
Keeping Women Safe: Eight Critical Components of an Effective Justice Response To Domestic Violence

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Prepared by the Critical Components Project Team

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Executive Summary

This paper outlines a framework for a comprehensive approach to domestic violence that best meets the diverse needs of communities in British Columbia. It is widely recognized that violence against women in their intimate relationships is a serious, widespread, costly, and sometimes deadly problem for women, their children, the men who abuse them, and for society as a whole. According to the 2004 Statistics Canada General Social Survey (GSS), 7% or approximately 653,000 women were victims of some form of violence by a current or previous partner in the five years up to and including 2004. Women are more likely than men to be the victims of domestic violence, and much more likely than men to be the victims of severe violence (Randall, 2003; Statistics Canada, 2005).

Research indicates that victimization rates in Canada are much higher among Aboriginal than non-Aboriginal people. The 2004 GSS found that Aboriginal people were three times more likely than non-Aboriginal people to be victims of domestic violence.

National statistics on domestic violence amongst immigrants are somewhat unreliable for a number of reasons. However, Statistics Canada figures indicate that spousal violence rates for immigrant women are lower than for non-immigrant women. (Johnson, 2006.) In any case, social isolation, lack of information about rights and available services, lack of English language skills and lack of services in their own language, immigration and sponsorship issues, poverty, and lack of support from their cultural community increase the vulnerability of abused immigrant women (Light, 2007 a & b; Smith, 2004).

Current, reliable data regarding the experience of domestic violence among other marginalized groups – for example, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people; women who are poor; and women who have disabilities are also difficult to access (Johnson, 2006).

A woman's reluctance or fear of proceeding through the criminal justice system is often referred to as the most persistent challenge in cases of domestic violence. Women who are fearful of proceeding are described as "reluctant", "uncooperative" or "hostile" witnesses. But women's fears may be rational reactions to the realities of their lives and what they know about the justice system. Inability or unwillingness to cooperate with a criminal prosecution should be recognized as a potential safety concern. A preoccupation with victim "cooperation" detracts from the basic need to ensure the victim is safe.

The project has identified eight critical components of an effective specialized justice response to domestic violence. These are based on research and evaluations of

Keeping Women Safe:
Eight Critical Components of an Effective Justice Response to Domestic Violence

coordinated approaches to service delivery for victims and offenders in other jurisdictions and criteria outlined in the Final Report of the Ad Hoc Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group Reviewing Spousal Abuse Policies and Legislation (2003). The paper also includes recommended actions that will help ensure the successful development and implementation of these critical components province-wide.

Crucial to this project is how the framework might best be utilized by the BC government to improve responses to domestic violence in both the short- and the long-term. The goal is that:

- Every BC community will incorporate these eight components into a coordinated response to domestic violence and have the capability of doing so.
- Every community will implement these eight components in a way that makes sense for that community, responding to circumstances, needs, and priorities in that particular community.
- All government funding to address domestic violence will be directed to these components, individually or as a “package”, in order to ensure that funding strategies are developed and implemented in a consistent, coordinated manner province-wide and that funding responds to needs identified on the basis of the best available evidence, rather than on an ad hoc basis.
- Other initiatives that may impact families affected by violence, including reviews of family law and the family justice system, consider these components and recommended actions.

Critical components of an effective response

In any community, the critical components of a framework for an effective, specialized response to domestic violence must include effective, inclusive approaches to:

1. Managing risk and victim safety – including a comprehensive, coordinated approach to risk and safety assessment and victim safety planning
2. Offender accountability – including appropriate and consistent sentencing, consistent enforcement of protection orders, and accessible treatment for abusers
3. Specialized victim support – including comprehensive, proactive, and timely support with outreach and access for marginalized groups
4. Information-sharing – including consistent, timely information-sharing between agencies and with the victim, with particular emphasis on high-risk cases
5. Coordination – including coordination and collaboration at all levels among all relevant sectors, senior level leadership, and resources to adequately support a coordinated approach

Keeping Women Safe:

Eight Critical Components of an Effective Justice Response to Domestic Violence

6. Domestic violence policy – including adherence to a comprehensive justice system policy that applies to all justice system components and requires a consistent and informed approach to charging, prosecution, and offender accountability
7. Use of specialized expertise – including specialized approaches such as dedicated justice system personnel and dedicated court time, adequately funded specialized training, and if they are considered an option, a carefully considered and principled approach to domestic violence courts.
8. Monitoring and evaluation – including monitoring and evaluation as an integral part of all the foregoing critical components and a systematic, comprehensive approach to collection, analysis, and publication of statistics across all justice system components.

3. Recommended Actions

This is a listing of all Recommended Actions in the paper. For information on the rationale for each recommendation, please refer to the appropriate section in the complete paper.

There is inter-connection among many of these recommended actions. For purposes of simplicity, cross-references are confined to those recommendations that are directly and explicitly linked.

3.1 Managing Risk and Victim Safety

- 3.1.1 Government should develop and maintain a comprehensive, coordinated strategy to ensure that safety assessment and risk management are integrated into all interventions by criminal justice personnel and contracted victim services who address domestic violence. This should include information-sharing protocols and training.
- 3.1.2 Consideration should be given to incorporating a requirement into the police data collection system (PRIME) that, if an incident is a “spousal”, the police member is required to enter information about risk and safety.
- 3.1.3 The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General should ensure that adequate funding and training is provided to those victim service programs contracted to perform safety assessment and planning, including training on all risk and safety assessment tools proposed for use in BC. Training should include a focus on the importance of risk assessment and safety planning taking account of the particular circumstances of women from marginalized populations, including language issues. Training should also include appropriate cautions about the limitations of risk assessment tools.
- 3.1.4 The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General should monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the implementation of the ASAP guidelines on victim safety (from the perspective of victim services) and on victim services’ workload.
- 3.1.5 The Ministries of Attorney General and Public Safety and Solicitor General should enhance their efforts to address systemic factors that affect victim safety, including lack of timely justice system responses; lack of interpreters and services in immigrant women’s own language, including police services; lack of resources and training to deal with victims or offenders with mental health issues and lack of system accountability, including lack of adherence to the Violence Against

Women in Relationships Policy(VAWIR) and lack of enforcement of protection order breaches.

3.2 Offender Accountability

Appropriate and consistent sanctions

- 3.2.1 Training for Crown counsel should include specialized training on sentencing issues for domestic violence offences, including: the need for sentences to address the particular nature and dynamics of domestic violence; the need for deterrence to over-ride rehabilitation in serious cases; the strengths and limitations of different approaches to treatment for assaultive men; the strengths and limitations of protective orders, including s. 810 recognizances; the importance of enforcement of orders through prosecution of breaches and bringing the offender back on the original offence; and the need for an escalating element in sentencing.
- 3.2.2 Consideration should be given to the development and maintenance of a sentencing casebook or database for Crown counsel, including statistical information on the magnitude of the problem of domestic violence for use in submissions where appropriate.

Effective enforcement of protection orders

- 3.2.3 The Ministries of Attorney General and Public Safety and Solicitor General should investigate and pilot successful models for coordinated protection order enforcement based on effective programs in some jurisdictions.
- 3.2.4 The Ministries of Attorney General and Public Safety and Solicitor General, in collaboration with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, should enhance training on the effective use of various types of protection orders, including their strengths and limitations. As part of this initiative, the updated 2006 Protection Order Enforcement Matrix should be completed and widely distributed in order to maximize access to clear, consistent information about this complex topic for criminal and civil justice system, child protection and youth services personnel.
- 3.2.5 The implementation of the Family Law Reform Package should include professional development for members of the Family Bar, and provision of resources to better enable them to coordinate with police and Crown to facilitate effective risk assessment and safety planning for clients who are seeking protection from harassment or abuse in the context of family breakdown. Education and resources should include information on the importance of enforcement clauses in any restraining order sought from the court.

- 3.2.6 Criminal Justice Branch should clarify the Crown's role in prosecuting breaches of Family Relations Act (FRA) orders, Supreme Court orders, and protective intervention orders under s. 28 of the Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA). Any guidelines produced should be shared with members of the private bar and should also include reference to Crown counsel's role in liaising with members of the Family Bar if there is a family law proceeding underway where violence is involved. Such information will better enable members of the Family Bar to advise clients as to the enforceability of these orders and to coordinate with Crown counsel regarding breaches and safety issues.

Assaultive men's treatment

- 3.2.7 Appropriate, timely treatment should be accessible to all assaultive men, both on a mandatory and on a voluntary basis, including men from marginalized populations.
- 3.2.8 The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General should adopt comprehensive practice guidelines for assaultive men's treatment programs developed in consultation with experts in the field, including the Ending Relationship Abuse Society of BC, as well as women-serving organizations. These guidelines should include directives that programs work in close collaboration with anti-violence and women-serving organizations in their community, to ensure that an appropriate gender analysis is maintained in the development and delivery of treatment for assaultive men and to enable victims to make informed choices about their safety. Contracts for assaultive men's treatment programs should require programs to adhere to the practice guidelines which are adopted.
- 3.2.9 The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General should have in place concrete, ongoing strategies to ensure that assaultive men's treatment providers, both within the Ministry and in the community, are adequately trained and supervised, including appropriate contract requirements and accountability mechanisms.
- 3.2.10 Links should be maintained on an ongoing basis between assaultive men's treatment programs and probation services to ensure compliance with treatment conditions.
- 3.2.11 The Ministries of Public Safety and Solicitor General and Attorney General should take the lead in providing training for all justice system personnel who deal with domestic violence. This training should address the nature of appropriate and effective treatment for assaultive men, including strengths and weaknesses of different approaches, the importance of focusing on women's safety, the importance of understanding and addressing the particular needs of

immigrant men, the central role of accountability strategies, and the need for a coordinated multi-disciplinary approach, should be provided for all justice system personnel who address domestic violence.

- 3.2.12 Evaluation measures should be established and implemented on an ongoing basis to assess effectiveness of both court-ordered and voluntary treatment for assaultive men.
- 3.2.13 The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General should actively encourage other appropriate ministries such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Children and Family Development to provide funding for assaultive men's treatment programs for voluntary, low risk, or self-referred men in order to seek to change abusive behaviour before the abuser is charged or convicted of a criminal offence. Strategic partnerships with these ministries should be explored in order to ensure a coordinated response

3.3 Specialized Victim Support

- 3.3.1 Criminal justice system personnel should be provided with training that emphasizes the central role played by victim support services in contributing to successful criminal justice system interventions. Criminal Justice System Policies should also reinforce the central role of victim support services.
- 3.3.2 Government funding should be increased for existing Community-based Victim Services to meet current and growing service pressures, and funding should be provided for additional Community-based Victim Services in communities that currently do not have such a program. This would include lowering the current community population requirement to be eligible for a community-based victim service program.
- 3.3.3 Government should provide adequate funding for victim support services for marginalized groups, including funding for:
- Innovative approaches to breaking through the isolation and meeting the needs of abused immigrant women, Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, women living in rural and isolated communities, and other marginalized women
 - comprehensive models of service delivery to meet the multiplicity of needs of marginalized women
 - interpreter services to facilitate timely access to appropriate community-based victim support services for immigrant women and women with disabilities
 - increased capacity of women's own geographic, social, or cultural community to meet their own needs
 - enhanced public education about availability of services for domestic violence victims

- enhanced prevention and intervention initiatives to address the issue of domestic violence in the long-term
- 3.3.4 Government should provide enhanced ongoing training on challenging service delivery issues such as effective referral, intensive support for women who are fearful of proceeding in the criminal justice system, and meeting the needs of marginalized women.
- 3.3.5 Where necessary and appropriate justice system personnel should work with victim service workers to develop protocols to guide responses to challenging service delivery issues such as those named above.

3.4 Information-sharing

- 3.4.1 The BC Government should make it an immediate priority to develop a provincial information-sharing and/or case coordination protocol framework for domestic violence cases, including both the criminal and civil (family law/child protection) systems, with the Ministries of Attorney General and Public Safety and Solicitor General taking the lead. (See Appendix 3 for details of what should be addressed in this protocol.) These ministries should work in partnership with other concerned ministries and with provincial organizations representing police, Community- and Police-based Victim Services, and transition houses. This protocol should complement and not replace existing provincial policies such as the Violence Against Women in Relationships Policy and existing case coordination protocols at both the local and provincial levels.
- 3.4.2 The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General should work collaboratively with provincial organizations representing the police, police-based and Community-based Victim Services, and transition houses to develop and deliver multi-disciplinary training on the provincial information-sharing protocol for their members.
- 3.4.3 The Ministries of Attorney General and Public Safety and Solicitor General should, on a priority basis, investigate the legal implications of having Police-based and Community-based Victim Services designated as "justice system personnel" pursuant to section 1 of the Victims of Crime Act. The Ministries should engage in immediate discussions with provincial organizations representing victim services to consider the practical and legal implications of such designation. The results of the Ministries' investigation of the legal implications of such a designation should form part of these discussions.
- 3.4.4 The Victims of Crime Act should be amended to specifically provide that, because of the unique dynamics of domestic violence and the likelihood of further offences, justice system personnel in these cases may disclose to Community-based and Police-based Victim Services the victim's name and contact information for the

Keeping Women Safe:

Eight Critical Components of an Effective Justice Response to Domestic Violence

purposes of making a proactive referral and may also disclose case-related information necessary to effectively manage risk. This would allow for critical information to be shared under section 33.1(1)(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).

- 3.4.5 The Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services, in consultation with the Ministries of Attorney General and Public Safety and Solicitor General, should review FIPPA and propose amendments to enable justice system personnel to proactively share information with the victim and victim-serving agencies in domestic violence cases.
- 3.4.6 The Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services, in consultation with the Ministries of Attorney General and Public Safety and Solicitor General, should work with their federal counterparts and the Federal Privacy Commissioner to review the federal Privacy Act to determine whether parallel amendments to that act are also needed to enable justice system personnel to proactively share information with the victim and victim-serving agencies in domestic violence cases.
- 3.4.7 The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General should monitor these changes to ensure they have the desired impact on ease and consistency of information-sharing.
- 3.4.8 Appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that all information provided to victims is in a language in which they are fluent.

(For more information on information-sharing and privacy issues, see Appendix 3.)

3.5 Coordination

- 3.5.1 A senior inter-ministry coordinating body should be established, with an ongoing budget, to coordinate government initiatives to respond to domestic violence. This body should have formal links with existing community coordinating initiatives, including Community Coordination for Women's Safety, as well as with any bodies established to address the needs of Aboriginal, immigrant, or other marginalized victims of domestic violence. This senior government coordinating body should have the authority to develop policy, programs, protocols, and procedures; to undertake monitoring and evaluation activities; and to respond to concerns and take action on recommendations from other coordinating bodies. This body should also be charged with the responsibility for overseeing consideration and implementation of recommended actions in this report.
- 3.5.2 Domestic violence initiatives developed by the Ministries of Attorney General or Public Safety and Solicitor General should be developed in a collaborative fashion with all relevant justice system players, including community-based services.

Keeping Women Safe:

Eight Critical Components of an Effective Justice Response to Domestic Violence

- 3.5.3 Government ministries should jointly fund local domestic violence coordinating committees or working groups, to facilitate information-sharing, coordination, accountability, and problem-solving at a local level, and direct that representatives of each of the relevant sectors should attend and participate on a regular basis, including justice, health, child protection, organizations serving marginalized groups, and other responders to women and their children who are victims of domestic violence.
- 3.5.4 Government ministries should jointly fund training for local coordination committees to support effective multi-disciplinary collaboration, development of multi-disciplinary protocols, and understanding about each other's roles.
- 3.5.5 If plans proceed to further develop Family Justice Services Centres or Family Justice Information Hubs, the Ministry of Attorney General should directly involve anti-violence professionals in the development, implementation, and ongoing operation of the Centres/Hubs in order to help address safety concerns for women who are victims of domestic violence.
- 3.5.6 The Family Justice Services Centres or Family Justice Information Hubs should include as part of their screening processes, comprehensive risk assessment that does not rely solely on victims' self-disclosure. The Hub model should also include referral to victim services, including Community-based Victim Services where they exist.

3.6 Domestic Violence Policy

Need for a rigorous, coordinated charging policy

- 3.6.1 Recognizing the serious nature of domestic violence, the pivotal role that Criminal Justice Branch plays in the justice system response to these cases, and the significant effect that weakening one aspect of the response has on all other elements of the response, the Crown Counsel Spouse Assault Policy:
- should be revised to emphasize the seriousness of these offences and the foremost importance of protection of victims
 - should include reference to the 2005 Charge Assessment Guidelines relating to the public interest
 - should be included in the overall VAWIR policy to communicate willingness to engage in a coordinated approach
 - should be augmented by practice bulletins for use by Crown counsel, to be shared with others involved in a coordinated response to domestic violence
- 3.6.2 Consistent with the serious nature of domestic violence, Criminal Justice and Corrections Branch policy should be amended to eliminate pre-charge alternative measures in domestic violence cases and to discourage post-charge alternative measures until research provides evidence that alternative justice processes offer

the same or more protection for domestic violence victims as does the traditional criminal justice process and traditional sanctions.

- 3.6.3 Consistent with evidence that uniformly supports the importance of a coordinated response to domestic violence, the VAWIR Policy, including the Crown Counsel Policy, should be amended to include a provision for each component of the justice system that it should work in coordination with the other components and should participate in local coordinating mechanisms.

Addressing dual arrest and charge recommendation

- 3.6.4 The police component of the provincial VAWIR Policy should be amended to incorporate a primary aggressor analysis to be used in cases where mutual aggression is alleged, with appropriate training for staff on how to apply such a policy and monitoring to ensure compliance. Provincial police statistics should be routinely reviewed and utilized in planning an appropriate strategy to address this issue, including on a jurisdiction by jurisdiction basis where required.

Facilitating policy adherence

- 3.6.5 The VAWIR policy should be monitored on a routine, ongoing basis and should be evaluated periodically in order to assess its impact on domestic violence cases, on recidivism, and on victims' safety.
- 3.6.6 Recognizing the fundamental role that "spousal" or "K" file designation plays in the management of domestic violence cases, a consistent, system-wide definition of "K" files should be developed, in consultation with Community-based Victim Services and offender services. This definition should specify that:
- In most cases, it is the nature of the relationship between victim and accused, and not the offence type, that will determine whether the case is a "K" file.
 - If the accused and the victim are, or were, in an intimate relationship (including married, common law, and dating relationships) then the "K" designation would apply.
 - Certain cases may still be designated as "K" files even though the intimate partner is not the primary victim, for example, in cases where the accused may direct violence at someone close to the intimate partner, such as her children, as a way of exercising power and control over her
- 3.6.7 The use of "K" file codes should be included in policy for Crown counsel.

(See also Action 3.8.2.)

3.7 Use of Specialized Expertise

- 3.7.1 The Ministries of Attorney General and Public Safety and Solicitor General should play a leadership role at the provincial level, including developing a coordinated policy framework and an advisory body, linked to the senior government coordinating body recommended in 3.5.1, to help ensure a consistent approach to the development of specialized justice processes in BC and to ensure adequate monitoring and evaluation of new approaches, building on the experiences of other jurisdictions. This advisory body should include key community stakeholders, including representatives of marginalized groups.

Dedicated police units

- 3.7.2 The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General should work with local police departments/detachments and community-based services to develop and fund specialized domestic violence units in communities where population warrants such an approach. Such units should embody a coordinated police-community approach and a broad service delivery mandate. Such units should also be guided by an advisory body that includes community agencies and is formally linked to any existing VAWIR coordinating committee.
- 3.7.3 The Ministries of Attorney General and Public Safety and Solicitor General should support the development of guidelines and protocols for police, Crown counsel, probation, and Community-based Victim Services to guide the development, implementation, and governance of these units.
- 3.7.4 The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General should ensure that appropriate contract requirements mandate the establishment of advisory committees and the development of guidelines and protocols as specified above in Actions 3.7.2 and 3.7.3.

Specialized personnel/dedicated court time

- 3.7.5 The Ministries of Attorney General and Public Safety and Solicitor General should undertake further exploration, including pilot projects and evaluation of models for specialized criminal justice personnel, including judges, and/or dedicated court days, in order to assess their suitability and effectiveness to improve the criminal justice response to domestic violence in communities across BC. Particular attention should be paid to linking these specialized approaches to existing domestic violence units and to ensuring that the needs of both rural and urban communities and the needs of various cultural communities are served by such approaches.

- 3.7.6 The Ministry of Attorney General should provide resources to encourage greater use of innovative and effective prosecution strategies and coordinated approaches by Crown counsel in domestic violence cases across the province, including:
- specialized Crown counsel resource units on domestic violence, based on an understanding of the crucial role of community coordination
 - the development of practice bulletins and reference to the Ministry of Attorney General VAWIR Policy to provide background information for use by Crown counsel confronted with these cases
 - enhanced professional development opportunities for Crown counsel, including an emphasis on particularly vulnerable domestic violence witnesses
- 3.7.7 Specialized personnel should attend rural and isolated communities to assist in the development of effective, specialized criminal justice approaches to domestic violence with a particular focus on local community needs.

Specialized courts

- 3.7.8 If domestic violence courts are implemented in BC, lessons learned in other jurisdictions and the following key elements should be considered and incorporated into the BC model, including monitoring and evaluation of their operation and impact:
- Coordination of justice system response in policy and practice
 - Methods to expedite cases
 - Sensitive, informed, appropriate service provided by trained justice professionals
 - Coordination with a range of other service providers
 - Early access to treatment by offenders to capitalize on offender motivation to change and allow for more immediate response
 - Monitoring of offender compliance with meaningful sanctions to hold offenders accountable, including successful completion of court-ordered treatment programs and escalating consequences for non-compliance
 - Access to support, information and referral by victims
 - Monitoring and evaluation of systems to assess effectiveness and identify need for changes
 - Shared information systems with family court
 - Enforcement of court orders and immediate prosecution of breaches.
- 3.7.9 Critical components and actions included in this Framework Paper should be taken into consideration in the development and implementation of Vancouver's

Downtown Community Court, including monitoring and evaluation of its operation and impact.

Training

(Recommendations on training are also included under every other Critical Component.)

- 3.7.10 Ministries and police should fund, develop, and deliver training on domestic violence for generalist and specialized justice system personnel, addressing the critical components outlined in this Framework Paper.
- 3.7.11 Adequate funding for ongoing training for generalist and specialized personnel should be built into budgets on an ongoing basis.
- 3.7.12 Training on special topics, such as new legislative or policy initiatives, the needs of specific marginalized groups, or new developments in understanding the dynamics of domestic violence, should be provided for generalist and specialized personnel in a timely manner and subsequently incorporated into ongoing training.
- 3.7.13 Training of supervisors in all components of the justice system should focus on their responsibility to ensure that policy and best practices are consistently followed with respect to domestic violence cases.
- 3.7.14 A mechanism for coordination of training across sectors on both an initiative-specific and an ongoing basis should be explored.

(For further information on specialized domestic violence responses in BC, see Appendix 2)

3.8 Monitoring and Evaluation

(Monitoring and evaluation recommendations are also included under most other components)

- 3.8.1 Statistical data collection systems across all components of the justice system should be integrated in order to facilitate cross-system tracking and monitoring of domestic violence cases as they proceed through the justice system and comprehensive evaluation of the justice system response to these cases.
- 3.8.2 Recognizing the fundamental role that “spousal” or “ K” file designation plays in the management of domestic violence cases:
 - Training of all justice system personnel should emphasize the purpose and importance of appropriate and consistent designation of domestic violence cases as “spousal” files. Training of supervisors should include a focus on

Keeping Women Safe:
Eight Critical Components of an Effective Justice Response to Domestic Violence

returning files to personnel who have not properly designated files as “spousal” files.

- Monitoring and accountability mechanisms should be put in place to ensure compliance with policy on “spousal” file designation.
- Consideration should be given to incorporating a “spousal” designation into the police data collection system (PRIME) as a required field.

(See also Actions 3.6.6 and 3.6.7)

- 3.8.3 Recognizing that the particular circumstances and needs of Aboriginal women and immigrant and refugee women may impact on their experience of domestic violence, Ministries should explore with Aboriginal and the immigrant and refugee communities ways in which cultural or immigration factors might be captured statistically on a routine basis.
- 3.8.4 Statistical collection and analysis and production of statistical reports on justice system processing of domestic violence cases should be established as an integral part of the operations of the Ministries of Attorney General and Public Safety and Solicitor General, both as routine practice and to examine specific issues over a limited time period. Routine statistics should be made publicly available in an accessible format on a regular (monthly or quarterly) basis. All reports should be provided to the senior government coordinating committee for review and action as necessary.
- 3.8.5 An applied research function should be incorporated into the ongoing operations of the Ministries of Attorney General and Public Safety and Solicitor General in order to increase understanding of the justice system response to domestic violence and inform the development of policy and programs. Consideration should be given to research collaboration with the Justice Institute of BC and BC Institute Against Family Violence as they proceed with the development of a Centre for the Prevention and Reduction of Violence. Priority should be given to research examining the effectiveness of current justice system approaches to domestic violence, including their impact on recidivism.
- 3.8.6 A monitoring and evaluation component should be included in the development, implementation, and funding of all new initiatives to address domestic violence, in order to assess the success of the initiative and make necessary changes in a timely manner. The critical components included in this paper should inform the development, implementation, and evaluation of all new initiatives in this area.
- 3.8.7 Consideration should be given to developing guidelines and criteria for establishing death review panels in cases of domestic violence. Any approach adopted should involve experts from community-based anti-violence organizations, including organizations specifically focused on immigrant and Aboriginal populations.