



Snapshot 2021 Narrative

Anova

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When the Covid-19 epidemic hit the world in 2020, we were all forced to a halt; everything we had ever known, places we were familiar with, friends we saw on a regular basis, and the social structures we relied on suddenly changed, leaving us all afraid and fearful of the future. We watched the virus's consequences on the elderly, on a seemingly sound healthcare system, and, most importantly, on the most vulnerable in our community. People we knew became ill, even died, and we all focused on that, wearing masks, socially distancing ourselves, and staying away, no matter how close we wanted to be. The pandemic's repercussions, however, were not only physical or even emotional; they were also societal. As the world worried about a possible end date and we spent our time going about our daily lives, we began to forget about those who feared staying at home; those who didn't have someplace to call home; and those whose home didn't emotionally feel like a home.

One of the most shocking societal impacts of this pandemic, particularly in London, Ontario, have been those that have gone unnoticed: the shadow pandemic of violence against women and children in the London community.

Anova is a non-profit organization situated in London, Ontario that provides shelter, support, counselling, and resources to abused women and their children. When the pandemic struck, however, many at Anova

reported a large decrease in calls to their centre. Over 7000 calls were made to Anova last year; nonetheless, there were 2000 fewer calls to their support centre on average than the previous year.

Home is not the safest place for everyone," says Jessie Rodgers, Executive Director of Anova. Survivors and victims' are confined in their house with an abuser and typically would have opportunities to make a phone call, but now can't do so. Home has always been a place of comfort for many people, and in many ways, this pandemic has taught us the futility of home as a solitary place you cannot escape.

We have had the opportunity to feel the suffocation, irritability, and final acceptance of an endless house sentence; nonetheless, we cannot state that we were physically harmed at any point during this entire ordeal. In reality, by staying indoors, we were able to prevent bodily violence, which many women and children in London, Ontario, cannot say. Aside from the lack of calls reported to Anova, the organization has had to turn away 1,793 people from their shelters due to social distance rules resulting in a lack of room.

My squad is fatigued Jessie Rodgers says, they are completely fatigued. They are providing trauma and violence informed care in a way that contradicts our values. Sometimes we must speak to someone via an intercom because you can't bring them into shelter, or we have to ask kids to wear masks during a time when they're under a lot of stress.

Maintaining Covid-19 protocols while attempting to assist those in greatest need has become extremely taxing work because Covid-19 protocols do not take into account the most vulnerable; they protect the general society while harming the homeless, abused, and fleeing with sanctions that are incongruous to their current situation. Now that these facts have been revealed, organizations such as Anova are taking a stand to give statistical evidence of this societal inequity.

Anova and Western University students are addressing this challenging issue by carefully presenting reliable information, such as the London Coordinating Committee to End Women Abuse (LCCEWA) Snapshot Project of 2021. This project is an overview of the primary statistics addressing the major concerns confronting the London community, with a focus on women and children. Anova is one of thirty-three organizations collaborating with the LCCEWA to create the snapshot project and ensure that the statistics are as accurate as possible.

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