



Sherry Hornby, Program Director

Strathmore Region Victim Services Society

Theme: Wrap-around Supports for Women

Strathmore Regional Victim Services Society is a non-profit, charitable volunteer organization that provides 24-hour crisis response to victims of crime and tragedy. They work in partnership with the Chestermere, Gleichen and Strathmore RCMP providing support, information and referrals for adults and children. Their role is to reduce the impact experienced from crime or tragedy. Victims of Crime Act is used as a guideline for all Victim Services work.

Critical Elements

- Main focus of work is on victims' rights – right to information and right to feel safe.
- Referrals (of witnesses or victims of crime) typically come from RCMP and sometimes from the Crown Prosecutors' office.
- Victim Services provides crisis support, engages community resources to ensure that victims' needs are met, and, in general creates a flow of information to help the victim negotiate all the different systems they work with.
- When working with the victims of domestic violence, the unit has build strong relationship with the local shelter and the local family violence coordinator, and works in collaboration with them to provide the victim with safe accommodation, transportation and other basic needs as required, ensuring that a safety plan is in place, and supporting the victims in court and as part of court preparation.
- In recognition of the importance of supporting victims' mental health, Victim Services also connect victims with counselling and emotional support that they might need. They often refer them to the counselling services that are free of charge, as well as mental health supports.
- Victim Service also uses a local "Sleep Well" program, that changes locks at no cost for women whose abusive partners have left the house.
- One of the main learnings is the importance of supporting victims in whatever choices they choose to make, but making sure that they have all of the information on which to base those choices.