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# Project Support to Report

## Situational Assessment

Revised May 10, 2018



Funded by:

Department of Justice Canada, Victims Fund  
Measures to Enhance Criminal Justice System  
Responses to Adult Sexual Assault in Canada



Commissioned by Salvation Army Correctional and Justice Services  
Project funded by Department of Justice Canada, Victim's Fund  
Prepared by Gerda Zonruiter, Research and Evaluation

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## Introduction

This report is the summary of a review of existing literature and key informant interviews conducted to inform Support to Report, a three-year project initiated and developed by Salvation Army Correctional and Justice Services. Support to Report is funded by the Department of Justice Canada, Victims Fund. The Project addresses two Victims Fund priorities:

- Promote access to justice and participation by victims in the justice system by enhancing the Criminal Justice Response in the City of London, Ontario to adult sexual assault
- Increase knowledge and awareness of the impact of victimization, the needs of victims of crime, available services, assistance and programs, and relevant legislation

Project "Support to Report" is a new program originally proposed as a response to a growing number of reports about human trafficking along the 401 and the related growing incidence of sexual assaults occurring in London motels among individuals involved in the sex trade. Funding for this project is provided by Department of Justice Canada, Victims Fund.

Project objectives include:

- Enhance criminal justice system response to complaints of sexual assault made by individuals involved in the sex trade by identifying local system barriers to collaboration with police and informing police about these barriers
- Improve survivors' access to justice by working with police to develop more supportive local system processes and protocols
- Increase survivors' confidence in the justice system by educating survivors about the law and providing individualized support

The program model includes the hiring of a full time dedicated Case Manager who is responsible for:

- Engaging with community agencies to develop partnerships and referral process
- Engaging with clients to identify information and practical support needs and to provide tailored support
- Developing and disseminating educational and information literature to individuals, agencies and police
- Working with police and the justice system to develop local policies and protocols that address system barriers to reporting

## Report Purpose and Outline

The purpose of this report is to provide Salvation Army Correctional and Justice Services with a foundational document to inform the development of the project and project materials as well as to assess ways in which the project could contribute to building a supportive local system for responding to sexual assault reporting needs of individuals involved in the sex trade.

Key informant interviews and a review of academic and grey literature were done to answer the following questions:

1. What are important definitions and concepts to consider?
2. What does the data say about the rate of sexual assault and the rate of reporting:
  - a. in the general population
  - b. in the target population (individuals in the sex trade who have been sexually assaulted and individuals who have been trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation)
3. What are barriers to reporting?
4. What is the impact of victimization?
5. What are the education and information needs of survivors, community agencies, and police?
6. What are the practical support needs of survivors?
7. What is the current situation with regards to education and information that is provided, services addressing practical needs, and reporting practices and protocols?
8. What are opportunities for developing a more supportive local system response?

## Definitions and Concepts

### Target Population for Project Support to Report

Adults age 18+ who self-identify as being involved in the sex industry and having experienced sexual assault. While the primary target group are adults involved in the sex industry, the Project will support any sexually assaulted adult who requests help.

### Sexual Assault

An assault (as defined in s. 265) in which the complainant's sexual integrity is violated (Criminal Code of Canada).

Non-consensual touching of a sexual nature that violates the sexual integrity of the victim. Legal term used in Canada to refer to any form of sexual contact without consent including forced or unwanted kissing, touching, vaginal penetration, anal penetration, and/or oral sex (Alberta Justice and Solicitor General).

Ranging from unwanted sexual touching to sexual activity where the victim/survivor was unable to consent for any reason to sexual attack (General Social Survey).

"Sex trade workers may have definitions of assault that are different from the mainstream and specific to their work. If a woman agrees to a particular kind of sexual act, and a different sexual act is demanded of her, they see this as a sexual assault: "I didn't agree to this kind of sex." (Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, 139)

Levels of sexual assault (Criminal Code Sections 271 to 273):

- Level 1 – section 271 - undefined – presumably any sexual assault that does not include elements of levels 2 or 3
- Level 2 – section 272 – sexual assaults that occur with a weapon present, that cause bodily harm, that involve threats of bodily harm to a person other than the victim, or that are committed with another person
- Level 3 – section 273 – aggravated sexual assaults that result in wounding, maiming, disfiguring, or endangering the life of the victim

(as worded by Johnson, Holly)

### Sexual attack

Sexual assault that involves the use of threats or physical violence (Alberta Justice and Solicitor General); where someone forces or attempts to force unwanted sexual activity through the use of threats, being held down or hurt in some way (General Social Survey).

### Historical assault

A sexual assault reported many years after the occurrence (Alberta Justice and Solicitor General).

Delayed reporting is common...some may not report an assault for many years (Alberta Justice and Solicitor General; Burdick, A.).

Historic cases are common in human trafficking (London Police).

### Disclosing Assault

When an individual tells anyone outside of police services that they have been sexually assaulted (locally developed definition).

### Reporting Assault

When an individual tells police that they have been sexually assaulted (locally developed definition).

### Sex Industry

For this project, sex industry includes a range of activities:

- Indoor sex trade
- Street level sex trade
- Sex trafficked
- Pornography
- Strip club
- Massage Parlor
- Escort
- Sugar Baby
- Underground Dance Club

It is important to be aware that the words in the list above are not likely to be the words that women involved in the sex industry use to describe themselves and their involvement

in sex trade. They are more likely to use words like: hookers, whores, prostitutes, girls, working girls, strippers, dancers, sex workers (Orchard, 2012).

Words that are likely to be used by males involved in the sex industry were not identified in this review.

## Human Trafficking

At this time, there is no consensus of what constitutes human trafficking with law enforcement, service agencies, legal clinic staff and survivors using different definitions and having different interpretations.

For the purposes of Support to Report, individuals who self-identify as being a survivor of sex trafficking will be counted as such.

## Justice

As defined by survivors, it includes: retribution, punishment, incarceration, official acknowledgement that a crime happened, public accountability, and community safety (Clark, H.)

“Victims’/survivors’ understandings, needs, and experiences provide a starting point for developing policies aimed at improving responses to sexual assault” (Clark, H. 29)

“An unsatisfactory outcome (such as the case not progressing beyond the police) could undermine even the most respectful, supportive treatment by system authorities” (Clark, H. 32)

## Data and Statistics

### Sexual Assault Rates

#### *Local Data*

An average of 239 sex assault incidents are reported to London Police each year from 2010 to 2016. The number of incidents varies from year to year, with no general trends (London Police Official Crime Statistics). London’s Sexual Assault helpline reports receiving 850 and 900 calls in 2015 and 2016, respectively. Roughly translated, the Sexual Assault helpline receives three to four calls for every single incident that is reported to London Police.

#### *Across Canada and Ontario*

Across Canada, there are 22 incidents per 1,000 individuals age 15+ (Canada, 2014, General Social Survey):

- Sexual attacks account for 20% of reported sexual assaults (Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, originally from Statistics Canada 2009 “General Social Survey on Victimization”).

The Province’s Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment (2015) reports that one in three Canadian women experience sexual assault in their lifetime.

### *Rates Among Sex Trade Involved Individuals*

Rates are higher among individuals involved in sex trade:

- 21% of 462 unique individuals presenting to the Sexual Assault Centre in Vancouver were identified as sex workers in police files (Du Mont, Janice).
- More than 50% of street level women at risk research study participants in London, Ontario experienced physical or sexual abuse from commercial partners during their lifetime and 73% experienced physical or sexual abuse from intimate partners during their lifetime (City of London). This local finding is consistent with previous research which found that 44% to 70% of individuals involved in sex trade were sexually assaulted by their customers and/or non-customers (Du Mont, J.).
- Women involved in street level sex trade experience rape or robbery (Orchard, T.).
- Based on experience, it is likely that a high percent of women in the sex trade have been sexually assaulted at some point even if they don't recognize it...disclosure comes out over the course of the relationship with Salvation Army (Burditt, A.).

### Sexual Assault Reporting Rates

<b>The Numbers</b>	<b>Description and Source</b>
3.3%	% reporting to police across Canada, based on # incidents recorded on the Incident Based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey/# incidents reported on GSS in 2007 (Johnson, Holly)
5%	% of survey respondents age 15+ who reported to police any sexual assault that occurred in the previous 12 months. This % is the same as in 2004 (General Social Survey, 2014 data released in 2017)
10%	% sexual assaults reported to Ontario police in 2014 (Select Committee)
66%	of survivors of non-historical assault who presented to sex assault centre in Vancouver reported to police (Du Mont, Janice)
34% to 49%	of sex trade involved individuals reported to police (Du Mont, Janice)
17%	of sexually assaulted individuals consulted a support service like a crisis centre/crisis line, victim services, counsellor, psychologist or community centre (General Social Survey, 2014 data released in 2017)
6%	of sexually assaulted individuals talked to a doctor or nurse (General Social Survey, 2014 data released in 2017)

### Human Trafficking Data

There is a lack of data on human trafficking as service agencies, law enforcement, legal clinic staff and survivors use different definitions and have different interpretations (Gabriele, F.).

2% of 551 individuals trafficked in Ontario between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2013 pursued civil claims in civil courts and 77% did not (Gabriele, F.).

Criminal investigations were known to have occurred in 41.3% of human trafficking cases, with 25.2% resulting in a prosecution (Alliance Against Modern Slavery).

Between 20% and 33% of trafficking survivors collaborated with the criminal justice system during the criminal investigation (Alliance Against Modern Slavery).

## Barriers to Reporting and Collaborating

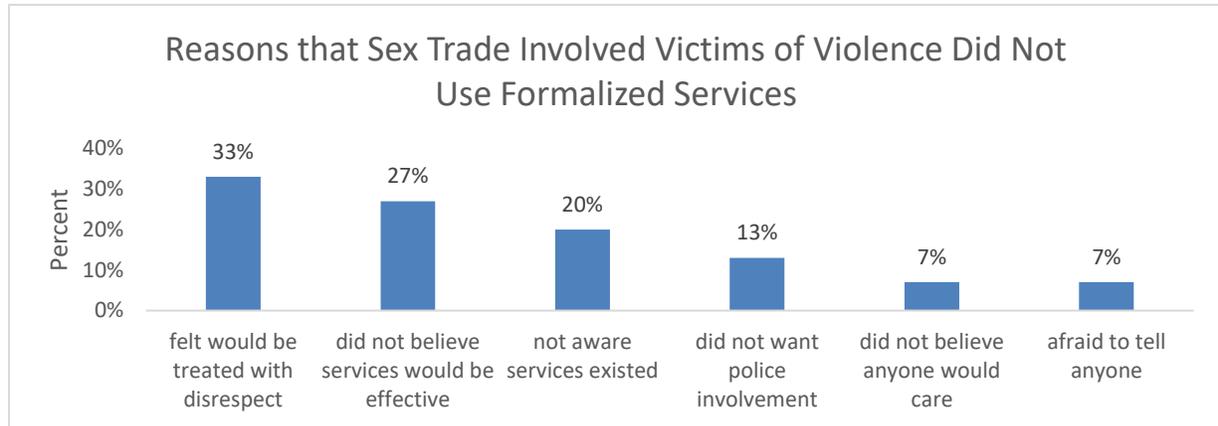
"Maybe 1<sup>st</sup> time of talking to them about reporting, they don't; second time might consider it; 3<sup>rd</sup> time might be more open...if know the lingo, are comfortable talking, it helps people disclose" (Miller, K.)

Individual	Service Providers	Related to Justice System
<p><u>Shame and self-blame</u></p> <p>"Want to move on"</p> <p>Feel young and powerless – won't be believed</p> <p>Crime perceived as minor and not worth taking time to report"</p> <p>Private/personal matter, handled informally</p> <p>No one harmed</p> <p><u>Capacity</u></p> <p>Not stable enough to make statement</p> <p>Not understanding legal system, their rights, and how to navigate</p> <p><u>Relational</u></p> <p>"Trauma bond" too strong</p> <p>Fear of effect on future relationships</p> <p>Desire to protect others</p> <p>Fear of retaliation</p> <p><u>Specific to sex trade</u></p> <p>"Part of the Job" – not recognizing it</p> <p>Fear of being "blacklisted"</p> <p>Many likely to have experienced many layers of harm and may have challenges related to mental health, addictions, poverty</p> <p>Fear of being charged or fined themselves</p>	<p>Past negative experience with service providers</p> <p>Although can get access to resources when connect with service providers, also can get "on the radar"</p> <p>Locally, no anonymity. London is a midsize city with limited service options. Survivors may choose not to connect if past experience felt negative</p>	<p><u>Not feeling like system is safe and supportive</u></p> <p>Negative and non-supportive attitudes and treatment; insensitive investigative techniques</p> <p>Myths and stereotypes entrenched in justice system itself, that blame or disbelieve survivors</p> <p>Did not want hassle of dealing with police</p> <p>Thought police would not have considered incident important enough</p> <p>Lack of evidence/case too old</p> <p><u>Court process</u></p> <p>Legal process – burden of proof is on the survivor who must testify while the accused does not; too formal.</p> <p>Defense attorney tactics which challenge the survivor</p> <p>Lengthy court process requiring an extensive amount of time and preparation prior to going to a judge and multiple court appearances</p> <p>Lack of confidence in justice system – "wouldn't do any good"; don't believe offender would have been adequately punished; low conviction rate; use of conditional sentences</p> <p><u>Specific to sex trade involved</u></p> <p>Lack of police protection</p> <p>Police are identified as victimizers: Past experience of being sexually assaulted by police</p>

More broadly, societal barriers include:

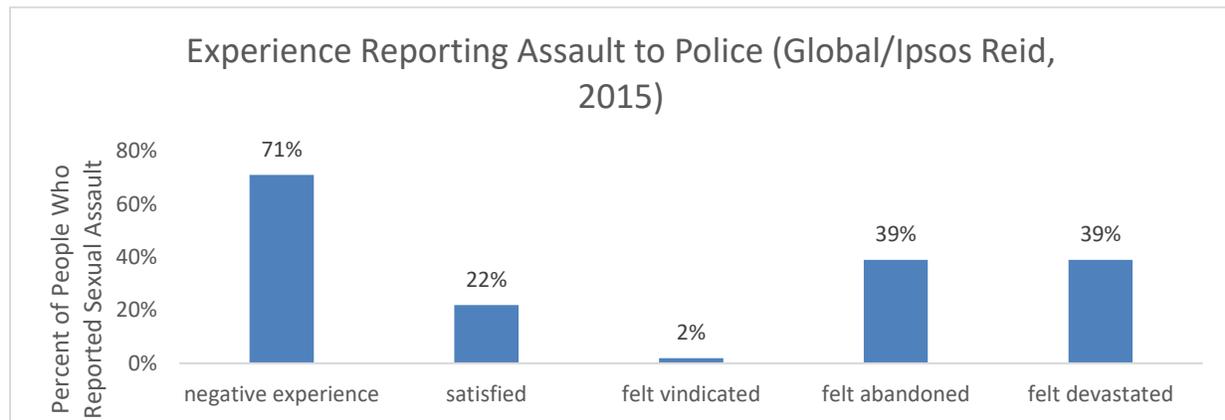
- Rape culture which normalizes, blames the victim, minimizes, and disbelieves sexual assault.
- Language, isolation, and cultural expectations.
- Lack of trust stemming from experiences of discrimination, traumatization, feeling invisible and/or experience of being treated as invisible by the system, feeling of powerlessness/lack of control.

Figure 1: Barriers to Using Formalized Services



Source: 1 Du Mont, J, originally from 1995 study of street-involved women in Vancouver

Figure 2: Experience Reporting to Police



Source: 2 Canadianwomen.org, Fact Sheet, 2016

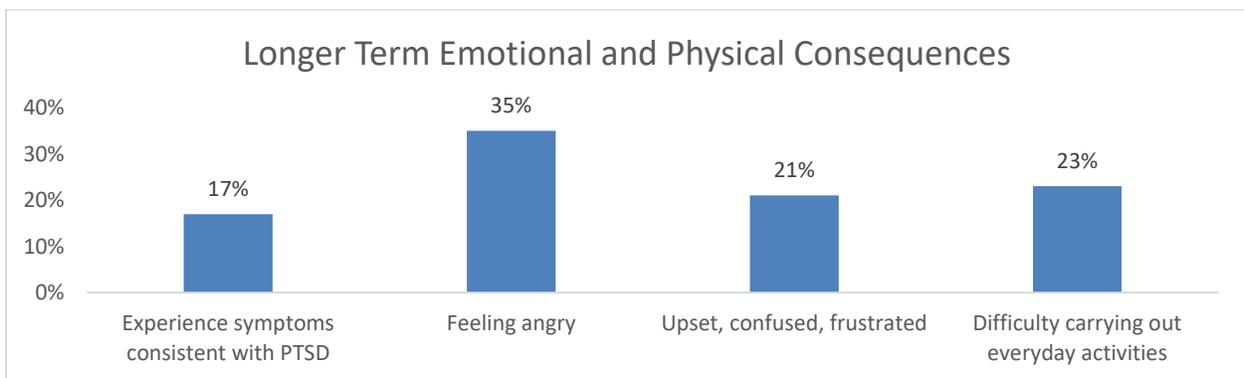
Additional barriers related to collaborating as witness include being incarcerated, not capable of giving testimony, survivor not showing up in court and inability to find the accused.

## Impact of Victimization

The impact of victimization relates to:

- Reporting: Being revictimized, blamed, not believed, not heard/unable to tell story (Clark, H.)
- Emotional appearance during medical-legal examination: Sexually assaulted sex-trade involved victims of violence were more likely than others to appear controlled, calm, withdrawn or subdued during the medical-legal examination. The discussion suggests that diminished emotional response may be the result of chronic victimization (Ontario Legislative Assembly)
- Longer Term Emotional and Physical Consequences

Figure 3: Impact of Sexual Assault



Source: 3 General Social Survey, 2017

“In de-gendering the law and replacing rape with a gradation of sexual assault offences, an important shared social understanding of the meaning and impact of rape for women has been lost” (Johnson, H. 9).

## Needs of Survivors

Education and Information	Practical Support	System
<p><u>Reporting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What constitutes sexual assault/when have been sexually assaulted</li> <li>• Survivors need to know that they can report, that police will listen and that perpetrator will be charged if survivor wants the person to be charged</li> <li>• To address fears that they will be charged - Reassurance that police understand how pimps work and so any illegal activity done by survivor because of pimp is taken into consideration</li> <li>• What their rights are and where they have control, for example, right to control when they make a statement</li> <li>• Reassurance that won't be forced to report or take stand</li> <li>• Reassurance that police believe them</li> <li>• Reasons that police might not press charges</li> <li>• About criminal justice system and its procedures</li> <li>• Practical information about various stages of system, key players, their role in the procedures, potential implications for them of the legal processes and possible outcomes</li> <li>• Help available once an individual has reported such as the Victim Witness Assistance Program</li> </ul> <p><u>Witness</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely information about what to expect from the system</li> <li>• Timely information about the right to ask for testimonial accommodations</li> <li>• Being kept informed during investigative process and prosecution</li> </ul>	<p><u>Crisis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health care for injuries</li> <li>• Emergency food and shelter</li> <li>• Counselling</li> <li>• Protection</li> </ul> <p><u>Reporting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage survivor not to shower or wash until get to hospital and put clothes into paper bag</li> <li>• Non-legal advocate to assist through court process</li> <li>• Legal services</li> <li>• Staying connected with survivor</li> </ul> <p><u>Longer Term</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health care for longer term health problems</li> <li>• Support finding housing</li> <li>• Referrals to education and job training programs</li> <li>• Access to income</li> <li>• Age appropriate counselling</li> <li>• Mental health services</li> <li>• Peer-to-peer support programs</li> <li>• Tattoo removal</li> <li>• Immigration services</li> <li>• Wraparound support</li> </ul> <p><u>Experience with Support Service</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has to be positive for survivors to access the service</li> <li>• Need to see how they themselves could benefit - what is going to better for the survivor from the survivor's perspective</li> </ul>	<p><u>Validation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief, sensitivity and empathy from officials</li> <li>• Status as a victim and survivor of serious crime</li> <li>• To hold the perpetrator to account</li> </ul> <p><u>Voice</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forum to tell story in their own words to a supportive and receptive audience</li> </ul> <p><u>Control</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survivor's best interests to be in forefront</li> <li>• Survivor discretion to proceed with or withdraw complaint</li> </ul> <p><u>Successful Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retribution and punishment</li> <li>• Official record</li> <li>• Safety and protection</li> <li>• Recognition that individual justice needs are diverse</li> </ul>

Education and Information	Practical Support	System
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justice officials to communicate and explain decisions including why they decided not to prosecute</li> </ul> <p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources that are available</li> <li>• Education to family and friends on the wrong and harm of sexual assault</li> </ul> <p><u>Practical Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard copy material</li> <li>• Engage with women to develop education</li> <li>• Use visuals</li> <li>• Peer-led information sharing and education works</li> <li>• If having workshop or gathering, make it a safe and neutral place, and offer food</li> <li>• Hold multiple sessions to build relationships</li> <li>• Come with attitude “you have knowledge that I might not”</li> </ul>		

“...do not like to use shelters for fear of being harassed or assaulted by other shelter users and they don’t feel welcome at the women’s shelter” (City of London)

Accessing social and health service appointments is time consuming as they have between 15 and 30 social service appointments a month which can require preparation and follow up, scheduling and transportation arrangements, and 2 to 5 health care visits. (Orchard, T.)

Need to be able to offer survivors something more than what they currently have – they need to be better off (London Police Human Trafficking Unit, and OPP Human Trafficking Project)

**Education and Information Needs of Professionals**

For frontline workers, sensitivity training informed by an awareness of cultural differences and other factors that may lead to discrimination against individuals, how to work with survivors in a non-judgmental way and trauma-informed care

Training judges, defense attorneys, and Crown attorneys on the realities of sexual violence and harassment and how sex-related crimes impact victim

Different ways that survivors respond to assault/Survivor perspective: common survivor reactions to trauma including denial, shock, disorganized, frightened, fearful, vulnerable, guilt/shame/embarrassment, anger, conflict et cetera

With regards to human trafficking, need to reach out to front-line workers in the form of presentations with the basics of what human trafficking is, what indicators and signs to look for, and what the Human Trafficking Unit is doing.

## Local Context

### System Overview: Partner Agencies Serving Sexually Assaulted Individuals Involved in Sex Industry

Agency	Description of Services Provided
Atlohsa	Similar to Support to Report: Accompany clients to make statement to police, court accompaniments, one-on-one support, Referrals and system navigation Women's emergency shelter and supportive housing Client group: First Nations
Salvation Army Correctional and Justice Services	Crisis response: Food, shower, place to sleep, clothes Report to Victim Services Accompany to hospital or pay for transportation to hospital Contact police Support group
CHOICES Program – partnership between LAWC and SACJS	Outreach Funding immediate needs like cab fare to hospital if in crisis Accompany to police if need to make video-taped statement Prepare women about what to expect once they report Long term counselling Safety planning Advocacy Referrals System navigation Education and information for women being trafficked/at risk of being trafficked In service training for agencies on how to provide counseling to women
ANOVA	Advocacy Education/prevention work – what is sexual assault, disclosure training, reporting and ramifications of reporting Training with criminal justice system on system barriers Crisis lines, counselling, shelter beds Get referrals from other agencies (e.g. FSTV, CMHA) Accompany people through reporting process if needed but not a big need Referrals and system navigation
St. Joseph's Sexual Assault Centre	24 hour, 7 day a week services Sex assault exam within 72 hours of assault Testing up to 6 months post-assault Provide one month of medication for post-exposure to HIV Case management and advocacy Ongoing counseling for individuals who come to the Centre and report an assault that occurred within the previous 12 months

Agency	Description of Services Provided
	Individuals who come to the Centre reporting an assault that occurred more than one year ago are referred to Anova
OPP Human Trafficking Project	Deliver presentations and information sessions about trafficking and what to look for to the public Training for Police upon request Reach out to motels and hotels
Victim Services	Provide information about what supports and help are available
Human Trafficking Prosecution Team (Crown)	A resource for local crown offices to get advice and information Does training for police officers
Fanshawe College, Sexual Violence Prevention	Education, information, advocacy, case management, and reporting support for Fanshawe students who experience sexual assault
Victim Witness Assistance Program	Court support services are available once a charge has been laid
Street Level Women at Risk Program Collaborative	Assists women who are experiencing homelessness and involved in street level sex work to secure permanent housing with supports.

**Current Local Reporting Practices and Protocols**

**Forensics**

A sexual assault exam is done at St. Joseph’s Health Care in London. The Centre is open from 8 to 6, Monday to Friday. It is best to call ahead to reduce wait times in the clinic.

Need to call the Nurse on Call to access the Centre after 6 pm and on the weekends.

An exam by the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) must be done within 72 hours of assault. These exams take an average of 4 hours. Some testing is possible up to 6 months post-assault.

The Province of Alberta has found that while the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) model of care does not increase the rate of reporting, it does reduce wait times, improve evidence collection, and is more supportive of survivors (Alberta Justice and Solicitor General)

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners are registered nurses who have completed specialized education and clinical preparation in the medical forensic care of an individual who has experienced sexual assault or abuse.

## Reporting Human Trafficked

Survivor does not want to charge: police report is still made. Survivor can change mind and lay charge at later date.

Survivor does want to charge: Victim Services offered, investigated like any other criminal investigation

Need to make official statement in detachment where occurrence happened because of need to video tape

Statement does not need to be taken immediately.

## Reporting Sexual Assault

When assault is by a non-intimate partner, then statement must be video-taped at police station.

When assault is by intimate partner, then statement can be video-taped at agency. To stand up in court, statements must be first-hand. To further charges, a witness, including someone who has experienced the assault or who observed the situation, is needed.

Statement does not need to be taken immediately.

## Court Process

Every sexual assault and human trafficking case is treated as a priority file and a Crown Attorney is made available as quickly as possible.

Prior to going to judge, evidence that has been gathered must be disclosed to lawyers and proceedings must be followed. As a result, the court process takes 2 to 3 years. (Crown)

During the court process, the survivor has the support of the crown, VWAP and a police officer.

## Choices Made by Survivors

It is the survivor's choice whether to report and whether to charge the perpetrator.

Survivors have the option of saying "maybe" to reporting to the police rather than being limited to "yes" or "no". The sexual assault team collects the evidence and places it along with documentation, in storage for 6 months to 1 year. There is a process for notification of destruction.

When to provide a statement, when to stop or take a break during statement interview.

Whether to pursue civil claim or not.

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### Case example: Reporting Historic Assault

Individual called 911 reporting a sexual assault that occurred 2 years prior. A police officer was dispatched to take a statement. Case forwarded to Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking Units as the office recognized elements of trafficking. Further investigation and interviews conducted to build case. Charges were laid and accused is in custody. The process took 2 months to build case.

Reducing the wait times for cases to go through the legal system would be "the best way for the court to better respond to claimants" (Key Informant)

## Choices Made by Police

Once reported police decide:

1. How to investigate?
2. After investigating, did a crime occur or not?
3. Should there be an official record of crime? Is there enough evidence? Is evidence solid enough?
4. More investigation and how much effort to put into it?
5. Whether or not to pursue charges.

## Choices Made by Prosecutors

Whether or not there are reasonable prospects for conviction – if not, then may choose not to prosecute.

For Level 1 charges, Prosecutors get to decide how to proceed:

- Indictable offense – punishable up to 10 years in prison.
- Summary offense – punishable up to 18 months in prison.

## Current Issue: Unfounded Rates

In 2017, after a 20-month investigation, a Globe and Mail article reported that London Police deemed that one-third of sexual assaults reported to them between 2010 and 2016 were “unfounded”. This was one of the highest rates across Canada.

In September 2017, the London Free Press reported the results of a local internal review of allegations that were ruled unfounded. The review found that 6 percent of the sample of over 2,000 cases could be considered unfounded. The review found that organizational coding decisions contributed to the high numbers of allegations coded as ‘unfounded’. Following the review, London Police implemented a more appropriate and accurate classification system.

London Police Services is taking steps to improve their approach to responding to allegations of sexual assault:

- Victim-centred.
- Sexual assault investigators trained in areas such as the law of consent and neurobiology of trauma.
- Meeting with community groups and legal officials to develop a strategy to better assist sexual assault complaints.

Based on a sample of 1,030 cases originally labeled as unfounded:

328 were complainants who withdrew from the process

448 were complaints where there were no reasonable grounds for criminal charge

26 were third party allegations and complainant could not be found or did not cooperate

85 incorrectly coded as unfounded

126 false complaints

17 ‘other’

(Carruthers).

## Actionable Ideas for Support to Report

### Program Design: Survivor-centred, focusing on and meeting the needs of survivors

Engage with individuals involved in the sex trade to help inform program services and delivery.

Principles should include: Supporting survivors in ways that help to give them back control in whatever way possible; non-judgmental support services; Meeting survivors where they are; Respecting right to self-identify; Respecting right to choose.

Take a survivor-directed approach to reporting: "Where are you at with regards to reporting this?" and then support no matter what the response. (LAWC)

### Championing System Change: Connected and Trustworthy Supports

Explore feasibility and opportunities to work with local agencies to adopt a coordinated approach that meets the needs of survivors. For example, this could include: working to establish or strengthen links between sexual assault professionals and community sex worker advocacy and support groups; advocating for sexual assault centre that provides 24-hour care; and wrap around service support.

Work with local agencies to explore the feasibility of developing consistent protocols for front-line workers to respond to sexual violence and harassment, to eliminate the influence of preconceived notions, biases, or stereotypes.

Work with local agencies to explore the feasibility of developing standards for responding to reports of sexual violence, including having female officers or social workers present to take victim statements and specialized police units or investigators to oversee sexual assault investigations.

### Education and Advocacy: Justice System Response:

Explore the need for local courts to be more sensitive to survivors' needs and preferences – for example, gender-neutral washrooms in court house; Crown using the survivor's preferred name and not automatically using birth name.

"Why does it take so long to go through court system?" (Key Informant)

Engage with police on current activity at improving their response to sexual assault allegations.

A local practice that would be helpful is for the survivor to be able to connect with the same officer throughout the reporting/court process. It would also be helpful if survivors could be kept informed of their case.

"Would be nice if could do video-taped statement at a more victim-centred location than the police station to make it less intimidating" (LAWC)

## Advocacy: Options for Seeking Justice

Gather local data to inform the need for advocacy for:

- Access to alternative forms of justice such as restorative justice systems or specialized survivor-centred sexual violence courts; and
- Access to more accessible civil justice system such as facilitating online claims.

“An unsatisfactory outcome (such as the case not progressing beyond the police) could undermine even the most respectful, supportive treatment by system authorities” (Clark, H. 32)

## Education and Awareness Component

Engage with the London Police training coordinator to discuss opportunities for delivering and/or collaborating with existing efforts regarding education and awareness for London Police and the Crown about sexual assault reporting barriers and victim impact.

Link London Police with the OPP Human Trafficking Project as this Project could provide London Police with education and information support.

Consider and explore opportunities for engaging with local media with regards to media reporting of sexual assaults perpetrated on individuals involved in sex trade and media reporting of successful prosecutions of sexual assault against someone in the sex trade. Media reports about perpetrators who get punished and their sentences show survivors that reporting can result in convictions, which can influence an individual’s decision to report.

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