

Community Needs Assessment: Providing Sexual Assault Counselling to Child Survivors of Sexual Violence and Their Families



Background

Kawartha Sexual Assault Center (KSAC) is a dedicated not-for-profit organization committed to addressing and combating sexual violence within the community. KSAC currently serves individuals above the age of 16 who have experienced sexual violence. KSAC has noticed a rise in requests specifically seeking sexual assault (SA) services for youth under 16.

Purpose

To proactively address the observed increase in requests for sexual assault services for those under 16 and to identify specific needs in this demographic with the possibility of eventually contributing to the development of KSAC's prevention and support services.

Research Questions

- (1) Does Peterborough and the surrounding area need sexual assault specific services for children under the age of 16?
- (2) If so, what types of support and resources are most effective in addressing the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of sexual assault survivors under the age of 16?

Methods

1. Literature Review

- Treatment modalities
- Time-sensitive need for service
- Effectiveness of services

2. Interview #1

- Providers of support services in the community
- Current supports, current barriers, level of need for specialized services

3. Interview #2

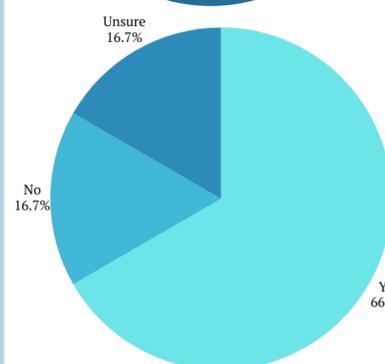
- Private Practitioners + Youth service providers in Ontario
- Treatment modalities, funding models, recommendations for a program

4. Thematic Analysis

- Reoccurring themes, responses, & ideas
- Part 1 & 3 data for recommendations for service implementation
- Part 2 & 3 data for level of need, current barriers, and current services

“ There really isn't a service following a sexual assault that's time-sensitive that can allow youth to access the kind of service they need, so that trauma event doesn't turn into a larger problem in their life, and often right now, that is what we see because they are not getting seen fast enough. ”

Key Findings



- All participating support service agencies believe there is an unmet need for sexual assault services for youth under 16 in Peterborough and surrounding community.
- A majority of participating agencies saw an increase in the number of requests seeking sexual assault services for youth under 16
- One agency saw an increase of 26.3% between April 2023 and February 2024
- Peterborough's reported crime rates of sexual violence-related offences including offences against children was 12% higher compared to the rate of Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2020)

Current Gaps/Barriers

- Funding (44%): Limited resources hinder expansion of services for sexually assaulted youth.
- Waitlists (44%): High demand leads to prolonged waiting periods
- Cost of current services (44%): limit access for those unable to afford them.
- Stigma (33%): stigma surrounding SA discourages youth and families from seeking needed support

Recommendations

- Dual approach of both familial/ individual counselling (55%)
- Community awareness of available services for easier referral (44%)
- Collaboration between KSAC and youth mental health services (33%)
- Stabilization sessions/trauma and violence informed care (33%)

Researcher: Kenzie Pilon

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Joel Cahn

Host Supervisors: Brittany McMillan & Heather Howe

TCRC Supervisors: Brittany Finigan & Carolyn Mount

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