

Not Always Happily Ever After



Before her wedding day, a bride-to-be imagines the moment she's dreamed about. She pores over photos and gathers ideas. She diligently makes to-do lists, crossing items off with satisfaction. *Flower arrangements. Seating plan.* Dress fittings. She places items on a registry—everything she'll need for her new life.

Tragically, at some point after the big day, the bride discovers she is trapped in a cycle of violence and finds herself desperately making a list she never imagined. *Escape plan. Untraceable cell phone. Emergency shelter.*

A woman who needs to flee an abusive partner faces a minefield of obstacles to reach safety. If she has children, the checklist becomes even more overwhelming. *Custody order. School transfer. Counselling.*

Interval House is here for her. For more than 45 years, we have existed to help women survivors of intimate partner violence and their children. We help create an individualized and comprehensive plan that guides a woman and her children through an incredibly anxious—and dangerous—time of change.

Some abusers take control over virtually every aspect of family

life. A woman who needs to leave may not have access to a bank account. In fact, her husband may even withhold her ID. For a woman whose status in Canada is tied to her spouse, the prospect of losing her record of citizenship is terrifying.

Often, someone who is being abused is cut off from family and friends. The isolation makes the prospect of breaking free from violence feel impossible.

From the moment we receive each crisis call, Interval House supports the women and children who come to us seeking safety and healing. Our Residential Program helps women work through each item on the list for starting her new life.

Your generosity makes a difference for women trapped in the cycle of violence. Just when they have had their dreams of a life filled with love broken, you give them a second chance at happily ever after.



Life After “I Do”

An abuser can often tell when a woman has made up her mind to leave and put an end to the abuse. For her own safety, these are just some of the steps a woman can take to cover her tracks.

- Be discreet. A survivor should not tell an abusive partner she's thinking of leaving.
- When she does leave, she should take her children with her.
- If there are family pets, a survivor should consider asking a friend to look after them or access the SafePet Program to arrange to have pets fostered for the duration of a shelter stay.
- Plan emergency exits.
- Keep emergency phone numbers readily available at all times.

THE BROKEN BRIDE

REGISTRY



Wedding Vision

The Dream:

A romantic proposal, the perfect dress, floral arrangements, a beautiful home and happily ever after.

The Reality: For some women, their wedding day marks an escalation in the cycle of abuse.

Interval House, Canada's first shelter for abused women, provides a safe space for women and children and helps them rebuild their lives, free from violence.

A Registry No Bride Should Need

The sad reality is that many women report that abuse escalates as soon as they get married. In this symbolic registry, we imagine the items that a woman trapped in violence might need.

www.brokenbride.ca

Riya's Story *Don't Talk Back Arm Sling*

Riya and her husband were enjoying a luxurious getaway in Mexico. At first, everything was romantic and fun. Then one night, after Riya came out of the shower, her husband's demeanor suddenly changed from cheerful and relaxed to irrationally angry. He began grabbing, scratching, and hitting her with anything he could find in the room, including a glass ashtray. She ended up with bruised ribs, a broken arm, and a severe concussion.



Aradhna's Story *Locked Fridge Protein Bar*

Aradhna's husband was controlling in many ways, but especially when it came to food. He put locks on the fridge and cupboards, so Aradhna had to ask him for permission whenever she wanted to eat. One day, he even refused to feed their own children. He told her that if she wanted them to eat, she should get a job and pay for the food herself.

Not every bride lives happily ever after



Each of these survivors' stories is a grim reminder that intimate partner violence takes many frightening forms. These courageous women can share their stories today because they were able to reach safety and begin again at Interval House. Without the support of friends like you, their stories—and their lives—could have had a very different ending.

If you or someone you know is getting married, adding Interval House to your gift registry is a wonderful way to give back and support women who have survived abuse. Give them a second chance at happily ever after.

For more information about how to do this, visit www.brokenbride.ca

Marianne's Story Untraceable Cell Phone

Marianne's husband wouldn't allow her to have her own phone. Instead, he bought one for her, and told her that she was only ever allowed to talk to him. No friends, no family, just him. He tracked her calls on a daily basis, and told her that if she ever dared to speak to anyone else, he would smash the phone over her head.



Denise's Story Cried all Night Sunglasses

Denise had the big, beautiful wedding that she had always dreamed of. But as soon as they were married, her partner started acting differently, screaming at Denise and telling her that she was useless and pathetic. She lost all of her confidence and felt terrified every day, in her own home.



From Impossible to Infinity: *Anna's Story*

Anna* didn't know what to expect when she walked into Interval House the night her husband's violence became unbearable.

She'd escaped her house—a place that no longer felt like home—where she had locked herself in a room, climbed out of a window, *and ran*.

Anna's husband had been chasing her with a knife, swearing he would kill her. It was the most terrifying event in his escalating violence since their move to Canada.

In a new city and with no family for support, Anna was desperate. "I didn't know what to do," she explains, "I was scared to leave my husband. But I was more scared to stay."

Thankfully, a friend advised Anna to call Interval House. A counsellor helped her formulate an exit plan for when she was ready to leave. When that fateful moment came, Anna was welcomed with open arms.

"It didn't feel like a shelter," says Anna, "I was nervous and confused, but the staff greeted me like a sister and made sure to help me with whatever I needed."

Thank you for welcoming survivors like Anna home.
Your generosity changes lives.

Interval House felt like home to Anna because it was intentionally designed that way. Common spaces foster a sense of community. Families stay together as they regain their independence.

Once settled, Anna began the work of rebuilding her life. The Building Economic Self-Sufficiency Program (BESS) equipped Anna with the practical and life skills she needed to plan for her future. She was supported as she sought training programs, employment options, and housing options, all while receiving emotional support through counselling.

At Interval House, Anna had an opportunity to regain her confidence and discover her own resilience and capabilities. "By welcoming me in and then assisting me as I looked for new housing, schooling and work, Interval House really helped me to find myself and my sense of home again."



Sustained Giving: the joy of lifting up a community

As a youngster, Rachel discovered the joy that came from giving back to her community. She grew up volunteering in a women's shelter, where her mother worked. It had a lasting impact on her life.

Today, Rachel continues to lift women up in her community through her work at Interval House, and as a monthly donor.

"It's so important to support women and children recovering from the cycle of abuse," she says. "I think it's a really positive thing for the whole community. Monthly giving is such a manageable way to support community organizations. And I know it gives the organization a predictable revenue stream. I think that's good peace of mind.

"Seeing the impact it makes, and seeing how women really do have their lives completely changed, is really amazing. Survivors of abuse deserve to have a fairy-tale ending, even if their marriage or partnership didn't turn out the way they had hoped," she explains. "And being part of that journey for women for years to come is something I want to do in my own small way."

With her monthly gifts, Rachel is a sustaining force for the frontline programs that empower women and help them build new lives for themselves and their children.

*Name has been changed to protect the survivor's identity

Will you become a monthly donor today? Your gifts can be a lifeline for women and children fleeing abusive homes.

If you'd like more information about how you can support the women and children of Interval House, visit our website www.intervalhouse.ca or call 416-924-1411 ext. 238



Interval House is a registered Canadian charity with a charitable tax number of 11897 1159 RR0001.

