

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Family Service Ontario Lauds Ontario's New Strategy to End Gender-Based Violence, Address Root Causes

March 3, 2018 (Toronto, ON): Family Service Ontario, an association representing Family Service agency members, lauds the March 1, 2018 announcement of the three-year, \$242 million investment for the *It's Never Okay: Ontario's Gender-Based Violence Strategy* from the Ministries of the Status of Women, Community and Social Services and Attorney General.

The long-awaited investment addresses the need for effective, earlier interventions, to provide better supports, to educate the public and to optimize the response of the justice system for everyone affected by violence.

Chair of Family Service Ontario Alan McQuarrie said, "The investment will fill service gaps, provide much needed base support (build capacity) for community-based counselling agencies—like our Family Service agency members—and help fill the diverse needs of survivors of violence and their families."

Family Service Ontario agency members currently provide community-based structured psychotherapy (counselling) to more than 250,000 individuals, couples and families a year, and the investment will allow agencies to expand services they are already offering to help people experiencing domestic violence and decrease wait times for male offenders.

As well, with over 125 community-based storefronts province-wide, Family Service Ontario agency members' locations are visible, accessible and easy to find when and where clients need them with most locations open weeknights and many on Saturdays.

Family Service Ontario agencies members are looking forward to meeting with the ministries in the coming months to discuss how the agencies will support the implementation of the strategy, specifically for Men's Services and Couples Counselling.

Family Service Ontario represents 48 Family Service agencies across the province who serve more than 250,000 Ontarians with mental health, trauma and addiction challenges each year. A core competency of Family Service agencies is offering evidenced-based structured psychotherapy services, provided by highly qualified, graduate level psychotherapists. For more information, visit www.familyserviceontario.org.

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