

Housing providers play a key role in supporting victims of domestic violence

Edmonton, April 24 2017: Two reports released today highlight the roles that housing providers can play in supporting families affected by domestic violence.

Domestic Violence: Roles of Landlords and Property Managers explores the key roles that front line staff currently play and what they need to be even more effective. According to principal researcher, Professor Lois Gander,

"We were incredibly impressed by the efforts some property managers make in helping their tenants. Staff in apartment complexes may be the first outsiders to spot trouble yet this work often goes unnoticed. We hope to change that. Our study recommends that a province-wide effort be undertaken to help front line staff recognize early warning signs of abuse and refer tenants to the services that they may need."

The research was conducted by the Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta and the Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta. The project was funded by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy through Homeward Trust Edmonton's Community Research Projects funding program. The report is available at www.cplea.ca/research.

This research attracted the attention of Ms Guddy Helevuo-Burnet, Senior Business Partner (Domestic Abuse) with Peabody, UK who visited Edmonton as part of her international research into promising practices in supporting families affected by domestic abuse. As she put it, "housing providers have unique entry into the 'hidden' spaces" where domestic violence often occurs.

Homeward Trust Domestic Violence Forum 2016 Final Report captures the robust discussion prompted by Ms Helevuo-Burnet's remarks at the Homeward Trust Domestic Violence Forum held in Edmonton on October 11, 2016. Landlords, property managers and domestic violence service providers urged better communication and more training and resources to assist front line housing staff in helping their tenants. The report is available at www.homewardtrust.ca/what-weve-learned/publications.

As a result of these projects, Homeward Trust Edmonton has launched a Domestic Violence and Housing Network. Anyone wishing to join the network can email, Rumbi Zinyemba, Homeward Trust Planning and Engagement Coordinator at rzinyemba@homewardtrust.ca.

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CPLEA maintains a website featuring plain language legal information on abuse and the law in Alberta: www.willownet.ca