

Strategic Plan

2017 - 2020

sasc

SEXUAL ASSAULT
SUPPORT CENTRE
OF WATERLOO REGION

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APPENDIX B: Notes from overall SWOT Analysis by the Staff and Board Team, April 25 2017

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Executive Summary

SASC is pleased to share our Strategic Plan for 2017 to 2020.

Since 1989 we have been leaders and change makers in Waterloo Region supporting survivors of sexual violence and working to transform systems which promote gender-based violence.

This Plan provides our Centre with a roadmap for support, services, and organizational development for the next three years. It was developed with broad involvement from staff members, the Board of Directors, clients, community partners and volunteers.

The planning process helped us assess both the challenges and opportunities SASC is likely to face over the next three years. It also set the context for the choices reflected in this strategic plan.

Four strategic directions emerged throughout this process to guide the organization.

- 1. We want to structure our growth to support our continued health as an organization.**
- 2. We want to continue to meet the needs of survivors of sexual violence by providing expert, innovative, effective and timely services.**
- 3. We want to have a strong, stable funding base and financial resiliency.**
- 4. We want to live out our values as an intersectional feminist agency committed to social action and social justice.**

This Plan was approved by our Board of Directors on June 16 2017. It will inform SASC's priorities from 2017 to 2020. The Board of Directors will review our progress on this plan quarterly and update the plan as needed.

The Executive Director, in collaboration with our staff team, is responsible for the development of annual Operating Plans to move our strategic directions forward.



The Planning Process

Data for this plan in its entirety was collected from September 2016 until May 2017 using a combination of in-person meetings and online surveys. The planning was divided into two stages:

- The first stage, beginning in September 2016, focused on a major revision of our Mission, Vision and Values in consultation with staff and board members.
- The second stage, beginning in January 2017, focused on gathering data from stakeholders including clients, community partners, volunteers, staff, and board members.

From January to March 2017, clients, community partners and volunteers were asked to answer the following questions:

1. **From your perspective, what are SASC's strengths?**
2. **What could SASC do better or improve upon?**
3. **From your viewpoint, what should SASC's future directions be?**

This feedback was sought from clients via a combination of surveys in our waiting room and a survey link on our website; where appropriate, this link was also sent to clients via email. Volunteers and community members were sent the online survey link via email. Compiled responses were then shared with staff and board members to help inform the conversations that were to come. This feedback was reviewed a number of times throughout the planning process.

On April 12th 2017, the staff team met to conduct a SWOT analyses for each of our program areas. On April 25th 2017, the staff team and the Board of Directors met for a broader

strategic planning session. We reviewed and discussed our founding essence, our Herstory and development over time, and our present situation.

Following this, we conducted a SWOT analysis for the Centre as a whole. We began to flush out overarching themes and directions that were emerging. After the meeting, staff and board members were invited to add final thoughts to the process via an online survey.

The key messages communicated to the staff and board team throughout the process were:

- Strategic planning creates high performance organizations.
- A good strategic planning process is inclusive; we're smarter together.
- We want to create a shared vision.
- The process will help guide the Centre's resources.
- We want to promote creativity and innovation; new ideas are not criticisms about the past or others. It is critical to the process that our messages are not framed or received that way.

On May 25th 2017 the Strategic Planning Committee met to further lay out the emerging key directions. A draft of these directions was sent to the staff and board team for feedback.

Our final directions were determined shortly thereafter and our Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Directors on June 16 2017.



Our Previous Strategic Plan and Related Development

Our previous Strategic Plan ran from 2011 to 2016 and had six focus areas.

1. Build and implement a capital campaign to afford a new home for our Centre.
2. Develop a strong annualized and/or major gift fundraising campaign.
3. Focus on strategic board recruitment and development considering our key directions.
4. Increase our visibility and services in Cambridge by securing a permanent satellite office.
5. Continue to enhance our community profile.
6. Increase our services and programs.



Since that plan was drafted, SASC has grown considerably to meet the needs of our community. We secured a permanent satellite office in Cambridge as part of The Hub@1145. We diversified funding sources, established funded partnerships, and nearly doubled our annual budget and staffing complement. We significantly grew our Male Allies Program, expanded our core services to offer counselling to male survivors, and we secured funding for our Family Court Support Program.

Because of this growth, we also engaged in a real-time strategic planning process during this period in regards to our structure. We embraced the Panarchy Cycle and went through a planned period of creative destruction and re-birth. In 2015 we transitioned from a Modified Collective structure to a more traditional structure with an Executive Director and a Results-Based Board of Directors. We separated governance from operations, updated our organizational chart, job descriptions, policies, and created clear lines of accountability and responsibility.

In 2016 we made a conscious decision to invest in our growth by physically moving our main office. For twenty years, we had operated out of Suite 201 in the YWCA Resource Centre on 151 Frederick, but we were bursting at the seams. When the opportunity arose to move one floor up to Suite 300, effectively doubling our square footage, we seized the opportunity.

Due to the commitment and creativity of our team, SASC saw five of our six previous key directions achieved. We continue to work to develop a strong annualized fundraising campaign, with limited resources in this area.

Building on the work of the women who came before us, we have established ourselves as strong, stable community leaders addressing sexual violence and gendered-based violence.

Herstory

To plan for the future, we have to know where we came from.

Since 1989 SASC has been transforming lives in our community.

In 1978 the three-year-old Waterloo Rape Distress Centre was forced to close when its funding was cut; its final appeal for \$5000 had been denied. For the next eleven years, there were few community supports available to survivors of sexual violence. Waterloo Region became the largest area in Ontario without critical sexual assault services.

Local women began to strategize. Many of them survivors themselves, they were determined to build a strong grassroots centre that could truly respond to the community need.

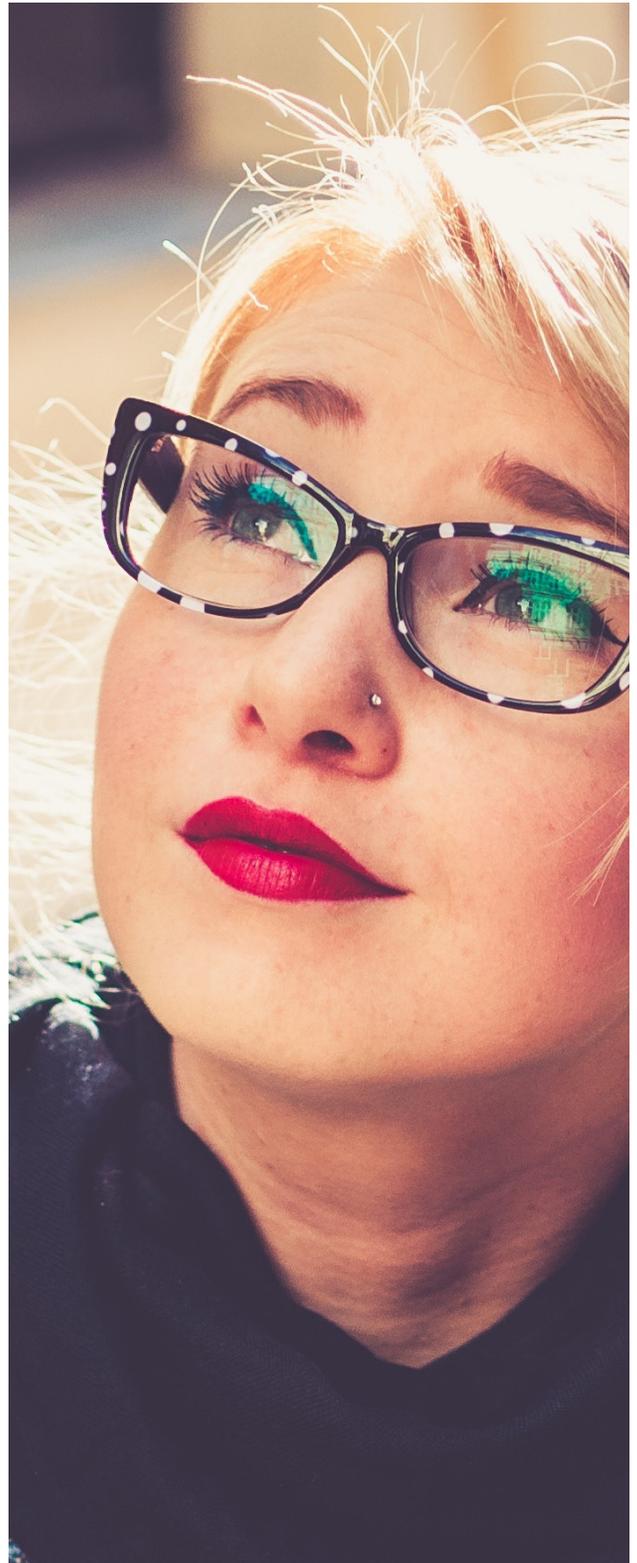
In October 1989, with an anonymous \$1000 gift, and donated airtime from an answering service, our 24 Hour Support Line was launched. This was due to the efforts of about twenty-five volunteers, ten of whom worked endless shifts during those first months.

Two months later, a tragedy stunned the nation. A gunman roamed the corridors of Montreal's École Polytechnique killing fourteen women. This massacre became a galvanizing moment in which national mourning turned into outrage and action on violence against women.

In response, in June 1990 Sun Life Financial (then Mutual Life of Canada) donated \$30,000 to assist in the Centre's establishment. This gift, combined with community donations, allowed SASC to rent office space and hire a staff person. Shortly after, provincial funding was secured to provide a base for operations.

SASC has now grown to eleven staff members and more than one hundred volunteers working out of multiple locations.

We offer wrap-around services to survivors by providing individual and group counselling, a 24 Hour Support Line, and advocacy and accompaniments for those navigating court, police, and medical processes. In addition to support services, we're committed to preventing sexual violence through education, collaboration and social justice work in Waterloo Region.



Who We Are

From September 2016 to March 2017, our staff and board members engaged in a process to overhaul our Mission, Vision and Values (MVV). Below you'll find the new versions, which remain reflective of the core values we were founded on.

MISSION

We support survivors of sexual violence. We listen, facilitate healing, and celebrate resiliency. Using an intersectional feminist approach, we work to transform systems which promote gender-based violence.

VISION

A world without sexual violence and oppression.

VALUES

1. **Sexual violence is both a crime and a human rights violation.**

- Survivors are never responsible for assaults committed against them.
- Full responsibility for any sexual assault lies with the perpetrator.
- Any sexual act between a child and an adult constitutes sexual assault, the responsibility for which lies solely with the adult.
- Sexual assault can have a profound impact on survivors' lives - physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally.
- Each individual, our community, and our society has a responsibility to both provide support to people who have been sexually assaulted and to work toward ending sexual violence.

2. **Survivors of sexual violence have the right to control their own bodies and their own path to healing.**

- Survivors have the right to access feminist, trauma-informed supports and services.
- Survivors have the right to confidentiality.
- Adult survivors have the right to choose whether or not to report an assault to authorities.
- Every person has the right to full access to reproductive health care and reproductive justice.

3. **An expression of social inequality, sexual violence is a gendered issue; the vast majority of sexual assaults are perpetrated by men against women and children. The sexual assault of a woman takes place within a social, political, cultural and economic context of historical disadvantage and oppression.**

- Prevailing social attitudes often normalize and perpetuate sexual violence.
 - Institutions such as law enforcement agencies, the judicial system, and the medical system are often sexist and punitive and can work to re-victimize survivors.
 - In order to bring about broad-based social change, prevention-oriented education and feminist advocacy are essential.
 - The work required to end both the causes and effects of sexual violence needs to be led and directed by women and non-binary individuals because of the power imbalance between these groups and men in society.
 - A feminist analysis recognizes that men's socialization processes can serve as barriers to male-identified survivors reaching out and receiving support; we are committed to making our services accessible to all genders.
- ### 4. **All forms of oppression are damaging. Sexism is but one of the intersecting oppressions used to violate and control. The prevalence and impact of sexual assault is compounded by these oppressions.**
- Other forms of oppression include, but are not limited to, racism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia, and discrimination based on cultural, ethnic or religious background. These oppressions, which are systemic and pervasive on individual and organizational levels, establish and maintain unequal power relationships in society.
 - It is essential to our vision and direction that we recognize the historical contribution to the anti-sexual violence movement made by women with intersecting identities; criticism that the feminist movement has excluded them is valid and these voices must be heard at our Centre.
- ### 5. **We promote the self-care and wellness of those working at our Centre; this is a political tool that sustains us in our work.**

Our Main Program Areas

24 HOUR SUPPORT LINE

Our 24 Hour Support Line is available to anyone who has experienced sexual violence, and their friends and families. With support available in more than 50 languages, this telephone line is supplemented by accompaniments to the hospital, police station and courthouse.

COUNSELLING, ADVOCACY & SUPPORT GROUPS

Our counselling program includes individual counselling for people, sixteen and older, who have been sexually assaulted recently or historically, as well as support for friends and family. We also offer group counselling, workshops, practical assistance and advocacy.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Our public education program educates for social change. We provide workshops and resource materials to schools, professionals, and the broader community. This program also houses our Male Allies Program which invites and trains men to be allies in the work to prevent gendered violence.

FAMILY COURT SUPPORT PROGRAM

This program provides practical and emotional support to women who have experienced violence in their relationship as they navigate the Family Court System.



Summary of Important Points

The following is a high-level summary of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats highlighted by our stakeholders. They represent only a portion of the data collected as part of our overall strategic planning process.

STRENGTHS

- We have a strong, respected team that includes experienced, long-time staff members and new staff members with new ideas and energy.
- We offer wrap-around, client-centered services using an intersectional, feminist framework. Our environment is hospitable, our services are free, and we give clients the space and time they need to heal. Client satisfaction levels are high.
- Our Male Allies Program is in high demand and is well-received in our community.
- The office space we moved into in 2016 has greatly increased our ability to effectively and creatively serve survivors.
- We have strong partnerships with community partners and post-secondary institutions.
- Governance has been clearly separated from operations. Roles and lines of communication and accountability are clear.

WEAKNESSES

- The demand for our services is higher than what we can currently accommodate. We have waiting lists for our Counselling Program. Our Public Education Program has more requests than resources. Our Family Court Support Program is single-staffed.
- We have grown considerably since our last strategic plan but our infrastructure has not.
- We have limited resources dedicated to fundraising, despite our significant need for unrestricted revenue.
- This work is rewarding but difficult. Staff members run the risk of experiencing vicarious trauma and burn-out.
- We need to continue to strengthen our relationships with diverse communities.
- We need to create additional office space in our main office.

OPPORTUNITIES

- New technology provides us with new ways to communicate with and support clients. Waterloo Region is a hub of tech companies with whom we can work.

- The Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres has received funding to support Centres to use technology to support survivors.
- Waterloo Region has three major post-secondary institutions. Bill 132 means universities/colleges are required to address and respond to sexual violence on campuses.
- There are increased resources available provincially for survivors of sexual commercial exploitation.
- There is national, provincial, and local interest right now in improving police responses to sexual violence.
- Some new funding pots may be accessible locally over the next year or two.
- There is a high demand for our Male Allies program, particularly in the sports sector.

THREATS

- There is an external push towards using a medical model to support survivors. This often conflicts with our values as an organization.
- A few community-based sexual assault centres across the province have merged with larger organizations, which may be threat to an independent, dedicated sexual violence movement.
- Multi-service organizations sometimes compete with us for sexual violence funding.
- Valued employees can be poached by organizations with higher pay scales, including the for-profit sector.
- We are often confused with local shelters and hospital-based programs.
- Our core funding is dependent on current governmental priorities.

OVERARCHING THEMES

We need to be intentional about our growth, while demonstrating flexibility to respond to emerging needs and opportunities. Strengthening our infrastructure will ultimately support the expansion of our core services. We want to promote creativity and thoughtful risk-taking to move our mission forward and meet the incredible demand that exists for our services.

SASC's Strategic Directions 2017 - 2020

DIRECTION 1:

SASC is a healthy organization with structured growth.

Goal areas

- i. Stabilize our foundation (Financial Coordinator, additional office space, support for single-staffed programs, increase staffing levels where demand is highest)
- ii. Solidify our commitment to operate as a trauma-informed agency (Ensure essential supports for frontline staff members, continue to nurture internal relationships)
- iii. Continue to strengthen our Board focused on Results-Based Governance
- iv. Create and live out a parallel strategic / operational plan for our Male Allies Program

DIRECTION 2:

SASC provides expert, innovative, effective and timely services.

Goal areas

- i. Increase our use of technology to better serve clients
- ii. Explore sustainable strategies to manage and reduce waitlists (promote innovation and thoughtful risk-taking)
- iii. Ensure comprehensive program evaluations, as part of a larger program management cycle
- iv. Create a communications plan that promotes our services as distinct and effective (clients / community partners)

DIRECTION 3:

SASC has a strong, stable funding base and financial resiliency.

Goal Areas

- i. Grow unrestricted revenue by creating a fund development plan that builds on our existing strategies
- ii. Grow our donor stewardship efforts and provide new ways of giving
- iii. Explore new ways to increase revenue (e.g. develop fee-for-service structures where appropriate, online stores, etc.)
- iv. Continue to diversify funding sources

DIRECTION 4:

SASC is an intersectional feminist agency committed to social action and social justice.

Goal areas

- i. Continue to nurture local and provincial partnerships to collaboratively move our mission forward
- ii. Be a visible presence in the community, responding to emerging needs and opportunities
- iii. Strengthen our relationships with diverse communities (Expand diverse representation in our membership, collaborate with and outreach to diverse communities)
- iv. Demonstrate a commitment to social action and social justice

Vision of Success

Since 1989 SASC has been a leader and a change-maker in Waterloo Region supporting survivors of sexual violence and working to transform systems which promote gender-based violence.

We envision a future in which we have greater capacity, resources and community support to meet the growing demand for our services. In this future, assistance will be readily available to survivors when they reach out. A strong infrastructure, including financial and fundraising supports, will promote the expansion of our core services. This foundation will also allow us to be flexible to respond to the emerging needs and opportunities in our community.

There is tremendous value in the feminist, trauma-specific services that SASC offers to survivors. We provide a safe place. We walk beside survivors. We listen. We bear witness. We advocate. Sometimes, we agitate. We understand the complex systems impacting survivors' lives; we help navigate. We use an intersectional approach, which means we respect how survivors' unique social locations impact their experiences, how people respond to them, and what resources they have access to. We celebrate the amazing resiliency of those that use our services. We facilitate healing. We offer hope.

In the years ahead, we will continue to balance our direct supports for survivors with long-term solutions to sexual violence, and other forms of gender-based violence. Preventative work aimed at the root causes of gendered violence makes our collective future brighter. It gives those of us working and volunteering at SASC the energy, creativity and enthusiasm to continue moving our mission forward.



Evaluation

The Executive Director, in collaboration with our staff team, is responsible for the development of an annual Operational Plan to move our four strategic directions forward.

Activities in the Operational Plan will use the SMART goal method; they will be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and have a time period attached to them. Each activity will include at least one indicator of success, be it a milestone or a quantifiable performance measure.

Directions, goals, and activities laid out in our Strategic and Operational Plans will be reflected in the work plan component of individual Staff Performance Appraisals, as appropriate.

No less than once per quarter, the Executive Director will update the Operational Plan and provide a copy to the Strategic Planning Committee and the Board of Directors. The Executive Director will modify the Operational Plan throughout the year as needed.

At least once per year, the Strategic Planning Committee will review our overall progress on the Strategic Plan. If environmental factors have changed, and new opportunities or threats have emerged, the Committee along with the Executive Director will make recommendations to the Board in regards to updates to the Strategic Plan.



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transforming lives since 1989



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