

Pathways of Care

An Introduction to Pathways of Care for Partner-Inflicted Traumatic Brain Injury



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. Pathways are often fragmented, difficult to access, and retraumatizing, with navigating these systems described as “almost as scary as the assault itself.” A reimagined pathway centers survivors’ 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 disclosure.
- Fragmented services – health, shelter, and legal systems often work in silos.
- Coordination burden falls on survivors, leaving them to navigate complex systems alone.
- Knowledge gap – 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.

Why Pathways Matter (Key Challenges for Survivors)

- **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.

This document was developed with the assistance of AI (OpenAI’s ChatGPT) for drafting and phrasing, based on our literature review findings.

Scan the QR code to learn more about our project!



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