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EMPOWER

Please **share our free newsletter** with your colleagues and friends or sign up to receive it directly by clicking [here](#).

Text: Our number is 613-208-0747

Chat: Please access through our [website](#).

For hours of operation and other info, please [click here](#).

[Hoping to connect with you soon!](#)

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A Message from the Executive Director

Dear Reader,

You may have noticed our new look.

Our new logo and website is a graphic representation of our ongoing commitment to serving people innocently thrown into a legal system that can be cold, confusing, and seems to not always have the best interest of crime victims at heart.

The newly designed and inclusive welcoming website encourages crime victims and survivors to reach out to us for help no matter where they may be on their journey as crime victims.

You deserve to feel **Empowered**.

You deserve to feel **Hopeful**.

You deserve to feel **Safe**.

You deserve to feel **Believed**.

These are the first words you will see when you visit the site at www.crcvc.ca.

They were carefully chosen as they embody the outcome we strive to achieve with all of our clients.

If you know of anyone who may be struggling as a victim of crime – please share and let them know we are here to offer unlimited, unbiased, free support.

In this issue of *Empower*, our first with the new brand, you will find the following stories:

- An article about our newly formed Victim Advisory Committee (VAC) – a group of volunteers from across Canada with lived experience as crime victims.
- A story about our participation in Canada's first Mass Casualty Commission, which is reviewing and will recommend changes regarding how Canada deals with mass casualties, such as the killings in Nova Scotia in April 2020.
- An audio link to an interview with yours truly on CityNews with Sam Laprade. We talk about the Paul Bernardo parole hearing and the effects that these hearings have on crime victims.
- Three new projects:
 - Safer + Stronger Grants | Subventions: Plus en sécurité et plus fortes through the Canadian Women's Foundation.
 - Helping Ottawa's elderly victims of homicide, fraud, and elder abuse.
 - Improving Crime Victim Assistance Programs to Support Victims Experiencing Crime Abroad

Thank you for subscribing to our newsletter and thank you for supporting crime victims. If you haven't already, please consider donating today. Every dollar you give goes directly to services for our clients.

Aline Vlasceanu
Executive Director

Donate Now

Upcoming Events



Victim Services and Vicarious Resilience Research Conference 2021

We are happy to announce our third annual partnership event alongside the Victimology Research Centre at Algonquin College on vicarious resilience on November 19th!

The registration page also includes a link to the new research survey on vicarious resilience in service providers working with victims or survivors of violence. We have a great keynote speaker, followed by breakout discussions. **Join us!**

Sign Up Here

CRCVC'S Loss to Violence Support group is going NATIONAL

For Victims and Survivors of Crime Week 2021 and in recognition of this year's theme, "The Power of Collaboration" the CRCVC's Loss to Violence support group will be launching nationally on Thursday, November 18th. This means we will be able to connect with and support more survivors from across the country.

The group is intended for family members, friends and close loved ones of homicide victims and is intended to offer peer support to those dealing with violent loss. Please RSVP by phone at 1-877-232-2610 or via email at crcvc@crcvc.ca. English only. From 6:30 to 8:30 pm EST.

Funded by the Department of Justice for Victims and Survivors of Crime Week 2021.

Email Us

IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF CRIME AND THE MEDIA CALLS, WHAT DO YOU DO?

The CRCVC Media Guide for Victims and Survivors of Crime helps you work effectively with the media. It also EMPOWERS you to say no!



Media Guide Orders

Our newest publication, *If The Media Calls: A Guide for Crime Victims and Survivors* is now available! The guide can be accessed in English or French and our [order form](#) is open now. You can order up to 200 copies of the *If the Media Calls: A Guide for Crime Victims & Survivors* booklet FREE OF CHARGE from CRCVC. The booklets will be mailed to you via post. No shipping confirmation will be sent.

If you wish to order more than 200 booklets or have any questions or concerns, you may contact us at crcvc@crcvc.ca or 1-877-232-2610.

Please note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some delays may be incurred. We look forward to hearing your [feedback!](#)

Spotlight on Research

Victim Services and Vicarious Resilience

The Victim Services and Vicarious Resilience research project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). It is a three-year project to learn more about survivor resilience from the perspective of victim service providers, as well as learn more about service provider well-being. We hope to hear from victim service providers across Canada and we are so thankful for your willingness to be involved!



[English Survey](#)

[French Survey](#)

New Projects

Safer + Stronger Grants | Subventions: Plus en sécurité et plus fortes through the Canadian Women's Foundation

Thanks to the Canadian Women's Foundation through the Safer + Stronger grant, the CRCVC can raise awareness and support for anyone experiencing gender-based violence. Look for a new [publication](#) coming soon, on our newly updated and more accessible website which was also possible thanks to this funding! To learn more, visit the "[Projects](#)" section on our website.

Helping Ottawa's elderly victims of homicide, fraud, and elder abuse

Ottawa's senior population is expected to double by the year 2031. As the population ages, support must increase to ensure the health and safety of people over the age of 65. With the rise in the population comes a potential rise in fraud, scams, and abuse against the elderly population. Senior citizens are targets for online, phone, and in-personal financial scams, including romance scams. Unfortunately, once they are dumped, they may not want to file a police report or, even if they do, they do not always have the information they need as a victim.

The Helping Ottawa's elderly victims of homicide, fraud, and elder abuse project will help seniors and their families who have fallen victim to crime and now need to understand their rights,

recourse and provide the resources available to them once they have entered the labyrinth of the legal system. This project will provide clear, concise, and supportive assistance as seniors navigate their way back to a feeling of safety and security in their homes and neighbourhoods. CRCVC will provide training sessions at senior homes, companion centers, apartments with senior populations as well as churches. This project will provide seniors with the information and tools they need to help them get their lives back on track. CRCVC will engage seniors and provide support while expanding awareness of elder abuse within the Greater Ottawa Region.

Learn more [here](#).

Improving Crime Victim Assistance Programs to Support Victims Experiencing Crime Abroad

The CRCVC will examine the victim assistance programs in the United States and Canada. Specifically, the aid that is given to their own citizens, their citizens victimized abroad, as well as foreigners victimized within their own countries. It will look at the laws and regulations that governments have in place and that promise to provide assistance and support to these victims. It will also look into possible ways to finance such programs.

The victim assistance programs will be researched specifically for the following facets:

1. Immediate and practical medical support as well as interpretation services as well as emotional support;
2. Legal assistance and provision of system navigators;
3. Reimbursement of crime-related expenses
4. Bilateral cooperation of agencies in the two countries (where the person was victimized and their home country) to provide fulsome and continuous support, especially after repatriation or if travel is necessary between the two).

To get more updates about this project, visit our website [here](#).

This project is possible thanks to the generosity of the [Korean Institute of Criminology and Justice](#).

Victims Advisory Committee – Helping Canadian Crime Victims Through Lived Experience

Victims and survivors of crime live a unique experience. Before and until someone is victimized, it can be difficult for them to comprehend the challenges crime victims face.

The newly formed CRCVC Victims Advisory Committee (VAC) is made up of Canadian victims and survivors of crime. Each volunteer member of the committee brings their own lived experience to help other victims.



The VAC provides input on substantive issues being worked on at CRCVC while also providing advice and recommendations on institutional, governmental, and cultural change as seen through the eyes of victims.

The committee offers a proactive and responsive voice by providing advice to the CRCVC as well as:

- Providing a voice for any Canadian who is a victim or survivor of a crime in Canada and abroad;
- Providing advice to ensure all levels of Government are accountable for their responses to the needs of Canadian victims and survivors of crime;
- Advising on specific reforms and initiatives that benefit all victims and survivors;
- Ensuring any recommendations recognize and reflect Canada's diverse population;
- Providing advice on the development of CRCVC programs and initiatives;
- Advising on written submissions to all levels of Government; and
- Using their individual and collective influence to affect positive change.

The CRCVC would like to thank the inaugural committee members and we look forward to receiving and following their guidance in support of all Canadian crime victims.

You can learn more about the [VAC in the About Us section](#) of the new website.

[Learn More](#)

Mass Killings in Canada – CRCVC Participating in Mass Casualty Commission

On April 19, 2020, sixteen people, including one RCMP officer, were killed by a lone gunman in Portapique, Nova Scotia.

Two years earlier, in 2018, a gunman in Fredericton, New Brunswick murdered two police officers and two civilians in a shooting spree.

That same year a cold-blooded killer drove a rented van onto a crowded Toronto sidewalk, killing ten and injuring sixteen others.

On a cold December 6 day in 1989, 14 women in an engineering class at Ecole Polytechnique, were shot

by a man wielding a semi-automatic rifle.

Mass killings have significant and everlasting detrimental effects on victims and their families. They also impact entire communities where they occur and people who live outside the community.

The Mass Casualty Commission, formed in early 2021, will examine the Portapique massacre in detail and examine related issues including:

- The role of gender-based and intimate partner violence
- Access to firearms
- Prior interactions and relationship of the perpetrator with the police and social services
- Police actions
- Communications with the public during and after the event
- Communications between and within law enforcement agencies and other services
- Police policies, procedures, and training

The Mass Casualty Commission will issue its final report in November 2022 and will use its findings to present lessons learned and to make recommendations that could help in the prevention and response to similar incidents in the future.

The CRCVC is proud to be chosen as one of the organizations lending guidance to the Commission. Learn more [here](#).

Mass Casualty Commission

Parole Hearings for Convicted Killers: Detrimental to Victims and Homicide Survivors

On Tuesday, June 22, convicted killer Paul Bernardo was denied parole for the second time for the murders of Kristin French and Leslie Mahaffy.

“Once again, Bernardo’s desires are inflicted on us as he inserts himself into our lives again, forcing his horrors and terrifying memories upon us,” Leslie’s mother Debbie Mahaffy said in a statement read by lawyer Tim Danson. “What does resting in peace mean when you have to relive these horrors every two or so years for the rest of our lives?” said [Global News](#).

The Parole Board of Canada allows offenders the right to parole hearings after they serve a portion of their sentence. This applies to every offender, no matter how heinous their crime. This right places undue stress on survivors as they are forced to relive the crime.

“We work with survivors of homicide throughout all stages of the crime, including attending parole board hearings,” says CRCVC Executive Director, Aline Vlasceanu. “I can hear and feel the tension and terror in their voices as they prepare for the hearing of the person who has killed their loved one. It’s tragic.”

[Listen to Aline’s interview](#) about parole hearings and the Bernardo case with CityNEWS Ottawa’s Sam Laprade.

Aline’s Interview with CityNEWS Ottawa

Canadian Victims Bill of Rights – Review Update – Letter to Government Leaders

Before Canada’s federal election, and at the urging of two petitions, government policymakers gathered to answer CRCVC’s call for a review of the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights.

CRCVC staff attended the hearings online, listening to Government leaders discuss the merits of reviewing the bill – even though Canadians were promised a review five years after the original bill. Once the election was called, the hearings stopped. This prompted CRCVC to write the leaders of the major parties with three key questions;

1. Will you and your party commit to a comprehensive review of the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and a strategic plan for its implementation?
2. Will you and your party increase support for those suffering in the Shadow Pandemic of domestic violence by legislating “coercive control” into the Criminal Code and adopting measures to prevent this type of gender-based violence?
3. Will you authorize a more independent Office for the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime by allowing it to provide oversight, guidance, and accountability by directly reporting to Parliament and being given the power to compel information and responses of federal departments and agencies?

Only one party responded.

If you find this lack of response unacceptable, contact your MP and ask them the same questions. Our voices are stronger together.

Read our letter to government leaders [here](#).

Know Your Rights

Canadian Victims Bill of Rights Act



Justice for Survivor of Sexual Assault

Edward "Eddie" Ekiyor was charged with overcoming resistance to commit an offence, kidnapping, and sexual assault after a night out drinking in Ottawa's ByWard Market. Traces of the date rape drug Gamma-hydroxybutyrate, commonly known as GHB, were found in the victim's system but Ekiyor states that it was a consensual sexual encounter. Justice Trevor Brown has stated that there was not enough substantial evidence that Ekiyor was the one who had drugged the victim. He states that his decision was "not in any way meant to blame or fault" the victim but made the final decision to acquit Ekiyor of all charges.

"I don't think I've spoken to a single woman that hasn't been appalled, shocked, outraged, angered by the decision," said CRCVC Executive Director, Aline Vlasceanu.

Community organizations from across the city are outraged, questioning the legitimacy of this sexual assault ruling and calling for an appeal. "The verdict from Justice Trevor Brown ... was shocking, and is just the latest example of why survivors have little to no faith in the justice system." Vlasceanu told the [Toronto Sun](#) on Friday morning.

The CRCVC, alongside Ottawa Victim Services and the Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women, started a [letter-writing campaign](#) directed at Doug Downey, the Attorney General of Ontario and the Head Crown Attorney of Ottawa, Brian Holowka as well his Deputy Crown Attorneys, Mark Holmes and Dallas Mack demanding the case be appealed. "An appeal needs to be made 30 days from the day of the decision," Vlasceanu said. You can read the media statement [here](#).

On October 28, Vlasceanu spoke on CBC's *All in a Day with Alan Neal*. She pointed out the repercussions that this decision to acquit Edward "Eddie" Ekiyor will have on future victims of sexual assault. She stated, "Victim-blaming is unfair and dangerous. It causes survivors to kind of question whether the violence is their own fault." To listen to the whole interview, click [here](#).

Vlasceanu was also on CityNews' *The Sam Laprade Show*. You can listen to it [here](#) (the interview starts at minute 11).

As of yet, there has been no word from any of the parties. The deadline for the appeal has passed.

You've Read This Far - Will You Consider Support?

On behalf of the clients we serve, we humbly ask you to consider a donation of whatever you can. \$150 offers two hours of support for our clients. They rely on us. We rely on people like you who have a vested interest in helping victims of crime.

In the words of our clients:

"Hope is probably even more powerful than laughter: rest assured that you have given me the biggest dose of hope I've had in a very, very long time. It's really easy to keep the mentality of being a victim and convince yourself that it's a burden you must bear yourself forever. Then boom! All of a sudden, you find lovely people willing to help, and climbing out of that lonely place feels doable. It's such a nice feeling."

- Victim of terrorism

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