GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

is defined as any harmful act—physical, sexual, psychological, economic, or emotional—perpetrated against an individual or group based on gender, gender identity, or gender expression. It encompasses violence within intimate relationships (**Intimate Partner Violence**), family or domestic environments (**Domestic Violence**), **human trafficking**, **sexual violence**, **elder abuse**, and violence directed at marginalized communities, including women, girls, non-binary, transgender, gender-diverse individuals, and those experiencing intersectional vulnerabilities. GBV includes acts that cause or are likely to cause harm, suffering, coercion, or deprivation of liberty, and it arises from structural power imbalances rooted in gender inequality, discrimination, and institutional or societal biases. It acknowledges intersectionality, recognizing how overlapping identities such as race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, immigration status, disability, and HIV status can amplify experiences of violence and create unique barriers to accessing support and justice.

DISCLOSURE at non-specialist community service or agency

Reassure about confidentiality, and explain the limits of this.
Gain consent. Explain what actions you may have to take

Connect (call or text) with a crisis line at a Domestic Violence shelter

Gillian's Place (serving Grimsby, Lincoln, West Lincoln, Niagara-on-the-lake, St. Catharines and Thorold)
905-684-8331

Birchway Niagara (serving Niagara Falls, Fort Erie, Welland, Wainfleet, Port Colborne, Pelham and surrounding areas)
905-356-5800

French-Speaking Supports (Fem'aide and Centre de Santé Communautaire Hamilton/Niagara)
1-877-336-2433

Indigenous Supports (Talk4Healing)
1-855-554-4325

The Coalition to END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN C.E.V.A.W

Is your victim pregnant and/or do they have children?

If you have concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of harm or neglect, contact **Family & Children's Services (FACS) Niagara - 905-937-7731**

Is your victim an older adult and you are concerned about elder abuse?

If you have a concern about an older adult that may be at risk for abuse, harm, or neglect, contact **Niagara Gatekeepers** - (8:30am-8:30pm) **905-684-0968**

Has your victim experienced a sexual assault?

Contact the **Niagara Sexual Assault Centre** Crisis Line for support - **905-682-4584**

Is your victim experiencing acute mental health or substance use challenges?

Contact **Access Line Niagara** for support identifying mental health and addictions services - **1-866-550-5205**

In all circumstances:

- Only ask questions about GBV when the individual is on their own and in private
- Document any disclosure, or suspicion of GBV, in professional records kept at your organization and record what you are told in their own words
- Document decision making, actions taken to manage risk and rationale for sharing or not sharing information
- If you need to use interpreters, ensure they are professional. Never rely on family members, friends or children (contact RIO Phone Network, 1-877-278-8007)
- Consider risks associated with communication//correspondence (e.g. a perpetrator finding leaflets/text messages/phone calls etc.)
- Contact a crisis line if you have concerns for a victim

Victim Services Niagara provides victim with support, information and referrals at no cost. Victim Services can be access by all agencies and emergency service providers, on behalf of victims, and is available throughout the Niagara Region.

24/7 Response Line - 905-682-2626

Not sure what to do?

If you are a service provider and are unsure of where to go or how to support someone in need, call any of the **crisis lines** listed on this page, or call **2-1-1**

