



Malton Women Council



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CHILD AND TEEN SAFETY

TIP SHEET



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Child and Teen Safety

Raising and protecting your children from harm is a big responsibility. Keep reading to learn more about common issues children may face, and how to keep your kids and kids in your community safe.





Child Abuse

Child Abuse is harm that can arise in various forms, such as physical, sexual, and emotional. Neglect is also a form of abuse.

- Physical Abuse involves harm to a child's body, such as kicking, slapping, shaking, or threatening to do these things.
- Sexual Abuse involves sexually touching or using a child. Examples include touching a child's private parts, making a child touch or look at another person's private parts, taking photos or videos of a child doing these things, or trying to get a child to do these things.



- Emotional Abuse involves hurtful comments made towards a child to bully, scare, or put them down. This includes threatening to hurt a child or engaging in a hurtful action, such as destroying their toys or harming their pets.
- Neglect can be physical or emotional. Parents or caregivers may not provide a child with basic needs such as food and clothing, or fail to provide medical care.
- Exposure to Family and Intimate Partner Violence is another form of child abuse, whether it is direct or indirect. Children may directly witness or see violence occurring if they are in the room or close enough to hear it. They may intervene to prevent physical abuse from happening. Indirectly, they may see the aftermath of a fight, be told about it by a sibling, or notice a change in a caregiver's behavior.



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If you suspect a child is being abused, it is the law to report this concern to your local Children's Aid Society.

- Peel Children's Aid Society: 905-363-6131
<https://www.peelcas.org/home>
- Toronto Children's Aid Society: 416-924-4646
<https://www.torontocas.ca/>

If you are experiencing abuse, there is help available.

- If you are in immediate danger, call 911 or your local police emergency number.
- For general support, call Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868. You do not have to reveal your name. <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>
- Tell a trusted adult if you see or experience abuse.



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Bullying and Cyber-Bullying

- Bullying is a repeated behaviour to intimidate or hurt another person. Bullying can include physical aggression, verbal abuse, exclusion, and online harassment. Bullying involves the bully targeting a person who may be weaker, more vulnerable, or different due to their gender, skin colour, disability, etc.
- Bullying can occur anywhere – at school, during sports practice, and through texting or social media. Cyberbullying can also include spreading false rumours or posting photos or videos without your consent.



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- Your child may be a victim of bullying if they have unexplained injuries, lose their personal belongings, experience anxiety or depression, have declining grades, avoid social situations, or have changes in eating.
- Talk to your kids about bullying – being bullied, acting as a bully, and standing up for someone who is being bullied. Teach your kid to be kind to others. If your child is being bullied, talk to a counsellor, supervisor, teacher, or authority figure.
- To learn more about cyberbullying, please refer to the cyberbullying document/page on this website.



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Drug and Alcohol Use

- Drugs are substances that influence the function of the mind and body. Examples of drugs include cocaine, ecstasy, marijuana, opioids, Methamphetamine, and electronic cigarettes (vaping). Alcohol and nicotine are also common substances used by teens.
- Your teen may fall into drug use due to a family history of substance abuse, mental health conditions (depression, anxiety, ADHD), impulsive behavior, or a desire to fit in.



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- Over time, teens may become dependent on the drugs, engage in impaired driving or high-risk sexual behavior, or face poor judgment and get poor grades in school. Drugs also have significant health effects. They can cause damage to the heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, and a person's mental health.
- Some signs of drug use may include secrecy, changes in personality, bloodshot eyes, trouble thinking clearly, smell of drug on clothing, and depression.
- If your teen is struggling with drug abuse, there is help available. Organizations such as the ones below can help your teen:
 - Punjabi Community Health Services: (905) 677-0889 <https://pchs4u.com/>
 - Peel Addiction Assessment and Referral Centre: (905) 629-1007 <https://paarc.com/>



Gun and Gang Violence

- Street Gangs involve three or more people coming together for a criminal purpose, like theft, harassment, selling drugs, and human trafficking. Gangs often have a common symbol or sign to represent themselves.
- Gang members are often recruited young, drawn by a sense of family, security, and identity. They are asked to engage in crime, and if they refuse, the gang can threaten to harm them or their loved ones.
- A person at risk in a gang may become isolated from friends and family, change their appearance (wear gang-related clothing or bandanas), change their behavior and attitude (adopt new slang and hand gestures, refuse to listen to authority figures), come home later than usual, and own expensive items they cannot afford.



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- People are often scared of gangs, making it less likely for gang-related crime to be reported. Unfortunately, this causes gang-related crimes to continue.
- Gun violence is also on the rise in Canada. 1 in 3 homicides in Canada are firearm-related.
- Many youth involved in gun violence come from vulnerable circumstances and are caught in violence, crime, and neighbourhood politics.
- Protect youth from gun and gang violence by removing guns and weapons from the home. If you carry a gun, store it unloaded and decocked in a lock box or gun safe. Store guns and ammunition in separate locations.
- Watch out for warning signs of gun violence in children and teens, such as bullying, withdrawing from others, making threats, bragging about access to weapons, and obsession with violent online content.
- Talk to your teen about gun and gang violence. Connect with counsellors, teaches, and authorities as required.





Street proofing and Walking Home Alone

To help your children stay safe while walking home, teach them to:

- Get help from “safe” people (police, paramedics, firefighters)
- Run and find a safe person if a stranger offers candy or money
- Yell “Stranger, Stranger” repeatedly and do whatever it takes to break free and run if a stranger approaches them.
- Never approach a car trying to get their attention. Adults do not ask kids for help.

You can also take steps to protect them:

- Learn about your child’s friends, including their names, how they look, contact information, and homes.
- Learn the routes your child takes.
- Ensure your child knows the contact information of parents and guardians and their home address.
- Walk the route to school with your child to increase familiarity.
- Teach your child to remain aware of their surroundings.



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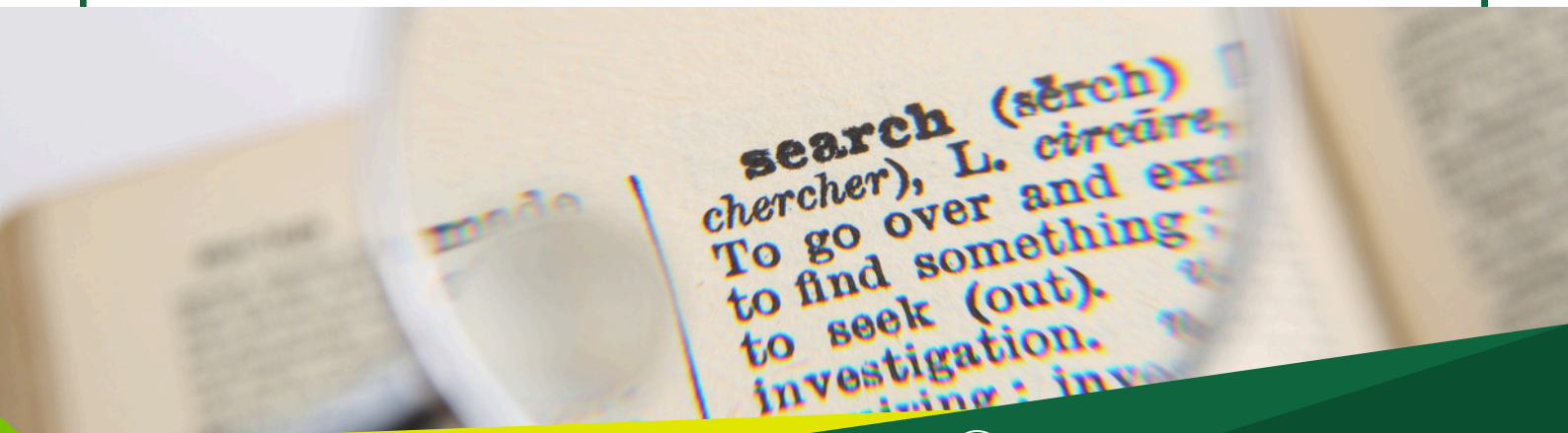


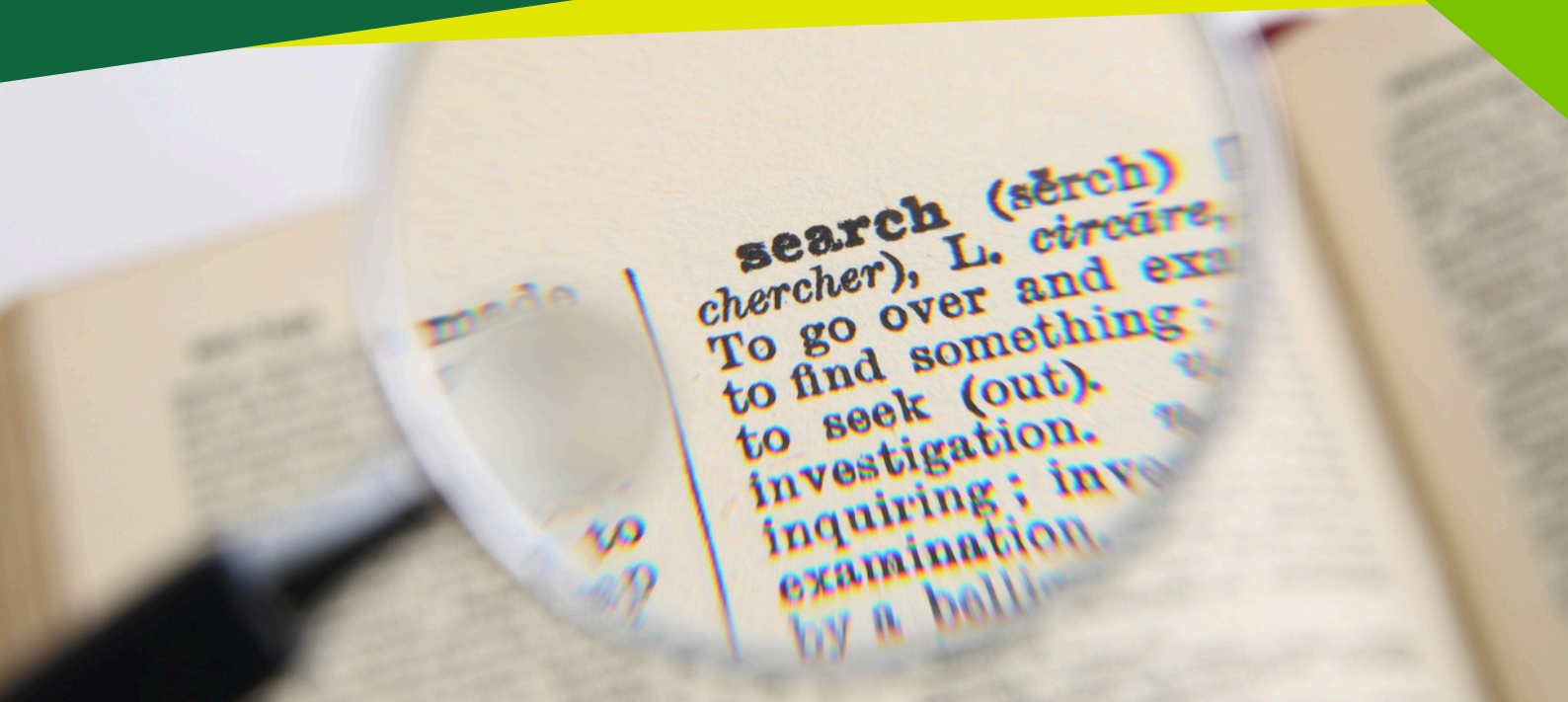
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Resources and References

- To learn more about how you can keep your children safe, refer to the following resources:
- Government of Canada Child Abuse: Information and Resources <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/fv-vf/ca-me.html>
- Peel Police Child and Teen Safety: <https://www.peelpolice.ca/en/safety-tips/child-and-teen-safety.aspx>
- Government of Canada HELP Toolkit: Identifying and Responding to Family Violence for Family Law Legal Advisers – Supplemental Material <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fl-df/help-aide/tab5-onglet5.html>
- Peel CAS Impacts of IPV on Children https://www.peelcas.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/documents/peel-cas---impacts-of-ipv-on-infants-children-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=69291281_6
- LittleWarriors.ca <https://littlewarriors.ca/about/information-resources/regional-resources/ontario-resources/#::~text=Victim%20Services%20Call%20the%20Victim,languages%20spoken%20in%20the%20province>





- Government of Ontario: Report child abuse and neglect
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/report-child-abuse-and-neglect>
- Mayo Clinic Drug Education
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/tween-and-teen-health/in-depth/teen-drug-abuse/art-20045921>
- Peel Police Drug Education Tips:
<https://www.peelpolice.ca/en/safety-tips/drug-education.aspx#At-Risk-or-Drug-Users>
- Bullying Canada <https://www.bullyingcanada.ca/>
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: Children and Guns
https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-And-Guns-Firearms-037.aspx
- Signs of Gun Violence
<https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/blog/gun-violence/know-the-signs-of-gun-violence/>

