



Jennifer Lepko, CEO

YWCA Lethbridge and District

Theme: Wrap-around supports for women

YWCA Lethbridge and District is an organization committed to women and the enhancement of their lives by providing programs and services which empower them, support equality and promote wellness in mind, body, and spirit. Programs include the YWCA Harbour House, a 30-bed crisis unit for women and children who are involved in abusive intimate partner relationships. Through a partnership with Lethbridge Housing Authority, YWCA Lethbridge & District is able to provide six housing allocations for women in crisis. Community members are able to access support and education-based counselling services through YWCA Outreach Services. YWCA Lethbridge and District's Safe Visitation Program meets the dual needs of children and parents through supervised visits that minimize the risks and potential for conflict escalation.

Critical Elements

- Women have numerous options when accessing services and the intake process involves a triage process to determine the best services for individual women.
- The Amethyst Project provides sexual violence advocacy, support and counselling. Advocacy and support is available both for women accessing the shelter and other women from the community. The Amethyst Project also provides education and training in the community for community stakeholders, high risk groups, and the general public regarding issues around sexual violence. (tool provided: B.E.S.T curriculum- Bystander Engagement to reduce Sexual Assault training)
- Provides a parent support group for parents who looks at the impacts of domestic violence, trauma as a parent as well as ages and stages of child development.
- Project Child Recovery and Project Teen Recovery: provides support to children and teens impacted by domestic violence
- Because Harbour House is part of the larger YWCA of Lethbridge the women and children accessing the shelter also have access to the various other programs within the organization: including "Girl Space", Girl to Girl mentoring, Girls with Tools, for example. Shelter residents have full access to health and wellness activities
- Provide Safe Visitation services: parent-child time is supervised by two qualified professionals to ensure a stress-free visit and the best possible outcomes for children.
- Management is focused on providing support for staff in the area of vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue. Currently have 3 staff that are trained and certified as resiliency consultants. Able to run groups both for YWCA staff and for other organizations in the area of compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma. Training was through the Canadian Trauma Institute.