



National
Defence Défense
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Canada



A large, stylized graphic in the background features a central blue feather-like shape within a circle, surrounded by concentric light blue and white circles. Below this, there are sweeping, thin-lined curves in light blue, white, and light orange.

2023
2024

ANNUAL REPORT

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT
SUPPORT AND RESOURCE
CENTRE

Table of contents

Report of the SMSRC's activities and initiatives in the period from
1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Rapport annuel 2023-2024
du Centre de soutien et de ressources sur l'inconduite sexuelle

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- 04** Message from the Chief Operating Officer
- 05** About the SMSRC
- 06** Key achievements in 2023-2024
- 08** Programs and services
- 24** External Advisory Council
- 26** Policy, Research, and Partnerships
- 28** Communications, Marketing and Outreach
- 30** Military Liaison Team
- 32** Moving forward

Message from the Chief Operating Officer

I am pleased to present the Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre Highlights for 2023-2024. This report marks a milestone for our organization as we introduce a new, more accessible format designed to provide a clearer and more comprehensive view of our activities, programs and services that directly and indirectly support people affected by sexual misconduct.

The past year has been one of profound resilience and growth. We have continued to support people affected by sexual misconduct, and advocate for changes that help foster a safer community. This new report format aims to transparently highlight the breadth of our work, and the progress we have made in the last fiscal year. Our work is deeply personal and grounded in a “people first” approach, and we remain committed to offering a safe, supportive environment for everyone who seeks our help. We know how difficult it can be to reach out, and we are here to ensure that no one walks this path alone. Thank you for your trust, your support, and your unwavering commitment to working with us, as we continue to create and evolve our programs to support changing needs.

With gratitude,

Linda Rizzo Michelin
Chief Operating Officer



About the SMSRC

The Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre (SMSRC) provides support services for:

- current and former Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members
- National Defence (DND) public service employees
- Cadets
- Junior Canadian Rangers
- family members of the wider Defence Community

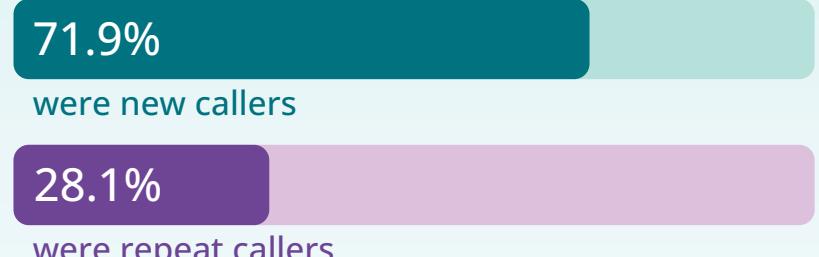
Services are currently available to those who are **16 years and older**, including individuals directly affected by sexual misconduct and those supporting a loved one who is affected.

Additionally, the SMSRC supports leaders and management seeking guidance on addressing sexual misconduct and the best ways to support those directly affected.

Key achievements in 2023-2024

24/7 line

1,496
total calls



48.3% of callers self-described as women

36.6% of callers self-described as men

14.6% of callers did not disclose

0.5% of callers self-described as another gender

43

projects received funding from the SMSRC Grant Program

11

new Grants programs were funded

5,452

people attended SMSRC outreach sessions

580+

class members onboarded to the Restorative Engagement Program

Table 1: Financial snapshot

Support to Programs (including outreach and communications)	\$5,776,858
Restorative Engagement	\$10,132,297
Grants	\$2,193,577
Programs and Services	\$10,482,578
TOTAL	\$28,585,310

Programs and **services**

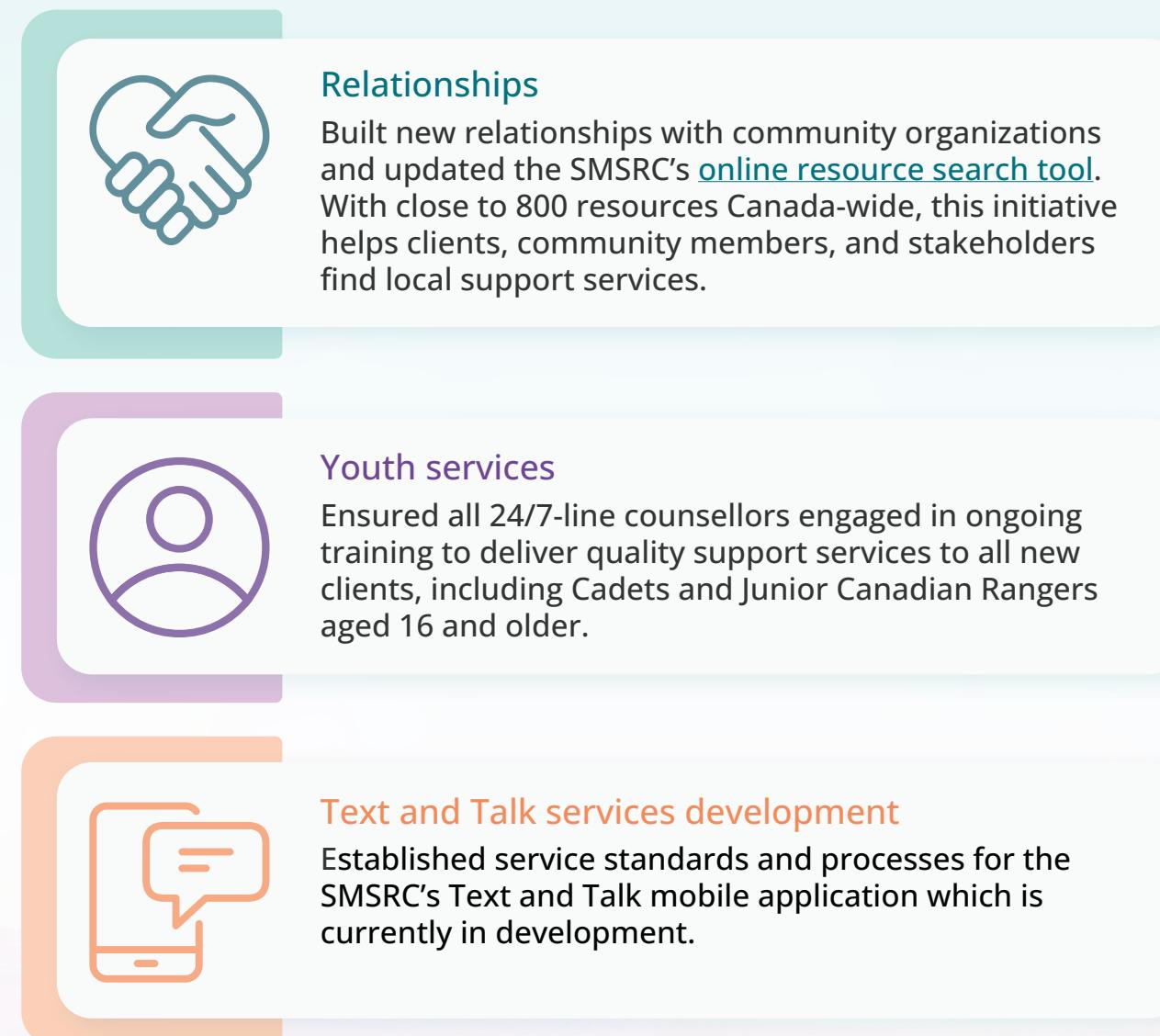
- 10 24/7 Response and Support Line
- 12 Response and Support Coordination
- 14 Peer Support Program
- 16 Restorative Engagement Program
- 18 Independent Legal Assistance Program
- 20 Organizational Learning Management Team Community
- 22 Support for Sexual Misconduct Survivors Grant Program



24/7 Response and Support Line

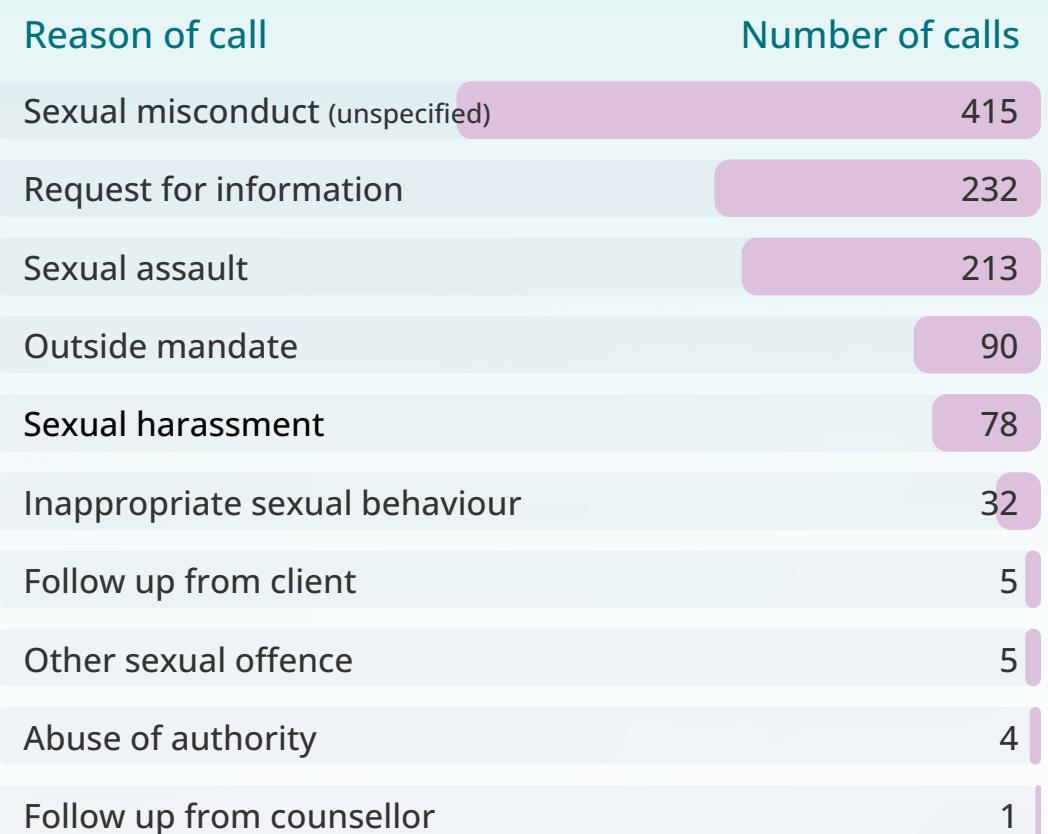
The SMSRC operates a 24/7 bilingual and toll-free line, [1-844-750-1648](tel:1-844-750-1648), where callers can receive supportive counselling, information on options, referrals to care and service organizations, and guidance on supporting others.

Highlights and achievements



Quick facts

Figure 1: Primary reason for calls (new callers) to the 24/7 response and support line



21.82
minutes

average 24/7 response and support line call length

Response and Support Coordination (RSC)

Through the RSC program, coordinators in regions across Canada, work directly with clients to ensure they receive the tailored support and resources they need including: **referrals, advocacy, accompaniments, and assistance**.

Highlights and achievements



Quick facts

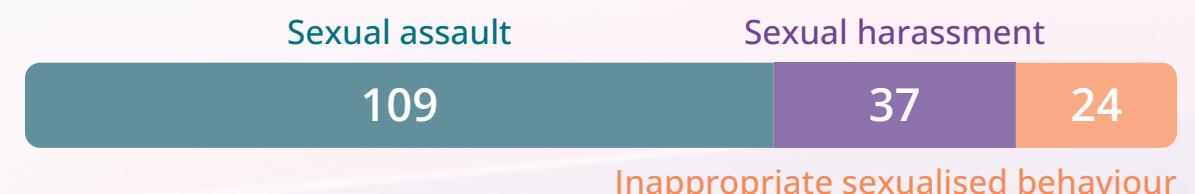
143

new client cases opened by the SMSRC's RSC Program in 2023-2024

Figure 2: Types of services provided by the SMSRC Response and Support Coordinators



Figure 3: Nature of incidents for cases opened in 2023-2024



Peer Support Program

The Peer Support Program provides support to those affected by sexual misconduct and military sexual trauma through connections with trained peer supporters who offer emotional support, information, and guidance throughout the healing process.

Highlights and achievements



Group services

Launched virtual formal group services in June 2023 for CAF members, Veterans/former CAF members, Cadets, Junior Canadian Rangers, and current/former DND public service employees 18 years and older affected by sexual misconduct and military sexual trauma during their service or at their workplace. These groups offered participants up to 10 virtual sessions co-facilitated by a trained peer supporter and a mental health professional.



211

communication exchanges with the Peer Support Program

Supported 8

formal groups co-facilitated by trained peer supporters with lived experience and mental health professionals

94%

of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the group discussions during the sessions were helpful to them.

91%

of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt supported throughout the group sessions.

85%

of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the information provided in the sessions met their expectations.

86%

of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend these sessions to future participants.

Quick facts

Restorative Engagement Program

The Restorative Engagement program was mandated through the [Canadian Armed Forces-Department of National Defence Sexual Misconduct Class Action Settlement](#). It provides supportive and facilitated restorative opportunities for Canadian Armed Forces and National Defence Sexual Misconduct Class Action Members to be heard and acknowledged, and for Defence Representatives to learn, understand, plan, act, and lead as catalysts for culture change.

Highlights and achievements

Pilot project

Launched a pilot project in collaboration with the Royal Canadian Air Force, leveraging collaboration with the Defence representative Alumni Community. The project increased Defence representatives' availability and integrated their learnings from the program. This bolstered the program's ability to meet the high demand from class members.

Class member communication

Reached out to all class members who had expressed their interest in participating in the program to ensure they have the opportunity to participate. This allowed the program to get a better sense of class members requirements to ensure the program can meet their demand. It also increased the number of class members who are ready for engagement opportunities to be assigned to a restorative practitioner.

Program enhancements

Implemented program enhancements informed by partners, stakeholders, former participants, and subject matter experts. As a result, a wider range of participation options were developed for Defence representatives, which allowed for greater availability for class member engagements and senior leader participation. These enhancements will allow the program to be more responsive to class members' requests for engagement.

Quick facts

1,200+

Class Members confirmed their interest in participating in the program

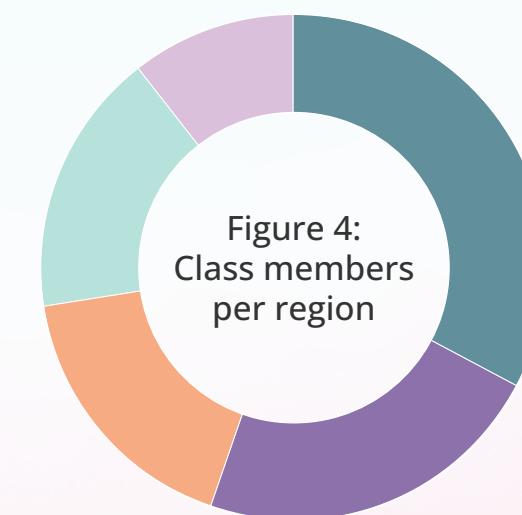
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onboarded restorative practitioners between April and October 2023

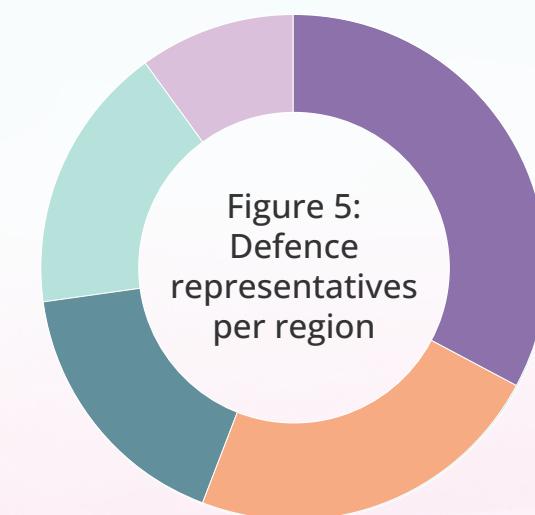
138

Defence representatives across the country, with a composition of [27.7% DND public service employees](#) and [72.3% CAF members](#). This diverse distribution of Defence representatives reflects a balanced representation within the program, catering to the varied needs and perspectives of participants.

The gender distribution among participants shows that [65%](#) are female, [34%](#) are male, and [1%](#) includes non-binary and 2SLGBTQI+ individuals.



- East/National Capital Region (32.8%)
- Central (22.6%)
- Prairies (16.8%)
- Pacific (10.4%)
- Atlantic (17.3%)



- Central (33%)
- Atlantic (23%)
- East/National Capital Region (17%)
- Prairies (17%)
- Pacific (10%)

Independent Legal Assistance Program

The Independent Legal Assistance (ILA) Program supports individuals who have experienced military sexual misconduct by providing legal advice, information, and representation in the military and criminal justice systems. The ILA Program currently provides reimbursements for eligible legal costs incurred by those who have experienced military sexual misconduct.

Highlights and achievements



Program launch

Launched the first phase of the ILA Program in May 2023, providing reimbursements for eligible legal costs incurred by those who have experienced military sexual misconduct.



Collaboration

Worked closely with the Canadian Forces Legal Advisor and Office of the Judge Advocate General, as well as consulting the community through the Community consultations initiative, to ensure all aspects of the ILA Program align with the 2022 Independent External Comprehensive Review by Justice Louise Arbour.



Program evolution

Prepared to launch a second phase in the 2024-2025 fiscal year, which includes staffing a lawyer to provide direct legal information and assistance and raising awareness among potential clients.



Organizational Learning Management Team

In 2023-2024, the SMSRC's Training and Education team transitioned into the Organizational Learning and Management Team (OLM) with a new mandate: To manage a range of learning activities to build individual and organizational capacity.

Highlights and achievements

Staff assistance visits

Conducted 16 Staff Assistance Visits across Canada to ensure the delivery of Respect in the CAF workshop content is current and trauma-informed.

Operational review

Conducted a review of daily operations to improve the SMSRC's responsiveness, efficiency, and credibility.

Outreach support

Assisted with delivering presentations about the SMSRC, Trauma-Informed Approach and a hybrid of the two presentations, providing tools and resources for DND/CAF leaders in addressing sexual misconduct and information for those affected.

Competency development

Worked with Programs and Services to determine core competencies required for SMSRC service providers.

Quick facts

Organized various specialized training sessions, including:

4 sessions

with **94 employees** participating to refine and support specialized skills in assisting and supporting men with trauma.

14 sessions

of Conversations on Defence Ethics for **180 employees**, facilitating conversations on ethics in the workplace.

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training for **71 employees** in **6 workshops** to ensure staff are better able to support clients in times of crisis.

Community Support for Sexual Misconduct Survivors Grant Program

The Community Support for Sexual Misconduct Survivors Grant Program funds projects led by community-based, not-for-profit service providers across Canada to expand support services for those affected by sexual misconduct. The funding helps increase access to counselling, peer support, and other critical resources in local communities.

Highlights and achievements

32

Funded projects

Funded 32 projects in the first call for applications, with 9 one-time projects completed in 2023-2024.



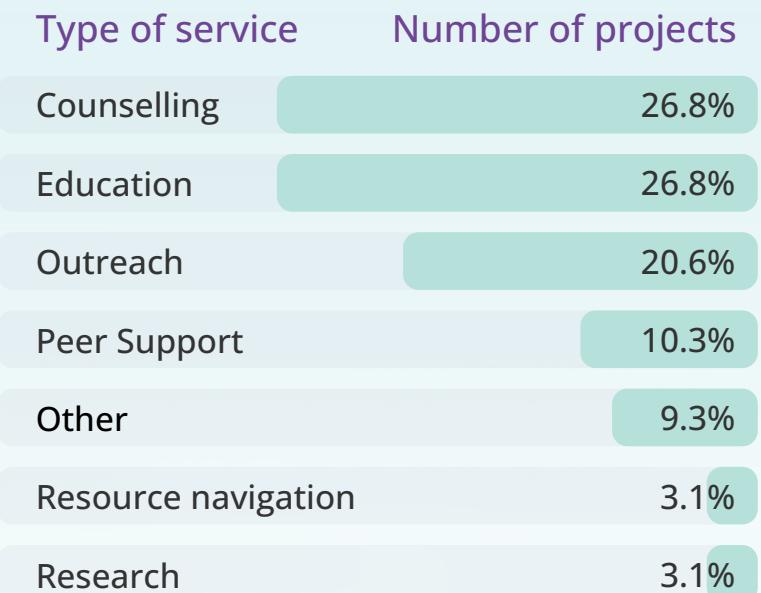
Addressed gaps in funding

Launched a second call for applications to address gaps, prioritizing underserved populations, and remote locations, including six provinces/territories where agreements were not established in the first call. Funded 11 new projects.

Quick facts

800+
Defence community members have been reached through funded projects.

Figure 6: Types of services provided by funded projects



External Advisory Council

The SMSRC's External Advisory Council (EAC) was established in 2018 to provide independent, third-party advice on issues related to sexual misconduct in the Department of National Defence (DND) and Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).

Highlights and achievements



Meetings

The EAC met three times throughout the year, including one-in person meeting in Fall 2023.



Topics

Discussed the results of the 2022 Survey on Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, the comprehensive model for the Independent Legal Assistance Program and the recommendation from the Independent External Comprehensive Review on the EAC's role, composition, and governance. The EAC members provided valuable feedback and advice that helped inform these programs and activities.

Policy, Research, and Partnerships

The SMSRC conducts research, analysis, and consultations on sexual misconduct within the Defence community, focusing on the prevalence, impacts, and best practices for prevention and response. This evidence-based work informs the development of policies, programs, and initiatives to address sexual misconduct, providing guidance and information on sexual misconduct prevention and responses.

Highlights and achievements

Community consultations

Launched an initiative to invite wider Defence community members to provide feedback to improve support services and programs for people affected by sexual misconduct. Hosted the SMSRC's first consultations in fall 2023.

Subject Matter Expertise (SME)

Provided expert recommendations on trauma-informed approach to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. Advised the DND/CAF on key priorities including the repeal of Duty to Report, amendments to policies related to sexual misconduct and related training, education, GBA Plus, intersectionality considerations, and trauma-informed practices aided in program and protocol development.

Quick facts

77
community
members

were involved in the SMSRC's first Community Consultations which ensured the SMSRC understood the community's preferences on the consultation topics.

Community Consultations on the [terms of reference for Community Consultations](#), the [Independent Legal Assistance Program](#) were held.

Independent External Comprehensive Review (IECR)

Collaborated with internal and interdepartmental stakeholders to implement IECR recommendations impacting the SMSRC. In 2023-2024, IECR recommendations [15 on the ownership of training and prevention](#) and [43 on the SMSRC's ability to direct an administrative investigation](#), were fully implemented.

Survey on Sexual Misconduct in the CAF (SSMCAF)

Coordinated with Statistics Canada to launch the third cycle of the SSMCAF. The results report was released by Statistics Canada on December 5, 2023. The SMSRC began work on interpreting the findings and further analysis to inform policies and initiatives promoting culture change and support services for individuals affected by sexual misconduct.

Communications, Marketing and Outreach

The Communications, Marketing and Outreach team provides strategic communications advice and support across the SMSRC.

Highlights and achievements

Social media

Built on the SMSRC's existing presence on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook and LinkedIn. Social media focused on maintaining high post engagement rates to ensure effective reach and interaction with the SMSRC's large target audience.

Outreach

Increased awareness of the SMSRC's programs and services using a variety of communication methods that included digital marketing tools (i.e. social media, web, etc.). promotional material, SMSRC presence at internal and external events and virtual and in-person information sessions, delivered in collaboration with personnel from the 24/7 line, the RSC Team, and the Military Liaison Team. All outreach efforts will be guided by a trauma-informed approach. This strategy is person-centered, trauma informed, respectful, safe and culturally appropriate.

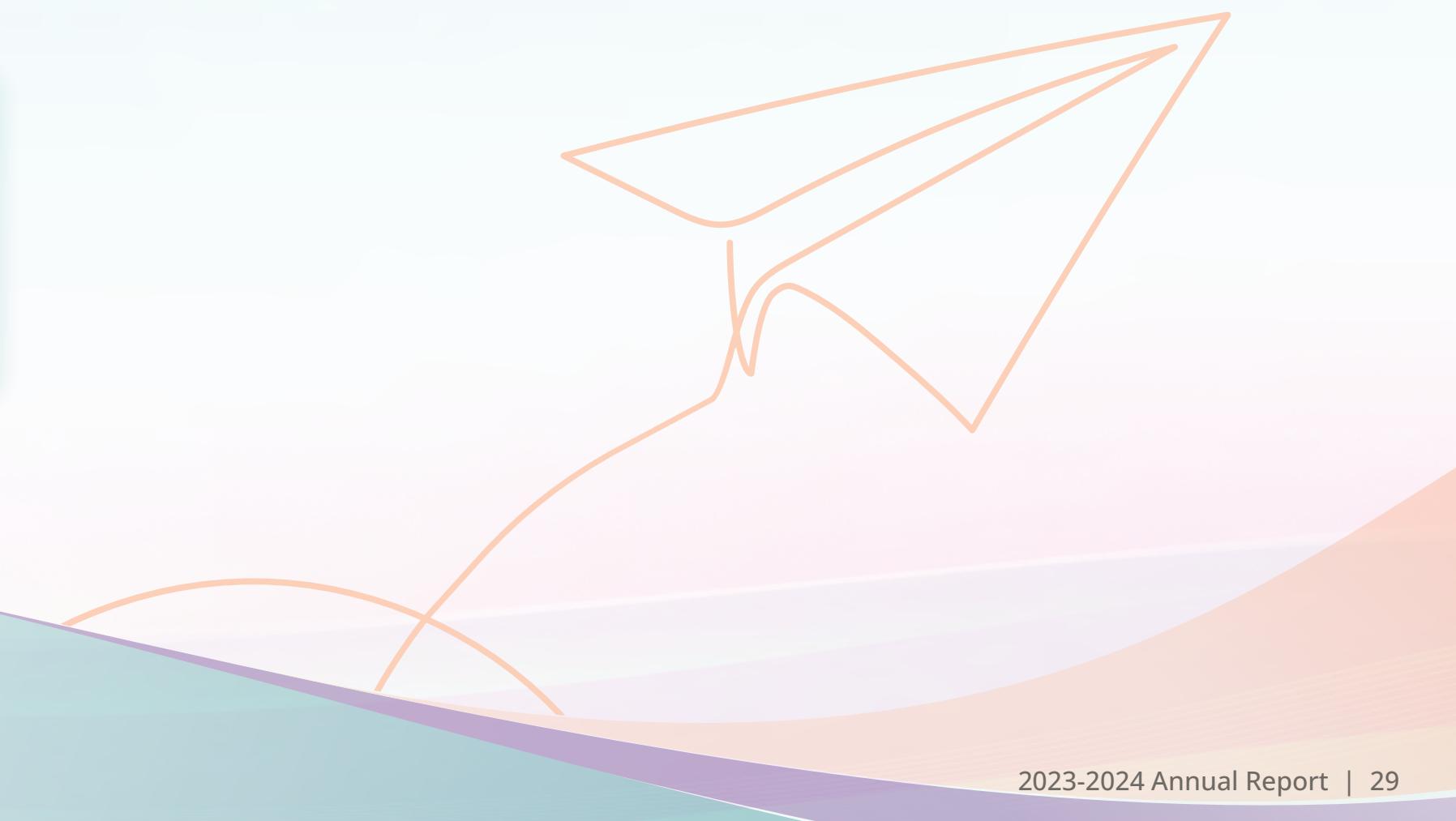
Quick facts

58,961

of visitors to the [SMSRC website landing page](#).

196

sessions and events that were delivered by the Communication's Outreach team to over **5,452** DND/CAF members and the wider Defence community.



Military Liaison Team (MLT)

The Military Liaison Team (MLT) is a key partner in the SMSRC's comprehensive approach to addressing sexual misconduct in the DND/CAF communities. The MLT consists of three Military Liaison Officers and a Military Police Liaison Officer.

Highlights and achievements



Guidance and support

Provided information and guidance about internal CAF policies and procedures to individuals impacted by sexual misconduct and those supporting them. These efforts have increased responsiveness from Chains of Command and established the team as a valuable resource for CAF members and Chains of Command.

Quick facts

Participated in **93 outreach** sessions and assisted in planning and coordinating SMSRC outreach visits to various bases.

Provided **8 training sessions** to SMSRC staff as part of onboarding and professional development activities.

Handled **280 referrals** over the past year, with most calls related to investigation status, duty to report, and reporting incidents of sexual misconduct.

Moving Forward

As SMSRC moves into the upcoming fiscal year, the organization will continue to focus on strengthening its foundation and expanding its impact. This will start with finalizing a mandate revision for the SMSRC initiated as a result of the recommendations of the Independent External Comprehensive Review, the many mandate changes that have occurred over the last few years and to better align with the organization's current focus.

To ensure we continuously improve programs and services to meet the evolving needs of those affected by sexual misconduct, SMSRC will also design and launch a client experience survey, designed to gather invaluable feedback on our programs, services, and resources.

To complement that, in the first half of the year, the teams that make up the SMSRC will embark on a strategic planning process that will solidify the organization's vision, mission, values to ensure goals and priorities align with the new mandate, and the evolving needs of the client groups and the community. This process will involve gathering input from personnel and key stakeholders, evaluating and strengthening current programs and services, and setting clear priorities for the years ahead.

From a resources standpoint, stabilizing SMSRC's resources is another key priority, starting with its annual allocated budget. By securing sustainable funding sources, SMSRC will continue to offer vital support and resources for years to come. SMSRC will continue to refine existing programs and services, making sure they are as effective and accessible as possible.

In the coming year, we will continue to increase awareness of SMSRC programs and services by expanding outreach efforts and ensuring that information, services and resources are accessible to people who may need them. SMSRC will continue to strengthen its partnerships with national and local organizations to help provide comprehensive support to people affected by sexual misconduct.

Looking ahead, SMSRC remains committed to building on its foundation, continually improving its programs and services, and working towards a future where everyone feels safer, respected and supported.