



## Healthy, Stable Communities

### Accurate, reliable information for community supports – A troubled women

A middle-aged women called the 211 Information and Referral line at Community Connections in Collingwood, a United Way funded agency asking for mental health resources. The information and referral (I&R) specialists at the call center gently probed to ascertain exactly the type of service required. As she spoke to the I&R specialists, she disclosed that she was in an abusive relationship and although the abuse was not physical at that time, she was concerned as things were escalating. She further indicated she is depressed and finds it hard to see how the situation can be resolved.

The I&R specialist discussed many options and provided additional information and contact information for a variety of support services. Some of these services included: Community Mental Health Services, My Friends House, New Path Youth and Family Counseling Services/Partner Abuse Program, Family and Friends Mental Health Support Group and the Mental Health Consumer Survivor Project for Simcoe County. The specialist further inquired as the whether anyone had spoken to her about developing a Safety Plan. It turned out no one had and she did not even know what it was. She was further advised as to resources that would help developing Safety Plans and was highly encouraged to do so as the abuse seemed to be escalating.

After 45 minutes on the phone with the 211 I&R specialist, the women expressed relief and gratitude. The specialist promised to follow-up with the women in a couple of weeks to see how things were going. When the specialist called back to check in, the women had indeed followed-up with a number of resources and was feeling better about her circumstances. Having access to these community supports and a friendly, informed listener through 211 may have made the difference in this potentially life or death situation and not only contributed to this woman's safety and well-being, but showed the compassion that exists within the community as a whole.



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