

Centre reaches out to York community

by Sheena Jarvis

The Sexual Harassment Education and Complaint Centre has been operated by the university for the past seven years. During that time, the number of harassment cases reported to SHEACC has increased by about 50 per cent. In the last year, 145 cases were reported.

Dale Hall, a counsellor at the centre, said she doesn't feel these statistics are anomalous for a campus of this size.

"I think we have more reporting [than other campuses] because our centre has been around longer," she said.

"The more education we do, the more people know we're here," and the more people will report abuses, she added.

According to Hall, reports of misogynist graffiti, sexual harassment and sexist behaviour have greatly increased since the 1989 Montreal massacre where 14 female students were killed at the Ecole Polytechnique.

"I don't think there are more incidents, but there is more reporting," she said.

SHEACC has become more than a complaint centre. Their outreach programs include training and workshops for residences to educate the students about such issues as date and acquaintance rape.

SHEACC can also function as a mediator, acting as a third party in complaint cases. However, Hall said many people phone the centre for advice and then try to deal with the problem on their own.

One of the most important things SHEACC does within the community is to act as a resource centre for women who need help and don't know to whom they can turn. "Anything concerning safety for women, we get calls on," said Hall.

COMMUNITY

Looking into non-profit services at York

The centre helps with short-term counselling but "we cannot offer long-term counselling for victims of assault, incest or battery," said Hall. However, the centre will direct individuals to organizations which can accommodate long-term counselling.

The centre works closely with York Security, exchanging information with them and following up on reports of sexual harassment.

SHEACC maintains a safehouse on campus where women who feel threatened or have been assaulted can stay at night.

With the existence of residences for married couples on campus and the number of women who attend York, the safehouse is an important service. Due to chronic underfunding it is a very small unit but is available 24 hours a day.

According to Hall, "we're the only campus I know of that has this."

Last month, York Security donated goods to the safehouse to make it more comfortable. According to Hall, if a woman calls up after hours and needs somewhere to go, security officers have access to the unit. "They can offer the woman a safe place to go for the night if she wants it."

Other services offered by SHEACC are on-campus educational sessions, a resource library, and answering machines they can loan to individuals who are receiving harassing or threatening phone calls.

"Although I'm not satisfied with what we have and I think we need a hell of a lot more, I think in many ways we're ahead of the ballgame" said Hall.

TODAY



A workshop given by Dale Hall

of the

SEXUAL HARASSMENT EDUCATION AND COMPLAINT CENTRE

to be held on

November 6th, 1991
at **5pm**

NEW SWITCHBOARD HOURS

Effective November 11, 1991 the York University Switchboard will change its hours of operation to the following:

Monday through Friday
8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Saturday, Sunday & Statutory Holidays
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Please inform your callers of the new hours of operation.

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In the event of an emergency dial 736-5333 and you will reach the Security Control Centre.

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