

## Family Transition Place says help is available to victims of sexual violence

An open letter to our community,

In response to the many recent disclosures of sexual violence against women, including the recent allegations of sexual assault against a well-known CBC broadcaster and the allegations of personal misconduct against two MPs in Ottawa, Family Transition Place would like to take this opportunity to join the conversation that is currently taking place publicly on the topic of sexual violence.

We are aware of survivors/victims' fears of reprisals for sharing their stories. Anyone who has experienced sexual violence needs to be believed and supported.

Most victims choose not to file complaints because of the stigma attached. They are:

? embarrassed,

? self-blame or fear being blamed by others,

? fear of not being believed,

? concerned about repercussions in their personal relationships ? particularly, as is often the case, when the offender is a friend, family member, acquaintance or co-worker.

For survivors of sexual violence, it is important to know that if something has happened to you, there are people who will believe and support you. You can talk to a trusted friend, family member, or you can access our 24-hour crisis line at: 1-800-265-9178. If you are considering reporting, we can help you think through your options. If you are not considering reporting, that's okay too. All calls are free and confidential.

If you are a friend, family member or colleague of someone who is dealing with sexual violence, there are things you can do. You can be an ally to the person who is victimized. Let them know you believe them. You can listen to them and support whatever decisions they make about what to do next.

If you are an employer, there are things you can do. You can speak up, or step in. You can ask for help from others if you are not sure what to do, and then step in together. You can take the initiative to fully understand your obligations to workplace safety as an employer, and ensure that these are in place at your workplace. You can be an ally to the person who is victimized, instead of to the aggressor.

At Family Transition Place, we have caring, supportive, non-judgmental staff who understand the complexities of this issue. We are committed to helping anyone who has experienced recent or historical sexual abuse through our clinical counselling services. We also believe that education and information goes a long way toward the prevention of violence and we are committed to doing this as best as we can.

We are here to help.

Family Transition Place