• Our counseling services, provided over 2000 individual counseling sessions this year. A variety of techniques, such as EMDR, Somatic, Narrative & art therapy are used by our counselors who are all trauma specialists.
• Our Skills for Healing & Building Strengths groups provided clients with the necessary skills to undertake trauma therapy while waiting for individual service. These counseling groups have given us the ability to provide support to clients on our counseling waitlist.
• The Boundaries and Communication & Relationships and Sexuality counseling groups provided space for survivors to deepen their healing journey by exploring the impact of sexualized violence on relationships, sexuality, and boundaries.
• Our Victim Services Team spent hundreds of hours providing justice support to 224 clients, on the phone, at the Clinic, courthouse, and the police station.
• The Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic provided critical crisis support, medical interventions, and access to justice to recent survivors of all genders across 13 municipalities.
• Our Trans Inclusion program built relationships with service providers and Trans, Two-Spirit, and Gender Diverse community members in the Cowichan Valley, Campbell River, Nanaimo, and Ucluelet. We supported these agencies to deepen their trans inclusion work and create more inclusive spaces to everyone seeking supports, especially those most marginalized, feel welcome and safer accessing services.
• Project Respect launched its cyber violence prevention initiative: In October, the Prevention Team facilitated their third annual Youth Social Action Camp with an awesome group of youth where they developed tools and actions to address cyber violence.
• We deepened the impact of our youth-led social action through Project Re-claim, a partnership with Tsartlip community leader Beangka Elliott & Project Respect. The program engages youth from the Tsartlip Nation to lead their community in healing from, resisting, and preventing violence through youth-led land restoration, and development & delivery of culturally relevant violence prevention.

Changing the Story for Survivors

“The Sexual Assault Response Team is the most incredible, on the ground, grassroots, direct and impactful volunteering I have ever done.”
– Grace Lore, Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Worker

Grace Lore has been a long-time volunteer Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) worker at the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC). Usually volunteers commit to a year of providing immediate, on-call support and information to recent survivors of sexual assault, but Grace has been at it for over 10 years.

Through Grace’s extensive involvement with the SART team, she has met with hundreds of survivors at the hospital and police station. She sees the difference the Clinic makes to people. We are excited to share her thoughts about the impact of the Clinic as we prepare for its three year anniversary:

What is the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)?
We are the sexual assault emergency team. I like to think of it as a network of quiet superheroes around Victoria ready to offer support to survivors of recent sexual assault. We help them navigate reporting to police or accessing any medical care they might need. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

What happens when you are called to support a survivor?
My first thought is toward the survivor: someone in our community, one of our neighbours or friends. But trauma is not the only narrative. I also think of the resiliency of survivors and the courage it takes to reach out for support. As a SART worker, my first task is to determine the situation and wishes of the survivor.

What is the impact of the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic on the need for help?
It is hard to say how meaningful and necessary any work is. With every SART, you see first-hand what it means for survivors to be empowered and regain control. Care is provided to survivors in a way that is trauma-informed and reflective of their wishes. There is always a support worker ready to move into action to provide support for the next survivor. We are here:

What has inspired you to continue this work for 10 years?
I think it has to do with how meaningful and necessary this work is. With every SART, you see first-hand what it means for survivors to be empowered and regain control. Care is provided to survivors in a way that is trauma-informed and reflective of their wishes. There is always a support worker ready to move into action to provide support for the next survivor.

On November 27th, the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre set out to raise $55,000 in 55 days to support survivors of sexualized violence!

We are unbelievably grateful to everyone who donates. We encourage anyone to contribute to this campaign in any way that they can:
• Donate by mail, over the phone (250-383-5345) or online (www.vsac.ca/donate)
• Join the Monthly Donor Club! Find out more info here: https://vsac.ca/monthly/
• Join the $1000 Club
• Spread the word and Get Connected! Share this newsletter and sign up for our e-newsletter at https://vsac.ca/subscribe/

WISHING YOU AND YOURS A HAPPY HOLIDAY & WONDERFUL NEW YEAR!
How would you describe Project Respect, VSAC’s violence prevention program?

Project Respect brings together youth to form community and organize projects to prevent sexualized violence. In the past, the Youth Team has created a music video, hosted events and created workshop curriculum. This curriculum is used by the Prevention Staff to deliver workshops in schools for middle school to high school aged youth. Our workshops usually take place in two parts, for a total of 3 hours of discussion about gender/gender stereotypes, the violence of labels (like slut) and consent.

Why is youth violence prevention programming important?

I have worked in youth programs for over 5 years now (since I was a youth!). and something I am constantly reminded of is that youth and children are frequently denied agency based on their age. When they experience sexualized violence, I often see youth not be believed and when they are believed, specific courses of action are almost always pre-scribed for them. In response to a culture which often dismisses youth and their knowledge and intelligence, so many young people are excited to take on the work of organizing projects to shift our culture and regenerate consensual ways of being.