

## Media Release

Nov. 25, 2024

### **Killam / Forestburg RCMP offer ways to identify unhealthy relationships during National Family Violence Awareness Month**

Killam, Alta. - November is National Family Violence Awareness Month, an important time to shed light on recognizing and addressing the warnings signs of unhealthy relationships. Harmful personal relationships can affect anyone, regardless of age or gender. Awareness of the warning signs in these relationships can be crucial in recognizing when to seek help, whether for oneself or to support some else in need.

Killam / Forestburg RCMP offers the following information to help individuals identify unhealthy relationships and where to seek help if needed:

- If one partner monitors or restricts the other's movements, social interactions, or communication, it can signal control issues. This behavior may include frequent check-ins, demands to see messages, or isolating the person from friends and family.
- Extreme jealousy, often masked as protection or care, can indicate underlying issues. This may involve accusations of infidelity without reason, monitoring interactions, or expressing discomfort when the partner socializes without them.
- Regular criticism, belittling, or manipulation are common tactics that can erode self-esteem. Emotional abuse may include name-calling, public shaming, or making a person feel unworthy or helpless.
- Using threats to instill fear, whether direct or implied. This could range from threats of leaving or self-harm, to threats of physical violence if expectations are not met.
- Any act of physical aggression is a clear indicator of danger. Even if it seems like a one-time incident, it can escalate over time.
- Controlling access to finances can prevent a partner from leaving or accessing essential resources. Financial abuse might include taking a partner's income, limiting access to funds, or coercing them into debt.
- Erratic changes in mood or behavior, especially where anger or aggression is concerned, can create an environment of fear and uncertainty.

If you recognize any of these signs, there are several ways to protect yourself and find support. Here are some safety tips and suggestions:

- Work with trusted friends, family, or a domestic violence counselor to create a personalized safety plan. This plan should outline steps for safely leaving the situation, gathering essentials (like IDs, financial records), and identifying safe places to go if needed.
- Many communities have shelters, hotlines, and non-profit organizations that offer support, housing, and counseling services. Police departments can provide referrals to these resources and assist in connecting individuals with crisis counselors.
- Unhealthy relationships may cross into criminal territory, and law enforcement can offer support with restraining orders or no-contact orders if needed. Many police departments have specialized domestic violence units with officers trained to handle such situations with sensitivity.

- Keep a record of any incidents, including photos, texts, and a log of events. This documentation can be critical if you decide to seek legal assistance or protective orders.
- If monitoring or stalking is a concern, take precautions with technology. Avoid sharing your location, use privacy settings on social media, and consider using secure devices or private browsing modes for communication.
- Do not hesitate to call the police if you feel unsafe. Law enforcement are trained to handle domestic disturbances and can offer immediate protection, conduct welfare checks, and intervene if necessary.
- Isolation is a tactic often used by abusers to maintain control. Reach out to trusted individuals who can provide emotional support, stay aware of your situation, and help you with your safety plan.

For more tips, follow us on Facebook @RCMPinAlberta and on X @RCMPAlberta.

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### **Media Contact**

Sgt. Andy Wetzstein

Killam / Forestburg RCMP Detachment Commander

780-385-3509