

**Protocol**  
**for Students who are**  
**Resident in**  
**Anselma House**  
**or**  
**Women's**  
**Crisis Services**

**February, 1999**

**The Waterloo Catholic District School Board**

# Preamble

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The following protocol has been collectively developed by *Anselma House, Women's Crisis Services and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board*.

Throughout this protocol "*Shelter*" refers to both Anselma House and Women's Crisis Services and "*Board*" refers to the Waterloo Catholic District School Board.

The protocol outlines the procedures the shelter and the principals will use as guidelines in working with women and children who choose to access protocol.

The intent of this protocol is to facilitate a clear working relationship between the school and the mother/guardian and ease this difficult transition time for the mother/guardian and the child(ren). Every mother/guardian has the right to NOT access the protocol procedures. The *Shelter* and the *Board* support and recognize this choice. The shelter and the individual school principal will provide the mother/guardian with the necessary information to help her make decisions.

The protocol will not take priority over a mother/guardian's choices and decisions or as per the requirements of the Education Act, Family & Children's Services Act or any other legal requirements.

## Confidentiality

The confidentiality and privacy of children and their mothers must be respected. Please consider all information private and confidential unless disclosure is required by law or granted by a signed release of information.

## Problem Resolution

Any new procedure is open to interpretation by those who are responsible for its implementation. In order to resolve any problems that result due to the interpretation of this protocol, this process is to be followed:

- The individuals involved in problems of interpretation of this agreement are encouraged to resolve the issues among themselves with the goals of working toward a common understanding.
- If an individual does not feel that the issue is adequately resolved, the *Shelter* or *Board* staff person may pass the issue on to his/her own immediate supervisor for resolution with the other person's immediate supervisor.
- A meeting of all parties may be requested, in order to discuss the issue and work towards its resolution.

## **Amendment of the Protocol**

All parties to this protocol (i.e. Anselma House, Women's Crisis Services and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board) will meet at least once per calendar year to review proposed amendments to this protocol.

**NOTE: This problem resolution process is not meant to be used as a substitute for a formal complaint, but is only to handle issues of interpretation of the *Board/Shelter* protocol. Every person has the right to pursue a formal complaint with the other involved party.**

## Protocol

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### Situation A

**Where no court ordered restrictions exist and mother/guardian decides to transfer child on a temporary basis to the school in the shelter area.**

- Mother calls the principal to request a temporary transfer and to set up a meeting time with the principal or designate.
- The principal arranges a meeting time for as soon as possible. (See Appendix A) (The principal also sets aside time to meet with the mother.) The need for translation services is also assessed. This need will likely be communicated by the Shelter Worker or the woman.
- Upon arrival at the school mother and child are welcomed into the school. The child is given a tour, and linked with a "buddy" or other support person for initial support (i.e. finding classes, washrooms, library, etc.).
- The principal meets with the mother after the child is in class or otherwise occupied.
- In some situations a mother may have completed a form called the "*Child Risk Alert Form*" (See Appendix B) at the *Shelter* prior to the meeting taking place. Although the principal is not given a copy of this form, the mother may choose to review the form with the principal at this meeting. The "*Child Risk Alert Form*" deals specifically with child safety issues. With mom's permission, the principal may take rough notes if needed. **A copy of the form is not provided to the principal as it would then become a part of the child's file leading to the possibility of a partner gaining access to this information.**
- The principal explains his or her role which is to provide for the safety issues of the child. The principal will obtain emergency contact information and numbers should he/she need to reach the mother.

#### 1. Visitor Status

- The child will remain on the register at the home school and will be listed as present as confirmed by the receiving school.
- The child will be given visitor status at the receiving school and not listed on the register. Changes to the child's visitor status will be discussed with the mother prior to any change in status taking place.
- The principal of the receiving school will notify the principal of the home school informally and confidentially of the child's presence at the school and will then update the home school before fifteen (15) days of visitor status.

## Protocol - Situation A (cont'd)

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### 2. Phone Inquiries Regarding the Child

The principal or other school employees will not disclose any information to anyone other than the mother/guardian who initially arranged the school transfer.

- ! Should someone call and identify themselves as dad, an aunt, uncle, etc., they will be told of the process of obtaining information through the *Board* in writing. They will be given the name of the School Superintendent.
- ! Should the caller persist, **the principal or designate shall not confirm nor deny that the child is in attendance at the school. The mother or the shelter shall be notified of such inquiry by the principal.**
- ! Should the School Superintendent receive inquiries about the child, this too shall be reported to the mother or *Shelter* as soon as possible.

### 3. In-Person Inquiries

- ! Should anyone show up at the school claiming to be a dad, aunt, uncle, etc., and make any inquiries regarding the said child, the same process will be followed as with telephone inquiries, that is:
  - **the principal or designate shall not confirm nor deny that the child is in attendance at the school;**
  - the person will be informed of the process of applying in writing for the desired information through the *Board*;
  - the mother or *Shelter* will be contacted immediately regarding the inquiry.

<p><b>NOTE: The principal, in accordance with Section 265 (m) of The Education Act, has the power to prohibit individuals onto school property when it is believed that his or her presence may be detrimental to the physical or mental well-being of the pupils. The person will be told that their presence on or near the school is disruptive and the police will be called if they are seen in the area. (Quote - Section 265 (m) of The Education Act - See Appendix C)</b></p>
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## Protocol - Situation A (cont'd)

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- 4. Someone Other Than the Mother is Seen Near or at the School and is Suspected to be following the Child**
- ! The child will be kept in the school or called back in to school.
  - ! The police will be called to provide assistance.
  - ! The mother will be contacted and the principal and mother will together arrange for the safe return of the child.
  - ! If the mother is unavailable, her emergency contact person will be called. The *Shelter* will also be called to inform them of the situation.

**NOTE: Mothers should be reminded that if they will be sending someone else to pick-up their child, they must inform the school in order to authorize the release of their child to this individual.**

- 5. Transportation**
- ! When necessary, the principal will arrange for transportation through the Business and Finance Superintendent. The assistant to the superintendent would then notify the principal regarding transportation arrangements. The principal would then notify the mother.
  - ! The transportation issue may begin to be explored upon initial telephone contact with the mother and then reviewed at the initial meeting. It is also recommended that any transportation requests by the mother be seriously considered due to safety issues even when the child is living in the catchment area (especially when the alleged abuser(s) is prone to stalking behaviour).
  - ! The principal will explain any transportation arrangement to the mother or shelter staff and provide her with a written outline to include (can be faxed to the shelter):
    - start date;
    - name and phone number of cab company;
    - route number;
    - pick-up and drop-off time;
    - instructions regarding how the mother can cancel the cab if the child is ill or will not be returning to school.
  - ! The process of how the school will respond if the child has not arrived at school and the mother has not called to the school to let them know of the child's absence should also be reviewed.

## Protocol - Situation A (cont'd)

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### 6. Other Details to be Reviewed at the Initial Meeting

- ! Is it safe for the child to go outside at lunch or recess? If not, the principal develops a plan to meet safety needs.
- ! Is it necessary, for safety reasons, for the child to have immediate access to the school upon arrival?
- ! Is it necessary, for safety reasons, for the child to wait inside the school until his/her ride arrives? Should he/she be escorted to the car? And if so, by whom?
- ! How will ongoing communication between the mother and school be facilitated?
- ! Are there any concerns regarding:
  - Health?
  - Special Education needs?
  - Language needs?
  - the need for additional support? (e.g. does the mother want behavioural consultants involved?)
- ! Has the mother signed consents previously with the father of the child for Board resources (not located within the school) to be involved with the child? If so, it is important that the individuals involved with the child be made aware of the change in family circumstances and in family location, by either the mother or the principal.
- ! Where can mom be reached in case problems arise (e.g. emergency contact numbers)?
- ! **For an emergency, the school can call staff at the shelter to reach mom, and for other school related issues, the school can call the mother at the shelter through resident phone line, which mom can provide to principal at the initial meeting.**

## Situation B

**Where no court ordered restrictions exist and the child remains at or returns to the home school while residing at the *Shelter*.**

- ! **The mother calls the principal to inform him/her that they are no longer residing in the home.**
- ! **The principal arranges a meeting with the mother as soon as possible.**
- ! **The principal meets with the mother while the child is in class or is otherwise occupied.**
- ! **In some situations a mother may have completed a form called the "*Child Risk Alert Form*" at the *Shelter* prior to this meeting taking place. Although the principal is not given a copy of this form, the mother may choose to review the form with the principal at this meeting. The "*Child Risk Alert Form*" deals specifically with child safety issues. With mom's permission the principal may take rough notes if needed.**

For further information see "Situation A" (Items 2 through 6).

### Situation C

**When an order/legal agreement exists (e.g. custody, recognizance, peace bond, etc.) and the child remains in the home school or attends another school as a visitor.**

- ! The principal requests a copy of the latest order/agreement from the mother. This should specify what the terms of custody and access are (e.g. partner has access every Wednesday night and every other weekend).
- ! The partner will not be allowed access to the child at the school unless outlined in the order/agreement or direction is given by the mother/guardian.
- ! Requests for information about the child will be directed to the *Board* and be in writing. Information can only be shared regarding school performance. **No information regarding present address can be given.** The mother must be informed of any inquiries as soon as possible.

### Situation D

**Due to safety concerns, the mother chooses to keep her child out of school.**

- ! **The principal will attempt to facilitate any requests for learning materials.**

## **Appendices**

**A ..... ! Principal's Checklist**

**B..... ! Child Risk Alert Form**

**C..... ! The Education Act 265 (m)**

**D..... ! Service Principles for  
Waterloo Region Social  
Resources Council**

**E..... ! Anselma House**

**F..... ! Women's Crisis Services**

## Principal's Checklist

The purpose of this checklist is to ensure that the necessary information is reviewed with the mother/guardian.

<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>			
	Yes	N/A	
1.	Meeting scheduled with mother/guardian.		Q Q
2.	If necessary, interpreter arranged.		Q Q
3.	Mother/guardian welcomed to the school and child(ren) linked with "buddy" or other support person.		Q Q
4.	Arranged for the child to be in a class or otherwise occupied away from the meeting.		Q Q
5.	Reviewed the " <i>Child Risk Alert Form</i> ". (if applicable)		Q Q
6.	Explained my role as a principal in dealing with safety/security issues.		Q Q
7.	Explained to mother how other teachers or support staff will be informed of the child's status and safety/security issues and any specific educational needs.		Q Q
8.	Transportation arrangements made with the Business and Finance Superintendent.		Q Q
9.	Current or past contacts with school social workers, guidance counsellors and/or behavioural resource team members were discussed to ensure that the mother/guardian informs them of the situation.		Q Q
10.	Received a copy of custody orders, restraining orders or peace bonds, if available.		Q Q
11.	Discussed how information will be passed to the mother/guardian while residing at the <i>Shelter</i> and if any inquiry is received at the <i>Board</i> regarding the child(ren) from partner or others.		Q Q
12.	Discussed how the school will deal with partner or other persons deemed a risk to the child arriving at the school.		Q Q
13.	Safety plan developed (alternate emergency contact names, phone numbers).		Q Q
14.	Discussed other support services that may be necessary for the child(ren) (i.e. school social workers, behavioural consultants).		Q Q
15.	Discussed confidentiality procedures (Release of Information Form)		Q Q
16.	Other details needing to be discussed.		Q Q
17.	In confidence, contact home school by telephone regarding		Q Q



**C. Information Re: Abuser(s) (include picture(s) if available):**

<b>Name</b>		<b>D.O.B</b>	
<b>Relationship to Mother/Guardian</b>		<b>Relationship to Child</b>	
<b>Current Address:</b>			
<b>Telephone No.</b>	<b>Languages Spoken</b>	<b>Interpreter Needed</b>	
(     )	_____	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
		<b>Q</b>	<b>Q</b>

1. Physical Description: (height, weight, hair colour, tattoos, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Vehicle(s) Description: (license plate number, colour, make, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. If employed, list employer name, address, phone number:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Immigration Status:  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Associates who may assist abuser(s): (name, description, car, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Have assault charges been laid or has there been any police involvement? Explain.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Any orders (i.e. peace bond/restraining order) or breach of orders? Explain.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**D. Assessment of Risk Level:**

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	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Does the woman have an interim custody order?	Q	Q

If yes, does she have a copy of the order? Q Q

Other information regarding the custody order:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Include any copies of documents related to custody, restraining orders, etc.)

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2. Is the abuser a biological/adoptive parent of the children?	Q	Q
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If No, refer to school/shelter protocol, whereby abuser should have not legal right to access except where determined by the courts.

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3. Has abuser ever threatened to take child or breach custody order?	Q	Q
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Explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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4. Child has been impacted by family violence in the following ways:	<b>Witnessed</b>	<b>Experienced</b>
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Physical Abuse  
Q \_\_\_\_\_ Q

Emotional Abuse  
Q \_\_\_\_\_ Q

Verbal Abuse  
Q \_\_\_\_\_ Q

Sexual Abuse  
Q \_\_\_\_\_ Q

Other, i.e.: \_\_\_\_\_ Q \_\_\_\_\_ Q

**D. Assessment of Risk Level (cont'd):**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
5. Is family involved with Family and Children's Services?	Q	Q
6. Has a report been filed with Family & Children's Services as per the Risk Assessment Model?	Q	Q
7. Is a protection investigation underway?	Q	Q
8. Does the abuser have access to any weapons? (Briefly describe)	Q	Q
9. Has the abuser threatened or used a weapon against the woman or child(ren)? Explain: _____ _____ _____ _____	Q	Q
10. Are there any other known threats towards the woman and/or child(ren), or significant others? Explain: _____ _____ _____ _____	Q	Q
10. Does the abuser have substance abuse issues?	Q	Q
11. Is the abuser aware of the family's present location?	Q	Q
12. Other relevant information: _ Explain: _____ _____ _____ _____	Q	Q

Staff Signature:

Woman's Signature:

Date Completed:

**The Education Act, Section 265 (m)**

*Duties of  
principal,*

265. It is the duty of a principal of a school,  
in addition to the principal's duties as a  
teacher,

*access to school  
or class*

(m) subject to an appeal to the board, to  
refuse to admit to the school or  
classroom a person whose presence in  
the school or classroom would in the  
principal's judgment be detrimental to  
the physical or mental well-being of the  
pupils.

## **Service Principles for Non-Abusive Family Relationships**

The Waterloo Regional Social Resources Council & the Ministry of Community and Social Services developed the following service principles for non-abusive family relationships in partnership with community agencies in 1991-92.

### **Preamble**

- ! Our patriarchal society espouses values which promote vulnerability by viewing power and control as acceptable and desirable as a means to achieve and maintain a position of advantage over another.
- ! Violence includes physical, psychological, emotional, sexual and economic abuse, all of which are used to maintain control over those perceived as vulnerable in our society.
- ! All individuals have the potential to abuse and be abused.
- ! Existing research indicates the majority of perpetrators of physical and sexual abuse in society are male and the majority of victims in families are women and children.
- ! Societal violence is reflected in corresponding violence within the family.

### **Service Principles**

- ! Everyone has the right to live without violence.
- ! Equality of the sexes is critical in maintaining non-violent relationships.
- ! Violence and abuse are betrayals of the respect due every individual.
- ! Relationships and families have many forms and are optimally a primary source of love, respect, nurturing and learning.
- ! Community members have an individual and collective responsibility to change values and to eliminate violence.
- ! Victims have the right to a healing process that is sensitive to gender inequality, that is safe, accessible and empowering.
- ! Perpetrators of violence must be legally and clinically helped to be accountable and held responsible for their behaviour.
- ! Prevention is essential to ending violence.
- ! Co-ordination of services is essential to eliminate violence.

## **Anselma House - Agency Overview**

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### **Anselma House Mission Statement**

The staff and board of directors of Anselma House are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment physically and emotionally abused women and their children.

We believe the design and provision of direct and indirect service programs will effect change for a better society.

Our global vision for the future is a society where violence is eradicated and there ceases to be a need for shelters to protect women and children from violence.

### **Service Philosophy**

The cornerstone of service to women and children involved with Anselma House is respect for and empowerment of the individual.

#### *Women Receiving Service:*

Basic to the service at Anselma House is a commitment to support each woman in recognizing the opportunity to make her own choices about her life.

#### *Women and Their Children:*

Anselma House has a commitment to helping women and children develop new family patterns, free from abuse, in an atmosphere of trust and openness.

### **Accessibility**

The services of Anselma House are open to all women irrespective of ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability and age. We recognize that discrimination is in itself a form of abuse.

### **Staff, Volunteers, and Board of Directors**

The staff, volunteers and board of directors of Anselma House seek to maintain a professional working relationship based on honesty, trust, respect, understanding and accountability.

### **The Community**

Anselma House is part of a network of community services and opportunities available to women and children. We seek to improve this network and develop these relationships for the greater benefit of the women and children we serve.

**Anselma House - Agency Overview (cont'd)**

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**Anselma House**

Abuse and violence have place in the family and society.

All forms of abuse are means of seeking control and gaining power.

No person deserves or provokes any form of violence.

Most victims of abuse are women and children. They do not deserve or provoke abuse and are not to blame for the crime of assault.

Women are not masochistic; they do NOT like being physically, sexually, emotionally or verbally hurt and degraded.

Women have the right to information and support in order to decide what is best for themselves.

Children living in an environment with an abuser suffer emotional abuse and are at the risk of becoming victims of physical abuse and/or neglect.

Abusers are themselves responsible for their abusive action.

Drug, alcohol abuse, mental illness and loss of temper are neither excuses for, not the causes of, abusive behaviour.

Historically, society has condoned the abuse of women and children. Abuse is perpetuated by society not responding appropriately to the issue of abuse.

Abuse does not stop by itself. All community members have the responsibility to become knowledgeable concerning the issues of abuse and to be involved in creating a safe environment and society for all women and children.

**Anselma House  
Shelter Goals**

To provide a safe and supportive environment for abused women and their children through safe shelter, short-term crisis counselling, resource referrals and telephone crisis intervention.

To prevent violence against and to increase social justice for women and children and to change society's attitudes about abuse against women and children through public education.

To respect and value the opinions and decisions, the individual rights, and the confidentiality of every woman receiving assistance from Anselma House.

**Anselma House - Agency Overview (cont'd)**

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**Anselma House  
Shelter Goals**  
(cont'd)

To uphold everyone's basic right to freedom from physical and emotional violence through continuing advocacy that woman assault is a crime.

To improve the quality of choice for assaulted women and their children by lobbying for affordable housing, economic equality and increased funding and services.

To provide access to direct services such as crisis lines, safe shelter, transportation, referrals and outreach to assaulted women who are isolated in urban and rural communities.

**Confidentiality**

Staff/volunteers will not, under Agency Policy, **release or obtain** any information about callers, residents, Outreach participants, staff or volunteers without their written consent.

This policy also applies to conversations with other shelters, other agencies, police calling without a missing persons report, women's therapists, doctors or family members.

Discussions concerning residents or Outreach participants of Anselma House are to remain in the work setting.

**Administration  
and Staffing**

Anselma House has a twelve (12) member volunteer board of directors and full-time, part-time and relief staff.

In addition, volunteers work with staff in order to provide support to residents and participants.

**Description of Services**

*Anselma House  
Residential Mandate*

An assaulted woman is any woman who identifies herself as having been physically, sexually, or emotionally abused. Admission to residential services is extended to women and their children who have been assaulted or who are in immediate actual or potential danger of physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

Female children of all ages and male children up to and including sixteen (16) years of age may accompany their mothers to Anselma House.

**Anselma House - Agency Overview (cont'd)**

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*Residential and Shelter Service*

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Anselma House is a twenty (20) bed facility and provides short term twenty-four (24) hour crisis shelter to assaulted women and their children. The length of stay is up to eight (8) weeks, depending on individual circumstances, the time can be extended.

**a) Crisis Support and Community Resource/Referral Information**

Shelter residents are provided with short-term support and resources to include:

- ! emotional support;
- ! referrals to community resources;
- ! legal and housing information;
- ! advocacy.

**b) Support Groups**

Residents are involved in group discussions with Outreach participants every weekly on the issues and concerns of assaulted women. The weekly sessions are facilitated by shelter staff.

**c) Children's Support Programs**

Through individual and group activities, child/youth support workers enable the child to express her/his thoughts and feelings about the abuse within the family.

Child/youth staff facilitate mother/child discussion regarding issues within the family and provide information/referral to appropriate community services.

*Outreach Program*

Women and their children who are living independently in the community after leaving an abusive partner can access the support of the Outreach Program. The program offers information and support groups on parenting and women's issues as well as information and referrals to resources in the community. Crisis support, as well as individual support women, children and teens is available from the women's and child/youth staff.

*Non-Residential Support*

Staff provide resource and referral information assaulted women from the community. Women may access this service through the crisis line, and may schedule an appointment. Non-residential support sessions are for the woman only; we do not provide support sessions to: a mother and daughter together, couple counselling, or other people whom the woman wants to bring to the appointment.

**Anselma House - Agency Overview (cont'd)**

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*Telephone Crisis Intervention*

Anselma House operates a 24-hour crisis line to provide women with support, information and referrals to community resources.

*Public Education and Professional Development*

Anselma House provides speakers to schools, churches and community groups to provide information about woman abuse. It is a community development role which aims at preventing woman abuse through information and education.

*Volunteer Program*

Anselma House utilizes community members to provide support to staff, residents and participants. The Volunteer Recreation Program provides recreational activities for children while their mothers attend support groups; and the Crisis Line Volunteer Program, where volunteers staff the crisis line and offer practical support to both staff and residents/participants.

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**Women's Crisis Services Agency Overview**

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<b>Mission Statement</b>	Women's Crisis Services is a non-profit community-based organization which provides safe and secure shelter to women and children who are victims of abuse via crisis intervention counselling, a 24-hour crisis line, supporting counselling and advocacy on behalf of women and children, (both residents and those remaining in the community), and public education regarding the issues involved in woman abuse.
<b>Vision</b>	Every person has the right to live a life free of the threat of abuse and to be treated with respect and dignity. Our vision is a violence-free society where all may live with dignity, free of threat and violation.
<b>Service Philosophy</b>	All programs of our agency reflect our belief in the dignity of every woman and child whom we serve. Women are empowered through counselling and education strategies to take charge of their own lives. Children are empowered by learning healthy ways of dealing with the violence which they experience or witness. We believe women have the right to make independent, informed choices, and to be supported in those choices.
<b>Accessibility</b>	Women's Crisis Services provides equal access to women and children regardless of ethnicity, sexual orientation, age or special needs. As a community-based agency, our programs are consumer-driven so as to meet the needs of the community we serve. They are offered in collaboration and cooperation with other community organizations, including social service and health care agencies, women's groups, schools, churches and community groups.
<b>Beliefs</b>	<p>Abuse and violence are human rights and equality issues.</p> <p>Abuse and violence have no place in the family and society.</p> <p>All forms of violence are means to establish and maintain unequal power and control, or domination, over another person or group.</p> <p>Most victims of abuse are women and children.</p> <p>Abuse is perpetuated because personal abuse and control over women and children have been reinforced historically within community institutions and through cultural messages.</p>

**Women's Crisis Services (cont'd)**

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In order to assist victims of abuse, community services must become totally intolerant of abuse and inequality on personal, institutional and cultural levels.

Abuse against women and children is not caused by personal or family dysfunction. Victims of abuse do not invite, provoke, or deserve to be abused. Similarly, substance abuse, mental illness, stress, anger, depression, lack of personal interaction skills, social and economic conditions, and childhood victimization are neither excuses for, nor causes of, abuse against women and children.

Victims of abuse have the right to make free and informed decisions about what is best for themselves. Safety and information through shelter, counselling and advocacy are, therefore, essential community services.

Abusers are responsible for their behaviour and must be held accountable for their abusive and controlling actions. Similarly, community systems which condone or ignore abusive behaviour are responsible for its reinforcement.

Children who witness abuse are impacted in a manner which is comparable to direct child abuse. These children are also at risk of becoming abusers or victims of abuse themselves.

Children who are abused or who witness abuse have the right to a safe and secure environment, to respect, to positive parenting, and to a violence-free childhood lived as children.

**Goals**

To provide 24-hour safe emergency shelter, crisis intervention counselling, education and advocacy to women and their children on a residential, outreach and crisis telephone line basis.

To provide services on both an individual and group basis.

To provide all services in a safe, respectful and confidential manner.

To offer accessible services to abused women and their children in both urban and rural communities.

To make services accessible to the full diversity of women and children in our community.

To participate in activities and support organizations whose vision, beliefs and goals are compatible with those of Women's Crisis Services.

**Women's Crisis Services (cont'd)**

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To promote the prevention of, and intervention against, violence through public education.

To work toward change within social, educational and legal systems in order to improve choices for abused women and their children.

To be accountable in terms of our programs and policies within the vision and principles of Women's Crisis Services.

**Confidentiality**

Women's Crisis Services staff and volunteers may not release or request any personal information about individual clients without their signed, written consent, except under certain specific conditions.

This policy includes contacts with other clients within our program, other shelters, police calling without a missing persons report, other professionals who may be working with our clients, other agency representatives, friends, partners, or family members, media representatives or members of the public.

Information about clients or Women's Crisis Services may be disclosed only under the following conditions: (a) where there is a signed, written consent by the client or legal guardian; (b) where disclosure is compelled by law, either by statute or by court order; (c) where safety concerns supersede confidentiality.

**Administration and Staffing**

Women's Crisis services has a volunteer board of directors as well as full-time, part-time and relief staff, and volunteers who assist with all programs offered.

**Description of Programs:***Crisis Line*

A confidential crisis and supportive counselling service is offered by telephone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Haven House*

Our residential program is an 18 bed facility which provides abused women and their children with food, clothing and shelter. Other services offered may include ongoing individual and group counselling, advocacy, emergency transportation, liaison with Regional Social Services, assistance to obtain affordable housing, and referral to community resources. Length of stay may be up to 6 weeks although extensions are granted in exceptional circumstances.

*Community Outreach*

Discharge planning, including safety planning, is done with residential clients prior to their departure in order to line them with support systems once they are on their own.

**Women's Crisis Services (cont'd)**

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Weekly supportive group counselling is offered to women who are currently living in abusive situations or who have recently left such situations. These groups are also made available to women within our residential program.

A "one-time options" service is offered to women currently living in abusive situations who may wish to discuss legal issues or to receive assistance in accessing a free legal consultation.

After receiving an initial sessions, some women may wish to participate in a "brief intervention program" which includes up to 5 supportive counselling sessions. Should more extensive intervention be requested, a referral to an appropriate community resource is facilitated.

A Peer Support Program is offered in conjunction with the volunteer program whereby volunteer peer supporters are paired with women in the community who are dealing with abuse issues. Peer supporters receive training enabling them to offer individualized, positive support to abused women. Throughout their involvement, peer supporters receive back-up support and guidance from outreach and volunteer program staff.

***Child and Youth***

Research demonstrates that children who witness family violence suffer from many of the same symptoms as children who have themselves been abused. Our program is designed to provide safety planning and early intervention for these high risk children, helping them to understand what family violence is and how it affects them, while rebuilding their self-esteem, and teaching effective communication and problem-solving skills. Assistance is offered both individually and in group settings to children who are in our residential program and to those referred from the community. Among groups offered are a Tiny Tots Group for children aged 4 to 7 years, a First Aid Teddy Bear Crisis Group for those aged 5 to 12, and a Teen Group for youth from 10 to 16 years.

***Volunteer Program***

Our volunteer program is active in recruiting, screening, training and placing interested and dedicated members of the community into all shelter programs and service areas. Special training is offered to crisis line volunteers assisting them to play a major role in the provision of this crucial service to the community. Our new Peer Support program also requires a high investment of training time and commitment on the part of its volunteers, and would not be possible without their contribution.

**Women's Crisis Shelter (cont'd)**

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*Public Education*

Our public education program provides community presentations as well as special events and displays relating to the issue of woman abuse and child witnesses. We distribute pamphlets and information packages, and we have a resource library which may be accessed by the public. Finally, we offer employment and student placements providing a meaningful learning experience for those wishing to know more about the complexities of abuse issues.

**Endorsement of Protocol**

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**Barbara Delisle  
Women's Crisis Services**

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**Roger Lawler  
for the Board**

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**Manuela Almeida  
Anselma House**

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**Date**

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**Date**

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**Date**