

## FTP supports Sexual Assault Awareness Month

By Jasen Obermeyer

May is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and Family Transition Place (FTP) is supporting this annual awareness campaign, to help create more support groups and enable others to speak up.

The theme for this year's campaign is "It's Never Okay," part of the Ontario Government's action plan to stop sexual violence and harassment.

According to a statistic from the Ontario Government's website, "It is estimated that one in three Canadian women will experience sexual assault in her adult life," but "Fewer than 10 per cent of sexual assaults are reported to police."

For May, FTP is in partnership with Dufferin Child and Family Services and Headwaters Health Care Centre, providing various services to those needing it, FTP specifically providing counselling services. FTP staff wore purple at the beginning of May to commence awareness, along with wearing purple scarves throughout.

"The month is really important because it allows us to focus on the issue and continue to work together to change gaps that exist in our system," says Lynette Pole-Langdon, FTP's manager of counselling services and community education.

"We need to talk about it. We need to have conversations with our family, with our friends, in our classrooms, workplaces. So we need to be teaching about what healthy and equal relationships look like."

Asked what one can do individually, Ms. Pole-Langdon says it can be as simple as "drawing attention to an inappropriate comment or joke and letting people know the comments aren't acceptable."

She added one can always call FTP's support line, which is available 24/7, at 519-941-HELP (4357).