

Mission, Values, Beliefs and Goals

Mission:

The mission of the Women's Sexual Assault Centre is to support, empower and advocate for women who are survivors of sexual assault and sexual abuse; and to work toward the prevention of sexual violence against women.

Values:

As feminists, in our work with others we value:

- Communicating in a direct, caring and honest manner, showing respect, gentleness, acceptance and celebration of each other in all our diversity.
- The journeys towards self-defined inner knowledge and empowerment with each woman setting her own pace.
- Our vision and ability to create a safe, accessible and effective centre where women are getting supported towards healing from sexual abuse/assault.
- Our vision and ability to promote social justice for all, when we work courageously together towards this end.

Beliefs:

Members of the WSAC believe the following:

- Sexual assault is an act of power and violence, which is expressed in the sexual arena. Sexual assault and sexual abuse are never justifiable forms of behavior.
- No one deserves to be sexually assaulted, and victims are never responsible for violence perpetrated against them.
- Lack of resistance on the part of the survivor of sexual assault or abuse does not imply consent.
- All women are affected by sexual assault and abuse whether or not they have been victimized. Fear of sexual violence is a crucial factor in controlling the development and behaviour of women and girls.
- Women have the right to empowerment and self-determination in all aspects of their lives including reproductive choice.
- All survivors have the right to embark upon their own individual healing process and make their own choices as to the nature of treatment and support which they receive.
- Male violence against women and children happens because our society has created and tolerates a power imbalance and socialization process that devalues and victimizes women and children. In addition to sexism we acknowledge the effects of discrimination on individuals in our society on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, religion, class, sexual orientation, and physical and mental abilities.
- Responsibility for sexual assault and abuse lies not only with individual offenders but with society as a whole, and change is possible on a societal as well as an individual level.

Goals:

The constitution of the Women's Sexual Assault Centre states our objectives as follows:

- 1) To provide immediate information and support to all those impacted by sexual assault and
- 2) To involve and support volunteers, from all walks of life, to assist staff in providing immediate information and support services, and to make other contributions toward the functioning of the agency.
- 3) To provide accessible, high quality, feminist counselling services to women who are survivors of sexual assault and historical sexual abuse.
- 4) To advocate for individual survivors within the justice, medical and social service systems and to work cooperatively with these systems, and with other community agencies, to be responsive overall to the needs of the survivor.
- 5) To prevent sexual violence against women, building awareness of its impact and prevention, through work in all schools, institutions and the community at large.
- 6) To continuously expand our knowledge of effective and innovative work in this field, to share this knowledge with others, and to apply it to our ongoing work with women.