



## **CHANGES IN SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT IN MONTREAL**

**Montreal, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

On April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the Montreal Sexual Assault Center (MSAC) launched the provincial helpline for victims of sexual assault and has continued to manage the service since its inception. The mandate for the helpline stems from the « *2e Plan d'action gouvernemental en matière d'agression sexuelle, 2008-2013* » and was extended in the « *Stratégie gouvernementale pour prévenir et contrer les violences sexuelles, 2016-2021* ». The helpline is funded by the Department of Justice. This bilingual and confidential service provides listening, information and guides victims, their loved ones and caregivers to the appropriate resources throughout Quebec. A team of trained telephone counsellors receive calls, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and complete an average of **630** telephone interventions per month.

Since 1983, MSAC has also been running the crisis line, **514 934 4504**, a bilingual helpline. Designed specifically for the region of Montreal, the crisis line was operational and viable primarily due to a network of trained and extremely committed volunteers. Close to **1 300** volunteers have offered listening, information and referrals to those in need during the past **35** years. The operational structure of the crisis line, its values and its approach to sexual assault victims and those close to them have served as a model and an inspiration for the framework and the development of the provincial helpline.

Since the creation of the provincial helpline in 2010, the number of calls made to the crisis line has decreased from year to year. Knowing that the provincial helpline is now well integrated into the network of services for victims of sexual assault throughout Quebec and that the crisis lines' callers from Montreal would continue to be well served, the MSAC made the decision to close its initial listening service on **March 29, 2018 at 8 pm**.

The MSAC would like to very warmly thank and extend a wholehearted appreciation to all individuals and organizations, volunteers and partners who have contributed to the functioning and the longevity of the crisis line. The ongoing commitment of the highest quality during all these years has allowed the MSAC to be faithful to the crisis line's mission, "**listening is our priority**".

We invite all those in need of support, information and referrals to call the provincial helpline for victims of sexual assault who will now take over from the crisis line. Don't hesitate, please call: **514-933-9007 or 1-800-933-9007**. We are here for you.

We also invite all agencies and organizations to update their directories of resources.