

Aboriginal Women's Safety Project

Our Contracted Regional Coordinator, Morgen Baldwin, has been working on behalf of CCWS with Northern Society for Domestic Peace on a project focused on increasing safety for Indigenous Women in urban settings and on reserve.

The project, funded by the Vancouver Foundation, is focused in the Upper Skeena and Bulkley Valley area. NSDP anti-violence workers Marilyn George and Belinda Lacombe have been connecting with leadership with the goal of building connections and increasing safety.



L-R: Barbara Barker, Ruby Morgan, Marilyn George and Morgen Baldwin at the Gitwangak training.

In November in Houston, Belinda and colleagues facilitated the 3-day Indigenous Communities

Safety Project knowledge sharing workshop in Houston. The community has now established a committee that is working on the development of protocols to enhance the connections between services and close gaps in the local safety net. The vision is to keep women safe, with a focus on those most marginalized and facing complex trauma due to the effects of colonization on their communities.

In Gitxsan and Wet'su'weten territories, Marilyn George has been building connections with leadership. The knowledge sharing workshop was facilitated March 25-28 in Gitwangak for the communities of Gitwangak, Gitsegukla and Gitanyow. On May 1-3, the knowledge sharing workshop will be facilitated for the communities of Gitanmaax, Sik'e'dakh (Glen Vowell), Anspa'yaxw (Kispiox), Hagwilget, and the Hazeltons.

Interagency Case Assessment Teams

CCWS has been very busy supporting communities that are working on interagency case assessment teams (ICAT). Gail Edinger and Debby Hamilton provided one-day workshops on developing ICAT to Maple Ridge and Burnaby on February 25 and 26. They are actively engaged with Williams Lake, Nelson, Trail, Castlegar, Richmond and Golden to deliver workshops before the end of June.

ICAT work and delivery is exciting and dynamic but the importance of building and maintaining strong relationships and foundations through local community coordination is key to the success of ICAT.

VAWIR Committee Conference Call

The December 11, 2102 conference call for coordination initiatives included 33 people from a broad variety of committees and sectors across the province. Some of the issues discussed included the need for MSD, MCFD and Health involvement with local coordination committees, access to emergency funds for people leaving communities

due to safety concerns, role of the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence, and interagency case assessment teams. Participants shared ideas about how to ensure longevity of committees, including leadership to revitalize groups when commitment is flagging, the importance of relationship building, tracking accomplishments and celebrating successes.

Capacity Building Highlights

CCWS played an active role at the National Research Day on Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence conference held in Vancouver from November 7-9, 2012 that was hosted by FREDa, EVA BC and BCSTH. CCWS delivered several workshops and facilitated some panel sessions that included:

Life Trumps Privacy: Disclosing Information in Woman Abuse Cases: This workshop was delivered as part of a panel on Justice System Responses. The presentation reviewed current domestic violence risk assessment tools that help service providers determine whether indicators of high risk are present. The presentation also provided an overview of federal and provincial privacy laws and discussed the implications of recent legal amendments and policy changes that allow a person's information to be shared without consent in certain situations. Best practices based models successfully implemented in communities with interagency high risk case management teams were outlined and a basic conceptual framework was provided, followed by facilitated group discussion of key practical and ethical concerns.

Women Victims of Domestic Violence Being Arrested: This was also delivered as part of the panel on Justice System Responses and was attended by about 40-50 conference attendees that included academics, government personnel, service providers, police and corrections personnel.

Legislation and Policy: CCWS Legal Analyst Gisela Ruebsaat moderated this panel on legislation and policy, which included discussion of 2010 domestic violence policies and whether they effectively respond to safety needs of women. This included discussion of VAWIR, VIR, SPO1 and MCFD Best Practices Approaches. There was also an update on the PODV action plan and a presentation on quasi-criminal domestic violence laws in Australia.

Do the 2010 Policies Effectively Respond to the Safety Needs of Women Experiencing Violence? Reviewing the VAWIR, VIR SPO 1, and Best Practices Approaches, Child Protection and Violence Against Women Policies: Delivered in the panel session on Legislation and Policy, this was attended by a number of community based service providers who took this practical information back to their communities.

From Listening To Action: Increasing Safety for Aboriginal Women in Northern BC. This session was delivered as part of a panel on "Experiences of Aboriginal Women" in partnership with staff from Northern Society for Domestic Peace.

Other Workshop Highlights

Increasing Safety: Moving VAWIR Forward in the Lakes District (Burns Lake, November 28, 2012): This one-day workshop focused on the history and importance of coordination, information about the work of other committees, and developing a work plan for the Burns Lake committee including information about working on High Risk Interagency Case Assessment.

Williams Lake "K" File Committee (December 20, 2012): CCWS facilitated some ICAT planning with service providers at a meeting of the Williams Lake "K" File Committee who are in the early stages of development. CCWS presented the history of the Vernon ICAT and talked about CCWS' role in supporting the VAWIR. They then facilitated a case study process and discussion.

Provincial Working Group

The Provincial Working Group met in November 2012 and most recently at the end of February 2013. New Working Group members are: **Clark Russell**, Provincial Office of Domestic Violence; **Dr. Randy Kropp**, Forensic Psychiatric Services Commission of British Columbia and Adjunct Professor of Psychology at Simon Fraser University; **Bill Naughton**, Office of the Representative for Children and Youth; **Terry Lejko**, Ministry for Children and Family Development; and **Teresa Chiesa**, Ministry of Health.

Presentations and discussions have included: the missing and murdered women along Highway 16;

CCWS FUNDER: BC Ministry of Justice

CCWS MANAGING PARTNER: Ending Violence Association of British Columbia (EVA BC)

updates on the Domestic Violence Action Plan; sexualized violence; highest risk protocol and the development of Interagency Case Assessment Teams (ICATs); RCMP policing plan strategic priorities; increasing safety for Indigenous women and communities; MSD Persons Fleeing Abuse policy implementation; and the PODV mapping project.

Resources

Changes to the BC Family Law Act: Q & A. This resource document, based on questions asked during conference calls held with anti-violence workers in January 2013, will soon be available on the EVA BC website. It provides answers to a number of questions and serves as a useful adjunct to the CCWS Information Bulletin on the Family Law Act.

CCWS Information Bulletin on Family Law Act: Implications for Anti-Violence Workers. Developed in consultation with BC Ministry of Justice, Civil Law Policy Unit.

To view CCWS resources and publications online, please visit www.endingviolence.org/publications.

Trends and Emerging Issues

CCWS is a forum for discussing the challenges of policy and program implementation and resolving those challenges. When communities identify issues such as those below, CCWS Regional Coordinators work with community stakeholders to address the issue at the local level. When an issue cannot be addressed at the local level and CCWS recognizes a province wide “trend” emerging, we endeavour to address the issue at a provincial level through the CCWS Working Group.

- Interventions for men using violence: Communities are grappling with how to address offenders’ vulnerabilities and risks as a way of increasing the safety of victims and children.
- Transition period impacting coordination: Workers and programs are having a hard time keeping up with the high number of new policies and practices that are rapidly being implemented throughout the province.
- Implementation of MSD Persons Fleeing Abuse Policy: Addressing the needs for clarity

regarding application of the new policy. Working with MSD regarding the importance of MSD representatives being part of coordination and high risk interagency case assessment teams.

Family Justice and the Courts

CCWS/EVA BC made a submission to the Family Justice Working Group, which is part of the Action Committee on Access to Justice initiated by the Supreme Court of Canada and chaired by Justice Tom Cromwell. The Family Justice Working Group is trying to address the gap between strongly worded recommendations of past reports on family justice and the failure of justice systems to fully implement them. In its report, *Meaningful Change for Family Justice: Beyond Wise Words*, the Working Group concludes that we need concrete action and full implementation of recommendations that have been on the books for some time. One of the primary barriers to change identified in the report are the limited resources available for the family justice system.

The CCWS/EVA BC submission included the following points:

- The need for increased funding for legal aid;
- The need for improved access to front end services for women suffering violence and the need for interagency referral protocols to ensure women are referred to community based advocacy services;
- The need to address challenges faced by marginalized women trying to access justice;
- Dangers associated with the use of consensual dispute resolution in family disputes where domestic violence is present;
- The need for ongoing education of family lawyers on the dynamics of domestic violence and risk indicators.

We would like to thank retired Justice of the British Columbia Supreme Court and judicial member of the National Advisory Committee on Family Law, the Honourable Donna Martinson, for encouraging us to submit our concerns.

Feedback will be collected by the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice and shared with the Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters.

Staff Changes



Thanks to Michelle Novakowski!

As many of you know, Michelle Novakowski left her position as CCWS Regional Coordinator in December 2012.

Since 2005, her skilled and profound dedication to the CCWS team and the work of supporting coordination strategies and solutions at the local, regional and provincial levels has been extraordinary. Anyone who has crossed paths with Michelle know her work is characterized by an enormous practical knowledge and understanding about violence against women that she is always willing to share. During her time as CCWS Regional Coordinator, her efforts significantly contributed to advancing the work of CCWS throughout BC. Thank you, Michelle!

Welcome Debby Hamilton!

EVA BC and CCWS are happy to announce that Debby Hamilton has joined the CCWS team as one of our Regional Coordinators.

Debby has almost 25 years experience in frontline, leadership and community coordination anti-violence work, in both rural and urban settings. The focus of her work has been primarily women and



children affected by intimate partner violence and sexual assault. For the past 12 years, Debby was the Executive Director of Vernon Women's Transition House Society, an agency that provides a broad range of services for women,

children and girls who experience violence. She is also co-founder of the North Okanagan Integrated Case Assessment Team (ICAT), a provincial pioneer in interagency case assessment and safety planning for highest risk domestic violence.

Debby started her journey with women-serving organizations as a frontline transition house worker in Dawson Creek, BC. Since that time she has worked in an assortment of front line and management roles in various settings, including sexual assault services, specialized victim assistance and emergency mental health programs. She was one of the first VAWIR Coordinators hired through the BC Attorney General's initiative in 1989. Debby has also taken a lead in community coordination and development efforts in Dawson Creek, Kelowna and Vernon. She is committed to providing feminist, woman-centred services and reducing the impact of institutional re-victimization.

Debby has worked on several provincial boards, including EVA BC many years ago (then, the BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs) and the BC Society of Transition Houses. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Social Work and was President of the Okanagan Branch of the BC Association of Social Workers.

Contact Us

Gail Edinger, Regional Coordinator
250-397-2389, gail.edinger@gmail.com

Debby Hamilton, Contracted Regional Coordinator
778-475-6164, dhamiltonccws@shaw.ca

Gisela Ruebsaat, Legal Analyst
250-592-6073, gisela2@islandnet.com

Morgen Baldwin, Contracted Regional Coordinator
250-635-5300, morgenbaldwin@gmail.com

Terran Bell, Administrative Assistant
604-633-2506 ext 15, ccws@endingviolence.org

Visit us online at:

www.endingviolence.org/ccws