

Message from the BCSTH Board Chair and the Executive Director

This past year has been another busy one for the BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH) and we know that it has been the same for our members. We want to start our message by acknowledging your work with respect and re-stating our commitment to supporting you through advocacy, training, research and the development of resources.

As you can see from this Annual Report, BCSTH continues its strong focus on training. We are proud to offer training on many of the most pressing issues for anti-violence workers, such as Reducing Barriers, Tech Safety and Legal Toolkit training. We have maintained our focus on promoting inclusive practices which increase women's access to supportive services when they have experienced violence. A highlight of the past year has been the "You are not alone" public awareness campaign directed at immigrant and refugee women, ensuring that they know that whatever their immigration status, they can access the services of a Transition House. This multi-lingual, province wide campaign reached women and children in the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island, Okanagan, Kootenay and Cariboo regions in BC.

BCSTH's advocacy work on behalf of member organisations has continued at both the provincial and federal government levels. Provincially, we have highlighted the great need for increased operational funding for Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA), Transition House, Second Stage and Safe Home programs, as well as a reinstatement of core funding for Violence is Preventable (VIP) programs which are currently surviving on minimal subsidies. We hope that the new NDP Government takes its opportunity to address these urgent needs. At the federal level, BCSTH contributed to the consultation on the Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence.

Last year saw the completion of the first phase of the Reaching Out with Yoga Project at BCSTH. With our partner Yoga Outreach, it has brought trauma-informed yoga programming to four pilot sites around BC: Revelstoke, Kitimat, Ucluelet and Burnaby. This year, the research project moves into the second phase and expands to provide trauma-informed yoga classes for children and youth as well. Again, the project reaches across the province to work with Transition Houses and Children Who Witness Abuse programs on Vancouver Island, the Okanagan, Cariboo, Kootenays and the Northwest.

Speaking of the Children Who Witness Abuse program, we are excited to celebrate its 25th birthday this year! We will be using the upcoming Annual Training Forum to celebrate the contribution that this program has made to children and youth across the province for a quarter of a century. And next year is no less significant. It will mark 40 years since the BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses came into being. More reasons to continue the reflections, reminiscences and celebrations in 2018...

We know that the coming year will bring new opportunities and challenges to the work that we all do. We continue to value being part of a movement that will not accept that violence against women and their children is natural or inevitable and that it can be ended.

Dawn Clark, Chair, BCSTH Board of Directors
Joanne Baker, Executive Director

Highlights from Membership Survey

- 90 members participated in the survey this year and nearly 90% of them expressed being very satisfied or satisfied with their BCSTH membership.
- Training opportunities, program support and the Annual Training Forum continue to be identified as the most important benefits of being a BCSTH member.
- Training - Members want more training to be provided with in-person training opportunities facilitated across the province being most favored by members. Online training and webinars are also preferred by members especially among those facing barriers to attend in-person training including funding, staff coverage and remote location of worksite. Training on legal issues, technology safety, supporting children exposed to violence against women (VAW) and conflict resolution have been most in need of by members.
- Advocacy - Members want BCSTH to advocate for more affordable housing for women and their children, more funding to increase their capacity to support and house women and their children and to advocate for higher compensation for workers in the sector.

Funders



Thank you! BC Society of Transition Houses gratefully acknowledges the generous support of our funders.

CWWA Programs

With funding from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (MPSSG), BCSTH supported 86 communities across BC to deliver Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA) programming. Notable activities included:

- Surveying CWWA Counsellors about program specific policies.
- The development of the CWWA Program Practice Toolkit.
- Hosting 2 CWWA in person trainings in Cranbrook and Dawson Creek.
- Other activities included providing feedback on CWWA program concerns to the First Call Coalition, MCFD, MOJ and PODV.

VIP Programs

With contributions from BCSTH, 28 CWWA programs delivered Violence Is Preventable in 97 schools across BC. From September 2016-June 2017 an amazing:

- 343 presentations were delivered to children and youth.
- 92 presentations were delivered to educators and caregivers.
- 497 adults participated in VIP.
- 5864 students received VIP presentations or groups.
- 116 children and youth were referred or self-referred to CWWA program interventions after participating in a VIP presentation.

BCSTH would like to thank the 28 CWWA programs that went above their CWWA program deliverables to raise awareness about children's exposure to violence in the home and the impact VAW has in schools.

Building Supports Project

This year the Building Supports project launched a public awareness campaign, "You are not alone". This province-wide campaign has been launched through variety of mediums including TV/radio PSAs, social media, posters in women's washrooms and buses/bus shelters with the aim of reaching out to immigrant and refugee women who are experiencing violence, informing them about Transition Houses and how to access their support. The campaign also educates the public about what Transition Houses are and how to access them. It is a multi-lingual campaign in Farsi, Punjabi, Arabic, Mandarin and English.

The final phase of the project also began this year which focuses on provincial and federal policy barriers, practices and solutions in order to reduce or eliminate the obstacles to obtain safe and secure housing that exist for immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence.

Reaching Out with Yoga Project

The ROWY project is underway in four pilot sites: Revelstoke Women's Shelter Society (Revelstoke), Dixon Transition House Society (Burnaby), Westcoast Community Resources Society (Ucluelet), and Tamitik Status of Women Association (Kitimat). Trauma-informed yoga classes for residents/clients have been taking place in each of these locations, and staff of these agencies have received a half-day workshop, Using Yoga in Your Work. Data is being collected from the women who are participating about their experiences and the feedback has been very positive. The ROWY team looks forward to moving into the next phase, where there will be an additional 10 programs added, which will include 6 additional women's programs as well as 4 programs specifically for children and youth.

BCSTH Training

2016-2017 has marked an exceptional year for training at BCSTH. We continue to work toward developing and delivering trainings to anti-violence workers across the province. Here are a few highlights that we are proud to share with you:

Online Training

- A new online training platform was launched with intuitive curriculum navigation, a beautiful interface to optimize learning experiences and new payment options to improve the registration process.
- A new self-directed online course Building Support Promising Practices was developed and launched. The aim of this course is to increase capacity and strengthen practices and policies of transition house to better support immigrant and refugee women and their children experiencing violence.

Reducing Barriers

- 4 Reducing Barriers in-person trainings were delivered in Regions 1, 4, 5 and 7.
- The new Reducing Barriers online toolkit was launched with additional resources, sample forms and policies and videos to reinforce learning from the in-person trainings and to support implementation of new practices.

Open Doors

- In partnership with YWCA Canada, Women's Shelter Canada and the Canadian Women's Foundation, BCSTH continued on its three-year project to increase accessibility to transition houses across Canada for women with varying levels of mental wellness and substance use concerns.
- The Open Doors 3-day in-person Train the Trainers curriculum was developed and 2 trainings were delivered in Hamilton, ON and Calgary, AB.

Legal Toolkit

- Two-day legal toolkit trainings for transition house workers and CWWA Counsellors were facilitated in Dawson Creek, Prince Rupert and Surrey.
- 4 webinars tailored for transition house and CWWA Counsellors were created.

Technology Safety

- 4 technology safety trainings for front line anti-violence workers were facilitated in Vancouver, North Vancouver, Ottawa and Salmon Arm.

CWWA Program

- 2 CWWA trainings were delivered in Dawson Creek and Cranbrook
- Supporting Children and Youth Exposed to Domestic Violence training for front line workers was delivered in the North West Territories.

BCSTH Library

The BCSTH Library has an online database of resources selected to support BCSTH staff and members in their work with women, children and youth. Topics of particular interest this year included mental wellness and substance use, trauma-informed practice, mindfulness, gender identity, non-profit management, and psychoeducational games and workbooks.

- 104 resources were added to the library, bringing the total to 1,890 items.
- 30 new borrowers were welcomed to the library.
- 639 resources were loaned to 64 borrowers.
- 335 member-written reviews of resources were added to the database.

BC Society of Transition Houses

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