

Community Victim Services Translates Overwhelming Processes into Plain English

At Haven's office, 29-year-old Avery* was relating her story to Gillian*, a Community Victim Service Worker. Two days earlier, her partner of three years, Ray*, had punched her during an argument—and it wasn't the first time. The neighbour from the apartment next door had called the police and Ray had been arrested.

Avery was now staying with her mom who had told her that no one deserves to be hit, for any reason. She was embarrassed, overwhelmed, didn't understand what was going to happen, and didn't know what she was supposed to do.

In plain English, Gillian explained how the court process worked. She offered Avery contact information for the Crown Counsel and the Justice Access Centre. She helped her to fill out forms for the Crime Victim Assistance Program so that Avery could access counselling—because self-care was a priority. She also referred Avery to Haven's Outreach Program who could assist with housing options.

Avery was relieved to hear that the Domestic Violence Court used a problem-solving, therapeutic process that referred those involved with ongoing community supports. She cared about Ray and also wanted him to receive help. If he chose, he could also attend Haven's Men Choose Respect program.

By the end of her appointment, Avery understood the process and knew what she had to do. It was going to take time to process everything that had happened—and right now it was enough for her to focus on the next few days.

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* For privacy reasons, this story and all names are fictional, but it represents the experiences of our clients.