

# BC PROVINCIAL CUTS TO

INFORMATION ACCURATE AS OF APRIL 10, 2002

## MALE SURVIVORS OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE AND RECENT SEXUAL ASSAULT

SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR MALE survivors of childhood sexual abuse and recent sexual assault are under threat as a result of the provincial government's cuts to funding and their changes to policy and legislation. Studies show that children of both genders are victims of sexual assault and that they are primarily, although not exclusively, abused by male perpetrators (BC Society for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse, 2002). Many male survivors of childhood sexual abuse were abused in institutional settings; this is particularly true for men with disabilities and for Aboriginal men who often suffered abuse in residential schools.

Despite the fact there are few national statistics on the incidence and prevalence of child sexual abuse in Canada, in BC more than 500 complaints of sexual abuse were received in March 1992 (Health Canada, 1992). The most extensive study of child sexual abuse in Canada indicated that, among adult Canadians, 53 % of women and 31% of men were sexually abused when they were children (Bagley, 1988). In a report on victimization of men, Mathews (1996) found that 33% of males and 50 % of females reported being victims of unwanted sexual touching. 3 in 4 of these incidents happened while the person was a child or youth.

Men also experience sexual assault by men as adults. Men are at risk for sexual assault in relationships with other men, when they are single or when they are in prison. Sometimes, sexual assault is part of a hate crime and aimed at men who are assumed to be gay. With respect to sexual violence in gay male relationships very little information exists that would help us assess the extent of this problem. The prevalence of violence in one US study of gay couples was found to be 38% (Short, 1996). In another US study, 52% of men in same sex relationships reported at least one incident of sexual coercion by same-sex partners. (California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, 2001). While same-sex violence is similar in some ways to the experience of violence in heterosexual couples,

its victims receive fewer protections. Even less is known about the prevalence of sexual assault against single men, and sexual assault in prison has rarely been studied comprehensively.

Male survivors of childhood sexual abuse and recent sexual assault face significant barriers in accessing support. Homophobia and gender socialization compound these barriers (Kimmel, 1994). That is, many men are afraid to disclose that they have been victimized for fear of being seen as less masculine. Gay, bisexual or transgendered men may not want to disclose abuse for fear of experiencing discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Men report that they rarely have choices with respect to the gender of the therapists they have access to and that in general many therapists are poorly trained about male childhood sexual abuse. Furthermore, many survivors are kept silent and isolated by "the damaging impact of the myth that all men who have been sexually abused as children go on to re-offend, that they are 'sexual abusers in the making'" (BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs (BCSVACP) Newsletter, Fall 2001, p9).

Emerging research demonstrates that men who experience sexual violence are affected socially, legally and psychologically. For example, male survivors of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse earlier in their lives face significant barriers when accessing counselling support, therapeutic services and resources (Migliaccio, 2001). Very little research has examined the long-term effects of sexual abuse on men, however, some long term effects include low self-esteem and negative self-perceptions. Perhaps as a result of low self-esteem and lack of trust, male vic-



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### INFORMATION

**BC Institute Against Family Violence**  
(604) 669-7055  
1-877-755-7055 (toll free)

**BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs**  
(604) 633-2506

**BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre:**

**Sexual Assault Service**  
(604) 875-2881

**The Woman Abuse Response Program**  
(604) 875-3717

**BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses**  
(604) 669-6943

### RESOURCES

**Government of British Columbia, Minister of Finance**  
[www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca)

**PovNet**  
[www.povnet.org](http://www.povnet.org)

**BC Coalition of Women's Centres**  
[www3.telus.net/bcwomen/bcwomen](http://www3.telus.net/bcwomen/bcwomen)

**Access Justice**  
[www.accessjustice.ca](http://www.accessjustice.ca)

**Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives**  
[www.policyalternatives.ca/bc](http://www.policyalternatives.ca/bc)

**BC Coalition of People with Disabilities**  
[www.bccpd.bc.ca](http://www.bccpd.bc.ca)

tims experience difficulty in developing and maintaining satisfying intimate adult relationships (Duncan & Williams, 1998). Sexual assault of male children by men has been described as effecting male youths' sexual behaviour and gender identity – including homophobic or rigid adherence to societally prescribed male gender roles (Urquiza & Keating, 1990).

Survivors already face long waitlists, and receive few subsidies for counselling and therapy. Research undertaken by

the BCASVAP shows that even prior to the cuts there was a lack of services for men and the services that did exist were under-funded. In the recent government cuts 'Breaking the Silence', a project run by the John Howard Society in Kelowna was eliminated as was funding for the male survivor program at The Elizabeth Fry Society in Kelowna. Further, the cuts to Specialized Victim Assistance Programs throughout the province means reduced support in many communities for male survivors.

## CUTS, POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Cuts to Specialized Victim Assistance Programs and elimination of funding for male survivor groups in some communities (e.g., Elizabeth Fry male survivor group and the group in Kelowna run by the John Howard Society).

Legal Services Society can no longer pay for legal aid for human rights complaints (see Human Rights Fact Sheet).

Closure of Native and Community Law offices.

Crown Victim Witness Services has been eliminated (see Criminal Law Fact Sheet).

15 Crown Counsel (i.e. 25%) are going to be laid off (see Criminal Law Fact Sheet).

Loss of youth counsellors for "at risk" adolescents.

Cuts to other support organizations like Youthquest that provide supports to queer youth in the form of drop-in peer support and advocacy.

Since April 16, 2002 awards for pain and suffering applications are no longer being received under the amended Criminal Injury Compensation Act.

Contract therapists who provide services for abusive men's treatment programs have received letters from the Corrections Branch indicating that services will be cut by a minimum of 50%.

Cuts to social assistance and the narrowing of rules of eligibility for social assistance (see Social Assistance and Other Social Programs Fact Sheet).

## IMPACT: KNOWN AND POTENTIAL

Lack of long-term specialized support will make it very difficult for male survivors to get the counselling and advocacy they need. Increase of clients for those organizations that still have some resources such as the BC Society for Male Survivors.

This cut has the potential to impact the most on marginalized men (e.g., Aboriginal, immigrant, men of colour, gay men and transgender men) who are seeking assistance (including against government discrimination) to protect their basic human rights.

Fewer resources especially for Aboriginal men and men living in poverty.

Remaining community-based and police-based victim assistance programs will be required to pick up these services. Those programs may have to reduce some services to victims of sexual assault.

With reduced crown resources there will be long delays. The ultimate result may be that fewer offences are prosecuted.

Many "at risk" male adolescents have experienced or witnessed abuse; fewer services to help them deal with such issues.

Young gay, bisexual and transgendered men will have fewer supportive places where they are able to disclose abuse and receive help.

Men who have been physically and sexually assaulted or psychologically traumatized may receive less compensation to support their recovery.

Male convicted abusers will be re-entering society without rehabilitation, and this creates risk, fear and instability for survivors of abuse and sexual assault.

Increase of poverty, homelessness, social isolation, illness and psychological stress for impoverished men. This has the potential to exacerbate the impact of childhood sexual abuse and assault on men.