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To all women, men and children in all communities,

We are a diverse group of women that come from many different economic, ethnic, religious, racial and cultural groups. We want to raise awareness about the reality of abuse and family violence that is happening in every community. We are a group of women with children that have been impacted by abusive partners and have taken the first steps in finding support to make the powerful decision to make positive changes in our lives.

There are many different forms of abuse such as physical, verbal, sexual, emotional, financial, and psychological/mental. These types of abuse have had a negative impact on our families and will continue to have a negative impact on other families in our community if we don't speak out. Abuse in families has a profound effect on women and children and their well being.

Family violence and abuse should not be a secret; it needs to be talked about. It needs to be talked about everywhere – at home, school, religious places, daycares and workplaces. We did speak up and we found out we are not alone; there are others who experienced abuse and family violence. Through the YWCA's Here to Help group that we attended together, we found the support, gained the knowledge and confidence, and found our power to move forward and break the cycle of abuse.

We want people to know that there is a brighter future, there is hope and there is support to help you make the journey. If you are worried or concerned about yourself or someone else, don't be afraid to speak up.

From the Women of the YWCA's Here to Help program.

Places to call for support:

Assaulted Women's Helpline	416-863-0511; 1-866-863-0511 www.awhl.org
YWCA TORONTO	416- 961-8100 www.ywcatoronto.org
Kids Help Phone	1-800-668-6868 www.kidshelpphone.ca
Community Information Toronto	211 www.211toronto.ca