

The Power
of Collaboration

11 to 17 May
2025

20^{years}
Victims
and Survivors
of Crime
Week

Victims Week 2025 - Virtual Events Agenda

Monday, May 12, 2025

1:00 pm to 3:30 pm (EDT)

OFFICIAL LAUNCH AND OPENING CEREMONY

OPENING REMARKS

MOMENT OF REFLECTION

PRESENTATION OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Supporting Victims of Domestic Violence Crime in the African Community

Dee Adekugbe (a.k.a “Mama Dee”) is the Founder and Executive Director of Ruth’s House, a safe haven for families of African descent who are experiencing family violence.

In her keynote address, Mama Dee will speak to the issue of domestic violence, which is a pervasive issue that affects individuals across all cultures and communities. In particular, she will share about the unique cultural, social, and economic factors within the African community that can create specific challenges and barriers for victims seeking help.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses awareness, education, support services, and community engagement. In this light, Mama Dee will speak to the incredible work that her organization is doing to provide comprehensive support to individuals of African descent who are facing family crises and violence, including through a wide range of services designed to address both prevention and intervention.



Dee Adekugbe (she/her)
Executive Director
Ruth's House Society
Calgary, Alberta

Dee Adekugbe (a.k.a “Mama Dee”) is the Founder and Executive Director of Ruth’s House, a safe haven for families of African descent who are experiencing family violence. Mama Dee is a highly respected community leader and collaborator who is committed to breaking the cycle of abuse in her community from a cultural and Afrocentric lens. On pioneering Ruth’s House, Dee has stated that “our community requires



bespoke help that is centered around our faith, culture and values as well as the Canadian system, and that is why Ruth's House exists."

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

11:00 am to 12:30 pm (EDT)

WORKSHOP #1

Online Panel: Building a national victim support service and transforming rights into real impact – a European perspective

2025 is the 40th Anniversary of the UN Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power. It is also the 35th Anniversary of Victim Support Europe and the European Day for Victims of Crime.

More than 30 years since States and civil society agreed that collaboration was essential to serving victims of crime, this panel will explore how services and rights have developed in Europe, what are some of the core principles and practices that can be applied around the world, and what might be the focus for the coming decades.

This panel discussion will explore developments from their national lenses, key challenges in designing and implementing victims' rights and services, what solutions have been found and what is needed to move from theory and law to genuine and meaningful access to support services for all victims of crime.

By the end of this panel discussion, participants will have a stronger understanding of:

- Core principles for designing victims' policy and law through a victim centric approach – as established through EU law and UN norms;
- Different national approaches to the organisation of victims' policy and law;
- The development and operation of national victim support services (through the lens of two different models), and;
- Co-operation mechanisms at national and local level to support the design of laws and policies as well as the operation of services.



Levent Altan, LLB

Executive Director, Victim Support Europe
Founding Member, International Network Supporting Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence, and Victim Support Asia

Levent has over two decades of experience in justice, security, and fundamental rights, including in the United Kingdom Civil Service, and six years in criminal justice in the European Commission. As Executive Director of Victim Support Europe (VSE), he has progressed work on policies, advocacy, capacity building, and supporting crime victims. Since the 2015 Paris attacks, he has led VSE's terrorism initiatives, which have helped shape European Union, United Nations, and governments victim focused responses.

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1:00 pm to 2:30 pm (EDT)

WORKSHOP #2

From Crisis to Resilience: A Victim-Centered Approach to Preparing for and Responding to Mass Victimization Events

Mass victimization incidents present significant challenges for responding agencies to provide timely and effective assistance to victims, survivors, families, first responders, and impacted communities. A victim-centered approach is essential to overcoming these challenges—ensuring that the experiences and voices of victims inform both preplanning and response strategies.

This panel will explore the importance of a victim-centered approach in mass casualty events, emphasizing the need for multi-agency collaboration and comprehensive pre-planning to address the immediate, medium, and long-term needs of victims. Panelists will share insights and lessons learned from past incidents, focusing on strategies that build public trust and confidence by prioritizing the rights and needs of victims, survivors and their families. Panelists will share how they have used their voices to advocate for victims' rights, influence policy changes, and promote collaborative approaches to support victims and survivors. Their insights will highlight the importance of a coordinated, respectful, and inclusive response that not only meets immediate needs but also supports long-term recovery and resilience. Participants will be equipped with actionable strategies to advocate for victims' rights and ensure that their voices remain at the heart of all response efforts.



Sue O'Sullivan (she/her)

Chair

International Network Supporting Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence

Sue O'Sullivan is the Chair of the International Network Supporting Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence and a former Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime in Canada. With a 30-year career in policing, retiring as Deputy Chief of Police in Ottawa, Sue has been a steadfast advocate for victims' rights and safer communities. As Ombudsperson, she championed victims'

voices at the federal level, making impactful recommendations for legislative and policy changes. Sue also leads the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police National Working Group and is the Deputy Chair of the Counter Terrorism Preparedness Network. Her global influence includes roles with Victim Support Asia and the International Victims Focus Group for Operation Kenova.

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Maureen Basnicki
Co-Founder
Secure Canada

Maureen Basnicki co-founded Secure Canada (formerly the Canadian Coalition Against Terror) in 2004, advocating for stronger laws and policies to combat extremism and terrorism. Her husband, Ken Basnicki, was one of 24 Canadians murdered in the 9/11 attacks. Maureen successfully lobbied for 9/11 to be recognized as a National Day of Service in Canada and founded the Canadian National Day of Service Foundation in 2013. She has appeared before parliamentary committees and has been widely quoted in the media. In 2012, she was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her efforts in counter-terrorism advocacy.



Maria McDonald (she/her)

Maria McDonald is an advocate, barrister, and founding member of the Irish Victims' Rights Alliance with over 18 years of experience in criminal justice and victims' rights. Called to the Irish Bar in 2007, she has influenced legislation in the Irish Parliament and lectured in subjects such as international human rights law. From 2018 to 2023, Maria led victim support initiatives for the Ontario Provincial Police. She is a founding member of the International Network Supporting Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence, a member of the Victims Focus Group for Operation Kenova in Northern Ireland and an advisor to the European Union Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism. In 2023, she was seconded from the Ontario Provincial Police to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada for a two-year period.



Pauline Okroglic
Lead Legal Officer, European Affairs
France Victimes

Pauline Okroglic is a jurist with extensive experience in international law and victim support. She joined France Victimes in 2018, advancing from a legal assistant to Lead Legal Officer specializing in European affairs. In her role, she collaborates with legal professionals across the France Victimes Network and addresses complex international and European legal issues affecting victims. Her prior experience includes a 10-month internship at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague and work with Eurojust. Pauline holds a Master's degree in International and European Criminal Law from the University of Limoges and studied law at the University of Oklahoma College of Law.

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Wednesday, May 14, 2025

11:00 am to 12:30 pm (EDT)

WORKSHOP #3

Responding to a Disclosure of a Youth Sexual Assault

This workshop will provide an overview of how working professionals should respond to a victim disclosing a historical sexual assault. The workshop will go over the statistics related to sexual assaults and examine why this is an issue, particularly within youth, and then provide an overview of best practices when responding to such a disclosure. Finally, it will specifically discuss how Family Services of the North Shore's Sexual Assault Response Program works collaboratively with the Forensic Nursing and Police Services teams within its community, providing a good layout for collaborative service in relation to sexual assaults and the criminal justice system.



Anna Nelson (she/her)
Coordinator, Sexual Assault Response Program
Family Services of the North Shore

Anna Nelson is the coordinator of the Sexual Assault Response Program at Family Services of the North Shore, and has been a big influence throughout its establishment, specifically in relation to connections with other organizations on the North Shore to provide collaborative care for survivors. Anna Nelson is an MA in counselling candidate and her research area of interest is domestic violence, specifically sexual violence.

Combining her educational and professional background, Anna provides emotional and practical support to survivors on the North Shore and engages with the community by doing presentations within high schools, other organizations, etc.

1:00 pm to 2:30 pm (EDT)

WORKSHOP #4

Specialized Court for Sexual and Domestic Violence (*French workshop with simultaneous interpretation into English*)

In December 2020, a committee of experts on supporting victims of sexual assault and domestic violence tabled the report "Rebuilding Trust". This report highlighted the many difficulties experienced by victims during the justice process and proposed 190 recommendations to address them. The establishment of a specialized court for sexual and domestic violence was one of the key recommendations of this report. The Quebec government followed up by tabling Bill 92. On November 25, 2021, the *Act to create a court specialized in sexual violence and domestic violence* was unanimously adopted by the National Assembly of Québec.

The objective of this workshop is to present the specialized court for sexual violence and domestic violence, which is currently deployed in 21 of the 36 judicial districts in Quebec. The

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measures put in place to facilitate the experience of victims through the justice system and to better meet their needs and safety will also be discussed. The integration of services, the coordination of interventions and the consultation between all socio-judicial actors are at the heart of the support model developed within the framework of the specialized court and will be highlighted in the workshop. The specialized court is based on a significant collaborative effort between several ministries and intersectoral partners, all of whom are called upon to contribute to culture change and improved practices. The presenters will report on all these contributions while presenting the challenges and conditions for success in deploying an innovative specialized court that meets the objective of rebuilding victims' confidence in the criminal justice system.

Claudine Simon

Coordinator, Specialized Court for Sexual and Domestic Violence
Quebec Department of Justice

Claudine Simon is a criminologist. She worked for several years as a clinician and trainer at Côté Cour, a service specializing in domestic violence in the criminal justice system. She has also worked in research with young people in youth protection and then worked to develop a support model for victims of domestic violence in cases handled by the Superior Court of Quebec. Since October 2021, she has joined the team of the Quebec Ministry of Justice, responsible for the implementation of the specialized court for sexual violence and domestic violence, as the project coordinator.

Sophie Bergeron

Coordinator for the implementation of the specialized court for sexual violence and domestic violence
Network of Crime Victims Assistance Centres (CAVAC)

Sophie Bergeron is a criminologist who graduated from the School of Criminology at the Université de Montréal in 1999. She quickly specialized in victimology, after working with female offenders for a few years. She has been working with the CAVAC Network since 2003 as Executive Director of the CAVAC Centre-du-Québec. A woman of action and passion, she has been involved for more than 20 years in all initiatives and projects aimed at supporting victims, relatives and witnesses of crime in their recovery efforts. Since the fall of 2022, she has been representing and acting on behalf of the CAVAC Network in the implementation of the beautiful and major social project that is the Specialized Court for Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence.

Jennifer Landry

Specialized Court Coordinator
Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions of Quebec (DPCP)

Jennifer Landry has been a member of the Quebec Bar since 2002 and a prosecutor since 2003. During the first 10 years of her career, she worked in the Quebec City, Shawinigan and Lac-Saint-Jean service points, handling all types of cases at the Court of Quebec, both at the Criminal and Penal Division and the Youth Division (delinquency component). In 2012, she joined the Youth Affairs Office; in 2022, she joined the DPCP's Office of Organizational Mandates where she collaborates on several mandates, including the one on sexual violence; and since 2023, she has been the coordinator of the specialized court for the DPCP. For several years, Ms. Landry has been a trainer for her peers and, for several police forces. Throughout her career with the DPCP team, she has been called upon to handle cases involving victims of crimes against the person.

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Thursday, May 15, 2025

11:00 am to 12:30 pm (EDT)

WORKSHOP #5

Bridging Connections: Expanding Community-Based Connections for Victim Recovery

For victims of crime, the path to healing is often shaped by more than just clinical services. Social connection, community engagement, and holistic wraparound supports play a critical role in fostering resilience and long-term recovery. However, service fragmentation and a lack of coordinated access to non-traditional supports often create barriers for victims seeking meaningful resources.

This workshop will introduce the *Bridging Connections & Purpose to Rebuild Lives After Trauma* (SACC-WE) project, funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada. This project has been designed to strengthen victim services through an integrated inventory and toolkit of community-based programs and resources. The toolkit serves as a practical guide for identifying relevant community supports, fostering partnerships with service and program providers, and equipping service providers with strategies to help clients navigate and access meaningful, non-clinical recovery resources. By integrating social, recreational, cultural, and wellness-based opportunities into victim support networks, this initiative ensures survivors receive wraparound care that extends beyond traditional clinical models.

Participants will leave with practical tools and strategies to better integrate community-based programming into victim support services and will learn how to: the importance of community belonging and participation in long-term healing and resilience; develop or adapt their own community-based inventory systems, ensuring they effectively capture local programs, services, and resources that align with the diverse needs of victims; leverage existing community supports by mapping and integrating non-clinical resources into their service models; equip clients with tools to explore personal interests and pathways, empowering them to connect with activities and networks that foster their recovery; and apply a trauma-informed, culturally responsive approach to inventory development and referrals.



Carol Branget (she/her)
Executive Director
Sexual Assault Crisis Centre of Essex County

Carol (MSW, RSW, BCN (Board Certified Neurofeedback)) is the Executive Director at the Sexual Assault Crisis Centre of Essex County. She has been working in the field of gender-based violence (GBV) for more than twenty years and has spent much of that time working with children who have experienced sexual abuse and their families. She has presented topics of children with sexualized behaviour, trauma, and the brain. Carol has also taught in the University of Windsor's Working

Professionals Master of Social Work Program. Carol believes strongly that building connections beyond trauma is an important step in helping survivors heal.

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Amy Peirone (she/her)
Sexual Assault Crisis Centre of Essex County

Amy Peirone is a Professor in the Community Studies Department at St. Clair College. Her research expertise includes intimate partner violence (IPV) and GBV. She is currently working on projects related to foundational training on IPV, understanding the landscape of GBV crisis lines, and is the Community Liaison Specialist with the SACC-WE project. Amy holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of Windsor and is also Co-Director of the Health Research Centre for the Study of Violence Against Women, and Coordinator of the Violence

Against Women Coordinating Committee Windsor-Essex.



Christina Saint-Cyr (she/her)
Sexual Assault Crisis Centre of Essex County

Christina, a registered social worker, graduated from the Master of Social Work program from the University of Windsor in 2023. She has experience in trauma counselling for sexual assault survivors and is currently the Service User Specialist with the SACC-WE. Her interests include GBV, research, and Indigenous reconciliation. Her research focuses on decolonizing academia and Indigenous pedagogy, with several publications in this area. She also supports Public Safety Canada's Aboriginal Community

Safety Planning Initiative by assisting Indigenous communities in writing and formatting final safety plans.



Melissa St. Pierre (she/her)
Sexual Assault Crisis Centre of Essex County

Melissa is a Senior Researcher and Manager with the Psycho-Social Ethnography of the Commonplace team, housed at Laurentian University and the University of New Brunswick, supporting research prioritizing the experiences of marginalized groups. She is also a consultant with a keen interest in action-oriented community-led research. She holds a PhD in Applied Social Psychology from the University of Windsor. Melissa is currently the Strategic Partnership Specialist with the SACC-WE project.

1:00 pm to 2:30 pm (EDT)

WORKSHOP #6

Peer Advisory Group Model: Human Trafficking Guiding Principles of Victim Services Toronto

Victim Services Toronto (VST) provides trauma-informed, survivor-centred services to human trafficking survivors. While VST employs survivors who have helped guide programming and services, VST knew they could better serve their clients by having a formal framework to inform all our work related to human trafficking.

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VST developed their Peer Advisory Group, which is composed of human trafficking survivors who are paid to consult on all their work as they are the real experts. Recommendations made by the Group have positively impacted VST's services. For example, VST's program, Project Recover, was rebranded to Reclaim based on the Group's evaluation.

This workshop will be co-facilitated by VST's Julie Moore and Kaitlin Bick along with survivors and members of the Peer Advisory Group. Survivors and Julie will introduce the Peer Advisory Group, explain its function, and their guiding principles. The workshop will also explore the user-centered program design model, including how and where attendees can apply it within their own community or organization.

By centering the voices of survivors, VST has strengthened its ability to provide meaningful, effective support for those impacted by human trafficking. The Peer Advisory Group ensures that lived experience directly informs our programs, fostering a survivor-led approach that empowers individuals and improves service delivery. Through this workshop, VST will share their learnings, encourage collaboration, and support other organizations in adopting similar survivor-informed models.



Kaitlin Bick (she/her)
Anti-Human Trafficking Specialist
Victim Services Toronto

Kaitlin Bick, Anti-Human Trafficking Specialist, provides trauma-informed support to survivors. A passionate, dedicated advocate, she goes above and beyond to ensure every survivor receives the individualized support they need to move forward with their lives. Her unwavering commitment to her clients and ability to navigate complex systems, ensures survivors have access to vital supports, like safe accommodations, counselling, healthcare access, and food support. With lived experience, Kaitlin is an expert in human trafficking and has advised on all aspects of Victim Services Toronto's work, including our Human Trafficking Prevention and Intervention programs and Reclaim that supports survivors with fraudulent and coercive debts.



Julie Moore (she/her)
Anti-Human Trafficking Specialist
Victim Services Toronto

Julie Moore, Anti-Human Trafficking Program Director, is a dedicated advocate with over 13 years of experience working with survivors of human trafficking and exploitation. With extensive front-line experience, she recognizes the importance of immediate and seamless supports being available for survivors to access. Julie has had the privilege of supporting many resilient and courageous individuals as they navigate their journey of healing. Julie works from a trauma informed strength-based perspective to empower survivors to rebuild their lives. She is an active member on multiple community committees focusing on advocacy, collaboration and education to support survivors.

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Friday, May 16, 2025

11:00 am to 12:30 pm (EDT)

WORKSHOP #7

Children as victims and witnesses: Developmental considerations for justice professionals

Understanding children's development in three areas – cognitive, language and memory - is essential for criminal justice system professionals. Professor Heather Price and colleagues are currently updating Louise Sas' seminal 2002 report entitled "[The Interaction Between Children's Developmental Capabilities and the Courtroom Environment: The Impact on Testimonial Competency](#)" to reflect the most recent psycho-social research on child development. Whether you are a prosecutor, judge, law enforcement officer, victim services provider or other criminal justice professional, you will want to join Professor Price in this workshop as she provides an overview of the most current knowledge on children's development and the implications for those working with children in the criminal justice system.

The learning objectives of this workshop are:

- 1) Understanding the current research on children's cognitive, language and memory development;
- 2) Understanding how that research can help you work better with children, as victims or witnesses of crime; and
- 3) Areas where we need more research and or better application of research in the Canadian criminal justice system.



Heather Price (she/her)
Canada Research Chair, Professor
Thompson Rivers University

Dr. Price is a Professor of Psychology and a Canada Research Chair in Children and the Law at Thompson Rivers University. Dr. Price's research is designed to facilitate children's participation in the justice system by better understanding how children remember and report their experiences. Her research focuses on children's memory, eyewitness identifications, and investigative interviewing. Dr. Price regularly works with police, social workers, and Child and Youth Advocacy Centres to engage in research-based practices.

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1:00 pm to 3:00 pm (EDT)

PLENARY SESSION

Responding with Care: Transforming Policing Through Canada's New Trauma-Informed Framework

This training session introduces the newly released Canadian Framework for Trauma-Informed Response in Policing, emphasizing its impact on law enforcement and community partnerships. Co-presented by Valarie Gates, an Inspector with the Barrie Police Service, and Teresa MacLennan, the executive director of the Barrie Women and Children's Shelter, this workshop will explore how collaborative, trauma-informed practices improve victim support, enhance police-community relationships, and create safer, more responsive systems.

After attending this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Understand the foundations of trauma-informed policing.
- Define trauma and its effects on victims, police interactions, and community trust.
- Outline the key principles of the Canadian Framework: safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment.
- Recognize the role of collaboration in trauma-informed responses.
- Highlight successful partnerships between police, shelters, advocacy organizations, and support services.
- Identify barriers to collaboration and strategies to strengthen multi-sector teamwork.
- Examine practical strategies for law enforcement and victim service providers to work together in trauma-informed ways.
- Explore case studies that showcase collaborative responses improving victim experiences and outcomes.
- Provide actionable steps for integrating the framework into policy, training, and frontline work.
- Discuss how police and community agencies can learn from one another to enhance trauma-informed responses.
- Encourage a culture of shared responsibility, where agencies work together rather than in silos.
- Highlight the power of partnerships in creating safer, more compassionate support systems for victims.

This presentation is a call to action for police and community organizations to embrace the power of collaboration, working side by side to create safer, more compassionate responses for victims of crime.

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Val Gates (she/her)
Inspector
Barrie Police Service

Val Gates is a seasoned law enforcement professional dedicated to supporting victims of crime. With over two decades of experience, she began her career with Peel Regional Police in 1997. In the Crimes Against Persons Unit, she established the Barrie Child Advocacy Center and developed Project Safe Horizon. Now an Inspector, Val chaired and co-authored the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police Trauma-Informed Policing Framework. She also serves as Chair of the

Child Advocacy Center of Simcoe Muskoka and Vice Chair of the Women and Children's Shelter of Barrie, earning several prestigious awards for her exemplary service.



Teresa MacLennan (she/her)
Executive Director
Women and Children's Shelter of Barrie

Teresa has been the Executive Director of the Women & Children's Shelter Barrie for almost nine years. Teresa has worked in the not-for-profit arena for the past 38 years in a variety of agencies and levels of leadership. Teresa provides trauma informed training as part of the community safety and well-being plan and to the business community and other agencies. Teresa is a certified trauma trainer, infant mental health specialist and registered social worker.

CLOSING CEREMONIES

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