

24 Hour PEACE Program Census Report 2019

A one day look at the Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling and Empowerment (PEACE) Programs for Children and Youth in BC

The word "PEACE" is written in a white, cursive, hand-drawn style font. It is centered on a dark teal, irregularly shaped background that resembles a watercolor splash or a textured brushstroke. The background is set against a light teal background with faint, larger-scale watercolor-like patterns.

BC Society of
Transition Houses



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Introduction

The BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH) is a member-based, provincial umbrella organization that, through leadership, support and collaboration, enhances the continuum of services and strategies to respond to, prevent and end violence against women, children and youth. The Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling and Empowerment (PEACE) Program for children and youth experiencing violence, (formerly the Children Who Witness Abuse Program) is a free, confidential program across BC for children and youth aged 3 to 18 who have experienced domestic violence.

BCSTH surveys PEACE Programs annually to document a snapshot of services provided in a single 24 hour survey period through an annual 24 hour census. BCSTH conducted this 24 hour census survey in November 2019. This census is a snapshot count of a 24 hour period where children and youth with experiences of violence and their non-offending caregivers were served by PEACE Programs. This census provides a provincial picture of how many people were seeking services for their experiences of violence, how many were unable to be served, and the scope of the current PEACE program support services.

While PEACE Programs submit their data to the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (MPSSG) that data may include duplicate information (e.g. a child or youth may have been served by two of the same Programs in one quarter). The 24 hour census data aims to eliminate duplication by capturing all individuals served within the same 24 hour time frame.

The PEACE Program is a psycho- educational program that provides age-appropriate individual and group counselling services to children and youth to:

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- Label and express the feelings they have experienced in relation to the violence they have encountered;
- Understand healthy ways of dealing with anger and expressing anger;
- Understand that they are not at fault for the violent actions of others;
- Teach safety skills, strategies and develop safety plans;
- Encourage open communication;
- Acknowledge loss and separation issues;
- Facilitate understanding of abuse and myths about violence against women;
- Explore other violence issues such as violence in the media; and
- Encourage self-confidence.

For more information about BCSTH's PEACE programs and to find a PEACE program in your community, visit our website at <https://bcsth.ca/who-we-support/>.



In 24 Hours

79 of the 86 PEACE Programs participated in BCSTH's 2019 24 Hour PEACE Program Census. Thank you to all of the PEACE Programs who took time out of their busy days to participate in the 2019 Census.

On November 27-28, 2019, over a 24 hour period, **481** children and youth who have experienced violence and their non-offending caregivers were supported in-person by PEACE Programs across BC.

In addition, during this 24 hour period, PEACE Programs in BC:

- Responded to **406** service-related calls, emails and texts by providing information and support; and
- Educated **156** people about the dynamics and impacts of violence against women through training and public presentations.

Unfortunately, during the same time period an additional **954** children and youth and their non-offending caregivers were unable to be served.

"We are seeing an increase in domestic violence, and my caseload is overflowing. Our small community could use a full time position." (PEACE Program Counsellor)

Most commonly reported factors contributing to programs not being able to provide services during the 24 hour reporting period were funding sufficient to serve all of the children and



youth requesting services, followed by waitlists for the program. The same factors were identified in 2018.

BCSTH sincerely thanks the PEACE Programs for the difference they are making in the lives of children and youth experiencing violence each day and MPSSG for their recognition of the value of the PEACE program and ongoing operational funding. By working together, all these key partners collaboratively can build a BC where children, youth and their families have access to critical supports and peace.

“The PEACE Program is an amazing program for children/youth and families. Our clients know that they have someone who cares to support them without judgement.” (PEACE Program Counsellor)



In-Person Support Services

Over a 24 hour period, **481** children and youth with experiences of violence and their non-offending caregivers were provided in-person support services through the 79 PEACE Programs that participated in the census. PEACE Programs supported **377** children and youth and **104** adults in person to support and respond to the impacts of violence.

# of people supported in-person	481 TOTAL
Female Adults	95
Male Adults	6
Trans-Identified Adults (over 18)	3
Female Youth (16-18)	19
Male Youth (16-18)	12
Trans-Identified Youth (16 - 18 years)	3
Female Children (11-15)	85
Male Children (11-15)	47
Trans-Identified Children/Youth (11 - 15 years)	2
Female Children (6-10)	92
Male Children (6-10)	81
Female Children (0-5)	20
Male Children (0-5)	16

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"Thank you for helping me, I really appreciate you being here for me."

(Youth, aged 15)

IN THE 24 HOUR PERIOD, PEACE PROGRAMS RESPONDED TO **406** SERVICE RELATED CALLS, EMAILS AND TEXT MESSAGES: AN AVERAGE OF 17 CALLS, EMAILS AND TEXTS EVERY HOUR.

"[Families] really appreciate the assistance and the fact that the services are free. Some of them feel as if they need support for at least a year or longer."

(PEACE Program Counsellor)



Standing Beside: Support and Advocacy

“My child looks forward to this appointment every week. It provided regulating support that he carries forward into the week. We also appreciate all of the parent support and resources you provide to us.” (Parent)

Individual support services was the activity PEACE Programs most frequently reported engaging in over the 24 hour period, (figure 2). Providing children’s support was the second most common activity reported by PEACE Program Counsellors.

PEACE Program Counsellors use a psycho-educational approach in their work in order to:

- Support children and youth to feel safe, respected, valued, and heard.
- Support children, youth, and parents to develop healthy and respectful ways of connecting with one another.
- Identify and develop safety skills and strategies.
- Support emotional health and self-esteem.
- Help children and youth identify and manage their emotions
- To foster hope by reminding children and youth of their abilities, and how they have used strategies and resistance in the past to successfully cope with adversity.
- To provide outreach in schools focused on violence prevention.
- To develop understanding of violence against women and girls.

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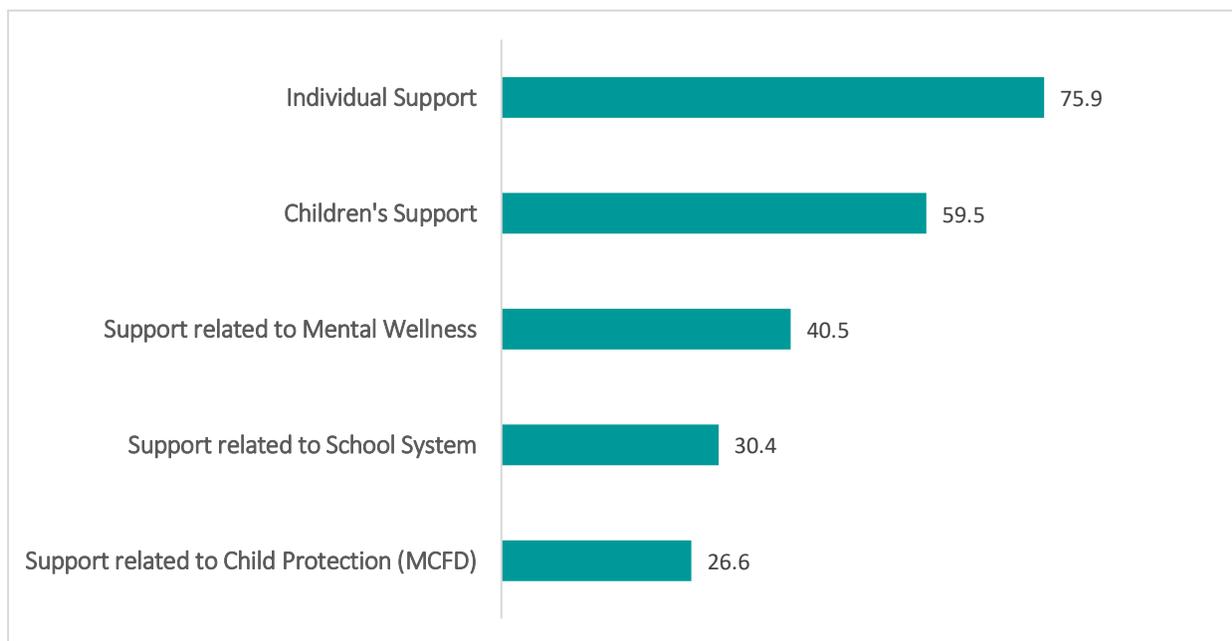


FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF PEACE PROGRAMS WHO REPORTED PROVIDING EACH ACTIVITY DURING THE CENSUS PERIOD

"My son's behavior has greatly improved since the PEACE worker started working with him." (Parent)

During the 24 hour period, PEACE Programs provided:

- **229** individual counselling sessions to children and youth;
- **27** group counselling sessions to children and youth; and
- **63** sessions to parents or caregivers.

IN THE 24 PERIOD, PEACE COUNSELLORS DELIVERED **319** SUPPORT SESSIONS.



Sharing Knowledge: Violence Prevention and Public Education

Violence prevention and education that PEACE Programs provide includes reaching out to children and youth in schools through the Violence is Preventable (VIP) project. Through VIP, PEACE Program counsellors educate young people and school staff about healthy relationships and the resources that are available regarding domestic violence.

During the 24 hour period, PEACE Programs offered 16 trainings and public education sessions across BC, including 9 VIP presentations and 7 additional community prevention presentations. Altogether, these events reached 156 people while delivering the message that violence is preventable.

"Thank you so much for coming into my class yesterday. It was fantastic!" (Youth)



Unmet Needs

"We need more funding! We currently have funding for me to be here 2 days a week, if I could have even one more day I would be able to work with so many more families!" (PEACE Program Counsellor)

Over the 24 hour November period, **954** children, youth and their non-offending parents or caregivers could not be served by PEACE Program services.

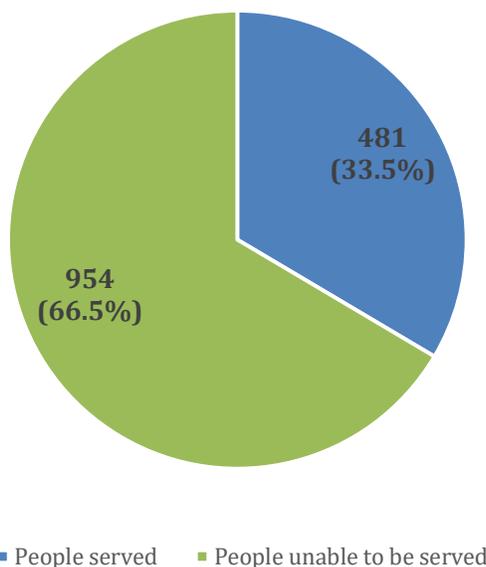


FIGURE 2: WOMEN, CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVED AND UNABLE TO BE SERVED BY PEACE PROGRAMS DURING THE 24 HOUR PERIOD

"[Because of the PEACE Program waitlist] one mother said she had to pay \$100/hour and drive to the next community to access counselling for her son."
(PEACE Program Counsellor)

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Limited resources are factors affecting the delivery of the PEACE Program. As with last year’s census, the top two most relevant factors identified by PEACE Programs was funding for the program (58.2% of respondents rated this as very relevant or somewhat relevant), and waitlists for the program (57.7% of respondents rated this as very relevant or somewhat relevant) (Table 1). These factors limit the PEACE Program’s ability to meet requests for services.

“We are working hard, and there is more need than ever for PEACE Program services in [our] region.” (PEACE Program Counsellor)

TABLE 1: TOP 5 REASONS PEACE PROGRAMS WERE UNABLE TO SERVE WOMEN, CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Top 5 Reasons PEACE Program were unable to serve women, children, and youth	Very Relevant	Somewhat Relevant	Not Relevant	Unanswered
Not enough funding for program	23 (29.1%)	23 (29.1%)	12 (15.2%)	21 (26.6%)
Waitlist	30 (40%)	14 (17.7%)	16 (20.3%)	19 (24.1%)
Not enough resources to support women, children and youth with varying levels of mental wellness and/or substance use	22 (27.8%)	18 (22.8%)	21 (26.6%)	18 (22.8%)
Not enough staff	16 (20.3%)	21 (26.6%)	21 (26.6%)	21 (26.6%)
No funds for transportation/travel	10 (12.7%)	25 (31.6%)	25 (31.6%)	19 (24.1%)

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"We are often asked to take on referrals from CYMH that include children who have trauma on top of severe mental health challenges. We should be working collaboratively, rather than taking referrals from CYMH and them closing the files on their end." (PEACE Program Counsellor)

A lack of resources to support adequately clients with mental health and substance use was another reason identified by PEACE Counsellors for being unable to serve women, children and youth. The unavailability of services such as Children and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) and Sexual Abuse Intervention Programs (SAIP) in many areas, results in PEACE Counsellors frequently being asked to carry out work that does not fall within the mandate of the PEACE Program.

"The PEACE program is very valuable and offers so much value to our community. We work with children and youth and Women, MCFD, RCMP, Teachers, Fathers and many children from one family. That's a lot of people with 1/2 time hours." (PEACE Program Counsellor)

The cost and lack of transportation also creates barriers to accessing PEACE Programs. Women in northern, rural and remote areas face particularly challenging circumstances. They often need to travel many kilometers outside of their communities to access services and supports and struggle with limited transportation options to get their children to appointments.

"The population in our area is very spread out with no public transportation. I work flexible hours, and often travel to children's schools and daycares to see them." (PEACE Program Counsellor).



Supporting PEACE Programs

BCSTH and the PEACE Programs are sincerely grateful for the ongoing funding commitment provided by Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to provide support to PEACE Program counselling services to the 86 PEACE Programs across BC. Today, PEACE Programs are supporting more children and youth with complex needs with these limited resources and often have waitlists for their services. It is vital that every BC child and youth responding to domestic violence along with their non-offending caregiver has timely access to appropriate supports to live safely and build PEACEful relationships. BCSTH and the PEACE Programs across BC are committed to continue working collaboratively with the provincial government stakeholders to ensure that all these critical needs are met.

*“This work is so valuable and life changing for the people who receive services.”
(PEACE Program Counsellor)*

Please visit the BCSTH [Directory of Member Programs & Services](#) or the [Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General site](#) to find more information about a PEACE Program in your community.