

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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In response to trends observed by our clinical leaders, Little Warriors and Safe Places announce the launch of a new online [Community Bridge Program](#) to assist adolescents as well as children and their parents or caregivers in preventing and coping with sexual trafficking, abuse, addiction, self harm, eating disorders and other mental health issues, while providing critical knowledge on internet safety, gender and diversity, sexual safety, relationships and conflict and other wellness topics.

The online program serves as a “Bridge” between what children, youth and families already know and what they may need or want to know at various stages of their young lives. Provision of the online platform allows more people to access age-appropriate activities, resources, and support services that they otherwise may never have access to.

The Community Bridge Program features Individual (self-led) and Facilitated (professional led) modules. Each has separate programs targeting children aged 8-12 and adolescents aged 13-17. Upon accessing the program, the participant may choose to review and complete all available modules in succession or select something that is of interest to them personally or as part of a learning experience.

The program and its content were developed by Dr. Wanda Polzin Holman and the Clinical team at the Little Warriors Be Brave Ranch in collaboration with Safe Places. Stakeholders who contributed to the program included psychologists, social workers, professionals, youth, and parents including Chinook School Division and their school counsellors. Their feedback and contribution to the content and format appropriate to implement this program has helped shape an effective user-friendly resource, tackling challenging and sometimes traumatic situations.

Recognizing that there was a gap of online educational tools for youth related to abuse, Safe Places approached Little Warriors in 2021, to develop a youth online education program on our behalf, in line with their [Little Warriors Prevent it! Program](#) which is a workshop for adults on how to help prevent and respond to child sexual abuse. Little Warriors disclosed that they already had intentions to produce a youth program and so after agreeing that our mandates were aligned, we formed a partnership to develop a program that would be available nationwide.

As we proceeded to discuss the format and content for this program and with stakeholder engagement, it became apparent that we could maximize the Little Warriors Clinical Team’s expertise to develop something that not only focused on the prevention of child sexual abuse but one that covered a variety of health and wellness topics.

“I couldn’t be more excited to share this innovative program with our communities across the country. I appreciate the positive partnership we have had with the Little Warriors Clinical Team and staff to make this project a reality. They are wonderful people with the biggest hearts, truly invested in improving the lives of young people.” **Kelly Schafer, Safe Places Manager.**

Thanks to our funding partners, Government of Canada Healthy Communities Initiative - Community Foundations of Canada, Butler Family Foundation, Cross Culture Ministries of BC, City of Swift Current

and the Innovation Federal Credit Union, Swift Current, the Community Bridge Program is **free of charge**. The Facilitated program would be of interest to anyone working with youth in a group setting such as youth service providers, professionals, schools, counsellors, coaches, trained facilitators and more. The Individual program is suitable for any youth, caregiver, parent, or support person working independently with children or teens.

“We are excited to give this gift of knowledge and resources to the general public. We have taken the insights we have learned at the Be Brave Ranch along with our research, and put them into the online modules to give children and teens practical tools and strategies to juggle their everyday life. Our hope is that this free resource is used far and wide across Canada to empower children and teens.” **Dr. Wanda Polzin Holman, Clinical Director at the Little Warriors Be Brave Ranch.**

We encourage professionals, families, youth service providers, children (ages 8-12) and adolescents (ages 13-17) to register to gain access to the Little Warriors and Safe Places [Online Bridge Community Programs](#).

About:

Little Warriors is a national, charitable organization focused on the awareness, prevention and treatment of child sexual abuse. Little Warriors programs include a free child sexual abuse prevention workshop called Prevent It!, a specialized, intensive treatment program for children and teens who have been sexually abused at the Little Warriors Be Brave Ranch, a comprehensive online Be Brave Bridge intensive program that connects specialized counsellors and coaches with children, teens and parents who have been impacted by child sexual abuse and a Bridge Community Program to educate children and youth on a variety of topics for their overall mental health and wellbeing. Coming Soon: Adults who were sexually abused as children will finally have a place to receive intensive treatment at Our Lighthouse, an intensive adult treatment centre. You can learn more at www.littlewarriors.ca

Safe Places is a City of Swift Current, SK, initiative that focuses on standardizing and developing best practices for youth service providers through education, awareness, and certification to improve the safety, support, and services for youth in the community. www.safeplaces.ca

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