



**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Tuesday, July 16, 2013**

**Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Program  
serves Niagara community for 20 years**

Staff in the Sexual Assault Domestic Violence Treatment Centre – Niagara are using the centre's 20th anniversary this year as an opportunity to remind the public that they are here and ready to help 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The services are available to people of all ages, including children. All services are covered 100 per cent by OHIP and are completely confidential.

Unfortunately, too many victims of sexual assault and domestic violence – all ages, both sexes -- do not seek medical or emotional help from the abuse.

Anyone, who has been assaulted can go to any Emergency Department or Urgent Care Centre in the region, and if necessary, will be transported to the treatment centre. The centre recently moved to dedicated space in the Emergency Department at the new St. Catharines Site.

Nurses, who are on call 24/7, will collect evidence if appropriate, treat injuries, do an extensive safety plan and/or risk assessment in cases of domestic violence. Social workers provide follow-up counselling on a short-term basis to address ongoing trauma symptoms associated with assault and/or abuse.

"A specially trained registered nurse will provide medical care, emotional care and forensic evidence collection," says co-ordinator Elaine Cybula. "The patient's choices and confidentiality are always respected."

"If you have been assaulted, please don't hesitate to come to the centre," says co-ordinator Rebecca Park. "Let us help you start the healing process."

**For victims of sexual assault or domestic violence who come to the hospital, there are a range of treatment options available. These options include:**

- Medical treatment for injuries, preventive medication for sexually-transmitted diseases and pregnancy
- Documentation of injuries on body diagrams and photographs of injuries
- In cases of sexual assault, a forensic evidence kit could be completed. This involves collection of specimens for DNA and drug testing
- Police involvement
- Completing a Third Party Report, a process whereby the victim's anonymity is maintained but consent has been given to allow program staff to give the police a description of the assailant
- Follow-up phone call from the Nurse Liaison to assess client's physical and emotional status and make appropriate linkages
- Short-term trauma counselling at St. Catharines Site or at various community agencies

The Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Program works with several community services in the region. **For more information, call 905-378-4647, ext. 45300.**

**Statistics regarding sexual assault, domestic violence and violence against children: Source Statistics Canada**

- 1 in 4 women are assaulted in their lifetime
- 1 in 5 women abused by their partner is assaulted during pregnancy
- 53% of women escaping abusive situations were admitted to shelters with their children, and 65% of these children were under the age of 10
- 1 in 10 sexual assault cases are reported to the police
- Highest age group at risk for sexual assault are women age 15-24
- 82% of assaults are committed by someone known to the victim, and the most serious assaults occur in private residences
- In 2011, there were 49 reported cases in Niagara of sexual assaults against children; 866 in the province of Ontario
- In 2011, there were 221 reported cases in Niagara of sexual assaults against women; 7,821 in the province of Ontario

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