



Message from the BCSTH Board Chair and the Executive Director

This past fiscal year has been a productive year for the BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH) and our growing membership. More than 18,000 women, children and youth in BC received support services from our 106 member programs. 2018–2019 ended by saying goodbye and a sincere thank you to our Executive Director, Joanne Baker, who led the Society to new strengths in membership support, funding and advocacy. As many of you know, Joanne is now carrying the BCSTH heart insignia while she works for the BC government in strategic planning bringing her wisdom and passion for the safety of women, children and youth responding to violence. The BCSTH Team and Board wish Joanne all the best in her future endeavours. The BCSTH Director of Training and Programs, Amy S. FitzGerald was hired as the permanent Executive Director in March of 2019 and while she is familiar with the Society, she has big shoes to fill and much to learn.

The successful BCSTH Annual Training Forum (ATF) in October last year celebrated 40 years of BCSTH and going forward we will be planning for 40 more years of success one strategic plan at a time. This year the BCSTH Board and Team embarked on a strategic planning process for the next three years to work collectively to meet our mandate and mission of training, supporting and advocating for our membership and working collectively to end violence against women, children and youth.

As you can see from this Annual Report, the BCSTH staff have been busy providing in-person trainings across the province and launching new online offerings, research and resources. These have included Reducing Barriers for women accessing services who have mental wellness and substance use issues, Tech Safety and Safety Planning, Records Management and Legal trainings, Violence is Preventable (VIP) webinars and trainings related to PEACE and the new VIP curriculum. The BCSTH online training platform is actively used by members and we launched revised foundations courses and a new course on Increasing Access for Indigenous Women and Children. The Getting Home Project focused on addressing local, provincial and national barriers for women to access safe and affordable long-term housing and has built a community of pilot sites across BC while engaging in compelling research as to barriers women face in the housing market. The “You are Not Alone” campaign for immigrant and refugee women and their families won the 2018 BC Association of Broadcaster’s (BCAB) Humanitarian Award which supported airtime donated by BCAB in excess of \$2.5 million running from July of 2018 –June of 2019. The campaign’s posters and PSA announcements can be seen across the province. The Reaching Out with Yoga project moved into its fourth year and expanded its project sites. The project reaches out across the province, from Williams Lake to Squamish and the research is demonstrating ongoing benefits of trauma-informed yoga for women, children and youth with lived experience and member program staff. The Technology Safety Project received funding from the provincial and federal government to train and develop resources related to technology-facilitated violence, safety planning and member organization’s use of technology and electronic databases.

Children and youth and their caregivers continue to be supported by the 86 PEACE programs across BC and the VIP programs that received funding this year from the BC provincial government to support their school based preventative work. BCSTH continues to advocate for the expansion of the VIP preventative programs for children and youth.

The fiscal year also saw the announcement of the BC Housing (BCH) Building BC

Fund that will generate 1500 units of housing over the next 10 years which represents an exciting opportunity that will transform housing for women and their families in BC. Throughout the year, BCSTH and its member programs had opportunities to consult with BCH through its internal and external review process of the BCH Women’s Transition House Support Program and through its development of design guidelines that will inform the BC Building Fund process. We know that the coming year will bring new opportunities and challenges to the work that we all do together and BCSTH and its member programs are up to the challenge. We continue to celebrate being part of a movement that will not accept that violence against women and their children is inevitable but that it can and will be ended. We are convinced that the “future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams” (Eleanor Roosevelt).

In solidarity,

Lisa Rupert, Chair, *BCSTH Board of Directors*

Amy S. FitzGerald, *Executive Director*

Highlights from Membership Survey

- 177 members participated in the survey this year and nearly 80% expressed being very satisfied or satisfied with their BCSTH membership.
- Training opportunities, the Annual Training Forum and program support continue to be the most important benefits of being a BCSTH member. Members also found access to the BCSTH library resources and the Weekly Newsletter valuable.
- **Training** – In-person training opportunities facilitated across the province are most favored by members. Online self-paced training and a combination of in-person and online training are also preferred by members. Training on trauma-informed practice, LGBTQ2S+ topics, legal issues and working with Children & Youth in PEACE programs have been identified as most needed.
- **Resources** – Members would like to see BCSTH develop resources focused on supporting older women, rural and remote areas and LGBTQ2S+ related topics.
- **Advocacy** – Over 80% of members thought BCSTH’s advocacy was excellent or good during the 2018-2019 year. In the upcoming year, members want BCSTH to advocate for more affordable housing options for women and their children, more funding for Transition and Second Stage housing and more transportation options in rural areas. Additional funding for in-person training and funding to increase members’ capacity to support and house women and their children were also identified.

Funders



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

Annual Report 18/19

STRENGTH IN SOLIDARITY



PEACE Programs

BCSTH supported 86 PEACE Programs across BC to deliver support services for children and youth. Notable activities included:

- Hosting an in-person meeting, a child and youth focused keynote speaker, and 10 workshops to enhance PEACE Program delivery at our 2018 ATF.
- Collaborating with the First Call Coalition, MCFD, and NEVR Committees regarding PEACE Program issues and developed and distributed the 16 Days of Activism Campaign to PEACE Programs.
- Hosting UBC Graduate students to research how the PEACE Program could better meet the needs of Indigenous children, youth, and non-offending caregivers in culturally safe and responsive ways.
- Creating the PEACE Program Policy Template and Guide and the Use of Technology Policy Template Guide.

Violence is Preventable Programs

- BCSTH developed the new VIP program K-12 school curriculum, facilitator's guide, resources, webinar and provided honoraria and support to 33 VIP programs for the 2018 school year.

Reaching Out with Yoga Project

Phase 2, the final phase of the ROWY project, is now underway. Highlights from the 2018-2019 included:

- Initiating programming in 3 Phase 2 women's project sites and 1 children and youth project sites. 51 women, 6 children/youth and 99 staff have been engaged as research participants.
- Attending 8 meetings/conferences for the purposes of dissemination.
- Delivering trauma-informed yoga teacher training in all communities. Children and youth yoga teacher training curriculum was completed, and volunteer yoga teachers for the ROWY children and youth program have received this training.

Research is showing promising results from the project. Some highlights from the findings include:

- Increased knowledge and skills regarding yoga, mindfulness, relaxation techniques and self-regulation.
- Increased interest and engagement in yoga and other forms of physical activity.
- A decrease in trauma symptoms (sleep difficulties, physical pain, intrusive thoughts, negative thoughts, detachment, etc.) at the end of the program as compared to the beginning.

Getting Home Project

The Getting Home Project is a three-year, community-based project focusing on reducing barriers to safe, secure and affordable housing for women and their children experiencing violence in BC. The first year of the project focused on research and developing a community needs assessment.

The findings from the needs assessment showed that the largest barriers to housing for women experiencing violence are:

- Affordability of housing, financial barriers and poverty.
- Availability of appropriate housing and services.
- Discrimination and lack of awareness.

As well, the key themes from the research were:

- Safety vs. Housing: women are being forced to trade safety for housing.
- Hopelessness: the dire lack of housing has led to feelings of hopelessness among women and anti-violence workers.

Building Supports Project

Building Supports' province-wide multi-language awareness campaign "You are not alone" was the recipient of 2018 BCAB Humanitarian Award. The PSA reached out to immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence, informing them about Transition Houses and how to access their support. The value of the TV/radio airtime donated by BCAB was over \$2.5 million in the last 12 months.

BCSTH Training

2018-2019 was a busy year for BCSTH training program. Here are a few highlights that we are proud to share with you:

In-Person Training

Reducing Barriers

- 4 in-person trainings were delivered in Regions 2, 5, 6 and 7 to 56 participants in total. 84% of feedback received indicated the participants were "very satisfied" with the training.
- Presented at Women's Shelter Canada Conference.

Open Doors

- BCSTH and Women's Shelter Canada co-facilitated the final Open Doors 3-day in-person training in Ottawa, ON for Nunavut participants.

Legal Toolkit

- Delivered two 1-day trainings in Kitimat and Kelowna, and a workshop to transition housing programs at the Okanagan Regional Meeting.

Tech Safety

- Delivered two webinars to anti-violence workers across Canada, and two 2-day in-person trainings in Kitimat and Halifax.
- Presented on the Tech Safety Project at Women's Shelter Canada Conference and BCSTH ATF.

PEACE

- Training on the new VIP Program curriculum at the BCSTH ATF.

Online Training

- 309 new enrollments in total, 9 active courses available.

Other Training Activities

- Participated in the development of trauma-informed practice online/ in-person course for Justice, Public Safety, and Anti-Violence Communities in BC.

Technology Safety Project

BCSTH's Technology Safety Project had two focuses this year. BCSTH researched electronic databases and their use by Canadian anti-violence organizations and with the support from our sister Technology Safety Projects, the National Network to End Domestic Violence in the United States and Australia's Women Services Network, BCSTH created a Technology Safety Online Toolkit.

Resources developed this year can be found on our new Tech Safety Resource page www.bcsth.ca/technology-safety-project-resources and include:

- 7 database consideration resources developed in French and English.
- A Technology Safety Online Toolkit, which includes 33 practical tip sheets.
- A guide for Canadian women experiencing technology-facilitated violence: Strategies for Enhancing Safety.
- Updated Love Is Secure Postcard, which is now available in French.

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 resilience, mindfulness, consent, parenting, trauma-informed practice, and psychoeducational games and workbooks for adults, teens and children.

- 102 new hard copy and online resources were added to the library, bringing the total to 2125.
- 42 new borrowers were welcomed to the library.
- 569 resources were loaned to 64 borrowers.
- 41 member-written reviews of resources were added to the database, for a total of 416 reviews.

BC Society of Transition Houses

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