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PCVI News



Issue 1 / Volume 1

Welcome

Welcome to the Policy Centre for Victim Issues Newsletter. On behalf of PCVI, I am pleased to introduce this newsletter and share information on the Policy Centre for Victim Issues at the Department of Justice Canada. In two weeks we celebrate National Victims of Crime Awareness Week (NVCAW), April 13-19. During this time, we should take a moment to recognize the accomplishments that have been made in victim programs, services and legislation and focus on what remains to be achieved. I encourage you all to take part in the NVCAW events in your community and mark the third annual NVCAW with us.

Catherine Kane

Acting Senior General Counsel
Department of Justice

The third National Victims of Crime Awareness Week symposium will bring together victims, victim service workers, volunteers, academics and policy makers to learn and share about the issues that they face everyday.

National Victims of Crime Awareness Week



On April 14, the Government of Canada will host

the third annual NVCAW symposium in Ottawa. Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Rob Nicholson and Minister of Public Safety Stockwell Day will be on hand to officially launch NVCAW 2008.

Minister Nicholson and Minister Day will give opening remarks and reflect on the efforts made in the past three years to raise awareness of victim issues through NVCAW. The Ministers will be followed by a keynote address from former NHL hockey player Sheldon Kennedy. Sheldon is best known for his courageous act to

charge his junior hockey coach with sexual assault. Since retiring from professional hockey, Sheldon has led numerous efforts to raise awareness about abuse in sport.

The symposium includes workshops on Elder Abuse, Correctional Service of Canada Victim Services Program, Hate Crimes Victimization, Information Needs for Victims of Crime, Cyber Crime and Responses to Mass Victimization. These workshops will focus on innovative responses to the needs of victims and provide insight into new and emerging areas of victim issues.

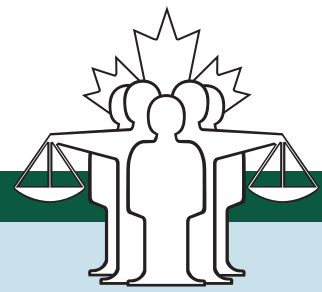
The third NVCAW symposium will bring together victims, victim service workers, volunteers, academics and policy makers to learn and share about the issues that they face everyday. Sharing information and exchanging ideas about the newest

research informs our day to day work and grounds our work in the knowledge that victims have needs to which we must respond.

NVCAW is organized by the Policy Centre for Victim Issues (PCVI) at the Department of Justice, the National Office for Victims within Public Safety Canada and a national organizing committee made up of representatives from government and non-governmental organizations, victim services providers, victim advocates and victims. PCVI would like to thank the committee for all of their hard work and contribution to NVCAW.

The NVCAW symposium is free to attend and for more information or to register visit www.victimsworld.gc.ca





Activities

Across Canada, communities large and small will be organizing events to recognize National Victims of Crime Awareness week. Below is a snapshot of some of the events planned.

In **Bonavista, Newfoundland**, BAYNET Inc. will bring together youth from local schools to participate in a two-day summit dealing with victim issues and other challenges surrounding youth violence. Over the two days, peer mentors will gain exposure as youth leaders and learn to become youth mentors in their schools.

A sky lantern ceremony honouring victims and survivors of crime will highlight National Victims of Crime Awareness

Week in **Listiguj, Quebec**. The Listiguj Community Health Services will coordinate a series of activities throughout the week in an effort to raise awareness of the issues that victims of crime face in the criminal justice system.

On April 18th in **Inuvik, Northwest Territories** approximately 50 community professionals that provide services to victims of crime or tragedy will come together for a luncheon, hosted by Inuvik Victim Services.

The **Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society** will host a panel presentation to launch a series of videos/DVDs on abuse.

The event is expected to draw 200 professionals and media personnel.

On April 19 in **Montreal, Quebec**, CRIPHASE (Le Centre de ressources et d'intervention pour hommes abusés sexuellement dans leur enfance) will mobilise the community with a walk for victims of sexual abuse in childhood. For more information, visit their website at: www.marchevas.ca

Nimikanan Niinawan ezhi Maamawiji'ing (Ojibway translation of "finding the way together") organizers will host a week of activities in **Pic Mobert, Ontario** combining aboriginal and mainstream approaches to increase awareness of the impact of crime on individuals, families and communities.

Interview



Dr. Susan McDonald is a lawyer and is currently a Senior Researcher with the federal Department of Justice in Ottawa. Her primary areas of research include victims of crime, public confidence in the criminal justice system, and access to justice.

Q What victims research projects are you working on right now?

A There are several research projects on the go right now. One of the most challenging projects is a study of restitution with Saskatchewan. It is quite challenging because the data is located in different places such as the Court of Queen's Bench and the provincial court. For both sites the data is housed in information management systems as well as in court files. Determining what data is available and the quality of it can be the most important step in developing research projects.

Q What are the emerging trends in victims research?

A In Canada, we need more research to understand how the specific *Criminal Code* provisions are working for victims. While there has been good research in a number of areas such as Victim Impact Statements, we still do not know how many of these are actually filed and/or read to the court each year in the different jurisdictions. We have a lot of research to do on how the restitution and surcharge provisions are working in practice, as well as the provisions on testimonial aids.

We also need to continue work on understanding victim services – which services work and how best to deliver them – particularly with the challenges in rural and remote communities.

Q What one project do you want to be working on one year from now?

A I would like to be working on a research project that is planned – interviews with sexual assault survivors to

better understand what affects their confidence in the criminal justice system, their reasons for reporting or not, and how they learned about the law. This project would replicate one done in the late 90s and we would be able to see if there have been any changes in how sexual assault survivors perceive the criminal justice system.

Q In the last year, what was the one finding that surprised you the most?

A We have completed research on the federal victim surcharge in two jurisdictions. The findings show that, on average, the surcharge (which is mandatory unless "undue hardship" can be shown by the defence) is waived in more than two thirds of cases. We plan to continue this research to see whether this is consistent in other jurisdictions.