



**YWCA Edmonton Counselling Services: Towards Healing**  
**~ A Women's Domestic Violence Support Group ~**

**DESCRIPTION:**

This is a weekly support group for women impacted by domestic violence. This group will provide participants the opportunity to: create new social connections and networks of support, to nurture their sense of resiliency and mental health, enhance their understanding of domestic violence, its impact on their lives and their relationships with others. Various topics will be introduced and discussed such as the cycle of violence, red flags in relationships, intergenerational trauma, coping with loneliness and isolation, self-care, forming healthy boundaries, navigating relationship strain, self-compassion, etc. It is intended that members will share ideas and discuss these topics and issues as they relate to their own experience. Members will also be invited to participate in arts, crafts, or activities relevant to the topic areas.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

In order to participate in this group you must: 1) Identify as female; 2) Be 18 years of age or older; 3) Complete an intake session to determine group eligibility; 4) Provide consent to participate in the group (if client is mandated to attend, client must still provide their *willing* consent to participate); 5) Commit to being a respectful group member; and 6) Understand that there is zero tolerance for active use of drugs or alcohol immediately prior to and during group sessions.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. To develop awareness about the risks (e.g. red flags) and potential outcomes related to domestic violence.
2. To dispel myths and misinformation about domestic violence.
3. Reduce isolation and provide a network of support.
4. To inform about helpful community resources.
5. To provide a supportive, caring and safe environment for exploring and sharing personal experiences.
6. To provide a safe space to begin the processing of healing from the effects of domestic violence.
7. To assist in the development of greater problem solving and assertiveness skills.
8. To enhance resiliency, provide opportunities for choice and encourage self-determination.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Start Date:** March 2021 (tentatively)

**Time Frame:** Group will run year round, except for the last week of December.

**Start time:** 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm

**Format:** Group will occur online through Zoom (currently, in response to COVID-19 restrictions).

**Maximum number of participants allowed:** approximately 15 participants.

**Cost:** This group is offered on a pay-what-you-can model or by donation. All proceeds from this group will be used to purchase program supplies (e.g. speciality refreshments, art supplies etc.).

**FACILITATORS:**

**Melanie Lestus** has been working the area of mental health for over 10 years, with a background in Social Work. She utilizes a holistic and mindfulness-based approach to work with various issues such as trauma and anxiety. She has years of experience facilitating psycho-educational groups with topics around Addiction/Recovery, CBT and Emotional Regulation. She utilizes solution-focused, cognitive behavioural and body-centred approaches to therapy.

**Debra Campbell** is in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of her PhD Counselling Psychology degree. She moved here from Nova Scotia to complete her PhD internship with the Edmonton Health and Counselling Psychology Residency Consortium. She has experience in co-facilitating groups and counselling victims of domestic violence, perpetrators and sexual assault survivors. Her counselling approach is eclectic, drawing mainly from feminism, cognitive behaviour therapy, and person-centred therapy.

**How to Sign-up:**

Interested participants need to contact our service coordinator at 780-970-6501 or email them at [counselling@ywcaedm.org](mailto:counselling@ywcaedm.org) to complete an intake information package and to schedule an intake with one of the group facilitators.