HBPC – June 2022

The average rate of unfounding for rape is 37.078 in the of unfounding for rape is 37.078 in the condition of the condition o The rate of unfounding for rape is 37.078 in 19

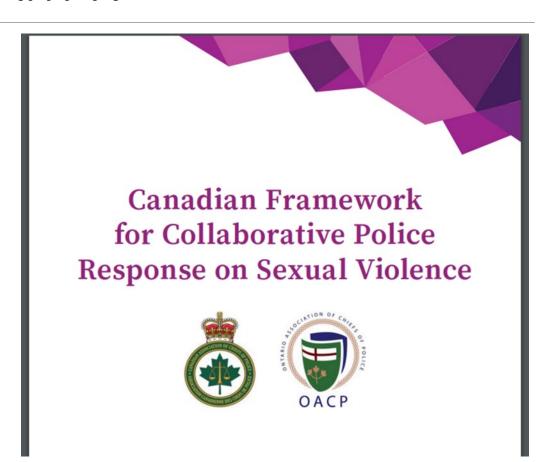
AN EMERGING BEST PRACTICE IN SEXUAL ASSAULT INVESTIGATIONS

> **Sunny Marriner VACR Project Lead**

Improving Institutional Accountability Project

Introductions: Who Am I?

- 25 yrs in frontline, SA advocacy w survivors intersecting w the Criminal Justice System
- 20 yrs focus on CJS & SA, in policy, barriers, criminal codes/legal, best practices
- 10 yrs developing case review model w partners from frontline, legal & privacy
- Co-created "<u>Canadian Framework for Collaborative Police Response on Sexual Violence</u>" w investigators, privacy experts, and Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police
- Working under federal funding to support municipal police & communities in implementing VACR



The Globe & Mail

"Unfounded" 2017

VACR had 2 sites underway;
Brantford ON
North Bay ON



CJS: Systemic & Cyclical



Low reporting rates and high case attrition

Half of charged cases dismissed or pled lower

Crown/ **Prosecution**



Judiciary

Low accountability for convicted persons

Low Conviction Rates

Triers of Fact

SEXUAL VIOLENCE CASE ATTRITION

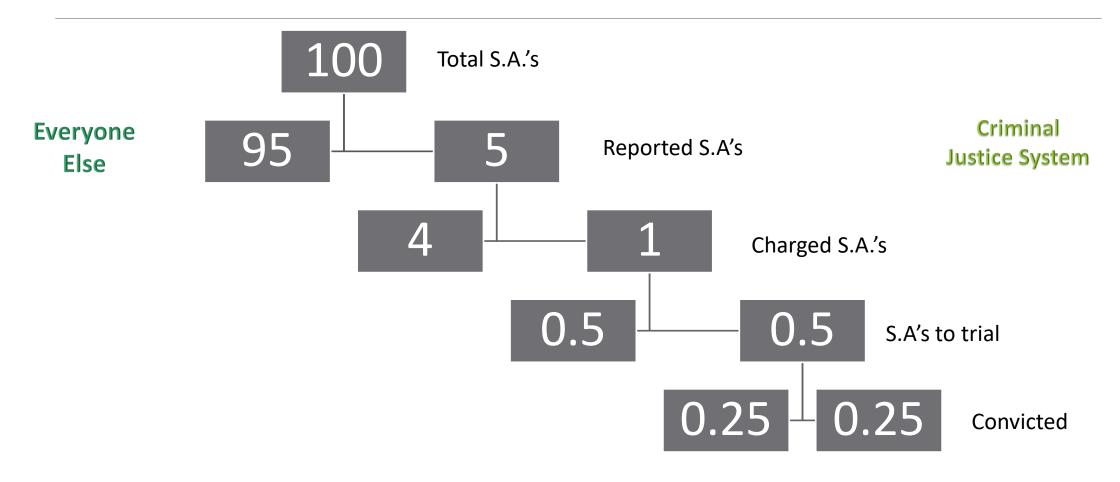
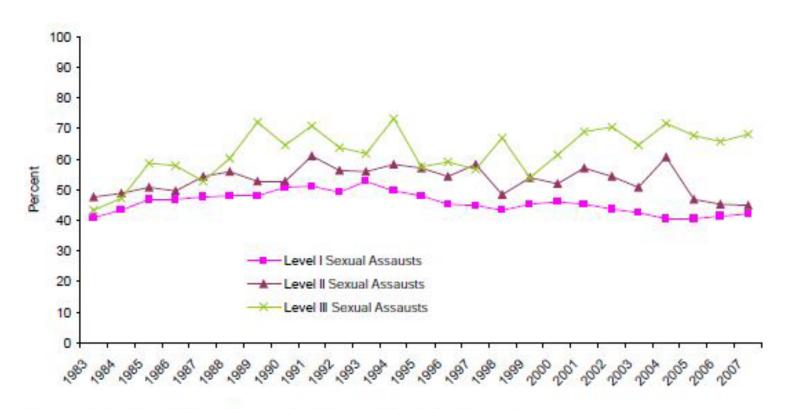
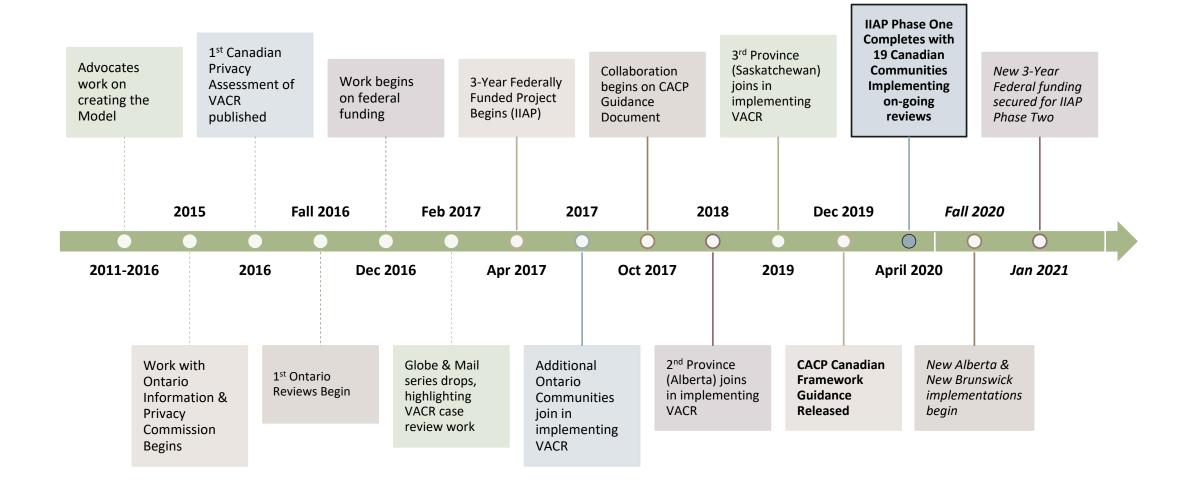


Figure 3: Percent of Founded Sexual Assaults that Resulted in Charges Laid Against A Suspect



Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, Statistics Canada.

VACR HISTORY AT-A-GLANCE





Improving
Institutional
Accountability
Project



Women and Gender Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

GOAL: To implement a mechanism to reduce case attrition in police-reported sexual assault

Activities: Implementing VACR reviews in communities across Canada + linking within national networks.

- **☐** Started with 4 communities/cities
- 2 years in we had 14 ON sites, and growing
- Expanded the goal to at least one city in every province/territory
- Currently 30 Sites: ON, AB, SK, NB, PEI

Goals of VAW Advocate Case Reviews

Create a Safety Net for Survivors Reporting Today

Address Case Attrition Through Identifying Barriers

Identify larger trends, themes, future needs, and solutions

A New Link in the Investigative Chain



Report Investigation Clearance Review

VACR Fundamentals At-A-Glance

VACR Basics

- Review all cases not cleared by charge
- Review quarterly
- Review all documents- videos notes etc.
- Reviews focus on 12+ victims and subjects over 18
- Consistent criteria and tools used

Reviewing Organizations

- Frontline Sexual Assault Advocates
- Understand unique community context
- Expertise in working with survivors directly
- Review independently of police & collaborate in findings stage
- Use MOUs to solidify partnership

Solutions-Focussed & Forward-Looking

VACR is not a "gotcha" exercise

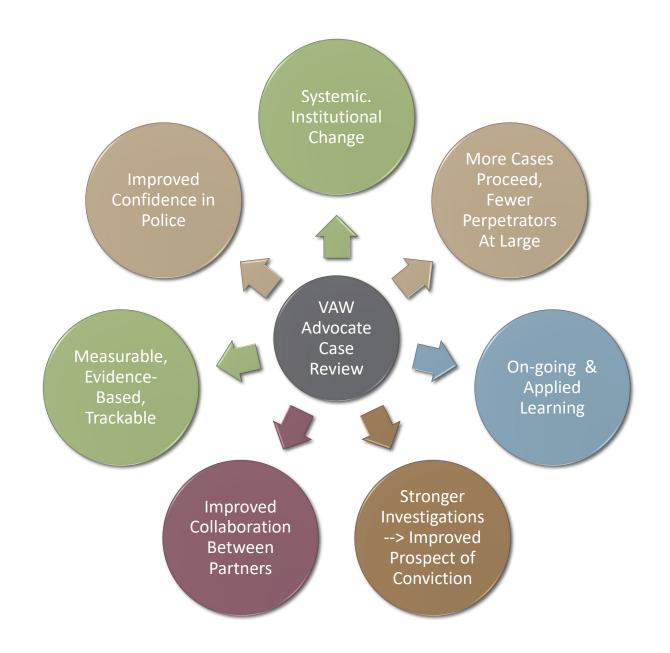
A proactive, rather than retrospective tool – forward-looking

Reviewers are not investigators and are trained on how to draw feedback from what's in front of them in the files, not conjecture

Reviewers intent is to identify barriers and next move to collaborative problemsolving with police partners – solutions focussed

Reviews build understanding for both advocates and police services

ADVOCATE
CASE REVIEW
(VACR):
The Benefit
Cycle



Sites Using VACR as of May 2022

- 1. Kingston, ON
- 2. Stratford, ON
- 3. Ottawa, ON
- 4. Brantford, ON
- 5. Timmins, ON
- 6. London, ON
- 7. Peterborough, ON
- 8. Barrie, ON
- 9. Peel, ON
- 10. Sudbury, ON

- 11. North Bay, ON
- 12. Durham, ON
- 13. Niagara, ON
- 14. Calgary, AB
- 15. Edmonton, AB
- 16. Camrose, AB
- 17. Regina, SK
- 18. Saskatoon, SK
- 19. Kennebecasis Valley, NB
- 20. Saint John, NB

- 21. Charlottetown, PEI
- 22. Waterloo, ON
- 23. Hamilton, ON (adapted)
- 24. Halton, ON (adapted)
- 25. Kentville, NS (*development*)
- 26. Lethbridge, AB (*development*)
- 27. Moose Jaw, SK (*development*)
- 28. Prince Albert, SK (development)