



*Building Better Services for Children and Youth who are Victims or Witnesses of Crime in Canada
Prestation de services améliorés aux enfants et aux adolescents qui ont été victimes ou témoins d'actes criminels au Canada*

YUKON

KEY INFORMATION ABOUT SERVING CHILD VICTIMS & WITNESSES IN YUKON

CONTEXT:

Population: Approximately 34,000 people live in Yukon

Population of Children/Youth in Yukon: Approximately 8,000 children and youth live in Yukon

Urban/Rural/Remote:

Approximately 75% of the population of Yukon lives in the capital city of Whitehorse. Therefore, less than 10,000 people live among 14 rural communities. 11 of 14 First Nations are self-governing

OVERVIEW OF SERVICES

Victim Services is part of Yukon Government's Department of Justice. Eight victim services workers provide services to the Yukon Territory and three Northern BC communities through an Exchange of Service Agreement with British Columbia. A portion of one half-time worker is designated to provide services to child victims in Whitehorse. Child victims in rural Yukon receive services from the Victim Services workers who attend their community.

Child victims of crime follow a similar process to adult victims of crime. The RCMP investigates the report and sometimes refers the child to Victim Services. Most interviews are not video recorded. The Federal Prosecution Service



The courthouse in Whitehorse, the capital of the Yukon territory

of Canada prosecutes the case. Family and Children's Services is involved in cases where the child is in need of protection and in some cases, RCMP members request that social workers from Family and Children's Services provide assistance in interviewing the child in a developmentally appropriate manner. Victim Services has been asked to provide an affidavit to support application for testimonial aid for a child.

COUNSELLING: Child Abuse Treatment Services (CATS)

Yukon Government Department of Health and Social Services provides a counselling program called Child Abuse Treatment Services (CATS). This is a child and family focussed resource to address the impacts of trauma on children. This program is based in Whitehorse with counsellors who travel to rural and remote Yukon communities. There is typically a waitlist for services at CATS. Several private practitioners (social workers and psychologists) also provide counselling for children and their families in Yukon.

Victim Services is currently in the process of reviewing and developing programming for children whose parents have attended the Domestic Violence Treatment Option therapeutic court.

NEW PROGRAM: VICTIMS OF CRIME STRATEGY

In 2010, Yukon Government, Department of Justice initiated a 4 year Victims of Crime Strategy to address the needs of victims and provide a framework that guides and enhances Yukon Government programs and services for victims of crime. This strategy states “we are committed to responding to the needs of children and youth who are victims of crime. We will continue to develop skills and knowledge to work effectively with child and youth victims of crime, and where appropriate, their families and others in their lives” (Yukon Victims of Crime Strategy 2009-2014)

INTER-AGENCY RESPONSE TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Yukon currently has an interagency committee mandated to coordinate the response to sexual assault in Yukon. The Sexual Assault Response Committee does not specifically address abuse against children but it does demonstrate collaboration between key stakeholders (RCMP, Victim Services, Family and Children’s Services, Crown Prosecutor, nurses, physicians, hospitals and policy makers).

POLICING REVIEW

Over the last year, Yukon has been involved in a comprehensive policing review. Although recommendations address domestic violence and sexual assault, the recommendations from the policing review do not discuss the needs of child victims of crime.

GOALS

Yukon has reviewed the best practices suggested for working with child victims and is committed to apply these to the Northern context with priority on:

- interagency collaboration
- child specific and developmentally appropriate interviewing
- child specific and culturally appropriate investigation
- specialized RCMP and Crown
- standardized process for Court – ie. opt-out process for testimonial aids
- efficient response to rural and remote Yukon communities
- immediate supports for children and families impacted by crime, including timely clinical interventions
- data collection
- support to child victims of crime minimizing traumatic response to intervention

CHALLENGES

- long distances between remote northern communities
- small population
- impact of residential schools
- history of intergenerational trauma and abuse
- lack of comprehensive data collection and outcome measurements
- lack of child specific programs for victims of crime
- lack of child oriented Court facilities and services