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Q : What are setbacks and how do they affect my property?

A : In last month's topic about Zoning I touched on setbacks and in this month's feature I would like to expand on this topic.

Setbacks are defined as the distance between roads, property lines, structures, or significant features where building is prohibited. Setbacks are created by Municipal and Provincial governments through By-laws to protect public safety, privacy, and the environment.

When building a structure on your property, such as a garage or even a shed, you should know how far it needs to be located from a setback line prior to construction. Costly mistakes are made by home owners who build within the setback limit.

As a licensed Ontario Land Surveyor I'm available to discuss the setback regulations governing your property and help ensure any structure you plan on building meets these regulations.

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Q : The topic of sexual assault and abuse has been in the news so much lately. Unfortunately, it happened to me too. I'm wondering if there is still any benefit for me getting counselling now to deal with my past?

A : Child sexual abuse and sexual assault impact every aspect of a young person's life and it is not something we "grow out of". It continues to negatively impact the individual forever until it is dealt with, with in-depth counselling, and even possibly well beyond that. The younger the child was when the abuse first occurred; the longer the abuse continued; the relationship between the child and the abuser, are all variables that will affect the impact of the abuse for the adult.

If the child is young when the abuse occurs, it will affect the child's ability to attach and may later result in many failed relationships and black and white thinking. From the age that the abuse began and for the time after that, all developmental tasks are impacted so that a child may develop a faulty sense of self and poor self esteem. He or she may become self destructive, addicted or sexually promiscuous. It is clear, therefore, as to why the younger the child and the longer the abuse continued, the more impact it will have on the developing self.

The child's ability to trust is clearly, impacted by sexual abuse. If the abuser was a trusted teacher, coach or religious leader, for example, the child may develop difficulty in trusting people in authority. As an adult, they may have frequent work place confrontations and may be fired or quit many jobs. They may avoid any religious ceremonies or events or have a difficult time allowing their own child to participate on sporting teams.

If the abuser was a close family member, attachment and trust issues are likely. In adulthood, the result can be familial triangulation, where one person plays one against the other; or possibly overprotective or overly permissive parenting.

The impacts and outcomes of sexual abuse and assault are always about power and control over a victim and how long it will take to make the necessary changes will depend on many factors. But the impacts can be remediated with intensive counselling with a highly skilled, knowledgeable counsellor. Dr. Elayne Tanner has the skills necessary to enable you to reclaim your life. Call today.

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