

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre

Annual Report 2015/16



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Message from the E.D and Board Co-Chairs

For 33 years Avalon has been at the forefront of direct service delivery and support for victims and survivors of sexualized violence and abuse. This year, we experienced the highest number of client contacts, and programs and services requests in the history of the Avalon Therapeutic Counselling and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners Programs.

As *Breaking the Silence: A Coordinated Response to Sexual Violence in Nova Scotia*, the provincial sexualized violence strategy, continues to be implemented Avalon is busier than ever before. Through support from the provincial government, stakeholders, donors, and volunteers, we have been able to accomplish amazing things, such as:

- Participating in the provincial sexualized violence strategy training and public awareness committees.
- Advising government on the implementation of two new Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) programs.
- Contributing to the development of the Trauma Informed Practise implemented by Nova Scotia Mental Health Services and the IWK Hospital.
- Collaborating with other advocacy groups to influence public policy and legislative reform.
- Addressing systemic racism and misogyny in the criminal justice process.
- Exploring alternatives to access to justice and safer spaces for people who are sexually victimized and exploited.

While accomplishing these important goals, Avalon has remained committed to increasing financial sustainability. We continue to explore different fund development opportunities, strengthen existing relationships, and establish new funding partners. A number of fundraising and social awareness campaigns took place -- Giving Tuesday and Denim Day, for example – that not only raise funds for Avalon but also initiate broader community engagement and mobilization.

As sexualized violence and abuse awareness continues to increase in Nova Scotia, Avalon struggles to find the balance of sustaining existing services while trying to meet the ever-growing demand for the organization's services and expertise. Avalon will continue to advocate to government for sustainable funding, while recognizing the economic realities of the province's financial state. Avalon will continue to look for new funding opportunities to ensure that Avalon's specialized community-based programs and services continue to thrive.

We wish to thank staff, volunteers, student placements, and board members who were part of the important work we accomplished in 2015/16. We extend appreciation to our funders, donors, community partners and supporters. We also want to acknowledge the strength and wisdom of the people who have accessed our services.

Jackie Stevens
Executive Director

Katie Mallam
Co-Chair

Kerry Copeland
Co-Chair

Board of Directors: Key Result Areas of Focus

The Board of Directors have identified key results of focus that support staff members, strengthen the direct service delivery, and advise the organizational direction of Avalon Sexual Assault Centre. The following committee updates show the key result areas:



Financial Stability

- Updated accounting System
- Moved to electronic payroll & bill payments
- Improved financial practices to address fiscal restraints and enhance financial responsibility



Fund Development and Communications

- Webinar presentation on Donor Stewardship to the Board and the E.D.
- Created a Standards of Practice for Donor Appreciation
- Set up and monitored Giving Tuesday campaign
- Created the Case for Support to use in Avalon fundraising efforts. Print and digital copies are now available
- Managed 4th year Mount Saint Vincent University Public Relations co-op students
- Worked with E.D. to contract a term fund developer



Human Resources

- Reviewed HR policies and procedures
- Job descriptions for each position completed
- Salary steps completed based on job descriptions, education and experience
- Updated employment package completed.
- Permanent position for Executive Director posted, interviewed and filled
- New performance review forms for staff positions and Executive Director completed
- Revised staff Performance evaluation forms and completed 2015-16 staff review process



Governance and Nominations

- Created board orientation manual (electronic and binder versions)
- Ongoing Board succession planning and recruitment throughout the year
- Coordinated staff/board gathering
- Preliminary work to develop a strategic plan. The full strategic planning session will take place after the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

2015-16 Board of Directors

Joanne Bealy
Kerry Copeland
Alison DeLory
Nicole Doria

Suman Jha
Robin Levy
Laurie MacKeigan
Melissa Furey

Katie Mallam
Ann McCabe
Sylvia Parris
Shakira Weatherdon

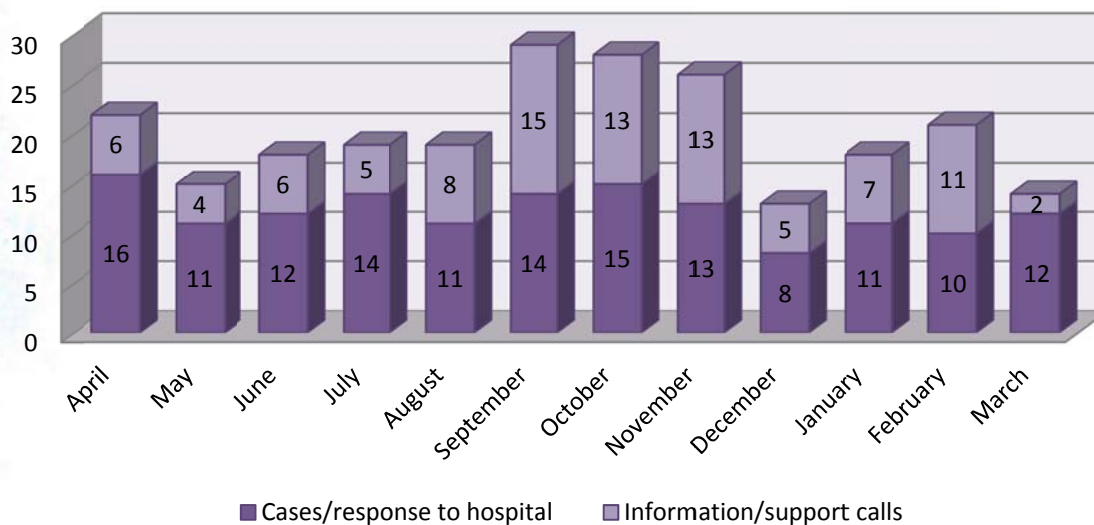
Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Avalon Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program provides immediate response to sexual assault victims/survivors requiring medical/forensic/supportive care. Now in its 16th year, the program provides SANE response to 4 health centres within Halifax Regional Municipality: QEII Health Sciences Centre, Dartmouth General Hospital, Cobequid Community Health Centre, and IWK Health Centre for Women, Children, and Families. The SANE Program is funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness through the District Health Authority (IWK). A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) is a registered nurse with advanced training and education in sexual assault examination and treatment, including medical and forensic examination of sexual assault victims. The SANE Program provides emergency response to all ages and genders within 120 hours (5 days) of a sexual assault.

SERVICE DELIVERY AND TRENDS

SANE responses per month



During the course of the 2015-16 fiscal year, SANEs responded to hospital a total of 147 times. Assistance was provided by phone to 95 clients and healthcare professionals regarding acute sexual assault for a total of 242 immediate response calls. This year has seen the highest number of SANE responses in the program's history and a 34% increase in reports to hospital.

SEEKING HEALING & TRUTH – CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY & VICTIM OUTCOMES

The Avalon SANE Program has just concluded a comprehensive 2 year project to evaluate the program, including measuring the impact of the SANE Program on criminal justice, community, and victim outcomes. This research explored criminal justice dispositions and outcomes, including a quantitative and qualitative review of SANE cases. This project was funded by the Department of Justice Canada Victims Fund Grant and will be released in the fall of 2016.

Individual Counselling and Group Program Services

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The current counselling services offered by Avalon Centre include: Counselling request calls, Initial consultation sessions, Information sessions for non-offending parents and partners, Foundations of safety sessions, Relational healing-focused sessions, Wait-list check-in sessions and Follow-up counselling sessions. Those who have experienced recent sexual assault (past month) continue to be prioritized and receive a call back within 24 business hours and an initial consultation appointment within a one week service standard. New counselling request calls are responded to within a week and we strive to offer an initial consultation session to each new client of the Centre within four weeks.

Counselling Service Delivery Statistics								
Therapeutic Counselling			Groups				Wait list	
# of Clients	# of Counselling Sessions	# of Counselling Requests	# of Pre Group Meetings	# of Groups	# of Group Sessions	# of Participants	Non-Client Contacts	Historical Sexual Assault/Abuse
366	1862	296	28	4	20	25	167	45
Total Clients/Participants/Requests/Contacts		Total Sessions/					Total Individuals	
854		1,910					45	

SERVICE DEMAND IN 2015/16:

Counselling requests remained very high for the third year in a row. Due to:

- Requests after recent assaults and assaults within the past 12-months
- Youth age 16-25 representing the highest request category for two subsequent years
- A higher number of SANE Clients accessing counselling for two years in a row
- The demand for quicker to access consultations and counselling sessions, along with crisis and advocacy support remains very high.

The counselling program simply could not function at this point without two Full Time Permanent Initial Response and Foundation of Safety therapists.

Community/Legal Education and Professional Training

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Community/Legal Education and Training program focused on community education, outreach and public awareness in 2015/2016. We continue to strengthen collaborations to extend sexual assault prevention and community mobilization to diverse communities.

COMMUNITY/LEGAL EDUCATION

Through our school and community based public education we continue to increase public awareness through the ongoing dissemination and leveraging of the consent based campaign “Doesn’t Mean I Owe You.” And the “Start By Believing Campaign.”

PREVENTION AND AWARENESS

In addition to requests from schools and universities, Avalon participated in a number of panel sessions, round table discussions, symposiums, and collaborative initiatives that focused on safer spaces, access to/alternatives to justice, restorative practices/justice, campus sexualized violence, responses to family violence for new Nova Scotian’s, discussions about strategies and solutions to eliminating cyber-violence, and systemic and judicial failures in addressing sexualized violence and protecting victims

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Professional Training provided this year included trauma-informed and first responder training for a variety of service providers. We provide ongoing professional consultation regarding legal information, best practice/policy development/revision, developing/implementing formalized sexual assault services and adapting Avalon resources for use in other organizations/communities



Dartmouth North Project

This project focused on preventing violence against girls and young women between the ages of 12 and 25 living in Dartmouth North, although there were many other people including boys and young men who were involved in the project. Community members were able to participate in finding a solution towards preventing violence in Dartmouth North. They worked together to mobilize the community to start addressing the issues related to sexual violence. Community members were involved in identifying possible strategies to prevent violence as well as helping to implement them within the community. This project, funded by Status of Women Canada, provided the opportunity for Avalon to make new connections and build relationships with organizations and community members in Dartmouth North. We were able to all work together to address the systemic barriers that lead to violence against women and girls.

- **52** organizations, agencies, government representatives participated
- **1554** individuals participated
- **15** Focus Groups/Interviews
- **48** Support Navigations to services
- **14** Events for Public Awareness and Community Education
- **851+** individuals reached online

Some of the outcomes achieved include:

1. Naming the violence and having an open dialogue. Increased knowledge and understanding of sexualized violence among the youth and adults.
2. Increased awareness of supports and resources available in the community.
3. Improved communication and co-ordination of services.
4. Access to services and programs in a safe and supportive place.
5. Strengthened capacity in the community.

People are voicing their concerns more and voicing their opinions more. And it is even the youth. A lot of youth are noticing the unacceptable behaviours... It's great to hear them getting their voices heard.

**Coordinator &
Community Member**

What worked well was coming into the community and asking what the needs were rather than coming in with totally preconceived ideas.

**Community Member & Service
Provider**

Thank you to the Community of Dartmouth North and all the partners that participated in the project. Without the support and dedication of these people the project could not have been the success that it was.

Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee would like to present the following nominees as members of the Board of Directors for Avalon Sexual Assault Centre for the 2016-17 term:

Members re-offering:

Joanne Bealy

Alexandra Connor

Lee-Ann Conrod

Kerry Copeland – Co-chair

Alison DeLory

Nicole Doria

Suman Jha

Robin Levy

Meagan Mahoney

Katie Mallam – Co-chair

Ann McCabe

Shakira Weatherdon (on leave until Sept. 2017)

Out Going Board Members:

Melissa Furey

Laurie MacKeigan

Sylvia Parris

In coming Board Members:

Alexandra Conner

Lee- Ann Conrod

Meagan Mahoney

Respectfully submitted by Kerry Copeland, Governance and Nominations Committee

Treasurer's Report

The Avalon Sexual Assault Centre ended the 2015-2016 fiscal year with a deficit of \$95,000 for the year. Funding from the Province of Nova Scotia declined by \$58,000 as the bridge funding they had provided in prior years to address service demands was cut in half. The Board of the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre decided to not cut services but to use prior year reserves to fund the shortfall in funding. Obviously, using reserves to make up for funding shortfalls cannot continue indefinitely. The Board is currently working to address the funding shortfalls for future years.

Total revenues recognized during the fiscal year were \$617,000, of which funding from the Province of Nova Scotia was \$421,000. Other funding sources included Status of Women Canada, and the Law Foundation. Avalon is very grateful for the support of these organizations. The money from the Status of Women Canada was for a specific project aimed at preventing and reducing violence against women and girls in high risk neighborhoods. Administrative fees of \$61,000 are primarily from the Avalon SANE program to cover the program's share of rent, salaries, and overhead.

Total expenses in the year were \$712,000. Salaries, wages and benefits were \$481,000 and spending on special projects was \$80,000.

Other projects and programs offered by the Centre during the year included the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program which received funding of \$373,000 from the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness. Expenses for the year were \$430,000, consisting primarily of wages for nurses and administration and the year ended and \$64,000 was spent on research project funded by Justice Canada. SANE ended the fiscal year with a small surplus of \$8,000.

During the past two years, the SANE Program received \$87,000 from Justice Canada Victims of Crime Fund to be used to assess the impact of the SANE Program on the progression of sexual assault cases through the criminal justice system. As of year-end, \$18,000 of the funding is unspent and included deferred revenue. This project will finish in 2017.

Laurie MacKeigan,
CPA, CA

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre
Summary Statement of Revenue and Expenses
Year ended March 31, 2016

	2016	2015
<u>Revenues</u>		
Province of Nova Scotia	\$ 420,615	\$ 478,793
Status of Women Canada	55,162	106,260
Law Foundation	46,160	50,733
Canadian Women's Foundation		43,689
Administrative fees	60,750	42,127
Donations, fundraising and other	29,601	40,588
Summer student	4,839	5,586
Halifax Regional Municipality Grant		196
	617,127	767,972
<u>Expenditures</u>		
Advertising and website	2,427	2,700
Board and staff development	8,437	12,310
Capital equipment and maintenance	12,848	25,250
Equipment rental and repairs	2,400	9,470
Fundraising	660	759
Insurance	8,243	8,513
Miscellaneous	9,334	6,677
Office	7,768	14,565
Professional fees	22,197	3,920
Rental	67,966	61,877
Salaries and wages	481,101	477,160
Special projects	79,882	125,059
Telephone	5,350	6,951
Travel	3,373	2,256
	711,986	757,467
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenditures from operations	\$ (94,859)	\$ 10,505

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre (SANE Program)
Summary Statement of Revenue and Expenses
Year ended March 31, 2016

	2016	2015
<u>Revenues</u>		
Department of Health and Wellness	\$ 372,799	\$ 372,802
Department of Justice Canada victim's fund	63,748	23,054
Donations, Fundraising, and other	2,205	2,500
	<u>\$ 438,752</u>	<u>398,356</u>
<u>Expenditures</u>		
Capital Equipment	-	7390
Education and training	9,896	11,273
Insurance	9,608	9,625
Memberships	803	2,876
Miscellaneous	3,947	2,864
Office	52,372	11,754
On Call nurses	149,728	147,685
Purchased services	968	2,255
Research project expenses	63,748	23,054
Salaries	127,764	152,404
Telephone	10,994	10,575
Transportation	814	227
	<u>430,642</u>	<u>381,982</u>
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	<u>\$ 8,110</u>	<u>\$ 16,374</u>

Staff List

Staff 2016/17

Executive Director

Jackie Stevens

Office Manager

Janis Blaine

Individual Counselling and Group Program

Services Coordinator

Glenda Haydon

Foundations of Safety Therapist

Adrienne Buckland

Allison Desjardins

Katie Hanczaryk

Relational Healing Therapist

Cindy Knapton

Sexual Assault Navigator Therapist

Jane Gavin-Hebert

Fund Developer

Sarah Kasupski

SANE Program Coordinator

Susan Wilson

SANE Program Administrative Assistant

Tarah Vallee

Dartmouth North Project Coordinator

Robyne Gorman

Students/ Temporary Staff

Cate Heimpel

Natasha Hollett

Active SANE Nurses

Susan Wilson

Jane Collins

Lynn Dorcas

Sandra Witherbee

Annette MacDonald

Paula Nickerson

Connie Harrison

Dawn Murphy

Margaret Duykers

Amy Earnshaw-Romans

Heather Hawes

Chantelle Murphy

Melissa Ashton

Emma Greer

Samantha Gould

Staff 2015/16

We wish to acknowledge the contributions of staff members, students and private contractors who were employed with us during the 2015/16 fiscal year.

Cindy Boland

Irene Smith

Caroline Kunysz

Peggy Mahon

Amina Abawajy

Tobbie Dyer

LaMeia Reddick

Jessica Hodder

Sarah Dobson

Client Message

My first contact with Avalon was 19 years ago as a young woman. Avalon was my first experience of being heard, my first experience of even building language to say what I had experienced and the first place I was able to feel safety and trust. Hope can be difficult to find when you've had someone violate your mind and body as a child. The foundation of my hope in this journey was established in sacred moments with the amazing women who supported me at Avalon. They helped me find the strength to heal myself through highly skilled trauma-specific counselling that gave me control and power in my own healing process. I don't think I would be alive and well and on this healing journey if it weren't for... Avalon. I had to slowly build the life that I have now out of the ruins of my childhood and at every point Avalon has been there to help me make sense of the impact of sexualized violence on my life and to overcome tremendous obstacles to becoming a healthy person. I became a social worker and advocate for survivors of sexualized violence, inspired by Avalon to help others in my community. There is no adequate way to thank the counsellors at Avalon for their skill, dedication and commitment except to ensure they have the support of our community and government to continue this highly skilled, extremely necessary work. Without it women like me would be unable to find the peace and healing we deserve.

“ She talked to me about healing instead of brokenness and every other counsellor I went to talked about brokenness like I was broken somehow...”

“ I found the **specialized approach** to be very effective in helping me understand what happened to me and how I coped as a result. **Using a feminist approach helped address any myths around sexual assault and who is really at fault.** This helped me work through the guilt and shame I felt for many years.”

“ **I needed emotional support, which was met, especially during the physical examination. They did not rush me, and were very understanding.**”

“ Coming to Avalon was the first time I felt respected and listened to, validated and supported. I immediately felt comfortable. I was never pressured to disclose more than I was comfortable with and never told what to do or invalidated in my own choices or feelings. That is essential.”



AVALON
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