



OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE
SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA

Working together for a safer community
La sécurité de notre communauté, un travail d'équipe

In your Time of Need

The Victim Crisis Unit

ottawapolice.ca

Helping You – Help Yourself...

The Ottawa Police Service's Victim Crisis Unit (VCU) is dedicated to helping victims of crime and individuals who have survived tragic circumstances. Our crisis counsellors can provide crisis intervention, assessments or make appropriate community referrals. Our partners – including Victim Assistance Services of Ottawa-Carleton (VASOC), the Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the City of Ottawa, to name a few – help us help those in need.

Who We Serve

No one expects to become a victim of crime. Ontario law defines a victim as “a person who, as a result of the commission of a crime by another, suffers emotional or physical harm.”

The Ottawa Police Service understands that whether you have been physically hurt, threatened, survived a tragedy, suffered a traumatic loss or witnessed a traumatic event, **you may be a victim and we may be able to assist you.**

Dealing with Trauma

Events such as a sexual assault, abuse, the death of a loved one, a natural disaster, etc., can cause trauma. These types of situations can result in unpleasant feelings and emotions – both during and after such events.

Responses to a stressful situation vary greatly from person to person. And not all people will experience the same reaction at the same level of intensity, nor for the same length of time. However, it's important to recognize that whatever the reaction is, it's often **a normal human response to a stressful situation.**

What to Expect

The after effects of a traumatic event can last a few days, weeks, months or years. A traumatic event is painful – professional assistance can help. With understanding and support from loved ones, a stress reaction often passes more quickly.

This is by no means an extensive list, but some normal reactions to a traumatic event include:

- Emotional changes such as increased depression, anxiety, fear or panic, anger or hostility, shame or feelings of vulnerability.
- A change in thinking – for example, being more disorganized with an inability to concentrate, an attitude or personality change or “If only I had done” syndrome, etc.
- Behavioural changes, including substance abuse, eating disorders, family conflict or withdrawal, etc.
- Physical changes, such as agitation and nervousness, headaches, sleep disturbance, nightmares or listlessness, etc.

Coping

It's important to remember that a traumatic event falls outside of normal everyday life. You may need some new strategies to cope with an unusual experience. Helpful things to do include:

- Talk to someone you trust
- Give yourself permission to reach out for professional help
- Spend time with supportive family and friends
- Abstain from alcohol and drugs
- Acknowledge your response to the situation and give yourself permission to have difficult moments after the fact
- Try to stay positive and avoid self-defeating thoughts (e.g., "I can't manage...", "nothing matters...", etc.) and use thought-stopping (i.e., say: "stop" to yourself when you find yourself thinking negative thoughts)
- Resist making life changing decisions following a serious incident
- Give yourself time to mend
- Write out or journal your experiences, thoughts and feelings – this may be especially useful through sleepless nights
- Maintain your regular routine
- Eat properly and exercise


A word about children...

Children who have been involved in a traumatic incident need the attention and close physical contact of their parents or caregivers:

- Reassure them of their physical safety
- Give yourself permission to reach out for professional help
- Take opportunities to listen and talk to the child
- Talk about your own reactions with the child, in an age appropriate way
- Invite conversation so children feel encouraged to share their concerns and reactions too
- Allow them to set their own pace
- Try to keep routines as normal as possible
- Encourage them to play and draw – a good way to cope with stress and anxious feelings
- Practice relaxation techniques with them

Make the Right Call!

Every call is important, but not all calls are life-threatening, and not all calls are police emergencies. Whatever the case, we're here to help. You have a role to play: "Make the Right Call."

9-1-1 

Life-threatening emergency or crime in progress

230-6211

Other emergencies

236-1222

TTY  **232-1123**

Community Police Centres and all other enquiries

See the "Red Pages" in the Ottawa telephone directory or visit the Police Web site at ottawapolice.ca for a full list of Ottawa Police services and contact information.

Community Resource List

The following community resources can help you in your time of crisis. Other organizations are also available to assist you – many of the resources listed below will also be able to refer you to other organizations or agencies for your specific or longer-term needs. As well, see “Social and Human Service Organizations” in the Yellow Pages telephone directory.

If you are a **victim needing assistance or information**, contact the Ottawa Police Service Victim Crisis Unit (**not a 24 hour service**) at **236-1222, ext. 5822 (TTY 760-8009)**. You may be prompted to leave a message. Someone will get back to you as quickly as possible.

Emergency Numbers (most offering 24-hr service)

Partner assault victims

Ottawa Police Partner Assault Section 236-1222, ext. 5407
Assaulted Women's Helpline .. 1-866-863-0511, TTY 1-866-863-7868
Services for Abused Women 745-4818
Men's Project 230-6179

Sexual assault victims

Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre 562-2333, TTY 562-3860
Sexual Assault Support Centre 234-2266, TTY 725-1657
S.O.S. Femmes 1-800-387-8603
TelAide Outaouais 741-6433

Shelters for abused women

Interval House 234-5181, TTY 234-5393
La Presence 241-8297
Maison D'Amitie 747-0020, TTY 747-9116
Nelson House 225-3129, TTY 225-4653
Oshki Kizis Lodge 789-1141

Emergency shelters

Ottawa YWCA/YMCA 788-5063
Carling Family Shelter 820-9909
Young Men's Shelter 241-1573
Young Women's Shelter 789-8220
Women's Emergency Shelter 237-4669
Chrysalis House (Kanata) 591-5901
Forward Ave. Shelter 722-9495

Services when children are involved

Ottawa Police Sexual Assault
and Child Abuse (SACA) Section 236-1222, ext. 5944
The Children's Aid Society 747-7800
Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868
Parent Help Line 1-888-603-9100
Youth Services Bureau 729-1000

If a loved one has died

Bereaved Families of Ontario - Ottawa region 567-4278
Compassionate Friends (when a child has died) 692-4521
Survivors of Suicide 224-8688

Mental health service or advice

Mental Health Crisis Line 722-6914

Hate crimes

Ottawa Police Hate Crimes Section 236-1222, ext. 2466
Immigrant Women Services Ottawa 729-3145
Pink Triangle (serving the gay, lesbian, bisexual
and transgender community) 563-4818
Men's Project 230-6179

Interpretation service

Immigrant Women Services Ottawa (729-3145) offers FREE interpretation services in over 60 languages to non-English speaking women who are victims of abuse. They also provide interpretation services for legal, social, health, community service providers and other professionals.

Ottawa Community Immigrant
Services Organization (OCISO) 725-0202
Languages of Life 232-9770

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