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STRIVING TOWARD BEST PRACTICE

Handling Crisis in Sponsorship

Sponsors have a responsibility to deal with all aspects of settlement; but when it comes to crisis issues, the knowledge of experts is essential in addressing solutions. And, the first point of contact for any sponsor in a crisis, is their sponsorship agreement holder, or SAH. Challenges might reflect family relationships, partner violence, children's issues or even tenants' rights. And, there may be legal implications.

This guideline provides a few key points to consider when a crisis arises. Look for community counselling services in your area.

Key guidelines:

Domestic Violence Issues

- Understand that tactics of power & control may be cultural and normal
- Perceived loss of power by males when women have more rights in Canada
- Name what you see without judgment or expectation; but speaking to a potential abuser may be a safety concern to the woman
- Validate fears and experiences; talk about expectations in Canada
- Refer, refer, refer to community supports, legal supports, counselling
- Reach out to community resources and support the family in accessing them
- Role model healthy relationships
- Break isolation and provide support in creating a larger and diverse community

Children's Issues

- Newcomer families are dealing with challenges around leaving what they know, family ties, culture, family values as well as parent/child relationships
- Understand and respect their re-settlement challenges; do not be judgmental
- Respect family values, understand cultural sensitivities
- Don't assume the role of parent; be compassionate and empathetic
- Sponsors may observe issues around children's fatigue, poor hygiene, absence from school, food insecurity or violence in the home
- Duty to protect children and investigate abuse, whether it is physical, emotional, or sexual
- Majority of calls to Children's Aid Society (CAS) come from schools; understand and respect the process; there will be investigations with parents, other children, teachers, doctors, etc.

- Remember that parents have protected their children from war, violence, refugee camps and brought them to Canada for safety
- Recognize there is an imbalance of power between the parent and the CAS
- Help parents understand their rights; identify community resources to help them

Landlord and Tenant Issues

- Understand tenant rights and obligations with regards to leasing accommodation
- Ensure newcomers know what they can do and not do within the living space
- Reinforce safety issues with newcomer tenants
- Reinforce timely payment of rent
- Reinforce that newcomers are protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code
- If housing issue occurs, newcomers should know to contact their sponsor for help
- Sponsors should ensure newcomers have insurance on their unit and its contents
- Sponsors and newcomers should try contacting their local community legal clinic for advice

Resources:

Domestic issues

- Community Counselling Centres in your area – check out what is available
- Women's Shelters – sheltersafe.ca/Ontario
- 911 to require assistance in many languages
- Barbara Schlifer Commemorative Clinic – 416 323-9149, or website
- Assaulted Women's Helpline – 1 866 863-0511 or <https://www.awhl.org/>
- FEM'AIDE – 1-877-336-2433
- Victim Services: <https://victimsupportdirectory.ca/>

Children's issues

- Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect - <https://www.ontario.ca/page/report-child-abuse-and-neglect>
- Muslim Children's Aid & Support Services (MCASS), <https://muslimchildrensaid.com>
- INDUS Community Family Services, Peel – <https://www.induscs.ca/familyservices>
- Mosom Multicultural Resource & Counselling Centre, <https://wmrcc.org/youth-projects/>
- London & Middlesex Children's Aid Society – <https://www.caslondon.on.ca>

Landlord and Tenant issues

- Guidelines on legal issues – <https://stepstojustice.ca>
- Information related on newcomer issues – <https://ocasi.org>
- Community legal education – <https://www.cleo.on.ca>
- Pro Bono legal advice – <https://www.probonoontario.org>
- Human Rights Legal Support – <https://hrlsc.on.ca>
- Tenants Rights in Ontario – <https://www.acto.ca>
- Legal Services on housing issues – <https://housingrightscanada.com>
- To find community legal clinics – <https://www.legalaid.on.ca/legal-clinics/>