



# **Perth County VAW Services During COVID-19**

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Prepared by the Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee of Perth County  
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# **STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF PERTH COUNTY**

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## **Introduction**

During the COVID-19 pandemic and under the guidance to socially distance and isolate, women and children are at a greater risk of experiencing abuse, particularly at home. Stop VAW and all its members have a responsibility to ensure all programs, services and resources continue to be accessible and available to ensure women and their children can remain as safe as possible during this time. The following includes information about how to stay safe and the availability of services each member agency has to offer during this pandemic.

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## **How to stay safe during COVID-19**

### **Safety and emergency planning**

- Create a safety plan: safety plans are unique plans that can be used to minimize harm to people living in situations where they are at risk for abuse. There are people available to help: Family Service Perth Huron VAW Services (519-273-1020), Optimism Place (519-271-5550), Victim Services Bruce Grey Perth (1-866-376-9852)
- Inform close friends or neighbours of the abuse going on. One way is to create a “code word” that when used in a call lets them know you are in danger.
- Stay in touch: Many people are feeling isolated at this time, but you are not alone. Use phone or video chats to keep in regular contact if it is safe to do so.
- Keep a copy of important documents (passports, birth certificates, driver’s license, banking information, legal documents) in case it’s needed. If not trusted in the home, consider keeping these with a trusted person.
- Plan where to stay in case of an emergency- supports you may have used could have different hours or policies at this time, friends or family may be quarantining due to illness. Check in with your support system just in case.
- Important numbers to keep on hand:
  - Police Emergency – 911
  - Stratford Police Service – (519) 271-4141
  - O.P.P – 1-888-310-1122
  - Optimism Place – (519) 271-5550 / 1-800-265-8598
  - Victim Services Bruce Grey Perth – 1-866-376-9852
  - Huron-Perth Crisis Intervention Services (Mental Health)– (519) 274-8000 / 1-888-829-7484

### **Self care tips**

During this stressful time, remember to practice self care.

- Tips for self care:
  - Breathe - take time to observe your breath, practice mindful breathing exercises or meditation
  - Practice positive affirmations and recognize the power and agency you have in your life.
  - Do something creative or active - yoga, paint, dance, listen to music, play an instrument, etc, as an outlet to express yourself and channel your energy.
  - Ask for help when you need it - we are here for you, you are not alone.

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### **Resources and services available during COVID-19**

VAW services in Perth County have been modified to meet the needs of our current conditions of social distancing and isolating while still maintaining the best quality of support we can offer anyone experiencing violence.

#### **Crown Attorney's Office**

The Crown Attorney's Office can be reached remotely by calling 226-921-5109.

#### **Emily Murphy Centre**

Counselling and support calls can be done via phone or skype. The office phone lines are forwarded to a cell phone that is monitored during business hours and beyond. The doors are locked, there are no visitors allowed at this time. The staff are working remotely. Emily Murphy Centre is working closely with Optimism Place to ensure that both agencies have what they need and can keep women and families safe. Donations can be accepted by calling 519-273-7350. More information can be found at [emilymurphycentre.com](http://emilymurphycentre.com)

#### **Family Services Perth Huron**

Family Services Perth-Huron Counselling department continues to serve clients through phone counselling. Clients of VAW, PAR and Partner Contacts programs continue to receive supports and phone safety check-ins. Intake continues during regular office hours, and is accepting referrals and new clients at this time. For more information relating to our counselling programs, please contact counselling intake at 519-273-1020 or 1-800-268-0903. More information can be found at [familyservicesperth-huron.ca](http://familyservicesperth-huron.ca).

#### **Huron Perth Children's Aid Society**

CAS is still operating. Any child abuse concerns can be reported by phone. Contact is taking place by phone or video conference. Some contact can take place at a client's home or at the office with proper planning in certain situations where it is deemed appropriate. The Family Visiting Program is cancelled. Video visits are taking place instead. For more information visit [www.h-pcas.ca](http://www.h-pcas.ca) or contact 519-271-5290 / 1-800-668-5094.

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### **Huron Perth Public Health**

The Health Line intake phone line is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm and Saturday and Sunday, 9am to 4pm. Please be advised that they have been experiencing high call volumes.

HPPH buildings are closed to the public so that they can focus efforts on the COVID-19 response in our community. Please view our COVID-19 Response Service Interruptions page for a list of programs and services interruptions and modifications.

[www.hpph.ca/en/about-us/covid-19-response-service-interruptions.aspx](http://www.hpph.ca/en/about-us/covid-19-response-service-interruptions.aspx)

### **Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Perth County Detachment**

Detachment locations in Sebringville, Mitchell, and Listowel are currently closed to the public. 24 hour emergency and non-emergency service remains available by telephone (1-888-310-1122), or 9-1-1 for emergencies. Online reporting can be accessed by visiting [www.opp.ca](http://www.opp.ca). Each detachment location still provides 24hr direct access to our OPP Communications Centre via public telephones posted at the front entrance. For additional information, follow Perth County OPP on social media: @OPP\_WR (Twitter) and @OPPWest (Facebook).

### **Optimism Place**

Optimism Place remains open and operational with service modifications in place. For all services contact 519-271-5550. This crisis line is open 24/7. Expanded Outreach Services by phone and video conferencing when it is safe to do so. Residential Shelter Services remain open for women at high risk with added cleaning and social distancing practices to ensure staff and residents' safety. More information can be found here: [www.optimismplace.com](http://www.optimismplace.com)

### **Regional HIV/AIDS Connection**

Carepoint (the safe injection site, or needle exchange program) is located at 186 King St. in downtown London and is open from 9am to 9pm with increased precautions. The Outreach Van (Counterpoint) for harm reduction supplies runs 11am - 6pm and will be doing door drop off only. The number for Counterpoint is 519-851-3548.

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HIV/HCV services are being conducted via phone. Contact 226-378-2167 for information on Women's Health HIV, and any other educational information. For more information contact 1-866-920-1601 or visit [www.hivaidconnection.ca](http://www.hivaidconnection.ca)

### **Stratford General Hospital Sexual Abuse Treatment Program**

There are no in person appointments occurring at this time and all groups have been postponed. Phone support is still available. If women wish to reach out they can continue to use the more direct contact number: 519-272-8210 ext 2572.

### **Stratford Police Service**

For safety purposes Police have adapted how they deal with in person calls and with conducting interviews however they can still be reached at 519-271-4141. More information can be found at [stratfordpolice.com](http://stratfordpolice.com)

### **Supervised Access Program Huron-Perth**

Supervised Access Programs of Perth and Huron are currently closed in all five locations but they are working on developing procedures for allowing virtual visits between families. For more information contact 519-508-6101.

### **Victim Services Bruce Grey Perth**

Services continue to be available through the 24/7 Contact Line at 1-866-376-9852. Support is available by telephone, text, or any other means that does not require in-person contact. Referrals, safety planning, and needs assessments will be completed by phone and email. Personnel are able to provide in-person response at the request of Police Services and based on Covid-19 screening to ensure safety for all. Visit [www.vsbgp.com](http://www.vsbgp.com) for more information.

### **Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP)**

VWAP staff is conducting interactions with clients by telephone. Clients are encouraged to call VWAP at 519-271-5221 for information, support and referrals.

For more information contact: [stopvaw@wightman.ca](mailto:stopvaw@wightman.ca)