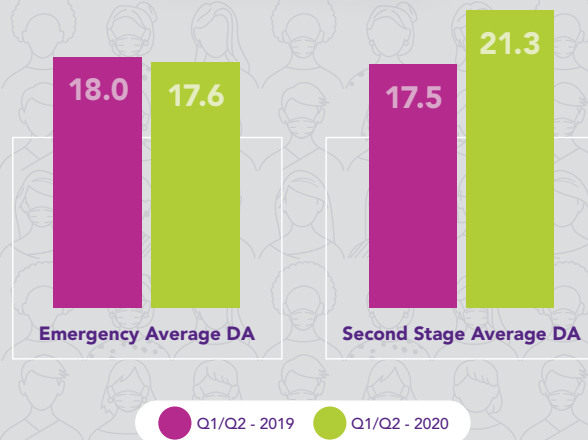


Women living with domestic violence are in danger.



Domestic violence calls to police have increased across the province:

- The RCMP saw an **11.7% increase of domestic violence calls** from March to September, 2020 compared to 2019.
- The Edmonton Police Service saw a **16% increase from January to November, 2020** in comparison to the same time period in 2019.
- The Calgary Police Service reports that they have responded to **9% more domestic violence incidents** in comparison to average but 10% less calls involving threatened/actual violence between January and September of 2020.



For more information, visit our website at acws.ca



2020 SHELTER SNAPSHOT

Six-month snapshot of shelter experiences during COVID-19



Our data shows increased severity in Danger Assessment scores for second stage shelters, and sustained levels of severity in Danger Assessment (DA) scores with emergency shelter clients

2,725
women, children, and seniors were admitted to emergency shelters across the province

300
women and children were admitted to second stage shelters

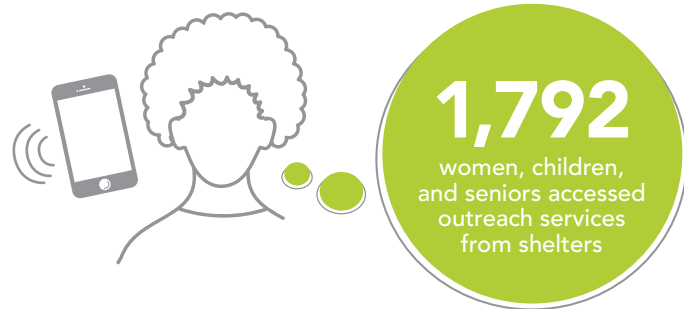
What we've learned:

Women's experiences of domestic violence are severe.

- Because she is isolated with her abuser, away from friends and other family; because everyone is experiencing more stress due to the pandemic; because fewer women see leaving and going to shelter as an option, women's lives are in danger now more than ever before.
- Our data shows increased severity in Danger Assessment scores (tool that assesses severity of violence and risk of homicide) for second stage shelters, and sustained levels of severity in Danger Assessment (DA) scores with emergency shelter clients.
- Shelter admissions are one barometer of the domestic violence experiences of Albertans. Police are reporting an increase in domestic-violence related calls, emergency shelter calls are down, but second-stage shelter calls are up.

"Stay home, stay safe" isn't always true for those living in violence and abuse at home.

- Shelters are worried about women and seniors living in danger feeling pressured to stay at home during the pandemic.
- Shelters have stayed open so that families living in violence don't have to stay at home if it's not safe.
- Like hospitals and other essential service providers, shelters have worked to follow health guidelines and support clients with COVID-19. Some shelters have had to reduce capacity in order to keep women and children safe.
- Despite the barriers COVID-19 posed for domestic violence shelters across the province, from April 1, 2020 – September 30, 2020, domestic violence shelters remained open and continued to support communities. In this six-month time frame:
 - 2,725 women, children, and seniors were admitted to emergency shelters across the province
 - 300 of women and children were admitted to second stage shelters



- 1,792 women, children, and seniors accessed outreach services from shelters
- Shelters received 21,744 calls, with 7,241 of those being for crisis support.

Shelters are at the heart of keeping survivors safe in community and are needed now more than ever.

- Shelters collaborate: locally, provincially, nationally and globally to offer the best for seniors, women and their children fleeing violence and abuse.
- More than ever before, shelters do what it takes to keep Albertans alive and wear many hats in their communities.
- A day in the life of each shelter is unique and some shelters are the sole service provider in their community during the pandemic, serving people with a diverse array of challenges.
- In six months, shelters recorded serving 1,792 women, children and seniors through outreach services.



What the public needs to know:

Shelters remain open and are preparing for spike in demand

Shelters continue to serve women, children and seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic – in 6 months, 12,058 Albertans were served through residential, outreach or crisis calls. The experiences of other jurisdictions have taught us that when distancing requirements are removed, the demand for shelter services goes up.

Women’s shelters remain the safest place for a woman fleeing violence. Call 1-866-331-3933 to be connected to a women’s shelter. If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

Shelters are adapting their services to meet the physical distancing, disinfecting, and isolation requirements by public health officials so they can continue to meet the safety needs of the women, children, and seniors in their communities who rely on their services.

Shelters are more than a bed.

Our members are trained to help women assess their danger levels and create safety plans. We encourage anyone experiencing violence or abuse to call their local women’s shelter. They have counsellors at the ready, and they will work to support your safety in person or over the phone. Call 1-866-331-3933 to be connected to a women’s shelter.



How you can enhance safety:

If possible, donate to your local shelter

COVID-19 caused a significant reduction in fundraised dollars because of the increased competition for charitable donations as non-profits try to address the increased costs resulting from creating safety during COVID-19. as well as restrictions that prohibit in-person fundraising activities, open doors to allow for walk-in donations, maintain social enterprise initiatives, or attend community events that help generate revenue.

Learn about the signs of domestic violence. Check in with each other.

When you learn more about the dynamics of domestic violence, you can recognize it in people you know and offer support and connections to shelters. Let those who may be feeling unsafe know of the supports available by phone, or in person from their local women’s shelter. You can find contact information for our member shelters at acws.ca/shelters.

Trust your instincts

If you are in immediate danger, call 911. If you suspect that someone’s life may be in danger, please call 911. To speak to someone at a shelter near you, call our toll-free 24/7 line, 1-866-331-3933. You do not have to stay in a shelter to get help from one and they are ready to help.

