



PRESS RELEASE

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April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Truro, NS: April 1, 2021 begins the annual Sexual Assault Awareness Month in communities across Canada. Throughout the month of April, the Colchester Sexual Assault Centre will be actively breaking down the barriers that many Nova Scotians face when accessing support services in their community. The education programs and support services offered by the Colchester Sexual Assault Centre are based on a single fundamental principle, to create a positive healing journey for those impacted by sexual violence. However, one of the greatest obstacles in accessing those available services are the negative myths that deter far too many from getting the support they need. Sexual violence impacts everyone, which is why the Colchester Sexual Assault Centre remains open and available to everyone, to all gender orientations and identities, in need of support.

MYTH-BUSTING RAPE CULTURE

Rape culture is a term that describes an environment where sexual violence is viewed as common, normal, and inevitable. It is largely maintained by common myths about sexual violence. Let's set the record straight.

THOSE IMPACTED BY SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Silence does not equal consent.
- No one has the "right" to sex, including spouses and partners.
- The "freeze" trauma response (as opposed to "fight" or "flight") is most common response during sexual violence.
- There are many different ways of reacting to sexual violence (crying, rage, numbness, laughter).
- No one can consent to sex while unconscious (asleep, drunk).

PERPETRATORS

- Most perpetrators engage in multiple forms of sexual violence (jokes, cat-calling, unsolicited nudes, etc.).
- 73% of sexual assaults are by someone the victim knows.
- 80% of sexual assaults occur in the home.
- 75% of sexual assaults are premeditated.

REPORTING

- Most people tell the truth about sexual violence.
- Only 2-4% of sexual assault reports are false reports.
- Most people do not want to report sexual violence to police and only 6% are, in fact, reported.
- Of those reported, only 1-2% make it to trial and only 0.3% of perpetrators are found guilty.
- Memory loss is common after sexual violence due to trauma.

RISK FACTORS

- The most common date rape drug is alcohol.
- How you dress does not affect your chances of experiencing sexual violence.
- Women with disabilities, POCs, 2SLGBTQI+ folks, and Indigenous women are at much higher risks of sexual violence.
- Sexual violence occurs as frequently in same-sex relationships as it does heterosexual relationships.
- Online sexual violence can be just as traumatizing as in-person forms of sexual violence.

MEN & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Sexual violence is a crime of power and violence, not because men "can't control their urges."
- The majority of perpetrators are heterosexual men.
- 1 in 6 men will experience sexual violence, often before age 16.
- Just because you get an erection or ejaculate during sexual violence, does not mean it was consensual.
- Adolescent boys' forced "initiations" into sexual activity (e.g. by a teacher, boss, friend, babysitter, or sex worker) is sexual violence.

Sources: Statistics Canada (2014), Break the Silence NS

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“Statistics are important and they certainly grab people’s attention but statistics don’t help people heal. Our organization is here to help in the healing journey for anyone impacted by sexual violence, and we are seeing that demand continue to grow – now more than ever. Throughout 2020, and now well into 2021, we are seeing a surge in new cases being reported into our Community Resource Centre, quadrupling in numbers since the COVID-19 pandemic first began. That is why we have developed new virtual programming to make our support services more easily accessible and that are specifically designed to help throughout the different stages in our clients’ unique journey.” says Jamie Matthews, Executive Director

During the month of April, and as part of its 25th anniversary, the Colchester Sexual Assault Centre has introduced its Aftercare: Journey Program which was created to further support clients along their healing journey. Following completion of the initial offering of the twelve free individual sessions with a Counselling Therapist, clients will be “graduated” into the Aftercare: Journey Program. This program is available both in-person or virtually and is comprised of five distinct themes including: understanding self-esteem, identifying values, boundaries and healthy relationships, effective communication techniques and self-forgiveness. Following the completion of the program, clients can be referred to other local organizations who are members of our highly trusted network of referral partners for services that are already well-established in the community. Every client will also be provided a Strategies Tool Kit that is a comprehensive workbook filled with exercises, resources, and helpful tips and tricks that will help in effectively managing their self-care.

“We are incredibly proud to unveil this new program to our clients across the Colchester, East Hants and Cumberland Counties. We are confident that our highly trained and specialized team of Counselling Therapists can deliver the highest quality of care to our clients along their healing journey. That’s what Awareness Month means to us, that we’re not just bringing awareness to the issue but we’re bringing awareness to the resources that are available, and that the Colchester Sexual Assault Centre is here to help.” says Matthews

ABOUT THE COLCHESTER SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE:

Located in Truro, Nova Scotia, the services of the Colchester Sexual Assault Centre (CSAC) are available, but not limited to, individuals in the Colchester, Cumberland and East Hants counties. Since its founding in 1992, and its incorporation in 1996, the CSAC is a non-profit community-based organization dedicated to strengthening, empowering, and supporting those impacted by sexual violence in a gender-equitable, compassionate environment. The ultimate goal of the CSAC is the prevention of sexual violence. The CSAC provides numerous services and programs, including one-on-one counselling, emotional support to those impacted by sexual violence and their support network, group counselling, presentations, awareness, advocacy and community events.

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