



ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETY OF MAINLAND NOVA SCOTIA

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



WE ARE

**A non-profit organization
addressing the systemic issues
that criminalize women, girls,
and gender-diverse people
in Mainland Nova Scotia**



ABOUT US

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia (EFMNS) is a non-profit organization that engages with vulnerable women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals to foster personal empowerment and address the root causes of criminalization.

Our overarching goal is to promote positive experiences of community reintegration and justice access post-criminalization, reducing recidivism and fostering safer, thriving communities.

MISSION

Respond to the needs of those in prison and those at risk of being criminalized;

Develop programs and services in the community for those who have been charged with offences or are at risk of coming into conflict with the law.

MANDATE

Educate women and gender-diverse individuals involved in the criminal justice system regarding their individual rights, how to access legal services, court processes, human rights during incarceration, and release and community planning;

Advocate for alternatives to incarceration by providing community-based options that include personal development workshops, comprehensive housing supports, adult diversion programs, and support and advocacy for conditional sentences;

Fight for the rights of criminalized individuals through court, advocacy, and social change campaigns;

Develop new community options such as safe, affordable housing and employment programs that are instrumental in decreasing women and gender-diverse people's recidivism rates; and

Develop a responsible community by promoting education, awareness, prevention, and intervention approaches.

2024-2025 EVENT SPOTLIGHT



National Elizabeth Fry
Week - May 9th



Medicinal Tea Tasting
Workshop - April 10th



"Incarceration and the impact on
2SLGBTQIA+ Communities"
- July 3rd



Bhayana Family Foundation
Invisible Champion Awards
- May 30th



Annual General Meeting - July 3rd



Prisoners' Justice Day
- August 10th



Thrift fashion Show
- April 12th



Summer's Free Yard
Sale - June 19th



Sip & Support
- May 29th



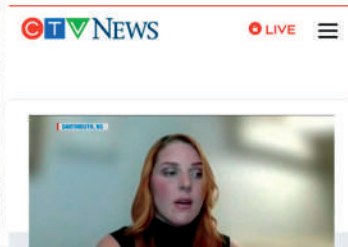
On Our Terms Art Exhibit & Crafters Market
- May 9-11th



"The Power of
Collaboration" - May 17th



Taylor Swift trivia night
- August 20th



CTV News with Sarah
Plowman - Jan 8



National Indigenous
Peoples Day - June 21st

2024-2025 EVENT SPOTLIGHT



Panel on women's corrections - November 1



Christmas Fair -
November 30



Sounds of Solidarity-
volume 1 - March 25



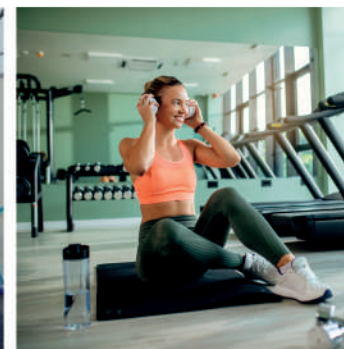
An evening for EFRY -
November 2



Global Halifax with Paul
Brothers -Feb 7



Lisa Adam's Dry Cell case
- March 20



Fitness wellness program
January-February



"Beyond the Sentence:
Navigating Parole from
Inside Out" - Feb 12



2SLGBTQIA+Justice &
Policing - Nov 28



Vigil "From Grief to Action" - March 6



"Reimagined Paths"
Concert - December 4



Free of charge
counselling



2024 CPLA Prison Law
Conference - October 7



Incarceration and 2SLGBTQIA+
Communities - July 3

ABOUT US

We do this through two key pillars: supporting healing, self-sufficiency, and reintegration; and improving access to justice through advocacy, guidance, and legal support. Our programs focus on personal empowerment, gender-based violence support, employment, education, and accessible housing. To advance access to justice, we offer assistance with record suspensions and peace bond applications through our legal advocacy team, and court navigation and various legal services and guidance through our non-profit law firm project, PATH (People's Advocacy & Transformational Hub) Legal; provide in-person support to incarcerated clients; and engage in advocacy on confinement conditions in correctional facilities.

EFMNS PROGRAMS

Our programs, focused on gender-based violence prevention, survivor support, and advocacy; navigating and healing from mental health and substance use concerns; meeting education, employment, and holistic wellness goals; and navigating the legal system and accessing justice, all contribute to outcomes of recovery, personal empowerment, community reintegration, and reduced risk of recidivism. Over the last year, our program managers and coordinators have worked hard to further develop, deliver, and ongoingly adapt programs to better serve the needs of our clients.



PROGRAMS

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE STRATEGY PROGRAM

■ Creating Communities of Care

Funded by the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the Creating Communities of Care project, a partnership between our organization, Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre, Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network, and Nova Scotia Association of Black Social Workers, strives to support Indigenous and African Nova Scotian women and gender-diverse individuals as they heal from histories of violence.

EFMNS Creating Communities of Care programs and support services, overseen by our Manager of GBV Strategy, are developed and delivered by our Indigenous Program Coordinator and African Nova Scotian Support Coordinator. Our Indigenous Program Coordinator supports criminalized and vulnerable Indigenous and gender-diverse people through one-on-one support and culturally grounded programming focused on healing and reconnection. In 2024/2025, this included the delivery of 18 group sessions and 21 hours of individual support to 56 clients, both in community and at CNSCF.



The Roots and Relationships program (formerly Indigenous Women for Change) offered sessions on Indigenous medicine, beading, the Seven Sacred Teachings, and land-based healing. A reproductive medicine workshop was co-facilitated with our Sexual Wellbeing Program. Participants also had opportunities to attend Pow Wows and Sweat Lodge ceremonies. Looking ahead, we aim to expand programming at CNSCF and maintain consistent offerings at our residential properties.

To aid Black and African Nova Scotian clients on their pathways to healing, safety, and justice, our African Nova Scotian Support Coordinator provides individualized, one-on-one support, in and out of prison and jail; facilitates connections to essential community resources; and offers empathetic guidance to those who are navigating the legal system. To better support Black and African Nova Scotian women and gender-diverse individuals impacted by systemic oppression, criminalization, and gender-based violence, we hope to develop and launch RISE (Reclaiming Identity, Sisterhood, and Empowerment for Black Women) over the next year, dependent on funding that we are able to attain.

PROGRAMS

■ Sexual Wellbeing Program

Using a decolonial, anti-oppressive, and 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusive approach, this program, funded by the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, aims to improve sexual health literacy and promote self-advocacy for vulnerable women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals who have been marginalized through experiences of criminalization and incarceration. The program has nine modules, which focus on subjects related to boundaries, consent, healthy relationships, safer sex, and reproductive justice.

In September of 2024, our sexual wellbeing program coordinator began delivering sexual wellbeing program modules to clients- first at our transition home, Holly House, but eventually extended the program to our other housing clients and those living in the community. The coordinator has been offering both one-on-one and group-based sessions, in-person and virtually. Very soon, they will also be delivering the program to clients who are currently incarcerated at CNSCF.

Since its launch, more than 80 clients have benefited from the program, including 15 Indigenous clients, 10 Black and African Nova Scotian clients, seven clients living with disabilities, and 25 clients who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. The coordinator, in collaboration with clients, is currently creating program modules that will specifically be focused on the experiences of sex workers.

■ RAMP: Restorative Approaches to Multiple Proceedings



The three-year Restorative Approaches to Multiple Proceedings (RAMP) Project draws on practices and research related to family-led decision making to build a restorative process that empowers and supports families in identifying their needs and creating plans for stability. In addition to facilitation with families, RAMP will also facilitate system and service collaboration in support of family led plans. During this past year, RAMP has supported three families through this trailblazing approach.

PROGRAMS

■ Empower and Connect

Empower and Connect (formerly known as Women for Change) is a program designed to address aspects of self that impact well-being and enhance relationships. The program covers communication, boundaries, conflict, anger, self-care, coping and defining what a healthy relationship looks like. It is offered one-on-one or in a group.

It is a five-week program which meets once a week and covers a new topic each week. In the past year, 34 clients have ongoingly engaged with and benefitted from Empower and Connect.

■ Domestic Violence Court Support Program

As the designated lead organization and primary service provider for women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals charged with domestic violence and navigating Domestic Violence Court (DV Court) in the Halifax Regional Municipality, our Domestic Violence Court Support Program, delivered by our Domestic Violence Court Support Worker, provides trauma-informed intake, assessment, case management, and programming. The program also offers vital navigation support for partners who have been harmed, children involved, and those who have been accused.

Between July 2024 and July 2025, we supported a total of 50 clients—24 connected directly through DV Court, and 26 community-based clients. In addition to court-specific support, many clients required help navigating other complex systems, including applying for legal aid, accessing family court information, securing housing, income assistance, tax preparation, and finding culturally relevant services. These supports were offered in-house wherever possible.

Referrals into the program came from a range of sources, including DV Court staff, Crown and defense counsel, RCMP and HRP victim services, family lawyers, the YWCA, Alice House, our website and phone line, and internal referrals from Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia housing programs.

External referrals were made to the December 6th Fund, Alice on the Go, women's shelters, Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia, and the Family Justice Navigation Program, among others. We remain committed to supporting individuals through a holistic, wraparound approach as they move through this specialized court process.

PROGRAMS

THE ABUNDANCE PROGRAM



Over the past year, the Abundance program and thrift store have settled into their new home at 165 Main Street in Dartmouth. Since then, we have seen significant growth for staff and program participants alike. In addition to the numbers outlined for our programs below, Abundance has helped dozens of women over the past year, by

meeting an urgent need for clothing; from thoughtfully compiling deliveries of second-hand clothing for our unhoused community members, to inviting local moms to “shop” our racks after fleeing from domestic violence. Thus, Abundance is filling critical gaps for both our program participants and members of the community.

■ Abundance Program Modules

The Abundance Program, a six-module course aimed at increasing wellness and personal empowerment, was run virtually and in-person 11 times over the year, serving the needs of 15 participants. To promote the importance of physical wellness, the Abundance Program Coordinator facilitated a fitness course over the winter, which supported four participants in staying active.

■ Employment & Education Support

During the spring months alone, the Employment Program Coordinator facilitated over 30 one-on-one employment support sessions. Throughout the past year, the six-module employment program has been redesigned, refreshed, and facilitated with two groups seeing 10 graduates. Over 10 new partnerships have been developed between Abundance and other local organizations, with one collaborative workshop having been hosted this spring. The Employment Program Coordinator continues to work at building connections with fair chance employers. Additionally, we have had multiple big wins for our participants regarding education in just the last few months.

PROGRAMS

■ The Abundance Thrift Store

This year The Abundance Store provided over 20 outstanding people with an employment opportunity where they were able to develop skills, build community, and most importantly, to gain confidence in their abilities.



■ Foodbank

The demand for foodbank donations increased over the last year, with over 50 people enjoying food from our pantry packaged with care by the Food Bank Coordinator. Our model shifted from delivery to pickup, only due to a high demand.

■ Abundance Cooking for Change program (NEW!)

In June of 2025, Abundance launched a cooking program aimed at addressing food insecurity. Through education about preparing meals, budgeting for groceries, and gardening, Cooking for Change will empower participants to grow a new relationship with food. This program is intended to run bi-monthly at two program locations and will provide flexible opportunities for our community members to engage in learning about nutrition. As is the case with all our programs, Cooking for Change will be a beautiful opportunity for people to connect and build a sense of community.

GATE: GIRLS' ACTION AGAINST TRAFFICKING & EXPLOITATION

The Girls Action to End Trafficking and Exploitation (GATE) program works to prevent trafficking and sexual exploitation of youth, particularly girls and gender-diverse individuals, across Mainland Nova Scotia. Over the past year, GATE continued to build awareness, strengthen community partnerships, and provide direct education and support to youth at risk.

In 2024-2025, GATE facilitated 24 trafficking prevention workshops in schools, shelters, and youth-serving organizations, reaching over 250 youth ages 12-18.

PROGRAMS



A majority —87%— reported increased awareness of grooming, online luring, and coercion tactics. Eight youth peer ambassadors were trained to lead conversations and support their peers using harm-reduction and lived experience-informed models. Peer Support staff in Shelburne, Truro, and Sydney also contributed to youth engagement efforts, including the planning and delivery of our annual Walk for Freedom.

GATE continued to build strong relationships with frontline service providers and local RCMP and participated in national and provincial advocacy to improve services for at-risk youth. Challenges remain, including the need for more accessible housing, increased support in rural areas, and growing online risks through gaming and social apps.

Unreported cases in Shelburne and Yarmouth Counties highlight the urgent need for expanded services and outreach.

Looking ahead, GATE will focus on expanding services to Francophone and Indigenous youth in Southern Nova Scotia, developing trauma-informed workshops for parents and caregivers, and training service providers in the LOVE146 #NotANumber curriculum. We remain committed to education, prevention, and amplifying survivor voices in the fight against trafficking and exploitation.

HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM

Over the past year, we have experienced exciting progress and developments within our housing programs. Through Hannah House, Charles Street, Holly House, and our Disability Support Program (DSP), we ongoingly fulfill our commitment to providing safe, stable, and supportive environments for women and gender-diverse individuals, ensuring they have the resources to live independently and thrive.

■ Hannah House

Established in 2023, Hannah House, named in memory of a young EFMNS client who passed away, is an eight-unit dedicated to providing safe, secure, and community-oriented housing for women and gender-diverse individuals. Hannah House does not currently have any vacancies, which reflects the high demand and effectiveness of the program.

PROGRAMS

To enhance resident safety and provide continuous support needed to break cycles of criminalization, we have a goal of implementing a 24/7 staffing model, which will include four full-time staff members working 12-hour rotational shifts.

We are pleased to share that we have added a community garden to the property, which has fostered resident involvement and contributed to a more welcoming environment.

■ Charles Street Apartments

Since the Fall of 2023, we have been master leasing six apartment units, consisting of two two-bedroom units, three one-bedroom units, and one bachelor unit. To better meet the greater-than-anticipated needs of our tenants, we recently hired a live-in superintendent, which has established a safer and more nurturing environment, benefiting both residents and the surrounding community. Additionally, our dedicated housing team now includes a Team Lead, a Housing Support Worker, a Property Manager, and two Intensive Case Managers.

■ Holly House

Concurrently operating as a restorative home and community, Holly House bridges the housing gap that exists for women and gender-diverse individuals after release from custody, including those who have completed a custodial sentence, and those on statutory, conditional, and interim judicial release. Holly House has 10 units that encompass both offices and eight single occupancy rooms for residents. In recent months, the Holly House staff schedule has transitioned to 12-hour rotational shifts, which offers increased consistency and stability for both staff and residents.



Currently, the Holly House staff team consists of a team lead, a client case manager, and four full-time staff, along with ongoing efforts to expand the casual roster. Additionally, to strengthen our partnerships with Correctional Services Canada, which in turn, facilitates better support for Holly House residents, our housing team has been making regular monthly visits to the Nova Federal Institution for Women.

PROGRAMS

■ Disability Support Program (DSP)

Since July 2024, we have been registered service providers for the Independent Living Support (ILS) Plus program. We now operate two DSP homes in the Spryfield area, currently housing three clients with 24/7 staff support to foster an inclusive, accessible environment.

Our DSP team includes a team lead and eight full-time staff. We are currently training casual staff, which will help reduce agency staffing-associated costs required for sick time and vacations.

ACCESS-TO-JUSTICE INITIATIVES

Our Access-to-Justice program supports clients, both in the community and incarcerated in CNSCF and Nova Federal Institution for Women, through offering essential legal services; subsequently promoting positive community reintegration and reduced likelihood of recidivism.

Specific components of the Access-to-Justice program are:

1. Advocacy for incarcerated clients trying to access services and supports
2. Limited scope representation of incarcerated individuals in prison law
3. Expert support to lawyers regarding client cultural competence, gender-based analysis, and social histories
4. Referrals to other community/non-profit programs
5. Release planning with lawyers and corrections staff
6. Support letters for court, parole, and probation
7. Accompaniment for the parole process
8. Referrals for addiction recovery
9. Referral to counsel and social workers
10. One-on-one counselling and in-house programming

■ Legal Advocacy Clinic

Our Legal Advocacy Clinic supports women and gender-diverse individuals navigating criminal records, police complaints, and protection orders through trauma-informed, person-centred services.

ACCESS-TO-JUSTICE INITIATIVES

A key focus of the clinic is assisting clients in applying for record suspensions—an essential step in accessing housing, education, childcare, and employment after conviction. Advocates work alongside clients to reflect on their journey, write personal statements for the Parole Board, and connect them with support as needed. In cases where a record suspension is pending, the team also provides letters of support to employers or schools, successfully helping clients gain admission or secure jobs.

The clinic also assists clients in filing police complaints, particularly in response to experiences of violence, discrimination, or misconduct. Advocates help document the harm, impacts and desired outcomes and support clients through the appeal process when necessary. Additionally, the clinic helps clients apply for Peace Bonds—protective orders often sought in situations of gender-based violence.

Advocates tailor their support to each client's needs, helping complete applications, drafting related documents, and attending court as requested. Through all services, the team works to reduce legal barriers and promote access to justice for those most impacted by systemic harm.

To further promote our services to those in need over the past year, we have been reaching out to numerous community/non-profit organizations that support vulnerable and marginalized women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals. Additionally, our legal advocates have made multiple trips to Newfoundland and Labrador, where they have held record suspension information sessions. For example, in September of 2024, our legal advocacy team hosted a record suspension information session in Happy Valley- Good Bay, Labrador. This involved meeting with service providers to form partnerships and to promote our record suspension services, which we are funded to provide in Newfoundland and Labrador. We had a successful turnout and meaningful connections were made.

Most recently, we established a record suspension contract with the Department of Opportunities and Social Development. Through this agreement, EFMNS provides Employment Support & Income Assistance (ESIA)-referred clients with comprehensive support to complete and submit record suspension applications. By covering key steps in the process and offering advocacy as needed, this partnership reduces financial and procedural barriers, helping clients move forward in their reintegration journey.

ACCESS-TO-JUSTICE INITIATIVES

■ PATH Legal

Through offering assistance with bail release plans, parole board support, police complaints, human rights complaints, habeas corpus applications, restorative justice initiatives, correctional disciplinary hearings, civil claims, and more, PATH Legal, launched in Fall of 2022, supports individuals of all genders, who are in and out of prison, with prison law matters and accessing the justice that they deserve.

PATH continues to lead legal and advocacy efforts addressing systemic discrimination in the justice and corrections systems. This year, the team welcomed Office Manager Megan MacDonald, who coordinated a volunteer-led intake line for potential clients.

In recent legal wins, PATH lawyers secured a court decision holding an ex-partner liable for non-consensual sharing of an intimate image, with damages to follow.



PATH also successfully intervened in a case challenging the denial of full Income Assistance to unhoused individuals, highlighting the disproportionate impacts on women and gender-diverse people and in a case that is challenging the denial of access to early parole for those serving life sentences.

PATH also launched a new website, partnered on class actions addressing unjust prison conditions, and participated in the Canadian Prison Law Association's conference, where Co-Director Emma Halpern and client Renford Farrier spoke on systemic racism in corrections. The team continues to advance trans prisoner rights, fight for gender-affirming care, and is preparing a constitutional challenge to Canada's current record suspension laws.



THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING 2024-2025 DONORS

Provincial Government Departments

Nova Scotia Department of Labour, Skills,
and Immigration- Employment Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status
of Women

Nova Scotia Department of Opportunities
and Social Development

Nova Scotia Department of Justice
Housing Nova Scotia

Federal Government Departments

Employment and Social Development

Canada- Canada Summer Jobs

Department of Justice Canada

Public Safety Canada

Women and Gender Equality Canada

Community Organizations/Foundations

Feed Nova Scotia

Canadian Women's Foundation

United Way Maritimes

Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia

Law Foundation of Nova Scotia

Pathy Family Foundation

Feed Nova Scotia

Community Foundation of Nova Scotia

Affordable Housing Association of NS

Home Depot Canada Foundation

Halifax Assistance Fund

Venture for Canada

Fergusson Foundation

JET Fund

Canadian Progress Club Halifax-Citadel

Northpine Foundation

**plus over one hundred caring individuals
and organizations across Canada.
To all of you, thank you!**

SCAN TO DONATE



**HELP US CONTINUE
GIVING OUT
TO THE COMMUNITY**

INDIVIDUAL **PROGRAM REPORTS**



THE ABUNDANCE **PROGRAM**

Kylee Nun
Abundance Program Manager

THE ABUNDANCE PROGRAM

Overview

Over the past year, the Abundance program has settled into its new home at 165 Main Street, we have seen significant growth for staff and program participants alike. Before Christmas, we completed our annual Holiday Craft Market and fundraised \$1755.00, and on May 2nd our 3rd annual Abundance Fashion Show raised \$2150.00. A warm thanks to NSCAD University for generously donating an event space for the fashion show.

In addition to the numbers outlined for our programs below, Abundance has helped dozens of women over the past year by meeting an urgent need for clothing; from thoughtfully compiling deliveries of second-hand clothing for our unhoused community members, to inviting local moms to “shop” our racks after fleeing from domestic violence, Abundance is filling an important gap. We aim to provide a dignified source of free clothing for those in transition who need this support.

Abundance Store

From July 2024 to July 2025 the store has earned a total income of 39,881.34 (up to June 30th, 2025). The Abundance store provided over 20 outstanding people with an employment opportunity where they were able to develop skills, build community and, most importantly, gain confidence.



Abundance Program Modules

The Abundance Program, a six-module course aimed at increasing wellness and empowerment, was run virtually and in person 11 times over the year serving the needs of 15 participants. The program coordinator also facilitated a fitness course over the winter which supported 4 participants in staying active.

THE ABUNDANCE PROGRAM

Employment Program

This spring alone, the Employment Program Coordinator has facilitated over 30 one on one employment support sessions. Over the past year, the 6-module employment program has been redesigned, refreshed, and facilitated with two groups seeing 10 graduates. Over 10 new partnerships have been developed between Abundance and other local organizations, with one collaborative workshop having been hosted this spring.



The program coordinator continues to work at building connections with fair chance employers, in the meantime we have had a few big wins for our participants regarding education in just the last few months! This spring we celebrated 2 program participants graduating from Solutions Learning, and another signed up to attend in September. Another participant is enrolled in the NSCC Adult Learning Program, and one other is independently preparing for their CAEC.

Foodbank

The demand for foodbank donations increased over the last year, with over 50 people enjoying food from our pantry packaged with care by the coordinator. Our model shifted from delivery to pickup only due to a high demand.

Cooking for Change Program

In June of 2025, Abundance received a grant while facilitated the launch of a cooking program geared to address food insecurity. Through education about preparing meals, budgeting for groceries, and gardening, Cooking for Change will empower participants to grow a new relationship to food. This program is intended to run bi-monthly at two program locations and to provide flexible opportunities for our community members to engage in learning about nutrition. As is the case with all our programs, Cooking for Change will be a beautiful opportunity for people to connect and build a sense of community.



HOUSING **PROGRAM**

Teri Musolino

Senior Manager
of Supportive Housing

HOUSING PROGRAM

This report highlights the progress and developments within our housing programs over the past year. We remain committed to providing safe, stable, and supportive environments for women and gender-diverse individuals, ensuring they have the resources to live independently and thrive in the community.

Hannah House

Hannah House is an 8-unit duplex dedicated to providing community-oriented housing for women and gender-diverse individuals.

Occupancy: We are pleased to report that there are currently no vacancies, reflecting the high demand and effectiveness of our program.

Staffing Update: We are seeking funding approval for a 24/7 staffing model, which will include four full-time staff members working 12-hour rotational shifts. This model aims to enhance resident safety and provide the continuous support needed to break cycles of criminalization.

Community Engagement: The addition of a community garden has fostered resident involvement and contributed to a more welcoming environment.



Charles Street Apartments

Charles Street serves as our master lease property, consisting of six individual apartment units designed initially as low-level supportive housing.

Current Status: The needs of our tenants have proven to be greater than anticipated, resulting in challenges related to trauma and stability.

HOUSING PROGRAM

Enhancements: With the recent hiring of a live-in superintendent, we have established a safer and more nurturing environment, benefiting both residents and the surrounding community.

Housing Team: Our dedicated housing team now includes a Team Lead, a Housing Support Worker, a Property Manager, a live-in superintendent, and two Intense Case Managers.



Disability Support Program (DSP)

In July 2024, EFRYMNS became registered service providers for the ILS Plus program funded through the Department of Community Services.



Program Overview: We now operate two DSP homes in the Spryfield area, currently housing three participants with 24/7 staff support to foster an inclusive environment.

Staffing Developments: Our DSP team includes a Team Lead and eight full-time staff. We are currently training casual staff, which will help reduce costs associated with agency staffing for sick time and vacations.

Holly House

Holly House is a 10-unit residential re-entry center for identified women, girls, non-binary, and gender-diverse individuals recently released from incarceration.

Operational Changes: We have successfully transitioned to 12-hour rotational shifts to provide consistency and normalize the scheduling for residents and staff.

Collaborative Efforts: Regular monthly visits to the Nova Institution for Women have strengthened our partnerships with Correctional Services Canada, facilitating better support for our residents.

HOUSING PROGRAM

Team Composition: The Holly House staff team currently includes a Team Lead, a client case manager, four full-time staff, and ongoing efforts to expand our casual roster. However, challenges remain with lengthy wait times for CSC clearance, which create hurdles in retaining casual positions.



Despite the various challenges we face, our commitment to providing quality housing and support for women and gender-diverse individuals remains steadfast. Our ongoing efforts to enhance safety, community engagement, and staff development are paving the way for greater success in the future.

We appreciate the continued support of our community partners, staff, and volunteers. Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.



GENDER BASED VIOLENCE **PROGRAM**

Sarah Tremblay
Gender-based Violence
Strategy Manager

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE PROGRAM

Indigenous Program Coordinator

The role of the Indigenous Program Coordinator is to create and provide comprehensive programming and one-on-one support to criminalized and vulnerable Indigenous and gender diverse people in Nova Scotia. This includes regular meetings with criminalized individuals, program facilitation, referrals to other organizations/agencies, and ongoing navigation of mental health, addiction, and housing opportunities. The main goal is to help other Indigenous women and gender diverse peoples reconnect with their culture and community after experiencing gender-based violence. Providing them with a safe space with culturally connected programming encourages a deeper level of healing.

Some of the projects completed this year are: A revamp of “Indigenous Women for Change” (now named “Roots & Relationships”), a sacred medicine garden located at 85 Queen St. for our clients to learn land-based healing and have access to sacred medicines, a collaboration with the sexual wellbeing coordinator to create and facilitate a workshop called “Reproductive Medicine”.

- Seen a total of 56 clients from July 2024 to July 2025.
- Delivered 18 group programs from July 2024 to 2025.
- Provided a total of 21 hours of group programs to clients from July 2024 to July 2025.
- Provided a total of 21 hours of individual one-on-one support to clients from July 2024 to July 2025.

Hopes for the future are continued consistent programs at the residential properties run by EFry and an increase in programming at CNSCF for 2025/2026.

Total 50 clients.

DV Court Caseworker

24 DV court clients in the past year

26 community clients in the past year

Out of the 50 total clients, 34 have engaged in the Empower and Connect program.

Referrals come from DV Court, website self-referrals, phone referrals, crowns, defense lawyers, family lawyers, RCMP and HRP victim services, YWCA, Alice house, and in house referrals from E Fry housing.

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE PROGRAM

Of these 50 clients, many have requested additional support in systems navigation such as applying for legal aid, family court information, information, housing, assistance with taxes, income assistance, culturally relevant supports — all of which has been offered in house.

External referrals have been made to outside organizations such as the December 6th fund with the YWCA, Alice on the Go, Women's shelters, Legal Info Ask a legal question phone line, Family Justice Navigation Program,

Women for Change has a new name this year-- Empower and Connect, the intention is to create a more inclusive space for all genders as it is not only Women identifying folks who participate in the program.

A Bachelor of Social Work student is currently modeling a Trauma program for Clients that has been adapted from the Healing Trauma program-- the intention is to make it more digestible and interactive, less wordy.

RAMP

The three-year Restorative Approaches to Multiple Proceedings (RAMP) Project draws on practices and research related to Family Led Decision Making to build a restorative process that empowers and supports families in identifying their needs and creating plans for stability. In addition to facilitation with families, RAMP will also facilitate system and service collaboration in support of family led plans. During this year, RAMP has supported three families through this trailblazing approach.

Sexual wellbeing program

The Sexual Wellbeing Program Coordinator works to improve sexual health literacy and promote self-advocacy for criminalized and vulnerable women, girls and gender non-conforming individuals. The program uses a decolonial, anti-oppressive, queer and trans inclusive approach to meet the diverse needs of these populations. Program offerings include sessions on boundaries, consent, healthy relationships, safer sex, and reproductive justice. This year, the Program Coordinator has organized three trainings on supporting trans clients, facilitated a staff training on reproductive justice, and collaborated with the Indigenous Program Coordinator to deliver two sessions on reproductive plant medicine for staff and clients. She is working on developing program offerings specific to clients engaged in sex work, and clients experiencing postpartum. She is also beginning to deliver one-on-one sessions both in-person and virtually to clients in community, and will be facilitating group sessions at CNSCF.



GATE **PROGRAM**

Stephanie Atwood

GATE Manager
ElevateHER Mental Health
Support Services Canada

GATE PROGRAM

Over the past year, the GATE program has continued its essential mission to prevent trafficking and exploitation of youth, particularly girls and gender-diverse individuals across Mainland Nova Scotia. With growing community awareness and partnerships, GATE has seen measurable progress in education, prevention, and youth engagement.

Program Highlights

Workshops & Outreach:

- Facilitated 24 trafficking prevention workshops across schools, shelters, and youth-serving organizations.
- Reached over 250 youth ages 12–18, with 87% reporting increased awareness of grooming, online luring, and coercion tactics.



Peer Leaders:

- Trained 8 youth ambassadors to lead conversations and support their peers through lived experience-informed education and harm reduction models.
- Trained and onboarded Peer Support staff in Shelburne, Truro and Sydney who assisted with the planning and implementation of the Annual Walk for Freedom.

Community Impact:

- Strengthened relationships with frontline organizations and local RCMP in responding to suspected trafficking.
- Participated in provincial and national advocacy initiatives to improve support services for at-risk youth.

Key Challenges:

- Continued need for sustainable funding to meet demand in rural areas.
- Gaps in accessible housing services make prevention work more complex.
- Youth are encountering increasing online risks, especially through gaming and social apps.
- High quantity of unreported cases in Shelburne & Yarmouth Counties outlines the need for more services and education.

GATE PROGRAM

Success Stories:

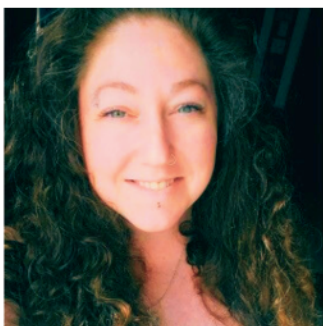
- One participant described the program as "life-changing" and is now pursuing peer mentorship training.
- A school partner noted a visible shift in student confidence and willingness to report unsafe situations.

Looking Ahead:

- Expand GATE into underserved communities, specifically Francophone and Indigenous youth spaces in Southern Nova Scotia.
- Develop a trauma-informed curriculum specific for parents and community members, using survivor voices at the core. This will be an expansion on #notanumber parent and caregiver workshop.
- Training of Trainers across Atlantic Canada in LOVE146 #notanumber core curriculum, which will provide income for GATE.
- Advocate for provincial policy change rooted in lived experience voices.

The past year has been a testament to the power of prevention, education, and community support. We remain committed to empowering youth and dismantling the systems that enable exploitation.

Program Management



Hi there, I'm Dawn Bergeron!

I am so honoured to take over the Girls Against Trafficking & Exploitation Program and continue the incredibly important work that GATE has done since Stephanie Atwood first brought this program to life. I bring many years of lived experience, as well as professional experience in supporting individuals with a wide variety of challenges.

I believe in using a strength based, harm reduction type approach that meets people where they're at and keeps them in the driver's seat when making decisions to create positive changes in their own lives. I really strive to better the communities that I get the chance to be a part of by making meaningful connections and empowering others and I hope to continue doing that as the new GATE Program Manager.



STAY CONNECTED!



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