

Collaborative Response to Covid-19

Child Abuse and Sexual Assault Unit,
Internet Child Exploitation Unit, Domestic
Violence Unit and the Victim Services Unit



June 25th, 2020

Impact of Covid 19

April saw the following:

- Reduction of 74% in reports and referrals of child abuse (CASA).
- Increase of 46% in child luring and exploitation cases (ICE).
- Increase of 19% in Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence (DV).
 - Increase of 30% in arrests for DV.
 - Increase of 81% in number of charges laid (DV).
 - Intensity and seriousness of offences was elevated.
- Decrease in number of active files and in ability to support victim's of crime through traditional means (VSU).



Child Abuse & Sexual Assault (CASA)

April 2020, saw a 74% drop in Child Abuse referrals and investigations. This was concerning because:

- Suspected child abuse complaints are most often raised by third parties such as schools, friends, other parents coaches and daycare providers.
- Isolation, financial stress, job and food insecurities and anxiety causes increased stress on families.
- Limited opportunity for children to reach out to a trusted adult – essentially there is no one to “tell” if they feel unsafe.



CASA Response:

- Collaborated with the Children's Aid Society (CAS) and both Public and Catholic School Boards for training, messaging and support.
- Develop a multifaceted social media and outreach campaign targeting the community, teachers, parents, children and frontline officers:
 - Media Release to raise awareness #HereToHelp.
 - Joint HRPS-CAS "Duty to Report" training webinar for educators.
 - A support and resources "Letter to the Parents."
 - Child and youth appropriate social media campaign.
 - Development of virtual "top up" training for frontline officers.
 - Leveraging technology to ensure safety for all.



CASA Media Campaign

23 media mentions with a potential reach of 6,168,948.



CityNews LOCAL VIDEO CONTACT US Q

Concerns raised after child abuse calls drop dramatically in the GTA

BY NEWS STAFF AND PAUL SUTELLE
POSTED APR 29, 2020 5:31 PM EDT LAST UPDATED APR 29, 2020 AT 5:10 PM EDT

Concerns are being raised about the effects that the COVID-19 lockdown is having on families after GTA police and child welfare agencies noticed a drop in child abuse reports.

This might normally be seen as good news, but some police services are worried that those numbers don't indicate a decrease in incidents of harm to children.

Halton police say there has been a 73 per cent drop in calls – only 8 in April compared to 30 last year in the same month.

Halton Children's Aid Society (CAS) is seeing a similar decline in investigations – from 169 last April to 85 this year.

Their concern is that the prevalence of child abuse may be just as high, but there are fewer opportunities to report it.

"We normally receive concerns from schools, friends, other parents, coaches, and daycare providers," said Halton Det. Sgt. Crystal Kelly. "With social distancing measures in place and increased stress on families, there is little opportunity for children to interact with or reach out to those they trust."

In a release, director of protection services, Jennifer Birnington for Halton CAS said, "We are concerned about the increased risk of child abuse and neglect due to families being isolated from the community."

Birnington also added they are considered an essential service and are open if anyone might have any concerns about a child.

City News story and interview had a potential reach of 2 million and was picked up by other outlets garnering further reach.



COVID-19 PANDEMIC **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING DOWN IN THE GTA** WED 12°
LOW UP. • THE CITY OF TORONTO SAYS HIGH PARK WILL OFFICIALLY CLOSE THURSDAY FOR THE 5:34 PM



CASA Social Media Samples

Achieved 14,670 Impressions
and 295 Engagements

HDSB participating in the
campaign using HRPS provided
material – post reached 32,200

Halton Police @HaltonPolice · May 5
Staying home doesn't always mean staying safe.

Virtually check in on your:
Neighbours
Kids' friends/classmates
Coworkers and their kids
Relatives

If you have any concerns surrounding the well-being of children, report it.
YOU CAN HELP.

#HereToHelp ^sr

we are #here to help

HRPS: 905-825-4777 | Halton CAS: 1-866-607-(KIDS)

HALTON REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE
YOU CAN HELP - REPORT ABUSE TODAY

Halton Police Retweeted

HDSB @HaltonDSB · May 15

While physical distancing measures have been in place, there has been a significant drop in reports of suspected child abuse/neglect. As a result, @HaltonPolice and the @HaltonCas have requested we share this letter with #HaltonON families: bit.ly/3bzQVxz. #HereToHelp

#HereToHelp

HRPS: 905-825-4777 | Halton CAS: 1-866-607-(KIDS)

HALTON REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE
YOU CAN HELP - REPORT ABUSE TODAY

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Internet Child Exploitation (ICE):

- National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (US) has seen a 106% increase Year-Over-Year.
- Canadian NCECC report May cases have doubled from May 2019.
- Trickle down impact on HRPS within 1-2 months as international cases are processed and forwarded.
- Legislative and process changes may also be cause for influx.
- ICE has observed an increase in Sexual Exploitation type calls.
- Increase may be Covid related as children and youth spend more time on-line during the pandemic.



ICE Response

- Collaborated with Canadian Center for Child Protection and National Child Exploitation Crime Center for education materials and on going real-time communication re: trends.
- Prioritizing investigations and executing search warrants where potential victims are at risk (in house).
- Developing “hot shot” training for frontline officers to enhance skills.
- Launched an Online Safety Social Media Campaign encouraging parents to talk to their children about online safety.

ICE Social Media Campaign had a collective reach of 83,320.



ICE Social Media Samples

Post reached 18,600 with 330 engagements captured.



HRPS and Protect Kids Online working together. Post reached 12,067 with 140 engagements captured.



Domestic Violence Unit (DVU)

- In collaboration with CASA, IT and the Crown's Office, has leveraged technology to replace in person statement taking:
 - Developed protocol for taking remote recorded video statements; ensures consistency, proper storage, retention and disclosure rules met.
 - Victim and officer safety; less face to face contact.
 - Maximizes our Victim Centric Approach by creating greater flexibility and minimizing further trauma to victim by displacement.



DVU Response & Media Campaign

Combined media mentions – 33
Reach 12,604,830

CHCH News interview had a reach of 493,000

- Launched media campaign urging vigilance and regular check ins.
- Featured recent de-identified cases to raise awareness and appeal to public.



DVU Media Campaign samples

Twitter post reached over 30,000 in a single day.

IPV investigator shares personal story through interview with Halton Women's Place.



Halton Police @HaltonPolice - Jun 13
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SIGNAL

Isolation can increase the risk of violence at home. Use this discrete gesture during a video call to show you need help:

1. Hold hand up with palm facing other person.
2. Tuck thumb into palm.
3. Fold fingers down over thumb.



1 THE VIOLENCE AT HOME SIGNAL FOR HELP

1. Palm to camera and back thumb

2. Tap three

1 188 190



Halton Police Retweeted

Halton Women's Place @HaltonWomensPl - Apr 23

An inspiring story of stopping the cycle of violence from Detective Constable Nick Tansley @HaltonPolice - don't scroll over this tweet. Watch-share. Men are part of the solution in ending violence against women. Thx Nick for sharing. @yourtvalton



Halton Women's Place - Det. Cst. Nick Tansley

Watch on youtube.com

0:21 / 2:00

Halton Women's Place - Det. Cst. Nick Tansley
Det. Cst. Nick Tansley shares his story coming from an abusive household and making a decision to help others.
youtube.com

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Victim Services Unit (VSU)

Challenges include:

- Engagement, outreach, meetings, and training.
- Significant drop in

Virtual Solutions:

- Meetings, on-line team building, Zoom engagement, telephone outreach and a monthly newsletter.

Media Campaign:

- Joint HRPS – SAAC video promoting changes #WeListened
- Maintained social media presence promoting VSU Volunteers.
- Released 3 “De-identified” case studies highlighting survivor journey’s through the process and the services accessed.



VSU Media Campaign samples

Reached 21,131 with 1500 Engagements



Promoting VSU Volunteer Team Reached 23,013 with 1540 Engagements



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