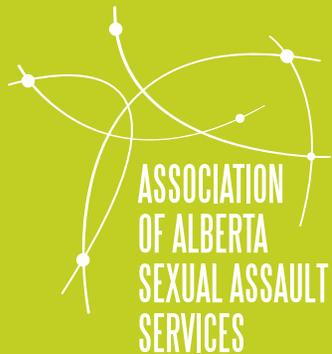


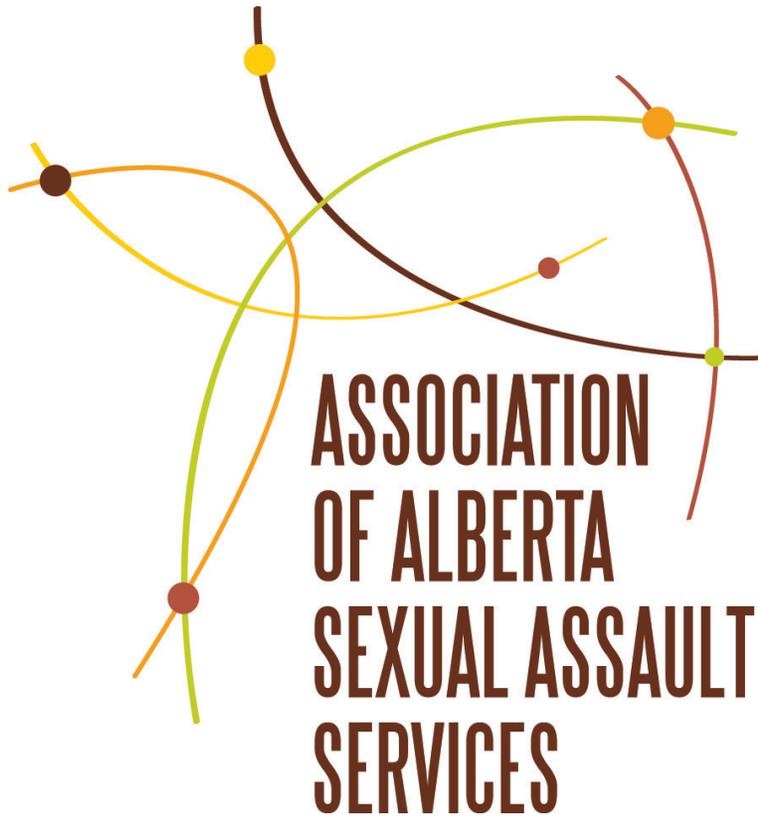
Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services

Annual Report 2018-2019

#I Believe You ...Now What?



Working Together for an Alberta
Free From Sexual Violence



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Providing leadership, coordination, collaboration and a unified voice on issues of sexual abuse and sexual assault.



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Organization Overview

The Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services (AASAS) is a non-profit, registered charitable organization that began operations in 1993. As a provincial umbrella organization, AASAS provides leadership, coordination and a unified voice on issues of sexual assault and sexual abuse while increasing recognition, support for and access to sexual assault services in Alberta.

Land Acknowledgement

In the spirit of respect and truth, AASAS would like to take a step towards reconciliation by acknowledging the land on which we do our work. Not as a token, or a box to check, but out of a genuine desire to acknowledge the traditional territories and travelling corridors of the people of the Treaty 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 regions and Metis regions 1 through 6 in Alberta.

We would also like to acknowledge the pervasive, and intergenerational effects of colonization; colonization, that included sexual violence as a way to harm Indigenous peoples, a weapon that is still used here on Turtle Island to harm others. Violence did exist before the arrival of settlers, but not in the ways that it is present in today's society. AASAS commitment to reconciliation includes education, increased access to services, and truth telling.

Our Vision

An Alberta free from sexual violence.

Our Mission

To provide leadership, coordination, collaboration and a unified voice on issues of sexual abuse and sexual assault.

The Role of AASAS

The AASAS Member Agencies/Services are responsible for day-to-day, front line delivery of services within their local communities and regional areas. As a provincial support organization, AASAS focuses its efforts in these key areas:

AWARENESS: AASAS works to increase public and government awareness of issues involving sexual abuse and sexual assault and the impacts they have on all Albertans.

ACCESS: AASAS strives to ensure that all Albertans affected by sexual abuse and sexual assault have access to healing and recovery programs, services and supports.

AASAS Core Beliefs

- We believe anyone can be a victim of sexual abuse and sexual assault.
- We believe anyone affected by sexual abuse and sexual assault has the right to access effective, affordable and timely services that are distinct and specialized.
- We believe everyone has the capacity and resiliency to recover from sexual abuse and sexual assault.
- We believe victims of sexual abuse and sexual assault are not to blame and perpetrators must be held accountable.
- We believe society minimizes the crime of sexual abuse and sexual assault on individuals and that minimization has devastating outcomes for survivors.
- We believe services addressing sexual abuse and sexual assault need to be delivered in an inclusive, respectful and equitable manner regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation or ability.
- We believe there is a need for increased recognition and support for existing and emerging sexual assault services in Alberta.
- We believe education and awareness initiatives need to be targeted at everyone.
- We believe the prevention initiatives are not to be targeted to survivors or potential survivors but towards perpetrators and potential perpetrators as well as those who can intervene.
- We believe that treatment is a form of prevention because healthy individuals and healthy communities break the cycle of abuse.
- We believe in the need for treatment and greater access to treatment for perpetrators of sexual abuse and sexual assault.

PACE Community Support, Sexual Assault & Trauma Centre

(Grande Prairie)

Support & Intake:

780.539.6692

Crisis Line: 1.888.377.3223

pacecentre.com

Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton

(SACE)

24-Hour Support & Info Line: 780.423.4121

Business: 780.423.4102

sace.ca

University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre

780.492.9771

ualberta.ca/current-students/sexual-assault-centre

Saffron Centre Ltd. (Sherwood Park)

780.449.0900

saffroncentre.com

Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Centre (Red Deer)

Toll Free: 1.866.956.1099

24-Hour Text: 403.986.HELP

Business: 403.340.1124

Web Chat: casasc.ca

Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse

Toll Free: 1.877.237.5888

Business: 403.237.6905

calgarycasa.com

Harmony Project Sexual Violence Response Program

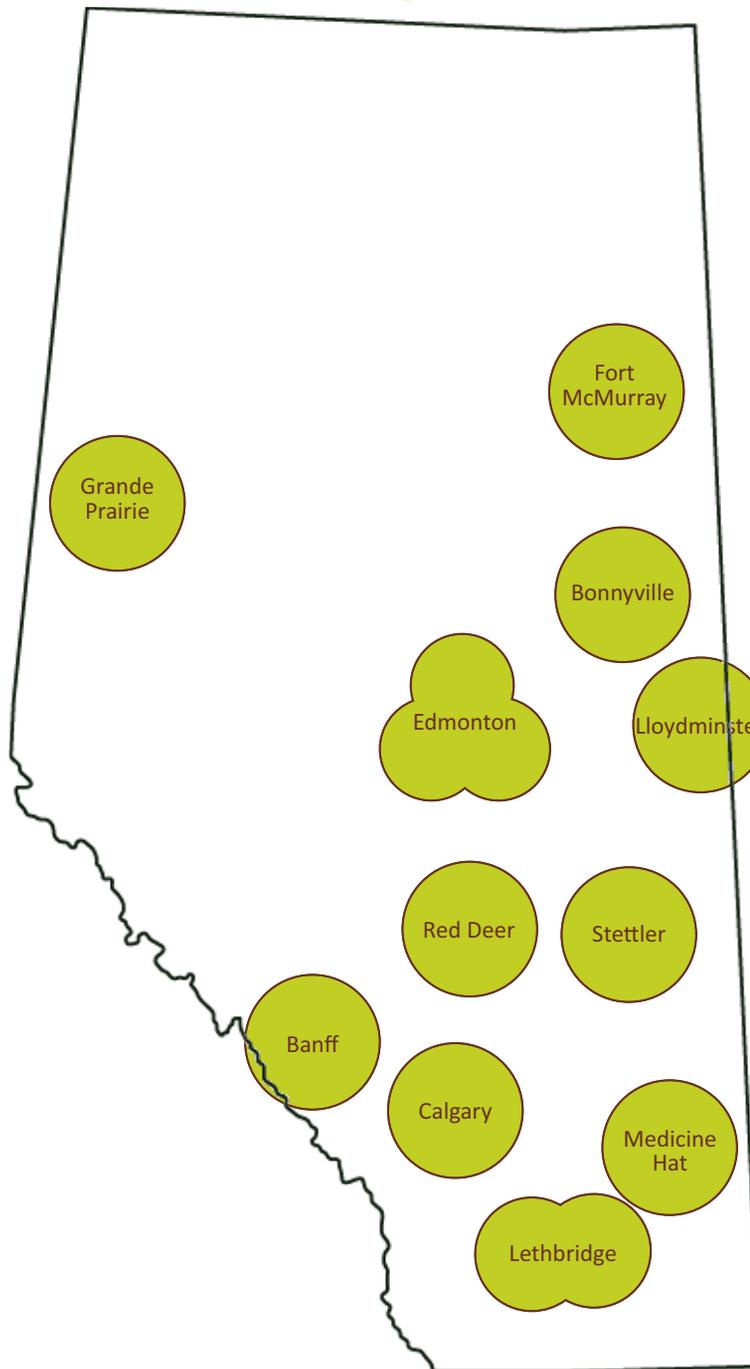
(Banff)

403.760.3200

ywcabanff.ca/programs-services/bow-

6 valley-harmony-project/

AASAS Member Agencies/Services



Waypoints Sexual Assault Healing Centre (Ft. McMurray)

Crisis Line: 780.791.6708

Business: 780.743.4691 Ext. 232

waypointswb.ca

Dragonfly Counselling & Support Centre: Sexual Assault Services

(Bonnyville)

780.812.3174

thedragonflycentre.com

Lloydminster Sexual Assault & Information Centre

Crisis Line: 306.825.8255

Business: 306.825.8255

lloydminstersexualassault.com

Association of Communities Against Sexual Abuse (Stettler)

Toll Free: 1.866.807.3558

Business: 403.742.3558

againstabuse.ca

Southeastern Alberta Sexual Assault Response Committee (Medicine Hat)

Toll Free: 1.866.403.8000

Business: 403.548.2717

mhsarc.com

Sexual Violence Action Committee (Lethbridge)

YWCA Harbour House Crisis Line:

403.320.1881

Toll Free: 1.866.296.0447

Business: 403.327.5724

svaclethbridge.com

Chinook Sexual Assault Centre (Lethbridge)

Toll Free: 1.844.576.2512

Business: 403.694.1094

csacleth.ca

Message from the Leadership

This year jubilantly arrived on the heels of a Government of Alberta announcement of an \$8.1M increase in funding for sexual assault centres. Funding was allocated to address counselling waitlists and respond to the increase in new counselling clients. In addition, funding was provided for specialized police and court support positions in Alberta. Two positions, a regional coordinator and a systems navigator were also allocated to seven under-served regions of the province. This degree of support for sexual assault centres was unprecedented in the province of Alberta and unmatched by any other province across Canada!

Did the increase in funding make a difference? Oh yes, it did!

Sexual assault centres provided 35,562 counselling sessions – a 24% increase from the previous year. Counselling wait times were reduced from 4 to 9 months to 1 to 5 months. AASAS formed its first ever Sexual Assault Specialized Police and Court Support Network supporting individuals as they make their way through the criminal justice system. Specialized services were expanded in five regions: North West (High Level; High Prairie), North East (Fort Chipewyan; Fort McKay), Central East (Bonnyville; Cold Lake; St Paul; Lac La Biche), Bow Valley (Canmore; Banff) and South West (Lethbridge; Cardston; Taber).

And two new sexual assault centres joined the AASAS membership bringing us to 14 sexual assault centres in the province. Welcome to the Harmony Project Sexual Violence Response Program in Banff and the Chinook Sexual Assault Centre in Lethbridge.

And this is just the beginning – look out next year –here we come!

Staff

Deb Tomlinson, Chief Executive Officer
Cheryl Wallach, Communications Specialist
Corinne Ofstie, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator
Cynthia Jardine, First Responder Training Admin Assistant
Haley Scott, Collaborative Community Response Coordinator
Katie Robertson, Continuing Education Coordinator
Lisa Oracheski, Criminal Justice Response Coordinator
Pradnya Yadav, Administrative Assistant
Tiffany Goebel, Community Development Associate

Board of Directors

Thorna Lawrence, President and Treasurer
Bill Walker, Vice-President
Dara Sutton, Secretary
Brad Cunningham, Director
Brenda Murdoch, Director
Linda McCracken, Director
Marilyn Fleger, Director
Rhonda Steinwand, Director

Highlights of 2018-2019

Celebrating Our 25th Anniversary

Alberta's sexual assault centres formed AASAS back in 1993 because they believed in the power of the collective and knew we would be stronger together. They knew if we could speak with one united voice there was a greater chance we would be heard. And we needed to be heard because we were speaking for one of the most silenced majorities – individuals who have experienced sexual assault and abuse.

In May 2018, AASAS members and partners gathered in Edmonton to celebrate our 25th anniversary. We looked back at how far we had come: from volunteers answering phone calls and pagers in their homes to fourteen strong agencies providing counselling services, outreach, education, and police and court support. We acknowledged and appreciated the contribution of all our partners in the growing movement to support those who have experienced sexual violence.



Sexual Violence Awareness Month Proclamation

This year, for the very first time, the Government of Alberta proclaimed the month of May as Sexual Violence Awareness Month. It is imperative that addressing sexual violence be an integral part of the government's social policy agenda because sexual violence impacts everyone – those who have experienced it directly and those who know someone who has experienced it; people of any gender identity; any age, race or ethnicity; people with and without disabilities. Sexual violence is a significant public health issue and presents a major risk to public safety. The costs of the legal response, health care, mental health services and social services supports are high.



Sexual violence belongs on the public agenda and by proclaiming May as sexual violence month in this province – the Government of Alberta has ensured that it will stay on the public agenda until it can be eradicated.

Strategic Plan

AASAS Board of Directors, member agencies and staff finalized a new strategic plan to guide our organization and membership for the next five years (2018-2022). Strategic goals include:

- Elevated awareness and understanding of the issue of sexual violence
- Access for all Albertans to specialized, effective, coordinated and identifiable services
- The inclusion of sexual violence in government policy and legislative frameworks
- Standards of excellence in service delivery.

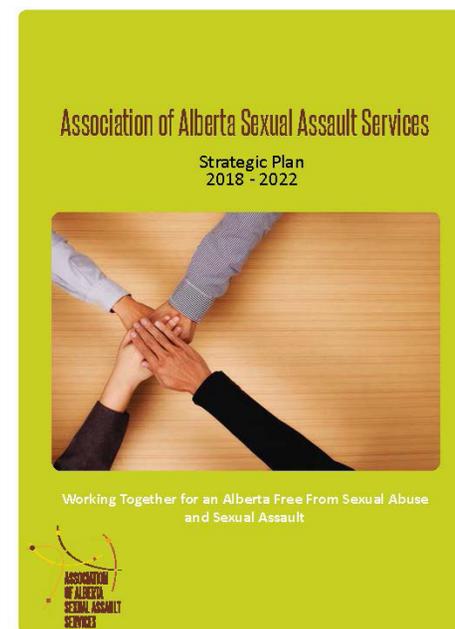
Regional Service Expansion

Alberta's 14 sexual assault centres work hard to meet the needs of people affected by sexual violence, however there remain large parts of the province that do not have a coordinated and collaborative specialized response to sexual violence. Much of the northern parts of the province, along with some central regions have no local specialized services at all. If individuals and their families require support they must either travel great distances, rely on non-specialized supports or, ultimately, go without services.

This year, the Government of Alberta provided much needed funding for regional service expansion to rural Alberta. The following regions were identified for enhanced funding to launch their collaborative community response:

- North West – High Level, High Prairie (Peavine), Rainbow Lake, Fort Vermillion
- North East – Fort Chipewyan, Fort McKay, Janvier
- North Central – Wabasca, Slave Lake, Athabasca
- Central West – Hinton, Jasper, Edson
- Central East – Bonnyville, Cold Lake, St. Paul, Lac La Biche
- Bow Valley – Canmore, Banff, Lake Louise
- South West – Lethbridge, Cardston, Taber, Pincher Creek

Funding to support the development of community response in each of the seven under-served regions added much needed resources for regional coordination and systems navigation. As a result, two new member agencies joined AASAS: Chinook Sexual Assault Centre in Lethbridge and the Harmony Project Sexual Violence Response Program in Banff.



Collaborative Justice Response

With support from Women and Gender Equality Canada, AASAS participated actively on the Collaborative Justice Response to Sexual Assault Committee (CJSAC), to explore ways in which to improve and enhance the criminal justice response to adult survivors of sexual assault. The committee identified seven priority areas for collaborative action including increasing access to Sexual Assault Evidence Kits (SAEK) in Alberta, and training and education to improve and enhance the criminal justice response to people affected.

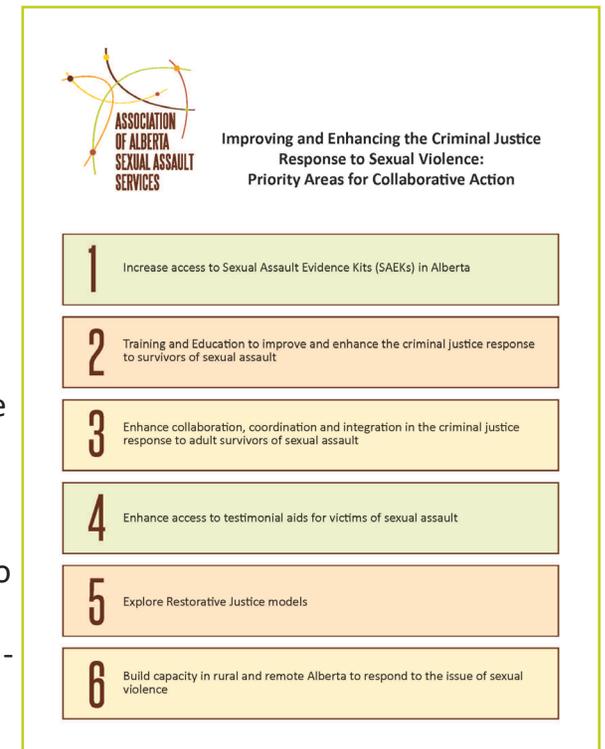
AASAS provided input to the Sexual Violence Investigation Best Practice Guide which was announced and disseminated to investigators across Alberta by the Justice Department in May 2018. In addition to outlining procedures for undertaking and managing sexual violence investigations, this guide:

- includes the importance of responding with a trauma informed approach
- addresses myths and misconceptions, such as how a person who has been sexually assaulted 'should' act – response to trauma varies and there is no right way for anyone to behave after experiencing sexual violence
- emphasizes the importance of investigating in collaboration with victim support services - like AASAS sexual assault centres, victim services units and health service providers.

Specialized Police and Court Support

Barriers to seeking justice for individuals who have experienced sexual assault are well documented. People affected by sexual violence can benefit greatly from having specialized, professional, consistent and ongoing support as they make their way through the criminal justice system.

As a result of increased funding provided by the Government of Alberta, AASAS member agencies were able to hire a specialized police and court support worker at every centre. For some this was a much-needed expansion of existing services. For other agencies, this was a new position. Providing specialized and consistent support from the time of reporting to the conclusion of the case will result in individuals having a better experience of the system as they manage this difficult process, and help them to maintain their investment in the process until completion.



Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Scan

A Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) is a multidisciplinary team that works collaboratively to support people who have experienced sexual assault, either in formalized, coordinated models with established guidelines and protocols, or in informal, cooperative partnerships that recognize the expertise of each professional along the continuum of service. SARTs are beneficial because they allow individuals affected to receive quality medical, legal and advocacy services with a single point of contact.

With support from Women and Gender Equality Canada, AASAS conducted an environmental scan of the Sexual Assault Response Teams in Alberta for submission to the Government of Alberta Sexual Violence Police Advisory Committee. The report looked at the history and composition of the SART, their medical response model, area served, the role of victim/survivor advocates or supports within the SART and whether there is third option medical collection available.

The results included frontline worker feedback about what changes and opportunities they identified that would benefit the systems within which they work. The main themes of the responses were focused on:

- Training and Education,
- Increased Collaboration,
- Increased Involvement of Victim/Survivor Advocates, and
- Expansion of Third Option Evidence Collection & Program Evaluation.

Allying with Indigenous Communities

In order for Indigenous people to feel comfortable and safe accessing sexual assault services, it is important that AASAS and its members develop and implement decolonizing practices. This year an additional three AASAS staff members attended the Allying with Indigenous People's workshop through Align Alberta, and an AASAS practicum student reviewed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, Calls to Action, and Summary, and the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples documents as the basis for AASAS reconciliation activities.

The student also surveyed AASAS member agencies and found several centres are experiencing success with initiatives in relationship building and service delivery to Indigenous communities. Decolonizing practice continues to be a priority for AASAS and its member agencies.



First Responder to Sexual Assault and Abuse Training™

The demand for AASAS First Responder to Sexual Assault and Abuse Training (FRT) across the province continues to increase. This year, 700 professionals and paraprofessionals were trained as first responders.

AASAS oversaw the work of 50 certified facilitators, and partnered with 8 post-secondary institutions to provide on-campus training to students, staff and faculty.

The AASAS Network provided 48 First Responder Trainings for a total of 672 hours of training to people in the communities of: Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Edmonton, Morley, Water Valley, Calgary, Bonnyville, Cold Lake, Sundre, Lac La Biche, Olds, Lacombe, Lloydminster, Grand Prairie, Fort McMurray, Banff, Siksika Nation, Peace River and Saskatoon.

To build capacity, a week-long Train the Trainer was completed in Alberta in June. This allowed us to expand our facilitator pool with 32 new facilitators-in-training and partner with six new post-secondary institutions. A week-long Train the Trainer was also held in Saskatchewan in March, 2019 where 21 individuals were trained to deliver the two-day FRT workshop in that province.

AASAS continues to work on curriculum development and inclusion of Indigenous content. The Continuing Education Coordinator and Chief Executive Officer have met with Elders within Alberta to receive guidance on how to complete these revisions in a good way, as the requests for training from Indigenous communities continues to grow.

Goals of Training

- To educate individuals about the personal, cultural and legal aspects of sexual assault and sexual abuse.
- To enable individuals to recognize, define and respond appropriately to disclosures of sexual assault and sexual abuse.



Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services is approved to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. Social workers completing this course receive 13 Category A continuing education credits.

Learning to Counsel Survivors Healing from Trauma of Sexualized Violence



Counselling Adult Survivors of Sexual Violence is a 12-week online integrative course that is designed for counselors, therapists, and other mental health practitioners who may wish to work with survivors of sexual violence, or who may be already working with survivors and would like to more deeply inform their counselling practice.

AASAS held two 12-week Counselling courses, training a total of 30 counselling professionals, and began the process of the accrediting the Counselling Adult Survivors of Sexual Violence course with the Alberta College of Social Workers (ACE), for 20 Category A continuing education credits.

Hope and Healing: Sexual Assault Counselling in Alberta

An increase in funding from the Alberta Government allowed AASAS member agencies to begin to address long wait times and demand for counselling and support services. This year, Alberta's sexual assault services supported 4,321 new clients. Further analysis into counselling outputs show that new counselling clients in rural Alberta are steadily increasing while new client intakes at large urban centres are reaching capacity.

AASAS member agencies provided 35,562 counselling sessions – a 24% increase in the number of counselling sessions provided as compared to last year. Seventy-four percent of individuals served were adults, with the remaining being children ages 17 and under. While the majority of counselling clients were women; 13% were men and 1% identified as transgender.

A median of 51% of counselling clients identified having a mental health diagnosis and/or addiction(s) demonstrating how sexual assault is linked closely to these serious health conditions. Outcome data collected showed that 91% of adult clients and 71% of child clients served during this period experienced a reduction in trauma symptoms.

AASAS member agencies reduced counselling wait times from approximately 4-9 months to 1-5 months

#IBelieveYou

When planning the 2018-19 #IBelieveYou (IBY) campaign, AASAS was faced with an interesting challenge. The increased public discourse about sexual assault, harassment and abuse because of the #MeToo movement had pushed the IBY campaign farther than anticipated which meant rethinking the original plans for the fourth and final year of the initiative.

The concept of a believing response to a disclosure of sexual violence was expanded to #IBelieveYou... Now What? in direct response to the questions raised through the #MeToo movement. And the campaign was divided into two phases: post-secondary engagement in the Fall of 2018 and the launch of Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence in May 2019.

Alberta post-secondary institutions and AASAS member agencies were invited to "Join the Discussion" and encouraged to create videos that captured perspectives on some big questions surrounding the #MeToo and #IBelieveYou movements. The response was amazing and 59 videos were submitted and posted on AASAS's YouTube channel, then shared on social media including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

**#WhyIDidntReport
boosted the social
reach of #IBelieveYou
by 16.6 million in just
five days**



Post-secondaries hosted display booths where individuals were encouraged to write the positive impacts of the campaign on the updated #IBelieveYou...Now What? graffiti walls.

Social media was an important part of the first phase of the campaign as people joined the conversation through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Last year we witnessed the hashtag #IBelieveYou being used more beyond the borders of Alberta. This continued in 2018. The news coverage of Dr. Christine Blasey Ford and Judge Brett Kavanaugh, and subsequent tweet by the President of the United States resulted in a social media explosion through the hashtag #WhyIDidntReport. Similar to #MeToo last year, people also used the #IBelieveYou hashtag and this resulted in an increase of 16.6M social reach in five days!

Alberta's Thought Leaders Answered Tough Questions

What positive changes have you seen as a result of #IBelieveYou and #MeToo in your work or personal life?

Some men have openly stated that they won't hire women or work closely with them.

What do you make of this concern, and how should it be addressed?

While many people celebrate the #MeToo movement, others worry about the accused being tried in the court of public opinion.

What do you say to that?
Do you think the pendulum has swung too far?

We're using the term I Believe You: Now What? to reflect the fact that believing survivors is the first step in a long process.

What's your answer to the now what question?

Some men have openly stated that they're afraid to compliment, flirt with or date women.

What do you make of this concern, and how should it be addressed?

You can view the #IBelieveYou...Now What? videos on the AASAS YouTube channel

Thank You



The funding from the Government of Alberta supports AASAS efforts to increase awareness of issues of sexual abuse and assault, and to ensure all Albertans affected by sexual violence have access to programs, supports and services.



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada

Canada

The funding AASAS received from Women and Gender Equality Canada supports a three-year project working to improve and enhance the criminal justice response to adult survivors of sexual assault in the province of Alberta.

AASAS is very appreciative of the support of Women and Gender Equality Canada on this very important initiative.

**Audited financial statements for the year (April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019) are available
by request from the office of the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services.
mailbox@aasas.ca**

2018-19 Year at a Glance

REGIONAL SERVICE EXPANSION

North West
(High Level
High Prairie
Peavine
Rainbow Lake
Fort Vermillion)

North East
(Fort Chipewyan
Fort McKay
Janvier)

Central East
(Bonnyville
Cold Lake
St. Paul
Lac La Biche)

Bow Valley
(Canmore
Banff
Lake Louise)

South West
(Lethbridge
Cardston
Taber
Pincher Creek)

TWO new member agencies:

Harmony Project Sexual Violence Response Program - Banff
Chinook Sexual Assault Centre - Lethbridge

COUNSELLING

4,321 new clients

74% adults
22% 17 years and under

35,562 counselling sessions

78% female
13% male
1% transgender

FIRST RESPONDER TO SEXUAL ASSAULT AND ABUSE TRAINING

48 Trainings

19 Communities

50 Facilitators

672 Hours

700 Albertans trained

AASAS staff participated in 17 professional development opportunities.

AASAS facilitated or participated in 401 collaboration and coordination meetings.

AASAS facilitated the formation of the Specialized Police and Court Support Network

#I Believe You ...Now What?

#I Believe You