

# Information bulletin

Victim Services and Crime Prevention

February 2016

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## Message from the Executive Director



Welcome to the February 2016 Information Bulletin. The theme of this issue is children and youth.

This edition includes a program spotlight on the Oak Child and Youth Advocacy Centre, which opened its doors in October 2015. Child and Youth Advocacy Centres bring together a coordinated team of professionals to assist child victims of abuse and crime. To learn more about the Oak Child and Youth Advocacy Centre, see page 2.

This issue also contains tips for victim services in working with

children and youth. Children and youth victims have unique needs that require specialized approaches and considerations in order to effectively support them as they interact with the justice system. To learn about these tips, see page 3.

The child forensic interview is an important element of a child abuse investigation. For more information about best practices in child forensic interviews, see page 5.

I'd like to congratulate Tim Agg on being awarded the Award of Distinction during the 2015 Community Safety and Crime Prevention Awards (see page 7).

I'd also like to recognize Tracy Myers from Haven Society for being this issue's Shining Star (see page 6).

I'm excited to announce that we have two upcoming free webinars for service providers: victim notification from arrest

to parole on March 8 and supporting child and youth victims through the criminal justice system on April 19. For more info, please see page 4.

Finally, this bulletin includes highlights from the Sophie's Place Child Advocacy Centre provincial conference, updates on human trafficking efforts throughout B.C., online training and resources for service providers, and other topics.

I'm always glad to receive your thoughts and suggestions about our bulletins. If you have a question about the bulletin, or would like to provide feedback, please feel free to contact me directly at [taryn.walsh@gov.bc.ca](mailto:taryn.walsh@gov.bc.ca).

Taryn Walsh  
Executive Director



Victim Services and  
Crime Prevention  
Community Safety and  
Crime Prevention Branch  
Ministry of Justice

## Program Spotlight: Oak Child and Youth Advocacy Centre

Oak Child and Youth Advocacy Centre in Vernon, B.C., held its grand opening on October 20, 2015. Oak Centre is a partnership between the North Okanagan RCMP, the Vernon Women's Transition House Society, RCMP Victim Assistance, the North Okanagan Youth and Family Services Society, and the Family Resource Centre for the North Okanagan, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). Oak Centre has received funding support from Department of Justice Canada and the B.C. government (through a civil forfeiture grant).

"Oak Centre is a one-stop shop for connecting child victims and their families with help," says Brooke McLardy, Acting Executive Director of the Vernon Women's Transition House Society. "It brings together a team of professionals including police, child protection social workers, victim services, and other service providers to assist children. If it's a domestic violence situation, we would bring in the domestic violence unit. Our Children Who Witness Abuse program is on-site and so is our Stopping the Violence Counselling and Outreach Services programs. If there is a court role, we will call in the appropriate victim service program. We can easily link families to those services at Oak Centre, so families have ease of access to the services they need."

Oak Centre is housed in a building that was originally designed as a group day home, and is shared with the Vernon Women's Transition House Society. The facility includes an intake room, an interview room, a monitoring room, a children's play room, as well as a full kitchen, staff room, and offices.

Prior to the establishment of Oak Centre, a child victim would have to visit multiple service providers in different locations to get help. The child would be



Photo (left to right): Sgt. Rob Daly, Brooke McLardy, and Mayor Akbal Mund at Oak Child and Youth Advocacy Centre grand opening, October 20, 2015.

interviewed several times by different people, which risked re-traumatizing them and potentially compromising disclosure about the abuse.

Oak Centre has a Child and Youth Advocate on staff whose role is to meet with families as they come in. She is with them from the point of intake, through to getting them long term support services. This helps to ensure that families have the help they need to support their child.

When a child comes into Oak Centre, the Child and Youth Advocate will introduce them to the interviewer (a plainclothes police officer in the case of a criminal investigation). The interviewer will take them to the specially equipped interview room, and during the interview, an MCFD child protection social worker will monitor the dialogue from the monitoring room. This allows the interviewer and social worker to touch base throughout the interview to cover all pertinent areas of inquiry in a single interview.

While the child is being interviewed, the Child and Youth Advocate meets separately with the child's caregiver and does an intake to understand the family's intermediate needs, help them with any crisis or short term needs, and make any follow-up appointments that may be required.

## Violence Against Children and Youth

Source: Statistics Canada (2015). *Family Violence in Canada, A Statistical Profile, 2013*

In 2013, police reported just over 58,000 child and youth victims of violence in Canada. Violent victimization rates for children and youth were slightly lower than those of the adult population (995.3 victims per 100,000). The exception to this was police-reported sexual offences, which were more likely to occur among children and youth than among those 18 years of age and over.

As is the case with adults, the majority of violence against children and youth is committed by someone known to the victim (81%).

Family violence against children and youth can take many forms, but the most common type of victimization reported to the police in 2013 was physical assault (57% of reported offences). The rate of physical assaults committed against children and youth by a family member decreased by 13% between 2011 and 2013.

Provincially, Saskatchewan had the highest rate of child and youth victims of family violence at 465.3 per 100,000. The provinces with the lowest rates were Ontario (166.2 per 100,000) followed by British Columbia (210.4 per 100,000).

## Oak Child and Youth Advocacy Centre (cont'd)

"What we've found during our research is that caregivers of children who have been victimized are often very lost," says McLardy. "They are traumatized themselves. They don't know who to turn to. They have no-one helping them navigate the system. While the child or youth are our clients, we want to make sure that the caregivers have the support that they need so that they can also help support their child. The healthier the caregiver is, the healthier the child is going to be."

Once the interview is wrapped up, the child sits with the Child and Youth Advocate while the child protection social worker, the forensic interviewer (police), and the caregiver have a quick conversation about next steps. The Child and Youth Advocate will then stay with

the family until they are ready to leave. Oak Centre has the capacity to assist up to 250 children per year. In addition to being open full time, police and child protection social workers have access to the facility after hours and on the weekend in case they need to bring in a child to do an after-hours interview.

"If there are other communities, and I know there's quite a few in B.C., that are starting to look at this model, we're more than happy to be a resource and answer any questions that people have. We've gone through several years of development and had some trials and tribulations and I think we can help."

*For more information about Oak Children and Youth Advocacy Centre, please [visit their website](#).*

## Conference Collaborates on Responding to Child Abuse

On November 17 and 18, 2015, over 150 service providers from across British Columbia gathered at Surrey City Hall for the Sophie's Place Child Advocacy Centre Provincial Conference. The theme of the Conference was "Responding to Child Abuse: Collaborating for Success."

Highlights of the conference include:

- Karen Hangartner, Deputy Project Director for the Southern Regional Children's Advocacy Center and the National Children's Advocacy Center, gave a keynote presentation on collaboration between multi-disciplinary teams and a workshop on vicarious trauma. The [National Children's Advocacy Centre](#) offers many free online training opportunities including webinars, recorded training sessions other online training resources.
- Dr. Gabor Mate, lectured on the impacts of trauma on brain devel-

opment and neurobiological roots of addiction. Excerpts from his best-selling books, including In the [Realm of Hungry Ghosts](#) are available online. He also has a great list of [resources for service providers](#).

- Activist/therapist and Adjunct Professor, Vicki Reynolds, presented an alternative approach to working with trauma and violence and challenged some of the traditional views of burnout among front line service providers. Her book, articles, and talks are available for free at [www.vikkireynolds.ca](#)
- Gary Anaka, a brain-based Learning Facilitator with over 34 years of teaching experience in the public school system, presented on "Understanding the Teenage Brain". Gary's book is [available for download](#) through iTunes.

## Child Maltreatment in Canada

Source: Statistics Canada (2015). [Criminal Victimization in Canada, 2014](#).

Approximately one-third of Canadians (30%) reported being victims of some form of abuse by an adult at least once before the age of 15. Specifically, 22% reported experiencing physical abuse, 3% suffered sexual abuse, and 5% experienced both physical and sexual violence.

The majority of self-reported cases of child maltreatment (93%) never came to the attention of authorities, either the police or child protective services. However, the probability of reporting the abuse increased with the severity and frequency of the abuse.

Overall, people 15 years of age and older who experienced child maltreatment recorded a rate of violent victimization more than double that of people who did not experience such abuse (125 per 1,000 compared to 55).

Several studies show a link between abuse experienced during childhood and both an increased risk of victimization in adulthood and an increased likelihood of having contact with police.

Child maltreatment is associated with several other risk factors in adulthood including increased drug use and increased presence of a mental health condition.



# Victim Services for Children and Youth: Integrating Trauma-Informed Principles with Victim Service Work

Information provided by Sandra Bryce,  
Executive Director, Victoria Child Abuse  
Prevention and Counselling Centre

Children's experiences with the criminal justice system can be overwhelming and confusing. Building awareness of the unique needs of children and youth among victim service workers and other key players in the justice system is key to reducing the likelihood that justice proceedings re-traumatize child and youth victims. By practicing victim service work from a trauma-informed perspective, workers can foster a sense of safety, control, choice, and trust for children or youth as they navigate the justice system.

Below is a list of practical tips that may be useful when supporting child and youth victims:

- Acknowledge the role and importance of caregivers, but recognize that the child or youth's needs are central.
- Provide information and resources to caregivers and parents so that they may be better informed to support the child or youth.
- Help to label and acknowledge emotions, reactions, and feelings.
- Educate the child on common reactions they might be experiencing.
- Discuss the child's worries and fears, acknowledging their concerns and providing clear information in response.
- Use age-appropriate, consistent, and concise language. Be aware of developmental needs when explaining the complexities of the justice system.
- Give honest and clear answers to questions.

## Trauma Informed Principles from the Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre:

Acknowledgment of the effects of trauma  
Safety  
Trust  
Choice and Control  
Compassion  
Collaboration

- Repeat information and use a variety of methods for teaching new information such as activities, art, play, and role-playing. Children learn by doing.
- Provide safety by setting limits, boundaries, and clear expectations.
- Be clear about what your role is as a victim service worker and what the roles of others are, including the children or youth.
- Create and utilize child or youth-friendly environments where possible.
- Explore positive coping strategies.
- Recognize and acknowledge strengths.
- Offer choice when possible to allow for a sense of control.
- Acknowledge that a child or youth victim may be impacted by their caregivers' reactions and experiences.
- Be aware of available accommodations for child or youth witnesses (under the Canadian *Victims Bill of Rights*)
- Advocate for the child or youth's needs and collaborate with other service providers and members of Criminal Justice System to enhance knowledge of child or youth-centred approaches.

## Free Webinars for Service Providers



In November 2015, we held a webinar on Civil Forfeiture Grant Applications with hosts Roz Currie, Ally Butler, and Assistant Deputy Minister Patti Boyle. A video of the webinar is [available online](#).

Our next free webinar is on March 8 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and will be on victim notification from arrest to parole. If you would like to participate in this webinar, please contact us at [victimservices@gov.bc.ca](mailto:victimservices@gov.bc.ca).

On April 19 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. we will present a webinar on supporting child and youth victims through the criminal justice system. If you would like to participate in this webinar, please contact us at [victimservices@gov.bc.ca](mailto:victimservices@gov.bc.ca).

Videos for the following webinars are available online:

[Human Trafficking](#)

[Draft Justice Framework](#)

[Crime Victim Assistance Program](#)

[Restitution Program](#)

# Best Practices in Child Forensic Interviewing

Adapted with permission from Chris Newlin, Linda Cordisco Steele, Andra Chamberlin, Jennifer Anderson, Julie Kenniston, Amy Russell, Heather Stewart, and Viola Vaughan-Eden. 2015. "Child Forensic Interviewing: Best Practices." OJJDP Bulletin. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Retrieved December 2015 from: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/248749.pdf>.

The forensic interview is one component of a comprehensive child abuse investigation, which includes law enforcement and child protection investigators, prosecutors, child protection attorneys, victim advocates, and medical and mental health practitioners. Although not all of these groups may directly participate in or observe the forensic interview, each party may benefit from the information obtained during the interview.

## Interviewer Tips

The following tips are useful for interviewers to remember during the interview.

## Overall Considerations

- Conduct the interview as soon as possible after initial disclosure.
- Record the interview electronically.
- Hold the interview in a safe, child-friendly environment.
- Use open-ended questions throughout the interview, delaying the use of more focused questions for as long as possible.
- Consider the child's age, developmental ability, and culture.

## Building Rapport with the Child

- Engage the child in brief conversation about his or her interests or activities.
- Provide an opportunity for the child to describe a recent non-abuse related experience in detail.
- Describe the interview ground rules.
- Discuss the importance of telling the truth.



## Conducting the Interview

- Transition to the topic of the suspected abuse carefully, taking into account the characteristics of the child and the case.
- Ask the child to describe his or her experience in detail, and do not interrupt the child during this initial narrative account.
- Once the initial account is fully explored, begin to ask more focused questions if needed to gather additional details, get clarification, or fill in missing information.
- Mirror the child's wording when asking follow-up questions.
- Exercise caution at this stage. Use focused queries judiciously and avoid suggestive questions that could compel the child to respond inaccurately.
- Explore other viable hypotheses for the child's behaviors or statements.
- Consult with those observing the interview to determine whether to raise additional questions or whether to resolve any ambiguities or contradictions.

## Ending the Interview

- Ask the child if there is anything else he or she would like to share or to ask.
- Discuss safety plans and provide educational materials.
- Thank the child for participating.

For more information about best practices for child forensic interviewing, see the [full article](#).

# Online Resources



## National Children's Advocacy Center Online Library

Many free resources for working with children

## Navigating the Canadian Criminal Justice System: A Guide for Victims

Guide intended to help demystify the criminal justice process for Canadian victims of crime

## Let's Go to Court

Resource for victim service workers and other professionals who are trained to assist child witnesses get ready to go to court

## Court Choices for Youth

Educational information for youth about testifying in court

# Updates on Human Trafficking

## Abbotsford and 100 Mile House Tackle Human Trafficking



Photo (from left): Melissa Hyland, Sonja Ramsay, Roz Currie, and Victor Porter

In fall 2015, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General's Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons (OCTIP) held two train-the-trainer workshops on human trafficking in Abbotsford and 100 Mile House. These workshops, which were hosted by 100 Mile House and District Women's Centre and Abbotsford Community Services, were well attended.

OCTIP's train-the-trainer workshops assist front line service providers to learn about the indicators of human trafficking and effective ways to support trafficked persons. They also help train service providers and leaders to work with their community to develop an ongoing response to human trafficking, including developing prevention activities for action by the community following the event.

Over the past four years, OCTIP has held train-the-trainer workshops in ten B.C. communities: Williams Lake, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Sauteau First Nation (Chetwynd), Nisga'a Nation (New Aiyansh), Kamloops, Quesnel, Courtney, 100 Mile House, and Abbotsford. Funding for these workshops has been provided by the Department of Justice Victim's Fund.

If your community is interested in hosting a train-the-trainer workshop and working with OCTIP to develop a response to human trafficking, or if you would like to learn more about human trafficking prevention and responses, please contact [OCTIP@gov.bc.ca](mailto:OCTIP@gov.bc.ca).

## "Guacamole for Justice": Workshop Examines the Plight of Migrant Farm Workers



Photo: Chefs at Guacamole for Justice

In November 2015, OCTIP collaborated with the Migrant Workers Dignity Association, West Coast Domestic Workers Association, KAIROS, Co Development Canada, members of the faith-based community, and other organizations on the "Guacamole for Justice" project, which helped to raise awareness about the labour exploitation and trafficking of migrant farm workers. Workshop participants made guacamole from vegetables harvested by temporary foreign workers, listened to the experiences of migrant farm workers who face a number of barriers that make them vulnerable to exploitation and human trafficking, and engaged in conversation about labour exploitation.



# Shining Stars



Tracy Myers has been working in the anti-violence field since 1990. She is the Coordinator of the Children and Youth Who Experience Violence program at Haven Society in Nanaimo and is passionate about this field.

"I am honoured and humbled to be considered a 'Shining Star', but I could not do the work I do without the incredible team of women I belong to," says Tracy. "Jenn Stuart, Melissa Peoples and Sara Short also work for children and their families here at Haven. Together we are so lucky to be able to support young people to be seen and heard. I am also incredibly privileged to receive the support of the broader agency as well as from the staff at the BCSTH. I deeply appreciate being part of a feisty, strong, stubborn, rebellious and proud movement of people who are determined to end domestic violence."



## Awards Honour Crime Prevention Heroes

On November 7, 2015, Minister of Justice, Suzanne Anton, presented the Ministry of Justice Community Safety and Crime Prevention Awards to recipients in Burnaby. The awards recipients were recognized for their outstanding contributions to crime prevention and community safety in British Columbia.

The awards were part of Crime Prevention Week (November 1 to 7), which provides an opportunity for people across British Columbia to organize and participate in events that promote the importance of community assessment, awareness, and action towards addressing and preventing crime and violence in their communities.

Tim Agg received the Award of Distinction in recognition of his more than 30 years of experience working with youth in the justice system. As the Executive Director of PLEA Community



Photo (seated, from left): Haroon Bajwa, Ann Alexander, Minister Anton, Kim Gramlich, Caber, Sgt. Paul Brookes, Garth Letcher

Services Society of BC, Tim has inspired generations of youth justice workers, contributed heavily to policy development for youth justice issues, and has brokered many partnerships in the youth justice sector. Other awards recipients include Garth Letcher, Sergeant Paul Brookes, Haroon Bajwa, and Kim Gramlich. For more information about the awards recipients, please see the [2015 awards brochure](#).

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## Online Training for Service Providers

### [Victim Services: Supporting Victims through the Justice System](#)

Provides an understanding of the justice system and practice tips on providing court support to victims through the justice process. Seats still available.

### [Understanding and Responding to Elder Abuse E-Book and Video](#)

Designed for workers in B.C. who work with older adults who have been abused and neglected

### [Domestic Violence Safety Planning Online Training](#)

Seats for staff and volunteers with our Branch-funded programs are still available

### [Human Trafficking: Canada is Not Immune](#)

Provides information about the indicators of human trafficking and ways to meet the unique needs of trafficked persons



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