

PCVI News – Fall/Winter 2011



Welcome

Pamela Arnott, *Director and Senior Counsel, Policy Centre for Victim Issues*

The New Year is a time for new beginnings. Here at the PCVI, we are delighted to be supporting organizations across the country in their beginning or enhancing of services to victims. Ruth Campbell is the coordinator of the Graduate Certificate in Victimology program at Algonquin College in Ottawa. PCVI was pleased to speak with Ms. Campbell about this new beginning: our conversation with her is printed below.

Marking the 10th anniversary of 9-11, PCVI sends a special note of recognition and respect to the families and friends of victims of terrorism. It is our hope that the Prime Minister's announcement of a National Day of Service will be a new beginning in national commitment to assist victim of terrorism.

If you have any comments on this edition of PCVI news, or would like to suggest future topics we would love to hear from you.

A New Resource for Victim-Serving Professionals

A leading Quebec organization for victim assistance (Association québécoise Plaidoyer Victimes) has released their primer, *Intervention with Crime Victims* in English. First drafted in French, this compendium of best practices, research and practical advice has been updated for 2011. This instructional tool will be very helpful to practitioners working with victims of crime who wish to know better how to serve their clients. Plaidoyer-Victimes (PV) brings together professionals from victim services, academia, police and criminal justice professionals to offer a unique approach to serving victims. PCVI was pleased to partner with PV on this valuable resource. For more information, visit: <http://www.aqpv.ca/>

Algonquin Victimology Certificate Program

The [Algonquin Victimology Certificate Program](#) has now entered its second year and a new cohort of students are well into their studies. Ms. Campbell is the Coordinator of the Victimology Graduate Certificate Program (as well as the Chair of the Office for Victim's of Crime in Ontario, reporting to the Attorney General, and Professor in the Police Foundations Program). As the Coordinator, Ruth Campbell shares her impressions on the program's beginnings.

How did the program begin?

We owe it to victims to not retraumatize them. I have been working with victims of crime for 25 years and have seen too many cases where people assisting victims of crime have well-meaning intentions but are often ill equipped without the education and foundational training necessary to best assist victims of crime. I had an "ah-ha" moment when the Cornwall Inquiry's Commissioner suggested there was a lack of training for people who work with victims. From that moment on, I had a development training program in mind.

I approached the president of Algonquin College with a proposal to start the program. We are now seeing the results with our second class of students in the program. We canvassed across Canada and consulted an advisory committee made up of people working in the field to

help develop the program. I believe we have developed a quality learning environment that will assist professionals working with victims of crime.

Tell us more about the program

Algonquin College is an expert in offering training to people who have had previous education or work-life experience. Many of our learners are at the stage in their careers where they can benefit from developing hands-on skills and marrying their education and training with specific knowledge about victim issues. The issues surrounding Aboriginal victimization in Canada provides a very good example of how important it is to balance historical and theoretical knowledge with learning practical skills and approaches. When developing the program, I insisted that we have a course dedicated to Aboriginal victimization. Lisa Monchalin developed the course and ensured that would be meaningful. Theory has to have meaning and context to people's real lives.

What do students get from the program?

I see that the students get access to people who they would not otherwise be able to learn from, such as guest speakers, and academics studying best practices throughout the world. We try to bring in people who have been harmed by crime. Just recently, we brought in a guest speaker who has been working with MADD Canada who is the father of a victim of a drunk driver. Hearing directly from someone who has been affected by crime allows students in the program to make a difference in their front-line and policy-development future careers. Someone who is doing a Masters Degree after our program might look back upon that experience of meeting a father and have a real connection beyond just the stories that may be read and case studies analyzed. Our goal is to give students in the program something different because of their experience at Algonquin. There are 300 organizations in Ottawa alone providing services to victims of crime. One of the advantages of being in the Ottawa area is the depth of policy-related positions available as job placements. These on-the-job placements offer a chance for students to gain real experience in the field of victim service or policy.

How is the future of this program changing?

This year the program is available on line through continuing education and via the traditional, in-class means. The College is committed to accessible education using technology as part of its service delivery. I am amazed by the diversity of the students we have applying to further their studies here at Algonquin. I love working here and seeing the future leaders and practitioners of victim services being trained and reaching for excellence as they translate "well-meaning" into better equipping professionals to assist victims of crime.

One Algonquin Student's journey

Victoria Stillie, Policy Analyst, is a member of the first graduating class of Algonquin's Victimology Program. Victoria completed her studies in April, 2011 while working full time at PCVI. Since graduating from Algonquin, Victoria has accepted a permanent position with PCVI where she chairs the National Victims of Crime Awareness Week Organizing Committee, reviews countless applications to the Victims Fund and participates in many departmental committees. When asked what Victoria found most useful about her studies at Algonquin she replied: "The program allowed me to learn at a theoretical and practical level the skills I need every day to help ensure that victims have a more effective voice in the criminal justice system."

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