

04.22.2020

Hi Priya,

The aim of this correspondence is to clarify for you and other VAW partners, the current situation of Toronto VAWN shelters during the Covid 19 crisis.

We understand that WomanAct has been receiving information that VAWN shelters are not admitting new clients. This is not the case. VAWN members are working with the Assaulted Women's HelpLine and are informing them of when a space is available. Actually, this past week, there were several vacancies in the shelters that were posted with AWHL.

As you know, there is a chronic shortage of beds in VAW shelters and this problem is only exacerbated by the current pandemic as VAW rates go up and shelters struggle to implement social distancing and other public health recommendations. VAWN members have been meeting weekly and shelters have been working hard to find ways to maintain capacity. We are working with the City to try to get more women into permanent housing, which will hopefully result in more shelter vacancies. Some shelters will also use Provincial funds to allow new intakes to self-isolate in hotels until it is safe for them to come into the shelter and shelter staff are available for women during this process.

These difficult times have posed new challenges for an already taxed shelter system. VAWN members are very well aware of the additional challenges abuse survivors face in this difficult time and are diligently working to build capacity to maintain and increase the flow of intakes, and provide quality service to current residents, while enforcing stringent safety measures to manage the risk of Covid-19 infection.

Let me know if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Judit

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Judit Alcalde

VAWN Coordinator