

Info Session

Victim Services Toronto

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- **My name is Jasinder and I wish to acknowledge the land on which I live, work and play. My family immigrated to Canada over thirty years ago, first to Treaty 13A territory in Mississauga, then to Treaty 19 Territory in Brampton and Caledon. They left India after the Sikh genocide in Punjab. British colonialism played a role in how Punjab was divided into India and Pakistan, and this had ongoing impacts on the safety of Sikhs in the region. My family is eternally grateful to move here, where they were able to find safety and peace. However, that safety and peace we know how has come at the price of the oppression of other groups, through genocide and war.**
 - **I now live in Treaty 13 Territory. For thousands of years this has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and I am grateful to have the opportunity to live, work and play on this land.**
 - **Today I do work in gender-based violence prevention. I know that Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people are disproportionately murdered, and have violence perpetrated against them. I commit to building relationships with Indigenous organizations and activists in my field to ensure I can make an impact in my work. I also commit to supporting activism that is being done by Indigenous communities for searching the landfills in Winnipeg, and to support Wet'suwet'en's self determination when it comes to building the Coastal Link gas pipeline.**

AGENDA



Outline of Discussion

- **About VST**
- **Programs**
- **Referral Process**
- **How to Get Involved**
- **Contact Information**

About

- **In 1996, Victim Services Toronto became a registered charity dedicated to helping victims of crime and sudden tragic circumstances.**
- **Our vision is to create a thriving community where people are safe, supported and empowered.**
- **Our mission is to provide trauma-informed support and advocacy in the moment for any person in Toronto who has experienced crime or sudden tragedy. We also work to prevent violence through community engagement.**



We provide support to survivors of:



- Intimate Partner violence
- Sexual assault
- Harassment
- Criminal harassment
- Human Trafficking
- Homicide
- Attempt Murder
- Assault
- Robbery
- Mass Casualty Events
- Sudden Tragic Events
- Fires
- Suicide
- Sudden Death

- **Anti-Oppressive and Anti-Racist**
- **Client Centered**
- **Strengths Based**
- **Crisis Intervention**
- **Trauma-Informed**

Frameworks

ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE

CRITICAL REFLECTION ON SELF IN PRACTICE

We are critically reflexive to avoid recreating oppressive social relations in practice

CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF SERVICE USERS' EXPERIENCES OF OPPRESSION

We strive to comprehensively understand the diversity and multiplicity of oppression in service users' lives.

EMPOWERING SERVICE USERS

Practical ways to promote empowerment include ensuring that service users' views and stated needs are incorporated into assessment and solution options.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The service user is the expert in their lives. Working in partnership attempts to balance unequal power dynamics by working against hierarchical structures to create a supportive environment.

MINIMAL INTERVENTION

Early intervention and an emphasis on preventative services contribute to minimal intervention and less disruption in service users' lives.

CLIENT CENTRED APPROACH



GENUINENESS AND CONGRUENCE

Realistic understanding of how internal experiences, like thoughts and feelings, interact with external experiences

UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD

Accepting client for who they are & displaying support & care no matter what client is facing or experiencing

EMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING

Seek to understand client & maintain an awareness & sensitivity to client experience and point of view

GOAL SETTING

Knowing why client wants to make the change and creating an actionable plan

STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT

Client takes time to identify their strengths

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Hold accountable and build with encouragement- connect to community resources

STRENGTHS -BASED APPROACH

ALTERNATIVE METHODS COME FIRST FOR DIFFERENT SITUATIONS

Create goal- use strengths to achieve them

HOPE-INDUCING RELATIONSHIPS

Creation of hope when guided by someone positive and encouraging

AUTONOMY TO MAKE MEANINGFUL CHOICES

Client has ultimate choice

Trauma Informed Approach

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- Assumes everyone could have been traumatized (considers what we “do not know”)
 - Recognizes the connections between violence, trauma, negative health outcomes and behaviors.
 - Increases safety, control and compassion for people who are seeking services who may have a history of trauma/violence.
 - Uses language and responses that prevents re-traumatization.
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- **Retraumatization:** A conscious or unconscious reminder of past trauma that results in re-experiencing of the initial trauma.
 - Can be triggered by a situation, an attitude or expression, or by certain environments that replicate the dynamics (loss of power/control/safety) of the trauma.

TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

PRINCIPLES

SAFETY

Ensuring physical and emotional safety

CHOICE

Client has choice and control

COLLABORATION

Making decisions together and power sharing

TRUSTWORTHINESS

clarity, consistency, and interpersonal boundaries

EMPOWERMENT

prioritizing empowerment and skill building

PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE

Common areas are welcoming and safety is respected

Provided a clear and appropriate message about their rights and responsibilities

provided a significant role in planning and program evaluation

Respectful and professional boundaries are maintained

Provide an environment for individuals to feel validated and affirmed

PROGRAMS



CRISIS RESPONSE PROGRAM



ENHANCED SERVICES

- Case Management
- High Risk Support Services
- VQRP+



PROJECT EXIT ROUTE

- 14, 23, 31, 43 Divisions

PROGRAMS



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

- Trauma Dog Program
- T.E.A.R.™ Program (Workshops, Youth Leader Program & Social Media Initiatives)
- Youth Symposium
- HT Prevention Workshops



STUDENT PLACEMENT & VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS



1) CRISIS RESPONSE PROGRAM

HOURS OF OPERATION

The VST crisis team operates 24/7, 365 days a year including holidays. We take police, agency & self-referrals

WHERE IS SUPPORT PROVIDED?

Support can be provided on scene but is primarily over the phone

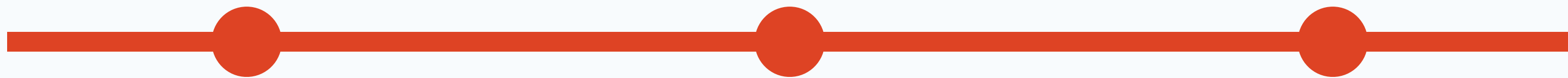
WHAT TYPE OF SUPPORT IS PROVIDED?

- Crisis intervention support
- Assistance with urgent and practical matters
- Locating, arranging, linking & coordinating services
- Writing support letters
- Advocacy and outreach

LANGUAGES

Our team is able to respond in over 35 languages with assistance of staff, volunteers and translation services

HOW TO CONNECT COMMUNITY AGENCIES



OBTAIN CONSENT FROM THE CLIENT

our services are
voluntary so consent
must be obtained prior
to the referral

CALL VST PHONE NUMBER

at: **416-808-7066** if you
get voicemail, leave a
message with your
contact information

SPEAK WITH AN INTAKE WORKER

Provide all pertinent
information including:
client information,
contact information &
details of the situation

HOW TO CONNECT



GENERAL PUBLIC



VOLUNTARY SERVICE

our services are **voluntary**. We are there to support you! If you have concerns about someone else, pass on our #

CALL VST PUBLIC LINE

at: **416-808-7066** if you get voicemail, leave a message with your contact information.
If it is an emergency, call 911

SPEAK WITH A TRAINED CRISIS COUNSELLOR

Have a conversation about support you are looking for.

2) ENHANCED SERVICES



HIGH RISK SUPPORT SERVICES

- Support for clients who are at high-risk of violence from intimate partner (this includes harassment & sexual assault)
- Home-assessments, safety planning for those at risk



CASE MANAGEMENT

- Provides longer term intensive assistance for victims of major crime (e.g. homicide, suicide, human trafficking)
- 1-3 months on average



VQRP+

- Supports direct victims/family/witnesses of violent crimes in immediate aftermath
- Short-term financial support with expenses (e.g. safety/practical needs)
- Means of last resort
- Eligibility criteria

3) Project Exit Route



Launched In January 2022



Provides specialized victim centered, trauma informed & culturally appropriate support



Trained staff in 4 localized police divisions (14, 23, 31, 43)

4) Project Recover



Project Recover supports survivors of human trafficking – in Toronto and across all of Canada – by working with Canadian creditors to remove fraudulent and coercive debt from the victim's name.

Intake form can be completed on our website, or you can call for more info





5) Trauma Dog Program

MEET DANDY!

8 year old Labrador retriever

SPECIALLY TRAINED

and certified as a trauma support dog

PRIORITY IS GIVEN TO

children & youth to provide comfort after a tragedy

HOW DOES DANDY HELP CLIENTS?

COMFORT

Dandy is a positive distraction and helps ground those experiencing high stress and anxiety

TOUCH

Dandy provides a source of touch to provide physical comfort. Touching Dandy can also reduce blood pressure.

MAIN ROLES OF DANDY

- **Court Support (in court or CCTV room)**
- **Victim Support (on scene, appointments, group and individual settings)**
- **Community Outreach**

RECOGNITION

Dandy received the Ontario Women of Law Enforcement (OWLE) "Teamwork Award" in 2019 for her support in court!

T.E.A.R™ PROGRAM

Composed of
workshops, youth
leadership program &
#TEARtalk

#TEARTALK

Social media initiative
for youth, by youth!

YOUTH SYMPOSIUM

Symposium to
educate youth on
safety, including
consent, healthy
relationships, online
safety and human
trafficking.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING WORKSHOP

Prevention workshops
for students and
parents

6) COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

CONTACT:

Tasmine (Manager of Community Programs + Projects):
tasmine.f@vstoronto.com

T.E.A.R.™

- 1) T.E.A.R.™ workshop on cyber-violence and healthy relationships
- 2) Youth Leadership Program
- 3) #TEARtalk social media initiative

Grounded in 3 principles:

- Youth Empowerment
- Adult/Youth Allyship
- Youth Peer Mentorship



T.E.A.R.™ Workshops

Free interactive and engaging workshop established by youth, for youth aged 12-18 years in the City of Toronto.

- **Equips youth with tools and knowledge to navigate digital world and make informed healthy relationship choices**
- **Available to TDSB & TCDSB schools and community agencies**
- **To request a workshop email: tear@vstoronto.com**





Human Trafficking Prevention Workshops

DELIVERED BY

Trained Victim Services Toronto staff

WORKSHOPS DELIVERED FOR:

- **Students aged 12-18 in TDSB & TCDSB schools and for community agencies**
- **Parents and families**
- **Educators and service agency staff**

REQUESTS GO TO:

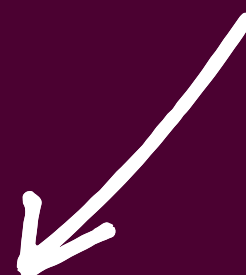
tear@vstoronto.com

T.E.A.R.™ Youth Leadership Program

Program builds on the workshop and allows youth to obtain high-school volunteer hours as a leader by:

- Analyzing root causes of gender-based violence, sexism and homophobia
- Exploring historical and current manifestations of systemic discrimination and oppression
- Understanding of cyber-safety
- Group has weekly meetings to discuss topics, engage in leadership activities & to connect as a group. Often there are collaborations with other agencies, workshops & guest speakers!
- Recruit yearly - 1 year commitment
 - Must be located in Toronto, Etobicoke, North York or Scarborough
 - Grades 9-12

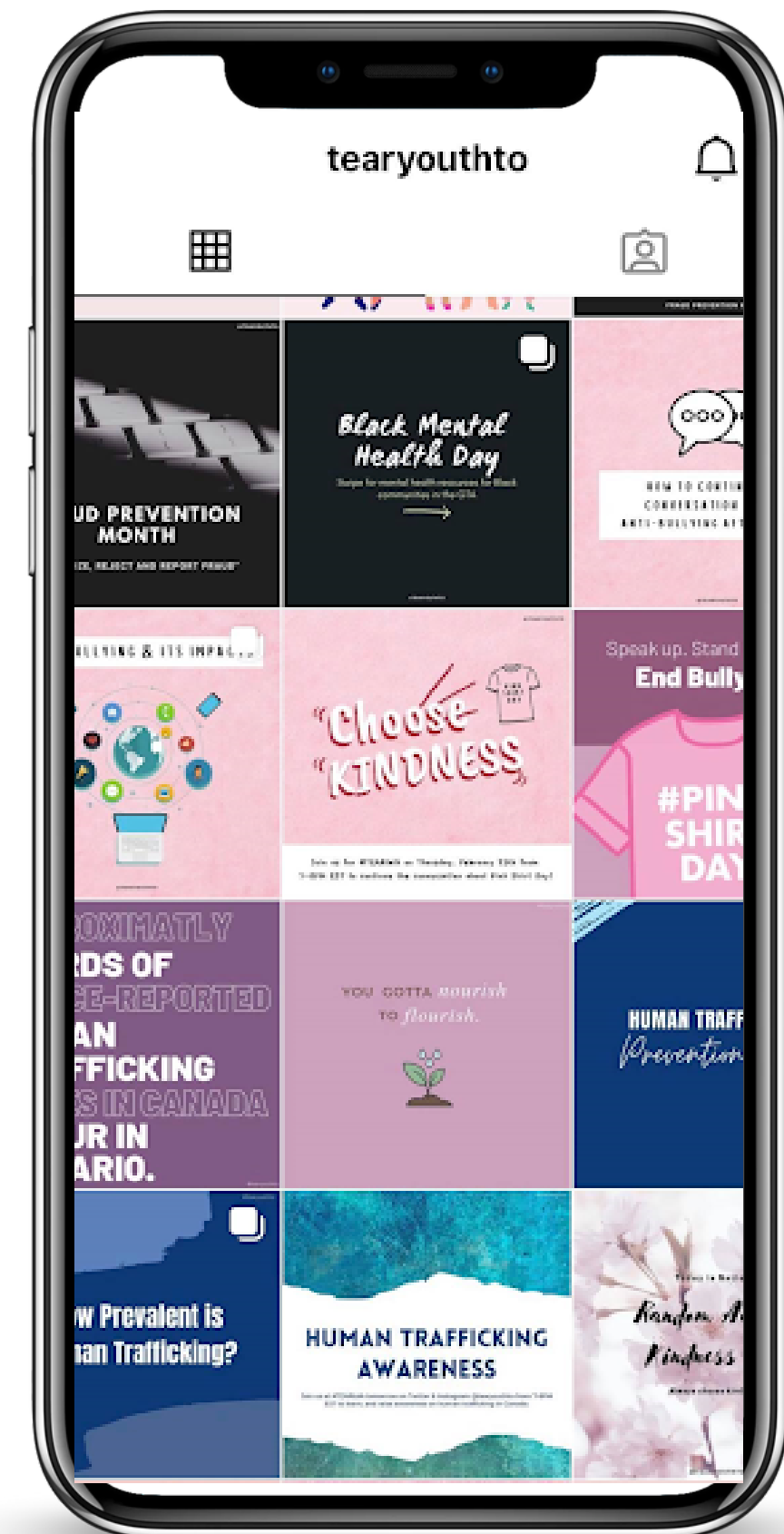
To fill out an application email: tearyouth@vstoronto.com



T.E.A.R.™ Social Media

T.E.A.R.™'s social media strategy provides a way for youth leaders to discuss and bring awareness to complex topics related to healthy relationships and cyber violence and how to get help. There are numerous parts of this initiative

- 1) Live chat that occurs the last Thursday of each month from 7-8pm on Twitter & Instagram through [@tearyouthto](https://www.instagram.com/tearyouthto)
 - Some examples of previous topics of discussion include: orange shirt day, black mental health day, human trafficking awareness, pride month
- 2) Hot Seat Video Series
 - Our youth and program staff interview community partners on different monthly themes e.g: climate change, human trafficking





Youth Symposium

TAKES PLACE

Date: February 2024

WHO FOR?

Open to all youth 12+ in Toronto

HOW TO SIGN UP

Email antitraffickingsymposium@gmail.com



Other Community Programs

Victim Services Toronto is committed to providing prevention services to the community it serves, this includes engaging in outreach events & preventative programming

Special Projects

- **Human Trafficking Prevention: Building Awareness in School Leaders**
- **Healthy Relationships: Navigating Cyberviolence & Cyber Bullying**
- **Advisory Committees**

7) Student Placement & Volunteer Programs

RECRUITS YEARLY

- Placement students completing advanced placements longer than 1 semester in MSW, SSW, SW programs
- Volunteers in crisis team, tasks or events

TRAINING

- Intensive training covering crisis intervention, trauma informed care, specialized skills and more

CONTACT

- **Jacqueline:**
volunteer@vstoronto.com
- **Note:** recruitment is closed at this time. Check website/social media for updates

Contact Information

Phone: 416-808-7066 (public line/agency referrals)

Email: info@vstoronto.com

Website: victimservicestoronto.com

Twitter: [@VSToronto](https://twitter.com/VSToronto)

Instagram: [@VSToronto](https://www.instagram.com/VSToronto)

Facebook: [facebook.com/vstoronto](https://www.facebook.com/vstoronto)





ANY QUESTIONS