

Specialised in supporting women, children & young people
in Caithness & Sutherland to stay safe from domestic abuse

CASWA

Caithness and Sutherland Women's Aid

0345 408 151 - www.caswa.org.uk - info@caswa.org.uk



SPOTLIGHT ON CASWA

45 Referrals
Jan-March 2022

86 women
currently
receiving support

59 children &
young people
currently receiving
support



"No matter how
long the Winter,
Spring is sure
to follow..."



Own My Life

For the last 12 weeks we have been running the life-changing domestic abuse course, Own My Life. Five women participated in the educational 12-week in-person course which helps women to regain control of their lives after they have been subjected to abuse or violence by a partner or ex-partner. The course is overseen by The Women's Liberation Collective, was founded by Natalie Collins and we are delighted to have some of our Women's Team trained up to deliver Own My Life locally.

The course covers all dynamics of domestic abuse, including economic, sexual, emotional and psychological. It includes domestic abuse education, literacy building on the psychology of trauma, the cycle of abuse and the most up-to-date information about male violence and entitlement, as well as coping mechanisms for co-parenting with an abuser. All content is supplemented with video content and a workbook.

All of the women who have taken the course have said the course has helped them better understand their life and feel they are in control of their lives and future. The feedback we've had speaks for itself...

"Its nice to have other people who know what we have been through"

"To be with people who 'get it' is so good"

"Its not dull and somber, its uplifting"

*"The course has changed my life as I feel like
I have started living again"*

"I have started to remember who I used to be before I met him".

CASWA will continue to provide the Own My Life course to women in Sutherland later this year before returning to Caithness in 2023.

More information can be found here: www.ownmylifecourse.org

Box of Gratitude

Crocus - we'd like to say THANK YOU SO MUCH to the team at Crocus who support bereaved children and young people in the Highlands every day. While we aren't specialists in bereavement, but the children and young people we work with experience a lot of loss, grief and change due to their experience of domestic abuse. We recently spent some time with the Crocus team and they sent us LOADS of great resources to add to our support toolkit!

A great example of organisations working together & sharing practice!



Highland Culture Collective (HCC)

- We'd like to say a huge THANK YOU to the Highland Culture Collective. We've been working with HCC Artists in Residence, Catriona Meighan & Sinéad Hargan, over the past few months to plan and deliver creative sessions for women, children and young people.

HCC is a group of artists, communities & arts organisations across the Highlands of Scotland who have come together as part of a national pilot project across Scotland, in response to the impact of the pandemic. Funded by Creative Scotland, the artists-in-residence are working creatively and collaboratively with communities for a year, from September 2021 to September 2022. We're looking forward to continuing to work with Cat & Sinéad over the coming months. Find out more here:

www.highlandculturecollective.com



POETRY WORKSHOP:

At the end of March our Sutherland Women's Group took part in a creative writing and poetry workshop run by Jackie Pavlenko. This was a new (and quite daunting!) activity for the group.

The session, with Jackie's facilitation, went really well. There was lots of laughter and everyone put pen to paper to write some fantastic poems.

Keep an eye out on our social media and the blog section of our website as we'll be sharing some of the poems soon!

Women's Service



TRAINING: One of our Domestic Abuse Specialists recently had the opportunity to attend a 4 day training on **The Safe and Together Model** which is being rolled out by the Scottish Government. The Safe and Together™ Model is an internationally recognised suite of tools & interventions designed to help child- and family-serving systems become **domestic abuse-informed**. Continuously refined, through years of experience implementing the Model across the United States and other countries, the Model helps improve competencies and multi-agency collaboration related to the **intersection of domestic abuse and child maltreatment**. This child-centered model derives its name from the concept that **children are best served when we can work toward keeping them safe and together with the non-offending parent (the adult domestic abuse survivor)**. The Model provides a framework for partnering with domestic abuse survivors and intervening with perpetrators in order to **enhance the safety and well-being of children**. Our colleague stated that this is a much needed model which **focuses on the perpetrator pattern-based approach**. This helps to **keep the perpetrator and his behaviour and choices visible and accountable**. There was strong statements throughout the training that, as domestic abuse services, we have felt frustrated in our day to day work supporting survivors and their families. **For years we have seen victim-blaming throughout society** with sayings such as "Why doesn't she just leave, report him to police, etc." **This model moves away from this, keeping the perpetrator's behaviour and choices as the sole source of harm, holding him entirely accountable and visible, applying the same high standards for men as parents**. With multi-agency work partnering with the "non-offending parent" as the natural ally of her children, **we can focus on both her and her children's safety and well-being**. Too often we hear of survivor's being told of their 'failure to protect' in homes with domestic abuse. When we use the Safe and Together Model we **look at the survivor's strengths**, adopting a strengths-based approach to **understand how she has been managing the risk to her children whilst living with the fear of domestic abuse**. Keeping them safe physically and emotionally, helping their child/children heal from trauma and providing a nurturing and stable environment. Finally we seem to be turning a corner... **Domestic abuse is not just about an unhealthy relationship, it is the behaviours of a perpetrator and his choices to do this to exert his power and control over another...** Watch this space!!!

Money worries and increased cost of living...

Money is a huge source of stress, worry and anxiety for many people at the moment...particularly with huge hikes in living costs! We are attending the Caithness Poverty Action Group meetings to keep informed and up-to-date. The local Citizen Advice Bureaus (CAB) are a huge source of support and advice to communities. They hold a wealth of knowledge and are a great support to many!

We included lots of links to local services, as well as information about financial abuse in a blog post we wrote this time last year: www.caswa.org.uk/blog/money-counts

The Money Saving Expert can also be a helpful resource: www.moneysavingexpert.com

Feedback we've had recently from children & young people about their support from CASWA:

"You help me when something is wrong"

"You help me change my feelings...every time I feel sad, you make me back happy"

"You listen to me & help me understand"

"Support really helps me get out of a spiral"

"[I like] having someone to talk to in a safe environment"

Children & Young People's Service

Training - Between January and March our Children & Young People's Team completed The Decider Therapeutic Skills training. The Decider Skills use Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to teach children, young people and adults the skills to recognise their own thoughts, feelings and behaviours, enabling them to monitor and manage their own emotions and mental health. We're looking forward to incorporating the skills into our work with children & young people to support their mental health & emotional wellbeing.



Consultation - As an organisation, we're lucky to be surrounded by a huge number of practitioners and organisations. We're big believers in peer learning and between January and March we held consultation sessions with our local Primary Mental Health Workers and the team at Crocus (Highland Hospice). Within our Children & Young People's Service we deal with mental health, emotional wellbeing, grief, loss and change on a daily basis. It has been great to draw on the knowledge, experience and expertise of other practitioners locally to develop our service.



Planning Ahead - As pandemic restrictions ease, we've started planning ahead for the next few months. We're really excited to be planning some great creative and group work activities over the coming months and the Summer holidays! Find out more next newsletter!

"A child's mental health is just as important as their physical health and deserves the same quality of support"

- Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge

AWARENESS RAISING, EDUCATION & PREVENTION

Awareness Session with Students from UHI - In January, two members of our team delivered a session for Social Services and Childhood Practice students studying at UHI. The session covered domestic abuse awareness and information about CASWA and the work that we do as well as giving a flavour of what it is like to work within the sector. We received some great feedback & look forward to returning to UHI to deliver more sessions like this in future.

Caithness Poverty Action Group - CASWA have joined the Caithness Poverty Action Group to address issues relating to poverty at a local level. As a service, we recognise the impact that the increased cost of living will have on our service users. Representatives from both our Women's Service and Children & Young People's Service look forward to continuing to be involved in this action group to try to make a difference to the women, children and young people who we work with & the local community.

Social Media Campaigns - We continue to have a strong presence on social media with an amazing 1,053 followers on our Instagram. We celebrated Women in History month on our platforms and shined a light on a number of influential women from history. Check out our Facebook and Instagram!

International Women's Day - For International Women's Day on 8th March, we dropped 12 placards each with an inspirational quote or message on how to support gender equality.

Self-Care Blog Post - In March, we compiled a blog post of 10 self-care tips as a result of the potential increase in anxiety levels with the news headlines at the time.

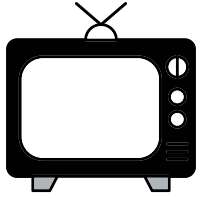
Read it here: www.caswa.org.uk/blog/caswas-10-self-care-tips

What we've been watching...

Stalker on BBC I-Player - A documentary where Stacy Dooley meets women who have been stalked and sees first-hand the long lasting impact it has on them and how it can fundamentally change people forever. We found this a really powerful & interesting documentary where women were given a voice.

Women spoke openly with Stacy around what is happening to them and the devastating impact it has on their lives. Stacy also speaks with a special UK police force to capture, how they gather evidence and build cases against the perpetrators - which involves establishing a pattern of behaviour rather than just proving single incidents. The documentary highlighted that 1 in 5 women are victims of stalking and that half of convicted stalkers re-offend. It also highlighted that convictions tend to result in visibly short sentences and restraining orders that are usually broken swiftly and without consequence. This is only the tip of the iceberg, more needs to be done to support survivors and highlight it's the perpetrators behaviour that needs to change.

Sirin Kale's article in the Guardian recently shed further light and awareness on stalking - "11 Years, 10 Arrests, At Least 62 Victims".



THE PLIGHT OF THE EVERYDAY WOMAN

A POEM BY KRISTIN ISHAYA

Double standards left and right,
seems like there is no end in sight.
"Can't do this or that" they say,
as they assign judgments all day.

"Act like a lady."
"Good girls don't do that."
"You're pretty good, for a girl."
"You can't wear that."
"That's a man's job."
"Stop being so emotional."
"You fight like a girl."

I was not born for you.
You can't tell me what to do.
I'm full of power and might,
and I will pick my own fight.

I am a strong force of will,
who can conquer all, but still...
All the pressure weighs me down,
making it hard not to drown.

Things I hear go to my head,
tainting all my thoughts with dread.
"What if they think this of me?"
and "How will I be perceived?"

So what does it mean to be
a woman in today's society?
It's a lot of give, no take,
and constant work with no break:

Give yourself to the world.
Let others tell you how to be a girl.
Let them put you in a box,
and try to sell you out like stocks.

All the blame is placed on you.
Who'll believe your words as true?
Achievements go down the drain,
as someone else claims your fame.

It seems as if all hope's gone,
no sight of the light at dawn.
But one small sliver of light
survives and shines through the night.

The fire cannot be put out,
growing bigger in the drought.
A trail has been set ablaze,
lighting the path to better days.

People from far and wide,
coming together to ally,
creating a better world,
for every woman & girl.

Feminist Books for Young Minds



We love this lovely collection of feminist books for young readers. A fabulous way to encourage young minds to explore the world around them, learn about inspirational women and build an understanding of their equal place in the world and the important mark that they can make!

The Bechdel Test

We looked at the Bechdel Test recently on our Social media, this test was designed to capture feminism within the TV & Movie industry. The test is simple enough, does the TV show or movie contain a scene where two or more women have a conversation about anything other than a man. How often do our favourite shows actually pass this test? Below is a list of movies which DO NOT pass the Bechdel Test!

- The Lord of the Rings Trilogy (2001-2003)
- Ratatouille (2007)
- Slumdog Millionaire (2008)
- Avatar (2009)
- The Social Network (2010)
- 21 Jump Street (2012)
- The Avengers (2013)
- La La Land (2016)
- A Star is Born (2018)
- Les Misérables (2019)
- Dear Evan Hansen (2021)



FEMINIST CORNER



CUT OUT & KEEP

Some bits and pieces for a scrapbook, your journal, a vision board, your wall, etc



GIVE IT A GO...



ONLINE, FREE PAINTING TUTORIAL:



Ever tried painting? Why not "give it a go" with this FREE tutorial from Haven House Art: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7beypl0GWQ4&t=3s>
Reasonably priced art supplies can be purchased online from The Works.

Coming Soon...

We really welcome seeing this new group for young girls & women pop up locally. Empower Her is led and delivered by Thurso Community Development Trust and the next session will take place on 5th May. If you'd like to hear more, contact Zoe from Thurso CDT: zoe@thursocdt.co.uk



We WANT Festival

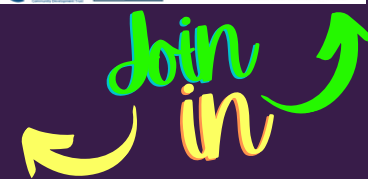
A health festival that includes you.

That means women, trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming people and the men who support them.



25th to 29th April 2022
Thurso - Fringe events

Saturday 30th April 2022
Olrig Street Gardens
Information stalls, talks, food, music



We're really excited about the upcoming We WANT festival taking place in Thurso at the end of April. We're delighted to be running a Fringe event and to have a stall at the festival itself on the 30th - come along and say hello!

More information: Follow @ThursoCDT on FB & Instagram.
Visit: <https://www.thursocdt.co.uk/we-want-festival>

Bug 	Butterfly 	Spiders web
Tree 	Flower 	Green leaf
Dandelion 	Wild Berries 	Mushroom
A stick shaped like the letter "Y" 	Animal Footprints 	Bird