



May 1, 2008

News Release

Don't be afraid to seek help Calgary Counselling Centre rallies Calgarians to pay attention and report domestic abuse

Calgary, AB – May 1, 2008 –. Thursday's violent strangulation of Darcy Rae Elder is another harsh reminder of why domestic abuse in Calgary is an issue for everyone who knows the victim.

"Domestic violence affects everyone", says Robbie Babins-Wagner, CEO, Calgary Counselling Centre "and often it is the presence or awareness of bystanders, such as relatives, neighbours or friends of the victims and perpetrators, who have the ability to make a difference and help save lives. People who see or suspect violence need to seek immediate help. Immediate action will help neighbors, friends and loved ones feel less alone and less helpless. If people get help early, physical abuse, violence and severe injury can often be prevented."

"Seemingly simple acts such as being called names or being put down are actually some of the strongest predictors of spousal violence," confirms Wagner. "Anything you know in your gut isn't right, such as listening to ongoing fights, should prompt people to place a call to police, a local shelter, the Distress Centre or Calgary Counselling Centre. These behaviours are so often the precursors to physical abuse and people often don't even realize that what they are experiencing is actually a form of abuse. We all can help, to prevent violence from becoming fatal."

Individuals can be assured there are safe avenues for help, for both victims and abusers. There are people who can help and will listen. Calgary Counselling Centre has programs for both male and female victims of violence, as well as programs for males and females to understand and change their aggressive, abusive behaviour and outbursts. Knowing about the appropriate resources can make the difference in preventing domestic violence from occurring.

"We are working hard to educate people about domestic violence," says Babins-Wagner. "The more people who are aware of their rights, their choices and their options, the more people can seek help through a counselling centre such as ours and hopefully solve the problems in a relationship before the story ends with such a terrible tragic conclusion."

Calgary Counselling Centre participates in numerous family and domestic violence prevention partnerships with other agencies in the community, as well as in other parts of the province and country. We believe each individual needs to be aware of the resources available in their community. Playing a role to report violence, you help everyone affected by family violence.

For more information about how the Calgary Counselling Centre can help victims of domestic violence, please contact the Centre, in confidence, at (403) 691-5991 or visit www.calgarycounselling.com.

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For more information, or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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Calgary Counselling Centre is a registered charitable organization, and the leading research and knowledge-based counselling facility in Canada. Since 1962, the Centre has been committed to providing compassionate, professional and affordable counselling services that help build better lives for Calgarians through positive outcomes. Offering service in over 15 languages, the Centre is also a recognized leader in the treatment of family violence, depression, self esteem and eating disorders. Through its ongoing research and education programs, Calgary Counselling Centre strives to meet the changing needs of our community. The Centre's fee structure is based on income - no one is turned away for an inability to pay.

