

ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITMENTS

Protocol Accountability to Victims and Survivors of Sexual Assault

Signatory partners will ensure that:

- Services for victims and survivors of sexual assault provided by their organizations are compatible with the Belief Statements and Guiding Principles for Service Delivery found in this Protocol, as reflected and summarized in their individual Service Description.¹⁹
- The perspectives and needs of victims and survivors of sexual assault are identified, considered and addressed during and throughout the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of relevant services and programs.
- Fair and objective client complaint procedures are available and accessible to victims and survivors of sexual assault using their services. During and subsequent to the client's use of said procedures, s/he will be treated in a manner consistent with the Victim's Bill of Rights found in Appendix # of this Protocol, and in accordance with the Belief Statements and Guiding Principles for Service Delivery found in this Protocol.

Refer to the individual Service Descriptions of each signatory partner for confirmation of the contact person/position re: client complaints.

- Critical information pertaining to the issue of sexual assault, as summarized in this section of the Protocol, will be given due consideration during the development, review, revision and application of the client complaint procedures adopted by signatory partners.

Protocol Accountability Between and Among Signatory Partners

Representation in and compliance with this Protocol is voluntary; however, signatory partners formally confirm their commitment to and accountability for the implementation and monitoring of the best practice guidelines outlined in the Protocol, as evidenced by the signature of the senior management representative for each organization on the Declaration of Commitment.

¹⁹It is the responsibility of each signatory partner to ensure that their individual Service Description remains an accurate reflection and summary of the services and supports they provide to victims and survivors of sexual assault. It is the responsibility of the QCCAV to ensure that signatory partners have access to an efficient and effective process for updating and/or revising their Service Descriptions on a regular and as needed basis.

This commitment includes but is not necessarily limited to:

- Ensuring that services provided by their organization to victims and survivors of sexual assault are developed and delivered in accordance with the Protocol, with special attention to the content and intent of the Protocol Framework.
- Active participation on, and regular attendance at meetings of, the Quinte Coordinating Committee Against Violence.
- Active participation on, regular attendance at meetings pertaining to, and/or meaningful contribution to any committees mandated to monitor and/or evaluate the use and application of this Protocol.
- Organizing, providing, contributing to, and/or participating in any in-house training and professional development opportunities for employees in relation to sexual assault.
- Organizing, providing, contributing to, and/or participating in inter-agency and/or community-based training and professional development opportunities relating to sexual assault.
- Active participation in and/or meaningful contributions to any concrete collaborative strategies designed to promote and support the development and delivery of an integrated network of services to victims and survivors of sexual assault, as developed and endorsed by the QCCAV, including but not necessarily limited to the service planning processes and service agreements found in this Protocol.
- Active participation in and/or meaningful contributions to community awareness, public education and/or prevention initiatives designed to help end violence against women and children, as developed and endorsed by the QCCAV.

Resolution of Protocol-Related Service Delivery Issues Between and Among Signatory Partners

This Protocol is designed to promote understanding and mutual respect for the mandates, roles and responsibilities, and constraints and parameters that guide and inform the work of our signatory partners and their employees. We believe that the different perspectives, priorities and approaches to this work embraced by the signatory partners serve, in most instances, to enrich and enhance the network of services available to victims and survivors of sexual assault; however, we also acknowledge that these same differences may occasionally result in tensions or misunderstandings.

In keeping with our shared commitment to work cooperatively and collaboratively, and in order to protect and promote quality services for victims and survivors of sexual assault

in our region, the signatory partners agree to address any issues relating to service delivery in accordance with the following process.

In the event that one or more service providers become concerned about a specific and particular issue(s) pertaining to the services provided, or not provided, to an individual client by another signatory partner agency:

- Step 1:** Frontline or direct service personnel from the agencies involved will contact each other directly to discuss the perceived problem or issue for the purpose of sharing information and seeking a mutually satisfactory resolution.
- Step 2:** In the event that the frontline staff members are not able to resolve the issue to their mutual satisfaction, they will update and involve their respective supervisors who will assume responsibility for continuing the resolution process in accordance with their respective organizational structures and processes.
- Step 3:** In the event that all processes between the two (or more) agencies have been exhausted and the involved parties have not been able to resolve the issue to their mutual satisfaction, the matter will be brought to the attention of the agency representatives on the Protocol Committee of the QCCAV (assuming they have not been involved with the process to date). The involved parties will attempt to address and resolve the issue with the assistance of their designated representatives on the Protocol Committee.
- Step 4:** In the event that either or any party continues to feel the issue has not be resolved to their satisfaction, they may present the relevant information to the Chair of the Protocol Committee²⁰, including but not necessarily limited to an overview of the initial issue and steps taken to date. The Chair of the Protocol Committee will make every reasonable effort to facilitate resolution of the issue.

In addition, s/he will determine if the specific service delivery issue represents or speaks to a larger issue pertaining to the signatory partner's failure to fulfill the commitments in this Protocol - eg. represents a pattern of behaviour that is incompatible with one or more Belief Statements or Guidelines for Service Delivery. If so, the Chair of the Protocol Committee is empowered to seek assistance and resolution through the Protocol Accountability Process, as outlined below.

²⁰In the event that the Chair of the Protocol Committee is involved in the issue and/or is in a position of conflict of interest in relation to these or any other accountability processes described in this Protocol, the Vice-Chair of the Protocol Committee will perform the duties of the Chair.

Protocol Accountability Process

The ongoing and regular meetings of the QCCAV provide frequent opportunities for member agencies to identify, address and/or brainstorm strategies to address systemic issues that they believe may be negatively impacting on the network of services available to victims and survivors of sexual assault (and partner abuse); and as outlined above, signatory partners have developed a process to address and resolve issues pertaining to the delivery of services to individual clients.

The Protocol Accountability Process provides another avenue for the resolution of significant problems or concerns pertaining to protocol compliance. In the event that one or more members of the Quinte Coordinating Committee Against Violence has reason to believe that a signatory partner, either as an agency or as represented by their designate, has consistently, repeatedly and over time failed to fulfill the commitments and agreements outlined in this Protocol, and/or the Chair of the Protocol Committee has determined the same in accordance with her/his involvement with the process outlined above for the resolution of protocol-related service delivery issues between and among signatory partners:

- Step 1:** The concerned party/parties will prepare a written document summarizing the perceived concern(s) or pattern of noncompliance and any efforts made to date to resolve said issue(s). This document, and confirmation of the member's intention to submit said document to the Protocol Committee, will be shared with the designated agency representative on the Protocol Committee. At the same time, the document will be submitted to the Protocol Committee via the Chair of the Protocol Committee or her/his designate.
- Step 2:** The Chair of the Protocol Committee, plus two (2) additional members of the Protocol Committee, will meet *individually* with the party/parties who raised the concern and the identified agency's representative on the Protocol Committee to gather and review relevant information. In addition, this group will meet *together with the involved parties* to discuss, clarify and resolve the issue.
- Step 3:** In the event that the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, the Chair of the Protocol Committee and the two additional members of the Protocol Committee will meet with the identified agency's representative on the Protocol Committee and the senior management representative of this agency responsible for Protocol compliance, as per the Declaration of Commitment. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss, clarify and resolve the issue.
- Step 4:** In the event that the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties as a result of Step 3, the Chair of the Protocol Committee will submit a motion in writing to the Chair of the Quinte Coordinating Committee Against Violence re: the participation and/or membership of the signatory