



REVELSTOKE WOMEN'S SHELTER SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT
2023-24



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Revelstoke Women's Shelter Society

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Report design: Emily Kemp Creative

Cover image: Our Coldest Night of the Year event in Revelstoke. Photo: Christine Love Hewitt

MISSION

The Revelstoke Women's Shelter Society exists to offer support, assistance, information and referrals in a courteous and compassionate manner that respects the dignity, privacy, culture and diversity of women and children who are victims of abuse.

MANDATE

The society established Forsythe House as a safe home to provide women and children in our community with temporary shelter. The board of directors and staff of the society work in a non-judgemental manner to support women and their children while exploring their options.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge and honour the four nations whose unneeded land is where we live, work and recreate: the Sinixt, Secwepemc, Syilx, and Ktunaxa.

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WHO WE ARE

For over 30 years our shelter, Forsythe House, has served as a place of refuge and support for women and their children at risk of all forms of abuse.

Photo: Christine Love Hewitt

BOARD MEMBERS

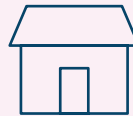
President: Meg Irving

Vice-President: Lisa Lamothe

Secretary/Treasurer: Hannah Rawlings

Members: Kelly McWilliams
Siobhan O'Conner
Valerie Duhamel

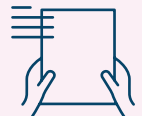
2023-24 HOUSE STATS



28 women
15 children
were sheltered



154 crisis calls
267 support calls



47 women
in Revelstoke
utilized onsite
shelter services

WE HAVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH:



RISE Legal Aide Support: They assist women navigating the legal system with individual support, advocacy and referrals.



Community Connections Emergency Shelter Beds: Our shelter assists with intake calls, with capacity to place needy individuals in five emergency shelter beds located in a local motel.



Columbia Park Elementary School: We provide social programming to youth. See our School Report to learn more.



Revelstoke Secondary School: We provide workshops on healthy relationships and consent to grade 8 students.



RICAT (Revelstoke Integrated Case

Assessment Team): We, along with other agencies including Interior Health, RCMP, Victim Services, Community Connections, Mental Health and Addictions and Probation partner to deliver this. The team assess and provide safety planning recommendations, guidance, services and support for the highest risk domestic violence cases.



Homeless Prevention Program: Prevent homelessness by providing rental subsidies based on income. We provide money for clients connected to the shelter. We no longer provide this service to new clients.

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LYNN LOEPPKY

Does Abuse Happen in Our Community? Yes. Unequivocally, Revelstoke is not immune to domestic violence.

Gender based violence is pervasive. In 2022, every 48 hours a woman or girl was murdered in Canada, primarily by men. Nationally, 184 women lost their lives that same year. Internationally, 48,800 women and girls were killed worldwide by their partners. Statistically, 1 in 3 women will be abused in their lifetime.

This abuse has many forms: physical, psychological, financial, and sexual. Less than 40% of abused women leave. Revelstoke has an estimated population of 9,032, with 48% being or identifying as women and girls. Applying that 1 in 3 statistic reveals 1,430 potential Revelstokian female victims of abuse.

These statistics align with our experience in the Forsythe House, where our bednights in the 2023 fiscal year was 1130, referred 117 local women and 26 local children, nearly 10% of the local potential female victims of abuse seeking shelter. This temporary safe haven with 5 beds is funded primarily by BC Housing.

It takes a host of societal and cultural changes to eliminate domestic violence. In Revelstoke, our first step in helping women is offering a safe space where they can heal and move forward with their lives. The Forsythe house offers a 24 hour crisis line, a safe refuge, support and advocacy to all women and their children fleeing abuse.

Domestic violence is at an all time high, and has been said to be a pandemic of its own. We recognize that the needs of our women are more complex than many are aware of.

While dealing with psychological effects of trauma, they are also navigating systems, some of which have many moving parts. These include but are not limited to court systems, social media platforms, medical systems, financial institutions, and ministries.

It is often overwhelming and exhausting work, and we do our best to provide in-house and outreach services to address these issues.



PROGRAMMING

Our outreach programs were developed with a trauma informed approach as our staff recognize that the house keeps women safe, but that our support and advocacy through various programs is what moves women forward.

With this in mind, the Moving Forward Program was created and facilitated by the RWSS to provide a wrap-around care model, and was our first step in addressing these needs. Our programming serves to address complex issues and promote healing through its 5 components: connection, individual support, clinical counseling, legal support/advocacy and school programming.

“IT TAKES A HOST OF SOCIETAL AND CULTURAL CHANGES TO ELIMINATE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE”

It has grown to include our Mental Health Matters Initiative, designed to offer support to in-house and outreach clients along their journey, and has positively impacted the community through the free counseling component. A healthy community acts as a preventative measure, increasing women's safety. These programs are all funded through grants, donations and fundraisers.

595 women accessed our outreach services in the last fiscal year, an increase of 33% from 399 women

the previous year. This calculation does not include women who seek services anonymously.

Our outreach also includes The Community Response Network (CRN), a program designed to educate and raise awareness in the community around elder abuse. The Revelstoke Women's Shelter holds this contract as another helping hand to keeping our seniors safe from abuse.

SECOND STAGE APPROVED

Having access to safe, longer term housing is a key component to ensure the safety of those brave enough to leave abusive relationships. Affordable, safe and timely housing is a huge barrier for those fleeing abuse, and often a reason victims return to live with the perpetrators. Locally, this is exacerbated by resort town housing issues including cost, availability, and lack of longevity in a rental contract.

Affordable housing waitlists are often a multi-year waiting game. We are thrilled to say our next step is to provide longer term housing for women and their children by opening up a second stage housing complex. This complex will consist of one bedroom, two bedroom and three bedroom units. Second stage housing is specifically for women and children fleeing abuse who have been residing in the transition house and need longer term housing of between 6 and 12 months while they rebuild their lives. Second stage will also host counseling and an outreach office onsite, so we can continue offering support. BC Housing plans to build in the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

We look forward to continuing our services by offering a safe place, in house and outreach services, and second stage housing.

Sara Lepply



HOUSE REPORT

MEGAN LUND

Our primary mission is the operation of the Forsythe House, a safe, temporary home for women and children fleeing abuse. Within this building, we run a crisis line answered 24/7. In the last fiscal year, we answered 154 crisis calls and 267 support calls, totalling 421 calls from members of the community. We offer support to anyone who calls regardless of gender. These supports include help accessing emergency shelter, referrals to counselling, crisis intervention, legal support and screening clients coming to stay at the shelter.

UPGRADES

We had numerous upgrades. The parking lot was paved, a new heat pump and generator installed, and a new shed placed in the backyard. We obtained a pet policy and have built a dog run. To date, having pets in the house has been a positive experience. Upcoming projects still to be completed in the fiscal year include adding escapable windows in our windowless basement. This will allow us to offer overflow sleeping when the bedrooms are full, as well as create a usable suite for clients with diverse needs.

CLIENT SERVICES

Our staff offer numerous support such as to legal advocacy, safety and action planning, on-site counselling, groceries, and crisis intervention. In the last fiscal year, 28 women and 15 children stayed. 47 vulnerable women in the community utilised our onsite services. These services can look different depending on the need but can include safety planning, meals, access to laundry machines, computer support, and often, someone to talk to.

STAFF

All of these services and supports are provided by compassionate and talented staff. Staff are certified counsellors or social workers, and others are experienced in offering trauma informed and empowering care in the social services sector. All work 12 hours shifts. They are reliable and regularly go above and beyond. It's a tall order for someone making well under the Revelstoke living wage. As the cost of living increases, more and more of our staff have to hold second jobs to sustain themselves and their families.

As the house manager I would like to thank everyone for their dedication and hard work.

MOVING FORWARD

PROGRAM

ADRIA

Trauma-Informed Women's Yoga Classes at the Community Centre have seen the highest numbers in four years! We've had up to 20 women. I am impacted by the ability of the instructor to offer trauma-informed yoga, seeing where the participants are at in their familiarity and comfort with yoga and offers more challenging poses, while at the same time cuing alternate poses to the ones who may be new to the practice and are still learning.

Seniors' Chair Yoga has been extremely highly attended with consistently 4-12 participants every week! There is high interest in the senior population to have an opportunity to engage as a group and build strength and flexibility together.

Eight-Week Art Series with Barbara Maye for eight women: We had 11 participants. The feedback from one of the participants was that this class helped break her out of the slump she was in and that she has started creating art again!

Six-Week Pottery Class for six women: we had 13 participants. The class was hugely enjoyed by all participants in learning a new method of creative expression.

Kids' Cooking Class in the Community Connections Kitchen: three women and four children attended. It was fun to give an opportunity for moms and kids to do something interactive to-gether.

Night Out: Two performances at the Performing Arts Centre: We had six participants. It was fun ladies nights out.

We had a **community garden** in the summer and will again this year.

Gingerbread House Decorating in December: 12 women and 16 children attended. It was great to see how individuals who attended the event were welcomed to sit with families to decorate houses together.

Lino Cutting Christmas Cards at the Visual Arts Centre: five women and one child attended. Everyone carved their own stamp and made 10 Christmas cards with

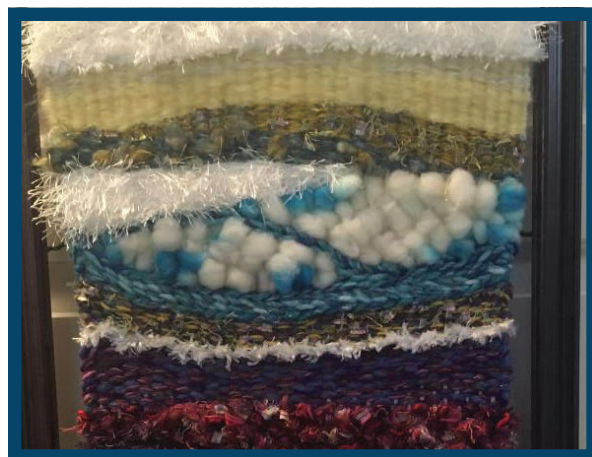


it, donating them to the women's shelter as greeting cards. Each participant took one card home, along with their stamp.

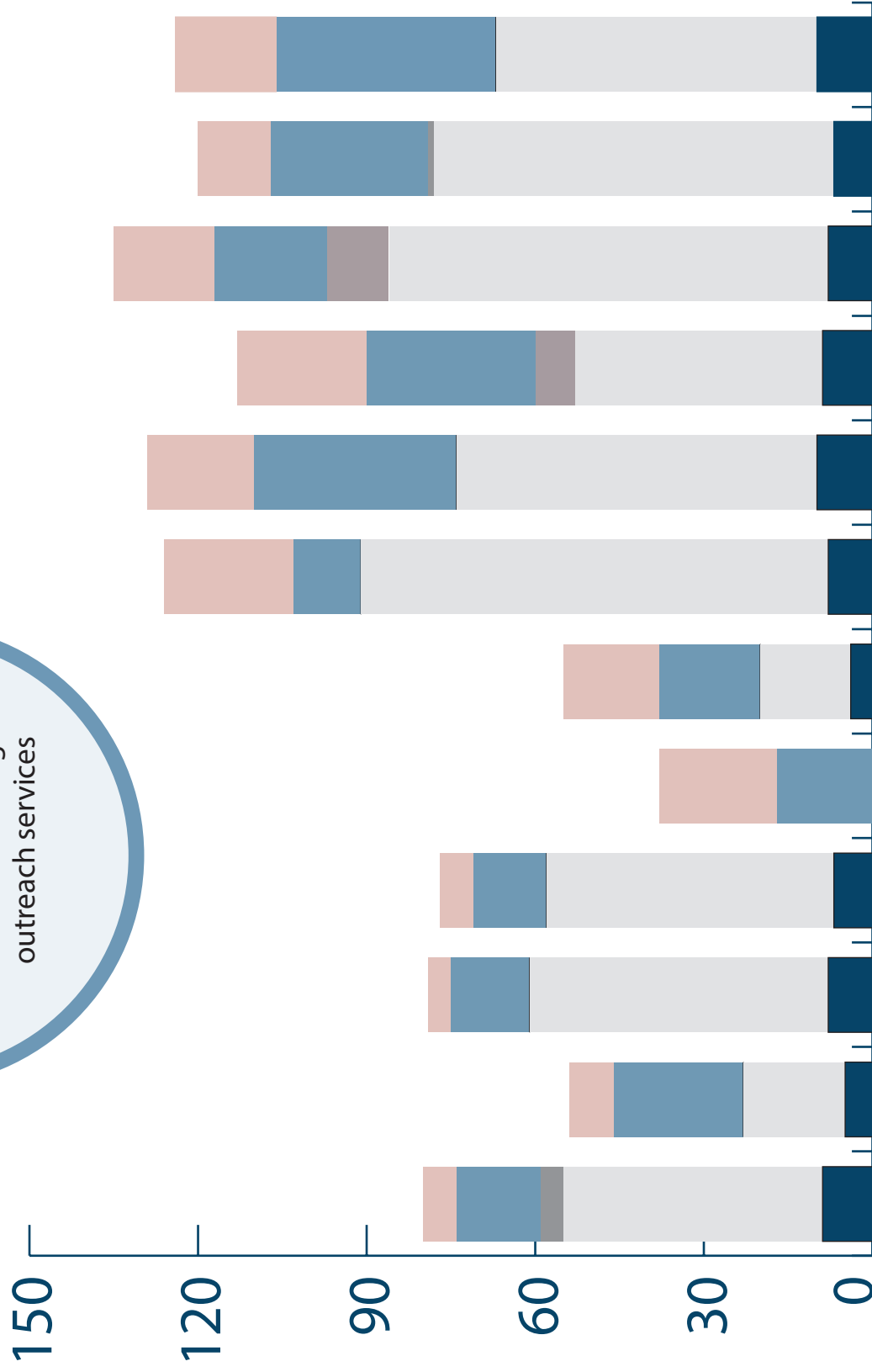
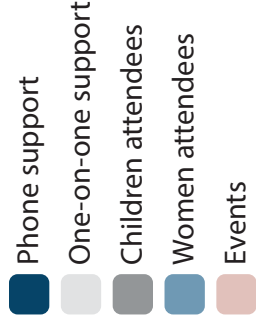
Craft/Swag Christmas Event: five women and six children attended. One of our amazing volunteers collected materials to create door swags with greenery, and had supplies for other crafts, such as weaving and decoupage.

We rented the local arena and hosted a **Family Skate Event** in December: 20 adults and 11 children attended. We saw families attend, as well as a baby-sitter and the kids, young couples, and seniors attend to skate!

Along with **weekly delivery** of food bank hampers, grocery shopping, running errands, and helping with light housework (making the bed, vacuuming, taking out the garbage as needed) to support seniors in the community.



STATISTICS



MOVING FORWARD

COUNSELLING PROGRAM

PHOEBE TOOP (RPC-C)

About Phoebe

Phoebe Toop joined the Revelstoke Women's Shelter Society in May 2023 as a registered professional counsellor. Over the past 12 months she has provided counselling services to women and children on an in-house and outreach basis.

Phoebe uses a person-centred approach and is passionate about creating and holding a safe container for clients to process and integrate trauma. Recognising the uniqueness of each individual, Phoebe uses a variety of therapy modalities to accommodate the needs and preferences of her clients.

Mindfulness-based cognitive behaviour therapy, dialectical behaviour therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, internal family systems, and emotion focused therapy are the primary modalities used to support clients. Sessions are structured around the client's current needs, strengths, and goals – at all times the client is empowered to be self-led in the therapeutic process.

Phoebe's lens is trauma-informed, consent-conscious, and feminist – recognising the significance of systemic inequalities faced by marginalised populations. Phoebe also identifies as a member of the LGBTQIA2S+ community, and warmly welcomes individuals of all gender and sexual identities.

THE THERAPEUTIC PROCESS

The clientele that Phoebe supports are often in a place of emotional overwhelm, burnout, and heightened stress. By reaching out for support they are taking an important step towards recentring themselves and working towards their goals.

The early stages of the therapeutic process are about supporting clients to regulate their nervous system through intentional somatic and psychological practices. Following the client's lead, the work then becomes about unpacking emotionally significant historical events, patterns of attachment, and self-limiting beliefs and behaviours.



Clients' insight grows during this work, and they are encouraged to become increasingly self-reliant until they are sufficiently empowered to continue their journey independently.

Benefits of Therapy

Therapy provides a non-judgemental and dedicated space for clients to externalise their inner world and be met with compassionate support and validation of their experiences. By verbalising their internal narratives, clients are allowing themselves to be seen and understood in an emotionally safe environment.

Being an objective party with unconditional positive regard for the client, the therapist is then able to support clients to restructure their working narratives and move towards a story which more accurately reflects their true nature, values, and strengths.

Through this, clients develop their innate ability to self-reflect, to compassionately understand themselves, and to use their intuition to guide them towards their goals. Clients are encouraged to develop both internal and external supports and to access them proactively to support their continued healing.

DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE

Phoebe is an avid reader and student of all things psychology, psychotherapy, and self-improvement. Informed by her own lived experience, and the therapeutic work itself, she continues to develop and deepen her practice to best serve the needs of clients.

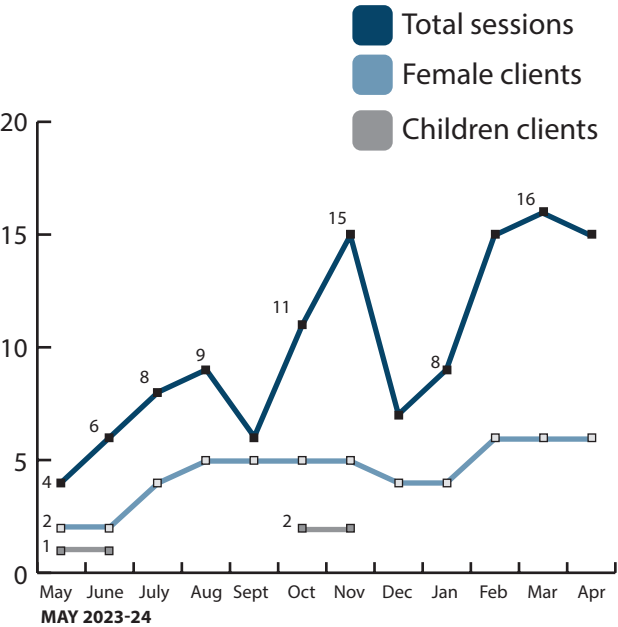
In private practice, Phoebe is especially passionate about working with couples and would love to see couples through the Moving Forward program.

Phoebe is also working towards additional certification to be able to offer comprehensive psychotherapy services to children and young people. Other areas of interest in professional development include Somatic Experiencing Practitioner training, Internal Family Systems certification, and Compassionate Inquiry Professional training.

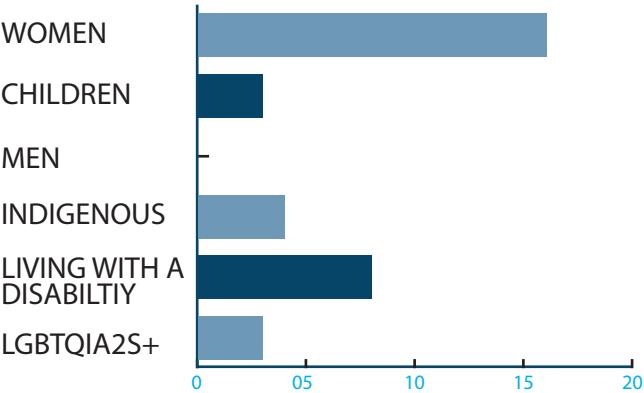
With additional funding, the Moving Forward counselling program will have the ability to better serve a larger population of men, women, children, and families – vitally important work in prevention and recovery for those affected by gender-based violence.

STATISTICS

Phoebe saw 19 clients across 121 sessions. If billed at a market average, these would cost clients a total of \$15,125.



CLIENT IDENTIFIERS



MELYSSA HUDSON. CCC (CANADIAN CERTIFIED COUNSELLOR)



Professional Training & Expertise

I have provided counselling services for the shelter since January 2023. I became a Canadian Certified Counsellor, CCC in January 2024 after completing my master's in counselling psychology. Combined with my bachelor's in social science and previous career in environmental advocacy, I come with a diverse range of training and expertise. I work diligently to uphold the values of equity, justice and respect for every client that uses the many essential services of the Revelstoke Women's Shelter.

Our clients have very specific needs and as such, I have completed training in multiple therapeutic interventions to best support these high-risk mental health issues and plan to continue to train in the specific needs presented by the clients of RWSS.

Completed Training includes: Internal Family Systems | Interventions for Trauma | Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Trauma | Suicide Intervention| Decolonization | ADHD Management in Adults & Youth

Upcoming Training: Perinatal & Pregnancy Loss | First Responders & Trauma

Future Certification Trainings: EMDR for Complex Trauma | Attachment and Attuned Parenting

WHO ARE MY CLIENTS?

The clients I have provided services for have mostly been women who are currently in an unsafe

relationship, who are fleeing physical violence or, very often, are being abused emotionally, financially as well as experiencing coercive control.

Most of the women have either been forced into being unhoused by their abuser or have chosen to become unhoused to keep themselves (and their children) safe.

Almost all these women have experienced extensive childhood abuse (sexual assault, physical or emotional abuse, emotional abandonment, early onset of substance use) or had significant traumatic events (sexual assault, bodily harm, near death experiences) in early adulthood.

The majority have grown up in low income or poverty-stricken homes with limited access to education or financial resources to gain formalized training for sufficient paying employment. Mental health support has come in and out of their lives due the high cost of services and underfunded systems.

Many of these women have children or adult children. Many of them express to me the fear that their child will not do things differently and find themselves being abused or using problematic coping skills that perpetuate their abusive situations and feelings of shame. The future of their children is a top priority and their main motivation for bringing positive change to their lives.

Primary Psychological Issues & Implications

Over 90% of my clients have met the criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (C-PTSD), major depression, and social anxiety.

About half of my clients meet the criteria for psychological disorders as a result of unmanaged/undiagnosed ADHD and many of them meet the criteria for major mood disorders such as Borderline Personality Disorder, Bipolar Disorder among others.

Importantly, major mood disorders are best suited for psychologists, which are not able to provide their services at the rates offered by transition homes or at least in the capacity needed by the clients. The scope of practice for psychotherapists does not encompass major mood disorders or not without collaboration from psychiatrists, psychologists and/or a physician.

I spend about 5+ hours a month liaising with local physicians, psychologists, and other experts to continue services for the RWSS clients with these higher psychological disorders. It's an extra part of the job that must be done to truly provide quality care.

HOW I HELP MY CLIENTS

In-house clients: I work at the intersection of intimate partner and gender-based violence and being able to provide informed, evidence-based treatment for women is my top priority.

I primarily work combining psychodynamic theory and Internal Family Systems approach to resolve early attachment injuries that form the basis of an individual's subsequent trauma responses to abuse.

Every client has their unique life experience embedded in culture, social class, ethnicity, and gender; therefore, I continue to develop my trauma based therapies with a multicultural lens and stay abreast of new developments in treatment for trauma processing.

Additionally, I currently use prominent parenting psychology and evidence-based research on child development to help women learn healthier child-rearing strategies. I support women in understanding attachment theory and how to raise children with positive attachment styles, which is a precursor to the child's healthy adult relationships.

I will be commencing certifications to expand my expertise on the topic of healthy parenting. This is directly intended to help the children of domestic abuse reduce their adverse childhood experiences so they can become cycle breakers for future generations.

**I COULD NOT HAVE DONE THIS
WITHOUT YOU. KNOWING WE WERE
MEETING EACH WEEK GAVE ME THE
STRENGTH TO KEEP GOING**

- TESTIMONIAL

Outreach clients: The broader community accesses the Moving Forward counselling program for a variety of mental health reasons. Depression, anxiety, unhealthy relationships, and parenting struggles are the top presenting issues I encounter in the outreach clientele.

My training in trauma therapies and Internal Family Systems continue to play a critical role within this population as well. I often come across the early stages of abuse in relationships in the outreach population.

This is a critical intervention period whereby we use

harm reduction strategies and prevention to ensure the clients know the services available to them in the event of an escalation. I use a strengths-based approach for women in the community who are starting the process of coming to terms with violence in their relationships.

The largest demographic that suffers from gender-based violence are low-income and marginalized communities across Canada. Revelstoke is no exception. The outreach counselling program is an essential violence prevention mechanism simply because it is at no cost to the client, who otherwise, would not be able to afford the current cost of private mental health services.

The TRUE value of the Mental Health Matters Initiative

It is no secret that mental health services are inaccessible to many in Canadian society. With the cost of living and housing is the highest in Canada, B.C. holds the majority of residents that simply cannot afford access to trained psychotherapists as they need. Due to the mental health needs of the clientele that utilize transition housing, well trained and experienced psychotherapists are essential to ensure that no unintentional harm is done due to inexperience.

This is an ethical and legal obligation on behalf of the therapist. The financial cost of running a counseling program suitable to address serious cases of PTSD, C-PTSD, addiction and supporting clients with major mood disorders is not minimal but financial resources are required for this client population.

Why this program matters

According to Canadian Femicide Observatory (CFO) (2022), 184 women and girls were killed in 2022 because of intimate partner violence. One woman or girl is killed every 48 hours in Canada (CFO, 2022).

The repercussions of harm of gender-based violence extends beyond the victim and impact family around victims and their children. In fact, children who witness violence in the home have twice the rate of psychiatric disorders as children from non-violent homes (Psychiatric News, 2004).

The Department of Justice calculated that it costs over \$7 billion to deal with the implications of intimate partner violence (2009). One of the deleterious effects of intimate partner violence is the inability to maintain steady employment due to the toll of declined mental health from their abuse (MacGregor et al., Safety and Health at Work, 2016).

Transition houses are a critical opportunity for victims to seek services far beyond momentary safety from abuse but rather life-skill building, suicide prevention, addictions support, and increased access to general healthcare services such as rides to doctor visits.



The populations that primarily use the Revelstoke Women's Shelter Society are at the highest risk of major mental health disorders and financial insecurity. The opportunity to support women early in their lives to develop the personal skills to ensure they do not repeat cycles of abuse for themselves and for their future children cannot be understated.

The Revelstoke Women's Shelter Society is a critical intervention and prevention resource for women and children beyond Revelstoke. I've seen clients from Calgary, Vancouver Island, Fernie, Nelson, and the surrounding areas.

Additionally, the frequency of higher-level mood disorders is high in the transition home system and must be taken into account when funding is being considered and allocated.

If we truly are to help our clients recover from cycles of abuse, we must consider the significance of their psychological needs and provide the capacity for transition homes to attract and maintain trained psychotherapists with minimal turn over. The continuity of care is essential for individuals suffering from C-PTSD, PTSD, and major mood disorders.

The Mental Health Matters Initiative provides the opportunity for victims of gender-based violence to seek out specialized psychotherapeutic services that can change an individual's life and change the course for their children.

 **THANK YOU FOR MAKING ME
FEEL LIKE I'M NOT ALONE AND
UNDERSTOOD** 
- TESTIMONIAL

By providing a comprehensive and diverse skillset in our counseling program we can offer women the best chance to rebuild their lives that gives them the tools needed to break cycles of poverty and intergenerational violence.

The benefits to society can be seen in young adults

who had a mother that recovered from her abuse, maintain employment, and modeled healthy interpersonal behaviour.

They can be seen in a woman recognizing signs of violence and removing herself before escalation. They can be seen in a woman taking care of her health because she knows her value as a unique human worthy of love and respect.

“
**I LOOK FORWARD TO MY
SESSIONS. IT FEELS SO GOOD TO
TALK TO YOU.**”
- TESTIMONIAL

The long-term economic impacts of a well-resourced psychotherapeutic program for marginalized and low-income communities is immense. Multiple studies found that the cost of domestic violence reaches upwards of billions of dollars (CanWaCH, 2024). One study in 2011, Varcoe et al., found that the cost of leaving domestic abuse and rebuilding their lives cost upward of \$6 billion to taxpayers (Dept of Justice, 2009).

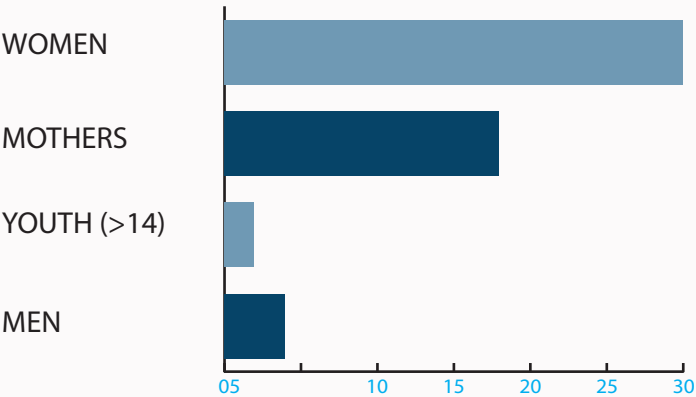
Imagine if we supported more women through outreach intervention programs that reduced the likelihood of a women remaining in an abusive relationship for too long?

STATISTICS

CLIENT IDENTIFIERS

Since April 2023 I counselled 30 women (18 were mothers), 4 men, two youth under 14.

From April 2023 to April 2024, I provided 363 hours of services for RWSS for in-house and outreach clients. This totals just over \$50,000 of a full professional rate.



MOVING FORWARD

ART THERAPY

MARINA RACHINSKI, DKATI (PENDING)

About Marina

Marina is passionate about helping individuals find their inner resources and process trauma. She has a background in dance, psychology and yoga. She is drawn to working with the Revelstoke Women's Shelter as she sees clients within their sociocultural context, understanding that women and non-binary folks are subject to different pressures and constraints to those influencing men.

Survivors of domestic violence live under a patriarchal context. Under this context, socialization patterns tend to result in women giving away their power in relationships, often without being aware of it.

Marina holds a relational, trauma-informed, feminist and anti-oppressive framework. Relational therapy aims towards a holistic approach, looking at the whole human, not just the mind or the body, but at the system and the sum of its parts.

A trauma informed art therapy approach involves being more aware of safety and includes building resourcing such as mind-body regulation, community connections and self-esteem.

As a feminist therapist, Marina will integrate a variety of strategies aimed at increasing autonomy and empowerment with her clients in a culturally sensitive manner. Marina believes in the power of the therapeutic relationship: we are hurt in relationship, and we can heal in relationship too.

THE ART THERAPY PROGRAM

I have been providing art therapy services through RWSS since October 2022. I completed 300 direct client practicum hours (700 total) for my post-graduate degree in art therapy in July 2023, and have since been working up to 20 hours a week with women in the shelter, with those transitioning from the shelter, and with people in the wider community of Revelstoke who have experienced trauma.

I have additional training in trauma-informed yoga and yoga psychology, and include a holistic lens, breathwork, and mindfulness practices in my work as



an art therapist.

This year, I have worked with individuals, parent-child dyads, and families through the Women's Shelter outreach program. I held weekly Open Studio, drop-in style art therapy groups in the shelter, an 8-week trauma-informed closed group centered around anxiety as a trauma response for women in the community, and two workshops.

What is Art Therapy?

Art therapy uses the expressive and self-reflective aspects of the creative process to address issues across the whole spectrum of human experience. It is a form of psychotherapy rooted in developmental psychology that uses art and self-expression to creatively explore and reconcile emotional conflicts, foster self-awareness, develop social skills, solve problems, reduce anxiety and increase self-esteem.

Art therapy can provide children, adolescents and adults with an opportunity for healing, psychological integration and personal growth. Art therapy is used in therapeutic treatment, prevention, and rehabilitation.

Art therapy is especially helpful for processing trauma as it is a non-verbal and sensory experience. Engaging with one's senses can be regulating and

“ I’M USING THE TOOLS I LEARN IN ART
THERAPY TO HELP ME NAVIGATE MY
DAY-TO DAY LIFE ”
- FEEDBACK

alleviate anxiety during therapy, helping people to feel grounded while processing their experiences. Trauma is stored in the body and is not always easy to access verbally.

Art can help circumnavigate the defenses of the conscious mind and allow unconscious material to be brought to light. Working with images can be a way to express emotion and story without using words. Making creative choices can be empowering, playful and a source of pleasure!

No art experience is required. Art therapy works with the underlying belief that creativity is innately healing & that every human is creative / an artist.

Art Making While Supported by a Therapist

Art therapists are trained to create emotionally safe space and to encourage expression.

- We ask informed questions in response to the client's art to explore their experiences further.

- We do NOT interpret the art, rather, encourage individuals to discover their own personal meaning in the art and the process.



Oil painting

WHAT DO SESSIONS LOOK LIKE?

- Individual one-on-one sessions
- Dyads between couples or single parents and their child/children
- Family art therapy between family members
- Groups of people who share similar challenges

TIMING: Weekly individual and dyad sessions typically range from: 30-75 min. for children | 60-120 min. for adults

Weekly group sessions tend to run longer and range from: 1 to 2 hours for children and adolescents | 2 to 4 hours for adults

STRUCTURE: The structure of each art therapy session is responsive to the needs of the client(s). Art therapy sessions are structured to have a distinct beginning, middle, and end.

Beginning: A welcome and engaging with the art materials.

Middle: The creative process. While creating there may be dialogue about the art, its meaning, and about life in general.

Closing: A closing period in which the client(s) show and share their art.

Individuals are encouraged to express themselves spontaneously using the materials. However, the art therapist may give a directive or introduce a new material or technique.

Depending on the form and the population we would address specific goals.

“THIS IS MEDICINE”
- FEEDBACK

NEEDS & GOALS

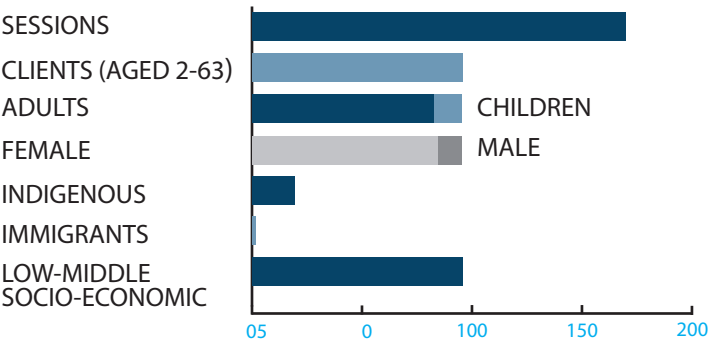
These were identified by clients, parents and myself in intake meetings and throughout art therapy sessions this year.

Children: Anxiety reduction, strengthening emotional ties with caregivers or in a new family configuration, trauma processing, emotional education and expression, development of empowerment and autonomy, co-regulation, sleep regulation, building resiliency.

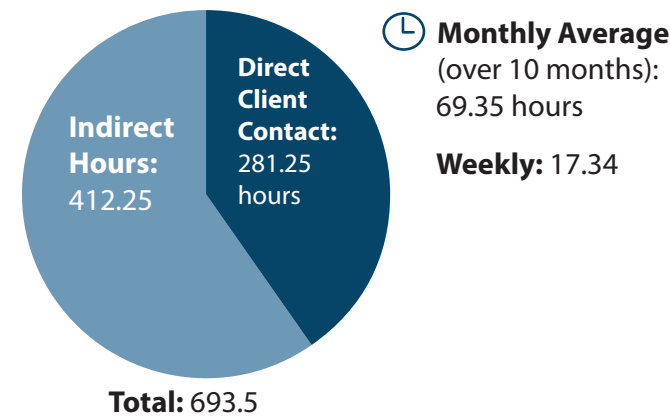
Adults: Trauma processing, navigating grief & loss, establishing safety and stability (internally, relationally, & environmentally), anxiety reduction, expression, self-regulation, identity exploration, sobriety, self-awareness, personal growth & development, building empowerment, strength & resiliency.

STATISTICS

DEMOGRAPHICS



HOURS



FEEDBACK (2022-2024)

- "He seems to be doing a lot better. He's naming emotions and we use that sheet of faces you gave us a lot. Thank you for everything you did and what you are doing for our community. It's so exciting to have an art therapist here in town willing to see young children."
- "I've tried lots of talk therapy, but it was never very helpful for me. With the art I find I am learning and processing so much and feel the changes ripple out in my life, especially with my family."
- "Being in an art therapy group has been wonderful, empowering, and healing."
- "Today's art work was really challenging for me, but it felt good to complete it!"
- "I feel like my feelings moved into the art. I don't have any words to describe it."
- "The therapeutic art group is really helpful; we resonate and empathize with each other, and when we see each other out in the world we cheer each other on."
- "I always feel better after coming in and making art."
- "I've loved the sessions and definitely felt a difference in myself."
- "This is helping, thank you."

Favourite things about the Trauma-Informed Art Therapy Group:

- "Having others listen and feeling understood"
- "Sharing with other ladies and making time for art!"
- "I love being in a group setting where I can share freely and hear others share in the same way."

SCHOOL REPORT

KRAFTY KIDS

IMOGEN & JACLYN

This program is offered at Columbia Park Elementary. It started in October 2023 and wraps for the academic year on July 12, 2024.

This program was created by a social worker and counsellor with the goal of promoting positive social skills in intermediate students. These skills build the foundations for healthy relationships. Krafty Kids aims to establish safe connections within the schools, especially for children dealing with domestic issues at home.

Our programming is grounded in craft activities or board games that promote collaboration, creativity, inclusion, and celebrates individual expression.

Run as an open group, we check in with each child who attends our program about their mental well being and lead discussions, often the topic being student-led. These topics are relative to the children and have included bullying, friendships, relationships, home life and school stress.

RWSS thanks CPE staff and admin for allowing us into their school and supporting our endeavours.

STRUCTURE

Kraft Kids ran twice a week. Two staff (one when short staffed) the shelter meet with children grades 4-7; this includes Mondays after school for 90 minutes and Tuesdays at lunch for 50 minutes. Every meeting included a variety of snacks.

Why craft?

Research has shown that craving, regardless of the medium used, can bolster mood, improve self-confidence, and reduce stress overall. Crafting stimulates the production of dopamine, the “feel good” neurotransmitter, that is responsible for pleasure and enjoyment. Authentic self expression is shown to improve confidence and perceived competence.

When engaging in crafts in safe space, people can take risks. It requires one to be present and mindful, teaches flexibility when things don’t go as planned, and allows for engaging and insightful conversation



in a low pressure environment. Crafting is inclusive as varying social groups collide and adjust to one another, encouraging empathy and communication.

FUTURE PLANS

Collected in two different groups:

- 65% of students desire to add smaller groups that are grade specific that may help ease social drama
- 100% of students want kitchen access for baking and more frequent “messy” crafts like slime and oobleck.
- 70% of students would like a capped number of students able to attend to reduce lunch time business
- 84% of students prefer Krafty Kids to be on a Monday and Friday, versus Monday and Tuesday.
- 79% of students want a longer check in.

Actionable Feedback

- A similar situation box - a place to ask for advice for a situation/experience and anonymously
- Starting the year off with making individual vision boards or a goal collage of how they want the year to look/feel etc.
- Sharing - in addition to, or in place of a check in, having roses and thorns which are highlights and lowlights of the week

The Numbers

Gr. 5 & 6

Students made up the 70% of attendees

5-10

Students attend on average after school on Mondays

12-20

Students attend on average at lunchtime on Tuesday

80%

Of attendees identified as female

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

NETWORK (CRN)

LAURA

The Revelstoke Community Response Network (CRN), based at the Revelstoke Women's Shelter, is a network of local service providers, both governmental and non-profit, who gather and network to prevent the abuse of vulnerable adults in our community. We do this by educating the public and frontline workers such as bank tellers about how to respond if they suspect someone is being abused. We conduct workshops, distribute educational material and refer concerned workers and residents to appropriate services. This past year the coordinator conducted a workshop for Revelstoke Women's Shelter staff and for the Credit Union.

For the last 2 ½ years we have produced a monthly newsletter called Revelstoke Senior Life to engage local seniors and inform them of events, activities and services. The newsletter's main articles always feature an inspiring senior and another topic of interest. In the June issue, for example, we have written about emergency preparedness, giving practical advice about ways to address heat, smoke and evacuation readiness.

We e-mail the newsletter to almost 200 seniors and print out 45-50 more copies for those without access to computers. We know that both the e-newsletter and the paper copies are shared, sometimes multiple times. One article a month is also printed in the Revelstoke Review each month to reach more readers. We have been lucky to have received grants from both the Revelstoke Credit Union (Community Giving) and Columbia Basin Trust (ReDi Grant) to support this effort.

Beginning with the May issue, Imogen Whale stepped up as a writer. She has been doing some wonderful profiles of inspiring seniors and will gradually take over producing the newsletter.

The CRN meets every two months or more as needed. Last July we met to talk about emergency preparedness with guest speaker Cindy Pierce. On June 6 of this year, we met again to talk about the subject as our organizations look ahead to a dry summer. This allows us to coordinate with, and learn from, each other.



The CRN coordinator also wrote to, and presented at, a Revelstoke Housing Society meeting about the lack of supportive housing for seniors here. With so few options available for seniors in town (outside the Cottages and Moberly Manor), many seniors, who have given so much to this community, have had to leave town when they can no longer stay safely at home.

Finally, the CRN coordinator has joined the City of Revelstoke's Social Development Committee to draw attention to the concerns of vulnerable adults in our community.

Networking at CRN and Social Development Committee meeting has been an invaluable way to promote collaboration and avoid duplication of efforts. The main beneficiaries must be vulnerable adults themselves.

For more information on the Revelstoke CRN and our member organizations please go to <https://bccrns.ca/bccrnsnetwork/revelstoke-community-response-network> (See Community Contact List at the bottom).

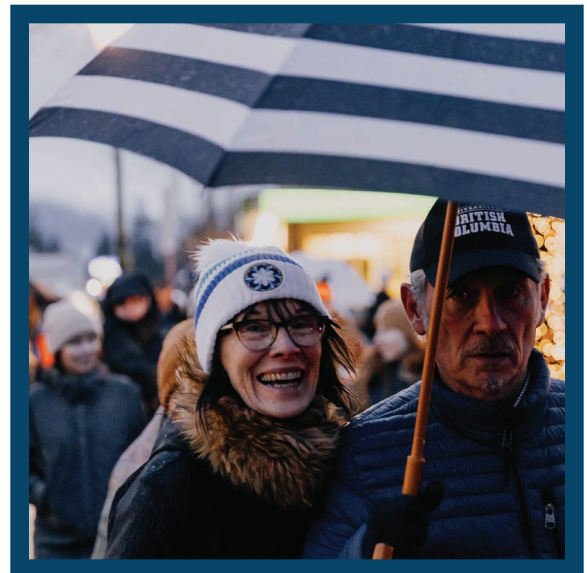


PHOTOS

COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR

The Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser event was held in February 2024. There were 120 walkers, 28 teams, 33 volunteers and the event raised \$24,136. We'd like to thank our sponsors:

- BC Housing (lead sponsor)
- Tim Hortons (goods and services)
- Silverwinds (goods and services)
- Velocity heating and plumbing (community sponsor)
- Southside Food Market (supporting sponsor)
- Left Field Floral (goods)
- City of Revelstoke (venue)
- Christine Love Hewitt (photography)
- Stoke FM (media)
- Revelstoke Review (media)
- City Furniture (community sponsor)





HOUSE UPGRADES

Dogs allowed inside the shelter.



The shelter's new shed.



REVELSTOKE
**Women's Shelter
Society**