



DAWN CANADA
RAFH CANADA

DisAbled Women's Network Canada
Réseau d'action des femmes handicapées du Canada

100% Accessible: DAWN-RAFH Canada's Goal for Women's Shelters

Women's shelters are a crucial resource for women fleeing abuse. To women with disabilities, who experience much higher rates of abuse than non-disabled women, this refuge is essential. Unfortunately, these women's services, which are already underfunded, are often not accessible and available to all women with disabilities. DAWN-RAFH Canada hopes to uncover the access issues that shelters are experiencing and to encourage them to become more accessible.

DAWN-RAFH Canada is conducting a National Accessibility and Accommodation Survey (NAAS) focusing on women's shelters across Canada. This survey, which was developed and tested in 2007, allows the shelter to do an in-depth audit of its facilities. Completing the NAAS provides immediate impact and examples of many inexpensive and simple accommodations that can be implemented right away. Following completion of the NAAS, follow-up information and resources are provided to administrators so that they can develop a strategic plan to improve their shelters' accessibility with 100% accessibility as a goal.

DAWN-RAFH Canada will use the results of the survey to provide online and printed toolkits for ongoing use by women's shelters and to develop other resources for increasing accessibility to shelters for women with disabilities. Ongoing training and development for shelter and outreach workers is another important part of this initiative.

From April to July 2008, DAWN-RAFH Canada's Special Projects & Research Assistant, Sujata Dey, will be surveying shelters across Canada. An online version will also be available through DAWN-RAFH Canada's website. The survey looks at all aspects of accessibility, from environmental sensitivity issues and attendant care issues to mental health issues, to helping mothers with disabilities and their children who come to shelters. DAWN-RAFH Canada's Special Projects and Research Coordinator, Diane Driedger, who has been involved in many research projects concerning the issues of women with disabilities, will be analyzing and compiling the data in preparation for presentation at the first World Conference of Women's Shelters in September 2008. DAWN-RAFH Canada, together with Women with Disabilities Australia, will be co-presenting on a Panel on Best Practices.

We are looking for representatives from all over the country to help us conduct the survey in their local communities. If you are interested please contact Sujata Dey at sujatadeyqs@gmail.com or through the National Head Office at:

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