

Family Transition Place holding weekly Tea & Chat at Mel Lloyd Centre]

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Family Transition Place is giving women in rural Dufferin County the chance to connect and converse in a safe space through a new program.

The new program, called Tea & Chat, is a weekly casual conversation session held at the Mel Lloyd Centre in Shelburne, which gives women living in rural Dufferin County the opportunity to connect and talk in a safe and judgement-free space.

Hosted by FTP's Rural Response Counsellors, Tea & Chat began in late 2022 and recently started up again. The program addresses the barriers women living in rural Dufferin County face and supports them through those barriers.

Over the last three years the barriers that already existed in rural communities only increased, whether that's transportation, isolation, growing up in a small town where everyone talks and knows each other. The availability of services or opportunities for women to connect with one another or with a counsellor, were limited," said Brennan Solecky, director of development and community engagement.

According to Family Transition Place, their Rural Response Program saw 157 women in 2022 through both in-office and mobile outreach.

Structured to allow for causal conversations, the types of discussions at the Tea & Chat sessions will differ each week, depending on who is attending. Some of the conversations may revolve around FTP's housing support, legal support, outreach services or around self-referral and whether the services support their specific needs.

"It's really a safe and judgement free location where people can come and connect, they can dive a bit deeper into what they might be experiencing, or simply just have someone to talk to," said Solecky.

The Tea & Chat sessions will run every Wednesday throughout the month of March, alternating each week between mornings (10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) and evenings (6 p.m. to 7:30 pm.)

No registration is required.

To find out more information about the Rural Response Program and the Tea & Chat sessions, visit www.familytransitionplace.ca.