

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 0151 - www.caswa.org.uk - info@caswa.org.uk



SPOTLIGHT ON CASWA

92 Referrals
January-June 2023

81
women currently
receiving support

49
children & young people
currently
receiving support

A Busy Start to the Year!

For those who are familiar with our newsletter, you'll know that we usually publish a quarterly newsletter. We had an incredibly busy start to the year and as a consequence had to postpone the publication of our newsletter covering the first quarter of the year (January-March). In light of this - we've switched things up and this edition contains our news from the first half of the year. We'll return to a quarterly newsletter for the next edition.

Recruitment

We're in the midst of a busy recruitment spell at the moment, recruiting new domestic abuse specialists within our Women's Team and Children & Young People's Team as well as a new Manager. We're really excited about welcoming new team members to CASWA and seeing the organisation grow and develop!

Training

We were delighted to have a visit from Dr Katy Proctor, a Senior Lecturer in Gender, Violence, and Criminology at Glasgow Caledonian University in May. Using findings from her research, she delivered training to our team around stalking. Our team found the day extremely informative and useful.

Did you know...?

Did you know that our website contains lots of useful information as well as details about the services that we offer. We also have a blog post section, it has been a little quiet recently, but we have over 50 posts covering a number of topics. Pay our website a visit here: www.caswa.org.uk

Box of Gratitude

We would like to say a **huge thank you** for two very generous grants and donations towards our volunteer-run sister project, **The Gift Project**.

Employees from Harbour Energy held a cake morning and raised **£183** for The Gift Project through donations. Their donations were very kindly matched by **Harbour Energy!** We would like to say a big thank you to all at Harbour Energy for their donations and support!

We would also like to **thank** the **Royal Dornoch Community Fund** who donated **£500** towards **The Gift Project**. These donations will go a long way in supporting the running costs and delivery of our sister project, The Gift Project.

Read more about the project on page 2.

We would like to say **thank you** to **groups of pupils from Wick, Golspie and Dornoch High Schools** who picked CASWA as their charity of focus for Youth Philanthropy Initiative work in their schools. The **Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI)** is a powerful active citizenship programme, empowering young people to make a difference in their communities while developing skills. Pupils select, meet and research a local charity and prepare a presentation for the opportunity to win their chosen charity £3000. We think very highly of YPI and are always very impressed with the pupils' dedication and enthusiasm. We are always extremely appreciative when pupils choose to champion our charity.

We would also like to say **thank you** to the **group of pupils from Golspie High School** who, following their work for YPI, decided to raise money for CASWA within their local community. They raised a fantastic **£105.16!**



thank you



We'd like to say a **big thank you** to the **Staxigoe Selkies** who marked International Women's Day in March not only with an outdoor swim and a picnic, but a generous donation of **£90** to CASWA.

“
It is
not
my shame
”

"It is not my shame". A short sentence said by a woman supported by our service recently. It may be a short sentence, but the words are incredibly powerful and music to our ears. Our support aims to support women, children and young people navigate the shame and blame that can be felt following an experience of domestic abuse. We stand firm in our stance: shame and blame do not belong to those who experience abuse. They lie firmly with those who perpetrate it.

“Shame dies when
stories are told in
safe spaces”

Ann Voscamp

Women's Service

Funding Success! We were successful in a funding application to the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, delivered by the Highland Third Sector Interface in partnership with Highland Health & Social Care Partnership. We were awarded £6000 to go towards women's group activities which target mental health and wellbeing. Two examples of the types of activities this will fund are below.

Own My Life. In June we completed our third Own My Life course. Own My Life is an innovative, creative, educational course developed to support women who have experienced abuse from a partner or ex-partner. It is a 12 week, group-based program which seeks to support women to regain ownership of their lives. Our Women's Team are accredited, trained facilitators of the course. Here's what one of them had to say: "Towards the end of the 12 weeks we have seen the women flourish in this safe space and gain understanding of what they have been through which has allowed them to move forward. As facilitators, we saw first hand the difference the course made!". The women who attended described the group as *powerful, caring, respectful, welcoming, friendly, understanding, supportive, empowering, helpful and enlightening.* The course was so beneficial to the lives of the women who recently completed the course, when invited to take part in CASWA's awareness raising they were extremely keen to use this opportunity to recommend the course to other women and joined us to co-write a blog post: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/a-message-to-other-women>

Spring Wreath Workshop - a 'blooming' great workshop.

Flower arranging is meant to be a therapeutic and mood boosting activity, one of our specialists from our Women's Team most certainly agrees! After attending a workshop in her own time, she organised a workshop for women supported by CASWA. The workshop was facilitated by Blooms from Burnside who demonstrated how to make our own living Spring wreath. The class was fun, therapeutic and relaxing - a tried and tested recipe for a good workshop! Everyone went home with their own handmade 'living' wreath. With care and plenty of watering they should last!



The first week of June was volunteer week and we celebrated our volunteer-run sister project, The Gift Project, delivered by our volunteer, Annie. This project provides gift boxes of essential items and clothing to women, children and young people supported by CASWA. The project is an invaluable and empowering project which adds to the support package available to women, children and young people supported by CASWA and meets a previously unmet need of our service. We asked Annie to share her thoughts on the project during volunteer week...

"The project has been developing over a few years thanks to the marvellous storage base at Dornoch Hub and the generous quality clothing donated by the public near and far. Recently there has been amazing monetary donations which now enable me to buy sufficient underwear and essential clothing for the project which I don't have in stock. I really feel that the boxes are complete when I can include these items. The requests from CASWA can come at any time throughout the year. Everyone one is individually important and I am grateful to have all these resources to provide the gift boxes. I always hope that they are not only useful but uplifting."

We always receive fantastic feedback from everyone who receives a gift parcel, they are always shocked at how amazing the parcels are and all the lovely items inside. The gift parcels from The Gift Project go a long way in boosting the recipient's confidence and feelings of worth - something that is really important to both CASWA and The Gift Project.

If you'd like to read more about the project, read our blog post <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/volunteer-week-gift-project-update> or follow the project on Facebook [@thegiftprojectsutherland](https://www.facebook.com/thegiftprojectsutherland)

Children & Young People's Service

Children & Young People-centred and -led working practice: what does this mean anyway? Our Children & Young People's Team recently revisited what it means to work in a person-led and person-centred way and why it is so important to our work in a trauma-informed service who support children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse. We've condensed this into a blog post to give some insight into how we work: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/cypteamworkingpractice>

One-to-one support. We've had a busy half year in our Children & Young People's Service, our primary focus has been providing one-to-one support to children and young people who need our service. Each child/young person who is referred to and wishes to be supported by our service is allocated one of our workers as their key-worker. Their worker works alongside them to understand their needs and build an individualised plan for support which is used throughout the support journey to meet their needs. The pink text opposite is reflections from children who completed some work around healthy and unhealthy relationships as part of their support journey to enable them to better understand healthy and unhealthy relationships and in turn reflect on and understand their own experiences.

"PEOPLE SHOULD
FEEL FREE
IN HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIPS"

"YOU FEEL SAFE
IN A HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIP"

"HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS
CREATE GOOD MEMORIES.
UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS
CREATE BAD MEMORIES"

AWARENESS RAISING, EDUCATION & PREVENTION



Information stand at Women's Wellness Festival: We were delighted to be invited to have an information stand at the North Highland Women's Wellness Hub's (NHWWH) festival at Lyth Arts Centre on 19th March. A great festival celebrating, sharing information and celebrating all things women's health and wellness. It was a great opportunity for our service to raise awareness of the work that we do and services we provide. Find out more about the work of NHWWH here: <https://www.northhighlandwwh.com/>



Social Media: Social media has become a really important vehicle for raising awareness and educating our local community and beyond about our organisation, gender-based abuse and women's issues and rights. Social media spaces such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have provided a platform for CASWA to empower women, bring important conversations about gender-based abuse to the fore, challenge and change the narrative as well as celebrate survivors of gender-based abuse.



While mainstream media has and continues to shine a light on gender-based abuse, the use of social media platforms, provide a safe, informed space for women, children and young people to connect with CASWA and begin the journey to heal from their experiences. We also value the opportunities to reach our community which is offered by social media as it can play a crucial role in engaging the community with the work that we do and its importance as well as provide opportunities for the community to show support and participate in activism.

If you don't already like and follow us on social media, please do.

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/CaithnessandSutherlandWomensAid>

Instagram - [@caswa_womensaid](https://www.instagram.com/caswa_womensaid)



Workshop at University of Highlands & Islands: In May we visited the North Highland campus and delivered a workshop to Health and Social Care students. This was a great opportunity for CASWA to raise awareness of domestic abuse and the work that we do, while also sharing some insight into the working world within the field of health and social care.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN WATCHING, READING, LISTENING TO...

Gaslight: Available on BBC Sounds, Gaslight is a five-part, Radio 4 thriller drama of the 1938 play by Patrick Hamilton - the play which brought the word to life. 'Gaslighting' was Merriam-Webster Dictionary's word of the year in 2022 and this modern adaption of the play illustrates this abusive behaviour and its impact.

The Power: Available on Amazon Prime (and a book), The Power is a TV adaption of the book by Naomi Alderman. It is a thought-provoking and clever deep dive in to power and the impact that power has on the lives of those who hold it and the lives of those who do not.

The Boy, The Mole, The Fox & The Horse: A beautifully illustrated book by Charlie Mackesy turned into an animation available on BBC iPlayer - a gentle story of kindness, friendship, courage and hope.

Boundaries after a Pathological Relationship: A fantastic short, accessible book by Adelyn Birch which gets to the heart of the matter of personal boundaries and really resonated with one of our team members and the work that they do with women supported by CASWA. This concise and powerful book is filled with practical wisdom and useful tips to help people identify and set clear boundaries and walks the reader through the process of creating boundaries from start to finish.

FEMINIST CORNER

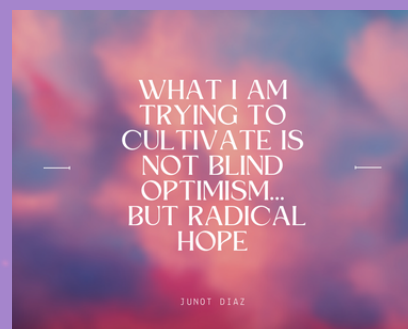
"It is literally impossible to be a woman. You are so beautiful, and so smart, and it kills me that you don't think you're good enough. Like, we have to always be extraordinary, but somehow we're always doing it wrong."

You have to be thin, but not too thin. And you can never say you want to be thin. You have to say you want to be healthy, but also you have to be thin. You have to have money, but you can't ask for money because that's crass. You have to be a boss, but you can't be mean. You have to lead, but you can't squash other people's ideas. You're supposed to love being a mother, but don't talk about your kids all the damn time. You have to be a career woman but also always be looking out for other people. You have to answer for men's bad behavior, which is insane, but if you point that out, you're accused of complaining. You're supposed to stay pretty for men, but not so pretty that you tempt them too much or that you threaten other women because you're supposed to be a part of the sisterhood. But always stand out and always be grateful. But never forget that the system is rigged. So find a way to acknowledge that but also always be grateful. You have to never get old, never be rude, never show off, never be selfish, never fall down, never fail, never show fear, never get out of line.

It's too hard! It's too contradictory and nobody gives you a medal or says thank you! And it turns out, in fact, that not only are you doing everything wrong, but also everything is your fault.

I'm just so tired of watching myself and every single other woman tie herself into knots so that people will like us. And if all of that is also true for a doll just representing women, then I don't even know."

Gloria (played by America Ferrera) - 'Barbie'



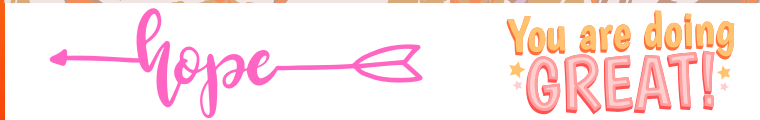
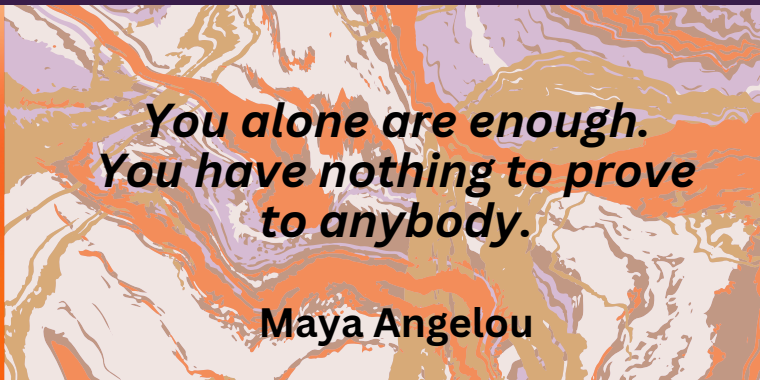
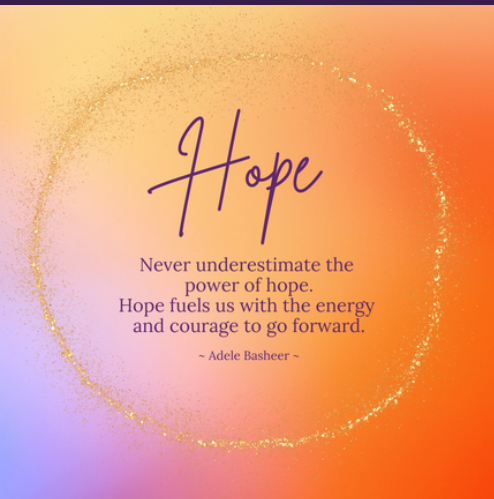
"I've had to hear a lot of times. 'well, it's better than it used to be for women'...and, you know, I don't think that's my goal, to have it not get worse!"

Katie Porter

"EACH TIME A WOMAN STANDS UP FOR HERSELF, SHE STANDS UP FOR ALL WOMEN."
- MAYA ANGELOU

CUT OUT & KEEP

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



GIVE IT A GO...

To start the year, in January CASWA's social media platforms focused on self-care...but self-care is important throughout the year, not just as a 'new year, new me' resolution. Below we've included some ideas we shared on social media!

First of all let's answer the question: what is self-care? At a simple level (but not always as easy as it sounds!), self-care is **looking after yourself, showing up for yourself and prioritising you! Not selfish or indulgent, but necessary and essential.** Self-care can be the every day things we do to look after ourselves, the steps we take to manage stress in our lives and the **actions that help us to take care of our physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing.** Self-care can and does **look different to us all.** Why not give self-care a go and explore what might work for you! Here are three of our team's favourite self-care activities: Connecting with others, escaping to another world through reading and moving our bodies!

Connecting with others



Connecting with others is important as a form of self-care. We are social beings and while many of us benefit from alone time and/or have more introverted natures, we all do benefit from connecting with each other. At CASWA we try to meet colleagues occasionally for a coffee, love a "Monday morning blether" and enjoy team meeting days when we are all together! Why not connect with someone in your world? Send a friend a message. Arrange to meet up for a coffee or a walk. Invite them to join you for an activity. Often it is simply extending the invite...

Looking to connect with new people, build a network and/or take up a new hobby? Why not join in on a group/activity/class that sounds interesting to you. One of our team really recommends this: "I've met so many people just by going along to local groups and activities, often on my own if it wasn't something my friends were interested in. I won't lie - it is daunting walking in and feels a little out of my comfort zone sometimes, but the way I always think about it is: if I don't like it, I don't have to go back. Taking that brave steps to enter a room and join in has meant I've taken part in enjoyable activities that I otherwise wouldn't have and made connections with like-minded people".

Escaping to another world through reading...

Escaping to another world through reading is something many of us find important to our wellbeing as we're largely a team of readers here at CASWA (even our Secret Santa gifts to each other at Christmas were...books)! If you're looking for some reading recommendations, check out our Book Fairy Project blog: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/caswas-book-fairy-project-2022> If you're looking for something new to read, why not suggest a book swap with friends? Books aren't cheap, but don't forget charity shops and our local Highlife Highland Libraries! Find out more about how to join our local libraries here: <https://www.highlifehighland.com/libraries/> Audio books DO count as reading too...as do magazines. You might prefer to sit back and listen to a book or don't quite have enough time to squeeze in sitting down to read. Maybe you prefer leafing through a magazine and reading shorter articles instead.



Moving our bodies!

Moving our bodies and being active is important for our physical health...but it has an additional positive benefit for our mental health too. We might feel a bit sweaty and exhausted, but moving our bodies also makes us feel strong, energised and great! Here are our team's favourite ways to move our bodies:

Yoga - Attending one of the many, great classes available locally or practicing at home using a YouTube video (we like Yoga with Adrienne).

Walking - Going on a good 'stomp' is a favourite pastime for many of our team, whether that be a daily dog walk, a 30 minute lunchtime stroll, meeting a friend for a walk or a good, long walk over the weekend! Taking advantage of living in the Highlands surrounded by the beautiful landscape, an amazing coastline and wide open skies on our doorsteps.

Jogging & Running - Upping the pace a little, a couple of us love to jog and run! There's some great running groups available for beginners or more seasoned runners. Not keen on a group, but keen to give running a go? Couch to 5K is a good training app some of us have used.

Swimming & watersports - Being in the water is something many of our team enjoy (they're mermaids really!) - swimming (indoors or outdoors), surfing or paddleboarding... There's lots of great options locally for lessons! Just be sure to be up to speed with all things safety-related before you go!

Gym - Going to one of the local gyms for a pre- or post-work workout or following a training plan.

Dancing - In our kitchens, at a class, dancing our wee socks off on a night out! Some of us love to pop on our favourite tunes, move our bodies and have a wee dance!

Cycling - There's some great work being done locally around cycling - have a look on Cycling UK to find out more - <https://www.cyclinguk.org/scotland>

There's lots of other opportunities too locally - rugby, tennis, badminton, boxing, martial arts, football, netball, etc... Ask around! Celebrate your body and all it can do - you'll feel great!!!

