

Pathways of Care

An Introduction to Pathways of Care for IPV -TBI



Definitions

Pathways of Care

A pathway of care is a structured, coordinated, trauma-informed sequence of services that supports survivors from immediate crisis through long-term healing. Like a roadmap, it links healthcare, legal, housing, and community services to connect survivors to the right supports at the right time. Too often, pathways are fragmented, hard to access, and retraumatizing. A reimagined pathway centers survivor voices, cultural safety, and systemic accountability. Pathways of care unite systems, ease survivor burden, and ensure no one “falls through the cracks.”

What Pathways Include

- Assessment and identification (screening for TBI, safety, mental health)
- Health care (medical and rehabilitation, TBI specialists)
- Community & Social Supports (housing, financial aid, legal help)
- Navigation (guide to help survivors move through systems)
- Collaboration (clear communication and “hand-offs”)
- Cultural Safety (flexible, survivor-centred, identity-affirming)

Why Pathways Matter (Key Challenges for Survivors)

- Head injury is often invisible – symptoms are missed/misdiagnosed (as mental illness or substance use)
- Stigma of IPV – shame and fear prevent disclosures
- Fragmented services – health, shelter, and legal systems often work in silos
- Coordination burden falls on survivors
- Lack of knowledge – limited awareness and training of IPV-related brain injury
- Irregular care trajectory - survivors often access healthcare late, non-linearly, unpredictably
- Barriers to follow up - repeated abuse/ trauma impair survivors’ consistent healthcare engagement
- Result: Survivors may not get treatment, support, or safety planning.

Unique Realities & Barriers

- **Indigenous survivors:** mistrust due to colonization & racism → need community-led, culturally safe care
- **2SLGBTQIA+ survivors:** risk of discrimination → need affirming, inclusive services
- **Newcomers/immigrants:** language & immigration status create barriers → need multilingual, culturally safe supports
- **Mothers:** fear of child removal → need parenting & family-centred supports
- **Mental health & substance use:** face stigma or service refusal → need harm reduction and integrated care



University
of Manitoba



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada



[Click here for
full project reference
list!](#)