

Envision classes to feature new workshop format and topics

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Some solid relationship advice and help are just a call away, with Envision Counselling and Support Centre's mini workshops coming up. This year, the format and topics of the workshops are new, addressing a new dimension of the complexity of relationships.

"The topics this year will be assertiveness and boundaries, combined. It involves being able to learn skills to not only stand up for yourself, but to curb some aggression that may come out when we try to do that," said executive director Christa Daku.

An important aspect of the workshops is that there will be more of them, because they're shorter than previous iterations running just in the evening.

"We decided that the workshops are better received if we split them up into mini-workshops," said Daku. "It's easier to come out during the evening for a couple of hours than it is to try and get a day off work, work out child care and all those types of things."

Workshops will continue to focus on, what Daku described as, their main element: meeting the needs of people who are looking to get help in doing so. In 2014, Envision, which used to be a specifically female organization, underwent a significant kind of growth in opening up workshops to men. This trend will continue this year, allowing couples to develop skills together. Often, the skills taught in the workshop build on ones the participants already have, enhancing what they're already capable of. They are structured in a sequence, so Daku recommends that participants attend them all, to get the full range of training offered.

"I think there's a real eagerness for guys to learn how to communicate and to meet the needs in their relationships," said Daku. "They want to break down those stereotypes and gender-gaps that we have in society that we naturally grow up with."

The first three sessions will entail an educational component, focused on what assertiveness looks like. Participants will learn different styles of communication, and will role play them, while facilitators give examples of certain types of behaviour, guiding the activity.

"They'll learn how to effectively deal with situations that they may wonder, or question if they were successful in, in the past," said Daku. "Essentially, it's training all the participants in some new skills."

Daku said the workshops are always popular, drawing in a number of participants from partner agencies, clients, and the general public. A trend among those who register for the event is that they often do so at the last minute, leading to a great deal of late entries.

“We had five people registered once, until the week before, and then we ended up with 18 registrants, which was too many. We have to cap participation,” said Daku. “I think it’s the product of being in a busy society, trying to make time for them.”

Daku notes that another element of late registration is likely people being embarrassed and not wanting to seek the kind of education Envision offers, because it relates to social skills.

“I definitely recommend stepping outside of that fear-box, calling the office and registering. It’s a workshop format, so there’s not self-disclosure and intimate detail sharing. It’s about educating people to be able to go home and improve their interpersonal lives.”

Workshops will begin on Sept. 28, running for the next five or six consecutive Mondays, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. For more information or to register, contact Envision’s Estevan office at 306-637-4004.

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