



Women's House
Serving Bruce and Grey

Women's House Serving Bruce & Grey

Newsletter - Spring 2021

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Sexual Assault #: 1.866.578.5566



Programs & Services

- Women's Shelter
- 24/7 Crisis Lines
- Outreach Counselling
- Group Counselling
- Sexual Assault Services
- Child Witness Counselling
- Transition & Second Stage Housing Services
- Community Development
- Volunteer Opportunities

Sexual Assault and the Justice Gap BY ANDREA TURCOTTE

Sexual assault is one of the least reported crimes. Statistics Canada states that **only 50 out of every 1,000 assaults are reported to police.** Of the 50 reported, approximately 5 will result in a criminal conviction.

In a 2020 report by the St. John's Status of Women Council, *'Survivors of Sexual Violence and the Criminal Justice System'*, the author suggests the significant under-reporting by survivors, as well as the many cases that are deemed unfounded once reported, lead to a lack of true understanding of the level of sexual violence perpetrated. This leads to substantial issues for survivors, both in the criminal justice system, and in society at large.

Survivors and allies consistently focus attention on the re-victimization that occurs throughout the legal process. Survivors repeatedly contend with victim-blaming, disbelief, implicit or overt discrimination, neglect, or interrogation at virtually every step. This re-victimization leaves survivors feeling unsupported by the system, frequently expressing regret at their decision to report, and often experiencing a significant amount of additional harm beyond that already experienced as a result of the sexual assault.

Rape myths that persist in the legal system (and society in general) create substantial issues for sexual assault survivors, despite consistent rejection by the Supreme Court. Some of these myths are:

- that a woman who is perceived as promiscuous is more likely to have consented
- that women who wait to report are lying about the assault
- if a woman doesn't fight back, or have physical injuries, it was not assault
- if a woman was under the influence of alcohol or substances it was her fault
- that it is not assault if it occurs in the context of an intimate partner relationship
- sexual assault is often (or only) committed by strangers and occurs in dark, dangerous places

None of these myths are true, but they play a significant part in how survivors are treated as they seek support and justice from the legal system. Greater understanding of sexual violence statistics, consent, trauma responses, and the ongoing impact of trauma can help to dispel these myths.

Recently, in Ontario, a sexual assault survivor was charged with, and pled guilty to, violating the publication ban in her own case. **This resulted in the woman paying a fine of \$2000 and an additional victim surcharge of \$600.** The survivor emailed court transcripts to close family and friends who were already aware that she was the victim in this case, and already knew the name of the perpetrator. The perpetrator was made aware that this had happened and

contacted police, who then charged the woman. **The purpose of a publication ban is to protect the victim.** In this case, the perpetrator was able to use it to exert further power and control over the victim, and engage the criminal justice system to cause her further harm.

A majority of sexual assault survivors fall into what the report describes as the justice gap, where populations who are at the highest risk of sexual violence and who also face inherent and amplified systemic barriers are the least likely to receive justice. Indigenous women are most at risk of sexual violence and deficient responses from the criminal justice system due to their marginalization in society. Other examples of marginalized groups disproportionately impacted include racialized, disabled, homeless or impoverished women, and those who have used alcohol or substances. Narrowing this justice gap involves moving towards a more trauma-informed criminal justice system that would be more responsive to sexual assault survivors. Additional training should guide those in the system to a fuller awareness that criminal trials need to provide all participants, including sexual assault survivors, with impartiality and fairness, which would then generate more justice-oriented results.

Canadian statistics show that 16% of sexual assault cases are classified as unfounded, as opposed to the 2-8% of cases that are found to be false reports. When a case is deemed unfounded, it is not investigated. This leaves a survivor no avenue for justice through the legal system, and once again feeling unheard and not believed.

The 'Canadian Framework for Collaborative Police Response to Sexual Violence', developed by advocates and several police services in Ontario, outlines guidelines for a collaborative response to sexual violence. The document is endorsed by both the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. A key component of this collaborative response is the creation of **Advocate Review Teams** that include members from community sexual assault centres. These external review teams undertake formal independent reviews of sexual violence reports, and should be the final stage for any sexual violence investigations not cleared by charge. In communities with Advocate Review Teams, recommendations made by the Team are presented to the relevant leaders of police services for implementation.

This document also discusses sexual assault police investigation guidelines, and clearly lays out the importance of trauma-informed support and collaboration throughout the entire process, so that survivors can have as supportive an experience as possible while navigating the legal system.

Moving this collaboration from theory to practice is an ongoing work-in-progress. A March 18th 2021 CBC headline read '**Dramatic rise in sexual assault reports doesn't lead to similar rises in charges.**' The rise in reports is generally believed to be largely driven by a greater awareness and openness sparked by the #MeToo movement. Advocates and allies continue to support survivors and seek opportunities to work in collaboration with police services and the legal system to increase safety and support, thereby closing the justice gap for sexual assault survivors.

How Do Your Donations Help?

- \$25:** Children's school snacks for one week
- \$50:** 1 month of pandemic PPE in the shelter
- \$100:** Clothing for a child who left home with only one outfit
- \$250:** Groceries for the shelter for one week
- \$300:** One (1) night of safety for a woman and child
- \$1000:** Six (6) nights of safety for a woman or child



MOTHER'S DAY REMINDER

Consider giving your mom the gift of helping another mother have a safer life - make a donation in your mom's name through our CanadaHelps site

We accept cash, cheque or credit card donations - make your donation:

On-line:

Visit whsbg.on.ca/donate/ to be directed to our CanadaHelps page - tax receipts are automatically sent to your email!



Mail (cheques):

Women's House Serving
Bruce & Grey
Box 760 Kincardine, ON
N2Z 2Z4

Phone or email: Contact Michelle at 519-396-9814 ext. 225 or mlamont@whsbg.on.ca

May is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

FACT:

Sexual violence crosses all social boundaries, affects people of every age and cultural background, and has devastating impacts on the lives of survivors and their families, as well as the well-being of society.

Sexual violence can be violence (physical or psychological), carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality, and can include:

- sexual abuse
- sexual assault
- rape
- incest
- childhood sexual abuse
- rape during armed conflict
- sexual harassment
- stalking
- indecent or sexualized exposure
- degrading sexual imagery
- voyeurism
- cyber harassment
- trafficking
- sexual exploitation

In Canada, the Criminal Code defines sexual assault as:

“any unwanted sexual act done by one person to another or sexual activity without one person’s consent or voluntary agreement”

(Department of Justice, 2010).



1 in 3 women

will experience sexual violence in their lifetime

Sexual Assault is the **only violent crime in Canada that is not declining**.

WHAT IS CONSENT?

- Consent is an **agreement** to engage in sexual activity with someone
 - When two people engage in sexual activity, they both have to agree to what is happening – this is known as **giving consent**
 - Consenting and asking for consent is about **setting personal boundaries and respecting those of your partner**
- Consent should never be assumed or implied
 - Consent is not silence or the absence of “no”
 - Consent cannot be given if you are impaired by alcohol or drugs, or are unconscious
 - Consent can never be obtained through threats or coercion
 - Consent can be withdrawn at any time
 - Consent cannot be given if the perpetrator abuses a position of trust, power or authority
 - Consent cannot be given by anyone other than the person participating in the sexual activity

If you are already a Women's House donor, sponsor, or supporter, thank you for your generosity and we hope you enjoy our newsletter!

Please help Women's House in our goals to help the environment AND save money so we can provide more for the women and children we serve by requesting that you receive this newsletter electronically. Contact mlamont@whsbg.on.ca to make your request. Thank you for your part in making this a better world for everyone!

I would like to support the work of Women's House Serving Bruce & Grey throughout the year!

My donation of \$_____ will help to ensure the continuation of all programs to assist women and children in crisis.

I am enclosing my cheque for: \$50 \$75 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other _____ I would like a charitable receipt

I prefer to use my: VISA MASTERCARD

Signature for credit card: _____

Card number: _____/_____/_____ Exp. Date: _____/_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

I would like to discuss a bequest or other planned giving

I would like to become a voting member of the organization.

I would like more information on becoming a volunteer or Board Member

Need more information or options to make a donation?

contact **Michelle** at mlamont@whsbg.on.ca or 519-396-9814 ext. 225

**THIS YEAR'S WOMEN'S HOUSE
FUNDRAISING TARGET IS
\$144,900**

Women's House provided services to

541 women and 118 children

from April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021.

We couldn't do it without your support. Thank you!

**Due to the pandemic, the shelter has operated at 50% capacity*

Upcoming Events

Current pandemic protocols mean that we are limited in the ways that we can hold events that increase awareness about women's issues and raise funds to continue to carry out the vital programs and services that we offer to women and children.

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes

Every year in May we hold a walk, with men donning red high heeled shoes to catch the eyes of passersby. These men help raise funds through pledges, while also raising awareness about domestic abuse and women's issues.

We start the conversation, and try to keep it going. It will look a little different this year, so keep an eye on our website and social media pages to see what we have planned!



Watch for our partnership events to be held with local restaurants this spring, summer & fall. Mouth-watering special deals and packages that you'll want to make sure you're a part of!

Don't forget about our annual fall events, such as Wrapped in Courage in November, and our various community hosted events – we'll keep you posted on our social media pages!

Please like, follow and check our social media pages often to stay up to date on all the latest news and events!



@WomensHouseServingBruceGrey



@womens.house.bruce.grey



@WomensHouseSBG



www.whsbg.on.ca



Got an idea for a fundraiser? Contact Michelle at 519-396-9814 ext. 225 or mlamont@whsbg.on.ca to share your thoughts or to learn how you can hold your own Host Event to help raise funds for Women's House.

Special Thanks TO OUR TOP SPONSORS



SOCIETY of
UNITED PROFESSIONALS
IFPTE 160

BrucePower™



United Way
Bruce Grey
Change starts here



THANK YOU TO OUR

Women's House Donors

All Donors from October 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 & All Annual Sponsors from April 1, 2020 to present *

Champions Sponsors: \$10,000+

- Bruce Power
- UNIFOR Social Justice Fund +UNIFOR General Fund + UNIFOR LOCAL 2458
- Society of United Professionals
- Howick Mutual Insurance Company
- Power Workers Equity Trust Fund - Bruce Site (PWU)

Innovators Sponsors: \$7,500-\$9,999

- The Co-operators and Jennifer Cook & Associates

Believers Sponsors: \$5,000-\$7,499

- Shoppers Drug Mart - Life Foundation
- Bruce Telecom
- Keith & Linda Battler
- Larry Bannerman Foundation
- United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners of America Local 2222
- Howick Mutual Insurance
- Nuclear Promise X (NPX)
- Nuclear Waste Management (NWMO)

Friends Sponsors: \$2,500-\$4,999

- Enbridge
- Matchett Financial Inc. - Holliswealth
- Lakeshore Recreation Hockey
- MODUS Solutions Inc
- Greenfield Global

Contributors Sponsors: \$1,000-\$2,499

- Kincardine Duplicate Bridge Club
- Black & McDonald
- Town of the Blue Mountains
- Kincardine Community Investment Grant
- CFUW - Southport
- Gilley's Feed Lot / Bar Down Kincardine
- The Best You
- Royal LePage Shelter Foundation
- Promotion
- Municipality of Meaford
- Southampton Rotary

All Donors \$100 and up

- United Way of Bruce Grey
- Town of Saugeen Shores
- Canadian Federation of University Women
- St. Luke's Anglican Church
- Grace United Church
- Bluewater Occasional Teachers' Local
- Georgian Shores United Church
- Grey Bruce Labour Council
- Knox Presbyterian Church
- Hepworth Sauble Beach Pastoral Charge

All Donors \$100 and up

- Grey Matter Brewery
- Weiler's Cleaning and Restoration Ltd.
- ETFO Bluewater O.T. Local
- United Church Women of Port Elgin United
- Colpoys Bay Womens Institute
- John Ernewein Limited
- Town of Hanover
- Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
- Port Elgin & District Lions Club
- Epsilon Alpha Sorority
- St. Paul's Anglican Church Women
- Lions Club of West Grey Durham
- Partners Physiotherapy Service
- Royal Canadian Legion Br#440
- Walkerton & District Optimist Club
- Plan Group Inc.
- Tara Rotary Community Support Fund
- Southampton United Church
- Southampton United Church Women
- St. John's ELW
- St. Marks Lutheran Church ELW
- Tara United Church Women
- St. Andrew's UCW
- South Kinloss Ladies Aid
- United Church Womens Clifford Pastoral Charge
- Lucknow United Church Women
- Davidson-Hill Elevator Inc
- St Joseph's Catholic Womens League

*For privacy reasons, we do not include donations from individuals, unless under their professional name