

## Learning Network Resource Spotlight

Connecting to Community after Intimate Partner Violence: The Building Opportunities for Women (B.O.W.) Program at Sudbury YWCA Genevra House




Tuesday, October 4 | 1:00 to 2:30 pm ET

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## Resource Spotlight Guidelines

- All participants automatically have their mics and cameras off.
- ASL interpretation is being provided. We invite those using ASL interpretation to please connect directly with interpreters in the chat box. Live captioning is available.
- If you have questions for presenters, please type them into the Q&A box.
- There will be an evaluation form link that automatically opens in your browser at the end of the Spotlight. A Certificate of Participation will be generated once you complete this evaluation.
- The Spotlight is being recorded. The recording and any materials (e.g. slides) will be posted on the Learning Network website and emailed to you after the event.
- For those wishing for support, a list of services will be posted in the chat box.

**Western**  Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children

**LEARNING NETWORK**

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## Connecting to Community after Intimate Partner Violence

Jen Johnson, PhD

Bernouse Davilus, RSW

13:00-14:30 EST 04/10/22 via ZOOM

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Sudbury YWCA Geneva House is located in N'Swakamok. The work of the BOW Program takes place on the traditional territories of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek First Nation and Wahnapiatae First Nation. We recognize the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850.

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## What is the BOW Program?

- ▶ The BOW Program is a 12-week support group for women 16+ who self-identify as having experienced, or feel they are at risk of experiencing, intimate partner violence.
- ▶ Bernouse Davilus, BOW Program Facilitator
- ▶ Jen Johnson, BOW Program Evaluator

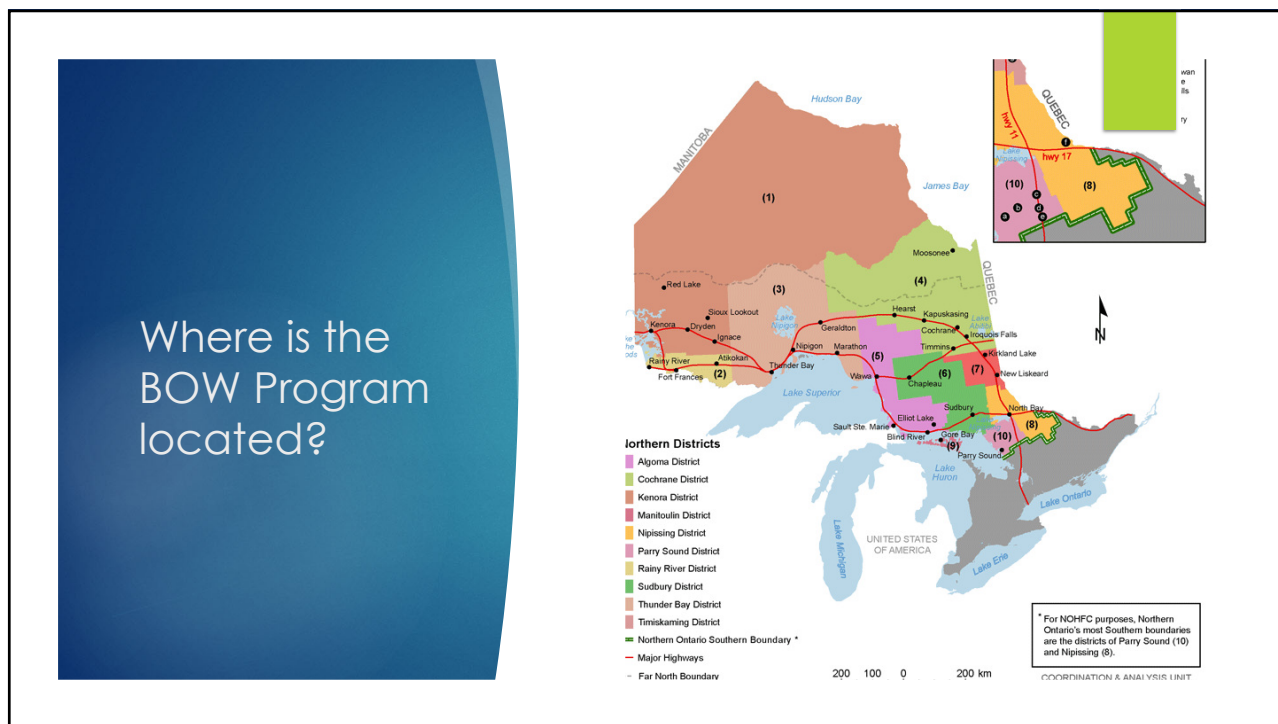
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## Learning Objectives

By the end of this presentation, participants will know more about:

- ▶ The establishment of the BOW Program as a virtual and in-person group support for women in Northeastern Ontario
- ▶ The BOW Program curriculum
- ▶ The importance of program evaluation and participants' responses to the BOW Program

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Who are the participants?

- ▶ Between 2019-22, 93 self-identified women, ages 21-84, participated in seven 12-week sessions (3 in-person and 4 remote sessions)
- ▶ Formal education: wide range, less than grade 10 to postgraduate degrees
- ▶ Languages spoken: English, French, Urdu, Luganda, Gujarati, Hindi, Farsi and Spanish
- ▶ Approximately 30-40% of participants self-identify as Black, racialized, Indigenous
- ▶ Commonalities: isolation from peers, family, and local services; unsure of how to improve access to education, housing and healthcare; interest in learning more about gendered violence

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## What is the BOW Program?

- ▶ Provides information about gendered violence combined with improved personal, social and financial awareness and skills, with the goal of health promotion
- ▶ Trauma-informed and culturally relevant approaches applied
  - ▶ Remote or in-person delivery to 10-15 people at a time
  - ▶ Skilled facilitation over 12 weeks
  - ▶ Referrals and resources

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## Goals of the BOW Program

Resources include referrals or stepping stones to obtain:

- ▶ Improved housing that is stable and meets participant needs
- ▶ Improved individual supports that are socially and culturally appropriate
- ▶ Improved financial stability

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## Program Methodology and Evaluation

The BOW Program Methodology is premised on the importance of:

- ▶ Connection
- ▶ Reflection
- ▶ Skill-building

These elements are built into the curriculum and an ongoing qualitative program evaluation

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## The BOW Program Curriculum

- ▶ Week 1: Introduction and goal-setting
- ▶ Week 2: Identify abuse and unhealthy relationships
- ▶ Week 3: Staying safe and free from abuse
- ▶ Week 4: Stress management and relaxation
- ▶ Week 5: Communication skills
- ▶ Week 6: Responding to change

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## The BOW Program Curriculum

- ▶ Week 7: The change challenge
- ▶ Week 8: Self-esteem - feeling good about ourselves
- ▶ Week 9: Looking at our labels
- ▶ Week 10: Decision making
- ▶ Week 11: Budgeting and survival on a low income/financial literacy
- ▶ Week 12: Affirming ourselves

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## The BOW Program Curriculum

Example of one workshop's visual content

**POWER AND CONTROL**

**PHYSICAL VIOLENCE SEXUAL**

- USING COERCION AND THREATS**  
Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her  
• threatening to leave her, to commit suicide, to report her to welfare  
• making her drop charges • making her do illegal things.
- USING INTIMIDATION**  
Making her afraid by using looks, actions, gestures  
• smashing things  
• destroying her property  
• abusing pets  
• displaying weapons.
- USING ECONOMIC ABUSE**  
Preventing her from getting or keeping a job  
• making her ask for money  
• giving her an allowance • taking her money • not letting her know about or have access to family income.
- USING MALE PRIVILEGE**  
Treating her like a servant • making all the big decisions • acting like the "master of the castle" • being the one to define men's and women's roles.
- USING CHILDREN**  
Making her feel guilty about the children • using the children to relay messages • using visitation to harass her • threatening to take the children away.
- USING ISOLATION**  
Controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to, what she reads, where she goes • limiting her outside involvement • using jealousy to justify actions.
- USING EMOTIONAL ABUSE**  
Putting her down • making her feel bad about herself  
• calling her names • making her think she's crazy • playing mind games • humiliating her  
• making her feel guilty.
- MINIMIZING, DENYING AND BLAMING**  
Making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously • saying the abuse didn't happen • shifting responsibility for abusive behavior  
• saying she caused it.

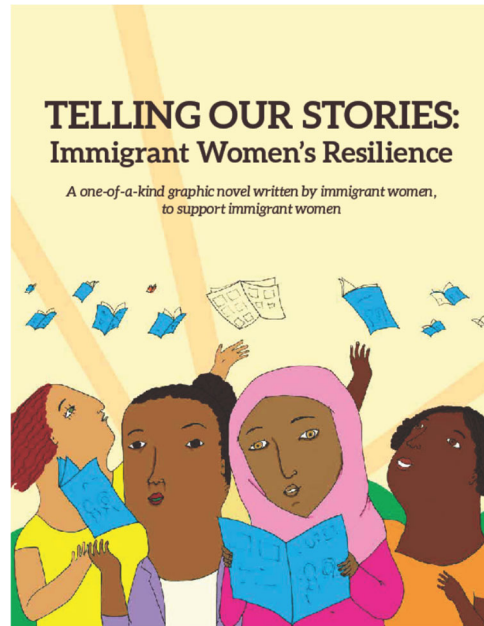
**PHYSICAL VIOLENCE SEXUAL**

DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS  
202 East Superior Street  
Duluth, Minnesota 55802  
218-722-2781  
www.TheDuluthModel.org

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## The BOW Program Curriculum

[Telling Our Stories:  
Immigrant Women's  
Resilience \(Ontario  
Council of Agencies  
Serving Immigrants, 2017\)](#)



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## Program Evaluation

Evaluation tools consist of:

- ▶ Two-part Intake forms (I. Contacts; confidentiality and participation commitment; consent to participate; II. Social, cultural, IPV experience and other+)
- ▶ Weekly Evaluations
- ▶ Midway Evaluation 'start, stop, continue'
- ▶ Final Evaluation
- ▶ Three or Six-Month Follow-ups

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## Connection

- ▶ Meaningful connections are essential to empowering participants to get the most out of the group, to access services they are entitled to in the community.
- ▶ “What did you like most?: “Sharing”; “sharing”; “Sharing!” “Loved it!”  
(Responses from participants in every group from 2019-2022)


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## Self-Reflection

- ▶ Opportunity for self-reflection: Participants express improved confidence in absorbing new ideas and willingness to test their knowledge and beliefs with peers in the group. For example:
- ▶ “[I learned] how to feel good about myself”; “The responses from other participants sharing major changes taught me a lot” (Participants in-person and remote, 2019-2022)

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A blue gradient graphic with the text "Skill-Building" centered inside it.

## Skill-Building

- ▶ Skill-building: The format of the BOW Program allows for focused thematic discussions into which resources can be introduced. Participants are prompted to offer suggestions about skills and topics they want to know more about. For example, many participants indicated the workshops help them learn:

“How to be confident”

(Participants in-person and remote, 2019-2022)

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A blue gradient graphic with the text "Outcomes" centered inside it.

## Outcomes

“A lot of things changed since I joined the program”


“I have been able to protect myself and children by using all the knowledge I gathered from the program. I have also been able to identify my needs and have worked towards it.”

(Participants, 6-Month follow up)

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Outcomes




“I learned a lot...don't let others always take benefits from you... I have more self-confidence than I thought!”

(Participant, 6-Month follow up)

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Outcomes



“I wish I knew these things when I was married some years ago”

“Young girls who are about to start relationships should take this program so they can learn about finances, their rights, and how to be independent”.

(Multiple participants, 6-Month follow up)

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## Conclusions

- ▶ The BOW Program is not a substitute for individual and institutional accountability for ending violence in Northeastern communities
- ▶ The BOW Program helps participants reconnect to community after intimate partner violence and some feel it could even be preventative
- ▶ The BOW Program approach to promoting connection, reflection, and skill-building entitles participants to access resources from public health, housing, social services, public education, and to accurate financial knowledge

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## Questions?

- ▶ What features of the BOW Program do you find of most interest and why?
- ▶ Would a program like BOW be useful in your community, what would you change for your local context?
- ▶ Do you organize or lead a program similar to BOW? Please share resources or links in the chat!

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With gratitude  
and thanks for  
your time



For further information about this presentation,  
please contact us

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To learn more about Sudbury YWCA Geneva  
House and its programs

**<https://ywcasudbury.ca>**