

## Abuse in Lesbian Relationships & Lesbian Friendly Service:

### A Saskatchewan Survey Data from service providers

This survey was intended to help determine the availability of and need for “lesbian friendly” services for women abused in same-sex relationships. This questionnaire was to be completed by **any service provider in Saskatchewan that provides services for women who have experienced abuse in intimate relationships.**

A list of relevant service providers was drawn up, each agency was contacted by telephone to ascertain a contact person (where possible), and that person was advised of the coming survey questionnaire. 132 questionnaires were distributed (see the attached list). After the deadline, everyone who had not returned a completed questionnaire was contacted by telephone, reminded of the survey, and asked to submit a response. (PATHS members that had not responded by the deadline were reminded by email.)

53 responses were received. Two of the responding agencies filled out only the identifying information and answered questions 1 and 2. (All data based on 53 respondents includes these two; data based on 51 respondents does not.) Two of the responding agencies (ID# 9 & 10) did not fill out the identifying information, but answered most of the questions. (Based on their answers, ID# 9 & 10 were assumed to be a shelter and a crisis service, respectively.)

### Demographics of Responding Agencies

Community	# of Responding Agencies
Beauval	1
Buffalo Narrows	1
Estevan	1
Fort Qu'Appelle	1
Humboldt	1
Lloydminster	1
Meadow Lake	1 + 1
Melfort	2
Moose Jaw	3
Nipawin	1
North Battleford	4
Prince Albert	3
Regina	6
Rosthern	0 + 1
Saskatoon	12
Swift Current	3
Unknown	2
Weyburn	3
Wynyard	1
Yorkton	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>51 + 2</b>

Type of Agency	Urban	Rural	Un known	Totals
Crisis Services	3	5	1	9
Family Services	5	3		8
Mental Health	1	7		8
Other	4	0		4
Shelter Services	4	4	1	9
Social Services	0	6		6
Victim Services	1	7		8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>52*</b>

\* one respondent is both a crisis service and a shelter, and therefore has been counted here twice

**(Answers in red are those of a lesbian staff member of a Saskatchewan service provider. Her answers were edited to ensure her anonymity.)**

## Answers to Questionnaire Questions

1. What services does your agency provide to abused women generally? (check all that apply)

shelter	12
crisis line	15
one-to-one counseling	39
support groups	28
referrals	47

**Out of 53**

2. What does your agency know about abuse in lesbian relationships?

nothing	3
very little	12
some	25
quite a bit	13

**Out of 53**

**All remaining answers (except for Question 14) are out of 51.**

3. Does your agency consider sexual orientation to be a contributing factor to the challenges faced by women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships?

yes	28
no	12
no answer	11

4. Does your agency consider issues in lesbian relationships to be something that requires specialized services?

yes	19
no	28
no answer	4

**If yes, what specialized services/supports do lesbians in abusive relationships need/want? If no [or no answer], please explain:**

Yes	Gay and lesbian services; specialized support group/educational group
Yes	Programs sensitive to their needs.
Yes	Awareness, information, tolerance, lesbian or lesbian friendly therapists.
Yes	The agency we make a referral to must be aware of the dynamics and be comfortable with this issue. Someone who understands the relationship dynamics.
Yes	There is a lack of resources that have an awareness of issues specific to lesbian relationships. There is also a lack of counsellors that have the necessary comfort level to deal appropriately and effectively with these issues and dynamics.
Yes	Therapists who are sensitive to the issues faced by lesbian couples in today's society

Yes	It requires special consideration of the issues women and lesbians face in our society and in our community and to be knowledgeable and mindful of this when working with lesbian clients. Knowledgeable staff, safe environment, referrals to services.
Yes	Non-homophobic staff
Yes	The abusive partner is referred elsewhere, inclusive language, support groups for lesbians only?
Yes	Specialized knowledge and specialized services (e.g. lesbians may feel uncomfortable in a group that involves more traditional couplings). An informed perspective and acceptance by the therapist.
Yes	The perpetrator of the violence would not be appropriate for referral to the current group for men who are violent - therefore need special intervention one-to-one.
Yes	To be heard, listened to and understood
Yes	Recognition of same-sex relationship issues/the lack of support/understanding in mainstream culture.
Yes	Clients do not necessarily fit into existing group programs because most of the participants have been abused by a male partner. They may face discrimination because of sexual orientation and be unable to safely share their experience.
Yes	Need service from individuals who have knowledge and understanding of the issue and are pro-gay and lesbian.
Yes	Advocacy and support in dealing with attitudes; care in making referrals to ensure lesbian/gay friendly services.
Yes	Peer support with understanding of same sex relationships and discrimination
Yes	I believe the dynamics of abuse are the same in straight or lesbian relationships, but I also believe (as with any other minority) lesbians would benefit from the support of their own community i.e. support groups specifically for lesbians.
Yes	Public perception would play a big role - my assumption is that women abused by other women would have a more difficult time admitting the abuse.
No	This is difficult to answer - if services are gay/lesbian positive, then specialized services are not needed.
No	Current services need only to have informed and sensitive service staff.
No	<b>My agency doesn't think so, but I do think specialized services are needed. The sentiment is that the relationship isn't taken seriously or counsellors can't get past lesbianism. [What's needed are] awareness, information, tolerance, lesbian or lesbian friendly counsellors.</b>
No	They are people requiring a service like everyone else.
No	Weyburn has a population of 10,000. It is a very rural red-neck retirement community. I haven't seen this as a problem in this community
No	Abuse is abuse no matter what the relationship.
No	Not at this time. We have a very small case load of gay or lesbian clients.
No	A 'victim' is a victim, and all should be given equal options.
No	Because we only work with women in our support groups and counselling, [lesbians would fit into these groups]. We're progressive in our abilities to offer this support.
No	I find that, after working with couples who experience abuse, issues are similar in many ways to heterosexuals - the great difference is that society has less acceptance of such relationships - people are generally intolerant and lack knowledge of the kind of abuse that exists in same-sex relationships.
No	All abuse is criminal whether in lesbian or heterosexual and we would counsel from where the client presents, whoever the perpetrator.
No	Needs non-homophobic staff - issues are the same
No	Not really. It is still about power and control. We can just adapt some of the material. This area is too small / isolated. We need to adapt to include these issues.
No	While services are gay positive, they are also generic and designed to meet the needs of clients from a wide range of backgrounds and situations

No	We try to provide for all clients (regardless of sexual orientation) any services / supports they may require - primary focus to keep families together.
No	We believe that power and control are the basis of abusive relationships regardless of sexual orientation.
No	We have found that women respond to the information and support - they make changes when they are ready - like all the women we serve.
No	As lesbian community is very minor in our community, it would be more fiscally responsible to establish a program in a larger centre and then have materials available and circulated in outer areas.
No	We believe issues of power/control and cycle of violence are the "same". However, one needs to be much more aware of how isolation is greater, and that victims are less likely to reach out for service as a result of stigma / discrimination related to sexual orientation etc. Need to be in "safe" setting for services i.e. free of prejudice, judgement, etc.
No	Abuse is a behaviour. We don't distinguish who the abuser is before we offer services. We offer services to abused women regardless of sexual orientation.
No	Requires informed and comprehensive services - we have a dearth of specialized services in many areas.
No	The services are there but there may be 'specialized' barriers: homophobia in the service providers, fear of being 'outed' when the lesbian has not come out publicly (S'toon is a small community - anonymity - confidentiality may be issues)
No	Non-judgemental service
No	Agencies dealing with abuse in general can be of help/support to all, regardless of sexual orientation.
No	Abuse is abuse - definers remain the same.
	This topic has not been explored in our facility. Will consider info/training if any.
	Depends on individual situations.

**5. What general services has your agency knowingly provided to women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships? (check all that apply)**

shelter	8
crisis line	12
one-to-one counseling	31
support groups	16
referrals	33

**6. What services has your agency provided specifically for women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships? (check all that apply)**

shelter	0
crisis line	0
one-to-one counseling	14
support groups	0
referrals	10

7. Please estimate the average number of self-identified lesbians who access your agency's programs/services per year:

Avg. # of Lesbians/yr	# of Agencies	Total Clients
0: mode	14	0
1	4	4
2: median	7	14
3	3	9
4	1	4
5	3	15
6	1	6
7	1	7
8	1	8
9	1	9
10	3	30
11	1	11
12	1	12
15	1	15
20	2	40
50	1	50
100	1	100
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>334</b>
<b>Mean (total clients/agencies):</b>		<b>7.2</b>
Can't estimate	5	

8. Please estimate the average number of self-identified lesbians with same sex abuse issues who access your agency's programs/services per year:

Avg. # of Lesbians/yr	# of Agencies	Total Clients
0: mode	16	0
1: median	13	13
2	3	6
3	2	6
5	5	25
6	1	6
7	1	7
8	1	8
10	2	20
11	1	11
12	1	12
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Mean (total clients/agencies):</b>		<b>2.5</b>
Can't estimate	5	

9. Does/would your agency feel comfortable providing services to women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships?

yes	51
no	0

Please explain:

We have in past and will continue to provide safe/affordable housing/support services.
If the situation arose, staff would be ok in the provision of services to women in same sex relationships where abuse occurs.
We are non-judgemental and provide service to those in need.
Our staff are sensitive and well-informed on lesbianism and abuse.
<b>The agency would say that they feel comfortable. Depends on the individual counsellor. I feel more comfortable because I am a lesbian, but I'm not 'out' at work - only to 3 other counsellors.</b>
Sexual orientation isn't a factor when providing services.
As Co-ordinator, I feel strongly that these services are available.
Wouldn't matter
We are a client-focused agency, willing to refer any person in an abusive relationship to qualified help.

We provide services for all women of all sexual orientations
I have not heard of any issues from the past nor can I foresee any issues in the future that would make providing services to lesbian clients uncomfortable unless a particular staff member has biases.
We attempt to approach all clients as individuals requiring individual case management.
We do this already.
Our agency includes all people that need support to help them cope in their situations. Abuse is abuse.
No different than women in heterosexual relationships
We have the necessary skill and do not consider sexual orientation a barrier to receiving service.
We provide services to people in crisis and would access services for client as required. Services which would address her needs
I see lesbians and gay individuals as individuals with the same rights/pain/feelings as heterosexuals. Individuals are to be provided the same services.
We serve all clients regardless of race, religion or age.
We are well informed and provide service as needed in a non-judgemental manner.
We work with all victims
We do not distinguish between abuse in a same sex relationship or a heterosexual relationship; need determines the services we offer and provide.
Don't know that anybody would be uncomfortable. No one has expressed any level of discomfort with same-sex relationships or issues
We offer services to any woman who has experienced abuse - we do not discriminate on the basis of race, culture, sexual orientation, religion ....
Our service is open to all.
No clientele though
To the extent that we deal specifically with abuse issues, which is not our particular area of expertise

**What would help your agency feel more comfortable?**

This topic has not been explored in our facility. Will consider info/training if any.
<b>Societal tolerance. This subject is not talked about. But I also know that 'religious right' sentiments prevail even though we have Bill C33</b> [which, in 1996, added 'sexual orientation' as a prohibited ground of discrimination to the Canadian Human Rights Act].

**10. Does your agency have a specific response or protocol for dealing with a client who is or was in an abusive lesbian relationship?**

yes	3
no	48

**Please explain:**

Yes	Individual counsellors do not see both partners; abusive partners are generally referred to other agencies, or are seen (if they also express having been abused) by another counsellor.
Yes	We have a protocol for addressing abuse and we believe that it is relevant for lesbians.
Yes	A specific protocol for all clients identified to be living with abuse.
No	Never a reason to develop a different type of protocol when dealing with abuse issues.
No	This topic has not been explored in our facility. Will consider info/training if any.
No	No, we refer people to counsellors outside our agency.

<b>No</b>	<b>Most staff don't even want [to deal with] those cases.</b>
No	Abuse is abuse! All clients are treated equally.
No	We have the same protocol for all victims.
No	We deal with each case and make a specific plan with the client.
No	All victims are treated equally. We find programs to best meet each client's needs.
No	We do not have any specific protocol for dealing with this situation but would certainly be interested in any information that could help us to develop appropriate protocol.
No	We do not have a 'specific protocol' - we apply empathetic listening, being non-judgemental and being knowledgeable of community resources to all clients.
No	Not at this time.
No	More caution as mentioned earlier in Question 6 (More intense screening of clients requesting admission during her stay - had one situation where her partner sought admission while a client here.)
No	Service to victim would be the same as in heterosexual relationship. Perpetrator would receive individual counselling.
No	Our response parallels that given to any client in an abusive relationship.
No	The protocol would be much the same as dealing with a heterosexual client in terms of counselling.
No	We believe that power and control are the basis of abusive relationships regardless of sexual orientation.
No	We don't need protocol for one type of relationship. Our experience is that those fearing abuse need the support/info we offer regardless of orientation.
No	All protocols deal with victims as individuals with individual needs
No	We do have, however, a protocol for women in abusive heterosexual relationship, as well as one for vulnerable adults.
No	We would follow the same protocol - address safety needs. This issue is considered to be primary. We'd refer to the necessary crisis agencies - police, Mobile Crisis, housing.
No	Same protocol would apply as a general guideline, but would have to be sensitive to issues unique to lesbian relationships
No	We have not yet had a resident who identified herself as a survivor of an abusive lesbian relationship.
No	They require same service - support information, advocacy and referral.
No	We use the same procedures as in abusive heterosexual relationships
No	We treat all clients the same—with respect.
No	Our services relate to abuses suffered by all women.
No	We've never had a client come to us at the office disclosing abuse in a lesbian relationship or identifying it as a concern. CTR provided support and information and referral to GLHS.

**11. Does your agency have counsellors who deal specifically with women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships?**

yes	2
no	49

**12. Are you aware of barriers that might prevent lesbians from accessing the services of your agency?**

yes	24
no	24
no answer	3

**Please explain:**

Yes	Difficulty accessing funding for services when abuse is emotional and psychological.
Yes	Fear of facing homophobic people; fear of disclosure, of discrimination. All the barriers women face in general.
Yes	Societal barriers in general
Yes	The perception of the gay/lesbian community is that they require services specialized in gay/lesbian issues.
<b>Yes</b>	<b>Generally a right wing community of homophobia exists. Gay and lesbian relationships are not taken seriously.</b>
Yes	We are located in an RCMP detachment - many barriers to reporting domestic violence especially in same sex relationships.
Yes	Lesbians may feel uncomfortable, ashamed in asking for help with abuse issue, because a number of people may view their lifestyle as different.
Yes	Concern about the attitude of therapists.
Yes	Prince Albert is not 'same sex' friendly. There are no same-sex bars, clubs, etc. It's not an ideal place to disclose if you are a lesbian.
Yes	Some may find the community service village intimidating - fear of someone seeing them access our services - although some people have stated they like the Village because people do not know why they are coming here.
Yes	It is a small community.
Yes	Fearful of exposure (we're part of Social Services) fearful of general homophobic response. Clients have disclosed that they perceive the GL community as being small and fear recourse from abuser who shares that community.
Yes	All agencies have barriers that prevent people from accessing services, therefore ours is no different. We try to accept all who come.
Yes	We note that in our agency literature, we don't specifically say that we are gay friendly.
Yes	Perhaps their own discomfort - fear of stigma, as this is a small community with very traditional views.
Yes	Not barriers imposed by us but barriers related to perception because we are a Catholic Family Services
Yes	The name of our agency [Catholic Family Services] is an issue as people fear discrimination.
Yes	Catholic tag.
Yes	Community is very small 'c' conservative.
Yes	We may not advertise enough - we do not have lesbian staff member if that is what someone would prefer. We do have lesbians as volunteers and as board members.
Yes	The community - fear of exposure of orientation because it would not be accepted or understood easily
Yes	They may not be aware of our services. They may not feel comfortable accessing our services.
Yes	General assumptions but more information would be great.
No	Our staff are very open-minded, respectful and non-judgemental.

No	The women's centre is committed to being accessible to everyone interested or in need of our services. It is our hope that any barriers that might prevent lesbians from accessing our services would be brought to our attention.
No	We are an agency which respects all choices people make - we do not discriminate people because of their sexual orientation.
No	We are an agency that is accessible to everyone.
No	We are non-judgemental
No	We don't make it a policy to ask sexual orientation before we offer services.
No	But in small town and rural communities tolerance/acceptance is less, so people do not self-disclose.
	Barriers that might prevent anyone from accessing services are that D.S.S. will take your children away, put them in foster care.
	Possibly [there are barriers we are] not [aware of] .... ???

**13. What is your understanding of the term “homophobia”?**

Fear, lack of knowledge and level of anxiety when dealing with women who are self-professing their sexuality.
Fear of gays or lesbians.
Irrational fear of homosexuality or homosexuals.
Fear of people who have a sexual relationship with same gender.
People who dislike and treat differently people who are gay/lesbian
Someone who fears gays and lesbians
Fear of the unknown
Excellent
<b>That's why I'm not totally 'out' at work.</b>
A fear of homosexuality
A fear based on misunderstanding or not understanding other's choices/lifestyle. Largely based on views imposed by segments of society.
Individuals that fear homosexuals.
Fear of homosexuality including being uncomfortable with issues related to gay and lesbian lifestyles and being uncomfortable with gay and lesbian individuals and couples.
Afraid to be around a homosexual because you may 'catch it' or people may think you are one.
A person who has a fear of homosexuals.
Lack of tolerance and fear of homosexuals.
People who are afraid of gay or lesbian people or who define anyone as 'other'
Fear of the unknown as is any phobia
Someone who is afraid of same sex relationships i.e. it could rub off onto them, it's a sin, etc.
Fear of people who have relationships with the same sex—men with men, women with women
Fear of an individual or group of individuals based on their sexual orientation. This fear is based on ignorance and is perpetuated in our society through jokes, violence and marginalization against gays, lesbians and bisexuals.
Fear or unusual negative bias regarding someone's sexual orientation.
Fear of homosexuality
Heterosexism reflected in hatred/fear of homosexual, bisexual and transgendered, cross dressers, people and their lifestyles, influence and points of view.
People who are extremely insecure with any person, information, or topic around homosexual conversation and attitude. It is a specific attitude that is excluding of gay/lesbian choice.
Fear, hatred, suspicion of anyone who is not heterosexual and fear of the homosexuality within ourselves.

Fear of dealing with people with sexual orientation different than their own.
Negative beliefs about homosexuality and a desire to act out, sometimes violently, against homosexuals - justification to 'gay bash'
Fear of others in same sex relationships; fear of one's own feelings (could I be that way too?) And fear shown as disgust and rejection and or derision.
People who take issue with lesbian or gay relationships.
Fear of homosexuals
A term describing someone who is fearful of lesbian or gay individuals and their lifestyle, often due to being misinformed / uneducated.
Fear of differing sexual orientation.
People who have a discomfort/fear of gay relationships.
When a person of a varying sexual orientation is viewed/treated differently than someone of their own sexual orientation.
A fear of someone based solely on his/her same gender sexual orientation.
Homophobia is when individuals are discriminated against because of sexual orientation. It also includes the general societal fear/discrimination of anyone who is not heterosexual.
Fear and hatred of gays and lesbians - often shows up in behaviour that is abusive.
Based on fear and misunderstanding
An irrational fear of homosexuality/homosexuals
Negative reactions to or fear of homosexuality
Fear, misunderstanding and intolerance (hatred in some levels) of people involved in same-sex relationships or lifestyles
Persons who do not understand and therefore fear/dislike homosexuality
Varying degrees of fear/discomfort/anxiety in relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual persons.
Someone who does not have any understanding or tolerance of others sexual orientation which may be different from theirs.
The lack of knowledge or the presence of ignorance—people choose to be fearful, hurtful and judgemental to those who are not heterosexual
People who experience fear and prejudice against homosexuals are experiencing homophobia. Believing homosexuals are bad, sick etc. and to be avoided and excluded.
Afraid of identity.
Heterosexuals who have a fear of the gay community.
Inability to accept or understand gay/lesbian relationships or feelings, resulting in anger or hatred.

**Does your agency have employees who could be described as homophobic?**

yes	6
no	35
no answer	4
not sure	6

**14. If your agency provides shelter services, does it have concerns about other residents being homophobic?**

yes	4
no	8

**Please explain:**

	<b>Agency Type</b>	<b>Shelter Concerns re Residents' Homophobia</b>
Yes	Shelter	Women and youth who are in crisis may deal with sexuality (difference) in an aggressive/????? manner. Close living quarters - ????? Pervasive, thoughts of other women watching while showering.
Yes	Shelter	We have had difficulties with other clients not accepting the woman - however we have had success in problem solving/mediating most of the time.
Yes	Shelter	Some residents may be uncomfortable at first - until they recognize that abuse is abuse no matter what race or religion or sexual orientation of the abused/abuser
Yes	Other	At CTR lots of support was needed for assisting a woman who self-identified as lesbian while homophobic residents were also there - lots of info, support & counselling to homophobic residents as well in attempt to deal with their fears and prevent conflict.
No	Shelter	Unknown
No	Shelter	Admission rules are that all clients are individuals and in communal living; if issues come up between clients, we deal with it one on one and then together if clients request.
No	Shelter	Think this could be possible but it has not been an issue in our 21 years of providing service.
No	Crisis	Not really
No	Shelter	It has never been an issue [but we have not knowingly provided shelter services to a lesbian].
No	Crisis	Our safe home Service shelters only one woman/family at a time
No	Shelter	The issue has never been brought forward.

**If your agency provides shelter services, does it have concerns about an abusive female partner getting into the shelter?**

yes	7
no	5

**Please explain:**

	<b>Agency Type</b>	<b>Shelter Concerns re Abusive Female Entering</b>
Yes	Shelter	Want to provide a fair/equitable service. Don't want women to come to shelter and not feel safe.
Yes	Shelter	We could refer the partner to support services of possibly another shelter, depends on situation.
Yes	Shelter	More intense screening of clients requesting admission during her stay - had one situation where her partner sought admission while a client here.
Yes	Shelter	We have had both women attempt to access our shelter and we also had one woman who began to "look" like she was the abuser - it is a dilemma.
Yes	Crisis	We rely on self-identification of the abuse issues - they may not always be accurately presented.
Yes	Shelter	We are always concerned about abusive partners getting access to our shelter.

Yes	Shelter	The two partners in the relationship could not receive services at the shelter during the same time frame.
No	Shelter	Every client is given the choice of listing her perpetrator. If the person by that name requests admission they are referred to an alternate shelter (whether partner, sister, mother, cousin).
No	Shelter	Guess it could happen if we weren't made aware by the victim.

**15. Have staff at your agency received training in providing 'lesbian friendly' services?**

yes	10
no	41

**If yes, who provided this training:**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Who provided training?</b>
Social Services	Some staff may have been trained to be gay/lesbian friendly in BSW training.
Shelter	Unknown if training provided.
Shelter	A fellow staff person.
Victim Services	Manager from Provincial Volunteer training manual
Victim Services	Co-ordinator at Program
Victim Services	AIDS Saskatoon
Crisis Services	Clients/personal experience/conferences/interagency consulting/reading/personal research
Mental Health	Attended presentations by GLHS
Mental Health	Lesbian staff member
Family Services	Sheri McConnell
Family Services	What does 'lesbian friendly' mean?
Family Services	STOPS, Regina GL and B Assoc., YWCA, Co-worker

**16. Do you consider your agency's services lesbian-friendly?**

yes	39
no	2
no answer	5
not sure	5

**Explain:**

Yes	Open and educated staff.
Yes	Provide services that fit with a person's needs. Treat everyone with respect and compassion.
Yes	We provide services to any victims in need.
Yes	We have an open-door policy for all victims of abuse
Yes	Our agency is friendly to people from any race, religion, sexual orientation, etc.
Yes	An open, non-judgemental willingness to provide the service and address the issues.
Yes	Our services are open to everyone no matter sexual orientation, or whatever.

Yes	Staff who are willing to listen with a friendly ear and offer referral services.
Yes	Therapists are sensitive to the needs of abused women regardless of their sexual orientation.
Yes	We do not judge our clients - we ask them to evaluate their own healthy behaviour.
Yes	Our agencies deal with 'victims' - <b>preference</b> is not given to any group-religion-colour-nationality or sexual orientation!
Yes	We work closely with the USSU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Centre to ensure that the Director is informed on LGB issues, as well as women's issues.
Yes	I work for an agency that has two staff members, both of whom provide lesbian-friendly services. However, we're located in a clinic that has 60 some staff. Some are not lesbian friendly.
Yes	Safe environment, knowledgeable; empathetic staff; staff trained in all aspects of abuse; staff who is not homophobic (who confront any biases they may have) - 'lesbian friendly' resource material: books, videos, pamphlets.
Yes	We treat all clients as equal and attempt a therapeutic approach that is empathetic and according to their needs for case management.
Yes	Have a staff member who is self-identified lesbian - myself.
Yes	Non-judgemental; use of inclusive language; feminist approach
Yes	We have friendly intentions and have done things like changing the terminology on our forms/brochures (i.e. 'partners', 'couples'). We have talked about offering a group for lesbian couples. Before our move, we had a poster wall that included gay/lesbian material.
Yes	Have staff that is trained to act professionally, respectfully to all clients and deal objectively with all issues in a non-biased manner, as per our written code of ethics.
Yes	Staff do not judge sexual orientation - basically not homophobic - zero tolerance for jokes, etc. about sexual orientation - we consider such behaviour as violent.
Yes	The same qualities that make us client friendly - no fee, qualified staff, feminist approach
Yes	Pretty decent group of staff
Yes	We are a smaller agency and I am aware that my co-workers are quite open-minded i.e. not homophobic in any manner. However, I do see from the next question that we may not be available due to lack of advertising.
Yes	We treat everyone equally regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, age, etc.
Yes	Staff are knowledgeable, non-judgemental and provide an atmosphere which is safe to disclose in.
Yes	We treat everyone as individuals with no attention being made to the individuals race, sexuality, gender, etc.
Yes	We post "Safe Positive Space" stickers, display brochures of GLHS, etc. Staff is sensitive to those people who may be marginalized for a variety of reasons.
Yes	We are a feminist organization—we have books and posters displayed in the office. We have lesbians on our Board of Directors and as volunteers on the Sexual Assault Line.
Yes	Non-judgemental/confidential and very welcoming. (I would like to think they are, therefore, lesbian friendly. Although we have not serviced this specific abuse issue, we have serviced several with sexual orientation issues.
Yes	We make it a policy to support clients where they're at.
Yes	Agency staff are not concerned with people's sexual orientations and strive to work with people according to their needs.
Yes	We don't discriminate.
Yes	Hopefully a lesbian survivor of abuse would benefit from the security and services we offer.
Yes	We are here for anyone in an abusive relationship, but further training on issues would be beneficial to our agency and lesbian community.
Yes	Our services are available to anyone
Yes	We treat all people with respect.
Yes	We provide services to any woman who meets our mandate.

<b>No</b>	<b>Only 3 or 4 out of the 10 counsellors are lesbian friendly</b>
	Staff perspective: we are lesbian friendly. We have gay and lesbian material in our waiting room.
	Never been discussed.
	We need a definition of 'lesbian friendly'. We treat lesbians as we would treat any other client—we provide services for them.
	Non-judgemental service
	Not friendly/not unfriendly
	Undecided
	Tough to answer - sexual orientation is not often discussed because our mandate is to deal with issues around conflict in the law - lesbian friendly only to the extent that services would be provided equally to lesbians who chose to disclose. We openly display sexual-minority material in our outreach office.

**What efforts does your agency make to inform the 'lesbian community' that your services are lesbian friendly?**

<p><b>no efforts</b></p> <p>(21 (54%) of the 39 agencies that said they are lesbian friendly make no efforts)</p>	<p>29</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>I would like to hold a youth group or give workshops on homophobia in the schools but I don't think I am able to feel safe doing this given the agency and the environment.</b></li> <li>• We only have our own material and other community resources. I don't believe there is a lesbian or an open lesbian community in Weyburn.</li> <li>• We promote our agency as one to assist victims of crime and traumatic events. We don't place guidelines for anyone wanting to access our services.</li> <li>• Offer service to all; simply don't exclude unless we do not have expertise to provide service. Our service is not conditional on sexual orientation, religion, income, etc.</li> <li>• We provide a service to the general public.</li> <li>• We do not make any differentiation between the lesbian community and the whole community</li> </ul>
<p><b>openly display sexual minority material in our waiting room and offices (i.e. material depicting other than heterosexual relationships).</b></p>	<p>16</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have gay and lesbian materials in waiting room and we have condoms.</li> <li>• We have hung up the poster you sent us.</li> <li>• We display sexual minority material from GLHS in our office.</li> <li>• We are listed at GLHS as gay and lesbian friendly.</li> <li>• If we have this material (to my knowledge, we have had some in the past).</li> <li>• We display posters, materials from other agencies including GLHS, AIDS S'toon, etc.</li> <li>• GLHS poster in Outreach office</li> </ul>
<p><b>openly advertise our services in sexual minority publications</b></p>	<p>4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target is for women in general, not specific to publications for sexual minority.</li> <li>• Have never been approached by a publisher.</li> <li>• USSU LGB Centre Newsletter</li> <li>• I don't know of any publications that do this in Prince Albert</li> <li>• Send pamphlets to other agencies that work with gay and lesbian individuals, have our info on pamphlets that target gay and lesbian clients</li> </ul>

<p><b>openly advertise our services in sexual minority publications (cont'd)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We haven't been approached and we tend not to be proactive with advertising, as our services are already in demand. Also, we have no advertising budget.</li> <li>• Don't know which publications are applicable</li> <li>• Haven't had requests to advertise and have not sought out opportunities to do so.</li> <li>• Have not advertised because we don't know where or how this would be best achieved.</li> <li>• What are sexual minority publications?</li> <li>• We do not advertise our services anywhere</li> </ul>
<p><b>other efforts</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through client and personal contacts within the lesbian community</li> <li>• Word of mouth in the gay/lesbian community that we are safe.</li> <li>• We have done things like changing the terminology on our forms/brochures (i.e. "partners/couples). We feel we have lost some of the visible signs of our gay/lesbian friendliness in the move to our new office. We need to restore some of these aspects.</li> <li>• We treat everyone respectfully and equally.</li> <li>• We have invited community organizations directly involved with the gay and lesbian community to share information about their role and programs and services.</li> <li>• We contact victims who have been involved in the criminal justice system (once we receive the police report) and offer our services</li> <li>• Presentations/awareness mentions various relationships where abuse occurs</li> </ul>

**Would your agency be interested in receiving training in providing lesbian friendly services?**

yes	31
no	14
no answer	6

**Please explain:**

<b>Would your agency be interested in receiving training to provide lesbian friendly services?</b>	
Yes	Gay <u>and</u> lesbian friendly. There are gay men in abusive relationships too.
Yes	Cost would be a factor.
Yes	It would benefit me to see if I am on target with the info I already use. May need to adapt and incorporate new information.
Yes	What a great idea!
Yes	If it was a general public information training open to other agencies and individuals and facilitated by professional presenters.
Yes	Though small numbers, perhaps we could approach SK Justice Victims Services, Regina, and do training in Regina for Regional co-ordinators.
Yes	I believe so but I'm not in control of this. I doubt if they would see it as a priority because there seems to be no request for this service.
Yes	As part of bigger picture - a seminar where more community agencies are invited.
Yes	Definitely

No	A few years back we did have training from Gay and Lesbian Health Services of Saskatoon - don't need more.
No	Not at this time.
No	We feel we are well informed already.
No	The Centre is very gay / lesbian positive. We do not feel it is necessary to receive further training.
No	Do not perceive the need - have been fully involved in supporting people (male) living with AIDS, but not lesbian women in abusive relationships, however feel we can be supportive and provide a good service.
	<b>Maybe</b>
	At who's expense?
	Not my decision.
	Can't answer for the agency.
	Maybe - if we have (or could identify that we have) clientele
	What would the training entail?

**17. Does your agency have an internal policy to protect lesbians from harassment or discrimination?**

yes	32
no	19

Yes	Basic harassment policy applies to all
Yes	General harassment policy protects all human rights including sexual orientation
Yes	Have general workplace anti-harassment which identifies sexual orientation as a category
Yes	Have such a code for all clients
Yes	I believe there is something about sexual orientation
Yes	Included in harassment policy
Yes	Is not exclusively lesbian oriented. Is for all people/staff/volunteers/clients
Yes	Just general harassment policy.
Yes	Just general policies
Yes	Not specific to lesbians
Yes	Not specifically, but for all individuals regardless of sexual orientation
Yes	Not specifically, but we have a general harassment policy which fits
Yes	Protects everyone
Yes	Protects more than lesbians
Yes	Really covers all
Yes	We have a harassment policy that protects all
<b>No</b>	<b>?</b>
No	No policy for women generally
No	Not aware of it if it exists

**18. Has your agency every received complaints or negative feedback related to sexual orientation issues from a lesbian client?**

yes	2
no	41
don't know	5
no answer	3

<b>Yes</b>	<b>But only privately</b>
Yes	One complaint

**19. How would your agency deal with a client who discloses discrimination or harassment within your agency because of her sexual orientation?**

We would investigate complaint and deal with issue.
Investigate complaint and take steps to educate/rectify situation.
Deal with it as you would a female being abused by her spouse (a male)
Refer to superiors to go through discrimination and harassment procedures. Give option of other agencies to call ex. Human Rights Commission, RCMP, MCA, etc.
It would be dealt with in the same manner as any other discrimination or harassment issues.
Follow regular policy and procedure on harassment.
Follow our procedure.
<b>I think in the long run nothing would happen. There is too much power here. It wouldn't be hard to make a case that the client was written off as having mental health problems. Who are they going to believe? The counsellor or the client?</b>
Discuss issue with person accused of harassment. Document. If situation occurs again they would be let go.
It would be seriously addressed.
Her case would be transferred to another worker or manager. Attempt to correct the situation if client was in agreement.
This would be a union issue. If out-of-scope I don't know.
Talk to our Organizational Development Branch in Regina
We would refer her to the proper authorities and support her through the process.
Complaint would be referred to management level.
We would follow procedures and policy re: harassment in a confidential way.
Same as any other client.
As we are a university organization, if the client was a student we would direct her to the office of discrimination & harassment services, as well as trying to provide her with as much information and support as possible.
I would take it to the Director of Community Programming.
There is a client and staff grievance procedure posted in our waiting room.
The complaint would be received by the executive director who would confront the staff member - the appropriate action would be taken as discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
As per all other harassment complaints.
Hasn't come up yet.
Follow discrimination / harassment protocol
Disciplinary action would be taken toward anyone when discriminating against or harassing another person.
We have a detailed protocol.

Exactly the same as someone disclosing the same because of racial, religious or other orientation. To my knowledge, we've had no known situations of this kind.
It would be investigated and dealt with through general anti-harassment protocol - also report to appropriate professional association or regulatory body for discipline depending on circumstances.
We have a complaint/harassment process assigned to meet the needs of any client who feels they haven't been treated fairly.
Try to assist in every way possible
I am uncertain how this might be dealt with.
We would work with it.
Haven't dealt with this. Generally we listen carefully to any concerns and address them to staff if necessary.
Any form of discrimination or harassment is dealt with through an investigation by the RCMP.
There is a sexual harassment policy/protocol. It appears the outcomes tend not to be particularly satisfactory for the complainant.
The client would be referred to the executive director to review the issue. The employee would be disciplined according to our policy and procedure.
This would be brought forward to a staff meeting and then to the personnel committee. The client would be told that mechanisms are in place to deal with these issues.
Supportively.
As per policy.
Hasn't happened so not sure.
Appeal information would be provided and we would deal with complaint / disclosure at their level. If person not happy, they can appeal all way to Minister's office.
Advocate on their behalf
Follow conflict resolution procedures as we do with other situations.
Investigation and, if discrimination is founded, dismissal
We would at present follow our general procedure for client complaints and attempt to resolve it (staff training, referral to other counsellor, etc.)
I don't really know how complaints are handled. I believe the program manager and staff would be consulted. I also believe our CEO would address the complaint somehow - perhaps with the help of the board.
Direct the person to the proper agency to assist.
We would follow the guidelines of our harassment policy.
Would likely go through harassment process outlined in manual or union contract

**20. Does your agency refer women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships to other agencies?**

yes	38
no	4
no answer	9

**If yes, to whom do you refer?**

<b>Agency refers to (GLHS is Gay &amp; Lesbian Health Services in Saskatoon)</b>	<b>And GLHS?</b>
	GLHS
	GLHS

Dept. of Social Services - Addiction Services, Shelwin House, Safe Haven - depending on clients issues and needs	
Family Support Centre, Family Services Saskatoon	GLHS
Generalized and specific resources within the Battlefords and/or Saskatoon dependent upon the needs of the client.	
Have never referred a self-identified lesbian women who has experienced abuse. But would refer to mental health, EPA programs, private counsellors.	
Hot Peach Pages; Women's Interservice Partnership Project; YWCA; Interval House; Police; Legal Aid; Adelle House; Women's Centre, U of S; Sexual Assault Centre; Victims Services and a variety of others dependent on need expressed; Healing Circle Lodge	GLHS
If we had occasion to refer, I think we would refer to GLHS's 1-800-358-1833	GLHS
Mental Health - Addictions	
Mental Health Clinic Support Groups, Saskatoon Family Service Support Group	
Mental Health Support Group (for women who have been abused)	
Most likely we would refer.	
Police, Sexual Assault Centre, SDH - Mental Health Services, Housing, Victims Services, Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Services, Interval House, YWCA Shelter	GLHS
Police, Women's Shelter, DSS, etc.	
Private counsellors; Family Support Centre; Interval House; YWCA Shelter; USSU Gay Lesbian, Bisexual Centre; STD Clinic	GLHS
Safe shelters, counsellors, mental health, women support groups.	
Same as all clients - mental health, RCMP, lawyer, medical, other counselling	
Same as everyone else.	
Saskatoon Family Support Centre, Gay/Lesbian Friendly Counsellors	
Shelters, counsellors, support groups, police, lawyers.	
Shelters, Mobile, Women's Centre	
SIGN, Sexual Assault Counselling (if applicable toll-free number)	GLHS
Student Counselling (many people don't wish to leave campus), Family Services	
To agencies which the client feels may enhance her lifestyle.	
To Regina Pink Triangle Health Services, I think it's called	
Transition House	
Victims Services and Mobile Crisis - we refer to these agencies for any kind of abusive relationship.	
Violence Intervention Program	
We refer to whoever comes up in case management requests. I would inquire.	
We would refer to VIP and Mental Health	
Whoever in our community is suitable - mental health counsellors, medical profession, sexual assault, etc.	
Whom ever is appropriate and available.	
Women's Centre	
Women's Centre, DSS, Legal Aid, contact in lesbian community if she's new to the city.	
YWCA Shelter, certain specific physicians, massage therapists, etc.	GLHS
YWCA, AIDS Saskatoon, Catholic Family Services, Family Services S'toon, Private Counsellors	
YWCA, Interval House	GLHS

<b>Agency does not refer</b>
Have not yet been confronted with the need.
Have not dealt with an abused partner in lesbian relationship.
Have not had opportunity but would offer available non-specialized services.
If we had folks identifying this problem, I would refer them to Heather at Regina Mental Health - she apparently has had considerable experience in the area.
<b>Maybe we are supposed to handle these problems internally. I may refer to a private lesbian counsellor in one of the major urban centres, but financial accessibility is often a problem.</b>
Never had to deal with this situation.
There are really no lesbian specific agencies/groups in our area.
Unless the woman specifically requests a lesbian counsellor.
We would if we were unable to service.

**21. Do you see gaps in the services your agency can provide to women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships?**

yes	18
no	23
no answer	10

**Please explain:**

<b>Are there gaps in your agency's services?</b>	
Yes	There is a gap in the groups that we offer. We have decided to offer a group for lesbian women in the winter/spring if there are sufficient numbers.
Yes	We're not aware of specific agencies that deal with this problem.
Yes	Not enough clients for group work.
<b>Yes</b>	<b>Because of the homophobia</b>
Yes	We could use more training.
Yes	We are not fully trained & therefore often refer to other outside agencies.
Yes	We have not run a group specifically for sexual abuse in lesbian relationships. This would be possible if clients expressed interest in that service.
Yes	There are always gaps in service that probably could be identified in services i.e. lesbian clients, disabled, hearing or language impaired, incest victims because counselling is not intensive in any one area due to fact that control theory is group with individual one-on-one.
Yes	Less security while in shelter
Yes	Some. If we adapt info to be non-gender (pamphlet), then we'd get inquiries and therefore services could be offered.
Yes	We may not advertise enough - we do not have lesbian staff member if that is what someone would prefer. We do have lesbians as volunteers and as board members.
Yes	There are no specific groups, etc. for lesbian relationship abuse and lack referral information.
Yes	Gaps in community services that may not have specific services/based on traditional models; we do not have a shelter for lesbians or groups specifically for women in lesbian relationships
Yes	Perhaps we are not as informed as we could be as to the needs of lesbians within abusive relationships.
Yes	We can always improve upon our services.

No	Unless there are services we're not aware of - our agency does not deal specifically with abuse as a major issue and usually makes referrals to other agencies
No	Can't identify any at this time except don't know of support groups in our community to refer lesbian women to.
No	A lack of referral agencies in general for all clients is problematic in our area.
No	We work with all victims of crime. Sexual orientation isn't an issue when providing referrals or support.
No	None have been identified by clients so far.
No	We have no demand for this service at this time.
No	We are struggling to provide basic service to the SDH client population. We do not have staff or funding to provide a specialized service.
No	If a lesbian women needed a referral, we would try to find a resource to fit her needs.
No	We deal with child protection and domestic violence, whether the violence is in same sex partnership or non-same sex partnership.
No	Not more than anyone else.
	Unknown
	Likely not an area we've had a lot of experience with.
	Don't know; we deal with short term crisis situations. There are very few clients with whom we have ongoing contact - no negative feedback that we've heard.
	Not sure.
	We have dealt with the needs of the 1 or 2 we've had.

**23. What does your agency know about the services offered in Saskatchewan by abuse help agencies to women abused in lesbian relationships?**

nothing	6
very little	23
some	18
quite a bit	4

**24. Do you see gaps in the services provided in Saskatchewan to women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships?**

yes	21
no	9
no answer	21

**Please explain:**

Are there gaps in services in Saskatchewan?	
Yes	We don't see advertising for such services so we don't really know what is available.
Yes	More awareness. Openness to run specific support groups.

Yes	I don't know. Probably there is a lack of awareness of the resources available. Rural area women may have a harder time to access services.
Yes	<b>I personally know that this has been raised by lesbians in our community, as well as in the closest urban centre.</b>
Yes	See earlier comments in Question 4. [There is a lack of resources that have an awareness of issues specific to lesbian relationships. There is also a lack of counsellors that have the necessary comfort level to deal appropriately and effectively with these issues and dynamics.]
Yes	More a lack of resources for professionals, news letters, etc.
Yes	Often, abuse in lesbian relationships seems to be perceived as a non-issue in both the women's movement & the LGB movement. This contributes to it being an issue that is often invisible & therefore lacking in services. Women are not perceived as being capable of the violence men are capable of.
Yes	My assumption is women are still not comfortable or have difficulty accessing services. Especially those in rural, northern and aboriginal communities.
Yes	Where is the information?
Yes	There could be more specialized services offered; better training 'across the board' just as there is awareness/sensitivity training for other oppressions (I.e. women who are disabled) - working on our homophobia
Yes	There are always gaps in services. We try to help those who come to us.
Yes	There are few services which are specialized in this respect and what might be helpful would be for existing services to receive more education.
Yes	We are unaware of most; there are none specific to our community
Yes	Lack of programming to address the specific needs of women abused in same-sex relationships.
Yes	Probably little organized support outside of Regina or Saskatoon - I don't really know.
Yes	Again the need to make these services more known to the lesbian community and an expansion of agencies services if needed.
Yes	More attention put out in general public.
	Unknown about the subject.
	?
	Don't know
	Know nothing re: services
	Don't know.
	Information not available.
	Unknown
	Don't know.
	Don't know.
	Not informed enough to know.
	Rural centres don't usually have the scope of services available in urban communities.
	Not sure
	Not even aware of the extent of the problem so unable to comment
	We don't know.
	Don't really know.
	Don't know.

**25. Have clients expressed to your agency that there are gaps in the services provided to women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships in Saskatchewan?**

yes	5
no	43
no answer	3

**Please explain:**

<b>Hear from clients about gaps in services?</b>	
Yes	Need groups specifically for lesbian women
Yes	Some clients have expressed concern about receiving services in their own community because of perpetrator belonging to the same community (And having political influence); others have expressed concerns about Social Service income security not believing their disclosures of orientation and therefore not trusting their other sex roommate situation as NOT being common law.
<b>Yes</b>	
No	Has not been discussed
No	No one has identified selves as this target group.
No	Not that we are aware of, but again we are not fully aware of services in other areas.
No	Don't know.
No	Not to my knowledge, however, I'm sure they would have concerns.
No	No gays or lesbians we have seen have expressed any concerns over these issues.
No	We do not have the numbers to form a judgement.
No	Has not been brought to our attention.
No	No clients of that sexual orientation have been to our shelter.
	Not that I am aware of.

<b>Any other comments?</b>
Our agency provides services to Immigrant and Refugee sponsored clients in a holistic way. We provide practical assistance in every day life. As a supervisor for the last 2 years, I have not received any report of lesbian women who are immigrant requesting help at SODS. But we attended workshop at CCR 2001 on Immigrant homosexual issues. We must be open to provide services to anyone with immigrant background when help is needed.
This facility has only dealt with heterosexual relationships. Never considered question of being lesbian friendly. However, this area of same-sex relationships/abuse will be explored.
I am new as the co-ordinator to Victim Services and am not aware that if this is a serious issue in our community. I don't know much about it, but feel it would be beneficial to learn more and train our workers also.
<b>Homophobia exists!</b>
We offer support and referral to: a person who has suffered harm, including; physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, or economic loss, by reason of an act that is in violation of Criminal Laws (The Victims of Crime Act). We are sensitive to all victims' needs.
We don't have enough volume of identified gay / lesbian clients to develop programming specifically for them.

Our agency deals with victims of crime causing injury to persons self and or property . No **preference** is given or will be to any groups - religion - race or anything else - each is treated on an individual basis.

The number of women who self-identify to us as lesbians is small [about 8/year]. Again P.A. is not lesbian "friendly". If we do see a woman who is a lesbian in an abusive relationship, we go through her options in the community the same as we do for women in heterosexual relationships. If she chooses to go to the police to lay a charge, we encourage her to take one of our staff along, for example. All women need the support, but because of attitudes and fears about "same sex" relationships, I feel that lesbian women need non-judgemental support even more so.

It would seem that this is an area the community [of service providers] needs to do more work in. We probably get more calls to the crisis line than actual clients into the centre. Disclosing is still risky in our society, and, based on our numbers, it is still risky to access services to a safe agency. We need to continue to reach out to gay/lesbian/bisexual clients who are being abused.

Question: Why does this survey not include bisexual and transgendered women in abusive relationships?  
**[Answer: Because that should really be two entirely different surveys, requiring completely separate questionnaires, and we did not have the capacity to carry out three different surveys.]**

Each community is unique in dynamics and we try to offer services to all people who come forward and express the need. Once that happens, a plan of action is taken. Many community people know about what the agency is all about and how to access services they need.

The responses to these questions were the collaborative effort of all of our staff. The questionnaire provided the opportunity for a thoughtful and productive discussion at our staff meeting. We are definitely interested in the results of your study.

In my 10 years here, only one client has identified herself as lesbian and none have identified that they are in abusive relationships. My impression is that people do not come out in this community, primarily because of the homophobia.

One of the main concerns of lesbian clients is the smallness of their community. When a relationship ends everyone knows the details, often takes sides, etc. It severely hinders their sense of security.

I would like to see our community of service providers (agencies, counsellors, shelters, doctors, etc.) be "user friendly" to all groups of people. And a society with zero tolerance for racism, abuse, homophobia, and all those things that separate us and make us fear "the other as different".

Unfortunately, it was difficult to answer survey. Have not given services to anyone who is a lesbian. At this time and place I see no problems with any services we have at present except for printed material about abuse because ours is all 'male abuser/female victim' info.

Our agency deals with the general public to provide both financial assistance and child protection concerns. We also refer clients to agencies that can assist our clients in a respectful manner.

Because we deal specifically with women in conflict with the law, unless their sexual orientation is directly related, we often don't know or have a need to ask.

**This survey was carried out by the Saskatchewan Ad Hoc Committee on Abuse in Lesbian Relationships. Email [sass@sk.sympatico.ca](mailto:sass@sk.sympatico.ca) with questions/comments.**