

QC opens shelter for abuse survivors

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The **Quezon City government** yesterday opened a shelter for survivors of gender-based violence, particularly women, children and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

Mayor Joy Belmonte led the opening of Bahay Kanlungan, which served as the highlight of the city's commemoration of the 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women.

“Our protection center offers different types of support for them, including medical assistance, legal assistance and counseling. But where will they go if they feel that they are not safe in their own homes? That is the objective of Bahay Kanlungan,” she said in Filipino. The newly opened shelter has 60 beds dedicated to women, children and LGBT survivors of abuse and other forms of violence.

It also has an activity area, reading hub and playing room for kids, as well as WiFi and a learning area for those who need to attend online classes.

A livelihood training center will also be established to provide further assistance to those who will stay at the shelter.

According to the city government, survivors may stay at the shelter for up to 12 weeks, depending on the referral of the Quezon City Protection Center.

Belmonte noted that significance of having such as shelter during the current pandemic, citing the reported increase in cases of domestic violence as more people are confined on their homes.

“Since they have limited income sources due to the pandemic, they are forced to stay at home and put up with the pain inflicted by their partners,” added the mayor.

Belmonte said the city government has strengthened its Helpline 122 and trained operators to handle and process concerns regarding violence against women and children.