



Greetings!

Welcome to the **March** issue of the *National Justice Network e-Update*, a publication of the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime. PLEASE SHARE THIS **FREE** NEWSLETTER WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES & FRIENDS OR HAVE THEM SIGN UP TO RECEIVE IT DIRECTLY AT: <http://crcvc.ca/en/newsletter/>.

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THE DIFFICULTY OF BEING BELIEVED AS A VICTIM OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT

Sexual assault and harassment are a recurring problem throughout Canada. According to [SACHA statistics](#), there are 460, 000 sexual assaults in Canada every year; one in three women in Canada will experience some form of sexual violence in her lifetime. [Sam Fazio](#), a 20-year old sexual assault survivor who grew up in the #MeToo era, became a human story behind this hashtag. [According to CBC news](#), Sam was 17 years old when a 16-year-old boy she knew brutally sexually attacked her at a school dance, in a Vancouver bar. Trying to heal from her psychological and physical injuries was just the beginning of her struggle stemming from this traumatic experience. From her first interaction with police officers who asked her what outfit she was wearing that night, to the defense lawyer insinuating that there was mutual consent, the process made her feel completely re-victimized. Eventually, the young offender was convicted and sentenced to three years, however the judge decided he would serve only two weeks in custody and the rest under supervision. The reasoning for this lenient sentence was rehabilitation-based: the judge deemed that the offender was at low-risk to re-offend. This reasoning was almost as shocking as the sentence for Sam, considering that this tends to set a precedence for future offenders.

QUICK LINKS

Chat & Text Support

CRCVC's chat and text support for victims of crime who wish to access information as well as emotional support.

Text support: Our number is 1-(613)-208-0747.

You didn't get a reply right away? That's okay! We can send a text back during our hours of operation.

Chat: Please access through our [website](#). Automatic pop-up when we are online, or you can send an offline message by clicking the chat box on the bottom-right hand side.

For **hours of operation** or other info, please click [here](#).
Hoping to connect with you soon!

Consider supporting our work with victims and survivors by making a donation to the CRCVC and make a difference that counts. Click [here](#) to donate.

Ottawa: Launch of a new toll-free number to help those trapped in the abusive cycle of human trafficking. If you need any help, contact 1-800-292-1168.

Manslaughter Trial: Ex-pastor drugged his wife in order to continue an affair.



Sam quickly realized how difficult it is for victims of sexual assault to be believed, even in this #MeToo era of recognition and respect. Sam decided to go to the court and ask to have the publication ban on her identity lifted, in order for her to be able to share her heinous experience with the public and to openly question why any victim would ever want to come forward with sexual assault allegations, given her experience of re-victimization within the criminal justice system.

Unfortunately, Sam is just one of many. After the hashtag #MeToo went viral, an immense increase in the number of police-reported sexual assaults followed, with a peak in October 2017 (namely a 46% rise from October the previous year). According to the [statistics reported by CBC](#), only 12% of reported sexual assaults result in a conviction and only in 7% of these cases does the attacker serve time in custody. Although the #MeToo movement, by inciting victims of sexual assault or harassment to come forward, is seen as a [watershed moment](#) in the advancement of gender equality, there is still a very long way to go. Anuradha Dugal, director of community initiatives and policy at the Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) Rape Crisis Center in Vancouver, explained to [Global News](#), there is an enormous need for funding for front-line services. Without these funding, the risk exists that women who finally decided to come forward, will be left waiting for support. This, in combination with the traumatizing legal process, could cause additional trauma and suffering for these women.

PRESSURE FOR SENATE TO PICK UP THE PACE ON SEXUAL ASSAULT BILL

There has been much controversy regarding how judges conduct themselves when overseeing sexual assault cases. In 2014, a case that was presided over by the Federal Court Justice Robin Camp was highly criticized by both the public and professionals. Specifically, the case involved a rape of a 19-year-old woman by a man who sexually assaulted her in the bathroom at a house party in Calgary. During the trial,

Funding Announcement:
Challenges remain the same for sexual assault centres.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ottawa Monthly Drop-in Support Group for "Loss to Violence"

The drop-in support group will return in April for family members of homicide victims. This group addresses a gap in the community and offers a place for peers to support each other in healing. Please "like" the CRCVC on our [Facebook page](#) or email crcvc@crcvc.ca in order to keep updated about the time/location of the gathering, as it is subject to change. We welcome all family and loved ones to join us!

When: Thursday, April 25th

Time: 7:15pm-9:15pm

Where: Ottawa, ON

Breaking Free: A Night of Art and Poetry Inspired by Trauma

About: Fundraiser for the Breaking Free Foundation which helps individuals that are dealing with PTSD, addiction and mental health problems. An auction for art pieces inspired by trauma and PTSD will be held. In addition, the event will feature poetry about trauma written by members of the community.

When: April 4, 2019, 7pm-10pm

Where: The Commons
Calgary, 1206 20 Avenue
Southeast, Calgary, T2G 1M8



Federal court justice Robin Camp made numerous inappropriate comments to the victim such as "[Why couldn't you just keep your knees together?](#)". In response, four law professors from Dalhousie University and the University of Calgary wrote an 11-page complaint regarding the judge's conduct. The complaint explained that Justice Camp demonstrated complete disregard for the rape shield provisions in the Criminal Code and the definition of consent to sexual touching. Unfortunately, this case is one of many that undermine public confidence in the justice system. The public expects a high standard from judges and wants to ensure that they act with the highest competence and judgement when dealing with cases.

In hopes of overcoming these issues, former Conservative Leader Rona Ambrose had presented to the House of Commons her private member's bill. [Bill C-337](#) would require anyone who wanted to become a judge to undergo training in sexual assault law. Moreover, this bill would require that the Canadian Judicial Council report the continuation of courses related to sexual assault by judges. The bill would also ensure that the courts provide written decisions in sexual assault cases. It appears that the proposed bill is receiving a lot of support. In fact, in the House of Commons the bill received unanimous support to send the bill to committee. Prime Minister Trudeau stated, "We need to make sure that we are doing a much better job than we are right now and that is why I look forward to parliamentarians having an opportunity to discuss ways in which we are going to be able to improve it, including with the member's bill".

Bill C-337 was passed quickly in the House of Commons and was expected in the Senate. However, the Senate is taking its time to reviewing the bill. In fact, there is yet to be a date set to study the bill. Rona Ambrose stated, "It's very upsetting because there are a lot of women and men who want to see us build more confidence in the justice system". She further highlights the importance of this bill by explaining how judges frequently still rely on stereotypes about women and sexual violence when overseeing sexual assault cases.

Cost: Free [Register here.](#)

Victims of Homicide Western Canadian Conference

About: This conference will bring together victims' families and individuals who will explore the journey and circumstances of those who have been "touched by murder" and have "survived". Guest speakers will also be present.

When: April 28, 2019, 6:00 pm-April 30, 2019, 4:30 pm

Where: DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel West Edmonton, 16615 109 Avenue Northwest, Edmonton, T5P 4K8

Cost: \$0-\$300

[Register here.](#)

2nd Annual Child Advocacy and Resiliency in Alberta Conference

About: A one-day conference on Child Advocacy and Resilience. Training will include a session to discuss the unique and vital work of Child Advocacy Centres, compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma.

When: April 30, 2019, 8:30am-6:30 pm

Where: Sy. John's Cultural Centre, 10611 110 Avenue Northwest, Edmonton, T5H 2Z5

Cost: \$75 [Register here.](#)

National Conference for Victims of Impaired Driving: MADD Canada

About: Over 300 delegates from across Canada come together to share their experiences with impaired



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On a more similar note, Prince Edward Island has introduced that [Bill 110](#) would ensure mandatory sexual law education for aspiring judges. There is a possibility that P.E.I will implement this bill, before the federal government!

MANITOBA'S VICTIM SERVICES ARE CHANGING AFTER TINA FONTAINE TRAGEDY

Since the death of [Tina Fontaine](#), Daphne Penrose, advocate for children and youth, released a 115-page report demanding for changes in both federal and provincial agencies handling cases regarding at-risk youth and children. The report focused on implementing five key recommendations. The recommendations are "improvements of how schools deal with absenteeism, expedited implementation of a youth mental-health strategy, provision of victim-support services for children, development by CFS of a "safe and secure" place for children at risk of sexual exploitation, and the creation of a provincial response protocol to be followed when youth go missing". Moreover, the document described Tina's case and how social-services had failed to help her. The document explained in detail how Tina's casefile was passed around between five different agencies who provided insufficient help. Before she went missing, she had been turned down from two city shelters since there were no beds available. Even when she called Child and Family Service, no useful options were offered. In response, Premier Brian Pallister explains "we need to make sure we do everything in our power to give every Manitoba child opportunity and security". It appears that since the death of Tina Fontaine, there have been [operational changes](#) made to the victim services branch in Manitoba. The Department has acknowledged its mistake of not informing Tina of her eligibility to receive counselling and other benefits. Given these past mistakes, Manitoba's victim services have increased their internal communication and tracking system between organizations. They have also created a template letter that explains what services are available for victims. Moreover, in the recent provincial budget, funding for Victim Services increased by \$325,000. We hope that these recent

driving through reflection sessions and different workshops, all while honouring of the lives lost through impaired driving.

When: April (TBD)

Information: Please visit the [MADD Canada Website](#), email info@madd.ca or call 1-800-665-6233 (ext. 222)

SNAPSHOTS

Report on Safe Places For Women: Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives conducted a report on 26 metro areas across Canada and ranked [Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge as the least \(26th\) safe community for women](#). In support of this allegation, this study showed that this region also had the highest reports of sexual assault and intimate partner violence: 452.9 people per 100,000 in the population, to be exact.

Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge was also ranked lowest for health with women's average life expectancy at 83.7 years; below Canada's average. Between 2012 and 2016 however, men were shown to have excellent health compared to women, displaying that within this region, the gender gap has actually widened.

Nova Scotia: Free Legal Assistance for Sexual



changes within Manitoba's victim services will make services more available to its youth.

QUEBEC LOOKING AT WAYS TO BETTER SUPPORT VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault victims deal with many elements and emotions. They often face stigma, misconceptions that they lie or exaggerate for personal benefit or revenge; they face internalized feelings of shame and guilt, and have to build up their courage to report it to police in the first place.

The Quebec government has assembled representatives from the three opposition parties, to come up with ways to provide better services and support victims of sexual assault. Other committee members include a former judge, a Crown prosecutor, a social worker and law professor.

Included in the group is [Justice Minister Sonia LeBel](#) of the Coalition Avenir Québec, who spent 20 years as a Crown Prosecutor and witnessed first-hand the routine failure of the legal system to handle sexual assault and domestic violence cases. The goal is not to change the Criminal Code but [to improve](#) both the way the laws are applied in Quebec and the process itself. The committee has looked to modify and make it clear during every appearance that the court would aim to centre both female and male victims' needs without infringing on fundamental human rights.

[The committee](#) will have a year to create a plan aimed at restoring confidence in the justice system. This would include creating a special tribunal for sexual assault crimes, which would make it easier for those trying to navigate the justice system after reporting a case of sexual assault. As part of the revamp and update of the current system, the committee aims to provide judges, prosecutors, etc. with the education to understand the complexity of sexual assault and how it affects victims' behaviour.

Assault Complainants During Court Trials

Recently, the Nova Scotia Justice Department has started offering complainants [of sexual assault free legal representation](#) in order to challenge applications to have their past sexual history used as evidence in criminal cases. Ontario has also recently given women the opportunity to have a lawyer present in the room when their sexual history is being disclosed as evidence. In addition, Nova Scotia has joined Ontario to pay for legal representation.

Advocates for victims of sexual assault state that this is a great step forward towards assisting victims. The Coordinator of Women's Centres Connect, Georgia Barnwell, says that this will allow another barrier to come down and encourage women to come forward. In the past, some women have expected to get support from the court system but found reality much different. This expectation, versus the current reality is why victims are so reticent to come forward.

Crown Attorneys have reported an increase in requests by defendants for the complainant's sexual history as evidence. An estimated quarter of all sexual assault cases that go to trial face this request. When Nova Scotia Justice



COURTROOM VICTIM-IMPACT STATEMENTS AS THERAPY

The delivery of a Victim Impact Statement (VIS) in court is assumed to contribute to the [healing and recovery](#) process of victims of violent crime yet its effectiveness to facilitate emotional recovery is [widely debated](#). While legal experts say that VIS (typically delivered at the end of a trial) should not affect a judge's sentencing decision, they play an [important role](#) for victims and their families. The statements provide an opportunity for victims, and those surrounding them, to describe the harm they have suffered.

The delivery of a VIS can have therapeutic benefits and contribute to the emotional healing and recovery process of victims. The effectiveness of a VIS in facilitating recovery is debated, where some argue that they are effective in helping victims to recover from the crime, others suggest that delivering a VIS may even be counterproductive and that it may lead to secondary victimization.

When retired Nova Scotia judge [Nancy Bateman](#) was called to the bench in 1990, victim impact statements were a relatively new part of the Canadian criminal justice system, "...no one really told us how they were to be used, but my understanding was they were to [give the victims a voice](#)".

A topic of healing in VIS could include forgiveness. "Forgiveness is kind of an inner quality of letting go of bitterness, reclaiming one's own life and not having this negative, hostile overlay around a situation," says [Fred Luskin](#), author of the book "Forgive For Good" and a clinical psychologist who specializes in researching the concept of forgiveness. Forgiveness requires remembering the past in a different way, perhaps by incorporating things to be grateful for, acknowledging those who supported you during your grief.

CRITICAL SEX ASSAULT TRAINING ON ONTARIO CAMPUSES

Minister Mark Furey learned about their frequency, he stated "it is unfathomable to think that a female victim survivor of sexual assault would be expected to represent herself in that circumstance".

SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH

THE ROLE OF SELF-OBJECTIFICATION AND WOMEN'S BLAME, SYMPATHY, AND SUPPORT FOR A RAPE VICTIM

This study investigates the nature of women's blame reactions towards survivors of sexual aggression, as well as the potential for sympathy and support. It was expected that increased self-objectification would lead to decreased sympathy and support, and more rape victim blame, and that women who engaged in greater self-objectification would again show greater sympathy and support for the victim. The overall relationship between self-objectification and sympathy and support was driven by body-relevant control beliefs.

When incidents of rape occur, women are highly unlikely to report to the police; only about 2% of victims do. Among victims who choose to share their experience with someone other than the police, the majority of the time the person chosen as a confidante will be a friend. The results of study one are consistent with past literature



There has been a significant debate regarding how educational institutions handle sexual assault complaints. In 2016, due to public pressure, the Ontario government created [Bill 132](#) which required every university to have a sexual assault policy. Each policy would describe how the institution would deal with complaints of sexual assaults. However, [according to Wendy Komiotis](#) the executive director of METRAC, an non-profit organization fighting violence against women, explains that these institutions should be doing better.

Many advocates for victims of sexual assault feel that current policies lack consistencies, are unclear and are not implemented properly. As Samu Pritchard from the Canadian Federation of Students states “we’re happy there’s policy, but we want to see better supports in place”. There have also been issues regarding inconsistencies in policies across campuses. In addition, there appears to be a lack of oversight to ensure that these policies are appropriately implemented.

In response, researchers at Western University are launching a training program for sexual assault across Ontario campuses. The [Responding to Disclosure of Sexual Violence](#) training was created over a period of three years by a team from the University’s Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women and Children. It consists of videos of individuals disclosing and reporting incidents of sexual violence and demonstrates examples of supportive responses. According to Barb MacQuarrie, community director of the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, a negative response to a disclosure of sexual violence, “can do great harm” and can have long-lasting impacts. Around a dozen of schools have already signed up for the training. We are hopeful that this training will ensure greater support for victims as well as prevent sexual violence from occurring.

which has shown that women may engage in a reactive way, or objectifying imagery and media. In these studies, women have been shown to exhibit less tolerance of violent attitudes towards women in general following exposure to media of this kind. Self-objectification remains somewhat unclear based on this study.

Police Reported Violence Among Same-Sex Intimate Partners in Canada (2009-2017)

This Statistics Canada report provides insight on the 2009 to 2017 period on police-reported violence involving same-sex partners that occurred within Canada. It is evident that intimate partner violence is a serious problem throughout Canada due to its severe impacts on its current victims and survivors. Specifically, studies have revealed that individuals who are a part of the LGBT community are at a higher risk for victimization and are a part of the vulnerable segment of the population.

Between 2009 and 2017, there were 22,323 incidents of same-sex intimate partner violence (IPV) which only represents 3% of all police reported IPV. Particularly, during this 9-year period, there were over 2,300 incidents of same-sex IPV reported by the police. When understanding these statistics, it is important to



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note that this number of incidents may not provide an accurate representation of IPV as there could possibly be an underestimation of the true magnitude of IPV in this population group.

In addition, it is clear that the trend analysis for these rates of reporting by police for same-sex IPV in Canada, have declined by 11% throughout this period. This report identifies that there have been many uncertainties by society about the stigma, homophobic reactions, and beliefs that the police will be biased. Thus, the report brings forward new discussions that need to be had in regard to same-sex IPV and call for more research to be done to complete this conversation. [Learn more.](#)