

SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRES FUNDING

November 2019

The Issue

The need for increased funding to support the demand for services. The last amount released was a one-time \$1 million, rather than the \$4 million stable funding that the centres had hoped for.

Increased demand:

- Sexual assault centres have seen a dramatic increase in request for services, starting in 2014 with the Jian Ghomeshi case, then #MeToo.
- In 2016 Ontario's sexual assault centres responded to over 50,000 crisis line calls—up from 30,000 recorded in 2009¹.
- The prevalence of sexual assault in Ontario rose from 7,434 police-reported incidences in 2016 and 8,782 in 2017 to 10,634 in 2018 —revealing a year over year increase of almost 19%.²
- Sexual Assault Center Kingston – requests for services doubled in three years³
- Barbra Schlifer Clinic, Toronto – in 2018 reported a 93% increase in counselling services and a 27% increase in legal advice services over 2017.⁴
- Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region – in February 2019, 176 people on the waitlist, up from what they previously saw as a crisis - 40 or 50 people⁵

Funding:

- Handled between Attorney General and Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Women's Issues Ontario
- March 2018 – Part of *It's Never Okay, An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment*, the Liberal government pledged to boost funding for the 40 sexual assault centers by 30% or \$14.8 million over the three years; didn't release it before the election.⁶
- May 2018 – Review established by Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services in conjunction with the Violence Against Women Coordinating Committees⁷
- Feb.2019 - **One time funding of \$1million**, rather than the ongoing \$4 million as hoped for; total funding \$15.8 million in 2019-20⁸

Action:

- Meet with your local sexual assault centre to learn more about their situation.
- **Write to your MPP asking for their support to in turn support the centres, to save the 2019 \$1 million, and to increase the funding to handle the waiting lists.**
- Share their stories through the club's newsletters.
- Invite those running shelters and sexual assault clinics as speakers.

¹ Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres <https://sexualassaultsupport.ca/statistics-canada-almost-19-year-over-year-increase-in-sexual-assaults-in-ontario/>

² Statistics Canada. *Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, Canada, provinces, territories and Census Metropolitan Areas*. Data release – July 22, 2019.

Online: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510017701&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.16&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.16>

³ <https://www.kingstonist.com/news/sexual-assault-centre-grapples-with-funding-cuts-increase-of-reported-sexual-violence/>

⁴ https://schliferclinic.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/BSC_Annual_ReportFINAL.pdf

⁵ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/sexual-assault-support-centre-waterloo-region-funding-1.5026755>

⁶ <https://news.ontario.ca/owd/en/2018/03/its-never-okay-ontarios-gender-based-violence-strategy.html>

⁷ <https://news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2018/11/ontario-working-to-stop-violence-against-women-and-support-survivors.html>

⁸ <https://news.ontario.ca/mag/en/2019/02/ontario-guarantees-funding-for-victim-services.html>