



[How We Help](#)

[About Us](#)

[Resources](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Donate Now](#)



## EMPOWER

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

We respectfully acknowledge the CRCVC office is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the Omàmiwininiwag (Algonquin peoples) Nation.

**Text:** Our number is 613-208-0747

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

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

[Donate Now](#)

### Message from the Executive Director

For victims of crime, it can seem like offenders get more help within Canada's legal system than their victims.

Victims can feel confused, frustrated, and angry. They may experience physical, psychological, and financial damages or a combination of all three.

While every crime victim has a unique and personal story, there are four common reactions to victimization:

- Shock, anger, fear, helplessness, disbelief, and guilt;
- A period of disorganization manifested through depression, guilt, fear, and a loss of confidence or self-esteem;
- Reconstruction and acceptance follow next on the long road to recovery; and
- Normalization and adjustment to the fact you were victimized.

The CRCVC places clients at the center of all of our work.

Our team devotes time and resources to helping clients work through the system and hopefully relieve the inherent stress that comes from being an innocent victim of crime.

In this issue of **EMPOWER**, we focus on victims and how we support the more than 1,800 people who contact us every year.

If you would like to join us in support, please visit our website at [www.crcvc.ca/donate](http://www.crcvc.ca/donate) to give what you can. Every donation is another step forward for a victim of crime.

Thank you,

P.S., If you'd like to learn more about the challenges victims face, please read our report "[The Impact of Victimization](#)".

---

## The Canadian Victim Bill of Rights

The [Canadian Victim Bill of Rights](#) (CVBR) puts the onus on victims to know, understand, and assert their rights. As discussed in this [CBC News article](#), victims are not automatically told that they have the right to receive information on their case. Instead, victims must specifically ask for it.

The CRCVC works with victims to inform them of their rights, encourage them to exercise those rights and make sure that they are upheld throughout the criminal justice process.

We will be outlining each right under the CVBR in detail along with how they correlate with the Parole Board of Canada (PBC) and Correctional Service Canada (CSC). We will also be explaining what the CRCVC can do for victims of crime within each right.



### *The right to information*

As per the CVBR, victims have the right to receive information about the justice system and the services and programs available to them. They also have the right to obtain specific information on the progress of their case, including information on the investigation, prosecution, and sentencing of the person who harmed them.

Victims registered with the PBC or CSC have the right to obtain information regarding their offender's status. This includes their progress in the correctional plan, their release date with the destination and conditions, copies of PBC decisions, and victim-offender mediation services.

If a victim requests it, the PBC or CSC can share information such as the offender's age, the location of the penitentiary in which the sentence is being served, the date of any hearing for a detention review, and any conditions attached to the offender's release.

In this case, the victim has the right to ask for representation, in which a person will receive notifications from CSC or PBC on their behalf. A victim can choose to have the CRCVC represent them with these two agencies. Through this service, the CRCVC can receive CSC and PBC notifications on the victim's behalf and pass them along in the way in which they prefer i.e. receive a call, fax, via post etc.

Victims also have the right to know about the offender's progress by viewing their Correctional Progress Plan Report (CPPR). Unfortunately, they do not automatically get this if they register as a victim; victims must proactively ask for this. The CRCVC can explain all of the information victims can receive as well as explain what each notification means, in plain language.

### *The right to protection*

The [CVBR](#) states that victims have the right to have their security and privacy considered at all stages of a criminal justice process and to have reasonable and necessary protection from intimidation and retaliation.

Victims are given the right to have their security and privacy considered by criminal justice personnel and to ask the court their identity not be released to the public, through a [publication ban](#).

For victims submitting a victim statement to the PBC or CSC, they may ask the PBC to impose reasonable and necessary conditions such as no-contact orders or geographic limitations on the offender. While victims have the right to ask for these restrictions for their own safety and protection, it cannot be guaranteed.

The CRCVC helps to write victim impact statements for victims of crime to be submitted to CSC and the PBC. By writing victim impact statements, the CRCVC helps victims by explaining the impact of the crime and including requests for no-contact orders and geographical limitations if the victim feels it is necessary for their safety.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, hearings continue to be done remotely via teleconferencing. With this format, victims are able to keep their cameras off which may allow for more privacy and comfort. It is important to note that hearings may no longer be offered virtually once in-person hearings resume. To learn more about the details of attending hearings, visit "[The right to participation](#)" section below.

According to [Public Safety Canada](#), offenders do not have the right to be notified if a victim registers with CSC or the PBC. [The Corrections and Conditional Release Act](#) (CCRA) requires that the PBC and CSC disclose to the offender any information the victim has provided that will be considered in the making of a decision by the CSC or PBC. The personal information of the victim is not shared with the offender for the protection of the victim.

The PBC is required to take reasonable steps to let victims know if the offender's conditions are removed

or changed. The victim also has the right to be provided with a current photograph of the offender before their release, unless it poses a risk to public safety.

### *The right to participation*

The CVBR states that victims have the right to present victim impact statements in court, as well as the right to express their views about decisions that affect their rights.

By registering with the PBC or CSC, victims are able to request information about the dates of any hearings for detention review purposes, information regarding whether or not the offender has appealed a decision of the Parole Board, as well as the outcome of those hearings. Registered victims can apply to receive financial assistance to attend these hearings via [the Victims Fund through Justice Canada](#). This assistance applies to both the victim and their designated support person and covers travel, hotel, and meal expenses. Due to pandemic restrictions hearings are being done remotely via teleconference and videoconference.

Regardless, victims wishing to attend any parole hearing must complete a [“request to observe a hearing”](#) form and will be informed of the options available for their participation before their hearing date. When attending via the virtual options, victims remain able to watch the hearing and present their statements for Board consideration.

If victims do not wish to attend the hearings at all, they can submit their statements to the Board by audio or video recording, request to listen to the audio recording of hearings, or request a copy of the PBC’s written decision.

CRCVC can help ensure relevant information is provided by the victim, including making sure the statement is provided on time or working to request an extension if need be. CRCVC can also explain the entire process and why things are done a certain way. It’s important to note that while registration is kept private from the offender, offenders do get copies of statements that victims submit.

Victims can also submit statements at any time, regardless if there is an upcoming hearing.

While at the hearing, victims are also able to designate a support person to attend the Board hearing with them and read their statement on their behalf. Regardless of whether or not they submit something or if they wish to read it, they are still able to attend.

Furthermore, victim-offender mediation services are coordinated by the CSC through the [Restorative Opportunities Program](#), providing victims with a chance to tell their stories, communicate with the offender who harmed them and hold them accountable. The program is based on Restorative Justice principles and values which seek to address the harm caused by crime by focusing on the needs and issues of the people affected, as defined by them. Restorative Opportunities processes are led by professional mediators and participation is voluntary for everyone concerned.

Victims do not need to attend face-to-face meetings; they can send written correspondence or a video message. CRCVC is also able to intervene and help navigate this process.

### *The right to restitution*

Under the CVBR, victims have the right to have the court consider making a restitution order, and have an unpaid restitution order enforced through a civil court.

Victims can describe the losses they have suffered due to the crime committed against them, and restitution orders must be considered for all offences. An offender’s ability to pay is not a factor when courts order restitution. Restitution can be ordered for many different forms of financial loss including damaged or lost property due to the crime, physical injury or psychological harm due to the crime, costs for temporary housing, food, childcare, and transportation due to moving out of the offender’s household, and costs that victims of identity theft paid to re-establish their identity and correct their credit history and ratings.

According to the [Public Prosecution Service of Canada](#), victims do not have the standing to request restitution. They must go through Crown counsel to make their request. If a victim has not been given the opportunity to make this request, the court may adjourn sentencing to allow the victim to do so.

There is a [standard form](#) available to help victims claim their losses. The amounts claimed must be easy to calculate and based on records of actual financial loss. The amount claimed can only include losses up to the date that the offender is sentenced, while future losses cannot be included.

Restitution orders may be given for the total or partial amount of the loss, and cannot include amounts for a victim’s pain and suffering.

Unfortunately, there is no formal tracking Canada-wide to see how many restitution orders are actually enforced and it varies vastly by province.

**CRCVC can help with this entire process.**

---

## **Tips and insights on working with survivors of sexual abuse**

Many reporters are unaware of the potential to re-traumatize a survivor of sexual assault in their work. A trauma-informed approach to interviews can promote treating survivors with the dignity and respect they deserve.

In a [Foreign Press article](#), Jo Healy highlights trauma-informed ways in which you can interview survivors of sexual assault.

It is crucial to consider the range of emotions the survivor can be feeling at the time of the interview. Thus, be aware that the survivor may be experiencing shame, guilt, disbelief, stigma, fear, trust, anger, or anxiety while talking with them. By considering these emotions, you are showing the survivor that their feelings come first.

Furthermore, it is important to prepare before the interview. Doing research and knowing details will signal

a level of respect to the survivor, thus gaining their trust. For example, knowing the proper terminology in regard to what the person prefers to be called is important. Do they prefer victims or survivors, or neither?

Making sure to offer victims and survivors choices and then respecting those choices is crucial. This can be something as simple as choosing where they'd like to sit.

During the interview, do not try to fix or patronize them, but rather treat them with dignity and empathy. For example, avoid asking them to describe the details of the crime as it can be personal and painful to them. Maintain open and non-threatening body language by sitting at the same level as them.

These are just a few of many tips on how to work with survivors. The CRCVC emphasizes using a victim-centred, trauma-informed approach when interacting with all victims and survivors and we encourage you to adopt a similar style through these tips and insights.

Interviews with survivors of sexual abuse are impactful not only on them but also on you. Be mindful of your own vulnerabilities when working with victims and survivors.

---

## Experts investigating Ontario's domestic violence deaths say they need new perspectives

Domestic violence experts are looking for new approaches to preventing future cases of intimate partner violence.

Since its formation in 2003, the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee (DVDRC) has stepped in every time a person is killed by a former or current partner in Ontario. Committee members are responsible for examining the death, identifying risk factors and patterns associated with intimate partner violence, and providing recommendations for prevention.

In a [Toronto Star article](#), DVDRC chair Prabhu Rajan calls domestic violence deaths in Ontario "an epidemic". Over 470 deaths have been examined by the committee, with 71% of cases having a history of domestic violence and 67% involving an actual or pending separation. Rajan is most concerned that "the numbers aren't changing" and is hoping to improve the transparency, diversity, and effectiveness of the DVDRC.

That improvement begins with a call for 15 new committee members to better reflect the racial, cultural, and geographical diversity in Ontario. Members are typically individuals working in the justice system, health care workers, and academics specializing in intimate partner violence. Rajan hopes that including front-line workers and advocacy groups will bring about "novel and aspirational" recommendations that help guide police and government agencies in combatting IPV.

Moving forward, the committee will begin to examine groups of cases to identify patterns and expand its mandate to cover cases where intimate partner violence was a factor but the direct cause of death. The way that they communicate their findings and raise public awareness about the warning signs of intimate partner violence will be re-evaluated as well.

## Events

### Monthly Homicide Support Group

Our newly renamed **Homicide Support Group** (formerly known as the "Loss to Violence Support Group") started in 2018 due to the lack of formal support for survivors of homicide across Canada. As the need became more apparent, the group quickly turned into a virtual, national support group.

**Our next session will be on Thursday, April 28th, at 6:30pm EST.**

If you have lost someone to homicide or know someone who you think may benefit from the monthly Homicide Support Group, [please visit the CRCVC web page for registration information.](#)

If you wish to sponsor or support the group through a financial gift, please contact our Director, Development Bernie Forestell at [bernard@crcvc.ca](mailto:bernard@crcvc.ca) or [visit here to make a donation.](#)



To RSVP, email us at [crcvc@crcvc.ca](mailto:crcvc@crcvc.ca) or call us at 1-877-232-2610.

*Virtual. English only.*

[Donate Today](#)

## Research Corner

[Psychological well-being of](#)

[Victimization of gay and heterosexual](#)

## adult family members bereaved by illness or homicide

Professor Pascale Brillon (Ph.D.) of the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQÀM) is currently conducting a [research project](#) to better understand the factors that influence the well-being of adult family members bereaved by illness or homicide.

Your participation will provide you with the opportunity to reflect upon your own personal development and life experiences. Participation is confidential and anonymous.

## men: a study of post-aggression distress factors

A [research project](#) that aims to better understand the factors that influence the distress of men who have experienced physical or sexual assault is also currently being led by Professor Pascale Brillon. This study aims to identify the risk and protective factors for the psychological well-being of men victims of physical or sexual aggression.

*Both studies are available in French or English and will be open until September 2022.*

---

[Donate Today](#)

Charitable Registration #13552 8701 RR0001

