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Gap Analysis of Services for Victims and Survivors of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Canada

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a gap analysis of specialized services for victims and survivors of online child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) in Canada. The analysis took place between March and July 2019 and was conducted to identify existing specialized support services for victims of CSEA, their families, and adult survivors of CSEA, as well as gaps in the availability of such services, any promising practices in Canada or elsewhere, and challenges to providing specialized supports for these victims and their families.

Very few support services and treatment practices are specifically related to online CSEA in Canada. Overall, the most promising practices currently offered in Canada are those that address child victims (children and youth up to the age of 18 years) of crime more generally, especially the services provided by the Child and Youth Advocacy Centre network that is expanding across the country, as well as those provided by the long-standing network of service providers that responds to victims of sexual assault. These networks have great potential to provide specialized supports for online CSEA victims and their families. However, they currently lack expertise in online CSEA, and need evidence-based guidance on how to best support these victims; methods demonstrated to be effective for sexual crime victims in general might not be effective or may even be harmful to victims of online crimes.

What is needed is investment in creating the evidence base – that is, data evaluating and verifying the appropriateness and effectiveness of specific support services and approaches to treatment for online CSEA – that would then inform best practices. These best practices could then be conveyed in training for service providers, and integrated into supervision and mentorship structures within organizations. Many of the individuals interviewed for this report are experts in the field of child sexual abuse. Other participants are well versed in providing referrals for clients needing specialized supports for child victims of sexual abuse. However, they did not believe that they had expertise specific to working with victims of online CSEA, and generally did not know of specialized services to which they could refer victims. The extensive and well-established networks of experts in the fields of sexual abuse and child sexual abuse should be mobilized to participate in, and contribute to, research in this area in order to develop evidence-based effective responses for victims of online CSEA.

Introduction

Research has established that online CSEA results in a complex set of harms, which have the potential to affect victims across their lifespan. The literature describes these harms as they relate to having, or to the potential to have, digital images circulating indefinitely, which adds a unique dimension to sexual abuse (Martin, 2014; Martin, 2015). Specifically, the abuse is ongoing, with an uncertain scope of distribution (Martin, 2014). Victims fear the images have been or can be viewed by offenders at anytime, anywhere in the world for their own sexual gratification (Palmer, 2005, 2015). They might fear the images will be viewed by people in their lives, or by anyone the victim may encounter. Sometimes the victim is confronted, or fears being confronted, with a visual record of their own sexual abuse (Canadian Center for Child Protection, 2016; Gewirtz-Meydan, Walsh, Wolak & Finkelhor, 2018; Leonard, 2010; Martin, 2014, 2015; Ost, 2016; Slane, 2015).

In March 2018, Public Safety Canada held consultation sessions with multiple stakeholders across Canada to discuss the need for an updated and modernized National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet (National Strategy). Partners under the Strategy include the Department of Justice Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (C3P). The National Strategy aims to provide a coordinated approach to online CSEA, by supporting online CSEA research and providing overall coordination, oversight, and training for professionals in the various sectors involved in combating these crimes and supporting victims.

Some of the challenges raised in these consultation sessions included: the lack of comprehensive connection between people who have created prevention and awareness resources; the small evidence base (or lack of an evidence base) to guide effective services; and the lack of sustainable funding for service providers.

The Social Work Policy Institute (SWPI) is a think tank established within the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Foundation. According to the SWPI (2010), "Evidence-based practice is a process in which the practitioner combines well-researched interventions with clinical experience, ethics, client preferences, and culture to guide and inform the delivery of treatments and services" (para. 1). A comprehensive evidence base regarding online CSEA needs to be developed from rigorous research that validates the efficacy of specific approaches to support services (i.e., methods and approaches that provide a range of services for victims of online CSEA and have been scientifically verified as effective). This research needs to include the evaluation of existing methods and approaches, which likely require modification for victims of online CSEA, because without modifications they could be ineffective or even harmful (Leonard, 2010; Martin, 2014, 2015; Palmer, 2005; Svedin, 2009).

In an effort to demonstrate the government's commitment to countering online CSEA, a list of high priority initiatives was identified for possible inclusion in a renewed CSEA strategy. A victim support gap analysis was amongst these prioritized initiatives. The purpose of this project was to research and document existing specialized services for child victims

(children and youth up to the age of 18 years) and adult survivors of online child sexual exploitation (CSEA) and in doing so, identify gaps in services.

This report is structured as follows. First, it sets out the methodology employed to gather data on services available in Canada for victims of online CSEA and their families, and gaps in those services. Next, it describes the findings arising from this data collection, according to the three sources investigated: a brief literature review, a web scan, and a series of substantive interviews with Canadian service providers. The report concludes by identifying gaps and research recommendations.

Terminology

The term “online CSEA”¹ encompasses a broad range of conduct related to the sexual abuse and exploitation of children and youth online. However, those interviewed for this report often limited their response to a particular form of online CSEA, such as online luring, or child trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation with online components. Therefore, a comprehensive evidence base regarding specialized services for victims of online CSEA should involve examining whether different approaches are required for different types of online CSEA, as well as evaluating which methods are most appropriate for the various developmental stages of child, youth, or adult survivors.

“CYAC” refers to Child and Youth Advocacy Centres, which provide a coordinated, multidisciplinary, and cross-sectoral approach to supporting children and youth involved in the justice system in a safe, comfortable environment, which has been shown to effectively address the needs of child and youth crime victims and their families. CYAC is the term used generally in Canada for this model of service delivery, although in the United States, Child Advocacy Center (CAC) is commonly used. This report uses CYAC to include both terms.

Limitations

Data collection for this report involved particular limitations, in that most of the interviewees had not worked with many or any cases of online CSEA. Some were unaware of or unfamiliar with the nuanced and differential effects of online CSEA on victims while some had received training on the unique impacts on victims of online CSEA. None of the interviewees had received training or education that enabled them to provide guidance on how best to support victims of online CSEA in terms of specific court supports, therapy, or counselling. Interviewees often stressed these gaps in knowledge, services, and training, and persistently referred to the need for more evidence-based resources on best practice approaches. These findings are repeated throughout the report, which may appear repetitious but accurately reflects the results. A second limitation was the inability to secure the participation of interviewees in the Northwest Territories or Nunavut.

¹ The Department of Justice Canada recognizes that the term online child sexual exploitation (CSE) was used in the study’s interviews; however, the report uses the more inclusive term of online CSEA to recognize the variants of technology-facilitated child sexual crime.

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Method

To create an inventory of existing specialized services and to identify gaps, the authors used three sources/methods:

- a review of academic and grey literature to assess support services for child victims and adult survivors of online CSEA, with a particular focus on whether any evidence-based studies have explored best approaches to providing support, especially treatment;
- a scan of the internet to assess available services for victims of online CSEA and their families in Canada; and,
- interviews with representatives of provincial and territorial victim services and CYACs across Canada.

Interviews with CYAC personnel were sought because they are in a unique position to offer programs and services that address the specific needs of victims and survivors of online CSEA due to the co-location of different services. CYACs address trauma treatment needs from the initial investigation to preparation for court. They are also dedicated to working with young people who are victimized by abuse and exploitation, although mostly not online. Further, the network of CYACs in Canada is expanding. Some provinces and territories have well-established CYACs or even multiple CYACs at various stages of development, and others are soon to acquire them. This network supports each individual CYAC as a hub for services for young victims, and can serve as a resource for training and knowledge dissemination for service providers.

At the beginning of the project, the research team attended a national CYAC network meeting in Toronto, hosted by Boost CYAC, to inform network members about the study. With the assistance of the Department of Justice Canada, 97 contacts from provincial and territorial victim services and CYACs were sent an email solicitation and a recruitment flyer inviting them to participate in the project. Of those contacted by email, 29 responded. After various email and telephone attempts to ensure participation of all provinces and territories, interviews were completed with representatives from a total of 17 Canadian support service organizations including: 8 CYACs (2 in Alberta, 1 in British Columbia, 1 in Manitoba, 2 in Ontario, 1 in Quebec, and 1 in the Yukon); 7 provincial victim services programs (1 in British Columbia, 1 in New Brunswick, 1 in Newfoundland, 1 in Nova Scotia, 1 in Ontario, 1 in Prince Edward Island, and 1 in Saskatchewan); 1 community agency in New Brunswick; and, 1 national not-for-profit-organization in Manitoba. No representatives of organizations in the Northwest Territories or Nunavut could be secured for an interview. In the Yukon, CYAC and victim services representatives are located within the same organization, so one combined interview was conducted. The following table lists the specific organizations participating in interviews.

Table 1 - Participating Organizations

Province	Organization
Alberta	Calgary & Area Child Protection Centre Zebra Child Protection Centre
British Columbia	Boundary and Regional RCMP Victim Services Victoria Child and Youth Advocacy Centre
Manitoba	The Canadian Centre for Child Protection (C3P) Victoria Child and Youth Advocacy Centre
New Brunswick	Victim Services – Community Service Unit, Public Safety Family Plus/Life Solutions, Inc.
Nova Scotia	Victim Services, Court Services Division, NB Dept. of Justice
Newfoundland and Labrador	Victim Services – Dept. of Justice and Public Safety, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Ontario	Victim Services – Policy, Program Design & Evaluation, Ministry of the Attorney General Boost CYAC Cedar Centre
Prince Edward Island	Victim Services – Department of Justice and Public Safety
Quebec	Fondation Marie-Vincent
Saskatchewan	Victim Services – Community Safety and Well-Being, Integrated Justice Services
Yukon	Project Lynx

All interviewees were asked the same 12 questions [listed in Appendix A (English) and B (French)]. Of the 17 interviews, 14 were conducted via telephone while the researchers took notes to record responses; the other three interviewees filled out the questions in writing. A summary of the general findings is included below, and more detailed profiles of services described in the interviews for each participating province or territory can be found at Appendix C.

Findings

Literature Review

The rapid proliferation of new digital technologies has given rise to increased sexual exploitation of children online. Online CSEA manifests in many forms including accessing, possessing, producing, and/or distributing technology-facilitated sexual abuse materials by those who have a sexual interest in children. As demonstrated by Dr. Martin's previous research with child and youth service providers (Martin, 2013; Martin, 2014; Martin 2015; Martin, 2016; Martin & Alaggia, 2013), many do not know how to adapt their current practices to address specific features of technology-facilitated child sexual abuse due to the lack of research and theory about the complex practice issues involved (British Association of Social Workers, 2013; Martin, 2014; Martin, 2016; Martin, Brady, Kwhali, Brown, Crowe & Matouskova, 2014; Rimer, 2008; von Weiler, Haardt-Becker & Schulte, 2010).

Online CSEA has been broadly conceptualized as the sexual abuse and exploitation of children on the internet in three principal forms: (a) child luring and sexual solicitation, (b) child prostitution and child trafficking, and (c) recording and distributing images of sexual abuse online.

Child luring and sexual solicitation may be defined as the use of the internet to initiate or enhance contact with children to groom and entice them to engage in sexual activities or sexual conversations online or offline with the perpetrator (Gámez-Guadix, Almendros, Calvete & De Santisteban, 2018; Kloess, Beech & Harkins, 2014; Madigan et al., 2018; Slane, 2011; Wolak, Mitchell & Finkelhor, 2006; Wurtele & Kenny, 2016), which may result in sexual extortion of the child victim (Acar, 2016).

Child prostitution and child trafficking involves using the internet for the purposes of advertising and acquiring child victims, often involving exchange of sex or sexual acts for drugs, food, shelter, protection, other basics of life, and/or money (Acar, 2016; Muir, 2005).

Recording and distributing images of sexual abuse online refers to the creation and distribution of sexual visual recordings (video with/without audio, photographs, live-streaming) of children and youth (Carr, 2003; Dodge & Spencer, 2018; Jones & Skogrand, 2006; Martin, 2014, 2015; McGlynn, Rackley & Houghton, 2017; Muir, 2005; Wolak, Finkelhor & Mitchell, 2005).

Estimates of the prevalence of online CSEA are dependent upon knowledge and/or available means to facilitate reporting of problematic or negative online experiences (Kloess, Beech & Harkins, 2014). In 2016, C3P published a report analyzing data collected from tips that were submitted to Cybertip.ca, Canada's national tip line for reporting online CSEA. In total, 152,000 reports were reviewed and 43,762 unique images classified as child pornography were examined. Of these images, 78% were of prepubescent children and more than 53% of abuse acts against those under age 12 years involved explicit sexual activity/assaults and extreme sexual assaults. Most of the extreme assaults were perpetrated against children younger than 8 years of age.

Previous research has revealed that the perpetrators of online CSEA are most frequently either family members (37%) or acquaintances of the family (36%) (Martin, 2014; Martin & Alaggia, 2013; Mitchell, Finkelhor & Wolak, 2005; Slane, 2009). Online CSEA has the defining characteristic that the digitally recorded images are accessible online, so they are potentially permanent and therefore involve the subsequent and continuous exploitation of the child victim (Martin & Alaggia, 2013).

The literature review revealed gaps in research related to treatment, education, training, and supervision practices for service providers who are responsible for working with victims of online CSEA. Specifically, there is a serious lack of documented research and knowledge, particularly related to clinical treatment and specialized support services (Canadian Centre for Child Protection, 2016; Leonard, 2010; Martin 2015; Martin, 2016; Martin & Alaggia, 2013; Palmer, 2015; von Weiler, Haardt-Becker & Schulte, 2010). It is also vital to develop responses that are specific to whether the child has been sexually exploited online or offline; whether the victim has or believes they have consented to the acts that amount to exploitation; whether the victim has generated their own images; and situations of online CSEA that involve no physical contact. The effects of online CSEA may differ between children and adolescents. Therefore, specific responses should also be developed based on the child's age and stage of development (Martin, 2014; Palmer, 2015).

The literature review revealed gaps in psychological treatment aimed at facilitating disclosure for victims of online CSEA. It also revealed the need for studies that implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of education and training for those providing support and treatment for victims of online CSEA. This should include enhanced understanding of the differential harms and risks, and studies evaluating effective clinical supervision practices in these cases.

Effective response to online CSEA requires strong collaboration across service providers (Canadian Centre for Child Protection, 2016; Slane, et al, 2018). Policy development and training should be profession-specific and role-sensitive as well as cross-disciplinary (Slane et al., 2018). Training should also focus on the effects of online CSEA, particularly images and audio of abuse, on service providers (Martin & Alaggia, 2013). A recently published article by Gewirtz-Meydan, Lahav, Walsh, and Finkelhor (2019) stressed the need to identify and treat children who experience online CSEA in part because younger survivors suffer higher levels of psychopathology in adulthood. They state that "immediate therapy is preferable considering the impact that emotional responses during the crime and shortly after have on mental health outcomes." They recommend that clinicians address victims' maladaptive reactions and use appropriate approaches to treat each reaction. The authors further suggest that "special techniques to decrease the feeling of embarrassment among [online CSEA] survivors should be designed and utilized."

Protection from abuse is considered a fundamental human right for all children. Although general awareness of the phenomenon of online CSEA has increased substantially, the ability to respond effectively continues to be hindered by gaps in knowledge, theory, and research (Martin, 2014; Slane et al., 2018). Nonetheless, resources and support should be provided to connect, integrate, and update the work that currently takes place for child

victims and survivors of sexual crimes; to build capacity among service providers and institute evidence-based practices in response to victims; and, to provide an essential foundation for sustained, collaborative research, training, and cross-sectoral knowledge exchange (Martin & Alaggia, 2013; Slane et al., 2018). Research involving child victims of online CSEA is vital to advancing these goals.

Web Scan

An in-depth web scan was also conducted, focusing on organizations that deliver programs and services to victims and survivors of online CSEA across Canada. The scan began with web searches of keywords for each province and territory (e.g., “online sexual exploitation [province],” “child sexual exploitation Canada,” and “internet exploitation [province]”). Next, three previous reports on organizations providing victim services were investigated to find the websites of the organizations: *Environmental Scan and Gap Analysis: Online and Technology Facilitated Child Sexual Exploitation* (Gelder, Gingras & Associates, 2016) produced for Public Safety Canada; *Victim Services in Canada 2018* report by the Research and Statistics Division of the Department of Justice, Canada; and the online *Victim Services Directory* hosted on the Department of Justice Canada’s website. The websites of each organization were examined to identify which population the service was intended for and whether the services offered were specific to victims and/or survivors of online CSEA. In some instances, a key word search was conducted within the website to identify mentions of online CSEA, and some organizations were contacted by email to clarify the services offered by specific programs. Overall, the web scan confirmed that a multitude of organizations are currently dedicated to providing resources and information to address sexual victimization, although almost none are specific to online CSEA.

C3P offers a range of resources related to online CSEA, although their most long-standing and prominent services are focused on investigations (e.g., Cybertip.ca, the national tip line), and more recently on removing online images (e.g. Project Arachnid). These are important programs that help combat online CSEA, but they are beyond the focus of this study because they are not direct victim services.

Boost CYAC² is the only organization that administers a support and referral program specific to victims of online CSEA through the Internet Child Exploitation (ICE) Counselling Program. This program, established and funded by the Ontario Victim Services Secretariat at the Ministry of the Attorney General, provides referral and funding for immediate short-term counselling to victims of online CSEA and their families, as well as the families of some accused perpetrators. Other ICE programs are provided in police services across Canada, but these are dedicated to investigating online CSEA crimes and do not provide support services to victims. Other websites of victim services provider organizations included “online/internet child sexual exploitation” or “child abuse images online” on their lists of crimes for which they provide services to victims, but apart from Boost CYAC, there was no indication of any specialized supports or treatment options pertaining to online CSEA.

² A Toronto-based non-government organization that works to prevent child abuse and violence through awareness and education.

The web scan did not reveal any previously unknown providers of specialized support or treatment for victims and survivors of online CSEA, but it reinforced the important role that community sexual assault centres play in providing services for those affected by sexual abuse. The websites of many sexual assault centres across Canada include online exploitation, luring, grooming, being shown sexual images, and being coerced into providing sexual images as examples of sexual abuse. The web scan did not indicate that any specialized support or treatment services were offered, only that victims of online CSEA are among those eligible for the general services available to sexual assault victims and survivors.

Interview Findings

Representatives from 17 service provider organizations across Canada were interviewed. All interviewees were asked the same 12 questions (see Appendices A and B) to collect their insights and perspectives regarding programs and support services for victims and survivors of online CSEA, including gaps in services as well as promising practices. The interview questions covered the following topics:

- Available specialized services
- Gaps in specialized services
- Current and available training and gaps in training
- Partnering with other service providers and community organizations to provide services for victims of online CSEA
- Promising practices to address specific needs of victims of online CSEA and their families
- Challenges unique to providing services to online CSEA victims and their families

The following sections discuss the general findings (see Appendix C for summaries for each participating province and territory). The responses provided by Boost CYAC and C3P have been singled out where appropriate because these two organizations had a much more specific focus on online CSEA than any of the others.

When asked about specialized support services for online CSEA, most interviewees referred to general services for victims of crime offered by their organizations. When interviewees did address specialized services, they were often referring to support and treatment services related to sexual assault and abuse, or more specifically child sexual abuse, but not online CSEA. When interviewees had experience with online CSEA, this was mostly related to cases of luring, peer-to-peer image exchange, or human trafficking more generally. Most interviewees were unable to identify services that specifically addressed the online aspects of the crimes, or how these services differ for victims of sexual crimes that did not involve an online component. Most interviewees from provincial victim services and CYACs relied on a conventional understanding of child sexual abuse or offline sexual exploitation and related support services when answering questions.

Available services

Most interviewees referred to the general structure of support services available for all victims of crime, or all victims of crimes that qualify for counselling (e.g., violent crime),

and sometimes more narrowly sexual crimes, or more specifically child sexual abuse. Families of child victims are generally supported through the same services as those focused on the child victim (in other words, families do not receive separate support services). Adult survivors are mostly only eligible for services if they are involved in an active court case related to historical CSEA.

The findings suggest that most support services provided by provincial victim services organizations provide referrals to organizations (including CYACs) that in turn provide services based on general trauma treatment approaches for child sexual abuse that are not specific to online CSEA. Interviewees were unable to identify any interventions, supports, or treatment methods that address the differential aspects of online CSEA. This is not to suggest that the vast experience of the organizations that provide trauma treatment, and in particular many specialized approaches that respond to sexual assault and abuse, are not relevant to online CSEA. However, the lack of evidence-based approaches that are specific to online CSEA represents a gap.

Provincial victim services organizations and CYACs across Canada provide victims, survivors, and their families with referrals to other agencies or individual counsellors to address their treatment needs. However, these counselling services are limited. Although general trauma-informed therapies are helpful and widely available to victims and their families, additional and sometimes different needs of *online* CSEA survivors may not be addressed.

Some provide a range of services and information resources specifically for victims of online CSEA and their families. However, service providers in Canada are unable to provide research-based, evaluated treatment programs that address the complex needs of victims and survivors of online CSEA because none currently exist. In Ontario, Boost maintains a roster of counsellors providing general treatment via the ICE Counselling Program. Short-term program funding is available to online CSEA victims immediately in recognition of the need for prompt supports, therefore, wait times are minimal. Counsellors on the roster provide treatment through this funding model, often using a trauma-informed lens. However, there are no counsellors identified as having expertise related specifically to the complex needs of this type of abuse. Further, while there is currently no waitlist for services for cases of online CSEA, more funding is needed because referrals are steadily increasing.

C3P provides resources and referral services regarding online CSEA, including:

- Assisting individuals with making reports to law enforcement
- Assisting victims with content removal (e.g., how to contact platforms hosting non-consensually posted intimate images on social media or websites)
- Assisting victims in preparing a victim impact statement (VIS)^{3*}
- Assisting with victim compensation applications

³ Note that in Canada, provinces and territories operate VIS programs. Police, victim services and Crown prosecutors play a significant role in ensuring that VIS contain appropriate content and are filed with the court.

When contacted by a victim, C3P reported that they connect the individual to the appropriate resources in their own community (e.g., police, child welfare, counselling, legal representation in the US system). However, it is unclear whether C3P has any contacts with more specialized counselling services, given that such services are rare in Canada. Referrals are likely to more general counselling services.

C3P also assists in the preparation of community impact statements (CIS) for consideration by the sentencing judge. CISs describe the harm or loss that an offence has caused to a community. C3P uses data collected through Cybertip.ca, the International Survivor Survey, and Phoenix 11 to compose CISs describing the impact of these crimes on victims, especially those related to offences connected to the possession of child pornography.

C3P also has specific resources for teens who have had intimate images distributed among peers (what they call self/peer exploitation). It operates a site called Needhelpnow.ca, which is designed to help teens stop the spread of sexual pictures or videos and provides resources for finding support services. The site provides practical steps for contacting service providers to have images taken down, as well as information about the importance of emotional support and how to engage supports, and information on certain *Criminal Code* offences. The site advises youth to contact Cybertip.ca for further information and assistance when dealing with this type of online CSEA. The site also contains resources for parents and other trusted adults who are assisting youth involved in these types of instances, such as the Resource Guide for Families: Addressing Self/Peer Exploitation.

C3P organizes several groups composed of victims and their families primarily for advocacy purposes, with the aim of providing input to policy, resources, and future research into appropriate supports for survivors of online CSEA. It has also established a survivor moms group. This group is not specific to non-offending parents of victims of online CSEA, but serves as a voice to influence changes in support services for non-offending parents affected by child sexual abuse crimes more generally. Some of its activities include providing input on needed resources, feedback on the family survey (see below), and creating and recording survivor moms community impact statements.

C3P has conducted or is conducting surveys of: 1) adult survivors of online CSEA (an ongoing online International Survivor's Survey); 2) survivor family members (although this survey is not specific to online CSEA). C3P states that the purpose of these surveys is to collect experiences that can inform advocacy efforts and contribute to CISs.

Overall, while available services and information resources are commendable, gaps remain for victims and survivors of online CSEA and their families, and more could be done to ensure they receive effective and timely specialized supports.

Gaps in services

Although most services available to support victims are more general rather than specific to online CSEA, there are also gaps in general service provision— for example, lack of access to long-term counselling; lack of counsellors in some communities; lack of communication between service providers; and lack of funds to support professional development and training.

Provincial funding for counselling services varies. Some interviewees noted that victims of online CSEA do not always qualify for available counselling, because some provinces do not fund victim counselling for “non-contact” offences. Online luring or sexual image exchange does not always involve contact by a perpetrator. In Quebec, these are not considered violent crimes and so are not eligible for funding for counselling. This is a gap in service provision, as the availability of funded counselling support for non-contact online CSEA varies depending on where a victim resides.

There is also a need for training for counsellors to learn about how best to respond to cases of online CSEA. Victims are currently referred to counsellors who most likely do not have experience with online CSEA, although they usually have experience with treating cases of sexual abuse. Online CSEA prevalence is a growing and increasingly requires familiarity with specific aspects of online CSEA, as well as best practices for treatment.

Boost CYAC acknowledged the gap in program and treatment evaluation for online CSEA, stating, “people are doing treatment and counselling and we don't know if it is working. CBT [Cognitive Behavioural Therapy] was the gold standard but now there are changes with that. How do you do training that you can feel comfortable with, without an evidence base?”

Some interviewees said they rarely see cases of online CSEA, if any, and so were unaware of the impact on victims and survivors and consequently how to provide support services. As a result, they indicated that acquiring specialized expertise was not a priority for them. It is unclear whether this reported lack of online CSEA cases can be attributed to service providers not asking about the possible involvement of technology when they respond to cases of child sexual abuse. However, when interviewees were asked about gaps in services specific to online CSEA, they frequently stated that children and youth may not be disclosing for a variety of reasons, including the strong self-protective need to deny the existence of images, or fearing who may view the images, even in a support capacity.

Some interviewees referred to knowledge gaps rather than service gaps. For example, some wanted more information about how to help victims get images taken down, and some felt that their lack of knowledge about the technology involved in online CSEA was a barrier to their ability to acquire the expertise to better serve these clients.

Training

When asked about training, many interviewees commented on conferences or presentations that they had attended where the specific features and harms of online CSEA were discussed (e.g., conference hosted by C3P, webinars provided by Boost CYAC). These types of resources do not provide training in how to address the specific harms of online CSEA in the course of providing supports for victims, such as court preparation and counselling. Although these resources serve as a good starting point by providing information about the process of victimization via online CSEA or the unique harms suffered by these victims, they are unlikely to result in improved support services or treatment responses. Boost CYAC noted that clinicians are willing to take on clients who

are victims of online CSEA, but that it is “unclear whether or how they transfer their skills and knowledge into the ICE [Internet Child Exploitation] realm.”

Many interviewees were aware of the lack of specific professional development training available to best support, and especially to provide clinical services for, victims of online CSEA. Quality training is available for best practices for working with victims of sexual assault and abuse, but little to none focuses on online CSEA. Training resources about sexual abuse supports would be important to include, but none of the interviewees mentioned an online CSEA aspect currently being included. Training specific to online CSEA is typically offered as a separate topic, and many clinicians do not seek this specialized training due to limited time and funding for professional development. These findings suggest that integration of online CSEA training into sexual assault training – once the evidence base has been established – might inform more service providers about best practices.

C3P provides web-based knowledge mobilization resources that address online CSEA in sector-specific ways (i.e., child welfare/social work, legal, law enforcement, therapists, educators, medical/healthcare providers). However, these resources are not sufficient to support online CSEA victims.

Gaps remain in the development and provision of evidence-based approaches to respond, support, and especially provide treatment for, online CSEA victims, which would inform the kind of training most needed by service providers.

Partnering with other agencies and organization

Robust partnerships have emerged within and between organizations that provide support for victims of crime. These may be local and/or national; some are structured and some have developed organically over time. For example, Boost CYAC hosts annual meetings of CYACs from across Canada, and the network of CYACs is getting stronger over time. The multidisciplinary partnerships within CYACs are commendable and effective in providing important support services for young victims, and should form the backbone for delivering specialized supports for young victims of online CSEA.

All interviewees indicated that their agencies work in partnership with other organizations and make referrals to other community organizations or counsellors. Most mentioned working with other organizations that provide services for victims of sexual assault (e.g., rape crisis centres) and some noted organizations that specifically work with victims of human trafficking. It was suggested that these well-established sites of support should be enhanced by incorporating evidence-based practices related to the online aspects of sexual assault and human trafficking.

Networking and partnering are common and are strengths in the provision of victim services. Therefore, once evidence-based training and best practices are established, their dissemination among service providers, especially CYACs, should naturally follow. All interviewees noted that they do their best to work collaboratively and share what they know about working with victims of online CSEA, but also that their knowledge is limited

and no system is currently in place to help them collect and share experiences about providing services – especially counselling – to these victims. As a result, many interviewees were not confident that they were providing the most appropriate supports, nor were they confident about making referrals to the most appropriate counsellors.

Promising practices

Overall, interviewees provided little insight into promising practices specific to providing support to victims of online CSEA. Most were aware of a range of approaches to deal with trauma, but stated repeatedly that they were not aware of specific practices addressing online CSEA.

Boost CYAC identified some promising directions for further development of support services, such as emerging interest about how to support non-offending parents in cases of online CSEA, especially in cases where an offender is convicted of child pornography possession offences, but still has access to their own children. They also mentioned increasing attention to the need for treatment specifically for female offenders in cases of online CSEA, and for services to treat the victims and survivors of online grooming.

C3P identified its own projects as promising practices. For example, C3P is collecting data from adult survivors and victims' families through surveys and advocacy groups, and this could potentially inform the development of more evidence-based treatment methods and help improve services for survivors of online CSEA.

Unique challenges

When asked about the unique challenges of providing specialized services for victims of online CSEA, interviewees repeated many of the challenges discussed above in terms of services and training. Some stressed that the difficulties they face in providing victim services are especially acute when it comes to providing support for victims of online CSEA. For example, they noted that providing services in rural communities is challenging and involves obstacles such as the lack of qualified counsellors and long travel distances to access support services. Some noted that such challenges are especially difficult to overcome with regard to online CSEA, for which qualified counsellors are rare in the best of circumstances.

Some referred to the complexity of certain cases, such as those involving victims in multiple jurisdictions, and the challenges related to providing services to a victim where the trial is being held elsewhere. Others referred to victim blaming as a hindrance to accessing supports, noting that victims of luring, for instance, are often assumed to have willingly participated to some degree in the creation of the sexual images, which also poses additional barriers to disclosure and support-seeking when victims blame themselves for their victimization. There are also common messages in internet safety materials intended to deter sharing sexual images among peers by stressing that exchanging sexual images of minors is a crime. This can inhibit victim disclosure because “kids are scared of being charged.”

Several interviewees were concerned that current well-established approaches to providing mental health supports for victims of crime (e.g., trauma-informed CBT) do

not adequately address the specific needs of victims of online CSEA. Several interviewees reported the lack of mentorship and supervision for counsellors and a few mentioned the absence of peer support for practitioners trying to do this work. Boost CYAC stated that appropriate responses to victims of online CSEA require knowledge-sharing among professional peers, effective supervision and mentorship of counsellors interested in doing this work, and that this would hopefully lead to stronger evidence-based treatment guidelines.

C3P provided a long list of challenges unique to providing services to victims of online CSEA and their families, including the following additions to the ones already listed above:

- lack of evidence-based protocols regarding how best to deal with child victims, such as when to share information if a child does not know that their abuse was recorded;
- lack of evidence-based protocols on how to best advise parents of young victims about the long-term impact of online CSEA victimization and what they can do to protect their child over time;
- lack of funding and availability of long-term therapy as currently many victim services provide more immediate or shorter-term support;
- lack of a protocol for how to support victims of online CSEA regarding the potential for ongoing safety threats when offenders remain interested in these survivors (e.g. child pornography collectors);
- lack of a protocol for how to protect the anonymity of victims of online CSEA to the greatest extent possible, while not hindering the court process and keeping accurate records; and
- lack of consistent support provided to victims of online CSEA regarding additional legal remedies they may be entitled to, such as forfeiture, restitution, and victim compensation funds.

All of these challenges point to the need for further research and evaluation into best practices for providing support to victims of online CSEA.

Conclusion

The findings of this study support the need for an updated and modernized national strategy to address online CSEA. Participants of the Public Safety consultation in March 2018 noted persistent challenges with meeting the specific needs of these victims and their families. Given the results of this gap analysis, it is reasonable to conclude that services, agencies, and the field itself appear stuck, in large part due to these same challenges. Without an evidence base, few specialized support services are tailored to the needs of victims and survivors of online CSEA, because service providers continue to use the approaches they have employed for victims of crime more generally, especially sexual crimes. The agencies that offer resources that are tailored to address online CSEA – Boost CYAC and C3P – acknowledge that they have been developed on a thin evidence base and hope to encourage their expansion.

Service providers who have a strong grounding in providing services to victims of sexual crimes, and especially child sexual abuse, would benefit from training and mentorship that could instil confidence in their ability to provide the needed supportive and therapeutic services unique to the potential harms to victims of online CSEA and their families. Knowledge and understanding of these harms are the first step in determining the most effective treatment approaches (Martin, 2015), in that these harms subject victims and adult survivors to a new level of victimization that must be addressed outside of typical trauma approaches (Martin, 2016). Further, long-term support services would benefit from research and evaluation. For example as preparation for court services, or current practices such as showing images to victims in a forensic interview and videotaping child interviews in cases of online CSEA (Martin, 2014; Martin & Alaggia, 2013; Palmer, 2005). Providing services that effectively address unique harms is paramount in helping victims and survivors lead healthy and productive lives.

The findings also reveal that more effective training methods may help build capacity within and across organizations to ensure effective responses to online CSEA. Most interviewees felt that mere information-sharing is insufficient because there is no evidence-based research backing up how to convert information into best practices and protocols. For example, although CYAC staff members reported attending webinars and conference presentations on features of online CSEA offending and the impact on victims, they subsequently returned to their usual approaches to practice. What they had learned via the webinars and conferences did not ‘stick’ because attendees were left without guidance about how to meaningfully integrate this information into their practices and protocols. Most interviewees also noted that they have limited budgets for training, so training related to other more commonly encountered issues in providing victim support take precedence. In short, disseminating information about the features of online CSEA is a starting point, but is insufficient.

The methods of counselling and other supports currently provided to victims of online CSEA and their families should be evaluated for their effectiveness. The findings of this project indicate a need for capacity-building within agencies. This could be implemented through the CYAC network for child victims and their families, as well as through the sexual assault survivors support network for adult survivors. These multi-disciplinary networks are already building a strong evidence base of best practices for their areas of expertise, and could extend these means of evaluating their approaches to online CSEA.

The findings also revealed the continued gap in funding for concrete evaluations of existing and new treatment and intervention approaches. This includes evaluations of how best to connect the extensive expertise and training available in Canada regarding trauma, especially trauma associated with sexual assault and other sexual abuse, and the specific differential needs of online CSEA victims. For example, Prince Edward Island has a long-standing multi-sectoral Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee that provides ongoing feedback on intervention models and response protocols for child sexual abuse (<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/family-and-human-services/child-sexual-abuse-advisory-committee>). This work is promising and could be mobilized to further address online CSEA.

An updated national strategy could include the development of more effective local structures for providing education, training, supervision, mentorship, and ongoing professional development in the specialized area of clinical practice for online CSEA. Sustainable funding could also be used for clinical supervisors and counselling service providers to undergo continued professional development specific to online CSEA. The national strategy has the potential to provide multiple sites for genuine specialized leading-edge training. However, professional development should not merely consist of conveying information; it should include ongoing guidance about how to best implement practices from clinical leaders in evidence-based practices. The evidence base should be established through rigorous academic standards of evaluation that comply with well-established methods of data gathering and analysis, as well as ethical research protocol obligations. Ideally, this research would be conducted via an interdisciplinary approach that engages the cross-sectoral professional expertise involved in providing services to victims of online CSEA.

There is a need for more Canadian clinical leaders. Some clinicians in the field have successfully provided services to victims of online CSEA. It would be helpful for them to be identified and share their experiences with researchers who can help test and further evaluate their successes (and analyze their failures). Once these Canadian clinical leaders are established, they could train clinical supervisors in the many service provider organizations across Canada, who in turn could be tasked with training, mentoring, and providing case supervision for their staff as they work through specific cases. It would be valuable to build capacity on the ground, where multiple sites of expertise can be leveraged across existing knowledge-sharing networks.

Mentoring and supervision are prevalent within and between service provider agencies, and should be mobilized to implement best practices. When clinical leaders are unavailable, engagement with professional supports would help build capacity across organizations: successes, ambivalences, and failures can build an evidence base regarding what works and what does not. Mentoring can also be fostered via ongoing networking supports where service providers specifically share and evaluate approaches to providing support for victims, especially treatment options; this would be especially important for counsellors who may be working as sole practitioners in smaller communities.

These methods of training would foster capacity within and across agencies, and help rural service providers have access to mentorship networks. Many rural service providers indicated that they do not see many (or any) cases of online CSEA, which may be more a sign that children and youth are not disclosing online CSEA, rather than that it is not happening. Therefore, increasing awareness of the additional and unique aspects of providing support to online CSEA victims could include ways of reaching out to these service providers.

It is suggested that further evaluations would be valuable to identify the most appropriate supports for online CSEA victims within the general support services currently provided by provincial and territorial victim services. For example, research suggests that standard

practices like videotaping child testimony may require modification for victims of online CSEA (Gewirtz-Meydan et al., 2018; Martin, 2013; Palmer, 2005; von Weiler et al., 2010). Some interviewees also referred to the need for more training for Crown counsel and judges to help them work more sensitively with victims of online CSEA. For example, previous research has revealed that showing victims images of themselves from an offender's collection is an especially harmful practice and should be avoided (Martin, 2014; Palmer, 2005).

This gap analysis did not include interviews with staff from sexual assault centres to explore whether any specialized treatments and support options specific to online CSEA are available; this would be a good next avenue of inquiry. As with CYACs, it is worthwhile to explore the potential for sexual assault centres to administer services that adequately address the needs of youth victims and adult survivors of online CSEA, given the established and verified successes of such centres in providing support for victims of sexual assault more generally.

The limited empirical knowledge regarding online CSEA means that those who are serving victims, survivors and their families have an incomplete understanding of the immediate, short-term, or long-term implications for their clients. The ongoing rapid development and proliferation of technology will always present challenges for the investigation and prosecution of online CSEA. However, researchers, evaluators, victim services and other human services providers can measure and share what works and what does not, so that the field can move more concretely toward the goal of providing effective responses to victims, survivors, and families in cases of online CSEA.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions – English

GAP ANALYSIS OF SERVICES FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN CANADA

Interview Guide

Principal Investigators: Dr. Jennifer Martin (Ryerson University) and Dr. Andrea Slane (University of Ontario Institute of Technology)

Introduction:

The Department of Justice Canada has contracted Drs. Martin and Slane to conduct a gap analysis of support services available to child victims and adult survivors of online child sexual exploitation (CSEA) in Canada. A central component of the analysis will consist of interviews with professionals who provide or facilitate access to available services, through provincial Victim Services or through Child and Youth Advocacy Centres. As one of these professionals, we consider you to be best positioned to provide information about the current state of services in your province or territory. Each interview will be conducted by phone or video conference call and will take a maximum of 1 hour. Interviews can be conducted in English or French. We value your insights and thank you in advance for your participation.

Questions:

Q1. Describe the role of your organization in providing specialized support services to child victims, their families, and/or adult survivors of online CSEA. Who in your organization is delivering these services? (*Prompt: What are their professional qualifications?*)

Q2. Describe the services that your organization provides to child victims of online CSEA.

Q3. Describe the services that your organization provides to families of child victims of online CSEA.

Q4. Describe the services that your organization provides to adult survivors of online CSEA.

Q5. How do victims, their families and/or adult survivors access support services in your organization, province, territory, or region? What may impede access to services? (*Prompt: How are these services structured?*)

Q6. What are the gaps in service in your organization, province, territory and/or region?

Q7. What training is provided for staff? What training do staff provide to other professionals? (*Prompt: What training is available to professionals in your province, territory and/or region regarding any needs of victims and survivors of CSEA? Has information from these trainings been incorporated into support services and/or supervision practices?*)

Q8. How do you partner, collaborate with other community support?

Q9. How do you refer victims and/or survivors to other community supports? (*Prompt: mental health? criminal justice? child protection?*)

Q10. Who else is providing services to victims and/or survivors within your province, territory or region?

Q11. What are some promising practices that you are aware of related to victims and/or survivors of online CSEA and have they been evaluated?

Q12. What are the challenges unique to providing services to victims of online CSEA?

Appendix B: Interview Questions – French

ANALYSE DES ÉCARTS DES SERVICES POUR LES VICTIMES ET SURVIVANTS DE L'EXPLOITATION SEXUELLE DES ENFANTS EN LIGNE AU CANADA

Guide d'Entrevue

Les Chercheuses Principales: Dr. Jennifer Martin (Ryerson University) et Dr. Andrea Slane (University of Ontario Institute of Technology)

Introduction:

Le ministère de la Justice Canada a retenu les Drs. Martin et Slane pour effectuer une analyse des écarts des services de soutien offerts aux enfants victimes et survivants adultes, de l'exploitation des enfants en ligne (CSEA) au Canada. Un élément central de l'analyse consistera en des entrevues avec des professionnels qui offrent ou faciliter l'accès aux services disponibles provincial des Services aux Victimes ou par l'intermédiaire de Child and Youth Advocacy Centres. Nous considérons que vous êtes les mieux placés pour fournir des informations sur l'état actuel des services offerts dans votre province ou territoire. Chaque entrevue sera menée par téléphone ou vidéo conférence téléphonique et prendra un maximum de 1 heure. Les entrevues peuvent être effectuées en anglais ou en français. Nous apprécions vos commentaires et nous vous remercions par avance de votre participation.

Questions:

- Q1. Décrire le rôle de votre organisation en fournissant des services de soutien spécialisés aux enfants victimes, leurs familles et/ou les survivants adultes en ligne CSEA. Qui dans votre organisation est de fournir ces services?
- Q2. Décrire les services que votre organisme offre aux enfants victimes de CSEA en ligne.
- Q3. Décrire les services que votre organisme offre aux familles des enfants victimes de CSEA en ligne.
- Q4. Décrire les services que votre organisme offre aux survivants adultes de CSEA en ligne.
- Q5. Comment les victimes, leurs familles et/ou les survivants adultes d'accéder à l'assistance des services dans votre organisation, province, territoire ou région? Ce qui peut constituer un obstacle à l'accès aux services?
- Q6. Quelles sont les lacunes dans les services de votre organisation, province, territoire ou région?
- Q7. Quelle formation est prévue pour le personnel? Quelle formation est le personnel offre à d'autres professionnels
- Q8. Comment avez-vous associé, collaborer avec d'autres soutiens communautaires?
- Q9. Comment consulter les victimes et/ou les survivants à d'autres soutiens communautaires?
- Q10. Qui d'autre est la prestation de services aux victimes et/ou de survivants au sein de votre province, territoire ou région?
- Q11. Quelles sont les pratiques prometteuses que vous avez connaissance de prévus pour les victimes et/ou les survivants de CSEA en ligne et ont-ils été évalués?
- Q12. Quels sont les défis propres à la prestation de services aux victimes de CSEA en ligne?

Appendix C: Summary of Interviewee Comments for Each Participating Province and Territory

Alberta

Interviewee Comments re: Services:

- Services are general; not specifically tailored to child victims of online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Gaps in Services:

- Gaps in knowledge about other services in the community: small pockets of direct service agencies and many people do not know that they exist or what services are provided – not specific to online CSEA.
- Gaps in access to services in general: rural and Indigenous communities have difficulty accessing support services.
- Gaps in access for services for peer-on-peer online CSEA: classification of what counts as ‘abuse’ is restrictive, and funding is not provided for peer-on-peer files.

Interviewee Comments re: Training:

- Staff do not have specific knowledge or training to work with online CSEA: “CSEA is a growing trend and there is a huge lack of training or lack of awareness that this is an issue.”
- Management have attended conferences about online CSEA, which has expanded their knowledge of the effects and challenges faced by this population.
- Front-line staff have little opportunity to attend such conferences.
- Training available for staff is not specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Partnering:

- Partnering between government, police, health, and community agencies to provide services for victims is common.
- Referral of victims for services occurs through formal relationships.
- None specific to providing support for online CSEA victims.

Interviewee Comments re: Promising Practices:

- New initiatives by C3P, such as Project Arachnid and Phoenix 11.
- Court preparation for child victims in general is a promising practice.

Interviewee Comments re: Challenges:

- Identifying and engaging the victims: “often [there are] lots of victims that aren’t identified” – how to reach those victims and connect them with support services.
- Lack of experience: hard to identify unique challenges they may face without experience.
- Lack of knowledge and research as to the unique challenges that victims of online CSEA face due to the ongoing nature of the crime committed against them.
- Current evidence-based mental health therapy does not adequately address unique struggles on victims of online CSEA.
- Same challenges as in other cases. One interviewee stated there were no unique challenges regarding providing support for victims of online CSEA as challenges were the same: getting in touch with victims, lack of participation of victims in the process, managing all of the calls (i.e., lots of victims), and organizing the support services.

British Columbia

Interviewee Comments re: Services:

- Support services are general and typical to all crime victims.
- Victim service supports are offered to adult survivors of historical abuse, which may include victims of online CSEA; services for adult survivors also not specific to online CSEA.
- Therapists provide counselling services for victims of child sexual abuse, but those services are not specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Gaps in Services:

- Sometimes communication and collaboration between organizations needs improvement so that service providers and in turn victims know what services are available – not specific to online CSEA.
- Online CSEA is a “growing trend” where there is a “huge lack of training or lack of awareness that this is an issue.”
- Online CSEA cases are often complex, which may result in a duplication of services or no service at all due to a “lack of cohesive collaboration.”

Interviewee Comments re: Training:

- Training is available for sexual exploitation of young people, human trafficking and gangs, which includes awareness of the use of technology in these crimes.
- Mentioned Boost CYAC webinars as a resource for staff.
- No training specific to online CSEA.
- Training is provided based on staff interest and conditional upon available funding, which is often limited.

Interviewee Comments re: Partnering:

- Partnering is a standard practice and crucial to successful victim support in general.

Interviewee Comments re: Promising Practices:

- General promising practice of client-centred, trauma-informed approaches as opposed to sole focus on charges and convictions. Should be expanded to include training for justice personnel in this approach.
- General promising practices of mobile support services to reach more communities.

Interviewee Comments re: Challenges:

- Lack of specific intervention strategies for online CSEA victims.
- Variability of impacts specific to online CSEA on victims and lack of guidance for how to best address them.
- Not knowing who the perpetrator is and only having a victim to work with in some cases of luring and extortion.
- Difficulty identifying victims of online CSEA.
- General challenges in providing staff with resources needed to support all victims.
- Some challenges with partnering with other organizations to provide support to Indigenous communities, such as working with different bands and the need for better coordination – not specific to online CSEA.

Manitoba

Interviewee Comments re: Services:

- No specialized services for cases of online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Gaps in Services:

- No direct support services specific to online CSEA.
- C3P identified as providing good resources and commended for bringing together survivors to learn more about their needs, but significant gap identified in getting that information to service providers in a way that would result in appropriate implementation.
- Lack of adequate training available for counsellors working with victims of online CSEA.
- Lack of evidence-based treatment protocols to properly and effectively address potential ongoing trauma of online CSEA, as general trauma treatment is designed to understand historical trauma and not ongoing trauma.
- Lack of means and opportunity to learn from other counsellors and support service providers with experience with online CSEA cases.
- Lack of funding in general, but also specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Training:

- No training available specific to online CSEA.
- Need training and a protocol regarding how to ask the right questions that may uncover online CSEA when working with victims.

Interviewee Comments re: Partnering:

- Working toward enhanced partnering with a range of community support service providers via CYAC model.
- Mentioned partnering with community agencies that work with families of sexual assault victims and noted that expertise in online CSEA is lacking in this network.

Interviewee Comments re: Promising Practices:

- Promising that information from survivors is being gathered by C3P – this information should be implemented via the CYAC model, and then evaluated for effectiveness.

Interviewee Comments re: Challenges:

- Professional development and training for clinicians.
- Lack of research to provide an evidence base upon which to build best practices.
- Need for best practices to be developed, which includes providing a forum for clinicians to discuss experiences with providing services, especially counselling, to online CSEA victims.
- Lack of a mechanism for mentorship to convey best practices and build capacity among staff.
- Lack of guidance regarding ethical challenges of working with online CSEA victims, such as when and if one should inform a victim that their sexual abuse images have been distributed online.

New Brunswick

Interviewee Comments re: Services:

- General victim services are available, none specific to online CSEA.
- Counselling service providers support all victims of abuse and exploitation and their families – no specific services for victims of online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Gaps in Services:

- Rural communities always suffer from insufficient service providers to meet needs.
- Lack of sufficient funding for counselling services, both general and specific to online CSEA.
- Lack of qualified counsellors who are trained to help victims of online CSEA.
- Lack of centralized location for victims and survivors to receive support, both in general and regarding online CSEA.
- Lack of counsellors available to work with offenders and offending youth, both in general and regarding online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Training:

- Ongoing training is available regarding sexual assault, but none specific to online CSEA.
- Mechanisms for sharing information about impact of online CSEA on victims include web-based resources, and presentations to other organizations were noted, however no training is available regarding best practices for support or treatment for victims of online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Partnering:

- Strong collaborative network among organizations providing support services for victims in general – not specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Promising Practices:

- No promising practices identified specific to online CSEA.
- General promising practices include receiving referrals as early as possible in the process so that support can be provided at the outset.
- Web-based training resources and training collaborations across organizations are a general promising practice for delivering specialized training.

Interviewee Comments re: Challenges:

- Challenge to ensuring that the policies and practices are reflective of current evidence, particularly with regard to online crimes.
- Specific challenges regarding offences that qualify for compensation because services are based on offence type and not all are compensable offences.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Interviewee Comments re: Services:

- General victim services offered, with support services for child sexual abuse, but none for online CSEA specifically.

Interviewee Comments re: Gaps in Services:

- General issues with service delivery include lack of available counsellors in some communities making it difficult to connect a victim to a local counsellor.

- Lack of counsellors to serve specific Indigenous communities – none specific to online CSEA.
- Do not see many cases of online CSEA, and so counsellors generally do not have expertise or even experience with online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Training:

- Training on specific topics is usually requested by staff, and interviewee noted that given how rare online CSEA cases are, there was no demand for training re: online CSEA, due to limited time and funding.
- Training regarding sexual abuse is available, but does not include training specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Partnering:

- Partnering among victim support service providers is common.
- Community partnership models include provincial Anti-Violence Initiative, whereby communities establish an Anti-Violence Committee consisting of representatives from provincial and local community supports. These committees engage in awareness-raising and training projects, but so far have not had any focus on online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Promising Practices:

- Has not heard of any promising practices specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Challenges:

- General challenges providing victim support services would also apply to online CSEA, such as difficulties with transportation (e.g., helping victims get to support services, funding for transportation, geography and weather making connecting child victim with support services even more challenging).
- Lack of awareness among support service providers: no response from staff regarding services for victims of online CSEA for this report.
- Specific challenges include coordination of out-of-province supports for victims of luring or other online CSEA where offender is being tried elsewhere.

Nova Scotia

Interviewee Comments re: Services:

- General victim services are provided but nothing specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Gaps in Services:

- General gaps in service arise from problems with communication; victims can “fall through the cracks because someone thinks they have referred them but they haven’t.”
- Some service providers do not realize that the non-consensual distribution of intimate images is a criminal offence.

Interviewee Comments re: Training:

- Online CSEA is not included in annual trainings related to sexual violence and violence against children.

Interviewee Comments re: Partnering:

- Referrals are routinely made to other community counselling and support service providers – no services exist specifically for online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Promising Practices:

- Unaware of any promising practices specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Challenges:

- An education and technology resource to teach young people about the implications of creating and sharing self-produced online sexual images is needed.
- Complexity of cases in which a young person feels both victimized and complicit.

Ontario**Interviewee Comments re: Services:**

- Boost CYAC provides general victim services, as well as the Internet Child Exploitation (ICE) Counselling Program.
- Victim Quick Response Program (VQRP) provides supports for victims of sexual assault – not specific to online CSEA.
- Cedar Centre offers treatment for adult survivors of interpersonal childhood trauma – not specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Gaps in Services:

- Lack of knowledge about available services for victims of online CSEA.
- Lack of clinicians to provide specialized support for victims of online CSEA.
- Clinicians that register with the ICE Counselling Program are not required to have any specialized knowledge, training, or experience with online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Training:

- There is no training specific to online CSEA.
- Trauma training in general is a costly investment for most agencies.

Interviewee Comments re: Partnering:

- Provincial victim services partners with Boost CYAC to provide services to victims and survivors of online CSEA.
- Victim services rely on Boost CYAC to match online CSEA victims with counselling and court support services.

Interviewee Comments re: Promising Practices:

- Successful and promising partnership between provincial victim services and Boost CYAC, specifically the ICE Counselling Program.
- The provincial ICE strategy offers annual conferences on online CSEA; has two specialized crown attorneys, which results in significant advances in the prosecution of the crimes.
- Working with adult survivors of abuse is promising because of their insights about how childhood trauma has impacted their development over their lifespan.

Interviewee Comments re: Challenges:

- Challenges matching services to young people's needs.
- Youth who are not interested in or able to access services.
- Whether youth can manage the repetitive nature of therapy.
- Need for alternate methods of service delivery (e.g., telephone and internet counselling) to meet the needs of some victims.

- Appropriateness of treatment. Some victims, for example, have abuse images that may be in perpetual circulation online, which adds complexity to the trauma experience of the victim and is unique to online CSEA.
- Child sexual abuse, both online and offline, continues to be a taboo topic.
- Difficulty accessing support services for those living in rural and remote locations.
- Difficulty with definitions regarding online CSEA within and across sectors and among service providers.
- Lack of capacity of organizations to provide support services and meet the needs of victims of sexual crimes in general.

Prince Edward Island

Interviewee Comments re: Services:

- General victim services are available with none specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Gaps in Services:

- Lack of access to long-term counselling supports and/or intensive treatment programs that specialize in online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Training:

- Staff receive training specific to victims of child and adult sexual victimization, not online CSEA.
- Staff have attended initiatives offered by C3P, for example Childhood Sexual Abuse and Exploitation: Reducing the Numbers.

Interviewee Comments re: Partnering:

- PEI has created a Child Sexual Abuse Protocol that provides guidelines and procedures for a coordinated response to child sexual abuse. While this protocol includes some elements of online CSEA (i.e., luring and pornography), it does not appear to have any specific guidelines for this type of victimization.
- The multi-sectoral Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee provides feedback on intervention models and response protocols or child sexual abuse – not specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Promising Practices:

- This interviewee was not aware of any promising practices related to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Challenges:

- Access to counselling and support specific to victims of online CSEA.

Quebec

Interviewee Comments re: Services:

- Service providers work closely with the dedicated unit within the Service de Police de la Ville de Montreal that investigates cases of online CSEA, as well as a separate unit dedicated to investigating human trafficking. Therapists provide group support and work one-on-one with victims and their families – not specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Gaps in Services:

- Indemnisation des victimes d'actes criminels (IVAC) is the victim compensation service in Quebec, which includes funding for counselling for children who are victims of crimes. Funding for counselling is only available for contact offences, therefore some variants of online CSEA do not qualify for this funding.

Interview Comments re: Training:

- No training specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Partnering:

- Relevant services are provided in-house and are co-located with police services.
- Counselling and support for victims and families is provided by therapists that are located within the organization.

Interviewee Comments re: Promising Practices:

- Efficacy of treatment is evaluated within the organization by a research chair; treatment is predominantly CBT and none specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Challenges:

- Compensation for victims of non-contact crimes (i.e., luring and grooming) is not available.
- Lack of support services for victims of non-contact crimes and their families.
- Explaining to parents that their child is not eligible for victim service support.

Saskatchewan

Interviewee Comments re: Services:

- General victim services are provided including a specialized Victim Service position in each CYAC – none specific to online CSEA.
- Service providers refer victims to C3P regarding removing online images, mainly peer-to-peer or intimate image distribution.
- Counselling support is offered for victims or survivors of trauma – none specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Gaps in Services:

- No specific training regarding online CSEA for service providers including police, counsellors, etc.

Interviewee Comments re: Training:

- All paid staff are required to attend three weeks of training that is co-developed between Victim Services and Saskatchewan Polytechnic, which regularly adds elements when there are new emerging issues to deal with – online CSEA is anticipated to become part of this training, but has not yet been added.

Interviewee Comments re: Partnering:

- Many examples of communication and collaboration across different branches of the Ministry of Corrections and Policing, the Community Engagement branch and within the Community Safety and Well-Being branch – none specific to online CSEA.
- Some prevention and education activities related to human trafficking and sex workers.

Interviewee Comments re: Promising Practices:

- Specific training for child trafficking is now starting to be available.

- Online CSEA is an emerging issue and so service providers are beginning to pay attention.
- The Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol (2017) outlines everyone's responsibilities, and includes exploitation in its mandate.

Interviewee Comments re: Challenges:

- Lack of awareness across sectors about online CSEA.
- How to get ahead of the curve and support young victims because online CSEA is far more pervasive than people realize.
- How to encourage young people to report incidences of online CSEA.
- Remembering that behind every image is a victim.
- Concerns for victims who have to provide testimony and the way they are treated by defence council (i.e., questioning).
- Communication challenges between different courts when dealing with the same victim.
- Lack of regulation of social media platforms regarding access to abuse images.
- Normalization of online deviance and pedophilia.
- Interconnection between online CSEA and human trafficking.

Yukon

Interviewee Comments re: Services:

- General victim support services are provided.
- Limited experience with online CSEA.
- Victims of online CSEA are typically seen at schools and through Child Protection Agencies.

Interviewee Comments re: Gaps in Services:

- Service providers' knowledge of the technological aspects of providing support to victims of online CSEA, for instance, how to get pictures taken down, and how to get evidence.
- Need for training and to be continuously informed about what young people are doing online.
- Informing young people about their rights regarding sexual images and sexually explicit text message including what is criminal and what is not.
- Lack of consistent response from RCMP regarding non-image text messages between youth.

Interviewee Comments re: Training:

- There are several multi-disciplinary community trainings about child abuse and effective response offered through this organization – no training specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Partnering:

- Organization is located in a very small community and there are formal agreements with some agencies, which results in extensive community involvement, interagency teams, and collaboration between service providers – none specific to online CSEA.

Interviewee Comments re: Promising Practices:

- Programs offered by C3P on peer-on-peer sexual exploitation.

- Access to web-based resources provided by C3P.

Interviewee Comments re: Challenges:

- Need for service providers to develop greater awareness about technology and how it is utilized by young people.
- How to encourage and support disclosure with young people in online cases that are peer-to-peer.