

Stay As Safe As Possible

SAY

**TO EXPLOITATION &
HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

NO

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

JUSTICE

Stay As Safe As Possible

GOALS

1. Empower people with an intellectual disability to avoid victimization through education about exploitation and human trafficking
2. Educate police, justice personnel, and others about the abilities and needs of people with an intellectual disability.

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A

Presentation Goals

1 Provide tips to help identify victims of human trafficking and exploitation who may have an intellectual disability.

In this section of the curriculum, we will discuss behavioural indicators, communicative indicators, and key questions to provide some insight into whether a person may have an intellectual disability.

2 Provide tips for communicating with victims of human trafficking and exploitation with an intellectual disability.

In the communication section, we will discuss: communication strategies, types of questions to avoid when communicating with someone with an intellectual disability, and environmental strategies to help facilitate communication.

3 Identify resources to help support victims of human trafficking and exploitation with an intellectual disability.

In this final section of the curriculum, we will discuss resources to assist survivors of human trafficking and exploitation with an intellectual disability. It will also provide emergency placement and shelter information and additional resources to assist survivors.

B

What is an Intellectual Disability?

This section provides the basis for understanding what is meant when we say “intellectual disability” and “mental illness”, and why people with an intellectual disability are vulnerable to victimization relating to exploitation and human trafficking.

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)

“Intellectual Disability” falls under the broader “Developmental Disability” umbrella:

1. It refers to significantly below-average abilities to learn and to apply knowledge, which is called “cognitive functioning.”

Clinically, this means an IQ below 70

Discuss what it means to “learn” and “apply knowledge”

To learn includes the ability to:

- Pay attention and focus
- Understand information
- Remember information

To apply knowledge includes the ability to:

- Use abstract thinking
- Use problem-solving
- Generalize information

2. Affects areas of major life activity, such as personal care, language skills, learning abilities, and the capacity to live independently—which is referred to as “adaptive functioning.”

Many people with an intellectual disability who live more independently are at higher risk of being victimized. These people tend to have a mild intellectual disability. This means that, although their cognitive skills may be below average, their independent living and other skills may not be. Also, just because someone has low cognitive functioning does not mean they also have a physical impairment. We want to dispel the misconception that intellectual disability manifests itself physically; many people who live with an intellectual disability “look” the same as people who do not live with an intellectual disability.

3. Present from childhood and continues throughout a person’s life. An intellectual disability cannot be “treated.” A person will live with this diagnosis throughout his or her life.

TRUE OR FALSE?

“Intellectual Disability” is a “mental illness.”

Intellectual Disability and Mental Illness

People with an intellectual disability may also have a mental illness or mental health concern, termed “dual diagnosis.”

Although the two can co-exist, intellectual disability is NOT a mental illness.

Intellectual disability affects learning, understanding, the application of knowledge, and problem solving. Mental illness affects mood, perception and behaviour and can be experienced by people regardless of levels of ability.

Intellectual disability is not an illness or disease, it is a permanent condition that cannot be cured or treated with medication.

Remember

“...every person who has a developmental [or intellectual] disability is an individual with unique talents, personality, and interests...it is important that people who have developmental [or intellectual] disabilities not be seen simply in terms of this one label but, rather, as people who are multifaceted.”
(Griffiths, Stavrakaki, & Summers, 2002)

This quote is meant to serve as a reminder that, although we will be talking about intellectual disabilities in a general sense, the people who live with them are as diverse as people who do not live with an intellectual disability. We cannot paint everyone with the same brush.

It is also vital to remember that we are speaking and interacting with people, not with disabilities.



Vulnerabilities and Risk Factors for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Question

How many times more likely do people with a disability fall victim to violent/sexual crimes when compared to people without a disability?

- a) 2
- b) 3
- c) 4
- d) 5



Anyone can be a
victim!

A mother, daughter, child.

The answer to the question above is contained in the video.
This video discusses the vulnerabilities of people with intellectual disabilities.

5 Risk Factors for People with Intellectual Disabilities

1. Isolation

Some people may live alone with minimal social ties and receive minimal funding for supports. Others living with family or in a residential setting also may experience limited contact with others.

These weak social ties and minimal lasting relationships contribute to a deepened desire for social connections and a sense of belonging, resulting in a propensity to be easily influenced by a potential 'friend' (Kuosmanen & Starke, 2011).

Isolation can also contribute to a lack of resources. The person may not be aware of who to contact if they suspect that they are being exploited or victimized.

2. Poverty

Studies have shown that people with intellectual disabilities are at significantly greater risk of living in poverty. This is largely due to a lack of employment opportunities and exclusion from the workforce (Emerson, 2007). Due to this exclusion, they receive their income from the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), which currently (as of September, 2019) amounts to \$1169 monthly for "basic needs" and "shelter." This represents an annual income of \$14,028, which is far below what is considered "low income" (\$22,133) for a single person living in Canada (2018).

This population is more likely to live in low-income housing, rely on others or on public transportation, and be dependent on staff or friends who may have questionable motives. These elements, cultivated by poverty, put people with an intellectual disability at higher risk of criminal victimization (Petersilia, 2000; Emerson, 2007).

3. Dependency

Many people with an intellectual disability become dependent on support staff to meet their social, emotional, and health care needs. For example, people may receive support relating to their finances, where support staff has access to a person's money, and personal care, such as bathing. These close relationships with support staff leave people receiving supports particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Statistically, people with an intellectual disability are victimized by people they know, including care providers, acquaintances or neighbors, and family members (Perrault, 2009).



Vulnerabilities and Risk Factors for People with Intellectual Disabilities

4. Increased Access to Technology

Over the past several years, increased opportunities have arisen for people with an intellectual disability to access technology. At Community Living Essex County, people supported have the opportunity to receive smart support technology—access to tablets and computing to facilitate independence (i.e. through scheduling apps). Increased access to tablets and internet also means increased access to social media. Many traffickers gain access to victims through social media; and with an influx of people with intellectual disabilities accessing the internet, this puts them at risk of exploitation.

5. Social Prejudice

Based on a disability, family, friends, and other members of the public may not believe a person who reports victimization (Polaris Project, 2018).

We will elaborate further on misplaced myths and attitudes regarding assumptions about people with intellectual disabilities in the “Communication Tips” section. We want to dispel these myths and address this risk factor in the ‘As Safe As Possible’ training.

Risk Factors and Recruitment

Traffickers may seek out victims with intellectual disabilities to gain access to funding and/or benefits (United States v. Weston)

From approximately 2001 through October 2011, Linda Weston and other co-conspirators lured individuals with a disability, who were estranged from their families, by offering them a place to stay. Once Weston convinced them to move in, she became their representative payee with Social Security and began to receive their disability benefits. If the individual was not receiving social security benefits, Weston took them to the social security office, instructed them on how to act, and made them apply for social security benefits, which she then took control of. On one occasion, Weston and one of her co-defendants took the social security and identification documents from a victim by force and then used the funds for her own purposes. The victims were confined to, among other areas, locked rooms, basements, closets, attics, and apartments

Locally, we have seen people squatting at other’s homes for lengthy periods of time—thereby exploiting them for their housing and other daily living expenses.

Vulnerabilities and Risk Factors for People with Intellectual Disabilities



Normalized power dynamic (this addresses the 'Dependency' Risk Factor)

People with disabilities may have a learned response to comply with those in positions of power due to their dependence on them. Therefore, they may have normalized an unequal power dynamic in their relationships, which could carry over into their relationship with a trafficker.

For example: Individuals with disabilities may require a caregiver to meet their basic needs, which may result in that caregiver taking advantage of this dependency for the purposes of exploitation or trafficking.

The Manipulation of Isolation and Poverty

Manipulation of Isolation: People with disabilities may experience more social isolation and therefore crave friendships and relationships. During the recruitment process, it is common for a trafficker to pose as a 'boyfriend' to create an emotional attachment (Nagy, 2018). The trafficker can recruit a person with an intellectual disability by preying on a propensity to be easily influenced which is created by social isolation.

Manipulation of Poverty: A recent study of the sex trafficking of girls with an intellectual disability reported that one of the first steps of the recruiting process is that the trafficker would "take care of the girls, giving the girls small amounts of cash..." (Reid, 2018, p. 119). Over time, victims are made to feel economically dependent on their trafficker.

People with disabilities may be unaware of their right to object or reject unwanted touching. They may be unsure of what constitutes a crime and what their rights are as a victim of a crime

It is important to note that the 'As Safe As Possible' curriculum designed for people with an intellectual disability and their families teaches about healthy and unhealthy relationships, and what consent is.

Traffickers may also target individuals with disabilities because of the social prejudice they face

This can cause even family and friends to not believe victims when they report their victimization. This may also contribute to a lack of willingness to report victimization at all. This is especially true for victims with disabilities that affect intellectual, cognitive, or communication functions or those individuals with a 'dual diagnosis.' It may require Police or Social Services to add their supportive voices before a victim's experience and needs are addressed properly.

D

How do you know whether a person may have an intellectual disability?

Now that you know what an intellectual disability is, we will discuss behavioral indicators, communicative indicators, and key questions to provide some insight into whether a person may have an intellectual disability.

Note: It is not expected that law enforcement, justice, or social services personnel to be able to make an assessment, but there are things you can look for that may suggest someone has an intellectual disability. If you think this is a possibility, it will be important for you to note that for anyone else who may try to assist the person.

How do you know whether a person may have an intellectual disability?

D

TRUE OR FALSE?

“Facial characteristics is an effective way to determine whether a person may have an intellectual disability? ”

FALSE

Behavioural Indicators:

Acting in ways that seem inappropriate for the situation

For example: People with an intellectual disability may have trouble understanding social cues. This can include not looking at someone who is speaking to them, or walking away during a conversation to look at or listen to something stimulating (i.e. a bright light or a tv/radio).

For example: A woman with an intellectual disability who has experienced a sexual assault may be focused on a scraped elbow rather than the sexual assault, because it is what she can see and feel.

Environmental stimuli seems overwhelming (i.e. lights or noises) or unusually focused on a single item in the environment or conversation (i.e. a badge, sign, weapon, pop dispenser, snacks).

Being overly eager to please

For example: A person may say ‘yes’ to anything asked or try to answer the way they think you want them to. They have learned throughout their life to be compliant with authority because of their dependency on supports.

Being easily frustrated or present emotional responses which appear too intense for the situation

May be due to a lack of coping strategies

May be due to an inability to properly communicate what they are thinking or feeling

They may think they are in trouble, and they are trying to deflect

How do you know whether a person may have an intellectual disability?

Being unable to perform tasks involving time, numbers, reading or following multiple directions

Due to cognitive functioning

Communicative Indicators:

Having no verbal language/limited vocabulary

Difficulty with processing information or questions

For example: If asked, “did you go to your uncle’s house,” the person answers ‘no’ because their uncle lives in an apartment.

Difficulty with sequences

For example: A person with an intellectual disability may have difficulty with defining if something took 2 hours or 5 hours.

Difficulty with abstract concepts

Note: Communication will be elaborated on in the next section, where communication strategies will be discussed.

How do you know whether a person may have an intellectual disability?

D

Key questions that may provide insight (always pair acronyms with the full name):

Has the person ever received ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program)?

ODSP is a Provincial program for people with a disability that offers 2 types of support:

1. **Income support:** This is financial assistance provided each month to help with the costs of basic needs, like food, clothing and shelter.
2. **Employment support:** Provides services and supports to help clients with disabilities find and keep a job, and advance their careers.

Has the person ever had an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) in school?

IEPs are very common for people with an intellectual disability. An IEP identifies a student's specific learning expectations and outlines how the school will address these expectations through appropriate accommodations, program modifications and/or alternative programs as well as specific instructional and assessment strategies.

Has the person ever had a support manager?

If someone has received support through an agency in the Developmental Services Sector, either while living at home or in a residential setting, they have likely had a support manager. Or even a support worker or helper.

Can the person tell time on an analogue clock? and Does the person struggle reading short sentences?

It is important to note that these two points in themselves are not accurate indicators of whether a person may have an intellectual disability. For example, someone may be dyslexic or have a learning disability, but not have an intellectual disability. However, if paired with the other points mentioned previously, these points could provide further insight into whether a person may have an intellectual disability.

E

Tips for communicating with victims of human trafficking and exploitation with an Intellectual Disability

When we speak of Communication, we want to focus on what people with an intellectual disability **CAN** do, rather than what they cannot.

This section will provide tips for communicating with victims of human trafficking and exploitation with an intellectual disability. It will address misplaced assumptions relating to the abilities of people with an intellectual disability, and communication tips, which include communication strategies, types of questions to avoid, and environmental strategies.

1. Misplaced Assumptions

2. Communication Tips

- a. Communication strategies
- b. Types of questions to avoid
- c. Environmental strategies

Communication Video



This video explores several misplaced assumptions and communication tips from the perspective of advocates, Jessica and Larry.

1. Misplaced Assumptions

Difficulties with communication also means a person is unable to understand.

For example: From a neurological perspective, speech (found in 'Broca's Area' of the brain) and speech comprehension (found in 'Wernicke's Area' of the brain) are found in two different areas of the brain. One does not automatically effect the other.

Monotone or lack of visible emotion also means a lack of ability to feel.

For example: People with an intellectual disability may not understand appropriate social cues when expressing emotion (i.e. they may not show stereotypical facial cues when surprised). However, this does not mean they do not feel emotion.

People with intellectual disabilities cannot be trusted to tell the truth.

An intellectual disability is unrelated to the ability to distinguish between the truth and a lie.

Difficulties with memory means they cannot remember details.

A intellectual disability is unrelated to the reliability of memory

Many people with disabilities have excellent recall of traumatic or special events in their lives, even if they do not easily remember more daily details, such as what they had for breakfast or what they did the night before.

People with disabilities lack credibility as witnesses.

If the person is stereotypically labeled as "not credible," then they may not be interviewed, they may be interviewed with a lack of preparation by the interviewer, or what they say in an interview may be given less weight or attention.

Communication Video



2. Communication Tips

A. Communication Strategies

Remain neutral in your vocal tone and facial expression

People with an intellectual disability may misread a loud voice and a raised brow as someone who is angry. This may make someone anxious, and they may not respond at all or just provide an answer they think you want to hear.

Tips for communicating with victims of human trafficking and exploitation with an Intellectual Disability

Use simple language/vocabulary

Use everyday words that are easy to understand, visualize, and relate to. If using abstract words that are hard to visualize, provide some concrete examples to help the person understand what the words mean.

Try to match the person's speech/vocabulary. This is a good way to measure your level of communication.

When asking questions, giving instructions, or explaining something, break things down into small components and keep sentences short

The person may only process the beginning of a run-on sentence or lengthy question, which may affect their answer.

This will help avoid loaded questions.

Matching another person's level of communication will help determine how short to keep sentences.

Be concrete with your language

'Who,' 'what,' and 'where' questions are easier than 'when,' 'why,' and 'how' questions. 'Who,' 'what,' and 'where' are more concrete. 'When' requires a recollection of time and sequencing, 'why' and 'how' require some abstract thinking—all of which can be affected by cognitive functioning.

Be alert to a person's use of pronouns. Who do they mean by 'he' or 'she' or 'them.' Avoid using pronouns to avoid confusion.

Avoid negatives and double negatives.

Avoid sarcasm. People with an intellectual disability may not understand sarcasm.

Allow the person more time to understand and respond

This may take an extra 15-20 seconds.

Recall: Lisa suggested this in the video on Communication Tips

B. Types of Questions to Avoid

Questions that communicate an answer

Yes/No questions

- Most frequently used type of question (Kebbell, Hatton & Johnson, 2000)
- **Recall:** A person with an intellectual disability may say 'yes' to what is asked or try to answer the way they think you want them to.

Either/Or questions

- A person may wrongly assume the choices provided are the only choices.

Leading questions

- Suggest an answer to a question.
- **For example:** The suspect got you in the hotel room by giving you drugs, didn't he?

This questions prompts a 'yes' or 'no' response, which will likely result in an acquiescent 'yes' answer by someone with an intellectual disability.

Repeated questions

- People with an intellectual disability tend to assume that if a question is being asked again, it is because the first answer given was wrong (Chong, Dickie, Martin, Harapiak & Garinger, 2000). This will result in a changed answer, which may not be accurate.
- Avoid this by asking a question in a different way to check for comprehension.

Questions that confuse

Questions with negatives and double negatives (These confuse anyone!)

- **For example:** Why didn't you say that wasn't something you didn't like?

Can sound like: Why didn't you say that wasn't something you like?

This really asks: Why didn't you say that was something you liked?

Tips for communicating with victims of human trafficking and exploitation with an Intellectual Disability

Multiple questions at once

- Asking a series of questions at once can create confusion around which question to answer first. The person could also forget the other questions, providing an answer for the only one they remember—which is likely the most recent question asked.
- **For example:** The hotel room on Walker Road? Where you were earlier in the day, do you remember?

Questions with complex vocabulary or sentence structure:

- **Recall:** Larry stated in the video about communication to use plain language as much as possible.
- **Recall:** Stephanie stated in the video about communication tips that it is okay to use proper legal terms. However, time needs to be spent unpacking the meaning of the terms in plain language.

C. Environmental Strategies:

If possible, talk to a person in a place where he or she feels comfortable or is familiar with

- This will help reduce anxiety and unfamiliar stimuli.
- **For Example:** A familiar, and preferably quiet, location.

Follow the lead of the person being interviewed as to who he or she would like to be present

- It may be required to reduce the number of significant others present, as their presence may be a distraction and/or influence a person's answers.
- It may be worth stating explicitly that the information provided during an interview will not be shared with support workers or caregivers. This may provide the person reassurance to speak freely.
- Remember, a family member, caregiver or other person who is close could be an offender or have reason to protect an offender. Be conscious of non-verbal behaviour—For Example: Arms crossed/ closed off posture, torso leaning away from the person present (creating distance), the body may maintain a tight tension (lack of comfort).

Reduce any visual or auditory distractions in the room

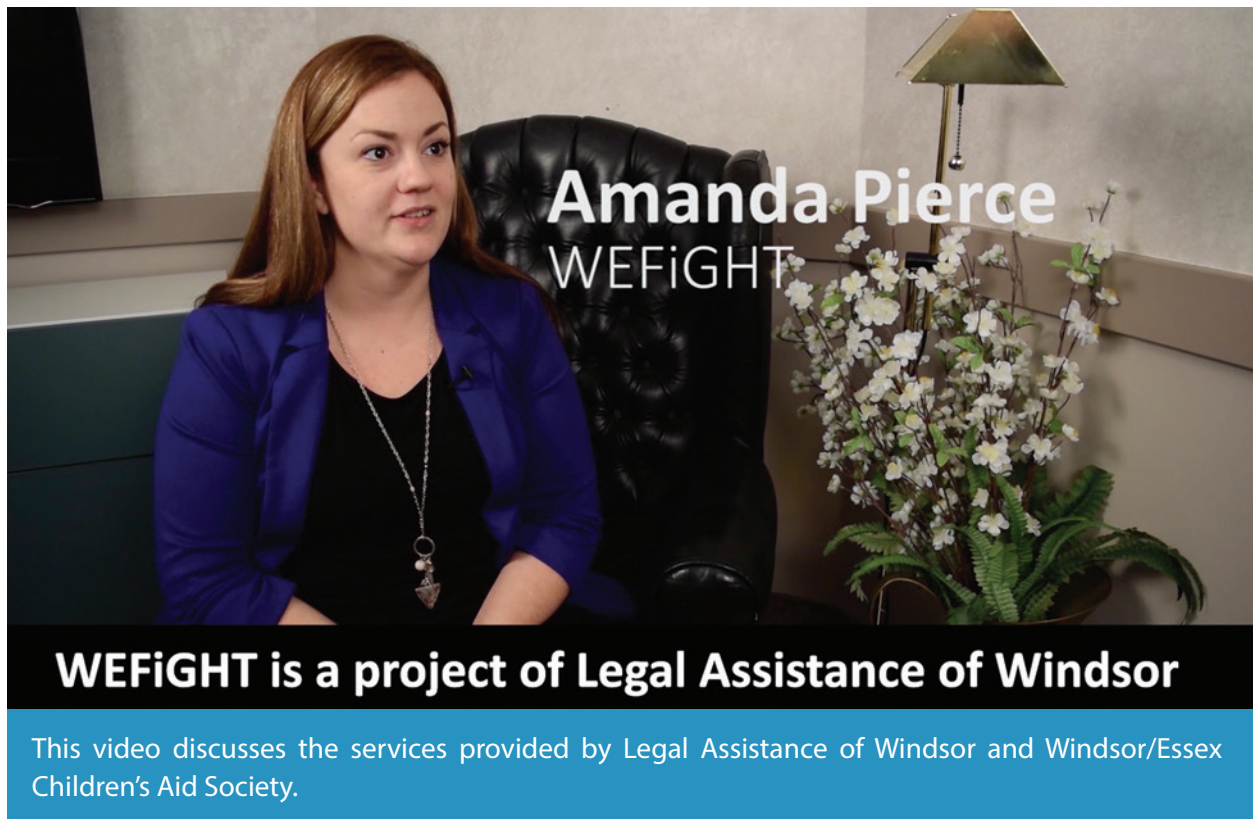
- **Recall:** A person with an intellectual disability may find environmental stimuli excessively overwhelming and distracting.

F

Resources to help support victims of human trafficking and exploitation with an intellectual disability

This section will discuss resources to assist survivors of human trafficking and exploitation with an intellectual disability. It will also provide emergency placement and shelter information and additional resources to assist survivors.

Community Resources Video



Agency Resources

Legal Assistance of Windsor (LAW): Is an interdisciplinary clinic combining legal and social work professions to meet the multi-faceted needs of the low-income community in Windsor and Essex County. LAW houses the WEFIGHT program, which provides direct support to survivors of human trafficking, including identification of risk factors and vulnerabilities, coordination with community partners and intensive case management and support. Note: For first responders, WEFIGHT is an excellent program to help survivors of human trafficking get connected with community supports. LAW also housed the I Decide project, which assisted people with intellectual disabilities to file claims for compensation with the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. Although the I Decide project has been completed, these services are still provided through LAW and its sister clinic, Community Legal Aid.

Tips for communicating with victims of human trafficking and exploitation with an Intellectual Disability

F

Community Living Essex County and Community Living Windsor: Provides supports for people with intellectual disabilities. These agencies will help connect survivors with an intellectual disability with supports and services to assist them in recovery, gaining legitimate employment, daily living, and applying to the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services for support funding. Note: Community Living Essex County is the lead agency in the 'As Safe As Possible' project and has developed strong relationships with community partners who also support survivors of human trafficking and exploitation.

Windsor/Essex Children's Aid Society (WECAS): Is dedicated to the well-being and safety of every child by advocating for, and partnering with, children, families and communities. As stated in the video, WECAS has an internal "Sexually Exploited Youth Committee," that educate frontline case workers of risk factors so they can educate parents that these risk factors may indicate their child is being sexually exploited. WECAS is also represented at the "Situation Table," which is a multi-sector collaborative that meet weekly to coordinate services for high-risk cases.

Windsor Regional Hospital: Both Campuses have Sexual Assault Treatment Centers, and Social Work Departments. The clinical services provided by the Social Work Departments include

- Locating and arranging resources
- Crisis/trauma counseling
- Placement options in consultation with hospital staff and community agencies

For first responders, either campus would assist with "what to do next" when supporting a survivor of sexual exploitation or human trafficking.

Victim Services of Windsor and Essex County: Victim Services of Windsor & Essex County assists victims of crime and tragedy by providing support, information and referrals at no cost. This service would also be provided by other Victim Services agencies in other jurisdictions.

Emergency Shelters/Placements

Welcome Center—Windsor

Located at 263 Bridge Avenue in Windsor, ON. The Welcome Center Shelter offers emergency placements for Women who are experiencing homelessness. Has collaborated with WEFiGHT.

Windsor Residence

Located at 1101 McDougall Street in Windsor, ON. Windsor Residence offers both long term and temporary accommodations for men and women who require emergency shelter. Has collaborated with WEFiGHT.

Hiatus House

Located at 250 Louis Avenue in Windsor, ON. Hiatus House offers emergency shelter for women from Windsor and Essex County. Has collaborated with WEFiGHT.

Chatham Kent Women's Center

This is an out-of-town option, if residing in Windsor-Essex County poses a risk to someone. Located at 20 Sandys Street in Chatham, ON. Provides emergency shelter for Women in crisis.

Windsor Residence for Young Men

Located at 1505 Langlois Avenue in Windsor, ON. Has provided emergency placements to young men who need somewhere to stay.

Additional Resources

Canada's Human Trafficking Hotline [1-833-900-1010]

Canada's Human Trafficking Hotline: Launched by the Canadian Center to End Human Trafficking.

The hotline provides the following services:

- Crisis response to people being trafficked
- Referrals to social service providers and law enforcement (as requested)
- Tip receipt and reporting
- General information provision
- Tools and resources to build community responses to trafficking

Victim Quick Response Program+: Replaced the former Criminal Injuries Compensation process. Call the Victim Support Line to find the Victim Quick Response Program+ service provider nearest you (Note: Victim Services of Windsor and Essex County is a service provider).

Victim Quick Response Program + (VQRP+) [1-888-579-2888]

- VQRP+ is available to individuals who have no other financial means (e.g. private insurance) where there is no publicly funded program available.
- This must be a violent crime that occurred in Ontario
- There must be a direct link between the crime and the expense being requested
- There must be no available service that is publicly funded that can meet the same need
- Depending on the crime, it must have been reported or disclosed to a police service, child protection authority domestic violence shelter, sexual assault centre, hospital, community agency or Indigenous organization that provides services to victims.

VQRP+ can provide the following:

- Emergency home safety expenses (e.g. window repair)
- Practical assistance expenses (e.g. basic necessities)
- Travel and related expenses (e.g. to medical treatment)
- Crime scene clean-up (e.g. removal of hate-crime graffiti)
- Short-term counselling services
- Supports required for serious injuries
- Basic funeral expenses and other financial support for families of homicide victims

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