



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### For Immediate Release

#### **Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter launches the Take A Stand Initiative to empower and educate community members to positively support victims of family violence and abuse**

**Calgary, AB:** Family violence and abuse affects us all. We all have a role to play in helping end it. Offering non-judgmental, compassionate support is a powerful way to help end violence and make positive change in our community.

Studies show that with the appropriate education and training, informal supporters, such as family and friends increase their capacity and confidence, and get involved supporting victims more often. This can make all the difference in the world.

"The majority of victims of violence turn to someone they know first for help, as opposed to a Shelter, the police or some other formal service," says Kim Ruse, Executive Director of the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter, "How these family members, friends and co-workers respond is incredibly important in shaping what a victim does next."

When someone experiences family violence and turns to family members or friends for support, those people may not know how best to respond. Many people want to reach out and be supportive of victims, but aren't sure how.

"The reactions of informal supporters, or "social responses" can have very positive or negative impacts for a victim," says Ruse.

Through the *Take A Stand* initiative, the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter educates community members to effectively support victims of violence and abuse. It empowers Calgarians to better support their family members, friends, co-workers, and neighbours who may be experiencing family violence and abuse.

Presentations are offered to organizations and community groups which help people learn how to identify family violence and abuse in all its forms, ways to respond compassionately to victims and how to connect them with resources.

**TAKE A STAND. Learn how YOU CAN SUPPORT victims of family violence and abuse. Help victims get the support they need. This is an important means of family violence prevention in which we can all be a part.**

[Click here for the Take A Stand launch video](#). Visit [calgarywomensshelter.com](http://calgarywomensshelter.com) for more information.

#### **ABOUT THE CALGARY WOMEN'S EMERGENCY SHELTER**

The Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter is focused on ending family violence and abuse in the lives of women, children, youth and men. "Taking a Stand Against Family Violence" in the community since 1974, the agency has helped close to 200,000 Calgarians build safe lives and healthy relationships. Although the Emergency Shelter is the cornerstone of the organization, it is "More than a Shelter", providing a number of innovative safety, healing and prevention programs. For more information: [www.calgarywomensshelter.com](http://www.calgarywomensshelter.com).

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