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BC GOV'T UNVEILS 3 YEAR \$10-M GRANT PROGRAM FOR SEX ASSAULT SERVICES



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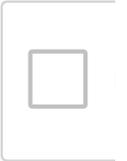
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Photo: Photo by Juan Pablo Serrano Arenas from Pexels (Courtesy CTV News)



The BC Government is creating a 3-year, \$10-million grant program to support emergency sexual assault response services throughout the province.

BC's Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Mike Farnworth says the funds will be administered by Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC):

"EVA BC will undertake this work in partnership with my ministry, the Ministry of Finance's Gender Equity Office, and the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous women. Once established this grant program will help organizations deliver trauma-informed and culturally appropriate responses to better meet the needs of sexual assault survivors across British Columbia, including the unique needs of Indigenous survivors across B.C."

Sexual assault disproportionately impacts women, girls and LGBTQ2S+

people. Indigenous women and girls are especially at risk of being targeted.

EVA BC Executive Director, Tracy Porteous, says the funds will go a long way to helping services "catch up" after suffering devastating cuts almost 2 decades ago:

" So this funding will restore and in fact expand emergency response service to survivors, including the provision of accompaniment to hospital, to report to the police for those that choose to do so, the provision of immediate emotional support, and the assistance in navigating the storm in the aftermath of sexual assault."

Porteous says sex assault is the only violent crime in Canada that is on the increase -- and service providers are already anticipating a "tsunami" of demand for support as COVID-19 restrictions ease -- noting many sexual and domestic assault victims live under the same roof as their abusers, and have not been able to reach out.

BC's Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity, Mitzi Dean, says she has worked supporting people who have faced violence for most of her career and knows first-hand that it's essential for people who have been sexually assaulted to have the services they need, when they need them.