



Correctional Service
Canada

Service correctionnel
Canada



SAFETY, RESPECT
AND DIGNITY
FOR ALL

LA SÉCURITÉ,
LA DIGNITÉ
ET LE RESPECT
POUR TOUS

ENHANCEMENT OF SERVICES PROVIDED TO VICTIMS OF FEDERAL OFFENDERS IN CANADA

***National Victim Services Program
Correctional Service of Canada***

October 2011

Canada



Introduction

The objective of this presentation is to provide an outline of how the enhancement of services at CSC's National Victim Services Program (NVSP) is "Breaking Down Barriers for Better Success in Changing Times". I will provide:

- an overview of where the NVSP within the Canadian criminal justice system,
- the legislative framework for the program,
- some innovative initiatives which are streamlining services for victims and
- highlight some innovative initiatives that help us focus on key target groups.



Jurisdictions

- The Correctional Services of Canada (CSC) is responsible for the care and custody of offenders serving a sentence of two years or more.
- CSC Victim Services provides information about offenders and the federal correctional system to victims who have been harmed by offenders serving a sentence under its jurisdiction.
- The provinces and territories are responsible for the majority of services offered to victims of crime (e.g., police, court and community-based victim services, court support, counselling, compensation and information sharing).



National Victim Services Program

- An Overview -



National Victim Services Program

A key Government of Canada priority is to provide victims of crime with a greater voice in the criminal justice and correctional systems while ensuring better access to services.

To that end the NVSP is responsible for

- registering victims;
- providing victim notification;
- receiving victim statements;
- providing referrals and answering questions about federal corrections; and
- conducting outreach - coordinating workshops and disseminating printed information to the public and staff in order to increase awareness of its services to victims of crime.



Principles of Program Delivery

Principles for Program Delivery

- **Program delivery based upon the Canadian Statement of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime.**
- **Stronger voice in the federal corrections and justice system**
- **Full time, dedicated service to victims**
- **Staff continuity in service provision**
- **Efficient and effective service delivery**
- **Reduction of bureaucratic impact of Victim Services for the victim**



Program Delivery Principles

Collaborate with provincial and territorial counterparts, i.e. Crown Attorneys, as well as federal partners.

Consult with victims and victim communities and create Victim Advisory Committees.

Ensure that Aboriginal victims information needs are identified and addressed.

Ensure that victims risk needs are appropriately taken into consideration in case management planning.





Definition of Victim

The *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* defines a victim as:

- a person to whom harm was done or who suffered physical or emotional damage as a result of the commission of an offence, and
- where the person is dead, ill or otherwise incapacitated, the person's spouse, relative, dependant, or anyone who is responsible for the care or support of the person.

A person is deemed to meet this definition if:

- harm was done to the person, or the person suffered physical or emotional damage, as a result of an act of an offender, whether or not the offender was prosecuted or convicted for that act; and
- a complaint was made to the police or the Crown attorney, or an information was laid under the *Criminal Code*, in respect of the Act.



Information Sharing with Registered Victims Victim Notification

The *CCRA* outlines the information that CSC “shall” and “may” share with registered victims.

Information is provided to victims who **request** it. Submitting a written request is commonly referred to as “**registering.**”

Victims who register generally receive both the “shall” and “may” information because the privacy of the offender usually does not outweigh the interest of the victim to know the information.

Currently, there are 7,115 registered victims receiving information from CSC. This number increases each month.

**Source: Prime-Victims: Number of Active Victims for Active Offenders*



Information Sharing with Registered Victims

Types of Information

Shall:

- offender's name
- offence of which the offender was convicted and the court that convicted the offender
- date of commencement and length of the sentence that the offender is serving
- eligibility dates and review dates for temporary absences or parole

May:

- offender's age
- whether the offender is in custody – if not, why not
- location of penitentiary
- transfers
- release dates (temporary absence, work release, parole or statutory release)
- conditions (temporary absence, work release, parole or statutory release)
- destination of release
- date of hearing for review of section 130 (detention)



Information Sharing with Victims

Victim Statements

Victims are entitled to provide a Victim Impact Statement during the court proceedings. The statement is taken into consideration by the judge during the court process.

CSC encourage victims to provide a statement describing the impact of the crime on their lives and/or other information for consideration at key decision points within the correctional process.

For example:

- for consideration by CSC staff when delivering programs or considering any temporary absence decisions (ETA's, UTA's and Work Releases that fall under the Warden's authority).
- for consideration by the PBC of any reviews with respect to community releases (UTA's, Day Parole, Full Parole, Statutory Release) that may or may not have special conditions imposed.



National Victim Services Program

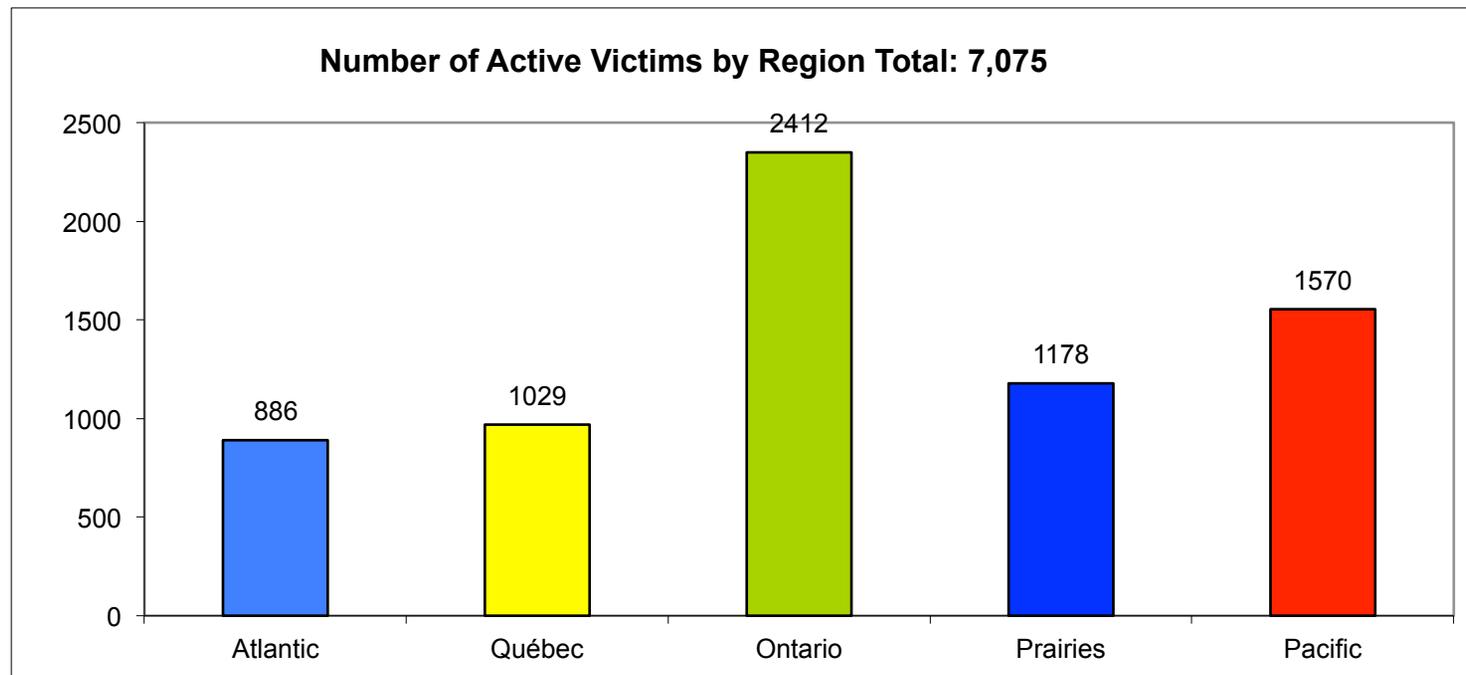
- Statistical Overview -



Statistical Overview

Number of Registered Victims

* 7,115 victims actively receive information about offenders who are currently serving a sentence. Overall there has been a 50% increase of in the number of active registered victims since the implementation of the National Victim Services Program in September 2007.



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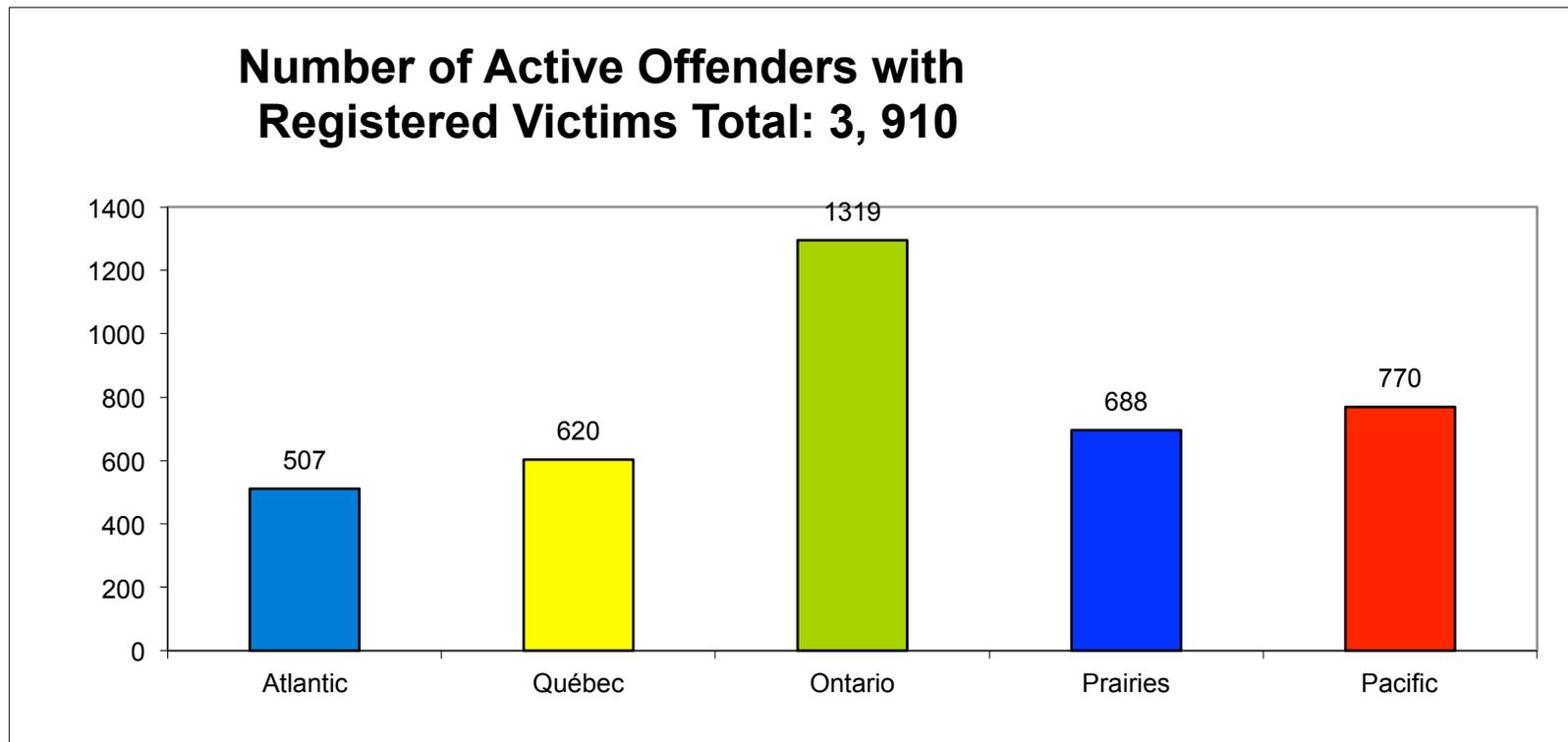
*Source: PRIME – Victims – Victims – Number of Active Victims for Active Offenders Extraction Date 2011-08-14



Statistical Overview

Number of Offenders with Registered Victims

* Offenders currently serving a sentence who have victims registered to receive information about them: 3,910.



*Source: PRIME



Statistical Overview

Pieces of Information Disclosed

Registered victims are contacted over 50,000 times per year and are provided with over 100,000 pieces of information in accordance with section 26 of the CCRA. Some examples are:

Day Parole	1600
Escorted Temporary Absences	59,000
Institutional location	7000
Sentencing information	6800
Travel Permits	10,000
Work Release	1026

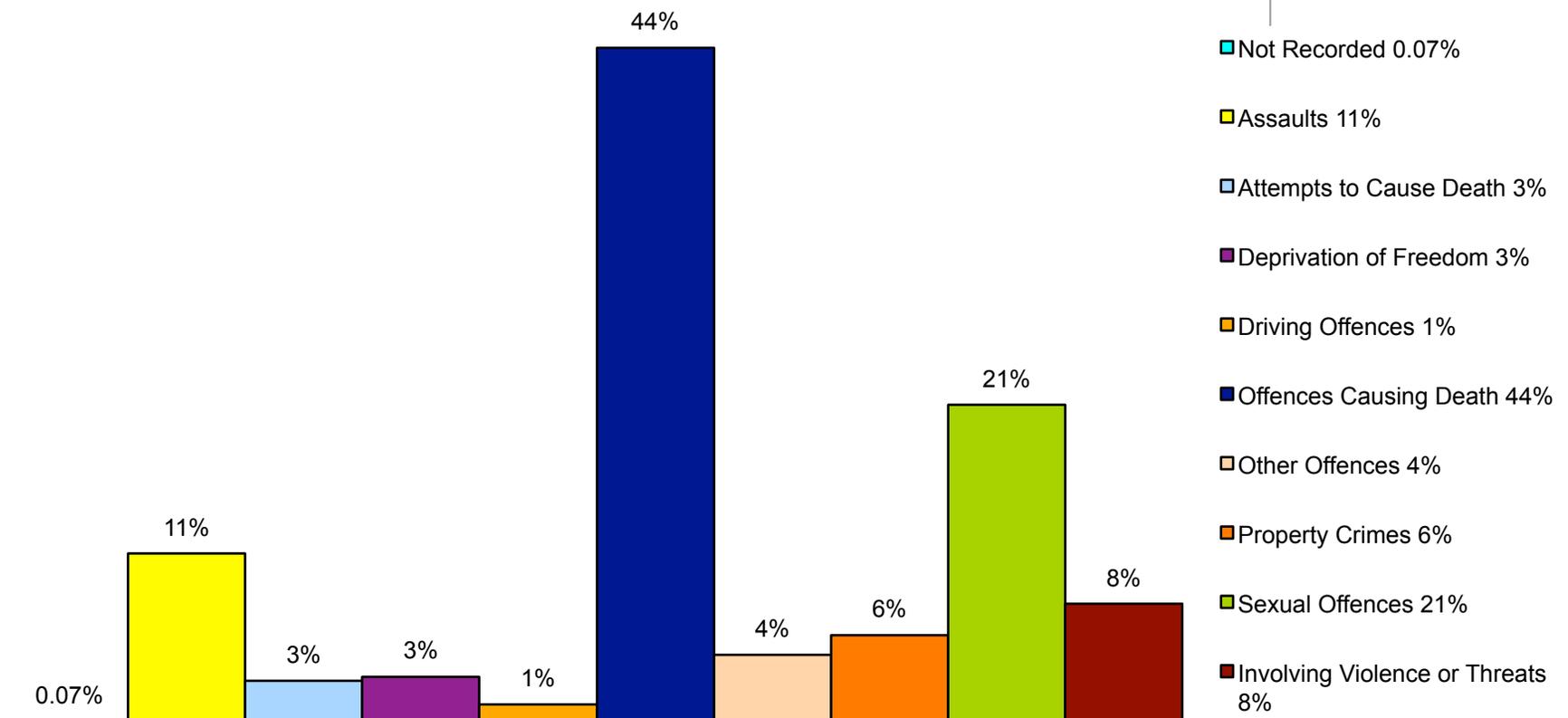


Statistical Overview

Types of Offences that Harmed Registered Victims

The most common offences of victimization are Offences Causing Death and Sexual Offences.

Offences of Victimization Nationally August 2011



*Source: PRIME –



National Victim Services Program

- Victims' Voice -



Victims' Experience

The impact of crime is experienced at every level of one's being:

- Physical – the physical impact of crime
- Intellectual – the need for information: Why was I a target? Why did the offender commit this offence? What happens now?
- Emotional – anxiety, anger, fear, hopelessness, helplessness, depression, etc.
- Spiritual - existential and values issues: why me? Life is not fair. Why did God let this happen? Can I ever be/feel safe again? etc.
- Social - isolationism, relationship breakdown, poor relationship choices, etc.

CSC's interventions primarily address the intellectual dimension through sharing information, as this is the focus of our legislative mandate.



Victims' Voice

The voice of victims in the criminal justice system is increasing. Victims of crime have told us that they want:

- to feel confident that the offender will not harm them in the future;
- to receive information about the offender's program involvement;
- to receive information about the correctional "environment" and the daily activities of the offender;
- to be informed about the role of CSC decision-makers; to better understand the decision process and to have a voice in it; and
- to have easier access to information relating to how CSC works.



Victims' Voice in CSC

A common message heard from victims

Victims want information.

Information empowers them to take control of their lives
and their fear of the offender.

Information helps victims feel safe.

“ Although we fear the offender, we fear silence more.”

- Anonymous



Collaboration and Communities

National Victim Advisory Committee:

- Provides advice to the Policy Centre for Victim Issues (PCVI), the National Office for Victims (NOV), Correctional Service Canada, and Parole Board of Canada. Chaired by PCVI and NOV.
- Provides advice on emerging issues related to victims of crime (corrections, conditional release and justice).

Regional Victim Advisory Committees:

- Regions are developing the capacity to create Regional Victim Advisory Committees.
- The Committees provide recommendations to CSC and Parole Board of Canada relating to victims' concerns, such as policy development, outreach activities and program development.
- Members are usually victims, victim services providers, representatives from victims' advocacy groups, law enforcement, and other stakeholders representing various victim interests.



National Victim Services Program - Areas of Interest -



Working with Families

Many registered victims are related to or have been friends with the offender who harmed them **and** some wish for the relationship to continue.

Family member may be hesitant to register because:

- they fear the offender may find out that a family member has made inquiries, which can lead to tension within the family;
- they fear that it may compromise their safety plan; and
- they fear that they will have to justify their relationship with the offender to staff.

Family members who chose to register have the benefit of being able to:

- verify information that they get from the offender;
- learn about victim participation at Parole Board of Canada hearings and about financial assistance to attend the hearings;
- learn about the Parole Board of Canada Decision Registry;
- gain information with which to make safety plans;
- receive information on behalf of child victims; and
- gain information to assist in their recovery process and manage their stress. 24



Working with Families

- Overall 1/3 of registered victims indicate being related to the offender.
- Specifically, 63% for child victims and 75% domestic violence victims are related to the offender
- Most commonly, related registered victims are the offender's ex-spouse.
- This demographic data is typically provided by the registered victim.



Working with Child Victims

The NVSP is developing a strategy to address issues impacting children. We have begun a process to clearly identify children who are impacted by crime.

This will allow us to:

- contact children when they reach eighteen to offer direct services, as opposed to receiving information through agents;
- assist CSC in better meeting the needs of families;
- identify the crimes which have been committed against children;
- facilitate research (e.g., children affected by domestic violence);
- work with child advocacy groups and organizations to better meet the need of registered victims.



Working with Aboriginal Victims

- Aboriginal peoples represent 3.8% of the Canadian population, but Aboriginal offenders account for 18% of the incarcerated population and 13% of offenders on release in the community.
- CSC continues to seek opportunities for collaboration with various partners to identify ways of providing victim information services to victims from diverse Aboriginal and other ethno-cultural communities.
- Key themes have emerged from our initial consultation with partners and community representatives. They have told us that CSC should:
 - undertake outreach activities to Aboriginal communities should be done through existing services (e.g., community health services, Aboriginal Court Workers); and
 - develop information products in various Aboriginal languages (NVSP's Aboriginal pamphlet).



Conclusion

- CSC has a positive message to share with Canadians about its service to victims.
- CSC is committed to ensuring that victims have an effective voice in the federal corrections and justice systems by providing victims of federal offenders with timely information about the offender who harmed them.
- CSC encourages victims harmed by offenders serving a sentence of two years or more to register to receive information and have their voices heard.
- CSC will continue to develop initiatives to reach out to victims with diverse needs.
- CSC will consult with victims, victim advocacy groups, partners and Canadians to ensure we provide the best possible services to registered victims.



Conclusion

Thank you for your kind attention.

**Please feel free to contact our national
and regional offices at**

1-866-806-2275