



# NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

## Instant Meeting: Guides

Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada

### Table of Contents

<i>Background Information for Guiders</i> .....	2
<i>Using this Instant Meeting</i> .....	3
<i>Discussion/Reflection Questions</i> .....	3
<i>Quiet Activity</i> .....	3
<i>Active Games</i> .....	4
<i>Books and Readings</i> .....	4
<i>Crafts</i> .....	5
<i>Outreach</i> .....	5
<i>Debrief/Closing</i> .....	6
<i>Where it fits</i> .....	6
<i>Appendix A: True or False Fact Sheet - Questions</i> .....	7





## Day of Action – Shelters and Resources

### Instant Meeting: Guides



### ***Background Information for Guiders***

A women's shelter is a safe place where a woman can get emergency housing for herself and her children. Women's shelters offer counselling, support, referrals, life skills programming and often transitional housing – a place for a woman and her children to move to once their time in the shelter is complete but before they find their own housing. The shelter may also offer a 24 hour crisis telephone line.

According to [www.shelternet.ca](http://www.shelternet.ca), one in four women in Canada will experience violence at the hands of a partner. Domestic violence is “any threat, act or physical force that is used to create fear, control or intimidate you”. With the far reaching effects of domestic violence, it is easy to see why Guides need to learn about women's shelters. While Guiding teaches girls the self-esteem and life skills to help them develop healthy relationships, they also need to be aware of the resources that are available if they, their friends or their

family members find themselves in an unsafe situation. In addition, girls need to know appropriate ways of expressing their feelings in order to avoid a potentially violent situation. By educating themselves on the topic of shelters, their services and the women and children who depend on them, the feelings that “I'm the only one,” can be lessened, allowing girls to get the help they need.

It is important to factor in the age and maturity level of the girls in your unit when covering a topic such as domestic violence. Therefore, it is a good idea with Guides to focus on community outreach. Engage with your local women's shelter and work together to create service projects and activities that allow Guides to connect with the shelter or raise public awareness of its importance in your community. And of course, this service work offers the added bonus of building the Guides' confidence while providing them with the opportunity to meet new people, learn new skills and have fun while instilling in them a sense of community – all things that will help build their resilience!

Before engaging in any activities relating to a women's shelter, it is very important to contact your local shelter and talk to the staff about what it is you and your unit would like to do. Ask about the types of service options available and whether they have any outreach that would allow Guides to learn about the shelter. Keep in mind that women's shelters place the safety of their residents above all else – most do not make their location publicly known. Sensitivity to the needs of the shelter and its residents is necessary for any service project or learning activities to succeed. See the Day of Action toolkit for more information about contacting shelters.

Read through the Day of Action Toolkit. It provides useful information and many resources regarding violence against women and children. Use that information and the details you gather about your own community as you use this Instant Meeting with your Guides. Remember that these activities are merely suggestions. You can use all or some of the activities or develop your own when planning your Day of Action. You can also adapt them so they work better with your unit. As long as you keep the Guides involved in the planning and organizing, your Day of Action will be successful!





Once your unit has successfully completed a Day of Action Event, either based on one of the activities from the toolkit or something you have created yourselves, you are then entitled to the Girl Guides of Canada Purple Ribbon Crest. The crest illustrates that your unit has worked together in the fight against violence against women. You can purchase your crests at your local guide store or on-line at [www.thegirlguidestore.ca](http://www.thegirlguidestore.ca)

It is recommended that a Guider views the Guide program, to identify where your Day of Action activities relate to the core programming and how you can apply your challenge work for further recognition and badges.

### ***Using this Instant Meeting***

In this Instant Meeting, there are many activities that you can choose to do. Some require planning and organizing and some can be done with just the information provided here.

As you and your Guide unit plan your Day of Action meeting, review the activities and decide which ones are suitable and of interest. Then you can mix and match activities to create your unit meeting.

You may want to open and close your meeting in the same way you always do, or you might want to create a special opening or closing for this meeting. The Discussion/Reflection Questions can help you with that.

Base your meeting on one of the Outreach Activities. This will help you determine how much time you have for Quiet Activities, Active Games or Crafts.

The Books and Readings offer helpful suggestions on how parents can continue the discussion around this important topic at home.

### ***Discussion/Reflection Questions***

These questions can be used to start a conversation with Guides about women's shelters or to encourage private reflection. You could ask a couple at one time to get a large discussion going or you could ask the questions throughout the meeting to get girls thinking as they work on something else.

- What are good ways to express your feelings? What are bad ways?
- Who can you talk to if you feel unsafe?
- What is domestic violence?
- How common do you think domestic violence is?
- Why should women who are abused get help?
- Why should kids who see abuse get help?
- Where can you go for help if you, a friend or a family member is being abused?
- Why do women go to shelters?
- Can a woman take her children to the shelter?
- What is life like in a shelter?

### ***Quiet Activity***

- a) *Invite a Guest.* Invite someone who works in a women's shelter to come to your unit and tell you about her work and life in a women's shelter.





- b) *Draw your feelings.* Draw a picture that shows your feelings or thoughts about domestic violence.
- c) *Send a Positive Message!* Make posters that you can give to your local women's shelter that highlight positive messages for the women and children who live there.

### **Active Games**

- a) *Act it out!* Have the girls come up with a variety of short violence-related skits that are relevant to the age group and your unit. For example, the skit could be an incident between a male and female student. The male has a very controlling and manipulative attitude towards his female friend.
  - Have the Guiders or Guides act out the skit.
  - Instruct the girls in the audience to shout STOP! when they think a violent situation is occurring.
  - Then discuss why they think it is a form of violence and what each character can do to change the situation in a positive way. Also, ask the girl responding to give an example of where the character can get help tackling this issue.
  - Another option is to have the girl yelling STOP! to pick a character on stage and switch positions with them.
  - Then she can act out what she thinks would be a good solution to the incident.

This activity allows the leader to take some time and explain to the unit some productive and safe ways to avoid and/or respond to a violent situation.

- b) *Run a special relay race.* Using four pieces of paper write TRUE on two of them and FALSE on the other two. Hang one TRUE and one FALSE sign beside each other allowing for some room between them. At another station hang the remaining two signs. Make two copies of the True and False fact sheets provided and cut out each question, putting a piece of tape on the back of each. Have the girls divide their unit up fairly into two groups.
  - One girl from each group runs to the Guider and gets a question. She runs back to her group where they discuss the question and decide whether it is true or false.
  - Then the girl runs to the wall and posts the question under the appropriate heading.
  - Once she returns to the group the next girl runs to the Guider to get the second question.
  - Each girl takes a turn.
  - If the team has finished and their answers are not correct allow them to continue working at it.
  - The team to finish first with all the CORRECT answers is the winner of the relay race!
  - After the game is complete, take a few minutes to discuss some of the questions and their correct answers.

### **Books and Readings**

These are chapter books, so it is not likely that you will be able to read them in your unit. However, these would be great to recommend to parents to read with their daughters to continue the discussion of violence against women. Check with your local or school librarian for more titles.

- *Praying at the Sweetwater Motel*, by April Young Fritz for grades 5-8



- *What Happened on Planet Kid*, by Jane Leslie Conly for grades 4-7
- *Camp of the Angel*, by Aileen Arrington for grades 4-6

### **Crafts**

- a) *Simple craft with a simple message!* Using your unit's craft supplies, have each girl create a small greeting card. Place kind simple phrases or inspirational quotes in the card. Attach the cards on to an item you will be donating to a local shelter. **IMPORTANT:** call your local shelter or community centre first to make sure they are willing to accept the items. They also might have a wish-list of items they are in need of at that moment.
- b) *Origami Peace Cranes.* Make a chain of origami cranes to explore feelings and values connected with alternatives to violence. Once crafted, donate your creations to a local shelter or community centre to decorate their space with these beautiful symbols of peace.  
<http://www.savingcranes.org/teachers/kids/origami.cfm>

### **Outreach**

- a) *Connect to your Community.* Understandably, women's shelters often have very strict confidentiality rules making it sometimes difficult to provide a unit with direct volunteer opportunities. But there are still lots of outreach opportunities. For example, you could invite a shelter representative to your unit to discuss and answer questions about domestic violence and the resources women's shelters provide for families. Also, before the visit ask the staff member if there are a few desired items needed at the shelter. Talk to the girls and explain to them why a shelter would be in need of these items and have each girl pick an item from the list and bring it to the next meeting. (See the craft that compliments this outreach activity.) When your guest from the shelter comes to visit have all the donated items ready for him or her to take back. This also engages the girls and allows them to have a clearer understanding and appreciation of where their donated item is going.
- b) *Discover your community.* Have each girl do research to find two local organizations that help people who are in a violent or potentially violent relationship. Have the girls report their findings in the next meeting. *Note: Inform the girls a meeting or two prior so they are ready and prepared.* Submit your list to the local newspaper along with a short letter stating why this is an important resource and ask if they would run it in an upcoming issue. Have each member sign the letter. If your local newspaper is not willing to print this material, you could ask your local library, community centre, doctor's office or school to post the resource list on their notice board.
- c) *Take Action in your community.* Involve concerned community organizations in planning or attending a memorial or remembrance ceremony to address the suffering caused by violence and the ways to triumph over it. Send materials to relevant organizations with a message that can be easily shared among members. *Note: Before organizing a unit event talk to your local shelter to see if there are upcoming events within your community.*



## ***Debrief/Closing***

Have a snowball fight! Give each Guide a piece of paper and a pencil. Ask everyone to write one thing that someone can do when she feels scared, unhappy or unsafe on her piece of paper. Then tell them all to crumple their papers into a ball. Then the “snowball fight” starts! After a few minutes, have each girl grab the closest piece of paper, uncrumple it and read it aloud.

## ***Where it fits***

### **Program Areas:**

You and Others - Learn about Leadership in a Group

You and Others - Learn about Safety

Beyond You - Discover Your Community

### **Interest Badges:**

Safety – Law Awareness

Safety – Street Wise





## ***Appendix A: True or False Fact Sheet - Questions***

1. Abuse includes hurting a person's body, hurting their feelings, or making them do things that make them feel bad or that they don't want to do.
2. Abuse is about trying to make a person feel like they are not smart, strong or able to make decisions about their own life. Abuse is about trying to have control and power over someone else.
3. Emotional abuse is when someone says or does something to hurt another person's feelings to have control over them.
4. Emotional abuse hurts our feelings and doesn't leave marks or bruises on our body.
5. A shelter is a safe place where a woman can get emergency housing and food for her and her children.
6. When escaping to a shelter, it is helpful to bring important documents such as: identification, health cards, medical records, court orders, medication, passports, credit cards, etc.
7. Often shelters will provide a private family room.
8. If the shelter nearest the victim is full, the victim will have to wait until space is available.
9. Domestic violence only affects women.
10. A shelter does not provide counselling and support for victims of domestic abuse.
11. Anger is the same as abuse.
12. Abusers are one type of person: always scary, loud, and dangerous
13. A person can find the address to a shelter on the internet or listed in the phone book.



## True or False Fact Sheet - Answers

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1. Abuse includes hurting a person's body, hurting their feelings, or making them do things that make them feel bad or that they don't want to do. **(True)**
2. Abuse is about trying to make a person feel like they are not smart, strong or able to make decisions about their own life. Abuse is about trying to have control and power over someone else. **(True)**
3. Emotional abuse is when someone says or does something to hurt another person's feelings to have control over them. **(True)**
4. Emotional abuse hurts our feelings and doesn't leave marks or bruises on our body. **(True)**
5. A shelter is a safe place where a woman can get emergency housing and food for her and her children. **(True)**
6. When escaping to a shelter, it is helpful to bring important documents such as: identification, health cards, medical records, court orders, medication, passports, credit cards, etc. **(True)**  
**Note:** It is recommended that women have photocopies of the above documentation placed away in a safe spot for the times when she needs to leave immediately.
7. Often shelters will provide a private family room. **(True)**
8. If the shelter nearest the victim is full, the victim will have to wait until space is available. **(False)**  
**Correct Answer:** Shelter staff will work with the victim to help her find a safe place.
9. Domestic violence only affects women. **(False)**  
**Correct answer:** While women are more likely to be in an abusive relationship, domestic violence can happen to both men and women. Domestic violence affects us all.
10. A shelter does not provide counselling and support for victims of domestic abuse. **(False)**  
**Correct Answer:** In addition to being a safe space it also provides women with counselling, support and referrals. Most shelters have a 24 hour crisis telephone line.
11. Anger is the same as abuse. **(False)**  
**Correct Answer:** Anger is not the same as abuse-although it's easy to confuse them. Anger is a feeling, and everyone gets angry sometimes. There are healthy ways to deal with our anger that are not hurtful to others. Abuse is a way of acting towards someone else that is always hurtful.
12. Abusers are one type of person: always scary, loud, and dangerous. **(False)**  
**Correct answer:** Abusers can be anyone. Abusers are not just one "type" of person.
13. You can find the addresses to most shelters on the internet or listed in the phone book. **(False)**  
**Correct Answer:** Most shelters DO NOT have their addresses listed in the phone book, or display them on the internet. This allows the location of the shelter to be confidential and hidden from the victim's abusers. For more information, see the Useful Links Section of the Day of Action toolkit.



Note: Kids can find information on local shelters and counselling resources from the Kids Help Phone, a 24 hour counselling service to youth across Canada. The phone number is 1-800-668-6868 or visit [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca).

Women can find local shelter information at the following websites:

<http://www.hotpeachpages.net/canada/index.html> and

[http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/pdfs/fem-2004Women\\_e.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/pdfs/fem-2004Women_e.pdf)

***Information provided by [www.shelternet.ca](http://www.shelternet.ca)***

