



November 14, 2021

Dear Ms. Lipkus and Mr. Adler,

Thanks to the confidence and support of the Adler & Lipkus Foundation, Auberge Shalom is so pleased to be entering Year 3 of offering the life changing Supporting Resilience Program.

Every day there is more evidence that domestic violence is often the result of learned behavior - children learn how to be in a relationship by what they see in the dominant intimate relationship in their homes. Through the Supporting Resilience Children's Program, we help children unlearn negative dynamics they witnessed at home and re-learn more effective skills at the same time as providing much needed support to mothers who strive to support healthy development in their children.

Because of the Adler & Lipkus Foundation, a new generation of youth will grow up having learned how to put an end to the harmful perpetuation of violence. They will have the best chance to be the last link in the cycle of abuse, and have the tools to create a new family tradition, rooted in love, trust and safety.

Thank you for this life changing gift.

Our deepest gratitude,

Joanna Kolb, MSW
Director of Development



Mural in the SRP Children's Space

In Year 1 we built the pillars of the Supporting Resilience Program. In Year 2 we solidified them.

Counselling & Support:

Our Supporting Resilience Program (SRP) counsellor, Anne-Celeste, works hard to maximize her time to provide wrap-around services to all her clients. Through one-on-one counselling and necessary advocacy and accompaniment, support groups, the SRP program is at full capacity.

Anne-Celeste has identified a number of areas where much of her time is focused:

1. **Strengthening parenting skills:** Years in an abusive relationship will undermine a woman's self-esteem, confidence in her capacity to parent and ability to set healthy boundaries. Through the counselling process, mothers begin the healing process and learn to separate the experience of abuse from their self-identity. Mothers are empowered to trust themselves, attune to their instincts and develop their own parenting style. They learn what a healthy attachment looks and feels like, and how to communicate in ways that are positive and adaptive for a strong mother-child bond.
2. **Tools for parallel parenting:** Raising a child with an ex-partner can be difficult. When that ex-partner is abusive, it can feel hopeless and daunting. This is why we use the term parallel parenting, rather than co-parenting. When it comes to making decisions about the child, our clients cannot count on cooperation, respect or compromise from their ex. We help mothers and children face the dynamics of their reality, and move forward with the best possible outcomes.

3. **Youth counselling:** When we talk about breaking the cycle of violence, the most critical work happens here, with the children and youth who witnessed it growing up. Our counsellor's work with youth is to realign what they understand about intimate relationships so that they do not spontaneously repeat what they learned in their home. She teaches girls and boys the "do's and don't's" of relationships, and how to resolve conflict and regulate emotions without resorting to violence. Part of this work includes rebuilding the bonds of trust and attachment between child and mother.
4. **Advocacy with interdisciplinary teams:** Families that have endured abusive experiences can have many intersecting needs. Often, there are a number of services or professionals involved in their lives, including youth protection, school social workers, lawyers, law enforcement, etc. The counsellor acts as an advocate for mother and child, providing context of domestic violence and the ramifications this can have on the functioning of the family and individual members. Anne-Celeste does a significant amount of report writing, testifying, and providing clinical assessment in support of her clients. Offering this type of advocacy can be the difference between mother and child accessing the services they need, or being kept in a harmful pattern of helplessness.
5. **Support groups:** Our groups are geared toward women who have experienced abuse. The SRP program offers a group specifically for the needs of mothers. Groups are a potent environment for healing and education. Not only is this an efficient and supportive environment for teaching critical skills in parenting, but they also provide the added benefit of peer bonding and support. Mothers learn from others who are going through similar experiences, or who have overcome them. The conversations can be sources of inspiration, showing mothers that situations can improve, that they can look forward to a light at the end of the darkness, because someone else has been there - and succeeded.

We are grateful for the strong team ethic we have at Auberge Shalom. Working closely together as we do, counsellors can identify clients who would benefit from another one of our diverse services. One client in particular exemplifies this:

Jane was seeing a support worker at the Harper Counselling Office. Through their sessions, it became clear to that worker that the client would be a candidate to join the SRP support group - "Parenting in the Context of Conjugal Violence". The client happily accepted the invitation to join the SRP program.

Anne-Celeste began seeing both mom and her teenage daughter for one-on-one session. Both women had endured significant abuse and the trauma was evident in their relationship and in the daughter's ability to cope with everyday life. Jane's daughter was admitted to a rehab facility after attempting suicide, and was assigned a caseworker who had not made the link between the child's traumatic experience of abuse and the impact of it on her recovery. Anne-Celeste participated in a number of multidisciplinary meetings with various case workers, youth protection, etc., to advocate for Jane and

her daughter, and ensure the proper services were being provided. Following that advocacy work, the case workers modified the intervention plan with the teenager to better respond to her needs.

The result of this tireless work was incredibly positive. Both Jane and daughter are doing so much better than when Jane first entered our services. They are now both focusing on their journey of healing and recovery, and looking forward to a bright future.

This is an email Anne-Celeste received from Jane:

Hi Anne,

I know we are meeting tomorrow, but I just wanted to say thank you very much for being a part of the meeting today. I don't know how to express it, but my daughter and I are not used to having support and it was really good to have it. We do mention you a lot. I absolutely agree with her, when she said that you are really good at your job. She told me again today how happy she [is] that we are working together with you and I agree with that as well. I wish I could better articulate what I want to say, but at the very minimum, I wanted to thank you.

Program Achievements:

- *29 mothers, teens and youth benefited from professional counselling, including individual and group therapy, impacting:*
 - *25 mothers*
 - *3 teenagers*
 - *1 youth*



Painted by a 6 year old in our Centre

Prevention Through Awareness Raising Workshops

Education and awareness raising is crucial to fostering future healthy relationships. Breaking the silence and stigma around domestic violence and bringing these conversations into the light are critical first steps to abuse prevention. Our presence in schools, community spaces and with vulnerable populations is a tried and true method to achieve this goal.

We have developed and refined workshops that can be tailored to specific populations and environments. Topics include types of abuse, red flags and healthy boundaries. We teach safety planning and how to help a friend. Depending on the population, we may also include components about social media, consent, and online dating. This work helps youth and other vulnerable populations detect the early warning signs of an unhealthy relationship before it is too late. It also allows for early intervention to take place when youth recognize the signs in their own households, and know when it is time to reach out for support.

The feedback of these workshops has been excellent, sensitizing the youth as well as the school teachers and administrators. We are thrilled that our SRP counsellor has been invited back to a number of schools to facilitate workshops for students.

Program Achievements:

- *Over 200 teens and adults participated in prevention and awareness raising workshops:*
 - *Westmount High*
 - *Beth Jacob Seminary School*
 - *Shimmering Lights social group*

[Click here to watch this video from the Vice Principal of Westmount High talking about the impact of these prevention workshops:](#)



Professional Development for Service Providers

As leaders in the field, we have been invited to share our expertise with other professionals and service providers who interface with women and families. We train frontline workers to identify the signs of abuse in their clients, and teach best practice trauma-informed intervention skills. Early intervention is vital for mitigation of trauma and harm for those experiencing intimate partner violence.

When a service provider detects signs of domestic violence, it is important that they know how and when to intervene. The wrong questions can put a woman on the defensive, resulting in her shutting down completely and ending the relationship with that worker - leaving her more isolated and vulnerable. In a worst-case scenario, a line of questioning can put a woman in increased danger. If for example, her abuser believes she disclosed their secret or accused him of any wrongdoing, the consequences can be severe. A properly trained service provider will have the skills to intervene in a safe and constructive manner.

A trauma-informed approach is one that asks “what happened to you?” instead of “what is wrong with you?”. It is non-judgmental and prioritizes collaboration, skills-building, trust and empowerment. Offering this capacity-building professional development to frontline and service workers - from family doctors to hairdressers - these workers can be the first step to a woman getting help.

Program Achievements:

- *Approximately 100 participants in training and professional development to gain skills of trauma-informed intervention and responding to domestic violence:*
 - *Concordia University, Women and Sexuality Studies Association*
 - *McGill University, School of Social Work*
 - *A working group of advocates in collaboration with the Jewish Rabbinical Court (??)*

IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID

Domestic violence and femicide have swelled since the pandemic. It seems like every other week we are reading in the news about another horrific murder in our community. We know that stress and isolation are triggers for increased violence, and the past 20 months have been characterized by both intense stress and isolation. The impact on our clients and all women and children in violence homes has been horrendous. The need for social services, particularly support for women and children in unsafe homes, has never been as critical as it is today.

It is well documented that the hardest hit demographic during the pandemic has been mothers, and specifically single mothers. The financial strain, the need for childcare and homeschooling, and the total isolation from the supportive social networks has deeply impacted our clients.

We were lucky that we were able to pivot and adapt our services overnight to be able to continue the counselling and support services that our clients desperately needed. We moved both individual and group counselling online and were able to continue our services with minimal interruption.

What we did not anticipate was the positive and powerful response this new method of therapy would have. Many of our clients were in fact relieved to be able to access online counselling sessions - avoiding the commute, finding babysitting etc., was a relief for many of our clients. In the warmer months, all of our counsellors offered outdoor sessions, meeting clients in a park or for a walk at a location convenient to them. For single mothers who have been totally isolated and alone with their children for months on end, this was a very powerful show of support.



Having the counselling services over the phone or at the park has been such a good experience. The commute there and back took almost an hour which just felt like an added stress in my day. It has been great to fit the calls in from home and on my work breaks, which I couldn't do if I had to go in person.

My son and I have also loved his appointments with Anne in the park. He always looks forward to seeing her and I can tell he feels so comfortable and at ease in the park, I think it has really helped him be receptive and open to the counseling.

- Rebecca, SRP client

GROWTH & SUSTAINABILITY

Your gift this year was intended to help us expand the SRP program with a second part-time counsellor. The reality of the current labor market has made that a challenge. It is difficult to recruit and retain staff with the expertise that this program requires with our current employment model. We have identified this issue and have already taken the necessary steps to become a more competitive and attractive workplace - such as, investment in professional development opportunities, flexible schedule, salary commensurate with the public sector, etc. Your continued support means that we can offer this in confidence, we can increase the employee package to attract the caliber of counsellor that this program requires. Thank you for continuing to believe in the value of this work. We are actively interviewing and



are hopeful that we will be able to recruit a second counsellor in the coming year -- and double the impact of this program.

We are always exploring additional funding opportunities to support the growth of this program, including relevant grants and major donors. We would gratefully welcome introductions to other Foundations similar to the Adler and Lipkus Foundation, that might be interested in supporting this unique and transformative program. Please see the separate document with the budget of expenses and revenue for 2021-22.

The need for services for women and children experiencing domestic violence is tremendous, and the demand is only growing. **Thanks to the enduring support of the Adler and Lipkus Foundation, Auberge Shalom is able to answer the call.**