



Community Report

April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025



AVALON
SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE

Table of Contents

Board of Directors Co-Chair Report

Message from the Executive Director

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE)

Sexualized Violence Trauma Therapy

Community Programming

Repair and Rebuild

Finance Report

Financial Statements

Our Funders

Photo Album

Thank You



Board of Directors Co-Chair Report

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, we are pleased to present this annual report for the 2024–2025 fiscal year.

Reflecting on the past year, we are deeply grateful for the leadership and dedication of Sarah Rodimon, Avalon's Executive Director. Her unwavering commitment to the well-being of staff, the SANE team, and community members has been vital to our work. Sarah leads with compassion and clarity, always centering the needs of survivors and fostering meaningful connections across the organization.

This year was also a significant one for our Board. We undertook a comprehensive governance review and restructuring process to ensure that our foundation remains strong and aligned with best practices. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to supporting Avalon in a meaningful and sustainable way. We were fortunate to work with Holly McLellan from Hummingboard, whose expertise and guidance were instrumental in strengthening our governance approach and helping us clarify our roles. We extend our sincere thanks to Holly for her essential support.

We also want to take a moment to express our appreciation to our dedicated Board members, who generously volunteer their time, energy, and expertise. Each person brings unique experience and insight, and together, we've made meaningful progress in a short period.

From a financial perspective, Avalon remains in a strong position, consistent with the previous fiscal year. Funding continued to support core services, including our trauma therapy program, SANE response team, and navigation program. As we enter the fourth year of a five-year province-wide Sexual Violence Trauma Therapy (SVTT) funding agreement with Nova Scotia Health, it is more important than ever to maintain and expand support for communities across the province.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the work to come. Avalon will be embarking on the development of a new strategic plan, an important opportunity to reflect on our mission and goals, and to ensure we are meeting the most urgent needs of the communities we serve. This planning process is especially important as we continue to navigate the deep and ongoing impacts of sexualized violence across the province.

Avalon's work is as essential as ever, and we are proud to stand alongside dedicated staff, community partners, and survivors in continuing to create pathways to healing, justice, and systemic change

With gratitude,

Emma Folkins and Arlea Walsh

Co-Chairs, Board of Directors
Avalon Sexual Assault Centre



Message from the Executive Director

Every day this year, I've been grounded by the post-it on my desk that reads, "we are building our foundation." That simple reminder carried us through a year of repair, renewal, and growth at Avalon. In 2024–2025, our focus was on strengthening the organization, tending to relationships, and building the systems that support our work.

It was a year of grounding. We paused to examine our systems, identify where healing was needed, and invest in our workplace culture. With guidance from the Restorative Approach team, we embedded collaboration, care, and accountability into how we work together, refreshed policies and created space for relational repair, which strengthened our ability to move forward as a team. We also worked with Hummingboard to build capacity within our Board of Directors, update our frameworks, and strengthen our accountability to community.

We worked hard to renew community partnerships, working alongside provincial GBV working groups, representing Nova Scotia on the Board of Ending Sexual Violence Canada, and bringing together local leaders to reimagine the future of our provincial trauma therapy program. Connections like this are the backbone of the broader movement to support survivors and end sexualized violence, and we're grateful to be in it together.

This fall, Nova Scotia declared gender-based violence an epidemic. We welcome this recognition, but the response must match the scale of the crisis. Survivors' needs are growing, and demand for services continues to rise. In response, we've expanded our navigation team, strengthened our support options, and advocated for the resources survivors need.

The lessons of this year, including stronger systems, repaired relationships, and a committed team, have laid the foundation for Avalon's future. I am so grateful to our staff, leadership, and Board for all they do to support our community and one another.

With care,

Sarah Rodimon
Executive Director



Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program

Avalon's Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program offers compassionate medical and forensic care to individuals in Halifax Regional Municipality who have experienced a recent sexual assault. Our dedicated team of contract Registered Nurses provide 24/7 on-call response across HRM's core emergency departments, including the QEII Health Sciences Centre, IWK Health, Dartmouth General, and Cobequid Community Health Centre. The program is supported by a Manager and Coordinator who provide leadership to the nursing team and actively promote the SANE program within the community, ensuring survivors have access to timely, trauma-informed care.

The 2024–2025 reporting year reflected continued growth in service demand for the Avalon SANE program, with a total of **432 client interactions**, which marks a nearly 15% increase from the previous year. Of these, 192 were hospital responses where SANEs travelled to meet survivors in emergency departments, and 174 of those responses resulted in direct care being provided. The remaining 240 interactions were information, consultation, and follow-up calls, highlighting the ongoing need for both in-hospital and community-based support.

Leadership members also took part in national and regional learning opportunities, attending conferences and professional development events to stay at the forefront of best practices in forensic nursing and trauma-informed approaches. These gatherings offered not only the chance to expand skills, but also to bring Nova Scotia's experience into broader conversations about sexual assault care across Canada.

The SANE program also continued to respond to invitations from community partners and advocacy groups, participating in workshops, panels, and community events where survivors and allies come together. These opportunities allowed Avalon SANEs to share knowledge, raise awareness about available services, and strengthen the circle of care that extends beyond the hospital walls.

In every setting, the Avalon SANE team worked to ensure survivors' voices, choices, and dignity remain central. By investing in community education and engagement, the program continues to create safer spaces for survivors, while advancing collective knowledge and awareness around sexual assault response in Nova Scotia.

"Going to the hospital, I was terrified and unsure of what was going to happen. From the moment I met the SANEs, they had a very kind, heartwarming and approachable personality and allowed me to be in charge of the examination. I felt safe leaving them afterwards. I can not thank them enough." -SANE Client

Sexual Violence Trauma Therapy Program (SVTT)

Our trauma therapists support survivors of sexualized violence aged 15 and older across Nova Scotia. Our services are offered by phone, online, or at our offices in Halifax, Windsor, Port Hawkesbury, Yarmouth, Shelburne, and Digby. This year, we also partnered with local agencies so that people could access sexualized violence trauma therapy in their own communities, including Antigonish Women's Resource and Sexual Assault Centre, Pictou Women's Resource and Sexual Assault Centre, Second Story Women's Centre in Lunenburg, and Colchester Sexual Assault Centre.

2024–2025 was the third year of our Community-Based Sexualized Violence Trauma Therapy Program (CB-SVTTP). During the year, Avalon's therapy team supported **263 clients** through **2145 hours of counselling**. Sessions included in-person, phone, virtual, and community-based counselling, along with group therapy. The team also provided **388 hours of supportive services**, including advocacy, client check-ins, information sessions, and collaborating with other service providers to better support their clients. These numbers reflect a year of transition as we focused on rebuilding our team, strengthening our foundations, and shaping the future of the program.

New Clients

Our intake team also helped **258 new clients** across all four health zones, providing them with information, referrals, and access to therapeutic support. The team continued to check in with clients on the waitlist and shared resources for online mental health tools and supports available across the province.

Group Therapy Programming

This past year, we also offered two new group therapy options: a Queer and Trans Grounding Group and an Art Therapy Group. Both were well received by clients and our team. These groups give clients a supportive space to develop skills and build connections to support their healing journey.

Community Partnerships

Avalon's partner organizations are key to making sexualized violence trauma therapy more available across the province. Over the past year, Avalon shared resources to support this work and collaborated with partners to develop service agreements to help sustain our work for years to come. Altogether, our partners supported more than **191 clients** through **1,966 hours of counselling**. As Avalon builds more partnerships across the province, this impact will keep growing—especially in rural and underserved communities.

Team Growth

This year, Avalon welcomed several new staff members, including four therapists, a second clinical supervisor, and a new Program Manager. It's taken time to find our footing as we expand this program, but these new additions – together with our new partnerships – mark an exciting step forward. With renewed energy, Avalon is more ready than ever to strengthen our services, reduce wait times, and increase the impact of our program for survivors across the province.

Client Feedback

At Avalon, we recognize that behind every statistic is a person with a unique experience. While respecting confidentiality, clients often share how accessing our services has impacted their lives. Many describe feelings of hope, relief, and empowerment after connecting with our trauma therapists. For example, one client shared that after their initial chat, they felt a sense of hope for the first time since their experience of assault, while another noted that accessing services at Avalon positively changed the course of their life. These reflections help illustrate the meaningful difference that therapeutic support can make in survivors' lives and complement the program's quantitative outcomes.

"I am feeling more joy and peace than I have felt in a long time. The experience of belonging and being able to show up as my full self, while learning/practicing skills that are beneficial outside of group was deeply meaningful." - Anonymous client



Community Programming

Education & Advocacy
Legal Navigation
Community Navigation

This year, we grew our team and strengthened our services by making community navigation a permanent part of Avalon's core programming. Our navigation team expanded with a new Navigation Lead, who now oversees both Community and Legal Navigation services, and a new Community Navigator focused on supporting newcomer, immigrant, and migrant communities. These additions have increased the reach and impact of our team, helping us better meet the unique and complex needs of the people we serve.

Later in the year, we brought back the Education and Advocacy Coordinator role after years of trying to do this work off the side of our desks. We realize this role is key to leading Avalon's community education and training programs, guiding our advocacy work, and building the foundation for long-term efforts to address the root causes of sexualized violence. We're excited to see how this work takes shape and are thrilled to have the role back on our team!

Community Advisory Committee

Avalon's BIPOC-led Community Advisory Committee makes sure community voices are at the centre of our programs and services, helping us shape our work to be inclusive, responsive, and grounded in the needs of the people we serve.

The Committee brings together 12 members with a wide range of backgrounds and lived experiences. Over the past year, they met monthly for 12 thoughtful conversations, each focused on a different theme. Meetings happen over a shared meal, giving space for connection and dialogue. Topics this year included intake processes, navigation programs, hiring practices, community outreach, and events.



Community Navigation

Avalon's Community Navigation Team offers low-barrier support for survivors aged 15 and older, of all genders, who need help finding their way through complex systems like housing, employment, policing, justice, and healthcare. Our navigators work directly in the community to make services more accessible for groups that are often underserved. They also build partnerships across sectors and create learning opportunities for those supporting survivors from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences.

Navigators fill an important gap by recognizing that sexualized violence can affect every part of a survivor's life. Getting support isn't always easy, especially when survivors and service providers are working on their own. By connecting services and bridging these gaps, navigators help survivors receive more coordinated support that promotes healing and safety.

In 2024–2025, our Community Navigation team supported **136 clients** through **548 navigation sessions**. Most sessions included emotional support, while other urgent needs focused on food access, housing, employment, safety planning, and immigration support.

Working Groups and Committees

The Navigation Team also strengthened connections by taking part in local and national working groups and committees. This past year, we were proud to be part of:

- YWCA Halifax's Trafficking and Exploitation Services System (TESS) Core, and Working Group(s)
- Immigrant Migrant Women's Association of Halifax (IMWAH) Newcomers Working Group
- Welcome Housing Working Group
- trans-LINK Canada Network's National Membership
- Ending Sexual Violence Association (ESVA)'s National Working Group on Sexual Violence
- Dr. Margherita Cameranesi's research initiative at Saint Mary's University: Finding Your Resilience in Nova Scotia (FYRe-NS), a participatory, community-directed research project with a focus on mental health and resilience in racialized refugee youth who are survivors of violence
- SUGAR Health (Nova Scotia's Sexual, Gender, and Reproductive Health Registry & Warmline)'s research and outreach efforts to expand and identify available sexual health services across Nova Scotia

Legal Navigation

Avalon's Legal Navigator provides survivors of sexualized violence with practical, trauma-informed support as they navigate the criminal legal system. This includes sharing information about legal processes and rights, accompanying survivors to legal proceedings, lawyer appointments, and court, and offering confidential emotional support throughout a client's journey.

In 2024–2025, our Legal Navigator supported **31 clients** through **395 sessions**. Of these sessions, the largest share of the work continues to be direct legal and emotional support, paired with accompaniment to legal proceedings.

Community Partnerships

The demand for Avalon's legal support program grows every year. To help meet this need, our Legal Navigator and Navigation Lead have worked closely with partner agencies—including Halifax Regional Police Victim Services, RCMP, Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network, LEAF, Independent Legal Advice, Halifax Crown Attorney's Office, Department of Victim Services, Nova Scotia Legal Aid, Dalhousie Legal Aid, Coverdale Justice Society, Valent Legal, the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre, Adsum House for Women and Children, and others—to extend resources and build a stronger network of supports for survivors.

Along with supporting clients directly, Avalon's Legal Navigator also work at the systems level to help service providers, organizations, and communities better respond to survivors of sexualized violence. This year, our team took part in the Halifax Sexual Assault Response Team, the Sexual Assault Investigations Review Committee, and public legal education projects. Through this work, we helped to strengthen policies and practices to make sure responses across Nova Scotia are more trauma-informed and survivor-centered.



Repair and Rebuild

This year, Avalon focused on repairing and rebuilding our workplace and governance structures to create a stronger foundation for the future. We're grateful for the support of our partners, Restorative Approach and Hummingboard, Inc., who guided us through this work with care and intention.

Workplace culture

Our team participated in a total of **69 individual meetings** and **5 full-day workshop sessions** with Restorative Approach, including sessions for staff, leadership, the full collective, and the SVTT team. These sessions focused on relational repair and conflict transformation, and provided opportunities for us to reimagine how we work together. Together, we built out communication agreements, created a consultation process plan, and addressed gaps in our collective care practices. The work concluded with co-creating new policies to guide Avalon's day-to-day work through an intersectional, trauma-informed lens.

Governance

Together, our ED and members of Avalon's Board of Directors engaged in a total of **36 governance-focused activities** led by Hummingboard, Inc. Highlights include developing and facilitating Avalon's Governance and Officers' Orientation, re-establishing our Board committee structure (Finance and Audit, HR & Governance), updating Financial Policies, creating a Governance Handbook rooted in intersectional principles, reviewing our Bylaws and charitable objects, and developing a risk mitigation tool and governance calendar to guide our work. We also updated our recruitment materials and processes, and welcomed three new members to our Board!



Finance Report 2024-25

This past year has been one of continued growth and deepened impact, supported by strong financial stewardship and the unwavering commitment of our funders, staff, and community. Avalon's total revenue for the year reached \$3,094,711, marking a significant 22% increase from the previous year's total of \$2,526,119. This growth reflects not only expanded programming but also the trust and support we continue to receive—particularly from the Province of Nova Scotia, which contributed over 90% of our total funding.

A key component of this financial growth was the combined \$2.9 million in deferred revenue from the previous year, which was earmarked for sustaining and growing our programming and supporting our investments in Avalon's governance and workplace culture. We are so grateful to our funders for working with us to provide this flexibility across fiscal years, and for their ongoing support of our mission to support survivors and prevent sexualized violence in Nova Scotia. We are also deeply grateful for the generosity of our community donors whose support is vital to our work.

Our Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program also continued to benefit from dedicated funding. In 2024–2025, we received a total amount of \$502,794 in funding from Nova Scotia Health, which ensured that our team could continue delivering 24/7 care to individuals who have experienced sexual assault. Their work represents a cornerstone of our direct service delivery model and an essential lifeline for survivors in HRM.

Total expenditures for the year amounted to \$2,980,467, representing a 20% increase over last year's figure of \$2,474,057. The increase was driven primarily by the rising costs of salaries and rent—expenses that reflect the growth of our Sexual Violence Trauma Therapy Program and the necessary hiring of additional therapists and leadership roles as we continue to build the reach and impact of our provincial program. Despite this growth in spending, we concluded the year with a surplus of \$114,244 in unrestricted revenue. The entirety of this surplus will be allocated to Avalon's contingency fund, enhancing our long-term financial stability.

At the close of the fiscal year, Avalon reported organizational equity of \$557,385 and total assets of \$4,214,686. The largest contributor to our asset base remains restricted cash in the form of deferred revenue from key funders, including Nova Scotia Health, WAGE, and DND. These funds are designated for future programming – particularly the expansion of our provincial trauma therapy program – and will be recognized as revenue to support the delivery of services in upcoming fiscal periods.

Our financial statements underwent an independent audit, and I am pleased to report that we received a clean opinion. The audit included a standard qualification related to the verification of fundraising revenues—a common limitation among nonprofit organizations that does not reflect any concerns with our financial management or internal controls. Avalon continues to uphold the highest standards of fiscal responsibility, transparency, and accountability.

Looking ahead, Avalon is in a strong financial position and remains deeply committed to its mission to end sexualized violence and other forms of oppression through trauma-informed care, education, and advocacy. We are encouraged by the continued generosity of our funders, partners, and community, and we look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.

Natcha Wannaklang
Board Treasurer
Avalon Sexual Assault Centre



Financial Statements

AVALON SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE SOCIETY
Statement of Revenues and Expenditures
Year Ended March 31, 2025

	2025	2024
REVENUES		
Province of Nova Scotia	\$ 2,772,349	\$ 2,099,072
Donations, fundraising and other	155,676	117,104
Law Foundation of Nova Scotia	78,130	36,528
Halifax Sexual Assault Community Support Network	48,128	216,322
Administrative fees (Note 6)	19,761	39,189
Department of National Defense	19,190	5,190
Emergency Community Support	1,477	214
Canadian Women's Foundation	-	20,000
Sexual Violence New Brunswick	-	10,000
Mental Health Foundation (repayment)	-	(17,500)
	<u>3,094,711</u>	<u>2,528,119</u>
EXPENDITURES		
Advertising and website	2,025	3,393
Board and staff development	79,372	98,607
Capital equipment and maintenance	2,114	10,526
Consulting fees	68,576	92,074
Equipment rental and repair	5,339	2,775
Insurance	52,979	49,094
Interest and bank charges	1,841	2,246
Membership fees	17,678	11,356
Miscellaneous	443	3,875
Office	26,728	27,728
Professional fees	165,713	130,094
Program supplies	74,586	80,250
Rental and location expenses	617,059	170,651
Salaries and wages (Note 7)	1,772,779	1,668,650
Technology	43,951	65,760
Telephone	19,256	17,232
Travel	30,028	39,746
	<u>2,980,467</u>	<u>2,474,057</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES FROM OPERATIONS	<u>114,244</u>	<u>52,062</u>
OTHER INCOME (EXPENDITURES)		
SANE revenues (Schedule 1)	502,794	420,502
SANE expenditures (Schedule 1)	<u>(502,794)</u>	<u>(454,479)</u>
	-	(33,977)
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES	<u>\$ 114,244</u>	<u>\$ 18,085</u>

2024-25 Photo Album



Community BBQ cohosted with The North Grove



Full day training with Sexual Violence New Brunswick



Take Back the Night cohosted with Dalhousie Sex Education Resource Centre



Trunk or Treat with Boys and Girls Club



National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women Vigil



Holiday Wreath Making Workshop cohosted with LEA Place



Our Funders



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada



And a special thank you to all of our donors,
for being such a critical part of Avalon's journey.



Thank You.

To our incredible staff team, dedicated Board of Directors, committed community partners, and all those who support our work—thank you for being such a vital part of Avalon’s journey.

To our clients and survivors everywhere, we believe you, and we’re so glad you’re here.

