



HALIFAX

Halifax Regional Police: Victim Services Unit

Update to the Board of Police Commissioners

October 18, 2021

What is the Victim Services Unit?

- The Victim Services Unit (VSU) is a key support unit within Halifax Regional Police.
- The team works collaboratively with police officers, the Nova Scotia Department of Justice and community partners to provide timely and specialized support services to victims of crime, with a focus on domestic and sexualized violence.



Victim-Centered Approach

- Halifax Regional Police employs a victim-centered, trauma-informed approach that strives to limit re-traumatization and ensures compassionate delivery of services in a non-judgmental and supportive environment.
- Foundational beliefs of VSU:
 - The victim's needs come first
 - The victim identifies their own needs
 - The victim is the expert
 - The victim makes their own choices



VSU Mandate

- To support victims by connecting them to community resources, agencies and services.
- Collaborate with police officers and other HRP operational staff to support victims of crime.
- To enhance the services provided to victims by HRP, including increasing police officers' awareness of the issues that victims face.



VSU Structure

The VSU is comprised of civilian employees, volunteers and a police officer. Permanent roles include:

- Coordinator
- Case Worker
- Volunteers
- High-Risk Domestic Violence Coordinator
- Domestic Violence Officer (police officer)
- Domestic Violence Offender Navigator
- Business Administrative Support
- Co-Op Students

Additional supports:

- HRP Volunteer Coordinator, Community Relations & Crime Prevention
- Other HRP volunteers



Supporting Victims

The VSU connects with victims in a variety of ways:

- Telephone follow up by VSU staff
- Police officer referral
- On-scene response
- Victim initiates contact

The VSU helps to empower victims through:

- Validation
- Education
- Providing information
- Presenting options



VSU in Action

- Crisis intervention
- Emotional support
- Referrals
- Advocacy
- On-scene response
- Safety planning
- Liaise with police officers
- High Risk Domestic case management
- Police officer and employee training
- Community/public outreach, education and training



VSU in Action

The VSU supports the municipality's Community Mobilization Team (CMT) in addressing community-level trauma in the following ways:

- Member of the Community Safety Committee which oversees the implementation of the CMT.
- Education and training for CMT members and municipal Public Safety Office staff.
- Trauma-informed community-level response to critical incidents.
- Additional guidance for individuals/families impacted by crime who reach out to CMT members for support.



Reaching out for Support

- Anyone who has been the victim of a crime can reach out for support.
- Call **902.490.5300**, Monday to Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

