

Child Advocacy Centres Knowledge Exchange, Ottawa
Tuesday morning, March 1, 2011

Panel # 5: *Research, Monitoring and Evaluation*

Susan McDonald, Principal Researcher, Department of Justice, Ottawa, ON
Research on Child and Youth Victims and Witnesses in Canada: What do we have? What do we need?

Tracy Hannah, Manager, Provincial Victim Services Program, Halifax, NS
Child Victims and Witnesses: A Case Management Model
See Presentation: [**Hannah**] [Case Management Model](#)

Milco de Graaf, Program Coordinator, Child Victim Support Services, Government of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB
Tracking Child Victims and Witnesses through the Justice System

Susan McDonald explained why research and evaluation is valuable in informing and shaping the work being done for child victims and witnesses across the country. She informed us that research, both undertaken by, and funded by the Department of Justice is used, even if not always published. Examples of the kinds of research projects supported by DOJ include: a court observation study by Zebra and Boost that looked at children's behaviour in court and the use of testimonial aids in two sites, Edmonton and Toronto; another study examined use of testimonial aids in different jurisdictions, since the passage of Bill C-2.

She highlighted a major concern that, while police-reported data shows that youth in Canada between ages 12-17 have the highest rate of violent victimization, we don't know much about this age group of victims.

Areas where we need to research and learn more about include: victimization of youth in a dating context; who youth talk to about their victimization experiences; and, what types of services help best, when teenagers are victims.

Milco DeGraaf talked about the PRISM system (Prosecution Information Scheduling Management) – a joint database which is shared in Manitoba by both victim services and crown attorneys. This file management system lets both these groups keep track of court status and date changes. Victim services can keep

families informed of updates in a timely fashion. Also, an email notification of all new files, essentially a one page report, alerts attention to a particular case. This system facilitates early referrals -- which helps service providers to identify and quickly address child and family needs. He also discussed access to the Winnipeg Police Service data system, which ensures early availability of information about child victims and witnesses. Victim services continue to work on getting proactive disclosure to ensure referrals from the RCMP.

He referred us to a checklist used by Victim Services to track information about each child witness, including their need for, and use of, specific testimonial aids and special accommodations. (See the summary of the Round Table discussion on this topic, for a visual sample of that checklist). He said that the checklist encourages discussion about cases, and helps to drive collaboration and dialogue, between the crowns and victim services, about the needs of specific children when they testify.

[Tracy Hannah's](#) presentation focused on the case management model they use in four regional offices and satellites across Nova Scotia. She told us that victim services rely on stakeholder agencies, to make referrals before they can begin to provide services. She also noted that some child victims / witnesses may be missed in the referral process.

She stated that, as a result of the case management system in place in Nova Scotia, it is now possible to identify trends such as urban and rural differences, including the number of days it takes to process court cases.

In terms of counselling, she noted that, while the province provides generous funding for child victims of family violence, there are many parents who do not pursue counselling after funding has been approved. She also discussed the availability of counselling through criminal injury compensation, and suggested that more research is needed to identify the obstacles that can prevent parents from taking their children to counselling. She noted that victim services workers are proactive in supporting that children continue in counselling by maintaining contact with the family. She stressed that if the first counsellor is the 'right fit' for the child, they encourage the child and family to see another professional who would be a better fit for them.

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For a summary of the discussion on these topics at the Round Tables, see:

[Round Table Summary 5 – Research, Monitoring and Evaluation](#)