



Klinik Community Health's Statement on Violence

Responsibility:	All Staff and Volunteers
Area:	KOP, KOB, Brandon
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Klinik Community Health is committed to creating and supporting initiatives that address violence against all people. Klinik will continue to provide care based on an integrated service model to address the physical, emotional and mental effects of violence. Initiatives that address social conditions, such as racism, sexism, colonialism, poverty and inequality, that foster violence are part of Klinik's larger social justice mandate. Further, Klinik advocates for rehabilitative, rather than punitive, consequences for individuals who behave violently. Finally, Klinik will continue to build local, provincial, and national partnerships to share best practices and to build capacity internally.

Overview

Klinik is a leader in community health, built on a foundation of social justice values. With an increasing understanding of the impacts of the social determinants of health, staff and volunteers at Klinik provide diverse services and programming targeted to populations most negatively affected by the inequitable distribution of these determinants. Our programming has a strong mental health focus, which presents opportunities for hope, healing and empowerment in a trauma-informed environment. As a socially conscious workplace, Klinik staff and board members have identified violence as a concern for people and the broader community.

Background

Around the world, violence, including sexual assault, physical attack, and psychological abuse is an increasing concern. Acts of violence threaten many of the prerequisites for health, such as peace, safety, shelter, education, food, income, social connection and social justice¹. Often violence occurs in places that individuals should expect to feel the safest, putting their mental and physical health at great risk. These struggles may also perpetuate issues in accessing health services, housing, employment and education.

Gender-based violence and violence against women are terms that are often used interchangeably as most gender-based violence is inflicted by men, on women and girls. The term gender violence reflects the idea that violence often serves to maintain structural gender inequalities, and includes all types of violence against men, women, children, adolescents, LGBTTTQ, transgender people and gender non-conforming. "Gender-based violence undermines the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims². These crimes are predominantly against women and perpetrated by men.

Gender-based violence has become an umbrella term for any harm that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that results from power inequalities that are based on gender roles.

People from all social, economic and cultural groups may suffer damaging short and long-term effects to their mental, physical and spiritual well-being as a result of violence. However,

1 http://ywcacanada.ca/data/research_docs/00000049.pdf

2 <http://www.unfpa.org/gender-based-violence>

demographic and socioeconomic factors, such as being male, poor, and young, increase the likelihood of violent behaviour³. Other contributors to violent behaviour include a history of involvement with the criminal justice system, or experiencing or witnessing violence⁴. In order to reduce violence, it is important to understand the underlying causes and risk factors that lead to violent behaviour.

Experiencing violence can lead to psychological distress, anxiety and depression⁵. For children, the negative effects of witnessing or being subject to violence can be severe and may result in behavioural, emotional, social, cognitive and physical difficulties⁶. The Adverse Childhood Experiences⁷ study, originally undertaken in California and now replicated around the world, found that exposure to violence and other traumatic events increased the likelihood of future struggles with substance abuse and mental health conditions. Physical health was also linked to childhood trauma, with higher rates of diabetes, cancer and heart disease.

In Canada, when talking about trauma and violence, we must consider the impacts of intergenerational trauma on Indigenous people. Government policies, such as enforced residential school attendance, banned religious ceremonies, and restricted access to the judicial system, aimed at assimilation have had wide-ranging effects on the mental and physical health of generations of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people⁸. Such effects have also been seen in families of survivors of other genocides, slavery, and war.

The public's fear of violence may exacerbate risk factors for violent behaviour and perpetuate myths around how to address violence in our society. Violence emerges from a complex mix of social, personal, and economic factors and occurs on both the individual and systemic level. Violence can be spread through existing government policies, service providers, and institutions. As such, it requires a multi-faceted approach to tackle the root causes. Therefore, responsibility for the reduction of violence must include a number of jurisdictions, including health, education, criminal justice, labour, social services and many others.

Key Considerations and Recommendations

External:

- Advocate for the scope and impact of violence in our society to be recognized as a priority health issue across sectors.
- Collaborate with governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned about the societal basis of violence; including our tolerance for violence and the social and economic conditions that allow it to flourish.

3 http://ontario.cmha.ca/public_policy/violence-and-mental-health-unpacking-a-complex-issue/#.VxY_APkrKUK

4 [ibid](#)

5 [ibid](#)

6 http://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/stoptheviolence/domestic_violence_prevention_strategy_2012.pdf

7 [http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(98\)00017-8/pdf](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(98)00017-8/pdf)

8 https://ccednet-rcdec.ca/sites/ccednet-rcdec.ca/files/view_from_here.pdf

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- Advocate for the federal and provincial governments along with the voluntary sector to establish a national priority health goal to eliminate violence in Canada.
 - Encourage, support and work alongside communities to define their own needs and to design appropriate programs and services to become violence-free.
 - Advocate for a broad network of organizations that provide care and support for individuals who experience violence and individuals who behave violently.
 - Identify and train service providers on new approaches to facilitating client-centred care for individuals who experience violence and individuals who behave violently.
 - Advocate for governments and non-governmental organizations to develop new methods of providing integrated services for individuals who have experienced violence (e.g. health, social, and justice).
 - Support curricula development for primary, secondary and adult education to address such issues as gender roles, the value of individual rights and responsibilities, skills for conflict resolution, and building healthy relationships.
 - Advocate for increased training and preparation for adults who work with children to provide guidance in non-violent interaction.

Internal:

- Engage in local, provincial, and national strategies to address domestic and sexual violence prevention.
- Join Ending Violence Association of Canada⁹.
- Integrate trauma-informed practice into all levels of service delivery and across the organization.
- Engage in public education, prevention initiatives, and social awareness activities.
- Develop initiatives that engage men and boys in violence prevention efforts.
- Develop a decision support tool for new and existing projects/programs to acknowledge and address the social and economic conditions that contribute to violence including gender-based analysis.

General:

- Endorse recommendations from Truth and Reconciliation Commission and consider the ongoing impact of colonization in service delivery and development¹⁰.
- Collect and use both qualitative and quantitative data from Klinik's service-users' experiences for the purpose of program evaluation and development.
- Encourage research initiatives that share knowledge and support program decision-making.

⁹ <http://endingviolencecanada.org/>

¹⁰ http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

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- Ensure strong connections among all programs to support the exchange of information and experiences that facilitate collaboration and reduce barriers within Klinik.
 - Recognize partnerships at the local, provincial and national level to support our social justice mandate.
 - Facilitate self-determined care and ensure that programs and services are developed and operated using a client-centred approach.
 - Recognize colonization as a social determinant of health as part of work to understand the complex role that colonization plays in the lives and health of Indigenous people in Canada.

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