



PAWS FOR JUSTICE

JANUARY 2016 TO JANUARY 2017

THE VICTIMS
CANINE-ASSISTED
VICTIM SERVICES
RESEARCH
PROJECT

*A Call to
Collective
Action!*

**CANINE-AIDS,
MAKING IT BETTER
NO MATTER WHY
IT HURTS.**

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CANADA.

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PREAMBLE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE CANADIAN FOUNDATION
FOR ANIMAL-ASSISTED SUPPORT
SERVICES (CFAS)



*Photo Courtesy of Krista Levar, M. Ed
Victim Services Coordinator, Prince George Royal Canadian
Mounted Police (RCMP) / Government of Canada*

In January 2016 a grant contribution from Justice Canada's Victims Fund enabled The Canadian Foundation for Animal-Assisted Support Services (CFAS) to launch the Victors of Crime Canine-Assisted Victim Services (CAVS) study. The purpose of the research was to conduct an environmental scan and gaps analysis pertaining to CAVS in Canada. The recommendations for next steps that follow represent the collective priorities that were reinforced throughout the research phase, as well as the views expressed during this historic national dialogue.

CFAS's mandate and charitable mission is to identify and help fill gaps so as to invest in the development of a seamless continuum of exceptional Animal-Assisted Support Services across Canada. Moreover, ensuring the welfare of the animals that give so much is among our top priorities. As such, this study both informed and reinforced the Foundation's vision concerning the viability of co-creating a national program and strategy to invest in CAVS in order to empower survivors of crime, their families, witnesses, first responders and others working in the justice system.

PAWSITIVE THOUGHTS LEAVE A PAWSITIVE FOOTPRINT

Curtailing the emotional, physical and psychological impact of crime and the judicial process on victims, witnesses of crime, and their families has become an area of significant interest among those working in the justice, social services, healthcare, corrections and the public safety sectors. Consequently, this research takes an in-depth look at these needs through a pawsitive lens; capturing how one of Canada's most precious natural resources, the human-animal bond experience, is being utilized to manage and stabilize the impact of victimization. As a starting point we reached out to a small sample population across Canada that are either directly, or indirectly involved with Canine-Assisted Victim Services (CAVS). We envision future studies branching out to tap into the value of Equine-Assisted Victim Services along with complementary Animal-Assisted Support Services.

Vicarious trauma, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and compassion fatigue are prevalent among those serving vulnerable persons impacted by crime, therefore, mention is made regarding the benefits canines have on victim services workers and first responders. These observations and good news reports present secondary benefits

and unprecedented opportunities for exciting new approaches for developing workplace mental-health strategies and job readiness.

Finally, the interest expressed in working together to leverage the nuances of the human-animal bond experience, to better serve this population, opens up a world of new possibilities for CAVS in addition to service providers. Consequently, this guide represents 'A Call to Collective Action.'

Paving the way with good intentions is a beginning; however, co-creating a multi-disciplinary intergovernmental action plan will require partnerships, resources, knowledge mobilization and perseverance – 'A National Centre of Excellence' if you will.

On behalf of the Foundation, I would like to extend our appreciation to Justice Canada for making both this study and this publication possible. To those who contributed to its content, thank you for caring, sharing and getting involved.

With heartfelt appreciation and gratitude,
Joanne Moss, National Director and
Research Project Coordinator



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR EMPOWERING SURVIVORS OF CRIME, WITNESSES AND THEIR FAMILIES

The purpose of the Guide goes beyond the dissemination of information - it is a Call to Collective Action. The year 2016 posed a milestone opportunity to conduct an environmental scan, a national dialogue and an online survey to scan the landscape of Canine-Assisted Victim Services (CAVS) in Canada.

As encouraging as it is to see the budding interest in and growth of CAVS across our nation, the lack of infrastructure to support, inform, evaluate and sustain these services impedes widespread access and recognition of this valuable natural resource. The absence of national best practices, a common language, or policies, imposes road blocks that must be overcome to better serve vulnerable persons, while supporting those that assist them.

In spite of existing gaps, it is important not to lose sight of the value of CAVS. Some studies have shown that victims' interactions with canines increase the level of oxytocin in their blood, a hormone associated with feeling calm and relaxed.¹ This physiological evidence backs up anecdotal observations of the effect of Human-Animal Interactions (HAI). Although the use of canines in the justice sector is still in its infancy stage in Canada, interest in taking CAVS to the next level was very apparent throughout the research and engagement process.

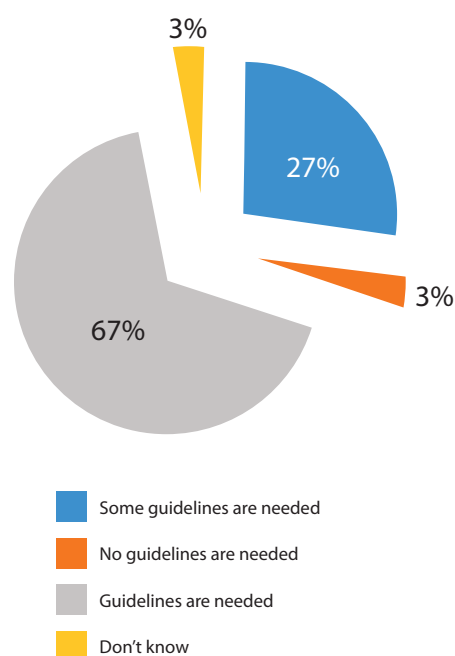
Canine-Assisted Intervention (CAI) is only one of many terms used to reference this work. At the time of this study there were at least fifteen dogs working in fourteen programs in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Saskatchewan. However, the

amount of coverage that these programs provide Canadians pales in comparison to the potential demand that exists for their services. Similar programs exist in the US and Chile. New Zealand recently initiated a pilot program.

Police services and victim or child serving organizations run the majority of CAVS programs in Canada. By contrast, district attorney's offices generally run programs in the United States, although police, victim, and child serving organizations have been known to offer similar programs. Some canines receive at least two-years of training prior to being donated to or working with victim-serving organizations. Funding for these dogs is achieved through the solicitation of public donations. Ongoing costs are comprised of paying for dog food, vet care, insurance and any additional training needed to ensure the ongoing efficacy of the teams. These costs are also often covered, or subsidized through fundraising efforts.

Membership-based industry guidelines have been developed by some organizations in an attempt to establish continuity and credibility. The survey snapshot portrayed a strong need for these guidelines (see Figure 1). Most of the research stakeholders agreed that the dogs should be well trained and obedient, have calm gentle demeanours, enjoy interacting with people, and demonstrate that they behave safely around children and other dogs. Some had breed preferences, while others did not.

FIGURE 1:
Should guidelines be introduced for CAVS?



¹ Psychosocial and Psychophysiological Effects of Human-Animal Interactions: The Possible Role of Oxytocin: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3408111/>

METHODS

The R.A. Malatest and Associates Research Team, an independent evaluation and market research firm, worked with The Canadian Foundation for Animal-Assisted Support Services (CFAS) to: 1) conduct an environmental scan; 2) formulate an interview guide, carry out and analyze the interviews and 3) develop, administer, and analyze an online survey in order to scan the landscape of Canine-Assisted Victim Services (CAVS) in Canada.

An environmental scan was conducted to understand the lay of the land with respect to CAVS. The scan phase included academic literature, newspaper articles, and websites of those providing the services answering the following questions:

- What kinds of programs are being implemented in Canada?
- What's needed to improve access to and leverage the impact of CAVS?
- What guidelines, qualifications and credentials are being, or could be, utilized within this emerging field?

In addition to the sources referenced in the end-notes and bibliography field-related websites were reviewed to answer these questions. The academic research was helpful in providing some background on and insight into the use of animals in a therapeutic setting.

The research team carried out 41 phone interviews over the course of the summer of 2016 consolidating the responses to capture the overall perspectives of this diverse and dynamic group of caring citizens, justice field-related employees and volunteers. Stakeholders from across Canada were selected using a sampling of individuals who were in contact with CFAS having expressed interest in being part of this leading edge discussion; while others who were not aware of the initiative were invited to participate.

The CFAS national director and CAVS research project coordinator, Joanne Moss, contributed to this dialogue by interacting with stakeholders across Canada and in the US through various activities, events, conversations, and speaking engagements.

Key informants were notified to confirm their interest in participating in a 45-minute interview and corresponding time-slots were scheduled to build momentum. Interviewees represented a diverse multi-disciplinary cross-section. The interviews were analyzed to distill the findings that were most consistent and salient with respect to the research questions. With this in mind, the Malatest team meticulously summarized each and every interview. These summaries were based on notes taken during interviews. Where required, the interviewer referred to the recordings to ensure an accurate depiction of what had been said. Key themes began to emerge during the analysis process that were congruent with their direct or indirect knowledge and experience with CAVS. Thirty-three individuals provided frank feedback to an online survey comprised of 19 questions over a two-week period in November to conclude the study.

Mental health was among the main factors associated with the risk of violent victimization in 2014. Victimization rates for all crimes measured by the 2014 GSS were lower than those reported 10 years earlier, with the exception of sexual assault, which remained stable. From 2004, the violent victimization rate fell by 28%, while the household victimization rate decreased by 42% and the rate of theft of personal property declined by 21%.

Source: S. Perrault. 2016. Criminal victimization in Canada, 2014. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
Accessed at www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14241-eng.pdf.



Photo Courtesy of Rachel Crawford M.S.W., R.S.W.
Child Witness Project Coordinator, London Family Court Clinic



1 | ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

ANIMAL-ASSISTED SUPPORT SERVICES AND SURVIVORS OF CRIME

» THE HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND EXPERIENCE

According to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, "Research studies identify certain groups of persons with disabilities who seem to be more at risk, such as persons with disabilities living in an institution (OVC, 2009; Health Canada, 2002, 1993; Reid, 2004; Sorensen, 2002), those who have severe disabilities (Reid, 2004; McNutt et al., 2002; Sorensen, 2002; Health Canada, 2002) and those with mental disorders (Teplin et al., 2005; Health Canada, 2002; Marley and Buila, 2001). Although there was no available data on the rates for the first two categories, persons who stated they suffered from mental or behavioural disorders experienced personal victimization (including violent crimes and theft of personal property) at a rate that was more than four times the rate for the persons with no mental or behavioural disorders (8455 incidents compared to 197 per 1,000 persons Source: Criminal Victimization and Health: A Profile of Victimization Among Persons with Activity Limitations or Other Health Problems).

According to Statistics Canada's 2014 General Social Survey on Victimization, almost one in five Canadians aged 15 or older reported that within the past year they or someone in their household had been the victim of at least one of eight serious offenses like sexual assault; robbery; physical assault; theft of personal property; breaking and entering; theft of motor vehicle or parts; theft of household property; or, vandalism.² This represents approximately 5.6 million people

across the country who had been victimized by crime at some point within the past 12 months prior to the survey.

The same survey found that approximately one-third (35%) of victims of violent crimes reported experiencing at least one of four long-term effects commonly associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Furthermore, approximately one-in-seven (13%) victims reported that they experienced at least three of these effects, which are the criteria used to indicate a potential case of PTSD. Younger people were considered more likely to be victims of crime, with individuals between the ages of 15 and 29 reporting substantially higher rates of victimization when compared to people aged 30 or older.³ Additionally, the survey confirmed that more often than not, victims know their attacker.⁴

These facts have serious implications when it comes to victims' experiences within the criminal justice system, suggesting that there is potentially a great demand for CAVS to assist victims, their families, and witnesses to cope with their experiences. Moreover, those that work within the justice system, including first responders, are at risk of developing workplace injuries such as PTSD and vicarious trauma due to prolonged exposure to traumatic situations.

Humans have had mutually beneficial relationships with dogs for generations, beginning with the domestication of dogs thousands of years ago. This relationship was originally thought to have revolved primarily around hunting and mutual protection, but man's relationship with dogs developed far beyond these origins to the point that dogs are utilized to help humans with a variety of tasks.

Recent studies have bolstered anecdotal evidence of the impact that dogs have on people. These studies noted that interacting with dogs can trigger greater concentrations of the hormone oxytocin in humans, which is connected to feeling calm and reductions in stress levels.⁵ This effect is particularly helpful in situations where a person is required to recount traumatic experiences. As a result, CAVS is evolving within the criminal justice system in order to help victims, their families and/or witnesses of crime to cope with the stress of having to relive their experiences as their cases work their way through the justice system. The availability of trained teams is very limited in comparison to the growing demand for services.

² Perreault 2015, p4.

³ Perreault 2015, p12. It should be noted that these statistics do not include victimization rates for people under the age of 15.

⁴ Perreault 2015, p18.

⁵ O'Haire, Guerin and Kirkham 2015, p2.

Although beyond the scope of this research, it was noted that the correction system encounters trauma-based challenges as well, in that numerous incarcerated offenders and parolees who are also victims of crime. Accordingly, some CAVS service providers are expanding their reach to offer support to those who have been incarcerated or are at risk of getting into trouble with the law to provide emotional support and to address recidivism to counter crime.

A research study published in the Western Journal of Nursing⁶ that included canines in therapy demonstrated that in this setting the dogs motivated patients to open up, speak out and participate in ways they were not able to when a dog was not present. This implication is powerful given that canines have been known to elicit positive social responses when other approaches often fail to mediate interactions in awkward and uncomfortable therapeutic settings.

» EXISTING PROGRAMS

Though the use of dogs in the justice environment is a relatively new concept, the impact of CAVS is rapidly spreading. Of the CAVS programs cited in Table 1 more than half are delivered by victim-serving organizations, with the remaining programs either through local police or child protection services. There are currently no programs offered by crown attorneys' offices, in contrast to the United States, where the majority of programs are run by district attorneys' offices.

CAVS IN CANADA

Almost all of the services highlighted in Table 1 involve a single, dedicated canine, a primary handler and a secondary handler. The Zebra Child Protection Centre in Alberta has two dogs as a part of their program.

As the table indicates, there are substantial availability gaps. Identifying CAVS programs presents further barriers due to fragmentation within this emergent environment.

Since 2014, 179 Canadian public safety and military personnel have died by suicide. 2016: 48 first responders and 15 military members have died by suicide. 2015: 51 first responders and 17 military members died by suicide. Between April 29 and December 31, 2014: 27 first responders died by suicide. In 2014: 21 military personnel died by suicide.

Source: www.tema.ca/inthenews

Table 1.
Organizations across Canada providing Canine-Assisted Victim Services (CAVS)

Organization	Location	Canine
Alberta		
Bonnyville RCMP Victim Services	Bonnyville (and St. Paul, Cold Lake and Lac La Biche)	Odie
Calgary Police Services	Calgary	Hawk
Camrose Police Services	Camrose	Lucy
Chinook Arch Victim Services	Didsbury (and Olds and Sundre)	Ringo
Zebra Child Protection Centre	Edmonton	Wren and Fossey
British Columbia		
The Prince George RCMP Victim Services	Prince George	Max
Delta Police Victim Services	Delta	Caber
*Ontario		
Victim Services Brant	Brantford	Eddie
Kingston Police Force	Kingston	Vernon
Toronto Victim Services	Toronto	Dandy
Victim Services of York Region	York	Boss
Saskatchewan		
Moose Jaw Police Services	Moose Jaw	Kane
Regina Police Services	Regina	Merlot
Southeast Regional Victim Services	Estevan (and Weyburn)	Beaumont

* The Ministry of the Attorney General's Victim/Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP) has a pilot underway at multiple sites.

» WHO USES CAVS?

Victims of crime is the targeted population within the justice system that are trying to cope with a wide range of situations, such as fatal car accidents, suicides, sexual assaults and homicides.^{7,8} Perhaps the most common group of users are children, as authorities can have difficulty winning the trust of children who have been victimized by adults.⁹ For example, when children arrive at a victims' centre, they are introduced to a canine team before the beginning of their interview. Having a canine available during an interview can be a source of comfort for the child that allows them to speak more freely about their experience. The mere presence of a dog helps to relieve shock and anxiety, nurturing a safe space for victims that greatly enhance the communication process.¹⁰

⁶ Western Journal of Nursing Research <http://wjn.sagepub.com/>

⁷ Mall 2015.

⁸ Moreau 2015.

⁹ CBC News 2013.

¹⁰ Martin 2015.



Courtesy of Chimo Animal Assisted
Wellness and Learning Society

CANINE-AIDS BUILDING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Common involvement of Canine-Aids is in emergency response situations, during forensic interviews, court testimonials and preparation, as well as during the recording of victim impact statements. The presence of these faithful partners' grounds victims helping them to open up and discuss their experiences more freely.

Sentiments among the research participants repeatedly echoed that the dogs often play a secondary role, particularly in instances when the service provider is a police department. In these cases, the dogs act as an internal support to members of the department. For instance, officers from the Bonnyville Royal Canadian Mounted Police sometimes visit Odie, their esteemed

canine at the victim services branch, after officers have return from a tough call.

Hawk, the Calgary Police Service's canine was sent to accompany several witnesses of the Brentwood stabbing case.¹¹ The cost benefit of assigning a police officer as a primary dog handler appeared to be questionable because of the primary duties police personnel are required to carry out on a daily basis. Nevertheless, precedence has been established clearly demonstrating the cost benefit of Canine-Assisted Mental Health (CAMH) in the workplace.

Community policing has also experienced direct benefits. The presence of canines has consistently fostered opportunities to educate the public about the impact of crime, and how to prevent it. Canine ambassadors make it easier for people of all ages to approach a police officer projecting a positive image. Other applications extend services to distressed students, hospital patients and nursing homes and that's just the beginning. For example, Lucy, the Camrose

Police Service's canine, visits schools during exam week.¹² Giving people healthy outlets that nurture laughter and social engagement may seem trivial, but in the grand scheme of things it is often the little simple things in life that open doors to mutual acceptance and a sense of belonging – two ingredients that foster healthier communities.

Children in particular are one of the primary recipients, as are victims with disabilities, although generally the dogs are made available to any children or adults who have experienced felony-level crimes.¹³ The goal is to avoid the "secondary victimization" of witnesses and victims that can occur when having to recount the original experience to strangers, particularly in the high-stress situations that can occur in the justice system.¹⁴ All who engaged in the research were inclined to agree that canines provide emotional support to victims and witnesses at all stages of a case, including during police interviews, victim impact statements, and court testimonies.¹⁵

¹¹ Grant 2014.

¹² Paradis 2014.

¹³ Carlson 2014; McKenna 2013.

¹⁴ McKenna 2013.

¹⁵ Klien 2009; KEYT 2012; Ahumada 2015; Nassau County 2014.



Photo Courtesy of Rachel Crawford M.S.W, R.S.W.
Child Witness Project Coordinator, London Family
Court Clinic

» SERVICE EXCELLENCE

There are currently no national or international consensus-based best practices, standards, qualifications, or credentials for CAVS. Instead, there is a patchwork of brand-oriented guidelines, sourced by organizations working with or promoting their respective CAVS. As such, the dialogue resulting from engaging the stakeholders elicited a range of insights and perspectives from instituting a spectrum of balance and checks like the voluntarily development of national best practices, to government regulations and/or national standards of Canada. A few interviewees felt strongly that enforceable standards and/or legislation should be in place whereby those failing to adhere would face repercussions such as stringent fines.

» RECOMMENDED BREEDS

Most Canadian service providers work with either Labrador Retrievers or Golden Retrievers. The prevalence of these breeds is perhaps because they are believed to be predisposed towards the preferred behavioural profiles. According to Assistance Dogs International (ADI), Labradors and Golden Retrievers have “many of the characteristics that make for a good service dog”. With that; it is not surprising that two of the organizations dedicated to training service dogs, namely Pacific Assistance Dog Society and National Service Dogs, are primarily working with these two breeds through their signature breeding programs. In general, there was little information regarding how the dog must appear while working in addition to the health and safety verification basic requirements like proof of vaccine and in some cases sterilization.

» RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOUR

Some organizations recommend that dogs being utilized in the justice sector should demonstrate specific behavioural traits in different circumstances. Accompanying a person into a courtroom, for example, requires that the dog remain inconspicuous at all times. Other foundational traits were characterized by their ability to respond to handler commands without fail along with an intuitive serene nature toward

vulnerable people demonstrated through patient attentiveness.

In a judicial context, the dogs are present to help ground victims of crime during their testimony. Furthermore, the dogs must be able to work in noisy and crowded environments without showing any signs of aggression or distress. If a child has an adverse reaction such as becoming aggressive during an encounter with a canine both the handler and the dog must be able to withdraw safely and promptly before a given situation escalates.

ADI member organizations typically use their assistance dog training guidelines to screen dogs, trainers and handlers before placing their dogs. The National District Attorneys Association in the US works with ADI proponents to promote¹⁶ the Courthouse Dogs Foundation’s methodologies.

Overall dog trainers come from diverse backgrounds with a kaleidoscope of academic and vocational training and backgrounds from hands-on experience working with animals, to post-secondary degrees. ADI created an internal service dog training certification for member organizations that attests to their preferred level of competencies in order to train their dogs for service work. Trainers’ certifications are granted after a test and must be renewed every two years.¹⁷ Their test ensures that trainers

¹⁶ www.ncdsv.org/images/NDAA_CourthouseOrComfortDogs_BofDResolution_11-19-2011.pdf; www.courthousedogs.com/starting_best_practices.html

¹⁷ www.assisteddogsinternational.org/wpcontent/uploads/2012/07/TrainerCertificationTestwithoutAnswersADI.pdf

have up-to-date knowledge of their best practices in dog training, including canine husbandry, training techniques and equipment, canine behaviour, and a working knowledge of applicable legislation. These practices are being adopted by ADI organizations working in the justice context. Pet Partners in the US also has a long-standing approach to raising the bar on continuous improvement.

Little is known with respect to specialized training regimes and requirements with respect to working with survivors of crime and witnesses at large and more specifically with persons with a disability. Further, the research raised important issues like the need for specialized training to appropriately navigate the justice system with the purpose of avoiding further complications that could lead to mistrials and the like.

As a whole, there is no way to monitor the level of suitability and screening of canine-handlers and their canine partners; or measuring their success. Unless these gaps are addressed subjective views and diverse modalities risk programs extinction and/or being grossly under resourced rather than being viewed as dynamic nuances with untapped potential.

Current service providers are not able to meet the growing demands due to the lack of infrastructure and opportunities to collaborate and coordinate their efforts; therefore, building a qualified work force along with a collective capacity-building strategy is vital if CAVS are to become an accessible and valued resource within the justice system.

The most common forms of service-delivery are:

- Emergency Response;
- Forensic Interviews;
- Court Preparation; and
- Court Accompaniment.

A special thanks to the contributors in Prince George, BC, for working with the foundation to introduce the hub model

www.cf4aass.org/prince-george-hub.html

» GROWING A LEARNING COMMUNITY AND A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Synergistic conversations strengthened the literature review by reinforcing that organizations like Pet Partners, the Courthouse Dogs Foundation, Assistance Dogs International, Dreamcatchers Nature-Assisted Therapy, Pawsitive Horizons, Therapeutic Paws of Canada, St. John Ambulance Therapy Dogs, among many others, possess a wealth of knowledge and expertise that would be instrumental in helping to inform the development of national best practices, policies, as well as a common language. Yet; it was recognized that such an exercise would be incomplete without the involvement of social workers, clinicians, judges, first responders, crown attorneys, occupational therapists, counsellors and a host of others working within the justice system and corresponding sectors. Moreover, placing an emphasis on the welfare of the canines was stressed during the interviews further validating the need to include veterinarians, veterinary technicians, animal behaviourists, dog trainers and others in the establishment of best practices, and if deemed necessary, the development of national standards of Canada.



Photo Courtesy of Krista Levar, M. Ed
Victim Services Coordinator, Prince
George Royal Canadian Mounted Police
(RCMP) / Government of Canada

SERVICES AND PROGRAMS DESIGN

All victim services and programs have the same primary goal, which is to provide emotional support to the victim or victims as they go through the judicial system by helping to defuse tension. The dogs were frequently described as a channel for honest communication.

The first element on which we can distinguish these programs is by the type of organization that provides them. Different organizations ranging from police services, to court volunteers, child advocacy groups, non-governmental organizations and various vulnerable persons' divisions within the government offer victim services in Canada; though, police services are by far the most common. Canine handlers are frequently employees of a victim services or investigators unit. For instance, one stakeholder was employed as a detective by the sexual assault and child abuse unit. Investigators introduce canines when conducting forensic interviews. The Zebra Child Protection Centre is a good example of one of many referral-based organizations that partner with police services. In other cases, the canine handler is not an employee of a victim services organization, but an on-call individual who is working for, or volunteering with, an external organization.

Two of the challenges that many key informants face when developing CAVS is the lack of consistent guidelines and confusion regarding terminologies. Since this practice was recently introduced in Canada, it has been difficult to find information with respect to where to begin. Stakeholders, who have been involved in grass-root initiatives, reported having trouble with where to procure a canine and determining whether this work is governed by legislation. A few interviewees referenced the Courthouse Dogs Foundation, as a potential resource to assist with framing program design. Kim Gramlich, Victim Services Coordinator at the Delta Police Department in British Columbia was among the first to bring a dog into a Canadian courtroom. Max, a yellow Lab, accompanied by his handler Krista Levar, the Prince George, British Columbia Victim Services Coordinator also made a court appearance to support a nine-year-old child while she gave her court testimonial. Overall, the feedback during the interview phase emphasized the versatility of program and service delivery, but accessing variations of and information about CAI's presented blockades to helping vulnerable people.

Manitoba Justice - Victim Services added a new member to their team. Milan was born June 21, 2013 and weighs around 56 pounds. This trusty canine works with families and children that are victims of crime.

A GROUNDBREAKING CONVERSATION

The interview participants relayed that canine-assisted programs vary in a number of ways like the diverse groups of people they support. Program configuration and the skill-sets of those providing the services also vary considerably and were duly noted. There was an unquestionable assertion that there is an urgent need for a common language along with best practices to ensure quality assurance and public safety.

Suggestions emphasized that the Canadian government participate in the creation of standards, increase the amount of funding for CAVS and that a space for stakeholders to engage be created. They further articulated that they view all levels of government as key players given their joint mandate to improve services to survivors of crime, witnesses and their families. More specifically, at least half of the people interviewed held a strong belief that Justice Canada would have a role to play in supporting the development of CAVS for survivors of crime.

Additionally, the interviewees saw a role for non-governmental organizations in so far as helping to develop emerging best practices and standards where necessary through a coordinated effort. The Canadian Foundation for Animal-Assisted Support Services (CFAS) was viewed favourably with respect to uniting and engaging the stakeholders in order to embark on such a journey.

Even though it shouldn't hurt to be a child, most canine related interventions are provided to children. However, adults can request interaction with a canine, although it was considered less common. Emergency response is not limited to crime. Some service providers respond to traumatic incidents like natural disasters. One interviewee mentioned that their organization only deploys their canine in cases of child sexual assault or human trafficking.

LEARNING EMPATHY

In programs that involved offenders some volunteered to share their living space with a dog to foster a deeper bonding experience by caring for the dog. Others chose to take things a step further by helping to obedience train the dog or learning how to track with the dog. These experiences teach the participants a lot about themselves often helping them to recognize their own fears and resistance to change. Involvement with the dogs nurtures confidence in both the person and the animal. Potential participants are screened; if they have a history of abusing animals they are not selected to participate in canine-oriented programs. The youth role-model training program is linked to local schools with an aim to help young men who are experiencing problems at home. Within the program sessions, these young men are taught to train a police dog or a fire fighter dog.

Compassion fatigue has been described as the "cost of caring" for others in emotional pain (Figley, 1982). People in certain occupations are at higher risk. A study out of the University of British Columbia found that emergency personnel such as doctors, nurses, paramedics and firefighters experience post-traumatic stress at twice the rate of the average population. In Canada, it is estimated that up to 10% of war zone veterans—including war service veterans and peacekeeping forces—will go on to experience post-traumatic stress disorder.

Source: Canadian Mental Health Association

A RESPONSE TO FIRST RESPONDERS

Discussions continued to uncover other types of canine interventions that were indirectly related to victims of crime. The Alberta Health Services, for example, offer support to first responders. Handlers and their canines are dispatched during emergency situations in order to assist. When there is no particular event to respond to the dogs act as a mental health buffer at special events. These programs likewise offer a rehabilitation component to support first responders who are coming back to work following a leave of absence.

HARMONIZING BEST PRACTICES

Stakeholders unanimously agreed that there is a need for a quality assurance process for CAVS in Canada, because standardization would help to have the services formally recognized within the justice system. One recommendation was that canine selection, temperament, and training be addressed through the development of a national standard including a dog's interest in interacting with humans. For the intervention to be successful one respondent pointed out that animal-assisted interventions require an attachment mechanism whereby people need to feel a connection with the animal and vice versa.

A few key informants felt that canines working in the justice context should be "bombproof" while others used the term "steady nerve base." Canine-partners often work in crowded chaotic environments; thus they are exposed to many distractions, therefore, they need to be composed and focused on their handler and the tasks at hand. Both the handler and the dog need to be grounded.

The conversations were not black and white; there were shades of grey that made room for different applications and circumstances like canine character traits being dependant upon the goals and the types of interventions. For instance, it was thought that intervention programs that target criminal offenders need to be more flexible when it comes to the temperament of the dog. These programs, typically utilize dogs with behaviour problems whereas

a dog providing emotional support to first responders is far different than those being deployed to an accident scene or to a situation where someone has been sexually assaulted.

RECOMMENDED BREEDS

Although there was consensus about calm stable temperaments as a prerequisite, stakeholders were not in agreement with respect to whether specific breeds should be mentioned as part of a national approach. Close to half of the respondents recommended that a national approach should focus on employing only Labradors, or more generally Retrievers. One participant explained that the reason why Retrievers are so popular is because they are generally calm and sociable, making them particularly suitable for this role. Some respondents mentioned Poodles as a good potential choice because they are hypoallergenic and vary in size. One participant said that they had obtained great results working with White Shepherds. Someone else shared that the most popular dogs in their program are Boxers.

About a third of the respondents believed that CAVS should not be breed-specific, because based on their experiences working with a range of breeds allowed for better matching between a client and a given situation.

Proponents of different breeds viewed various breed characteristics as advantageous depending on the application. Certain breeds are prone to specific health issues like hip dysplasia, which could shorten the life span of the dog and/or its ability to work. Larger dogs elicit a sense of security for some clients while others are intimidated by larger breeds. Some held reservations when it came to using breeds that appear aggressive for fear of dog bites. In addition, the reputation of certain dog breeds, like pit bulls, might be enough to deter clients from interacting with the dogs. In spite of differing views, the majority of respondents felt that there was no need to categorically prohibit certain breeds. Context, needs, expectations, and service compatibility were variables that were viewed as important in terms of formulating a balanced approach.



Photo Courtesy of Krista Levar, M. Ed.
Victim Services Coordinator, Prince George Royal Canadian
Mounted Police (RCMP) / Government of Canada



*Photo Courtesy of Rachel Crawford M.S.W, R.S.W.
Child Witness Project Coordinator, London Family Court Clinic*

DOG TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

An interesting finding was that the majority of research participants believe that a national program should include canine training guidelines; however, the suggested route to achieve this was not consistent among stakeholders. A possible explanation could be the result of conflicting ideas as to what constitutes a standard, guidelines and best practices.

A few individuals asserted that only dogs from specific organizations should be utilized in the justice context. Despite diverse views, the majority of respondents preferred that a third-party accreditation process be established to avoid conflict of interest.

Further, several key informants suggested that extensive, professional training should be part of a national approach. This training was generally described as a one or two-year program where the dog would be trained on a regular basis, from puppyhood to adulthood. One stakeholder suggested that due to the nature of their work, canines should receive the same level of training as service dogs to ensure that they do not interfere with a crime scene or a court process. Some individuals believed that canines working in the justice sector must go through rigorous training to learn how to interact with clients without impacting evidence. Certain stakeholders echoed that the level of training should be dependent upon context. Assessing the suitability of

dogs for different jobs also played a factor in the emergent views.

Not all stakeholders made training-specific recommendations. A few suggested that the training should be tailored for the type of intervention. Canines with more demanding jobs may also be required to travel with their handlers, therefore other considerations came into play such as controlled bathroom habits and the ability to maintain a stay position for a long period of time in a confined space. Two interviewees highlighted that training dogs with both voice commands and hand signals was useful under specific conditions. The purpose of using hand signals is to prevent distractions that could negatively impact the process.

Lastly, one stakeholder suggested deep pressure therapy as a necessary addition to a training curriculum. Deep pressure therapy refers to applying surface pressure to the body inducing a hug-like feeling heightening the person's sense of security. Examples of tactile interaction were having a dog draping its paw across, or laying its head on, a person's lap.

DOG HANDLERS COMPETENCIES

Developing a certification process for dog handlers was considered significant. Many respondents proposed that canine handlers should be able to provide a credential that can be easily validated. Others suggested an evaluation mechanism that could be completed online or in person with a dog. To ensure that dog handlers are keeping up with new information and trends, several stakeholders noted that annual or bi-annual requalification should also be a part of an evaluation process. Close to one third of the respondents suggested that the handlers should have a proven record of accomplishments working with vulnerable populations. Additionally, some felt strongly that handlers should have credentials in the field of psychology or social work to reduce the risk of upsetting clients.

As for professional experience, it was noted that if the handler partakes in forensic interviews, they should have a firm background in investigation. A few participants felt that a national standard for CAVS should only allow dog handlers

who are working as professionals in a justice-related field. Many respondents felt that dog handler qualifications should go beyond certifying their skills. Some stakeholders suggested that a separate screening process be developed to assess the suitability of handlers. Some training organizations already have a screening process in place. Co-creating a national program was typically viewed as an opportunity to raise awareness regarding the roles and responsibilities of being a canine handler. Furthermore, a common belief among the stakeholders was the importance of increasing public awareness to attract potential candidates to grow the field in order to meet current needs.

Building a skilled workforce, raising public awareness, and increasing the amount of training and resources were believed to be significant precursors to successful outcomes. Respondents offered various suggestions regarding the availability of training such as making training available in different formats (online, in class, etc.).

Introducing the thought of hosting a national conference and educational events to address these and other needs was well received.

MANAGING RISK

Stakeholders commonly suggested that there is also a need for a strategy to manage risk especially for dog trainer however, there was no consensus on which form this quality control process should take. Designing and implementing an accreditation or certification process were amongst the most popular suggestions. Others felt that third-party oversight was critical in order to expedite progress.

While it was clear that the participants wanted to see a form of quality assurance in place, it proved difficult to compare and contrast the differences between the suggested means. Adding to the mix, words such as accreditation, certification, registry or oversight were clearly being used interchangeably without fully understanding the nuances.

There was no consensus on whether an accreditation system should be mandatory. Some noted that in order to provide



Newmarket Court
Courtesy of Ministry of the Attorney General
Province of Ontario

services, dog-training schools should be registered with an accreditation body that would assess whether the trainers meet the standards and/or guidelines of a given agency. However, the term 'dog-training school' has yet to be defined causing further complications. One respondent reflected on whether Accreditation Canada could lend their support. A few respondents felt that only their brand should be permissible, therefore, they felt that there was no need to seek accreditation elsewhere.

As previously stated, the majority of interviewees were generally in favour of more oversight and quality assessments. However, there was no succinct consensus regarding which organizations should assume this responsibility. All the same, stakeholders favoured the concept of a monitoring process being in place to increase accountability, as well as to preserve

credibility. They felt that CAVS should have to follow pre-defined guidelines and policies. Monitoring activities could take the form of site visits or mandatory compliance reporting showing that they meet and comply with the required best practices and/or standards. Some stakeholders believe that various levels of government should monitor these programs.

"We have heard from some crown council in Canada that when the dog is called trauma dog, they don't want this terminology to be used in the court, because it can indicate that the person who the dog is accompanying has suffered trauma. US courts have decided not to use the term therapy dog, because dogs are not providing therapy to the witnesses."

- Anonymous Quote

WORDS MATTER

When it comes to definitions and terminologies for CAVS in the justice system, the majority of stakeholders expressed a desire to see a common vocabulary emerge. One pressing example was the confusion around labels like court dogs, trauma dogs, facility dogs, assistance dogs, therapy dogs, and service dogs.

Comparing apples with apples, or in this case, dogs with dogs, requires a subsequent dialogue; it is not just a matter of words, but why the words matter. There are legal ramifications that need to be taken into consideration when working in the justice field according to one interviewee because names like “therapy dog” or “trauma dog” should be avoided due to the connotation that they carry. Having a witness assisted by a trauma dog in a courtroom could be perceived as an attempt to influence a jury, for example. In addition, another respondent pointed out that the term “courthouse dog” should be avoided since it has now been copy written and is owned by the Courthouse Dogs Foundation in the US.

ADVANCING CANINE-ASSISTED VICTIM SERVICES IN CANADA

Stakeholders had numerous suggestions regarding what is needed to advance CAVS in Canada. The most common replies were the creation of standards, increased availability of funding and the construction of a space to share information and resources. They further articulated that they view all levels of government as key players given their joint mandate to improve services to survivors of crime, witnesses and their families.

A range of Criminal Code provisions make it easier for young victims and witnesses and sexual-assault complainants to testify, and protect or limit their re-victimization in the criminal justice process. For example, the Code gives judges the discretion to allow a support person to accompany a victim or witness (<http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cp-pm/cr-rc/dig/vict.html>). Perhaps this law could be amended to include a Canine-Aid, if a member of parliament were to champion such a change.

Joanne Moss, CFAS National Director and Research Project Coordinator

INVOLVING GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

When asked which federal department(s) would be suitable partners, the majority of respondents suggested the Department of Justice. Some stakeholders suggested that CAVS should involve more than one federal department. For example, Health Canada

could be involved because these services encompass the well-being, inclusive of mental health, of victims of crime. Other considerations were Correctional Service Canada, Community and Social Services and Public Safety Canada.

Expectations about the role of the provincial governments were less clear among stakeholders due to jurisdictional issues. Nevertheless, the majority of stakeholders recognized the importance of involving all levels of government in a national strategy so as not to reinvent wheels. With this in mind, an intergovernmental approach could expedite knowledge mobilization streamlining processes that would ultimately empower vulnerable persons in a timely manner.

A NEUTRAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Finally, respondents were asked if The Canadian Foundation for Animal-Assisted Support Services (CFAS) could play a role in the development of a national CAVS program and strategy. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents believed that this national public health Foundation could play an important role in uniting and engaging the stakeholders, while helping to disseminate information.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Many stakeholders thought that the CFAS would be instrumental in bringing them together to create a national strategy for CAVS in Canada. The role of the organization could be to facilitate and coordinate

efforts among stakeholder engagement. One stakeholder highlighted that the Foundation has the experience, community development and technical vision to build a virtual gateway and local service delivery hubs to keep people informed, resourced and connected. At the end of the day, the common thread was a shared desire to work together to support vulnerable people and first responders.

DISSEMINATING INFORMATION

The second most requested role with respect to CFAS was to help build mutual capacity so that less time would be spent on resource development enabling the service providers to focus their energy on supporting survivors of crime.



Photo Courtesy of Krista Levar, M. Ed
Victim Services Coordinator, Prince George Royal Canadian
Mounted Police (RCMP) / Government of Canada



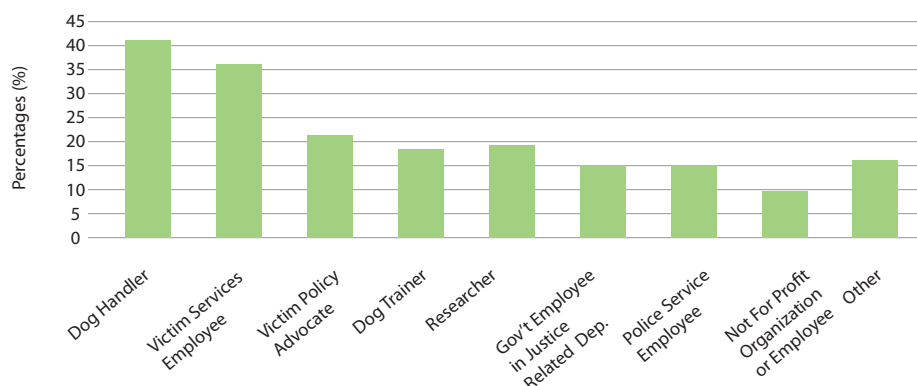
Victim Witness Assistance Program – Brampton
Courtesy of Ministry of the Attorney General
Province of Ontario

2 | ONLINE SURVEY SURVEYING THE LANDSCAPE

To conclude the study R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. conducted a brief online survey in November 2016. The survey sought feedback to further explore the landscape in addition to the potential development of a coordinated national strategy. Some of the results exceeded a sum of 100% because some questions allowed for multiple responses. The enclosed tables and charts capture the overall responses.

As illustrated in **Figure 2** dog handlers (42%) were the most common survey participants, followed by victim services employees (33%). Half of respondents were either survivors of crime (27%) or witnesses of crime (24%) or both. Close to one quarter of respondents (24%) were a family members or a friend of a victim or survivor of crime. Most respondents were either somewhat familiar (33%) or very familiar (64%) with CAVS within the criminal justice context. Only one respondent reported not being at all familiar.

FIGURE 2:
Which perspective would best describe your involvement in Canine-Assisted Victim Services?



Nineteen percent of the respondents felt that the term “Canine-Assisted Victim Services” (CAVS) did not adequately describe canine involvement in the justice system. Their suggested terms were as follows:

- Accredited facility dogs;
- Canine assisted services;
- Canine-assisted therapy;
- Court house facility;
- Facility dogs for courthouse duties; or
- Intervention K9 for victim services.

When participants were asked what name should be considered when referring to dogs that provide assisted intervention, names were provided as seen in **Table 2**.

Table 2.
What should canines be called when working in the criminal-justice context?

Victim services dog	49%
Facility dog	39%
Therapy dog	24%
Trauma dog	21%
Other	24%
Don't Know	3%

Conversely, seventy-five percent of the respondents believed that the term Canine-Assisted Victim Services adequately describes canine involvement in the justice system. When summarizing the results from Table 3 more than half (55%) respondents identified at least six challenges that may hinder the development of CAVS.

Survey respondents were asked who should be involved when it comes to establishing guidelines for CAVS. Various groups were identified and are illustrated in **Figure 3**.

FIGURE 3:
Who should be involved in establishing guidelines for Canine-Assisted Victim Services

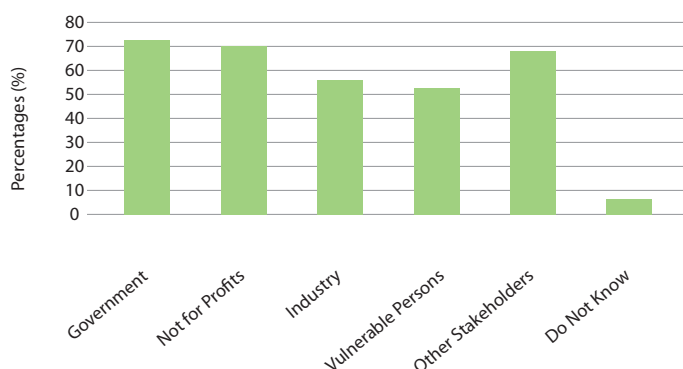
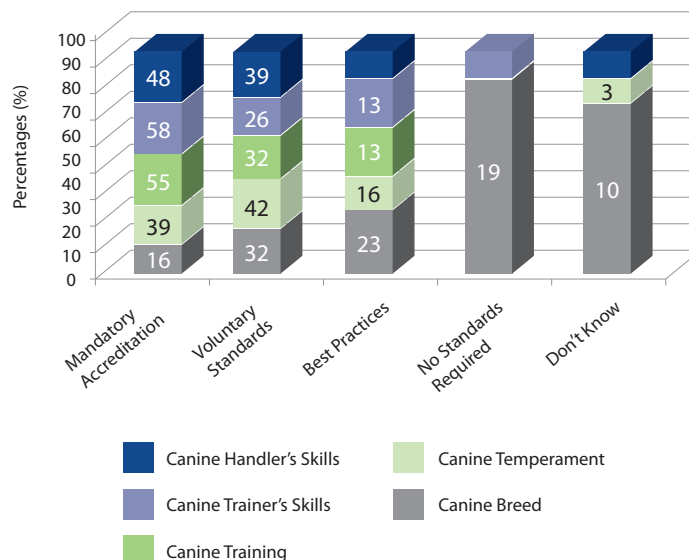


Table 3.
What are the greatest challenges facing Canine-Assisted Victim Services (CAVS)?

	Total (n=33)
Lack of funding	82%
Lack of nationally recognized standards	73%
Long waiting lists to obtain a dog from a dog trainer or dog training organization	64%
Cost associated with obtaining a trained dog	64%
Confusion with existing practices	61%
Inconsistencies with terminologies	61%
Need for credibility chain (e.g. quality assurance strategy)	52%
Lack of available information on how to establish CAVS	42%
Clear understanding of various applications of CAVS	34%
Long waiting lists to obtain CAVS	33%
Fear associated with the unknown (e.g. what change would look like)	21%
Other	12%

With a coordinated approach, initiatives could entail mandatory accreditation, voluntary industry standards or perhaps no standards. Respondents were asked to consider several elements as they relate to prospective best practices (see **Figure 4**).

FIGURE 4:
Proportion of elements of crime-related or victim-related Canine-Assisted Intervention (CAI) Programs where regulations should be applied





Newmarket Court Open House
 Courtesy of Ministry of the Attorney General
 Province of Ontario

CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

Suggested next steps according to the percentage ratios of responses included developing a nationwide coordinated approach (73%) followed by the need to build a virtual portal for stakeholder engagement and mutual capacity building (58%). About a third of the respondents felt that developing public policy was also in order (36% of respondents).

Eighty-eight percent of the respondents expressed an interest in working with The Canadian Foundation for Animal-Assisted Support Services (CFAS) to spearhead the advancement of this national program. To tie it all together CFAS foresees the advantages of hosting a national conference to get the wheels in motion.

In the end, most stakeholders favourably viewed a united approach as a means to incubate a seamless continuum of exceptional and sustainable CAVS in Canada – taking emergency response and mental health in the workplace initiatives to brand new heights.

The Victors Canine-Assisted Victim Services study/scan cultivated a space to be heard producing a collective voice that reinforced the need to foster service excellence to better serve survivors of crime, witnesses and their families. At last, we pay tribute to the wonderful canines that selflessly serve across our nation ever remembering that, “The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated” Mahatma Gandhi.

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