

## Envision Counseling Accepts Cell Phone Donation From EPS

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*Envision Counseling and Support Center took a donation of cell phones and tablets from the EPS.*

For people trying to escape an abusive relationship, a cell phone can be a life-saving tool. Envision Counseling and Support Center hopes to get some more of those tools into the hands of those who need them thanks to a donation by the Estevan Police Service.

"They gave us a few phones and some tablets that they had there that they'd wiped," said Lynda Rideout, assistant executive director of Envision. "We like to have cell phones on hand that we can give out to clients that are in need, that are in situations where they may be fleeing domestic violence."

Envision also receives phones sometimes from Sasktel's Fresh Start program, but extra phones are always appreciated as Envision often runs out of those phones. In recent months, with COVID-19 gripping the country, domestic violence has been statistically on the rise in Saskatchewan.

"We can only do so much from where we are," Rideout said. "This gives people that are in those situations a little bit of peace of mind and knowing that help is only a call away if they need it."

A call for help via phone may be the only way out many victims of domestic violence or abusive relationships have. Since abusers often keep a very close eye on their victims, a cell phone can, according to Envision, become a lifeline.

"If you're alone in a situation that is precarious, it's giving you some hope," said Rideout, "and knowing that there's help on the other end of that line can be a matter of feeling that security and comfort."

Using the phone to call for help doesn't just mean literally calling or even texting anymore either. To help someone escape their abuser, there are apps for victims of domestic violence that disguise themselves as other apps if the abuser ever gets a hold of their phone. Envision can help people navigate these.

"Our counselors work with them and give them all kinds of tools and support so that they feel confident," said Rideout. "We are so extremely grateful for every donation received. Knowing that the EPS thinks of us in these moments is so heartwarming for us."