
Policy Statement
Regional Victims' Services Program

Chapter 1: Client Services Date Issued: May 1, 1996
1.07: Services to Victims of Family Violence within Revision Number: 2
Framework for Action Against Family Violence Date Revised: September 1, 1996

PREAMBLE:

This policy refers specifically to all forms of violence committed by current or former spouses or partners in an intimate relationship, whether they be legally married; living together in a common-law relationship; or dating. This policy and procedure has been developed to support the pro-arrest, pro-charge and pro-prosecution policy set out in the Framework for Action Against Family Violence.

PRINCIPLES:

- C The provision of services to victims of spousal/intimate partner violence is a high priority;
- C The safety of victims is of primary concern;
- C Regional Victims' Services will work in partnership with other justice departments and community-based organizations to coordinate the delivery of services to victims of spousal/intimate partner violence and to avoid any duplication of services.

POLICY:

- C Regional Victims' Services will provide support, advocacy and liaison within the criminal justice system to victims of spousal/intimate partner violence;
- C Regional Victims' Services will work cooperatively with community-based initiatives relating to family violence;
- C Regional Victims' Services will provide services to victims of spousal/intimate partner violence either directly or in conjunction with other organizations.

PROCEDURE:

Referral Guidelines:

- C In the best interest of the victim, referrals to Victims' Services should be made *early in the criminal justice process* but will be accepted at any stage of the criminal justice process;
- C Referrals can be made by telephone or faxed to the nearest Regional Victims'

Services office. (Staff or an answering machine is available 24 hours a day to receive victims information.)

Initial Contact:

- C Victims' Services will endeavour to make personal contact with a victim within two working days of receiving a referral *or at the earliest opportunity the victim is available;*
- C During the initial contact, a Victims' Services Officer will provide information on the services available and will inform victims of their rights;
- C In a situation where a victim declines the offer of services, the victims' file will be kept open and a Victims' Services Officer will continue to inform the victim of. This will ensure immediate access to services if the victim changes his mind or if the victims' situation varies.

Services:

The following services will be provided to assist victims in their dealings with the Criminal Justice System:

Support

- C Emotional support and assistance *while* preparing to appear as a witness in court;
- C *Liaison with support services in the community to assist with court accompaniment;*
- C Assessment and referral to other relevant services, agencies or organizations.

Assistance

- C Assistance in court preparation;
- C Assistance in applying for *Peace Bonds;*
- C Assistance in applying for *Criminal Injuries Compensation;*
- C Information and guidance in the preparation of a *Victim Impact Statement;*
- C Assistance in filing *Victims Impact Statements* with the Courts;
- C Assistance in the explanation of and forwarding of probation orders.

Security

- C Development of or review of *personal safety plans;*
- C The provision of a *separate waiting area* for the victim and family in Regional Victims' Services offices and, where possible, in other court locations.
- C *Liaison with police and Court officials* when there is a need for security for the victim, especially while attending court.

Information

- C Information on *spousal/intimate partner violence;*
- C General information on the *Criminal Justice System;*
- C *Specific information related to the case,* including updates and schedules changes.

Liaison

- C Liaison with the *Crown Attorney, police and Court officials* on behalf of the victim, especially regarding safety issues and possible recantation;
- C Liaison with *community agencies and supports for victims* of spousal/intimate partner violence to ensure coordination and to avoid any duplication of services;
- C Liaison with *Corrections* in relation to issues such as parole hearings and offender release from custody.

MONITORING:

The Victims' Services Division will monitor the provision of services by Regional Victims' Services to victims of spousal/intimate partner violence. A tracking system will be established to monitor the services utilized by victims as their case moves through the Criminal Justice System.