

ALBERTA ASSOCIATION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRES



Alberta Association of
Sexual Assault Centres

ANNUAL REPORT

2007 – 2008

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- ✚ Alberta Children's Services
- ✚ FirstEnergy Capital Corp.
- ✚ Individual Donations

We are thankful for the commitment and dedication of
our Full Members:

- ✚ Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse
- ✚ Crisis Centre (Red Deer)
- ✚ Lethbridge Family Services – Counselling, Outreach and Education
Department
- ✚ Lloydminster Sexual Assault and Information Centre
- ✚ PACE Sexual Assault Centre (Grande Prairie)
- ✚ Sexual Abuse Recovery Committee of Medicine Hat
- ✚ Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton
- ✚ Sexual Assault Program – Ft McMurray Family Crisis Society
- ✚ Saffron Strathcona Sexual Assault Centre
- ✚ University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre

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Vision

The eradication of sexual violence in Alberta.

Mission

To provide leadership, coordination and a unified voice on issues of sexual violence while increasing recognition and support for sexual assault centres in Alberta.

Core Beliefs

- ✚ We believe in inclusion and equality regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or ability
- ✚ We believe sexual assault victims can be of any age, socio-economic background, religion, race, or gender group
- ✚ We believe all Albertans have a right to access effective, affordable and timely sexual assault services
- ✚ We believe that sexual assault services must be accessible, client centred and community based
- ✚ We believe sexual assault is an act of violence and a crime
- ✚ We believe people effected by sexual violence are not to blame
- ✚ We believe everyone has the capacity and resiliency to recover from sexual violence
- ✚ We believe sexual violence has long-term impact on society
- ✚ We support the treatment of offenders
- ✚ We believe victims have the right to access distinct and specialized sexual assault services.

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Executive Director's Report

AASAC experienced significant challenges in 2007-2008, all of which arguably strengthened the organization and its members' commitment. Unforeseen circumstances left the organization with part time contract staff for a portion of the year and without staff for the majority of the year. This, requiring board members and full members to go beyond their usual best commitment to the organization and its core membership, and brought with it some changes to AASAC. I submitted a three year proposal with a detailed action plan to the Status of Women Canada (SWC). With the help of SWC, our vision was to engage the Provincial government to make the issue of sexual assault a priority within its relevant policies and programs and to commit to core sustainable funding to support sexual assault centres in Alberta. Fortunately, our funding proposal was approved and the work began. Three years later, I am pleased to report AASAC's vision was realized. This goal could not have been achieved without the support of Status of Women Canada, and we are very grateful for their on-going support and counsel.

It is to Alberta's credit that in the 2005-06 provincial budget the Honourable Heather Forsyth, Minister of Children's Services, announced a \$9.5 million boost in funding dedicated to putting an end to family violence and bullying in Alberta. The strategy, which is designed to eradicate family violence in Alberta, included the spending of \$500,000 to develop a comprehensive provincial approach to the reduction of sexual violence.

The purpose of this initiative was to work towards improving services available to survivors of sexual violence in Alberta. It was also intended to facilitate sharing of information and resources to enhance and inform sexual violence program development and research.

AASAC identified seven core service areas that we believe are essential in each region of Alberta in order to provide a comprehensive, coordinated approach to service delivery for victims of sexual violence and their families. These core services are:

- Coordination and collaboration
- Crisis response
- Counselling
- Police and court support
- Education
- Outreach
- Volunteers

Funding was allocated in October 2006 and the work began. The six-month funding from Children's Services was used to provide support in four of the seven core service areas (coordination/collaboration, crisis response, counselling and outreach) across the province as well as to support the work of AASAC and four special projects that focused on developing standards of service delivery and comprehensive accessibility of services.

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Community Coordination and Service Development

The purpose of this project was twofold. Firstly the project assisted four regions of Alberta where sexual assault services are in the development stages (i.e. Fort McMurray, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and the Barrhead Region]. Secondly the project assisted local sexual assault centres to promote and support the development of a coordinated, collaborative, multi-disciplinary response to victims of sexual assault/abuse and their families in five regions of Alberta (Edmonton, Lloydminster, Grande Prairie, Red Deer, Calgary). Community consultations held in Grande Prairie, Peace River, Fort McMurray and Wainwright identified and prioritized service gaps. In addition, stakeholders met to organize community consultations in Barrhead region (one of the least resourced regions in Alberta).

Research

There were two distinct research projects:

1) The first initiative explored and recommended a service delivery model to fit the unique needs of individuals affected by sexual violence in rural/remote communities. Overall the Alberta sexual assault centres are in urban centres which generally have the capacity to support and fund specialized services. Few models of rural practice are found in the literature, confirming the necessity of addressing this issue. A literature review of the needs of people in rural or remote communities was completed. Because of the scarcity of available literature on the topic, providers of rural and remote services in Canada, the United States and other countries were contacted directly and the information summarized.

2) The second research project was conducted in partnership with the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters. This research project set out to understand, compare and contrast the service delivery needs of shelter clients and sexual assault centre clients. The purpose of the research was to identify areas of service delivery overlap and to make recommendations regarding potential for collaboration and to also identify areas where client needs dictate distinct and specialized service delivery mechanism. Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Centres (AASAC) and Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) will act on these findings to build options for comprehensive services for victims of sexual assault and family violence.

Outcomes Project

The purpose of the outcomes project was to ensure that standards of excellence in service delivery are achieved in this sector. In order to do this, AASAC proposed to develop standards of evidence-based practice for sexual assault centre core services. This project is being implemented in three phases. Phase one took place in year one of the funding plan and audited all sexual assault programs and services and reviewed existing program plans and evaluation plans. Phase two will build program plans and evaluation plans in consultation with all sexual assault centres. Phase Three will involve sexual assault centres collecting

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statistics and assessing impacts on clients. The project will standardize and design measurement tools where appropriate. Assessment reports of existing outcome measures at individual sexual assault centres have been completed. Draft outcomes, indicators and potential measurement instruments for each of the seven essential core service areas have been developed

Impact of Provincial Funding

The provincial funding has added valuable resources to the sexual violence sector in Alberta. We are pleased to report that in only six short months a great deal has been accomplished. The majority of core services were made available to Albertans across the province. In regions where services were particularly lacking we were able to provide the support to develop and strengthen service coordination. We engaged communities in all corners of the province in consultation to identify and address their needs. In addition, we began to document a compendium of knowledge on sexual assault needs, services and indicated actions in our province.

We look forward to continuing to work with all stakeholders in the province to maintain the momentum of these early gains and to enhance the ability of families and communities to develop nurturing and safe environments for all children, youth and adults in Alberta.

Respectfully submitted by Debra Tomlinson