

Renewed space for safety and healing: Headwaters unveils renovated Sunrise Centre

Headwaters is proud to unveil its newly renovated Sunrise Centre. The updated centre will support the hospital's commitment to providing accessible, high-quality support and resources for those affected by sexual assault and domestic violence (SADV).

The Sunrise Centre is one of 37 SADV treatment centres across Ontario. It provides OHIP-funded access to medical forensic supports and resources for community members affected by SADV.

Before the renovations, the Sunrise Centre housed furniture from the 1990s with outdated design features. Siobhan Bell, SADV program leader for Headwaters, said the Centre "didn't provide a space that conveyed care and holistic compassion."

Headwaters added that creating a compassionate environment is essential in helping people navigate some of the most traumatic experiences of their lives.

Working with partners from Caledon Dufferin Victim Services, the Ontario Provincial Police, and the Punjabi Community Health Services, Headwaters received a grant to renovate the Sunrise Centre to improve capacity and support for patients and their supporters.

The renovation has created a more welcoming and comforting space, with inviting colours and touches of purple, the colour associated with awareness of violence against women.

"The overall vibe of the space now reflects the promise to our patients to holistically support them in accessing resources and medical forensic care," said Siobhan.

In 2024, intimate partner violence (IPV) was declared an epidemic in Dufferin County.

"This should tell you something about the rates of domestic violence and IPV seen across the county," said Siobhan.

In 2024-25, Caledon Dufferin Victim Services assisted 1,549 new victims of crime. Of those assisted, 613 were specifically for sexual violence, criminal harassment and intimate partner violence.

The Sunrise Centre will help address this growing need in the community.

"Our community is full of courageous people who have been victims of sexual and intimate partner violence and who do not know that they have options, support, and resources," said Siobhan.

The Sunrise Centre aims to work closely with community partners across the province to ensure patients are connected with the supports they need to stay safe. This includes local partnerships with Family Transition Place (FTP) and Dufferin Child and Family Services (DCAFS), which provide extensive counselling support.

Services offered by the centre include the collection and storage of forensic evidence, written and photographic documentation of SADV experiences, and nurse-led assessments of physical, psychological, and social health. In addition, the Centre offers treatment for the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, as well as many other options for support, such as counselling.

"The Sunrise Centre follow-up clinic ensures that patients have someone to provide acute and immediate health and holistic support for physical and mental health needs, while also ensuring they have another place for safety planning and other supports," explained Siobhan.

The Sunrise Centre also provides comprehensive assessments of traumatic brain injuries and non-fatal strangulation, which are two very important and under-supported consequences of IPV, according to Siobhan.

The Sunrise Centre represents Headwaters' unwavering commitment to providing compassionate care for those affected by sexual and domestic violence. This renovated space reflects the dignity, safety, and support every person in our community deserves," said Kim Delahunt, president and CEO of Headwaters Health Care Centre.

The Sunrise Centre is available 24/7, 365 days a year.

Those affected by SADV or IPV can contact the Sunrise Centre at 519 941 2702, ext. 2519, to speak with a forensic nurse. Anyone who is impacted is also encouraged to visit Headwaters' Emergency Department and request to see the physician and forensic nurse examiner.

For non urgent needs, email: sadvreferrals@headwatershealth.ca

"As the program lead, I am so proud of the work our team is doing and so proud that our hospital is now providing a space where our patients can truly feel the care and professionalism that we bring to this work," said Siobhan.