

When You Don't Know Where to Turn, 211 Is There to Help

On February 22nd Canadians marked "Pink Shirt Day" to take a stand against bullying. That special day of awareness has come and gone, but how would you find the services that are available to parents and children trying to cope with bullying behavior?

A Red Deer County mom recently called 211 because she was concerned with how her son was responding to bullying. The Information and Referral (I&R) Specialist who answered the call validated the mother's concerns and they first talked about her son's immediate safety. They then explored ways the mom could talk with her son about the bullying and check in on how he is coping. The caller was then given resources for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services for counselling supports. The mom was also invited to call back any time she needed more support.

211 phone service provides a vital service for anyone looking to escape all types of abusive behavior. Another woman who had recently moved to Red Deer was regretting her decision to move in with her abusive boyfriend. She wanted to escape, but depended heavily on the man financially. She didn't know where to turn, and she called 211. The I&R Specialist was able to listen and provide help for the woman by referring her to the Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter and Alberta Works Emergency Needs Allowance. The woman was thankful for the 211 Specialist's patience and understanding, and she was also invited to call back if she required more support.

When you don't know where to turn, help is just a phone call away in the City of Red Deer, Red Deer County, Penhold, Delburne, Bowden, Elnora and Innisfail. Help is also available online throughout Central Alberta at www.ab.211.ca, which now has a Confidential Chat feature that gives you access to an I&R Specialist from noon to 8 pm daily.