a basement apartment/granny suite. Alternatively, you might want to share the space and expenses of a larger apartment or house with a roommate.

You may be restricted by money and/or time, but do your best to find a place where you and your children can be secure and comfortable and where you can feel good about re-building your life.

Salvation Army Emergency Housing provides lists of nonsubsidized housing in Oxford County. 519-539-6166

Housing

It is discriminatory – and illegal – to refuse to rent to someone because they: are pregnant or have children, are on government assistance, have a mental or physical handicap, or because of their marital status, age, gender, sexual orientation, race or nationality.

The Landlord and Tenant Act also states that a tenant may own a pet as long as it isn't a danger, doesn't cause an allergic reaction and isn't a bother to the other tenants or the landlord.

Problems with your rental home should be reported to your landlord or superintendent and repairs should be made within a few days.

If the problems are not fixed, you can call the Elgin/Oxford Legal Clinic for advice at 1-866-611-2311. Problems affecting your health and safety might also be reported to the Building Department at City Hall or Inspection Services at the Oxford County Public Health.

Signing a Lease

If you are interested in the apartment/house, talk to the landlord about what is required. It is normal to have to pay both the first and last month's rent up front. If you can't afford to do that you may be able to get some assistance from Ontario Works (*see page 34*). The landlord may also ask you for references or want someone else to co-sign the lease with you if you are unemployed. Once the details have been sorted out, you can arrange to move in.

You may be asked to sign a lease, obligating you to rent the home for a minimum period (usually a year). If you want to move out before the lease expires, you might have to pay a fee or arrange to sublet the unit to someone else. The lease is a legal contract between you and your landlord. Before signing, make sure it includes...

- the full address of the unit
- a description (number of rooms, size)
- the monthly rent and when it is due
- who collects the rent
- the amount of the deposit
- a breakdown of who pays for which utilities
- items the landlord has agreed to fix

If there is something in the lease you don't understand, get answers before you sign. As a tenant, you have certain rights: to possession on the agreed upon date; to privacy; to good repair; to no more than one rent increase per year; to have visitors; to not have personal property seized. Your responsibilities are to pay the rent when it's due, to act responsibly and to give written notice when you are ready to move.

If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact the Elgin/Oxford Legal Clinic at 1-866-611-2311 or the Transitional and Housing Support Worker at Domestic Abuse Services Oxford, 519-539-7488 ext 224.

Oxford County Affordable Housing Program (AHP)

Affordable Housing Program (AHP) units offer rental accommodations with a rent based on less than 80% of the current Average Market Rents. Several private and co-operative non-profit housing developments offer Affordable Housing in Oxford County. Applications for market rent units must be made directly with the applicable housing provider. Visit www.oxfordcounty.ca for more information and a list of Affordable Housing providers.

Housing Resource Centre

Operating under the direction of the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Housing Resource Centre is a free community service providing help to both tenants and landlords. *www.cmhaoxford.on.ca*.

Tenants' Services

The Housing Resource Centre helps people (16 and over) find suitable and affordable housing in Woodstock and Oxford County. You can also contact the centre to get information about the Tenant Protection Act and other related legislation or for assistance with a wide range of housing issues such as:

- how to contact landlords
- completing application forms
- advocacy for tenants with housing problems
- how to get utilities hooked up

Rent/Utility Bank

This program will help tenants who are in imminent danger of being evicted/disconnected because they are behind in their rent/utilities. Call the Salvation Army at 519-539-6166 for more information. Loans are given to those who meet certain criteria. For example...

- You cannot owe more than the equivalent of two month's rent between rent, heat and hydro arrears.
- You must have a demonstrated ability to repay the loan.
- Your current housing must be sustainable.

The Salvation Army Emergency Housing and Advocacy

The Outreach Program helps individuals and families who are homeless by helping them access emergency shelters and facilities in the community, assisting with other basic needs, and providing referrals for income, food, permanent housing and other services. Contact 519-539-7235 for more information Housing

Oxford Housing 21 Reeve Street Woodstock N4S 7Y3 Tel. 519-539-9800 Toll-free: 1-800-265-1015 www.oxfordcounty.ca

Satellite Offices: Ingersoll Learning & Employment Resource Centre: 37 Alma Street Ingersoll N5C 1N1 Toll-free: 1-800-265-1015

Livingston Centre 90-96 Tillson Ave. Tillsonburg, N4G 3A1 Toll-free: 1-800-265-1015

Salvation Army Emergency Housing and Advocacy 519-539-7235 www.woodstock salvationarmy.com

Utilities

Utilities include electricity (hydro), water, heat (i.e. natural gas if it isn't electric heat), telephone and cable. If you rent, some of the utilities — for example heat, hydro and electricity — may be included in the rental amount. If any are not, you will have to set up an account with the appropriate utility companies. There is usually a one-time activation/ administration fee for new accounts and in some cases, deposits are required. The following are the telephone numbers for some of the local utility firms.

Woodstock Hydro (electricity and water in Woodstock) *www.woodstockhydro.com/resrates* 16 Graham Street, Woodstock N4S 7X4, 519-537-3488 Call for rates and set-up fees

Hydro One (electricity in Oxford and around Ontario) *www.hydroone.com* 1-800-664-9376 (for emergencies: 1-800-434-1235)

Union Gas (natural gas) 1-888-774-3111 (for gas leaks, other emergencies: 1-877-969-0999) www.uniongas.com Minimum notice: 48 hours (more preferred) Deposit: Required for all new customers but may be waived if equal billing and pre-authorized payment plan options are selected Connection Fee: \$35 plus GST (added to first bill)

Bell Canada (home phone, Internet, satellite, wireless phone) *www.bell.ca*

4-1147 Dundas St., Woodstock, Tel: 519-421-2442;

A number of services/packages are available for home phone, satellite, Internet and wireless phone.

Call or visit the website for more information and for start-up fees

Rogers (cable TV, Internet, home Phone, wireless phone) 705-709 Dundas St W., Woodstock, 519-421-3127; *www.rogers.com* A number of services/packages are available for cable, home phone,

Internet and wireless phone.

Call or visit website for more information and for start-up fees.

Redirecting Your Mail...

You can purchase a "Change of Address" kit at any Canada Post outlet or online (www. canadapost.ca). You need to fill out a form indicating your new, as well as old, address. Select "self only" so that only mail addressed to you will be redirected. Mail will be forwarded to your new address for three, six or 12 months with corresponding fees. You will also get change of address cards to send to anyone you wish to have your new address.
Financial Assistance

If you are unemployed and have no means of supporting yourself and your children, you are entitled to financial assistance. The following provides instruction on how to access some of the main sources. *Please note that the application procedures change periodically; check with the appropriate service or office.*

Ontario Works

Social assistance is provided through Ontario Works. To apply, call the local intake department at 519-539-9800.

You will need to provide:

- personal information including your full name, date of birth, Social Insurance Number, health card number, etc.
- personal information for each of your children
- the address of where you will be living
- the amount you will be paying in rent
- any income you will be receiving

You will be given the date, time and location of an appointment with a case manager. If you are in Woodstock or Oxford County, you will most likely be asked to report to the Woodstock office.

Assuming you qualify and depending on your rent, the ages of your children and other personal circumstances, you may qualify for approximately...

\$560 per month
\$904 per month
\$950 per month
\$1,036 per month

You will also receive a drug card, which will cover some of the cost of prescription medicine.

Note that you cannot apply to Ontario Works until you know where you will be living.

Ontario Works 21 Reeve Street Woodstock N4S 3G1 Tel. 519-539-9800 ext. 3083

In order to receive any type of federal or provincial social assistance payments, you must have filed an income tax return for the previous year.

Financial Assistance

Oxford County Child Care Subsidy Call to make an appointment: 519-539-9800 ext. 3310

Ontario Disability Support Program – Oxford County 21 Reeve Street, Woodstock Tel: 519-537-5579 or 1-800-461-7296

Family Responsibility Office P.O. Box 220 Downsview, Ontario M3M 3A3 1-800-267-4330 Fax: 416-240-2401 www.mcss.gov.on.ca/mcss/ english/pillars/ familyresponsibility

Canada Child Tax Benefit 1-800-387-1193

Ontario Child Care Supplement 1-800-263-7965

Assistance With Child Care Costs

Child Care Services' Fee Subsidy Program provides financial assistance towards the cost of child care in licensed programs. You might be eligible if you are working, going to school or attending an approved training program. Both full and partial child care subsidies are issued. Call to find out if you qualify for the subsidy and how to proceed.

Ontario Disability Support Program

If you have a disability preventing you from working, you may qualify for income support through the Ontario Disability Support Program. A referral is available through Ontario Works. Call for more information on the program and how to apply.

Spousal and Child Support

If you separated from your husband or common law spouse, you may be entitled to financial support for yourself (if he supported you in full or in part during the relationship) as well as support for your children. Your lawyer would apply to the court on your behalf and any decisions about support and the amount of the payments would be part of the court order (see page 24).

Family Responsibility Office

Once an order for support is issued by the court, it is filed with the Family Responsibility Office (FRO), which processes the payments to help make sure they are paid on a regular basis. The FRO would collect the money from your husband or partner — or from his employer — and then forward the money to you. The FRO will take various measures to collect any payments that are missed.

In order to provide the information the FRO needs to collect and forward the payments, you must fill out the forms that you receive in the "Filing Package" and send them back. You must also make sure to report any changes to this information (ie. your partner's address, employer or banking information; your address or banking information). Contact the FRO for more information.

Child and Family Benefits

The federal and provincial governments operate programs to provide some financial relief to lower income households. They include the monthly Canada Child Tax Benefit (formerly Family Allowance) for children under 18 and the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families to help with the cost of raising children under the age of seven. If you had not received benefits previously, but think you may be entitled to them, call the appropriate office to inquire.

Tax Credits

Revenue Canada issues a **Goods and Services Tax (GST) Credit** to individuals and families with incomes below a certain level. If you are eligible, a cheque will be sent to you four times a year. The amount of the credit will depend on your income and the number of people in your household.

You may also be entitled to other tax credits, such as **Ontario Property** or **Sales Tax Credits**. These would serve to either reduce the amount of taxes you have to pay, or provide you with a refund cheque.

To receive any of the above credits or the child and family benefits, you must file an **income tax return**, even if you were not employed during the year. If you do not receive an income tax package in the mail, you can pick one up at any post office. There are services that will complete your return for you (for a fee) or you can do it yourself; help is available through free tax clinics and telephone support lines (watch the newspaper for details).

Employment Insurance

If you have been working and have lost your job, or if you had to stop working because you were pregnant or stayed home to care for your new baby, you may be eligible for Employment Insurance (EI) benefits. Employment Insurance provides you with temporary income while you are looking for another job or until you can return to work.

For more information contact Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) at 1-800-206-7218.

To receive benefits, file your claim as soon as possible after your last day of work. You can go to the nearest HRDC office to apply. You need to bring your S.I.N. card and your Record of Employment (which you will get from your employer). Your application will be reviewed and you will have a chance to ask questions about your benefits. **Financial Assistance**

GST/HST Credit 1-800-959-1953

Human Resources Development Canada Woodstock Service Canada Centre 959 Dundas Street, Office 101 Woodstock N4S 1H2 519-421-7225 1-800-206-7218

Financial Assistance

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board 439 University Ave. 4th floor Toronto ON M5G 1Y8 Tel: 1-800-372-7463 www.cicb.gov.on.ca

Leaving an abusive relationship can be difficult and your standard of living may drop initially. But it will be a worthwhile price to pay for your safety, well being and self-esteem.

You can channel your newfound confidence and energy into activities that make you happy, fulfilled and prosperous. See pages 55-57 for information on education, training and employment opportunities.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

If you have suffered injuries and incurred expenses as a result of a crime of violence (including domestic violence) you may be eligible for compensation through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB). You do not have to have laid charges against your partner. You can apply for compensation up to two years after the incident (time extensions are possible, but they are not always granted).

To get an application, call or write to the CICB. After you have applied, proving a claim can be an involved process and will include a hearing. You may want help from a lawyer. The maximum amount of compensation is \$25,000 but most applicants receive much less.

Money Matters

When resources are scarce, it can be stressful and you may be tempted to go back to your partner, even though you know that the abuse will begin again. Don't be tempted to return for the wrong reasons. Your financial situation can improve and you can learn how to acquire and manage the money you need for yourself and your children. In the meantime, consider the following tips...

- Avoid incurring any additional debt. It may be tempting to rely on credit cards or financing programs in order to get the things you want, but be careful. High interest rates and financing charges can have you paying a lot more than you thought for those great "sale" items.
- Get some help. There are plenty of books, articles and workshops on managing your finances. You can also get credit counselling to help you get out from under your debts.
- Create a household budget. Know how much money you have coming in and what regular expenses you have to cover each month. Decide what you can afford to spend on food, clothing, entertainment and other expenditures. Use the form on page 65 to create a personalized household budget.
- Learn ways to cut back and save on purchases and expenses. (See the next section for suggestions on where to go to get clothing, household goods and other items for little or no money.)
- As difficult as it may be, try to save some money (even just a few dollars on a regular basis) that you can use for an unexpected expense or a special treat.

Food, Clothing and Household Needs

There may be times when you need some assistance whether you are starting over in a new place or getting through on a tight budget. The following services are available to you in Oxford County. *Note that days/ times and services often change; call to check current information.*

Food Banks

Salvation Army Woodstock – Community and Family Services Food Bank 519-539-9345 After Hours: 519-532-2648

190 Huron St., Woodstock N4S 7A1 Hours: Mon - Fri 10 am - 12 noon and 1:30 - 4 pm

- Proof of income required
- By appointment, food assistance can be accessed once every six weeks if required

Salvation Army Thrift Store and Family Services – Ingersoll

519-485-4961

192 Thames St S., Ingersoll N5C 2T5 Hours: Mon - Fri 10 am - 4:30 pm; Sat 10 am - 4pm

Food bank services; call for information

Salvation Army Thrift Store and Family Services - Norwich

519-863-6375

After Hours: 519-532-2935 18 Main St W, Norwich NOJ 1PO Hours: Mon, Sat 9 am - 3 pm; Tues - Fri 9 am - 5 pm

- Food bank services, by appointment only
- Financial subsidy upon eligibility

Salvation Army Thrift Store and Family Services – Tillsonburg

519-842-4447

519-539-3361

155 Broadway St., Upper Unit, Tillsonburg N4G 4H3 Hours: Mon- Fri 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Operation Sharing – Woodstock

22 Wilson Street, Woodstock N4S 3N4
Hours: Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 9 am - 2 pm; Wed 9 am - 2 pm & 7 pm - 9pm
"Food for Friends" program; drop-in service

Operation Sharing – Ingersoll

519-425-2227

1 Charles St E, Ingersoll N5C 1J5 Hours: Mon, Wed, Fri 9 am - 2 pm

"Food for Friends" program; drop-in service

Community food banks provide free food or food vouchers to families in need.

You do not need to be embarrassed by having to go to a food bank – they are there to help people make ends meet. Food, Clothing and Household Needs

Helping Hand Food Bank – Tillsonburg

519-688-3434

55 Broadway St, Unit A., Tillsonburg N4G 3P4 Hours: Tue. 9am-11am; Wed. 9am-3:30pm

- Anyone in need of food due to financial reasons
- Limited to within Tillsonburg area

Emergency Food Programs

Nutritious meals are available free of charge at various locations in Oxford County including the following:

Society Saint Vincent de Paul

51 Vension St W, Tillsonburg – 519-842-0773 First Baptist Church: 603 Adelaide St, Woodstock – 519-537-5261

Furniture, Clothing and Household Items

Salvation Army Woodstock – Community and Family Services		ervices
	Furniture Assistance	519-539-6166
	After hours	: 519-532-2648
-	190 Huron St, Woodstock	
-	Emergency furniture assistance is available for certain in bility and availability	tems upon eligi-
	Salvation Army Thrift Store and Family Services – Inge	ersoll
		519-485-4961
	192 Thames St S., Ingersoll	
	Sales of used clothing, furniture and household goods	
	Salvation Army Thrift Store and Family Services – Nor	
	After hours	519-863-6375 : 519-532-2935
	18 Main St W, Norwich	: 519-532-2935
	Sales of used clothing, furniture and household goods	
	Salvation Army Thrift Store and Family Services – Tills	onburg
		519-842-9491
	155 Broadway St., Upper Unit, Tillsonburg	
	Sales of used clothing, furniture and household goods	
	Goodwill Retail Store and Donation Centre	519-539-5192
	865 Dundas Street, Woodstock, N4S 1G8	
	Hours: Mon - Sat 9 am - 6 pm, Sun 12 pm - 4 pm	

Second-hand or thrift stores sell clothing, toys, books, furniture, linens and household goods at low prices. Check the local telephone directory under "secondhand stores."

You may also find inexpensive but good quality gently-used items at garage sales or advertised in the newspaper classifieds and Pennysaver.

Kijiji is a free online classified advertising forum. Visit the website at www.kijiji.ca and select your city/region.

Clothing Assistance

Salvation Army Woodstock – Community and Family Services Clothing Assistance

519-539-6166 After hours: 519-532-2648

190 Huron St, Woodstock, N4S 7A1

Hours: Mon - Fri 9 am - 12 noon, 1:30 pm - 4pm

- An emergency clothing allowance is available from the thrift store
- Clothing will be made available for transients and emergency situations upon eligibility
- Clothing allowance will only be given twice a year unless otherwise discussed with Director

Operation Sharing - Coats for Kids Program

Beginning the end of October, new and used coats, boots, hats and mitts are available to children and adults. Donations are accepted all year round.

22 Wilson Street (College Ave. United), Woodstock - 519-539-3361 1 Charles St. E, Ingersoll - 519-425-2227

Health Services

Your family doctor can give you advice and support and keep track of your medical history – and that of your children. If you can't get in to see your family doctor (e.g. on weekends), or you do not have a doctor, you can go to a walk-in clinic. You do not need an appointment; patients are treated on a firstcome, first served basis.

Make sure you bring your health card (or your child's card if that's who needs treatment).

Hospitals and Clinics

Alexandra Hospital 29 Noxon St., Ingersoll N5C 3V6 <i>24-hour emergency care</i>	519-485-1700
Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital 167 Rolph St, Tillsonburg N4G 3Y9 24-hour emergency care	519-842-3611
Woodstock General Hospital 310 Juliana Drive Woodstock N4V 0A1 24-hour emergency care	519-421-4211
Ingersoll Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic Ingersoll Pharmasave Centre For Health and Wellness King Street Level, 19 King Street East, Ingersoll N5C 1 <i>Hours:</i> Mon-Thurs 8:30 am - 8:30 pm; Fri 8:30 am - 4:3 Visit www.ingersollnplc.ca for information and services	30 pm
Woodstock and Area Community Health Centre 35 Metcalfe Street, Woodstock N4S 3E6	519-539-1111
<i>Hours:</i> Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 8:30 am - 4:30 pm; Wed 8:30 am - 12 noon and 5:30 - 8:30 pm Visit www.wachc.ca for information and services.	
Wed 8:30 am - 12 noon and 5:30 - 8:30 pm Visit www.wachc.ca for information and services. Northwood Medical Centre – Walk-in Clinic 35 Springbank Ave, Woodstock N4S 7P6 <i>Hours:</i> Tues-Thurs 5 - 8 pm; Sat. 9 am - 12 noon All patients welcome; no appointment necessary	519-537-6147
Wed 8:30 am - 12 noon and 5:30 - 8:30 pm Visit www.wachc.ca for information and services. Northwood Medical Centre – Walk-in Clinic 35 Springbank Ave, Woodstock N4S 7P6 <i>Hours:</i> Tues-Thurs 5 - 8 pm; Sat. 9 am - 12 noon	519-537-6147
Wed 8:30 am - 12 noon and 5:30 - 8:30 pm Visit www.wachc.ca for information and services. Northwood Medical Centre – Walk-in Clinic 35 Springbank Ave, Woodstock N4S 7P6 <i>Hours:</i> Tues-Thurs 5 - 8 pm; Sat. 9 am - 12 noon All patients welcome; no appointment necessary	d County Branch

Oxford County - Public Health & Emergency Services –Health Matters Line519-539-9800 or 1-800-755-0394 ext. 3473Call for confidential health information and advice from a public healthnurse. Available to Oxford County residents. Call for hours of operation.

Poison Information Centre

1-800-268-9017

Telehealth Ontario

1-866-797-0000

Free, confidential health information available by phone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A registered nurse will answer your questions, assess your symptoms and advise if you should go to the doctor, clinic or hospital. You do not need your OHIP number.

Choosing a Doctor, Dentist or Specialist

A family doctor who you trust and can confide in can play a significant role in helping you — and your children — stay safe and healthy. Ask people whose opinion you trust to recommend a doctor, dentist or other healthcare professional. You will have to call to find out if the doctor is taking new patients.

You can search online for family physicians who are taking patients: www.cpso.on.ca/Doctor_Search/dr_srch_hm.htm

Fee for Service/OHIP Coverage

Although there may be some medical services or procedures that require a separate fee, most doctors' fees are covered by OHIP. You should have a separate health card for yourself and for each of your children. You will be required to show these cards every time you access any health service (ie. hospital, clinic, doctor, specialist).

If you are on social assistance through Ontario Works (*see page 35*), you will also receive a drug card which will cover some or all of the cost of prescription medicine for yourself and your children. Most dental services, however, are **not** covered by OHIP. If you have a dental plan, or are covered under your spouse's or someone else's plan, some or all of the fees may be covered. Otherwise, you will have to pay for the service. Call around to compare fees.

Financial Aid for Children's Dental Services

If your child requires dental work and you cannot afford the fees, you might be able to get financial assistance through the Oxford County Public Health Services Dental Screening for Financial Assistance program. Call 519-539-9800 ext. 3428 for more information.

Oxford County Public Health and Emergency Services

Public Health strives for the optimal health of Oxford County residents by promoting and facilitating healthy behaviours in a healthy environment. Public Health offers a range of programs and services including health education, disease prevention, nutrition, healthy growth and development of children, healthy lifestyles, sexual health, immunization services and more. Public Health is open to the public during business hours (8:30am-4:30pm). Services are confidential and most programs are free of charge. Call for more information.

Oxford County Public Health and Emergency Services 410 Buller Street Woodstock N4S 4N2 519-539-9800 or 1-800-755-0394 www.oxfordcounty.ca/ publichealth

To get a health card, call the Ontario Ministry of Health at 1-800-664-8988.

For more information about health insurance, call the Info Line at 1-800-268-1153.

Health Services

Community Dental Services

Oxford County Public Health's Community Dental Services offers free dental services to Oxford County residents who do not have dental insurance and have not been treated by a dentist for at least two years. Eligibility requirements.To find out if you qualify for the program, call 519-539-0968 or visit www.oxfordcounty.ca/Dentalandoralhealth.aspx.

Sexual Health Clinics

Oxford County Public Health Services – Sexual Health Clinic Woodstock

519-539-9800 ext. 3407

410 Buller St, Woodstock N4S 4N2 E-mail: publichealth@oxfordcounty.ca; www.oxfordcounty.ca/publichealth View services available at http://www.oxfordcounty.ca/site/2884/ default.aspx Mon - Fri 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Tillsonburg Sexual Health Clinic Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital – Lower Level

519-539-9800 ext. 3407

167 Rolph St, Tillsonburg N4G 3Y9 www.tillsonburghospital.on.ca Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month 2 - 4 pm

Pregnancy, Prenatal and Postnatal Care

Oxford County Public Health and Emergency Services

Tel: 519-539-9800 or 1-800-755-0394 410 Buller Street, Woodstock N4S 4N2 www.oxfordcounty.ca/publichealth E-mail: publichealth@oxfordcounty.ca or healthmatters@oxfordcounty.ca

Prenatal Education Classes

Information for a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby. Education program offers prenatal classes to prepare expectant parents for pregnancy, childbirth and parenting. View the course outline at http://www. oxfordcounty.ca/Portals/_county/3680/prenatal_programs.pdf

Breastfeeding Support Services

Provides up-to-date information regarding breastfeeding for new and expecting parents, as well as providing hands-on support with trained breastfeeding counselors. Certified lactation consultant available. Call the general line for more information and view resources at http://www.oxfordcounty.ca/site/913/default.aspx.

For at least 25 per cent of domestic abuse victims, the assault begins during pregnancy.

You may feel particularly vulnerable at this stage, and think you cannot leave the relationship while you are pregnant. But physical abuse usually gets worse and you may be putting yourself and your baby at risk.

Call Domestic Abuse Services Oxford's Crisis Line at 519-539-4811 for confidential support and advice.

ext. 3473

ext. 3473

Healthy Babies Healthy Children

ext. 3473

A variety of services offered to expectant parents and parents of infants 0-6 years. Services include a Parent Support Team, Postpartum Support Team, and public health nursing support for new families before baby is born, after baby is born and as baby grows. For more information call the general Public Health line and request extension 3482 or visit www. *oxfordcounty.ca/site/585/default.aspx.*

Moms Offering Moms (MOMS) Support Group

ext. 3473

Drop in program for new moms who are finding motherhood overwhelming or are experiencing feelings of sadness, anxiety or anger. Every Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm

Woodstock YMCA, 808 Dundas Street. Free childcare available.

Well Baby Clinic

ext. 3473

Offers new parents (of infant 0-4 years) the opportunity to have their child weighed, ask a public health nurse about infant and child care issues, meet other new mothers in the community, and discuss topics of interest to new parents. Clinics run from 10am-12pm, Tuesday's to Thursday's across the County. Call the general Public Health line for more information, ext. 3473, or view the clinic schedule at www.oxford-county.ca/site/2690/default.aspx

Beginnings Pregnancy Care Centre

519-421-2127 Crisis Line: 1-800-395-4357

28 Wellington Street, Woodstock N4S 6P3 Non-profit organization providing pregnancy tests, pregnancy support and counselling, material support (cribs, car seats, clothing, diapers, formula, etc), peer counselling (adoption, parenting, birth coaching), mom's support groups, and adoption services. Call for hours.

Community Living Tillsonburg – A Child First

519-842-9000 ext. 254

The Livingston Centre

96 Tillson Ave, Tillsonburg N4G 3A1

www.communitylivingtillsonburg.ca

Help for families with children in licensed childcare and early learning programs who face physical, developmental, social and behavioural challenges. Contact agency directly to arrange consultation.

Community Living Tillsonburg – A Child First – Woodstock 519-421-0687 ext. 22

375 Finkle Street, Woodstock N4V 1A3

www.goodbeginningsday.com

Help for families with children in licensed childcare and early learning programs who face physical, developmental, social and behavioural challenges. Parent sharing support group is available. Contact agency directly to arrange consultation.

Developmental Resources for Infants

779 Baseline Rd E, London N6C 5Y6 www.tvcc.on.ca A combination of resources from four different organizations.

For additional support services and groups, including those for specific health/medical disorders, speak with your doctor or check the local telephone directory and the Oxford County Community Directory published annually or available online at www.county.oxford.on.ca

Counselling and Support

Counselling/Transitional Support for Women

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford

Women's Counselling and Support Groups 519-539-7488 ext. 234 Weekly meetings offer confidential support, information and strategies for positive change. Open to all women in Oxford County who are experiencing domestic abuse or who been abused in the past. Participants share feelings, concerns and fears with one another and learn about the issues and available options.

Call to learn more, find out the dates and locations (e.g. Woodstock, Tillsonburg, Ingersoll) of upcoming sessions, or to register.

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford Sexual Assault/Abuse Counselling

519-539-7488 ext. 226

Individual, confidential suport for women 16 and over who have been sexually abused as an adult or as a child. Call to arrange an appointment.

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford

Transitional and Housing Support Program519-539-7488 ext. 224

Women receive help in overcoming the barrers they face starting a life free of abuse. Counsellors provide advocacy, goal planning, safety planning and assistance with housing applications. They can meet with women at the Woodstock location or in one of DASO's outreach sites within Oxford County. See page 30 for more details.

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford Community Outreach Program

519-539-7488 ext. 234

Support and information related to abuse and unhealthy relationships is available to women living anywhere within Oxford County, including regularly scheduled counselling sessions at the Livingston Centre in Tillsonburg. Call to arrange an appointment.

Sexual Assault Centre London

24 Hour Crisis and Support Line: 519-439-0844

379 Dundas at Colborne St 121. London N6B 1V5 E-mail: sacl@sacl.ca; www.sacl.ca Support and accompaniment/advocacy services including information and referral, individual and group counselling. For women 16 years and older. Many counselling agencies offer marriage or couples counselling. This is not recommended for women who are still at risk of physical abuse.

You should go for counselling alone. Your counsellor should be supportive and empathetic and have an understanding of domestic abuse.

Counselling and Support

Victim Assistance Services of Oxford County

615 Dundas St, Woodstock N4S 1E1 www.vasoc.on.ca

Provides short-term emotional, practical and referral support to victims of crime and/or tragic circumstances, at the request of Emergency Services.

Children's Aid Society of Oxford CountyFamily Violence Counselling Program24-hour line: 519-539-6176

E-mail: info@casoxford.on.ca; www.casoxford.on.ca The Family Violence Counselling Program is committed to act cooperatively with the community to end violence against women by providing services that address the needs of women and promote safety and work preventively to interrupt the generational cycle of violence with child witnesses of wife assault.

Compassionate Souls Women's Self Help Group – Support for Women

519-879-6458

231 Main St E, Otterville

Support group for women in a safe place to share and grow - a place of confidentiality. Monthly meetings (every third Tuesday of the month 7:30pm-9:30pm) to discuss different topics of health and wellness specific to women, with guest speakers and discussion time.

Counselling for Children and Adolescents

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford Journeys - Children Exposed to Domestic Violence

519-539-7488 ext. 225

Journeys, a program for children and adolescents exposed to violence in the home, helps them to deal with the effects of their mother being abused. Topics discussed at the weekly group sessions include anger control, conflict resolution and self-esteem. Mothers attend their own support group at the same time. Assistance with transportation can be arranged. Call for more information.

Children's Aid Society of Oxford County – Child and Family Services

519-539-6176

92 Light St, Woodstock N4S 6H1 E-mail: info@casoxford.on.ca; www.casoxford.on.ca Provision of child protection and counselling services to children and families who are clients of CAS.

Children's Mental Health Ontario

www.kidsmentalhealth.ca

Children's mental health information website.

Counselling services listed in this handbook are free, or have fees that are geared to income. For additional services, check the local telephone directory under "Marriage, Family and Individual Counselling."

M.A.R.C. (Men Accepting Responsibility for Change) Program **Oxford County Family Violence Counselling Program**

519-539-6176

519-539-6176

519-539-0463

This program is a men's group that focuses on accountability and taking action to change abusive behaviour. Men can learn how to express anger in nonviolent and constructive ways, to identify and express feelings and to adapt more flexible attitudes and beliefs about women.

Children's Aid Society of Oxford County Family Violence Counselling Program

92 Light St, Woodstock N4S 6H1 E-mail: info@casoxford.on.ca; www.casoxford.on.ca Co-ordination of services and treatment groups for male abusers.

Operation Sharing: Perspectives for Men

22 Wilson Ave., Woodstock (College Avenue United Church) Interactive workshops designed for men who have experienced various forms of abuse in ther lives and who want to overcome the damaging effects of those experiences and discover more effective ways to communicate feelings.

Oxford Counselling and Chaplaincy Services Empowerment Resources

69 Light St, Ste #7, Woodstock N4S 6G9 E-mail: OCCS1@on.aibn.com; www.ocl.net/projects/ocss Care and assistance offered in the form of counselling, consolation, encouragement and guidance in overcoming abusive behaviors (relationship or substance) and other life disruptive behaviors. We do this by providing appropriate life alternatives independent of denomination.

Support Services and Groups

There are many programs and special interest groups for people seeking help, information and support to deal with specific problems and issues. The following is a cross section of what is available in Woodstock and Oxford County. To find out about other groups/support services, ask your doctor, check the local telephone directory, or consult the Oxford County Community Directory, available online at www.oxfordcounty.ca.

912 Dundas Street, Woodstock N4S 1H1; www,ocyc.on.ca Mondays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (excluding holidays) Free, private and confidential

Counselling for Abusive Men

Oxford-Elgin Child & Youth Centre

Walk-In Counselling Service

519-788-2508

519-533-0834

Counselling and Support

Counselling and Support

Regularly scheduled walk-in sessions are held in Woodstock, Ingersoll and Tillsonburg.

Contact Addiction Services of Thames Valley for times and locations.

Addiction Services of Thames Valley

200 Queens Ave, Ste 260, London N6A 1J3 www.adstv.on.ca

A variety of services for individuals with substance abuse or gambling problems. Services include: assessment, treatment planning, referrals, relapse prevention, specialized support groups, programs for youth, older adults, pregnant women and family members. Satellite offices in Woodstock, Ingersoll and Tillsonburg.

Woodstock Satellite (call main London office)

Vance Unit, 3rd Floor Woodstock General Hospital 293 Wellington St. N., Woodstock N4S 6S4

Ingersoll Satellite (call main London office)

Substance Abuse Services Fusion Youth at Thames Centre 121 Thames Street, Ingersoll N5C 3C9

Tillsonburg Satellite (call main London office)

Substance Abuse Services The Livingston Centre 96 Tillson Avenue, Tillsonburg N4G 3A1

The Cynthia Anne Centre for Addictions (Operation Sharing)

519-421-4017

723 Dundas Street, Woodstock (Old St. Paul's Anglican Church) A free day treatment program available to anyone in Oxford County with substance abuse issues. Call for more information.

A "Women's Only" group is held Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 909 James Street (Open Door).

Alcoholics Anonymous for Oxford County

24-hour answering service: 519-438-1122

431 Juliana Drive, Woodstock N4V 1E8 Support for people expressing a strong desire to deal with their alcohol use problems.

Al-Anon and Alateen – Oxford County Branch 519-457-9393

Support for relatives and friends of alcoholics

Hope's Garden – Eating Disorders Support and **Resource Centre**

519-434-7721

379 Dundas St, Ste 210, London N6B1V5 www.hopesgarden.org Provides non-treatment support and resources to people who have eating disorders and their loved ones. Referral directory of professionals who have experience with eating disorders available. **Gambler's Anonymous – International Service Office**

519-421-4515

www.gamblersanonymous.org

Group support services for individuals with a desire to stop gambling.

Narcotics Anonymous

London chapter: 519-661-0119

(24-hour helpline) Mutual support groups that encourage individuals to avoid use of their addictive substance or any other mood-altering substances by sharing recovery experiences.

Oxford Self Help Network

554 Princess Street, Woodstock N4S 4H1 www.ocl.net/projects/selfhelp Help and support for those with a mental illness or significant mental health challenge. Programs and services include a drop-in centre.

Smoker's Helpline

1-877-513-5333

www.smokershelpline.ca

Victim Assistance Services of Oxford County

519-537-2824

615 Dundas St, Woodstock N4S 1E1 www.vasoc.on.ca

Provides short-term emotional, practical and referral support to victims of crime and/or tragic circumstances, at the request of Emergency Services. Available Monday to Friday 8:30am-4:30pm. After hours contact your local police service to have Victims Assistance Services activated.

The location of churches and other places of worship are listed in the telephone directory. In addition to their faith services, many churches host social activities and/or support groups.



519-421-2180

Child / Parent Resources

Parenting — a job that can be difficult in the best of times — is especially stressful and exhausting for women who are in, or who are leaving, an abusive relationship. In addition to coping with a range of emotions (fear, anxiety, guilt, shame, etc.) these moms need to protect, nurture and re-assure children who are themselves overwhelmed by anxieties and the changes in their lives. The following organizations can provide help, advice and/or relief. (*For medical/health and counselling services, see the preceding sections.*)

Child / Youth Services

Big Brothers/Big Sisters

Support, friendship and guidance for boys and girls. Serving Oxford County through a number of local offices:

Woodstock and District Association

519-537-6404

912 Dundas St, Woodstock N4S 1H1 www.bbbswoodstock.ca bigs@bbbswoodstock.ca

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ingersoll, Tillsonburg & Area

www.sharethefun.org bbbsingtill@aol.com

Ingersoll Office 58 Thames St S, Ingersoll N5C 2T1

Tillsonburg Office 28 Brock St W, Tillsonburg N4G 2A2

519-539-6176

519-485-1801

519-842-8542

Children's Aid Society of Oxford County 92 Light St, Woodstock N4S 6H1 www.casoxford.on.ca

The Children's Aid Society (CAS) is devoted to promoting the safety and well being of children through a range of programs and services including assessments, protection services, child welfare, residential services, foster care, adoption and family support. Case workers at the CAS will work with you to plan for the safety of your children. Depending on your needs, solutions can range from counselling on improving the family environment, to temporary care arrangements for your children.

Kid's Help Phone

1-800-668-6868

Confidential support and help for children.

Ministry of Children and Youth Services – **South West Region**

519-438-5111

217 York St, Unit 203, London N6A 5P9 www.children.gov.on.ca

Funding and monitoring a number of programs in the South West region of the province including: Ontario Early Years; Best Start; child well-being and protection; licensed child care; Ontario Child Benefit; special needs/ special services at home; developmental services; children's mental health; foster care; adoption; Aboriginal children; youth opportunities.

Oxford-Elgin Child & Youth Centre

912 Dundas St, Woodstock N4S 1H1 1 www.ocyc.on.ca Offering a range of services for childen and youth and their families. Operates the free Parent-Child Mother Goose Program in Woodstock, Tillsonburg and Ingersoll. Call for times and locations.

Ontario Early Years Centre

www.earlyyearsoxford.ca Programs and services for parents, caregivers and their children including early learning and literacy, play and learn, and workshops on parenting and child development. Three offices throughout Oxford County:

Woodstock Main Centre

519-539-9800 ext. 3392

Ingersoll Satellite 118 King St W, Ingersoll N5C 2J6

21 Market Square, Woodstock N4S 7Y3

519-539-4419 ext. 12

519-842-9000 ext. 226

Tillsonburg Satellite The Livingston Centre 96 Tillson Ave, Tillsonburg N4G 3A1

Your Children's Education

Despite the changes and emotional turmoil that your family may be experiencing, it is important to try and maintain a normal schedule for your children as much as possible. Except in special circumstances, school age children should continue to go to school and participate in regular activities. If you are a newcomer to Woodstock or Oxford County, or if you move to a new residence, you can contact the head office of the school boards to find out the closest school and any registration requirements (such as birth certificates and immunization records).

Thames Valley District School Board

1250 Dundas St, London N5W 5P2 www.tvdsb.on.ca

The school should have copies of any court orders restricting access to your children by your partner.

519-452-2000

519-539-0463	
-877-539-0463	

London District Catholic School Board

5200 Wellington St S, London N6A 4X5 www.ldcsb.on.ca

It is up to you to decide if you want to tell your child's teacher or principal about the situation at home. Special school board resources (such as counselling by a Child and Youth Worker or Social Worker) may be recommended. These services are free and would only be provided to your child with your consent.

Child Care

Options for child care include private home day care, licensed child care, and specialized programs for children with special needs. Check the local telephone book under "Day Care Centres and Nurseries" for licensed centres or contact the Ontario Early Years Centre for a copy of their child care directory.

Visit the home or centre to find out how the program runs and whether it will be appropriate for your child. Provide clear instructions about who may retrieve your children. If you have any court orders restricting access by your partner, make sure copies are left with day care providers and babysitters.

Oxford Community Child Care

519-539-4419

204 Huron St, Woodstock N4S 7A1 E-mail: info@oxfordccc.ca; www.oxfordccc.ca Provide quality child care programs and support services for families.

Ingersoll Children's Centre

519-485-4788

24 Raglan St, Ingersoll N5C 1P9

Ontario Early Years Centre

E-mail: earlyyears@county.oxford.on.ca; www.earlyyearsoxford.ca Programs and services for parents, caregivers and their children including early learning and literacy, play and learn, and workshops on parenting and child development. Three offices throughout Oxford County.

Woodstock Main Centre 21 Market Square, Woodstock N4S 7Y3	519-539-9800 ext. 3392
Ingersoll Satellite	519-539-4419 ext. 12
118 King St W, Ingersoll N5C 2J6	
Tillsonburg Satellite The Livingston Centre	519-842-9000 ext. 302
96 Tillson Ave, Tillsonburg N4G 3A1	

Child care and babysitting fees can take a significant bite out of your household budget. You might consider alternatives such as finding another parent with whom you can take turns watching the kids.

Training, Education and Employment

As you begin to put some of the crucial elements in place – housing, financial aid, and other basic needs – you may start thinking about other goals and ambitions, such as a job or career. Being able to earn your own money will not only let you enjoy a better standard of living, it will help boost your self confidence and enable you to regain control of your own life.

If you have never worked outside the home, or if it has been some time since you did, you might want to improve your job skills or develop new ones. You may be interested in going back to school or enrolling in a training program. You might want to start by talking to someone who can advise you about career/job options.

The following agencies and community supports can help you get started in your search for a fulfilling and rewarding new position.

Education, Training and Skills Upgrading

Community Employment Services Ingersoll Adult Basic Literacy and General Education Development

519-485-6088

37 Alma St, Ingersoll N5C 1N1

www.ceswoodstock.org

Adult basic literacy program prepares adults to get their grade 12 diploma for independent learning, or search for employment. The General Education Development program provides high school equivalency, testing for adults who have been unable to complete high school. Classroom is open year round; night classes available; computer assisted learning; videos; small class size; tutorials; students can work alone or with small groups to prepare; one-on-one tutoring is available.

Fanshawe College

Woodstock Campus

519-421-0144

369 Finkle St, Woodstock N4T 1M5 www.fanshawec.ca/woodstock A number of programs are offered to adults including post-secondary education, continuing education, adult academic upgrading, training

Tillsonburg Centre

The Livingston Centre 96 Tillson Ave, Tillsonburg N4G 3A1 www.fanshawec.on.ca/tillsonburg

services and employment services.

Before you embark on a job search or decide to change careers, take some time to think about your interests, strengths, skills, and your short and longterm goals.

This may be a good time to make changes that will ensure a brighter future and security for yourself and your children.

Information about courses and programs at colleges, universities and training institutions may be available at the library, through Internet websites, or by calling to request a course catalogue.

A wide range of online courses and programs are also available. Visit www.studyonline.ca for more information.

519-842-9000 ext. 225

Thames Valley District School Board English as a Second Language

This program is designed to meet the needs of adult learners whose first language is not English, regardless of the length of time in Canada. Services include language instruction, orientation to the community and available services, academic preparation for further education, language preparation for the workplace, language related to professions for internationally trained immigrants, language instruction in the workplace, group learning environment. Available in both Woodstock and Tillsonburg.

Woodstock

519-537-0109

391 Blossom Park Rd, Woodstock N4S 7J3 E-mail: blossompark@tvdsb.on.ca; www.tvdsb.on.ca/ace

Tillsonburg

519-842-9000 ext. 309

The Livingston Centre 96 Tillson Ave, Tillsonburg N4G 3A1 E-mail: tillsonave@tvdsb.on.ca; www.tvdsb.on.ca/ace

Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre Basic Adult Literacy

E-mail: msc@ocl.net; www.thelivingstoncentre.com A range of services for adults looking to build literacy skills in a number of areas. Call for more information or visit your local office.

Tillsonburg

519-842-9000

The Livingston Centre 96 Tillson Ave, Tillsonburg N4G 3A1

Woodstock

40 Metcalfe St, Woodstock N4S 3E7

519-842-9000

Employment Counselling and Support

Ontario Works

519-539-9800

Woodstock Office, 21 Reeve Street

If you are receiving social assistance through Ontario Works, you can participate in one of the following programs designed to help people become gainfully employed:

Employment Support – activities that promote job readiness and support job search, job clubs, active referral to employment, referrals to basic job-specific skills training but not generalized training.

Community Participation - which is unpaid. Community activity of a community improvement nature and/or with public or non-profit organizations.

Community Employment Services

www.ceswoodstock.org

One stop centre for accessing a variety of employment related programs and services in Oxford County. Free employment services are offered. Employment counsellors are available to assist in identifying any barriers to employment and can help in the various aspects of a job search.

Woodstock

519-539-8161

519-485-6088

519-863-6611

40 Metcalfe St, Woodstock N4S 3E7

Ingersoll 37 Alma St, Ingersoll N5C 1N1

Norwich 41 Main St W, Norwich ON NOJ 1PO

Resources and Job Listings

Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre Adult Employment Services and Employment Resource Centre 519-842-9000

The Livingston Centre- 96 Tillson Ave, Tillsonburg N4G 3A1 E-mail: msc@ocl.net; www.thelivingstoncentre.com A variety of services offered to the community including employment consulting and planning, job search support and workshops, career exploration and formal vocational assessment, employer training incentives, information sessions, and resumes/cover letters.

Women's Employment Resource Centre

519-421-2077

424 Dundas St, Woodstock N4S 1C1

E-mail: werc@werc.ca; www.werc@werc.ca

Providing employment readiness services to female residents of Oxford County. WERC offers a full range of Employment Preparation Assistance, including: resume and cover letter prep; interview practice; strategies for job searching; labour market information; and self marketing tools. In addition, they offer Employment Counselling to women, to help identify what may be keeping them from getting a job, develop an action plan to move forward, and to help them get and keep a job. Training, Education and Employment

If you will be working you will need a S.I.N. (Social Insurance Number) card. If you do not have one you can apply in person at the nearest Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) office. For more information call 1-800-206-7218 and follow the prompts.

Public libraries offer information on virtually any topic, including resume writing, career development and job search tips.

All of the libraries in Oxford County (see page 60) have Internet-ready computers which you can use free of charge to search for information or visit websites, including the online job listings in this book. There are plenty of recreational activities and programs for adults and children of all ages in Woodstock and Oxford County. They can provide opportunities to get exercise, learn new skills, meet people and have a good time. Many are free or involve nominal fees.

Health/Fitness and Recreation Centres

Fusion Youth Centre

519-485-4386

121 Thames Street North, Ingersoll N5C 3C9 www.fusionyouthcentre.ca Supervised recreation and technology centre for youth aged 12 to 18. The centre's mission is to provide a fun, safe and inclusive environment where youth are empowered to make positive changes in their lives.

YFC/Youth Unlimited – Southwestern Ontario

519-537-5219

94 Graham St, Ste 4, Woodstock N4S 6J7 E-mail: admin@swoyfc.com; www.swoyfc.com YFC's areas of service are the Youth Centres, Campus Life high school programs, Youth Camps and Youth Guidance for at risk teens. The different branches provide activities for youth 10-18 which promote healthy development of the whole person in an effort to help youth build a stable foundation for life.

YFC/Youth Unlimited – Woodstock

519-537-8080

519-863-6891

24 Light St, Woodstock N4S 6G8; www.woodstock.swoyfc.com

YFC/Youth Unlimited – Tillsonburg519-688-226619 Queen St, Tillsonburg N4G 3G5; www.tillsonburg.swoyfc.com

YFC/Youth Unlimited - Ingersoll519-485-30161 Charles St E, Ingersoll N5C 1J5; www.ingersoll.swoyfc.com

YFC/Youth Unlimited – Norwich 4 Stover St, Norwich NOJ 1PO; www.norwich.swoyfc.com

YMCA of Western Ontario – Woodstock Branch 519-539-6181

808 Dundas St, Woodstock N4S 1G4 www.ymca.wo.ca Health, fitness and recreation programs available with full-time licensed child care service. School break and PD Day programs, day camp, residential camping, language instruction for new Canadians.

While you may be under tremendous stress and feel you have too many essential tasks to take care of, it is important that you devote some time to fun and relaxation.

Plan activities that you can enjoy with your children, with friends or by yourself.

Summer camp can be a fun and rewarding experience for children. A list of local day camps is published in the Oxford Review every spring.

Many organizations, including the Y and the Boys & Girls Club, offer full or partial fee subsidies to low income families. Call the individual day camp providers for more information. **Community Centres** in Oxford County offer drop-in sports and recreational programming for children and adults. Some programs are free, others require registration. Call for more information. Subsidies are available.

Norwich Community Centre

519-863-3733

519-688-9011

519-425-1181

53 1/2 Stover ST S, Norwich NOJ 1PO E-mail: rpfncc@twp.norwich.on.ca\

Tillsonburg Community Centre Complex/ Memorial Arena

45 Hardy Avenue, Tillsonburg N4G 3W9 www.tillsonburg.ca

Victoria Park Community Centre

355 Wellington St, Ingersoll N5C 1T2 www.ingersoll.ca

Woodstock District Community Complex

519-421-3484

381 Finkle Street, Woodstock N4V 1A3 www.city.woodstock.on.ca

Outdoor Fun

Your nearest park or playground can provide hours of free, healthy and enjoyable activity. Some parks offer free arts and crafts and other organized activities for children during the summer. In the winter, many community parks have outdoor skating rinks, maintained by volunteers. The Pittock Conservation Area and Pittock Park has hiking trails.

Sports, Clubs and Social Groups

Activities and programs in the community for you and your children include:

- Organized sports of all types and for all ages/skill levels
- Recreational skating
- Public swimming
- Fitness/exercise classes and programs
- Music, dance and other creative arts
- Groups and clubs catering to a wide range of interests

Check out the Woodstock and Oxford County Community Guide, or the local telephone directory for more information.

Recreation and Leisure

Sports, leisure and recreation opportunities are published in the What's On Woodstock, a monthly magazine mailed to all residents of Woodstock.

Check the local newspaper for upcoming community events and other activities for children, adults and families. Many of these events are free to the public.

For events happening around Oxford County, check the county website or the respective websites of each city.

Public Libraries

Libraries provide a wealth of information, resources and programs/ activities, virtually all free of charge. You and your children can borrow books, magazines, videos, CDs/DVDs and books on tape. You can browse through local newspapers, look through college and university course catalogues, use resource material for research or job hunting, and log on to computers with Internet access. There are also computers for children (preloaded with games and educational activities), story times, crafts, activities and movies.

Visit your local library to find out what's available.

Oxford County Libraries

Brownsville Library, 163518 Brownsville Rd	519-877-2938
Burgessville Library, 604 Main St S	519-424-2404
Embro Library, 135 Huron St	519-475-4172
Harrington Library, 539 Victoria St	519-475-6909
Ingersoll Library, 130 Oxford St	519-485-2505
Innerkip Library, 695566 17th line RR 1	519-469-3185
Mount Elgin Library, 333204 Plank Line, Hwy 19	519-485-0134
Norwich Library, 10 Tidey St	519-863-5356
Otterville Library, 207 Main St W	519-879-6586
Plattsville Library, 112 Mill St E	519-684-7390
Princeton Library, 25 Main St S	519-458-4416
Tavistock Library, 31 Maria St	519-655-3013
Thamesford Library, 165 Dundas St	519-285-3219

Tillsonburg Public Library519-842-55712 Library Lane, Tillsonburg N4G 4S7E-mail: publiclibrary@tillsonburg.ca; www.library.tillsonburg.ca

Woodstock Public Library 445 Hunter St, Woodstock N4S 4G7 www.woodstock.library.on.ca 519-539-4801

City / County Resources

Public Transportation

Woodstock Transit

519-539-1291 ext. 3104

Main terminal: Wellington Street at Dundas Street

Local bus service is provided to the City of Woodstock. Call or visit the website for more information about bus routes, fares and schedules: www.woodstocktransit.ca

For **taxi cab service**, see the listings under "taxis" in the local telephone directory.

For transportation out of town contact the following for schedules and fares:

VIA Rail

1-888-842-7245

Inter-city bus service (including Greyhound) 1-800-661-TRIP (8747)

Your Government Representatives

City of Woodstock Woodstock City Hall 500 Dundas St, P.O. Box 1539 Woodstock N4S 0A7 www.city.woodstock.on.ca	519-539-1291
County of Oxford 21 Reeve St, P.O. Box 1614 Woodstock N4S 7Y3 www.county.oxford.ca Call for information about County administration, inform vices	519-539-9800
Municipal Offices Blandford-Blenheim Township PO Box 100, Drumbo NOJ 1G0 www.twp.bla-ble.on.ca	519-463-5347
East Zorra-Tavistock 90 Loveys St E, Hickson NOJ 1L0 www.twp.ext.on.ca	519-462-2697
Town of Ingersoll 130 Oxford St, 2nd Floor, Ingersoll N5C 2V5 www.ingersoll.ca	519-485-0120

See the blue pages of the local telephone directory under "Drivers and Vehicles" to find out how to get or renew a driver's license or vehicle license.

City / County Resources	
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Norwich Township 210 Main St E, Otterville NOJ 1R0 www.twp.norwich.on.ca		519-863-2709
Tillsonburg Customer Service Centre 10 Lisgar Ave, Tillsonburg N4G 5A5 www.town.tillsonburg.on.ca		519-842-9200
Township of South-West Oxford 312915 Dereham Line, RR #1, Mount E www.swox.org	lgin NOJ 1NO	519-877-2702
Zorra Township 274620 27th Line, Ingersoll N5C 3K5 www.zorra.on.ca		519-485-2520
Other Numbers to Know Police:		
Emergency	911	
Woodstock Police Service	519-537-232	3
Ontario Provincial Police	1-888-310-1	122
OPP Detachments:		
Ingersoll	519-485-655	54
Tavistock	519-655-255	60
Blandford-Blenheim	519-537-232	3
Norwich	519-863-264	
Tillsonburg	519-688-65 4	10
Crime Stoppers:	519-750-TIP	S (8477)

Help Lines

General Information - 211

For information or referrals to any community and/or social service in southwestern Ontario, dial 211. When you dial the 211 hotline, you are connected with a Certified Information and Referral Specialist who has been trained to assess your needs, answer your questions accurately, and advise you about the services and programs that are best for you and your loved ones.

Assaulted Women's Helpline

1-800-863-0511

Free 24-hour, 7-day-a-week crisis counselling, information and referrals via telephone to women in up to 154 languages. www.awhl.org

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) - Oxford County Branch 519-539-8342 or 1-877-339-8342

24 hour mobile crisis response line: professionally trained staff respond by phone and/or personal contact to sudden and unexpected events that put people in distress. Not anonymous but is confidential.

Domestic Abuse Services Oxford

24-hour Crisis Line - 519-539-4811 or 1-800-265-1938

Confidential crisis support by telephone or in person for women who are victims of domestic abuse.

Kid's Help Phone

1-800-668-6868

Confidential support and help for children and adolescents.

Poison Information Centre

1-800-268-9017

Sexual Assault Centre London

4-hour Crisis and Support Line: 519-439-0844

24 hour crisis and support line for women who have been sexually assaulted. Support and accompaniment/advocacy services available as well as information and referral and individual and group counselling.

Telehealth Ontario

1-866-797-0000

Free, confidential health information available by phone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A Registered Nurse will answer your questions, assess your symptoms and advise if you should go to the doctor, clinic or hospital. You do not need your OHIP number. In an emergency, call 911.

You Can Do It!

Change can be difficult for people, even if it is necessary and for the best. Once you leave an abusive relationship you might have mixed emotions. You may feel a great sense of relief, empowerment and excitement about beginning a new life.

You may, however, also feel angry, depressed or sad over the loss of your relationship and your former life. This is normal, even if the relationship was a destructive one. It may take you some time to work through these feelings — counselling and the support of trusted friends and family can help.

If you are on your own after being with your partner for some time, you will need to adjust to new responsibilities and routines. It is not unusual to feel overwhelmed. Your children may initially be resentful and rebellious. They might blame you for the changes in their lives. Remember that they have also been through a lot. Be firm, but loving and kind. They need you to show them that there are ways to communicate and discipline without using violence.

Be kind to yourself too. You have accomplished a great deal and have a lot to be proud of. Take time to rest, relax and enjoy your new freedom.

When you need help, ask for it. There are answers to your questions and support to get you through difficult times. You do not have to feel alone.

You have proven that you possess the strength to deal with life's challenges and the wisdom to make decisions that will lead to a safer, happier life for yourself and your children.

We applaud your courage and wish you the very best.

The staff of Domestic Abuse Services Oxford

Appendix - Household Budget Worksheet

The worksheet below will be helpful in creating a personal budget. You can tailor it to meet your own needs — don't forget to add in any of your own unique sources of income and/or expenses. If you are creating a monthly budget (as in the sample below), remember to make any necessary adjustments to the amounts (e.g. multiply a biweekly paycheque by two and divide any annual payments by 12). Knowing what you have to spend and organizing your finances will help you avoid getting into debt and assist you in gaining control of your life.

MONTHLY INCOME

Take home pay / El benefits Ontario Works payments Child Tax Benefit / supplement Pension or other government cheques Child support / other support payments Other income	
Total Monthly Income	
MONTHLY EXPENSES Housing (rent, mortgage) Water / electricity	
Gas heat Telephone / cell phone Cable/Internet	
Food & groceries Transportation (gas, bus tickets, etc.) Clothing / personal needs	
Laundry Homes expenses / maintenance Insurance (home, life, car)	
Entertainment/recreation Child care Dental care, prescription drugs	
Loan payments Taxes Alcohol / Cigarettes	
Other expenses	
Total Monthly Expenses	
Monthly Income <i>minus</i> Monthly Expenses - Total Remaining =	

This is what you have left. Consider putting some money into a savings account to cover unexpected expenses or to help meet your long-term goals. If your total expenses are greater than your total income, you will need to adjust your budget by cutting back on certain costs and/or finding a way to increase your income.

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Domestic Abuse Services Oxford 1974-2014

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24-hour Crisis/Information Line: 519-539-4811 or 1-800-265-1938 TTY 519-539-1979

All other calls: 519-539-7488 Fax: 519-539-3533 / E-mail: info@daso.ca www.daso.ca



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