



Community of Practice on Harm Reduction & Lowering Barriers to VAW Service

Women's Shelters Canada (WSC) is launching a new Community of Practice (CoP) for VAW shelters and transition houses that are working to adopt a harm reduction model and reduce barriers to service at their shelter, and who want to work with and learn from other shelters on this journey.

As a participant in this CoP, you will have access to:

- A community of 20-25 like-minded shelters and transition houses from across the country that you can connect to, learn from, and work with on common areas of interest and need
- Mentors from shelters and transition houses that have already implemented harm reduction practices and can share tips and lessons learned based on their experiences
- Learning sessions with experts on a variety of relevant topics
- Support to develop and implement a concrete action plan to reduce harm and lower barriers

The CoP will take place over two years, from September 2022 to September 2024, and will involve 6-8 virtual meetings per year (approx. 2 hours each) and one in-person meeting in Winter/Spring 2023.

Who can participate?

This CoP is open to VAW shelters and transition houses across the country that are working on adopting a harm reduction approach and reducing barriers. Your organization does not need to be an expert in these practices to participate – in fact, the CoP is intended for shelters and transition houses that are in the early stages of this journey and would benefit from increased knowledge and support.

WSC will select 20-25 shelters to participate, seeking a balance of regions, shelter size, and shelter type. Each shelter will name two staff to participate, including one person who is in a supervisory/leadership role (e.g. team lead, program supervisor, shelter director, executive director), and one person from a frontline role (e.g. residential support worker, outreach worker, child and youth worker). Simultaneous interpretation in English and French will be available during the meetings and documents will be made available in both English and French.

Is there a cost to participate?

There is no fee to participate in this program and WSC will cover all costs related to travel, accommodation, and food for the in-person event. In addition, each shelter/transition house will be able to access up to \$2,000 during the second year to support them in implementing their action plan.

How can I apply?

To apply, you must complete and submit the online application form by June 17, 2022. As part of the application, we will ask you to provide documentation showing your organization's commitment to moving towards a harm reduction model or lowering barriers. This could include a motion from your Board, a letter from your leadership team, an existing policy or plan, etc.

If you have any questions about this opportunity or how to apply, please contact Chandra at csaha@endvaw.ca.