

UPCOMING EVENTS



Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®

Sunday, May 25, 2014 | 2-4pm
Spirit (Centennial) Square

All funds raised from this event will go directly towards Victoria Sexual Assault Centre's commitment to ending sexualized violence through advocacy, counselling, empowerment and prevention education.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

Visit www.walkamilevictoria.com

Triathlon of Compassion

Sunday, June 29th | Esquimalt Recreation Centre.

Proudly brought to you by **Human Powered Racing**. Swim, bike, run to support VSAC. Everyone welcome!
Register to race at www.triofcompassion.com

Victoria Goddess Run

Sunday, June 1, 2014

The Victoria Goddess Run is a women's run and walk. There are 3 distances to choose from: RED BARN MARKET Half Marathon, WESTHILLS 10k, & BMO 5k.

VSAC is proud to be one of three partner charities to receive five dollars from every registration!

Register now: www.victoriagoddess.com

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & GRANT PROVIDERS

Ministry of Justice, Province of BC, Community Gaming Grant – Project Respect: School-based workshops, Rhizome Youth-led Social Action Project, Youth-focused Counsellor

Provincial Employees Community Services Fund – Crisis and Information Line, Information Meetings, Workshops for Supporters

United Way of Greater Victoria – Project Respect: School-based workshop, Rhizome Youth-led Social Action Project

Canadian Women's Foundation – Project Respect: Teen Healthy Relationships Project

Telus Community Fund – Project Respect: Teen Healthy Relationships Project

The Harweg Foundation – General Fund

Vancouver Foundation – Trans* Inclusion and Accessibility to Sexual Assault Services

Thrifty's Smile Card – Updating communications and promotional materials



Project Respect: Three members of the Rhizome youth social action team (Second from Left: Eunice Malchuk-Rasmussen, Dani Recalma, and Paloma Ponti) along with Prevention Coordinator Kingsley Strudwick (Right), accept the Youth Leadership Award from the BC Minister for Justice, Suzanne Anton (Left) at the Crime Prevention and Community Safety Awards in November, 2013.

To find out more about Project Respect: www.yesmeansyes.com

Make a gift of Securities!

VWSAC is now able to accept gifts of securities.

Gifting securities is the most tax efficient way to make a charitable donation and a great way for donors to make a greater impact with their gift.

Call Lenore at 250-383-5545 ext. 115 for more information.

Believe in our work? Want to see survivors of sexualized violence continue to receive the support they need? Make a donation today! Visit www.vwsac.com or call 250-383-5545.



@Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre
@Project Respect - WSAC
@Trans and Gender Variant Inclusion at VSAC



@VictoriaWSAC
@projRespect
@inclusiveVSAC

spring
2014

OUR MISSION

The Women's Sexual Assault Centre is a feminist organization committed to ending sexualized violence through healing, education, and prevention. We are dedicated to supporting women and all trans* survivors of sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse, through advocacy, counselling, and empowerment.

WSAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Heidi Exner, Co-Chair
Sean Dhillon, Co-Chair

Kelly Branchi
Kim Brown
Julia Denley
Yvonne Haist
Debra Scarfone

Makenna Rielly,
Executive Director



Women's Sexual Assault Centre

healing, education & prevention

WORKING TOGETHER



The key to providing the best support to survivors of sexual assault is community collaboration. For the past twenty-two years, the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC), Island Health, and Capital Region District policing agencies, have worked together to provide a multi-disciplinary, comprehensive, compassionate and consistent approach to the handling of urgent sexual assault cases (13 years and over).

Previous to 1992, when a survivor arrived at the hospital, no procedure existed to provide a coordinated response by the medical professionals involved, police, and VSAC. Because of lack of coordination and communication, very few survivors were made aware of the emotional support and follow-up services available through VSAC.

Both hospital and VSAC staff recognized the need for change. In a collaborative effort with police, they developed a coordinated response to sexual assaults: the **Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)**. Over the years, community support for SART has grown. SART is now overseen by **Team Victoria**, a committee of invested partner members who work together to ensure our collective response meets the needs of survivors.

Today we are able to provide a holistic response to trauma survivors. We work together by joining our expertise and knowledge to support our community. We thank you for supporting our efforts.

Makenna Rielly

Makenna Rielly, MA
Executive Director
Victoria Sexual Assault Centre

IMPORTANT UPDATE:

We are in the process of legally changing our name from Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre to **Victoria Sexual Assault Centre**. We will keep you informed as we navigate this process.

"Research shows that when a survivor receives compassionate support during the initial response, it has a significant impact on their healing"

Who is on the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)? The Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) is made up of Forensic Nurse Examiners (FNE), Physicians, Emergency Room Nurses, Municipal/RCMP/Military/NIS Police Officers as well as staff and volunteer support workers from the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC).

Together, the SART team works to ensure that survivors of a recent sexual assault are provided with a compassionate and comprehensive response where all parties collaborate in the best interest of the survivor. The SART team is there to let the survivor know that they are in control, that they have support and that they are not alone.

Please read on and meet some members of this dedicated team.

Q&A with Kelly Branchi

(BScN, Forensic Nurse Examiner (FNE) Clinical Nurse Leader, Emergency; SANE Program Coordinator; VSAC Board of Directors)

As a Forensic Nurse Examiner, some may say you have an incredibly difficult job. Do you like your work? I couldn't imagine doing anything else. It's more of a passion than a job.

You also sit on the board of directors. What does it mean to you to help steward the agency? When I joined

the board I really wanted to understand what happened to survivors after they left the hospital, and it felt important to me to build a relationship with the Centre, since we work so closely together. This is an exciting time to be on the board. We've taken great strides as an organization to become more trans* inclusive, and it feels exciting to be part of this process. As forensic nurses, this is extremely important learning for us, and I'm seeing that across the country forensic nurses are embracing trans* inclusion, it's one way we provide the best patient care possible.

As one of VSAC's most active members of the Board of Directors Gratitude Committee (a committee formed specifically to work on thanking donors), what would you like donors to know? I wish every donor could come to the Centre and see the quilt survivors made, so you could see how important you are. The Centre belongs to the community, because you keep it thriving. The goal of the gratitude committee is to help donors feel part of our community. In our society, I don't think we say thank you enough. And small donations deserve just as much thanks as large ones. I love to write handwritten cards, I want donors to feel special.

What do you think VSAC needs most to keep thriving?

Resources are needed to provide continuous counselling without a waitlist. Why should someone have to wait for support and counselling?

Why do you think VSAC is needed? VSAC helps people re-build their life after what can be a very traumatic experience. VSAC helps bring people out of darkness and back into the light.

Q&A with Jan Malinosky

(Detective, Victoria Police Department, Special Victims Unit)

Tell me about your job? I investigate all sexual related offences including historical and current sex assaults. We also investigate all child physical and sexual assaults. There is no typical day, every day is different and it's one of the reasons I love my work.

How are you connected to our work at VSAC? When survivors wish to report a recent or historic assault, often I am the person who they report to. I'm also part of Team Victoria* and I help train the SART volunteer support workers – which is part of the job I really enjoy.

What's the hardest part of your job? Not being able to deliver the bad guy to jail on conviction. The nature of the criminal justice system is that convictions can be difficult. I am really careful to prepare survivors for all possibilities. I'm honest about the limitations but it doesn't make it any easier.

Do survivors have to report to police? No, they don't. But I've noticed that for survivors who feel good about the reporting process it can be part of the healing process. Sometimes just talking to the police can help. I know that survivors trust me and trust that I will do the best of my ability, that's why I am always honest about what I can and can't do.

From your perspective, what value does VSAC bring to the community? The VSAC brings amazing value to the community. My job is impossible without the Centre. The Centre is excellent in assisting survivors who are on the fence about reporting to police, the support workers help survivors make educated decisions about what to do. Most importantly, when we don't meet the threshold for conviction, the Centre gives survivors resources to heal. No Centre, no healing.

***Team Victoria** consists of the partner members of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), as well as Crown Counsel and other Victim Service agencies. Team Victoria meets on a monthly basis for case consultation as well as service coordination and improvement.

Q&A with Karen Wickham

(Victoria Sexual Assault Centre Crisis Line Coordinator)



What is your role with the Sexual Assault Response Team?

My role includes providing accompaniments to the hospital and/or police station during VSAC office hours, supervision of volunteers in coordination with the Coordinator of Volunteers. I also meet regularly with other Team Victoria members (i.e. hospital and police) to continually discuss and improve response to survivor's experience with our Team.

What do volunteers do and why are they important?

The SART volunteers are an integral part of the team providing outside-office hours support to survivors of recent sexual assault. Each volunteer undergoes an extensive training program prior to acceptance on the team and commits to providing assistance for a year-long period. Our volunteers are from diverse communities and share their knowledge as they continue on their life journey. The Team would not exist without their vital contribution to VSAC.

What training do they receive? Each volunteer undergoes 60 hours training including education about sexual violence, communication skills, hospital procedure orientation, police procedure orientation and self-care. Debriefing, support and additional education are offered as they continue their volunteer work.

What challenges do SART volunteers face? It is impossible to train SART volunteers for every possible scenario. The reality is each survivor's experience and needs are unique. Each volunteer faces unique situations and must be able to respond as needed with the support of other Team members, other SART volunteers and staff.

What would be lost if we didn't have SART Volunteers?

Without the support of VSAC SART volunteers, we would be unable to continue providing services on a 24 hour basis. We would lose the ongoing community connection volunteers bring to VSAC and their valued input as we continually strive to improve survivor's healing journey after a sexual assault.

What we Want Survivors to Know

Karen Wickham, VSAC Crisis Line Coordinator:

Survivors of sexual assault have experienced a traumatic event that can have a lasting impact on their lives. They need to know their choices and their rights as a victim of a crime. At a time when it is difficult to process and retain information, survivors are faced with a series of choices (i.e. medical treatment, informing police). The Sexual Assault Response Team is there to provide support, information, medical treatment (if requested), police response (if requested) and generally reducing the longer-term impact of a traumatic event.

Kelly Branchi, Forensic Nurse Examiner:

I want every survivor to know, you are **not** just another patient. My job is to be the best nurse I can be, for you, on your terms, I will tailor the exam to whatever the survivor asks for, whether that's a full forensic exam or a quick prescription for pregnancy prevention and medication for sexually transmitted infections.

Jan Malinosky, Victoria Police Detective:

Most importantly, I want survivors to know **I believe them**. I want to work *with* them and want survivors to feel comfortable sharing what has happened to them. People might not know or understand that as police, one of our main goals is to connect survivors of sexualized violence to services in the community (like VSAC) so they can heal. When I work with survivors I take a gentle approach, I listen carefully to what survivors say. The police are sensitive to survivors' needs we look at the situation from the survivor's perspective.

The SART team is available 24/7 to anyone over 13 years old of all genders across the Southern Island and Outer Gulf Islands, who has been recently sexually assaulted.

To access the SART team either call our crisis & information line at **250-383-3232** or visit the Victoria General Hospital Emergency Room.

What does each member of the Sexual Assault Response Team do?

VSAC Support Workers

- Provide immediate emotional support to survivors of recent sexual assaults
- Facilitate accompaniment to hospital, and medical/police involvement as requested by the survivor.
- Provide information regarding medical and forensic procedures, and options for reporting to police.
- Provide information on follow-up counselling and justice-related services available through Victoria Sexual Assault Centre.

Forensic Nurse Examiner

- A Forensic Nurse Examiner (FNE) is a nurse who has been specially trained to provide a medical and/ or forensic exam to victims of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, neglect, or other forms of intentional injury.
- FNEs also "collect evidence and give testimony that can be used in a court of law to apprehend or prosecute perpetrators who commit violent and abusive acts."

~International Association of Forensic Nurses

Police

- Gather any evidence that may exist including statements and forensic evidence
- Support and protect victims which occurs from the first contact made with police and includes; referrals to support services; assistance in attending medical examinations and; updating the victim on the progress of any court proceedings
- Identify, apprehend and prosecute offenders.

~from the Victoria Police Department