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EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ADDRESSES VIOLENCE AGAINST YUKON WOMEN AND CHILDREN

WHITEHORSE – The Government of Yukon has launched its first phase today, of a three-year public education campaign addressing violence against women and children, as part of the efforts around Woman Abuse Prevention Month.

“This campaign will provide critical information for people to contribute to the health of their family, their friends and their whole community,” minister responsible for the Women’s Directorate, Elaine Taylor said. “We are giving people the tools needed to safely take action to support women experiencing violence in their lives.”

Co-led by the departments of the Women’s Directorate and of Justice, the campaign is being developed by an interagency group of 19 organizations dedicated to stopping violence against women and children in the Yukon. The campaign focuses on addressing the territory’s high rates of violence against women.

“The Department of Justice is pleased to be working with partners including other departments, non-governmental organizations and grassroots women’s organizations to address this issue,” Justice Minister John Edzerza said. “The frontline workers who are dealing with violence against women daily are well-versed on this issue and this public education campaign will help to support their work.”

The campaign ties in with the government’s comprehensive Substance Abuse Action Plan, a draft of which was released for review in October, as family violence is often linked with substance abuse.

The Yukon rates of reported sexual assault are three times the national average. First Nations women report incidents of spousal violence three times more than non-First Nations women. These realities will be addressed throughout the campaign.

By providing access to resources to people who are aware of women living with violence, campaign posters and ads encourage people to act and to use services like VictimLINK. VictimLINK is a phone line to help victims of violence and is available 24 hours, seven days a week.

Safety kits will also be issued this week, which will address issues for women who are victims of violence and those wishing to support to them. The kits include five booklets: Helping a Woman Who is Experiencing Abuse, a Safety Planning workbook, Steps Toward Your Independence, a Resource List, and Options Choices Changes.

“As a worker in a frontline counseling and a family support organization, I can see first-hand that having campaigns that focus on public awareness will help to provide added community support to our clients,” Yukon Family Services Association’s family educator, Joan Turner said.

Information can be found on the new website: www.stopviolenceinyukon.ca. Printed material distribution to Yukon communities will take place this week. Those wishing to receive printed copies of the safety kits can visit local social service agencies or call the Women's Directorate at 1-800-661-0408, extension 3030.

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