

ALL  
HUMAN  
BEINGS  
ARE BORN  
FREE AND  
EQUAL IN  
DIGNITY  
AND  
RIGHTS

TOUS  
LES ÊTRES  
HUMAINS  
NAISSENT  
LIBRES ET  
ÉGAUX ET  
DIGNITÉ  
ET EN  
DROITS



**OCTEVAW**

Ottawa Coalition To End Violence Against Women

# Hidden from Sight:

*A Look at the  
Prevalence of  
Violence Against  
Women in Ottawa*

# **Hidden from Sight: A Look at the Prevalence of Violence Against Women in Ottawa**

May 2009

This report, as well as additional information on violence against women can be found on our website:  
**[www.octevaw-cocvff.ca](http://www.octevaw-cocvff.ca)**

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**Mandy Faulkner, Holly Johnson, Isabelle N. Miron, Halina Siedlikowski, Bonnie Stephanson and Erin Williams.**

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# Voice of OCTEVAW Members on Violence Against Women (VAW)

The collection of VAW specific statistics from local agencies is important in order to highlight the gender-based issues that the women in our community face. It also provides an opportunity to identify trends and gaps in service for the women who experience woman abuse and sexual assault.

**Mandy Faulkner**  
*Chair of OCTEVAW*

This project is important in that it merges information from many sources and allows us to get a clearer picture of what is happening to women who are victims of sexual violence and women who are victims of violence by their partners. In addition, this method of merging information will serve as a template with which to collect data in the coming years and to track our progress in ending violence against women.

**Halina Siedlikowski, R.N.,M.Sc.(A),CPMHN(C)**  
*Vice-chair of OCTEVAW and Teaching Associate, University of Ottawa*

This research project is a collaboration of statistical data collected from various agencies who work with women who have experienced violence. It is our hope that the data collected will help inform and provide a more comprehensive and global picture to the community as well as those working with women. Its aim will be to identify gaps in services, the prevalence of different forms of violence against women, and the current state of issues surrounding violence against women. The data collected will potentially provide recommendations for an action-oriented process to improve services and end violence against women.

**Angelika Lorinser**  
*Women's Advocate*

Statistics often reflect the experiences only of a small percentage of women. This research captures a more realistic and comprehensive look at women who have experienced sexual violence and highlights the fact that they access a variety of services.

**Sexual Assault Network**



# Overview of Findings and Recommendations

## Findings

### **Woman Abuse**

#### *Police:*

- In 2007 - 2008, police responded to 2,440 total domestic violence occurrences where charges were laid or warrants sought.
- Of those 2,440 occurrences, 2,168 men were charged representing 89% of all domestic violence cases, 45% of those men were repeat woman abuse offenders.
- In 2007 - 2008, it is predicted that the Ottawa Police Victim Crisis Unit handled approximately 1,579 occurrences of partner assault, which were perpetrated by men against women.

#### *Hospital:*

- The Sexual Assault and Partner Abuse Care Program from April 2007 - March 2008 saw 53 acute (emergency) clients who had been physically assaulted by their partner within the previous 72 hours.
- Of these cases, 15 (28%) of the women had also been sexually assaulted by their partner.
- Only 62% involved the police. All clients were women.

#### *Women's Shelters:*

- In 2007 - 2008, women between the ages of 26-35 were the largest group of women to access shelters
- In general women accessing shelters reported emotional/psychological abuse most frequently at 47%.
- In 2007, Ottawa women's shelters provided safe housing for 544 women and 444 children. However, due to the overwhelming demand, the shelters had to turn away 3,281 women, as there was simply no space available.
- On average, most shelters report turning away 1-3 women daily. In general, for every one woman served by an Ottawa shelter, six are turned away.
- It is estimated that in a single year the 7 shelters collectively receive over 18,600 phone calls for service, averaging just over 50 calls per day in Ottawa.

#### *Community Services:*

- 56% of women accessing community resources for woman abuse fall below the low-income cut-off for a single person living in Ottawa
- 62% of women with one child and 65% of those with two children fell below the low-income cut-off.

#### *New Directions:*

- In 2007 - 2008, 1,135 men were referred to New Directions for treatment.
- 934 men began the program and 689 completed treatment (74%), while some remain in ongoing treatment.



### *Children's Aid Society:*

- In 2008, 342 cases were referred to the CAS/VAW Integrated Services unit, however, due to limited resources, only 81 cases were served.
- Overall, 80% of all CAS files agency-wide include some form of woman abuse.

## **Sexual Assault**

### *Police:*

- In 2007 - 2008, there were a total of 606 sexual assault cases, by adding in other related sex crimes, there is a total of 644 cases.
- It is predicted that a total of 6,060 sexual assaults actually occurred from 2007 - 2008, when extrapolating from the fact that only 10% of sexual assaults are actually reported.

### *Courts:*

- In 2008, Ottawa courts tried individuals on 245 sexual assault charges and 93 other sexual offences for a total of 338 charges. During this time, the court disposed of 366 sexual violence charges. However, there is no published figure on the number of guilty verdicts.

### *Hospital:*

- The Sexual Assault and Partner Abuse Care Program from April 2007 - April 2008 saw 151 acute (emergency) clients who had been sexually assaulted within the previous 72 hours.
- Of those cases, only 46% involved the police. The vast majority of cases involved clients who were women (97%).
- Ottawa's rate of suspected drug-facilitated sexual assault was 4.5% higher than average at 25.5% out of 7 Ontario cities.

### *Community Resources:*

- One Ottawa sexual assault agency reported that in an average year they receive over 5,000 crisis calls.

## **Homicide**

### *Nationally:*

- In Canada during 2007, 162 women were murdered representing 27.3% or 1 in 4 of all homicides.
- In 2006, 56 women were killed by their husbands or common-law partners-current, separated or divorced.

### *Provincially:*

- In 2007, 21 women and children were murdered in Ontario as a result of woman abuse. In 2008, 15 women and children were similarly murdered.

### *Locally:*

- In 2007, 7 women were murdered; 3 by male partners.
- In 2008, 3 women were murdered; 2 by male partners.



## ***New Areas of Interest***

- Ottawa has seen an increase in forcible confinement charges. Most recently in 2008, the average number of charges per quarter doubled in the third quarter of 2008.
- New research in Ottawa found that women with pets prolong leaving relationships where domestic violence is prevalent for fear of their pets' safety, inadequate housing for their pets, and the loss of companionship.

## **Recommendations**

The following long-term recommendations are proposed by OCTEVAW as a result of *Hidden from Sight*.

### **A. Standardized Reporting and Data Collection**

#### **1. Justice System**

- Improve the identification and recording of woman abuse crimes, particularly homicides, by police.
- Increase the level of detailed data released to the public.
- Measure and publish recidivism rates by provincial partner assault programs.
- Increase the transparency of and publish case resolutions within the local Domestic Violence Court.

#### **2. Governmental Departments**

- Increase communication between ministries to allow for VAW cases to be publicly tracked from the time charges are laid until the end of that individual's contact with the criminal justice system.
- Standardization of requirements for data collection and reporting for VAW community agencies.
- Increase funding to create and maintain a community-managed centralized database of VAW data that would allow for real-time data monitoring.

#### **3. Community-Based Agencies**

- Track similar and consistent information about women accessing services.
- Input VAW data into the proposed community-managed centralized database.
- Replicate this study at a future date to enable the mapping of trends over time.

### **B. Inclusive Research Procedure**

It is important to recommend and advocate for a future research process that would aim to be more inclusive of and accessible to community-based agencies and all women in the Ottawa community.

### **C. New Areas of Interest**

It is vital that the community and future research continue to expand its focus to include new trends and changes in the nature of VAW. Additionally, it is important to identify and research additional barriers that women face in accessing VAW services.

The following research topics are examples of new areas that surfaced during the course of completing *Hidden from Sight*. They require more attention, yet are by no means inclusive and exhaustive of all new and possible VAW research areas.



## **Internet Abuse**

- Track and flag Internet based abuse/violence for information gathering and monitoring for the purpose of developing initiatives to combat this form of VAW.
- Include Internet abuse on future victimization surveys to gather information on cases not reported to police.

## **Forcible Confinement**

- Pay specific attention to forcible confinement cases and implement continuous monitoring to track changes in rates for the purpose of developing initiatives to combat this form of VAW.
- Include forcible confinement on future victimization surveys to gather information on cases not reported to police.

## **Additional Barriers**

- Identify and study new and additional barriers that prevent women from accessing services and agencies in cases of woman abuse and/or sexual assault, for example pet ownership.

# Mission, Vision and values

## ***Mission:***

The Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW) is a coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to ending violence against women (VAW) and through leadership, education, advocacy and political action, to promoting a coordinated response to women and their children who have experienced abuse. We bring together women's shelters, sexual assault centres, children's services, health and resource centres, police services, hospital services, victims' services, the Crown, researchers, students and other community agencies and justice partners to combat woman abuse and sexual violence in our community.


## ***Vision:***

OCTEVAW aspires to a future in which:

- No woman in our community need fear for her safety and well-being, or that of her children;
- Respect for the inherent worth and dignity of all women is reflected in our public institutions; and,
- All members of the community are united in supporting efforts to ensure a permanent end to violence and abuse of women and their children in Ottawa.

## ***Values:***

In working collaboratively to achieve equality of rights, fair access to services and resources, and social justice for women and their children who have experienced abuse, OCTEVAW adheres to feminist, anti-racist and anti-oppression principles and is committed to celebrating diversity, inclusiveness and the dignity of all women and their children.



# Background to the Project

*Hidden from Sight* was born out of a prevailing need for a more accurate overview of the prevalence of VAW in Ottawa. Over the years and through discussions amongst members of OCTEVAW, it became clear that there existed a need for a local snapshot of the issue, which would provide the general public, service providers and policy makers with an understanding of the scope of VAW in our city. To that end, OCTEVAW received one-time project funding in 2008 - 2009 from the Ministry of Community and Social Services to conduct research and write this report.

This project has two main goals: consolidating currently available VAW data collected by local agencies and educating the public on the prevalence of VAW in Ottawa. It is OCTEVAW's hope that *Hidden from Sight* can act as a reference and resource tool for the community in addition to being a starting point for more in-depth research and dialogue leading to change and equality for women.

## Time Frame

Unless otherwise specified, 2007 - 2008 refers to the full 24 calendar months of this time period. In cases where organizations track information based on the fiscal calendar, their data has been recoded to correspond to the appropriate timeframe or as otherwise noted.

## Geographic Location

This report has included data from agencies who serve women currently residing in the Ottawa area or who have accessed services in Ottawa but may live elsewhere.

## Methodology of the Project

To coordinate the research project, OCTEVAW hired a part-time researcher to liaise between the agencies involved, manage and analyze the data and write a final report. The overall intention was to be as participatory as possible by eliciting feedback from OCTEVAW members as to the focus and design of the project. Therefore, an open meeting for members was held in November 2008, at which discussions on content, format and goals for the final report began.

The research coordinator then contacted specific agencies through information letters (see APPENDICES A and B) phone calls and emails. The pool of agencies snowballed with input from OCTEVAW members and the agencies initially contacted (for a list of all agencies contacted see APPENDIX C). In the end, 44 agencies were contacted and invited to participate, while a total of 16 agencies and institutions were actually able to contribute data.

Agencies contributed available data along four major themes: demographic characteristics of clients served, number of clients served, chief concern of client served, and referrals to other services. A \$50 honorarium was offered to all community-based agencies to assist with amassing data.



## Limitations of the Research Design

A number of limitations in the research design result from the ad hoc nature of the project:

### Resources

- A great challenge for this project was finding individuals within each agency who could spare the time to summarize and submit relevant data. Although interest in participating was high, not all organizations were able to provide data due to a lack of time or available resources. Therefore, the data presented in this report should not be considered exhaustive or inclusive of all women affected by violence in Ottawa.
- It is not possible from the data provided to assess the status of VAW in all its diversity. Certain groups of women who experience multiple barriers and intersecting oppressions may not have been thoroughly accounted for in this report including (but not limited to) Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, women of colour, Francophone women and single parents. Due to limited resources and time, it was impossible to do an exhaustive and extensive collection of data from all agencies that may have served women survivors of violence. Thus, it is important to recommend and advocate for a future research process that would aim to be as inclusive and accessible as possible.

### Data Collection

- It is important to note that this report includes data collected from 16 Ottawa agencies. Therefore women who have come forward to agencies not included in this report and women who have not come forward to any agency will not be reflected in the data. *Hidden from Sight* should be read as a starting point but not as an exhaustive picture of VAW within our city.
- All data presented within this report came from pre-existing data collected by the agencies themselves and no two agencies collect the same data in exactly the same format. As such, our role was to faithfully report and analyze the data as it was provided to us.
- There are two counting limitations important to this report. First, VAW tends to be highly under-reported. Second, women who contact more than one agency will more than likely be counted more than once in the data. Figures in this report should therefore be interpreted as the number of contacts that women have had with services and not the number of women affected (unless otherwise stated).
- Cases of woman abuse often include elements of sexual abuse. However, sexual violence is particularly underreported (Statistics Canada, 2008) due to the shame and stigma experienced by survivors. When women report abuse by their partners, they often do not disclose sexual abuse, making sexual violence more difficult to measure. Additionally, this report does not focus on sexual violence committed against minors less than 16 years of age.



# Violence Against Women (VAW)

## Definitions and Terminology

### **Violence Against Women**

Violence against anyone is unacceptable. However, violence perpetrated by men against women represents a unique aspect of a wider social problem and requires specific attention and solutions. Experiences of woman abuse and sexual violence must be assessed against the backdrop of the historical, social, political, cultural and economic inequality of women.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) from the United Nations defines VAW as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.” Health Canada has adapted this as the official definition of VAW of the Government of Canada (Health Canada, 2006). In addition, the Declaration further defines VAW as understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:

- (a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;
- (b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;
- (c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs (United Nations, 1993).

### **Survivor**

The word “victim” is often used to describe women who have experienced violence; however, it is often argued that the term pathologizes individuals and their experiences. The word “survivor” stems from a feminist framework and emphasizes and celebrates the enduring strength and resiliency of women. This term has been chosen for this report to refer to women who have experienced violence.

### **Woman Abuse**

Woman abuse is a term that stems from a gender-based analysis. It refers to psychological, emotional, verbal, environmental, social, financial, ritual and religious abuse, harassing behaviour and use of physical or sexual violence, be it actual or threatened, that occurs by a man to a woman who currently or previously shared an intimate relationship. Woman abuse can occur in all relationships regardless of relationship type or status (dating, common law, or marriage). The violence may represent isolated incidents, but typically occurs within a larger context of power and control leading to ongoing abuse and controlling behaviour.

Woman abuse will be used to describe women who have experienced violence in a past or present relationship. An exception to this terminology will be in using the term domestic violence to reflect the terminology of particular agencies and/or institutions.

### **Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)**

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a gender-neutral term that describes abusive relationships. The focus may not be on perpetrators who are men and women survivors.



## **Sexual Violence**

Sexual Violence is used in this report as an umbrella term to refer to a variety of sexually aggressive behaviours. It is important to note that the *Criminal Code of Canada* has a specific definition of sexual assault (see APPENDIX D). Due to the limitations of this definition, the VAW community uses the following broader definition:

*Sexual Assault* is an unwanted act of a sexual nature that is imposed on another person without their consent. It is a crime defined in the *Criminal Code of Canada*. This may include:

- Any kissing, fondling, touching, oral/anal sex, and sexual intercourse without consent;
- Forcing someone to engage in sexual intercourse or any other sexual act; and,
- Continued sexual contact without consent. The *Criminal Code* describes consent and the specific instances where consent is not obtained (APPENDIX D).

*Sexual Abuse* is an act of violation, power and domination. Sexual abuse is any kind of sexual contact forced on a child or an adult.

- It can include unwanted sexual touching, rape or attempted rape, date rape, incest, forcing someone to have sexual intercourse, forcing someone to engage in any sexually related activity and sexual exploitation through pornography or prostitution;
- A child or woman can also be sexually abused without being touched; for example, if they are forced to watch sexual acts, movies or read pornographic material.

*Sexual Harassment* is discrimination based on sex. It is a form of sexual violence that includes any unwanted attention of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment includes suggestive remarks, sexual jokes, display of suggestive images, leering or whistling, unwanted physical contact, demand for sexual favours, and physical assault. When sexual harassment leads to sexual assault or stalking, it falls under the *Criminal Code* (section 273 for sexual assault and section 264 for criminal harassment). Otherwise, it falls under *Human Rights Law and civil litigation*.



# Woman Abuse in Intimate Relationships

## Danger on the Streets?

Women experience violence by men intimate partners and by men they know far more often than from strangers or from random acts of violence (Statistics Canada 2008). This contradicts the caution given to women to be especially vigilant while walking alone or at night. This type of advice puts responsibility on women for their own safety when we should be putting the responsibility on men to stop being abusive. Women are at greater risk for violence at home than on the street. Being aware of this fact can be more helpful in promoting women's safety than being overly pre-occupied with danger from strangers.

## Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in Canada

- Nearly 200,000 women reported to Statistics Canada's 2004 General Social Victimization Survey that they had been assaulted or sexually assaulted by a spouse in the previous year.
- IPV can be found in every province, territory, city and community within Canada.
- Police reported over 38,000 incidents of IPV nation-wide, representing approximately 15% of all violent incidents reported to the police.
- Women represent the majority of IPV survivors (83%).
- The most common police charges filed in IPV cases include: common assault (61%), major assault (14%), uttering threats (11%) and criminal harassment (8%).
- Police laid charges in approximately 75% of cases and this has remained relatively stable over the past 9 years.

Source: Statistics Canada (2008)

## Intimate Partner Violence in Ontario

- In 2006, a total of 11,713 IPV incidents were recorded.
- Ontario has the second highest police-charging rate in the country at approximately 90% of cases.
- IPV represents 14% of all police charges in Ontario and women continue to outnumber men as survivors.
- Of the total number of violent crimes, the proportion of IPV cases is 4 times greater for women (12%) than men (3%).
- Among cases of IPV in Ontario, in 2006 there were 44 homicides or attempted homicides, 189 sexual assaults and 1,777 major assaults.
- The most frequent charges filed in Ontario IPV cases include: common assault (64%), major assault (15%), uttering threats (8%) and criminal harassment (8%).

Source: Statistics Canada (2008)



## Ottawa Police

In 2007, the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) responded to 1,372 occurrences of domestic violence where charges were laid or warrants sought. In the first 3 fiscal quarters of 2008, the OPS responded to 1,068 similar occurrences. **Of these combined 2,440 domestic violence occurrences, 2,168 men were charged representing 89% of all domestic violence cases.** This rate is higher than the national average of 83% (Statistics Canada, 2008). **Repeat domestic violence offenders were responsible for 45% of these occurrences. Women accounted for 2,098 of the survivors of domestic violence.**

In many cases, domestic violence does not represent a single charge but a combination of charges that reflect the severity and complexity of the issue. The following chart represents only a few of the commonly used charges (see APPENDIX D for *Criminal Code* definitions and/or additional information regarding charges).

<b>Charges Laid in Domestic Violence Cases:</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008 Quarter 1-3</b>
<b>Assault</b>		
Common Assault	755	477
Assault with a Weapon or Cause Bodily Harm	199	152
Aggravated Assault	15	19
<b>Sexual Assault (within a domestic violence case)</b>		
Sexual Assault	30	30
Sexual Assault with a Weapon or Cause Bodily Harm	0	3
Aggravated Sexual Assault	0	1
<b>Breaches</b>		
Breach of Recognizance	152	198
Breach of Undertaking	189	127
Breach of Remand (CC - s.516; CC - s.517)	2	0
Breach of Peace Bond (CC - s.810)	13	5
Breach of Probation / Parole	221	167
Breach of Restraining Order ( <i>Family Law Act</i> – s.46(2), <i>Children's Law Reform Act</i> – s.35(2), CC - s.515(4))	5	4
<b>Other Charges</b>		
Uttering Threats	333	241
Criminal Harassment	118	121
Mischief	254	210
Homicide (Manslaughter & Murder)	0	0
Attempted Murder	3	2
Choking	1	2
Forcible Confinement	58	76
Firearms	10	19

Table 1: Brief list of common charges laid against perpetrators who are men in woman abuse cases. Source: Ottawa Police Service data.



Ottawa differs from the provincial average in the rate at which charges are laid for both common assault and for uttering threats. In Ottawa, perpetrators who are men are charged with common assault 14% less than in the province as a whole, while charges for uttering threats are 3 times higher than the Ontario rate. The underlying reasons for these differences in charge rates highlight an area for future study.

### % of Total Domestic Violence Charges

	Ottawa	Ontario	Canada
Homicide/Attempts	0%	0%	0%
Sexual Assaults	3%	2%	2%
Major Assault	16%	15%	14%
Common Assault	50%	64%	61%
Criminal Harassment	10%	8%	8%
Uttering Threats	24%	8%	11%

Table 2: Comparison of 2007 - 2008 break down of common charges laid against perpetrators who are men in woman abuse cases compared to provincial and national figures for 2006.

### Zero Homicides?

The Partner Assault Unit did not identify any homicides in their data for 2007 - 2008, although five Ottawa women were murdered due to women abuse during that time frame. These women are not reflected in their data as the Homicide Unit probably handled and coded these cases. Therefore, there remains an opportunity to accurately identify and record the deaths of women due to women abuse in the police system.

In addition to the Partner Abuse Unit that handles the investigation of domestic violence cases, the Victim Crisis Unit provides counselling and referral services for survivors of crime.

### Total Occurrences Dealt With by Ottawa Police Victim Crisis Unit

Crime	2007	2008	Total
Breach	85	77	162
Domestic Dispute	150	121	271
Harassment	217	286	503
Partner Assault	828	946	1774
Same Sex Partner Assault	8	4	12
Sexual Assault	66	122	188
Stalking	47	56	103
Phone	16	16	32
Threats	119	158	277
Phone Threats	43	33	76

Table 3: Comparison of 2007 - 2008 break down of occurrences dealt with by Ottawa Police Service: Victim Crisis Unit.

As previously reported, 89% of domestic violence cases involve a woman survivor (OPS, 2008). By using this finding we can extrapolate the total number of partner assaults that the Victim Crisis Unit responded to that involved a woman survivor. **Therefore, it is predicted the unit handled approximately 1,579 occurrences of partner assault, which were perpetrated by men against women.**

While police figures represent reliable data, these do not reflect violence and abuse that goes unreported. In order to get a more complete picture of woman abuse, we extend our focus to community agencies. Many women seek out community-based agencies for support but never report to the police.



## *Sexual Assault and Partner Abuse Care Program at the Ottawa Hospital*

The Ottawa Hospital runs the Sexual Assault and Partner Abuse Care Program out of the emergency department of the Civic campus. Specially trained staff are available for health care services, crisis intervention, evidence collection and documentation and safety planning, as well as support for emotional and social concerns (Ottawa Hospital, 2003). **From April 2007 - March 2008, the program saw 53 acute (emergency) clients who had been physically assaulted by their partner within the previous 72 hours. Of these cases, 15 (28%) of the women had also been sexually assaulted by their partner. Only 62% involved the police. All clients were women.** The program also conducted 165 follow up calls, 16 follow-up health visits and notified the Children's Aid Society in 15 cases. Additionally, 32 patients returned for a total of 126 hours of counselling services.

## *Women's Shelters*

There are 7 main shelters in the City of Ottawa that were established to provide housing and support to women and their children fleeing violence and abuse: Chrysalis House, Harmony House, Interval House, La Présence, Maison d'Amitié, Nelson House and Oshki Kizis Lodge. All but Harmony House are first stage or emergency housing which allow a woman to stay for approximately 3 months. Harmony House is a second stage or transitional shelter which can accommodate a woman up to 1 year. Additionally, Evelyn Horne Emergency and Transitional Housing offers support for young women aged 12-24, including support for those who have experienced violence. Women's shelters in Ottawa offer a variety of services including counselling, support groups, children's groups, safety planning and above all safe refuge from violent partners or ex-partners. Three out of the 7 shelters were able to participate in this project. They were able to provide information not only about their services but also about the type of women who accessed their services in 2007 and 2008.

## *Demographic Information*

Women who access shelters come from all backgrounds. **The most common age bracket was 26-35 (35%),** followed by 20-25 (24%), 36-45 (21%), 46-50 (13%), 50 and over (4%) and under 20 (3%). The majority of individuals seeking support were of Caucasian decent. Mother tongue varied considerably with English being the most dominant language, followed by French, Arabic and Somali. The majority of women were Canadian citizens, followed by landed immigrants and several refugee women.

**Women accessing shelters report emotional/psychological abuse most frequently at 47%.** The other main forms of woman abuse (verbal, physical and financial) were experienced almost uniformly. Women often experience more than one form of abuse and often experience all forms of abuse.

### **Sexual Violence:**

Sexual violence is reported less often to shelter workers than other forms of violence. While this may lead some to believe that sexual abuse is less prevalent in intimate partner violence, a further exploration reveals a different reality. Many women do not initially disclose sexual violence to shelter workers because of shame and the perceived stigma associated with having been sexually abused in a relationship. We have heard from women's advocates however that once women feel safe and the fear of judgment diminishes, many reveal that some form of sexual violence took place. The 1993 Violence Against Women Survey found that 25% of women who were assaulted by a spouse had also been sexually assaulted by them.



### Type of violence experienced

Emotional/Psychological	47%
Verbal	16%
Physical	15%
Financial	15%
Sexual	4%
Stalking	2%
Spiritual/Religious	1%

Table 4: Type of violence experienced by shelter clients.

## Over Capacity

Ottawa shelters are almost always full and frequently over their capacity. On average, most shelters report turning away 1-3 women daily as there are simply no beds available. In 2007, 3,281 requests for emergency shelter were turned away. Local shelters are forced to turn away 6 times more women than they are able to house. Most women requesting shelter space are fleeing a violent partner with their children. Almost 450 children were living in shelters in 2007 and many more were turned away. Women who access more than one shelter will be counted more than once in these figures.

2007	Women served	Children served	Women turned away due to full capacity	Turn Away Ratio
Chrysalis House	96	92	951	1 : 9.9
Harmony House	16	15	90	1 : 5.6
Interval House	96	151	1032	1 : 10.8
La Presence	40	9	46	1 : 1.2
Maison d'Amitie	94	100	208	1 : 2.2
Nelson House	79	40	878	1 : 11.1
Oshki Kizis Lodge	123	37	76	1 : 0.6
<b>Ottawa Total</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>3281</b>	<b>1 : 6.0</b>
Lanark County Interval House	69	42	134	1 : 1.9

Table 5: Ottawa Women's shelters' capacity for 2007. Turn Away Ratio equals how many women are served compared to the number turned away. Example: for every 1 woman served 6 are turned away. Source: Chrysalis House

In addition to providing safe housing, shelters also receive phone inquiries, requests for information and follow-up calls. Of the 3 shelters that provided data, almost 8,000 phone calls over the course of a single year were received. **If we extrapolate this amount to all 7 women's shelters, then we could assume that over 18,600 phone calls were received in a year, averaging just over 50 calls per day total.** They also help women develop safety plans to prepare strategies for protecting themselves and their children during violence, when getting ready to leave, or at their new home, while obtaining protection orders, at work, in public places, and so on. In 2008, the 3 participating shelters helped over 1,000 women develop appropriate safety plans.

## Community Resources

In addition to the shelter system, woman abuse and sexual assault survivors can also seek assistance from various community services that include community health and resource centres, counselling services, legal clinics, as well as organizations dedicated specifically to the needs of diverse women. Ottawa has 6 community health centres and 8 community resource centres. These organizations provide a wide range of services that vary based on the type of organization and target population. This report documents statistics from 2 community resource centres, one community health centre and one victim assistance program.



## Demographic Information

Women who escape violence also face a variety of other barriers and struggles. The interconnectedness of woman abuse and poverty is well documented (WACT, 2009). Fifty-six percent of women accessing community resources fall below the low-income cut-off for a single person living in Ottawa. However, women seeking assistance often have children. Sixty-two percent of women seeking assistance would fall below the cutoff if they each had one child and 65% if they each had two children.

### Before Tax Low Income Cut-offs 2004

Family Size	Population of Community of Residence	
	500,000 + (OTTAWA)	Rural
1	\$20,337	\$14,000
2	\$25,319	\$17,429
3	\$31,126	\$21,426
4	\$37,791	\$26,015
5	\$42,862	\$29,505
6	\$48,341	\$33,278
7 +	\$53,821	\$37,050

Table 6: Before Tax Low Income Cut-offs 2004. Source: Statistics Canada (2005).

Age	%	Income	%	Language Spoken	%
Under 20	1%	0-\$14,999	50%	English	88%
20-25	12%	\$15,000-\$19,999	6%	Vietnamese	3%
26-30	11%	\$20,000-\$24,999	6%	French	3%
31-35	14%	\$25,000-\$29,999	3%	Kahmer (Cambodian)	1%
36-40	18%	\$30,000-\$34,999	3%	Chinese	1%
41-45	14%	\$35,000-\$39,999	1%	Japanese	1%
46-50	14%	\$40,000-\$59,000	4%	Arabic	1%
Over 50	15%	Unknown	28%		

Table 7: Demographic Breakdown of Women Accessing Community Services 2008.

## Beyond woman abuse

Woman abuse does not occur in isolation and the women who experience it may also face many other co-occurring concerns. One community resource centre coded over 1,050 individual problems, complaints, issues and needs that co-occurred amongst woman abuse survivors in 2008.

### Presenting Problem

Woman abuse	56%
(Children) Witness	21%
Sexual Assault	8%
Harassment	5%
Physical Assault	5%
Transitional Client	3%
Threats	2%
Assault	1%

Table 8: Break down of primary issue presented to community resources 2008.



### Co-occurring Woman Abuse Issues

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Visit for Observation / Health Education / Advice / Diet  
Visit for Prescription Renewal  
Homelessness (residing in shelters)  
Feeling Stressed Out  
Anxiety  
Substance Abuse  
Depression  
Request for Administrative Procedure / Form  
Financial Problem  
Inability to Acquire Transportation

Table 9: Top 10 woman abuse co-occurring issues/needs/complaints.

## Domestic Violence Courts

Ontario's Domestic Violence Court (DVC) program is the most extensive DVC program in Canada as it covers all 54 Ontario court districts. The goal of the courts is to facilitate "the prosecution of domestic assault cases and early intervention in abusive domestic situations, provide better support to survivors and increase offender accountability" (Ministry of the Attorney General, 2007). The DVC program provides training to Crown prosecutors and judges on IPV issues, as well as assistance to survivor/witness such as accompaniment, support and language interpretation. The DVC works in conjunction with police and partner assault response (PAR) programs such as New Directions in Ottawa. The DVCs were designed in part to provide relevant sentencing options such as, PAR programs. As such, **individuals convicted of IPV were less likely to serve jail time for the offence, 19% vs 29% for other violent crime (Gannon & Mihorean, 2004)**. Differences in sentencing extend beyond incarceration. Probation continues to be the most common sentence used in specialized DVCs; sexual offences committed by spouses received conditional sentences in 24% of cases compared to 15% of non-spouse cases (Gannon & Mihorean, 2004). The Ottawa DVC opened its doors in 1998 after the success of a Toronto-based pilot project.

Research comparing IPV outcomes with other violent crime outcomes illustrates that DVCs are not without their limitations and challenges:

- There is a high proportion of cases in which the survivor recants or is otherwise unable to cooperate with the prosecution. Research conducted on the Toronto DVC has shown that a survivor's ability to cooperate is the strongest predictor of prosecution (Dawson & Dinovitzer, 2001).
- The study also found that survivors were much more likely to cooperate if they had been contacted by the Victim/Witness Assistance Program (Dawson & Dinovitzer, 2001).
- In general Victim/Witness Assistance Programs are perceived as more approachable and less intimidating than prosecutors or police; therefore, their continued presence and input during the court process is one strategy to strengthen the outcomes of DVC cases (Dawson & Dinovitzer, 2001).

### Why Do Women Recant?

Recanting occurs for many reasons. One main reason is fear, intimidation and control that the perpetrator, and in some cases his family, has over the woman survivor. With the implementation of the provincial mandatory charging policy, that woman's advocates helped to develop, there are some challenges for women reporting their assaults. Namely their decision-making powers have substantially decreased. In some cases, a woman may not wish to have charges filed against her partner for various reasons. As she has no say in whether charges are laid, her power lies in the testimony she can provide to the court and in some cases that means choosing to recant her story.



## New Directions

New Directions is a partner assault response (PAR) program funded by the Victim Services Secretariat, Ministry of the Attorney General. Administered by Catholic Family Services of Ottawa, a non-profit community based organization, it runs a 16-week IPV counselling program in addition to providing outreach to survivors. The majority of their clients are mandated by the Ottawa DVC to participate. New Directions works with individuals on probation, peace bond, bail, charges pending, and early intervention cases. It offers 8 men's groups (7 English and 1 French), 2 women's groups, 1 group for men who are not mandated by the courts, 1 gay men's group or individual counselling (based on demand) and a father's group. There is also a heavy focus on partner outreach (contact and support for survivors whose current or former partners are in the program) that includes information packages, telephone calls, one-on-one meetings, drop-in groups, referral and advocacy.

In 2007 - 2008:

- **1,135 men were referred to New Directions.**
- Of these, 953 were mandated to attend counselling by a sentencing judge (84%), 88 attended voluntarily (8%), and 94 were there for other reasons such as on suggestion of defence counsel (8%).
- The program was able to accept 981 of the referrals (86%).
- **934 men began the program and 689 completed treatment (74%), while some remain in ongoing treatment.**
- In 2007, New Directions had 1,015 total contacts with 312 different women as part of the partner outreach for court mandated men. In 2008, 295 women were contacted 840 times.

New Directions serves a wide demographic of individuals and offers language services to accommodate their clients. Participants come from wide variety of socio-economic and education levels. Sixty percent of New Directions clients report that their main source of income is from employment: 31% receive Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program or have no source of income.

<b>Education</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than Grade 8	5.70%	Less than \$10,000	34.60%
Less than High School	30.40%	\$10,000-\$20,000	21.90%
High School	10.80%	\$20,000-\$30,000	21.80%
Some College	29.30%	\$30,000-\$40,000	8.90%
College	5.50%	\$40,000-\$50,000	5.60%
Some University	13.50%	\$50,000+	7.10%
B.A. or higher	12.10%		

Table 10: Demographic information of New Direction Clients 2007 - 2008.

## Children's Aid Society (CAS)/Violence Against Women Integrated Services Project

Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre in collaboration with Ottawa's CAS has undertaken to lead the development and implementation of an integrated CAS/VAW team, which provides services to women and children in families where children may be in need of protection because of their exposure to woman abuse. The Child and Family Services Act stipulates that a child who witnesses violence by one parent against the other is a child in need of supervision. The project is a joint initiative of the VAW sector (VAW Management member agencies) and the Ottawa CAS. The model is an integrated service team consisting of 1 VAW supervisor and 2 VAW counsellors, 4 CAS Supervisors and 15 CAS front-line workers working together to provide service. In the second and third quarter of 2007, 61 files were referred to the VAW unit. **In 2008, 342 cases were referred to the VAW unit. Due to resources, VAW counselors served 81 of the cases, leading to a long waiting list to gain access to the program. The project has found that VAW files represent 80% of all CAS files agency wide.**



## Legal Clinic

The University of Ottawa's Legal Clinic works with women who are survivors of IPV, assisting them in securing peace bonds, preparing criminal injury compensation cases, as well as providing legal assistance to women who have been charged with IPV (i.e. in double charging cases where both parties are charged). In 2008, the clinic handled approximately 50 IPV related cases. The clinic also provides advice to out-of-province women (Quebec residents primarily).

## Sexual Violence

### Why Doesn't Canada Have a "Rape" Law?

Following lobbying by equality-seeking organizations, the wording of Canada's rape law was formally changed to sexual assault. Before 1983, there had to be proof of vaginal rape for a rape charge to be entered and husbands could legally rape their wives. Some judges required not only that a woman state she did not consent but "proof" of force, such as bruising or tearing. (Busby, 2006). In 1983, the wording of the law was changed from rape to sexual assault as the charge only required some sexual element be present in the assault (Busby, 2006). The Supreme Court of Canada ruled any circumstances that violated the sexual integrity of the victim were grounds for sexual assault (Busby, 2006). The change in language opened the legal system's ability to lay charges in circumstances beyond forced vaginal sex and allowed for charges to be laid against anyone committing these acts without consent (see APPENDIX D for consent laws) regardless of their relationship. Additionally, the law created 3 levels of severity of sexual assaults ranging from level 1 – sexual assault to level 3 – aggravated sexual assault.

However, this new law is not without its limitations. Many women feel that the change of language from rape to sexual assault minimizes the important social meaning that rape has for women (Sheehy, 2002).

## Sexual Assaults in Canada

- In 2007, police recorded 24,200 sexual assault against individuals over 16 in Canada.
- Only 1 in 10 sexual assaults are reported to the police.
- The number one reason (58%) they go unreported is that the survivor felt it was not "important enough."
- Women also commonly choose not to involve the criminal justice system due to shame and embarrassment and fear of retaliation from the offender.
- Data from victimization surveys suggest that the annual average number of assaults has remained steady over time, but the number recorded in police statistics is steadily declining.
- Over half the sexual assaults in Canada involved someone under 18 years old. Of these cases, 81% were young women.
- Sexual offences are less likely to be cleared by police than other types of violent offences.

Source: Statistics Canada (2008)

### Not Important Enough?

The shame and stigma surrounding sexual assault leads many women to feel as if their experiences of violence are not important enough to report to authorities. Many women experience guilt and self-directed blame, e.g. with the *It's my fault, I shouldn't have been there, I shouldn't have gone on a date with him... I should have known better*. Combined with poor treatment of survivors by the criminal justice system, very few women who experience sexual violence decide to report to police. In recent years, there has been a decline in sexual assaults recorded in police statistics, while victimization surveys show that sexual violence rates have remained stable.



## Ottawa Police and Courts

In 2007 - 2008, there were a total of 606 sexual assault cases, by adding in other related sex crimes, there were a total of 644 cases.

Police Cases	2007	2008	Total
Sexual Assault (Level I)	253	217	470
Sexual Assault Weapon (Level II)	1	3	4
Sexual Assault Aggravated (Level III)	3	6	9
Sexual Assault Under 16	54	62	116
Sexual Assault Anal Intercourse	4	3	7
Sexual Assault Incest	2	3	5
Sexual Assault Interference	7	3	10
Sexual Assault Exploitation	0	1	1
Sexual Assault Invitation <14	9	0	9
Sexual Interference	0	8	8
Sexual Exploitation	0	5	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>644</b>

Table 11: Reported sex crimes 2007 - 2008, Ottawa Police Data. For more information and criminal code definitions of charges see APPENDIX D.

Statistics Canada (2008) reports that only 1 in every 10 sexual assaults is reported to the police. Some variation exists between official findings and the reports from women's groups. Whether the reported rate is 10%, 8% or 6% is immaterial; the point is that it is unacceptably low. Based on the Statistics Canada finding, it is possible to extrapolate what the real picture of sexual violence in Ottawa looks like:

Police Cases	Reported Total	Projected Total
Sexual Assaults	470	4700
Sexual Assault Weapon	4	40
Sexual Assault Aggravated	9	90
Sexual Assault Under 16	116	1160
Sexual Assault Anal Intercourse	7	70
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>6060</b>

Table 12: Projected "true" number of sexual assaults from 2007 - 2008 based on Statistics Canada (10%) reporting.

In 2008, Ottawa courts tried individuals on 245 sexual assault charges and 93 other sexual offences for a total of 338 charges. During this time, the court disposed of 366 sexual violence charges (some carried over from 2007), meaning a conclusion was reached - charges were dismissed, withdrawn or stayed, or a finding of guilty or not guilty was made (Ontario Court of Justice, 2009). However, there is no published figure on how many of these cases lead to a guilty verdict. Similarly in 2007, the court received 337 sexual violence charges (221 sexual assault charges and 116 other sexual offences and was able to dispose of 280 sexual violence charges (Ontario Court of Justice, 2008). As individuals are often charged with more than one offence, they may plead guilty or be convicted of one charge and have another charge withdrawn. For sexual offences, the average number of days from the booking of the first court appearance to the final court appearance was approximately 374 days in 2008 and 325 days in 2007 (Ontario Court of Justice, 2008 and 2009). Individuals who were charged with a sexual offence appeared before the court an average of 13.9 times in 2008 and 12.5 times in 2007 (Ontario Court of Justice, 2008 and 2009).

### Waiting for Justice

Women's recovery from a sexual assault can take many paths. Each time the police report new developments in a case, the survivor can be brought back to the initial shock and reactions she was first confronted with. When a case takes almost a year to come to trial, updates are spread out over a much larger time frame and can continuously disrupt the healing process. These are setbacks to recovery making it even less likely that the woman would want to report. Resources to assist women throughout this process if they do report are extremely important.



## Sexual Assault and Partner Abuse Care Program at the Ottawa Hospital

From April 2007 - March 2008, the program saw 151 acute (emergency) clients who had been sexually assaulted within the previous 72 hours. Of these cases, only 46% involved the police. The majority of the clients were women (97%). The program also conducted 414 follow up calls, 68 follow-up health visits and notified the Children's Aid Society in 4 cases. Additionally, 52 patients returned for counselling services for a total of 172 hours.

A recent study of hospital-based sexual assault treatment centres found that 21% of sexual assault survivors believed they had been drugged (Du Mont et al., 2009). Ottawa was one of the locations of service used in the study and locally the rate of suspected drug-facilitated sexual assault was 4.5% higher than average at 25.5%. Women who suspected being drugged were most commonly between the ages of 16-24 (60%), employed (64%), and living with family (41%). Alcohol had been consumed immediately before the assault in 88% of cases, while the use of prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications and street drugs were common (Du Mont et al., 2009). It will be important to track this issue as there are serious implications for both the recovery of these women as well as prosecution. In both instances, the issue rests on the ability of the survivor to remember the details of the incident.

## Community Resources for Sexual Violence

In addition to the community health and resource centres and women's agencies previously discussed, women also have access to dedicated sexual assault services in Ottawa. These include the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre, the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa, Centre d'aide et d'lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel (CALACS) and local/provincial crisis lines. **One sexual assault agency reported that in an average year, they received over 5,000 crisis calls and they believe that other centres probably receive a similar volume.** In addition to telephone support, many agencies offer face-to-face counselling either individually or in groups, provide advocacy and court accompaniment for survivors, provide information and referral services, educate the public, and liaise with community organizations. These organizations rely heavily on volunteers: one centre reported approximately 13,000 volunteer hours donated by its members in 2008. However, these services are over capacity, and there is often a waiting list for counselling.

### Co-occurring Sexual Assault Complaints Issue

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Homelessness (residing in a shelter)  
Visit for Observation / Health Education / Advice / Diet  
Depression  
Anxiety  
Visit for Prescription Renewal  
Feeling Stressed Out  
Immigrant with Language Difficulty

*Table 13: Top sexual assault co-occurring issues/needs/complaints.*

Like woman abuse, sexual violence does not occur in isolation and can leave the survivor with trauma that lasts long after the assault. Table 13 illustrates the other common issues women who have been sexually assaulted report to one community health centre.



# Homicide

## Homicide in Canada

- In Canada during 2007, 162 women were murdered representing 27.3% or 1 in 4 of all homicides (Statistics Canada, 2008).
- Homicides typically involve perpetrators who are men, with an average of 484 men accused of homicide annually, which represents 88.6% of homicides (Statistics Canada, 2006).

## Spousal Homicides in Canada

- In 2007, there were 65 spousal homicides in Canada and 16 homicides by a girlfriend/boyfriend/intimate partner (former or current).
- In 2006, 56 women were killed by their husbands or common-law partners (current, separated or divorced) representing 78% of all spousal homicides in Canada.
- Spousal homicides represent 16% of all solved homicides nationally.
- Women remain the majority of spousal homicide victims and are 4 times more likely than men to be killed by their partner.
- Young women (18-24) are 3 times more likely than other women to be victims of spousal homicide (Statistics Canada, 2006).
- Spousal homicides are most common in common-law relationships (22%), followed by marriages (18%), divorced/separated married couples (6%) and separated common-law couples (5%).

Source: Statistics Canada (2008)

## Homicide in Ontario

- In 2007, 21 women and children were murdered in Ontario as a result of woman abuse. In 2008, 15 women and children were similarly murdered (OAITH, 2008).
- According to the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee 80% of homicides are “predictable and preventable in hindsight on the high number of risk factors that were present” (DVDRC, 2007).
- The most common risk factors for homicide include actual or pending separation (79%), history of domestic violence (75%), perpetrator depressed in the opinion of non-professionals (e.g., family, friends, etc.) (63%), obsessive behaviour displayed by the perpetrator (63%) and an escalation of violence (50%) (DVDRC, 2007).

## Ottawa Homicides

In 2007, seven women were murdered in Ottawa. Of those, three murders were spousal homicides. In 2008, three women were murdered; two by their husbands, while one case still remains unsolved.



# Recommendations

The following long-term recommendations are proposed by OCTEVAW as a result of *Hidden from Sight*:

## A. Standardized Reporting and Data Collection

### 1. Justice System

- Improve the identification and recording of woman abuse crimes, particularly homicides, by police.
- Increase the level of detailed data released to the public.
- Measure and publish recidivism rates by provincial partner assault programs.
- Increase the transparency of and publish case resolutions within the local Domestic Violence Court.

### 2. Governmental Departments

- Increase communication between ministries to allow for VAW cases to be publicly tracked from the time charges are laid until the end of that individuals' contact with the criminal justice system.
- Standardization of requirements for data collection and reporting for VAW community agencies.
- Increase funding to create and maintain a community-managed centralized database of VAW data that would allow for real-time data monitoring.

### 3. Community-Based Agencies

- Track similar and consistent information about women accessing services.
- Input VAW data into the proposed community-managed centralized database.
- Replicate this study at a future date to enable the mapping of trends over time.

## Summary

Continuity in tracking data from the police through the court system is the only way that the public can gauge whether the criminal justice system is effectively responding to cases of woman abuse. In order to assess the process, the public must be made aware of the following: how many cases of woman abuse or sexual violence are reported to the police; what proportion of those cases lead to charges being laid and against whom; how many of the accused go to a preliminary hearing and to a final court hearing; what were the dispositions in those cases and what sentences were handed down to those found guilty.

However, this data is recorded, cataloged and housed by separate government ministries. Due to their interpretation of current privacy laws, it is not possible for the ministries to share a large proportion of this data even amongst themselves. If the government is currently unable to track and release an individual's progress through the criminal justice system, the public is unable to provide the necessary checks and balances to ensure the system is responding appropriately and justly to woman abuse. It is therefore recommended that the appropriate government ministries reevaluate their information sharing and tracking policies and propose new legislation to facilitate communication between relevant departments.

One of the greatest challenges in preparing this report was navigating the different methods by which participating organizations collect data. Generally speaking, statistics are collected by agencies for diverse funding bodies or provincial departments, which vary in their reporting requirements. While similarly focused organizations i.e. women's shelters, offer comparable services, they do not track the women they serve in the same manner. For example, some organizations record the number of women who access the service, others record the number of occurrences, while others record the total hours of service provided. Secondly, working definitions vary between organizations. For example, sexual assault can be measured in single recent assaults, historical assaults for which women now seek support, or individual support visits related to a sexual assault. Lastly, there was varied data regarding the demographic information of women accessing services.

Ideally, this data collection tool and the information that would be most helpful to collect would be developed by working together across ministries and agencies for the purposes of public education, program development, capacity building, accountability and advocacy.



By centralizing the data, it would be possible to create real time assessments or snap shots of the status of VAW in Ottawa and plot trends over time. The data could be analyzed as a whole for general trends or to examine specific research questions more closely. It would also be possible to track new problems or rising issues as they occur and not as historical trends.

*Hidden from Sight* was intended to serve as a template for conducting future research and data collection regarding VAW in Ottawa.

## B. Inclusive Process

Certain groups of women who experience multiple barriers and intersecting oppressions may not have been thoroughly accounted for in this report including (but not limited to): Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, women of colour, Francophone women, single parents, and others. Due to limited resources and time, it was impossible to do an exhaustive and extensive collection of data from all agencies that may have served women survivors of violence. It is important to recommend and advocate for a research process that would provide ample resources and time in order to be more inclusive of and accessible to an increased amount of community-based agencies that work with women survivors.

## C. New Areas of Interest

It is vital that the community and future research continue to expand its focus to include new trends and changes in the nature of VAW. Additionally, it is important to identify and research additional barriers that women face in accessing VAW services.

The following research topics are examples of new areas that surfaced during the course of completing *Hidden from Sight*. They require more attention, yet are by no means inclusive and exhaustive of all new and possible VAW research areas.

### Internet Abuse

- Track and flag Internet based abuse/violence for information gathering and monitoring for the purpose of developing initiatives to combat this form of VAW.
- Include Internet abuse on future victimization surveys to gather information on cases not reported to police.

As technology continues to evolve and become integrated in our lives, it represents new challenges to ending VAW. Thus far, no data collected in this project dealt with Internet abuse. However, these cases may be reflected in other Ottawa agencies that do collect this type of information. These cases include harassment conducted online; Internet stalking; threats made via email, social networking site, chat room or instant messaging; dissemination of private documents or images online; creation or addition of misogynistic, inflammatory or defamatory internet content; and luring victims online. While this data may appear in part in the aggregate totals of threats or harassment, agencies we contacted do not, for the most part, record the fact that these behaviours are being conducted online.

### Forcible Confinement

- Pay specific attention to forcible confinement cases and implement continuous monitoring to track changes in rates with the purpose of developing initiatives to combat this form of VAW.
- Include forcible confinement on future victimization surveys to gather information on cases not reported to police.

In March 2009 Statistics Canada released a new report on the state of forcible confinement in Canada. Forcible confinement represents a growing trend in criminal behaviour:

- In 2007, Canadian police laid 4,600 forcible confinement charges.
- It is one of the rising violent crimes in Canada, having doubled in the last decade and is 7 times the rate it was 20 years ago.
- Forcible confinement most commonly occurs in conjunction with woman abuse, representing about half of all forcible confinement cases.
- In woman abuse cases, forcible confinement is almost exclusively perpetrated against women by men; men represent 98% of the perpetrators.

Source: Statistics Canada (2009)



Ottawa has also seen an increase in forcible confinement charges. Most recently in 2008, the average number of charges per quarter doubled in the third quarter of 2008. Forcible confinement represents a new study area and one requiring further research.

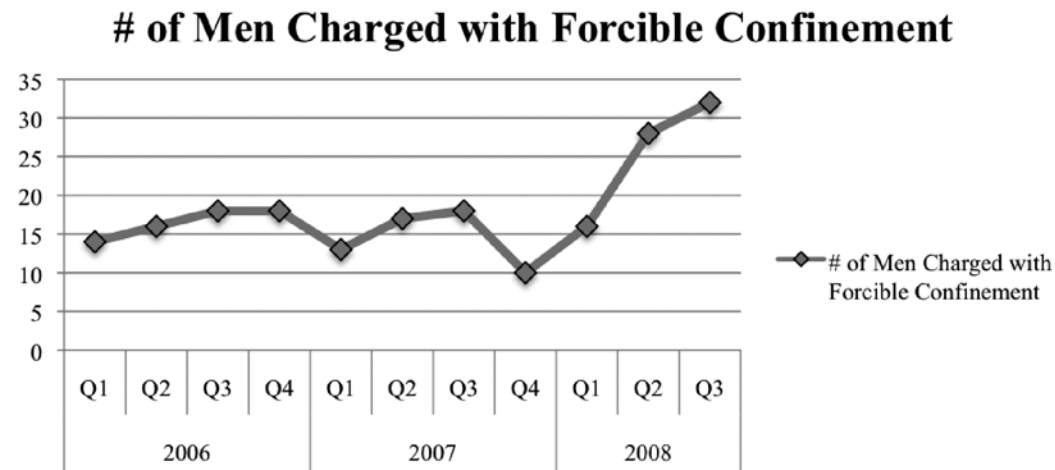


Figure 1: Trend in charges laid against men for forcible confinement 2006-2008 in woman abuse cases. Source: Ottawa Police Service

## Additional Barriers

- Identify and study new and additional barriers that prevent women from accessing services and agencies in cases of woman abuse and/or sexual assault, e.g. pet ownership.

Women escaping domestic violence are faced with a number of obstacles, particularly when they are pet owners. OCTEVAW, in partnership with the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS), supported a research project led by Carleton University Master of Social Work students to examine the role that pet ownership plays in woman abuse cases. The project entitled “The Effects of Pet Ownership on Women’s Experiences of Escaping Domestic Violence” focused on the necessity of offering support services to women and their pets, the barriers that prevent women with pets from escaping abuse, and solutions to end such obstacles.

Their research found that women with pets prolong leaving relationships where domestic violence is prevalent for fear of their pets safety, inadequate housing for their pets, and the loss of companionship. The vast majority of shelter workers identified the need for accessibility to a safe pet program in the Ottawa area so women who experience abuse have one less fear and loss in their lives. The effects of pet ownership on women escaping domestic violence are complex and play an important role in helping to end VAW (Penney MacDonald, Personal Communication, March 29, 2009).

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Ottawa Police Service Units  
 Ottawa Public Health  
 Sexual Assault & Partner Abuse Care Program at the Ottawa Hospital  
 Sexual Assault Support Centre  
 Somerset West Community Health Centre  
 University of Ottawa Legal Clinic  
 Victim Assistance Services Ottawa Carleton  
 Victim/Witness Assistance Program  
 Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre



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# APPENDIX A

## **Data Collection Information Package for OCTEVAW Member Organizations**

Dear OCTEVAW members,

Welcome to 2009 and the official data collection period for the Statistics Data Collection Project. This letter outlines what data we will be seeking, who to send it to, how best to format it, and when it must be received by. As always if you have any question please do not hesitate to contact our Research coordinator, Trina Forrester at [research@octevaw-cocvff.ca](mailto:research@octevaw-cocvff.ca).

### **Introduction to Project**

The OCTEVAW Statistics Data Collection Project arose from a need to obtain a more global understanding of the current state of violence against women (woman abuse and sexual violence) in Ottawa and the services, institutions, organizations and agencies who provide resources to women who have experienced violence. The report aims to consolidate currently existing statistics collected by individual agencies. This project has received funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), which has allowed OCTEVAW to hire a part time researcher to coordinate this project and create the final report. The creation of the report is a 6-month project, which began in November of 2008 and will be completed at the end of April 2009.

### **Goals**

This project has 2 main goals:

- Consolidate available statistics regarding violence against women (woman abuse and sexual violence) and children, as well as corresponding services in the Ottawa area for the 2007 and 2008 calendar years.
- Create a comprehensive report on the state of violence against women to serve as a resource for advocacy, public education and service planning.

### **Honorariums**

- A reminder to all organizations that a \$50 honorarium is available to those requiring financial aid in order to help off set the cost of accumulating and amalgamating the data for this project. If your organization would like to receive an honorarium, please contact the research coordinator at [research@octevaw-cocvff.ca](mailto:research@octevaw-cocvff.ca) with your organizations name and the mailing address for the cheque to be sent to. All cheques will be mailed out before March 31, 2009.

### **Data Being Sought**

The following are examples of the kinds of information we are seeking to collect in this project. The list is by no means exhaustive; therefore, if your organization has additional data that you feel is relevant to this project please feel free to contribute it to the project.

*Demographic information of clients served*

- Age
- Gender
- Language Spoken
- Sexual Orientation
- Geographic Location (ex. Orleans, the Glebe, Vanier or postal codes)
- Disabilities



#### *Number of Individuals accessing service*

- Number of individuals accessing the service
- Number of calls for information or aid
- Number of times an individual accesses a service
- Was this the first service they accessed?

#### *Reason for accessing service/chief complaint*

- Type of violence experiences (physical, sexual, emotional, financial, etc.)
- Counselling (if voluntary or court mandated)
- Medical Attention
- Resource seeking
- Etc.
- Was the perpetrator a stranger, current partner, past partner, etc.

#### *Referrals*

- Had the individual been referred from another organization?
- Was the client referred to another service/agency/organization for additional aid?
- If yes where?

#### *Current Resources*

- Number of staff, volunteers, etc.
- Number of shelter beds versus average number of women seeking aid
- At your current level of funding and staffing how close to maximum capacity is your organization, for example: **75%** – busy but room to immediately take more clients, **100%** - we cannot serve more clients than we are right now, **over capacity** – long wait times to access services, turning individuals away or referring to other services.

#### *Any information on children who witness*

For organizations in the justice community such as the police, new directions or the domestic violence courts:

- Number of domestic violence calls received
- Number of domestic violence related arrests
- Number of charges laid
- Number of domestic violence trials
- Breakdown of the disposition by case
- Breakdown of sentences
- Number of individuals court mandated to attend new directions
- Completion rate of the new directions program

## **Data Format**

Data can be emailed to the research coordinator, Trina Forrester, in an excel or word document.

The more detailed the information the more use full it is for the purposes of this project. For example, it is better to send a breakdown of the number calls by month or quarter than to say there were 4000 calls in a year. It is ideal to send a data file that contains more than one piece of information about an individual, however, we are aware this may not always be possible.

We will work with whatever level of breakdown or detail that is possible. Please do not hesitate to send us whatever data you have available regardless of the level of detail.

To assemble this kind of document may be time consuming, again we remind you that honorariums are available to ensure your organizations full participation in this project. For examples of an optimum and a useful data set please see the attached excel documents.



## Time Frame

This project is collecting data from the 2007 and 2008 calendar years. If time or resources are limited for data assembly, then we would prefer the most recent data you have.

**All data must be received no later than January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009** in order to make it into the final report. If not all 2008 data is available yet, please feel free to send what data has been compiled now and then send the last of 2008's data later in the month.

## Ethical Considerations

Due to the sensitivity of the data this project will be collecting, we ask that you please follow all ethical guidelines outlined by your service, institution or organization. There are 2 main ethical concerns to bear in mind for this data collection project: confidentiality and legality.

### *Confidentiality*

The confidentiality of the individuals accessing services must be maintained. Therefore, we ask that absolutely no names be included in the data sent for this project. This includes those individuals who may have consented to have their names appear in any other research projects and/or published report, as they have not consented to be named in this report.

### *Legality*

We ask that all administrative channels be followed prior to sending any data for this project. While we appreciate the enthusiasm of members to participate, we want to ensure that proper procedure for your organization is followed. Please confer with your colleagues, supervisor, ED, board of directors or legal consultant as necessary.

## Contact Information

**Trina Forrester**  
*Researcher*

Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW)  
Email: [research@octevaw-cocvff.ca](mailto:research@octevaw-cocvff.ca)

**Erin Williams**  
*Executive Director/Directrice générale*

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# APPENDIX B

## Data Collection Information Package for Non-OCTEVAW Member Organizations

Welcome to the Ottawa Coalition To End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW) Statistics Data Collection Project. If you have received this package, we currently have your name as the project contact for your organization, institution or service. If there is another individual whom should be contacted, please contact our researcher, Trina Forrester, at [research@octevaw-cocvff.ca](mailto:research@octevaw-cocvff.ca).

### Introduction to Project

The OCTEVAW Statistics Data Collection Project arose from a need to obtain a more global understanding of the current state of violence against women (woman abuse and sexual violence) in Ottawa and the services, institutions, organizations and agencies who provide resources to women who have experienced violence. The report aims to consolidate currently existing statistics collected by individual agencies. This project has received funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), which has allowed OCTEVAW to hire a part time researcher to coordinate this project and create the final report. The creation of the report is a 6-month project, which began in November of 2008 and will be completed at the end of April 2009.

This project has 2 main goals:

- Consolidate available statistics regarding violence against women (woman abuse and sexual violence) and children, as well as corresponding services in the Ottawa area for the 2007 and 2008 calendar years.
- Create a comprehensive report on the state of violence against women to serve as a resource for advocacy, public education and service planning.

### Goals of the Final Report

The final written report of this project will attempt to:

- Include all forms of violence against women
- Present the findings of the analysis in an impactful and meaningful way
- Ensure the report conveys “the story” of violence against women by including snippets of qualitative data in addition to quantitative - give a face and story to the statistics
- Include a “map of services” to illustrate the concept that “it takes a community to assist” a woman who has been affected by violence
- Make recommendations for directions for future research

### Honorariums

- A reminder to all organizations that a \$50 honorarium is available to those requiring financial aid in order to help off set the cost of accumulating and amalgamating the data for this project. If your organization would like to receive an honorarium, please contact the research coordinator at [research@octevaw-cocvff.ca](mailto:research@octevaw-cocvff.ca) with your organizations name and the mailing address for the cheque to be sent to. All cheques will be mailed out before March 31, 2009.



## Data Being Sought During Data Collection (Jan 2009)

From the wishlist, a list of the data necessary to answer those questions was created. The following are examples of the kinds of information we are seeking to collect in this project. The list is by no means exhaustive; therefore, if your organization has additional data that you feel is relevant to this project please feel free to contribute it to the project.

### Demographic information of clients served

- Age
- Gender
- Language Spoken
- Sexual Orientation
- Geographic Location (ex. Orleans, the Glebe, Vanier or postal codes)
- Disabilities

### Number of Individuals accessing service

- Number of individuals accessing the service
- Number of calls for information or aid
- Number of times an individual accesses a service
- Was this the first service they accessed?

### Reason for accessing service/chief complaint

- Type of violence experiences (physical, sexual, emotional, financial, etc.)
- Counselling (if voluntary or court mandated)
- Medical Attention
- Resource seeking
- Etc.
- Was the perpetrator a stranger, current partner, past partner, etc.

### Referrals

- Had the individual been referred from another organization?
- Was the client referred to another service/agency/organization for additional aid?
- If yes where?

### Current Resources

- Number of staff, volunteers, etc.
- Number of shelter beds versus average number of women seeking aid
- At your current level of funding and staffing how close to maximum capacity is your organization, for example: 75%
  - busy but room to immediately take more clients, 100% - we cannot serve more clients than we are right now, over capacity
  - long wait times to access services, turning individuals away or referring to other services

### Any information on children who witness violence

#### For organizations in the justice community such as the police, new directions or the domestic violence courts:

- Number of domestic violence calls received
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- Number of charges laid
- Number of domestic violence trials
- Breakdown of the disposition by case
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## Data Format

Data can be emailed to the research coordinator, Trina Forrester, in an excel or word document.

The more detailed the information the more use full it is for the purposes of this project. For example, it is better to send a break down of the number calls by month or quarter than to say there were 4000 calls in a year. It is ideal to send a data file that contains more than one piece of information about an individual, however, we are aware this may not always be possible. We will work with whatever level of breakdown or detail that is possible. Please do not hesitate to send us whatever data you have available regardless of the level of detail.

To assemble this kind of document may be time consuming, again we remind you that honorariums are available to ensure your organizations full participation in this project. For examples of an optimum and a useful data set please see the attached excel documents.

## Time Frame

This project is collecting data from the 2007 and 2008 calendar years. If time or resources are limited for data assembly, then we would prefer the most recent data you have.

All data must be received no later than January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in order to make it into the final report. If not all 2008 data is available yet, please feel free to send what data has been compiled now and then send the last of 2008's data later in the month.

## Ethical Considerations

Due to the sensitivity of the data this project will be collecting, we ask that you please follow all ethical guidelines outlined by your service, institution or organization. There are 2 main ethical concerns to bear in mind for this data collection project: confidentiality and legality.

## Confidentiality

The confidentiality of the individuals accessing services must be maintained. Therefore, we ask that absolutely no names be included in the data sent for this project. This includes those individuals who may have consented to have their names appear in any other research projects and/or published report, as they have not consented to be named in this report.

## Legality

We ask that all administrative channels be followed prior to sending any data for this project. While we appreciate the enthusiasm of members to participate, we want to ensure that proper procedure for your organization is followed. Please confer with your colleagues, supervisor, ED, board of directors or legal consultant as necessary.

## Contact Information

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*Researcher*

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Email: [research@octevaw-cocvff.ca](mailto:research@octevaw-cocvff.ca)

**Erin Williams**  
*Executive Director/Directrice générale*

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Email/Courriel: [ed@octevaw-cocvff.ca](mailto:ed@octevaw-cocvff.ca)



## APPENDIX C

List of all organizations contacted to participate in the project and/or circulate the invitation:

- The Bethany Hope Centre
- Catholic Family Services of Ottawa
- Centre d'aide et d'lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel
- Children's Aid Society
- Chrysalis House
- Ottawa Public Health - Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program
- Comité Réseau
- Council on Aging of Ottawa
- Crime Prevention Ottawa
- DisAbled Women's Network
- Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre
- Elizabeth Fry Society
- Evelyn Horne Emergency and Transitional Housing for Young Women
- Family Services à la famille d'Ottawa
- Fémaide
- Harmony House
- Hunt Club/Riverside Community Services Centre
- Immigrant Women Services Ottawa
- Interval House
- Jewish Family Services
- La Présence
- Maison d'Amitié
- Minwaashin Lodge
- New Directions
- Nelson House
- Oshki Kizis Lodge
- Ottawa Police Service
  - Partner Assault Unit
  - Victim Crisis Unit
  - Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Unit
- Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre
- Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Services
- Ontario Probation and Parole
- REACH Canada
- Sexual Assault & Partner Abuse Care Program at the Ottawa Hospital
- Sexual Assault Network (SAN)
- Sexual Assault Support Centre
- Somerset West Community Health Centre
- St. Mary's Home
- University of Ottawa Legal Clinic
- Victim Assistance Services Ottawa Carleton
- Victim/Witness Assistance Program
- Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre
- Women's Initiative for Safer Environments



## APPENDIX D

### **Criminal Code Definitions of relevant assault charges:**

#### **Assault (266)**

Assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (267) Every one who, in committing an assault,

- (a) carries, uses or threatens to use a weapon or an imitation thereof, or
- (b) causes bodily harm to the complainant.

**Aggravated assault 268.** (1) Every one commits an aggravated assault who wounds, maims, disfigures or endangers the life of the complainant.

### **Criminal Code Definitions of relevant sexual violence charges:**

#### **Meaning of “consent”**

273.1 (1) Subject to subsection (2) and subsection 265(3), “**consent**” means, for the purposes of sections 271, 272 and 273, the voluntary agreement of the complainant to engage in the sexual activity in question.

Where no consent obtained

(2) No consent is obtained, for the purposes of sections 271, 272 and 273, where

- (a) the agreement is expressed by the words or conduct of a person other than the complainant;
- (b) the complainant is incapable of consenting to the activity;
- (c) the accused induces the complainant to engage in the activity by abusing a position of trust, power or authority;
- (d) the complainant expresses, by words or conduct, a lack of agreement to engage in the activity; or
- (e) the complainant, having consented to engage in sexual activity, expresses, by words or conduct, a lack of agreement to continue to engage in the activity.

Subsection (2) not limiting

(3) Nothing in subsection (2) shall be construed as limiting the circumstances in which no consent is obtained.

1992, c. 38, s. 1.

**Consent no defence (150.1)** (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (2.2), when an accused is charged with an offence under section 151 or 152 or subsection 153(1), 160(3) or 173(2) or is charged with an offence under section 271, 272 or 273 in respect of a complainant under the age of 16 years, it is not a defence that the complainant consented to the activity that forms the subject-matter of the charge.

**Sexual assault (271).**

**Sexual assault with a weapon, threats to a third party or causing bodily harm (272).** (1) Every person commits an offence who, in committing a sexual assault,

- (a) carries, uses or threatens to use a weapon or an imitation of a weapon;
- (b) threatens to cause bodily harm to a person other than the complainant;
- (c) causes bodily harm to the complainant; or
- (d) is a party to the offence with any other person.

**Aggravated sexual assault (273).** (1) Every one commits an aggravated sexual assault who, in committing a sexual assault, wounds, maims, disfigures or endangers the life of the complainant.

**Sexual interference (151).** Every person who, for a sexual purpose, touches, directly or indirectly, with a part of the body or with an object, any part of the body of a person under the age of 16 years.



**Invitation to sexual touching** (152). Every person who, for a sexual purpose, invites, counsels or incites a person under the age of 16 years to touch, directly or indirectly, with a part of the body or with an object, the body of any person, including the body of the person who so invites, counsels or incites and the body of the person under the age of 16 years.

**Sexual exploitation** (153). (1) Every person commits an offence who is in a position of trust or authority towards a young person, who is a person with whom the young person is in a relationship of dependency or who is in a relationship with a young person that is exploitative of the young person, and who

- (a) for a sexual purpose, touches, directly or indirectly, with a part of the body or with an object, any part of the body of the young person; or
- (b) for a sexual purpose, invites, counsels or incites a young person to touch, directly or indirectly, with a part of the body or with an object, the body of any person, including the body of the person who so invites, counsels or incites and the body of the young person.

**Inference of sexual exploitation** (1.2) A judge may infer that a person is in a relationship with a young person that is exploitative of the young person from the nature and circumstances of the relationship, including

- (a) the age of the young person;
- (b) the age difference between the person and the young person;
- (c) the evolution of the relationship; and
- (d) the degree of control or influence by the person over the young person.

**Criminal harassment** (264) (1) No person shall, without lawful authority and knowing that another person is harassed or recklessly as to whether the other person is harassed, engage in conduct referred to in subsection (2) that causes that other person reasonably, in all the circumstances, to fear for their safety or the safety of anyone known to them.

### **Breaches**

A breach is a violation of any condition set out by the judge in sentencing or other condition set out by the court:

**Recognizance** - Obligation to appear before the court

**Undertaking** - Enforcement of judgment to do or abstain from doing any act

**Remand** - send the accused to custody in prison by warrant (CC s.516-s.5.17)

**Peace Bond** - protection order granted in cases where an individual has reasonable fear that someone will cause injury to them or a family member, damage their property or commit a sexual offence against them (CC s.810)

**Probation/Parole** - conditions outlined for probation or parole

**Restraining Order** - protection order that limits contact or sets other limits, usually in cases of domestic violence (*Family Law Act* – s.46(2), *Children's Law Reform Act* – s. 35(2), CC s.515(4))