

## GRAND ROUNDS

# Caring support for victims of abuse in our communities

The Regional Assault Care Program (RACP) and Older Adult Protection Services at the Renfrew Victoria Hospital provide care for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

The RACP was developed in 1991 in response to gaps in service for victims of sexual assault in the emergency departments (ED).

The goal was “to improve the quality of care for clients by enhancing the nursing role,” said Jen Valiquette, Program Manager, in a recent presentation.

The first priority when a client presents in the ED is health care. Key to first contact with victims of abuse is informed consent, explained Valiquette. “It’s important that they regain control and have the

information needed to make their own choices about next steps.”

“We are always mindful of client dignity and privacy,” noted Valiquette.

Clients are then supported through health and legal options, which may include forensic evidence collection and documentation by highly trained forensic nurses who also testify routinely in court.

“It’s important to hold perpetrators accountable,” said Valiquette.

The team of specially-trained nurses is on call 24/7 and works in close collaboration with ED physicians/nurses to provide access at all five local hospitals, responding within an hour once the client has consented to receiving the service.

The program expanded its mandate over the years to include domestic violence, child maltreatment, and elder abuse.

Elder abuse clients receive support for sexual assault, neglect, psychological, physical, and financial abuse. RNs work in partnership with organizations in the community to reduce harm and manage risk, coordinating care and helping make connections with services.

Home visits are available for seniors to assess their needs and living conditions. The program also provides short-term housing for seniors who are in danger or in crisis.

“We work with seniors to identify options to increase their safety and decrease risk of harm. There are lots of great success stories,” concluded Valiquette.

### 2018–2019 program statistics

Regional Assault Care Program

- 90 clients
- 377 follow-up visits
- 320 counselling visits

### Older Adult Protection Services

- 152 clients
- 497 visits
- 1,317 phone calls
- 4,152 hours of crisis respite

Referrals to the program can be made by calling 613-432-4851 ext. 818 or 224 Monday to Friday. For after hours, weekends and urgent referrals, call 1-800-363-7222.



**Keanan Stone (left) Chair, RVH Board of Directors, and Chris Ferguson (right) RVH VP of Patient Services, join Jennifer Valiquette during a presentation about the services provided by the Regional Assault Care Program (RACP) and Older Adult Protection Services.**