



BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance & Counselling Programs

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THE LEE INQUEST



At the end of April 2008, a coroner's inquest was held to investigate the murder-suicide that took place in Oak Bay, BC, in September 2007. Peter Lee murdered his estranged wife, Sunny Park, their son Christian, and Sunny's parents, Kum Lea Chun and Moon Kyu Park.

Building on the interest that the Coroner's office had shown in our Keeping

Women Safe report (see page 13), the BCASVACP, in consultation with lawyer Diane Turner, made an application to participate in the inquest proceedings. The Coroner accepted our application, making this the first inquest in BC to allow participation by a provincial victim-serving organization. We received funding from the Law Foundation to retain Diane Turner as our counsel.

Inquest proceedings began on April 28 and continued until May 7. A Coroner's inquest is not meant to determine fault but to ascertain facts and make recommendations to prevent future tragedies. In Ontario some key inquests into intimate partner homicides have resulted in important recommendations being implemented in that province, including the establishment

of the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, greater justice resources being devoted to violence in relationship cases and a more specialized justice system response to violence in relationships.

The Association's being granted status at the inquest meant that we had the right to question witnesses at the inquest, including police, MCFD, the bail supervisor, and Regional Crown. We also introduced the Keeping Women Safe report as evidence to be considered by the inquest jurors as they made recommendations for change.

We called two witnesses to testify: Tracy Porteous presented evidence related to risk factors for women in violent relationships and recommendations for increasing women's safety, in particular the critical role of specialized victim services and the need for pro-active referral to these services by the justice system. Tracy also raised issues encountered by immigrant women in cases of this kind, such as discrimination and language and cultural barriers to accessing services. Lori Haskell, an Ontario psychologist who is an expert on violence against women and trauma, spoke to the issue of post-traumatic stress often experienced by survivors, how it can be difficult for survivors to disclose abuse, and how to recognize risk indicators in light of this.

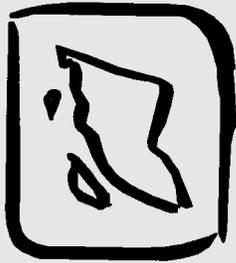
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Message from the Executive Director

Hello everyone,

As this issue of the newsletter goes to press, we are still absorbing the experience of participating in the Lee Inquest last month in Victoria, regarding the murder-suicide that took place in Oak Bay, BC, in September 2007. Peter Lee murdered his estranged wife, Sunny Park, their son Christian, and Sunny's parents, Kum Lea Chun and Moon Kyu Park.

We are proud to have been able to bring forward the perspective and concerns of the anti-violence sector. The seven days that we spent at the hearings were intense and gruelling, as we learned more about the tragic details of the incident and spoke with media about our concerns. Thanks to all of you who sent support and information to us during this process. As you know, the inquest is now on hold pending a decision by the Supreme Court about Crown testifying in the proceedings. See the full story on page 1 and 2.

The murders of children in both Oak Bay and Merritt during the past year have emphasized the importance of connecting women's and children's safety in cases of relationship violence. We have focused on that issue in this newsletter, and have included a number of articles and resources, including an excerpt from the brand new curriculum for child protection workers (see page 4) that we hope will enhance MCFD's response to relationship violence.

On a more positive note, at the end of April we launched a new film, Men Speak Up: Ending Violence Together. We are very excited about the potential of this film to reach men and others whom we have not been able to reach with other educational initiatives. See page 15 for more.

I know that all of you have been hard at work on the front lines, and that you managed to put on great events for International Women's Day and Victims of Crime Awareness Week and Violence Against Women Awareness Week this spring. As always, we are grateful for all the work you do to keep people safe across our province. 

Tracy Porteous

THE LEE INQUEST

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Through our witnesses we were able to raise a number of issues of critical importance to survivors of violence against women in relationships, including:

- The impact of ongoing violence on survivors and the risks they face if they make the decision to leave the relationship
- The importance of survivors being pro-actively referred to specialized victim services who can help them navigate the justice system and assist with safety planning
- The importance of implementing strategies to improve access to justice for immigrant women and/or women for whom English is a second language, such as easy access to translation services and early involvement of immigrant-serving agencies
- The need for specialized personnel to deal with this complex crime

The inquest was suspended on May 7, due to the Criminal Justice Branch refusing to allow the two Crown prosecutors directly involved with the Lee case to testify and answer questions.

We had requested that they testify because we believed that their direct knowledge of the case might shed light on what happened and how similar deaths might be prevented. Almost all the other justice system personnel, including police, MCFD and Corrections had provided evidence.

Criminal Justice Branch opposed our request and indicated that if the Coroner were to order Crown to testify, they would appeal that ruling and take it to the Supreme Court. The result would be that the completion of the inquest would be delayed. In addition to our request, the Coroner's lawyer received a request directly from the inquest jurors to have the two Crown testify, and he requested an order from the Coroner to this effect.

The Coroner made the order and Criminal Justice Branch appealed to the BC Supreme Court. Inquest proceedings have been suspended.

In his ruling Coroner Jeff Dolan mentioned that an inquest does not assign blame but rather makes recommendations to prevent future tragedies and that the process must assure the community that no facts are concealed, overlooked or ignored. The Coroner also said that "to extend special privilege to any individual or group may compromise the integrity, or appear to compromise the integrity, of this process."

In Canada, the law is in a state of flux on the question of whether an inquiry, such as an inquest, has the legal authority to inquire into the exercise of prosecutorial discretion. In Ontario in the 1998 inquest into the murder of Arlene May by Randy Iles, who also killed himself, Crown counsel testified and answered questions; Crown immunity was not raised as an objection in that inquest.

We believe that if we are going to ask people such as Crown and police to have jobs that require them to make decisions that are sometimes life and death decisions, that it is incumbent upon us to make sure they have the training, guidelines, policy and resources to do their jobs. It is for this reason that we hope to see Crown come forward. It is unfortunate that because of the position now being taken by the Criminal Justice Branch, the completion of the inquest has been delayed.

We look forward to a resolution on the issue of the extent of Crown immunity and for the opportunity for the jury to complete their important work in the Lee inquest.

Thank you to the Law Foundation for funding us to retain counsel and to MPSSG for assistance with funding for the Keeping Women Safe report. 

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SAFETY FOR CHILDREN

In this issue we take a look at safety for children, and how it relates to safety for women. We believe that children's safety is usually best protected by ensuring the safety of their mothers.

The anti-violence sector has been working for many years to try to help child protection workers to understand the links between women's and children's safety. The Association is pleased to announce that the curriculum for MCFD child protection workers has just been completed. As you know, this is a collaborative effort between the Association, the BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses and BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre (see below for more information and an excerpt).

We know that anti-violence programs across the province are supporting women and their children every day to stay safe,

and that you are doing this from a woman-centred perspective. We have included excerpts from some excellent materials—some of them suggested by you—to assist you in this important work, and to provide materials that could be helpful if you are trying to explain this perspective to workers in other sectors.

We are focusing in this issue on working with adult survivors of violence who are parenting, and how this work benefits not only the survivors themselves, but their children too. We have also included an excerpt from an excellent document on working with teenaged women who are in abusive relationships, and whose needs are similar to, yet different from, adult women's. We are not focusing here on direct work with children who have been sexually or otherwise abused, and hope to do this in a future issue. 

NEW CURRICULUM FOR CHILD PROTECTION WORKERS

We are very excited to announce the completion of Best Practice Approaches: Child Protection And Violence Against Women, a curriculum for child protection workers prepared for the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The curriculum is based on the Best Practices document developed by the BCASVACP, the BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses, BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre, Woman Abuse Response Program and the BC Institute Against Family Violence, with input from a working group of experts from the anti-violence and child protection sectors.

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Excerpts from the curriculum

These are some brief excerpts from the 240-page curriculum that will give a sense of the perspective of the curriculum; we anticipate that frontline anti-violence workers will see some of their concerns about child protection reflected here. We are hopeful that once this curriculum is implemented there will be a greater understanding of the dynamics of violence against women within MCFD and a more effective response to families in these situations.

Why the Best Practices Approaches for Child Protection Intervention and Violence Against Women Document was Developed ¹

The Best Practices Approaches document was developed by the Ministry of Children and Family Development to address expressed concerns of child protection workers and of clinicians and frontline workers delivering services to women experiencing abuse and children affected by witnessing abuse. Some examples of concerns that were raised included: removing children while

they were residing with their mother at a transition house; creating service plans for women experiencing abuse that did not acknowledge the risks she was facing in her relationship; treating both parents as equally responsible for the risks to the child/youth; and lack of coordination between women-serving and child protection services. The Best Practice Approaches document was developed to support child protection workers to address these concerns, emphasizing the need to create safety for women/mothers as well as protect their children. The underlying guiding principle is that by focusing on the safety and support of mothers, children will also be safer. This principle is applied to all levels of intervention, even if a child is removed from the non-offending parent.

Goals of the Best Practice Approaches for Child Protection Intervention and Violence Against Women

A major focus of the Best Practice Approaches is to recognize the reality that the safety of the child is linked to the safety of the mother and that wherever possible, supportive services should be provided to the mother in order to enhance her ability to care safely for her children.

The Best Practice Approaches are intended to promote an integrated response to women and their children who are experiencing violence and abuse. An increase in the implementation of the Best Practice Approaches in communities will:

- Build on the strengths of both women services and child protection services
- Keep children with their non-abusive parent and provide supportive services to her in order to enhance her ability to continue to care safely for her children
- Improve risk management
- Keep children and their mothers safe by connecting the safety of the children with their mother's safety wherever possible

Child protection workers and workers in the anti-violence sector will be best able to accomplish this if they understand the overlap between violence against women and child protection, the dynamics of woman abuse, women's experience of being abused, the impact of this abuse for women, the challenges of mothering in the context of abuse and the impact of exposure to abuse for children and youth. In addition, this document describes an integrated approach for meeting the safety needs of children while providing supportive services to women so that women's safety remains a parallel consideration throughout child protection involvement.

Risk Assessment

Violence against women poses serious threats to women. It is difficult to talk about these risks to women without creating an urgent response to protect children. This subject is included because the potential risks that women face must be kept in mind during all interventions and support for women and their children, but they are not meant to direct child protection workers to intervene without proper assessment and knowledge of the dynamics of abuse, women's strengths and safety strategies. Even in extreme situations where the children are removed, the risks posed by the abusive partner should be assessed.

As the Curriculum Development Team, we asked the question "What can a child protection worker reasonably do to reduce the risks for women impacted by abuse from a partner?" The answer is not simple, but there are some basic guidelines for supporting women and assessing for risk. First, child protection workers should not feel that they must attend to women's safety on their own. They likely do not have the time to complete a comprehensive risk assessment, nor should they have to. That is the job of those dealing with the offender. However, there are some key risk factors that every child protection worker should ask women about. If there are risk factors present, it will be important to involve an anti-violence colleague, with the woman's permission, to create a comprehensive safety plan.

Information sharing is a key element of women's safety when it is done with the purpose of reducing risks rather than for the purpose of surveillance and monitoring. This is a difficult area. All system sectors must work collectively towards more seamless sharing of information with the anti-violence sector, with the women's safety in mind.

It is important to remind participants that risk assessment is a tool, but the process is also important. The positive application of a risk assessment tool is to help a woman to assess and understand her partner's level of risk. They should not be used as a tool for the child protection workers to decide on their own interventions. In the latter case, a risk assessment tool is used as a formula to "add up" how dangerous he is and make decisions about interventions based on that, when experience tells us that they are not clear predictors of risk. For example, if a situation is deemed "high risk," it could be used to assess the woman as being in denial about the dangers of her situation and therefore less able to care for her children.

Applying a Women-Centred Approach²

The purpose of the Best Practices document is to understand the overlap between child protection and women-centred approaches and apply it to child protection services. Providing women-centred services is fundamental to women's empowerment and safety. This approach is not in conflict with a child protection approach but recognizes that women's safety can be an important factor in the safety and protection of their children. A women-centred approach includes working with women to build on existing strengths, recognizing that women use many strategies to keep themselves and their children safe. It also means respecting a woman's choice, providing services and options for women with a goal of safety rather than punishment or further control, ensuring that services are respectful of cultural diversity and recognizing that all forms of marginalization affect women's experiences and may limit options.³ The curriculum starts from the assumption that child protection workers have women's safety in mind during interventions, but routine practices, heavy caseloads and the urgency of child protection work can sometimes prohibit incorporating significant changes in practice or challenging status quo approaches. These guidelines and curriculum provide the opportunity for all child protection workers, with the support and leadership of their managers, to make systemic changes to child protection approaches in cases of violence against women.

Despite efforts to keep a woman and her children together, a child protection worker's intervention may lead to the decision that the non-abusing woman is not able to protect her children from the abuser. A women-centred approach can still apply. Women-centred practice in this context could mean:

- Understanding and respecting a woman's reasons for returning to or remaining with an abusive partner
- Not blaming a woman if it appears that she has "chosen" her partner over her children
- Not punishing the woman by withholding access to her children
- Ensuring that the woman has developed a safety plan and she has been given referrals to anti-violence women's organizations for support in a non-coercive (eg. non-mandated) manner.
- Ensuring that a risk assessment is completed in collaboration with the woman.
- It also means continuing to work with the woman to support her to create a safe environment for herself and her children, develop a service plan independent of her partner and ensure that she is not treated as a risk to her children.

Guiding Concepts When Determining Child Protection Involvement⁴

When determining and implementing a child protection intervention and throughout child protection interventions, the following concepts about violence against women in relationships should be considered:

- Women who are fearful about the removal of their children usually will not be forthcoming when providing information to a child protection worker. Developing trust with a woman can occur if time is taken to understand the situation from her perspective.
- Some women decide to stay or return to their abusing partner as they feel it is the best way of protecting their children. Being with the abuser allows the woman to observe the abuser's actions, to witness the cycle of violence and to prepare herself and her children for the onset of the violence. In her experience, knowing can be better than not knowing.
- Most abusive partners present as being non-violent outside of their intimate relationships, affirming that they have the ability to control their behaviour. Assessing men for abuse is difficult as they go to great lengths to conceal their abuse. Because of the myriad impacts of abuse, some women appear to be the problem while their partners appear as credible, rational and responsible. It is crucial to understand the impact of violence from the perspective of the woman to accurately understand the safety concerns of the woman and her children. This will enable child protection workers to avoid approaches that minimize or blame women for the abuse or inadvertently be complicit in the abuser's control of his partner. 

¹ Best Practice Approaches: Child Protection and Violence Against Women, p 7.

² Excerpt from Best Practice Approaches: Child Protection and Violence Against Women, 2004, 16-18. See Module One for a full discussion.

³ Buchwitz, Rita (2001). Alternatives to Apprehension: Education, Action and Advocacy. Society to Support Family Bonding and Healing and DAMS

⁴ Best Practice Approaches: Child Protection and Violence Against Women, 2004, p. 23.

SIGNIFICANT GAP IN SERVICES FOR YOUNG WOMEN

In our regular meetings with the Ministry of Community Services, we present information about gaps in services for survivors of abuse across the province. One of the major gaps is in services for young women. This is an excerpt from a PowerPoint presented to MCS in the spring of this year.

Currently, STV counselling is available to women 19 years or older, or younger women who are living an adult lifestyle when no other appropriate service is available to them. However:

- 61% of sexual offences reported to police in 2002 involved victims under 18 years old
- The majority of date and acquaintance rape victims are young women aged 16 to 24. —Helen Lenskyj, *“An Analysis of Violence Against Women: A Manual for Educators and Administrators,” Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1992*

According to a study of 712 street youth:

- 87% of girls and 27% of boys who were introduced to sex before the age of 10 said rape had been their first sexual experience.
- 1 in 4 of the 321 female street youth (25%) described their first sexual experience as rape, perpetrated by male relatives or family friends. —JL Radford et al, *“Street Youth and AIDS, Social Program Evaluation Group,” Kingston: Queen’s University, 1989*

Interviews of Okanagan youth who had been involved in the formal sex trade reported that poverty, and abuse within the family prepared them for sexual exploitation. But a violent, humiliating sexual assault was the final trigger for entry into the formal trade. Sexually exploited

young women in Golden, BC stated that their peers needed to be able to tell someone right away about sexual assault. They want other young women to know what sexual exploitation and rape looks like. When asked what they would have changed to stay free of sexual exploitation, youth responded:

- Get help for the rape I experienced
- Talk about the sexual assault and my drug use
- Have the strength and esteem to say no to a boyfriend—*“Giving youth a voice: Experiential youth in the North Okanagan,” Vernon: North Okanagan Youth and Family Services Society, 2004*

Currently STV counsellors have a mandate to counsel young women living an adult lifestyle. This mandate needs to be expanded to include young women 14 years and up. But funding is needed to cover this work. STV Outreach hours should be expanded as well in the very small programs to establish primary prevention and education for young women regarding dating safety, sexual exploitation and sex trade.

We know that CBVAPs also do this important education work, and we have been writing to and in discussions with MPSSG about the importance of increasing funding to CBVAPs as well. ☒

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VIOLENCE IN RELATIONSHIPS AND PARENTING

Excerpted with permission from *Little Eyes, Little Ears: How Violence Against A Mother Shapes Children As They Grow*, by Alison Cunningham and Linda Baker, The Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, 2007

[Relationship violence has a serious impact on women's ability to parent. Understanding this impact is an important part of making the connections between women's and children's safety and working with mothers in a supportive and empowering way.]

Effects of coercive control tactics on a mother

1. Woman believes she is an inadequate parent

- Woman is portrayed by abuser as unfit mother or the cause of children's deficits
- She fears having her children taken by child protection services
- She is frustrated in attempts to create structure or be consistent
- Children may have problems at school or in the neighbourhood, fuelling her belief she is a bad parent

2. Woman loses the respect of some or all children

- Children may grow to devalue or be ashamed of their mother
- Children learn to disregard her parental authority, don't follow her rules
- Some children come to see her as legitimate target of abuse

3. Woman believes man's excuses for abuse and reinforces them with children

- Tells children abuse is her fault so she must change or improve her behaviour
- Feels responsible for abuse and guilty for its effects on children
- Excuses abuse because she thinks it is linked to alcohol or his stress
- Believes and teaches that woman abuse is culturally or religiously appropriate
- Believes and teaches children that men and boys should have more privileges and power in the family

4. Woman changes her parenting style in response to abuser's parenting style

- She is too permissive in response to authoritarian parenting of abuser
- She is authoritarian to try and keep children from annoying abuser
- She makes age-inappropriate or unreasonable demands on children to placate abuser
- She is afraid to use discipline because the children have been through so much
- She assumes the demanding parts of parenting while he takes the fun parts

Watching a mother abused by her partner over time, children and teenagers may come to see her as vulnerable, emotionally unavailable to them, not a person with legitimate parental authority, or as someone who cannot protect them. They may become her protector, her confidant, or her caretaker.

5. Woman's capacity to manage is thwarted or overwhelmed

- Depression, anxiety, poor sleeping, etc. compromise her capacity to care for children and provide for their daily needs
- If denied use of birth control, too many children are born too close together
- May be denied sufficient money to meet children's basic needs for food, etc.
- Reactive rather than pro-active parenting, responding to crisis not preventing problems

6. Woman may use survival strategies with negative effects

- May leave children with inadequate caretakers to get a break
- May avoid being at home (e.g., working double shifts)
- May use alcohol or drugs to excess
- May maltreat children, physically or verbally

7. Woman's bond to children is compromised

- Children may be angry at mother for failing to protect them or evict abuser
- One child assumes care-taking role for mother
- Children anticipating a mother's deportation or leaving may become anxious or may emotionally disengage to protect themselves from impending loss
- Children may blame mother for absence of father from the home and other disruptions (e.g., moving, changing schools)
- Mother prevented by abuser from comforting distressed child

8. Woman gets trapped in competition for children's loyalties

- Abuser attempts to shape child's view of himself as good and mother as bad after separation, abuser entices children to support his bid for custody with promises of great life at his house
- During access visits, abuser is fun parent who has no rules
- Abuser has more money and can offer more material goods and nicer home

Watching a man abuse their mother over time, children and teenagers may see him as frightening or unpredictable. Some will see him as powerful or the only legitimate parental authority. They may believe his rationalizations for abuse or accept his excuses, such as alcohol or job stress. Each sibling may have different opinions of him, depending on their age, gender, emotional closeness to him, whether he abused them directly, and the frequency and severity of his violence against their mother.

Supporting women as parents

Helping a mother is among the most effective strategies to help her children. A mother's love, affection, availability and investment in her children's well-being and healthy development are powerful factors to harness in our work helping children. Each day yields dozens of priceless opportunities for "teachable moments" which foster healing and promote healthy development.

Three strategies for helpers

"Counselling" may be the first thing that comes to mind when we think about how to help. But these three strategies are also important interventions.

1. Ending a child's exposure to domestic violence and maltreatment is the single most important way to help children. Severity of violence (including frequency) and the number of types of maltreatment are statistically correlated

to the probability and level of later problems in children. Using psychological testing as the measure, most children function in the "normal range" after the exposure to violence stops and they can feel safe.

2. If required, help the family find a safe place to live, a source of income, and other features of daily living to meet basic needs and create stability.

Outcomes in children are also statistically correlated with stresses and adversities typically seen in conjunction with domestic violence, such as socio-economic disadvantage, low standard of living, low parental educational level, parental alcohol problems, and child sexual abuse.

3. Support women as mothers by fostering good parenting skills and encouraging them to address any personal issues compromising their parenting (e.g., depression).

Outcomes in children exposed to domestic violence are correlated with family functioning and parenting style, including discipline techniques.

Issues to work on with mothers and children together

- Mapping out expectations for healthy (non-violent) family relationships
- Strengthening healthy communication and practicing problem-solving
- Establishing safe ways to talk together about the past
- Working to heal and move forward as a family
- Identifying activities and engaging in family "fun"

In addition to helping women with their own healing, these areas can be helpful

- Positive parenting practices such as non-physical discipline
- Parent/child communication skills
- Parenting skills designed for children who lived with violence
- Modelling of constructive problem solving and management of emotions

A link to the complete Little Eyes, Little Ears document can be found on our website at http://endingviolence.org/links/more_antiviolence_resources. The original document includes citations that have been left out of this excerpt due to space limitations. The document can also be ordered for free from the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/>. 

TEENAGE COMPLAINANTS IN INTIMATE PARTNER ASSAULT CASES

Excerpted with permission from “Children and Teenagers Testifying in Domestic Violence Cases” by Alison Cunningham and Pamela Hurley. Part of the series of booklets called A Full and Candid Account: Using Special Accommodations and Testimonial Aids to Facilitate the Testimony of Children Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System. Download copies of all seven booklets in the series at: www.lfcc.on.ca.

Typically this group is comprised of girls between the ages of 15 and 17 years who allege assault by an intimate partner. Their needs are similar to but different from those of adult victims of domestic violence. It can be easy to treat them as adults because they are victims in a “domestic violence” case but, developmentally, they are still children. Whether living independently, in a common-law relationship, group home or at home, teenagers will benefit from the same services you would arrange for any child witness, including enhanced victim support tailored to their needs.

PRACTICE TIP: As court witnesses under age 18, teenage victims of intimate partner violence qualify, upon application, for testimonial aids and special accommodations, including testimony outside the courtroom, a witness screen or having a support person. Be aware of these challenges faced by teenage victims of partner assault:

- Understanding the dynamics of their own abusive relationships is often difficult for teenagers.
- Some teenage witnesses are young mothers or pregnant at the time of the assault or testimony.
- The teenager may be involved simultaneously in family court proceedings with the accused (e.g., custody and access issues) or regarding child protection.
- Young mothers who acknowledge violence in a relationship may find themselves under scrutiny of a child protection agency.
- Some teenage victims don’t want their parents to find out about the charges.

As in all domestic violence cases, a complainant can experience an escalation in the violence during or after separation from the accused.

PRACTICE TIP: When working with teenaged victims of intimate partner violence, you may see co-occurring or historical stressors that accentuate the impact of abuse and/or indicate extra support is required in the pre-court period. They may

have little or ineffective family support, unsafe or unstable living situations, be pregnant and/or parenting an infant, and have little or a poor connection with support through school.

PRACTICE TIP: Many communities use extra-judicial sanctions for intimate partner violence when the accused is under 18 years of age. Women’s advocates caution against using these measures for intimate partner violence if the victim is expected to participate at, for example, a sentencing circle. If these measures are used for intimate partner violence, ensure the complainants have access to the same level of victim support as do complainants whose cases are processed through the courts.

Tips for working with teenage victims of intimate partner violence

- The vulnerabilities of teenaged witnesses may go unrecognized because of their adult-like physical appearance. Some have had very grown-up life experiences as well that can obscure their true needs as children.
- Teenagers are typically slow to share their feelings and you may gain an incorrect impression of their true levels of anxiety.
- Teenagers can be frustrating clients who fail to show at scheduled appointments only to pop in when not expected, or who are obsessed with something one day only to have forgotten about it the next.
- Don’t assume that teenagers are too old to need testimonial aids—they are older than child victims but teenaged victims can be extremely afraid of testifying and afraid of seeing the accused.
- Ensure they have the literacy capacity to read necessary documents, as in when they review their written statement.
- Follow the guidelines about questioning children discussed in the Overview handbook (e.g., use short sentences and simpler words).
- As with children, consider the possibility that a teenager has special needs that may affect ability to testify (e.g., developmental delays, auditory processing disabilities, hearing limitations, etc.).
- Some teenagers are reluctant to reveal a lack of knowledge about the justice system process—explain everything clearly and clarify their understanding at each step of the process. 

HIGHLIGHTS OF INITIATIVES, PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Wages and Benefits

The Association met with staff of the Ministry of Community Services in April to discuss emerging issues for STV Counselling and STV Outreach programs. Because of concerns raised by programs, we prioritized the issue of wages and benefits. We requested that the ministry work with us to do an in-depth analysis of the issue with the intention of moving forward with recommendations and actions. We are awaiting their response. In the meantime, if you have not already done so, please feel free to contact your contract manager at MCS and express your concerns regarding this issue.

STV Counsellor Core Training 2008

The STV Counsellor Core Training ran from February to May (three four-day sessions) with 27 counsellors participating from 18 communities. It was a great experience for both facilitators and participants. Comments from participants include:

The presenters were a perfect mix of professional, knowledgeable and real. The experiential exercises had just the right amount of challenge and safety.

Very respectful of all our different learning styles and paces.

Lots of concrete ideas for working with clients!

Participants also proposed a number of ideas for further training. As always, we have noted these ideas and they will inform the Annual Training Forum and other training events. Suggestions include: more training on dissociation, addictions, trauma and brain functioning, EMDR, legal issues and more. Thanks to trainers Maureen McEvoy, Maggie Ziegler, Maria Loewen and outgoing STV Program Manager Susan Armstrong for all their hard work.

STV Outreach Core Training Development 2008/2009

As reported in the last issue, we have been in the process of developing training for STV Outreach workers in partnership with the BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses. We hope to confirm dates for training sessions soon; we anticipate running the training in the fall of 2008 and spring of 2009. We will keep you posted!

STV Counsellor Core Training: New Module

We are in the process of developing a fourth module for our STV Counsellor Core Training. The module will focus on substance use and mental health, and we hope to pilot it in January 2009.

Revised Tool Kit for Marginalized Women

Residents and service providers of the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver (DTES) have requested that the BCASVACP produce an abridged and tailored version of Freedom from Violence: Tools for Working with Trauma, Mental Health and Substance Use, for use with peer support workers and service providers in the DTES and in other communities across the province who work with highly marginalized women. Utilizing a peer driven consultation and review process, an abridged Toolkit and DVD will be developed.

Peers will work with a production/facilitation team to develop the accompanying DVD that will illustrate in concrete ways how to manage conversations that are relevant in enhancing safety for this population of women. The DVD is a critical component of the project given that literacy levels are lower among marginalized women and some women would self select out of the project if the material produced was only in a written format. Test drive implementation sessions will be held in the DTES as well as in Victoria before final production of the resource tools is complete. The Toolkit and DVD will be distributed to anti-violence programs across BC and to service providers and natural helpers in the DTES. Funding proposals have been submitted and we are waiting to hear back.

Non-Profit/Government Task Force

The provincial government has embarked on a new initiative to improve the relation with the non-profit sector in BC. The initiative was born out of an ADM's committee. There is an overall task force and three sub task forces: 1) Procurement, 2) Capacity Building, 3) Working Together. The Association was asked to join the Working Together task force and has been an active contributing member since February.

Multi BC Domestic Violence Training

The Ministry of Multiculturalism has been asked by Attorney General Wally Oppal to coordinate and consult on violence in relationships with all the immigrant and settlement workers in BC, and to bring them together with anti-violence workers. The Association was asked to join a committee to assist with the development and delivery of a two-day pilot program on June 2 and 3, 2008. Tracy Porteous and Gail Edinger have been asked to speak at the event.

Legal Education and Preventing Violence (LEAPV), MOSAIC

The Association has been asked to join the Advisory Committee for this project. The project will be responsible for providing the South Asian community with legal education on violence prevention with a focus on women, using the media. This is a three-year project funded by the Law Foundation. The goal of the project is to enhance the safety of women and children in the South Asian community and increase access to the justice system by providing legal information in order to eliminate barriers.

Sexual Assault Protocol Survey

We are now analyzing the results of a survey we did with our programs about sexual assault protocols in communities throughout BC. We will use the information to create a template for communities to use who wish to develop protocols. Once it is completed we will distribute it through the listservs.

Dual Arrests Survey

In response to the growing concerns across BC about the number of women being arrested in relationship violence cases, the Association did a survey with all of our programs to get numbers and communities identified where there are significant problems. We are working with CCWS to negotiate some solutions with E Division. One possible solution involves us delivering training to all RCMP Detachment Commanders on dual arrest. This training begins with a pilot in June 2008.

Regional Support Conference Calls

Our annual regional support conference calls with STV counsellors, STV Outreach workers and CBVAP workers were held in April and May 2008. The final reports for all three sets of calls will be submitted to the Ministries in June, and will be posted on our website. Thanks to all participants for taking the time out of your busy days to share your expertise on the criti-

cal issues in the anti-violence field. The information you share on these calls shapes the submissions we make to government on your behalf, and the training and materials that we develop.

Sexual Assault Incorporated into the Victims Assistance Program Core Training

We are pleased that the VSCPD decided to make our training "Supporting Survivors of Sexual Assault" part of the core training for Victim Services workers held in March 2008. The Association delivered the 2.5-day module and the JIBC managed it.

Sexual Assault Health Care Provincial CME by BC Women's Sexual Assault Service (SAS)

Tracy Porteous was one of the presenters at this two-day event for physicians, held in April 2008. The training was a shorter version of the annual provincial sexual assault examiner training. Tracy presented information about community-based support and advocacy to assist physicians in making referrals.



Community Coordination for Women's Safety

CCWS provides assistance to BC communities to develop new models or improve existing models of cross-sector coordination on violence against women. More at www.endingviolence.org/ccws.

Ongoing CCWS Work

Support to communities across the province in person and via phone and email: Regional Coordinators travel to communities to lead planning, strategizing and training events, including regional events that included participants from a number of small neighbouring communities. These communities receive training in important skills and information related to coordination without having to travel to an urban centre. We also assist people in accessing resources on our website and send information out on our listserv.

Identification of issues from communities: Issues reported this year included: dual arrests/charging, referrals between Community-Based and Police-Based Victim Services, police and Crown participation in coordination initiatives, education needed for judiciary on violence against women, education

needed for mental health and addictions workers on violence against women, education on addictions and mental health needed for anti-violence workers, funding needed for coordination initiatives, police/RCMP use of peace bonds instead of recommending charges, Safety Issues Protocol, lack of arrest and prosecution for breaches of protection orders.

Intersectoral solutions management: Members of the CCWS Provincial Working Group are senior personnel in government, police and community agencies. They provide input to CCWS on issues that relate to their field of professional expertise and identify local and provincial strategies to help enhance coordination and implementation of violence against women policies. Issues addressed at the three Provincial Working Group meetings this year included: strategizing for meetings with deputies of key provincial government ministries, specialized response to domestic violence in BC, third party reporting, violence against immigrant and refugee women, Safety Issues Protocol between CCWS and RCMP and government pleadings in VAWIR cases.

The CCWS Working Group includes a number of Work Teams that have been formed to address specific issues:

- The Protection Orders Enforcement Matrix Work Team
- The Work Team on Tools for Collaborating with Court Personnel and Crown
- The Work Team on KGB
- The Immigration Work Team
- The Assaultive Men's Programs Work Team
- Third Party Reporting Work Team
- Specialized Response to Violence Against Women Committee

Development of recommendations, strategies, protocols and solutions: ongoing work on issues including: safety for immigrant, refugee and non-status women who have experienced violence; protocol for sharing information about an accused's violent past; third party reporting protocol; protection orders matrix to help the different sectors coordinate the enforcement of protection orders.

Resource development: see our website for a wide range of resources related to violence against women coordination.

Keeping Women Safe Report

CCWS worked with the BCASVACP, the Victoria VAWIR Committee, MPSSG, Diane Turner and Judge Josiah Wood to develop the report *Keeping Women Safe: Eight Critical Components of an Effective Specialized Justice Response to Domestic Violence*. The paper was released in April to a great

deal of media and government attention, and led to the Association being granted status at the Lee Inquest (see cover story). Gisela Ruebsaat of CCWS, a member of the team that developed the paper, attended the inquest along with Tracy Porteous. The recommendations emphasize coordination between police, Crown prosecutors, community-based support services and government. The collaborative approach recommended in the report has already gained support in principle from RCMP E Division and BC Municipal Chiefs of Police. The report and the accompanying press release are available on the BCASVACP website.

Third Party Reporting Training

As this newsletter goes to press, we are halfway through our six third party reporting training sessions. Workshops have been held in Nanaimo, Prince George and Cranbrook, with about 20 to 30 participants each. So far, co-facilitators Michelle Novakowski (CCWS) and Kathleen Tchang (Vancouver Police Sex Crimes Unit) report that the sessions have surpassed their highest expectations. Participants from CBVS, municipal police, RCMP and PBVS have demonstrated amazing commitment to supporting marginalized victims and collaborating across sectors. Michelle and Kathleen worked hard to create a curriculum that combined their expertise in anti-violence work and policing, and even managed to incorporate some humour. They have found that this helps the group to relax and be more open to working with each other.

The training has been developed for CBVAP workers, who will be supporting survivors to complete the forms, as well as police officers, who will be accepting and processing the reports. PBVS workers are included in the training as they play a critical role in referring victims of sexual assault to CBVAPs. For communities without CBVAPs, provisions are being made for referrals to the closest program. The reason for this relates to policy regarding police access to police victim service files.

Comments from participants include:

"Like the way police, community VS and police VS to work together." "As an investigator it will be beneficial—also enhances community partnerships." "A follow-up meeting/workshop to deal with any difficulties that arise would be helpful." (from police officer)

We are very grateful for funding from the National Policy Centre for Victim Issues and the RCMP Family Violence Initiative for this training.

Community Leadership Training

The fifth Community Leadership Training was offered in Vancouver in March 2008. The 17 participants in the training were extremely positive about all aspects of the training. Comments from participants included:

Professional and competent, well organized, respectful.

Great panelists—gave us hope and inspiration for how different departments/ministries can work together!

Lots of practical ideas, useable, concrete.

Helped increase my awareness of issues and provided a best practices model that could be used throughout the province.

Improved skills in facilitation and coordination, increased understanding of the issues impacting women's safety.



Angela Kayira from Surrey Women's Centre presenting "Dimensions of Diversity" at the Community Leadership Training



Participants in the 2008 Community Leadership Training

Safe Choices Support and Education Program

Safe Choices focuses on improving the health and safety of women who are currently or have been in abusive same-sex/gender relationships by empowering women and strengthening our communities to respond to this issue. More at www.endingviolence.org/safe_choices.

This spring Safe Choices facilitated a groundbreaking community workshop called "Mind Your Own Business—Don't Air Our Dirty Laundry: How to talk about relationship concerns with friends and family." Participants explored the challenging topic of how to address violence in relationships at a very grassroots level. The discussion was rich and constructive, and participants left with concrete tools for raising issues with friends and family.

We continue to distribute our curriculum to other agencies across Canada (available on our website at http://endingviolence.org/safe_choices/publications).

In May, Connie Bonsteel replaced Susan Armstrong as coordinator of the Safe Choices program (see page 18). We are excited to welcome Connie to this position, as she joins our team of dedicated workshop facilitators and program advisors. BCASVACP Board member Cathy Welch has also joined the program as an ad hoc advisor. She brings many years of experience to the issue of violence in same-gender relationships. 

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Toll-Free Line!
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RENEWING RESOURCES FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES

A partnership between the BCASVACP and the Ending Relationship Abuse Society of BC (ERA), funded by MCS through a Partners in Prevention grant.

Project Coordinator Sandra Beggs has found the project taking many an unexpected turn. According to The United Steelworkers Union, a dramatic downturn in the forest industry has seen “over 20,000 industry jobs lost in the mills and woods”¹, and since that article was written many more jobs have been lost. That translated to very little initial interest in attending Violence in Relationships and the Workplace workshops from forest sector workers. They are scrambling to find new jobs and figure out how to put their lives back together again. The irony, of course, is that had this workshop been held a year ago it might have had a significant impact on the sector as they grappled with the issues of job loss and lay-offs.

Job loss, however, is not the only reason for the relatively few registrants for these workshops. We have discovered that many Health and Safety Workshops are planned over a year in advance by the joint Health and Safety Committees and that there are many agencies that provide these workshops and are already networked into the grid. Workers often attend only one or two workshops a year and taking an entire day off work to attend a workshop, even a free one, is simply more than many of them are willing to do.

Our best response was from the unions. The BC Federation of Labour, the United Steelworkers, the Canadian Labour Congress and WorkSafe BC have all given us tremendous support and encouragement. The United Steelworkers invited us to present at their Kimberley Summer School in June and Sandra and Dr. Harry Stefanakis will be there from the 10th through the 12th working with the almost 200 union reps who will be attending. The Canadian Labour Congress has invited us to attend their school as well. This will allow us to reach another 600 union reps. If the project moves into Phase II, as we hope it does, we will be working towards this goal.

The Prince George Workshop has gotten a terrific response from management and union at CANFOR and many of their Health and Wellness committee members

will have attended the May 30th workshop by the time this article goes to print.

Finally, another important collaborative endeavour resulting from this project has been to work with WorkSafe BC to become Education Partners. We hope to meet with them in the very near future in order to discuss revisions to the Violence In The Workplace module to include a piece on violence in relationships, currently not addressed in the module.

Men Speak Up: Ending Violence Together *Part of the Renewing Resources Project*

In thinking about bringing men together from the forestry and mining industries, the Project Advisory felt that we needed a tool to show the way, to send a message to the men attending the workshops that violence against women is important for men to talk about. We looked at other models such as Jackson Katz’s work in the United States and a number of projects in Australia. Australia is currently doing a national campaign to end violence against women, using famous rugby players in television ads. We reviewed this initiative and concluded it might be helpful to have something similar—that is, to have recognizable men speak up about violence against women and to encourage others to do the same. We first approached the Vancouver Canucks, but their communications department turned us down. Our Advisory then brainstormed a plan B. We knew it would be imperative to have men from across BC and from across cultures appear in the film so as to reach as many men in the mainstream as possible.

Many women’s organizations have been finding creative ways to involve men in your work for some time. This film was a first step for us. As we got close to the final edits, we felt that we had produced a powerful tool that anti-violence programs might want to have available to use in whatever ways you see fit. So we sought out resources to enable us to get it into your hands.



From left:
Ujjal Dosanjh,
Jim Sinclair,
Harry Bains,
Steve Hunt,
Doug LePard,
Bruce Foster.

As most of you are aware, we launched the film at the end of April, which we produced in collaboration with the Ending Relationship Abuse Society of BC (ERA). The film combines television news clips with a collection of statements from prominent male leaders in BC about the importance of men speaking up about violence against women. Participants include legislators, police, union leaders and counsellors of abusive men—Ujjal Dosanjh, Evan Adams and Jim Sinclair are just some of the prominent leaders who came forward to help with this project. Funding for the film development came from MCS through the Renewing Resources Project. We have also been successful in accessing additional funds to distribute the film to the programs under our umbrella.

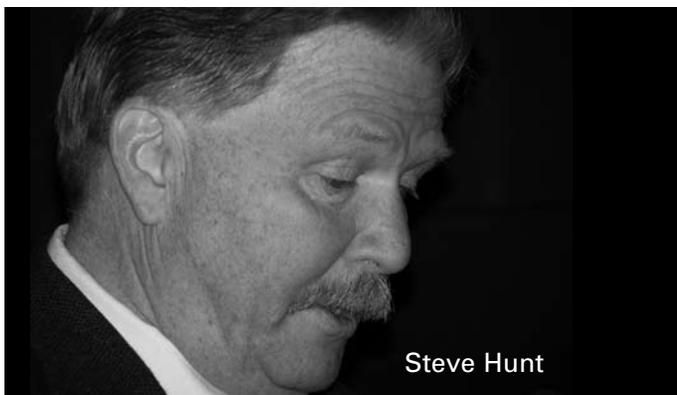
Since the film has been launched, we have received a great deal of positive feedback from anti-violence programs and other sectors that plan to use the film as part of their education programs. As well, two of our members approached us with some comments about how the film had been promoted and how the film could have been better. They raised concerns that by promoting the film as “creating opportunities for men to become part of the solution,” we

could be implying criticism of the work that has been done by women on this issue. We will be meeting with these members soon and hope to come to a mutual understanding of all the issues and perspectives.

We want to emphasize that we created the film as simply one more tool that could be used to encourage men and boys to speak up against violence against women. The men in the film place violence squarely in the context of sexism, speak frankly about their own confusion about how to address the issue, and speak directly to the camera about how crucial it is that men stop being violent immediately.

We hope the film will complement the excellent work that has already been done by women for many decades and will continue to engage men and boys in anti-violence work. Please continue to share any feedback that you might have once we distribute the film to you. Let us know how the film is working in your community! ☒

³ Steve Hunt. (2008, January 17). Dogwood Initiative. Retrieved May 27, 2008, from Dogwood Initiative: Solutions for lands and people: [www.dogwoodinitiative.org/newsstries/gordonCampPreseidingFores t%20destructio-SteelworkersvsCampbell](http://www.dogwoodinitiative.org/newsstries/gordonCampPreseidingFores%20destructio-SteelworkersvsCampbell)



Steve Hunt



Harry Bains

STAFF CHANGES AT THE ASSOCIATION

In May, Susan Armstrong left her position as STV Program Manager after two years of amazing work. As Tracy Porteous said in a recent email to our programs, “We will miss her wisdom, insights, analysis and energy. We will miss her and at the same time we greatly respect her decision to be living in a smaller place, doing clinical work that is closer to her heart.”

Susan says, “My two years with the Association have been incredibly rich in the relationships built, the deepening of the work and the changes in practice that contribute to strengthening women’s and children’s safety. I have the deepest admiration for the Association and for all you in the programs who courageously offer witness, support and advocacy to survivors.

“I’ll be working at Nechako Valley Community Services Society in Vanderhoof as a program manager providing clinical supervision and support/training to their staff and developing new community interventions. The first project is a social enterprise coffee shop which will be staffed by adults with developmental disabilities and serving Café Femenino, the only coffee in the world that is grown and marketed solely by women coffee farmers.”

The Association is very pleased to announce that Connie Bonsteel has stepped into the STV Program Manager position.

Connie says, “I have been working in the anti-violence area for 11 years—the past seven as Program Coordinator of Evergreen and Virginia Sam Transition Houses. As well as the day-to-day operation of these programs, I was given the opportunity to work in the community on several committees and projects. Of particular interest to me is professional relationship building for all of us doing this challenging work. I think that it is through these relationships that we build community capacity to



Connie Bonsteel

respond to violence, and to increase our own best practices at all levels. It also serves to break the isolation that can plague service providers as we struggle with the successes and frustrations of this important work.

I look forward to meeting you all—through the listserv, over the phone, and in person. I’m going to be going through a steep

learning curve, and I’m aware that there is a lot of knowledge out there. I really look forward to supporting you all in this vital work, and to collectively making a difference.” ☒



Connie is getting along well with our Small Projects Manager, Jackson the papillon dog, even though she seems to be a cat person. Here we see her cat Squeak relaxing at home.

WEBSITE WHAT’S NEW

Make sure to check out the website regularly for updates. Recent additions include:

- New publications: Keeping Women Safe, fall 2007 and spring 2008 issues of this newsletter
- New job postings and event listings

- Links to new resources at http://endingviolence.org/links/more_antiviolence_resources

Also, we are in the process of updating all the contact info for programs on our website. Please check your agency’s listing (use the Search function or click on your region at Find A Service) and let us know if there are any changes needed. ☒

PROGRAMS AT WORK ACROSS THE PROVINCE

International Women's Day 2008

Hope

In Hope, we held an open community event with the help of Transition House staff and had Jean Scott speak, then had coffee, cake and a ritual to remember where and how women are struggling and affirm that our hearts are with them. Jean Scott is the woman for whom our transition house is named and who started houses in the Lower Mainland. She is over 90 years old and has been an advocate and an activist for women all her life; she can speak to the progress, but also to the journey ahead. — *Gloria Miller, Hope and Area Transition Society*

Clearwater

We had an IWD sharing time in Clearwater at the First Nations meeting place (now closed due to lack of funding). We focused on remembering women who had positively impacted our lives, and had a potluck lunch together. A candlelight service rounded off the afternoon. — *Irene Crick, Coordinator of Women's Services and CWWA Counsellor, Yellowhead Community Services*



IWD celebration at Kelmuc'w Sharing Place in Clearwater

Ideas for Working with Older Women

Elder Abuse Awareness Day is coming up on June 15. Workers shared these ideas on our STV Counselling listserve in response to a request for suggestions for getting older women involved in anti-violence programs. More

information at the BC Coalition to Eliminate Abuse of Seniors: <http://www.bcceas.ca/> and the Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse: <http://www.cnpea.ca>

I have had success in hosting a traditional tea luncheon. Making connections with your local senior's home or group is a good way to get the word out. At the luncheon hearing life stories (there are many) and asking questions has been an enjoyable and learning experience. Another amazing group I have seen has been "Elder Nights" where a group of people all ages brings food and drinks to an elder's home and listens to the history of traditional ways or stories of past times. Each night would be in a different home, or you could even organize it at a seniors' home. — *Karla Strickland, Women's Outreach Worker, Westcoast Community Resources Society*

We've had success based on connections we've made with a few seniors. Through these keen seniors we've made inroads into the older population. I've found including a few in the planning makes such a difference. Like any other group, they tend to go where their friends or peers are. — *Sara Davis, Outreach Coordinator, Golden Women's Resource Centre*

I have found that music (e.g. someone playing the piano and singing songs of days gone by) is a big attraction. Also an event such as a Strawberry Tea, where tea and coffee and strawberry shortcake may entice people to come. I hope this helps. — *Alice Temesvary, Women's Outreach Worker, Nelson*

News from Mary Manning Centre, Victoria

HELEN DURIE, INTAKE COORDINATOR

Visit with Nobel Prize Winner Dr. Shirin Ebadi

On March 5, 2008, Mary Manning Centre was honoured to host visiting Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Shirin Ebadi. Dr. Ebadi received the prestigious award in 2003 for her human rights work on behalf of women and children in Iran. She toured the Mary Manning Centre and praised its important work. In particular, Dr. Ebadi was impressed with the way the agency's victim assistance program prepares children to testify in court—a service which Dr. Ebadi stated does not

exist in Iran. Speaking to Times Colonist reporter Lindsay Kines, Dr. Ebadi expressed her concern about the threatened layoffs of therapists at the agency. "I really got upset when I heard that news," she said through an interpreter. Limiting money for children's programs, she added, is a "disregard for the future."



Dr Shirin Ebadi visits Mary Manning Centre: (from left) MMC Board Chair Jenelle Cooper, Dr. Shirin Ebadi and MMC staff Judith Wright, Helen Durie and Fred Ford.

Stop the Cycle Tour



Stop the Cycle Tour:
Katie Domries,
Jody Watson
and Fred Ford.

From March 21 to 28, Mary Manning Centre counsellors Katie Domries and Jody Watson and Executive Director Fred Ford rode their bicycles from Port Hardy to Victoria to raise funds for the agency and to raise awareness about child sexual abuse. The trio participated in media interviews as well as meetings and presentations with professionals and/or teens in several communities along the way. Despite the weather, which included snow almost every day, the Stop

the Cycle Tour was a tremendous success, raising more than \$13,000 and focusing attention on the critically important issue of child sexual abuse in Vancouver Island communities.

ORCA Centre

Mary Manning Centre is working to establish a Greater Victoria and Vancouver Island centre of excellence in responding to the needs of child and youth victims of sexual abuse and severe physical abuse. The proposed ORCA Centre (ORCA stands for "organized response to child abuse") would bring together police officers, child protection workers, victim service workers and other professionals in a child-centred facility where professionals will work cooperatively to ensure the best possible outcomes for child and youth victims of abuse as well as best practices and optimal outcomes of investigations and prosecutions of child abuse cases. The ORCA Centre is based on the Child Advocacy Centre model adopted throughout the United States and in Edmonton and St. Catharine's in Canada.

Victims of Crime Awareness Week

Counsellors Katie Domries and Jody Watson made an educational presentation to approximately 50 grade 8 girls at Oceanside Middle School in Parksville. The presentation focused on providing the girls with a basic understanding of sexual abuse and sexual assault, of their right to be free from abuse, of actions that they can take to stop abuse and how to get help to heal from the trauma of sexual abuse. The school was provided with prevention information and materials including posters, brochures and educational material. The girls actively participated in the presentation by asking questions and sharing their knowledge and concerns about sexual abuse and sexual assault.

Outgoing Executive Director

Our only sad news is that our longest-serving and highly respected Executive Director, Fred Ford, is leaving the Mary Manning Centre at the end of the summer. Fred has been an indefatigable and courageous advocate for abused children and youth and we know that his deep commitment will continue. Recruitment of his replacement is taking place in late May-early June.

Victims of Crime Awareness Week at Information Services Vancouver

HAZEL SMITH, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Service providers from a variety of Lower Mainland agencies came together for a half-day conference hosted recently by Information Services Vancouver (ISV) to mark National

Victims of Crime Awareness Week. Almost 60 people gathered at Heritage Hall in Vancouver for the Finding the Way Together Through Learning Together Conference, which was funded by the Department of Justice Canada.

The morning was packed with presentations courtesy of several guest speakers. Bruce Foster, Director of the Victim Services Unit, VSCPD, MPSSG, began the day with an overview of victim services in BC, while Kim Gramlich, President of Police Victim Services of BC, and Harjit Kaur, Special Projects Manager with the BCASVACP, spoke about the roles of their respective agencies within victim services.

Two of ISV's own staff, Panteha (Pany) Aghili, Manager of Information and Referral Services, and Susan Larkin, of ISV's Resources and Publications Department, gave a joint

presentation. They spoke about VictimLINK, the province-wide, 24-hour help line for victims of family and sexual violence, and all other crime, which ISV operates on behalf of the Ministry, and also gave a demonstration of ISV's resource database, which includes victims' services and programs around the province, as well as many other community resources.

We were also pleased to welcome Pam Cripps, Acting Supervisor of the Abbotsford Community-Based Victim Services Program, who began an "open mic" segment, designed to encourage participants to share their best practices. Pam spoke about the very successful working relationship her agency enjoys with the Abbotsford police and other service providers in the community. 



Guests enjoy lunch at the Finding the Way Together Through Learning Together conference.



Several agencies set up displays, including conference host, Information Services Vancouver.

Goodbye Wishes

BRENDA ROLAND, STV PROGRAM MANAGER AND TRAUMA COUNSELLOR, SURPASSING OUR SURVIVAL, PRINCE GEORGE

"I would like to extend my thanks to the Association and the wonderful women who work so hard to end violence to women and children and will continue to be the warrior woman and sister wherever I go. Thanks for all the support and shared passion." —Brenda



WORKER PROFILE

Amanda Winn-Roberts, STV Outreach Worker, Island Women Against Violence, Salt Spring Island

From talking to a few Outreach workers I think I may have a rather unique job within the system. I work 35 hours a week. We also have an STV counsellor (17.5 hours a week) and a CWWA worker (17.5 hours a week). So I have the very interesting job of being our organization's PR person. I get to do presentations, advertising and workshops.

I work on five islands: Salt Spring, Pender, Galiano, Mayne and Saturna, and I see clients on all the islands in our office space (which is usually a church basement). I do mostly referrals and resources, and some light counselling around safety planning, setting boundaries, parenting skills and life skills. I also do accompaniments to Legal Aid, BC Benefits, court and RCMP, and work with women in our transition house. I put up posters about our program and hand out brochures after each presentation I do—a crucial part of the job.

I find the hardest thing about my job is organizing my hours. I can start the week with only 20 hours booked. Then I am concerned that I am being paid for 35 hours, so I will book some presentations in to make up my hours, and suddenly I get lots of calls from clients needing to see me, and end up working 40 hours.

I have worked at this job for two years now and never had two weeks the same in a row. It's great to have all the variety, and I really love my job, but it can be very exhausting wearing so many hats. I also spend a great deal of time travelling on ferries, waiting for ferries, rushing to catch ferries—my life is run around ferry schedules, as sometimes I have to catch five different ferries in one day. I also get to have some very long days because of the lack of ferries. When I go to Saturna it's a 14-hour round trip (if I had my own boat I could be there and back in a couple of hours).

I am very interested to hear about other workers' jobs, especially things that are working well. At the moment I am formulating a workshop around gender stereotyping and job distribution at Christmas/holiday time, which will include making a floral table centerpiece, while discussing traditional female roles, boundary setting, and self-care. I find that if the clients are focused on creating and their hands are busy, they relax and open up more. I will be happy to share my ideas with anyone who thinks it might work for their clients.

IWAV is a great organization that really cares about its workers and the women we serve. I am always proud to have the opportunity to promote them. 

**BCASVACP Member's
Toll-Free Line!
1-877-633-2505**



VICTIM SAFETY UNIT UPDATE

KAREN SPEARS, MANAGER

Court Updates

Victim Safety Unit staff respond to general enquires from victims or their victim service workers and can provide court updates related to adult accused and offenders. Victims and victim service workers are welcome to phone the Victim Safety Unit to receive court update information. The victim does not have to be registered with the Victim Safety Unit. If an accused or offender is being supervised by BC Corrections, either in custody (jail) or the community (bail, probation), it may be appropriate for the victim to be registered for notification with the Victim Safety Unit. Registration means that:

- The Victim Safety Unit will monitor and pro-actively contact victims with notifications regarding BC Corrections movements (admissions, transfers and releases from jail and community) of the accused/ offender
- Court updates can also be provided
- Notifications can be provided to the victim service worker, the victim, or both,

Working with BC Corrections

Victim Safety Unit staff work closely with BC Corrections staff, both in community and custody. Since BC Corrections also provides victim notification, we are looking at ways to coordinate with them. For example, when an accused or offender reports to BC Community Corrections (bail, probation), we email the probation officer to let them know that a victim is registered with us.

Prolific Offenders Management Pilot

The Division is involved with the Prolific Offenders Management (POM) pilot. The pilot project, which is being led by the Criminal Justice Reform Secretariat and BC Corrections staff, is based on a successful approach taken in the United Kingdom that helped to reduce crime. Because offenders' behaviour is often related to alcohol or

drug addiction, homelessness, mental illness or lack of job skills, the pilot project has formed teams of people in the justice, social and health services areas who will work together to help prolific offenders deal with the issues that drive their criminal activity. The five communities that are testing out the integrated approach to supervising these offenders more closely are Victoria, Kamloops, Nanaimo, Prince George, Surrey and Williams Lake. Division staff have been attending some of the meetings, and recently provided information related to victim services at the all team training session. The Victim Safety Unit will be sending our "general request" letter to victims named on active protection orders in relation to these offenders, as we do for victims of other offenders. The letters are to ensure that victims are aware of services.

Prolific and Dangerous Offenders Conference

Karen Spears recently spoke at the recent Fraser Valley Criminal Justice Conference on the topic of Public Notifications and victims. A special thanks goes to Corrine Arthur and the staff of the Surrey Women's Centre for providing Karen with feedback in preparing for this topic.

High Risk Recognizance Advisory Committee

The Victim Safety Unit also plays an important role in the provincial High Risk Recognizance Advisory Committee. This committee reviews federal offenders who are approaching Warrant Expiry, which means that their sentences are due to expire, and they will be released from federal custody with no supervision. The committee recommends to the police whether or not to pursue an 810.1 or 810.2 recognizance, which will place conditions on the offender. The Victim Safety Unit provides notification to victims, and suggests conditions designed to prevent future victims.

Working with Victim Service Programs

Victim service programs are an essential link between victims and the Victim Safety Unit. Remember to call us if you'd like:

- A copy of a protection order (bail, UTA, PTA, probation, peace bond, family restraining order....)
- Court results
- To know whether an accused or offender is in jail or not
- And other questions...

We welcome the opportunity to get out into the communities and meet victim service workers. We have recently visited Langley, both community and police based, the Surrey Women's Centre and Family Services of Greater Vancouver. If you would like a visit from Victim Safety Unit staff, please contact us, and we will do our best to accommodate your request.

Contact Us

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Kay MacIntosh, Court Support Caseworker, Port Coquitlam
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INCREASE IN FUNDING FOR VICTIM SERVICE PROGRAMS

We were pleased to learn that the VSCPD has updated and enhanced their funding formula for victim service programs for this fiscal year. As stated in the May 2008 Information Bulletin from Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division, "as a result of the increase in funding from the Victim Surcharge Special Account all victim service programs have been allocated additional funding for the fiscal year 2008/2009. This increase reflects an updating of the Funding Formula to align with current police strength and population data as well as an increase to the FTE allocation from \$60,000 to \$70,000. The Division has also introduced a minimum funding level equivalent to half of an FTE." The new funding formula also provides funds for worker case consultation and/or self-care planning.

Many CBVAP workers have emphasized the importance of increased funding and the importance of case consultation, clinical supervision or other means of support for your difficult work. We look forward to hearing about how these changes will support your work. The Division will be announcing further recommendations once the ViSDA analysis is completed; we hope that these recommendations will respond effectively to the feedback that we and our programs provided in the ViSDA process and continue to enhance victim services in BC. 

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT: www.endingviolence.org
or e-mail: bcasvaccp@endingviolence.org

CHILD PROTECTION LEGISLATION

BY ALISON WARD, LEGAL SERVICES SOCIETY



The Community Advocate Support Line (CASL) is a dedicated telephone support line for BC advocates. The line is staffed full-time by lawyer Alison Ward, who can give you brief legal information and advice about specific client files in areas including family law and poverty law. The CASL line is part of the Legal Services Society's LawLINE service, and is funded by the Law Foundation and the Ministry of Attorney General.

Advocates and community workers can reach CASL at 604-601-6074 in the Lower Mainland, and toll-free within BC at 1-877-601-6066. These numbers are for advocates' use only; please do not distribute them to the general public. To access legal advice on the CASL line, you must provide Alison with your client's full name and contact information, and the full names of any opposing parties. All information that you give to Alison is confidential and is subject to solicitor-client confidentiality. We have to track this information due to potential conflicts of interest. CASL is part of the LawLINE project, and LawLINE has to know the names of both parties because they can only give advice to one side. The Law Society also requires that we obtain this information.

Sample Call to CASL

(fictional example, not based on a real client scenario)

This morning I received a call from Karen, a victim support worker in the Northwest.

Karen is phoning on behalf of her client Linda, who is a low-income, single mother of two children under 10. Karen explains that the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is investigating Linda's care of her children, and that a social worker wants to meet with Linda this afternoon. Linda is not sure what the social worker wants to discuss with her, but she thinks it is probably related to some concerns about her

mental health. The social worker has already told Linda that MCFD is thinking seriously about removing the children from her care, and Linda is very upset. She realizes that she does have some mental health problems, but she thinks MCFD is overreacting.

This is Karen's first time dealing with a child protection issue with MCFD, and she is not sure what to tell Linda. She wants some general information about child protection law. She would also like to know whether Linda has to meet with the social worker this afternoon, and whether Legal Aid can pay a lawyer to represent Linda if MCFD removes the children from her care.

General information about child protection law

In terms of general information, I tell Karen that Legal Services Society has two useful publications regarding child protection law. They are available in print and online.

Parents' Rights, Kids' Rights: A Parent's Guide to Child Protection Law in BC is a booklet that is designed both for parents and for advocates who are assisting them in dealing with MCFD. It explains what can happen if MCFD is concerned about a child's safety and well-being or is planning to remove a child from the family home. It includes detailed information about developing agreements with MCFD, what happens in court during child protection hearings, and what family members and advocates can do if they have concerns about a child's foster care or a complaint about a social worker. It includes a flowchart that outlines the various legal steps in an MCFD investigation, including what may happen in court if MCFD applies for a supervision order or removes a child. *Parents' Rights, Kids' Rights: A Parent's Guide to Child Protection Law in BC* is available online at http://www.lss.bc.ca/publications/pub.aspx?p_id=77.

If your child taken by the Ministry of Children and Family Development: Your Rights as a Parent is a smaller LSS pamphlet, designed to inform parents and guardians about the steps they can take if MCFD removes, or is planning to remove, a child from their home. It is available at http://www.lss.bc.ca/publications/pub.aspx?p_id=28.

MCFD Investigations

One of Karen's specific questions was whether Linda has to meet with the social worker this afternoon. I tell Karen that the answer to this question requires a general understanding of the MCFD investigation process.

I explain that MCFD has a duty to investigate all complaints they receive about possible abuse or neglect of a child. MCFD has various powers during an investigation. An MCFD social worker can talk to a parent about his or her family and any concerns they have about a child's safety. MCFD can also speak to a child without the parent present; talk to other people (e.g. teachers, doctors, neighbours, etc) who know the child; visit the child at home without warning; and remove a child from a home without warning if they think the child is in danger.

I tell Karen that it is generally in a parent's best interest to talk frankly with the social worker during an investigation. If a parent refuses to speak with a social worker, MCFD may have to assume that the parent has something to hide, and remove the child. An investigation is a parent's chance to explain the situation to MCFD, and to respond to MCFD's concerns, for example by developing a safety plan for the child(ren) that the parent can share with the social worker. It is also an opportunity for a parent to try to access services that they may need, to enable the parent to keep the children safe. I explain that there is more information about MCFD investigations and services in chapter 2 of the *Parents' Rights, Kids' Rights* publication.

Linda should meet with the social worker. But, whether she needs to meet with them this afternoon is a separate issue. If Linda wants time to prepare for the meeting, or to arrange for a support person or advocate to attend the meeting with her, she should explain that to the social worker and ask to reschedule the meeting to allow for that. If the social worker agrees to reschedule, I tell Karen it will be very helpful if she can go to the meeting with Linda. As a support person, Karen can help Linda develop a safety plan. She can also help Linda understand how the child protection system works, help her decide

how to explain her situation to MCFD, take notes of the meeting, ask questions, and help Linda organize and keep copies of any documents or information she gives to, or receives from, the social worker.

Help available from Legal Aid

Karen's other specific question was whether Legal Aid can pay a lawyer to represent Linda if MCFD does remove the children from her care.

I tell Karen that if Linda is financially eligible for legal representation, then the Legal Services Society may be able to appoint a lawyer to help her in many situations involving MCFD, even if the children are never removed from her care. Specifically, a parent may be able to get a Legal Aid lawyer in the following circumstances:

- The parent believes MCFD is about to take the child away;
- The parent is trying to work out an agreement with MCFD and needs advice from a lawyer about what to do;
- The parent has worked out an agreement with MCFD and wants advice about signing it;
- MCFD plans to apply for a supervision order for their child;
- MCFD has removed their child from the home;
- The child is in foster care and the parent wants to be able to see them more often;
- The parent wants to get permission to bring the child back home; or
- A court ruled that MCFD should care for the child for the long term, and the parent just learned that MCFD is trying to give custody of the child to someone else from now on.

Because MCFD has already told Linda that they are thinking seriously about removing her children, I tell Karen that Linda should make an application for legal representation right away. If someone is not sure whether they would qualify for this help, it is always best to call or visit a Legal Aid office to find out what services they may be eligible for. Information about how to apply for legal representation is available online at http://www.lss.bc.ca/legal_aid/howToApply.asp.

Karen thanks me for my assistance, and says she's very glad she called. ☺



Resources

Check our website regularly for more new resources...

Mental Health and Substance Use Info in Other Languages

Information in Arabic, simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, Farsi/Dari, French, Korean, Spanish, Russian, Punjabi, Vietnamese. <http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/other-languages>

ERABC Information Bulletins

Topics such as anger management, couples counselling, etc. <http://erabc.ca/bulletins.htm>

Victim Services Directory 2008

The 2008 Victim Services Directory has been posted on the victim services website at http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victim_services/directory/index.htm. The PDF format has replaced the previous online format. Any changes to contact information can be sent to sarah.barrett@gov.bc.ca

New Resource for young Aboriginal Women

Spirit Bear Centre in Abbotsford provides 10 beds of transitional housing with support services for young Aboriginal women, aged 13-19, in recovery from addictions and at risk of homelessness. More at <http://www.spiritbearcenter.com>.

National Clearinghouse on Family Violence

Lots of excellent resources at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence>.



Events

Check our website regularly for more...

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day June 15

<http://www.inpea.net/>

Walk4Justice

This walk starts in Victoria and ends in Ottawa, to raise awareness of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. Walk starts June 21, 2008, and ends in Ottawa on September 12. Website: <http://walk4justice.piczo.com/>, Facebook group: <http://apps.facebook.com/causes/2181>

First World Conference of Women's Shelters

September 8-11, 2008 in Edmonton. More info at http://www.womenshelter.ca/home_en.php.

The 8th World Indigenous Women and Wellness Conference

September 29-October 1, 2008 in Calgary. More info at <http://www.awotaan.org>.

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REGION 4 – FRASER VALLEY

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Mission Statement

The BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs works to coordinate and support the work of victim serving and other anti-violence programs in BC through the provision of issue based consultation and analysis of resource development, training, research and education. Our work is guided by respect for difference, human dignity and equality.

Membership

We work to address the needs of Specialized Victim Assistance Programs, Sexual Assault, Stopping the Violence Counselling Programs and other similar programs. The BCASVACP provides support, training, education, policy and legislative analysis, resource development, and information exchange forums to its member programs.

Your membership will support the BCASVACP in continuing many important services, including the development of analysis, representation on various government committees, administration tools development, and training.

A membership will ensure that your organization has access to the most current information available. Your BCASVACP membership acts also as a voice of community support for our continued working on behalf of your programs.

We always welcome your input and questions. For more information about what BCASVACP membership is all about, contact 604-633-2506, extension 10, or email bcasvacp@endingviolence.org.

We wish to thank the Ministry of Community Services and Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General for their funding support.



BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance & Counselling Programs

Our program wants to be a BCASVACP member. Membership fees are on a sliding scale between \$60 to \$160. (Whatever your program can afford)

I do not qualify for program membership. I would still like to receive the BCASVACP tri-annual newsletters (\$25)

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Website: _____ E-mail: _____

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Please make cheques payable to the BC Assn. of Specialized Victim Assistance & Counselling Programs and forward to #728 – 602 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1P2

Charitable # 13926 5821 RR0001