

## NE LHIN Support Ensures Survivors of Sexual Abuse/Assault Have a Voice

**Friday, December 10, 2010** - Avoiding unlit and unfamiliar paths at night is a good pre-cautionary measure - but according to the Ontario Women's Directorate website, an alarming 49% of sexual assaults occur in broad daylight, with 80% occurring in the home.

For survivors of sexual abuse/assault, knowing they are not alone is pivotal to recovery. With bilingual services to people living in Cochrane and Iroquois Falls, the Minto Counseling Centre is a place within their community for women who have experienced childhood or adult sexual abuse/assault to go for help. The Sexual Abuse Survivor Program offers a non-threatening group atmosphere of support and healing. It also teaches survivors how to overcome the effects of abuse. Survivors meet weekly for sixteen weeks and address topics such as trust, improving self esteem and coping with relationships.

"With funding from the North East LHIN, this free service allows us to provide a safe and confidential environment for survivors of sexual abuse/assault to help with their healing process by the sharing of stories," explains Sharon Downie, Group Counsellor and Community Resource Worker at the Minto Counselling Centre. "At the end of the program, survivors have a restored sense of control in their lives and regain confidence."



Sharon Downie, Counsellor and Community Resource Worker holds up the 'Courage to Heal' book that she references during she references during counseling sessions.

For survivors who are not yet ready to share their story in a group atmosphere, the Minto Counselling Centre offers individual sessions. For Thérèse Perreault, combining both the group and individual counselling services proved the most effective method for helping her to recover. "When I started my one-on-one counseling at the Minto Centre I felt like a victim – but once my trust was rebuilt and I was able to relate to others in the group session, then I became a survivor. The Minto Counselling Centre helped me to realize that there is hope and that I was not alone."

Louise Paquette, CEO of the NE LHIN notes that living healthy means being able to get the care support needed as close to where you live as possible. "Having to worry about paying for counseling is the last thing any survivor of sexual abuse/assault should be troubled with. The North East LHIN is pleased to provide support to allow this community service to be offered free of charge."

To learn more about the services and programs available at the Minto Counselling Centre visit [www.nmintocounsellingcentre.org](http://www.nmintocounsellingcentre.org), or call 705-272-4245. Confidentiality is guaranteed for all inquiries and consumers of the Minto Counselling Centre.

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### Did you know?

- The NE LHIN funds 83 individual mental health and addiction programs across the region; seven of which provide sexual assault counseling
- There are 2 woman's substance abuse recovery homes in Northeastern Ontario, one in Sault Ste. Marie (Breton House) and one in Sudbury (Iris Addiction Recovery for Women).
- The NE LHIN supports one regional eating disorder program in Sudbury with outreach within the region.

For more information please contact:

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