

# Avalon Sexual Assault Centre

Annual Report 2016/17



Table of Contents

**Message from the E.D and Board Co-Chairs .....1**

**Avalon Sexual Assault Centre’s Strategic Plan.....2**

**Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program .....3**

**Individual Therapeutic Counselling and Group Program Services.....4**

**Sexual Assault Navigator Therapist Project .....6**

**Capacity Co-ordinator Project .....8**

**Community/Legal Education and Professional Training.....9**

**Fund Developers Report .....10**

**Treasurer’s Report.....12**

**Avalon Sexual Assault Centre Summary Statement of Revenue and Expenses .....13**

**Avalon Sexual Assault Centre (SANE Program) Summary Statement of Revenue and Expenses .....14**

## Message from the E.D and Board Co-Chairs

The Avalon Sexual Assault Centre has provided 34 years of services to those impacted by sexualized violence in the Halifax region. Since its inception, the Centre has been committed to better serving our clients. We are proud that our programs continue to be models for trauma informed and trauma specific sexual assault services in Nova Scotia. The Avalon Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program played a large role in the implementation of a Provincial SANE Program for Nova Scotia. Our successful Community/Legal Education and Professional Training Program has improved sexual assault prevention, and improved support and response services for victims/survivors.

Avalon's Therapeutic Counselling Program always has been, and will continue to be, a cornerstone of our core programs and services. The year 2016 marks a significant milestone for Avalon as it celebrates 20 years of providing sexual assault/abuse trauma specific therapeutic counselling services to individuals and groups in the Halifax Regional Municipality. The number of clients accessing therapeutic counselling has steadily increased over the past 20 years, with 2016/17 experiencing the highest number of clients to date. Over the past twenty years, we have provided 28,280 individual and group counselling sessions to 6,266 clients.

Avalon Centre hired its first fund developer in an effort to meet the strategic priority of achieving financial stability, sustainability, and growth. Having a staff member devoted to helping Avalon expand and diversify its funding base will be crucial to achieving this important strategic priority.

The work of Avalon extends beyond individual issues within the Halifax Regional Municipality to addressing systemic issues at local, provincial, regional and national levels. This includes participation on various committees to improve access to services, exploring access to justice/improving the legal process, and partnering with a national coalition of women's organizations to achieve intervenor status in the judicial review of Justice Camp.

This report will highlight many of the Centre's 2016 accomplishments. Although we have been successful in many areas, there are always more clients to see and more issues to address. The need for Avalon's programs and services have not diminished. We continue to have record numbers of client requests and their needs continue to evolve and grow. As we reach almost 35 years of service we continue to look for ways to respond to the needs of clients. This year we reflected on the work of Avalon, client and community needs, and financial resources. The development of a new three-year strategic plan will lead us forward as we launch the Centre into its thirty-fifth year of service.

We wish to thank staff, volunteers, student placements, and board members who were part of the important work we accomplished in 2016/17. 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.

Kerry Copeland  
Co-Chair

Katie Mallam  
Co-Chair

Jackie Stevens  
Executive Director

# Avalon Sexual Assault Centre's Strategic Plan

Since its creation, Avalon has seen a consistent increase in demand for services but never as significantly as in recent years. The goal of this strategic plan is to outline the key priorities of Avalon to ensure our financial and organizational sustainability.

Avalon will be refocusing its efforts to better support clients, staff, and communities through maximizing limited resources.

## **Avalon will continue to be a leader in providing services to those affected by sexual assault and abuse**

- Avalon will continue to thrive as an expert in trauma-specific counselling and will provide high-quality services to female youth, women, and trans/non-gender binary youth and adults ages 16 and older
- Avalon will continue to operate, invest in, and advocate for the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program to ensure people of all genders and ages have access to timely medical and forensic services when they experience an immediate sexual assault
- Avalon will collaborate with other organizations and institutions to improve access to sexual assault services
- Avalon will continue, based on current resources, to seek ways to increase access to our resources and services for highly vulnerable populations
- Avalon will continue to seek ways to reduce the waitlist for Relational Healing Counselling for victims/survivors of historical sexual abuse/assault

## **Avalon will become financially sustainable**

- Avalon will ensure its financial transparency and accountability to support important relationships with funders
- Avalon will continue to value its funding relationship with government and look for increased opportunities to collaborate on issues of mutual importance
- Avalon will develop a donor relations strategy that focuses on diversifying funding sources

## **Avalon will drive social and systemic change to reduce sexualized violence and abuse**

- Avalon will champion policy development, legislative reform, and social justice initiatives through collaboration with government, partners, and communities

## **Avalon will be a workplace of excellence**

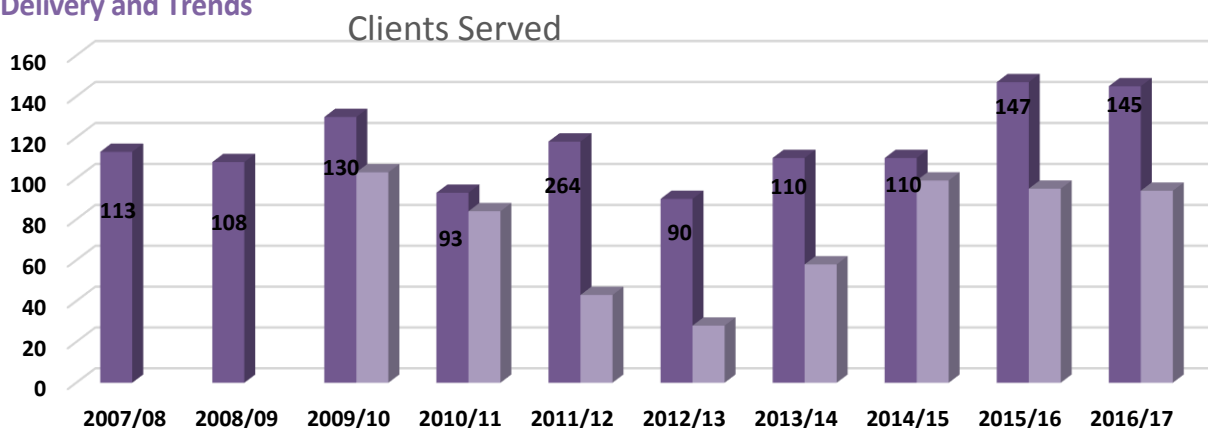
- Avalon will improve staff retention through continuing to address vicarious trauma
- Avalon will provide educational resources and programs that support a positive environment, foster a healthy engaged workforce, and promote personal wellness

# Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program

## About the Program

The Avalon SANE Program provides immediate response to sexual assault victims/survivors requiring medical, forensic, and supportive care in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Services are provided through the QEII Health Sciences Centre, Dartmouth General Hospital, Cobequid Community Health Centre, and IWK Health Centre. In its 17th year, the program is funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness.

## Service Delivery and Trends



A SANE is a registered nurse with advanced expertise in sexual assault examination and treatment, and provides emergency response to all ages and genders within five days of a sexual assault. They provided direct medical and forensic response to 145 clients. Through providing phone services, additional assistance was provided to 94 clients who experienced acute sexual assault. A total of 239 immediate response calls were conducted.

Over the past year, the SANE Coordinator continued to provide trauma informed training for police, emergency department room staff, and medical/nursing students. In the coming year, training and policy development with the SANE program partners will continue.

## SANE is continuing to see an increase of:

- People who are being targeted for violence because they are vulnerable and marginalized (i.e. youth and people with mental health diagnoses)
- Sexual assaults involving other forms of violence (i.e. strangulation)
- Alcohol/drug facilitated sexual assault

## Who the Avalon SANE Program served this year

- 135 clients identified as female (93%), 8 identified as male (6%), 2 identified as transgender (1%)
- Clients ranged in age from 4 to 58 years
- 78% of clients who reported are between the ages of 17 to 40 years of age, with ages 17-25 representing the highest age demographic who reported (57%)

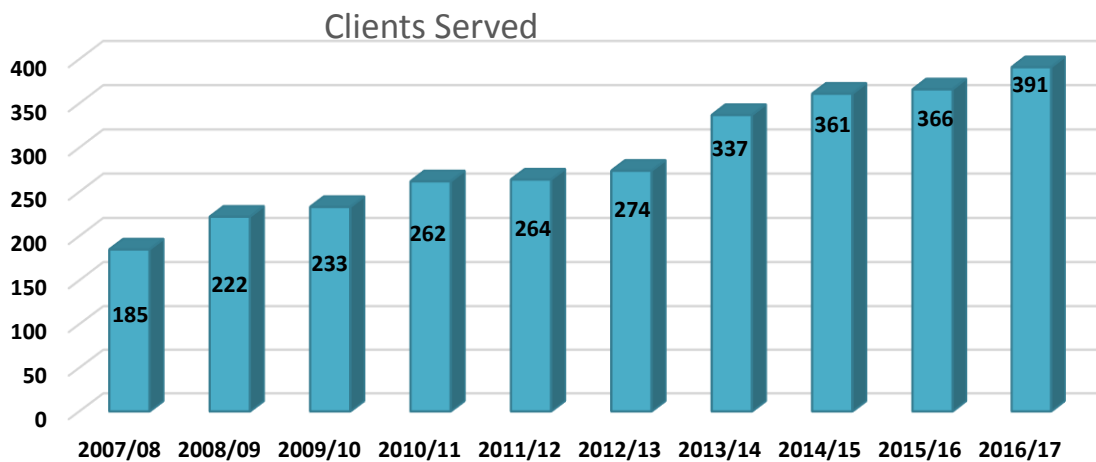
## Disposition of cases

- 67% of clients chose to complete a forensic exam/evidence collection
- 53% of clients chose to involve police immediately
- 31% of clients chose to store the evidence for potential later release
- 29% of clients chose to receive medical care only by the SANES
- 5% of clients declined to see SANES on arrival or left hospital before being seen by the SANES

# Individual Therapeutic Counselling and Group Program Services

The Therapeutic Counselling Program has developed a comprehensive Tri-Phase Therapeutic Model, which is specific to addressing relational trauma impacts caused by sexualized violence. Our specialized counselling services are also informed by a socio-cultural anti-oppressive, feminist lens.

During the 2016/17 fiscal year, the counselling program provided a combined total of 1,872 individual counselling sessions to 391 clients; this is the highest number of clients receiving service in the 20-year history of the program. In addition, the program provided 18 group sessions serving over 20 clients.



## Key Trends

This is the first year in the history of the counselling program that adult sexual assault cases have exceeded childhood sexual abuse cases. This trend may be due to several factors including:

- An increase in the youth client population accessing services
- The expansion of our quick access counselling sessions to any client 16-19 years of age
- Continued efforts to eliminate wait times for clients who have experienced a sexual assault within the previous 12 months
- An increase of SANE Program referred clients. This trend has led to a significant increase in total counselling requests since the 2013/14 fiscal year.

## 2016/17 Statistics

Trend	Total	Comparison with 2015/16
<b>Childhood Sexual Abuse (CSA)</b>	218	On par
<b>Adult Sexual Assault (ASA)</b>	261	Increase of 44 clients
<b>Both CSA and ASA</b>	112	Increase of 23 clients
<b>Recent Sexual Assault within past month</b>	43	Increase of 9 clients
<b>Sexual Assault within last 2-12 months</b>	68	On par
<b>Clients age 16-25</b>	121	Increase of 11 clients
<b>Ages 26-40</b>	136	Increase of 15 clients
<b>SANE referred clients</b>	41	Increase for 3 <sup>rd</sup> year in a row



## Waitlist

During 2016/17, the waitlist for historical sexual abuse/assault counselling included over 50 individuals with a wait of approximately 8 to 12-months. This significant wait period was due to multiple factors and challenges including:

- The increase in requests from clients requiring quick access sessions
- Clients with complex trauma who required highly comprehensive therapy
- An increase in highly marginalized clients with multiple vulnerability factors who require additional services and supports along with therapeutic counselling
- Uncertainty if funding for term counselling positions would continue meant counsellors couldn't start with new clients closer to the end of the fiscal year

With funding for the counselling program confirmed for 2017/18, Avalon is in a better position to meet our service access standards. The trend, however, in increasing demand for counselling continues to stretch our limited resources and requires the continuation of a waitlist for historical abuse/assault requests. This creates concern for this often highly traumatized client population. We will continue to offer limited sessions to help stabilize individuals during the waiting period.

# Sexual Assault Navigator Therapist Project

## Halifax Community Support Network Project

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The Sexual Assault Navigator Therapist Project is funded by the Nova Scotia Sexualized Violence Provincial Strategy. The project's goal is to reduce the systemic barriers that women, two spirit, and gender non-binary individuals experience when trying to access trauma informed, non-judgmental support services. The program is offered to individuals over 16 years of age who have experienced sexualized violence. The navigation therapist works with highly marginalized community members, including: newcomers to the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), Indigenous Nova Scotians, Black Nova Scotians, trans/two spirit/non-binary, racialized, queer, sex workers, those living in poverty, and/or living with a (dis)ability.

The sexual assault navigator therapist serves as the initial contact person for those seeking information regarding the programs offered by Avalon. The navigator provides linkages, and connects people to services in the HRM community and more widely. They also provide immediate crisis response services, handle walk-in requests for support, and provide short-term counselling and advocacy support. A key aspect of the navigator role is to enhance partnerships with community organizations who work with marginalized populations.

**Between July 2016 and April 2017, the navigator therapist met with 49 people to provide navigation support.**

### **This involved:**

- 147 sessions of individual counselling
- Five group sessions with nine clients
- Service provision to people who self-identify in the following way:
  - 16 youth
  - 6 2SLGBTQ+
  - 2 African Nova Scotians
  - 5 other racially visible persons
  - 1 persons with (dis)Abilities
  - 3 Indigenous
  - 1 immigrant/refugee
  - 12 low income
  - 2 sex worker
  - 2 homeless/street based
  - 2 elderly
  - 10 neurodiverse

### **The navigation therapist also worked to reduce barriers for clients in the following ways:**

- Provided clients with space for childcare supports and/or enabled them to bring their children to sessions
- Provided advocacy and support efforts for resource allocation
- Made recommendations in relation to housing, employment, school and legal demands
- Provided language translation services in therapeutic sessions
- Advocated for testimonial aids and court supports

### **Navigation Outreach and Partnership Outcomes Included:**

- Increased awareness of Avalon's programs and services
- Establishing community support network for clients/coordinated care efforts
- Strong partnership with Avalon's Capacity Coordinator to identify and support skill development for key partners and stakeholders
- Working with community partners to provide knowledge exchange of services and parameters of referrals



**Priorities for Year Two** (July 2017-July 2018) will include:

- Strengthening existing and building new partnerships with organizations that work with priority populations
- Trauma informed first response training for service providers and key stakeholders
- Collaboration with community partners on systemic advocacy
- Exploring options to provide outreach therapy

# Capacity Co-ordinator Project

## Halifax Community Support Network Project

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### About the Program

With funding through the Nova Scotia Sexualized Violence Provincial Strategy this project focuses on increasing the capacity of service providers to respond to sexualized violence in their communities. The goal is to increase access to services and supports for marginalized community members. To develop responsive training and competencies required to support each community's unique needs as they navigate sexual assault services, Avalon collaborated with Indigenous, African Nova Scotian, Newcomer and LGBTQ communities; sex workers; and people living with (dis)abilities. Through Avalon Centre's Legal and Professional Training Program, sexualized violence education and trauma informed practice training, has been delivered to a broad audience of service providers, community partners, and emergency first responders.

**Between November 2016 and April 2017, Avalon worked towards addressing the systemic barriers that lead to violence against racialized and marginalized communities through:**

- 19 educational workshops on sexualized violence, healthy relationships, gender, and consent
- Nine professional trainings on sexualized violence, the neuro-biology of trauma, and trauma informed practice and response
- Two safer space workshops including cultural sensitivity, physical/emotional/cultural safety, and active listening
- Partnering with 32 community partners to work with 918 individuals

**Some of the outcomes achieved were:**

- Increased knowledge of available services, supports, assets, and resources for victims and survivors
- Coordinated points of entry into support networks
- Contributed to more knowledgeable and skilled service providers
- Network of service providers has a better understanding of sexual violence trauma and tools and skills to decrease secondary wounding and victimization

**The second year of the project (November 2017-November 2018) will be focused on:**

- Knowledge-sharing initiatives and continuing to build the capacity of the larger community to support racialized and marginalized survivors
- The development and implementation of specialized modules in Avalon's professional training curriculums (developed in partnership with community members and organizations serving racialized and marginalized populations)
- A training conference (developed in consultation with key stakeholders)

# Community/Legal Education and Professional Training

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## About the Program

Through our school/community-based public education and our professional training workshops, Avalon continues to increase public awareness regarding the issues surrounding sexualized violence. In 2016/17 program activities included:

- 40 professional consultations
- Distribution of over 2,500 educational and training resources
- Over 100 education and training workshops for 1,350 participants
- 5 resource displays to over 200 people
- 12 initiatives that resulted in resource development

## Prevention and Awareness

In addition to requests from schools and universities, Avalon participated in several panel sessions, round table discussions, symposiums, and collaborative initiatives. The focus of these activities included: safer spaces, access to/alternatives to justice, restorative practices/justice, campus sexualized violence, discussions about strategies and solutions to eliminate cyber-violence and addressing systemic and judicial failures in responding to sexualized violence and protecting victims. Several Public Awareness Campaigns also took place:

- Start by Believing
- Denim Day
- Doesn't Mean I Owe You
- The Feminist Speaking Tour

We received a Prevention and Innovation Grant from the Province of Nova Scotia in 2016 to continue to support violence against women and girls' prevention in Dartmouth North. This community mobilization project saw youth, community members and service providers work together to create new posters and videos for the Doesn't Mean I Owe You Campaign. This fall we will wrap up the campaign with a school and community tour.

## Professional Training

Much of the professional and consultation provided this year was done by, or in partnership, with the Capacity Coordinator. This included:

- Trauma-informed and first responder training
- Legal information
- Best practice/policy development/revision
- Developing/implementing formalized sexual assault services
- Adapting Avalon resources for use in other organizations/communities

# Fund Developers Report

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## Thank You

Avalon is grateful to all our generous partners and grantors:

- Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Nova Scotia Community Support Network Grant
- Nova Scotia Prevention Innovation Fund
- Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness / IWK Health Centre
- Nova Scotia Health Authority
- Government of Canada – Canada Summer Jobs
- Law Foundation of Nova Scotia
- NSPIRG

Our sincere gratitude is extended to the individuals, businesses and organizations that contributed their time, money and resources in 2016 to sustain our services and programs. In response to the sharp increase in demand for services from the community, Avalon launched a month-long ‘Stand with Avalon’ crowdfunding campaign in April/May 2016, which successfully raised \$10,000 from 99 donors in 30 days! Whether a donor chooses to support Avalon by contributing to one of our campaigns as a monthly donor, or by organizing a third-party fundraiser, we are grateful and every donation is meaningful. Your energy and generosity directly impacts survivors of sexualized violence and is an investment in the wellbeing of our community. Thank you.

The following list acknowledges those who gave gifts between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2017. Please note this list includes only some of our many incredible donors. \*

Black Market	OTC Insurance
Bowtique Hair and Makeup	Pete’s Fine Foods
Deep Hollow Print	Purple Ribbon Campaign
Farmer Clem’s	RBC Royal Bank Spring Garden & Summer Branch
IWK Birth Unit	RJF Healthcare
Jampy Furniture	Rotary Club of Dartmouth
Jane Software Inc.	Scotiabank – Sackville Branch
Just Us	Scintillescents Body & Boutique
Lunar Lotus Yoga	Wednesday Bridge Club

*\*To protect privacy, we do not list donations made by individuals*

Thank you for standing with Avalon in addressing sexualized violence and supporting survivors!





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"I am so grateful to Avalon for being there in traumatic times for people close to me. It is a vital resource to many sexual assault survivors in the province; we need more organizations like Avalon!"

*Laura MacDonald, Deep Hollow Print*

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Maker of hand crafted furniture and décor, **Chris Smith** of **Jampy Furniture** offered up a gorgeous desk in exchange for a \$400 donation to Avalon. The desk sold within an hour of being posted to social media!

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**Barbara Brown Conrod, Artist**  
*'Any Way You Spin It'*



**RBC Royal Bank Spring Garden & Summer Branch Paint Night**



Janet from the **Dartmouth Rotary Club** delivered their \$3,000 donation towards our 'Stand with Avalon' crowdfunding campaign



# Treasurer's Report

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The Avalon Sexual Assault Centre had a successful 2016-2017 fiscal year. The year ended 31 March 2017 as planned and budgeted, with a deficit of \$76,000 (\$20,000 less than prior financial year). This is due to increased funding from the Department of Community Services as well as increased fundraising efforts. There has also been a conscious effort to use reserves conservatively in the current year to support organizational expenses.

Total donations and revenues received for the fiscal year was \$671,000, of which \$409,000 was received from the Province of Nova Scotia. Other funding during the year included funding for special projects from the Department of Community Services, the Law Foundation and other individual and corporate donors. The majority of the revenues from the governmental sources are through sustainable agreements where future income is highly likely and growing. Avalon also charges administration fees to the SANE program in order to cover the programs share of rent, salaries and overhead. This amount has reduced year over year as Avalon retains more sustainable funding (2017 - \$46,600, 2016 - \$60,750).

The expenses this year totaled \$749,000, which was an increase from the expenses last year (\$712,000). The largest portion of expenses are salaries and wages (\$510,000), which has increased by \$30,000 since F16; mostly due to special projects and the need for staff as demand for services increased.

The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program (SANE) has received a consistent amount of funding from the Department of Health and Wellness year over year (\$372,000). Most of the expenses are also salaries and wages for nurses and admin staff, both of which have been consistent when compared to previous years. SANE has managed its budget well and ended with a surplus of \$5,000.

Overall, the 'Unrestricted Fund' pool has been depleted by a further \$72,000 in the current year, which brings the centre's net assets to \$155,000. Our ongoing goal is to keep this reserve without further depletion in the upcoming fiscal year, in addition to increasing our fundraising efforts and securing government funding.

Sharon Merwin

Treasurer

# Avalon Sexual Assault Centre

## Summary Statement of Revenue and Expenses

Year Ended March 31, 2017

	2017	2016
<b>Revenue</b>		
Administrative fees	\$ 46,608	\$ 60,750
Donations, fundraising and other	33,871	29,601
Law Foundation	45,660	46,160
Province of NS	409,800	420,615
Special projects: Dartmouth North - Prevention Innovation Grant	34,978 -	
Special projects: Department of Community Services - Community Support Network Grant	95,251 -	
Status of Women Canada		55,162
Summer student	5,028	4,839
	<b>671,196</b>	<b>617,127</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Advertising and website		2,428
Board and staff development	18,375	8,437
Capital equipment and maintenance	13,853	12,848
Equipment rental and repairs	2,271	2,400
Fundraising	2,520	660
Insurance	8,683	8,243
Miscellaneous	5,701	9,334
Office	1,998	7,767
Professional fees	9,257	22,197
Rental	65,953	67,966
Salaries and wages	510,121	481,101
Special projects	103,991	79,882
Telephone	5,062	5,350
Travel	1,516	3,373
	<b>749,301</b>	<b>711,986</b>
<b>Deficiency of revenue over expenses from operations</b>	<b>\$ (78,105)</b>	<b>\$ (94,859)</b>

	Unrestricted Fund	Contingency Reserve	2017	2016 <i>Restated (Note 10)</i>
<b>Net assets - beginning of year</b>	\$ 227,526	\$ 58,087	<b>\$ 285,613</b>	\$ 372,362
Deficiency of revenue over expenses	(72,176)	-	<b>(72,176)</b>	(86,749)
<b>Net assets - end of year</b>	\$ 155,350	\$ 58,087	<b>\$ 213,437</b>	\$ 285,613

# Avalon Sexual Assault Centre (SANE Program)

## Summary Statement of Revenue and Expenses

Year Ended March 31, 2017

	<b>2017</b>	2016
<b><u>Revenue</u></b>		
Department of Health and Wellness	<b>\$ 372,800</b>	\$ 372,799
Department of Justice Canada Victims' Fund	<b>18,198</b>	63,748
Donations, fundraising and other	<b>4,246</b>	2,205
	<b><u>395,244</u></b>	<u>438,752</u>
<b><u>Expenses</u></b>		
Education and training	<b>8,050</b>	9,896
Insurance	<b>9,562</b>	9,608
Memberships	<b>716</b>	803
Miscellaneous	<b>2,727</b>	3,946
Office	<b>49,879</b>	52,373
On call nurses	<b>151,903</b>	149,728
Purchased services	<b>1,000</b>	968
Research project expenses	<b>25,889</b>	63,748
Salaries and wages	<b>128,260</b>	127,764
Telephone	<b>10,630</b>	10,994
Transportation	<b>699</b>	814
	<b><u>389,315</u></b>	<u>430,642</u>
<b>Excess of revenue over expenses</b>	<b><u>\$ 5,929</u></b>	<u>\$ 8,110</u>





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