



BC Society of
Transition Houses

24 HOUR Census Report

*A One-Day Look at Transitional Housing and
Children Who Witness Abuse Programs in BC & the Yukon
2009*

Table of Contents

In Just One Day	2
Women, Youth and Children Served	3
Seeking Safety	3
Children Who Witness Abuse	4
Reaching Out	4
Advocacy and Support	4
Public Education and Prevention	5
Unmet Needs	5
Doing More with Less	6
Thank You	7
<i>Appendix</i>	
FAQ for VAW Programs & Advocates	8
FAQ for Media	9
Understanding the Census Methods & Data	10

In Just One Day

BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH) conducted its first 24 Hour Census of Violence Against Women's Services in BC and the Yukon in 2009. The census provides an unduplicated snapshot of the number of adults, youth and children seeking support in Violence Against Women's programs among BCSTH's Membership. A total of 119 programs responded to the 2009 survey.

On November 3rd, 484 women, youth and children sought refuge from violence in Transitional House, Second Stage House and Safe Home programs in BC and the Yukon. Another 335 women, youth, children and men sought support after experiencing violence from Children Who Witness Abuse programs in BC and the Yukon. Without the 119 programs that responded to this survey, these 819 people would not have received the support they needed. For some, the consequences may have been fatal.

Aside from serving 819 women, youth, children and men in person, BCSTH Members responded to 850 service-related calls and provided community education to 230 people in BC and the Yukon.

That means that **BCSTH members touched the lives of 1899 people!**

Despite this, respondents were **unable to meet the needs of 513 women, youth, children and men.** Funding restraints limit the number of people service providers can support. Speaking about the current funding situation and the possibility of funding cuts, one advocate said, "Women will be killed because they have no options but to stay in abusive relationships due to the cut backs. We will see more abusers become more violent which has a ripple effect on cost for health care, police, courts, economy, the children see the abuse and those children are our future".

While the current economy has resulted in a freeze in any new funding for Violence Against Women's programs, women need these services more than ever. During economic downturns violence against women increases and it becomes even more difficult for women to achieve financial stability and independence. Because of this, Violence Against Women's services are in even more demand and need resources to ensure that women who are in danger have a safe place to go.

On November 3rd,
2009 BCSTH Members
in BC and the Yukon
touched the lives of
1899 people.



In just one day, BCSTH Member programs in BC and the Yukon provided safe shelter and support to 819 adults, youth and children.



“Several residents expressed their gratitude for the safety they have found at the Transition House and for being able to rest peacefully at night without fear of harm.”

TH Advocate

Women, Youth and Children Served

In just one day, BCSTH Member programs in BC and the Yukon provided safe shelter and support to 819 adults, youth and children. Our members provide professional, compassionate support when women, youth and children need it most. Transition House, Second Stage House and Safe Home programs meet immediate needs of people fleeing violence by providing shelter, food and other basic necessities. Advocates within these and Children Who Witness Abuse programs share information with women, youth and children about the dynamics of violence against women, the impacts it can have and they help people who use their services to make plans to keep themselves safe. Women have the time and safety they need to identify the options they have and receive nonjudgmental support as they navigate the complex issues that result from experiencing violence.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED PER PROGRAM

	CWWA	TRANSITION HOUSE	SAFE HOMES	SECOND STAGE HOUSE	TOTAL
WOMEN	103	289	30	32	454
YOUTH & CHILDREN	222	88	12	33	355
MEN	10	0	0	0	10
TOTAL	335	377	42	65	819

Seeking Safety

Women fleeing violence can access shelter from Transition House, Second Stage House and Safe Home programs in BC and the Yukon. Together, these programs are referred to as Transitional Housing programs. Transition House and Safe Home programs meet the immediate needs of women fleeing violence. Transition House programs are a safe and supportive environment where women can stay up to 30 days and access information, resources, services and referrals. Safe Home programs are community based networks of private residences or rental units that provide emergency shelter for women fleeing violence for up to 5 days. There are few Second Stage House programs in BC and the Yukon. These important programs provide longer term (3-12 months) secure housing with some support as women search for permanent housing. Without the option of Second Stage housing programs some women are left with no housing after their short stay at a Transition House or Safe Home program or return to an abusive situation when they would have chosen not to if other options were available.

On November 3rd, 2009, Transitional Housing programs sheltered, supported and advocated for 484 women, youth and children.

Children Who Witness Abuse

Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA) programs grew out of concern for the children of women who were coming to Transitional Houses. In 1992 the BC Society of Transition Houses obtained funding to research the effects on youth and children exposed to the abuse of their mothers, and to develop a program to support young people. Today there are 90 CWWA programs in BC and the Yukon aimed at helping youth and children between the ages of 3 and 18.

On November 3rd, 2009 CWWA programs helped 222 youth and children to understand and cope with violence against their mother and the effects of this violence on themselves. In addition, CWWA programs supported and provided information to 113 mothers and non-abusive caregivers.

Reaching Out

Aside from supporting 819 people in person, BCSTH Member Programs provided support via phone to 850 callers. Often the first step towards seeking assistance around experiences with violence is on the phone to service providers who are able to answer questions, provide resources and referrals and compassionately listen.

For some women, a phone call is the only way they can access support. Transportation to Violence Against Women's programs in rural and remote areas is often unavailable given the distance each program covers and lack of public transportation. While many programs provide transportation for women to get to the program or, alternatively, have outreach workers who can travel to women, many other programs do not have the funding or the resources to provide transportation.

Advocacy and Support

Violence Against Women's programs also provide support and advocacy for women, youth and children as they deal with the violence they have experienced. Advocates may accompany and help women, youth and children to navigate the medical, criminal justice and government systems as women seek assistance with financial support, legal information and childcare assistance. In fact, the most frequent service BCSTH Member programs reported providing to women, youth and children in the 24 hour period was advocacy.

In addition, service providers refer women to other services they may need such as financial information & assistance, education, job training, mental wellness, substance use, childcare and counselling.

"We had a positive meeting at a school where staff were receptive to educational information shared by the CWWA counsellor about Domestic Violence and its impact on the child"

VAW Advocate



On November 3rd, 2009 BCSTH Members in BC and the Yukon answered 850 calls for service.

On November 3rd, 2009 BCSTH Members in BC and the Yukon provided public education to 230 people.



On November 3rd, 2009 BCSTH Members were unable to meet the needs of 513 women, youth, children and men.

Public Education and Prevention

Violence Against Women agencies work hard to support women, youth and children who have experienced violence, but work towards prevention as well. These education sessions raise awareness about violence against women and the impacts it can have on youth and children. Participants also learn about other services in their communities and how to support friends or family members who may be experiencing violence. On November 3rd, 2009, BCSTH Members in BC and the Yukon provided public education to 230 people.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE EDUCATED PER PROGRAM

CWWA	TRANSITION HOUSE	SAFE HOMES	SECOND STAGE HOUSE	TOTAL
114	64	38	14	230

In total, the 119 BCSTH Members that responded to this survey touched the lives of 1899 people, providing support and advocacy to women, youth and children who had experienced violence. Members also provided public education about violence against women to people from all walks of life. Put simply, if these services did not exist, thousands of people would be without support or information about violence against women.

Unmet Needs

In one day, BCSTH member programs were unable to serve 209 women and 313 youth and children who needed help.

Despite helping almost 2,000 adults, youth and children on November 3rd, 2009, BCSTH Member programs were unable to meet the need of 522 people due to limited resources, funding and staff. Programs in the Violence Against Women’s sector have been shuffled between government ministries and Crown Corporations three times in the past three years which has created an environment of uncertainty for programs. Many programs reported operating on “a shoestring budget” resulting in limited service hours and long waitlists, impacting the quality of service they can offer women, youth and children fleeing violence. Advocates credit the determination of staff who do their best to support every person who seeks services from their program. But with limited resources Violence Against Women’s programs are just not able to meet the demand.

Program staff said limited funds, resources and inadequate levels of



“Clients in outlying communities are denied service because the Children Who Witness Abuse program does not have funds for travel to the community and the Band does not have funds for them to travel here”

VAW Advocate

staffing prevented them from providing timely service, transportation, accompaniment to court and other appointments and from spending time with women who needed extra support during the 24 hour period.

“Women want staff to accompany her to places for fear of being seen in public. We’re not able to provide full advocacy work due to single staff shifts.” - Violence Against Women Advocate

According to BCSTH Members, many women cannot participate in existing programs and services because they lack the childcare and transportation they require.

“Single mother, outlying community, unable to get counselling for 9 year-old daughter because no funds for CWWA to travel there or for daughter, with mom, to travel to CWWA.” - CWWA Advocate

Doing More with Less

In 2009 the economic downturn hit Violence Against Women services hard. As more women needed services, agencies were struggling to raise the additional funds they needed to meet increasing demands for services.

Many programs, like Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA), cannot be delivered on the funds provided by government and rely on the donations of community members, grants and other sources of income to cover basic program expenses.

During the time of this survey the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General announced a funding cut of 2.6% for CWWA programs. After sector-wide advocacy against the cuts they were subsequently rescinded. Still, in the 24 Hour Census, Members expressed concerns about what this type of funding cut would mean to them. Most members indicated that they would have to make cuts to several positions and resources. The consequences would be still more women, children and youth without safe shelter or counselling programs they seek.

“We have one multi-cultural outreach worker [who speaks various languages] funded for 8 hours [a week]. She currently works 40 hours per week with a large caseload. Losing her if we lost funding or fundraising decreased would be a huge loss to the community we serve.” - Transition House Advocate

“If we had the 2% cut we may have had to reduce ... one staff person ... We have already eliminated [all expenses that are not absolutely essential] to help offset the rising cost of rent, audits and the wage and benefit lifts...” - Transition House Advocate

"There is a food budget of \$4 per person at a transition house per day after all other expenses are allocated."

TH Advocate

Others felt overwhelmed thinking about where the cuts would come from and said there simply is no more areas to trim within their agencies.

"There is really nowhere else to cut as far as staffing goes as there is only one staff on at any given time." - Transition House Advocate

As these quotations suggest, agencies are struggling to meet basic needs and are concerned about the future for women and children fleeing violence. Given the current economic climate and upcoming funding contract renewals, many agencies expressed concerns about the possibility of future funding cuts. Members indicated that any funding cuts will directly and negatively impact the women, children and youth who need the services most.

"They cannot cut programs without cutting direct services – we are all at maximum in our agency." - Transition House Advocate

While staff in Violence Against Women's agencies do their best to serve as many women, children and youth who are fleeing violence as they can, they simply are not able to meet the demand. Contact your local Violence Against Women agency to find out how you can help today.

Thank you.

To the staff of the 119 anti-violence programs in BC that took the time to participate in the 24 hour survey and to share information about the essential services you provide every day. We would also like to thank the National Network to End Domestic Violence for allowing us to use their 24 hour census and report as models for our own.



Appendix

24 Hour Census FAQ for Violence Against Women's Programs & Advocates

Violence Against Women Counts

A Provincial and Territorial 24 Hour Census of Violence Against Women Services of BCSTH Membership

How can we use the data?

The 2009 24 Hour Census provides a snapshot of the important work you do without jeopardizing the confidentiality or safety of people accessing your services. It is a way for you to share information about the work that you do with your community, funders, the media and others you see fit.

Can we get data for just our organization of region?

For confidentiality and safety reasons, we only provide reports at the provincial and territorial level. The summary and report can be used to supplement other information you have relevant to your community though.

Given that not all Violence Against Women's Services in BC and the Yukon participated in this survey, can I still use it?

Yes. Because it was our first survey only BCSTH Member program were asked to participate. For various reasons, not all BCSTH Members participated. Still, the information is valuable because it provided insight into the work that you do. Even though we know that not all people who access VAW services or who experienced violence during the 24 hour period were counted in this survey, the numbers give us a lower range estimate about the number of people accessing services. To increase accuracy, we encourage your program to participate in next years' 24 Hour Census.

Your name is BC Society of Transition Houses. Why have you included information about the Yukon?

At the time of the 2009 survey we were BC Yukon Society of Transition Houses and provided services and support to Members in BC as well as the Yukon. Because of this, the Yukon is included in our analysis. Since the last 24 Hour Census our Yukon Members have decided to start the process of forming their own territorial agency and we are working to support them in that process. Next years' survey will be focussed solely on BC.

Our agency was not asked to participate in the 2009 survey. Can we participate in the 2010 survey?

Because it was our first survey, we asked only BCSTH Member programs to participate in the 2009 survey. If your agency offers Transition House, Safe Home, Second or Third Stage Housing or Children Who Witness Abuse programming we welcome your participation in the 2010 survey whether you are a BCSTH Member or not.

When is the next 24 Hour Census?

The 2010 24 Hour Census will take place on November 24th, 2010 at 8:00am PST to November 25th, 2010 7:59 am PST. We will notify you soon about informational webinars or conference calls where you can learn about the survey. If you are interested in being notified about the 2010 survey please email survey@bcysth.ca.

24 Hour Census FAQ for Media

Violence Against Women Counts

A Provincial and Territorial 24 Hour Census of Violence Against Women Services of BCSTH Membership

Who should I contact if I have questions about this report?

Please contact Shabna Ali at 604.669.6943 or Amanda Alexander at 250.563.1113.

When was the survey conducted?

November 3rd, 2009.

Your name is BC Society of Transition Houses. Why have you included information about the Yukon?

At the time of the 2009 survey we were BC Yukon Society of Transition Houses and provided services and support to Members in BC as well as the Yukon. Because of this, the Yukon is included in our analysis. Since the last 24 Hour Census our Yukon Members have decided to start the process of forming their own territorial agency and we are working to support them in that process. Next years' survey will be focused solely on BC.

Can we get data for a specific region or community?

No. For confidentiality and safety reasons, we only provide province-level aggregate reports.

How can we interpret the data?

Please take a look at Understanding the Data section to understand how to interpret the report. If you have other questions about the data or report contact Shabna Ali at 604.669.6943 or Amanda Alexander at 250.563.1113.

Can I estimate whether the number of people accessing Violence Against Women's services has gone up or down since previous years?

Our first survey was in 2009 and because not all Violence Against Women's programs in BC and the Yukon participated it is difficult to compare with numbers from other studies or data.

Is the economy causing more violence against women?

The economy does not cause violence. In situations where violence exists, though, economic factors can exacerbate violence.

Some believe that abuser's violence increases during times of increased stress. It is possible, however, that violence increases simply due to increased contact between the abuser and the woman they are abusing. Unemployed abusers are at home for an increased period of time, as are unemployed women. It may be as simple as abusers having increased time and access in which to be violent.

Understanding the Census Methods & Data

Violence Against Women Counts

A Provincial and Territorial 24 Hour Census of Violence Against Women Services of BCSTH Membership

Methods

The 24 Hour Census survey provides a snapshot or one point-in-time, unduplicated record of people who access Violence Against Women's (VAW) services among BCSTH Membership in a 24-hour period. The 2009 24 Hour Census was BCSTH's first and helped us learn about the number of people who accessed VAW services, were unable to access services and an overall picture of the services our Members are delivering.

By surveying over a 24 hour period we are able to get an unduplicated count of people accessing services – people are unlikely to access services at more than one VAW program during the census period. For example, it is impossible for one person to be sheltered at more than one Transition House at any given time and the same youth or child will not see more than one Children Who Witness Abuse program in one day.

The survey is a way to learn about VAW services in BC and the Yukon while keeping the identities of people accessing services confidential. All information is aggregated, or combined, so that no identifying information about any one BCSTH Member program is revealed.

Understanding the Data

Can I tell how many people in BC and the Yukon experienced violence during the 24 hour census period by reading the report?

No. There are a number of programs across the province that did not participate in the 2009 24 Hour Census and it is our hope to increase participation in 2010. Because not all Violence Against Women programs participated in the Census this report underestimates the number of people who accessed Violence Against Women services on November 3rd, 2009. Even if we were able to capture all people who accessed services in the 24 hour period, many women, youth and children who experience violence do not report the violence or seek support from VAW services. As such there are probably many more people in BC and the Yukon who experienced violence during the 24 hour census period.

Will we be able to compare this years' data with next years' survey results and conclude whether demand for service has increased or decreased?

While it is our intention to be able to identify patterns and trends over the years, concrete comparisons will likely not be possible. 2009 was our first survey year and as we move forward with the survey we will likely make changes to better capture pertinent information. In addition, the number of programs will vary from year to year as might the day of the week and date of the count. These variables make it difficult to make year-to-year comparisons.

This count was only on one day. Can I multiply it by 365 and get an average estimate of the number of women, youth and children who sought services in a year?

The reason we survey over a 24 hour period is to obtain an unduplicated count of the number of people accessing services. In other words, the same people are not likely accessing more than one program in one day. Throughout the year though, some people may access support many times. Program also experience days where they see many people and others where they see fewer. Because of this, multiplying the one day totals by 365 to estimate annual service rates would not be accurate.

Why can't you just do an annual unduplicated count?

Getting an unduplicated count over a year is not feasible. Programs would have to somehow ensure they were not counting the same person more than once which would require collecting and share personal information about people accessing their services. This would be a violation of Canada's privacy laws. It would also not be in the best interest of people accessing Violence Against Women's services who are trying to escape and hide from abusers.