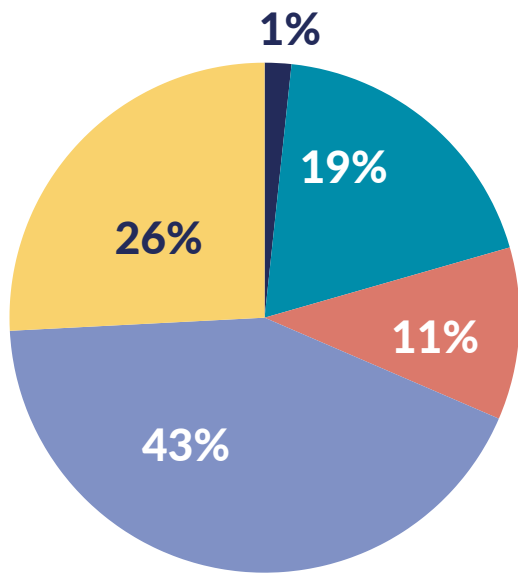


# Supporting Survivors with Disabilities

In 2024, Women's Shelters Canada surveyed frontline workers to learn more about their experiences supporting survivors of gender-based violence with disabilities who have experienced technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV).

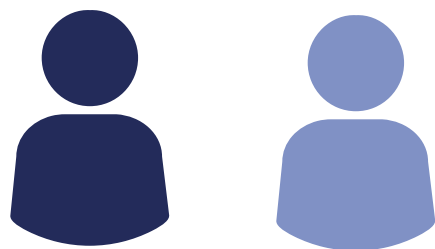


## 179 respondents from shelters across Canada shared their experiences supporting survivors:

- Central Canada
- West Coast
- Prairie Provinces
- Atlantic Provinces
- Northern Territories

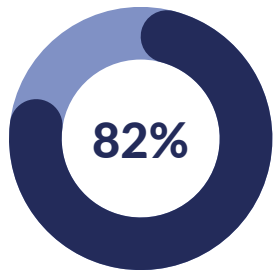
Two-thirds of respondents lived outside of a large city (population of 100,000+), and just over one-quarter of respondents work in a rural, remote, isolated, northern, or on-reserve community.

## Survivors with disabilities experience TFGBV at high rates.

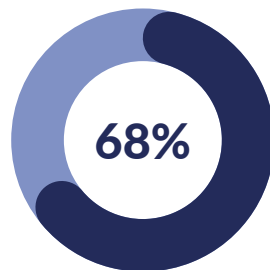


**1 in 2** frontline workers has supported a survivor with a disability who disclosed experiencing TFGBV (n=129).

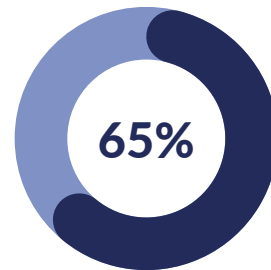
Frontline staff report supporting survivors in cases where abusers are engaging in the following behaviours (n=81):



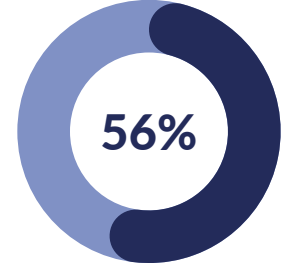
**82%**  
Withholding internet or account access to prevent a survivor from connecting with others/support services



**68%**  
Breaking or altering a survivor's assistive technology so it can't be used

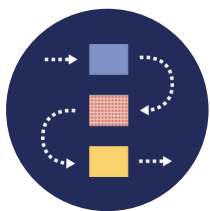


**65%**  
Withholding, hiding, or preventing a survivor from using their assistive technology



**56%**  
Misusing or manipulating a survivor's assistive technology (e.g. impersonating a survivor or intercepting communications)

## Shelter capacity to respond to TFGBV and support survivors with disabilities is limited.



**Less than half** of frontline workers said that their shelter or transition house (TH) can create safety plans that capture the specific needs of survivors with disabilities who use assistive technology.



**Only half** work in a shelter or transition house that has contacts in the community to support survivors who use assistive technology. This might include interpreters, organizations that fund or provide assistive technology, rehabilitative or occupational therapy, or health services.

**"I recently came across a young woman who was visually impaired who came into our Women's Centre. She told me there were no services in our community that could help her with her disability. I feel that this is astonishing that our community had no resources for this young lady to utilize. I find this very concerning and appalling."**  
-frontline worker

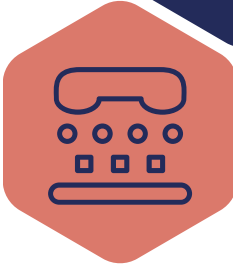
# There is a gap in capacity and training when it comes to supporting survivors with disabilities.



Just **one-fifth** of frontline workers said that there were staff members on their team **trained to assist individuals with disabilities** with technology-related challenges, including TFGBV.



Only **41%** of survey respondents reported that they have some **experience working with assistive technology** or supporting individuals who use assistive technology.



“There were some areas of safety planning in which **we could not mitigate or reduce risk** due to lack of assistive devices and lack of resources to support the individual”  
-frontline worker

## Further training, resource development, and funding are needed to support survivors with disabilities.

The top three areas for further training identified by frontline workers were:

The use of assistive technology in shelter/TH programming

Including assistive technology in safety planning

Integrating and using technology to make organizations accessible

Survey respondents also noted the need for **funds to replace assistive technology**, information about **how to access funding**, and a list of **partner organizations** in their area (n=129).

To support & advocate for survivors with disabilities, the sector needs:

1

Sustained funding for continuous training about TFGBV that addresses supporting survivors with disabilities.

2

Funding to replace assistive technology when survivors leave, including phones, tablets, and accessible, affordable phone plans that meet the minimum standards set by the CRTC.

3

Strategies to promote accessibility in the anti-violence sector, including skills building surrounding technology's role in accessibility.

4

Partnerships across community service sectors (e.g. health services, interpreters, assistive tech specialists) to increase sector capacity to support survivors with disabilities.

For Tech Safety Canada's full library of technology safety resources, visit [techsafety.ca](https://techsafety.ca)

To view our resources on assistive technology and supporting survivors with disabilities, visit <https://techsafety.ca/resources/toolkits/assistive-tech>



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