



Dear Community Partners,

Re: Inviting Referrals - Safe Passages Healing Retreat Program

Women's Support Network of York Region (WSN) is now inviting referrals to the *Safe Passages Healing Retreat Program* for sexually exploited women.

As a trusted community partner, we know that you likely come into contact with women who have experienced sexual exploitation. This Program will be of interest to you and the women you are supporting.

WSN has been supporting survivors of human trafficking and sexual exploitation for over 10 years, with numerous designated programs and projects dedicated to fostering support for this population. Our expertise and leadership in this area – and the survivors accessing our existing human trafficking support program – led us to develop *Safe Passages*.

Funded by the Anti-Human Trafficking Community Supports Fund, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), the program offers a holistic model of support, addressing the specific needs of trafficked survivors. It is grounded on Indigenous healing approaches, women-centred principles of counselling and trauma-informed practices.

What is the Safe Passages Program?

Safe Passages is a healing retreat program for women who have experienced sexual exploitation. The *Safe Passages Program* allows survivors a consistent, safe environment to begin the process of healing from the layers of traumatic incidents they have been exposed to through sexual exploitation.

There are 3 components to the Program (survivors will participate in all three):

- **A 4-week Pre-Retreat Group** (Jan 13, 20, 27 @ WSN 1:30-3:30pm; Jan 31, 2021 @ retreat venue). In preparation for participating in the *Safe Passages Healing Retreat*, women will participate in a 4 week pre-group (two-hour group session each week, for four weeks). In this group, women will meet other program members, meet program staff and prepare for the healing retreat experience.
- **A 1-week Healing Retreat** (Jan 31- Feb 5, 2021). The *Safe Passages Healing Retreat* (women remain on-site at the healing retreat for a week) will provide survivors with a structured and safe program that allows women to understand the impacts of sexual exploitation, and provides intensive therapeutic strategies for long term healing and wellness.
- **A 2-week post-retreat group** (Feb 10 & 17 @ WSN, 1:30-3:30pm). Upon completion of the one week healing retreat, the women will participate in a 2-week post-group to help them integrate their learnings from the retreat into their day to day lives.



How does the *Safe Passages Healing Retreat* work?

The retreat is a one-week component of the overall Program. During the *Safe Passages Healing Retreat*, women stay on-site at the location for one week and participate in healing and self-care activities. During this time, the Program provides survivors with a structured and safe program that supports them to understand the impacts of sexual exploitation, and provides intensive therapeutic strategies for long-term healing and wellness.

Daily activities include group and individual support, body work, breath work, trauma recovery work, art, bundle and mask making, solitude and ceremonial fires. Women will have access to various relaxation treatments, a pool, a sauna, a variety of self-care activities, as well as, land and water fitness activity options.

The location of the retreat is in Ramara, Ontario. Each woman stays in her own bedroom with a three-piece bathroom. A trauma counsellor will be on site, including all overnights, to offer support to participants, as needed. All meals are included for the week and we accommodate all dietary restrictions (just let us know). We can provide travel to and from the retreat (within York Region).

The healing retreat week will take place from Jan 31- Feb 5, 2021. *Note:* women interested in attending these dates must first take part in the Pre-Retreat Groups (one two-hour group session each week), commencing Jan 13, 2021. Additional retreats will be scheduled over the course of 2021.

What is the registration fee for *Safe Passages Program*?

The program is free for survivors participating in *Safe Passages* groups and healing retreat. This Program is funded by the Anti-Human Trafficking Community Supports Fund, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

Who should take part in *Safe Passages*?

Safe Passages welcomes any woman (aged 18 and up) who has experienced trafficking and sexual exploitation to participate. Women who wish to participate in the Program should commit to take part in all three components: the Pre-Retreat Groups, the one week Healing Retreat itself, and the Post-Retreat Groups.

Please note that *Safe Passages* may not be a good fit for survivors who are in crisis, have exited a trafficking situation very recently, those who have not yet developed basic emotional coping skills, and those who do not have basic practical necessities (i.e. safe housing, access to food) in their day to day lives.

How can you refer to *Safe Passages*, or learn more?

If you know a trafficked survivor who could benefit from this therapeutic intervention, please get in touch with us! If you are interested in referring a client, or have any questions **contact WSN at 905-895-3646.**