



TODAY
Family Violence
Help Centre

Annual Report 2010-2011

Integrated response to family violence



VISION

A healthy community safe and free of family violence

MISSION

Provide links and collaborative, community-wide services for those affected by family violence

VALUES

We support each person's definition of family.

We will honour and respect each person's choices.

We believe all persons have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

We believe each person has the capacity to make positive change in his or her life.

We will deliver services in a timely, client-focused manner.

We will stay up-to-date on the latest research about family violence and share this knowledge with other service providers.



About our logo

The rising sun...
the dawn of a new day

The reflection on the ground...
the path people follow on their
journey to wellness

The colours...
muted, understated, yet hopeful

Today...
action can be taken today,
don't wait

Family...
violence affects everyone
in the family

Help Centre...
non-threatening, non-judgmental
assistance is available

It starts today...
immediate action
is possible, today

Message from Board of Directors

When you first conceive an idea, it is tender and fragile. Like a freshly planted acorn, it needs just the right amount of care and attention to see it grow.

The idea for the Today Centre—a safe, centrally-located hub of supports for families impacted by domestic violence—first germinated in 2004. That’s when a group of community agencies, City of Edmonton and Alberta government representatives decided to find the best way of serving victims of family violence. The group consulted 65 family violence groups in the Edmonton area, and saw the need for a single point of entry to services and better program coordination.

Because of the group’s dedicated nurturing and care, Today Centre formed an operational board and opened its doors in October, 2009. In the first month, the Centre hired its first resource worker, and handled seventeen walk-in clients and twelve phone calls.

In 2010/2011, the board faced a year of changes and growing pains as it transitioned from an operations focus to governance, and recruited new members. The board held its first meeting in April, and over the summer and fall refined the Centre’s strategic plan. After a change in leadership in January 2011, the board was back operating the Centre for six months until a new Executive Director was hired in Jane Hirst.

2010 was also a year of finding our way after setbacks in securing funding extensions and experiencing high building costs.

Despite the growing pains, the Centre built important partnerships in 2010 to move towards our vision. The office is now home to many on-site essential services, including programs staffed with nurses, police officers, social workers and government aid workers, with more partners in the works. We are working with our partners to make client referrals seamless, so they can access all the services they need in one safe place. Throughout the year, client referrals continued to increase, and with it gaps in services emerged, which we filled. For example, when staff noticed clients were struggling with mental health issues, they arranged for a mental health worker to visit the Centre every two weeks.

This integrated approach is not only proving effective, but crucial to client safety. When family violence homicides occur, we have learned several agencies were often aware of a piece of the picture, but lacked the protocols to share information with one another and the client “fell through the cracks.”

Today Centre has begun to fill these cracks. We now have a Victim Serving Agencies Linking Protocol with 9 other agencies and have developed a common consent form, allowing partnering agencies to share client information. 2010 has been a fulfilling year for the board to nurture this integrated approach, and watch our delicate acorn grow into a grand oak tree.

Board members

Chantile Shannon (Chair)
Sue Languedoc (Co-Chair)
Karen Reynolds (Treasurer)

Rhonda Holloway
Stuart Sutherland
Clarece Mather
Jean Anderson

Jason Boldt
Judy Mackay
Jane Hirst (Executive Director)

Our work

Today Centre is the single point of entry to comprehensive services for those impacted by family violence. Our resource workers provide telephone and face-to-face intake, assessment, referral and case navigation services to link clients with supports located on-site or in the community.

They offer clients emotional support and help them create a safety plan, identify their rights, learn about the court system, and understand the cycle of violence. Together, they also address any related issues, including the need for food, housing, childcare, mental health or addictions counseling.

To reduce barriers in getting help, Today Centre's goal is to house many of these essential services under one roof. This integrated approach replaces what is often a dispersed and complex system of services, and reduces trauma and repeat victimization of those already in distress.

Our results

Today Centre's integrated approach means we can help clients:

- Create a safe home, reduce their fear and increase their sense of well-being
- Access timely, short-term services and support
- Secure medium and long-term services in the community to support their quality of life
- Reduce their challenges in accessing multiple services in various locations

Our partners

The programs listed below are located at Today Centre. We also arrange meetings with off-site partners so clients can easily access all the supports they need in one safe location at the Centre.

- Divisional Domestic Violence Intervention Team - Downtown Unit
- Elder Abuse Intervention Team
- Elderly Adult Resource Service (EARS)
- Edmonton John Howard Society - Outreach Program
- Victim Service Unit
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Alberta Employment and Immigration
- Islamic Family Support Services Association



Financials

Full audited statements available upon request

Statement of Operations		For the year ended March 31, 2011	
Revenue		2011	2010
Status of Women		363,334	226,693
United Way of AB Capital Region		77,205	55,635
Rent recoveries		38,669	
Alberta Children's Services		32,610	61,571
City of Edmonton - Family and Community Support Services		32,476	36,126
Amortization of deferred contributions		9,336	8,799
Donations		5,000	
Interest		136	
		558,766	388,824
Expenses			
Wages and employee benefits		281,159	87,555
Building and occupancy		136,664	137,205
Administrative and support services		29,098	29,759
Office supplies, telephone		38,939	23,380
Contracted services		25,556	91,944
Amortization		13,947	8,799
Insurance		6,709	5,952
Training		6,347	2,427
Travel		3,171	1,803
		541,590	388,824
Excess of revenue over expenses		17,176	

Statement of Financial Position		As at March 31, 2011	
Assets			
Current assets		634,159	571,425
Property and equipment		55,106	66,403
		689,265	637,828
Liabilities			
Current liabilities		672,089	637,828
		672,089	637,828
Net assets			
Unrestricted		(1,272)	
Invested in property and equipment		18,448	
		17,176	
Total liabilities & net assets		689,265	637,828

Leila's new beginning

Leila* is married with four sons. She came to Canada ten years ago, and soon after immigrating, her husband developed a gambling problem. He began to abuse her emotionally, physically, and sexually. He manipulated their sons to turn against her. He even broke the front door of their home and two of her cell phones.

Leila wanted to leave her abusive relationship, but knew she faced several barriers—her language skills were poor, and she needed help with finances, housing and transportation.

Leila was referred to the Today Centre through her community health centre. But because her English was limited, she needed help in her native Arabic.

Today Centre connected Leila with an Arabic speaking worker through John Howard Society's outreach program—one of Today Centre's on-site partners. Without having to retell her story, Leila received emotional support, education on family

violence, safety planning, advocacy and referrals to other community agencies.

With the combined help of Today Centre and our partners, Leila and her four sons left their abusive home and stayed at a shelter. She met with an Alberta Employment and Immigration worker—another partner located at Today Centre—to access their Fleeing from Violence fund to set up a new home. She was also referred to the Islamic Social Services Association (IFSSA) to access their Ethnic Food Bank. Lastly, Leila sought counseling for herself and her children.

Leila truly embraced the supports she received, and is building a better life for her family. She recently enrolled in computer classes at her son's school and goes swimming with other women in her community. She also attends a women's support group through IFSSA, where she learned she's not alone.

With the collaboration of different programs available at Today Centre, Leila was able to overcome her barriers and transition from a place of isolation to a place of great personal growth.



** Name and photo have been changed to protect our client's identity*



Rachel breaks the cycle of violence

Rachel's* common-law partner of three years yelled at her often. He called her names and constantly put her down. He punched and slapped her. She was ready to leave him, but didn't know how and was overwhelmed at doing it alone. Rachel, 31, walked in the Today Centre one day, looking for help.

A Today Centre resource worker gave Rachel emotional support and explored ways of increasing her safety, whether she chooses to leave him or to stay in the relationship. That's when Rachel revealed her partner has prevented her from working for years. She was worried she couldn't afford to leave him.

Over the next three weeks, Rachel and her resource worker developed a comprehensive safety plan to leave her partner. Rachel secured temporary financial assistance from an Alberta Employment and Immigration worker on-site at the Centre. Her resource worker also gave her a free Safe Connections cell phone to make

emergency calls, since she didn't have one. Lastly, she met with a police officer from the Domestic Violence Intervention Team, one of Today Centre's on-site programs, about options if she wanted to report her partner's abuse to the police.

With the Centre's help and support, Rachel left her partner and found an apartment of her own. During her last meeting at Today Centre, Rachel said she felt safe for the first time in years, and truly believes she deserves a life free from abuse.

The profile of a "typical" client at Today Centre is female, 30-37 years old, with one or two children.

* Name and photo have been changed to protect our client's identity

Family violence in Edmonton

Today Centre defines family violence as:

The attempt, act or intent of someone within a relationship, where the relationship is characterized by intimacy, dependency or trust, to intimidate either by threat or by the use of physical force on another person or property. The purpose of the abuse is to control and/or exploit through neglect, intimidation, inducement of fear or by inflicting pain.

Abusive behaviour can take many forms including: verbal, physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, spiritual, economic and the violation of rights. All forms of abusive behaviour are ways in which one human being is trying to have control and/or exploit or have power over another.

Spousal abuse is the number one reason people contact Today Centre.

Edmonton receives about 6,500 reports of family violence every year.

Violence Reduction Action Plan, August 2011

Thank you!

Helping a fellow citizen live a life free of abuse and fear is our calling at Today Centre. Since our doors opened, demand for our services continues to increase. In 2011, calls increased by 51 per cent compared to the same period in 2010. We could not meet this rising demand without the generous support of our funders and supporters.

Your contributions have helped many break the cycle of violence. Our clients are truly grateful for the supports they receive and the opportunity for a positive future. You make that possible with your support and we thank you.



Status of Women
Canada

Condition féminine
Canada

Government of Alberta ■
Human Services



United Way



Family and Community
Support Services

Contact us

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