
OPTION: COUNSELLING FOR MEN, WOMEN & CHILDREN

What are the Option programs?

Family Service Moncton's Option programs are designed to stop and prevent all types of violence towards women in relationships and promote healthy family relationships. The overall goal of the service is to break the cycle of family violence by decreasing the incidences of partner abuse and preventing domestic violence in the next generation. The Option programs have trained therapists, who offer both group and individual counseling sessions and support community wide initiatives that serve to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence.

Who can benefit?

Family Service Moncton recognizes the importance of offering services to each individual family member when addressing family violence. The Option programs are designed to deliver group counseling to men who are, or have been, abusive towards their partner. In addition, groups are offered to support women who are, or have been in an abusive relationship with a partner, and the children who have witnessed family violence.

Why group interventions?

Although Family Service Moncton does offer individual counseling to address the issues of family violence, the treatment process related to partner abuse is primarily dependant on group work. The support that can only be offered through a group process is highlighted by research as being a key component for achieving lasting positive changes.

All groups delivered for men, women and children are facilitated by a team of 2 professional facilitators (male and female). Groups are designed to enable individuals to share their experiences in a supportive and confidential environment. They serve to create opportunities for feedback and learning experiences that foster stronger self-awareness.

Group intervention also enables participants to challenge the values and belief systems that often underlie family violence. In the men's group, belief systems and attitudes that condone or support abusive behaviors are challenged by promoting nonviolent alternatives. Within the women's group, a supportive and understanding environment is created to help break isolation and address issues of abuse while promoting confidence and self-esteem.

OPTION: WOMEN'S GROUP

Family Service Moncton Inc. conducts support groups for women who are, or have been in an abusive relationship with their partner. The service accepts referrals year round giving participants the opportunity to join the group whenever they are ready to do so. The Women's Group provides support through a confidential, safe, nurturing environment that breaks the isolation so often found in abusive relationships. This service enables women to be heard by providing opportunities to share experiences and express feelings that result from partner abuse. Participants are assisted in establishing a safety plan for themselves and their children and are provided with an opportunity to explore other community options and resources. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that women do not feel responsible for the abuse and enabling participants to gain knowledge, awareness, and education on abuse and its impact on the family.

The program provides participants with the key elements of healthy relationships, increases self-esteem and assertiveness, and improves participants' abilities for self-care.

OPTION: MEN'S GROUP

The Option Partner Abuse Treatment Program consists of a service for men who are or have been emotionally, verbally, physically, sexually, socially and financially abusive in their intimate relationships. Family Service Moncton views abuse as an issue of power and control where there are imbalances of power within the relationship. Abusive behavior is a pattern that attempts to establish dominance and control. Controlling, intimidating, humiliating, manipulating, punitive, and violent actions are used to reinforce one person's authority over another. The treatment program is based on the philosophy that such behaviors are learned and that they can be unlearned and replaced by more effective coping and problem solving skills.

The men's group consists of twelve, two hour sessions held once per week. The program is designed to stop and prevent men from exhibiting abusive behaviors towards their past, current, or future partners. Men are educated regarding the dynamics of partner/spousal abuse within the context of family violence so that they may begin to recognize and alter their attitudes and values toward female/male roles within relationships and within society in general. Men are taught to accept full responsibility for their abusive behaviors; therefore, the usual defense mechanisms which may occur within the group such as denial, blame, minimization, rationalization, and justification are consistently challenged. The group intervention allows for the building of a more positive self-concept and promotes healthier relationships with others. Men

gain self-awareness and learn skills that will enable them to listen, communicate, express feelings and problem-solve effectively within their relationships. Upon completion of this program, the Option Maintenance Program is available for long term support.

OPTION: CHILDREN WITNESS OF PARTNER ABUSE

Research clearly demonstrates that children who witness assault upon their mother by their father are at risk for developing behavioral and emotional difficulties. The emotional damage caused when one parent is abusive towards the other often affects the child significantly as if the abuse is directed towards the child.

Family Service Moncton has extensive experience working with hundreds of men who have been abusive; we know that a large percentage have witnessed their fathers use violence towards their mothers. Some of the research which describes characteristics of abusive men states that 80% of abusive men were abused as children or saw their mothers being abused. Also, by witnessing violence, children are taught to use violence as a problem solving technique. In turn, we repeatedly see children, whose fathers are violent, using force and violence to get their way with their siblings and sometimes their mother. Family Service Moncton believes it is essential to provide services for children who have witnessed partner abuse to prevent future violence.

The children's group consists of 8 weekly sessions. The program seeks to reduce isolation and provide the children with skills to help them identify and express feelings that could be present as a result of witnessing family violence.

Participants are taught alternatives to violence by exploring problem-solving techniques as well as inappropriate and appropriate responses to feelings of anger. The service enables children to understand family violence in its many forms and its impact on them. Children are being provided with an opportunity to share their experiences and explore their relationship with their parents in a safe nurturing environment. Children are also assisted in developing a safety plan that takes into account their social support network. By the end of the program, children understand the proper assignment of responsibility for abusive behavior and recognize that they are not to blame. In addition, their burdens are lessened as they leave with an increased sense of self-confidence.



For more information or to make an appointment, contact:

**Family Service Moncton Inc.
120 High Street
Moncton, NB E1C 6B5**

Tel: (506) 857-3258

Fax: (506) 858-8315

Website: www.fsmoncton.com



OPTION: Family Violence Treatment Programs

Services for Men, Women and Children

*BREAK THE CYCLE
OF VIOLENCE*

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