

#TalkJustice : 2- Getting Help

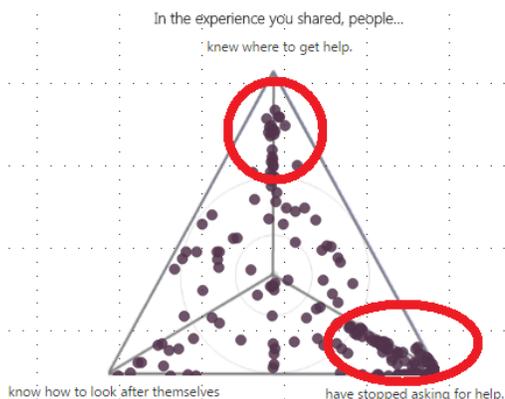
Fall 2017

INTRODUCTION

Since the spring of 2016, the #TalkJustice project has been collecting experiences of Nova Scotians concerning our justice system. To date, Nova Scotians have shared over 220 experiences with us. They were collected as 'top of mind' thoughts and were provided along with responses to a few additional questions that would help interpret the story. This update provides information concerning those experiences.

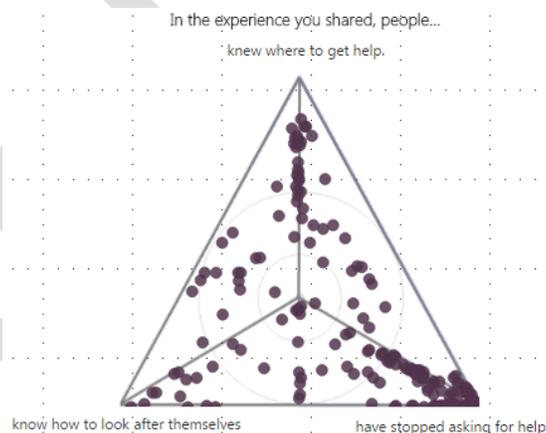
THE TRIAD

The primary tool for analysis is the triad. Respondents are asked to 'tag' their stories with meaning using quantitative tools. In the case of the triad, respondents are asked to provide context for their story by clicking on a point in the triad that reflects the position of the story. To the left (and below) is the first triad of the #TalkJustice project. While responses reflect many different perspectives, there are two interesting clusters of response at the top and bottom right corners.



Responses in the bottom right corner that are circled, in fact, represent approximately 35%

of total responses to date. That is to say that about 35% of the respondents said that their story was related to **people having stopped asking for help**. In and of itself, this is an important finding.



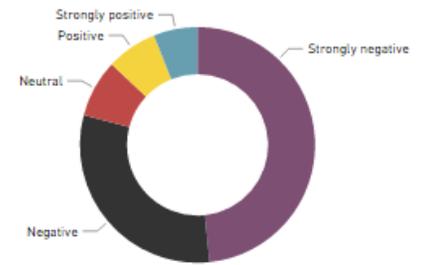
[Stopped asking for help] I was sexually abused in the sex industry as a child and teenager and I did not have active memory of the incidents until my 30s and 40s and at the time the incidents occurred it never would have occurred to me that the justice system would be on my side.

[Stopped asking for help] 40 years ago a relative passed away. All of his assets were not dispersed according to the terms of his will. Besides over \$50000 in a bank account there were also many shares in various companies. When this was discovered in 2012 it was put in the hands of a <city> law firm <law firm>. Five years and at least three law firm lawyers later the funds have still not been dispersed. Yet the law firm is claiming over \$20000 in legal fees over \$2000 of which was for keeping people informed which amounted to two mail-out letters to the survivors during those 5 years. I find those fees exorbitant and unjustified and feel that the case was not given the proper attention nor dealt with in an expeditious manner.

WHO STOPS ASKING FOR HELP?

The issue of not seeking help is highly relevant to the provision of public services that are almost always 'passive' in their orientation. That is to say, most services are not designed to be pro-active and so require persons in need of support (or a supportive agency) to be able to assess their own requirements and *actively* seek out fulfillment. When people stop seeking help or become resigned, their access to programs and services that they would benefit from can be diminished.

Its also useful to note that that majority of stories to date were identified as either 'negative' or 'very negative' by their authors. It is in this context that we should look at the specifics of those shared experiences of people who stopped asking for help. The point here is that in the context of a negatively slanted story bank, one would expect that a large portion of respondents to Triad1 would reflect that people "stopped asking for help".



THEMES OF 'STOPPED ASKING' SHARED EXPERIENCES

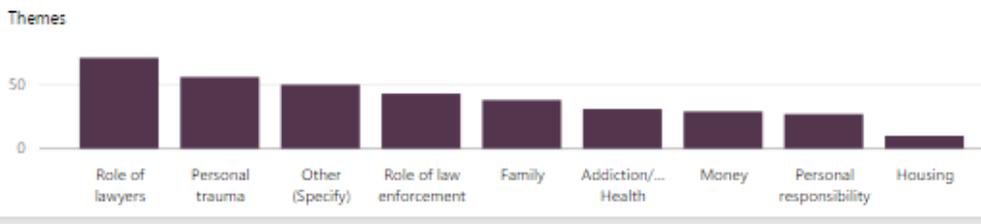
Equity-seeking groups

People from equity-seeking groups are more likely to share an experience in which they report that people have stopped asking for help. While members of equity-seeking groups make up about 20% of our study population to date, they make up about 25% of the respondents who have reported that their story is about people who have stopped asking for help.

Personal Trauma

The themes of all shared experiences received to date are below (n=221). The largest cluster of stories is in the theme "Role of Lawyers". The second most frequent is in the "Personal Trauma" theme. Over forty percent of the 'stopped asking' subset is also in the personal trauma theme. This reflects a strong relationship between a personally traumatic experience while engaged with the justice system and decisions to not seek help.

Stopped asking for Help	Value
Acadian / Acadien	7
African Nova Scotian / Black	5
I prefer not to answer	10
Immigrant or refugee	2
Lesbian gay bisexual	3
Mikmaq / Indigenous	4
None of the above	25
Other (specify)	8
Person with a disability	6
Total	70



[Theme: Personal Trauma, Stopped asking for help] I am a mom who was recently incarcerated and when I went to jail my kids were placed in care. Now I am out and I can't get them back. They are living with their father who is angry and abusive and he has spent years and years in jail.

Incarceration

One could argue that incarceration is by its nature personally traumatic, however challenging situations can arise when it is coupled with the hopelessness reflected in choosing not to seek help. The triad to the right reflects experiences that were about 'being arrested' and 'being in jail'. The large proportion of responses in the bottom right corner supports the notion that hopelessness and resignation can be coupled with the experience of incarceration

