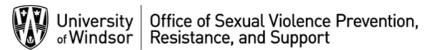




**Season 3 Episode 1: Support with  
the Office of Sexual Violence**  
with Dr. Dusty Johnstone



**Prevent Resist Support Podcast**

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Anne Rudzinski: Hi, everyone, I'm Anne Rudzinski. And you're listening to Season 3 of Prevent Resist Support, a podcast by the Office of Sexual Violence Prevention, Resistance and Support at the University of Windsor.

Music: I got your back my dear and I know that you got mine. I feel that hope and fear but I know we'll hold the line. Keep your head up. Keep your hand out when your breath is feeling short. Prevent, Resist, Support.

Anne: Hi, everyone, I can't believe we're on Season 3. We started this podcast in 2020 as a way to reach students, staff and faculty in our community with information and resources about sexual violence and discussion about topics that relate to sexual violence. We found that folks were not as able to come out to workshops when they're virtual, and we wanted to create some content that folks could access whenever they wanted. And it's really exciting that we're here today with Season 3. Today, our episode focuses on getting support after any kind of unwanted experience of sexual violence or anything that's kind of yucky that falls in that spectrum of things. Our guest is Dr. Dusty Johnstone. Dusty is our sexual violence support human at the University of Windsor. And she'll tell you more about her official title, her role at the university and how it came to be in our episode today.

Welcome, Dusty,

Dr. Dusty Johnstone: Thank you, Anne.

Anne: I feel like it's awkward for us to do an introduction because we already know each other so well and work with each other. But could you introduce yourself to our listeners?

Dusty: Sure. I'm Dr. Dusty Johnstone, and I'm the Director of Sexual Violence prevention, Resistance and Support at the University of Windsor.

Anne: So can you tell us a little bit about what does that mean? What is your role at the university? How does that relate to our campus community?

Dusty: Sure. So my role is to oversee all aspects of our sexual violence strategy at the university, which is in our office title, of course, we really espouse to Prevent Resist and Support. But in particular, from the beginning, my role has really been designed to focus on the support piece of things and to make sure that members of our campus community who've experienced any form of harm, any form of sexual harm at any time in their life, have access to someone for support if they need it, however that might look for them, we just want to make sure that people have a central point for receiving support on campus.

Anne: Amazing. So as is the theme of our episode, today, we're going to talk about what that looks like, and kind of the ins and outs of what's involved in that. But my standard question that I love to ask people when they visit our podcast is can you tell us a little bit about how you got into this role? Because I feel like we have lots of student listeners who maybe think, Wow, that's a really cool job, and how did you get your really cool job?

Dusty: Sure. Okay. So I guess we have to go back and kind of really far, I was graduating from undergrad and I just really knew that I did not want to go back to living at home. Okay, so whatever I needed to do, I was going to like go to graduate school, so that I did not have to go back to living in rural New Brunswick. Not that there's anything wrong with rural New Brunswick just was not my life choice at that time. And so I wanted to study something in women's health, like kind of vaguely seeing I just do like, that mattered to me, but I didn't have a specific vision for that. And

I was accepted to the University of Windsor for grad school. I came here. And I started working with Dr. Charlene Senn in our Psychology Department, really, just by good fortune, I needed a supervisor, and she wasn't really taking students, but she was interested in, you know, who I was as a person and that I had a background in women's studies. And so through her, I started to study gender based violence, because that was sort of like her area, and I need to do something on that topic. And so I thought, yes, women's health, gender based violence, these things align, this makes good sense. So I started studying women's experiences of trying to like label and make sense of sexual violence because what I realized through my own lived experience is that so many of my friends had these experiences that I felt were coercive, and I - to me felt like sexual violence, but they didn't label them and in that way, it was, it was normal, or it was dismissed, or they didn't feel like they could claim that kind of label. But these experiences were still causing a lot of like distress. And so I thought, this is interesting. I need to study this. And I did. And that is really how I started to get into this work because I started to develop this real understanding of how we experience sexual violence, how we make sense of it. And from there I had opportunities to start teaching in the very early years of our Bystander program on campus. So those courses that we prepare students to become peer facilitators who then teach prevention education, I got to develop those and teach them. And that was transformative. Like that was the moment I feel like when my future and this work really crystallized, and it was so meaningful. And from, you know, my years of teaching, I then moved into the role that I'm in currently, where the focus is less on education, and more on the response part of things. But it all fits together, like all of the prevention, the education, the support, I all see it as fitting together. And so I feel tremendously fortunate to get to do the work that I do.

Anne: I think that's amazing. And I feel like it dovetails so well into our discussion of how was the Office created? And talking a little bit about those ministry mandates that mean that we have these offices. But really fast, I'm going to plug that Dr. Charlene Senn has visited our podcast. And so if you're curious about the work that she's been doing in the last little while, she did visit to talk about some of her research on the Flip the Script program. So real fast plug to check out that episode.

But yeah, Dusty, can you tell us more about, we didn't always have sexual violence offices on campus. So how did this come about? I know that you were really involved in the creation of this office and what it looks like, can you tell us a bit of that history?

Dusty: Absolutely. The longer history is that we've known for a good 40 years, that there's really high rates of sexual violence on university campuses, that's been well established. There's been a lot of research on that. But the public response to that has been pretty slow. But things started to change about 10 years ago. And then in 2015, the provincial government actually mandated that all of the post secondary institutions in Ontario that receive public funding needed to have standalone sexual misconduct policies. And that was like a legislative that as a concerted effort to try to make universities accountable for engaging with this issue of being responsive to it. And so we had already started working on a Sexual Misconduct Policy prior to even 2015. I'm going to say I think we started working on it in 2014. And I was part of that process. But what we realized after that legislation was mandated, and we were getting near to the point of finalizing our policy is that in order for a university to have a sensitive, responsive policy, you need to have an actual human that can make that policy actionable, like good policies don't just manifest in meaningful, productive ways, if you don't have people that can do the work to make that happen. And so in order to make our policy really work, we needed someone to do that. And so that's when my role was created. And it's not like the primary part of it was to like oversee the policy, the primary part of it was to provide the support that people need in order for our policy to be responsive and sensitive to their experiences. And in order to ensure that people are cared for as well as possible. And so in the beginning, it was really this intention that I could receive disclosures, and then if people wanted to file complaints through the university, I could help guide them through that process. So they wouldn't be navigating it on their own, they wouldn't have to figure it out on their own, I could help them do that. And that still is absolutely part of my work. It's not the biggest part of my work by any means. But I am grateful that legislation happened because it opened the space for the resources that we needed to do this work more comprehensively overall.

Anne: I mean, I'm obviously super biased because I work here, but I think it's really cool to see how this has kind of grown from that point into what the Office is now, which is having this much larger structure. So do you mind taking a quick minute to describe our Prevent Resist Support strategy? And what that looks like in terms of that comprehensive approach?

Dusty: Yeah, absolutely. So when I was first in this role, it was very support focused, there was a bit of an education component. And then there were the more administrative pieces. But what became really obvious to me is that we needed more in the way of education. And so I was coming from a background in Bystander where we were already doing tons of prevention education. And then there was also you know, the other really meaningful work happening on our campus around sexual assault resistance, but then just generally, public education factors into what do people even know about the supports that are offered on campus and the resources and what their options are? Like we need education just to open the opportunity for people to seek our services. And so we needed to build in capacity to do more of that work. And when I started to imagine what would this ideally look like, you know, I realized we would be best guided by using a public health model. And the public health model is simple in that it focuses on three stages of intervention for public health problems. And I consider gender based violence to be a public health problem, because of the magnitude of it, the scope and the number of people it affects. So the first stage, there's primary intervention, that is before things happen, ideally you intervene and prevent them from happening at that point. That's really like the best option, the best goal for us is to prevent before it happens. And we do a lot of that already through a Bystander work. That's not the only piece of it, though, there are other potential strategies and education that can be done to facilitate prevention. But prevention isn't easy. If it was easy, we would have already done it. But it takes changing cultural attitudes towards this problem. It isn't just about stopping one person, it's about changing the attitudes of all of the people who choose not to recognize or see the harm that's occurring around them. And so we know with prevention, and we're looking at a really like long term project. So in the meantime, while we are attempting to change the

culture, and engage people as Bystanders, to prevent sexual violence, women are still being harmed. And what can we do in the immediate to give women the tools to keep themselves as safe as possible, if someone tries to harm them? And I want to be really clear, women cannot prevent someone else from choosing to act in a harmful way. That is on that other person for choosing to be coercive. But I absolutely do believe if someone else chooses to be coercive, you are entitled to do whatever you need to do to keep yourself safe in that situation. And we don't socialize women to always feel that that is what they can prioritize, we often socialize them to be agreeable or to, you know, just try to get along with people to not make a fuss to not make assumptions. And unfortunately, that works against women being able to do the things to keep themselves safe sometimes when someone else is trying to be harmful. So that secondary intervention is when harm is already starting to occur, someone else is initiating a process of harm. And we interrupted before it gets worse, or get out of that situation. And so that's where the resistance education that we offer really comes in, whether that be through Flip the Script, or whether that be through the Wen Do Self Defence training that we offer, that resistance piece is that secondary point of intervention in this kind of three point, public health model for responding to gender based violence. And then the third part is when harm has already occurred, what can we do to mitigate the effects of that harm, so that it doesn't get worse for the person who has been harmed? And that's where the support piece is critical. How do we as an institution, make sure that survivors of sexual violence are being cared for being responded to appropriately? And so part of that, of course, is that's my job. That is to make sure that I'm an access point for people to get the support that we need. But this is also the building capacity for the whole campus. Because one person alone isn't going to change everything for everybody, but an entire campus of people who recognize when someone has experienced sexual violence, who are sensitive to it, who know what to say, what is helpful, isn't helpful, who know how to refer, those things can make a critical difference. We know that most people are going to disclose informally to someone that they already know, they're not going to seek out a professional as their first point of contact. And so if we can build the capacity of the people in our community to receive those disclosures, informally from a friend or a

family member and know what to do, then we're really increasing the likelihood that the person has been harmed will receive the response that they need, will get access to the resources that they need, and will not be further harmed in the process of disclosure, because that's always the concern. We don't want people to be more harmed, because they've disclosed what's happened.

Anne: I think that's such a great summary of all of the things that we do, given that there are a lot of them like it is a it's a complex and comprehensive system of things that we do. There's a lot of different things we do to impact this complicated problem. And I think that that is also true about the support that folks can access. I think that there's a lot of different things that you do in the vein of support. And so I think that's kind of the next piece that I would love to chat about. Let's start with who can I access support from you who is able to reach out to you?

Dusty: Any member of our campus community be that students, staff or faculty. Our policy was really intentionally written to be broad, the majority of people who do reach out are students, but certainly anyone who works here in any capacity can reach out to me. Sometimes I've had alumni even reach out to me to talk about prior experiences. And I'm more than happy to have those conversations as well. But yeah, really, I try to be accessible to as many people as possible, who identify as members of our community.

Anne: Amazing. And then how do folks go about reaching out if they would like to get in touch? What are the ways that they can reach out to you?

Dusty: I mean, typically, we would encourage people to contact us by email, whether that be you know, to me personally, through our website, using the contact form on our website, or using our svsupport@uwindsor.ca email, usually, that's the best strategy to make sure you're going to get a quick response. I mean, people can also call our number as well, though, because we're less often in the office now, or, you know, sometimes from home, I find just generally, email is good. We don't encourage drop ins simply because we have limited resources. And we're very often with clients. So a drop in might not work because we unfortunately, might not be free. But if people reach out by email, I

really try to make sure that we can see them within 48 business hours, if possible. So sometimes with scheduling, that's just not possible. But we really do try to make sure that it's not a long wait to connect with somebody. Because we know that can be such a barrier. So we really try to see people as fast as we can.

Anne: Amazing. And then what does that initial appointment typically look like? I often wonder if that might be a barrier to folks, "I'm just not sure what it will look like to access support. I'm not sure if there will be like requirements or things that happen automatically." And I know that you and I both try to make sure that folks know there are no requirements. But can you kind of walk us through what does that initial appointment often look like with you?

Dusty: Absolutely. Kind of the first thing is just getting to know each other a little bit, it's helpful for me to just have some context of like, what program are you in? The, tell me about that? How are your classes going? To get just a sense of who they are in the world, and you know what their current context is. And then you know, as we get kind of a little bit more comfortable with each other, I invite people to tell me, you know, what has led them to reach out? And I try to be really clear about like, what the limits are with confidentiality. Fortunately, like we have a really high threshold, there are very few situations where we need to break confidentiality. But I lay that out in that conversation. So that they know, before we get into discussing things, what they will or will not necessarily feel comfortable telling me about. And then I also tell them, you can tell me as much or as little detail what's been going on. So if it's helpful for you, and you want to kind of give me the full picture of what you've experienced, by all means, I mean, I am here to hold space for that. Or sometimes people are like, I really don't want to get into this at all. That's not what I'm here for. I just I just need some help, I need you to help me figure out some tangible supports or to engage in some problem solving. And I don't want to tell you my story. No problem. I think the most important thing for people coming to the Office is just to know, they don't owe us anything, they don't have any obligation, we're here to support in whatever ways is going to feel most helpful for them. And what people need can look really different. And we really try to be responsive to what their particular needs are. And

sometimes that means just a one time conversation, sometimes that means some ongoing support. That totally depends. Some people need accommodations, we can help coordinate that. Or maybe they're worried about we're running into someone on campus who's caused them harm. And so we can think through that together based on the particulars of their situation like Okay, are there any things that we can do to make you feel safer on campus or to mitigate the likelihood that you're going to run into this person, are there other supports or resources that you might need? Where I'm coming from in this work is the first piece to me is making sure people just feel like you know what, you have a space where you can be received without judgment, you can just, whatever's been going on that you feel you would like to kind of get off of your chest, you're welcome to share that here, and we will receive that just with warmth, and with care and with compassion. And you get to set the terms for how much you want to talk about and what you want to talk about. The other thing that I try to offer, if this is something that people need, is problem solving. What can we do that will make your life even a little bit easier? And it might be that there's nothing we can do to change the fact that you've been harmed in a really significant way. And that is just, it's just hot garbage. And maybe we can't change that. But maybe there is something else that's going on that's causing you stress. And we can do something that might alleviate that stress even just a little bit. And when we do that, that creates just a little bit more space for you to access the coping resources that you'll already have. Because people have their own coping resources. But just sometimes they're, they're pulled so thin, that they can't make the best use of them. And so maybe in a small way, there is just something that we can figure out together, that's going to give a little bit more room to cope. And if and if we can do that, great. Maybe that's not what folks need. But that is always something that's like, on my mind, if tangibly, we can figure it something together, then let's do that.

Anne: So I feel like one of my favorite things that you use to describe your job is the language of being a professional problem solvers. So can you give some examples of some of the things that you've done for people that maybe just aren't what we would expect from an office like ours?

Dusty: This kind of goes back to, you know, my previous answer about figuring out if there are things that we can do that will make people's lives just a little bit easier. And sometimes people come to me with a really like, significant problem that they need some help with. And sometimes they're smaller, and, you know, we're just kind of working better together. I mean, a lot of times, we're responding to the need for academic accommodations. And often people won't come and tell me, I need academic accommodations. But they'll tell me like how stressed they are about this exam that they have to write and the person who's caused them harm is in the same class, and they really just, they can't focus when they're in that space. And immediately, it's like, we can do something about that, let's get you connected with Student Accessibility, let's get you writing in a private space, so that you don't have to worry about that. And that's just alleviates, you know, one very immediate problem to give them again, now a little bit more emotional energy for for coping, and for focusing on school. There's a lot of variability in terms of academic accommodations. And so that really is specific to their circumstances. That's why there's no one size fits all. I get a sense of like, what's actually going on with you, and then start to think of like, okay, what are the potential approaches that we can take, that are maybe going to make this a little bit easier for you? So that's one of those tangible things that we do is just helping with academics. But I mean, sometimes, you know, there are other aspects of campus life, like where you're living, you know, being in residence, and maybe that's not feeling safe or comfortable for you. So we reach out to our colleagues in Residence and see what we can do about that. Or maybe it's parking, like sometimes I've been able to get people into a parking lot that feels safer for them, maybe the one that they were in isn't feeling safe. So Okay, is there anything we can do there? I try to think about it as broadly as possible. But I think sometimes to what people need is just to receive care, like just to feel some warmth, and care. And so sometimes we'll identify like, maybe there's a particular book that could be helpful for them as a resource, and we can get that for them. Or maybe sometimes they're just having a really, really bad time. And they're struggling to take care of themselves and struggling to eat, and we can just send them a Skip the Dishes gift card, and for an evening, we can either just order in and really be able to spend some time doing

some self care. Recently, we have this really wonderful experience of someone who had to leave a difficult situation. And I said, You know what, what is weighing on you the most, what is hardest for you to leave, and they said, leaving my plants, I have so many plants that have taken like such good care of them, it's actually really crushing to me to leave them behind. And I'm like, Oh, you need someone to take your plants like like, we will take your plants we will have your plants I we could do a whole Foster Care Program for your plants like that is a thing that can be done. And they were like, Oh, my really? Yes, yes, we do not advertise plant services. But it turns out, that's a thing that we are very willing to do. And so for them, that was actually a big relief of just great, someone will take care of my plants while I need them to. And so while that is not a conventional problem solving tool, it's one that worked in this particular situation for this person. So again, it's so specific, and really, we just try to be as open and creative and responsive as we can be. And sometimes maybe we won't be able to do anything all that useful. I realize that, but even if it's just you know, we've got snacks, we have a nice kind of gentle, quiet place for you to be for a while. Sometimes I've had students who've had unsafe situations at home and they have no privacy, they have no place. And we could just maybe give them like an hour to have a quiet space by themselves for a while. And even that can be something that I think can be nurturing or helpful. So we really try to work from a place of care, a place of creativity and problem solving to just try make people's lives a little bit easier for even a small piece of time, if we can.

Anne: You have this amazing structure that you've created of disclose, report and complaint. So I think a lot of the things that you've described really fall under that disclose category, if somebody's reached out, they need some help with something, there's so many things we can do to help. Let's talk a little bit maybe about what happens if they would like something more formal?

Dusty: Sure. So I'm going to kind of orient us briefly back to our policy, because the point of the policy is to outline what the university's obligations are to people, if they come forward the experience of sexual violence. And we really wanted to be clear that people have choices, you can do nothing at all. Or you can do these things. And so the Disclose

Report Complaint option is meant to be kind of a general overview of your options within the institution for gaining access to support and institutional response. So at the Disclose level, that simply means you are telling someone about what has happened for the purpose of gaining support, there is no obligation there, you don't necessarily want them to do anything, you just want to be able to tell someone what's happened, and be supported in that process. And that is what the majority of people are looking for. We receive disclosures, we provide care, and that's it. But for some people, if they have been harmed by a member of our campus community, they might want to pursue some sort of formal action. And that's where we have the report and the complaint options. And the language is a little bit confusing with that. But what we mean is, when someone files a report, what they're doing is they're providing a written description of what has happened. And they're leaving it with me. And for the time being, they're saying, I don't want to do anything else with this, I don't want this to be investigated or looked into, I just want there to be a written record that this has happened. So that in the future, if I decide, I would like to take more action, that exists, there's already a record of that, that that exists. And so if someone files a report, that just stays with me, it's not going anywhere else, unless they decide that they would like to do something with that. Now, for people who are like, I want to do a thing, like I want to see this move through some sort of institutional process. That's where the complaint option happens. And so a complaint begins, again, with a formal written document that outlines what has happened, and then based upon the parties involved, so who is the person that caused harm? Are they a student, a staff member, a faculty member? How are they situated within the university? Based on that, we figure out which policy within the institution do we need to use to pursue an investigation and the possibility of potential sanctions or discipline for what has happened? So there are different policies that apply to staff, we have HR policies for our staff, and faculty, we have a Student Code of Conduct for our students, sometimes people are in two different roles at once. Maybe they're unemployed, but they're also a student. And we need to think about, okay, what role were they acting in when this harm occurred, and then pursue it. There's a lot of the bureaucratic pieces that I would expect, no one else would ever know. And it's complicated. And that's why like, historically, when survivors

have tried to report through institution, it's just really, really challenging because they don't know all of the internal policies and the procedures and how things happen and who have to speak to. The point of my job is to make sure that survivors don't have to think about those things. They just need to tell me what they would like to do. And then I figure it out for them, and help put that process in place, and help facilitate communication to try to make it as easy as possible. Because filing complaints are hard. Even when the people who are involved are caring and responsive, even then it's still a lot to come forward and to disclose your experience to a stranger and to have them ask questions. And to know that you know, the person who's caused harm, they're being asked questions, and it's, it's a lot emotionally and so it's really important to be cared for through that process. And that is what we endeavor to do through this Office.

Anne: So one of the questions that that brings up for me is, can you tell us a little bit about the REES program and how that fits into all of the structures and options that folks have through the Office?

Dusty: Yes. So historically, people have had the option of reporting directly through the Office. Reaching out to me in some capacity or another, we can discuss their options, and then they're like, Okay, I want to bring forward a complaint. And then I help them do that. But a lot of people have also told us, "I'd really like to be able to report online", like I maybe don't feel ready to talk to an actual person yet, but I would like to be able to report online, that makes a lot of sense. That's something a lot of people want. But it's not without challenges. Because anytime we are putting things online, specifically when it is like highly personal information, we need to be really, really careful about confidentiality, about ensuring that that data is safely stored and protected, that they have control over who it goes to, how it's received, how it's used, and so forth. So we've collaborated with this organization called REES, in order to create a really safe, secure, online reporting platform for our community. So REES has done the work of making sure they have this tool that is trauma informed, that has had survivors, you know, actively involved in providing feedback throughout its development, that has really strong security protections, and that gives her virus control over how they will report their story and who it will be shared with. And so,

REES really opens up a wider range of options, who would like to report. People can still absolutely report to me directly anytime. But if they would rather do it through REES there are a few different tools that it makes available. So one is that people can create a record of their experience. And REES will give them a whole bunch of prompts to help them think about the specifics of that experience to provide as much detail as possible. But they get to choose how much of that they actually want to fill in. People can create their record. And they can choose to just keep it and sit on it and come back to it and edit it and think about it, they can send it right away if they want, but they don't have to. That stays with them. That doesn't go to anybody until they decide that they want to. If they decide, okay, I would now like to bring this to the attention to the university, they can submit that record and it will come to me. And then I get this description of everything that has happened. And I will follow up with them directly to figure out what they would like to do in the way of next steps. So it just it's one of the ways that they can open up a pathway for communication. Without necessarily disclosing verbally, everything that has happened, they can put that into written form, but the next stage in the process is still I'm going to connect with them to make sure that they fully understand the options available to them and can choose what they would like to have happen next. The other cool functions, though, that REES has are what some called anonymous reporting. So this is something like a lot of people really want is they would like to just be able to share what has happened, I think they don't want to be identified. And that's often because of like fear of retribution, or what the consequences could be. And there are some limits to that. When people report anonymously, we are not necessarily able to do an investigation, we might not have enough information that we can actually do one, there is a principle of what they call natural justice, which is not specific to our institution, that's a principle of Administrative Law across the board, which means that people who were accused have the right to know what they are fully being accused of, and who is making the accusation and to respond to that. And so, with an anonymous report, we are not necessarily able to provide all of the information that we would need to an accused party to do an investigation with possibility of sanctions and so forth. So it can be a limitation in that way. But anonymous reporting can still be really helpful and powerful. And then it puts it on my radar, I

know that something is happening, and is now kind of on my radar that it just happened. And we can watch for general patterns. So when we have you know, quite a bit of anonymous reporting data, because you know, a number of people are using it, we can start to see like, Okay, are there certain, like hotspots are there certain, you know, people of concern or places of concern. It's useful in that way. The other thing though, that I really love about REES is it has this functionality that's called Repeat Perpetrator Identification. And so what we know to be true is that there's people who experience harm, who feel scared to come forward or hesitant to come forward or don't want to make too big of a deal of it. They're not sure if it warrants coming forward. But if they find out that someone else has been harmed by the same person that changes everything, they're like, Wait, okay, it's not just me this persons out there causing harm to other people, that is not okay. And that can change what they want to do if they learn that. And so, REES allows people to enter the names or the social media handles or the descriptors of whoever is caused harm in various ways. And if they choose this Repeat Perpetrator Identification, it will match those variables with other people who've been entered into the system. And so, the survivors don't get a notification about that immediately. But I do, if there is a match, and to say the same person comes up twice, I get notified of, hey, we've had multiple people report something about this. And then what I can do from that point is reach out to the survivors who have filled in that information, say, Listen, we've had multiple concerns about this person, does this potentially change what you would like to do in terms of coming forward and doing something formally within the institution? And they might say, like, Nope, not at all. And I'm like, okay, that's, I understand, or they may be like, yes, actually, that does change things, I think I would like to do something formal. And then I can help with that process. REES allows us to get a sense of whether there are people who are committing harm in an ongoing way. And that can be extremely useful information.

Anne: I think REES is actually just very cool. And I feel like maybe people want to learn more about it. And if you do, we have a really awesome episode with Mary from REES. She kind of walks through, you know, how it was created, and some of that confidentiality information, and you know, the features of the program. And so if you're curious about that, check

out that episode, we did have a great conversation with Mary. So one of the last things on my list of things that I would like to chat with you about is, you know, obviously, there are folks who might want to pursue options outside of the university, whether that's like a civil legal route or a criminal justice route, how does that relate to you in the Office? And what are the things that you can provide or help out with if somebody is interested in doing that?

Dusty: Yeah, not everyone who comes to see me has necessarily been harmed by a member of our campus community. And if the person who's caused harm isn't a member of our campus community, then our policies don't apply to that. And there's nothing we can do internally, in the way of like an investigation or procedure. That doesn't mean we can't offer support or accommodation or any of those things. But like, procedurally, there's not a lot that we can do. But they may still have options, you know, within the community more largely for what they can do. The thing that people often think of first, of course, is going to the police, which can be a really complicated experience, it can be something that people have hesitation about, that they don't know what that's going to involve. And so if people are considering that, I really encourage them to come have a conversation with me first. And we can explore what that will look like what that might feel like for them what that involves, what the prospective timeline would be for that. And if they decide that they do want to report sometimes that's actually something like I can help help them with, you know, whether that be online reporting, sometimes that's an option. It is in Windsor, if the harm has occurred in Windsor, or, you know, sometimes I've been able to reach out directly to detectives who have expertise specifically in sexual violence and and kind of help more quickly move that process along. Sometimes that's helpful to people. Sometimes they learn about the process, and they're like, You know what, I don't think that's for me, there's no right or wrong answer with that. But I'm here to help people think through what that might look like, and make an informed choice based on what feels right for them. We can also talk about, you know, other potential options, maybe they don't want to pursue a criminal charge, but they would like to sue the person for causing harm to them and for the ongoing, you know, harm that has occurred. Not a lot of people choose that option, because there is often a cost to it, you know,

whereas through the criminal system, you don't have to personally hire a lawyer, if you were to choose to, you know, sue someone for causing you harm, you probably wouldn't have to pay for that out of pocket. But we can talk about that we can refer people to possible lawyers, if they would like to meet with them. There is a good program through the province that allows survivors of sexual violence to get legal consult. So they can talk through their options with an actual lawyer, which I highly recommend. And it's like, you don't have to do anything with that. But you can get some good legal advice on what your options are, and what that might look like. We can help facilitate that with lawyers who we have really a good history with who we really trust, have a good analysis and gender based violence, because that is a critical piece of it. If you're going to be getting legal advice, we want to make sure you're getting it from someone who really has a sensitive trauma survivor centered approach to the work that they do.

Anne: I don't think I've ever plugged as many episodes from previous seasons as I am in this episode. But if those are things that you're curious about, we do have an episode about the civil legal system, Gillian, and we also have a really wonderful episode about reporting to the police on what the criminal justice system looks like for survivors. And that one's with Laurie. So if you would like to check those out, head back to our previous season. There's some cool resources there for you. What are the types of things that you do for people while they're going through those processes?

Dusty: So here's the thing. Those processes are really hard, and they take a really long time and especially when you're going through the criminal system, a lot of what you're doing is hurry up and wait, where there is no part of that, that's usually within your control. And so you might be like, Okay, there's a date, we're gonna go to a pretrial hearing, and then it gets postponed, and then it gets postponed, and then it gets postponed. And that's really frustrating. I also have absolutely no control over that process at all. But I can be a steady point of contact, or someone who can provide support to, you know, kind of work through how emotionally challenging that is. And our Office can also be a point of connection with the victim support services in the community, as well, we have a good relationship with them. Survivors can work with

them directly, we can connect them together, we can also be part of the conversation to try to build a network of support. I mean, I think that is part of the bigger picture is like if you're going to go through a process like this. I, I wish I could say it would be easy, but like that would be disingenuous, it is hard. And I don't say that to dissuade someone if that's really what they want to do. But the reality is, it's really hard. It takes a really long time. And you're going to need to have a good support system in place. So we can be one part of that. But how do we imagine what other parts of you know, your support network, you can call upon? You know, Anne, you do a really cool exercise with people around pod mapping and mapping out like, what are your supports? Who can you pull in and strategic moments that are going to be there for you? And I'm trying to think about that expansively, because it's real, real hard to go through any sort of legal proceeding, and we want to help coordinate the best support possible for that process.

Anne: Amazing. So my last kind of like, formulated question is how does this relate to other campus services? And I feel like you've kind of already laid that out. But is there anything you want to say about our relationships with some of the other folks on campus?

Dusty: We work with so many different people on campus, and by and large, have really positive relationships with people. And I find like, those relationships are so essential, I'm so grateful to the colleagues that we have, because they help us with the problem solving. Like I might have an idea for how we can problem solve it, but like, I can't just like magically make it happen. I really, you know, need the help of my colleagues and other areas to make it happen. We work with a Registrar's Office, we work with Student Awards, we work with Associate Dean's all the time on academic issues, not to mention, you know, our health services or Student Counseling Services, Peer Support, Residence, like there are so many different people on our campus. And it's almost exclusively been my experience that when I reach out to ask for help, they are very responsive and willing to help. It can be really difficult, I think, for students to know who to ask for help. But we have kind of that ongoing relationship and really like can help make that easier and make some things happen that probably students might not be able to imagine that we could make happen, or even for, you know,

staff, and faculty who know the institutional system, you know, probably better than a lot of students, but might not know it from this angle, might not have needed to access support within the institution. And so we can help do that as well, by leveraging you know, the the ongoing kind of connections and the relationship and the institutional knowledge that we have to try to serve people as best as possible.

Anne: I feel like this has been a really thorough discussion of all the things that we do and all the options that exist and gives a really good sense of just like who you are as a person, and you know, the perspective that you bring to this work. So thank you for spending some time with us today.

Dusty: I'm so glad to. Thanks for giving me the option.

Anne: Is there anything else that you would like our listeners to know about support or any like closing thoughts that you have that you'd like to share today?

Dusty: Yeah, I think I would just say like, nothing's too small. Okay. Nothing is too small for you to reach out about. Not everything needs to necessarily feel like it was the biggest trauma of your life. If you've had an experience that feels like oh, just kind of gross, or unresolved, or I don't know how to make sense of that. Reach out to us. We're happy to talk through that. It can be so easy to dismiss the significance of the things that happened to us. And you don't have to do that for our sake. We're happy to have a conversation no matter what. You still deserve support, whether it feels big or it feels little.

Anne: Amazing. I think that's so important. And I would also echo that, that we just always would love for people to reach out. Yeah. Amazing. Well, thank you for being here with us today. Yeah, we'll share lots of links about all of the things you talked about in the description of our episodes so folks can access all those things, and we'll share all the links for how to reach out to Dusty if you would like to access some support. Bye, everyone!

Dusty: Great! Bye.

Anne: So that was our amazing chat with Dusty. As a reminder, you can find information about getting support here on our UWindsor campus at our website [www.uwindsor.ca/prevent-resist-support](http://www.uwindsor.ca/prevent-resist-support). Thanks so much for joining us today.

Thanks for listening to prevent, resist support, we'd love if you liked, subscribed, followed or even just give us a follow on our Instagram. Then you can see up to date information on our episodes and our events and workshops. Give us a follow at [preventresistsupport](https://www.instagram.com/preventresistsupport). If you need support and you're a member of our UWindsor community, you can reach out to us, the Office of Sexual Violence Prevention, Resistance and Support. You can reach us by email at [svsupport@uwindsor.ca](mailto:svsupport@uwindsor.ca). Or you can check out our website at [www.uwindsor.ca/prevent-resist-support](http://www.uwindsor.ca/prevent-resist-support). You can contact us through the website or view a list of resources on our UWindsor campus and in our Windsor community. If you're not at UWindsor, you can learn about supports and your community through the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres. Their website is [sexualassaultsupport.ca](http://sexualassaultsupport.ca)