



Child Welfare League of Canada
Ligue pour le bien-être de l'enfance du Canada

Resources assist health-care and social service providers to help those who experience family violence

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An online platform built with the assistance of the Child Welfare League of Canada has been launched to assist health-care and social service providers to recognize and respond safely to family violence.

The website of pan-Canadian guidance and education resources is focused on three main types of family violence, including child maltreatment, intimate partner violence, and children's exposure to intimate partner violence. The online resources are comprised of evidence-based learning modules which include care pathways, scripts and how-to videos, along with interactive educational scenarios and a handbook.

The Violence Evidence Guidance Action (VEGA) project led by McMaster University has developed the family violence education resources in collaboration with 22 national organizations and with funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

To access VEGA resources, visit <https://vegaproject.mcmaster.ca/>.

“Family violence is a major public health problem with devastating consequences for children, women, families and communities,” said VEGA project lead Harriet MacMillan, distinguished university professor in the departments of psychiatry and behavioural neurosciences and pediatrics at McMaster.

“The Public Health Agency of Canada’s ongoing investment in VEGA ensures that important efforts will continue in supporting health-care and social service providers to recognize and respond safely to family violence.”

Studies show family violence impacts at least one in three families in Canada.

Rachel Gouin, Executive Director of the Child Welfare League of Canada, welcomed the launch of the project.

“The tools and training developed through the VEGA project support each of us to play a role in ensuring children are safe,” said Gouin.

The Public Health Agency of Canada is providing an additional \$750,000 to McMaster for the Researching the Impact of Service provider Education (RISE) project that will see McMaster collaborate with the universities of Toronto, McGill and Calgary and work with eight professional associations to evaluate the use of VEGA materials within their provider and student membership across the country.

The eight professional associations involved in the newly-funded project include: The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, the Canadian Psychiatric Association, the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, the Canadian Paediatric Society, the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada, the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the Child Welfare League of Canada, and the Canadian Association of Social Workers.

Through its partnerships, McMaster aims to improve the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours of the thousands of providers involved in recognizing the signs of family violence and providing a safe and effective response to survivors.

“Our previous work has told us that providers need more evidence-informed training to be able to safely recognize and respond to family violence and it is important to them; the partnerships we have established with professional associations reiterates this message,” said Melissa Kimber, lead of the RISE project and an assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioural neurosciences at McMaster.

“We are delighted to be able to lead the implementation and evaluation of VEGA. We firmly believe that investing in Canadian providers is an investment in Canada’s children, youth, and families.”

For more information:

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Backgrounder

VEGA has developed an online platform of education resources comprised of learning modules (i.e. care pathways, scripts, how-to videos), interactive educational scenarios and a handbook. The materials will help equip providers, including students, in addressing the needs of those who may have experienced family violence. These resources are based on a series of systematic reviews summarizing the scientific evidence.

The VEGA resources are most useful in the context of a workshop or setting where discussion and role playing are possible but can also be used as individual online training.

To use the site, visit <https://vegaproject.mcmaster.ca/>. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click “Register now” under ‘Registration for Individuals’. You will be taken to a simple form to fill out. The form will be in the same language as you see on the website. Once submitted you will be sent a welcome email with your username, password, and login instructions.

The 22 partner national organizations involved in the development of VEGA are:

- Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada
- Canadian Association of Community Health Centres
- Canadian Association of Midwives
- Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing
- Canadian Association of Social Workers
- Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction
- Canadian Dental Association
- Canadian Dental Hygienists Association
- Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association
- Canadian Medical Association
- Canadian Nurses Association
- Canadian Paediatric Society
- Canadian Psychiatric Association
- Canadian Psychological Association
- Canadian Public Health Association
- Child Welfare League of Canada
- College of Family Physicians of Canada
- Mental Health Commission of Canada
- National Aboriginal Council of Midwives
- Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
- Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada
- Women’s Shelters Canada