



Torstar file photo

Halton police will be publishing some details of domestic abuse incidents.

HALTON POLICE TO PUBLISH SOME DETAILS ON DOMESTIC INCIDENTS

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Incidents of intimate-partner violence threaten the sense of safety and well-being that defines the region, Halton police say.

Halton police hope to change that by shedding more light on the incidents.

Last year, police responded to more than 3,300 intimate-partner domestic violence calls.

Police said they know that intimate-partner violence is overwhelmingly under-reported. In fact, Statistics Canada estimates that more than 80 per cent of these incidents go unreported.

Starting now, Halton Regional Police will periodically publish media releases that capture a de-identified incident of intimate-partner violence in

the community. No names. No residence details. They will, however, disclose the nature of the incident and what charges were laid as a result of an investigation. Each media release will also include key messaging that:

- Reinforces that no one has the right to abuse another person

- Encourages victims and witnesses to contact Halton Regional Police

- Provides a comprehensive list of community resources for those affected

The police hope that releasing information will create an opportunity to connect others who are at risk, or who may already be victims of intimate-partner violence, with the resources and support they need and deserve.

As well, police want to heighten the awareness of the public regarding how

pervasive this violence is in the community.

"Intimate-partner violence reaches across socio-economic, cultural, racial and class distinctions. It is a community problem that requires community engagement to address," said Deputy Chief Jeff Hill.

"It is impossible to fix what you can't see, so we are broadening the conversation to clearly signal that this insidious violence is not solely an issue of concern to victims. If you see something, say something," said Hill.

"We applaud (Halton Regional Police) for taking this bold step," said Diane Beaulieu, executive director of Halton Women's Place.

"An increase in public awareness will help destigmatize the issue of gender-based violence, and particularly violence against women. Every person in the community is entitled to feel safe in their home."

Given the prevalence of intimate-partner violence in the region, it is imperative that all stakeholders shed light on this issue. In collaboration with community partners, through ongoing education and shared information, Halton Regional Police said it hopes to further prevent and reduce future victimization.

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In separation situations who gets custody of the children?

A

The question to be determined by the court is always what is in the "best interests" of the child. Best Interests is a vague concept, with numerous factors to consider. Here is just one of the more important ones. The assumption most courts make is the best indication of future appropriate parenting is past history. Hence, custody and access trials are often an exercise in deconstruction of the child's life, examining what roles each parent took on. Most judges try to minimize disruption in a child's life which usually means the primary care giver in the past remains the primary care giver in the future.

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