Persevering through crisis

Since the pandemic’s onset the need for the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre’s services has risen. In the fall, wait times for crisis counselling hit a record high of four months.

The survivors seeking these services are some of the most vulnerable clients: youth, recent survivors, and those in crisis. The need to address the waitlist was urgent.

We asked our community to help us address the amplified need and throughout the fall and winter we received generous donations and grants that allowed us to hire additional staff.

Thanks to community backing, we have reduced the crisis counselling waitlist significantly. As of February 2021, we were able to provide service to every person on the waitlist! We are excited to share this encouraging news with you! Today if a survivor calls us for help they can see a counsellor within a week.

Together we are persevering through challenging times and realizing timely service for survivors. We are grateful to every community member and business that has donated and fundraised, and to our grantors who have provided funding at this critical time - Thank you.

We are determined to keep the waitlist at zero. We will continue to fundraise to support the increased staff hours that have allowed us to provide timely support to survivors.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Thank you to every individual who has supported us through the pandemic. Your donations truly make a difference in survivor’s lives. You keep the doors open, services available, and hope alive in survivors hearts.
Highlights of 2020...

- Our counselling services provided over 2000 individual counselling sessions this year. We were able to continue providing services with no major disruptions due to the nimbleness of staff and quick transition to phone and virtual platforms for service.

- We adapted our Skills for Healing groups to be provided virtually, providing clients with the necessary skills to undertake trauma therapy while waiting for individual service. We were able to offer the group two times in Fall 2020.

- Our Victim Services Team spent hundreds of hours providing justice support, and welcomed 198 new clients to the program.

- The Sexual Assault Response Team provided 105 recent survivors with critical crisis support, medical interventions, and access to justice at our Clinic.

- Project Respect partnered with the Girls and Femmes with Afro-Textured Hair group to develop and facilitate consent and bystander intervention workshops that are responsive to the needs and realities of Black youth in our community.

Thank You to our Funders

Canadian Women's Foundation - COVID Relief Funds
City of Langford - Clinic
City of Victoria - Clinic
Civil Forfeiture - Clinic, Crisis Counselling
District of Oak Bay - Clinic
District of Saanich - Clinic
Ending Violence Association BC - Clinic
Gaming - Clinic, Youth Counsellor, Prevention Education
Harweg Foundation - Greatest Need
KazLaw Injury Lawyers - Greatest Need
McGregor Young Foundation - Greatest Need
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General - Stopping the Violence Counselling & Victim Services
Pine Lighting - Greatest Need
Province of BC - Clinic
Provincial Employees Community Services Fund - Access Line
Public health Agency of Canada - Prevention Education: SHIFT
Rotary Club of Victoria-Harbourside - Clinic
Saxon Media Inc. - Greatest Need
Shewan Foundation - Greatest Need
Thrifty Foods Smile Card Program - Direct Client Services
Township of Esquimalt - Clinic
Township of View Royal - Clinic
United Way of Greater Victoria - Clinic, Prevention Education
Vancouver Foundation - Transformative Justice Project
Victoria Foundation - Inclusion, COVID Emergency Funds, Rapid Relief Funds
Women and Gender Equality Canada - Capacity Building, Indigenous Community Response Network
Zonta Club of Victoria - Clinic

Supporting Survivors: How to Help a Friend or Family Member

During the pandemic you may feel more overwhelmed or uncertain on how to provide support. If your friend or loved one has disclosed that they have experience sexual assault, here are some steps you can take:

Listen: Your loved one may really need someone to hear their story. Be non-judgmental and understanding. Reassure them that it was not their fault. “You didn’t do anything to deserve this; it’s not your fault.”

Believe: It is important for someone who has been sexually assaulted to have people believe in what has happened. Remember most people do not lie about being abused or assaulted.

Support: “I’m really glad you’ve reached out for help.” Remember it is important to be there for your friend later on too. During the days, weeks and months following the assault your friend will still need your support.

Ensure Physical Safety: Are you safe now?” and offer to help find support if they wish. “We can contact someone at the Sexual Assault Centre who can help you or even just give you more information confidentially.”

Trust your connection with the survivor & try to balance the support you offer with support you give yourself.

For more information on how to support a survivor in your life, visit our website: https://vsac.ca/how-to-help/